

Jax State's Case, McGinnis notch milestone wins



Libya's Gadhafi runs rebels out of key oil town

Survey finds obstacles in gov't openness

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BLAST ROCKS SECOND NUKE UNIT



Associated Press

An elderly man is helped into a wheelchair to be scanned for levels of radiation Sunday in Koriyama, Fukushima Prefecture, Japan.

Thousands flee, Japan officials say six workers injured

BY ERIC TALMADGE AND MARI YAMAGUCHI
Associated Press

SOMA, Japan — The second hydrogen explosion in three days rocked Japan's stricken Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant today, sending a massive column of smoke into the air and wounding six workers. It was not immediately clear how much — if any — radiation had been released.

The explosion at the plant's Unit 3, which authorities have been frantically trying to cool following a system failure in the wake of a massive earthquake and tsunami, triggered an

order for hundreds of people to stay indoors, said Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano.

The blast follows a similar explosion Saturday that took place at the plant's Unit 1, which injured four workers and caused mass-evacuations.

Japan's nuclear safety agency said six workers were injured in today's explosion but it was not immediately clear how, or whether they were exposed to radiation. They were all conscious, said the agency's Ryohei Shomi.

Earlier, Tokyo Electric Power Co., which operates the reactor, said three

workers were injured and seven missing.

The reactor's inner containment vessel holding nuclear rods was intact, Edano said, allaying some fears of the risk to the environment and public. TV footage of the building housing the reactor appeared to show similar damage to today's blast, with outer walls shorn off, leaving only a skeletal frame.

More than 180,000 people have evacuated the area in recent days, and up to 160 may have been exposed to radiation.

Please see JAPAN I Page 7A

MARCHING PAST

NCAA selection committee leaves out Bama in field of 68

NIT TOURNAMENT

With its 8-7 non-conference record and its 114th-ranked schedule, Alabama was passed over by the NCAA selection committee despite its 12-4 record in Southeastern Conference play and wins over five teams who were awarded tournament berths. Alabama did, however, earn a No. 1 seed in the NIT, where it will play host to Coastal Carolina on Tuesday at 6 p.m.

FOR STORY, SEE PAGE 4B



TOP SEEDS

OHIO STATE (32-2)

KANSAS (32-2)

DUKE (30-4)

PITTSBURGH (27-5)



STATE TIES

Those looking to cheer for home teams have two options in the tournament. UAB surprised many by receiving an at-large berth, while Alabama State earn a spot by virtue of winning the SWAC Tournament.



BRACKET

If you're looking to get into an office pool, you'd better hurry. The NCAA tournament tips off on Tuesday, which is earlier than in years past.



FOR MORE, SEE SPORTS, PAGES 1B, 5B

OFF TO WORK ... WITH A SWORD SWALLOWER

Career gives Meyer an edge

BY LAURA B. JOHNSON
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Indiana native Dan Meyer doesn't have an ordinary job, but that doesn't mean he can't relate to those who do.

As for so many people, Meyer's work involves long days, late nights and lots of travel. But unlike most jobs, Meyer's involves long metal blades and plenty of performances.

So, when he stood before a crowd at Weaver's First Baptist Church Wednesday and drove a sword into his mouth, through his throat and down to his belly, it felt like just another day at the office.

Meyer goes off to work as a sword swallower.

The people in the audience appeared to be a little less comfortable with the

show. Their faces contorted and their shoulders drew up around their necks as they watched Meyer drive sword after sword into his body.

"I can get everybody's attention, whether it's at a bikers' convention or kids with black fingernails and trench coats," he said.

Meyer's performance, which has the feel of a professional magic show, is captivating, but is about something much more than entertainment. It's about belief. Meyer uses his unique skill to challenge skeptics and encourage faith in Christ.

In fact, he says, he discovered sword swallowing while on a mission trip in India when he was still a college student.

Please see WORK I Page 9A



Trent Penny/The Anniston Star

Swordswallower Dan Meyer entertains the congregation Wednesday at Weaver First Baptist Church.

ANNISTON

Development office's demise led to city loss of grant funds

BY LAURA CAMPER
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Anniston's loss last spring of federal funds totaling \$569,794 to help prevent homelessness was caused by factors that began sometime before authorities actually took the money away.

In 2007, the city hired Clarence Williams to manage the Community Development Block Grant fund, money delivered through the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The program, in which Anniston has participated for decades, funds a number of housing-related activities, including a loan program for low-income residents to bring their homes up to code.

Williams' contract specified that he was to receive \$60,000 per year to act as the coordinator of the CDBG program. Former city manager George Monk was working for Anniston at the time Williams was hired and was Williams' supervisor, he said.

Please see GRANT I Page 9A

Immigrants and the U.S. economy

BY JOHN FLEMING
Editor at large

Politicians in Montgomery are eager to make Alabama the next Arizona. At least, in terms of our policies concerning illegal immigration they are.

It seems a bill advancing in the Legislature has a strong resemblance to the immigration law in Arizona that has garnered so much media attention in the last few months.

That attention, it should be added, hasn't been all that positive. Alabama knows about that kind of coverage. We've experienced quite a bit of it in the last few decades. Think fire hoses and attack dogs.

So if you want to talk about the sort of effect this kind of legislation can have on the state's image, it's pretty clear it won't be sunshine and roses. Just check in with the folks in the convention-planning business if you doubt that.

What's a little more hazy is what kind of effect illegal immigration has on the overall economy. State Rep. Micky Hammon of

Please see BUSINESS I Page 9A

(BUSINESS)
(AS USUAL)

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OBITUARIES, 6A

Cedric Sherod Dothard, Lincoln
Curtis W. Hudson, Oxford
Annie R. Jackson, Hobson City
Charlene Trapp

Smith, Anniston
Susie Sykes, Talladega
George Frank Ware, Roanoke
Essie Wycoff, Lineville

INDEX

Calendar 2A
Classifieds . . 6B
Comics 11A
Editorial 10A
Lottery 2A

WEATHER, 12A



CHANCE OF STORMS
HIGH: 75 LOW: 51
Miranda Schoening,
C.E. Hanna