

Town Mourns 2 Slain Police Officers

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (AP) — One was a decorated “Officer of the Year.” The other was a proud recent graduate of the police academy.

A routine traffic stop led to their shooting deaths Saturday night — the first Hattiesburg police officers to die in the line of duty in more than 30 years — and three suspects were in custody, including two who were charged with capital murder.

The deaths of Officers Benjamin Deen and Liquori Tate stunned this small city in southern Mississippi. On Sunday morning, bloodstains still marked the street where the two were shot, and in the nearby New Hope Baptist Church, worshippers prayed for them and their families.

“This should remind us to thank all law enforcement for their unwavering service to protect and serve,” Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant said in a statement. “May God keep them all in the hollow of his hand.”

Marvin Banks, 29, and Joanie Calloway, 22, were each charged with two counts of capital murder, said Warren Strain, a spokesman for the Mississippi Department of Public Safety. Banks also was charged with one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm and with grand theft for fleeing in the police cruiser after the shooting, Strain said.

Tropical Storm Warnings Discontinued

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Tropical Storm Ana lost the last of its strength and was downgraded to a depression as it created wet and windy conditions along the North and South Carolina coasts.

At 2 p.m. Sunday, the National Hurricane Center said the center of the depression was located about 30 miles north of Myrtle Beach. The storm's maximum sustained winds were at 35 mph. Gradual weakening was expected over the next few days, according to the hurricane center.

While the storm was stationary over the northeastern coast of South Carolina, forecasters said Ana should resume moving to the north on Sunday, turn to the northeast and pick up speed. It was expected that the storm would move over eastern North Carolina on Sunday night.

The forecast also called for between 2 and 6 inches of rain over the affected regions, and coastal flooding, especially around high tide. A combination of storm surge and the rising tide created the possibility of up to 2 feet of water above normal from Cape Hatteras as far south as South Carolina. Forecasters said those conditions should diminish as well over the next day or so.

Forecasters also reiterated their warnings for rip currents along the southeastern U.S. coast.

Raul Castro Thanks Pope For Detente

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Cuban President Raul Castro paid a call Sunday on Pope Francis at the Vatican to thank him for working for Cuban-U.S. detente — and said he was so impressed by the pontiff he is considering a return to the Catholic church's fold.

“Bienvenido (welcome)!” Francis said in his native Spanish, welcoming Castro to his studio near the Vatican public audience hall. The Cuban president, bowing his head, gripped Francis' hand with both of his, and the two men began private talks. The meeting lasted nearly an hour, as the Argentine-born Francis and Castro spoke in Spanish.

Francis will visit Cuba in September en route to the United States.

After leaving the Vatican, Castro, the brother of Fidel, the revolutionary leader who brought the Communists to power in Cuba, gushed with praise for Francis.

The pontiff “is a Jesuit, and I, in some way, am too,” Castro said at a news conference. “I always studied at Jesuit schools.”

Florida Offers No Clear Plan On Flooding

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. (AP) — America's oldest city is slowly drowning.

St. Augustine's centuries-old Spanish fortress sits feet from the encroaching Atlantic, whose waters already flood the city's narrow streets about 10 times a year — a problem worsening as sea levels rise. The city relies on tourism, but visitors might someday have to wear waders at high tide.

“If you want to benefit from the fact we've been here for 450 years, you have the responsibility to look forward to the next 450,” said Bill Hamilton, whose family has lived in the city since the 1950s. “Is St. Augustine even going to be here? We owe it to the people coming after us to leave the city in good shape.”

St. Augustine is one of many chronically flooded communities along Florida's coast, and officials in these diverse places share a concern: They're afraid their buildings and economies will be further inundated by rising seas in just a couple of decades. The effects are a daily reality in much of Florida. Drinking water wells are fouled by seawater. Higher tides and storm surges make for more frequent road flooding from Jacksonville to Key West, and they're overburdening aging flood-control systems.

But the state has yet to offer a clear plan or coordination to address what local officials across Florida's coast see as a slow-moving emergency. Republican Gov. Rick Scott is skeptical of man-made climate change and has put aside the task of preparing for sea level rise, an Associated Press review of thousands of emails and documents pertaining to the state's preparations for rising seas found.

Girls, Women Rescued From Boko Haram

YOLA, Nigeria (AP) — The taunts wouldn't stop. “Boko Haram wives,” the schoolgirls were called because they had been briefly held by Nigeria's Islamic extremists before escaping. The teasing was so relentless that some of the Chibok girls left their town and families.

Their plight does not bode well for hundreds of girls and women recently rescued from months of captivity by Boko Haram, including dozens who are pregnant. After enduring captivity by the militants, the females may now face stigma from their communities.

“The most important thing is to restore their dignity,” the executive director of the United Nations Population Fund, Babatunde Osotimehin, told The Associated Press in a telephone interview from his office in New York.

“When you have been in captivity against your will, and God knows whatever they have done to them, some of them will have been violated, some raped, food insecure ... We need to take them, work with them and bring them back to the reality of their lives,” said Osotimehin, who is Nigerian.

His agency is providing the women and girls with intense psychosocial counseling and medical care for reproductive and maternal health. It is also encouraging communities to allow the girls to return in peace.

Journalists Gain Rare Combat Glimpse

QALAMOUN MOUNTAINS, Syria (AP) — Here in pockets of the rugged mountains near the Lebanese border, the distinctive yellow flag of Hezbollah now flies where al-Qaida militants once held sway.

These gains in the Qalamoun Mountains represent a bright spot for embattled Syrian President Bashar Assad's government, now reeling from a unified insurgent assault in the country's northwest. And again, they show the power and influence of the Lebanese militant group in Syria's civil war, grinding on into its fifth year after killing more than 220,000 people.

A team of Associated Press journalists traveling with Hezbollah into Syria found smiling Hezbollah fighters proudly showing newly dismantled booby traps and food quickly left behind by the Sunni insurgents as commanders promised further advances they say protect Lebanon. But in Lebanon, worries persist that Hezbollah's battlefield successes only further entangle the tiny country in Syria's violence, risking attacks back home as well.

The Qalamoun Mountains are on the Syrian side of the border with Lebanon. They tower near Syria's capital, Damascus, and linking that base of Assad's power to the coast, an enclave of his Alawite sect, an off-shoot of Shiite Islam.

But the Sunni militants of the local al-Qaida chapter called the Nusra Front and the Islamic State group, have been dug into the terrain for years.

From Rockies East, Severe Weather Casts A Wide Net

By The Associated Press

South Dakota was the center of weather extremes Sunday, with a tornado damaging a small town and injuring at least nine people on the eastern side of the state and more than a foot of snow blanketing the Black Hills to the west.

Parts of several Great Plains and Midwest states were in the path of severe weather, including North Texas, where the National Weather Service said a likely tornado damaged roofs and trees near Denton and torrential rain caused flash flooding. At the same time, a tropical storm came ashore in the Carolinas, and wintry weather affected parts of Colorado.

Tropical Storm Ana made landfall near Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, on Sunday morning and was downgraded to a tropical depression by Sunday afternoon. The storm's maximum sustained winds were at 35 mph, and it was expected to move over eastern North Carolina on Sunday night.

In North Texas, a likely tornado ripped roofs off buildings and damaged trees near Denton, about 40 miles northwest of Dallas, according to National Weather Service meteorologist Tom Bradshaw. There were no immediate reports of injuries or fatalities.

Torrential rains led to widespread flash flooding in North Texas. People in Krum were being rescued by helicopter from rising



RICHARD W. RODRIGUEZ/FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM/TNS

A street sign at the intersection of Highway 377 and Moss Creek Drive lies on the ground after a possible tornado touched down in the Bent Creek Estates neighborhood in Denton, Texas, on Sunday.

floodwaters there.

Denton County Emergency Services Chief Jody Gonzalez said Sunday that multiple rescues had been performed for people in flooded streets and homes in the small town located about 50 miles northwest of Dallas.

About 100 miles west of Fort Worth, people in the sparsely populated ranching and farming community of Cisco were left to clean up from Saturday's tornado that left one person dead and another in critical condition. Cisco Fire Department spokesman Phillip Truitt said the two people were near each other.

The National Weather Ser-

vice said that tornado was rated an EF-3, with winds ranging from 136 to 165 mph. At least six buildings were damaged south of Cisco, as well as six others near Lake Leon, Truitt said.

A strong line of storms moved through the Dallas-Fort Worth area Sunday morning, forcing significant delays and a total of 100 flight cancellations at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport and Dallas Love Field Airport.

Forecasters issued tornado watches through Sunday evening for parts of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota and Missouri.

Farther north, a late-season snow fell in parts of the Rockies, western Nebraska and western South Dakota.

National Weather Service meteorologist Kyle Carstens said between 10 to 18 inches of snow was on the ground Sunday morning in the Black Hills of South Dakota and totals could reach 20-24 inches by the time the system moves out. Rapid City, South Dakota, had 8-11 inches, accompanied by 20-30 mph winds.

Nearly 18 inches of snow fell in southern Colorado, a state that also saw hail, flooding and tornado warnings over the weekend.

Governor: Nuke Plant Fire Produced Hudson Oil Slick

BY VERENA DOBNIK

Associated Press

BUCHANAN, N.Y. — Part of a New York nuclear power plant remained offline Sunday after a transformer fire created another problem: thousands of gallons of oil leaking into the Hudson River, officials said.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said emergency crews were out on the water near Buchanan trying to contain and clean up transformer fluid that leaked from Indian Point 3.

“There's no doubt that oil was discharged into the Hudson River,” Cuomo said. “Exactly how much, we don't know.”

It could be weeks before Indian Point 3 is reopened again, said a spokesman for Entergy Corp., the plant owner.

The transformer at the plant about 30 miles north of midtown Manhattan failed on Saturday evening, causing a fire that forced the automatic shut-down.

Cuomo revealed Sunday that even after the blaze on the nonnuclear side of the plant was quickly doused, the heat reignited the fire that was again extinguished.

The governor said oil in the transformer had seeped into a holding tank that did not have the capacity to contain all the fluid, which then entered river waters through a discharge drain. Joseph Martens, commissioner of

the state Department of Environmental Protection, said measures were taken to keep the oil from spreading, including setting up booms over an area about 300 feet in diameter in the water.

The cleanup should take a day or two, Cuomo said.

A spokesman for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said several thousand gallons of oil may have overflowed the transformer moat.

The reactor itself was deemed safe and stable, said Entergy spokesman Jerry Nappi. The plant's adjacent Unit 2 reactor was not affected and remained in operation.

The Indian Point Energy Center in Buchanan supplies electricity for millions of homes, businesses and public facilities in New York City and Westchester County.

“These situations we take very seriously. Luckily this was not a major situation. But the emergency protocols are very important,” Cuomo said Saturday. “I take nothing lightly when it comes to this plant specifically.”

The transformer at Indian Point 3 takes energy created by the plant and changes the voltage for the grid supplying power to the state.

The blaze, which sent black smoke billowing into the sky, was extinguished by a sprinkler system and on-site personnel, Nappi said.

He said a foam-like substance containing animal protein and fat was used

to put out the fire, leaving an oily sheen on the water that does not harm the environment. He said he cannot confirm that fluid from the transformer leaked beyond the holding tank until a probe is conducted.

It was not immediately clear what caused the initial failure.

Officials did not know how long the 1,000-megawatt reactor would be down. Nappi estimated it could be “a few weeks” before Indian Point 3 reopened.

Cuomo said there had been too many emergencies recently involving Indian Point. Unit 3 was shut down Thursday morning for an unrelated issue — a water leak on the nonnuclear side of the plant.

“We have to get to the bottom of this,” the governor said.

In March, Unit 3 was shut down for a planned refueling that took about a month.

Diane Screnci, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, said an agency inspector was at the site Sunday and the agency would follow up as Indian Point assesses the affected equipment.

She said there was no impact on the public.

The environmental watchdog group Riverkeeper issued a statement Sunday saying the latest Indian Point accident proves that the plant should be closed for good.

Ivanov: Many Attacks Had Been Planned

BY BORIS GRDANOSKI AND KONSTANTIN TESTORIDES

Associated Press

KUMANOVO, Macedonia

— An armed group battling Macedonian police over the weekend left 22 people dead and aimed to destabilize the country with terror attacks, the country's president declared Sunday in a nationwide television address.

President George Ivanov spoke after an emergency meeting of Macedonia's National Security Council in the capital, Skopje. He had cut short his visit to Russia on Saturday, the day the armed clashes began in the northern town of Kumanovo.

“Police have prevented coordinated terrorist attacks at different locations in the country that would cause serious destabilization, chaos and fear,” Ivanov said. “The members of the group are extremists and criminals with remarkable military training and skills. That's why we have paid such a high price with the loss of lives.”

The attacks left at least 22 people dead, including eight police and 14 attackers, Interior Ministry spokesman Ivo Kotevski said.

The Macedonian government declared two days of mourning Sunday for those killed in the clashes. Flags were flying at half-staff and sports events and political gatherings were canceled.

Prime Minister Nikola Grujevski told reporters the

group of over 40 armed men had planned to attack state institutions, sport events and shopping malls and said they had combat experience both in the region and in the Middle East. He said the group was not supported by members of Macedonia's ethnic Albanian minority. The fighting comes as Macedonia is grappling with its deepest political crisis since its independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1991. The government and the opposition have accused each other of planning to destabilize the country to take or preserve power and some analysts fear leaders on both sides are ready to provoke ethnic clashes.

Kotevski named five leaders of the armed group, all citizens of Kosovo, as founders of paramilitary cells. He said the group entered Macedonia at the beginning of May to launch attacks on state institutions and hid out in Kumanovo's western neighborhood, where police found a huge arsenal of weapons.

Kumanovo is an ethnically mixed town 40 kilometers (25 miles) northeast of Skopje, near the border with Kosovo and Serbia. The region was the center of hostilities between ethnic Albanian rebels and government forces during the ethnic conflict in 2001. That insurgency ended with a Western-brokered peace deal that granted more rights to

ethnic Albanians, who make up about a quarter of the country's 2 million people.

Grujevski praised the police, who also saw 37 members wounded. Three dead policemen were later buried in the town of Tetovo, west of Skopje.

“Macedonian police have performed the most complicated operation and the police forces, with officers from all ethnic groups, have performed a professional, heroic and patriotic operation,” Grujevski said at a press conference.

Police have filed terrorism-related charges against more than 30 members of the group who surrendered. They were brought before an investigative judge late Sunday to be questioned.

Kotevski said some of the slain attackers wore uniforms with the insignia of the disbanded ethnic Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army but had no identification documents on them. The ethnic Albanian rebel group fought Serb government forces in 1998-99 for the independence of neighboring Kosovo.

About two weeks ago, authorities said about 40 wearing UCK uniforms attacked a police watchtower in Gosince on Macedonia's northern border with Kosovo and briefly captured four Macedonian police officers.

EU Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn expressed “deep concern” at the situation around Kumanovo.

“Any further escalation must be avoided ... in the interest of the overall stability,” Hahn said.

Observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) were in Kumanovo to tour the site of the armed clashes. The European Union, NATO, OSCE missions in Macedonia and U.S. Embassy in Skopje issued a joint statement, pointing that “the armed group in Kumanovo is an isolated phenomenon.”

“We strongly believe that it must not be allowed to harm relations within society. We also hope that this will be the moment for the country's leaders to pull together and facing in dialogue on all issues enging the country, including the protracted political crisis and necessary reforms,” the statement said.

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