

### New Englanders Deal With Tornado Aftermath

MONSON, Mass. (AP) — The sight of flattened homes, peeled-off roofs and the toppled steeple of a 140-year-old church stunned New Englanders after deadly tornadoes swept through Massachusetts, striking an area of the country that rarely sees such severe twisters.

The storms, which came with fair warning but still shocked with their intensity, killed at least three people, injured about 200 and wreaked damage in a string of 18 cities and villages across central and western Massachusetts.

Tornadoes are not unheard of in New England — the downtown of Connecticut's largest city was devastated by one last June — so many people heeded warnings. That didn't guarantee their survival; among the dead was a mother who shielded her teenage daughter as they huddled in a bathtub.

But in many cases, doing the right thing — quickly — helped save lives.

Karen Irla, 50, was leaving Adams Hometown Market in the picturesque village of Monson when she heard children on their bicycles yelling, "Look at that tornado!"

### Christie Reimburses State For Helicopter Trips

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — After a firestorm of criticism, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie made an about-face Thursday, reimbursing the state for his personal use of a state police helicopter because he said the story had become a distraction from the real problems facing the state.

Remaining unapologetic about his use of the helicopter to attend two of his son's baseball games and a political dinner with GOP campaign contributors from Iowa, Christie said that he has reimbursed the state about \$2,100 and asked the state Republican Party to pay about \$1,200 for his trip to see the donors.

Christie said of the two baseball game trips that he was just trying to balance his role as governor and as a father.

"I'm governor 24-7 ... but I am also a father. And the fact of the matter is sometime when you are a governor, you do not control your schedule," he said at a bill signing ceremony in Denville.

Christie's reversal came a day after a spokesman said the governor would not make a reimbursement, defending the trips as appropriate. On Thursday, Christie said state police told him he wasn't required to reimburse the state for use of the helicopter, but told reporters, "I also understand this is a really fun media story for all of you."

### Hundreds Of Civilian Casualties In Sudan

JUBA, Sudan (AP) — Southern Sudan soldiers attacking a rival ethnic group fired indiscriminately on unarmed men, women and children at a remote Nile River village, killing or wounding hundreds of civilians, according to witness accounts in a confidential U.N. report.

A U.N. team that traveled to the village 11 days after the April 23 killings saw more than two dozen corpses and said grass-roofed mud huts clearly contained many more bodies, but the toll of 254 dead civilians from a local official has not been independently verified.

The three U.N. reports obtained by The Associated Press are the first accounts of mass civilian casualties in the southern village of Kaldak caused by soldiers from Southern Sudan. One report was labeled "Confidential & Sensitive Information," another was "UN RESTRICTED," and the third had no apparent classification.

The Texas-sized south voted in January to secede from Sudan and becomes independent in July. It has been strongly supported by the U.S. and other Western nations.

While the Khartoum-based Sudanese government has been vilified for carrying out genocide in Darfur and for invading Abyei — a central region contested by the north and south — last month, the reports obtained by AP raise serious questions about human rights abuses carried out by southern forces, known as the Sudan People's Liberation Army, and about how much control their leaders have over them.

### Man, 73, Opens Fire In Arizona, Killing 5

YUMA, Ariz. (AP) — A 73-year-old man opened fire Thursday in southern Arizona, killing five people and wounding one other before fatally shooting himself, authorities said. Yuma police identified the suspected shooter as Carey Hal Dyess of Yuma.

The timeline of events wasn't immediately clear, but police said they responded to the first call at about 9:30 a.m. and found Dyess dead two hours later.

One of the victims, an adult male, was killed inside a business in the downtown Yuma area, investigators said.

The shooting forced officials block off a city street and lock down the nearby Yuma County Courthouse and some area schools. No one was injured at the courthouse or schools, and the buildings were later reopened.

### Sex Offender Will Spend Rest Of Life In Prison

PLACERVILLE, Calif. (AP) — Jaycee Dugard refused to "waste another second" in the presence of the married couple she said stole her life. She didn't want to be in a northern California courtroom Thursday as 60-year-old Phillip Garrido, the serial sex offender who kidnapped, raped and held her captive for 18 years, was ordered to spend the rest of his life in prison and his wife, Nancy, 55, was given a decades-long sentence.

The feelings the 31-year-old victim had never been able to express while she was held prisoner did make it into court.

"I chose not to be here today because I refuse to waste another second of my life in your presence," Dugard said in a statement read aloud by her mother, the first public comments about her experience since police found her 22 months ago. "As I think of all of those years I am angry because you stole my life and that of my family."

"Everything you have ever done to me has been wrong and someday I hope you can see that," she wrote, directing her words to Phillip Garrido. "I hated every second of everyday of 18 years because of you and the sexual perversion you forced on me."

### Sony Probing Claim Hackers Stole Information

LONDON (AP) — Sony Pictures said Thursday it is investigating a statement from hackers claiming to have stolen more than 1 million pieces of user information.

A group of hackers calling itself LulzSec said it has compromised users' personal information, including passwords, email addresses, phone numbers, home addresses, dates of birth, and all Sony opt-in data associated with their accounts.

Sony Pictures, a subsidiary of Sony Corporation of America, said Thursday it is aware of the LulzSec statement and looking into it.

The data, carried in a plain text file posted to the hacking group's site, appeared to be at least partially genuine. The Associated Press called a number listed by LulzSec as belonging to 84-year-old Mary Tanning, a resident of Minnesota. Tanning picked up the phone, and confirmed the rest of the details listed by LulzSec — including her password, which she said she was changing.

# Romney Opens Presidential Bid

BY PHILIP ELLIOTT AND HOLLY RAMER  
Associated Press

STRATHAM, N.H. — Just as Mitt Romney declared he's in, it's suddenly looking like he might have more big-name competition for the Republican presidential nomination.

While Romney made his candidacy official in New Hampshire on Thursday, political stars Sarah Palin and Rudy Giuliani caused a stir of their own with visits to the first-in-the-nation primary state. Both made sure to assuage the health care law approved while Romney was governor of neighboring Massachusetts.

And rumbblings about Texas Gov. Rick Perry, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and Rep. Michele Bachmann of Minnesota further challenged Romney's standing as the closest thing the GOP has to a front-runner to take on President Barack Obama in November 2012. Bachmann plans to take part in a presidential debate in New Hampshire on June 13, an aide said Thursday.

Unswayed by possible competitors, Romney declared to cheers on a sunny farm in southern New Hampshire, "I'm Mitt Romney and I believe in America. And I'm running for president of the United States."

The former governor and business executive aggressively challenged Democratic President Obama while trying to pitch himself to the coalition that makes up the modern GOP: fiscal conservatives, social conservatives, evangelicals and libertarians. Romney included nods to all as he sought to make himself the candidate with the broadest appeal and best shot at sending Obama home to Chicago as a one-term president.

"It breaks my heart to see what is happen-

ing to this great country," Romney said. "No, Mr. President, you had your chance."

Romney, who lost the GOP nomination to John McCain in 2008, hopes it's now his turn. He comes to a Republican presidential contest that lacks a true front-runner and could be unsettled with new names. Repeated polls show party members unimpressed with or indifferent to the declared candidates.

Romney's strengths are substantial: He's well known, and he's an experienced campaigner. He has a personal fortune and an existing network of donors. He has a successful businessman's record and knows the logistics of a national campaign.

But he must confront his own record of changing positions on social issues including abortion and gay rights, shifts that have left conservatives questioning his sincerity. He also has struggled to allay some skepticism of his Mormon faith.

On top of that, Romney championed a health care law enacted in Massachusetts that's similar to Obama's national health overhaul, which conservatives despise.

His rivals, giving him unwelcome company in New Hampshire, weren't about to let that go.

"The reality is that Obamacare and Romneycare are almost exactly the same," Giuliani said in North Conway. "It's not very helpful trying to distinguish them. I would think the best way to handle it is to say, it was a terrible mistake and if I could do it over again, I wouldn't do it."

Palin, too, criticized Romney for the health care law.

"In my opinion any mandate coming from government is not a good thing, so obviously ... there will be more explanation coming

from former Gov. Romney on his support for government mandates," Palin said in Boston, where Romney is basing his campaign.

Romney nodded to the challenges. "If I ran through all my mistakes, Ann would love it, and you'd be here all night," Romney said with a smiling reference to his wife, who was at his side. He called for repeal of the Democrats' national plan but did not explicitly acknowledge his own hurdle.

In recent weeks, the still-forming GOP field has become less certain. Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee took themselves out of the race before getting in. Others, such as former Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, are set to start their campaigns in earnest.

Giuliani said he hasn't decided yet if he will run again — like Romney he fell short in 2008 — and expects to make up his mind by the end of the summer.

But he certainly sounded like a candidate, telling reporters that the nation is being led in the wrong direction by Obama.

"He's been in office a very long time now, and his results on the economy have been abysmal," Giuliani said. "His only answer to it has been, 'Oh, I inherited this.' Well, my goodness, he's been in office long enough now, so that whatever he inherited, he should've straightened out by now."

Palin, her party's 2008 vice presidential nominee, arrived in New Hampshire for appearances that highlighted her potential to upend the race should she run. Before attending a clambake in Seabrook, Palin gave no hints when she might make — or share — a decision.

# WHO Says Europe E. Coli Is New; CDC Not Sure

BY MARIA CHENG  
Associated Press

LONDON — A super-toxic bug is causing the frightening food poisoning outbreak in Europe that has sickened at least 1,600 people and killed 18, researchers and global health officials said Thursday.

The new E. coli strain that is believed to have contaminated salad vegetables was analyzed by Chinese and German scientists. It contains several genes that cause antibiotic resistance and is similar to a strain that causes serious diarrhea and is found in the Central African Republic, according to a statement from the Shenzhen, China-based laboratory, BGL. Those scientists were working together with the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf.

"This is a unique strain that has never been isolated from patients before," Hilde Kruse, a food safety expert at the World Health Organization, told The Associated Press. The new strain has "various characteristics that make it more virulent and toxin-producing" than the many E. coli strains people naturally carry in their intestines.

Preliminary genetic sequencing suggests the strain is a never before seen combination of two different E. coli bacteria, with aggressive genes that could explain why the outbreak appears to be so massive and dangerous, the agency said.

However, Dr. Robert Tauxe, a foodborne disease expert at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, questioned whether the strain is entirely new and said it had previously caused a single case in Korea. He said genetic fingerprints may vary a little but that "this strain is rare enough that a lot of people haven't heard of it."

Researchers have so far been unable to pinpoint the food source of the illness, which has now spread to at least 10 European countries and fanned uncertainty about eating tomatoes, cucumbers and lettuce. The germ has caused 499 to develop a kidney failure complication. Germany is hardest hit.

Fearful of the outbreak spreading east to Russia, the country extended a ban on vegetables to the entire European Union from just Germany and Spain, a move the bloc quickly called disproportionate.

Kruse said it's not uncommon for bacteria to continually mutate, evolving and swapping genes. It is difficult to explain where the new strain came from, she said, but strains of bacteria from both humans and animals easily trade genes, similar to how animal viruses like Ebola sometimes jump into humans.

"One should think of an animal source," Kruse said. "Many animals are hosts of various types of toxin-producing E. coli." Some scientists suspect the deadly E. coli might have originated in contaminated manure used to fertilize vegetables.

Previous E. coli outbreaks have mainly hit children and the elderly, but the European outbreak is disproportionately affecting adults, especially women. Kruse said there might be something particular about the bacteria strain that makes it more dangerous for adults.

But she cautioned that since people with milder cases probably aren't seeking medical help, officials don't know just how big the outbreak is. "It's hard to say how virulent (this new E. coli strain) is because we just don't know the real number of people affected."

Nearly all the sick people either live in Germany or recently traveled there. British officials announced four new cases, including three Britons who recently visited Germany and a German person on holiday in England.

The WHO recommends that to avoid food-borne illnesses people wash their hands before eating or cooking food, separating raw and cooked meat from other foods, thoroughly cooking food, and washing fruits and vegetables, especially if eaten raw. Experts also recommend peeling raw fruits and vegetables if possible.

Russia had earlier this week banned fresh imports from Spain and Germany, but it expanded the ban Thursday to include the entire EU. The United Arab Emirates issued a temporary ban on cucumbers from Spain, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands.

Lyubov Voropayeva, spokeswoman for the Russian Agency for the Supervision of Consumer Rights, told the AP the Russian ban has been imposed immediately and indefinitely. No fatalities or infections have yet been reported in Russia.

# Silence, Vagueness From Democrats On Weiner Photo

BY ANDREW MIGA AND HENRY C. JACKSON  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Publicly silent, fellow Democrats privately seethed Thursday over the distraction and furor surrounding the lewd photo sent from Rep. Anthony Weiner's Twitter account, even as he declared he was finished talking about it and wanted to move on.

Weiner's one-day, pun-laden media blitz a day earlier had only raised more questions about the embarrassing flap when he conceded he wasn't sure whether the waist-down photo of a man's bulging underpants was of him or not. His refusal to involve law enforcement because he said as a member of Congress he shouldn't get special treatment — instead turning the issue over to a private security company he hired — raised rather than answered questions.

The uproar began over the weekend when conservative activist Andrew Breitbart reported on his website that Weiner had sent the photo to a 21-year-old female college student in Seattle who was one of the New York congressman's Twitter followers. Weiner has insisted he did not send the photo. He says he saw it online before deleting it.

Though generally mum in public, Democrats privately fumed at the forced detour in their arguments about Medicare and spending, leaving the generally well-liked seven-term congressman from Brooklyn and Queens largely to fend for himself for a third day in a row. Most Republicans seemed content to let the controversy simmer.

A scene on the House floor Wednesday afternoon seemed to highlight the situation. As newly elected New York Rep. Kathy Hochul was sworn in — after an upset, special-election victory Democrats considered a sign of their ability to communicate their differences with Republicans on the future of Medicare — Weiner and the No. 2 House Democrat, Steny Hoyer were locked in a nearly 10 minute, animated conversation.

On Thursday, Weiner joined Democratic lawmakers at the White House where the caucus met with President Barack Obama. As they walked from buses on Pennsylvania Ave. Weiner's colleagues stonewalled when they were asked about their colleague.

"I will have nothing to say about that," said fellow New Yorker, Rep. Louise Slaughter. "I'm here to put people to work." "We're not distracted by that,"

said Rep. Rob Andrews, D-N.J.

The House's top Democrat, Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California, earlier told ABC News that she was "a late-comer to the issue" — one that cable TV and the Capitol press corps have been fixated on for most of the week.

Still, Pelosi added, "I have confidence in Anthony Weiner that if an investigation is in order that will take place."

Other top Democrats expressed a desire for the issue to disappear. Longtime Rep. John Conyers of Michigan said Weiner was a valuable member of the Democratic caucus, and he called the issue a distraction.

"The public mostly likes entertainment and excitement and that's what the Weiner issue provides," he said. "That's human nature."

Noting that the House was heading into a week-long break, Conyers said he hoped the issue soon "will not have the entertainment value that it currently

enjoys."

It seemed to be a bad week for politicians and their social media elsewhere, too. The Twitter account of the speaker of the Ohio House, William Batchelder, was hacked and phony comments were posted making it appear the Republican leader was championing liberal causes.

In New York, Weiner's constituents said they were disappointed.

Ian Fredericks in Queens' Kew Gardens said Weiner could end the controversy by being forthcoming. "He seems really reluctant to answer whether or not it's a picture of him," Fredericks said.

Evelyn Carson said her children brought the news to her attention after being on Twitter.

"That's an embarrassment for the children to see something like that, especially from a big-time figure," she said. Carson said she'd voted for Weiner but now regrets it.

It's the first of the month...

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