

Israel Fires At Syria After Shell Strikes Base

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel was drawn into the fighting in neighboring Syria for the first time Sunday, firing warning shots across the border after an errant mortar shell landed near an Israeli military installation in the Golan Heights.

While Israel appeared eager to calm the situation, its response was a potent reminder of how easily the Syrian civil war — already spilling across borders with Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan — could explode into a wider regional conflagration.

Israeli officials threatened even tougher retaliation if attacks persist.

They have feared that the instability in Syria over the past 19 months could spill across the border into Israel, particularly as President Bashar Assad's grip on power grows increasingly precarious.

Israel has little love for Assad, who has provided refuge and support to Israel's bitterest enemies through the years. But the Syrian leader — and his father before him — have kept the frontier quiet for nearly four decades, providing a rare source of stability in the volatile region.

Blast Devastates Indianapolis Neighborhood

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Splintered beams and boards on a piece of charred earth were all that remained Sunday where three Indianapolis homes were leveled in a blast that killed two people and rendered homes for blocks uninhabitable.

A backhoe raked through the rubble in the middle-class subdivision as clusters of firefighters and rescue workers weary from a long, chaotic day that began late the night before waited for their next assignment.

The two-story, brick-faced homes on either side of those demolished by the blast were ruins. One home's roof was gone, a blackened husk left behind. On the other side of the gap, the side of a home was sheared off. Across the street, garage doors had buckled from the heat.

It wasn't yet clear what caused the blast that shook the neighborhood at 11 p.m. Saturday. Residents described hearing a loud boom that blew out windows and collapsed ceilings. Some thought a plane had crashed or that it was an earthquake.

Alex Pflanzner, who was asleep when the nearby homes were leveled, said he heard his wife screaming and thought someone was breaking in his house. Grabbing his gun, he checked the house and saw the front door was standing open.

"I walked outside and all the houses were on fire," he said.

Pflanzner, his wife and two dogs were staying in a hotel room Sunday night. They were, however, without their cat, who refused to budge from the crawl space.

Long-Revered BBC Faces Extraordinary Crisis

LONDON (AP) — The bungling of reports that powerful Britons sexually abused children has thrown one of the largest and most respected broadcasters in the world into a deep crisis.

It is hard to overstate the importance of the BBC in British society; its influence stretches throughout the former British empire and beyond. Over the years, the BBC has been behind almost all of the U.K.'s broadcast milestones, serving as a voice for the British nation. Its airwaves have carried the clanging of Big Ben's bells, wartime messages from Winston Churchill, and the music of the Beatles — exporting British culture to a global audience.

The head of the BBC's governing body called Sunday for an overhaul of the broadcaster. That could mean many things for the sprawling organization that has long emphasized its obligations to the public. To know what it would take, it is important to know what the BBC is and the scale of the crisis it faces.

007 Soars With Record \$87.8M U.S. Debut

LOS ANGELES (AP) — James Bond's "Skyfall" has extended its worldwide box-office rule to North America, hauling in a franchise-record \$87.8 million in its first weekend at U.S. theaters.

Adding in \$2.2 million from Thursday night previews at IMAX and other large-format theaters, "Skyfall" has taken in \$90 million domestically, according to studio estimates Sunday.

That lifts the worldwide total for "Skyfall" to \$518.6 million since it began rolling out overseas in late October. Internationally, the 23rd Bond flick added \$89 million this weekend to raise its overseas revenue to \$428.6 million.

The third installment starring Daniel Craig as British super-spy Bond, "Skyfall" outdid the \$67.5 million U.S. debut of 2008's "Quantum of Solace," the franchise's previous best opening. "Skyfall" more than doubled the \$40.8 million debut of Craig's first Bond film, 2006's "Casino Royale."

"Skyfall" already has passed the \$407.7 million overseas total for "Quantum of Solace" and by Monday, it will top the \$432.2 million international haul for "Casino Royale."

Veterans Day 2012

BY STACY A. ANDERSON
 Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama paid tribute at a Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery to "the heroes over the generations who have served this country of ours with distinction."

He said the wreath he laid earlier at Tomb of the Unknowns was intended to remember every service member who has worn a uniform and served the nation.

In a speech at the Memorial Amphitheater during the brisk, sunny morning, Obama said America will never forget the sacrifice made by its veterans and their families.

"No ceremony or parade, no hug or handshake is enough to truly honor that service," the president said, adding that the country must commit every day "to serving you as well as you've



POOL/MICHAEL REYNOLDS/EPA/MCT
President Barack Obama, left, participates in a wreath-laying ceremony on Veterans Day at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., Sunday.

served us."

He spoke of the Sept. 11 generation, "who stepped forward when the Towers fell, and in the

years since have stepped into history, writing one of the greatest chapters in military service our country has ever known.

Frustration Simmers For Some Storm Victims

BY CHRISTINA REXRODE AND VERENA DOBNIK
 Associated Press

NEW YORK — New Yorkers railed Sunday against a utility that has lagged behind others in restoring power two weeks after the superstorm that socked the region, criticizing its slow pace as well as a dearth of information.

About 120,000 customers in New York and New Jersey remained without power Sunday, including tens of thousands of homes and businesses that were too damaged to connect to power even if it was running in their neighborhood. More than 8 million lost power during the storm, and some during a later nor'easter.

Separately, U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano visited with disaster-relief workers Sunday in Staten Island's Midland Beach neighborhood, which is still devastated two weeks after Sandy hit.

The lack of power restoration for a relative few in the densely populated region at the heart of the storm reinforced Sandy's fractured effect on the area: tragic and vicious to some, merely a nuisance to others.

Perhaps none of the utilities have drawn criticism as widespread, or as harsh, as the Long Island Power Authority. Nearly 50,000 of the homes and businesses it serves were still without power Sunday evening, and 55,000 more couldn't safely connect even though their local grids were back online because their wiring and other equipment had been

flooded. It would need to be repaired or inspected before those homes could regain power, LIPA said.

"We certainly understand the frustration that's out there," LIPA's chief operating officer, Michael Hervey, said in a conference call late Sunday. But, he said, the storm had been worse than expected, no utility had as many workers in place beforehand as it would have liked, and the power was coming back rapidly "compared to the damage that's been incurred."

Customers told of calling LIPA multiple times a day for updates and getting no answer, or contradictory advice.

"I was so disgusted the other night," said Carrie Baram of Baldwin Harbor, who said she calls the utility three times a day. "I was up till midnight, but nobody bothered to answer the telephone."

Baram, 56, said she and her husband, Bob, go to the mall to charge their cellphones, and Bob, a sales manager, goes there to work. They trekked to her parents' house to shower. At night, they huddle under a pile of blankets and listen to the sound of fire engines, which Baram assumes are blaring because people have been accidentally setting blazes with their generators.

"It's dark," said an exasperated Baram, "it's frightening, and it's freezing."

LIPA has said it knows that customers aren't getting the information they need, partly because of

an outdated information technology system that it is updating. Sunday, executives said they were working on setting up information centers near the most heavily damaged areas. The company also said it had deployed 6,400 linemen to work on restoring power, compared to 200 on a normal day.

"They're working on it, they're working on it" — that would be their common response," Nassau

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