

Cocaine-ring guilty pleas

Three in Delta Blues case admit to trafficking roles. — Arkansas, 1B



Newest golden girl

American Gabrielle Douglas seizes women's all-around top spot. — Sports, 1C

Arkansas Democrat Gazette

ARKANSAS' NEWSPAPER

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Printed at Little Rock • August 3, 2012

ArkansasOnline.com

92 Pages • 11 Sections \$1.00

In the news

■ **Tom Kean**, the top Republican in New Jersey's state Legislature, dismissed Australian Treasurer Wayne Swan's characterization of the Garden State as a down-trodden place where workers get "thrown on the scrap heap of life," saying, "I'm not terribly certain why anyone here would care what Mr. Swan has to say."

■ **Pope Benedict XVI** has completed *Jesus of Nazareth*, the third installment of his trilogy on the life of Christ, the Vatican has announced, saying the book is dedicated to accounts of Christ's infancy.

■ **Jorge Santini**, the mayor of Puerto Rico's capital, says he will sleep aboard a bus on the streets of San Juan to prove they are safe, adding that his wife and three children also will participate in the sleepover.

■ **Tyler Pagenstecher**, 17, has pleaded guilty to drug-trafficking charges in a juvenile-court case after being arrested and accused of playing a role in a ring that each month sold as much as \$20,000 worth of high-grade marijuana to fellow students in and around the Cincinnati suburb of Mason, Ohio.

■ **Moslemuddin Sarkar**, 52, whose family believed he was dead after he left home in 1989, has returned to his native Bangladesh after being released from a jail in Karachi, Pakistan, where he was found after the International Committee of the Red Cross received an anonymous call that he was there.

■ **William Hoover**, who was deputy director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives until 2011, has left the agency after the criticism over a flawed gun-smuggling probe called Operation Fast and Furious, says agency spokesman Drew Wade.

■ **Sen. Marco Rubio**, R-Fla., has introduced a bill that would exempt Olympic medal winners from paying taxes on the cash awards that accompany the honors, saying fines on athletes who volunteer to represent the country are ridiculous and that success should be celebrated, not taxed.

2 plants in LR announce layoffs

Hawker Beechcraft tells 170 employment ending

JACK WEATHERLY
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Hawker Beechcraft announced Thursday in a letter to workers at the company's Little Rock plant that 170 of them "across multiple levels and functions, hourly and non-hourly, throughout our Little Rock facilities" will be laid off.

In accordance with the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act, 60-day notices were being given to the workers affected by

the cutbacks, Chief Executive Steve Miller said in the letter.

The federal act requires that 60-day notice be given when a company that has at least 100 full-time employees decides to lay off 33 percent or more of them.

The plant, at Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport/Adams Field, employs approximately 450, according to the most recent numbers available. Private jets are fin- See **HAWKER**, Page 6A

LM Windpower cutting 234 jobs

MADELINE WILL
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

LM Windpower will lay off more than half of its Little Rock work force within the next few months as wind-energy companies await the fate of a tax credit that's essential to the industry.

The Denmark-based company, the largest manufacturer of wind-turbine blades in the world, employs 300 full-time people in Little Rock and has another 140 temporary jobs. It is laying off 80 hourly employees, 14 salaried employees and all of the 140

temporary workers, said Adam Ruple, the company's human-resources director for the Americas.

The layoffs are because of a decrease in demand, attributed to the nonrenewal thus far of the federal production tax credit, which is an incentive for renewable energy and is to expire Dec. 31.

It was a bleak day for Little Rock's employment situation as Hawker Beechcraft, a Wichita, Kan.-based plane-maker, also announced that it will lay off 170 people in its plant at the Little Rock

airport.

Michael Pakko, chief economist at the Institute for Economic Advancement at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, said the job losses are setbacks but will not have a lasting effect on the region's economy.

"From one month to the next, there's an awful lot of turnovers in the job market," he said. "It's not going to have a huge ripple effect that we'll be seeing for months to come in the unemployment statistics," Pakko said.

See **WIND**, Page 6A

Pirate-held sailors freed



Ship officer Muhammad Mujtaba greets his children upon arrival Thursday at Karachi airport after seven Pakistanis held by Somali pirates since late 2010 were released. The men's families raised \$1.1 million for ransom. The pirates continue to hold 15 others.

44.46% of state at highest rating on drought scale

No relief expected until fall; wildlife on the move, adapting

KELLY POE
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

The summer drought that has gripped Arkansas is now considered a flash drought by the National Weather Service because of its unusually quick development and intensity.

According to the National Drought Mitigation Center's drought-monitor update released Thursday, 44.46 percent of the state is now in "exceptional drought," the worst category. That is up from 33.64 percent last week.

"In the near future, we have nothing that's going to alleviate the conditions quickly," said Chris Buonanno, science and operations officer at the North Little Rock office of the National Weather Service. "It's not just Arkansas that's being affected. A good portion of

MONEY APPROVED to aid farms hurt by drought. Page 1D.

the United States is affected by drought conditions right now."

National Weather Service meteorologist Matthew Clay said flash drought is a term to describe the drought's unusual acceleration — droughts normally take three to four months to develop, but this summer, the state went from virtually no drought to extreme drought in about two months. The state has had unusually little humidity, which resulted in rapidly increased evaporation, Clay said.

Buonanno said there is a greater-than-normal chance for precipitation in the southern half of Arkansas in October, November and December. See **DROUGHT**, Page 8A

Quitting as envoy to Syria, Annan casts wide blame

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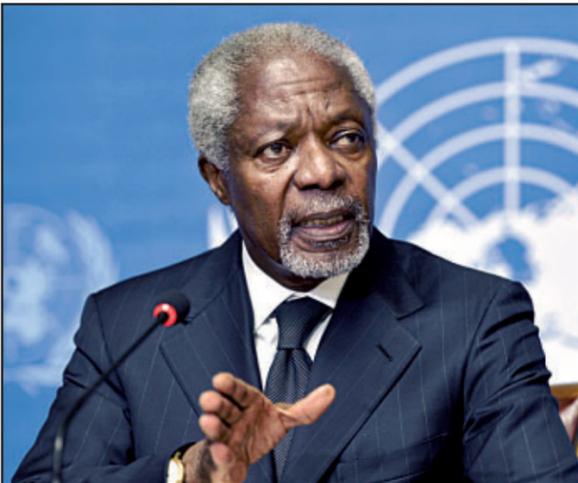
Frustrated by the seemingly intractable Syrian conflict, Kofi Annan announced his resignation Thursday as the special peace envoy of the United Nations and the Arab League, throwing new doubts on whether a diplomatic solution is possible. He also said President Bashar Assad of Syria "must leave office."

Meanwhile, Syrian rebels Thursday bombarded a military air base in Aleppo using

a tank captured from government troops as activists reported the regime has begun new raids against opposition fighters near the capital, Damascus, killing dozens.

Annan's announcement coincided with Arab countries dropping a demand that Assad resign in the latest draft of a symbolic U.N. General Assembly resolution that faces a vote today in New York.

A previous draft resolution was resisted by countries such as Brazil, Russia, See **SYRIA**, Page 5A



PLUS
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Kofi Annan, special peace envoy for the United Nations and the Arab League, announced his resignation Thursday in Geneva, saying he had accepted the task as a "sacred duty to do whatever was in my power to help the Syrian people find a peaceful solution to this bloody conflict."

July haul of revenue tops state's forecast

MICHAEL R. WICKLINE
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Propelled by surging individual income-tax collections, state general revenue in July increased by \$26.4 million over the same month last year, to \$461.2 million.

Although last month's general revenue exceeded the state's forecast by \$15.7 million, Tim Leathers, deputy director of the state Department of Finance and Administration, said those tax collections indicate only slow growth in the state's economy.

The increased income-tax collections last month could be offset by decreased income-tax collections within the next few months, he said.

"We don't have any reason to believe that this is any trend one way or the other" although national economic indicators seem to be changing each day, Leathers told reporters Thursday.

Gov. Mike Beebe said the state's increased income-tax collections mean "people are working," but he's worried about last month's sales- and use-tax collections falling several million dollars short of the state's See **REVENUE**, Page 6A

Trooper's firing tied to athlete traffic stop

SPENCER WILLEMS
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

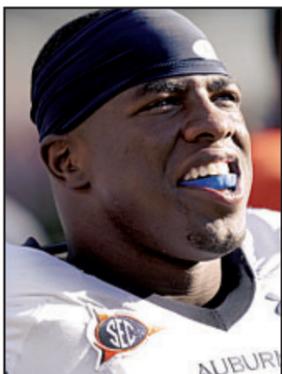
An Arkansas State Police trooper was fired last week for unprofessional conduct during a March 10 traffic stop of an Arkansas State University athlete and appealed his termination Thursday morning.

An 11-year veteran with the state police, Cpl. Royce Denney was fired July 27 for breaking department standards when he turned off camera equipment, confiscated a weapon "without legal justification" and dis-

posed of marijuana found in a car driven by ASU running back Michael Dyer. The state police did not reveal the firing until Thursday.

Arkansas State Police spokesman Bill Sadler said that since Denney had 10 days to appeal his firing, the command felt "due process" was in order not to announce Denney's termination until the appeal was filed.

"The letter of appeal was the triggering mechanism for the notification of termina- See **DENNEY**, Page 3A



PLUS
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Arkansas State Police Cpl. Royce Denney (left) has appealed his firing last week over his conduct during a March 10 traffic stop of Arkansas State University running back Michael Dyer (right). Denney's firing was revealed Thursday.



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WEATHER

LITTLE ROCK
Today Partly cloudy.
High 98 with south-southwest winds at 5 to 10 mph.
Tonight Partly cloudy.
Low of 77.



INDEX

Arkansas	1B	Movies	6E
Business	1D	MovieStyle	1E
Classifieds	1G	Police beat	2B
Comics	4E	Sports	1C
Crossword	4E	Television	2E
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