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Fifth device explodes in Texas; White House sees no link to terrorism

AUSTIN/SCHERTZ, Texas (Reuters) - A package bomb blew up at a FedEx distribution center near San Antonio on Tuesday, hastening investigators to seek the public's help in determining if there is any link to four homemade bombs that have rocked the state capital of Austin this month. Hundreds of federal investigators joined local authorities in probing the bombings, which the White House said do not appear to be linked to terrorism. The latest blast knocked a female employee off her feet, police said. The package, filled with nails and metal shrapnel, exploded shortly after midnight local time at the FedEx Corp sorting facility in Schertz, Texas, about 65 miles south of Austin, the San Antonio Fire Department said on Twitter. Investigators were also examining a second suspicious package at the same facility, San Antonio Police Chief Bill McManus told reporters. "There was one other package that we believe was also loaded with an explosive device that they are looking at right now," McManus told reporters in Schertz, about 20 miles northeast of San Antonio. In Sunset Valley, a town within Austin, police surrounded a FedEx store on suspicion it was linked to the Schertz bombing. "The FBI is currently investigating a confirmed link between packages involved in the Austin bombing investigation and a mail

delivery office in Sunset Valley. It appears that the source of the suspect packages was a private package delivery office in Sunset Valley," Sunset Valley police said in a statement. Even with the apparent Austin link, it remained unknown whether the latest incident was the work of what Austin police said could be a serial bomber who is responsible for the four earlier devices that killed two people and injured four others. The blast at the FedEx facility in Schertz was the fifth in the state in the last 18 days and the first involving a commercial parcel service. "We are committed to bringing perpetrators of these heinous acts to justice. There is no apparent nexus to terrorism at this time," White House spokesman Sarah Sanders said in a Twitter post. Investigators were trying to come up with a theory or intelligence regarding the motive for the bombings or identity of the bomber or bombers, a U.S. security official and a law enforcement official told Reuters. The FBI was investigating the FedEx package explosion as if there were a connection to the Austin bombings, the law enforcement official said. Both sources declined to be identified.



An officer with Schertz Police Department holds a FedEx truck from entering the scene of a blast at

Federal authorities at the scene offered few details, telling reporters their probe was in the early stages and that the building would be secured before investigators could gather evidence. Authorities offered a \$115,000 reward to anyone providing information leading

the arrest or conviction of the culprit, and public urged the bomber to communicate with them to explain the motivation for the attacks. We need the public's help right now," said James Smith, the assistant special agent in charge of the FBI's San Antonio office.

Maryland high school shooter dies after gunfight with officer: sheriff

GREAT MILLS, Md. (Reuters) - A 17-year-old student shot and critically wounded two fellow students at a Maryland high school on Tuesday morning before dying after exchanging gunfire with a campus security officer, the county sheriff said. The shooting, which came amid a renewed national debate over gun violence following a school massacre in Florida last month, occurred just before 8 a.m. (1200 GMT) at Great Mills High School in St. Mary's County, county Sheriff Timothy Cameron said. A 16-year-old girl and a 14-year-old boy were wounded and taken to hospitals. The girl was in intensive care with life-threatening critical injuries, the sheriff said, while the boy was in good condition. The gunman was identified as Austin Wyatt Rollins, and Cameron said there was "an indication" of a prior relationship between him and the female student, though he said that

was still under investigation. Maryland lockdown pulls Florida students into Twitter storm: 'Be strong' The latest in a long string of deadly shootings at U.S. schools and colleges took place a little more than a month after 17 students and educators were shot dead at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. That massacre sparked a new student movement against gun violence, including a national school walkout last week that Great Mills students participated in. It occurred just days before a planned Saturday march in Washington calling for new restrictions on guns. Rollins pulled out a Glock semiautomatic handgun around 7:55 a.m. in a hallway and shot the students, the sheriff said. The attack, which lasted less than a minute, ended after the school resource officer, Deputy 1st Class

Sheriff Blaine Gaskill, ran inside the building and engaged with Rollins, with both firing a single round almost simultaneously. The officer was not harmed, Cameron sheriff said. Rollins was confirmed deceased at 10:41 a.m. ET after being taken to a hospital. Parkland students and Great Mills students exchanged supportive messages on Twitter following Tuesday's shooting. "We are here for you, students of Great Mills, together we can stop this from ever happening again," Emma Gonzalez, a senior at Stoneman Douglas High School who survived last month's rampage, wrote on Twitter. Cameron said investigators would determine whether the shooter died of a wound from the school resource officer's gun or in some other way. An armed school resource officer had also been on the campus of Stoneman Douglas at the time of the

shooting there, and came under criticism for failing to stop the gunman, who was armed with an AR-15 assault-style rifle. The officer, who resigned, said he had not been sure where the gunfire was coming from. U.S. President Donald Trump and the National Rifle Association have proposed arming teachers to combat the threat of school shootings, while gun safety advocates have demanded a ban on semiautomatic rifles, among other laws. The Maryland school is in Great



Mills, a community about 70 miles south of Washington. "You never think it'll be your school and then it is," Mollie Davis, who identified herself as a student at the school, wrote on Twitter. "Great Mills is a wonderful school and somewhere I am proud to go. Why us?"

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By Katherine Blunt

widely at this time of year as refiners complete seasonal maintenance and switch to more expensive, lower-emissions fuel blends for the summer driving season. Patrick DeHaan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy, anticipates that gasoline this spring will cost 10 to 25 percent more than it did at this time last year, when oil prices were much lower.

“The national average now stands at its highest level in over a month and is likely to continue moving higher in the weeks ahead as demand continues to recover from the winter blues and the transition to summer gasoline kicks into high gear,” he said.



million-barrel gain a week earlier. Saudi Arabia's exports of diesel and gasoline soared to a record in January, underscoring its advantage over other producers who're more dependent on shipments of lower-value crude. While U.S. shale companies are pumping record amounts of oil, the growth rate is flattening out for one closely watched category

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Women Know About The Increased Cancer Risk Of Oral Contraceptives. This New Study Shows That The Using Birth Control Pills May Protect Against Certain Cancers For At Least 30 Years

Birth Control Pills May Protect Against Some Cancers For Decades

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



After an analysis of more than 46,000 women, researchers from the University of Aberdeen in the United Kingdom found that women who had ever used oral contraceptive pills were at lower risk of colorectal, ovarian, and endometrial cancers, compared with women who had never used the pill. Furthermore, the study found no link between the use of oral contraceptives during reproductive years and increased risk of new cancers in later life. The study was led by Dr. Lisa Iversen, of the Institute of Applied Health Sciences at

Aberdeen, and the findings were recently published in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), around 16 percent of women in the United States aged between 15 and 44 years are currently using oral contraceptive pills as a method of birth control. The “combined pill” is the most common form of oral contraceptive used. This contains synthetic versions of the hormones estrogen and progesterone. Since naturally occurring estrogen and

progesterone have been associated with cancer development, numerous studies have investigated whether oral contraceptives might play a role in cancer risk. Assessing the long-term effects of oral contraceptives While some studies have uncovered a



link between oral contraceptive use and increased risk of breast cancer, others have associated the pill with a reduced risk of certain cancer types, including endometrial and colorectal cancers. The aim of the new study was to assess the long-term cancer benefits or risks of oral contraceptive use. To reach their findings, Dr. Iversen and colleagues analyzed the data of 46,022 women who were part of the U.K. Royal College of General Practitioners’ Oral Contraception Study from 1968 to 1969. Participants were monitored for up to 44 years, and the researchers assessed the development of all cancer types during this time. “Because the study has been going for such a long time we are able to look at the very long-term effects, if there are any, associated with the pill,” notes Dr. Iversen. Findings are ‘reassuring’ Compared with women who had never used oral contraceptive pills, those who had used the pills were found to be at lower risk of colorectal, endometrial, and ovarian cancers. “So the protective benefits from using the pill during their reproductive years are lasting for at least 30 years after wom-

en have stopped using the pill,” says Dr. Iversen. The team did identify a greater risk of breast and cervical cancers with oral contraceptive use, but they found that this risk appeared to diminish within 5 years of ceasing use. Additionally, the researchers found no evidence of increased risk of new cancer development in later life among women who had used oral contraceptives.

The team says that the findings should offer some peace of mind to women who use oral contraceptives. “These results from the longest-running study in the world into oral contraceptive use are reassuring. Specifically, pill users don’t have an overall increased risk of cancer over their lifetime and that the protective effects of some specific cancers last for at least 30 years.” (Courtesy https://www.medicalnewstoday.com)

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Scores of Americans are in an uproar since Food Safety News revealed the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will soon allow U.S. chickens to be sent to China for processing before being shipped back to the states for human consumption.

This arrangement is especially disturbing given China’s subpar food safety record and the fact that there are no plans to station on-site USDA inspectors at Chinese plants.

Also, American consumers won’t know which brands of chicken are processed in China because there’s no requirement to label it as such.

It’s Already Done With Your Seafood
To ease concerns, lobbyists and chicken industry proponents argue no U.S. company will ever ship chicken to China for processing because it wouldn’t work economically.



“Economically, it doesn’t make much sense,” said Tom Super, spokesman for the National Chicken Council, in a recent interview with the Houston Chronicle. “Think about it: A Chinese company would have to purchase frozen chicken in the U.S., pay to ship it 7,000 miles, unload it, transport it to a processing plant, unpack it, cut it up, process/cook it, freeze it, repack it, transport it back to a port, then ship it another 7,000 miles. I don’t know how anyone could make a profit doing that.” Yet, a similar process is already being used for U.S. seafood.

According to the Seattle Times, domestically caught Pacific salmon and Dungeness crab are being processed in China and shipped back to the U.S. because of significant cost savings.

“There are 36 pin bones in a salmon and the best way to remove them is by hand,” said Charles Bundrant, founder of Trident, which ships about 30 million pounds of its 1.2 billion-pound annual harvest to China for processing. “Some-

USDA Gives Green Light To Ship Chicken From USA To China For Processing -- Then Back To US For Consumption

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

thing that would cost us \$1 per pound labor here, they get it done for 20 cents in China.”



Low Pay, Poor Safety Record
Bureau of Labor Statistics data estimates that American poultry processors are paid roughly \$11 per hour on average. In China, reports have circulated that the country’s chicken workers can earn significantly less—\$1 to 2 per hour—which casts doubt on Super’s economic feasibility assessment.

China’s food safety system, which is said to be decades behind America’s, is highly questionable given some of the more recent food safety scandals that



have surfaced in the country:
More than 300,000 Chinese children have suffered illness, and several have died, from melamine-tainted milk powder.

Dangerously high levels of mercury have been found in Chinese baby formula.
More than \$1 million worth of rat and other small mammal meat has been sold to Chinese consumers as lamb. (Courtesy <http://wisemindhealthybody.com/ecowatch/>)

Related

USDA Gives Green Light To China’s Poultry Inspections

Audit released is for processing, not slaughter
(Sept. 2017) The “our beef for your chicken deal” hatched by President Donald Trump with the People’s Republic of China last May appears to be on track.

CFI called out some of China’s “serious food safety events,” including:

- Melamine in baby formula
- Toxins in pet treats
- Rat meat sold as lamb
- Smuggling of decades old frozen meat
- Restaurant using discarded cooking oil
- Tainted meats sold at fast food outlets

- Potentially harmful sauces made with rock salt and recycled spices.



Ken Maschhoff, president of the National Pork Producers Council, was one of the few commenting in favor of the new rule. He suggested that USDA add a requirement for inspection of all PRC poultry shipments at U.S. ports of entry “before being released into the marketplace, just as U.S. meat and poultry exports to China now are subject to inspections at that country’s port of entry.”

Maschhoff said pork producers “want the United States to remain the gold standard in the world for food safety.” He said his organization supports the rule because it cannot find scientific grounds on which to oppose it.

FSIS auditors inspected four Chinese poultry facilities, three in the Shandong Province and one in the Anhui Province. Two microbiology laboratories, one each in Shandong and Anhui, were also inspected.

CFI says four establishments is too small of a subset of China’s poultry producers to make a favorable decision. It questions whether USDA has the resources to conduct audits “at the frequency needed to ensure the safety of Chinese products.”



FSIS plans annual equivalency reviews of China’s food safety systems for meat and poultry products. The agency may order so-called “secondary inspections” of meat imports at U.S. ports of entry. (Courtesy <http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2017>)

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