

NATION/WORLD DIGEST

New BP Gulf Spill Cleanup Head Says Job Is To Listen

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The man taking over the Gulf oil spill response from BP's embattled CEO says he's concerned Americans are rushing to judgment. BP managing director Bob Dudley said Wednesday that BP has made information about its operations available that no other company would have provided. It was leasing the Deepwater Horizon rig when an explosion April 20 set off the worst offshore spill in U.S. history. Dudley on Wednesday took charge of the new Gulf Coast Restoration Organization, which is in charge of cleaning up the mess. He says he is confident that once an investigation is finished, BP will not be the only company found responsible for the disaster. In the meantime, he says his job is to assure people that BP is in the cleanup effort for the long term and to listen carefully to their concerns.

Stem Cells Can Reverse Blindness Caused By Burns

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Italian doctors have restored sight to dozens of people blinded or injured by chemical burns using the patients' own stem cells. The treatment was successful in 82 out of 107 cases. Researchers took stem cells from the patient's healthy eye, grew them in the lab and placed them into the damaged eye. One man whose eyes were damaged more than 50 years ago now has near-normal vision. The research involved patients with chemical burns. The same technique doesn't work for people with macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness. The study was released online Wednesday by the New England Journal of Medicine.

Ex-Detroit Mayor Indicted On Federal Fraud Charges

DETROIT (AP) — Former Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick is in trouble with the law again. Kilpatrick was indicted Wednesday on federal fraud and tax charges. Federal prosecutors say the alleged scheme is related to the Kilpatrick Civic Fund, which is a tax-exempt fund that was supposed to pay for voter education. Instead, Kilpatrick is accused of using it as a slush fund to take cash payments for himself, friends and relatives. Prosecutors accuse him of failing to report at least \$640,000 in taxable income between 2003 and 2008, which includes money and private jet flights. Kilpatrick is already in prison. A Wayne County judge sentenced him in May to up to five years in prison for violating probation stemming from his conviction for lying under oath about an affair.

Bin Laden Hunter On His Way Back To United States

DENVER (AP) — An American on a solo mission to hunt down Osama bin Laden is on his way back to the United States. Gary Faulkner has been detained since June 13 after authorities found him in the woods of northern Pakistan with a pistol, a sword and night-vision equipment. His brother says Faulkner left Pakistan early Wednesday and will arrive in Denver later in the day. Faulkner is a construction worker who sold his tools to finance six trips on what relatives have called a Rambo-type mission to kill or capture bin Laden. Scott Faulkner says he spoke to his brother briefly Tuesday and he reported being treated well in Pakistan. By the excitement in his brother's voice, Scott Faulkner thinks his brother came close to finding bin Laden.

UN: Global Drug Use Shifting To Synthetic Drugs

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United Nations is reporting that global drug use is shifting with consumption moving toward new narcotics and markets. In an annual report released in Washington on Wednesday, the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime said that opium production in Afghanistan and coca production in the Andes is declining while heroin and cocaine use has stabilized in developed countries. At the same time, the report found signs of increasing illicit drug use in developing nations. The U.N. also says that abuse of stimulants and prescription drugs is up worldwide. It says the use of synthetic drugs exceeds opiates and cocaine combined.

New Home Sales Plunge 33 Percent With Tax Credits Gone

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sales of new homes collapsed last month, sinking 33 percent to the lowest level on record as potential buyers stopped shopping for homes once they could no longer get government incentives. The Commerce Department says new home sales fell in May from a month earlier to a seasonally adjusted annual sales pace of 300,000. That was the slowest sales pace on records dating back to 1963. It indicates that buyers left the market as federal tax credits of up to \$8,000 expired at the end of April. Economists surveyed by Thomson Reuters had expected a May sales pace of 410,000. April's sales pace was revised downward to 446,000.

Blago Lawyers Seek Summaries Of Obama Interviews

CHICAGO (AP) — Attorneys for ousted Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich want to see the FBI's summaries of interviews agents conducted with President Barack Obama. After court adjourned Wednesday, Blagojevich's lawyers filed a motion asking for the summaries, saying the request was prompted by testimony from Blagojevich's former chief of staff John Harris and tapes played in court. They said the tapes and the testimony raise the issue of Obama's "direct knowledge and communication with emissaries and others" about who would succeed him in the Senate. They said there would be no way to conduct a meaningful cross-examination of Harris without the summaries. Blagojevich has pleaded not guilty to charges including scheming to sell or trade the Senate seat and racketeering.

Hurricane Celia Strengthens To Category Two Storm

MIAMI (AP) — Hurricane Celia has strengthened a bit in the Pacific. According to the National Hurricane Center in Miami, the storm's maximum sustained winds increased Wednesday to near 115 mph (185 kph) with some additional strengthening possible. It's a Category 2 storm. Celia is located about 735 miles (1,180 kilometers) south of the southern tip of Mexico's Baja California peninsula and is heading west — farther out to sea — at about 13 mph (20 kph). Meanwhile, Tropical Storm Darby is gaining strength in the Pacific south of Mexico. It's maximum sustained winds have increased to about 65 mph (100 kph) with additional strengthening forecast. Darby is located about 295 miles (475 kilometers) south of Salina Cruz, Mexico, and is moving west-northwest near 12 mph (19 kph).

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Judge Who Nixed Drill Ban Has Oil Investments

BY CURT ANDERSON AND MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
Associated Press Writers

NEW ORLEANS — The Louisiana judge who struck down the Obama administration's six-month ban on deepwater oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico has reported extensive investments in the oil and gas industry, according to financial disclosure reports. He's also a new member of a secret national security court. U.S. District Judge Martin Feldman, a 1983 appointee of President Ronald Reagan, reported owning less than \$15,000 in stock in 2008 in Transocean Ltd., the company that owned the sunken Deepwater Horizon drilling rig. Feldman overturned the ban Tuesday, saying the government simply assumed that because one rig exploded, the others pose an imminent danger, too. The White House promised an immediate appeal. The Interior Department had imposed the moratori-

um last month in the wake of the BP disaster, halting approval of any new permits for deepwater projects and suspending drilling on 33 exploratory wells. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said in a statement late Tuesday that within the next few days he would issue a new order imposing a moratorium that eliminates any doubt it is needed and appropriate. BP's new point man for the oil spill wouldn't say Wednesday if the company would resume deepwater drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. Asked about it Wednesday on NBC's "Today" show, BP managing director Bob Dudley said they will "step back" from the issue while they investigate the rig explosion. Also Wednesday, BP said Dudley has been appointed to head the new Gulf Coast Restoration Organization, which is in charge of cleaning up the oil spill. Several companies that ferry people and supplies and provide other services to offshore rigs argued that the

moratorium was arbitrarily imposed after the April 20 explosion that killed 11 workers and blew out a well 5,000 feet underwater. It has spewed anywhere from 67 million to 127 million gallons of oil. Feldman's 2008 financial disclosure report — the most recent available — also showed investments in Ocean Energy, a Houston-based company, as well as Quicksilver Resources, Prospect Energy, Peabody Energy, Halliburton, Pengrowth Energy Trust, Atlas Energy Resources, Parker Drilling and others. Halliburton was also involved in the doomed Deepwater Horizon project. Feldman did not respond to requests for comment and to clarify whether he still holds some or all of these investments. He's one of many federal judges across the Gulf Coast region who have had money in oil and gas. Several have disqualified themselves from hearing spill-related lawsuits and others have sold their holdings so they can provide over some of the 200-plus cases.

WAR

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sonal insult." Flanked by Vice President Joe Biden, Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in the Rose Garden, he said: "War is bigger than any one man or woman, whether a private, a general, or a president." He urged the Senate to confirm Petraeus swiftly and emphasized the

Afghanistan strategy he announced in December was not shifting with McChrystal's departure. "This is a change in personnel but it is not a change in policy," Obama said. The president delivered the same message in a phone call to Afghan President Hamid Karzai, the White House said, and Karzai told Obama he would work toward a smooth transition. As Obama was speaking in the Rose Garden, McChrystal released a statement saying that he resigned out of "a desire to see the mission succeed"

and expressing support for the war strategy. With lawmakers of both parties praising the choice of Petraeus, the White House is confident he will be confirmed before Congress adjourns at the end of next week. Obama hit several grace notes about McChrystal and his service after their meeting, saying he made the decision to sack him "with considerable regret." And yet, he said the job in Afghanistan cannot be done now under McChrystal's leadership, asserting that the critical remarks from the general and his inner

circle in *Rolling Stone* displayed conduct that doesn't live up to the standards for a command-level officer. "I welcome debate among my team, but I won't tolerate division," Obama said. He had delivered that same message — that there must be no more backbiting — to his full war cabinet in a Situation Room session, said a senior administration official. Obama seemed to suggest that McChrystal's military career is over, saying the nation should be grateful "for his remarkable career in uniform" as if that has drawn to a close.

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