

Obama Pushes New Jobs Initiatives

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — His sleeves rolled up and his finger stabbing the air, President Barack Obama pitched his newly unveiled jobs plan with campaign-style fervor Friday, urging Americans to pressure their lawmakers to pass his \$447 billion initiative. "We're tougher than these times," he declared. "We are bigger than the smallness of our politics."

Venturing out of Washington to promote his initiative, Obama's first stop after addressing a joint session of Congress Thursday was on the home turf of one of his top Republican antagonists. Speaking at the University of Richmond, in the district represented by House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, Obama made a full-throated appeal for public support, punctuating his remarks with a sharp refrain: "Pass this bill!"

"It will jump start an economy that has stalled," Obama said, conceding that a nation stuck at 9.1 percent unemployment is no longer in recovery.

It was the first of many expected efforts by the president to rally public support for his program. The president and his advisers have made it clear that he intends to build pressure on lawmakers by emphasizing the urgency of acting on his proposals this fall and making sure they are held accountable if nothing passes. Next week he plans to go to Columbus, Ohio, a city represented by Republican congressmen and a state that is home to House Speaker John Boehner.

"I'm asking all of you to lift up your voices," he said. "I want you to call, I want you to email, I want you to tweet, I want you to fax, I want you to visit, I want you to Facebook, send a carrier pigeon, I want you to tell your congressperson the time for gridlock and games is over, the time for action is now."

Officials: Austrian Incest Suspect Freed

VIENNA (AP) — An 80-year-old Austrian man held for around two weeks on suspicion that he regularly raped his daughters for 41 years was freed Friday after the two women changed their story, prosecutors said.

Until Friday's stunning development, the case was described as having parallels to that of Josef Fritzl, another Austrian serving a life sentence for fathering seven children with his daughter in a windowless cellar.

Any similarities appeared to be rapidly dissolving, however. The women in the latest case still say they were sexually molested but were now blaming another man — not their father — for the alleged assaults, which they say happened some time in the past, said the state prosecutor's office.

That version is now being checked, a prosecutor's statement from the Upper Austrian city of Ried said. Now 53 and 45 years old, the women have been described by officials as having mental disabilities — one to a slight degree, the other more severely affected.

Power Back On For Most In Ariz. And Calif.

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Utility crews brought electricity back to much of California, Arizona and Mexico on Friday, a day after a power outage left millions in the dark, paralyzed freeways and halted flights at San Diego's airport.

Officials, however, warned that the electrical grid was still too fragile after the outage and asked residents and businesses to go easy on — or even put off using — major appliances, such as air conditioners.

"Conservation will really help reduce the strain," said Stephanie McCorkle at the California Independent System Operator, which manages the power grid.

A decade after California faced rolling blackouts that shutdown everything from ATMs to traffic signals, Thursday's outage raised anew questions about the condition of the nation's electricity grid.

Authorities were focused Friday on trying to figure out how a mistake by a single Arizona Public Service Co. worker making a routine repair in Yuma, Ariz., could cascade across the Southwest.

Dow Falls More Than 300 Points Friday

NEW YORK (AP) — The problems that have weighed on investors all summer — European debt and fear of a new recession in the United States — hammered the stock market Friday. The Dow Jones industrial average fell more than 300 points.

The plunge erased the week's gains for stocks and sent the Dow below 11,000. It had not closed below that level since Aug. 22, after several weeks of extraordinary volatility.

The European Central Bank said a top official, Juergen Stark, was resigning almost three years before the end of his term in 2014, revealing deep disagreement over how to solve economic problems in Europe.

Traders fear that one of the continent's heavily indebted economies could default, an event that would ripple through the global banking system and make it difficult for other European countries to borrow money.

Such an outcome could tip the world economy back into recession. In the U.S., economic growth is already slowing, and unemployment is stuck above 9 percent.

N.Y., Washington, Aware Of Terror Threat

BY EILEEN SULLIVAN AND LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Undaunted by talk of a new terror threat, New Yorkers and Washingtonians wove among police armed with assault rifles and waited with varying degrees of patience at security checkpoints Friday while intelligence officials scrambled to nail down information on a possible al-Qaida strike timed to coincide with the 10th anniversary of 9/11.

Counterterrorism officials have been working around the clock to determine whether the threat is accurate, and extra security was put in place to protect the people in the two cities that took the brunt of the jetliner attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon a decade ago.

It was the worst terror assault in the nation's history, and al-Qaida has long dreamed of striking again to mark the anniversary. But it could be weeks before the intelligence com-

munity can say whether this particular threat is real.

Security worker Eric Martinez wore a pin depicting the twin towers on his lapel as he headed to work in lower Manhattan on Friday where he also worked 10 years ago when the towers came down. "If you're going to be afraid, you're just going to stay home," he said.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg, too, made a point of taking the subway to City Hall.

Briefed on the threat Friday morning, President Barack Obama instructed his security team to take "all necessary precautions," the White House said. Obama still plans to travel to New York on Sunday to mark the 10th anniversary with stops that day at the Pentagon and Shanksville, Pa.

Washington commuters were well aware of the terror talk.

Cheryl Francis, of Chantilly, Va., said she travels over the Roosevelt bridge into Washington every day and doesn't plan to change

her habits. Francis, who was in Washington on Sept. 11, 2001, said a decade later the country is more aware and alert.

"It's almost like sleeping with one eye open," she said, but she added that people need to continue living their lives.

Late Wednesday, U.S. officials received information about a threat that included details they considered specific: It involved up to three people, either in the U.S. or who were traveling to the country; a plan concocted with the help of al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri; a car bomb as a possible weapon and New York or Washington as potential targets.

Officials described the information to The Associated Press only on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the sensitive matters.

Counterterrorism officials were looking for certain names associated with the threat, but it was unclear whether the names were real or fake.

Parts Of Northeast See Waters Subside

BY MARK SCOLFORO
AND MICHAEL RUBINKAM
Associated Press

BLOOMSBURG, Pa. — Northern stretches of the swollen Susquehanna River began receding Friday after days of rainfall from the remnants of Tropical Storm Lee flooded communities from Virginia to New York, leading to evacuation orders for nearly 100,000 people. Some evacuees were allowed back home.

The damage was concentrated along the Susquehanna in Binghamton, N.Y.; in towns up- and downriver from levee-protected Wilkes-Barre, Pa., where more than 70,000 people were told to evacuate; and communities farther downstream in Maryland.

The Susquehanna crested at 42.66 feet Thursday night in Wilkes-Barre — beyond the design capacity of the city's levee system and higher than the record set in historic flooding spawned by Hurricane Agnes in 1972.

"They did what was right for them, the people down there," said Tom Vaxmonsky, a resident of West Pittston, just upstream from Wilkes-Barre. "But it's like everything else, for every action there's a reaction. And the reaction is that we got a lot more water than we did in '72 with the Agnes flood."

As flood waters that inundated the city of Binghamton, which the mayor called the worst in more than 60 years, and surrounding communities began subsiding, the first of the 20,000 evacuees began returning to their homes.

Robert Smith, 35, made it back around noon to his home in a struggling section of Binghamton. Mud and debris covered pavement, and water still blocked streets closest to



KIM HAIRSTON/BALTIMORE SUN/MCT
Two people in a canoe survey the damage to Port Deposit, Maryland, as they float upon waters from the Susquehanna River on N. Main Street, Friday, September 9, 2011.

the river. But he felt inspired by the time he spent in a shelter; when a woman collapsed on the floor there, he said, strangers rushed to tend to her.

"Everybody was helping each other out, just total strangers," he said. "You've never seen it before in your life."

The flooding was fed by days of drenching rains from what had been Tropical Storm Lee, and followed a little more than a week the dousing that Hurricane Irene gave the East Coast. In some areas of Pennsylvania, the rainfall totals hit 9 inches or more, on top of what was already a relatively wet summer.

Authorities in Pennsylvania closed countless roads, including some heavily traveled interstates, and evacuation shelters opened to serve the many displaced people. In Wilkes-Barre, officials said the

levees holding back the Susquehanna were under "extreme stress" but holding.

A broken flood gauge had hampered officials' ability to measure the river's height, but the U.S. Geological Survey on Friday estimated that the river had crested at 42.66 feet, well above earlier estimates and higher than the 1972 record of 40.9 feet.

White House Asks For Disaster Aid

BY ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House has asked Congress for \$500 million in immediate disaster aid to avoid a cut-off of help for victims of Hurricane Irene and other disasters.

The money is part of a total request of \$5.1 billion to refill the disaster relief fund of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which has been allowed to become so depleted that the administration has been forced to put rebuilding projects on hold in order to direct aid to victims of Irene.

But the flooding and other damage wrought by Irene and Tropical Storm Lee is tapping out the fund, and White House budget director Jacob Lew says the \$500 million is needed to address the possibility that disaster funds might run out before the budget year ends on Sept. 30.

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