

Groton Daily Independent

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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.

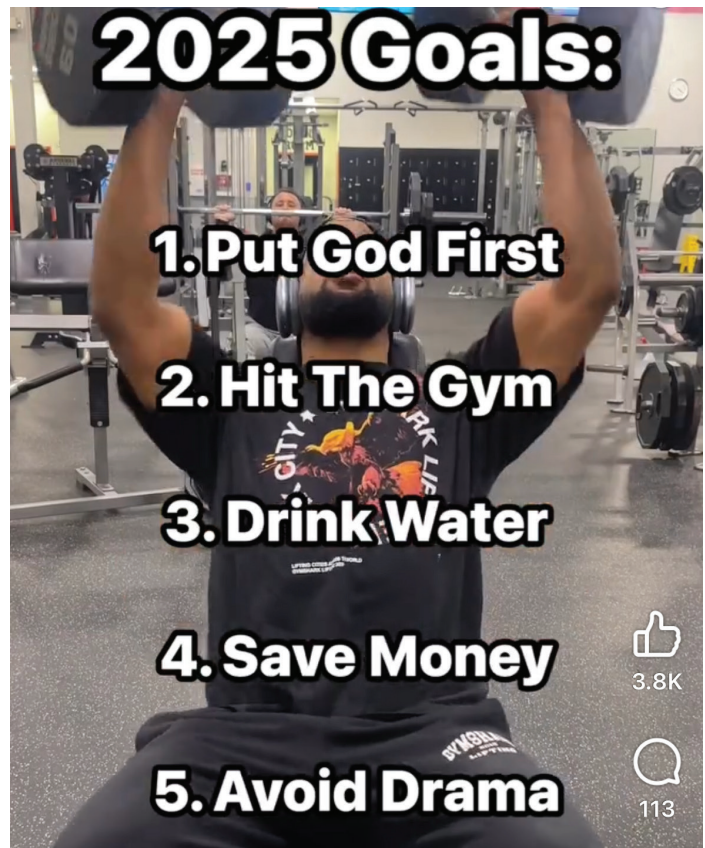
Girls Wrestling at McCook Central/Montrose (Salem), 2 p.m.

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)



Sunday, Jan. 5

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Communion Sunday: Conde worship, 8:15 a.m.; Groton worship, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Coffee Time, 10:30 a.m.; Britton worship, 11:15 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.;

Pancake Sunday: 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Groton Community Center (proceeds benefit the Historical Society's jail restoration.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9:45 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.; No Sunday School

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.

New Orleans Attack

At least 15 people were killed and 30 injured after an attacker intentionally drove a pickup truck through a crowd on New Orleans' Bourbon Street during New Year's Eve festivities. Officials are describing the attack as an act of terrorism. The driver was killed in a shootout with police shortly after exiting the vehicle.

Officials identified the suspect as 42-year-old Shamsud-Din Jabbar. As of this writing, details remain forthcoming, though Jabbar was said to be flying an ISIS flag in the bed of the truck during the attack. According to reports, Jabbar—a US Army veteran and US citizen from Texas, said to be outfitted in full military gear—shot two first responders, both of whom were in stable condition. City officials said barriers to prevent attacks, installed in 2017 along the street, were being replaced and had been removed in November.

Federal officials had some (but not conclusive) evidence Jabbar may not have acted alone. While no evidence as of late Wednesday linked the two events, officials are also probing the explosion of a Cybertruck outside the Trump Hotel in Las Vegas that killed the driver and injured seven others.

Puerto Rico Goes Dark

Puerto Rico suffered an island-wide power outage early morning on New Year's Eve, plunging millions of people into darkness as officials continue to grapple with a faulty power grid. As of yesterday afternoon, less than 5% of customers remained without power.

The US territory has suffered from frequent power outages over the past eight years. In 2016, a fire significantly damaged one of Puerto Rico's largest power plants, while one year later, Hurricane Maria devastated the island's already aging power infrastructure. The total damage from Maria was estimated at \$90B, and blackouts persisted into mid-2018—ultimately becoming the second-worst blackout on record.

The somewhat unique relationship between Puerto Rico and the US—residents are US citizens but lack meaningful political representation—has left the island at a disadvantage, making it difficult to receive federal funds to repair infrastructure. Estimates to modernize the power grid have been in the range of \$20B.

Lions, Longhorns, and Buckeyes

The semifinal round of the inaugural College Football Playoff is nearly set after a slate of matchups over the New Year's holiday winnowed the field to three teams, with a final game scheduled today.

No. 6 Penn State topped No. 3 Boise State Tuesday night, holding star running back Ashton Jeanty to three-and-a-half yards per carry and no touchdowns. Yesterday, No. 8 Ohio State avenged a midseason loss against top-seeded Oregon, beating the Ducks 41-21. The Buckeyes will face No. 5 Texas (Jan. 10, 7:30 pm ET, ESPN), who beat No. 4 Arizona State 39-31 in double overtime in the closest game of the inaugural playoff season.

The Sugar Bowl, featuring Notre Dame and Georgia and played in downtown New Orleans, was postponed following the New Year's Eve attack described above. The teams will play this afternoon at 4 pm ET (ESPN).

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Popeye, Tintin, and "A Farewell to Arms" among popular intellectual properties that entered the public domain yesterday; works in the public domain are free for all to copy, share, and build upon.

Five people charged in Argentina in connection with October 2024 death of One Direction's Liam Payne.

Justin Baldoni files \$250M libel lawsuit against the New York Times over their coverage of Blake Lively's allegations against Baldoni of harassment.

"Squid Game" season 2 hauls in 68 million views in its first four days, a Netflix record-high for a series opening weekend.

Science & Technology

Montenegro formally extradites Terraform Labs cofounder Do Kwon to the US; Kwon is accused of defrauding investors of \$40B in a collapsed crypto scheme in 2022.

Astronomers detect origin of latest fast radio burst—high-energy explosions of radiation that last for a second or less—coming from a galaxy about 200 million light-years away.

Protein in mosquito spit found to inhibit blood clotting and help transmit deadly parasites; findings could lead to gene-editing interventions that help combat diseases like malaria.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close down Tuesday (S&P 500 -0.4%, Dow -0.1%, Nasdaq -0.9%), but overall surge in 2024; Nasdaq rises almost 29% on the year, driven by tech stocks, followed by S&P (+23%) and the Dow (+13%).

Securities and Exchange Commission writes off \$10B in fines it says it can no longer collect; reasons range from court decisions to companies having gone bankrupt.

Gas exports from Russia to Europe via Ukrainian pipelines end, as Ukraine declines to renew transit deal amid ongoing war.

Politics & World Affairs

Former President Jimmy Carter to lie in state in the US Capitol next Thursday; flags to be held at half-staff for 30 days.

Wide range of new laws at the state level become official; includes 20 states with increased minimum wage, Florida's ban on social media for children under 14, and more.

US House of Representatives to vote for speaker tomorrow; current speaker Mike Johnson (R, LA-4) can afford only one no vote from GOP caucus, has been endorsed by President-elect Donald Trump.

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December Students of the Month

Back Left: Ryder Johnson (11th), Elizabeth Fliehs (12th), Elizabeth Cole (9th), Kira Clocksene (10th)
Front Left: Aspen Beto (8th), Victoria Schuster (6th), Amelia Ewalt (7th)

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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

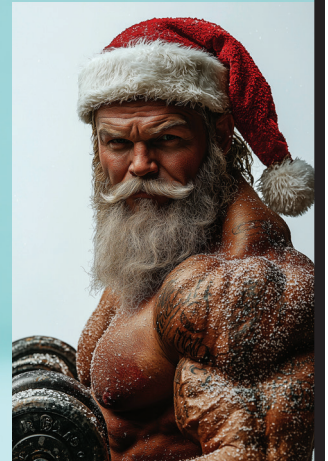
Annual Memberships:

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

Open 24/7

We the People

The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column -- "We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



By David Adler

The Framers: Integrity and Impeachment Will Temper Use of Pardon Power

English history was constantly before the eyes of delegates to the Constitutional Convention as they stressed about the exercise of the presidential pardon power. Kings had abused the pardoning authority for corrupt ends. They sold pardons to those who could afford them and, on occasion, sought to screen from parliamentary inquiry those whom they had instigated to violate the law. The historical practice, it seemed to the Framers, constituted a parade of horrors.

What, then, persuaded the founders—a generation that lived in dread fear of an expansive, undefined executive power—to vest in one man a seemingly unbridled authority with potentially disastrous implications for the nation? From the Framers' perspective, the exercise of the power itself provided sufficient restraints on the president.

In Federalist 74, Alexander Hamilton stated: "As the sense of responsibility is always strongest, in proportion as it is undivided, it may be inferred that a single man would be most ready to attend to the force of those motives which might plead for a mitigation of the rigor of the law, and least apt to yield to considerations which were calculated to shelter a fit object of its vengeance." The weight of the responsibility, he added, would "inspire scrupulousness and caution; the dread of being accused of weakness or connivance, would beget equal circumspection."

Hamilton's belief that presidential integrity would constrain the exercise of the pardon power, however, was not sufficient to convince him during debates in Philadelphia to extend the power to acts of treason without approval of the Senate. Whether the president should be empowered to grant pardons for treason was particularly troublesome for the Framers, and it provoked an impassioned debate on the scope of the authority that was not resolved until the last days of the Convention.

Edmund Randolph shared Hamilton's concern and moved to exclude treason from the scope of the pardon authority. In rhetoric that stirred images of a presidential coup, he warned: "The President himself may be guilty. The traitors may be his own instruments." George Mason agreed with his fellow Virginian and framed his objection in words that echoed English history. The power "may be sometimes exercised to screen from punishment those whom he had secretly instigated to commit the crime and thereby prevent discovery of his own guilt."

Against this nightmare, the subversion of the Republic by pardons, James Wilson of Pennsylvania asserted the need for the availability of pardons for treason to extract confessions from those engaged in rebellion. In a speech that assuaged the Convention's concerns, Wilson explained that if the president were involved in treason, he could be "impeached and prosecuted."

Every warning that a president might use the pardon power to exonerate accomplices, to forestall investigations, and generally to subvert law and government was met with assurances that that the threat of impeachment— "the terror of punishment"—would prevent such misconduct. These guardrails—im-

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peachment and prosecution—in addition to Hamilton’s emphasis on the integrity and accountability of the executive, persuaded the Convention that the pardon authority should encompass acts of treason.

Despite the Framers’ fears, there was no getting around the need for the existence of the power to temper miscarriages of justice and to quell rebellions, as demonstrated by the effectiveness of the gubernatorial pardons to participants in ending Shay’s Rebellion in Massachusetts. As an executive tool, the pardon might secure justice, but it might also be a handmaiden of tyranny.

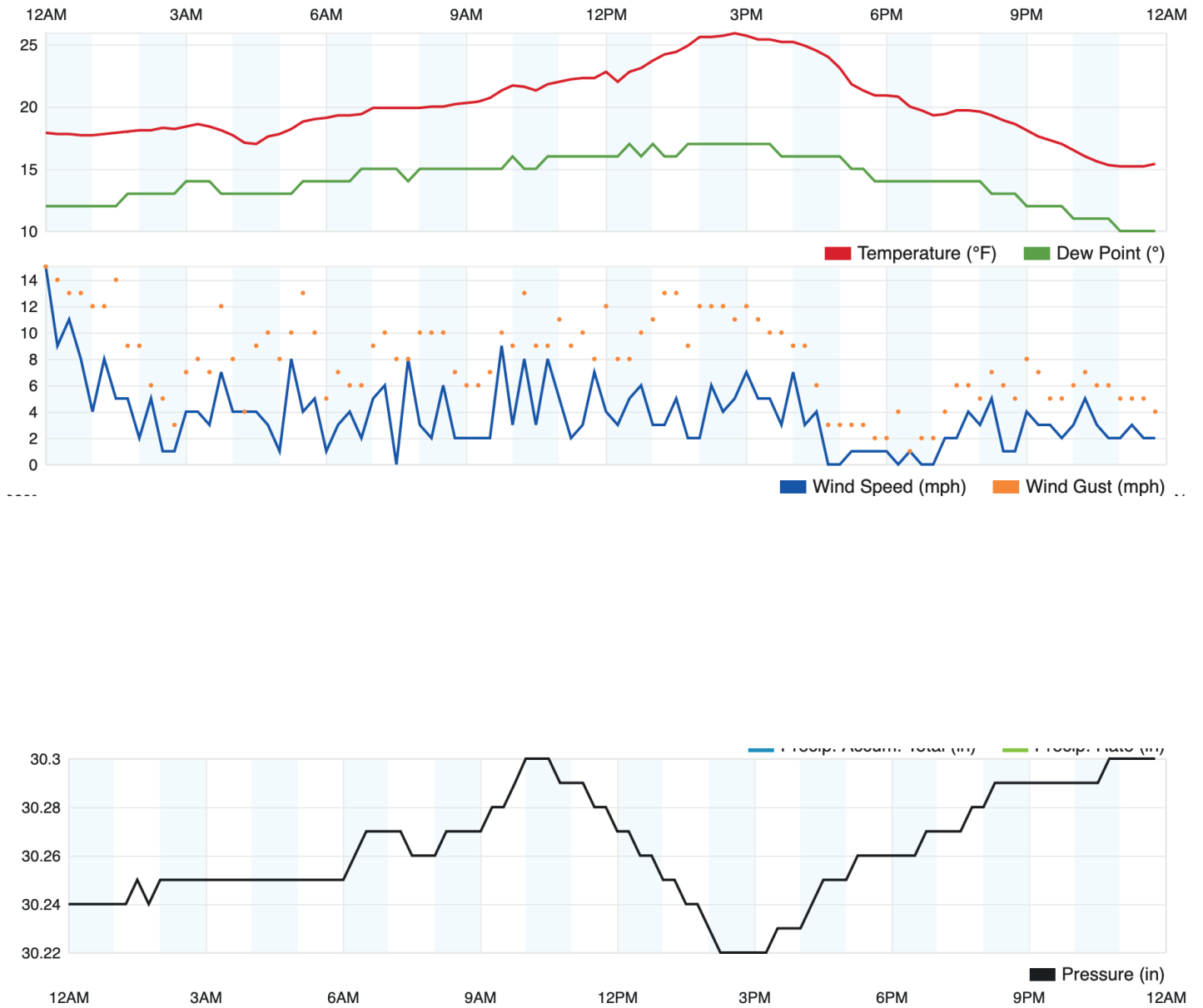
In drafting the Constitution to create a government, to borrow from the delegates, in which men would govern men, it was true then, as it will always be true, that there is no substitute to electing candidates with integrity. A blueprint can only go so far.

-David Adler

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

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Today



High: 14 °F

Decreasing
Clouds

Tonight



Low: 1 °F

Partly Cloudy

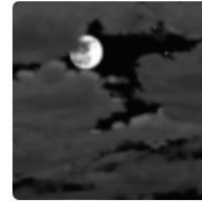
Friday



High: 11 °F

Mostly Sunny

Friday Night



Low: -5 °F

Increasing
Clouds

Saturday



40%

High: 7 °F

Chance Snow



Snowfall Probabilities

January 2, 2025
4:10 AM

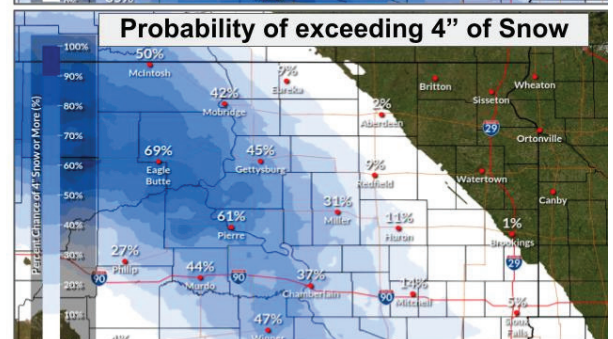
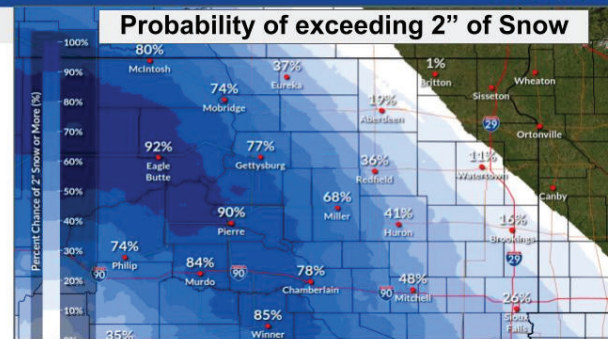
Friday Night Through Sunday Morning

Key Messages

- A few inches of snow possible from early Saturday morning through late Sunday morning
- Temperatures dropping into the single digits above to teens above zero this weekend

Impacts

- Travel, mainly west river, may be hampered by falling and blowing snow.
- **COLDEST WIND CHILLS** of -15F to -25F degrees are forecast this weekend through early next week
 - **Tuesday and Wednesday mornings will be the coldest mornings**
 - Dress in several layers before heading outdoors
 - Have a cold weather emergency kit in your vehicle
 - *Please bring your pets inside!*



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Accumulating snow is possible this weekend mainly over portions of central and north central South Dakota, with better chances further west. Along with snow chances this weekend, some rather cold air will be filtering into the region, resulting in several days of below normal temperatures.

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2024 Climate Summary - Temperatures

January 1, 2025
5:39 PM

	Aberdeen (Since 1898)	Sisseton (Since 1935)	Mobridge (Since 1927)	Pierre (Since 1934)	Watertown (Since 1898)
Highest Temperature	98° (Aug 3)	96° (July 26)	101° (Aug 2)	104° (July 26)	93° (Aug 3)
Lowest Temperature	-18° (Jan 13)	-15° (Jan 14)	-24° (Jan 13)	-19° (Jan 13)	-20° (Jan 13)
Average Temperature	47.8°	47.8°	49.1°	49.4°	46.4°
Normal	44.1°	44.0°	46.4°	47.0°	43.0°
Departure	+3.7°	+3.8°	+2.7°	+2.4°	+3.4°
All Time Rank	5th Warmest	3rd Warmest	5th Warmest	14th Warmest	6th Warmest

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Here is the rundown of the numbers for 2024. Overall it was a warm year with many of our sites in the "top 10" for average temperatures.



2024 Climate Summary - Precipitation

January 1, 2025
5:46 PM

	Aberdeen (Since 1898)	Sisseton (Since 1935)	Mobridge (Since 1927)	Pierre (Since 1934)	Watertown (Since 1898)
Total Precipitation	20.13"	22.56"	14.15"	19.70"	24.96"
Normal Precipitation	21.82"	22.94"	17.99"	20.20"	22.71"
Departure	-1.69"	-0.38"	-3.84"	-0.50"	+2.25"
All Time Rank	76th	42nd	77th	42nd	31st

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Precipitation in 2024 was fairly close to normal for the year.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 29 °F at 12:05 PM

Low Temp: 17 °F at 8:37 PM

Wind: 27 mph at 3:43 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 8 hours, 52 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 50 in 1963

Record Low: -30 in 2010

Average High: 24

Average Low: 3

Average Precip in Jan.: 0.04

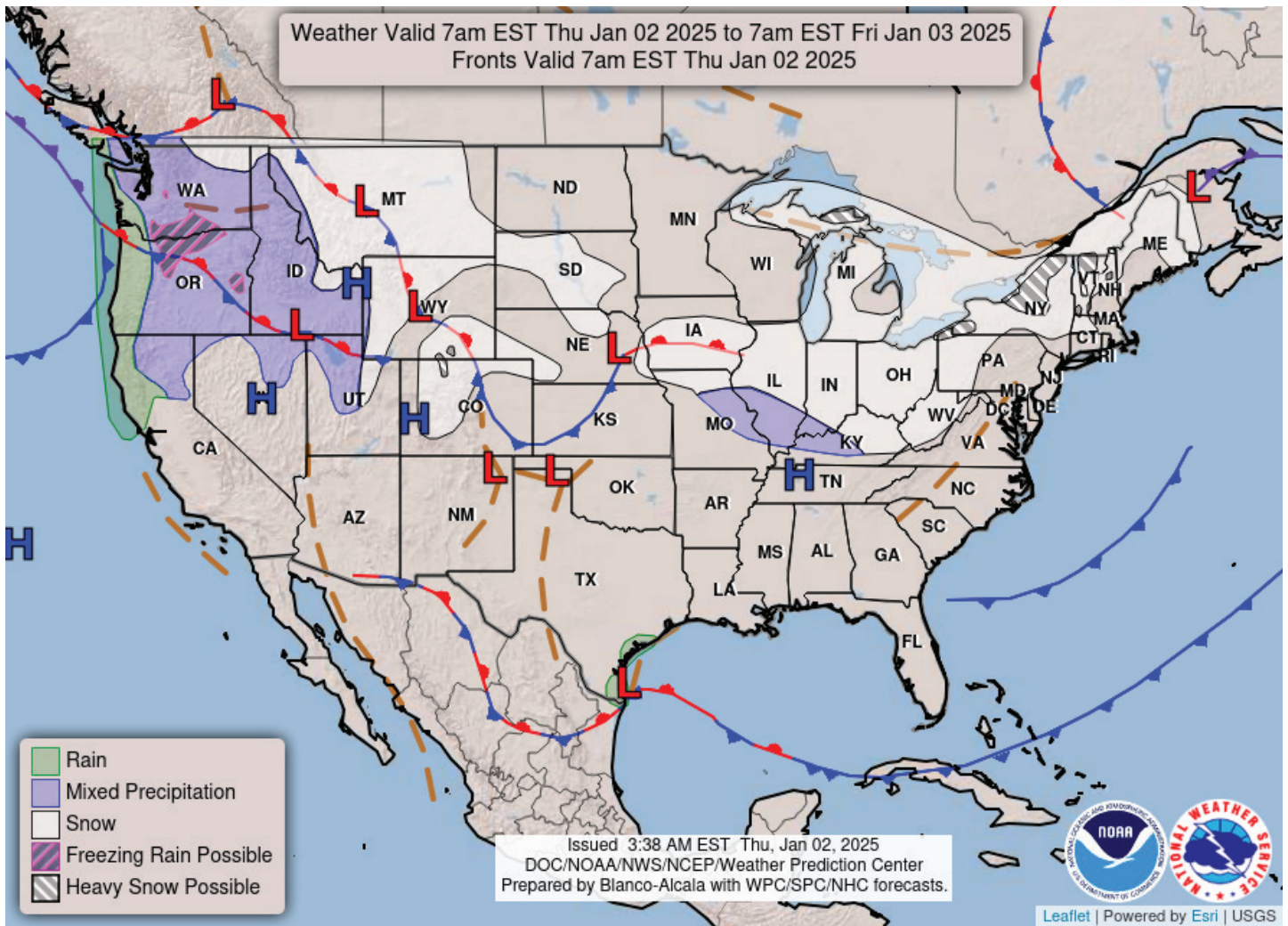
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.04

Precip Year to Date: 21.71

Sunset Tonight: 5:02:52 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:10:24 am



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Today in Weather History

January 2, 1999: Heavy snow of 6 to 8 inches fell across part of northeast South Dakota from the late afternoon hours of the 1st to the early morning hours of the 2nd. Strong north winds of 15 to 30 mph combined with temperatures in the single digits generated wind chills from 25 to 40 below and visibilities below 1/4 of a mile at times. Holiday travel along Interstate-29 and Highway 12 was most affected by this winter storm. There were some travel delays and some stranded motorists as a result. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Kidder, Victor, Sisseton, Webster, Waubay, Wilmot, and 8 inches at Britton and near Peever.

1839: It is believed Louis Daguerre took the first daguerreotype of the moon. Unfortunately, in March of that same year, his entire laboratory burnt to the ground, destroying all his written records and much of his early experimental work—and that historical image of the moon. A year later, John William Draper, an American doctor, and chemist took his own daguerreotype of the moon.

1897: Tornadoes in January? Two tornadoes touched down on this day. The first tornado touched down in Mooringsport, Louisiana, killing five people and injuring 21 others. The second tornado occurred at Benton, Arkansas. Although this tornado was more destructive in regards to property damage, it caused one death.

1949: A blizzard raged and brought heavy snow, strong winds, and cold temperatures to South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska.

1955: Hurricane Alice passed through the Islands of Saint Martin and Saba in the Caribbean Sea on this day. Alice, which developed on December 30, 1954, is the only known Atlantic hurricane to span two calendar years.

1999: A powerful winter storm developed over the Texas panhandle and moved northeast through the Missouri bootheel and then north northeast through eastern Illinois and into Michigan. Snow began accumulating in east-central Illinois and areas south of Chicago during the early evening hours of New Year's Day and overspread the city and north suburbs by midnight. Snow continued through the night and much of the day Saturday, January 2. The heaviest snow fell during the daytime hours Saturday and tapered off by late afternoon or early evening and ended by late evening. Northeast winds were 20 to 30 mph with a few higher gusts during the day Saturday. Winds gusted to over 50 mph along the Lake Michigan shoreline. The strong wind coming off the lake enhanced snowfall totals within about 10 miles of the lake. Snowfall was generally 9 to 15 inches over north central and east central Illinois and in the Chicago suburbs. Snowfall in Chicago and the north suburbs in Lake County was 18 to 22 inches. Winds subsided Saturday evening as the storm center passed over southern Lake Michigan. Then strong northwest winds developed Sunday, causing considerable blowing and drifting and hampering clean-up efforts.

The 21.6 inches at O'hare, the official observing site for Chicago, was the second greatest storm total snowfall. The record was 23.0 inches January 26-27, 1967. Of the 21.6 inches, 18.6 fell on January 2, setting a record for the most snowfall on a calendar day. Other snowfall amounts included; Algonquin 14.0, Aurora 14.4, Barrington 18.0, Brookfield 15.1, Bourbonnais 14.0, Channahon 13.0, Chatsworth 17.0, Coal City 13.0, Compton 9.7, Crestwood 14.2, DeKalb 12.4, Dixon 16.4, Earlville 11.3, Fairbury 13.0, Geneva 13.0, Glenwood 16.0, Harvard 9.0, Lake Villa 17.9, LaGrange Park 15.0, Midway Airport 20.6, Mundelein 10.0, Naperville 11.0, Olympia Fields 15.8, Orland Park 13.8, Rochelle 9.6, Rockford 9.0, Streamwood 14.0, Willow Springs 12.0. The heavy snow and blowing snow caused hazardous travel. Lake Shore Drive was closed down for the first time ever. State, county, and local road crews worked around the clock. The City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation spent 12 million dollars on snow removal efforts. Three hundred flights were canceled at O'Hare and Midway airports.

2006: Six tornadoes impacted central and northern Georgia. The tornadoes were rated from F0 to F3.

2017: 36 confirmed tornadoes impacted the Deep South from Louisiana to Georgia. Many of the tornadoes came from line segments of storms known as quasi-linear convective systems. A larger convective system also created numerous wind damage reports, and in Alabama, four people died from straight-line winds.



SUCCESS AT WHAT PRICE?

A reporter was interviewing a farmer who was known for growing the best corn in his area. He was intrigued by the fact that the farmer was also known for sharing his seed corn freely with his neighbors. He was the opposite of being selfish.

"Why do you share your best seed corn with your neighbors?" asked the reporter.

After a moment's thought, he replied, "The wind picks up the pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbors grow inferior corn, cross-pollination would degrade mine. If I am to grow good corn, I must help my neighbors do the same."

Jesus said, "Give and it will be given unto you!" He was teaching us that if we want more, we must give more. That is God's plan and it is His promise. Whatever we share with others, whether it is our time, our talents, or our treasures, will always be returned to us with "interest added." There will be more time in our day, more opportunities to enjoy life, our talents will continue to grow, and our value to the Lord will increase as well.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to give generously to others in the gracious way that You give to us. May we understand that everything belongs to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full – pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back. Luke 6:38

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

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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

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

Name: _____

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P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent www.397news.com Subscription Form

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

- 1 Month \$15.98
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Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

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paypal.me/paperpaul

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.31.24

13 22 27 29 35 1

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$42,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 12
DRAW: Mins 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.01.25

1 2 8 14 30 6

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$19,840,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 27
DRAW: Mins 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.01.25

7 15 17 39 40 16

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 42 Mins
DRAW: 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.01.25

6 18 20 27 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$200,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 42
DRAW: Mins 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.01.25

8 10 25 33 66 20

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 11
DRAW: Mins 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.01.25

6 12 28 35 66 26

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$200,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 11
DRAW: Mins 29 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

Biden is giving the second highest civilian award to the leaders of the Jan. 6 congressional panel

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

President Joe Biden is bestowing the second highest civilian medal on Liz Cheney and Bennie Thompson — the lawmakers who led the congressional investigation into the violent Jan. 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol riot by Donald Trump's supporters, and who Trump has said should be jailed.

Biden will award the Presidential Citizens Medal to 20 people in a ceremony Thursday at the White House, including Americans who fought for marriage equality, a pioneer in treating wounded soldiers, and two of the president's longtime friends, former Sens. Ted Kaufman, D-Del., and Chris Dodd, D-Conn.

"President Biden believes these Americans are bonded by their common decency and commitment to serving others," the White House said in a statement. "The country is better because of their dedication and sacrifice."

Biden last year honored people who were involved in defending the Capitol from the rioters, or who helped safeguard the will of American voters during the 2020 presidential election, when Trump tried and failed to overturn the results.

Cheney, who was a Republican representative from Wyoming, and Thompson, a Mississippi Democrat, led the House committee that probed the insurrection. Cheney later said she would vote for Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris in the 2024 presidential race even campaigned with her, raising Trump's ire. Biden has been considering whether to offer preemptive pardons to Cheney and others Trump has targeted.

Trump, who won the 2024 election and will take office Jan. 20, still refuses to back away from his lies about the 2020 presidential race and has said he would pardon the rioters once he takes office.

During an interview with NBC's "Meet the Press," Trump said, "Cheney did something that's inexcusable, along with Thompson and the people on the un-select committee of political thugs and, you know, creeps," claiming without evidence they "deleted and destroyed" testimony they collected.

"Honestly, they should go to jail," he said.

Biden is also giving the award to attorney Mary Bonauto, who fought to legalize same-sex marriage, and Evan Wolfson, a leader of the marriage equality movement.

Other honorees include Frank Butler, who set new standards for using tourniquets on war injuries; Diane Carlson Evans, an Army nurse during the Vietnam War who founded the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation; and Eleanor Smeal, an activist who led women's rights protests in the 1970s and fought for equal pay.

He's also giving the award to photographer Bobby Sager, academics Thomas Vallely and Paula Wallace, and Frances Visco, the president of the National Breast Cancer Coalition.

Other former lawmakers being honored include former Sen. Bill Bradley, D-N.J.; former Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, the first woman to represent Kansas; and former Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y., who championed gun safety measures after her son and husband were shot to death.

Biden will honor four people posthumously: Joseph Galloway, a former war correspondent who wrote about the first major battle in Vietnam in the book "We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young"; civil rights advocate and attorney Louis Lorenzo Redding; former Delaware state judge Collins Seitz; and Mitsuye Endo Tsutsumi, who was held with other Japanese Americans during World War II and challenged the detention.

The Presidential Citizens Medal, created by President Richard Nixon in 1969, is the country's second highest civilian honor after the Presidential Medal of Freedom. It is awarded to those who "performed exemplary deeds of service for their country or their fellow citizens."

What is the Islamic State group, and what attacks has it inspired by offshoots and lone wolves?

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI says it recovered the stark black banner of the Islamic State extremist group from the truck that an American man from Texas smashed into New Year's partygoers in New Orleans' French Quarter Wednesday, killing 15 people.

The investigation is expected to look in part at any support or inspiration that driver Shamsud-Din Jabbar may have drawn from that violent Middle East-based group, or from any of at least 19 affiliated groups around the world.

President Joe Biden said Wednesday evening that the FBI had told him that "mere hours before the attack, (Jabbar) posted videos on social media indicating that he was inspired" by the Islamic State group.

Routed from its self-proclaimed caliphate in Syria and Iraq by a U.S. military-led coalition more than five years ago, the Islamic State group has focused on seizing territory in the Middle East more than on staging massive al-Qaida-style attacks on the West.

But in its home territory, the Islamic State group has welcomed any chance to behead Americans and other foreigners who come within its reach. And it has had success, although abated in recent years, in inspiring people around the world who are drawn to its ideology to carry out ghastly attacks on innocent civilians.

Here's a look at the Islamic State group, its current status, and some of the offshoot armed groups and so-called lone wolves that have killed under the Islamic State flag.

What is the Islamic State group?

The Islamic State group is known as both IS and ISIS, or the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

It began as a breakaway group from al-Qaida.

Under leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, IS had seized stunning amounts of territory in Iraq and Syria by 2014. Within territory under its control, it killed and otherwise abused members of other faiths and targeted fellow Sunni Muslims who strayed from its harsh interpretation of Islam.

By 2019, a U.S.-led military intervention had driven the Islamic State group from the last inch of its territory. Al-Baghdadi killed himself, and two children near him, that same year, detonating an explosive vest as U.S. forces closed in on him.

Currently, the central Islamic State group is a scattered and much weakened organization working to regain fighting strength and territory in Syria and Iraq. Experts warn that the group is reconstituting itself there.

And that ISIS flag? Typically, it's a stark black banner with white Arabic letters expressing a central tenet of the Islamic faith. Countless Muslims around the world see the coercive violence of the group as a perversion of their religion.

What's the influence of the Islamic State group today?

Some experts argue the Islamic State group is powerful today partly as a brand, inspiring both militant groups and individuals in attacks that the group itself may have no real role in.

The Islamic State group's ruthless credo and military successes have helped spur affiliated groups in Africa, Asia and Europe. It's a greatly decentralized alliance.

Many offshoots have carried out lethal attacks, such as a March 2024 attack blamed on an Afghanistan-based affiliate of the Islamic State group that killed about 130 people at a Moscow theater.

What's the group's track record for inspiring attacks in the United States?

The New Orleans rampage reflects the deadliest Islamic State group-inspired attack on U.S. soil in several years.

Other attacks over the last decade include a 2014 shooting rampage by a husband-and-wife team who killed 14 people in San Bernardino, California, and a 2016 massacre at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, by a gunman who fatally shot 49 people, pledged his allegiance on a 911 call to al-Baghdadi and raged against the "filthy ways of the West."

Those attacks coincided with an influx of thousands of Westerners — some of them Americans — who

traveled to Syria in hopes of joining the so-called caliphate.

In the aftermath of those killings, the threat from radicalized followers of the group had appeared to wane in the U.S. Defense Department strikes have taken out other Islamic State group members and the FBI has had significant success in disrupting plots before they come to fruition.

But over the last year, FBI officials have warned about a significantly elevated threat of international terrorism following Hamas' rampage in Israel in October 2023 and the resulting Israeli strikes in Gaza.

The SITE intelligence group reported IS supporters celebrating in online chat groups Wednesday.

"If it's a brother, he's a legend. Allahu Akbar," or "God is great," it quoted one as saying.

US Army veteran who killed 15 in New Orleans attack was inspired by the Islamic State group

By ERIC TUCKER, JIM MUSTIAN, KEVIN MCGILL and JACK BROOK Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A U.S. Army veteran who drove a pickup truck into a crowd of New Year's revelers in New Orleans, killing 15 people, had posted videos to social media hours before the carnage saying he was inspired by the Islamic State group and expressing a desire to kill, the president said.

The FBI said it was investigating early Wednesday's attack in which the driver steered around a police blockade and slammed into revelers before being shot dead by police as a terrorist act and did not believe he acted alone.

Investigators found guns and what appeared to be an improvised explosive device in the vehicle — which bore the flag of the Islamic State group — along with other explosive devices elsewhere in the city's famed French Quarter.

President Joe Biden said Wednesday evening that the FBI found the videos the driver posted to social media. He called the attack a "despicable" and "heinous act."

The rampage turned festive Bourbon Street into a macabre scene of maimed victims, bloodied bodies and pedestrians fleeing for safety inside nightclubs and restaurants. In addition to the dead, dozens of people were hurt. A college football playoff game at the nearby Superdome was postponed until Thursday.

Zion Parsons, 18, of Gulfport, Mississippi, said he saw the truck "barreling through, throwing people like in a movie scene, throwing people into the air."

"Bodies, bodies all up and down the street, everybody screaming and hollering," said Parsons, whose friend Nikyra Dedeaux was among the people killed.

"This is not just an act of terrorism. This is evil," New Orleans Police Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick said.

The attack is the latest example of a vehicle being used as a weapon to carry out mass violence and the deadliest IS-inspired assault on U.S. soil in years.

The driver "defeated" safety measures in place to protect pedestrians, Kirkpatrick said, and was "hell-bent on creating the carnage and the damage that he did."

The FBI identified the driver as Shamsud-Din Jabbar, 42, a U.S. citizen from Texas, and said it was working to determine any potential associations with terrorist organizations.

"We do not believe that Jabbar was solely responsible," FBI Assistant Special Agent in Charge Alethea Duncan said at a news conference.

Investigators found multiple improvised explosives, including two pipe bombs that were concealed within coolers and wired for remote detonation, according to a Louisiana State Police intelligence bulletin obtained by The Associated Press.

The bulletin, relying on preliminary information gathered soon after the attack, also cited surveillance footage that it said showed three men and a woman placing one of the devices, but federal officials did not immediately confirm that detail and it wasn't clear who they were or what connection they had to the attack, if any.

Jabbar drove a rented pickup truck onto a sidewalk, going around a police car that was positioned to block vehicular traffic, authorities said. A barrier system meant to prevent vehicle attacks was being repaired in preparation for the Super Bowl in February.

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Jabbar was killed by police after he exited the truck and opened fire on responding officers, Kirkpatrick said. Three officers returned fire. Two were shot and are in stable condition.

Investigators recovered a handgun and AR-style rifle, according to a law enforcement official who was not authorized to discuss the investigation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

There were also deadly explosions in Honolulu and outside a Las Vegas hotel owned by President-elect Donald Trump. President Joe Biden said the FBI was looking into whether the Las Vegas explosion was connected to the New Orleans attack but had "nothing to report" as of Wednesday evening.

A photo circulated among law enforcement officials showed a bearded Jabbar wearing camouflage next to the truck after he was killed. The intelligence bulletin obtained by the AP said he was wearing a ballistic vest and helmet. The flag of the Islamic State group was on the truck's trailer hitch, the FBI said.

"For those people who don't believe in objective evil, all you have to do is look at what happened in our city early this morning," U.S. Sen. John Kennedy, a Louisiana Republican, said. "If this doesn't trigger the gag reflex of every American, every fair-minded American, I'll be very surprised."

Jabbar joined the Army in 2007, serving on active duty in human resources and information technology and deploying to Afghanistan from 2009 to 2010, the service said. He transferred to the Army Reserve in 2015 and left in 2020 with the rank of staff sergeant.

Hours after the attack, several coroner's office vans were parked on the corner of Bourbon and Canal streets, cordoned off by police tape with crowds of dazed tourists standing around, some trying to navigate their luggage through the labyrinth of blockades.

Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry urged people to avoid the area, which remained an active crime scene.

"We looked out our front door and saw caution tape and dead silence and it's eerie," said Tessa Cundiff, an Indiana native who moved to the French Quarter a few years ago. "This is not what we fell in love with, it's sad."

Nearby, life went on as normal in the city known to some for a motto that translates to "let the good times roll." At a cafe a block from where the truck came to rest, people crowded in for breakfast as upbeat pop music played. Two blocks away, people drank at a bar, seemingly as if nothing happened.

Biden, speaking from the presidential retreat at Camp David, addressed the victims and the people of New Orleans: "I want you to know I grieve with you. Our nation grieves with you as you mourn and as you heal."

"My heart goes out to the victims and their families who were simply trying to celebrate the holiday," Biden said in an earlier written statement. "There is no justification for violence of any kind, and we will not tolerate any attack on any of our nation's communities."

FBI officials have repeatedly warned about an elevated international terrorism threat due to the Israel-Hamas war. In the last year, the agency has disrupted other potential attacks, including in October when it arrested an Afghan man in Oklahoma for an alleged Election Day plot targeting large crowds.

Impeached South Korean president issues defiant message as he faces possible detention

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, in a message to conservative supporters rallying outside his Seoul residence, vowed to "fight to the end" against "anti-state forces," while his legal team warned Thursday that police officers attempting to detain him could face arrest by his presidential security service or even civilians.

Yoon's latest statement of defiance came as the Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials prepared to execute a detention warrant against him that was issued by a Seoul court on Tuesday and is valid for one week. The warrant was issued after Yoon evaded multiple requests to appear for questioning and blocked searches of his office, hindering an investigation into whether his short-lived power grab on Dec. 3 amounted to rebellion.

Oh Dong-woon, the anti-corruption agency's chief prosecutor, has indicated that police forces might be

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deployed if Yoon's security service resists the detention attempt, which could occur as early as Thursday. But it remains unclear whether Yoon can be compelled to submit to questioning.

Yoon's legal team issued a statement on Thursday warning that any attempt by the anti-corruption agency to use police units for his detention would exceed their legal authority. The lawyers said police officers could face arrest by either the "presidential security service or any citizens" if they try to detain Yoon. They didn't elaborate further on the claim.

South Korean law permits anyone to make an arrest to stop an active crime, and critics accused Yoon of inciting his supporters to obstruct attempts to detain him.

In a message to supporters gathered outside his residence Wednesday evening, Yoon said he would continue to fight against anti-state forces "violating our sovereignty" and putting the nation in "danger." He applauded his supporters for their efforts to protect "liberal democracy and constitutional order" and said he was watching their protests on live YouTube broadcasts, according to a photo of the message shared by Yoon's lawyers.

Yoon Kap-keun, the president's lawyer, filed a challenge with the Seoul Western District Court on Thursday to block both the detention warrant for Yoon Suk Yeol and a related search warrant for his residence. The lawyer argued that both warrants violate criminal laws and the constitution.

The liberal opposition Democratic Party, which drove the legislative vote that impeached Yoon Suk Yeol on Dec. 14 over his imposition of martial law, accused the president of trying to mobilize his supporters to block his detention and called for law enforcement authorities to execute the warrant immediately.

Braving subfreezing temperatures, thousands of Yoon's supporters rallied for hours near his residence on Thursday amid a heavy police presence, waving South Korean and American flags while chanting, "Nullify the impeachment!" and "We will protect President Yoon Suk Yeol!" Officers removed some protesters who laid down on a road leading to the entrance of Yoon's residence, but there were no immediate reports of major clashes.

"The Corruption Investigation Office must detain him immediately, and the presidential security service must cooperate with the lawful execution of the detainment warrant," said Park Chan-dae, the Democrats' floor leader.

"They should be aware that obstructing the execution of the detainment warrant could result in punishment for interference with official duties and complicity in rebellion," he said.

Yoon's lawyers have argued that the court's detainment warrant is invalid, claiming that the anti-corruption agency lacks the legal authority to investigate rebellion charges. They also accuse the court of bypassing a law that says locations potentially linked to military secrets cannot be seized or searched without the consent of the person in charge.

Some experts believe the anti-corruption agency, which is leading a joint investigation with police and military authorities, would not risk clashing with Yoon's security service, which has said it will provide security to Yoon in accordance with the law. The office may instead issue another summons for Yoon to appear for questioning if they are not able to execute the detainment warrant by Jan. 6.

If Yoon is detained, the anti-corruption agency will have 48 hours to investigate him and either request a warrant for his formal arrest or release him. Yoon's defense minister, police chief and several top military commanders have already been arrested over their roles in the martial law enactment.

Yoon's presidential powers were suspended following a National Assembly vote 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.

To formally end Yoon's presidency, at least six justices on the nine-member Constitutional Court must vote in favor.

The National Assembly voted last week to also impeach Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, who became 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.

Facing growing pressure, the new acting president, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, appointed two new justices on Tuesday, which possibly increased the chances of the court upholding Yoon's impeachment.

Cho Han-chang, one of the newly appointed justices, said Thursday that he began his job with a "heavy heart." Jeong Gye-seon, the other new justice, expressed hope that the remaining vacancy would be filled.

Yoon's imposition of martial law ended after only six hours when the National Assembly voted 190-0 to lift it despite attempts by heavily armed soldiers to prevent them from voting.

Yoon has defended his martial law decree as a necessary act of governance, portraying it as a temporary warning against the Democratic Party, which he has described as an "anti-state" force obstructing his agenda with its legislative majority.

Montenegro mourns after gunman kills at least 12 people before shooting himself

By RISTO BOZOVIC Associated Press

CETINJE, Montenegro (AP) — Shock and dismay prevailed in Montenegro on Thursday after a gunman fatally shot 12 people, including two children, in a western town before killing himself.

At least four others were wounded in the shooting rampage in Cetinje on Wednesday that followed a bar brawl, officials said. This was the second such incident in the town in the past three years.

The shooter, identified as 45-year-old Aco Martinović, killed the owner of the bar, the bar owner's children and his own family members, officials have said.

The attacker, who first fled after the rampage, was later located and surrounded by police. He died after shooting himself in the head, Interior Minister Danilo Šaranović said.

Residents of Cetinje were stunned and grief-stricken. Vanja Popović, whose relatives are among the victims, said that "we are all in shock."

"How can I feel after this?" Popović said. "No one expected it. You can't even ask anyone anything."

Police had dispatched a special unit to search for the attacker in the town, which is located about 30 kilometers (18 miles) northwest of Podgorica, the capital. All roads in and out of the city were blocked for hours as police swarmed the streets.

Šaranović said that the shooter had died while being taken to a hospital in the capital and succumbed from the "severity of his injuries."

Officials have said that the attacker was at the bar throughout the day with other guests when the brawl erupted. He then went home, brought back a weapon and opened fire at around 5:30 p.m.

Prosecutor Andrijana Nastić said Thursday that the attacker went to six locations during the shooting rampage, including the last one, where he shot himself.

Four men were killed at the bar, Nastić said. The shooter then moved on to another location where he killed four more people, and then two children at a third site. He then went on to kill two more people at two other locations before eventually shooting himself, Nastić said.

"Further investigation will determine the exact circumstances of the events," she added.

The government has declared three days of national mourning starting on Thursday, and all planned New Year's festivities have been canceled throughout the country.

Prime Minister Milojko Spajić said that the government may try to impose a total ban on weapons "because we must ask ourselves after this who should be allowed to have guns in Montenegro."

The small Adriatic Sea nation, which has a population of around 620,000 people, is known for its gun culture and many people traditionally have weapons.

In August 2022 in Cetinje, which is Montenegro's historic capital, an attacker killed 10 people, including two children, before he was shot and killed by a passerby.

Police have said that the suspect in Wednesday's shooting received a suspended sentence in 2005 for violent behavior and had appealed his latest conviction for illegal weapons possession. Montenegrin media have reported that he was known for erratic and violent behavior.

"Instead of holiday joy ... we have been gripped by sadness over the loss of innocent lives," Montenegro's President Jakov Milatović said in a post on X.

Rudy at the Bat: Giuliani fights to save his Yankees World Series rings from \$148 million verdict

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press
NEW YORK (AP) — Ruth. Gehrig. DiMaggio. Mantle. Giuliani?

As Rudy Giuliani's life gets stripped for parts to satisfy a \$148 million defamation verdict, the former New York City mayor is fighting to keep one gleaming set of sports memorabilia in the family: Yankees World Series rings bestowed to him by the team's late owner, George Steinbrenner.

A lifelong Bronx Bombers fan, Giuliani contends that the rings — bejeweled behemoths commemorating the team's four championships in five years while he was mayor — now belong to his son, Andrew, and shouldn't be given up.

In sworn testimony made public this week, ahead of a pair of key court dates, Giuliani described the 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2000 World Series rings as something of a family heirloom and Yankees good-luck charm.

He recounted how he and Andrew would each put one on for "a special Yankee occasion," like the team's last World Series win in 2009.

Giuliani testified that when Steinbrenner gave him the rings in 2002, he insisted on paying for them and told the owner, "These are for Andrew." He said he then invited his son — a teenager at the time — to take one for himself while he held the others for safekeeping.

Realizing he wasn't wearing them as much as the Yankees' fortunes ebbed, Giuliani testified, he decided to give the rest to Andrew at a birthday party in 2018. He estimated that the rings, the same as the players received, were worth about \$27,000.

"They are now yours," Giuliani recalled saying. "These are your rings. I don't know what I'm keeping them for. They belong to you."

The ex-mayor took his swings at a Dec. 27 deposition, a week before the start of a courtroom double-header in a tug-of-war over assets sought by the two former Georgia election workers who sued him over his lies about them in the wake of President-elect Donald Trump's 2020 election loss. A transcript was posted to the court docket on Monday.

Up first is Giuliani's contempt hearing in Manhattan federal court Friday over what lawyers for the Georgia women say was his failure to turn over property in a timely fashion, such as his New York City apartment lease.

Then, on Jan. 16, Judge Lewis J. Liman will hold a trial to decide what happens not only to Giuliani's World Series rings but also his condominium in Palm Beach, Florida. Giuliani claims the condo, estimated to be worth more than \$3 million, is his primary residence and should be exempt.

For Giuliani, once heralded as "America's Mayor" for his post-9/11 leadership, it's the legal equivalent of two strikes, two out in the bottom of the ninth.

Lawyers for the former election workers, mother and daughter Ruby Freeman and Wandrea "Shaye" Moss, argue that Giuliani has engaged in a "consistent pattern of willful defiance" of court orders to turn over items.

In a Monday filing, lawyer Aaron Nathan said Giuliani's compliance has been spotty, noting that while he finally surrendered a Mercedes previously owned by actor Lauren Bacall, he failed to provide the vehicle's title.

After listing 26 watches in a bankruptcy filing, Giuliani now claims without explanation that 18 watches he turned over to Freeman and Moss are all he has, Nathan wrote. He added that Giuliani also claims not to know the whereabouts of a shirt signed by Joe DiMaggio or a photo signed by Reggie Jackson, both Yankees legends.

Freeman and Moss asked the judge in August to award them the World Series rings, but the judge demurred and scheduled a trial after Andrew Giuliani, now 38, said they belong to him.

Giuliani's eight hours of deposition testimony offered a vivid portrait of a still-proud, combative and

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downtrodden man who has lost almost everything and remains convinced that it has been unjustly taken. Recalling his days as a two-term Republican mayor, he boasted that he “cured” homelessness in the city while acknowledging that he is now rejected by most clubs he would like to join, except for two.

Questioned by Nathan, he spoke at length about the rings, his ties to Trump and the Yankees, and his dismay over his once-beloved Big Apple’s liberal politics — a factor he said drove him to relocate to Florida and register to vote there last May.

“Frankly, I wanted my vote to count,” Giuliani testified.

Asked why it was important to him to cast a vote for president, Giuliani replied: “Because I am a very, very strong supporter of Donald Trump, which is the reason why you are doing all of this to me.”

Before Trump, it was the Yankees. Giuliani, who saw them win 10 titles during his childhood and college years, regularly cheered the team as mayor, often sitting next to the dugout.

“I was a very ardent Yankee fan,” he testified. “When I was the mayor, I was described as New York’s No. 1 Yankee fan.”

After the team triumphed in 1996 to snap a 15-year drought, Steinbrenner thought “New York’s No. 1 Yankee fan” deserved a World Series ring — but Giuliani wasn’t having it.

“I didn’t think it was appropriate that a mayor get a ring,” Giuliani testified.

By the time he left office in 2002, the Yankees had three more championships.

At spring training that year in Tampa, Florida, Steinbrenner presented him with a plaque and three World Series rings, Giuliani testified, each engraved with his name.

“I was very touched and moved by that,” he said.

The Yankees also gave him the 1996 ring that he turned down, he said. He recalled showing all four rings to his son and telling him: “These are going to be yours.”

Each ring was bigger and more extravagant than the last, Giuliani testified, so much so that “you’d look crazy wearing it.”

Giuliani lamented that his rings didn’t bring the Yankees more success, noting their 2003 World Series loss to the Marlins and 2004 playoff collapse against the hated Red Sox.

“I stopped wearing them after the Yankees stopped winning because it was no longer working,” he said. “And then I wasn’t using them anymore.”

Carter reflected on 1980 Olympic boycott: ‘A bad decision’

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — It was a decision that robbed hundreds of athletes of their once-in-a-lifetime chance at Olympic glory, and for more than four decades, it weighed heavily on the man who made it — Jimmy Carter.

Carter’s passing Sunday has unearthed memories from his 1977-1981 presidency. Somewhere between his greatest foreign-policy success (the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt) and his greatest failure (the Iran hostage crisis) sits the U.S. boycott of the 1980 Olympics in Moscow.

It was Carter who called for that boycott — a Cold War power play intended to express America’s disdain for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In his 1980 State of the Union Address, Carter said the invasion “could pose the most serious threat to world peace since the second World War.”

The boycott garnered more than two-thirds support from the 2,400 members of the unwieldy U.S. Olympic Committee house of delegates, the governing body that made the official move to keep the athletes out of Moscow. In short time, that move came to be seen as the textbook example of the risks, confusion and low success rate of injecting politics into sports.

“We were not allowed to go for a not-so-clear reason,” said Edwin Moses, the hurdling great who won 122 straight races between 1977 and 1987, which included the Olympic gold-medal contests in 1976 and 1984.

For decades, members of the 1980 U.S. Olympic team — recognized as Olympians at home but not by the International Olympic Committee abroad — told stories about opportunities missed and dreams unfulfilled because of the trip to Moscow they never took. Of the 474 athletes who had qualified for the

team in 1980, 227 would not get another chance to compete in the Olympic Games.

Many athletes told stories of meeting Carter at a White House visit in the summer of 1980 that served as a tepid substitute. In Washington, the athletes received the highest honor civilians can receive from Congress: the Congressional gold medal. But those medals were only gold-plated bronze, not pure gold, and they weren't recorded in the Congressional record until a push was made nearly three decades later.

Swimmer Jesse Vassallo, a reigning world champion in multiple events at the time, told Swimming World Magazine about meeting Carter in the reception line.

Carter "reached out to shake my hand and he said 'How would you have done in Moscow?'" Vassallo recalled. "And I said, 'I would have won two golds and a silver.' And he just gave me this (pained) look. He didn't ask anybody else that question." Wrestler Jeff Blatnick, a champion on the 1984 Olympic team, met Carter on an airplane years later. According to an essay written by the late USOC spokesman Mike Moran, Blatnick said: "He looks at me and says, 'Were you on the 1980 hockey team?' I say, 'No sir, I'm a wrestler, on the summer team.' He says, 'Oh, that was a bad decision, I'm sorry.'"

In his 2021 biography on the 39th President, Kai Bird writes that the boycott was a byproduct of a hard line Carter decided to take against the Soviets at the urging of his national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who had been in a long-running struggle with the less-hawkish Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, to influence Carter's thinking. "History would prove Vance correct; Brzezinski's 'Carter Doctrine' never amounted to much more than a cover for wasteful arms exports," Bird wrote.

And Carter's boycott did nothing to deter the Soviets. They stayed in Afghanistan for another nine years, while further disrupting the Olympic movement and America's own turn as an Olympic host four years later. The Soviets and 13 other countries, mostly from the Eastern Bloc, boycotted the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 in retaliation for what the Americans had done to Moscow four years earlier.

Forty-four years after Carter's fateful decision, the Olympics remain every bit as politicized and polarized as they were back then. And for the past several years, the world has grappled with Russia's place in international sports in the wake of another invasion — this time, into neighboring Ukraine.

How that war is resolved will help define Russia's role when the Olympics come back to Los Angeles in 2028.

An aspiring nurse, a football star, a single mother and a father of 2 killed in New Orleans attack

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — An 18-year-old girl dreaming of becoming a nurse, a single mother, a father of two and a former Princeton football star suffered fatal injuries when the driver of a white pickup truck sped down Bourbon Street, packed with holiday revelers early Wednesday morning.

Officials have not yet released the names of the 15 people killed in the New Orleans New Year's Day truck attack, but their families and friends have started sharing their stories. New Orleans Coroner Dr. Dwight McKenna said in a statement late Wednesday that they will release the names of the dead once autopsies are complete and they've talked with the next of kin. About 30 people were injured.

Nikyra Dedeaux

Zion Parsons of Gulfport, Mississippi, had been celebrating New Year's Eve at his first night on Bourbon Street when a vehicle appeared and plowed into his friend, 18-year-old Nikyra Dedeaux, who he said had dreamed of becoming a nurse.

"A truck hit the corner and comes barreling through throwing people like in a movie scene, throwing people into the air," Parsons, 18, told The Associated Press. "It hit her and flung her like at least 30 feet and I was just lucky to be alive."

As the crowd scattered in the chaos he ran through a gruesome aftermath of bleeding and maimed victims, hearing gunshots and explosive sounds.

"Bodies, bodies all up and down the street, everybody screaming and hollering" Parsons said. "People crying on the floor, like brain matter all over the ground. It was just insane, like the closest thing to a war

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zone that I've ever seen."

Dedeaux was a responsible daughter -- shorter than all her siblings but the one who helped take care of everyone, Parsons said. Dedeaux had a job at a hospital and was set to start college and begin working towards her goal of becoming a registered nurse.

"She had her mindset -- she didn't have everything figured out but she had the plan laid down," Parsons said.

Reggie Hunter

A 37-year-old father of two from Baton Rouge was among the 15 people killed early Wednesday when a pickup truck careened down Bourbon Street in what officials called an act of terror.

Reggie Hunter had just left work and headed to celebrate New Year's with a cousin when the attack happened, his first cousin Shirell Jackson told Nola.com.

Hunter was killed and his cousin was injured, Jackson said.

Tiger Bech

A former high school and college football player from Louisiana was among those who died after a driver rammed a pickup truck into a crowd in New Orleans' French Quarter, according to an education official.

Tiger Bech, 27, died late Wednesday morning at a New Orleans hospital, according to local media outlets citing Kim Broussard, the athletic director at St. Thomas More Catholic High School in Lafayette. Bech attended the high school, where he played wide receiver, quarterback, punt returner and defensive back, NOLA.com reported.

Bech played football at Princeton University before graduating in 2021. Most recently he was working as an investment trader at a New York brokerage firm.

Princeton football coach Bob Surace said Wednesday that he had been texting with Bech's father, sharing memories of the player, who was a school kick returner and receiver from 2017 to 2019. He earned All-Ivy League honors as a returner.

"He might be the first Tiger to ever play for us, and that nickname kind of described him as a competitor," Surace told ESPN. The school's nickname is the Tigers. "He was somebody that somehow, like in the key moments, just excelled and was full of energy, full of life."

Bech has been working at Seaport Global, where company spokesperson Lisa Lieberman could not confirm his death. But she told The Associated Press that "he was extremely well regarded by everybody who knew him."

Bech's younger brother, Jack, is a top wide receiver at Texas Christian University.

In a response to a KLFY-TV report posted on X about Tiger Bech's death, a post from an account for a Jack Bech on the social media site said: "Love you always brother ! You inspired me everyday now you get to be with me in every moment. I got this family T, don't worry. This is for us."

Nicole Perez

Nicole Perez was a single mother to a 4-year-old son working hard to make life better for her family when she was killed in the New Orleans truck attack, according to her employer.

Perez, who was in her late 20s, was recently promoted to manager at Kimmy's Deli in Metairie, Louisiana and "was really excited about it," deli owner Kimberly Usher said in a phone interview with AP. Usher confirmed Perez's death through her sister, who also works for her.

Usher said Perez would walk in the morning to the deli, which opened at breakfast time, and would ask lots of questions about the business side of the operations. She also was permitted to bring her son, Melo, to work, where during breaks she taught him basic learning skills.

"She was a really good mom," said Usher, who started a GoFundMe account to cover Perez's burial costs and to help with expenses for her son that "he will need to transition into a new living situation," the donation request says.

Firework mortars, gas cannisters stuffed inside Tesla that exploded outside Trump's Las Vegas hotel

By TY O'NEIL and ANITA SNOW Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Firework mortars and camp fuel canisters were found stuffed into the back of the Tesla Cybertruck that exploded outside President-elect Donald Trump's Las Vegas hotel early Wednesday, killing a suspect inside the vehicle and sparking an intense investigation into possible terrorism.

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police and Clark County Fire Department officials said that a person died inside the futuristic-looking pickup truck and seven people nearby suffered minor injuries.

By late Wednesday afternoon, authorities were still working to get the body out of the vehicle and start processing the evidence inside. President Joe Biden was briefed on the explosion.

"Our number one goal is to ensure that we have the proper identification of the subject involved in this incident," said Jeremy Schwartz, acting special agent in charge for the FBI's Las Vegas office, "Following that, our second objective is to determine whether this was an act of terrorism or not."

Police Department Sheriff Kevin McMahill said authorities know who rented the truck with the Turo app in Colorado, but are not releasing the name until investigators determine if it is the same person who died.

McMahill said video captured at Tesla charging stations provided by CEO Elon Musk helped authorities track the vehicle's journey, arriving in Las Vegas about 7:30 AM. then driving about an hour later into the valet area of the Trump International Hotel, where it sat 15 to 20 seconds before the explosion occurred.

Video presented at an afternoon news conference showed a tumble of charred fireworks mortars, canisters and other explosive devices crowded into the back of the pickup. The truck bed walls were still intact because the blast shot straight up rather than to the sides.

Musk said Wednesday afternoon on X that "we have now confirmed that the explosion was caused by very large fireworks and/or a bomb carried in the bed of the rented Cybertruck and is unrelated to the vehicle itself. All vehicle telemetry was positive at the time of the explosion."

In an earlier post on the platform Musk said that his entire senior term was investigating the explosion, adding, "We've never seen anything like this."

Musk has recently become a member of Trump's inner circle. Neither Trump nor Musk were in Las Vegas early Wednesday. Both had attended Trump's New Year's Eve party at Trump's estate in South Florida.

Musk spent an estimated \$250 million during the presidential campaign to support the former president. He was at Trump's resort on election night and has been a frequent guest there. Trump has named Musk, the world's richest man, to co-lead a new effort to find ways to cut the government's size and spending.

"This is a Tesla truck, and we know that Elon Musk is working with President-elect Trump, and it's the Trump Tower," McMahill said when reporters asked about possible political connections. "So there's obviously things to be concerned about and it's something we continue to look at."

The truck explosion came hours after a driver rammed a truck into a crowd in New Orleans' famed French Quarter early on New Year's Day, killing at least 15 people before being shot to death by police. That crash was being investigated as a terrorist attack and police believe the driver was not acting alone.

"We are absolutely investigating any connectivity to what happened in New Orleans as well as other attacks that have been occurring around the world," McMahill said. "We aren't ruling anything out."

In a statement, Turo said it was working with authorities.

"We do not believe that either renter involved in the Las Vegas and New Orleans attacks had a criminal background that would have identified them as a security threat," the statement said.

In Las Vegas, witness Ana Bruce, visiting from Brazil, said she heard three explosions.

"The first one where we saw the fire, the second one, I guess, was the battery or something like that, and the third was the big one that smoked the entire area and was the moment when everyone was told to evacuate and stay away," Bruce said.

Her travel companion, Alcides Antunes, showed video he took of flames lapping the sides of the silver-colored vehicle.

The 64-story hotel is just off the Las Vegas Strip and across the street from the Fashion Show Las Vegas shopping mall.

Eric Trump, a son of the president-elect and executive vice president of the Trump Organization, posted about the fire on the social media platform X. He praised the fire department and local law enforcement "for their swift response and professionalism."

Islamic State-inspired driver expressed desire to kill before deadly New Orleans rampage, Biden says

By ERIC TUCKER, JIM MUSTIAN, KEVIN MCGILL and JACK BROOK Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A U.S. Army veteran driving a pickup truck that bore the flag of the Islamic State group wrought carnage on New Orleans' raucous New Year's celebration, killing 15 people as he steered around a police blockade and slammed into revelers before being shot dead by police.

The FBI said it was investigating the attack early Wednesday as a terrorist act and did not believe the driver acted alone. Investigators found guns and what appeared to be an improvised explosive device in the vehicle, along with other devices elsewhere in the city's famed French Quarter.

President Joe Biden said Wednesday evening that the FBI found videos that the driver had posted to social media hours before the attack in which he said he was inspired by the Islamic State group and expressed a desire to kill.

The rampage turned festive Bourbon Street into a macabre mayhem of maimed victims, bloodied bodies and pedestrians fleeing for safety inside nightclubs and restaurants. In addition to the dead, dozens of people were hurt. A college football playoff game at the nearby Superdome was postponed until Thursday.

Zion Parsons, 18, of Gulfport, Mississippi, said he saw the truck "barreling through, throwing people like in a movie scene, throwing people into the air."

"Bodies, bodies all up and down the street, everybody screaming and hollering," said Parsons, whose friend Nikyra Dedeaux was among the people killed.

"This is not just an act of terrorism. This is evil," New Orleans Police Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick said.

The driver "defeated" safety measures in place to protect pedestrians, Kirkpatrick said, and was "hell-bent on creating the carnage and the damage that he did."

The FBI identified the driver as Shamsud-Din Jabbar, 42, a U.S. citizen from Texas, and said it was working to determine any potential associations with terrorist organizations.

"We do not believe that Jabbar was solely responsible," FBI Assistant Special Agent in Charge Alethea Duncan said at a news conference.

Investigators found multiple improvised explosives, including two pipe bombs that were concealed within coolers and wired for remote detonation, according to a Louisiana State Police intelligence bulletin obtained by The Associated Press.

The bulletin, relying on preliminary information gathered soon after the attack, also cited surveillance footage that it said showed three men and a woman placing one of the devices, but federal officials did not immediately confirm that detail and it wasn't clear who they were or what connection they had to the attack, if any.

Jabbar drove a rented pickup truck onto a sidewalk, going around a police car that was positioned to block vehicular traffic, authorities said. A barrier system meant to prevent vehicle attacks was being repaired in preparation for the Super Bowl in February.

Jabbar was killed by police after he exited the truck and opened fire on responding officers, Kirkpatrick said. Three officers returned fire. Two were shot and are in stable condition.

Investigators recovered a handgun and AR-style rifle, according to a law enforcement official who was not authorized to discuss the investigation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

There were also deadly explosions in Honolulu and outside a Las Vegas hotel owned by President-elect Donald Trump. Biden said the FBI was looking into whether the Las Vegas explosion was connected to the New Orleans attack but had "nothing to report" as of Wednesday evening.

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A photo circulated among law enforcement officials showed a bearded Jabbar wearing camouflage next to the truck after he was killed. The intelligence bulletin obtained by the AP said he was wearing a ballistic vest and helmet. The flag of the Islamic State group was on the truck's trailer hitch, the FBI said.

"For those people who don't believe in objective evil, all you have to do is look at what happened in our city early this morning," U.S. Sen. John Kennedy, a Louisiana Republican, said. "If this doesn't trigger the gag reflex of every American, every fair-minded American, I'll be very surprised."

Jabbar joined the Army in 2007, serving on active duty in human resources and information technology and deploying to Afghanistan from 2009 to 2010, the service said. He transferred to the Army Reserve in 2015 and left in 2020 with the rank of staff sergeant.

Hours after the attack, several coroner's office vans were parked on the corner of Bourbon and Canal streets, cordoned off by police tape with crowds of dazed tourists standing around, some trying to navigate their luggage through the labyrinth of blockades.

Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry urged people to avoid the area, which remained an active crime scene.

"We looked out our front door and saw caution tape and dead silence and it's eerie," said Tessa Cundiff, an Indiana native who moved to the French Quarter a few years ago. "This is not what we fell in love with, it's sad."

Nearby, life went on as normal in the city known to some for a motto that translates to "let the good times roll." At a cafe a block from where the truck came to rest, people crowded in for breakfast as upbeat pop music played. Two blocks away, people drank at a bar, seemingly as if nothing happened.

Biden, speaking from the presidential retreat at Camp David, called the attack a "despicable" and "heinous act." Addressing the victims and the people of New Orleans, he said: "I want you to know I grieve with you. Our nation grieves with you as you mourn and as you heal."

"My heart goes out to the victims and their families who were simply trying to celebrate the holiday," Biden said in an earlier written statement. "There is no justification for violence of any kind, and we will not tolerate any attack on any of our nation's communities."

The attack is the latest example of a vehicle being used as a weapon to carry out mass violence and the deadliest IS-inspired assault on U.S. soil in years.

FBI officials have repeatedly warned about an elevated international terrorism threat due to the Israel-Hamas war. In the last year, the agency has disrupted other potential attacks, including in October when it arrested an Afghan man in Oklahoma for an alleged Election Day plot targeting large crowds.

Sugar Bowl CFP quarterfinal between Georgia and Notre Dame postponed after deadly truck attack

By BRETT MARTEL AP Sports Writer

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The College Football Playoff quarterfinal at the Sugar Bowl between Georgia and Notre Dame was postponed a day because of an attack about a mile away from the Superdome early Wednesday, when authorities say a truck driver deliberately plowed into a New Year's crowd and killed 15 people.

The game, originally scheduled for 7:45 p.m. CST at the 70,000-seat Superdome on Wednesday, was pushed back to 3 p.m. Thursday. The winner advances to the Jan. 9 Orange Bowl against Penn State.

"Public safety is paramount," Sugar Bowl CEO Jeff Hundley said at a media briefing alongside federal, state and local officials, including Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry and New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell. "All parties all agree that it's in the best interest of everybody and public safety that we postpone the game."

The casualties occurred when a driver rammed a pickup truck into a crowd of revelers in New Orleans' famed French Quarter early on New Year's Day. In addition to those killed, more than 30 people were injured. The driver was killed in a firefight with police following the attack at about 3:15 a.m. along Bourbon Street near Canal Street, the FBI said.

The decision to postpone the game meant numerous traveling fans with tickets would not be able to

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attend. Ticket prices online plummeted in some cases to less than \$25 as fans with plans to depart on Thursday tried to unload them.

"We can't get new flights," said Lisa Borrelli, a 34-year-old Philadelphia resident who came to New Orleans with her fiancé, a 2011 Notre Dame graduate.

Postponing the game "was absolutely the right call," she said. "I completely understand."

She said they paid more than \$250 per ticket and hadn't bothered listing them for resale yet because prices were so low.

"Of course we're disappointed to miss it and to lose so much money on it, but at the end of the day it doesn't matter," Borrelli said. "We're fortunate enough that we'll be fine."

U.S. Rep. Troy Carter, D-La., said the decision to postpone the game "was not done lightly."

"It was done with one single thing in mind: public safety — making sure that the citizens and visitors of this great city, not only for this event, but for every event you come to in Louisiana, that you will be safe," Carter added.

Landry said he had a message for those thinking, "Man, do I really want to go to the Sugar Bowl tomorrow?"

"I tell you one thing: Your governor's going to be there," Landry said. "That is proof, believe you me, that that facility and this city is safer today than it was yesterday."

Darrell Huckaby, 72, of Athens, Georgia, also decided to return home Thursday instead of staying for the game. He was in a hotel room overlooking the corner where the attack took place. He was asleep when it occurred, but when he woke up, he could see pink blankets covering the bodies of the dead, and later saw them being placed in bags and loaded onto trucks bound for the Orleans Parish Coroner's office.

"It was heartbreaking," he said. "I think the first instinct of most people this morning was wanting to be home. As important as football is to our Georgia culture, for a little while, the game just didn't really seem to matter."

"And I think there was a lot of uncertainty, and I understand," Huckaby said. "It took them a long time to decide on the game time and people kind of had to make decisions without all the information."

He added that he would "probably eat" the \$360 per ticket he paid.

Hundley said work was underway to "set up a safe and efficient and fun environment" at and around the Superdome on Thursday.

The Superdome was on lockdown for security sweeps on Wednesday morning.

Both teams spent most of the day in their hotels, holding meetings in ballrooms.

Georgia's players bused to the Superdome for a walk-through practice on Wednesday evening. As they made their way to buses on Canal Street, fans in red and black stood eight to 10 deep behind barricades, cheering them on, phones held high above their heads to capture the scene.

Around that time, at a hotel on the banks of the Mississippi River, Notre Dame players gathered with family members in a ballroom where the Rose Bowl quarterfinal between Ohio State and Oregon was being shown on television.

Notre Dame offered band members the option of flying home on Thursday instead of attending the game, and some chose to do so.

Georgia president Jere Morehead said the university confirmed that a student was among those critically injured. Morehead said the university was in contact with the student's family.

Statements from the University of Georgia Athletic Association and from Notre Dame said both schools had accounted for all team personnel and members of official travel parties.

New Orleans City Council President Helena Moreno told WDSU-TV earlier Wednesday, before the postponement was announced, that the security perimeter around the Superdome was being "extended to be a larger zone."

"There are more police officers who are coming in," she said.

The Superdome, which is about 20 blocks away, also is scheduled to host the Super Bowl on Feb. 9.

The first Super Bowl after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, also was held in New Orleans, and

there was a massive security perimeter for that game including street closures surrounding the Superdome and officers — including snipers — on the tops of surrounding high-rise buildings, as well as on the roof of the dome itself.

“We are deeply saddened by the news of the devastating incident in New Orleans,” the NFL said in a statement.

“The NFL and the local host committee have been working collaboratively with local, state and federal agencies the past two years and have developed comprehensive security plans,” the statement continued. “We are confident attendees will have a safe and enjoyable Super Bowl experience.”

What we know about a vehicle attack on pedestrians in New Orleans that killed at least 15

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Authorities say the driver of a pickup truck sped through a crowd of pedestrians gathered in New Orleans’ bustling French Quarter district early on New Year’s Day, killing at least 15 people and injuring about 30 other revelers. The suspect was killed in a shootout with police.

The FBI is investigating the attack as an act of terrorism and said it does not believe the driver acted alone.

Wednesday’s attack unfolded on Bourbon Street, known worldwide as one of the largest destinations for New Year’s Eve parties. Large crowds also gathered in the city ahead of the College Football Playoff quarterfinal at the Sugar Bowl that had been scheduled for later Wednesday at the nearby Superdome. The game was postponed until Thursday afternoon following the attack.

Here’s what we know about the attack:

What happened?

Police said the driver steered around a police blockade and raced through a crowd along Bourbon Street around 3:15 a.m. Wednesday as revelers gathered to celebrate the new year. At least 15 people were killed and about 30 injured. Two police officers wounded in a shootout with the suspect were in stable condition.

Authorities also found potential explosive devices in the French Quarter, the FBI said. Surveillance footage showed three men and a woman placing one of multiple improvised explosive devices, according to a Louisiana State Police intelligence bulletin obtained by The Associated Press.

Who is the driver and what was his motive?

The FBI said the driver was 42-year-old Shamsud-Din Bahar Jabbar, a U.S. citizen and Army veteran from Texas.

A flag representing the Islamic State group was found on the vehicle’s trailer hitch, the FBI said. The bureau is trying to determine if Jabbar was associated with any terrorist organizations.

Alethea Duncan, an assistant special agent in charge of the FBI’s New Orleans field office, said during a news conference that the agency does not believe Jabbar acted alone.

Jabbar enlisted in the Army in March 2007, working in both human resources and information technology. He deployed to Afghanistan from February 2009 to January 2010, then transferred into the U.S. Army Reserve in 2015, the service said in a statement. Jabbar served until July 2020, leaving the military with the rank of staff sergeant.

Court records show Jabbar faced a deteriorating financial situation in 2022 while separating from his then-wife. Jabbar said he was \$27,000 behind on house payments, accumulated \$16,000 in credit card debt and wanted to quickly finalize the divorce.

“I have exhausted all means of bringing the loan current other than a loan modification, leaving us no alternative but to sell the house or allow it to go into foreclosure,” he wrote in a January 2022 email to his now-ex-wife’s attorney.

At the time, court documents show he made about \$10,000 a month doing business development and other work for the consulting firm Deloitte. In a statement, Deloitte said Jabbar had “served in a staff-level role” since being hired in 2021 and that the company was doing all it could to assist authorities.

What have authorities found in their investigation?

Guns and pipe bombs were found in the suspect's vehicle, according to the State Police bulletin. The devices were concealed within coolers and wired for remote detonation with a remote control that also was found in the vehicle, the bulletin said.

Who was in the crowd?

Authorities said Bourbon Street was filled with revelers toasting the start of 2025 when the attack occurred. Crowds in New Orleans also ballooned in anticipation of the Sugar Bowl college football playoff game between No. 2 Georgia and No. 3 Notre Dame. That game was postponed until Thursday.

What protections are there for pedestrians on Bourbon Street?

City documents show New Orleans has been in the midst of a major project to remove and replace post-like barriers called bollards designed to prevent vehicle attacks along Bourbon Street. That project began in November and involves replacing old bollards with new removable stainless steel bollards.

Have there been similar deadly attacks involving vehicles?

Wednesday's attack in New Orleans is the latest example of a vehicle being used as a weapon to carry out mass violence. The trend has alarmed law enforcement officials because such attacks can be difficult to protect against. Last month, a 50-year-old Saudi doctor plowed into a Christmas market teeming with holiday shoppers in the German city of Magdeburg, killing four women and a 9-year-old boy.

Texas avoids huge upset, beats Arizona State 39-31 in double overtime at Peach Bowl

By PAUL NEWBERRY AP National Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — With Arizona State one play away from pulling off a comeback for the ages in the College Football Playoff, Quinn Ewers delivered a throw to Matthew Golden that saved the season for Texas.

Then it was left to Andrew Mukuba to finish off Cam Skattebo and the gritty Sun Devils.

If the Longhorns go on to win the national championship, they'll long remember how they kept their hopes alive in this Peach Bowl quarterfinal classic.

Ewers passed 28 yards to Golden for a touchdown on fourth-and-13 to force a second overtime, and Mukuba's interception clinched a 39-31 victory after Texas squandered a 16-point lead in the fourth quarter and missed two field goal attempts that could've won it in regulation.

"The one thing that I know about our group is when our backs are against the wall and when our best is needed, our best shows up time and time again," coach Steve Sarkisian said. "The resiliency that these guys showed today was something that as a coach makes you really proud."

Skattebo put No. 10 Arizona State ahead for the first time all day with a 3-yard touchdown run to start overtime against No. 4 Texas, the capper on a brilliant performance that wasn't quite enough to knock off the Longhorns.

The Sun Devils — a two-touchdown underdog, according to BetMGM Sportsbook — had the game in their grasp before Ewers spotted Golden breaking free behind two defenders to haul in the tying score.

"That's just a testament to how mature this team is and just taking advantage of every single opportunity that we have," Ewers said.

After moving to the opposite end of Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Ewers threw a 25-yard touchdown pass to Gunnar Helm on the very next play, followed by a 2-point conversion pass to Golden.

The Longhorns (13-2) finally put Arizona State (11-3) away when Mukuba picked off Sam Leavitt's pass at the 3 to end the game.

"We gave everything we had," Skattebo said. "We never stopped."

After a bunch of lopsided results through the first five games of the expanded 12-team playoff, the format finally produced the sort of thrilling game that supporters envisioned.

It sends Texas back to its home state for a Cotton Bowl semifinal against No. 6 Ohio State, which routed No. 1 Oregon 41-21 in the Rose Bowl.

Despite being dominated on the stat sheet most of the game, the Longhorns had a seemingly comfortable 24-8 lead after scoring two early touchdowns and getting a 5-yard scoring run from Ewers with just

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over 10 minutes remaining.

But Skattebo and the Sun Devils were just getting warmed up.

The running back who calls himself the best in the nation, Skattebo backed up his bravado by displaying every facet of his all-around game.

First, he took a pitch on fourth-and-2 and heaved a 42-yard touchdown pass to Malik McClain that gave the Sun Devils a chance when they made the 2-point conversion.

Then, Skattebo broke loose down the sideline and hauled in a 62-yard throw from Leavitt — getting his helmet ripped off at the end of the play, which seemed like the only way to bring him down.

That set up a 2-yard touchdown run by the bowling ball of a back, and it was only appropriate that Skattebo also powered in for the 2-point conversion that tied the game at 24 with 5 minutes remaining.

Texas had a pair of chances to win in regulation, but Bert Auburn was wide right on a 48-yard field goal attempt and clanked one off the left upright from 38 yards away as time expired.

“We weren’t at our best and it felt like an NCAA March Madness basketball game with the swings of emotions and things,” Sarkisian said. “I’m just proud of these guys because not every game is going to be pretty and not every game is just going to go exactly how you want it to go.”

In the final minute of the third quarter, Texas led 17-8 even though Arizona State had a commanding 303-128 lead in total yards and had held the ball nearly three times longer than the Longhorns, 32:49 to 11:30.

Arizona State finished with 510 yards to 375 for the Longhorns.

Despite vomiting on the sideline before the start of the fourth quarter, Skattebo rushed for 143 yards, made eight catches for another 99 yards and, of course, had that one big completion.

It wasn’t quite enough.

Ewers threw for 322 yards, with Golden making seven receptions for 149 yards.

Early fireworks

After Arizona State drove for a field goal on the opening possession, Texas needed only two plays to claim the lead.

Ewers hooked up with Golden on a 54-yard play, then went to DeAndre Moore Jr. for a 23-yard scoring pass.

Both times, the Longhorns went after Montana Warren, starting in place of Shamari Simmons with the Sun Devils star forced to sit out the first half after being penalized for targeting in the Big 12 championship game.

Arizona State then went three-and-out and Silas Bolden returned the punt 75 yards for another Texas touchdown. Having taken just two snaps, the Longhorns had a 14-3 lead.

But any thoughts of another CFP blowout faded as Texas struggled to finish off the Sun Devils, one of the nation’s most surprising teams after going 3-9 a year ago and remaining largely unnoticed until late this season.

The takeaway

Texas: It wasn’t pretty, but Sarkisian was correct to give the Longhorns points for resiliency. This also provides the coaching staff with plenty of teaching tools, because it’s hard to see Texas winning two more games — and a national championship — without significant improvement.

Arizona State: The Sun Devils will regret all the chances they squandered before the fourth quarter. Three times, they were stopped on fourth down in Texas territory. The Longhorns also blocked a 36-yard field goal attempt just before the end of the first half. But this was a performance that is sure to boost ASU’s profile nationwide and give coach Kenny Dillingham’s program a sense that it does belong among the nation’s elite.

Up next

Texas: The Longhorns will face Ohio State for the first time since the 2009 Fiesta Bowl, when Texas prevailed 24-21. The Cotton Bowl on Jan. 10 will make the fourth meeting overall between the powerhouse programs, with Texas holding a 2-1 lead in the series.

Arizona State: Will look to build on its remarkable turnaround, beginning with the 2025 season opener hosting Northern Arizona on Aug. 30.

New Orleans barriers to prevent vehicle attacks were in the process of being replaced

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER, JEFF MARTIN and KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Seven years ago, New Orleans officials began installing adjustable barriers at intersections in the famed French Quarter to temporarily prevent vehicles from entering the tourist area where the narrow streets are typically teeming with pedestrians every night.

But the steel columns known as bollards were in the process of being replaced and were not engaged early on New Year's Day when a motorist rammed a pickup truck through a crowd of revelers, killing at least 15 people.

The project to remove and replace the bollards along about eight blocks of bustling Bourbon Street, from St. Ann Street to Canal Street, began Nov. 18, city records show. Temporary asphalt patches were installed in the spots where the steel columns were removed, according to the documents.

City officials have not confirmed whether the intersection the truck sped through was actively under construction or said if the replacement project created a vulnerability.

Some of the old bollards had "proved unreliable and have been non-operational," the city said in a statement Wednesday afternoon. "In the interim, white gate barriers have been used in these areas, managed by the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) to secure the street and regulate vehicle access for safety purposes."

One day before New Year's Eve, New Orleans officials issued a traffic advisory about its vehicle barrier replacement project, stating that crews would work until 2 p.m. on Monday and try to "minimize road closures as much as possible to reduce impacts" during the celebration.

"Currently, Bourbon Street is fully open from Canal Street to Toulouse Street," the city said in its Dec. 30 advisory.

The intersection of Bourbon and Canal is where the pickup swerved around a police blockade and rammed into the mass of people. The driver was shot to death by police and the FBI is investigating the incident as an act of terrorism, authorities said.

As vehicle attacks have increased in recent decades, cities around the world have installed bollards in pedestrian-heavy areas. New York City has put up similar retractable steel columns around Times Square, City Hall and Wall Street. They are also a common sight in other large cities such as London, Paris and Tokyo.

There have been proposals over the years to turn much of Bourbon Street into a pedestrian plaza managed by a team focused on making it safe, Louisiana Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser said Wednesday. He told The Associated Press that it's important to examine every aspect of safety following the New Year's Day carnage.

"You can't prevent something like this when someone wants to kill people," Nungesser said, "but I'm hoping we take a hard look at what we do because there will be another one, whether it's in New Orleans or elsewhere."

Addressing the removal of the bollards, Nungesser said, "How does that happen for a major event?"

Initially installed beginning in Dec. 2017 as part of a \$40 million safety plan, the New Orleans' bollards system consisted of four sets of barriers placed at either side of Bourbon Street intersections. The inner two columns can be pushed back when unlocked by a ground-level control panel, allowing for a roughly 13-foot (4-meter) berth for vehicles to navigate through, NOLA.com reported when construction began.

Aaron Miller, director of the city's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, said at the time that the bollards would go up nightly in keeping with city rules that close off stretches of the popular French Quarter boulevard exclusively to pedestrians. Otherwise, they would only be used to block intersections either by a city ordinance or during special events, he said.

The barriers were "designed to mitigate against what we believe the risk is for pedestrians" in a part of the city he said was "an iconic or symbolic target," Miller said in Dec. 2017.

Wednesday's rampage happened amid the ongoing Bourbon Street Bollard Assessment and Replacement

Project, which includes "removing the old bollards, replacing concrete pavement, constructing concrete bases, installing metal sleeves for the new bollards, and repouring the roadway," according to the city's Wednesday statement. So far, 11 of the 16 bollard locations have been replaced, the statement said.

Daily inspections monitor progress, and testing reports issued today confirm the required material strength has been achieved.

On Dec. 10, the city posted a photo on social media of a torn-up street in the French Quarter, with two bollards sitting atop a pallet. Work was scheduled to be completed by early Feb. 2025, when New Orleans will host the Super Bowl, city records show.

"The project includes replacing old bollards with new removable stainless-steel bollards and sidewalk repairs at various locations," a Department of Public Works document states.

In a Nov. 26 update, city officials said work including concrete pouring was occurring on both sides of Bourbon Street "without closing intersections to vehicle traffic."

New Orleans New Year's Day ramming is the latest attack to use a vehicle as a deadly weapon

By The Associated Press undefined

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Police say a man who drove a pickup truck at high speed into a crowd of people celebrating the new year in New Orleans early Wednesday was hell-bent on creating carnage. While a motive for the attack that killed 15 people has yet to be revealed, the FBI is investigating it as a terrorist act.

Several such attacks have taken place over the past two decades, some inspired by extremist politics and others blamed on mental illness or misogyny.

What authorities call "vehicle as a weapon attacks" have reshaped cities around the world, with planners erecting concrete barriers around public spaces and building anti-vehicle obstacles in new developments.

Here are the details of some major vehicle attacks:

NEW ORLEANS, Jan. 1, 2025 — At least 15 people are killed and dozens are injured after a U.S. citizen from Texas rams a vehicle into a crowd of pedestrians in New Orleans' bustling French Quarter district at 3:15 a.m. on New Year's Day. The FBI identifies the suspect as 42-year-old Shamsud-Din Jabbar. He is killed in a firefight with police. The FBI says several possible explosive devices were recovered and that a flag associated with the Islamic State group was found in the truck.

MAGDEBURG, Germany, Dec. 20, 2024 — At least five people are killed and more than 200 are injured when a car slams into a Christmas market in eastern Germany. Police arrest a 50-year-old doctor from Saudi Arabia who has renounced Islam and supports the far-right AfD party.

ZHUHAI, China, Nov. 11, 2024 — A 62-year-old driver rams his car into people exercising at a sports complex in southern China, killing 35, in the country's deadliest attack in years. Authorities say the suspect is upset about his divorce. He pleads guilty to endangering public safety by dangerous means and is sentenced to death.

LONDON, Ontario, June 6, 2021 — Four members of a Muslim family are killed when an attacker hits them with a pickup truck. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau calls it "a terrorist attack, motivated by hatred." White nationalist Nathaniel Veltman is sentenced to life in prison.

TORONTO, April 23, 2018 — A 25-year-old Canadian man, Alek Minassian, drives a rental van into mostly female pedestrians on Yonge St., the main thoroughfare in Toronto, killing 10 people and injuring 16. Minassian tells police he belongs to an online "incel" community of sexually frustrated men. He is sentenced to life in prison.

NEW YORK, Oct. 31, 2017 — Sayfullo Saipov, an Islamic extremist from Uzbekistan, drives a pickup truck onto a popular New York City bike path, killing eight people. He is convicted of federal terrorism charges and sentenced to 10 life sentences plus 260 years in prison.

BARCELONA, Aug. 17, 2017 — A man rams a van into people on the Spanish city's crowded Las Ramblas boulevard, killing 14 and injuring others. The Islamic State group claims responsibility. Several members of the same cell carry out a similar attack in the nearby resort town of Cambrils, killing one person.

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CHARLOTTESVILLE, Virginia, Aug. 12, 2017 — During a “Unite the Right” rally, white supremacist James Alex Fields Jr. drives his car into a crowd of counter-protesters, killing one woman and injuring dozens of people. Fields is serving a life sentence for murder and hate crimes.

LONDON, June 19, 2017 — Darren Osborne, a man radicalized by far-right ideas, drives a van into worshippers outside a mosque in Finsbury Park, killing one man and injuring 15 people. Osborne is sentenced to life in prison.

LONDON, June 3, 2017 — Three attackers drive a van into pedestrians on London Bridge before stabbing people in nearby Borough Market. Eight people are killed and the attackers are shot dead by police.

LONDON, March 22, 2017 — British man Khalid Masood rams an SUV into people on Westminster Bridge, killing four, then fatally stabs a policeman guarding the Houses of Parliament. Masood is shot dead.

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan. 20, 2017 – Six people are killed and more than 30 injured when a car hits lunchtime crowds at a pedestrian mall in Australia’s second-largest city. James Gargasoulas is found to have been in a state of drug-induced psychosis and is sentenced to life in prison.

BERLIN, Dec. 19, 2016 — Anis Amri, a rejected asylum-seeker from Tunisia, plows a hijacked truck into a Christmas market in the German capital, killing 13 people and injuring dozens. The attacker is killed days later in a shootout in Italy.

NICE, France, July 14, 2016 — Tunisian-born French resident Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel drives a rented truck for more than a mile (almost 2 kilometers) along a packed seaside promenade in the French Riviera resort on the Bastille Day holiday, killing 86 people in the deadliest attack of its kind. He is killed by police, but eight other people are sentenced to prison for helping orchestrate the attack.

APELDOORN, Netherlands, April 28, 2009 – Former security guard Karst Tate drives a car into parade spectators in an attempt to hit an open-topped bus carrying members of the Dutch royal family. Six people are killed and Tate dies of injuries the next day, leaving his full motive a mystery.

CHAPEL HILL, North Carolina, March 3, 2006 — University of North Carolina graduate Mohammed Taheri-Azar drives an SUV into a crowd at the university, lightly injuring nine people, in a self-professed bid to avenge Muslim deaths overseas. He is sentenced to up to 33 years in prison.

An armed man kills at least 10 people, including 2 children, in a shooting rampage in Montenegro

By PREDRAG MILIC Associated Press

PODGORICA, Montenegro (AP) — At least 10 people, including two children, were killed and four others were seriously wounded on Wednesday in a shooting rampage that followed a bar brawl in a western Montenegrin city, officials said. The shooter was on the run.

Police identified the attacker as 45-year-old Aco Martinovic. He killed the owner of the bar in the city of Cetinje, the bar owner’s children and his own family members, Interior Minister Danilo Saranovic said at a news conference.

“At this moment, we are focused on arresting him,” Saranovic told reporters.

Police dispatched special troops to search for the attacker in Cetinje, located some 30 kilometers (18 miles) northwest of the capital, Podgorica. All the roads in and out of the city have been blocked as police swarmed the streets.

Saranovic described the suspect as dangerous and appealed on the residents to stay indoors.

“The level of rage and brutality shows that sometimes such people ... are even more dangerous than members of organized criminal gangs,” Saranovic said.

Martinovic was at the bar throughout the day with other guests when the brawl erupted, said Police Commissioner Lazar Scepanovic. He said that Martinovic then went home, brought back a weapon and opened fire at around 5:30 p.m.

“He killed four people” at the bar, before heading out and then continued shooting at three more locations, said Scepanovic. “He tried to take the lives of four more people, and then fled with the vehicle he

was using, which we have found.”

He said that the suspect received a suspended sentence in 2005 for violent behavior and has appealed his latest conviction for illegal possession of weapons. Montenegrin media have reported he was known for erratic and violent behavior.

Small Montenegro, which has some 620,000 people, is known for its gun culture and many people traditionally have weapons.

Wednesday’s shooting was the second shooting rampage over the past three years in Cetinje, Montenegro’s historic capital. An attacker also killed 10 people, including two children, in August 2022 before he was shot and killed by a passerby in Cetinje.

President Jakov Milatovic said he was “shocked and stunned” by the tragedy. “Instead of holiday joy ... we have been gripped by sadness over the loss of innocent lives,” Milatovic said on the social media platform X.

Prime Minister Milojko Spajic went to the hospital where the wounded were being treated and announced three days of mourning. He said “all police teams” were out searching for the suspect.

“This is a terrible tragedy that has affected us all,” Spajic said.

Israeli strikes kill 12 in Gaza, including children, as war grinds into the new year

By WAFAA SHURAFI and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli strikes killed at least 12 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, mostly women and children, officials said Wednesday, as the nearly 15-month war ground on into the new year.

One strike hit a home in the Jabaliya area of northern Gaza, the most isolated and heavily destroyed part of the coastal territory, where Israel has waged a major operation since early October. Gaza’s Health Ministry said seven people were killed, including a woman and four children.

Israel’s military said it “eliminated” Hamas fighters.

Another strike overnight in the built-up Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza killed a woman and a child, according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, which received the bodies.

“Are you celebrating? Enjoy as we die. For a year and a half, we have been dying,” said a man carrying the body of a child in the flashing lights of emergency vehicles.

Israel’s military said militants fired rockets at Israel from the Bureij area overnight and that its forces responded with a strike targeting a militant.

A third strike, in the southern city of Khan Younis, killed three people, according to Nasser Hospital and the European Hospital, which received the bodies.

The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people and abducting around 250. About 100 hostages are still held in Gaza, at least a third believed to be dead.

Defense Minister Israel Katz warned in a statement Wednesday that Hamas will “suffer blows of a magnitude not seen in Gaza for a long time” if it doesn’t soon release the remaining hostages and stop firing at Israel.

Israel’s air and ground offensive has killed over 45,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry. It says women and children make up more than half the dead but does not say how many of those killed were militants.

The Israeli military says it only targets militants and blames Hamas for civilian deaths because its fighters operate in dense residential areas. The army says it has killed 17,000 militants, without providing evidence.

The war has caused widespread destruction and displaced some 90% of Gaza’s population of 2.3 million, many of them multiple times.

Hundreds of thousands live in tents on the coast as winter brings rainstorms and temperatures drop below 10 degrees Celsius (50 degrees Fahrenheit) at night. At least six infants and another person have died of hypothermia, according to the Health Ministry.

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Many displaced Palestinians in central Gaza rely on charity kitchens as their sole food provider amid restrictions on aid and skyrocketing prices. AP footage showed a long line of children waiting for rice, the only item served at the kitchen in Deir al-Balah on Wednesday.

"Some of those kitchens close because they don't receive aid, and others distribute little amounts of food and it's not enough," said Umm Adham Shaheen, displaced from Gaza City.

American and Arab mediators have spent nearly a year trying to broker a ceasefire and hostage release, but those efforts have repeatedly stalled. Hamas has demanded a lasting truce, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to keep fighting until "total victory."

Former defense minister leaves parliament

Israel's previous defense minister Yoav Gallant, fired nearly two months ago amid disagreements with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, resigned on Wednesday from parliament, citing a proposed law that would uphold controversial exemptions from the military draft for ultra-Orthodox men.

Gallant called the proposed law "contrary to the needs of the military and to the security of the state. I cannot be a part of that." Military service is compulsory for most Jews. Exemptions for ultra-Orthodox men to pursue studies has generated widespread resentment among the broader public.

Gallant's surprise firing in November sparked protests across Israel. He and Netanyahu were at odds over the war, with Gallant pushing for a diplomatic deal that would bring back the hostages while Netanyahu wanted more military pressure on Hamas. Netanyahu replaced Gallant with Katz, a longtime loyalist.

In Wednesday's address, Gallant said he would remain a member of Netanyahu's Likud party.

Israel sees net departure of citizens for a second year

More than 82,000 Israelis moved abroad in 2024 and 33,000 people immigrated to the country, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics said. Another 23,000 Israelis returned after long periods abroad.

It was the second straight year of net departures, a rare occurrence in the history of the country that actively encourages Jewish immigration. Many Israelis, looking for a break from the war, have moved abroad, leading to concern about whether it will drive a "brain drain" in sectors like medicine and technology.

Last year, 15,000 fewer people immigrated to Israel than in 2023.

In an event for the final day of Hanukkah, hostages released from Gaza and others called again for a peace deal to bring remaining hostages home. "Until they return, we will not really be able to move on," said a relative, Yuval Haran.

Palestinian Authority suspends Al Jazeera's work in the West Bank

The Palestinian Authority on Wednesday suspended the work of Al Jazeera in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, accusing it of broadcasting incitement and misleading reports.

Israel had already ordered Al Jazeera to close in the West Bank, but the order had not been strictly enforced. Al Jazeera and other outlets have been covering the Palestinian Authority's crackdown in Jenin, where PA forces have clashed with local Palestinian militants in recent weeks, sparking one of the worst armed confrontations between Palestinians in years.

Power is restored to nearly all of Puerto Rico after a major blackout

By AMANDA PÉREZ PINTADO Associated Press

BAYAMÓN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Power was restored to nearly all electrical customers across Puerto Rico on Wednesday after a sweeping blackout plunged the U.S. territory into darkness on New Year's Eve.

By Wednesday afternoon, power was back up for 98% of Puerto Rico's 1.47 million utility customers, said Luma Energy, the private company overseeing transmission and distribution of power in the archipelago. Lights returned to households as well as to Puerto Rico's hospitals, water plants and sewage facilities after the massive outage that exposed the persistent electricity problems plaguing the island.

Still, the company warned that customers could still see temporary outages in the coming days. It said full restoration across the island could take up to two days.

"Given the fragile nature of the grid, we will need to manage available generation to customer demand,

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which will likely require rotating temporary outages," Juan Saca, president of Luma Energy, said in a statement.

The lights went off in Puerto Rico at 5:30 a.m. on Tuesday, darkening almost the entire archipelago as people prepared to ring in the New Year. Authorities are still investigating the cause of the outage, but Luma Energy said a preliminary review pointed to a failure in an underground electric line in the south of the territory.

Governor-elect Jenniffer González Colón, who is set to take office on Thursday, warned that customers might experience interruptions in the coming days, with power plants not yet operating at maximum capacity.

"These days, I urge you to be moderate with your energy consumption to help reduce load shifting, so that more people can have access to electricity and the system can start up without any major setbacks," González Colón said on social media platform X.

On the campaign trail, González Colón had promised to appoint an "energy czar" to oversee the operation of the power grid, which has long been fragile and faulty due to years of neglect.

The island's power grid was ravaged in September 2017 by Hurricane Maria, a Category 4 storm.

Unreliable electricity remains frustratingly common, hindering daily life for Puerto Ricans. In June, over 340,000 customers were left without electricity as people reeled from soaring temperatures. At the peak of Hurricane Ernesto, in August, over half of all utility customers lost power. Tens of thousands of people remained without electricity a week after the storm.

The New Year's Eve outage came as clients brace for a hike in electricity rates. Last month, Puerto Rico's Energy Bureau approved an increase of 2.2 cents per kilowatt hour for residential customers from January through March, causing electric bills for the average household to jump by nearly \$20, the Energy Bureau says.

Movies in 2024: Lessons from a turbulent year at the box office

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Movie ticket sales took a bit of a hit in 2024. The annual domestic box office is expected to end up at around \$8.75 billion, down more than 3% from 2023, according to estimates from Comscore.

It's not as dire as it was in the pandemic years, but it's also not even close to the pre-pandemic norm when the annual box office regularly surpassed \$11 billion.

This is the year the business felt the effects of the Hollywood strikes of 2023, the labor standoff that delayed productions and releases and led to a depleted calendar for exhibitors and moviegoers. And yet it's not as bad as it could have been, or at least as bad as analysts projected at the start of the year.

"This has been a really incredible comeback story for the industry," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "Just a couple of months ago it was a question of whether we would even hit \$8 billion for the year."

Hollywood continues to learn lessons about what moviegoers really want, what works and what doesn't. Here are the biggest takeaways from 2024.

The strike fallout was real

The Hollywood strikes might have ended in 2023, putting productions back into full swing and sending stars out on the promotional circuit again — but the ripple effect of the work stoppages and contract standoffs showed their real effects on the 2024 release calendar.

The first two quarters were hit hardest, with tentpoles pushed later in the year ("Deadpool & Wolverine," for one) or even into 2025 (like "Mission: Impossible 8"). With no Marvel movie kicking off the summer moviegoing season, the box office was down a devastating 27.5% from 2023 right before "Inside Out 2" opened in June.

"It's an unpredictable business but it thrives on stability," Dergarabedian said. "When the release calendar is thrown off, the momentum stops."

The PG rating (and animation) ruled

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Sequels and franchises dominated the top 10 movies of the year, as has often been the case in the past 15 years. But this year, films carrying a PG rating did especially well, starting with the biggest movie of 2024: "Inside Out 2," which also became the biggest animated movie of all time, not accounting for inflation.

Family films with a PG rating — including "Despicable Me 4," "Moana 2," "Wicked," "Kung Fu Panda 4," "Sonic the Hedgehog 3," "Mufasa" and "The Wild Robot" — grossed over \$2.9 billion this year, accounting for around 33% of the annual box office, according to Comscore. Movies rated PG-13, by contrast, made up about 30% of ticket sales.

The Disney impact

After a quieter 2023 and several years without a film at the very top of the charts, the Walt Disney Co. came back roaring in 2024 with three of the top five movies of the year: "Inside Out 2," "Deadpool & Wolverine" and "Moana 2." In mid-December, it crossed the \$2 billion domestic mark, the second time any studio has done so since 2019 (that was also Disney, in 2022). Its 20th Century division also played an important part with "Alien: Romulus" and "Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes."

"It's a different industry when Disney commits to theatrical releases," said Daniel Loria, an executive at the movie data and analytics trade The Boxoffice Company.

Looking at 'flops' a different way

Every year has high-profile flops and disappointments, and this was no exception. Sony had a rough go with its "Spider-Man" adjacent titles like "Madame Web" and "Kraven the Hunter" (but this also seems to be the fate lately for anyone not named "Deadpool"). Universal had higher hopes for "The Fall Guy," as did Warner Bros. for "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga" and "Joker: Folie à Deux."

Then there were the filmmaker-driven (and financed) passion projects that failed to take off like Kevin Costner's "Horizon: An American Saga — Chapter 1" and Francis Ford Coppola's "Megalopolis."

"It's a reductive way of thinking about those passion projects," Loria said. "Those movies didn't come out with huge expectations, meaning theaters didn't clear out the house and give them three auditoriums per site in hopes for money to come in."

This was, however, part of the problem with "Joker 2," which was expected to be more in line with the first which made over \$1 billion. But even that has a caveat, Loria thinks.

"It wasn't just that 'Joker' didn't perform, it's that there was nothing coming in behind it to make up that momentum," Loria said. "That's more the fault of a release schedule where one movie is supposed to carry a month. That model doesn't work anymore."

Audiences crave options and a diverse lineup

What does work, Loria said, is a diverse lineup, with the Thanksgiving and Christmas successes being the perfect example. At Thanksgiving, there was "Wicked," "Gladiator II" and "Moana 2." Christmas had "Mufasa," "Sonic 3," and a lot of adult offerings too, including "Nosferatu," "A Complete Unknown" and "Babygirl."

Horror is often the safest bet for theatrical, but this year had even veterans pleasantly surprised by just how enthusiastic that audience can be, with hits like "Longlegs," "Nosferatu," "Terrifier 3" and "Smile 2" getting people out of the house.

The Blake Lively drama "It Ends With Us," which had its share of ongoing off-screen drama as well, also became an event. Audiences turned out for smart thrillers, like "Conclave" as well as unexpected originals including "Anora," "The Substance" and "The Brutalist."

Nostalgia and the allure of a re-release

Re-releases of movies in theaters that are also widely available in the home thrived this year. Some of the biggest successes included Christopher Nolan's "Interstellar," "Coraline" and "The Phantom Menace."

"It just shows our industry once again that audiences truly understand the difference between a communal, big screen theatrical experience that they crave even on films that they've had the opportunities to see in the home," Nolan said in December. "That theatrical experience that we all know and love is so powerful and so exciting. It's a very clear demonstration of it."

Viral marketing moments

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As silly as it sounds, this is the year the novelty popcorn bucket became a star. It started with the accidentally suggestive "Dune: Part 2" creation, which "Deadpool & Wolverine" latched onto in a less accidental way. More recently, the "Nosferatu" coffin buckets have been fetching high resale prices.

For Loria, it's all part of a trend that theaters have been noticing since reopening during the pandemic: Moviegoers aren't back in pre-pandemic numbers, but those who did come back were spending more on concessions and premium tickets (like IMAX and other large format screens) than ever before.

2025 looks bright

Everyone is optimistic for the film business in 2025, and the offerings for moviegoers — which include at least 110 films projected to open on over 2,000 screens — according to the National Association of Theatre Owners. And the momentum is there.

"There's been a huge amount of box office generated in the last six weeks of the year," Dergarabedian said. "This is the best opening act 2025 could have."

The world welcomes 2025 with light shows, embraces and ice plunges

By MELISSA GOLDIN, CEDAR ATTANASIO and CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY Associated Press
NEW YORK (AP) — From Sydney to Mumbai to Paris to Rio de Janeiro, communities around the world welcomed 2025 with spectacular light shows, embraces and ice plunges.

The New Year's Eve ball dropped in soggy Times Square, where thousands of revelers stuck it out in heavy rain to celebrate the start of 2025 in New York City.

Countries in the South Pacific Ocean were the first to ring in the New Year, with midnight in New Zealand striking 18 hours before the ball dropped in Times Square. Auckland was the first major city to celebrate, with thousands thronging downtown or climbing the city's ring of volcanic peaks for a fireworks vantage point.

Conflict muted acknowledgements of the start of 2025 in places like the Middle East, Sudan and Ukraine. American Samoa will be among the last to welcome 2025, a full 24 hours after New Zealand.

Earliest fireworks

A few hours after Auckland, fireworks blasted off Australia's Sydney Harbor Bridge and across the bay. More than a million people gathered at iconic Sydney Harbor for the celebration. British pop star Robbie Williams led a singalong with the crowd.

The celebration also featured Indigenous ceremonies and performances that acknowledged the land's first people.

American traditions, old and new

In New York City, crowds cheered and couples kissed when the ball weighing almost 6 tons (5.4 metric tons) and featuring 2,688 crystal triangles descended down a pole in Times Square. The celebration included musical performances by TLC and Jonas Brothers.

The revelry culminated with a dance party and a carpeting of soggy confetti as attendees left singing along to Frank Sinatra's version of "New York, New York."

Angie Cuadrado, from Virginia, said she hopes 2025 is going to be great. "We're sending positive vibes everywhere," she said.

Las Vegas' pyrotechnic show will be on the Strip, with 340,000 people anticipated as fireworks are launched from the rooftops of casinos. Nearby, the Sphere venue will display for the first time countdowns to midnight in different time zones.

In Pasadena, California, Rose Parade spectators were camping out and hoping for prime spots. And some 200,000 people flocked to a country music party in Nashville, Tennessee.

Asia prepares for Year of the Snake

Much of Japan shut down ahead of the nation's biggest holiday, as temples and homes underwent a thorough cleaning.

The upcoming Year of the Snake in the Asian zodiac is heralded as one of rebirth — alluding to the rep-

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tile's shedding skin. Other places in Asia will mark the Year of the Snake later, with the Lunar New Year. In South Korea, celebrations were cut back or canceled during a period of national mourning following Sunday's crash of a Jeju Air flight in Muan that killed 179 people.

China and Russia exchange goodwill

Chinese state media covered an exchange of New Year's greetings between leader Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin in a reminder of growing closeness between two leaders who face tensions with the West.

Xi told Putin their countries will "always move forward hand in hand," the official Xinhua News Agency said.

China has maintained ties and robust trade with Russia since the latter invaded Ukraine in 2022, helping to offset Western sanctions and attempts to isolate Putin.

Seaside celebrations and beyond

In India, thousands of revelers in the financial hub of Mumbai flocked to the city's bustling promenade facing the Arabian Sea. In Sri Lanka, people gathered at Buddhist temples to light oil lamps and incense sticks and pray.

In Dubai, thousands attended a fireworks show at the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest skyscraper. And in Nairobi, Kenya, scattered fireworks were heard.

A Holy Year begins

Rome's traditional New Year's Eve festivities have an additional draw: the start of Pope Francis' Holy Year, the once-every-quarter-century celebration projected to bring some 32 million pilgrims to the Eternal City in 2025.

On Tuesday, Francis celebrated a vespers at St. Peter's Basilica. During Mass on Wednesday he is expected to again appeal for peace in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Jan. 1 is a day of obligation for Catholics, marking the Solemnity of Mary.

In Saint Paul, Minnesota, about 400 Catholics joined the archbishop for a rare 11 p.m. Mass followed by a champagne reception in the city's monumental cathedral.

"People have the tradition to stay up and toast the new year, so we said, 'Ok, let's build on that,'" said the Rev. Joseph Johnson.

Paris recaptures the Olympic spirit

Paris capped a momentous 2024 with its traditional countdown and fireworks extravaganza on the Champs-Élysées. The city's emblematic Arc de Triomphe monument was turned into a giant tableau for a light show that celebrated the city's landmarks and the passage of time, with whirring clocks.

"Paris is a party," proclaimed Mayor Anne Hidalgo.

The Summer Olympics and Paralympic Games hosted in the French capital from July to September had transformed the city into a site of joy, fraternity and astonishing sporting achievements.

Wintry weather, for good and bad

London rang in the New Year with a pyrotechnic display along the River Thames. With a storm bringing bitter weather to other parts of the United Kingdom, however, festivities in Edinburgh, Scotland, were canceled.

But in Switzerland and some other places, people embraced the cold, stripping and plunging into the water in freezing temperatures.

Millions revel in Rio

Rio de Janeiro threw Brazil's main New Year's Eve bash on Copacabana beach, with barges shooting off 12 straight minutes of fireworks. Thousands of tourists on cruise ships and charter boats witnessed the show up close, while many more streamed onto the sand to find their spot.

The crowd on Copacabana was expected to exceed 2 million people — most decked out in white to keep with tradition. They packed together to enjoy concerts by Brazilian music legends Caetano Veloso, Maria Bethânia and Ivete Sangalo, among others. Right after the fireworks concluded, Brazil's biggest pop star, Anitta, took the stage.

"It's so magical. It's an incredible thing," Alejandro Legarreta, a tourist from Puerto Rico, said after diving into the ocean.

Psychedelic therapy begins in Colorado, causing tension between conservatives and veterans

By JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press/Report for America

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — As Colorado becomes the second state to legalize psychedelic therapy this week, a clash is playing out in Colorado Springs, where conservative leaders are restricting the treatment over objections from some of the city's 90,000 veterans, who've become flagbearers for psychedelic therapy to treat post-traumatic stress disorder.

Colorado residents voted to legalize the therapeutic use of psilocybin, the chemical compound found in psychedelic mushrooms, in a 2022 ballot measure, launching two years of rulemaking before it could be used to treat conditions such as depression and PTSD.

This week, companies and people will be able to apply for licenses to administer the mind-altering drug, though treatment will likely not be available for some months as applications are processed.

Colorado joined Oregon in legalizing psilocybin therapy, though the drug remains illegal in most other states and federally. Over the last year, a growing number of Oregon cities have voted to ban psilocybin. While Colorado metros cannot ban the treatment under state law, several conservative cities have worked to preemptively restrict what are known as "healing centers."

At a City Council meeting in Colorado Springs this month, members were set to vote on extending the state prohibition on healing centers from 1,000 feet (305 meters) to 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) from certain locations, such as schools. From the lectern, veterans implored them not to.

"We have an opportunity to support veterans, and it's a really easy one to say 'Yes' to," said Lane Belone, a special forces veteran who said he's benefited from his own psychedelic experiences. Belone argued that the restrictions effectively limit the number of centers and would mean longer waiting lists for the treatment.

Veterans have pulled in some conservative support for psychedelic therapy — managing to set it apart from other politically charged drug policies such as legalizing marijuana.

That distinction was made clear by Councilmember David Leinweber, who said at the council meeting both that marijuana is "literally killing our kids" and that he supported greater access to psilocybin therapy.

Psilocybin is far more restricted in Colorado than marijuana, which the state legalized in 2014. Psilocybin is decriminalized but there won't be recreational dispensaries for the substance, which will be largely confined to licensed businesses and therapy sessions with licensed facilitators.

Patients will have to go through a risk assessment, preliminary meetings, then follow-up sessions and remain with a facilitator while under the drug's influence. The psilocybin will also be tested, and the companies that grow them regulated by a state agency.

Still, allowing broader access to the treatment hasn't been easy for most of the city councilmembers, including three who are veterans. Colorado Springs is home to several military installations, including the U.S. Air Force Academy, and local leaders have touted it as an ideal community for retired service members.

"I will never sit up here and criticize a veteran for wanting to find a medical treatment to fix or to help with the issues that they carry," said Council President Randy Helms, a veteran himself.

Still, he continued, "Do I think that it's helpful to not just veterans but to individuals? Probably so. Do I think it still needs to be tested under strict requirements? Yes."

The Colorado Springs City Council passed the proposed restrictions.

While research has shown promise for psychedelic drugs such as psilocybin and MDMA, also known as molly, in helping people with conditions such as alcoholism, depression and PTSD, the scientific field remains in its relatively early stages.

"I'm very positive about the potential value, but I'm very concerned that we've gotten too far ahead of our skis," said Jeffrey Lieberman, a professor of psychiatry at Columbia University, who's been involved in studies of psychedelic drugs' therapeutic efficacy.

The risks, said Lieberman, include customers being misled and paying out of pocket for expensive treatments. He also said there are cases where the drugs can exacerbate some extreme mental health conditions, such as schizophrenia.

In Oregon, where the treatments started in June 2023, costs can reach \$2,000 for one session. Of the over 16,000 doses administered in the state, staff have only called 911 or taken a patient to the hospital five times.

Other Colorado Springs city councilmembers raised concerns that the Food and Drug Administration has not approved psilocybin to treat mental health conditions and, in August, rejected the psychedelic MDMA to treat PTSD. A number of clinical trials are still underway for both drugs.

Some researchers, advocacy groups and veterans worry that waiting on slow-moving bureaucracy — namely the FDA — carries its own risks as people continue to struggle with mental illnesses. Advocates argue that psychedelic therapy offers an option to those for whom talk therapy alone and antidepressants have not helped.

“This is a crisis that we are in, and this is a tool that we can add to our toolbox,” said Taylor West, executive director of the Healing Advocacy Fund, which advocates for psychedelic therapy.

Belone said he’s carried his military experience long after leaving the special forces. It started when he first heard artillery sirens wailing in a U.S. base in Iraq, his breath catching with fear for a few thudding moments.

That fear kept him on edge when he returned stateside and found himself always keeping his back to the wall, looking for exits to the room he was in, never quite able to give himself fully to the music at a concert.

A psychedelic experience with psilocybin, said Belone, helped him connect the fear that attached to him in the war zone to the ceaseless anxiety at home. It didn’t solve everything overnight, he said, but it allowed him to better identify when that humming fear was getting in the way of a joyful life.

Pope calls for commitment to protect life as he doubles down on abortion in New Year’s Day message

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis ushered in the New Year with a renewed appeal for the faithful to reject abortion, calling for a “firm commitment” to protect and respect life from conception to natural death.

Francis, 88, celebrated a New Year’s Day Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica on Wednesday that was dedicated to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

In his homily, he prayed that everyone learns to care for “every child born of a woman” and to protect “the precious gift of life: life in the womb, the lives of children, the lives of the suffering, the poor, the elderly, the lonely and the dying.”

“I ask for a firm commitment to respect the dignity of human life from conception to natural death, so that each person may cherish his or her own life and all may look with hope to the future,” he said, using the terminology of the church’s opposition to abortion and euthanasia.

In recent years, the Argentine Jesuit has been speaking out more emphatically about abortion than he did at the start of his pontificate. After two doctrinaire popes, Francis complained in the first months of his papacy in 2013 that the church had become obsessed by “small-minded rules” about hot-button issues such as abortion.

Francis now regularly refers to procuring an abortion as “hiring a hitman to solve a problem.”

He recently sparked outrage in Belgium when he criticized its abortion law as “homicidal” and announced he wanted to beatify Belgium’s late king who abdicated for a day rather than approve legislation legalizing the procedure. The Vatican recently announced that the beatification process is under way for King Baudouin, who died in 1993.

The morning Mass marked the final big event of Francis’ busy Christmas schedule. For the pope, who suffers from recurrent respiratory problems, this year’s season was even more challenging with the start of the Vatican’s big Holy Year, a once-every-quarter-century celebration of the faith that is expected to bring 32 million pilgrims to Rome during 2025.

Speaking to pilgrims who gathered in a sun-filled St. Peter’s Square, Francis recalled the Jubilee’s central

message of the need to forgive debts. He again called for world leaders from wealthy countries to eliminate or reduce the debts owed by poorer countries.

Francis urged Christian leaders, in particular, "to provide a good example" by taking the lead to forgive debts.

Ukraine halts transit of Russian gas to Europe after a prewar deal expired

By HANNA ARHIROVA and JOANNA KOZLOWSKA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine on Wednesday halted Russian gas supplies to European customers through its pipeline network after a prewar transit deal expired at the end of 2024 and almost three years into Moscow's all-out invasion of its neighbor.

Even as Russian troops and tanks moved into Ukraine in February 2022, Russian natural gas kept flowing through the country's pipeline network — set up when Ukraine and Russia were both part of the Soviet Union — to Europe, under a five-year agreement.

Russia's state-owned energy giant Gazprom earned money from the gas and Ukraine collected transit fees.

Ukraine's energy minister, Herman Halushchenko, confirmed Kyiv had stopped the transit "in the interest of national security."

"This is a historic event. Russia is losing markets and will incur financial losses," Halushchenko said Wednesday on the Telegram messaging app. "Europe has already decided to phase out Russian gas, and (this) aligns with what Ukraine has done today."

At a summit in Brussels last month, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowed that Kyiv would not allow Moscow to use the transits to earn "additional billions ... on our blood, on the lives of our citizens." However, he briefly held open the possibility of the gas flows continuing if payments to Russia were withheld until the war ends.

Gazprom said in a statement Wednesday it "has no technical and legal possibility" of sending gas through Ukraine, due to Kyiv's refusal to extend the deal.

Before the war, Russia supplied nearly 40% of the European Union's pipeline natural gas. Gas flowed through four pipeline systems, one under the Baltic Sea, one through Belarus and Poland, one through Ukraine and one under the Black Sea through Turkey to Bulgaria.

After the war started, Russia cut off most supplies through the Baltic and Belarus-Poland pipelines, citing disputes over a demand for payment in rubles. The Baltic pipeline was blown up in an act of sabotage, but details of the attack remain murky.

The Russian cutoff caused an energy crisis in Europe. Germany had to shell out billions of euros to set up floating terminals to import liquefied natural gas that comes by ship, not by pipeline. Users cut back as prices soared. Norway and the United States filled the gap, becoming the two largest suppliers.

Europe viewed the Russian cutoff as energy blackmail and has outlined plans to completely eliminate Russian gas imports by 2027.

Zelenskyy said Wednesday that halting the transits would see Moscow lose "one of the most profitable and geographically accessible markets" for its gas. In a post on X, he said Russia was "resorting to cynical blackmail of partners."

Russia's share of the EU pipeline natural gas market dropped sharply to about 8% in 2023, according to data from the EU Commission. The Ukrainian transit route served EU members Austria and Slovakia, which long got the bulk of their natural gas from Russia but have recently scrambled to diversify supplies.

Gazprom halted supplies to Austria's OMV in mid-November over a contractual dispute, but gas flows through Ukraine's pipelines continued as other customers stepped in. Slovakia this year inked deals to begin buying natural gas from Azerbaijan, and also to import U.S. liquefied natural gas through a pipeline from Poland.

Among the hardest-hit will be EU candidate country Moldova, which was receiving Russian gas via Ukraine and has brought in emergency measures as residents brace for a harsh winter and looming power cuts.

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Separately from Kyiv's decision to let the transit deal expire, Gazprom said last month it will halt gas supplies to Moldova starting on Jan. 1, citing unpaid debt. Gazprom has said Moldova owes close to \$709 million for past gas supplies, a figure the country has fiercely disputed.

Heating and hot water supplies were abruptly cut off Wednesday to households in Transnistria, Moldova's breakaway region that has for decades hosted Russian troops, as Russian natural gas stopped flowing to the territory, local transit operator Tiraspoltransgaz-Transnistria said.

In an online statement, the company urged residents to gather household members together in a single room, hang blankets over windows and balcony doors, and use electric heaters. It said some key facilities, including hospitals, were exempt from the cuts.

On Dec. 13, Moldova's parliament voted in favor of imposing a state of emergency in the energy sector, as fears mounted that the gas shortages could trigger a humanitarian crisis in Transnistria, for decades dependent on Russian energy supplies.

Many observers have predicted that the looming energy shortage could force people in the separatist territory to travel to Moldova proper, seeking basic amenities to get through the harsh winter and placing further strain on resources.

Moldova, Ukraine and EU politicians have repeatedly accused Moscow of weaponizing energy supplies.

On Wednesday, Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski called Ukraine's move to halt supplies a win for those opposed to the Kremlin's policies. In a post on X, Sikorski accused Moscow of systematic attempts to "blackmail Eastern Europe with the threat of cutting off gas supplies," including through a Baltic pipeline bypassing Ukraine and Poland and running directly to Germany.

Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico claimed Wednesday the end of gas flows via Ukraine "will drastically affect us all in the EU but not Russia."

Fico, whose views on Russia have sharply differed from the European mainstream, has previously criticized Kyiv's refusal to extend the transit deal, and threatened to end electricity supplies to Ukraine in response.

Moscow can still send gas to Hungary, as well as non-EU states Turkey and Serbia, through the Turk-Stream pipeline across the Black Sea.

The steady reduction of Russian gas supplies to European countries has also spurred them to hasten the integration of Ukraine's energy grids with its neighbors to the west.

Last week, private Ukrainian energy utility DTEK said it had received its first shipment of liquefied natural gas from the U.S., delivered through a newly expanded network spanning six countries from Greece to Ukraine — a significant step in reducing regional dependence on Russian energy.

Separately, overnight into New Year's Day, Russia launched a drone strike on Kyiv that left two people dead under the rubble of a damaged building, according to the city administration. At least six people were wounded across the Ukrainian capital, according to Mayor Vitali Klitschko.

Russian shelling also killed a man and wounded two women in Ukraine's southern city of Kherson, regional authorities reported.

Today in History: January 2, Armed militia occupies Malheur refuge in Oregon

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Thursday, Jan. 2, the second day of 2025. There are 363 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Jan. 2, 2016, a heavily armed group led by brothers Ammon and Ryan Bundy seized the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon, beginning a 41-day standoff to protest the imprisonment of two ranchers convicted of setting fires on public land and to demand the federal government turn over public lands to local control.

Also on this date:

In 1942, the Philippine capital of Manila was captured by Japanese forces during World War II.

In 1959, the Soviet spacecraft Luna 1 launched, becoming the first spacecraft to escape Earth's gravity.

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In 1971, 66 people were killed in a pileup of spectators leaving a soccer match at Ibrox Stadium in Glasgow, Scotland.

In 1974, President Richard Nixon signed legislation requiring states to limit highway speeds to 55 miles an hour as a way of conserving gasoline in the face of an OPEC oil embargo. (The 55 mph limit was effectively phased out in 1987; federal speed limits were abolished in 1995.)

In 2023, Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin suffered cardiac arrest after making a tackle during the first quarter of an NFL game against the Cincinnati Bengals, requiring life-saving treatment on the field. The game was cancelled; Hamlin would recover fully and return to play the following season.

Today's Birthdays: Filmmaker Todd Haynes is 64. Baseball Hall of Famer Edgar Martínez is 62. Actor-singer Tia Carrere is 58. Actor Cuba Gooding Jr. is 57. Model Christy Turlington is 56. Actor Taye Diggs is 54. Actor Renée Elise Goldsberry is 54. Actor-comedian Dax Shepard is 50. Singer-rapper Bryson Tiller is 32.