

### Blatter Refuses To Resign After Raids

ZURICH (AP) — As defiant as ever, Sepp Blatter resisted calls to resign as FIFA president Thursday and deflected blame for the massive bribery and corruption scandal engulfing soccer's world governing body.

"We, or I, cannot monitor everyone all of the time," Blatter said in his first public remarks on the crisis that has further tainted his leadership on the eve of his bid for a fifth term as president.

The 79-year-old Blatter insisted he could restore trust in world soccer after a pair of corruption investigations brought "shame and humiliation" on his organization and the world's most popular sport.

"We cannot allow the reputation of football and FIFA to be dragged through the mud any longer," he said. "It has to stop here and now."

Despite a tide of criticism and pressure on him to leave, Blatter is moving ahead with a presidential election Friday that is likely to bring him another four years in office as one of them most powerful men in sports.

### Carter Demands Training Enhancements

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pentagon leaders are trying to "fine tune" U.S. strategy for ousting the Islamic State group from Iraq, focusing on faster and better training and arming of Sunni tribes whose combat role is central to reversing the extremists' advances, senior U.S. officials said Thursday.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter, speaking to reporters while traveling to Asia, said he told senior military officers at the Pentagon this week to come up with ideas to improve training and equipping, particularly of the Sunni tribes who complain that the Shiite-dominated government in Baghdad is dragging its heels on helping them.

"I can't describe to you what the possibilities are because folks are looking at them right now," Carter said.

The scramble for answers comes after Islamic State forces, though outnumbered, captured the Anbar province capital of Ramadi as Iraqi forces fled on May 16. Although the White House says those Iraqi forces were not U.S.-trained, the defeat prompted Carter to make the startlingly frank public assessment last weekend that the Iraqis lacked "the will to fight."

President Barack Obama on Tuesday said it was time for the U.S. to consider whether it was delivering military aid to Iraq efficiently.

### Kurdish Fighters On March Against IS

BEIRUT (AP) — In contrast to the Iraqi army's failures, Kurdish fighters in Syria are on the march against the Islamic State group, capturing towns and villages in an oil-rich swath of the country's northeast under the cover of U.S.-led airstrikes.

As the Kurds close in on Tel Abyad, a major commercial center on the Turkish border, their advance highlights the decisive importance of combining airstrikes with the presence of a cohesive and motivated ally on the ground — so clearly absent in Iraq.

In Syria, a country now split mostly between al-Qaida-style militants and forces loyal to President Bashar Assad, the U.S. has found a reliable partner in the country's main Kurdish fighting force, known as the YPG. They are moderate, mostly secular fighters, driven by revolutionary fervor and deep conviction in their cause.

Since the beginning of May, they have wrested back more than 200 Kurdish and Christian towns in northeastern Syria, as well as strategic mountains seized earlier by IS. Along the way, they have picked up ammunition, weapons and vehicles left behind by Islamic State fighters.

The push has gotten them closer to Tel Abyad, a major avenue for commerce for the extremist group through which it smuggles foreign fighters and sells black-market oil to help fund its conquests. The city is also a key link between Turkey and the northern Syrian city of Raqqa, the Islamic State group's de-facto capital in its self-declared caliphate.

### Human Error Blamed In Shipments

WASHINGTON (AP) — Human error probably was not a factor in the Army's mistaken shipment of live anthrax samples to numerous U.S. government and commercial laboratories in the U.S. and in South Korea, the Army's top general said Thursday.

Gen. Ray Odierno, the Army chief of staff, told reporters the problem may have been a failure in the technical process of killing, or inactivating, anthrax samples. The process in this case "might not have completely killed" the samples as intended before they were shipped, he said.

Odierno said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is investigating that aspect of what went wrong at Dugway Proving Ground, the Army installation in Utah that sent the anthrax to government and commercial labs in at least nine states across the U.S. and to an Army lab in South Korea.

The general said he was not aware that such a problem had surfaced previously at Dugway.

"The best I can tell, it was not human error," he said, adding that normal procedures had been followed and he is confident that "nobody is in danger."

### Adviser Earned Bush Millions

WASHINGTON (AP) — During his transition from Florida governor to likely presidential candidate, Jeb Bush served on the boards of or as an adviser to at least 15 companies and nonprofits, a dizzying array of corporate connections that earned him millions of dollars and occasional headaches.

Bush returned to corporate America after leaving the governor's mansion in early 2007, and his industry portfolio expanded steadily until he began shedding ties late last year to prepare a run for president.

Executives who worked alongside Bush describe him as an engaged adviser with an eye for detail.

Yet experts question how anyone could serve so many boards at once effectively.

"Board of directors and advisory boards are in charge of high-level oversight," said law professor Elizabeth Nowicki, a former Securities and Exchange Commission lawyer. "You cannot possibly do that simultaneously for 10 or 15 entities."

### Popular Beaches Closed Over Oil

MANHATTAN BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Popular beaches along nearly 7 miles of Los Angeles-area coastline were off-limits to surfing and swimming Thursday as scientists looked for the source of globs of tar that washed ashore.

The sand and surf on south Santa Monica Bay appeared virtually free of oil after an overnight cleanup, but officials weren't sure if more tar would show up. They planned to assess during low tide at midday.

U.S. Coast Guard and state officials said samples of tar and water would be analyzed to identify where it originated, but it could take days to get the results. Nothing has been ruled out, including last week's coastal oil spill that created a 10-square-mile slick about 100 miles to the northwest off the Santa Barbara County coast.

There is also a refinery and offshore oil tanker terminal nearby, but the Coast Guard did not find a sheen from a spill after the tar started to accumulate Wednesday.

No problems with wildlife have been reported, said Sau Garcia of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

# Ex-US Speaker Charged In Relation To Payments Of Hush Money

BY MICHAEL TARM  
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Former U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert agreed to pay \$3.5 million in hush money to keep an unidentified person silent about "prior misconduct" by the Illinois Republican who was once second in line to the U.S. presidency, according to a federal grand jury indictment handed down on Thursday in Chicago.

The indictment, which does not describe the misconduct Hastert was allegedly trying to conceal, charges the 73-year-old with one count of evading bank regulations as he withdrew tens of thousands of dollars at a time to make the payments. He is also charged with one count of lying to the FBI about the reason for the unusual bank withdrawals.

Each count of the indictment carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The Associated Press left a phone message seeking comment with a person at Hastert's office in Washington, D.C., where he has worked as a lobbyist since 2008; it was not immediately returned. Hastert also did not immediately return a message left on his cellphone seeking comment, or respond to an email.

Hastert withdrew a total of around \$1.7 million in cash from various bank accounts from 2010 to 2014, and then provided it to the person identified in the indictment only as Individual A. Hastert allegedly agreed to pay the person \$3.5 million, but never apparently paid that full amount.

The seven-page indictment notes Hastert was a high school teacher and coach from 1965 to 1981 in suburban Yorkville, about 50 miles west of Chicago. While the indictment says Individual A has been a resident of Yorkville and has known Hastert most of his life,

it doesn't describe their relationship.

The indictment says Hastert agreed to the payments after multiple meetings in 2010. It says that "during at least one of the meetings, Individual A and defendant discussed past misconduct by defendant against Individual A that had occurred years earlier" and Hastert agreed to pay Individual A \$3.5 million "in order to compensate for and conceal his prior misconduct against Individual A," the indictment says.

The indictment says that between 2010 and 2012 Hastert made fifteen \$50,000 withdrawals of cash from bank accounts at Old Second Bank, People's State Bank and Castle Bank and gave cash to Individual A around every six weeks.

Around April 2012, bank officials began questioning Hastert about the large withdrawals, and starting in July of that year, Hastert reduced the amounts he withdrew at a time to less than \$10,000 — apparently so they would not run afoul of a regulation designed to stop illicit activity such as money laundering, according to the indictment.

Among the focuses of the FBI investigation was whether Hastert, in the words of the indictment, was "the victim of a criminal extortion related to, among other matters, his prior positions in government." The court document does not elaborate.

Investigators questioned Hastert on Dec. 8, 2014 and he lied about why he had been withdrawing so much money at a time. He told investigators he did it because he didn't trust the banking system, the indictment alleges.

"Yeah ... I kept the cash. That's what I am doing," it quotes Hastert as saying.

Hastert, who also maintains a home in Plano, Illinois, was a little known lawmaker from suburban Chicago when chosen to succeed conservative Newt Gingrich as speaker. Hastert was picked after favored Louisiana Congressman

Bob Livingston resigned following his admission of several sexual affairs.

As speaker, Hastert pushed President George W. Bush's legislative agenda, helping pass a massive tax cut and expanding Medicare prescription drug benefits.

He retired from Congress in 2007 after eight years as speaker, making him the longest-serving Republican House speaker. He was second in line to the presidency during those years after the vice president.

David Corwin of Yorkville said his son, Scott, wrestled for Hastert in high school, then later became a wrestling coach himself.

"You won't get anyone to say anything bad about him out here," said David Corwin. "Everybody loved him. The kids loved him and they still do."

Illinois has a long history of politicians getting in legal trouble.

Former U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. left an Alabama prison for a half-way house in March after serving a year and a half for illegally spending \$750,000 in campaign funds on furs, vacations and other luxury items. Two successive governors in the 2000s, Republican George Ryan and Democrat Rod Blagojevich, were convicted on sweeping corruption charges. Ryan served more than five years in prison and Blagojevich is still serving a 14-year sentence.

In the Hastert case, it is not clear if the money was paid in relation to his former position in government. Hastert started making the payments to the person in about 2010 after he retired from Congress, according to the indictment.

Reached by telephone after the announcement, former governor Ryan described Hastert as an effective legislator.

"I'm just surprised if this is true," said Ryan, who has lived in Kankakee, Illinois, since his release from prison.

## Rain Eases Drought, Water Could Linger

BY JUAN A. LOZANO  
AND SETH ROBBINS  
Associated Press

HOUSTON — This week's record rainfall in Texas eased the state's drought and swelled rivers and lakes to the point that they may not return to normal levels until July, scientists said Thursday.

Just weeks ago, much of the state was parched with varying levels of drought. But the same drenching rainfall that paralyzed parts of Houston and swept away a vacation home with eight people inside also offered relief from a long dry spell.

Many cities were still in danger of flooding as heavy rain from earlier in the week poured downstream, pushing rivers over their banks.

"There's so much water in Texas and Oklahoma that it's going to take quite a while for those rivers to recede," said Mark Wiley, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Fort Worth, Texas.

If normal amounts of precipitation return, rivers will probably drop to average levels by the Fourth of July, he said.

"Six months ago, we were dying for this stuff," he said. "And now we're saying, 'Please, please stop.'"

On Wednesday, the Houston area got a respite from the rain, but by Thursday runoff from earlier in the week had lifted the San Jacinto River above flood stage, and it kept climbing.

Nearby residents watched the high water with alarm.

"We came back out here today to get a few of our things that we had parked by the road," said Brian Harmon, who lives in suburban Kingwood. "The water keeps rising and rising. We didn't want to lose anything else."

Harmon's home had up to 2 feet of water. Nearby streets had water rushing over them.

"It's very stressful," he said. "I'm very tired of it."

About 60 miles southwest of Houston, the mayor of Wharton asked residents to voluntarily evacuate about 300 homes because of the predicted rise of the Colorado River.

And in the rural Parker County community of Horseshoe Bend, some 40 miles southwest of Fort Worth, officials asked people in 250 homes to flee from the Brazos River.

By early Thursday, Parker County Emergency Management spokesman Joel Kertok said the Brazos had almost crested, but officials had no immediate reports of flooded homes and were monitoring the situation.

He said the river, which has a flood level of 21 feet, was at nearly 24 feet.

This week's storms and floods in Texas and Oklahoma have left at least 23 people dead and at least 14 others missing.

In Miami, President Barack Obama said the flooding should serve as a reminder

of the need to make the nation more resilient against natural disasters. He said climate change is affecting both the pace and intensity of storms.

"The best scientists in the world are telling us that extreme weather events, like hurricanes, are likely to become more powerful," Obama said during the first visit of his presidency to the National Hurricane Center.

"When you combine stronger storms with rising seas, that's a recipe for more devastating floods," he said.

In Central Texas, search crews continued looking for the eight people feared dead after the swollen Blanco River smashed through Wimberley, a small tourist town between San Antonio and Austin, over the Memorial Day weekend. Authorities there are concerned that more rain forecast for the region could hamper the search.

The Hays County emergency management coordinator, Kharley Smith, said more rain could shift debris fields and complicate efforts to find entangled victims.

A portion of the San Jacinto on Thursday was at nearly 53 feet, about 4 feet above flood stage, said Kim Jackson, a spokeswoman for the Harris County Flood Control District.

A neighbor was helping Joy Rizzi build a concrete barrier Thursday at the rear of her home north of Houston near the San Jacinto.

She was hoping the barrier would prevent debris carried by the rising river from damaging her home. Rizzi planned to move her car to higher ground, but she was staying put.

"I'll stay because I don't want to leave my home," she said.

Chuck Bayne was among those who decided to follow authorities' advice and leave his North Texas home in Horseshoe Bend. On Wednesday, Bayne, owner of the Brazos RV Resort, headed to his second home in Arlington.

"Everybody on the river is leaving, except you have a couple dozen who aren't leaving," he said. "They're afraid of looters, and some are just plain stubborn."

Farther west, about 20 homes flooded after waters rose at Lake Leon. Fire Chief Darrell Fox said officials had asked for voluntary evacuations of 100 to 150 homes around the lake, which is 100 miles southwest of Fort Worth.

In Wharton, the Colorado River is expected to crest at about 45.5 feet, nearly 7 feet above flood stage, by either late Friday or early Saturday.

"We've made a tour of the area, and a lot of the people have taken heed of our warnings and are moving out," Wharton Mayor Domingo Montalvo Jr. said Thursday. The city has opened a shelter, but so far only one person is staying at the facility.

## Alabama, Feds Reach Agreement Over Prison Abuse

BY KIM CHANDLER  
Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — An Alabama women's prison will be overhauled after the U.S. Justice Department said officers there coerced inmates into sex, watched them in showers and bathrooms and organized a New Year's Eve strip show.

The Justice Department on Thursday reached a settlement agreement with the state of Alabama to address the alleged abuses at the Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women in Wetumpka. Vanita Gupta, the Justice Department's top civil rights lawyer, said the agreement could serve as a model for other prisons.

"The settlement ultimately aims for a complete transformation, a kind of cultural change inside the institution," Gupta said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Built in 1942 in the sleepy town of Wetumpka and named for a reformer who crusaded for better conditions behind bars, Alabama's

Elimination Act.

"It's a good day not just for Tutwiler. It's a good day for the Department of Corrections and the state, and I think it speaks well for where we are going in the future," Alabama Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn said.

Dunn said that many of the changes outlined in the settlement are already in place, including the camera system, staff training and bathroom privacy features. The staff at Tutwiler is now 65 percent female, he said; previously only 35 percent of the staff were female.

"The Alabama Department of Corrections was really a full partner in drafting the agreement," Gupta said, adding, "It's hard for anyone to take a look at our findings and not be objectively disturbed by what we found."

The Montgomery-based Equal Justice Initiative first raised the alarm about Tutwiler after investigating an inmate's complaint in 2011 that she was assaulted.

"It was a horror house," EJI executive director Bryan Stevenson said. "Women were not safe. They were being

threatened and menaced, and when they were assaulted and raped, there was no safe way for them to complain about these problems."

Stevenson said conditions have improved, but he was concerned about how long it has taken. He also said that problems of crowding and assaults persist at other state prisons. Stevenson said he was also concerned that officers in the incidents did not face criminal charges.

"Things have improved but there is still a lot more work that has to be done there," he said.

Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley said the state has tried to address the concerns raised by the Justice Department.

State Sen. Cam Ward, who chairs a state task force on prison reform, said that with the settlement, "Hopefully, we are closing an ugly chapter in our state's correctional history, but I don't think by any stretch of the imagination that it is something to be happy about. It should be a wake-up call for all of us that we've got to do a better job of managing our corrections system."