

UN: Nearly 1,000 Iraqis Killed In Sept.

BAGHDAD (AP) — An Iraqi sheik cradled his grandson's tightly wrapped body Tuesday, his face grim and his eyes downcast, trailed by men bearing the coffin of the infant's mother.

The mother and son were killed the day before by a bombing in Baghdad — two among nearly 1,000 Iraqi lives lost to violence in September. The heartbreaking image, captured in an Associated Press photo, illuminates the human tragedy behind the numbers.

Sectarian bloodshed has surged to levels not seen in Iraq since 2008. More than 5,000 people have been killed since April, when a deadly government raid on a Sunni protest camp unleashed a new round of violence that showed al-Qaida in Iraq is still strong despite years of U.S.-Iraqi offensives against the terror group.

At least 979 people — 887 civilians and 92 soldiers and national policemen — were killed in September, a 22 percent increase from the previous month, the U.N. mission in Iraq said Tuesday. Baghdad was hit hardest, with 418 violent deaths. The U.N. also reported that 2,133 people were wounded nationwide in the relentless car bombings, suicide attacks and shootings.

The spike reversed a brief decline to 804 in August after the death toll reached 1,057 in July, the highest since June 2008 when 975 people were killed.

Netanyahu: Israel Not Giving Up With Iran

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu played the spoiler Tuesday to Iran's attempts to ease relations with the West, calling the Iranian leader "a wolf in sheep's clothing" and declaring that Israel will do whatever it takes to prevent Tehran from developing nuclear weapons, even if it has to stand alone.

Speaking to world leaders at the U.N. General Assembly, Netanyahu gave a point-by-point rebuttal of President Hassan Rouhani's speech last week signaling a willingness to discuss Iran's disputed nuclear program.

Accusing Rouhani of a "charm offensive" aimed at getting the West to lift crippling sanctions, Netanyahu portrayed him as "a loyal servant of the regime" who has done nothing to stop his country's nuclear program since he took office in June.



Netanyahu

Rouhani, he added, must have known about terrorist attacks carried out by Iranian agents in Argentina, Saudi Arabia and Berlin in the 1990s because he was national security adviser at the time.

Israel's hope for the future is challenged "by a nuclear-armed Iran that seeks our destruction," the Israeli leader said.

A year ago at the General Assembly, Netanyahu held up a drawing of a spherical bomb with a sputtering fuse, then pulled out a red marker and drew a line across what he said was the threshold Iran was fast approaching and which Israel would not tolerate — 90 percent of the uranium enrichment needed to make an atomic bomb.

"Iran has been very careful not to cross that line," Netanyahu said Tuesday. "But Iran is positioning itself to race across that line in the future at a time of its choosing."

Weapons Inspectors Begin Work In Syria

BEIRUT (AP) — Wading into the world spotlight, international inspectors arrived in Damascus on Tuesday to begin the monumental task of overseeing the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons in the middle of a civil war.

The inspectors from a Netherlands-based chemical weapons watchdog have around nine months to complete their mission that calls for finding, dismantling and eliminating President Bashar Assad's estimated 1,000-ton arsenal.

Their task has been endorsed by a U.N. Security Council resolution that calls for Syria's chemical stockpile to be scrapped by mid-2014. The deadline is the tightest that the experts from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have ever faced.

An advance team of 19 inspectors and 14 U.N. staff members arrived in Damascus late Tuesday afternoon in a 19-vehicle convoy escorted from the Lebanese border by two Syrian Foreign Ministry representatives. The experts set up a logistics base for its immediate work, the U.N. said in a statement.

Experts at The Hague, where the OPCW is based, said Sunday the inspectors' priority is to reach the first milestone of helping Syria scrap its ability to manufacture chemical weapons by a Nov. 1 deadline, using every means possible.

No End In Sight

Government Shutdown Continues As Both Sides Trade Blame

BY DAVID ESPO AND DONNA CASSATA
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — First slowed, then stalled by political gridlock, the vast machinery of government clanged into partial shutdown mode on Tuesday and President Barack Obama warned the longer it goes "the more families will be hurt."

Republicans said it was his fault, not theirs, and embarked on a strategy — opposed by Democrats — of voting on bills to reopen individual agencies or programs.

Ominously, there were suggestions from leaders in both parties that the shutdown, heading for its second day, could last for weeks and grow to encompass a possible default by the Treasury if Congress fails to raise the nation's debt ceiling. The two issues are "now all together," said Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill.

Speaking at the White House, the president accused Republicans of causing the first partial closure in 17 years as part of a non-stop "ideological crusade" to wipe out his signature health care law.

House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, gave as good as he got. "The president isn't telling the whole story," he said in an opinion article posted on the USA Today website. "The fact is that Washington Democrats have slammed the door on reopening the government by refusing to engage in bipartisan talks."

Both houses of Congress met in a Capitol closed to regular public tours, part of the impact of a partial shutdown that sent ripples of disruption outward — from museums and memorials in Washington to Yellowstone and other national parks and to tax auditors and federal offices serving Americans coast to coast.

Officials said roughly 800,000 federal employees would be affected by the shutdown after a half-day on the job Tuesday to fill out time cards, put new messages



JILL TOYOSHIBA/KANSAS CITY STAR/MCT
Federal employees and their supporters protested the government shutdown on Tuesday at the Richard Bolling Federal Building in Kansas City, Mo.

on their voice mail and similar chores.

Among those workers were some at the National Institute of Health's famed hospital of last resort, where officials said no new patients would be admitted for the duration of the shutdown. Dr. Francis Collins, agency director, estimated that each week the shutdown lasts will force the facility to turn away about 200 patients, 30 of them children, who want to enroll in studies of experimental treatments. Patients already at the hospital are permitted to stay.

Late Tuesday, House Republicans sought swift passage of legislation aimed at reopening small slices of the federal establishment. The bills covered the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Park Service and a portion of the Washington, D.C., government funded with local tax revenue.

Democrats generally opposed all three, saying Republicans shouldn't be permitted to choose which agencies remain open and which stay shut. As a re-

sult, all fell well short of the two-thirds majority needed for passage.

The White House also issued veto threats against the bills, drawing a jab from Michael Steel, a spokesman for Boehner. Obama "can't continue to complain about the impact of the government shutdown on veterans, visitors at National Parks, and D.C. while vetoing bills to help them," he said.

Several House Democrats used the occasion to seek a vote on a standalone spending bill, a measure that Rep. Elizabeth Esty of Connecticut said would "end the tea party shutdown." The requests were ruled out of order.

Republican aides said all three bills that were sidetracked could be brought up again on Wednesday under rules requiring a mere majority to pass. They said the House might also vote on a measure to reopen the hospital at the NIH, after several Democrats cited the impact on patients.

Insurance Markets Struggle To Handle Traffic

BY CARLA K. JOHNSON
AP Medical Writer

CHICAGO — Americans got their first chance Tuesday to shop for health insurance using the online marketplaces that are at the heart of President Barack Obama's health care overhaul, but government websites designed to sell the policies struggled to handle the traffic, with many frustrated users reporting trouble setting up accounts.

State and federal agencies were working to fix the sites, which represent the biggest expansion in coverage in nearly 50 years. There should be time to make improvements. The open-enrollment period lasts for six months.

Administration officials said they are pleased with the strong consumer interest, but on a day of glitches they refused to say how many people actually succeeded in signing

up for coverage. They gave inconsistent answers on whether a common problem had been cleared up or was still being corrected.

By Tuesday afternoon, at least 2.8 million people had visited the healthcare.gov website, said Medicare administrator Marilyn Tavenner, whose office is overseeing the rollout of the Affordable Care Act. The website had seven times the number of simultaneous users ever recorded on the medicare.gov site.

In Obama's home state, dozens of people who came to a Champaign, Ill., public health office to sign up for coverage found computer screens around the room flashing an error message: "System is unavailable."

Kimberly Shockley — logging in from Houston, Texas — and Mike Weaver, who lives in rural southern Illinois, ran into the same glitch as many oth-

ers: They could not get past the security questions while trying to set up their personal accounts through healthcare.gov.

"I'm frustrated, very frustrated," said Shockley, a self-employed CPA. She spent more than an hour trying to get the security questions to work without success. When she clicked on a drop-down menu of suggested security questions, none appeared. She then tried to create her own questions, but that didn't work either.

Weaver, a self-employed photographer, said he also ran into problems with the drop-down menus. And when they started working, he still wasn't able to set up his account.

"The first day of something that you know is going to have a lot of bugs, it's not that frustrating," he said. "If it was the last day to sign up ... then I'd be terribly frustrated."

Shockley has health insurance, but is looking for a better plan. Weaver is uninsured.

State-operated sites also experienced trouble.

Minnesota got its site running after a delay of several hours. Rhode Island's site recovered after a temporary crash. A spokesman for the New York Department of Health blamed difficulties on the 2 million visits to the website in the first 90 minutes after its launch. Washington state's marketplace used Twitter to thank users for their patience.

Exchange officials in Colorado said their website would not be fully functional for the first month, although consumers will be able to get help applying for government subsidies during that time. Hawaii's marketplace wasn't allowing people to compare plans and prices.

Visit AveraHealthPlans.com for more information about the Marketplace and plans for 2014.

Just For Fun...



We want to know the worst gift you ever received from your man. Was it a soup pot when you wanted a diamond bracelet? How about a wrench instead of the sweater you had "hinted" you wanted? We've all received the "not so ideal" gift and thought it would be fun to share them with other *Her Voice* readers.

Send us your brief story of the "less than ideal" gift you received for the upcoming November/December issue of *Her Voice*. We hope to share as many as possible!

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