

Murdoch Media Empire Hit By New Allegations

LONDON (AP) — Rupert Murdoch's media empire was besieged Monday by accusations that two more of his British newspapers engaged in privacy violations that included accessing former Prime Minister Gordon Brown's bank account information and stealing the medical records of his seriously ill baby son.

If proven true, the charges by rival newspapers seem certain to dramatically increase the pressure on Murdoch's News Corp. from a scandal that seems to grow wider and deeper by the hour.

The public outrage began a week ago over wrongdoing at the Murdoch-owned best-selling tabloid News of the World. It has since disrupted the media titan's plans to take over highly profitable satellite broadcaster British Sky Broadcasting and slashed billions off the value of his global conglomerate, News Corp.

In Britain, the scandal has cast a harsh light on the unparalleled political influence of Murdoch's collection of newspaper titles, and is taking an increasing toll on Prime Minister David Cameron. The conservative leader's former communications chief, Andy Coulson, was arrested last week in connection with allegations of payments to police when he was editor of News of the World.

With political pressure rising, a final decision on the multi-billion pound BSKyB takeover was delayed after Murdoch withdrew a promise to spin off news channel Sky News, inviting the British government to refer the bid to authorities charged with enforcing anti-monopoly laws. That is expected to delay any approval for months.

U.S. Says Syria's Assad Has Lost Legitimacy

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Monday that Syrian President Bashar Assad has "lost legitimacy" as a leader interested in reform as the United States formally protested an attack on the U.S. Embassy and the American ambassador's residence in Damascus.

Clinton's comments fell short of demanding that Assad leave power but were some of the strongest public criticism yet by a senior U.S. official and demonstrated Washington's anger not only at the embassy attack but the Assad regime's continuing crackdown on opponents.

"From our perspective, he has lost legitimacy," Clinton told reporters at the State Department in a joint news conference with European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton. "He has failed to deliver on promises he has made, he has sought and accepted aid from the Iranians as to how to repress his own people."

Clinton said there was a "laundry list of actions" that the Assad regime should be held accountable for. And she condemned the attacks on the U.S. and French embassies while demanding that Syria uphold its international treaty obligations to protect foreign diplomatic missions.

Earlier, the department summoned a senior Syrian diplomat to register the U.S. complaints in person and said it would seek compensation for damage caused when a mob of what it described as about 300 "thugs" breached the wall of the embassy compound before being dispersed by U.S. Marine guards.

Court: Gov't Should Say If It'll Defend DODT

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A federal appeals court that has called for the immediate halt of the military's ban on openly gay troops issued an order Monday requiring the U.S. government to state whether it will continue to defend the constitutionality of the policy in court.

Monday's order comes less than a week after the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ordered the Obama administration to immediately cease enforcing "don't ask, don't tell," which could speed up its repeal.

The ruling stems from a lawsuit filed by the gay rights organization, the Log Cabin Republicans, against the Department of Justice. The rights group last year persuaded a lower court judge to declare the ban unconstitutional.

The lawsuit that went to trial last year put the Obama administration in the awkward position of defending a policy it opposes.

DOJ attorneys have said they are defending the policy in court as they do with any law that is being challenged. They also have said the issue should be decided by Congress and not the courts.

Astronauts Begin Space Station Stockpiling

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The International Space Station got a year's worth of groceries in a giant shopping cart Monday, courtesy of the astronauts on NASA's final shuttle flight.

Astronauts Sandra Magnus and Douglas Hurley used the space station's hulking robot arm to hoist the bus-size container out of Atlantis' payload bay and attach it to the orbiting outpost.

The canister — 21 feet long and 15 feet across — is jammed with nearly 5 tons of household goods, enough to keep the 245-mile-high station and its inhabitants going for another year. Food alone accounted for more than 1 ton. Clothes also were stuffed inside the Italian-built cylinder, named Raffaello, as well as spare parts for the station.

"Take care and let us know if we can do anything from down here," Italian astronaut Paolo Nespoli, a former space station resident, radioed from the European Space Agency's control center in Germany.

"Ciao, buddy," space station astronaut Michael Fossum replied.

Betty Ford's Funeral Set For Today In Calif.

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Former first lady Betty Ford, always known for her take charge attitude, chose the people who will eulogize her and the subjects they would discuss, focusing on the power of friendship to mend political differences even in these hyper-partisan times.

Ford, who died on Friday at 93, chose former first lady Rosalynn Carter and journalist Cokie Roberts from the political realm and a former director of her Betty Ford Center to address her passion for helping others overcome substance and alcohol abuse.

First lady Michelle Obama will also be attending along with former first ladies, Nancy Reagan and Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Roberts, a commentator on National Public Radio and member of a noted political family, said Ford asked her five years ago to talk about a time in Washington when Democrats and Republicans were friends

and partisan politics did not paralyze government.

Ford's instructions for her eulogy pointed to the strong friendship that developed when her husband, Republican Gerald R. Ford, was House minority leader and Roberts' father, Democratic Congressman Hale Boggs, was majority leader.

Another speaker at Tuesday's funeral in Palm Desert who is symbolic of the bipartisan past will be Mrs. Carter. She and President Jimmy Carter became close friends with the Fords after Carter defeated Gerald Ford for the presidency in 1976.

Carter, the former president, spoke of their friendship at President Ford's funeral in 2007.

Heat Wave Grips South, Midwest

BY JAMIE STENGLE
Associated Press

DALLAS — The temperature setting is stuck on broil across a swath of the Midwest and South, with Dallas and Oklahoma City sweltering through 100-degree heat for at least 10 days in a row.

Forecasters warned on Monday that the extreme heat could continue for most of the week and perhaps beyond. At the same time, many people won't be able to cool off by taking a dip: Swimming pools in some cities have closed because of budget cuts.

Heat advisories and excessive-heat warnings were issued Monday for 17 states in the Midwest and South. For Tuesday, the National Weather Service issued heat advisories for much of the East Coast, from Georgia to Connecticut, where temperatures are expected in the upper 90s but will feel as hot as 105 because of the humidity.

"It says a lot when you are dealing with such an expansive area of heat alerts," said National Weather Service spokesman Chris Vaccaro.

Hutchinson, Kan., had reached 103 by Monday afternoon after hitting a scorching 112 on Sunday. (Records haven't been kept there long enough to tell if it was a new high for the date.) The mercury hit 99 in Joplin, Mo., by the afternoon after topping out on Sunday at 106, breaking the record of 104 for the date, set in 1980.

Oklahoma City has hit 100 degrees or higher — 110 on Saturday — every day since June 29, including Monday, making it 13 in a row. The record there is 22 consecutive days of 100 degree-plus weather, set in 1936.



CHRIS WALKER/CHICAGO TRIBUNE/MCT
The heat wave cooking parts of the Midwest is also spawning strong weather. Here, residents of the Pine Grove apartments survey the damage after a windstorm tore the roof from two buildings in their complex Monday in Waukegan, Ill.

Dallas recorded its 10th-straight day of 100-degree weather Monday. The city hit 100 for nearly three straight weeks as recently as 2006, and the National Weather Service issued a heat advisory Monday afternoon for the Dallas-Fort Worth area for the first time since June 18. The advisory will remain in effect until Wednesday night.

In 1980, the Dallas-Fort Worth area endured 42 days in a row of 100-degree-and-over heat.

Triple-digit highs are expected through the weekend in Dallas, and there is little chance of rain to cool things down.

"It's breaking daily records, but when you're talking about a record string of days — we're not there yet," Vaccaro said. "We're in the midst of a heat wave that's not over yet."

On Monday, 87-year-old R.F. Lanham was taking the heat in stride as he picked weeds in his

shaded front yard in Dallas. "I've seen a lot of hot summers," he said.

As 40-year-old Sally Smith loaded two of her children into her minivan as she left a spin class at a Dallas YMCA, she said that even though she had lived in Texas for 18 years, the hot weather was hard to get used to.

"You feel like your skin is baking," the Michigan native said.

In Fort Worth, all of the city's pools are closed because of budget cuts. Through a partnership with the YMCA, Fort Worth residents can swim at four of its pools for two hours a day without a membership.

Authorities said a 51-year-old man suffered heat stroke and died Sunday because his mobile home in Granite City, Ill., had no working air conditioner. His body temperature was 104 when he arrived at the hospital.

In Tahlequah, Okla., 56-year-

old David Vaughan, who works construction at water treatment plants, said he was using survival skills he learned while working in Kuwait.

"In Kuwait, we had a saying: Walk slow and drink a lot of water," he said.

In El Paso, Texas, 67-year-old Jesus Franco was the grateful recipient of a fan from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Franco, who is blind, said that he had a small air conditioning unit installed in his home last week, but even then, "at night it gets so hot you can't sleep."

As the stream of air cooled his shirtless torso Monday, he said, "This is much nicer."

Felix Cabrera, an employee of the agency giving out the fans, said: "With so many people unemployed and the population getting older, we are getting more calls."

In New Orleans, the heat was, as usual, heavy and suffocating — but just under 95 degrees, cool enough to allow the mule-drawn carriages to continue riding through the French Quarter. When the mercury hits 95, tourist guides are prohibited from working their mules.

Lorna Taylor, a guide and horse trainer, kept a close eye on her mule, Elvis. She threw snacks into his trough to force him to dunk his head in the water. But she wasn't worried.

"Mules are desert-dwellers," she said, sweat glistening on her brow. "So this is a walk in the park."

Associated Press writers Paul J. Weber in San Antonio, Jim Suhr in Granite City, Ill., Cain Burdeau in New Orleans, Justin Juozapavicius in Tahlequah, Okla., and Juan Carlos Llorca in El Paso contributed to this report.

Ford Endorses Ban On Phone Use While Driving

BY AARON KESSLER
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WASHINGTON — Ford has come out in support of congressional legislation that would institute a nationwide ban on motorists using hand-held cellphones and other mobile devices while driving.

Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y., introduced the Safe Drivers Act of 2011 on June 23. The proposed legislation would direct the Department of Transportation to set a national standard prohibiting such use of mobile devices, except in certain emergencies.

Ford is the first automaker to publicly support the bill.

"Ford endorses Rep. McCarthy's legislation because it represents a practical, common-sense approach to a national problem," said Pete Lawson, Ford's vice president of government affairs, in a statement Monday. "Distracted driving is an important issue, and that's why

Ford became the first automaker to support proposed legislation banning hand-held texting while driving in 2009 and why we are proud to support Rep. McCarthy's legislation that will ban using hand-held devices while driving."

Devices that allow hands-free use of a cellphone would be permitted under McCarthy's legislation.

But the Department of Transportation would also be directed to study whether use of mobile phones or other devices could be dangerous even when operated hands-free. A finding that such "cognitive distraction" poses a safety risk could put a damper on in-vehicle infotainment technologies and hands-free phone integration that have become popular with automakers, including Ford.

Ford's Lawson said that the company believed hands-free technology was an appropriate solution, citing research showing that "drawing drivers' eyes away from the road — whether text-messaging, manually dialing a cellphone, or reading maps —

substantially increases the risk of an accident or near misses."

"Ford believes hands-free, voice-activated technology significantly reduces that risk by allowing drivers to keep their hands on the wheel and eyes on the road," Lawson said.

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, July 15th
4:00-6:00 p.m. Team Registration & Check-in
4:30-5:45 p.m. Survivor Registration & Check-in
5:00 p.m. Survivor Reception & Meal
5:45 p.m. Survivor Photo
5:00-7:00 p.m. Community Dinner
5:00-9:00 p.m. Luminaria's Available
5:00-9:30 p.m. Relay Store Open
6:00 p.m. OPENING CEREMONIES/SURVIVOR'S LAP
6:00-10:00 p.m. Silent Auction
7:00 p.m. Honorary Survivor Chair/Drawing
7:15 p.m. Entertainment/Academy of Dance
8:00 p.m. Team Introductions
9:30 p.m. (dusk) Luminaria Ceremony
10:00 p.m. Community Raffle Drawings/Silent Auction Ends
11:30-4:00 a.m. Big Kahuna Games & Overnight Entertainment

Saturday, July 16th
5:00 a.m.-6:30 a.m. Community Breakfast sponsored by McDonald's
5:30 a.m. Closing Ceremony/Fight Back Ceremony & Awards
6:00 a.m. Last Lap led by Survivors

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