

Syrian Soldiers Killed With Crisis Out Of Control

BEIRUT (AP) — Army defectors ambushed dozens of Syrian troops and regime forces gunned down civilians during one of the bloodiest days of the 8-month-old uprising, which appeared Tuesday to be spiraling out of President Bashar Assad's control.
Up to 90 people were killed in a gruesome wave of violence Monday, activists said. The extent of the bloodshed only came to light Tuesday, in part because corpses lying in the streets did not reach the morgue until daylight.
As the bloodshed spiked, Assad's former allies were turning on him in rapid succession — a sign of profound impatience with a leader who has failed to stem months of unrest that could explode into a regional conflagration.
Turkey, Jordan and the 22-member Arab League all signaled they were fed up with Assad's response to the uprising and were ready to pressure him to go.
Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Tuesday he no longer has confidence in the government led by Assad, a 46-year-old eye doctor who inherited power from his father 11 years ago.

Retail Sales Rise, Wholesale Prices Flatten

WASHINGTON (AP) — Consumers are giving a modest lift to the economy. They spent more on trucks, electronics and building supplies in October to boost retail sales for the fifth straight month. The gains provide an encouraging start for the October-December quarter. They come just as separate reports show that wholesale prices are flattening and U.S. shoppers are spending more at Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer.
Still, consumers might not be able to sustain their spending growth if unemployment remains high and pay raises scant. And Europe may be on the brink of a recession that could further slow U.S. growth next year.
"The consumer has to come through this holiday season if we are going to get back to more decent growth rates, and the early readings are those households have hit the stores quite strongly," said Joel Naroff, chief economist at Naroff Economic Advisors.

Apple Names Levinson Non-Executive Chairman

CUPERTINO, Calif. (AP) — Apple has named board member Arthur Levinson as its non-executive chairman to fill the vacancy left open when co-founder Steve Jobs died last month. Levinson is chairman of Genentech Inc., a pharmaceuticals company he joined as a research scientist in 1980 and led as chief executive from 1995 to 2009. Levinson has been co-lead director on Apple Inc.'s board since 2005. He joined the board in 2000. Robert Iger, president and CEO of The Walt Disney Co., was tapped as a director.
After taking the reins at Disney in 2005, Iger repaired frayed relations between Jobs and Disney, first by making ABC shows available on iTunes, and then by leading Disney's acquisition of computer animated movie studio Pixar for \$7.4 billion. The Pixar deal made Jobs Disney's largest shareholder.
The appointments were announced Tuesday.

Congress Fights Attempts At Healthier Lunches

WASHINGTON (AP) — Who needs leafy greens and carrots when pizza and french fries will do? In an effort many 9-year-olds will cheer, Congress wants pizza and french fries to stay on school lunch lines and is fighting the Obama administration's efforts to take unhealthy foods out of schools.
The final version of a spending bill released late Monday would unravel school lunch standards the Agriculture Department proposed earlier this year. These include limiting the use of potatoes on the lunch line, putting new restrictions on sodium and boosting the use of whole grains. The legislation would block or delay all of those efforts.
The bill also would allow tomato paste on pizzas to be counted as a vegetable, as it is now. USDA had wanted to only count a half-cup of tomato paste or more as a vegetable, and a serving of pizza has less than that.
Nutritionists say the whole effort is reminiscent of the Reagan administration's much-ridiculed attempt 30 years ago to classify ketchup as a vegetable to cut costs. This time around, food companies that produce frozen pizzas for schools, the salt industry and potato growers requested the changes and lobbied Congress.

Recordings After JFK Assassination Found

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A long-lost version of the Air Force One recordings made in the immediate aftermath of President John F. Kennedy's assassination, with more than 30 minutes of additional material not in the official version in the government's archives, has been found and is for sale.
There are incidents and code names described on the newly discovered two-plus hour recording, which predates the shorter and newer recording currently housed in the National Archives outside Washington and the Lyndon B. Johnson Library in Texas. The shorter recording was thought to be the only surviving version of the tape.
The asking price is \$500,000 for the reel-to-reel tape, which is inside its original box with a typewritten label showing it was made by the White House Communications Agency for Army Gen. Chester "Ted" Clifton Jr.
It is titled "Radio Traffic Involving AF-1 in flight from Dallas, Texas to Andrews AFB on November 22, 1963."
"Americans have looked to the history of the Kennedy assassination in search of answers, somewhere in an attic there existed a tape made years before the only known surviving version, of the conversations on Air Force One on that fateful day," said Nathan Raab, vice president of The Raab Collection, a Philadelphia historic documents dealer that put the tape up for sale Tuesday.

Wanted: Astronauts; Missing: U.S. Rocket

WASHINGTON (AP) — Looking for a job? NASA is hiring astronauts. You can even apply online at a giant government jobs website. There's only one hitch: NASA doesn't have its own spaceship anymore and is sending fewer fliers into orbit right now.
"The experience is well worth the wait," promised NASA flight crew operations director Janet Kavandi as the space agency started a public search Tuesday for new astronauts.
There will be flights, but not many, with the space shuttle fleet retired. A handful of astronauts each year are launching on a Russian Soyuz spaceship to the International Space Station for six-month stays.
In about three to five years, NASA hopes to purchase trips for astronauts headed to the space station on American-built commercial rockets instead. And eventually, NASA hopes to fly astronauts in a government owned Orion capsule to an asteroid or even Mars, but those pioneering trips are more than a decade away.
With veteran astronauts leaving the space agency, Kavandi said NASA is afraid it will not have enough astronauts, something a National Research Council report pointed out in September.
NASA needs about 55 astronauts, and with a new class of nine graduating earlier this month, the astronaut roster is up to 58. One of those new astronauts will get to fly to the space station as early as 2013, Kavandi said.

Crackdowns Reach Epicenter Of Protests

BY MEGHAN BARR AND CHRIS HAWLEY
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Crackdowns against the Occupy Wall Street encampments across the country reached the epicenter of the movement Tuesday, when police rousted protesters from a Manhattan park and a judge ruled that their free speech rights do not extend to pitching a tent and setting up camp for months at a time.

It was a potentially devastating setback. If crowds of demonstrators return to Zuccotti Park, they will not be allowed to bring tents, sleeping bags and other equipment that turned the area into a makeshift city of dissent.

But demonstrators pledged to carry on with their message protesting corporate greed and economic inequality, either in Zuccotti or a yet-to-be chosen new home.

"This is much bigger than a square plaza in downtown Manhattan," said Hans Shan, an organizer who was working with churches to find places for protesters to sleep. "You can't evict an idea whose time has come."

State Supreme Court Justice Michael Stallman upheld the city's eviction of the protesters after an emergency appeal by the National Lawyers Guild.

The protesters have been camped out in the privately owned park since mid-September. Mayor Michael Bloomberg said he ordered the sweep because health and safety conditions had become "intolerable" in the crowded plaza. The raid was conducted in the middle of the night "to reduce the risk of confrontation" and "to minimize disruption to the surrounding neighborhood," he said.

By early Tuesday evening, some protesters were being allowed back into the park two by two. But they could each take only a small bag.



Howard Schnapp/Newsday/MCT
Occupy Wall Street protestor Andrew Carbone takes his place as protesters are allowed back into Zuccotti Park on Tuesday evening, November 15, 2011, in New York, New York.

Still, some protesters believed the loss of Zuccotti Park may be an opportunity to broaden and decentralize the protest to give it staying power.

"People are really recognizing that we need to build a movement here," Shan said. "What we're dedicated to is not just about occupying space. That's a tactic."

But without a place to congregate, protesters will have a harder time communicating with each other en masse. The leaders of the movement spent most of Tuesday gathering in small groups throughout the city — in

church basements and on street corners — and relaying plans in scattered text messages and email.

Robert Harrington, owner of a small importing business in New York, stood outside the barricade with a sign calling for tighter banking regulations.

"To be effective it almost has to move out of the park," Harrington said. "It's like the anti-war movement in the '60s, which started as street theater and grew into something else."

"The issues," he added, "are larger than just this camp."

Italy's Premier-Designate Finalizing New Govt

BY NICOLE WINFIELD AND COLLEEN BARRY
Associated Press

ROME — Prime Minister-designate Mario Monti of Italy said Tuesday he is ready to present his new government to the president after winning wide backing — and important pledges of sacrifices — from political, business and union leaders during two days of intense consultations.

Monti said he still has to put the final touches on his Cabinet and economic program, which he will outline to President Giorgio Napolitano on Wednesday. His government must receive votes of confidence in both houses of Parliament, expected this week, to take office and begin the task of steering the eurozone's third-

largest economy through its debt crisis.

Monti expressed his "serenity" and "conviction" in Italy's ability to overcome the difficult phase in its history.

"I was impressed by the sense of responsibility and willingness to back social growth," Monti said. "Everyone offered concrete contributions of possible partial sacrifices in exchange for a more general positive outcome."

Monti, a respected economist and former European commissioner, is under pressure to quickly reassure financial markets that Italy will avoid a default that could tear apart the 17 countries that use the euro currency and push the global economy back into recession. The European Union and the European Central Bank have out-

lined measures Italy must take — many of them reforms blocked in the past by special interests.

Monti, 68, has already shown his determination to press through deep reforms by making it clear he intends to serve until regularly scheduled elections in 2013, rejecting calls for an early vote.

On Tuesday, after rounds of meetings, Monti garnered support from the center-left Democratic Party, former premier Silvio Berlusconi's People of Freedom party and the Confindustria, a powerful business lobby.

"We strongly support the birth of this government because for us it is the last chance to regain credibility," Confindustria leader Emma Marcegaglia said.

Union leader Raffaele Bonanni said Monti was close to completing

his Cabinet at the time of their meeting Tuesday afternoon.

"Monti told us that he has reached an agreement with the main political forces that will give him a consistent parliamentary majority that will support him and he will very quickly be in a position to present the list of ministers," said Bonanni, leader of the powerful CISL union.

Despite reports of progress, European markets closed lower Tuesday as investors worried that politicians might pull their support in the future if austerity measures proved unpalatable.

On Wall Street, stock indexes wavered between small gains and losses as investors considered another spike in Italy's main borrowing rate against an increase in U.S. retail spending.

Post Office Nears Default As Losses Mount To \$5.1B

BY HOPE YEN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service said Tuesday it has lost \$5.1 billion in the past year, pushing it closer to imminent default on a multibillion-dollar payment and to future bankruptcy as the weak economy and increased Internet use drive down mail volume.

The financial losses for the year ended Sept. 30 came despite deep cuts of more than 130,000 jobs in recent years and the closing of some smaller local post offices.

Losses will only accelerate in the coming year, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe warned, citing faster-than-expected declines in first-class mail. He implored Congress to take swift, wide-ranging action to stabilize the ailing agency's finances as it nears a legal deadline Friday to pay \$5.5 billion into the U.S. Treasury for future retiree health benefits.

Congress is expected to grant a reprieve, but that will only delay the day of reckoning for an agency struggling for relevance in an electronic age. Based on current losses, the Postal Service says it will run out of money — or come dangerously close — next September, forcing it to halt service.

"We are at a point where we require urgent action," Donahoe said.

In the event of a shutdown, private companies such as FedEx and UPS could handle a small portion of the material the post office moves, but they do not go everywhere. No business has shown interest in delivering letters everywhere in the country for a set rate of 44 cents for a first-class letter.

For the fiscal year ended Sept. 30, the post office had income of \$65.7 billion, down \$1.4 billion from the previous year. Expenses totaled \$70.6 billion.



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