

Groton Daily Independent

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Monday, Jan. 6

Senior Menu: Beef tips on rice, mixed vegetables, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast sliders.

School Lunch: Turkey gravy over mashed potatoes.

Boys JV/JH Wrestling at McCook Central/Montrose (Salem), 5 p.m.

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

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

Tuesday, Jan. 7

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, masehd potato with gravy, oriental blend, cinnamon apple sauce, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg omelets.

School Lunch: Pasta with meat sauce, bread sticks.

Basketball Double Header hosts Warner ((Girls JV at 4 p.m.; Boys JV at 5:15 p.m.; Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity to follow)

Common Cents Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 209 N Main.

Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1:30 p.m.



Wednesday, Jan. 8

Senior Menu: Baked turkey crunch, Italian blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Cheese stuffed breadsticks, marinara sauce.

Groton Chamber Board Meeting, 6 p.m., at City Hall

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

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

Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 9

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, corn, peaches, garlic toast.

School Breakfast: Pancake on a stick.

School Lunch: Sweet and sassy chicken, rice.

Girls Basketball hosts Clark/Willow Lake (JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow)

Groton Lions Club meeting, 6 p.m., 104 N Main

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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.

Arctic Blast

At least 60 million people across dozens of states were under winter weather alerts over the weekend as a massive winter storm swept across the US from the Rockies to the East Coast. The system arrived in the Midwest late Saturday, dropping up to a foot of snow in many locations. Some parts of eastern Kansas reported as much as 18 inches.

Lengthy stretches of highways were shut down in a number of locations, including an 18-mile segment of I-70 in Kansas. As of early this morning, almost 10,000 flights had been canceled or delayed and more than 300,000 customers were without power. No deaths had been reported as of this writing. The snow comes along with a mass of Arctic air expected to drop temperatures significantly below average from North Dakota to as far south as the Gulf Coast.

Golden Globes

The 82nd annual Golden Globe Awards kicked off the 2025 awards season last night with a mix of expected and surprising wins. The ceremony was hosted by comedian Nikki Glaser, marking the first time a woman has solo hosted the Golden Globes.

Postwar epic "The Brutalist" emerged as the night's big winner, taking home the awards for best drama, best director (Brady Corbet), and best actor in a motion picture (Adrien Brody). In the musical or comedy category, "Emilia Pérez" secured multiple awards, including best film, best supporting actress for Zoe Saldaña, best song, and best non-English language film.

Demi Moore's win for best actress in a comedy or musical for "The Substance" marked the actress's first major acting award. On the television side, "Shōgun" won best drama, and "Hacks" won best comedy.

Congestion Pricing Begins

The first congestion pricing plan in the US went into effect yesterday, with drivers heading into a large swath of Manhattan paying a \$9 fee during peak hours. The program, meant to reduce notoriously gridlocked traffic and encourage the use of public transit, is the culmination of an effort first proposed by then-Mayor Michael Bloomberg (R) in 2007.

The pricing zone extends from the bottom of Central Park to the island's southern tip, with the charges dropping by 75% during overnight hours. City officials say the toll is expected to generate \$500M in revenue annually over the first three years, which will be reinvested in public transportation infrastructure.

Manhattan is one of the most densely populated counties in the US—average taxi speeds in midtown sank below 5 mph early last year. One analysis pegged New York City as the world's most congested metro area, with drivers losing 101 hours due to traffic delays each year.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Jeff Baena, indie filmmaker and husband of Aubrey Plaza, dies by suicide at age 47.

Gwen Van Dam, supporting character actress whose career spanned 70 years, dies at age 96.

The 2024 NFL regular season wraps; see playoff bracket and schedule.

Baltimore Ravens star Lamar Jackson becomes first NFL player with 4,000 passing and 900 rushing yards in a season.

Michael J. Fox, Hillary Clinton, Magic Johnson, and Bono among 19 awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Joe Biden.

Science & Technology

CES 2025, the world's largest consumer technology conference, gets underway this week in Las Vegas; see anticipated announcements.

Study suggests sleep may play a key role in strengthening the brain's ability to block out unwanted or unpleasant memories during waking hours.

Scientists develop artificial blood vessel system to study how snake venom causes internal bleeding; around 100,000 people die from snake bites each year worldwide.

Business & Markets

Stocks close up Friday (S&P 500 +1.3%, Dow +0.8%, Nasdaq +1.8%); gains snap five-day losing streak for S&P and Nasdaq.

Average US 30-year fixed mortgage rate hits six-month high at 6.9%.

Microsoft to invest \$80B in expanding its AI infrastructure in fiscal year 2025; half of expected spending to be in the US.

Meta's Nick Clegg, longtime vice president for global affairs and former UK deputy prime minister, to step down; Joel Kaplan, who was deputy chief of staff to former President George W. Bush, to assume role.

Politics & World Affairs

Standoff between suspended South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's security forces and police continues as arrest warrant for Yoon is set to expire; Yoon was impeached following a botched attempt to declare martial law in December.

Funeral services for former President Jimmy Carter begin in home state of Georgia; Carter to head to the US Capitol to lie in state tomorrow and Wednesday.

Congress to certify President-elect Donald Trump's presidential victory in Congress today.

Ukraine launches offensive in the Russian region of Kursk; Ukraine captured significant chunks of the Russian territory in August but has ceded gains since.

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Girls NEC Standings

Roncalli	2-0	5-1
Clark/Willow Lake	1-0	4-1
Hamlin	1-0	3-1
Deuel	1-0	2-2
Groton Area	2-1	4-1
Webster Area	1-1	2-3
Britton-Hecla	1-1	1-5
Tiospa Zina	0-1	3-2
Sisseton	0-1	2-3
Milbank	0-1	2-2
Redfield	0-2	1-3

Hamlin 44, Groton Area 41
Groton Area 48, Sisseton 45
Groton Area 51, Redfield 9
Roncalli 64, Redfield 10
Roncalli 61, Webster Area 22
Britton-Hecla 43, Tiospa Zina 29
Webster Area 50, Britton-Hecla 29
Deuel 53, Britton-Hecla 45
Clark/Willow Lake 72, Milbank 39
Redfield at Deuel Postponed

Jan. 7

Milbank at Britton-Hecla
Tiospa Zina at Webster Area

Jan. 9

Clark/Willow Lake at Groton Area
Britton-Hecla at Redfield
Deuel at Webster Area
Hamlin at Tiospa Zina

Jan. 10

Roncalli at Sisseton

Jan. 11

Webster Area vs. Clark/Willow Lake at Willow Lake

Jan. 14

Milbank at Tiospa Zina

Jan. 16

Groton Area at Tiospa Zina
Milbank at Redfield
Hamlin at Webster Area

Boys NEC Standings

Roncalli	2-0	3-3
Clark/Willow Lake	1-0	5-0
Hamlin	1-0	3-1
Deuel	1-0	4-0
Groton Area	3-1	3-2
Britton-Hecla	2-1	3-1
Sisseton	0-1	1-3
Redfield	0-1	0-2
Tiospa Zina	0-1	0-5
Milbank	0-1	0-2
Webster Area	0-3	1-5

Hamlin 69, Groton Area 41
Groton Area 73, Sisseton 41
Groton Area 76, Webster Area 46
Groton Area 86, Redfield 11
Roncalli 61, Redfield 34
Roncalli 72, Webster Area 32
Britton-Hecla 67, Tiospa Zina 38
Britton-Hecla 56, Webster Area 46
Deuel 73, Britton-Hecla 53
Clark/Willow Lake 52, Milbank 35
Redfield at Deuel postponed

Jan. 7

Milbank at Britton-Hecla
Tiospa Zina at Webster Area

Jan. 9

Britton-Hecla at Redfield
Deuel at Webster Area
Hamlin at Tiospa Zina

Jan. 10

Groton Area vs. Clark/Willow Lake at Clark

Jan. 11

Webster Area vs. Clark/Willow Lake at Willow Lake

Jan. 16

Groton Area at Tiospa Zina
Sisseton at Roncalli
Milbank at Redfield
Hamlin at Webster Area

Jan. 17

Deuel vs. Clark/Willow Lake at Willow Lake

"Let's Get Moving!"

As we start the New Year, many people are making resolutions and setting goals for the next 12 months. One of the most common resolutions is to be more active. At Prairie Doc, we want all of our viewers to be both healthy and happy. This week, On Call with the Prairie Doc will be showcasing different ways people can incorporate movement into their lives. There is truly something for everyone.

Personally, I've explored a variety of activities with varying levels of success and competence. Regardless of the activity, what has made many of these experiences memorable and enjoyable are the people I have met along the way. Some of my most cherished friendships have formed through shared activities, proving to be just as beneficial to my mental health as any physical benefits of the activity itself.

Let me share some of the more unusual ways that I've stayed active throughout my life. In fourth grade, I joined the wrestling team. I became the first girl in my school to do so. I was not particularly good, ending the season with a 1-11 record. However, I was proud of myself for trying. By sixth grade, two other girls joined the team with me.

In junior high I tried volleyball, and while I loved, but was not very skilled. The place I did excel in was taekwondo. I started when I was ten and earned my 3rd degree black belt while in college. When I was in medical school, I still found time for activities and needed to try things that were the complete opposite of my school work. I tried rock climbing, belly dancing, and fencing. All activities that were outside my comfort zone, but quickly became welcome breaks from studying.

In Brookings, we are blessed with a multitude of activities in the area to try. I have participated in an adult kickball league. I have also started curling with the Brookings Curling Club. This game involves not only skill and strategy but a little bit of luck. On Prairie Doc, viewers will get to see me doing my favorite exercise activity, aerial silks. My medical residency training was in Baraboo, Wisconsin, the home town of the Ringling Brothers. I always loved the circus and aerial silks allows me to feel like I have joined the circus, if only for a few moments.

Finding the right activity may take some trial and error, but once you find something you love it will be worth it. So, as you set your goals for the coming year, consider trying something completely different. You may just discover an activity that brings you joy and a new community of friends along the way. Until next time, Stay healthy and active out there!

Jill Kruse, D.O. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices as a hospitalist in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook, Instagram, and Threads featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show, 2 podcasts, and a Radio program, providing health information based on science, built on trust, streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central and wherever podcast can be found.



Jill Kruse, DO

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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

Sunday Night Football versus the Detroit Lions. The final game of the regular season. A nationally televised game. The first time in NFL history two teams met in the regular season with 14 wins each. The division on the line. The number one seed on the line, and the coveted bye-week that comes along with it. This game was going to give us a glimpse of how prepared the Vikings were for the playoffs. And what did they do? They played their worst game of the season in a 31-9 loss...

The game started well. The Lions got the ball first and were forced to punt, but the Vikings couldn't do anything on offense so they punted right back. The Lions scored a touchdown on their next drive, taking an early 7-0 lead. The two teams traded punts on the next two drives, then they both turned the ball over – the Vikings' turnover coming from a failed fourth-down play from the three-yard line, Detroit's turnover coming from an Ivan Pace Jr. interception. Three incomplete passes later, the Vikings kicked a field goal. The Lions failed a fourth-down attempt on their next possession, giving the ball back to the Vikings with three and a half minutes left in the first half. Although the drive stalled in the red zone, Minnesota kicked a field goal with 20 seconds left, cutting the deficit to one point. With the Vikings getting the ball to begin the second half, the momentum felt like it was shifting. But, in true Vikings fashion, they shanked the kickoff, giving Detroit the ball at the 40-yard line. Two plays and 30 yards later, the Lions kicked a field goal, extending their lead.

The Vikings got the ball to begin the second half, and once again failed a fourth down attempt just a few yards away from the endzone. Luckily, Harrison Smith intercepted an errant pass by Jared Goff, giving the ball right back to the Vikings, but the offense could only manage a field goal, and once again the game was within one point. That's when the game got ugly. The next six total drives were: a Lions' touchdown, then a Vikings' missed punt, then a Lions touchdown, followed by a Vikings punt, then another Lions' touchdown followed by the Vikings turning the ball over on downs.

Stick a fork in this team. They're done.

Sam Darnold stunk, only completing 18 of 41 passes for 166 yards. The ground game was decent, with Cam Akers, Aaron Jones, and Sam Darnold combining for 120 yards on 19 carries. Justin Jefferson caught three passes for 54 yards, while Jordan Addison had one catch for exactly zero yards.

The Vikings' defense played better than the offense, but that was a very low bar. Jonathan Greenard and Jonathan Bullard each had a sack, while Ivan Pace Jr. and Harrison Smith each had an interception.

Looking ahead, the Vikings will travel to LA to take on the Rams. Eerily reminiscent of earlier this season, when the Vikings' win streak was stopped by Detroit followed by a loss to the Rams in LA. Let's hope this game turns out better, but after Sunday's performance, I'm not holding my breath.

Minnesota Tried Algebra for all Eighth Graders - It Hasn't Gone Well

Some places are moving to universal early algebra. Minnesota has required it for years — with less-than-promising results.

ESG University

Environmental Social Governance

BRAHAM, Minn. — It was fourth-period Basic Algebra 8 class on a gray October morning at Braham Area High School. Teacher Rick Riccio had assigned an exercise on converting large integers to scientific notation, but fifteen minutes in, some students had lost focus. Two girls at a back table sang, their worksheets empty. Two boys pulled up games on their laptops, as two other girls discussed what they'd name their children someday.

Riccio tried to reel them in as he walked around answering questions. "You're a little too crazy today," he said to the girls in the back. "You gotta settle down and get this done."

Not all eighth graders are ready for the abstract concepts — like variables, linear functions, slope — that come with Algebra I, some experts and teachers say. Those more complex ideas also require extended concentration, which is difficult for many middle schoolers.

"Eighth grade, they're just in full-on puberty, hormones," said Zach Loy, another math teacher at the high school, an hour's drive from Minneapolis. "Are they capable of sitting down and focusing on one thing for two, three minutes at a time without getting distracted? I see that as being the hardest barrier."

But under a 2006 Minnesota law designed to boost the number of students going into math and science careers, all eighth graders were required to take Algebra I. At the time, legislators argued that getting more kids through algebra before starting high school would ensure they were on a path to graduate having taken calculus, often seen as a gateway for entry to selective colleges and to well-paying jobs in fields like engineering and medicine.

There was a logic behind that: In a traditional course sequence, finishing calculus is easier if students take Algebra I by eighth grade since they can continue on to geometry, Algebra II, precalculus or trigonometry, and then calculus their senior year.

But a Hechinger Report analysis of federal data shows Minnesota's law hasn't worked out as planned. Between 2009 and 2017, the share of the state's students taking calculus did rise modestly, from 1.25 to 1.76%. But other states saw far larger gains, and Minnesota dropped from sixth to 10th place among states for calculus enrollment as a share of total enrollment. (2017 is the latest year for which there are compiled federal data on calculus enrollment, according to U.S. Department of Education spokesperson Alberto Betancourt.)



On October 25, 2024, 14-year-old Peyton Schulz focuses intently as he works through his class assignment in Mr. Loy's algebra class, at Braham Area High School in Braham, Minnesota. Photo by Patience Zalanga for The Hechinger Report

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On the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a national test done every two years, Minnesota fell from second place among the 50 states in 2009 on eighth grade math scores to eighth place in 2022, the latest year of available data.

Braham and other districts report that there's been no change in the number of their students taking calculus, in part because many students just aren't interested in STEM-heavy careers, administrators say. In addition, state education leaders responded to the 2006 mandate by introducing a policy in 2007 that enabled students to take Algebra I over two years instead of one, neutralizing the effect of starting the course earlier.

In many school districts around the country, algebra has become a hot button issue, with some parents pushing their kids to take it in eighth grade — and school districts to offer it then — because of the opportunities it may unlock in high school and beyond. But the share of students in eighth grade algebra who are Black or Hispanic has remained low. A few districts have tried eliminating the eighth grade algebra option altogether as a way to increase equity and get rid of separate advanced and standard math tracks, stirring parent opposition.

Minnesota went the opposite route, effectively giving students the same opportunities by placing everyone on an accelerated track. Its experience suggests early universal algebra isn't a cure-all for boosting the share of students in advanced math.

"That replicates what most of the studies have found," said Scott Peters, senior research scientist at educational assessment organization NWEA. Early algebra does appear to slightly boost enrollment in advanced math courses in the short term — for example, more 10th graders taking Algebra II — but the effect fades as students get older, he said.

And there could be a downside. A 2015 study found that a brief experiment by California to enroll all eighth graders in algebra backfired, lowering test scores in large districts, though it had little effect on small and mid-sized ones. "If you push a kid too far, too fast, they might be either less interested or feel defeated or it hurts their self-efficacy and confidence in math," study co-author Andrew McEachin said.

The roots of universal eighth grade algebra go back to the late 1990s, when policymakers began promoting it to get more students through calculus in high school. That, in turn, would boost their college and career chances — especially for Black and Latino students and those from low-income households — and help U.S. competitiveness, went the thinking. Between 2000 and 2005, the share of U.S. eighth graders enrolled in algebra shot up from 27% to 42%, according to the Brookings Institution. (By 2020-21 it was less than 24%, according to the U.S. Department of Education.)

Minnesota legislators took notice. In 2006, a state education bill required for the first time that the state's eighth graders take Algebra I, starting in the 2010-11 school year. "I remember people saying they wanted to make sure students could complete algebra, geometry, trigonometry and calculus in high school," said former state Sen. Steve Kelley, the bill's co-author. "To do that, we needed to have them take Algebra I in eighth grade."

Many math experts warned against the move. "This whole idea is a very naive belief that if we just



Eighth grade algebra teacher Rick Riccio helps students with a problem at Braham Area High School in Minnesota.

Photo by Patience Zalanga for The Hechinger Report

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kind of make it for everybody, everyone will learn," Brookings education researcher Tom Loveless told the Pioneer Press in 2008. That same year the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics recommended against mandating Algebra I at a prescribed grade level. "Exposing students to such coursework before they are ready often leads to frustration, failure, and negative attitudes toward mathematics and learning," the group wrote.

But Minnesota kept universal algebra in eighth grade and to date is the only state that's adopted and stuck with the policy. California mandated its plan in 2008 but reversed course in 2010 after a court-ordered postponement and pressure to adopt the Common Core standards, which recommended that eighth graders take pre-algebra, not algebra. About 6.4% of school districts around the country, most of them in Minnesota, report having policies mandating algebra in eighth grade.

At Braham and other Minnesota districts, the algebra-to-calculus pipeline hasn't materialized. In some districts, not many students head into careers that require calculus, and that's been true both before and after the mandate, said district leaders. Most students pursue fields in which calculus isn't needed, like nursing, education, business, or dental hygiene, said district social worker and career advisor Staci Kuhnke. Isanti County, where Braham is located, has about 70 manufacturers, an energy company headquarters, a hospital and a community college.

This year, in a senior class of 47 students, just one is taking calculus, through an arrangement with a local community college, she said. Most students do not take a math course their senior year.

Braham ninth grader Savannah Gudilias, 14, said she wished she'd waited till ninth to start Algebra I. She struggled so much that it hurt her confidence in math. "I didn't understand it and still don't," she said. She wants to be a nurse. "Actually, that takes too much math," she said. "Maybe a teacher. But not a math teacher."

Caden Rivera, a 16-year-old junior, said middle school was the beginning of a math slide for her. She got As in elementary school math but her grades fell once she hit algebra in eighth grade. "I was just really immature and didn't pay attention," she said. "And I needed more time — some people learn slower and others faster." After high school she wants to get a culinary degree and knows she'll need more math, but she has no interest in calculus.

Others are doing well in the course. Sean Oldenburg, an eighth grader, wants to someday get a job at the BNSF Railway Company, where four generations of his family have worked. He thinks he'll pursue an engineering degree, which would mean he'd take calculus in high school. Algebra I in eighth grade has been a stretch. "I could do multiplication tables, all that stuff great," he said. "Then you started adding these symbols, and I didn't get it." But he's confident he'll master it. "It just takes time," he said.

When it comes to math, Braham's leaders have worries that are more basic than getting students to calculus. District scores on state eighth grade math tests have lagged behind the state average most years since 2010. The district, which at fewer than 800 students is small, is 87% white and has a poverty level in the low-to-middle range, with 44% of students getting free and reduced-price lunch.

Ken Gagner has been Braham's superintendent since 2015. Gagner, trim and graying, is mostly neutral on eighth grade algebra for all — he said it's good for students to be exposed to increased rigor but worries those who aren't ready for the course could be turned off to math completely. What the district really needs to address its math gap, he and other administrators said, are more certified math teachers, math tutors to help those struggling and smaller class sizes. Gagner said when the district advertises for math teachers he would be happy "if we would get four applicants."

At Pillager Public School District, 100 miles northwest of Braham in another rural town, eighth grade Algebra I has played out much the same way. Ryan Krominga, the district director of curriculum and instruction, said the mandate came with little direction from the state. So districts simply took their ninth grade algebra textbook and content and started using it in eighth grade, he said.

Many eighth graders aren't developmentally ready for the more complex concepts involved in algebra, he said. They don't get enough time with the concrete elements of math, such as multiplication and division, because there's pressure to get to algebra so quickly, he added.

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"In my experience, it hasn't worked out," he said of the requirement. "I haven't seen that kids have this huge understanding of mathematics or that they've increased their algebraic thinking." And the district has seen no increase in the number of students taking calculus, he said. Some years they don't offer the class because they don't have enough students who want it.

Not all districts dislike the policy. Jeremy Larson, assistant superintendent of learning and accountability at Moorhead Area Public Schools in the state's far west, said two years of algebra gives the district flexibility to slow down eighth graders who may have been accelerated too fast into Intermediate Algebra, the second part of the district's two course Algebra I sequence. "If they're in Intermediate Algebra as an eighth grader and it's just kind of difficult, we say, 'Hey, let's just take a step back,'" said Larson.

And unlike the other two districts, Moorhead's calculus numbers have increased, though not by much: An average of 1.3% of students in the district were enrolled in calculus in the three years before the eighth grade requirement took effect in 2010. Today it's about 1.5%, or 13 more students per year in a district with total enrollment of about 6,200.

The Minnesota Department of Education contends that the state's drop in calculus enrollment and eighth-grade math scores compared to those of other states isn't representative of its larger efforts. "These are two of many measures of student success that MDE looks at to guide our support of school communities," said spokesperson Anna Arkin in an emailed response to Hechinger's findings. "We are invested in every student receiving a world class education and thriving in school."

There's been no pressure to change the mandate. That's in part because of the 2007 revision legislators made to the state education standards, enabling schools to stretch algebra over two years, said Mike Weimerskirch, associate professor at the University of Minnesota's School of Mathematics. Weimerskirch said the issue didn't come up during the latest state committee revision of the math standards. "It's been long enough now that it's just kind of become accepted, become part of the culture, and we've learned to deal with it," he said.

Back in Riccio's eighth grade algebra class a day later, slowing down made a difference. Riccio decided that it would be a catchup session because so many students struggled with scientific notation the day before. "Looking at some of these papers that you guys handed in, a lot of you have not gotten this concept," he said. He went through the procedures again and put up an integer on the whiteboard. "So what is our number then?" he asked.

"Would it be 5 times 10?" offered one student. "Why is it 5? No," said Riccio, as students started cross-talking. "Everybody pay attention. Everybody quiet. Focus." He wrote another large integer on the whiteboard. "What if I give you something like this? Any volunteers?"

"Can I try it?" said James Belland, a tall 14-year-old in a red T-shirt. "Jimmy, take a stab at it please," said Riccio. Belland came to the whiteboard and wrote the conversion.

"You got it Jimmy," said Riccio. "Everybody give him a round of applause." The kids clapped and cheered. Riccio put up another problem and asked whether anyone else wanted to try. Ten hands shot up.

"It's nice when these kids start getting it," said Riccio afterward.

This story about eighth grade algebra was produced by The Hechinger Report, a nonprofit, independent news organization focused on inequality and innovation in education. Sign up for the Hechinger newsletter.

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SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Huge surge in 'unclaimed property' is sole revenue bright spot for SD legislators

Record \$308 million amount provides lawmakers with spending choices in an otherwise tight budget

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JANUARY 5, 2025 6:00 AM

Amid the widespread budget cuts that Republican Gov. Kristi Noem proposed during her recent budget address, there was one source of surging revenue that will provide legislators with spending decisions this winter: unclaimed property.

South Dakota received \$308 million worth of unclaimed property this year, nearly double the state's previous record from last year.

Unclaimed property consists of an array of abandoned or forgotten private assets, including money from bank accounts, Paypal accounts, stocks, life insurance payouts, uncashed checks, unused refunds, and even the contents of safe deposit boxes.

"Everything from false teeth to gold bars," state Treasurer Josh Haeder has said.

Holders of the money or items, such as banks, try to find the owners. The property reverts to the state after three years. Much of the money flows into the state budget, while physical items are held in safes at the state Treasurer's Office in Pierre. The office tries to return the items, but after a year, most of them go to a state auction to be converted into revenue for state government.

Rightful owners can still claim their assets from the state at any time, and state government maintains some of the unclaimed property revenue in reserve to pay claims. But much of the money is never reclaimed. Last year, as the state took in \$175 million of unclaimed property, it paid out \$38 million in claims to 6,768 claimants.

The Treasurer's Office maintains a website where people can see if they're owed money, but making a claim is a multi-step process that some people deem unworthy of their time for what could be a few dollars. The process includes filling out an online form and an emailed form, and providing copies of photo identification along with documentation of a Social Security number.

Why unclaimed property is surging

South Dakota has long enjoyed a stream of unclaimed property revenue, due mostly to favorable laws that have prompted some national banks to place their charters in the state.

The last three years have brought large increases in unclaimed property revenue, in part due to the country's continued recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Haeder said the pandemic prompted widespread relocations, and some people left abandoned assets behind. The three-year dormancy period for many of those abandoned assets has now passed.

"We're getting a lot of money from those COVID years," Haeder said.

This year's record amount of unclaimed property is also driven by a big bank that moved its national charter to South Dakota, according to Haeder.

He declined to name the bank, but Bancorp publicly announced the relocation of its headquarters to Sioux Falls last year. U.S. Treasury records show Bancorp holds over \$8 billion in total assets.

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A billion-dollar liability

The value of unclaimed property transferred to the state that's never been claimed by its rightful owners now stands at \$1.19 billion, of which \$549 million has accumulated in just the past three years. Because the state spends much of its unclaimed property revenue, that amount of money is not on hand, but the state is technically liable to pay it if all the claimants came forward at once.

In her recent budget address, Noem proposed putting \$43 million of unclaimed property money in the state's reserve fund, which would increase the fund balance from 10% to 12% of state expenditures and provide a cushion for increased claims.

"This money belongs to the people, and we must be ready to pay it back when those claims come in," Noem said.

Haeder wants the state to change the way it handles unclaimed property revenue. Rather than putting most of it into the state budget every year, he advocates for the creation of an unclaimed property trust fund. That approach would retain money to cover potential claims, while the state could peel off the annual interest.

"That's a more stable source of revenue," Haeder said.

Some lawmakers say a trust fund is unnecessary, noting that some of the funds come from outside the country and unclaimed property older than five years is extremely unlikely to be claimed.

But there is new leadership in the state House and Senate this year, and incoming Senate President Pro Tempore Chris Karr, R-Sioux Falls, supports the trust fund concept.

"It's not the state's money to begin with," Karr said. "Yet, we are in a position where our ongoing expenses are dependent on a certain amount of unclaimed property funds coming in every year."

Spending proposals

South Dakota legislators and governors typically distinguish between ongoing and one-time revenue and expenses. One-time revenue, such as money from a legal settlement or other sudden windfall, has traditionally been used for one-time expenses, like paying off debt or constructing a building without incurring debt. Ongoing revenue, from sources such as sales taxes, is used for the general support of the state's operations.

Noem is proposing numerous cuts in ongoing spending due to declining sales tax revenue. Those include large cuts to the Department of Social Services, Department of Human Services, South Dakota Public Broadcasting, the State Library, the state university system, and the repair and maintenance of state buildings. She's also proposing only a 1.25% funding increase for schools, state employee pay, and health care provider reimbursements.

Yet she's also proposing some increases in ongoing funding, such as her plan to spend \$4 million on the creation of education savings accounts that would provide public funds for families to pay for private school tuition or alternative instruction costs, such as homeschooling.

Noem's proposed budget predicts \$229 million of available unclaimed property revenue for the state after payouts to claimants.

Of that amount, she wants to label \$61 million as ongoing revenue. In her budget address, she said that's the amount "we can safely and responsibly plan for moving forward."

"We are considering everything above that amount to be one-time revenue," Noem said.

That's \$167.7 million of one-time revenue from unclaimed property. When that's combined with unspent money from the current budget and other one-time sources, Noem's fiscal year 2026 budget anticipates about \$280 million in one-time revenue that lawmakers can choose how to spend.

She wants to use \$182 million to continue building up a fund to build a prison south of Sioux Falls, which would replace the Sioux Falls penitentiary, parts of which date to 1881.

The state has already set aside \$567 million for the project, which is expected to cost \$825 million. Noem said the state expects \$76 million in interest earnings from the prison fund. The interest and the proposed \$182 million would fully fund the project, she said.

Other major one-time expenses recommended by Noem include:
\$54 million to pay off bonds for the state Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Lab, Precision Agriculture building at South Dakota State University, and some state fish hatcheries.
\$13 million for a dam replacement project at the Richmond Lake Recreation Area near Aberdeen.
\$5 million to improve state government's information technology infrastructure.
\$10 million for grants to improve safety in K-12 schools.
\$5 million to cover costs associated with emergencies and disasters.
\$2.6 million for wildfire suppression efforts.
\$2.1 million to help recruit medical professionals to rural areas.
\$425,000 for tax refunds to low-income elderly and disabled residents.
\$75,000 to expand the state veterans cemetery.

Lawmakers will begin debating Noem's budget proposals when they convene Jan. 14 at the Capitol in Pierre for their 38-day lawmaking session. Noem is expected to resign sometime after President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration on Jan. 20 to accept his nomination as secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, assuming Noem is confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

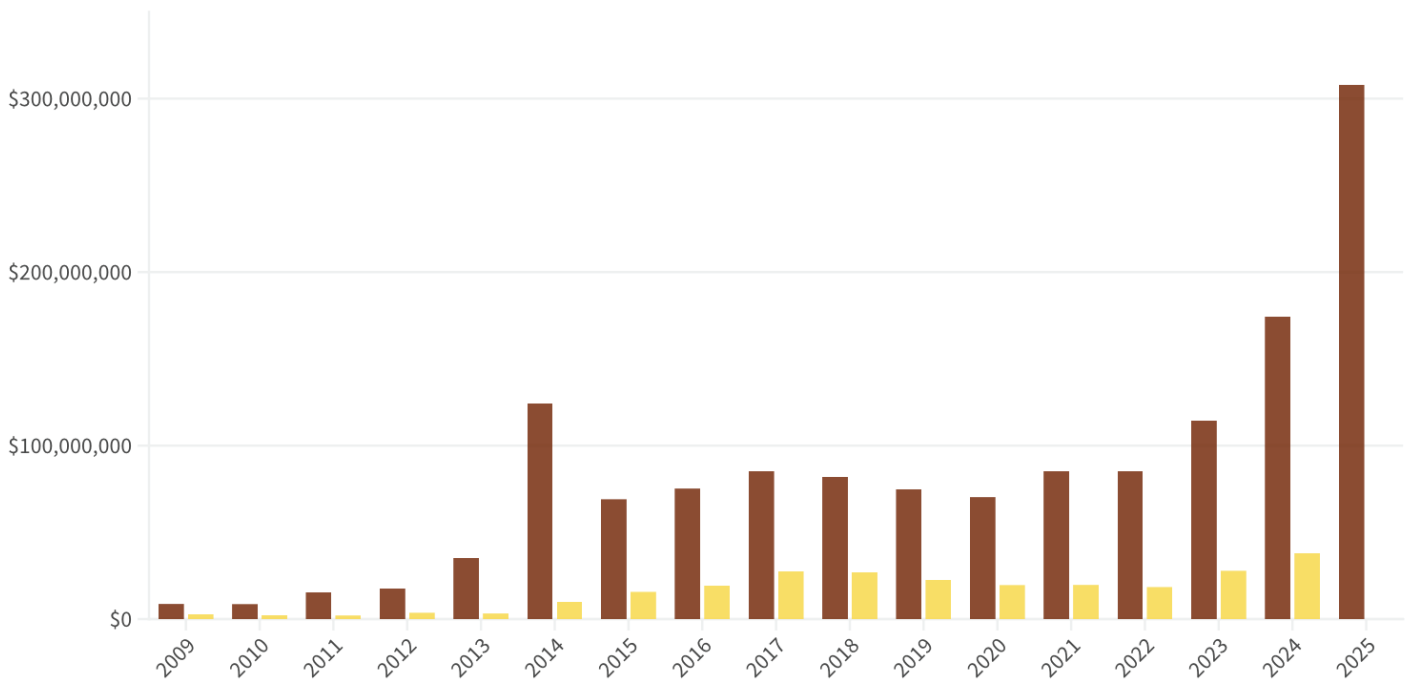
Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist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

Unclaimed property in South Dakota

Fiscal Year 2009 to 2025



■ Unclaimed property received ■ Claims paid

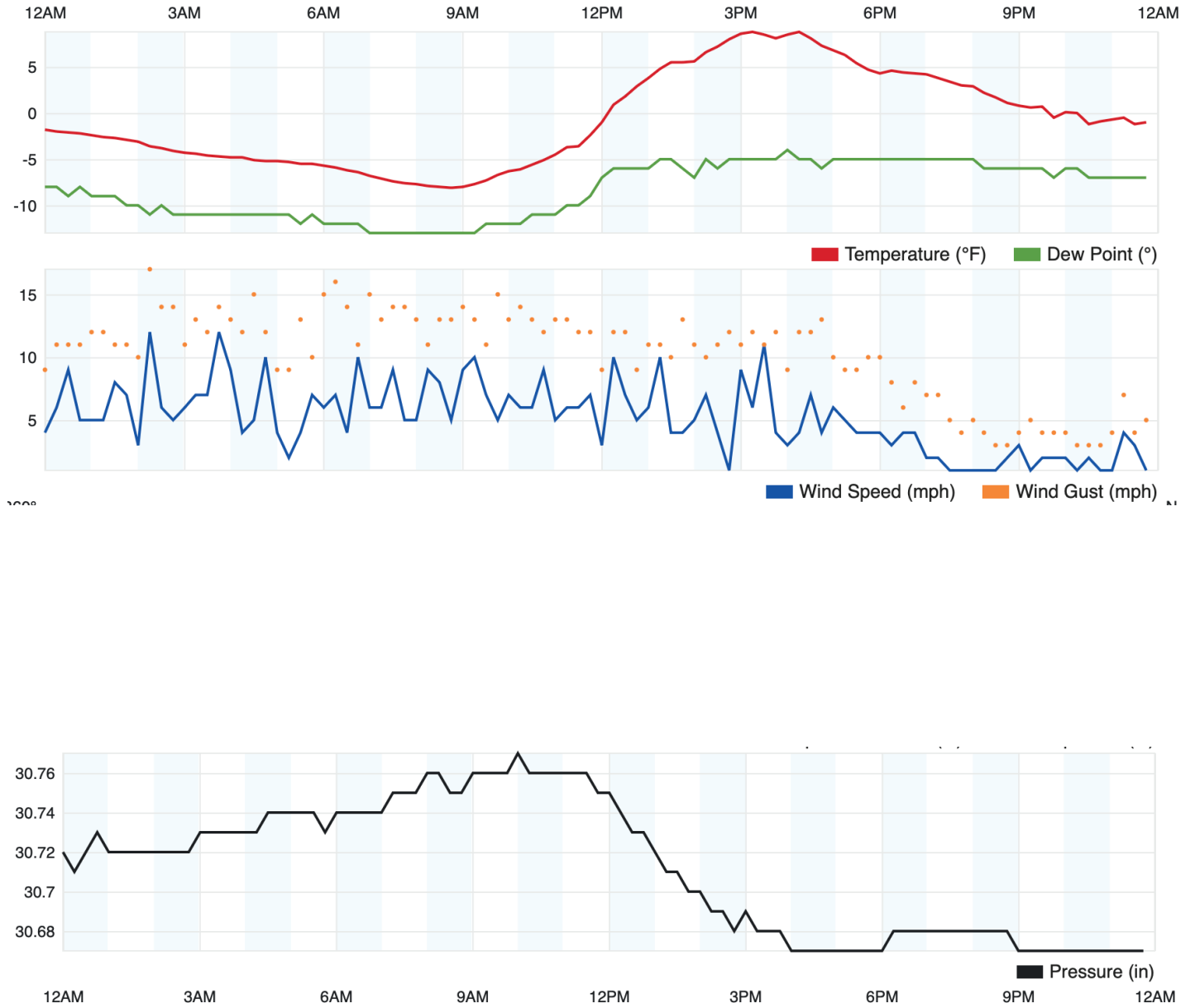


Source: SD State Treasurer's Office

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 13 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Tonight



Low: 4 °F

Slight Chance Snow

Tuesday



High: 13 °F

Gradual Clearing

Tuesday Night



Low: -2 °F

Mostly Clear

Wednesday



High: 22 °F

Mostly Sunny



Cold Temperatures Continuing

January 5, 2025

5:11 AM

Below normal temperatures expected through Tuesday

- Temperatures remaining well below normal over the next few days. Will struggle to reach the teens until Monday afternoon.
- Wind chill values from **15 below to 30 below zero** will be common across a large part of the area this morning. Coldest over far northeast SD and west central MN.
- Under these conditions, frostbite and hypothermia can occur in as little as 30 minutes. Limit outdoor activity when possible and bundle up if you have to go outside.

	Sun						Mon						
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm
Aberdeen	-3	-4	2	8	4	-1	-3	-4	-4	-2	8	14	11
Britton	-10	-9	-3	1	-2	-5	-7	-8	-7	-6	6	11	8
Brookings	-2	0	7	10	5	0	-2	-5	-5	-1	11	17	12
Chamberlain	5	5	7	11	8	4	1	-1	-3	0	9	15	13
Clark	-3	-3	3	6	3	-1	-3	-4	-4	-2	9	13	10
Eagle Butte	-2	1	4	6	3	0	0	-2	0	3	11	16	14
Ellendale	-8	-6	1	6	2	-1	-3	-4	-5	-1	9	14	11
Eureka	-3	-3	2	7	3	-1	-2	-3	-4	-2	9	14	11
Gettysburg	-5	-2	2	7	3	-1	-3	-4	-4	-2	8	12	11
Huron	1	4	7	9	6	2	-1	-2	-3	-1	9	15	13
Kennebec	2	5	7	8	5	1	-1	-4	-4	0	9	14	13
McIntosh	-4	-1	4	8	5	1	1	2	2	5	13	17	13
Milbank	-5	-5	0	4	1	-3	-4	-4	-5	-3	6	13	9
Miller	-4	0	3	6	3	0	-2	-3	-4	-2	9	14	12
Mobridge	-2	3	7	10	6	4	3	2	2	5	14	17	15
Murdo	2	1	4	7	4	1	0	-2	-1	3	10	16	17
Pierre	2	5	6	9	7	1	0	-2	-1	2	9	15	16
Redfield	-3	-2	2	6	3	-1	-4	-5	-4	-3	7	13	10
Sisseton	-6	-7	-1	4	-1	-3	-5	-5	-5	-3	8	13	9
Watertown	-2	-3	4	8	3	-1	-3	-4	-4	-2	10	15	11
Webster	-6	-7	1	5	0	-3	-5	-5	-4	-3	9	13	9
Wheaton	-9	-8	-3	2	-1	-4	-6	-7	-7	-6	3	9	6



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A cold air mass will remain in place across the Northern Plains through the early part of the week, with highs in the single digits (today) and teens (Monday & Tuesday). Bitterly cold wind chill values will occur this morning across northeast SD into west central MN, with readings from 15 below to 30 below zero. A moderating trend in temperatures is expected by Wednesday.

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This Week's Forecast

January 5, 2025
12:43 PM

A couple rounds of light snow possible this week.

MONDAY



10-17°

LOWS:

0-5°

30% CHANCE FOR
LIGHT SNOW
OVERNIGHT.

TUESDAY



8-14°

LOWS:

-2 - 1°

WEDNESDAY



20-34°

LOWS:

13-22°

THURSDAY



31-36°

LOWS:

11-17°

20-40% CHANCE
FOR LIGHT SNOW.
WIND TO 30 MPH.

FRIDAY



21-28°

LOWS:

9-14°



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A couple chances for light snow are possible this week, but only a light dusting is expected both Monday night and Thursday. Cold air will move out of the area beginning Wednesday, and normal to above normal temperatures will be in place through the rest of the week.

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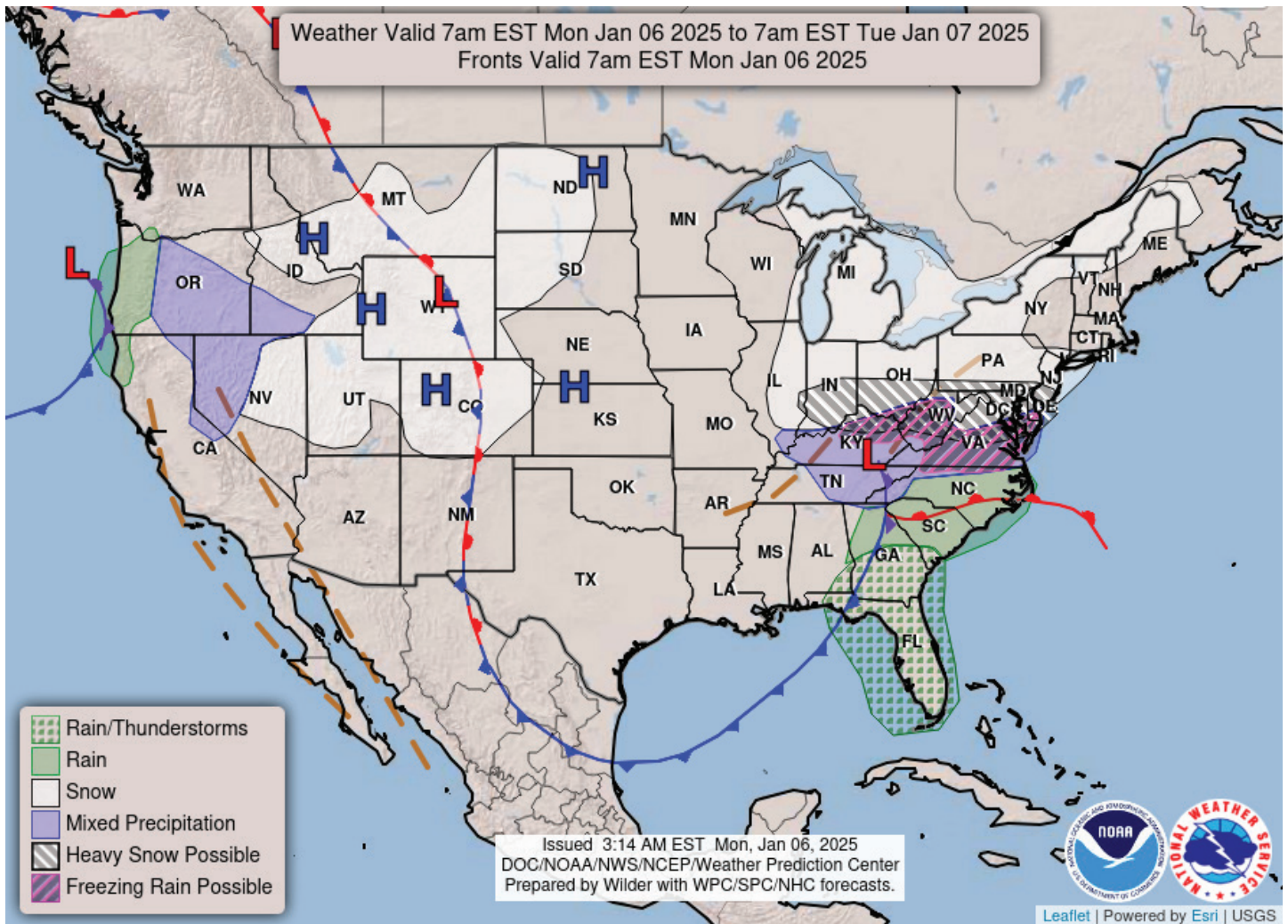
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 9 °F at 3:15 PM
Low Temp: -8 °F at 8:24 AM
Wind: 17 mph at 2:15 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 49 in 2012
Record Low: -30 in 1909
Average High: 24
Average Low: 3
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.13
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.13
Precip Year to Date: 21.71
Sunset Tonight: 5:06:57 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:09:44 am

Day length: 8 hours, 56 minutes



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Today in Weather History

January 6, 1962: Snow, high winds, sub-zero temperatures, and near blizzard conditions caused hazardous driving conditions across the area from the 6th into the 9th. Snowfall of generally 2 to 6 inches with winds of 30 to 40 mph caused widespread low visibilities along with drifts up to 4 foot high across central and northeast South Dakota.

January 6, 2010: A strong Alberta Clipper system tracked southeast through the northern plains on Tuesday night, January 5th through Thursday, January 7th. Sufficient Pacific moisture interacted with bitter cold Arctic air surging south from Canada, resulting in widespread snowfall over northeast South Dakota. Snowfall amounts ranged from 6 to 11 inches. The snow began across northeastern South Dakota in the late evening of the 5th into the early morning hours of the 6th. Many schools closed on the 6th and the 7th. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches in Andover and Doland; 7 inches in Britton, Sisseton, and near Milbank; 8 inches in Aberdeen, Bryant, and near Summit; 9 inches at Wilmot and Castlewood; 10 inches in Clear Lake and 11 inches at Watertown. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

January 6, 2014: The coldest air in recent history moved into the region during the early morning hours of the 5th and continued into the afternoon hours of the 6th. The combination of sub-zero temperatures with north winds produced dangerously cold wind chills from 40 below to around 55 degrees below zero. Winds gusted to over 40 mph at times. Several area activities were canceled, as well as many schools on Monday the 6th. Some of the coldest wind chills include; 56 below in Summit; 55 below near Hillhead; 54 below in Brandt and Webster; 53 below in Clear Lake; 52 below in Herreid; 51 below in Leola; 50 below in Watertown, Sisseton, Bowdle, and McIntosh.

1880 - Seattle, WA, was in the midst of their worst snowstorm of record. Hundreds of barns were destroyed, and transportation was brought to a standstill, as the storm left the city buried under four feet of snow. (David Ludlum)

1884 - The temperature dipped to one degree below zero at Atlanta, GA. It marked the final day of a severe arctic outbreak in the South and Midwest. (David Ludlum)

1886: The "Great Blizzard of 1886" struck the Midwest with high winds, subzero temperatures, and heavy snowfall. These conditions caused as many as 100 deaths, and 80% of the cattle in Kansas perished.

1987 - A storm moving across the western U.S. spread heavy snow into the Central Rockies. Casper WY received 14 inches of snow in 24 hours, a January record for that location. Big Piney WY reported 17 inches of snow. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - It was a bad day for chickens. Heavy snow in Arkansas, with totals ranging up to 16 inches at Heber Springs, claimed the lives of 3.5 million chickens, and snow and ice up to three inches thick claimed the lives of another 1.75 million chickens in north central Texas. Up to 18 inches of snow blanketed Oklahoma, with Oklahoma City reporting a record 12 inches of snow in 24 hours. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A "bonafide blizzard" ripped through south central and southeastern Idaho. Strong winds, gusting to 60 mph at the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, whipped the snow into drifts five feet high, and produced wind chill readings as cold as 35 degrees below zero. The blizzard prompted an Idaho Falls air controller to remark that "the snow is blowing so hard you can't see the fog".(National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Rain and gale force winds prevailed along the Northern Pacific Coast. Winds at Astoria OR gusted to 65 mph. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed over Florida. Five cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Miami with a reading of 86 degrees. The hot spot in the nation was West Palm Beach with a high of 87 degrees. (National Weather Summary)

1996: A severe nor'easter paralyzed the East Coast from January 6 to the 8. In Washington D.C., this storm is also known as the "Great Furlough Storm" because it occurred during the 1996 federal government shutdown. Snowfall amounts from this event include 47 inches in Big Meadows, Virginia; 30.7" in Philadelphia; 27.8" in Newark; 24.6" at the Dulles International Airport; 24.2" in Trenton; 24" in Providence; 22.5" in Baltimore; 18.2" in Boston; 17.1" in D.C.; and 9.6" in Pittsburgh.



"BRED TO RUN"

On the wall behind the desk of a horse breeder is a picture of a newborn colt. It appears to be only a few days old and seems as though it is having a difficult time struggling to stand up. It looks weak and wobbly even though the mother is nearby watching carefully. But underneath the picture are three words engraved on a bronze plate, "Born To Run."

Bred into the genes of the colt are qualities of strength and success, endurance and energy. And even though the colt is unsure and unsteady as it struggles to stand tall, the potential for greatness is inside.

So it is with the Christian. When we are born again, God implants within us His strength and stamina, His power and the potential for a life of victory over sin. He gives us a purpose in life, goals to achieve and a message to proclaim.

With all of its potential the colt is not ready to run. It must endure hours of training and miles of running and learn obedience to its master.

So it is with the Christian. God has given us all that we need to achieve greatness in serving Him. But the greatness will not come unless we discipline ourselves to "study and meditate on the Book of the Law continually – day and night – so that we may be sure to obey all that is written in it. "Only then," Joshua says, "will we succeed!"

Prayer: Lord, we are so blessed to be called Your children and to be called to serve You. Help us to be strong, courageous and unafraid to run the race before us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today : Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. Joshua 1:6-9

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.03.25

20 42 46 59 69 19

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$62,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 19
DRAW: Mins 26 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.04.25

1 3 17 21 34 4

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,350,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 34 Mins
DRAW: 26 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.05.25

6 27 31 33 47 13

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 49 Mins
DRAW: 26 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.04.25

20 26 29 31 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 49
DRAW: Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.04.25

12 25 63 65 66 14

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 18 Mins
DRAW: 26 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.04.25

26 32 43 54 56 24

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$220,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 18 Mins
DRAW: 26 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

South Korean anti-corruption agency and police debate tougher measures to detain impeached president

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea's anti-corruption agency and police debated on Monday more forceful measures to detain impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol after their previous attempt was blocked by the presidential security service last week.

The discussions highlighted the obstacles facing the criminal investigation into Yoon's Dec. 3 martial law decree, which led to his impeachment on Dec. 14. The one-week detention warrant was set to expire at midnight, but the agency requested a new court warrant to extend the timeframe for taking Yoon into custody.

The Seoul Western District Court last week issued a warrant to detain Yoon and a separate warrant to search his residence after he defied authorities by refusing to appear for questioning over his brief power grab. Executing those warrants is complicated as long as Yoon remains in his official residence.

Yoon has described his power grab as a necessary act of governance against a liberal opposition bogging down his agenda with its legislative majority and has vowed to "fight to the end" against efforts to oust him. While martial law lasted only several hours, it set off turmoil that has shaken the country's politics, diplomacy and financial markets for weeks and exposed the fragility of South Korea's democracy while society is deeply polarized.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials, which leads a joint investigation with police and military investigators, revealed Monday it had asked police to take over efforts to detain Yoon, following its prominent role in Friday's failure.

However, the anti-corruption agency backtracked hours later after the police stated it could be legally problematic for them to be entirely responsible for Yoon's detention, given that the warrants had been obtained by the agency.

The agency, which has faced questions about its competence after failing to detain Yoon, said the efforts to execute the warrants would be carried out under the authority of the joint investigation team but did not clarify whether its approach would change.

Police vow more forceful efforts to detain Yoon

Police say they plan to make a more aggressive effort to detain Yoon at the official residence, where members of the presidential security staff were seen installing barbed wire near the gate and along the hills leading up to the building.

A police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity per department rules, told reporters there were discussions with the anti-corruption agency on whether to arrest members of the presidential security staff if they forcefully obstruct efforts to detain Yoon.

When asked about the possibility of deploying police special task forces, the official said "all available options" were being reviewed.

If investigators manage to detain Yoon, they will likely ask a court for permission to make a formal arrest. Otherwise, he will be released after 48 hours.

Meanwhile, the agency has urged the country's acting leader, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, to instruct the presidential security service to comply with the execution of the detention warrant. Choi has yet to publicly comment on the issue.

Yoon's lawyers argued the detention and search warrants against the president cannot be enforced at his residence due to a law that protects locations potentially linked to military secrets from search without the consent of the person in charge — which would be Yoon. They also argue the anti-corruption office lacks the legal authority to investigate rebellion charges and delegate police to detain Yoon.

Yoon's lawyers file complaints

Yoon's lawyers on Monday filed complaints with public prosecutors against the anti-corruption agency's chief prosecutor, Oh Dong-woon, and six other anti-corruption and police officers for orchestrating Friday's detention attempt, which they claim was illegal.

The lawyers also filed complaints against the country's acting national police chief, the acting defense minister and two Seoul police officials for ignoring the presidential security service's request to provide additional forces to block the detention attempt. The lawyers said they also plan to file complaints against some 150 anti-corruption and police investigators who were involved in Friday's detention attempt.

The anti-corruption agency has been weighing charges of rebellion after Yoon declared martial law and dispatched troops to surround the National Assembly. Lawmakers who managed to get past the blockade voted to lift martial law hours later.

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

Winter blast of snow, ice and bitter cold grips the US from the Midwest to the East Coast

By PATRICK WHITTLE and BRIAN WITTE Associated Press

A major winter blast of snow, ice, wind and plunging temperatures in the U.S. stirred dangerous travel conditions from central and southern states all the way to the East Coast early Monday, prompting schools and government offices in several states to close.

Snow and ice blanketed major roads across Kansas, western Nebraska and parts of Indiana, where the state's National Guard was activated to help stranded motorists. At least 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow was expected, along with gusting winds up to 45 mph (72 kph).

The National Weather Service issued winter storm warnings from Kansas and Missouri all the way to New Jersey.

"For locations in this region that receive the highest snow totals, it may be the heaviest snowfall in at least a decade," the weather service said.

Gary Wright wore a parka as he and his husband chipped away at thick ice coating his SUV in a slippery apartment parking lot in Missouri. Wright said he will work remotely Monday, but wanted to scrape off his vehicle as an excuse to spend a little time in the snow. He also is seeking boots for their two older dogs that "won't budge at all" when their paws hit the cold ground.

The polar vortex of ultra-cold air usually spins around the North Pole. People in the U.S., Europe and Asia experience its intense cold when the vortex escapes and plunges southward.

Studies show a fast-warming Arctic is partly to blame for the increasing frequency of the polar vortex extending its icy grip.

Classes canceled

School closings are expected to be widespread Monday. Districts in Indiana, Virginia and Kentucky began announcing cancellations and delays on Sunday afternoon. Kentucky's Jefferson County Public Schools canceled classes, extracurricular activities and athletics for its nearly 100,000 students.

Classes also have been cancelled in Maryland, where Gov. Wes Moore declared a state of emergency Sunday and announced the state government would be closed Monday.

"Keeping Marylanders safe is our top priority. Please stay off the roads during this storm. Prepare your home and family and charge your communications devices in case you lose power," Moore said in a statement.

Car wrecks proliferate as storm hits

Over the weekend, at least 600 motorists were stranded in Missouri, authorities said. Hundreds of car accidents were reported in Virginia, Indiana, Kansas and Kentucky, where a state trooper was treated for non-life-threatening injuries after his patrol car was hit.

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, who declared a state emergency, said government buildings would be closed Monday.

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"We see far too many wrecks out there for people that do not have to be on the roads, so I want to ask: Stay inside," Beshear said.

Virginia State Police reported at least 135 crashes as the storm entered the state Sunday. In Charleston, West Virginia, where several inches (centimeters) of snow had fallen by Sunday night, authorities urged motorists to stay home.

Snow and ice in the forecast

In Indiana, snow fully covered portions of Interstate 64, Interstate 69 and U.S. Route 41, prompting Indiana State Police to plead with motorists to stay off the roads as plows worked to keep up.

"It's snowing so hard, the snow plows go through and then within a half hour the roadways are completely covered again," Sgt. Todd Ringle said.

Roughly 10 inches (25 centimeters) of snow fell in Kansas, with eventual totals predicted to top 14 inches (36 centimeters) for parts of that state and northern Missouri.

In Kentucky, Louisville recorded 7.7 inches (19.5 centimeters) of snow on Sunday, a new record for the date that shattered the previous mark of 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) set in 1910.

The storm was forecast to move into the Ohio Valley and reach the Mid-Atlantic states on Monday, with a hard freeze expected as far south as Florida. Winds downed trees around the Deep South on Sunday.

Air and rail travel also snarled

The storms caused havoc for the nation's passenger railways with more than 20 cancellations Sunday and about 40 planned Monday.

"If local authorities are telling people not to travel, it's counterintuitive to try to run a full slate of services when people are being told to stay home," Amtrak spokesperson Marc Magliari said.

Nearly 200 flights in and out of St. Louis Lambert International Airport were canceled, according to tracking platform FlightAware.

Temperatures plunge

Starting Monday, the eastern two-thirds of the U.S. will experience dangerous, bone-chilling cold and wind chills, forecasters said. Temperatures could be 12 to 25 degrees (7 to 14 degrees Celsius) below normal.

In Chicago, temperatures hovered Sunday in the teens (minus 7 to 10 Celsius) and dropped to 11 below (minus 11.7 Celsius) in International Falls, Minnesota, on the Canadian border.

The Northeastern states are more likely to experience several days of cold after a mostly mild start to winter, said National Weather Service meteorologist Jon Palmer in Gray, Maine.

The cold air likely will grip the eastern U.S. as far south as Georgia with parts of the East Coast experiencing single-digit lows, Palmer said.

Shooting attack on a bus carrying Israelis in the occupied West Bank kills 3

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Gunmen opened fire on a bus carrying Israelis in the occupied West Bank on Monday, killing at least three people and wounding seven others. Violence has surged in the territory since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack out of Gaza ignited the ongoing war there.

The attack occurred in the Palestinian village of Al-Funduq, on one of the main east-west roads crossing the territory. Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service said two women in their 60s and a man in his 40s were killed, and the military said it was looking for the attackers.

Palestinians have carried out scores of shooting, stabbing and car-ramming attacks against Israelis in recent years. Israel has launched near-nightly military raids across the territory that frequently trigger gunbattle with militants. There has also been a sharp rise in attacks on Palestinians by Israeli settlers, leading the United States to impose sanctions.

The Palestinian Health Ministry says at least 838 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank since the start of the war in Gaza. Most appear to have been militants killed in battles with Israeli troops, but the dead also include participants in violent protests and civilian bystanders.

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to "reach the despicable murderers" behind Monday's attack and "settle accounts with them and with everyone who assisted them. No one will be spared."

Hamas praised the attack in a statement but did not claim responsibility for it.

Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war, and the Palestinians want all three territories for their future state.

Some 3 million Palestinians live in the West Bank under seemingly open-ended Israeli military rule, with the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority administering population centers.

Over 500,000 settlers with Israeli citizenship live in well over 100 settlements across the territory, ranging from small hilltop outposts to sprawling communities that resemble suburbs or small towns. Most of the international community considers the settlements illegal.

Meanwhile, the war in Gaza is raging with no end in sight, though there has reportedly been recent progress in long-running talks aimed at a ceasefire and hostage release.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed across the border in a massive surprise attack nearly 15 months ago, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250. Some 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, at least a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Israel's air and ground offensive has killed over 45,800 Palestinians in Gaza, according to local health authorities, who say women and children make up more than half of those killed. They do not say how many of the dead were militants. The Israeli military says it has killed over 17,000 fighters, without providing evidence.

Hamas has suffered major losses but has repeatedly regrouped after Israeli operations. Militants fired three projectiles into Israel from Gaza on Monday, one of which was intercepted, the military said. There were no reports of casualties.

The war has destroyed vast areas of Gaza and displaced 90% of the territory's population of 2.3 million, often multiple times. Hundreds of thousands are enduring a cold, rainy winter in tent camps along the windy coast. At least seven infants have died of hypothermia because of the harsh conditions, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Aid groups say Israeli restrictions, ongoing fighting and the breakdown of law and order in many areas make it difficult to provide desperately needed food and other assistance.

Afghans arrive in the Philippines to complete visa processing for resettlement in US

By AARON FAVILA and EILEEN NG Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — A group of Afghan nationals arrived in the Philippines on Monday to process special immigrant visas for their resettlement in the United States, as part of an agreement between Manila and Washington.

The Philippines agreed last July to temporarily host a U.S. immigrant visa processing center for a limited number of Afghan nationals aspiring to resettle in America.

Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Teresita Daza said the Afghan nationals who landed in the Philippines on Monday were provided entry visas. She said they had completed extensive security vetting and undergone full medical screenings prior to their arrival.

The U.S. government will cover the costs for the Afghan nationals' stay in the Philippines, including their food, housing, security, medical and transportation expenses, she said.

She didn't specify how many Afghans arrived or how long the visa processing will take. Under the Philippines' rules, visa applicants can stay for no longer than 59 days.

A senior Philippine official told The Associated Press last year that only 150 to 300 applicants would be accommodated in the Philippines under the "one-time" deal. The official who had knowledge of the negotiations agreed to speak on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to speak publicly.

The Afghan nationals seeking resettlement primarily worked for the U.S. government in Afghanistan or were deemed eligible for U.S. special immigrant visas but were left behind when Washington withdrew

from the country and Taliban militants took back power in a chaotic period in 2021.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken first relayed the request to his Philippines counterpart in 2022, and President Joe Biden discussed the request with Philippines leader Ferdinand Marcos Jr. when he visited the U.S. last year, Philippine officials said.

Marcos has rekindled relations with the U.S. since winning the presidency by a landslide margin two years ago. In February last year, he allowed an expansion of the American military presence under a 2014 defense agreement in a decision that upset China.

France's former President Sarkozy standing trial over alleged campaign funding by Libya's Gadhafi

By NICOLAS VAUX-MONTAGNY and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — France's former President Nicolas Sarkozy goes on trial Monday over alleged illegal financing of his 2007 presidential campaign by the government of late Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

The so-called "Libyan case," the biggest and possibly most shocking of several scandals involving Sarkozy, is scheduled to run until April 10, with a verdict expected at a later date.

Sarkozy, 69, faces charges of passive corruption, illegal campaign financing, concealment of embezzlement of public funds and criminal association, punished by up to 10 years in prison. Sarkozy, who served as president from 2007 to 2012, has denied any wrongdoing.

The trial involves 11 other defendants, including three former ministers. Franco-Lebanese businessman Ziad Takieddine, accused of having played the role of intermediary, has fled in Lebanon and is not expected to appear at the Paris court.

Sarkozy is looking forward to the hearings "with determination," his lawyer Christophe Ingrain said in a statement.

"There is no Libyan financing of the campaign," the statement said. "We want to believe the court will have the courage to examine the facts objectively, without being guided by the nebulous theory that poisoned the investigation."

Gadhafi's alleged agreement

The case emerged in March 2011, when a Libyan news agency reported that the Gadhafi government had financed Sarkozy's 2007 campaign. In an interview, Gadhafi himself said "it's thanks to us that he reached the presidency. We provided him with the funds that allowed him to win," without providing any amount or other details.

Sarkozy, who had welcomed Gadhafi to Paris with great honors in 2007, became one of the first Western leaders to push for a military intervention in Libya in March 2011, when Arab Spring pro-democracy protests swept the Arab world. Gadhafi was killed by opposition fighters in October that same year, ending his four-decade rule of the North African country.

The next year, French online news site Mediapart published a document said to be a note from the Libyan secret services, mentioning Gadhafi's agreement to provide Sarkozy's campaign 50 million euros in financing.

Sarkozy strongly rejected the accusations, calling the document a "blatant fake" and filing complaints for forgery, concealment and spreading false news.

However, French investigative magistrates eventually said in 2016 the document has all the characteristics of an authentic one, although there is no definitive evidence that such a transaction took place.

The official cost for Sarkozy's 2007 campaign was 20 million euros.

Accusations of witness tampering

French investigators scrutinized numerous trips to Libya made by people close to Sarkozy, then the interior minister, between 2005 and 2007, including his chief of staff Claude Guéant. They also noted dozens of meetings between Guéant and Takieddine, a key player in major French military contracts abroad.

The investigation gained traction when Takieddine told news site Mediapart in 2016 that he had delivered

three suitcases from Libya containing millions in cash to the French Interior Ministry.

However, Takieddine reversed his statement four years later.

Since then, a separate investigation has been launched into alleged witness tampering as magistrates suspect an attempt to pressure Takieddine in order to clear Sarkozy. Sarkozy and his wife, former supermodel Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, were given preliminary charges as financial prosecutors said the former president is suspected of "benefitting from corruptly influencing" Takieddine.

11 other defendants

The other accused are three former French ministers, including Guéant, and a former adviser close to Sarkozy.

Like Takieddine, Franco-Algerian businessman Alexandre Djouhri is accused of having been an intermediary.

The case also involves Gadhafi's former chief of staff and treasurer Bashir Saleh, who sought refuge in France during the Libyan civil war then moved to South Africa, where he survived a shooting in 2018, before settling in the United Arab Emirates.

Other defendants include two Saudi billionaires, a former Airbus executive and a former banker accused of having played a role in the alleged money transfers.

Shukri Ghanem, Gadhafi's former oil minister who was also suspected, was found dead in the Danube River in Vienna in 2012 in unclear circumstances. French investigators were able to find Ghanem's notebook, which is believed to document payments made by Libya.

Gadhafi's spy chief and brother-in-law Abdullah al-Senoussi told investigative judges millions have indeed been provided to support Sarkozy's campaign. Accused of war crimes, he is now imprisoned in Libya.

Sarkozy convicted in 2 other cases

Sarkozy has been convicted in two other scandals — yet the Libyan case appears as the one most likely to significantly affect his legacy.

France's highest court, the Court of Cassation, last month upheld a conviction against Sarkozy of corruption and influence peddling while he was the head of state. He was sentenced to one year in house arrest with an electronic bracelet. The case was revealed as investigative judges were listening to wiretapped phone conversations during the Libya inquiry.

In February last year, an appeals court in Paris found Sarkozy guilty of illegal campaign financing in his failed 2012 reelection bid.

Indonesia launches free meals program to feed children and pregnant women to fight malnutrition

By NINIEK KARMINI and DITA ALANGKARA Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesia's new government started an ambitious project on Monday to fight malnutrition by feeding nearly 90 million children and pregnant women that is expected to cost \$28 billion through 2029, although critics question whether the program is affordable.

The Free Nutritious Meal program delivers on a campaign promise by President Prabowo Subianto, who was elected last year to lead the nation, which has more than 282 million people and Southeast Asia's largest economy. He said the program aims to fight the stunting of growth that afflicts 21.5% of Indonesian children younger than 5 and would raise the income of farmers.

Subianto has pledged to accelerate GDP growth to 8% from 5% now.

In his inauguration speech in October, Subianto said many children are malnourished. His promise to provide free school lunches and milk to 83 million students at more than 400,000 schools is part of a longer-term strategy to develop the nation's human resources to achieve a "Golden Indonesia" generation by 2045.

"Too many of our brothers and sisters are below the poverty line, too many of our children go to school without breakfast and do not have clothes for school," Subianto said.

Subianto's signature program could cost upward of 450 trillion rupiah (\$28 billion) by the end of his term

in 2029. He said his team has made the calculations to run such a program, and "We are capable."

The government's target is to reach an initial 19.5 million schoolchildren and pregnant women in 2025 with a budget of 71 trillion rupiah (\$4.3 billion) so as to keep the annual deficit under a legislated ceiling of 3% of GDP, said Dadan Hindayana, the head of the newly formed National Nutrition Agency.

Hindayana said the money would buy an estimated 6.7 million tons of rice, 1.2 million tons of chicken, 500,000 tons of beef, 1 million tons of fish, vegetable and fruit, and 4 million kiloliters of milk.

Nearly 2,000 cooperatives will be involved in the free meals program by providing eggs, vegetables, rice, fish, meat, milk and other food, Cooperative Minister Budi Arie Setiadi said.

On Monday, a truck carrying food arrived at SD Cilangkap 08, a primary school in the Jakarta satellite city of Depok. The 740 students were provided rice, stir-fried vegetables, tempeh, stir-fried chicken and oranges.

"We will send a team to each school to facilitate the meal distribution to students every day," Hindayana said, adding that the program will provide one meal per day for each student from early childhood education to senior high school, covering a third of the daily caloric needs for children, with the government providing the meals at no cost to recipients.

But the program has drawn criticism from investors and analysts over the scale of its logistics, the burden on state finances and the economy, and its relation to the interests of industrial lobby groups.

Nailul Huda, a researcher at the Center of Economic and Law Studies, said Indonesia's state finances are not strong enough to support the program and this will lead to additional national debt.

"The burden on our state budget is too heavy if it is forced to reach 100% of the target recipients, and it will be difficult for Prabowo's government to achieve the economic growth target of 8%," Huda said.

He warned it could also worsen the external balance of payments for the country, which is already a major importer of rice, wheat, soybeans, beef and dairy products.

Reni Suwarso, the director of Institute for Democracy, Security and Strategic Studies, said the decline in the stunting rate in Indonesia was far from the target of a 14% reduction in 2024.

According to the 2023 Indonesian Health Survey, the national stunting prevalence was 21.5%, down around 0.8% from the previous year. The United Nations Children's Fund estimated that one in 12 Indonesian children younger than 5 suffers from low weight while one in five is shorter than normal. Both conditions are caused by malnourishment.

"That's so bad and must be solved," Suwarso said. "Child malnourishment has severe consequences, threatening the health and long-term development of infants and young children throughout this nation."

Israel helps former soldier leave Brazil over investigation into alleged war crimes in Gaza

By SAM MEDNICK and WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel has helped a former soldier leave Brazil after legal action was initiated against him by a group accusing Israelis of war crimes in the Gaza Strip based in part on soldiers' social media posts.

Israel's Foreign Ministry on Sunday said it had helped the former soldier safely leave Brazil on a commercial flight after what it described as "anti-Israel elements" sought an investigation last week. It warned Israelis against posting on social media about their military service.

The Hind Rajab Foundation, named for a 5-year-old Palestinian girl killed in Gaza, said Brazilian authorities had launched an investigation into the soldier after it filed a complaint based on video footage, geolocation data and photographs showing him taking part in the demolition of civilian homes.

The foundation described the move as a "pivotal step toward accountability for crimes committed in Gaza" during nearly 15 months of war.

There was no immediate comment from Brazilian authorities. Brazilian media reported Saturday that the investigation was ordered by an on-call federal judge in Brazil's Federal District. The decision was issued on Dec. 30 but first reported over the weekend.

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Israel has faced heavy international criticism over its war against Hamas in Gaza, with the International Criminal Court issuing arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defense minister. The International Court of Justice is separately investigating genocide allegations.

The Brazil case raised the prospect that rank-and-file Israeli troops could also face prosecution while abroad.

Israel rejects the international allegations, saying its forces in Gaza are acting in accordance with international law and that any violations are punished within its judicial systems. It blames Hamas for civilian deaths, saying the militant group conceals tunnels and other infrastructure in residential buildings, necessitating their demolition.

Throughout the war, Israeli soldiers have posted numerous videos from Gaza that appear to show them rummaging through homes and blowing up or burning residential buildings. In some, they chant racist slogans or boast about destroying the Palestinian territory.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250. Some 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, at least a third believed to be dead.

Israel's offensive has killed over 45,800 Palestinians in Gaza, according to local health officials. They say women and children make up over half the dead but do not distinguish between civilians and militants. Israel says it has killed over 17,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Israeli airstrikes on Sunday killed five people in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, four in the southern city of Khan Younis and three in Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza, according to health workers. Gaza's Health Ministry said at least 88 people had been killed in the past 24 hours.

Israel's military in a statement said it struck a Hamas command center in Khan Younis and an Islamic Jihad militant in Deir al-Balah.

The war has caused widespread destruction in Gaza and displaced around 90% of the population of 2.3 million people, with many forced to flee multiple times.

Israeli forces kill Palestinian security member

In the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Israeli forces killed a member of the Palestinian security services, calling him a wanted militant.

Israel's paramilitary Border Police said Sunday they carried out an operation in Meithaloun village overnight to arrest Hassan Rabaiya. They said he was killed in a shootout while trying to escape. Israeli authorities released helmet-cam footage that showed police blowing up what they called an explosives lab in his home.

The Palestinian security services identified Rabaiya as a first lieutenant in its Preventive Security force, saying he was killed while "performing his national duty."

Meithaloun is near the West Bank city of Jenin, an epicenter of Israeli-Palestinian violence. The Palestinian Authority has been waging a rare crackdown on militants in Jenin, angering many Palestinians.

Separately on Sunday, the Palestinian Health Ministry in the West Bank said a 17-year-old boy was killed by Israeli gunfire in the urban Askar refugee camp in Nablus. The military said individuals hurled explosives at soldiers operating in the area, who then opened fire and hit one of them.

The internationally recognized Palestinian Authority exercises limited autonomy in parts of the West Bank and cooperates with Israel on security matters. But Israel has long accused it of inciting violence and turning a blind eye to militants, while Palestinian critics view it as a corrupt and ineffective body that aids the occupation.

The West Bank has seen a surge of violence during the war in Gaza. Israel captured both Gaza and the West Bank, as well as east Jerusalem, in the 1967 Mideast war, and the Palestinians want all three territories for their future state.

What to know about Venezuela's upcoming presidential inauguration

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — The next presidential term in Venezuela is set to begin Friday, when the ruling party-controlled congress hosts a swearing-in ceremony for President Nicolás Maduro, despite serious doubts about the validity of last year's official election results.

Maduro is expected to begin a third six-year term amid demonstrations by his supporters, but it is unclear if anyone among the millions who voted for his main challenger, Edmundo González, will also protest. González, who claimed to have won the July 28 election, left Venezuela for exile in Spain in September after a judge issued a warrant for his arrest.

Taking the oath of office will allow Maduro to cement a mishmash of policies that allowed the government to end the scarcities and runaway inflation that dominated most of his 11 years in office. Those measures, however, no longer fulfill his and his predecessor's self-proclaimed socialist promises and continue to strip Venezuela of its democracy.

González has said he intends to be in Caracas on Friday, but he has not explained how he intends to do so or what his plans are upon arrival.

Here's what to know about Venezuela's next presidential term:

Why are there doubts about who should be sworn in as president?

The doubts stem from the government's lack of transparency in handling and announcing the results of the presidential election.

Venezuela's National Electoral Council, stacked with ruling-party loyalists, declared Maduro the winner hours after polls closed. However, unlike previous presidential elections, electoral authorities did not provide detailed vote counts, alleging that a website hack prevented them from doing so.

Yet, the opposition collected tally sheets from 80% of the nation's electronic voting machines, posted them online and said the detailed vote records showed González won the election with twice as many votes as Maduro.

Global condemnation over the lack of transparency prompted Maduro to ask the country's high court, also filled with allies of the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela, to audit the election results. The court, without showing thorough evidence, subsequently reaffirmed Maduro's victory and encouraged the electoral council to release the vote counts. But electoral authorities never did and neither did the ruling party, whose voting center representatives — just like the opposition's — were entitled to tally sheets from every voting machine.

The U.S.-based Carter Center, which Maduro's government invited to observe the presidential election, has said the tally sheets published by the opposition are legitimate.

Will people demonstrate in favor or against Maduro?

The government frequently schedules demonstrations, particularly when it wants to show strength in numbers, such as on Friday. Maduro has called on Venezuelans to head to the streets that day, but not everyone marching with a pro-ruling-party shirt supports him. The government often coerces public employees and state-benefits recipients into participating in demonstrations.

Whether people will protest against Maduro on Friday remains to be seen since the government's post-election repression campaign, including the arrests of more than 2,000 people, has had a chilling effect. And even if opposition supporters decide to demonstrate, it is unclear who would lead them.

On Sunday, opposition stalwart Maria Corina Machado urged supporters to demonstrate on Thursday across the country to push Maduro out of office.

"Maduro is not going to leave on his own, we must make him leave with the strength of a population that never gives up," Machado said in a social media video. "Go outside, shout, fight. It is time to stand firm, and make them understand that this is as far as they go. That this is over."

Machado, who has been hiding for months at an undisclosed location to avoid arrest, told supporters

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she "will be with" them Thursday.

Meanwhile, González remains away from Venezuela and opposition leaders who often accompanied him and Machado to campaign rallies were jailed after the election.

Who will attend the swearing-in ceremony?

Members of the National Assembly, ministers and Maduro's close allies within Venezuela are expected to attend.

The government's centralized public information office did not immediately respond to a request from The Associated Press for a list of the heads of state who have confirmed their attendance.

But the list could be in the single digits since the country's post-election crisis has further isolated Maduro.

Maduro has faced criticism for the election's lack of transparency from dozens of countries, including neighboring Colombia and Brazil, whose leaders had been friendly toward him in practically all other matters. They even attempted to broker a peacemaking deal between his government and the opposition after the July vote. Neither country's president will attend Friday's ceremony and will instead send representatives.

Maduro's last inauguration, in 2019, was attended by Cuba's President Miguel Diaz-Canel and then-Bolivian President Evo Morales.

What is expected of Maduro's next term?

The food shortages and four-digit inflation that characterized most of Maduro's 11-year presidency are gone, but the country's protracted crisis has no end in sight.

These days, the average Venezuelan must cope with a monthly minimum wage of less than \$2, soaring food prices, irregular fuel supply and a substandard public education system. But at the same time, a lucky few with ties to Maduro and his allies benefit from jobs and contracts that allow them to afford imported toilet paper that costs \$70, import and sell vehicles, open made-for-Instagram restaurants, and offer luxury tourism experiences.

That inequality is precisely the kind that was supposed to disappear under the policies that Maduro's mentor and predecessor, the late President Hugo Chávez, described as socialism for the 21st century. It is expected to widen as the government continues to wrestle with an oil-dependent economy crippled by limited crude production, corruption, mismanagement, economic sanctions, firmly restricted credit access and a lack of private investment.

Ahead of the election, voters across the country repeatedly said they or their loved ones would emigrate if Maduro remained in power. Under his watch, more than 7.7 million Venezuelans have already left their homeland in search of better living conditions.

'The Brutalist,' 'Emilia Perez' triumph at Golden Globes

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

Two wildly audacious films — Brady Corbet's 215-minute postwar epic "The Brutalist" and Jacques Audiard's Spanish language, genre-shifting trans musical "Emilia Perez" — won top honors at the 82nd Golden Globes on Sunday.

The Globes, which are still finding their footing after years of scandal and makeover, scattered awards around to a number of films. But the awards group put its strongest support behind a pair of movies that sought to defy easy categorization.

"The Brutalist" was crowned best film, drama, putting one of 2024's most ambitious films on course to be a major contender at the Academy Awards. The film, shot in VistaVision and released with an intermission, also won best director for Corbet and best actor for Adrien Brody. In his acceptance speech, Corbet spoke about filmmakers needing approval on the final cut.

"I was told that this film was un-distributable," said Corbet. "No one was asking for a three-and-half-hour film about a mid-century designer in 70mm. But it works."

"Emilia Pérez" won best film, comedy or musical, elevating the Oscar chances of Netflix's top contender. It also won best supporting actress for Zoe Saldaña, best song ("El Mal") and best non-English language film. Audiard, the French director, made way for Karla Sofía Gascón, the film's transgender star who plays

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a Mexican drug lord who undergoes gender affirming surgery, to speak on behalf of the film.

"The light always wins over darkness," said Gascón, gesturing to her brightly orange dress. "You can maybe put us in jail. You can beat us up. But you never can take away our soul or existence or identity."

"I am who I am. Not who you want."

Demi wins her first Globe

Though the Globes audience was particularly starry, including nominees Zendaya, Timothée Chalamet, Angelina Jolie and Daniel Craig, most of the winners hailed from smaller, less seen films.

That included some surprises. One was Demi Moore's win for best actress in a comedy or musical. Her comeback performance in "The Substance," about a Hollywood star who resorts to an experimental process to regain her youth, landed the 62-year-old Moore her first Globe — a victory that came over the heavily favored Mikey Madison of "Anora."

"I'm just in shock right now. I've been doing this a long time, like over 45 years, and this is the first thing I've ever won as an actor," said Moore, who was last nominated by the Globes for a film role in 1991 for "Ghost." "Thirty years ago, I had a producer tell me that I was a popcorn actress."

Best actress, in a drama film, was an even bigger surprise. The Brazilian actress Fernanda Torres won for her performance in "I'm Still Here," a based-on-a-true-story drama about a family living through the disappearance of political dissident Rubens Paiva in 1970s Rio de Janeiro. Torres dedicated the award to her mother, the great actor Fernanda Montenegro, who appears in "I'm Still Here," too.

"She was here 25 years ago," said Torres. "And this is like a proof that art can endure through life even through difficult moments."

Best supporting actor in a musical or comedy went to Sebastian Stan for "A Different Man," in which Stan plays a man with a deformed face who's healed. Stan, who was also nominated for playing Donald Trump in "The Apprentice," noted that both films were hard to get made.

"These are tough subject matters but these films are real and they're necessary," said Stan. "But we can't be afraid and look away."

Glaser lightly roasts the Globes

Comedian Nikki Glaser kicked off the Globes, with a promise: "I'm not here to roast you."

But Glaser, a stand-up whose breakthrough came in a withering roast of Tom Brady, made her way around the ballroom of the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California, on Sunday picking out plenty of targets in an opening monologue she had worked out extensively in comedy clubs beforehand.

While Glaser might not have reached Tina Fey and Amy Poehler levels of laughs, the monologue was a winner, and a dramatic improvement over last year's host, Jo Koy. Last year's Globes, following a diversity and ethics scandal that led to the dissolution of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, were widely panned. But they delivered where it counted: Ratings rebounded to about 10 million viewers, according to Nielsen. CBS, who waded in after NBC dumped the Globes, signed up for five more years.

Hosting the Globes two weeks before the inauguration of Donald Trump, Glaser reserved perhaps her most cutting line for the entire room of Hollywood stars.

"You could really do anything ... except tell the country who to vote for," said Glaser. "But it's OK, you'll get 'em next time ... if there is one. I'm scared."

The Globes are now owned by Todd Boehly's Eldridge Industries and Dick Clark Productions, which acquired the award show from the now defunct Hollywood Foreign Press Association. However, more than a dozen former HFPA members are currently seeking to have the sale to Eldridge Industries and Dick Clark Productions rescinded.

A win for 'Wicked'

Unlike last year's Oscar race, when "Oppenheimer" rolled, this year's season has more uncertain, with a field of contenders. Most of the movies that are seen as having a chance — "Conclave," "Emilia Perez," "The Brutalist," "Wicked" and "Anora" — came away with at least one award Sunday. The exception was Sean Baker's Palme d'Or-winning "Anora," which went home empty handed despite five nominations.

The Globes' award for cinematic and box-office achievement went to Jon M. Chu's "Wicked," which has

nearly collected \$700 million in theaters. In a heavily arthouse Oscar field, "Wicked" is easily the biggest hit in the best picture mix. Accepting the award, Chu argued for "a radical act of optimism" in art.

Though few awards have been predictable this season, Kieran Culkin is emerging as the clear favorite for best supporting actor. Culkin won Sunday for his performance in Jesse Eisenberg's "A Real Pain," his second Globe in the past year following a win for the HBO series "Succession." He called the Globes "basically the best date night that my wife and I ever have," and then thanked her for "putting up what you call my mania."

The papal thriller "Conclave" took best screenplay, for Peter Straughan's script. "Flow," the wordless Latvian animated parable about a cat in a flooded world, took best animated film, winning over studio blockbusters like "Inside Out 2" and "The Wild Robot." Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross won best score for their thumping music for "Challengers."

TV prizes

Most of the TV winners were oft-awarded series, including the Emmy champ "Shōgun." It won four awards, including best drama series and acting wins for Hiroyuki Sanada, Anna Sawai and Tadanobu Asano. Other repeat winners were: "Hacks" (best comedy series, actress for Jean Smart), "The Bear" (Jeremy Allen White for best actor) and "Baby Reindeer" (best limited series).

Ali Wong won for best stand-up performance, Jodie Foster for "True Detective" and Colin Farrell for his physical transformation in "The Penguin."

"I guess it's prosthetics from here on out," said Farrell.

They fled from extremists. Now the government in Burkina Faso tries to hide their existence

By MONIKA PRONCZUK Associated Press

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP) —

Their loved ones were slaughtered by Islamist extremists or government-affiliated fighters. Their villages were attacked, their homes destroyed. Exhausted and traumatized, they fled in search of safety, food and shelter.

This is the reality for over 2.5 million displaced people across the West African nation of Burkina Faso, torn apart by years of extreme violence.

But unlike others displaced in the region, they are seen as a challenge to Burkina Faso's military junta that took power two years ago on the pledge of bringing stability. Their existence contradicts its official narrative: that security is improving and people are safely returning home.

Those who fled to Ouagadougou, the capital, which has been shielded from violence, find fear instead of respite. They are made into shadows, with many resorting to begging. Most of them are not entitled to support from authorities, and international aid organizations are not authorized to work with them.

The Associated Press reached out to several international aid groups, Western diplomats and the United Nations. None would speak on the record about the issue.

With no official displacement sites in Ouagadougou, no one knows how many people shelter in the capital or sleep on the streets. A rare acknowledgement of their existence by authorities noted 30,000 last year.

But aid groups say real numbers are much higher. And as violence increases, and people crowd displacement sites in the country's remote north and east, exposed to hunger and disease, more are expected to arrive in the capital.

One aid worker, speaking like others on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation, described the situation as "a ticking bomb."

'This is not a life'

The AP interviewed four displaced people in Ouagadougou. All spoke at great risk. Three are with the Fulani ethnic group, which authorities accuse of being affiliated with Islamist insurgents. All three said they have faced discrimination in the capital, with trouble finding jobs and sending children to school.

For decades, the Fulani were neglected by the central government, and some did join Islamist fighters.

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As a result, Fulani civilians are often targeted both by the extremists — affiliated with al-Qaida or the Islamic State group — and by rival pro-government forces.

A 27-year-old Fulani cattle trader from Djibo, a city besieged by armed groups since 2022, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of repercussions from authorities, said government-affiliated forces indiscriminately treated all Fulani in the area as extremists.

"They started arresting people, bringing them to the city, beating them, undressing them. It was humiliating," he said. His uncle spent seven months in prison because he received aid from a charity run by extremists in part to spread their ideology.

He said he was arrested once in Djibo and beaten by the military, with injuries so extensive that he went to the hospital. He said soldiers told him only that they were "conducting a security operation."

According to analysts, the junta's strategy of military escalation, including mass recruitment of civilians for poorly trained militia units, has exacerbated tensions between ethnic groups. Data gathered by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project show that militia attacks on civilians significantly increased since Capt. Ibrahim Traore took power.

The violence has radicalized some Fulanis, the cattle trader said.

"Every day, you prayed to live through the next 24 hours," he said. "This is not a life."

He did not want to flee and leave his parents behind. But one day, his father woke him and said: "You have to leave, because if you stay, someone will just come and kill you."

His father was later killed.

He left in a military convoy over a year ago. Life in Ouagadougou is "very difficult," he said. He lives with extended family and relies on odd jobs to get by.

"There are mornings when I wake up and ask myself how will I get something to eat," he said. "I used to live with dignity."

His mother has joined him in the capital. They have not received support from the government.

Always on the run

A 28-year-old mother from the northwest, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said at first the extremists came to her village and stole cattle. But last summer, they came to the market and killed several men, including her husband. Then they ordered women and children to leave.

She grabbed her children, and cooking pots, and fled. She walked for hours through the night until she reached her husband's family home.

Ten days later, armed men were approaching. She strapped her 2-year-old daughter to her back, grabbed her 4-year-old son and left for the capital.

She said she has not received government support in Ouagadougou. She was promised a job as a cleaner but lost the offer once the employer found out she was Fulani.

She secured a place at a rare shelter for displaced women, run with Western-supplied funds by a local activist who tries to keep a low profile. She is learning how to sew and has enrolled her son in school.

"I miss my village," she said. "But for the moment I have to wait until the violence is over."

Her stay is precarious. The shelter is full, hosting 50 women and children. Usually, they are allowed to stay for one year. Time is running out.

The demand is enormous, the activist said, and there is less and less aid. Local authorities are wary of anyone working with displaced people.

"I don't know for how much longer I can keep on going," she said.

A veneer of normalcy

As much as 80% of Burkina Faso's territory is controlled by extremist groups and more civilians died from violence last year than in the years before, but in Ouagadougou, it is easy to forget that the government is battling an insurgency.

Busy open-air restaurants serve beer and the national dish of slowly roasted chicken. In recent months, the capital hosted a theater festival and an international arts and crafts fair. The authorities reinstated a cross-country cycling race, Tour de Faso, previously cancelled due to insecurity.

The military leadership has installed a system of de facto censorship, rights groups said, and those daring to speak up can be openly abducted, imprisoned or forcefully drafted into the army.

Burkina Faso used to be known for its vibrant intellectual life. Now, even friends are afraid to discuss politics.

"I feel like I am in prison," said a local women's rights activist. "Everyone distrusts each other. We fought for the freedom of speech, and now we lost everything."

Burkina Faso's authorities did not respond to questions.

Jimmy Carter raised climate change concerns 35 years before the Paris Accords

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

PLAINS, Ga. (AP) — When Jimmy Carter chose branding designs for his presidential campaign, he passed on the usual red, white and blue. He wanted green.

Emphasizing how much the Georgia Democrat enjoyed nature and prioritized environmental policy, the color became ubiquitous. On buttons, bumper stickers, brochures, the sign rechristening the old Plains train depot as his campaign headquarters. Even the hometown Election Night party.

"The minute it was announced, we all had the shirts to put on — and they were green, too," said LeAnne Smith, Carter's niece, recalling the 1976 victory celebration.

Nearly a half-century later, environmental advocates are remembering Carter, who died on Dec. 29 at the age of 100, as a president who elevated environmental stewardship, energy conservation and discussions about the global threat of rising carbon dioxide levels.

President-elect Donald Trump has vowed to abandon the renewable energy investments that President Joe Biden included in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, echoing how President Ronald Reagan dismantled the solar panels Carter installed on the White House roof. But politics aside, the scientific consensus has settled where Carter stood two generations earlier.

"President Carter was four decades ahead of his time," said Manish Bapna, who leads the Natural Resources Defense Council. Carter called for cuts in greenhouse gas emissions well before "climate change" was part of the American lexicon, he said.

Wearing cardigans and setting standards

Former Vice President Al Gore, whose climate advocacy earned him the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, called Carter "a lifelong role model for the entire environmental movement."

As president, Carter implemented the first U.S. efficiency standards for passenger vehicles and household appliances. He created the U.S. Department of Energy, which streamlined energy research, and more than doubled the wilderness area under National Park Service protection.

Inviting ridicule, Carter asked Americans to conserve energy through personal sacrifice, including driving less and turning down thermostats in winter amid global fuel shortages. He pushed renewable energy to lessen dependence on fossil fuels, calling for 20% of U.S. energy to come from alternative sources by 2000.

But laments linger about what 39th president could not get done or did not try before his landslide defeat to Ronald Reagan.

Addressing climate change

Carter left office in 1981 shortly after receiving a West Wing report linking fossil fuels to rising carbon dioxide levels in Earth's atmosphere. Carter's top environmental advisers urged "immediate" cutbacks on the burning of fossil fuels to reduce what scientists at the time called "carbon dioxide pollution."

"Nobody anywhere in the world in a high government position was talking about this problem" before Carter, biographer Jonathan Alter said.

The White House released the findings, which drew forgettable news coverage: The New York Times published its story on the 13th page of its front section. And with scant time left in office, there were no tangible moves Carter could make, beyond the energy legislation he had already signed.

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The report recommended limiting global average temperatures to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial levels. Thirty-five years later, in the 2015 Paris climate accords, participating nations set a similar goal.

"If he had been reelected, it's fair to say that we would have been beginning to address climate change in the early 1980s," Alter told the AP. "When you think about that, it adds a kind of a tragic dimension, almost, to his political defeat."

Reagan ended high-level conversations about carbon emissions. He opposed efficiency standards as government overreach and rolled back some regulations. His chief of staff, Don Regan, called the solar panels "a joke."

Pursuing energy independence

Despite Carter's emphasis on renewable sources, the fossil fuel industry benefited from his push toward U.S. energy independence.

Collin O'Mara, CEO of the National Wildlife Foundation, pointed to coal-fired power plants built during and shortly thereafter Carter's term, and his deregulation of natural gas production, a move O'Mara called "a precursor" to widespread fracking. Bapna noted Carter backed drilling off the coasts of Long Island in New York and New England.

Steven Nadel, executive director of the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, pointed to Carter's Synthetic Fuels Corporation, a short-lived effort to produce fossil fuel alternatives that "would have meant much higher carbon emissions."

But Carter had the right priorities, especially on research and development coordinated through the Energy Department, Nadel said. "He allowed us to have a national approach rather than one agency here and another there."

Stewarding God's creation

Carter's environmental interests had deep roots going back to a rural boyhood filled with hunting and fishing and working his father's farmland.

"Jimmy Carter was an environmentalist before it was a real part of the political discussion — and I'm not talking about solar panels on the White House," said Dubose Porter, a longtime Georgia Democratic Party leader. "Just focusing on that misses how early and how committed he was."

His early years influenced Carter as governor, Porter said, when he boosted Georgia's state parks system and opposed Georgia congressmen who wanted to dam a river. Carter paddled the waterway himself and decided its natural state trumped the lucrative federal construction proposal.

In Washington, Carter continued sometimes unwinnable fights against funding for projects he deemed damaging and unnecessary. He found more success extending federal protection for more than 150 million acres (60.7 million hectares), including redwood forests in California and vast swaths of Alaska.

Randall Balmer, a Dartmouth College professor who has written on Carter's faith, said he saw himself as a custodian of divinely granted natural resources.

"That's a real connection that young evangelicals still have with him today," Balmer said.

Condemning consumerism

Carter won the presidency amid energy shortages rooted in global strife, especially in the oil-rich Middle East, so national security and economic interests dovetailed with Carter's religious beliefs and affinity for nature, Nadel noted.

Carter compared the energy crisis to "the moral equivalent of war," and as inflation and gas lines grew, he called for individual sacrifice and sweeping action on renewable energy.

"Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns," Carter warned in 1979. "But we've discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning."

That "malaise" speech — dubbed so by the media despite Carter not using the word — was unique in presidential politics for its condemnation of unchecked American consumerism. Carter celebrated that more than 100 million Americans watched. By 2010, Carter acknowledged in his annotated "White House Diary" that his speech was a flop, but said it proved to be prescient for advocating bold and direct action on energy.

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"You can say the Carter presidency is still producing results today," said Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, whose 2020 presidential run focused on climate action. "I've learned in politics that timing is everything and serendipity is everything."

Congress is ready to certify Trump's election win, but his Jan. 6 legacy hangs over the day

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — As Congress convenes amid a winter storm to certify President-elect Donald Trump's election, the legacy of Jan. 6 hangs over the proceedings with an extraordinary fact: The candidate who tried to overturn the previous election won this time, and is legitimately returning to power.

Lawmakers will gather noontime Monday under the tightest national security level possible. Layers of tall black fencing flank the U.S. Capitol complex in a stark reminder of what happened four years ago, when a defeated Trump sent his mob to "fight like hell" in what became the most gruesome attack on the seat of American democracy in 200 years.

No violence, protests or even procedural objections in Congress are expected this time. Republicans from the highest levels of power who challenged the 2020 election results when Trump lost to President Joe Biden have no qualms this year after he defeated Vice President Kamala Harris.

And Democrats frustrated by Trump's 312-226 Electoral College victory nevertheless accept the choice of the American voters. Even the threat of a massive snowstorm barreling down on the region wasn't expected to interfere with Jan. 6, the day set by law to certify the vote.

"Whether we're in a blizzard or not, we are going to be in that chamber making sure this is done," House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Republican who helped lead Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election, said Sunday on Fox News.

The day's return to a U.S. tradition that launches the peaceful transfer of presidential power comes with an asterisk as Trump prepares to take office in two weeks with a revived sense of authority. He denies that he lost four years ago, muses about staying beyond the Constitution's two-term White House limit and promises to pardon some of the more than 1,250 people who have pleaded guilty or were convicted of crimes for the Capitol siege.

What's unclear is if Jan. 6, 2021 was the anomaly, the year Americans violently attacked their own government, or if this year's expected calm becomes the outlier. The U.S. is struggling to cope with its political and cultural differences at a time when democracy worldwide is threatened. Trump calls Jan. 6, 2021 a "day of love."

"We should not be lulled into complacency," said Ian Bassin, executive director of the cross-ideological nonprofit Protect Democracy.

He and others have warned that it is historically unprecedented for U.S. voters to do what they did in November, reelecting Trump after he publicly refused to step aside last time. Returning to power an emboldened leader who has demonstrated his unwillingness to give it up "is an unprecedentedly dangerous move for a free country to voluntarily take," Bassin said.

Biden, speaking Sunday at events at the White House, called Jan. 6, 2021 "one of the toughest days in American history."

"We've got to get back to the basic, normal transfer of power," Biden said. What Trump did last time, Biden said, "was a genuine threat to democracy. I'm hopeful we're beyond that now."

Still, American democracy has proven to be resilient, and Congress, the branch of government closest to the people, will come together to affirm the choice of Americans.

With pomp and tradition, the day is expected to unfold as it has countless times before, with the arrival of ceremonial mahogany boxes filled with the electoral certificates from the states — boxes that staff were frantically grabbing and protecting as Trump's mob stormed the building last time.

Senators will walk across the Capitol — which four years ago had filled with roaming rioters, some defecating and menacingly calling out for leaders, others engaging in hand-to-hand combat with police — to

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the House to begin certifying the vote.

Harris will preside over the counting, as is the requirement for the vice president, and certify her own defeat — much the way Democrat Al Gore did in 2001 and Republican Richard Nixon in 1961.

She will stand at the dais where then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi was abruptly rushed to safety last time as the mob closed in and lawmakers fumbled to put on gas masks and flee, and shots rang out as police killed Ashli Babbitt, a Trump supporter trying to climb through a broken glass door toward the chamber.

There are new procedural rules in place in the aftermath of what happened four years ago, when Republicans parroting Trump's lie that the election was fraudulent challenged the results their own states had certified.

Under changes to the Electoral Count Act, it now requires one-fifth of lawmakers, instead of just one in each chamber, to raise any objections to election results. With security as tight as it is for the Super Bowl or the Olympics, law enforcement is on high alert for intruders. No tourists will be allowed.

But none of that is expected to be necessary.

Republicans, who met with Trump behind closed doors at the White House before Jan. 6, 2021 to craft a complex plan to challenge his election defeat, have accepted his win this time.

Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Ariz., who led the House floor challenge in 2021, said people at the time were so astonished by the election's outcome and there were "lots of claims and allegations."

This time, he said, "I think the win was so decisive.... It stifled most of that."

Democrats, who have raised symbolic objections in the past, including during the disputed 2000 election that Gore lost to George W. Bush and ultimately decided by the Supreme Court, have no intention of objecting. House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries has said the Democratic Party is not "infested" with election denialism.

"There are no election deniers on our side of the aisle," Jeffries said on the first day of the new Congress, to applause from Democrats in the chamber.

"You see, one should love America when you win and when you lose. That's the patriotic thing to do," Jeffries said.

Last time, far-right militias helped lead the mob to break into the Capitol in a war-zone-like scene. Officers have described being crushed and pepper-sprayed and beaten with Trump flag poles, "slipping in other people's blood."

Leaders of the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys have been convicted of seditious conspiracy and sentenced to lengthy prison terms. Many others faced prison, probation, home confinement or other penalties.

Those Republicans who engineered the legal challenges to Trump's defeat still stand by their actions, celebrated in Trump circles, despite the grave costs to their personal and professional livelihoods.

Several including disbarred lawyer Rudy Giuliani and John Eastman, and indicted-but-pardoned Michael Flynn met over the weekend at Trump's private club Mar-a-Lago for a film screening about the 2020 election.

Trump was impeached by the House on the charge of inciting an insurrection that day, but acquitted by the Senate. At the time, GOP leader Mitch McConnell blamed Trump for the siege but said his culpability was for the courts to decide.

Federal prosecutors subsequently issued a four-count indictment of Trump for working to overturn the election, including for conspiracy to defraud the United States, but special counsel Jack Smith was forced to pare back the case once the Supreme Court ruled that a president has broad immunity for actions taken in office.

Smith last month withdrew the case after Trump won reelection, adhering to Justice Department guidelines that sitting presidents cannot be prosecuted.

Biden, in one of his outgoing acts, awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal to Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., and former Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., who had been the chair and vice chair of the congressional committee that conducted an investigation into Jan. 6, 2021.

Trump has said those who worked on the Jan. 6 committee should be locked up.

Biden says Americans shouldn't forget Capitol attack -- but that there won't be a repeat this time

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

President Joe Biden is decrying what he calls an "unrelenting effort" to downplay a mob of Donald Trump supporters overrunning the U.S. Capitol in an attempt to block certification of the 2020 election — seeking to contrast that day's chaos with what he promises will be an orderly transition returning Trump to power for a second term.

In an opinion piece published Sunday in The Washington Post, Biden recalled Jan. 6, 2021, writing that "violent insurrectionists attacked the Capitol."

"We should be proud that our democracy withstood this assault," Biden wrote. "And we should be glad we will not see such a shameful attack again this year."

Congress will convene amid snow in Washington on Monday to certify Trump's victory in November's election — in a session presided over by the candidate he defeated, Vice President Kamala Harris. No violence, or even procedural objections, are expected this time, marking a return to a U.S. tradition that launches the peaceful transfer of presidential power.

That's despite Trump continuing to deny that he lost to Biden in 2020, already musing publicly about staying beyond the Constitution's two-term White House limit, and promising to pardon some of the more than 1,250 people who have pleaded guilty or were convicted of crimes for the Capitol siege.

In his opinion piece, Biden says of the certification process, "After what we all witnessed on Jan. 6, 2021, we know we can never again take it for granted." He doesn't mention Trump directly but says "an unrelenting effort has been underway to rewrite — even erase — the history of that day."

"To tell us we didn't see what we all saw with our own eyes," Biden wrote. "We cannot allow the truth to be lost."

He vowed that the "election will be certified peacefully. I have invited the incoming president to the White House on the morning of Jan. 20, and I will be present for his inauguration that afternoon," even though Trump skipped Biden's inauguration in 2021.

"But on this day, we cannot forget," Biden added. "We should commit to remembering Jan. 6, 2021, every year. To remember it as a day when our democracy was put to the test and prevailed. To remember that democracy — even in America — is never guaranteed."

The published piece followed Biden telling reporters at the White House earlier Sunday that the history of what occurred on Jan. 6, 2021, "should not be rewritten" and adding, "I don't think it should be forgotten."

Biden spent much of 2024 warning voters that Trump was a serious threat to the nation's democracy. And this past week, the president awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal to Liz Cheney and Bennie Thompson, leaders of the congressional investigation into the Capitol riot.

As he did with his opinion piece, Biden used his Sunday comments to reporters to stress that his administration is overseeing a peaceful handover of power — unlike the last one.

"I've reached out to make sure the smooth transition," Biden said of Trump's incoming administration. "We've got to get back to basic, normal transfer of power."

Asked if he still viewed his soon-to-be successor in the White House as a threat to democracy, Biden responded, "I think what he did was a genuine threat to democracy. I'm hopeful we're beyond that now."

Lawsuit alleges Fox Sports ex-host harassed hairstylist and offered her \$1.5M for sex

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A woman who worked as a hairstylist for Fox Sports alleges in a lawsuit that former host Skip Bayless made repeated, unwanted advances toward her — including an offer of \$1.5 million to have sex with him.

Attorneys for Noushin Faraji, who was a hair stylist at Fox for more than a decade, are seeking unspecified damages from Bayless, Fox Sports and its parent company, Fox Corporation, according to a copy of

the lawsuit filed Friday in California Superior Court in Los Angeles.

The complaint claims Fox executives fostered a hostile work environment that allowed senior managers and on-air personalities including Bayless to abuse workers without fear of punishment.

The Associated Press does not generally identify, in text or images, those who say they have been sexually assaulted or subjected to abuse unless they have publicly identified themselves as Faraji has in filing the lawsuit.

An attorney for Bayless, Jared Levine, did not immediately respond to AP's telephone and text messages seeking comment. Email and phone messages left at Bayless's talent company were not immediately returned.

Bayless could not be reached directly for comment.

Fox Sports said in a statement that it takes the allegations seriously but had no further comment given the pending lawsuit.

Faraji claimed that the advances by Bayless, which began in 2017 and continued until last year — included lingering hugs, kisses on the cheek and comments from Bayless that he could change Faraji's life if she had sex with him.

In 2021, she claims in the suit, Bayless offered Faraji \$1.5 million for sex and, after she refused, later threatened her job.

"Ms. Faraji knew that he was trying to pressure her into having sex with him, but she kept repeating that she was a professional that had to be kind to all talent," the lawsuit says.

Bayless worked for Fox Sports until 2024 when his show was canceled after its ratings plummeted with the departure of his co-host, Shannon Sharpe.

Faraji said she was fired in 2024 based on "fabricated" reasons. The lawsuit said she initially remained quiet about her treatment at Fox, believing she could be in danger if she went public.

The suit also claims Fox employees were not paid their full wages or overtime. It seeks class-action status on behalf of other workers who allegedly were impacted.

In 2017 Fox Sports fired its head of programming amid a probe of sexual harassment allegations.

The heaviest snowfall in a decade is possible as a wintry blast roils parts of the US

By PATRICK WHITTLE and BRIAN WITTE Associated Press

A blast of snow, ice, wind and plunging temperatures stirred up dangerous travel conditions in parts of the central U.S. on Sunday, as a disruptive winter storm brought the possibility of the heaviest snowfall in a decade to some areas.

Snow and ice blanketed major roadways in nearly all of Kansas, western Nebraska and parts of Indiana, where the state's National Guard was activated to help any motorists who were stuck. At least 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow were expected, particularly north of Interstate 70, as the National Weather Service issued winter storm warnings for Kansas and Missouri, where blizzard conditions brought wind gusts of up to 45 mph (72 kph). The warning extended to New Jersey for Monday and into early Tuesday.

"For locations in this region that receive the highest snow totals, it may be the heaviest snowfall in at least a decade," the weather service said.

Gary Wright wore a parka as he and his husband chipped away at a thick coating of ice on his SUV Sunday in a slippery apartment parking lot in Missouri. Wright said he will work remotely for the University of Missouri-Columbia on Monday, but wanted to scrape off his vehicle as an excuse to spend a little time in the snow. He's also in the market for boots for their two older dogs, who "won't budge at all" when their paws hit the cold ground.

The polar vortex of ultra-cold air usually spins around the North Pole. People in the U.S., Europe and Asia experience its intense cold when the vortex escapes and stretches south.

Studies show a fast-warming Arctic is partly to blame for the increasing frequency of the polar vortex extending its icy grip.

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Snow and ice in the forecast, and even possible tornadoes

In Indiana, snow fully covered portions of Interstate 64, Interstate 69 and U.S. Route 41, prompting Indiana State Police to plead with motorists to stay off the roads as plows worked to keep up with the pace of the precipitation.

"It's snowing so hard, the snow plows go through and then within a half hour the roadways are completely covered again," Sgt. Todd Ringle said.

Roughly 10 inches (25 centimeters) of snow had fallen in parts of Kansas, with snow and sleet totals predicted to top 14 inches (36 centimeters) for parts of that state and northern Missouri.

In Kentucky, Louisville recorded 7.7 inches (19.5 centimeters) of snow on Sunday, a new record for the date that shattered the previous mark of 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) set in 1910. Lexington, Kentucky, also set a snowfall record, with 5 inches (12.7 centimeters).

Parts of upstate New York saw 3 feet (0.9 meters) or more of snow from a lake effect event expected to last until late Sunday afternoon.

The storm was forecast to move into the Ohio Valley and reach the Mid-Atlantic states later Sunday and Monday, with a hard freeze expected as far south as Florida.

Damaging winds brought down trees across the Deep South. The weather service issued tornado warnings Sunday in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

Car wrecks proliferate as storm hits

Hundreds of car accidents were reported in Virginia, Indiana, Kansas and Kentucky, where a state trooper was treated for non-life-threatening injuries after his patrol car was hit on Interstate 65. At least 600 motorists were stranded in Missouri, that state's highway patrol said.

Highways in northeastern Kansas were closed due to "impassable" conditions, according to the state's Transportation Department. The closures included roughly 220 miles (354 kilometers) of the state's main artery, Interstate 70, from the Missouri border into central Kansas.

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, who declared a state emergency ahead of the storm, said state buildings would be closed Monday.

"We see far too many wrecks out there for people that do not have to be on the roads, so I want to ask: Stay inside. Stay safe with your family," the governor said.

Virginia State Police reported at least 135 crashes as the storm entered the state Sunday. A handful of injuries were reported.

In Charleston, West Virginia, where several inches of snow had fallen by Sunday night, authorities urged motorists to stay home. The Kanawha County Sheriff's Office said deputies were responding to crashes and 911 calls countywide. "Please be patient if you have called 911 for assistance. A deputy will call you or respond to you as soon as possible," the sheriff's office said in a statement.

Air and rail travel also snarled

The storms caused havoc for the nation's passenger railways. More than 20 cancellations were planned on Sunday, 40 for Monday and at least two for Tuesday.

"If local authorities are telling people not to travel, it's counterintuitive to try to run a full slate of services when people are being told to stay home," Amtrak spokesperson Marc Magliari said.

The Midwest was hit especially hard. A train between Chicago and New York and several regional trains between Chicago and St. Louis were among those canceled Sunday.

Nearly 200 flights in and out of St. Louis Lambert International Airport were canceled, according to tracking platform FlightAware.

Temperatures dip, though no records break

Starting Monday, the eastern two-thirds of the country will experience dangerous, bone-chilling cold and wind chills, forecasters said. Temperatures could be 12 to 25 degrees (7 to 14 degrees Celsius) below normal.

In Chicago on Sunday, temperatures hovered in the teens (minus 7 to 10 Celsius) and around zero in Minneapolis, while dropping to 11 below (-11.7 Celsius) in International Falls, Minnesota, on the Canadian

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border.

The Northeastern states are more likely to experience several days of cold following what has mostly been a mild start to winter, said Jon Palmer, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Gray, Maine. A plume of cold air coming down from Canada is likely to result in a cold but dry week, he said.

The cold air will likely grip the eastern half of the country as far south as Georgia, Palmer said, with parts of the East Coast experiencing freezing temperatures and lows dipping into the single digits in some areas.

Wind might also pick up as the week gets going, making for potentially dangerous conditions for people exposed to the elements for long periods of time, Palmer said.

Disruptions extend southward

The National Weather Service predicted 8 to 12 inches (about 20 to 30 centimeters) of snow for the Annapolis, Maryland, area. In a statement on X, Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin declared a state of emergency ahead of the storm and encouraged residents to vote before the state's special elections on Tuesday.

Similar declarations were issued in Kansas, Maryland, West Virginia and in central Illinois cities.

Classes canceled

School closings were likely to be widespread Monday. Districts in Indiana, Maryland, Virginia and Kentucky were already announcing cancellations and delays on Sunday afternoon.

Kentucky's Jefferson County Public Schools canceled classes, extracurricular activities and athletics Monday for its nearly 100,000 students. The day would have been students' first one back after winter break.

"This is a traditional snow day with no online learning," the district announced.

As he prepares to leave office, Biden urges incoming Democratic lawmakers to reach across the aisle

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Sunday called on incoming Democratic lawmakers who will govern in the minority to always be mindful of other people's perspectives — even when they may be wrong.

At a reception meant to welcome new, mostly young, Democratic lawmakers to Washington, the nation's oldest and outgoing Democratic president — reflective as he shared some war stories of his past and pointed to challenges ahead — urged the new generation of legislators to listen and work across the aisle.

"We don't do that anymore," he said in the White House State Room. "The single greatest loss we have is that we don't know each other anymore."

The new slate of roughly 30 Democratic lawmakers arrive prepared to be in the minority in the executive and legislative branches. Democrats faced a crushing loss in the 2024 general election — after Vice President and Democratic nominee Kamala Harris lost her bid for the presidency. Republicans also maintained control of the House in the November election and won a narrow majority in the Senate.

New incoming lawmakers on Sunday expressed hope they can make a difference.

California Rep. Sam Liccardo, a former San Jose mayor, told The Associated Press that while he expects limitations as a new Democratic member of Congress, he believes there will be opportunities to make change by focusing on common areas of agreement.

"I'm not expecting as a first-term member I will be the one to cut the deal on the border," he said. "On the other hand, there are other issues like housing costs, low-income house tax credits, where there have been relative consensus to build a majority on."

At the reception, Biden recalled his entry to Washington more than 50 years ago. He was just 29 when he was first elected to Congress in 1972, having ousted longtime incumbent Republican Caleb Boggs. At the time of his election, Biden didn't meet the Senate's minimum age requirement but turned 30 a couple of weeks after he won his race.

He talked about the importance of building relationships with lawmakers across the aisle. "You don't have to give up your principles to build relationships," Biden said.

He also talked about the challenges the U.S. faces internationally and domestically. "We're in an entirely

new era, everything has changed. Our safety depends on who our partners are and who our allies are.”

New Democratic Arizona Rep. Yassamin Ansari, speaking on CNN on Sunday, said she’s hopeful to work on issues like housing affordability, climate issues and reproductive freedom. “These are issues that young people have said loud and clear are important to them.” “And I think, some of these issues, we can also work on in a bipartisan way.”

And while new Rep. Adam Gray, D-Calif., was elected to office, his district also voted for Trump over Harris by five points.

“I think what Americans want to see is border security,” Gray told CNN, “Obviously, the last Congress wasn’t serious enough, which is why the American people sent me here and sent a strong message that they want change. Status quo is not going to do it.”

Liccardo said Biden’s past experience shows that “he appreciates the importance of the passage of the torch.” The Sunday event “is an opportunity for him to bless and share a moment with the next generation of leaders in the country.”

Man behind New Year’s attack visited New Orleans before, recorded video with smart glasses, FBI says

By JACK BROOK, STEPHEN SMITH and SARA CLINE Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The man responsible for the truck attack in New Orleans on New Year’s Day that killed 14 people visited the city twice before and recorded video of the French Quarter with Meta smart glasses, an FBI official said Sunday.

Shamsud-Din Jabbar also traveled to Cairo and Canada before the attack although it was not yet clear whether those trips were connected to the attack, Deputy Assistant Director Christopher Raia said at a news conference. Federal officials believe Jabbar, a U.S. citizen and former U.S. Army soldier, was inspired by the Islamic State militant group to carry out the attack.

Police fatally shot Jabbar, 42, during an exchange of gunfire at the scene of the deadly crash of the rented pickup truck on Bourbon Street, famous worldwide for its festive vibes in New Orleans’ historic French Quarter.

Federal investigators so far believe Jabbar acted alone, but are continuing to explore his contacts.

“All investigative details and evidence that we have now still support that Jabbar acted alone here in New Orleans,” said Raia. “We have not seen any indications of an accomplice in the United States, but we are still looking into potential associates in the U.S. and outside of our borders.”

Lyonel Myrthil, FBI special agent in charge of the New Orleans Field Office, said Jabbar traveled to Cairo in the summer of 2023 and then to the Canadian province of Ontario a few days later.

“Our agents are getting answers to where he went, who he met with and how those trips may or may not tie into his actions here,” Myrthil said.

Suspect recorded video with smart glasses while plotting attack, the FBI says

Jabbar had also traveled to New Orleans twice in the months preceding the attack, first in October and again in November. On Oct. 31, Myrthil said Jabbar used glasses from Meta, the parent company of Facebook, to record video as he rode through the French Quarter on a bicycle as “he plotted this hideous attack.” He said Jabbar was also in New Orleans on Nov. 10.

He also wore the glasses capable of livestreaming during the attack, but Myrthil said Jabbar did not activate them.

When asked about the glasses, a Meta spokesperson declined comment to The Associated Press.

The FBI released Jabbar’s recorded video from the planning trip to New Orleans as well as video showing him placing two containers with explosive devices in the French Quarter at around 2 a.m. shortly before the attack. One of the containers, a cooler, was moved a block away by someone uninvolved with the attack, officials said.

Joshua Jackson, New Orleans special agent in charge, said Jabbar privately purchased a semiautomatic rifle on Nov. 19 from an individual in a legal transaction in Arlington, Texas.

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"This was a chance encounter," Jackson said. "There's no way this individual knew that Jabbar was radicalized or had any sort of awareness that this attack was imminent."

Security a prime concern ahead of other major events

Police have used vehicles and barricades to block traffic at Bourbon and Canal streets since. Other law enforcement agencies helped city officers provide extra security, said Reese Harper, a New Orleans police spokesperson.

The first parade of the Carnival season leading up to Mardi Gras in March is scheduled Monday evening. New Orleans also will host the Super Bowl on Feb. 9.

In a previous effort to protect the French Quarter, the city installed steel columns known as bollards to restrict vehicle access to Bourbon Street. The posts normally retract to allow deliveries to bars and restaurants. But they stopped working reliably after being gummed up by Mardi Gras beads, beer and other detritus.

When New Year's Eve arrived, the bollards were gone. New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell acknowledged the city remains uncertain as to whether the new bollards it is installing in the French Quarter would be able to stop a similar vehicle attack.

"The thorough assessment that I am asking for will determine whether they are strong enough," Cantrell said. "I can't say with surety that's the case but an expert will be able to do so, and we'll respond accordingly." Cantrell said she requested that Homeland Security upgrade Mardi Gras to the highest Special Event Assessment Rating to receive more federal support for security and risk assessments.

President Joe Biden planned to travel to New Orleans with first lady Jill Biden on Monday to "grieve with the families and community members impacted by the tragic attack."

After signing the Social Security Fairness Act, Biden was asked Sunday by journalists what his message would be to the families he will meet. He responded, "I've been there. There's nothing you can really say to somebody that's just had such a tragic loss, my message is going to be personal if I get to get them alone."

The two explosive devices that Jabbar placed were recovered by federal officials undetonated. ATF Special Agent in Charge Joshua Jackson credited New Orleans police for responding quickly before the devices could be set off. He said both were equipped with receivers and a transmitter was recovered in Jabbar's truck.

Jabbar exited the crashed truck wearing a ballistic vest and helmet and fired at police, wounding at least two officers before he was fatally shot.

Bomb-making materials were found at Jabbar's home. Jackson said Jabbar appeared to have used a chemical compound known as RDX, which he said is commonly available in the U.S. He said field tests found RDX at Jabbar's Houston home and they are conducting further tests on similar materials found at the New Orleans rental home.

Jabbar tried to burn down the rental house by setting a small fire in a hallway but the flames went out before firefighters arrived.

Suspect proclaims support for Islamic State group

Jabbar proclaimed support for the Islamic State militant group in online videos posted hours before he struck. It was the deadliest IS-inspired assault on U.S. soil in years, laying bare what federal officials have warned is a resurgent international terrorism threat.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos" that the country faces "not only the persistent threat of foreign terrorism" but "a significant increase in what we term homegrown violent extremism" in recent years.

The attack has prompted security concerns elsewhere in the nation. In California, for instance, military officials announced via online platform X that access has been tightened to Camp Pendleton, the largest Marine base on the West Coast with tens of thousands of active-duty service members. The announcement said all IDs are being checked for base entry, a "trusted travel program" is being suspended and random inspections will be carried out.

Higher Social Security payments coming for millions of people from bill that Biden signed

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Sunday signed into law a measure that boosts Social Security payments for current and former public employees, affecting nearly 3 million people who receive pensions from their time as teachers, firefighters, police officers and in other public service jobs.

Advocates say the Social Security Fairness Act rights a decades-old disparity, though it will also put strain on Social Security Trust Funds, which face a looming insolvency crisis.

The bill rescinds two provisions — the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset — that limit Social Security benefits for recipients if they get retirement payments from other sources, including public retirement programs from a state or local government.

"The bill I'm signing today is about a simple proposition: Americans who have worked hard all their life to earn an honest living should be able to retire with economic security and dignity — that's the entire purpose of the Social Security system," Biden said during a signing ceremony in the White House East Room.

"This is a big deal," he said.

Biden was joined by labor leaders, retirement advocates, and Democratic and Republican lawmakers including the legislation's primary sponsors, Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins and exiting Ohio Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown, who received a standing ovation from ceremony attendees.

The Congressional Research Service estimated that in December 2023, there were 745,679 people, about 1% of all Social Security beneficiaries, who had their benefits reduced by the Government Pension Offset. About 2.1 million people, or about 3% of all beneficiaries, were affected by the Windfall Elimination Provision.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated in September that eliminating the Windfall Elimination Provision would boost monthly payments to the affected beneficiaries by an average of \$360 by December 2025. Ending the Government Pension Offset would increase monthly benefits in December 2025 by an average of \$700 for 380,000 recipients getting benefits based on living spouses, according to the CBO. The increase would be an average of \$1,190 for 390,000 or surviving spouses getting a widow or widower benefit.

Those amounts would increase over time with Social Security's regular cost-of-living adjustments.

The change is to payments from January 2024 and beyond, meaning the Social Security Administration would owe back-dated payments. The measure as passed by Congress says the Social Security commissioner "shall adjust primary insurance amounts to the extent necessary to take into account" changes in the law. It's not immediately clear how this will happen or whether people affected will have to take any action.

Edward Kelly, president of the International Association of Fire Fighters, said firefighters across the country are "excited to see the change — we've righted a 40-year wrong." Kelly said the policy was "far more egregious for surviving spouses of firefighters who paid their own quotas into Social Security but were victimized by the government pension system."

The IAFF has roughly 320,000 members, which does not include hundreds of thousands of retirees who will benefit from the change.

"Now firefighters who get paid very little can now afford to actually retire," Kelly said.

Brown, who as an Ohio senator pushed for the proposal for years, lost his reelection bid in November. Lee Saunders, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees labor union, thanked Brown for his advocacy.

"Over two million public service workers will finally be able to access the Social Security benefits they spent their careers paying into," Saunders said in a statement. "Many will finally be able to enjoy retirement after a lifetime of service."

National Education Association President Becky Pringle said the law is "a historic victory that will improve the lives of educators, first responders, postal workers and others who dedicate their lives to public service

in their communities.”

And while some Republicans such as Collins supported the legislation, others, including Sens. John Thune of South Dakota, Rand Paul of Kentucky and Thom Tillis of North Carolina, voted against it. “We caved to the pressure of the moment instead of doing this on a sustainable basis,” Tillis told The Associated Press last month.

Still, Republican supporters of the bill said there was a rare opportunity to address what they described as an unfair section of federal law that hurts public service retirees.

The future of Social Security has become a top political issue and was a major point of contention in the 2024 election. About 72.5 million people, including retirees, disabled people and children, receive Social Security benefits.

The policy changes from the new law will heap more administrative work on the Social Security Administration, which is already at its lowest staffing level in decades. The agency, currently under a hiring freeze, has a staff of about 56,645 — the lowest level in over 50 years even as it serves more people than ever.

The annual Social Security and Medicare trustees report released last May said the program’s trust fund will be unable to pay full benefits beginning in 2035. The new law will hasten the program’s insolvency date by about half a year.

Along with ratifying the Social Security Fairness Act, earlier in his presidency Biden signed the Butch Lewis Act into law, which saved the retirement pensions of two million union workers. ____

Associated Press writer Stephen Groves contributed to this report.

Ukraine presses attacks in Russia’s Kursk region

By VOLODYMYR YURCHUK and ELISE MORTON Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says he will urge allies to boost Ukraine’s air defenses at a meeting this week in Germany, while both sides said Kyiv’s forces pressed new attacks Sunday in Russia’s Kursk region.

Russian shelling, meanwhile, killed at least one person and wounded another in Ukraine’s Dnipropetrovsk region, local officials said.

Dozens of partner countries will participate in the meeting of the Ramstein group at Ramstein Air Base in Germany on Thursday, Zelenskyy said, “including those who can help boost our capabilities not only to defend against missiles but also against guided bombs and Russian aviation.”

“We will discuss this with them and continue to persuade them,” Zelenskyy said in his nightly address on Saturday. “The task remains unchanged: strengthening our air defense.”

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin will attend the meeting, which originally had been scheduled for October with U.S. President Joe Biden present. The session was postponed in the aftermath of Hurricane Milton striking the state of Florida.

The Biden administration is pressing to send as much military aid as possible to Ukraine before Trump is sworn in Jan. 20. Trump claimed during his election campaign that he could end the nearly 3-year-old war in one day, and his comments have raised questions over whether Washington will continue to be Ukraine’s biggest — and most important — military backer.

Zelenskyy said last week that Trump is “strong and unpredictable,” and those qualities can be a decisive factor in his policy approach to the war.

Russia controls about a fifth of Ukraine and last year advanced slowly in eastern areas despite high losses of troops and equipment. The war’s trajectory isn’t going in Ukraine’s favor, with the country shorthanded on the front line and in need of more support from its Western partners.

In Ukraine’s incursion in the Kursk region, Zelenskyy said Russian and North Korean troops had suffered heavy losses in fighting in Russia’s Kursk region.

“In battles yesterday and today near just one village, Makhnovka, in the Kursk region, the Russian army lost up to a battalion of North Korean infantry soldiers and Russian paratroopers,” he said. “This is significant.”

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Zelenskyy said last month that 3,000 North Korean troops had been killed or wounded in Kursk, where Ukrainian forces launched an incursion in August, dealing a blow to Russia's prestige and forcing it to deploy some of its troops from eastern Ukraine.

The incursion didn't significantly change the dynamic of the war, and military analysts say Ukraine has lost around 40% of the land it initially captured.

Russia's Defense Ministry said Sunday that Ukraine launched a fresh offensive in the Kursk region. It claimed its forces pushed back Ukrainian troops, but some reports from Russian military bloggers indicated that Moscow's forces faced significant pressure.

A ministry statement said Ukrainian forces attacked about 9 a.m. local time (0600 GMT, 1 a.m. EST) near the village of Berdin with two tanks, a mine-clearing vehicle and 12 armored combat vehicles with paratroopers. Two Ukrainian attacks were repelled, it said.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Andriy Yermak said there was "good news" from Kursk and that Russia was "getting what it deserves," while Andriy Kovalenko, head of Ukraine's official Centre Against Disinformation, said on Telegram that Russian troops were attacked in several places.

The Associated Press was not immediately able to verify the reports.

In other developments, local officials said one person was killed and another wounded in Russian shelling of the city of Nikopol in Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region on Sunday. Downstream along the Dnieper River, at least six people were wounded when Russian troops shelled the city of Kherson, capital of the region of the same name. Settlements along the west bank of the river come under regular shelling from Russian-controlled territory on the opposite bank.

Nine people were wounded in a Russian guided bomb attack on the border town of Semenivka in Ukraine's northern Chernihiv region on Saturday evening, local officials said.

Moscow sent 103 drones into Ukraine overnight Sunday, Ukrainian officials said. According to Ukraine's air force, 61 drones were destroyed and 42 were lost, likely due to electronic jamming.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that 61 Ukrainian drones were shot down overnight Sunday in western Russia. No casualties were reported but Rostov regional Gov. Yuri Slyusar said residential buildings and cars were damaged by falling drone debris.

A Melania Trump documentary from director Brett Ratner will be released by Amazon

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Incoming first lady Melania Trump will be the subject of a new documentary directed by Brett Ratner and distributed by Amazon Prime Video. The streaming arm of the tech giant got exclusive licensing rights for a streaming and theatrical release later this year, the company said Sunday.

Filming is already underway on the documentary. The company said in a statement that the film will give viewers an "unprecedented behind-the-scenes look" at Melania Trump and also promised a "truly unique story."

The former and now future first lady also released a self-titled memoir late last year. Her husband takes office on Jan. 20.

The film is the latest connection between Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and Donald Trump. The company in December announced plans to donate \$1 million to the President-elect's inauguration fund, and said that it would also stream Trump's inauguration on its Prime Video service, a separate in-kind donation worth another \$1 million.

The two men had been at odds in the past. During his first term, Trump criticized Amazon and railed against the political coverage at The Washington Post, which Bezos owns. But he's struck a more conciliatory tone recently as Amazon and other tech companies seek to improve their relationship with the incoming president.

In December, Bezos expressed some excitement about potential regulatory cutbacks in the coming years and said he was "optimistic" about Trump's second term.

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Bezos in October did not allow the Post to endorse a presidential candidate, a move that led to tens of thousands of people canceling their subscriptions and to protests from journalists with a deep history at the newspaper. This weekend, a cartoonist quit her job after an editor rejected her sketch of the newspaper's owner and other media executives bowing before the president-elect.

The film also marks the first project that Ratner has directed since he was accused of sexual misconduct by multiple women, including actor Olivia Munn, in the early days of the #MeToo reckoning in November 2017. Ratner, whose lawyer denied the allegations, directed the "Rush Hour" film series, "Red Dragon" and "X-Men: The Last Stand."

Fernando Sulichin, an Argentine filmmaker, is executive producing the film, which began shooting in December.

Melania Trump, Donald Trump's third wife, has been an enigmatic figure since her husband announced he was running in the 2016 election. She had sought to maintain her privacy even as she served as first lady, focusing on raising their son, Barron, and promoting her "Be Best" initiative to support the "social, emotional, and physical health of children."

While she appeared at her husband's campaign launch event for 2024 and attended the closing night of the Republican National Convention this summer, she has otherwise stayed off the campaign trail, though the demands of again being first lady may dictate a higher public profile after Inauguration Day.

Hezbollah leader Nasrallah was killed last year inside the war operations room, aide says

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah was killed in an Israeli airstrike last year while inside the militant group's war operations room, according to new details Sunday disclosed by a senior Hezbollah official.

A series of Israeli airstrikes flattened several buildings in Beirut's southern suburbs on Sept. 27, 2024, killing Nasrallah. The Lebanese Health Ministry said six people died. According to news reports, Nasrallah and other senior officials were meeting underground.

The assassination of Nasrallah, who had led Hezbollah for 32 years, turned months of low-level strikes between Israel and the militants into all-out war that battered much of southern and eastern Lebanon for two months until a U.S.-brokered ceasefire took effect Nov. 27.

"His Eminence (Hassan Nasrallah) used to lead the battle and war from this location," top Hezbollah security official Wafiq Safa told a news conference Sunday near the site where Nasrallah was killed. He said Nasrallah died in the war operations room. He did not offer other details.

Lebanese media had reported that Safa was a target of Israeli airstrikes in central Beirut before the ceasefire but appeared unscathed.

During the first phase of the ceasefire, Hezbollah is supposed to move its fighters, weapons and infrastructure away from southern Lebanon north of the Litani River, while Israeli troops that invaded southern Lebanon need to withdraw all within 60 days. Lebanese army soldiers are to deploy in large numbers and alongside United Nations peacekeepers be the sole armed presence in southern Lebanon.

Lebanon and Hezbollah have been critical of ongoing Israeli strikes and overflights across the country and for only withdrawing from two of dozens of Lebanese villages it controls. Israel says that the Lebanese military has not done its share in dismantling Hezbollah infrastructure.

Hezbollah's current leader Naim Kassem in a televised address Saturday warned that its fighters could strike Israel if its troops don't leave the south by the end of the month.

Meanwhile, Israel's defense minister Israel Katz echoed similar sentiments should Hezbollah's militants not head north of the Litani River and their infrastructure remain intact.

"If this condition is not met, there will be no agreement, and Israel will be forced to act on its own to ensure the safe return of the residents of (Israel's) north to their homes," he said.

Safa said that Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, who negotiated the ceasefire deal with Washington, told

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Hezbollah that the government will meet with U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein soon. "And in light of what happens, then there will be a position," said Safa.

Hochstein had led the shuttle diplomacy efforts to reach the fragile truce.

'Mufasa' and 'Sonic 3' rule first weekend of 2025

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

The Walt Disney Co.'s "Mufasa" claimed the No. 1 spot on the North American box office charts over the first weekend of 2025.

The photorealistic "Lion King" prequel earned \$23.8 million in its third weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday. Paramount's "Sonic the Hedgehog 3," which has dominated the past two weekends, wasn't far behind.

"Sonic 3" stayed close with a 3-day estimate of \$21.2 million, bringing its total domestic earnings to \$187.5 million and helping the overall franchise cross \$1 billion worldwide. "Mufasa's" running total is slightly less, with \$169.2 million.

In third place, Focus Features' "Nosferatu" remake defied the fate of so many of its genre predecessors and fell only 39% in its second weekend. Horror films typically fall sharply after the first weekend and anything less than a 50% decline is notable. "Nosferatu," which added 140 screens, claimed \$13.2 million in ticket sales, bringing its running total to \$69.4 million since its Christmas debut. The film, directed by Robert Eggers, already surpassed its reported production budget of \$50 million, though that figure does not account for marketing and promotion expenses).

No new wide releases opened this weekend, leaving the box office top 10 once again to holdovers from previous weeks. Several have been in theaters since Thanksgiving. One of those, "Moana 2," claimed the No. 4 spot for Disney in its sixth weekend in theaters. The animated sequel earned another \$12.4 million, bumping its global total to \$960.5 million.

The Bob Dylan biopic "A Complete Unknown," dipped only slightly in its second weekend, bringing in \$8.1 million. With \$41.7 million total, it's Searchlight's highest grossing film since Disney acquired the company in 2019.

A24's erotic drama "Babygirl," which added 49 locations, held steady at \$4.5 million.

Another Thanksgiving leftover, "Wicked," rounded out the top five. Universal's movie musical was made available to purchase on VOD on Jan. 31, but still earned another \$10.2 million from theaters. The movie is up for several awards at Sunday's Golden Globes, including nominations for Cynthia Erivo, Ariana Grande, best motion picture musical or comedy and "cinematic and box office achievement," which last year went to "Barbie."

Also in theaters this weekend was the IMAX re-release of David Fincher's 4K restoration of "Seven," which earned just over \$1 million from 200 locations.

The 2025 box office year is already off to a better start than 2024, up around 20% from the same weekend last year.

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

1. "Mufasa: The Lion King," \$23.8 million.
2. "Sonic the Hedgehog 3," \$21.2 million.
3. "Nosferatu," \$13.2 million.
4. "Moana 2," \$12.4 million.
5. "Wicked," \$10.2 million.
6. "A Complete Unknown," \$8.1 million.
7. "Babygirl," \$4.5 million.
8. "Gladiator II," \$2.7 million.
9. "Homestead," \$2.1 million.
10. "The Fire Inside," \$1.2 million.

TikTok creators left in limbo while awaiting decision on potential platform ban

By JONATHAN LANDRUM JR. and HALELUYA HADERO Associated Press
Will TikTok be banned this month?

That's the pressing question keeping creators and small business owners in anxious limbo as they await a decision that could upend their livelihoods. The fate of the popular app will be decided by the Supreme Court, which will hear arguments on Jan. 10 over a law requiring TikTok to break ties with its Chinese-based parent company, ByteDance, or face a U.S. ban.

At the heart of the case is whether the law violates the First Amendment with TikTok and its creator allies arguing that it does. The U.S. government, which sees the platform as a national security risk, says it does not.

For creators, the TikTok doomsday scenarios are nothing new since President-elect Donald Trump first tried to ban the platform through executive order during his first term. But despite Trump's recent statements indicating he now wants TikTok to stick around, the prospect of a ban has never been as immediate as it is now with the Supreme Court serving as the final arbiter.

If the government prevails as it did in a lower court, TikTok says it would shut down its U.S. platform by Jan. 19, leaving creators scrambling to redefine their futures.

"A lot of my other creative friends, we're all like freaking out. But I'm staying calm," said Gillian Johnson, who benefited financially from TikTok's live feature and rewards program, which helped creators generate higher revenue potential by posting high-quality original content. The 22-year-old filmmaker and recent college graduate uses her TikTok earnings to help fund her equipment for projects such as camera lens and editing software for her short films "Gambit" and "Awaken! My Neighbor."

Johnson said the idea of TikTok going away is "hard to accept."

Many creators have taken to TikTok to voice their frustrations, grappling with the possibility that the platform they've invested so much in could soon disappear. Online communities risk being disrupted, and the economic fallout could especially be devastating for those who mainly depend on TikTok and have left full-time jobs to build careers and incomes around their content.

For some, the uncertainty has led them to question whether to continue creating content at all, according to Johnson, who says she knows creators who have been thinking about quitting. But Nicola Bartoli, the vice president of sales at The Influencer Marketing Factory, said the creators she has interacted with have not been too worried since news about a potential TikTok ban has come up repeatedly over the years, and then died down.

"I believe a good chunk think it is not going to happen," said Bartoli, whose agency works to pair influencers and brands.

It's unclear how quickly the Supreme Court will issue a decision. But the court could act swiftly to block the law from going into effect if at least five of the nine justices deem it unconstitutional.

Trump, for his part, has already asked the justices to put a pause on the ban so he could weigh in after he takes office. In a brief — written by his pick for solicitor general — Trump called the First Amendment implications of a TikTok ban "sweeping and troubling" and said he wants a "negotiated resolution" to the issue, something the Biden administration had pursued to no avail.

While waiting for the dust to settle in Washington, some creators are exploring alternative ways to promote themselves or their business, encouraging users to follow them on other social media platforms or are investing more time producing non-TikTok content.

Johnson says she is already strategizing her next move and exploring alternative opportunities. While she hasn't found a place quite like TikTok, she's begun to spend more of her time on other platforms, such as Instagram and YouTube, both of whom are expected to benefit financially if TikTok vanishes.

According to a report by Goldman Sachs, the so-called creator economy, which has been fueled in part by TikTok, could be worth \$480 billion by 2027.

Because the opportunity to monetize content exists across a range of platforms, a vast amount of creators have already diversified their social media presence. However, many TikTok creators have credited the platform — and its algorithm — with giving them a type of exposure they did not receive on other platforms. Some say it has also boosted and provided opportunities for creators of color and those from other marginalized groups.

Despite fears about the fate of TikTok, industry analysts note creators are generally avoiding making any big changes, like abandoning platform, until something actually happens.

"I'm anxious but also trying to be hopeful in a weird way," said Brandon Hurst, who credits TikTok with rescuing his business from obscurity and propelling it into rapid growth.

A year after joining TikTok, the 30-year-old Hurst, who sells plants, said his sales doubled, outpacing the traction he'd struggled to gain on Instagram. He built his clientele through the live feature on TikTok, which has helped him sell more than 77,000 plants. The business has thrived so much that he says he now employs five people, including his husband and mom.

"For me, this has been my sole way of doing business," Hurst said.

Billion Dollar Boy, a New York-based influencer marketing agency, has advised creators to download all of their TikTok content into a personal portfolio, which is especially important for those who post primarily on the platform, said Edward East, the agency's founder and group CEO. This can help them quickly build their audiences elsewhere. Plus it can serve as a resume for brands who might want to partner with them for product advertisements, East said.

But until the deadline of Jan. 19 comes around, East said creators should continue to post regularly on TikTok, which has 170 million monthly U.S. users and remains highly effective in reaching audiences.

If the Supreme Court does not delay the ban, as Trump is asking them to do, app stores and internet service providers would be required to stop providing service to TikTok by Jan. 19. That means anyone who doesn't have TikTok on their phone would be unable to download it. TikTok users would continue to have access, but the prohibitions — which will prevent them from updating the app — will eventually make the app "unworkable," the Justice Department has said.

TikTok said in court documents that it estimates a one-month shutdown would cause the platform to lose approximately a third of its daily users in the U.S. The company argues a shutdown, even if temporary, will cause it irreparable harm, a legal bar used by judges to determine whether to put the brakes on a law facing a challenge. In under three weeks, Americans will know if the Supreme Court agrees.

New Orleans mourns victims of truck attack with tearful vigil and celebration of life

By JIM MUSTIAN, JACK BROOK, STEPHEN SMITH and SARA CLINE Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — New Orleans mourned, wept and danced at a vigil Saturday evening along the famous thoroughfare where a man rammed a pickup truck into a crowd, killing and injuring revelers who were there to celebrate the new year.

A makeshift memorial of crosses and pictures of the 14 deceased victims included candles, flowers and teddy bears. Victims' relatives held each other, some crying. But as a brass band began playing, the sorrow transformed into a celebration of life as the crowd snapped fingers, swayed and followed the music down Bourbon Street.

The coroner's office listed the cause of death for all 14 victims as "blunt force injuries." About 30 other people suffered injuries. University Medical Center New Orleans spokesperson Carolina Giepert said 13 people remained hospitalized, with eight people in intensive care.

The attack early Wednesday was carried out by Shamsud-Din Jabbar, a former U.S. Army soldier. Police fatally shot Jabbar, 42, during a firefight at the scene of the deadly crash on Bourbon Street, famous worldwide for its festive vibes in New Orleans' historic French Quarter.

Street vigil honors victims and connects city

Cathy Tenedorio, who lost her 25-year-old son Matthew, said she was moved by the flood of condolences

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and kindness at Saturday's vigil. "This is the most overwhelming response of love, an outpouring of love. I'm floating through it all," she said.

New Orleans native Autrele Felix, 28, left a handwritten card beside a memorial for his friend Nicole Perez, a single mother who was killed. "It means a lot, to see that our city comes together when there's a real tragedy," Felix said. "We all become one."

Others who crowded around the brass band said the best way to honor the victims was with a party. "Because that's what they were down here to do, they were having a good time," life-long New Orleans resident Kari Mitten said.

President Joe Biden planned to travel to New Orleans with first lady Jill Biden on Monday to "grieve with the families and community members impacted by the tragic attack."

Investigation continues

Authorities on Friday continued investigating the attack, including Jabbar's motives. The FBI concluded he acted alone.

Jabbar proclaimed his support for the Islamic State militant group in online videos posted hours before he struck. It was the deadliest IS-inspired assault on U.S. soil in years, laying bare what federal officials have warned is a resurgent international terrorism threat.

He reserved the vehicle used in the attack more than six weeks earlier, on Nov. 14, according to law enforcement officials who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

Jabbar had suspected bomb-making materials at his Houston home, which contained a workbench in the garage and hazardous materials believed to have been used to make explosive devices, officials familiar with a search conducted there said.

Authorities found crude bombs in the neighborhood of the attack in an apparent attempt to cause more carnage. Two improvised explosive devices left in coolers several blocks apart were rendered safe at the scene. Other devices were determined to be nonfunctional. Jabbar purchased a cooler in Vidor, Texas, hours before the attack and gun oil from a store in Sulphur, Louisiana, investigators said.

Investigators searching Jabbar's rental truck found a transmitter intended to trigger the two bombs, the FBI said in a statement Friday, adding that there were bomb-making materials at the New Orleans home he rented. Jabbar tried to burn down the house by setting a small fire in a hallway with accelerants but the flames burned out before firefighters arrived.

Jabbar exited the crashed truck wearing a ballistic vest and helmet and fired at police, wounding at least two officers before he was fatally shot by police. New Orleans police declined to say Friday how many shots were fired by Jabbar and the officers or whether any bystanders may have been hit, citing the active investigation.

Stella Cziment, who heads the city's civilian-run Office of the Independent Police Monitor, said investigators are working to account for "every single bullet that was fired" and whether any of them struck bystanders.

Enhanced security planned

Police have used multiple vehicles and barricades to block traffic at Bourbon and Canal streets since the attack. Other law enforcement agencies helped city officers provide extra security, said Reese Harper, a New Orleans police spokesperson.

The first parade of the Carnival season leading up to Mardi Gras was scheduled to take place Monday. New Orleans also will host the Super Bowl on Feb. 9.

"This enhanced safety effort will continue daily, not just during large events," Harper said in a statement.

In a previous effort to protect the French Quarter, the city installed steel columns known as bollards to restrict vehicle access to Bourbon Street. The posts retracted to allow deliveries to bars and restaurants. They stopped working reliably after being gummed up by Mardi Gras beads, beer and other detritus.

When New Year's Eve arrived, the bollards were gone. They will be replaced ahead of the Super Bowl, officials said.

Victims identified

The attack killed an 18-year-old aspiring nurse, a single mother, a father of two and a former Princeton

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University football star, among others.

The New Orleans coroner's office has identified 13 of the 14 victims, with the youngest listed as 18 and the oldest 63. Most of the victims were in their 20s. One was a British citizen, 31-year-old Edward Pettifer of west London, according to London's Metropolitan Police.

British media reported Pettifer was the stepson of Tiggy Legge-Bourke, who was the nanny for Prince William and Prince Harry between 1993 and 1999, which included the time after the death of their mother, Princess Diana.

At the vigil on Saturday, family members identified Tasha Polk, a mother and nursing assistant in her 40s, as the final victim of the attack.

'Our country ignored Africa,' Jimmy Carter said. He didn't

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Jimmy Carter was the first U.S. president to make a state visit to sub-Saharan Africa. He once called helping with Zimbabwe's transition from white rule to independence "our greatest single success." And when he died at 100, his foundation's work in rural Africa had nearly fulfilled his quest to eliminate a disease that afflicted millions, for the first time since the eradication of smallpox.

The African continent, a booming region with a population rivaling China's that is set to double by 2050, is where Carter's legacy remains most evident. Until his presidency, U.S. leaders had shown little interest in Africa, even as independence movements swept the region in the 1960s and '70s.

"I think the day of the so-called ugly American is over," Carter said during his warm 1978 reception in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country. He said the official state visit swept aside "past aloofness by the United States," and he joked that he and Nigerian President Olesegun Obasanjo would go into peanut farming together.

Cold War tensions drew Carter's attention to the continent as the U.S. and Soviet Union competed for influence. But Carter also drew on the missionary traditions of his Baptist faith and the racial injustice he witnessed in his homeland in the U.S. South.

"For too long our country ignored Africa," Carter told the Democratic National Committee in his first year as president.

African leaders soon received invitations to the White House, intrigued by the abrupt interest from the world's most powerful nation and what it could mean for them.

"There is an air of freshness which is invigorating," visiting Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda said.

Carter observed after his first Africa trip, "There is a common theme that runs through the advice to me of leaders of African nations: 'We want to manage our own affairs. We want to be friends with both of the great superpowers and also with the nations of Europe. We don't want to choose up sides.'"

The theme echoes today as China also jostles with Russia and the U.S. for influence, and access to Africa's raw materials. But neither superpower has had an emissary like Carter, who made human rights central to U.S. foreign policy and made 43 more trips to the continent after his presidency, promoting Carter Center projects that sought to empower Africans to determine their own futures.

As president, Carter focused on civil and political rights. He later broadened his efforts to include social and economic rights as the key to public health.

"They are the rights of the human by virtue of their humanity. And Carter is the single person in the world that has done the most for advancing this idea," said Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, a Sudanese legal scholar.

Even as a candidate, Carter mused about what he might accomplish, telling Playboy magazine, "it might be that now I should drop my campaign for president and start a crusade for black-majority rule in South Africa or Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). It might be that later on, we'll discover there were opportunities in our lives to do wonderful things and we didn't take advantage of them."

Carter welcomed Zimbabwe's independence just four years later, hosting new Prime Minister Robert Mugabe at the White House and quoting the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

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"Carter told me that he spent more time on Rhodesia than he did on the entire Middle East. And when you go into the archives and look at the administration, there is indeed more on southern Africa than the Middle East," historian and author Nancy Mitchell said.

Relations with Mugabe's government soon soured amid deadly repression, and by 1986 Carter led a walkout of diplomats in the capital. In 2008, Carter was barred from Zimbabwe, a first in his travels. He called the country "a basket case, an embarrassment to the region."

"Whatever the Zimbabwean leadership may think of him now, Zimbabweans, at least those who were around in the 1970s and '80s, will always regard him as an icon and a tenacious promoter of democracy," said Eldred Masunungure, a Harare-based political analyst.

Carter also criticized South Africa's government for its treatment of Black citizens under apartheid, at a time when South Africa was "trying to ingratiate itself with influential economies around the world," current President Cyril Ramaphosa said on X after Carter's death.

The think tank Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter founded in 1982 played a key role in monitoring African elections and brokering cease-fires between warring forces, but fighting disease was the third pillar of The Carter Center's work.

"The first time I came here to Cape Town, I almost got in a fight with the president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, because he was refusing to let AIDS be treated," Carter told a local newspaper. "That's the closest I've come to getting into a fist fight with a head of state."

Carter often said he was determined to outlive the last guinea worm infecting the human race. Once affecting millions of people, the parasitic disease has nearly been eliminated, with just 14 cases documented in 2023 in a handful of African countries.

Carter's quest included arranging a four-month "guinea worm cease-fire" in Sudan in 1995 so that The Carter Center could reach almost 2,000 endemic villages.

"He taught us a lot about having faith," said Makoy Samuel Yibi, who leads the guinea worm eradication program for South Sudan's health ministry and grew up with people who believed the disease was simply their fate. "Even the poor people call these people poor, you see. To have the leader of the free world pay attention and try to uplift them is a touching virtue."

Such dedication impressed health officials in Africa over the years.

"President Carter worked for all humankind irrespective of race, religion, or status," Ethiopia's former health minister, Lia Tadesse, said in a statement shared with the AP. Ethiopia, the continent's second most populous country with over 110 million people, had zero guinea worm cases in 2023.

Border shelters relieved the pressure during migrant surges. Under Trump, they could become a target

By VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas (AP) — When Roselins Sequera's family of seven finally reached the U.S. from Venezuela, they spent weeks at a migrant shelter on the Texas border that gave them a place to sleep, meals and tips for finding work.

"We had a plan to go to Iowa" to join friends, said Sequera, who arrived at the Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley in October. "But we didn't know how."

Dozens of shelters run by aid groups on the U.S. border with Mexico have welcomed large numbers of migrants, providing lifelines of support and relief to overwhelmed cities. They work closely with the Border Patrol to care for migrants released with notices to appear in immigration court, many of whom don't know where they are or how to find the nearest airport or bus station.

But Republican scrutiny of the shelters is intensifying, and President-elect Donald Trump's allies consider them a magnet for illegal immigration. Many are nonprofits that rely on federal funding, including \$650 million under one program last year alone.

The incoming Trump administration has pledged to carry out an ambitious immigration agenda, including

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a campaign promise of mass deportations. The new White House's potential playbook includes using the National Guard to arrest migrants and installing buoy barriers on the waters between the U.S. and Mexico.

As part of that agenda, Trump's incoming border czar, Tom Homan, has vowed to review the role of nongovernmental organizations and whether they helped open "the doors to this humanitarian crisis." Entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, who along with Elon Musk was tapped by Trump to find ways to cut federal spending, has signaled that the groups are in his sights and called them "a waste of taxpayer dollars."

"Americans deserve transparency on opaque foreign aid & nonprofit groups abetting our own border crisis," Ramaswamy said last month in a post on X.

The Trump administration did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

The developments have alarmed immigration advocates and some officials in border communities, including Republicans, who say those communities can collapse without shelter space or a budget to pay for humanitarian costs.

Aid groups deny that they are aiding illegal immigration. They say they are responding to emergencies foisted on border towns and performing humanitarian work.

"The groundwork is being laid here in Texas for a larger assault on nonprofits that are just trying to protect people's civil rights," said Rochelle Garza, president of the Texas Civil Rights Project, an advocacy group.

For the past year, Texas has launched investigations into six organizations that provide shelter, food and travel advice to migrants. Courts have so far largely rebuffed the state's efforts, including rejecting a lawsuit to shut down El Paso's Annunciation House, but several cases remain on appeal.

The Texas Civil Rights Project, which represents two organizations being probed by the state, says it has trained more than 100 migrant aid organizations in the weeks since Trump's reelection on how to respond if investigators come knocking.

The Texas investigations began after Republican Gov. Greg Abbott alleged in 2022, without evidence, that border nonprofits were encouraging illegal crossings and transporting migrants.

Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, which operates a shelter in McAllen with capacity for 1,200 people, was notified by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton in March that authorities wanted to interview the executive director, Sister Norma Pimentel, to investigate whether there were "practices for facilitating alien crossings over the Texas-Mexico border."

Pimentel declined to comment to The Associated Press, citing the ongoing case, but attorneys representing her organization responded to the accusations in court calling them a "fishing expedition into a pond where no one has ever seen a fish."

In downtown McAllen, a large lobby serves as a welcome center where families receive travel information while their children play with volunteers. This year, nearly 50,000 migrants have passed through the shelter. Personal belongings and sleeping mats are in a separate section sandwiched between the lobby and the kitchen.

The Sequeras, who stayed two weeks, fell into a regimen of waking at 6 a.m., clearing sleeping mats off the floor and having breakfast by 7 a.m. They performed other chores such as cleaning or doing laundry to keep the large shelter running.

Volunteer attorneys help migrants apply for work authorization. Without that help, Sequera said, the process would have taken longer to learn and cost them thousands of dollars before they would have been able to continue their journey north.

McAllen Mayor Javier Villalobos is at odds with Paxton, a fellow Republican, over the Catholic Charities investigation. His city found room for about 140 migrants a day in 2024 — a dramatic drop from 2021, when a surge in crossings across the southern U.S. border that year put the shelter over maximum capacity and forced it to close for several days.

"They have served the purpose because the feds have not acted in what they have to do," Villalobos said. "In McAllen, we would have been lost without them."

Former McAllen Mayor Jim Darling still recalls the night he received a call from the city manager in 2014 explaining that the bus station was closing, but 25 migrants were still waiting for a bus. He asked Pimentel at Catholic Charities for help.

Hidalgo County authorities turned to Pimentel in 2021 when migrants were being released without testing for COVID-19. Catholic Charities conducted testing and quarantined those who tested positive.

The shelters have received help from U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar, a Texas Democrat who since 2019 has steered federal funding to them through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. He beat back Republican opposition last year.

"Will they attack it again and try to eliminate it?" Cuellar said. "Yes."

South Korean protesters brave cold to demand Yoon's ouster as detention deadline looms

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Hundreds of South Koreans, bundled up against freezing temperatures and snow, rallied overnight into Sunday near the residence of impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol, calling for his ouster and arrest, as authorities prepared to renew their efforts to detain him over his short-lived martial law decree.

Dozens of anti-corruption agency investigators and police attempted to execute a detainment warrant against Yoon on Friday but retreated from his residence in Seoul after a tense standoff with the presidential security service that lasted more than five hours.

A deadline approaches

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials is weighing charges of rebellion after the conservative president, apparently frustrated that his policies were blocked by a legislature dominated by the liberal opposition, declared martial law on Dec. 3 and dispatched troops to surround the National Assembly.

The Assembly overturned the declaration within hours in a unanimous vote and impeached Yoon on Dec. 14, accusing him of rebellion, while South Korean anti-corruption authorities and public prosecutors opened separate investigations into the events.

Last Tuesday, a Seoul court issued a warrant to detain Yoon and a separate warrant to search his residence after the embattled president defied authorities by refusing to appear for questioning. But enforcing them is complicated as long as Yoon remains in his official residence.

The one-week warrant for his detention is valid through Monday. Staff from the presidential security service were seen installing barbed wire near the gate and hills leading up to Yoon's residence over the weekend, possibly in preparation for another detention attempt.

If the anti-corruption agency manages to detain Yoon, it will likely ask a court for permission to make a formal arrest. Otherwise, Yoon will be released after 48 hours.

As hundreds of anti-Yoon protesters rallied for hours near the gate of the presidential residence, pro-Yoon protesters gathered in nearby streets, vowing to protect him. Both groups were separated by police barricades and buses.

"With barely a day left before the execution deadline for Yoon Seok Yeol's detainment warrant, the presidential security service continues to hide a criminal and the Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials cannot be more relaxed," Kim Eun-jeong, an activist, said on a stage during the anti-Yoon rally.

Park Chan-dae, floor leader of the main opposition Democratic Party, called on the anti-corruption agency to move quickly to detain Yoon, accusing the agency of "hesitating and letting time slip away."

The presidential security service blocks Yoon's detainment

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials, which is leading a joint investigation with police and military investigators, has urged the country's acting leader, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, to instruct the presidential security service to comply with their execution of the detainment warrant. Choi has yet to publicly comment on the issue.

Park Jong-joon, chief of the presidential security service, hit back against criticism that his organization has become Yoon's private army, saying it has legal obligations to protect the incumbent president. Park said

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he instructed his members not to use violence during Friday's standoff and called for the anti-corruption agency and police to change their approach.

Park and his deputy defied summonses on Saturday from police, who planned to question them over the suspected obstruction of official duty following Friday's events.

While the presidential security act mandates protection for Yoon, it does not authorize the service to block court-ordered detainments, which may amount to an obstruction of official duty, said Park Sung-bae, an attorney specializing in criminal law. While the president mostly has immunity from prosecution while in office, the protection does not extend to allegations of rebellion or treason.

The agency said its outnumbered investigators had several scuffles with presidential security forces that threatened their safety.

After getting around a military unit guarding the residence's grounds, the agency's investigators and police were able to approach within 200 meters (about 218 yards) of Yoon's residential building but were stopped by a barricade formed with 10 vehicles and about 200 members of the presidential security forces and troops.

Kim Seon-ho, the acting defense minister, conveyed his concern to the presidential security service, saying that using military personnel to block the execution of the detention warrant would be "inappropriate" and that the troops shouldn't be placed in a position where they might confront police.

Yoon's defense minister, police chief and several top military commanders have already been arrested over their roles in the enforcement of martial law.

Yoon fights back

Yoon's legal team said it will file complaints against the anti-corruption agency's chief prosecutor, Oh Dong-woon, and approximately 150 investigators and police officers involved in Friday's detention attempt, which they claim was unlawful. The team said it will also file complaints with public prosecutors against the country's acting defense minister and police chief for ignoring the presidential security service's request to provide additional forces to block the detention attempt.

Yoon's lawyers have claimed that the detention and search warrants against Yoon cannot be enforced at his residence, citing a law that protects locations potentially linked to military secrets from search without the consent of the person in charge. They also argue the anti-corruption office lacks the legal authority to investigate rebellion charges and that police officers don't have the legal authority to assist in detaining Yoon.

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

Lawmakers brace for Trump's promised Jan. 6 pardons. Some are urging restraint

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The fourth anniversary of the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol has a new focus as lawmakers brace for the prospect that President-elect Donald Trump may soon pardon many of the more than 1,500 people charged with crimes for their actions related to the riot.

Trump said he would issue pardons to rioters on "Day 1" of his presidency, which begins Jan. 20. "Most likely, I'll do it very quickly," he said recently on NBC's "Meet the Press." He added that "those people have suffered long and hard. And there may be some exceptions to it. I have to look. But, you know, if somebody was radical, crazy."

His promise, made throughout his campaign for the White House, is shadowing events Monday as lawmakers gather to certify a presidential election for the first time since 2021, when Trump's supporters breached the Capitol and temporarily halted the certification of an election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., said she has spoken at length with Trump and is lobbying him to pardon everyone who participated in the siege. Few Republicans are going that far, but many believe it's appropriate for Trump to look at pardons on a case-by-case basis.

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"Here we are nearly four years later. Many of these people have been in prison since 2021. Even the ones that fought Capitol Police, caused damage to the Capitol, I think they've served their time and I think they should all be pardoned and released from prison," Greene said. "Some of these people have been given prison sentences: 10 years, 18 years and more. I think it's an injustice. It's a two-tiered justice system, and it's time to end it."

More than 1,250 have pleaded guilty or been convicted after trials in connection with Jan. 6, with more than 650 receiving prison time ranging from a few days to 22 years.

Many of those who broke into the Capitol were echoing Trump's false claims about election fraud. Some rioters menacingly called out the names of prominent politicians — particularly then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and then-Vice President Mike Pence, who refused to try to object to Biden's win. Lawmakers who had evacuated both chambers on Jan. 6 returned that night to finish their work.

Police officers who defended the Capitol are particularly incensed about the possible pardons. Many officers were beaten, some with their own weapons, as they tried to hold back the mob. About 140 officers were injured on Jan. 6, making it "likely the largest single day mass assault of law enforcement" in American history, Matthew Graves, the outgoing U.S. attorney in the nation's capital, has said.

"You cannot be pro-police officer and rule of law if you are pardoning people who betrayed that trust, injured police officers and ransacked the Capitol," said Capitol Police Sgt. Aquilino Gonell, who retired due to his injuries after fighting rioters.

Some Republicans in Congress, even those closely aligned with Trump, suggested not all Jan. 6 offenders should be treated the same.

Rep. Jim Jordan, a top Trump ally who leads the House Judiciary Committee, said he supported some pardons, but also made a distinction.

"For people who didn't commit any violence, I think everyone supports that. I think that makes sense," said Jordan, R-Ohio.

Veteran Republican Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Fla., also wasn't ready to go as far as Greene. "You've got to look at it individually. Some probably deserve to be pardoned," he said.

But he was more reticent when asked if those who attacked U.S. Capitol police officers should be among those pardoned.

"My goodness. Again, I'd have to look at the scenario," he said. "But if they attacked the U.S. Capitol Police, it's a big problem."

Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-S.D., said not every single charge is the same and that people who were trespassing are a different category from those who entered the Capitol and damaged property. He said he believes Trump will look at each individual circumstance and decide what is appropriate.

"People who attacked police officers, listen, I don't think that is something we should ever condone," Johnson said.

House Democrats, who led the drive to impeach Trump over Jan. 6 and conducted a wide-ranging investigation into the attack, warned that the pardons could have far-reaching consequences, both for the rule of law and the security of the country. Members of the extremist Oath Keepers and Proud Boys, for instance, were convicted of seditious conspiracy and other crimes in relation to the insurrection.

"Those 140-odd law enforcement people who got hurt defending this institution, I think anyone who loves peace and security would be offended that you would pardon people who attacked those individuals for doing their jobs," said Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss.

Thompson led the House committee that investigated the events surrounding Jan. 6, concluding with a report that said Trump "lit the fire" for the insurrection.

Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., who served as lead impeachment manager during Trump's second impeachment trial in which he was acquitted, said if pardons are going to happen, people should demand contrition and repentance from each of those pardoned and an affirmative statement they pose no further threat to public safety.

"Because anything that happens by these people, in a political context or some other context, will essentially be laid at the doorstep soon-to-be President Donald Trump," Raskin said.

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Like police officers who protected them, lawmakers who were in the Capitol during the attack have a visceral reaction to the pardon talk, having barely escaped a mob that seemed determined to do them harm. Rep. Jim Himes, D-Conn., who was trapped in the House gallery as rioters tried to break in below, said it would be "extraordinarily difficult" for him and many others if Trump goes ahead with the pardons. "I'm pretty controlled and pretty disciplined, but that would be really hard," Himes said. "Too many of us had very personal experiences with the people who are serving time or were convicted."

How to watch the Golden Globes and red carpet fashions before the show

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Hollywood is getting dressed up as the Golden Globes are returning for their annual champagne-soaked celebration of film and television that serves as the ceremonial start to awards season.

Here's what you need to know about the 82nd annual Golden Globe Awards, including how to watch, stream and follow along live with Sunday's happenings from the show at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California, hosted by comedian Nikki Glaser.

When does the Golden Globes start and how can I watch?

CBS is airing the Golden Globes live across the country for the second year. The show starts at 8 p.m. Eastern and 5 p.m. Pacific on Sunday. CBS is available with an antenna or through cable and satellite providers.

The network's NFL football coverage will be the lead-in and could last until near showtime. "60 Minutes" will be pre-empted, but the news show will return Jan. 12.

How do I stream the Golden Globes?

Paramount+ users with the Showtime add-on can stream the Golden Globes live. Other Paramount+ subscribers can stream the show the next day.

The Globes can also be watched through live TV streaming services that include CBS in their lineup, like Hulu + Live TV, YouTube TV or FuboTV.

How can I watch the red carpet?

Variety and "Entertainment Tonight" are teaming up for the official red carpet pre-show, which will air on the outlets' websites, www.goldenglobes.com, and Paramount+. Their show, hosted by Variety's Marc Malkin and "E.T.'s" Rachel Smith, begins at 6:30 p.m. Eastern.

And after taking a year off, E! will return to covering the fashion fiesta of the Globes red carpet, with a show starting at 6 p.m.

Backstage once the show starts, The Associated Press will livestream Globe winners speaking to reporters backstage at the show, beginning at 8:15 p.m. Eastern.

Who's nominated for the Globes?

"Emilia Perez," director Jacques Audiard's audacious musical about a Mexican drug lord who undergoes gender affirming surgery, is the leading nominee.

It's nominated for best picture, musical or comedy, along with "Wicked" and "Anora," and its stars Zoe Saldana, Karla Sofía Gascón and Selena Gomez are nominated in the acting categories.

Nominees for best picture, drama, include "The Brutalist" and "A Complete Unknown." Their stars, Adrien Brody and Timothée Chalamet are nominated for best actor in a drama.

"The Bear" led all nominees on the TV side with five, followed closely by "Shogun" with four.

And Viola Davis and Ted Danson will get lifetime achievement awards.

For the full list of nominees, [click here](#).

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Today in History: January 6

Trump supporters storm Capitol to stop certification of Biden victory

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, Jan. 6, the sixth day of 2025. There are 359 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Jan. 6, 2021, supporters of President Donald Trump, fueled by his false claims of a stolen election, assaulted police and smashed their way into the Capitol to interrupt the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's victory, forcing lawmakers into hiding; most of the rioters had come from a nearby rally where Trump urged them to "fight like hell." A Trump supporter, Ashli Babbitt, was shot and killed by a police officer as she tried to breach a barricaded doorway inside the Capitol. Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, injured while confronting the rioters, suffered a stroke the next day and died from natural causes, the Washington, D.C., medical examiner's office said. Congress reconvened hours later on Jan. 6 to finish certifying the election result.

Also on this date:

In 1919, former President Theodore Roosevelt died in Oyster Bay, New York, at age 60.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his State of the Union address, outlined a goal of "Four Freedoms": freedom of speech and expression, the freedom of people to worship God in their own way, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

In 1974, year-round daylight saving time began in the United States on a trial basis as a fuel-saving measure in response to the OPEC oil embargo.

In 1982, truck driver William G. Bonin was convicted in Los Angeles of 10 of the "Freeway Killer" slayings of young men and boys. (Bonin was later convicted of four other killings; he was executed in 1996.)

In 1994, figure skater Nancy Kerrigan was clubbed on the leg by an assailant at Detroit's Cobo Arena; four men, including the ex-husband of Kerrigan's rival, Tonya Harding, went to prison for their roles in the attack. (Harding pleaded guilty to conspiracy to hinder prosecution but denied any advance knowledge about the assault.)

In 2005, former Ku Klux Klan leader Edgar Ray Killen was indicted on murder charges 41 years after three civil rights workers were slain in Mississippi. (Killen was later convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to 60 years in prison; he died in prison in 2018.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor-comedian Rowan Atkinson is 70. Golf Hall of Famer Nancy Lopez is 68. TV chef Nigella Lawson is 65. Football Hall of Famer Howie Long is 65. Football Hall of Famer Charles Haley is 61. Actor Norman Reedus is 56. TV personality Julie Chen Moonves is 55. Actor Eddie Redmayne is 43. Actor-comedian Kate McKinnon is 41. Businessman Eric Trump is 41.