

NATION/WORLD DIGEST

Plant Operator Unveils Plan To Resolve Crisis

TOKYO (AP) — The operator of Japan's crippled nuclear plant laid out a blueprint Sunday for stopping radiation leaks and stabilizing damaged reactors within the next six to nine months as a first step toward allowing some of the tens of thousands of evacuees to return to the area.

While the government said the timeframe was realistic, those forced to flee their homes, jobs and farms were frustrated that their exile is not going to end soon. And officials acknowledge that unforeseen complications, or even another natural disaster, could set that timetable back even further.

"Well, this year is lost," said Kenji Matsueda, 49, who is living in an evacuation center in Fukushima after being forced from his home 12 miles (20 kilometers) from the plant. "I have no idea what I will do. Nine months is a long time. And it could be longer. I don't think they really know."

Pressure has been building on the government and plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Co. to resolve Japan's worst-ever nuclear power accident since a catastrophic earthquake and tsunami hit the country March 11, knocking out power and cooling systems at the Fukushima Dai-ichi complex.

On orders from Prime Minister Naoto Kan, TEPCO drew up the blueprint and publicly explained its long-term strategy — for the first time since the disaster — for containing the crisis that has cast a cloud of fear over the country.

FAA Gives Controllers An Extra Hour To Rest

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government said Sunday it is giving air traffic controllers an extra hour off between shifts so they don't doze off at work, a problem that stretches back decades. But officials rejected the remedy that sleep experts say would make a real difference: on-the-job napping.

"On my watch, controllers will not be paid to take naps. We're not going to allow that," Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said.

That's exactly the opposite of what scientists and the Federal Aviation Administration's own fatigue working group say is needed after five cases disclosed since late March of sleeping controllers. The latest one occurred just before 5 a.m. Saturday at a busy regional radar facility that handles high altitude air traffic for much of Florida, portions of the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

Several other countries, including Germany and Japan, permit controllers to take sleeping breaks and they provide quiet rooms with cots for that purpose.

Three Killed As Thousands of Syrians Protest

BEIRUT (AP) — Gunmen opened fire during a funeral for a slain anti-government protester Sunday, killing at least three people on a day when tens of thousands of people took to the streets nationwide as part of an uprising against the country's authoritarian regime, witnesses and activists said.

It was not immediately clear who was behind the shooting at the funeral near Homs, 100 miles (160 kilometers) from the capital, Damascus.

In the past four weeks, Syrian security forces in uniforms and plain-clothes have launched a deadly crackdown on demonstrations, killing at least 200 people, according to human rights groups. The government has blamed armed gangs looking to stir up unrest for many of the killings.

One witness said gunmen wearing black clothes opened fire at hundreds of people in the Talbiseh district in central Syria at a funeral for a protester who was killed Saturday. Other witnesses said they saw soldiers and security forces open fire, shooting even at homes and balconies. Dozens were wounded, they said.

A human rights activist in Damascus confirmed the three deaths, but said he had no information on who killed them. He confirmed the deaths through witnesses on the ground who saw the killings and gave him the names of the dead.

U.S. Envoys In Iraq Face Testing Times In '12

BASRA, Iraq (AP) — Make no mistake, Mazin al-Nazeni hates Americans. Soldiers, diplomats, oilmen — the militant leader in Basra, Iraq's second largest city, considers all of them to be Enemy No. 1.

But U.S. diplomats in the southern port city say they're here to stay — even if it's at their peril.

It's a quandary for the Obama administration as the U.S. tries to move from invading power to normal diplomatic partner. But with the last American troops obligated to be gone by year's end, the protection of American diplomats will fall almost entirely to private contractors and Iraqi security forces.

The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee has raised fears that diplomats in Iraq won't be safe, and the dour pronouncements coming from al-Nazeni and others in his hard-line Sadrist movement are not encouraging.

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SURVEY:

Economy Improving Despite Crises

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Economists say the U.S. economy is gaining strength despite political unrest in North Africa and the Middle East and last month's devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

A survey from the National Association for Business Economics finds that economists are hopeful that the broader economy is substantially improving, with rising employment reported for the fifth quarter in a row. The survey found that "companies appear to be positioning themselves for a firming economic environment," said Shawn DuBravac, an economist with the Consumer Electronics Association, who analyzed the findings.

The outlook for employment rose slightly, reaching a 12-year high. No firms reported significant layoffs, with the only reductions coming from already planned cuts.

Sales increased for the third consecutive quarter, profit margins continued to improve and the number of economists whose firms increased spending over the previous quarter held steady. Nearly all of the 72 economists surveyed, about 94 percent, now expect the

economy to grow at least 2 percent in 2011.

The quarterly survey includes the views of economists for private companies and trade groups who are NABE members. The data are reported by broad industry groupings. Many results in the survey are expressed through the Net Rising Index, or NRI — the percentage of panelists reporting better outlooks minus the percentage whose outlook is bleaker.

The survey looked at two new questions for its April survey, gauging the financial impact of anti-government unrest in the Arab world and the deadly Japanese earthquake and tsunami.

Nearly 60 percent of those polled said they expected higher costs because of political turmoil in Bahrain, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria and about 52 percent said they expected economic growth to be weaker in 2011 because of the protests and fighting.

The March 11 earthquake and tsunami, which left nearly 28,000 people dead or missing and sparked a crisis at a nuclear plant, had less of an impact on the economic forecasts. About 31 percent said costs would be higher and 40 percent said it would weaken the broader economic recovery.

In the first quarter of this year, 63 percent

of economists said sales rose from the previous quarter — the highest percentage since 1994. The NRI rating for sales rose 11 points from the previous quarter to 54, and the improvement was across all industry sectors: goods, utilities, information and communications, finance, insurance and real estate, and services.

Profit margins rose to an NRI figure of 31 — the highest rating since 1983. The number of economists reporting rising profits has almost doubled over the past year, to 45 percent from 25 percent.

Prices rose, with about one third of those surveyed saying their firms had made increases over the past three months. Two-thirds of the goods-producing industry, which includes farming, mining, construction and manufacturing, reported their firms had raised prices. Similarly, the costs paid for materials rose for the third quarter in a row and wages and salaries jumped to the highest reading since a survey in October 2007.

The survey was conducted between March 16 and 31.

Geithner Believes Debt Limit Will Be Raised

WASHINGTON (AP) — Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner says Republican leaders have privately assured the Obama administration that Congress will raise the government's borrowing limit in time to prevent an unprecedented default on the nation's debt.

But a top Republican quickly pushed back Sunday and said there was no guarantee the GOP would agree to increase the \$14.3 trillion debt ceiling without further controls on federal spending.

Geithner told ABC's "This Week" and NBC's "Meet the Press" that Republicans told President Barack Obama in a White House meeting last Wednesday that they will go along with a higher limit.

"I want to make it perfectly clear that Congress will raise the debt ceiling," Geithner said in the interviews taped Saturday and aired Sunday.

He said the leaders told Obama that they couldn't play around with the government's credit rating. "They recognize it, and they told the president that on Wednesday in the White House," Geithner said.

But Rep. Paul Ryan, the chairman of the House Budget Committee, said that while it was true nobody wants the country to default, it's essential to address future borrowing at the same time.



Geithner

"We want cuts in spending accompanying a raising of the debt ceiling. And that is what we have been telling the White House," Ryan said on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Ryan, R-Wis., wrote the 2012 budget blueprint that the House passed on Friday. The plan for the budget year that begins Oct. 1 cuts \$6.2 trillion over the coming decade and transforms Medicare for people under 55.

The government is projected to reach its borrowing limit no later than May 16 and risks going into an unprecedented default. Geithner has said he will have a few options he can use that would delay a possible government default until about July 8.

The looming credit crunch has heightened the tensions between the administration and Republicans in Congress.

A last-minute deal last month between the White House and GOP avoided a government shut down on a budget running through September. But Republicans are seeking additional savings in the budget for next year, and say unless they get them, they won't support raising the debt ceiling.

In an interview with The Associated Press on

Friday, Obama predicted that Congress would raise the debt ceiling, but he acknowledged that he would have to offer more spending cuts in the budget to get a deal. Later, Obama's spokesman said a debt ceiling vote could not be contingent on upcoming negotiations over the budget.

If the debt ceiling is not raised, Obama told the AP that it would undermine the solvency of the government, roil financial markets and potentially "plunge the world economy back into a recession."

Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan said the country's financial crisis is "so imminent and so difficult that I think we have to allow the so-called Bush tax cuts all to expire."

The House budget blueprint would extend those tax cuts at all income levels.

"I think that what we have to become aware of is that if we allow taxes to fill in the holes here, we are going to find that we are getting ever closer to the type of economies that exist in Europe, which are very heavily laden and not rapidly growing the ways ours can," Greenspan said on NBC.

Assessing the current economic state, he said "there's a lot of headwinds that are hitting the economy now and slowing it down, and we are in a soft patch."

Super-Rich See Federal Taxes Drop Dramatically

WASHINGTON (AP) — As Monday's tax filing deadline nears, ponder this: The super rich pay a lot less taxes than they did a couple of decades ago, and nearly half of U.S. households pay no income taxes at all.

The Internal Revenue Service tracks the tax returns with the 400 highest adjusted gross incomes each year. The average income on those returns in 2007, the latest year for IRS data, was nearly \$345 million. Their average federal income tax rate was 17 percent, down from 26 percent in 1992.

Over the same period, the average federal income tax rate for all taxpayers declined to 9.3 percent from 9.9 percent.

The top income tax rate is 35 percent, so how can people who make so much pay so little in taxes? The nation's tax laws are packed with breaks for people at every income level. There are breaks for having children, paying a mortgage, going to college, and even for paying other taxes. Plus, the top rate on capital gains is only 15 percent.

There are so many breaks that

45 percent of U.S. households will pay no federal income tax for 2010, according to estimates by the Tax Policy Center, a Washington think tank.

The sheer volume of credits, deductions and exemptions has both Democrats and Republicans calling for tax laws to be overhauled. House Republicans want to eliminate breaks to pay for lower overall rates, reducing the top tax rate from 35 percent to 25 percent. Republicans oppose raising taxes, but they argue that a more efficient tax code would increase economic

activity, generating additional tax revenue.

President Barack Obama said last week he wants to do away with tax breaks to lower the rates and to reduce government borrowing.

In all, the tax code is filled with a total of \$1.1 trillion in credits, deductions and exemptions, an average of about \$8,000 per taxpayer, according to an analysis by the National Taxpayer Advocate, an independent watchdog within the IRS.

OBITUARIES

Martin Busch

ATCHISON, Kan. — Martin P. Busch, known fondly as "the father of South Dakota Public Broadcasting," passed away quietly April 15, 2011 at his Grand Villas home in Atchison, Kansas.

Busch was born on March 29, 1922 to Paul and Marie (Roemer) Busch in Wolsey, South Dakota. After graduating from Wolsey High School in 1940 he attended Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, South Dakota. He began his career in Wolsey as a music teacher and as principal after returning as a naval Lt. Commander during World War II, attending the University of South Dakota, and earning his BFA Degree in 1948.

After moving to and teaching in Brookings, South Dakota he became program director for KUSD-AM radio in 1954 at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, South Dakota. At that time he also began his MFA degree and also was a professor of the fledgling "communications" department.

His love for, and deep knowledge of, the classics evolved into a popular show "The Classics." As his broadcasting career expanded he was appointed Executive Director of the South Dakota Public Broadcasting system in 1960 and served the people of South Dakota in the development of the statewide multimedia network.

KUSD-TV, channel 2, the flagship station went on the air in 1961, the first educational television in the state and part of his vision that everyone in the state, especially children in schools, should have access to educational programming.

As the TV stations were constructed, each was designed to add the "new" FM band radio transmissions statewide. His vision culminated with SDPB TV operating nine transmitters and six translators and Public Radio

operating ten translators. And during his tenure, he participated in the early development of similar state systems in the three-state area as well as nationally in the development of National Public Radio (NPR) and PBS (Public Broadcasting System).

Busch was honored in October, 2010 having the SDPB headquarters studios, in the Al Neuharth Media Center at the University of South Dakota dedicated to his vision and service.

In addition to meeting and developing many professional and personal friendships throughout South Dakota and the nation, Busch was well-known for his radio show "The Bookshop", which spanned over six decades from 1956 to 2001.

Busch's community leadership involved countless years of involvement in local, regional and national civic, fraternal and business organizations in Vermillion and later, after his retirement, in

Rapid City, South Dakota. He was also a member of the South Dakota Hall of Fame.

He enjoyed reading, music and choirs, classic cars, flying his airplane and most of all his Harley friends and bike trips he took into his early 80's. In his last 15 years he was an avid participant in Cardiac Rehabilitation in Rapid City and at Atchison Hospital.

Busch is survived by three sons; David and Stephan (Rae Ellen) of Atchison, KS and Harlan (Frances) Busch, La Ciega, Honduras; one daughter, Annalisa of Hastings, MN and four grandchildren, Angela Moeckly of Tucson, AZ; Patrick Busch of La Ciega, Honduras, and Stephanie and Christina Busch of Atchison, KS.

Services will be held Wednesday, April 20 at 11 a.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church in Vermillion. Visitation will be 1 hour prior to the service on

Wednesday at the church. Burial will be in Bluff View Cemetery with military honors conducted by V.F.W. Clay County Post #3061.

Memorials can be made to SDPB Friends, P.O. Box 5000, Brookings, SD 57006-5000.

Kober Funeral Home in Vermillion is in charge of arrangements.

Condolences may be sent online to www.koberfuneralhome.com

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April 18, 2011

Please Join Us!



Solitaires

A social group of widows/widowers of all ages that meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month in the Hospitality Center on the grounds of Wintz & Ray Funeral Home.

Wednesday, April 20

6pm Potluck Dinner • 6:45pm Speaker
Dr. James Nyberg, Yankton Historical Society

Mark Your Calendars For These Events

May 18th ¥ June 15th
July 20th • Aug. 17th • Sept. 21st
Oct. 19th • Nov. 16th

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*Our Thoughts And
Prayers Are With Them*

Our care and concern does not end with the funeral service. This week we remember with family and friends the anniversary of the deaths of:

Anthony DeMaro
who passed away on
April 18, 2010

Dawn Lavere Starlin
who passed away on
April 18, 2010

Albert M. Mueller
who passed away on
April 19, 2010

Kevin Patrick Rokusek
who passed away on
April 19, 2010

John 'Jack' Kastengren
who passed away on
April 20, 2010

Barbara Elsie McCool
who passed away on
April 21, 2010

Olive Marie Gross
who passed away on
April 22, 2010

Helen Gearhart
who passed away on
April 23, 2010

Alvin Ackerman
who passed away on
April 24, 2010

This remembrance is brought to you free of charge. If you have a loved one you would like remembered, contact us at Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory. Guiding and serving families with compassion and trust.

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