

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 1 of 64

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1449 News Headlines](#)
- [3- Groton Locke Electric 2024 Claim Victory Over Merchants](#)
- [3- Christopher Reder Ad](#)
- [5- Tornado spotted north of Groton](#)
- [5- Witte Exteriors Ad](#)
- [6- Weekly Vikings Roundup](#)
- [7- Manhart Ad](#)
- [7- Harry Implement Ad](#)
- [8- Prairie Doc: "Kindness is the Best Medicine"](#)
- [9- EarthTalk - Criminal Behavior](#)
- [10- SD SearchLight: By hand or machine: Tabulator bans go to voters in three counties Tuesday](#)
- [13- Weather Pages](#)
- [17- Daily Devotional](#)
- [18- Subscription Form](#)
- [19- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [20- News from the Associated Press](#)

Monday, June 3

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes and gravy, Harvard beets, Pineapple tidbits, whole wheat bread.

- Legion at Lake Morden, 6 p.m. (2)
- Junior Teeners hosts W.I.N., 5:30 p.m. (2)
- U10 R/W hosts Watertown, 6 p.m. (2)
- U8 R/B at Britton, 5:30 p.m. (4)
- SB U8 hosts Oakes, 5 p.m.
- SB U10 Blk hosts Oakes, 6 p.m.
- State Golf Meet at Bakker Crossing Golf Course, Sioux Falls
- The Pantry at Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Tuesday, June 4

Senior Menu: Pork roast, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli and carrots, peaches, whole wheat bread.

Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

Good Morning It's Monday

This is a good day to give
Thanks to the Lord!

He Woke us up
this Morning,
and He's
Worthy of all
Praise.

God's Spoken
Word Ministries

Have a Glorious day!

- Legion hosts Redfield, 5:30 p.m. (1)
- Junior Legion hosts Redfield, 7:30 p.m. (1)
- U12 R/W hosts Sisseton, 5:30 p.m. (2)
- SB U14 hosts Miller, 6:30 p.m.
- T-Ball G/B practice, 6 p.m.
- State Golf Meet at Bakker Crossing Golf Course, Sioux Falls
- Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- The Pantry at Community Center, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.
- United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
- Olive Grove Ladies League, 6 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

© 2024 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 2 of 64

1440

In partnership with [smartasset™](#)

Mexican voters are awaiting the results of yesterday's historic national elections, expected to yield the country's first female president.

Jury selection in a federal gun trial against Hunter Biden begins today, nearly one year after a plea deal to avoid criminal charges fell apart. Prosecutors allege the youngest son of President Joe Biden lied when responding to questions about drug use on federal forms in the course of purchasing a firearm.

South Korea yesterday said it will soon take "unbearable" steps in response to North Korea sending more than 600 trash balloons into its airspace over the weekend. North Korea says the campaign is in response to decades of political leaflets from South Korea.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Florida Panthers edge New York Rangers 2-1 to win Eastern Conference Finals 4-2, advance to Stanley Cup Final for second straight year. Edmonton Oilers advance to Stanley Cup Final for first time since 2006 after winning Western Conference Finals series 4-2 over the Dallas Stars.

All four members of legendary pop group ABBA knighted in Sweden. Ron Edmonds, Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer, dies at 77. Washington Post executive editor Sally Buzbee steps down after three years.

Real Madrid tops Borussia Dortmund 2-0 to win their 15th UEFA Champions League title. Simone Biles wins record ninth US women's gymnastics all-around title.

Science & Technology

First crewed flight of Boeing's Starliner spacecraft scrubbed again, just four minutes before planned blastoff Saturday. Chinese lunar lander touches down on far side of the moon in mission to collect and return rock samples.

Doctors report first patient to receive a genetically modified pig liver is alive and well two weeks post-surgery; marks the fifth person worldwide to undergo a pig organ transplant.

Researchers discover cheap, nontoxic method to lure and kill termites using pinene, which mimics the scent of wood; existing fumigation approaches involve toxic sulfur fluoride.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed Friday (S&P 500 +0.8%, Dow +1.5%, Nasdaq -0.01%) as latest inflation measures remained level in April as expected; personal consumption expenditures price index rises 0.2%.

OPEC+ countries agree to extend oil production cuts of 2.2 million barrels of crude oil per day into 2025. Saudi Aramco's \$12B stock offer sells out within hours.

AI chipmaker Nvidia unveils next generation of chips, dubbed "Rubin," to be released in 2026.

Politics & World Affairs

South Africa's African National Congress party fails to secure majority in first election since the end of apartheid; will work to form coalition.

Anthony Fauci to testify today before House committee about his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and government-sponsored research on pathogens. Former President Donald Trump joins TikTok after previous position to ban the social media platform, surpasses President Joe Biden's followers in 24 hours.

Water service returns in downtown Atlanta, Georgia, two days after pipe burst leads to widespread water outages and state of emergency.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 3 of 64

Groton Locke Electric 2024 Claim Victory Over Merchants By GameChanger Media

Groton Locke Electric 2024 were triumphant over Merchants 5-2 on Sunday.

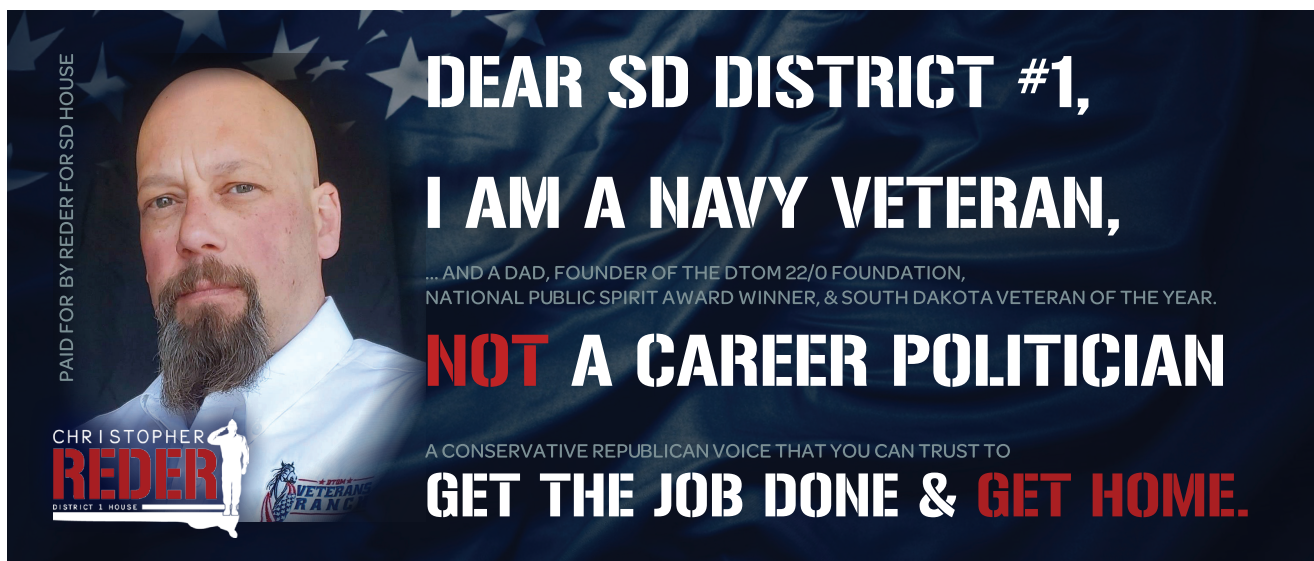
Groton Locke Electric 2024 got on the board in the top of the fourth inning after Spencer Knecht doubled, scoring two runs, and Ben Althoff singled, scoring one run.

Alex Morris earned the win for Groton Locke Electric 2024. They gave up eight hits and two runs over nine innings, striking out nine and walking two. Bryan Weber took the loss for Merchants. The righty went four innings, allowing three runs (two earned) on seven hits, striking out two and walking one.

Knecht and Ty Sieber were a one-two punch in the lineup, as each drove in two runs for Groton Locke Electric 2024. Sieber led Groton Locke Electric 2024 with two hits in five at bats. Cole Simon stole two bases. Groton Locke Electric 2024 had patience at the plate, amassing six walks for the game.

Carter Lane and Ethan Beyers each collected two hits for Merchants. Lane and Jeremiah Maxfield each drove in one run for Merchants.

Copyright © 2024 GameChanger Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Any reuse or republication of this story must include the preceding attribution and is subject to the Dick's Sporting Goods, Inc. Terms of Use, License Agreement, and Privacy Policy.



PAID FOR BY REDER FOR SD HOUSE

DEAR SD DISTRICT #1,

I AM A NAVY VETERAN,

... AND A DAD, FOUNDER OF THE DTOM 22/0 FOUNDATION,
NATIONAL PUBLIC SPIRIT AWARD WINNER, & SOUTH DAKOTA VETERAN OF THE YEAR.

NOT A CAREER POLITICIAN

CHRISTOPHER
REDER
DISTRICT 1 HOUSE

A CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN VOICE THAT YOU CAN TRUST TO

GET THE JOB DONE & GET HOME.

A VETERAN'S
TRAN

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 4 of 64

Groton Locke Electric 2024 5 - 2 Merchants

📍 Away 📅 Sunday June 02, 2024

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	H	E
GRTN	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	5	8	1
MRCH	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	8	3

BATTING

Groton Locke Elect	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
S Knecht (CF)	3	1	1	2	1	0
T Sieber (SS)	5	0	2	2	0	0
B Althoff (3B)	4	0	1	1	1	0
A Morris (P)	4	0	0	0	1	2
B Hansen (2B)	5	0	1	0	0	0
C Simon (LF)	4	1	1	0	1	2
S Locke (C)	4	1	0	0	1	1
A Sippel (RF)	5	0	1	0	0	4
C Larson (1B)	4	2	1	0	1	1
Totals	38	5	8	5	6	10

2B: S Knecht, **TB:** B Althoff, A Sippel, C Larson, B Hansen, S Knecht 2, T Sieber 2, C Simon, **HBP:** S Knecht, **SB:** C Simon 2, **LOB:** 13

PITCHING

Groton Locke	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
A Morris	9.0	8	2	2	2	9	0
Totals	9.0	8	2	2	2	9	0

W: A Morris, **P-S:** A Morris 122-87, **WP:** A Morris, **BF:** A Morris 37

Merchants	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
C Simes (CF)	5	1	1	0	0	1
J Maxfield (1B)	3	0	0	1	1	1
B Fischbach (SS)	4	0	1	0	0	0
N Pezonella (3B, P)	4	0	1	0	0	2
K Stahl (C)	4	0	0	0	0	3
M Waltman (RF)	3	1	1	0	1	0
E Beyers (2B)	4	0	2	0	0	0
S Hamiel (LF)	4	0	0	0	0	1
C Lane (DH, 3B)	4	0	2	1	0	1
Totals	35	2	8	2	2	9

2B: N Pezonella, C Lane, **TB:** M Waltman, C Simes, N Pezonella 2, B Fischbach, E Beyers 2, C Lane 3, **SB:** C Simes, B Fischbach, **LOB:** 8

Merchants	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
B Weber	4.0	7	3	2	1	2	0
K Beardsley	2.0	0	0	0	3	2	0
N Pezonella	3.0	1	2	0	2	6	0
Totals	9.0	8	5	2	6	10	0

L: B Weber, **P-S:** B Weber 58-42, N Pezonella 53-38, K Beardsley 31-14, **WP:** N Pezonella, K Beardsley, **HBP:** B Weber, **BF:** B Weber 23, N Pezonella 13, K Beardsley 9

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 5 of 64



Tornado spotted north of Groton

Layne Howard took this photo of a developing tornado four miles north of Groton. It did not stay around long and quickly went back up into the cloud. Severe storms hit the area Sunday evening. Groton proper was spared the severe weather and only got .03 of moisture. Sirens were sounded in Columbia as a tornado was spotted in that area.

WITTE 
EXTERIORS LLC

Specializing in Asphalt and Wood Shingles

Call for an estimate

Zack Witte ~ 605-695-7874

Webster, SD

No Contracts!

Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

While we wait for the NFL season to begin, we're taking a look at the Minnesota Vikings' roster. Last week we covered the quarterback position, so this week we turn our attention to the running backs (and fullback). But before we begin, let's look at some recent news coming out of Minnesota.

Recent News

The biggest news was the re-signing of left guard Dalton Risner. A few weeks ago, while breaking down the remaining holes on the Vikings' roster, I listed left guard as the biggest weakness. I couldn't figure out why the Vikings hadn't re-signed Risner, who played well—especially considering that he was signed midway through the season and had to learn a new playbook. In 2023, the Vikings had the third-best pass-blocking win rate according to ESPN. With the change at quarterback this offseason, the offensive line will be crucial in 2024.

Another big storyline this offseason was the potential tampering by the Atlanta Falcons regarding quarterback Kirk Cousins. The NFL has strict rules about how teams can approach free agents. During an introductory press conference, Cousins told reporters about his conversations with the Falcons - and if his timeline is correct, the Falcons broke the rules and will face the consequences. According to Adam Schefter, the NFL will likely announce their findings sometime this week. If the tampering was significant, the Vikings could receive one or more of Atlanta's draft picks.

Running Backs

The Vikings' run game in 2023 was, to put it mildly, atrocious. The team cut Dalvin Cook before the season and tried to replace him with Alexander Mattison. While Mattison had shown promise as a backup, he was unable to handle the increased responsibility that comes with the starting role. Now Mattison is gone and has been replaced by Aaron Jones, the former Green Bay Packer. Jones battled health issues last season and is 29 years old, but when healthy, he's one of the best RBs in the league.

Ty Chandler will once again be the primary backup. The fifth-round pick in the 2022 draft had 102 carries for 461 yards (4.5 yards per attempt) and three touchdowns last season. Considering Jones' age and health, I expect Chandler to get plenty of carries in 2024.

While the top two spots on the depth chart are pretty much set, there will be a competition between Myles Gaskin, DeWayne McBride, and Kene Nwangwu to make the final 53-man roster.

Kene Nwangwu has a good shot of making the roster because of his kick return skills, especially considering the new kickoff changes coming to the NFL this season. However, Nwangwu has been unable to earn the coach's trust as a running back—he only had five carries last season—and has missed many games due to injury. This season is his last chance to prove he has what it takes to make it in the NFL.

DeWayne McBride was a seventh-round pick by the Vikings in 2023 and spent his rookie season on the practice squad. McBride had a tremendous college career at UAB, rushing for 120 yards or more in 10 of 11 games during the 2022 season. The biggest knock on McBride was his fumbling issues, but if he can clean those up, he has a ton of potential.

Myles Gaskin is the low man on the totem pole entering the 2024 season. He was a seventh-round pick by the Miami Dolphins in 2019, and after being cut last offseason, Gaskin spent time on both the Los Angeles Rams' and Vikings' practice squads.

Fullback

C.J. Ham will be the Vikings' starting fullback in 2024, his eighth season in the NFL. Ham was selected to his second Pro Bowl last year and is the second-highest paid fullback in the NFL. Hopefully he gets more targets this season, as he only had one carry and seven receptions in 2023.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 7 of 64



MANHART

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 1

Working to Protect & Promote Traditional American Values

- ✓ Pro Law Enforcement
- ✓ Pro Constitution
- ✓ Pro Family
- ✓ Property Rights



Visit the Campaign Site
ManhartForHouse.com or
facebook.com/ManhartLogan

Paid for by Manhart for State House

Primary Election: *Vote Now Through June 4th*

Cub Cadet

ULTIMA^{ZTS}

STEER IT TO BELIEVE IT.

Engineered for precision and confident control on challenging hills — all backed by the strength, comfort and quality of a Cub Cadet® zero-turn.



Your independent Cub Cadet Dealer - Expert Service. Locally Owned.
The Advice, Service, Selection and Support you need to find the right fit for

Harry Implement

"Family Owned & Operated Since 1935!"

(605) 395-6421 ~ Ferney

Ultima™ ZTS1 42 ZERO-TURN



- 22 HP** Kohler® KT 7000 Series V-Twin OHV engine
- 42" AeroForce™ fabricated twin-blade deck
- Sealed ball bearing maintenance-free spindles

\$4,399*

Ultima™ ZTS1 46 ZERO-TURN



- 22 HP** Kohler® 7000 Series V-Twin OHV engine
- 46" AeroForce™ fabricated twin-blade deck
- Sealed ball bearing maintenance-free spindles

\$4,499*

Ultima™ ZT1 50 ZERO-TURN



- 23 HP** Kawasaki® FR691V V-twin OHV engine
- 50" AeroForce™ fabricated triple-blade deck
- Dual Hydro-Gear® EZT-2200™ transmission

\$3,299*

*Actual retail prices are set by dealer and may vary. Taxes are additional and vary by location. Freight and PDI charges may be additional and vary by dealer. Models subject to limited availability. Images may not reflect dealer inventory and/or final specifications. **As rated by Kohler. All power levels are added to gross horsepower at 3600 RPM per SAE J1940 as rated by engine manufacturer. ††As required by Kawasaki. Horsepower listed in accordance with SAE J1925 and rated in accordance with SAE J1923 and certified by SAE International. †††See operator's manual for warranty details and information. Certain restrictions apply. Kohler® is a registered trademark of Kohler Co. Kawasaki® is a registered trademark of KAWASAKI JIROCHO KAWASAKI. © 2024 Cub Cadet

FOR FULL PRODUCT SPECS

Cub Cadet

VISIT CUBCADET.COM

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 8 of 64

"Kindness is the Best Medicine"



Based on Science, Built on Trust



Joanie Holm, RN, CNP

My name is Joanie Holm. I am a certified nurse practitioner in Brookings, South Dakota and I am the person fortunate to have been the life partner of the original Prairie Doc, Richard P. Holm, M.D. Rick and I were married for 40 years before his passing in March of 2020.

During those wonderful decades together, if I could point to one powerful action that strengthened our relationship with each other, with our family, our community and with our patients, it would be the act of kindness.

Thankfully, Rick was alive to see the recognition and formalization of kindness as an essential element of medical education. Medical schools across the country have started to offer courses on compassion and caring. One of the first to do so was the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine.

When Dr. Mary Nettleman was Dean of the USD medical school, she explained why the school embraced kindness as part of its core curriculum at the time. "People want a physician who is not only competent, but also kind, so we will work to elevate this value throughout the school. By approaching this intentionally, we hope that students will learn how important kindness is in medicine and how they can incorporate it into their everyday practice. A culture of kindness can make us exceptional," said Nettleman.

I celebrate this awareness and elevation of kindness in medical education and I salute educators for enriching their medical students in this way.

Since Rick's death, I have received many wonderful notes of condolence that have been very meaningful to me and my family. With permission from the author of one such letter, I share the following message which further illustrates kindness.

Dear Mrs. Holm,

I'm one of the people who knew your husband through his TV show, and I learned from him. I have cerebral palsy and sometimes it's hard for people to understand me. One day, my mom and I were having dinner in Sioux Falls and you were seated close to us. When Dr. Holm walked by my table, I put my hand out and he stopped and talked to me. I wanted to tell him that we were praying for him and I will never forget how he made me feel. I have worked with many doctors and he was one of the best!

My dear husband practiced kindness in all he did. Regardless of our profession, may we all embrace acts of kindness and stop to hold the outreached hand of a fellow human being.

Joanie S. Holm, R.N., C.N.P. is co-founder and president of Healing Words Foundation that supports Prairie Doc® programming. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust for 21 Seasons, on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Is it true that there is a link between exposure to different kinds of pollution and an increased propensity to commit crimes?

-- H.J., Raleigh, NC

Recent research increasingly suggests a correlation between exposure to various forms of pollution and an increase in criminal behavior. This relationship is multifaceted, influenced by a complex interaction of environmental, biological and societal factors. Nonetheless, key findings from recent studies appear to substantiate this correlation.

One recent study published in The Journal of Environmental Economics and Management found that exposure to higher levels of particulate matter was linked with a significant increase in violent crime, like assault and robbery, but not property crime. This study, along with others, hypothesizes that air pollution can impair cognitive function and increase aggression, thereby potentially escalating criminal behavior.

Meanwhile, a study highlighted by The Journal of Political Economy found a strong correlation between childhood lead exposure and higher rates of crime in adulthood. The research indicates that areas with higher historical use of leaded gasoline experienced more violent crime, underscoring the long-term societal impacts of environmental toxins. Exposure to lead, a toxic metal, has been linked to neurological damage, which can result in behavioral problems and reduced impulse control.

Interestingly, noise pollution also appears to have a connection to crime. A study in Environmental Research found that higher levels of urban noise were associated with an increase in aggressive behavior and violent crime. The stress and sleep disturbances caused by constant noise can exacerbate aggressive tendencies, potentially leading to higher crime rates.

The underlying mechanism connecting pollution and crime often revolves around cognitive impairment. Pollutants like fine particulate matter and lead can cross the blood-brain barrier, leading to inflammation and neurotoxicity. These physiological changes can impair judgment and increase impulsivity. Research cited by ScienceDaily demonstrates that poor air quality can reduce cognitive performance, which is critical for decision-making and self-control, both of which are essential in preventing criminal behavior.

It's important to note that pollution often disproportionately affects lower-income communities, which are already at a higher risk for crime due to factors like poverty, lack of education and limited access to resources. The added burden of pollution can exacerbate these pre-existing social issues, creating a compounded effect on crime rates.

Stricter emissions standards and moving to clean energy are obvious ways we can help reduce pollution-related crime. We can also remove lead paint from older homes and buildings. We can update infrastructure to prevent lead contamination of drinking water. And we can reduce noise pollution through better urban planning and enforcement of noise regulations. Educating the public about the dangers of pollution can help reduce exposure. And supporting economic development and job creation in disadvantaged areas can alleviate some of the socioeconomic pressures that contribute to crime.



Recent research increasingly suggests a correlation between exposure to various forms of pollution and an increase in criminal behavior.

Credit: Pexels.com.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

By hand or machine: Tabulator bans go to voters in three counties Tuesday

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JUNE 2, 2024 6:00 PM

On Tuesday, when voters in three counties decide whether to ban tabulator machines in future elections, it will be the culmination of a statewide citizen group's multi-year movement to switch South Dakota elections to hand counting.

The votes – in Gregory, Haakon and Tripp counties – were forced by citizen-initiated petitions. Proponents of the ban claim that tabulator machines lack transparency, that election officials are breaking a state law that dictates where ballots can be counted, and that hand counting ballots is cheaper than machine counting. County auditors — the elected officials who oversee local elections — say machine counting is accurate, transparent and more efficient, and they worry a switch to hand counting could be more expensive.

Whatever the outcome, members of the South Dakota Canvassing Group plan to continue their push for hand counting.

"There's a fire going here and will not be going out soon," said Steve McCance, one of the lead petitioners for the Gregory County ballot question.

The nonprofit organization is part of a nationwide movement that started after the 2020 election, motivated in part by claims that the election was "stolen" from former president Donald Trump. Trump filed more than 60 lawsuits contesting either the election or the way it was administered. None of the cases succeeded, and he's currently under criminal prosecution for allegedly attempting to subvert the election.

Polling by South Dakota News Watch and the Chiesman Center for Democracy shows that 67% of South Dakota voters accept the outcome of the 2020 presidential election, but only 20% are "very confident" that American election results reflect the will of the people.

Robert Tate, one of Tripp County's lead petitioners, said it's important that Americans have confidence in elections.

"If we elect an elected official and he's not doing a good job, then we complain about him for four years and then we can vote him out," Tate said. "But if we don't have confidence in our elections and then our governor or our president isn't doing a good job, we complain about how they stole the election. We don't want that. That's not good. "

Several tabulator ban petitions were circulated at the county level across the state earlier this year, with some counties — including Lawrence, McPherson and Charles Mix counties — rejecting them. Officials in some counties said the petitions could conflict with federal election requirements, according to their legal counsel.

Push for hand counting focused on transparency

Aside from concerns about accuracy, South Dakota Canvassing President Jessica Pollema said the group is dedicated to transparency.

"The elections belong to the people, but they've been contracted out to a third party that's blacked out an audit trail. People don't trust that," Pollema said. "Once there's full transparency, people will possibly be able to trust the system again."

South Dakota county auditors contract with Election Systems and Software, known as ES&S, a national company based in Omaha, to lease and operate tabulator machines. The company "doesn't sign an oath," Pollema said, and the group's members have not been able to audit the system themselves through public

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 11 of 64

records requests.

Tate said he and other members of South Dakota Canvassing asked for cast vote records and were told they "did not exist." Activists nationwide requested such records.

A cast vote record is the electronic representation of how a voter voted (without personally identifying information), which is not a public record in the state and is only able to be produced with certain software in a few counties, officials said.

Will Adler is the associate director of the Elections Project with the Bipartisan Policy Center, which advocates for election policy reform approved by a task force of election officials aiming to make elections more secure, fair and trustworthy.

Adler said allowing cast vote records and images of marked ballots to be public records would "improve transparency a lot." Two bills introduced during the 2024 legislative session that would have made cast vote records public — one introduced by the Secretary of State's Office and one by Sen. Tom Pisce, R-Dell Rapids — failed to pass out of committee.

"In general, that's a more promising avenue to move towards that would allow members of the public to understand why they can trust the tabulations," Adler said.

State law allows for several forms of transparency in elections, including the use of poll watchers to observe the election process and public test runs of tabulators before each election to check for accuracy. Petitioners in Tripp County held a hand counting seminar the same day as the county's tabulator test on May 30.

In 2023, the South Dakota Legislature addressed transparency by passing a bill to require post-election audits. County auditors must randomly audit at least 5% of ballots cast in voting precincts after the primary and general elections. South Dakota was one of the last few states to implement audits.

Some counties have decided to audit more than the required 5% after the primary, including Tripp, Haakon and Gregory counties.

Adler said post-election audits are a step in the right direction, though he said some other states are implementing "risk limiting audits," which can change the audit amount based on the closeness of the race.

"This allows you to have really high confidence in a really efficient way and leveraging that human insight," Adler said. "That allows you to have quick tabulation and quick comprehensive audits."

Petitioners, auditors differ on cost estimates

In Haakon County, Auditor Stacy Pinney and the county state's attorney estimates hand counting could cost more.

"I plan and prepare for the worst, but I work for the best outcome," Pinney said.

The worst case scenario, for Pinney, is that it could take up to 15 hours for paid election workers to count the ballots, making mistakes and having to recount. County commissioners set election worker rates at the beginning of an election year. Precinct workers are required to be paid, according to state law.

The three county auditors' estimated budgets for machine counting vs. hand counting vary, depending on how long it could take workers to count ballots. At their quickest possible pace, hand counting would be cheapest, though auditors don't expect that.

"Honestly, we know it would never take just an hour," said Tripp County Auditor Barb DeSersa. "Some precincts are larger than others, so it's hard to judge how many hours it would take. It also depends on the voter turnout."

South Dakota implemented machine tabulators in the early 2000s. Mark Nelson, one of the lead petitioners in Haakon County, was an election worker over 40 years ago and said hand counting back then "wasn't that difficult."

But even if it is more expensive to hand count, that money stays within the county by paying residents rather than an out-of-state corporation, said South Dakota Canvassing's Pollema.

Pollema said hand counting can be cheaper, especially if using a specific kind of tally sheet that her group has determined can be used to count 250 ballots per hour with up to 11 races on one ballot with a trained team.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 12 of 64

Adler said that even if auditors used the tally sheet South Dakota Canvassing Group is proposing, hand counting could still have a higher risk of error and costs.

"Regardless of how you implement it, the fact is humans are extremely bad at repetitive tasks like counting ballots," Adler said, referencing studies on human error in different industries. "I think there's just no way around it."

Tripp County hand counted ballots for the 2022 election. DeSersa was awake for 40 hours straight between Election Day and the day after, with a significant amount of that time supervising hand-counters. Several races had to be recounted, sometimes three or four times that night.

Group alleges elected officials breaking law

Pollema and petitioners also claim that ballots must be counted within the precinct boundaries where they were cast, and doing otherwise is unlawful. But that statute only refers to hand counting ballots, not tabulating, said Sara Frankenstein, a Rapid City lawyer who specializes in election law.

South Dakota implemented machine tabulators in the early 2000s. Mark Nelson, one of the lead petitioners in Haakon County, was an election worker over 40 years ago and said hand counting back then "wasn't that difficult."

But even if it is more expensive to hand count, that money stays within the county by paying residents rather than an out-of-state corporation, said South Dakota Canvassing's Pollema.

Pollema said hand counting can be cheaper, especially if using a specific kind of tally sheet that her group has determined can be used to count 250 ballots per hour with up to 11 races on one ballot with a trained team.

Adler said that even if auditors used the tally sheet South Dakota Canvassing Group is proposing, hand counting could still have a higher risk of error and costs.

"Regardless of how you implement it, the fact is humans are extremely bad at repetitive tasks like counting ballots," Adler said, referencing studies on human error in different industries. "I think there's just no way around it."

Tripp County hand counted ballots for the 2022 election. DeSersa was awake for 40 hours straight between Election Day and the day after, with a significant amount of that time supervising hand-counters. Several races had to be recounted, sometimes three or four times that night.

Group alleges elected officials breaking law

Pollema and petitioners also claim that ballots must be counted within the precinct boundaries where they were cast, and doing otherwise is unlawful. But that statute only refers to hand counting ballots, not tabulating, said Sara Frankenstein, a Rapid City lawyer who specializes in election law.

"With the advent of automatic tabulating systems, we have a chapter in our South Dakota code that governs when those machines are used," Frankenstein said, referencing a statute regarding the auditor setting up a central counting location (which is usually the courthouse or the county administration building) and keeping the process open to the public.

Frankenstein said the allegations are "reckless."

"Ballots absolutely can and are required to be taken to the central location the county auditor deems," Frankenstein said, referring to elections that include tabulator machines. "So they aren't doing anything illegal by following those very laws."

Whether the bans pass or not, South Dakota Canvassing will continue pushing for hand-counted elections, attending state Board of Elections meetings and supporting legislative efforts that align with their values, Pollema said.

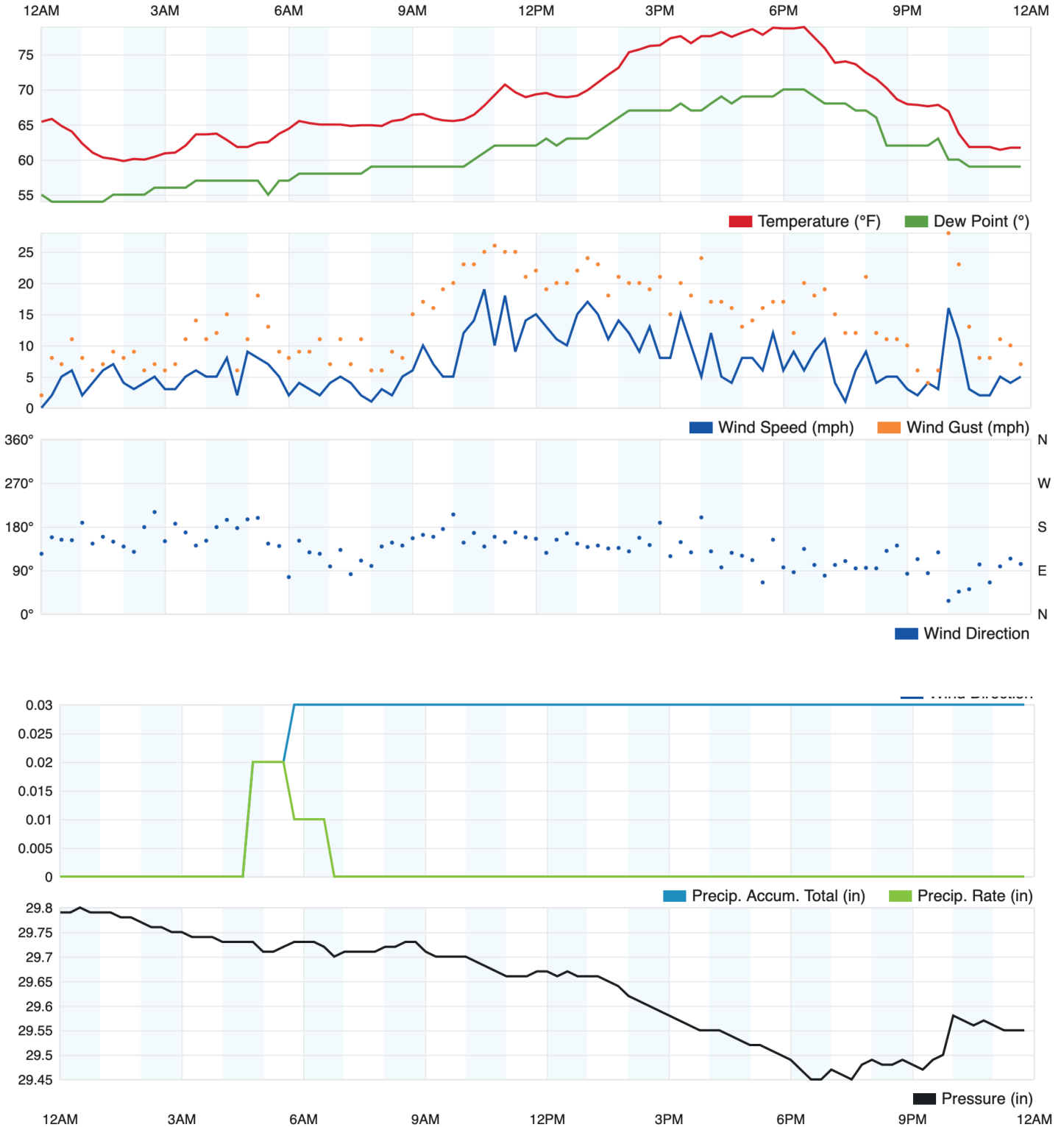
"The people need to have the government under their watchful eye. That's why we're in this mess," Pollema said. "We've been a little apathetic to our approach of watching our government. Now the people realize what's going on and have decided to participate at all levels."

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 13 of 64

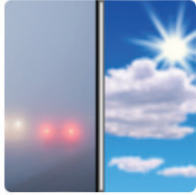
Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 14 of 64

Today



High: 81 °F

Patchy Fog
then Mostly
Sunny

Tonight



20 % → 50 %

Low: 64 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms then
Chance
T-storms

Tuesday



40%

High: 73 °F

Chance
T-storms and
Breezy

Tuesday Night



Low: 52 °F

Mostly Clear

Wednesday



High: 76 °F

Sunny and
Breezy

Today



20% chance of showers &
thunderstorms over central SD
by mid afternoon

Highs: 78 to 85°

Tonight



40% chance of showers &
thunderstorms over central SD,
expanding across eastern SD/w
central MN overnight

Highs: 59 to 65°

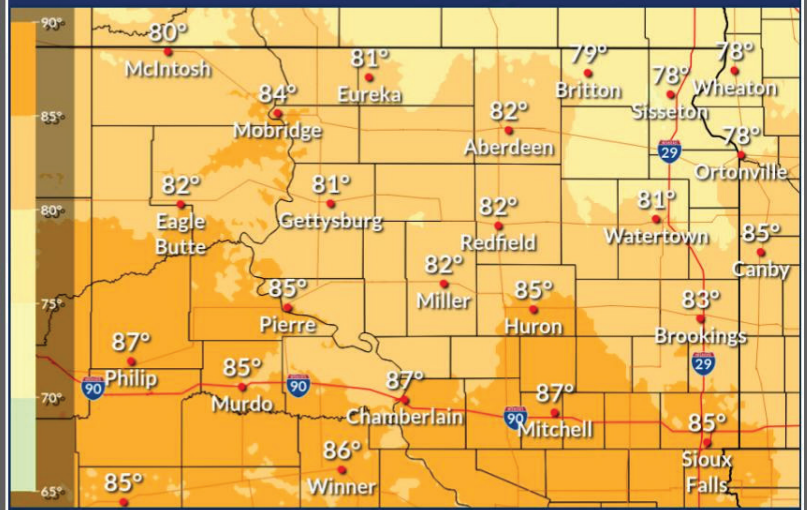
Tuesday



showers & thunderstorms
ending over central SD in the
morning, and over eastern SD/w
central MN in the afternoon

Highs: 70s

Warm & mainly Dry Today: High Temperatures



Aberdeen, SD
weather.gov/aberdeen



Temperatures will top out in the upper 70s to mid 80s today. While most locations will remain dry, there is a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms over central South Dakota by mid afternoon. These showers and storms will expand across eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota overnight before ending west to east during the day Tuesday.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 15 of 64

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 79 °F at 5:41 PM

Low Temp: 60 °F at 1:58 AM

Wind: 29 mph at 11:18 AM

Precip: : 0.03

Day length: 15 hours, 33 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 1933

Record Low: 34 in 1964

Average High: 77

Average Low: 52

Average Precip in June.: .32

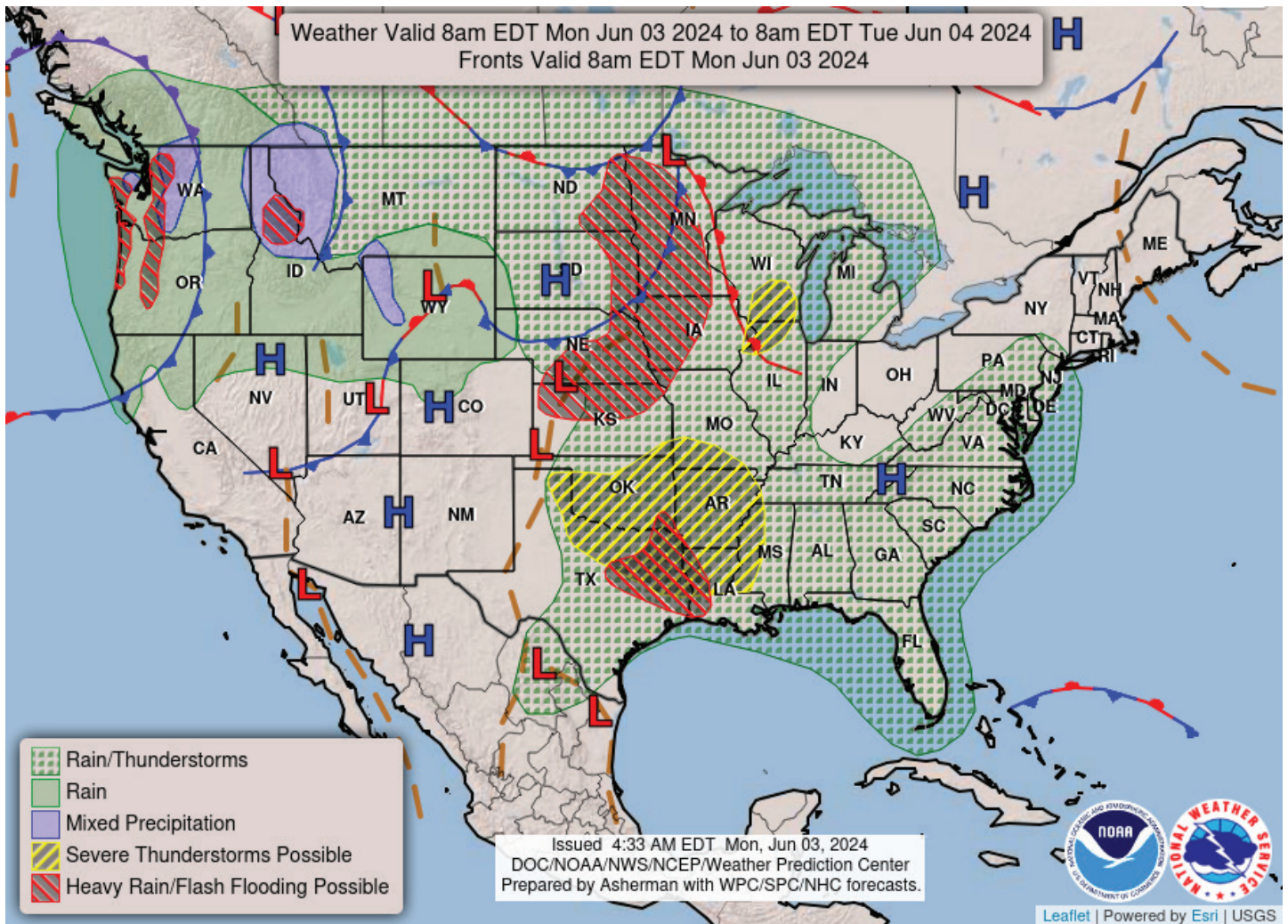
Precip to date in June: 0.03

Average Precip to date: 7.57

Precip Year to Date: 7.10

Sunset Tonight: 9:17:24 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:43:34 am



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 16 of 64

Today in Weather History

June 3, 1898: A violent windstorm passed over Aberdeen between 1 AM and 2 AM. Damage was confined to awnings, roofs of buildings, and plate glass windows.

June 3, 1933: This estimated F2 tornado moved ENE from 6 miles southwest of Wilmot, passing 3 miles south of town and dissipating at Big Stone Lake. A child was killed in a barn. Roof, barn, and church debris was scattered for miles, and over a dozen farms were heavily damaged. This tornado was estimated to be on the ground for about 15 miles.

June 3, 1975: Severe thunderstorms erupted across central sections of South Dakota. During the evening hours, the storms stretched from the southern border to the North Dakota state line and were packing high winds and large hail. In several areas, including Mobridge, hail as large as baseballs did damage to crops, homes, and vehicles and in some regions piled up to two feet deep. Strong thunderstorm winds also uprooted trees and damaged numerous farm buildings. Multiple funnels and small tornadoes were observed, including three in Charles Mix County.

June 3, 1997: Heavy rains of 2 to 4 inches through the early morning hours resulted in the flooding of some roads, fields, and creeks across parts of Jones and Lyman counties. In particular, the KOA campgrounds near Presho were heavily flooded. The KOA office and home had three and a half feet of water in them. Also, several homes near or in Presho received water and were heavily damaged. The Medicine and Stoney Butte creeks set record highs.

1860: Iowa's infamous Camanche Tornado, likely an F5 storm, kills 92 and injures 200. Every home and business were destroyed. It was one of the most damaging families of tornadoes ever to strike the US and resulted in more farm fatalities than any other tornado except for the Tri-State tornado.

1921 - A cloudburst near Pikes Peak CO killed 120 people. Pueblo CO was flooded by a twenty-five foot crest of the Arkansas River, killing 70 persons. Fourteen inches of rain was reported at Boggs Flat, where a hard surface road through nearly level country was washed out to a depth of seven feet. (The Weather Channel)

1959 - Thunderstorms in northwestern Kansas produced up to eighteen inches of hail near Salden during the early evening. Crops were completely destroyed, and total damage from the storm was about half a million dollars. Hail fell for a record eighty-five minutes. The temperature dropped from near 80 degrees prior to the storm to 38 degrees at the height of the storm. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Six days of flooding in South Texas culminated with five to six inch rains from Bexar County to Bandera County, and five to nine inches rains in Gonzalez and Wilson Counties. Total crop damage was estimated at 500 million dollars. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Early morning thunderstorms in southern Texas produced wind gusts to 86 mph at Port Isabel, and wind gusts to 83 mph at South Padre Island. Unseasonably hot weather prevailed from the Southern Plateau Region to the Northern High Plains. Fourteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing over the Southern Plains Region during the afternoon hours produced severe weather into the night. Thunderstorms spawned eleven tornadoes, and there were 169 reports of large hail and damaging winds. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 80 mph at Newcastle, OK, and Wilson, OK. Softball size hail was reported at Monahans, Childress and Groesbeck TX. Monahans TX reported six million dollars damage. Five inches of rain deluged Geronimo OK. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1993: Early morning severe thunderstorms dumped huge hailstones across northern Oklahoma. Hail, up to 6 inches in diameter in Enid, went through roofs of homes, damaged three jets at Vance Air Force Base, and did \$500,000 in damage at a car dealership. Winds gusts reached 70 mph at Vance Air Force Base as well. Hail damage to the wheat crop was estimated at 70 million dollars.

1997: It was a chilly day in the East. The high temperature at Philadelphia International Airport was only 59 degrees, tying a record-low maximum for the date set back in 1881. The temperature at Middletown, Pennsylvania rose to 58 degrees, breaking the record-low maximum for the date of 59 degrees set back in 1915. Washington, DC only reached 58 degrees, breaking the old record-low maximum of 59 set back in 1915. Central Park in New York City only reached 61 degrees.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 17 of 64

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

ACTIVE OR EFFECTIVE

To be active for God is one thing but to be effective for God is another thing. Anyone can be active but not everyone will be effective.

Being "active" can be compared to "riding" a stationary bicycle: there is a lot of motion but no movement. Or spending an hour in a rocking chair going back and forth: you end up in the same place having gone nowhere.

For the Christian to be effective means making a positive impact on the world with our lives. It means that we have lived lives that made a difference in the lives of others - a difference that can be seen, a difference that can be felt, and a difference that will bring others to Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

We begin this life of effectiveness giving our life to God through the work of Christ. When we give our lives to Him, He will accept us as we are and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And when He cleanses us, He will fill us with power that comes from His Holy Spirit dwelling within us. When he fills us with His Spirit, He can use us.

There are many things we can do but only one thing we must do. Paul said, "Present your bodies to God!" God has pleasing and perfect plans for all of us to do His work effectively. But first we must present ourselves to Him.

Prayer: Lord of our lives, help us to understand how much You want us to work with You in reclaiming Your world. May we present all that we are to You, now! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: And so, dear brothers and sisters I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Romans 12:1



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 18 of 64

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White \$48.99/year
- Colored \$79.88/year
- Colored \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly* \$31.95/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- 1 Month \$15.98
- 3 Months \$26.63
- 6 Months \$31.95
- 9 Months \$42.60
- 12 Months \$53.25

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 19 of 64



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.31.24

4 11 23 33 49 23

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$560,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 51 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.01.24

13 15 19 29 39 5

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,800,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 6 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

06.02.24

8 16 19 20 25 6

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 21 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.01.24

1 4 17 28 29

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$132,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 21 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.01.24

24 40 53 56 59 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 50 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.01.24

28 38 52 54 68 8

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$171,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 50 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Zelenskyy in Manila to promote peace summit, which he says China and Russia are trying to undermine

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with the Philippine president on Monday in a rare Asian trip to urge regional leaders to attend a Swiss-organized global peace summit on the war in Ukraine that he accuses Russia, with China's help, of trying to undermine.

Zelenskyy arrived unannounced and under heavy security in Manila late Sunday after speaking over the weekend at the Shangri-La defense forum in Singapore. He was given a red-carpet welcome with military honors Monday at the presidential palace before meeting with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., after which he left the Philippines.

Marcos pledged that his country would take part in the peace summit, Philippine Communications Secretary Cheloy Garafil said.

"I'm happy to hear today from you that you'll participate in our peace steps," Zelenskyy told Marcos. "It's a very strong signal."

Zelenskyy said Ukraine needs more mental health workers for its soldiers. Marcos promised to help and welcomed a decision by Ukraine to open an embassy in Manila this year which would hasten efforts to deliver assistance.

"We have ourselves been trying to promote the continuing adherence to international law in our part of the world," Marcos said. "The issues that you are facing are similar and in parallel to ours and, therefore, the position the Philippines takes is always to promote peace."

Both leaders spoke critically of China at the Singapore forum, which was attended by top defense and government officials from around the world, including from Washington and Beijing. The talks were held amid the raging wars in Gaza and Ukraine as well as growing tensions and rivalry for influence between the United States and China in the Indo-Pacific region.

At a news conference in Singapore on Sunday, Zelenskyy accused China of helping Russia to disrupt the Swiss-organized peace summit by pressuring other countries not to attend.

"Russia, using Chinese influence in the region, using Chinese diplomats also, does everything to disrupt the peace summit," he said, without elaborating. "This is unfortunate that such a big independent powerful country as China is an instrument in the hands of (Russian leader Vladimir) Putin."

The Chinese Foreign Ministry did not respond immediately to a request for comment on Zelenskyy's allegation.

China has taken what it says is a neutral position on the war, putting it at odds with Ukraine, the U.S. and most of Europe. Its trade with Russia has grown, easing the economic impact of Western sanctions. American, Ukrainian and other intelligence agencies say there is evidence that Chinese parts are winding up in Russian weaponry, even if China is not directly arming its neighbor.

Switzerland had been hoping China would attend the peace conference in mid-June, but Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning suggested Friday that was unlikely.

At the security forum, Zelenskyy urged top defense officials to participate in the talks in Switzerland, expressing disappointment over the failure of some countries to commit to attending. Ukraine, he said, has proposals to make at the summit as a basis for peace, addressing nuclear security, food security, the release of prisoners of war and the return of Ukrainian children abducted by Russia.

He said Ukraine is "ready to hear various proposals and thoughts that lead us ... to an end of the war and a sustainable and just peace."

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin met with Zelenskyy on the sidelines of the conference and renewed U.S. commitments to Ukraine. In an address to the forum Saturday, Austin said that "Putin's war of aggression has provided us all with a preview of a world that none of us would want."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 21 of 64

Marcos, whose country has had escalating clashes with China over disputed islets in the South China Sea, bluntly underscored the dangers of the regional flashpoint Friday at the defense forum. He said that if "a willful act" should result in a Filipino dying in the high-seas hostilities, "that is, I think, very, very close to what we define as an act of war."

"That would certainly increase the level of response," Marcos said in response to a question.

"Illegal, coercive, aggressive and deceptive actions continue to violate our sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdictions," Marcos said, without naming China, but he added that the Philippines remains committed to a peaceful resolution of the disputes.

Austin said at the forum that the U.S. commitment to the Philippines as a treaty ally is "ironclad" but reiterated the importance of dialogue with China.

"There are a number of things that can happen at sea or in the air, we recognize that," he said. "But our goal is to make sure that we don't allow things to spiral out of control unnecessarily."

Mexico elects Claudia Sheinbaum as its first woman president

By MARÍA VERZA and MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's projected presidential winner Claudia Sheinbaum will become the first woman president in the country's 200-year history.

"I will become the first woman president of Mexico," Sheinbaum said with a smile, speaking at a downtown hotel shortly after electoral authorities announced a statistical sample showed she held an irreversible lead. "I don't make it alone. We've all made it, with our heroines who gave us our homeland, with our mothers, our daughters and our granddaughters."

"We have demonstrated that Mexico is a democratic country with peaceful elections," she said.

The National Electoral Institute's president said Sheinbaum had between 58.3% and 60.7% of the vote, according to a statistical sample. Opposition candidate Xóchitl Gálvez had between 26.6% and 28.6% of the vote and Jorge Álvarez Máynez had between 9.9% and 10.8% of the vote. Sheinbaum's Morena party was also projected to hold majorities in both chambers of Congress.

The climate scientist and former Mexico City mayor said that her two competitors had called her and conceded her victory.

The official preliminary count put Sheinbaum 28 points ahead of Gálvez with nearly 50% of polling places reporting.

The fact that the two leading candidates were women had left little doubt that Mexico would make history Sunday. Sheinbaum will also be the first person from a Jewish background to lead the overwhelmingly Catholic country.

She will start her six-year term Oct. 1. Mexico's constitution does not allow reelection.

The leftist has said she believes the government has a strong role to play in addressing economic inequality and providing a sturdy social safety net, much like her political mentor President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Sheinbaum's her victory suggests that the political movement López Obrador created will live on after his presidency.

His anointed successor, the 61-year-old Sheinbaum led the campaign wire-to-wire despite a spirited challenge from Gálvez. This was the first time in Mexico that the two main opponents were women.

"Of course, I congratulate Claudia Sheinbaum with all my respect who ended up the winner by a wide margin," López Obrador said shortly after the electoral authorities' announcement. "She is going to be Mexico's first (woman) president in 200 years."

If the margin holds it would approach his landslide victory in 2018. López Obrador won the presidency after two unsuccessful tries with 53.2% of the votes, in a three-way race where National Action took 22.3% and the Institutional Revolutionary Party took 16.5%.

Still, Sheinbaum is unlikely to enjoy the kind of unquestioning devotion that López Obrador has enjoyed.

In Mexico City's colonial-era main plaza, the Zocalo, Sheinbaum's win did not draw the kind of cheer-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 22 of 64

ing, jubilant crowds that greeted López Obrador's victory in 2018. Those present were enthusiastic, but comparatively few in number.

"I promise that I am not going to let you down," Sheinbaum said, once she arrived in the plaza.

Sara Ríos, 76, a retired literature professor at Mexico's National Autonomous University, celebrated after hearing that Gálvez had conceded.

"The only way that we move forward is by working together," Ríos said. "She is going to work to bring peace to the country, and is going to manage to advance, but it is a slow process."

Fernando Fernández, a chef, 28, acknowledged challenges ahead while waiting to hear the results in the square.

"You vote for Claudia out of conviction, for AMLO," Fernández said, referring to López Obrador by his initials. But his highest hope is that Sheinbaum can "improve what AMLO couldn't do, the price of gasoline, crime and drug trafficking, which he didn't combat even though he had the power."

The main opposition candidate, Gálvez, a tech entrepreneur and former senator, had promised to take a more aggressive approach toward organized crime.

In her concession speech, she said "I want to stress that my recognition (of Sheinbaum's victory) comes with a firm demand for results and solutions to the country's serious problems."

Nearly 100 million people were registered to vote and turnout appeared to be about 60%, similar to earlier elections.

Voters were also electing governors in nine of the country's 32 states, and choosing candidates for both houses of Congress, thousands of mayorships and other local posts, in the biggest elections the nation has seen and ones that have been marked by violence.

The elections were widely seen as a referendum on López Obrador, a populist who has expanded social programs but largely failed to reduce cartel violence in Mexico. His Morena party currently holds 23 of the 32 governorships and a simple majority of seats in both houses of Congress.

Sheinbaum promised to continue all of López Obrador's policies, including a universal pension for the elderly and a program that pays youths to apprentice.

The persistent cartel violence and Mexico's middling economic performance were the main issues on voters' minds.

Julio García, a Mexico City office worker, said he was voting for the opposition in Mexico City's central San Rafael neighborhood. "They've robbed me twice at gunpoint. You have to change direction, change leadership," the 34-year-old said. "Continuing the same way, we're going to become Venezuela."

On the fringes of Mexico City in the neighborhood of San Andres Totoltepec, electoral officials filed past 34-year-old homemaker Stephania Navarrete, who watched dozens of cameramen and electoral officials gathering where frontrunner Claudia Sheinbaum was set to vote.

Navarrete said she planned to vote for Sheinbaum despite her own doubts about López Obrador and his party.

"Having a woman president, for me as a Mexican woman, it's going to be like before when for the simple fact that you say you are a woman you're limited to certain professions. Not anymore."

She said the social programs of Sheinbaum's mentor were crucial, but added that deterioration of cartel violence in the past few years was her primary concern in this election.

"That is something that they have to focus more on," she said. "For me security is the major challenge. They said they were going to lower the levels of crime, but no, it was the opposite, they shot up. Obviously, I don't completely blame the president, but it is in a certain way his responsibility."

López Obrador claims to have reduced historically high homicide levels by 20% since he took office in December 2018. But that's largely a claim based on a questionable reading of statistics. The real homicide rate appears to have declined by only about 4% in six years.

Just as the upcoming November rematch between U.S. President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump has underscored deep divisions in the U.S., Sunday's election revealed how severely polarized public opinion is in Mexico over the direction of the country, including its security strategy and how to grow the economy.

Expect the cost of your airfare to continue to rise, an aviation trade group and industry heads warn

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The cost of your next flight is likely to go up.

That's the word from the International Air Transport Association, which held its annual meeting Monday in Dubai, home to the long-haul carrier Emirates.

While carriers recover from the groundings worldwide from the coronavirus pandemic, industry leaders told journalists that there are several costs likely to push those ticket prices ever higher.

Part of that comes from worldwide inflation, an ongoing problem since the pandemic started. Jet fuel costs, roughly a third of all airline expenses, remain high. Meanwhile, a global push for the aviation industry to decarbonize has more carriers fighting for the little amount of so-called sustainable aviation fuel, or SAF, available in the market.

"The airlines will continue to do everything they can to keep costs in control as much as possible for the benefit of consumers," said Willie Walsh, the director-general of the the International Air Transport Association, an industry-trade group. "But I think it's unrealistic to expect that airlines can continue to absorb all of the costs. ... It's not something we like to do, but it's something we have to do."

Also pressuring the industry is a pandemic hangover in aircraft production as well, they say. Carriers now keep older planes that burn more fuel flying longer. There also aren't enough new aircraft to expand routes and increase supply to bring down overall prices.

That warning comes as the IATA estimates globally, airline revenue will reach nearly \$1 trillion in 2024, a record high. There will be 4.96 billion travelers on airplanes this year, with total expenses for carriers reaching \$936 billion — another record high.

But industry profits also are expected to be nearly \$60 billion this year.

In particular, Emirates, a main driver for Dubai's economy, saw record profits of \$4.7 billion in 2023 off revenues of \$33 billion.

The Emirates' results track with those for its base, Dubai International Airport. The world's busiest airport for international travelers had 86.9 million passengers last year, surpassing numbers for 2019 just before the coronavirus pandemic grounded global aviation.

The airport now plans to move to the city-state's second, sprawling airfield in its southern desert reaches in the next 10 years in a project worth nearly \$35 billion.

Tim Clark, the airline's president, obliquely acknowledged that Monday by saying that he didn't want people to "get boxes of tissues out and play the violins" when warning that the industry's profit margins sit in the low single digits. However, he contended that as airlines have grown larger and carriers consolidated, cost savings have quietly been passed onto consumers now able to book flights across the world.

"It is quite amazing that ticket prices are where they are today," Clark said. "I think the value-for-money proposition that the consumers have had the benefit from for many decades is something that is one of those hidden bits of the narrative."

Yvonne Manzi Makolo, the CEO of RwandAir, also highlighted the taxes and fees imposed on carriers by the countries they operate in. She specifically cited those paid by carriers flying out of African nations as "already ridiculous."

The Latest | Israeli strikes in central Gaza kill at least 11 as the US pushes a cease-fire plan

By The Associated Press undefined

Palestinian health officials said Israeli strikes killed 11 people overnight into Monday, including a woman and three children, in central Gaza.

A strike on a home in the built-up Bureij refugee camp late Sunday killed four people, including the three children. The second strike, early Monday, killed seven people, including a woman, in the Nuseirat

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 24 of 64

refugee camp.

Earlier Monday, the Israeli military said that the body of a man presumed to be a hostage was found in a community near the Gaza border that Hamas militants attacked on Oct. 7.

U.S. President Joe Biden said Friday that Israel has offered Hamas a three-phase cease-fire and hostage release deal, declaring it was time to end the fighting in Gaza and that Hamas is "no longer capable" of carrying out another large-scale attack on Israel.

Israel is expanding its offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, once the main hub of humanitarian aid operations. The Israeli invasion has largely cut off the flow of food, medicine and other supplies to Palestinians facing widespread hunger. Israel faces growing international criticism over the huge cost in civilian lives and the widespread destruction caused by its nearly 8-month war with Hamas.

Israeli bombardments and ground operations in the besieged territory have killed more than 36,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians.

Israel launched its war in Gaza after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, in which militants stormed into southern Israel, killed some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducted about 250. Israel says around 100 hostages are still captive in Gaza, along with the bodies of around 30 more.

Currently:

- Israeli leader Netanyahu faces growing pressure at home after Biden's Gaza proposal
- Israel seeks a 'governing alternative' to Hamas in Gaza. It's been tried and failed before
- Israel maintains a shadowy hospital in the desert for Gaza detainees. Critics allege mistreatment
- Two Lebanese shepherds killed amid ongoing escalation along Lebanon-Israel border
- Maldives will ban Israelis from entering the country over the war in Gaza
- Condemnations mount over Israeli proposal to label UN aid agency a terrorist group
- Ultra-Orthodox protesters block Jerusalem roads ahead of Israeli court decision on draft exemptions
- Parade for Israel in NYC focuses on solidarity this year as Gaza war casts a grim shadow
- Michael Douglas pays solidarity visit to southern Israel

Follow AP's coverage of the war in Gaza at <https://apnews.com/hub/israel-hamas-war>

Here's the latest:

ISRAELI STRIKES KILL 11 IN GAZA

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Palestinian health officials said Israeli strikes killed 11 people overnight into Monday, including a woman and three children, in central Gaza.

A strike on a home in the built-up Bureij refugee camp late Sunday killed four people, including the three children. The second strike, early Monday, killed seven people, including a woman, in the Nuseirat refugee camp.

Both camps date back to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were driven out of areas that became part of the new state. The refugees and their descendants make up most of Gaza's population.

An Associated Press reporter counted the bodies as they arrived at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central town of Deir al-Balah on Monday and confirmed the details with hospital records.

Israel says it tries to avoid harming civilians and blames Hamas for their deaths because the militant group places fighters, tunnels and rocket launchers in dense, residential areas. The military rarely comments on individual strikes, which often kill women and children.

IRAN'S TOP LEADER SAYS ISRAEL IS 'MELTING DOWN'

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei Monday said Israel is melting down due to its war against Hamas in Gaza.

Speaking in a ceremony marking 35th anniversary of late leader of the county Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Khamenei said "Today, the Zionist regime gradually melts down before eyes of the world's people." State television broadcast his speech live.

In a nearly 55-minute speech, the leader said that Israel's response to the Oct. 7th attack by Hamas that began the war placed it in a "dead-end corridor."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 25 of 64

Khamenei also said that the war had derailed Israel's U.S.-backed efforts to reach accommodations with regional neighbors, which he characterized as part of an Israeli plot to dominate the region.

ISRAELI MILITARY REPORTS SHOOTING DOWN MISSILE OVER RED SEA

TEL AVIV, Israel — The Israeli military says it shot down a surface-to-surface missile fired toward southern Israel from the Red Sea.

There were no reports of casualties or damage in Monday's incident, which set off air raid sirens in the southernmost Israeli city of Eilat.

The military did not specify the missile's origin, but it was likely fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels, who have claimed several drone and missile strikes on Israel in recent months. Nearly all the projectiles have been intercepted.

The Iran-backed Houthis have also repeatedly attacked international shipping in the Red Sea, portraying their actions as a blockade of Israel in support of the Palestinians. But most of the ships that have been targeted have no known ties to Israel.

ISRAEL FINDS BODY OF MAN THOUGHT TO BE HOSTAGE

TEL AVIV, Israel — The Israeli military says the body of a presumed hostage was found in a community near the Gaza border that Hamas militants had attacked on Oct. 7.

Dolev Yehud, 35, was thought to be among scores of hostages held in Gaza until Monday, when the military announced the discovery of his body and said he had been killed in the initial attack.

His remains were found at Kibbutz Nir Oz, where he lived and worked as a paramedic. Dolev's wife, Sigal, who was nine months pregnant on Oct. 7, gave birth to their fourth child nine days after the attack, according to Israeli media.

Medical professionals and scientists, including archaeologists, have spent months trying to identify remains found in communities attacked by Palestinian militants in the wide-ranging assault that ignited the war in Gaza.

The surprise attack into Israel killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians. The militants abducted around 250 people, more than 100 of whom were released during a cease-fire last year.

The Israeli government says militants in Gaza are still holding around 85 hostages and the remains of 39 others.

Israel launched a massive offensive in response to the attack that has killed over 36,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials who do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their count.

The first woman elected to lead Mexico faces pressing gender-related issues

By SARA ESPAÑA Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Claudia Sheinbaum's name will go down in Mexican history.

The governing party candidate won Mexico's presidential election on Sunday, a turning point in a mostly conservative nation that for more than two centuries has been exclusively ruled by men.

Elsewhere in Latin America, women have presided over Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Nicaragua, Honduras, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Haiti and Costa Rica.

Mexican women won the right to vote in 1953. No law prevented female candidates from holding office, but sexism and "macho" culture continue to permeate the country of 129 million people.

Prior to the current presidential race, during which Sheinbaum maintained a comfortable lead against opposition candidate Xóchitl Gálvez, only two women had officially sought Mexico's presidency. Both failed.

In her bid to replace outgoing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, Sheinbaum struggled to construct an image of her own, leaving many wondering whether she can escape the shadow of her mentor.

Women currently lead some key Mexican institutions, such as the Senate, the Supreme Court and the National Electoral Institute. Mexico ranks third among Latin American nations with the most women in the national Cabinet — 44% — and has 10 female governors among its 32 states.

In some Indigenous villages, though, men still hold the power.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 26 of 64

Among the issues that Mexican women face are femicide, or women killed because of their gender, a gender employment gap and inadequate policies guaranteeing sexual and reproductive rights. Sheinbaum, 61, will need to address these after she takes office on Oct. 1.

Here's a look at the issues.

FEMICIDE AND GENDER VIOLENCE

Demonstrations on International Women's Day on March 8 are painful reminders that many Mexican women disappear or are killed on a daily basis.

According to U.N. Women, up to 10 women are victims of femicide each day in Mexico. The number totaled 3,000 in 2023.

Thousands more have disappeared. In many cases, it is their mothers, feeling abandoned by the government, who have taken on the task of searching for them.

Most femicides go unpunished due to Mexico's inefficient justice system, which frequently dismisses reported crimes or fails to properly investigate and prosecute them.

According to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, more than 40% of Mexican women who are 15 years old or older say they have been victims of some sort of violence in their lives.

During her campaign, Sheinbaum said she would replicate measures against gender-based violence that were implemented when she was mayor of the capital. They include the creation of an anti-femicide prosecutor's office and legislation that would force offenders to leave their homes.

"We transform, we are warriors who open paths for other women," Sheinbaum said.

In spite of this, Sheinbaum has been criticized by feminists and activists arguing that her government lacked gender-related policies. Excessive use of force against women during demonstrations has been flagged as well.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Teenage pregnancy among Mexican women and girls has raised concern.

According to official figures from 2021, the latest available, there were 147,279 births among adolescents between 15 and 19 years old, and 3,019 among girls under 15.

Mexico's Supreme Court ruled in 2023 that national laws prohibiting abortions are unconstitutional and violate women's rights, but further state-by-state legal work is pending to remove all penalties.

Twelve of Mexico's 32 states have decriminalized abortion, most of them in the past five years. A few more states allow abortion if the mother's life is in danger, and it is legal nationwide if the pregnancy is the result of rape.

In most states where it has been decriminalized, advocates say they face persistent challenges in making abortion safe, accessible and government funded.

Sheinbaum did not address the topic during her campaign.

GENDER EMPLOYMENT GAP

According to official figures, 76% of Mexican men and only 47% of women are employed.

Among working women, 54% have informal jobs and they dedicate close to 43 hours per week to household chores. According to the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness, this limits the time that women can devote to the labor market. Education and access to public transportation are determining factors as well.

Women usually earn less money than men. In Mexico City, the difference is 6%, while in other states the gap can reach up to 25%.

South Korea plans to nullify peace deal to punish North Korea over trash-carrying balloon launches

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea announced Monday it'll suspend a rapprochement deal with North Korea to punish it over its launches of trash-carrying balloons, even after the North said it would halt its balloon campaign.

Over several days, North Korea flew hundreds of balloons to drop trash and manure on South Korea in

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 27 of 64

an angry reaction against previous South Korean civilian leafleting campaigns. On Sunday, South Korea said it would take "unbearable" retaliatory steps in response, before North Korea abruptly announced it would stop flying balloons across the border.

On Monday, South Korea's presidential national security council said it has decided to suspend a 2018 inter-Korean agreement aimed at easing frontline animosities, until mutual trust between the two Koreas is restored, according to the presidential office.

The security council said the suspension would allow South Korea to resume military drills near the border with North Korea and take effective, immediate responses to provocations by North Korea. It said a proposal on the suspension will be introduced at the Cabinet Council on Tuesday for approval.

Observers say South Korea needs the deal's suspension to restart blasting anti-Pyongyang propaganda broadcasts, K-pop songs and outside news from border loudspeakers. They say such broadcasts have previously stung in the rigidly controlled North, where most of its 26 million people are not allowed official accesses to foreign news.

The 2018 agreement, reached during a brief period of reconciliation between then-liberal South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, require the Koreas to cease all hostile acts against each other, including propaganda broadcasts and leafleting campaigns.

But the accord doesn't clearly state civilian leafleting should also be banned. That has allowed South Korean activists to continue to fly balloons to drop anti-Pyongyang leaflets, USB sticks with South Korean dramas and world news, and U.S. dollars in North Korea. Enraged over such leafleting campaigns, North Korea has previously fired at incoming balloons and destroyed a South Korean-built, unoccupied inter-Korean liaison office in the North.

The 2018 deal has already been in the danger of collapsing. Tension spiked after North Korea's spy satellite launch last November prompted both Koreas to take steps in breach of the accord — South Korea resuming frontline aerial surveillance and North Korea restoring border guard posts.

Since last Tuesday, a total of about 1,000 North Korean balloons carrying manure, cigarette butts, scraps of cloth and waste paper have been discovered in various parts of South Korea. No hazardous substances were found, according to South Korea's military.

On Sunday night, Kim Kang Il, a North Korean vice defense minister, said the North would stop its balloon campaign because it left the South Koreans with "enough experience of how much unpleasant they feel." He said North Korea will fly balloons again if South Korean activists restart their own balloon activities.

Experts say North Korea's balloon campaign, reportedly the first of its kind in seven years, is meant to trigger a divide in South Korea over its current conservative government's tough policy on the North. Since 2022, North Korea has dramatically ramped up its weapons tests in what analysts call an attempt to bolster its nuclear capability and increase its leverage in future diplomacy with the U.S.

Remembering D-Day, RAF veteran Gilbert Clarke recalls the thrill of planes overhead

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Gilbert Clarke leans back on the seat of his mobility scooter, cranes his neck and gazes into the bright blue skies over East London, remembering the moment 80 years ago when he knew the invasion of France was under way.

Clarke, then an 18-year-old Royal Air Force volunteer from Jamaica, was still a trainee learning about the intricacies of radar systems when the roar of aircraft engines forced him to look to the heavens on June 6, 1944.

"You couldn't have seen the blue sky," Clarke recalled, his voice tinged with awe eight decades later. "Was all planes. Hundreds and thousands of them — all shapes and sizes. All different type of plane. The instructor (said) 'Hmm. Well, boys, it's started.'"

"We all shouted, 'Give them hell,' or probably something a lot stronger than that."

Clarke got to make his own contribution after he finished his training a few weeks later and was posted

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 28 of 64

to a series of air bases where he serviced the radio and radar systems of British and American aircraft for the rest of the war. He plans to travel to northern France later this week, joining other veterans of the Battle of Normandy for ceremonies marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings that started the campaign to liberate Europe from Nazi rule.

Clarke, now 98, is one of more than 3 million men and women from South Asia, Africa and the Caribbean who served in the British military during World War II. Citizens of what was still the British Empire, they volunteered to fight for "king and country" just like recruits from the British Isles, but their service is often overlooked.

The U.K.'s former colonies were crucial to the Allied victory because they supplied money and resources, as well as manpower, to support the war effort after the Nazis occupied Europe and threatened to invade Britain, said George Hay, a historian for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Those contributions should be remembered along with the sacrifices of those who fought and died on the Normandy beaches, he said.

"It's incredibly important, what those men managed to do on the beaches on that one day," Hay said. "But what gets them there and what keeps them there and what allows them to fight on from that point is far bigger than those who actually put their feet on the sand."

That includes ground crew members like Clarke, who had the unglamorous but vital job of maintaining the aircraft that were crucial to the success of the Normandy campaign.

The RAF was a popular destination for Black volunteers because the air force lifted the "color bar" soon after war broke out and it started recruiting in the Caribbean in 1940. By the end of the war, around 6,000 West Indian men had enlisted in the RAF, with 450 assigned to air crews and another 5,500 serving on the ground. Eighty women joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

Many of the recruits faced racism, despite an official ban on discrimination. Still, many thrived.

One of the most highly decorated West Indian volunteers was navigator Philip Louis Ulric Cross, a native of Trinidad and Tobago who flew 80 missions over Germany and occupied Europe. Cross, who died in 2013, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and was promoted to squadron leader before he left the RAF. He later served as a high court judge in Trinidad and returned to London as the high commissioner for Trinidad and Tobago in 1990.

Clarke was a teenager in Montego Bay when he heard reports of German submarines attacking ships in the Caribbean and figured the war was coming to Jamaica. Rather than wait for that to happen, he decided to enlist.

"We were all in a situation where someone's gotta do something to end what was going on," Clarke said, speaking softly, with a Jamaican lilt still in his voice. "And (I'm) proud to know I did my little bit."

Still, there was a "flood of tears" when Clarke went home to say goodbye. He soon found himself on board a troop ship that was part of a convoy being attacked by U-boats, but he made it safely to Liverpool and was assigned to a base in northern England for training.

Life in the RAF proved to be a series of Nissen huts, prefabricated structures made of corrugated iron bent over a semi-circular frame and heated with a single wood- or coal-burning stove.

"The Black volunteers had learned a lot about Britain at school and most considered that they were in a real sense 'coming home' to the mother country," according to an exhibit at the RAF Museum. "On arriving here, however, many experienced culture shock" due to the cold weather, lack of Caribbean food and the fact that most white Britons had never met a Black person.

Even so, Clarke decided to stay in England after the war, using his RAF training to earn a living "fixing anything with a wire."

Like other veterans, he proudly wears his RAF beret and a dark suit coat festooned with medals and military badges on ceremonial occasions. But in Clarke's case, the ornamentation isn't just to celebrate his service. It also reminds the world that men who look like him came to Britain's aid in its hour of need.

While he sidesteps questions about any racism he may have faced over the years, Clarke recognizes that Black people still face discrimination in Britain.

He hopes his story, and those of other Black veterans, will help to change that.

"We are somebody," he said. "We did something for the presence of all the people here. I feel very proud."

The Latest | Sheinbaum appears set to become Mexico's first female president

By The Associated Press undefined

Former Mexico City mayor Claudia Sheinbaum declared victory in Mexico's presidential election, shortly after electoral authorities said she held an irreversible lead in an official quick count.

Sheinbaum appears set to become Mexico's first female president — a major step in a country long marked by its macho culture. The election is also the biggest in the country's history. More than 20,000 congressional and local positions are up for grabs, according to the National Electoral Institute.

Sheinbaum was the expected victor after maintaining a comfortable double-digit lead in opinion polls for months. Xóchitl Gálvez, an opposition senator and tech entrepreneur, represented a coalition of parties that have had little historically to unite them other than their recent opposition to outgoing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Mexico went into Sunday's election deeply divided: Friends and relatives no longer talk politics for fear of worsening unbridgeable divides, while drug cartels have split the country into a patchwork quilt of warring fiefdoms. The atmosphere is literally heating up with a wave of unusual heat, drought, pollution and political violence.

Currently:

- More populist policies or tougher fight with cartels? Mexicans weigh choice as they pick a new leader.
- Mexico's drug cartels and gangs appear to be playing a wider role in Sunday's elections than before.
- Mexicans choose between continuity and change in an election overshadowed by violence.
- Violence clouds the last day of campaigning for Mexico's election.

Here's the latest in Mexico's election:

SHEINBAUM DECLARES VICTORY

Mexico's projected presidential winner Claudia Sheinbaum said Sunday night that her two competitors had called her and conceded her victory.

"I will become the first woman president of Mexico," Sheinbaum said with a smile, speaking at a downtown hotel shortly after electoral authorities announced that a statistical sample showed she held an irreversible lead.

"We have demonstrated that Mexico is a democratic country with peaceful elections," she said.

SHEINBAUM HOLDS IRREVERSIBLE LEAD, QUICK COUNT SHOWS

Climate scientist Claudia Sheinbaum held an irreversible lead Sunday in the race that would make her Mexico's first female president, according to an official quick count.

The National Electoral Institute's president said Sheinbaum had between 58.3% and 60.7% of the vote, according to a statistical sample. Opposition candidate Xóchitl Gálvez had between 26.6% and 28.6% of the vote and Jorge Álvarez Máynez had between 9.9% and 10.8% of the vote.

The governing party candidate campaigned on continuing the political course set over the last six years by her political mentor President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

His anointed successor, the 61-year-old Sheinbaum led the campaign wire-to-wire despite a spirited challenge from Gálvez. This was the first time in Mexico that the two main opponents were women.

GOVERNING PARTY CANDIDATE FOR MEXICO PRESIDENT LEADS EARLY RETURNS, BUT COUNT IS RUNNING SLOW

Former Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum is leading in very early returns from Sunday's presidential election, but only 10% of polling place tallies have been counted by Mexico's electoral authority.

Vote counting is running slower than usual.

ELECTORAL AGENCY CHIEF URGES RESTRAINT IN ELECTION REPORTING AS VOTE COUNT LAGS

The head of Mexico's electoral agency is urging political parties, candidates and the news media "to act

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 30 of 64

with restraint, prudence and responsibility" in announcing results.

The plea Sunday night came after a number of news organizations called the presidential race based on private exit polls with little official information available.

In a statement, electoral institute President Guadalupe Taddei Zavala says: "Our electoral system is designed to ensure that every vote counts and that every result is verified in a fair and transparent manner."

Vote counting is lagging in Mexico's historic election. Despite private exit polls favoring front-runner Claudia Sheinbaum, The Associated Press bases its report on official results.

VOTING RESULTS BEGIN TO PUBLISH IN HISTORIC ELECTION

Mexico's electoral agency is beginning to publish results of the country's historic election, in which a woman is likely to be elected as president for the first time.

POLLS CLOSE IN MOST MEXICAN STATES IN HISTORIC ELECTION

Polls have closed in most of Mexico's 32 states. Voters begin awaiting the results of an election that will chart the way forward in the coming years. Voting will continue for another hour on the Baja California peninsula.

THOUSANDS OF MEXICANS LINE UP TO VOTE IN CITIES ACROSS THE US AND OTHER COUNTRIES

MCCALLEN, Texas — Thousands of Mexican voters lined up at their nearest consulate offices. The turnout exceeded Mexico's expectations in several cities across the United States and other countries.

In Dallas, some voters started waiting in line at 3:30 a.m. local time, according to the Dallas Morning News.

Similar lines could be seen in Houston after hundreds filled sidewalks waiting in the heat with little to no shade for hours.

In Los Angeles, voters draped themselves in Mexican flags and erupted in cheers every time another ballot was cast, the Los Angeles Times reported. Street vendors selling food and snacks also gathered outside the consulate, catering to eager voters.

The Mexican consulates in San Francisco, San Diego and Fresno also saw long lines of hundreds of voters Sunday. California is home to more than three million Mexican immigrants.

"In some cases, such as in Madrid, California, Chicago and Phoenix, the large influx of people wishing to vote at the consular headquarters has exceeded expectations," Mexico's National Electoral Institute said in a statement.

1 DEAD AND 3 INJURED IN SEPARATE ATTACKS IN BAJA CALIFORNIA STATE

MEXICO CITY — An armed attack near a voting center in the border city of Tijuana, left three people injured, according to security authorities in the state of Baja California.

Local media reported that the violent episode occurred when an alleged criminal tried to assault a businessman who was lined up to vote. His bodyguard shot the attacker, which led to a shootout.

Another violent incident occurred in the coastal city of Ensenada, also in Baja California state, when two alleged criminals stole ballots from three polling stations. The assailants were intercepted by the police as they fled. A chase ensued that culminated in a crash where one of the attackers was killed, according to the state Secretariat of Citizen Security.

MAN KIDNAPPED WHILE VOTING IN CHIAPAS

MEXICO CITY — Armed men kidnapped one man who was voting in a polling station in the town of San Fernando, in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, according to the Chiapas Prosecutor's Office.

Two armed men burst into a local market where a voting station was set up and kidnapped the man. The man later appeared beaten up in another place, prosecutors said.

Violence has rapidly escalated in Chiapas in the past year like no other part of Mexico. Cartels and other criminal groups have waged a brutal war for control of the lucrative migrant and drug smuggling routes along the country's southern border with Guatemala.

ISOLATED INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE REPORTED IN PUEBLA AND QUERÉTARO

MEXICO CITY — While voting appeared peaceful, if time-consuming, at most of Mexico's approximately 170,000 polling places, there were isolated incidents of violence reported. In the central state of Puebla, four armed assailants tried to burst into a school where voting booths were installed to try to steal ballots.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 31 of 64

State police said arrests had been made in the case.

And the governor of the central state of Querétaro, just north of the capital, told local media that assailants had tried to burn ballots at four polling places in his state. A video posted on social media showed two masked men escaping on a motorcycle after one attack. But the problems — both logistical and involving conflicts — were perhaps greatest in the southern border state of Chiapas, where as many as 42% of polling places were delayed in setting up; some apparently couldn't open at all.

OPPOSITION CANDIDATE XÓCHITL GÁLVEZ CASTS VOTE

MEXICO CITY — Presidential candidate Xóchitl Gálvez cast her vote after more than an hour and a half of waiting in Mexico City. After voting, she posed for photographers and then addressed journalists saying: "It is the people who have to decide, I have already done my job... let the citizens do their job." She anticipated that the election results are likely to "come a little late" and noted that she expects a "huge turnout."

CRIME AND VIOLENCE ON VOTERS' MINDS

MEXICO CITY — Mexico's unrelenting wave of crime and violence appeared to be uppermost in the minds of some voters, especially those leaning toward the opposition.

In Mexico City, voters appeared concerned more about street-level crime, given that the capital has not seen as many drug-cartel shootouts as in outlying states.

Julio García, 34, a Mexico City office worker, said he was voting for the opposition. "I've been robbed twice, with a pistol pointed at me," Garcia said, describing armed assailants who approached his car when he was stuck in traffic.

"We definitely need a change in leadership. If we continue on the same path, we're going to become Venezuela."

Diego García, 49, a shopkeeper and no relation to Julio, said he was voting for the opposition. "We definitely need a change, above all, because of crime. I have relatives who have been robbed, who have been kidnapped."

BRING YOUR DOG TO THE VOTING BOOTH

MEXICO CITY — A relatively new trend is emerging in Mexico's election: bringing your dog to the voting booth.

At one polling place in central Mexico City, nearly a dozen dogs — ranging in size from Great Danes to pugs — were waiting patiently with their owners in lines that stretched around the block.

Koba, a tawny colored Husky, accompanied his owner, Marco Delaye, into the polling place, and the two emerged smiling.

"He behaved very well," said Delaye. "He let me vote without any problem."

That was no small feat, given that turnout was very high early Sunday and polling places were jam-packed, perhaps because Mexicans are lining up to vote early to avoid the country's unprecedented heat wave.

FRONT-RUNNER SHEINBAUM CASTS BALLOT

MEXICO CITY — As she left home to vote, frontrunner Claudia Sheinbaum told reporters briefly that she was "very happy, very excited" in what she described as a "historic day."

She said that she had a "quiet" night and that after voting she would come back home to have breakfast.

She called people to go to the polls. "You have to vote, you have to go out and vote," said the former Mexico City mayor.

MEXICO CITY — On the fringes of Mexico City in the neighborhood of San Andres Totoltepec, electoral officials filed past 34-year-old homemaker Stephania Navarrete, who watched dozens of cameramen and electoral officials gathering where frontrunner Claudia Sheinbaum was set to vote.

Navarrete said she planned to vote for Sheinbaum despite her own doubts about outgoing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and his party.

"Having a woman president, for me as a Mexican woman, it's going to be like before when for the simple fact that you say you are a woman you're limited to certain professions. Not anymore."

She said the social programs of Sheinbaum's mentor were crucial, but that deterioration of cartel violence

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 32 of 64

in the past few years was her primary concern in this election.

"That is something that they have to focus more on," she said. "For me security is the major challenge. They said they were going to lower the levels of crime, but no, it was the opposite, they shot up. Obviously, I don't completely blame the president, but it is in a certain way his responsibility."

At a special voting post on a large Mexico City medical campus where people like on-duty doctors and nurses who can't get home to vote can cast their ballots, men and women are waiting for polls to open.

Aida Fabiola Valencia said, "Yesterday I told my colleagues to go vote, I don't know who they are going to vote for, but it is the first time they are going to be able to elect a woman, who I think is going to play an important role. We (women) are 60% of the population, it is historic."

There have been female candidates before in Mexico, but this is the first time the two leading candidates — Claudia Sheinbaum and Xóchitl Gálvez — are women.

Nearby, Mónica Martínez, said, "The fact that people vote for a candidate who is a woman implies a lot of change at all social and work levels, that means that it is already starting to get better. It already is. But the fact that it is for a presidential candidacy is much more significant."

STORES OFFER FREE GOODS FOR SUNDAY VOTERS

MEXICO CITY — Thousands of Mexican stores are advertising offers of free goods for customers who come in Sunday and show ink on their finger, a security measure to prevent anyone from voting twice.

The offers are intended to encourage voting.

Some outlets in the nation's largest convenience store chain, Oxxo, are offering voters a free cup of coffee. The national restaurant chamber said some members will be offering discounts on food or beverage as well.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CRITICIZES ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES

MEXICO CITY — Mexico's once-autonomous National Human Rights Commission issued an unusual statement criticizing electoral authorities.

The commission, which has largely followed and supported the policies of outgoing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, claimed on Saturday electoral authorities have not acted forcefully enough against "slander," a term frequently used by López Obrador in reaction to any criticism.

Elections in Mexico are run by the independent National Electoral Institute, and the commission is supposed to have no role in the process.

Israeli airstrikes near city of Aleppo kill several people, Syrian state media say

BEIRUT (AP) — Israeli airstrikes around the Syrian city of Aleppo killed several people early Monday, Syrian state media reported.

The state-run SANA news agency gave no specific toll. It said the strikes were around the southeastern edge of Aleppo.

"The aggression led to a number of martyrs and some material losses," SANA said.

Israel did not immediately acknowledge the strikes and rarely does when it comes to Syria.

Syria and Israel have been at war since Israel's founding in 1948. Syria's President Bashar Assad has been backed by Iran in his country's yearslong war, and Israeli strikes previously have targeted Iranian positions and equipment.

The strikes also come while Israel is fighting Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Israel separately has been striking targets in Lebanon as well as Hezbollah continues its cross-border fire into the country.

President Milei's surprising devotion to Judaism and Israel provokes tension in Argentina and beyond

By ISABEL DEBRE and ALMUDENA CALATRAVA Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — At the base of the sacred Western Wall in Jerusalem's Old City, President Javier Milei of Argentina appeared to be in a spiritual trance.

With head and hands pressed against the ancient stone, he prayed with the Orthodox rabbi who introduced him to Judaism three years ago. Although born and raised Roman Catholic, Milei has increasingly shown public interest in Judaism and even expressed intentions to convert.

Stepping back from the wall, Milei broke down. He hugged Rabbi Shimon Axel Wahnish close, sobbing onto his shoulder.

"In that moment, I felt proud that we have such determined leader, with such deep spiritual values," Wahnish told The Associated Press in a recent interview, recalling their state trip to Israel in February.

For many Argentines, that pride was fraught with peril.

Breaking decades of policy precedent, Milei has gone further in his support of right-wing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government than perhaps any other world leader as Israel faces growing isolation over its bombardment and invasion of Gaza that has killed over 36,000 Palestinians and pushed the enclave to the brink of famine.

His posture could not stand in starker contrast to most of Latin America — where Bolivia and Colombia have severed ties with Israel and at least five regional countries, most recently Brazil, have pulled ambassadors from Tel Aviv.

"Among great nations that should be pillars of the free world, I see indifference in some and fear in others about standing on the side of truth," Milei told Jewish community leaders at an event last month commemorating the 81st anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. It was a veiled swipe at Western powers — including the United States — for criticizing Israeli military conduct.

The crowd leapt to its feet in applause.

The president's supporters insist his newfound Jewish fervor has no bearing on his foreign policy. But Milei's infatuation with Judaism and outspoken support for Israel has generated fears and exposed fissures within Argentina's Jewish community, among the biggest in the world, and roiled relations with its neighbors.

Argentine Jews remain deeply scarred by a pair of lethal bombings targeting Israel's embassy in 1992 and the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association, a community center known by its Spanish acronym AMIA, in 1994. Authorities allege Iran plotted the attacks and Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group carried them out. No one has been held responsible. Argentina's investigation has been mired in controversy.

"Milei has a messianic mind, and this is quite dangerous," said Diana Malamud, whose husband was among the 85 people killed in the AMIA attack. "His policies can not only stoke conflicts at the international level ... but also generate anti-Semitism within our country."

Milei's curiosity about Judaism began as a kind of penitence in 2021, when he faced accusations of harboring pro-Nazi sympathies and wanted to prove in speech that he bore no animus toward Jews. He connected with Sephardic leader Rabbi Wahnish to have "a chat that was supposed to last 10 minutes and ended two hours later," Wahnish said.

As Milei evolved from TV pundit to "anarcho-capitalist" president, Wahnish guided him through the study of Torah. Seeking common ground between his vision of radical libertarianism and the prophecy of the Old Testament, Milei's casual interest morphed into a regular religious practice.

Wahnish, recently appointed Argentina's ambassador to Israel, declined to comment on Milei's conversion.

"In Judaism and Moses, Milei sees a cultural and spiritual revolution toward freedom," Wahnish said. Since childhood, he added, Milei "felt Moses was his idol, his hero."

Milei, who owns four clones of his dead dog Conan, has never been the most conventional occupant of Argentina's highest office. Still, his foray into Judaism has come as a particular surprise.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 34 of 64

On the campaign trail, Milei quoted the Torah, made multiple Brooklyn pilgrimages to the tomb of influential Hasidic leader Menachem Mendel Schneerson and sounded the shofar, the ram's-horn trumpet blasted during the Jewish High Holy Days, to close his electoral campaign.

Ahead of Milei's victory, nearly 4,000 Argentine Jewish intellectuals signed a petition voicing concern over Milei's "political use of Judaism."

"It's perverse ... to use the shofar, which is played during religious ceremonies, to announce himself," said Pablo Gorodneff, secretary-general of the progressive Argentine Jewish Appeal group. "It makes me very frustrated, very sad."

As fighting raged in Gaza, Milei flew to Israel for his first foreign visit and praised Netanyahu without reservation. Following in the footsteps of former U.S. President Donald Trump, he pledged to move Argentina's Embassy from a beachfront bastion near Tel Aviv to the contested capital of Jerusalem — aggravating an emotional issue at the heart of the conflict. Netanyahu called Milei "a great friend." Hamas called him "a partner of the Zionist occupier."

Last month, Milei's government upended Argentina's traditional recognition of Palestinian statehood, joining the U.S. and Israel to vote against Palestinian membership at the U.N.

His foreign policy shift has thrilled Jewish community leaders, but also left them on edge.

"If Milei's supposed defense of Israel is an attack on Palestinian rights, it puts the Jewish community in Argentina at risk," said Héctor Shalom, director of Argentina's Anne Frank Center. "The decades of impunity for past attacks show our vulnerability."

The 1994 bombing, Argentina's most notorious cold case, still spreads unease. After Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, the mood in the Jewish community went from worried to alarmed.

Jewish high schools requested that students stop wearing their uniforms, so as not to identify as Jewish. Authorities jacked up security at synagogues. Two bomb scares emptied out the AMIA building.

"Security levels have always been high but now there is a much greater sensitivity," said Amos Linetzky, head of AMIA.

Government officials have also grown anxious, lashing out at Iran and warning that the Israel-Hamas war has stoked the embers of Islamic militancy and blown them all the way to Latin America.

Upon news of the first Iranian assault on Israeli territory April 14, local media reported Milei's pro-Israel stance had made him a target. He cut his state visit to Denmark short and flew home to convene a crisis committee alongside the Israeli ambassador.

Milei's hardline security minister, Patricia Bullrich, singled out left-wing neighbors Bolivia and Chile as Islamist hotbeds, ordering reinforcements to Argentina's northern border.

"We are on high alert," Bullrich said, alleging that Bolivia — which last year struck a defense agreement with Iran — teems with Iranian Revolutionary Guard operatives. "Politically correct messages like calling for peace are not Argentina's position."

Without providing evidence, Bullrich also claimed that Chile — home to the largest Palestinian population outside the Arab world — hosts Hezbollah.

The accusations, decried as baseless by Bolivia and Chile, prompted both governments to pull their ambassadors from Buenos Aires.

On Saturday, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, a 57-member group describing itself as "the collective voice of the Muslim world," issued a furious denunciation of what it described as Milei's anti-Islamic rhetoric.

For years, U.S. and Argentine intelligence services have subjected the Triple Frontier, where Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay meet, to intense surveillance, scouring the large population of Lebanese and Syrian immigrants for Islamist sympathies.

"One of the things I don't think gets enough attention is how long Hezbollah has had a presence in our hemisphere," Senator Marco Rubio, Republican of Florida, told a Senate Foreign Relations Committee this spring.

Washington claims Hezbollah funds its activities through drug traffickers in the area. The U.S. Treasury has sanctioned dozens of individuals in South America over alleged ties to Hezbollah, most recently last

fall. Authorities have reported thwarting attacks, with Israel's Mossad spy agency helping Brazil arrest alleged Hezbollah recruits last November.

Hezbollah denies running operations in the region.

"What would Hezbollah want with Latin America?" the group's spokesperson, Rana Sahili, asked the AP. She accused Milei of playing loose with facts to score points in a "political game."

Experts say the true threat lies somewhere in the middle.

"Some say Hezbollah's presence in Latin America is a complete fabrication, while others say the group uses the region as a base and we're doomed," said Fernando Brancoli at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.

"Neither is correct."

Remembering D-Day: Key facts and figures about the invasion that changed the course of World War II

OMAHA BEACH, France (AP) — The June 6, 1944, D-Day invasion of Nazi-occupied France was unprecedented in scale and audacity, using the largest-ever armada of ships, troops, planes and vehicles to punch a hole in Adolf Hitler's defenses in western Europe and change the course of World War II.

With veterans and world dignitaries gathering in Normandy to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the landings, here's a look at some details about how the operation unfolded.

WHO TOOK PART

Nearly 160,000 Allied troops landed in Normandy on June 6, 1944. Of those, 73,000 were from the United States and 83,000 from Britain and Canada. Forces from several other countries were also involved, including French troops fighting with Gen. Charles de Gaulle.

The Allies faced around 50,000 German forces.

More than 2 million Allied soldiers, sailors, pilots, medics and other people from a dozen countries were involved in the overall Operation Overlord, the battle to wrest western France from Nazi control that started on D-Day.

WHERE AND WHEN

The sea landings started at 6:30 a.m., just after dawn, targeting five code-named beaches: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, Sword. The operation also included actions inland, including overnight parachute landings on strategic German sites and U.S. Army Rangers scaling cliffs to take out German gun positions.

Around 11,000 Allied aircraft, 7,000 ships and boats, and thousands of other vehicles were involved.

VICTIMS ON ALL SIDES

A total of 4,414 Allied troops were killed on D-Day itself, including 2,501 Americans. More than 5,000 were wounded.

In the ensuing Battle of Normandy, 73,000 Allied forces were killed and 153,000 wounded. The battle — and especially Allied bombings of French villages and cities — killed around 20,000 French civilians.

The exact German casualties aren't known, but historians estimate between 4,000 and 9,000 men were killed, wounded or missing during the D-Day invasion alone. About 22,000 German soldiers are among the many buried around Normandy.

SURVIVORS

Inevitably, the number of survivors present at major anniversary commemorations in France continues to dwindle. The youngest survivors are now in their late 90s. It's unclear how many D-Day veterans are still alive. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs says it doesn't track their numbers.

India's election concludes with the votes being counted Tuesday. Here's what to know

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — The world's largest election could also be one of its most consequential.

India has close to 970 million voters among its more than 1.4 billion people, and its general election pits Prime Minister Narendra Modi, an avowed Hindu nationalist, against a broad alliance of opposition parties that are struggling to play catch up.

Now 73, Modi first swept to power in 2014 on promises of economic development, presenting himself as an outsider cracking down on corruption. Since then, he has fused religion with politics in a formula that has attracted wide support from the country's majority Hindu population.

India under Modi is a rising global power, but his rule has also been marked by rising unemployment, attacks by Hindu nationalists against minorities, particularly Muslims, and a shrinking space for dissent and free media.

HOW DOES THE ELECTION WORK?

The final day of voting in the 6-week-long election was Saturday. The vote counting will start Tuesday and will be updated throughout the day. The election results will likely be known the same day.

The voters are choosing 543 members for the lower house of Parliament for a five-year term.

Votes were cast at more than a million polling stations. Each of the seven voting phases lasted a single day with several constituencies across multiple states voting that day. The staggered polling allowed the government to transport election officials and voting machines and deploy tens of thousands of troops to prevent violence. Candidates crisscrossed the country, poll workers hiked to remote villages, and voters lined up for hours in sweltering heat.

India has a first-past-the-post multiparty electoral system in which the candidate who receives the most votes wins. To secure a majority, a party or coalition must breach the mark of 272 seats.

India uses electronic voting machines.

WHO IS RUNNING?

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party and his main challenger, Rahul Gandhi of the Indian National Congress, represent Parliament's two largest factions. Several other important regional parties are part of an opposition bloc.

Opposition parties, which previously were fractured, have united under a front called INDIA, or Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance, to deny Modi a third straight election victory.

The alliance has fielded a single main candidate in most constituencies. But it has been roiled by ideological differences and personality clashes, and has not yet decided on its candidate for prime minister.

Most exit polls project Modi is set to extend his decade in power with a third consecutive term, especially after he opened a Hindu temple in northern Ayodhya city in January, which fulfilled his party's long-held Hindu nationalist pledge. During the polls Modi escalated polarizing rhetoric in incendiary speeches that targeted the country's Muslim minority.

Another victory would cement Modi as one of the country's most popular and important leaders. It would follow a thumping win in 2019, when the BJP clinched an absolute majority by sweeping 303 parliamentary seats. The Congress party managed only 52 seats.

WHAT ARE THE BIG ISSUES?

For decades, India has clung doggedly to its democratic convictions, largely due to free elections, an independent judiciary, a thriving media, strong opposition and peaceful transition of power. Some of these credentials have eroded under Modi's 10-year rule, with the polls seen as a test for the country's democratic values.

Many watchdogs have now categorized India as a "hybrid regime" that is neither a full democracy nor a full autocracy.

The poll results will also test Modi's limits. Critics accuse him of running on a Hindu-first platform, endangering the country's secular roots.

Under Modi, the media, once viewed as vibrant and largely independent, have become more pliant and critical voices muzzled. Courts have largely bent to Modi's will and given favorable verdicts in crucial cases. Centralization of executive power has strained India's federalism. And federal agencies have bogged down top opposition leaders in corruption cases, which they deny.

Another key issue is India's large economy, which is among the fastest growing in the world. It has helped India emerge as a global power and a counterweight to China. But even as India's growth soars by some measures, the Modi government has struggled to generate enough jobs for young Indians, and instead has relied on welfare programs like free food and housing to woo voters.

Jury selection is beginning in gun case against President Joe Biden's son

By RANDALL CHASE, CLAUDIA LAUER, MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Jury selection is to begin Monday in the federal gun case against President Joe Biden's son after a deal with prosecutors fell apart that would have avoided the spectacle of a trial so close to the 2024 election.

Hunter Biden, who spent the weekend with his father, has been charged with three felonies stemming from a 2018 firearm purchase when he was, according to his memoir, in the throes of a crack addiction. He has been accused of lying to a federally licensed gun dealer, making a false claim on the application used to screen firearms applicants when he said he was not a drug user, and illegally having the gun for 11 days.

He has pleaded not guilty and has argued he's being unfairly targeted by the Justice Department, after Republicans decried the now-defunct deal as special treatment.

The trial comes just four days after Donald Trump was convicted of 34 felonies in New York City after a jury found him guilty of a scheme to cover up a hush money payment to a porn actor to fend off damage to his 2016 presidential campaign. The two criminal cases are not related, but their proximity underscores how the criminal courtroom has taken center stage during the 2024 campaign.

Hunter Biden is also facing a separate trial in California in September on charges of failing to pay \$1.4 million in taxes. Both cases were to have been resolved through a deal with prosecutors last July, the culmination of a years-long investigation into his business dealings.

But Judge Maryellen Noreika questioned some unusual aspects of the deal that included a proposed guilty plea to misdemeanor offenses to resolve the tax crimes and a "diversion agreement" on the gun charge, which meant as long as he stayed out of trouble for two years the case would be dismissed. The lawyers squabbled over the agreement, could not come to a resolution and the deal fell apart. Attorney General Merrick Garland then appointed the top investigator as a special counsel in August, and a month later Hunter Biden was indicted.

This trial isn't about Hunter Biden's foreign business affairs — which Republicans have seized on without evidence to try to paint the Biden family as corrupt. But it will excavate some of Hunter Biden's darkest moments and put them on display.

The president's allies are worried about the toll the trial may take on the elder Biden, who's long been concerned about the well-being and sobriety of his only living son and who must now watch as those painful past mistakes are publicly scrutinized. He's also protective; Hunter Biden was with his father all weekend before the case began, biking with his dad, and attending church together.

Biden, in a last minute switch in plans, shifted from his Rehoboth Beach home back to his Wilmington compound on Sunday evening. Boarding the helicopter on Sunday was the only time the president was seen publicly without his son all weekend.

Allies are also worried the trial could become a distraction as the president tries to campaign under anemic poll numbers and as he is preparing for an upcoming presidential debate while the proceedings play out.

Prosecutors are hoping to show he was in the throes of addiction when he bought the gun - and therefore lied on the forms. They have said they're planning to use as evidence Hunter Biden's published

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 38 of 64

memoir, and they may also introduce contents from a laptop that he left at a Delaware repair shop and never retrieved. The contents made their way to Republicans in 2020 and were publicly leaked, revealing embarrassing and personal photos where he's often nude and doing drugs and highly personal messages where he asks dealers about scores.

The judge will ask a group of prospective jurors a series of questions to determine whether they can serve impartially on the jury, including whether they have donated to political campaigns or run for political office. She will ask whether their views about the 2024 presidential campaign prevent them from being impartial.

She's also going to ask whether prospective jurors believe Hunter Biden is being prosecuted because his father is the president. Also, she'll ask about firearms purchasing and addiction issues, including: "Do you believe someone who is addicted to drugs should not be charged with a crime?"

The case against Hunter Biden stems from a period where, by his own public admission, he was addicted to crack. His descent into drugs and alcohol followed the 2015 death of his brother Beau Biden from cancer. He bought and owned a gun for 11 days in October 2018, and indicated on the gun purchase form that he was not using drugs.

Hunter Biden has pleaded not guilty in both cases, and his attorneys have suggested they may argue he didn't see himself as an addict when prosecutors say he checked "no" to the question on the form. They'll also attack the credibility of the gun store owner.

Prosecutors, meanwhile, are also planning to call as witnesses Hunter Biden's ex-wife and his brother's widow Hallie, with whom he became romantically involved.

If he were to be convicted, he could face up to 25 years in prison, though first-time offenders do not get anywhere near the maximum and it is unclear whether the judge would actually give him time behind bars if he were convicted.

A guide to what's next for South Africa and the key figures in unprecedented coalition talks

By GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — South Africa's election has decided little, other than the African National Congress that liberated the country from apartheid in 1994 has lost its 30-year majority.

It remained the biggest party, though. With no one holding a majority, South Africa's party leaders are embarking on coalition talks to form a government. South Africa has never had to do this due to the ANC's long dominance.

There are four major political parties and at least eight with significant shares of the vote after last week's election. It'll be complicated.

Here's a guide to some of the key figures and what might be coming next as South Africa enters uncharted territory.

PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

Once a protege of Nelson Mandela, Ramaphosa, 71, has now overseen the worst election result in the ANC's history. He is under pressure within his own party as well as with voters, but he managed to laugh when an official made a slip Sunday and referred to him as the "extinguished" president rather than distinguished. "I'm not yet extinguished," Ramaphosa said.

Ramaphosa's challenge is to guide his party to a coalition he sees as best amid different factions within the ANC. The obvious choice is the main opposition Democratic Alliance. Between them, they would have enough seats in Parliament to govern. But the DA has been fiercely critical of the ANC's policies for years and the marriage wouldn't be an easy one, even if both have said they are open to discussions.

Another option for the ANC is to join with one or both of the two other main opposition parties, the uMkhonto weSizwe party, or MK party, and the Economic Freedom Fighters. That could be damaging for South Africa's image with foreign investors given MK and the EFF have both pledged to nationalize South Africa's important gold and platinum mines and the central bank.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 39 of 64

Ramaphosa's presidency is in the balance given a coalition agreement also has to translate into reelecting him for a second term. South Africans vote for parties in elections to decide how many seats they get in Parliament. Lawmakers then elect the president and the ANC now doesn't have enough lawmakers on its own to reelect Ramaphosa.

JOHN STEENHUISEN

Steenhuisen, 48, is the main opposition leader as head of the centrist DA and the only white leader among the four main parties. He said his party was also initiating talks with various parties, except MK and the EFF. The DA has drawn a line there and said it will never work with those two over ideological differences.

Getting Steenhuisen's DA and Ramaphosa's ANC together is widely viewed as the most stable coalition option by analysts. Some have suggested that other smaller parties could be brought in to create a wider coalition and dilute the ANC-DA mix.

FORMER PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA

Zuma was the leader of the ANC and president of South Africa until he was replaced by Ramaphosa in both positions. They've become fierce rivals. Zuma, who is 82, was the wildcard of this election after only announcing his political comeback in December. His newly formed MK Party had a huge impact by winning 14% of the vote and taking some of the ANC's support to become the third biggest party in its first election.

Zuma's party has demanded Ramaphosa step down as a condition for a coalition, a mark of the personal animosity. The ANC rejected the condition. While it would seem there's little for them to work with to come together, MK does now have a significant vote share and seats in Parliament.

Zuma, who has served a prison sentence for contempt of court, is due to go on trial next year on charges of corruption. He was barred from running for a seat in Parliament in this election because of his criminal record.

JULIUS MALEMA

Malema's EFF party lost support in the election to drop to the fourth biggest party behind MK. Malema is the youngest of the major leaders at age 43 and also has old ties to the ANC as its former youth leader before he was expelled for misconduct.

Renowned as a firebrand, his party follows a Marxist ideology but there's some common ground between it and the ANC and the EFF was raised as a logical coalition partner for the ANC before MK overtook it and reduced its significance. Because of their differences, the inclusion of the EFF and MK in any coalition may result in the DA pulling out.

Simone Biles cruises to 9th national title and gives Olympic champ Sunisa Lee a boost along the way

By WILL GRAVES AP National Writer

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — There used to be a time when Simone Biles would find "beauty in the blindness" ahead of the Olympics, reveling in not knowing what she didn't know.

That was eight years ago. Back when she was still just a teenager. Still kind of "ditzy."

Those days are long gone. The evidence isn't just on Biles drivers' license or her marriage certificate but in how the now 27-year-old is able to see beyond herself. The tunnel vision that most great athletes have in pursuit of greatness has fallen away.

And maybe that's the biggest difference between the national title the gymnastics star won on Sunday night — her ninth, this one with an all-around total of 119.750 — and her first over a decade ago.

The defining moment of Biles' victory wasn't a twist, a turn or a jump, but a walk.

It came early on, when Biles watched 2020 Olympic champion and good friend Sunisa Lee spin awkwardly in the air during her vault and landed on her back, a mixture of surprise and fear spreading across her face.

"I was kind of thinking that this was over," Lee said.

Then Biles appeared at her side, unprompted. She knew exactly where Lee was in that moment better

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 40 of 64

than anyone.

Three years ago at the Tokyo Games, a similar wayward vault by Biles started a chain of events that led to her withdrawing from multiple competitions and dragging the discussion on the importance of mental health front and center.

Watching Lee, who has spent most of the last two years battling kidney issues that have made her weight yo-yo and complicated her training, try to gather herself, Biles left her World Champions Centre teammates and gave Lee the kind of support Biles relied on so heavily back in Japan.

"I know how traumatizing it is, especially on a big stage like this," Biles said. "And I didn't want her to get in her head, so we just went and talked about it."

The two retreated off the floor to talk, with Biles reminding Lee she "could do hard things."

When they returned, Biles stood next to the uneven bars cheering Lee on as she rebounded with a brilliant (if somewhat watered down) routine that scored a 14.500 and helped her finish a promising fourth.

"I know I was having a hard time and she was just there to help lift me up," Lee said.

Biles is at a stage in her unparalleled career where the joy she gets from the sport is no longer centered strictly on the quality of her performance.

While she joked that she believes she's "aging like fine wine," it's telling that she saved her biggest smile afterward when talking about the five World Champions Centre teammates — most of them a decade younger — who will join her at Olympic trials in Minneapolis later this month.

"That's kind of what excites me because I think they have long careers ahead of them," Biles said. "So if I can do anything to help them, right now and in the future, that's what I'm going to do."

It's her way of giving back. She is well aware of the spotlight that awaits her in Paris and is trying to set an example for others on how to navigate the pressure that lies ahead. She's become a regular in therapy — now even during meet weeks — and is determined to focus on what she can control.

Like say, her gymnastics.

In front of an audience that included her husband, Chicago Bears safety Jonathan Owens, Biles put on a four-rotation clinic that featured all the trademarks of a typical Biles performance. There was jaw-dropping athleticism mixed with precision and more than a splash of swagger.

Biles finished with the highest two-day score on all four events, something she'd done only once before at nationals (2018).

Her only misstep on Sunday came on vault. She came up short on her Yurchenko double pike — two back flips with her hands clasped behind her knees — during warmups and overcompensated when it counted, generating so much force she wound up on her back. She still received a 15.000 for her effort, a testament to a vault that's never been completed in competition by another woman and only attempted by a select group of men.

Not that it bothered her. Biles collected herself, took a couple of deep breaths then followed it up a Cheng vault that was rewarded with a 15.1 and put a ninth national title within reach. No other gymnast in the history of the sport in the U.S. has more than seven.

While Biles remains above the fray as usual, there is plenty of competition for the other four spots on the five-woman U.S. team that will head to Paris as heavy favorites to return to the top of the podium after finishing second to Russia in Tokyo three years ago.

Skye Blakely, 19, put together another impressive performance and will head to Minneapolis with plenty of momentum. Three years after her bid to make the 2020 Olympic team ended with an injury, Blakely is peaking at the right time.

Lee remains a picture of elegance on bars and beam, her best events, and was encouraged after her first elite all-around competition since she triumphed in Tokyo while Biles cheered from the stands.

Olympians Jordan Chiles and Jade Carey are in the mix, though both endured falls on beam on Sunday. Third-place finisher Kayla DiCello slipped off the uneven bars.

Then there's Shilese Jones, considered the best all-around gymnast in the U.S. without the last name Biles, pulled out of the championships on Friday, citing a shoulder injury though she said Sunday she

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 41 of 64

was feeling better and plans to be available for trials. So will 18-year-old Kaliya Lincoln, who opted not to compete on Sunday after tweaking something during Friday night's opening session.

Both — if healthy — figure to be serious contenders to earn an invitation to Paris (Jones in particular). Biles' ticket is essentially punched. Same as it ever was.

Sally Buzbee steps down as executive editor of The Washington Post

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Washington Post said Sunday that its executive editor, Sally Buzbee, has stepped down after three years at the top of one of journalism's most storied brands.

She will be replaced by Matt Murray, former editor in chief of The Wall Street Journal, through this fall's presidential election. Following that, Robert Winnett, deputy editor of the Telegraph Media Group, will take over as editor as the newsroom restructures its operations.

No reason was given for Buzbee's departure. She wasn't quoted in the news release announcing that she was leaving, and did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

The Post also announced that it was launching a new division in its newsroom dedicated to reaching audiences who want to pay for and consume news in a different way.

Buzbee, former top editor at The Associated Press, was selected as the Post's top editor in May 2021. She replaced a renowned predecessor, Martin Baron, after the Post exploded in popularity during the Trump administration.

Buzbee was the first woman to serve as executive editor of The Washington Post. And like Jill Abramson, the first woman to be top editor at The New York Times, her tenure was short: Abramson had her job from 2011 to 2014.

It has been a miserable few years financially for the news industry, including for the Post. It has bled subscribers to the point where new publisher, Will Lewis, told employees last month that the newspaper lost \$77 million last year.

"To speak candidly, we are in a hole, and have been for some time," Lewis said, according to the Post.

Lewis was named late last year to replace Fred Ryan as Post publisher. He has worked at both The Wall Street Journal and The Telegraph in England, the places he turned to to find the new executives.

He's talked about creating a multi-tier subscription plan for The Post, similar to that in place at Politico. In an email to employees late Sunday, Lewis said the new department will focus on more video storytelling, will embrace artificial intelligence and flexible payment methods. It will begin this fall, he said.

In an earlier meeting, "we highlighted the need to move away from the traditional one-size-fits-all approach in the news media industry and focus on creating news for a broader range of readers and customers."

It augurs a change to the traditional structure of the Post. In his memo, Lewis mentioned "three newsrooms." Winnett will not take on the title of executive editor, but he will be responsible for the "core coverage areas" of politics, investigations, business, technology, sports and features. He has run The Telegraph's news operations since 2013, the Post said.

Murray will take over as leader of the newly-created department starting Nov. 6, the Post said. No one will have the title of executive editor: Murray, Winnett and David Shipley, the editorial page editor who will lead the "opinions newsroom," will each report directly to Lewis, the Post said.

"By creating three strong journalism functions — core, service/social and opinions — we are taking a definitive step away from the 'one size fits all' approach and moving towards meeting our audiences where they are," Lewis said.

The Post won three Pulitzer Prizes last month, including one in national reporting for a vivid series on the impact of the AR-15 rifle.

California firefighters continue battling wind-driven wildfire east of San Francisco

By TRÂN NGUYỄN AND THOMAS PEIPERT Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California firefighters made significant progress Sunday to tame a wind-driven wildfire that scorched thousands of acres 60 miles (97 kilometers) east of San Francisco, burned down a home and forced residents to flee the area near the central California city of Tracy.

The fire erupted Saturday afternoon in the grassy hills managed by the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, one of the country's key centers for nuclear weapons science and technology. The cause was under investigation.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said the research center was not under immediate threat from the blaze, dubbed the Corral Fire, which had devoured some 22 square miles (52 square kilometers) by Sunday afternoon. The fire was 50% contained as of Sunday evening.

Thousands of people in the area, including parts of the city of Tracy with a population of 100,000, were ordered to leave for evacuation centers Saturday. The evacuation order was lifted to allow residents to return home starting Sunday evening. Tracy is about 70 miles (112 kilometers) south of California's capital in Sacramento.

CalFire Battalion Chief Josh Silveira said Sunday afternoon the fire "burned right up to the homes" in the area and destroyed one house. With calmer winds and milder weather Sunday, Silveira said he didn't expect the fire to grow.

Two firefighters suffered minor to moderate burns on Saturday and were expected to make a full recovery, Silveira said.

The wildfire presented no threat to any laboratory facilities or operations and had moved away from the site, Lawrence Livermore spokesperson Paul Rhien said in a statement to The Associated Press early Sunday.

"As a precaution, we have activated our emergency operations center to monitor the situation through the weekend," Rhien said.

Photos showed a wall of flames moving over the parched landscape as dark smoke billowed into the sky.

The wildfire also forced the closure of two major highways, including an interstate that connects the San Francisco Bay Area to San Joaquin County in central California. But they had reopened by Sunday afternoon.

The San Joaquin County Office of Emergency Services on Saturday issued an evacuation order for areas west of the California Aqueduct, south of Corral Hollow Creek, west to Alameda County and south to Stanislaus County. A temporary evacuation point was established at Larch Clover Community Center in Tracy. The county also asked residents to temporarily use boiled tap water or bottled water for drinking and cooking purposes.

Sunday's high temperature for Tracy was expected to reach 85 degrees Fahrenheit (29 degrees Celsius), with no rain in the forecast. But hotter conditions are on their way.

The National Weather Service said "dangerously hot conditions" with highs of 103 F to 108 F (39.4 C to 42.2 C) were expected later in the week for the San Joaquin Valley, an area that encompasses Tracy. Wind gusts of up to 45 mph (72 kph) lashed the region Saturday night, according to meteorologist Idamis Shoemaker of the weather service in Sacramento.

After crackdown on Hong Kong, overseas communities carry the torch to keep Tiananmen memories alive

By KANIS LEUNG and TIAN MACLEOD JI Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — As the 35th anniversary of Beijing's Tiananmen Square crackdown neared, Rowena He, a prominent scholar of that bloody chapter of modern China's history, was busy flying between the United States, Britain and Canada to give a series of talks. Each was aimed at speaking out for those who cannot.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 43 of 64

The 1989 crackdown, in which government troops opened fire on student-led pro-democracy protesters, resulting in hundreds, if not thousands, dead, remains a taboo subject in mainland China. In Hong Kong, once a beacon of commemorative freedom, the massive June 4 annual vigil that mourned the victims for decades has vanished, a casualty of the city's clampdown on dissidents following huge anti-government protests in 2019.

He was still reeling from the loss of her academic position after Hong Kong authorities last year rejected her visa renewal, widely seen as a sign of the financial hub's decline in intellectual freedom. Despite the exhausting schedule of talks, the former protester in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou in 1989 viewed this as her duty.

"We cannot light the candles in Hong Kong anymore. So we would light it everywhere, globally," she said.

As Beijing's toughened political stance effectively extinguished any large-scale commemorations within its borders, overseas commemorative events have grown increasingly crucial for preserving memories of the Tiananmen crackdown. Over the past few years, a growing number of talks, rallies, exhibitions and plays on the subject have emerged in the U.S., Britain, Canada, Australia and Taiwan.

These activities foster hope and counteract the aggressive efforts to erase reminders of the crackdown, particularly those seen in Hong Kong. In 2021, the city's police charged three leaders of the group that organized the vigil with subversion under a 2020 sweeping national security law that has all but wiped out public dissent. Later, the group voted to disband. Tiananmen-related statues were also removed from universities.

Last week, under a new, home-grown security law, Hong Kong police arrested seven people on suspicion of alleged sedition over their posting of social media content about commemorating the Tiananmen crackdown. A Christian newspaper, which typically publishes content related to the event ahead of its anniversary, left its front page mostly blank. It said it could only turn words into blank squares and white space to respond to the current situation.

On Tuesday, the park that used to hold the vigil will be occupied by a carnival held by pro-Beijing groups.

However, attempts to silence commemorative efforts have failed to erase the harrowing memories from the minds of a generation of liberal-minded Chinese in the years after tanks rolled into the heart of Beijing to break up weeks of student-led protests that had spread to other cities and were seen as a threat to Communist Party rule.

He, who was 17 years old at the time, recalls that protesters like her took to the streets out of love for their country. When the crackdown happened, she spent the entire night in front of her TV, unable to sleep. After she returned to school, she was required to recite the official narrative — that the government had successfully quelled a riot — in order to pass her exams.

"I never killed anyone. But I lived with that survivor's guilt all those years," she said.

To preserve memories of the event, a museum dedicated to the Tiananmen crackdown opened in New York last June. It features exhibits such as a blood-stained shirt and a tent used by student protesters.

A similar museum operated by vigil organizers was shuttered in Hong Kong in 2021.

As of early May, its board chair Wang Dan, also a leading former student leader of the Tiananmen protests, estimated the New York museum attracted about 1,000 people, including Chinese immigrants, U.S. citizens and Hong Kongers. To expand its audience, Wang said he plans to organize temporary exhibitions on university campuses in the U.S., and possibly in other countries over the longer term.

He said overseas memorial events are crucial because mainland Chinese and Hong Kongers can see overseas memorial activities online.

"It can have an effect in mainland China because young people there all know how to use VPNs to circumvent internet censorship," he said.

Aline Sierp, a professor of European history and memory studies at Maastricht University in the Netherlands, said overseas commemorative activities allow the memories to travel and endure, providing access for other people and future generations.

But she said it can be "a double-edged sword" because adapting the memories to new places might risk

fragmenting or de-contextualizing them in the future.

Alison Landsberg, a memory studies scholar at George Mason University in Virginia, said that overseas efforts carry the potential to inspire people from other places who are facing their own challenges in the pursuit of democracy.

To carry the memories forward, film and television dramas can be powerful tools for people to take on memories of events through which they didn't live, she said.

She said overseas theater productions about the crackdown, which began last year in Taiwan and continued in London this year, have a greater possibility of making those connections and potentially reaching a broader audience.

"When you have a dramatic narrative, you have the capacity to bring the viewer into the story in a kind of intimate way," Landsberg said.

Last week, members of an audience at a London theater were visibly moved, some to tears, after watching the play "May 35th," a title that subtly references the June 4 crackdown.

The play, produced by Lit Ming-wai, part of the Hong Kong diaspora who moved to the U.K. after the enactment of the 2020 security law, tells the story of an elderly couple who wish to properly mourn their son who died in 1989.

Its director, Kim Pearce, who was born in the U.K. in the 1980s, said the tragedy had resonated with her from a young age and she was once moved to tears when she read the poem "Tiananmen" by James Fenton. Working on this project, she said, has further deepened her connection to the stories.

British theater-goer Sue Thomas, 64, also found the play deeply moving. "Particularly as a parent myself now, which I wasn't then, which sort of made me think of it in a much more sort of heartfelt way," she said.

At the theater, He, the scholar, served as one of the post-show speakers, sharing her struggles and the motivations behind her work with the audience. She said the play was so powerful that it made her relive the trauma of the past 35 years, leaving her in tears and causing her to lose her contact lenses.

"It shows that how much sufferings that people had to endure all these years," she said. "If there's anything we can do, I hope that we would bring the younger generation to understand this."

Prosecutors to dismiss charges against Minnesota trooper who shot motorist Ricky Cobb

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Prosecutors plan to dismiss murder and manslaughter charges against a white Minnesota state trooper who fatally shot Ricky Cobb II, a Black motorist, as Cobb tried to pull away from a traffic stop, saying the decision comes in response to recent statements from the trooper's attorney and new analysis of video from the scene.

Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty filed a notice to dismiss the charges after Trooper Ryan Londregan's defense team revealed prospective testimony during an April court hearing that the trooper believed Cobb was reaching for a firearm — and that a Minnesota State Patrol trainer said he never instructed officers to refrain from shooting into a moving vehicle.

The evidence would have made it impossible for prosecutors to prove that Londregan's actions were not an authorized use of force by a peace officer, the county attorney's office said in a statement released Sunday.

Referring to the decision to drop the charges, Londregan's attorney, Chris Madel, told the Star Tribune, "It's about goddamn time. That's going to be about my only on the record comment."

Bakari Sellers, an attorney representing Cobb's family, told the Star Tribune the family was disappointed with prosecutors.

"They got bullied. There's no other way around it," Sellers said.

Londregan, 27, pleaded not guilty May 15 in the death of Cobb, and his trial was set to begin Sept. 9.

Troopers pulled the 33-year-old Cobb over on Interstate 94 in Minneapolis last July 31 because the lights were out on his car. They then found that the Spring Lake Park man was wanted for violating a protection order in neighboring Ramsey County. Londregan shot Cobb twice as Cobb tried to drive away after

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 45 of 64

troopers ordered him to get out of his car.

Prosecutors and a law enforcement expert reviewed footage from the scene and found that, as Londregan's partner clung to the passenger's door, Cobb moved his hand upward. Cobb did have a gun in the vehicle. Moriarty told the Star Tribune there is still no evidence he intended to grab it but that the defense team's statements caused prosecutors to reconsider the evidence through a new lens.

"They could have told us that before we charged it, they could have told us that at any time," she said. "And that is information that we would have considered — and obviously have considered."

Law enforcement and Republican leaders had been calling on Democratic Gov. Tim Walz to take the case away from Moriarty, a former public defender who was elected on a platform of police accountability following the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis officer in 2020, and turn it over to Democratic Attorney General Keith Ellison. Walz had expressed concern about the direction of the case but had not acted.

Cobb's family filed a federal civil rights lawsuit in April, alleging that the stop and the shooting were unjustified.

Moriarty plans to hold a news conference Monday morning to discuss her decision to dismiss the charges in more detail.

Firefighters find charred body while extinguishing wildfire in south Florida

OSTEEN, Fla. (AP) — Firefighters found a charred body after dousing a brush fire in south Florida on Sunday, while fire crews elsewhere in the drought-stricken state battled wildfires that temporarily closed a highway and forced some residents to be evacuated from their homes.

Pompano Beach Fire Rescue crews were extinguishing a blaze when they discovered the body, and officials said they couldn't determine whether the person was male or female, WTVJ-TV reported. Firefighters said some people had been living in camps in the wooded area, but weren't sure if the victim had been living there.

Pompano Beach fire investigators, the state fire marshal and the Broward County Sheriff's Office were investigating the cause of the fire and the death.

To the north, more than 900 acres (360 hectares) had burned near Osteen in Volusia County as of Sunday. The Florida Forest Service said the fire was 90% contained. The fire broke out Saturday and may have been sparked by the remains of an earlier wildfire, Volusia County Fire Rescue Battalion Chief Scott Smoak told WESH-TV.

Most of central and southern Florida are currently experiencing drought conditions, according to the National Drought Mitigation Center, with the driest conditions concentrated around Sarasota and Punta Gorda. Outdoor burning of yard debris is currently banned by 13 central and southwest Florida counties, according to the Florida Forest Service.

"We're extremely dry, especially in this part of the county. Any bit of people burning outdoors, any type of, you know, vehicles that creates sparks, those are our main concerns," Smoak said.

So far this year, more than 1,100 wildfires have been reported in Florida, burning more than 24,000 acres (9,800 hectares), the state forest service reports.

A smaller fire Saturday in North Port briefly forced the closure of the northbound lanes of Interstate 75, with some residents being evacuated. The fire was 80% contained late Saturday, with firefighters saying Sunday they worked through the night and were continuing to douse hotspots.

In Martin County, smoke lingered Sunday from a fire that was sparked Friday from the remains of a previous fire. A helicopter was dropping water on the fire, WPTV-TV reported, although the blaze was 90% contained.

Derek Craver told WPEC-TV that he had to evacuate when the fire burned dangerously close to his house.

"We were sitting in the house and the smoke started getting close. It looked thick. I looked out there and saw flames," Craver said. "It's kind of hectic, a little bit of panic especially when they tell you to leave."

No houses were damaged and residents were allowed to return.

Yuka Saso wins another US Women's Open. This one was for Japan

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

LANCASTER, Pa. (AP) — The first Filipina to win the U.S. Women's Open, and now the first from Japan. Sweetest of all for Yuka Saso was sharing the biggest prize in her sport with countries of both her parents.

Saso delivered a masterpiece on the back nine at tough Lancaster Country Club on Sunday amid collapses from so many contenders. She closed with a 2-under 68 — the four players in the last two groups combined to go 22-over par — for a three-shot victory.

And then she held back tears at the trophy presentation — the silver Semple Trophy has only the names of the 79 winners, not their countries — as she thought about how much her Filipina mother and Japanese father have provided so much care and support.

She won at The Olympic Club in 2021 playing under the flag of the Philippines. She won at Lancaster three years later under the flag of Japan. She couldn't be prouder of both.

"Winning in 2021, I represented the Philippines. I feel like I was able to give back to my mom," Saso said. "This year I was able to represent Japan, and I think I was able to give back to my dad. I'm very happy that I was able to do it.

"It's just a wonderful feeling that I was able to give back to my parents in the same way."

Only the flag changed. The 22-year-old Saso was just as rock-solid down the stretch as she was at Olympic Club, where two late birdies got her into a playoff she won over Nasa Hataoka.

This time, she rode four birdies over a five-hole stretch on the back nine with a collection of clutch moments with tee shots and putts, wedges and long irons, everything the hardest test in gold demands. And no one could catch her.

Saso got up-and-down for par from short of the 18th green to finish at 4-under 276, winning by three shots over Hinako Shibuno, who in 2019 became the first Japanese player to capture the Women's British Open.

They were the only two players under par, the fewest for the Women's Open in 10 years.

Saso, who has two titles on the Japan LPGA before coming to America, joined Se Ri Pak and In Gee Chun as the only players to make their first two LPGA victories major championships.

This also was her first win since Olympic Club, a victory so surprising she said she wasn't ready for the spotlight. She handled everything Lancaster and the Women's Open threw her way.

"I really wanted it, as well — not just to get a second win but also to prove something to myself," Saso said. "I haven't won in three years. I definitely had a little doubt if I can win again or if I won't win again. But yeah, I think those experiences helped a lot, and I think I was able to prove a little bit something to myself."

Andrea Lee, part of a three-way tie for the lead at the start of this wild day, was the last player who had a chance to catch Saso. But the Stanford alum, a former No. 1 amateur, badly missed her tee shot on the easy 16th and had to settle for par, then took bogey on the 17th. Lee took one last bogey on the 18th for a 75 to tie for third with Ally Ewing (66).

Saso won \$2.4 million from the \$12 million purse, the largest in women's golf and in women's sports at a standalone venue.

The victory also put Saso in position to return to the Olympics — she played for the Philippines in 2021 in the Tokyo Games and tied for ninth. She had to decide before turning 21 which country to represent, and she went with Japan.

She led a strong showing by Japan at Lancaster — five players among the top 10. Saso and Shibuno were the first Japanese players to finish 1-2 in any major.

As much as Saso shined, Sunday was filled with meltdowns. None was more shocking than Minjee Lee, a two-time major champion who captured the Women's Open at Pine Needles two year ago.

Minjee Lee led by three shots when she got to the sixth hole. She missed a few birdie chances and made two bogeys before making the turn, but still had control. And then her tee shot on the par-3 12th — the same hole where Nelly Korda made 10 in the opening round — came up short and rolled back into the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 47 of 64

water. She took double bogey to fall into a tie with Saso.

Saso took the lead for good with a wedge to 3 feet for birdie on the 13th. Minjee Lee drove into waist-high grass on the 14th, had to take a penalty drop and made another double bogey. She closed with a 78.

"Just missed a couple putts for birdie early and then I kind of blew up from there" she said.

Wichanee Meechai of Thailand, the outsider among the leaders with no LPGA wins and a No. 158 world ranking, fell out early and took a triple bogey on the par-3 sixth. She shot 77.

Saso wasn't immune from mistakes. She had a four-putt double bogey on the par-3 sixth that left her four shots behind Minjee Lee. That was the last of the mistakes that mattered.

Her big run began with a 10-foot birdie putt on the 12th, followed by a wedge for birdie on No. 13. She hit her approach to 6 feet on the 15th hole and then delivered the winner, a 3-wood to 20 feet on the reachable par-4 16th for a two-putt birdie.

Saso is the second woman to win a major under two flags. Sally Little won the 1980 LPGA Championship for South Africa, and then won the du Maurier Classic in 1988 as an American citizen.

Saso started the final round three shots behind, and it didn't take long for collapses to unfold.

Andrea Lee three-putted the opening hole and then took double bogey on the fourth when she drove into the creek, hit a tree with her third shot and had to get up-and-down from a bunker for double bogey. Meechai three-putted her first two holes, and then went left of the flag on the par-3 sixth where the green slopes to the left and into the creek.

Saso also needed help in her other U.S. Women's Open win — Lexi Thompson losing a five-shot lead over the last 10 holes. This time she seized control with a brilliant display of clutching putting and taking advantage of the scoring holes.

She said her emotions were from not expecting to win. It felt that way at Olympic, and it felt that way at Lancaster. This one felt twice as good.

The Israeli army says it investigates itself. Where do those investigations stand?

By JULIA FRANKEL and JACK JEFFERY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Throughout its grinding seven-month war with Hamas, Israel has pledged to investigate a series of deadly events in which its military forces are suspected of wrongdoing. The commitment comes in the face of mounting claims — from human rights groups and the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor — that the country's leaders are committing war crimes in Hamas-ruled Gaza.

In one of the highest-profile cases, an attack on a World Central Kitchen convoy that killed five foreign aid workers, the Israeli army promptly published its findings, acknowledged misconduct by its forces and dismissed two soldiers. But other investigations remain open, and admissions of guilt are rare.

Israel's military advocate general, Maj. Gen. Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi, said this past week that the military is investigating about 70 cases of alleged wrongdoing. She gave few details. The military refused to disclose the full list of investigations and told The Associated Press it could only respond to queries about specific probes.

A look at some of the investigations that have been publicly announced:

A DEADLY STRIKE ON A TENT CAMP KILLS DISPLACED FAMILIES

On Tuesday, Israel revealed the preliminary results of an investigation into a deadly strike on a tent camp sheltering displaced families in the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

The May 26 strike killed at least 45 people and caused widespread destruction. Most of the victims were women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between the deaths of civilians and Hamas militants.

The military's chief spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said a preliminary investigation found the Israeli munitions used that day in efforts to eliminate two Hamas militants were too small to be the source of a fire that broke out.

Hagari said the destruction may have been caused by secondary explosions, possibly from Palestinian

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 48 of 64

militants' weapons in the area. Hamas did not respond to that explanation, but a member of the militants' political bureau remarked Tuesday that Israel "believes that it is deceiving the world, with its false claim that it did not intend to kill and burn children and women, and its claim to investigate its crimes."

The Israeli military said in a statement that the investigation had been turned over to a fact-finding group that operates independently outside the army's chain of command. Those findings are then handed to the military advocate general, who decides if there should be disciplinary measures. It's not clear how long the probe will last.

SCORES OF CIVILIANS ARE SHOT DEAD AROUND A FLOUR CONVOY

In February, witnesses said Israeli troops fired on a crowd of Palestinians waiting for aid in Gaza City. At least 104 people were killed and 760 were wounded, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which described it as a massacre.

Army officials initially said dozens of Palestinians were killed in a stampede when huge crowds tried to grab supplies off the pre-dawn convoy of 30 army trucks carrying flour toward hard-hit northern Gaza. But the military's preliminary investigation, released a week later, appeared to back off that description, saying only that the stampede caused "incidents of significant harm to civilians."

The investigation found that troops opened fire at some people who approached them and posed a threat to them and that a tank also fired warning shots to disperse "suspects." But it did not directly address how the people were killed.

The military said the case is also being investigated by the fact-finding group.

AL-AHLI HOSPITAL EXPLOSION SETS OFF DEADLY INFERNO

An explosion in October in the courtyard of the Al-Ahli hospital, where thousands of Palestinians had sought shelter or medical treatment, set off an inferno that burned men, women and children alive.

There are still conflicting claims over what happened.

Officials in Gaza quickly said an Israeli airstrike had hit the hospital, killing at least 500 people. Images of the aftermath ignited protests across the region.

Within hours, Israeli officials said they had conducted an investigation and determined they were not involved. They released live video, audio and other evidence that Israel said showed the blast was caused by a rocket misfired by Islamic Jihad, another Palestinian militant group.

Islamic Jihad denied responsibility.

An AP investigation, along with U.S. and French intelligence assessments, concluded a misfired rocket likely caused the explosion.

A PALESTINIAN MAN IS SHOT WHILE WALKING WITH OTHERS

In January, the Israeli government announced it was investigating the death of a Palestinian man who was fatally shot while walking with four others.

Video footage shows one of the men holding a white flag — the international symbol of surrender — and the others behind him holding their hands in the air. They then scramble backward as several shots ring out.

In a second clip, one of the men is lying on the ground. The shooter is not visible in the video but before the shots are fired, the camera pans, showing what looks to be an Israeli tank positioned nearby. Ahmed Hijazi, a citizen journalist who filmed the episode, told The Associated Press that an Israeli tank fired on the group.

The army said it conducted an in-depth investigation and found the tank did not fire at the men. It also said it was "not possible to determine with certainty" whether the man was killed by Israeli fire.

FOUR PALESTINIANS ARE SHOT ON A DIRT ROAD

On March 22, Israel's military launched an investigation after footage emerged appearing to show the bombing of five Palestinians near the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis.

Aerial footage circulating on social media shows four men walking along a dirt road before a strike hits them, killing all four instantly. Another man farther along the road tries to run away before he is hit and killed. The origin of the footage remains unclear.

The military said the investigation had been turned over to the independent fact-finding group.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 49 of 64

A GAZA SURGEON DIES IN AN ISRAELI PRISON

Famed Gaza surgeon Adnan al-Bursh died in an Israeli prison after he was rounded up in an arrest raid on Al Awda hospital in mid-April, according to the United Nations.

Bursh led the orthopedic department at Al-Shifa Hospital. At the time of his arrest in December, he was reportedly in good health and operating on patients, the U.N. said.

But those who saw Bursh in detention reported that he looked depleted and bore signs of violence, according to Physicians for Human Rights-Israel. Israel's military and police did not respond to requests for comment.

Palestinian detainees who have returned from Israeli detention have reported beatings, harsh interrogations and neglect while in Israeli custody. Israel has denied the reports. Bursh was transferred to Israel's Ofer military prison in the West Bank, where he died.

Israeli police will conduct an autopsy of Bursh's body with a doctor from Physicians for Human Rights-Israel present, the group said, noting it had filed a petition on behalf of Bursh's family. It's unclear when the autopsy will be conducted.

Authorities have released no information on the cause of death and it is unclear who is investigating. Israel's military and police referred questions to Israel's Prison Service, which referred questions back to the military.

Trump joins TikTok and calls it 'an honor.' As president he once tried to ban the video-sharing app

By JILL COLVIN, WILL WEISSERT and MEG KINNARD Associated Press

Donald Trump has joined the popular video-sharing app TikTok, a platform he once tried to ban while in the White House, and posted from a UFC fight two days after he became the first former president and presumptive major party nominee in U.S. history to be found guilty on felony charges.

"It's an honor," Trump said in the TikTok video, which features footage of him waving to fans and posing for selfies at the Ultimate Fighting Championship fight in Newark, New Jersey, on Saturday night. The video ends with Trump telling the camera: "That was a good walk-on, right?"

By Sunday morning, Trump had amassed more than 1.1 million followers on the platform and the post had garnered more than 1 million likes and 24 million views.

"We will leave no front undefended and this represents the continued outreach to a younger audience consuming pro-Trump and anti-Biden content," Trump spokesman Steven Cheung said in a statement about the campaign's decision to join the platform.

"There's no place better than a UFC event to launch President Trump's Tik Tok, where he received a hero's welcome and thousands of fans cheered him on," he added.

Democratic President Joe Biden signed legislation in April that could ban TikTok in the U.S., even as his campaign joined in February and has tried to work with influencers.

Trump received an enthusiastic welcome at the fight at Newark's Prudential Center, where the crowd broke into chants of "We love Trump!" and another insulting Biden with an expletive.

It was Trump's first public outing since a jury in New York found him guilty Thursday on 34 charges of falsifying business records as part of a scheme to illegally influence the 2016 election by covering up hush money payments made to a porn actor who claimed she and Trump had sex. Trump has maintained he did nothing wrong and plans to appeal the verdict. He will be sentenced on July 11.

Throughout his campaign, Trump has used appearances at UFC fights to project an image of strength and to try to appeal to potential voters who may not closely follow politics or engage with traditional news sources. It's also part of a broader effort to connect with young people and minority voters, particularly Latino and Black men.

TikTok, owned by Beijing-based ByteDance, is another opportunity to reach those potential voters. The platform has about 170 million users in the U.S., most of whom skew younger — a demographic that is especially hard for campaigns to reach because they shun television.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 50 of 64

As president, Trump tried to ban TikTok through an executive order that said "the spread in the United States of mobile applications developed and owned" by Chinese companies was a national security threat. The courts blocked the action after TikTok sued.

Both the FBI and the Federal Communications Commission have warned that ByteDance could share user data such as browsing history, location and biometric identifiers with China's government. TikTok said it has never done that and would not, if asked.

The platform was a hot topic of debate during the 2024 GOP primary campaign, with most candidates shunning its use. Many, including former Vice President Mike Pence, called for TikTok to be banned in the U.S. due to its connections with China

Trump said earlier this year that he still believes TikTok posed a national security risk, but was opposed to banning it because that would help its rival, Facebook, which he continues to criticize over his 2020 election loss to Biden.

"Frankly, there are a lot of people on TikTok that love it. There are a lot of young kids on TikTok who will go crazy without it," Trump told CNBC.

The legislation signed by Biden gives ByteDance nine months to sell the company, with a possible additional three months if a sale is in progress. If it doesn't, TikTok will be banned. Biden barred the app on most government devices in December 2022.

His reelection campaign nonetheless uses the app, which it joined the night of the Super Bowl in February. Aides argue that in an increasingly fragmented modern media environment, the campaign must get its message out to voters via as many platforms as possible, including TikTok as well as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Biden's "bidenhq" account currently has more than 330,000 followers and 4.5 million likes.

Trump's appearance at Saturday's fight came after he had sat down for an interview with Fox News Channel's "Fox & Friends Weekend" that aired Sunday.

In that appearance, Trump said he was "OK" with the prospect of potential jail time or house arrest, saying it was "the way it is."

But he again suggested the public might not accept such a punishment for a former president now running to return to the White House.

"I don't know that the public would stand it, you know. I'm not sure the public would stand for it," he said. "I think it would be tough for the public to take. You know, at a certain point there's a breaking point."

Trump, as he has throughout the trial, maintained his innocence, saying he "did absolutely nothing wrong."

He was asked how his wife, former first lady Melania Trump, has taken the news.

"She's fine. But I think it's very hard for her. I mean, she's fine. But, you know, she has to read all this crap," he said.

She did not appear with Trump in court at any point during his seven-week trial.

Energy shutdowns hit Ukraine after Russian attacks target infrastructure

By SAMYA KULLAB and ELISE MORTON Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine imposed emergency power shutdowns in most of the country on Sunday, a day after Russia unleashed large-scale attacks on energy infrastructure and claimed it made gains in the eastern Donetsk province.

The shutdowns were in place in all but three regions of Ukraine following Saturday's drone and missile attack on energy targets that injured at least 19 people.

Ukraine's state-owned power grid operator Ukrenergo said the shutdowns affected both industrial and household consumers.

Sustained Russian attacks on Ukraine's power grid in recent weeks have forced the government to institute nationwide rolling blackouts. Without adequate air defenses to counter assaults and allow for repairs, though, the shortages could still worsen as need spikes in late summer and the bitter-cold winter.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 51 of 64

Among the most significant recent strikes were an April barrage that damaged Kyiv's largest thermal power plant and a massive attack on May 8 that targeted power generation and transmission facilities in several regions.

Following Saturday's barrage, Ukraine's air force said Sunday that air defenses had shot down all 25 drones launched overnight.

Russia claimed Sunday that it had taken control of the village of Umanske in the partially Russian-occupied Donetsk region.

Russia's coordinated new offensive has centered on Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region, but seems to include testing Ukrainian defenses in Donetsk farther south, while also launching incursions in the northern Sumy and Chernihiv regions.

In Russia, six people were injured in shelling in the city of Shebekino in the Belgorod region bordering Ukraine, regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said Sunday. He also said that a local official, the deputy head of the Korochansky district, had been killed by "detonation of ammunition." He gave no details.

In the neighboring Kursk region, three people were injured Sunday when an explosive device was dropped from a drone, according to acting regional head Alexey Smirnov.

Speaking at Asia's premier security conference in Singapore, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy accused China on Sunday of helping Russia to disrupt an upcoming Swiss-organized peace conference on the war in Ukraine.

Also on Sunday, White House National Security Communications Adviser John Kirby confirmed President Joe Biden agreed to allowing Ukraine to use some U.S.-provided weapons to strike inside Russia to relieve "incredible downward pressure" that Russia has put on Kharkiv.

Earlier this week, four U.S. officials, who requested anonymity, said President Joe Biden had given Ukraine the go-ahead to use American weaponry to strike inside Russia for the limited purpose of defending Kharkiv.

Ukraine asked for permission to use the U.S.-provided weapons to strike against "imminent threats just across the border," Kirby said Sunday on ABC's This Week With George Stephanopoulos.

"We're talking about military emplacements, gun positions, that kind of thing. Logistics staging bases that the Russians were using to create some sort of buffer zone so that they could continue to pound Kharkiv." Kirby said the permission is "limited to the Kharkiv region and it is limited with respect to the kinds of targets they can hit, and how far back they can go."

Water begins to flow again in downtown Atlanta after outage that began Friday

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Water pressure was returning to downtown Atlanta and nearby neighborhoods on Sunday after a two-day water outage shut down businesses and left faucets dry at many homes.

A large swath of the city remained under an order to boil water before drinking it, but Mayor Andre Dickens said in a late Saturday news conference that one of the two major water main breaks affecting the city had been repaired.

The first-term Democratic mayor, who faces reelection in 2025, was again apologetic, even as residents continued to savage the city's response. Among the critics: Megan Thee Stallion, whose Friday and Saturday night shows at downtown's State Farm Arena were canceled.

"Call the mayor! All day they've been telling us we can perform," the rapper said in a video she posted Saturday.

The city said Dickens visited senior centers and other locations Sunday to check on water supplies, while the city continued to hand out bottled water at some fire stations. The outage did not affect the entire city of 500,000 — many areas in Atlanta's northern and southern ends never lost water pressure and never faced a boil order.

State Farm Arena management said Megan Thee Stallion's Friday night show would take place on Sunday,

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 52 of 64

while the Saturday show was rescheduled for Monday.

Other events downtown happened on schedule Sunday, including an Atlanta United soccer match at Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Centennial Olympic Park turned back on its fountains, where children often splash in bathing suits.

Two affected hospitals said they were still providing bottled water to patients, but said they were otherwise ramping back up to normal operations, with regular schedules of surgeries and appointments planned for Monday.

Department of Watershed Management Commissioner Al Wiggins Jr. told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution that boil orders could be lifted in some areas Monday.

The problems began Friday morning where three large water mains intersect just west of downtown. Wiggins said at a Saturday news conference that at least some of the pipes that burst were old and corroded. With pipes coming together in a confined area, it was a tight squeeze to make repairs, with only one worker at a time working in the manhole accessing the junction. Repairs were completed Saturday evening, officials said.

Another water main later burst in the city's Midtown neighborhood, which is studded with new office, hotel and apartment towers. Wiggins said Saturday that officials weren't sure yet why that pipe had broken. That leak continued to gush through the city streets Sunday. City officials said Saturday that they were working on ways to isolate the leak from the larger water system and were awaiting a part needed to repair to the pipe. Dickens declared a state of emergency so the city could buy materials and hire workers without following the normal purchasing laws.

Faltering infrastructure is a common story in older parts of American cities. Atlanta has spent billions in recent years to upgrade its aging sewer and water infrastructure, including a tunnel drilled through 5 miles of rock to provide the city more than 30 days of stored water. Last month, voters approved continuing a 1-cent sales tax to pay for federally mandated sewer upgrades. The city at one time routinely dumped untreated sewage into creeks and the Chattahoochee River.

City workers spent much of Saturday handing out water and setting up portable toilets at several fire stations while checking on senior citizens who live in high-rise residences.

Officials were widely criticized for being slow to update citizens on the situation. The city and its water management department sent out an update after 8 p.m. Friday and waited more than 12 hours to update residents again. Dickens didn't address the media until 2 p.m. Saturday, explaining he was in Memphis, Tennessee, when the problem began.

Someone in the affected area posted flyers around the neighborhood asking "Don't have water?" and "Help us find our mayor."

Some attractions and businesses, including the Georgia Aquarium, reopened on Sunday, although the aquarium warned that the boil water order meant no ice or fountain drinks in its cafeteria.

Border mayors heading to DC for Tuesday's immigration announcement

BY VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

McALLEN, TEXAS (AP) — At least two Texas border mayors are headed to Washington on Tuesday when President Joe Biden is expected to announce an executive order that will mark his latest and most aggressive plan to curtail the number of migrants allowed to seek asylum in the U.S.

Brownsville Mayor John Cowen and Edinburg Mayor Ramiro Garza both confirmed they were invited by the White House for an immigration announcement on Tuesday. Cowen told the Associated Press that he plans to attend, while Garza said he would have more details on Monday about his plans.

Notably, the Democratic mayor of Eagle Pass, the Texas-Mexico border town where the number of migrants led to a state-federal clash over border security, had not received an invitation as of Sunday. The mayor from McAllen said he was invited, but could not attend because of a prior commitment.

A White House spokesman did not immediately return a request for comment on other mayors who were invited to the announcement.

The AP reported last week that the White House was finalizing an executive order that could shut off asylum requests and automatically deny entrance to migrants once the number of people encountered by U.S. border officials exceeded a new daily threshold.

The unilateral action is expected even as the number of border crossings at the southern U.S. border has declined since December, due in large part to Mexico's escalated enforcement efforts. But Biden wants to head off any potential spike in crossings that could occur later in the year, as the fall election draws closer, when the weather cools and numbers tend to rise.

Immigration remains a concern for voters ahead of the November elections, with Republicans eager to punish Biden electorally over the issue. Democrats have responded that Republicans, at the behest of Donald Trump, killed a bipartisan border deal in Congress that would have led to the toughest legislative restrictions on asylum in years.

Israel seeks a 'governing alternative' to Hamas in Gaza. It's been tried and failed before

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel is looking into an alternative local governing body for Gaza, the defense minister said Sunday, proposing a future beyond Hamas but giving no idea who those challengers might be.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant's comments came at a time of new uncertainty in the eight-month war. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is under growing pressure from many Israelis to accept a new cease-fire deal proposed by U.S. President Joe Biden, while far-right allies threaten to collapse his government if he does.

Gallant, part of Israel's three-member War Cabinet who recently urged the government to have a detailed postwar plan for Gaza, said in a briefing that "we seek a governing alternative to Hamas. The framework for this includes isolating areas, removing Hamas operatives in these areas and bringing in other forces that will enable the formation of a governing alternative."

That will achieve Israel's goals of removing Hamas' military and governing authority in Gaza and returning home the remaining hostages taken in the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that sparked the war, Gallant said. He stressed that "we will not accept the rule of Hamas at any stage in any process aimed at ending the war."

In response to questions, an Israeli defense official told The Associated Press that Gallant hopes to enable isolated, Hamas-free areas in Gaza to become "hubs of local government" and identify forces that can enable a longer-term formation of a government.

Israel is looking for "local non-hostile actors," the official said, adding that Gallant believes that "Palestinians should be governing Palestinians." Israel would facilitate surges of aid to the areas, and the local forces would be responsible for distributing it to strengthen their authority.

But that approach is challenging and has failed before, one expert said.

"I haven't heard of any local players that are brave enough to present themselves as an alternative to Hamas," said Michael Milshtein, an Israeli analyst of Palestinian affairs at Tel Aviv University and a former military intelligence officer.

Milshtein said Gallant's "wishful thinking" would amount to a suicidal mission for any local leader. Hamas has threatened anyone cooperating with Israel's government.

"Although Hamas suffered severe damage over the past eight months, their impact on the public is still very strong," he said.

Milshtein noted that Israel has tried this approach in the past. In the 1970s and '80s, Israel tried to establish "village leagues," empowering local Palestinian leaders.

"They were considered in the eyes of Palestinians as collaborators, and it ended in a very tragic manner," he said. Unless Israel maintains a constant presence in Gaza, any "alternative forces" they try to install will be too fragile, he added.

Netanyahu has said Israel will maintain security control over Gaza but delegate civilian administration to local Palestinians unaffiliated with Hamas or the Western-backed Palestinian Authority, which governs

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 54 of 64

parts of the occupied West Bank. He has ruled out a path to Palestinian statehood.

Top ally the U.S. has proposed that a reformed Palestinian Authority would govern Gaza with the assistance of Arab and Muslim nations.

The Hamas attack on Oct. 7 in southern Israel killed around 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducted about 250. About 100 hostages remain in Gaza, along with the bodies of around 30 more.

Over 36,430 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza by Israel's offensive, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Its count doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants. Israel blames Hamas for civilian deaths, accusing it of operating from dense residential areas.

At least five people including a young girl were killed Sunday in a strike on a street in Zawayda, central Gaza, according to Palestinian health officials and AP journalists at al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital who counted the bodies.

The United States continued to press Israel on the cease-fire proposal outlined by Biden, who said Friday it's time for the war to end. Many of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced and shelter with few supplies, large parts of the territory have been destroyed and the United Nations has warned of "full-blown" famine.

The deal's first phase would last six weeks and include a "full and complete cease-fire," a withdrawal of Israeli forces from all densely populated areas of Gaza and the release of a number of hostages, including women, older people and the wounded, in exchange for the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. Biden acknowledged that moving into the next phase of the deal would require more negotiations.

"This was an Israeli proposal. We have every expectation that if Hamas agrees to the proposal — as was transmitted to them, an Israeli proposal — then Israel would say yes," White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby told ABC.

Also Sunday, officials from Egypt, Israel and the U.S. ended a meeting in Cairo without any apparent agreement to reopen the crucial Rafah crossing into Gaza, which has been closed since Israel took over the Palestinian side of it in early May, Egypt's state-run television channel Al-Qahera News reported.

Israel's military continues to press into Rafah, Gaza's southernmost city, in search of what's been described as Hamas' last stronghold even as the militants regroup elsewhere in the territory.

Citing an unnamed official, Al-Qahera News said Egypt affirmed that Israel must withdraw its forces from the Palestinian side of the crossing before it can reopen. The report said Egypt accused Israel of blocking the delivery of badly needed humanitarian aid to Gaza, which Israel denies.

Ultra-Orthodox protesters block Jerusalem roads ahead of Israeli court decision on draft exemptions

Dozens of ultra-Orthodox protesters blocked roads in Jerusalem on Sunday as Israel's Supreme Court heard arguments in a landmark case challenging a controversial system of exemptions from military service granted to the religious community.

The court is looking at the legality of the exemptions, which have divided the country and threatened to collapse Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's governing coalition. A decision is expected in the coming weeks.

Most Jewish men and women in Israel are required to serve mandatory military service at the age of 18. But the politically powerful ultra-Orthodox have traditionally received exemptions if they are studying full-time in religious seminaries. These exemptions have infuriated the wider general public, especially as hundreds of soldiers have been killed in the war with Hamas.

During Sunday's arguments, government lawyers told the judges that forcing ultra-Orthodox men to enlist would "tear Israeli society apart." The court suggested a target of enlisting 3,000 ultra-Orthodox men a year — more than double the current levels but still less than 25% of their overall numbers.

In Jerusalem, Israeli police cleared protesters from roads, and forcefully removed those who briefly blocked the city's light rail. Demonstrators chanted "to prison and not to the army."

In March, the court ordered an end to government subsidies for many ultra-Orthodox men who do not serve in the army.

Netanyahu faces a court-ordered deadline of June 30 to pass a new law that would end the broad exemptions. But he depends on ultra-Orthodox parties to prop up his government, and ending the exemptions could cause them to leave and trigger new elections.

Condemnations mount over Israeli proposal to label UN aid agency a terrorist group

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Qatar and Saudi Arabia on Sunday condemned an Israeli parliamentary bill that seeks to label UNRWA, the main provider of aid for Palestinians in Gaza, a terrorist group, joining a growing number of nations opposed to the proposal.

The bill, which passed a preliminary vote in parliament last week, is the product of increasingly tense relations between Israel and the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees. Israel has accused the agency of militant links, claiming that hundreds of its employees are members of militant groups, including some who allegedly participated in the Oct. 7 attacks on southern Israel.

Those allegations led to a freeze in funding by many donors to the agency at a time when Gaza has been buckling under a humanitarian crisis triggered by the war. UNRWA says it took swift action against those accused and an independent review of the agency's neutrality found that Israel did not previously raise concerns about the workers and did not provide evidence backing its claims.

The bill moving through parliament seeks to brand the agency a "terror group," saying that the employees' alleged involvement in the Hamas assault shows that "it is a terror organization that is no different from the Hamas terror organization." The bill also seeks to cut diplomatic ties between Israel and the agency.

The bill passed the initial vote 42-6 and must go through committees and three other votes before becoming law.

Juliette Touma, UNRWA's director of communications, said the bill was part of Israel's ongoing "systematic campaign" to dismantle the U.N. agency that is putting the lives of its staff at risk. She said it was too early to predict how the bill might affect the agency.

UNRWA has operations in east Jerusalem, the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza and it must go through Israeli crossings in order to deliver aid and supplies into Gaza.

In response to the bill, Qatar's Foreign Ministry said the attempt to brand UNRWA a terrorist organization is "an extension of the systematic campaign aimed at dismantling the agency at a time when the need for its humanitarian services is dire due to the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip."

Saudi Arabia also condemned the move, saying UNRWA employees "are doing their duty to alleviate the severity of the humanitarian catastrophe that the Palestinian people are going through."

"The kingdom stresses that Israel, as an occupying state, must abide by international law and international humanitarian law and stop obstructing the work of international organizations," the Saudi Foreign Ministry said.

The European Union, which along with its member states is the biggest donor to UNRWA, also condemned the move on Friday. It pointed to the "crucial and irreplaceable" role of UNRWA in addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Belgium, an EU member, put out its own condemnations.

UNRWA, employs thousands of workers and provides vital aid and services to millions of people across the Middle East. In Gaza, it has been the main supplier of food, water and shelter to civilians during the Israel-Hamas war.

Israel has long railed against the agency, accusing it of tolerating or even collaborating with Hamas and of perpetuating the 76-year-old Palestinian refugee crisis. UNRWA denies the charges, saying it adheres to U.N. standards of neutrality. The Israeli government has accused Hamas and other militant groups of siphoning off aid and using U.N. facilities for military purposes.

Democrats wanted an agreement on using artificial intelligence. It went nowhere

By DAN MERICA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Democratic National Committee was watching earlier this year as campaigns nationwide were experimenting with artificial intelligence. So the organization approached a handful of influential party campaign committees with a request: Sign onto guidelines that would commit them to use the technology in a “responsible” way.

The draft agreement, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press, was hardly full of revolutionary ideas. It asked campaigns to check work by AI tools, protect against biases and avoid using AI to create misleading content.

“Our goal is to use this new technology both effectively and ethically, and in a way that advances — rather than undermines — the values that we espouse in our campaigns,” the draft said.

The plan went nowhere.

Instead of fostering an agreement, the guidelines sparked a debate about the value of such pledges, particularly those governing fast-evolving technology. Among the concerns expressed by the Democratic campaign organizations: Such a pledge might hamstring their ability to deploy AI and could turn off donors with ties to the AI industry. Some committee officials were also irked that the DNC gave them only a few days to agree to the guidelines.

The proposal’s demise highlighted internal divisions over campaign tactics and the party’s uncertainty over how to best utilize AI amid warnings from experts that the technology is supercharging the proliferation of disinformation.

Hannah Muldavin, a senior spokesperson at the Democratic National Committee, said the group is not giving up on finding a consensus.

The DNC, she said, “will continue to engage with our sister committees to discuss ideas and issues important to Democratic campaigns and to American voters, including AI.”

“It’s not uncommon for ideas and plans to shift, especially in the midst of a busy election year, and any documents on this subject reflect early and ongoing conversations,” Muldavin said, adding the “DNC and our partners take seriously the opportunities and challenges presented by AI.”

The wrangling comes as campaigns have increasingly deployed artificial intelligence — computer systems, software or processes that emulate aspects of human work and cognition — to optimize workloads. That includes using large language models to write fundraising emails, text supporters and build chatbots to answer voters’ questions.

That trend is expected to continue as November’s general election approaches, with campaigns turning to supercharged generative AI tools to create text and images, as well as clone human voices and create video at lightning speeds.

The Republican National Committee used AI-generated images in a television spot last year predicting a dystopian future under President Joe Biden.

Much of that adoption, however, has been overshadowed by concerns about how campaigns could use artificial intelligence in ways that trick voters. Experts have warned that AI has become so powerful that it has made it easy to generate “deep fake” videos, audio snippets and other media targeting opposing candidates. Some states have passed legislation regulating the way generative artificial intelligence can be used. But Congress has so far failed to pass any bills regulating artificial intelligence on the federal level.

In the absence of regulation, the DNC sought a set of guidelines it could point to as evidence the party was taking seriously the threat and promise of AI. It sent the proposal in March to the five Democratic campaign committees that seek to elect House, Senate, gubernatorial, state legislative and state attorneys general candidates to office, according to the draft agreement.

The goal was to have each committee agree to a slate of AI guardrails and the DNC proposed issuing a joint statement proclaiming such guidelines would ensure that campaigns could use “the tools they need to prevent the spread of misinformation and disinformation, while empowering campaigns to safely,

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 57 of 64

responsibly use generative AI to engage more Americans in our democracy.”

The Democratic committee had hoped the statement would be signed by Chair Jaime Harrison and the leaders of the other organizations.

Democratic operatives said the proposal landed with a thud. Some senior leaders at the committees worried that the agreement might have unforeseen consequences, perhaps constricting how campaigns use AI, according to multiple Democratic operatives familiar with the outreach.

And it might send the wrong message to technology companies and executives who work on AI, many of whom help fill campaign coffers during election years.

Some of the Democratic Party’s most prolific donors are top tech entrepreneurs and AI evangelists, including Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, and Eric Schmidt, the former CEO of Google.

Altman has donated over \$200,000 to the Biden campaign and his aligned Democratic joint fundraising committee since the start of last year, according to data from the Federal Election Commission, and Schmidt’s contributions to those groups have topped \$500,000 over the same time.

Two other AI proponents, Dustin Moskovitz, the co-founder of Facebook, and Reid Hoffman, the co-founder of LinkedIn, donated more than \$900,000 to Biden’s joint fundraising committee this cycle, according to the same data.

The DNC plan caught the committees off guard because it came with little explanation, other than a desire to get each committee to agree to the list of best practices within a few days, said multiple Democratic operatives who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren’t authorized to discuss the matter. Aides to the Democratic Congressional Campaign and Democratic Senatorial Campaign committees said they felt rushed by a DNC timeline that urged them to sign quickly.

Representatives from the Democratic Attorneys General Association did not respond to the Associated Press’ request for comment. Spokesmen from the Democratic Governors Association and Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee declined to comment.

The Republican National Committee did not respond to questions about its AI guidelines. The Biden campaign also declined to comment when asked about the DNC effort.

The four-page agreement — “Guidelines on Responsible Use of Generative AI in Campaigns” — covered everything from ensuring that artificial intelligence systems were not trusted without a human checking its work to notifying voters when they are interacting with AI-generated content or systems.

“As the explosive rise of generative AI transforms every corner of public life – including political campaigns – it’s more important than ever that we limit this new technology’s potential threat to voters’ rights, and instead leverage it to build innovative, efficient campaigns and a stronger, more inclusive democracy,” the proposal said.

The guidelines were divided into five sections that included titles such as “Offering Human Alternatives, Consideration and Fallback” and “Providing Notice and Explanation.” The proposed rules would have required the committees to ensure “a real person should be responsible for approving AI-generated content and be accountable for how, where, and to whom it is deployed.”

The directive outlined how “users should always be aware when they are interacting with an AI bot” and stressed that any images or video created by AI “should be flagged” as such. And it stressed that campaigns should use AI to assist staffers, not replace them.

“Campaigns are a human-driven and human motivated business,” read the agreement. “Use efficiency gains to teach more voters and focus more on quality control and sustainability.”

It also urged campaigns not to use “generative AI to create misleading content. Period.”

Republicans make Biden’s EV push an election-year issue as Democrats take a more nuanced approach

By THOMAS BEAUMONT and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP) — Donald Trump says the Biden administration’s policy to promote electric vehicles is a “radical plan” that would kill the economy in automaking states. Republican allies in the petroleum

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 58 of 64

industry have spent millions on ads that say President Joe Biden's tax credit for EV buyers will cost Americans their freedom.

For voters this election year like Jim Cagle, a retired Jeep assembly-line worker from Toledo, Ohio, the concerns about all-electric vehicles are more practical, such as how he would charge it. Cagle parks his car on the street because he does not have a garage.

"Can you imagine having a cord running out to the street?" Cagle said as he cleaned his minivan at a car wash near a General Motors transmission plant that later this year is set to begin building electric drive units.

Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, and others say Biden's push for EVs is unfair for consumers and amounts to government overreach, and ultimately will be a liability for Democrats. Trump even squeezed in an attack at the top of his remarks Friday after his criminal conviction in New York.

Democrats have been less vocal and more nuanced, advocating Biden's climate reduction goals while promoting homegrown technology over competition from China.

But interviews with about 20 voters in the pivotal industrial heartlands of Ohio and Michigan reveal a more complicated dynamic among people who may decide the winner of November's presidential and Senate elections.

The Toledo area is itself a crossroads for the issue. It's an automotive city making the shift from the internal combustion engine to electric power, like neighboring Michigan, a presidential swing state that is synonymous with the auto industry.

Toledo has not only produced Jeeps since World War II, but it is also home to oil refineries that supply gasoline across the Midwest and to parts manufacturers for gas and diesel vehicles.

It's here where people like Cagle say issues such as the cost of gas and groceries will be more important than EVs when they vote. But during the interviews with people across the political spectrum, many were skeptical of the vehicles and critical of the Democratic president's tax credits.

"You cannot be shoving EVs down our throat," said Joe Dempsey of Oregon, Ohio, who drives a Toyota gas-electric hybrid that does not require charging. "Let the American people decide if it's going to happen."

VULNERABLE SENATE DEMOCRAT IS A TARGET

The issue has put some Democrats in a tricky spot — perhaps none more so than Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown, one of the Republicans' top targets as the GOP looks to win Senate control.

He is having to navigate a changing auto industry and his support for the president's environmental goals in a state that Trump carried twice by 8 percentage points.

A petroleum manufacturing industry group has spent about \$16 million on advertising criticizing Biden's policy to promote EVs, and that total includes about \$1.5 million in Ohio criticizing Brown for his support, according to AdImpact and the group's reporting. In addition to Ohio, the ads are airing in six other swing states and Montana, a GOP-leaning state where Democratic Sen. Jon Tester is seeking reelection.

Republicans, long unable to crack Brown's blue-collar backing, see linking him to Biden's sweeping 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, which created tax credits for EV buyers, as one way to do it in an election year.

Brown voted for the act, aimed at fighting climate change in part by providing a \$7,500 tax credit for new EV sales to spur steps toward the president's goal of making EVs 50 percent of all new vehicle sales by 2030. Republicans and their allies routinely refer to the policy incorrectly as a government mandate.

But Brown has pledged to oppose a rule change this summer proposed by Biden to allow EVs that are built in the United States but include Chinese-made components to qualify for the credit.

"This will allow China to infiltrate the American auto supply chain, at American taxpayers' expense," Brown said in a statement in May. "American tax dollars should support American manufacturing and American workers — not enrich Chinese companies."

Brown, a progressive with a pro-worker mantra, has little to worry about in maintaining his party's base. But he appears to be aware of the risks of being seen as allying too strongly with Biden, who is unpopular in Ohio, said former Ohio Rep. Tim Ryan, a fellow Democrat.

"Sherrod doesn't have to worry about Democrats. They love him," Ryan said. "The question is, can he make up the middle? I think he can. And if he is seen as disagreeing with the left, it's only good for him."

BIDEN, DEMOCRATS MAKE THEIR CASE

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 59 of 64

Biden has visited EV plants and grinned as he test drove the new electric Cadillac at the Detroit Auto Show. His chief surrogate in Michigan, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, has advocated for Biden's policy, but with an eye on protecting the industry vital to her state.

"We've got to incentivize innovation. There's no question," Whitmer said in an interview before Trump visited the state in May, where he railed against EVs. "We cannot let Chinese companies be the only ones innovating around electric vehicles because then they will eat our lunch."

Biden's campaign notes that the president's policies are aimed at moving EV jobs, many of which were left in China during the Trump administration, into the United States.

"Donald Trump would rather lie about President Biden's policies than face his own betrayals to the middle class," Biden campaign spokesman Ammar Moussa said in a statement. "President Biden wants the future of auto manufacturing built in America, not China."

According to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll conducted in April, relatively small shares of Americans — around 3 in 10 or less — see a benefit from electric vehicles for themselves personally, the economy or the U.S. auto industry.

John Hiskey, a Vietnam veteran from Toledo, said he thinks EVs are a great idea and he doubts the industry would be this far along without a push from the government. But he has no interest in getting one until he can visit his grandkids without making multiple stops and taking time to charge the vehicle.

"I don't want to wait a half-hour unless they start putting them in bars," said Hiskey, adding that his vote will not be influenced by which party or politician backs EVs.

Others said the vehicles are cost-prohibitive, even with the tax credit.

"How can they afford electric vehicles when it's hard to afford living?" said Dru Wilson, 21, who attends college outside Toledo.

Although the petroleum manufacturers represent a fraction of what the two major parties' political action committees are spending in battleground states, it dwarfs the counterprogramming on the part of pro-EV and environmental groups.

Environmental Defense Action Fund and a related group have spent a little more than \$772,000 on ads, according to AdImpact, and little of it is targeted in key presidential or Senate states.

Climate Power, a strategic communication group promoting Biden's climate reduction goals, has committed to spending \$80 million on promoting the administration's measures, including on advertising in battleground states. The group declined to specify how much it expects to spend on advertising and noted that its efforts will also include voter outreach on an array of Biden measures, including promoting EVs.

Missing is one unifying call for Americans to embrace the technology, akin to President John F. Kennedy's 1961 moon landing goal within the decade, said veteran Democratic strategist Joel Benenson, who was a pollster and senior adviser to Barack Obama's and Hillary Clinton's presidential campaigns.

"No one's telling an inspiring story for EVs. So, how do you develop that story and what it's going to mean for America going forward?" Benenson said. "That could be a powerful narrative."

A growing community of breast milk donors in Uganda gives mothers hope

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP) — Early last year, Caroline Ikendi was in distress after undergoing an emergency Caesarean section to remove a stillborn baby and save two others. Doctors said one of the preterm babies had a 2% chance of living.

If the babies didn't get breast milk — which she didn't have — Ikendi could lose them as well.

Thus began a desperate search for breast milk donors. She was lucky with a neighbor, a woman with a newborn baby to feed who was willing to donate a few millilitres at a time.

"You go and plead for milk. You are like, 'Please help me, help my child,'" Ikendi told The Associated Press.

The neighbor helped until Ikendi heard about a Ugandan group that collects breast milk and donates it to mothers like her. Soon the ATTA Breastmilk Community was giving the breast milk she needed, free of

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 60 of 64

charge, until her babies were strong enough to be discharged from the hospital.

ATTA Breastmilk Community was launched in 2021 in the Ugandan capital, Kampala, by a woman who had struggled like Ikendi without getting support. The registered nonprofit, backed by grants from organizations and individuals, is the only group outside a hospital setting in Uganda that conserves breast milk in substantial amounts.

ATTA, as the group is known, receives calls for support from hospitals and homes with babies born too soon or too sick to latch onto their mothers' breasts.

More than 200 mothers have donated breast milk to support over 450 babies since July 2021, with over 600 liters of milk delivered for babies in that period, according to ATTA's records.

In a measure of efforts to build a reliable community, many donors have given multiple times while others help to find new ones, said ATTA administrator Racheal Akugizibwe.

"We are an emergency fix," Akugizibwe said. "As the mother is working on their own production, we are giving (her) milk. But we do it under the directive and under the support of a lactation specialist and the medical people."

She added: "Every mother who has given us milk, they are kind of attached to us. They are we; we are them. That's what makes it a community."

ATTA makes calls for donors via social media apps like Instagram. Women who want to donate must provide samples for testing, including for HIV and Hepatitis B and C, and there are formal conversations during which ATTA tries to learn more about potential donors and motivations. Those who pass the screening are given storage bags and instructed in safe handling.

Akugizibwe spoke of ATTA's humble beginnings in the home of its founder, Tracy Ahumuza, who would store the milk in her freezer. Ahumuza started the group amid personal grief: She hadn't been able to produce breast milk for her newborn who battled life-threatening complications. Days later, after the baby died, she started lactating.

She asked health workers, "Where do I put the milk that I have now?" Akugizibwe said. "They told her, 'All we can do for you is give you tablets to dry it out.' She's like, 'No, but if I needed it and I didn't get it, someone could need it.'"

In the beginning, ATTA would match a donor to a recipient, but it proved unsustainable because of the pressure it put on donors. ATTA then started collecting and storing breast milk, and donors and recipients don't know each other.

Akugizibwe said the group gets more requests for support than it can meet. Challenges include procuring storage bags in large quantities as well as the costs of testing. And donors are required to own freezers, a financial obstacle for some.

"The demand is extremely, extremely high," Akugizibwe said, "but the supply is low."

Lelah Wamala, a chef and mother of three in Kampala who twice has donated milk, said she was spurred to act when, while having a baby in 2022, she saw mothers whose premature babies were dying because they didn't have milk.

Being a donor is a time-consuming responsibility, "but this is the right thing to do," she said.

Via motorcycle courier on Kampala's busy streets, breast milk from donors is taken to ATTA's storage and delivered to parents in need.

ATTA's goal is to set up a full-fledged breast milk bank with the ability to pasteurize. The service is necessary in a country where an unknown number of women suffer for lack of lactation support, said Dr. Doreen Mazakpwe, a lactation specialist who collaborates with ATTA.

Mazakpwe cited a range of lactation issues mothers can face, from sore nipples to babies born too sick or too weak to suckle and stimulate milk production.

If both mother and baby are healthy, "this mother should be able to produce as much milk as the baby needs because we work on the principle of supply and demand," said Mazakpwe, a consultant with a private hospital outside Kampala. "So, in situations where there's a delay in putting the baby on the breast, or the baby is not fed frequently enough ... you can eventually have an issue where you have low supply."

Mazakpwe said she advises mothers on how to establish their own supply within about a month of

receiving donated breast milk, and sometimes all that's needed is to hold the baby the right way. When mothers start lactating, it frees up supply for new ones who need ATTA's help, she said.

Akugizibwe said their work is challenging in a socially conservative society where such a pioneering service raises eyebrows. Questions, even from recipients, include fears that babies who drink donated breast milk might inherit the bad habits of their benefactors.

In addition, "if you don't breastfeed there is a lot of negativity," said Ikendi, whose premature babies survived on donated milk. "Society looks at you as though you've just literally refused to breastfeed."

She spoke of struggling even when she knew she had no choice after seeing her babies in the intensive care unit for the first time. Through the glass she saw they were so tiny, on oxygen therapy and bleeding from their noses. The babies, a boy and a girl, had been removed at seven months.

Ikendi's babies received donated breast milk for two months.

One recent morning, an emotional Ikendi held her children as she described how the donated milk "contributed 100% to our babies' growth."

Cancer patients often do better with less intensive treatment, new research finds

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

Scaling back treatment for three kinds of cancer can make life easier for patients without compromising outcomes, doctors reported at the world's largest cancer conference.

It's part of a long-term trend toward studying whether doing less — less surgery, less chemotherapy or less radiation — can help patients live longer and feel better. The latest studies involved ovarian and esophageal cancer and Hodgkin lymphoma.

Thirty years ago, cancer research was about doing more, not less. In one sobering example, women with advanced breast cancer were pushed to the brink of death with massive doses of chemotherapy and bone marrow transplants. The approach didn't work any better than chemotherapy and patients suffered.

Now, in a quest to optimize cancer care, researchers are asking: "Do we need all that treatment that we have used in the past?"

It's a question, "that should be asked over and over again," said Dr. Tatjana Kolevska, medical director for the Kaiser Permanente National Cancer Excellence Program, who was not involved in the new research.

Often, doing less works because of improved drugs.

"The good news is that cancer treatment is not only becoming more effective, it's becoming easier to tolerate and associated with less short-term and long-term complications," said Dr. William G. Nelson of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, who was also not involved in the new research.

Studies demonstrating the trend were discussed over the weekend at an American Society of Clinical Oncology conference in Chicago. Here are the highlights:

OVARIAN CANCER

French researchers found that it's safe to avoid removing lymph nodes that appear healthy during surgery for advanced ovarian cancer. The study compared the results for 379 patients — half had their lymph nodes removed and half did not. After nine years, there was no difference in how long the patients lived and those with less-extreme surgery had fewer complications, such as the need for blood transfusions. The research was funded by the National Institute of Cancer in France.

ESOPHAGEAL CANCER

This German study looked at 438 people with a type of cancer of the esophagus that can be treated with surgery. Half received a common treatment plan that included chemotherapy and surgery on the esophagus, the tube that carries food from the throat to the stomach. Half got another approach that includes radiation too. Both techniques are considered standard. Which one patients get can depend on where they get treatment.

After three years, 57% of those who got chemo and surgery were alive, compared to 51% of those who got chemo, surgery and radiation. The German Research Foundation funded the study.

HODGKIN LYMPHOMA

A comparison of two chemotherapy regimens for advanced Hodgkin lymphoma found the less intensive treatment was more effective for the blood cancer and caused fewer side effects.

After four years, the less harsh chemo kept the disease in check in 94% of people, compared to 91% of those who had the more intense treatment. The trial included 1,482 people in nine countries — Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Australia and New Zealand — and was funded by Takeda Oncology, the maker of one of the drugs used in the gentler chemo that was studied.

Being a patient is getting harder in a strained and complex US health care system

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

Tamika Davis couldn't nap on her couch during cancer treatment. She kept worrying one of her toddlers would wander over and pull out the needle delivering chemotherapy.

Friends and family watched her kids when they could during her treatment last year for colon cancer. But Davis had gaps with no help because she couldn't afford child care and didn't know where to look for assistance.

"I did not have the strength nor the energy to try to navigate these things myself," the San Antonio, Texas, resident said.

Patients are not getting enough help dealing with a healthcare system that is growing increasingly complex, according to researchers and other experts in care delivery. They say more frequent insurance complications, doctor and drug shortages, and a lack of communication all make life harder for people with serious or chronic illnesses.

"Just about anything you can think of, it's now harder to get it done, basically," said Elisabeth Schuler, founder and president of Patient Navigator, a business that helps people get through the system.

More care providers and employers are offering help guiding people, a practice the federal Medicare program has started to cover. But that assistance has limits.

Patients with serious or chronic illnesses face a web of challenges. They include:

- Coordinating doctor appointments and tests, often while working or undergoing treatment.
- Dealing with coverage denials or care delays due to insurer pre-approval requirements.
- Figuring out how to fill a prescription if they can't get coverage or their medication lands on a growing list of drugs in shortage.
- Acting as a go-between for doctors and specialists who don't talk to each other.
- Paying medical bills and getting help with rent or utilities. That assistance has been harder to find since the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Beth Scott of the non-profit Patient Advocate Foundation.

All of this can be compounded for patients who don't speak English or have no experience navigating the health care system, noted Gladys Arias, a policy principal with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network.

Davis, the San Antonio cancer patient, said she was in the hospital when she asked for help finding community resources.

She said a case manager set a book of available resources on her bedside table and did nothing else. Davis, a nursing professor, found the book confusing. The programs it detailed had different qualifications based on things like income or diagnosis. The 44-year-old wound up losing her car and leaving her home after care bills piled up.

"I feel like there was some type of help out there for me," she said. "I just didn't know where to look."

Ali DiGiacomo said she wishes that she learned in college how to deal with insurance companies. She often has to do that while coping with side effects from rheumatoid arthritis treatments.

The 30-year-old personal trainer said she's spent years trying to get a diagnosis for bouts of intense chest pain, which doctors think may be tied to her condition. That requires imaging tests that insurers often decline to cover.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 63 of 64

"Dealing with them with brain fog and fatigue and being in pain is just like the cherry on top," DiGiacomo said.

DiGiacomo said her formulary, or list of covered drugs, has changed three times. That can force her to hunt for a place that carries the newly covered drug, which puts her behind on her medication schedule. She figures she talks to her insurer at least four times a month.

"I have to hype myself up," she said. "Then you talk to a million different people. I wish I just had like one person that helped me deal with all this."

Care delays due to insurer pre-approval requirements have grown more common, many experts say. More plans also have made it challenging to get coverage outside their networks of doctors and hospitals.

A typical appeal for a denial can easily involve 20 to 30 phone calls between the patient, the insurer and the doctor's office, said Scott, director of case management for Patient Advocate Foundation, which helps people with chronic or debilitating illnesses.

She said some patients give up.

"Sometimes you are sick, and you don't want to fight it anymore," she said.

Case managers at hospitals are often overworked, which limits how much help they can provide, noted Schuler, who became a patient advocate about 20 years ago after her 2-year-old daughter went through cancer treatment.

Overall, help for patients is "very patchy everywhere," according to Harvard Medical School researcher Michael Anne Kyle.

"I think we have a lot of Band-Aids that are necessary," she said.

Many cancer centers offer patient navigators who can help coordinate appointments, get answers to coverage questions, find rides to the doctor and provide other support. Some insurers provide similar assistance.

And more employers are offering navigation or advocacy help for people on their insurance plans, according to the benefits consultant Mercer.

But these services still aren't widespread. Alzheimer's disease patients and their caregivers lack consistent access to such help, said Sam Fazio, a senior director with the non-profit Alzheimer's Association.

"People are having trouble finding their way," he said.

Making the system better for patients requires big change, said Dr. Victor Montori, a Mayo Clinic researcher who studies care delivery.

He said the system must focus more on minimally disruptive medicine, which makes care fit into patient lives. That means things like cutting unnecessary paperwork and surveys, making appointments more flexible and giving patients more time with doctors.

He noted that the burden that falls on patients is not just the time and effort they spend navigating the system. It's also what they give up to do that.

"If you waste people's time on silly things, you are being unkind to (their) main purpose, which is to live," he said. "We have to stop thinking of the patient as a part time employee of the healthcare system that we don't get to pay."

Today in History: June 3, Muhammad Ali dies

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, June 3, the 155th day of 2024. There are 211 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 3, 2016, heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali, whose athletic feats and activism put him among the most revered athletes of all time, died at a hospital in Scottsdale, Arizona, at age 74.

On this date:

In 1621, the Dutch West India Co. received its charter for a trade monopoly in parts of the Americas and Africa.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 3, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 343 ~ 64 of 64

In 1888, the poem "Casey at the Bat" by Ernest Lawrence Thayer was first published in the San Francisco Daily Examiner.

In 1935, the French liner Normandie set a record on its maiden voyage, arriving in New York after crossing the Atlantic in just four days.

In 1937, Edward, The Duke of Windsor, who had abdicated the British throne, married Wallis Simpson in a private ceremony in Monts, France.

In 1962, Air France Flight 007, a U.S.-bound Boeing 707, crashed while attempting to take off from Orly Airport near Paris; all but two of the 132 people aboard were killed.

In 1965, astronaut Edward H. White became the first American to "walk" in space during the flight of Gemini 4.

In 1977, the United States and Cuba agreed to set up diplomatic interests sections in each other's countries; Cuba also announced the immediate release of 10 Americans jailed on drug charges.

In 1989, Chinese army troops began their sweep of Beijing to crush student-led pro-democracy demonstrations. And Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, died.

In 2011, physician-assisted suicide advocate Dr. Jack Kevorkian died at a Michigan hospital at 83. And actor James Arness of TV's "Gunsmoke" died at age 88.

In 2012, a Dana Air jetliner carrying 153 people crashed on the outskirts of Lagos, Nigeria, killing everyone on board.

In 2018, Guatemala's Volcano of Fire, one of the most active volcanos in Central America, erupted in fiery explosions of ash and molten rock, killing more than 100 people and leaving scores of others missing.

In 2020, prosecutors charged three more police officers in the death of George Floyd and filed a new, tougher charge of second-degree murder against Derek Chauvin, the officer who was caught on video pressing his knee to Floyd's neck. (Chauvin would be convicted on all charges.) Defense Secretary Mark Esper took issue with President Donald Trump's threats to use the full force of the military to quell street protests.

Today's Birthdays: The former president of Cuba, Raul Castro, is 94. Actor Irma P. Hall is 90. Rock singer Ian Hunter (Mott The Hoople) is 86. World Golf Hall of Famer Hale Irwin is 79. Actor Penelope Wilton is 78. Singer Eddie Holman is 78. Actor Tristan Rogers is 78. Musician Too Slim (Riders in the Sky) is 76. Singer Suzi Quatro is 74. Singer Deneice Williams is 74. Singer Dan Hill is 70. Actor Suzie Plakson is 66. Actor Scott Valentine is 66. Rock musician Kerry King (Slayer) is 60. Actor James Purefoy is 60. Rock singer-musician Mike Gordon is 59. TV host Anderson Cooper is 57. Country singer Jamie O'Neal is 56. Writer-director Tate Taylor is 45. Singers Gabriel and Ariel Hernandez (No Mercy) are 54. Actor Vik Sahay is 53. R&B singer Lyfe Jennings is 51. Actor Arianne Zucker is 50. Actor Nikki M. James is 43. Tennis player Rafael Nadal is 38. Actor Josh Segarra is 38. Actor-singer Lalaine is 37. Actor Sean Berdy is 31. Actor Anne Winters is 30.