

Gadhafi's Wife, 3 Children Flee To Algeria

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — Moammar Gadhafi's wife and three of his children fled Libya to neighboring Algeria on Monday, firm evidence that the longtime leader has lost his grip on the country. Gadhafi's whereabouts were still unknown and rebels are worried that if he remains in Libya, it will stoke more violence. In Washington, the Obama administration said it has no indication Gadhafi has left the country. Rebels also said one of Gadhafi's other sons, elite military commander Khamis, was probably killed in battle. The Algerian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Gadhafi's wife Safia, his sons Hannibal and Mohammed, and his daughter Aisha entered the country across the land border. It said Algerian authorities have informed the United Nations Secretary General, the president of the U.N. Security Council, and the head of the Libyan rebels transitional leadership council. Ahmed Jibril, an aide to rebel National Transitional Council head Mustafa Abdul-Jalil, said officials would "demand that Algerian authorities hand them over to Libya to be tried before Libyan courts."

Fed Judge Blocks Alabama Immigration Law

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — A federal judge temporarily blocked enforcement of Alabama's new law cracking down on illegal immigration, ruling Monday that she needed more time to decide whether the law opposed by the Obama administration, church leaders and immigrant-rights groups is constitutional. The brief order by U.S. District Judge Sharon L. Blackburn means the law — which opponents and supporters alike have called the toughest in the nation — won't take effect later. Instead, she said she needed more time to consider lawsuits filed by the Justice Department, private groups and individuals that claim the state is overstepping its bounds. The judge said she will issue a longer ruling by Sept. 28, and her temporary order will remain in effect until the day after. She heard arguments from the Justice Department and others during a daylong hearing last week.

Obama Taps Labor Economist For Top Post

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facing a public deeply dissatisfied with his handling of the economy, President Barack Obama on Monday tapped a prominent labor economist to join his cadre of advisers and help steer a fall jobs agenda that will be critical to the president's re-election bid. In nominating Alan Krueger as chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, Obama gains an economist with expertise in the labor market and unemployment, a key drag on the U.S. economy and Obama's presidency. Krueger, a former Treasury Department official and Princeton University economist, has advocated for hiring tax credits for businesses and increased government spending on infrastructure, two programs Obama aides are considering proposing this fall. His appointment also caps a wholesale makeover of Obama's economic leadership team during the past year. Several high-ranking advisers, including Lawrence Summers, Christina Romer and Austan Goolsbee, have all left the administration, leaving Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner as the only top official remaining from the president's original economic team. Obama has often reached within his administration's ranks to fill vacant posts on the economic team, and Krueger is no exception. Though he spent last year at Princeton, he served as assistant secretary for economic policy at the Treasury Department during the first two years of Obama's administration.

NASA: Space Station May Be Evacuated

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Astronauts may need to take the unprecedented step of temporarily abandoning the International Space Station if last week's Russian launch accident prevents new crews from flying there this fall. Until officials figure out what went wrong with Russia's essential Soyuz rockets, there will be no way to launch any more astronauts before the current residents have to leave in mid-November. The unsettling predicament comes just weeks after NASA's final space shuttle flight. "We have plenty of options," NASA's space station program manager, Mike Suffredini, assured reporters Monday. "We'll focus on crew safety as we always do." Abandoning the space station, even for a short period, would be an unpleasant last resort for the world's five space agencies that have spent decades working on the project. Astronauts have been living aboard the space station since 2000, and the goal is to keep it going until 2020.

Irene's Toll Jumps To 40

Vermont Communities Battle Heavy Flooding

BY WILSON RING AND JENNIFER PELTZ
Associated Press

MONTPELIER, Vt. — The full measure of Hurricane Irene's fury came into focus Monday as the death toll jumped to 40, New England towns battled epic floods and millions faced the dispiriting prospect of several days without electricity. From North Carolina to Maine, communities cleaned up and took stock of the uneven and hard-to-predict costs of a storm that spared the nation's biggest city a nightmare scenario, only to deliver a historic wallop to towns well inland. In New York City, where people had braced for a disaster-movie scene of water swirling around skyscrapers, the subways and buses were up and running again in time for the Monday morning commute. And to the surprise of many New Yorkers, things went pretty smoothly. But in New England, landlocked Vermont contended with what its governor called the worst flooding in a century. Streams also raged out of control in upstate New York. In many cases, the moment of maximum danger arrived well after the storm had passed, as rainwater made its way into rivers and streams and turned them into torrents. Irene dumped up to 11 inches of rain on Vermont and more than 13 in parts of New York.

"We were expecting heavy rains," said Bobbi-Jean Jeun of Clarksville, a hamlet near Albany, N.Y. "We were expecting flooding. We weren't expecting devastation. It looks like somebody set a bomb off." Meanwhile, the 11-state death toll, which had stood at 21 as of Sunday night, rose sharply as bodies were pulled from floodwaters and people were electrocuted by downed power lines. The tally of Irene's destruction mounted, too. An apparently vacant home exploded in an evacuated, flooded area in Pompton Lakes, N.J., early Monday, and firefighters had to battle the flames from a boat. In the Albany, N.Y., suburb of Guilderland, police rescued two people Monday after their car was swept away. Rescuers found them three hours later, clinging to trees along the swollen creek. "It's going to take time to recover from a storm of this magnitude," President Barack Obama warned as he promised the government would do everything in its power to help people get back on their feet. For many people, the aftermath could prove more painful than the storm itself. In North Carolina, where Irene blew ashore along the Outer Banks on Saturday before heading for New York and New England, 1,000 people were still in emergency shelters, awaiting word on their homes.



SHAWN ROCCO/RALEIGH NEWS & OBSERVER/MCT
Randy Boyd, left, of the North Carolina Department of Transportation, stands on a portion of N.C. 12 that was washed away near the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina on Monday. He and three other DOT officials and a contract survey crew came down to assess the damage caused by Hurricane Irene.

At the same time, nearly 5 million homes and businesses in a dozen states were still without electricity, and utilities warned it might be a week or more before some people got their power back. "Once the refrigerator gets warm, my insulin goes bad. I could go into diabetic shock. It's kind of scary because we don't know how long it's going to be out for," said Patricia Dillon, a partially paralyzed resident of a home for the disabled in Milford, Conn., where the electricity was out and a generator failed. Her voice cracking, she added: "I'm very tired, stressed out, aggravated, scared." Russ Furlong of Barrington, R.I., ruefully remembered the two weeks he went without power after Hurricane Bob 20 years ago. "Hopefully, we won't have to wait that long this time," he said. "Last night we had candles. It was romantic. It was fun. But that feeling doesn't last too long." Up and down the Eastern Seaboard, commuters and vacationers found their travel plans scrambled. Airlines warned it would be days before the thousands of passengers stranded by Irene find their way home. Some Amtrak service in the Northeast was suspended. Commuter trains between New Jersey and New York City were not running. Trains between the city and its northern suburbs were also disrupted. Kris and Jennifer Sylvester of Brooklyn sat on a bench in the town center in Woodstock, N.Y.,

with luggage at their feet and their daughters, aged 4 and 9, holding signs reading, "Need a Ride 2 NYC" and "Help Us, No Bus, No Train." They rode Amtrak out for a long weekend in the country, but were unable to get home. "We're hoping for anything," Jennifer Sylvester said. In Vermont, the state's emergency management headquarters stood empty, evacuated because of river flooding from Irene's heavy rains. Rescuers used a boat and bucket loaders to pluck seven people from a swamped mobile home park in Lyndonville. In upstate New York, authorities were closely watching major dams holding back drinking water reservoirs. Throughout the region, hundreds of roads were impassable because of flooding or fallen trees, and some bridges had simply given way, including a 156-year-old hand-hewn, wooden, covered bridge across Schoharie Creek in Blenheim, N.Y. In all, more than a dozen towns in Vermont and at least three in New York remained cut off by flooded roads and bridges. Still, there were glimmers of good news. In Pennsylvania, the Delaware River largely remained in its banks, cresting several feet lower than feared. The forecast for flooding on the Mohawk River in New York also eased at Schenectady, N.Y., where officials had worried that high water might threaten the city's drinking water and sewage treatment plant.

Irene May Lead To Higher Insurance Premiums

WASHINGTON (AP) — The \$7 billion in estimated losses from Hurricane Irene will compound the vast damage caused by weather in the United States this year. Yet despite billions they've paid out for floods, tornadoes and earthquakes, big insurance companies can expect another profitable year. And their customers can expect higher premiums. The stocks of major insurers shot up on Monday as investors celebrated Irene's less-than-expected damage. The storm didn't even cause most analysts to adjust their profit estimates for insurers. In part, that's because insurance companies have been raising premiums this year, espe-

cially for customers in high-risk areas. Homeowner and auto policies cost 5 to 10 percent more than they did a year ago, according to research by Gregory Locraft, an analyst with Morgan Stanley. The damage from Irene and other disasters means that property insurance premiums will likely rise across the board into 2012, Locraft said. "Irene is just another log on the fire," he said. The storm seems unlikely to hurt the overall U.S. economy. Analysts agree that damage from Irene will likely run less than \$10 billion — a tiny fraction of the \$14 trillion U.S. economy. Reconstruction might even strengthen areas

hit hard by Irene, analysts said. Rebuilding homes, repairing cars and fixing streets and bridges should help boost those local economies late this year and early next year, they said. Irene is the 10th U.S. weather disaster this year to have caused more than \$1 billion in damage, the National Weather Service says — the most for any year on record dating back 30 years. And 2011 is hardly over. Excluding Irene, this year's natural catastrophes had caused about \$18 billion in damage to insured properties, according to the Insurance Information Institute. Irene will add \$3 billion to \$5 billion, said Robert Hartwig, an economist and president of the group.

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