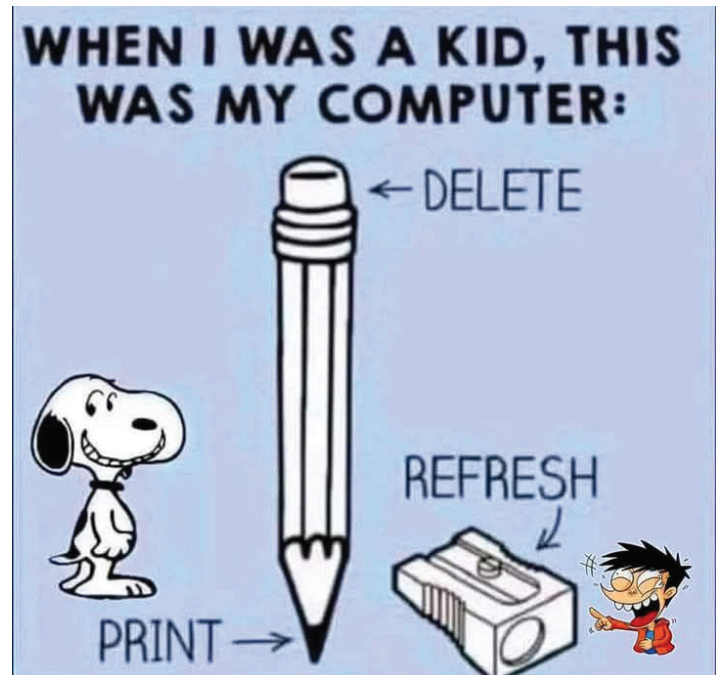


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Monday, Dec. 30

Senior Menu: Chicken alredo, broccoli, pineapple, breadstick.

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

Girls Varsity Wrestling at Sioux Falls Lincoln.

Boys Basketball at Webster: C at 5 p.m. followed by JV and Varsity.

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

Tuesday, Dec. 31

Senior Menu: Roast pork, mashed potatoes and gravy, three bean salad, fruit, whole wheat bread.

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, Jan. 1, 2025

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Thursday, Jan. 2

Senior Menu: Chicke strips, tri-tators, peas and carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast Pizza.

School Lunch: Lasagna bake, garlic toast.

School resumes

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 3

Senior Menu: Chili, corn bread, winter blend, oranges.

School. Breakfast: Egg wraps.

School Lunch: Popcorn chicken, tri taters.

Girls Wrestling at McCook Central/Montrose (Salem), 2 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 4

Boys Wrestling Tournament at Webster, 10 a.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 209 N Main

Basketball Double Header hosts Redfield ((Boys Girls JV at 1 p.m.; Boys JV/ at 2 p.m.; Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity to follow)

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

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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.

South Korea Air Crash

At least 179 people were killed yesterday morning when a commercial airliner crashed on landing at South Korea's Muan airport. Two people—both crew members working for operator Jeju Air—survived what is believed to be the worst air disaster in the country's history.

Early reports suggest the aircraft, a Boeing 737-800 en route from Bangkok, may have been struck by a bird, though it was unclear whether it was the engine or elsewhere, such as the cockpit window. The control tower received a mayday call from the pilots, and five minutes later the plane reached the runway—but failed to deploy its landing gear, sliding into an embankment before exploding. Officials said it could take weeks to analyze the flight recorder.

The incident comes amid political turmoil in the country, initiated by a botched attempt by now-suspended President Yoon Suk Yeol to impose martial law earlier this month.

Jimmy Carter Dies

Former President Jimmy Carter passed away yesterday at his home in the town of Plains, Georgia, according to a statement from family members. Carter was the only US president to live to 100 years old.

A former US Naval officer turned peanut farmer, the Georgia native and Democrat entered politics in 1963 as a state senator, rising to become governor in 1971 while championing civil rights. In 1976 he was elected president, beating Republican incumbent Gerald Ford by a 50.1-48.0% margin. Carter's single term in office was marked by an economic slowdown, the Iran hostage crisis, and the aftereffects of the Vietnam War. He ultimately lost the 1980 election to Republican Ronald Reagan in an electoral landslide, 489-49.

A winner of the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize, Carter was known for his philanthropic efforts, including his participation in Habitat for Humanity, which he continued into his 90s, among other causes.

OpenAI Restructures

Artificial intelligence giant OpenAI revealed long-anticipated plans to restructure the organization Friday, announcing it will transition to a public benefit corporation with an associated nonprofit arm. The company said the move will allow it to raise the capital needed to finance its massive computing needs while balancing the interests of shareholders and the public.

Now valued at \$157B, the maker of ChatGPT originally began as fully nonprofit in 2015. In 2019, the organization moved to a hybrid model, with the relatively smaller nonprofit arm controlling a for-profit operation—a structure that played a role in a failed attempt to oust CEO Sam Altman in 2023.

In response to the new plans, an AI safety nonprofit joined an existing lawsuit brought by Elon Musk—an early investor in OpenAI and CEO of competitor xAI—attempting to block OpenAI's transition to a for-profit entity. The suit alleges the move violates OpenAI's founding charter, among other claims.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

NFL football, presidential debates, Academy Awards, and Paris Olympicstop list of 100 most-watched US telecasts of 2024; see full list.

Olivia Hussey, actress best known for leading role in "Romeo and Juliet" film, dies at 73.

Dayle Haddon, supermodel and actress, dies at 76 of suspected carbon monoxide poisoning.

Miami's Cam Ward breaks all-time NCAA Division 1 record for most career TD passes with 156.

Science & Technology

Jeff Bezos-owned Blue Origin receives license for a test launch of its New Glenn heavy-lift launch vehicle, successfully fires up rocket on launch pad,

Health officials report a surge in norovirus outbreaks across the US, with the number per week roughly tripling between mid-November and early December.

James Webb Space Telescope detects most distant spiral galaxy to date, formed roughly one billion years after the Big Bang.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close down Friday (S&P 500 -1.1%, Dow -0.8%, Nasdaq -1.5%) as major tech stocks like Tesla (-5.0%) and Nvidia (-2.0%) drop; markets still close holiday week up.

President-elect Donald Trump asks Supreme Court to pause upcoming Jan. 19 deadline requiring TikTok be divested or face a US ban; court to hear case Jan. 10.

Crypto industry groups sue the IRS over rule requiring some decentralized finance platforms to track and report user data, including transaction history, beginning in 2027.

Politics & World Affairs

Israeli forces detain more than 240 people during a raid on hospital in northern Gaza, alleging Hamas fighters were using the facility as cover.

At least two dead and six injured in Texas and Mississippi as intense weekend storm spawns tornadoes across the southern US; hundreds of thousands of people left without power.

President-elect Donald Trump issues statement supporting H-1B visa program for high-skilled foreign workers amid online dispute between some supporters and Elon Musk.

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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

When the Vikings and Packers met in week four, the Vikings got out to a big lead and then allowed the Packers to mount a comeback before holding on to a two-point win for Minnesota. On Sunday, the two division rivals met again. The Vikings built a sizeable lead and were up by 17 points halfway through the fourth quarter... then the Packers started coming back. Luckily, just like in week four, the Vikings held on and secured a two-point win, 27-25.

The Packers won the coin toss and elected to receive the opening kickoff. Five plays later, GB running back Josh Jacobs fumbled the ball. The Vikings picked up a first down then stalled and punted the ball back to Green Bay, who went three-and-out and punted the ball right back to Minnesota. The Vikings got the ball into field goal range, but Will Reichard missed a 57-yard attempt. The Packers finally got the scoring started late in the first by kicking a field goal, 3-0 Green Bay at the end of the first quarter.

The Vikings marched down the field on their next drive, going 77 yards in nine plays and finding the endzone (Sam Darnold to Jalen Nailor for 31 yards), taking a 7-3 lead. Facing fourth down on their next drive, the Packers gambled and lost, which gave the ball back to the Vikings. 10 plays and 69 yards later, the Vikings' offense stalled and settled for a field goal, making the score 10-3. Green Bay then went three-and-out, and with 1:16 left in the half, the Vikings drove down and kicked another field goal as time expired, extending the lead to 10 points.

The Vikings got the ball to begin the second half and put together another great drive that ended in a Darnold to Jordan Addison touchdown catch. Halfway through the third quarter, Green Bay had another three-and-out. The Vikings had a 17-point lead, the ball, and all the momentum. Unfortunately, this is the Vikings we're talking about. After a run on first down for a loss, Darnold attempted a pass to T.J. Hockenson which was intercepted by Green Bay. Four plays later, the Packers finally found the endzone, cutting the lead to 10. Sensing the momentum starting to shift, the Vikings put together another great drive which resulted in another touchdown pass from Darnold (this time to Cam Akers), putting the lead back to 17 entering the fourth quarter.

Green Bay's first drive of the fourth quarter went backward, and facing 4th&23 they were forced to punt. Minnesota got to the Packers' 25-yard line but Reichard missed a FG attempt. The Packers went into hurry-up mode and found the endzone again, and this time they completed a two-point conversion to make the score 27-18. The Vikings had a chance to shut the door on their next drive, so of course they went three-and-out and punted the ball to Green Bay. Nine plays and 62 yards later, the Packers got into the endzone again, cutting the Vikings' lead to two points with just over two minutes left in the game. The Vikings got the ball back and did what they needed to do, picking up two first downs and finishing the game in victory formation.

Sam Darnold completed 33 of 43 passes for 377 yards, three touchdowns and one interception. Justin Jefferson had eight catches for 92 yards, leading the team in both categories, while Nailor, Addison, and Akers caught the three TD passes.

Blake Cashman led the way for the Vikings' defense, totaling 11 tackles and 1.5 sacks. Andrew Van Ginkel had the other half of that sack, and rookie Dallas Turner added a sack of his own.

Looking ahead, the Vikings will set sail for Detroit for the game of the year. No matter what happens with the Lions' week 17 game, the matchup next week will be for the division and the number one seed in the playoffs (which comes with a much-needed bye week). This game will tell us a lot about the Vikings - if they win (or lose a close, competitive game), we'll know the team is capable of doing damage in the playoffs. Skol!

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Tuff Tiger Weekend update



Braxton Sombke, Roman Bahr and Brooks Sombke.

Blue Dragon - Garretson

Brooks Sombke champion
Roman Bahr champion
Braxton Sombke champion

Little Floyd - Sioux Falls

Brooks Sombke 2nd place
Roman Bahr champion
Braxton Sombke champion

League of Hero's - Hartington, Neb.

Roman Bahr Champion.



Cossack Clash - Volga

From L to R
Roman Bahr - Champion
Watson Herron Champion
Ryker Herron 4th place
Brooks Vedvie 4th place

Ehresmann, Kucker ranked in the state

According to the latest wrestling standings, Christian Ehresmann is ranked second in the state at 157 pounds and Korbin Kucker is ranked fourth at 175 pounds. As a team, Groton Area is ranked 15th in Class B.

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You have to start some time! Why not **now!**

5 months to get your through the winter!

Student: \$175.75, Single: \$202.40, Couple: \$298.90,
Family: \$362.15

This will get you into the gym through the end of May!



Gift
Certificates
Available!

Daily Pass Available for \$5

Age 65 or older
Physical Therapy
\$20 per month

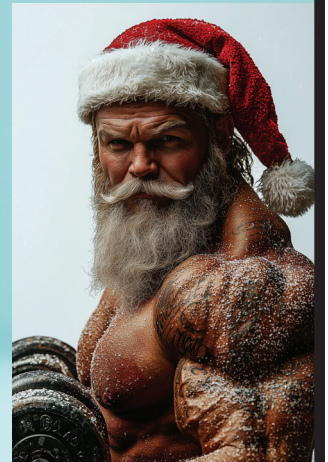
Annual Memberships:

Student: \$255.60

Single: \$319.50

Couple: \$575.10

Family: \$702.26



15 N Main St. - Ste. 101
Downtown Groton

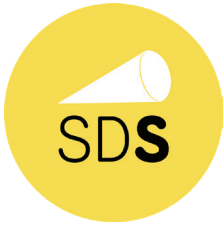
Call/Text Paul: 605-397-7460

Call/Text Tina: 605-397-7285



Living Heart Fitness Center

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SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

'School choice' would force bad budget choices on the state and school districts

SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS COALITION

During her recent budget address, Gov. Kristi Noem outlined a plan to utilize \$4 million of taxpayer money to pay for a new program she is calling "education savings accounts." Let's be clear. This is a school voucher program that diverts public dollars to private schools or alternative education programs with little transparency or accountability to taxpayers.

Some will say this is about "school choice," but the reality is that these programs force future legislatures and local communities to make hard choices in the future. Numerous states have started these voucher schemes with devastating impacts on state budgets.

One example is Arizona. It started a similar program in 2022 with a price tag of \$65 million. In just a few short years, that program is estimated to cost \$429 million for the 2025 fiscal year alone and is responsible for two-thirds of the state's \$1.4 billion budget deficit for the combined 2024 and 2025 fiscal years.

Iowa, which hastily passed a voucher program in the opening weeks of its 2023 legislative session, is now facing a \$200 million budget deficit. More private schools are opening, mostly in urban areas such as Des Moines, while small rural schools are closing. These are not isolated incidents but rather a pattern South Dakota should learn from.

This program is about choice, but not good choices for South Dakota rural communities and local school districts. Legislators can choose to fund this voucher program at the cost of cutting other programs such as the ones outlined in the governor's proposed budget.

They can reduce state funding for the dual credit program for high school students, which provides a step up to students attending our universities. They can cut funding for the State Library, which provides vital resources to rural schools. They can even choose to cut South Dakota Public Broadcasting, which again offers valuable education and information to citizens of all ages. The Legislature can choose to start a voucher program, but only by cutting other services. Is that in South Dakota's best interest?



The South Dakota State Capitol at Pierre in December 2024. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

What does making this choice mean in the long run for South Dakota's schools and communities? We have already outlined what has happened in other states, and the same thing will happen here.

There will be less money for public schools, where over 80% of the state's students attend — forcing local school boards to make the unpopular choice of cutting staff and having larger class sizes. There will be no room in local budgets for fine arts programs, which are essential for a district's ability to offer an education that reaches all students, especially those at risk. Gone will be the career and technical education programs vital in training the workforce necessary to have a strong and vibrant rural economy. Schools in our rural communities will be hit the hardest, with no choice but to make devastating cuts or close their doors.

The South Dakota Public Schools Coalition emphasizes the importance of evaluating the long-term consequences of introducing a voucher program. Public schools are vital to our communities and require adequate resources to provide equitable, high-quality education to all students, as mandated by the South Dakota Constitution. Lawmakers have a duty to uphold this commitment.

School Administrators of South Dakota (SASD), Rob Monson, executive director

Associated School Boards of South Dakota (ASBSD), Heath Larson, executive director

South Dakota Education Association (SDEA), Ryan Rolfs, executive director

South Dakota United School Association (SDUSA), Mitch Richter, executive director

Large School Group, Dianna Miller, executive director

Businesses could face changes in unemployment assistance tax

Retailers' representative says impact of raising one tax and lowering another would be unequal

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - DECEMBER 29, 2024 6:00 AM

Legislators could soon be asked to impose a higher tax on employers to cover the administrative expenses of the state's unemployment assistance program, but a lower tax to fund the program's payouts to unemployed people, sparking concerns of an unequal impact on businesses.

The state's Reemployment Assistance Advisory Council approved a plan this month to ask legislators for the changes in January.

South Dakota's Reemployment Assistance program offers a safety net for laid-off workers. Payroll taxes from employers help support the trust fund to cover unemployment claims. Payroll taxes also go toward the administration of the program and toward the Future Fund, which is used by the gover-



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

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nor for economic development grants.

The increase in the administrative portion of the taxes is needed, according to state Department of Labor and Regulation Secretary Marcia Hultman, because the administration fund is projected to fall into the red in coming years due to state employee salary increases passed by the Legislature, inflation and other expenses.

The proposal would triple the portion of taxes known as the "administrative fee." Most businesses pay a 0.02% administrative fee on the first \$15,000 of an employee's wages annually, or \$3 per employee. The fee increase would raise that by \$9 per employee to raise a collective \$3 million.

Hultman hopes to simultaneously reduce taxes paid to the unemployment trust fund by \$3 million to be "revenue neutral." Even with that reduction in funds, Hultman told board members in November that her department projects a "healthy balance" to meet the demand of the program and potential claims. The trust fund balance for 2023 was \$217 million.

Hultman's idea is "not the worst proposal," board member and president of the South Dakota Chamber of Commerce & Industry David Owen said in November, when Hultman first proposed the bill.

But the proposal doesn't affect all employers fairly, said South Dakota Retailers Association Executive Director Nathan Sanderson, who is also a board member.

"Some businesses who pay nothing now will pay a higher administrative fee," Sanderson said after a recent meeting. "Some businesses who pay more now will pay less under this."

Some employers currently pay nothing into the trust fund because they've previously contributed enough to cover potential unemployment claims. But they still pay an administrative and Future Fund fee, and their administrative fee would increase under the proposed legislation.

Other businesses that do pay into the trust fund could see a reduction in their overall burden because of the proposed reduction in that tax, while 2,906 employers that don't currently pay an administrative fee because they're "new employers" would lose that exemption under the new proposal.

Owen said small retailers would be disproportionately affected. The wage base — the first \$15,000 on an employee's salary — is a more significant share of a small business payroll than a larger business.

Owen also said the administrative funding ought to come from the state's general fund, since it would be a more stable source and the program serves the state's working population.

Sanderson plans to explore other options during the legislative session that may or may not be "complementary" to Hultman's proposal.

"There are a lot of conversations that need to be had before we say this proposal is the right fit," Sanderson added.

The Future Fund, controlled by the governor, has come under fire from some legislators in recent years due to the Legislature's lack of oversight or approval of fund expenditures.

Julie Johnson, legislative director for the South Dakota Society for Human Resource Management State Council, said during public comment she doesn't want the needed increase to get "tangled with Future Fund issues lingering out there."

If nothing changes, the program's administration fund would go into the red and put the state out of compliance with federal standards. That would be a bigger cost to South Dakota businesses in the long run than the proposed \$3 million administrative fee hike, Hultman said in November.

Being in compliance gives South Dakota employers a break on their federal unemployment tax. Employers pay a flat \$42 per employee in federal unemployment tax annually. That would increase to \$420 per employee if the reemployment program isn't in compliance — moving total payments from \$18.3 million to \$183 million.

"There is a real hazard and danger to not maintaining operations as they currently are," Hultman said in November. "It would be a very heavy burden — obviously much more extreme than the \$3 million we're trying to generate to continue operations in an efficient manner."

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

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter dies at 100

BY: ROSS WILLIAMS - DECEMBER 29, 2024 5:04 PM

President Jimmy Carter, the only Georgian to ever occupy the White House, died Sunday, Dec. 29, 2024, after spending over a year in hospice care.

Carter, who turned 100 on Oct. 1 and is the longest-lived president in American history, died at his home in Plains Sunday surrounded by family, according to the Carter Center.

"My father was a hero, not only to me but to everyone who believes in peace, human rights, and unselfish love," Chip Carter, the former president's son, said in a statement. "My brothers, sister, and I shared him with the rest of the world through these common beliefs. The world is our family because of the way he brought people together, and we thank you for honoring his memory by continuing to live these shared beliefs."

Public services are planned for Atlanta and Washington, with a private burial service following in Plains. A full schedule has not yet been released.

President Carter and former first lady Rosalynn Carter were beloved residents of Plains, the small town in southwest Georgia where the couple grew up. Rosalynn Carter died Nov. 19, 2023 at 96.

Their affection for one another never seemed to fade during their 77-year marriage, which spanned Carter's ever-changing career, from peanut farmer to state senator, governor and president, as well as his post-White House roles as diplomat, humanitarian and volunteer.

The former president's passion for helping others and devotion to his faith, family and country garnered praise from Georgia's political leaders.

In a statement, Gov. Brian Kemp praised Carter's dedication to the state and the nation as well as his humanitarian work and love for the former first lady.

"Their family continues to be in our prayers as President Carter is reunited with his beloved wife and the world mourns this native Georgian, former state and national leader, and proud peanut farmer from Plains," Kemp said.

U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock called Carter a hero, a friend and one of his favorite people, who moved the country "closer toward our highest ideals."

"A former president, he got his hands dirty, literally building people's homes while helping them build their lives. President Carter was a Matthew 25 Christian. He believed, as I do, that the true test of your faith is the depth of your commitment to the most marginalized members of the human family. I believe he passed that test and has now graduated into immortality. Democracies around the world are stronger and children across the globe are alive today because of President Carter's work—what a legacy to leave."



Former President Jimmy Carter and wife Rosalynn converse prior to the start of Game Three of the NLDS of the 2010 MLB Playoffs between the Atlanta Braves and the San Francisco Giants on Oct. 10, 2010, at Turner Field in Atlanta, Georgia. (Jamie

Squire/Getty Images)

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U.S. Sen Jon Ossoff said Carter will be remembered for “his commitment to democracy and human rights, his enduring faith, his philanthropic leadership and his deep love of family.”

“From Plains to across the State of Georgia, the United States, and around the world, millions will forever admire and appreciate all that President Carter did for the United States and for the global community,” Ossoff said. “The State of Georgia and the United States are better places because of President Jimmy Carter.”

As president, he helped broker the Camp David Peace Accords between Israel and Egypt, established diplomatic relations with China, and oversaw the creation of the departments of Energy and Education, among other accomplishments.

But he would serve only one term as president, losing to Ronald Reagan in 1980 amid a struggling economy and the Iranian hostage crisis.

His popularity increased after leaving the White House, becoming the face of Habitat for Humanity – and even showing up at his namesake build after suffering injuries in a fall – and taking on global crises and strife with his Atlanta-based Carter Center.

He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 for “his decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development.”

Carter was also a prolific author who was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for a memoir about growing up on a Georgia farm in the rural South after the Great Depression and before the civil rights movement. He has won a Grammy three times for his audio books and was nominated another nine times.

The Carters returned to their hometown after leaving the White House, moving back into the same modest ranch-style home they first purchased in 1961. A devout Christian, Carter famously continued to teach Sunday School class at Maranatha Baptist Church until 2020, ending a four-decade run that became part of Georgia political lore.

The Atlanta-based Carter Center announced Feb. 18, 2023 that Carter had decided to enter hospice care and spend his remaining time at home with his family. The announcement triggered an outpouring of tributes and fond remembrances from Georgians on both sides of the aisle.

Carter overcame brain cancer in 2015 and several accidents in recent years.

The former president also continued to wield influence in politics – especially in Georgia. He continued to endorse candidates in high-profile races, including Vice President Kamala Harris. His grandson Jason Carter told reporters he was hanging on to cast a ballot for Harris.

Carter also threw his endorsement behind top Democrats including Sen. Raphael Warnock and gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams – and hosted the Bidens at their home in Plains in 2021. Back in 1976, Biden, then a senator, was one of the first elected officials outside Georgia to back Carter’s presidential run.

Thune statement on Carter

U.S. Sen. John Thune, R-South Dakota, released the following statement on the death of former President Jimmy Carter:

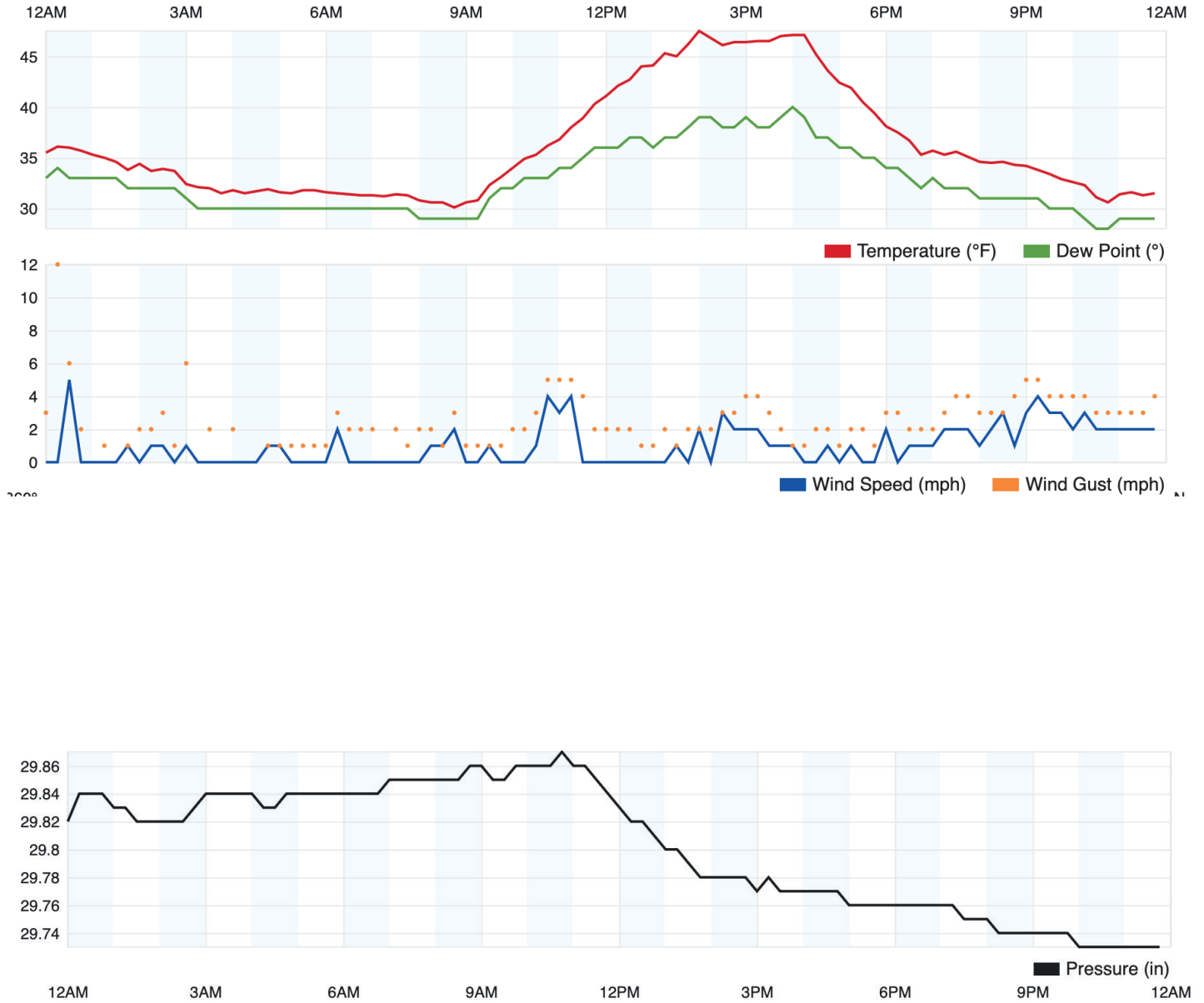
“Today we mourn the passing of a dedicated public servant and man of faith, former President Jimmy Carter. President Carter dedicated his life to serving the people of Georgia and our great country – as a naval officer, a governor, and as the 39th President of the United States. From peanut farming to the presidency and every step in between, his wife Rosalynn was by his side. Kimberley and I are praying for the Carter family, and we are comforted by the fact that Jimmy and Rosalynn are together again.”

Before joining the Georgia Recorder, Ross Williams covered local and state government for the Marietta Daily Journal. His work earned recognition from the Georgia Associated Press Media Editors and the Georgia Press Association, including beat reporting, business writing and non-deadline reporting.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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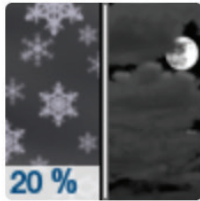
Today



High: 30 °F

Chance Wintry Mix and Patchy Fog

Tonight



Low: 18 °F

Slight Chance Snow and Patchy Fog then Mostly Cloudy

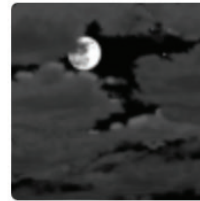
Tuesday



High: 24 °F

Partly Sunny

Tuesday Night



Low: 10 °F

Mostly Cloudy

New Year's Day



High: 20 °F

Mostly Sunny

Wintry Mix, Becoming all Snow This Afternoon
December 30, 2024
3:55 AM

Key Messages

- Minor to moderate travel impacts across central/south central South Dakota due to ice and snow.
- 60-90% chance of a wintry mix of rain, freezing rain, and snow this morning south of a line from Mobridge to Redfield.
- The wintry mix becomes all snow this afternoon, with 1 to 4 inches possible.

NEW

What Has Changed

- A Winter Weather Advisory is in effect for snow and/or ice mix and *potential for impacted travel*.

Next Scheduled Update

- Final Update

Winter Weather Advisory

For a mix of rain, freezing rain, and snow - dependent on location

Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen, SD
 Issued Dec 30, 2024 3:30 AM CST

www.weather.gov/abr



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A Winter Weather Advisory remains in effect for the potential impacts associated with a system that brings a mix of rain, freezing rain, and snow to the area today.

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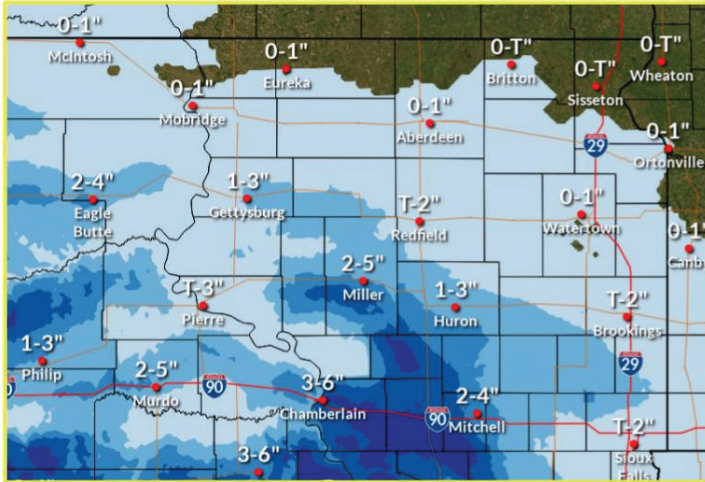


Expected Snow and Ice Accumulation

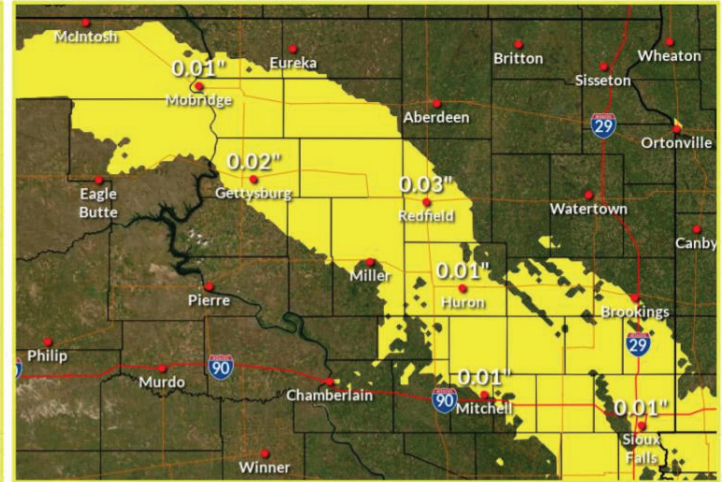
December 30, 2024
3:57 AM

Valid: 6 AM CST Monday to 12 AM CST Tuesday

Snowfall Ranges



Potential Ice Accumulation



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Potential ranges for some and possible ice accumulations with today's system.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 48 °F at 2:01 PM

Low Temp: 30 °F at 8:41 AM

Wind: 12 mph at 12:12 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 8 hours, 49 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 59 in 1999

Record Low: -35 in 1917

Average High: 25

Average Low: 4

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.57

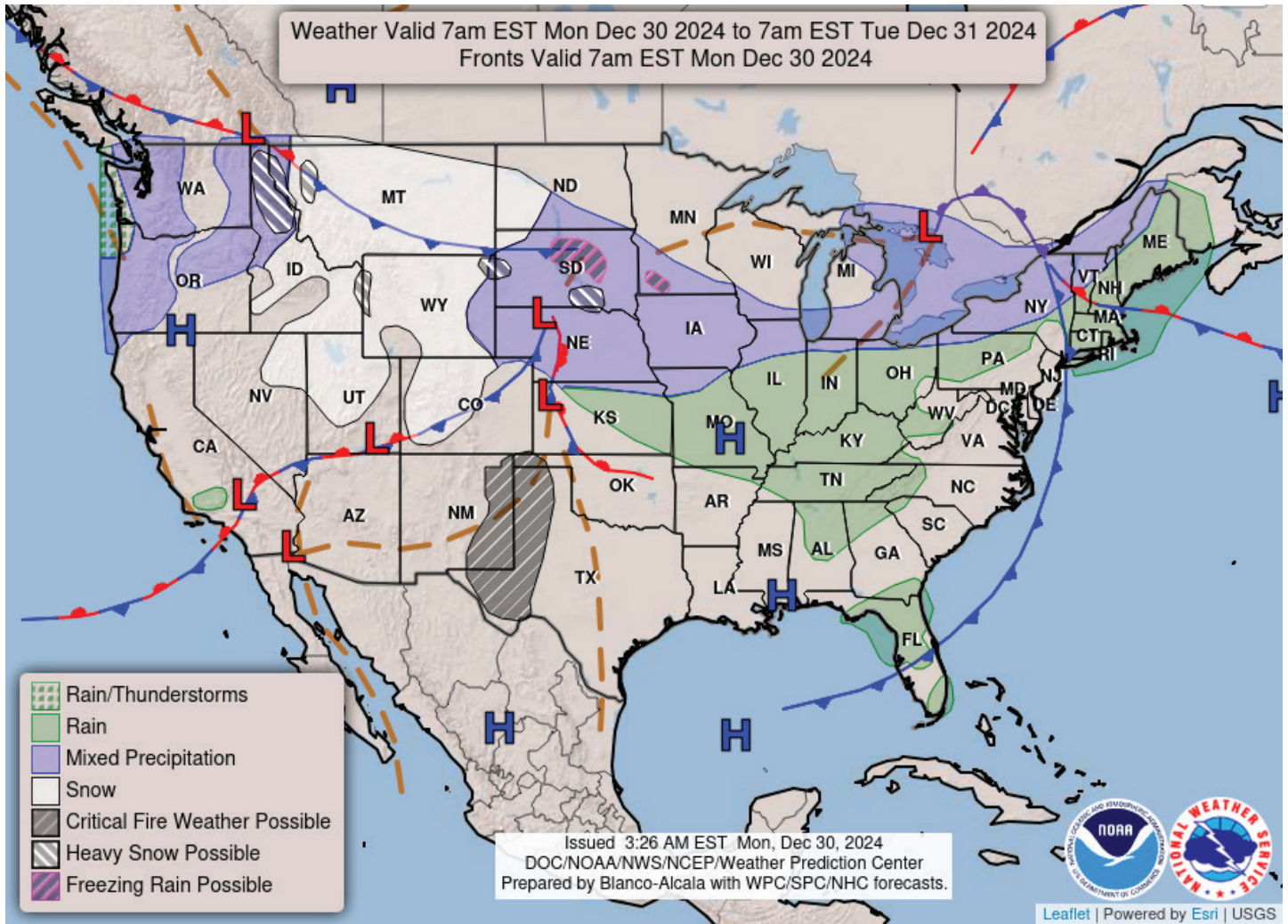
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.78

Precip Year to Date: 21.71

Sunset Tonight: 5:00:09 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:10:27 am



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Today in Weather History

December 30, 1985: Winds gusted to 40 to 50 mph over northern South Dakota through the day and into the southern part of the state by late afternoon. The high winds lowered visibilities to near zero at times between Lemmon in Perkins County and Faith in Meade County. The strongest wind gusts were to 63 mph at Mitchell. At 9:33 pm CST, the strong winds blew a semi-tractor trailer off the highway one mile east of Aberdeen.

December 30, 2010: A strong upper-level low-pressure trough and associated surface low-pressure area moved across the region bringing the first of two consecutive blizzards to central and northeast South Dakota. Snowfall amounts of 3 to 6 inches combined with bitter cold north winds of 25 to 40 mph caused widespread blizzard conditions across central and northeast South Dakota from the late morning until the evening hours. Near zero visibilities caused dangerous travel conditions resulting in the closing of Interstates 29 and 90 along with several highways across the region. Several hundred people were stranded in the aftermath of the storm. A group of fishermen had to be rescued in Day County when they became stranded on the ice. The snowfall began across the area anywhere from 7 to 11 am CST and ended between 10 pm and 1 am CST.

1880 - The temperature at Charlotte, NC, plunged to an all-time record cold reading of 5 degrees below zero, a record which was equalled on the 21st of January in 1985. (The Weather Channel)

1917 - A great cold wave set many records in the northeastern U.S. The mercury plunged to 13 degrees below zero at New York City, and to 15 degrees below zero at Boston. Temperature readings dipped below zero at Boston five nights in a row. Berlin NH hit 44 degrees below zero in the "Great World War I Cold Wave," and Saint Johnsbury VT reached 43 degrees below zero. (David Ludlum)

1933 - The temperature reached 50 degrees below zero at Bloomfield, VT. It was the coldest reading in modern records for New England. The temperature at Pittsburgh NH reached 44 degrees below zero. (David Ludlum)

1955 - Anchorage, AK, reported an all-time record snow depth of 47 inches. (30th-1st) (The Weather Channel)

1960: A massive accumulation of snow, 68.2 inches to be exact, buries the Japanese city of Tsukayama in 24 hours. Tsukayama is located in the coastal mountains inland from the Sea of Japan along Honshu's west coast and subject to significant sea-effect snowfalls.

1987 - A storm in the western U.S. produced heavy snow in Utah, with 28 inches reported in the Mount Holly and Elk Meadows area. Strong winds prevailed ahead of a cold front in the central U.S. Winds gusted to 46 mph at Dodge City KS, and reached 80 mph at Ruidoso NM. Strong northerly winds, ushering arctic cold into the north central U.S., created blizzard conditions in western Minnesota and central and eastern South Dakota. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Unseasonably cold weather prevailed in the southwestern U.S. A week of subfreezing temperatures in southern California claimed the lives of five people. Redding CA was blanketed with four inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Extreme cold continued across northern Maine. Milo ME was the cold spot in the nation with a morning low of 38 degrees below zero, and the low of 31 degrees below zero at Caribou ME was a December record for that location. Freezing rain spread across much of Lower Michigan, knocking out electrical power to 1.9 million customers in southeastern Lower Michigan. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2003: The first time in five years, sections of Las Vegas receive an inch or two of snow on cars, roads, sidewalks, and trees, while snow flurries fell on downtown and the Strip.

2008 - Severe to extreme drought was observed across parts of the Hawaiian Islands, the western continental U.S., and parts of Georgia and South Carolina. Meanwhile, severe to exceptional drought conditions were present across southern Texas. (NCDC)

2014: Steam Devils were seen over Lake Superior near Saginaw, Minnesota.

2017: Funnels/steam devils were observed on Lake McConaughy, Nebraska in the morning. A boundary moved over the lake's 'warmer' water (compared to the surrounding air). The combination of converging winds and energy added by the lake helped spin these up.



What To Expect in 2025

As we come to the close of this year and face the uncertainties that are before us in the year to come, it is important to pause, listen to, and accept a promise from our God:

“For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

“In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you search for me with all your heart, you will find me, declares the Lord.”

This is one of God’s if – then’s. There can be no misunderstanding of what He is talking about in this passage of Scripture. God knows our future. He very carefully designed it in our best interest to enable us to find and follow His will. Because He knows our future, He assures us that it can be one of goodness and hope – not one of disaster.

But if we want this future that contains goodness and hope, we must study His Word and go to Him in earnest prayer. He assures us that He will listen to us IF we search for Him with all of our hearts and THEN are obedient to and follow Him. IF we do this, THEN He will bless us.

Perhaps we have prayed and even searched for Him in years past, but did not do so with all our heart. With God, it is always IF you obey me, THEN you can count on Me.

Prayer: Lord, may we come to You this year with sincerity and singleness of heart to find Your plans. Give us Your courage to seek, find, and follow You in our lives. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scriptures For Today: Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

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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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

12.27.24

3 7 37 49 55 6

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 2

DRAW: Mins 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

12.28.24

12 17 22 30 42 2

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$19,360,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 17 Mins

DRAW: 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

12.29.24

7 18 26 35 38 1

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 15 Hrs 32 Mins

DRAW: 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

12.28.24

5 10 20 27 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$191,000

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 32

DRAW: Mins 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

12.28.24

22 40 42 54 68 7

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 1 Mins 33

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

12.28.24

6 31 51 54 55 12

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$163,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 1 Mins 33

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

- 01/05/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/26/2025 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed at the Community Center 10am-1pm
- 01/26/2025 87th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 02/02/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 02/05/2025 FB Live Electronic Hwy 12 Sign Drawing City Hall 12pm
- 03/02/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 03/22/2025 Spring Vendor Fair at the GHS Gym 10am-2pm
- 04/05/2025 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39, 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 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
- 06/07/2025 Day of Play
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 08/09/2025 2nd Annual Celebration in the Park/Rib Cook-Off 1-9:30pm
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1:30pm

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Holloway, No. 5 Alabama overwhelm South Dakota State with 19 3-pointers in 105-82 victory

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (AP) — Aden Holloway made eight 3-pointers and scored 26 points off the bench, and No. 5 Alabama overwhelmed South Dakota State with 19 made 3-pointers in a 105-82 victory on Sunday.

Labaron Philon added 21 points, six assists and two steals for Alabama (11-2), while Mark Sears had 20 points and five assists. Grant Nelson scored 17 points.

Oscar Cluff scored 21 points and Isaac Lindsey had 11 for South Dakota State (9-6).

Takeaways

South Dakota State: Cluff entered Sunday averaging 16.6 points and 10.8 rebounds, but had failed to hit double digits in either category in either of his last two games before returning to form Sunday with 21 points and 15 rebounds.

Alabama: Holloway's 8-for-19 performance was a welcome sight after making four of his 15 attempts in his previous three games. Holloway, in his first season at Alabama after transferring from Auburn, saw his scoring average dip under 9 points per game before 13 points in the previous game and 26 on Sunday.

Key moment

Sears and Holloway hit 3-pointers less than 30 seconds apart just past the midway point of the first half, completing a 17-0 run and putting Alabama up by 23 points. The Jackrabbits never got the deficit lower than 14 after that.

Key stat

Alabama committed six turnovers, after having committed at least 14 in six of its last seven games.

Up next

Alabama begins Southeastern Conference play at home against Oklahoma on Saturday; South Dakota State begins Summit League play on Thursday at home against Denver.

Jimmy Carter, the 39th US president, has died at 100

By BILL BARROW and ALEX SANZ Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Jimmy Carter, the peanut farmer who won the presidency in the wake of the Watergate scandal and Vietnam War, endured humbling defeat after one tumultuous term and then redefined life after the White House as a global humanitarian, has died. He was 100 years old.

The longest-lived American president died on Sunday, roughly 22 months after entering hospice care, at his home in the small town of Plains, Georgia, where he and his wife, Rosalynn, who died at 96 in November 2023, spent most of their lives, The Carter Center said.

"Our founder, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, passed away this afternoon in Plains, Georgia," the center said on the social media platform X. It added in a statement that he died peacefully, surrounded by his family.

As reaction poured in from around the world, President Joe Biden mourned Carter's death, saying the world lost an "extraordinary leader, statesman and humanitarian" and he lost a dear friend. Biden cited Carter's work to eradicate disease, forge peace, advance civil and human rights, promote free and fair elections and house the homeless as an example for others.

"To all of the young people in this nation and for anyone in search of what it means to live a life of purpose and meaning — the good life — study Jimmy Carter, a man of principle, faith, and humility," Biden said in a statement.

Biden spoke later Sunday evening about Carter, calling it a "sad day" but one that "brings back an incredible amount of good memories."

"I've been hanging out with Jimmy Carter for over 50 years," Biden said in his remarks.

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He recalled the former president being a comfort to him and his wife Jill when their son Beau died in 2015 of cancer. The president remarked how cancer was a common bond between their families, with Carter himself having cancer later in his life.

"Jimmy knew the ravages of the disease too well," said Biden, who scheduled a state funeral in Washington, D.C., for Carter on Jan. 9.

Biden also declared Jan. 9 as a National Day of Mourning across the nation and ordered U.S. flags to fly at half-staff for 30 days from Sunday.

Businessman, Navy officer, evangelist, politician, negotiator, author, woodworker, citizen of the world — Carter forged a path that still challenges political assumptions and stands out among the 45 men who reached the nation's highest office. The 39th president leveraged his ambition with a keen intellect, deep religious faith and prodigious work ethic, conducting diplomatic missions into his 80s and building houses for the poor well into his 90s.

"My faith demands — this is not optional — my faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can, with whatever I have to try to make a difference," Carter once said.

A president from Plains

A moderate Democrat, Carter entered the 1976 presidential race as a little-known Georgia governor with a broad smile, outspoken Baptist mores and technocratic plans reflecting his education as an engineer. His no-frills campaign depended on public financing, and his promise not to deceive the American people resonated after Richard Nixon's disgrace and U.S. defeat in southeast Asia.

"If I ever lie to you, if I ever make a misleading statement, don't vote for me. I would not deserve to be your president," Carter repeated before narrowly beating Republican incumbent Gerald Ford, who had lost popularity pardoning Nixon.

Carter governed amid Cold War pressures, turbulent oil markets and social upheaval over racism, women's rights and America's global role. His most acclaimed achievement in office was a Mideast peace deal that he brokered by keeping Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin at the bargaining table for 13 days in 1978. That Camp David experience inspired the post-presidential center where Carter would establish so much of his legacy.

Yet Carter's electoral coalition splintered under double-digit inflation, gasoline lines and the 444-day hostage crisis in Iran. His bleakest hour came when eight Americans died in a failed hostage rescue in April 1980, helping to ensure his landslide defeat to Republican Ronald Reagan.

Carter acknowledged in his 2020 "White House Diary" that he could be "micromanaging" and "excessively autocratic," complicating dealings with Congress and the federal bureaucracy. He also turned a cold shoulder to Washington's news media and lobbyists, not fully appreciating their influence on his political fortunes.

"It didn't take us long to realize that the underestimation existed, but by that time we were not able to repair the mistake," Carter told historians in 1982, suggesting that he had "an inherent incompatibility" with Washington insiders.

Carter insisted his overall approach was sound and that he achieved his primary objectives — to "protect our nation's security and interests peacefully" and "enhance human rights here and abroad" — even if he fell spectacularly short of a second term.

And then, the world

Ignominious defeat, though, allowed for renewal. The Carters founded The Carter Center in 1982 as a first-of-its-kind base of operations, asserting themselves as international peacemakers and champions of democracy, public health and human rights.

"I was not interested in just building a museum or storing my White House records and memorabilia," Carter wrote in a memoir published after his 90th birthday. "I wanted a place where we could work."

That work included easing nuclear tensions in North and South Korea, helping to avert a U.S. invasion of Haiti and negotiating cease-fires in Bosnia and Sudan. By 2022, The Carter Center had declared at least 113 elections in Latin America, Asia and Africa to be free or fraudulent. Recently, the center began monitoring U.S. elections as well.

Carter's stubborn self-assuredness and even self-righteousness proved effective once he was unencum-

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bered by the Washington order, sometimes to the point of frustrating his successors.

He went "where others are not treading," he said, to places like Ethiopia, Liberia and North Korea, where he secured the release of an American who had wandered across the border in 2010.

"I can say what I like. I can meet whom I want. I can take on projects that please me and reject the ones that don't," Carter said.

He announced an arms-reduction-for-aid deal with North Korea without clearing the details with Bill Clinton's White House. He openly criticized President George W. Bush for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. He also criticized America's approach to Israel with his 2006 book "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid." And he repeatedly countered U.S. administrations by insisting North Korea should be included in international affairs, a position that most aligned Carter with Republican President Donald Trump.

Among the center's many public health initiatives, Carter vowed to eradicate the guinea worm parasite during his lifetime, and nearly achieved it: Cases dropped from millions in the 1980s to nearly a handful. With hardhats and hammers, the Carters also built homes with Habitat for Humanity.

The Nobel committee's 2002 Peace Prize cites his "untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development." Carter should have won it alongside Sadat and Begin in 1978, the chairman added.

Carter accepted the recognition saying there was more work to be done.

"The world is now, in many ways, a more dangerous place," he said. "The greater ease of travel and communication has not been matched by equal understanding and mutual respect."

'An epic American life'

Carter's globetrotting took him to remote villages where he met little "Jimmy Carters," so named by admiring parents. But he spent most of his days in the same one-story Plains house — expanded and guarded by Secret Service agents — where they lived before he became governor. He regularly taught Sunday School lessons at Maranatha Baptist Church until his mobility declined and the coronavirus pandemic raged. Those sessions drew visitors from around the world to the small sanctuary where Carter will receive his final send-off after a state funeral at Washington's National Cathedral.

The common assessment that he was a better ex-president than president rankled Carter and his allies. His prolific post-presidency gave him a brand above politics, particularly for Americans too young to witness him in office. But Carter also lived long enough to see biographers and historians reassess his White House years more generously.

His record includes the deregulation of key industries, reduction of U.S. dependence on foreign oil, cautious management of the national debt and notable legislation on the environment, education and mental health. He focused on human rights in foreign policy, pressuring dictators to release thousands of political prisoners. He acknowledged America's historical imperialism, pardoned Vietnam War draft evaders and relinquished control of the Panama Canal. He normalized relations with China.

"I am not nominating Jimmy Carter for a place on Mount Rushmore," Stuart Eizenstat, Carter's domestic policy director, wrote in a 2018 book.

"He was not a great president" but also not the "hapless and weak" caricature voters rejected in 1980, Eizenstat said. Rather, Carter was "good and productive" and "delivered results, many of which were realized only after he left office."

Madeleine Albright, a national security staffer for Carter and Clinton's secretary of state, wrote in Eizenstat's forward that Carter was "consequential and successful" and expressed hope that "perceptions will continue to evolve" about his presidency.

"Our country was lucky to have him as our leader," said Albright, who died in 2022.

Jonathan Alter, who penned a comprehensive Carter biography published in 2020, said in an interview that Carter should be remembered for "an epic American life" spanning from a humble start in a home with no electricity or indoor plumbing through decades on the world stage across two centuries.

"He will likely go down as one of the most misunderstood and underestimated figures in American history," Alter told The Associated Press.

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A small-town start

James Earl Carter Jr. was born Oct. 1, 1924, in Plains and spent his early years in nearby Archery. His family was a minority in the mostly Black community, decades before the civil rights movement played out at the dawn of Carter's political career.

Carter, who campaigned as a moderate on race relations but governed more progressively, talked often of the influence of his Black caregivers and playmates but also noted his advantages: His land-owning father sat atop Archery's tenant-farming system and owned a main street grocery. His mother, Lillian, would become a staple of his political campaigns.

Seeking to broaden his world beyond Plains and its population of fewer than 1,000 — then and now — Carter won an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy, graduating in 1946. That same year he married Rosalynn Smith, another Plains native, a decision he considered more important than any he made as head of state. She shared his desire to see the world, sacrificing college to support his Navy career.

Carter climbed in rank to lieutenant, but then his father was diagnosed with cancer, so the submarine officer set aside his ambitions of admiralty and moved the family back to Plains. His decision angered Rosalynn, even as she dived into the peanut business alongside her husband.

Carter again failed to talk with his wife before his first run for office — he later called it "inconceivable" not to have consulted her on such major life decisions — but this time, she was on board.

"My wife is much more political," Carter told the AP in 2021.

He won a state Senate seat in 1962 but wasn't long for the General Assembly and its back-slapping, deal-cutting ways. He ran for governor in 1966 — losing to arch-segregationist Lester Maddox — and then immediately focused on the next campaign.

Carter had spoken out against church segregation as a Baptist deacon and opposed racist "Dixiecrats" as a state senator. Yet as a local school board leader in the 1950s he had not pushed to end school segregation even after the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, despite his private support for integration. And in 1970, Carter ran for governor again as the more conservative Democrat against Carl Sanders, a wealthy businessman Carter mocked as "Cufflinks Carl." Sanders never forgave him for anonymous, race-baiting flyers, which Carter disavowed.

Ultimately, Carter won his races by attracting both Black voters and culturally conservative whites. Once in office, he was more direct.

"I say to you quite frankly that the time for racial discrimination is over," he declared in his 1971 inaugural address, setting a new standard for Southern governors that landed him on the cover of *Time* magazine.

'Jimmy Who?'

His statehouse initiatives included environmental protection, boosting rural education and overhauling antiquated executive branch structures. He proclaimed Martin Luther King Jr. Day in the slain civil rights leader's home state. And he decided, as he received presidential candidates in 1972, that they were no more talented than he was.

In 1974, he ran Democrats' national campaign arm. Then he declared his own candidacy for 1976. An Atlanta newspaper responded with the headline: "Jimmy Who?"

The Carters and a "Peanut Brigade" of family members and Georgia supporters camped out in Iowa and New Hampshire, establishing both states as presidential proving grounds. His first Senate endorsement: a young first-termer from Delaware named Joe Biden.

Yet it was Carter's ability to navigate America's complex racial and rural politics that cemented the nomination. He swept the Deep South that November, the last Democrat to do so, as many white Southerners shifted to Republicans in response to civil rights initiatives.

A self-declared "born-again Christian," Carter drew snickers by referring to Scripture in a *Playboy* magazine interview, saying he "had looked on many women with lust. I've committed adultery in my heart many times." The remarks gave Ford a new foothold and television comedians pounced — including NBC's new "Saturday Night Live" show. But voters weary of cynicism in politics found it endearing.

Carter chose Minnesota Sen. Walter "Fritz" Mondale as his running mate on a "Grits and Fritz" ticket.

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In office, he elevated the vice presidency and the first lady's office. Mondale's governing partnership was a model for influential successors Al Gore, Dick Cheney and Biden. Rosalynn Carter was one of the most involved presidential spouses in history, welcomed into Cabinet meetings and huddles with lawmakers and top aides.

The Carters presided with uncommon informality: He used his nickname "Jimmy" even when taking the oath of office, carried his own luggage and tried to silence the Marine Band's "Hail to the Chief." They bought their clothes off the rack. Carter wore a cardigan for a White House address, urging Americans to conserve energy by turning down their thermostats. Amy, the youngest of four children, attended District of Columbia public school.

Washington's social and media elite scorned their style. But the larger concern was that "he hated politics," according to Eizenstat, leaving him nowhere to turn politically once economic turmoil and foreign policy challenges took their toll.

Accomplishments, and 'malaise'

Carter partially deregulated the airline, railroad and trucking industries and established the departments of Education and Energy, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. He designated millions of acres of Alaska as national parks or wildlife refuges. He appointed a then-record number of women and nonwhite people to federal posts. He never had a Supreme Court nomination, but he elevated civil rights attorney Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the nation's second highest court, positioning her for a promotion in 1993. He appointed Paul Volker, the Federal Reserve chairman whose policies would help the economy boom in the 1980s — after Carter left office. He built on Nixon's opening with China, and though he tolerated autocrats in Asia, pushed Latin America from dictatorships to democracy.

But he couldn't immediately tame inflation or the related energy crisis.

And then came Iran.

After he admitted the exiled Shah of Iran to the U.S. for medical treatment, the American Embassy in Tehran was overrun in 1979 by followers of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Negotiations to free the hostages broke down repeatedly ahead of the failed rescue attempt.

The same year, Carter signed SALT II, the new strategic arms treaty with Leonid Brezhnev of the Soviet Union, only to pull it back, impose trade sanctions and order a U.S. boycott of the Moscow Olympics after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan.

Hoping to instill optimism, he delivered what the media dubbed his "malaise" speech, although he didn't use that word. He declared the nation was suffering "a crisis of confidence." By then, many Americans had lost confidence in the president, not themselves.

Carter campaigned sparingly for reelection because of the hostage crisis, instead sending Rosalynn as Sen. Edward M. Kennedy challenged him for the Democratic nomination. Carter famously said he'd "kick his ass," but was hobbled by Kennedy as Reagan rallied a broad coalition with "make America great again" appeals and asking voters whether they were "better off than you were four years ago."

Reagan further capitalized on Carter's lecturing tone, eviscerating him in their lone fall debate with the quip: "There you go again." Carter lost all but six states and Republicans rolled to a new Senate majority.

Carter successfully negotiated the hostages' freedom after the election, but in one final, bitter turn of events, Tehran waited until hours after Carter left office to let them walk free.

'A wonderful life'

At 56, Carter returned to Georgia with "no idea what I would do with the rest of my life."

Four decades after launching The Carter Center, he still talked of unfinished business.

"I thought when we got into politics we would have resolved everything," Carter told the AP in 2021. "But it's turned out to be much more long-lasting and insidious than I had thought it was. I think in general, the world itself is much more divided than in previous years."

Still, he affirmed what he said when he underwent treatment for a cancer diagnosis in his 10th decade of life.

"I'm perfectly at ease with whatever comes," he said in 2015. "I've had a wonderful life. I've had thou-

sands of friends, I've had an exciting, adventurous and gratifying existence."

Value-seekers drove 2024's retail trends and dead ends

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO and DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writers

Value was in vogue in 2024.

Shoppers and restaurant patrons in the U.S. were choosy about where and how to spend their money as they wrestled with high housing and food prices.

Well-heeled customers traded down to Walmart and Aldi. Diners opted for fast food or home cooking instead of sit-down restaurants. Department stores struggled as buyers shopped online or at cheaper chains like H&M.

Residents also moved away from buying furniture or investing in expensive renovations, opting to refresh their homes with inexpensive items like frames and candles.

Those shifts changed the buying and eating landscape in 2024. As of Dec. 20, Coresight Research tracked 48 retail bankruptcies in the U.S., compared with 25 during the same period a year ago. And at least 22 restaurant chains filed for bankruptcy this year, the highest number since 2020, according to Bankruptcy-Data, a company that tracks filings.

Here are some of the trends – and dead ends – that The Associated Press tracked in 2024:

WINNERS:

WALMART

The nation's largest retailer typically shines during tough times as shoppers turn to the discounter for groceries, which account for 60% of Walmart's total business. And just like during the 2008 Great Recession, Walmart saw households with incomes of \$100,000 or above making up more of its clientele. But this time around, company executives think they can keep those customers because they've expanded online services and added more stylish clothes and mannequins.

AMAZON

Online juggernaut Amazon leaned into its reputation as a destination for deals to appeal to bargain-hungry buyers. In November it launched Amazon Haul, a new low-cost storefront featuring electronics, apparel and other products priced under \$20. And the company said its Prime Day event in July resulted in record sales. But Amazon could face headwinds in the coming year with threatened tariffs on products from China and labor unrest in the U.S.

FAST CASUAL CHAINS

It was a good year for restaurant chains like Shake Shack that are a step up from fast food but still offer good value. Cava, which specializes in fresh Mediterranean food, said its revenue surged more than 33% in the first nine months of this year as it rapidly built new restaurants. Chipotle got some heat from value-conscious diners about smaller portions, but drew customers back after retraining workers to ensure "consistent and generous" portions.

JEANS SELLERS

The wide-leg jeans silhouette – the "it" style that rapidly replaced boot-cut and skinny jeans – drove sales across many different retailers this year. Macy's, Abercrombie & Fitch, Levi Strauss, Gap and Stitch Fix were among those citing the trend as a big sales booster in recent months. Value-conscious buyers could snap them up at Walmart for \$29. At the high end, Gucci had wide-leg versions for \$1,200.

MCDONALD'S

The year didn't begin well for McDonald's. The company's sales slumped as inflation-weary customers chose to eat at home instead of grabbing fast food. But a \$5 meal deal introduced in June helped draw lower-income customers back into stores. McDonald's extended the deal through the end of this year and said more value is coming in 2025. The fast food giant is working to get customers back after a fall E. coli outbreak linked to raw onions in Quarter Pounder hamburgers sickened at least 104 people in 14 states.

LOSERS:

TARGET

Target's cheap chic fashions and home decor have long been a big attraction, but the chain faced challenges in 2024. Unlike Walmart, Target is more reliant on discretionary items like clothing because less than a quarter of its sales come from food and beverages. It has always battled a perception of being more expensive, and analysts say its merchandise has lately been in disarray. Still, Target drew crowds on Black Friday with exclusive Taylor Swift products.

STARBUCKS

Starbucks had a tough year. Orders are getting increasingly complex, with thousands of ways to customize drinks. That's leading to long lines and incorrect pickup times on the mobile app. New offerings like olive oil-infused coffee didn't attract customers, who also grew tired of Starbucks' high prices. Starbucks hired a new CEO, Brian Niccol, in the fall to help turn things around. But labor strife, which led to strikes in December, could continue to hurt the company in 2025.

LEGACY RESTAURANTS

Several decades-old chains threw in the towel in 2024, succumbing to rising competition, changing dining patterns and big portfolios of outdated restaurants. Red Lobster, TGI Fridays and Buca di Beppo all filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection and shuttered dozens of locations. A leaner Red Lobster later exited bankruptcy under new ownership, but it remains to be seen whether older chains can turn around years of declining sales.

BIG TICKET ITEMS

At the height of the coronavirus pandemic, U.S. consumers took advantage of low interest rates and stimulus benefits to remodel their homes and make other big purchases. But last year, they pulled back. That's been a challenge for retailers like Best Buy, the nation's largest consumer electronics chain, which noted lower sales of appliances, home theaters and gaming equipment. Home Depot and Lowe's also reported lower sales of big-ticket items, particularly discretionary kitchen and bathroom remodeling projects.

DEPARTMENT STORES

Department stores, particularly those catering to middle income shoppers, have struggled to hold onto customers as many turn to online shopping or to fast-fashion retailers. Among the worst performers: Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin-based Kohl's, which reported its 11th consecutive quarter of sales declines this year. Outgoing CEO Tom Kingsbury recently owned up to merchandising mistakes, including scaling back fine jewelry, popular store label brands and petite sizes. Customers will see those categories return in the coming year.

Macy's said it would close 150 namesake stores over three years and open 15 higher-end Bloomingdale's. Upscale Nordstrom, on the other hand, had a better than expected fiscal year due largely to soaring sales at its off-price Nordstrom Rack stores.

South Korea to inspect Boeing aircraft as it struggles to find cause of plane crash that killed 179

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean officials said Monday they will conduct safety inspections of all Boeing 737-800 aircraft operated by the country's airlines, as they struggle to determine what caused a plane crash that killed 179 people a day earlier.

Sunday's crash, the country's worst aviation disaster in decades, triggered an outpouring of national sympathy. Many people worry how effectively the South Korean government will handle the disaster as it grapples with a leadership vacuum following the recent successive impeachments of President Yoon Suk Yeol and Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, the country's top two officials, amid political tumult caused by Yoon's brief imposition of martial law earlier this month.

New acting President Choi Sang-mok on Monday presided over a task force meeting on the crash and instructed authorities to conduct an emergency review of the country's aircraft operation systems.

"The essence of a responsible response would be renovating the aviation safety systems on the whole to prevent recurrences of similar incidents and building a safer Republic of South Korea," said Choi, who

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is also deputy prime minister and finance minister.

The Boeing 737-800 plane operated by South Korean budget airline Jeju Air aborted its first landing attempt for reasons that aren't immediately clear. Then, during its second landing attempt, it received a bird strike warning from the ground control center before its pilot issued a distress signal. The plane landed without its front landing gear deployed, overshot the runway, slammed into a concrete fence and burst into a fireball.

Alan Price, a former chief pilot at Delta Air Lines and now a consultant, said the Boeing 737-800 is a "proven airplane" that belongs to a different class of aircraft than the Boeing 737 Max jetliner that was linked to fatal crashes in 2018 and 2019.

But South Korea's Transport Ministry said Monday it plans to conduct safety inspections of all of the 101 Boeing 737-800 jetliners operated by the country's airlines as well as a broader review into safety standards at Jeju Air, which operates 39 of those planes. Senior ministry official Joo Jong-wan said representatives from the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board and Boeing were expected to arrive in South Korea on Monday to participate in the investigation.

Ministry officials also said they will look into whether the Muan airport's localizer — a concrete fence housing a set of antennas designed to guide aircraft safely during landings — should have been made with lighter materials that would break more easily upon impact.

Joo said the ministry has determined that similar concrete structures are in other domestic airports, including in Jeju Island and the southern cities of Yeosu and Pohang, as well as airports in the United States, Spain and South Africa.

Video of the crash indicated that the pilots did not deploy flaps or slats to slow the aircraft, suggesting a possible hydraulic failure, and did not manually lower the landing gear, suggesting they did not have time, said John Cox, a retired airline pilot and CEO of Safety Operating Systems in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Despite that, the jetliner was under control and traveling in a straight line, and damage and injuries likely would have been minimized if not for the barrier being so close to the runway, Cox said.

Other observers said the videos showed the plane was suffering from suspected engine trouble but the landing gear malfunction was likely a direct reason for the crash. They said there wouldn't likely be a link between the landing gear problem and the suspected engine issue.

Earlier Monday, another Boeing 737-800 plane operated by Jeju Air returned to Seoul's Gimpo International Airport shortly after takeoff when the pilot detected a landing gear issue. Song Kyung-hoon, a Jeju Air executive, said the issue was resolved through communication with a land-based equipment center, but the pilot decided to return to Gimpo as a precautionary measure.

Joo said officials were reviewing whether there might have been communication problems between air traffic controllers and the pilot. "Our current understanding is that, at some point during the go-around process, communication became somewhat ineffective or was interrupted, ahead of the landing and impact," he said.

Ministry officials said Monday the plane's flight data and cockpit audio recorders were moved to a research center at Gimpo airport ahead of their analysis. Ministry officials earlier said it would take months to complete the investigation of the crash.

The Muan crash is South Korea's deadliest aviation disaster since 1997, when a Korean Airlines plane crashed in Guam, killing 228 people on board.

The crash left many South Koreans shocked and ashamed, with the government announcing a seven-day national mourning period through Jan. 4. Some questioned whether the crash involved safety or regulatory issues, such as a 2022 Halloween crush in Seoul that killed 160 people and a 2014 ferry sinking that killed 304 people.

The Transport Ministry said authorities have identified 146 bodies and are collecting DNA and fingerprint samples from the other 33.

Park Han Shin, a representative of the bereaved families, said they were told that the bodies were so badly damaged that officials need time before returning them to their families.

"I demand that the government mobilize more personnel to return our brothers and family members as

intact as possible more swiftly," he said, choking down tears.

The crash was yet more major news for South Koreans already reeling from a political crisis set off by Yoon's martial law decree, which brought hundreds of troops into Seoul streets and revived traumatic memories of past military rule in the 1970-80s.

The political tumult resulted in the opposition-controlled National Assembly impeaching Yoon and Han. The safety minister stepped down and the police chief was arrested over their roles in the martial law enforcement.

The absence of top officials responsible for managing disasters has led to concerns.

"We are deeply worried whether the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters really can handle the disaster," the mass-circulation JoongAng Ilbo newspaper said in an editorial Monday.

Linda Lavin, Tony-winning Broadway actor who starred in the sitcom 'Alice,' dies at 87

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Linda Lavin, a Tony Award-winning stage actor who became a working class icon as a paper-hat wearing waitress on the TV sitcom "Alice," has died. She was 87.

Lavin died in Los Angeles on Sunday of complications from recently discovered lung cancer, her representative, Bill Veloric, told The Associated Press in an email.

A success on Broadway, Lavin tried her luck in Hollywood in the mid-1970s. She was chosen to star in a new CBS sitcom based on "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore," the Martin Scorsese-directed film that won Ellen Burstyn an Oscar for playing the title waitress.

The title was shortened to "Alice" and Lavin became a role model for working moms as Alice Hyatt, a widowed mother with a 12-year-old son working in a roadside diner outside Phoenix. The show, with Lavin singing the theme song "There's a New Girl in Town," ran from 1976 to 1985.

The show turned "Kiss my grits" into a catchphrase and co-starred Polly Holliday as waitress Flo and Vic Tayback as the gruff owner and head chef of Mel's Diner.

The series bounced around the CBS schedule during its first two seasons but became a hit leading into "All in the Family" on Sunday nights in October 1977. It was among primetime's top 10 series in four of the next five seasons. Variety magazine listed it among the all-time best workplace comedies.

Lavin soon went on to win a Tony for best actress in a play for Neil Simon's "Broadway Bound" in 1987.

She was working as recently as this month promoting a new Netflix series in which she appears, "No Good Deed," and filming a forthcoming Hulu series, "Mid-Century Modern," according to Deadline, which first reported her death.

Lavin grew up in Portland, Maine, and moved to New York City after graduating from the College of William and Mary. She sang in nightclubs and in ensembles of shows.

Iconic producer and director Hal Prince gave Lavin her first big break while directing the Broadway musical "It's a Bird ... It's a Plane ... It's Superman." She went on to earn a Tony nomination in Simon's "Last of the Red Hot Lovers" in 1969 before winning 18 years later for another Simon play, "Broadway Bound."

In the mid 1970s, Lavin moved to Los Angeles. She had a recurring role on "Barney Miller" and in 1976 was chosen to star in a new CBS sitcom based on Ellen Burstyn's Oscar-winning waitress comedy-drama, "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore."

Back on Broadway, Lavin later starred Paul Rudnick's comedy "The New Century," had a concert show called "Songs & Confessions of a One-Time Waitress" and earned a Tony nomination in Donald Margulies' "Collected Stories."

Michael Kuchwara of the AP gave Lavin a rave in "Collected Stories," writing that she "gives one of those complete, nuanced performances, capturing the woman's intellectual vigor, her wry sense of humor and her increasing physical frailty with astonishing fidelity. And Lavin's sense of timing is superb, whether delivering a joke or acerbically dissecting the work of her protegee."

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Lavin basked in a burst of renewed attention in her 70s, earning a Tony nomination for Nicky Silver's "The Lyons." She also starred in "Other Desert Cities" and a revival of "Follies" before they transferred to Broadway.

The AP again raved about Lavin in "The Lyons," calling her "an absolute wonder to behold as Rita Lyons, a nag of a mother with a collection of firm beliefs and eye rolls, a matriarch who is both suffocating and keeping everyone at arm's length."

She also appeared in the film "Wanderlust" with Jennifer Aniston and Paul Rudd, and released her first CD, "Possibilities." She played Jennifer Lopez's grandmother in "The Back-Up Plan."

When asked for guidance from up-and-coming actors, Lavin stressed one thing. "I say that what happened for me was that work brings work. As long as it wasn't morally reprehensible to me, I did it," she told the AP in 2011.

She and Steve Bakunas, an artist, musician and her third husband, converted an old automotive garage into the 50-seat Red Barn Studio Theatre in Wilmington, North Carolina.

It opened in 2007 and their productions include "Doubt" by John Patrick Shanley, "Glengarry Glen Ross" by David Mamet, "Rabbit Hole" by David Lindsay-Abaire and "The Tale of the Allergist's Wife" by Charles Busch, in which Lavin also starred on Broadway, earning a Tony nomination.

She returned to TV in 2013 in "Sean Saves the World," starring "Will & Grace's" Sean Hayes, a show which lasted a season. Lavin also made appearances on "Mom" and "9JKL."

South Korean authorities seek warrant to detain impeached President Yoon in martial law probe

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean law enforcement officials requested a court warrant on Monday to detain impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol as they investigate whether his short-lived martial law decree on Dec. 3 amounted to rebellion.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials, which leads a joint investigation with police and military authorities into the power grab that lasted only a few hours, confirmed it requested the warrant from the Seoul Western District Court. They plan to question Yoon on charges of abuse of authority and orchestrating a rebellion.

Yoon Kap-keun, the president's lawyer, denounced the detention attempt and filed a challenge with the same court, arguing that the warrant request was invalid. He also claimed the anti-corruption agency lacked the legal authority to investigate rebellion charges. Still, he evaded answering how the legal team would respond if the court approved the warrant for the president's detention.

"An incumbent president cannot be prosecuted for abuse of power," the lawyer said. "Of course, there are differing academic opinions on whether a president can be investigated for abuse of power and some assert that investigations are possible. But even when investigations are allowed, the prevailing opinion is that they should be exercised with the utmost restraint."

The anti-corruption agency didn't immediately respond to the lawyer's comments.

Han Min-soo, spokesperson of the liberal opposition Democratic Party, called for the court to issue the warrant, saying Yoon Suk Yeol's detention would be the first step toward "ending the rebellion and restoring normalcy."

The warrant request came after Yoon dodged several requests by the joint investigation team and public prosecutors to appear for questioning and also blocked searches of his offices.

While Yoon has the presidential privilege of immunity from criminal prosecution, such protections don't extend to allegations of rebellion or treason.

It's not clear whether the court will grant the warrant or whether Yoon can be compelled to appear for questioning.

Under the country's laws, locations potentially linked to military secrets cannot be seized or searched without the consent of the person in charge, and it's unlikely that Yoon will voluntarily leave his residence

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if he faces detention. There are also concerns about possible clashes with Yoon's presidential security service if authorities attempt to forcibly detain him.

Yoon's presidential powers were suspended after the National Assembly voted to impeach him on Dec. 14 over his imposition of martial law, which lasted only hours but has triggered weeks of political turmoil, halted high-level diplomacy and rattled financial markets.

Yoon's fate now lies with the Constitutional Court, which has begun deliberations on whether to uphold the impeachment and formally remove Yoon from office or reinstate him.

The National Assembly voted last week to also impeach Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, who had assumed the role of acting president after Yoon's powers were suspended, over his reluctance to fill three Constitutional Court vacancies ahead of the court's review of Yoon's case. The country's new interim leader is Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, who is also finance minister.

To formally end Yoon's presidency, at least six justices on the nine-member Constitutional Court must vote in favor. Three seats are currently vacant following retirements and a full bench could make conviction more likely.

Choi, who has been handling the government's response to a plane crash on Sunday that killed 179 people, has yet to say whether he intends to appoint the Constitutional Court justices.

In a separate criminal investigation of Yoon, authorities have already arrested his defense minister, police chief and several other military commanders involved in the attempt to enforce the martial law decree, which harkened back to the days of authoritarian leaders the country hasn't seen since the 1980s.

In theory, the authority to investigate rebellion charges lies solely with the police, following a 2021 reform that redistributed investigative powers among law enforcement agencies and removed rebellion from the list of crimes prosecutors and the anti-corruption office could pursue. But those agencies have still been investigating rebellion accusations against Yoon, allegedly linked to charges related to abuse of power, a type of crime they are authorized to investigate.

Yoon and his military leadership have been accused of attempting to block the National Assembly from voting to end martial law by sending hundreds of heavily armed troops to encircle the building. Lawmakers who managed to get in voted unanimously 190-0 to lift martial law, hours after Yoon declared it in a late-night television address.

Yoon has also been accused of ordering defense counterintelligence officials to detain key politicians, including opposition leader Lee Jae-myung, National Assembly Speaker Woo Won Shik and the ex-leader of his own conservative party, Han Dong-hun, a reformist who supported investigations into corruption allegations against first lady Kim Keon Hee.

Yoon has defended the martial law decree as a necessary act of governance, portraying it as a temporary warning against the liberal opposition Democratic Party, which he has described as an "anti-state" force obstructing his agenda with its majority in the National Assembly. Yoon has claimed he had no intention to paralyze the functioning of the assembly, saying that the troops were sent to maintain order, and also denied planning to arrest politicians.

Yoon's claims have been denied by Kwak Jong-keun, the now-arrested commander of the Army Special Warfare Command, who testified in the National Assembly that Yoon called for troops to "quickly destroy the door and drag out the lawmakers who are inside" the assembly's main chamber where the vote occurred. Kwak said he did not carry out Yoon's orders.

The joint investigation team has also questioned Maj. Gen. Moon Sang-ho, commander of the Defense Intelligence Command who has also been arrested over suspicions that he sent troops to the National Election Commission in the city of Gwacheon after Yoon declared martial law.

Yoon has defended the troop deployment to the election commission, which happened at the same time as the military operation at the National Assembly, saying it was necessary to investigate supposed vulnerabilities in the commission's computer systems potentially affecting the credibility of election results.

Yoon's failure to offer any evidence in support of his claims has raised concerns that he was endorsing conspiracy theories on right-wing YouTube channels that April's parliamentary elections were rigged. The

Democratic Party won those elections by a landslide. The election commission rejected Yoon's allegations, stating there was no basis to suspect election fraud.

Now Syria's long-ruling Baath party is collapsing, too

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — A few days after insurgents in Syria overthrew President Bashar Assad, his ruling Baath party announced it was freezing its activities, marking a stunning change in fortunes for the political group that had ruled for more than six decades.

Many members of the party's leadership have gone into hiding and some have fled the country. In a symbolic move, Syria's new rulers have turned the former party headquarters in Damascus into a center where former members of the army and security forces line up to register their names and hand over their weapons.

Calls are on the rise to officially dissolve the Arab Socialist Baath Party that had ruled Syria since 1963.

Many Syrians — including former party members — say its rule damaged relations with other Arab countries and aided in the spread of corruption that brought the war-torn nation to its knees.

"The party should not only be dissolved, it should go to hell," said Mohammed Hussein Ali, 64, who worked for a state oil company and was a party member for decades until he quit at the start of Syria's anti-government uprising in 2011 that turned into civil war. He never left the country and said he is happy the Baath rule is over.

An official with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS, the group that led the insurgent offensive that overthrew Assad, said no official decision has been made on what to do with the Baath party.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly about the matter, noted that HTS leader Ahmad al-Sharaa has said that officials who committed crimes against the Syrian people over the past decades will be brought to justice and hinted that they include party members.

The Baath party, whose aim was to unify Arab states in one nation, was founded by two Syrian Arab nationalists, Michel Aflaq and Salaheddine Bitar, in 1947 and at one point ruled two Arab countries, Iraq and Syria.

A rivalry developed between the Syrian branch under Assad and his late father, Hafez, and the one in Iraq under Saddam Hussein, who was removed from power by a U.S.-led invasion in 2003.

In Syria, the Baath party became inextricably associated with the Assad family, which took power in 1970. For decades, the family used the party and its pan-Arab ideology to control the country. Many senior military jobs were held by members of the family's minority Alawite sect, and party membership was used as a cover to give it a nationalist rather than a sectarian nature.

A former soldier and decades-long Baath party member who came to party headquarters to cut his military ties, Abdul-Rahman Ali, said he had no idea it was founded by Aflaq and Bitar. He had always thought that Hafez Assad was the founder.

"I am happy. We have been liberated from fear," said Ali, 43. "Even the walls had ears. We didn't dare express opinions with anyone." He was referring to the dreaded security and intelligence agencies that detained and tortured people who expressed criticism of Assad or government officials.

Many Syrians were required to join the Baath Vanguard, the party's youth branch, while in elementary school, where Arab nationalist and socialist ideology was emphasized.

It was difficult for people who were not party members to get government jobs or join the army or the security and intelligence services.

In 2012, a year after Syria's uprising began, a paragraph of the constitution stating that the Baath party was the leader of the nation and society was abolished, in a move aimed to appease the public's demand for political reforms. In practice, however, the party remained in control, with members holding majority seats in parliament and government.

Another former soldier, who gave only his first name, Ghadir, out of fear of reprisals as a member of

the Alawite sect, said he came from a poor family and joined the party so he could enter the military for a stable income.

"You could not take any job if you were not a Baathist," he said.

While few are mourning the party's fall in Syria, some are concerned that the Sunni majority that now controls the country could carry out a purge similar to the one in Iraq after Saddam's fall.

A de-Baathification committee was formed in Iraq and its main job was purging Saddam loyalists from government and military institutions. The Sunni minority considered it a means of sectarian score-settling by Iraq's Shiite majority. The Sunni resentment and disenfranchisement that followed helped to drive the rise of extremist groups in the country including al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq.

In Syria, a Baath party statement issued three days after Assad's fall called on all members to hand their weapons and public cars to the new authorities.

On Dec. 24, party member and former army colonel Mohammed Merhi was among hundreds who lined up at the former party headquarters and handed over weapons.

Merhi said the Baath party should be given another opportunity because its principles are good but were exploited over decades. But he said he might want to join another party if Syria becomes a multiparty democracy in the future.

He handed over his Soviet Makarov pistol and received a document saying he can now move freely in the country after reconciling with the new authorities.

"I want to become again a normal Syrian citizen and work to build a new Syria," he said.

In Gaza's crowded tent camps, women wrestle with a life stripped of privacy

By WAFAA SHURAFI and JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza City (AP) — For Gaza's women, the hardships of life in the territory's sprawling tent camps are compounded by the daily humiliation of never having privacy.

Women struggle to dress modestly while crowded into tents with extended family members, including men, and with strangers only steps away in neighboring tents. Access to menstrual products is limited, so they cut up sheets or old clothes to use as pads. Makeshift toilets usually consist of only a hole in the sand surrounded by sheets dangling from a line, and these must be shared with dozens of other people.

Alaa Hamami has dealt with the modesty issue by constantly wearing her prayer shawl, a black cloth that covers her head and upper body.

"Our whole lives have become prayer clothes, even to the market we wear it," said the young mother of three. "Dignity is gone."

Normally, she would wear the shawl only when performing her daily Muslim prayers. But with so many men around, she keeps it on all the time, even when sleeping — just in case an Israeli strike hits nearby in the night and she has to flee quickly, she said.

Israel's 14-month-old campaign in Gaza has driven more than 90% of its 2.3 million Palestinians from their homes. Hundreds of thousands of them are now living in squalid camps of tents packed close together over large areas.

Sewage runs into the streets, and food and water are hard to obtain. Winter is setting in. Families often wear the same clothes for weeks because they left clothing and many other belongings behind as they fled.

Everyone in the camps searches daily for food, clean water and firewood. Women feel constantly exposed.

Gaza has always been a conservative society. Most women wear the hijab, or head scarf, in the presence of men who are not immediate family. Matters of women's health — pregnancy, menstruation and contraception — tend not to be discussed publicly.

"Before we had a roof. Here it does not exist," said Hamami, whose prayer shawl is torn and smudged with ash from cooking fires. "Here our entire lives have become exposed to the public. There is no privacy for women."

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Even simple needs are hard to meet

Wafaa Nasrallah, a displaced mother of two, says life in the camps makes even the simplest needs difficult, like getting period pads, which she cannot afford. She tried using pieces of cloth and even diapers, which have also increased in price.

For a bathroom, she has a hole in the ground, surrounded by blankets propped up by sticks.

The U.N. says more than 690,000 women and girls in Gaza require menstrual hygiene products, as well as clean water and toilets. Aid workers have been unable to meet demand, with supplies piling up at crossings from Israel. Stocks of hygiene kits have run out, and prices are exorbitant. Many women have to choose between buying pads and buying food and water.

Doaa Hellis, a mother of three living in a camp, said she has torn up her old clothes to use for menstrual pads. "Wherever we find fabric, we tear it up and use it."

A packet of pads costs 45 shekels (\$12), "and there is not even five shekels in the whole tent," she said.

Anera, a rights group active in Gaza, says some women use birth control pills to halt their periods. Others have experienced disruptions in their cycles because of the stress and trauma of repeated displacement.

The terrible conditions pose real risks to women's health, said Amal Seyam, the director of the Women's Affairs Center in Gaza, which provides supplies for women and surveys them about their experiences.

She said some women have not changed clothes for 40 days. That and improvised cloth pads "will certainly create" skin diseases, diseases related to reproductive health and psychological conditions, she said.

"Imagine what a woman in Gaza feels like, if she's unable to control conditions related to hygiene and menstrual cycles," Seyam said.

'Everything is destroyed'

Hellis remembered a time not so long ago, when being a woman felt more like a joy and less like a burden.

"Women are now deprived of everything, no clothes, no bathroom. Their psychology is completely destroyed," she said.

Seyam said the center has tracked cases where girls have been married younger, before the age of 18, to escape the suffocating environment of their family's tents. The war will "continue to cause a humanitarian disaster in every sense of the word. And women always pay the biggest price," she said.

Israel's campaign in Gaza has killed more than 45,000 Palestinians, over half of them women and children, according to the territory's Health Ministry. Its count does not differentiate between combatants and civilians.

Israel launched its assault in retaliation for the Oct. 7, 2023, attack by Hamas on southern Israel, in which militants killed some 1,200 people and abducted around 250 others.

With large swaths of Gaza's cities and towns leveled, women wrestle with reduced lives in their tents.

Hamami can walk the length of her small tent in a few strides. She shares it with 13 other people from her extended family. During the war, she gave birth to a son, Ahmed, who is now 8 months old. Between caring for him and her two other children, washing her family's laundry, cooking and waiting in line for water, she says there's no time to care for herself.

She has a few objects that remind her of what her life once was, including a powder compact she brought with her when she fled her home in the Shati camp of Gaza City. The makeup is now caked and crumbling. She managed to keep hold of a small mirror through four different displacements over the past year. It's broken into two shards that she holds together every so often to catch a glimpse of her reflection.

"Previously, I had a wardrobe that contained everything I could wish for," she said. "We used to go out for a walk every day, go to wedding parties, go to parks, to malls, to buy everything we wanted."

Women "lost their being and everything in this war," she said. "Women used to take care of themselves before the war. Now everything is destroyed."

Brace for turbulence: Lessons from a bumpy 'super year' of global elections

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By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — When voters around the globe had their say in 2024, their message was often: “You’re fired.”

Some 70 countries that are home to half the world’s population held elections this year, and in many incumbents were punished. From India and the United States to Japan, France and Britain, voters tired of economic disruption and global instability rejected sitting governments — and sometimes turned to disruptive outsiders.

The rocky democratic landscape just seemed to get bumpier as a dramatic year careened toward its end, with mass protests in Mozambique and Georgia, an election annulled in Romania and an attempt to impose martial law in South Korea.

Cas Mudde, a professor of international affairs at the University of Georgia who studies extremism and democracy, summed up 2024 in Prospect magazine as “a great year for the far right, a terrible year for incumbents and a troublesome year for democracy around the world.”

Incumbents battered

One message sent by voters in 2024: They’re fed up.

University of Manchester political scientist Rob Ford has attributed the anti-incumbent mood to “electoral long COVID” — lingering pandemic-related health, education, social and economic disruptions that have made millions of people unhappier and worse off. High inflation, fueled by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and mass displacement from that war and conflicts in the Middle East and Africa have added to the global unease.

In South Africa, high unemployment and inequality helped drive a dramatic loss of support for the African National Congress, which had governed for three decades since the end of the apartheid system of white minority rule. The party once led by Nelson Mandela lost its political dominance in May’s election and was forced to go into coalition with opposition parties.

Incumbents also were defeated in Senegal, Ghana and Botswana, where voters ousted the party that had been in power for 58 years since independence from Britain. Namibia’s ruling SWAPO party extended its 34 years in power in December — but only by a whisker.

Uruguay’s leftist opposition candidate, Yamandú Orsi, became the country’s new president in a November runoff that delivered another rebuke to incumbents.

In India, the world’s largest democracy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party lost its parliamentary majority in a shock election result in June after a decade of dominance. It was forced to govern in coalition as the opposition doubled its strength in Parliament.

Japanese politics entered a new era of uncertainty after Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba’s governing Liberal Democratic Party, which has ruled almost without interruption since 1955, suffered a major loss in October amid voter anger at party financial scandals. It now leads a minority government.

The U.K.’s July election saw the right-of-center Conservatives ousted after 14 years in office as the center-left Labour Party swept to power in a landslide. But the results also revealed growing fragmentation: Support for the two big parties that have dominated British politics for a century shrank as voters turned to smaller parties, including the hard-right party Reform U.K. led by Nigel Farage.

Authoritarians advance

Britain is not alone in seeing a rise for the right. Elections in June for the parliament of the 27-nation European Union saw conservative populists and the far right rock ruling parties in France and Germany, the EU’s biggest and most powerful members.

The anti-immigration National Rally party won the first round of France’s parliamentary election in June, but alliances and tactical voting by the center and left knocked it down to third place in the second round, producing a divided legislature and a fragile government that collapsed in a Dec. 4 no-confidence vote.

In Austria, the conservative governing People’s Party was beaten by the far-right, pro-Russia Freedom Party in September, though other parties allied to keep it out of a coalition government.

Nepotism and political dynasties continued to exert influence — and to be challenged. After messy elections in February, Pakistan elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, younger brother of three-time leader

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Nawaz Sharif. Indonesia, Southeast Asia's largest democracy, elected President Prabowo Subianto, son-in-law of the late dictator Suharto.

Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the world's longest-serving female leader, won a fourth successive term in a January election that opposition parties boycotted. Months later, her 15-year rule came to a tumultuous end: After mass student-led protests in which hundreds were killed, Hasina was ousted in August and fled to India.

In Sri Lanka, voters also rejected a discredited old guard. Voters elected the Marxist Anura Kumara Dissanayake as president in September, two years after an island-wide public movement by an engaged middle class removed the long-ruling Rajapaksa clan.

Interference allegations

Covert meddling and online disinformation were growing concerns in 2024. Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, said that this year it took down 20 election-related "covert influence operations around the world, including in the Middle East, Asia, Europe and the U.S." It said Russia was the top source of such meddling, followed by Iran and China.

In Romania, far-right candidate Călin Georgescu came from nowhere to win the first round of the presidential election in November, aided in part by a flood of TikTok videos promoting his campaign. Amid allegations of Russian meddling, Romania's Constitutional Court canceled the presidential election runoff two days before it was due to take place after a trove of declassified intelligence alleged Russia organized a sprawling campaign across social media to promote Georgescu. No date has yet been set for a rerun.

Moldova's pro-Western President Maia Sandu won a November runoff against her Moscow-friendly rival in an election seen as pivotal to the future of one of Europe's poorest nations.

Georgia has seen huge protests since an election in October was won by the pro-Moscow Georgian Dream party, which suspended negotiations on joining the European Union. The opposition and the pro-Western president, Salome Zourabichvili, have accused the governing party of rigging the vote with Russia's help.

Uncertainty reigns

Possibly the year's most seismic result, Donald Trump's victory in November's U.S. presidential election, has America's allies and opponents bracing for what the unpredictable "America-first" leader will do with his second term.

And instability already reigns on several continents as the year ends. Venezuela has been in political crisis since a July election marred by serious fraud allegations which both President Nicolás Maduro and the opposition claim to have won. Amid opposition protests and a harsh crackdown, opposition candidate Edmundo González went into exile in Spain.

In Mozambique, the Frelimo party that has ruled for half a century was declared the winner of an October election that the opposition called rigged. Weeks of ongoing street protests across the country have left more than 100 dead.

South Korea's conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol — weakened after the liberal opposition retained control in an April election — astonished the country by declaring martial law in a late-night announcement on Dec. 3. Parliament voted to overturn the decision six hours later, and within days voted to impeach Yoon. The crisis in the deeply divided country is far from over.

Democracy's bumpy ride looks likely to continue in 2025, with embattled incumbents facing challenge in countries including Germany, where Chancellor Olaf Scholz lost a confidence vote on Dec. 16, triggering an early election likely in February. Canada will also vote in 2025, with the governing Liberals widely unpopular and increasingly divided after almost a decade in power.

Seema Shah, head of democracy assessment at the Stockholm-based International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, said global surveys suggest support for the concept of democracy remains strong, but the numbers plummet "when you ask people how satisfied they are with their own democracy."

"People want democracy. They like the theory of it," she said. "But when they see it actually play out, it's not living up to their expectations."

Brazilian film 'I'm Still Here' tops box office, forcing nation to reckon with dictatorship trauma

By GABRIELA SÁ PESSOA Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Brazilian-made dramas rarely last long in local cinemas. But, nearly two months after its release, "I'm Still Here," a film about a family torn apart by the military dictatorship that ruled Brazil for more than two decades, has drawn millions of moviegoers across the South American country.

The film's domestic box office success — with nearly 3 million tickets sold, it secured the fifth spot at the 2024 box office by mid December — is rooted in its exploration of a long-neglected national trauma, but it is particularly timely, especially as Brazil confronts a recent near-miss with democratic rupture.

Set in the 1970s and based on true events, "I'm Still Here" tells the story of the Paivas, an upper-class family in Rio de Janeiro shattered by the dictatorship. Rubens Paiva, a former leftist congressman, was taken into custody by the military in 1971 and was never seen again. The narrative centers on his wife, Eunice Paiva, and her lifelong pursuit of justice.

The film was nominated for a Golden Globe for best foreign language film and shortlisted for the Oscars in the same category.

"Comedies and other topics are more likely to become mega-successes, but this (the dictatorship) is a very taboo subject for us," said Brazilian psychoanalyst and writer Vera Iaconelli, adding that she felt a "sense of urgency" after watching the movie last month, even though the dictatorship ended almost four decades ago.

As the movie was being shown across Brazil, the Federal Police unsealed a report detailing a 2022 plot by military officers to stage a coup to prevent President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva from taking office, and to keep far-right former army captain Jair Bolsonaro in power. Bolsonaro and his allies have denied any involvement in participating or inciting a coup.

"Even if (director) Walter Salles wanted to plan the timing of the release this precisely, he wouldn't have gotten it so right," said Lucas Pedretti, a historian and sociologist whose works address memory and reparations after the military dictatorship.

"The film plays a very important role in telling us: 'Look, this is what would happen if the coup that was planned by Bolsonaro and his military officers had succeeded.'"

Overdue reckoning

Unlike countries like Argentina and Chile, which established truth commissions and prosecuted former dictators and their henchmen, Brazil's transition back to democracy was marked by a sweeping amnesty to military officials.

For years, said Pedretti, Brazil's military promoted the notion that government silence was the best way to bury the past.

It was not until 2011 that Brazil's then- President Dilma Rousseff — a former guerrilla who was tortured during the dictatorship — established a national truth commission to investigate its abuses.

The commission's 2014 report detailed harrowing accounts of torture and named perpetrators of human rights violations — none were ever imprisoned. But just as a reckoning of the dictatorship began, calls for a return to military rule emerged in street protests against corruption revelations.

It was then that Marcelo Rubens Paiva, one of Rubens' sons, decided to share his family's story in his 2015 book "I'm Still Here." The book introduced Eunice Paiva to a larger audience, chronicling her journey from a housewife to a relentless advocate for her disappeared husband, and how she raised five children by herself, while also pursuing a law degree.

In the years that followed, far-right, anti-establishment forces increasingly gained traction. Bolsonaro — who has long celebrated the coup and praised dictatorship-era torturers — would go on to ride that wave to a presidential victory in 2018.

A fragile memory

Observing the surge of the far-right in Brazil, filmmaker Salles realized the country's memory of its dictatorship was very fragile. He said he saw a need for his country to confront its trauma in order to prevent

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history from repeating itself.

"I'm Still Here" isn't the first Brazilian movie to explore the memory of the dictatorship, but it is the most popular. Unlike other films on the subject that tend to focus on dissidents and armed resistance, Salles chose to frame his as a family drama and how the disappearance of the family patriarch upended their day-to-day lives.

Its climax — spoiler alert! — arrives 25 years after Rubens' disappearance, when Eunice finally receives his death certificate.

In December, a month after the film's premiere, the Brazilian government allowed families of dictatorship-era victims to obtain reissued death certificates acknowledging state-sponsored killings.

"It is very symbolic that this is happening amid the international repercussion of 'I'm Still Here' ... so younger people can understand a bit of what that period was like," Brazil's Human Rights Minister Macaé Evaristo said during the announcement, calling it an important step in the "healing process for Brazilian society."

Calls for justice

The healing process remains incomplete, as some forces — once again — seek to prevent those who allegedly sought to sabotage democracy from being held to account.

On Nov. 29, Bolsonaro urged Lula and the Supreme Court to grant amnesty for those involved in the 2022 alleged coup plot and, alongside his allies, pushed for legislation to pardon participants in the 2023 anti-democratic riot that aimed to oust Lula and marked an echo of the Capitol insurrection in the U.S.

"The coup is still here. It's still in people's minds, it's still in the minds of the military," said Paulo Sergio Almeida, a filmmaker and founder of Filme B, a company that tracks Brazil's national cinema. "We thought this was a thing of the past, but it's not. The past is still present in Brazil."

This time around, many Brazilians are calling for the prosecution of those responsible for the attempted coup, believing that justice is essential for national reconciliation and future progress.

On Dec. 14, police arrested Bolsonaro's 2022 running mate and former defense minister in connection with investigations into the alleged coup plot, becoming the first four-star general arrested by civilians since the end of the dictatorship in 1985.

"It's a sign that we are making progress as a constitutional democracy," leftist Sen. Randolfe Rodrigues wrote on X that day. "Brazil still has a long way to go as a Republic, but today is a HISTORIC day on this journey."

Brazilians have also embraced the "No amnesty!" rallying cry, which originated at street protests in the aftermath of the capital's 2023 riot and can still be heard.

Earlier this month, a Supreme Court justice cited "I'm Still Here" while arguing that the 1979 amnesty law shouldn't apply to the crime of concealing bodies.

"The disappearance of Rubens Paiva, whose body was never found or buried, highlights the enduring pain of thousands of families," Justice Flávio Dino said.

Striking a chord in Brazil was precisely Marcelo Rubens Paiva's intent when adapting his book into a film.

"The movie is sparking this debate, and it arrived at the right moment for people to recognize that living under a dictatorship is no longer acceptable," he said.

On a recent evening in Sao Paulo, 46-year-old Juliana Patrícia and her 16-year-old daughter, Ana Júlia, left a movie theater in tears, touched by "I'm Still Here."

"We saw all the suffering that Eunice endured, with Rubens being killed and taken from his family in such a brutal way," Patrícia said. "It made us even more certain that democracy needs to be respected and that, as Brazilians, we must fight harder to ensure that this never happens in our country again."

Jetliner skids off runway and bursts into flames while landing in South Korea, killing 179

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A jetliner skidded off a runway, slammed into a concrete fence and burst

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into flames Sunday in South Korea after its landing gear apparently failed to deploy. All but two of the 181 people aboard were killed in one of the country's worst aviation disasters, officials said.

The Boeing 737-800 operated by Jeju Air plane arrived from Bangkok and crashed while attempting to land in the town of Muan, about 290 kilometers (180 miles) south of Seoul.

Footage of the crash aired by South Korean television showed the plane skidding across the airstrip at high speed, evidently with its landing gear still closed, and slamming into the wall, triggering an explosion and generating plumes of thick, black smoke.

The crash killed 179 people, the South Korean fire agency said. Emergency workers pulled two crew members to safety. They were conscious and did not appear to have any life-threatening injuries, health officials said.

The chief of the Muan fire station, Lee Jeong-hyeon, told a televised briefing that the plane was completely destroyed, with only the tail assembly still recognizable in the wreckage. Officials were investigating the cause of the crash, including whether the aircraft was struck by birds, Lee said.

The control tower issued a warning about birds to the plane shortly before it intended to land and gave the crew permission to land in a different area, Transport Ministry officials said. The crew sent out a distress signal shortly before the crash, officials said.

Investigators retrieved the jet's flight data and cockpit voice recorders, said senior Transport Ministry official Joo Jong-wan. He said it may take months to complete the probe into the crash. The runway will be closed until Jan. 1, the ministry said.

Video of the crash indicated that the pilots did not deploy flaps or slats to slow the aircraft, suggesting a possible hydraulic failure, and they did not manually lower the landing gear, suggesting they did not have time, said John Cox, a retired airline pilot and CEO of Safety Operating Systems in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Despite that, the jetliner was under control and traveling in a straight line, and damage and injuries likely would have been minimized if not for a barrier being so close to the runway, Cox said.

"It's all in one piece. Everything is coming along fine until it hits that wall, at which point it disintegrates into a catastrophe," he said.

Another aviation expert said videos showed the aircraft had used up much of the runway before touching down. With little braking ability, the aircraft skidded atop its engine cowlings, said Ross "Rusty" Aimer, CEO of Aero Consulting Experts.

"It's basically like skidding on ice," he said.

The Boeing 737-800 is a "proven airplane" that belongs to a different class of aircraft than the Boeing 737 Max jetliner that was linked to fatal crashes in 2018 and 2019, added Alan Price, a former chief pilot at Delta Air Lines and now a consultant.

More than 4,500 of the planes are in service around the world, according to the aviation analytics company Cirium.

One of the survivors was being treated for fractures to his ribs, shoulder blade and upper spine, said Ju Woong, director of the Ewha Womans University Seoul Hospital. Ju said the man, whose name was not released, told doctors he "woke up to find (himself) rescued." Details on the other survivor were not immediately available.

The passengers were predominantly South Korean and included two people from Thailand. Officials identified 88 of them in the hours after the crash, the fire agency said.

Thailand's prime minister, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, expressed condolences to the families of those aboard the plane in a post on X. Paetongtarn said she ordered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide assistance.

Boonchuay Duangmanee, the father of a Thai passenger, told The Associated Press that his daughter, Jongluk, had been working in a factory in South Korea for several years and returned to Thailand to visit her family.

"I never thought that this would be the last time we would see each other forever," he said.

Kerati Kijmanawat, the director of Thailand's airports, confirmed in a statement that Jeju Air flight 7C 2216 departed from Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport with no reports of anything abnormal aboard the aircraft or on the runway.

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Jeju Air in a statement expressed its "deep apology" over the crash and said it will do its "utmost to manage the aftermath of the accident."

In a televised news conference, the company's president, Kim E-bae, bowed deeply with other senior company officials as he apologized to bereaved families and said he feels "full responsibility" for the crash. He said the company had not identified any mechanical problems with the aircraft following regular check-ups and that he would wait for the results of government investigations.

Family members wailed as officials announced the names of some victims at a lounge in the Muan airport.

Boeing said in a statement on X that it was in contact with Jeju Air and was ready to support the company in dealing with the crash.

The crash happened as South Korea is embroiled in a political crisis triggered by President Yoon Suk Yeol's stunning imposition of martial law and ensuing impeachment. South Korean lawmakers on Friday impeached acting President Han Duck-soo and suspended his duties, leading Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok to take over.

Choi, who traveled to the site in Muan, called for officials to use all available resources to identify the dead as soon as possible. The government declared Muan a special disaster zone and designated a week-long national mourning period.

Yoon's office said his chief secretary, Chung Jin-suk, presided over an emergency meeting between senior presidential staff to discuss the crash and reported the details to Choi. Yoon expressed condolences to the victims in a Facebook post.

In Rome's St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis said he joined in "prayer for the survivors and the dead." U.S. President Joe Biden said the United States was ready to offer "any necessary assistance."

The Muan crash is one of the deadliest disasters in South Korea's aviation history. The last time South Korea suffered a large-scale air disaster was in 1997, when a Korean Airlines plane crashed in Guam, killing 228 people on board. In 2013, an Asiana Airlines plane crash-landed in San Francisco, killing three and injuring about 200.

Sunday's accident was also one of the worst landing disasters since a July 2007 crash that killed all 187 people on board and 12 others on the ground when an Airbus A320 slid off a slick airstrip in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and hit a nearby building, according to data compiled by the Flight Safety Foundation, a nonprofit group aimed at improving air safety.

In 2010, 158 people died when an Air India Express aircraft overshot a runway in Mangalore, India, and plummeted into a gorge before erupting into flames, according to the safety foundation.

The Latest: State funeral for Jimmy Carter will be Jan. 9

By The Associated Press undefined

Former President Jimmy Carter has died at the age of 100. The 39th president of the United States was a Georgia peanut farmer who sought to restore trust in government when he assumed the presidency in 1977 and then built a reputation for tireless work as a humanitarian. He earned a Nobel Peace Prize in 2002.

Carter died Sunday, coming up on two years after entering hospice care, at his home in Plains, Georgia.

At age 52, Carter was sworn in as president on Jan. 20, 1977, after defeating President Gerald R. Ford in the 1976 general election. Carter left office on Jan. 20, 1981, following his 1980 general election loss to Ronald Reagan. Here's the latest:

Carter's state funeral will be Jan. 9

President Joe Biden has scheduled a state funeral in Washington for former President Jimmy Carter on Jan. 9.

Biden also declared Jan. 9 as a National Day of Mourning across the U.S. Carter, the longest-lived former president, died Sunday at his home in Plains, Georgia. He was 100.

Biden also ordered U.S. flags to fly at half-staff for 30 days from Sunday.

Guterres' remembrance focuses on Carter's contributions to peace

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on Sunday praised Carter for his significant contribu-

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tions to international peace through the Camp David Accords, the SALT II Treaty and the Panama Canal treaties.

"President Carter's commitment to international peace and human rights also found full expression after he left the presidency," Guterres said in a statement. "He played a key role in conflict mediation, election monitoring, the promotion of democracy, and disease prevention and eradication. These and other efforts earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 and helped advance the work of the United Nations.

"President Carter will be remembered for his solidarity with the vulnerable, his abiding grace, and his unrelenting faith in the common good and our common humanity," Guterres said.

Reflections from King Charles III

King Charles III joined leaders from around the world in issuing their condolences and sharing their reflections on the former president.

"It was with great sadness that I learned of the death of former President Carter," the king said in a public statement. "He was a committed public servant, and devoted his life to promoting peace and human rights. His dedication and humility served as an inspiration to many, and I remember with great fondness his visit to the United Kingdom in 1977."

Biden remembers Carter for his decency

President Joe Biden broke from his family vacation in the U.S. Virgin Islands to remember Carter, recalling his predecessor as a role model and friend.

America and the world lost a "remarkable leader" with Carter's death, Biden said, adding that he had spoken to several of the former president's children and was working with them to formalize memorial arrangements in Washington. Speaking for roughly 10 minutes, Biden remembered Carter as a humanitarian and statesman, someone he couldn't imagine walking past a person in need without trying to help them. He represented "the most fundamental human values we can never let slip away," Biden said.

The president repeatedly praised Carter's "simple decency" and his values, saying some will see him as a man of honesty and humility from a bygone era.

"I don't believe it's a bygone era. I see a man not only of our time, but for all times," Biden said. "To know his core, you need to know he never stopped being a Sunday school teacher at that Baptist church in Plains, Georgia."

Egyptian president notes historic Camp David Accords

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi said on X that Carter's significant role in achieving the peace agreement between Egypt and Israel "will remain etched in the annals of history."

He went on to say Carter's "humanitarian work exemplifies a lofty standard of love, peace, and brotherhood." Carter will be remembered as "one of the world's most prominent leaders in service to humanity," el-Sissi said.

Biden to speak on Carter's death

President Joe Biden will speak about Carter Sunday evening. The president will make his address from a hotel in St. Croix, from the U.S. Virgin Islands, where he is on a holiday vacation with his family.

Carter's relationship with his wife Rosalynn spanned a near-lifetime

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter had one of the great love stories and political partnerships in U.S. presidential history.

The former president sometimes called his wife, who died Nov. 19, 2023, "Rosie," which is a good way to remember how her name actually is pronounced. It is "ROSE-uh-lyn," not, repeat NOT, "RAHZ-uh-lyn."

They were married more than 77 years but their relationship went back even further. Jimmy's mother, "Miss Lillian," delivered Eleanor Rosalynn Smith at the Smith home in Plains on Aug. 18, 1927. The nurse brought her eldest child back a few days later to visit, meaning the longest-married presidential couple met as preschooler and newborn.

She became his trusted campaign aide and White House adviser, surprising Washington by sitting in on Cabinet meetings. Then they traveled the world together as co-founders of The Carter Center.

Most of the nation saw the former president for the last time at Rosalynn Carter's funeral.

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Grandson Jason Carter says Plains kept his grandparents humble

Jason Carter is now the chairman of The Carter Center's board of governors. He said his grandparents "never changed who they were" even after reaching the White House and becoming global humanitarians.

He says their four years in Washington were just one period of putting their values into action and that the center his grandparents founded in Atlanta is a lasting "extension of their belief in human rights as a fundamental global force."

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter traveled the world advocating for democracy and fighting disease, but Jason Carter said they weren't motivated by pity, or arrogance that a former American president had all the answers — they ventured to remote places because they could "recognize these people." They too were from "a 600-person village" and understood that even the poorest people "have the power ... the ability ... the knowledge and the expertise to change their own community."

President Biden mourns his predecessor

As reaction poured in from around the world, President Joe Biden mourned Carter's death, saying the world lost an "extraordinary leader, statesman and humanitarian" and he lost a dear friend. Biden cited Carter's compassion and moral clarity, his work to eradicate disease, forge peace, advance civil and human rights, promote free and fair elections, house the homeless and advocacy for the disadvantaged as an example for others.

Biden said he is ordering a state funeral for Carter in Washington.

Pelosi says Carter's life 'was saintly' in devotion to peace

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is remembering Carter as a man steeped "in devotion to public service and peace."

The California Democrat said in a statement Sunday that Carter was committed to "honoring the spark of divinity within every person," something she said manifested in "teaching Sunday school in his beloved Maranatha Baptist Church, brokering the landmark Camp David Accords to pave the way to peace or building homes with Habitat for Humanity."

Pelosi also said Carter led "perhaps the most impactful post-presidency in history."

Historical praise from the United Kingdom

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer noted in a post on X the special contribution Carter made by brokering the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt and through his work with the Carter Center.

"Motivated by his strong faith and values, President Carter redefined the post-presidency with a remarkable commitment to social justice and human rights at home and abroad," Starmer said.

Commemoration in New York City

To commemorate Carter's death, officials with the Empire State Building said in a post on social media that the iconic New York City landmark would be lit in red, white and blue on Sunday night, "to honor the life and legacy" of the late former president.

The Obamas recall Carter's Sunday services

In a statement issued Sunday, former President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama said Carter's beloved Maranatha Baptist Church "will be a little quieter on Sunday,s" but added that the late former president "will never be far away -- buried alongside Rosalynn next to a willow tree down the road, his memory calling all of us to heed our better angels."

Noting the "hundreds of tourists from around the world crammed into the pews" to see the former president teach Sunday school, as he did "for most of his adult life," the Obamas listed Carter's accomplishments as president. But they made special note of the Sunday school lessons, saying they were catalysts for people making a pilgrimage to the church. "Many people in that church on Sunday morning were there, at least in part, because of something more fundamental: President Carter's decency."

A somber announcement

The longest-lived American president died Sunday, more than a year after entering hospice care, at his home in the small town of Plains, Georgia, where he and his wife, Rosalynn, who died at 96 in November 2023, spent most of their lives.

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"Our founder, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, passed away this afternoon in Plains, Georgia," The Carter Center said in posting about his death on the social media platform X. It added in a statement that he died peacefully, surrounded by his family.

A Southerner and a man of faith

In his 1975 book "Why Not The Best," Carter said of himself: "I am a Southerner and an American, I am a farmer, an engineer, a father and husband, a Christian, a politician and former governor, a planner, a businessman, a nuclear physicist, a naval officer, a canoeist, and among other things a lover of Bob Dylan's songs and Dylan Thomas's poetry."

A moderate Democrat, Carter entered the 1976 presidential race as a little-known Georgia governor with a broad smile, outspoken Baptist mores and technocratic plans reflecting his education as an engineer.

After he left office and returned home to his tiny hometown of Plains in southwest Georgia, Carter regularly taught Sunday School lessons at Maranatha Baptist Church until his mobility declined. Those sessions drew visitors from around the world.

Former Vice President Gore remembers Carter for life "of purpose"

Former Vice President Al Gore praised Jimmy Carter for living "a life full of purpose, commitment and kindness" and for being a "lifelong role model for the entire environmental movement."

Carter, who left the White House in 1981 after a landslide defeat to Ronald Reagan, concentrated on conflict resolution, defending democracy and fighting disease in the developing world. Gore, who lost the 2000 presidential election to George W. Bush, remains a leading advocate for action to fight climate change. Both won Nobel Peace Prizes.

Gore said that "it is a testament to his unyielding determination to help build a more just and peaceful world" that Carter is often "remembered equally for the work he did as President as he is for his leadership over the 42 years after he left office."

During Gore's time in the White House, President Bill Clinton had an uneasy relationship with Carter. But Gore said he is "grateful" for "many years of friendship and collaboration" with Carter.

The Clintons react to Jimmy Carter's death

Former President Bill Clinton and his wife, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, remember Carter as a man who lived to serve others.

"Hillary and I mourn the passing of President Jimmy Carter and give thanks for his long, good life. Guided by his faith, President Carter lived to serve others — until the very end."

The statement recalled Carter's many achievements and priorities, including efforts "to protect our natural resources in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, make energy conservation a national priority, return the Panama Canal to Panama, and secure peace between Egypt and Israel at Camp David."

After he left office, the Clinton statement said, Carter continued efforts in "supporting honest elections, advancing peace, combating disease, and promoting democracy; to his and Rosalynn's devotion and hard work at Habitat for Humanity — he worked tirelessly for a better, fairer world," the statement said.

Jimmy Carter: A brief bio

The Associated Press undefined

— BIRTH NAME: James Earl Carter, Jr.

— BORN: Oct. 1, 1924, at the Wise Clinic in Plains, Georgia, the first U.S. president born in a hospital. He would become the first president to live for an entire century.

— EDUCATION: Plains High School, Plains, Georgia, 1939-1941; Georgia Southwestern College, Americus, Georgia, 1941-1942; Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, 1942-1943; U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, 1943-1946 (class of 1947); Union College, Schenectady, New York, 1952-1953.

— PRESIDENCY: Sworn-in as 39th president of the United States at the age of 52 years, 3 months and 20 days on Jan. 20, 1977, after defeating President Gerald R. Ford in the 1976 general election. Left office on Jan. 20, 1981, following 1980 general election loss to Ronald Reagan.

— POST-PRESIDENCY: Launched The Carter Center in 1982. Began volunteering at Habitat for Human-

ity in 1984. Awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. Taught for 37 years at Emory University, where he was granted tenure in 2019, at age 94.

— OTHER ELECTED OFFICES: Georgia state senator, 1963-1967; Georgia governor, 1971-1975.

— OTHER OCCUPATIONS: Served in U.S. Navy, achieved rank of lieutenant, 1946-53; Farmer, warehouseman, Plains, Georgia, 1953-77.

— FAMILY: Wife, Rosalynn Smith Carter, married July 7, 1946 until her death Nov. 19, 2023. They had three sons, John William (Jack), James Earl III (Chip), Donnel Jeffrey (Jeff); a daughter, Amy Lynn; and 11 living grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

Jimmy Carter: Many evolutions for a centenarian 'citizen of the world'

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

PLAINS, Ga. (AP) — Newly married and sworn as a Naval officer, Jimmy Carter left his tiny hometown in 1946 hoping to climb the ranks and see the world.

Less than a decade later, the death of his father and namesake, a merchant farmer and local politician who went by "Mr. Earl," prompted the submariner and his wife, Rosalynn, to return to the rural life of Plains, Georgia, they thought they'd escaped.

The lieutenant never would be an admiral. Instead, he became commander in chief. Years after his presidency ended in humbling defeat, he would add a Nobel Peace Prize, awarded not for his White House accomplishments but "for his decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development."

The life of James Earl Carter Jr., the 39th and longest-lived U.S. president, ended Sunday at the age of 100 where it began: Plains, the town of 600 that fueled his political rise, welcomed him after his fall and sustained him during 40 years of service that redefined what it means to be a former president.

With the stubborn confidence of an engineer and an optimism rooted in his Baptist faith, Carter described his motivations in politics and beyond in the same way: an almost missionary zeal to solve problems and improve lives.

Carter was raised amid racism, abject poverty and hard rural living — realities that shaped both his deliberate politics and emphasis on human rights.

"He always felt a responsibility to help people," said Jill Stuckey, a longtime friend of Carter's in Plains. "And when he couldn't make change wherever he was, he decided he had to go higher."

Defying expectations

Carter's path, a mix of happenstance and calculation, pitted moral imperatives against political pragmatism; and it defied typical labels of American politics, especially caricatures of one-term presidents as failures.

"We shouldn't judge presidents by how popular they are in their day. That's a very narrow way of assessing them," Carter biographer Jonathan Alter told the Associated Press. "We should judge them by how they changed the country and the world for the better. On that score, Jimmy Carter is not in the first rank of American presidents, but he stands up quite well."

Later in life, Carter conceded that many Americans, even those too young to remember his tenure, judged him ineffective for failing to contain inflation or interest rates, end the energy crisis or quickly bring home American hostages in Iran. He gained admirers instead for his work at The Carter Center — advocating globally for public health, human rights and democracy since 1982 — and the decades he and Rosalynn wore hardhats and swung hammers with Habitat for Humanity.

Yet the common view that he was better after the Oval Office than in it annoyed Carter, and his allies relished him living long enough to see historians reassess his presidency.

"He doesn't quite fit in today's terms" of a left-right, red-blue scoreboard, said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, who visited the former president multiple times during his own White House bid.

At various points in his political career, Carter labeled himself "progressive" or "conservative" — sometimes both at once. His most ambitious health care bill failed — perhaps one of his biggest legislative

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disappointments — because it didn't go far enough to suit liberals. Republicans, especially after his 1980 defeat, cast him as a left-wing cartoon.

It would be easiest to classify Carter as a centrist, Buttigieg said, "but there's also something radical about the depth of his commitment to looking after those who are left out of society and out of the economy." 'Country come to town'

Indeed, Carter's legacy is stitched with complexities, contradictions and evolutions — personal and political. The self-styled peacemaker was a war-trained Naval Academy graduate who promised Democratic challenger Ted Kennedy that he'd "kick his ass." But he campaigned with a call to treat everyone with "respect and compassion and with love."

Carter vowed to restore America's virtue after the shame of Vietnam and Watergate, and his technocratic, good-government approach didn't suit Republicans who tagged government itself as the problem. It also sometimes put Carter at odds with fellow Democrats.

The result still was a notable legislative record, with wins on the environment, education, and mental health care. He dramatically expanded federally protected lands, began deregulating air travel, railroads and trucking, and he put human rights at the center of U.S. foreign policy. As a fiscal hawk, Carter added a relative pittance to the national debt, unlike successors from both parties.

Carter nonetheless struggled to make his achievements resonate with the electorate he charmed in 1976. Quoting Bob Dylan and grinning enthusiastically, he had promised voters he would "never tell a lie." Once in Washington, though, he led like a joyless engineer, insisting his ideas would become reality and he'd be rewarded politically if only he could convince enough people with facts and logic.

This served him well at Camp David, where he brokered peace between Israel's Menachem Begin and Egypt's Anwar Sadat, an experience that later sparked the idea of The Carter Center in Atlanta. Carter's tenacity helped the center grow to a global force that monitored elections across five continents, enabled his freelance diplomacy and sent public health experts across the developing world. The center's wins were personal for Carter, who hoped to outlive the last Guinea worm parasite, and nearly did.

As president, though, the approach fell short when he urged consumers beleaguered by energy costs to turn down their thermostats. Or when he tried to be the nation's cheerleader, beseeching Americans to overcome a collective "crisis of confidence."

Republican Ronald Reagan exploited Carter's lecturing tone with a belittling quip in their lone 1980 debate. "There you go again," the former Hollywood actor said in response to a wonky answer from the sitting president. "The Great Communicator" outpaced Carter in all but six states.

Carter later suggested he "tried to do too much, too soon" and mused that he was incompatible with Washington culture: media figures, lobbyists and Georgetown social elites who looked down on the Georgians and their inner circle as "country come to town."

A 'leader of conscience' on race and class

Carter carefully navigated divides on race and class on his way to the Oval Office.

Born Oct. 1, 1924, Carter was raised in the mostly Black community of Archery, just outside Plains, by a progressive mother and white supremacist father. Their home had no running water or electricity but the future president still grew up with the relative advantages of a locally prominent, land-owning family in a system of Jim Crow segregation.

He wrote of President Franklin Roosevelt's towering presence and his family's Democratic Party roots, but his father soured on FDR, and Jimmy Carter never campaigned or governed as a New Deal liberal. He offered himself as a small-town peanut farmer with an understated style, carrying his own luggage, bunking with supporters during his first presidential campaign and always using his nickname.

And he began his political career in a whites-only Democratic Party.

As private citizens, he and Rosalynn supported integration as early as the 1950s and believed it inevitable. Carter refused to join the White Citizens Council in Plains and spoke out in his Baptist church against denying Black people access to worship services.

"This is not my house; this is not your house," he said in a churchwide meeting, reminding fellow pa-

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visioners their sanctuary belonged to God.

Yet as the appointed chairman of Sumter County schools he never pushed to desegregate, thinking it impractical after the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board* decision. And while presidential candidate Carter would hail the 1965 Voting Rights Act, signed by fellow Democrat Lyndon Johnson when Carter was a state senator, there is no record of Carter publicly supporting it at the time.

Carter overcame a ballot-stuffing opponent to win his legislative seat, then lost the 1966 governor's race to an arch-segregationist. He won four years later by avoiding explicit mentions of race and campaigning to the right of his rival, who he mocked as "Cufflinks Carl" — the insult of an ascendant politician who never saw himself as part the establishment.

Carter's rural and small-town coalition in 1970 would match any victorious Republican electoral map in 2024. Once elected, though, Carter shocked his white conservative supporters — and landed on the cover of *Time* magazine — by declaring that "the time for racial discrimination is over."

Before making the jump to Washington, Carter befriended the family of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., whom he'd never sought out as he eyed the governor's office. Carter lamented his foot-dragging on school integration as a "mistake." But he also met, conspicuously, with Alabama's segregationist Gov. George Wallace to accept his primary rival's endorsement ahead of the 1976 Democratic convention.

"He very shrewdly took advantage of his own Southernness," said Amber Roesner, a University of Tennessee professor and expert on Carter's campaigns.

A coalition of Black voters and white moderate Democrats ultimately made Carter the last Democratic presidential nominee to sweep the Deep South. Then, just as he did in Georgia, he used his power in office to appoint more non-whites than all his predecessors had, combined.

He once acknowledged "the secret shame" of white Americans who didn't fight segregation. But he also told Alter that doing more would have sacrificed his political viability — and thus everything he accomplished in office and after.

King's daughter, Bernice King, described Carter as wisely "strategic" in winning higher offices to enact change. "He was a leader of conscience," she said in an interview.

Rosalynn was Carter's closest advisor

Rosalynn Carter, who died on Nov. 19 at the age of 96, was identified by both husband and wife as the "more political" of the pair; she sat in on Cabinet meetings and urged him to postpone certain priorities, like pressing the Senate to relinquish control of the Panama Canal.

"Let that go until the second term," she would sometimes say.

The president, recalled her former aide Kathy Cade, retorted that he was "going to do what's right" even if "it might cut short the time I have."

Rosalynn held firm, Cade said: "She'd remind him you have to win to govern."

Carter also was the first president to appoint multiple women as Cabinet officers. Yet by his own telling, his career sprouted from chauvinism in the Carters' early marriage: He did not consult Rosalynn when deciding to move back to Plains in 1953 or before launching his state Senate bid a decade later.

Many years later, he called it "inconceivable" that he didn't confer with the woman he described as his "full partner," at home, in government and at The Carter Center.

"We developed a partnership when we were working in the farm supply business, and it continued when Jimmy got involved in politics," Rosalynn Carter told AP in 2021.

So deep was their trust that when Carter remained tethered to the White House in 1980 as 52 Americans were held hostage in Tehran, it was Rosalynn who campaigned on her husband's behalf.

"I just loved it," she said, despite the bitterness of defeat.

Reevaluating his legacy

Fair or not, the label of a disastrous presidency had leading Democrats keep their distance, at least publicly, for many years, but Carter managed to remain relevant, writing books and weighing in on societal challenges.

He lamented widening wealth gaps and the influence of money in politics. He voted for democratic socialist Bernie Sanders over Hillary Clinton in 2016, and later declared that America had devolved from fully

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functioning democracy to "oligarchy."

Yet looking ahead to 2020, with Sanders running again, Carter warned Democrats not to "move to a very liberal program," lest they help re-elect President Donald Trump. Carter scolded the Republican for his serial lies and threats to democracy, and chided the U.S. establishment for misunderstanding Trump's populist appeal.

He delighted in yearly convocations with Emory University freshmen, often asking them to guess how much he'd raised in his two general election campaigns. "Zero," he'd gesture with a smile, explaining the public financing system candidates now avoid so they can raise billions. Carter still remained quite practical in partnering with wealthy corporations and foundations to advance Carter Center programs.

Carter recognized that economic woes and the Iran crisis doomed his presidency, but offered no apologies for appointing Paul Volcker as the Federal Reserve chairman whose interest rate hikes would not curb inflation until Reagan's presidency. He was proud of getting all the hostages home without starting a shooting war, even though Tehran would not free them until Reagan's Inauguration Day.

"Carter didn't look at it" as a failure, Alter emphasized. "He said, 'They came home safely.' And that's what he wanted."

Well into their 90s, the Carters greeted visitors at Plains' Maranatha Baptist Church, where he taught Sunday School and where he will have his last funeral before being buried on family property alongside Rosalynn. Carter, who made the congregation's collection plates in his woodworking shop, still garnered headlines there, calling for women's rights within religious institutions, many of which, he said, "subjugate" women in church and society.

Carter was not one to dwell on regrets. "I am at peace with the accomplishments, regret the unrealized goals and utilize my former political position to enhance everything we do," he wrote around his 90th birthday.

Pilgrimages to Plains

The politician who had supposedly hated Washington politics also enjoyed hosting Democratic presidential contenders as public pilgrimages to Plains became advantageous again. Carter sat with Buttigieg for the final time March 1, 2020, hours before the Indiana mayor ended his campaign and endorsed eventual winner Joe Biden.

"He asked me how I thought the campaign was going," Buttigieg said, recalling that Carter flashed his signature grin and nodded along as the young candidate, born a year after Carter left office, "put the best face" on the walloping he endured the day before in South Carolina.

Never breaking his smile, the 95-year-old host fired back, "I think you ought to drop out."

"So matter of fact," Buttigieg said with a laugh. "It was somehow encouraging."

Carter had lived enough, won plenty and lost enough to take the long view.

"He talked a lot about coming from nowhere," Buttigieg said, not just to attain the presidency but to leverage "all of the instruments you have in life" and "make the world more peaceful."

In his farewell address as president, Carter said as much to the country that had embraced and rejected him.

"The struggle for human rights overrides all differences of color, nation or language," he declared. "Those who hunger for freedom, who thirst for human dignity and who suffer for the sake of justice — they are the patriots of this cause."

Carter pledged to remain engaged with and for them as he returned "home to the South where I was born and raised," home to Plains, where that young lieutenant had indeed become "a fellow citizen of the world."

Significant milestones in life and career of Jimmy Carter

The Associated Press undefined

— Oct. 1, 1924: James Earl Carter Jr. is born in Plains, Georgia, son of James Sr. and Lillian Gordy Carter.

— June 1946: Carter graduates from the U.S. Naval Academy.

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- July 1946: Carter marries Rosalynn Smith, in Plains. They have four children, John William ("Jack"), born 1947; James Earl 3rd ("Chip"), 1950; Donnel Jeffrey (Jeff), 1952; and Amy Lynn, 1967.
- 1946-1953: Carter serves in a Navy nuclear submarine program, attaining rank of lieutenant commander.
- Summer 1953: Carter resigns from the Navy, returns to Plains after father's death.
- 1953-1971: Carter helps run the family peanut farm and warehouse business.
- 1963-1966: Carter serves in the Georgia state Senate.
- 1966: Carter tries unsuccessfully for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination.
- November 1970: Carter is elected governor of Georgia. Serves 1971-75.
- Dec. 12, 1974: Carter announces a presidential bid. Atlanta newspaper answers with headline: "Jimmy Who?"
- January 1976: Carter leads the Democratic field in Iowa, a huge campaign boost that also helps to establish Iowa's first-in-the-nation caucus.
- July 1976: Carter accepts the Democratic nomination and announces Sen. Walter Mondale of Minnesota as running mate.
- November 1976: Carter defeats President Gerald R. Ford, winning 51% of the vote and 297 electoral votes to Ford's 240.
- January 1977: Carter is sworn in as the 39th president of the United States. On his first full day in office, he pardons most Vietnam-era draft evaders.
- September 1977: U.S. and Panama sign treaties to return the Panama Canal back to Panama in 1999. Senate narrowly ratifies them in 1978.
- September 1978: Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Carter sign Camp David accords, which lead to a peace deal between Egypt and Israel the following year.
- June 15-18, 1979: Carter attends a summit with Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev in Vienna that leads to the signing of the SALT II treaty.
- November 1979: Iranian militants storm the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, taking 52 hostages. All survive and are freed minutes after Carter leaves office in January 1981.
- April 1980: The Mariel boatlift begins, sending tens of thousands of Cubans to the U.S. Many are criminals and psychiatric patients set free by Cuban leader Fidel Castro, creating a major foreign policy crisis.
- April 1980: An attempt by the U.S. to free hostages fails when a helicopter crashes into a transport plane in Iran, killing eight servicemen.
- Nov. 4, 1980: Carter is denied a second term by Ronald Reagan, who wins 51.6% of the popular vote to 41.7% for Carter and 6.7% to independent John Anderson.
- 1982: Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter co-found The Carter Center in Atlanta, whose mission is to resolve conflicts, protect human rights and prevent disease around the world.
- September 1984: The Carters spend a week building Habitat for Humanity houses, launching what becomes the annual Carter Work Project.
- October 1986: A dedication is held for The Carter Presidential Center in Atlanta. The center includes the Carter Presidential Library and Museum and Carter Center offices.
- 1989: Carter leads the Carter Center's first election monitoring mission, declaring Panamanian Gen. Manuel Noriega's election fraudulent.
- May 1992: Carter meets with Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev at the Carter Center to discuss forming the Gorbachev Foundation.
- June 1994: Carter plays a key role in North Korea nuclear disarmament talks.
- September 1994: Carter leads a delegation to Haiti, arranging terms to avoid a U.S. invasion and return President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power.
- December 1994: Carter negotiates tentative cease-fire in Bosnia.
- March 1995: Carter mediates cease-fire in Sudan's war with southern rebels.
- September 1995: Carter travels to Africa to advance the peace process in more troubled areas.
- December 1998: Carter receives U.N. Human Rights Prize on 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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— August 1999: President Bill Clinton awards Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

— September 2001: Carter joins former Presidents Ford, Bush and Clinton at a prayer service at the National Cathedral in Washington after Sept. 11 attacks.

— April 2002: Carter's book "An Hour Before Daylight: Memories of a Rural Boyhood" chosen as finalist for Pulitzer Prize in biography.

— May 2002: Carter visits Cuba and addresses the communist nation on television. He is the highest-ranking American to visit in decades.

— Dec. 10, 2002: Carter is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his "untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development."

— July 2007: Carter joins The Elders, a group of international leaders brought together by Nelson Mandela to focus on global issues.

— Spring 2008: Carter remains officially neutral as Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton battle each other for the Democratic presidential nomination.

— April 2008: Carter stirs controversy by meeting with the Islamic militant group Hamas.

— August 2010: Carter travels to North Korea as the Carter Center negotiates the release of an imprisoned American teacher.

— August 2013: Carter joins President Barack Obama and former President Bill Clinton at the 50th anniversary of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech and the March on Washington.

— Oct. 1, 2014: Carter celebrates his 90th birthday.

— December 2014: Carter is nominated for a Grammy in the best spoken word album category, for his book "A Call To Action."

— May 2015: Carter returns early from an election observation visit in Guyana — the Carter Center's 100th — after feeling unwell.

— August 2015: Carter has a small cancerous mass removed from his liver. He plans to receive treatment at Emory Healthcare in Atlanta.

— August 2015: Carter announces that his grandson Jason Carter will chair the Carter Center governing board.

— March 6, 2016: Carter says an experimental drug has eliminated any sign of his cancer, and that he needs no further treatment.

— May 25, 2016: Carter steps back from a "front-line" role with The Elders to become an emeritus member.

— July 2016: Carter is treated for dehydration during a Habitat for Humanity build in Canada.

— Spring 2018: Carter publishes "Faith: A Journey for All," the last of 32 books.

— March 22, 2019: Carter becomes the longest-lived U.S. president, surpassing President George H.W. Bush, who died in 2018.

— September 18, 2019: Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter deliver their final in-person annual report at the Carter Center.

— October 2019: At 95, still recovering from a fall, Carter joins the Work Project with Habitat for Humanity in Nashville, Tennessee. It's the last time he works personally on the annual project.

— Fall 2019-early 2020: Democratic presidential hopefuls visit, publicly embracing Carter as a party elder, a first for his post-presidency.

— November 2020: The Carter Center monitors an audit of presidential election results in the state of Georgia, marking a new era of democracy advocacy within the U.S.

— Jan. 20, 2021: The Carters miss President Joe Biden's swearing-in, the first presidential inauguration they don't attend since Carter's own ceremony in 1977. The Bidens later visit the Carters in Plains on April 29.

— Feb. 19, 2023: Carter enters home hospice care after a series of short hospital stays.

— July 7, 2023: The Carters celebrate their 77th and final wedding anniversary.

— Nov. 19, 2023: Rosalynn Carter dies at home, two days after the family announced that she had joined

the former president in receiving hospice care.

— Oct. 1, 2024 — Carter becomes the first former U.S. president to reach 100 years of age, celebrating at home with extended family and close friends.

— Oct. 16, 2024 — Carter casts a Georgia mail ballot for Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris, having told his family he wanted to live long enough to vote for her. It marks his 21st presidential election as a voter.

— Dec. 29, 2024: Carter dies at home.

Jet crash disaster in South Korea marks another setback for Boeing

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A machinists strike. Another safety problem involving its troubled top-selling airliner. A plunging stock price.

2024 was already a dispiriting year for Boeing, the American aviation giant. But when one of the company's jets crash-landed in South Korea on Sunday, killing all but two of the 181 people on board, it brought to a close an especially unfortunate year for Boeing.

The cause of the crash remains under investigation, and aviation experts were quick to distinguish Sunday's incident from the company's earlier safety problems.

Alan Price, a former chief pilot at Delta Air Lines who is now a consultant, said it would be inappropriate to link the incident Sunday to two fatal crashes involving Boeing's troubled 737 Max jetliner in 2018 and 2019. In January this year, a door plug blew off a 737 Max while it was in flight, raising more questions about the plane.

The Boeing 737-800 that crash-landed in Korea, Price noted, is "a very proven airplane. "It's different from the Max ...It's a very safe airplane."

For decades, Boeing has maintained a role as one of the giants of American manufacturing. But the the past year's repeated troubles have been damaging. The company's stock price is down more than 30% in 2024.

The company's reputation for safety was especially tarnished by the 737 Max crashes, which occurred off the coast of Indonesia and in Ethiopia less than five months apart in 2018 and 2019 and left a combined 346 people dead. In the five years since then, Boeing has lost more than \$23 billion. And it has fallen behind its European rival, Airbus, in selling and delivering new planes.

Last fall, 33,000 Boeing machinists went on strike, crippling the production of the 737 Max, the company's bestseller, the 777 airliner and 767 cargo plane. The walkout lasted seven weeks, until members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers agreed to an offer that included 38% pay raises over four years.

In January, a door plug blew off a 737 Max during an Alaska Airlines flight. Federal regulators responded by imposing limits on Boeing aircraft production that they said would remain in place until they felt confident about manufacturing safety at the company.

In July, Boeing agreed to plead guilty to conspiracy to commit fraud for deceiving the Federal Aviation Administration regulators who approved the 737 Max. Acting on Boeing's incomplete disclosures, the FAA approved minimal, computer-based training instead of more intensive training in flight simulators. Simulator training would have increased the cost for airlines to operate the Max and might have pushed some to buy planes from Airbus instead. (Prosecutors said they lacked evidence to argue that Boeing's deception had played a role in the crashes.)

But the plea deal was rejected this month by a federal judge in Texas, Reed O'Connor, who decided that diversity, inclusion and equity or DEI policies in the government and at Boeing could result in race being a factor in choosing an official to oversee Boeing's compliance with the agreement.

Boeing has sought to change its culture. Under intense pressure over safety issues, David Calhoun departed as CEO in August. Since January, 70,000 Boeing employees have participated in meetings to

discuss ways to improve safety.

Croatia's incumbent president gains most votes for re-election, but not enough to avoid a runoff

By DARKO BANDIC Associated Press

ZAGREB, Croatia (AP) — Croatia's incumbent President Zoran Milanovic won most of the votes in the first round of a presidential election on Sunday, but must face a runoff against a ruling party candidate to secure another five-year term.

With nearly all of the votes counted, left-leaning Milanovic won 49% while his main challenger Dragan Primorac, a candidate of the ruling conservative HDZ party, trailed far behind with 19%.

Pre-election polls had predicted that the two would face off in the second round on Jan. 12, as none of the eight presidential election contenders were projected to get more than 50% of the vote.

Milanovic thanked his supporters but warned "this was just a first run."

"Let's not be triumphant, let's be realistic, firmly on the ground," he said. "We must fight all over again. It's not over till it's over."

Milanovic is an outspoken critic of Western military support for Ukraine in its war against Russia. He is often compared to Donald Trump for his combative style of communication with political opponents.

The most popular politician in Croatia, 58-year-old Milanović has served as prime minister in the past. Populist in style, he has been a fierce critic of current Prime Minister Andrej Plenković and continuous sparring between the two has lately marked Croatia's political scene.

Plenković, the prime minister, has sought to portray the vote as one about Croatia's future in the EU and NATO. He has labeled Milanović "pro-Russian" and a threat to Croatia's international standing.

"The difference between him and Milanović is quite simple: Milanović is leading us East, Primorac is leading us West," he said.

Though the presidency is largely ceremonial in Croatia, an elected president holds political authority and acts as the supreme military commander.

Milanović has criticized the NATO and European Union support for Ukraine and has often insisted that Croatia should not take sides. He has said Croatia should stay away from global disputes, though it is a member of both NATO and the EU.

Milanović has also blocked Croatia's participation in a NATO-led training mission for Ukraine, declaring that "no Croatian soldier will take part in somebody else's war."

His main rival in the election, Primorac, has stated that "Croatia's place is in the West, not the East." His presidency bid, however, has been marred by a high-level corruption case that landed Croatia's health minister in jail last month and featured prominently in pre-election debates.

During the election campaign, Primorac has sought to portray himself as a unifier and Milanović as divisive.

Primorac was upbeat despite such a big defeat in the first round.

"I know the difference (in votes) at first sight seems very big," said Primorac, who insisted that the center-right votes had split among too many conservative candidates.

"Now we have a great opportunity to face each other one on one and show who stands for what," he said.

Sunday's presidential election is Croatia's third vote this year, following a parliamentary election in April and the European Parliament balloting in June.

Israeli hospital says Netanyahu has undergone successful prostate surgery

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu underwent successful surgery Sunday to have his prostate removed, hospital officials said, a procedure that came as he manages multiple crises including the war in Gaza and his trial for alleged corruption.

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Netanyahu, who has had a series of health issues in recent years, has gone to great lengths to bolster a public image of himself as a healthy, energetic leader. During his trial this month, he boasted about working 18-hour days, accompanied by a cigar. But as Israel's longest-serving leader, such a grueling workload over a total of 17 years in power could take a toll on his well-being.

Netanyahu, 75, is among older world leaders including U.S. President Joe Biden, 82, President-elect Donald Trump, 78, Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, 79, and Pope Francis, 88, who have come under scrutiny for their age and health issues.

Netanyahu's latest condition is common in older men, but the procedure has had some fallout. The judges overseeing his trial accepted a request from his lawyer on Sunday to call off three days of testimony scheduled this week. The lawyer, Amit Hadad, had argued that Netanyahu would be fully sedated for the procedure and hospitalized for "a number of days."

Dr. Ofer Gofrit, head of the urology department at Jerusalem's Hadassah Medical Center, said in a video statement late Sunday that the procedure had gone well and "there was no fear" of cancer or malignancy. "We only hope for the best," he said.

In a statement, Netanyahu thanked his doctors. His office said he was "fully alert" and was taken to an underground recovery unit fortified against potential missile attacks. Netanyahu was expected to remain in the hospital for several days of observation.

Justice Minister Yariv Levin, a close ally, served as acting prime minister during the operation.

With so much at stake, Netanyahu's health in wartime is a concern for both Israelis and the wider world.

A turbulent time in the region

As Israel's leader, Netanyahu is at the center of major global events that are shifting the Middle East. With the dizzying pace of the past 14 months, being incapacitated for even a few hours can be risky.

Netanyahu will be in the hospital at a time when international mediators are pushing Israel and Hamas to reach a ceasefire in Gaza and as fighting between Israel and Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels intensifies.

Prostate issues are common and in many cases easily treatable. Still, the procedure puts a dent in Netanyahu's image of vigor at a time when he would want to project strength more than ever, both to an Israeli audience navigating constant threats as well as to Israel's enemies looking to expose its weaknesses.

Previous health issues, including a heart condition

Netanyahu insists he is in excellent health. His office releases footage of him touring war zones in full protective gear flanked by military officers, or meeting with defense officials on windswept hilltops in youthful dark shades and puffer jackets.

But that image was shattered last year when Netanyahu's doctors revealed that he had a heart condition, a problem that he had apparently long known about but concealed from the public.

A week after a fainting spell, Netanyahu was fitted with a pacemaker to control his heartbeat. Only then did staff at the Sheba Medical Center reveal that Netanyahu has for years experienced a condition that can cause irregular heartbeats.

The revelation came as Netanyahu was dealing with massive anti-government protests. The news about a chronic heart problem stoked further anger and distrust during extreme political polarization in Israel.

Last year, Netanyahu was rushed to the hospital for what doctors said likely was dehydration. He stayed overnight, prompting his weekly Cabinet meeting to be delayed.

Earlier this year, Netanyahu underwent hernia surgery, during which he was under full anesthesia and unconscious. Levin served as acting prime minister during the operation.

Recovery can be quick

According to Netanyahu's office, the Israeli leader was diagnosed with a urinary tract infection on Wednesday stemming from a benign enlargement of his prostate. The infection was treated successfully with antibiotics, but doctors said the surgery was needed in any case.

Complications from prostate enlargement are common in men in their 70s and 80s, Dr. Shay Golan, head of the oncology urology service at Israel's Rabin Medical Center, told Israeli Army Radio. Golan spoke in general terms and was not involved in Netanyahu's care or treatment.

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He said an enlarged prostate can block proper emptying of the bladder, leading to a build-up of urine that can lead to an infection or other complications. After medicinal treatment, doctors can recommend a procedure to remove the prostate to prevent future blockages, Golan said.

In Netanyahu's case, because the prostate is not cancerous, Golan said doctors were likely performing an endoscopic surgery, carried out by inserting small instruments into a body cavity, rather than making surgical cuts in the abdomen to reach the prostate.

The procedure lasts about an hour, Golan said, and recovery is quick. He said that aside from catheter use for one to three days after the procedure, patients can return to normal activity without significant limitations.

Notable quotes by Jimmy Carter

The Associated Press undefined

Some quotations from Jimmy Carter.

We have a tendency to exalt ourselves and to dwell on the weaknesses and mistakes of others. I have come to realize that in every person there is something fine and pure and noble, along with a desire for self-fulfillment. Political and religious leaders must attempt to provide a society within which these human attributes can be nurtured and enhanced. — from 1975 book "Why Not the Best?"

Our government can express the highest common ideals of human beings — if we demand of government true standards of excellence. At this Bicentennial time of introspection and concern, we must demand such standards. — "Why Not the Best?"

I am a Southerner and an American, I am a farmer, an engineer, a father and husband, a Christian, a politician and former governor, a planner, a businessman, a nuclear physicist, a naval officer, a canoeist, and among other things a lover of Bob Dylan's songs and Dylan Thomas's poetry. — "Why Not the Best?"

Christ said, "I tell you that anyone who looks on a woman with lust has in his heart already committed adultery." I've looked on a lot of women with lust. I've committed adultery in my heart many times. This is something that God recognizes I will do — and I have done it — and God forgives me for it. But that doesn't mean that I condemn someone who not only looks on a woman with lust but who leaves his wife and shacks up with somebody out of wedlock. — Interview, November 1976 Playboy.

This inauguration ceremony marks a new beginning, a new dedication within our Government, and a new spirit among us all. A President may sense and proclaim that new spirit, but only a people can provide it. — Inaugural address, January 1977.

It's clear that the true problems of our nation are much deeper — deeper than gasoline lines or energy shortages, deeper even than inflation and recession. ... All the legislation in the world can't fix what's wrong with America. ... It is a crisis of confidence. — So-called "malaise" speech, July 1979.

But we know that democracy is always an unfinished creation. Each generation must renew its foundations. Each generation must rediscover the meaning of this hallowed vision in the light of its own modern challenges. For this generation, ours, life is nuclear survival; liberty is human rights; the pursuit of happiness is a planet whose resources are devoted to the physical and spiritual nourishment of its inhabitants. — Farewell Address, January 1981.

We appreciate the past. We are grateful for the present and we're looking forward to the future with great anticipation and commitment. — October 1986, at the dedication of the Carter Presidential Library and Museum.

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War may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, it is always an evil, never a good. We will not learn to live together in peace by killing each other's children. — December 2002, Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech.

Fundamentalists have become increasingly influential in both religion and government, and have managed to change the nuances and subtleties of historic debate into black-and-white rigidities and the personal derogation of those who dare to disagree. ... The influence of these various trends poses a threat to many of our nation's historic customs and moral commitments, both in government and in houses of worship. — From 2005 book "Our Endangered Values."

I think that this breakthrough by Barack Obama has been remarkable. When he made his speech (on race) a few months ago in Philadelphia, I wept. I sat in front of the television and cried, because I saw that as the most enlightening and transforming analysis of racism and a potential end of it that I ever saw in my life. — August 2008, commenting on then-Sen. Barack Obama's candidacy.

I think it's based on racism. There is an inherent feeling among many in this country that an African-American should not be president. ... No matter who he is or how much we disagree with his policies, the president should be treated with respect. — September 2009, reacting to Rep. Joe Wilson's shout of "You lie!" during a speech to Congress by President Barack Obama.

I'm still determined to outlive the last guinea worm. — 2010, on The Carter Center's work to eradicate guinea worm disease.

You know how much I raised to run against Gerald Ford? Zero. You know how much I raised to run against Ronald Reagan? Zero. You know how much will be raised this year by all presidential, Senate and House campaigns? \$6 billion. That's 6,000 millions. — September 2012, reacting to the 2010 "Citizens United" U.S. Supreme Court decision permitting unlimited third-party political spending.

I have become convinced that the most serious and unaddressed worldwide challenge is the deprivation and abuse of women and girls, largely caused by a false interpretation of carefully selected religious texts and a growing tolerance of violence and warfare, unfortunately following the example set during my lifetime by the United States. — From 2014 book "A Call to Action."

I don't think there's any doubt now that the NSA or other agencies monitor or record almost every telephone call made in the United States, including cellphones, and I presume email as well. We've gone a long way down the road of violating Americans' basic civil rights, as far as privacy is concerned. — March 2014, commenting on U.S. intelligence monitoring after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks

We accept self-congratulations about the wonderful 50th anniversary - which is wonderful - but we feel like Lyndon Johnson did it and we don't have to do anything anymore. — April 2014, commenting on racial inequality during a celebration of the Civil Rights Act's 40th anniversary.

I had a very challenging question at Emory (University) the other night: "How would you describe the United States of America today in one word?" And I didn't know what to say for a few moments, but I finally said, "Searching." I think the country in which we live is still searching for what it ought to be, and what it can be, and I'm not sure we're making much progress right at this moment. — October 2014 during a celebration of his 90th birthday.

The life we have now is the best of all. We have an expanding and harmonious family, a rich life in our

church and the Plains community, and a diversity of projects at The Carter Center that is adventurous and exciting. Rosalynn and I have visited more than 145 countries, and both of us are as active as we have ever been. We are blessed with good health and look to the future with eagerness and confidence, but are prepared for inevitable adversity when it comes. — From 2015 book, "A Full Life."

A fourth infant dies of the winter cold in Gaza as families share blankets in seaside tents

By WAFAA SHURAFa and MAJDI MOHAMMED Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — A fourth infant has died of hypothermia in the Gaza Strip, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians displaced by nearly 15 months of war huddle in tents along the rainy, windswept coast as winter arrives.

Jomaa al-Batran, 20 days old, was found with his head as "cold as ice" early Sunday, his father, Yehia, said. The baby's twin brother, Ali, was moved to intensive care at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital.

Their father said they were born one month premature and spent just a day in the nursery at the hospital, which like other Gaza health centers is overwhelmed and only partially functioning.

He said medics told their mother to keep the newborns warm, but it was impossible because they live in a tent and temperatures regularly drop below 10 degrees Celsius (50 degrees Fahrenheit) at night.

"We are eight people, and we only have four blankets," al-Batran said as he cradled his son's pale body. He described drops of dew seeping through the tent overnight. "Look at his color because (of) the cold. Do you see how frozen he is?"

Children, some of them barefoot, stood outdoors and watched him mourn. The shrouded infant was laid at the feet of an imam for prayers. Then the imam took off his ankle-length coat and wrapped it around the father.

"Feel warm, my brother," he said.

At least three other babies have died from the cold in recent weeks, according to local health officials.

Israeli report details abuse of hostages held in Gaza

The Oct. 7, 2023 attack by Hamas militants that sparked the war killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted around 250, including women, children and older adults. Around 100 are still inside Gaza, at least a third believed to be dead.

Israel's Health Ministry released a report late Saturday detailing what it called widespread physical, psychological and sexual abuse, based on findings of doctors who treated some of the over 100 hostages released during a ceasefire last year. It said the captives — including children — had been subjected to severe abuse such as "beatings, isolation, deprivation of food and water, branding, hair-pulling and sexual assault."

The report said one hostage described being sexually assaulted at gunpoint by a Hamas militant, and "on several occasions, captors forced women of all ages to undress while others, including the captors, watched."

Former hostage Aviva Siegel told the AP that "people like to keep it quiet and say it didn't happen. It happened." She said she had watched others being threatened with a gun and beaten and that she had been physically assaulted.

The findings, to be sent to the United Nations, could increase pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to agree to a ceasefire and hostage release with Hamas. Families of hostages and supporters have held mass demonstrations for months, and diplomats have reported progress in the indirect talks.

A Palestinian woman is killed at home in the West Bank

A Palestinian woman was shot and killed in her home in the volatile West Bank town of Jenin, where the Palestinian Authority this month launched a rare campaign against militants.

The family of Shatha al-Sabbagh, a 22-year-old journalism student, said she was killed by a sniper with the Palestinian security forces late Saturday while she was with her mother and two children. They said

there had been no militants in the area.

A Palestinian security forces statement said she was shot by “outlaws” — the term it uses for local militants battling Israeli forces. The security forces condemned the shooting and vowed to investigate.

The Western-backed Palestinian Authority exercises limited self-rule in parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank. It is unpopular among Palestinians, largely because it cooperates with Israel on security matters, even as Israel accuses it of incitement and of generally turning a blind eye to militancy.

The al-Sabbagh family’s statement accused the Palestinian security forces of being “repressive tools that practice terrorism against their own people instead of protecting their dignity and standing up to the (Israeli) occupation.”

Hamas blamed the security forces and noted that al-Sabbagh was the sister of one of its fighters who was killed fighting with Israeli troops last year.

Later Sunday, hundreds of people demonstrated in support of the Palestinian security forces, organized by the Fatah party that dominates the Palestinian Authority.

Violence has flared in the West Bank since the war in Gaza began. Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians want all three for a future state.

More deadly strikes in Gaza

An Israeli strike on Wafa Hospital in Gaza City killed at least seven people and wounded several others, according to the Civil Defense, first responders affiliated with the Hamas-run government. Israel’s military said it struck a Hamas control center inside the building, which it said no longer served as a hospital.

A strike near Nuseirat in central Gaza killed eight and wounded over 15, according to Al-Awda Hospital officials.

Meanwhile, Israel’s military said militants launched five projectiles from northern Gaza, the second time in two days, saying two were intercepted and the rest likely fell in open areas. The Sderot municipality said three people were lightly injured on their way to shelters. Rockets from northern Gaza were rare in recent months as Israel’s military increased operations there.

Israel’s offensive has killed over 45,000 Palestinians, according to local health authorities. They say women and children make up more than half the deaths but don’t distinguish between militants and civilians in their count. Israel says it has killed over 17,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Israel’s bombardment and ground operations have displaced some 90% of Gaza’s population of 2.3 million, often multiple times. Vast areas are in ruins, with critical infrastructure destroyed.

Israeli restrictions, fighting and the breakdown of law and order have hindered aid delivery, raising fears of famine. Hunger leaves people at greater risk of disease and death.

Azerbaijan’s president says crashed jetliner was shot down by Russia unintentionally

By The Associated Press undefined

Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev said Sunday that the Azerbaijani airliner that crashed last week was shot down by Russia, albeit unintentionally, and criticized Moscow for trying to “hush up” the issue for days.

“We can say with complete clarity that the plane was shot down by Russia. (...) We are not saying that it was done intentionally, but it was done,” he told Azerbaijani state television.

Aliyev said that the airliner, which crashed Wednesday in Kazakhstan, was hit by fire from the ground over Russia and “rendered uncontrollable by electronic warfare.” Aliyev accused Russia of trying to “hush up” the issue for several days, saying he was “upset and surprised” by versions of events put forward by Russian officials.

“Unfortunately, for the first three days we heard nothing from Russia except delirious versions,” he said.

The crash killed 38 of 67 people on board. The Kremlin said that air defense systems were firing near Grozny, the regional capital of the Russian republic of Chechnya, where the plane attempted to land, to deflect a Ukrainian drone strike.

Aliyev said Azerbaijan made three demands to Russia in connection with the crash.

"First, the Russian side must apologize to Azerbaijan. Second, it must admit its guilt. Third, punish the guilty, bring them to criminal responsibility and pay compensation to the Azerbaijani state, the injured passengers and crew members," he said.

Aliyev noted that the first demand was "already fulfilled" when Russian President Vladimir Putin apologized to him on Saturday. Putin called the crash a "tragic incident" though stopped short of acknowledging Moscow's responsibility.

He said that an investigation into the crash was ongoing, and that "the final version (of events) will be known after the black boxes are opened."

He noted that Azerbaijan was always "in favor of a group of international experts" investigating the crash, and had "categorically refused" Russia's suggestion that the Interstate Aviation Committee, which oversees civil aviation in the Commonwealth of Independent States, investigate it.

"It is no secret that this organization consists mostly of Russian officials and is headed by Russian citizens. The factors of objectivity could not be fully ensured here," Aliyev said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Russian state media on Sunday that Putin had spoken to Aliyev over the phone again, but did not provide details of the conversation.

The Kremlin also said a joint investigation by Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan was underway at the crash site near the city of Aktau in Kazakhstan. The plane was flying from Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, to Grozny when it turned toward Kazakhstan, hundreds of kilometers (miles) across the Caspian Sea from its intended destination, and crashed while making an attempt to land.

Passengers and crew who survived the crash told Azerbaijani media that they heard loud noises on the aircraft as it was circling over Grozny.

Dmitry Yarov, head of Russia's civil aviation authority Rosaviatsia, said Friday that as the plane was preparing to land in Grozny in deep fog, Ukrainian drones were targeting the city, prompting authorities to close the area to air traffic.

The crash is the second deadly civil aviation accident linked to fighting in Ukraine. Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was downed with a Russian surface-to-air missile, killing all 298 people aboard, as it flew over the area in eastern Ukraine controlled by Moscow-backed separatists in 2014.

Russia has denied responsibility, but a Dutch court in 2022 convicted two Russians and a pro-Russia Ukrainian man for their role in downing the plane with an air defense system brought into Ukraine from a Russian military base.

Musk causes uproar for backing Germany's far-right party ahead of key elections

BERLIN (AP) — Tech entrepreneur Elon Musk caused uproar after backing Germany's far-right party in a major newspaper ahead of key parliamentary elections in the Western European country, leading to the resignation of the paper's opinion editor in protest.

Germany is to vote in an early election on Feb. 23 after Chancellor Olaf Scholz's three-party governing coalition collapsed last month in a dispute over how to revitalize the country's stagnant economy.

Musk's guest opinion piece for *Welt am Sonntag* — a sister publication of *POLITICO* owned by the Axel Springer Group — published in German over the weekend, was the second time this month he supported the Alternative for Germany, or AfD.

"The Alternative for Germany (AfD) is the last spark of hope for this country," Musk wrote in his translated commentary.

He went on to say the far-right party "can lead the country into a future where economic prosperity, cultural integrity and technological innovation are not just wishes, but reality."

The Tesla Motors CEO also wrote that his investment in Germany gave him the right to comment on the country's condition.

The AfD is polling strongly, but its candidate for the top job, Alice Weidel, has no realistic chance of becoming chancellor because other parties refuse to work with the far-right party.

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An ally of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, the technology billionaire challenged in his opinion piece the party's public image.

"The portrayal of the AfD as right-wing extremist is clearly false, considering that Alice Weidel, the party's leader, has a same-sex partner from Sri Lanka! Does that sound like Hitler to you? Please!"

Musk's commentary has led to a debate in German media over the boundaries of free speech, with the paper's own opinion editor announcing her resignation, pointedly on Musk's social media platform, X.

"I always enjoyed leading the opinion section of WELT and WAMS. Today an article by Elon Musk appeared in Welt am Sonntag. I handed in my resignation yesterday after it went to print," Eva Marie Kogel wrote.

The newspaper was also attacked by politicians and other media for offering Musk, an outsider, a platform to express his views, in favor of the AfD.

Candidate for chancellor, Friedrich Merz, of the Christian Democratic Union, said Sunday that Musk's comments were "intrusive and presumptuous". He was speaking to the newspapers of the German Funke Media Group.

Co-leader of the Social Democratic Party, Saskia Esken said that "Anyone who tries to influence our election from outside, who supports an anti-democratic, misanthropic party like the AfD, whether the influence is organized by the state from Russia or by the concentrated financial and media power of Elon Musk and his billionaire friends on the Springer board, must expect our tough resistance," according to the ARD national public TV network.

Musk's opinion piece in the Welt am Sonntag was accompanied by a critical article by the future editor-in-chief of the Welt group, Jan Philipp Burgard.

"Musk's diagnosis is correct, but his therapeutic approach, that only the AfD can save Germany, is fatally wrong," Burgard wrote.

Responding to a request for comment from the German Press Agency, dpa, the current editor-in-chief of the Welt group, Ulf Poschardt, and Burgard — who is due to take over on Jan. 1 — said in a joint statement that the discussion over Musk's piece was "very insightful. Democracy and journalism thrive on freedom of expression."

"This will continue to determine the compass of the "world" in the future. We will develop "Die Welt" even more decisively as a forum for such debates," they wrote to dpa.

3 die off northern France coast in a Channel crossing attempt

By TOM NOUVIAN Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — At least three migrants died early Sunday while attempting to cross the English Channel to Britain from northern France, authorities said. The deaths were confirmed after an early morning rescue operation involving French emergency services and the navy's "Dauphin" helicopter.

Around 50 people were stranded in the water and on the beach near Sangatte at around 6 a.m., according to the regional prefecture. Rescuers assisted 45 individuals, including four who were transported to hospitals.

Three unconscious people were pulled from the water but could not be revived, despite efforts by medical teams.

An investigation has been opened by prosecutors in Boulogne-sur-Mer.

Jacques Billant, the prefect of Pas-de-Calais, said an overcrowded boat may have contributed to the tragedy.

"There were more people attempting to board than the boat could hold," he said during a press conference Sunday.

Angela Eagle, the U.K. border security and asylum minister, said the boats were operated by smugglers the government has vowed to stop.

"This morning, lives have been lost at sea because ruthless criminals running the small boat trade are overloading people into unseaworthy vessels," Eagle said. "This government is committed to smashing these gangs."

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Sunday's tragedy comes during a spike in Channel crossing attempts as 2024 draws to a close. Officials have noted a significant increase in attempted crossings over the past few days.

"Since Dec. 24, 23 maritime incidents have been thwarted by internal security forces, saving over 1,000 lives," said Billant. "But crossing attempts continue, despite extremely dangerous sea conditions. The water is icy, so survival time in the water is very short."

This year has been one of the deadliest for migrants attempting the perilous journey between France and England, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, with at least 76 deaths reported by officials. More than 36,000 migrants have made the perilous Channel crossing so far this year, more than in 2023, though fewer than in 2022.

Billant also blamed human traffickers for putting lives at risk.

"These are low-quality boats put into the water solely for profit by these criminal networks, which have no regard for the lives of these children, women and men," he said.

In November, a French court convicted 18 people in a migrant-smuggling trial that shed light on the lucrative but often deadly clandestine business of transporting people across the English Channel.

Despite French and British efforts to stop it, the route remains a major smuggling corridor for people fleeing conflict or poverty. Migrants favor the U.K. for reasons of language, family ties or perceived easier access to asylum and work.

Tornadoes in Texas and Mississippi kill 2 and injure 6 as severe weather system moves east

HOUSTON (AP) — A strong storm system threatened to whip up tornadoes in parts of the U.S. Southeast on Sunday, a day after severe weather claimed at least two lives as twisters touched down in Texas and Mississippi.

Strong storms moving across the Southeast are expected to continue producing "gusty, damaging winds," hail and tornadoes through Sunday, National Weather Service meteorologist Frank Pereira said. So far, the line of severe weather has led to about 40 tornado reports from southeastern Texas to Alabama, Pereira said, but those reports remain unconfirmed until surveys of damage are completed.

"It's not unheard of but it is fairly uncommon to have a severe weather outbreak of this magnitude this late in the year," he said. The storms will continue to slide east until they eventually move offshore, meaning severe weather risks will dwindle into Sunday evening.

On Saturday, one person died in the Liverpool area, located south of Houston, Texas. Four people suffered injuries that were not considered critical, according to Madison Polston of the Brazoria County Sheriff's Office. Officials knew of around 10 damaged homes but were working to determine the extent of the damage, Polston said.

In the Houston area, National Weather Service crews planned to conduct surveys Sunday for at least five tornados that hit north and south of the city on Saturday.

In Mississippi, one person died in Adams County and two people were injured in Franklin County, according to the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

The National Weather Service said two tornadoes hit around Bude and the city of Brandon, ripping roofs from several buildings.

It appeared at least six tornadoes touched down in the Houston area, though more may be discovered when crews go out to survey the damage. There was damage in the area from both tornadoes and straight-line winds, according to Josh Lichter, meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

North of Houston, mobile homes were damaged or destroyed in Katy and Porter Heights, where the doors of a fire station were blown in, the weather service said.

Storm damage has been reported in the northern Alabama town of Athens, just northwest of Huntsville. A National Weather Service survey team was expected to begin assessing damage Sunday morning, said meteorologist Chelly Amin.

Holly Hollman, spokeswoman for the city of Athens, said she lives about two blocks from downtown —

where most of the damage from the early Sunday morning storms occurred.

Hollman said the storm hurled large HVAC units from the tops of building, ripped the roof off a bookstore and damaged a brick building adjacent to a veteran's museum. A full-sized, yet stripped down, military helicopter was toppled from a pole where it was on display, she added.

"I stepped out on my porch and I could hear it roar," she said. "I think we are extremely lucky that we got hit late at night. If it had hit during the busy hours, I think we might have had some injuries and possibly some fatalities."

The National Weather Service issued severe thunderstorm warnings across portions of the Deep South as the line of storms barreled east through Alabama, Georgia and into South Carolina. Wind gusts of 60 mph (97 kph) were expected in the Spartanburg, South Carolina, area. Damage to trees and powerlines was expected in a number of counties, while a tornado watch was in effect for some parts of the state.

At 9 a.m. Sunday ET, nearly 65,000 customers were without power in Mississippi, down from 93,000 around 1 a.m., according to electric utility tracking website PowerOutage.us. Some 54,000 customers were without power in Georgia; 36,000 in Alabama; 20,000 in Louisiana; and 13,000 in Texas.

Kansas once required voters to prove citizenship. That didn't work out so well

By JOHN HANNA Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Republicans made claims about illegal voting by noncitizens a centerpiece of their 2024 campaign messaging and plan to push legislation in the new Congress requiring voters to provide proof of U.S. citizenship. Yet there's one place with a GOP supermajority where linking voting to citizenship appears to be a nonstarter: Kansas.

That's because the state has been there, done that, and all but a few Republicans would prefer not to go there again. Kansas imposed a proof-of-citizenship requirement over a decade ago that grew into one of the biggest political fiascos in the state in recent memory.

The law, passed by the state Legislature in 2011 and implemented two years later, ended up blocking the voter registrations of more than 31,000 U.S. citizens who were otherwise eligible to vote. That was 12% of everyone seeking to register in Kansas for the first time. Federal courts ultimately declared the law an unconstitutional burden on voting rights, and it hasn't been enforced since 2018.

Kansas provides a cautionary tale about how pursuing an election concern that in fact is extremely rare risks disenfranchising a far greater number of people who are legally entitled to vote. The state's top elections official, Secretary of State Scott Schwab, championed the idea as a legislator and now says states and the federal government shouldn't touch it.

"Kansas did that 10 years ago," said Schwab, a Republican. "It didn't work out so well."

Steven Fish, a 45-year-old warehouse worker in eastern Kansas, said he understands the motivation behind the law. In his thinking, the state was like a store owner who fears getting robbed and installs locks. But in 2014, after the birth of his now 11-year-old son inspired him to be "a little more responsible" and follow politics, he didn't have an acceptable copy of his birth certificate to get registered to vote in Kansas.

"The locks didn't work," said Fish, one of nine Kansas residents who sued the state over the law. "You caught a bunch of people who didn't do anything wrong."

A small problem, but wide support for a fix

Kansas' experience appeared to receive little if any attention outside the state as Republicans elsewhere pursued proof-of-citizenship requirements this year.

Arizona enacted a requirement this year, applying it to voting for state and local elections but not for Congress or president. The Republican-led U.S. House passed a proof-of-citizenship requirement in the summer and plans to bring back similar legislation after the GOP won control of the Senate in November.

In Ohio, the Republican secretary of state revised the form that poll workers use for voter eligibility challenges to require those not born in the U.S. to show naturalization papers to cast a regular ballot. A federal judge declined to block the practice days before the election.

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Also, sizable majorities of voters in Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina and the presidential swing states of North Carolina and Wisconsin were inspired to amend their state constitutions' provisions on voting even though the changes were only symbolic. Provisions that previously declared that all U.S. citizens could vote now say that only U.S. citizens can vote — a meaningless distinction with no practical effect on who is eligible.

To be clear, voters already must attest to being U.S. citizens when they register to vote and noncitizens can face fines, prison and deportation if they lie and are caught.

"There is nothing unconstitutional about ensuring that only American citizens can vote in American elections," U.S. Rep. Chip Roy, of Texas, the leading sponsor of the congressional proposal, said in an email statement to The Associated Press.

Why the courts rejected the Kansas citizenship rule

After Kansas residents challenged their state's law, both a federal judge and federal appeals court concluded that it violated a law limiting states to collecting only the minimum information needed to determine whether someone is eligible to vote. That's an issue Congress could resolve.

The courts ruled that with "scant" evidence of an actual problem, Kansas couldn't justify a law that kept hundreds of eligible citizens from registering for every noncitizen who was improperly registered. A federal judge concluded that the state's evidence showed that only 39 noncitizens had registered to vote from 1999 through 2012 — an average of just three a year.

In 2013, then-Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, a Republican who had built a national reputation advocating tough immigration laws, described the possibility of voting by immigrants living in the U.S. illegally as a serious threat. He was elected attorney general in 2022 and still strongly backs the idea, arguing that federal court rulings in the Kansas case "almost certainly got it wrong."

Kobach also said a key issue in the legal challenge — people being unable to fix problems with their registrations within a 90-day window — has probably been solved.

"The technological challenge of how quickly can you verify someone's citizenship is getting easier," Kobach said. "As time goes on, it will get even easier."

Would the Kansas law stand today?

The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the Kansas case in 2020. But in August, it split 5-4 in allowing Arizona to continue enforcing its law for voting in state and local elections while a legal challenge goes forward.

Seeing the possibility of a different Supreme Court decision in the future, U.S. Rep.-elect Derek Schmidt says states and Congress should pursue proof-of-citizenship requirements. Schmidt was the Kansas attorney general when his state's law was challenged.

"If the same matter arose now and was litigated, the facts would be different," he said in an interview.

But voting rights advocates dismiss the idea that a legal challenge would turn out differently. Mark Johnson, one of the attorneys who fought the Kansas law, said opponents now have a template for a successful court fight.

"We know the people we can call," Johnson said. "We know that we've got the expert witnesses. We know how to try things like this." He predicted "a flurry — a landslide — of litigation against this."

Born in Illinois but unable to register in Kansas

Initially, the Kansas requirement's impacts seemed to fall most heavily on politically unaffiliated and young voters. As of fall 2013, 57% of the voters blocked from registering were unaffiliated and 40% were under 30.

But Fish was in his mid-30s, and six of the nine residents who sued over the Kansas law were 35 or older. Three even produced citizenship documents and still didn't get registered, according to court documents.

"There wasn't a single one of us that was actually an illegal or had misinterpreted or misrepresented any information or had done anything wrong," Fish said.

He was supposed to produce his birth certificate when he sought to register in 2014 while renewing his Kansas driver's license at an office in a strip mall in Lawrence. A clerk wouldn't accept the copy Fish had of his birth certificate. He still doesn't know where to find the original, having been born on an Air Force

base in Illinois that closed in the 1990s.

Several of the people joining Fish in the lawsuit were veterans, all born in the U.S., and Fish said he was stunned that they could be prevented from registering.

Liz Azore, a senior adviser to the nonpartisan Voting Rights Lab, said millions of Americans haven't traveled outside the U.S. and don't have passports that might act as proof of citizenship, or don't have ready access to their birth certificates.

She and other voting rights advocates are skeptical that there are administrative fixes that will make a proof-of-citizenship law run more smoothly today than it did in Kansas a decade ago.

"It's going to cover a lot of people from all walks of life," Avore said. "It's going to be disenfranchising large swaths of the country."

What we know about the deadly passenger jet crash in South Korea

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A passenger jet burst into flames while landing at an airport in South Korea on Sunday, killing 179 people in one of the deadliest air disasters in that nation's history. There were only two survivors, officials said.

Video showed the plane skidding across the airstrip, overrunning the runway and crashing into a barrier at the airport about 290 kilometers (180 miles) south of Seoul on Sunday. Its front landing gear apparently was not deployed.

Here are some things to know about crash:

What preceded the deadly fire?

The pilot sent out a distress signal shortly before the plane overshot the end of the runway, officials said.

Footage aired by South Korean television channels showed the plane skidding — and apparently without its landing gear deployed. The jet overran the runway and hit a barrier, triggering a fiery explosion. Footage showed thick plumes of smoke billowing from the plane, which was engulfed in flames.

The 15-year-old Boeing 737-800 jet was arriving from Bangkok when the crash happened at 9:03 a.m. Sunday in the town of Muan.

Workers have retrieved the flight data and cockpit voice recorders of the plane's black box, which will be examined by government experts investigating the cause of the crash and fire, Senior Transport Ministry official Joo Jong-wan said.

What do we know about casualties?

The jet operated by Jeju Air had 181 passengers and crew. Of those, a total of 179 people perished in the crash and ensuing fire; only two crew members survived, officials said.

Family members wailed as officials announced the names of some victims at a lounge in the Muan airport.

Kim E-bae, Jeju Air's president, bowed deeply with other senior company officials as he apologized to bereaved families and said he feels "full responsibility" for the incident. Boeing also extended condolences and said in a statement on X that it is ready to support the company in dealing with the crash.

The government declared Muan a special disaster zone.

What about reports of a bird strike?

It will take months to determine the cause. But there are some possible clues.

Lee Jeong-hyeon, chief of the Muan fire station, said workers were looking into various possibilities about what caused the crash, including whether the aircraft was struck by birds. Transport Ministry officials said the airport control tower issued a bird strike warning to the plane shortly before it intended to land and gave its pilot permission to land in a different area.

The plane was destroyed with the tail assembly being the only recognizable part among the wreckage, the fire chief told a televised briefing.

What is the reaction from around the world?

The incident came as South Korea is embroiled in a political crisis triggered by President Yoon Suk

Yeol's stunning imposition of martial law and ensuing impeachment. Last Friday, South Korean lawmakers impeached acting President Han Duck-soo, leading Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok to take over.

Choi, who traveled to the crash site, called for officials to employ all available resources to find the missing and identify the victims as soon as possible. The government designated a weeklong national mourning period through Saturday.

Yoon's office said his chief secretary, Chung Jin-suk, presided over an emergency meeting between senior presidential staff to discuss the crash and reported the details to Choi. Yoon also expressed condolences to the victims.

World leaders expressed their sympathies as South Korea dealt with the tragedy.

Thailand's prime minister, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, expressed deep condolences to the families and ordered the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide assistance immediately. Pope Francis offered condolences from St. Peter's Square. Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said he was "deeply saddened by the loss of many precious lives." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy also extended condolences.

Russian man arrested for allegedly running LGBTQ+ travel agency found dead in custody

By The Associated Press undefined

A Russian man arrested for allegedly running a travel agency for gay customers was found dead in custody in Moscow, rights group OVD-Info reported Sunday, amid a crackdown on LGBTQ+ rights in Russia.

According to OVD-Info, which tracks political arrests, Andrei Kotov — director of the "Men Travel" agency — faced charges of "organizing extremist activity and participating in it."

OVD-Info said an investigator told Kotov's lawyer that her client had died by suicide early Sunday while in pretrial detention and was found dead in his cell.

Prior to Kotov's death, independent media outlet Mediazona reported earlier this month that Kotov had rejected the charges and said in court that law enforcement officers beat him and administered electric shocks during the arrest, even though he didn't resist.

Just over a year ago, Russia's Supreme Court effectively outlawed any LGBTQ+ activism in a ruling that designated "the international LGBT movement" as extremist. The move exposed anyone in the community or connected to it to criminal prosecution and prison, ushering in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

The LGBTQ+ community in Russia has been under legal and public pressure for over a decade but especially since the Kremlin sent troops to Ukraine in 2022. Russian leader Vladimir Putin has argued that the war is a proxy battle with the West, which he says aims to destroy Russia and its "traditional family values" by pushing for LGBTQ+ rights.

Turkey's imprisoned Kurdish rebel leader says he is willing to work with authorities for peace

ISTANBUL (AP) — Abdullah Ocalan, the imprisoned leader of Turkey's banned Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, has said that he is willing to contribute to peace between Turks and Kurds, in a statement issued by the pro-Kurdish DEM party Sunday.

"I possess the necessary competence and determination to contribute positively to the new paradigm supported by Mr. Bahçeli and Mr. Erdoğan," the statement read, referring to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his nationalist ally, Devlet Bahçeli, leader of the Nationalist Movement Party, or MHP.

Ocalan has been serving a life term in prison on the Imrali island off Istanbul since 1999, after being convicted of treason. The PKK has been fighting for an autonomous state in Turkey's southeast since 1984, and the violence has claimed tens of thousands of lives. The group is considered a terrorist organization by Turkey and its Western allies.

Devlet Bahçeli, who has traditionally maintained a hardline stance against the PKK, had surprised everyone in October when he suggested in parliament that Ocalan could be granted parole if he renounced

violence and disbanded the PKK. Erdogan offered tacit support for his ally a week later. At the time Ocalan himself had said he was ready to work for peace in a message conveyed by his nephew.

Two senior members of DEM, or the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party, Pervin Buldan and Sirri Sureyya Onder met with Ocalan at his prison island on Saturday. The meeting was closed to the press, and no details were released until the following day. Sunday's one-page statement offers bullet points of what was discussed in the meeting, namely a call for all parties to work together for peace.

"This is an era of peace, democracy, and fraternity for Turkey and the region," reads the statement's last line.

LeBron James at 40: A milestone birthday arrives Monday for the NBA's all-time scoring leader

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

When LeBron James broke another NBA record earlier this month, the one for most regular-season minutes played in a career, his Los Angeles Lakers teammates handled the moment in typical locker room fashion.

They made fun of him.

"They told me I'm old as hell," James quipped.

By NBA standards, they're not wrong. He was dubbed "The Kid from Akron" when the Ohio native entered the league with a limitless future nearly 22 years ago. He's now the 40-year-old from Los Angeles with wisps of gray in his beard. His milestone birthday comes Monday, one that will make him the first player in NBA history to play in his teens, 20s, 30s and 40s.

Such a feat has happened a couple of dozen times in baseball before. It has happened in hockey — Gordie Howe was a five-decade player, appearing in the NHL from his teens to his 50s — but never in the NFL or the NBA. Until now. James is making more basketball history and creating a club all of his own.

"In some ways he's a freak of nature," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. "I've been around a lot of great players and he's one of the hardest-working players I've been around. I mean, he doesn't take a day off. He seems to not take an afternoon off. He's always working on some part of his body. You meet with him and he's always soaking something or eating something with some contraption attached to him."

A 40th birthday, in NBA terms, means the on-court end is near. James will become the 30th player to appear in a regular-season game with a "4" as the first digit of his age; only nine logged more than 51 games after that birthday. He'll be the 32nd player to play after turning 40 overall; Tim Duncan and Danny Schayes both turned 40 during playoff runs in what became their final seasons.

And for the most part, big numbers are largely nonexistent at that age.

Only Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (who did it three times), John Stockton (twice), Michael Jordan, Robert Parish and Karl Malone have averaged more than 10 points in a season after turning 40. Jordan averaged 22.4 points in 30 games after turning 40 in his final season with Washington; Malone is the most recent to do it, averaging 13.2 points in 42 games after turning 40 while with the Lakers in 2003-04.

James, meanwhile, is still putting up All-Star level numbers: 23.5 points, 9 assists and 7.5 rebounds per game. Forget how doing that at 40 is unheard of. Doing that at 30 is practically unheard of. The only players to have those numbers in all three categories in a season after turning 30 are James (who did it at 33 and 35) and James Harden (who did it at 31).

"The size, the strength and the IQ ... with his frame and the way he takes care of himself, he doesn't have to be the best athlete on the planet. At one time he was," Miami Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "We're not talking about the best athlete in the association. He was the best athlete on the planet arguably, just size, strength, agility, explosiveness combined. But at this size and if he just wants to slow the game down and just play off his brain and IQ, he could do that for another decade. I doubt he'll find interest in that. But he could."

Nobody knows when James will stop playing. And it surely isn't going to get any easier: James wanted to play all 82 games this season and couldn't, was widely criticized when the Lakers went through a slump earlier this season and took tons of backlash when his team drafted his son Bronny in the second round

last summer in what many thought was simple nepotism.

He has always been a lightning rod. If his play declines at 40, his naysayers will be lined up to revel in that. "It's a lot harder, physically and emotionally, to face what those guys face night after night after night," Golden State coach Steve Kerr said of top NBA stars getting up in years, like James and the Warriors' Stephen Curry — who'll turn 37 in March. "There's a reason players have to retire. You know, they can't do it forever."

James won't either.

But even while playing alongside elite 30-year-olds like Giannis Antetokounmpo, James — who reportedly spends more than \$1.5 million annually on his fitness and has an on-site mechanic of sorts at all times for anything his body needs in personal athletic training guru in Mike Mancias — has shown how to play long past what used to be considered an NBA player's peak years.

"What he's done is incredible, never been done, especially at the level he's playing," Antetokounmpo said. "For me, I always look at the other players that kind of set the blueprint for us, and this is something that's never been done before. I definitely want to play late into my career, like 37, 38, 39, as much as my body can allow me to play. But I have to do a good job of taking care of my body, which I believe I do, but he kind of set the path for us, set the blueprint for us. We've just got to follow."

The accolades are countless: James is the NBA's all-time scoring leader, has a place in the GOAT conversation, most minutes played, four NBA championships, three Olympic gold medals, 20 and likely soon to be 21 All-Star selections, oldest to do this, oldest to do that, generational wealth with a net worth exceeding \$1 billion, and on and on and on.

It begs the question: What does one get a 40-year-old who has everything?

"I don't even know," lamented Bronny James — another example of how James is one of one, becoming the first dad in NBA history to have his son as a teammate.

James has hinted that the end is near. "Don't make me feel old right now," he said, only half-kiddingly, when asked earlier this month about the looming 40th birthday. He is under contract for next season but hasn't offered any guarantees about how long he will play, saying he isn't "going to play that much longer, to be completely honest" and insisting that he won't be "playing till the wheels fall off" because he doesn't want to disrespect the game.

No player scored more points in his teens than James did. Same goes for his 20s. Only Malone and Abdul-Jabbar scored more points in their 30s than James. And now, here comes his 40s, with James still going strong.

It's the final decade of a basketball career like none other.

"Fans pay attention every time he steps on the court because they're watching one of the greatest ever and still playing an incredibly high level, despite turning 40 this month," Silver said. "I marvel at him."

Syria's dwindling Jewish community can visit one of the world's oldest synagogues again

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

JOBAR, Syria (AP) — In this Damascus suburb, the handful of remaining Jews in Syria can again make pilgrimages to one of the world's oldest synagogues where people from throughout the region once came to pray.

Syria's 13-year civil war left the synagogue partially destroyed. Walls and roofs have collapsed. Some artifacts are missing. A marble sign in Arabic at the gate says it was first built 720 years before Christ.

Since insurgents overthrew President Bashar Assad in early December, people have been able to safely visit the widely destroyed Jobar suburb that was pounded for years by government forces while in the hands of opposition fighters.

Syria was once home to one of the world's largest Jewish communities. Those numbers have shrunk dramatically, especially after the state of Israel was created in 1948.

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Today, only nine Jews live in Syria, according to the head of the community, almost all older men and women. The community believes that no Syrian Jews will remain in the country in a few years.

One of the people visiting the Jobar Synagogue, also known as Eliyahu Hanavi synagogue, on Thursday was gray-haired Bakhour Chamntoub, the head of the community in Syria.

"This synagogue means a lot to us," the 74-year-old told The Associated Press during his first visit in 15 years.

Chamntoub had heard the synagogue was damaged, but he did not expect to see that part of it had been reduced to a pile of debris.

"I am frankly disturbed," he said.

Chamntoub said Jewish people from around the world have been calling him to say they are ready to help rebuild.

He had refused to leave Syria during the war, while all 12 of his siblings left. He said he was happy in Syria and surrounded by people who respect him.

Chamntoub said he had been one of the few Jews who openly spoke about his faith, adding that he never faced discrimination. He said other Jews preferred not to speak openly for safety reasons amid the animosity in Syria toward archenemy Israel and fears of being labeled spies or collaborators.

The Jewish community in Syria dates back to the prophet Elijah's Damascus sojourn nearly 3,000 years ago. After 1099, when Christian armies conquered Jerusalem in the First Crusade and massacred the city's Muslim and Jewish inhabitants, some 50,000 Jews reportedly fled to Damascus, making up nearly a third of residents. Another wave of Jews later arrived from Europe, fleeing the Spanish Inquisition that began in 1492.

The community in Syria numbered about 100,000 at the start of the 20th century. In the years surrounding Israel's creation, Syrian Jews faced increased tensions and restrictions. Many emigrated to Israel, the United States and other countries.

Under the Assad family's 54-year dynasty, Jews in Syria enjoyed freedom in performing religious duties, but community members were prevented from traveling outside the country to prevent them from going to Israel until the early 1990s. Once travel restrictions were lifted after Arab-Israeli peace talks started, many more left.

Before Syria's conflict began in 2011, Chamntoub and other remaining community members came on Saturdays to Jobar for prayers. He recalled Torahs written on gazelle leather, chandeliers, tapestries and carpets. All are gone, likely stolen by looters.

Barakat Hazroumi, a Muslim born and raised near the synagogue, recounted how worshipers on Saturdays asked him to turn on the lights or light a candle since Jews are not allowed to do physical labor on the Sabbath.

"It was a beautiful religious place," Hazroumi said of the synagogue, which at some point during the war was protected by rebels. It and the whole destroyed suburb "needs to be reconstructed from scratch."

Assad's forces recaptured Jobar from rebels in 2018 but imposed tight security, preventing many people from reaching the area.

The new rulers of Syria, led by the Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, have said they will allow members of all religions to perform their religious duties freely. There have been some sectarian attacks but mostly against members of Assad's minority Alawite sect.

After visiting the synagogue, Chamntoub returned to his home in old Damascus, close to the private Jewish school known as Maimonides that was founded in 1944 but has been closed for decades. Posters in Hebrew remain on the walls.

The area is known as the Jewish quarter. Many old homes have doors and windows closed with pieces of metal and a sign in Arabic saying: "The real estate is closed by the state's Higher Committee for the Affairs of Jews."

As the Jewish community has shrunk, it has also struggled to find kosher food. Chamntoub receives packages of meat from siblings in the U.S. at least once a year via people traveling to Syria. In the past,

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he went to the chicken market with a Jewish friend who would slaughter them, but the man now can hardly walk.

Chamntoub mostly eats vegetarian dishes. Almost every morning, he cooks for himself and a Jewish woman in the area with no remaining relatives in Syria.

The woman, 88-year-old Firdos Mallakh, sat on a couch Thursday under two blankets. When asked to greet an AP journalist with "Shabbat Shalom," she replied it was not yet time. "Today is Thursday and tomorrow is Friday," she said.

Chamntoub, who makes a living as a landlord, asked Mallakh why she had not turned on the gas heater. Mallakh said she did not want to waste gas.

Chamntoub hopes that with the fall of Assad, Syrians will enjoy more freedoms, economic and otherwise. In the past, he said, authorities prevented him from giving interviews without permission from the security agencies.

"I am a Jew and I am proud of it," he said.

But with so few remaining in Damascus, the city's synagogues see no services. Chamntoub is marking the eight-day Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, which began on Wednesday, alone at home.

Today in History: December 30, Saddam Hussein executed

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, Dec. 30, the 365th day of 2024. There is one day left in the year.

Today in history:

On Dec. 30, 2006, former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein was executed by hanging after being convicted of crimes against humanity by the Iraqi High Tribunal.

Also on this date:

In 1860, 10 days after South Carolina seceded from the Union, the state militia seized the United States Army arsenal in Charleston.

In 1896, José Rizal, whose writings inspired the Philippine Revolution, was executed by Spanish army troops after being convicted of rebellion, sedition and conspiracy.

In 1903, more than 600 people died when fire broke out at the recently opened Iroquois Theater in Chicago.

In 1922, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) officially came into existence.

In 2009, seven CIA employees and a Jordanian intelligence officer were killed by a suicide bomber at a U.S. base in Khost (hohst), Afghanistan.

In 2015, Bill Cosby was charged with drugging and sexually assaulting a woman at his suburban Philadelphia home in 2004. (Cosby's first trial ended in a mistrial after jurors deadlocked; he was convicted on three charges at his retrial in April 2018 and sentenced to three to 10 years in prison, but the Pennsylvania Supreme Court overturned the conviction in June 2021, setting Cosby free.)

Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall of Famer Sandy Koufax is 89. TV director James Burrows is 84. Football Hall of Famer Mel Renfro is 83. Singer-author Patti Smith is 78. Musician Jeff Lynne is 77. TV personality Meredith Vieira is 71. Actor Sheryl Lee Ralph is 68. Country singer Suzy Bogguss is 68. Actor-comedian Tracey Ullman is 65. TV commentator Sean Hannity is 63. Golfer Tiger Woods is 49. TV personality-boxer Laila Ali is 47. Singer-actor Tyrese Gibson is 46. Actor Eliza Dushku is 44. Actor Kristin Kreuk is 42. NBA star LeBron James is 40. Singer-actress Andra Day is 40. Pop-rock singer Ellie Goulding (GOL'-ding) is 38.