

NATION/WORLD DIGEST

U.S. Toll In Afghanistan Now Over 1,000 Dead

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — More U.S. military deaths in the last 10 months of the Afghan war than in the first five years of the conflict. More boots on the ground than in Iraq.

As the U.S. military death toll in the Afghan conflict reached the 1,000 mark, a fight that has become "Obama's war" now faces its greatest challenge — a high-risk campaign to win over a hostile population in the Taliban's southern heartland.

More casualties are expected when the campaign kicks into high gear this summer. The results may determine the outcome of a nearly nine-year conflict that has become the focus of America's fight against Islamist militancy.

The 1,000 U.S. military death occurred in a roadside bombing Friday — just before the Memorial Day weekend when America honors the dead in all its wars.

A NATO statement did not identify or give the nationality of the victim. U.S. spokesman Col. Wayne Shanks said the trooper was American — the 32nd U.S. war death this month by an Associated Press count.

Justice Dept. Initiates Immigration Meetings

PHOENIX (AP) — Justice Department officials told Arizona's attorney general and aides to the governor Friday that the federal government has serious reservations about the state's new immigration law.

Attorney General Terry Goddard said he urged them not to sue. "I told them we need solutions from Washington, not more lawsuits," the Democrat said.

The Justice Department initiated separate meetings by phone and face-to-face in Phoenix with Goddard and aides to Republican Gov. Jan Brewer to reach out to Arizona's leaders and elicit information from state officials regarding the Obama administration's concerns about the new law.

The strong message that the Justice Department representatives delivered at the private meetings — first with Goddard, then with Brewer's staff — left little doubt that the Obama administration is prepared to go to court if necessary in a bid to block the new law, which takes effect July 29.

Goddard said he noted that five privately filed lawsuits already are pending in federal court to challenge the law.

Train Derailment Kills At Least 71 In India

SARDIHA, India (AP) — Rescuers scoured the wreckage of a passenger express train Friday that derailed and collided with a cargo train in eastern India, killing at least 71 people and injuring hundreds. The government accused Maoist rebels of sabotaging the tracks.

As night fell, railway workers and paramilitary soldiers were using two cranes to lift and pry apart train cars in search of survivors from the Jnaneswari Express, which was heading from Calcutta to suburban Mumbai when it derailed about 1:30 a.m. Friday.

Railway officials said they expected the death toll to rise because bodies were still trapped between the engines of the two trains, which collided along a rural stretch of track near the small town of Sardiha, about 90 miles (150 kilometers) west of Calcutta in West Bengal state.

The area is a stronghold of India's Maoist rebels, known as Naxalites, who had called for a four-day general strike in the area starting Friday. The Naxalites have launched repeated and often-audacious attacks in recent months — despite government claims that it was launching its own crackdown.

Just 11 days ago, the rebels ambushed a bus in central India, killing 31 police officers and civilians. A few weeks before that, 76 soldiers were killed in a rebel ambush — the deadliest attack by the rebels against government forces in the 43-year insurgency. There also have been dozens of smaller attacks.

TV Star Coleman Dies After Brain Hemorrhage

PROVO, Utah (AP) — Gary Coleman, the adorable, pint-sized child star of the smash 1970s TV sitcom "Diff'rent Strokes" who spent the rest of his life struggling on Hollywood's D-list, died Friday after suffering a brain hemorrhage. He was 42.

Coleman was taken off life support and died with family and friends at his side, Utah Valley Regional Medical Center spokeswoman Janet Frank said.

He suffered the brain hemorrhage Wednesday at his Santaquin home, 55 miles south of Salt Lake City. Frank said Coleman was hospitalized because of "an accident" at the home, but she said she had no details on what the accident was.

Best remembered for "Diff'rent Strokes" character Arnold Jackson and his "Whatchu talkin' 'bout?" catchphrase, Coleman chafed at his permanent association with the show but also tried to capitalize on it through reality shows and other TV appearances. His adult life was marked with legal, financial and health troubles, suicide attempts and even a 2003 run for California governor.

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GULF OIL SPILL

Obama Visits, Examines Gulf Coast

Locals Mostly Unimpressed At Appearance Despite More Promises For Help

BY DARLENE SUPERVILLE
 AND JENNIFER LOVEN
 Associated Press Writers

GRAND ISLE, La. — Kneeling to pick up tar balls on an oil-fouled beach and listening to "heartbreaking stories" of loss, President Barack Obama personally confronted the spreading damage wrought by the crude gushing into the Gulf of Mexico — and the bitter anger that's rising onshore.

"What can he really do?" said Billy Ward, a developer who comes to his beach house here every weekend and, like many other locals, had little positive to say about Obama's trip to the beleaguered region on Friday. "If he wants to do something, let him get out there and pump some mud and cement into that hole. Just fix it. Help us."

BP PLC, even less popular here, kept up its efforts to "just fix it," using its "top kill" procedure to try to stop the deep oil well leak by pumping in heavy mud. If it doesn't work, something BP says will be known within a couple of days, Obama's own problems will only compound.

He said he understands people "want it made right" and that their frustration won't fade until the oil is stopped and cleaned up.

"It's an assault on our shores, on our people, on the regional economy and on communities like this one," the president said from this small barrier island town threatened by what is now established as the largest oil spill in American history. "People are watching their livelihoods wash up on the beach."

A BP drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico exploded on April 20, killing 11 workers and beginning to send millions of gallons of oil spewing into the water. That oil is now beginning to foul beaches, kill wildlife and cripple the tourism and fishing industries on which this area depends. With the crude still flowing freely, criticism has been increasingly aimed at Obama and his administration.

Amid concern that the environmental and economic disaster could also engulf his presi-



PATRICK KELLEY/US COAST GUARD/MCT

The mobile offshore drilling unit Q4000 holds position directly over the damaged Deepwater Horizon blowout preventer as crews work to plug the wellhead using a technique known as "topkill," May 26, 2010. The procedure is intended to stem the flow of oil and gas and ultimately kill the well by injecting heavy drilling fluids through the blow out preventer on the seabed, down into the well.

dency, Obama has stepped up his public appearances this week to demonstrate that he is engaged. He held a rare White House news conference on Thursday, focusing almost entirely on the spill. And Friday, he flew to the coast for an inspection tour and meetings that lasted about four hours — his second visit in the 39 days of the crisis.

He noted that all may not go well in such a massive, unprecedented undertaking. Mistakes are possible, Obama said. But a lack of urgency about plugging the leak and restoring the region is not, the president declared.

"There are not going to be silver bullets or a lot of perfect answers for some of the challenges that we face," he said in front of an incongruously pristine backdrop of sparkling blue water with dolphins, fish and seabirds frequently spotted. "But we're going to keep at

this every day."

Obama made an unqualified promise to coast residents reminiscent of previous presidents speaking after disasters — such as George W. Bush after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

"I'm here to tell you that you are not alone, you will not be abandoned, you will not be left behind," Obama said. "The media may get tired of the story, but we will not. We will be on your side and we will see this through."

With more than 20,000 people already working to contain and clean up the oil, the president announced he was tripling the manpower in places where the sticky mess has come ashore or is about to.

As for specific advice for beleaguered local residents and the concerned U.S. public, he pointed them to the White House website, www.whitehouse.gov, for guidance.

Consumers More Cautious About Spending In April

WASHINGTON (AP) — Consumers don't appear confident enough in the economy to open their wallets more freely.

Their spending stalled in April. Without stronger job creation and higher pay, people are less likely to up their spending in the months ahead and invigorate the recovery.

The flat level for consumer spending was the weakest showing in seven months, according to the Commerce Department report. Personal incomes rose 0.4 percent, in line with expectations but not fast enough to help generate real growth.

Falling gas prices and cheaper utility bills could make people

feel better about spending more over the summer. So could historically low mortgage rates. That would lead more people to refinance and leave them with more disposable income.

But Nigel Gault, an economist at IHS Global Insight, said employment will be key to supporting income growth in coming months.

"The consumer needs sustainable income support, so employment reports including next Friday's will be key signals of just how robust consumption will be over the rest of 2010," Gault said.

Economists are looking for 503,000 jobs to be added in May. That would be better than April's

290,000 increase, the biggest one-month rise in four years. The May surge is expected to include a sizable number of temporary census workers hired by the government.

Still, the April jobs report showed that 15.3 million people remain out of work. Economists say it will take at least five years for the economy to regain the nearly 8 million jobs wiped out during the recession.

In the mean time, more people are holding on to their money. The savings rate rose 3.6 percent in April.

People are feeling a need to rebuild savings and reduce their debt loads and this will dampen consumer spending in coming months, said Sal Guatieri, an economist at BMO Capital Markets. But this will be offset somewhat by rising employment gains.

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Clinic Closed Memorial Day, May 31st
 The Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. and ConvenientCare will both be closed on Memorial Day, Monday, May 31st so that our staff may enjoy the holiday with their families. Regular hours will resume on Tuesday, June 1st. Regular ConvenientCare hours are Monday-Friday, 5PM to 9PM and Saturday-Sunday, 12PM to 5PM.
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