

Perry Touts Jobs Record, Executive Experience

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Texas Gov. Rick Perry contended Monday he has the best economic record and executive experience in government of any Republican presidential candidate, contrasting his credentials with those of his top two rivals, Mitt Romney and Michele Bachmann.

"I respect all the other candidates in the field but there is no one that can stand toe-to-toe with us," Perry told The Associated Press in an interview at the start of his first full day campaigning in the lead-off caucus state of Iowa.

Perry also offered his first policy proposal as a candidate, calling for a six-month moratorium on federal business regulations that he said were holding back job growth nationally. He brought the proposal forward just as President Barack Obama traveled to the Midwest for a bus tour and speeches on the economy.

The Texan argued that the Obama administration's Department of Labor and Environmental Protection Agency, for instance, had restrained business growth with excessive restrictions.

Taken together, Perry's comments about his own credentials and the policy proposal were an effort to establish him as the strongest Republican able to challenge Obama on the economy — and lay claim to Romney's mantle of the jobs candidate.



Perry

Indiana Honors 5 Killed In Stage Collapse

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Hundreds of mourners gathered Monday at the Indiana State Fairgrounds to remember five people killed when high winds caused an outdoor stage to collapse onto an audience awaiting the start of a country music concert.

Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels told the roughly 500 mourners that the tragedy has broken the hearts of the state's residents. He became emotional as he praised those who rushed to the stage to help the injured.

"I cannot tell you how proud I am," Daniels said, his voice cracking, "to be the employee of six and half million people like that."

Daniels said Saturday's stage collapse was especially sad because the state fair is "a family reunion of all Hoosiers," where farmers and city dwellers gather for fun.

Steven and Amanda Potaczek of the band 1,000 Generations opened the service with "Fail Us Not," a song they wrote when one of their friends died in 2008. Amanda Potaczek said the song is keeping trust in God when tragedies happen.

AP: Food Aid For Starving Somalis Stolen

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — Sacks of grain, peanut butter snacks and other food staples meant for starving Somalis are being stolen and sold in markets, an Associated Press investigation has found, raising concerns that thieving businessmen are undermining international famine relief efforts in this nearly lawless country.

The U.N.'s World Food Program acknowledged for the first time that it has been investigating food theft in Somalia for two months. The WFP strongly condemned any diversion of "even the smallest amount of food from starving and vulnerable Somalis."

Underscoring the perilous security throughout the food distribution chain, donated food is not even safe once it has been given to the hungry in the makeshift camps popping up around the capital of Mogadishu. Families at the large, government-run Badbado camp, where several aid groups distribute food, said they were often forced to hand back aid after journalists had taken photos of them with it.

"They tell us they will keep it for us and force us to give them our food," said refugee Halima Sheikh Abdi. "We can't refuse to cooperate because if we do, they will force us out of the camp, and then you don't know what to do and eat. It's happened to many people already."

The U.N. says more than 3.2 million Somalis — nearly half the population — need food aid after a severe drought that has been complicated by Somalia's long-running war. More than 450,000 Somalis live in famine zones controlled by al-Qaida-linked militants, where aid is difficult to deliver. The U.S. says 29,000 Somali children under age 5 already have died.

Stocks Soar After Google's \$12.5B Purchase

NEW YORK (AP) — The Dow Jones industrial average notched a three-day win streak Monday for the first time in six weeks. A \$19 billion corporate buying spree and encouraging economic news from Japan sent the Dow up 213 points and erased its losses from last week.

The return of what's called "Merger Monday" on Wall Street made investors more optimistic about the future. So did a report that Japan's economy shrank less than feared after the earthquake and tsunami there on March 11. That helped ease worries that the U.S. economy may slide into another recession.

The Dow rose 213.88 points, or 1.9 percent to 11,482.90. It has gained 763 points since Thursday. That's the best three-day point gain since it rose 927 in November 2008, during the depths of the financial crisis. The Dow is also up 7.1 percent over the three days, the biggest percentage gain since it rose 9.5 percent the first three days of the bull market in March 2009.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 25.68, or 2.2 percent, to 1,204.49. The Nasdaq composite index rose 47.22, or 1.9 percent, to 2,555.20.

Markets may have stabilized the last three days, but financial analysts warned investors not to assume that stocks have fully settled down after last week's swings. The Dow rose or fell by at least 400 points in four straight days for the first time. The first downgrade of the U.S. credit rating triggered the volatility. It was worsened by concerns that Europe's debt problems are worsening and that the U.S. economy is weakening.

Oldest Survivor Of Bataan Death March Dies

NASHVILLE, Ill. (AP) — A World War II veteran recognized as the oldest living survivor of the Bataan Death March has died at age 105 in an Illinois nursing home.

His biographer, Kevin Moore, says Albert Brown was recognized as the oldest survivor of the deadly 65-mile trek at an annual survivors' convention in 2007. His granddaughter says he died Sunday.

Japanese soldiers forced Brown and 78,000 other prisoners of war to march through the Philippines to a POW camp in 1942. As many as 11,000 died.

But Brown survived. When the war ended, he moved to California and rented properties to the era's biggest Hollywood stars.

Moore said Monday that Brown's story of endurance and hope has as much relevance for today's wounded warriors as it did for World War II veterans.

LIBYA

Rebels Try To Isolate Gadhafi

Supply Lines To Tripoli Targeted In Effort To Pressure Dictator

BY KARIN LAUB
 Associated Press

ZAWIYA, Libya — Libya's rebels threatened to isolate Tripoli by blocking key supply routes and cutting oil pipelines on Monday after a dramatic weekend advance put them in the strongest position since the 6-month-old civil war began to attack Moammar Gadhafi's stronghold.

In Washington, the Obama administration said the U.S. was encouraged by the rebel advances and hoped they had broken a months-long stalemate with Gadhafi's forces.

"We are closing the roads for Gadhafi so there is no way for him to bring anything to Tripoli," a rebel field commander, Jumma Dardira, told The Associated Press.

The rebels' push into the strategic city of Za-

wiya on Saturday brought them within 30 miles (48 kilometers) of Tripoli, the closest they have ever gotten.

Also Monday, a U.S. military official said Libyan government forces fired a scud missile for the first time in the year's conflict with rebels. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it landed about 50 miles (80 kilometers) from the town of Brega early Sunday and hurt no one.

Rebel and government forces have battled over the strategic port city, and control of it has gone back and forth between the two sides.

After three days of fierce battles for Zawiya, a city of 200,000 on the Mediterranean coast, rebel commanders said they controlled the south and west of the city and were fighting for the refineries. Oil-rich Libya's only functioning refineries are in Zawiya.

Nuri el-Bouaisi, an oil production engineer in

the city, said rebels had cut off pipelines that transport gasoline and diesel fuel to Tripoli.

"We shut down all four pipelines to Tripoli," said el-Bouaisi, whose claim could not be verified.

The rebels are also determined to cut key supply routes to Tripoli from the Ras Ajdir border crossing with Tunisia in the west and from the south, where Libya borders Chad and Niger. These are critical lifelines with NATO imposing a no-fly zone over the country.

Over the past two days, a number of rebel officials have claimed that they either cut or were close to cutting those two routes. However that could not be immediately confirmed.

In addition to gaining a foothold in Zawiya, the rebels claimed Sunday to have taken two towns near Tripoli on those key supply roads — Gharyan, 50 miles (80 kilometers) south of the capital and Surman, less than 10 miles west of Zawiya.

A storm of protest

Tens of thousands of Syrians defied an increasing government crackdown on dissent, protesting in cities around the country to demand the ouster of President Bashar Assad.



Source: ESRI, AP
 Graphic: Tom Reinken, Los Angeles Times
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U.S. Advocates Putting More Pressure On Syria

BY BRADLEY KLAPPER
 Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Its hands largely tied, the Obama administration pressed nations Monday to sever financial ties to Syria as part of an admittedly laborious strategy to pressure President Bashar Assad's government into ending its brutal crackdown on protesters. Progress was seen in Turkey's blunt demand Monday for Assad to halt the violence.

The sanctions reflect the U.S. government's limited leverage with a regime it has isolated for decades, and American unwillingness to entertain military options. Instead, diplomacy is progressing at a snail's pace, with U.S. officials acknowledging that travel bans, asset freezes and other measures have done little so far to force Assad's embattled dictatorship to halt its repression, let alone initiate a historic transition toward democracy.

White House spokesman Jay Carney said Monday that Assad must "cease the systematic violence, mass arrests and the outright murder of his own people."

"By his actions he has demonstrated that he has lost legitimacy to lead," Carney said, adding that President Barack Obama has no doubt that Syria will be better off without him. He said the U.S. would be looking to apply further sanctions against Assad's government, but it was unclear if that was the extent of the administration's "or else" part of the equation.

State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland insisted Monday that sanctions, if extended globally, can make it harder for Syria's government to continue with its "abhorrent" attacks on demonstrators. The

Treasury Department hit Syria's biggest commercial bank and mobile telephone operator with new sanctions last week, though the immediate effect was likely marginal because of the already severely restricted U.S. economic ties with Syria.

"There are countries out there still putting money into the coffers of the Syrian regime," Nuland said. "Our emphasis at the moment is on working with as many countries as possible to have them sanction as strongly as they can, because this will work if there are not holes in it."

The question is whether this strategy can work fast enough.

The latest reports out of Syria suggest people in the coastal city of Latakia came under fire from gunships in the Mediterranean Sea. Combined with ground attacks there and elsewhere, Assad is pressing on with a dramatic escalation in a five-month crackdown that activists say has killed more than 1,700 people. And his government shows no sign of relenting.

Bombs Tear Through 17 Iraqi Cities; 63 Killed

BY REBECCA SANTANA AND
 HAMID AHMED
 Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A relentless barrage of bombings killed 63 people Monday in the most sweeping and coordinated attack Iraq has seen in over a year, striking 17 cities from northern Sunni areas to the southern Shiite heartland.

The surprising scope and sophistication of the bloodbath suggested that al-Qaida remains resilient despite recent signs of weakness. Such attacks, infrequent as they are deadly, will likely continue long after American forces withdraw from the country.

"This is our destiny," said Eidan Mahdi, one of more than 250 Iraqis wounded Monday. Mahdi was lying in a hospital bed in the southern city of Kut. One of his eyes was closed shut with dried blood, and burns covered his hands and head.

While some Iraqis expressed resignation, others voiced fury at security officials and Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

"Where is the government with all these explosions across the country? Where is al-Maliki? Why doesn't he come to see?" said Ali

Jumaa Ziad, a Kut shop owner. Ziad was brushing pieces of human flesh from the floor and off equipment in his shop.

The bombs went off on a hot and sunny morning as people were headed to work. Explosive devices were planted in the vests of suicide attackers, in parked cars, along the sides of roads and even on light poles.

No group immediately claimed responsibility, but the simultaneous attacks, the targeting of Shiite civilians and Iraqi security forces and the use of suicide bombers indicated that al-Qaida in Iraq was re-sponsible.

That the terror group was able to pull off such an attack, spanning half of Iraq's 18 provinces, came as somewhat of a surprise.

A little over a year ago, U.S. and Iraqi officials said the deaths of al-Qaida in Iraq's two top leaders in a raid had dealt a severe blow to the organization. The group has suffered from a drop in funding and just last week was calling on former members to come back to the fold, a sign of the group's diminished status.

But time and again, al-Qaida in Iraq has shown an ability to resurrect itself.

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This training is supported by Grant #R18TP000320 entitled, "A Health Security Card for Disasters and Public Health Emergencies" from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Office of Public Health Preparedness & Response. Contents of this flyer are solely the responsibility of the project team and do not represent the official views of the AMA or the CDC.

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