

World and Nation

Hurricane Gilbert heads for Texas

From Associated Press reports

BROWNSVILLE, Texas — Thousands of coastal residents from Mexico to Louisiana fled to higher ground Thursday as fierce Hurricane Gilbert sent the first of its storms against Texas after thrashing the Yucatan Peninsula.

"This is a killer storm," said Gordon Guthrie, director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management. "I feel sorry for anybody wherever this hits."

The death toll from the storm's onslaught through the Caribbean islands and the Yucatan was at least 36, and damage estimates reached \$8

billion.

By early evening, the first thunderstorms and showers in the outermost spiral bands of the storm had reached southeast Texas, forecasters said.

Texas Gov. Bill Clements issued an emergency proclamation allowing local authorities to suspend laws "to preserve the health, safety and welfare of the public," including such things as the direction of travel on highways.

Grocery stores ran low on bottled water, batteries, canned tuna and bread as people laid in supplies. Homeowners covered windows and doors with plywood and shatter-

proofing hurricane tape. Offshore oil workers left their rigs in the Gulf of Mexico.

Bob Sheets, director of the National Hurricane Center in Miami, said the 450-mile wide storm would likely make land Friday afternoon along the northern coast of Mexico or southern Texas.

In Brownsville, Texas' southernmost city, winds began to pick up around noon under overcast skies.

Lorena Curry, who has lived in Brownsville since 1935, said she plans to ride out the storm. "I've been through them before. I'm going to

stick around at my home."

At 5 p.m. CDT, the storm center was about 340 miles southeast of Brownsville, moving west-northwest at about 15 mph and dumping about 10 inches of rain, according to the National Weather Service.

The weather service issued a hurricane warning for Mexico's northern coast and the southern half of the 370-mile Texas coast from Brownsville to Port O'Connor, including 250,000-resident Corpus Christi. A hurricane watch remained in effect for the remainder of the Texas coast, from Port O'Connor north to Port Arthur near the Louisiana border.

Wasteful federal regulations weeded out, Reagan reports

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — President Reagan on Thursday said he and George Bush have "weeded out and eliminated wasteful, unnecessary and intrusive" federal environmental, safety and other regulations that cost American consumers tens of billions of dollars.

In his final report on government regulations, Reagan listed reducing regulatory burdens imposed under past presidents, "cutting red tape and slowing the pace of new regulations" as one of his proudest achievements.

"This administration understands that American life is burdened by too much regulation and that true regulatory reform must involve regulatory reduction," Reagan said in the 603-page report.

Unlike a year ago when the White House report on the same topic never mentioned Bush, Reagan this year shares the credit with his vice president and a task force that Bush chaired for eliminating "unnecessary regulatory costs."

Handgun proposal shot down

WASHINGTON — The pro-gun lobby won a major victory Thursday when the House eliminated from a major anti-drug bill a seven-day waiting period for handgun purchases.

The 288-182 vote substituted a plan — still to be established — that would allow gun dealers to identify convicted felons seeking to buy handguns.

The margin showed the National Rifle Association was able to outmuscle a coalition of handgun control organizations and allies from all of the nation's major law enforcement groups.

Walesa encouraged by talks

WARSAW, Poland — Lech Walesa met for four hours with government officials Thursday and stuck to his position that "there is no freedom without Solidarity."

Walesa, the chairman of the banned independent union move-

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ment, and Interior Minister Gen. Czeslaw Kiszczak agreed to continue working toward an early start of talks on the future of Poland.

"The problems are very difficult but the atmosphere is encouraging," a smiling Walesa told reporters after his second meeting with senior government officials in more than six years.

The government agreed to the talks after Walesa agreed to halt a wave of strikes last month that posed the most serious threat to the government since Solidarity was crushed in 1981.

Norwegian city lands Games

SEOUL, South Korea — The Norwegian ski resort of Lillehammer scored a stunning upset of sports and tradition over money and politics Thursday when it won the right to stage the 1994 Winter Olympics.

Anchorage, Alaska, finished third in the balloting, behind Ostersund, Sweden. Sofia, Bulgaria, the favorite at the start of the week, was the first city eliminated and said it was upset at not getting more support from its East-bloc allies.

A town of just 21,000 people about 110 miles north of Oslo, Lillehammer used a history of winter sports excellence, a solid collection of existing facilities and an impressive performance by Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland in its final presentation to persuade the International Olympic Committee it was the best choice.

The city also focused on having its venues concentrated in a small area and on its proven organizing experience. Lillehammer bidders, successful in their second try for the Winter Games, said that may have been the turning point.

"When they put the athletes in focus, that was the key moment for us," said Sigmund Thue, general manager of the Lillehammer Olympic Association.

Bush plays campaign aggressor

From Associated Press reports

George Bush said Thursday he hopes Oliver North is found innocent of charges in the Iran-contra affair and declined to rule out a pardon if the former White House aide is convicted. Michael Dukakis toured Yellowstone National Park and said he was "awestruck" by the summer's fire damage.

Bush seized the role of campaign aggressor for the day, saying that under Dukakis, Massachusetts has fared poorly on job creation. He derisively awarded his Democratic rival a gold medal in the "tax and spend" competition.

But the vice president's attack was

marred when he omitted a word from his prepared text and said Massachusetts had lost jobs since 1983. Official figures show the state has lost manufacturing jobs — as Bush's prepared speech said — but overall employment has risen by more than 200,000 jobs.

Dukakis' aides in Massachusetts rushed to criticize Bush's claim, but the governor himself at first said, "I'll be responding to that sometime next week."

Later in the same session with reporters, without further prompting, he said: "If this nation had 3 percent unemployment (the rate in Massachusetts) and had 10 years of bal-

anced budgets and had the record that we have, we could be looking forward to a future of strength and optimism and jobs for everybody."

"My state has more jobs than people to fill them," he said, asserting that the Reagan administration has left a "fiscal mess" in Washington.

Bush was on the attack in the battle of the television commercials, as well, airing an ad in environmentally-minded California that accused Dukakis of permitting the harbor in Boston to become the dirtiest in America. Dukakis ran advertisements touting his own record on crime fighting and other issues.

Both campaigns were pointing

toward the first campaign debate, a 90-minute televised session in Winston-Salem on Sept. 25.

Bush's office released a schedule showing the vice president with limited campaigning outside Washington next week and large blocks of time at home.

Dukakis also will have a curtailed travel schedule next week, and aides disclosed that Washington attorney Bob Barnett would join the group of advisers preparing him for the debate. Barnett played the role of a Bush stand-in when Democrat Geraldine Ferraro was preparing for the vice presidential debate in the 1984 campaign.

Reagan defends his Iran-contra actions

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — President Reagan said Thursday there is "no truth" to a suggestion that he was inattentive to his duties during the Iran-contra crisis, and the White House denied that any serious thought was given to removing him from office by constitutional means.

"It's total nonsense," said White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater. "It speaks more to the state of mind of some of the staff here than it does about the president."

Fitzwater was referring to White House aides who were interviewed by James Cannon, a longtime associate of Howard Baker, on the weekend

in 1987 when Baker replaced Donald Regan as White House chief of staff.

In a new book by two newspaper reporters, Cannon is quoted as saying that after interviewing 15 to 20 White House aides, he wrote a memo to Baker that began: "Consider the possibility that section four of the 25th Amendment might be applied."

The 25th Amendment, added to the Constitution in 1967, provides the president may be removed if the vice president and a majority of the cabinet declare him "Unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office."

Cannon, in an interview with Cable News Network, said that of the

staffers he talked to "not all but most said in one way or another that the president was inattentive, that he had lost interest in his job."

"There's nothing to this," said Fitzwater. "This is fiction by staff people who for their own reasons chose to say this. It was dismissed immediately by those who heard it. It was never taken seriously."

Cannon also said he concluded after seeing Reagan that there was no reason to invoke the amendment and said he assumed the aides were motivated by loyalty to Regan, who had been removed by the president and replaced with Baker.

Cannon and Fitzwater differed,

however, over how long the matter was under consideration.

According to Cannon, he interviewed the White House staffers on Friday, Feb. 27, 1987, and the following day and wrote his memo on Sunday. Then on Monday, Baker, he and others had a working lunch with the president, he said.

"To our obvious delight, President Reagan was dandy," he said. "I thought, 'This man is fine and what are these guys talking about?'"

Fitzwater, however, said Cannon "raised the question and Senator Baker said, 'That's not the president I talked to,' and that was the end of it."

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