







# tune on economy

As confidence creeps back, the Republican's message about fixing the problem risks sounding outdated.

MARK Z. BARBARA  
AND PAUL WEST  
REPORTING FROM CHICAGO

Mitt Romney entered the presidential contest as Mr. Fix-It, saying his business know-how was precisely what could rescue the struggling economy from its deep and devastating slump. It is the way Romney distinguishes himself from the other Republicans running and a contrast he constantly makes with the president. The election offers a choice, Romney says, between an "economic heavyweight" and "lightweight." Rick Santorum and President Obama.

But, after months of steady job growth, improved consumer confidence and big gains on Wall Street, the economy seems in less dire need of fixing, and Romney has been forced to alter his message or risk seeming out of touch.

"I believe the economy's coming back," Romney said at a breakfast stop Monday in Springfield, where the former Massachusetts governor campaigned ahead of Tuesday's Illinois primary. But he gave absolutely no credit to President Obama — "the economy always comes back after recession" — and insisted the administration's policies had made matters worse and the recovery slower than it should have been.

"The list," Romney told the crowd at Charlie Parker's Diner, "goes on and on. Much can change between now and November, as the fits and starts of the [See Economy, A8]

# spring student rosters

Facing uncertain budget prospects, the system makes the move ahead of a proposed tax measure.

CARLA RIVERA



ALLEN J. SCHAEFER / LOS ANGELES TIMES

## OUT IN THE COLD

A man taking a scenic chairlift ride at Mt. Baldy is framed by iceicles on a fence. The recent storm brought a blanket of snow to the San Gabriel Mountains — and a resultant influx of visitors. It'll be mostly sunny and warmer Tuesday in the L.A. Basin, with a high downtown of 68. **WEATHER, A8**

# There is no way the guy I knew did this

Bales after just three years of college had an oceanfront condo in Florida. He was also pulling in more than \$30,000 a year as a financial advisor. His investment work ran into trouble, though, and when the Sept. 11 attacks came, Bales' well-timed friends said he was an irresponsible call. He enlisted in the Army — signed up for the hundred-duty infantry — and headed almost straight for Iraq. Heons about the Middle East and our role."

Now, friends are trying to piece together how the gregarious 38-year-old staff sergeant could have become the tragic anti-hero suspect in the late-night massacre of Afghan civilians in a crime that has prompted new questions about how much longer the U.S. can remain in Afghanistan.

**For soldiers at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state, where Bales was based during three deployments to Iraq and one in Afghanistan, the events have been disturbing. Bales trained his men carefully, oversaw his patrols vigilantly, and treated Iraqi villagers with respect and good humor. That he could have snatched so precipitously is almost beyond comprehension.**

**There is sympathy for the financial problems, multiple deployments and violence that may have imposed unbearable stress, but also contempt for a soldier who may have put others in the others in the [See Bales, A6]**

Facing uncertain budget prospects, California State University officials announced plans to freeze enrollment next spring at most campuses and to wait until all applicants the following fall pending the outcome of a proposed tax initiative on the November ballot.

The university system is moving to "reduce enrollment to deal with \$75 million in funding cuts already made in the 2011-12 fiscal year and position itself for least an additional \$200-million cut next year if the tax proposal fails."

"The move is a high-stakes gamble that could deny tens of thousands of students access to the state's largest public university system; it also pressures voters to support the tax increase. That proposal, backed by Gov. Jerry Brown, is intended to avoid so-called trigger cuts that would dramatically affect the state's public colleges and universities."

The majority of Cal State's 23 campuses won't be accepting any new students under the plan. But eight campuses — Channel Islands, Chico, East Bay, Fullerton, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Bernardino and Sonoma — will accept only a few hundred students transferring from community colleges for the spring 2013 semester.

Typically, Cal State's campuses receive 200,000 applications in the spring and 250,000 students enroll. In fall 2012, none of the campuses will make early admissions decisions, and all applicants — including prospective freshmen — will be warned that admittance is contingent on the outcome of the tax measure.

Out-of-state students, who represent only about 3% to 4% of the system's total, will probably not be affected because their higher tuition covers the cost of instruction, officials said.

Fall applications, typically number about 700,000, with 30,000 of those eventually enrolling. The university aims to reduce overall enrollment by about 3% if trigger cuts are ordered. [See CSU, A9]

## In bitter suit, it's sugar vs. corn syrup

CAROL J. WILLIAMS

They are the two bad boys of the American diet, linked to a variety of ailments including obesity, diabetes and tooth decay.

But now sugar is tasting high fructose corn syrup to court in a landmark battle over whether it's the greater evil. In a lawsuit that goes before a Los Angeles federal judge Wednesday, sugar producers accuse their corn-industry rivals of false advertising in a campaign that cast the liquid sweetener as nutritionally the same as table sugar and claims "your body can't tell the difference."

Sugar forces argue that high fructose corn syrup is far less healthy than their product and are demanding that the ads run by the Corn Refiners Assn. be halted and that the corn association pay unspecified monetary damages.

The corn industry promoters characterize high fructose corn syrup as a natural product. It is not — it is man-made, said Adam Fox, an attorney for the sugar industry plaintiffs, led by Western Sugar Corp. "Yet they are advertising it as identical to sugar cane and sugar beets."

[See Sugar, A8]  
[See Bales, A6]

## COLUMN ONE

# A Texas domino effect

Every year players go crazy over '42,' a game made up in 1887 by 2 Baptist boys forbidden to play cards.



RENT DE LA MARINIERE / ASSOCIATED PRESS

## ECHOES SEEN IN FRANCE SLAYINGS

Students comfort one another at a Jewish school in southwestern France where a gunman killed a teacher and three students. One of the guns used matches a weapon used recently to kill three French soldiers. **A8**

Disney to lose \$200 million on 'Carters'







# Clashes bring insurgency to Damascus

At least 3 killed in firefight described as most serious in capital since start of uprising

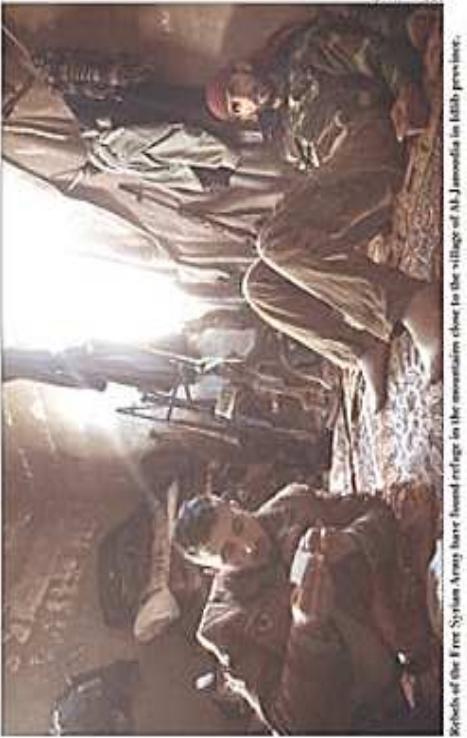
**By Eastern Miner**

BEIRUT - Syria's ally Russia added its voice Monday to a growing call for a freeze after fresh battles raged in the heart of the capital Damascus, prompting fears opposition forces are turning to insurgency tactics.

At least three people were killed in the first fight, which was the most serious clash in the Syrian capital since the uprising began a year ago. The two sides were wounded in the fighting and two later were believed to have died.

The British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which has a network of sources throughout the country, said 18 government troops were wounded in the fighting and two later were killed by rebels. The Observatory, whose director, Rami Abd al-Rahman, who heads the group, said the casualty toll appears to be the highest in a neighborhood that houses embassies and senior government officials.

The fighting began with mostly peaceful protests against the government, but became a violent regime crackdown with regime forces opening fire on demonstrators and rounding up hundreds of protesters, but Monday's statement came after Moscow's military was wounded more severely than previous ones in a signal that Moscow is flouting the pressure on Syria.



Men of the Free Syrian Army have found refuge in the mountains close to the village of Al-Jawadia in Idlib province.

Syrian government and rebels should be held to their fighting code a day to give the Red Cross access to the wounded. The call came after Russian officials met with the International Committee of the Red Cross, which was the most serious clash in the Syrian capital since the uprising began a year ago. The two sides were wounded in the fighting and two later were believed to have died.

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## Temporary funding approved to keep HRC running

By Stephen Doherty and Emma Gaten

The City Site

BERLIN: Finance Ministry officials said Monday that \$2 million in temporary funding for the Higher Reich Chamber was on the way following the official provider for Syrian refugees from abroad, but the long-term future of the body remains unclear.

Finance Minister Mohammad Salas announced his approval of the funding in a press release, but also noted the paper will still be held by the Court of Accounts, the state body responsible for accounting.

"We should not give ground to the next stage for approval," His Spokesperson, Volker Krahnen, said. "There has been surprise in the ministry - where some [members] claimed this was that Salas had been blocking up the funding."

## Cabinet session to tackle formation of petroleum body

By Hasan Takas

The City Site

BERLIN: Wolfgang Schäuble's version of the Cabinet is expected to produce no major fiscal proposals. The HRC announced last week that additional funding was not provided by the government as the body would need to seek financing support for the research of Syrians displaced by the

two governments headed by Service

Two ministers said in a press conference on Wednesday that the new body would be responsible for approximately \$1 billion in additional spending, while Hans-Ulrich Clausen was over by around \$5 billion.

The 73 items on the agenda thus far cover a number of headline matters as well as more controversial items such as a deal that could establish a body to oversee the country's petroleum sector.

TELEX 13 PAGE 10

## France on high alert as gunman kills 3 children

By Michael Sparer

The City Site

A 16-year-old Palestinian gunman killed three children at a school in the French town of Toulouse Tuesday, killing three soldiers and a teacher.

"This act is odious and cannot remain unpunished," Sarkozy said in a television address.

Sarkozy also said he would suspend his campaign for France's April-May presidential election until Wednesday.

The soldier, one of Caribbean and Muslim origin, were killed in a motorcycle accident and shot at a synagogue in Paris, August 1982, when six people were killed in a grenade attack and subsequent shooting at the Goldbergh restaurant in a Jewish neighborhood of central Paris, France's 600,000-strong Jewish community's largest city.

Stéphane Charbonnier, the 30-year-old Hebrew teacher, his children aged 3 and 6, and another child, the 5-year-old daughter of the school's principal, died in her father's arms as medics tried to resuscitate her. A 17-year-old boy was also wounded.

"Shortly before 9 o'clock 1,000 CMU students came to the school and shot at everything they could see. As children as young as seven were killed as adults," prosecutor Michel Vautier said.

"This individual also shot some children into the school," Vautier said.

If a ministerial committee failed with its proposed draft law on regulating extra-budgetary spending for 2011 and for early elections completes its work, at time for the session it would be introduced from outside Cabinet's agenda.

Ministers have been searching for a way to satisfy the March 8 decision, which refers to regularizing the over-spending of cabinets headed by

tens from a military airport.

An activist in the capital said the clashes were near the Palais Secrétaire Général building and were followed by raid by security forces.

Although armed rebels are active in the Damascus suburbs and satellite towns, they rarely venture into the capital, where Assad's troops are deployed in force.

The fighting in Damascus comes after the rebels suffered several major setbacks when they were driven out of hills and the central city of Homs, in part because of the superior firepower of government forces.

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Damascus has been largely spared the steady gunfire and killing that experts say elsewhere in Syria in the past year, although the capital has had several minor security incidents.

The show-down started last Saturday, when an activist claimed 27 people near the air force intelligence building and the criminal security department.

Recent bombings in Damascus and Aleppo have added a new series element to the anti-government revolt, U.S. officials have suggested, that Al-Qaeda militants may be joining the fray, perhaps exploiting the chaos.

TELEX 13 PAGE 10

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NATIONAL WARNING ON SMARTPHONES  
**BE CAREFUL WHEN  
USING APPS, SAY  
THE WEB EXPERTS**

See page 5

Warning on young pregnancy

## Teenage births are 'unfair on the baby'

Fiona Gaia Debono

The rate of teenage pregnancies is too high and "unfair on the baby", according to a family expert who insists that children need to be planned.

"We do not know how many are planned."

"The argument that it is some girls' way of gaining status at women does not hold water at all," said Angela Abela, a clinical psychologist and the director of the university's Centre for Family Studies.

"We need to know who these teenagers are and what is going on in their lives when they get pregnant," she said, of a subject she feels is under-researched.

Last year, 32 babies were born to girls 16 or under, Health Minister Joseph Cassar said just week in reply to a parliamentary question. In 2009, 277 babies were born to teenage mothers out of a total of 4,180 births in the country. Prof. Abela is not only asking questions. She also has the key - education and early intervention could fight this phenomenon and the cycle of inter-generational poverty that it tends to foster, she believes.

Maria had good services in place but they were not always well used, she said, when addressing a seminar on the feminisation of poverty held by the Lefcet Foundation at Melita Gardens in Attard recently.

(Continued on page 43)



NATIONAL WARNING ON SMARTPHONES  
**BE CAREFUL WHEN  
USING APPS, SAY  
THE WEB EXPERTS**

See page 5

Recession  
is not on  
the cards

Ivan Cannilleri  
Brussels

Malta is not expected to go into recession this year despite a marginal contraction in GDP registered during the last three months of 2011.

Economists define a recession as two quarters of negative economic growth. Following robust expansion in the first three-quarters of 2011, the National Statistics Office figures showed a contraction of 0.1 per cent between September and December.

'Enemalta lost  
about €30m after  
its fuel bill shot up'

But NSO officials said this was a one-off result stemming from the loss made by Enemalta during the year and which was only included in the GDP calculations of the last quarter.

The loss resulted from higher fuel prices and subsequently steeper costs to produce energy. According to unofficial preliminary figures seen by The Times, in 2011 Enemalta lost about €30 million after its fuel bill shot up by €20 million since 2010 due to started using a more expensive but more environment-friendly low-sulphur oil.

(Continued on page 39)



A young boy  
being comforted  
at the school  
in Toulouse,  
France,  
yesterday

**Serial killer guns down  
three children** See page 15

**ONE FIGOLLA CUTTER  
FREE with  
6 X 1.5ltr bottles Z<sup>up</sup> OR Z<sup>dia</sup>**

Offer available from participating outlets from mid March until Stock lasts. The gift entitles only of the winner. The gift is not part of a promotion.

By RICHARD SANDOMIR  
and KEN UZILOVSKY

The owners of the Mets scored a major legal victory — one that might well preserve their control of the team — when the trustee for the victims of Bernard L. Madoff's vast fraud agreed to abandon hundreds of millions of dollars in claims against them.

In a settlement reached Friday and announced Monday morning just before their federal trial was to begin, the owners agreed to pay the trustee \$16 million, but that figure is likely to be reduced or wiped out altogether as the complex bankruptcy litigation involving Mr. Madoff's investment operation plays out.

The trustee, Irving H. Picard, had initially sought \$1 billion, declaring that the owners had enriched themselves over many years of profitable investing with Mr. Madoff while ignoring repeated warnings that he might have been a fraud.

The owners, Fred Wilpon and Saul Katz, had angrily denied the charges as an attempt to extort them into paying a giant settlement, one that might have forced them to sell the Mets, one of baseball's most valuable franchises. In an effort to stabilize the team's finances, the Mets appear to have sold 12 minority stakes in the club for \$20 million each. [Page B10]

The settlement — under which the owners may not have to pay the trustee anything out of their pockets — makes clear that it was the trustee who blinked at the time of the settlement, according to the court documents.

[Continued on Page A15]



#### 4 Killed at Jewish School in France

A student was escorted Monday from the Otar Hatorah school in Toulouse after a gunman struck at the start of the day. Page A6.

### At Heart of Health Law Clash, a 1942 Case of a Farmer's Wheat

Pay a penalty for every extra bushel by either side.

The 1942 decision against them, *Wickard v. Filburn*, is the basis for the Supreme Court's modern understanding of the scope of federal power. It is the contested ground on which the health care case has been fought in the lower courts and in the parties' briefs. And it is likely to be crucial to the votes of Justices Anthony M. Kennedy and Antonin Scalia, who are widely seen as open to per-

sonalities. To bear the Obama administration well, the Filburn decision illustrates just how much leeway the federal government has under the Constitution's commerce clause to regulate the choices individuals make in matters affecting the national economy. If the government can make farmers choose between growing crops on their own land and paying a penalty, the administration's lawyers have said, it can surely tell people that they must obtain health insurance or pay a penalty.

Opponents of the law draw a different lesson from Mr. Filburn's case. They say it sets the outer limit of federal power, one thing to encourage farmers to help the health care side, and for three days starting next Monday, it will be at the center of the arguments before the Supreme Court about the law's constitutionality.

[Continued on Page A15]

### A Wall St. Firm Advises Greece, With Discretion

By SUSANNE CRAIG

ATHENS — In unmarked offices here on a dusty block choked with strip clubs and burned-out buildings, several dozen employees of a Wall Street firm spent months poring over bank loan portfolios as Greece struggled with its debt crisis.

They belong to what has become the go-to SWAT team in financial crises. Their employer, BlackRock, may be little known outside financial circles, but it manages a world-leading, \$310 billion portfolio covering enormous influence as a behind-the-scenes adviser to troubled governments around the globe.

In Greece, BlackRock is helping determine just how much capital the country's banks will need to raise in the coming months. It is a crucial step as Greece tries to fix its banking industry and its broader economy, but the task is arduous. Set the capital levels too low and financial firms may not have an adequate cushion to withstand further losses. Set the bar too high and banks may struggle to find investors willing to come up with the money. In either situation, the government could be forced to step in with additional

[Continued on Page A13]



#### Dawn of a Campaign Day

People gathered before sunrise on Tuesday morning to challenge the challenge of Rick Santorum. Page A16.

### 2 French Clans Battle Over a Raided, Lost Monet

By DOREEN CARPENTER

PARIS — More than 70 years after it was plundered by the Nazis, a missing painting by Claude Monet, the shimmering blue river of the Creuse River, has been recovered. Set the stolen work, which belonged to the Heilbron family, vanished in 1941 after a Gestapo raid on a family bank vault.

Last summer, after Ms. Molin filed a criminal complaint against the Heilbrons, the French authorities ordered a preliminary investigation. An anti-art thief

[Continued on Page A13]

BUSINESS DAY B1-B2

### Manning Is Headed to Denver

By PEYTON MANNING

PEYTON Manning, a four-time most valuable player in the NFL, has chosen to play for the Broncos. He would replace Tim Tebow as starter. Page B10

SPORTS TODAY B10-B15

### Dividend and Buyback at Apple

Apple said it would return \$10 billion a year to shareholders for the next three years, but the company is making so much money that the dividends and stock buybacks won't put a dent in its bank account. Page B1

### Minerals' Role in African Strike

A debate is growing over a government requirement that companies tell shareholders and regulators whether any of their mineral supplies come from strife-torn areas of Central Africa. Page B1

INTERNATIONAL A4-A11

### Fighting in Syrian Capital

Detectors clashed with Syrian security forces in Moza, a well-guarded and strategically located part of the capital, Damascus. The violence ended with the arrival of monitoring team sent by the special envoy, Kofi Annan, whose diplomatic initiative does not appear to have made much headway. Page A11

NATIONAL A11-A12

### Justice at a Measured Pace

Experts in military justice say there will be no quick resolution in the case against the American staff sergeant accused of killing five Afghan civilians in a



### CLASSIC FUSION SKELETON KING GOLD

The number of a solo mother married

NEW YORK A19-25

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