

### Internet Service Goes Out Across Syria

BEIRUT (AP) — Internet service went down Thursday across Syria and international flights were canceled at the Damascus airport when a road near the facility was closed by heavy fighting in the country's civil war.

Activists said President Bashar Assad's regime pulled the plug on the Internet, perhaps in preparation for a major offensive. Cell-phone service also went out in Damascus and parts of central Syria, they said. The government blamed rebel fighters for the outages.

With pressure building against the regime on several fronts and government forces on their heels in the battle for the northern commercial hub of Aleppo, rebels have recently begun pushing back into Damascus after largely being driven out of the capital following a July offensive. One Damascus resident reported seeing rebel forces near a suburb of the city previously deemed to be safe from fighting.

The Internet outage, confirmed by two U.S.-based companies that monitor online connectivity, is unprecedented in Syria's 20-month-old uprising against Assad, which activists say has killed more than 40,000 people.

Regime forces suffered a string of tactical defeats in recent weeks, losing air bases and other strategic facilities. The government may be trying to blunt additional rebel offensives by hampering communications.

### Egypt's Islamists Hurriedly Vote On Constitution

CAIRO (AP) — Islamists on Thursday rushed to approve a draft constitution for Egypt without the participation of liberal and Christian members, aiming to pre-empt a court ruling that could dissolve their panel and further inflaming the clash between the opposition and President Mohammed Morsi.

The draft of the charter, meant to determine a new political identity for Egypt after 60 years of rule by authoritarian leaders, has an Islamist bent that rights experts say could lead to a say by Muslim clerics in legislation and restrictions on freedom of speech, women's rights and other liberties.

The lack of inclusion was obvious in Thursday's session of the assembly that has been writing the document for months. Of the 85 members in attendance, there was not a single Christian and only four women, all Islamists. Many of the men wore beards, the hallmark of Muslim conservatives. For weeks, liberal, secular and Christian members, already a minority on the 100-member panel, have been pulling out to protest what they call the Islamists' hijacking of the process.

Voting had not been expected for another two months. But the assembly, overwhelmingly made up of Morsi's allies, abruptly moved it up in order to pass the draft before Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court rules on Sunday on whether to dissolve the panel.

Morsi is expected to call for a referendum on the draft as early as mid-December.

### WikiLeaks Suspect: I Felt Like A Caged Animal

FORT MEADE, Md. (AP) — An Army private charged in the biggest security breach in U.S. history testified Thursday that he felt like a doomed, caged animal after he was arrested in Baghdad for allegedly sending classified information to the secret-spilling website WikiLeaks.

Pfc. Bradley Manning testified on the third day of a pretrial hearing at Fort Meade, outside Baltimore. His lawyers are seeking dismissal of all charges, contending his pretrial confinement in a Quantico, Va., Marine Corps brig was needlessly harsh.

Before he was sent to Quantico in July 2010, Manning spent some time in a cell in a segregation tent at Camp Arifjan, an Army installation in Kuwait.

"I remember thinking I'm going to die. I'm stuck inside this cage," Manning said under questioning by defense attorney David Coombs. "I just thought I was going to die in that cage. And that's how I saw it — an animal cage."

The compact, 24-year-old intelligence analyst looked youthful in his dark blue dress uniform, close-cropped hair and rimless eyeglasses. He was animated, often swiveling in the witness chair and gesturing with his hands.

### Thoughtful Officer Becomes Online Sensation

NEW YORK (AP) — A tourist's snapshot of a New York City police officer giving new boots to a barefoot homeless man in Times Square has created an online sensation.

Jennifer Foster, of Florence, Ariz., was visiting New York with her boyfriend on Nov. 14, when she came across the shoeless man asking for change in Times Square.

As she was about to approach him, she said the officer — identified as Larry DePrimo — came up to the man with a pair of all-weather boots and thermal socks on the frigid night. She recorded his generosity on her cellphone.

It was posted Tuesday night to the NYPD's official Facebook page and became an instant hit. More than 360,000 users "liked" it as of Thursday afternoon, and over 100,000 shared it.

Thousands of people commented, including one person who praised him as "An officer AND a Gentleman."

### NASA Spacecraft Confirms Ice On Mercury

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Just in time for Christmas, scientists have confirmed a vast amount of ice at the north pole — on Mercury, the closest planet to the sun.

The findings are from NASA's Mercury-orbiting probe, Messenger, and the subject of three scientific papers released Thursday by the journal Science.

The frozen water is located in regions of Mercury's north pole that always are in shadows, essentially impact craters. It's believed the south pole harbors ice as well, though there are no hard data to support it. Messenger orbits much closer to the north pole than the south.

"If you add it all up, you have on the order of 100 billion to 1 trillion metric tons of ice," said David Lawrence of the Applied Physics Laboratory at Johns Hopkins University. "The uncertainty on that number is just how deep it goes."

The ice is thought to be at least 1 1/2 feet deep — and possibly as much as 65 feet deep.

### Report: Extending Jobless Benefits Creates Jobs

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Congressional Budget Office says extending the current level of long-term unemployment benefits for another year would add 300,000 jobs to the economy.

A report from the nonpartisan office estimates that preserving jobless benefits would cost the government \$30 billion. But it would also lead to more spending by the unemployed, boosting demand for goods and services and creating new jobs.

Federal long-term unemployment benefits are set to expire on Dec. 29 unless Congress approves an extension. Democrats have called for reauthorization of extended benefits, but Republicans are generally opposed.

Regular jobless benefits generally last up to 26 weeks for eligible workers who lose their job and are seeking employment. Since 2008, the federal government has offered up to 47 weeks of additional benefits.

# U.N. Vote Recognizes State Of Palestine

BY EDITH M. LEDERER  
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations voted overwhelmingly Thursday to recognize a Palestinian state, a long-sought victory for the Palestinians and an embarrassing diplomatic defeat for the United States.

The resolution upgrading the Palestinians' status to a nonmember observer state at the U.N. was approved by a vote of 138-9, with 41 abstentions, in the 193-member world body.

A Palestinian flag was quickly unfurled on the floor of the General Assembly, behind the Palestinian delegation. In the West Bank city of Ramallah, hundreds crowded into the main square waved Palestinian flags and chanted "God is great." Others who had watched the vote on outdoor screens and television sets hugged, honked and set off fireworks before dancing in the streets.

Real independence, however, remains an elusive dream until the Palestinians negotiate a peace deal with the Israelis, who warned that the General Assembly action will only delay a lasting solution. Israel still controls the West Bank, east Jerusalem and access to Gaza, and it accused the Palestinians of bypassing negotiations with the campaign to upgrade their U.N. status.

The Palestinians still face enormous limitations. They don't control their borders, air-space or trade, they have separate and

competing governments in Gaza and the West Bank and they have no unified army or police.

The United States immediately criticized the historic vote. "Today's unfortunate and counterproductive resolution places further obstacles in the path peace," U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice said. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton called the vote "unfortunate" and "counterproductive."

The United States and Israel voted against recognition, joined by Canada, the Czech Republic, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau and Panama.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the speech by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to the General Assembly shortly before the vote "defamatory and venomous," saying it was "full of mendacious propaganda" against Israel. Netanyahu called the vote meaningless.

Abbas had told the General Assembly that it was "being asked today to issue the birth certificate of Palestine." Abbas said the vote is the last chance to save the two-state solution.

After the vote, Netanyahu said the U.N. move violated past agreements between Israel and the Palestinians and that Israel would act accordingly, without elaborating what steps it might take.

Thursday's vote came on the same day, Nov. 29, that the U.N. General Assembly in

1947 voted to recognize a partitioned state in Palestine, with the jubilant revelers then Jews. The Palestinians rejected that partition plan, and decades of tension and violence followed.

Just before Thursday's vote, Israel's U.N. ambassador, Ron Prosor, warned the General Assembly that "the Palestinians are turning their backs on peace" and that the U.N. can't break the 4,000-year-old bond between the people of Israel and the land of Israel.

The vote had been certain to succeed, with most member states sympathetic to the Palestinians. Several key countries, including France, this week announced they would support the move to elevate the Palestinians from the status of U.N. observer to nonmember observer state.

Unlike the more powerful U.N. Security Council, there are no vetoes in the General Assembly, and the resolution to raise the Palestinian status only required a majority vote for approval.

The vote grants Abbas an overwhelming international endorsement for his key position: establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, the territories captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war. With Netanyahu opposed to a pullback to the 1967 lines, this should strengthen Abbas' hand if peace talks resume.

## Winning Tickets Sought In \$588M Powerball Jackpot

BY MARIA SUDEKUM  
AND BRIAN SKOLOFF  
Associated Press

DEARBORN, Mo. — The search is on for the country's newest multimillionaires, the holders of two tickets that matched all six numbers to claim a record \$588 million Powerball jackpot.

Lottery officials said Thursday that the winning tickets matching all six numbers were sold at a convenience store in suburban Phoenix and a gas station just off Interstate 29 in a small northwestern Missouri town. Neither ticket holder had come forward.

The mystery fueled a giddy mood at the Trex Mart just outside Dearborn, Mo. — population 500 — as lottery officials and the media descended.

Cashiers Kristi Williams and Kelly Blount greeted customers with big smiles and questions about whether they had bought the winning ticket. No one had come forward to claim the prize by late Thursday morning, Missouri Lottery officials said.

"It's just awesome," Williams said. "It's so exciting. We can't even work."

The winning ticket sold in Arizona was purchased at a 4 Sons Food Store in Fountain Hills, Ariz.,



DAVID EULITT/KANSAS CITY STAR/MCT

Kristi Williams, a sales associate at the Trex Mart gas station in Dearborn, Missouri, smiles next to the lottery machine at right that was used to sell one of the winning lottery tickets for the Powerball jackpot inside the gas station. The location of the winning tickets was announced on Thursday.

state lottery officials said.

In Dearborn, Williams said several local people buy lottery tickets there regularly and workers were hoping it was one of their regulars.

But Baron Hartell, son of the store's owner, Lowell Hartell, said truck drivers moving in both direc-

tions on the north-south interstate that connects Kansas City to the Canadian border who frequent the store are also considered locals.

"Even the truck drivers who come around, we see them every day, so they all feel like all locals to us," he said.

Store manager Chris Naurez

said business had been "crazy" for Powerball tickets lately and that the store had sold about \$27,000 worth of tickets in the last few days.

"This really puts Dearborn on the map," he said.

The general manager of Trex Mart suggested his staff would be sharing in the \$50,000 bounty that the store will be awarded for selling one of the winning tickets.

"The response from the owner was, 'I guess we'll be able to give out Christmas bonuses,'" General Manager Kenny Gilbert said. "That's nice, especially at this time of year."

It appeared the winners had yet to come forward, and it wasn't clear if the tickets had been bought by individuals or groups. Winners have 180 days to claim their share of the prize money.

The numbers drawn Wednesday night were 5, 16, 22, 23, 29. The Powerball was 6. The \$587.5 million payout represents the second-largest jackpot in U.S. history.

"If you find you're holding the winning ticket, be sure you sign the back and put it in a safe place until you can take it to a Missouri Lottery office," said May Scheve Reardon, executive director of the Missouri Lottery. "You will also want to get some legal and financial advice before you claim."

## White House 'Fiscal Cliff' Offer Gets GOP Cold Shoulder

BY DAVID ESPO  
AP Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON — The White House is seeking \$1.6 trillion in higher taxes over a decade and an immediate infusion of funds to aid the jobless, help hard-pressed homeowners and perhaps extend the expiring payroll tax cut, officials said Thursday as talks aimed at averting an economy-rattling "fiscal cliff" turned testy.

In exchange, the officials said, President Barack Obama will support an unspecified amount of spending cuts this year, to be followed by legislation in 2013 producing savings of as much as \$400 billion from Medicare and other benefit programs over a decade.

The offer produced a withering response from House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, after a closed-door meeting in the Capitol with Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner. "Unfortunately, many Democrats continue to rule out sensible spending cuts that must be part of any significant agreement that will reduce our deficit," he declared.

Boehner added, "No substantive progress has been made between the White House and the

House" in the two weeks since Obama welcomed congressional leaders at the White House.

Democrats swiftly countered that any holdup was the fault of Republicans who refuse to accept Obama's campaign-long call to raise tax rates on upper incomes.

At the White House, presidential press secretary Jay Carney said, "There can be no deal without rates on top earners going up." Taking a confrontational, at times sarcastic tone, he said, "This should not be news to anyone on Capitol Hill. It is certainly not news to anyone in America who was not in a coma during the campaign season."

With barely a month remaining until a year-end deadline, the hardening of positions seemed more likely to mark a transition into hard bargaining rather than signal an end to efforts to achieve a compromise on the first post-election challenge of divided government.

Boehner suggested as much when one reporter asked if his comments meant he was breaking off talks with the White House and congressional Democrats.

"No, no, no. Stop," he quickly answered.

"I've got to tell you, I'm disappointed in where we are, and disappointed in what's happened over the last couple weeks. But going over the fiscal cliff is serious business."

Republican aides provided the first description of the White House's offer, although Democratic officials readily confirmed the outlines.

Under the proposal, the White House is seeking passage by year's end of tax increases totaling \$1.6 trillion over a decade, including the rate hikes sought by Obama.

Obama also asked for year-end approval for an unspecified amount of new spending to renew expiring jobless benefits, help homeowners hit by the real estate collapse and prevent a looming Jan. 1 cut in fees for doctors who treat Medicare patients.

The White House also wants a new stimulus package to aid the economy, with a price tag for the first year of \$50 billion, as well as

an extension of the Social Security payroll tax cut that is due to expire on Dec. 31, or some way to offset it.

In political terms, the White House proposal is a near mirror image of what officials have said Republicans earlier laid down as their first offer — a permanent extension of income tax cuts at all levels, an increase in the age of Medicare eligibility and steps to curtail future growth in Social Security cost-of-living increases.

In exchange, the GOP has offered to support unspecified increases in revenue as part of tax reform legislation to be written in 2013.

The GOP said the White House was offering unspecified spending cuts this year. Those would be followed next year by legislation producing savings from Medicare and other benefit programs of up to \$400 billion over a decade, a companion to an overhaul of the tax code.



Coyle-Young

Rachel Coyle and Ethan Young were married on Saturday, November 24, 2012, at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, in Lombard, Ill. with Father Thomas Botheroyd officiating.

Parents of the couple are Ken and Becc Coyle and Jim and Bonnie Young, all of Yankton.

Maid of honor was Liz Young of Yankton and Bridesmaid was Grace Schofield of Sioux Falls.

The bride's personal attendant was Leah Schretenthaler of Aiea, HI.

Vincent Coyle, Yankton, was best man and ring bearer was Devin Schofield of Sioux Falls. Dianna Heidinger of Las Vegas, NV served as lector.

Following the ceremony, a reception was held at the Odyssey Ship departing from Navy Pier in Chicago, Ill.

The bride graduated from Yankton High School in 2007 and from the University of South Dakota with a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree in Studio Art in 2011.

The groom graduated from Yankton High School in 2007 and from the University of South Dakota in 2011 with a BBA degree in Health Services Administration. He is currently a medical student at Midwestern University in Downers Grove, Ill.

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**Yule Tide Downtown Yankton**  
- Jar Count Contest -  
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Register at participating stores for a chance to win \$500!

- Parade of Lights -  
Saturday, Dec. 1st 6pm  
Enter your float!!! (stores open until 7pm)  
Parade will start at Levee & Capitol, go along 3rd St to alley between Cedar & Broadway by the County Government Center.  
Then join us at the Meridian Bridge for Tree Lighting

- Yuletide Yankton Celebration -  
Thursday, Dec. 13th, 7-8:30pm  
Drawings @ The Riverfront Event Center  
www.historicdowntownyankton.com