

Groton Daily Independent

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“NEVER
UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER YOU
HAVE TO TAKE
YOUR LIFE IN A
NEW DIRECTION.”

-GERMANY KENT

Tuesday, December 1, 2020

LifeTouch Picture Retake Day

3:15pm: Groton Novice Debate

Junior High GBB at Clark-Willow Lake (7th at 4:30, 8th at 5:30)

7 p.m.: City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center

Saturday, December 5, 2020

10:00am: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Jamboree at Groton



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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The Minnesota Vikings have added to the win column after narrowly defeating the Carolina Panthers 28-27 on Sunday. Teddy Bridgewater almost beat the team that drafted him in the first round, but Panther's kicker Joey Slye missed a 54-yard field goal with six seconds left on the clock and the Vikings were able to hold on to the W. The Vikings are now 5-6 and are still in play for the playoffs with five games left in the season.



By Jordan Wright

The Vikings came out of the gates playing well, as the Panthers got the ball to start the game and were forced to punt after picking up 14 yards. The Vikings' offense took the field and drove the ball 68-yards on 13 plays, culminating in Kirk Cousins finding Justin Jefferson for a 12-yard touchdown. The two teams exchanged punts on the following two drives, but the Panthers found success on their third drive of the game, going 53-yards on 11 plays. Vikings' linebacker Eric Kendricks ended that drive with an interception at the Vikings' seven-yard-line, but the Vikings were unable to capitalize and were forced to punt the ball back. Teddy and the Panthers finally got on the board with less than two minutes left in the first half, tying the score 7-7. The Vikings got the ball back with 1:52 left before halftime and were able to answer the Panthers' score with an 11-play, 41-yard drive that ended with a Dan Bailey 53-yard field goal to give the Vikings a 10-7 lead.

The Vikings got the ball to start the second half and had a disastrous start, conceding back-to-back fumbles returned for a touchdown. Suddenly the Vikings were down 21-10 and things were looking bleak. They were forced to punt on their ensuing possession, and the Panthers were anxious to put this one out of reach. The Vikings were able to block the Panthers' field goal attempt, however, preserving the 11-point deficit. The Vikings and Panthers exchanged field goals on the next two possessions, and the score was 24-13 with 11:31 left on the clock in the fourth quarter. Knowing the Vikings were still in this one, Cousins came out and led a beautiful drive, going 75-yards on 11 plays which ended in a 10-yard touchdown to Jefferson. After a successful two-point conversion, the Vikings were only down three points with 5:31 left in the game. The Vikings forced a punt on the Panthers' next drive, but Chad Beebe muffed the punt and Carolina recovered at the Vikings' nine-yard line. The Vikings defense held strong once again, forcing a field goal and keeping it a one-score game with less than two minutes to go. Cousins stepped up to the plate when the team needed it the most, completing a seven-play, 75-yard drive for a touchdown and a 28-27 lead. Teddy Bridgewater, with only :46 seconds left, managed to get the Panthers into field goal range - but Slye missed wide left, and the Vikings players, coaches, and fans were able to let out a collective sigh of relief.

Kirk Cousins: 34/45, 307 yards, 3 touchdowns

Dalvin Cook: 18 carries, 61 yards

Justin Jefferson: 7 catches, 70 yards, 2 touchdowns

Looking ahead, the Vikings remain in Minnesota and welcome the 1-10 Jacksonville Jaguars. This game is a big mismatch on paper, with ESPN giving the Vikings an 82.9% chance to win, and Vegas setting the opening spread at MIN -8.5. Skol!

Rheuma-What?

As a rheumatologist, I often get the question, "What do you do?" According to my kids, their mom does "something with joints." At the conclusion of patient visits, when I propose a diagnosis such as polymyalgia rheumatica or PMR, I often hear, "What is that?" The fact is most people do not think about rheumatology until they need a rheumatologist. And then, learning the lingo about disease, medications, and lab monitoring can be a challenge.



By Jennifer May, MD ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

Rheumatology is a relatively new specialty in the world of medicine. Focus on the disease in America began in the early 1920s with initial definition and discovery, followed by the famous breakthrough of cortisone at Mayo Clinic in 1950, and grew to a deeper scientific understanding of arthritis diseases today. Treatments have progressed from cortisone and aspirin to immune system modification with biologic medications. Future therapies will involve genetics, engineering new cartilage, and creating cells that rheumatologists will command to do our bidding upon the immune system.

Today we work to manage autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis or lupus with medications that adjust the immune system response. Symptoms that can occur in association with some of these diseases are rashes, joint swelling, fevers, lung problems, and kidney issues. By adjusting the immune system, we can change the symptoms, hopefully lessening their impact on the patient.

In our fast-paced world, we often want answers and quick solutions to our problems. However, rheumatology cases require persistence. There are no blood tests that specifically diagnose the problem. Rheumatologists must take time to talk with and examine the patient. We gather additional information from labs tests, studies, and x-rays. Once all the data is available, sometimes the condition is clear. But other times, the case is more challenging and requires several visits before making a firm diagnosis.

Like most health providers, I enjoy solving patient problems and making a diagnosis. We get satisfaction from figuring things out and our reward comes when a treatment improves a patient's function or quality of life. Our goal in rheumatology is to help patients achieve remission, or better yet, to predict who is likely to get rheumatoid arthritis in hopes of preventing it from starting in the first place.

So, when patients look at me with that expression that asks "rheuma-what?", they don't necessarily want to hear about the science of what I do. Instead, I assure them that we will keep working together with the same goal: To get the immune system to quiet down, and help the patient feel better so they can get back to life.

Jennifer May, M.D. is a contributing Prairie Doc® columnist. She practices rheumatology in Rapid City, South Dakota and serves on the Healing Words Foundation Board of Directors, a 501c3 which provides funding for Prairie Doc® programs. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

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Spotlight on Groton Area Staff



Todd Peterson

Photo by
Benjamin Higgins

Name: Todd Peterson

Occupation: Middle School Resource Room Teacher

Length of Employment: 2016-Present

Todd Peterson has been employed at Groton Area High School for four years, but his history in the field of education is storied and long, reaching between decades of work and miles of ocean.

Mr. Peterson began his career in education at the Dakota House Treatment Facility in Aberdeen by teaching youths with violent tendencies. After his tenure at Dakota House, he worked at OM Tiffany, also in Aberdeen, teaching youths with criminal records. After his tenure with these specialized facilities, Todd Peterson moved to the island of Maui, Hawaii to teach at Waihee Elementary School. When asked about the reasoning behind this sudden move from Hawaii, Peterson attributed his decision to a

“strong sense of wanderlust and adventure.”

After working with younger children in Maui, Todd progressed to the islands of Oahu and Hawaii. After his stay on the various tropical beaches of the Hawaiian islands, his wanderlust kicked in once more. In his desire to experience the foreign cultures of the world, he traded the temperate humidity of Hawaii for the frigid cold of Emmonak, Alaska. He taught in a fishing village primarily populated by Yupik Eskimos. For Peterson, adjusting to the disparate climates of these locales was secondary to adapting to the new cultures he engaged with. In his words, “I didn’t try to fit in with the culture. I respected it and learned from it.” After a year in Hawaii, Peterson became familiar with the primarily Polynesian population of Maui. Unfortunately, the residents of Emmonak gave him a more frigid reception.

Todd Peterson has taught youths from South Dakota, Hawaii, and Alaska alike, bringing levity and humor to each class he taught. To quote Mr. Peterson, “I want kids to see school as a safe, happy place!” When he is not teaching middle school students in the Resource Room, Peterson can be found working at Ken’s Grocery or spending time with his son.

- Benjamin Higgins

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#280 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

We have Sunday numbers compounded by the long holiday weekend; they're very low today. As we've discussed throughout this weekend, we're not going to do much interpreting until Tuesday or so when testing and reporting have rebounded to normal levels. We are at 13,444,300 cases reported in the US so far in the pandemic. There were just 138,000 new cases reported today for a 1.0% increase in total cases. We've been over 100,000 daily new cases for 26 days running. We've been over 90,000 cases for a solid four weeks and over 70,000 for five weeks. With the holiday week, it's hard to tell; but we may be leveling off; we'll know more about that this next week. Hospitalizations are at 91,635, a new record after a day off from a streak of record-breaking days. This number is up 38% over two weeks, and the system continues to scream for mercy.

There are more states in trouble this week than last—all but three in the red zone; but the rate of growth may be slowing. One-week increase in total cases was 1,198,500 (10.8%) last week and is 1,137,200 (9.2%) this week. Two-week increase was 2,255,800 (22.4%) last week and is 2,335,700 (21.0%) this week. We've added two million cases in 12 days and are almost halfway to our next million today. I have us at a one-week daily average new-case number of 162,457, which is down some from last week's 171,214. With three days of the week included in a long weekend, I am not prepared to say we're on a down-trend, but this is better than numbers continuing to go up.

I track 54 states and US territories, including the District of Columbia; and the number of these showing two-week rates of increase greater than 25% is down to 23. Here are the states and territories with the greatest rate of growth in cases over 14 days with their percentage increase in that time: New Mexico (48.62%), Wyoming (44.43% - big decrease), Vermont (41.92 - big decrease), Minnesota (39.97% - big decrease), Colorado (39.90% - big decrease), West Virginia (39.63%), New Hampshire (39.60%), Ohio (39.03% - increase), Connecticut (38.00%), Michigan (36.86% - decrease), Alaska (34.65% - big decrease), Pennsylvania (34.32%), Indiana (32.20% - big decrease), Kansas (31.82% - decrease), Montana (31.05% - big increase), Oregon (30.31%), Rhode Island (29.92%), Nebraska (29.42% - big decrease), Maine (29.67% - increase), Kentucky (28.41% - decrease), Oklahoma (26.87% - increase), Utah (26.01% - big decrease), and Illinois (25.49% - big decrease). Six states—Idaho, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Missouri, and Wisconsin—fell off the list this week. We have 32 states and territories with growth rates above the US growth rate, which tells us transmission is remaining very widespread.

Even as the pandemic shifts, the fastest spread remains, as it has been for some time, in the middle of the country. Highest per capita new-case numbers in the past week are in North Dakota, Wyoming, South Dakota, Minnesota, and New Mexico. There has been some movement, but the general region in the most trouble is the same.

There were 813 deaths reported today, a 0.3% increase to 266,732. Average daily deaths are down a bit at 1450.1; last week, they were at 1509.7. This is the second consecutive week we've reported over 10,000 deaths since spring; that's not great. States with the most per capita deaths over the past week are South Dakota, North Dakota, New Mexico, Illinois, and Wyoming.

We've talked about infections in mink several times, first infections on mink farms in the US in Utah, Wisconsin, and Michigan, then in the Netherlands, Denmark, and Greece. Now we have an outbreak on a farm in Oregon with 10 infected animals and no deaths so far. There was a mutation that showed up in the animals in Denmark which appeared to be less susceptible to control via vaccines and a rush to cull animals. We've seen a report that this particular viral variant was wiped out by those culling efforts, and there have been no further cases in humans. We are still not clear how dangerous it may have been. Farms continue to cull large numbers of animals because of the economic as well as public health threat they pose. The Netherlands had already decided before the pandemic to phase out mink farming due to animal welfare concerns; so they've simply accelerated their timetable for that process. In the US, the USDA has ordered testing and quarantines of infected farms, as well as strict regulation of movement of animals from one farm to another; the industry has an interest in compliance because the disease is so

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lethal to mink.

US Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Anderson is recommending those who traveled or joined large gatherings for Thanksgiving be tested. He is suggesting people isolate themselves, get tested, and be diligent about preventing transmission to others. This is as cases continue to rise, hospitalizations increase, and the death toll mounts, all within hollering distance of the first vaccinations going out. Dr. Deborah Birx, coordinator of the White House coronavirus task force, agrees: "If you're young and you gathered, you need to be tested about five to 10 days later. You need to assume that you're infected and not go near your grandparents and aunts and others without a mask," adding, "If you're over 65 or if you have comorbidities and you gathered at Thanksgiving—if you develop any symptoms, you need to be tested immediately." Admiral Brett Giroir, the White House's testing coordinator, also concurs, mentioning that we are in a very dangerous time with hospitals filling up.

Dr. Birx is also saying (again) that mask mandates are critical for keeping schools open. "First, what we do know works is mask mandates, mask requirements in states that did those or mayors or counties that did that, we can see a really significant difference in not only cases but hospitalizations and fatalities. Starting with mask mandates and re-masking requirements—absolutely key." She also recommends reducing capacity or closing spaces where people cannot wear masks. She's talking primarily about bars and restaurants, suggesting we cannot have those operating as usual and keep schools open and that, if something has to give, we should not be sacrificing our children's education so we can pack ourselves into hot spots for an evening's entertainment.

Meadow is a year-old golden retriever who isn't actually very golden at all; she's more like white. Turns out that's a good thing. You see, Meadow disappeared from her owners in a wooded area in New York and hadn't been seen for a week. Her worried family posted flyers all over the area in the hopes someone would see her and alert them, but so far, no one had been in touch.

Then Brian James came along. He saw the flyer and decided to join the community in its search. He thought about that white coat and the fact that there was no snow yet in those woods and figured she should be reasonably easy to spot from the air. James is a licensed drone pilot, and so he sent the drone up wondering whether they'd have some luck there. It looks like his hunch was a good one; he spotted a patch of white in the mostly leafless trees. He was pretty much able to walk right up to her. I enjoy a happy ending to a story now and then. The family is grateful, the doggie is safe and healthy, and James feels very satisfied. Wins all around. James told a reporter he doesn't think this was a big deal and anyone could do the same. "Everybody's got the capability to help."

True enough. Most of us need to move that into action.

Take care. We'll talk again

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Nov. 18	Nov. 19	Nov. 20	Nov. 21	Nov. 22	Nov. 23	Nov. 24
Minnesota	236,949	242,043	249,906	256,700	262,952	270,157	276,500
Nebraska	103,805	106,617	109,280	111,661	113,029	114,061	115,921
Montana	49,398	50,582	51,818	53,293	54,542	55,580	56,381
Colorado	172,044	176,694	182,801	188,566	194,679	198,600	202,289
Wyoming	21,047	21,750	22,489	23,347	23,567	24,309	25,560
North Dakota	65,967	67,230	68,612	70,016	71,540	72,683	73,397
South Dakota	67,284	68,671	69,742	71,070	72,214	73,065	73,848
United States	11,360,125	11,530,345	11,718,867	11,913,945	12,090,469	12,247,487	12,421,216
US Deaths	248,707	250,548	252,564	254,424	255,905	256,783	257,707

Minnesota	+5,931	+5,094	+7,863	+6,794	+6,252	+7,205	+6,343
Nebraska	+2,204	+2,812	+2,663	+2,381	+1,368	+1,032	+1,860
Montana	+1,371	+1,184	+1,236	+1,475	+1,249	+1,038	+801
Colorado	+4,331	+4,650	+6,107	+5,765	+6,113	+3,921	+3,689
Wyoming	+1,162	+703	+739	+858	+220	+742	+1,251
North Dakota	+1,082	1,263	+1,382	+1,404	+1,524	+1,143	+714
South Dakota	+1,006	+1,387	+1,071	+1,328	+1,144	+851	+783
United States	+154,640	+170,220	+188,522	+195,078	+176,524	+157,018	+173,729
US Deaths	+1,487	+1,841	+2,016	+1,860	+1,481	+878	+924

	Nov. 25	Nov. 26	Nov. 28	Nov. 29	Nov. 30
Minnesota	282,916	289,303	295,001	304,023	306,603
Nebraska	117,682	120,076	124,066	125,323	126,466
Montana	57,504	58,565	59,796	60,845	61,801
Colorado	206,439	210,630	220,953	225,283	228,772
Wyoming	25,975	26,677	27,597	27,737	28,252
North Dakota	74,401	75,478	77,232	77,935	78,658
South Dakota	74,859	76,142	78,280	79,099	79,900
United States	12,597,333	12,780,410	13,092,661	13,247,386	13,385,494
US Deaths	259,962	262,282	264,866	266,074	226,887

Minnesota	+6,416	+6,387	+5,698	+9,022	+2,580
Nebraska	+1,761	+2,294	+2,990	+1,257	+1,143
Montana	+1,123	+1,061	+1,231	+1,049	+956
Colorado	+4,150	+4,191	+10,323	+4,330	3,489
Wyoming	+415	+702	+920	+140	+515
North Dakota	+1,004	+1,077	+1,754	+703	+723
South Dakota	+1,011	+1,283	+2,138	+819	+801
United States	+176,117	+183,077	+312,251	+154,725	+138,108
US Deaths	+2,255	+2,320	+2,584	+1,208	+813

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November 29th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

The numbers look better today than they did yesterday. We had more recoveries than positive cases, 976-801. One death recorded in today's report, He was in the 60s from Kingsbury County.

In the past seven days, South Dakota had 6,835 positive cases and 6,678 recovered cases for a net loss of 157. Brown County had 349 positive cases and 301 recovered cases for a net loss of 48. We lost a little ground this week, but I would say we're holding steady.

Glacial Lakes hospital beds being occupied by COVID-19 patients as well as Minnehaha and Pennington counties: Walworth: 5 (-1) Occupied Beds.; Potter: 3 (+0) Occupied Beds; Hughes: 11 (-1) Occupied Beds, 4 (+1) ICU Beds, 2 (-0) Ventilation; Hand: 1 (-1) Occupied Beds; Faulk: 2 (+0) Occupied Beds; Edmunds: 4 (+2) Occupied Bed; McPherson: 1 (+0) Occupied Bed; Brown: 34 (+1) Occupied Beds, 6 (+1) ICU, 1 (-0) Ventilation; Spink: 1 (-0) Occupied Beds; Day: 2 (-1) Occupied Beds; Marshall: 2 (+1) Occupied Beds; Grant: 2 (+1) Occupied Beds; Codington: 8 (+0) Occupied Beds, 1 (-0) ICU, 1 (-0) Ventilation; None (some counties have no hospitals): Clark, Hyde, Stanley, Sully, Campbell, Roberts; Minnehaha: 275 (+5) Occupied Beds, 57 (-5) ICU, 37 (-3) Ventilation; Pennington: 82 (-2) Occupied Beds, 14 (+0) ICU, 10 (+0) Ventilation.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +21 (3609) Positivity Rate: 11.5%

Total Tests: +182 (27,757)

Total Individuals Tested: +37 (13,734)

Recovered: +56 (2,866)

Active Cases: -35 (722)

Ever Hospitalized: +2 (210)

Deaths: +0 (21)

Percent Recovered: 79.4%

Hospital Reports:

Avera St. Luke's: Covid-19 Occupied 24 (-1); ICU 3 (+1), Ventilation 0 (0).

Sanford Aberdeen: Covid-19 Occupied 10 (+2); ICU 3 (-0), Ventilation 1 (-0)

Sanford Webster: Covid-19 Occupied 2 (-1).

Marshall County Healthcare: Covid-19 Occupied: 2 (+1).

South Dakota:

Positive: +801 (79,900 total) Positivity Rate: 14.6%

Total Tests: 5,486 (607,007 total)

Total Individuals Tested: 2368 (327,744)

Hospitalized: +68 (4468 total). 544 currently hospitalized +5)

Deaths: +1 (943 total)

Recovered: +976 (62,027 total)

Active Cases: -176 (16,930)

Percent Recovered: 77.6%

Total COVID-19 Occupied Beds: 544 (+5), Black Hills Region 111 (-5), Glacial Lakes Region 76 (+1) Sioux Empire Region 292 (+7), South Central Plains 65 (+2).

ICU Units: Total 91 (-4), BH 15 (-0), GL 11 (+2), SE 57 (-5), SCP 8 (-1).

Ventilation: Total 51 (-4), BH 10 (+0), GL 3 (-0), SE 37 (-3), SCP 1 (-1).

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 19% Covid, 41% Non-Covid, 40% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 44% Covid, 36% non-covid, 20% available.

Staffed Adult + Pediatric ICU Bed Capacity: 62% Occupied, 38% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 12% Covid, 12% Non-Covid, 76% Available

Beadle (29) +18 positive, +38 recovered (468 active cases)

Brookings (16) +25 positive, +22 recovered (455 active cases)

Brown (21): +21 positive, +56 recovered (721 active cases)

Clark (1): +1 positive, +8 recovered (60 active cases)

Clay (10): +19 positive, +19 recovered (280 active cases)

Codington (50): +19 positive, +24 recovered (484 active cases)

Davison (36): +10 positive, +33 recovered (633 active cases)

Day (9): +6 positive, +4 recovered (123 active cases)

Edmunds (2): +4 positive, +3 recovered (48 active cases)

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Faulk (10): +1 positive, +2 recovered (25 active cases)
 Grant (12): +8 positive, +13 recovered (160 active cases)
 Hanson (2): +1 positive, +3 recovered (87 active cases)
 Hughes (18): +9 positive, +22 recovered (346 active cases)
 Lawrence (22): +31 positive, +18 recovered (405 active cases)
 Lincoln (51): +57 positive, +71 recovered (1091 active cases)
 Marshall (3): +2 positive, +6 recovered (58 active cases)
 McCook (15): +7 positive, +5 recovered (142 active cases)
 McPherson (1): +1 positive, +3 recovery (46 active case)
 Minnehaha (183): +207 positive, +215 recovered (4071 active cases)
 Pennington (77): +139 positive, +101 recovered (1879 active cases)
 Potter (1): +2 positive, +2 recovered (71 active cases)
 Roberts (19): +5 positive, +7 recovered (161 active cases)
 Spink (14): +5 positive, +5 recovered (118 active cases)
 Walworth (12): +0 positive, +5 recovered (124 active cases)

NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Nov. 29:

- 12.8% rolling 14-day positivity
- 725 new positives
- 8,951 susceptible test encounters
- 323 currently hospitalized (+6)
- 6,837 active cases (-514)
- 920 total deaths (+5)

Yesterday

62,369,397

13,247,386 US
9,392,919 India
6,290,272 Brazil
2,260,789 France
2,249,890 Russia
1,628,208 Spain
1,609,150 United Kingdom
1,564,532 Italy
1,413,375 Argentina
1,299,613 Colombia
1,101,403 Mexico
1,052,494 Germany
985,075 Poland
960,368 Peru

Global Deaths

1,454,745

266,074 deaths US
172,561 deaths Brazil
136,696 deaths India
105,459 deaths Mexico
58,127 deaths United Kingdom
54,363 deaths Italy
52,212 deaths France
47,874 deaths Iran

Today

Global Cases

62,829,641

13,385,494 US
9,431,691 India
6,314,740 Brazil
2,275,936 Russia
2,270,573 France
1,628,208 Spain
1,621,307 United Kingdom
1,585,178 Italy
1,418,807 Argentina
1,308,376 Colombia
1,107,071 Mexico
1,059,755 Germany
990,811 Poland
962,530 Peru

Global Deaths

1,461,049

266,887 deaths US
172,833 deaths Brazil
137,139 deaths India
105,655 deaths Mexico
58,342 deaths United Kingdom
54,904 deaths Italy
52,410 deaths France
48,246 deaths Iran

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
Aurora	357	267	730	5	Substantial	29.41%
Beadle	2273	1776	4655	29	Substantial	31.43%
Bennett	316	261	1033	5	Substantial	20.33%
Bon Homme	1361	1206	1734	14	Substantial	38.50%
Brookings	2429	1958	8727	16	Substantial	15.98%
Brown	3609	2866	10125	21	Substantial	20.21%
Brule	563	458	1595	5	Substantial	20.99%
Buffalo	377	320	821	8	Substantial	32.61%
Butte	715	591	2563	13	Substantial	10.58%
Campbell	103	91	185	1	Moderate	28.57%
Charles Mix	860	584	3324	5	Substantial	28.29%
Clark	251	190	769	1	Substantial	21.02%
Clay	1368	1078	4128	10	Substantial	24.87%
Codington	2645	2111	7526	50	Substantial	22.71%
Corson	382	313	837	5	Substantial	49.23%
Custer	540	419	2156	7	Substantial	14.55%
Davison	2385	1716	5263	36	Substantial	35.89%
Day	374	242	1396	9	Substantial	20.65%
Deuel	306	236	907	2	Substantial	25.00%
Dewey	832	509	3380	3	Substantial	33.82%
Douglas	294	231	749	5	Substantial	18.58%
Edmunds	249	199	846	2	Substantial	9.14%
Fall River	363	292	2102	9	Substantial	7.02%
Faulk	278	243	555	10	Substantial	10.53%
Grant	618	446	1759	12	Substantial	31.12%
Gregory	438	337	967	20	Substantial	24.58%
Haakon	145	120	459	3	Substantial	8.51%
Hamlin	479	319	1370	4	Substantial	20.69%
Hand	282	214	649	1	Substantial	31.96%
Hanson	262	173	533	2	Substantial	46.15%
Harding	73	62	133	0	Minimal	14.29%
Hughes	1649	1285	4900	18	Substantial	14.50%
Hutchinson	568	393	1839	8	Substantial	23.81%

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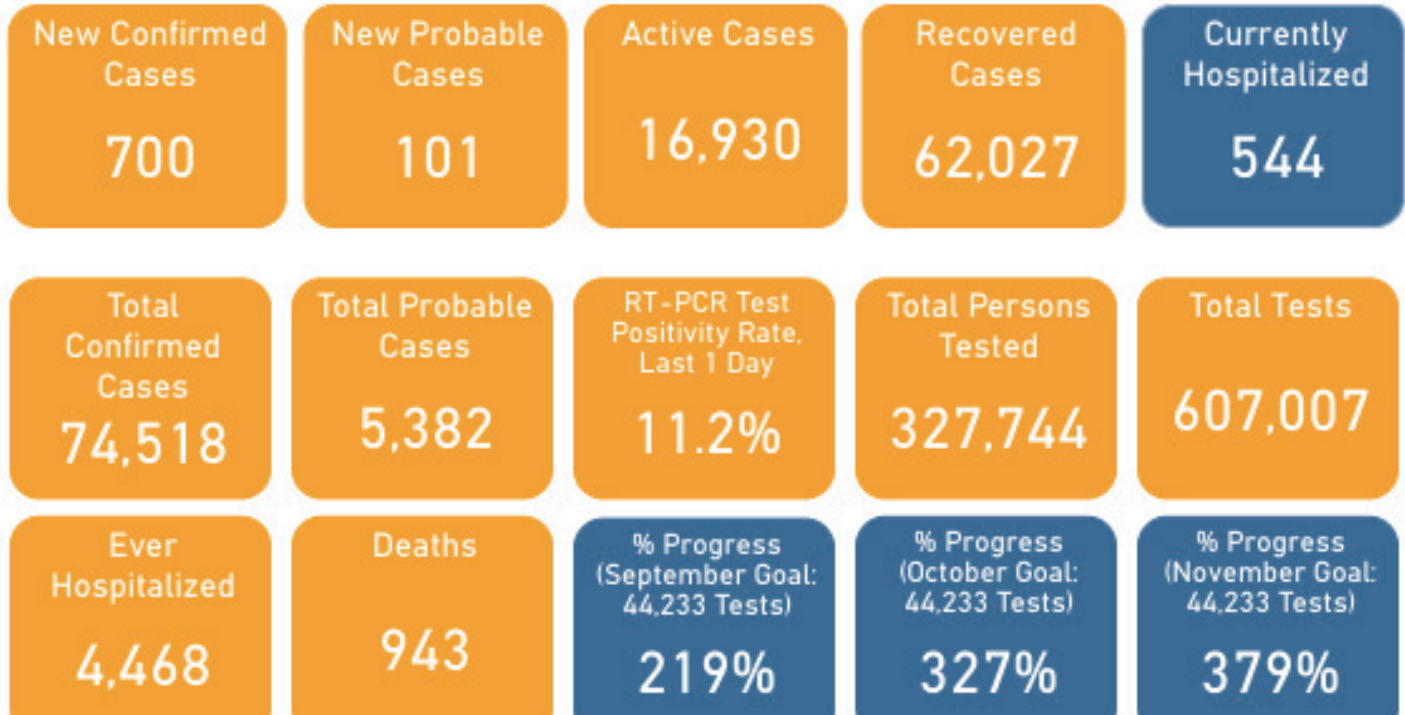
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Hyde	125	85	338	0	Substantial	25.53%
Jackson	200	156	821	8	Substantial	11.90%
Jerauld	237	187	438	13	Substantial	20.69%
Jones	62	47	151	0	Moderate	30.30%
Kingsbury	439	320	1255	10	Substantial	18.72%
Lake	857	640	2524	10	Substantial	18.91%
Lawrence	2009	1582	6920	22	Substantial	11.76%
Lincoln	5410	4268	15579	51	Substantial	27.09%
Lyman	455	366	1559	8	Substantial	24.17%
Marshall	178	117	903	3	Substantial	25.78%
McCook	596	439	1269	15	Substantial	33.12%
McPherson	149	102	466	1	Substantial	12.64%
Meade	1737	1372	6078	13	Substantial	13.69%
Mellette	176	142	612	1	Substantial	54.55%
Miner	188	152	464	5	Moderate	8.82%
Minnehaha	20454	16200	61015	183	Substantial	24.52%
Moody	416	303	1484	10	Substantial	32.50%
Oglala Lakota	1631	1280	5940	23	Substantial	25.95%
Pennington	8604	6648	30365	77	Substantial	16.13%
Perkins	201	114	551	2	Substantial	49.07%
Potter	267	195	652	1	Substantial	12.98%
Roberts	703	523	3590	19	Substantial	22.38%
Sanborn	271	177	547	1	Substantial	37.25%
Spink	553	419	1746	14	Substantial	16.82%
Stanley	229	170	678	0	Substantial	19.68%
Sully	91	70	203	3	Substantial	23.40%
Todd	950	751	3592	12	Substantial	61.54%
Tripp	511	376	1239	4	Substantial	33.91%
Turner	782	619	2120	42	Substantial	17.80%
Union	1248	982	4813	25	Substantial	25.64%
Walworth	476	340	1456	12	Substantial	27.57%
Yankton	1771	1258	7507	9	Substantial	16.65%
Ziebach	180	121	599	7	Substantial	27.27%
Unassigned	0	0	1655	0		

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South Dakota



AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	2768	0
10-19 years	8690	0
20-29 years	15103	2
30-39 years	13365	9
40-49 years	11421	17
50-59 years	11341	58
60-69 years	8956	125
70-79 years	4634	202
80+ years	3622	530

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	41716	463
Male	38184	480

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Brown County

New Confirmed Cases

21

New Probable Cases

0

Active Cases

722

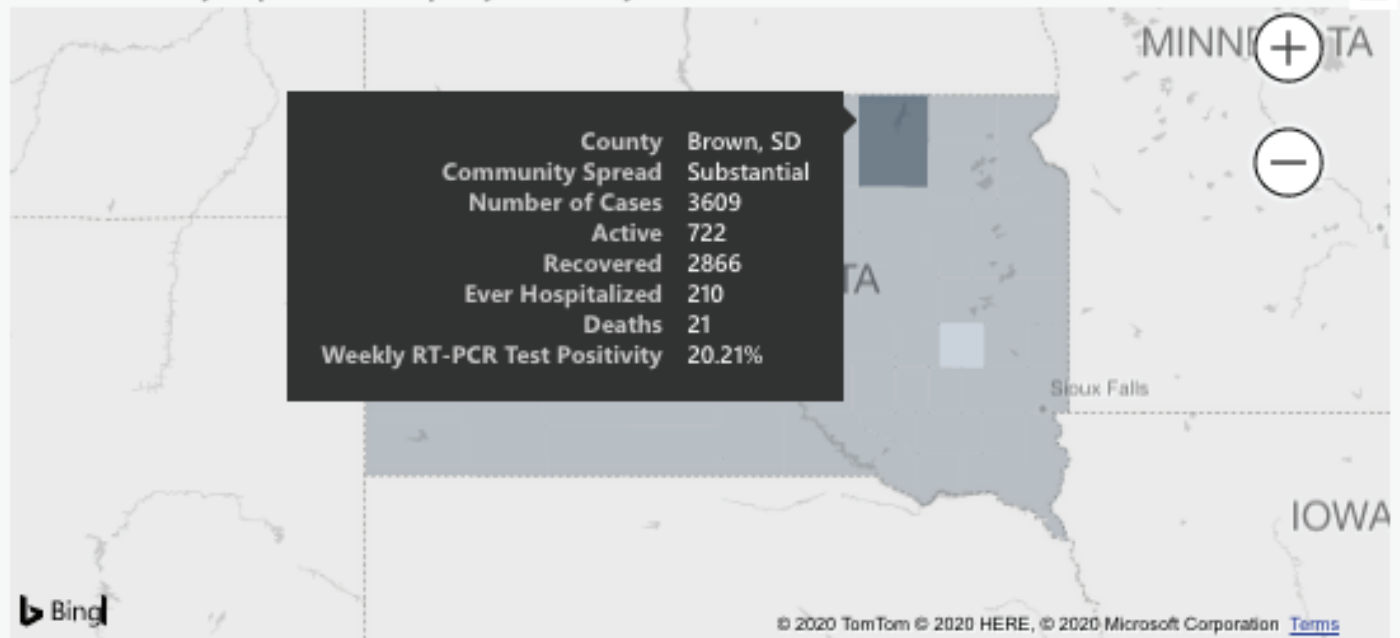
Recovered Cases

2,866

Currently Hospitalized

544

Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread ● Minimal ● Moderate ● Substantial

Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.

Total Confirmed Cases

3,490

Total Probable Cases

119

RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate, Last 1 Day

5.3%

Total Persons Tested

13,734

Total Tests

27,757

Ever Hospitalized

210

Deaths

21

% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests)

8%

% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests)

327%

% Progress (November Goal: 44,233 Tests)

379%

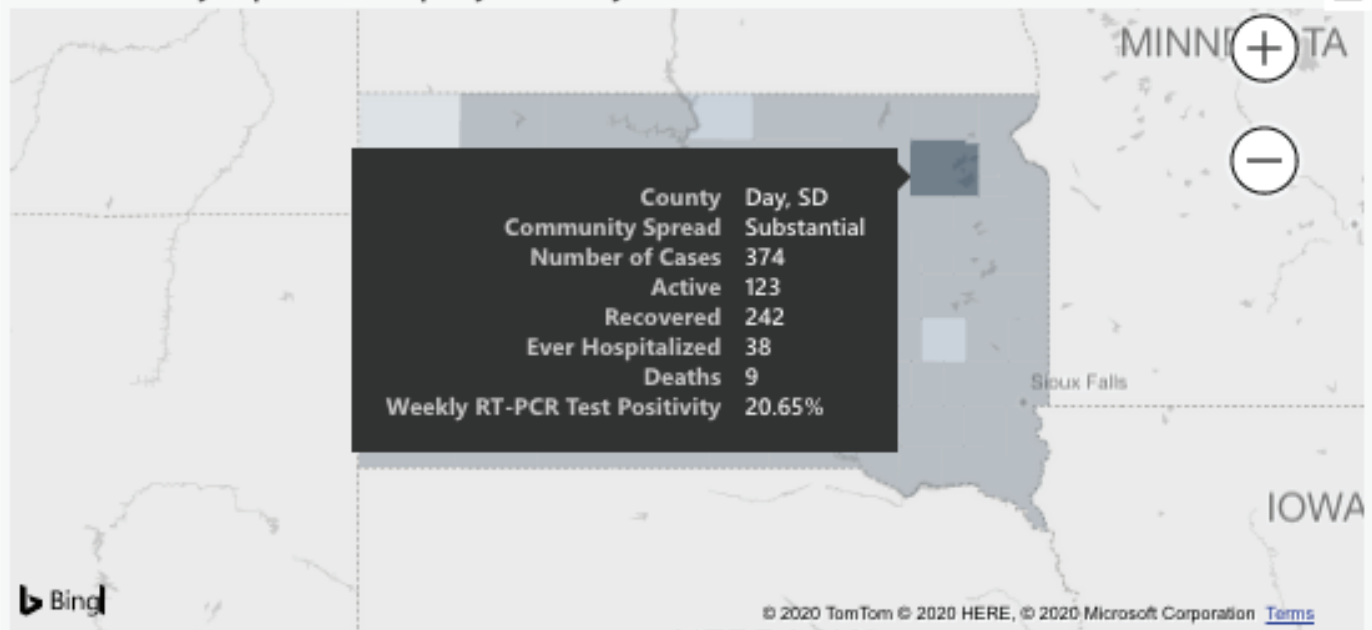
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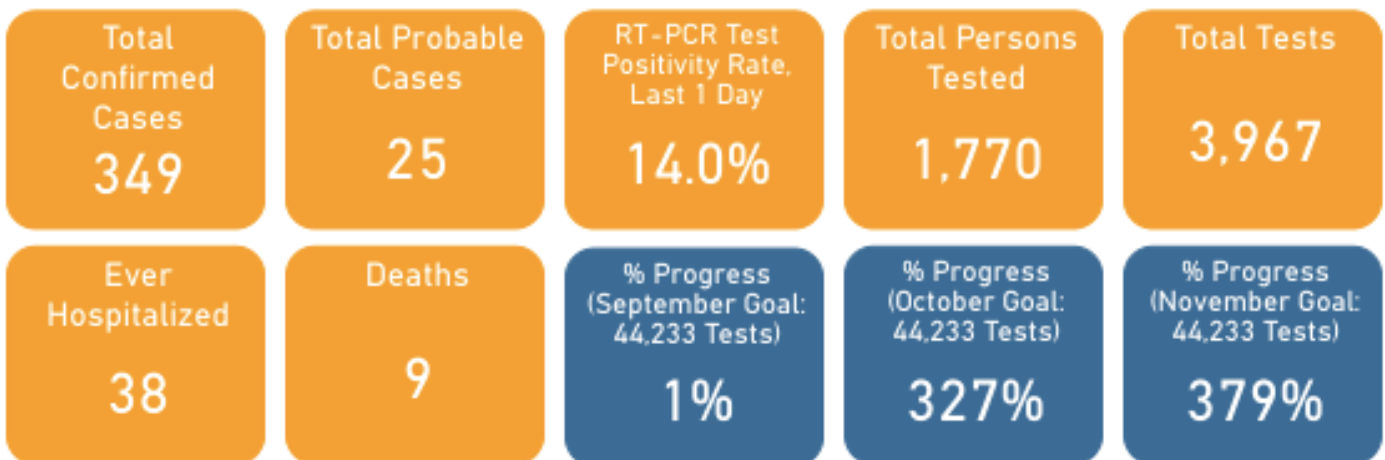
Day County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



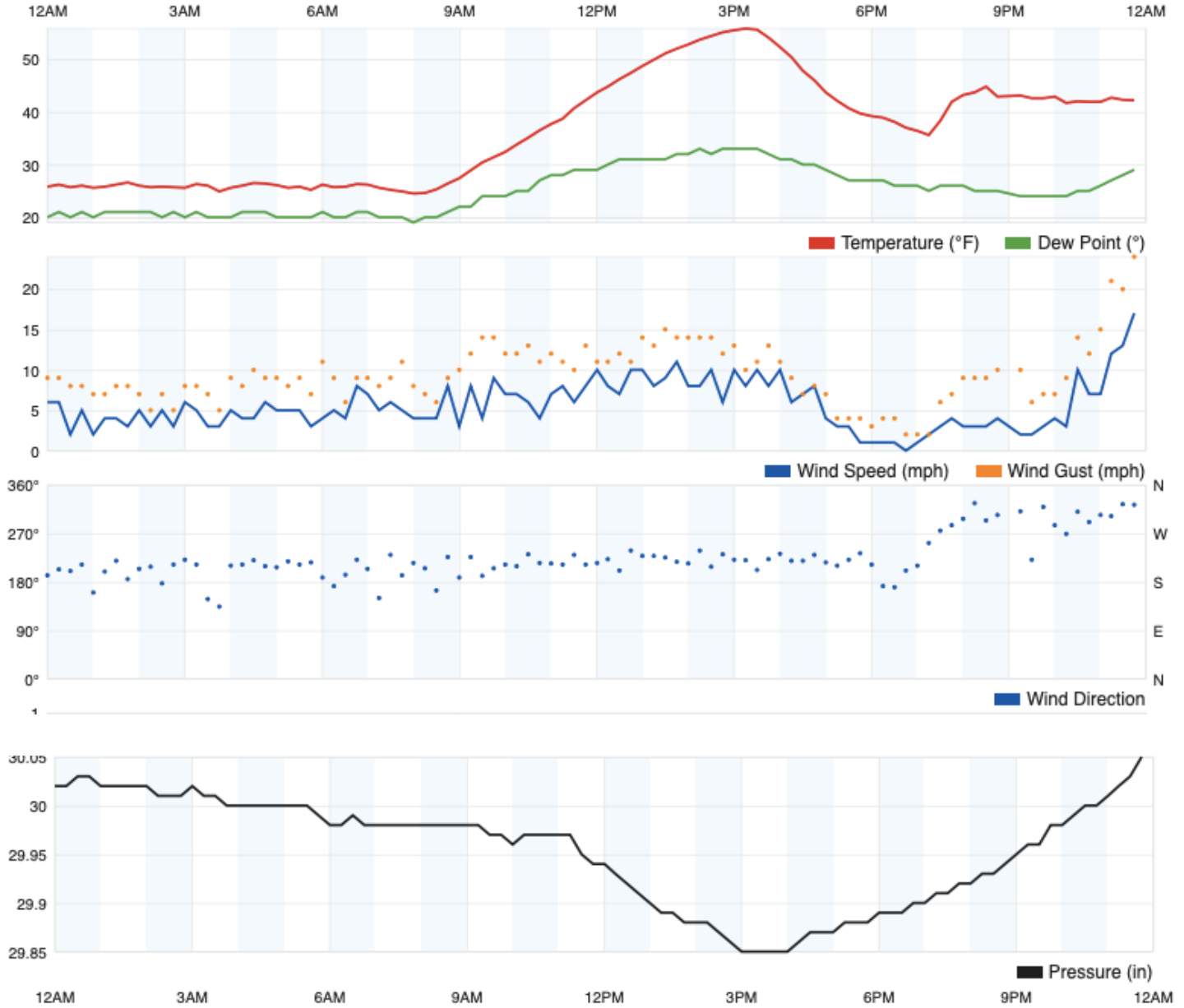
Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Tuesday

Tuesday
Night

Wednesday



Sunny



Mostly Clear



Mostly Sunny



Mostly Cloudy



Mostly Cloudy

High: 42 °F

Low: 15 °F

High: 41 °F

Low: 22 °F

High: 33 °F

Today,
*Mostly Sunny
Highs 34-52°F*

Tonight,
*Mostly Clear
Lows 14-23°F*

Tuesday,
*Partly Sunny
Highs 37-47°F*

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

Graphic Created 11/30/2020 2:27 AM

Relatively mild and dry conditions are expected through most of this work week. #sdwx #mnwx

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Today in Weather History

November 30, 1981: A two-day winter storm, beginning as rain, changing to freezing rain and then to snow, completely paralyzed the eastern half of South Dakota, as well as west central Minnesota Monday, November 30 through Tuesday, December 1, 1981. Snow accumulations of between eight and twelve inches were common in South Dakota. Wind with gusts to near 50 mph whipped the snow into blizzard conditions. The Governor of South Dakota closed east-west Interstate 90 to all traffic. Hundreds of motorists were stranded. One person died during snow removal after the storm. Some storm total snowfall amounts included 8 inches at Kennebec, 7 inches at Pierre and Faulkton, 4 inches at Aberdeen, and 2 inches at Watertown. The winter precipitation was caused by a storm center that moved from Kansas Monday through Iowa Monday night and into Wisconsin Tuesday morning, December 1st. The same storm produced heavy snow and blizzard conditions over a large area of the central Plains. Travel was especially difficult because of the snow. Many roads were impassible and motorists were forced to find shelter.

November 30, 1991: The third major winter storm of the season moved from the central plains to eastern South Dakota. The storm generally dropped between 4 and 8 inches of snow over the eastern third of South Dakota from the 28th to the 30th. New snow accumulations of 2 to 5 inches occurred over most of the rest of the state. Some specific snow reports across the area included Aberdeen with 2 inches and Watertown with 3 inches. Five inches fell at Clear Lake and 3 inches fell near Summit. Strong winds developed after the snow fell, producing widespread blowing and drifting snow, especially across the northeast corner of South Dakota.

November 30, 2000: Heavy snow of 6 to 12 inches fell across a large part of northern South Dakota and into western Big Stone County in Minnesota, causing travel problems and school closings. Several accidents also occurred due to the slippery roads. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Milbank and Ortonville; 8 inches at McLaughlin, Ipswich, Summit, and Mellette; 9 inches northwest of Britton, Clear Lake, and Pollock; 10 inches at Leola and Faulkton; 11 inches at Aberdeen and Webster; and 12 inches at Houghton.

November 30, 1925: An extremely rare late November hurricane began to affect the west coast of Florida as it strengthened during the day. The storm made landfall very early on December 1st south of Tampa Bay, weakened to a tropical storm as it crossed central Florida, and exited around St. Augustine. The storm regained Hurricane strength off Jacksonville late on the 1st. Heavy rain continued over northeast Florida on the 2nd. Gale force winds were reported from the Keys to Jacksonville and over 50 people lost their lives, mostly on ships at sea. Damage along the coast south of Jacksonville was heavy and excessive rain and wind seriously damaged citrus and truck crops.

1875 - A severe early season cold wave set November records in the northeastern U.S. The temperature dipped to 5 above zero at New York City, 2 below at Boston MA, and 13 below at Eastport ME. (David Ludlum)

1957 - Lee slope winds enhanced by Hurricane Nina gusted to 82 mph at Honolulu, Hawaii, a record wind gust for that location. Wainiha, on the island of Kauai, was deluged with 20.42 inches of rain, and 35 foot waves pounded some Kauai beaches, even though the eye of the hurricane was never within 120 miles of the islands. (30th-1st) (The Weather Channel)

1967 - A record November snowstorm struck the Washington D.C. area. It produced up to a foot of snow in a 12 hour period. (David Ludlum)

1976 - MacLeod Harbor, AK, reported a precipitation total for November of 70.99 inches, which established a state record for any month of the year. (The National Weather Summary)

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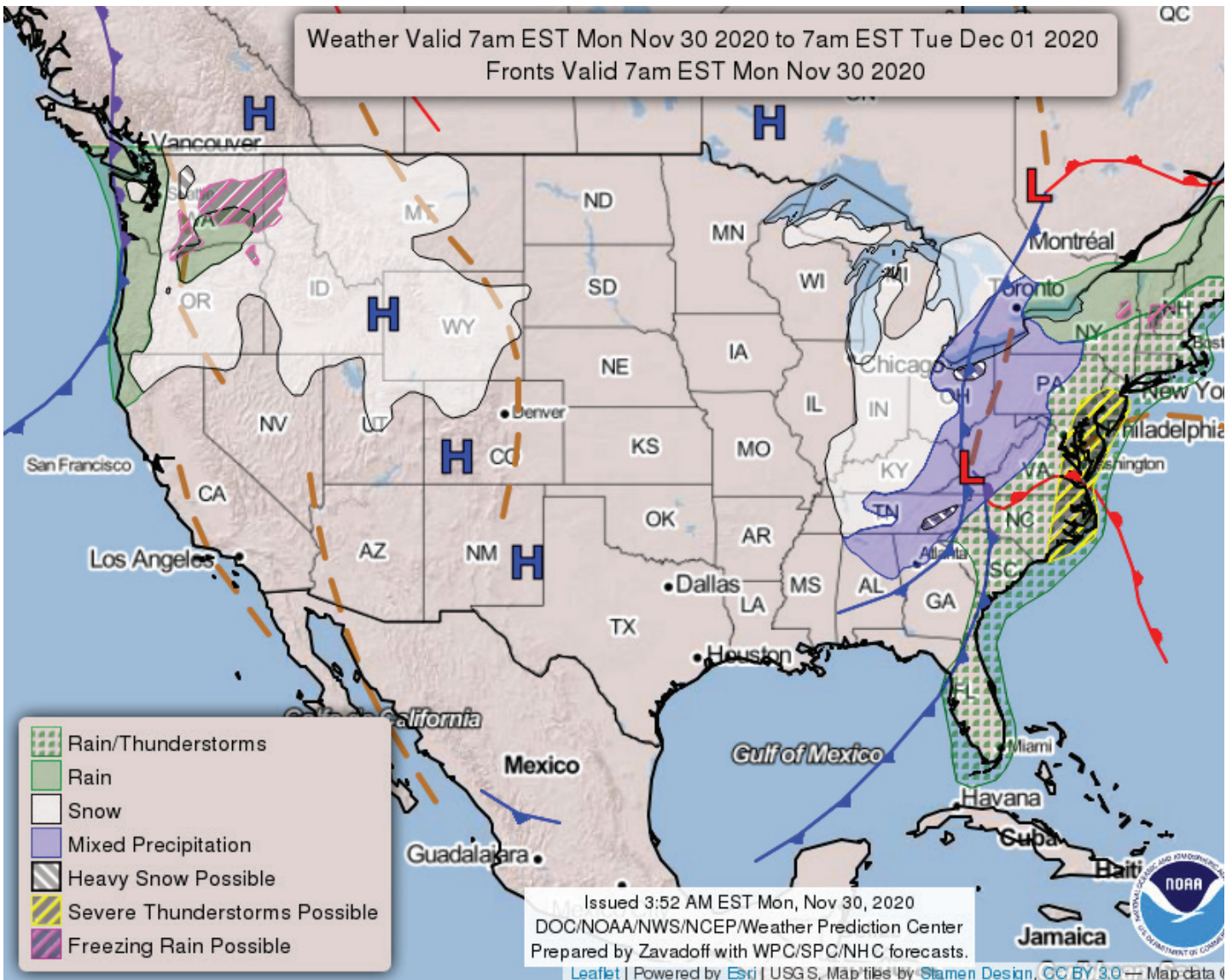
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 41 °F at 12:00 AM
Low Temp: 13 °F at 11:56 PM
Wind: 33 mph at 1:25 AM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 66° in 1995
Record Low: -27° in 1964
Average High: 31°F
Average Low: 12°F
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.71
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.18
Average Precip to date: 21.18
Precip Year to Date: 16.52
Sunset Tonight: 4:52 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:54 a.m.



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HE SATISFIES

God did not create any need He could not satisfy! He did not create food that would simply taste good. He created food that would taste good and satisfy our hunger – food that would nourish and sustain us, comfort us and bring us enjoyment. Every hunger or need that we have - whether spiritual, emotional, physical, or social - can be fulfilled out of the abundance of His creation. That includes this life and the life to come. He is a needs-meeting God.

Listen to the Psalmist: "For He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things." If we are thirsty, we must drink the water that He provides to quench our thirst through His Son. If we are hungry, we must eat the Bread of Life which is His Son. Unless we ask the Lord to become our Savior, we will live lives that are empty, unsatisfied, and unfulfilled. Only when we are willing to allow Him to fill the needs He has placed deep within us through His Son will we become complete.

There is a story of a little boy returning home from the store with a jar of honey. After struggling for quite some time to open it, he finally succeeded. He stuck his finger into the jar to taste its wonderful, delicious contents. An older man watching him from a distance approached him.

"Is it sweet?" he asked. "Yes, Sir," came the reply. "How sweet?" asked the man. "Well, Sir, I can't describe it. It's so sweet it more than satisfies my need for candy. But I'll tell you what. You stick your finger in the jar and taste it for yourself, and then you'll know."

"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!" He alone can satisfy our every need.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for meeting our every need! Fill the emptiness in our lives with Your beauty as You become our Redeemer, Savior, and Lord. Fill our lives with Your sweetness! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. Psalm 107:9

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2020 Groton SD Community Events

- **CANCELLED** Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- **CANCELLED** Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
- **CANCELLED** Fireman's Fun Night (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- **POSTPONED** Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
- **CANCELLED** Father/Daughter dance.
- **CANCELLED** Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
- **CANCELLED** Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
- 07/24/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ferney Open Golf Tourney
- 07/25/2020 City-Wide Rummage Sales
- **CANCELLED** State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12-13/2020 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In at the Groton Airport north of Groton
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
- 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/30/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/30/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
- **CANCELLED** Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
- 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates

News from the Associated Press

Sioux Falls gets creative with city services during pandemic

By TREVOR J. MITCHELL Sioux Falls Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — In the scope of Sioux Falls' 5,500+ active cases of COVID-19, six or seven people with the disease don't seem like that many.

But that's all it took to cause staffing issues at Sioux Area Metro serious enough that evening routes were suspended entirely last week, and the remaining routes were moved to hourly service.

"You get six or seven out at one time, they don't have a lot of extra people around," said Sam Trebilcock, senior planner with the city of Sioux Falls. "They can't just all the sudden just work four or five people another shift."

Trebilcock said he wasn't positive if the cases were connected in any way, but said "I think you could assume when you get that many that there was some close contact."

City departments have had to plan for these occasions — and how to avoid them entirely — since the pandemic started, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported.

For the city's Public Works department, much of which falls under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's definition of critical infrastructure, it's even more important to get those plans set.

Public Works Director Mark Cotter said that "pre-COVID, we had two operators working in the same room" in some plants, and they've separated those people into different zones. In other areas, they've proactively moved to make sure staff are always available — in water operations, for example, they've moved some positions to 12-hour shifts.

"You can potentially run the system with fewer people if you do get impacted," Cotter said.

They also put out the call for people to get cross-trained on departments outside of where they normally work — which resulted in one person taking that initiative, and then making a series of training videos for the water team.

"We can pull up people that are not full time, they're on the water team but they may not be an operator," Cotter said. "It becomes one of those things through the pandemic that will translate to long-term benefits."

Vehicles are also being assigned to specific people instead of being shared, Cotter said, and can be cleaned whenever those people aren't working.

The department also set up different "report to work" stations for some divisions to avoid large numbers of people starting their day in one place, and even used the city's libraries as "remote break stations" when they were closed to the public earlier in the year.

Many of those lessons and changes play into snow removal — and with one snow event down and more likely to come, Cotter said they're prepared.

"We really tried to brainstorm how we do shift change," he said.

Under normal circumstances, snowplow drivers would do 12-hour shifts, trading off in groups in a large meeting room. That was obviously off the table.

So they made sure their trucks were preloaded, cleaned and ready to go, and reduced the close contacts on those changes. The fleet team, in charge of upkeep and repair on city vehicles, are on shift changes offset by two hours to further reduce congestion.

And of course, the entire department is wearing masks ever since Mayor Paul TenHaken mandated them for city staff last month, although Cotter says the teams were "essentially already practicing that."

There's no snow in the immediate forecast, thankfully. But they're ready for when it comes, Cotter said. "I think we've all learned a lot over the last several months."

Moderna asking US, European regulators to OK its virus shots

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

Moderna Inc. said it would ask U.S. and European regulators Monday to allow emergency use of its COVID-19 vaccine as new study results confirm the shots offer strong protection — ramping up the race to begin limited vaccinations as the coronavirus rampage worsens.

Multiple vaccine candidates must succeed for the world to stamp out the pandemic, which has been on the upswing in the U.S. and Europe. U.S. hospitals have been stretched to the limit as the nation has seen more than 160,000 new cases per day and more than 1,400 daily deaths. Since first emerging nearly a year ago in China, the virus has killed more than 1.4 million people worldwide.

Moderna is just behind Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech in seeking to begin vaccinations in the U.S. in December. Across the Atlantic, British regulators also are assessing the Pfizer shot and another from AstraZeneca.

Moderna created its shots with the U.S. National Institutes of Health and already had a hint they were working, but said it got the final needed results over the weekend that suggest the vaccine is more than 94% effective.

Of 196 COVID-19 cases so far in its huge U.S. study, 185 were trial participants who received the placebo and 11 who got the real vaccine. The only people who got severely ill — 30 participants, including one who died — had received dummy shots, said Dr. Tal Zaks, the Cambridge, Massachusetts, company's chief medical officer.

When he learned the results, "I allowed myself to cry for the first time," Zaks told The Associated Press. "We have already, just in the trial, have already saved lives. Just imagine the impact then multiplied to the people who can get this vaccine."

Moderna said the shots' effectiveness and a good safety record so far — with only temporary, flu-like side effects — mean they meet requirements set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for emergency use before the final-stage testing is complete. The European Medicines Agency, Europe's version of FDA, has signaled it also is open to faster, emergency clearance.

WHAT COMES NEXT

The FDA has pledged that before it decides to roll out any COVID-19 vaccines, its scientific advisers will publicly debate whether there's enough evidence behind each candidate.

First up on Dec. 10, Pfizer and BioNTech will present data suggesting their vaccine candidate is 95% effective. Moderna said its turn at this "science court" is expected exactly a week later, on Dec. 17.

RATIONING INITIAL DOSES

If the FDA allows emergency use, Moderna expects to have 20 million doses ready for the U.S. by year's end. Recipients will need two doses, so that's enough for 10 million people.

Pfizer expects to have 50 million doses globally in December. Half of them — or enough for 12.5 million people — are earmarked for the U.S.

This week, a different panel of U.S. experts, established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will meet to decide how initial supplies will be given out. They're expected to reserve scarce first doses for health care workers and, if the shots work well enough in the frail elderly, for residents of long-term care facilities. As more vaccine gradually becomes available in coming months, other essential workers and people at highest risk from the coronavirus would get in line. But enough for the general population isn't expected until at least spring.

Outside the U.S., Zaks said significant supplies from Moderna would be available later, "in the first quarter" of next year.

"Obviously we are doing everything in our power to increase the capacity and accelerate the timelines," he said.

Both Moderna's and Pfizer's vaccines are made with the same technology, using a piece of genetic code for the "spike" protein that studs the virus. That messenger RNA, or mRNA, instructs the body to make some harmless spike protein, training immune cells to recognize it if the real virus eventually comes along.

ASTRAZENECA CONFUSION

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AstraZeneca last week announced confusing early results of its vaccine candidate from research in Britain and Brazil

That vaccine appears 62% effective when tested as originally intended, with recipients given two full doses. But because of a manufacturing error, a small number of volunteers got a lower first dose — and AstraZeneca said in that group, the vaccine appeared to be 90% effective.

Experts say it's unclear why the lower-dose approach would work better and that it may just be a statistical quirk.

A larger U.S. study of the AstraZeneca candidate still is underway that should eventually give the FDA a better picture of how well it works. The FDA has said any COVID-19 vaccine would have to be at least 50% effective.

Meanwhile Britain's government will have to decide whether its U.K. data is sufficient for an early rollout there.

STILL IN THE PIPELINE

Johnson & Johnson also is in final-stage testing in the U.S. and several other countries to see if its vaccine candidate could work with just one dose.

Both the J&J and AstraZeneca vaccines work by using harmless cold viruses to carry the spike protein gene into the body and prime the immune system.

The different technologies have ramifications for how easily different vaccines could be distributed globally. The AstraZeneca shots won't require freezer storage like the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

Candidates made with still other technologies are in late-stage testing, too. Another U.S. company, Novavax Inc., announced Monday that it has finished enrolling 15,000 people in a late-stage study in Britain and plans to begin recruiting even more volunteers for final testing in the U.S. and Mexico "in the coming weeks."

Vaccines made by three Chinese companies and a Russian candidate also are being tested in thousands of people in countries around the world.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Iran says Israel remotely killed military nuclear scientist

By NASSER KARIMI and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — A top Iranian security official on Monday accused Israel of using "electronic devices" to remotely kill a scientist who founded the Islamic Republic's military nuclear program in the 2000s.

Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of the country's Supreme National Security Council, made the comment at the funeral for Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, where Iran's defense minister separately vowed to continue the man's work "with more speed and more power."

Israel, long suspected of killing Iranian nuclear scientists over the last decade, repeatedly has declined to comment on the attack.

Fakhri-zadeh headed Iran's so-called AMAD program, which Israel and the West have alleged was a military operation looking at the feasibility of building a nuclear weapon. The International Atomic Energy Agency says that "structured program" ended in 2003. U.S. intelligence agencies concurred with that assessment in a 2007 report.

Israel insists Iran still maintains the ambition of developing nuclear weapons, pointing to Tehran's ballistic missile program and research into other technologies. Iran long has maintained its nuclear program is peaceful.

Shamkhani's remarks drastically change the story of Fakhri-zadeh's killing Friday. Authorities initially said a truck exploded and then gunmen opened fire on the scientist, killing him. State TV even interviewed a man the night of the attack who described seeing gunmen open fire.

State TV's English-language Press TV reported earlier Wednesday a weapon recovered from the scene

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of the attack bore "the logo and specifications of the Israeli military industry." State TV's Arabic-language channel, Al-Alam, claimed the weapons used were "controlled by satellite," a claim also made Sunday by the semiofficial Fars news agency.

None of the outlets immediately offered evidence supporting their claims.

"Unfortunately, the operation was a very complicated operation and was carried out by using electronic devices," Shamkhani told state TV. "No individual was present at the site."

Satellite control of weapons is nothing new. Armed, long-range drones for instance rely on satellite connections to be controlled by their remote pilots. Remote-controlled gun turrets also exist, but typically see their operator connected by a hard line to cut down on the delay in commands being relayed.

While technically feasible, it wasn't immediately clear if such a system had been used before, said Jeremy Binnie, the Mideast editor of Jane's Defence Weekly.

"Could you set up a weapon with a camera which then has a feed that uses an open satellite communications line back to the controller?" Binnie said. "I can't see why that's not possible."

It also raised the question of if the truck that exploded during the attack detonated afterward to try and destroy a satellite-controlled machine gun hidden inside of it. Iranian officials did not immediately acknowledge that. It also would require someone on the ground to set up the weapon.

Shamkhani also blamed the Iranian exile group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq as well for "having a role in this," without elaborating. The MEK did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Monday's service for Fakhrizadeh took place at an outdoor portion of Iran's Defense Ministry in Tehran, with officials including Revolutionary Guard chief Gen. Hossein Salami, the Guard's Quds Force leader Gen. Esmail Ghaani, civilian nuclear program chief Ali Akbar Sahebi and Intelligence Minister Mamoud Alavi. They sat apart from each other and wore masks due to the coronavirus pandemic as reciters melodically read portions of the Quran and religious texts.

Defense Minister Gen. Amir Hatami gave a speech after kissing Fakhrizadeh's casket and putting his forehead against it. He said Fakhrizadeh's killing would make Iranians "more united, more determined."

"For the continuation of your path, we will continue with more speed and more power," Hatami said in comments aired live by state television.

Hatami also criticized countries that hadn't condemned Fakhrizadeh's killing, warning: "This will catch up with you someday." Overnight, the United Arab Emirates, which just reached a normalization deal with Israel, issued a statement condemning "the heinous assassination." The UAE, home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, warned it "could further fuel conflict in the region."

Last year, the UAE found itself in the middle of an escalating series of incidents between Iran and the U.S. Though long suspicious of Iran's nuclear program, the Emirates has said it wants to de-escalate the crisis. The UAE just started passenger air service to Israel and Israelis are expected to vacation in the country over Hanukkah in the coming days.

Meanwhile, Israeli Foreign Ministry Director-General Alon Ushpiz has sent a cable to all Israeli diplomatic delegations around the globe urging diplomats to maintain "the highest level of readiness and awareness of any irregular activity" around missions and Jewish community centers.

Hebrew-language media in Israel reported that following the Fakhrizadeh's killing, the Foreign Ministry ordered security beefed up at certain Israeli diplomatic missions overseas. The ministry declined to comment on diplomatic security matters.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writer Ilan Ben Zion in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

The Latest: EU sees flatter virus curve, still needs limits

By The Associated Press undefined

BERLIN — The European Union's latest surge of coronavirus infections is flattening or going down in some but not all countries across the continent but it's too early to relax current virus restrictions, the

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head of the continent's disease control center said Monday.

It's alarming that the death rate caused by COVID-19 is still rising across Europe — it was 95 per 1 million people last week compared to 84 the week before, said Andrea Ammon, director of the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control.

Ammon also noted that occupancy of intensive care units was at 91% last week, meaning that "some countries are probably already at the limit."

She spoke at a virtual gathering of lawmakers responsible for European affairs in all the EU member states and at the European Parliament.

Ammon also said there are still challenges when it comes to testing and contact tracing and that EU nations need to harmonize their medical data.

As of Monday, more than 13 million coronavirus cases have been reported in the 27-nation European Union and over 319,700 people in the bloc have died of COVID-19.

THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- Fauci: US may see 'surge upon surge' of virus in coming weeks after Thanksgiving travel
- U.K. stocks up on vaccines, hopes to start virus shots within days
- Virus forces businesses to adapt or close down on the streets of London
- Hawaii seeks to attract remote workers to help offset tourism losses
- New York City to reopen its schools to in-person learning, tests students more for COVID-19

Follow AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

LISBON, Portugal -- The European Union's police agency says it has made 102 arrests in a continent-wide operation to check on the correct disposal of sanitary waste amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Europol says it identified sanitary waste treatment, which is meant to be closely regulated by authorities, as a potential concern during the worldwide health emergency.

Europol said Monday its investigation in 30 countries uncovered cases of illegal trafficking, storage, dumping and shipment of waste and document fraud.

In Portugal, police inspections of more than 2,000 companies, hospitals and health centers led to 30 arrests and the seizures of assets worth almost 800,000 euros (\$960,000).

In one case in Spain, a company cut its treatment of sanitary waste, which is supposed to be sterilized at high pressure, to increase profits.

TOKYO Japan says a fast-track arrangement for business-related travel with China amid the pandemic started Monday.

The deal was agreed during Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Japan last week for talks with his Japanese counterpart, Toshimitsu Motegi. The deal lets travelers engage in limited business activities during the 14-day quarantine period after arrival.

Motegi said at a Japan-China annual international forum Monday that he hoped the arrangement will contribute to promote people exchanges between the two neighbors.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato told reporters that resumption of international travel is "indispensable" for the recovery of the pandemic-hit economy. He said the government will also do its utmost to maintain adequate border control as Japan struggles with the recent resurgence of the infections.

The two countries have also launched residence-track program Monday for students, interns and others with long-term residence permits.

Japan has reported nearly 147,000 cases and more than 2,100 virus-related deaths.

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BERLIN — Germany's word of the year is -- what else? -- "corona pandemic."

The Association for the German Language announced Monday that a jury chose "Corona-Pandemie" for this year's honor. The group said that it "names THE dominant issue of almost the entire year."

The runners-up were "Lockdown" and "Verschwörungserzählung," or "conspiracy story." "Black Lives Matter" took fourth place.

Previous winners include "postfaktisch," a reference to the rise of "post-truth" politics, in 2016; and "Heisszeit," a play on the words for "hot" and "ice age," to reflect concern over climate change in 2018.

Germany has recorded more than 1 million infections of the coronavirus since the pandemic began and is now in a second partial shutdown, but has been credited with handling the disease better than some other European countries.

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — Cambodia's Education Ministry has ordered all state schools to close until the start of the next school year in January after a rare local outbreak of coronavirus.

Education Minister Hang Chuon Naron issued a statement late Sunday saying that all schools will be shut to prevent students from being infected. Public schools will remain closed until until Jan. 11, the start of the next school year, while private schools must close for two weeks, he said.

Students in private schools will be permitted to study online.

Cambodian officials said over the weekend that a family of six and another man tested positive for the coronavirus. Eight more cases were reported Monday among residents of Phnom Penh who were in contact with the family.

Prime Minister Hun Sen expressed concern that the woman believed to be the source had traveled extensively in the country. The woman's husband works at the Interior Ministry in charge of prisons, and three Cabinet ministers are undergoing self-quarantine.

About 3,300 people in seven provinces in contact with the family are having themselves tested, according to the statement.

Also on Monday, the Culture and Fine Arts Ministry announced the closure of all theaters and museums and the prohibition of public concerts for the next two weeks.

Cambodia has reported only 323 cases of the virus since the pandemic began.

NEW DELHI — India has recorded 38,772 new coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, driving its overall total to 9.43 million.

The health ministry on Monday also reported 443 deaths in the same period, raising the death toll to 137,139.

India continues to have one of the lowest deaths per million population globally, the health ministry said.

For more than three weeks now India's single-day cases have remained below the 50,000 mark.

The capital, New Delhi, has also seen a dip in daily infections. It reported fewer than 5,000 new cases for the second consecutive day. On Sunday, it recorded 68 deaths, driving the capital's total to 9,066.

India is second behind the U.S. in total coronavirus cases.

In an effort to slow the virus's spread, the home ministry has allowed states to impose local restrictions such as night curfews but has asked them to consult before imposing lockdowns at state, district or city levels.

LOS ANGELES -- Counties across California will begin stricter COVID-19 restrictions on Monday as cases surge statewide and Thanksgiving travelers return home.

Health officials are preparing for a wave of cases in the next two or three weeks that could be tied to holiday gatherings.

Los Angeles County will impose a lockdown calling for its 10 million residents to stay home beginning Monday.

Santa Clara County is banning all high school, collegiate and professional sports and imposing a quarantine for those traveling into the region from more than 150 miles away.

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San Francisco and San Mateo counties moved to the most restrictive purple tier in the state's pandemic blueprint for the economy.

The state reported 7,415 coronavirus hospitalizations on Sunday, citing the most recently available data from the previous day. More than 1,700 of those patients were in intensive care units. California's previous record was 7,170 in July.

As of Sunday, California has had nearly 1.2 million confirmed coronavirus cases and more than 19,000 deaths since the pandemic began. The state reported around 15,600 new cases on Saturday.

CHICAGO — Public health officials in Illinois on Sunday reported 57 more deaths from COVID-19, as well as 7,178 new confirmed and probable cases.

There have been 720,114 COVID-19 cases in Illinois since the pandemic began. The death toll has reached 12,193 people.

The state reported 62,740 tests in the past 24 hours with more than 10.4 million tests overall.

Currently, 5,858 people in Illinois are being hospitalized for COVID-19, with 1,185 people in intensive care units.

NEW YORK -- New York City will reopen its school system to in-person learning and increase the number of days a week many children attend class even as the coronavirus pandemic intensifies in the city.

Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Sunday that some elementary schools and pre-kindergarten programs will resume classes Dec. 7. Others will take longer to reopen their doors. The announcement marks a major policy reversal for the nation's largest school system.

It comes just 11 days after de Blasio announced that schools were shutting down because of a rising number of cases. The plan for reopening middle and high schools is still being developed.

Some elementary schools and pre-kindergarten programs will resume classes Dec. 7, a week from Monday, the mayor said. Others will take longer to reopen their doors.

HONOLULU -- A group of Hawaii leaders launched a campaign Sunday to promote the islands as an appealing location for a remote office with a view.

Now that many companies, especially in the tech industry, allow employees to work from anywhere during the pandemic, they hope Hawaii will be alluring.

They're also throwing in roundtrip tickets to Honolulu for the first 50 approved applicants.

Some say high-paid workers will bolster an economy decimated by dramatically fewer tourists.

Others worry what those with Silicon Valley money will mean for housing, especially when there's already a crunch for affordable places to live.

LONDON — Britain says it has secured 2 million more doses of a promising coronavirus vaccine as it gears up to launch within days the country's most ambitious inoculation program in decades.

The U.K. has had Europe's deadliest coronavirus outbreak, with more than 58,000 confirmed virus-related deaths. It now hopes to hit a more positive milestone by becoming one of the first countries in the world to start vaccinating its population against COVID-19.

The U.K. government has agreed to buy more than 350 million doses of vaccines from seven different producers, should they prove effective, as it prepares to vaccinate as many of the country's 67 million people as possible.

Hospitals in England have been told they could receive the first doses of the Pfizer shot as early as the week of Dec. 7 if it receives approval, the Guardian and Financial Times reported.

Congress returns with virus aid, federal funding unresolved

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After months of shadowboxing amid a tense and toxic campaign, Capitol Hill's

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main players are returning for one final, perhaps futile, attempt at deal-making on a challenging menu of year-end business.

COVID-19 relief, a \$1.4 trillion catchall spending package, and defense policy — and a final burst of judicial nominees — dominate a truncated two- or three-week session occurring as the coronavirus pandemic rockets out of control in President Donald Trump's final weeks in office.

The only absolute must-do business is preventing a government shutdown when a temporary spending bill expires on Dec. 11. The route preferred by top lawmakers like House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is to agree upon and pass an omnibus spending bill for the government. But it may be difficult to overcome bitter divisions regarding a long-delayed COVID-19 relief package that's a top priority of business, state and local governments, educators and others.

Time is working against lawmakers as well, as is the Capitol's emerging status as a COVID-19 hotspot. The House has truncated its schedule, and Senate Republicans are joining Democrats in forgoing the in-person lunch meetings that usually anchor their workweeks. It'll take serious, good-faith conversations among top players to determine what's possible, but those haven't transpired yet.

Top items for December's lame-duck session:

KEEPING THE GOVERNMENT OPEN

At a bare minimum, lawmakers need to keep the government running by passing a stopgap spending bill known as a continuing resolution, which would punt \$1.4 trillion worth of unfinished agency spending into next year.

That's a typical way to deal with a handoff to a new administration, but McConnell and Pelosi are two veterans of the Capitol's appropriations culture and are pressing hard for a catchall spending package. A battle over using budget sleight of hand to add a 2 percentage point, \$12 billion increase to domestic programs to accommodate rapidly growing veterans health care spending is an issue, as are Trump's demands for U.S-Mexico border wall funding.

Getting Trump to sign the measure is another challenge. Two years ago he sparked a lengthy partial government shutdown over the border wall, but both sides would like to clear away the pile of unfinished legislation to give the Biden administration a fresh start. The changeover in administrations probably wouldn't affect an omnibus deal very much.

At issue are the 12 annual spending bills comprising the portion of the government's budget that passes through Congress each year on a bipartisan basis. Whatever approach passes, it's likely to contain a batch of unfinished leftovers such as extending expiring health care policies and tax provisions and continuing the authorization for the government's flood insurance program.

COVID-19 RELIEF

Democrats have battled with Republicans and the White House for months over a fresh installment of COVID-19 relief that all sides say they want. But a lack of good faith and an unwillingness to embark on compromises that might lead either side out of their political comfort zones have helped keep another rescue package on ice.

The aid remains out of reach despite a fragile economy and out-of-control increases in coronavirus cases, especially in Midwest GOP strongholds. McConnell is a potent force for a smaller — but still sizable — package and has supplanted Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin as the most important Republican force in the negotiations.

Pelosi seems to have overplayed her hand as she held out for \$2 trillion-plus right up until the election. The results of the election, which saw Democrats lose seats in the House, appear to have significantly undercut her position, but she is holding firm on another round of aid to state and local governments.

Before the election, Trump seemed to be focused on a provision that would send another round of \$1,200 payments to most Americans. He hasn't shown a lot of interest in the topic since, apart from stray tweets. But the chief obstacles now appear to be Pelosi's demand for state and local government aid and McConnell's demand for a liability shield for businesses reopening during the pandemic.

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At stake is funding for vaccines and testing, reopening schools, various economic "stimulus" ideas like another round of "paycheck protection" subsidies for businesses especially hard hit by the pandemic. Failure to pass a measure now would vault the topic to the top of Biden's legislative agenda next year.

DEFENSE POLICY

A spat over military bases named for Confederate officers is threatening the annual passage of a defense policy measure that has passed for 59 years in a row on a bipartisan basis. The measure is critical in the defense policy world, guiding Pentagon policy and cementing decisions about troop levels, new weapons systems and military readiness, military personnel policy and other military goals.

Both the House and Senate measures would require the Pentagon to rename bases such as Fort Benning and Fort Hood, but Trump opposes the idea and has threatened a veto over it. The battle erupted this summer amid widespread racial protests, and Trump used the debate to appeal to white Southern voters nostalgic about the Confederacy. It's a live issue in two Senate runoff elections in Georgia that will determine control of the chamber during the first two years of Biden's tenure.

Democrats are insisting on changing the names and it's not obvious how it'll all end up.

Completed Wisconsin recount confirms Biden's win over Trump

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Wisconsin finished a recount of its presidential results on Sunday, confirming Democrat Joe Biden's victory over President Donald Trump in the key battleground state. Trump vowed to challenge the outcome in court even before the recount concluded.

Dane County was the second and last county to finish its recount, reporting a 45-vote gain for Trump. Milwaukee County, the state's other big and overwhelmingly liberal county targeted in a recount that Trump paid \$3 million for, reported its results Friday, a 132-vote gain for Biden.

Taken together, the two counties barely budged Biden's winning margin of about 20,600 votes, giving the winner a net gain of 87 votes.

"As we have said, the recount only served to reaffirm Joe Biden's victory in Wisconsin," Danielle Melfi, who led Biden's campaign in Wisconsin, said in a statement to The Associated Press.

Trump campaign spokeswoman Jenna Ellis said in a statement that the Wisconsin recounts have "revealed serious issues" about whether the ballots were legal, but she offered no specific details to validate her claim.

"As we have said from the very beginning, we want every legal vote, and only legal votes to be counted, and we will continue to uphold our promise to the American people to fight for a free and fair election," Ellis said.

With no precedent for overturning a result as large as Biden's, Trump was widely expected to head to court once the recount was finished. His campaign challenged thousands of absentee ballots during the recount, and even before it was complete, Trump tweeted that he would sue.

"The Wisconsin recount is not about finding mistakes in the count, it is about finding people who have voted illegally, and that case will be brought after the recount is over, on Monday or Tuesday," Trump tweeted on Saturday. "We have found many illegal votes. Stay tuned!"

The deadline to certify the vote is Tuesday. Certification is done by the Democratic chair of the Wisconsin Election Commission, which is bipartisan.

The Wisconsin Voters Alliance, a conservative group, has already filed a lawsuit against state election officials seeking to block certification of the results. It makes many of the claims Trump is expected to make. Gov. Tony Evers' attorneys have asked the state Supreme Court to dismiss the suit. Evers, a Democrat, said the complaint is a "mishmash of legal distortions" that uses factual misrepresentations in an attempt to take voting rights away from millions of Wisconsin residents.

Another suit filed over the weekend by Wisconsin resident Dean Mueller argues that ballots placed in drop boxes are illegal and must not be counted.

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Trump's attorneys have complained about absentee ballots where voters identified themselves as "indefinitely confined," allowing them to cast an absentee ballot without showing a photo ID; ballots that have a certification envelope with two different ink colors, indicating a poll worker may have helped complete it; and absentee ballots that don't have a separate written record for its request, such as in-person absentee ballots.

Election officials in the two counties counted those ballots during the recount, but marked them as exhibits at the request of the Trump campaign.

Trump's campaign has already failed elsewhere in court without proof of widespread fraud, which experts widely agree doesn't exist. Trump legal challenges have failed in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada and Pennsylvania.

A long road to US charges against Islamic State 'Beatles'

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As two Islamic State militants faced a judge in Virginia last month, Diane Foley listened from home through a muffled phone connection and strained to make out the voices of the men prosecutors say kidnapped her son before he was murdered.

Alexanda Kotey and El Shafee Elsheikh stand accused of belonging to an IS cell dubbed "the Beatles," an incongruously lighthearted nickname for British citizens blamed for the jailing, torture and murder of Western hostages in Syria.

After geopolitical breakthroughs and stalemates, military actions in Syria and court fights in London, the Justice Department's most significant terrorism prosecution in years was finally underway. For Foley, who months earlier had pleaded with Attorney General William Barr to pursue justice by forswearing the death penalty, the fact the case was proceeding at all felt miraculous.

"We'd met so many blocks over the years, I couldn't believe it was happening," Foley said. "I was in awe of it, really, and almost didn't trust it — a bit incredulous. Is this really happening?"

The prosecution is a counterterrorism success in the waning weeks of the Trump administration. But it almost didn't happen.

Interviews with 11 people connected to the case make clear the hurdles along the way, including a death penalty dispute that required two normally close allies, the U.S. and U.K., to navigate fundamental differences in criminal justice systems. In the end, the interviews show, grieving families reached a gradual consensus to take capital punishment off the table while a key commitment by Barr to do the same enabled the U.S. to obtain crucial evidence it needed.

At another time, the case might not have even been handled in civilian courts. After the Sept. 11 attacks, the Republican-led Justice Department favored detaining foreign fighters at the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for military tribunals. But that approach changed. Now federal prosecutors are pursuing the highest-profile terrorism case since trials over the Boston Marathon bombing and Benghazi attack, aiming to secure convictions and punishments that can keep the men, in their 30s, imprisoned for life.

"There was never a time when I thought we didn't have any case," said John Demers, assistant attorney general for national security. But, "we didn't want to bring them here unless we had really good charges, a really strong case, and ultimately expected a conviction that was going to result in a very significant prison sentence."

The group of militants, called "the Beatles" by their captives because of their British accents, came to embody IS barbarism with the 2014 release of grisly propaganda videos depicting the beheadings of American hostages. The first showed James Foley, captured as a freelance journalist covering Syria's civil war, kneeling in the desert in an orange jumpsuit beside a masked man in black brandishing a knife to his throat.

The beheadings were part of a reign of terror that officials say also involved waterboarding, mock executions and electric shocks. Elsheikh once videotaped the shooting of a Syrian hostage as Kotey directed hostages to watch while holding signs pleading for their release, prosecutors say.

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The pair also coordinated ransom demands, the indictment says. An email to the Foleys tauntingly told them the U.S. government treated them "like worthless insects."

An airstrike killed the group's most notorious member, who had killed Foley and was known by the moniker of "Jihadi John." Another was prosecuted in Turkey.

That left Kotey and Elsheikh, who were captured in Syria in 2018 by American-backed forces. Weeks later, they appeared unapologetic while speaking to The Associated Press at a Kurdish security center, denouncing the U.S. and Britain as hypocrites who wouldn't give them a fair trial.

Inside the Justice Department, officials weighed whether the men should be tried in the U.K. or U.S. or even transferred to Guantanamo, which then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions had called a "very fine place" even though prosecutions there have floundered, lagging behind the speedier justice of American courts.

U.S. officials initially leaned toward a U.K. prosecution. British authorities had accumulated compelling evidence during their own investigation and U.S. policy encouraged other nations to repatriate and prosecute their citizens who'd joined IS.

Yet the U.K., which had stripped the men of their British citizenship, resisted doing the case in part over concerns about the ability to get convictions and significant prison sentences in British courts.

Once that position became clear, officials coalesced around bringing the men to America, said State Department counterterrorism coordinator Nathan Sales. But the British balked at sharing evidence with U.S. prosecutors without assurances they wouldn't impose the death penalty, which was abolished in the U.K. That was an impediment for American officials, who say they considered Britain's evidence vital in tracing the men's travel and path of radicalization.

They decided they wouldn't do the case without that evidence, Demers said.

The British later relented and agreed to share evidence without any assurances. But Elsheikh's mother sued over the evidence transfer, delaying the case well over a year. Last March, a British court effectively blocked the evidence-sharing over the death penalty issue, a hurdle U.S. officials assumed might require additional litigation to overcome.

Despite the ruling, prosecutors pressed forward. G. Zachary Terwilliger, the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, whose office is handling the case, was among those arguing internally that prosecuting the defendants was more important than leaving the death penalty on the table.

"You certainly can make an argument, and maybe it's not even a close call, that capital punishment would have been appropriate given the horrific nature of this crime," Terwilliger said. But, "getting justice for the victims was paramount to me."

The families, too, began uniting around the idea of removing the death penalty from consideration.

That had long been Diane Foley's position. The most vocal of the group, she met regularly over the years with government officials and cultivated high-level Washington contacts like her hometown senator, Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, with whom she co-authored a 2019 newspaper op-ed warning against "impunity for these monsters."

Still, the budding consensus in recent months was notable because the families had not always shared the same perspective of the case.

The executions of Foley and two other hostages, Steven Sotloff and Peter Kassig, were documented in propaganda videos, the men's fates apparent to the world. But the circumstances of the death of a fourth, Kayla Mueller, who prosecutors say was sexually abused by late IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, were less established and her parents initially believed keeping the death penalty on the table could be leverage to get answers.

Mueller's mother, Marsha, said in a text message that the couple had not wanted anyone to die but was eager for information about Kayla.

Ultimately, though, she concluded: "The other families who we care so deeply for wanted the men brought here and this seemed to be the only way they would come."

Meanwhile, current and former FBI officials who were helping the families, including the head of the bureau's hostage recovery cell, encouraged them to speak out in unison to prod the Trump administration

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toward prosecution. Ali Soufan, a former FBI counterterrorism agent who'd partnered with Mueller's parents to investigate Kayla's death, made the case that waiving the death penalty was essential for cooperating with the U.K. and even customary in international terrorism cases like this one.

Other options were hardly optimal. A trial in Iraq, where the men had been held in U.S. military custody over the past year, could produce a human rights outcry creating empathy for the men. The proceedings could also result in their release, or potentially execution if they were convicted.

Concerned a U.S. prosecution might not happen at all, or that the men might be left in Iraq, the families accelerated their public advocacy. In July, all four signed onto an opinion piece in The Washington Post imploring the U.S. to prosecute the pair as a message that anyone who harms American citizens "will not escape." That month, NBC News aired an interview with the men in which they admitted involvement in Mueller's captivity.

When Foley met with Barr in 2019, he said he shared her desire for accountability. But she said he and other Justice Department officials were firm in their convictions that the death penalty, a punishment Barr had brought back after a 16-year federal government hiatus, was merited.

Last summer, though, as the families conveyed their wishes to remove death from consideration and as the case dragged on without obvious resolution, Barr was ready to break the logjam.

"I don't know if it was the deciding factor or not, but I think it did help when we finally spoke up again and said, 'Please. Please bring them to the U.S.,"' Foley said. "If you need that evidence and you need to waive the death penalty, please do it."

A senior Justice Department official prepared Foley for the news about to break, writing in an Aug. 14 email that once the U.S. message is delivered and becomes public, "we are sure it will generate a lot of attention and discussion — and that many will be interested to hear from all of you."

That happened days later with the release of Barr's letter to U.K. Home Secretary Priti Patel. In it, he committed to forgo the death penalty but also issued an ultimatum: If the Justice Department received Britain's evidence by Oct. 15, it would proceed with prosecution. If not, it would transfer the men to Iraqi custody for prosecution.

"That was a real option. It wasn't posturing," Demers said. "I didn't know if the U.K. could do everything it needed to do in time to get us that evidence."

The evidence came, resulting in a 24-page indictment with counts punishable by life imprisonment.

Justice Department prosecutors announced their case on Oct. 7 as the men were flown to Dulles International Airport and taken to jail, where because of the pandemic they faced a judge via video link. They have pleaded not guilty.

As Foley listened to court proceedings she once doubted would ever come, she couldn't help but wonder if, under different circumstances, the men might have been friends with James, who years earlier had taught jail inmates.

But she also is gratified.

"To my last dying breath, I will do my best to bring some accountability and justice for the horror of the murders of these four Americans."

Uproar in France over proposed limits on filming police

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French activists fear that a proposed new security law will deprive them of a potent weapon against abuse — cellphone videos of police activity — threatening their efforts to document possible cases of police brutality, especially in impoverished immigrant neighborhoods.

French President Emmanuel Macron's government is pushing a new security bill that makes it illegal to publish images of police officers with intent to cause them harm, amid other measures. Critics fear the new law could hurt press freedoms and make it more difficult for all citizens to report on police brutality.

"I was lucky enough to have videos that protect me," said Michel Zecler, a Black music producer who was beaten up recently by several French police officers. Videos first published Thursday by French website

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Loopsider have been seen by over 14 million viewers, resulting in widespread outrage over police actions. Two of the officers are in jail while they are investigated while two others, also under investigation, are out on bail.

The draft bill, still being debated in parliament, has prompted protests across the country called by press freedom advocates and civil rights campaigners. Tens of thousands of people marched Saturday in Paris to reject the measure, including families and friends of people killed by police.

"For decades, descendants of post-colonial immigration and residents in populous neighborhoods have denounced police brutality," Sihame Assbague, an anti-racism activist, told The Associated Press.

Videos by the public have helped to show a wider audience that there is a "systemic problem with French police forces, who are abusing, punching, beating, mutilating, killing," she said.

Activists say the bill may have an even greater impact on people other than journalists, especially those of immigrant origin living in neighborhoods where relationships with the police have long been tense. Images posted online have been key to denouncing cases of officers' misconduct and racism in recent years, they argue.

Assbague expressed fears that, under the proposed law, those who post videos of police abuses online may be put on trial, where they would face up to a year in jail and a 45,000-euro (\$53,000) fine.

"I tend to believe that a young Arab man from a poor suburb who posts a video of police brutality in his neighborhood will be more at risk of being found guilty than a journalist who did a video during a protest," she said.

Amal Bentounsi's brother, Amine, was shot in the back and killed by a police officer in 2012. The officer was sentenced to a five-year suspended prison sentence. Along with other families of victims, in March she launched a mobile phone app called Emergency-Police Violence to record abuses and bring cases to court.

"Some police officers already have a sense of impunity. ... The only solution now is to make videos," she told the AP. The app has been downloaded more than 50,000 times.

"If we want to improve public confidence in the police, it does not go through hiding the truth," she added.

The proposed law is partly a response to demands from police unions, who say it will provide greater protection for officers.

Abdoulaye Kante, a Black police officer with 20 years of experience in Paris and its suburbs, is both a supporter of the proposed law and strongly condemns police brutality and violence against officers.

"What people don't understand is that some individuals are using videos to put the faces of our (police) colleagues on social media so that they are identified, so that they are threatened or to incite hatred," he said.

"The law doesn't ban journalists or citizens from filming police in action ... It bans these images from being used to harm, physically or psychologically," he argued. "The lives of officers are important."

A "tiny fraction of the population feeds rage and hatred" against police, Jean-Michel Fauvergue, a former head of elite police forces and a lawmaker in Macron's party who co-authored the bill, said in the National Assembly. "We need to find a solution."

Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has acknowledged that "the intent (to harm) is something that is difficult to define" and the government appears ready to back revamping part of the proposed law.

Activists consider the draft law one more step in a series of security measures passed by French lawmakers to extend police powers at the expense of civil liberties.

A statement signed by over 30 groups of families and friends of victims of police abuses said that since 2005, "all security laws adopted have constantly expanded the legal field allowing police impunity."

Riots in 2005 exposed France's long-running problems between police and youths in public housing projects with large immigrant populations.

In recent years, numerous security laws have been passed following attacks by extremists.

Critics noted a hardening of police tactics during protests or while arresting individuals. Hundreds of complaints have been filed against officers during the yellow vest movement against social injustice, which erupted in 2018 and saw weekends of violent clashes.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said out of 3 million police operations per year in France, some 9,500 end up on a government website that denounces abuses, which represents 0.3%.

France's human rights ombudsman, Claire Hedon, is among the most prominent critics of the proposed law, which she said involves "significant risks of undermining fundamental rights."

"Our democracy is hit when the population does not trust its police anymore," she told the National Assembly.

AP writer John Leicester contributed from Le Pecq, France.

Follow all AP stories on racism and police brutality at <https://apnews.com/Racialinjustice>

Biden chooses an all-female senior White House press team

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE and ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden will have an all-female senior communications team at his White House, reflecting his stated desire to build out a diverse White House team as well as what's expected to be a return to a more traditional press operation.

Biden campaign communications director Kate Bedingfield will serve as Biden's White House communications director. Jen Psaki, a longtime Democratic spokeswoman, will be his press secretary.

Four of the seven top communications roles at the White House will be filled by women of color, and it's the first time the entire senior White House communications team will be entirely female.

President Donald Trump upended the ways in which his administration communicated with the press. In contrast with administrations past, Trump's communications team held few press briefings, and those that did occur were often combative affairs riddled with inaccuracies and falsehoods.

Trump himself sometimes served as his own press secretary, taking questions from the media, and he often bypassed the White House press corps entirely by dialing into his favorite Fox News shows.

In a statement announcing the White House communications team, Biden said: "Communicating directly and truthfully to the American people is one of the most important duties of a President, and this team will be entrusted with the tremendous responsibility of connecting the American people to the White House."

He added: "These qualified, experienced communicators bring diverse perspectives to their work and a shared commitment to building this country back better."

Bedingfield and Psaki are veterans of the Obama administration. Bedingfield served as communications director for Biden while he was vice president, and Psaki was a White House communications director and a spokesperson at the State Department.

Others joining the White House communications staff are:

— Karine Jean Pierre, who was Vice President-elect Kamala Harris' chief of staff, will serve as a principal deputy press secretary for the president-elect. She's another Obama administration alum, having served as a regional political director for the White House office of political affairs.

— Pili Tobar, who was communications director for coalitions on Biden's campaign, will be his deputy White House communications director. She most recently was deputy director for America's Voice, an immigration reform advocacy group, and was a press staffer for Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Three Biden campaign senior advisers are being appointed to top communications roles:

— Ashley Etienne, a former communications director for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, will serve as Harris' communications director.

— Symone Sanders, another senior adviser on the Biden campaign, will be Harris' senior adviser and chief spokesperson.

— Elizabeth Alexander, who served as the former vice president's press secretary and his communications director while he was a U.S. senator from Delaware, will serve as Jill Biden's communications director.

After his campaign went virtual due to the coronavirus pandemic, Biden faced some of his own criticism for not being accessible to reporters. But near the end of the campaign, he answered questions from the

press more frequently, and his transition team has held weekly briefings since he was elected president. The choice of a number of Obama administration veterans — many with deep relationships with the Washington press corps — also suggests a return to a more congenial relationship with the press.

Taylor reported from Washington.

Source: Pa. lawmaker gets a positive test at Trump meeting

By MARK SCOLFORO Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — A Pennsylvania state senator abruptly left a West Wing meeting with President Donald Trump after being informed he had tested positive for the coronavirus, a person with direct knowledge of the meeting told The Associated Press.

Republican state Sen. Doug Mastriano had gone to the White House last Wednesday with like-minded Republican state lawmakers shortly after a four-hour-plus public meeting that Mastriano helped host in Gettysburg — maskless — to discuss efforts to overturn president-elect Joe Biden's victory in the state.

Trump told Mastriano that White House medical personnel would take care of him, his son and his son's friend, who were also there for the Oval Office meeting and tested positive. The meeting continued after Mastriano and the others left, the person said.

The person spoke to the AP on Sunday on the condition of anonymity to discuss the private session because the matter is politically sensitive.

Positive coronavirus cases are surging across the United States and the nation's top infectious disease expert said Sunday that the U.S. may see "surge upon surge" in the coming weeks. The number of new COVID-19 cases reported in the United States topped 200,000 for the first time Friday.

Everyone who will be in close proximity to the president must take a rapid test. Trump was himself hospitalized in October after he contracted the virus. Dozens of White House staffers and others close to the president have also tested positive, including the first lady and two of the president's sons.

All participants in Wednesday's meeting took COVID-19 tests, but the positive results were not announced until they were in the West Wing of the White House, the person said.

"The president instantly called the White House doctor in and he took them back to, I guess, the medical place," the person said. The meeting with Trump was to strategize about efforts regarding the election, the person said.

After Mastriano and the others left, the discussion with Trump continued for about a half-hour. Mastriano did not return to the meeting.

Mastriano sought the meeting of the Pennsylvania Senate Republican Policy Committee earlier Wednesday that drew Trump personal attorney Rudy Giuliani, a second Trump lawyer, several witnesses and a crowd of onlookers. Only a few of them were masked.

The committee let Giuliani and others, for several hours, air their beliefs that there had been problems with how the Pennsylvania vote was conducted and counted. All claims were baseless; no evidence was presented to support any of the allegations they made.

Trump even participated, calling from the White House while one of his lawyers held a phone up to a microphone. He reiterated the same unfounded claims of fraud he's been tweeting about for weeks.

Those beliefs have persisted despite Trump losing repeatedly in state and federal courts, including a Philadelphia-based federal appeals court's decision Friday that said the Trump campaign's "claims have no merit," and a state Supreme Court decision Saturday that threw out a legal challenge to the election and effort to stop certification of its results.

Mastriano, a conservative from a rural district in central Pennsylvania and outspoken Trump supporter, did not return several messages left Sunday seeking comment.

Republican state Sen. Dave Argall, who chairs the policy committee, declined Sunday in a text message to discuss Mastriano's medical condition and the White House visit.

"I've received some conflicting information that I'm trying to resolve," Argall said in the text. "It's my

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understanding a Senate statement later today will help us all to understand this better.”

Argall said he would not talk publicly about the matter “until I know more.”

Senate Republican spokeswoman Kate Flessner declined comment, describing it as a personnel matter.

The person with knowledge of the White House visit said several people rode in a large van from Gettysburg, where the policy committee met in a hotel, to the White House. Mastriano, his son and his son’s friend drove in another vehicle.

It’s not clear why Mastriano’s son and his friend accompanied the state senator to the meeting, which the person said was also attended by Trump and the president’s chief of staff, Mark Meadows, who tested positive in early November.

Mastriano has aggressively opposed policies under the administration of Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus and keep people safe.

He has led rallies where he advocated to reopen businesses despite the risk of infection and he has repeatedly and sharply denounced Wolf’s orders. Mastriano also spoke to a few thousand Trump supporters who gathered outside the Capitol on Nov. 7, hours after Democrat Joe Biden’s national win became evident.

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

Biden breaks foot while playing with dog, to wear a boot

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden will likely wear a walking boot for the next several weeks as he recovers from breaking his right foot while playing with one of his dogs, his doctor said.

Biden suffered the injury on Saturday and visited an orthopedist in Newark, Delaware, on Sunday afternoon, his office said.

“Initial x-rays did not show any obvious fracture,” but medical staff ordered a more detailed CT scan, his doctor, Kevin O’Connor, said in a statement. The subsequent scan found tiny fractures of two small bones in the middle of his right foot, O’Connor said.

“It is anticipated that he will likely require a walking boot for several weeks,” O’Connor said.

Fractures are a concern generally as people age, but Biden’s appears to be a relatively mild one based on his doctor’s statement and the planned treatment. At 78 he will become the oldest president when he’s inaugurated in January; he often dismissed questions about his age during the campaign.

Reporters covering the president-elect were not afforded the opportunity to see Biden enter the doctor’s office Sunday, despite multiple requests. Leaving the doctor’s office to head to an imaging center for his CT scan, Biden was visibly limping, though he walked without a crutch or other aid.

Biden sustained the injury playing with Major, one of the Bidens’ two dogs. They adopted Major in 2018, and acquired their first dog, Champ, after the 2008 election. The Bidens have said they’ll be bringing their dogs to the White House and also plan to get a cat.

Last December he released a doctor’s report that disclosed he takes a statin to keep his cholesterol at healthy levels, but his doctor described him as “healthy, vigorous” and “fit to successfully execute the duties of the Presidency.”

Associated Press writer Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

Merriam-Webster’s top word of 2020 not a shocker: pandemic

By LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — If you were to choose a word that rose above most in 2020, which word would it be? Ding, ding, ding: Merriam-Webster on Monday announced “pandemic” as its 2020 word of the year.

“That probably isn’t a big shock,” Peter Sokolowski, editor at large for Merriam-Webster, told The Associated Press.

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"Often the big news story has a technical word that's associated with it and in this case, the word pandemic is not just technical but has become general. It's probably the word by which we'll refer to this period in the future," he said.

The word took on urgent specificity in March, when the coronavirus crisis was designated a pandemic, but it started to trend up on Merriam-Webster.com as early January and again in February when the first U.S. deaths and outbreaks on cruise ships occurred.

On March 11, when the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic, lookups on the site for pandemic spiked hugely. Site interest for the word has remained significantly high through the year, Sokolowski said.

By huge, Sokolowski means searches for pandemic on March 11 were 115,806% higher than lookups experienced on the same date last year.

Pandemic, with roots in Latin and Greek, is a combination of "pan," for all, and "demos," for people or population. The latter is the same root of "democracy," Sokolowski noted. The word pandemic dates to the mid-1600s, used broadly for "universal" and more specifically to disease in a medical text in the 1660s, he said.

That was after the plagues of the Middle Ages, Sokolowski said.

He attributes the lookup traffic for pandemic not entirely to searchers who didn't know what it meant but also to those on the hunt for more detail, or for inspiration or comfort.

"We see that the word love is looked up around Valentine's Day and the word cornucopia is looked up at Thanksgiving," Sokolowski said. "We see a word like surreal spiking when a moment of national tragedy or shock occurs. It's the idea of dictionaries being the beginning of putting your thoughts in order."

Merriam-Webster acted quickly in March to add and update entries on its site for words related to the pandemic. While "coronavirus" had been in the dictionary for decades, "COVID-19" was coined in February. Thirty-four days later, Merriam-Webster had it up online, along with a couple dozen other entries that were revised to reflect the health emergency.

"That's the shortest period of time we've ever seen a word go from coinage to entry," Sokolowski said. "The word had this urgency."

Coronavirus was among runners up for word of the year as it jumped into the mainstream. Quarantine, asymptomatic, mamba, kraken, defund, antebellum, irregardless, icon, schadenfreude and malarkey were also runners up based on lookup spikes around specific events.

Particularly interesting to word nerds like Sokolowski, a lexicographer, is quarantine. With Italian roots, it was used during the Black Death of the 1300s for the period of time a new ship coming into port would have to wait outside a city to prevent disease. The "quar" in quarantine derives from 40, for the 40 days required.

Spikes for mamba occurred after the January death of Kobe Bryant, whose nickname was the Black Mamba. A mass of lookups occurred for kraken in July after Seattle's new National Hockey League franchise chose the mythical sea monster as its name, urged along by fans.

Country group Lady Antebellum's name change to Lady A drove dictionary interest in June, while malarkey got a boost from President-elect Joe Biden, who's fond of using the word. Icon was front and center in headlines after the deaths of U.S. Rep. John Lewis and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg.

The Merriam-Webster site has about 40 million unique monthly users and about 100 million monthly page views.

Biden chooses an all-female senior White House press team

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE, ANDREW TAYLOR and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden will have an all-female senior communications team at his White House, reflecting his stated desire to build out a diverse White House team as well as what's expected to be a return to a more traditional press operation.

Biden campaign communications director Kate Bedingfield will serve as Biden's White House communi-

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tions director. Jen Psaki, a longtime Democratic spokeswoman, will be his press secretary.

Four of the seven top communications roles at the White House will be filled by women of color, and it's the first time the entire senior White House communications team will be entirely female.

President Donald Trump upended the ways in which his administration communicated with the press. In contrast with administrations past, Trump's communications team held few press briefings, and those that did occur were often combative affairs riddled with inaccuracies and falsehoods.

Trump himself sometimes served as his own press secretary, taking questions from the media, and he often bypassed the White House press corps entirely by dialing into his favorite Fox News shows.

In a different area of the White House operation, Biden plans to announce a number of his top economic advisers this week. He'll name Neera Tanden, the president and CEO of the liberal think tank Center for American Progress, as director of the Office of Management and Budget, according to a person familiar with the transition process granted anonymity to speak freely about internal deliberations.

In a statement announcing the White House communications team, Biden said: "Communicating directly and truthfully to the American people is one of the most important duties of a President, and this team will be entrusted with the tremendous responsibility of connecting the American people to the White House."

He added: "These qualified, experienced communicators bring diverse perspectives to their work and a shared commitment to building this country back better."

Bedingfield, Psaki and Tanden are all veterans of the Obama administration. Bedingfield served as communications director for Biden while he was vice president; Psaki was a White House communications director and a spokesperson at the State Department; and Tanden served as a senior adviser to Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and helped craft the Affordable Care Act.

Others joining the White House communications staff are:

— Karine Jean Pierre, who was Vice President-elect Kamala Harris' chief of staff, will serve as a principal deputy press secretary for the president-elect. She's another Obama administration alum, having served as a regional political director for the White House office of political affairs.

— Pili Tobar, who was communications director for coalitions on Biden's campaign, will be his deputy White House communications director. She most recently was deputy director for America's Voice, an immigration reform advocacy group, and was a press staffer for Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Three Biden campaign senior advisers are being appointed to top communications roles:

— Ashley Etienne, a former communications director for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, will serve as Harris' communications director.

— Symone Sanders, another senior adviser on the Biden campaign, will be Harris' senior adviser and chief spokesperson.

— Elizabeth Alexander, who served as the former vice president's press secretary and his communications director while he was a U.S. senator from Delaware, will serve as Jill Biden's communications director.

After his campaign went virtual due to the coronavirus pandemic, Biden faced some criticism for not being accessible to reporters. But near the end of the campaign, he answered questions from the press more frequently, and his transition team has held weekly briefings since he was elected president.

The choice of a number of Obama administration veterans — many with deep relationships with the Washington press corps — also suggests a return to a more congenial relationship with the press.

Also joining the Biden administration as economic advisers, according to a person familiar with transition plans who was not authorized to speak on the matter:

— Brian Deese, a former Obama administration economic adviser, is expected to be named to head the National Economic Council.

— Princeton University economist Cecilia Rouse, who served on the Council of Economic Advisers during the Obama administration, is expected to be named to head the Council of Economic advisers.

— Heather Boushey, the president and co-founder of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, and Jared Bernstein, who served as an economic adviser to Biden during the Obama administration, are also expected to be named to the Council of Economic Advisers.

As head of the OMB, Tanden would be responsible for preparing Biden's budget submission and would

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command several hundred budget analysts, economists and policy advisers with deep knowledge of the inner workings of the government.

Her choice may mollify progressives, who have been putting pressure on Biden to show his commitment to progressive priorities with his early staff appointments. She was chosen over more moderate voices with roots in the party's anti-deficit wing such as Bruce Reed, who was staff director of President Barack Obama's 2010 deficit commission, which proposed a set of politically painful recommendations that were never acted upon.

Taylor reported from Washington and Madhani from Chicago.

Dave Prowse, actor who played Darth Vader, dies at 85

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Dave Prowse, the British weightlifter-turned-actor who was the body, though not the voice, of arch-villain Darth Vader in the original "Star Wars" trilogy, has died. He was 85.

Prowse died Saturday after a short illness, his agent Thomas Bowington said Sunday.

Born in Bristol, southwest England, in 1935, Prowse was a three-time British weightlifting champion and represented England in weightlifting at the 1962 Commonwealth Games before breaking into movies with roles that emphasized his commanding size, including Frankenstein's monster in a pair of Hammer Studios horror films.

Director George Lucas saw Prowse in a small part in "A Clockwork Orange" and asked the 6-foot-6-inch (almost 2-meter) actor to audition for the villainous Vader or the Wookie Chewbacca in "Star Wars."

Prowse later told the BBC he chose Darth Vader because "you always remember the bad guys."

Physically, Prowse was perfect for the part. Yet his lilting English West Country accent was considered less than ideal and his lines were dubbed by James Earl Jones.

Prowse donned Darth Vader's black armor and helmet for "Star Wars" (1977), "The Empire Strikes Back" (1980) and "Return of the Jedi" (1983).

He expressed some regret that, thanks to Vader's mask, "I can walk around with complete anonymity."

"All actors crave recognition and I'd like to have some like Luke Skywalker and Han Solo," he told The Associated Press in 1980. "Fortune tends to follow fame."

Lucas said Prowse "brought a physicality to Darth Vader that was essential for the character."

"He made Vader leap off the page and on to the big screen, with an imposing stature and movement performance to match the intensity and undercurrent of Vader's presence," the director said in a statement on the official "Star Wars" website.

"David was up for anything and contributed to the success of what would become a memorable, tragic figure. May he rest in peace."

Prowse also worked as a trainer for other actors, helping Christopher Reeve prepare to be the Man of Steel in hit 1978 film "Superman."

Prowse was also known to a generation of British children as the Green Cross Code Man, a superhero in road safety advertisements during the 1970s and '80s.

Prowse suffered from arthritis for many years and campaigned to raise money for research into disease. In 1999 he was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II for his services to charity and road safety.

He was a regular at "Star Wars" fan events but was banned from official conventions by Lucas in 2010 after the pair fell out.

Mark Hamill, who played Luke Skywalker in the "Star Wars" films, tweeted that Prowse was "a kind man & much more than Darth Vader." Hamill said the actor "loved his fans as much as they loved him. #RIP."

"Shaun of the Dead" director-writer Edgar Wright also paid tribute to Prowse on Twitter.

"As a kid, Dave Prowse couldn't be more famous to me; stalking along corridors as evil incarnate in the part of Darth Vader & stopping a whole generation of kiddies from being mown down in street as the

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Green Cross Code man," he wrote. "Rest in Peace, Bristol's finest."

Prowse is survived by his wife Norma and their three children.

Mahomes, Hill light up Bucs, Chiefs hold on vs. Brady 27-24

By FRED GOODALL AP Sports Writer

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — When Tyreek Hill draws single coverage, Patrick Mahomes is going to find a way to get the ball to the Kansas City Chiefs' most explosive receiver.

Mahomes threw for 462 yards, including touchdowns of 75, 44 and 20 yards to Hill, who finished with 13 catches for 269 yards in the reigning Super Bowl champions' 27-24 victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sunday.

"It feels good, you know, but I feel like there's still a lot of work for me to do," Hill said after going over 1,000 yards for the season.

"I'm always trying to get better, got to be consistent with what you do," Hill added. "Those same people showing you love this week, you make a bad play next week, they're going to hate you."

Mahomes outplayed Tom Brady to win the fourth career matchup between the MVPs, completing 37 of 49 passes and holding the ball for more than 10 minutes without scoring on Kansas City's last two possessions to put the game away.

Hill benefited from Sammy Watkins' return to the Chiefs lineup after being sidelined since Week 5 with a hamstring injury and got the best of a matchup with Bucs cornerback Carlton Davis, who often had no help trying to contain the speedy receiver.

"We don't get that a lot, especially with that guy and his ability," Mahomes said. "So when we do, we try to take advantage of it."

Hill had seven catches for 203 yards and two touchdowns in the first quarter alone, joining Qadry Ismail (210 in the third quarter on Dec. 12, 1999) and Lee Evans (205 in the first quarter on Nov. 19, 2006) as the only NFL receivers since 1980 to have 200 yards worth of receptions in a single quarter.

The fifth-year pro's last catch — an 8-yarder on third-and-7 in the final minute — gave Mahomes an opportunity to run out the clock.

"The last one, I learned a long time ago, you don't give Tom Brady another shot," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "That's why he's the G.O.A.T. So, don't give them the ball back. That was the mindset there."

The Chiefs (10-1) won their sixth straight game and clinched their seventh 10-win season in eight years under Reid.

The defending champs improved to 6-0 on the road and have won nine straight away from home going back to last year.

"Very very few guys that I've seen in this league or any league that can backpedal eight, nine, 10, 11 yards in the pocket and throw a dime 25 yards down the field," Bucs coach Bruce Arians said of Mahomes. "And he can read the defense as he does it. That makes him more explosive."

Brady was 27 of 41 for 345 yards, three touchdowns and a pair of second-half interceptions in falling to 2-2 against Mahomes, who built an early 17-0 lead and also had the Chiefs up by 17 entering the fourth quarter.

The Bucs (7-5) made it close, with Brady throwing TD passes of 31 and 7 yards to Mike Evans, the latter trimming his team's deficit to 27-24 with 4:10 remaining.

Tampa Bay, which has lost three straight home games, never got the ball back.

"We battled back but we left ourselves a big deficit," Brady said. "When you play a good offense we've got to do our job offensively and keep them off the field."

The Chiefs led 20-7 at halftime. The Bucs were fortunate they weren't in a bigger hole.

Kansas City ran 42 plays to Tampa Bay's 22 in the first two quarters, outgaining the Bucs 377 yards to 131 with Mahomes throwing for 359 yards and Brady 117.

Three drives inside the Bucs 20, however, only netted a pair of short field goals. Shaquil Barrett sacked Mahomes, forcing a fumble that William Gholston recovered at the 14 with the Chiefs looking to build on

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a 17-0 lead.

Bashaud Breeland and Tyrann Mathieu picked off Brady. The Chiefs hurt themselves with a pair of roughing the passer penalties on the 10-play, 73-yard drive the six-time Super Bowl champion put together to close the gap to three points.

The loss comes on the heels of home defeats to New Orleans and the Los Angeles Rams, games in which Brady played poorly and left his new team searching for answers about the offense's inconsistency.

Brady isn't listening to critics, who feel the Bucs aren't tailoring their scheme to what he's done best during his career.

"Just external noise. When you're losing that's what you deal with," Brady said. "I love playing with the guys, and the whole organization is unbelievable. I've just got to do a better job in the final four games."

LONG DROUGHT

The Chiefs beat Tampa Bay for the first time since Sept. 5, 1993, when Joe Montana led Kansas City to a 27-3 victory. The Bucs had won five straight in a series the Chiefs lead 8-5.

INJURIES

Chiefs: LB Dorian O'Daniel suffered a right ankle injury in the first quarter and did not return.

Buccaneers: LG Ali Marpet returned to the lineup after missing three games because of a concussion. LT Donovan Smith was active after not practicing all week and being listed as questionable with an ankle injury suffered last week against the Los Angeles Rams.

UP NEXT

Chiefs: Host Denver next Sunday night, the lone home game during a stretch that'll see Kansas City play four of five on the road.

Buccaneers: Bye week.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Mysterious silver monolith disappears from Utah desert

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A mysterious silver monolith that was placed in the Utah desert has disappeared less than 10 days after it was spotted by wildlife biologists performing a helicopter survey of bighorn sheep, federal officials and witnesses said.

"We have received credible reports that the illegally installed structure, referred to as the 'monolith' has been removed from Bureau of Land Management public lands by an unknown party," on Nov. 27, BLM spokesperson Kimberly Finch said in a statement. The agency did not remove the structure, she said.

The Utah Department of Public Safety said biologists spotted the monolith on Nov. 18, a report that garnered international attention. It was about 11 feet (3.4 meters) tall with sides that appeared to be made of stainless steel.

While Utah officials did not say specifically where the monolith was located, people soon found it on satellite images dating back to 2016 and determined its GPS coordinates, prompting people to hike into the area.

Reporters with The Salt Lake Tribune hiked to the spot on Saturday and confirmed that it was gone.

Spencer Owen of Salt Lake City said he saw the monolith Friday afternoon and camped in the region overnight, but as he hiked to the area again on Saturday people passing him on the trail warned him it was gone, the Tribune reported. When he arrived at the spot, all that was left was a triangular piece of metal covering a triangular-shaped hole in the rocks.

"I was really bummed," said Owen, who posted a video on his Instagram. "It was so pretty and shiny. I wanted to go see it again."

Riccardo Marino and his girlfriend Sierra Van Meter were traveling from Colorado to California on Friday and decided to stop and see the object after finding the GPS coordinates online.

"This was just a once-in-a-lifetime experience that we couldn't miss out," Marino told KUTV.

On the way, they passed a long-bed truck with a large object in the back and he said he joked "oh look,

there's the Utah monolith right there," he said.

When they arrived at the spot, it was gone.

Steve Adams said he left Helper, in central Utah, at 7 a.m. Saturday to drive to the area. When he arrived and asked someone for directions he was told the tower was gone. He and some friends made the hike anyway.

"It was pretty disappointing," he told the Tribune. "We were really excited to go down and have an adventure to see it. It feels like it was everybody's and then it was nobody's. It's gone."

Riccardo Marino

Jill Biden, Joe's chief protector, to step up as first lady

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — She's fended off protesters who made a run at her husband. She's moved him farther from reporters during the coronavirus pandemic. She's supported his presidential ambitions again and again — except in 2004, when she deployed a novel messaging technique to keep Joe Biden from running.

"No," Jill Biden, then clad in a bikini, wrote in Sharpie across her stomach and then marched through a strategy session in which advisers were trying to talk her husband into challenging Republican President George W. Bush.

Protecting Joe stands out among Jill Biden's many roles over their 43-year marriage, as her husband's career moved him from the Senate to the presidential campaign trail and the White House as President Barack Obama's vice president. She's a wife, mother, grandmother and educator with a doctoral degree — as well as a noted prankster.

Now, with her husband on the brink of becoming the 46th president, Jill Biden is about to become first lady and put her own stamp on a position that traditionally is viewed as a model of American womanhood — whether that means hewing to old ways or finding new, activist ones, in the manner of Eleanor Roosevelt, Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama, for example.

She intends to keep working as a college professor, which would make her the only first lady to keep her day job outside the home. And if four decades in the public eye are any indication, she'll continue being Biden's chief protector.

The role isn't completely unfamiliar territory for Jill Biden. She's been a political wife the entire time she's been married to Joe Biden. Plus, she had a bird's-eye view of what a first lady does during Obama's two terms.

But the scrutiny level will change. And all eyes are on the incoming Biden administration to deliver what both Joe and Jill have promised — getting the coronavirus pandemic raging across the country under control.

Myra Gutin, a professor at Rider University and the author of several books about first ladies, recalled Barbara Bush telling her: "You know, when I was second lady, I could say anything I wanted, and no one really paid much attention. But the minute I became first lady, everything became newsworthy."

Still, Jill Biden won't have the learning curve most other new first ladies faced. "She's been in the public eye for a long time," Gutin said. "She's going in eyes wide open."

The coronavirus has killed more than 260,000 Americans and upended much of daily life. The Bidens offered themselves as agents of comfort at a time of loss and grief, experiences they know well particularly after their son Beau Biden died of brain cancer in 2015.

From the start, she brought comfort to the Biden family.

Joe Biden's first wife and young daughter were killed in a car accident in 1972. Jill Biden helped raise his surviving young sons, Beau and Hunter, before giving birth to their daughter, Ashley, in 1981. She refers to all of them as her children.

As Joe Biden commuted from Delaware to Washington while serving as a senator, Jill Biden built a career as a teacher, ultimately earning two master's degrees and then a doctorate in education from the University of Delaware in 2007.

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Throughout, Jill Biden's protective streak was notable. There she stood at his side, when Joe Biden withdrew from his first presidential bid under accusations of plagiarism. She says she emulated her mother's stoic style. Jill Biden's mother, she said, didn't even cry when her own parents died. She saw that as strength. "I decided early that I would never let my emotions rule me," she wrote in her memoir, "Where the Light Enters."

"As a political spouse, I've found that my stoicism often serves me well," Jill Biden wrote. "In 1988, when Joe's first presidential campaign started to look bleak, people were constantly looking for cracks in our team. We all felt scrutinized, but I refused to show weakness."

It showed early in the 2020 race when several women accused Biden of inappropriate touching. The candidate denied acting inappropriately but acknowledged that social norms had changed. He pledged that he would change, too.

Jill Biden defended him.

"I think what you don't realize is how many people approach Joe — men and women, looking for comfort or empathy," she told ABC's "Good Morning America." "But going forward, I think he's gonna have to judge — be a better judge — of when people approach him, how he's going to react. That he maybe shouldn't approach them."

She recalled a time in her life when she had been treated inappropriately and didn't speak up.

"I can remember specifically — it was in a job interview," Jill Biden said. "If that same thing happened today, I'd turn around and say, 'What do you think you're doin?'"

She's quick to rally to her husband's side, sometimes physically.

In New Hampshire in February, a man tried to cross into the roped-off area near Joe Biden. In a flash, Jill Biden crossed behind her husband and put her arms around the man, turned him around and helped push him away.

A month later in Los Angeles, she similarly blocked one protester, then a second one, who had stormed the stage while Joe Biden was delivering his Super Tuesday victory speech.

When the first one approached waving an anti-dairy sign and yelling, Jill Biden stepped between the protester and her husband. She did the same with the second one, this time putting her arms up to block the intrusion.

Both were removed without coming in contact with the candidate. After the 27-second confrontation, Jill turned around saying, "We're okay," and encouraged Joe to keep the event going. The Bidens then said it might be time for Secret Service protection, and they got it soon after.

"I worry about Jill," Joe Biden said.

She's been protective during the pandemic.

On Oct. 5 at New Castle Airport in Delaware, she moved her husband back from members of the media as he spoke outside his campaign plane before a trip to Miami.

Like many American families, the Bidens spent Thanksgiving differently this year. They stayed at their house in Rehoboth, Delaware, rather than their usual "Nana-tucket," as her grandchildren have called the Massachusetts island where the Bidens started going early in their marriage to establish a new holiday tradition.

In 2020, instead of the usual sprawling family tableau, their daughter and her husband were the only Biden visitors to the house in Delaware. A Zoom call with the larger group was on the evening's agenda.

Look, too, for Jill Biden to try to keep things light.

"She's not your average grandmother," granddaughter Naomi said on a video shown at the Democratic National Convention, recalling that Jill Biden once woke her up at 5 a.m. on Christmas morning to go "soul cycling."

"She's a prankster, she's very mischievous," Naomi added with a grin. "When she goes on a run, sometimes she'll find, like, a dead snake and she'll pick it up and put it in a bag and use it to scare someone."

Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman>

Source: Pa. lawmaker gets a positive test at Trump meeting

By MARK SCOLFARO Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — A Pennsylvania state senator abruptly left a West Wing meeting with President Donald Trump after being informed he had tested positive for the coronavirus, a person with direct knowledge of the meeting told The Associated Press on Sunday.

Republican state Sen. Doug Mastriano had gone to the White House last Wednesday with like-minded Republican state lawmakers shortly after a four-hour-plus public meeting that Mastriano helped host in Gettysburg — maskless — to discuss efforts to overturn president-elect Joe Biden's victory in the state.

Trump told Mastriano that White House medical personnel would take care of him, his son and his son's friend, who were also there for the Oval Office meeting and tested positive. The meeting continued after Mastriano and the others left, the person said.

The person spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the private session because the matter is politically sensitive.

Positive coronavirus cases are surging across the United States and the nation's top infectious disease expert said Sunday that the U.S. may see "surge upon surge" in the coming weeks. The number of new COVID-19 cases reported in the United States topped 200,000 for the first time Friday.

Everyone who will be in close proximity to the president must take a rapid test. Trump was himself hospitalized in October after he contracted the virus. Dozens of White House staffers and others close to the president have also tested positive, including the first lady and two of the president's sons.

All participants in Wednesday's meeting took COVID-19 tests, but the positive results were not announced until they were in the West Wing of the White House, the person said.

"The president instantly called the White House doctor in and he took them back to, I guess, the medical place," the person said. The meeting with Trump was to strategize about efforts regarding the election, the person said.

After Mastriano and the others left, the discussion with Trump continued for about a half-hour. Mastriano did not return to the meeting.

Mastriano sought the meeting of the Pennsylvania Senate Republican Policy Committee earlier Wednesday that drew Trump personal attorney Rudy Giuliani, a second Trump lawyer, several witnesses and a crowd of onlookers. Only a few of them were masked.

The committee let Giuliani and others, for several hours, air their beliefs that there had been problems with how the Pennsylvania vote was conducted and counted. All claims were baseless; no evidence was presented to support any of the allegations they made.

Trump even participated, calling from the White House while one of his lawyers held a phone up to a microphone. He reiterated the same unfounded claims of fraud he's been tweeting about for weeks.

Those beliefs have persisted despite Trump losing repeatedly in state and federal courts, including a Philadelphia-based federal appeals court's decision Friday that said the Trump campaign's "claims have no merit," and a state Supreme Court decision Saturday that threw out a legal challenge to the election and effort to stop certification of its results.

Mastriano, a conservative from a rural district in central Pennsylvania and outspoken Trump supporter, did not return several messages left Sunday seeking comment.

Republican state Sen. Dave Argall, who chairs the policy committee, declined Sunday in a text message to discuss Mastriano's medical condition and the White House visit.

"I've received some conflicting information that I'm trying to resolve," Argall said in the text. "It's my understanding a Senate statement later today will help us all to understand this better."

Argall said he would not talk publicly about the matter "until I know more."

Senate Republican spokeswoman Kate Flessner declined comment, describing it as a personnel matter.

The person with knowledge of the White House visit said several people rode in a large van from Gettysburg, where the policy committee met in a hotel, to the White House. Mastriano, his son and his son's friend drove in another vehicle.

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It's not clear why Mastriano's son and his friend accompanied the state senator to the meeting, which the person said was also attended by Trump and the president's chief of staff, Mark Meadows, who tested positive in early November.

Mastriano has aggressively opposed policies under the administration of Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus and keep people safe.

He has led rallies where he advocated to reopen businesses despite the risk of infection and he has repeatedly and sharply denounced Wolf's orders. Mastriano also spoke to a few thousand Trump supporters who gathered outside the Capitol on Nov. 7, hours after Democrat Joe Biden's national win became evident.

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

Fauci: US may see 'surge upon surge' of virus in weeks ahead

By TAMARA LUSH Associated Press

The nation's top infectious disease expert said Sunday that the U.S. may see "surge upon a surge" of the coronavirus in the weeks after Thanksgiving, and he does not expect current recommendations around social distancing to be relaxed before Christmas.

Meanwhile, in a major reversal, New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio said the nation's largest school system will reopen to in-person learning and increase the number of days a week many children attend class. The announcement came just 11 days after the Democratic mayor said schools would shut down because of rising COVID-19 cases.

"We feel confident that we can keep schools safe," he said.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told ABC's "This Week" that the level of infection in the U.S. would not "all of a sudden turn around."

"So clearly in the next few weeks, we're going to have the same sort of thing. And perhaps even two or three weeks down the line ... we may see a surge upon a surge," he said.

Fauci addressed the school issue, saying that spread "among children and from children is not really very big at all, not like one would have suspected. So let's try to get the kids back, but let's try to mitigate the things that maintain and just push the kind of community spread that we're trying to avoid," he said.

Fauci also appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press," where he made similar remarks, adding that it's "not too late" for people traveling home after Thanksgiving to help curb the virus by wearing masks, staying distant from others and avoiding large groups of people.

The number of new COVID-19 cases reported in the United States topped 200,000 for the first time Friday, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. Since January, when the first infections were reported in the U.S., the nation's total number of cases has surpassed 13 million. More than 265,000 people have died.

Fauci said the arrival of vaccines offers a "light at the end of the tunnel." This coming week, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices will meet with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to discuss a rollout of the vaccine, he said.

He added that President-elect Joe Biden should focus on distributing vaccines in an "efficient and equitable way." Fauci also said he planned to push the new administration for a rigorous testing program.

Health care workers will likely be among the first to get the vaccine, with the first vaccinations happening before the end of December, followed by many more in January, February and March, he said.

"So if we can hang together as a country and do these kinds of things to blunt these surges until we get a substantial proportion of the population vaccinated, we can get through this," Fauci said.

Other experts agreed that the coming weeks would be difficult, especially since so many traveled over the holiday and held in-person dinners indoors.

Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House coronavirus response coordinator, said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation" that Americans who traveled this past week should try to avoid people over 65. She said that those who were around others for Thanksgiving "have to assume that you were exposed and you became infected and you really need to get tested in the next week."

Meanwhile, a busy travel weekend continued, despite warnings for Americans to stay close to home and

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limit their holiday gatherings.

Aside from the Thanksgiving holiday itself, anywhere from 800,000 to more than 1 million travelers made their way through U.S. airport checkpoints on any day during the past week, according to Transportation Security Administration statistics. That's a far cry from the 2.3 to 2.6 million seen daily last year. But it far surpasses the number of travelers early in the pandemic, when daily totals fell below 100,000 on some spring days.

More COVID-19 restrictions were in store for California starting Monday. Los Angeles County will impose a lockdown calling for its 10 million residents to stay home. Santa Clara County, which includes San Jose, is banning all high school, collegiate and professional sports and imposing a quarantine for anyone traveling into the region from more than 150 miles away.

Back in New York, some elementary schools and pre-kindergarten programs will resume classes Dec. 7, a week from Monday, the mayor said. Others will take longer to reopen.

The plan for reopening middle and high schools is still being developed, de Blasio said.

About 190,000 students will be eligible to return to classrooms in the first round of reopening, just a fraction of the more than 1 million total pupils in the system. The great majority of parents have opted to have their kids learn remotely by computer.

De Blasio said that many of those returning in person will be able to attend five days of class a week, up from one to three days previously.

Elementary school students attending in person will be required to undergo frequent testing for the virus. Previously, the city set a target of testing 20% of teachers and students in each school building once a month. Now the testing will be weekly.

The mayor said the city was doing away with its previous trigger for closing schools, which was when 3% or more of the virus tests conducted in the city over a seven-day period came back positive.

New York exceeded that threshold early in November, and infections have slightly worsened since then. More than 9,300 residents have tested positive for the virus over the past seven days.

Associated Press writers Sarah Skidmore Sell in Portland, Oregon, and David B. Caruso and Karen Matthews in New York contributed to this report.

Grosjean escapes F1 fireball at Bahrain GP after huge crash

By JEROME PUGMIRE AP Auto Racing Writer

It was like a scene from an action movie, except totally unscripted and genuinely life-threatening, involving a stunning escape that Harry Houdini would have struggled to match.

Formula One driver Romain Grosjean was trapped in a burning car after it sliced in half and exploded into a fireball, following a crash on the first lap of the Bahrain Grand Prix on Sunday.

As flames tore into the desert night sky, Grosjean was inside a raging furnace for about 10-15 seconds. Somehow, the quick-thinking Frenchman did not give in to panic.

Somehow, he was lucid enough to find a way out.

Jumping through the flames like an action hero, he then grabbed the molten-hot metal barrier in front of him and hurdled over it onto the track.

Safe though visibly shaken, he was well enough to walk to the ambulance with the help of two medics.

He was treated for minor burns to the back of both hands but was well enough to speak from his hospital bed late Sunday, in a video posted by F1.

"Just wanted to say I am OK," a smiling Grosjean said. "Thank you very much for all the messages."

The relief at the time of the incident, for his distraught teammate Kevin Magnussen and others watching from the paddock, was immense. Drivers and other team members spontaneously applauded.

"I saw a lot of fire and thought that is not a good thing," Red Bull's Max Verstappen said. "Luckily he is OK and hopefully he will recover."

The 34-year-old Grosjean clambered out of the burning wreckage with his race helmet and fireproof

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race tunic singed as track marshalls sprayed him with a fire extinguisher.

"I want to thank the rescue crews who are very quick," Haas team principal Guenther Steiner said. "The marshals and FIA people they did a great job, it was scary."

As Grosjean was taken by helicopter to a military hospital, where he was being kept overnight, drivers reacted to the jarring scene.

"The car, the cockpit. I don't know what Gs he pulled but I'm just so grateful the halo worked," said F1 champion Lewis Hamilton, who won the restarted race. "It shows what an amazing job Formula One has done, the FIA has done, for him to be able to walk away from something like that."

Countryman Pierre Gasly, who drives for AlphaTauri, was left in shock.

"It was horrible, really scary. I had no idea a Formula One car could break that way," Gasly said. "I have texted him to wish him a good recovery. I think he is fine but a really scary thing."

Hospital X-rays showed Grosjean did not even break a bone, despite an estimated impact speed of 200 kph (125 mph).

But had he not managed to wriggle free, pulling him out of the cockpit would have been extremely difficult.

"I've never seen that much fire in 12 years. It took a little while to process what was going on but then Romain started to get out of the car himself, which was amazing," said Alan van der Merwe, the driver of the F1 medical car. "Everything worked hand in hand today: the halo, the barriers, the seat belt. Without one of the things it could've been a different outcome."

The halo is a safety device that forms a protective ring around the drivers' head. It was introduced following the death of French driver Jules Bianchi after he sustained massive head trauma on a rain-soaked track at the Japan GP six years ago and went headfirst into a trackside crane. Two years ago Charles Leclerc — Bianchi's close friend — was likely saved serious injury or death by the halo when another car landed on top of his at the Belgian GP.

Hamilton and Verstappen were not initially fans of the halo.

Things have changed.

"I think the halo saved his life," Verstappen said. "When it came onto the cars I was quite critical about it and it looked ugly. But you can't say anything about the safety because today it definitely saved Roman."

The best-placed person to confirm that was Grosjean himself.

"I wasn't for the halo some years ago," he said. "But I think it's the greatest thing and without it I wouldn't be able to speak to you today. Thanks to all the medical staff at the circuit and the hospital"

His accident happened when he slid to the right and his back wheel clipped the front of Daniil Kvyat's AlphaTauri, causing Grosjean to fly sideways into the barrier.

"If everyone else is shocked, just imagine how his family's feeling (at the time)," Hamilton said. "The flames, the car broken in two and not knowing where the driver is, and him popping out from those flames. I can't imagine what that's like."

It reminded Hamilton of a traumatic experience from his junior karting days.

"When I was nine I saw a kid die on the same day I won a race. So I've always been aware of the dangers and the risks," Hamilton said. "I'm also thinking of Roman. He's got a wife and kids, that must be something he will have to think heavily on. Because it's a privilege to be able to do what we do, but there's so much and so many other things to do."

More AP auto racing: <https://apnews.com/apf-AutoRacing> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sport

Trump 'ashamed' to have endorsed Republican Georgia governor

By CUNEYD DIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Sunday he was "ashamed" for endorsing the Republican governor of Georgia after he lost in the state to Democrat Joe Biden.

Trump has seethed over losing the southern state, which hadn't voted for a Democrat for president in nearly 30 years. In January, the state will decide whether the GOP retains control of the U.S. Senate when

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voters decide two run-off Senate races.

Trump said on Fox News that Gov. Brian Kemp has "done absolutely nothing" to question the state's results. Trump has made baseless accusations that illegal votes cost him the election in Georgia and beyond. His legal challenges have failed in several states.

Trump backed Kemp's campaign in 2018, boasting that his "full endorsement" helped him edge rising Democrat Stacey Abrams.

In this month's presidential contest, Biden beat Trump by about 12,670 votes.

Democrats hope for two other upset victories in twin Senate races on Jan. 5 against Republican office holders. That would deny Republicans their majority, keeping the GOP with 50 seats, while Vice President-elect Kamala Harris would be available for tie-breaking votes.

Democrat Jon Ossoff is challenging Sen. David Perdue while Rev. Raphael Warnock takes on Sen. Kelly Loeffler. No candidate won at least 50% of the vote share in this month's election, leading to the head-to-head runoffs.

Ossoff said Sunday that a Republican-controlled Senate will hit the Biden administration with the same "obstructionism" it mounted against former President Barack Obama.

"It will be paralysis, partisan trench warfare," he told CNN. "At a moment of crisis, when we need strong action."

Loeffler on Fox News said GOP victories would be a "firewall to socialism" and the Democratic policies of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer. It is Loeffler's first election cycle after Gov. Kemp appointed her to the seat in January when her predecessor resigned.

Trump on Saturday plans to arrive in the state he lost to campaign for the GOP incumbents.

"We're making sure that Georgians are fired up to turn out to vote," Loeffler said. "If we vote, we will win this election."

This story has been corrected to show that Trump backed Kemp's campaign in 2018, not Kemp's re-election campaign.

Mother of slain Florida teen shot during burial service

Associated Press undefined

COCOA, Fla. (AP) — An unknown gunman fired into a crowd gathered at a Saturday afternoon burial service of a teenager who was fatally shot by a Florida sheriff's deputy earlier this month, officials said.

The deceased teen's mother was wounded by the bullet, Florida Today reported.

The shooting happened as guests gathered at Riverview Memorial Gardens to pay their respects to 18-year-old Sincere Pierce. Pierce and 16-year-old Angelo Crooms were killed Nov. 13 by a Brevard County Sheriff's deputy.

The shot rang out as the pastor had just finished his prayers and the teen's friends and loved ones were placing flowers on the casket, the newspaper reported. The loud popping sound was followed by stunned silence before Quasheda Pierce screamed that she'd been hit.

The newspaper reported that mourners were at first slow to react before realizing what had occurred. They began rushing to nearby cars and leaving the funeral quickly.

Friends and family members helped Quasheda Pierce into a minivan before ambulances arrived. Deputies carrying rifles arrived a short time later in response to multiple 911 calls.

The mother was taken to a hospital, but the severity of her injury was not immediately known.

Detectives and crime scene investigators remained at the cemetery throughout the afternoon Saturday, the newspaper reported.

The teens were killed when Deputy Jafet Santiago-Miranda fired multiple shots into their car when the teens didn't pull over. Sheriff Wayne Ivey had said the deputies thought the vehicle might have been stolen, but the teens' families and lawyer, Natalie Jackson, said they had permission to use the car and called it a case of mistaken identity.

Their deaths captured national interest, with well-known civil rights attorney Benjamin Crump working on behalf of the families in what he called a bid for justice.

Ivey has released dash cam footage from the Nov. 13 shooting that showed the teens pulling into a driveway after being followed by two sheriff's cars without lights. Crooms, who was driving, then backed out of the driveway and drove forward in the direction of a deputy, who, gun drawn, repeatedly shouted at the teen to stop the car.

The sheriff said in a Facebook post that the deputy "was then forced to fire his service weapon in an attempt to stop the deadly threat of the car from crashing into him."

Investigators search doctor's office, probing Maradona death

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Argentine police searched the home and office of one of Diego Maradona's doctors on Sunday, taking away medical records as part of investigations into the death of the 60-year-old soccer star that caused a wave of grief across the country.

Neurologist Leopoldo Luque told reporters after the searches that he had given investigators all of the records of his treatment of Maradona, as well as computers, hard drives and cellphones.

Weeping at times, he insisted he defended his treatment of the troubled soccer star, who died Wednesday of a heart attack following a Nov. 3 brain operation.

"I know what I did. I know how I did it.... I am absolutely sure that what I did the best for Diego, the best I could."

Luque said he was not Maradona's chief physician, but part of a medical team.

Court investigators have been taking declarations from Maradona's relatives, according to a statement from the San Isidro prosecutor's office, which is overseeing a probe into the medical attention Maradona received prior to his death, which caused an enormous outpouring of emotion across Argentina and among soccer fans worldwide.

Tens of thousands of weeping fans lined up to file past Maradona's coffin, with lay in state at the presidential palace, before his burial on Thursday.

Maradona had suffered a series of medical problems, some due to excesses of drugs and alcohol. He was reportedly near death in 2000 and 2004.

Luque said he was a difficult patient and had kicked the doctor out of his house several times.

"Diego did what he wanted," Luque said. "Diego needed help. There was no way of getting through to him."

UK stocks up on vaccines, hopes to start virus shots in days

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain said Sunday it has secured 2 million more doses of a promising coronavirus vaccine as it gears up to launch within days the country's most ambitious inoculation program in decades.

The U.K. has had Europe's deadliest coronavirus outbreak, with more than 58,000 confirmed virus-related deaths. It now hopes to hit a more positive milestone by becoming one of the first countries in the world to start vaccinating its population against COVID-19.

The U.K. government has agreed to buy more than 350 million doses of vaccines from seven different producers, should they prove effective, as it prepares to vaccinate as many of the country's 67 million people as possible.

The Department of Health said Sunday it had increased its order for a vaccine developed by U.S. firm Moderna from 5 million to 7 million doses, enough for 3.5 million people.

The Moderna vaccine is expected to be referred soon to the U.K.'s Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, to see if it is safe and effective. Two other vaccines — one developed by Pfizer and German firm BioNTech, the other by Oxford University and AstraZeneca — are already being assessed by the regulator, the final stage before being rolled out.

Britain has ordered 40 million doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and 100 million doses of the Oxford/

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AstraZeneca vaccine.

Hospitals in England have been told they could receive the first doses of the Pfizer shot as early as the week of Dec. 7 if it receives approval, the Guardian and Financial Times reported. The U.S. vaccination program also hopes to begin inoculating some Americans in December.

The government says frontline health care workers and nursing home residents will be the first to be vaccinated, followed by older people, starting with those over 80. The plan is to work down the age and risk groups until everyone 18 and over has been inoculated.

Peter Openshaw, professor of experimental medicine at Imperial College London, said he "wouldn't be too surprised if an announcement would be made within the next two weeks, possibly even as early as next week."

Non-medical staff including volunteer first-aiders are already being trained to give the shots, which will be administered at around 1,000 community vaccination centers and 40 to 50 large-scale facilities in stadiums and conference venues, according to a government planning document.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said officials hope to vaccinate "the vast majority of the people who need the most protection by Easter."

Writing in the Mail on Sunday, Johnson said the roll-out of a vaccine could be "just days away." But he said there would not be a quick end to the onerous restrictions on business and everyday life that have been imposed to curb the spread of the virus.

"There are still long weeks and months ahead before we can be completely confident that we can vaccinate enough people in the country, and thereby remove enough targets for the virus, in order to beat the disease," he wrote.

A four-week national lockdown in England is due to end Wednesday, and will be replaced by a three-tiered system of regional measures. The vast majority of the country is being put into the upper two tiers, meaning most people will be barred from meeting up with friends indoors, pubs and restaurants still face restrictions and everything from large weddings to choir practices are being banned.

Pfizer and BioNTech say their vaccine is 95% effective, according to preliminary data. It must be stored at ultra-cold temperatures of around minus 70 degrees Celsius (minus 94 Fahrenheit). The Moderna vaccine, which also needs to be stored at freezer temperatures, was also about 95% effective in clinical trials, the company said.

The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine can be stored at conventional refrigerator temperatures, making its distribution much simpler, and is also cheaper than its main rivals. But some scientists have questioned gaps in its reported results.

Oxford and AstraZeneca reported this week that their vaccine appeared to be 62% effective in people who received two doses, and 90% effective when volunteers were given a half dose followed by a full dose. They said the half dose was administered because of a manufacturing error, and they plan a new clinical trial to investigate the most effective dosing regimen.

Full data from the Oxford-AstraZeneca trial is expected to be published soon, and may answer some of the questions about the vaccine.

Openshaw said he'd be happy to get any vaccine that is approved.

"If my GP rings me and says 'I've got an approved vaccine,' I really don't care which one it is," he told the BBC.

Follow AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Suspected extremists kill at least 40 farmers in Nigeria

By HARUNA UMAR Associated Press

MAIDGURI, Nigeria (AP) — Suspected members of the Islamic militant group Boko Haram killed at least 40 rice farmers and fishermen in Nigeria as they were harvesting crops in the country's northern state of

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Borno, officials said. One said the death toll could rise to about 60 people.

The attack Saturday in a rice field in Garin Kwashebe came on the same day that residents were casting votes for the first time in 13 years to elect local councils, although many didn't go to cast their ballots.

The farmers were reportedly rounded up and summarily killed by armed insurgents in retaliation for refusing to pay extortion to one militant.

Malam Zabarmari, a leader of a rice farmers association in Borno state, confirmed the massacre to The Associated Press, saying at least 40 and up to 60 people could have been killed.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari expressed grief over the killings.

"I condemn the killing of our hardworking farmers by terrorists in Borno State. The entire country is hurt by these senseless killings. My thoughts are with their families in this time of grief," he said.

Buhari said the government had given the armed forces everything needed "to take all necessary steps to protect the country's population and its territory."

A member of the House of Representatives, Ahmed Satomi, who represents the Jere Federal constituency of Borno, said at least 44 burials were taking place Sunday.

"Farmers and fishermen were killed in cold blood. Over 60 farmers were affected, but we only have so far received 44 corpses from the farms," the lawmaker said.

Boko Haram and a breakaway faction, the Islamic State West Africa Province, are both active in the region. Boko Haram's more than decade-long insurgency has left thousands dead and displaced tens of thousands. Officials say Boko Haram members often force villagers to pay illegal taxes by taking their livestock or crops but some villagers have begun to resist the extortion.

Satomi said the farmers in Garin Kwashebe were attacked because they had disarmed and arrested a Boko Haram gunman on Friday who had been tormenting them.

"A lone gunman, who was a member of Boko Haram came to harass the farmers by ordering them to give him money and also cook for him. While he was waiting for the food to be cooked, the farmers seized the moment he stepped into the toilet to snatch his rifle and tied him up," he said.

"They later handed him over to the security. But sadly, the security forces did not protect the courageous farmers. And in reprisal for daring them, the Boko Haram mobilized and came to attack them on their farms."

Insurgents also torched the rice farms before leaving, he said.

AP journalist Bashir Adigun in Abuja contributed to this report.

Over 300 detained in Belarus during anti-government protests

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A human rights group in Belarus says over 300 people have been detained during Sunday protests against the country's authoritarian president, who won his sixth term in office in a vote widely seen as rigged.

The protests took place in Minsk, the capital, and other cities and attracted thousands of people. In Minsk, large crowds gathered in different parts of the city despite the snowy weather for what has been dubbed as the Neighbors' March, blocking the roads in some areas.

"Neighbor for neighbor against dictatorship," one protest banner read.

"Go away, rat!" the crowds chanted, referring to President Alexander Lukashenko, who has run the country for 26 years, relentlessly cracking down on dissent.

Nearly 250 demonstrators were detained in Minsk alone, police said.

Mass protests have gripped Belarus, a former Soviet republic in eastern Europe, since official results from the Aug. 9 presidential election gave Lukashenko a landslide victory over his widely popular opponent, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya. She and her supporters refused to recognize the result, saying the vote was riddled with fraud.

Authorities have cracked down hard on the largely peaceful demonstrations, the biggest of which attracted up to 200,000 people. Police used stun grenades, tear gas and truncheons to disperse the rallies.

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On Sunday, police once again deployed tear gas and stun grenades to break up some of the crowds in Minsk, and some were chased into residential courtyards and beaten up with truncheons, the Viasna human rights center said. More than 300 people have been detained all across the country, according to the group.

Ahead of the rally, water cannons, armored vehicles and police vans were seen in the center of Minsk. Several subway stations were closed and internet access was restricted.

On Saturday, Tsikhanouskaya, who left the country soon after the election under pressure from the authorities and is currently in exile in Lithuania, extended her support to the protesters.

"I will support everyone who takes part in the Neighbors' March this Sunday," Tsikhanouskaya said in a video statement. "We have come a long, hard way together already... We're a proud, brave, peaceful people that have learned the price of freedom and will never agree to live without it."

Iran newspaper: Strike Haifa if Israel killed scientist

By AMIR VAHDAT and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — An opinion piece published Sunday by a hard-line Iranian newspaper urged Iran to attack the Israeli port city of Haifa if Israel carried out the killing of the scientist who founded the Islamic Republic's military nuclear program in the early 2000s.

Though the hard-line Kayhan newspaper has long argued for aggressive retaliation for operations targeting Iran, Sunday's opinion piece went further, suggesting any assault be carried out in a way that destroys facilities and "also causes heavy human casualties."

Israel, suspected of killing Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade, has not commented on the brazen slaying of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh. A military-style ambush Friday on the outskirts of Tehran reportedly saw a truck bomb explode and gunmen open fire on the scientist, killing him and a bodyguard.

U.S. intelligence agencies and U.N. nuclear inspectors have said the organized military nuclear program that Fakhrizadeh oversaw disbanded in 2003. Israel insists Iran still maintains the ambition of developing nuclear weapons.

Kayhan published the piece written by Iranian analyst Sadollah Zarei, who argued Iran's previous responses to suspected Israeli airstrikes that killed Revolutionary Guard forces in Syria did not go far enough to deter Israel. He said an assault on Haifa also needed to be greater than Iran's ballistic missile attack against American troops in Iraq following the U.S. drone strike in Baghdad that killed a top Iranian general in January.

Striking the Israeli city of Haifa and killing a large number of people "will definitely lead to deterrence, because the United States and the Israeli regime and its agents are by no means ready to take part in a war and a military confrontation," Zarei wrote.

While Kayhan is a small circulation newspaper, its editor-in-chief Hossein Shariatmadari was appointed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and has been described as an adviser to him in the past.

Haifa, on the Mediterranean Sea, has been threatened in the past by both Iran and one of its proxies, the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. Haifa, Israel's third-largest city, is home to a major port and power plant.

Such a strike likely would draw an immediate Israeli retaliation and spark a wider conflict across the Mideast. While Iran has never directly targeted an Israeli city militarily, it has conducted attacks targeting Israeli interests abroad in the past over the killing of its scientists, like in the case of the three Iranians recently freed in Thailand in exchange for a detained British-Australian academic.

Israel also is widely believed to have its own nuclear weapons, a stockpile it neither confirms nor denies possessing.

Israeli officials remained silent about the scientist's death on Sunday. But Lt. Gen Aviv Kohavi, commander of the Israeli military, traveled to northern Israel for what the army said was a routine visit with commanders along the front with Syria. Earlier this month, Israeli warplanes struck Iranian-linked targets in Syria after Israel uncovered roadside bombs that it said were planted with Iranian guidance.

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"I came here to evaluate the current state of security, with an emphasis on the Iranian entrenchment in Syria," Kohavi said. "Our message is clear: We will continue to act as vigorously as necessary against the Iranian entrenchment in Syria, and we will remain fully prepared against any manifestation of aggression against us."

The Iranian parliament on Sunday held a closed-door hearing about Fakhrizadeh's killing. Afterward, parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf said Iran's enemies must be made to regret killing him.

"The criminal enemy does not regret it except with a strong reaction," he said in a broadcast on Iranian state radio.

A public session of lawmakers saw them chant: "Death to America!" and "Death to Israel!"

They also began the review of a bill that would stop inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The nuclear watchdog has provided an unprecedented, real-time look at Iran's civilian nuclear program following the country's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

The deal has unraveled after President Donald Trump's unilateral 2018 withdrawal of the U.S. from the accord. Iran's civilian atomic program has since continued its experiments and now enriches a growing uranium stockpile up to 4.5% purity.

That's still far below weapons-grade levels of 90%, though experts warn Iran now has enough low-enriched uranium to reprocess into fuel for at least two atomic bombs if it chose to pursue them. The proposed bill reportedly also would require Iran's civilian atomic program to produce at least 120 kilograms (265 pounds) of uranium enriched to 20% — a short technical step to 90%.

Iran's 290-seat parliament is dominated by hard-liners who likely would support the bill. It ultimately would have to be approved by Iran's Guardian Council. Khamenei also has final say on all matters of state.

Khamenei has called Fakhrizadeh "the country's prominent and distinguished nuclear and defensive scientist" and has demanded the "definitive punishment" of those behind the killing.

Fakhrizadeh headed Iran's so-called AMAD program, which Israel and the West have alleged was a military operation looking at the feasibility of building a nuclear weapon. The IAEA says the "structured program" ended in 2003. U.S. intelligence agencies concurred with that assessment in a 2007 report.

Israel contends Iran is still intent on developing a nuclear weapon. It argues Iran's ballistic missile program and other research could help build a bomb if it pursued one — especially as provisions of the 2015 nuclear deal expire. Iran long has maintained its nuclear program is peaceful.

Amos Yadlin, a former head of Israeli military intelligence who is now director of the Institute for National Security Studies, a Tel Aviv think tank, alleged Fakhrizadeh ran "all covert activities with weaponization of the program."

The damage of his death "cannot be measured since nobody knows exactly the scope and the depth what the Iranians are doing covertly," Yadlin said. "But no doubt that he was the core source of authority, knowledge and organization of this program."

Fakhrizadeh's killing likely complicates the plans of President-elect Joe Biden, who has said his administration will consider reentering Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers. It also raises the risk of an open conflict in Trump's final weeks in office, as any retaliation could provoke an American military response, Yadlin said.

"I highly recommend to the officials to keep their mouths closed and not leak anything. They've already spoken too much," he said, referring to cryptic remarks by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to his supporters that he could not discuss everything he did last week.

"Any more evidence that will help the Iranians to decide on retaliation against Israel is a mistake," Yadlin said.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writers Joseph Krauss and Josef Federman in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

Hungarian official retracts comparing George Soros to Hitler

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By JUSTIN SPIKE Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) — After facing strong condemnation, a Hungarian commissioner on Sunday begrudgingly retracted an article comparing American-Hungarian billionaire and philanthropist George Soros, a staunch critic of Hungary's government, to Adolf Hitler and the Nazis.

"Europe is George Soros' gas chamber," Szilard Demeter, ministerial commissioner and head of the Petofi Literary Museum in Budapest, wrote in an opinion Saturday in the pro-government Origo media outlet. "Poison gas flows from the capsule of a multicultural open society, which is deadly to the European way of life."

The comments drew outrage from Hungary's Jewish community, including the Unified Hungarian Jewish Congregation, which called the article "tasteless" and "unforgivable."

"(It's) a textbook case of the relativization of the Holocaust, and is therefore incompatible with the government's claim of zero tolerance for anti-Semitism," the group said.

In a statement Sunday on Origo, Demeter said he would retract his article "independently of what I think" and will delete his Facebook page.

"I will grant that those criticizing me are correct in saying that to call someone a Nazi is to relativize, and that making parallels with Nazis can inadvertently cause harm to the memory of the victims," he said in a statement.

In the article, Demeter, who was appointed by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban to oversee cultural production, compared Soros to Hitler, writing he was "the liberal Führer, and his liber-Aryan army deifies him more than did Hitler's own."

Soros, who was born in Hungary and is a Holocaust survivor, is a frequent target of Orban's government for his philanthropic activities that favor liberal causes. Government media campaigns targeting Soros have led to charges of anti-Semitism.

The article also noted the conflict over the European Union's next budget, which Hungary and Poland are holding up over provisions that could block payments to countries that do not uphold democratic standards. Demeter referred to the two countries, both of which are under EU investigation for undermining judicial independence and media freedom, as "the new Jews."

The government of Israel, a close ally of Hungary, condemned Demeter's comments.

The Israeli Embassy in Budapest tweeted, "We utterly reject the use and abuse of the memory of the Holocaust for any purpose ... There is no place for connecting the worst crime in human history, or its perpetrators, to any contemporary debate."

Gordon Bajnai, a former Hungarian prime minister, wrote on Facebook on Sunday that if Demeter isn't removed from his post by Monday, "Hungarians and the rest of the world will obviously consider (his) statement as the position of the Hungarian government."

Key question in Cosby appeal: Does defendant's past matter?

By MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — In 2016, as Bill Cosby's legal team prepared for trial in his stunning sexual assault case in Pennsylvania, the state Supreme Court quietly heard a death row inmate's appeal.

Lawyers for Charles Hicks questioned whether three women who said he had beaten and choked them in Texas should have testified at his trial in a fourth woman's death in the Pocono Mountains.

Prosecutors hoped to show a pattern of "strikingly similar" conduct, even if only one woman died. The seven Supreme Court justices issued five separate opinions on the use of the "prior bad act" testimony.

That may explain why they are hearing Cosby's appeal of his conviction on Tuesday.

In taking the case, the justices appear eager to clear up the law on one of the murkiest questions plaguing criminal trials: When should a jury hear about someone's past?

Investigators say it can be crucial to show a signature crime pattern, but defense lawyers say it often amounts to character assassination.

The debate has been central to the high-profile prosecutions of actor and comedian Cosby, movie mogul

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Harvey Weinstein and a Roman Catholic Church official in Philadelphia charged with protecting predator priests. But it also comes into play for lesser-known people like Hicks, who remains on Pennsylvania's death row.

"The issue is really intriguing because it forces defendants to spend time fighting shadows of uncharged, sometimes unrelated accusations that never really became formal criminal charges," said Philadelphia defense lawyer William J. Brennan, who was involved in the church trial. "It's very distracting. You should focus on what you're criminally charged with."

Cosby has long complained that Montgomery County Judge Steven T. O'Neill let five other accusers testify at his 2018 retrial, when he became the first celebrity convicted of sexual assault in the #MeToo era. His lawyers, and his wife, Camille, have called the women gold diggers and their testimony lies.

But District Attorney Kevin Steele believes the similarities in their accounts were no mere coincidence.

"It is unusual, to say the least, that defendant has been repeatedly ... accused of engaging in sexual conduct with unconscious or otherwise incapacitated young women," his office wrote in a Supreme Court brief this year.

Cosby, 83, has spent more than two years in prison since he was convicted of drugging and sexually assaulting Andrea Constand, a Temple University employee he had taken under his wing, at his suburban Philadelphia estate in 2004.

By the time her case went to trial in 2017, after a judge unsealed Cosby's long-buried testimony in her 2005 sexual battery lawsuit, dozens of women had come forward to say the star of "The Cosby Show" had mentored and then betrayed them.

O'Neill allowed just one of them to testify at the first trial, in which the jury could not reach a verdict.

But the following year, at the 2018 retrial, the judge let five other accusers take the stand to describe encounters with Cosby in the 1980s. Each believed they had been drugged and sexually assaulted.

Constand, a former professional basketball player from Toronto, said she became incapacitated after taking what she thought was an herbal remedy from Cosby. She said she could not fight back as he put his hand down her pants. Cosby described the penetration that followed as consensual.

An intermediate appeals court last year called O'Neill's decision on the other accusers reasonable. Then the state Supreme Court jumped in when he appealed again.

The Cosby appeal could decide whether courts allow the expansive use of "prior bad act" witnesses that many judges have adopted in recent years or rein it in to preserve the presumption of innocence.

The testimony is often referred to as "404(b) evidence," a reference to the legal rule that governs it.

"I think the Supreme Court probably wants to tighten up some of the 404(b) issues that certainly are ripe for tightening," said Brennan, who sat through weeks of testimony from priest-abuse victims in the 2012 church trial. "It pollutes the air for the jury."

Pennsylvania Chief Justice Thomas Saylor raised concerns that creates "mini-trials on collateral testimony" in his 2017 opinion in the Hicks case, but he still sided with the majority to uphold the conviction, if for different reasons.

The Supreme Court will also consider Tuesday whether the jury should have heard Cosby's damaging deposition testimony from Constand's lawsuit, when he acknowledged giving alcohol or quaaludes to some of his accusers before sexual encounters.

Defense lawyers say that Cosby, before sitting for the deposition, relied on a secret agreement from a former prosecutor that he would never be charged in Constand's case. But O'Neill found no evidence of such a pact.

Cosby, like other defendants, does not have the right to attend the appellate arguments, which have been moved online because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He resides at a state prison near Philadelphia, where several inmate deaths have been blamed on the coronavirus. Cosby's friends have made public pleas for his early release, given his age and increased risk of infection, but he has not filed any formal legal petitions. And prosecutors say he doesn't qualify as a sexually violent predator.

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The Supreme Court is not expected to rule for several months.

Follow Maryclaire Dale on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/Maryclairedale>

This story has been corrected to show that 404(b) evidence refers to a legal rule, not a statute.

Fact or fiction? UK govt says 'The Crown' should be clear

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's culture minister thinks the Netflix TV series "The Crown" should come with a disclaimer: It's a work of fiction.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden weighed in amid criticism of the historical liberties taken by the drama about the British royal family.

"It's a beautifully produced work of fiction. So as with other TV productions, Netflix should be very clear at the beginning it is just that," Dowden told the Mail on Sunday newspaper. "Without this, I fear a generation of viewers who did not live through these events may mistake fiction for fact."

Dowden is expected to write to Netflix this week to express his view. Netflix did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

Questions of historical fidelity were not a major issue during earlier seasons of the show, which debuted in 2016 and traces the long reign of Queen Elizabeth II, which began in 1952.

But the current fourth season is set in the 1980s, a divisive decade that many Britons remember vividly. Characters include Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, whose 11-year tenure transformed and divided Britain, and the late Princess Diana, whose death in a car crash in 1997 traumatized the nation.

Former royal press secretary Dickie Arbiter has called the series a "hatchet job" on Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne, and his first wife Diana. The troubled relationship of the couple, played by Josh O'Connor and Emma Corrin, is a major storyline in the series.

Diana's brother, Charles Spencer, has also said the show should carry a notice that "this isn't true but it is based around some real events."

"I worry people do think that this is gospel and that's unfair," he told broadcaster ITV.

Some Conservatives have criticized the program's depiction of Thatcher, played by Gillian Anderson. Britain's first female prime minister, who died in 2013, is portrayed as clashing with Olivia Colman's Elizabeth to an extent that some say is exaggerated.

"The Crown" creator Peter Morgan, whose work also includes recent-history dramas "The Queen" and "Frost/Nixon," has defended his work, saying it is thoroughly researched and true in spirit.

In a 2017 discussion of "The Crown," Morgan said "you sometimes have to forsake accuracy, but you must never forsake truth."

Steven Fielding, a professor of political history at the University of Nottingham, said the suggestion that "The Crown" carry a disclaimer was "reasonable and yet pointless."

"It invariably doesn't have an effect," he said. "There are studies that show that people believe fiction when it's presented as fact — even if you tell them it's not fact."

Fielding said it was no surprise that Charles and his allies were annoyed with the heir to the throne's depiction as "a bit of an idiot." But he said making a fuss about it only amplifies the attention.

Historians are used to railing at inaccuracies in dramas such as the Academy Award-winning "Darkest Hour," which included an invented scene of Winston Churchill meeting ordinary Londoners on an Underground Tube train during World War II.

"Mixing historical fact and fiction has been around since Shakespeare. This is not new to films, it's not new to TV," said Fielding, co-author of "The Churchill Myths," which examines Britain's wartime leader in popular culture.

"I don't recall the culture secretary complaining about the ridiculous presentation of Winston Churchill in 'Darkest Hour,' he said. "Because it went with the myth, with the idea of Churchill the hero, nobody

complained.”

“Nobody’s bothered if fact and fiction are all mangled up, so long as it’s saying nice things,” he added.

UN: Ethiopia’s victory claim doesn’t mean war is finished

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Ethiopia’s announcement that it has completed its military offensive in its defiant Tigray region “does not mean the conflict is finished,” the U.N. refugee chief said Sunday, adding he is very concerned about the fate of nearly 100,000 Eritrean refugees there amid reports that some have been abducted.

If confirmed, such treatment of refugees in camps close to the Tigray border with Eritrea “would be major violations of international norms,” Filippo Grandi told reporters. “It is my strong appeal for the prime minister of Ethiopia for this situation to be addressed as a matter of urgency.”

Nearly a month of fighting between Ethiopian federal forces and Tigray regional ones has threatened to destabilize Ethiopia, the linchpin of the strategic Horn of Africa, and its neighbors. The involvement of Eritrea in the conflict has been alleged by refugees and the now-fugitive Tigray leaders but, like much in the sealed-off region, has not been verified.

Meanwhile, in a rare report from inside the Tigray capital of Mekele, the International Committee of the Red Cross said a major hospital in northern Ethiopia, Ayder Referral Hospital, is lacking body bags while some 80% of its patients have trauma injuries.

“The influx of wounded forced the hospital to suspend many other medical services so that limited staff and resources could be devoted to emergency medical care,” it said.

Hospitals and health centers in the Tigray region are running “dangerously low” on supplies to care for the wounded, it added. Food is also running low, the result of the Tigray region being cut off from outside aid for almost a month.

The ICRC also said 1,000 Eritrean refugees have arrived in Mekele from their refugee camps near the Eritrean border, looking for food and other help.

Eritrea, which watchdogs call one of the world’s most repressive countries, has remained almost silent on the allegations by the Tigray regional leaders that it has been involved in the conflict at the invitation of Ethiopia and its Nobel Peace Prize-winning Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, whose government has denied it.

Overnight, the U.S. Embassy in Eritrea said six explosions were heard in the capital, Asmara. It followed an embassy report of another “loud noise, possibly an explosion” on Friday, nearly two weeks after the Tigray regional leader confirmed firing missiles at the city.

The latest explosions came just hours after Abiy declared victory in his government’s fighting against the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, which has run the northern Tigray region. The army said it was in “full control” of Mekele but the government said TPLF leaders remain on the run.

The U.S. has accused the TPLF of seeking to “internationalize” the deadly conflict in which aid groups say several hundred people have been killed, including civilians.

Communications remain almost completely severed with the Tigray region of 6 million people, and the U.N. has been unable to access it with aid. Fears are growing about the atrocities that might emerge once transport and other links are restored.

It has been impossible to verify claims made by the warring sides.

Nearly 1 million people have been displaced, including about 44,000 who fled into Sudan. The camps that are home to the 96,000 Eritrean refugees have been in the line of fire.

“We need first and foremost access” to Tigray, Grandi said, adding that his U.N. colleagues in Addis Ababa are in discussions with the government there. Abiy’s government has promised a “humanitarian corridor” managed by itself, but the U.N. has stressed the importance of neutrality.

Asked about refugees’ allegations that Ethiopian security forces have blocked people from fleeing the conflict into Sudan, the U.N. refugee chief said his team had not raised that issue with Ethiopia’s government. But refugees told him about the “many checkpoints” and pockets of insecurity they faced as they fled.

“We have not heard of any systematic sealing-off,” Grandi said. “But certainly there are growing difficul-

ties.”

Most people traveled with nothing, Grandi said, and many are farmers who were forced to flee at harvest time, creating a “very difficult situation for them.”

Even before it declared victory in the conflict, Abiy’s government was urging the refugees to return and promised to protect them. But many of the refugees have said they were running from the deadly violence of Ethiopian forces and attacks from the direction of nearby Eritrea.

“Of course, I’m not encouraging people to return,” Grandu said, adding that refugees told him they fear possible retaliation and intercommunal violence and need security assurances before they can go home.

The U.N. refugee agency is asking for almost \$150 million in aid over the next six months to support up to 100,000 refugees.

‘World’s loneliest elephant’ Kaavan starts trip to Cambodia

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Kaavan, dubbed the “world’s loneliest elephant” after languishing alone for years in a Pakistani zoo, was readied Sunday for his flight to a sanctuary in Cambodia and the much-needed company of other elephants.

The mammoth task of getting him into an elephant-sized metal box for transport took several hours, and was perhaps the most crucial step in rescuing him from the dire conditions he’s lived in for 35 years.

Had Kaavan been spooked and refused to enter the cage or bolted, his departure could have been delayed for months while the rescue team sought to restore calm and trust before trying again, explained Martin Bauer, a spokesman for Four Paws International. The global animal welfare group has led the charge to save Kaavan since 2016.

Iconic American singer and actress Cher also arrived in Islamabad last week, the culmination of her longstanding efforts to raise awareness about rescuing Kaavan from the zoo. Conditions there were so bad that a court in the Pakistani capital ordered the zoo closed in August.

Dr. Amir Khalil, a veterinarian with Four Paws who’s been treating Kaavan’s many wounds and ailments over the past three months, said he was hopeful about the next chapter of the elephant’s life.

“In the sanctuary in Cambodia ... waiting for him is three ladies, three Asian female elephants,” he said. “Now Kaavan might have a new partner, and share a new life with a partner.”

Khalil described how on Sunday he slowly and gently cajoled Kaavan to walk backwards into a steel crate, as nearly a dozen men carefully guided him inside using chains around his tree-trunk sized legs.

Kaavan is set to leave aboard a Russian cargo plane for the 25,000-acre sanctuary early Monday morning.

The plight of the male Asian elephant, who’s been alone since the death of his partner Saheli in 2012, has captured worldwide attention.

Cher’s animal welfare group Free the Wild has worked with Four Paws and the American syndicated columnist and philanthropist, Eric Margolis, to relocate Kaavan — a mission that’s cost about \$400,000. She’s also making a documentary film about the process.

Kaavan was diagnosed earlier this year as being dangerously overweight, owing to his unsuitable diet of around 250 kilograms (550 pounds) of sugar cane each day.

With Khalil’s help, Kaavan lost 1,000 pounds (450 kilograms) over the past three months, and was down to a slimmer, more agile 9,000 pounds (over 4,000 kilograms) when he left the zoo Sunday.

Kaavan’s wounds are emotional as well as physical. He would spend his days throwing his head from side to side, a stereotypical sign of boredom and misery in an elephant, Bauer said, and something the Four Paws team has been working to treat.

The loss of his mate Saheli in 2012 took a toll on Kaavan’s mental health. Elephants are social animals that thrive on the company of other elephants, Bauer explained. For Kaavan, the last eight years have been akin to living in quarantine — something the world has come to understand all too well amid the coronavirus pandemic, he said.

“I always compare it to us humans now during the pandemic. We are locked away for 14 days isolated

and we all know how that feels," Bauer said.

Saheli developed a small infection in her foot that went unattended and became gangrenous. When she died, her lifeless body lay for several days beside the heartsick Kaavan until zookeepers eventually removed her.

For much of his time in Pakistan, Kaavan was kept chained in a small enclosure surrounded by a moat of water. The floor irritated his feet and toenails, which are badly damaged and will require years of treatment in Cambodia, said Bauer. He arrived in Pakistan as a gift from Sri Lanka when he was only a year old.

Four Paws first came to evaluate Kaavan's situation in 2016, said Khalil, the veterinarian. The team returned in August following the zoo's court-ordered closure, and the decision was made to resettle him.

The zoo once housed 500 animals, but by August barely 30 were still alive, and Kaavan's condition had deteriorated.

"They always say it takes a village, but it took a whole country to get Kaavan moved to Cambodia," said Bauer, who applauded Pakistan's Wildlife Foundation, which first sounded the alarm about Kaavan.

While Kaavan is the most celebrated rescue at the zoo, Bauer said Four Paws has already relocated about 30 animals from there.

All that remain are a deer, a monkey and two retired dancing bears — Suzie and Bubaloo — whose teeth had all been removed by their previous owners to stop them from biting customers and the owners. The bears will be relocated to Jordan in December with the assistance of the Princess Alia Foundation, headed by the eldest daughter of the Jordan's late King Hussein.

"Elephants are ambassadors from the jungle, and they deserve to live like ambassadors," Khalil said.

Court orders France to rethink 30-person limit on worship

PARIS (AP) — France's highest administrative court on Sunday ordered a rethink of a 30-person attendance limit for religious services put in place by the government to slow down the spread of coronavirus.

The measure took effect this weekend as France relaxes some virus restrictions, but it faced opposition by places of worship and the faithful for being arbitrary and unreasonable. Even before the ruling, several bishops had announced they would not enforce the restrictions and some churches were expected to defy it.

The Council of State has ordered that Prime Minister Jean Castex modify the measure within three days.

French churches, mosques and synagogues started opening their doors again to worshippers this weekend — but only a few of them, as France cautiously starts reopening after its latest virus lockdown.

Many people expressed irritation outside several Paris churches where priests held services for groups that numbered over 30.

"People respected social distancing perfectly, each to his place and with enough space so I don't think there's anything to worry about here," Laurent Frémont told The Associated Press on his way home after Mass.

To attend Mass, they had to book tickets online and give their names on their way in. However, the church's protocol didn't seem to help limit the number of people inside the building.

Asked whether they would stay if the crowd was too large, most said they would.

"I really think you couldn't do better from a sanitary point of view," said Humblin Frémont.

For some, the new rules stirred up fears. French Catholics were sharing rules and recommendations on social media for how to behave if the police arrive at a church for a head count.

Farid Kachour, secretary general of the group running the mosque of Montermeil, a heavily immigrant suburb northeast of Paris, says that his mosque simply wouldn't open with too few people permitted.

"We can't choose people" allowed to enter for prayer. "We don't want to create discontent among the faithful," he said.

Kachour noted that Muslims pray five times a day, further complicating the situation. To respect the rules, the mosque would need 40 services a day to allow all the faithful to pray, he said.

Places of worship were allowed to continue during France's latest nationwide lockdown, which is coming to an end in December, but regular prayer services were banned due to health concerns. Around the

world, some religious services have been linked to coronavirus clusters, including superspreading events. France has reported over 52,000 virus-related deaths, the third-highest pandemic death toll in Europe after Britain and Italy.

"Non-essential" shops reopened in France on Saturday, museums and cinemas will reopen on Dec. 15 but bars and restaurants will stay closed for indoor dining until Jan. 20.

Alex Turnbull and Elaine Ganley contributed to this report.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Faith takes the forefront as Georgia Senate runoffs heat up

By ELANA SCHOR and BEN NADLER Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Bishop Reginald Jackson stepped to the microphone at a drive-in rally outside a church in southwest Atlanta as his voice carried over a loudspeaker and the radio to people gathered in, around and on top of cars that filled the parking lot.

"Let's keep Georgia blue," Jackson said. "Let's elect Jon Ossoff, Raphael Warnock to the United States Senate." The presiding bishop of more than 400 African Methodist Episcopal churches in Georgia added a pastoral flourish as horns honked and supporters cheered: "If I have a witness, somebody say amen!"

As Georgia becomes the nation's political hotspot this winter before twin runoff elections Jan. 5 that will determine control of the Senate, faith-based organizing is heating up.

Conservative Christians are rallying behind Republican Sens. Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue, while Black churches and liberal-leaning Jewish groups are backing Democratic challengers Rev. Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff. The Democrats' fates are seen as intertwined in a state that this year turned blue in the presidential election for the first time since 1992 by a razor-thin margin.

"These runoffs are critically important," Jackson said. "We want to make sure there is no decrease in turnout."

Across Georgia, the African Methodist Episcopal Church is implementing a program designed to ensure its members, and Black voters overall, cast ballots in the runoff — focusing on votes by mail and early in-person voting. Pastors at each church remind tens of thousands of congregants every week to apply for an absentee ballot and of early voting dates, Jackson said in an interview. Each local church also follows up with congregants to make sure they have a plan to vote.

The New Georgia Project, a nonpartisan voter mobilization group founded by Democrat Stacey Abrams, who ran for governor in 2018, is also preparing to tap the influence of faith communities in stoking turnout.

Rev. Billy Honor, director of faith organizing at the group, said the conservative Christian Faith & Freedom Coalition — founded by former Georgia GOP chairman Ralph Reed — has long positioned Georgia "as the home of evangelical fundamentalist types when it comes to the political space."

"But the truth is, for a very long time, there has been an active, effective movement of progressive-minded, justice-centered clergy" who have worked in the state on voting rights, health care and other issues, Honor added. He said Warnock was part of that work before his candidacy. Warnock is senior pastor at Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, the congregation led by the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Meanwhile, Loeffler and Perdue can expect to benefit from a conservative Christian base that has long boosted the state's Republicans. Faith & Freedom made Georgia one of its top three spending targets in a \$50 million get-out-the-vote program during the general election and plans increased organizing for the runoffs.

The reach of "the evangelical vote in Georgia is very large and very strong," Timothy Head, the group's executive director, said in an interview.

Head noted that while President Donald Trump kept a strong hold on white evangelical voters this year, Perdue out-performed Trump in Georgia during the general election. President-elect Joe Biden may have

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won over some evangelicals by contrasting his character with that of Trump, Head said, but he argued that the same sort of case would be harder for Democrats to make against Loeffler and Perdue.

Another faith-focused conservative group, the legislative affiliate of the Family Research Council, is holding trainings and pastor briefings before the runoffs. The anti-abortion group Susan B. Anthony List, whose president advised Trump's reelection campaign on Catholic outreach, has announced a \$4.1 million plan to boost Loeffler and Perdue through a partner political action committee.

Religious issues already have become a campaign flashpoint in the runoff. The GOP has resurfaced excerpts from past Warnock sermons to assail him as insufficiently supportive of the military as well as anti-Israel. The Democrat signed a letter last year comparing Israel's policy toward Palestinians to "previous oppressive regimes" and criticized it in a 2018 sermon, while also calling for a two-state solution in the region.

Warnock pushed back in a recently released television ad, saying the attacks are "trying to scare people by taking things I've said out of context from over 25 years of being a pastor."

One group criticizing Warnock as too left-leaning on Israel, the Republican Jewish Coalition, is also mobilizing on behalf of the GOP incumbents.

Jewish Democrats in Georgia predicted that the GOP attack on Warnock's Israel record would fall flat, citing his record of friendship with the Jewish community through his pulpit at Ebenezer.

Sherry Frank, president of the Atlanta section of the National Council of Jewish Women, said she sees "no doubt in the Jewish community about (Warnock's) stance on Israel and anti-Semitism." Frank's group is conducting nonpartisan voter turnout work for the runoffs.

Georgia's Jewish Democrats also see, in Ossoff and Warnock, candidates whose joint push for the Senate harkens back to a tradition of Black and Jewish leaders working together during the civil rights movement. Warnock has a bond with a prominent Atlanta rabbi whose predecessor at the synagogue was close with King.

Warnock is viewed "as the inheritor" of King's legacy, said Michael Rosenzweig, co-chair of the Georgia chapter of the Jewish Democratic Council of America, which has endorsed both Democrats. "And to the extent that Jews were supportive of the civil rights struggle and supportive of (King), I think they look supportively on Rev. Warnock."

Ossoff, who is Jewish, has defended Warnock against GOP criticism over Israel and fondly recalled his own connection to the late Rep. John Lewis, a Georgia civil rights leader who endorsed Ossoff before his death in July. In October, Ossoff said he and Lewis talked during their first meeting about "the bond between the Black and Jewish communities, marching alongside rabbis and young Jewish activists in the mid 1960s ... and how important it was that these communities be brought together."

Schor reported from Washington.

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Nov. 30, the 335th day of 2020. There are 31 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 30, 2000, Al Gore's lawyers battled for his political survival in the Florida and U.S. Supreme Courts; meanwhile, GOP lawmakers in Tallahassee moved to award the presidency to George W. Bush in case the courts did not by appointing their own slate of electors.

On this date:

In 1782, the United States and Britain signed preliminary peace articles in Paris for ending the Revolutionary War; the Treaty of Paris was signed in September 1783.

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In 1803, Spain completed the process of ceding Louisiana to France, which had sold it to the United States.

In 1835, Samuel Langhorne Clemens — better known as Mark Twain — was born in Florida, Missouri.

In 1874, British statesman Sir Winston Churchill was born at Blenheim Palace.

In 1900, Irish writer Oscar Wilde died in Paris at age 46.

In 1936, London's famed Crystal Palace, constructed for the Great Exhibition of 1851, was destroyed in a fire.

In 1940, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz were married at the Byram River Beagle Club in Greenwich, Connecticut. (The marriage ended in divorce in 1960.)

In 1960, the last DeSoto was built by Chrysler, which had decided to retire the brand after 32 years.

In 1981, the United States and the Soviet Union opened negotiations in Geneva aimed at reducing nuclear weapons in Europe.

In 1987, American author James Baldwin died in Saint Paul de Vence, France, at age 63.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Brady Bill, which required a five-day waiting period for handgun purchases and background checks of prospective buyers.

In 2018, former President George H.W. Bush, a World War II hero who rose through the political ranks to the nation's highest office, died at his Houston home at the age of 94; his wife of more than 70 years, Barbara Bush, had died in April. On the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires, President Donald Trump and the leaders of Canada and Mexico signed a revised North American trade pact.

Ten years ago: Pentagon leaders called for scrapping the 17-year-old "don't ask, don't tell" ban on openly gay military service after releasing a survey about the prospect of openly gay troops. (The policy was rescinded in 2011.) The Obama administration announced that all 197 airlines that flew to the U.S. had begun collecting names, genders and birth dates of passengers so the government could check them against terror watch lists before they boarded flights.

Five years ago: Jury selection began in Baltimore in the trial of Officer William Porter, the first of six policemen to face charges in the death of Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old Black man who died of a severe spinal injury while in police custody. (All charges against Porter were dropped after a mistrial; three other officers were acquitted; all remaining charges were later dropped.)

One year ago: Nine members of an extended Idaho family died and three others were injured in the crash of a small plane after taking off from the airport in Chamberlain, South Dakota; investigators found that the pilot and a passenger had spent three hours clearing snow and ice from the plane before departure. Wintry weather plagued Thanksgiving weekend travelers across the country, as a powerful and dangerous storm moved eastward, dumping heavy snow from parts of California to the northern Midwest. Amid mounting pressure from mass anti-government protests, Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi submitted his resignation to parliament.

Today's Birthdays: G. Gordon Liddy is 90. Country singer-recording executive Jimmy Bowen is 83. Movie director Ridley Scott is 83. Screenwriter Geoffrey C. Ward is 80. Movie writer-director Terrence Malick is 77. Rock musician Roger Glover (Deep Purple) is 75. Playwright David Mamet (MA'-meht) is 73. Actor Mandy Patinkin is 68. Musician Shuggie Otis is 67. Country singer Jeannie Kendall is 66. Singer Billy Idol is 65. Historian Michael Beschloss is 65. Rock musician John Ashton (The Psychedelic Furs) is 63. Comedian Colin Mochrie is 63. Former football and baseball player Bo Jackson is 58. Rapper Jalil (Whodini) is 57. Actor-director Ben Stiller is 55. Rock musician Mike Stone is 51. Music producer Steve Aoki is 43. Singer Clay Aiken is 42. Actor Billy Lush is 39. Actor Elisha Cuthbert is 38. Actor Kaley Cuoco (KWOH'-koh) is 35. Model Chrissy Teigen (TY'-gihn) is 35. Actor Christel Khalil is 33. Actor Rebecca Rittenhouse is 32. Actor Adelaide Clemens is 31. Actor Tyla Harris is 20.