

Groton Daily Independent

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Monday, Nov. 25

Senior Menu: Spanish rice, green beans, peaches, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast sliders.

School Lunch: French bread pizza, peas.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Groton Community Center

First allowable day for girls basketball practice

JH GBB at Britton (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)

Fall Sports Awards Night, 7 p.m., GHS Gym

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, potluck at noon

Tuesday, Nov. 26

Senior Menu: Macaroni and cheese with kielbasa, Italian blend, vanilla pudding with oranges, whole wheat bread.

Senior Menu: Egg omelets.

School Lunch: Sloppy joes, fries.

United Methodist: No Bible Study

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



Wednesday, Nov. 27

Senior Menu: Chili, corn bread, coleslaw, fruit.

Emmanuel Lutheran: No Confirmation

St. John's Lutheran: Thanksgiving Eve Service, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

No School - Thanksgiving Break

Thursday, Nov. 28

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

No School - Thanksgiving Break

Community Thanksgiving Dinner, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Groton Community Center

Friday, Nov. 29

No School - Thanksgiving Break

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

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FROSTY CLUE

I/My.....

25. My spouse works at the Groton Elementary School



Hanson County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: I-90, mile marker 344, 1 mile north of Alexandria, SD

When: 8:41 a.m., Saturday, November 23, 2024

Driver 1: 68-year-old female from Council Bluffs, IA, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2024 Chevy Silverado 2500

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Passenger 1: 62-year-old female from Oceanside, CA, serious, life-threatening injuries

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Passenger 2: 4-year-old female, minor injuries

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Hanson County, S.D.- One person died and another was seriously injured Saturday morning in a single-vehicle crash near Alexandria, SD.

The names of the people involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates a 2024 Chevy Silverado was traveling westbound on I-90 near mile marker 344. The driver drifted into the median, corrected steering, then entered the north ditch where the vehicle rolled.

The driver passed away at the scene. The adult passenger was transported to a Sioux Falls hospital with serious, life-threatening injuries.

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

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

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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.

Cabinet Picks Completed

President-elect Donald Trump nominated his former White House aide Brooke Rollins for secretary of agriculture Saturday. The announcement—part of a rapid pace of appointments—closes out Trump's list of 15 Cabinet advisers requiring Senate confirmation.

Among the final nominations announced this weekend were hedge fund manager Scott Bessent—an advocate for tax cuts and deficit reform—to lead the Treasury Department. Trump also named pro-union Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R, OH-5) as his pick for labor secretary and former Texas politician and NFL star Scott Turner to lead the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Trump also rounded out key health positions, selecting former Florida congressman Dr. Dave Weldon (R) to lead the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Johns Hopkins professor Dr. Marty Makary to lead the Food and Drug Administration; and Fox News contributor Dr. Janette Nesheiwat as surgeon general.

COP29 Climate Deal

International negotiators struck a deal over the weekend to establish a climate resiliency fund, with wealthier nations committing \$300B annually for developing nations by 2035. The agreement, which came together after the United Nations' COP29 conference was extended by two days, fell far short of a stated \$1.3T per year target.

Officials from developing nations—more than half of which are in Africa—have argued that while industrialized countries reaped the benefits of fossil fuels for economic development for decades, developing nations are more vulnerable to droughts, extreme weather, and rising sea levels.

The language of the deal allows for the \$300B to be provided from sources like multilateral development banks and private companies in addition to public funds. China—the world's largest emitter, still classified as a developing country—is also expected to voluntarily contribute to the financing.

'Glicked' Seeks Movie Magic

"Wicked" and "Gladiator II" had their US premieres over the weekend, following a media blitz in which the films' actors sought to recreate the box office success of 2023's "Barbenheimer." "Wicked" brought in \$164.2M globally; "Gladiator II"—which premiered a week earlier in some countries—yielded \$221M globally to date with \$106M over the weekend.

The figures fall below opening weekend yields of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" but appear on track for healthy sales. "Wicked" broke the record for the best-ever debut for a Broadway musical adaptation, earning \$114M domestically. While "Gladiator II" had a weaker box office domestic debut at \$55.5M, estimates suggest the film could yield over \$740M by the end of its run.

Movies often need to earn roughly 2.5 times their budget to break even—a roughly \$375M benchmark for "Wicked" and \$575M for "Gladiator II." While box office sales have yet to surpass prepandemic levels, studios expect "Glicked" and other upcoming draws—like "Moana 2"—to power a strong end-of-year showing.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Orlando Pride top Washington Spirit 1-0 to win their first National Women's Soccer League championship. MLS Cup Playoffs conference final matchups set; see bracket and schedule.
Rapper Kendrick Lamar releases surprise album "GNX".
Singer-songwriter Khalid comes out as gay after being outed on social media.
Chuck Woolery, longtime TV game show host best known for "Love Connection," dies at age 83,
Rico Carty, former MLB All-Star and NL batting champion, dies at age 85.

Science & Technology

Astronomers capture aftermath of a galaxy collision, including one galaxy traveling at an estimated 2 million miles per hour.
Archaeologists discover network of 4,000-year-old canals in Belize; structures believed to have been used for fishing by the civilization predating the Maya.
Brain study suggests overthinking social situations is governed by interactions with the amygdala, part of the "lizard brain," responsible for fear and assessing risk.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher Friday (S&P 500 +0.4%, Dow +1.0%, Nasdaq +0.2%), with Dow closing at all-time high.
Cantor Fitzgerald—whose CEO is President-elect Donald Trump's pick for commerce secretary—is reportedly in talks with lead stablecoin company Tether for project lending clients \$2B against bitcoin.
Social media platform Bluesky surpasses 21 million users, up from 13 million last month; COO says the 20-person team running the company, which spun off from then-Twitter in 2021, is racing to get more servers.

Politics & World Affairs

Storms forecast this week amid record Thanksgiving travel, with East Coast predicted to be most impacted by storms on Thanksgiving and Black Friday.
Hezbollah fires 250 rockets and other projectiles into northern, central Israel; barrage comes after Israel strikes Beirut, killing 29 people.
UAE arrests three suspects in killing of Moldovan-Israeli rabbi.
Russia reportedly recruits Houthi-linked Yemeni citizens to fight in Ukraine.
Romanians vote in first round of presidential elections, with right-wing Calin Georgescu and left-wing Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu leading list of 13 candidates; vote now heads to a Dec. 8 runoff.

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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

It might have been closer than it should have, but the Minnesota Vikings escaped Chicago with a 30-27 win over the Bears. After going 3-0 in three straight road games, the Vikings are 9-2 and are keeping pace with the division-leading Detroit Lions (10-1).

The game started well for the Vikings. The Bears got the opening kickoff, and the Vikings' defense held them to a three-and-out. The Vikings got the ball and were moving it well, going 72 yards in six plays, thanks in large part to Aaron Jones, who had three carries for 56 yards. However, on the seventh play of the drive, Jones fumbled the ball at the two-yard line. After the two teams traded punts, the Bears went on a 7-play, 79-yard drive that found the endzone, marking the first time all season the Bears scored first. With less than a minute left in the first quarter, the Vikings wasted no time, as a 15-yard run by Cam Akers, a penalty on Chicago, and a 45-yard pass to Jordan Addison got the ball to the two-yard line as the quarter ended.

One play into the second quarter, Addison caught a touchdown pass to even the score 7-7. Chicago answered with a 10-play drive, but for the second time in consecutive weeks, they had a field goal attempt blocked. With the ball back near midfield, the Vikings marched down the field (with help from a 35-yard pass interference penalty on Chicago), and on 2nd & goal from the five, Sam Darnold hit Jalen Nailor for a TD, making the score 14-7. Both teams traded punts again, then Chicago moved the ball to the Vikings' 31-yard line and kicked a field goal as time expired in the first half, cutting the Vikings' lead to four.

The Vikings got the ball to start the second half and managed to get three points on the drive thanks to a 40-yard field goal from John Parker Romo. The Bears turned the ball over on downs on their next possession, followed by three straight punts. The Vikings got a lucky break when Chicago muffed a punt, giving the ball to the good guys at the 15-yard line. Five plays later Aaron Jones crossed the goalline, making the score 24-10. Chicago was forced to punt to close out the third quarter, and with a two-score lead and the ball heading into the fourth quarter, this game seemed well in hand.

The Vikings moved the ball to Chicago's 36-yard line, but a failed fourth down attempt gave the ball back to the Bears, who went on a 10-play, 64-yard drive that found the endzone. A failed two-point conversion, however, kept the score 24-16. The Vikings answered with a field goal drive to make it a two-score game again with less than two minutes left on the clock. The Vikings went into prevent mode, which allowed Caleb Williams to drive the Bears down for a quick touchdown, and this time they made the two-point conversion, making the score 27-24. With only 22 seconds left on the clock, however, all the Vikings needed to do was secure the onside kick attempt and the game would be over. Unfortunately, this is the Vikings we're talking about. There hadn't been a successful onside recovery in the NFL this season, but a mental gaff by a Vikings player resulted in the Bears recovering the attempt. A 27-yard pass and a spiked ball later, the Bears kicked a field goal to even the score as time expired, and we were heading to overtime.

The Bears won the coin toss and elected to receive the ball, but the Vikings' defense forced a three-and-out. 10 plays and 68 yards later, John Parker Romo kicked a 29-yard field goal to win the game.

Sam Darnold completed 22 of 34 passes for 330 yards and two touchdowns. Aaron Jones carried the ball 22 times for 106 yards and a touchdown. The Bears' game plan on defense was to shut Justin Jefferson down, and although it was successful, it freed up Jordan Addison (8 catches for 162 yards and a touchdown) and T.J. Hockenson (7 catches for 114 yards). Defensively, Harrison Smith led the team with 11 tackles. Jonathan Greenard had two sacks and two tackles for a loss, and Andrew Van Ginkel had a sack as well.

Looking ahead, the Vikings host the Arizona Cardinals (6-4). While the Vikings are the better team, sometimes coming home after a long road trip can lead to unpredictable results. If the defense can keep QB Kyler Murray in check, the Vikings should be able to hit double-digit wins. Skoll!

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"Giving Thanks"

Would you like to sleep better, have a healthier heart and less aches and pains? How about a lower blood pressure, a higher self-esteem and enhanced relationships? Would you believe that the Mayo Clinic and Harvard University, as well as other scientist all say these benefits can be yours with very little effort. And it doesn't require a change in your diet or excessive exercise!

So, what is this magical therapy? GRATITUDE!!



Based on Science, Built on Trust



Joanie Holm, CNP

Gratitude comes from the Latin word gratia, which means grace, graciousness or gratefulness. Psychologist's Robert Emmons of University of California, Davis and Michael McCullough, University of Miami, were early researchers in this field. They found that 10 weeks of practicing gratitude can result in the outcomes listed above as well as: an increased happiness score, increased optimism, increased exercise, decreased physician visits, increased focus, increased patience and strengthened social connections. Wow, who doesn't want these health and relationship benefits?

Gratitude is like a muscle that you can build with exercise and practice. There are many ways to increase your gratitude muscle such as writing thank you notes, saying thank you to others in person or just mentally, writing a gratitude journal, praying and meditating. Other experts mention benefits from a brief, positive chat with a friend, a kind gesture toward a stranger and a peaceful stroll in nature. A change in mindset can help you feel better, for example feeling grateful for a helpful friend rather than feeling frustrated that you can do the task alone.

Lets get started on this journey of gratitude. Thank you for reading this essay and for watching On Call with the Prairie Doc. Thanks to all of my friends and family for the love and support you give me daily. Thanks to my church family for your spiritual support.

Now it is your turn....

Joanie Holm, CNP is the Prairie Doc Board President and co-founder of Prairie Doc Programming. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and Threads. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays on SDPB at 7pm and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB), providing health information based on science, built on trust.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Now that we are a few decades into the process of removing dams, how are the fish ecosystems doing?

-- H.F., Boulder, CO

Dams, often built to generate hydroelectric power, store water and control floods, have significant negative impacts. They disrupt natural river flows, fragment habitats and alter the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of their river. When ecosystems are functioning properly, they support a wide variety of plant and animal life, providing crucial benefits to the environment and local communities.

A healthy river is marked by clean water, diverse plant and fish life and the ability to transport sediments that replenish beaches and floodplains, all working together sustain life and adapt to ecosystem changes.

As the dam removal process has progressed in the U.S., scientists have seen significant improvements in waterway ecosystems. A long-term study that monitored the Cedar River in Washington state after dam removal showed a remarkable recovery in local fish populations. In the 20 years following the removal of the dam, chinook salmon, coho salmon and mountain whitefish returned to pre-dam population levels. The chinook salmon reached the river's carrying capacity—the maximum number of fish the river can support. Also, salmon diversity tripled. This demonstrates the long-term benefits of river restoration through dam removal and highlights the potential for ecosystems to recover when natural flow is restored.

In another example, the removal of dams along the Klamath River in California is also helping restore native fish populations. While the deconstruction of the dams initially led to the death of non-native fish species, it paved the way for native fish—like chinook salmon and steelhead—to migrate upstream for the first time in over 60 years, offering hope that the river will once again become a thriving ecosystem for its native species. According to Bob Pagliuco, a NOAA marine habitat resource specialist, the Klamath River will soon see the return of these iconic fish species to areas where they had been absent for decades.

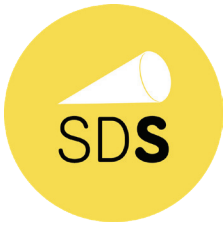
Dam removal has benefits beyond increased fish populations, allowing for vegetation regrowth, natural sediment transport, better water quality and safe spaces for fish from predators.

Despite these benefits, dam removal remains controversial. But by raising awareness, advocating for policy change and engaging the public through protests, the tide can be turned. Supporting legislation like the Clean Water Act is also crucial. By staying informed and actively participating, we can ensure the long-term health of our rivers and a future with thriving ecosystems and abundant wildlife.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.



Workers dismantle the Savage Rapids Dam on the Rogue River in Oregon. Credit: Oregon State University, FlickrCC.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Big Sioux River buffer program takes off with higher landowner payments

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - NOVEMBER 24, 2024 8:00 AM

A \$3 million state effort to help landowners keep their agricultural runoff out of the Big Sioux River has experienced a spike in enrollments since the program began offering higher payments.

The Legislature authorized the Riparian Buffer Initiative in 2021 with a spending deadline of June 30, 2025.

The river is polluted with dissolved soils, agricultural chemicals and livestock waste beyond levels safe for uses including fishing and swimming. The program pays landowners to leave a vegetated area along the river or a tributary, which helps to filter out pollutants before they enter the water. Buffer strip root systems also prevent erosion along the banks.

However, nobody had signed up for the program by January 2023.

"The feedback that we got back was that we're not paying enough to really move the needle," Hunter Roberts, secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, told lawmakers at the time.

So, the department doubled incentive payments that year.

Under the old rates, a 50-foot wide, half-mile-long buffer under a minimum 10-year contract would have yielded a total payment of about \$5,000 for cropland and \$1,300 for pastureland. Under the new formula, the rates for the same examples increased to about \$13,000 for cropland and \$3,400 for pastureland.

Since then, interest in the program has increased.

According to the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources' 2024 progress report, the department had enrolled 35 total projects as of late October, covering 608 acres of buffers along 218,556 linear feet of the river.

The department estimates that will result in annual reductions of 1,593 pounds of nitrogen, 332 pounds of phosphorus and 206 tons of sediment entering the river.

The project has spent \$1.17 million of its \$3 million in funding. An additional \$800,000 has been earmarked for 26 buffer projects in progress, covering another 382 acres and 143,000 linear feet of the riverbank. The report emphasizes the department's intent to fully allocate all remaining funds by the program's deadline of June 30, 2025.

The report notes that partnerships with the South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks Department, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and other conservation organizations have been instrumental in promoting the program.

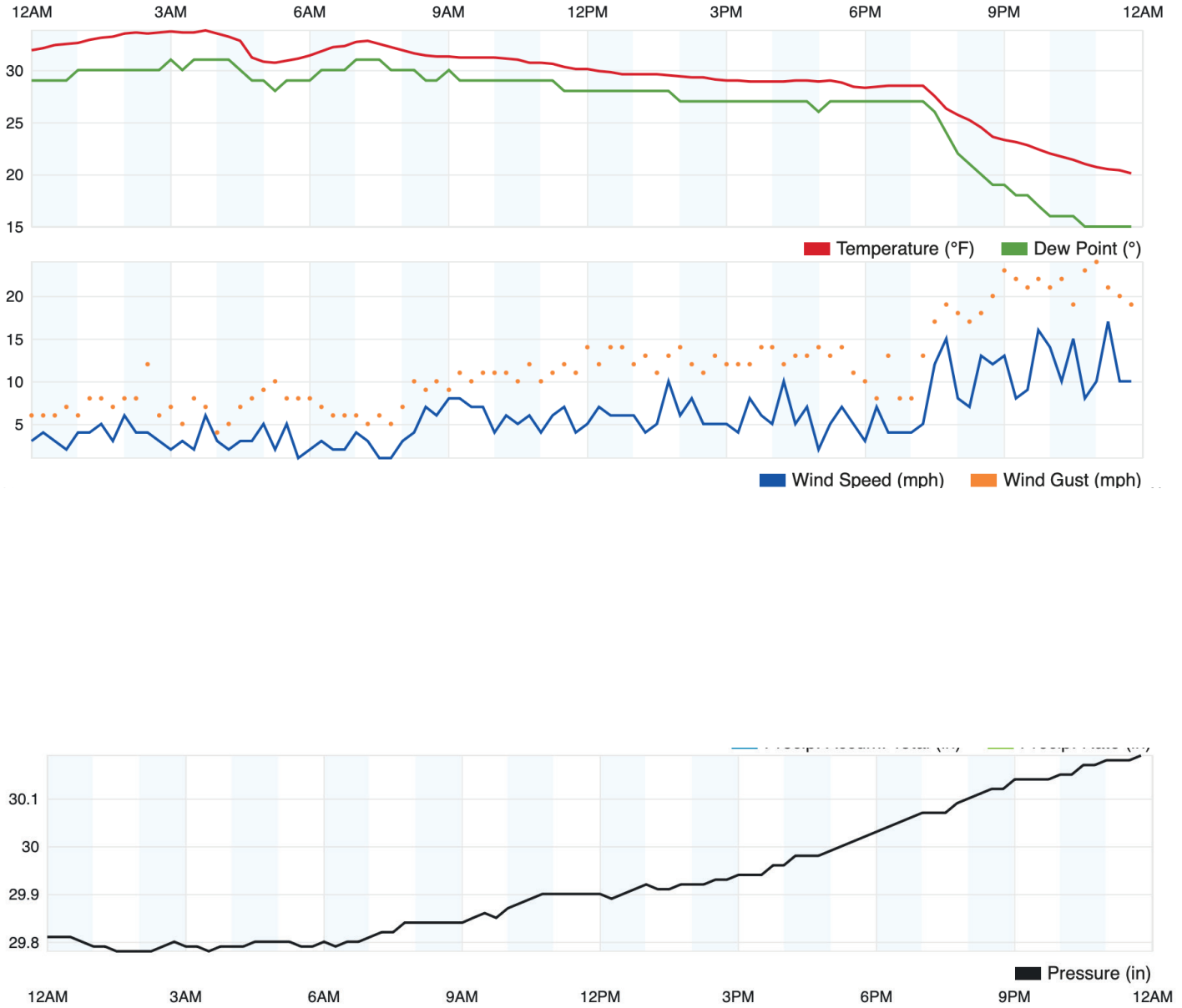
While the state program has made strides in increasing participation, it has also faced questions regarding its overlap with existing local initiatives. Similar projects established by the East Dakota Water Development District, based in Brookings, also offer buffer zone support along the river. Those projects' administrators said they had enrolled over 100 landowners and nearly 3,600 acres, totaling almost 89 miles of stream protection, as of November 2023.

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.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 26 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 8 °F

Mostly Clear

Tuesday



High: 26 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tuesday Night



Low: 10 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Wednesday



High: 23 °F

Slight Chance
Snow then
Mostly Cloudy

Into the Holiday Weekend

Today



Highs: 22 to 33°F
Lows: 8 to 12°F

Tuesday



Highs: 23 to 32°F
Lows: 9 to 14°F

Becoming cloudy in the evening

Wednesday



Highs: 20 to 31°F
Lows: 8 to 12°F

25% chance of light snow east of MO River

Thanksgiving



Highs: 17 to 28°F
Lows: -3 to 5°F

15% chance light snow along ND/SD border



We have a few relatively nice days before our next chance for snow Wednesday. Today and Tuesday will have highs in the low 20s to low 30s. Wednesday, areas along the ND/SD border and east of the Missouri River will have a slight chance for some light snow. Accumulations are expected to be less than half an inch. Thursday will be the last day before much colder air sets in.

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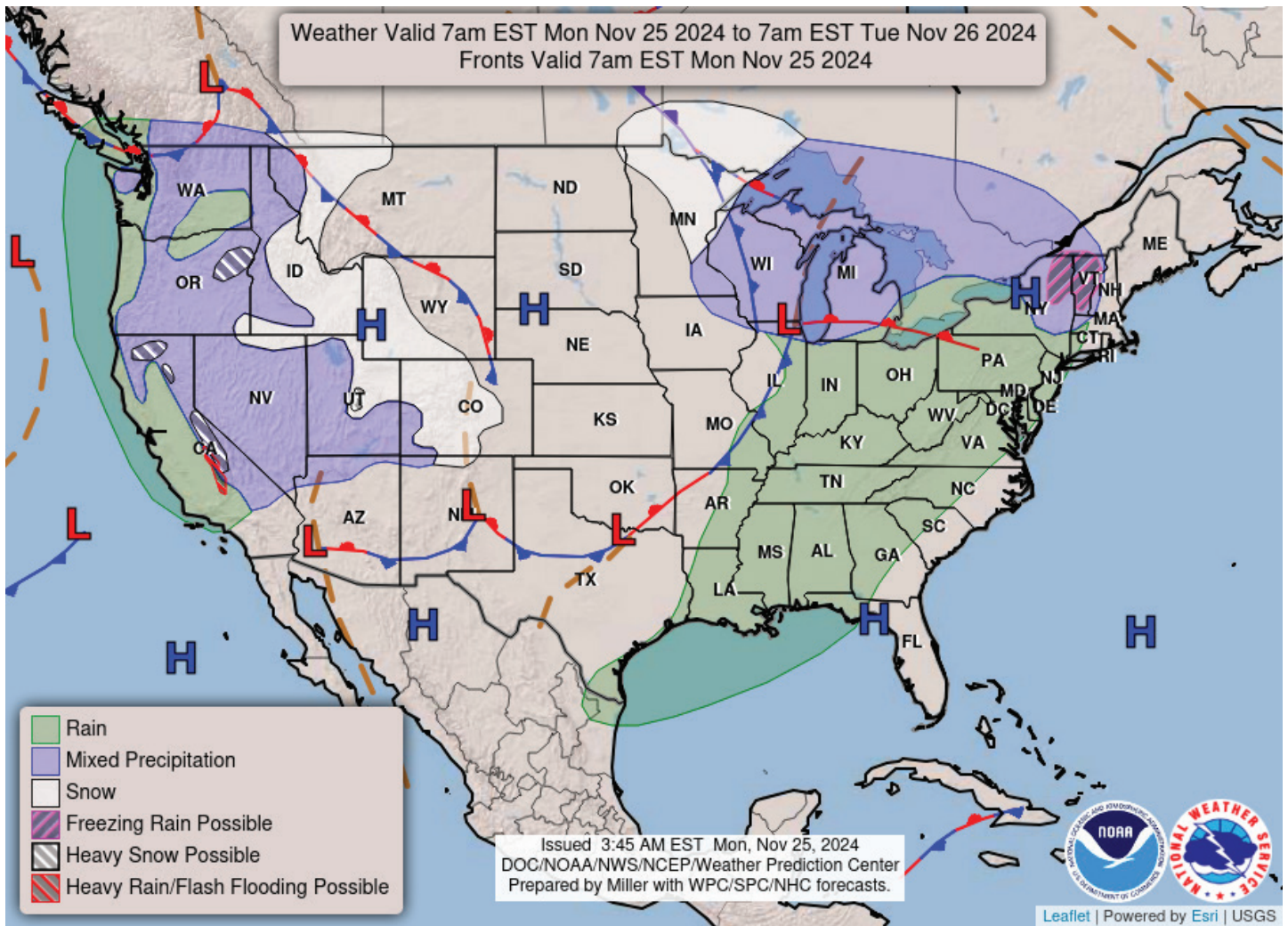
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 34 °F at 3:47 AM
Low Temp: 20 °F at 11:24 PM
Wind: 24 mph at 10:54 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 11 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 64 in 1960
Record Low: -22 in 1996
Average High: 38
Average Low: 15
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.64
Precip to date in Nov.: 1.83
Average Precip to date: 21.11
Precip Year to Date: 21.71
Sunset Tonight: 4:55:21 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:45:05 am



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Today in Weather History

November 25, 1896: A major blizzard occurred throughout South Dakota, beginning on the 25th and continuing until the 27th. The storm began in most locations as rain and sleet, which turned to snow, accompanied by strong northerly winds. The 26th was the peak of the storm, and the heaviest snow and strongest wind occurred throughout the north, northeast, west and southwest portions of the state. In eastern and southeastern South Dakota, sleet was extraordinarily heavy on the 26th. There were many reports received of large quantities of trees stripped of smaller branches and limbs due to the weight of the sleet. Across the state, telegraph lines were flattened in all directions, and the poles were broken off in many places. Although there was very little loss of livestock in areas with available shelter, there were heavy individual losses on the ranges of South Dakota. Several people also perished on the ranges west of the Missouri River when they became lost in the storm without livestock. Reports of snowfall totals from the storm are very limited but included 17 inches at Aberdeen and 12 inches at Mellette. This blizzard was the most prominent individual feature in a November that was overall frigid, with a state mean temperature of 16.5 degrees, which was 17.2 degrees below normal at the time. The month still stands as the coldest November on record in Aberdeen, with an average temperature nearly 7 degrees Fahrenheit colder than the next coldest November (1985). The lowest reported temperature during the month was -29 F at Webster. Aberdeen recorded a low of -25 F on the 29th with a high temperature of -8 F that same day. The month currently stands as the snowiest November on record and second snowiest overall month on record for Aberdeen, with 32.8 inches, behind 38.5 inches recorded in February 1915.

November 25, 1703: The greatest windstorm ever recorded in the southern part of Great Britain reaches its peak intensity which it maintains through November 27. Winds gust up to 120 mph, and 9,000 people perish in the mighty gale, most of them sailors of the British fleet. The storm continued through December 2nd. It was reported that 4,000 oaks died in the New Forest and an attempt to count the toll of trees in Kent gave up at 17,000. At sea, the Eddystone Lighthouse was washed away, killing six people. Daniel Defoe wrote a journal called *The Storm* (1704) about this event. The storm has been called the first substantial work of modern journalism.

1950 - A great storm hit the Northern and Central Appalachians with snow and high winds. Winds reached hurricane force along eastern slopes of the Appalachians, with gusts to 100 mph at Hartford CT, 110 mph at Concord NH, and 160 mph at Mount Washington NH. Heavy rain also hit the eastern slopes, with eight inches reported at Slide Mountain NY. The western slopes were buried under heavy snow. The storm produced record snowfall totals of 27.7 inches at Pittsburgh PA, and 36.3 inches at Steubenville OH. The snow, and record cold temperatures, resulted in 160 deaths. (25th-26th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1970 - The temperature at Tallahassee, FL, dipped to 13 degrees, following a high of 40 degrees the previous day. The mercury then reached 67 degrees on the 26th, and highs were in the 70s the rest of the month. (The Weather Channel)

1983 - The Great Thanksgiving Weekend Blizzard hit Denver, CO. The storm produced 21.5 inches of snow in 37 hours, closing Stapleton Airport for 24 hours. The snow and wind closed interstate highways around Denver. Visibility at Limon CO was down to zero for 24 hours. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - An early morning thunderstorm in southeastern Texas produced high winds which rolled a mobile home east of Bay City killing two of the four occupants. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in central and eastern Texas, with nine inches reported at Huntsville, and 8.5 inches at Wimberly. Snow fell across northern and central Lower Michigan, with totals ranging up to nine inches at Cadillac. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in Arkansas, eastern Oklahoma and northwest Texas during the day and into the night. Thunderstorms in Texas produced softball size hail at Alba, and wind gusts to 80 mph at Krum. Hail and high winds caused nearly five million dollars damage at Kaufman TX, and strong downburst winds derailed twenty-eight freight cars at Fruitvale TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



THE SOURCE OF PEACE

Russ Ortiz was an outstanding baseball pitcher for the Atlanta Braves. In fact, in one season he won twenty-one games.

On one occasion a reporter asked him how he kept calm in situations when it looked like he would lose control of the game. Quickly he replied, "When I am on the mound and need a calming experience I look under the bill of my cap. You see, I keep a Bible verse there," he explained. "When I started doing it," he continued, "it helped me put things in perspective."

The Christian is never guaranteed a life free from stress, strife or the worries of the world. It does not assure us of quiet paths and calm waters. But it does assure us that when we keep our minds securely focused on God and His Word, we will know perfect peace even in the most turbulent times.

Isaiah, in a song of praise to the Lord, wrote, "You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You, whose thoughts are fixed on You!"

This is a powerful promise for the believer. His Word provides all of the assurance that we need to know a perfect peace. It exceeds all of the wisdom, knowledge and understanding that we find in the writings of worldly authors. In Him we have everything we need: His unending and unchanging love. When we accept that fact, there is no reason for us to fear the chaos that confronts us or the confusion that surrounds us.

Prayer: Lord, may we accept the peace that You offer us through Your Son, our Savior. Help us to rely on Him and His power to protect and preserve us in all things. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Isaiah 26:3

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 Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

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Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

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Password _____

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

paypal.me/paperpaul

Pay with Venmo: [@paperpaul](https://venmo.com/paperpaul) Phone Number to Confirm: 7460

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.22.24

13 20 26 32 65 2

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$489,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 1
DRAW: Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.23.24

2 8 10 14 49 9

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$15,760,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 16 Mins
DRAW: 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.24.24

7 11 14 26 48 15

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 31 Mins
DRAW: 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.23.24

18 20 28 30 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$118,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 31
DRAW: Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.23.24

36 40 41 50 60 13

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 23
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.23.24

12 13 34 44 67 8

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$184,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 23
DRAW: 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

Garry scores 20, South Dakota State takes down Duquesne 71-60 at Cayman Islands Classic

By The Associated Press undefined

GEORGE TOWN, George Town (AP) — Kalen Garry scored 20 points as South Dakota State beat Duquesne 71-60 on Sunday at the Cayman Islands Classic.

Garry also had five rebounds for the Jackrabbits (5-1). Oscar Cluff scored 17 points while shooting 6 of 10 from the field and 5 for 6 from the free-throw line and added 11 rebounds and five assists. Matthew Mors had 15 points and shot 4 of 7 from the field, including 1 for 3 from 3-point range, and went 6 for 8 from the foul line.

The Dukes (0-5) were led by Tre Dinkins, who recorded 19 points and two steals. Maximus Edwards added 11 points for Duquesne. Jake DiMichele finished with 10 points.

South Dakota State was tied with Duquesne at the half, 33-33, with Garry (12 points) its high scorer before the break. Joe Saylor's 3-pointer with 8:54 remaining in the second half gave South Dakota State the lead for good at 52-51.

Russia reportedly captures a Briton fighting for Ukraine as Russian troops advance

By The Associated Press undefined

Russia's military captured a British national fighting with Ukrainian troops who have occupied part of Russia's Kursk region, according to reports Monday, as Moscow began daylight drone attacks on civilian areas of Ukraine and its ground forces accelerated gains along parts of the front line.

The Briton was identified by state news agency Tass and other media as James Scott Rhys Anderson. Tass quoted him as saying that he had served as a signalman in the British army for four years and then joined the International Legion of Ukraine, formed early on in Russia's nearly 3-year-old war against its neighbor.

On the battlefield, Ukrainian forces are straining to hold at bay a push by Russia's bigger army at places in the eastern Donetsk region. Russian forces recently have gained ground at "a significantly quicker rate" than they did in the whole of last year, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank.

The Russians have detected and are exploiting weaknesses in the Ukrainian defenses, it said in an analysis late Sunday.

The war surpassed 1,000 days last week, and the milestone coincided with a significant escalation in hostilities.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's air force said Russia is adapting its drone tactics, as it fired 145 Shahed drones at Ukraine.

Russia has started launching drones during the day, whereas in the past most drone attacks occurred during the night, the air force said.

Andrii Kovalenko, the head of the National Security Council's Counter-disinformation Center, said earlier this month that the Russians were looking to conserve their stocks of more destructive but more expensive missiles and also terrorize civilians.

The air force said it stopped almost all the drones before they struck.

But a morning missile attack on downtown Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city in the northeast, injured at least 23 people, according to Mayor Ihor Terekhov. He said the attack on a densely populated residential area was carried out by a modified surface-to-air S-400 missile.

The father of the British man says he was told by a Ukrainian commander of his capture

The captured Briton reportedly served as an instructor for Ukrainian troops and was deployed to the Kursk region against his will. Tass published a video of the man saying in English that he doesn't want to be "here."

The report couldn't be independently verified, but if confirmed it could be one of the first publicly known case of a Western national captured on Russian soil while fighting for Ukraine.

The U.K. Embassy in Moscow said officials were "supporting the family of a British man following reports of his detention" but provided no further details.

The Russian Defense Ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The soldier's father, Scott Anderson, told Britain's Daily Mail newspaper that his son's Ukrainian commander had informed him that the young man had been captured.

Scott Anderson said his son had served in the British military for four years, then briefly worked as a police custody officer before going to Ukraine to fight. He said he tried to convince his son not to join the Ukrainian military, and now he fears for his safety.

"I'm hoping he'll be used as a bargaining chip, but my son told me they torture their prisoners and I'm so frightened he'll be tortured," he told the newspaper.

The International Legion for Defense of Ukraine was created at the request of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy shortly after Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The Legion is a unit of Ukraine's Ground Forces that consists mostly of foreign volunteers. Apart from the Legion, Ukraine recruits foreigners to other units of its army, filling squads, companies, or even battalions.

Early on in the war, Ukraine's authorities said over 20,000 people from 52 countries came to Ukraine to help it defend itself against Russia's aggression. Ever since, the numbers of foreign fighters in the ranks of the Ukrainian military have been classified.

Prosecutors demand maximum sentence for Gisèle Pelicot's ex-husband in mammoth rape trial in France

AVIGNON, France (AP) — A mammoth rape trial in France moved into a new phase Monday with prosecutors beginning to lay out the verdicts and punishments they want for dozens of men accused of raping Gisèle Pelicot while she was drugged and rendered unconscious by her husband.

After hearings stretching over nearly three months, the trial in the southern city of Avignon is beginning to wrap up, with the prosecutors' summing up of the verdicts they want for the 51 accused.

They started Monday by focusing on Dominique Pelicot, the man that 71-year-old Gisèle Pelicot was married to for nearly 50 years. He has acknowledged that for years, he mixed sedatives into her food and drink, so he could rape her and also invite dozens of strangers to rape her, too.

Prosecutor Laure Chabaud asked for the maximum possible penalty for aggravated rape — 20 years — against Gisèle Pelicot's now ex-husband. The 72-year-old stared down at the floor, one hand on the handle of his cane, as the prosecutor spoke.

"Twenty years between the four walls of a prison," she said. "It's both a lot and not enough."

The court is expected to deliver its verdicts before Dec. 20.

Foreign ministers meet in Italy for the last G7 of the Biden administration

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

FIUGGI, Italy (AP) — Foreign ministers from the world's leading industrialized nations are meeting Monday, with the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East entering decisive phases and a certain pressure to advance diplomatic efforts ahead of the new U.S. administration taking over.

Hopes for brokering a cease-fire in Gaza and Lebanon are foremost on the agenda of the Group of Seven meeting outside Rome that is gathering ministers from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, in the last G7 encounter of the Blinken administration.

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On the first day of the two-day gathering Monday, the G7 will be joined by ministers from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, as well as the Secretary General of the Arab League.

"With partners will be discussed ways to support efforts to reach a cease-fire in Gaza and Lebanon, initiatives to support the population and the promotion of a credible political horizon for stability in the region," the Italian foreign ministry said.

The so-called "Quintet" grouping of the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and the UAE has been working to finalize a "day after" plan for Gaza, and there is some urgency to make progress before the Trump administration takes over in January. President-elect Donald Trump is expected to pursue a policy that strongly favors Israel over the aspirations of the Palestinians.

As the G7 ministers arrived in Italy, Israel's ambassador to the U.S., Mike Herzog, told Israeli Army Radio on Monday a cease-fire deal to end fighting between Israel and the Lebanon-based Hezbollah could be reached "within days."

Host Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani added another item to the G7 agenda last week after the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his former defense minister and Hamas' military chief.

Italy is a founding member of the court and hosted the 1998 Rome conference that gave birth to it. But Italy's right-wing government has been a strong supporter of Israel after the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks, while also providing humanitarian aid for Palestinians in Gaza.

The Italian government has taken a cautious line, reaffirming its support and respect for the court but expressing concern that the warrants were politically motivated.

"There can be no equivalence between the responsibilities of the state of Israel and the terrorist organization of Hamas," Premier Giorgia Meloni said, echoing the statement from U.S. President Joe Biden.

Nathalie Tocci, director of the Rome-based Institute for International Affairs think tank, said Italy would be seeking to forge a united front on the ICC warrants, at least among the six G7 countries that are signatories of the court: everyone but the U.S.

But in an essay this weekend in La Stampa newspaper, Tocci warned it was a risky move, since the U.S. tends to dictate the G7 line and has blasted the ICC warrants against Netanyahu as "outrageous."

"If Italy and the other (five G7) signatories of the ICC are unable to maintain the line on international law, they will not only erode it anyway but will be acting against our interests," Tocci wrote, recalling Italy's recourse to international law in demanding protection for Italian U.N. peacekeepers who have come under fire in southern Lebanon.

The other major talking point of the G7 meeting is Ukraine, and tensions have only heightened since Russia attacked Ukraine last week with an experimental, hypersonic ballistic missile that escalated the nearly 33-month-old war.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha is expected at the G7 in Fiuggi on Tuesday, and NATO and Ukraine are to hold emergency talks the same day in Brussels.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said the strike was retaliation for Kyiv's use of U.S. and British longer-range missiles capable of striking deeper into Russian territory.

The G7 has been at the forefront of providing military and economic support for Ukraine since Russia's invasion in February 2022 and G7 members are particularly concerned about how a Trump administration will change the U.S. approach.

Trump has criticized the billions of dollars that the Biden administration has poured into Ukraine and has said he could end the war in 24 hours, comments that appear to suggest he would press Ukraine to surrender territory that Russia now occupies.

Italy is a strong supporter of Ukraine and has backed the U.S. decision to allow Ukraine to strike Russia with U.S.-made, longer-range missiles. But Italy has invoked the country's constitutional repudiation of war in declining to provide Ukraine with offensive weaponry to strike inside Russia.

The G7 foreign ministers' meeting, the second of the Italian presidency after ministers gathered in Capri in April, is being held in the medieval town of Fiuggi southeast of Rome, best known for its thermal spas.

On Monday, which coincides with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, ministers will attend the inauguration of a red bench meant to symbolize Italy's focus on fighting gender-based violence.

Over the weekend, tens of thousands of people marched in Rome to protest gender-based violence, which in Italy so far this year has claimed the lives of 99 women, according to a report last week by the Eures think tank.

Middle East latest: Israeli ambassador to US says Hezbollah cease-fire deal could come 'within days'

By The Associated Press undefined

The Israeli ambassador to Washington says that a cease-fire deal to end fighting between Israel and the Lebanon-based Hezbollah could be reached "within days."

Ambassador Mike Herzog told Israeli Army Radio on Monday that there remained "points to finalize" and that any deal required agreement from the government. But he said "we are close to a deal" and that "it can happen within days."

Among the issues that remain is an Israeli demand to reserve the right to act should Hezbollah violate its obligations under the emerging deal. The deal seeks to push Hezbollah and Israeli troops out of southern Lebanon.

Israel accuses Hezbollah of not adhering to a U.N. resolution that ended the 2006 war between the sides that made similar provisions, and Israel has concerns that Hezbollah could stage a Hamas-style cross-border attack from southern Lebanon if it maintains a heavy presence there. Lebanon says Israel also violated the 2006 resolution. Lebanon complains about military jets and naval ships entering Lebanese territory even when there is no active conflict.

It is not clear whether Lebanon would agree to the demand.

The optimism surrounding a deal comes after a top U.S. envoy held talks between the sides last week in a bid to clinch a deal.

Hezbollah began attacking Israel on Oct. 8, 2023, a day after Hamas' raid on southern Israel, setting off more than a year of fighting. That escalated into all-out war in September with massive Israeli airstrikes in Lebanon and later an Israeli ground incursion into the country's south.

Hezbollah has fired thousands of rockets into Israeli cities and towns, including some 250 on Sunday.

Here's the Latest:

Palestinian officials say Israeli forces killed 2 people, including a 13-year-old, in the occupied West Bank JERUSALEM — The Palestinian Health Ministry says Israeli forces killed two people, including a 13-year-old, in the occupied West Bank.

The Israeli military said the two had thrown explosives at forces overnight near the Palestinian town of Yabad and that the forces had responded by opening fire.

The Health Ministry identified the two as Mohammed Hamarsheh, 13, and Ahmad Zayd, 20. It did not disclose details about the circumstances behind their deaths.

It was the latest bloodshed in the West Bank, which has faced a surge of violence throughout the 13-month war in Gaza. The Health Ministry says nearly 800 people have been killed, with more than 160 of them 18 and younger.

Many have been killed in fighting with the Israeli military, but Palestinians throwing rocks and others not involved in confrontations have also been killed. There has also been an increase in Palestinian attacks against Israelis in the West Bank since the war in Gaza began.

Israeli government orders public entities to stop advertising in Haaretz newspaper

JERUSALEM — The Israeli government has ordered all public entities to stop advertising in the Haaretz newspaper, which is known for its critical coverage of Israel's actions in the Palestinian territories.

Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi said Sunday that the government had approved his proposal

after Haaretz' publisher called for sanctions against Israel and referred to Palestinian militants as "freedom fighters."

"We advocate for a free press and freedom of expression, but also the freedom of the government to decide not to fund incitement against the State of Israel," Karhi wrote on the social platform X.

Noa Landau, the deputy editor of Haaretz, accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of "working to silence independent and critical media," comparing him to autocratic leaders in other countries.

Haaretz regularly publishes investigative journalism and opinion columns critical of Israel's ongoing half-century occupation of lands the Palestinians want for a future state.

It has also been critical of Israel's war conduct in Gaza at a time when most local media support the war and largely ignore the suffering of Palestinian civilians.

In a speech in London last month, Haaretz publisher Amos Schocken said Israel has imposed "a cruel apartheid regime" on the Palestinians and was battling "Palestinian freedom fighters that Israel calls 'terrorists.'"

He later issued a statement, saying he had reconsidered his remarks.

"For the record, Hamas are not freedom fighters," he posted on X. "I should have said: using terrorism is illegitimate. I was wrong not to say that."

Iran's supreme leader says Netanyahu should be 'sentenced to death'

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran's supreme leader has suggested that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should be "sentenced to death" for his role in the ongoing wars in the Gaza Strip against Hamas and in Lebanon.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei made the remarks Monday during an event in which he spoke to members of the Basij, the all-volunteer arm of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.

Khamenei referenced the International Criminal Court's decision to issue an arrest warrant for Netanyahu and Israel's former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.

"What the Zionist regime did in Gaza and Lebanon is not a victory, it is a war crime. Now they have issued a warrant for their arrest. This is not enough!" Khamenei said, according to remarks published by the state-run IRNA news agency. "Netanyahu and the criminal leaders of this regime must be sentenced to death."

The International Criminal Court at the Hague does not issue death sentences.

Khamenei also insisted those in Iran's self-described "Axis of Resistance," like the Palestinian militant group Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah, would be stronger after the war.

"The idiots should not think that bombing houses and hospitals in Gaza and Lebanon is a victory," he said. "The enemy has not become winner in Gaza and Lebanon, and it will not be winner."

Thousands of Imran Khan supporters defy tear gas, lockdown and arrest to head to Pakistani capital

By MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Thousands of supporters of Pakistan's imprisoned former premier Imran Khan have defied a lockdown and widespread arrests to head to the capital Monday to demand his release.

Khan, who has been in jail for over a year and faces more than 150 criminal cases, remains popular. His party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf or PTI, says the cases are politically motivated.

The "long march" comes ahead of a visit by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko to Islamabad.

The convoy of vehicles carrying protesters is expected to reach the capital later Monday. Security officials say they expect between 9,000-11,000 demonstrators, while the PTI claims the number will be much higher.

The lockdown, which has been in place for two days, has disrupted daily life. Travel between Islamabad and other cities has become nearly impossible. Ambulances and cars were seen turning back from areas along the key Grand Trunk Road highway in Punjab province, where shipping containers were used to block roads.

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Footage circulating online showed some protesters, who had been traveling all night, operating heavy machinery to remove the containers.

"We are determined and we will reach Islamabad, though police are using tear gas to stop our march," Kamran Bangash, a PTI senior leader, told The Associated Press. "We will overcome all hurdles one by one, and our supporters are removing shipping containers from roads."

Bangash also said Khan's wife, Bushra Bibi, who was recently released on bail in a graft case, will lead the march along with Ali Amin Gandapur, the chief minister in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province where Khan's party remains in power.

Almost 50 kilometers (31 miles) away from Islamabad, Bibi, wearing a white head-to-toe burqa, addressed protesters while sitting in a truck, urging them to remain determined to "achieve their goal" and free Khan. She then chanted, "God is great" and left.

Khan's main political opponent, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, heads the current government.

Sharif's spokesman, Attaullah Tarar, said on Sunday that whenever any high-profile foreign delegation comes to Pakistan, the PTI "begins the politics of long marches and onslaught on Islamabad to harm the economy."

Some economists say protests cause billions of rupees in damages to the country's fragile economy.

Protesters on Sunday night burned trees as police fired tear gas to disperse crowds. Khan supporters retaliated by using slingshots and pelting security personnel with rocks.

In a bid to foil the protest, police have arrested more than 4,000 Khan supporters since Friday and suspended mobile and internet services "in areas with security concerns," which the PTI said affected the efficacy of its call for protest on social media. On Thursday, a court prohibited rallies in the capital and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said anyone violating the ban would be arrested.

Authorities say only courts can order the release of Khan, who was ousted in 2022 through a no-confidence vote in Parliament. He has been imprisoned since his first conviction in a graft case, in August 2023.

Khan has also been sentenced in several cases, including to three years, 10 years, 14 years and seven years to be served concurrently under Pakistani law. His convictions were later overturned on appeal but he cannot be freed due to other pending cases against him.

In South Korea, nations meet in final round to address global plastic crisis

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT Associated Press

Negotiators gathered in Busan, South Korea, on Monday in a final push to create a treaty to address the global crisis of plastic pollution.

It's the fifth time the world's nations convene to craft a legally binding plastic pollution accord. In addition to the national delegations, representatives from the plastics industry, scientists and environmentalists have come to shape how the world tackles the surging problem.

"We must end plastic pollution before plastic pollution ends us," Kim Wansup, South Korea's minister of environment, said during the opening session.

The planet is "choking on plastic," according to the United Nations. It's polluting lakes, rivers, oceans and people's bodies.

"Don't kick the can, or the plastic bottle, down the road," U.N. Environment Programme Executive Director Inger Andersen said in a message aimed at negotiators.

This "is an issue about the intergenerational justice of those generations that will come after us and be living with all this garbage. We can solve this and we must get it done in Busan," she said in an interview.

The previous four global meetings have revealed sharp differences in goals and interests. This week's talks go through Saturday.

Led by Norway and Rwanda, 66 countries plus the European Union say they want to address the total amount of plastic on Earth by controlling design, production, consumption and where plastic ends up. The delegation from the hard-hit island nation of Micronesia helped lead an effort to call more attention

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to “unsustainable” plastic production, called the Bridge to Busan. Island nations are grappling with vast amounts of other countries’ plastic waste washing up on their shores.

“We think it’s the heart of the treaty, to go upstream and to get to the problem at its source,” said Dennis Clare, legal advisor and plastics negotiator for Micronesia. “There’s a tagline, ‘You can’t recycle your way out of this problem.’”

Some plastic-producing and oil and gas countries, including Saudi Arabia, disagree. They vigorously oppose any limits on plastic manufacturing. Most plastic is made from fossil fuels. Saudi Arabia is the world’s largest exporter of primary polypropylene, a common type of plastic, accounting for an estimated 17% of exports last year, according to the Plastics Industry Association.

China, the United States and Germany led the global plastics trade by exports and imports in 2023, the association said.

The plastics industry has been advocating for a treaty focused on redesigning plastic products, recycling and reuse, sometimes referred to as “circularity.” Chris Jahn, International Council of Chemical Associations secretariat, said negotiators should focus on ending plastic waste in the environment, not plastic production, to get a deal. Many countries won’t join a treaty if it includes production caps, he said.

To continue to progress and grow as a global economy, there are going to be more plastics, Jahn added.

“So we should strive then to keep those plastics in the economy and out of the environment,” Jahn said.

The United States delegation at first said countries should develop their own plans to act, a position viewed as favoring industry. It changed its position this summer, saying the U.S. is open to considering global targets for reductions in plastic production.

Environmental groups accused the U.S. of backtracking as negotiations approached.

Center for Coalfield Justice executive director Sarah Martik said the United States is standing on the sidelines rather than leading, putting “their thumb on the scale throughout the entirety of the negotiations.” She hopes this does not derail other countries’ ambition.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released a national strategy to prevent plastic pollution Thursday, but Martik said she thinks too many of the measures are voluntary to make a difference.

Democratic U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, of Oregon, said it’s a mistake for the United States to settle for the lowest common denominator proposals, just to get some kind of agreement.

Luis Vayas Valdivieso, the committee chair from Ecuador, recently proposed text for sections where he thinks the delegations could agree.

The production and use of plastics globally is set to reach 736 million tons by 2040, up 70% from 2020, without policy changes, according to the intergovernmental Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Research published in Science this month found it is still possible to nearly end plastic pollution. The policies that make the most difference are: mandating new products be made with 40% post-consumer recycled plastic; limiting new plastic production to 2020 levels; investing significantly in plastic waste management, such as landfills and waste collection services and implementing a small fee on plastic packaging.

The treaty is the only way to solve plastic pollution at this scale, said Douglas McCauley, professor at UC Santa Barbara and UC Berkeley. McCauley co-led the research.

Margaret Spring, chief conservation and science officer for Monterey Bay Aquarium, said plastic pollution used to be considered largely a waste problem. Now it is widely viewed as an existential crisis that must be addressed, said Spring, who represents the International Science Council at the negotiations.

“I’ve never seen people’s understanding of this issue move as fast, given how complex the topic is,” she said. “It gives me hope that we can actually start moving the dial.”

Uruguay's leftist opposition candidate Yamandú Orsi becomes country's new president

By NAYARA BATSCHE Associated Press

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay (AP) — Uruguay's leftist opposition candidate, Yamandú Orsi, became the country's new president in a tight runoff Sunday, ousting the conservative governing coalition and making the South American nation the latest to rebuke the incumbent party in a year of landmark elections worldwide.

Even as the vote count continued, Álvaro Delgado, the presidential candidate for the center-right ruling coalition, conceded defeat to his challenger while surrounded by sullen-looking family members and colleagues.

"The country of liberty, equality and fraternity has triumphed once again," Orsi said to sprawling crowds of supporters that waved flags and shouted their support. "I will be the president who calls for national dialogue again and again, who builds a more integrated society and country."

As initial exit polls began showing Orsi, 57, a working-class former history teacher and two-time mayor from Uruguay's Broad Front coalition, holding a lead over Delgado, cheers rang out across Montevideo's beaches.

Delgado told supporters gathered at his own party's headquarters in the capital of Montevideo that he had lost. The crowd was hushed.

"With sadness, but without guilt, we can congratulate the winner," he told them. "But it's one thing to lose the elections and another to be defeated. We are not defeated," he added, generating a burst of applause.

A political heir to former President José "Pepe" Mujica, an ex-Marxist guerilla who became a global icon for transforming Uruguay into one of the most liberal and environmentally sustainable nations in the region, Orsi rode to power on promises of safe change and nostalgia for his left-wing party's redistributive social policies.

He struck a conciliatory tone, vowing to unite the nation of 3.4 million people after such a tight vote.

"Let's understand that there is another part of our country who have different feelings today," he said, as fireworks erupted over his stage overlooking the city's waterfront. "These people will also have to help build a better country. We need them too."

With nearly all the votes counted, electoral officials reported that Orsi won 49.8% of the vote, ahead of Delgado's 45.9%, a clear call after weeks in which the opponents appeared tied in polls.

The rest cast blank votes or abstained in defiance of Uruguay's enforced compulsory voting. Turnout in the nation with 2.7 million eligible voters reached almost 90%.

Analysts say that the candidates' lackluster campaigns failed to entice apathetic young people and generated unusual levels of voter indecision.

But with the rivals in broad consensus over key issues, the level-headed election was also emblematic of Uruguay's strong and stable democracy, free of the anti-establishment fury that has vaulted populist outsiders to power elsewhere, like the United States and neighboring Argentina.

Orsi's win ushers in a return of the Broad Front that governed for 15 consecutive years until the 2019 election of center-right President Luis Lacalle Pou.

"I called Yamandú Orsi to congratulate him as President-elect of our country and to put myself at his service and begin the transition as soon as I deem it appropriate," Lacalle Pou wrote on social media platform X.

The opposition's upset was the latest sign that simmering discontent over post-pandemic economic malaise favors anti-incumbent candidates. In the many elections that took place during 2024, voters frustrated with the status quo have punished ruling parties from the U.S. and Britain to South Korea and Japan.

But unlike elsewhere in the world, Orsi is a moderate with no plans for dramatic change. He largely agrees with his opponent on driving down the childhood poverty rate, now at a staggering 25%, and containing an upsurge in organized crime that has shaken the nation long considered among Latin America's safest.

Orsi is also likely to scupper a trade agreement with China that Lacalle Pou pursued to the chagrin of Mercosur, an alliance of South American nations promoting regional commerce.

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Despite Orsi's promise to lead a "new left" in Uruguay, his platform resembles the mix of market-friendly policies and welfare programs initiated under President Mujica and other Broad Front leaders.

From 2005-2020, the coalition presided over a period of robust economic growth and pioneering social reforms that won widespread international acclaim, including the legalization of abortion, same-sex marriage and sale of marijuana.

Mujica, now 89 and recovering from esophageal cancer, turned up at his local polling station before balloting even began on Sunday to praise Orsi's humility and Uruguay's proud stability.

"This is no small feat," he said of his nation's "citizenry that respects formal institutions."

Orsi, who for a decade served as mayor of Canelones — a town of beaches and cattle ranches also home to a Google data center and upstart tech scene — proposes tax incentives to lure investment and revitalize the critical agricultural sector. He supports security reforms that would lower the retirement age but fall short of a radical overhaul sought by Uruguay's unions that failed to pass in the Oct. 27 general election.

In that first round of voting — in which neither front-runner secured an outright majority — voters rejected generous pay-outs and the redistribution of privately managed pension funds in a rare gesture of fiscal constraint.

"He's my candidate, not only for my sake but also for my children's," said Yeny Varone, a nurse at a polling station who voted for Orsi. "In the future they'll have better working conditions, health and salaries."

Delgado, 55, a rural veterinarian with a long career in the National Party, served most recently as Secretary of the Presidency for Lacalle Pou and campaigned under the slogan "re-elect a good government."

With inflation easing and the economy expected to expand by over 3% this year, Delgado promised to continue his predecessor's pro-business policies. Lacalle Pou, who constitutionally cannot run for a second consecutive term, enjoyed high approval ratings, around 50%.

Sunday's outcome showed Uruguayans' growing discontent with the government's failure to reverse a decade of sluggish economic growth and contain crime over the past five years. Some also attributed Delgado's loss to his lack of charisma and weak campaign strategy.

"Delgado struggled with communication defending the government's agenda," said Nicolás Saldías, a Latin America and Caribbean senior analyst for the London-based Economist Intelligence Unit.

"He was focused on criticizing the Frente Amplio (Broad Front) rather than giving a positive vision of what his government would do. It was a fear-based campaign that did not satisfy enough voters."

After such a suspense-filled, close race, Orsi said his win gave him a "a strange feeling that I think takes a while to come to terms with."

"Starting tomorrow, I'll have to work very hard," he told The Associated Press from the glass-walled NH Columbia hotel, thronged exuberant friends and colleagues. "There's a lot to do."

His government will take office on March 1, 2025.

South Korea holds memorial for forced laborers at Sado mines, a day after boycotting Japanese event

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

SADO, Japan (AP) — South Korea paid tribute to wartime Korean forced laborers at Japan's Sado Island Gold Mines in a memorial ceremony on Monday, a day after boycotting a similar event organized by Japan, as tensions over historical atrocities continue to strain relations between the two sides.

Monday's ceremony at a former dormitory near the 16th century Sado mines, which were listed this summer as a UNESCO World Heritage site, was organized by South Korea's Foreign Ministry and attended by nine family members of Korean wartime laborers, the country's ambassador to Japan and other officials.

Japan on Sunday held a memorial service for all workers at the Sado mines, including Koreans. It thanked them for their contributions at the mines but did not acknowledge their forced labor or issue an apology.

At the Korean-sponsored memorial on Monday, participants in dark suits observed a moment of silence and offered white chrysanthemums in honor of the South Korean laborers, along with offerings such as

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dried fish, sliced apple and pears.

In a short speech, South Korea's Ambassador to Japan Park Chol-hee offered his condolences to the forced laborers and their families, expressing hopes that the memorial would bring comfort to families. He said South Korea and Japan should both make efforts to ensure that the painful wartime history is remembered.

"We will never forget the tears and sacrifices of the Korean workers behind the history of the Sado mines," Park said.

"I sincerely hope that today will be a day of remembrance for all the Korean workers who suffered indescribable pain under harsh conditions, and that this memorial service will bring comfort to the souls of the deceased Korean workers and their bereaved families," Park added.

At the mines, about 1,500 Koreans were forced to labor under abusive and brutal conditions during World War II, historians say.

Sunday's ceremony, which was supposed to further mend wounds, renewed tensions between the two sides. South Korea announced Saturday its decision to not attend the Japanese-organized ceremony, citing unspecified disagreements with Tokyo over the event.

There was speculation that the South Korean boycott was related to parliamentary vice minister Akiko Ikuina's attendance at Sunday's ceremony.

Ikuina reportedly visited Tokyo's controversial Yasukuni Shrine in August 2022, weeks after she was elected as a lawmaker. Japan's neighbors view Yasukuni, which commemorates 2.5 million war dead, including war criminals, as a symbol of Japan's past militarism.

The Sado mines were registered as a UNESCO cultural heritage site in July after Japan agreed to include an exhibit on the conditions of Korean forced laborers and to hold a memorial service annually, after repeated protests from the South Korean government.

Signs, including one at the site where South Koreans held their ceremony, have been erected indicating former sites of Korean laborers' dormitories. A city-operated museum in the area also added a section about Korean laborers, but a private museum attached to the main UNESCO site doesn't mention them at all.

The site of South Korea's memorial was the former Fourth Souai Dormitory, one of four dorms for Korean laborers without families. A newly erected sign there reads, "Workers from the Korean Peninsula lived here during the wartime."

On Saturday, the families visited a former housing site where Korean laborers lived. They also briefly saw the city-run museum and an exhibit on the Korean laborers as they listened to explanations through a translator.

Landslide and flash floods hit Indonesia's Sumatra island, leaving 16 dead and 6 missing

By BINSAR BAKKARA Associated Press

KARO, Indonesia (AP) — Rescuers in Indonesia recovered 16 bodies under tons of mud and rocks or that were swept away in flash floods that hit mountainside villages on Sumatra Island, officials said Monday.

Six people are still missing, officials said.

Mud, rocks and trees tumbled down a mountain after torrential rains over the weekend and rivers burst their banks, tearing through four hilly districts in North Sumatra province, washing away houses and destroying farms.

Police, soldiers and rescue workers used excavators, farm equipment and their bare hands to sift through the rubble looking for the dead and missing in Semangat Gunung, a resort area in Karo district, said Juspri M. Nadeak, who heads the local disaster management agency.

Rescuers recovered six bodies after a landslide hit two houses and a cottage late Sunday, he said. Nine injured people managed to escape, he said. Rescuers on Monday were still searching for four missing people, including two children.

Rescuers on Sunday pulled two bodies from a river after flash floods swept away at least 10 houses and

damaged about 150 houses and buildings in villages in South Tapanuli district, said Puput Mashuri, who heads the local disaster management agency.

Dozens of people were injured by the flash floods, which also destroyed more than 130 hectares (321 acres) of agricultural land and plantations.

Flash floods on Sunday left four people dead in Deli Serdang district and rescue workers on Monday were searching for two people who were swept away by flash floods and are still missing.

A landslide hit several houses in Harang Julu, a mountainside village in Padang Lawas district, said Mustari, the chief of the local search and rescue agency, who like many Indonesians goes by a single name.

Rescuers late Saturday pulled out the bodies of a four-member family, including two children, and rescued at least three injured people from the devastated village, he said.

Television reports showed relatives wailing as they watched rescuers pull mud-caked bodies from a room at a buried house in Harang Julu village.

Seasonal rain from about October to March frequently causes flooding and landslides in Indonesia, an archipelago of 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near fertile flood plains.

Last December, 12 people were swept away to Lake Toba or buried under tons of mud after heavy rains triggered flash flood and landslide in mountainside villages in North Sumatra province. Only one of them was found dead and 11 others remain unaccounted for.

The 1,145-square-kilometer (440-square-mile) Lake Toba, formed out of an ancient super volcano, is a popular sightseeing destination on the island of Sumatra and an area the government aims to develop as a magnet for international tourists.

Lebanon's Shiite Muslims pay high price in war between Israel and Hezbollah

By BASSEM MROUE and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The Lebanese civilians most devastated by the Israel- Hezbollah war are Shiite Muslims, and many of them believe they are being unfairly punished because they share a religious identity with Hezbollah militants and often live in the same areas.

"This is clear," said Wael Murtada, a young Shiite man who anxiously watched paramedics search rubble after a recent Israeli airstrike destroyed his uncle's two-story home and killed 10 people. "Who else is being attacked?"

Israel has concentrated its attacks on villages in southern and northeastern Lebanon and neighborhoods south of Beirut. This is where many Hezbollah militants operate from, and their families live side by side with large numbers of Shiites who aren't members of the group.

Israel insists its war is with Hezbollah and not the Lebanese people – or the Shiite faith. It says it only targets members of the Iran-backed militant group to try to end their yearlong campaign of firing rockets over the border. But Israel's stated objectives mean little to people like Murtada as growing numbers of Shiite civilians also die in a war that escalated sharply in recent months.

Shiites don't just measure the suffering of their community in deaths and injuries. Entire blocks of the coastal city of Tyre have been flattened. Large parts of the historic market in the city of Nabatiyeh, which dates to the Ottoman era, have been destroyed. And in Baalbek, an airstrike damaged the city's famed Hotel Palmyra, which opened in the late 19th century, and a home that dates to the Ottoman era.

"Lebanese Shias are being collectively punished. Their urban areas are being destroyed, and their cultural monuments and building are being destroyed," said Mohanad Hage Ali, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut.

As Shiites flee their war-torn villages and neighborhoods, the conflict is increasingly following them to other parts of Lebanon, and this is fueling tensions.

Scores of people have been killed by Israeli airstrikes on Christian, Sunni and Druze areas where displaced Shiites had taken refuge. Many residents in these areas now think twice before providing shelter

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to displaced people out of fear they may have links to Hezbollah.

"The Israelis are targeting all of Lebanon," said Wassef Harakeh, a lawyer from Beirut's southern suburbs who in 2022 ran against Hezbollah in the country's parliamentary elections and whose office was recently demolished by an Israeli airstrike. He believes part of Israel's goal is to exacerbate frictions within the small Mediterranean country, which has a long history of sectarian fighting even though diverse groups live together peacefully these days.

Some Shiites say statements from the Israeli military over the years have only reinforced suspicions that their wider community is being targeted as a means to put pressure on Hezbollah.

One commonly cited example is the so-called Dahiyeh doctrine, which was first espoused by Israeli generals during the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war. It is a reference to the southern suburbs of Beirut where Hezbollah is headquartered and where entire residential blocks, bridges and shopping compounds were destroyed in both wars. Israel says Hezbollah hides weapons and fighters in such areas, turning them into legitimate military targets.

A video released by the Israeli military last month has been interpreted by Shiites as further proof that little distinction is being made between Hezbollah fighters and Shiite civilians.

Speaking from a southern Lebanese village he did not name, Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari called it "a terror base. This is a Lebanese village, a Shiite village built by Hezbollah." As he toured a house and showed stocks of hand grenades, rifles, night-vision goggles and other military equipment, Hagari said: "Every house is a terror base."

Another army spokesperson disputed the notion that Israel tries to blur the line between combatants and civilians. "Our war is with the terror group Hezbollah and not with the Lebanese population, whatever its origin," said Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani. He denied that Israel was intentionally trying to disrupt the social fabric of Lebanon, and pointed to Israel's evacuation warnings to civilians ahead of airstrikes as a step it takes to mitigate harm.

Many Lebanese, including some Shiites, blame Hezbollah for their suffering, while also decrying Israel's bombardments. Hezbollah began firing rockets into Israel last year the day after Hamas attacked Israel and started the war in Gaza; this went against the group's promises to use its weapons only to defend Lebanon.

Since last October, more than 3,500 people have been killed in Lebanon, and women and children accounted for more than 900 of the dead, according to the Health Ministry. More than 1 million people have been displaced from their homes. Shiites, who make up a third of Lebanon's 5 million people, have borne the brunt of this suffering. Israel says it has killed well over 2,000 Hezbollah members in the past year.

The death and destruction in Lebanon ramped up significantly in mid-September, when Israeli airstrikes began targeting Hezbollah's leaders, and once again in early October, when Israeli ground troops invaded.

Early in the war, Israeli airstrikes killed about 500 Hezbollah members but caused very little collateral damage. But since late September, airstrikes have destroyed entire buildings and homes, and in some cases killed dozens of civilians when the intended target was one Hezbollah member or official.

On one particularly bloody day, Sept. 23, Israeli airstrikes killed almost 500 people and prompted hundreds of thousands of people – again, mostly Shiites -- to flee their homes in panic.

Murtada's relatives fled from Beirut's southern suburbs in late September after entire blocks had been wiped out by airstrikes. They moved 22 kilometers (about 14 miles) east of the city, to the predominantly Druze mountain village of Baalchmay to stay in the home of Murtada's uncle.

Then, on Nov. 12, the home where they sought refuge was destroyed without warning. The airstrike killed nine relatives — three men, three women and three children — and a domestic worker, Murtada said.

The Israeli army said the home was being used by Hezbollah. Murtada, who lost a grandmother and an aunt in the strike, said nobody in the home was connected to the militant group.

Hezbollah has long boasted about its ability to deter Israel, but the latest war has proven otherwise and taken a severe toll on its leadership.

Some Shiites fear the weakening of Hezbollah will lead to the entire community being sidelined politically once the war is over. But others believe it could offer a political opening for more diverse Shiite voices.

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Cease-fire negotiations to end the Israel-Hezbollah appear to have gained momentum over the past week. Some critics of Hezbollah say the group could have accepted months ago the conditions currently under consideration.

This would have spared Lebanon "destruction, martyrs and losses worth billions (of dollars)," Lebanese legislator Waddah Sadek, who is Sunni Muslim, wrote on X.

Namibia may elect its first-ever female president in elections this week

By ELIASER NDEYANALE Associated Press

OSHKATI, Namibia (AP) — Namibia's Vice President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah could become the country's first female president if she wins the presidential election Wednesday.

At least 1.4 million people, or about half of the population, have registered to vote in the elections, with 15 political parties running for president and seats in the National Assembly.

Results from special early polls held for Namibia's foreign missions, seamen and security services announced by the Electoral Commission of Namibia this month indicate Nandi-Ndaitwah and her party, the South West Africa People's Organization, or SWAPO, are in the lead.

SWAPO has governed the southwest African country since its independence from South Africa's apartheid minority government in 1990.

But in 2019, the party lost its two-thirds majority in the National Assembly for the first time since 1994. Its dismal electoral performance has been widely attributed to allegations of corruption and money laundering in the Namibian fishing industry. Two cabinet ministers were arrested, and businessmen connected to the ministers were also convicted and imprisoned.

Political analyst Henning Melber, a professor at the University of Pretoria and the University of the Free State, believes SWAPO and Nandi-Ndaitwah must take the 2019 election results as a warning even though they appear favored to win the elections.

Melber said the party needs to attract support from younger voters who do not feel a link to the party's history of liberation struggles — a challenge also shared by Africa's other former liberation movements, such as South Africa's African National Congress.

"It looks like there is no way back to regain such dominance. The process of erosion of legitimacy as a former liberation movement has advanced too much," he said.

He added that the "born-frees" — a term for children born after their country's liberation — will not vote based on emotions like the older generations did, but will do so based on delivery and governance.

Nandi-Ndaitwah, 72, has promised to create more jobs and tackle the 20% unemployment rate for young people and graduates. She has pledged to spend approximately 85 billion Namibian dollars (\$4.7 billion) over the next five years to create more than 500,000 jobs, a goal that her critics call unrealistic.

Issues affecting women, including reproductive rights, equal pay and healthcare, are also likely to rank high for voters.

If she becomes president, Nandi-Ndaitwah would follow in the footsteps of Liberia's Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who made history when she became the continent's first elected female president in 2005, as well as Malawi's Joyce Banda and Samba Pranza of the Central African Republic.

Erika Thomas, a political science lecturer at the University of Namibia, said should Nandi-Ndaitwah be elected as president of Namibia, she must strive to be independent, transparent and accountable.

"She must also try to push for policies and legislation frameworks for women participation and to bring more women into the political structures," Thomas said.

SWAPO will face competition from the Independent Patriots for Change, led by former dentist Panduleni Itula, and university professor Job Amupanda's Affirmative Repositioning party.

Political parties contesting the elections wrapped up their campaigns with final rallies this weekend.

Elections in southern Africa this year have delivered ground-breaking changes to the region's political

landscape, with the ANC in South Africa losing its 30-year parliamentary majority and Botswana's Democratic Party getting unseated after 58 years in power.

In Mauritius, considered one of the most stable democracies in Africa, the opposition won recent elections by a landslide.

Disputed election results in Mozambique, which saw the ruling Frelimo party declared the winner, have led to ongoing protests that have seen at least 30 people killed.

An average of 140 women and girls were killed by a partner or relative per day in 2023, the UN says

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The deadliest place for women is at home and 140 women and girls on average were killed by an intimate partner or family member per day last year, two U.N. agencies reported Monday.

Globally, an intimate partner or family member was responsible for the deaths of approximately 51,100 women and girls during 2023, an increase from an estimated 48,800 victims in 2022, UN Women and the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime said.

The report released on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women said the increase was largely the result of more data being available from countries and not more killings.

But the two agencies stressed that "Women and girls everywhere continue to be affected by this extreme form of gender-based violence and no region is excluded." And they said, "the home is the most dangerous place for women and girls."

The highest number of intimate partner and family killings was in Africa — with an estimated 21,700 victims in 2023, the report said. Africa also had the highest number of victims relative to the size of its population — 2.9 victims per 100,000 people.

There were also high rates last year in the Americas with 1.6 female victims per 100,000 and in Oceania with 1.5 per 100,000, it said. Rates were significantly lower in Asia at 0.8 victims per 100,000 and Europe at 0.6 per 100,000.

According to the report, the intentional killing of women in the private sphere in Europe and the Americas is largely by intimate partners.

By contrast, the vast majority of male homicides take place outside homes and families, it said.

"Even though men and boys account for the vast majority of homicide victims, women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected by lethal violence in the private sphere," the report said.

"An estimated 80% of all homicide victims in 2023 were men while 20% were women, but lethal violence within the family takes a much higher toll on women than men, with almost 60% of all women who were intentionally killed in 2023 being victims of intimate partner/family member homicide," it said.

The report said that despite efforts to prevent the killing of women and girls by countries, their killings "remain at alarmingly high levels."

"They are often the culmination of repeated episodes of gender-based violence, which means they are preventable through timely and effective interventions," the two agencies said.

Senators took down one Trump Cabinet pick. But the fight over their authority is just beginning

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's a short phrase in the Constitution, mentioned in passing. But it's already taking on an outsize significance as President-elect Donald Trump charts his return to office.

The withdrawal of Matt Gaetz as Trump's nominee for attorney general dramatically affirmed that the Senate still maintains its "advice and consent" powers when it comes to vetting and installing a president's Cabinet. Yet it may be only a brief reprieve from the intense struggles to come as Senate Republicans try

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to preserve their constitutional role.

Trump has been making his Cabinet announcements at a rapid clip, often over social media, and frequently catching GOP senators off guard. Gaetz's selection on Nov. 13, in particular, left Republicans shocked and momentarily dumbfounded. His withdrawal just over a week later came just as suddenly, leaving many grasping for words.

Within hours, Trump had moved on, announcing on social media that he had selected another loyalist, former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, to run the Justice Department. Over the weekend, Trump filled out the rest of his Cabinet selections.

The dizzying speed of the picks has given Trump's second term in office a bracing start, a show of force from a president-elect who has made clear he intends to fill his administration with officials who are willing to upend the ways of Washington. His desire to pack the government with loyalists and wield executive power in expansive ways seems certain to result in frequent clashes with Congress, even with Republicans in control.

"From what I'm hearing from my Republican colleagues on everything from defense secretary to other posts, it sounds like they are ready to roll over for Mr. Trump," Sen. Tammy Duckworth, an Illinois Democrat, said on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Republican senators are choosing their words carefully as they size up Trump's proposed Cabinet, while also issuing gentle reminders about their role in the confirmation process.

"The constitutional directive is clear, and it does not change based upon the personalities involved," said Sen. Mike Rounds, a South Dakota Republican. "The way I approach it, the president has a responsibility to make nominations, and we give him the benefit of the doubt, but we do have a responsibility for 'advice and consent.'"

Gaetz's nomination was sunk after Republican senators had privately become wary of a volatile confirmation hearing amid allegations he had sex with an underage girl. As many as four to six GOP senators were signaling their reservations, according to one outgoing Republican senator, Mike Braun of Indiana, though the number was certainly higher.

With Democrats ready to oppose Cabinet nominees they view as unqualified and extreme, Trump's margin for error is narrow. Republicans are set to have a 53-47 majority in the next Senate, so defections from just four Republicans would mean defeat for any nominee that doesn't enjoy bipartisan support.

Other Cabinet picks also face a complicated path to confirmation. Trump's transition team has so far not signed the requisite agreements that allow the FBI to screen his personnel choices, sending nominees before the Senate without the typical vetting that happens beforehand.

So far, Trump's nominees have included for defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, a Fox News personality who was accused of sexual assault, which he denies; for secretary for health and human services, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who has also faced allegations of sexual misconduct as well as concern about his opposition to vaccines; and for national intelligence director, Tulsi Gabbard, a former Democratic House member who has echoed Russian propaganda and talking points.

Those picks fall outside the Republican mainstream and are a notable departure from when Trump entered the White House the first time and mostly chose from the ranks of Republican officials well-respected across Washington.

"The Constitution gives us a role in personnel called 'advice and consent,'" said Sen. Mitch McConnell, the outgoing Senate Republican leader who will remain in office next year. "My view is that's exactly what will unfold here when these nominees are actually sent forward, and we will treat them like we've treated all others with proper vetting."

Still, Trump's allies argue that senators need to be ready to confirm the Cabinet, no matter who is chosen.

"The president deserves to be able to put people in place who will do what he campaigned on, which is to disrupt, and the establishment is concerned, and they probably should be," said Sen. Eric Schmitt, a Missouri Republican, adding, "I fully support President Trump's ability to pick his people to go do that."

After Gaetz's withdrawal, Trump supporters on social media and in activist circles circulated the names of Republicans they believed were holding out support. Charlie Kirk, whose conservative youth organization

Turning Points Action worked closely with the Trump campaign, is already organizing a “grassroots army” to pressure senators to confirm his nominees.

That might not even matter. Trump has also demanded that Senate Republicans agree to allow him to make recess appointments, a process whereby the Senate would adjourn so that Trump could use a constitutional power to make appointments while the chamber is in recess. Sen. John Thune, who will take over as Senate majority leader in January, has kept that option on the table, saying he would be inclined to use it if Democrats try to delay confirmations.

It would be unprecedented in modern times for the Senate to step aside willingly to allow the president to make top-level Cabinet appointments. Experts say it would amount to surrendering the chamber’s constitutional power over Cabinet choices.

“It’s crystallized the choices for Senate Republicans,” said Sarah Binder, a political scientist at George Washington University. “Who is your loyalty to and how far are you willing to put your loyalty to President Trump above your procedural rights and constitutional powers?”

Yet some Trump allies have also discussed a scenario where the Republican-controlled House could vote to adjourn Congress. Even if the Senate declined to adjourn also, that could theoretically create a “disagreement” between the two chambers, which allows the president to tap a constitutional authority to adjourn Congress until a time he thinks is “proper.”

Still, that constitutional provision has never been tried, and Binder asserted that it would still be within the Senate leaders’ ability to promptly call the chamber back into session. But it would also be a further test for the senators.

“A constitutional system doesn’t work unless those in the institutions stand up and fight to maintain their constitutional rights of advice and consent,” said Binder.

Trump 2.0 has a Cabinet and executive branch of different positions and eclectic personalities

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump’s personnel choices for his new Cabinet and White House reflect his signature positions on immigration and trade but also a range of viewpoints and backgrounds that raise questions about what ideological anchors might guide his Oval Office encore.

With a rapid assembly of his second administration — faster than his effort eight years ago — the former and incoming president has combined television personalities, former Democrats, a wrestling executive and traditional elected Republicans into a mix that makes clear his intentions to impose tariffs on imported goods and crack down on illegal immigration but leaves open a range of possibilities on other policy pursuits.

“The president has his two big priorities and doesn’t feel as strongly about anything else — so it’s going to be a real jump ball and zigzag,” predicted Marc Short, chief of staff to Vice President Mike Pence during Trump’s 2017-21 term. “In the first administration, he surrounded himself with more conservative thinkers, and the results showed we were mostly rowing in the same direction. This is more eclectic.”

Indeed, Secretary of State-designee Marco Rubio, the Florida senator who has pilloried authoritarian regimes around the world, is in line to serve as top diplomat to a president who praises autocratic leaders like Russia’s Vladimir Putin and Hungary’s Viktor Orban.

Republican Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer of Oregon has been tapped to sit at the Cabinet table as a pro-union labor secretary alongside multiple billionaires, former governors and others who oppose making it easier for workers to organize themselves.

The prospective treasury secretary, Scott Bessent, wants to cut deficits for a president who promised more tax cuts, better veterans services and no rollbacks of the largest federal outlays: Social Security, Medicare and national defense.

Abortion-rights supporter Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is Trump’s choice to lead the Health and Human Services Department, which Trump’s conservative Christian base has long targeted as an agency where the anti-abortion movement must wield more influence.

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Former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich allowed that members of Trump's slate will not always agree with the president and certainly not with one another. But he minimized the potential for irreconcilable differences: "A strong Cabinet, by definition, means you're going to have people with different opinions and different skills."

That kind of unpredictability is at the core of Trump's political identity. He is the erstwhile reality TV star who already upended Washington once and is returning to power with sweeping, sometimes contradictory promises that convinced voters, especially those in the working class, that he will do it all again.

"What Donald Trump has done is reorient political leadership and activism to a more entrepreneurial spirit," Gingrich said.

There's also plenty of room for conflict, given the breadth of Trump's 2024 campaign promises and his pattern of cycling through Cabinet members and national security personnel during his first term.

This time, Trump has pledged to impose tariffs on foreign goods, end illegal immigration and launch a mass deportation force, goose U.S. energy production and exact retribution on people who opposed — and prosecuted — him. He's added promises to cut taxes, raise wages, end wars in Israel and Ukraine, streamline government, protect Social Security and Medicare, help veterans and squelch cultural progressivism.

Trump alluded to some of those promises in recent weeks as he completed his proposed roster of federal department heads and named top White House staff members. But his announcements skimmed over any policy paradoxes or potential complications.

Bessent has crusaded as a deficit hawk, warning that the ballooning national debt, paired with higher interest rates, drives consumer inflation. But he also supports extending Trump's 2017 tax cuts that added to the overall debt and annual debt service payments to investors who buy Treasury notes.

A hedge-fund billionaire, Bessent built his wealth in world markets. Yet, generally speaking, he's endorsed Trump's tariffs. He rejects the idea that they feed inflation and instead frames tariffs as one-time price adjustments and leverage to achieve U.S. foreign policy and domestic economic aims.

Trump, for his part, declared that Bessent would "help me usher in a new Golden Age for the United States."

Chavez-DeRemer, Trump promised, "will achieve historic cooperation between Business and Labor that will restore the American Dream for Working Families."

Trump did not address the Oregon congresswoman's staunch support for the PRO-Act, a Democratic-backed measure that would make it easier for workers to unionize, among other provisions. That proposal passed the House when Democrats held a majority. But it's never had measurable Republican support in either chamber on Capitol Hill, and Trump has never made it part of his agenda.

When Trump named Kennedy as his pick for health secretary, he did not mention the former Democrat's support for abortion rights. Instead, Trump put the focus on Kennedy's intention to take on the U.S. agriculture, food processing and drug manufacturing sectors.

The vagaries of Trump's foreign policy stand out, as well. Trump's choice for national security adviser, Florida Rep. Mike Waltz, offered mixed messages Sunday when discussing the Russia-Ukraine war, which Trump claims never would have started had he been president, because he would have prevailed on Putin not to invade his neighboring country.

Speaking on "Fox News Sunday," Waltz repeated Trump's concerns over recent escalations, which include President Joe Biden approving sending antipersonnel mines to Ukrainian forces.

"We need to restore deterrence, restore peace and get ahead of this escalation ladder, rather than responding to it," Waltz said. But in the same interview, Waltz declared the mines necessary to help Ukraine "stop Russian gains" and said he's working "hand in glove" with Biden's team during the transition.

Meanwhile, Tulsi Gabbard, Trump's pick for director of national intelligence, the top intelligence post in government, is an outspoken defender of Putin and Syrian President Bashar al Assad, a close ally of Russia and Iran.

Perhaps the biggest wildcards of Trump's governing constellation are budget-and-spending advisers Russell Vought, Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy. Vought led Trump's Office of Management and Budget in

his first term and is in line for the same post again. Musk, the world's wealthiest man, and Ramaswamy, a mega-millionaire venture capitalist, are leading an outside advisory panel known as the "Department of Government Efficiency."

The latter effort is a quasi-official exercise to identify waste. It carries no statutory authority, but Trump can route Musk's and Ramaswamy's recommendations to official government pathways, including via Vought.

A leading author of Project 2025, the conservative movement's blueprint for a hard-right turn in U.S. government and society, Vought envisions OMB not just as an influential office to shape Trump's budget proposals for Congress but a power center of the executive branch, "powerful enough to override implementing agencies' bureaucracies."

As for how Trump might navigate differences across his administration, Gingrich pointed to Chavez-DeRemer.

"He might not agree with her on union issues, but he might not stop her from pushing it herself," Gingrich said of the PRO-Act. "And he will listen to anybody. If you convince him, he absolutely will spend presidential capital."

Short said other factors are more likely to influence Trump: personalities and, of course, loyalty.

Vought "brought him potential spending cuts" in the first administration, Short said, "that Trump wouldn't go along with." This time, Short continued, "maybe Elon and Vivek provide backup," giving Vought the imprimatur of two wealthy businessmen.

"He will always calculate who has been good to him," Short said. "You already see that: The unions got the labor secretary they wanted, and Putin and Assad got the DNI (intelligence chief) they wanted. ... This is not so much a team-of-rivals situation. I think it's going to look a lot like a reality TV show."

Overhauls of 'heritage brands' raise the question: How important are our products to our identities?

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — When Katja Vogt considers a Jaguar, she pictures a British-made car purring confidently along the Italian coastline — a vision of familiarity that conveys "that dreaming, longing feeling we all love."

She's not sure what to think about Jaguar now after the 89-year-old company announced a radical rebranding this week that featured loud colors and androgynous people — but no cars. Jaguar, the company says, will now be JaGUar. It will produce only electric vehicles beginning in 2026.

And say goodbye to British racing green, Cotswold Blue and black. Its colors are henceforth electric pink, red and yellow, according to a video that has received backlash online. Its mission statement: "Create exuberance. Live vivid. Delete ordinary. Break moulds."

"Intrigued?" @Jaguar posted on social media. "Weird and unsettled" is more like it, Vogt wrote on Instagram.

"Especially now, with the world feeling so dystopian," the Cyprus-based brand designer wrote, "a heritage brand like Jaguar should be conveying feelings of safety, stability, and maybe a hint of rebellion — the kind that shakes things up in a good way, not in a way that unsettles."

Our brands, ourselves

Jaguar, a sturdy symbol of British tradition and refinement, was one of several iconic companies that announced significant rebrandings in recent weeks, upending a series of commercial — and, yes, cultural — landmarks by which many modern human beings sort each other, carve out identities and recognize the world around them.

Campbell's, the soupy, 155-year-old American icon immortalized in pop culture decades ago by Andy Warhol, is ready for a new, souplless name. Comcast's corporate reorganization means that there will soon be two television networks with "NBC" in their name — CNBC and MSNBC — that will no longer have any corporate connection to NBC News, a U.S. legacy news outlet.

One could even argue that the United States itself is rebranding a bit with the election this month of former President Donald Trump and Republican majorities in the House and Senate in a divided nation.

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Unlike Trump's first election in 2016, he won the popular vote in what many called a national referendum on American identity.

Are we, then, the sum total of our consumer decisions — what we buy, where we travel and whom we elect?

Certainly, it's a question for those privileged enough to be able to afford such choices. But volumes of research in the art and science of branding — from "brandr," an old Norse word for burning symbols into the hides of livestock — say those factors do contribute to the modern sense of identity. So rebranding, especially of heritage names, can be a deeply felt affront to consumers.

"It can feel like the brand is turning its back on everything that it stood for — and therefore it feels like its turning its back on us, the people who subscribe to that idea or ideology," said Ali Marmaduke, strategy director with the Amsterdam-based Brand Potential.

He said cultural tension — polarization — in 2024 is surging over politics, wars in Russia and the Mideast, the environment, public health and more, creating what Marmaduke said is known as a "polycrisis:" the idea that there are several massive crises converging and that feel scary and complex.

"People are understandably freaked out by that," he said. "So we are looking for something that will help us navigate this changing, threatening world that we face."

Trump's "Make America Great Again" qualifies. So did President Joe Biden's "Build Back Better" slogan atop his legislative plan. And Campbell's soup itself — "Mmm Mmm Good" — isn't going anywhere, its CEO, Mark Clouse, said in a statement. The company's new name, Campbell's Co., will reflect "the full breadth of our portfolio," which for some time has included brands like Prego pasta sauce and Goldfish crackers.

When Jaguar is not a sleek movie-star car, what is it?

None of the recent activity around heritage brands has sparked a backlash as ferocious as Jaguar's. It's a company that has stood as a pillar of tradition-loving British identity since World War II.

The rebrand, which includes a new logo, is slated to launch Dec. 2 during Miami Art Week, when the company will unveil a new electric GT model. Jaguar said in its press release that its approach was rooted in the philosophy of its founder, Sir William Lyons, to "copy nothing."

What it's calling "the new Jaguar" will overhaul everything from the font of its name to the positioning of its famous "leaper" cat. "Exuberant modernism" will "define all aspects of the new Jaguar world," according to the press release. The approach is thought to be aimed at selling fewer cars at a six-figure price point to a more diverse customer base.

The reaction, though, ranged from bewilderment to hostility. Memes sprouted up likening the video to the Teletubbies, a Benetton ad and — perhaps predictably — a bow to "woke" culture as the blowback intersected with politics.

"Grace. Space. Pace. That's what you are supposed to be about," tweeted @JonnyHorsepower. "I don't know what the hell this ad (?) is about." Replied @Jaguar, cryptically: "These are our Strikethroughs. Deliberate, graphical and linear."

A Spectator headline declared that the Jaguar rebrand is "doomed" and that it had "killed a British icon." But wait: "What if the rebrand turns out to be just a huge mockery of 'woke' rebrands?" wondered Benie1289 on Reddit.

Marketing and branding designers pointed out that any rebrand should, at least, be easy for consumers to remember and understand. JaGUAr stumbled over that test on Day 1.

"Correction, November 19th," read a blurb under an article in The Verge. "A previous version of this article said only the 'G' and 'U' letters in Jaguar are upper case. The 'J' is also upper case."

'Busiest Thanksgiving ever':

How the TSA plans to handle record air travel

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Just as there are good odds the turkey will taste dry, airports and highways are expected to be jam-packed during Thanksgiving week, a holiday period likely to end in another record day for air travel in the United States.

The people responsible for keeping security lines, boarding areas and jetliners moving — from the U.S. transportation secretary and airline chiefs on down the line — swear they are prepared for the crowds.

Airline passengers might get lucky like they did last year, when relatively few flights were canceled during the holiday week. A repeat will require the weather's cooperation. And even if skies are blue, a shortage of air traffic controllers could create delays.

Thanksgiving, by the numbers

Auto club and insurance company AAA predicts that nearly 80 million Americans will venture at least 50 miles from home between Tuesday and next Monday. Most of them will travel by car.

Drivers should get a slight break on gas prices. The nationwide average price for gasoline was \$3.06 a gallon on Sunday, down from \$3.27 at this time last year.

The Transportation Security Administration expects to screen 18.3 million people at U.S. airports during the same seven-day stretch. That would be 6% more than during the corresponding days last year but fit a pattern set throughout 2024.

The TSA predicts that 3 million people will pass through airport security checkpoints on Sunday; more than that could break the record of 3.01 million set on the Sunday after the July Fourth holiday. Tuesday and Wednesday are expected to be the next-busiest air travel days of Thanksgiving week.

TSA says it's ready

"This will be the busiest Thanksgiving ever in terms of air travel," TSA Administrator David Pekoske said. "Fortunately, our staffing is also at the highest levels that they have ever been. We are ready."

Pekoske said TSA will have enough screeners to keep general security lines under 30 minutes and lines for people who pay extra for PreCheck under 10 minutes.

FAA staffing shortage could create delays

However, an ongoing shortage of air traffic controllers could cause flight delays.

Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Mike Whitaker said last week that he expects his agency to use special measures to deal with shortages at some facilities. In the past, that has included airports in New York City and Florida.

"If we are short on staff, we will slow traffic as needed to keep the system safe," Whitaker said.

The FAA has long struggled with a shortage of controllers that airline officials expect will last for years, despite the agency's lofty hiring goals.

Timing of holiday shapes travel patterns

Thanksgiving Day takes place late this year, with the fourth Thursday of November falling on Nov. 28. That shortens the traditional shopping season and changes the rhythm of holiday travel.

With more time before the holiday, people tend to spread out their outbound travel over more days, but everyone returns at the same time, said Andrew Watterson, the chief operating officer of Southwest Airlines.

"A late Thanksgiving leads to a big crush at the end — the Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday after Thanksgiving are usually very busy with Thanksgiving this late," Watterson said.

Airlines did a relatively good job of handling holiday crowds last year, when the weather was mild in most of the country. Fewer than 400 U.S. flights were canceled during Thanksgiving week in 2023 — about one of every 450 flights. So far in 2024, airlines have canceled about 1.3% of all flights.

Combining work and leisure

The rise of remote work also has caused the Thanksgiving travel period to expand, AAA spokesperson Aixa Diaz said.

"The pandemic changed everything," she said. "What we have seen is that post-pandemic, people are

leaving at certain times, perhaps even leaving the weekend before Thanksgiving, working remotely from their destination a couple of days, and then enjoying time with their loved ones.”

Nightmares of Thanksgivings past have further shaped holiday traffic jams. Motorists who learned to avoid traveling the day before and the Sunday after Thanksgiving have created new bottlenecks on other days, according to Diaz.

“Because we warned for so long (that) Wednesday and Sunday are the worst days to travel, people were like, ‘OK, I’m going to leave on Tuesday and come back on Monday to avoid the rush,’” she said. “So now those two days are congested as well.”

Advice for travelers

Airport security officials are pleading with passengers to arrive early, not to put lithium-ion batteries in checked bags in case they overheat, and to keep guns out of carry-on bags. TSA has discovered more than 6,000 guns at checkpoints this year, and most of them were loaded.

Holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas bring out many infrequent travelers, and they often have questions about what they can bring on the plane.

TSA has a list on its website of items that are banned or restricted.

Drivers should know that Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons will be the worst times to travel by car, but it should be smooth sailing on freeways come Thanksgiving Day, according to transportation analytics company INRIX.

On the return home, the best travel times for motorists are before 1 p.m. on Sunday, and before 8 a.m. or after 7 p.m. on Monday, the company said.

In metropolitan areas like Boston, Los Angeles, New York, Seattle and Washington, “traffic is expected to be more than double what it typically is on a normal day,” INRIX transportation analyst Bob Pishue said.

Pakistani police arrest thousands of Imran Khan supporters as capital under lockdown ahead of rally

By RIAZAT BUTT Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistani police arrested thousands of Imran Khan supporters as the capital remained under lockdown ahead of a rally there to demand the ex-premier’s release from prison, a security officer said Sunday.

Khan has been behind bars for more than a year and has over 150 criminal cases against him. But he remains popular and his political party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf or PTI, says the cases are politically motivated.

Shahid Nawaz, a security officer in eastern Punjab province, said police have arrested more than 4,000 Khan supporters. They include five parliamentarians.

Pakistan has since Saturday sealed off Islamabad with shipping containers and shut down major roads and highways connecting the city with PTI strongholds in Punjab and northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

Tit-for-tat teargas shelling between the police and the PTI was reported on the highway bordering Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Earlier on Sunday, Pakistan suspended mobile and internet services “in areas with security concerns.”

The government and Interior Ministry posted the announcement on the social media platform X, which is banned in Pakistan. They did not specify the areas, nor did they say how long the suspension would be in place.

“Internet and mobile services will continue to operate as usual in the rest of the country,” the posts said.

Meanwhile, telecom company Nayatel sent out emails offering customers “a reliable landline service” as a workaround in the areas suffering suspended cellphone service.

Khan’s supporters rely heavily on social media to demand his release and use messaging platforms like WhatsApp to share information, including details of events.

PTI spokesperson Sheikh Waqas Akram said Khan’s wife Bushra Bibi was traveling to Islamabad in a

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convoy led by the chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur.

"She cannot leave the party workers on their own," said Akram.

There was a festive mood in Peshawar, with PTI members dancing, drumming and holding up pictures of Khan as cars set off for Islamabad.

The government is imposing social media platform bans and targeting VPN services, according to internet advocacy group Netblocks. On Sunday, the group said live metrics showed problems with WhatsApp that were affecting media sharing on the app.

The U.S. Embassy issued a security alert for Americans in the capital, encouraging them to avoid large gatherings and warning that even "peaceful gatherings can turn violent."

Last month, authorities suspended the cellphone service in Islamabad and Rawalpindi to thwart a pro-Khan rally. The shutdown disrupted communications and affected everyday services such as banking, ride-hailing and food delivery.

The latest crackdown comes on the eve of a visit by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said authorities have sealed off Islamabad's Red Zone, which houses key government buildings and is the destination for Khan's supporters.

"Anyone reaching it will be arrested," Naqvi told a press conference.

He said the security measures were in place to protect residents and property, blaming the PTI for inconveniencing people and businesses.

He added that protesters were planning to take the same route as the Belarusian delegation, but that the government had headed off this scenario.

Naqvi denied cellphone services were suspended and said only mobile data was affected.

Who is Yamandú Orsi, the next president of Uruguay?

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay (AP) — Left-wing politician Yamandú Orsi is poised to become the next president of Uruguay after his main challenger in the runoff conceded defeat Sunday and even the outgoing leader of the South American country congratulated him.

His victory marks the return of a center-leftist government to Uruguay's presidency after five years of a conservative administration.

But who is Yamandú Orsi?

From a working-class family to heir of the left

A teacher of history, folk dancer and former mayor, the 57-year-old politician is considered the political heir of former President José Mujica, who accompanied him in his campaign and praised him as a new leader able to find the right balance between the complex dynamics on the social, political and economic chessboard.

Orsi was born on June 13, 1967, in the rural area of the Canelones department. His father was a vineyard farmer and his mother a seamstress.

He has several similarities with his political godfather, such as the love for the countryside and a quiet lifestyle. Throughout the campaign, he was often photographed drinking mate, walking his dog and wearing casual suits. His administration is to take office next March, and like Mujica, he has said that he will not live in the presidential residence.

He turned to the left after the dictatorship

While living in the countryside, his sister taught him to read and write. But the young Orsi began to shape his political views and desires in the middle of the dictatorship in Uruguay, which lasted from 1973 to 1983.

After the end of the dictatorship, Orsi joined the Popular Participation Movement led by Mujica, the ex-guerrilla leader who became president in 2010.

He promises a renewed left in Uruguay

Orsi focused his campaign on promoting friendly-environmental policies, promises to support small producers and social inclusion policies.

He has also promised a renewal of the left by favoring dialogue with everyone, and he insisted during

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the campaign that he's not planning any dramatic changing in the country of 3.5 million people.

Although he says it's important to promote social welfare, Orsi has had used a friendly tone toward the market and private sector.

Left-wing opposition candidate wins tight presidential election in Uruguay

By NAYARA BATSCHE Associated Press

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay (AP) — Uruguay's leftist opposition candidate, Yamandú Orsi, claimed victory in a tight presidential runoff Sunday, ousting the conservative governing coalition and making the South American nation the latest to rebuke the incumbent party in a year of landmark elections.

Even as the vote count continued, Álvaro Delgado, the presidential candidate of the center-right ruling coalition, conceded defeat to his challenger.

"With sadness, but without guilt, we can congratulate the winner," he told supporters at his campaign headquarters in the capital of Montevideo

Fireworks erupted over the stage where Orsi, 57, a working-class former history teacher and two-time mayor from Uruguay's Broad Front coalition, thanked his supporters as crowds flocked to greet him.

"The country of liberty, equality and fraternity has triumphed once again," he said, vowing to unite the nation of 3.4 million people after such a tight vote.

"Let's understand that there is another part of our country who have different feelings today," he said. "These people will also have to help build a better country. We need them too."

With nearly all the votes counted, electoral officials reported that Orsi won just over 49% of the vote, ahead of Delgado's 46%. The rest cast blank votes or abstained in defiance of Uruguay's enforced compulsory voting. Turnout reached almost 90%.

While failing to entice apathetic young voters, Uruguay's lackluster electoral campaigns steered clear of the anti-establishment fury that has vaulted populist outsiders to power elsewhere in the world, like in the United States and neighboring Argentina.

After weeks in which the moderate rivals appeared tied in the polls, Delgado's concession ushers in Orsi as Uruguay's new leader and cuts short the center-right Republican coalition's shot at governing. The 2019 election of President Luis Lacalle Pou spelled an end to 15 consecutive years of rule by the Broad Front.

"I called Yamandú Orsi to congratulate him as President-elect of our country," Lacalle Pou wrote on social media platform X, adding that he would "put myself at his service and begin the transition as soon as I deem it appropriate."

Orsi's victory was the latest sign that simmering discontent over post-pandemic economic malaise favors anti-incumbent candidates. In the many elections that took place during 2024, voters frustrated with the status quo have punished ruling parties from the U.S. and Britain to South Korea and Japan.

But unlike elsewhere in the world, Orsi is a moderate with no radical plans for change. He largely agrees with his opponent on key voter concerns like driving down the childhood poverty rate, now at a staggering 25%, and containing an upsurge in organized crime that has shaken the nation long considered among Latin America's safest.

Despite Orsi's promise to lead a "new left" in Uruguay, his platform resembles the mix of market-friendly policies and welfare programs that characterized the Broad Front's tenure from 2005-2020.

The coalition of leftist and center-left parties presided over a period of robust economic growth and pioneering social reforms that won widespread international acclaim.

The driving force behind Uruguay's legalization of abortion, same-sex marriage and sale of marijuana a decade ago was former President José "Pepe" Mujica, an ex-Marxist guerilla who became a global icon and mentor to Orsi.

Mujica, now 89 and recovering from esophageal cancer, turned up at his local polling station before balloting even began on Sunday to praise Orsi's humility and Uruguay's proud stability.

"This is no small feat," he said of his nation's "citizenry that respects formal institutions."

Specific proposals by Orsi include tax incentives to lure investment and revitalize the critical agricultural

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sector, as well as social security reforms that would lower the retirement age but fall short of a radical overhaul sought by Uruguay's unions that failed to pass in the Oct. 27 general election during which neither front-runner secured an outright majority.

In keeping with the nation's reputation for being sensible, voters rejected generous pay-outs and the redistribution of privately managed pension funds in favor of fiscal constraint.

He is also likely to scupper a trade agreement with China that Lacalle Pou had pursued to the chagrin of Mercosur, an alliance of South American nations promoting regional commerce.

"He's my candidate, not only for my sake but also for my children's," said Yeny Varone, a nurse at a polling station who voted for Orsi. "In the future they'll have better working conditions, health and salaries."

Delgado, 55, a rural veterinarian with a long career in the National Party, served most recently as Secretary of the Presidency for Lacalle Pou and campaigned under the slogan "re-elect a good government."

With inflation easing and the economy expected to expand by some 3.2% this year, Delgado has promised to continue pursuing his predecessor's pro-business policies. Lacalle Pou, who constitutionally cannot run for a second consecutive term, has enjoyed high approval ratings.

But the official results trickling in Sunday showed that mounting complaints in Uruguay about years of sluggish economic growth, stagnant wages and the government's struggle to contain crime after five years helped swing the election against Delgado.

Still, Orsi struck a conciliatory tone.

"I will be the president who calls for national dialogue again and again, who builds a more integrated society and country," he said, adding that he would get to work immediately.

"Starting tomorrow, I'll have to work very hard, there's a lot to do," he told The Associated Press from the glass-walled NH Columbia hotel, thronged friends and colleagues embracing and congratulating him.

The win after such the hard-fought race, he said, gave him a "a strange feeling that I think takes a while to come to terms with."

His government will take office on March 1, 2025.

Forecasts warn of possible winter storms across US during Thanksgiving week

WINDSOR, Calif. (AP) — Another round of wintry weather could complicate travel leading up to the Thanksgiving holiday, according to forecasts across the U.S., while California and Washington state continue to recover from storm damage and power outages.

In California, where two people were found dead in floodwaters on Saturday, authorities braced for more rain while grappling with flooding and small landslides from a previous storm.

The National Weather Service office in Sacramento, California, issued a winter storm warning for the Sierra Nevada through Tuesday, with heavy snow expected at higher elevations and wind gusts potentially reaching 55 mph (88 kph). Total snowfall of roughly 4 feet (1.2 meters) was forecast, with the heaviest accumulations expected Monday and Tuesday.

The Midwest and Great Lakes regions will see rain and snow Monday and the East Coast will be the most impacted on Thanksgiving and Black Friday, forecasters said.

A low pressure system is forecast to bring rain to the Southeast early Thursday before heading to the Northeast. Areas from Boston to New York could see rain and breezy conditions, with snowfall possible in parts of northern New Hampshire, northern Maine and the Adirondacks. If the system tracks further inland, there could be less snow and more rain in the mountains, forecasters said.

"The system doesn't look like a powerhouse right now," Hayden Frank, a meteorologist with the weather service in Massachusetts, said Sunday. "Basically, this is going to bring rain to the I-95 corridor so travelers should prepare for wet weather. Unless the system trends a lot colder, it looks like rain."

Frank said he isn't seeing any major storm systems arriving for the weekend anywhere in the country so travelers heading home Sunday can expect good driving conditions. Temperatures, however, will get colder in the East while warming up out West.

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More rain expected after deadly 'bomb cyclone' on West Coast

Two people died in the Pacific Northwest after a rapidly intensifying "bomb cyclone" hit the West Coast last Tuesday, bringing fierce winds that toppled trees and power lines and damaged homes and cars. Hundreds of thousands lost electricity in Washington state before powerful gusts and record rains moved into Northern California. Fewer than 25,000 people in the Seattle area were still without power Sunday evening.

Two bodies were found Saturday in Sonoma County wine country, north of San Francisco, authorities said. Someone walking on a trail near Santa Rosa found the body of a man in a swollen creek, according to the sheriff's department. Hours later, rescue crews recovered a body inside a vehicle bobbing in floodwaters in nearby Guerneville, Deputy Rob Dillion said. Investigators are trying to determine if the deaths were storm-related.

Santa Rosa saw its wettest three-day period on record with about 12.5 inches (32 centimeters) of rain by Friday evening, the National Weather Service in the San Francisco Bay Area reported. Vineyards in nearby Windsor were flooded.

Forecasters said the risk of flooding and mudslides remained as the region gets more rain starting Sunday. But the latest storm won't be as intense as last week's atmospheric river, a long plume of moisture that forms over an ocean and flows over land.

"However, there's still threats, smaller threats, and not as significant in terms of magnitude, that are still going to exist across the West Coast for the next two or three days," weather service forecaster Rich Otto said.

As the rain moves east throughout the week, Otto said, there's a potential for heavy snowfall at higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada, as well as portions of Utah and Colorado.

California's Mammoth Mountain, which received 2 feet (.6 meters) of fresh snow in the recent storm, could get another 4 feet (1.2 meters) before the newest system clears out Wednesday, the resort said.

Northeast gets needed precipitation

Into Thanksgiving, parts of the Midwest and East Coast can expect to see heavy rain, and there's potential for snow in Northeastern states.

A storm last week brought rain to New York and New Jersey, where wildfires have raged in recent weeks, and heavy snow to northeastern Pennsylvania. The precipitation was expected to help ease drought conditions after an exceptionally dry fall.

"It's not going to be a drought buster, but it's definitely going to help," said Bryan Greenblatt, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Binghamton, New York.

Heavy snow fell in northeastern Pennsylvania, including the Pocono Mountains. Higher elevations reported up to 17 inches (43 centimeters), with lesser accumulations in valley cities including Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. Around 35,000 customers in 10 counties were still without power, down from 80,000 a day ago.

In the Catskills region of New York, nearly 10,000 people remained without power Sunday morning, two days after a storm dumped heavy snow on parts of the region.

Precipitation in West Virginia helped put a dent in the state's worst drought in at least two decades and boosted ski resorts as they prepare to open in the weeks ahead.

Israel says rabbi who went missing in the UAE was killed. The government arrests 3

By TIA GOLDENBERG and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel said Sunday that the body of an Israeli-Moldovan rabbi who went missing in the United Arab Emirates has been found after he was killed in what it described as a "heinous antisemitic terror incident."

The UAE's Interior Ministry later said authorities arrested three suspects involved in the killing of Zvi Kogan.

The statement from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Israel "will act with all means to seek justice with the criminals responsible for his death." Israeli authorities did not say how they determined the killing of Kogan was a terror attack and offered no additional details.

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Kogan, 28, an ultra-Orthodox rabbi who went missing on Thursday, ran a kosher grocery store in the futuristic city of Dubai, where Israelis have flocked for commerce and tourism since the two countries forged diplomatic ties in the 2020 Abraham Accords.

The agreement has held through more than a year of soaring regional tensions unleashed by Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack into southern Israel. But Israel's devastating retaliatory offensive in Gaza and its invasion of Lebanon, after months of fighting with the Hezbollah militant group, have stoked anger among Emiratis, Arab nationals and others living in the the UAE.

Iran, which supports Hamas and Hezbollah, has also been threatening to retaliate against Israel after a wave of airstrikes Israel carried out in October in response to an Iranian ballistic missile attack. Iran's Embassy in Abu Dhabi denied Tehran was involved in the rabbi's slaying.

The Emirati government did not respond to a request for comment. However, senior Emirati diplomat Anwer Gargash wrote on the social platform X in Arabic on Sunday that "the UAE will remain a home of safety, an oasis of stability, a society of tolerance and coexistence and a beacon of development, pride and advancement."

Early on Sunday, the UAE's state-run WAM news agency acknowledged Kogan's disappearance but pointedly did not acknowledge he held Israeli citizenship, referring to him only as being Moldovan. The Emirati Interior Ministry described Kogan as being "missing and out of contact."

"Specialized authorities immediately began search and investigation operations upon receiving the report," the Interior Ministry said.

The ministry later said that three "perpetrators" had been arrested "in record time" without giving additional details.

Netanyahu told a regular Cabinet meeting later Sunday that he was "deeply shocked" by Kogan's disappearance and death. He said he appreciated the cooperation of the UAE in the investigation and that ties between the two countries would continue to be strengthened.

Israel's largely ceremonial president, Isaac Herzog, condemned the killing and thanked Emirati authorities for "their swift action." He said he trusts they "will work tirelessly to bring the perpetrators to justice."

Israel also again warned against all nonessential travel to the Emirates after Kogan's killing.

"There is concern that there is still a threat against Israelis and Jews in the area," a government warning issued Sunday said.

Kogan was an emissary of the Chabad Lubavitch movement, a prominent and highly observant branch of ultra-Orthodox Judaism based in Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighborhood in New York City. It said he would be buried in Israel.

"The targeting of Rabbi Kogan was an attempt to destroy the sacred Jewish values that he represented: light, goodness and kindness," the movement said. "No country, no community, no society can afford the loss of these sustaining values."

The UAE has a burgeoning Jewish community, with synagogues and businesses catering to kosher diners.

The Rimon Market, a kosher grocery store that Kogan managed on Dubai's busy Al Wasl Road, was shut Sunday. As the wars have roiled the region, the store has been the target of online protests by supporters of the Palestinians. Mezuzahs on the front and back doors of the market appeared to have been ripped off when an Associated Press journalist stopped by on Sunday.

Kogan's wife, Rivky, is a U.S. citizen who lived with him in the UAE. She is the niece of Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg, who was killed in the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

In a statement, U.S. National Security Council spokesperson Sean Savett called Kogan's killing "a horrific crime against all those who stand for peace, tolerance, and coexistence."

"We condemn in the strongest terms the murder of Rabbi Zvi Kogan in the UAE and our prayers are with his family, the Chabad-Lubavitch community, the broader Jewish community, and all who are mourning his loss," Savett said.

The UAE is an autocratic federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula and is also home to Abu Dhabi. Local Jewish officials in the UAE declined to comment.

While the Israeli statement did not mention Iran, Iranian intelligence services have carried out past

kidnappings in the UAE.

Western officials believe Iran runs intelligence operations in the UAE and keeps tabs on the hundreds of thousands of Iranians living across the country.

Iran is suspected of kidnapping and later killing British Iranian national Abbas Yazdi in Dubai in 2013, though Tehran has denied involvement. Iran also kidnapped Iranian German national Jamshid Sharmahd in 2020 from Dubai, taking him back to Tehran, where he was executed in October.

Far-right populist surprises in Romanian presidential election appearing set to enter runoff

By STEPHEN McGRATH Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — A little-known, far-right populist took the lead in Romania's presidential election Sunday, electoral data showed, and will likely face leftist Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu in a runoff in two weeks, an outcome that rocked the country's political landscape.

Calin Georgescu, who ran independently, led the polls with around 22% of the vote, while Ciolacu of the Social Democratic Party, or PSD, trailed at 20%. Elena Lasconi of the Save Romania Union party, or USR, stood at about 18%, and George Simion, the leader of the far-right Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, or AUR, took 14.1%.

After polls closed, 9.4 million people — about 52.4% of eligible voters — had cast ballots, according to the Central Election Bureau. The second round of the vote will be held Dec. 8.

Thirteen candidates ran for the presidency in the European Union and NATO member country. The president serves a five-year term and has significant decision-making powers in areas such as national security, foreign policy and judicial appointments.

Georgescu, 62, ran independently and was not widely known. He outperformed most local surveys, sending shockwaves through Romania's political establishment as he ascended to poll position.

After casting his ballot on Sunday, Georgescu said in a post on Facebook that he voted "For the unjust, for the humiliated, for those who feel they do not matter and actually matter the most ... the vote is a prayer for the nation."

Cristian Andrei, a political consultant based in Bucharest, told The Associated Press that Georgescu's unexpected poll performance appears to be a "large protest or revolt against the establishment."

"The mainstream political parties have lost the connection with regular Romanians," he said. "You don't have strong candidates or strong leaders ... there are weak candidates, weak leaders, and the parties in general are pretty much disconnected."

Georgescu lacks an agenda, Andrei added, and has a vague and populist manifesto with positions that are "beyond the normal discourse." His stances include supporting Romanian farmers, reducing dependency on imports, and ramping up energy and food production.

According to his website, Georgescu holds a doctorate in pedology, a branch of soil science, and held different positions in Romania's environment ministry in the 1990s. Between 1999 and 2012, he was a representative for Romania on the national committee of the United Nations Environment Program.

Videos posted to his popular TikTok account, where he has amassed 1.6 million likes, depict him attending church, doing judo, running around an oval track, and speaking on podcasts.

Ahead of Sunday's vote, many had expected to see Simion, a vocal supporter of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, face Ciolacu in the second round. He campaigned for reunification with Moldova, which this year renewed a five-year ban on him entering the country over security concerns, and he is banned for the same reason from neighboring Ukraine.

Ecaterina Nawadia, a 20-year-old architecture student, said she voted for the first time in a national election on Sunday and hoped young people turn out in high numbers.

"Since the (1989) revolution, we didn't have a really good president," she said. "I hope most of the people my age went to vote ... because the leading candidate is not the best option."

Romania will also hold parliamentary elections on Dec. 1 that will determine the country's next govern-

ment and prime minister.

As the ballots were still being counted, Simion said he congratulated Georgescu and that he was "Very happy that approximately 40% of the votes of Romanians went towards the sovereign option" and would be in the second round.

Andrei, the political consultant, said Romania's large budget deficit, high inflation, and an economic slowdown could push more mainstream candidates to shift toward populist stances amid widespread dissatisfaction.

Ciolacu told the AP before the first-round vote that one of his biggest goals was "to convince Romanians that it is worth staying at home or returning" to Romania, which has a massive diaspora spread throughout EU countries.

Other candidates included former NATO deputy general secretary Mircea Geoana, who ran independently and obtained about 6%; and Nicolae Ciuca, a former army general and head of the center-right National Liberal Party, which is currently in a tense coalition with the PSD — who stood at 9.3%.

Geoana, a former foreign minister and ambassador to the United States, told the AP before Sunday's vote that he believed his international experience would qualify him above the other candidates.

Lasconi, a former journalist and the leader of the USR, said she sees corruption as one of the biggest problems Romania faces and that she supports increased defense spending and continued aid to Ukraine.

Republicans push back against Democrats' claims that Trump intelligence pick Gabbard is compromised

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Republican senators pushed back on Sunday against criticism from Democrats that Tulsi Gabbard, Donald Trump's pick to lead U.S. intelligence services, is "compromised" by her comments supportive of Russia and secret meetings, as a congresswoman, with Syria's president, a close ally of the Kremlin and Iran.

Sen. Tammy Duckworth, an Illinois Democrat and veteran of combat missions in Iraq, said she had concerns about Tulsi Gabbard, Trump's choice to be director of national intelligence.

"I think she's compromised," Duckworth said on CNN's "State of the Union," citing Gabbard's 2017 trip to Syria, where she held talks with Syrian President Bashar Assad. Gabbard was a Democratic House member from Hawaii at the time.

"The U.S. intelligence community has identified her as having troubling relationships with America's foes. And so my worry is that she couldn't pass a background check," Duckworth said.

Gabbard, who said last month she is joining the Republican Party, has served in the Army National Guard for more than two decades. She was deployed to Iraq and Kuwait and, according to the Hawaii National Guard, received a Combat Medical Badge in 2005 for "participation in combat operations under enemy hostile fire in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III."

Duckworth's comments drew immediate backlash from Republicans.

"For her to say ridiculous and outright dangerous words like that is wrong," Sen. Markwayne Mullin, a Republican from Oklahoma, said on CNN, challenging Duckworth to retract her words. "That's the most dangerous thing she could say — is that a United States lieutenant colonel in the United States Army is compromised and is an asset of Russia."

In recent days, other Democrats have accused Gabbard without evidence of being a "Russian asset." Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a Massachusetts Democrat, has claimed, without offering details, that Gabbard is in Russian President Vladimir "Putin's pocket."

Mullin and others say the criticism from Democrats is rooted in the fact that Gabbard left their party and has become a Trump ally. Democrats say they worry that Gabbard's selection as national intelligence chief endangers ties with allies and gives Russia a win.

Rep. Adam Schiff, a California Democrat just elected to the Senate, said he would not describe Gabbard as a Russian asset, but said she had "very questionable judgment."

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"The problem is if our foreign allies don't trust the head of our intelligence agencies, they'll stop sharing information with us," Schiff said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Gabbard in 2022 endorsed one of Russia's justifications for invading Ukraine: the existence of dozens of U.S.-funded biolabs working on some of the world's nastiest pathogens. The labs are part of an international effort to control outbreaks and stop bioweapons, but Moscow claimed Ukraine was using them to create deadly bioweapons. Gabbard said she just voiced concerns about protecting the labs.

Gabbard also has suggested that Russia had legitimate security concerns in deciding to invade Ukraine, given its desire to join NATO.

Republican Sen. Eric Schmitt of Missouri said he thought it was "totally ridiculous" that Gabbard was being cast as a Russian asset for having different political views.

"It's insulting. It's a slur, quite frankly. There's no evidence that she's a asset of another country," he said on NBC.

Sen. James Lankford, another Oklahoma Republican, acknowledged having "lots of questions" for Gabbard as the Senate considers her nomination to lead the intelligence services. Lankford said on NBC that he wants to ask Gabbard about her meeting with Assad and some of her past comments about Russia.

"We want to know what the purpose was and what the direction for that was. As a member of Congress, we want to get a chance to talk about past comments that she's made and get them into full context," Lankford said.

AP Top 25: Alabama, Mississippi out of top 10 and Miami, SMU are in; Oregon remains unanimous No. 1

By ERIC OLSON AP College Football Writer

Alabama and Mississippi tumbled out of the top 10 of The Associated Press Top 25 poll Sunday and Miami and SMU moved in following a chaotic weekend in the SEC and across college football in general.

Oregon is No. 1 for the sixth straight week and Ohio State, Texas and Penn State held their places behind the Ducks, who are the last unbeaten team.

The shuffling begins at No. 5, where Notre Dame returned for the first time since Week 2 after beating Army for its ninth straight win.

No. 6 Georgia moved up two spots, No. 7 Tennessee and No. 8 Miami each got a three-rung promotion and No. 9 SMU jumped four places for its first top-10 ranking since 1985. SMU has clinched a spot in the Atlantic Coast Conference title game and would play Miami, if the Hurricanes win at Syracuse this week, or No. 12 Clemson.

Indiana dropped from No. 5 to No. 10 following its first loss, a 38-15 defeat at Ohio State. The Buckeyes would play Oregon in the Big Ten championship game if they beat Michigan this Saturday for the first time in four years.

The Southeastern Conference's hopes for landing four spots in the College Football Playoff took a hit with two of their teams losing as double-digit favorites. Texas, Georgia and Tennessee are the only SEC teams with fewer than three losses after Alabama lost 24-3 at Oklahoma and Mississippi lost 24-17 at Florida.

Alabama and Mississippi each dropped six spots in the AP poll, the Crimson Tide to No. 13 and the Rebels to No. 15.

Texas A&M was the third SEC team to lose, 43-41 at Auburn in four overtimes. The Aggies tumbled five places to No. 20 but would play Georgia in the SEC championship game if they knock off Texas this week.

Losses by BYU and Colorado created a four-way tie for first in the Big 12.

No. 14 Arizona State, picked to finish last in the conference, handed BYU its second straight loss and is the highest-ranked Big 12 team. No. 17 Iowa State earned a five-rung promotion with its win at Utah. BYU is No. 19 and Colorado, which lost to Kansas, is No. 23.

If the four teams each finish 7-2 in conference play, it's Iowa State vs. Arizona State in the Big 12 championship game.

No. 11 Boise State is first among the four ranked Group of Five teams. The Broncos got a one-spot bump

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despite struggling to beat a two-win Wyoming team. Tulane is No. 18, UNLV is No. 21 and Army is No. 25.
Poll points

Oregon, which was idle, was the consensus No. 1 team for the fourth straight week. The Ducks will be unbeaten in the regular season for the first time since 2010 if they beat Washington at home Saturday.

Boise State's ranking is its highest since it was No. 8 in the final poll of the 2011 season. Arizona State's ranking is its highest since it was No. 12 in the final poll of the 2014 season.

Indiana-Ohio State was the final top-five matchup of the regular season. The five were the most in a regular season since 1996. There also were five in 1936 and 1943.

In and out

No. 24 Missouri, a 39-20 winner at Mississippi State, returned to the Top 25 after a one-week absence.

Washington State's four-week run in the rankings ended with its second straight loss, 41-38 loss at Oregon State.

Conference call

SEC — 8 (Nos. 3, 6, 7, 13, 15, 16, 20, 24).

Big Ten — 5 (Nos. 1, 2, 4, 10, 22).

Big 12 — 4 (Nos. 14, 17, 19, 23).

ACC — 3 (Nos. 8, 9, 12).

AAC — 2 (Nos. 18, 25).

Mountain West — 2 (Nos. 11, 21).

Independent — 1 (No. 5).

Ranked vs. ranked

—No. 16 South Carolina at No. 12 Clemson: It's a Top 25 matchup for the first time since 2013. Clemson's 16-7 victory in Columbia last year was the fourth of five straight wins to end the Tigers' season.

—No. 3 Texas at No. 20 Texas A&M: Stakes are high for the first meeting of longtime rivals since both were in the Big 12 in 2011. Winner goes to the SEC title game.

Heavy rains in Bolivia send mud crashing into the capital, leaving 1 missing and destroying homes

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP) — A landslide caused by heavy rains after a prolonged drought in La Paz, the capital of Bolivia, flooded dozens of homes early Sunday, local authorities said. It swept away a young girl, spurred evacuations and left parts of the city without electricity.

Torrential rain on Saturday caused a river to spill its banks, dislodging mud from a southwestern La Paz neighborhood where low-slung, shoddily built dwellings dot the hillside.

The torrent of rocks and soil surged down a narrow ravine early Sunday, wrecking some two dozen homes and flooding another 40, said Juan Carlos Calvimontes, Bolivia's deputy civil defense minister.

"I lost my workshop and the cars that I had there are buried," said auto mechanic Luis Mencias, his voice shaking as he surveyed the sea of debris.

Hours after the rain subsided, rescuers were still searching for a missing 5-year-old girl in the inundated neighborhood of Bajo Llojeta. Emergency workers trudged through the boot-sucking mud on Sunday, pulling at least six residents — suffering from hypothermia, their hair matted with sludge — from the collapsed hillside. Soldiers helped clear mud from the streets.

"My daughter was with her cousins when the mud came," said Grover Mendoza, the missing girl's father. "The neighbors rescued my nephews but my daughter was missing."

The mayor of La Paz, Iván Arias, directly blamed the poor construction of houses perched on the hillside without permits.

"There are irresponsible people who destabilize the hillside and the rains drag it away, affecting the lower-lying neighborhoods," he said.

In a visit to the site, President Luis Arce delivered aid to flood victims and vowed to hold people responsible for the illegal construction that exacerbated the damage.

"We are shocked by what happened," he said. "This cannot be left like this. An investigation must be carried out."

The city of La Paz, nestled in a valley surrounded by high hills, is particularly prone to floods and landslides. Bolivia's rainy season is just starting after the nation suffered one of its most severe droughts in recent memory.

Hezbollah fires about 250 rockets and other projectiles into Israel in heaviest barrage in weeks

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB and TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Hezbollah fired about 250 rockets and other projectiles into Israel on Sunday, wounding seven people in one of the militant group's heaviest barrages in months, in response to deadly Israeli strikes in Beirut while negotiators pressed on with cease-fire efforts to halt the all-out war.

Some of the rockets reached the Tel Aviv area in the heart of Israel.

Meanwhile, an Israeli strike on an army center killed a Lebanese soldier and wounded 18 others in the southwest between Tyre and Naqoura, Lebanon's military said. The Israeli military expressed regret, saying that the strike occurred in an area of combat against Hezbollah and that the military's operations are directed solely against the militants.

Israeli strikes have killed over 40 Lebanese troops since the start of the war between Israel and Hezbollah, even as Lebanon's military has largely kept to the sidelines.

Lebanon's caretaker prime minister, Najib Mikati, condemned the latest strike as an assault on U.S.-led cease-fire efforts, calling it a "direct, bloody message rejecting all efforts and ongoing contacts" to end the war.

Hezbollah fires rockets after strikes on Beirut

Hezbollah began firing rockets, missiles and drones into Israel after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack out of the Gaza Strip ignited the war there. Hezbollah has portrayed the attacks as an act of solidarity with the Palestinians and Hamas. Iran supports both armed groups.

Israel launched retaliatory airstrikes at Hezbollah, and in September the low-level conflict erupted into all-out war as Israel launched airstrikes across large parts of Lebanon and killed Hezbollah's top leader, Hassan Nasrallah.

The Israeli military said about 250 projectiles were fired Sunday, with some intercepted.

Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service said it treated seven people, including a 60-year old man in severe condition from rocket fire on northern Israel, a 23-year-old man who was lightly wounded by a blast in the central city of Petah Tikva, near Tel Aviv, and a 70-year-old woman who suffered smoke inhalation from a car that caught fire there. In Haifa, a rocket hit a residential building that police said was in danger of collapsing.

The Palestine Red Crescent reported 13 injuries it said were caused by an interceptor missile that struck several homes in Tulkarem in the West Bank. It was unclear whether injuries and damage were caused by rockets or interceptors.

Sirens wailed again in central and northern Israel hours later.

Israeli airstrikes without warning on Saturday pounded central Beirut, killing at least 29 people and wounding 67, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry.

Smoke billowed above Beirut again Sunday with new strikes. Israel's military said it targeted command centers for Hezbollah and its intelligence unit in the southern suburbs of Dahiyeh, where the militants have a strong presence.

Israeli attacks have killed more than 3,700 people in Lebanon, according to the Health Ministry. The fighting has displaced about 1.2 million people, or a quarter of Lebanon's population.

On the Israeli side, about 90 soldiers and nearly 50 civilians have been killed by bombardment in northern Israel and in battle following Israel's ground invasion in early October. Around 60,000 Israelis have been displaced from the country's north.

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EU envoy calls for pressure to reach a truce

The European Union's top diplomat called Sunday for more pressure on Israel and Hezbollah to reach a deal, saying one was "pending with a final agreement from the Israeli government." U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein was in the region last week.

Josep Borrell spoke after meeting with Mikati and Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally who has been mediating with the group. Borrell said the EU is ready to allocate 200 million euros (\$208 million) to assist the Lebanese military.

But Borrell later said that he did not "see the Israeli government interested clearly in reaching an agreement for a cease-fire" and that it seemed Israel was seeking new conditions. He pointed to Israel's refusal to accept France as a member of the international committee that would oversee the cease-fire's implementation.

The emerging agreement would pave the way for the withdrawal of Hezbollah militants and Israeli troops from southern Lebanon below the Litani River in accordance with the U.N. Security Council resolution that ended the monthlong 2006 war. Lebanese troops would patrol with the presence of U.N. peacekeepers.

One year since the only hostage-release deal

With talks for a cease-fire and hostage release deal in Gaza stalled, freed hostages and families of those held marked a year since the war's only hostage-release deal.

"It's hard to hold on to hope, certainly after so long and as another winter is about to begin," said Yifat Zailer, cousin of Shiri Bibas, who is held along with her husband and two young sons.

Around 100 hostages are still in Gaza, at least a third believed to be dead. Most of the rest of the 250 who were abducted in the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack were released in last year's cease-fire.

Talks for another deal recently had several setbacks, including the firing of Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who pushed for a deal, and Qatar's decision to suspend its mediation. Hamas wants Israel to end the war and withdraw all troops from Gaza. Israel has offered only to pause its offensive.

The Palestinian death toll from the war surpassed 44,000 this week, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count.

On Sunday, six people were killed in strikes in central Gaza, according to AP journalists at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah.

'Wicked' and 'Gladiator' make gravity-defying theater debuts

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — With a combined \$270 million in worldwide ticket sales, "Wicked" and "Gladiator II" breathed fresh life into a box office that has struggled lately, leading to one of the busiest moviegoing weekends of the year.

Jon M. Chu's lavish big-budget musical "Wicked," starring Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo, debuted with \$114 million domestically and \$164.2 million globally for Universal Pictures, according to studio estimates Sunday. That made it the third-biggest opening weekend of the year, behind only "Deadpool & Wolverine" and "Inside Out 2." It's also a record for a Broadway musical adaptation.

Ridley Scott's "Gladiator II," a sequel to his 2000 best picture-winning original, launched with \$55.5 million in ticket sales. With a price tag of around \$250 million to produce it, "Gladiator II" was a big bet by Paramount Pictures to return to the Coliseum with a largely new cast, led by Denzel Washington and Paul Mescal. While it opened with a touch less than the \$60 million predicted in domestic ticket sales, "Gladiator II" has performed well overseas. It added \$50.5 million internationally.

The collision of the two movies led to some echoes of the "Barbenheimer" effect of last year, when "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" launched simultaneously. The nickname this time, "Glicked," wasn't quite as catchy and the cultural imprint was also notably less. Few people sought out a double feature this time. The domestic grosses in 2023 — \$162 million for "Barbie" and \$82 million for "Oppenheimer" — were also higher.

"Glicked" falls short of "Barbenheimer"

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For Universal, which distributed "Oppenheimer" last year, the weekend was more a triumph of "Wicked" than it was of "Glicked."

"We saw an opportunity to dominate a weekend and get a very large running start into the Thanksgiving holiday," said Jim Orr, distribution chief for Universal. "We're very confident that it will play ridiculously well through the Christmas corridor and into the new year."

But the counter-programming effect was still potent for "Wicked" and "Gladiator II," which likewise split broadly along gender lines. And it was again the female-leaning release – "Wicked," like "Barbie" before it – that easily won the weekend. About 72% of ticket buyers for "Wicked" were female, while 61% of those seeing "Gladiator II" were male.

"Standing on their own, each of these movies may have done pretty much what they did, but it's hard to know," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Comscore. "Raising awareness can indeed lead to an increase in box office. Let's put it this way: They didn't hurt each other at all."

Massive marketing campaigns paved the way for opening weekend

While "Barbenheimer" benefitted enormously from meme-spread word-of-mouth, both "Wicked" and "Gladiator II" leaned on all-out marketing blitzes.

The "Gladiator II" campaign featured everything from a much-debated Airbnb cross-promotion with the actual Colosseum in Rome to simultaneously running a one-minute trailer on more than 4,000 TV networks, radio station and digital platforms.

The "Wicked" onslaught went even further, with pink and green themed "Wickedly Delicious" Starbucks drinks, Stanley mugs and Mattel dolls (some of which led to an awkward recall). Its stars made appearances at the Met Gala and the Olympics.

"We had roughly 400 global brand partners on 'Wicked,' so the campaign was inescapable, said Orr. "And our cast, led by Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande, worked so hard on this. They were everywhere. They did everything we asked them to do."

Going into the weekend, box office was down about 11% from last year and some 25% from pre-pandemic times. That meant this week's two headline films led a much-needed resurgence for theaters. With "Moana 2" releasing Wednesday, Hollywood might be looking at historic sales over the Thanksgiving holiday.

The two films boosted sluggish box office performance

"This weekend's two strong openers are invigorating a box office that fell apart after a good summer," said David A. Gross, a film consultant who publishes a newsletter for Franchise Entertainment.

Though "Wicked" will face some direct competition from "Moana 2," it would seem better set up for a long and lucrative run in theaters than "Gladiator II." Though some have dinged "Wicked" for running long, at 2 hours and 40 minutes, the film has had mostly stellar reviews. Audiences gave it an "A" on CinemaScore. The reception for "Wicked" has been strong enough that Oscar prognosticators expect it to be a contender for best picture at the Academy Awards, among other categories.

Producers, perhaps sensing a hit, also took the step of splitting "Wicked" in two. Part two, already filmed, is due out next November. Each "Wicked" installation cost around \$150 million to make.

"Gladiator II" has also enjoyed good reviews, particularly for Washington's charismatic performance. Audience scores, though, were weaker, with ticket buyers giving it a "B" on CinemaScore. The film will make up for some of that, however, with robust international sales. It launched in many overseas markets a week ago, and has already accrued \$165.5 million internationally.

Coming in a distant third place for the weekend was "Red One," the Dwayne Johnson, Chris Evans holiday movie turned action film. In its second week of release, the Amazon MGM Studios release grossed \$13.3 million to bring its two-week global haul to \$117 million. At a cost of \$250 million to make, "Red One" is the season's biggest flop, though it could recoup some value for Amazon if it's more popular once it begins streaming.

Final domestic figures will be released Monday. Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore:

1. "Wicked," \$114 million.

2. "Gladiator II," \$55.5 million.
3. "Red One," \$13.3 million.
4. "Bonhoeffer: Pastor Spy Assassin," \$5.1 million.
5. "Venom: The Last Dance," \$4 million.
6. "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever," \$3.5 million.
7. "Heretic," \$2.2 million.
8. "The Wild Robot," \$2 million.
9. "Smile 2," \$1.1 million.
10. "A Real Pain," \$1.1 million.

After Trump's win, Black women are rethinking their role as America's reliable political organizers

By KENYA HUNTER Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — As she checked into a recent flight to Mexico for vacation, Teja Smith chuckled at the idea of joining another Women's March on Washington.

As a Black woman, she just couldn't see herself helping to replicate the largest act of resistance against then-President Donald Trump's first term in January 2017. Even in an election this year where Trump questioned his opponent's race, held rallies featuring racist insults and falsely claimed Black migrants in Ohio were eating residents' pets, he didn't just win a second term. He became the first Republican in two decades to clinch the popular vote, although by a small margin.

"It's like the people have spoken and this is what America looks like," said Smith, the Los Angeles-based founder of the advocacy social media agency, Get Social. "And there's not too much more fighting that you're going to be able to do without losing your own sanity."

After Trump was declared the winner over Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris, many politically engaged Black women said they were so dismayed by the outcome that they were reassessing — but not completely abandoning — their enthusiasm for electoral politics and movement organizing.

Black women often carry much of the work of getting out the vote in their communities. They had vigorously supported the historic candidacy of Harris, who would have been the first woman of Black and South Asian descent to win the presidency.

Harris' loss spurred a wave of Black women across social media resolving to prioritize themselves, before giving so much to a country that over and over has shown its indifference to their concerns.

AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 120,000 voters, found that 6 in 10 Black women said the future of democracy in the United States was the single most important factor for their vote this year, a higher share than for other demographic groups. But now, with Trump set to return to office in two months, some Black women are renewing calls to emphasize rest, focus on mental health and become more selective about what fight they lend their organizing power to.

"America is going to have to save herself," said LaTosha Brown, the co-founder of the national voting rights group Black Voters Matter.

She compared Black women's presence in social justice movements as "core strategists and core organizers" to the North Star, known as the most consistent and dependable star in the galaxy because of its seemingly fixed position in the sky. People can rely on Black women to lead change, Brown said, but the next four years will look different.

"That's not a herculean task that's for us. We don't want that title. ... I have no goals to be a martyr for a nation that cares nothing about me," she said.

AP VoteCast paints a clear picture of Black women's concerns.

Black female voters were most likely to say that democracy was the single most important factor for their vote, compared to other motivators such as high prices or abortion. More than 7 in 10 Black female voters said they were "very concerned" that electing Trump would lead the nation toward authoritarianism, while only about 2 in 10 said this about Harris.

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About 9 in 10 Black female voters supported Harris in 2024, according to AP VoteCast, similar to the share that backed Democrat Joe Biden in 2020. Trump received support from more than half of white voters, who made up the vast majority of his coalition in both years.

Like voters overall, Black women were most likely to say the economy and jobs were the most important issues facing the country, with about one-third saying that. But they were more likely than many other groups to say that abortion and racism were the top issues, and much less likely than other groups to say immigration was the top issue.

Despite those concerns, which were well-voiced by Black women throughout the campaign, increased support from young men of color and white women helped expand Trump's lead and secured his victory.

Politically engaged Black women said they don't plan to continue positioning themselves in the vertebrae of the "backbone" of America's democracy. The growing movement prompting Black women to withdraw is a shift from history, where they are often present and at the forefront of political and social change.

One of the earliest examples is the women's suffrage movement that led to ratification in 1920 of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which gave women the right to vote. Black women, however, were prevented from voting for decades afterward because of Jim Crow-era literacy tests, poll taxes and laws that blocked the grandchildren of slaves from voting. Most Black women couldn't vote until the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Black women were among the organizers and counted among the marchers brutalized on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Alabama, during the historic march in 1965 from Selma to Montgomery that preceded federal legislation. Decades later, Black women were prominent organizers of the Black Lives Matter movement in response to the deaths of Black Americans at the hands of police and vigilantes.

In his 2024 campaign, Trump called for leveraging federal money to eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion programs in government programs and discussions of race, gender or sexual orientation in schools. His rhetoric on immigration, including false claims that Black Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio, were eating cats and dogs, drove support for his plan to deport millions of people.

Tenita Taylor, a Black resident of Atlanta who supported Trump this year, said she was initially excited about Harris' candidacy. But after thinking about how high her grocery bills have been, she feels that voting for Trump in hopes of finally getting lower prices was a form of self-prioritization.

"People say, 'Well, that's selfish, it was gonna be better for the greater good,'" she said. "I'm a mother of five kids. ... The things that (Democrats) do either affect the rich or the poor."

Some of Trump's plans affect people in Olivia Gordon's immediate community, which is why she struggled to get behind the "Black women rest" wave. Gordon, a New York-based lawyer who supported the Party for Socialism and Liberation's presidential nominee, Claudia de la Cruz, worries about who may be left behind if the 92% of Black women voters who backed Harris simply stopped advocating.

"We're talking millions of Black women here. If millions of Black women take a step back, it absolutely leaves holes, but for other Black women," she said. "I think we sometimes are in the bubble of if it's not in your immediate circle, maybe it doesn't apply to you. And I truly implore people to understand that it does."

Nicole Lewis, an Alabama-based therapist who specializes in treating Black women's stress, said she's aware that Black women withdrawing from social impact movements could have a fallout. But she also hopes that it forces a reckoning for the nation to understand the consequences of not standing in solidarity with Black women.

"It could impact things negatively because there isn't that voice from the most empathetic group," she said. "I also think it's going to give other groups an opportunity to step up. ... My hope is that they do show up for themselves and everyone else."

Brown said a reckoning might be exactly what the country needs, but it's a reckoning for everyone else. Black women, she said, did their job when they supported Harris in droves in hopes they could thwart the massive changes expected under Trump.

"This ain't our reckoning," she said. "I don't feel no guilt."

A man called 911 for help during a home invasion. Las Vegas police fatally shot him

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A Las Vegas man called for police help during a home invasion before an officer fatally shot him, according to authorities and 911 calls.

Brandon Durham called 911 early Nov. 12, saying he was hiding with his 15-year-old daughter after someone broke into his home, Assistant Sheriff Dori Koren said.

Durham is heard pleading with the dispatcher to "send someone ASAP" in audio recordings obtained this week by KVVU-TV in Las Vegas.

Koren identified the officer who shot Durham as Alexander Bookman, 26.

Bookman was one of the first officers to arrive and kicked in the front door. Koren said the officer found Durham in a hallway struggling over a knife with the intruder.

In a short clip of body camera video released by police, the officer yells for them to drop the knife, then fires one round. Durham and the intruder both fall to the floor, then the officer moves closer and fires five more rounds while standing over them, the video shows.

Durham, 43, died in his home.

Koren said Durham and the intruder knew each other. The intruder was arrested and charged with home invasion and assault.

David Roger, general counsel for the union representing Las Vegas police officers, said Saturday in a statement that Bookman was not at fault.

"While Mr. Durham's death is tragic, Officer Bookman was doing his job and did not intend to commit a crime. The person responsible for Mr. Durham's death is in custody," he said.

Durham's family wants Bookman fired and charged in the shooting.

"Mr. Durham was not threatening anyone. There's no justification for the use of force against Mr. Durham," Lee Merritt, a civil rights attorney representing the family, said at a news conference, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported.

Clark County District Attorney Steve Wolfson said in a statement that it was too early in the investigation for him to comment on possible charges.

Bookman is on paid leave while the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department investigates.

Chuck Woolery, smooth-talking game show host of 'Love Connection' and 'Scrabble,' dies at 83

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Chuck Woolery, the affable, smooth-talking game show host of "Wheel of Fortune," "Love Connection" and "Scrabble" who later became a right-wing podcaster, skewering liberals and accusing the government of lying about COVID-19, has died. He was 83.

Mark Young, Woolery's podcast co-host and friend, said in an email early Sunday that Woolery died at his home in Texas with his wife, Kristen, present. "Chuck was a dear friend and brother and a tremendous man of faith, life will not be the same without him," Young wrote.

Woolery, with his matinee idol looks, coiffed hair and ease with witty banter, was inducted into the American TV Game Show Hall of Fame in 2007 and earned a daytime Emmy nomination in 1978.

In 1983, Woolery began an 11-year run as host of TV's "Love Connection," for which he coined the phrase, "We'll be back in two minutes and two seconds," a two-fingered signature dubbed the "2 and 2." In 1984, he hosted TV's "Scrabble," simultaneously hosting two game shows on TV until 1990.

"Love Connection," which aired long before the dawn of dating apps, had a premise that featured either a single man or single woman who would watch audition tapes of three potential mates and then pick one for a date.

A couple of weeks after the date, the guest would sit with Woolery in front of a studio audience and tell everybody about the date. The audience would vote on the three contestants, and if the audience agreed

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with the guest's choice, "Love Connection" would offer to pay for a second date.

Woolery told The Philadelphia Inquirer in 2003 that his favorite set of lovebirds was a man aged 91 and a woman aged 87. "She had so much eye makeup on, she looked like a stolen Corvette. He was so old he said, 'I remember wagon trains.' The poor guy. She took him on a balloon ride."

Other career highlights included hosting the shows "Lingo," "Greed" and "The Chuck Woolery Show," as well as hosting the short-lived syndicated revival of "The Dating Game" from 1998 to 2000 and an ill-fated 1991 talk show. In 1992, he played himself in two episodes of TV's "Melrose Place."

Woolery became the subject of the Game Show Network's first attempt at a reality show, "Chuck Woolery: Naturally Stoned," which premiered in 2003. It shared the title of the pop song in 1968 by Woolery and his rock group, the Avant-Garde. It lasted six episode and was panned by critics.

Woolery began his TV career at a show that has become a mainstay. Although most associated with Pat Sajak and Vanna White, "Wheel of Fortune" debuted Jan. 6, 1975, on NBC with Woolery welcoming contestants and the audience. Woolery, then 33, was trying to make it in Nashville as a singer.

"Wheel of Fortune" started life as "Shopper's Bazaar," incorporating Hangman-style puzzles and a roulette wheel. After Woolery appeared on "The Merv Griffin Show" singing "Delta Dawn," Merv Griffin asked him to host the new show with Susan Stafford.

"I had an interview that stretched to 15, 20 minutes," Woolery told The New York Times in 2003. "After the show, when Merv asked if I wanted to do a game show, I thought, 'Great, a guy with a bad jacket and an equally bad mustache who doesn't care what you have to say — that's the guy I want to be.'"

NBC initially passed, but they retooled it as "Wheel of Fortune" and got the green light. After a few years, Woolery demanded a raise to \$500,000 a year, or what host Peter Marshall was making on "Hollywood Squares." Griffin balked and replaced Woolery with weather reporter Pat Sajak.

"Both Chuck and Susie did a fine job, and 'Wheel' did well enough on NBC, although it never approached the kind of ratings success that 'Jeopardy!' achieved in its heyday," Griffin said in "Merv: Making the Good Life Last," an autobiography from the 2000s co-written by David Bender. Woolery earned an Emmy nod as host.

Born in Ashland, Kentucky, Woolery served in the U.S. Navy before attending college. He played double bass in a folk trio, then formed the psychedelic rock duo The Avant-Garde in 1967 while working as a truck driver to support himself as a musician.

The Avant-Garde, which toured in a refitted Cadillac hearse, had the Top 40 hit "Naturally Stoned," with Woolery singing, "When I put my mind on you alone/I can get a good sensation/Feel like I'm naturally stoned."

After The Avant-Garde broke up, Woolery released his debut solo single "I've Been Wrong" in 1969 and several more singles with Columbia before transitioning to country music by the 1970s. He released two solo singles, "Forgive My Heart" and "Love Me, Love Me."

Woolery wrote or co-wrote songs for himself and everyone from Pat Boone to Tammy Wynette. On Wynette's 1971 album "We Sure Can Love Each Other," Woolery wrote "The Joys of Being a Woman" with lyrics including "See our baby on the swing/Hear her laugh, hear her scream."

After his TV career ended, Woolery went into podcasting. In an interview with The New York Times, he called himself a gun-rights activist and described himself as a conservative libertarian and constitutionalist. He said he hadn't revealed his politics in liberal Hollywood for fear of retribution.

He teamed up with Mark Young in 2014 for the podcast "Blunt Force Truth" and soon became a full supporter of Donald Trump while arguing minorities don't need civil rights and causing a firestorm by tweeting an antisemitic comment linking Soviet Communists to Judaism.

"President Obama's popularity is a fantasy only held by him and his dwindling legion of juice-box-drinking, anxiety-dog-hugging, safe-space-hiding snowflakes," he said.

Woolery also was active online, retweeting articles from Conservative Brief, insisting Democrats were trying to install a system of Marxism and spreading headlines such as "Impeach him! Devastating photo of Joe Biden leaks."

During the early stages of the pandemic, Woolery initially accused medical professionals and Democrats of

lying about the virus in an effort to hurt the economy and Trump's chances for reelection to the presidency.

"The most outrageous lies are the ones about COVID-19. Everyone is lying. The CDC, media, Democrats, our doctors, not all but most, that we are told to trust. I think it's all about the election and keeping the economy from coming back, which is about the election. I'm sick of it," Woolery wrote in July 2020.

Trump retweeted that post to his 83 million followers. By the end of the month, nearly 4.5 million Americans had been infected with COVID-19 and more than 150,000 had died.

Just days later, Woolery changed his stance, announcing his son had contracted COVID-19. "To further clarify and add perspective, COVID-19 is real and it is here. My son tested positive for the virus, and I feel for of those suffering and especially for those who have lost loved ones," Woolery posted before his account was deleted.

Woolery later explained on his podcast that he never called COVID-19 "a hoax" or said "it's not real," just that "we've been lied to." Woolery also said it was "an honor to have your president retweet what your thoughts are and think it's important enough to do that."

In addition to his wife, Woolery is survived by his sons Michael and Sean and his daughter Melissa, Young said.

Somalia says 24 people have died after 2 boats capsized in the Indian Ocean

By OMAR FARUK Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — Twenty-four people died after two boats capsized off the Madagascar coast in the Indian Ocean, Somalia's government said Sunday.

Somalia's Foreign Minister Ahmed Moalim Fiqi said 46 people were rescued.

"We are working tirelessly to ensure the survivors are brought back home safely and provided with the necessary care," he said.

Most of the passengers were young Somalis, and their intended destination remains unclear. Many young Somalis embark every year on dangerous journeys in search of better opportunities abroad.

A delegation led by the Somali ambassador to Ethiopia is scheduled to travel to Madagascar on Monday to investigate the incident and coordinate efforts to help survivors.

Fiqi also said Sunday that Somalia's ambassador to Morocco will look into a separate report of Somali youth stranded on Morocco's coastline. It is not clear when the Morocco incident took place and Fiqi did not provide details.

The U.N migration agency has in the past raised concern over rising cases of irregular migration from the Horn of Africa countries as people flee from conflict and drought.

In April, 38 migrants died and 22 others were rescued from a shipwreck off Djibouti on a popular route to Yemen. Most of those rescued were of Somali and Ethiopian nationalities.

Moscow offers debt forgiveness to new recruits and AP sees wreckage of a new Russian missile

By SAMYA KULLAB and ELISE MORTON Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a law granting debt forgiveness to new army recruits who enlist to fight in Ukraine.

The measure, whose final version appeared on a government website Saturday, underscores Russia's needs for military personnel in the nearly 3-year war, even as it fired last week a new intermediate-range ballistic missile.

According to Russian state news agency Interfax, the new legislation allows those signing up for a one-year contract to write off bad debts of up to 10 million rubles (\$96,000). The law applies to debts for which a court order for collection was issued and enforcement proceedings had commenced before Dec. 1, 2024. It also applies to the spouses of new recruits.

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Russia has ramped up military recruitment by offering increasing financial incentives, in some cases several times the average salary, to those willing to fight in Ukraine.

The strategy has allowed the military to boost its ranks in the conflict zone while avoiding another mobilization order. A "partial mobilization" in September 2022 sparked an exodus of tens of thousands of Russian men, who fled the country to avoid enlistment.

The intense and drawn-out war has strained Russian resources. Putin in September called for the military to increase its troops by 180,000.

The U.S., South Korea and Ukraine say North Korea sent more than 10,000 troops to Russia in October, some of whom have recently begun engaging in combat on the front lines, piling more pressure on Ukraine's also weary and overstretched army.

The AP sees wreckage of Russia's new experimental missile

The push for recruits coincides with the firing of a new intermediate-range ballistic missile at Ukraine on Thursday. Putin said it was in response to Kyiv's use of American and British missiles capable of striking deeper into Russia.

Ukraine's Security Service showed The Associated Press on Sunday wreckage of the new experimental ballistic missile, which struck a factory in the central Ukrainian city of Dnipro.

The fragments of the missile called Oreshnik -- Russian for hazel tree, and which the Pentagon said is based on Russia's RS-26 Rubezh intercontinental ballistic missile -- have not been analyzed yet, according to security officials on site in an undisclosed location in Ukraine. The AP and other media were able to see the fragments before they were taken by investigators.

Charred, mangled wires and an ashy airframe the size of a large snow tire was all that remained of the weapon, which can carry either conventional or nuclear warheads.

"It should be noted that this is the first time that the remains of such a missile have been discovered on the territory of Ukraine," said an expert with Ukraine's Security Service, who identified himself only by his first name Oleh because he wasn't authorized to discuss the issue with the media.

Ukraine's Main Intelligence Directorate said the missile was fired from the 4th Missile Test Range, Kapustin Yar, in Russia's Astrakhan region and flew for 15 minutes before striking Dnipro. The missile had six warheads, each carrying six submunitions. The peak speed was 11 Mach.

The U.S. needs to "get ahead" of escalation, says incoming national security adviser

In light of the missile strike, U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's incoming national security adviser, Mike Waltz, said Sunday that the incoming administration wants "to get both sides to the table" and is concerned about escalation.

Waltz made clear on "Fox News Sunday" that he has met with Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, to discuss U.S. policy and options in Ukraine, and the Florida congressman assured that those conversations will continue.

"For our adversaries out there that think this is a time of opportunity, that they can play one administration off the other, they're wrong," Waltz said. "We are hand in glove. We are one team with the United States in this transition."

Waltz seemed to endorse Biden's decision to send antipersonnel mines for Ukraine forces to use in the conflict. "It is a step towards somewhat solidifying the lines, and we also needed to stop Russian gains," Waltz said.

The congressman also emphasized Trump's desire for the conflict to end quickly. Trump, who has praised Putin over the years, avoided throughout the campaign setting conditions for an end to the conflict, suggesting he would be open to considerable annexations of Ukraine. Waltz avoided discussing any terms Trump might pursue once he takes office.

"The president-elect has been very concerned about the escalation and where it's all going," Waltz said. "We need to bring this to a responsible end. We need to restore deterrence, restore peace and get ahead of this escalation ladder, rather than responding to it."

In other developments:

— Moscow sent 73 drones into Ukraine overnight into Sunday. According to Ukraine's air force, 50 drones

were destroyed and four lost, likely having been electronically jammed.

— Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Sunday that Russian forces over the past week had struck Ukraine with more than 800 guided aerial bombs, about 460 attack drones and more than 20 missiles.

— In Russia, the Defense Ministry said that 34 Ukrainian drones were shot down overnight into Sunday in four regions of western Russia, including Kursk, Lipetsk, Belgorod and one over the Oryol region.

Haiti wonders what's next as gang violence surges and the push for a UN peacekeeping mission flops

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — When Kenyan police arrived in Haiti as part of a U.N.-backed mission earlier this year to tackle gang violence, hopes were high.

Coordinated gang attacks on prisons, police stations and the main international airport had crippled the country's capital and forced the prime minister to resign, plunging Haiti into an unprecedented crisis.

But the crisis has only deepened since the international policing contingent arrived. The main international airport closed for the second time this year after gangs opened fire on commercial flights in mid-November, striking a flight attendant. Gunmen also are attacking once-peaceful communities to try and seize control of the entire capital, taking advantage of political infighting that led to the abrupt dismissal of the prime minister earlier this month.

Now, a new prime minister is tasked with turning around a nation that sees no escape from its troubles as Haitians wonder: How did the country reach this point?

'No functioning authority'

Bloody coups, brutal dictatorships and gangs created by Haiti's political and economic elite have long defined the country's history, but experts say the current crisis is the worst they've seen.

"I'm very bleak about the future," said Robert Fatton, a Haitian politics expert at the University of Virginia. "The whole situation is really collapsing."

The government is anemic, the U.N.-backed mission that supports Haiti's understaffed police department lacks funding and personnel, and gangs now control 85% of the capital. Then, on Wednesday, another blow.

Doctors Without Borders announced it was suspending critical care in Port-au-Prince as it accused police of targeting its staff and patients, including threats of rape and death. It's the first time the aid group has stopped working with new patients since it began operating in Haiti more than 30 years ago.

"Every day that we cannot resume activities is a tragedy, as we are one of the few providers of a wide range of medical services that have remained open during this extremely difficult year," said Christophe Garnier, mission director in Haiti.

Lionel Lizarre, deputy spokesman for Haiti's National Police, did not return messages for comment. Neither did officials with Kenya's mission when asked about the surge in gang violence.

In a recent statement, the Kenyan-led mission said it was "cognizant of the road ahead that is fraught with challenges." But it noted that ongoing joint patrols and operations have secured certain communities and forced gangs to change the way they operate.

André François Giroux, Canada's ambassador to Haiti, told The Associated Press on Saturday that his country and others have been trying to bolster the Kenyan-led mission. "They've done miracles, I think, considering all the challenges that we've been facing," he said.

"What we have to keep in mind is that it's still very much in deployment mode," Giroux said. "There are not even 400 on the ground right now."

A spokesman for Haiti's new prime minister, Alix Didier Fils-Aimé, did not return messages for comment. In a statement Thursday, his administration said authorities were strengthening security along the capital's main roads and had formed a special security council.

"The prime minister renews his commitment to find lasting solutions to current problems," it said.

The statement was issued just days after gangs launched a pre-dawn attack Tuesday around an upper-class community in Haiti's capital, forcing residents armed with machetes and guns to fight side-by-side

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with police to repel gunmen.

At least 28 gang members were killed, but not before some reached an area near an upscale hotel long considered safe.

"It tells you that there is no functioning authority in Haiti," Fatton said.

Dwindling aid and growing isolation

A main concern in the ongoing crisis is the temporary closure of the main international airport in Port-au-Prince.

It means critical aid is not reaching those who need it the most in a country where nearly 6,000 people are starving and nearly half of the more than 11 million inhabitants are experiencing crisis levels of hunger or worse. Gang violence also has left more than 700,000 people homeless in recent years.

"We are deeply concerned about the isolation of Port-au-Prince from the rest of Haiti and the world," said Laurent Uwumuremyi, Mercy Corps' country director for Haiti.

The aid group helps people including more than 15,000 living in makeshift shelters, but persistent gang violence has prevented workers from reaching a growing number of them in the capital and beyond.

Basic goods also are dwindling as the suspension of flights has delayed imports of critical supplies.

"Before, there were some neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince that we considered safe that the gangs had never reached, but now they are threatening to take over the control of the entire capital," Uwumuremyi said.

At least 150 people were reported killed in the capital and 20,000 forced to flee their homes in the second week of November alone. Overall, more than 4,500 people were reported killed in Haiti so far this year, the U.N. said.

Jimmy Chérizier, a former elite police officer who became a gang leader known as Barbecue, warned that a gang coalition known as Viv Ansanm will keep attacking as they demand the resignation of a transitional presidential council tasked with leading the country along with the new prime minister. The council also is supposed to organize general elections for the first time in nearly a decade so voters can choose a president, a position left empty since President Jovenel Moïse was killed at his private residence in July 2021.

'What else are you left with?'

The U.S. and other countries pushed for a U.N. peacekeeping mission in Haiti at a U.N. Security Council meeting this week. Only about 400 officers from Kenya have arrived, along with a handful of police and soldiers from other countries — way short of the 2,500 personnel slated for the mission.

"This is not just another wave of insecurity; it is a dramatic escalation that shows no signs of abating," Miroslav Jenča, U.N. assistant secretary general for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, said Wednesday at the meeting.

But Russia and China oppose a U.N. peacekeeping mission, leaving many to wonder what other options are left for Haiti.

Giroux, the Canadian ambassador, said his country supports a peacekeeping operation "when the time is right."

"Everybody is looking at a peacekeeping mission as a silver bullet," he said, adding that even if that were to happen, it wouldn't be able to deploy for another six to 12 months. "We need to be realistic."

Giroux said he is hopeful that some 600 Kenyans will arrive in Haiti in upcoming weeks, but added that "none of this matters if the political elite doesn't get its act together."

The nine-member transitional presidential council has been marred by accusations of corruption and infighting and was criticized for firing the previous prime minister.

"I'm at a loss for any short-term solution for Haiti, let alone any long-term solutions," Fatton said. "The gangs have seen that they shouldn't be afraid of the Kenyan mission."

He said one option may be for the government to negotiate with the gangs.

"At the moment, it is perceived as utterly unacceptable," he said. "But if the situation deteriorates even more, what else are you left with?"

Earth bids farewell to its temporary 'mini moon' that is possibly a chunk of our actual moon

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Planet Earth is parting company with an asteroid that's been tagging along as a "mini moon" for the past two months.

The harmless space rock will peel away on Monday, overcome by the stronger tug of the sun's gravity. But it will zip closer for a quick visit in January.

NASA will use a radar antenna to observe the 33-foot (10-meter) asteroid then. That should deepen scientists' understanding of the object known as 2024 PT5, quite possibly a boulder that was blasted off the moon by an impacting, crater-forming asteroid.

While not technically a moon — NASA stresses it was never captured by Earth's gravity and fully in orbit — it's "an interesting object" worthy of study.

The astrophysicist brothers who identified the asteroid's "mini moon behavior," Raul and Carlos de la Fuente Marcos of Complutense University of Madrid, have collaborated with telescopes in the Canary Islands for hundreds of observations so far.

Currently more than 2 million miles (3.5 million kilometers) away, the object is too small and faint to see without a powerful telescope. It will pass as close as 1.1 million miles (1.8 million kilometers) of Earth in January, maintaining a safe distance before it zooms farther into the solar system while orbiting the sun, not to return until 2055. That's almost five times farther than the moon.

First spotted in August, the asteroid began its semi jog around Earth in late September, after coming under the grips of Earth's gravity and following a horseshoe-shaped path. By the time it returns next year, it will be moving too fast — more than double its speed from September — to hang around, said Raul de la Fuente Marcos.

NASA will track the asteroid for more than a week in January using the Goldstone solar system radar antenna in California's Mojave Desert, part of the Deep Space Network.

Current data suggest that during its 2055 visit, the sun-circling asteroid will once again make a temporary and partial lap around Earth.

Japan holds Sado mines memorial despite South Korean boycott amid lingering historical tensions

By MARI YAMAGUCHI and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SADO, Japan (AP) — Japanese officials on Sunday paid tribute to workers at the country's Sado Island Gold Mines but offered no apology over Japan's brutal wartime use of Korean forced laborers, highlighting lingering tensions between the neighbors over the issue.

South Korea a day earlier announced that it was boycotting the memorial, saying it had been impossible to settle unspecified disagreements between both governments in time for the event. The Korean absence is a major setback in the rapidly improving ties between the two countries, which since last year have set aside their historical disputes to prioritize U.S.-led security cooperation.

The Sado mines were listed in July as a UNESCO World Heritage Site after Japan moved past years of disputes with South Korea and reluctantly acknowledged the mines' dark history, promising to hold an annual memorial service for all victims, including hundreds of Koreans who were mobilized to work in the mines.

The first ceremony of what Japan has promised will be an annual event held at a facility near the mines took place with more than 20 seats for South Korean attendees empty.

"As a local resident, I must say (their absence) is very disappointing after all the preparations we made," said Sado Mayor Ryugo Watanabe. "I wish we could have held the memorial with South Korean attendees."

Families of Korean victims of mine accidents and South Korean officials are expected to hold their own ceremony near the mine on Monday as an expression of their "firm resolve not to make a compromise

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with Japan on history issues," South Korea's Foreign Ministry said in a statement. It said South Korea will continue to strive to achieve the improvement of bilateral ties in a way that serves national interests of both countries.

At Sunday's ceremony, four Japanese representatives, including central and local government officials and the head of the organizing group, thanked all mine workers for their sacrifice and mourned for those who died. None offered any apology to Korean forced laborers for the harsh treatment at the mines.

Akiko Ikuina, a parliamentary vice minister, representing Japan's government, praised the craftsmanship of the laborers and their contribution to the Sado mines.

She noted that "many people from the Korean Peninsula were at the mines under Japan's wartime labor policies" and that they engaged in difficult work under dangerous and severe conditions away from home and their loved ones, and some died in accidents or from illnesses. But she did not acknowledge their forced labor or Japan's colonization of the Korean Peninsula.

There has been speculation that the South Korean boycott might have been because of Ikuina's past visit to Tokyo's controversial Yasukuni Shrine — in August 2022, weeks after she was elected as a lawmaker. Japan's neighbors view Yasukuni, which commemorates 2.5 million war dead including war criminals, as a symbol of Japan's past militarism.

Ikuina belonged to a Japanese ruling party faction of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who led the whitewashing of Japan's wartime atrocities in the 2010s during his leadership.

For instance, Japan says the terms "sex slavery" and "forced labor" are inaccurate and insists on the use of highly euphemistic terms such as "comfort women" and "civilian workers" instead.

South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul said Saturday that Ikuina's Yasukuni visit was an issue of contention between the countries' diplomats.

The 16th-century mines on the island of Sado, off Japan's north-central coast, operated for nearly 400 years before closing in 1989 and were once the world's largest gold producer.

Historians say about 1,500 Koreans were mobilized to Sado as part of Japan's use of hundreds of thousands of Korean laborers, including those forcibly brought from the Korean Peninsula, at Japanese mines and factories to make up for labor shortages because most working-age Japanese men had been sent to battlefronts across Asia and the Pacific.

Japan's government has maintained that all wartime compensation issues between the two countries were resolved under a 1965 normalization treaty.

South Korea had long opposed the listing of the site as World Heritage on the grounds that the Korean forced laborers, despite their key role in the wartime mine production, were missing from the exhibition. Seoul's backing for Sado came as South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol prioritized improving relations with Japan.

Some South Koreans had criticized Yoon's government for supporting the event without securing a clear Japanese commitment to highlight the plight of Korean laborers. There were also complaints over South Korea agreeing to pay for the travel expenses of Korean victims' family members to Sado.

The rising price of paying the national debt is a risk for Trump's promises on growth and inflation

By JOSH BOAK and FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump has big plans for the economy — and a big debt problem that will be a hurdle to delivering on them.

Trump has bold ideas on tax cuts, tariffs and other programs, but high interest rates and the price of repaying the federal government's existing debt could limit what he's able to do.

Not only is the federal debt at roughly \$36 trillion, but the spike in inflation after the coronavirus pandemic has pushed up the government's borrowing costs such that debt service next year will easily exceed spending on national security.

The higher cost of servicing the debt gives Trump less room to maneuver with the federal budget as he

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seeks income tax cuts. It's also a political challenge because higher interest rates have made it costlier for many Americans to buy a home or new automobile. And the issue of high costs helped Trump reclaim the presidency in November's election.

"It's clear the current amount of debt is putting upward pressure on interest rates, including mortgage rates for instance," said Shai Akabas, executive director of the economic policy program at the Bipartisan Policy Center. "The cost of housing and groceries is going to be increasingly felt by households in a way that are going to adversely affect our economic prospects in the future."

Akabas stressed that the debt service is already starting to crowd out government spending on basic needs such as infrastructure and education. About 1 in 5 dollars spent by the government are now repaying investors for borrowed money, instead of enabling investments in future economic growth.

It's an issue on Trump's radar. In his statement on choosing billionaire investor Scott Bessent to be his treasury secretary, the Republican president-elect said Bessent would "help curb the unsustainable path of Federal Debt."

The debt service costs along with the higher total debt complicate Trump's efforts to renew his 2017 tax cuts, much of which are set to expire after next year. The higher debt from those tax cuts could push interest rates higher, making debt service even costlier and minimizing any benefits the tax cuts could produce for growth.

"Clearly, it's irresponsible to run back the same tax cuts after the deficit has tripled," said Brian Riedl, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and a former Republican congressional aide. "Even congressional Republicans behind the scenes are looking for ways to scale down the president's ambitions."

Democrats and many economists say Trump's income tax cuts disproportionately benefit the wealthy, which deprives the government of revenues needed for programs for the middle class and poor.

"The president-elect's tax policy ideas will increase the deficit because they will decrease taxes for those with the highest ability to pay, such as the corporations whose tax rate he's proposed reducing even further to 15%," said Jessica Fulton, vice president of policy at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington-based think tank that deals with issues facing communities of color.

Trump's team insists he can make the math work.

"The American people re-elected President Trump by a resounding margin giving him a mandate to implement the promises he made on the campaign trail, including lowering prices. He will deliver," said Karoline Leavitt, the Trump transition spokeswoman.

When Trump was last in the White House in 2020, the federal government was spending \$345 billion annually to service the national debt. It was possible to run up the national debt with tax cuts and pandemic aid because the average interest rate was low, such that repayment costs were manageable even as debt levels climbed.

Congressional Budget Office projections indicate that debt service costs next year could exceed \$1 trillion. That's more than projected spending on defense. The total is also greater than nondefense spending on infrastructure, food aid and other programs under the direction of Congress.

What fueled the increased cost of servicing the debt has been higher interest rates. In April 2020, when the government was borrowing trillions of dollars to address the pandemic, the yield on 10-year Treasury notes fell as low as 0.6%. They're now 4.4%, having increasing since September as investors expect Trump to add several trillions of dollars onto projected deficits with his income tax cuts.

Democratic President Joe Biden can point to strong economic growth and successfully avoiding a recession as the Federal Reserve sought to bring down inflation. Still, deficits ran at unusually high levels during his term. That's due in part to his own initiatives to boost manufacturing and address climate change, and to the legacy of Trump's previous tax cuts.

People in Trump's orbit, as well as Republican lawmakers, are already scouting out ways to reduce government spending in order to minimize the debt and bring down interest rates. They have attacked Biden for the deficits and inflation, setting the stage for whether they can persuade Trump to take action.

Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, the wealthy businessmen leading Trump's efforts to cut government costs, have proposed that the incoming administration should simply refuse to spend some of the money

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approved by Congress. It's an idea that Trump has also backed, but one that would likely provoke challenges in court as it would undermine congressional authority.

Russell Vought, the White House budget director during Trump's first term and Trump's choice to lead it again, put out an alternative proposed budget for 2023 with more than \$11 trillion in spending cuts over 10 years in order to potentially generate a surplus.

Michael Faulkender, a finance professor who served in Trump's Treasury Department, told a congressional committee in March that all the energy and environmental components of Biden's Inflation Reduction Act from 2022 should be repealed to reduce deficits.

Trump has also talked up tariffs on imports to generate revenues and reduce deficits, while some Republican lawmakers such as House Budget Committee Chairman Jodey Arrington, R-Texas, have discussed adding work requirements to trim Medicaid expenses.

The White House was last pressured by high rates to address debt service costs roughly three decades ago during the start of Democrat Bill Clinton's presidency. Higher yields on the 10-year Treasury notes led Clinton and Congress to reach an agreement on deficit reduction, ultimately producing a budget surplus starting in 1998.

Clinton political adviser James Carville joked at the time about how bond investors pushing up borrowing rates for the U.S. government could humble the commander in chief.

"I used to think that if there was reincarnation, I wanted to come back as the president or the pope or as a .400 baseball hitter," Carville said. "But now I would like to come back as the bond market. You can intimidate everybody."

Today in History: November 25 John F. Kennedy laid to rest at Arlington

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, Nov. 25, the 330th day of 2024. There are 36 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Nov. 25, 1963, the body of President John F. Kennedy was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery after a funeral procession through Washington; an estimated 1 million people lined the procession route.

Also on this date:

In 1783, following the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, the last remaining British troops in the United States were evacuated from New York City.

In 1961, the USS Enterprise was commissioned; it was the first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and remains the longest naval vessel ever built, at 1,123 feet (342 meters).

In 1986, the Iran-Contra affair erupted as President Ronald Reagan and Attorney General Edwin Meese revealed that profits from secret arms sales to Iran had been diverted to Nicaraguan rebels.

In 1999, Elian Gonzalez, a 5-year-old Cuban boy, was rescued by a pair of sport fishermen off the coast of Florida, setting off an international custody battle.

In 2001, as the war in Afghanistan entered its eighth week, CIA officer Johnny "Mike" Spann was killed during a prison uprising in Mazar-e-Sharif, becoming America's first combat casualty of the conflict.

In 2016, Fidel Castro, who led his rebels to a victorious revolution in 1959, embraced Soviet-style communism and defied the power of 10 U.S. presidents during his half-century of rule in Cuba, died at age 90.

Today's Birthdays: Football Hall of Fame coach Joe Gibbs is 84. Actor John Larroquette is 77. Dance judge Bruno Tonioli (TV: "Dancing with the Stars") is 69. Musician Amy Grant is 64. Football Hall of Famer Cris Carter is 59. Rapper-producer Erick Sermon is 56. Actor Jill Hennessy is 56. Actor Christina Applegate is 53. Former NFL quarterback Donovan McNabb is 48. Former first daughter Barbara Pierce Bush is 43. Former first daughter Jenna Bush Hager is 43. Soccer manager and former player Xabi Alonso is 43. Actor Stephanie Hsu is 34.