

North Texas Walloped By Tornadoes, Six Dead

GRANBURY, Texas (AP) — Ten tornadoes touched down in several small communities in North Texas overnight, leaving at least six people dead, dozens injured and hundreds homeless. Emergency responders were still searching for missing people Thursday afternoon.

The National Weather Service gave a preliminary estimate of Wednesday night's violent system, saying a tornado in Granbury had wind speeds between 166 mph and 200 mph. Other tornadoes damaged nearby Cleburne and Millsap.

Granbury, about 40 miles southwest of Fort Worth, bore the brunt of the damage, as the exceptionally powerful tornado tore through two neighborhoods around 8 p.m. Wednesday.

Resident Elizabeth Tovar said fist-sized hail heralded the tornado's arrival and prompted her and her family to hide in their bathroom.

"We were all, like, hugging in the bathtub and that's when it started happening. I heard glass shattering and I knew my house was going," Tovar said, shaking her head. "We looked up and ... the whole ceiling was gone."

2nd Top IRS Official Announce Plans To Leave

WASHINGTON (AP) — A second top Internal Revenue Service official has announced plans to leave the agency amid the controversy over the targeting of tea party groups.

An internal IRS memo says Joseph Grant, commissioner of the agency's tax exempt and government entities division, will retire June 3. Grant joins Steven Miller, who was forced to resign as acting IRS commissioner on Wednesday.

As part of his duties, Grant oversaw the IRS division that targeted tea party groups for additional scrutiny when they applied for tax-exempt status.

Grant joined the IRS in 2005.

Court-Martial Case Set For Trial In Murder

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) — Sitting on a dirty straw mat on the parched ground of southern Afghanistan, Masooma sank deeper inside a giant black shawl. Hidden from view, her words burst forth as she told her side of what happened to her family sometime before dawn on March 11, 2012.

According to Masooma, an American soldier wearing a helmet equipped with a flashlight burst into her two-room mud home while everyone slept. He killed her husband, Dawood, punched her 7-year-old son and shoved a pistol into the mouth of his baby brother.

"We were asleep. He came in and he was shouting, saying something about Taliban, Taliban, and then he pulled my husband up. I screamed and screamed and said, 'We are not Taliban, we are not government. We are no one. Please don't hurt us,'" she said.

The soldier wasn't listening. He pointed his pistol at Masooma to quiet her and pushed her husband into the living room.

"My husband just looked back at me and said, 'I will be back.'" Seconds later she heard gunshots, she recalled, her voice cracking as she was momentarily unable to speak. Her husband was dead.

Witness Protection Terrorists Not On Watch List

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government has allowed terrorists into America's witness protection program and has failed to provide the names of some of them for the watch list that's used to keep dangerous people off airline flights, the Justice Department's inspector general says.

As a result of the department's failure to share information with the Terrorist Screening Center, some in the witness protection program who were on a "no-fly" list were allowed to travel on commercial flights, the department's watchdog said.

The FBI-managed screening center is the clearinghouse for information about known or suspected terrorists.

In a briefing for reporters Thursday, the Justice Department said it has remedied the problem with a restrictive travel policy that prohibits program participants with no-fly status from traveling on commercial flights. The department declined to say how many people in the program actually flew.

While people involved in terrorism cases have long been eligible for federal witness protection, the Justice Department wouldn't say how many have been in the program. The inspector general's report said it was "a small but significant number."

A.A. To Let Some Passengers Board Sooner

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — If you're traveling light, you can board earlier on American Airlines.

The airline said Thursday that people carrying just a personal item that fits under the seat — no rolling suitcases — will be allowed to board before most other passengers.

American said that the change will speed up the boarding process and allow flights to take off sooner, helping the airline improve its on-time performance.

Airlines have been seeing a buildup in boarding times since they began charging fees for checked baggage as more people fight for limited space in overhead bins.

American tested the new boarding procedure at several airports earlier this year and began applying it to all flights Thursday. Passengers carrying just a personal item — a purse, backpack or computer bag that will fit under the seat — will board right after Group 1 premium passengers and before boarding groups 2, 3 and 4.

Judge Lets Ariz. Immigrant License Policy Stand

PHOENIX (AP) — A judge has refused to halt Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer's policy denying driver's licenses for young immigrants who have gotten work permits and avoided deportation under an Obama administration policy.

The decision Thursday by U.S. District Judge David Campbell rejects the argument by immigrant rights advocates who say her policy is unconstitutional because it's trumped by federal law.

Last summer, the Obama administration took steps to shield thousands of young immigrants from deportation.

Arizona's refusal to view those in the deferral program as legal residents has become the most visible challenge to the program the president announced in June.

Brewer's lawyers asked for the lawsuit challenging her policy to be dismissed.

The judge dismissed one claim, but another remains alive.

Obama Acts, But Republicans Unsatisfied

BY JULIE PACE

AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama, seeking to regain his footing amid controversies hammering the White House, named a temporary chief for the scandal-marred Internal Revenue Service Thursday and pressed Congress to approve new security money to prevent another Benghazi-style terrorist attack.

The efforts did little to satisfy Republicans, who see the controversies as an opportunity to derail Obama's second-term agenda. House Speaker John Boehner suggested the White House had violated the public's trust, and he promised to "stop at nothing" to hold the administration accountable.

"Nothing dissolves the bonds between the people and their government like the arrogance of power here in Washington," Boehner said. "And that's what the American people are seeing today from the Obama administration — remarkable arrogance."

The targeting of conservative political groups by the IRS and new questions about the deadly attack on the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya, last year — along with the Justice Department's seizure of journalists' phone records — have consumed the White House for nearly a week. Of the three controversies, the president's advisers see the IRS matter as the most likely to linger. At least three congressional committees are planning investigations into the agency that touches the lives of nearly every American.

Obama, who was criticized by both opponents and allies for his measured initial response to the IRS targeting, vowed to ensure the agency acts "scrupulously and without even a hint of bias."

"I think we're going to be able to fix it," he declared during a joint news conference with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Soon afterward, Obama appointed senior budget official Danny Werfel to temporarily

run the IRS, one day after Acting Commissioner Steven Miller's forced resignation. The White House is expected to nominate a permanent commissioner later this year.

However, the president knocked down the prospect of appointing a special prosecutor to investigate the IRS, saying the congressional investigations and a separate Justice Department probe should be enough to nail down who was responsible for improperly targeting tea party groups when they applied for tax-exempt status.

Obama and Erdogan were questioned during a light but steady rain during Thursday's outdoor event. As the rain picked up, the president summoned a pair of Marine guards to provide umbrellas for Erdogan and himself, joking, "I've got a change of suits, but I don't know about our prime minister."

The news conference marked Obama's first comments on the government's widely criticized seizure of telephone records of reporters and editors of The Associated Press in an investigation of news leaks. The president spoke of the importance of striking a balance between "secrecy and the right to know" but said he would make no apologies for trying to protect classified information that could put Americans at risk.

"I've still got 60,000-plus troops in Afghanistan, and I've still got a whole bunch of intelligence officers around the world who are in risky situations," he said. "Part of my job is to make sure that we're protecting what they do, while still accommodating for the need for information."

The president said he continues to have confidence in Attorney General Eric Holder, who has been the target of intense criticism from lawmakers after the phone record subpoenas were made public.

The IRS and Justice Department controversies have coincided with a revival in the GOP-led investigations into the September attacks in Benghazi, which claimed the lives of the U.S. ambassador to Libya and three other Americans.

House Bill Protects Homeland Security Budget

BY ANDREW TAYLOR

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A Republican-controlled House panel moved Thursday to protect the Department of Homeland Security from the big cuts facing other domestic agencies under the party's budget slashing plan.

The move came as the Appropriations Committee leadership privately circulated plans to drastically reduce spending for labor, education and health programs, foreign and housing aid, the Environmental Protection Agency and transportation.

The Pentagon would be spared and a program that provides food aid to poor pregnant women and their babies is likely to escape cuts, but the effects on most agencies would be severe — in the unlikely event the recommendations were to make their way into law over the protests of President Barack Obama and Democrats.

Appropriations Committee Chairman Harold Rogers, R-Ky., appears to be embarking on a strategy to advance a handful of the annual spending bills by funding them at levels closer to Obama's budget than the tea party budget that passed the House in March. GOP conservatives have balked at such moves in the past, saying they're a trick aimed at boosting spending, but some Democrats seem willing to give Rogers the benefit of the doubt.

Rogers' strategy was on display earlier Thursday as an Appropriations subcommittee moved to beef up the Border patrol and grants to local governments for first responders and training to disarm bombs. Its work came a day after another panel increased funding for politically sacrosanct programs for veterans.

Thursday's measure won support from Democrats. In many areas Republicans boosted spending above Obama's budget request.

Earlier this year, tea party forces in the GOP-controlled House pushed through a budget that would force nondefense programs to bear cuts more than \$90 billion below levels called for in a 2011 budget pact. The GOP House and Democratic-controlled Senate remain at odds over the budget, including the amount for agency operating budgets.

At issue are the 12 annual bills funding the day-to-day budgets of Cabinet agencies. The Appropriations panel is moving ahead even though Democrats and Republicans are \$92 billion apart on the overall pot of money to dedicate to agency operating budgets. Democrats are pushing a \$1.058 trillion figure; Republicans are backing a \$966 billion level that assumes unpopular across-the-board spending cuts known as sequestration are left in place. The cuts are the result of Washington's inability to follow up a

2011 budget agreement with additional deficit cuts.

In addition, to placate GOP defense hawks, party leaders have moved to replace defense cuts by forcing domestic programs to take even deeper cuts.

For instance, programs in the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education departments that are funded by the largest domestic spending bill would bear cuts of about one-fifth compared to current monies.

"The disinvestment proposed for health, education and labor programs reveal that the majority believes that poor people, kids, college students, sick people, the unemployed and the disabled should just fend for themselves," said Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn.

The old-school, pragmatic Republicans atop the Appropriations panel are skeptical that the party's budget plan is workable but with no broader deal in sight they are moving ahead with their bills anyway. The first two measures advancing this week, however, basically ignore the strictures of the GOP budget assembled by Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis.

Obama, who angrily cast the investigations as a "sideshow" earlier this week, tried to turn the focus Thursday to Congress. He urged lawmakers to provide more money to strengthen security at U.S. diplomatic missions around the world.

"We need to come together and truly honor the sacrifice of those four courageous Americans and better secure our diplomatic posts around the world," Obama said. "That's how we learn the lessons of Benghazi. That's how we keep faith with the men and women who we send overseas to represent America."

The State Department is seeking about \$1.4 billion for increased security; the money would come primarily from funds that haven't been spent in Iraq. It would include \$553 million for 35 more Marine Security Guard units, \$130 million for 155 diplomatic security agents and \$376 million for security upgrades and construction at new embassies.

Since the attack, Democrats have complained that Republicans cut \$300 million from the Obama administration's budget request of \$2.6 billion for diplomatic and embassy security in 2012.

Congressional Republicans held new hearings on the Benghazi attacks last week, and a congressional official also released details of emails that GOP lawmakers said suggested an administration effort to downplay the prospect of terrorism in the election year attacks. The White House, which has long disputed allegations of a cover-up, released 100 pages of documents Wednesday in an effort to put an end to protracted controversy.

However, the release of the emails didn't quiet the GOP furor on Capitol Hill, and investigations continued to move ahead. Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, a member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, said that while he applauded the release of "hand-picked emails," the White House should release all the unclassified emails.

"I want all the documents released," said Chaffetz, who also made clear that the committee wanted to talk to more current and former administration officials.

Democrats warned earlier Thursday that generously funding the homeland security and veterans' budgets will mean even sharper cuts to programs like education, medical research, transportation and clean energy.

"The first few bills we're dealing with are pretty close to the president's request," said the panel's top Democrat Rep. Nita Lowey of New York. "Which means not much pickings left for the rest of the bills."

The Appropriations chairman says he's hopeful of getting more money to work with later.

"Obviously we are severely short on our allocation," Rogers said. "It very well could be that during the year there could be a replacement for sequestration and/or a budget deal that would give us more."

The homeland security measure would put the Border Patrol on a path to hire 1,600 additional agents, replace cuts sought by Obama to grants for state and local governments, boost cyber security spending and rejects Obama-sought cuts to the Coast Guard.

Memorial Day Deadlines

The Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan will be closed Monday, May 27th, for the Memorial Day holiday.

The following deadlines will apply:

Out On The Town — Wednesday, May 22

Tuesday, May 28 newspaper — 5 p.m., Wednesday, May 22

Wednesday, May 29 newspaper — 5 p.m., Thursday, May 23

Thursday, May 30 newspaper — 5 p.m., Friday, May 24

There will be no newspaper on Monday, May 27, 2013.

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