THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2022 3A

Severe storms pummel South after 7 hurt in Arkansas tornado

No deaths had been reported from the storms as of early Thursday

BY EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS AND JILL BLEED

A line of severe storms pack-ing isolated tornadoes and high ing isolated tornadoes and high winds ripped across the Deep South overnight, toppling trees and power lines and leaving homes and businesses dam-aged as the vast weather front raced across several states. At least two confirmed tor-nadoes injured several people Wednesday, damaged homes

nadoes injured several people Wednesday, damaged homes and businesses and downed power lines in Mississippi and Tennessee after earlier storm damage in Arkansas, Missouri and Texas.

No deaths had been report-ed from the storms as of early Thursday, authorities said. But widespread damage was report-ed in the Jackson, Tennessee, area as a tornado warning was in effect. "Significant damage" occurred to a nursing home near Jackson-Madison County General Hospital and the Mad-ison County Sheriff's Office in Jackson, said Madison County Emergency Management Di-rector Jason Moore. In Nashville, Tennessee, paneling fell five stories from the side of a downtown hotel Wednesday evening and onto a roof of a building below. The fire department warned the No deaths had been report-

debris could become airborne debris could become airborne as high winds continued, and some hotel guests were moved to other parts of the building due to concerns that the roof would become unstable. No in-juries were immediately associ-ated with the collapse. Elsewhere, a warehouse roof collapsed as the storms moved through Southaven, Mississip-in ear Memphis, nolice said.

pi, near Memphis, police said. The building had been evacuat-ed and no injuries were reported

ed. The Mississippi Senate sus-pended its work Wednesday as weather sirens blared during a tornado watch in downtown Jackson. Some employees took

shelter in the Capitol basement. Rander P. Adams said he and his wife, Janice Delores Ad-ams, were in their home near downtown Jackson when severe downtown jackson when severe weather blew through during a tornado warning Wednesday afternoon. He said their lights flashed and a large window ex-ploded just feet from his wife as she tried to open their front door.

as she trieu to option door. "The glass broke just as if someone threw a brick through it," he said. "I advised her then, 'Let's go to the back of the hous

house." Adams said the storm top-pled trees in a nearby park, and a large tree across the street from their house split in half. "We were blessed," he said.

"Instead of falling toward the house, it fell the other way." Earlier Wednesday, a tor-nado that struck Springdale, Arkanasa, and the adjoining town of Johnson, about 143 miles (235 kilometers) north-west of Little Rock, about 4 a.m. injured seven people, two criti-cally, said Washington County, Arkansas, Emergency Manage-ment Director John Luther. The National Weather Ser-vice said that tornado would be rated "at least EF-2," which would mean wind speeds

be rated "at least EF-2," which would mean wind speeds reached 111-135 mph. "Search and rescue teams have been deployed, as there are significant damages and injuries," Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson said.

Mississippi legislators

JACKSON — Mississippi legislators are giv-ing themselves more time to finish their work. The three-month session was scheduled to end April 3, but negotiators missed deadlines to file final versions of tax and budget bills. The state constitution prohibits legislators from passing money bills in the final five days of a session.

from passing money bills in the final live days of a session. Under a resolution adopted Tuesday, legisla-tors are extending the session by 30 days — the minimum allowed by the state constitution. But, the resolution says they intend to leave by April 6. That puts them on track to wrap up work on taxes and budgets by Friday.

extend their time to

finish work THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



School leader fired for reading 'New Butt' book awaits fate

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BYRAM — A Mississip

BYRAM — A Mississip-pi educator will have to wait to see if he will be rehired after he was fired for read-ing a children's book called "I Need a New Butt" to a group of second graders. Toby Price is trying to regain his job as assistant principal at Gary Road El-ementary in the Jackson subarb of Byram in Hinds County. His employment appeal hearing started last week and resumed Monday, lasting about five hours, WITVT reported. The Hinds County School Board's decision on Price's employment is ex-

Price's employment is ex-pected in about two months.

Price was initially sus-pended with pay but later fired after reading the book to young students over Zoom. The book, by Dawn McMillan, chron-icles a child's journey to find a new backside. It is illustrated with cartoons that show the character considering an armor-plat-ed butt, a rocket butt and a robot butt. robot butt. In a statement after the

In a statement after the hearing, Superintendent Delesicia Martin called the book "inappropriate." "First and foremost, the book contains statements and cartoon pictures re-garding bodily anatomy, bodily functions and re-moving clothing to expose

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private areas of the body in various positions," Martin said. "These statements and pictures are inappro-priate for an educator to read and display to second graders, especially with-out advance notice to the teachers of the students." Teachers have been un-der increased scrutiny na

der increased scrutiny nader increased scrutiny na-tionwide as advocates have pushed book challenges and bans in an attempt to restrict how students are taught certain subjects, particularly around rac-ism, sexuality and gender. During the first hear-ing, Price's attorney listed other books in the school's library that have similar themes or illustrations,

including "Captain Underpants.

Price described the book as "silly" and one that children could enjoy, the Clarion Ledger report-

ed. "The kids are in on the joke as they read it," Price said

However, if he were asked beforehand not to read it, Price said he would have followed that request. Martin said educators must be extremely careful in what they say and do "especially in the presence

of our impressionable chil-dren."



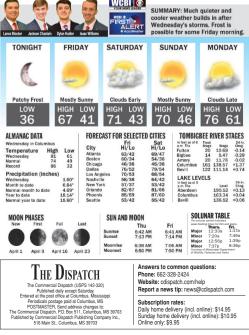
Cheap thrills. Go for a walk



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Courtey pr Stan McCrary, center, led the Mississippi House of Representatives in prayer on March 29. In the speaker of the House Philip Gunn, left, and Rep. Kabir Karriem (D-Columbus), right.