

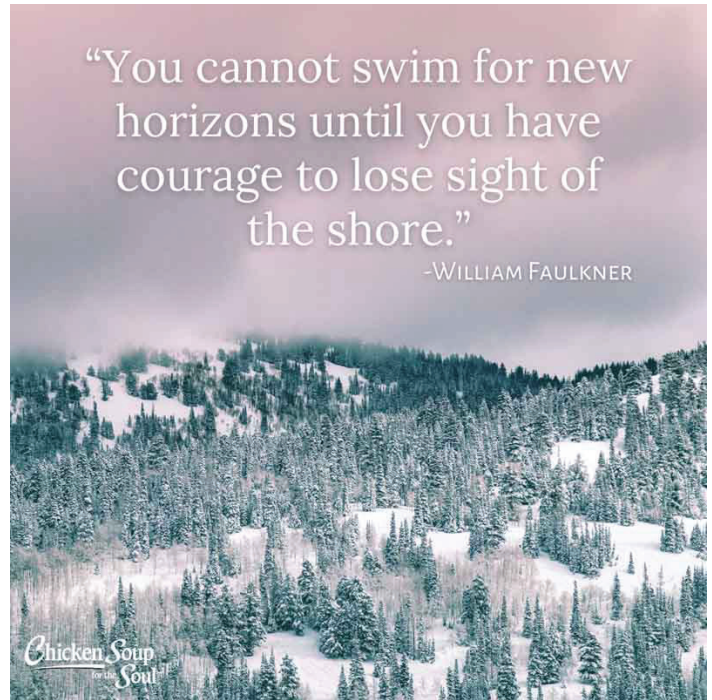
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Games Scores from Last Night

Boys JV: Groton 38, Webster 21
Girls JV: Groton 21, Webster 14
Varsity Girls: Groton 44, Webster 39
Varsity Boys: Groton 58, Webster 52



Upcoming Schedule

Tuesday, Jan. 12

6 p.m.: Girls Basketball vs. Aberdeen Christian at Aberdeen Civic Arena with JV followed by varsity.

Thursday, Jan. 14

5 p.m.: Boys Basketball hosts Aberdeen Roncalli with C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV and then varsity

Friday, Jan. 15

6 p.m.: Girls Basketball at Roncalli with JV game followed by varsity

Saturday, Jan. 16

10 a.m.: Wrestling at Potter County Invitational (Gettysburg)

Monday, Jan. 18

5:30 p.m.: Junior High Boys Basketball hosts Aberdeen Christian with 7th grade at 5:30 p.m. followed by 8th grade at 6:30

6:30 p.m.: Girls Basketball at Langford Area with JV followed by Varsity



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 service of
Sandra Mayou
Tuesday, Jan. 12th, 11 a.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran Church



GDILIVE.COM
GDIRADIO Locally 89.3FM



Girls



**Groton Area vs. Aberdeen
Christian at the Ab. Arena
6 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021**

GJV, GV **GDILIVE.COM**

The service of
Delores Leonhardt
Wednesday, Jan. 13, 11 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran Church



GDILIVE.COM

The Life of Delores Leonhardt



Delores Leonhardt, 88, entered heavens gates on Saturday, January 9, 2021 at Sun Dial Manor in Bristol.

Delores Beverly (Shannon) Leonhardt was born on March 1, 1932 on the farm near Crandall to John and Mary (Hutchinson) Shannon. She attended country school and later Bristol High School. As a child, she helped her dad on the family farm, where she would develop a passion for the land and its animals. On September 18, 1949, she was united in marriage with George Leonhardt in Groton. Together, they farmed for many years, along with raising livestock, and a family.

Delores was a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Groton. She was actively involved in the Salvation Army, the Alliance for Mental Health support group in Aberdeen, served on the Board for the Scotland cemetery and she took pride in decorating the gravesites every Memorial Day. She loved attending church and supporting her family at school and life events.

Celebrating her life is her daughter, Eretta Dargatz of Waubay and her grandchildren: Brenda Kennedy, Shelley (Loren) Steiner, Melissa (Horacio) Figueroa, Karla (Andrew) Smith, Dylan Deaver, Katie Leonhardt, Amy Leonhardt, Addie Leonhardt, 14 great grandchildren, 3 great-great-grandchildren, and sister-in-law Lorene Blocker.

Preceding her in death were her parents, her husband George, and her son Daniel (Danny) Leonhardt, brothers William (Billy) Shannon, Norman Shannon, sister Betty (Shannon) Raethke Brauntner, brothers-in-law Floyd Leonhardt and Delbert Leonhardt, father-in-law Hans Leonhardt, and mother-in-law Ella (Bahr) Leonhardt.

Services for Delores Leonhardt, 88, of Groton will be at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, January 13, 2021 at St. John's Lutheran Church, Groton. Rev. Andrew Wolfgram will officiate. Burial will follow in Scotland Cemetery under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Services will be live streamed at GDILIVE.COM. Masks are required for all those who attend in person.

Visitation will be held for one hour prior to services on Wednesday.

Honorary Pallbearers will be all of Delores's Grandchildren, Great-Grandchildren, Nieces and Nephews.

Memorials may be directed to Eretta Dargatz, 408 North Main St. Waubay, SD 57273.

Condolences may be made online at www.paetznick-garness.com

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Superintendent's Report to the Groton Area School District 06-6 Board of Education

January 11, 2021

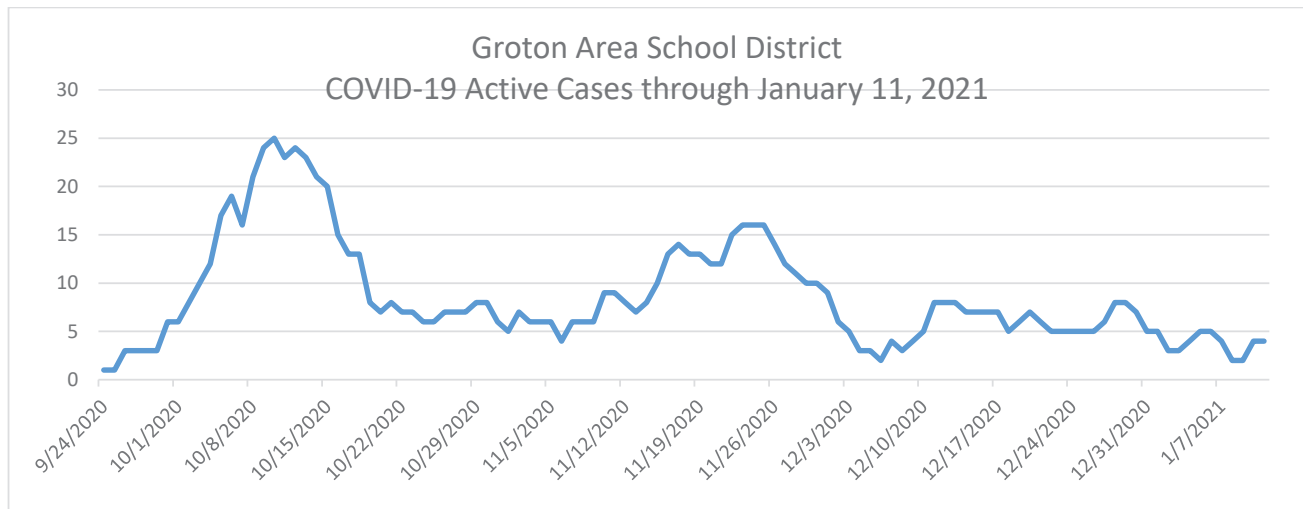
Groton Area School District COVID Data Update.

Groton Area School District															
Active COVID-19 Cases															
Updated January 11, 2021; 3:33 PM															
JK	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Staff	Total
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4

To date we've had 88 total confirmed cases of COVID-19 [12.13%] of students or staff members of our District (30 staff members [30.0%], 18 elementary students [5.92%], 14 middle school students [10.0%], and 20 high school students [14.18%]).

Brown County data to date indicates 4,666 infections of total population 30,839 [15.13%].

Statewide data to date indicates 93,098 infections of total population 884,659 [10.52%].



Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Testing. As of the end of the day, we've conducted 98 tests. 30 have been positive (30.6%).

Quarantine Protocols. We continue to determine school-based close contacts after notification of positive COVID-19 tests. Students quarantine for a five day period and are permitted to return to school on day 6 following exposure provided they agree to wear a mask through day 10.

State Vaccination Plan. Currently, the state is in phase 1C of distribution (which includes school nurses). According to the state's vaccination distribution plan, K-12 school staff are included in phase 1D. Phase 1D is a large group that includes our 65 and older population, those with two or more underlying medical issues, school employees, and other essential worker categories. Based on their estimated allocation of doses of vaccine, phase 1D is estimated to begin in February and run through the end of March.

Federal COVID-19 Fiscal Relief. Congress has passed another coronavirus relief bill that includes substantial additional revenue for K-12 schools (ESSER II). Many details are not yet available on these funds, but here is what we do know: 1) Funding will be distributed to schools based on the Title I funding formula much in the same way the initial round of coronavirus relief (ESSER) was distributed; 2) We do not anticipate the state will use its portion of funding to provide a stable per-student allocation to all south Dakota schools as was done with ESSER I; 3) The appropriation to be distributed based on the Title I formula is approximately four times the initial allocation of ESSER I – based on this

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assumption, I'm estimating our local allocation at \$265,000; 4) There is reportedly "broad" approved use for the funds with an emphasis on measuring student progress and remediation; I do, however, believe we'll have to submit line item expenditures for this grant as opposed to the CRF funds we received.

Winter Sports. We continue to distribute ticket vouchers for home athletic events. Rostered participants receive six tickets for a two-team event and four for a multi-team event (double headers, wrestling quads/tournaments).

State Accreditation Review. We've been notified that our state accreditation review is pushed back one year and will be held during the 2024-2025 school year.

2021 Legislative Session. The first day of the 2021 legislative session is Tuesday, January 12.

NSU Teacher Job Fair. We're registered to attend the NSU Teacher Job Fair on Friday, January 5. This annual event is a good way to meet the teacher candidates coming out of Northern and introduce ourselves to them.

Collective Bargaining Training. I've registered to participate in the series of collective bargaining webinars put on by ASBSD over the next couple of months taking the place of the typical day-long workshop.

#323 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

We're light today, which is expected on Mondays. There were just 198,900 new cases reported today, increasing yesterday's total by 0.9%. We now stand at 22, 647,200 total cases diagnosed in the US in this pandemic. Hospitalizations continue off the record for a third consecutive day; if this hadn't been a weekend, I'd be dancing in the streets—I'll wait for tomorrow for any dancing, thanks. And we have now lost 376,223 lives to this virus, 0.5% more than yesterday. There were 1834 deaths reported today.

I am seeing a lot of news indicating vaccination efforts are smoothing out and speeding up. That's definitely good news. Cities are putting things like sports stadiums into use as vaccination centers, which is pretty smart—large spaces, crowd control infrastructure, and access by car or mass transit are largely in place. Given what a mess we're in, the only real option we have at this stage is to hold things together until we can vaccinate our way out of it; so anything that serves either the holding-things-together portion of the program or the vaccinate-our-way-out portion is more than welcome.

I've seen an announcement on the San Diego Zoo's website that they've diagnosed two of their gorillas with Covid-19. The animals do have symptoms, but are so far doing well. The keepers suspect the infection was transmitted from an asymptomatic staff member, even though rigorous precautions are in place. One of the things we want to remember is that there are no guarantees, no matter how careful we are; we're always in risk reduction mode, not risk elimination mode. These are the first infections in great apes, so it remains to be seen how serious this might turn out to be. This particular troop is part of a conservation effort to preserve populations in Cameroon, so their welfare is of special interest. This portion of the zoo has not been open to the public since December 6.

I read an account by a county manager in Florida of the vaccination rollout. It seems when the federal government shipped vaccine out to states, some states just shipped it on to the counties and told them to start vaccinating. At least in this man's case, that was the first he knew he was going to be responsible for putting a vaccination program together. In the piece in the Washington Post, he says, "I'll be the first to admit that I didn't expect for us to be managing this rollout at the county level. . . . I made the assumption back in the fall that when vaccines became available, it would be handled by some combination of federal and state government. . . . I've gotten a lot of emails from people saying: 'You've known for nine months that this was coming, and you should have had a plan in place.'" He acknowledges this is true, but adds, "But the truth is, nobody told us what to be ready for."

When he received vaccine, he didn't know how much more would be coming or when. He was just told to administer it. There was no time or team or assistance to organize logistics—parking, crowd management, sign-ups. Senior citizens waited in line for hours, only to be turned away when the vaccine ran out. A man collapsed while waiting in line. There were traffic issues. People rushed in from other places upon hearing it was first-come-first-served; the crowds were enormous, and people were not distancing. There's no mask mandate, so you have these crowds mingling and waiting. It was a mess.

He still doesn't know how many doses, if any, he'll have next week or the week after or on any given day, so he can't schedule appointments for vaccination. He doesn't know what to tell people about their second doses because he doesn't have any information about those either. Sounds like a nightmare. Also sounds like the folks with the least ability to materially change the situation are getting all of the public backlash when things, rather predictably, go wrong.

We simply have to do better.

After repeated politically-driven delays, the WHO team is finally scheduled to land in China on Thursday to begin its investigation of the origins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that has the world in so much trouble. The organization is taking great pains to make clear we are not interested here in assigning blame; we just need to understand where and how this virus came to humans. This is important information to help us see the next one coming and, if possible, to head it off at the pass. For that, we need to understand how these events occur.

Colleges and universities are preparing for the spring semester, still in the midst of a pandemic, arguably

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in many places in a worse spot than they were in September. Some have delayed the start of the semester, hoping to avoid the post-holiday surge in cases, some are staying with mostly remote instruction, and some are bringing more students back to campus. Many of them are tightening testing regulations and tracking mechanisms. Some will be pushing vaccination as soon as possible. But budgets are tight; they are not receiving as much aid from this latest stimulus package as they did in the first one, even though the virus-associated expenses have not decreased for spring. Many schools have laid off faculty, even cut departments; and no one thinks the budget tightening is finished.

And that's before they address campus culture; the suppression of parties and other gatherings is becoming steadily more difficult. Then there are sports: Schedules shift, games are postponed, rosters shift, quarantines upend plans. (And nope, not going to discuss college sports as a social/cultural/ethical issue; that's policy, and while I am interested in that conversation, it does not belong here in this discussion of a virus.) Those issues will continue to offer challenges. Also, no one expects the old-style graduation with all due pomp and circumstance (apologies to Sir Edward Elgar) in a crowded auditorium in May either.

I'm not much on declaring this person's experience worse than another's—and I'm not going to do that here; but I do know an entire year of what is a precious and quite literally a once-in-a-lifetime experience has been lost for these students. That makes me sad. I can't think of a way to change it, but it's another loss in the midst of so many. I can feel sad for that without anyone needing to win the grief sweepstakes.

Hosein Asadi has been teaching elementary children in villages and with nomadic tribes of Iran for 28 years. With a family that includes five children, he has never been able to afford a house or a car on his teacher's salary; so when he inherited \$300,000, he had big plans for the money. Then came the pandemic. His students from poor families were simply shut out of class because their families could not afford computer equipment for remote instruction.

You know what's next, right? The guy went out and bought tablets for them all. Of course, he did because he's a much better person than I am. And while he was on a shopping spree, he bought 30,000 masks to distribute to the children too. He couldn't bear to see them cheated out of a year's instruction, and he wanted them to be safe. His friends thought he was nuts, but he told the New York Times, "[F]or me seeing the sweet smile on the children's faces and knowing I had given them the gift of education is enough."

Sometimes good things come to good people, and it worked out that way for Asadi. He became a national hero; he's been on television and been written up in the media. He received a personal call from the Minister of Education. And, better yet, he started something.

Businesses and ordinary people and even Iranian expatriates have all been raising money for more tablets for more children. He told the Times there have been an additional 12,000 tablets distributed as a result of these efforts, saying, "Creating happiness for kids who have nothing is the most rewarding feeling."

If I was a little richer, I'd buy the guy a car myself. I don't love hard times, but I have to say they draw something special out of people. With all of the bad things this pandemic has visited on us, I will take from it in the plus column a renewed appreciation for the essential goodness in so many of us. That is a gift.

Take care. We'll talk again.

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Jan. 11 COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

South Dakota: Community Spread for week of Jan. 11:

Moderate: Faulk, Sanborn changed from minimal to moderate.

Positive: +181 (103,499 total) Positivity Rate: 8.7%

Total Tests: 2090 (807,349 total)

Total Persons Tested: 551 (384,712 total)

Hospitalized: +13 (5917 total) 242 currently hospitalized (+5)

Avera St. Luke's: 9 (+1) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Sanford Aberdeen: 5 (+1) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Deaths: +0 (1585 total)

Recovered: +119 (96,812 total)

Active Cases: +62 (5102)

Percent Recovered: 93.5%

Vaccinations: +1594 (45667)

Vaccinations Completed: +808 (7306)

Brown County Vaccinations: +1 (1856) 19 (+1) completed

Beadle (38) +3 positive, +0 recovered (83 active cases)

Brookings (31) +13 positive, +7 recovered (239 active cases)

Brown (68): +9 positive, +1 recovered (284 active cases)

Clark (2): +0 positive, +0 recovered (11 active cases)

Clay (12): +1 positive, +0 recovered (73 active cases)

Codington (72): +11 positive, +5 recovered (207 active cases)

Davison (53): +4 positive, +2 recovered (101 active cases)

Day (21): +3 positive, +2 recovered (29 active cases)

Edmunds (4): +2 positive, +3 recovered (59 active cases)

Faulk (13): +0 positive, +0 recovered (4 active cases)

Grant (35): +0 positive, +0 recovered (29 active cases)

Hanson (3): +1 positive, +0 recovered (12 active cases)

Hughes (29): +1 positive, +0 recovered (99 active cases)

Lawrence (31): +3 positive, +4 recovered (102 active cases)

Lincoln (68): +11 positive, +15 recovered (357 active cases)

Marshall (5): +1 positive, +1 recovered (13 active

cases)

McCook (22): +1 positive, +0 recovered (27 active cases)

McPherson (3): +3 positive, +0 recovery (15 active case)

Minnehaha (285): +48 positive, +46 recovered (1178 active cases)

Pennington (144): +14 positive, +17 recovered (638 active cases)

Potter (3): +1 positive, +0 recovered (26 active cases)

Roberts (32): +3 positive, +3 recovered (90 active cases)

Spink (24): +1 positive, +0 recovered (30 active cases)

Walworth (14): +1 positive, +1 recovered (50 active cases)

NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Jan. 11:

- 4.6% rolling 14-day positivity
- 121 new positives
- 2,638 susceptible test encounters
- 74 currently hospitalized (+2)
- 1,881 active cases (-18)
- 1,352 total deaths (0)

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased Among Cases	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
Aurora	430	393	789	11	Moderate	17.24%
Beadle	2556	2435	5315	38	Substantial	10.69%
Bennett	369	347	1090	8	Moderate	4.44%
Bon Homme	1499	1444	1910	23	Substantial	15.52%
Brookings	3201	2931	10366	31	Substantial	13.38%
Brown	4666	4314	11328	68	Substantial	22.59%
Brule	652	618	1707	7	Moderate	26.09%
Buffalo	415	402	854	10	Minimal	19.05%
Butte	923	867	2886	20	Substantial	16.13%
Campbell	116	108	225	4	Minimal	25.00%
Charles Mix	1159	1092	3587	13	Substantial	12.05%
Clark	323	310	879	2	Moderate	2.22%
Clay	1682	1597	4674	12	Substantial	16.74%
Codington	3607	3328	8715	72	Substantial	19.61%
Corson	453	439	908	11	Moderate	19.35%
Custer	695	668	2465	9	Substantial	12.79%
Davison	2802	2648	5843	53	Substantial	15.84%
Day	564	514	1591	21	Substantial	17.65%
Deuel	438	397	1018	7	Substantial	9.09%
Dewey	1340	1266	3543	14	Substantial	21.25%
Douglas	396	368	839	9	Substantial	31.58%
Edmunds	417	353	897	5	Substantial	9.09%
Fall River	470	440	2339	13	Substantial	9.41%
Faulk	316	299	619	13	Moderate	14.29%
Grant	849	785	1982	35	Substantial	21.05%
Gregory	492	457	1111	26	Moderate	0.00%
Haakon	237	220	478	9	Moderate	10.00%
Hamlin	631	557	1561	37	Substantial	10.75%
Hand	317	305	716	4	Minimal	8.33%
Hanson	322	307	625	3	Moderate	23.81%
Harding	89	88	160	1	Minimal	0.00%
Hughes	2086	1958	5803	29	Substantial	4.11%
Hutchinson	719	668	2090	20	Substantial	13.21%

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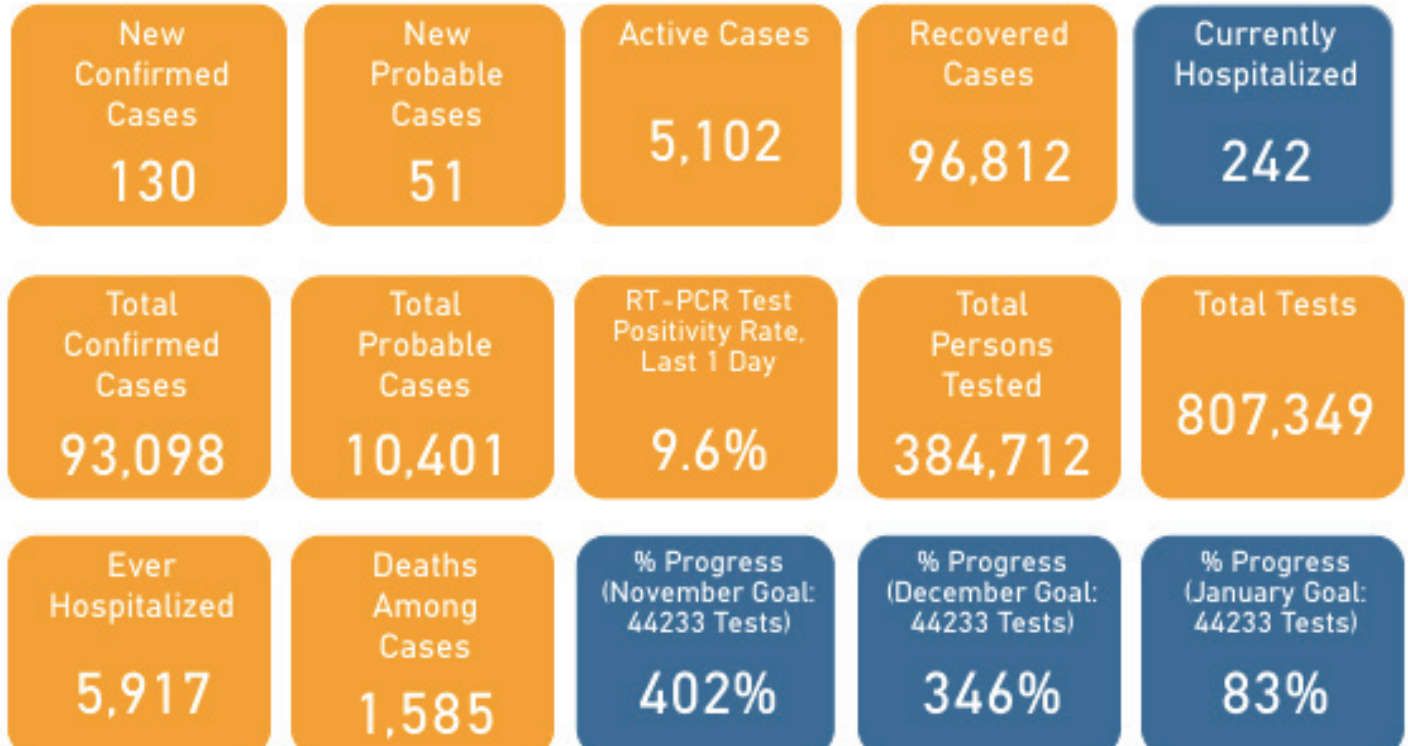
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Hyde	134	130	372	1	Minimal	0.00%
Jackson	267	249	869	12	Minimal	33.33%
Jerauld	265	241	511	16	Minimal	15.79%
Jones	71	67	186	0	Minimal	10.00%
Kingsbury	572	517	1457	13	Substantial	9.33%
Lake	1071	1001	2865	16	Substantial	29.13%
Lawrence	2655	2522	7708	31	Substantial	11.54%
Lincoln	7089	6664	17968	68	Substantial	19.74%
Lyman	553	515	1736	9	Moderate	16.67%
Marshall	270	252	1038	5	Moderate	4.00%
McCook	705	656	1437	22	Substantial	29.31%
McPherson	199	179	507	3	Moderate	2.94%
Meade	2355	2202	6876	24	Substantial	21.02%
Mellette	227	219	669	2	Minimal	10.34%
Miner	244	210	515	7	Moderate	10.00%
Minnehaha	25972	24509	69781	285	Substantial	16.17%
Moody	560	518	1606	14	Substantial	22.73%
Oglala Lakota	1976	1851	6300	37	Substantial	16.17%
Pennington	11811	11031	34967	144	Substantial	21.05%
Perkins	301	266	699	11	Substantial	16.67%
Potter	327	298	739	3	Moderate	8.57%
Roberts	1061	939	3820	32	Substantial	20.27%
Sanborn	314	297	621	3	Moderate	35.71%
Spink	723	669	1906	24	Substantial	10.20%
Stanley	292	275	800	2	Substantial	6.52%
Sully	122	106	253	3	Moderate	10.00%
Todd	1186	1139	3895	19	Substantial	8.42%
Tripp	639	614	1352	13	Substantial	12.12%
Turner	999	907	2431	49	Substantial	23.53%
Union	1730	1558	5555	30	Substantial	14.38%
Walworth	662	598	1667	14	Substantial	23.00%
Yankton	2596	2410	8426	27	Substantial	12.68%
Ziebach	320	280	708	8	Moderate	14.29%
Unassigned	0	0	2060	0		

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South Dakota



AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	3920	0
10-19 years	11410	0
20-29 years	18757	4
30-39 years	17063	14
40-49 years	14774	30
50-59 years	14652	84
60-69 years	11767	198
70-79 years	6221	345
80+ years	4754	910

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	54022	761
Male	49296	824

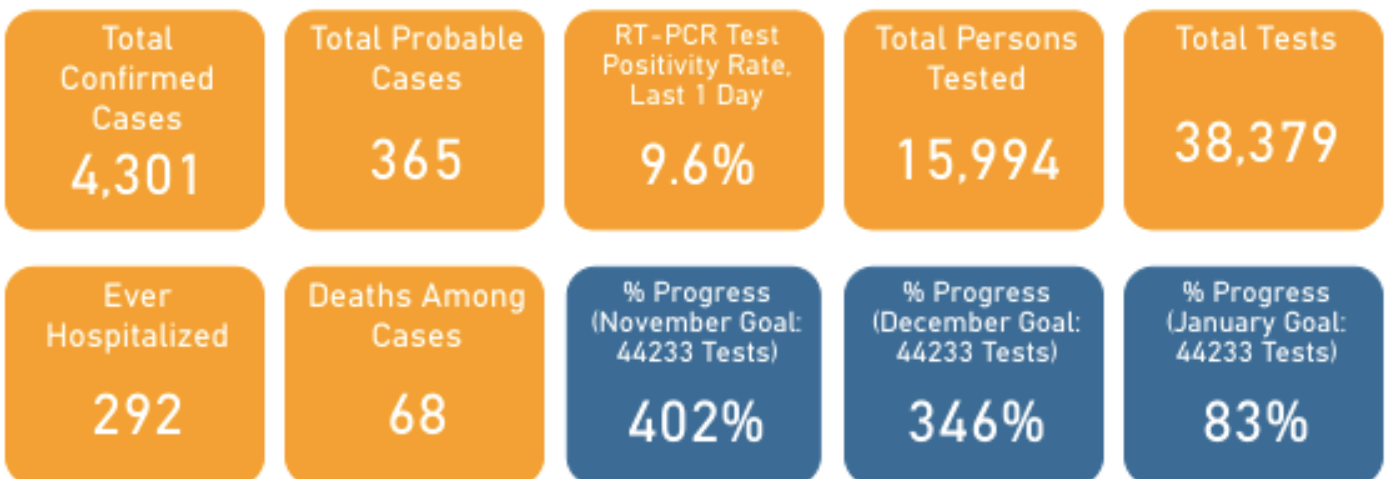
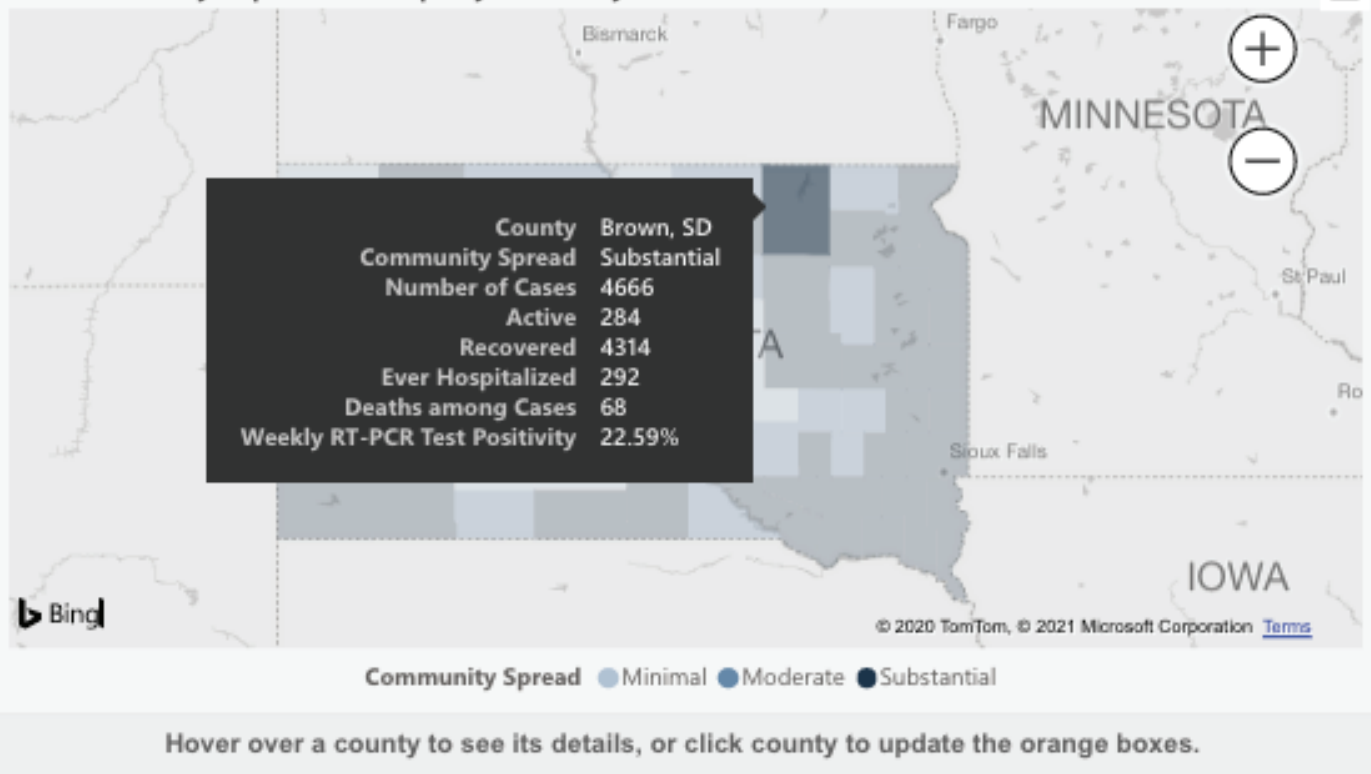
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Brown County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



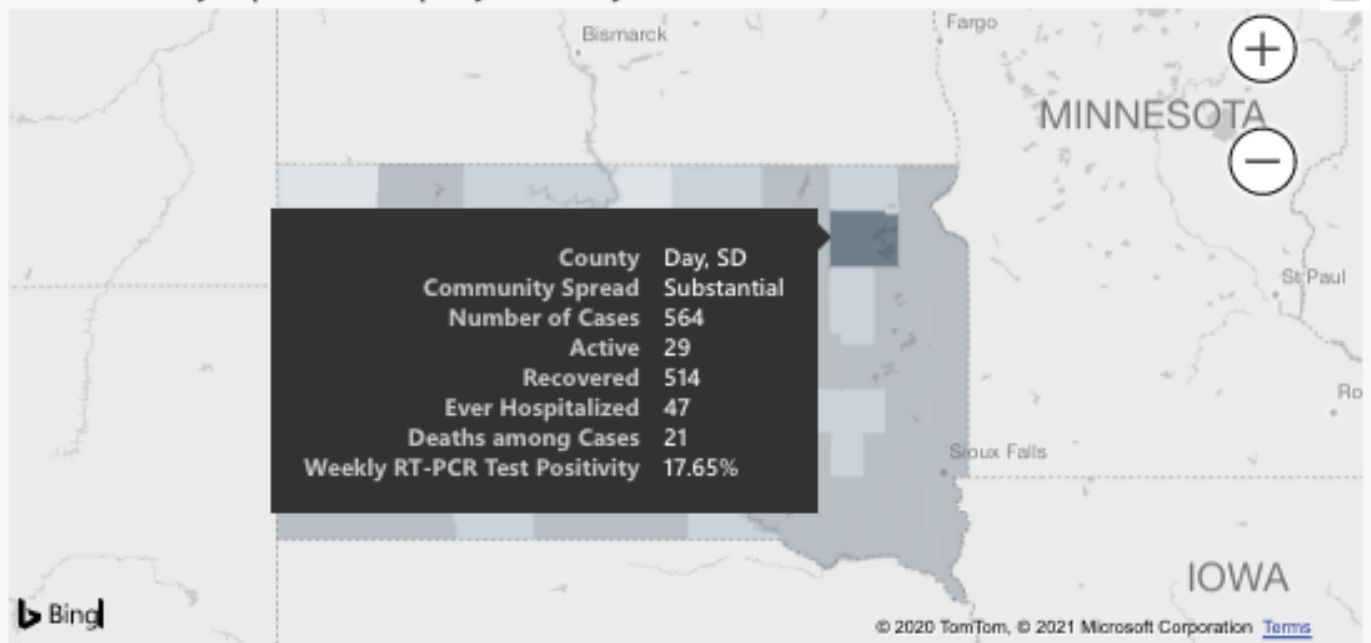
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Day County

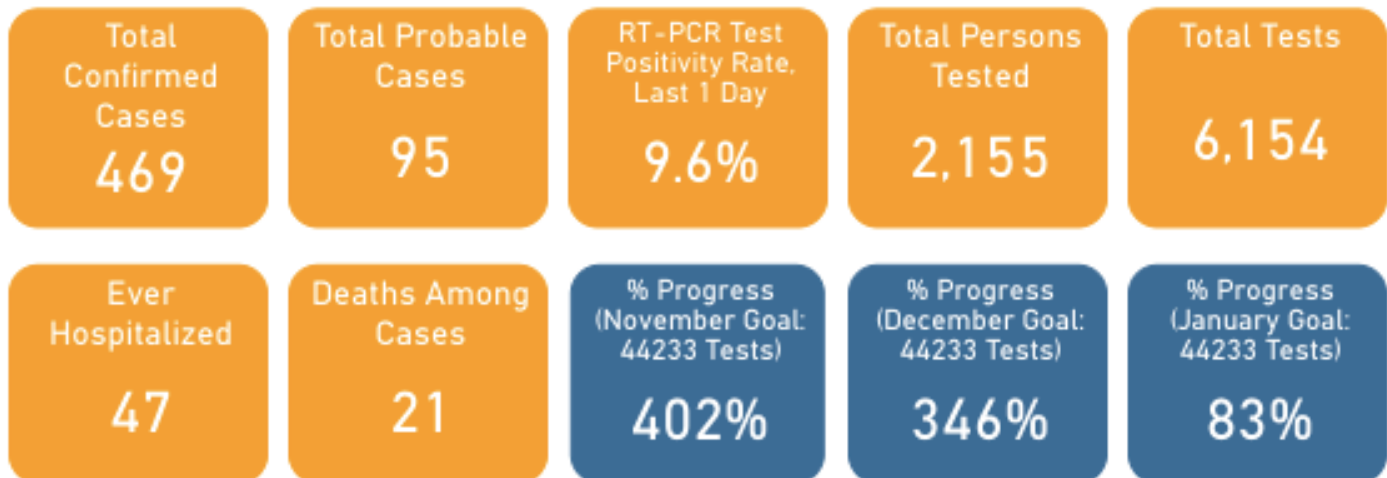


Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread ● Minimal ● Moderate ● Substantial

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



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Vaccinations

Total Doses Administered

45,667

Total Persons Administered a Vaccine

38,360

Manufacturer	Number of Doses
Moderna	21,620
Pfizer	24,047

Doses	Number of Recipients
Moderna - 1 dose	21,620
Pfizer - 1 dose	9,435
Pfizer - Series Complete	7,296

County	# Doses	# Persons (1 dose)	# Persons (2 doses)	Total # Persons
Aurora	81	81	0	81
Beadle	819	437	191	628
Bennett*	50	46	2	48
Bon Homme*	398	384	7	391
Brookings	1177	773	202	975
Brown	1856	1,818	19	1,837
Brule*	197	193	2	195
Buffalo*	3	3	0	3
Butte	128	124	2	126
Campbell	146	120	13	133
Charles Mix*	302	296	3	299
Clark	119	107	6	113
Clay	682	628	27	655
Codington*	1419	1,063	178	1,241
Corson*	14	12	1	13
Custer*	257	227	15	242
Davison	1367	1,315	26	1,341
Day*	278	262	8	270
Deuel	167	139	14	153
Dewey*	63	61	1	62
Douglas*	185	183	1	184
Edmunds	123	123	0	123
Fall River*	233	227	3	230
Faulk	35	33	1	34
Grant*	383	369	7	376
Gregory*	228	224	2	226
Haakon*	80	80	0	80

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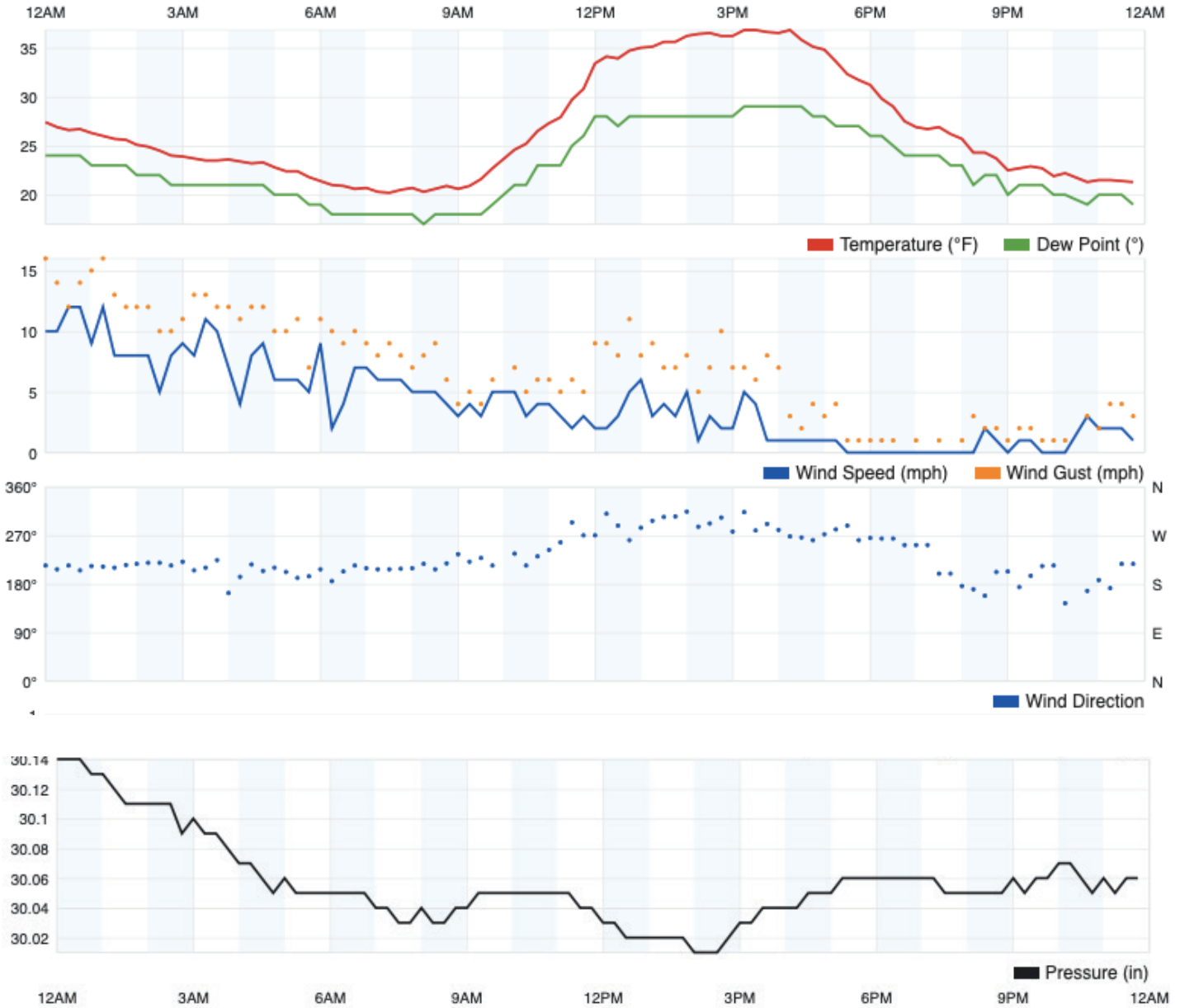
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Hamlin	211	167	22	189
Hand	180	164	8	172
Hanson	61	55	3	58
Harding	2	2	0	2
Hughes*	893	865	14	879
Hutchinson*	544	512	16	528
Hyde*	92	92	0	92
Jackson*	38	38	0	38
Jerauld	74	60	7	67
Jones*	47	43	2	45
Kingsbury	291	219	36	255
Lake	552	252	150	402
Lawrence	491	463	14	477
Lincoln	5892	2,858	1,517	4,375
Lyman*	57	57	0	57
Marshall*	151	145	3	148
McCook	272	178	47	225
McPherson	19	19	0	19
Meade*	561	389	86	475
Mellette*	4	4	0	4
Miner	87	65	11	76
Minnehaha	14688	7,918	3,385	11,303
Moody*	215	185	15	200
Oglala Lakota*	15	7	4	11
Pennington*	4341	2,668	836	3,504
Perkins*	37	37	0	37
Potter	115	111	2	113
Roberts*	294	284	5	289
Sanborn	95	87	4	91
Spink	410	392	9	401
Stanley*	127	121	3	124
Sully	30	24	3	27
Todd*	22	18	2	20
Tripp*	226	224	1	225
Turner	575	475	50	525
Union	204	182	11	193
Walworth*	304	142	81	223
Yankton	1339	1,321	9	1,330
Ziebach*	11	11	0	11
Other	1310	872	219	1,091

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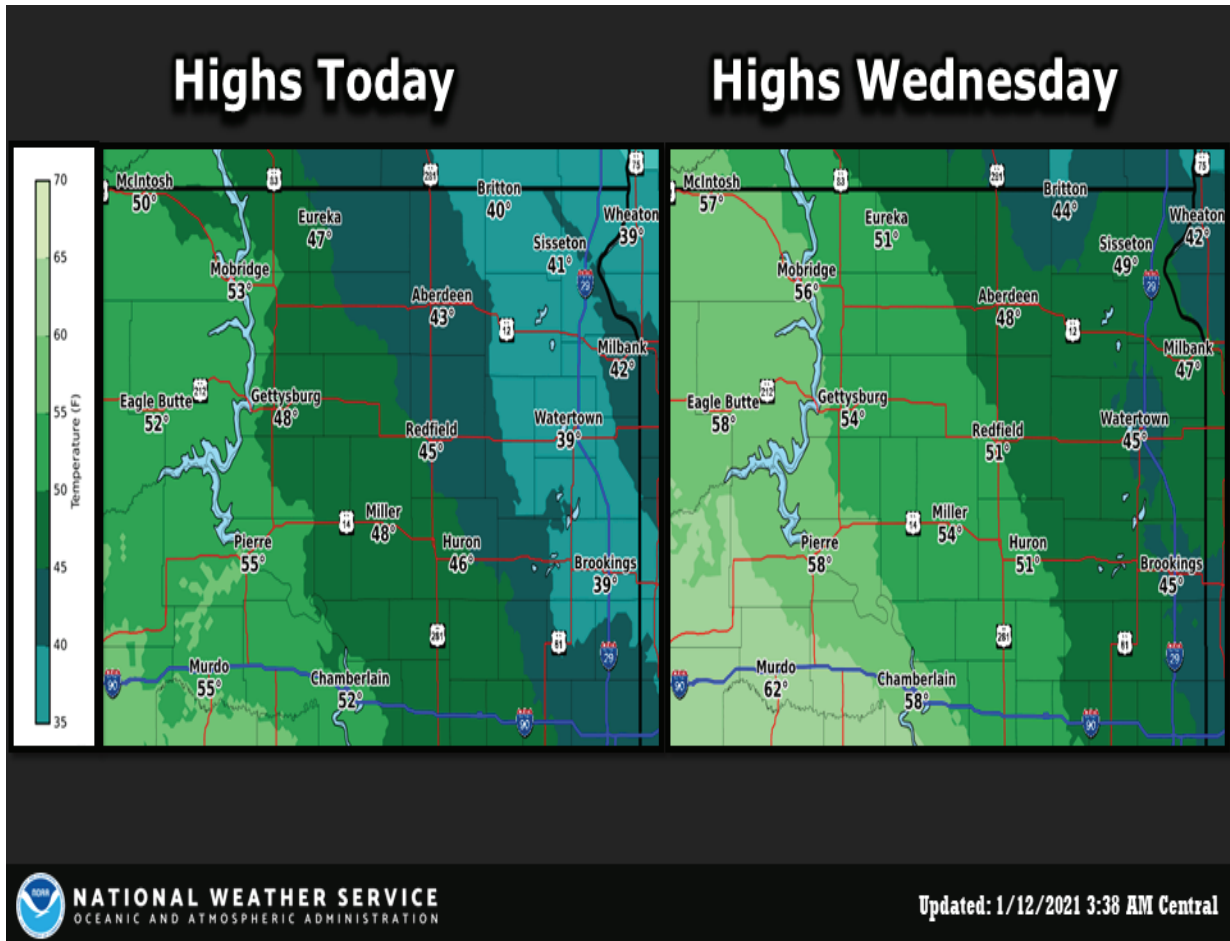
Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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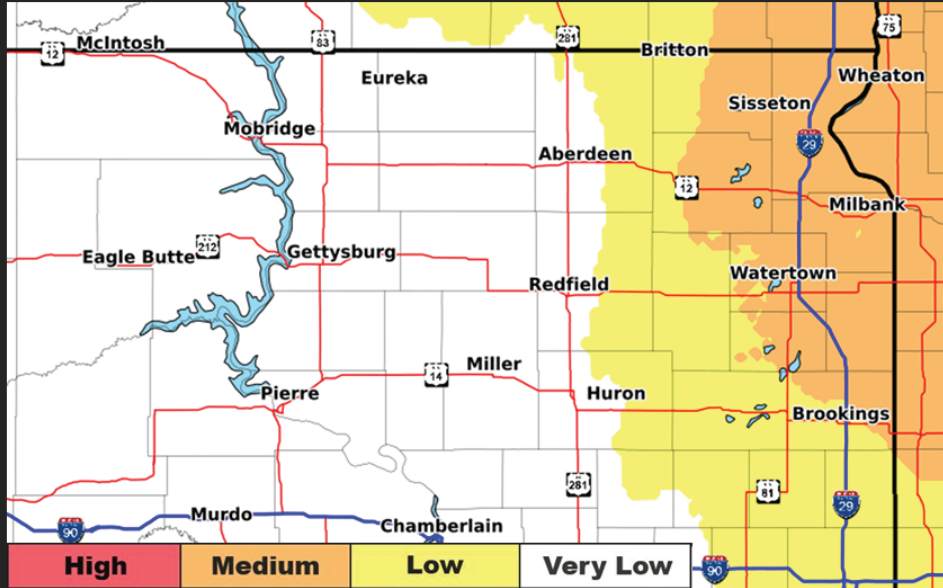
Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
				
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	50% 30%	30% 30%
			Chance Rain then Chance Rain/Snow	Breezy. Chance Snow then Chance Rain/Snow
High: 42 °F	Low: 23 °F	High: 47 °F	Low: 28 °F	High: 37 °F



Mild temperatures will continue into Wednesday

Snow & Wind Impact Potential

Impact Outlook: Thursday & Friday



What

Winds - From 35 to 55mph (peak winds west-river, lower in western MN)
Snow - Potential for a few inches (peak snowfall far eastern SD and western MN)

When

Winds - Picking up Wednesday night and continue through Friday
Snowfall - Will be spotty until late Thursday & continues into early Friday

Impacts

Traveling? Pay attention to the latest forecast as well as road conditions before heading out

Uncertainty

Strength and track of system still uncertain

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Today in Weather History

January 12, 1912: The all-time coldest temperature ever recorded at Aberdeen and Timber Lake were 46 degrees below zero on this date in 1912. On February 8th, 1895, 46 degrees below zero was also recorded in Aberdeen. The record low for this date was also set at Watertown with 38 degrees below zero.

January 12, 1997: On January 12th, 1997, some of the greatest snow depths were recorded across central and northeast South Dakota. Ipswich had 29 inches on the ground, Aberdeen had 30 inches, Timber Lake had 31 inches, Mobridge had 34 inches, and Waubay had 38 inches. Some of the highest snow depths were recorded at Summit, Sand Lake, and at Eureka. Summit had 42 inches of snow on the ground on January 12th, Sand Lake had 47 inches, and Eureka had a snow depth of 50 inches. The snow depth at Aberdeen was the all-time record snow depth and Mobridge was just an inch shy of their 35-inch record snow depth.

1886: With a reading of 26 degrees below zero, Bowling Green Kentucky recorded its coldest temperature on record.

1890: A tornado touched down at St. Louis, MO and crossed the Mississippi River, ending just south of Venice. The worst damage from this tornado occurred in St. Louis. Further east and northeast, one tornado in McLean County passed through downtown Cooksville, destroying at least a dozen buildings, while a tornado in Richland County destroyed four homes northeast of Olney. In all, over 100 homes and other buildings were unroofed or damaged. The storm caused four deaths and 15 injuries.

1985: A record snowstorm struck portions of western and south-central Texas. All snowfall records dating back to 1885 were easily broken. Austin measured 3.6 inches, and Del Rio received 8.6 inches. San Antonio saw a record-setting 13.5 inches from this event.

1888 - A sharp cold front swept southward from the Dakotas to Texas in just 24 hours spawning a severe blizzard over the Great Plains. More than 200 pioneers perished in the storm. Subzero temperatures and mountainous snow drifts killed tens of thousands of cattle. (David Ludlum)

1912 - The morning low of 47 degrees below zero at Washta IA established a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1985 - A record snowstorm struck portions of western and south central Texas. The palm trees of San Antonio were blanketed with up to thirteen and a half inches of snow, more snow than was ever previously received in an entire winter season. (Weather Channel) (Storm Data)

1987 - Twenty-seven cities in the Upper Midwest reported new record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 72 degrees at Valentine NE and 76 degrees at Rapid City SD set records for the month of January. (National Weather Summary)

1988 - Parts of North Dakota finally got their first snow of the winter season, and it came with a fury as a blizzard raged across the north central U.S. Snowfall totals ranged up to 14 inches at Fargo ND, winds gusted to 65 mph at Windom MN, and wind chill readings in North Dakota reached 60 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A dozen cities in the southeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings warmed into the 70s and 80s. Fort Myers FL reported a record high of 86 degrees. (National Weather Summary)

1990 - Gale force winds produce squalls with heavy snow in the Great Lakes Region. Totals in northwest Pennsylvania ranged up to eleven inches at Conneautville and Meadville. Barnes Corners, in western New York State, was buried under 27 inches of snow in two days. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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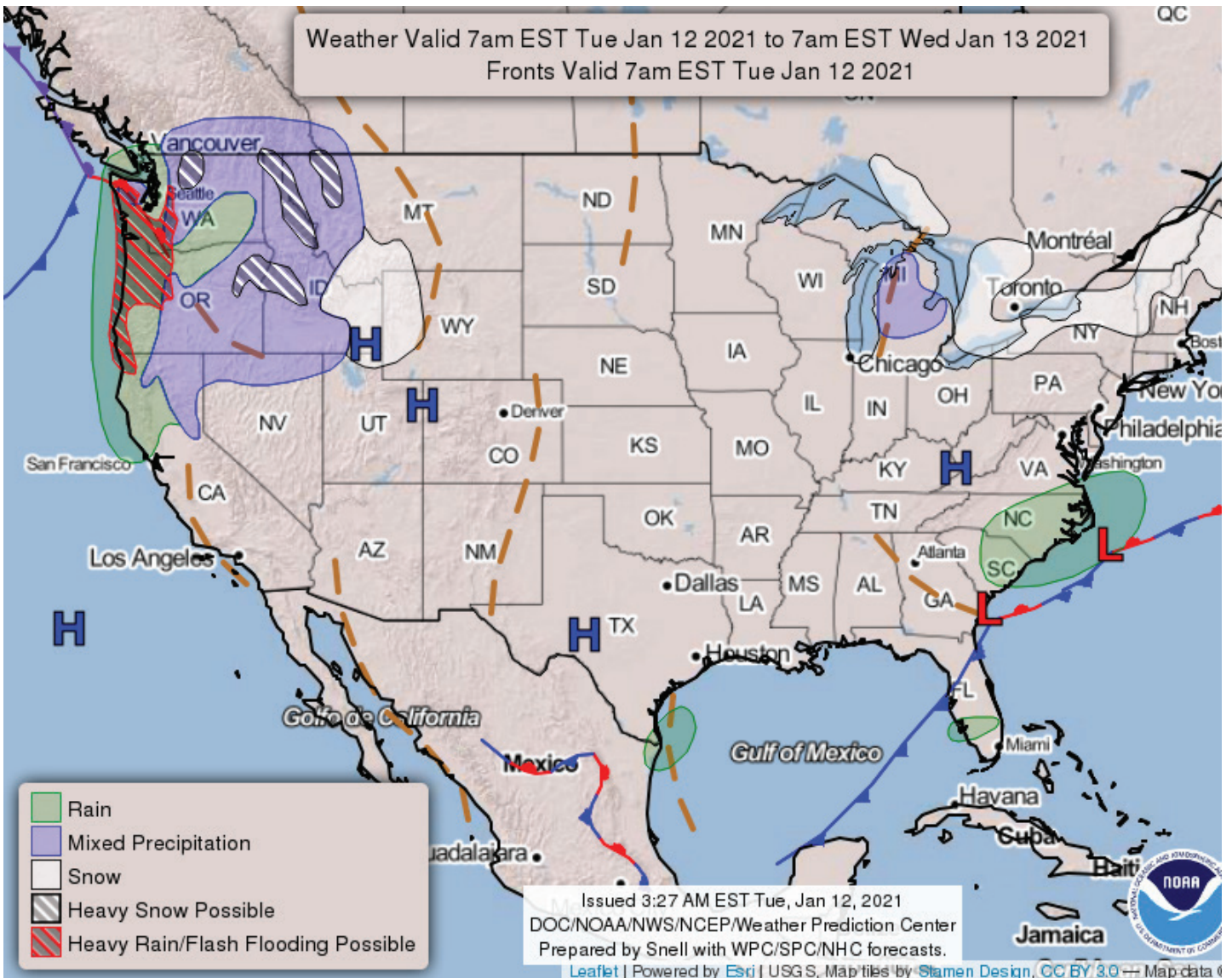
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 37 °F at 3:13 PM
Low Temp: 20 °F at 7:24 AM
Wind: 16 mph at 1:14 AM
Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 58° in 1987
Record Low: -46 in 1912
Average High: 22°F
Average Low: 1°F
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.19
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.19
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:14 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:11 a.m.



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EMOTIONS

Emotions are a very important part of life. They are a gift from God and have a very significant role. Our emotions are an outward expression of what is going on inside of us. We smile when something pleases us. We cry when something saddens us. We rejoice when unexpected gifts are given to us. We groan when we are in pain or if someone we love hurts. There is no internal feeling that does not have an external result. It is "external" things that we "internalize" that force our feelings – positive or negative.

Take sporting events. When teams face one another in a contest, one will win, and the other will lose. If we select the winning team, our emotions will demonstrate feelings of joy and happiness, excitement, and ecstasy. We will stand and shout, lift our arms in victory and jump up and down. If we select the losing team, our emotions will demonstrate feelings of gloom and doom, discouragement and disgust. Unless one gambles on the outcome of the event, all we stand to lose is our pride for making the wrong choice.

Rarely, however, do we see overt emotions expressed when God grants us His blessings. There were times when Christians wept with joy when a lost soul repented or shared their enthusiasm when a prayer request was answered or stood with arms reaching toward heaven for a miracle of healing. We have allowed a ritualistic "theology" to overcome the joy of "doxology" – giving thanks to God for His blessings.

We need to heed the Psalmist: "Let those who trust and love You...be glad...sing for joy...and rejoice in You."

Prayer: Awaken our emotions, Lord! Free us from being lukewarm, uninvolved, detached, and impassioned about Your grace. May we sing praises – openly and loudly – in Jesus' Name!

Scripture For Today: But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name be joyful in You. Psalm 5:11

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News from the  Associated Press

Monday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Bridgewater-Emery 79, Colman-Egan 41

Groton Area 58, Webster 52

Herreid/Selby Area 68, South Border, N.D. 45

Leola/Frederick 57, Aberdeen Roncalli 54

Sioux Falls Washington 55, Yankton 48

Waverly-South Shore 68, Tri-State, N.D. 48

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Burke 59, Lyman 41

DeSmet 59, James Valley Christian 44

Dell Rapids St. Mary 54, Elkton-Lake Benton 20

Groton Area 43, Webster 39

Harrisburg 68, Sioux Falls Washington 60, OT

Lemmon 62, Bison 35

Lennox 41, Dell Rapids 26

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

South Dakota GOP lawmakers not worried about armed protests

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Despite the FBI on Monday warning of plans for armed protests at all 50 state capitals in the coming days, South Dakota lawmakers in Pierre prepared to launch the legislative session with few concerns about armed groups and one lawmaker encouraging a lie by right-wing pundits that last week's U.S. Capitol violence was perpetrated by left-wing antifa thugs rather than supporters of the president.

"I'm not worried at all," Sen. John Wiik, a Big Stone City Republican said when asked about whether he was concerned about armed protests contesting the outcome of the presidential election. But he raised doubts about whether it was President Donald Trump's supporters who violently disrupted the U.S. Congress as it certified Democrat Joe Biden as the victor.

Other Republican lawmakers, including legislative leaders responsible for overseeing the conduct of the House and Senate, said they were either not aware or not concerned about protests at the state Capitol. A group of people gathered on Wednesday in Pierre to contest the presidential election, but that gathering remained peaceful, Dakota News Now reported.

The FBI has put out an internal bulletin warning that nationwide protests at state capitals may start later this week and extend through Joe Biden's Jan. 20 inauguration.

"I don't think there's too much concern," said House Speaker Rep. Steve Haugaard, who will leave his role as Speaker this week. "Everybody here believes that we're pretty isolated."

Haugaard was spotted attending a "Stop the Steal" rally in Sioux Falls earlier this month, but said that he has not closely followed the news as law enforcement has identified and arrested those involved in the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

But Wiik has raised questions about who the rioters at the U.S. Capitol were, suggesting that they were not supporters of the president.

"No one knows who is who," he said. "Anyone can put on a Trump hat."

Records show that the insurrectionist mob was overwhelmingly made up of longtime Trump supporters,

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including Republican Party officials, GOP political donors, far-right militants, white supremacists, members of the military and adherents of the QAnon myth that the government is secretly controlled by a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophile cannibals.

Forum News Service first reported that Wiik had emailed a constituent with debunked evidence to claim that the mob was infiltrated by leftist extremists. In an interview with The Associated Press, Wiik backed off some of the claims in the email, saying, "Let's just find out who did it and prosecute them individually."

Tony Mangan, the spokesman for the Department of Public Safety which is responsible for security at the Capitol, said that the department does not comment on security issues.

The Bureau of Administration said it has not received any permit applications to hold a protest or other event on the Capitol grounds.

Asian food production facility to be built in Sioux Falls

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — One of South Korea's largest food companies is building a production facility in Sioux Falls, the company announced Monday.

CJ CheilJedang, known as CJCJ, plans to set up an Asian food production facility that is expected to employ 600 people within five years. The food will be sold and distributed by CJ Foods and Schwan's Company, the Minnesota-based frozen food distributor that was purchased by CJCJ in 2018.

Gov. Kristi Noem, a Republican, has made attracting businesses to South Dakota a priority, especially as she avoided ordering business closures during the pandemic. She touted the announcement as an opportunity for job growth.

Noem had scheduled to make the announcement in-person on Monday alongside Dimitrios Smyrniotis, the Executive Chairman of CJCJ Food, Americas and CEO of Schwan's Company, but that news conference was canceled early Monday. Noem's spokesman Ian Fury said that both their schedules had changed and the governor would speak on the new facility in her State of the State address on Tuesday.

Smyrniotis thanked state and local officials in a statement.

The company is planning to expand as Asian food becomes more popular in the United States. It already operates food production facilities in California, Ohio, New York and New Jersey.

Man, child die after ATV falls through ice in South Dakota

ARLINGTON, S.D. (AP) — A man and child have died after an ATV fell through the ice in eastern South Dakota over the weekend.

The Hamlin County Sheriff's Office says emergency crews responded to the northern end of Lake Poinsett on Saturday evening after getting a call that the ATV and two people broke through the ice.

A 60-year-old man and an 8-year-old boy were pulled from the water and taken to a hospital, where they were pronounced dead.

KELO-TV reported that after they were pulled from the water, sheriff's officials learned that a four-wheeler and ice fishing shack had also fallen through the ice and were partially submerged on northeast part of the same lake. There were no reported injuries in that incident.

Sheriff's officials are reminding people to be careful on lakes as ice thickness can vary.

This story has been corrected to show that Arlington is in eastern South Dakota.

US asking states to speed vaccine, not hold back 2nd dose

By ZEKE MILLER WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is asking states to speed delivery of COVID-19 vaccines to people older than 65 and others at high risk by no longer holding back the second dose of the two-dose shots, officials said Tuesday.

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said that "the administration in the states has been too

narrowly focused.”

As a result, he said, the Trump administration is now asking states to vaccinate people aged 65 and over and those under 65 with underlying health conditions. He said the vaccine production is such that the second dose of the two-shot vaccine can be released without jeopardizing immunization for those who got the first shot.

“We now believe that our manufacturing is predictable enough that we can ensure second doses are available for people from ongoing production, Azar told ABC’s “Good Morning America.” “So everything is now available to our states and our health care providers.”

The Trump administration also is pushing to expand the number of places where people can be vaccinated by adding community health centers and additional drug stores.

President-elect Joe Biden is expected to give a speech Thursday outlining his plan to speed vaccines to more people in the first part of his administration. His transition team has vowed to release as many vaccine doses as possible, rather than continuing the Trump administration policy of holding back millions of doses to ensure there would be enough supply to allow those getting the first shot to get a second one.

Volkswagen triples electric car sales ahead of climate rules

By DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Europe’s push into electric cars is gathering speed — despite the pandemic. Automaker Volkswagen tripled sales of battery-only cars in 2020 as its new electric compact ID.3 came on the market ahead of tough new European Union limits on auto emissions. And Germany, long a laggard in adopting electric vehicles, saw more people buy electrics in December than opted for previously dominant diesel vehicles.

Those are early signs of what will likely be an upcoming year of increasing market share for electric cars as EU regulations drive their adoption, despite the recession caused by the coronavirus pandemic that has caused the overall car market to shrink.

Volkswagen said Tuesday its namesake brand sold 134,000 battery-powered cars last year, up from 45,000 in 2019.

Including hybrids, which combine an internal combustion engine and an electric motor, sales of electrified cars reached 212,000, up from 82,000 in 2019.

Volkswagen’s announcement comes as the auto industry association in Germany reports that one in four cars sold in the country in December had an electric motor, uptake that was supported by incentives as part of the government stimulus package during the COVID-19 recession.

Battery and hybrid cars took 26.6% of sales that month, running ahead of diesel cars, which had 26.2%. That is also a token of diesel’s steep decline after Volkswagen’s 2015 scandal involving diesel cars rigged to cheat on emissions tests.

Electric cars have so far been a small but rapidly growing slice of the European market.

Automakers in the EU must sell more zero-emission cars in order to meet tougher fleet average limits on emissions of carbon dioxide, the primary greenhouse gas blamed for climate change. Those limits came fully into effect on Jan. 1. Failure to achieve a fleet average of less than 95 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometer driven can mean heavy fines.

Sales have been driven by government incentives, and by an increasing number of new models that — like the ID.3 — were designed purely as electric cars, rather than being converted from internal combustion models.

Demand has been held back by lack of places to charge electric cars, including for people who live in apartment buildings and can’t install a charging box at home. Germany’s auto association, the VDA, said there’s only one publicly available charging station for every 17 electric cars.

California-based Tesla has been a major factor in the electric upswing with its Model 3 and its proprietary network of fast-charging stations.

Read all AP stories about climate change issues at <https://apnews.com/hub/Climate>.

Emergency imposed in Malaysia over virus is reprieve for PM

By EILEEN NG Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysia has declared a coronavirus emergency that will suspend Parliament at least until August and halt any bids to seek a general election, but critics charged it was a political move by embattled Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin to stay in power.

The palace said in a statement Tuesday that King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah consented Monday to Muhyiddin's proposal for an emergency until Aug. 1 to curb the virus spread, which has reached a critical level.

In a televised speech, Muhyiddin assured citizens that the emergency was "not a military coup and a curfew will not be enforced." He said his civilian government will remain in charge and that Malaysia is still "open for business."

The emergency declaration came just a day before millions of people in Malaysia's biggest city, Kuala Lumpur, the administrative capital, Putrajaya, and five high-risk states return to a near-lockdown for two weeks.

Opposition lawmakers, analysts and critics said the emergency appeared aimed at halting the collapse of Muhyiddin's government amid threats by the United Malays National Organization, the largest party in his ruling coalition, to withdraw support to force an early general election.

"If this is the true underlying reason, the declaration of a national emergency is not only an overkill but an abuse of executive power that places the country at great peril," according to a joint statement by activist groups and nongovernmental organizations.

Muhyiddin took power in March after instigating the collapse of the reformist alliance that won 2018 elections and joined with the opposition to form a Malay-centric government. But his government is shaky with a razor-thin majority in Parliament.

A second UMNO lawmaker, Nazri Aziz, announced later Tuesday that he would no longer support Muhyiddin. With more UMNO lawmakers expected to follow suit, he said the emergency was an admission of defeat by Muhyiddin. Many in the UMNO are unhappy that the party is playing second fiddle to Muhyiddin's own Malay party.

Muhyiddin said the national Parliament and all state legislatures will be suspended, and that no election is allowed during the period. He pledged to call a general election once the crisis has eased and it is safe to hold polls.

Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow at the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, said most people could understand the need for movement curbs but an emergency declaration appeared overblown as it is unclear how that could help slow the virus spread.

"It's very clearly a political move from the Muhyiddin side to preempt political challenges from both his rivals in his ruling coalition as well as the opposition," he said.

Malaysia last declared an emergency in 1969 after bloody racial riots that killed hundreds. The king, who can declare a state of emergency that allows the country to be governed through ordinances that cannot be challenged in court, had in October rejected Muhyiddin's request to declare an emergency.

King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah said at the time that existing laws were sufficient to halt the virus spread. But in a palace statement Tuesday, the monarch said he took into account public safety and the country's best interest as the pandemic has spiraled and parts of the country are struggling with floods that have displaced thousands.

The health ministry later Tuesday reported 3,309 new coronavirus cases, a new daily record, pushing the country's tally to 141,533, from just over 15,000 three months ago. The death toll also inched up to 559.

Muhyiddin, in announcing the lockdown Monday, warned that the country's healthcare system was at "breaking point." He said daily coronavirus cases, which have consistently breached 2,000 in recent weeks, could jump to 8,000 by the end of May if nothing is done. The health ministry also said it has identified

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the first case of a highly contagious U.K. variant in the country.

Separately, Home Minister Hamzah Zainuddin became the third Cabinet minister in days to test positive for the virus, his office said Tuesday.

Under the renewed curbs that start Wednesday, social gatherings and interstate travel are banned and movement is limited within a 10-kilometer (6-mile) radius, similar to a national lockdown last March. However, certain sectors in manufacturing, construction, services, trade and distribution, and plantations will be allowed to operate with strict guidelines.

Muhyiddin assured investors that the period of emergency will provide "much needed calm and stability, as well as enable us to focus on economic recovery and regeneration."

Josef Benedict, a researcher with rights group CIVICUS Monitor, said the emergency appeared to be another bid by Muhyiddin to "hold on to power, block elections and to remove parliamentary oversight" rather than seriously addressing the pandemic.

"A dark day for democracy," he tweeted.

The power of words in crisis: Who hits mark, and who misses?

By MICHAEL TACKETT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In moments of crisis, of war and terror, of loss and mourning, American leaders have sought to utter words to match the moment in hope that the power of oratory can bring order to chaos and despair.

Lincoln at Gettysburg. Franklin Roosevelt during the Depression and World War II. Reagan after the Challenger disaster. Bill Clinton after the Oklahoma City bombing. George W. Bush with a bullhorn at Ground Zero in 2001 and Barack Obama after the slaughter of congregants at a South Carolina church.

Each time, the speakers, Republican and Democrat, extemporaneously or with a script, managed to sound notes that brought at least a temporary sense of national unity and purpose.

"I really think there is something at the very core of our humanity that only words can satisfy," said Wayne Fields, author of "Union of Words: A History of Presidential Eloquence," and a professor at Washington University in St. Louis. "Almost as much as our need to be touched in the most desperate of circumstances is our need to be spoken to. Public despair in particular has to be literally addressed, I think, if it is to be overcome, must be articulated and then transcended."

In the aftermath of a violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, a cathedral of democracy, President Donald Trump did not meet that prescription. He scaled the walls of false equivalency and descended into the canyons of conspiracy.

He stirred the riotous mob with his "fight like hell" speech before his supporters marched to the Capitol, then delivered a tepid appeal for nonviolence, telling his supporters he loved them. This came well after the man voters chose to succeed him, President-elect Joe Biden, had summoned outrage, empathy and a sense of a path forward.

Trump has never been much for the big speech. Those he has given, like his Oval Office address about the pandemic in March, contained more than one large error. His preferred medium was Twitter, where his 280-characters-at-a-time rhetoric was a study in hortatory rather than oratory. And by Friday, Twitter had shut down his account permanently.

The oratory of crisis typically consists of either a formal statement or an extemporaneous speech. Bush's initial speech after 9/11 was not particularly well received. But his appearance in the rubble of the World Trade Center bombing was considered one of his finest moments, in which he found just the right words when speaking to rescue workers who said, "I can't hear you."

Using a bullhorn, Bush responded: "I can hear you! I can hear you! The rest of the world hears you. And the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon."

Other presidents have made more direct appeals for healing. Ronald Reagan, poised to deliver a State of the Union address, had to pivot to address the national tragedy of the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger, and the loss of its crew of seven, including the teacher Christa McAuliffe.

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"I know it is hard to understand, but sometimes painful things like this happen," Reagan said. "It's all part of the process of exploration and discovery. It's all part of taking a chance and expanding man's horizons. The future doesn't belong to the fainthearted; it belongs to the brave. The Challenger crew was pulling us into the future, and we'll continue to follow them."

Clinton was known for his feel-your-pain persona, on display after the Oklahoma City bombing. "You have lost too much, but you have not lost everything," he said. "And you have certainly not lost America, for we will stand with you for as many tomorrows as it takes."

After the killing of congregants at Mother Emanuel church in Charleston, South Carolina, Obama sang the hymn "Amazing Grace" and also challenged the nation. "At some point," he said, "we as a country will have to reckon with the fact that this type of mass violence does not happen in other advanced countries. It doesn't happen in other places with this kind of frequency. And it is in our power to do something about it."

Unlike Trump, Biden was unsparing in his remarks after the insurrection at the Capitol about where blame lay. "They weren't protesters," Biden said. "Don't dare call them protesters. They were a riotous mob, insurrectionists, domestic terrorists. It's that basic. It's that simple."

But Biden also promised a better day ahead, saying that the rioters did not represent the "true America."

"Oratory in such times, just by being composed at a time when things are falling apart, reassures and opens a door for positive responses and for hope," Fields said. "Ironically, in being spoken to we can be reassured that we are being heard, that the fears and emotions we have been too distressed to compose, can be articulated, can be expressed."

Most times, presidents themselves don't write the words that are most remembered, but their speechwriters know their voice and sentiments. Obama and Clinton heavily edited their speeches; Lincoln wrote many of his own. The most memorable words from Trump's inaugural address were about the need to end an "American carnage" that existed mostly in his own mind.

Soon, Biden's words will be the ones the nation examines. He has a mixed history with oratory. His first presidential campaign ended largely because he appropriated language from a British politician, Neil Kinnock, a literary theft that today seems almost benign. But Biden even then, in 1987, was also known for his ability to use words, albeit sometimes too many of them.

The president-elect is fond of both lofty rhetoric spoken with an eye to history and the common language of the union hall. He will need to summon both in the days ahead, navigating the fractious end to the Trump presidency and imploring the nation to turn the page.

The word crisis has its origins in the Greek language. Loosely translated, it means the stage of a disease where one lives or dies. It can be overused in the modern context, but few would argue the American democracy is not facing one. The challenge for crisis oratory is to not underplay the severity of the problem or foster a new sense of panic.

The most effective oratory has, at its core, a sense of authenticity, which plays to Biden's strength.

"Words matter. Words can explain, inspire, console, and heal. In the past, presidents have tried to do these things, with various degrees of success," said John J. Pitney, a professor of politics at Claremont McKenna College, adding: "Trump is unique in that he has made things much worse."

Michael Tackett, deputy Washington bureau chief for The Associated Press, has been covering politics and government since 1986. Follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/tackettDC>

Ireland to apologize for abuses in unwed mothers' homes

LONDON (AP) — The Irish government is poised to make a formal apology for abuses in church-run homes for unmarried women and their babies, where thousands of infants died and were sometimes buried in mass graves.

The final report of an inquiry into the mother-and-baby homes is to be published Tuesday. Prime Minister Micheal Martin is expected to apologize on behalf of the Irish state later in the week.

The Sunday Independent newspaper, which disclosed leaked details of the report, said it found that

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9,000 children died in 18 different homes during the 20th century. One in seven of all children born in the homes died, far above Ireland's nationwide infant mortality rate.

Church-run homes in Ireland housed orphans, unmarried pregnant women and their babies for most of the 20th century. The institutions have been subject to intense public scrutiny since historian Catherine Corless in 2014 tracked down death certificates for nearly 800 children who died at the former Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home in Tuam, County Galway — but could only find a burial record for one child.

Investigators later found a mass grave containing the remains of babies and young children in an underground sewage structure on the grounds of the home, which was run by an order of Catholic nuns and closed in 1961.

The last of Ireland's mother-and-baby homes did not shut down until the late 1990s.

The inquiry is part of a process of reckoning in overwhelmingly Roman Catholic Ireland to come to terms with a history of abuses in church-run institutions, including the shunning and shaming of unwed mothers, many of whom were pressured into giving up their babies for adoption.

Bodies pile up at crematorium in Germany's virus hot spot

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

MEISSEN, Germany (AP) — The caskets are stacked three high in the Meissen crematorium's somber memorial hall, piled up in empty offices and stored in hallways. Many are sealed with plastic wrapping, others are labeled "infection risk," "urgent" or simply "COVID."

A surge of coronavirus deaths in this corner of eastern Germany has boosted business for crematorium manager Joerg Schaldach and his staff, but nobody is celebrating.

"The situation is a little bit tense for us at the moment," Schaldach said as another undertaker's van pulled up outside.

The crematorium would typically have 70 to 100 caskets on site at this time of year, when the flu season takes its toll on the elderly.

"It's normal for more people to die in winter than in summer," said Schaldach. "That's always been the case."

Now he has 300 bodies waiting to be cremated and each day dozens more are delivered to the modernist building on a hill overlooking Meissen, an ancient town better known for its delicate porcelain and impressive Gothic castle.

On Monday, Meissen county once again took the unwanted lead in Germany's COVID-19 tables, with an infection rate three times the national average. The state of Saxony, where Meissen is located, includes six of the 10 worst-hit counties in Germany.

Schaldach says the crematorium is doing its best to keep up with demand, firing up the twin furnaces every 45 minutes and managing 60 cremations a day.

"The ashes still end up in the right urn," he said.

But whereas staff would normally try to ensure the deceased look good for relatives to bid their final farewells, infection rules now mean the caskets of COVID victims have to remain shut throughout, making the entire process even harder for those involved.

"It's our business, we've seen death many, many times," said Schaldach. "The problem we see is that the grieving relatives need our help. And at the moment, there's a greater need for words of consolation because they've given their deceased loved one to the ambulance and then they never see them again."

Some have linked Saxony's high infection rate to wider anti-government sentiment in a state where over a quarter voted for the far-right Alternative for Germany party at the last national election. Its lawmakers have objected to the need to wear masks, limits on people gathering and the closure of stores. A few have even denied the existence of a pandemic outright.

Other commentators have noted the state's large number of elderly and its reliance on nursing home workers from the neighboring Czech Republic, where COVID-19 infections are even higher.

Officials in Meissen, including the head of the county administration, the local doctors association and

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the lawmaker representing the region in parliament, an ally of Chancellor Angela Merkel, all declined to be interviewed about the situation.

Saxony's governor, Michael Kretschmer, acknowledged in a recent interview with daily Freie Presse that he had underestimated the impact of the pandemic in his state and paid too much attention to those calling for businesses and schools to remain open.

A video showing Kretschmer talking to anti-lockdown protesters outside his home Sunday ends with him walking away after one person dons a mask made to look like the German Imperial War Flag, a symbol favored by far-right extremists.

Schaldach, the crematorium manager, says most people in Saxony accept the rules. But he, too, has read comments on social media branding reports about bodies piling up at his crematorium as fake news.

"Those who believe in conspiracy theories can't be helped. We don't want to debate with them," he told The Associated Press. "They have their beliefs and we have our knowledge."

Down in Meissen, the streets are empty, devoid of the usual tourists or even the bustle of locals.

Franziska Schlieter runs a gourmet food store in the historic city center that's among the few allowed to stay open amid the lockdown. Her store, which has been run by five generations of her family, is being sustained by a trickle of regulars buying lottery cards and gift baskets.

"In the Bible, God sent people plagues when they didn't behave," said Schlieter, who feels easing the lockdown over Christmas was a mistake. "Sometimes I have to think of that."

On the cobblestone square, Matthias Huth tends a lone food truck outside his shuttered restaurant. He defends those who have questioned the government's COVID-19 restrictions, but says skepticism shouldn't justify denial.

"Conversations are starting to change," Huth said as he served up a dish of chopped blood sausage, sauerkraut and mash known locally as 'Dead Grandma.' "Everyone wants it to be over."

Kerstin Sopke contributed to this report.

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

In Greek city, segregated graves extend COVID-19 isolation

By COSTAS KANTOURIS Associated Press

THESSALONIKI, Greece (AP) — Even after death, COVID-19 victims endure harrowing isolation in Thessaloniki, the city in Greece most acutely affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Efcharis Gunseer, 84, couldn't see her daughter during any part of a losing battle with the virus, not at the nursing home where she first became ill or at the hospital where she spent several weeks. The staff of the overwhelmed intensive care ward also was too busy to set up phone calls, the daughter said.

When Gunseer died in late August, her body was wrapped in two plastic bags and placed in a shrink-wrapped casket. Under rules set by city authorities, she wasn't buried next to her late husband but in a section of a cemetery reserved for people infected with the virus. Her grave remains off-limits to visitors.

"I think to die alone that way is the worst thing that can happen," daughter Mikaela Triandafyllidou, 45, told The Associated Press. "I only saw my mother for a moment, from a distance at the morgue for identification....People are dying with no one there for them, like dogs."

More than 300 people have been buried so far in the segregated plots, according to Thessaloniki officials.

Greece suffered an alarming setback in late October when the country's eight-month run of low infections abruptly ended and hospital wards were pushed to capacity. Thessaloniki, Greece's second-largest city, and neighboring areas in the north of the country bore the brunt of the surge. For weeks, the city reported a higher daily number of new cases than Athens, despite having a population roughly one-quarter the size.

The emergency at the city's hospitals was matched at the two Thessaloniki cemeteries where pandemic victims are buried and rows of graves stand freshly dug to help keep funerals short. Flimsy white crosses

and small plywood signs mark the graves.

In Greece, where most cemeteries are overcrowded, remains are typically removed after three years of burial and taken to an ossuary, but coronavirus victims will remain buried for 10 years.

Giorgos Avarlis, the deputy mayor of Thessaloniki, said authorities worry that the body bags and casket covers might slow down how quickly the bodies of pandemic victims decompose.

"It is strictly forbidden to bury them anywhere else," Avarlis said. He noted that people who died of sexually transmitted diseases used to be buried in reserved sections of cemeteries, a practice abandoned decades ago.

Scientific opinion about the posthumous danger posed by COVID-19 is divided. Coroners wear full protective gear when carrying out autopsies on people who were infected, citing studies indicating the virus remains posthumously in the respiratory system, respiratory secretions, feces and blood.

Yet Symeon Metallidis, an assistant professor of internal medicine and infectious diseases at the University of Thessaloniki, thinks the cemetery precautions are mostly unnecessary.

"I find it absurd to do this. It makes no sense," Metallidis said. "There is no evidence of transmission of the virus after death, nor is there any reason for them to be buried for 10 years."

At Thessaloniki's Evosmos cemetery, an Orthodox Christian priest stands under a small black marquee waiting to conduct funeral services, while gravediggers and pallbearers wearing white coveralls handle the burials.

Chrysanthi Botsari, 69, recently lost her 75-year-old husband to the virus. She said she was never officially told where his burial in late November would take place and had to pursue the information herself.

"We didn't know where they would take him. They just told us it should not be in the cemeteries where other people are buried because of the coronavirus," Botsari said.

"To me, that is unacceptable, inhuman," the widow said. "All these people died alone and helpless."

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Probe highlights Vatican legal system's limited protections

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — A criminal investigation into a Vatican real estate investment is exposing weaknesses in the city state's judicial system and a lack of some basic protections for those accused — highlighting the incompatibility of the Holy See's procedures with European norms.

The Vatican has never been a democracy, but the incongruity of a government that is a moral authority on the global stage and yet an absolute monarchy is becoming increasingly evident. The pope is supreme judge, legislator and executive, who holds the ultimate power to hire and fire officials, judges and prosecutors and make and waive laws and regulations.

One longtime papal adviser who quit all his Holy See consulting roles to protest what he considered grave human rights violations in the probe of the 350 million-euro London real estate investment spelled out his reasoning in emails to the Vatican's No. 2 official that were obtained by The Associated Press.

If nothing is done, wrote Marc Odendall, "the Holy See will no longer be able to integrate itself in the system of civilized countries and will return to a universe reserved to totalitarian states."

The investigation burst into public awareness on Oct. 1, 2019, when the pope's bodyguards raided the Vatican secretariat of state — the offices of the central government of the Holy See — and the Vatican's financial watchdog authority, known as AIF. Pope Francis personally authorized the raids after a trusted ally alerted Vatican prosecutors of suspicions about the investment.

The investigation has been portrayed as a sign that Francis is cracking down on corruption. And there is

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evidence of at least financial mismanagement by Vatican officials, since they agreed to pay Italian middlemen tens of millions of euros in fees.

But the suspects say Francis was at least aware of the payment and that top Holy See leaders authorized it. A lawyer for one even contended that the pope himself approved it.

The Vatican prosecutor's office denied to AP that Francis authorized the money, but acknowledged that he did join a meeting of people negotiating the final stages of the deal in which "he asked them to find a solution with the good will of all."

The prosecutors also said the deputy secretary of state, Monsignor Edgar Pena Parra, similarly wasn't a suspect because he "was not informed" about what his subordinates were up to, though even the prosecutors' own documentation suggests he was. In fact, no senior leaders are known to be under investigation.

The case has highlighted the limitations of the Vatican law, which is based on an 1889 Italian code no longer in use and greatly curbs the rights of defendants during the investigative phase compared to modern legal systems.

For instance, Francis authorized Vatican prosecutors to use a "summary rite" that allowed them to deviate from typical procedures, essentially giving them carte blanche to interrogate and conduct searches and seizures without oversight by an investigating judge, defense lawyers say.

"It's a phase that's completely in the hands of the prosecutors," said Laura Sgro, who has defended clients before the Vatican tribunal but is not involved in this case. "It's a phase that doesn't foresee the most minimal right to defense."

It took months for the suspects to even be able to tell their side of the story to prosecutors, despite having their names and photos, displayed on a Vatican police circular, leaked to the media. Their lawyers have had no access to the documentation in the case. They never received a list of the material seized or had the chance to contest the seizures before a judge, as would be required in Italy. To date no one has been indicted.

The prosecutors insist the rights of the accused have been safeguarded, and that the pope had to order the "summary rite" because of a technicality owing to the old code in use.

But Paolo Carozza, a member of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission, which promotes democracy, rule of law and human rights, said there appeared to be red flags with the case, starting with the search warrant, though he acknowledged he wasn't familiar with particulars.

"I think it (is) self-evidently not compatible with the basic standards of procedural justice that would be applied in other European legal systems," said Carozza, a law professor at the University of Notre Dame and former member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. "There needs to be specific causes for specific searches of specific things... And then there needs to be an accounting afterward, certainly, and an opportunity to contest things."

Kurt Martens, a canon lawyer who works in the Vatican's other justice system for church crimes, was more blunt: "This is what you have in a banana republic."

Further complicating their defense, once a ruling is made, the accused have no recourse outside the Vatican system, since the Holy See isn't a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights, which allows defendants to petition the European court in Strasbourg.

Italian political affairs commentator Ernesto Galli della Loggia referred to the lack of safeguards in a recent front-page column in leading daily *Corriere della Sera*.

"How is this compatible with the right of every person to know the accusations that are made against them, to know the motivations and have a just trial by independent judges?" he asked. He was referring to the case of a cardinal implicated in the deal whom Francis summarily fired on unrelated allegations, but his point applies more broadly.

Questions about the lack of a separation of powers in the Vatican and independence of its judicial system have cropped up before. In one famous case, prosecutors decided to not even investigate the cardinal whose Vatican apartment was renovated using a half-million dollars in donations for the pope's children's hospital. The hospital president who diverted the funds was convicted by the Vatican tribunal.

More recently, Francis summarily lifted the statute of limitations in a criminal sex abuse case — with no

chance for the accused priest to contest the decision.

When the Vatican prosecuted two journalists in 2015 for reporting on confidential Vatican documents, media watchdogs denounced the trial as an assault on press freedom. The journalists, who described a "Kafka-esque investigation, were ultimately cleared after the tribunal declared at the end of the trial it never had jurisdiction over them.

The Vatican has long defended its legal system as sound, but Odendall, the papal adviser who quit in protest over the raids, has repeatedly told top Vatican officials that the current probe is exposing the Holy See to institutional and reputational damage.

Odendall warned the secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, in November of a public relations "time bomb that risks exploding if the unacceptable situation of the Holy See's judicial system becomes public."

It already has. Next week lawyers for an Italian woman sought by Vatican prosecutors as part of the probe will argue against her extradition in an Italian court.

One possible argument at their disposal: that since there is no extradition treaty between Italy and the Vatican, Italian law precludes sending any Italian to a country that doesn't guarantee the "fundamental rights" to a fair trial.

Pandemic restrictions a business boon for some Iraqi women

By ABDULRAHMAN ZEYAD Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Fatima Ali was in her final year studying to become a medical analysis specialist when Iraq imposed a full lockdown in March. Forced by a raging pandemic to stay home, she spent her days on social media, looking for something to do with her time.

Then an idea came to her: Six years ago, visiting America on a young leaders exchange program, she and other students toured a Vermont cheese factory where aged cheese platters were displayed on wooden boards so inviting they looked like paintings.

"I liked it ... I said to myself, why not be the first to do it in Baghdad?" She took a free online business course and researched cheeses and wooden plates available in the Iraqi capital.

Months later, 22-year-old Ali is successfully marketing her cheese boards, making a small but steady income and garnering over 2,000 Instagram followers.

A growing number of Iraqi women are using pandemic restrictions to establish home-based businesses. It's a way to bypass discrimination and harassment that often come with working in Iraq's male-dominated, conservative society — and bring in extra income as the economy worsens.

On a recent day in her kitchen, Ali cut up and arranged cheeses, dried fruit and nuts as she talked about her further dreams. She wants to go to culinary school abroad and one day open a school in Iraq for those "who have passion for cooking, like me."

"This is just the beginning. I'm still developing myself," she said. The slogan on her purple T-shirt declared, "You Have to Love Yourself."

Rawan Al-Zubaidi, a business partner at an Iraqi NGO that supports start-ups and young entrepreneurs, said there's been a noticeable increase in home-based businesses since the pandemic's start, including women making food deliveries, sweets, accessories, crocheting and embroidering.

"It represents a solution to obstacles that Iraqi women face when trying to find a job," she said, citing women whose husbands or fathers won't let them work, unsupportive male colleagues, discrimination and lack of career growth opportunities.

"Some Iraqi women can't find a job because conservative families or husbands consider that women talking directly with other men on the job will bring shame on them," Rawan said.

Women's labor force participation in Iraq is particularly low. As of 2018, only 12.3% of women of working age were employed or looking for work, according to the United Nations.

Tamara Amir, who manages a Facebook page to educate Iraqi women about their rights, said she receives dozens of calls each day from women facing sexual harassment at work. Often, they report feeling they have to give their male boss "something in return" to get a job or advancement.

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Ali's parents have been supportive of her home-based business, which she says is more secure and means she does not have to go outside and mix with people. Her mother helps her prepare her products, and Ali teamed up with a popular delivery app.

At first, she received two orders a week maximum. Now she can barely keep up with the multiple orders she gets every day.

Mariam Khzarjian, a 31-year-old Iraqi-Armenian, worked as an executive assistant in an engineering company for seven years. She quit in late 2018, feeling her career was going nowhere, and started her own home business selling handmade accessories inspired by her ancestors, who used to work as carpenters.

She called her business Khzar — Armenian for the art of cutting metals and woods — with the slogan "wear a story," since Khzar designs are based on telling stories and building emotional communication with the clients.

She got off to a slow start. Distractions got in the way. But the pandemic forced her to focus, working on new designs and techniques during curfews. The move toward online shopping helped her business take off in a way she could not have imagined.

"Online became the only way to reach clients, and they in turn became more loyal and more confident about my art, because they are buying something without trying it," Khzarjian said.

"Corona is terrible, but for those able to take advantage of the internet and build connections with customers, it had its positive side," she said.

Sara al-Nedawi, 23, studied business administration and has tried to find a job for months.

"One day I sent my CV to a company, and they texted me to ask if I was pretty and whether I wear the hijab or not," she said, referring to the headscarf worn by some Muslim women. Someone from another company she applied to called her to get more information, then told her she has a lovely voice and asked for a photo.

Now she is trying to start a home-based food-catering business but lacks the capital.

"I need to work first to collect enough money," she said.

Leading human rights group calls Israel an 'apartheid' state

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — A leading Israeli human rights group has begun describing both Israel and its control of the Palestinian territories as a single "apartheid" regime, using an explosive term that the country's leaders and their supporters vehemently reject.

In a report released Tuesday, B'Tselem says that while Palestinians live under different forms of Israeli control in the occupied West Bank, blockaded Gaza, annexed east Jerusalem and within Israel itself, they have fewer rights than Jews in the entire area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

"One of the key points in our analysis is that this is a single geopolitical area ruled by one government," said B'Tselem director Hagai El-Ad. "This is not democracy plus occupation. This is apartheid between the river and the sea."

That a respected Israeli organization is adopting a term long seen as taboo even by many critics of Israel points to a broader shift in the debate as its half-century occupation of war-won lands drags on and hopes for a two-state solution fade.

Peter Beinart, a prominent Jewish-American critic of Israel, caused a similar stir last year when he came out in favor of a single binational state with equal rights for Jews and Palestinians. B'Tselem does not take a position on whether there should be one state or two.

Israel has long presented itself as a thriving democracy in which Palestinian citizens, who make up about 20% of its population of 9.2 million, have equal rights. Israel seized east Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 war — lands that are home to nearly 5 million Palestinians and which the Palestinians want for a future state.

Israel withdrew troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005 but imposed a blockade after the militant Hamas group seized power there two years later. It considers the West Bank "disputed" territory whose fate

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should be determined in peace talks. Israel annexed east Jerusalem in 1967 in a move not recognized internationally and considers the entire city its unified capital. Most Palestinians in east Jerusalem are Israeli "residents," but not citizens with voting rights.

B'Tselem argues that by dividing up the territories and using different means of control, Israel masks the underlying reality — that roughly 7 million Jews and 7 million Palestinians live under a single system with vastly unequal rights.

"We are not saying that the degree of discrimination that a Palestinian has to endure is the same if one is a citizen of the state of Israel or if one is besieged in Gaza," El-Ad said. "The point is that there isn't a single square inch between the river and the sea in which a Palestinian and a Jew are equal."

Israel's harshest critics have used the term "apartheid" for decades, evoking the system of white rule and racial segregation in South Africa that was brought to an end in 1994. The International Criminal Court defines apartheid as an "institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group."

"There is no country in the world that is clearer in its apartheid policies than Israel," said Nabil Shaath, a senior adviser to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. "It is a state based on racist decisions aimed at confiscating land, expelling indigenous people, demolishing homes and establishing settlements."

In recent years, as Israel has further entrenched its rule over the West Bank, Israeli writers, disillusioned former generals and politicians opposed to its right-wing government have increasingly adopted the term.

But until now B'Tselem, which was established in 1989, had only used it in specific contexts.

Israel adamantly rejects the term, saying the restrictions it imposes in Gaza and the West Bank are temporary measures needed for security. Most Palestinians in the West Bank live in areas governed by the Palestinian Authority, but those areas are surrounded by Israeli checkpoints and Israeli soldiers can enter at any time. Israel has full control over 60% of the West Bank.

Itay Milner, a spokesman for Israel's consulate general in New York, dismissed the B'Tselem report as "another tool for them to promote their political agenda," which he said was based on a "distorted ideological view." He pointed out that Arab citizens of Israel are represented across the government, including the diplomatic corps.

Eugene Kontorovich, director of international law at the Jerusalem-based Kohelet Policy Forum, says the fact that the Palestinians have their own government makes any talk of apartheid "inapplicable," calling the B'Tselem report "shockingly weak, dishonest and misleading."

Palestinian leaders agreed to the current territorial divisions in the Oslo accords in the 1990s, and the Palestinian Authority is recognized as a state by dozens of nations. That, Kontorovich says, is a far cry from the territories designated for Black South Africans under apartheid — known as bantustans — to which many Palestinians compare the areas governed by the PA.

Kontorovich said the use of the word "apartheid" was instead aimed at demonizing Israel in a way that "resonates with racial sensitivities and debates in America and the West."

Alon Pinkas, a former Israeli consul general in New York, rejects the term. "Occupation, yes. Apartheid, absolutely not."

But he acknowledged that critics of Israel who had refrained from using the term, or who had used it and been attacked, "will now conveniently say, 'Hey, you know, Israelis are saying it themselves.'"

Rabbi Rick Jacobs, head of the Union for Reform Judaism, which estimates its reach at more than 1.5 million people in 850 congregations across North America, says the situation in the West Bank and Gaza is a "moral blight" and an "occupation," but not apartheid.

"What goes along with saying that, to many in the international community, is that therefore Israel has no right to exist," he said. "If the accusation is apartheid, that is not simply a strong critique, it's an existential critique."

El-Ad points to two recent developments that altered B'Tselem's thinking.

The first was a contentious law passed in 2018 that defines Israel as the "nation-state of the Jewish people." Critics say it downgraded Israel's Palestinian minority to second-class citizenship and formalized

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the widespread discrimination they have faced since Israel's founding in 1948. Supporters say it merely recognized Israel's Jewish character and that similar laws can be found in many Western countries.

The second was Israel's announcement in 2019 of its intention to annex up to a third of the occupied West Bank, including all of its Jewish settlements, which are home to nearly 500,000 Israelis. Those plans were put on hold as part a normalization agreement reached with the United Arab Emirates last year, but Israel has said the pause is only temporary.

B'Tselem and other rights groups argue that the boundaries separating Israel and the West Bank vanished long ago — at least for Israeli settlers, who can freely travel back and forth, while their Palestinian neighbors require permits to enter Israel.

There have been no substantive peace talks in more than a decade. The occupation, which critics have long warned is unsustainable, has endured for 53 years.

"Fifty years plus, that's not enough to understand the permanence of Israeli control of the occupied territories?" El-Ad said. "We think that people need to wake up to reality, and stop talking in future terms about something that has already happened."

Unstoppable Tide: Alabama routs Ohio St for national title

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — The celebration was at once familiar and unique. The confetti cannons sent a crimson and white shower into the air and Alabama players ran to the sideline to grab their championship hats and T-shirts.

It's a rite of passage if you have played for the Crimson Tide under coach Nick Saban.

This time, though, the band playing the fight song was a piped-in recording, and when "Sweet Home Alabama" blared, only a few thousand Tide fans were still in the stadium to sing along.

The final game of a college football season in a pandemic, a season that was uncertain to be played in the summer and filled with disruptions in the fall, ended in the most predictable fashion: Alabama as national champion for the sixth time in the last 12 years under Saban.

DeVonta Smith was uncoverable, Najee Harris unstoppable and Mac Jones impeccable as the top-ranked Tide won the College Football Playoff national championship game 52-24 against No. 3 Ohio State on Monday night. They finished the year 13-0 — a full season when many wondered if it would be possible to play any.

"I think we're the best team to ever play," Jones said.

For Saban, it was career title No. 7 overall, breaking a tie with Alabama great Paul "Bear" Bryant for the most by a major college coach.

"To me this is the ultimate team," Saban said. "There is more togetherness on this team than on almost any team we've ever had. They've had to overcome and to persevere so much through this season, and they have done it magnificently."

Ohio State (7-1) just couldn't keep up. Justin Fields, playing what might be his last game before heading to the NFL, passed for 194 yards and a touchdown. Whether Fields was 100% after taking a brutal hit to the side during his brilliant semifinal performance against Clemson was hard to know for sure.

"I was able to be out there," was all the junior quarterback would say.

On the Buckeyes' first drive, they lost star running back Trey Sermon to an injury, and in a game they needed to be running at top speed, facing one of great offenses in recent history, they sputtered too much. Ohio State has never allowed more points in a bowl game.

"I think there's a feeling of, if you don't score you're going to get behind and then the pressure mounts," Buckeyes coach Ryan Day said of facing the Tide's prolific offense.

Fans can debate which team in the Saban dynasty is best, but none will be more memorable than this group.

"Everybody is so together," Smith said. "People last year said the dynasty was over. We don't stop. We just keep reloading."

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After going a whole two seasons without winning a national title, the Tide finished perfect during a season that could not have been further from it. COVID-19 forced teams into quarantines and endless testing and uncertainty every single week with games played in mostly empty stadiums.

"To me this team accomplished more than almost any team," Saban said. "No disrespect to other teams we had but this team won 11 SEC games. No other team has done that. They won the SEC and went undefeated in the SEC and then they beat two great teams in the playoffs with no break. I think there's going to be quite a bit to write about the legacy of this team."

Only about 15,000 fans were at Hard Rock Stadium, capacity 65,326, to see the last magnificent performance of Smith's college career. The Heisman Trophy winner had catches for 12 catches for 215 yards and three touchdowns, all in the first half.

"Heaven knows what he would have done if he played the whole game," Saban said.

Using an array of motions and misdirections, outgoing offensive coordinator Steve Sarkisian had Ohio State heads spinning trying to track down Smith. At one point, he suddenly was matched up against a linebacker, whom he left in the dust for a 42-yard score to make it 35-17 with 41 seconds left in the second quarter.

Smith, who finished his freshman season by catching the 2017 national championship-winning touchdown pass from Tua Tagovailoa, ended his Alabama career as the leading career receiver in Southeastern Conference history and the most outstanding offensive player of his third title game.

As for Sarkisian, he is on his way to Texas as the head coach. Longhorns fans had to have liked what they saw. If only he could bring Smith and his fellow Heisman contenders to Austin.

Jones, who finished third in the Heisman voting, was 36 for 45 for a CFP championship-record 464 yards and five touchdowns. In one of maybe the most overlooked seasons a quarterback has ever played, Jones set a single-season record for passer efficiency rating at 203.

Harris, who was fifth in the Heisman race, had 158 yards from scrimmage on 29 touches, scoring three times to give him an SEC record 30 touchdowns this season.

Smith hardly played in the second half, leaving with an injury. He returned to the sideline in the fourth quarter with his right hand wrapped to the wrist, two fingers taped together, and wearing a Heisman mask.

Alabama hardly missed him and cracked 50 early in the fourth quarter when Harris went in untouched from a yard out.

Smith and Harris surprised some by returning to college after last season for their senior years.

Boy, did it turn out to be worthwhile. Along with Jones, another member of that 2017 recruiting class, they will leave Alabama as the leaders of a team that managed to make an arduous march from through the pandemic look easy.

"We all had a mission trying to end things the right way," Smith said. "We all went to work and it ended the way we wanted."

Follow Ralph D. Russo at <https://twitter.com/ralphDrussoAP> and listen at <https://westwoodonepodcasts.com/pods/ap-top-25-college-football-podcast/>

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Analysis: Trump abdicating in the job he fought to retain

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's days in office are numbered. But he's already stopped doing much of his job.

In the last three weeks, a bomb went off in a major city and the president said nothing about it. The coronavirus surged to horrifying new levels of illness and death in the U.S. without Trump acknowledging the awful milestones. A violent mob incited by the president's own words chanted for Mike Pence's lynching at the U.S. Capitol and Trump made no effort to reach out to his vice president.

Trump only belatedly ordered flags flown at half-staff to honor an officer who gave his life defending the

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Capitol, and couldn't be bothered to describe the officer's actions.

The transgressions, big and small — of norms, of leadership, of human decency — cast a pall over his final days in office, and, in the view of even close advisers speaking privately, have indelibly stained his legacy. A half-dozen current administration officials expressed dismay at the president's actions in recent weeks, speaking on the condition of anonymity because they are still working for Trump.

"Even after losing the election, President Trump had the opportunity to leave the White House with his head held high, celebrating achievements like the COVID-19 vaccine, progress in the Middle East, and the vibrant pre-pandemic economy fueled by tax reform," said GOP operative Michael Steel, a onetime aide to former House Speaker John Boehner.

"Instead, he chose to wallow in delusion and grievance, and — as a result — the defining images of his presidency will be a bloody, murderous mob looting the cathedral of our democracy, the United States Capitol," Steel said.

As the violence raged at the Capitol last Wednesday, Trump only reluctantly put out a pair of tweets appealing for calm at the insistence of aides. He followed it up with a presidential video on Thursday decrying the violence, apparently hoping to ward off potential legal exposure and efforts to remove him from office.

Now, as the FBI warns of armed protests across the nation and in Washington in the days leading up to President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, Trump has said nothing in recent days to tamp down passions or ensure his supporters do not again resort to violence.

At the same time, Trump has continued to spread lies about election fraud, about his political opponent and about members of his own party. After the Nov. 3 vote, he retreated into a bunker of his own delusion, unable or unwilling to concede defeat, and dragged millions with him.

Two months later, aides are still struggling to convince Trump to make an effort to showcase and salvage his achievements in office, with limited success.

He agreed to travel to Texas on Tuesday to view the U.S.-Mexico border wall one final time in office. But he has yet to sign off on a proposal from aides for him to deliver remarks in his final week in office highlighting the development of coronavirus vaccines and his efforts to boost military funding.

It remains unlikely that Trump will deliver a farewell speech before leaving office, a tradition for departing presidents.

Trump's actions have cost him his megaphone, as social media companies suspended him from their platforms citing his provocative rhetoric. But Trump has made little effort to get his voice back, avoiding television interviews and interactions with reporters.

Instead, Trump has been stewing inside the White House, alternating between his private dining room off the Oval Office and the mansion's residence level, never far from a television set. Without Twitter or Facebook, he's used his phone to call an ever-shrinking circle of aides and allies to claim the role of the aggrieved.

Since the holidays, Trump has dictated that his daily public schedule — virtually devoid of any public events — include a bizarre affirmation that he is indeed on the job. "President Trump will work from early in the morning until late in the evening. He will make many calls and have many meetings."

The guidance has become a punchline in the White House, and close aides say it belies the truth: Trump effectively ceased acting like the president after the election, with his inability to focus on almost anything other than his defeat growing more pronounced as the weeks have passed.

Trump has not had an intelligence briefing on his schedule in months — though aides say he has sat for them sporadically. As the coronavirus has killed more than 375,000 Americans in the last year, he has done little publicly or privately to try to manage the raging pandemic. And weeks after one of the largest infiltrations of U.S. government computer networks was pinned on Russia, Trump's main response was to suggest it could have been China.

As Trump obsesses over his election loss and many of his defenders fade away, it has largely fallen to his dwindling cadre of White House aides to defend his record over the past four years and offer assurances the president is still on the job.

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"President Trump has rolled back government regulations, built the strongest, most inclusive economy in history, brought much-needed agency accountability, is bringing our troops home, developed a safe, effective vaccine in record time, and changed the way domestic and international deal-making is done so that the results actually help hardworking Americans," said Trump spokesman Judd Deere. "This important work continues along with rebuilding our economy and fulfilling the promises he made that has led to a safer, stronger, more secure America."

Trump himself has made little effort lately to make that argument.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Zeke Miller has covered the White House for The Associated Press since 2017.

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

Belichick won't get Presidential Medal of Freedom after all

By JIMMY GOLEN AP Sports Writer

New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick announced Monday night that he will not accept the Presidential Medal of Freedom, saying "remaining true to the people, team and country I love outweigh the benefits of any individual award."

In a delicately worded, one-paragraph statement, the six-time Super Bowl-winning coach did not say explicitly that he had turned down the offer from President Donald Trump, whom he has called a friend. Instead, Belichick explained, "the decision has been made not to move forward with the award" in the wake of last week's deadly siege on the U.S. Capitol.

A White House official said on Sunday, four days after the riots, that Trump would be awarding Belichick the nation's highest civilian honor — part of a late flurry of presentations that also included golfers Annika Sorenstam, Gary Player and the late Babe Zaharias.

Sorenstam and Player accepted their awards in a private ceremony the day after Trump supporters stormed the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Five people died in the mayhem, including U.S. Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick. Belichick was to be honored on Thursday.

"I was flattered ... out of respect for what the honor represents and admiration for prior recipients," the coach said in a statement, which was forwarded to The Associated Press by the Patriots.

"Subsequently, the tragic events of last week occurred and the decision has been made not to move forward with the award. Above all, I am an American citizen with great reverence for our nation's values, freedom and democracy. I know I also represent my family and the New England Patriots team."

Although he describes himself as apolitical, Belichick has waded into politics on occasion.

The architect of the Patriots dynasty wrote Trump a letter of support that the candidate read aloud the night before the 2016 election at a rally in New Hampshire, a bastion of the team's fandom.

Although Trump said the letter offered "best wishes for great results" on election day and "the opportunity to make America great again," Belichick said it was merely to support a friend.

Belichick also wore an Armenian flag pin to the White House in 2015 when the team celebrated its fourth Super Bowl victory — believed to be a sign of support for the team's director of football, Berj Najarian, who is of Armenian descent. Last month, Belichick called on the U.S. government to take action against Turkey and Azerbaijan for "unprovoked and violent attacks against Armenians."

In the aftermath of George Floyd's death this summer, Patriots players praised Belichick for providing an open forum for them to express their feelings on race and social injustice in America. In his statement on Monday, Belichick called that "one of the most rewarding things in my professional career."

"Through the great leadership within our team, conversations about social justice, equality and human rights moved to the forefront and became actions," he said. "Continuing those efforts while remaining true to the people, team and country I love outweigh the benefits of any individual award."

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

After frosty few days, Pence, Trump appear to reach détente

By JILL COLVIN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence appear to have come to a détente after nearly a week of silence, anger and finger-pointing.

The two met Monday evening in the Oval Office and had a “good conversation,” according to a senior administration official. It was their first time speaking since last Wednesday, when Trump incited his supporters to storm the Capitol building as Pence was presiding over certification of November’s election results. Pence and his family were forced into hiding.

During their conversation, the official said, Trump and Pence pledged to continue to work for “the remainder of their term” — a seeming acknowledgement that the vice president will not pursue efforts to try to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office with nine days left in his term.

While his office had not definitively ruled out invoking the amendment, Pence had signaled that he no intention of moving forward with that kind of challenge. The House is prepared to cast a vote Tuesday calling on Pence to invoke the amendment.

“The president represents an imminent threat to our Constitution, our Country and the American people, and he must be removed from office immediately,” said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. The House on Wednesday is expected to make Trump the first president in the nation’s history to be impeached a second time.

“We are further calling on the vice president to respond within 24 hours after passage,” Pelosi wrote. There is no mechanism that would force Pence to do so, making the move wholly symbolic.

Indeed, one person close to Pence said aides dismissed Democrats’ efforts to drag the vice president further into the fray as little more than a tactic aimed at damaging Pence’s political future. The person, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Even if Pence had been on board with the sentiment to remove Trump, the appetite for doing so has waned across the administration since last week. While three members of Trump’s Cabinet have resigned, not one has publicly called for Trump to be forcefully removed from office.

Most Cabinet-level agencies did not respond Monday when asked where their agency head stood on the matter. At Interior, spokesman Nicholas Goodwin said Secretary David Bernhardt did not support such a move. Housing Secretary Ben Carson tweeted that he had not discussed the possibility with anyone and was focused on “finishing what I started in uplifting the forgotten women and men of America.”

After four years of fealty to the mercurial Trump, studiously avoiding conflict and steadfastly refusing to discuss their disagreements publicly, the events of the last week have put Pence in a highly unusual spot.

Pence allies have expressed outrage over what they have described as a malicious attempt by the president to try to scapegoat the vice president by pressuring him to take the impossible step of trying to block certification of the November election results by invoking powers he did not possess. After days of behind-the-scenes arm-twisting, Trump repeatedly singled out Pence during his pre-riot rally, wrongly insisting the certification could be halted as it got underway.

Trump then continued to tweet that Pence “lacked courage” as the president’s supporters stormed the Capitol. Trump never bothered to check on the vice president’s safety as Pence spent hours in a secure holding area with his staff and family as the rioters chanted about wanting to hang him outside the Capitol doors.

Trump, for his part, was furious that Pence refused to go along with his scheme — raging about the decision behind closed doors.

But Trump and Pence apparently chosen to bury the hatchet — at least for the time being. The senior administration official said that, during their Oval Office meeting, Trump and Pence discussed the week ahead and reflected on their accomplishments over the last four years.

The two also “reiterated that those who broke the law and stormed the Capitol last week do not represent the America first movement backed by 75 million Americans, and pledged to continue the work on behalf of the country for the remainder of their term,” the official’s readout said.

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The official did not mention whether the disagreements between the men had been discussed.

There had been previous signs that Pence's refusal to defy the Constitution by blocking the electoral count did not mean he had an appetite for anything further. Pelosi said in an interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" that Pence refused to come to the phone when she and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer called to urge him to initiate 25th Amendment procedures.

"We were kept on the line for 20 minutes. 'He's going to be here in a minute, a minute, a minute.' Well, he never did come to the phone," she said. "I was at home, so I was running the dishwasher, putting my clothes in the laundry. We're still waiting for him to return the call."

Even with Trump still in place, Pence has taken on some of the roles of the executive as Trump retreats ever further into a world of anger and conspiracy and continues to rage about his fate.

Pence, for instance, was the one coordinating with lawmakers and the D.C. National Guard during the Capitol siege. And on Friday, he was the one who called the family of Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, who died of injuries sustained during the attack, to express condolences.

In the meantime, Pence has kept a low profile as he carries out his current job. The vice president led a coronavirus task force meeting at the White House on Monday and is expected to spend his remaining days focused on ensuring a peaceful transition of power to President-elect Joe Biden's incoming administration.

That includes attending the new president's inauguration, which Trump will be the first president since Andrew Johnson in 1869 to skip.

While the vice president will be present, an aide close to Biden's transition team said there was no expectation that Pence will play any major role in next Wednesday's program.

___ Associated Press writer Alexandra Jaffe contributed to this report.

House speeding to impeach Trump for Capitol 'insurrection'

By LISA MASCARO, BILL BARROW and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Poised to impeach, the House sped ahead with plans to oust President Donald Trump from office, warning he is a threat to democracy and pushing the vice president and Cabinet to act even more quickly in an extraordinary effort to remove Trump in the final days of his presidency.

Trump faces a single charge — "incitement of insurrection" — after the deadly Capitol riot in an impeachment resolution that the House will begin debating Wednesday.

At the same time, the FBI warned ominously Monday of potential armed protests in Washington and many states by Trump loyalists ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration Jan. 20. In a dark foreshadowing, the Washington Monument was closed to the public amid the threats of disruption. Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf abruptly resigned.

It all added up to stunning final moments for Trump's presidency as Democrats and a growing number of Republicans declare he is unfit for office and could do more damage after inciting a mob that violently ransacked the U.S. Capitol last Wednesday.

"President Trump gravely endangered the security of the United States and its institutions of Government," reads the four-page impeachment bill.

"He will remain a threat to national security, democracy, and the Constitution if allowed to remain in office," it reads.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is summoning lawmakers back to Washington for votes, and Democrats aren't the only ones who say Trump needs to go.

Republican Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania joined GOP Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska over the weekend in calling for Trump to "go away as soon as possible."

Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., encouraged House GOP colleagues late Monday to "vote your conscience," according to a person granted anonymity to discuss the private call. She has spoken critically of Trump's actions, but has not said publicly how she will vote.

Pending impeachment, Democrats called on Vice President Mike Pence and the Cabinet to invoke their constitutional authority under the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office before Inauguration Day.

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Their Democrats' House resolution was blocked by Republicans. However, the full House is to hold a roll call vote on it Tuesday, and it is expected to pass. After that, Pelosi said, Pence will have 24 hours to respond. Next would be the impeachment proceedings.

Pence has given no indication he is ready to proceed on a course involving the 25th Amendment.

He and Trump met late Monday for the first time since the Capitol attack, a senior administration official said.

Trump and Pence had a "good conversation" in the Oval Office discussing the week ahead, and they pledged to continue working for the remainder of their terms, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private meeting.

No member of the Cabinet has publicly called for Trump to be removed from office though the 25th Amendment.

As security tightened, Biden said Monday he was "not afraid" of taking the oath of office outside — as is traditionally done at the Capitol's west steps, one of the areas where people stormed the building.

As for the rioters, Biden said, "It is critically important that there'll be a real serious focus on holding those folks who engaged in sedition and threatening the lives, defacing public property, caused great damage -- that they be held accountable."

Biden said he's had conversations with senators ahead of a possible impeachment trial, which some have worried would cloud the opening days of his administration.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer was exploring ways to immediately convene the Senate for the trial as soon as the House acts, though Republican leader Mitch McConnell would need to agree. The president-elect suggested splitting the Senate's time, perhaps "go a half day on dealing with impeachment, a half day on getting my people nominated and confirmed in the Senate, as well as moving on the package" for more COVID relief.

As Congress briefly resumed Monday, an uneasiness swept government. More lawmakers tested positive for COVID-19 after sheltering during the siege. And new security officials were quickly installed after the Capitol police chief and others were ousted in fallout from the attack on the iconic dome of democracy. Some GOP lawmakers, including Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley, faced public blowback for their efforts on the day of the riot trying to overturn Biden's election.

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., offered the 25th Amendment resolution during Monday's brief session. It was blocked by Rep. Alex Mooney, R-W.Va., as other GOP lawmakers stood by him.

Pelosi said the Republicans were enabling Trump's "unhinged, unstable and deranged acts of sedition to continue. Their complicity endangers America, erodes our Democracy, and it must end."

However, House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy, a Trump ally, said in a letter to colleagues that "impeachment at this time would have the opposite effect of bringing our country together."

He said he would review possible censure of the president. But House Republicans are split and a few may vote to impeach.

The impeachment bill from Reps. David Cicilline of Rhode Island, Ted Lieu of California, Jamie Raskin of Maryland and and Jerrold Nadler of New York draws from Trump's own false statements about his election defeat to Biden.

Judges across the country, including some nominated by Trump, have repeatedly dismissed cases challenging the election results, and Attorney General William Barr, a Trump ally, has said there was no sign of widespread fraud.

The impeachment legislation also details Trump's pressure on state officials in Georgia to "find" him more votes, as well as his White House rally ahead of the Capitol siege, in which he encouraged thousands of supporters last Wednesday to "fight like hell" and march to the building.

The mob overpowered police, broke through security lines and windows and rampaged through the Capitol, forcing lawmakers to scatter as they were finalizing Biden's victory over Trump in the Electoral College.

While some have questioned impeaching the president so close to the end of his term, Democrats and

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others argue he must be held accountable and prevented from holding future public office. He would be the only president twice impeached.

House Democrats have been considering a strategy to delay for 100 days sending articles of impeachment to the Senate for trial, to allow Biden to focus on other priorities.

There is precedent for pursuing impeachment after an official leaves office. In 1876, during the Ulysses Grant administration, War Secretary William Belknap was impeached by the House the day he resigned, and the Senate convened a trial months later. He was acquitted.

Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., said he would take a look at any articles that the House sent over. Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., a frequent Trump critic, said he would "vote the right way" if the matter were put in front of him.

Cicilline, leader of the House effort, tweeted Monday that "we now have the votes to impeach," including 213 cosponsors and private commitments.

Barrow reported from Wilmington, Delaware. Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Jill Colvin, Ellen Knickmeyer, Tom Beaumont and Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

Law enforcement: We'll be ready for Joe Biden's inauguration

By COLLEEN LONG and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — This time, they'll be ready.

The inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden will be held on the same risers in the same spot at the U.S. Capitol where a violent, pro-Trump mob descended last week. But the two events aren't even comparable from a security standpoint, said Michael Plati, U.S. Secret Service special agent in charge, who is leading the inauguration security.

The inauguration is designated as a "national special security event," which clears the way for communication, funding and preparation between multiple agencies in Washington, like the Capitol Police, Pentagon, Homeland Security and District-area police. Other such events are the State of the Union, the Super Bowl and the Democratic and Republican National Conventions.

Last week's rally turned violent siege was viewed as a free speech event in the days before, despite multiple warnings about the potential for violence from right-wing extremist groups. Egged on by President Donald Trump and his repeated attempts to delegitimize Biden's win, the violent mob marched from the White House to the Capitol, where they occupied the building for hours to try to stop lawmakers from certifying Biden's win. Five people died, including a police officer. Two explosive devices were found, but they did not go off.

"I don't want to use the expression that we're comparing apples to oranges," Plati said, but the event is planned over a year with contingencies, and they anticipate the possibility of extreme violence.

Biden himself hasn't expressed concern about his own security at the inauguration.

"I'm not afraid of taking the oath outside," he told reporters Monday. "It is critically important that there'll be a real serious focus on holding those folks who engaged in sedition and threatening the lives, defacing public property, caused great damage -- that they be held accountable."

Law enforcement officials never go into too much detail about security so would-be attackers aren't tipped off. But Plati said they've taken into account the siege: "It's a poignant reminder of what can happen."

And the inauguration will look different from other presidential inaugurations because of last week's riot, with extremely tight security around the entire capital region. At least 10,000 National Guard troops will be in place by Saturday. Some will be obvious: officers in uniforms, checkpoints, metal detectors, fencing. Some won't.

"There's a variety of methods to ensure that we have a secure, seamless, safe environment for our protectees, but most importantly, the general public," Plati said.

Acting U.S. Capitol Police Chief Yogananda Pittman said in a statement Monday that officials have "comprehensive, coordinated plans" in place to ensure safety and security. She said the grounds of the Capitol

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will be closed to the public. The inauguration is a ticketed event.

The Department of Homeland Security is setting increased inauguration security measures in motion earlier than scheduled, citing an "evolving security landscape" leading up to the event.

Acting DHS Secretary Chad Wolf said Monday, just hours before he announced his resignation, that he's moved up the timing of the national special security event for Biden's inauguration to Wednesday, instead of Jan. 19. He cited the "events of the past week," along with an evolving security landscape.

Next week's event was already going to be pared down because of COVID-19; Biden had asked supporters to stay home and watch from afar. In keeping with crowd size restrictions to slow the spread of the virus, traditional activities like the parade and the inaugural balls will be virtual.

The theme for the event will be "America United," an issue that's long been a central focus for Biden but one that's taken on added weight.

In an announcement shared first with The Associated Press, the Presidential Inaugural Committee said that the theme "reflects the beginning of a new national journey that restores the soul of America, brings the country together, and creates a path to a brighter future."

In keeping with the theme of unity, the committee also announced that after Biden is officially inaugurated, he, Vice President Kamala Harris and their spouses will lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery and will be joined there by former Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton and their wives. It will be one of Biden's first acts as president, and a show of bipartisanship at a time when the national divide is on stark display.

Plati said they're prepared for the group to shift to Arlington — and for the possibility of threats to shift with them.

Trump is skipping Biden's inauguration, a decision Biden said was a "good thing," though Vice President Mike Pence and his wife plan to attend.

One of the main problems last week was a lack of coordination by multiple agencies in the district, which won't happen this time because those agencies have already been approved to work together and have been doing so for months, Plati said.

"We will have the adequate resourcing, personnel and plans in place," he said.

The National Park Service announced Monday that the Washington Monument would be closed until Jan. 24. But plans were still on for a major public art display spanning multiple blocks of the National Mall that will feature 191,500 U.S. flags and 56 pillars of light. The display is meant to symbolize every U.S. state and territory, and "the American people who are unable to travel" to the capital to celebrate.

Biden has focused on unity from the the start. And he's said repeatedly since winning the White House that he sees unifying the country as one of his top priorities as president. But the scope — and urgency — of the challenge Biden faces became even clearer after the Capitol siege.

"This inauguration marks a new chapter for the American people — one of healing, of unifying, of coming together, of an America united," said Tony Allen, CEO of the Presidential Inaugural Committee. "It is time to turn the page on this era of division. The inaugural activities will reflect our shared values and serve as a reminder that we are stronger together than we are apart, just as our motto 'e pluribus unum' reminds us — out of many, one."

Associated Press writer Bill Barrow in Newark, Del., contributed to this report.

EXPLAINER: Why National Guard's role was limited during riot

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and ROBERT BURNS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the aftermath of the deadly riot at the U.S. Capitol last week, questions are being raised about why the District of Columbia National Guard played such a limited role as civilian law enforcement officers were outnumbered and overrun.

The questions also highlight concern about the potential for violence to erupt again next week when President-elect Joe Biden is inaugurated at the Capitol, and whether the Guard should play a bigger or

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different role.

Use of the Guard, particularly in Washington, is a complicated process, tangled in an array of jurisdictional issues between city and federal agencies. The original plans called for having a small National Guard presence with a limited role.

When rioters ransacked the Capitol on Wednesday, it wasn't easy to quickly pivot to having a larger, more muscular force capable of backing up the embattled Capitol Police. Top city, defense, Capitol and law enforcement officials had to figure out what was needed and where it was needed. They also struggled to get the required approvals and then get the Guard members instructed, equipped and on their way.

A look at what slowed down the Guard's response and its role in the run-up to inauguration:

WHY DIDN'T THE GUARD MOVE FASTER?

Bottom line: It was a planning problem complicated by a logistical challenge. Once officials determined that more Guard were needed than original envisioned, it took time to put them in position.

About 340 members of the D.C. National Guard had been requested by Mayor Muriel Bowser. Because the District is not a state, the Defense Department has authority over the D.C. Guard, and that control is delegated to Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy. The Pentagon approved Bowser's request for Guard troops to support D.C. police for the protests.

Based on the agreement with D.C., the Guard members were deployed early last week to about 30 checkpoints and a half-dozen Metro entrances. The agreement stipulated that their deployment was restricted to traffic control and crowd issues, and they specifically were not to be armed or in riot gear.

The Capitol Police, who have authority over the Capitol grounds, repeatedly declined support from the Guard before Wednesday. Officials say they did not expect a huge, violent protest.

When the riot began Wednesday, the couple hundred D.C. Guard members already on the streets needed an explicit request from federal authorities to go to the Capitol, since that is federal jurisdiction. The Guard also needed approval from the Pentagon and new orders to change their mission. They then had to return to their armory to get riot gear and a briefing on what they would be doing at the Capitol.

The deployment discussions triggered complaints that the Pentagon delayed the Guard deployment. But defense officials defended the need for a careful, deliberate process.

"It's important that in the midst of a dire situation we have a clear plan and understand the task, purpose, and role of our Guardsman before we employ them," said Lt. Gen. Walter Piatt, director of the Army staff. "Creating shared understanding will prevent a complex and potentially dangerous situation from getting worse."

As that was happening, officials activated the entire D.C. Guard — 1,100 members. But Guard members who had not already been activated were, as usual, at their homes, their regular jobs or even in other states, and it took time for them to respond.

WHY COULDN'T THEY STORM THE CAPITOL?

Pentagon officials and other national and city leaders are very sensitive to the optics of the U.S. military appearing to arrest or lay hands on American citizens on U.S. soil. They prefer to leave law enforcement to federal, state and city police agencies.

Many are still stinging from the chaotic law enforcement response last June to Washington street protests over the killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis. Critics decried what they saw as an overly militarized approach to containing the problem. This was in part due to the military-style clothing worn by some federal law enforcement personnel.

With that in mind, the D.C. request last week largely limited the Guard to traffic control. They were not authorized to perform law enforcement duties.

In any state, Guard members may do law enforcement activities if needed and approved by the governor in a crisis. In most cases, however, Guard members are used to support law enforcement. As an example, last Wednesday police SWAT and other tactical units went into the Capitol to roust out the rioters, while the Guard fell in behind them and set up a security perimeter around the building to ensure no one else got in. Guard members did not enter the Capitol.

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The final caveat is that, in any dire circumstance, Guard members can do whatever is needed to protect their own lives or that of those around them.

WHAT IS THE GUARD'S ROLE IN THE COMING DAYS?

The Pentagon has already activated 10,000 Guard members for the next several weeks, and has authority to tap as many as 15,000. Officials said Monday that requests are coming in from the Secret Service, Park Police and Capitol Police for National Guard support, so the numbers are rapidly evolving.

McCarthy has said officials are considering allowing the Guard members to carry guns, but no decision has yet been made. The exact duties of the Guard members — and whether they will be allowed to do any policing activities — will be decided by each jurisdiction, based on its needs, and will be subject to approval by the Pentagon.

IS THERE A SECURITY ROLE FOR THE ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY?

The short answer is no.

The Pentagon has no intention of including active-duty forces in Inaugural Day security. Unlike the citizen-soldiers of the Guard, federal troops are legally prohibited from performing law enforcement duties unless a president invokes the Insurrection Act, which is not foreseen at this point. The intent is to avoid militarizing the security effort, which is primarily the responsibility of civilian agencies like the Metropolitan Police Department, the U.S. Park Police, the Secret Service and the Capitol Police.

Customarily, active-duty troops do, however, perform ceremonial roles on Inauguration Day such as providing marching bands, honor guards and escorts for distinguished guests.

In an unusual event, Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will — after being sworn into office — lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. Sentinels from the Army's "Old Guard" stand watch over the Tomb. Biden and Harris are to be joined there by former Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton and their wives.

26 missing, at least 13 dead in Indonesia landslides

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Rescuers are searching for 26 people still missing after two landslides hit a village in Indonesia's West Java province over the weekend, officials said Tuesday.

At least 13 people were killed and 29 others injured in the landslides that were triggered by heavy rain on Sunday in Cihanjuang, a village in West Java's Sumedang district. Some of the victims were rescuers from the first landslide.

The search and rescue operation has been hampered by rainy weather around the disaster site, said National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesperson Raditya Jati.

Seasonal rains and high tides in recent days have caused dozens of landslides and widespread flooding across much of Indonesia, a chain of 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near fertile flood plains close to rivers.

Law enforcement: We'll be ready for Joe Biden's inauguration

By COLLEEN LONG and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

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Last week's rally turned violent siege was viewed as a free speech event in the days before, despite multiple warnings about the potential for violence from right-wing extremist groups. Egged on by President

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Donald Trump and his repeated attempts to delegitimize Biden's win, the violent mob marched from the White House to the Capitol, where they occupied the building for hours to try to stop lawmakers from certifying Biden's win. Five people died, including a police officer. Two explosive devices were found, but they did not go off.

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"I'm not afraid of taking the oath outside," he told reporters Monday. "It is critically important that there'll be a real serious focus on holding those folks who engaged in sedition and threatening the lives, defacing public property, caused great damage -- that they be held accountable."

Law enforcement officials never go into too much detail about security so would-be attackers aren't tipped off. But Plati said they've taken into account the siege: "It's a poignant reminder of what can happen."

And the inauguration will look different from other presidential inaugurations because of last week's riot, with extremely tight security around the entire capital region. At least 10,000 National Guard troops will be in place by Saturday. Some will be obvious: officers in uniforms, checkpoints, metal detectors, fencing. Some won't.

"There's a variety of methods to ensure that we have a secure, seamless, safe environment for our protectees, but most importantly, the general public," Plati said.

Acting U.S. Capitol Police Chief Yogananda Pittman said in a statement Monday that officials have "comprehensive, coordinated plans" in place to ensure safety and security. She said the grounds of the Capitol will be closed to the public. The inauguration is a ticketed event.

The Department of Homeland Security is setting increased inauguration security measures in motion earlier than scheduled, citing an "evolving security landscape" leading up to the event.

DHS Secretary Chad Wolf said Monday, just hours before he announced his resignation, that he's moved up the timing of the national special security event for Biden's inauguration to Wednesday, instead of Jan. 19. He cited the "events of the past week," along with an evolving security landscape.

Next week's event was already going to be pared down because of COVID-19; Biden had asked supporters to stay home and watch from afar. In keeping with crowd size restrictions to slow the spread of the virus, traditional activities like the parade and the inaugural balls will be virtual.

The theme for the event will be "America United," an issue that's long been a central focus for Biden but one that's taken on added weight.

In an announcement shared first with The Associated Press, the Presidential Inaugural Committee said that the theme "reflects the beginning of a new national journey that restores the soul of America, brings the country together, and creates a path to a brighter future."

In keeping with the theme of unity, the committee also announced that after Biden is officially inaugurated, he, Vice President Kamala Harris and their spouses will lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery and will be joined there by former Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton and their wives. It will be one of Biden's first acts as president, and a show of bipartisanship at a time when the national divide is on stark display.

Plati said they're prepared for the group to shift to Arlington — and for the possibility of threats to shift with them.

Trump is skipping Biden's inauguration, a decision Biden said was a "good thing," though Vice President Mike Pence and his wife plan to attend.

One of the main problems last week was a lack of coordination by multiple agencies in the district, which won't happen this time because those agencies have already been approved to work together and have been doing so for months, Plati said.

"We will have the adequate resourcing, personnel and plans in place," he said.

The National Park Service announced Monday that the Washington Monument would be closed until Jan. 24. But plans were still on for a major public art display spanning multiple blocks of the National Mall that will feature 191,500 U.S. flags and 56 pillars of light. The display is meant to symbolize every U.S. state

and territory, and “the American people who are unable to travel” to the capital to celebrate.

Biden has focused on unity from the the start. And he’s said repeatedly since winning the White House that he sees unifying the country as one of his top priorities as president. But the scope — and urgency — of the challenge Biden faces became even clearer after the Capitol siege.

“This inauguration marks a new chapter for the American people — one of healing, of unifying, of coming together, of an America united,” said Tony Allen, CEO of the Presidential Inaugural Committee. “It is time to turn the page on this era of division. The inaugural activities will reflect our shared values and serve as a reminder that we are stronger together than we are apart, just as our motto ‘e pluribus unum’ reminds us — out of many, one.”

Associated Press writer Bill Barrow in Newark, Del., contributed to this report.

Trump Homeland Security chief abruptly quits at tense time

By BEN FOX Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump’s acting head of the Department of Homeland Security abruptly resigned Monday, leaving the post ahead of schedule as the nation faces a heightened terrorism threat from extremists seeking to reverse the election.

The announcement by acting DHS Secretary Chad Wolf was perplexing. It came less than a week after he pledged to remain in office and just 10 days before the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden. Wolf cited a legal challenge to his leadership as a reason for his resignation, but that had surfaced months ago.

“For months we have known Chad Wolf has been serving illegally in his position, so the timing of his resignation from the Department today is questionable,” said Rep. Bennie Thompson, the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee. “He has chosen to resign during a time of national crisis and when domestic terrorists may be planning additional attacks on our government.”

Wolf, who had been serving in an acting capacity since November 2019 and was never confirmed by the Senate, said he was compelled to leave by “recent events,” including court rulings that found he could not legally hold the position. He did not specify the other events or cite other factors.

“These events and concerns increasingly serve to divert attention and resources away from the important work of the Department in this critical time of a transition of power,” he said in a written message to DHS employees.

The resignation comes a day before Trump is set to visit the U.S.-Mexico border wall, Trump’s signature political project and one overseen by DHS.

Wolf’s departure followed the abrupt resignation of other Cabinet officials angered by Trump’s role in encouraging the mob to storm the Capitol on Jan. 6 over his false claims of election fraud.

Wolf condemned the violent attack on the Capitol by Trump supporters, calling it “tragic and sickening.” He also said then he would stay on at DHS until the end of the administration to ensure a smooth transition and to help the department stay focused on the threats facing the nation.

It was unclear what prompted him to change course with the nation braced for the potential for more violence ahead of the Jan. 20 inauguration. The FBI has warned of plans for armed protests at all 50 state capitals and in Washington, D.C.

The White House had no immediate comment.

Wolf led DHS as it carried out Trump administration priorities on immigration and law enforcement, prompting criticism that he politicized a department that was created to better protect the nation in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The department was accused during his tenure by a whistleblower of suppressing facts in intelligence reports that Trump might find objectionable, including information about Russian interference in the election and the rising threat posed by white supremacists. Wolf and the department denied the allegations.

The acting secretary defended his tenure in his statement to employees, saying DHS had strengthened border security and successfully launched the cybersecurity agency that helped safeguard the 2020 election.

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"I leave knowing that the Department has positioned itself for an orderly and smooth transition to President-elect Biden's DHS team," he wrote. "Welcome them, educate them, and learn from them. They are your leaders for the next four years — a time which undoubtedly will be full of challenges and opportunities to show the American public the value of DHS and why it is worth the investment."

Peter Gaynor, the administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, will serve as acting head of the Department of Homeland Security until the Biden administration takes over.

"Right now, our nation is facing significant challenges and it is our privilege to support the nationwide efforts to fight the pandemic and protect our homeland," Gaynor said in a message to FEMA employees. He announced that his post would be filled by Bob Fenton, the Region 9 administrator for the agency, on an acting basis.

Biden has nominated Alejandro Mayorkas, a former senior DHS official, to lead an agency that carried out Trump administration priorities on immigration and law enforcement and was criticized for becoming politicized as a result.

Trump appointed Wolf acting secretary in November 2019, following the resignation of Kevin McAleenan, the acting secretary who took over following the resignation of Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen.

Wolf had been a chief of staff to Nielsen and an undersecretary in the agency as well as an official at the Transportation Security Administration, a component of DHS. He has also worked as a lobbyist.

Trump had said he liked the "flexibility" of having senior officials in an acting status despite criticism that it keeps people from long-term planning that would give an agency more stability.

The president sent Wolf's nomination to the Senate for confirmation after the Government Accountability Office determined that neither Wolf nor his deputy, Ken Cuccinelli, were legally eligible to run DHS because of a violation of the rules of succession in federal agencies.

That finding has put policy changes under their tenure, especially related to immigration, in potential jeopardy because of legal challenges, including one as recently as Friday in which a federal judge blocked sweeping asylum restrictions imposed by the administration.

House speeding to impeach Trump for Capitol 'insurrection'

By LISA MASCARO, BILL BARROW and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Poised to impeach, the House sped ahead Monday with plans to oust President Donald Trump from office, warning he is a threat to democracy and pushing the vice president and Cabinet to act even more quickly in an extraordinary effort to remove Trump in the final days of his presidency.

Trump faces a single charge -- "incitement of insurrection" — after the deadly Capitol riot in an impeachment resolution that the House will begin debating Wednesday.

At the same time, the FBI warned ominously Monday of potential armed protests in Washington and many states by Trump loyalists ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, Jan. 20. In a dark foreshadowing, the Washington Monument was closed to the public amid the threats of disruption. Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf abruptly resigned.

It all added up to stunning final moments for Trump's presidency as Democrats and a growing number of Republicans declare he is unfit for office and could do more damage after inciting a mob that violently ransacked the U.S. Capitol last Wednesday.

"President Trump gravely endangered the security of the United States and its institutions of Government," reads the four-page impeachment bill.

"He will remain a threat to national security, democracy, and the Constitution if allowed to remain in office," it reads.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is summoning lawmakers back to Washington for votes, and Democrats aren't the only ones who say Trump needs to go.

Republican Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania joined GOP Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska over the weekend in calling for Trump to "go away as soon as possible."

Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., encouraged House GOP colleagues late Monday to "vote your conscience,"

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according to a person granted anonymity to discuss the private call. She has spoken critically of Trump's actions, but has not said publicly how she will vote.

Pending impeachment, Democrats called on Vice President Mike Pence and the Cabinet to invoke their constitutional authority under the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office before Inauguration Day.

Their Democrats' House resolution was blocked by Republicans. However, the full House is to hold a roll call vote on it Tuesday, and it is expected to pass. After that, Pelosi said, Pence will have 24 hours to respond. Next would be the impeachment proceedings.

Pence has given no indication he is ready to proceed on a course involving the 25th Amendment.

He and Trump met late Monday for the first time since the Capitol attack, a senior administration official said.

Trump and Pence had a "good conversation" in the Oval Office discussing the week ahead, and they pledged to continue working for the remainder of their terms, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private meeting.

No member of the Cabinet has publicly called for Trump to be removed from office though the 25th Amendment.

As security tightened, Biden said Monday he was "not afraid" of taking the oath of office outside — as is traditionally done at the Capitol's west steps, one of the areas where people stormed the building.

As for the rioters, Biden said, "It is critically important that there'll be a real serious focus on holding those folks who engaged in sedition and threatening the lives, defacing public property, caused great damage -- that they be held accountable."

Biden said he's had conversations with senators ahead of a possible impeachment trial, which some have worried would cloud the opening days of his administration.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer was exploring ways to immediately convene the Senate for the trial as soon as the House acts, though Republican leader Mitch McConnell would need to agree. The president-elect suggested splitting the Senate's time, perhaps "go a half day on dealing with impeachment, a half day on getting my people nominated and confirmed in the Senate, as well as moving on the package" for more COVID relief.

As Congress briefly resumed Monday, an uneasiness swept government. More lawmakers tested positive for COVID-19 after sheltering during the siege. And new security officials were quickly installed after the Capitol police chief and others were ousted in fallout from the attack on the iconic dome of democracy. Some GOP lawmakers, including Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley, faced public blowback for their efforts on the day of the riot trying to overturn Biden's election.

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., offered the 25th Amendment resolution during Monday's brief session. It was blocked by Rep. Alex Mooney, R-W.Va., as other GOP lawmakers stood by him.

Pelosi said the Republicans were enabling Trump's "unhinged, unstable and deranged acts of sedition to continue. Their complicity endangers America, erodes our Democracy, and it must end."

However, House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy, a Trump ally, said in a letter to colleagues that "impeachment at this time would have the opposite effect of bringing our country together."

He said he would review possible censure of the president. But House Republicans are split and a few may vote to impeach.

The impeachment bill from Reps. David Cicilline of Rhode Island, Ted Lieu of California, Jamie Raskin of Maryland and and Jerrold Nadler of New York draws from Trump's own false statements about his election defeat to Biden.

Judges across the country, including some nominated by Trump, have repeatedly dismissed cases challenging the election results, and Attorney General William Barr, a Trump ally, has said there was no sign of widespread fraud.

The impeachment legislation also details Trump's pressure on state officials in Georgia to "find" him more votes, as well as his White House rally ahead of the Capitol siege, in which he encouraged thousands of supporters last Wednesday to "fight like hell" and march to the building.

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The mob overpowered police, broke through security lines and windows and rampaged through the Capitol, forcing lawmakers to scatter as they were finalizing Biden's victory over Trump in the Electoral College.

While some have questioned impeaching the president so close to the end of his term, Democrats and others argue he must be held accountable and prevented from holding future public office. He would be the only president twice impeached.

House Democrats have been considering a strategy to delay for 100 days sending articles of impeachment to the Senate for trial, to allow Biden to focus on other priorities.

There is precedent for pursuing impeachment after an official leaves office. In 1876, during the Ulysses Grant administration, War Secretary William Belknap was impeached by the House the day he resigned, and the Senate convened a trial months later. He was acquitted.

Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., said he would take a look at any articles that the House sent over. Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., a frequent Trump critic, said he would "vote the right way" if the matter were put in front of him.

Cicilline, leader of the House effort, tweeted Monday that "we now have the votes to impeach," including 213 cosponsors and private commitments.

Barrow reported from Wilmington, Delaware. Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Jill Colvin, Ellen Knickmeyer, Tom Beaumont and Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

Eagles fire coach Doug Pederson 3 years after Super Bowl win

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Doug Pederson lost his job less than three years after he led the Philadelphia Eagles to the franchise's only Super Bowl title.

Pederson was 42-37-1 in five seasons. He guided the Eagles to two division championships and three playoff appearances before going 4-11-1 in 2020.

Owner Jeffrey Lurie made the decision after meeting with Pederson last week and again Monday.

"Very few people probably after success deserve to lose their job," Lurie said. "This is much more about the evaluation of whether the Eagles moving forward, our best option is to have a new coach and that's really what it's about. ... He did not deserve to be let go."

Pederson had two years remaining on his contract. Lurie said he wouldn't be surprised if another team hired Pederson before the end of the week.

"Although I am disappointed that this chapter of my career has come to an end, I am extremely proud of what we accomplished together," Pederson said in a statement.

"Through all the ups and downs, one thing remained constant about our team — an unwavering commitment to battle through adversity and to achieve our goals not as individuals, but as a collective unit. There is no better example of that than when we celebrated the first Super Bowl championship in Eagles history together with our city. That is a memory we will all cherish forever."

Pederson's loyalty to his coaching staff and frustration with the front office's interference became a major issue, according to a person familiar with the decision who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the conversations. The person also said Pederson and general manager Howie Roseman weren't on the same page regarding many personnel moves, including draft picks and use of veteran players.

The team's draft failures in recent years from taking wide receiver J.J. Arcega-Whiteside over DK Metcalf in 2019 to selecting wideout Jalen Reagor one pick before Justin Jefferson in 2020 contributed to the offense's struggles along with numerous injuries and quarterback Carson Wentz's poor performance.

Ultimately, Lurie chose Roseman over Pederson.

"I have real confidence that our football operations, led by Howie, can not only repeat the performance of 2016 until now, and once again, create a dominant football team that can really maximize every aspect of its potential," Lurie said.

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Lurie indicated Pederson wasn't on board with rebuilding.

"It's a transition point and we've got to get younger and we have to have a lot more volume of draft picks and we have to accumulate as much talent as we possibly can that is going to work in the long run with a focus on the midterm and the long term and not on how to maximize 2021," Lurie said. "And it's almost not fair to Doug, because his vision has to be: what can I do to fix this right away and what coaches can I have that can help me get to a smoother 2021?"

Pederson benched Wentz for the final four games after the quarterback had the worst season of his five-year career and started rookie Jalen Hurts. Pederson had said repeatedly he was confident he could fix Wentz and get him back on track.

He won't get that chance now.

Wentz's \$128 million, four-year contract kicks in this year and he knows the Eagles control whether to keep him or trade him. Wentz has been taking time away to reflect on his situation before meeting with the team to discuss his future, a person close to the situation told the AP last week. Wentz was frustrated with his season and unhappy that he got benched, but he had no input into Pederson's firing, two people said.

"Carson and Doug got along way better than people think," a teammate told the AP on Monday. "That stuff got exaggerated."

The player spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss private conversations.

Wentz hasn't spoken to reporters since Dec. 6. He didn't immediately return a phone call from the AP on Monday.

Pederson was a starting quarterback in Philadelphia in 1999 and later served as an assistant coach under Andy Reid with the Eagles and Kansas City Chiefs. The Eagles hired him in January 2016 after abruptly firing Chip Kelly a month earlier.

Pederson led the Eagles to a Super Bowl victory over New England in just his second season with backup quarterback Nick Foles filling in after Wentz was injured. Pederson and Foles again led the Eagles to a playoff win the following year after Wentz went down late in the season.

"He's a close friend, he's a family friend and Doug is family to me," Lurie said.

Pederson was heavily criticized for his decision to replace Hurts with third-string quarterback Nate Sudfeld in the fourth quarter of a 20-14 loss to Washington in Week 17. Washington's victory cost the New York Giants the NFC East title. The loss gave the Eagles the sixth overall pick in the draft instead of the ninth.

"Nothing to do with it whatsoever," Lurie said when asked if Pederson's decision in that game factored into his dismissal.

Several Eagles showed their support for Pederson on social media after the news broke.

"Doug is a great coach, a great guy, a great man," running back Boston Scott told the AP. "He's the type of guy that will open his house up to you. He's a man of faith and I've always respected that about him. Every Saturday before games, I see him in chapel and that's where I truly believe it starts. I think that he's a true leader. Regardless of what the situation was like this season, he continued to bring energy, continued to bring the juice and he continued to be there for us so I have a lot of respect for him."

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

After frosty few days, Pence, Trump appear to reach détente

By JILL COLVIN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence appear to have come to a détente after nearly a week of silence, anger and finger-pointing.

The two met Monday evening in the Oval Office and had a "good conversation," according to a senior administration official. It was their first time speaking since last Wednesday, when Trump incited his supporters to storm the Capitol building as Pence was presiding over certification of November's election results. Pence and his family were forced into hiding.

During their conversation, the official said, Trump and Pence pledged to continue to work for "the re-

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mainder of their term" — a seeming acknowledgement that the vice president will not pursue efforts to try to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office with nine days left in his term.

While his office had not definitively ruled out invoking the amendment, Pence had signaled that he no intention of moving forward with that kind of challenge. The House is prepared to cast a vote Tuesday calling on Pence to invoke the amendment.

"The president represents an imminent threat to our Constitution, our Country and the American people, and he must be removed from office immediately," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. The House on Wednesday is expected to make Trump the first president in the nation's history to be impeached a second time.

"We are further calling on the vice president to respond within 24 hours after passage," Pelosi wrote. There is no mechanism that would force Pence to do so, making the move wholly symbolic.

Indeed, one person close to Pence said aides dismissed Democrats' efforts to drag the vice president further into the fray as little more than a tactic aimed at damaging Pence's political future. The person, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Even if Pence had been on board with the sentiment to remove Trump, the appetite for doing so has waned across the administration since last week. While three members of Trump's Cabinet have resigned, not one has publicly called for Trump to be forcefully removed from office.

Most Cabinet-level agencies did not respond Monday when asked where their agency head stood on the matter. At Interior, spokesman Nicholas Goodwin said Secretary David Bernhardt did not support such a move. Housing Secretary Ben Carson tweeted that he had not discussed the possibility with anyone and was focused on "finishing what I started in uplifting the forgotten women and men of America."

After four years of fealty to the mercurial Trump, studiously avoiding conflict and steadfastly refusing to discuss their disagreements publicly, the events of the last week have put Pence in a highly unusual spot.

Pence allies have expressed outrage over what they have described as a malicious attempt by the president to try to scapegoat the vice president by pressuring him to take the impossible step of trying to block certification of the November election results by invoking powers he did not possess. After days of behind-the-scenes arm-twisting, Trump repeatedly singled out Pence during his pre-riot rally, wrongly insisting the certification could be halted as it got underway.

Trump then continued to tweet that Pence "lacked courage" as the president's supporters stormed the Capitol. Trump never bothered to check on the vice president's safety as Pence spent hours in a secure holding area with his staff and family as the rioters chanted about wanting to hang him outside the Capitol doors.

Trump, for his part, was furious that Pence refused to go along with his scheme — raging about the decision behind closed doors.

But Trump and Pence apparently chosen to bury the hatchet — at least for the time being. The senior administration official said that, during their Oval Office meeting, Trump and Pence discussed the week ahead and reflected on their accomplishments over the last four years.

The two also "reiterated that those who broke the law and stormed the Capitol last week do not represent the America first movement backed by 75 million Americans, and pledged to continue the work on behalf of the country for the remainder of their term," the official's readout said.

The official did not mention whether the disagreements between the men had been discussed.

There had been previous signs that Pence's refusal to defy the Constitution by blocking the electoral count did not mean he had an appetite for anything further. Pelosi said in an interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" that Pence refused to come to the phone when she and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer called to urge him to initiate 25th Amendment procedures.

"We were kept on the line for 20 minutes. 'He's going to be here in a minute, a minute, a minute.' Well, he never did come to the phone," she said. "I was at home, so I was running the dishwasher, putting my clothes in the laundry. We're still waiting for him to return the call."

Even with Trump still in place, Pence has taken on some of the roles of the executive as Trump retreats ever further into a world of anger and conspiracy and continues to rage about his fate.

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Pence, for instance, was the one coordinating with lawmakers and the D.C. National Guard during the Capitol siege. And on Friday, he was the one who called the family of Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, who died of injuries sustained during the attack, to express condolences.

In the meantime, Pence has kept a low profile as he carries out his current job. The vice president led a coronavirus task force meeting at the White House on Monday and is expected to spend his remaining days focused on ensuring a peaceful transition of power to President-elect Joe Biden's incoming administration.

That includes attending the new president's inauguration, which Trump will be the first president since Andrew Johnson in 1869 to skip.

While the vice president will be present, an aide close to Biden's transition team said there was no expectation that Pence will play any major role in next Wednesday's program.

___ Associated Press writer Alexandra Jaffe contributed to this report.

Right-wing app Parler booted off internet over ties to siege

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

The conservative-friendly social network Parler was booted off the internet Monday over ties to last week's siege on the U.S. Capitol, but not before digital activists made off with an archive of its posts, including any that might have helped organize or document the riot.

Amazon kicked Parler off its web-hosting service, and the social media app promptly sued to get back online, telling a federal judge that the tech giant had breached its contract and abused its market power.

It was a roller coaster of activity for Parler, a 2-year-old magnet for the far right that welcomed a surge of new users. It became the No. 1 free app on iPhones late last week after Facebook, Twitter and other mainstream social media platforms silenced President Donald Trump's accounts over comments that seemed to incite Wednesday's violent insurrection.

The wave of Trump followers flocking to the service was short-lived. Google yanked Parler's smartphone app from its app store Friday for allowing postings that seek "to incite ongoing violence in the U.S."

Apple followed suit on Saturday after giving Parler a day to address complaints it was being used to "plan and facilitate yet further illegal and dangerous activities." But the death knell came from Amazon Web Services, the leading provider of cloud computing infrastructure, which informed Parler it would need to look for a new web-hosting service after Sunday.

Parler CEO John Matze decried the punishments as "a coordinated attack by the tech giants to kill competition in the marketplace."

Parler's lawsuit in a Seattle-based federal court makes the argument that Amazon violated antitrust laws to harm Parler and help Twitter, which also uses Amazon's cloud services. It also alleges Amazon breached its contract by not giving 30 days of notice before terminating Parler's account. Amazon did not return requests for comment about the dispute Monday.

Parler attorney David Groesbeck said by email Monday that the company is awaiting a hearing on the lawsuit. But it was admonished later in the day by Judge Barbara Rothstein of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington, who wrote that Parler had failed to properly serve court papers to Amazon and ordered it to do so.

Matze has signaled there is little chance of getting Parler back online anytime soon after "every vendor, from text message services, to e-mail providers, to our lawyers all ditched us too on the same day," he told Fox New Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures."

In a Monday interview with Fox Business, he said the company "may even have to go as far as buying and building our own data centers and buying up our own servers."

Trump may also launch his own platform. But that will not happen overnight, and free speech experts anticipate growing pressure on all social media platforms to curb incendiary speech as Americans take stock of Wednesday's violent takeover of the U.S. Capitol by a Trump-incited mob.

Organizers of pro-Trump forces are already regrouping in other forums, such as the conservative-friendly social media site Gab, as new actions are planned ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration.

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"Gab and Parler are like hastily put together and less easy-to-use versions of Twitter and Facebook," said Graham Brookie, director of the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab, which has investigated the online organizing leading up to the Capitol assault. "They've got notoriety as ultimate free speech sites where you can say literally whatever you want even if it's unlawful or egregious."

Meanwhile, a group of digital "hactivists" salvaged much of what happened on Parler before it went offline and said they plan to put it into a public archive. One described the operation on Twitter as "a bunch of people running into a burning building trying to grab as many things as we can."

The effort to scrape Parler's website to download and archive posts, including image files that can be tied to geographic locations, has instilled some fear in Parler users. But law enforcement might have been able to access the data anyway, and experts said the archive does not include information that was not publicly accessible. The cache of data is not yet easily readable by non-experts.

"If this wasn't done, we would only have fragments and scraps of the information that was on Parler before the takedown," said Gabriella Coleman, an anthropologist at McGill University who has studied hacker movements. "It's important because these forums are increasingly where people come together to organize themselves. You learn about motivations, ideological tactics."

Coleman said Trump loyalists are likely to find other ways to communicate, such as encrypted messaging apps or old-fashioned email lists, but only if they already knew where to find like-minded groups.

Cutting off Parler removes a key recruitment tool for various groups that are connected by Trump's misinformation about the presidential election, Brookie said.

"Parler has been particularly good at bringing more audience into this collective delusion," he said.

AP technology writers Barbara Ortutay and Frank Bajak contributed to this report.

Study: Wildfires produced up to half of pollution in US West

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Wildfire smoke accounted for up to half of all health-damaging small particle air pollution in the western U.S. in recent years as warming temperatures fueled more destructive blazes, according to a study released Monday.

Even as pollution emissions declined from other sources including vehicle exhaust and power plants, the amount from fires increased sharply, said researchers at Stanford University and the University of California, San Diego.

The findings underscore the growing public health threat posed by climate change as it contributes to catastrophic wildfires such as those that charred huge areas of California and the Pacific Northwest in 2020. Nationwide, wildfires were the source of up to 25% of small particle pollution in some years, the researchers said.

"From a climate perspective, wildfires should be the first things on our minds for many of us in the U.S.," said Marshall Burke, an associate professor of earth system science at Stanford and lead author of the study.

"Most people do not see sea-level rise. Most people do not ever see hurricanes. Many, many people will see wildfire smoke from climate change," Burke added. The study was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The researchers used satellite images of smoke plumes and government air quality data to model how much pollution was generated nationwide by fires from 2016 to 2018 compared to a decade earlier. Their results were in line with previous studies of smoke emissions across earlier time periods and more limited geographic areas.

Large wildfires churn out plumes of smoke thick with microscopic pollution particles that can drift hundreds or even thousands of miles. Driving the explosion in fires in recent years were warmer temperatures, drought and decades of aggressive fire fighting tactics that allowed forest fuels to accumulate.

Air pollution experts say that residents of the West Coast and Northern Rockies in particular should expect major smoke events from wildfires to become more frequent.

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There's little doubt air quality regulations helped decrease other sources of pollution even as wildfire smoke increased, said Loretta Mickley, an atmospheric chemist at Harvard University. But it's difficult to separate how much of the increase in smoke pollution is driven by climate change versus the forest fuel buildup, she added.

Mickley and researchers from Colorado State University also cautioned that fires can vary significantly from year to year because of weather changes, making it hard to identify trends over relatively short periods such as the decade examined in the new study.

An AP analysis of data from government monitoring stations found that at least 38 million people in California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana were exposed to unhealthy levels of wildfire smoke for at least five days in 2020. Major cities in Oregon suffered the highest pollution levels they had ever recorded.

Smoke particles from those wildfires were blamed for health problems ranging from difficulty breathing to a projected spike in premature deaths, according to health authorities and researchers.

Fires across the West emitted more than a million tons of particulate pollution in 2012, 2015 and 2017, and almost as much in 2018.

Scientists studying long-term health problems have found correlations between smoke exposure and decreased lung function, weakened immune systems and higher rates of flu.

The new study matches up with previous research documenting the increasing proportion of pollution that comes from wildfire smoke, said Dan Jaffe, a wildfire pollution expert at the University of Washington. Jaffe added that it also raises significant questions about how to better manage forests and the role that prescribed burns might play.

"We have been making tremendous progress on improving pollution in this country, but at the same time we have this other part of the puzzle that has not been under control," Jaffe said. "We're now at the point where we have to think about how to manage the planet a whole lot more carefully than we've done."

Follow Matthew Brown on Twitter: @MatthewBrownAP

Scientists decry death by 1,000 cuts for world's insects

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

The world's vital insect kingdom is undergoing "death by a thousand cuts," the world's top bug experts said.

Climate change, insecticides, herbicides, light pollution, invasive species and changes in agriculture and land use are causing Earth to lose probably 1% to 2% of its insects each year, said University of Connecticut entomologist David Wagner, lead author in the special package of 12 studies in Monday's Proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences written by 56 scientists from around the globe.

The problem, sometimes called the insect apocalypse, is like a jigsaw puzzle. And scientists say they still don't have all the pieces, so they have trouble grasping its enormity and complexity and getting the world to notice and do something.

Wagner said scientists need to figure out if the rate of the insect loss is bigger than with other species. "There is some reason to worry more," he added, "because they are the target of attack" with insecticides, herbicides and light pollution.

Co-author and University of Illinois entomologist May Berenbaum, a National Medal of Science winner, said, "Insect decline is kind of comparable to climate change 30 years ago because the methods to assess the extent, the rate (of loss) were difficult."

Making matters worse is that in many cases, people hate bugs, even though they pollinate the world's foods, are crucial to the food chain and get rid of waste, she said.

Insects "are absolutely the fabric by which Mother Nature and the tree of life are built," Wagner said.

Two well known ones — honeybees and Monarch butterflies — best illustrate insect problems and declines, he said. Honeybees have been in dramatic decline because of disease, parasites, insecticides, herbicides and lack of food.

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Climate change-driven drier weather in the U.S. West means less milkweed for butterflies to eat, Wagner said. And changes in American agriculture remove weeds and flowers they need for nectar.

"We're creating a giant biological desert except for soybeans and corn in a giant area of the Midwest," he said.

Monday's scientific papers don't provide new data, yet show a big but incomplete picture of a problem starting to get attention. Scientists have identified 1 million insect species, while probably 4 million more are still to be discovered, Berenbaum said.

University of Delaware entomologist Doug Tallamy, who wasn't part of the studies, said they highlight how the world has "spent the last 30 years spending billions of dollars finding new ways to kill insects and mere pennies working to preserve them."

"The good news is, with the exception of climate change, individuals can do much to reverse insect declines," Tallamy said in an email. "This is a global problem with a grassroots solution."

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter: @borenbears .

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.

State capitols step up security amid new safety concerns

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

State capitols across the nation stepped up security Monday, deploying National Guard units, SWAT teams and extra police officers while several legislatures convened amid heightened safety concerns following last week's violence at the U.S. Capitol.

The protections came as the FBI issued a bulletin warning of plans for armed protests at all 50 state capitols and in Washington ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's Jan. 20 inauguration.

Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee activated hundreds of National Guard troops to help state police keep order at the state Capitol. At least two people were arrested, including a man who tried to walk past authorities as lawmakers were to begin their session and shouted: "I have every right to witness this."

At the Georgia Capitol, a state patrol SWAT team walked the perimeter wearing fatigues and carrying rifles while lawmakers gathered inside for the start of a two-year term. State troopers were stationed throughout the Iowa Capitol for opening day as more than 200 people opposing coronavirus mask mandates chanted "freedom" during a peaceful rally.

Legislatures convened in more than a half dozen states. By week's end, three-fourths of all state legislatures will have opened their sessions. Because of concerns about the coronavirus, many state capitols had already adopted procedures to curb the potential for large crowds, including arranging for lawmakers to meet remotely. Those steps greatly reduced the number of people who are actually working in capitol buildings.

After insurrectionists backing President Donald Trump overran the U.S. Capitol last Wednesday, some governors and lawmakers began ramping up security because of online threats suggesting that more mobs could target state capitols.

In Michigan, a state commission voted Monday to ban the open carrying of weapons in the Capitol building.

In Idaho, doors to the House and Senate chambers were locked Monday morning, and two state troopers were stationed at each entrance. In past years, the doors were propped open while an unarmed statehouse staff member controlled access.

During a special session last August, a group that included anti-government activist Ammon Bundy forced its way past overwhelmed troopers and filled the Idaho House gallery despite COVID-19 restrictions limiting the number of people allowed in. The group called People's Rights was founded by Bundy and opposes the restrictions. Its leaders were urging members to show up Monday at the Capitol.

Glen Thorne wore a handgun in a holster on his right hip Monday at the Capitol. Openly carrying weap-

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ons in the building is legal. Thorne said he wanted to make sure Republican Gov. Brad Little “knows that we’re here.”

“We want to end the state of emergency for Idaho. It’s ridiculous. We all want to go back to a normal state of living,” Thorne said. He did not think the group would cause trouble.

“This is Idaho. We’re all gun-carrying, respectful Republicans,” said Thorne, who lives in Buhl, Idaho, about a two-hour drive to the southeast of Boise.

Republican Idaho Rep. Chad Christensen said he brought a bulletproof vest.

“If I feel things are going to get heightened up, I may put it on,” said Christensen, who also carried a .45-caliber handgun on his belt, which is standard procedure for him.

In Georgia, Republican Gov. Brian Kemp and other officials approved construction of a fence around the Capitol last year after racial injustice protests. Kemp has kept a group of National Guard soldiers on active duty to protect state properties since last summer, when protesters smashed windows and set a fire at state public safety headquarters in Atlanta.

Georgia House Speaker David Ralston, another Republican, said he had “full confidence” that authorities would be “ready to do whatever needs to be done to to protect the members, staff, the public, the media, and all the people that have to be here.”

A memo issued late last month by the FBI office in Minneapolis and confirmed by The Associated Press warned of credible threats for this Sunday at the state capitols in Minnesota and Michigan. The memo said followers of the right-wing Boogaloo movement had done reconnaissance at the Capitol in St. Paul, including scouting police sniper locations that would need to be destroyed if a gunbattle broke out.

Inslee, a Democrat, activated 750 members of the National Guard. On the same day as the deadly riot in Washington, D.C., a group of armed people broke down a gate outside the governor’s mansion in Olympia, Washington, and made it to the porch and front yard before being convinced to leave by police.

On Monday, lawmakers had to drive through an area gated off and guarded by the National Guard to park outside the Capitol. A small group of protesters gathered in the morning, shouting that they should be let inside the building to observe lawmakers.

“It’s a sad day for our country, isn’t it, where you have to have that kind of security around the people who were elected to represent you,” Democratic Sen. Patty Kuderer said. “Unfortunately, we live in troubling times, and I do believe we’re going to get through it, but it’s going to take a lot of time and a lot of effort.”

In Missouri, Republican Gov. Mike Parson’s inauguration proceeded Monday without incident. Concrete barriers and extra police — both typical inaugural precautions — surrounded the Capitol grounds where fewer than 2,000 people gathered. Parson told reporters later that security precautions also will be taken at potential upcoming demonstrations, though he was not specific.

Kansas House Speaker Ron Ryckman Jr., a Republican, said he was worried about protests at state capitols planned for this coming weekend and asked for extra security from the Kansas Highway Patrol.

“We’re hopeful that things, people, remain calm and the democratic process can continue,” Ryckman said.

Oregon state police will conduct building security training for those who work at the state Capitol, including journalists, on Tuesday and Wednesday.

In Michigan, where armed demonstrators against coronavirus restrictions entered the Capitol last year, there was little discussion as the open-weapons ban was approved. Michigan lawmakers are to return to session Wednesday.

Some of the anti-government extremists accused in a plot to kidnap Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer had attended the earlier lockdown protests. Prosecutors say the accused ringleader initially talked of recruiting 200 men to storm the building, take hostages and “execute tyrants.”

Authorities are aware of recent online posts promoting statehouses marches and would make “both seen and unseen” security enhancements at the Capitol for the next couple weeks, Michigan state police spokeswoman Shanon Banner said.

Associated Press writers Jeff Amy in Atlanta; David Eggert in Lansing, Michigan; John Hanna in Topeka, Kansas; Keith Riddler, in Boise, Idaho; and Rachel La Corte in Olympia, Washington; David Pitt in Des

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Moines, Iowa; and Andrew Selsky in Salem, Oregon, contributed to this report.

Going big: US dispensing shots at stadiums and fairgrounds

By LISA MARIE PANE, PATTY NIEBERG and JULIE WATSON Associated Press

The U.S. is entering the second month of the biggest vaccination drive in history with a major expansion of the campaign, opening football stadiums, major league ballparks, fairgrounds and convention centers to inoculate a larger and more diverse pool of people.

After a frustratingly slow rollout involving primarily health care workers and nursing home residents, states are moving on to the next phase before the first one is complete, making COVID-19 shots available to such groups as senior citizens, teachers, bus drivers, police officers and firefighters.

Emily Alexander, a fourth-grade teacher in hard-hit Arizona, got vaccinated in a round-the-clock, drive-thru operation that opened Monday at the suburban Phoenix stadium where the NFL's Arizona Cardinals play. She said she hopes it means she can be reunited in person with her students and colleagues before the end of the year.

"I miss the kids so much," the 37-year-old Alexander said. "I'm really looking forward to seeing them and their families, being able to hug them. That has just been so tough."

Similarly, in Britain, where a more contagious variant of the virus is raging out of control and deaths are soaring, seven large-scale vaccination sites opened Monday at such places as a big convention center in London, a racecourse in Surrey and a tennis and soccer complex in Manchester.

Across the U.S., where the outbreak has entered its most lethal phase yet and the death toll has climbed to about 375,000, politicians and health officials have complained over the past several days that too many shots were sitting unused on the shelves because of overly rigid adherence to the federal guidelines that put an estimated 24 million health care workers and nursing home residents at the front of the line.

About 9 million Americans have received their first shot, or 2.7% of the U.S. population, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Experts say as much as 85% of the population will have to be inoculated to achieve "herd immunity" and vanquish the outbreak.

Many states are responding by throwing open the line to other groups and ramping up the pace of vaccinations, in some cases offering them 24-7.

In California, one of the deadliest hot spots in the U.S., a drive-thru vaccination center was set up outside the San Diego Padres' ballpark, with plans to inoculate 5,000 health care workers a day. Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles will also be pressed into service by the end of the week.

"It really truly was a hassle-free experience," said Julieann Sparks, a 41-year-old nurse who received a shot through her car window at the San Diego site. After getting inoculated, drivers had to stay there for 15 minutes so that they could be watched for any reaction.

About 584,000 doses have been administered in California, or about 1.5% of the population. At the same time, the state hit another gloomy milestone, surpassing a death toll of 30,000. It took the state six months to record its first 10,000 deaths but barely a month to go from 20,000 to 30,000.

Arizona, with the highest COVID-19 diagnosis rate in the U.S., is offering vaccinations to people 75 and older, teachers, police and firefighters.

In Texas, vaccine megasites opened at the Alamodome in San Antonio and at the state fairground in Dallas. Nearly 4,000 people were vaccinated Saturday at Minute Maid Park, the home of baseball's Houston Astros.

Detroit's call center was jammed with more than 100,000 calls Monday as the city took appointments for vaccinations at the city's TCF convention center, starting Wednesday. Officials plan to schedule 20,000 appointments over the next month for elderly people. Police officers and bus drivers can start getting shots there at the end of the week.

"We do not have the capacity to answer questions from people under 75 or non-Detroiters about vaccinations in general," said Detroit's chief operating officer, Hakim Berry. "If you are not eligible, please do not tie up the call lines."

The slow rollout of the U.S. campaign has been blamed in part on inadequate funding and guidance

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from Washington and a multitude of logistical hurdles at the state and local level that have caused confusion and disorganization.

As Colorado moves into its next phase of vaccine distribution for people 70 and older, frustration is building among senior citizens who say they have received little or no communication from local public health officials.

Joyce Ballotti, 85, and her 94-year-old husband went to a vaccination site in Pueblo, Colorado, on Monday that was supposed to begin at 9 a.m. But around 8:45 a.m., they were turned away because it had run out of vaccine.

"When we saw that exit locked, we said, 'Uh-oh, the city has screwed up again,'" Ballotti said.

A police officer managing traffic waved them away, and they received no guidance on other vaccine sites. Ballotti said she is angry and frustrated about the process.

"I'm about ready to get it not at all," she said, noting that the couple's son had taken off from work to drive them. "I can't ask my son to spend his time on fruitless errands."

There were snags as well in Georgia, where the plan to expand access to people over 65 got off to a rocky start. The websites of at least two public health districts crashed Monday, and other districts reported overwhelming demand for appointments.

Florida, the longtime retirement haven with one of the biggest concentrations of elderly people in the country, is using Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens to dispense shots. A little over 402,000 doses have been administered in Florida since mid-December, or just under 2% of its population.

Rather than wait for the first designated group of recipients under the federal guidelines to get their shots, Gov. Ron DeSantis has opened vaccinations to people 65 and over.

The move has been met with huge demand, with senior citizens standing in line in the overnight chill or sleeping in their cars — a spectacle that has alarmed many people. DeSantis said drive-thru sites will be ramped up in the coming days.

In New York City, two round-the-clock sites opened and several more are expected to be up and running over the next two weeks. Appointments for the midnight-to-4-a.m. shift on Tuesday were snapped up quickly in what Mayor Bill de Blasio pointed out is, after all, "the city that never sleeps."

"It gives you hope," said David Garvin, who turns 80 next weekend and got a vaccination at a city-run site in Brooklyn on Monday, the first day the state made people over 75 eligible along with various front-line workers. "I've been in my room for six months."

Saad Omer, director of the Yale Institute for Global Health, said it is reasonable to speed things up and move on to the next group of people as long as health workers and nursing home residents continue being given shots at the same time.

"Our country should be able to walk and chew gum when it comes to its immunization program," he said.

Pane reported from Boise, Idaho, and Watson reported from San Diego. Nieberg, based in Denver, is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues. Associated Press writers Jennifer Peltz in New York and Terry Tang in Phoenix also contributed.

Business grows skittish about Trump and GOP after riots

By JOSH BOAK, BRIAN SLODYSKO and TOM KRISHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Corporate America is quickly distancing itself from President Donald Trump and his Republican allies, with many of the biggest names in business — Goldman Sachs, Coca-Cola, Ford and Comcast — suspending political donations after a Trump-inspired mob ransacked the U.S. Capitol in a deadly and violent spree last Wednesday.

For now, the move is about affirming the rule of law and the clear results of an election that will elevate Democrat Joe Biden to the presidency. But it also signals that companies are growing skittish about lawmakers who backed Trump's false claims of election fraud, possibly depriving Republicans of public backing

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from business groups who until recently were the heart of the GOP's political brand.

"This is spreading like wildfire," said Jeffrey Sonnenfeld, a professor at Yale University's management school who consults with CEOs. "The U.S. business community has interests fully in alignment with the American public and not with Trump's autocratic bigoted wing of the GOP."

Yet the pausing of donations announced by many companies — including Marriott, American Express, AT&T, JPMorgan Chase, Dow, American Airlines and others — was unlikely to deliver a serious blow to Republicans in Congress who voted to overturn Biden's win.

"These are symbolic pledges," said Sheila Krumholz, executive director of the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan group that traces the role money plays in politics. "This is just one source of revenue and for some it's vanishingly small, particularly in the Senate."

Corporate-sponsored political action committees are limited to donating \$5,000 per candidate each year. In races that often cost incumbents millions of dollars, such contributions account for just a small fraction of the overall fundraising picture.

Take Sen. Josh Hawley. The Missouri Republican has drawn widespread scorn, including from longtime supporters and Senate Republican leadership, for becoming the first senator to announce he would oppose the certification of Biden's victory.

Since 2017, when he launched his Senate bid, only about \$754,000 of the \$11.8 million he raised came from corporate PACs and trade groups. That accounts for about 15% of his total fundraising haul, according to an analysis of campaign finance disclosures.

What's more, Hawley wasn't the biggest spender in his race. Outside conservative groups, including those affiliated with Republican leadership, were the ones who dropped the lion's share of money that helped him oust former Democratic Sen. Claire McCaskill. Such groups are largely insulated from the corporate donation pause.

Still, greeting card maker Hallmark went a step further than most companies. The Kansas City-based company has asked both Hawley and recently elected Kansas Sen. Roger Marshall to return its contributions because of their votes opposing Biden's win.

"Hallmark believes the peaceful transition of power is part of the bedrock of our democratic system, and we abhor violence of any kind," Hallmark spokeswoman JiaoJiao Shen said in a statement.

A PAC for the company has donated \$7,000 to Marshall, FEC records show. The company says it has also donated \$5,000 to Hawley.

In many cases, though, most companies are only suspending their giving for several months, leaving ample time to ramp up donations before the 2022 elections.

"They are going into hiding until the news cycle moves on," said Erik Gordon, a law and business professor at the University of Michigan. "They will be back with their checkbooks, and politicians who already are gearing up for the 2022 congressional contests are waiting at the back door."

Even if Trump sold himself to voters as a billionaire guru with a Midas-like grip on the economy, many business leaders had already quietly backed away from a president who had cracked down on trade, inflamed racism, curtailed immigration and failed to contain a deadly pandemic.

But the rejection accelerated after he egged on a crowd at a Washington rally and urged them to march on the Capitol on Wednesday.

Since then, technology companies have denied the use of services to Trump's political operation. The payments firm Stripe has stopped processing donations for Trump campaign committees, according to a person familiar with the matter who requested anonymity because the decision hasn't been made public.

The move could cut off Trump's fundraising arm from what has been a steady stream of small-dollar donations that are often solicited through emails and text messages. Stripe's decision was first reported by the Wall Street Journal. Shopify, an e-commerce platform for merchants to sell goods, shut down the Trump campaign's merchandise website as well, as other tech companies including Twitter, Facebook and Amazon are putting new restrictions on Trump's movement because of the violence.

Leading business groups such as the National Association of Manufacturers, the Business Roundtable

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and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce all condemned the insurrection. Yet these same groups also worked in support of Trump's 2017 tax cuts and will face a Biden administration that wants to increase corporate taxes, a sign that they may not fully align with one political party.

What surprised some ethics watchdogs was how quickly companies reacted by suspending their donations. "It looks like it is sincere for many of the corporations," said Craig Holman, a campaign finance expert with Public Citizen, a liberal consumer advocacy organization. "There was no big public push or pressure to get Marriott and others to announce they would no longer make campaign contributions. They did it on their own — they shocked everyone in the campaign finance community."

The response has not been uniform by corporations. Dow, the chemical company, said it would suspend contributions for the next two years to any member of Congress who objected to the certification of the electoral college. Airbnb said it would also withhold support to those lawmakers.

Some companies are trying to avoid politics completely in the aftermath of last week's riots. Citigroup confirmed Sunday that it is pausing all federal political donations for the first three months of the year, including those to Democratic lawmakers.

"We want you to be assured that we will not support candidates who do not respect the rule of law," said a memo from Candi Wolff, Citi's head of global government affairs. She added that once the presidential transition is completed, the country can "hopefully" emerge "from these events stronger and more united."

The decision by Citigroup and others to pause all political contributions outraged some Democrats, who said they were being punished for violence that originated with Republicans and left five people dead.

"This is not a time to say both sides did it," said New York's Rep. Sean Maloney on MSNBC. "What the hell did the Democrats do this week except stand up for the Constitution and the rule of law?"

This story has been corrected to show that the next congressional elections are in 2022, not 2020. AP business reporter Ken Sweet contributed to this report from Charlotte, North Carolina.

FBI warns of plans for nationwide armed protests next week

By COLLEEN LONG, MICHAEL BALSAMO and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI is warning of plans for armed protests at all 50 state capitals and in Washington, D.C., in the days leading up to President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, stoking fears of more bloodshed after last week's deadly siege at the U.S. Capitol.

An internal FBI bulletin warned, as of Sunday, that the nationwide protests may start later this week and extend through Biden's Jan. 20 inauguration, according to two law enforcement officials who read details of the memo to The Associated Press. Investigators believe some of the people are members of extremist groups, the officials said. The bulletin was first reported by ABC.

"Armed protests are being planned at all 50 state capitols from 16 January through at least 20 January, and at the U.S. Capitol from 17 January through 20 January," the bulletin said, according to one official. The officials were not authorized to speak publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

The FBI issued at least one other bulletin — they go out to law enforcement nationwide on the topic — before the riots last week. On Dec. 29, it warned of the potential for armed demonstrators targeting legislatures, the second official said.

"While our standard practice is to not comment on specific intelligence products, the FBI is supporting our state, local, and federal law enforcement partners with maintaining public safety in the communities we serve," the bureau said in a statement. "Our efforts are focused on identifying, investigating, and disrupting individuals that are inciting violence and engaging in criminal activity."

The FBI said it wasn't focused on peaceful protests but "on those threatening their safety and the safety of other citizens with violence and destruction of property."

Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, told reporters Monday that the Guard is also looking at any issues across the country,

"We're keeping a look across the entire country to make sure that we're monitoring, and that our Guards

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in every state are in close coordination with their local law enforcement agencies to provide any support requested," he said.

The riots followed weeks of online calls for violence in the nation's capital in the waning days of Donald Trump's presidency. There have been several arrests, and at least two Capitol police officers, one who took a selfie with rioters, and another who put on a Make America Great Again hat, were suspended. At least a dozen more are under investigation, according to lawmakers.

A tweet in which Trump promised that last Wednesday's event in Washington, D.C., "will be wild" fueled a "month-long frenzy of incitements, strategizing, and embrace of violence against lawmakers," according to a research group that tracks online extremism activity. In a report issued Saturday, the SITE Intelligence Group also warned that the Capitol attack has emboldened Trump-supporting extremists.

"No matter how all this plays out, its only the beginning," posted a user on TheDonald message board, according to the report.

Mark Pitcavage, a senior research fellow at the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism, said authorities in state capitals and other major cities besides Washington should prepare for the possibility of violent protests next week.

"A lot of people were energized by what happened last week," he said. "State capitals are a natural place where people might want to show up, especially assuming that they think there might be a huge presence of police and military in D.C. because of what happened last week."

Pitcavage tracks militia, white supremacists and other far-right extremists, but he said the Capitol siege demonstrated the emergence of a new movement of "Trumpist extremists, so caught up in the cult of personality around Trump that they may be willing to break the law or engage in violence purely in support of Trump and whatever he wants."

The talk of armed marches next week isn't limited to "radicalized" Trump supporters. State capital events on Jan. 17 appear to be promoted by supporters of the anti-government, pro-gun "boogaloo" movement. Boogaloo followers advocate for a second civil war or the collapse of society, and they don't adhere to a coherent political philosophy.

Posts on social media sites also have promoted a "Million Militia March" on the day of Biden's inauguration. Pitcavage said the event, apparently organized by a promoter of the pro-Trump "QAnon" conspiracy theory, appears unlikely to draw a massive crowd.

Javed Ali, a former FBI senior intelligence officer who teaches courses in counterterrorism at the University of Michigan, said it can be challenging for law enforcement to identify the line between people exercising their constitutionally protected rights to bear arms and free speech and those who pose "a real operational threat."

"The FBI just can't passively sit in websites and forums and social media platforms, waiting to see who's going to present a direct threat versus just someone who is being highly radicalized," he said. "There has to be an investigative predicate for the FBI to then start even the lowest form of an investigation."

David Deitch, an attorney who was a prosecutor in the Justice Department's counterterrorism section from 2003 to 2007, said law enforcement must recognize a "tenuous balance" between protected free speech and speech that intends to incites violence.

"It's a very fact-based, case-by-case determination," he said. "There's no one factor that's going to determine all of it. It's certainly going to be a judgment call on the part of law enforcement about whether and when to intervene."

Kunzelman reported from College Park, Maryland. Associated Press writer Matthew Daly contributed to this report.

Trump hits Cuba with new terrorism sanctions in waning days

By MATTHEW LEE and JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration on Monday re-designated Cuba as a "state sponsor of

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terrorism," hitting the country with new sanctions that could hamstring President-elect Joe Biden's promise to renew relations with the communist-governed island.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced the step, citing in particular Cuba's continued harboring of U.S. fugitives, its refusal to extradite a coterie of Colombian guerrilla commanders as well as its support for Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro.

The designation, which had been discussed for years, is one of several last-minute foreign policy moves that the Trump administration is making before Biden takes office Jan. 20.

Removing Cuba from the blacklist had been one of former President Barack Obama's main foreign policy achievements as he sought better relations with the island, an effort endorsed by Biden as his vice president. Ties had been essentially frozen after Fidel Castro took power in 1959.

As he has with Iran, Trump has sought to reverse many of Obama's decisions involving Cuba. He has taken a tough line on Havana and rolled back many of the sanctions that the Obama administration had eased or lifted after the restoration of full diplomatic relations in 2015.

Since Trump took office, after a campaign that attacked Obama's moves to normalize relations with Cuba, ties have been increasingly strained.

In addition to attacking Cuba for its support of Maduro, the Trump administration has also suggested that Cuba may have been behind or allowed alleged sonic attacks that left dozens of U.S. diplomats in Havana with brain injuries starting in late 2016.

However, few U.S. allies believe Cuba remains a sponsor of international terrorism, quibbling with either the definition based on the support for Maduro or outright rejecting American claims that Cuban authorities are bankrolling or masterminding international terrorist attacks.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez condemned the U.S. action. "The US political opportunism is recognized by those who are honestly concerned about the scourge of terrorism and its victims," he said on Twitter.

Rep. Gregory Meeks, the new chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said Trump's designation would not help the Cuban people and seeks only to tie the hands of the Biden administration.

"This designation of Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism with less than a week to go in his presidency and after he incited a domestic terror attack on the U.S. Capital ... that's hypocrisy," Meeks said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Nonetheless, cheered on by Cuban American and Venezuelan exiles in south Florida, the Trump administration has steadily increased restrictions on flights, trade and financial transactions between the U.S. and the island.

The latest sanctions put Cuba alongside North Korea, Syria and Iran as the only foreign nations deemed state sponsors of terrorism. As a result of Monday's actions, most travel from the U.S. to Cuba will be barred as well as the sending of remittances to Cuba from relatives in the United States, a significant source of income for the impoverished island.

But with dollar-generating business already reeling from the effects of the coronavirus and previous measures like Trump's ban on cruise ships and cap on remittances, the biggest impact will likely be diplomatic.

"This will really slow any thaw in relations with the Biden administration," said Emilio Morales, an exiled Cuban economist and president of the Miami-based Havana Consulting Group.

Morales said unwinding the measure will take at least a year and require careful study by the U.S. government. He is also doubtful whether Biden, who played no significant role in the Obama administration's opening to Cuba, would be willing to invest the sort of political capital Obama did and throw a lifeline to Cuba's leadership without anything in return.

Obama's removal of Cuba from the "state sponsors of terrorism" list had been a major target of Trump, Pompeo and other Cuba hawks in the current administration.

Cuba has repeatedly refused to turn over U.S. fugitives that have been granted asylum, including a black militant convicted of killing a New Jersey state trooper in the 1970s. In addition to political refugee status, U.S. fugitives have received free housing, health care and other benefits thanks to Cuba's government, which insists the U.S. has no "legal or moral basis" to demand their return.

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But perhaps the biggest change since Obama's outreach in 2015 is Cuba's strong support for Maduro, who is considered by the a dictator whose pilfering of the oil-based economy has driven 5 million Venezuelans from their homes.

Cuba has had a long-standing alliance with Maduro, although it has long denied it has 20,000 troops and intelligence agents in Venezuela and says it has not carried out any security operations. Cuban officials, however, have said they have the right to carry out broad military and intelligence cooperation that they deem as legitimate.

The relationship between the two countries has grown strong in the past two decades, with Venezuela sending Cuba oil shipments worth billions of dollars and receiving tens of thousands of employees, including medical workers.

In May 2020, the State Department added Cuba to a list of countries that do not cooperate with U.S. counter-terrorism programs.

In making that determination, the department said several leaders of the National Liberation Army, a Colombian rebel group designated a terrorist organization, remained on the island despite Colombia's repeated request they be extradited to answer for the 2019 car bombing of a police academy in Bogota that killed 22 people.

Cuba has rejected such requests, saying that turning over the leaders would violate protocols agreed to by Colombia's government for peace efforts that were broken off after the deadly bombing.

In repudiating the allegations, President Miguel Díaz-Canel has said Cuba was the victim of terrorism. He cited an armed attack on its embassy in Washington last April as one example. Cubans see the blacklist as helping the U.S. justify the long-standing embargo on the island and other economic sanctions that have crippled its economy.

Associated Press diplomatic writer Matthew Lee reported this story in Washington and AP writer Joshua Goodman reported from Miami. AP writer Andrea Rodriguez in Havana contributed to this report.

Woman hedges apology in tense interview on hotel attack

NEW YORK (AP) — A white woman who wrongly accused a Black teenager of stealing her cellphone and tackled him at a New York City hotel appeared to back off her apology in a TV interview that aired Monday, suggesting without evidence that maybe he did try to steal her phone after all.

"So, maybe it wasn't him but at the same time how is it so that as soon as I get asked to leave the premises after I had accused this person of stealing my phone, how is that all of a sudden they just miraculously have my phone at the back?" 22-year-old Miya Ponsetto said in the interview on "CBS This Morning."

The interview was conducted Thursday, hours before Ponsetto was arrested in Ventura County, California, over the Dec. 26 confrontation with 14-year-old Keyon Harrold Jr. Ponsetto was charged Saturday in New York with attempted robbery, grand larceny, acting in a manner injurious to a child and two counts of attempted assault, according to city police.

Security video released by the police shows Ponsetto frantically grabbing at Harrold as he tries to get away from her through the front door of Manhattan's Arlo Hotel. The teen's father, jazz trumpeter Keyon Harrold, has said that Ponsetto's phone had actually been left in an Uber and was returned by the driver.

In the first part of the CBS interview, broadcast Friday, Ponsetto told host Gayle King, "I don't feel that that is who I am as a person. I don't feel like this one mistake does define me."

She was frequently combative in the clips that aired Monday, interrupting King and her own attorney, Sharen H. Ghatan.

Ponsetto said she was "sorry from the bottom of my heart" but added, "He's 14? That's what they're claiming? Yeah, I'm 22, I've lived probably just the same amount of life, like honestly. I'm just as a kid at heart as he is."

When King asked her to go over the events at the hotel, Ponsetto said, "You already asked me that at the beginning of the interview. I'm not going over it again. I would like to have a real interview with real

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questions and real heart and real sincere apologies. Let 2021 be the moment of healing, seriously."

Ponsetto's arrest followed more than a week of media coverage of the hotel lobby encounter and demands by the teen's family and activists that she face criminal charges over what was seen as an instance of racial profiling.

In the CBS interview, Ponsetto denied profiling the teenager and said her heritage is partly Puerto Rican. When King asked her if she believed a person of color could not be racist, she said, "Exactly."

"I feel sorry that I made the family go through all that stress but at the same time it wasn't just them going through that," she said in a "CBS This Morning" interview that aired Friday. "But I do sincerely from the bottom of my heart apologize that if I made the son feel as if I assaulted him or if I hurt his feelings or the father's feelings."

At a news conference on Monday in New York City, the teen's family called for a boycott of the hotel, claiming it had racially profiled him in its response.

"This is the reality of Black mothers in America," said his mother, Kat Rodriguez. "Every day we must face the reality that a simple case of mistaken identity or a misunderstanding can end in tragedy."

Management of the Arlo Hotel previously posted on Facebook that they had reached out to apologize to the family.

Biden gets 2nd dose of vaccine as team readies COVID-19 plan

By WILL WEISSERT and BILL BARROW Associated Press

NEWARK, Del. (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden received his second dose of the coronavirus vaccine on Monday, three weeks after getting his first one with television cameras rolling in an attempt to reassure the American public that the inoculations are safe.

Biden took off his sport jacket and said, "Ready, set, go." Chief Nurse Executive Ric Cumin administered the Pfizer vaccine at Christiana Hospital in Newark, Delaware, close to the president-elect's home.

Scenes of the procedure aired on cable news moments after it occurred.

Biden got his first shot on Dec. 21. The virus has now killed more than 375,000 people in the United States — about 60,000 more than when the president-elect got his first round of vaccination — and continues to upend life around the globe.

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine requires a second shot about three weeks after the first vaccination. Another vaccine, this one produced by Moderna, requires a second shot about four weeks afterward. One-shot vaccines are still undergoing testing.

In comments to reporters after his shot, Biden said he has confidence in his COVID-19 medical team to hit ambitious vaccination rate targets after he takes office on Jan. 20. He also called the current rate of thousands of people dying daily because of the pandemic "beyond the pale."

"The No. 1 priority is getting vaccines in people's arms as rapidly as we can," Biden said.

He also said he'd spoken to Senate leaders about splitting time between approving key Cabinet nominations for his new administration and proceeding with an impeachment trial against President Donald Trump.

The House is preparing articles of impeachment against Trump — for an unprecedented second time — for helping incite last week's violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Biden told reporters he'd mentioned the possibility of going "a half day on dealing with impeachment, a half day on getting my people nominated and confirmed in the Senate, as well as moving on the package" for further actions related to the coronavirus and economic aid.

Biden said he has a virtual meeting later Monday with his virus team and planned to outline more of his pandemic response plan on Thursday. His transition team has vowed to release as many vaccine doses as possible, rather than continuing the Trump administration policy of holding back millions of doses to ensure there would be enough supply to allow those getting the first shot to get a second one.

Biden's goal is to protect more people, more quickly, his team announced last week. The plan would not involve cutting two-dose vaccines in half, a strategy that top government scientists recommend against. Instead, it would accelerate shipment of the first doses and use the levers of government power to provide

required second doses in a timely manner.

Like Biden, Vice President Mike Pence and other national leaders got pre-Christmas, first rounds of vaccinations.

Trump did not. He was hospitalized with COVID-19 in October and given an experimental monoclonal antibody treatment that he credited for his swift recovery. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advisory board has said people who received that treatment should wait at least 90 days to be vaccinated to avoid any potential interference.

Weissert reported from Washington.

Lebanon plans 11-day, 24-hour curfew, hospital beds fill up

By SARAH EL DEEB and FADI TAWIL Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanese authorities tightened a nationwide lockdown Monday, including an 11-day, 24-hour curfew, amid a dramatic surge in coronavirus infections and growing criticism of uncoordinated policies many blame for the spread of the virus.

News of the restrictions to be implemented starting Thursday morning sparked panicked grocery buying as people lined up outside of supermarkets to stock up, raising fears the crowds could further spread the virus.

Lebanon had only just announced a nationwide lockdown last week. But many, including the health minister and officials on a government committee, considered it to be too lenient because it exempted many sectors, such as florists, plant nurseries and factories. Hospitals, meanwhile, were running out of beds amid rapidly multiplying COVID-19 cases.

Critics have said uncoordinated and hesitant policies wavering between relaxing restrictions and shutting down were behind the failure to contain the virus.

For instance, despite a rise in infections, the government relaxed restrictions ahead of Christmas and New Year's celebrations, hoping to boost a crumbling local economy as thousands of Lebanese expats arrived in the country. Bars and nightclubs, which had been ordered shut for months, were allowed to open.

Daily infection rates have since hovered above 3,000, hitting an all-time high of over 5,000 last week. Doctors and experts say the extent of the spread has yet to be felt, predicting numbers will skyrocket in the coming days, overwhelming health facilities in the country of nearly 6 million.

Despite the nationwide lockdown announced last week, a soccer match was allowed to take place in the northern Tripoli province on Sunday with an audience and was aired on TV.

The spike in cases has exhausted the health care sector, prompting lawmakers and officials to call on the government to consider a 24-hour lockdown without exemptions, and to shut down the airport.

Panicked shoppers swarmed supermarkets following reports they would only be allowed to take delivery orders amid the tightened lockdown. Long lines formed outside chain supermarkets and in some cases arguments broke out over shopping carts, sparking fear the crowds could further spread the virus.

Merna Jumaa left a packed supermarket in eastern Beirut pushing a cart full of groceries but with no bread. "We came to get bread. There was already not a single piece of bread left," she said, walking away with her mother.

The government declared a "state of health emergency" between Jan. 14-25 that includes a round-the-clock curfew. Lebanon's caretaker prime minister said earlier that the country has entered a "very critical zone" in the battle against the coronavirus.

As of Sunday, the World Health Organization said 81.7% of Lebanon's hospital beds were occupied and the intensive-care-unit bed occupancy had reached 91.4%, with the highest in Beirut. Some 2,295 health care workers had been infected by Jan. 10, up from 2,015 last week.

Kayssar Mawad, director of a private hospital in Zgharta in northern Lebanon, said he has been turning cases away because there were no more beds. Out of 35 patients there with COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus, seven are in ICU, he said. Zgharta is one of the country's hotspots.

"It is a difficult period," said Mawad. "We are refusing many cases. There are no places, no more res-

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pirators.”

Since February, Lebanon has recorded more than 219,000 infections and 1,606 deaths. Hospitals have appealed to the government to turn all health care facilities into locations for treating coronavirus patients, saying all 15,000 hospital beds are needed to meet the new surge.

At the largest public hospital in Beirut, Rafik Hariri University hospital, doctors and nurses were overwhelmed with new patients and all 40 ICU beds were occupied. “We are in the heart of the crisis,” said nurse Therese Gobar.

Jad Chaaban, a Lebanese economist and political activist, tweeted that Lebanon “is dying” and called it “another chapter” of the “criminal incompetence” of the authorities.

Lebanon’s political class was facing a wave of antigovernment protests before the virus outbreak. The protesters blamed the long-serving political elite for mismanagement. Then, a massive explosion in August in Beirut’s port killed over 200 people and injured thousands. The blast, caused by the ignition of explosive chemicals stored there for years, has been blamed on gross negligence.

Snow and ice disrupt lives, vaccine rollout in Spain

By ARITZ PARRA Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — The Spanish capital of Madrid was still trying to get back on its feet Monday after a 50-year record snowfall that paralyzed large parts of central Spain and hampered the delivery of coronavirus vaccines.

The blizzard dumped over 50 centimeters (20 inches) of snow in some areas and a cold front was turning mounds of fluffy white into sheets of ice and crusted drifts. At least 700 roads were still not clear enough, half of them unfit for driving without chains.

Temperatures were expected to drop to minus 11 degrees Celsius (12 degrees Fahrenheit) in a large swathe of the country later Monday, according to the national AEMET weather agency, prompting authorities to urge people to exercise caution.

“We have some very complicated days ahead until the cold snap subsides,” Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska said at a televised press conference. “It is necessary to postpone any movement that is avoidable, for safety and in order to not interrupt the works in the road network.”

A new batch of 350,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine arrived at half a dozen Spanish airports on Monday, but the doses destined for Madrid had to be diverted to the northern city of Vitoria. Authorities said that police escorts would help the vaccines get through the snow-clogged streets and highways.

After delays over New Year’s, health authorities in Spain were hoping to speed up vaccination nationwide this week. Just over 50% of the nearly 750,000 doses received by Spain had been given out by Monday, according to the Health Ministry. Health care workers got vaccine shots in Madrid on Monday despite the massive snow cleanup.

The country’s top coronavirus expert, Fernando Simón, said that he expected the storm’s aftermath to impact vaccination plans “in some specific areas,” but that overall most doses should still be administered because the priority now remains residents in nursing homes and medical workers.

Storm Filomena left four people dead and dropped snow that trapped over 1,500 people in their vehicles, some of them for up to 24 hours. It has since moved east.

In Madrid, civil protection and military battalions, aided by snowplows and bulldozers, managed to clear lanes for ambulances and emergency vehicles. Still, much of the city’s services remained closed on Monday, including the main wholesale market, although some supermarkets and newsstands opened for the first time in three days. Schools were closed for the week.

Residents, some with crampons and hiking sticks, warily made their way on icy snow to subway stations, the only viable way to commute to work. But that led to overcrowding in train cars where keeping social distance was impossible. Commuter trains in Madrid and the high-speed railway between Barcelona and Madrid were resuming later Monday.

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The Spanish capital's airport, which had been closed since Friday evening, saw a dozen flights take off or land on Monday.

The slow return to normalcy came as a relief to Alba Martínez, a nurse who spent six shifts minus the occasional nap working at an emergency ward during the blizzard.

The 30-hour-long blizzard blocked her colleagues from reaching their northern Madrid region hospital. Martínez was only replaced on Sunday afternoon when a volunteer 4x4 vehicle brought reinforcements and sent her home.

"The staff self-organized on messaging apps to figure out how to change shifts. But we feared running out of certain food that some patients needed," she recounted, adding that the situation in intensive care units with COVID-19 patients was even more difficult for her colleagues.

Martínez wondered why authorities didn't stock up on supplies and place staff in nearby hotels before the storm.

"The logical thing would have been to anticipate the situation, because all the warnings were there. But they didn't," she said.

Follow AP coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at:

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'The most dangerous time': UK sees toughest virus threat yet

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The U.K. opened seven mass vaccination centers Monday as it moved into the most perilous moment of the COVID-19 pandemic, with exhausted medical staff reeling under the pressure of packed hospitals and increasing admissions.

England's chief medical officer, Dr. Chris Whitty, warned people to strictly follow measures to prevent the spread of the virus while they wait their turn for a vaccine shot. The government is trying to vaccinate some 15 million people by Feb. 15 — but Britain's National Health Service is struggling to treat those who are ill now.

"I think everybody accepts that this is the most dangerous time we've really had in terms of numbers into the NHS," Whitty told the BBC.

People in the U.K. already face severe coronavirus restrictions but political leaders are considering tightening the rules further as a new, more transmissible variant of COVID-19 aggravates the health care crisis. Leaders want to vaccinate the country out of the crisis, but with hospitals under siege, they must persuade the public to take prevention methods more seriously.

"We don't rule out taking further action if it's needed, but it's your actions now that can make a difference: Stay at home!" Health Secretary Matt Hancock said during a press conference Monday.

Britain, with over 81,000 dead, has the deadliest virus toll in Europe and the number of hospital beds filled by COVID-19 patients has risen steadily for more than a month. English hospitals are now treating 55% more COVID-19 cases than during the first peak of the pandemic in April.

"Everybody knows what they need to do. And I think that's the key thing — minimize the number of contacts," Whitty said.

England last week entered a third national lockdown that closed all nonessential shops, schools, colleges and universities for at least six weeks. The lockdown is slightly looser than the one in the spring with many more workplaces and businesses open, but police across the country have issued fines for breaking rules that require people to stay home except for essential reasons such as exercise or grocery shopping.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government hopes the restrictions will reduce the strain on the NHS while it ramps up a nationwide mass vaccination program using vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and a second from Oxford-AstraZeneca. A third vaccine that has been approved for use, by Moderna, won't arrive until the spring.

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Seven large-scale vaccination centers are opening, joining around 1,000 other sites across the country, including ones at hospitals, general practitioners' clinics and drugstores.

At one vaccination center in Stevenage, north of London, medical workers administering shots described the mood as marked by relief and joy.

"They've been quite emotional actually, really pleased that there is some hope at the end of this tunnel, this very long tunnel for everybody," said Caroline Shepherd, clinical expert for immunizations at Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust. "A few people (were) quite teary, saying 'I'm really pleased to be here, thank you so much, we're really grateful for the NHS.'"

Nearly 2.3 million people in the U.K. have received a COVID-19 vaccine so far. The government's goal is to vaccinate the most vulnerable by mid-February, targeting people over 70, front line healthcare workers, nursing home residents and staff and others who are especially vulnerable. That will protect the people who account for almost 90% of coronavirus-related deaths and may allow restrictions to be eased, the government says.

"(But) we cannot be complacent," Johnson said during a visit to a vaccination center in Bristol. "The worst thing now would be for us to allow the success in rolling out a vaccine program to breed any kind of complacency about the state of the pandemic."

Jill Lawless contributed to this report.

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Harris team says it was blindsided by VP-elect's Vogue cover

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Vice President-elect Kamala Harris has landed on the cover of the February issue of Vogue magazine, but her team says there's a problem: the shot of the country's soon-to-be No. 2 leader isn't what both sides had agreed upon, her team says.

Instead of the powder blue power suit Harris wore for her cover shoot, the first African American woman elected vice president is instead seen in more casual attire and wearing Converse Chuck Taylor sneakers, which she sometimes wore on the campaign trail.

Harris' team was unaware that the cover photo had been switched until images leaked late Saturday, according to a person involved in the negotiations over how Harris would be featured on the cover. Harris' office declined comment and the person spoke Sunday on condition of anonymity.

In a statement, Vogue said it went with the more informal image of Harris for the cover because the photo captured her "authentic, approachable nature, which we feel is one of the hallmarks of the Biden-Harris administration."

But the magazine said it released both images as digital magazine covers to "respond to the seriousness of this moment in history, and the role she has to play leading our country forward."

Harris, who is of Jamaican and Indian descent, posed in the light blue suit in front of a gold backdrop for the magazine's cover. She also posed, more casually dressed in slacks, a blazer and sneakers in front of a pink and green background, for photos that were planned for inside the magazine, the person said. Pink and green are the colors of Harris' college sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha.

Vogue has released both images online, but the photo of a sneaker-clad Harris is the one that will grace the cover of the fashion bible's print edition.

The person with knowledge of the negotiations said Harris' team has expressed to Vogue its disappointment over the magazine's decision.

The cover also generated outrage on social media as posters expressed disappointment in how the

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magazine decided to present the nation's first female vice president on its cover. Harris is set to be sworn in as vice president on Jan. 20.

50 countries vow to protect 30% of land and sea by 2030

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — At least 50 countries committed to protecting 30% of the planet, including land and sea, over the next decade to halt species extinction and address climate change issues, during a global summit Monday aimed at protecting the world's biodiversity.

About 30 leaders, government officials and heads of international organizations participated in the One Planet Summit, which was being held by videoconference because of the coronavirus pandemic. Top U.S. officials were notably absent, as were the leaders of Russia, India and Brazil.

French President Emmanuel Macron announced that the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, which was launched in 2019 by Costa Rica, France and Britain to set a target of protecting at least 30% of the planet by 2030, has now been joined by 50 countries.

A 2019 U.N. report on biodiversity showed that human activities are putting nature in more trouble now than at any other time in human history, with extinction looming for over 1 million species of plants and animals.

"We know even more clearly amid the crisis we are going through that all our vulnerabilities are inter-related," Macron said. "Pressure on nature exerted by human activities is increasing inequalities and threatening our health and our security."

"We can change the story if we decide to do it," he added.

The one-day summit focused on four major topics: protecting terrestrial and marine ecosystems; promoting agroecology, a more sustainable way to grow food; increasing funding to protect biodiversity; and identifying links between deforestation and the health of humans and animals.

The summit also launched a program called PREZODE which Macron presented as an unprecedented international initiative to prevent the emergence of zoonotic diseases and pandemics, which is already mobilizing over 400 researchers and experts across the world. The move comes as scientists suspect that the coronavirus that first infected people in China last year came from an animal source, probably bats.

"Pandemic recovery is our chance to change course," U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres said. "With smart policies and the right investments, we can chart a path that brings health to all, revives economies, builds resilience and rescues biodiversity."

Guterres also stressed that according to the World Economic Forum, emerging business opportunities across nature could create 191 million jobs by 2030.

Other leaders at the summit were German Chancellor Angela Merkel, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. China, represented by Vice Premier Han Zheng, agreed that "collective efforts" are needed.

The event, organized by France, the United Nations and the World Bank, took place without top U.S. officials, as President-elect Joe Biden, a strong proponent of climate issues, does not take office until Jan. 20. During his campaign, Biden pledged to better protect biodiversity by preserving 30% of American lands and waters by 2030.

Monday's talks sought to prepare negotiations on biodiversity targets at a U.N. conference on biodiversity in China in October, after it was postponed last year due to the pandemic. The U.N.'s global climate summit, the COP26, has also been rescheduled for November in the U.K.

A side conference on Monday focused on investment for Africa's Great Green Wall project, which involves gigantic efforts to stop the Sahara Desert from spreading further south.

Participants welcomed the creation of a so-called accelerator, which is expected to release \$14.3 billion over the next five years to finance the program. Launched in 2007, it aims to plant an arc of trees running 7,000 kilometers (4,350 miles) across Africa — from Senegal along the Atlantic all the way to Djibouti on the Gulf of Aden.

Another initiative involves a new coalition of Mediterranean countries working to better protect the sea from pollution and overfishing.

Britain's Prince Charles launched an "urgent appeal" to private sector leaders to join a new investment alliance targeting \$10 billion by 2022 to finance nature-based solutions.

AP Science and Environment Writers Seth Borenstein and Christina Larson contributed.

Follow all AP coverage of climate change issues at <https://apnews.com/hub/Climate>.

Pope says women can read at Mass, but still can't be priests

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis changed church law Monday to explicitly allow women to do more things during Mass, granting them access to the most sacred place on the altar, while continuing to affirm that they cannot be priests.

Francis amended the law to formalize and institutionalize what is common practice in many parts of the world: Women can be installed as lectors, to read Scripture, and serve on the altar as eucharistic ministers. Previously, such roles were officially reserved to men even though exceptions were made.

Francis said he was making the change to increase recognition of the "precious contribution" women make in the church, while emphasizing that all baptized Catholics have a role to play in the church's mission.

But he also noted that doing so further makes a distinction between "ordained" ministries such as the priesthood and diaconate, and ministries open to qualified laity. The Vatican reserves the priesthood for men.

The change comes as Francis remains under pressure to allow women to be deacons — ministers who perform many of the same functions as priests, such as presiding at weddings, baptisms and funerals. Currently, the ministry is reserved for men even though historians say the ministry was performed by women in the early church.

Francis has created a second commission of experts to study whether women could be deacons, after a first one reported on the history of women deacons in the early church.

Advocates for expanding the diaconate to include women say doing so would give women greater say in the ministry and governance of the church, while also helping address priest shortages in several parts of the world.

Opponents say allowing it would become a slippery slope toward ordaining women to the priesthood.

Phyllis Zagano, who was a member of the pope's first study commission, called the changes important given they represent the first time the Vatican has explicitly and through canon law allowed women access to the altar. She said it was a necessary first step before any official consideration of the diaconate for women.

"This is the first codification of allowing women inside the sanctuary," said Zagano. "That's a very big deal."

Noting that bishops have long called for such a move, she said it opens the door to further progress. "You can't be ordained as deacons unless you're installed as lectors or acolytes," said Zagano, an adjunct professor of religion at Hofstra University.

Lucetta Scaraffia, the former editor of the Vatican's women magazine, however, called the new changes a "double trap." She said they merely formalize what is current practice, including at papal Masses, while also making clear that the diaconate is an "ordained" ministry reserved for men.

"This closes the door on the diaconate for women," she said in a phone interview, calling the change "a step backward" for women.

This version corrects to say that women can read Scripture, not Gospel.

A theater of propaganda: The Capitol, cameras and selfies

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By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — One of the defining images of the Capitol siege was of a man dangling from the balcony of the Senate chamber. Clad in black and with a helmet over his head, he might have been hard to identify even after he paused to sit in a leather chair at the top of the Senate dais and hold up a fist.

But Josiah Colt made it easy. He posted a video to his Facebook page moments later, bragging about being the first to reach the chamber floor and sit in Nancy's Pelosi's chair (he was wrong). He used a slur to describe Pelosi and called her "a traitor."

A little later, the 34-year-old from Boise, Idaho, posted again. This time, he sounded more anxious. "I don't know what to do," Colt said in a video he'd soon delete but not before it was cached online. "I'm in downtown D.C. I'm all over the news now."

Colt was far from the only one documenting the insurrection from within last Wednesday in Washington. Many in the mob that ransacked the Capitol did so while livestreaming, posting on Facebook and taking selfies, turning the seat of American lawmaking into a theater of real-time — and often strikingly ugly and violent — far-right propaganda.

"This extremist loop feeds itself. The folks who are watching and commenting and encouraging and sometimes giving some cash are supporting the individual on the ground. And he's supporting their fantasies," says Oren Segal, vice president of the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism.

"Selfie culture," Segal says, "has become so much part of the norm that it's almost second nature when you're carrying out a terrorist insurrection."

Taken together, the fragmented feeds from Wednesday's incursion form a tableau of an ill-conceived insurrection — as full of "I was here" posturing for social media as of ideological revolution — and one that was given far more latitude than most peaceful Black Lives Matters protests were in 2020. In hundreds of images, the fallacy of a far-right brand of "patriotism" was laid bare.

The modern Capitol had previously been besieged before only in Hollywood fiction. Marauding aliens in "Mars Attacks!" Ensnarling ivy in "Logan's Run." Blown to bits in "Independence Day." But the imagery of last week's siege offered something far more banal if no less chilling: a warped cinema verité of right-wing extremism with waving Confederate flags and white-power poses in Capitol halls.

Though many involved Wednesday in Washington were Trump supporters without designs on violence, the visuals illustrate that some were clearly there to summon mayhem if not outright bloodshed. The call to the Capitol drew many of the right's extremist factions — some of whom helped lead the charge.

The white nationalist Tim Gionet, known online as "Baked Alaska" and a participant in the "Unite the Right" rally at Charlottesville, streamed live from congressional offices, gleefully documenting the break-in for more than 15,000 viewers on the streaming platform Dlive. The service, ostensibly for gamers, has grown into an attractive tool for white nationalists. Nick Fuentes, a leader of the white supremacist "Groyper Army," streamed on Dlive from outside the Capitol. He later tweeted that the siege was "awesome."

Journalists documenting the chaos, and in some cases suffering attacks from violent protesters, captured the storming of the Capitol. But the pervasive self-documentation of the rioters told another story: the on-the-ground culmination of an online alternative reality fueled by QAnon conspiracies, false claims of fraud in the election and Trump's own rhetoric.

"In their minds they had impunity. I'm having trouble understanding how these people could believe that. At the same time, I can see that it's of a piece with the Trump family," says Larry Rosenthal, chair of the Berkeley Center for Right-Wing Studies and author of the upcoming "Empire of Resentment: Populism's Toxic Embrace of Nationalism."

"They're going to be prosecuted," he says of those involved, and "they have provided the evidence."

Federal law enforcement officials have pledged an exhaustive investigation into the rampage that left five people dead, including Capitol Police officer Brian D. Sicknick. They are relying in part on the social media trail many left behind. "The goal here is to identify people and get them," Ken Kohl, the top deputy federal prosecutor in Washington, told reporters Friday.

Among those arrested so far is Richard Barnett, who was photographed sitting in Pelosi's office with his

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feet on her desk. Outside the Capitol, he proudly clutched mail he said belonged to Pelosi. The 60-year-old Barnett, from Gravette, Arkansas, faces up to a year in federal prison for three charges including theft of public property.

Also arrested was Derrick Evans, a newly elected Republican from West Virginia, who had posted video on social media of himself clamoring at the Capitol door. "We're in! Keep it moving, baby!" Evans shouted in a packed doorway of Trump supporters. Inside the Capitol, he chanted: "Our house! Our house!"

Evans deleted the videos, but federal prosecutors said they found them on Reddit. If convicted, he faces up to 1 1/2 years in federal prison for two misdemeanors: entering a restricted area and disorderly conduct.

Others have been fired for participating in the mob. The Texas company Goosehead Insurance fired its associate general counsel, Paul Davis, after he posted an Instagram video complaining about being tear-gassed while trying to break into the Capitol. Maryland's Navistar Direct Marketing said it fired an employee who was seen inside the Capitol. He hasn't been identified, but photographs showed a man with an easily visible employee badge from the company around his neck.

Colt landed on the Senate floor; despite his remarks, photos suggested he had actually sat in a chair reserved for Vice President Mike Pence, who is president of the Senate. Colt issued an apology begging forgiveness for his prominent role. "In the moment I thought I was doing the right thing," he said.

Jessie Daniels, a professor of sociology at Hunter College whose books include "Cyber Racism: White Supremacy Online and the New Attack on Civil Rights," expects many of the images from the Capitol breach will reverberate online as far-right propaganda. The woman who died trying to break through a Capitol door, Ashli Babbitt, will be made a martyr.

"She's going to be on all the posters, trying to get people radicalized," Daniels says.

For those who have been tracking and researching how the far right operates online, the live streams of well-known activists like Gionet were especially telling. Gionet streamed Wednesday from within the Capitol, interacting with his followers as he went. When the number of viewers ticked over 10,000, he cheered, "Shoutout to Germany!"

Inside congressional offices, Gionet, who has been banned from Twitter and YouTube, filmed himself making a mock phone call to the Senate. "Yeah, we need to get our boy, Donald J. Trump, into office," he said. One user cautioned him about leaving fingerprints on the phone.

Gionet profited by his exploits. Megan Squire, a professor of computer science at Elon University who has studied Dlive, estimates Gionet made \$2,000 in donations while inside the Capitol.

"He's making an enormous amount of money saying incredibly racist and anti-Semitic and violent things," Squire says. "They're hugely brand-conscious."

Scrutiny has intensified on the role social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, which both suspended Trump in the days following the riot. For those who have tracked far-right fringes, a reckoning for social media in its role in giving extremists platforms is long overdue. Before the Capitol siege, Squire had observed no mechanism for reporting questionable content on Dlive. "Their approach to content modulation is basically nonexistent, which is why these guys love to be there," she said.

On Saturday, after mounting pressure, Dlive suspended several accounts, including those of Gionet and Fuentes, saying they were "found to be inciting violent and illegal activities."

Following neo-Fascists from one platform to another, some have said, is an inevitably helpless game of catch-up. Daniels disagrees.

"There's a lot of evidence that deplatforming people who are harmful from these platforms is effective," Daniels says. "The pushback from tech people is that it's whack-a-mole, that if they're not here, they'll go somewhere else. Fine. Let's play whack-a-mole. Let's do this. Let's chase them off of every platform until they go away."

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

Biden chooses veteran diplomat Burns as CIA director

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By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — William Burns, a well-known figure in diplomatic circles around the world, is President-elect Joe Biden's choice to lead the CIA, a selection likely to be embraced by the rank and file at the nation's premier spy agency.

A former ambassador to Russia and Jordan, Burns, 64, had a 33-year career at the State Department under both Republican and Democratic presidents. He rose through the ranks of the diplomatic corps to become deputy secretary of state before retiring in 2014 to run the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace.

If confirmed, he would succeed Gina Haspel, the first female CIA director, who guided the agency under President Donald Trump. Trump expressed skepticism about intelligence and frequently disparaged the assessments of U.S. spy agencies, especially about Russia's interference in the 2016 election to help his campaign.

Trump also fired several career intelligence professionals in favor of loyalists, including some with little to no experience in the field.

Burns has never been an American intelligence officer, but he has worked with many abroad.

"I developed enormous respect for my colleagues in the CIA," Burns said in an online video statement Monday with Biden. "I served with them in hard places around the world. I saw firsthand the courage and professionalism that they displayed and the sacrifices that their families made."

Burns called intelligence the first line of defense for the country and the basis for making sound policy decisions. He also said he would deliver the intelligence to Biden and policymakers "without a hint of partisanship."

Burns is perhaps an unconventional choice for the CIA job that many thought would go to a career intelligence officer.

However, he is also deeply experienced in the kind of cloak-and-dagger secret contacts that is a hallmark of the agency and won plaudits for his analysis and reporting abilities while he served as an American diplomat overseas. Burns was the author of some of the most insightful State Department cables that were published by Wikileaks in 2010 and is widely respected throughout the national security community.

Michael Morell, a career intelligence officer and former acting director of the CIA whose name was floated to hold the top position under Biden, praised the pick, an indication that Burns likely will be embraced by the spy agency's rank and file.

"I've known Bill Burns for decades. ... His command of the issues, his deep respect for intelligence, and his care for people will ensure it," Morell tweeted.

Norman Roule, a 34-year veteran of the CIA and an expert on Iran in the intelligence community, concurred: "Bill Burns is deeply respected for his integrity, honesty, & commitment to the workforce," Roule tweeted. "He will arrive w great respect for the IC & its work."

Amid tumult in the State Department after Trump took office in 2017, Burns held his tongue until last year when he began writing highly critical pieces of the Trump administration's policies in Foreign Affairs and other publications. Burns has been a staunch advocate of rebuilding and restructuring the foreign service, positions Biden has aligned himself with.

Biden said in a statement Monday that Burns shares his "profound belief that intelligence must be apolitical."

"Ambassador Burns will bring the knowledge, judgment and perspective we need to prevent and confront threats before they can reach our shores," Biden said. "The American people will sleep soundly with him as our next CIA director."

Burns was said to have been a candidate to be Biden's secretary of state. Biden chose Anthony Blinken instead.

He joined the foreign service in 1982 and before being named ambassador to Russia in 2005, served as a top aide to former Secretaries of State William Christopher and Madeleine Albright as well as director of the State Department's policy planning office.

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He has received three Presidential Distinguished Service Awards and the highest civilian honors from the Pentagon and the U.S. intelligence community. He has doctoral degrees in international relations from Oxford University, where he studied as a Marshall Scholar.

In his 2019 book "The Back Channel: A Memoir of American Diplomacy and the Case for Its Renewal," Burns called for a revamp of American diplomacy, while recalling his days in the field, including helping to spearhead the early stages of the Obama administration's outreach to Iran in 2013.

The CIA post is not expected to be a Cabinet-level post under Biden. The CIA stopped being a Cabinet-level position during the George W. Bush administration. That's because in 2005, after 9/11, the Office of the National Intelligence Director was created to oversee and improve cooperation among all the agencies within the U.S. intelligence community. The director of national intelligence, not the CIA director, was in the Cabinet.

Trump elevated the CIA director post back up to a Cabinet-level position, and both Haspel and National Intelligence Director John Ratcliffe sit in his Cabinet.

Associated Press writer Deb Riechmann contributed to this report.

Snow, heavy rain in Balkans cause floods, disrupt traffic

By JOVANA GEC Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — Days of heavy rain and snow across the Balkans left homes and fields flooded Monday, disrupted traffic on highways and at ports and caused power outages.

In Serbia, authorities on Monday started clearing up tons of garbage that was clogging a southwestern lake after it was swept off from landfills by overflowing rivers. Emergency measures were announced in the southern Doljevac and Vlasotince municipalities, where rescue teams helped more than two dozen people evacuate their homes.

The state RTS television reported that numerous homes, barns and fields were flooded and villages were left without drinking water after days of rain and snow around the southern town of Leskovac and nearby areas.

In central and eastern Serbia, thousands of people were left without electricity as heavy snow collapsed distribution lines. Serbia's state power company EPS said Monday they were working to restore power.

Authorities urged drivers not to take to the road unless absolutely necessary because of heavy snow.

Traffic disruptions and speed limits due to snow were reported in Croatia, where a bus overturned early Monday on the main east-west highway, injuring eight people.

Floods were reported in Albania and Kosovo, where days of heavy rain mixed with snowy weather.

Thousands of acres of land were flooded in western Albania and bridges and roads have been damaged, leaving villages isolated and forcing emergency deliveries of water to hundreds of people.

Power outages were also reported, which meant that some schools could not reopen Monday as authorities struggled to handle water levels at the main hydropower system on the Drini River. The army, police and local emergency teams stepped in to assist isolated residents in Shkoder, Lezha and Durres, where major flooding in 2010 caused devastation.

In Kosovo, officials were talking with NATO-led peacekeepers over how to help flood-hit areas in the west where people have been forced to evacuate their homes. A house in the village of Fushe belonging to 60-year-old Muj Zabeli was flooded and seriously damaged, but Zabeli said he was getting little help.

"No one is interested," he complained. "You may suffer a loss here and no one would care."

Slippery roads and strong winds prompted authorities to ban trucks with trailers and double-decker buses on some roads, as many Adriatic Sea ferry connections were halted.

The snow has made the situation even harder for residents in central Croatia, which was hit by a major earthquake on Dec. 29. Many people cannot stay in their damaged homes and have been sleeping in containers.

Heavy rains further south in Montenegro damaged a fortress wall in the southern town of Ulcinj, near

the border with Albania.

Llazar Semini contributed from Albania and Predrag Milic from Montenegro.

Capitol assault a more sinister attack than first appeared

By JAY REEVES, LISA MASCARO and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Under battle flags bearing Donald Trump's name, the Capitol's attackers pinned a bloodied police officer in a doorway, his twisted face and screams captured on video. They mortally wounded another officer with a blunt weapon and body-slammed a third over a railing into the crowd.

"Hang Mike Pence!" the insurrectionists chanted as they pressed inside, beating police with pipes. They demanded House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's whereabouts, too. They hunted any and all lawmakers: "Where are they?" Outside, makeshift gallows stood, complete with sturdy wooden steps and the noose. Guns and pipe bombs had been stashed in the vicinity.

Only days later is the extent of the danger from one of the darkest episodes in American democracy coming into focus. The sinister nature of the assault has become evident, betraying the crowd as a force determined to occupy the inner sanctums of Congress and run down leaders — Trump's vice president and the Democratic House speaker among them.

This was not just a collection of Trump supporters with MAGA bling caught up in a wave.

That revelation came in real time to Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., who briefly took over proceedings in the House chamber as the mob closed in Wednesday and Pelosi was spirited to safer quarters moments before everything went haywire.

"I saw this crowd of people banging on that glass screaming," McGovern told The Associated Press on Sunday. "Looking at their faces, it occurred to me, these aren't protesters. These are people who want to do harm."

"What I saw in front of me," he said, "was basically home-grown fascism, out of control."

Pelosi said Sunday "the evidence is that it was a well-planned, organized group with leadership and guidance and direction. And the direction was to go get people." She did not elaborate on that point in a "60 Minutes" interview on CBS.

The scenes of rage, violence and agony are so vast that the whole of it may still be beyond comprehension. But with countless smartphone videos emerging from the scene, much of it from gloating insurrectionists themselves, and more lawmakers recounting the chaos that was around them, the contours of the uprising are increasingly coming into relief.

THE STAGING

The mob got stirring encouragement from Trump and more explicit marching orders from the president's men.

"Fight like hell," Trump exhorted his partisans at the staging rally. "Let's have trial by combat," implored his lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, whose attempt to throw out election results in trial by courtroom failed. It's time to "start taking down names and kicking ass," said Republican Rep. Mo Brooks of Alabama.

Criminals pardoned by Trump, among them Roger Stone and Michael Flynn, came forward at rallies on the eve of the attack to tell the crowds they were fighting a battle between good and evil. On Capitol Hill, Republican Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri gave a clenched-fist salute to the hordes outside the Capitol as he pulled up to press his challenge of the election results.

The crowd was pumped. Until a little after 2 p.m., Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell was at the helm for the final minutes of decorum in partnership with Pence, who was serving his ceremonial role presiding over the process.

Both men had backed Trump's agenda and excused or ignored his provocations for four years, but now had no mechanism or will to subvert the election won by Biden. That placed them high among the insurrectionists' targets, no different in the minds of the mob from the "socialists."

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"If this election were overturned by mere allegations from the losing side, our democracy would enter a death spiral," McConnell told his chamber, not long before things spiraled out of control in what lawmakers call the "People's House."

Far-right social media users had openly hinted for weeks that chaos would erupt at the Capitol when Congress convened to certify the election results. As the attack unfolded, they urged followers to "trust the plan" and "hold the line." Just what the plan might have been is central to the investigation.

The FBI is investigating whether some of the attackers intended to kidnap members of Congress and hold them hostage. Authorities are particularly focused on why some in the mob were seen carrying plastic zip-tie handcuffs and had apparently accessed areas of the Capitol generally difficult for the public to locate.

THE ASSAULT

Thousands had swarmed the Capitol. They charged into police and metal barricades outside the building, shoving and hitting officers in their way. The assault quickly pushed through the vastly outnumbered police line; officers ran down one man and pummeled him.

In the melee outside, near the structure built for Joe Biden's inauguration on Jan. 20, a man threw a fire extinguisher at the helmeted head of a police officer. Then he picked up a bullhorn and threw it at officers, too.

The identity of the officer could not immediately be confirmed. But Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick, who was wounded in the chaos, died the next night; officials say he had been hit in the head with a fire extinguisher.

Shortly after 2 p.m., Capitol Police sent an alert telling workers in a House office building to head to underground transportation tunnels that criss-cross the complex. Minutes later, Pence was taken from the Senate chamber to a secret location and police announced the lockdown of the Capitol. "You may move throughout the building(s) but stay away from exterior windows and doors," said the email blast. "If you are outside, seek cover."

At 2:15 p.m., the Senate recessed its Electoral College debate and a voice was heard over the chamber's audio system: "The protesters are in the building." The doors of the House chamber were barricaded and lawmakers inside it were told they may need to duck under their chairs or relocate to cloakrooms off the House floor because the mob has breached the Capitol Rotunda.

Even before the mob reached sealed doors of the House chamber, Capitol Police pulled Pelosi away from the podium, she told "60 Minutes."

"I said, 'No, I want to be here,'" she said. "And they said, 'Well, no, you have to leave.' I said, 'No, I'm not leaving.' They said, 'No, you must leave.'" So she did.

At 2:44 p.m., as lawmakers inside the House chamber prepared to be evacuated, a gunshot was heard from right outside, in the Speaker's Lobby on the other side of the barricaded doors. That's when Ashli Babbitt, wearing a Trump flag like a cape, was shot to death on camera as insurrectionists railed, her blood pooling on the white marble floor.

The Air Force veteran from California had climbed through a broken window into the Speaker's Lobby before a police officer's gunshot felled her.

Back in the House chamber, a woman in the balcony was seen and heard screaming. Why she was doing that only became clear later when video circulated. She was screaming a prayer.

Within about 10 minutes of the shooting, House lawmakers and staff members who had been cowering during the onslaught, terror etched into their faces, had been taken from the chamber and gallery to a secure room. The mob broke into Pelosi's offices while members of her staff hid in one of the rooms of her suite.

"The staff went under the table, barricaded the door, turned out the lights and were silent in the dark," she said. "Under the table for two and a half hours."

On the Senate side, Capitol Police had circled the chamber and ordered all staff and reporters and any nearby senators into the chamber and locked it down. At one point about 200 people were inside; an officer

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armed with what appeared to be a semi-automatic weapon stood between McConnell and the Democratic leader, Sen. Chuck Schumer.

Authorities then ordered an evacuation and rushed everyone inside to a secure location, the Senate parliamentary staff scooping up the boxes holding the Electoral College certificates.

Although the Capitol's attackers had been sent with Trump's exhortation to fight, they appeared in some cases to be surprised that they had actually made it in.

When they breached the abandoned Senate chamber, they milled around, rummaged through papers, sat at desks and took videos and pictures. One of them climbed to the dais and yelled, "Trump won that election!" Two others were photographed carrying flex cuffs typically used for mass arrests.

But outside the chamber, the mob's hunt was still on for lawmakers. "Where are they?" people could be heard yelling.

That question could have also applied to reinforcements — where were they?

At about 5:30 p.m., once the National Guard had arrived to supplement the overwhelmed Capitol Police force, a full-on effort began to get the attackers out.

Heavily armed officers brought in as reinforcements started using tear gas in a coordinated fashion to get people moving toward the door, then combed the halls for stragglers. As darkness fell, they pushed the mob farther out onto the plaza and lawn, using officers in riot gear in full shields and clouds of tear gas, flash-bangs and percussion grenades.

At 7:23 p.m., officials announced that people hunkered down in two nearby congressional office buildings could leave "if anyone must."

Within the hour, the Senate had resumed its work and the House followed, returning the People's House to the control of the people's representatives. Lawmakers affirmed Biden's election victory early the next morning, shell-shocked by the catastrophic failure of security.

Associated Press writers Dustin Weaver in Washington and Michael Casey in Concord, New Hampshire, contributed to this report. Reeves reported from Birmingham, Alabama.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Jan. 12, the 12th day of 2021. There are 353 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 12, 2000, in a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Illinois v. Wardlow*, gave police broad authority to stop and question people who run at the sight of an officer.

On this date:

In 1773, the first public museum in America was organized in Charleston, South Carolina.

In 1828, the United States and Mexico signed a Treaty of Limits defining the boundary between the two countries to be the same as the one established by an 1819 treaty between the U.S. and Spain.

In 1910, at a White House dinner hosted by President William Howard Taft, Baroness Rosen, wife of the Russian ambassador, caused a stir by requesting and smoking a cigarette — it was, apparently, the first time a woman had smoked openly during a public function in the executive mansion. (Some of the other women present who had brought their own cigarettes began lighting up in turn.)

In 1915, the U.S. House of Representatives rejected, 204-174, a proposed constitutional amendment to give women nationwide the right to vote.

In 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Sipuel v. Board of Regents of University of Oklahoma*, unanimously ruled that state law schools could not discriminate against applicants on the basis of race.

In 1959, Berry Gordy Jr. founded Motown Records (originally Tamla Records) in Detroit.

In 1969, the New York Jets of the American Football League upset the Baltimore Colts of the National Football League 16-7 in Super Bowl III, played at the Orange Bowl in Miami.

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In 1971, the groundbreaking situation comedy "All in the Family" premiered on CBS television.

In 1976, mystery writer Dame Agatha Christie died in Wallingford, England, at age 85.

In 1995, Qubilah Shabazz (keh-BEE'-lah shuh-BAZ'), the daughter of Malcolm X, was arrested in Minneapolis on charges she'd tried to hire a hitman to kill Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan (the charges were later dropped in a settlement with the government).

In 2006, Mehmet Ali Agca (MEH'-met AH'-lee AH'-juh), the Turkish gunman who shot Pope John Paul II in 1981, was released from an Istanbul prison after serving more than 25 years in Italy and Turkey for the plot against the pontiff and the slaying of a Turkish journalist.

In 2010, Haiti was struck by a magnitude-7 earthquake; the Haitian government said 316,000 people were killed, while a report prepared for the U.S. Agency for International Development suggested the death toll may have been between 46,000 and 85,000.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama visited Tucson, Arizona, the scene of a shooting rampage that wounded Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and killed six others; he urged Americans to refrain from partisan bickering and to embrace the idealistic vision of democracy held by 9-year-old Christina Taylor Green, the youngest of the victims.

Five years ago: In his final State of the Union address, President Barack Obama urged Americans to rekindle their belief in the promise of change that first carried him to the White House, declaring that the country must not allow election-year fear and division to put economic and security progress at risk. Iran detained 10 American sailors and their two small Navy boats after the boats drifted into Iranian waters; the sailors and their vessels were released the following day. The St. Louis Rams' move back to Los Angeles was approved by 30 of 32 NFL owners. Media mogul Rupert Murdoch announced his engagement to ex-supermodel Jerry Hall, Mick Jagger's ex-wife (they married the following March).

One year ago: President Donald Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi sparred ahead of Trump's impeachment trial, with Pelosi saying senators would "pay a price" for blocking new witnesses, and Trump labeling the House impeachment vote a "totally partisan hoax." Defense Secretary Mark Esper said he had seen no hard evidence that four American embassies had been under a possible threat, as Trump had claimed, when the president authorized the drone strike that killed Iran's top military commander.

Today's Birthdays: The Amazing Kreskin is 86. Country singer William Lee Golden (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 82. Actor Anthony Andrews is 73. Movie director Wayne Wang is 72. Actor Kirstie Alley is 70. Political commentator Rush Limbaugh is 70. Legal affairs blogger Ann Althouse is 70. Writer Walter Mosley is 69. Country singer Ricky Van Shelton is 69. Radio-TV personality Howard Stern is 67. Writer-producer-director John Lasseter is 64. Broadcast journalist Christiane Amanpour is 63. Actor Oliver Platt is 61. Basketball Hall of Famer Dominique Wilkins is 61. Entrepreneur Jeff Bezos is 57. Rock singer Rob Zombie is 56. Actor Olivier Martinez is 55. Model Vendela is 54. Actor Farrah Forke is 53. Actor Rachael Harris is 53. Rock singer Zack de la Rocha is 51. Rapper Raekwon (Wu Tang Clan) is 51. Actor Zabryna Guevara is 49. Singer Dan Haseltine (Jars of Clay) is 48. Singer Melanie Chisholm (Spice Girls) is 47. Contemporary Christian singer Jeremy Camp is 43. Actor Cynthia Addai-Robinson is 41. Rhythm-and-blues singer Amerie is 41. Actor Issa Rae is 36. Actor Will Rothhaar is 34. Actor Andrew Lawrence is 33. Rock singer ZAYN is 28. Pop/soul singer Ella Henderson (TV: "The X Factor") is 25.