

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Tuesday, Nov. 19

Senior Menu: Tuna noodle hot dish with peas, mixed vegetables, apple crisps, whole wheat bread.  
School Breakfast: Waffles.  
School Lunch: Turkey gravy, mashed potatoes, stuffing, cranberries.  
St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 12:30 p.m.  
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.  
Common Cents Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 209 N Main.  
Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center  
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

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



## Wednesday, Nov. 20

Senior Menu: Hamburger cabbage hot dish, corn, pears, muffin.  
School Breakfast: Cereal.  
School Lunch: Tacos.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, time to be determined; League, 6:30 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.  
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.  
Groton C&MA: Kids' Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study at 7 pm.

## Thursday, Nov. 21

Senior Menu: Ham rotini bake, capri blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.  
School Breakfast: Pancake on a stick.  
School Lunch: Glazed ham, baby bakers.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: WELCA: Praise and Thanksgiving, 1:30 p.m. (Program - Sarah, Hostess - Nigeria)  
State Volleyball Tournament in Sioux Falls

## Post election

I realize we're in our post-election honeymoon period during which everyone has amnesia or hangovers, and platitudes are the order of the day, but in consideration of journalistic integrity — if we're still doing that — honesty is in order. We can't "sane-tize" this.

This has been the weirdest damn thing. And it may get even weirder.

I went to bed early Election Eve after practicing for the passage of Measure 5 before waking with a start in a sea of Oreo crumbs, clicked on the news, and wondered how I could have been so out-of-touch with half of the country. Like conservatives did in 2020.

My first "World is Gonna End Election" was in 1980, when I convinced two other people — my roommate and his girlfriend — to vote for Ed Clark, a libertarian running with David Koch (Yeah, that Koch brother, but who knew?) Clark promised to legalize marijuana. On the other hand, I was convinced Reagan was going to blow up the world.

Besides, hey, weed.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday morning I hit my snooze bar while my iPhone pinged away with wellness checks. Friends wanted to know how I was doing. Just fine. Better than fine. Measure #5 passed, didn't it?

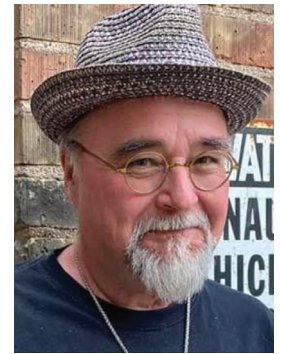
Besides, democracy worked. There will be a peaceful transfer of power. No insurrection. The new/old administration won in an electoral landslide and in the popular vote. Democracy worked in 2016, too, right up to that tourist thing, but after one unsatisfactory term, voters decided to return the reins to the Democratic Party.

Dems, you had your chance. But these voters, they're an impatient lot. Democrats may think they did pretty well, but each party has their own news echo chamber, and that's not what the Republican "news" network was saying. Did I wonder earlier how we could be so out of touch with the other half of the country? That's how. Their perspective is their reality.

That said, I've always believed that we are bound by greater things. Brotherhood, kindness, the rule of law. Those things have historically (but not always smoothly) won out. Now we shall see if everyone still cherishes the U.S. Constitution.

America's democracy has been called a grand experiment, "a Republic if you can keep it." Now, Republicans have the White House, Senate, Supreme Court, and the House.

Democracy was intentionally constructed to have more brakes than acceleration. This is a rare opportunity for any party. We shall see what Republicans do with it. If they're willing to implement Constitutional guardrails from within the party. Whether we're still neighbors instead of enemies of the neighborhood. Whether in four years, voters will be able to judge our progress in a free election.



**That's  
Life**  
by Tony Bender

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## Remembering Our American Veterans



## Doug Hamilton

**by Laila Roberts**

Hi, I am Laila Roberts, and I am going to introduce to you Doug Hamilton.

Doug Hamilton grew up in Redfield, South Dakota. Doug is the child of the late Claude and Delores Hamilton and brother to Roger Hamilton and late Pat Hamilton. He has only had three jobs in his life, which he is proud of. His first job was working at a grocery store, stocking shelves. And his last job being at Northern Electric, working there for 40 years before retiring.

Doug was an average student, who did not see a career choice in Redfield that was promising. He saw the navy as an opportunity to have schooling without going to college. Doug enlisted on July 8, 1970. He went to Basic Training in San Diego, California. Doug says that if you didn't volunteer or speak out loud, then you were fine. If you did end up getting in trouble, you would have to clean the bathrooms. He says that basics teach you how to be regimented and how to be disciplined. He also went to Port Hueneme,

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California, for his construction Electrician Class "A" School.

Doug went to 6 duty stations. These included: Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (GTMO); Gulf Port, Mississippi; Diego Garcia; British Indian Ocean Territory (B.I.O.T.); Guam; and the Philippines. At the GTMO, Base Maintenance, Diego Garcia, and B.I.O.T., he did electrical wiring of housing units, installed runway lighting and wiring at the communication sites. At Guam, Base Maintenance, Philippines, he finished wiring the Rec. Center. Doug never was sent on a ship, but his work was very vital for his squad.

Doug had some memorable experiences while he was on duty. He got to see The Bob Hope Christmas Show twice. When he was at B.I.O.T., his entertainments were playing softball, running, and SCUBA diving. While he was playing softball, Doug ended up breaking his leg. Another fun fact about Doug was that he was considered a "Sea Bee." This was a term they used for the navy. Sea Bees always protected each other.

Through his experiences in the Navy, Doug got to travel the world. The countries he went to were Japan, Thailand, Turkey, Spain, Puerto Rico, and Saipan. When Doug was asked about the food choices, he said it had it's good and bad days. In Diego, Garcia, he said the food was terrible. Between all the physical activities and the terrible food, Doug ended up losing 80lbs. Along with that, Doug had very little contact with his family. Back in the day, they did not have email so he had to use snail mail and occasionally could have a phone call. While he was in Saipan, he got to talk on the landline once. Doug ended up being on the TV, which was a shock to his parents. Since they had little communication with Doug, it was a huge surprise when they saw him on TV.

Doug did not receive any medals or awards for his service, but he will proudly admit his father got all the awards for him. Doug's dad was in WWII, and he received a Bronze Star, along with General Patton.

Doug was discharged on June 7, 1974 and went to work for Spink Electric Co-op in Redfield. That is now considered Northern Electric in Bath. Doug worked there for 40 years, before retiring. He has been married to Wanda for 48 years and has had three children. They all graduated from Groton and gave him 6 beautiful grandchildren. Doug is also a 50-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary and 38 of those years have been with Groton Legion Post #39.

He was an American Legion baseball commissioner, but now he leads the baseball program for Groton.

Doug's words for his experience are, "Respect others and take nothing for granted. Having been at duty stations where there was limited electricity and running water, you appreciate what we have. Rely on other people to survive or get by." Along with that, if you are uncertain on what to do, Doug says the military is a great opportunity to travel and see the world. There are so many more educational opportunities now than there were in the past.

Doug, would you please stand. On behalf of the community and nation, with our deepest appreciation, we honor your service with this quilt of honor.



**Doug Hamilton (center) pictured with Laila Roberts (right) and Legion Auxiliary member Tami Zimney.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)

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# 1440

**Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.**

## **Spirit Seeks Financial Lifeline**

Spirit Airlines has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, marking the first major US airline bankruptcy in over a decade. The move follows a failed merger attempt with JetBlue Airways, which a federal judge blocked in January on antitrust grounds.

The budget carrier—which has accumulated over \$2.5B in debt since 2020—reported a loss of more than \$335M in the first half of 2024 and faces debt payments totaling more than \$1B in 2025 and 2026. It has faced financial pressures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, rising fuel costs, labor shortages, increased competition, and an engine recall that grounded dozens of its jets.

The filing is backed by existing bondholders with \$350M in equity investment and it plans to convert \$795M of debt into stock. Additionally, the bondholders will provide \$300M in debtor-in-possession financing. Spirit aims to complete the restructuring process by the first quarter of 2025.

The company's shares have fallen more than 90% year-to-date.

## **Fat Cells 'Remember' Obesity**

Fat tissue cells keep a "memory" of obesity after dieting, with long-lasting changes to gene function, a new study finds. The study may help explain why many people struggle to sustain long-term weight loss.

Researchers analyzing fat tissue cells in humans and mice found epigenetic changes to the RNA of those with a history of obesity compared with control groups. Genes involved in metabolism for those individuals were turned off; their fat cells also took in nutrients at a faster rate. After low-calorie diets, those with a history of obesity regained weight faster than their respective control groups.

The study suggests a correlation—not necessarily causal tie—between the pace of weight regain and epigenetic markers for those with a history of obesity. These molecular differences remained even after stomach reduction and gastric bypass surgery, with no known mechanism to reverse them. Researchers suggest their findings may emphasize the value of prevention.

## **NYC Tackles Congestion**

New York City's transit authority voted 12-1 yesterday to approve a first-in-the-nation daily toll on vehicles entering Manhattan's central business district, starting around Jan. 5. The revised proposal is expected to generate \$15B to help modernize the city's 120-year-old transit system.

Under the plan, most motorists with E-ZPasses will pay \$9, rather than an initially proposed \$15, to enter Manhattan's busiest areas between 5 am and 9 pm each weekday and 9 am and 9 pm on weekends. The fee is set to increase to \$15 by 2031. Trucks with E-ZPasses will be charged \$14.40 during the same hours.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul (D) unveiled the revised initiative last week after sidelining the original version in June following criticism over economic concerns. Opponents also argue the plan would force commuters to take different routes, potentially increasing pollution in other parts of the city.

Federal transportation authorities must now approve the plan, which President-elect Donald Trump has said he will terminate once in office.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Shaboozey's "A Bar Song (Tipsy)" tops Billboard Hot 100 for 18th week, one week from tying record for most weeks at No. 1.

Beyoncé tapped to perform at halftime at Baltimore Ravens-Houston Texans Christmas Day matchup on Netflix.

LeBron James' production company merges with UK company behind Grammy Awards and "The Kardashians".

Pittsburgh Pirates' Paul Skenes, New York Yankees' Luis Gil win MLB's National and American League Rookie of the Year awards.

CC Sabathia, Ichiro Suzuki headline group of 14 debuting on baseball Hall of Fame ballot.

## Science & Technology

Pennsylvania school closes after a student creates and distributes explicit AI-generated deepfakes of a reported 50 students; head of school reportedly first learned of the issue in November 2023.

Researchers use AI to identify three subtypes of the congenital brain disorder known as Chiari type 1; affecting roughly 4% of the population, condition occurs when the cerebellum protrudes through a gap in the skull.

Study reveals how dust mites trigger the immune system and cause allergic reactions after being inhaled.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 +0.4%, Dow -0.1%, Nasdaq +0.6%); Nasdaq boosted by Tesla, with EV maker's shares closing up nearly 6% on report of President-elect Donald Trump seeking to relax US self-driving vehicle rules.

Super Micro Computer shares rise 40% in after-hours trading after hiring BDO as its new auditor and filing a compliance plan with the Nasdaq composite to avoid delisting; move comes amid scrutiny on Super Micro's accounting practices.

Boeing to lay off more than 2,000 workers in Oregon and Washington next month as part of broader plan to cut 17,000 jobs or roughly 10% of its global workforce.

## Politics & World Affairs

Brazil hosts annual G20 summit this week in Rio de Janeiro, the first to be held in South America's largest economy; early discussions center around Ukraine, China, and Trump.

President Joe Biden becomes first sitting US president to visit the Amazon rainforest.

At least one person dead following E. coli outbreak linked to organic carrots from grocery stores; at least 39 cases have been reported across 18 states so far, with 15 people hospitalized.

At least seven people dead from landslide in the northern Philippines triggered by Typhoon Man-yi.

Emergency declared in India's capital, New Delhi, as toxic smog clouds northern parts of the country.

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## Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

November 19, 2024 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Utility Metering – Water/Electric
4. Soccer Gate Discussion
5. Code Enforcement/Building Inspection Discussion
6. October Finance Report
7. Second Reading of Ordinance No. 781 – Budget Pay Plan
8. Second Reading of Ordinance No. 780 – 2025 Appropriations
9. Minutes
10. Bills
11. Holiday Lighting Contest – December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024 - \$100, \$75, & \$50 Utility Bill Credits to Be Given Away
12. Announcement: City Offices Closed on November 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> for Thanksgiving
13. Reminder: 2025 Dog Licenses are Due by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024
14. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
15. Second Reading of Ordinance No. 782 – 2025 Salaries
16. Adjournment

## Names Released in Minnehaha County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle injury crash

Where: SD Highway 11, mile marker 94, three miles north of Garretson, SD

When: 6:19 p.m., November 14, 2024

Driver 1: Jose Gabriel Hidalgo Gomez, 33-year-old male from Baltic, SD, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 1: 2015 Kia Sorento

Seatbelt Used: Yes

Driver 2: Maureen Ann Bell, 71-year-old female from Jasper, MN, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 2: 2020 Buick Encore

Seatbelt Used: Yes

Passenger 1: Robert Stephen Bell, 81-year-old male from Jasper, MN, fatal injuries

Seatbelt Used: Yes

Minnehaha County, S.D.- A Jasper, MN man died in a collision Thursday evening three miles north of Garretson, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Maureen Ann Bell, the driver of a 2020 Buick Encore was traveling northbound on SD Highway 11. At the same time, Jose Gabriel Hidalgo Gomez, the driver of a 2015 Kia Sorento was traveling eastbound on 250th Street and failed to yield at a stop sign at the intersection with Hwy 11 and collided with the oncoming Buick. Dense fog is a contributing factor in the crash.

The drivers of both vehicles sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries. A passenger in the Buick, Robert Stephen Bell, sustained fatal injuries and passed away at the scene.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the cause of the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.



## FROSTY CLUE

I/My.....

19. Love following my grandkids' events



### Hazardous Weather Outlook

Hazardous Weather Outlook  
National Weather Service Aberdeen SD  
433 AM CST Tue Nov 19 2024

MNZ039-046-SDZ006>008-011-018>023-201215-  
Traverse-Big Stone-Brown-Marshall-Roberts-Day-Spink-Clark-Codington-Grant-Hamlin-Deuel-  
433 AM CST Tue Nov 19 2024

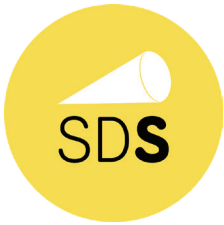
This Hazardous Weather Outlook is for west central Minnesota and northeast South Dakota.

.DAY ONE...Today and tonight.

Northwesterly gusts of 45 to 55 miles per hour are expected today. Snow showers may begin over northeastern South Dakota tonight. There is a 60% chance of snow overnight, mainly at the higher elevations. Marshall and Day counties may see 1 to 3 inches of snow overnight.

.DAYS TWO THROUGH SEVEN...Wednesday through Monday.

Strong northwesterly winds will continue on Wednesday. Snowfall will also continue on Wednesday. The highest snowfall totals are expected over the Prairie Coteau of northeastern South Dakota. Storm total chances of 2 inches or more is 75 percent or better from northern Clark county through Day and Marshall counties. The combination of falling snow and strong winds will create blowing snow and reduce visibilities over northeastern South Dakota. Hazardous driving conditions are possible Wednesday as a result.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Relaunched Open Meetings Commission finds violations in five of six cases

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - NOVEMBER 18, 2024 5:57 PM

The Lincoln County Commission violated South Dakota's open-meetings laws when three commissioners attended a November 2023 open house for a carbon dioxide pipeline without notifying the public, the state's Open Meetings Commission decided Monday in Pierre.

Commissioners Mike Poppens, Jim Jibben and Joel Arends attended the gathering, which prompted a complaint. The Open Meetings Commission decided a public notice should have been issued because a quorum of the five-member commission was present at a gathering where public policy may have been discussed — in this case, a pipeline that's been a matter of debate in the county for several years.

"You know, I don't think it matters if public policy was or was not talked about when they were there," said Open Meetings Commission member Austin Hoffman, the state's attorney of McPherson County. "I don't see that as the issue at all. It's whether public policy 'may' be talked about."

Hoffman said public policy is almost always discussed at such gatherings and that county commissioners should know better — particularly when the topic is something as controversial as the carbon pipeline project.

The Open Meetings Commission is a five-member body appointed by the state attorney general to consider complaints about government bodies around the state. Monday was the commission's first meeting since December 2020, due to a long and unexplained period of inactivity during the administration of former Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg. Current Attorney General Marty Jackley said he has been working to



**The sun sets behind the South Dakota Capitol in Pierre on Dec. 5, 2023.** (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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build up a full roster of commission members and allowing time for a review of lingering cases.

The commission found violations in five of the six cases it considered Monday, which will result in written public reprimands against the offenders.

## **Bennett County Commission**

The Open Meetings Commission ruled that a complaint against the Bennett County Board of Commissioners was a violation of open-meetings laws.

Board members failed to adequately notify the public before a meeting in July 2021 where they discussed and voted on a wage increase for an employee. The board took the action following a closed-door portion of the meeting, known as an executive session. It was not listed on the meeting agenda. That violated the state's requirement for 24 hours of advance public notice.

That was the first complaint involving the Bennett County Board of Commissioners. Another called out the board's failure to properly move into an executive session during a February 2023 meeting. The commissioners failed to cite the specific law authorizing the closed session and failed to obtain a second for the motion to enter the executive session. That was determined by the Open Meetings Commission to be a violation of state law.

## **Piedmont Board of Trustees**

The Piedmont Board of Trustees violated the law in 2023 when it failed to post a meeting agenda on its website, per state law, which says the agenda must be posted on the website "if a website exists."

## **North Sioux City Council**

The North Sioux City Council violated state law by not publishing agendas at least 24 hours before meetings. A complaint filed by a resident cited several instances when the agenda was posted late.

## **No violation: City of Martin**

Martin resident Robert Fogg alleged the Martin City Council violated state open meetings laws by not including specific agenda items related to the "Combining of City and County Law Departments" and the "Cozad Property" on the meeting's publicly posted agenda in February 2023. State law mandates that agendas for public meetings must be posted at least 24 hours in advance, including all topics to be discussed.

Sara Frankenstein, an attorney representing the city, acknowledged the discussions but said "Law" and "Public Comments" were listed as broad categories on the agenda, providing sufficient notice for what ensued at the meeting. She argued that finding otherwise would restrict meaningful discussions among officials, a point the Open Meetings Commission found persuasive. The commission decided no violation occurred.

## **Next meeting**

Another meeting is scheduled for Nov. 25 to hear complaints against the Carlyle Township in Beadle County, Pennington County Board of Commissioners, Sturgis City Council, City of Lead Commission, Green Valley Sanitary District in Pennington County, Charles Mix County Commission and Tripp City Council.

*Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.*

## Local government cybersecurity program moves forward with administrative hire

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - NOVEMBER 18, 2024 3:39 PM

Michael Waldner, of Madison, will lead the effort to establish the state's local government cybersecurity grant program, Dakota State University announced in a news release Monday.

The Municipal Cybersecurity Grant Program, under the Attorney General's Office and in partnership with the university, aims to strengthen cybersecurity infrastructure for South Dakota local governments.

Even though the program's name focuses on municipalities, it's open to cities and counties. The program will provide "secure email solutions, technical support, risk assessments, and specialized training," based on the news release.

The Legislature approved \$7 million in funding for the program last winter as a response to mounting cybersecurity concerns among city and county governments. Many lack proper training and equipment to defend themselves and the taxpayer money and information they're entrusted with.

Waldner previously directed South Dakota's centralized education email system, which is what lawmakers hoped to model the program after. Waldner held the role for nine years before leaving in 2008. He also served as project manager for FirstNet, the network used by law enforcement in the state. Most recently, he served as coordinator for the ConnectSD Broadband initiative, which aims to expand internet access statewide.

The need for a centralized local government email system has grown in recent years as local governments become larger targets for cybersecurity attacks.

Brown County suffered a cyberattack in 2021 affecting services, and the city of Sioux Falls sent two electronic payments to someone impersonating a vendor in 2018. Hutchinson County was hit by a ransomware attack in 2019, which temporarily shut down accounts that contained receipts and records for \$4 million in county business, according to the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan.

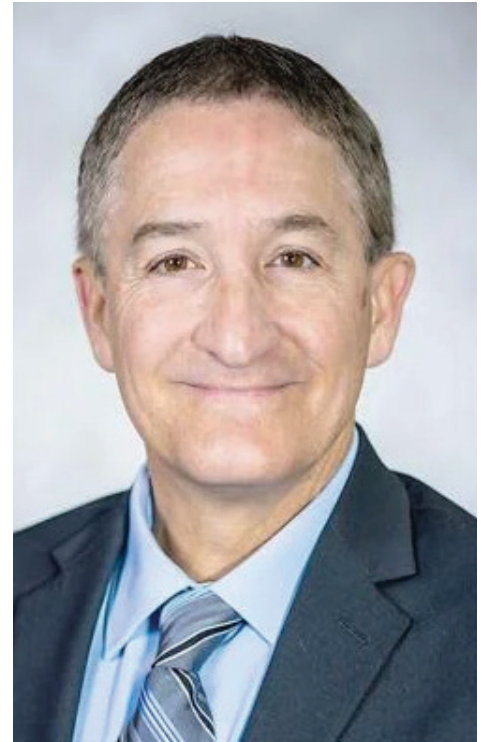
"This program is an important step toward making South Dakota a model of cybersecurity for the nation," Attorney General Marty Jackley said in the news release.

State and local governments experienced 148% more malware attacks and 51% more ransomware incidents during the first eight months of 2023, compared with the same period in 2022, according to a Center for Internet Security report.

The 2024 report on ransomware in state and local government identified a 51% drop in ransomware attacks, which is attributed to fewer governments paying ransoms, making them less attractive targets to cybercriminals. But when the attacks are successful, they're growing more costly to local governments.

The state effort is a four year program, set to end during the summer of 2028, according to the university. An advisory council including representatives from state, local and federal government departments and agencies, as well as cybersecurity organizations in the state, will provide assistance.

*Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.*



**Michael Waldner will serve as the director of the Municipal Cybersecurity Grant Program.** (Courtesy of Dakota State University)

## Abortion measure lawsuit dismissed in Minnehaha County

BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 18, 2024 1:57 PM

A Sioux Falls judge has dismissed a lawsuit over an abortion rights ballot question less than two weeks after voters rejected the measure.

An anti-abortion group called Life Defense Fund sued the sponsors of Amendment G, Dakotans for Health, over the summer in Minnehaha County circuit court.

The amendment would have restored abortion rights in South Dakota, which has a near-total abortion ban that took effect after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade* in 2022.

The anti-abortion group, which was also involved with the political opposition to Amendment G, alleged that the sponsoring group's petition gatherers had broken South Dakota laws on signature collection.

Voters rejected Amendment G, with 59% casting a "no" ballot.

Shortly after the election, Dakotans for Health moved to dismiss the lawsuit on the grounds that the election had rendered any lingering legal issues moot. Judge John Pekas, however, rejected that motion. Life Defense Fund's lawsuit sought not only to invalidate petition signatures it alleged were collected in violation of state law, but to bar Dakotans for Health's Rick Weiland from being involved in future petition drives, citing a law allowing such a move for petition sponsors who "knowingly or with reckless disregard" commit violations of petition circulation law.

The election results could constitute a reason for dismissal of parts of the case, Pekas wrote, but not the issue of Weiland's potential future involvement with the ballot measure process.

Last Wednesday, however, Lawyers with Life Defense Fund filed a motion to dismiss the case, "with each respective party to bear its own costs and attorney fees."

Pekas dismissed the case on Friday.

*John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.*



**Leslee Unruh (left) and Jon Hansen (right), leaders of Life Defense Fund, celebrate the anticipated failure of Amendment G at the group's election night watch party in Sioux Falls on Nov. 5, 2024.** (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

## Biden administration asks Congress for \$98.4 billion in disaster aid after stormy year

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - NOVEMBER 18, 2024 11:58 AM

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration is asking Congress to approve \$98.4 billion in emergency spending to bolster the federal government's response and recovery efforts following a series of natural disasters, including Hurricanes Helene and Milton that devastated parts of Southeastern states.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency and Department of Agriculture would receive the bulk of the funding request, if lawmakers approve it in full, though they can increase, decrease, or ignore whatever they wish.

Congress is expected to begin vetting the supplemental spending request this week before departing on a one-week Thanksgiving break. It's likely lawmakers and staff will release an emergency spending bill

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in early December when both chambers return for a three-week session.

"It is absolutely critical that these communities know that their government has not forgotten them," White House budget director Shalanda Young said Monday in a briefing with reporters.

The spending request, she said, would address a series of natural disasters throughout the country, including ongoing recovery efforts following the wildfires in Maui; tornados across the Midwest; the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, Maryland; and severe storms in Alaska, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia were hit by the hurricanes.



**Debris and a mobile home are piled up along a tree line in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene on Sept. 29, 2024 in Old Fort, North Carolina.** (Photo by Melissa Sue Gerrits/Getty Images)

## Busy hurricane, tornado seasons

FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell said during the call that 2024 has been "a year of records."

"Hurricane Beryl became the earliest Category 5 storm to form in the Atlantic and Hurricane Helene has devastated six states," Criswell said. "We saw the second-busiest spring tornado season ever recorded. And we've seen, overall, a 50% increase in disaster activity."

FEMA managed 114 disaster declarations during 2023, but has provided response and recovery aid to 172 natural disasters so far this year, Criswell said.

"To date, FEMA has obligated over \$7.5 billion alone for the response and recovery for Hurricanes Helene and Milton," she said. "These storms were incredibly large and spending on the first month, post-landfall for each storm outpaced nearly all disasters that we have responded to over the last 20 years."

FEMA, she said, has enough funding to continue its life-saving response and recovery activities through the end of a stopgap funding bill on Dec. 20, assuming no other major disasters take place.

## The emergency spending request released Monday asks Congress to provide

\$40 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's disaster relief fund.

\$24 billion for the Department of Agriculture to "provide assistance to farmers that experienced crop or livestock losses due to natural disasters like hurricanes, drought and wildfires." That funding would also go toward a permanent overhaul of pay for federal wildland firefighters and emergency food support programs, like the Special Supplemental Nutrition Programs for Women, Infants and Children or WIC, according to a fact sheet.

\$12 billion for the Department of Housing and Urban Development for Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery programs.

\$8 billion for the Department of Transportation to repair roads and bridges throughout 40 states and territories that were "seriously damaged by natural disasters or catastrophic failures from external causes," according to a fact sheet.

\$4 billion for the Environmental Protection Agency for "long-term water system upgrades" as well as hazardous waste and debris clean up.

\$3 billion for the Health and Human Services Department, which Young said would help "build supply chain capacity and resilience for IV fluids and other critical medical products that became scarce during

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recent hurricanes.”

\$2 billion for the Small Business Administration for low-interest disaster loans.

\$2 billion for the Commerce Department for flexible economic development grants and to buy three “hurricane hunter” aircraft.

\$1 billion for the Education Department to aid schools in affected areas.

\$1 billion for the Energy Department to “support grid rebuilding, modernization and future hardening efforts in areas hardest hit by Hurricanes Helene and Milton and funding to implement energy recovery efforts in communities affected by the Maui wildfires,” according to a fact sheet.

\$500 million for the Army Corps of Engineers to reimburse the cost of cleaning up wreckage after a ship crashed into the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, Maryland.

\$300 million for the State Department to “address the need for additional water infrastructure to prevent and reduce sewage flows and contamination at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant” in California.

\$200 million for the Interior Department for several programs, including a permanent overhaul of federal wildland firefighter pay, repairing siphons on the St. Mary Canal in Montana and mapping hazard impacts, according to the fact sheet.

\$200 million for the Department of Labor’s Dislocated Worker National Reserve.

\$100 million for the Legal Services Corporation for legal assistance for low-income disaster survivors.

\$100 million for AmeriCorps for disaster recovery projects.

## Congress to probe disaster recovery

Congressional committees are holding a series of hearings this week to delve into how the Biden administration responded to the slew of natural disasters that have happened this year and to vet the supplemental spending request.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is scheduled to hold a hearing Tuesday morning with Criswell; North Carolina Republican Rep. Chuck Edwards, who represents western sections of the state, including Asheville; and Florida Democratic Rep. Kathy Castor, who represents parts of the Tampa Bay area.

The House Oversight and Accountability Committee will hold a hearing Tuesday afternoon on FEMA’s natural disaster response, with testimony from Criswell.

On Wednesday, the Senate Appropriations Committee will hold a hearing on disaster funding needs with testimony from Georgia Democratic Sen. Jon Ossoff, North Carolina Republican Sen. Thom Tillis, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, Small Business Administrator Isabel Guzman, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Xochitl Torres Small, Deputy Secretary for the Department of Housing and Urban Development Adrienne Todman and FEMA Administrator Criswell.

The Appropriations committees in the House and Senate will work with leadership to draft the supplemental spending bill.

Senate Appropriations Chair Patty Murray, D-Wash., released a written statement Monday calling on her colleagues to quickly approve an emergency spending bill.

“We cannot afford to delay further in getting disaster relief across the line so that communities can rebuild schools, roads, and utilities, families can get back on their feet, and our small businesses and farmers can stay afloat,” Murray said. “As we get additional updates from agencies from their ongoing assessments, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the remaining weeks of this Congress to craft and pass a bipartisan disaster package that addresses this request and other critical disaster needs in order to meet the urgent challenges communities all across our country are facing.”

*Jennifer covers the nation’s capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.*

## Tribes reach for sun, start from ground up

Some see opportunity in solar as wind projects dominate

BY: GRACE FIORI, BUFFALO'S FIRE - NOVEMBER 18, 2024 11:52 AM

WAKPALA – On an unseasonably hot day in mid-October, three apprentices learning to install solar panels clambered on the roof of a community building in the small township of Wakpala, on the Standing Rock Reservation. Three weeks into their apprenticeship, they had a practiced ease on the roof as they attached solar panels to anchor points. Before the week was over they moved north on Highway 1806 to install a solar array for the small riverside community of Kenel.

The technicians are part of an apprenticeship program run by Lightspring Solar, a solar panel installation company, and the community development corporation for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, SAGE Development Authority, leading renewable energy projects on the reservation.

Great Plains tribes are eager to capitalize on the burgeoning clean energy economy and are creating training programs to empower tribal members. Rather than competing with the region's dominant wind industry, some tribal communities are focused on solar power programs. By prioritizing local workforce development, they're reimagining the job site and a utility system rooted in community ownership.

This was the first time the young men had done work like this, and they applied after seeing social media posts from SAGE Development Authority. Besides crawling in some dusty attics and stray wasps, they all agreed hands-on training outweighed a classroom lecture.

"It's a good crew and I'm learning something new," Joseph White Mountain III said. He previously worked in oil and gas, and said this job site was much different. That's largely due to the guidance of Wes Davis, Lightspring's general manager, who leads the installation crew.

He envisions the job site as "an environment where everybody is part of the process," he said. "This is something more than just a job. It's giving back to your community."

Through tax credits, grants and loan programs, the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act provides \$369 billion for renewable energy projects and climate change mitigation. The IRA makes funding accessible for various organizations — from local and tribal governments to educational institutions and private businesses. Northern Great Plains states have been notably absent in applying for funding.

In this region, "Native Americans and Native American tribes are going to lead the effort in the next five years," when it comes to solar development, said Cody Two Bears, executive director of Indigenized Energy, a nonprofit focused on tribal energy sovereignty. The group says program development and workforce training are essential.

The massive federal investments prioritize apprenticeship programs because of the need for skilled workers in the renewable energy sector. Since 2020, solar jobs grew more than 5% nationally, but 40% of (non-unionized) employers reported it was "very difficult" to find qualified workers.



**Lightspring Solar apprentices install solar panels on the roof of a community building in the small township of Wakpala, on the Standing Rock Reservation.** (Grace Fiori/Buffalo's Fire)



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Northern Great Plains tribes are taking a grassroots approach to solving this need and utilizing these funds. "How can we create this industry on our reservations to give our communities resiliency," said Davis, a citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa.

## Betting on solar in a wind economy

Energy is a big industry in North Dakota. Fourteen percent of the state's workforce is employed by the energy sector. The strongest renewable energy sector has been wind, providing about 1,700 jobs and a majority of the \$10 billion in capital investments for the state, according to American Clean Power.

Tribes looking to expand renewable energy in their regions want to see more Indigenous people employed in the energy sector, but face significant barriers to wind energy development. Wind projects require a lot of land, upfront costs, and complicated agreements for regional grid connectivity, said Lizana Pierce, deployment supervisor with the Department of Energy's Office of Indian Energy. Tribes are instead focusing on solar.

They hope training programs like Lightspring Solar will help capitalize on the clean energy boom. SAGE Development Corporation CEO Joe McNeil Jr. envisions Standing Rock employing tribal members to operate a grid powered by solar and wind.

But some are skeptical. "We need to be honest with ourselves," said Chéri Smith, founder of the Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy. In the Dakotas, "it's not solar friendly, the state incentives aren't there, the state support isn't there," she said. In other words, there's insufficient solar demand to support new jobs.

While she has seen multiple solar trainees go on to start their businesses or work for solar companies, the industry's potential workforce benefits in Great Plains tribal communities "should not be overstated," she warned.

"We don't want solar installers to just become solar installers," said Smith, a descendant of the Mi'kmaq Nation. There's not enough demand yet, she said, to support solar specialists. These training programs should also include basic electrical skills, so "they're not stuck with only one skill set." Smith views this as a holistic solution to the persistently high unemployment of Standing Rock Reservation's young population.

Solar also faces tough competition. Wind is king in the clean energy economy. Nationally, wind supplies more energy than solar because commercial wind technology was developed decades before solar, and there have been more federal incentives. That trend is extreme in North Dakota, where 36% of all energy is supplied by wind, compared to just 0.01% by solar. And the state gets plenty of sunshine – it's one of the sunniest states along the Canadian border.

Wind turbines and the technical experience required to maintain them require a lot more certifications, training and upfront cost. The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa in northern North Dakota tried it out – but without a local wind technician they could not afford to maintain the turbines.

These issues have proven contentious in the state, where lawmakers have pushed the wind industry to employ locals. A failed 2021 bill would have required companies to prioritize hiring local workers for their state-funded projects. In September, a local labor union criticized the high number of out-of-state workers in the state's wind industry.

So rather than try to muscle in on the wind sector, they've decided to start with solar. Solar's costs have dropped almost 90% in the last decade, reducing barriers to entry. Storage advancements have improved solar reliability.

"Solar is here to stay and is only going to grow," said Pierce.

## Community ownership model

The apprenticeship program is just the beginning of SAGE Development Corporation's broader vision, McNeil said. Tribal energy advocates know training community members is crucial to tribal energy sovereignty.

"I'm excited to have the opportunity to have someone from here who has been trained professionally and certified through our process ... and know they have our best interest at heart because our community supports one other," McNeil said.

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The six technicians who completed this summer's installation apprenticeship have a promising future in the Dakotas. White Mountain is an independent general contractor based out of Standing Rock. He plans to incorporate solar installation into his services. "We've got plenty of work," said Kambeitz. Even during winter when installation work virtually stops, Lightspring tries to keep staff employed through additional training and certification.

Indigenized Energy is working with the Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin to develop similar workforce development programs and include business skills for their solar operation. "The biggest thing" is the tribe's capacity to manage their utilities operation, according to Two Bears. These efforts could speed up development region-wide. By adapting the Menominee Tribe's model, other tribes won't have to "recreate the wheel," he said.

"The biggest thing is we're an Indigenous crew and we're installing for an Indigenous community," Davis said. He acknowledged that some potential apprentices hesitate to commit to solar training when there is "no historical data in North Dakota supporting it."

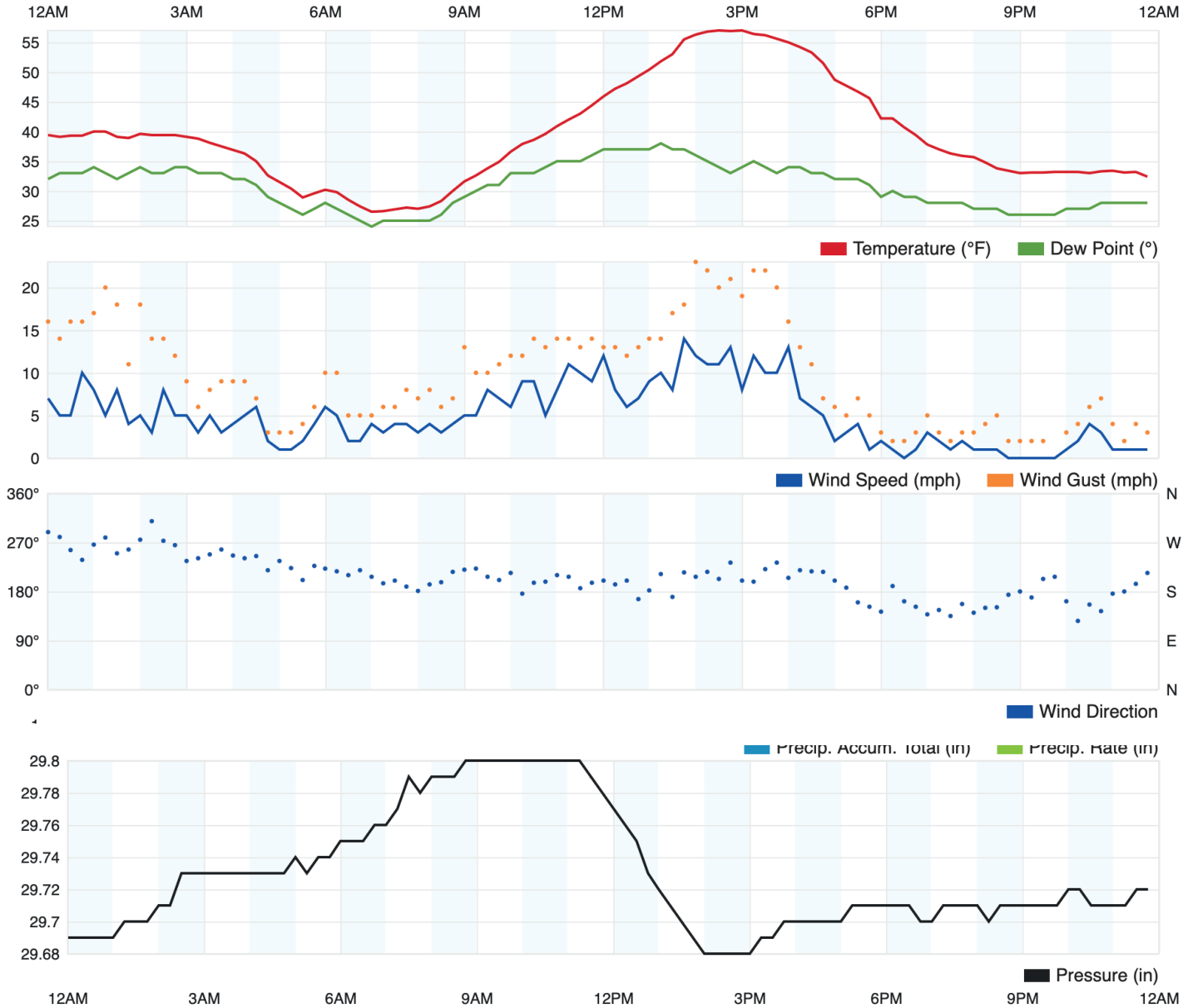
But the sun's potential is not new to the tribes. "This is something we as Indigenous people have known for time immemorial," Davis said. "We're able to use these alternative energy resources to give us our power back."

*Grace Fiori is a Report for America Corps Member covering environmental and agricultural issues along the Missouri River for Buffalo's Fire. While in North Dakota, she will be exploring how agricultural, industrial, and conservation practices impact tribal communities in the Missouri River basin.*

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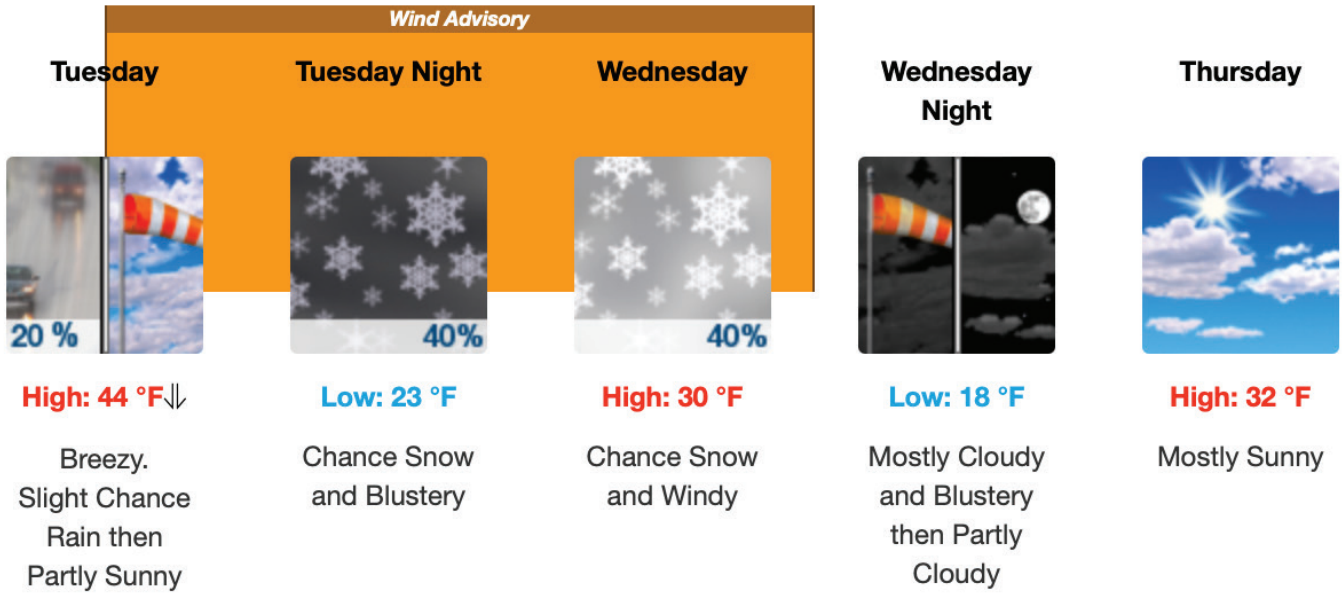
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

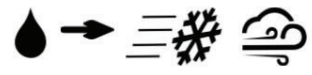


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## Precipitation Type & Timing November 18, 2024 3:49 PM



- Rain late this afternoon over eastern SD/western MN to expand into central SD tonight (lowest chances around 20% chance of rain west of the Missouri River)
- Rain to transition to light snow over eastern SD/west central MN Tuesday evening
- Light Snow to continue over northeastern SD/west central MN through the day Wednesday

|             | 11/18 Mon 6pm | 11/19 Tue |     |      |     | 11/20 Wed |     |      |     |
|-------------|---------------|-----------|-----|------|-----|-----------|-----|------|-----|
|             |               | 12am      | 6am | 12pm | 6pm | 12am      | 6am | 12pm | 6pm |
| McIntosh    | 15%           | 20%       | 15% | 0%   | 5%  | 10%       | 10% | 10%  | 0%  |
| Eagle Butte | 15%           | 5%        | 5%  | 0%   | 0%  | 5%        | 5%  | 0%   | 0%  |
| Murdo       | 15%           | 0%        | 0%  | 0%   | 0%  | 0%        | 0%  | 0%   | 0%  |
| Mobridge    | 20%           | 15%       | 15% | 0%   | 5%  | 15%       | 15% | 10%  | 0%  |
| Pierre      | 20%           | 5%        | 0%  | 0%   | 0%  | 5%        | 5%  | 0%   | 0%  |
| Gettysburg  | 25%           | 15%       | 10% | 5%   | 5%  | 10%       | 10% | 5%   | 0%  |
| Kennebec    | 30%           | 5%        | 0%  | 0%   | 0%  | 5%        | 0%  | 0%   | 0%  |
| Eureka      | 30%           | 30%       | 35% | 15%  | 10% | 35%       | 25% | 20%  | 0%  |
| Chamberlain | 55%           | 20%       | 5%  | 0%   | 10% | 15%       | 5%  | 0%   | 0%  |
| Miller      | 70%           | 35%       | 10% | 0%   | 0%  | 5%        | 20% | 15%  | 0%  |
| Ellendale   | 90%           | 85%       | 60% | 15%  | 20% | 35%       | 45% | 30%  | 5%  |
| Redfield    | 90%           | 80%       | 25% | 0%   | 5%  | 15%       | 30% | 25%  | 0%  |
| Aberdeen    | 90%           | 85%       | 30% | 10%  | 10% | 25%       | 35% | 25%  | 5%  |
| Huron       | 100%          | 90%       | 30% | 5%   | 25% | 25%       | 40% | 20%  | 5%  |
| Britton     | 95%           | 95%       | 60% | 30%  | 20% | 60%       | 55% | 50%  | 10% |
| Clark       | 95%           | 90%       | 35% | 10%  | 10% | 40%       | 40% | 30%  | 5%  |
| Webster     | 100%          | 95%       | 50% | 25%  | 15% | 55%       | 50% | 40%  | 5%  |
| Watertown   | 100%          | 100%      | 40% | 10%  | 10% | 35%       | 40% | 30%  | 5%  |
| Sisseton    | 100%          | 95%       | 70% | 25%  | 20% | 55%       | 60% | 50%  | 15% |
| Brookings   | 100%          | 95%       | 35% | 10%  | 15% | 25%       | 45% | 45%  | 10% |
| Milbank     | 100%          | 100%      | 60% | 5%   | 0%  | 30%       | 50% | 45%  | 15% |
| Wheaton     | 100%          | 100%      | 85% | 15%  | 20% | 50%       | 65% | 60%  | 25% |

Created: 2 pm CST Mon 11/18/2024. Shows most impactful weather for the period beginning at the time shown. Weather symbols display where Probability of Precipitation ≥ 0%.

- Rain + - Snow +

Created: 2 pm CST Mon 11/18/2024 | (Sorted geographically from West to East)



Rain will transition over to light snow Tuesday evening and continue through the day Wednesday.

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## Snowfall Tuesday through Wednesday

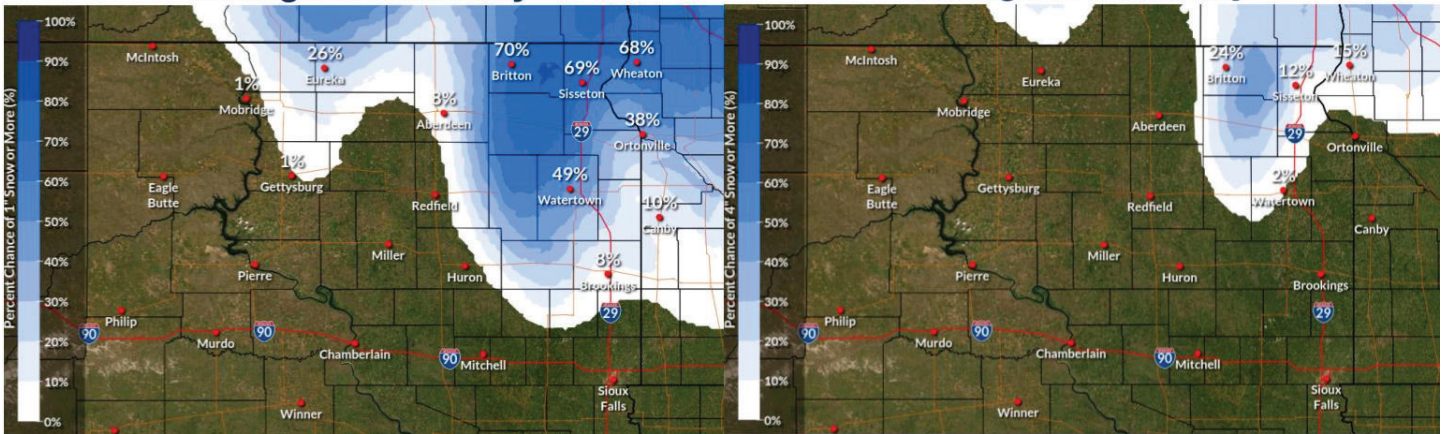
November 18, 2024  
3:59 PM

Highest chance of accumulating snow over the Prairie Coteau of eastern SD

- **Rain to transition to light snow** over north central SD Tuesday morning and eastern SD/west central MN Tuesday afternoon and evening. **\*\*Most snow and blowing snow expected during the day Wednesday\*\***
- **Blowing Snow** with reduced visibilities in falling snow, which may impact travel Wednesday over northeastern SD
- There is a 50% or higher chance of 1" or more snow near Eureka and along the Prairie Coteau from Britton to Watertown and east. **There is a 25-40% chance of more than 4" of snow between Britton, Webster, and Sisseton, SD.**

### Chance of 1" Snow or more through Wednesday

### Chance of 4" Snow or more through Wednesday



The transition from rain to snow is expected to occur Tuesday evening for eastern SD and west central MN. There is a 50% or higher chance of 1" or more snow near Eureka and along the Prairie Coteau from Britton to Watertown and east. There is a 25-40% chance of more than 4" of snow between Britton, Webster, and Sisseton, SD. Most snow and blowing snow is expected during the day Wednesday. This may impact travel over northeastern SD. Make sure to check the forecast before traveling.



## Strong Winds tonight through Wednesday

November 18, 2024  
4:04 PM

Strongest winds will be across central SD



- **Strong winds out of the northwest** over central SD late tonight to expand across SD during the day Tuesday
  - **Strongest winds Wednesday, with gusts of 40 to 55 mph** (while 30 to 40 mph over west central MN)
- 
- The strong winds will combine with any falling snow to reduce visibilities to less than a mile at times in **blowing snow, mainly over northeastern SD during the day Wednesday**

### Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

|             | 11/18 Mon |      | 11/19 Tue |      |     |      | 11/20 Wed |      |     |  |
|-------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----|------|-----------|------|-----|--|
|             | 6pm       | 12am | 6am       | 12pm | 6pm | 12am | 6am       | 12pm | 6pm |  |
| McIntosh    | 23        | 44   | 49        | 53   | 49  | 52   | 52        | 52   | 36  |  |
| Eagle Butte | 29        | 48   | 52        | 52   | 48  | 53   | 53        | 53   | 35  |  |
| Murdo       | 30        | 45   | 47        | 46   | 43  | 46   | 47        | 47   | 35  |  |
| Mobridge    | 17        | 44   | 44        | 46   | 46  | 51   | 47        | 45   | 35  |  |
| Pierre      | 21        | 43   | 44        | 44   | 41  | 45   | 45        | 45   | 33  |  |
| Gettysburg  | 18        | 41   | 44        | 46   | 43  | 45   | 47        | 47   | 33  |  |
| Kennebec    | 25        | 46   | 46        | 47   | 41  | 46   | 49        | 51   | 37  |  |
| Eureka      | 14        | 39   | 46        | 49   | 46  | 48   | 52        | 53   | 39  |  |
| Chamberlain | 22        | 39   | 49        | 48   | 39  | 37   | 47        | 48   | 37  |  |
| Miller      | 23        | 41   | 44        | 44   | 40  | 45   | 46        | 46   | 32  |  |
| Ellendale   | 17        | 35   | 43        | 45   | 40  | 44   | 46        | 47   | 36  |  |
| Redfield    | 22        | 38   | 39        | 40   | 36  | 40   | 41        | 43   | 31  |  |
| Aberdeen    | 20        | 35   | 40        | 43   | 38  | 43   | 43        | 44   | 32  |  |
| Huron       | 20        | 33   | 46        | 44   | 32  | 36   | 46        | 48   | 39  |  |
| Britton     | 22        | 31   | 38        | 43   | 38  | 41   | 41        | 43   | 36  |  |
| Clark       | 24        | 35   | 39        | 39   | 37  | 39   | 39        | 40   | 32  |  |
| Webster     | 24        | 36   | 41        | 44   | 40  | 44   | 44        | 46   | 39  |  |
| Watertown   | 28        | 36   | 40        | 41   | 38  | 43   | 41        | 43   | 36  |  |
| Sisseton    | 20        | 35   | 39        | 43   | 39  | 44   | 41        | 40   | 35  |  |
| Brookings   | 26        | 31   | 45        | 41   | 33  | 37   | 46        | 45   | 39  |  |
| Milbank     | 22        | 33   | 37        | 38   | 35  | 36   | 36        | 38   | 31  |  |
| Wheaton     | 25        | 29   | 35        | 37   | 33  | 37   | 35        | 35   | 30  |  |

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 55 °F at 12:21 PM

Low Temp: 29 °F at 12:56 AM

Wind: 20 mph at 12:55 PM

Precip: : 0.83 + .24

Day length: 9 hours, 23 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 75 in 1908

Record Low: -11 in 1914

Average High: 41

Average Low: 18

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.51

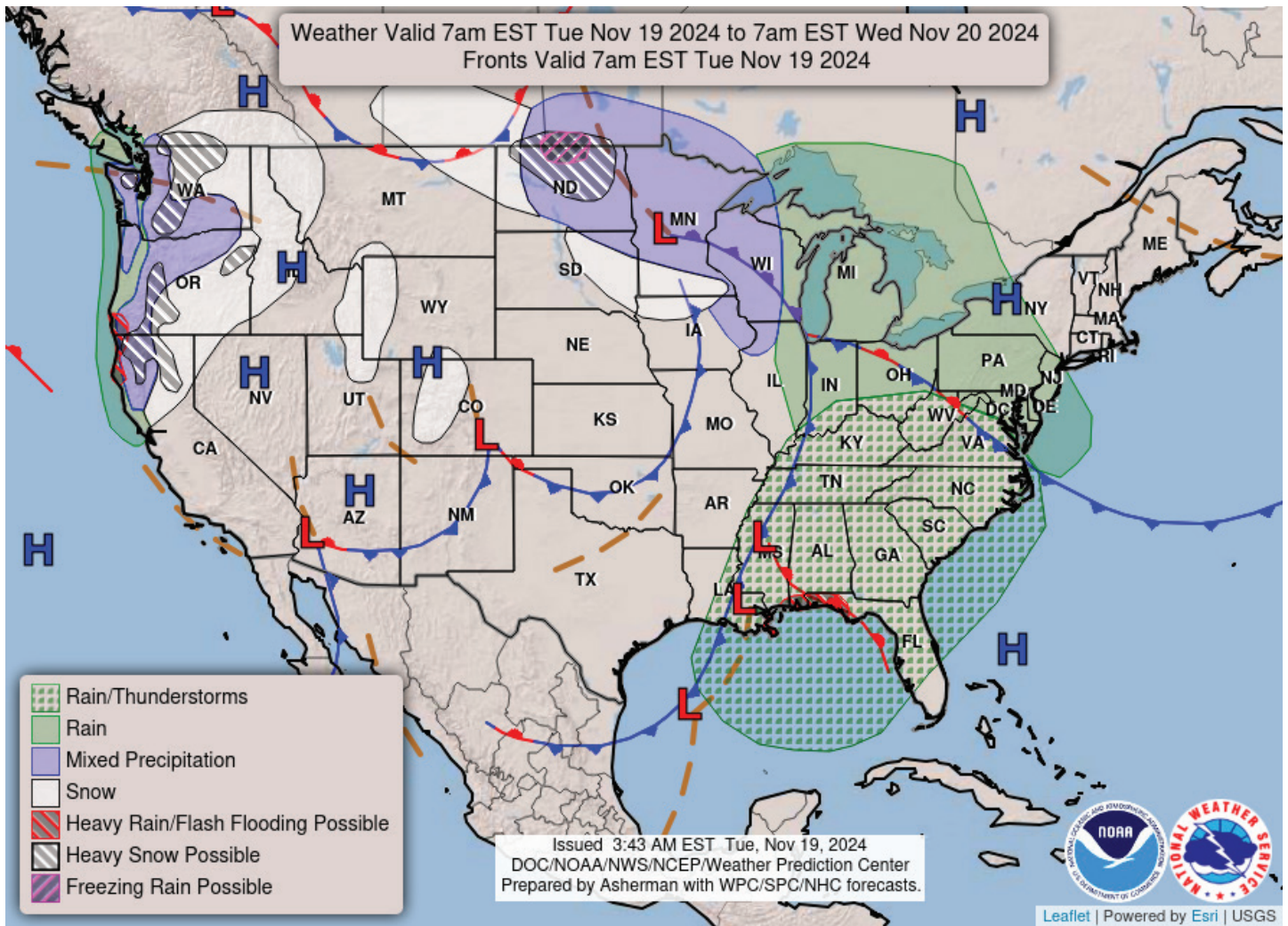
Precip to date in Nov.: 1.59

Average Precip to date: 20.98

Precip Year to Date: 21.47

Sunset Tonight: 4:59:47 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:37:26 am



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## Today in Weather History

November 19, 1981: A storm system moved from southeast Nebraska through Iowa on the 18th and spread rain and sleet as well as a few thunderstorms into southern Minnesota. Rain and sleet began changing over to snow during the afternoon on the 18th and continued through the 19th. The most substantial snowfall was in the Minneapolis area. The 10.4 inches of snow reported from the National Weather Service office in the Twin Cities was the heaviest snowfall recorded at the office since March 22nd, to the 23rd, 1965 when 13.6 inches fell. The storm knocked out power and phones to many in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Damage was also done to the Humber H. Humphrey Metrodome, where the weight of the heavy snow caused the newly inflated, fabric dome collapsed and ripped.

November 19, 1996: Widespread freezing rain spread a layer of ice across a large area before changing over to snow during November 19-20. Snowfall amounts were 1 to 3 inches in central South Dakota, 3 to 7 inches across north central South Dakota, 5 to 6 inches in west central Minnesota, and 4 to 12 inches across northeast South Dakota. Travel was difficult, and several schools were closed or delayed. Mail delivery was also slowed or postponed for a day or two. Several, mainly minor accidents, resulting in several minor injuries, occurred as a result of the ice and snow covered roads. Two Milbank buses slid into ditches. Strong north winds led to near-blizzard conditions across northeast South Dakota on the 20th. Some snowfall totals included; 12.0 inches in Clear Lake and near Milbank; 10.1 inches near Mellette; 9.0 inches in Browns Valley; 8.3 inches near Big Stone City; 8.0 inches in Faulkton; and 7.0 inches in Britton and Conde.

1873 - A severe storm raged from Georgia to Nova Scotia causing great losses to fishing fleets along the coast. In Maine, the barometric pressure reached 28.49 inches at Portland. (David Ludlum)

1921: The Columbia Gorge ice storm finally came to an end. In Oregon, 54 inches of snow, sleet, and glaze blocked the Columbia River Highway at The Dalles. Apart from traffic on the river itself, all transportation between Walla Walla WA and Portland, OR came to a halt. Nine trains were stopped as railroads were blocked for several days.

1930: A rare, estimated F4 tornado struck the town of Bethany, Oklahoma. Between 9:30 am and 9:58 am CST, it moved north-northeast from 3 miles west of the Oklahoma City limits, and hit the eastern part of Bethany. About 110 homes and 700 other buildings, or about a fourth of the town, were damaged or destroyed. Near the end of the damage path, 3.5 miles northeast of Wiley Post Airfield, the tornado hit the Camel Creek School. Buildings blew apart just as the students were falling to the floor and looking for shelter, and five students and a teacher were killed. A total of 23 people were killed and another 150 injured, with 77 being seriously injured. Damage estimates were listed at \$500,000.

1955 - An early season cold snap finally came to an end. Helena, MT, experienced 138 consecutive hours of subzero temperatures, including a reading of 29 below zero, which surpassed by seven degrees their previous record for the month of November. Missoula MT broke their November record by 12 degrees with a reading of 23 below zero, and Salt Lake City UT smashed their previous November record of zero with a reading of 14 below. Heavy snow in the Great Basin closed Donner Pass CA, and total crop damage from the cold wave amounted to eleven million dollars. (David Ludlum)

1957 - A tornado, 100 yards in width, travelled a nearly straight as an arrow 27-mile path from near Rosa AL to near Albertville AL, killing three persons. A home in the Susan Moore community in Blount County was picked up and dropped 500 feet away killing one person. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - The first of two successive snowstorms struck the northeastern U.S. The storm produced up to 20 inches of snow in southern New Hampshire. Two days later a second storm produced up to 30 inches of snow in northern Maine. (Storm Data)

1987 - It was a windy day across parts of the nation. Gale force winds whipped the Great Lakes Region. Winds gusting to 80 mph in western New York State damaged buildings and flipped over flatbed trailers at Churchville. In Montana, high winds in the Upper Yellowstone Valley gusted to 64 mph at Livingston. Strong Santa Ana winds buffeted the mountains and valleys of southern California. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing along a warm front drenched Little Rock AR with 7.01 inches of rain, smashing their previous record for the date of 1.91 inches. (The National Weather Summary)



## NEVER LEFT ALONE

A flight attendant noticed an elderly lady having a difficult time buckling her seat belt. Recognizing her anxiety and obvious fear, the flight attendant went to the captain and explained what she had seen. Graciously, he accompanied the attendant to the lady, and he asked, "May I help you, Ma'am?"

"Oh yes," she replied. "This is my first flight. I must admit that I am rather frightened. Tell me, Sir, will you bring me back down safely?"

As he fastened her seat belt, he smiled politely and said, "Yes, Ma'am. I've flown hundreds of thousands of miles and never left anyone up there."

In the closing verse of Matthew, Jesus promised His disciples, "And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

What a precious promise: "I am with you always." But what does it mean? His memories would be with us? His teachings would be with us? His imprint on history would be with us? Of course. But that is only the beginning.

"I am with you" leaves no doubt that after Jesus ascended into heaven He would be with us through the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit would be Jesus' presence that was with them then and is with us now and will never leave us. Ever.

Jesus said, "I am going away, but I will come back to you again!" Jesus continues to be with us today.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for the assurance of Your presence in our lives. We are comforted to know that whatever comes into our life, You are there to protect us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Matthew 28:20

*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*



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

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Password \_\_\_\_\_

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

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
11.15.24

5 17 35 55 69 19

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$420,000,000**

NEXT 17 Hrs 33 Mins  
DRAW: 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
11.18.24

20 36 37 42 43 6

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$15,430,000**

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 48  
DRAW: Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
11.18.24

4 9 10 28 29 1

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 17 Hrs 3 Mins  
DRAW: 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
11.16.24

1 11 15 16 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$107,000**

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 3  
DRAW: Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
11.18.24

2 6 24 36 43 13

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 32  
DRAW: Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
11.18.24

27 31 41 52 69 26

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$155,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 32  
DRAW: Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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## Upcoming Groton Events

07/04/2024 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course  
07/09/2024 FREE SNAP Application Assistance 1-6pm at the Community Center  
07/14/2024 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm  
07/17/2024 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm  
07/17/2024 Pro Am Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course  
07/25/2024 Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day  
07/25/2024 Summer Downtown Sip & Shop 5-8pm  
07/25/2024 Treasures Amidst The Trials 6pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
07/26/2024 Ferney Open Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start  
07/27/2024 1st Annual Celebration in the Park 1-9:30pm  
08/05/2024 School Supply Drive 4-7pm at the Community Center  
**Cancelled:** Wine on 9 at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm  
08/08/2024 Family Fun Fest 5:30-7:30pm  
08/9-11/2024 Jr. Legion State Baseball Tournament  
08/12/2024 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 1:15-7pm  
09/07/2024 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm  
09/07-08/2024 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport  
09/08/2024 Sunflower Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am  
10/05/2024 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm  
10/11/2024 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am  
10/31/2024 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm  
10/31/2024 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm  
11/16/2024 Groton American Legion "Turkey Raffle" 6:30-11:30pm  
11/28/2024 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm  
12/01/2024 Groton Snow Queen Contest, 4:30 p.m.  
12/07/2024 Olive Grove 8th Annual Holiday Party with Live & Silent Auctions 6pm-close  
12/14/2024 Santa Day at Professional Management Services, downtown Groton  
04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp  
05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm  
05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm  
07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course  
07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary Salad Luncheon  
07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm  
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm  
09/20/2025 NSU Gypsy Day  
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm  
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm

## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### **Cluff's 14 help South Dakota State down Mount Marty 89-41**

By The Associated Press undefined

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Oscar Cluff's 14 points helped South Dakota State defeat Mount Marty College 89-41 on Monday night.

Cluff also had nine rebounds for the Jackrabbits (3-1). Kalen Garry hit three 3-pointers and scored 13. Stoney Hadnot scored 11.

The Lancers were led by Tash Lunday, who recorded 14 points. Mac Ryken added nine points for Mount Marty. Jared Lopez had five points.

### **Putin signs new Russian nuclear doctrine after Biden's arms decision for Ukraine**

By The Associated Press undefined

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday signed a revised nuclear doctrine declaring that a conventional attack on Russia by any nation that is supported by a nuclear power will be considered a joint attack on his country.

Putin's endorsement of the new nuclear deterrent policy comes on the 1,000th day after he sent troops into Ukraine, on Feb. 24, 2022.

It follows U.S. President Joe Biden's decision to let Ukraine strike targets inside Russia with U.S.-supplied longer-range missiles.

The signing of the doctrine, which says that any massive aerial attack on Russia could trigger a nuclear response, demonstrates Putin's readiness to tap the country's nuclear arsenal to force the West to back down as Moscow presses a slow-moving offensive in Ukraine.

Asked whether the updated doctrine was deliberately issued on the heels of Biden's decision, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said the document was published "in a timely manner" and that Putin instructed the government to update it earlier this year so that it is "in line with the current situation."

Putin first announced changes in the nuclear doctrine in September, when he chaired a meeting discussing the proposed revisions.

Russia's president has previously warned the U.S. and other NATO allies that allowing Ukraine to use Western-supplied longer-range weapons to hit Russian territory would mean that Russia and NATO are at war.

The updated doctrine states that an attack against Russia by a nonnuclear power with the "participation or support of a nuclear power" will be seen as their "joint attack on the Russian Federation."

It adds that Russia could use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear strike or a conventional attack posing a "critical threat to sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Russia and its ally Belarus, a vague formulation that leaves broad room for interpretation.

It does not specify whether such an attack would necessarily trigger a nuclear response. It mentions the "uncertainty of scale, time and place of possible use of nuclear deterrent" among the key principles of the nuclear deterrence.

The document also notes that an aggression against Russia by a member of a military bloc or coalition is viewed as "an aggression by the entire bloc," a clear reference to NATO.

At the same time, it spells out conditions for using nuclear weapons in greater detail compared with previous versions of the doctrine, noting they could be used in case of a massive air attack involving ballistic and cruise missiles, aircraft, drones and other flying vehicles.

The wide formulation appears to significantly broaden the triggers for possible nuclear weapons use compared with the previous version of the document, which stated that Russia could tap its atomic arsenal

if case of an attack with ballistic missiles.

President Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled Belarus with an iron hand for more than 30 years and has relied on Russian subsidies and support, has allowed Russia to use his country's territory to send troops into Ukraine and to deploy some of its tactical nuclear weapons.

Since Putin sent troops into Ukraine, he and other Russian voices have frequently threatened the West with Russia's nuclear arsenal to discourage it from ramping up support for Kyiv.

Russian hawks have been calling for toughening the doctrine for months, arguing that the previous version failed to deter the West from increasing its aid to Ukraine and created the impression that Moscow would not resort to nuclear weapons.

## **Big money to respond to climate change is key to UN talks in Baku. How can nations raise it?**

By SETH BORENSTEIN and SIBI ARASU Associated Press

BAKU, Azerbaijan (AP) — Just as a simple lever can move heavy objects, rich nations are hoping another kind of leverage — the financial sort — can help them come up with the money that poorer nations need to cope with climate change.

It involves a complex package of grants, loans and private investment, and it's becoming the major currency at annual United Nations climate talks known as COP29.

But poor nations worry they'll get the short end of the lever: not much money and plenty of debt.

Half a world away in Brazil, leaders of the 20 most powerful economies issued a statement that among other things gave support to strong financial aid dealing with climate for poor nations and the use of leverage financial mechanisms. That was cheered by climate analysts and advocates. But at the same time, the G20 leaders noticeably avoided repeating the call for the world to transition away from fossil fuels, a key win at last year's climate talks.

Money is the key issue in Baku, where negotiators are working on a new amount for aid to help developing nations transition to clean energy, adapt to climate change and deal with weather disasters. It'll replace the current goal of \$100 billion annually — a goal set in 2009.

Climate cash could be in the form of loans, grants or private investment

Experts put the need closer to \$1 trillion, while developing nations have said they'll need \$1.3 trillion in climate finance. But negotiators are talking about different types of money as well as amounts.

So far rich nations have not quite offered a number for the core of money they could provide. But the European Union is expected to finally do that and it will likely be in the \$200 to \$300 billion a year range, Linda Kalcher, executive director of the think tank Strategic Perspectives, said Tuesday. It might be even as much as four times the original \$100 billion, said Luca Bergamaschi, co-founding director of the Italian ECCO think tank.

But there's a big difference between \$200 billion and \$1.3 trillion. That can be bridged with "the power of leverage," said Avinash Persaud, climate adviser for the Inter-American Development Bank.

When a country gives a multilateral development bank like his \$1, it could be used with loans and private investment to get as much as \$16 in spending for transitioning away from dirty energy, Persaud said. When it comes to spending to adapt to climate change, the bang for the buck, is a bit less, about \$6 for every dollar, he said.

But when it comes to compensating poor nations already damaged by climate change — such as Caribbean nations devastated by repeated hurricanes — leverage doesn't work because there's no investment and loans. That's where straight-out grants could help, Persaud said.

Whatever the form of the finance, Ireland's environment minister Eamon Ryan said it would be "unforgivable" for developed countries to walk away from negotiations in without making a firm commitment toward developing ones.

"We have to make an agreement here," he said. "We do have to provide the finance, particularly for the developing countries, and to give confidence that they will not be excluded, that they will be center stage."

For developing nations, the talk of loans brings fear of debt

If climate finance comes mostly in the form of loans, except for the damage compensation, it means more debt for nations that are already drowning in it, said Michai Robertson, climate finance negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States. And sometimes the leveraged or mobilized money doesn't quite appear as promised, he said.

"All of these things are just nice ways of saying more debt," Robertson said. "Are we here to address the climate crisis, which especially small developing states, least developed countries, have basically done nothing to contribute to it? The new goal cannot be a prescription of unsustainable debt."

His organization argues that most of the \$1.3 trillion it seeks should be in grants and very low-interest and long-term loans that are easier to pay back. Only about \$400 billion should be in leveraged loans, Robertson said.

Leverage from loans "will be a critical part of the solution," said United Nations Environment Programme Director Inger Andersen. But so must grants and so must debt relief, she added.

Bolivia's foreign policy director and chair of the Like-Minded Group negotiating bloc Diego Balanza called out developed countries in speech Tuesday, saying they have "squarely failed to provide committed support to developing countries."

"A significant share of loans has adverse implications for the macroeconomic stability of developing countries," Balanza said.

Rohey John, Gambia's environment minister, said the absence of a financial commitment from rich nations suggests "they are not interested in the development of the rest of the mankind."

"Each and every day we wake up to a crisis that will wipe out a whole community or even a whole country, to a crime that we never committed," she said.

Praise and worry about G20 statement

The G20's mention of the need for strong climate finance and especially the replenishment of the International Development Association gives a boost to negotiators in Baku, ECCO's Bergamaschi said.

"G20 Leaders have sent a clear message to their negotiators at COP29: do not leave Baku without a successful new finance goal," United Nations climate secretary Simon Stiell said. "This is an essential signal, in a world plagued by debt crises and spiraling climate impacts, wrecking lives, slamming supply chains and fanning inflation in every economy."

But the G20 failed to talk about how much the funds will be for the new goal, said Shepard Zvigadza, from South Africa's Climate Action Network. "This is a shame," he said.

Analysts and activists said they were also worried because the G20 statement did not repeat the call for a transition away from fossil fuels, a hard-fought concession at last year's climate talks.

Veteran climate talks analyst Alden Meyer of the European think tank E3G said the watering down of the G20 statement on fossil fuel transition is because of pressure by Russia and Saudi Arabia. He said it is "just the latest reflection of the Saudi wrecking ball strategy" at climate meetings.

## US envoy pushes for cease-fire in Lebanon as food crisis worsens after looting in Gaza

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB, WAFAA SHURAFI and FATMA KHALED Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A United States envoy returned to Beirut on Tuesday, where Lebanese officials have tentatively welcomed a proposal for an Israel-Hezbollah cease-fire. There was no such optimism in the Gaza Strip, where the mass looting of aid trucks by armed men worsened an already severe food crisis.

Amos Hochstein, the Biden administration's pointman on Israel and Lebanon, arrived as Hezbollah's allies in the Lebanese government said it had responded positively to the proposal, which would entail both the militants and Israeli ground forces withdrawing from a U.N. buffer zone in southern Lebanon.

It's unclear how close they are to clinching an agreement. The buffer zone would be policed by thousands of additional U.N. peacekeepers and Lebanese troops. Israel has called for a stronger enforcement mechanism, potentially including the ability to operate against any Hezbollah threats, something Lebanon

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is likely to oppose.

In Gaza, meanwhile, the theft of nearly 100 trucks loaded with food and other humanitarian aid over the weekend sent prices soaring and caused shortages in central Gaza, where most of the population of 2.3 million people have fled and where hundreds of thousands are crammed into squalid tent camps.

An even more severe hunger crisis is underway in the north, where Israel has been waging a weeklong offensive that has killed hundreds of people and driven tens of thousands from their homes. Experts say a famine might already have set in there.

Food prices soar in central Gaza after looting

On Monday, a crowd of people waited outside a shuttered bakery in the central city of Deir al-Balah. A woman who had been displaced from Gaza City, identifying herself as Umm Shadi, said the price of flour had climbed to 400 shekels (over \$100) a bag, if it can even be found.

Nora Muhanna, another woman displaced from Gaza City, said she was leaving empty-handed after waiting five hours for a bag of bread for her children. "From the beginning, there are no goods, and even if they are available, there is no money," she said.

The United Nations said armed men stole food and other aid from 98 trucks over the weekend, the largest single incident of its kind since the start of the war. It did not say who was behind the theft.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the convoy of 109 trucks was instructed by the Israeli military to take an "alternative, unfamiliar route" after the aid was brought in through the Kerem Shalom crossing, and that the trucks were stolen near the crossing itself.

Israel has long accused Hamas of stealing aid, allegations denied by the militant group.

Al-Aqsa TV, a media outlet operated by the militants, said Hamas-run security forces in Gaza had launched an operation against looters, killing 20 of them. The report implied that members of tribal groups near Rafah were behind the theft.

The Hamas-run government had a police force of tens of thousands that maintained a high degree of public security before the war, but they have vanished from the streets in many areas after being targeted by Israeli strikes. Hamas says it has taken measures to prevent both looting and price-gouging in local markets.

Wars rage on in Biden administration's final months

Hamas ignited the war in Gaza when its fighters stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250. Around 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, at least a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 43,800 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children, according to local health authorities, who do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their toll. The war has left much of the territory in ruins and forced around 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million to flee, often multiple times.

Hezbollah began firing rockets into northern Israel the day after the Hamas attack in what it said was solidarity with the Palestinians and Hamas, a fellow Iran-backed militant group. Israel launched retaliatory airstrikes, and all-out war erupted in September.

The fighting has left more than 3,500 dead in Lebanon and almost 15,000 wounded, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. It also displaced nearly 1.2 million, or a quarter of Lebanon's population. On the Israeli side, 87 soldiers and 50 civilians have been killed by rockets, drones and missiles.

The Biden administration has spent several months trying to broker cease-fires on both fronts. It appears to have made some progress in Lebanon, while talks over a cease-fire and the release of hostages held in Gaza stalled over the summer.

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has vowed to end the wars in the Middle East without saying how he would do it. He was a staunch supporter of Israel and its hawkish government during his first term.

## At UN climate talks, farmers argue for a share of money dedicated to fighting climate change

By MELINA WALLING Associated Press

BAKU, Azerbaijan (AP) — Extreme heat ruined the pineapples on Esther Penunia's small farm in the Philippines this year, more disappointment than catastrophe since Penunia doesn't depend on the farm for a living. But Penunia worries about the millions of small farmers in her part of the world who do depend on rice paddies, coconut groves and vegetable patches that are all threatened by climate change.

That's why she's hoping that countries at this year's United Nations climate summit will dedicate some of the money for fighting climate change to agriculture — and the family farmers who feed most of the people in many parts of the world.

"You don't help small farmers, where will you get your food?" wondered Penunia, secretary general of the Asian Farmers Association. "Who will farm for you? Who will catch the fish, who will get the honey, who will plant your vegetables?"

Many countries, especially in the Global South, need money to help pay for the months of recovery when typhoons wreck fields, to insure farmers against more extreme droughts and to prepare for a hotter world with better seeds, better fertilizers and better water infrastructure. But there's a massive gap between the \$1 trillion in climate finance that poorer countries need, according to experts from the World Resources Institute, and what richer countries are prepared to pay.

Whatever deal is reached, it's certain that the money will have to be stretched. And there's debate about exactly how much money should go toward agriculture and how much toward cutting fossil fuel emissions.

Small farmers get less than 1% of climate finance, according to a report last year from the Climate Policy Initiative. At the same time, food systems — all the processes involved in making, shipping and disposing of food — account for about a third of planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions.

Farmers' efforts to adapt to a warming climate get harder the hotter it gets, Ismahane Elouafi, executive managing director of CGIAR, a global partnership for agricultural research, said in a statement. At a COP29 panel on climate-smart solutions for smallholder farmers, she added: "If we want to solve the issue, how could we not invest in a sector that is having a third of the problem?"

Praveena Sridhar, chief science and technical officer of Save Soil, a movement aimed at raising awareness about soil health, offered a simpler reason for why countries should help fund agriculture's adaptation to climate change. As hard as it is to agree on cutting fossil fuel use, it should be easier to support farming solutions proven to work.

"We have not figured out the puzzle yet," she said. "Why not look at the puzzle pieces we have figured out and start moving?"

Yet others worry that doing so would distract from tackling the biggest problem — fossil fuels.

Zeke Hausfather, a research scientist with the nonprofit Berkeley Earth, said in an email that there is "real potential" in land management changes to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. But the most that could cut emissions globally is around a billion tons a year, he said — just a tiny fraction of the 40 billion tons of carbon dioxide the world emits every year.

Hausfather also noted that carbon stored in the ground by more climate-conscious agricultural practices isn't guaranteed to stay there permanently, he said, referencing a paper he published this month.

That hasn't stopped some countries, companies and private investors from putting big money toward agricultural technology, including the \$9 billion announced last year at COP28 for a joint U.S. and U.A.E.-backed project aimed at innovating in farming and food systems to adapt to climate change and cut emissions.

With the incoming Trump administration likely to reverse many U.S. climate initiatives, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said he hopes business, academic and farming interests keep climate-related agriculture projects going. "It's always important to remember that we have three levels of government in the U.S. And there's going to be a lot of activity in cities and states that's going to complement what was being done in these initiatives that I think will continue," Vilsack said.

The stakes are high for advocates like Penunia, who was disappointed that farmers weren't mentioned



in language at the last U.N. climate talks.

"We hope that really we can be heard," she said.

## 1,000 days of war in Ukraine, distilled in a single 24-hour span of violence and resilience

By LORI HINNANT, ILLIA NOVIKOV and DMYTRO ZHYHINAS Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The clock on her wall stopped almost as soon as the day began, its hands frozen by the Russian bomb that hit the dormitory serving as home for Ukrainians displaced by war.

It was 1:45 a.m. in an upstairs room in the eastern city of Zaporizhzhia, Natalia Panasenko's home for just shy of a year after the town she thinks of as her real home came under Russian occupation. The explosion blasted a door on top of her, smashed her refrigerator and television and shredded the flowers she'd just received for her 63rd birthday.

"The house was full of people and flowers. People were congratulating me ... and then there was nothing. Everything was mixed in the rubble," she said. "I come from a place where the war is going on every day. We only just left there, and it seemed to be quieter here. And the war caught up with us again."

Nov. 11 was a typical day of violence and resilience in Ukraine. The Associated Press fanned out across Ukraine to chronicle 24 hours of life just as the country prepared to mark a grim milestone Tuesday: 1,000 days since Russia's full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

The day opened with two Russian bombings — one that hit Panasenko's apartment and another that killed six in Mykolaiv, including a woman and her three children. Before the day was even halfway done, a Russian ballistic missile shattered yet another apartment building, this time in the city of Kryvyi Rih.

Swimmers braved the Black Sea waters off Odesa, steelworkers kept the economy limping along, a baby was born. Soldiers died and were buried. The lucky ones found a measure of healing for their missing limbs and broken faces.

About a fifth of Ukraine's internationally recognized territory is now controlled by Russia. Those invisible geographical lines shift constantly, and the closer a person is to them the more dangerous life is.

In the no-man's-land between Russian and Ukrainian forces, there's hardly any life at all. It's called the Gray Zone for good reason. Ashen homes, charred trees and blackened pits left by shells exploding over 1,000 days of war stretch as far as the eye can see.

Odesa, 6:50 a.m.

The waters of the Black Sea hover around 13 degrees Celsius (55 Fahrenheit) in late fall. The coastline is mined. Dmytro's city is regularly targeted by drones and missiles.

But Dmytro — who insisted on being identified only by his first name because he was worried for the safety of his family — was undaunted as he plunged into the waves with a handful of friends for their regular swim.

Before the war, the group numbered a couple of dozen. Many fled the country. Men were mobilized to fight. Some returned with disabilities that keep them out of the water. His 33-year-old stepson is missing in action after a battle in the Donetsk region.

For Dmytro and fellow swimmers, the ritual grounds them and makes the grimness of war more bearable. He said the risks of his hobby are well worth the reward: "If you're afraid of wolves, don't go into the forest."

Zaporizhzhia, noon

Managing the Zaporizhstal steel mill during wartime means days filled with calculations for Serhii Saphonov.

The staff of 420 is less than half its pre-war levels. Power cuts from Russian attacks on electricity infrastructure require an "algorithm of actions" to maintain operations. Russian forces are closing in on the coke mine in Pokrovsk that supplies the plant with coal. And the city is under increasing attack by Russia's unstoppable glide bombs.

Right outside his office, a bulletin board displays the names of 92 former steelworkers who have joined the army. Below are photos of the dead. Staff hold fundraisers for supplies for colleagues on the front,

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including two bulletproof vests sitting in the corner near his desk.

"The old workers, they carry everything on their shoulders. They are hardened. They know their job," Saphonov said. "Everyone knows that we have to endure, hold out, hoping that things will get better ahead." Chernihiv, 1 p.m.

Dr. Vladyslava Friz has performed more reconstructive surgeries in the past 1,000 days than she did in the previous decade of her career. And the injuries are like nothing she had ever seen before.

Her days start early and end late. In the first months of the war, she said, the hospital was admitting 60 people per hour, and eight surgeons worked nonstop. They're still catching up, because so many of the injured need multiple surgeries.

On Nov. 11, she was rebuilding the cheek and jaw of a patient injured in a mine explosion.

"Appearance is a person's visual identity," she said. "There is work to be done; we are doing it. We have no other options. There are medicines, equipment and personnel, but there are no metal structures for reconstruction. There is no state funding for implants."

She said she will not abandon her patients but worries that the world will abandon Ukraine as the war approaches its fourth year.

"The global community continues to lose interest in the events in Ukraine while we lose people every day," she said. "The world seems to have forgotten about us."

Odesa, 6 p.m.

Yulia Ponomarenko has brought two babies into the world in the past 1,000 days, including Mariana on Nov. 11. Her husband, Denys, is fighting at the front.

Their hometown, Oleshky, was submerged by flooding after the explosion of the Kakhovka Dam. But by then, she'd long since fled the occupying Russian forces, who target the families of Ukrainian soldiers.

Mariana, born healthy at 3.8 kilograms and 55 centimeters (8 pounds, 6 ounces and 21 inches), will grow up with an older brother and sister and a menagerie of two cats and two dogs.

"This child is very expected, very wanted. We now have another princess," Ponomarenko said.

Kyiv, 9 p.m.

The actors can't perform in their home theater in Kharkiv — too many bombs, too few people willing to gather in one place. So they've moved to the Ukrainian capital, where they played to a nearly full house on Nov. 11 as guests of the Franko Theater.

"Because of the war, the Kharkiv theater cannot play on its stage. We play underground. It is literally underground art. There are only two to three places in Kharkiv where we can play, and that's it," said Mykhailo Tereshchenko, one of the principal actors of the Taras Shevchenko Academic Ukrainian Drama Theatre, named for Ukraine's most famous writer.

Yevhen Nyshchuk, director of the Franko, said the theater paused production for a few months after the war started. Now, it's packed nearly every night there is a play, and the lengthy applause when curtains close is deafening.

The reason goes beyond the quality of a performance at this point, he believes, and expresses "this inner realization that in spite of everything, we will create, we will live, we will come, we will meet, we will applaud each other."

## 45 pro-democracy activists get 4 to 10 years in prison in Hong Kong's biggest national security case

By KANIS LEUNG and ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Forty-five ex-lawmakers and activists were sentenced to four to 10 years in prison Tuesday in Hong Kong's biggest national security case under a Beijing-imposed law that crushed a once-thriving pro-democracy movement.

They were prosecuted under the 2020 national security law for their roles in an unofficial primary election. Prosecutors said their aim was to paralyze Hong Kong's government and force the city's leader to resign by aiming to win a legislative majority and using it to block government budgets indiscriminately.

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The unofficial primary held in July 2020 drew 610,000 voters, and its winners had been expected to advance to the official election. Authorities postponed the official legislative election, however, citing public health risks during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Legal scholar Benny Tai, whom the judges called the mastermind, received the longest sentence of 10 years. The judges said the sentences had been reduced for defendants who said they were unaware the plan was unlawful.

However, the court said the penalties were not reduced for Tai and former lawmaker Alvin Yeung because they are lawyers who were "absolutely adamant in pushing for the implementation of the Scheme."

In the judgment posted online, the judges wrote that Tai essentially "advocated for a revolution" by publishing a series of articles over a period of months that traced his thinking, even though in a letter seeking a shorter sentence Tai said the steps were "never intended to be used as blueprint for any political action."

Two of the 47 original defendants were acquitted earlier this year. The rest either pleaded guilty or were found guilty of conspiracy to commit subversion. The judges said in their verdict that the activists' plans to effect change through the unofficial primary would have undermined the government's authority and created a constitutional crisis.

The judges rejected the reasoning from some defendants that the scheme would never have materialized, stating that "all the participants had put in every endeavor to make it a success."

The judges highlighted that a great deal of time, resources and money were devoted to the organization of the primary election.

"When the Primary Election took place on the 10 and 11 July, no one had remotely mentioned the fact that Primary Election was no more than an academic exercise and that the Scheme was absolutely unattainable," the judgment read. "In order to succeed, the organizers and participants might have hurdles to overcome, that however was expected in every subversion case where efforts were made to overthrow or paralyze a government."

Some of the defendants waved at their relatives in the courtroom after they were sentenced.

Gwyneth Ho, a journalist-turned-activist who was jailed for seven years, said "our true crime for Beijing is that we were not content with playing along in manipulated elections" on her Facebook page.

"We dared to confront the regime with the question: Will democracy ever be possible within such a structure? The answer was a complete crackdown on all fronts of society," she wrote.

Chan Po-ying, wife of defendant Leung Kwok-hung, told reporters she wasn't shocked when she learned her husband received a jail term of six years and nine months. She said they were trying to use some of the rights granted by the city's mini-constitution to pressure those who are in power to address the will of the people.

"This is an unjust imprisonment. They shouldn't be kept in jail for one day," said Chan, also the chair of the League of Social Democrats, one of the city's remaining pro-democracy parties.

Emilia Wong, the girlfriend of Ventus Lau, said his jail term was within her expectations. She said the sentencing was a "middle phase" of history and she could not see the end point at this moment, but she pledged to support Lau as best as she could.

Philip Bowring, the husband of Claudia Mo, was relieved that the sentences were finally handed down.

Observers said the trial illustrated how authorities suppressed dissent following huge anti-government protests in 2019, alongside media crackdowns and reduced public choice in elections. The drastic changes reflect how Beijing's promise to retain the former British colony's civil liberties for 50 years when it returned to China in 1997 is increasingly threadbare, they said.

Beijing and Hong Kong governments insisted the national security law was necessary for the city's stability.

The sentencing drew criticism from foreign governments and human rights organizations.

The U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong said the U.S. strongly condemned the sentences for the 45 pro-democracy advocates and former lawmakers.

"The defendants were aggressively prosecuted and jailed for peacefully participating in normal political activity protected under Hong Kong's Basic Law," the statement said, referring to the city's mini-constitution.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told reporters no one should be allowed to

use democracy as a pretext to engage in unlawful activities and escape justice.

Hong Kong Secretary for Security Chris Tang said in a news briefing that the sentences showed those committing national security crimes must be severely punished.

The subversion case involved pro-democracy activists across the spectrum. They include Tai, former student leader Joshua Wong and former lawmakers. Wong was sentenced to four years and eight months in jail. Young activist Owen Chow was given the second-longest jail term, seven years and nine months.

Most of them have already been detained for more than three and a half years before the sentencing. The separations pained them and their families.

More than 200 people stood in line in rain and winds Tuesday morning for a seat in the court, including one of the acquitted defendants, Lee Yue-shun. Lee said he hoped members of the public would show they care about the court case.

"The public's interpretation and understanding has a far-reaching impact on our society's future development," he said.

Wei Siu-lik, a friend of convicted activist Clarisse Yeung, said she arrived at 4 a.m. even though her leg was injured. "I wanted to let them know there are still many coming here for them," she said.

Thirty-one of the activists entered guilty pleas and had better chances of getting reduced sentences. The law authorizes a range of sentences depending on the seriousness of the offense and the defendant's role in it, from under three years for the least serious to 10 years to life for people convicted of "grave" offenses.

## **Tens of thousands crowd New Zealand's Parliament grounds in support of Māori rights**

By CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — As tens of thousands crowded the streets in New Zealand's capital, Wellington, on Tuesday, the throng of people, flags aloft, had the air of a festival or a parade rather than a protest.

They were marching to oppose a law that would reshape the country's founding treaty between Indigenous Māori and the British Crown. But for many, it was also a celebration of a resurging Indigenous language and identity that colonization had once almost destroyed.

"Just fighting for the rights that our tūpuna, our ancestors, fought for," Shanell Bob said as she waited for the march to begin. "We're fighting for our tamariki, for our mokopuna, so they can have what we haven't been able to have," she added, using the Māori words for children and grandchildren.

What was likely the country's largest-ever protest in support of Māori rights — a subject that has preoccupied modern New Zealand for much of its young history — followed a long tradition of peaceful cross-country marches that have marked turning points in the nation's story.

"We're going for a walk!" one organizer proclaimed from the stage as crowds gathered at the opposite end of the city from the nation's Parliament. People had traveled from across the nation over the past nine days.

For many, the turnout reflected growing solidarity on Indigenous rights from non-Māori. At bus stops during the usual morning commute, people of all ages and races waited with Māori sovereignty flags. Some local schools said they would not register students as absent. The city's mayor joined the protest.

The bill that marchers are opposing is unpopular and unlikely to become law. But opposition to it has been widespread, which marchers said indicated rising knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi's promises to Māori among New Zealanders — and a small but vocal backlash from those who are angered by the attempts of courts and lawmakers to keep them.

Māori marching for their rights is not new. But the crowds were larger than at treaty marches before and the mood was changed, Indigenous people said.

"It's different to when I was a child," Bob said. "We're stronger now, our tamariki are stronger now, they

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know who they are, they're proud of who they are."

As the marchers moved through the streets of Wellington with ringing Māori haka — rhythmic chants — and waiata, or songs, thousands more holding signs lined the pavement in support.

Some placards bore jokes or insults about the lawmakers responsible for the bill, which would change the meaning of the principles of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi and prevent them from applying only to Māori — whose chiefs signed the document when New Zealand was colonized.

But others read "proud to be Māori" or acknowledged the bearer's heritage as a non-Māori person endorsing the protest. Some denounced the widespread expropriation of Māori land during colonization, one of the main grievances arising from the treaty.

"The treaty is a document that lets us be here in Aotearoa so holding it up and respecting it is really important," said Ben Ogilvie, who is of Pākehā or New Zealand European descent, using the Māori name for the country. "I hate what this government is doing to tear it down."

Police estimated that 42,000 people tried to crowd into Parliament's grounds, with some spilling into the surrounding streets. People crammed themselves onto the children's slide on the lawn for a vantage point; others perched in trees. The tone was almost joyful; as people waited to leave the cramped area, some struck up Māori songs that most New Zealanders learn at school.

A sea of Māori sovereignty flags in red, black and white stretched down the lawn and into the streets. But marchers bore Samoan, Tongan, Indigenous Australian, U.S., Palestinian and Israeli flags, too. At Parliament, speeches from political leaders drew attention to the reason for the protest — a proposed law that would change the meaning of words in the country's founding treaty, cement them in law and extend them to everyone.

Its author, libertarian lawmaker David Seymour — who is Māori — says the process of redress for decades of Crown breaches of its treaty with Māori has created special treatment for Indigenous people, which he opposes.

The bill's detractors say it would spell constitutional upheaval, dilute Indigenous rights, and that it has provoked divisive rhetoric about Māori — who are still disadvantaged on almost every social and economic metric, despite attempts by the courts and lawmakers in recent decades to rectify inequities caused in large part by breaches of the treaty.

It is not expected to ever become law, but Seymour made a political deal that saw it shepherded through a first vote last Thursday. In a statement Tuesday, he said the public could now make submissions on the bill, which he hopes will experience a swell of support.

Seymour briefly walked out onto Parliament's forecourt to observe the protest, although he was not among the lawmakers invited to speak. Some in the crowd booed him.

The protest was "a long time coming," said Papa Heta, one of the marchers, who said Māori sought acknowledgement and respect.

"We hope that we can unite with our Pākehā friends, Europeans," he added. "Unfortunately, there are those that make decisions that put us in a difficult place."

## Middle East latest: US envoy arrives in Lebanon to meet with officials about possible cease-fire

By The Associated Press undefined

A U.S. envoy has arrived in Beirut to meet with Lebanese officials about a possible cease-fire in the Israel-Hezbollah war.

Amos Hochstein, a senior advisor to United States President Joe Biden, arrived Tuesday, a day after Hezbollah reportedly gave a positive response to a U.S. draft proposal to end the war, which has been ongoing for more than 13 months.

The U.S. has been working on a proposal to end hostilities that would remove Israeli ground forces from Lebanon and push Hezbollah forces away from the Israeli border. More Lebanese troops and U.N. peacekeepers would be sent to the buffer zone in southern Lebanon as part of the deal.

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Hochstein's main meeting on Tuesday will be with Lebanon's Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally who is mediating for the militants.

Hochstein's arrival came hours after an Israeli strike in central Beirut killed five people and wounded others. It was the third Israeli strike in the heart of Beirut in two days.

Since late September, Israel has dramatically escalated its bombardment of Lebanon, vowing to severely weaken Hezbollah and end its rocket barrages into Israel.

Hezbollah began firing rockets, and drawing Israeli retaliation, on Oct. 8, 2023, a day after Hamas' attack on southern Israel ignited the war in Gaza. Both groups are supported by Iran. The fighting has left more than 3,500 dead in Lebanon and almost 15,000 wounded, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. It also has displaced nearly 1.2 million, or a quarter of Lebanon's population.

On the Israeli side, 87 soldiers and 50 civilians, including some foreign laborers who work in agriculture, have been killed by attacks involving rockets, drones and missiles.

Here's the Latest:

Tuesday marks 1-year anniversary of Houthi attacks on shipping in Red Sea

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Tuesday marks the one-year anniversary of Yemen's Houthi rebels beginning their attacks on shipping in the Red Sea corridor.

On Nov. 19, 2023, the Houthis seized the car carrier Galaxy Leader in a helicopter-borne attack in the Red Sea. The ship and its 25 crew remain held until today, something the United Nations Security Council noted in a statement calling on the rebels to release the ship and its crew.

The Houthis have attacked over 90 commercial vessels in the time since. They sank two vessels in the campaign, which also killed four sailors. Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by a U.S.-led coalition in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets, which have included Western military vessels as well.

## Local Washington officials brace for four years of playing defense against Trump

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump's first stint in the White House proved to be a chaotic ride for the District of Columbia.

Now with Trump set to return to power — backed by a Republican-controlled Congress and the momentum of a sweeping electoral win — local officials in the nation's capital are trying to sound conciliatory while preparing for the worst.

"We have been discussing and planning for many months in the case that the District has to defend itself and its values," said Mayor Muriel Bowser. Her office had "communicated with (Trump's) team and indicated we would like to speak," she said on Nov. 12, but hadn't heard back.

Bowser downplayed the myriad differences between the two sides and emphasized a search for common ground. But those commonalities may be hard to come by, given open mutual animosity that has defined Trump's relationship with the district.

During Trump's turbulent first four years in office, he and the local government publicly sparred multiple times — in tones ranging from playful to deeply personal. When Trump floated the idea of a massive July 4 military parade complete with tanks rolling through the streets, the D.C. Council publicly mocked him.

When mass protests broke out in the summer of 2020 over the death of George Floyd and wider police brutality and racial issues, Trump accused Bowser of losing control of her city. He eventually declared his own multi-agency lockdown that included low-flying helicopters buzzing protesters. Bowser responded by having "Black Lives Matter" painted on the street in giant letters one block from the White House.

During the last four years, with Trump as an aggrieved private citizen, his feelings toward Washington have remained intense. On the campaign trail, he repeatedly vowed to "take over" the city and usurp the

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authority of the local government. In August 2023, when he briefly came to town to plead not guilty on charges of trying to overturn his 2020 electoral loss to President Joe Biden, Trump blasted the capital city on social media, calling it a “filthy and crime ridden embarrassment to our nation.”

Now Bowser and the D.C. Council are bracing for what could be several years of playing defense against opponents who wield significant power over Washington’s affairs.

“We just have to do our best and hold on for another few years. We have to figure out how to make it work,” said Councilmember Christina Henderson. “Unlike millions of voters around the country, I actually believe the man when he speaks. He said what he’s going to do.”

Henderson, a former staffer for Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., points out that Trump has already experienced what she called “the trifecta” — Republican control of the White House and both houses of Congress — during his first two years in office and the district managed to get through it. She also notes that Republican control of the House of Representatives will be up for grabs again in just two more years.

“I can’t predict what they’re going to try to do to us,” she said. “I can just prepare to respond.”

But responding to the intentions of an antagonistic White House and Congress is difficult, given the nature of the District’s limited autonomy. Under terms of the city’s Home Rule authority, Congress essentially vets all D.C. laws and can outright overturn them.

Even when Trump was out of the White House, activist Republicans on the House Oversight Committee repeatedly summoned Bowser and members of the D.C. Council — often to publicly grill them about local crime rates.

And by far the most extensive modern congressional encroachment on the District’s authority came with Democrats controlling both the Senate and the White House. In 2023, a sweeping rewrite of the D.C. criminal code was branded as soft on crime by House Republicans; in a major setback for the council, both Senate Democrats and President Biden agreed and the law was effectively canceled.

“We know that the district can always be a convenient foil to some of these folks,” said Councilmember Charles Allen. “Without statehood, without autonomy, our laws are always more at risk than any other Americans.”

Both councilmembers predict a wave of budget riders on the annual appropriations bill — designed to alter district laws in ways big and small. These riders have been a longtime source of resentment for local lawmakers, who charge Congress members with tinkering with the district in a manner they could never get away with at home.

“They want to do something to the district because they feel they can. They would never do that to their own state,” Allen said.

He highlights the infamous “Harris rider” named for Maryland Rep. Andy Harris. A staunch opponent of legalized marijuana, Harris has for years used a budget rider to prevent the local government from creating any sort of regulatory framework for taxing or controlling sales. Meanwhile, Maryland has since legalized recreational marijuana use.

“He can’t implement it in his home state, but he can do it to us,” Allen said.

Last year’s appropriations bill initially included riders that would have banned all traffic speed cameras in the nation’s capital and prevented the district government from banning right turns on red lights. Those proposals eventually faded during the negotiation process, but Allen feels that the coming Congress “won’t have Democrats in the same position to help negotiate away many of the most objectionable budget riders.”

Other congressional Republicans have sought to make more fundamental changes to the way Washington operates. Rep. Andrew Clyde of Georgia has proposed completely repealing the Home Rule Act, while Rep. Andy Ogles of Tennessee has talked publicly of abolishing the office of D.C. mayor. Neither Ogles’ nor Clyde’s office responded to Associated Press requests for comment on their future intentions.

Despite the looming battles, Bowser’s search for common ground with Trump and congressional Republicans may not be completely hopeless. Bowser actually vetoed the criminal code rewrite but was overridden by the D.C. Council; her opposition was frequently cited by congressional Republicans as proof of how far the council had strayed from mainstream Democratic policy.

And Bowser, Trump and Republicans in Congress have all agreed for years on one particular issue: the need to end post-pandemic teleworking and bring all federal employees back to their offices five days a week. She said she looked forward to discussing that with Trump.

## Takeaways from the AP's investigation into Osprey safety issues

By TARA COPP, KEVIN VINEYS and AARON KESSLER Associated Press

After being grounded for months following a crash last November that killed eight service members in Japan, the V-22 Osprey — a complicated aircraft that flies fast like a plane but converts to land like a helicopter — is back in the air.

But there are still questions as to whether it should be.

Since the military started flying the aircraft three decades ago, 64 personnel have been killed and 93 injured in crashes. Japan's military briefly grounded its fleet again late last month after an Osprey tilted violently during takeoff and struck the ground.

To assess its safety, The Associated Press reviewed thousands of pages of accident reports and flight data obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, interviewed more than 50 current and former program officials, crew members and experts, and flew both simulator and real training flights.

The AP found that safety issues have increased in the past five years and that the design of the aircraft itself is directly contributing to many of the accidents.

Yet past and present Osprey pilots — even those who have lost friends in accidents or been in crashes themselves — are some of the aircraft's greatest defenders. Ospreys have been deployed around the world, rescuing U.S. service personnel from ballistic missiles in Iraq and evacuating civilians in Niger.

"There's no other platform out there that can do what the V-22 can do," said former Osprey pilot Brian Luce, who has survived two crashes. "When everything is going well, it is amazing. But when it's not, it's unforgiving."

Osprey safety issues have increased

The AP found that the top three most serious types of incidents rose 46% between 2019 and 2023, while overall safety issues jumped 18% in the same period before the fleet was grounded.

Moreover, the AP found that over the past five years, not only have incidents climbed for both the Marine Corps and Air Force, but that the rise in safety problems largely involved the Osprey's engine or drive system.

There were at least 35 instances where crews experienced an engine fire, power loss or stall, 42 issues involving the propellers and at least 72 instances of chipping. That means that the gears inside the transmission or drive system become so stressed they flake off metal chips that can quickly endanger a flight.

The Marine Corps maintains that the Osprey is still one of the safest aircraft in its fleet. Over the past decade, the rate that it experienced the worst type of accident resulting in either death or loss of aircraft was 2.27 for every 100,000 hours of flight. That compares with 5.66 for its other heavy lift helicopter, the CH-53.

Those numbers don't tell the whole story. The Marines' three most serious categories of accidents climbed from 2019 to 2023 — even as the number of hours they flew their Ospreys dropped significantly, from 50,807 total hours in fiscal 2019 to 37,670 hours in 2023, according to data obtained by the AP.

The Air Force's Osprey has a much higher rate of the worst type of accidents per 100,000 flight hours than its other major aircraft, and its accidents have also climbed even as flight hours have dropped.

Challenges are tied to the Osprey's design

Experts said the Osprey's failures have a variety of causes. In the 1980s, when the V-22 was still in early concept for Bell Flight and Boeing, the Marine Corps got to call the shots on the Osprey's final design because it committed to buying most of them. The Marines wanted an aircraft that could carry at least 24 troops and take up the same limited amount of space on a ship deck as the CH-46 helicopter, which the Osprey was replacing.

Those design limitations made the Osprey weigh more than twice as much as the CH-46.



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Because of the Osprey's weight, the blades needed to be longer, but couldn't be — they would have hit the body of the aircraft or the tower on the ship deck.

As a result, the Osprey's proprotors — which work as propellers while flying like an airplane and as rotor blades when functioning as a helicopter — are too small in diameter for the aircraft's weight, which tops out at 60,500 pounds.

To help with weight, the Osprey's entire engine and transmission bends like an elbow to shift to a vertical position when it flies like a helicopter — and engines don't like to be vertical.

How the design affects safety

While designing the engines to rotate vertically helped the Osprey takeoff, it also created dangers that crews still have to mitigate today.

When flying as a helicopter, the engines can't cool down because they don't get enough air flow. The hydraulic lines at the joint can wear down, and the aircraft is difficult to maintain.

The Osprey's first fatal crash in 1992 occurred because pooled fluids spilled back down into the engine as the aircraft converted from flying horizontally like a plane to vertically like a helicopter to land. It caught fire and crashed, killing seven.

A 2000 crash that killed four Marines happened when a worn-down hydraulic line ruptured and the Osprey lost power.

Then there's dust. When the Osprey hovers in helicopter mode, the air and exhaust it creates can kick up a wall of dust and debris that can get sucked back into the engines, clogging and degrading them.

In 2015, a Marine Corps Osprey hovering for 45 seconds in Hawaii disturbed so much sand and dust that the crew had to abort and try again to land, because they could no longer see. On their second attempt, the Osprey's left engine stalled and the aircraft dropped flat, killing two Marines.

Pilots have to fly perfectly

Pilots face very sensitive instruments that change from working like the controls inside an airplane to operating like those inside a helicopter.

The aircraft's cockpit is also crammed with messaging and navigation screens, and rows of control buttons. The aircraft is frequently flashing error codes — but crews can get desensitized to them, what one Osprey pilot called the "fatigue of small errors."

If there are other complications in flight or a pilot is distracted or misses the significance of an aircraft warning light, those mistakes can turn dangerous quickly.

Col. Seth Buckley, commander of the 20th Special Operations Squadron, which flies Ospreys, acknowledged that he puts a lot of pressure on his crews to be perfect for their own safety.

"You have to take that mindset because there are so many things you can do in this aircraft to induce worse problems," Buckley said.

## **In southern India's tea country, small but mighty efforts are brewing to bring back native forests**

By SIBI ARASU Associated Press

UDHAGAMANDALAM, India (AP) — Scattered groves of native trees, flowers and the occasional prehistoric burial ground are squeezed between hundreds of thousands of tea shrubs in southern India's Nilgiris region — a gateway to a time before colonization and the commercial growing of tea that reshaped the country's mountain landscapes.

These sacred groves once blanketed the Western Ghats mountains, but nearly 200 years ago, British colonists installed rows upon rows of tea plantations. The few groves that stand today are either protected by Indigenous communities who preserve them for their faith and traditions, or are being grown and tended back into existence by ecologists who remove tea trees from disused farms and plant seeds native to this biodiverse region. It takes decades, but their efforts are finally starting to see results as forests flourish despite ecological damage and wilder weather caused by climate change.

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The teams bringing back the forests — home to more than 600 native plants and 150 animal species found only here — know that they still need to work around their neighbors. Nearly everyone in the region's more than 700,000-strong population either farms black, green and white tea or works with the almost 3 million tourists who come to escape the searing heat of the Indian plains.

"In this time of climate change, I think ecological restoration and rewilding is extremely important," said Godwin Vasanth Bosco, a Nilgiris-based naturalist and restoration practitioner. "What we're trying to do is to help nature restore itself."

Degraded land and climate change threaten communities

Environmentalists say industrial-scale tea farming has destroyed the soil's nutrients and led to conflict with animals like elephants and gaur, or Indian bison, that have little forest left to live in.

Estimates say nearly 135,000 acres of tea have been planted across the mountains, damaging close to 70% of native grasslands and forests.

"There is no biological diversity," Gokul Halan, a Nilgiris-based water expert, said of the tea farms. "It doesn't support the local fauna nor is it a food source."

The forests among the tea farms are recognized by the United Nations as one of the world's eight "hot-test hotspots for biodiversity," but the areas degraded by excessive pesticide use and other commercial farming methods have been dubbed "green deserts" by environmentalists for their poor soil and inability to support other life.

The Nilgiris region has also had to clear land to facilitate the increasing number of tourists and people from India's plains who are moving to the region.

Poorer land makes it more vulnerable to landslides and flooding, which are now more common because of human-caused climate change. The neighboring mountainous region of Wayanad suffered devastating landslides that killed nearly 200 people earlier this year, and Halan warns Nilgiris may suffer a similar fate.

Halan also warned the region is susceptible to long droughts and excess heat because of climate change, and that's already affected some tea harvests.

Restoring forests brings life back to Nilgiris

In a small mountain fold just a few hundred meters below the region's tallest peak, native trees planted 10 years ago have grown up to 4.5 meters (15 feet) tall. A stream flows amid the young trees that replaced nearly 7 acres of tea plants.

"This whole place was tea plantations and this stream was not flowing throughout the year," said Bosco, the ecologist. "Since we began our restoration work, it flows through the year and the trees and bamboo have grown well along the stream."

The forests are known as Shola-grassland forests or cloud forests because they can capture moisture from high-altitude mist.

Bosco said the plants and trees have an "incredible capacity to provide for life" across the nearly 2,000 acres his organization works to restore. The native trees maintain the microclimate underneath them by providing nutrients to the soil. That helps saplings and small plants grow even during hot, dry summers.

The region is also home to several Indigenous communities, called Adivasi, many of them classified as highly vulnerable with only a few thousand of their people remaining.

Representatives of these Adivasi communities consider themselves the original custodians of the forests and have also restored forests in the region. They say such restoration initiatives are welcome.

"When the British built tea estates, we were kicked out to the fringes of this district, our lands were lost and we lost our traditions because of deforestation," said Mani Raman, who belongs to the Alu Kurumbar Adivasi community.

"Such restoration work is good. By bringing the forests back, the wildlife and birds will get more food. Animals that have moved out of forests will have a place to live," he said.

Tea growers still need a livelihood

Tea growers and factory owners say that the region's entire economy depends on tea and it is relatively less harmful to the local environment compared to rampant development to cater to tourism.

"To convert tea to grasslands and shola forests will have a negative impact on the region's economy

and environment," said A. Balakrishnan, the owner of a two-year-old tea factory near the town of Kotagiri in the Nilgiris.

Eighty-year-old I. Bhojan, who's been a tea grower all his life, agrees. "There is no Nilgiris without tea," he said.

Bhojan, president of the small farmers and tea growers welfare association for the Nilgiris, estimates that around 600,000 people — 50,000 of them small farmers — depend on tea for their livelihood.

Balakrishnan argued that tea plants are maintained well given their economic benefits compared to native forests.

"If tea was not there, Nilgiris will become a place for tourists only, there'll be more construction and urbanization," he said.

Finding common ground

Planting woody trees and shrubs in tea plantations, known as agroforestry, can ease the battle for space between farms and restoration, according to some experts.

Other crops and timber "can make tea plantations a bit more biodiverse compared to what is there currently," said water expert Halan.

Officials of Tamil Nadu state, of which the Nilgiris district is a part, earmarked \$24 million earlier this year to encourage farmers to shift away from chemical-laden fertilizers to help preserve soil health. The state's forest department officials also announced plans last year to plant nearly 60,000 native trees in the region.

Restoration ecologist Bosco said adding value to smaller tea farming operations by growing special, higher-quality tea on smaller parcels of land can open up more land to reforestation without hurting farmers' pockets.

He added that if those working to restore the land were paid for that service, that could be another stream of revenue for residents, as well as sourcing new products to sell from the native plants. "For example, we're trying to come up with products from some of the plants that have medicinal value," he said.

Raman added that future such work could also learn from Adivasi traditional practices.

"Adivasi people have been protecting forests for so long, wherever we live the forests are protected," he said. "The state government should be taking such work up at large scale."

## **The Osprey's safety issues spiked over five years and caused deaths. Pilots still want to fly it**

By TARA COPP, KEVIN VINEYS and AARON KESSLER Associated Press

CANNON AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. (AP) — Over a New Mexico training range named the Hornet, two Osprey aircraft speed 100 feet off the ground, banking hard over valleys and hills as they close in on a dusty landing zone.

A flight engineer in the back braces a .50-caliber machine gun over the edge of the Osprey's open ramp as desert shrubbery blurs past. The aircraft's joints shift and rattle, and there is little steady to hold on to until the Osprey touches down with a bump, flooding seats with rust-colored dust.

After being grounded for months following a crash last November that killed eight U.S. service members in Japan, the V-22 Osprey is back in the air. But there are still questions as to whether it should be.

The Pentagon bought the V-22 Osprey more than 30 years ago as a lethal hybrid, with the speed of an airplane and the maneuverability of a helicopter. Since then, 64 personnel have been killed and 93 injured in more than 21 major accidents.

Japan's military briefly grounded its fleet again late last month after an Osprey tilted violently during takeoff and struck the ground. And four recent fatal crashes brought the program the closest it's come to being shut down by Congress.

To assess its safety, The Associated Press reviewed thousands of pages of accident reports and flight data obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, interviewed more than 50 current and former program officials, crew members and experts, and flew both simulator and real training flights.

The AP found that the top three most serious types of incidents rose 46% between 2019 and 2023, while

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overall safety issues jumped 18% in the same period before the fleet was grounded.

Yet current and former Osprey pilots — even those who have lost friends in accidents or been in crashes themselves — are some of the aircraft's greatest defenders.

Ospreys have been deployed worldwide — landing in deserts and on ship decks, rescuing U.S. service members from ballistic missiles in Iraq, evacuating civilians in Niger and even standing by ready to protect the president during a surprise trip to Ukraine last year.

"There's no other platform out there that can do what the V-22 can do," said former Osprey pilot Brian Luce, who has survived two crashes. "When everything is going well, it is amazing. But when it's not, it's unforgiving."

Unlike other aircraft, the Osprey's problems have not leveled off as the years passed, instead they spiked — even as the number of hours flown have dropped. Many of those incidents can be directly tied to the aircraft's design, experts said.

Parts are wearing out faster than planned, and it's so complex that a minor mistake by a pilot can turn deadly.

While some aspects of the Osprey are now getting modified to make it more reliable, it's unlikely the Osprey's core design will change. With about 400 aircraft that cost between \$75 million and \$90 million apiece, a major upgrade to the fleet could cost billions.

One pilot survives two crashes

In 2010, Luce was the co-pilot in an Osprey crash in Afghanistan that killed his aircraft commander, flight engineer, an Army Ranger and a translator.

There was no enemy fire. In the final seconds of flight, as the Osprey converted to land like a helicopter, it dropped at a rate of more than 1,800 feet per minute. The crash investigation was inconclusive but found possible crew errors and said the engines may have lost power from sucking in too much dust.

Two years later, Luce was the aircraft commander overseeing a co-pilot on a Florida training range. Luce's aircraft was flying low to the ground and about 750 feet behind the lead Osprey — three times the safe minimum distance required.

Despite being football fields apart, when both Ospreys banked, their change in position put one of Luce's rotor blades inside the 25-foot vertical separation they needed. It crossed into the wake of the lead aircraft — a turbulent and unpredictable wash of air so strong that crews nicknamed it "Superman's cape."

In seconds, Luce's Osprey nearly inverted and began dropping at more than 2,800 feet per minute before crashing and catching fire.

All five crew members survived. As the most seriously injured were airlifted out, Luce called his wife at the time, his voice shaking.

"It happened again," he said.

She did not have to ask what he meant.

Both the 2010 and 2012 crashes exposed issues with the Osprey that the military still faces today.

After Luce's 2012 crash, Osprey pilots warned investigators that the program was in trouble, according to investigation interviews obtained by the AP. Pilots couldn't get enough training hours. Ground maintenance crews couldn't keep enough aircraft flying due to a shortage of parts.

To meet cost and schedule targets, the Pentagon's Osprey program office allowed manufacturers Bell Flight and Boeing to turn the Osprey over to the military without fully identifying all the ways the aircraft could run into trouble, a 2001 Government Accountability Office report found.

So even by Luce's 2012 crash, the military still didn't know the full size of the Osprey's wake, crash investigators found.

"The fact that they fell out of the sky just defies logic," Luce's commander Lt. Col. Matt Glover told crash investigators in documents reviewed by the AP.

"I wish I could say there's not going to be a next one, but where we are right now, is it 'if' or 'when,'" said a second pilot, who was flying the Osprey in front of Luce's and whose name is redacted.

The Osprey's safety record has been challenged in multiple congressional hearings over the years. But

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each time, it has returned to flight. Some members of Congress have said there is no more margin for error. "If another Osprey goes down, we're done. This program's done," Rep. Stephen Lynch, a Massachusetts Democrat, told Osprey program officials during a hearing this spring.

The design of the Osprey is a big challenge

In the 1980s, when the \$56 billion V-22 program was in its early stages for Bell Flight and Boeing, the Marine Corps controlled the Osprey's final design because it committed to buying the most. The Marines wanted an aircraft that could carry at least 24 troops, but only take the same small space on a ship deck as the CH-46 helicopter, which the Osprey was replacing.

Experts say design choices have affected the Osprey's safety since:

— The Osprey's proprotors, which work as propellers while flying like an airplane and as rotor blades when functioning as a helicopter, are too small in diameter for the aircraft's weight, which can top out at 60,500 pounds.

— The Osprey's entire engine, transmission and proprotors rotate to a vertical position when it flies like a helicopter, which compromises the engines.

— That vertical rotation is at the core of what makes the Osprey complex. Crews must watch numerous factors: speed, the angles of the engine and rotor blades, and the up or down position of the aircraft's nose, related to the Osprey's weight and center of gravity to keep it from crashing.

The Osprey is twice as heavy as the CH-46, so the rotor blades needed to be longer but couldn't be because they would have hit the body of the aircraft or the tower on the ship deck. Instead, the Osprey's engines had to be more powerful to help the shorter blades generate enough lift.

That creates fast, violent airflow through the rotor blades, which can quickly destabilize the Osprey if one engine has more power than the other.

More powerful engines also meant they would weigh more. So engineers designed them to rotate and used their exhaust thrust to help lift the Osprey off the ground.

"It's an aircraft with a huge amount of performance packed into a very compact space. What that means is that it's a real hot rod to fly," said Richard Brown, a rotorcraft specialist at Sophrodyne Aerospace. "But it also has these foibles which are baked into the design."

Osprey crashes go back decades

Problems with the vertical engine caused the aircraft's first fatal accident in 1992. Oils that had pooled while the Osprey was flying like an airplane spilled down into the engine as it rotated to a vertical helicopter position, catching fire and killing seven crew.

In December 2000, repeated transitions to helicopter mode — where the engine and rotor blades rotate upward like an elbow joint — wore down one of the hydraulic lines in an Osprey to the point that it ruptured in flight, killing four Marines. That led to a grounding and system redesign.

Dusty landings present added danger. When the Osprey hovers in helicopter mode, the air and exhaust it creates can kick up a wall of dust and debris that can get sucked back into the engines, clogging and degrading them.

In 2015, a Marine Corps Osprey hovering for 45 seconds in Hawaii disturbed so much sand and dust the crew had to abort and try again to land, because they could no longer see. On their second attempt, the Osprey's left engine stalled and the aircraft dropped flat, killing two Marines.

"I heard what sounded like the entire aircrew yelling 'power, power, power,'" a surviving Marine told investigators, according to redacted interviews obtained by the AP. "The ceiling opened like a sardine can."

After the accident, the Marine Corps put out new guidelines reducing the amount of time the aircraft could hover in dusty environments.

But two years later, dust was a factor again. Pilots of a Marine Corps Osprey that had been dropping off troops in landing zones in Australia all day were concerned enough about the aircraft's weight and potential accumulated dust in the engines that they wanted troops to pour out their water jugs to cut weight.

On their final flight, as the Osprey neared the deck of the transport ship USS Green Bay, it dropped. Airflow generated by the Osprey had reflected off the ship deck and backed up through the rotors.

The pilots applied full throttle but the engines could not produce enough power to compensate for the

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loss. The Osprey kept falling, clipped the side of the ship and fell into the ocean, killing three.

"It just felt like there was nothing you could do," the lead pilot told investigators. "I don't recall seeing anything with the gauges at this point. I just remember being very frightened."

The Osprey's manufacturers, Bell Flight and Boeing, both referred questions about whether design changes could be made to either the rotors or engine orientation to the Pentagon.

In a statement to the AP, Bell said it took the heavier loads into account in its aircraft.

"While the capabilities of the Osprey have evolved over the years, the envelope of the aircraft based on configuration to support the varied missions has actually not adjusted significantly and was anticipated by the original design," Bell said.

The aging aircraft is wearing down

The Osprey's design strains critical components inside, especially in helicopter mode — and those parts are wearing out faster than expected.

When the Osprey is flying like a helicopter, everything has to work harder, because the engines and rotors are supporting the full weight of the aircraft. In airplane mode, the rotors only have to overcome the aircraft's drag, said Brown, the rotorcraft expert.

Air Force crews fly the heaviest Osprey variant because of all the special instruments needed to allow it to fly secret missions, such as conducting rescues or inserting special operations forces in hostile territory.

In helicopter mode, they have to use an option called "interim power" to land safely, said Glover, the former Osprey squadron commander. The option surges more power, but that also can overtax the gears in the Osprey's transmission, known as the proprotor gearbox.

"Bell-Boeing and the Marines had said: 'Hey, you're not supposed to use that thing very often. We don't recommend it.' Well, the Air Force, we've got to use it because we are heavy," Glover said. "If you don't use it, you won't have the power to land."

Japan's defense ministry blamed human error for its most recent accident, where the Osprey tilted and struck the ground, because the pilots did not engage the interim power option as they hovered like a helicopter during takeoff. The ministry announced last week that its Ospreys had been cleared to return to flight.

The strain from helicopter mode shows in the Osprey's transmission. A total of 609 have had to be replaced in the past 10 years, according to data obtained by the AP.

Wear and tear also puts a large demand on ground maintenance crews, who closely track components in the aircraft's drive system to monitor strain. After each flight, they examine the Osprey's engines, transmission and hydraulic lines for signs of stress.

On the hydraulic lines, "if one of those comes loose, it's a problem," said Master Sgt. Frank Williams, an Osprey maintenance supervisor at Cannon Air Force Base. "You have to pay attention."

In response to questions from the AP, the Marine Corps said the Osprey is still one of its safest aircraft. Over the past decade, the rate that it experienced the worst type of accident resulting in either death or loss of aircraft was 2.27 for every 100,000 hours of flight. The Marines said that compares with 5.66 for its other heavy lift helicopter, the CH-53.

Those numbers don't tell the whole story. The Marines' three most serious categories of accidents climbed from 2019 to 2023, even as the number of hours they flew dropped significantly — from 50,807 in fiscal 2019 to 37,670 in 2023, according to data obtained by the AP.

The Air Force's Osprey has a much higher rate of the worst type of accidents per 100,000 flight hours than its other major aircraft, and its incidents also climbed even as flight hours dropped.

The AP also found that the rise in safety problems over the past five years largely involved the Osprey's engine or drive system.

There were at least 35 instances where crews experienced an engine fire, power loss or stall, 42 issues involving the proprotors and at least 72 instances of the gears inside the transmission or drive system becoming so stressed they flake off metal chips that can quickly endanger a flight.

Pilots have to fly perfectly

The Osprey's complexity tests its crews.

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Pilots control the angle of the engines and propellers with a small notched wheel they move with their thumbs. It's sensitive to the touch — too much of a nudge and the engines' angle changes by several degrees. And they have to watch a computer display to see the angle.

As the engines and rotor blades begin to rotate upward, the flight controls inside the cockpit change, too — from working like the controls inside an airplane to operating like those in a helicopter.

"You have to just mentally switch, while you are on approach, what your hands are doing," said Osprey pilot Capt. Christian Eells.

The aircraft's computer is designed to autocorrect for a pilot if their movement of the wheel could result in the Osprey's internal components being damaged. But that adds to the danger if a pilot can't quickly force the nacelles, which house the engines, upward to slow down the aircraft, he said.

"It will not prevent you from stalling, sinking rapidly or entering any other unsafe flight," Luce said. "But if you are going too fast, it will not only prevent you from raising the nacelles to slow down, the flight control computers will bounce the nacelles forward" to reduce strain on the gears — which speeds the Osprey up, Luce said.

If there are other complications in flight or a pilot is distracted or misses the significance of an aircraft warning light, those mistakes can turn dangerous quickly.

Lt. Col. Seth Buckley, the 20th Special Operations Squadron commander at the Cannon base, acknowledged that he puts a lot of pressure on his crews to be perfect.

"You have to take that mindset because there are so many things you can do in this aircraft to induce worse problems," Buckley said.

Reminders of why hang inside the squadron's heritage room at Cannon, where they have put up a wooden memorial plaque with eight upside-down shot glasses for the friends they lost last November in Japan.

Many of them also wear black metallic memorial bands on their wrists, with the Nov. 29, 2023, crash date and the Osprey's call sign, "Gundam 22," etched in.

## Osprey faces investigations

The most recent accidents have spurred new lawsuits and congressional investigations.

Family members of the five Marines killed in a 2022 crash in California, caused by an unprecedented dual failure of the Osprey's clutch, are suing Bell and Boeing, and the maker of the engines, Rolls-Royce. Some of the families of the eight Air Force members killed last November in the Japan crash, which was caused in part by weakened metals in a critical transmission gear, also have hired a lawyer.

"Ultimately, the goal is an Osprey that is as airworthy and in as safe a condition as possible," said attorney Tim Loranger, who is representing the families.

Following the Japan crash, the military grounded the fleet for three months. Congress also was investigating, and there was frustration from some lawmakers that the Osprey returned to flight before those reviews were complete.

In the meantime, it's been difficult to get a clear picture of how the aircraft's manufacturers are responding. After investigations into the Japan and Australia crashes were released this year, neither Bell Flight nor Boeing commented, citing pending litigation.

Naval Air Systems Command, or NAVAIR, which runs the joint Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy Osprey program, is working on a variety of upgrades that should make the aircraft easier to maintain and looking at how else the program can be improved.

"This is the appropriate time to be looking at systemic improvements to the platform," former program manager Marine Corps Col. Brian Taylor said in a statement.

But it's unlikely to change any of the fundamentals of vertical engines or rotor size. Those problems are getting fixed in a new aircraft called the Valor that Bell Flight is selling to the Army.

The Valor looks a lot like the Osprey, but it's smaller. The Valor's engines stay in a horizontal position. Its smaller size means the rotor blades are more proportional with the aircraft's weight, which reduces strain on all the other components.

The Valor "captured many lessons learned from both tiltrotor and helicopter previous experience," Bell

said in a statement.

What comes next for the Osprey?

Air Force leadership is watching the Osprey closely, investing in improvements to the engine to make it easier to maintain and looking at future alternatives. The Navy has taken steps to keep more of its legacy aircraft carrier transport planes around in case it can't make the Osprey work.

The Marine Corps is committed to flying its hundreds of Ospreys through 2050. But it's also doing a study to decide whether to "significantly modernize the MV/22 and/or begin the process to move forward" to a next-generation assault aircraft, Lt. Gen. Bradford Gering, Marine deputy commandant of aviation, said in a statement.

Until it has a new option, the Air Force is looking at what can be done to ensure pilots get the time and training needed to master the Osprey, Air Force special operations commander Lt. Gen. Michael Conley said.

"What I don't want is someone in my seat 10 years from now say, 'You know back in 2010, 2012, 2024, you knew crews weren't getting enough flight hours, you knew there were maintenance challenges, and here we are having the same discussion,'" Conley said.

But it's also about realizing that aspects of how the Osprey flies won't change, said Buckley, the Cannon Osprey squadron commander.

"What you have to do is reduce your exposure," Buckley said.

For example, simulators can now model the full "Superman's cape" phenomenon, and crews can train to it. But there are still unknowns.

"I do think that we're still — and maybe even to this day — to a degree working through all the ins and outs aerodynamically what is different about this that has never been seen before with any other aircraft," Buckley said.

But that doesn't mean ground it, he said.

In Iraq, Buckley flew a mission where the Osprey was the only aircraft that could help save a service member's life after a vehicle rollover.

"There wasn't another plane flying in the sky because the weather was so bad," Buckley said. "We flew up and down the line of the haboob trying to get around it, but the lightning was too bad, so we penetrated."

"To this day, that guy is with his family," he said.

Buckley understands the risks in a different way than many of his crews. He was a high school senior when his 25-year-old brother, 1st Lt. Nathaniel D. Buckley, died in an AFSOC MC-130H cargo aircraft crash in 2002.

In his office, Buckley pointed to the American flag that the Air Force presented to his family after his brother's death.

"I think my job here is to ensure that I'm going to push it to the level that we are making sure we aren't delivering any more of these," he said.

## **G20 summit calls for more aid to Gaza and an end to the war in Ukraine**

By MAURICIO SAVARESE, ELÉONORE HUGHES and DAVID BILLER Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Leaders of the world's 20 major economies called for a global pact to combat hunger, more aid for war-torn Gaza and an end to hostilities in the Mideast and Ukraine, issuing a joint declaration Monday that was heavy on generalities but short of details on how to accomplish those goals.

The joint statement was endorsed by group members but fell short of complete unanimity. It also called for a future global tax on billionaires and for reforms allowing the eventual expansion of the United Nation Security Council beyond its five current permanent members.

At the start of the three-day meeting which formally ends Wednesday, experts doubted Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva could convince the assembled leaders to hammer out any agreement at all in a gathering rife with uncertainty over the incoming administration of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, and heightened global tensions over wars in the Mideast and Ukraine.



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Argentina challenged some of the language in initial drafts and was the one country that did not endorse the complete document.

"Although generic, it is a positive surprise for Brazil," said Thomas Traumann, an independent political consultant and former Brazilian minister. "There was a moment when there was a risk of no declaration at all. Despite the caveats, it is a good result for Lula."

Condemnation of wars, calls for peace, but without casting blame

Taking place just over a year after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel, the declaration referred to the "catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza and the escalation in Lebanon," stressing the urgent need to expand humanitarian assistance and better protect civilians.

"Affirming the Palestinian right to self-determination, we reiterate our unwavering commitment to the vision of the two-State solution where Israel and a Palestinian State live side by side in peace," it said.

It did not mention Israel's suffering or of the 100 or so hostages still held by Hamas. Israel isn't a G20 member. The war has so far killed more than 43,000 Palestinians in Gaza, according to local health officials, and more than 3,500 people in Lebanon following Israel's offensive against Hezbollah, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry.

The omitted acknowledgment of Israel's distress appeared to run contrary to U.S. President Joe Biden's consistent backing of Israel's right to defend itself. It's something Biden always notes in public, even when speaking about the deprivation of Palestinians. During a meeting with G20 leaders before the declaration was hammered home, Biden expressed his view that Hamas is solely to blame for the war and called on fellow leaders to "increase the pressure on Hamas" to accept a cease-fire deal.

Biden's decision to ease restrictions on Ukraine's use of longer-range U.S. missiles to allow that country to strike more deeply inside Russia also played into the meetings,

"The United States strongly supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Everyone around this table in my view should, as well," Biden said during the summit.

Russian President Vladimir Putin did not attend the meeting, and instead sent his foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov. Putin has avoided such summits after the International Criminal Court issued a warrant that obliges member states to arrest him.

The G20 declaration highlighted the human suffering in Ukraine while calling for peace, without naming Russia.

"The declaration avoids pointing the finger at the culprits," said Paulo Velasco, an international relations professor at the State University of Rio de Janeiro. "That is, it doesn't make any critical mention of Israel or Russia, but it highlights the dramatic humanitarian situations in both cases."

The entire declaration lacks specificity, Velasco added.

"It is very much in line with what Brazil hoped for ... but if we really analyze it carefully, it is very much a declaration of intent. It is a declaration of good will on various issues, but we have very few concrete, tangible measures."

Fraught push to tax global billionaires

The declaration did call for a possible tax on global billionaires, which Lula supports. Such a tax would affect about 3,000 people around the world, including about 100 in Latin America.

The clause was included despite opposition from Argentina. So was another promoting gender equality, said Brazilian and other officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly.

Argentina signed the G20 declaration, but also had issues with references to the U.N.'s 2030 sustainable development agenda. Its right-wing president, Javier Milei, has referred to the agenda as "a supranational program of a socialist nature." It also objected to calls for regulating hate speech on social media, which Milei says infringes on national sovereignty, and to the idea that governments should do more to fight hunger.

Milei has often adopted a Trump-like role as a spoiler in multilateral talks hosted by his outspoken critic, Lula.

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Concrete steps for fighting global hunger

Much of the declaration focuses on eradicating hunger — a priority for Lula.

Brazil's government stressed that Lula's launch of the global alliance against hunger and poverty on Monday was as important as the final G20 declaration. As of Monday, 82 nations had signed onto the plan, Brazil's government said. It is also backed by organizations including the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

A demonstration Sunday on Rio's Copacabana beach featured 733 empty plates spread across the sand to represent the 733 million people who went hungry in 2023, according to United Nations data.

Viviana Santiago, a director at the anti-poverty nonprofit Oxfam, praised Brazil for using its G20 presidency "to respond to people's demands worldwide to tackle extreme inequality, hunger and climate breakdown, and particularly for rallying action on taxing the super-rich."

"Brazil has lit a path toward a more just and resilient world, challenging others to meet them at this critical juncture," she said in a statement.

Long-awaited reform of the United Nations

Leaders pledged to work for "transformative reform" of the U.N. Security Council so that it aligns "with the realities and demands of the 21st century, makes it more representative, inclusive, efficient, effective, democratic and accountable."

Lula has been calling for reform of Security Council since his first two terms in power, from 2003 to 2010, without gaining much traction. Charged with maintaining international peace and security, its original 1945 structure has not changed. Five dominant powers at the end of World War II have veto power — the U.S., Russia, China, Britain and France — while 10 countries from different regions serve rotating two-year terms.

Virtually all countries agree that nearly eight decades after the United Nations was established, the Security Council should be expanded to reflect the 21st century world and include more voices. The central quandary and biggest disagreement remains how to do that. The G20 declaration doesn't answer that question.

"We call for an enlarged Security Council composition that improves the representation of the under-represented and unrepresented regions and groups, such as Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean," the declaration said.

The United States announced shortly before a U.N. summit in September that it supports two new permanent seats for African countries, without veto power, and a first-ever non-permanent seat for a small island developing nation. But the Group of Four — Brazil, Germany, India and Japan — support each other's bids for permanent seats. And the larger Uniting for Consensus group of a dozen countries including Pakistan, Italy, Turkey and Mexico wants additional non-permanent seats with longer terms.

## Arthur Frommer, travel guide innovator, has died at 95

By BETH HARPAZ AP Travel Editor

NEW YORK (AP) — Arthur Frommer, whose "Europe on 5 Dollars a Day" guidebooks revolutionized leisure travel by convincing average Americans to take budget vacations abroad, has died. He was 95.

Frommer died from complications of pneumonia, his daughter Pauline Frommer said Monday.

"My father opened up the world to so many people," she said. "He believed deeply that travel could be an enlightening activity and one that did not require a big budget."

Frommer began writing about travel while serving in the U.S. Army in Europe in the 1950s. When a guidebook he wrote for American soldiers overseas sold out, he launched what became one of the travel industry's best-known brands, self-publishing "Europe on 5 Dollars a Day" in 1957.

"It struck a chord and became an immediate best-seller," he recalled in an interview with The Associated Press in 2007, on the 50th anniversary of the book's debut.

The Frommer's brand, led today by his daughter Pauline, remains one of the best-known names in the travel industry, with guidebooks to destinations around the world, an influential social media presence, podcasts and a radio show.

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Frommer's philosophy — stay in inns and budget hotels instead of five-star hotels, sightsee on your own using public transportation, eat with locals in small cafes instead of fancy restaurants — changed the way Americans traveled in the mid- to late 20th century. He said budget travel was preferable to luxury travel "because it leads to a more authentic experience." That message encouraged average people, not just the wealthy, to vacation abroad.

It didn't hurt that his books hit the market as the rise of jet travel made getting to Europe easier than crossing the Atlantic by ship. The books became so popular that there was a time when you couldn't visit a place like the Eiffel Tower without spotting Frommer's guidebooks in the hands of every other American tourist.

Frommer's advice also became so standard that it's hard to remember how radical it seemed in the days before discount flights and backpacks. "It was really pioneering stuff," Tony Wheeler, founder of the Lonely Planet guidebook company, said in an interview in 2013. Before Frommer, Wheeler said, you could find guidebooks "that would tell you everything about the church or the temple ruin. But the idea that you wanted to eat somewhere and find a hotel or get from A to B -- well, I've got a huge amount of respect for Arthur."

"Arthur did for travel what Consumer Reports did for everything else," said Pat Carrier, former owner of The Globe Corner, a travel bookstore in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The final editions of Frommer's groundbreaking series were titled "Europe from \$95 a Day." The concept no longer made sense when hotels could not be had for less than \$100 a night, so the series was discontinued in 2007. But the Frommer publishing empire did not disappear, despite a series of sales that started when Frommer sold the guidebook company to Simon & Schuster. It was later acquired by Wiley Publishing, which in turn sold it to Google in 2012. Google quietly shut the guidebooks down, but Arthur Frommer — in a David vs. Goliath triumph — got his brand back from Google. In November 2013 with his daughter Pauline, he relaunched the print series with dozens of new guidebook titles.

"I never dreamed at my age I'd be working this hard," he told the AP at the time, age 84.

Frommer also remained a well-known figure in 21st century travel, opinionated to the end of his career, speaking out on his blog and radio show. He hated mega-cruise ships and railed against travel websites where consumers put up their own reviews, saying they were too easily manipulated with phony postings. And he coined the phrase "Trump Slump" in a widely quoted column that predicted a slump in tourism to the U.S. after Donald Trump was elected president.

Frommer was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, and grew up during the Great Depression in Jefferson City, Missouri, the child of a Polish father and Austrian mother. "My father had one job after another, one company after another that went bankrupt," he recalled. The family moved to New York when he was a teenager. He worked as an office boy at Newsweek, went to New York University and was drafted upon graduating from Yale Law School in 1953. Because he spoke French and Russian, he was sent to work in Army intelligence at a U.S. base in Germany, where the Cold War was heating up.

His first glimpse of Europe was from the window of a military transport plane. Whenever he had a weekend leave or a three-day pass, he'd hop a train to Paris or hitch a ride to England on an Air Force flight. Eventually he wrote "The GI's Guide to Traveling in Europe," and a few weeks before his Army stint was up, he had 5,000 copies printed by a typesetter in a German village. They were priced at 50 cents apiece, distributed by the Army newspaper, Stars & Stripes.

Shortly after he returned to New York to practice law at the firm Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, he received a cable from Europe. "The book was sold out, would I arrange a reprint?" he said.

Soon after he spent his month's vacation from the law firm doing a civilian version of the guide. "In 30 days I went to 15 different cities, getting up at 4 a.m., running up and down the streets, trying to find good cheap hotels and restaurants," he recalled.

The resulting book, the very first "Europe on 5 Dollars a Day," was much more than a list. It was written with a wide-eyed wonder that verged on poetry: "Venice is a fantastic dream," Frommer wrote. "Try to arrive at night when the wonders of the city can steal upon you piecemeal and slow. ... Out of the dark,

there appear little clusters of candy-striped mooring poles; a gondola approaches with a lighted lantern hung from its prow."

Eventually Frommer gave up law to write the guides full-time. Daughter Pauline joined him with his first wife, Hope Arthur, on their trips starting in 1965, when she was 4 months old. "They used to joke that the book should be called 'Europe on Five Diapers a Day,'" Pauline Frommer said.

In the 1960s, when inflation forced Frommer to change the title of the book to "Europe on 5 and 10 Dollars a Day," he said "it was as if someone had plunged a knife into my head."

Asked to summarize the impact of his books in a 2017 Associated Press interview, he said that in the 1950s, "most Americans had been taught that foreign travel was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, especially travel to Europe. They were taught that they were going to a war-torn country where it was risky to stay in any hotel other than a five-star hotel. It was risky to go into anything but a top-notch restaurant. ... And I knew that all these warnings were a lot of nonsense."

He added: "We were pioneers in also suggesting that a different type of American should travel, that you didn't have to be well-heeled."

To the end of his life, he said he avoided traveling first class. "I fly economy class and I try to experience the same form of travel, the same experience that the average American and the average citizen of the world encounters," he said.

As Frommer aged, his daughter Pauline gradually became the force behind the company, promoting the brand, managing the business and even writing some of the content based on her own travels. Her relationship with her father was both tender and respectful, and she summed it up this way in a 2012 email to AP: "It's wonderful to have a working partner whose mind is a steel trap, and who doesn't just have smarts, but wisdom. His opinions, whether or not you agree with them, come from his social values. He's a man who puts ethics at the center of his life, and weaves them into everything he does."

In addition to Pauline, Frommer's survivors include his second wife, Roberta Brodfeld, and four grandchildren.

## What to know about Sean Duffy, Trump's choice to become transportation secretary

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump has chosen Sean Duffy to become transportation secretary in his new administration, positioning him to oversee a complex system that includes pipelines, railroads, cars, trucks, airlines and mass transit systems, as well as funding for highways.

Here are some things to know about Duffy.

He is a former member of Congress

Duffy, 53, is an attorney who represented Wisconsin in the House for nine years after he was elected as part of the tea party wave in 2010. He served from 2011 to 2019, when he resigned, citing a need to care for his large family. In the House, Duffy was a member of the House Financial Services Committee and chairman of its subcommittee on housing and insurance.

Duffy is the second Fox-affiliated host to be tapped by Trump

Duffy joined Fox News as a contributor in 2020 and has been one of Trump's most visible defenders on cable news, a prime concern for the media-focused president-elect. He served as co-host of "The Bottom Line" on Fox Business until leaving the network Monday.

Trump announced last week Pete Hegseth, a co-host of "Fox and Friends Weekend," as his pick for defense secretary.

Like Trump, Duffy is a former reality TV star

Duffy was featured on MTV's "The Real World: Boston" in 1997. He and his wife, Rachel Campos-Duffy, met on the set of MTV's "Road Rules: All Stars" in 1998. Campos-Duffy is a co-host of "Fox & Friends Weekend."

A reality television background before politics is not unusual in Trump's world. The former and future

president starred in "The Apprentice" before he took office in 2017.

He declined to run for governor of Wisconsin

Duffy in 2022 ruled out a run for Wisconsin governor despite pleas from Trump to make a bid. Duffy said he needed to care for his nine children, including his youngest child who had a heart condition.

When he first ran for Congress, Duffy was largely considered an underdog. He attracted national attention for campaign ads in which he wore a red flannel shirt and chopped trees. He told voters he came from a "long line of lumberjacks" and would bring his axe to Washington.

Duffy is a former lumberjack athlete.

## Trump says he is naming former Wisconsin Rep. Sean Duffy to be transportation secretary

By ZEKE MILLER, MICHELLE L. PRICE and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump said Monday he is naming former Wisconsin Rep. Sean Duffy as his nominee for transportation secretary, as he continues to roll out picks for his Cabinet.

Duffy is a former reality TV star who was one of Trump's most visible defenders on cable news — a prime concern for the media-focused president-elect. Duffy served in the House for nearly nine years, was a member of the Financial Services Committee and chairman of the subcommittee on insurance and housing. He left Congress in 2019, and is co-host of "The Bottom Line" on Fox Business.

In his announcement, Trump noted that Duffy is married to a Fox News host, calling him "the husband of a wonderful woman, Rachel Campos-Duffy, a STAR on Fox News."

A spokesperson for Fox News Media wished Duffy "the best of luck in his return to Washington" and said he left the company Monday.

Duffy is so far the second Fox-affiliated television host that Trump has named to his Cabinet. Trump last week announced his choice of Fox News host Pete Hegseth to serve as his defense secretary.

Trump said Duffy would use his experience and relationships built over the years in Congress "to maintain and rebuild our Nation's Infrastructure, and fulfill our Mission of ushering in The Golden Age of Travel, focusing on Safety, Efficiency, and Innovation. Importantly, he will greatly elevate the Travel Experience for all Americans!"

Duffy in 2022 ruled out a run for Wisconsin governor despite pleas from Trump to make a bid, saying he needed to care for his nine children, including his youngest child who had a heart condition.

He is a former lumberjack athlete and frequent Fox News contributor. He was featured on MTV's "The Real World: Boston" in 1997. He met his wife on the set of MTV's "Road Rules: All Stars" in 1998.

A reality television background before politics is not unusual in Trump's world. The former president launched his political career after his hit reality show, "The Apprentice,"

Duffy, after his time on reality television, worked as a special prosecutor and Ashland County district attorney. He won election to Congress as part of a tea party wave in 2010.

When he first ran for office, Duffy was largely considered an underdog but attracted national attention for his campaign ads, in which he donned a red flannel shirt and chopped trees. He told voters he came from a "long line of lumberjacks" and would bring his axe to Washington.

He served until resigning in 2019.

The Transportation Department oversees the nation's complex transportation system, including pipelines, railroads, cars, trucks, the airlines and mass transit systems as well as federal funding for highways.

If confirmed, Duffy would take over at a time of tremendous change, especially on the nation's highways. Traffic deaths remain near record highs at a time when new technologies are being introduced that could help make the roads safer. Multiple companies are deploying autonomous robotaxis and even driverless semis with no specific federal regulations. And the nascent move from gasoline to electric vehicles presents safety problems of its own, especially with battery fires that can be difficult to extinguish.

The department includes the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which regulates automakers,

including Elon Musk's Tesla. The department sets fuel economy standards for cars and trucks and regulates the airline industry through the Federal Aviation Administration, which is grappling with a shortage of air traffic controllers to ensure the safe and orderly flow of air travel.

Nicholas Calio, president and CEO of Airlines for America, said the association was "thrilled" by the choice of Duffy.

"Congressman Duffy has a proven track record for getting things done, and we are eager to collaborate with him on key issues impacting the U.S. airline industry," Calio said.

Trump has criticized electric vehicles as expensive and unreliable and called President Joe Biden's policy to promote them "lunacy. He also has said EV manufacturing will destroy auto industry jobs and has falsely claimed that battery-powered cars don't work in cold weather and are unable to travel long distances.

Trump has softened his rhetoric about electric vehicles in recent months after Musk endorsed him and campaigned heavily for his election.

Even so, industry officials expect Trump to try to slow a shift to electric cars, and a tax credit for EV purchases is reportedly among those the Trump administration may seek to eliminate next year.

Trump, in his statement, said Duffy would "prioritize Excellence, Competence, Competitiveness and Beauty when rebuilding America's highways, tunnels, bridges and airports." Trump, as he campaigned for the White House, would sometimes complain about the state of air travel in particular, lamenting that the nation's "once-revered airports" are a "dirty, crowded mess."

Duffy, Trump said Monday, "will make our skies safe again by eliminating DEI for pilots and air traffic controllers." DEI refers to "diversity, equity and inclusion" programs.

## **Israeli airstrike hits central Beirut near key government buildings and embassies**

By SALLY ABOU ALJOUD Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — An Israeli airstrike slammed into a densely populated residential area in Lebanon's capital near key government and diplomatic buildings late Monday, killing at least five people as the U.S. pressed ahead with cease-fire efforts.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said two missiles hit the area of Zoqaq al-Blat neighborhood — where local U.N. headquarters and Lebanon's parliament and prime minister's office are located.

Since late September, Israel has dramatically escalated its bombardment of Lebanon, vowing to severely weaken the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group and end its barrages in Israel that the militants have said are in solidarity with Palestinians during the war in Gaza.

The U.S. has been working on a cease-fire proposal that would remove Israeli ground forces from Lebanon and push Hezbollah forces far from the Israeli border. Lebanon's Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally who is mediating for the militants, is expected to meet with U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein in the Lebanese capital on Tuesday. The White House has not confirmed Hochstein's visit.

Labor Minister Mostafa Bayram, who met with Berri on Monday, said Lebanon would convey its "positive position" to the latest U.S. proposal.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the strike, which also wounded 24 people, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry.

Many areas in central Beirut, including Zoqaq al-Blat, have become a refuge for many of the roughly 1 million people displaced by the ongoing conflict in southern Lebanon and the southern suburbs of Beirut. The strike also occurred near a Hussainiye, a Shia mosque.

The target of the airstrike remained unclear, and the Israeli army did not issue a prior warning. Ambulance sirens echoed through the streets as an Associated Press photographer on the scene saw significant casualties on the street.

It was the second consecutive day of Israeli strikes on central Beirut after more than a monthlong pause. On Sunday, a strike in the area of Ras el-Nabaa killed Hezbollah media spokesperson Mohammed Afif, along with six other people, including a woman. Later that day, four people were killed in a separate strike

in the commercial district of Mar Elias.

The Israeli military has not said what the target of that strike was.

Minutes after Monday's strike, Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati said in a post on X, "All countries and decision-makers are required to end the bloody and destructive Israeli aggression on Lebanon and implement international resolutions, most notably Resolution 1701."

UN Security Council Resolution 1701, adopted in 2006, ended a monthlong war between Israel and Hezbollah and was intended to create a buffer zone in southern Lebanon. However, the resolution's full implementation has faced challenges from both sides.

The resolution is again on the table as part of an American proposal for a cease-fire deal, aiming to end 13 months of exchanges of fire between Israel and Hezbollah.

Israeli ground forces, who invaded southern Lebanon on Oct. 1, would fully withdraw from Lebanon, where the Lebanese army and the U.N. peacekeeping force UNIFIL would be the exclusive armed presence south of Lebanon's Litani River. Hezbollah would withdraw from the area.

A Western diplomat familiar with the talks told The Associated Press there is a sense of "cautious optimism." The diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss behind-the-scenes negotiations, said a final deal, however, was "still in the hands" of the warring players.

Israel is said to be pushing for guarantees it can continue to act militarily against Hezbollah if needed, a demand the Lebanese are unlikely to accept. Israeli government spokesperson David Mencer said Israel would continue attacking Hezbollah infrastructure while the US and other countries led negotiations for the ceasefire. "The military campaign will continue until the immediate threat from Lebanon is removed," he said.

Also on Monday, Hezbollah launched dozens of projectiles against Israel. A rocket that hit the northern Israeli city of Shfaram killed one woman and injured 10, according to Israel's Magen David Adom rescue services.

More than 3,500 people have been killed by Israeli fire, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. In Israel, 77 people, including 31 soldiers, have been killed by Hezbollah projectiles, while over 50 soldiers have been killed in the Israeli ground offensive.

Israel has said it is targeting Hezbollah in order to ensure that thousands of Israelis can return to their homes near the border.

## **Moscow warns the US over allowing Ukraine to hit Russian soil with longer-range weapons**

By ILLIA NOVIKOV and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The Kremlin warned Monday that President Joe Biden's decision to let Ukraine strike targets inside Russia with U.S.-supplied longer-range missiles adds "fuel to the fire" of the war and would escalate international tensions even higher.

Biden's shift in policy added an uncertain, new factor to the conflict on the eve of the 1,000-day milestone since Russia began its full-scale invasion in 2022.

It also came as a Russian ballistic missile with cluster munitions struck a residential area of Sumy in northern Ukraine, killing 11 people and injuring 84 others. Another missile barrage sparked apartment fires in the southern port of Odesa, killing at least 10 people and injuring 43, Ukraine's Interior Ministry said.

Washington is easing limits on what Ukraine can strike with its American-made Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMs, U.S. officials told The Associated Press on Sunday, after months of ruling out such a move over fears of escalating the conflict and bringing about a direct confrontation between Russia and NATO.

The Kremlin was swift in its condemnation.

"It is obvious that the outgoing administration in Washington intends to take steps, and they have been talking about this, to continue adding fuel to the fire and provoking further escalation of tensions around this conflict," spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

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Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia went further at a U.N. Security Council meeting marking 1,000 days of war, saying Moscow is "astounded" that the leaders of Britain and France "are eager to play into the hands of the exiting administration and are dragging not just their countries but the entire Europe into large-scale escalation with drastic consequences."

The scope of the new firing guidelines isn't clear. But the change came after the U.S., South Korea and NATO said North Korean troops are in Russia and apparently are being deployed to help Moscow drive Ukrainian troops from Russia's Kursk border region.

Biden's decision almost entirely was triggered by North Korea's entry into the fight, according to a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, and was made just before he left for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Peru.

Russia also is slowly pushing Ukraine's outnumbered army backward in the eastern Donetsk region. It has also conducted a devastating aerial campaign against civilian areas in Ukraine.

Peskov referred journalists to a statement from President Vladimir Putin in September in which he said allowing Ukraine to target Russia would significantly raise the stakes.

It would change "the very nature of the conflict dramatically," Putin said at the time. "This will mean that NATO countries — the United States and European countries — are at war with Russia."

Peskov claimed that Western countries supplying longer-range weapons also provide targeting services to Kyiv. "This fundamentally changes the modality of their involvement in the conflict," he said.

Putin warned in June that Moscow could provide longer-range weapons to others to strike Western targets if NATO allowed Ukraine to use its allies' arms to attack Russian territory. After signing a treaty with North Korea, Putin issued an explicit threat to provide weapons to Pyongyang, noting Moscow could mirror Western arguments that it's up to Ukraine to decide how to use them.

"The Westerners supply weapons to Ukraine and say: 'We do not control anything here anymore and it does not matter how they are used,'" Putin has said. "Well, we can also say: 'We supplied something to someone — and then we do not control anything.' And let them think about it."

Putin has also reaffirmed Moscow's readiness to use nuclear weapons if it sees a threat to its sovereignty.

Biden's move will "mean the direct involvement of the United States and its satellites in military action against Russia, as well as a radical change in the essence and nature of the conflict," Russia's Foreign Ministry said.

President-elect Donald Trump, who takes office Jan. 20, has raised uncertainty about whether his administration would continue military support to Ukraine. He has also vowed to end the war quickly.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy gave a muted response Sunday to the approval that he and his government have requested for over a year, adding: "The missiles will speak for themselves."

"The longer Ukraine can strike, the shorter the war will be," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said Monday before the U.N. Security Council meeting marking the 1,000th-day milestone.

Asked whether the United Kingdom would follow the United States in authorizing use of its longer-range missiles, U.K. Foreign Secretary David Lammy, who chaired the meeting, declined to comment. He said doing so would risk "operational security and can only play into the hands of Putin."

France's U.N. Ambassador Nicolas De Riviere, whose country has also given Ukraine longer-range missiles, told the Security Council without directly saying what his country will do that "The right of Ukraine to its legitimate defense includes the possibility of striking military targets involved in operations aimed at the territory."

Ukraine's Sybiha said a green light from the U.S. to use longer-range missiles against Russia "could be a game changer," but others are less certain.

ATACMS, which have a range of about 300 kilometers (190 miles), can reach far behind the about 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line in Ukraine, but they have relatively short range compared with other types of ballistic and cruise missiles.

The policy change came "too late to have a major strategic effect," said Patrick Bury, a senior associate professor in security at the University of Bath in the United Kingdom.



"The ultimate kind of impact it will have is to probably slow down the tempo of the Russian offensives which are now happening," he said, adding that Ukraine could strike targets in Kursk or logistics hubs or command headquarters.

Jennifer Kavanagh, director of military analysis at Defense Priorities, agreed the U.S. move would not alter the war's course, noting Ukraine "would need large stockpiles of ATACMS, which it doesn't have and won't receive because the United States' own supplies are limited."

On a political level, the move "is a boost to the Ukrainians and it gives them a window of opportunity to try and show that they are still viable and worth supporting" as Trump prepares to take office, said Matthew Savill, director of Military Sciences at the Royal United Services Institute in London.

The cue for the policy change was the arrival in Russia of North Korean troops, according to Glib Voloskyi, an analyst at the CBA Initiatives Center, a Kyiv-based think tank.

"This is a signal the Biden administration is sending to North Korea and Russia, indicating that the decision to involve North Korean units has crossed a red line," he said.

Russian lawmakers and state media bashed the West for what they called an escalatory step, threatening a harsh response.

"Biden, apparently, decided to end his presidential term and go down in history as 'Bloody Joe,'" lawmaker Leonid Slutsky told Russian news agency RIA Novosti.

Vladimir Dzhubarov, deputy head of the foreign affairs committee in the upper house of parliament, called it "a very big step toward the start of World War III" and an attempt to "reduce the degree of freedom for Trump."

Russian newspapers offered similar predictions of doom. "The madmen who are drawing NATO into a direct conflict with our country may soon be in great pain," Rossiyskaya Gazeta said.

Some NATO allies welcomed the move.

President Andrzej Duda of Poland, which borders Ukraine, praised the decision as a "very important, maybe even a breakthrough moment" in the war.

"In the recent days, we have seen the decisive intensification of Russian attacks on Ukraine, above all, those missile attacks where civilian objects are attacked, where people are killed, ordinary Ukrainians," Duda said.

Easing restrictions on Ukraine was "a good thing," said Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna of Russian neighbor Estonia.

"We have been saying that from the beginning — that no restrictions must be put on the military support," he told senior European Union diplomats in Brussels. "And we need to understand that situation is more serious (than) it was even maybe like a couple of months ago."

But Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico, known for his pro-Russian views, described Biden's decision as "an unprecedented escalation" that would prolong the war.

## **3 people are killed in random stabbings in New York City. A suspect is in custody**

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A man fatally stabbed three people across a swath of Manhattan on Monday morning, carrying out a series of random attacks without uttering a word to his victims, officials said.

The 51-year-old suspect was in police custody after being found with blood on his clothes and the two kitchen knives he was carrying, authorities said. The suspect's and victims' names weren't immediately released.

"Three New Yorkers. Unprovoked attacks that left us searching for answers on how something like this could happen," Mayor Eric Adams said at a news conference.

Investigators were working to understand what propelled the rampage, which happened within 2 1/2 hours.

"No words exchanged. No property taken. Just attacked, viciously," said Joseph Kenny, the New York Police

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Department's chief of detectives. "He just walked up to them and began to attack them with the knives."

The first stabbing, on West 19th Street, killed a 36-year-old construction worker who was standing by his work site near the Hudson River a little before 8:30 a.m. About two hours later and across the island of Manhattan, a 68-year-old man was attacked while fishing in the East River near East 30th Street.

Both men died shortly after the stabbings, Kenny said.

The suspect then apparently traveled north near the riverfront. Around 10:55 a.m., a 36-year-old woman was stabbed multiple times near the United Nations headquarters on East 42nd Street, Kenny said. She died later Monday at a hospital, police said.

A passing cabdriver saw the third attack and alerted police on nearby First Avenue and East 46th Street, officials said. An officer soon apprehended the suspect.

The bloodshed happened in a major city where, like in others, crime has taken a prominent place in political discourse and everyday concerns in the years since pandemic lockdowns emptied streets and spurred disorder. Killings in New York City so far in 2024 have declined 14% in two years, but serious assaults are up about 12%, according to police statistics.

Some recent stabbings in public places have drawn attention, including a fatal attack at the Coney Island subway station just weeks ago.

Adams, a Democrat, called Monday's violence "a clear, clear example" of failures in the criminal justice system and elsewhere.

The suspect in Monday's rampage, who apparently is homeless, had been sentenced in a criminal case a few months ago and was arrested in a grand larceny case last month, officials said.

The rampage came three years after a string of stabbings at various points along a subway line killed two people and wounded two others within a few hours.

In 2019, four people who were sleeping in doorways and sidewalks in Chinatown were beaten to death, and a fifth was seriously injured, early one Saturday morning.

## Brazil's G20 summit produces a broad declaration that's short on specifics

By ELÉONORE HUGHES, MAURICIO SAVARESE and DAVID BILLER Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — The summit of the Group of 20 leading economies in Rio de Janeiro produced a joint declaration Monday that, while not totally endorsed by one of the group's members, succeeded in addressing most topics host Brazil had prioritized addressing: both ongoing major wars, a global pact to fight hunger, taxation of the world's wealthiest people and changes to global governance.

Experts had doubted Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva could convince assembled leaders to hammer out agreement given uncertainty about the incoming administration of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump and heightened global tensions amid the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. Further dimming prospects of consensus, Argentina's negotiators challenged some of the draft language — and ultimately refrained from endorsing the complete document.

"Although generic, it is a positive surprise for Brazil," said Thomas Traumann, an independent political consultant and former Brazilian minister. "There was a moment when there was risk of no declaration at all. Despite the caveats, it is a good result for Lula."

Condemnation of wars, calls for peace, but without casting blame

Militant group Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel occurred one month after last year's G20 summit. It was thus unclear how this year's statement might address Israel's campaign of retaliation, which has killed more than 43,000 Palestinians in Gaza, according to local health officials, and more than 3,500 people in Lebanon in Israel's offensive against Hezbollah, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry.

The G20 declaration referred to the "catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza and the escalation in Lebanon," and stressed the urgent need to expand humanitarian assistance and reinforce protection of civilians.

"Affirming the Palestinian right to self-determination, we reiterate our unwavering commitment to the

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vision of the two-State solution where Israel and a Palestinian State live side by side in peace," it said.

But it made no mention of Israel's suffering or some 100 hostages that remain in Hamas captivity. Israel isn't a G20 member.

That lack of acknowledgment appeared to run contrary to U.S. President Joe Biden's consistent backing of Israel's right to defend itself. It's something Biden dutifully notes in public, even when speaking about the deprivation of Palestinians caused by the grinding war. During a meeting with G20 leaders before the declaration was hammered home, Biden expressed his view that Hamas is solely to blame for the war and called on fellow leaders to "increase the pressure on Hamas" to accept a cease-fire deal.

Looming large on Monday was news of Biden's decision to ease restrictions on Ukraine's use of longer-range U.S. missiles to allow that country to strike more deeply inside Russia.

"The United States strongly supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Everyone around this table in my view should, as well," Biden said during the summit.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is the summit's most notable absentee. The International Criminal Court has issued a warrant that obliges member states to arrest him, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov attended instead.

The G20 declaration highlighted the human suffering in Ukraine while calling for peace, but without naming Russia.

"The declaration avoids pointing the finger at the culprits," said Paulo Velasco, an international relations professor at the State University of Rio de Janeiro. "That is, it doesn't make any critical mention of Israel or Russia, but it highlights the dramatic humanitarian situations in both cases."

Such lack of specificity is true of the entire declaration, Velasco added. "It is very much in line with what Brazil hoped for ... but if we really analyze it carefully, it is very much a declaration of intent. It is a declaration of good will on various issues, but we have very few concrete, tangible measures."

Fraught push to demand taxation of global billionaires

In working group meetings in the run-up to the G20, ministers and negotiators discussed Brazil's proposal to tax billionaires' incomes by 2%. According to French economist Gabriel Zucman, who worked as a consultant for Lula's administration on the topic, such a measure would affect some 3,000 people around the world, of whom 100 are in Latin America.

At the start of the leaders' afternoon session, Lula reiterated his call for the tax.

That made it into the final declaration, but there had been considerable doubt it would. One official from Brazil and one from another G20 nation say Argentine negotiators most vehemently opposed the clause — which they had previously accepted, in July — and another promoting gender equality. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly.

In the end, Argentina signed the G20 declaration while partially dissenting from certain aspects, it said in a statement on X. That included content related to the U.N.'s previous 2030 sustainable development agenda that right-wing President Javier Milei has referred to as "a supranational program of a socialist nature." It also objected to the regulation of hate speech on social media, action by global institutions like the U.N. that the libertarian president has criticized as infringement on national sovereignty, and the idea that increased state intervention is the way to fight hunger.

Argentina's presidency didn't respond to requests for comment clarifying specifically which clauses it opposed. The official from the G20 nation with knowledge of the negotiations said Argentina adopted the statement under intense pressure from world powers. The X statement, the official said, was aimed at a domestic audience that appeared to relish Milei's Trump-like role as spoiler in the multilateral talks hosted by his outspoken critic, Lula.

Concrete step for fighting global hunger

Much of the declaration focuses on the eradication of hunger — a priority for Lula.

Brazil's government previously stressed that Lula's launch of the global alliance against hunger and poverty on Monday was as important as the final declaration. As of Monday, 82 nations had signed onto the plan, Brazil's government said. It is also backed by organizations including the Rockefeller Foundation and

the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

A demonstration Sunday on Rio's Copacabana beach featured 733 empty plates spread across the sand to represent the 733 million people who went hungry in 2023, according to United Nations data, and called on leaders to take action.

Viviana Santiago, a director at Oxfam, an anti-poverty nonprofit, praised Brazil for using its G20 presidency "to respond to people's demands worldwide to tackle extreme inequality, hunger and climate breakdown, and particularly for rallying action on taxing the super-rich."

"Brazil has lit a path toward a more just and resilient world, challenging others to meet them at this critical juncture," she said in a statement.

Long-awaited reform of United Nations

Leaders pledged to work for "transformative reform" of the U.N. Security Council so that it aligns "with the realities and demands of the 21st century, makes it more representative, inclusive, efficient, effective, democratic and accountable."

Lula has been calling for reform of the powerful Security Council since his first two terms in power, from 2003-2010, but had gained little traction. Charged with maintaining international peace and security, it has not changed from its original 1945 configuration. Five countries that were dominant powers at the end of World War II have veto power — the U.S., Russia, China, Britain and France — while 10 countries from different regions serve two-year terms.

Virtually all countries agree that nearly eight decades after the United Nations was established, the Security Council should be expanded to reflect the world in the 21st century and include more voices. But the central quandary — and the biggest disagreement — remains how to do it. The G20 declaration doesn't answer that question.

"We call for an enlarged Security Council composition that improves the representation of the under-represented and unrepresented regions and groups, such as Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean," the declaration said.

The United States announced shortly before a U.N. summit in September that it supports two new permanent seats for African countries without veto power, and a first-ever non-permanent seat for a small island developing nation. But as examples, the Group of Four — Brazil, Germany, India and Japan — support each other's bid for permanent seats. And the larger Uniting for Consensus group of a dozen countries including Pakistan, Italy, Turkey and Mexico wants additional non-permanent seats with longer terms.

## **Prosecutors say 2 men prioritized money over human life leading to deaths of Indian family**

By MICHAEL GOLDBERG Associated Press

FERGUS FALLS, Minn. (AP) — Two men put financial profit over human life when they attempted to smuggle a couple from India and their two young children across the U.S.-Canada border in heavy snow and bone-chilling winds, leading to the family freezing to death, prosecutors said Monday.

Prosecutors allege Indian national Harshkumar Ramanlal Patel, 29, ran part of a sprawling human smuggling scheme and recruited Steve Shand, 50, to shuttle migrants across the border. Both men have pleaded not guilty to four federal counts related to human smuggling. Their trial in Minnesota is expected to last about five days.

Prosecutors say the family of four — 39-year-old Jagdish Patel; his wife, Vaishaliben, who was in her mid-30s; their 11-year-old daughter, Vihangi; and 3-year-old son, Dharmik — died on Jan. 19, 2022, after spending hours wandering in blizzard conditions. Shand had been waiting in a truck for 11 migrants, including the family from Gujarat state, as the wind chill reached minus 36 degrees (minus 38 Celsius).

Shand and Patel knew the winter weather conditions were extreme, but chose to go forward with a plan to smuggle migrants across the border on foot anyway, prosecutor Ryan Lipes said in his opening statement.

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"The migrants were dropped at a dark isolated part of the Canadian border nowhere near a legal port of entry," Lipes said.

When Jagdish Patel's body was found, he was holding Dharmik, who was wrapped in a blanket, prosecutors added.

"This case is about these two men putting profit over people's lives, profit they earned by smuggling migrants from India across the Canadian border into the U.S.," Lipes told the jury.

Attorney Thomas Leinenweber said his client, Harshkumar Patel, should never have been charged. Leinenweber said in his opening statement that no one would testify that Patel ever talked about a smuggling conspiracy or provide visual evidence of his involvement.

"There are certain universal feelings that we all have," Leinenweber said. "One of the worst feeling universally that anyone could feel is when you are wrongfully accused."

Leinenweber also told The Associated Press that his client came to America to escape poverty and build a better life for himself before being unjustly accused of crimes he didn't commit.

Shand's attorney, Lisa Lopez, asked the jury to differentiate between the two defendants. She said Shand was an unwitting participant in the smuggling ring.

"Mr. Shand was used by Mr. Patel. And being used does not equate under the law to being guilty of conspiracy," Lopez said.

Lopez said Shand and the migrants were duped by Patel and the smuggling network.

A jury of eight men and six women, including two alternates, was seated Monday afternoon. Before jury selection began in the morning, defense attorneys objected to prosecutors' plan to show seven photos of the frozen bodies of Jagdish Patel and his family, including close-up images of the children.

Another attorney for Shand, Aaron Morrison, said the heart-wrenching images could cause "extreme prejudice to the jury" and asked for them to be removed as evidence. Prosecutors argued the photos were necessary to show Shand and Harshkumar Patel did not prepare the family for the frigid conditions.

U.S. District Judge John Tunheim allowed the images to remain as evidence.

Patel is a common Indian surname and the victims were not related to Harshkumar Patel. Federal prosecutors say Harshkumar Patel and Shand were part of an international criminal network that scouted for clients in India, got them Canadian student visas, arranged transportation and smuggled them into the U.S., mostly through Washington state or Minnesota.

The U.S. Border Patrol arrested more than 14,000 Indians on the Canadian border in the year ending this Sept. 30. By 2022, the Pew Research Center estimates more than 725,000 Indians were living illegally in the U.S., behind only Mexicans and El Salvadorans.

Prosecutors filed court documents showing Patel was in the U.S. illegally after being refused a visa at least five times, and that he recruited Shand at a casino near their homes in Deltona, Florida, just north of Orlando.

Over five weeks, court documents show, Patel and Shand often communicated about the bitter cold as they smuggled five groups of Indians over a quiet stretch of the border. One night in December 2021, Shand messaged Patel that it was "cold as hell" while waiting to pick up one group, the documents say.

"They going to be alive when they get here?" he allegedly wrote.

During the last trip in January, Shand had messaged Patel, saying: "Make sure everyone is dressed for the blizzard conditions, please," according to prosecutors.

Prosecutors say Shand told investigators that Patel paid him about \$25,000 for the five trips.

Jagdish Patel grew up in Dingucha. He and his family lived with his parents, who were schoolteachers, according to local news reports.

## Speaker Johnson's 'epic' weekend with Trump shows strengths and limits of his power

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — There was House Speaker Mike Johnson walking behind President-elect Donald Trump's entourage into Saturday night's UFC fight at Madison Square Garden, his stature overcome by the enormity of the scene around him.

And Johnson mugging with musicians Kid Rock and Jelly Roll.

And there was Johnson on Trump's airplane, peering over the seat in front of him, a four-top table loaded with McDonald's meals for the president-elect, his son Donald Trump, Jr., Elon Musk and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. — the speaker grinning over the seatback.

"Epic," Johnson said about it all as he arrived back at the U.S. Capitol.

The images from Johnson's wild weekend with Trump provide a snapshot of his proximity to power, the former religious rights attorney just a year on the job as House speaker, now dining at Mar-a-Lago, flying on Trump Force One, appearing near-ringside in Manhattan — and riding shotgun to Trump's second term in the White House.

Taken together the photographs, which boomeranged around social media with stunning disbelief and mocking commentaries, put on vivid display Trump's command of the Republican Party. It spotlighted not only a political force that has swept control of the government in Washington but a cultural moment for the hypermasculine, partygoing, men, and some women, propelling the movement.

And for the office of House speaker, among the highest ranking in the U.S. government, second in the line of succession to the president, it was like nothing seen in modern times.

"It is indicative of how precarious Johnson's position is," said Jeffery A. Jenkins, the provost professor of Public Policy, Political Science, and Law at the University of Southern California, who has written extensively about Congress and its leadership.

Jenkins said it shows that Johnson, with his tenuous hold on power in the House, "is beholden to the president-elect in ways that prior speakers have not been."

House speakers tend to keep a level of independence, if not measurable distance, from the White House, even when the president is a member of their own party. It's a way to exert the authority of the Congress as a co-equal branch of government.

There have been exceptions to be sure. Johnson's predecessor, former Speaker Kevin McCarthy, was an early confidant of the former president and someone Trump referred to as, "My Kevin."

But in the modern era speakers have tended to show the power of the gavel as they held their ground vis-a-vis the president.

Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi led the House to impeach Trump, twice, and famously stood up to him during a meeting at the White House — finger pointed — warning him of the power she carried into the room.

That photo, too, became an enduring image, the first woman to become House speaker standing up, literally, to the president, as did one of her exiting the White House — slipping on her dark sunglasses, her rust overcoat swinging out the door.

Former Republican Speaker John Boehner flexed his power more silently: Boehner simply left then-President Barack Obama waiting by the phone for a call that never came to secure a hard-fought budget deal. The deal had collapsed.

For Johnson, who has worked this past year to mend his past criticisms of Trump and draw closer to the former president as they both sought to rise to power in the November election, the weekend was viewed as time well spent to secure those bonds and craft the agenda ahead.

During a day of meetings and two nights of gala dinners at Trump's private Mar-a-Lago club and residence, Johnson emerged as a person in the president-elect's orbit, and presumably aligned with his power.

"It was just a great celebration of America," Johnson said about the weekend's events, particularly the UFC fight.

"What happened at Madison Square Garden Saturday night was a kind of microcosm of what we are

experiencing all around the country," he said.

"I kept telling everybody there's an energy out there .... it's an almost euphoric felling that people have, that America is back," he said. "And it was fun to be a part of that."

Newt Gingrich, himself a former House speaker, said Johnson understands he's on one of "the wildest" rides of his career, alongside Trump heading back to the White House.

"If you ever needed an image of the new Republican Party — try to imagine Boehner or Ryan in that setting," he said, referring to other recent Republican speakers, including Paul Ryan,

Gingrich said he and his wife, Calista, joined one of the Mar-a-Lago events with the speaker and marveled at the scene: actor Sylvester Stallone at one minute. Kennedy the next. And he penned an essay about how many millions of Americans Trump was reaching with the images at the UFC fight.

"Trump basically runs a three-ring circus, along with a vaudeville act," Gingrich said, all while preparing to run the government and engage on the global stage.

"It's just fun," Gingrich said.

As for Johnson's religious background, Gingrich said, the speaker is "somebody who understands you're true to your own faith, but you walk through the world the way the world is."

He said he texted with Johnson in the morning.

"I think Mike's having the time of his life," he said. \_\_\_

Associated Press writers Michelle Price and Farnoush Amiri and Will Weissert in West Palm Beach, Florida, contributed to this story.

## Georgia appeals court cancels hearing in election interference case against Trump

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATHENS, Ga. (AP) — A Georgia appeals court on Monday canceled oral arguments that were scheduled for next month on the appeal of a lower court ruling allowing Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis to continue to prosecute the election interference case she brought against President-elect Donald Trump.

Trump and other defendants had asked the Georgia Court of Appeals to hold oral arguments in the case, and the court had set those arguments for Dec. 5. But in a one-line order with no further explanation, the appeals court said that hearing "is hereby canceled until further order of this Court."

A Fulton County grand jury in August 2023 indicted Trump and 18 others, accusing them of participating in a sprawling scheme to illegally try to overturn the 2020 presidential election in Georgia. Four defendants have pleaded guilty after reaching deals with prosecutors, but Trump and the others have pleaded not guilty.

But with Trump set to return to the White House in January, the future of the case against the once and future president was already in question even if the Court of Appeals ultimately says Willis shouldn't be disqualified.

Trump and other defendants filed the appeal seeking to get Willis and her office removed from the case and to have the case dismissed. They argue that a romantic relationship Willis had with special prosecutor Nathan Wade created a conflict of interest. Superior Court Judge Scott McAfee in March found that no conflict of interest existed that should force Willis off the case, but he granted a request from Trump and the other defendants to seek an appeal of his ruling from the Court of Appeals.

McAfee wrote that "reasonable questions" over whether Willis and Wade had testified truthfully about the timing of their relationship "further underpin the finding of an appearance of impropriety and the need to make proportional efforts to cure it." He allowed Willis to remain on the case only if Wade left, and the special prosecutor submitted his resignation hours later.

The allegations that Willis had improperly benefited from her romance with Wade resulted in a tumultuous couple of months in the case as intimate details of Willis and Wade's personal lives were aired in court in mid-February.

## What does Biden's decision to allow Ukraine to use longer-range US weapons mean?

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The U.S. will allow Ukraine to use American-supplied longer-range weapons to conduct strikes deeper inside Russian territory, a long-sought request by Kyiv.

It isn't yet clear if there are limits on Ukraine's use of the Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMS, as there have been on other U.S. missile systems. Their deployment could — at least initially — be limited to Russia's Kursk region, where Ukrainian troops seized territory earlier this year.

Since the first year of the war, Ukrainian leaders have lobbied Western allies to allow them to use advanced weapons to strike key targets inside Russia — which they hope would erode Moscow's capabilities before its troops reach the front line and could make it more difficult for the Russian forces to strike Ukrainian territory. It could also serve as a deterrent force in the event of future cease-fire negotiations.

The U.S. has long opposed the move, with President Joe Biden determined to avoid any escalation that he felt could draw the U.S. and other NATO members into direct conflict with nuclear-armed Russia. The Kremlin warned on Monday that the decision adds "fuel to the fire."

The decision comes in the waning days of Biden's presidency, before President-elect Donald Trump assumes office. Trump has said he would bring about a swift end to the war, which many fear could force unpalatable concessions from Kyiv.

What are ATACMS?

The ballistic missiles, developed by U.S. aerospace and defense company Lockheed Martin, have nearly double the striking distance — up to 300 kilometers (190 miles) — of most of the weapons in Ukraine's possession. They carry a larger payload and have more precise targeting for pinpoint attacks on air fields, ammunition stores and strategic infrastructure.

The United States has supplied Ukraine with dozens of ATACMS (pronounced attack-ems) and they have been used to destroy military targets in Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine such as Crimea — but not on Russian soil.

What is Biden allowing Ukraine to do?

Biden authorized Ukraine to use the ATACMS to strike deeper inside Russia, according to a U.S. official and three other people familiar with the matter.

The longer-range missiles are likely to be used in response to North Korea's decision to send troops to support Kremlin forces, according to one of the people familiar with the development. Pyongyang's troops are apparently being deployed to help the Russian army drive Ukrainian forces out of Russia's Kursk border region, where they launched an incursion in August.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the U.S. decision publicly.

It was the second time that Washington has expanded Ukraine's authority to use its U.S.-provided weapons systems inside Russian territory.

In May, after Russia's offensive into the Kharkiv region threatened to stretch Ukrainian forces thin, Biden permitted the use of HIMARS systems — with a range of 80 kilometers (50 miles) — to quell that advance. That decision helped Ukrainian soldiers stabilize the fight for a time by forcing Russian forces to pull back military assets.

Why does Ukraine need longer-range weapons?

Ukraine has been asking its Western allies for longer-range weapons in order to alter the balance of power in a war where Russia is better resourced, and strike with precision air bases, supply depots and communication centers hundreds of kilometers (miles) over the border.

It hopes the weapons would help blunt Russia's air power and weaken the supply lines it needs to launch daily strikes against Ukraine and to sustain its military ground offensive into Ukraine.

If used in Kursk, the weapons would likely require Russian forces preparing for counterattacks to push back valuable equipment and manpower and complicate battle plans.



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In lieu of Western weapons, Ukraine has been regularly striking Russia with domestically produced weapons, with some capable of traveling up to 1,000 kilometers (620 miles), but still lacks sufficient quantities to do serious long-term harm.

Will the decision change the course of the war?

Ukrainian leaders are being cautious about the announcement — and senior U.S. defense and military leaders have persistently argued that it won't be a gamechanger. They also have noted that Russia has moved many key assets out of range.

"I don't believe one capability is going to be decisive and I stand by that comment," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has said, noting that the Ukrainians have other means to strike long-range targets.

Analysts have also suggested the effect could be limited.

"Today, many in the media are talking about the fact that we have received permission to take appropriate actions. But blows are not inflicted with words. Such things are not announced. The rockets will speak for themselves," said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of the announcement.

The effect of the decision depends on the rules set for the weapons' use.

If strikes are allowed across all of Russia, they could significantly complicate Moscow's ability to respond to battlefield demands.

If strikes are limited to the Kursk region, Russia could relocate its command centers and air units to nearby regions, blunting the effect of those logistical challenges. That would also mean many of the valuable targets Ukrainian officials have expressed desire to hit may still be beyond reach.

Either way, Pentagon spokesman Lt. Col. Charlie Dietz has noted the ATACMS wouldn't be the answer to the main threat Ukraine faces from Russian-fired glide bombs, which are being fired from more than 300 kilometers (180 miles) away, beyond the ATACMS' reach.

In addition, the overall supply of ATACMS is limited, so U.S. officials in the past have questioned whether they could give Ukraine enough to make a difference — though some proponents say that even a few strikes deeper inside Russia would force its military to change deployments and expend more of its resources.

Jennifer Kavanagh, director of military analysis at Defense Priorities, said the U.S. decision would not alter the course of the war.

"To really impose costs on Russia, Ukraine would need large stockpiles of ATACMS, which it doesn't have and won't receive because the United States' own supplies are limited," she said. "Moreover, the biggest obstacle Ukraine faces is a lack of trained and ready personnel, a challenge that neither the United States nor its European allies can solve and that all the weapons in the world won't overcome."

What are the key remaining questions?

In addition to it being unclear what, if any, restrictions the U.S. will impose on the weapons' use, it's also not known how many the U.S. will give to Ukraine.

While the U.S. has provided ATACMS to Ukraine in various military aid packages, the Defense Department will not disclose how many have been sent or exactly how many of those missiles the Pentagon has. Estimates suggest the U.S. has a number that is in the low thousands.

The recent American election raises questions over how long this policy will be in place. Trump has repeatedly criticized the Biden administration's spending to support Ukraine — and could reverse moves like this one.

On the other hand, it's also not clear whether other allies might step up: The decision may encourage Britain and France to allow Ukraine to use Storm Shadow missiles, also known as SCALP missiles, with a range of 250 kilometers (155 miles).

## 'Interior Chinatown': Its cast has faced Hollywood struggles uncannily like its characters

By TERRY TANG AP National Race Writer

Jimmy O. Yang once played "Chinese Teenager #1." He's now No. 1 on the call sheet in "Interior Chinatown" — despite playing downtrodden background actor Willis Wu in the new Hulu series.

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There's no escaping the layers of meta around "Interior Chinatown," an adaptation of Charles Yu's award-winning satirical novel that jabs at how Asian American men have been treated by Hollywood — and in life — one trope at a time.

"I feel like I have gone through every single number on the call sheet now," Yang told The Associated Press. "And I've learned from a lot of other great No. 1s, you know? To carry yourself a certain way. It's not just about showing up when you work, but it's also about leading by example."

The dramedy, premiering Tuesday, is told from the view of Willis, a Chinatown restaurant server stuck in a police procedural show whose perspective starts to shift as he looks into the yearslong disappearance of his older brother. The 10-episode season has a mostly Asian cast including Ronny Chieng, Chloe Bennet, Archie Kao and Tzi Ma. There is also plenty of Asian talent behind the scenes, led by Yu, who serves as creator and executive producer.

The episodes are full of nods to cop dramas such as "Law & Order." They also evoke scenes from '80s and '90s U.S. action-comedies structured around one of the co-leads being Asian and knowing martial arts — think "Rush Hour" and "Martial Law." But it wasn't a youth spent watching these movies and shows that inspired Yu's book, which is structured like a screenplay.

"More what informed the book was the experiences of my parents, who are immigrants, and of their community and seeing how they and their friends had built lives here, were trying to be Americans, were succeeding at it in a lot of ways, but still were feeling like outsiders — and wanting to just tell their story," Yu said.

Taika Waititi, the director of "Jojo Rabbit" and two "Thor" movies and the first person of Māori descent to win an Academy Award, also produces. He's no stranger to promoting underrepresented voices on television, co-creating the Emmy-nominated "Reservation Dogs," the first series where every role on and off-screen was held by someone Indigenous. Growing up in New Zealand, he saw similarities in "Interior Chinatown" with how Indigenous Māori like him were treated even in daily interactions.

"I remember working in a convenience store and I was always out the back of the convenience store. There were people who got to come in — and I'd been working there for six months — and they went straight to work on the till," Waititi told The Associated Press. "One of the big draws to me was to be able to be involved in something that highlights those issues."

The series' episode titles reference different archetypes that have shadowed Asian American actors for decades. These include "delivery guy," "tech guy," "kung fu guy" and "Chinatown expert." There has been a reclaiming in recent years of "kung fu guy," particularly. Marvel's "Shang-Chi," the CW's "Kung Fu," and "Warrior" on Max all have protagonists with martial arts prowess who also deal with personal baggage. All three stories happen to take place in San Francisco's Chinatown.

The show's commentary on stereotyping seems more relevant in a post-coronavirus pandemic era, Ma said.

"In every major city, you know, the Chinatowns are going through hard times particularly after the pandemic," Ma said. "I hope that people who come to Chinatown realize that Chinatown isn't just a place for you to eat food. It's a community."

Chieng, who plays curmudgeonly restaurant server Fatty Choi, memorably stuck up for Chinatowns everywhere in 2016 when he used his "Daily Show" gig to put Fox News' Jesse Watters on blast for a racist segment about Manhattan's Chinatown. (The Malaysian-born comedian says that takedown helped get him his part in "Crazy Rich Asians," alongside Yang. Unlike the characters in "Interior Chinatown," he says, he has since been very fortunate. In fact, he didn't even have to read for Yu and other producers.)

A third of "Interior Chinatown's" main cast has been in projects set in a Chinatown, which Yu says affirms the story's examination of how Hollywood limits the range of roles available to Asian Americans.

"You don't have to look too far down the IMDb listings of some of our cast who are really successful actors, but a few years ago could have easily been — you know, Jimmy likes to still tell the story of how he was 'Chinese Teenager (#1)' on Chloe's show, 'Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.,' which is 10 years ago," Yu said.

Bennet, who is half Chinese and half white, has spoken out before about struggling to be considered for roles when she used her actual surname, Wang. For so long, Bennet felt like her whiteness was what

people saw at work and her "Asian-ness" was always reserved for home," the former "Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D." star told the AP. So, just walking onto the "Interior Chinatown" set was emotional.

"I'm viewed as white and so I've never really been a part of something where being Asian was so much at the forefront on and off-screen," Bennet said. "And so being surrounded by our incredible crew, who was also very diverse, was something I didn't realize I'd seen and that it was the immediate power of representation. I felt so much more comfortable."

Yang, though, was too embarrassed to tell his frequent scene partner about his nameless part on her show.

"The journey that Willis was going through was the journey that I went through. I just have to zoom back 10 years," said Yang, who also has his own production company. "I had a phase where I was fighting for the same kind of roles. ... Even I had to fight to get Chinese Teenager #1."

## Today he is a high school football player. Soon he'll be a Buddhist lama in the Himalayas

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

ISANTI, Minn. (AP) — The young Buddhist lama sat on a throne near an altar decorated with flowers, fruits and golden statues of the Buddha, watching the celebrations of his 18th birthday in silence, with a faint smile.

Jalue Dorje knew it would be the last big party before he joins a monastery in the Himalayan foothills -- thousands of miles from his home in a Minneapolis suburb, where he grew up like a typical American teen playing football and listening to rap music.

But this was not an ordinary coming-of-age celebration. It was an enthronement ceremony for an aspiring spiritual leader who from an early age was recognized by the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan Buddhist leaders as a reincarnated lama.

From the stage, he saw it all: The young women in white long bearded masks who danced, jumping acrobatically and twirling colorful sticks to wish him luck in a tradition reserved for dignitaries. The banging of drums. The procession of hundreds -- from children to elderly -- who lined up to bow to him and present him with a "khata" -- the white Tibetan ceremonial scarves that symbolize auspiciousness.

From a throne reserved for lamas, he smelled the aroma of Tibetan dishes prepared by his mother over sleepless nights. He heard the monks with shaved heads, in maroon and gold robes like his own, chant sacred mantras. Behind them, his shaggy-haired high school football teammates sang "Happy Birthday" before he cut the first slice of cake.

One of his buddies gave him shaker bottles for hydrating during training at the gym; another, a gift card to eat at Chipotle Mexican Grill.

"I was in awe!" Dorje recalled later. "Usually, I'd be at the monk section looking up to whomever was celebrating. But that night it was for me."

Watching Monday Night Football and memorizing ancient Buddhist prayers

Since the Dalai Lama's recognition, Dorje has spent much of his life training to become a monk, memorizing sacred scriptures, practicing calligraphy and learning the teachings of Buddha.

After graduation in 2025, he'll head to northern India to join the Mindrolling Monastery, more than 7,200 miles (11,500 kilometers) from his home in Columbia Heights.

Following several years of contemplation and asceticism, he hopes to return to America to teach in the Minnesota Buddhist community. His goal is "to become a leader of peace," following the example of the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela and Gandhi

"There's going to be a lot of sacrifice involved," Dorje said. But he's not new to sacrifices.

He remembered all the early mornings reciting ancient prayers and memorizing Buddhist scriptures, often rewarded by his dad with Pokémon cards.

"As a child, even on the weekend, you're like: 'Why don't I get to sleep more? Why can't I get up and watch cartoons like other kids.' But my dad always told me that it's like planting a seed," he said, "and

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one day it's going to sprout."

It all began with the process of identifying a lama, which is based on spiritual signs and visions. Dorje was about 4 months old when he was identified by Kyabje Trulshik Rinpoche, a venerated master of Tibetan Buddhism and leader of the Nyingma lineage. He was later confirmed by several lamas as the eighth Terchen Taksham Rinpoche — the first one was born in 1655.

After the Dalai Lama recognized him at age 2, Dorje's parents took him to meet the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism when he visited Wisconsin in 2010.

The Dalai Lama cut a lock of Dorje's hair in a ceremony and advised his parents to let their son stay in the U.S. to perfect his English before sending him to a monastery.

Dorje is fluent in English and Tibetan. He grew up reading the manga graphic novel series "Buddha," and is an avid sports fan. He roots for the Timberwolves in basketball, Real Madrid in soccer, and the Atlanta Falcons in football. He even keeps a rookie card of wide receiver Drake Londo pasted to the back of his phone, which he carried wrapped in his robes during his party.

On the football field, playing as a left guard, his teammates praised his positivity, often reminding them to have fun and keep losses in perspective.

"It's someone to look up to," said Griffin Hogg, 20, a former player who took Dorje under his wing. He said they learned from each other and credits Dorje with helping him find his spirituality. "I'm more of a relaxed person after getting to know him and understanding his own journey."

While Dorje tries to never miss Monday Night Football, he's always there to help with any event hosted by the local Tibetan community, one of the largest in the United States.

"He has one foot in the normal high school life. And he has one foot in this amazing Tibetan culture that we have in the state of Minnesota," said Kate Thomas, one of his tutors and the teachings coordinator at Minneapolis' Bodhicitta Sangha Heart of Enlightenment Institute.

"You can see that he's comfortable playing a role of sitting on a throne, of participating and being honored as a respected person in his community, as a religious figure. And yet, as soon as he has the opportunity, he wants to go and hang out with his high school buddies," she said. "That's testimony to his flexibility, his openness of mind."

Listening to rap and making Tibetans proud

For years, he has followed the same routine. He wakes up to recite sacred texts and then attends school, followed by football practice. He returns home for tutoring about Tibetan history and Buddhism. Then he might practice calligraphy or run on a treadmill while listening to BossMan Dlow, Rod Wave and other rappers.

Although he was officially enthroned in 2019 in India, an estimated 1,000 people gathered at the Tibetan American Foundation of Minnesota for his recent ceremony.

"He unites us — Jalue is always here for us," said Zenden Ugen, 21, a family friend and neighbor who performed Tibetan dances at the event.

"I wish him the best in life because being born and not being able to choose your life must be very hard," Ugen said. "But he has a responsibility and him being able to take on that responsibility, I'm very inspired by him. I just hope he keeps being who he is."

Dorje's proud uncle, Tashi Lama, saw him grow up and become a Buddhist master.

"He's somebody who's going to be a leader, who's going to teach compassion and peace and love and harmony among living beings," he said about his nephew, often referred to as "Rinpoche" -- a Tibetan word that means "precious one."

## NYC issues first drought warning in 22 years, pauses aqueduct repairs to bring in more water

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City on Monday issued its first drought warning in 22 years after months of little rain -- and will restart the flow of drinking water from an out-of-service aqueduct as supplies run low. Dry conditions across the Northeast have been blamed for hundreds of brush fires. They had already

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prompted New York City and state officials to implement water-conservation protocols when Mayor Eric Adams upgraded the drought warning and temporarily halted a \$2 billion aqueduct repair project that had stopped drinking water from flowing from some reservoirs in the Catskill region.

Last week, a park on the northern tip of Manhattan caught fire, sending smoke billowing across the city — less than a week after a brush fire in Brooklyn's Prospect Park.

"New Yorkers should not underestimate the dry weather and what it means," Adams said at a news conference, noting the recent fires. "The fire risk is high and the fire risk is real."

The city may elevate the warning to an emergency if dry conditions persist. A drought emergency involves requiring residents and city agencies to cut down on water usage. Upgrading from a watch to a warning requires a range of conservation protocols, Adams said.

Water-saving measures planned for the coming weeks will include washing buses and subway cars less frequently and limiting water use for fountains and golf courses, the mayor said.

"Our city vehicles may look a bit dirtier, and our subways may look a bit dustier, but it's what we have to do to delay or stave off a more serious drought emergency," he said.

At the same time on Monday, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul issued a statewide drought watch and elevated 15 counties to drought warning status, asking residents to conserve water whenever possible.

The shut-off of a stretch of the Delaware Aqueduct to address leaks had been in the works for years.

The aqueduct carries water for 85 miles (137 kilometers) from four reservoirs in the Catskill region to other reservoirs in the city's northern suburbs.

A portion of the aqueduct was shut off in early October but will now be turned back on because water levels across the city's reservoir system are too low to make up the difference, officials with the city Department of Environmental Protection said.

The last drought warning in New York City was issued in January 2002.

## **Spirit Airlines filed for bankruptcy. What does that mean for travelers?**

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS and DAVID KOENIG Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Spirit Airlines, the largest budget carrier in the U.S., filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection Monday. The airline said customers should not see any disruption to their travel plans while the process unfolds.

The filing followed years of struggles for the Florida-based airline, which is known for its no-frills, low-cost flights. Spirit failed to bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic, largely due to rising operating expenses and stiffer competition. The airline has lost more than \$2.5 billion since the beginning of 2020 while also racking up mounting debt.

The bankruptcy proceedings are aimed at restructuring the company and shoring up its finances. Still, unease around the bankruptcy petition may have some travelers looking elsewhere for flights ahead of the busy holiday travel season.

Here's what you need to know.

Will the Chapter 11 affect my booking or loyalty points with Spirit?

For now, it's business as usual. Spirit says it expects to continue operating normally throughout the bankruptcy process, and that travelers can continue making reservations and taking flights without interruptions.

All existing tickets, credits and loyalty points remain valid, as do the airline's affiliated credit cards and other membership perks, the company said.

Reassuring customers that the bankruptcy won't impact their travel plans or loyalty programs will be crucial to Spirit's short-term ability to preserve business, according to Sarah Foss, global head of legal at financial services company Debtwire.

"If you're someone that's booking your holiday December travel ... are you going to book Spirit, which is in bankruptcy? Or are you going to choose maybe Southwest or Delta — or something else that you view as potentially being more stable?" Foss said.

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As long as Spirit is on track to reach a deal with lenders relatively quickly and avoid wider liquidation, frequent flyer miles and other loyalty program should remain untouched, she said. But the response from customers to the Chapter 11 could threaten the company's turnaround efforts.

Foss said Spirit estimates show some 34.3 billion frequent flyer miles worth about \$105 million are currently unredeemed. "A rush to use these miles or otherwise have its customers choose another airline to travel for the holidays could be disastrous for the airline's reorganization efforts," she said.

Will there be fewer flights available down the road?

While Spirit says currently scheduled flights won't be affected, the airline already warned about tightened capacity before Monday's filing and said it would reduce the number of trips it offered in the coming months.

In a highly unusual move, Spirit announced plans to cut its October-through-December schedule by nearly 20%, compared with the same period last year. The airline also has had to ground dozens of its Airbus jets due to required repairs to Pratt & Whitney engines.

A reduced schedule should help prop up Spirit's fares, according to some analysts, but it would give the airline's rivals more of a boost than Spirit itself. Analysts from Deutsche Bank and Raymond James say Frontier, JetBlue and Southwest would benefit the most because of their overlap with Spirit on many routes.

Where does Spirit primarily fly in and out of?

Spirit flies in and out of destinations across the U.S., as well as Latin America and the Caribbean.

The airline's largest hub is Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Florida. Spirit is the biggest airline at the airport, accounting for 30% of all passengers in August, according to Transportation Department figures.

Spirit's second-biggest hub is also in Florida. It's Orlando International Airport, where Spirit follows only Southwest in terms of passenger counts — ranking slightly ahead of Delta, Frontier and American. The airline also has big operations in Las Vegas, Atlanta and Los Angeles. The carrier's largest maintenance facilities are in Detroit and Houston.

Spirit frequently ranks among U.S. airlines with the highest consumer complaint rates, according to the Transportation Department.

What other airlines offer budget fares?

Spirit may still be the biggest discount airline in the U.S., but it faces more competition. The company recorded much of its recent losses as more and more rival carriers began offering their own versions of low cost, no-frills tickets.

Some of Spirit's biggest competitors are other budget airlines, like Frontier and JetBlue, both of which previously tried to merge with Spirit. JetBlue and Spirit abandoned their latest deal this year after a federal judge sided with the Justice Department in its lawsuit to block the \$3.8 billion deal, arguing it would drive up prices too much for customers who depend on low fares.

Major carriers also offer competitive, tiered pricing today. Southwest's "Wanna Get Away" fares and the Basic Economy options offered by United and Delta, for example, have become popular with budget-conscious travelers.

## Grocery chains vie for a place on Thanksgiving tables with turkey dinner deals and store brands

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — With Thanksgiving less than two weeks away, Walmart, Target, Aldi and other grocers are competing for a place on holiday tables with turkey dinner deals and other promotions to tempt Americans who haven't recovered from recent food price inflation.

Walmart, the nation's largest food retailer, first bundled the makings of a traditional turkey feast into a meal deal three years ago. This year, the 29-item offer, which includes a frozen turkey and ingredients for side dishes, costs less than \$55 and is intended to serve eight. That calculates to less than \$7 per person.

Target's version for four people costs \$20, \$5 less than the company's 2023 Thanksgiving meal, and includes a frozen turkey, stuffing mix and canned green beans and canned jellied cranberry sauce. Aldi's

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offers a frozen Butterball turkey with gravy mix as well as pumpkin ingredients for pumpkin pie and ingredients for side dishes like sweet potato casserole. The German-owned supermarket chain priced it for \$47 and said that was less than it charged for the same items in 2019.

Meijer, with more than 500 supercenters in the Midwest, jumped into the fray last week by offering a frozen turkey for 49 cents per pound or lower and a \$37 Thanksgiving family meal for a group of four to six.

Comparing the respective menus to determine which represents the best value is difficult since recommended serving sizes and contents vary. But the promotions, introduced earlier than ever and at a time when many households remain put off by higher prices, underscore the importance of Thanksgiving to grocers, analysts said.

While consumer perceptions of grocery prices is based on the cost of staples like eggs and milk, "the Thanksgiving meal has become essentially a new benchmark," Jason Goldberg, chief commerce strategy officer at Publicis Groupe, a global marketing and communications company.

It's the occasion for the second-largest holiday meal for retailers behind the feasts that accompany the winter holidays. Compared with an average, Thanksgiving meal shopping delivered a \$2.4 billion sales lift during the week before and after the holiday last year, market research firm Circana said. Shopping for Christmas, Hanukah and New Year's Day meals gave stores a \$5.3 billion sales uplift compared with an average week, Circana said.

Walmart launched its offer on Oct. 14, two weeks earlier than last year and plans to make it available through Dec. 24. The two bundles the retailer offered last year contained different items, but Walmart said this year's selected products cost 3.5% less.

Joan Driggs, a Circana vice president, expects shoppers to buy items on sale for half of what they need to prepare Thanksgiving dinner meal. That's double the amount from 2022, when retailers pulled back on promotions due to limited supplies left over from the coronavirus pandemic.

Consumers still aren't seeing discounts as deep as the ones grocers trotted out in pre-pandemic 2019, Driggs said. To attract customers, retailers therefore are creating strategies like meal bundles, which may "lessen the stress" for shoppers since they show the cost per person, she said.

Angel Rosario-Sanchez, 24, a New Jersey resident who was at a Walmart store in Secaucus on Wednesday, said he planned to have Thanksgiving with his friends but had not shopped for groceries yet. Seeing the big displays of Thanksgiving products in the store made him want to return to buy some.

"I always count on Walmart for deals," said Rosario-Sanchez, who usually selects food from Walmart's lower-end, Great Value brand. "Inflation is too much, and it needs to go back to where it originally was."

For the past two years, Walmart, Target and others have seen price-conscious shoppers shift more of their purchases to store label brands. In response, retailers have improved their selections or created new food lines brands.

Walmart in April launched Bettergoods, its biggest store-label food brand in 20 years in terms of the breadth of items, to appeal to younger customers who aren't loyal to national brands and want chef-inspired foods that are more affordably priced.

But store brands aren't necessarily cheaper.

Wells Fargo's Agri-Food Institute, a team of national industry advisors that provides economic insights and research, compared the costs of store brands and national name brands for a typical Thanksgiving dinner. The name-brand versions of cranberry sauce were less expensive than the store brands the team inventoried, while the name brand pumpkin pies versus store brand versions were the same price.

Robin Wenzel, the head of the Wells Fargo institute, thinks the makers of some familiar brands realized they "overshot" with some of their post-pandemic price increases and are retrenching.

The Agri-Food Institute's 10-person Thanksgiving menu includes turkey, stuffing, salad, cranberries, dinner rolls and pumpkin pie. Using all name-brand would cost \$90 this year, 0.5% less than last year. Preparing the same meal with store-branded food would cost \$73, or 2.7% more than a year ago.

That gives shoppers the option to mix and match, Wenzel said.

The latest government snapshot on inflation showed grocery prices rose just 0.1% from September to October and are up just 1.1% over the past year. That's providing some relief to consumers after food

costs surged roughly 23% over the past three years.

For main Thanksgiving entrées and beverages, prices are easing, but given the spike in food prices in recent years, consumers may or may not feel it.

A 15-item Thanksgiving meal costs an average of \$65.51 this year, down nearly 3% from last year but 42% higher overall than in 2019, retail intelligence provider Dataassembly said. For example, a 12-ounce can of jellied cranberry sauce averaged \$2.89, which is 1% lower than a year ago but still 90% higher compared with 2019.

A 10-pound frozen turkey averages \$10.40 this year, a 19% decrease from 2023 but still 6% higher than in 2019, the data firm said. Prices for some Thanksgiving products are still going up: A 30-ounce box of pumpkin pie mix now costs an average of \$5.56, up 6% compared with a year ago and nearly 70% more than five years ago, according to Dataassembly.

Like many food retailers, Walmart put a mix of store and name-brand products into its Thanksgiving bundle. The meal deal includes Ocean Spray canned jellied cranberry sauce, and green beans and dinner rolls from the in-house Great Value line. The bundle also includes a white whole frozen turkey from the national brand Shady Brook Farms, and fresh items like a 5-pound bag of russet potatoes.

Still, plenty will bypass the bundles at Walmart and elsewhere.

While visiting the Walmart in Secaucus, New Jersey, Nadia Rivest, 70, said she already had shopped at the discounter to buy turkey, fish and chicken for her Thanksgiving meal. But she was only interested in buying fresh items, not canned goods.

"I like red pepper, red tomatoes, something fresh," she said.

## French farmers escalate protests against an EU-Mercosur trade deal and fear unfair competition

By TOM NOUVIAN and THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

BEAUVAIS, France (AP) — French farmers escalated protests Monday against the European Union-Mercosur trade agreement under negotiation, citing fears of unfair competition. Backed by their government, they argue the deal would threaten their livelihoods by allowing a surge of South American agricultural imports produced under less stringent environmental standards.

In Beauvais in northern France, dozens of farmers with about 50 tractors disrupted traffic before walling up a government office tasked with enforcing environmental standards. The protesters dumped manure and tires in front of the building and moved to the local prefecture, where they set up a noisy camp with firecrackers.

"The government slept on its agriculture, so we won't let them sleep," said Régis Desrumaux, 54, head of the FDSEA Oise farmer's union. "Last year, we protested for the same reasons: too much paperwork, overly strict norms, not enough help from the state. Now, with unfair competition from South American products boosted with hormones and GMOs, it's the final straw."

Armelle Fraiture, a 25-year-old who took over her family's 300-cow farm in the Beauvais region earlier in the year, expressed concerns about the prospect of South American beef products hitting the French market.

"My partner and I want to do this for the rest of our lives, but we don't earn much from our farm right now," said Fraiture, who is a representative of Jeunesse Agricole Oise, a local union for young farmers. "I feel that the horizon is bleak and that our work is disrespected."

Elsewhere, protesters burned vine stems in Bordeaux and blocked the "Europe Bridge" in Strasbourg. The FNSEA, one of France's main farming unions, reported over 85 demonstrations nationwide Monday.

Proponents of the agreement argue that it would significantly boost economic ties between Europe and South America by eliminating tariffs on European exports, notably for machinery, chemicals and cars, thereby enhancing market access and creating lucrative opportunities for European businesses.

The EU and the Mercosur trade bloc, composed of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia,



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reached an initial agreement in 2019, but negotiations stumbled due to opposition from farmers and some European governments, particularly France.

"It is unacceptable as it stands," said French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot.

But France's hands might be tied.

There are fears the agreement could be finalized at the G20 summit in Brazil this week, or in the coming weeks. A partial deal, with many of the parts that French farmers find unsavory, could be agreed over their heads since France does not hold veto power.

Other nations like Germany and Spain would like to see a far-reaching deal with their South American counterparts.

"There is a certain mythology surrounding Mercosur," said Spanish Farm Minister Luis Planas Puchades, who argues there is more at stake than just farming.

"Is the European Union interested, at this moment, in closing in on itself?" he asked ahead of an EU farm ministerial meeting on Monday. "Or is it interested, in this particular geopolitical context that we are experiencing, and especially after the North American election, in expanding the network of our trade agreements with third countries to maintain our economic and commercial influence as well? I think the answer is very clear."

Leading the new protests in France are unions, who oppose provisions such as duty-free imports of beef, poultry and sugar, which they say create unfair competition. Coordination Rurale, a union linked to the far right, has promised an "agricultural revolt," including food freight blockades beginning Tuesday in Auch and Agen in southwestern France.

Earlier this year, farmers staged protests across France and elsewhere in Europe to protest EU regulations and financial problems, demand fairer agricultural policies and oppose the trade agreement.

French Agriculture Minister Annie Genevard has publicly opposed the EU-Mercosur trade agreement, citing risks of deforestation and health concerns linked to hormone-treated meat.

President Emmanuel Macron has also criticized the agreement unless South American producers meet EU standards.

Farmers say they are further frustrated by a European Commission audit that flagged hormone use in Brazilian beef exports. Their demonstrations aim to pressure the French government and EU officials to block or renegotiate the agreement.

## **Some Arab Americans who voted for Trump are concerned about his picks for key positions**

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Just a week after winning several of the nation's largest Arab-majority cities, President-elect Donald Trump has filled top administration posts with staunch Israel supporters, including an ambassador to Israel who has claimed "there is no such thing as Palestinians."

Meanwhile, the two Trump advisers who led his outreach to Arab Americans have not secured positions in the administration yet.

The selections have prompted mixed reactions among Arab Americans and Muslims in Michigan, which went for Trump along with all six other battleground states. Some noted Trump's longstanding support for Israel and said their vote against Vice President Kamala Harris was not necessarily an endorsement of him. Others who openly supported him say he will be the final decisionmaker on policy and hope he will keep his promise of achieving an end to the conflicts in the Middle East.

Albert Abbas, a Lebanese American leader whose brother owns the Dearborn, Michigan, restaurant Trump visited in the campaign's final days, stood beside the former president during that visit and spoke in support of him.

Now, Abbas says it's "too early" to judge Trump and that "we all need to take a deep breath, take a step back and let him do the work that he needs to do to achieve this peace."

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"I just want you to think about what the alternative was," said Abbas, referring to the current administration's handling of Israel's war in Gaza and its invasion of Lebanon. He added, "What did you expect from myself or many members of the community to do?"

Beyond promising peace in the Middle East, Trump has offered few concrete details on how he plans to achieve it. His transition team did not respond to a request for comment.

Throughout the campaign, his surrogates often focused more on criticizing Harris than outlining his agenda. And visuals of the conflict — with tens of thousands of deaths collectively in Gaza and Lebanon — stirred anger among many in Arab and Muslim communities about President Joe Biden and Harris' backing of Israel.

Amin Hashmi, a Pakistani American in Michigan who voted for Trump, urged him to stay true to his campaign commitments to bring peace.

"I am disappointed but not surprised," said Hashmi, who urged Trump to "keep the promise you made to the people of Arab descent in Michigan."

Trump picks what pro-Israel conservatives call a 'dream team'

Those in the community with concerns have specifically pointed to former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, nominated as Trump's ambassador to Israel. Huckabee has consistently rejected the idea of a Palestinian state in territories seized by Israel, strongly supported Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and opposed a two-state solution, claiming "there really isn't such a thing" as Palestinians in referring to the descendants of people who lived in Palestine before the establishment of Israel.

While Huckabee has sparked the most concern among community members, other Trump Cabinet picks have strongly spoken in Israel's favor as it targets Hamas following the militant group's Oct. 7, 2023, attack in which it killed 1,200 Israelis and took hundreds more as hostage.

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, nominated for secretary of state, has opposed a ceasefire in the war, stating that he wants Israel to "destroy every element of Hamas they can get their hands on."

Trump's pick to be his ambassador to the United Nations, New York Rep. Elise Stefanik, led the questioning of university presidents over antisemitism on campuses. She has also opposed funding for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, which oversees aid to Gaza.

Pete Hegseth, an Army National Guard veteran and Fox News host, was chosen by Trump to head the Department of Defense. Hegseth has publicly opposed the two-state solution and advocated for rebuilding a biblical Jewish temple on the site of Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of Islam's holiest sites.

The Republican Jewish Coalition, which organized for Trump in Michigan, has been outspoken in its support for many of Trump's Cabinet picks. Sam Markstein, the group's political director, described the proposed lineup as a "pro-Israel dream team," adding that "folks are giddy about the picks." He praised Trump's pro-Israel record as "second to nobody."

"The days of this mealy-mouthed, trying to have support in both camps of this issue are over," Markstein said. "The way to secure the region is peace through strength, and that means no daylight between Israel and the United States."

No roles yet for key figures in Trump's Arab American outreach

Among the reasons some Arab American voters supported Trump was that they believed his prominent supporters would be key in the next administration.

Massad Boulos, a Lebanese businessman and father-in-law of Trump's daughter Tiffany, led efforts to engage the Arab American community, organizing dozens of meetings across Michigan and other areas with large Arab populations. Some sessions also featured Richard Grenell, former acting director of national intelligence, who was well-regarded by those who met with him.

Neither Boulos nor Grenell has been tapped yet for the coming administration, though Grenell was once considered a potential secretary of state before Rubio was selected. Boulos declined to comment and Grenell did not respond to a request for comment.

"Some people expected Trump to be different and thought Massad would play a significant role," said Osama Siblani, publisher of the Dearborn-based Arab American News, which declined to endorse a can-

didate in the presidential race.

Siblani himself turned down a suggested meeting with Trump after the non-endorsement announcement. "But now people are coming to us and saying, 'Look what you've done,'" Siblani said. "We had a choice between someone actively shooting and killing you and someone threatening to do so. We had to punish the person who was shooting and killing us at the time."

## As China cracks down on bookstores at home, Chinese-language booksellers are flourishing overseas

By FU TING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Yu Miao smiles as he stands among the 10,000 books crowded on rows of bamboo shelves in his newly reopened bookstore. It's in Washington's vibrant Dupont Circle neighborhood, far from its last location in Shanghai, where the Chinese government forced him out of business six years ago.

"There is no pressure from the authorities here," said Yu, the owner of JF Books, Washington's only Chinese bookseller. "I want to live without fear."

Independent bookstores have become a new battleground in China, swept up in the ruling Communist Party's crackdown on dissent and free expression. The Associated Press found that at least a dozen bookstores in the world's second-largest economy have been shuttered or targeted for closure in the last few months alone, squeezing the already tight space for press freedom. One bookstore owner was arrested over four months ago.

The crackdown has had a chilling effect on China's publishing industry. Bookstores are common in China, but many are state-owned. Independent bookstores are governed by an intricate set of rules with strict controls now being more aggressively policed, according to bookstore owners. Printing shops and street vendors are also facing more rigorous government inspections by the National Office Against Pornography and Illegal Publication.

The office did not respond to interview requests from The Associated Press. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a statement to AP, said it was not aware of a crackdown on bookstores.

Yu isn't alone in taking his business out of the country. Chinese bookstores have popped up in Japan, France, Netherlands and elsewhere in the U.S. in recent years, as a result of both stricter controls in China and growing Chinese communities abroad.

It's not just the books' contents that are making Chinese authorities wary. In many communities, bookstores are cultural centers where critical thinking is encouraged, and conversations can veer into politics and other topics not welcomed by the authorities.

The bookstore owner who was arrested was Yuan Di, also called Yanyou, the founder of Jiazazhi, an artistic bookstore in Shanghai and Ningbo on China's eastern coast. He was taken away by police in June, according to Zhou Youlieguo, who closed his own bookstore in Shanghai in September. Yuan's arrest was also confirmed by two other people who declined to be named for fear of retribution. The charge against Yuan is unclear.

An official in Ningbo's Bureau of Culture, Radio Television and Tourism, which oversees bookstores, declined comment, noting the case is under investigation. The Ningbo police didn't respond to an interview request.

Michael Berry, director of UCLA's Center for Chinese Studies, said a sluggish Chinese economy may be driving the government to exert greater control.

"The government might be feeling that this is a time to be more cautious and control this kind of discourse in terms of what people are consuming and reading to try to put a damper on any potential unrest and kind of nip it in the bud," Berry said.

These bookstore owners face dual pressures, Berry added. One is the political clampdown; the other is the global movement, especially among young people, toward digital media and away from print publications.

Wang Yingxing sold secondhand books in Ningbo for almost two decades before being ordered to close

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in August. Local officials informed Wang he lacked a publication business license even though he wasn't eligible to obtain one as a second-hand seller.

Faded outlines marked the spot where a sign for Fatty Wang's Bookstore once hung. Spray-painted black letters on the bookstore's window read: "Temporarily closed".

"We're promoting culture, I'm not doing anything wrong, right? I'm just selling some books and promoting culture," Wang said, tying a bundle of books together with brown wrapper and white nylon string.

"Then why won't you leave me alone?" Wang added.

Half a dozen other people heaved boxes of books into the back of a van. The books, Wang said, were being sold to cafe and bar owners who wanted to burnish little libraries for their patrons. Some would be sent to a warehouse in Anhui. The rest, he said, were to be sent to a recycling station to be pulped and destroyed.

Bookstores are not the only target. Central authorities have also cracked down on other places such as printing shops, internet bars, gaming rooms and street vendors. Strict inspections have taken place all over the country, according to Chinese authorities.

Authorities in Shanghai inspected printing places and bookstores, looking for "printing, copying or selling illegal publications," according to a government document. This shows the authorities are not just barring the sale of some publications, but tracing them back to the printing process. They found some printing stores did not "register the copy content as required" and demanded they fix the problem quickly.

In Shaoyang, a city in China's south, authorities said they will be "cracking down on harmful publications in accordance with the law."

The Communist Party has various powers to control which books are available. Any publication without a China Standard Book Number is considered illegal, including self-published books and those imported without special licenses. Books can be banned even after they are published if restrictions are later tightened — often for unclear reasons — or if the writers say something upsetting to the Chinese authorities.

Yet despite these restrictions and the crackdown on existing booksellers, more bookstores are opening. Recent figures are unavailable, but a survey by Bookdao, a media company that focuses on the book industry, shows more than twice as many bookstores opened than closed in China in 2020.

Liu Suli, who has been running All Sages Books in Beijing for over three decades, says there are many idealists in the industry.

"Everyone who reads has a dream of having a bookstore," Liu says, despite the challenges.

In many cases, those dreams are being fulfilled outside China. Yu and other Chinese booksellers around the world stock their shelves with books from Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China, as well as books published locally.

Zhang Jieping, founder of Nowhere, a bookstore in Taiwan and Thailand, said there's a growing demand for books from migrants who left China after the COVID-19 pandemic.

"They don't just want to speak fluent English or Japanese to fit in, they want cultural autonomy," Zhang said. "They want more community spaces. Not necessarily a bookstore, but in any format — a gallery, or a restaurant."

Li Yijia is a 22-year-old student who arrived in Washington from Beijing in August. One Sunday morning, she wandered through JF Books where she found titles in Chinese and English. She said a Chinese bookstore feels like "another world in a bubble" which helps her critical thinking by allowing her to read books in both languages.

"It also relieves homesickness, like a Chinese restaurant," Li added.

The closure of the bookstores leads the owners to different paths. Some ended up in jail, some went looking for jobs to feed their families. Some started a journey to leave censorship behind.

Since he closed his Shanghai bookstore, Zhou, 39, has moved to Los Angeles, but hasn't decided what his next step will be.

He said his fully licensed independent bookstore, which sold art books and self-published works by artists and translators, was fined thousands of dollars and he was interrogated over a dozen times during

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the past four years. He's seen colleagues jailed for selling "illegal publications." All the self-published book artists and editors he worked with asked him to take down their work after warnings by local authorities.

Zhou said he could not handle further harassment. He said it was as if he were "smuggling drugs instead of selling books."

The existence of his bookstore, Zhou said, was "a rebellion and a resistance," which is not there anymore.

## Rafael Nadal and Spain's captain won't say whether he'll play at the Davis Cup

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

FUENGIROLA, Spain (AP) — Rafael Nadal felt a hand on his left shoulder as he walked out of a conference room at a resort on Spain's southern coast Monday following his first question-and-answer session with reporters since announcing this week's Davis Cup Final 8 will be his last event before retirement.

Nadal turned to see Carlos Alcaraz, his Spanish teammate and heir apparent, who wanted to whisper something. Nadal, 38, and Alcaraz, 21, might share a court one last time on Tuesday, when Spain is scheduled to face the Netherlands on Tuesday in the quarterfinals on an indoor hard court at the Palacio de Deportes Jose Maria Martin Carpena in Malaga.

Then again, maybe they won't both play Tuesday: Neither Nadal nor Spain's captain, David Ferrer, would say Monday whether the 22-time Grand Slam champion will participate. What is clear is that Nadal's career soon will be over.

What will he miss the most?

"I mean, probably the feeling of competition, (to) go on court and see the fans out there, the atmosphere when you play big matches," Nadal said. "And at the end of the day, (it) is about the adrenaline that you feel before, at the end, and during the match."

The Spain-Netherlands winner will play in the semifinals on Friday against Canada or Germany. The championship will be decided on Sunday.

"I'm not here to retire. I'm here to help the team win. It's my last week in a team competition, and the most important thing is to help the team. The emotions will come later," said Nadal, wearing the squad's red polo shirt with a tiny red-and-yellow Spanish flag on the left sleeve.

"I'm enjoying the week. I'm not putting too much attention to the retirement," Nadal said. "It will be a big change in my life after this week."

Nadal said it doesn't "make sense to keep going, knowing that I don't have the real chance to be competitive the way that I like to be competitive, because my body" won't allow it.

At the team news conference held at a hotel in Fuengirola, about 12 miles (20 kilometers) south of the competition venue, Nadal was asked how he has been feeling in practice in recent days and whether he is ready to play.

"That's a question for the captain," Nadal responded, drawing a laugh from Ferrer, sitting to the star player's left.

Ferrer's answer?

"I don't know yet," he said.

Perhaps this will factor in: Nadal is 29-1 in his Davis Cup singles career, a .967 winning percentage that is the highest for anyone who has played more than 15 matches. Way back in 2004, Nadal lost his Davis Cup debut to the Czech Republic's Jiri Novak — and he's won all 29 matches in a row since.

There will be two matches in singles and one in doubles in each matchup. Nadal could appear just in singles, just in doubles — perhaps alongside Alcaraz, his partner at the Paris Olympics — in both, or not at all.

"Maybe we can be a part of that story of his finish here," Germany's Yannick Hanfmann said, looking ahead to a possible semifinal. "It would be nice to get a chance to play against him one more time."

Ferrer's lineup doesn't need to be submitted until 4 p.m. local time (1500 GMT), an hour before play

begins. The reason the 9,200-capacity arena is sold out for Tuesday: It could be the last chance to see Nadal play a match that matters.

"His last moments on court probably are going to be super special. Not (just) for me, but for everyone," Alcaraz said. "It's going to be an emotional day."

Nadal has been dealing with a series of injuries the past two seasons and has been limited to only 23 official singles matches in that span, including a 12-7 record this year.

"OK, I can hold for one more year. But why? To say goodbye in every single tournament? I don't have that ego to need that," Nadal said, adding that he has "been thinking for a long time" about retiring.

He hasn't played a real match since the Paris Games in early August, when he lost in the second round of singles to Novak Djokovic and in the quarterfinals of doubles.

"I've tried to prepare as hard as possible for the last month and a half. I'm trying to give my best for this event," Nadal said. "When you don't compete so often, it's difficult to maintain the level consistently. But the improvement is there every day. I believe that."

## **Negotiators are urged to get down to business as climate talks in Baku enter second week**

By SIBI ARASU, MELINA WALLING and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press

BAKU, Azerbaijan (AP) — United Nations climate talks resumed Monday with negotiators urged to make progress on a stalled-out deal that could see developing countries get more money to spend on clean energy and adapting to climate-charged weather extremes.

U.N. Climate Change executive secretary Simon Stiell called for countries to "cut the theatrics and get down to real business."

"We will only get the job done if Parties are prepared to step forward in parallel, bringing us closer to common ground," Stiell said to a room of delegates in Baku, Azerbaijan. "I know we can get this done."

Climate and environment ministers from around the world have arrived at the summit to help push the talks forward.

"Politicians have the power to reach a fair and ambitious deal," said COP29 President Mukhtar Babayev at a press conference at the venue. "They must deliver and engage immediately and constructively."

Climate cash is still a sticking point

Talks in Baku are focused on getting more climate cash for developing countries to transition away from fossil fuels, adapt to climate change and pay for damages caused by extreme weather. But countries are far apart on how much money that will require.

A group of developing nations last week put the sum at \$1.3 trillion, while rich countries are yet to name a figure. Several experts estimated that the money needed for climate finance is around \$1 trillion.

"We all know it is never easy in politics and in international politics to talk about money, but the cost of action today is, as a matter of fact, much lower than the cost of inaction," said Wopke Hoekstra, the EU climate commissioner at press conference.

"We will continue to lead to do our fair share and even more than our fair share, as we've always done," he said. But Hoekstra added that "others have a responsibility to contribute based on their emissions and based on their economic growth too."

Teresa Anderson, the Global Lead on Climate Justice at ActionAid International, was skeptical about rich countries' intentions.

"The concern is that the pressure to add developing countries to the list of contributors is not, in fact, about raising more money for frontline countries," Anderson said. "Rich countries are just trying to point the finger and have an excuse to provide less finance. That's not the way to address runaway climate breakdown, and is a distraction from the real issues at stake."

Rachel Cleetus from the Union of Concerned Scientists said \$1 trillion in global climate funds "is going to look like a bargain five, 10 years from now."

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"We're going to wonder why we didn't take that and run with it," she said, citing a multitude of costly recent extreme weather events from flooding in Spain to hurricanes Helene and Milton in the United States.

Robert Habeck, Germany's climate and economic affairs minister said rich nations shouldn't try to stop developing nations from producing more energy, but it has to come from cleaner sources.

"They have the same right to create (the) same work, same education and health system," he said. "On other hand, if ... they are doing the same as we did for 100 years of burning fossil energy, that is completely messed up."

Alongside U.K. energy minister Ed Miliband, Habeck announced around \$1.3 billion on Monday for developing countries to move away from fossil fuels.

"The industrialized countries are committed to their climate financing, while at the same time we are bringing more private investors and donors on board and broadening the donor base," Habeck said.

Climate watchers keep an eye on Rio and Paris

Meanwhile, the world's biggest decision makers are halfway around the world as another major summit convenes. Brazil is hosting the Group of 20 summit Monday and Tuesday that brings together many of the world's largest economies. Climate change — among other major topics like rising global tensions and poverty — will be on the agenda.

COP President Babayev said the world "cannot succeed" in its climate goals without G20 nations.

"We urge them to use the G20 meeting to send a positive signal of their commitment to addressing the climate crisis. We want them to provide clear mandates to deliver," he said.

Harjeet Singh, global engagement director for the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, said G20 nations "cannot turn their backs on the reality of their historical emissions and the responsibility that comes with it."

"They must commit to trillions in public finance," he said.

Also on Monday, the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has been mulling a proposal to cut public spending for foreign fossil fuel projects. The OECD — made up of 38 member countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, South Korea, Japan and Germany — are discussing a deal that could prevent up to \$40 billion worth of carbon-polluting projects.

At COP29, activists are protesting the U.S., South Korea, Japan, and Turkey who they say are the key holdouts preventing that OECD agreement from being finalized.

"It's of critical importance that President Biden comes out in support. We know it's really important that he lands a deal that Trump cannot undo. This can be really important for Biden's legacy," said Lauri van der Burg, Global Public Finance Lead at Oil Change international. "If he comes around, this will help mount pressure on other laggards including Korea, Turkey and Japan."

## **Typhoon Man-yi leaves 7 dead in Philippines and worsens crisis from back-to-back storms**

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Typhoon Man-yi left at least seven people dead in a landslide, destroyed houses and displaced large numbers of villagers before blowing away from the northern Philippines, worsening the crisis wreaked by multiple back-to-back storms, officials said Monday.

Man-yi was one of the strongest of the six major storms to hit the northern Philippines in less than a month and had sustained winds of up to 195 kilometers (125 miles) per hour when it slammed into the eastern island province of Catanduanes on Saturday night.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin met President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in Manila and offered his prayers, announcing an additional \$1 million in humanitarian aid for typhoon victims. He told Marcos he has authorized U.S. troops to help Filipino forces provide lifesaving aid.

Torrential rains and fierce wind unleashed by Man-yi set off a landslide early Monday in the northern town of Ambaguio in Nueva Vizcaya province that buried a house and killed seven people, including children, and injured three others inside, regional police chief Brig. Gen. Antonio P. Marallag Jr. said.

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Army troops, police and villagers were scrambling to search for three other people who were believed to have been entombed in the avalanche of mud, boulders and uprooted trees, Marallag said.

Disaster response officials said they were checking if the deaths of two villagers in a motorcycle accident and an electrocution were directly related to Man-yi's onslaught so they could be added to the overall death toll. They said a separate search was underway for a couple and their child after their shanty was swept away in rampaging rivers in northern Nueva Ecija province.

More than a million people were affected by the typhoon and two previous storms, including nearly 700,000 who fled their homes and moved to emergency shelters or relatives' homes, according to the Official of Civil Defense.

Nearly 8,000 houses were damaged or destroyed and more than 100 cities and towns were hit by power outages due to toppled electric posts, it said.

In the worst-hit province of Camarines, officials pleaded for additional help after fierce winds and rain damaged more houses and cut off electricity and water supplies in the entire province, along with cellphone connections in many areas, provincial information officer Camille Gianan said.

Welfare officials transported food aid, drinking water and other help but more is needed over the coming months, Gianan said. Many villagers will need construction materials to rebuild their houses, she said.

"They have not recovered from the previous storms when the super typhoon hit," Gianan told The Associated Press. "It's been one calamity after another."

The rare number of back-to-back storms and typhoons that lashed Luzon — the country's largest and most populous island — in just three weeks left more than 160 people dead, affected 9 million people and caused such extensive damage to communities, infrastructure and farmlands that the Philippines may have to import more rice, a staple food.

In an emergency meeting as Man-yi approached, Marcos asked his Cabinet and provincial officials to brace for "the worst-case scenario."

At least 26 domestic airports and two international airports were briefly shut and inter-island ferry and cargo services were suspended due to rough seas, stranding thousands of passengers and commuters. Most transport services have now resumed, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippine and the coast guard.

The U.S., Manila's treaty ally, along with Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei provided cargo aircraft and other storm aid to help the government's overwhelmed disaster-response agencies. Last month, the first major storm, Trami, left scores of people dead after dumping one to two months' worth of rain in just 24 hours in several towns.

The Philippines is battered by about 20 typhoons and storms each year. It's often hit by earthquakes and has more than a dozen active volcanoes, making it one of the world's most disaster-prone countries.

## Today in History: November 19, Lincoln delivers Gettysburg Address

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 19, the 324th day of 2024. There are 42 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Nov. 19, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address at the dedication of a national cemetery at the site of the Civil War battlefield of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania.

Also on this date:

In 1959, Ford Motor Co. announced it was halting production of the unpopular Edsel.

In 1969, Apollo 12 astronauts Charles Conrad and Alan Bean made the second crewed landing on the moon.

In 1977, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat became the first Arab leader to visit Israel.

In 1985, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev met for the first time as they began their summit in Geneva.



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In 1999, Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr testified before the House Judiciary Committee during impeachment hearings against President Bill Clinton.

In 2004, in one of the worst brawls in U.S. sports history, Ron Artest (now known as Metta Sandiford-Artest) and Stephen Jackson of the Indiana Pacers charged into the stands and fought with Detroit Pistons fans after a fan threw a drink at Artest, forcing officials to end the Pacers' 97-82 win with 45.9 seconds left.

In 2017, Charles Manson, the cult leader behind the murders of actress Sharon Tate and six others in Los Angeles in 1969, died in a California hospital at the age of 83 after nearly a half-century in prison.

In 2022, five people were killed and 25 injured when a shooter opened fire at an LGBTQ+ nightclub in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Today's Birthdays: Talk show host Dick Cavett is 88. Media mogul and philanthropist Ted Turner is 86. Fashion designer Calvin Klein is 82. Poet Sharon Olds is 82. Sportscaster and former NFL wide receiver Ahmad Rashad is 75. Broadcast journalist Ann Curry is 68. Former NASA astronaut Eileen Collins is 68. Writer-filmmaker Charlie Kaufman is 66. Actor Allison Janney is 65. Actor Meg Ryan is 63. Actor-filmmaker Jodie Foster is 62. Olympic gold medal-winning sprinter Gail Devers is 58. Entrepreneur Jack Dorsey is 48. Olympic gold medal-winning gymnast Kerri Strug is 47. Actor Reid Scott is 47. Film director Barry Jenkins ("Moonlight") is 45. Actor Adam Driver is 41. NHL forward Patrick Kane is 36.