

Burundi: Forces Fight Over Key Sites

BUJUMBURA, Burundi (AP) — Gunfire and explosions rang out Thursday as military forces backing an attempted coup against President Pierre Nkurunziza battled troops loyal to him over key sites in Burundi's capital, while his office reported he had returned to the country.

Weeks of turmoil in this impoverished Central African country boiled over Wednesday when an army general announced that Nkurunziza was being ousted.

The president was in Tanzania at the time for a meeting with regional leaders about the political crisis. Late Thursday, his office announced on Twitter that Nkurunziza was back in Burundi, although the report could not be independently verified.

The report also said Nkurunziza saluted the patriotism of the police and the patience of the Burundian people. His office had earlier said he had urged calm and said the situation was under control.

Shooting and explosions could be heard in central Bujumbura as loyalist troops guarding the national broadcaster RTNB exchanged fire with forces believed to support Maj. Gen. Godefroid Niyombare, the senior army officer leading the coup attempt.

Afghan Head Condemns Taliban Attack

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — An audacious Taliban attack on a Kabul guesthouse that left 14 people dead, including nine foreigners, underscores the difficulties President Ashraf Ghani faces in providing even basic security following the withdrawal of international combat troops from Afghanistan.

The hourslong siege, which ended early Thursday, was the deadliest in Kabul since the insurgents launched their annual "spring offensive" against Ghani's administration in late April, sparking fierce battles that have forced the government to concentrate resources on security at the expense of desperately needed reforms.

An American, a British citizen, an Italian, four Indian nationals and two Pakistanis were among the dead. Five Afghans were also killed and seven were wounded, including a policeman.

By targeting a guesthouse popular with international residents and visitors, the Taliban also stoked fears they were renewing their strategy of killing foreigners, which will further undermine Ghani's credibility in his efforts to bring peace, stability and prosperity not only to Afghanistan but to the broader region.

"The attack shows that Kabul is very vulnerable. An increase in attacks on Kabul can paralyze life here, and if there is a cascade of attacks in Kabul, it can hurt the government," said Haroun Mir, an independent political analyst.

Malaysia Turns Away 2 Boats Of Migrants

LANGKAWI, Malaysia (AP) — Rohingya and Bangladeshis abandoned at sea following a crackdown on human traffickers had nowhere to go Thursday after Malaysia turned away two wooden boats crammed with hundreds of hungry people. Thailand, too, made it clear the migrants were not wanted.

"What do you expect us to do?" asked Malaysian Deputy Home Minister Wan Junaidi Jafaar. "We have been very nice to the people who broke into our border. We have treated them humanely, but they cannot be flooding our shores like this."

"We have to send the right message," he said, "that they are not welcome here."

Thai Prime Minister Gen. Prayuth Chan-ocha, meanwhile, said his country couldn't afford to host the refugees.

"If we take them all in, then anyone who wants to come will come freely," he said. "Where will the budget come from?"

Trade Dispute Deepens Wh-Warren Rift

WASHINGTON (AP) — When President Barack Obama huffed that Elizabeth Warren, the Massachusetts senator and established liberal star, was a "politician like everybody else" he revealed a rift that predates the current hostilities between the two Democrats over trade.

Though occasional allies, Warren has been aggravating the Obama administration since her pre-Senate days when she chaired an oversight panel charged with being a watchdog over the massive federal bank bailout.

But the dispute over Obama's efforts to get trade negotiating authority from Congress and complete a 12-nation Pacific rim trade deal goes to the heart of a fundamental divide within the Democratic Party. It also has turned the tables in Congress where Democrats once delighted in watching Republicans struggle with their conservative tea party faction.

Now it's Republicans who are amused and making the most of a Democratic split.

"You've got the energy of the Elizabeth Warren faction kind of driving the agenda" for Democrats, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said Wednesday on CNBC. "I want to compliment the president — the way he took on the base, he took on Elizabeth Warren, he took on the labor unions."

Report: Agents In Vehicle Incident

WASHINGTON (AP) — What were they thinking? For months new Secret Service Director Joseph Clancy had been warning agents and officers that misconduct and drunken shenanigans would not be tolerated in the once-vaunted law enforcement agency. And yet, according to investigators, two senior Secret Service agents spent five hours at a bar, ran up a significant tab, and then drove back to the White House, where they shoved their car into a construction barrier and drove within inches of a suspicious package earlier this year.

All this just months after Secret Service Julia Pierson director was ousted in the aftermath of a series of embarrassing security breaches involving Secret Service agents and officers.

George Ogilvie and Marc Connolly were "more likely than not" impaired by alcohol when they drove through a secure area at the White House earlier this year, the Homeland Security Department's inspector general said in a new report released late Wednesday.

They were among dozens of agency personnel who went to a retirement party for another agent but when the party wrapped up on March 4, the pair and two other, non-agent Secret Service employees, stuck around the Irish-themed bar for three more hours. Ogilvie, the assistant special agent in charge of the agency's Washington field office, opened a tab and paid \$149.87 for eight Johnny Walker Red scotches, two vodka drinks, three beers and a glass of wine.

Polar Drilling Rig Arrives In Seattle

SEATTLE (AP) — An oil rig outfitted for exploration in the remote Arctic Ocean passed in Seattle's harbor Thursday, marking a pivotal moment for an environmental movement increasingly mobilized around climate change.

Activists paddling out in kayaks to meet the rig off Seattle's picturesque waterfront said it's their moment to stand against opening a new frontier of fossil fuel exploration.

"Unless people get out there and put themselves on the front lines and say enough is enough, then nothing will ever change," said Jordan Van Voast, 55, an acupunctureist who was going out on the water to confront the Polar Pioneer. "I'm hopeful that people are waking up."

About two dozen kayakers paddled around Elliott Bay as the towering rig passed the city's Space Needle. The tiny boats, which kept their distance from the rig, were dwarfed by the 400-foot-long structure rising nearly 300 feet above the water. The image suggests how outmatched Shell's opponents have been as they try to keep the petroleum giant from continuing its \$6 billion effort to open new oil and gas reserves in one of the world's most dangerous maritime environments.

Environmental groups in the Pacific Northwest are sensing a shift in the politics that surround energy production and have mobilized against a series of projects that would transform the region into a gateway for crude oil and coal exports to Asia.



DAVID MAIALETTI/PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/TNS

Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter announces that the death toll in the Amtrak derailment has reached eight people during a news conference on Thursday in Philadelphia.

Investigators Look At Why Train Sped Up Before Derailment

BY GEOFF MULVIHILL
AND MICHAEL KUNZELMAN

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — In the moment the Amtrak train that derailed at a curve this week was supposed to be slowing down, it was accelerating, investigators said Thursday.

How that came to happen has emerged as the central question surrounding the derailment, which killed eight people and sent more than 200 to hospitals Tuesday night in the nation's deadliest train wreck in nearly six years.

In the minute or so before the crash, the train sped up from 70 mph until it reached more than 100 mph at a sharp bend where the maximum speed is supposed to be 50 mph, National Transportation Safety Board member Robert Sumwalt said. It's unclear, Sumwalt said, whether the speed was increased manually by engineer Brandon Bostian, who grew up obsessed with trains.

Investigators have found no problems with the track, signals or locomotive. Sumwalt said the train, on a route from Washington to New York City, was on time as it left the station in Philadelphia a few minutes before the crash.

Investigators want to know why the

train was going so fast. But Bostian refused to talk to police on Wednesday, authorities said. On Thursday, Sumwalt said Bostian had agreed to be interviewed by the NTSB and the meeting will take place in the next few days.

Separately, the Philadelphia district attorney's office said it was investigating and will decide whether to bring charges. And an Amtrak dispatcher injured in the crash filed what's apparently the first lawsuit stemming from it, blaming Amtrak and seeking at least \$150,000 in damages, his lawyer said.

Amtrak, in a statement posted online by CEO Joseph Boardman, called the derailment "a terrible tragedy" and said it was cooperating fully with the NTSB and was responding with every resource it has available.

"Amtrak takes full responsibility and deeply apologizes for our role in this tragic event," it said.

Bostian's lawyer, Robert Goggin, told ABC News that his client suffered a concussion in the wreck, needed 15 staples in his head and has "absolutely no recollection" of the crash. Goggin also said Bostian, who lives in New York, had not been using his cellphone, drinking or using drugs.

As the death toll climbed on Thurs-

day with the discovery of what was believed to be the last body in one of the mangled railcars, Mayor Michael Nutter again appeared to cast blame on Bostian, questioning why the train was going so fast.

"I don't think that any commonsense, rational person would think that it was OK to travel at that level of speed knowing that there was a pretty significant restriction on how fast you could go through that turn," Nutter said.

Officials believe they have accounted for all 243 passengers and crew members thought to have been aboard, Nutter said. Forty-three remained hospitalized Thursday, he said.

Amtrak, meanwhile, said limited train service between Philadelphia and New York should resume on Monday, with full service by Tuesday. Amtrak carries 11.6 million passengers a year along the Northeast Corridor, which runs between Washington and Boston.

Bostian was obsessed with trains while growing up, talked about them constantly and wanted to be an engineer or a conductor, friends said.

"He would go on vacation and bring back subway maps," said Stefanie McGee, a friend from Tennessee. "He would go places with his family, and he would talk about the trains instead of the places."

Obama Convenes Camp David Summit With Gulf State Leaders

BY JULIE PACE

AP White House Correspondent

CAMP DAVID, Md. — President Barack Obama and leaders from six Gulf nations gathered at Camp David Thursday in an effort to work through tensions sparked by the U.S. bid for a nuclear deal with Iran, which has put regional partners on edge.

Obama is seeking to reassure the Gulf leaders that U.S. overtures to Iran will not come at the expense of commitments to their security. He is expected to offer them more military assistance, including increased joint exercises and coordination on ballistic missile systems.

But when the meetings at the presidential retreat in the Maryland mountains conclude, it's unlikely Obama will have fully assuaged the Gulf's deep-seated fear of Iranian intentions in the region.

"My guess is that the summit is going to leave everybody feeling a little bit unsatisfied," said Jon Alterman, the Middle East director at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Just two other heads of state — the emirs of Qatar and Kuwait — joined Obama at Camp David. Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Bahrain all sent lower-level but still influential representatives.

Obama rarely uses Camp David for personal or official business. White House aides hoped the more intimate setting would lead to a more candid conversation.

As the leaders gathered around a large table in the Laurel lodge, the most notable absence was Saudi King Salman. On Sunday, Saudi Arabia announced that the king was skipping the summit, just two days after the White House said he was coming.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef and Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman were representing Saudi Arabia instead. They held a separate meeting with Obama before the other leaders arrived.



KEVIN DIETSCH/SIPA USA/TNS

President Barack Obama talks to Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, during a working lunch at the Gulf Cooperation Council-U.S. summit at Camp David on Thursday. Obama hosted leaders from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman to discuss a range of issues including the Iran nuclear deal.

The president made no mention of Saudi skepticism of the Iran talks as he opened that meeting, but he acknowledged the region is in the midst of a "very challenging time."

The White House and Saudi officials insist the king is not snubbing Obama. But Salman's absence comes amid indisputable signs of strain in the long relationship between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, driven not only by Obama's Iran overtures but also the rise of Islamic State militants and a lessening U.S. dependency on Saudi oil.

"There have been disagreements under this administration and under the previous administration about certain policies and development in the Middle East, but I think on a set of core interests, we continue to have a common view about what we aim to achieve," said Ben Rhodes, Obama's deputy national security adviser.

The Gulf summit comes as

the U.S. and five other nations work to reach an agreement with Iran by the end of June to curb its nuclear efforts in exchange for relief from international economic sanctions. The Gulf nations fear that an easing of sanctions will only facilitate what they see as Iran's aggression.

The White House says a nuclear accord could clear the way for more productive discussions with Iran about its reputed terror links. The U.S. has criticized Iran's support for Hezbollah, as well as attacks carried out by Iran's Quds Force.

In 2011, the Obama administration accused Iran of plotting to kill the Saudi ambassador to the United States in Washington.

The Saudis are also particularly concerned about the situation in Yemen, where Houthi rebels with ties with Iran have ousted the U.S.- and Saudi-backed leader.

For more than a month, a Saudi-led coalition has tried

to push back the Houthis with a bombing campaign. On Tuesday, a five-day humanitarian cease-fire went into effect, though the pause in fighting was already at risk. A jet fighter from the Saudi coalition on Wednesday struck a military convoy belonging to Shiite rebels and their allies in southern Yemen.

Saudi officials cited the cease-fire as one of the reasons why King Salman needed to stay in Riyadh and not make the trip to the United States.

The Saudi king isn't the only head of state sending a lower-level representative to the summit. The heads of the United Arab Emirates and Oman have had health problems and were not making the trip.

Bahrain's royal court announced Wednesday that rather than travel to Washington, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa would be attending a horse show and meeting with Queen Elizabeth II.