

Tearful Putin Claims Russian Election Victory

MOSCOW (AP) — Vladimir Putin scored a decisive victory in Russia's presidential election Sunday to return to the Kremlin and extend his hold on power for six more years. His eyes brimming with tears, he defiantly proclaimed to a sea of supporters that they had triumphed over opponents intent on "destroying Russia's statehood and usurping power."

Putin's win was never in doubt as many across the vast country still see him as a guarantor of stability and the defender of a strong Russia against a hostile world, an image he has carefully cultivated during 12 years in power.

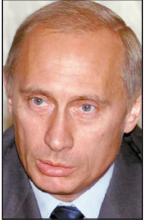
Accounts by independent observers of extensive vote-rigging, however, looked set to strengthen the resolve of opposition forces whose unprecedented protests in recent months have posed the first serious challenge to Putin's heavy-handed rule. Another huge demonstration was set for Monday evening in central Moscow.

Putin claimed victory Sunday night when fewer than a quarter of the votes had been counted. He spoke to a rally just outside the Kremlin walls of tens of thousands of supporters, many of them government workers or employees of state-owned companies who had been ordered to attend.

"I promised that we would win and we have won!" Putin shouted to the flag-waving crowd. "We have won in an open and honest struggle."

Putin, 59, said the election showed that "our people can easily distinguish a desire for renewal and revival from political provocations aimed at destroying Russia's statehood and usurping power."

He ended his speech with the triumphant declaration: "Glory to Russia!"



Putin

AG Holder To Address Targeted Killings

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Eric Holder is expected to outline the legal framework for the use of lethal force in targeted killings of Americans overseas in a major speech at Northwestern University law school, an Obama administration official said Sunday night.

Holder's speech Monday comes five months after the killing of U.S.-born al-Qaida cleric Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen in a drone attack.

The official said the attorney general plans to say that lethal force is legal under a Sept. 18, 2001, joint congressional resolution. The Authorization for Use of Military Force enacted a week after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks authorizes the use of all necessary force in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States.

The official said Holder also will address how the Obama administration reformed military commissions and how both the Obama and the George W. Bush administrations have successfully used civilian courts to convict and sentence terrorists. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the contents of the speech haven't been released.

Fed Judges Give Widely Disparate Sentences

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new study shows that federal judges are handing out widely disparate sentences for similar crimes 30 years after Congress tried to create fairer results, but the differences don't line up with the party of the president who appointed the judges, despite any impressions that Republicans or Democrats may be tougher or softer on crime.

Sentencing data from the past five years that was analyzed for The Associated Press by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse during this presidential election year show that sentences for the same types of crimes vary significantly between judges in the same courthouse. But the party of the president who picked a judge is not a good predictor of whether a judge will be tough or lenient on a defendant found guilty at trial.

The analysis showed the judges who meted out the harshest average sentences after trials for three of the most common types of crime — drugs, weapons and white-collar charges — were split evenly between the two parties, based on which president appointed them.

In the 10 court districts with the most drug case sentences after trial, Republican-appointed judges assigned stiffer average sentences in five districts, but Democratic appointees gave longer penalties in the other five. In weapons cases as well, the longest average sentences were issued by Democratic appointees in five districts and by Republican-appointed judges in the other five.

For white-collar crimes, only seven districts had at least 20 trials for judges from each party over the past five years, and the split was Democratic-appointees tougher in four and Republican ones in three.

'Lorax' Cleans Up At Box Office With \$70.7M

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Dr. Seuss' The Lorax" raked in all kinds of green, earning \$70.7 million in its first weekend to score the biggest box-office debut of the year by far.

The 3-D animated family film from Universal Pictures, featuring the voices of Danny DeVito, Zac Efron and Taylor Swift, is based on Seuss' cautionary fable about the importance of preserving the environment. Of its opening haul, \$5.4 million, or 8 percent, came from IMAX screens, which is on the high side for a family film.

Coming in second place with a strong debut of its own was the R-rated "Project X," about a trio of high school misfits who throw a raging party in hopes of becoming popular. The Warner Bros. comedy made about \$20.8 million, according to Sunday studio estimates.

"The Lorax" comes from the makers of "Despicable Me," — Illumination Entertainment, led by producer Christopher Meledandri — and director Chris Renaud. It actually had a bigger opening than that film, which debuted with \$56.4 million in July 2010. It also scored the biggest opening for a Dr. Seuss adaptation, topping the \$55.1 million that "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" made in 2000.

Before this, "The Vow" had the best debut of 2012 with \$41.2 million.

Israel

From Page 1

dience that his Republican rivals would probably distort his record. "There should not be a shred of doubt by now," Obama said. "When the chips are down, I have Israel's back."

The United States fears an Israeli strike on Iran would do little to derail its long-term nuclear weapons pursuit and, in the near term, would turn Iran into a victim. Many analysts believe an Israeli attack would result in a region-wide conflict, including Iranian attacks on American troops in the Persian Gulf.

Obama is also worried about gas prices, a chief concern to American voters this election year.

"I would ask that we all remember the weightiness of these issues, the stakes involved for Israel, for America, and for the world," Obama said. "Already, there is too much loose talk of war."

He summed up his approach by borrowing a line from a predecessor, Theodore Roosevelt: "Speak softly, but carry a big stick."

Israeli media focused on Obama's strong threats to use force if necessary.

Eytan Gilboa, an expert on U.S.-Israel relations at Bar Ilan University, said Obama's speech would make it more difficult for Israel to act alone. But he added: "Is this sufficient to assure Netanyahu? No, I don't think so."

Winter Storms

Indiana Baby Found In Field Dies

BY REBECCA YONKER AND TOM LOBIANCO
Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — An Indiana toddler found in a field after violent tornadoes died Sunday after being taken off life support, ending a hopeful tale for survivors in the Midwest and South picking through the storms' devastation.

Fifteen-month-old Angel Babcock of New Pekin, Ind., was found after her family's mobile home was destroyed in Friday's storms. Her father, mother and two siblings were killed.

When Angel arrived at Kosair Children's Hospital in Louisville Friday night, she was opening her eyes — a hopeful sign, chief nursing officer Cis Gruebbel said.

Things turned on Saturday, when the swelling in her brain didn't decrease, he said. As the day went on, her eyes ceased to move and she continued to deteriorate. There was no sign of brain activity.

Medical staff told the family there wasn't anything more they could do. With extended family gathered to say goodbye, the family made the decision to end life support on Sunday.

"Angel has been reunited with her parents," her grandfather, Jack Brough, said in a statement. "We want to thank God for all of you and for your thoughts and prayers. God will bring you and all of us out of this. This is what it will take. All should look to God."

The girl's death brings the overall toll from Friday's storms to 39 across five states. Rescuers were still going door-to-door in rural areas to rule out more victims. Another round of storms earlier last week killed 13 people in the Midwest and South, the latest in a string of severe-weather episodes ravaging the American heartland in the past year.

On Sunday, people gathered to worship, comb through piles of debris and learn what happened to loved ones and friends, often without modern technology to help.

Cellphone signals were hard to find, Internet was out and electricity indefinitely interrupted. In many cases, word-of-mouth conversations replaced text messages, Facebook status updates and phone calls.

"It's horrible. It's things you take for granted that aren't there anymore," said Jack Cleveland, 50, a Census Bureau worker from Henryville, Ind.

Randy Mattingly, a 24-year-old mechanic, said he and his Henryville neighbors passed on information by word-of-mouth to make sure people were OK: "It was like, 'Hey, did you talk to this guy?'" He said state police quickly set up two gathering points for adults and children, at the church and at a nearby community center.

At Sunday's mass at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Henryville, Father Steve Schafflein turned the church into an information exchange, asking the 100 or so in atten-



RON GARRISON/LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER/MCT

Josh Phillips and his dad, Jeff Phillips, take a break from searching the debris of what was Ronnie and Beverly Bowman's home that was destroyed by a tornado on Friday in Menifee County, Ky., along Opossum Hollow Road Saturday.

dance to stand up and share what they knew.

Lisa Smith, who has been Henryville's postmaster for six weeks, told people that they could pick up their mail in Scottsburg, about 10 miles north. She said she was most worried about people needing medication and she had been shaking boxes to see if they had pills inside with hopes of connecting them to their recipients.

A local insurance agent, Lyn Murphy-Carter, shared another story. The founder of her agency, 84-year-old Tom Murphy, had told her always to keep paper records. That proved valuable without access to computers. She collected about 1,000 claims Saturday alone, and was gathering handwritten claims from policyholders at church.

In West Liberty, Ky., about 85 miles east of Lexington, loss of technology led to a confusing and stressful aftermath for Doris Shuck, who was cleaning her house when the storm approached. She grabbed her laptop, cellphone and iPod and put them in a tote bag to bring down to the basement. The storms took her home, leaving only the basement and front porch. Huge piles of debris and mattresses were strewn in the back yard.

"I could hear the glass and hear the wood breaking. I just thought the house is going to fall on top of me," she said. She had scrapes and bruises.

After the storm passed, she received a text message from her mother, 70 miles away in Pre-

stonsburg, but couldn't reply.

"I was just trying to figure out what had happened and get my thoughts together and my phone beeped and I looked and it was from my mom. I couldn't answer it," Shuck said. She went to the hospital where she works, but there was no Internet access there, either.

She reunited with her husband and daughter at the hospital and left for Prestonsburg to let her mother know they were OK. But they didn't know her parents were on their way to West Liberty at the same time.

"We had no way to communicate that to each other. We're so used to our cell phones and instant messaging. We didn't have any of that."

Her parents asked a state fish and wildlife officer to go to their home. The officer eventually found Doris Shuck's name on a list at the hospital for people who were accounted for.

While it could be days before power and cell service are fully restored to the damaged areas, crews were making progress Sunday. In Indiana, about 2,800 homes were without power, down from 8,000 in the hours after the storms. But in some hard-hit areas, like Henryville, a substation and transmission lines need to be rebuilt, and that could take up to a week.

Almost 19,000 customers were without power in Kentucky, according to the state's Public Service Commission, and a few thousand more from municipal utilities and TVA, which the PSC does not track.

Limbaugh Comments Overshadow GOP Contest

BY STEVE PEOPLES AND KASIE HUNT
Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Intensifying debate over conservative social values — and Republican icon Rush Limbaugh — overshadowed the nation's economic concerns Sunday as the Republican presidential campaign hurtled toward Super Tuesday contests that could re-shape the nomination battle and shift the direction of the Grand Old Party.

Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum distanced themselves from Limbaugh, who boasts a huge conservative following and recently apologized for calling a Georgetown University law student a "slut" and a "prostitute" on his nationally syndicated radio program. The woman testified at a congressional hearing in favor of an Obama administration mandate that employee health plans include free contraceptive coverage. While religious institutions are exempt, their affiliates, such as hospitals and universities, were at first in-

cluded in the requirement. Under harsh criticism from conservatives, President Barack Obama later said the affiliates could opt out, but insurers must pay for the coverage.

The GOP framed the issue as one of religious liberty. But Obama's chief political strategist suggested the Limbaugh's reaction — and Republicans slow repudiation of his comments — would benefit Democrats in the general election this fall.

"I think what Rush Limbaugh said about that young woman was not only vile and degrading to her, but to women across the country," David Axelrod said on ABC's "This Week" Sunday morning.

While the contraception de-



bate raged on national television, Newt Gingrich predicted a strong performance Tuesday would resurrect his fading candidacy. Romney and Santorum spent Sunday racing across Georgia, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Ohio, four of the ten states to host elections on Super Tuesday, the biggest single voting day of the 2012 cycle.

Campaigning in Alaska, Ron Paul conceded he's a long shot.

"Do I believe I can win? Yes. Do I believe the chances are slim? Yes, I do," he said on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Super Tuesday's defining contest may be Ohio, where Santorum and Romney have devoted tremendous time and resources in recent weeks. Santorum's performance there could well define his fate — and Romney's — in the rollercoaster race going forward.

"This is a game of survival," Santorum said while campaigning Sunday in Memphis, Tenn.

Preparing for the worst, Romney's campaign began preparing for a possible loss in Ohio, where polls show the former Massachusetts governor locked in a dead heat with Santorum, a former senator from neighboring Pennsylvania.

"I don't think any state is a must-win," Romney adviser Eric Fehrnstrom said. "I think the only must-do on a candidate's check list is getting 1,144 delegates."

Romney has won four consecutive contests, including Saturday's Washington caucuses. His broad, well-disciplined organization virtually assures he'll collect more delegates than his opponents on Tuesday, in contrast with Santorum's looser group of supporters. Santorum and Gingrich did not collect enough signatures to qualify for the Virginia ballot, for example, and Santorum cannot win 18 of Ohio's 66 delegates for similar reasons.

SENIOR DAY
Tuesday at Schweser's
Seniors take an
EXTRA 30% OFF
on top of savings up to 80% OFF on
Alfred Dunner Coordinates Jewelry & Scarves
Giftware & Home Décor Handbags
Gift Bags & Cards Wallets & Watches
Power Value Sweaters Books
Coats and Dresses Kids items
55 or better qualifies for Senior discounts. 15% off on all other items!
THE BIGGEST SENIOR DISCOUNT OF THE YEAR!
TUESDAY
Schweser's
Fashions for Less!
Yankton Mall

Find out What The Buzz Is About...
2012
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8 9
15 16
22 23
29 30
MARCH
7
Coming...
www.ForkFly.com
PRESS&DAKOTAN
PLAIN TALK
ForkFly™