

Federal Investigation Now For Baltimore

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department waded anew Friday into fraught big city police-community relations, with new Attorney General Loretta Lynch declaring the subject “one of the most challenging issues of our time.” She announced a wide-ranging investigation into Baltimore’s police.

The federal civil rights investigation, which city officials requested following the death last month of a man in police custody, will search for discriminatory policing practices and examine allegations that Baltimore officers too often use excessive force and make unconstitutional searches and arrests.

The investigation is to build upon the government’s voluntary and collaborative review of the Baltimore police that began last year. Since then, the death of 25-year-old Freddie Gray and the days of rioting that followed exposed a “serious erosion of public trust,” Lynch said, and showed that community concerns about the police were more pervasive than initially understood and that a broader investigation was warranted.

“It was clear to a number of people looking at this situation that the community’s rather frayed trust — to use an understatement — was even worse and has, in effect, been severed in terms of the relationship with the police department,” Lynch said.

The announcement indicated that Lynch, who was sworn in last week as the successor to Eric Holder, is likely to keep the Justice Department engaged in a national dialogue about race relations and law enforcement. That issue consumed the final year of Holder’s tenure and flared most vividly last summer following the shooting death of an unarmed black 18-year-old by a Ferguson, Missouri, police officer.

Unemployment Rate At A 7-Year Low

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rebounding from a dismal start to the year, the U.S. economy added 223,000 jobs in April, a solid gain that suggested that employers are helping fuel a durable if still subpar recovery.

The job growth helped lower the unemployment rate to 5.4 percent from 5.5 percent in March, the Labor Department said Friday. That is the lowest rate since May 2008, six months into the Great Recession.

The figures provided some reassurance that the economy is recovering from a harsh winter and other temporary headwinds that likely caused it to shrink in the first three months of the year. Yet the bounce back appears to be falling short of hopes that growth would finally accelerate in 2015 and top 3 percent for the first time in a decade.

Most analysts foresee the economy growing about 2.5 percent this year, similar to the modest expansion typical of much of the 6-year-old recovery.

In its report Friday, the government revised sharply down its estimate of March’s job gain to 85,000 from 126,000. In the past three months, employers have added 191,000 positions, a decent total but well below last year’s average of 260,000.

Oklahoma Braces For More Tornadoes

MOORE, Okla. (AP) — When spring arrives in Oklahoma and conditions are right for tornadoes, David Wheeler and his family don’t take any chances.

Two years ago, a top-of-the-scale twister tore a miles-long path through this Oklahoma City suburb and turned Wheeler’s son’s school into a pile of rubble. That’s when he installed a small underground shelter in his garage. Now the family regularly drills on what to do if the skies turn ominous.

“Today we’ve been nervous,” Wheeler, a fifth-grade teacher whose family has survived two deadly tornadoes, said Friday. “We’ve done some dry runs before the spring. I made the kids go down there by themselves, and we’ve done the same thing with me, the wife and the kids, all together.”

The Wheeler family retreated underground nearly a dozen times on Wednesday night, when a powerful thunderstorm that rumbled across the southern Plains produced more than 50 tornadoes. The menacing clouds had barely vanished before forecasters began warning of another system that could produce even more violent twisters through the weekend in parts of Kansas, Oklahoma and North Texas.

“We’re going to see storms that present the risk of a full gamut of severe weather,” including large hail, high winds and tornadoes, said Todd Lindley, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

Saudi-Led Coalition To Cease-Fire Tuesday

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — A coalition led by Saudi Arabia ordered civilians in rebel strongholds in northern Yemen to flee by nightfall Friday, warning it will strike anything in the region, even as the Saudis pressed for a cease-fire to begin next week.

After the evening deadline passed, the coalition’s warplanes attacked a rebel-held complex in the region that was believed to contain weapons, a Saudi news agency reported.

The declaration of an entire region of Yemen as a “military target” was a sharp escalation that raised alarm about more casualties in a conflict that has killed over 1,400 people — many of them civilians — since March 19. The fighting also has created a humanitarian crisis in what was already the Arab world’s most impoverished nation.

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir announced in Paris that a cease-fire aimed at allowing humanitarian aid to reach Yemen’s embattled population of 25 million would begin Tuesday — but on the condition that the Shiite rebels, known as Houthis, and their allies also halt hostilities.

The mixed signals from Saudi Arabia seemed to have two purposes: The declaration of an all-out war in the northern region of Saada, the Houthis’ stronghold, appeared aimed at stopping cross-border attacks against Saudi cities that have inflicted civilian casualties. At the same time, it appeared to pressure the Houthis and their allies — military units loyal to ousted President Ali Abdullah Saleh — to abide by a cease fire.

70 Years Since Nazis Surrendered

PARIS (AP) — With quiet moments of memory or military pomp, leaders and ordinary citizens across Europe are marking 70 years since the Nazi defeat and the end of a war that ravaged the continent. But the East-West alliance that vanquished Hitler is deeply divided today.

Russia is celebrating Soviet wartime feats in a ceremony Saturday that is causing diplomatic tensions because of the country’s role in Ukraine’s conflict. Poland has held a ceremony meant as an alternative to Moscow’s.

Paris’ mile-long Champs Elysees was closed to traffic to make way for a procession of official motorcades and mounted military escorts that ascended the wide boulevard from the Place de la Concorde to the Arc de Triomphe, site of France’s Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Cameron To Govern Britain Without Coalition After Election

BY DANICA KIRKA
AND JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON — After years of sharing power, David Cameron pulled off an unexpected election triumph that gave the Conservative prime minister a second term with an outright majority Friday and dealt a stinging defeat to his three main rivals.

Standing before the glistening black door of 10 Downing Street, Cameron pledged to govern as the party of “one nation, one United Kingdom.” But he faces a fractured Britain — divided by rich and poor, by separatist gains in Scotland and by doubts over its place in the European Union.

The election ushers in a new era in British politics, with veteran lawmakers ousted by a public that made clear it had lost trust in its political leaders. The victors included a 20-year-old Scottish nationalist who beat out a senior Labour Party leader in Scotland.

It was also unexpected. Polls had predicted a dead heat — a result that would have meant days of haggling to form a new government. Queen Elizabeth II was out of town at her castle in Windsor, and needed to rush back to London for the traditional meeting at Buckingham Palace in which the victor offers to form a government.

By the time Cameron met the monarch all three of his major rivals had resigned: Ed Miliband of the Labour Party, Nick Clegg of the Liberal



ANDREW PARSONS/I-IMAGES/ZUMA PRESS/TNS

The Prime Minister David Cameron delivers his victory speech at the Whitney Constituency Parliamentary Count, Witney, Oxfordshire, on Friday after winning his seat in Witney the previous night.

Democrats and Nigel Farage of the U.K. Independence Party.

For the losers, Cameron offered sympathy. “Elections can be bruising clashes of ideas and arguments, and a lot of people who believe profoundly in public service have seen that service cut short,” he said.

The surprising outcome merely underscored how much things have changed — that there is now a new unpredictability in British politics. The idea of two big parties squabbling over the spoils is over. There are

new players — and some are very young. Some don’t even want a United Kingdom at all.

“For the new government, it is not possible to carry on business as usual,” said Murray Pittock, a professor at the University of Glasgow. “Such a course is not a sustainable or good course to ensure the survival of the UK.”

With the Conservatives winning an outright majority in the 650-seat House of Commons, the result looked to be far better for Cameron than even his own party had

foreseen. With all the votes counted, the Conservatives had 331 seats to Labour’s 232.

But the new ruling class inherits a country divided by negative campaigning and infighting about the future. Fought largely over the economy, the race revolved around the question of whether the Conservative-led government charted the right course through the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis, the worst recession since the 1930s.

Ambassadors Killed In Pakistan Helicopter Crash

BY MUNIR AHMED
AND ZARAR KHAN

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — A Pakistani army helicopter crashed Friday on its way to an inauguration at a resort in the country’s north, killing four foreigners — ambassadors to Islamabad from the Philippines and Norway, as well as the wives of the ambassadors from Malaysia and Indonesia — and a three-member crew in what was one of the worst such incident in the country involving a high number of foreign dignitaries.

The air force said a technical failure caused the crash while Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who was flying to the same event on a separate aircraft, declared Saturday a day of national mourning. Twelve passengers, many of them diplomats, who were injured in the crash were being treated at a local hospital, officials said.

Hussain Khan, a police officer at the crash site Naltar, said he saw the helicopter stall in midair, then come down in an erratic manner as if the pilot had no control over it — then plunge to the ground.

“The helicopter was preparing to land at a helipad near a school, when it suddenly crashed and caught fire,” Khan told The Associated Press over the phone from Naltar.

Security forces scrambled to rescue survivors and transport the dead and injured to a nearby hospital, Khan added.

Hours after the crash, the Pakistani Taliban issued a statement claiming they had shot down the helicopter with an anti-aircraft missile. The claim, though impossible to independently verify, appeared to be an opportunistic attempt to take responsibility for such a high-profile incident.

Pakistan’s Foreign Secretary Aizaz Chaudhry dismissed the claim as “bogus.”

The air force said a technical failure had caused the crash but did not elaborate on the nature of the glitch. Air force spokesman Syed Muhammad Ali said the fire, which engulfed the aircraft shortly after the crash, caused the high number of fatalities.



ISPR/PACIFIC PRESS/ZUMA PRESS/TNS

The ambassadors to Pakistan from the Philippines and Norway and the wives of the ambassadors from Malaysia and Indonesia were killed Friday when a Pakistani army helicopter carrying foreign dignitaries made a crash landing in the country’s north.

Pakistani army spokesman, Maj. Gen. Asim Bajwa, tweeted that the MI-17 helicopter was forced to make an emergency landing. He said the surviving passengers, including the Dutch and Polish ambassadors to Pakistan, received “varying degree of injuries.”

The helicopter with the diplomats was on route to Naltar, where Sharif was also to attend a public ceremony to inaugurate a newly installed chair-lift at a ski resort.

A statement from his office said Sharif was flying on a special government plane to Naltar when the “tragic news” was conveyed to him. It said Sharif returned to Islamabad after hearing of the crash.

Earlier, the Pakistani Foreign Ministry said the heads of diplomatic missions from more than 30 coun-

tries, along with their family members and some Pakistani dignitaries, had been flown to the city of Gilgit by a C-130 aircraft.

“From there, they were being taken to Naltar in four helicopters for a three-day excursion trip,” the ministry said.

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs said it was “deeply saddened” by the death of Ambassador Domingo Lucenario Jr., and that his colleagues in Manila observed a two-minute period of silence in commemoration. Lucenario, 54, also served as non-resident ambassador to Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. He is survived by his wife and three children.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Borge Brende confirmed the death of Ambassador Leif H. Larsen, describing him in a state-

ment as, “a well-liked and highly respected colleague. His friends and colleagues in the Foreign Ministry and across our foreign stations are today in sorrow.” Larsen, 61, is survived by a wife and a son.

Malaysia’s foreign ministry confirmed that the wife of its high commissioner to Pakistan perished in the crash. The high commissioner Hasrul Sani Mujtabar survived the incident and currently being treated at the Gilgit hospital, it said.

Romania’s ambassador to Pakistan, Emilian Ion, was on the same helicopter and survived, the Romanian Foreign Ministry said. Pope Thrower, assistant spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, said that “no American Embassy personnel participated in this trip.”

Hours after the crash, Indonesia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi confirmed in Jakarta that Heri Listyawati, the wife of Indonesia’s ambassador, was killed while her husband, Burhan Muhammad, survived with injuries.

In Poland, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that the Polish Ambassador Andrzej Ananicz and his wife, Zofia, were on board the helicopter and that “both suffered injuries, which were not life threatening.”

The prime minister’s statement expressed “deep grief and sorrow over the tragic incident” and said he “extended heartfelt condolences to those who lost their lives in this incident.”

Sharif declared Saturday a national day of mourning, according to his office, which also said that helicopters were evacuating the injured diplomats and that the bodies of those killed will be transported to Islamabad.

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