

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 1 of 72

- [1- Scores from Yesterday](#)
- [2- Coming up on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [2- Conde National League](#)
- [3- Upcoming Schedule](#)
- [4- That's Life by Tony Bender](#)
- [5- Prairie Doc: Lessons from the Liver](#)
- [6- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- [8- Groton School COVID-19 Report](#)
- [9- January 25th COVID-19 UPDATE](#)
- [17- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [18- Weather Pages](#)
- [21- Daily Devotional](#)
- [22- News from the Associated Press](#)



## Scores from yesterday

**Varsity: Groton Area 65, Northwestern 29**  
**Junior Varsity: Groton Area 40, Northwestern 21**  
**C Game: Groton Area 50, Northwestern 22**  
**8th Grade: Groton Area 43, Northwestern 31**  
**7th Grade: Groton Area 62, Northwestern 15**



## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 2 of 72

## Coming up on GDILIVE.COM

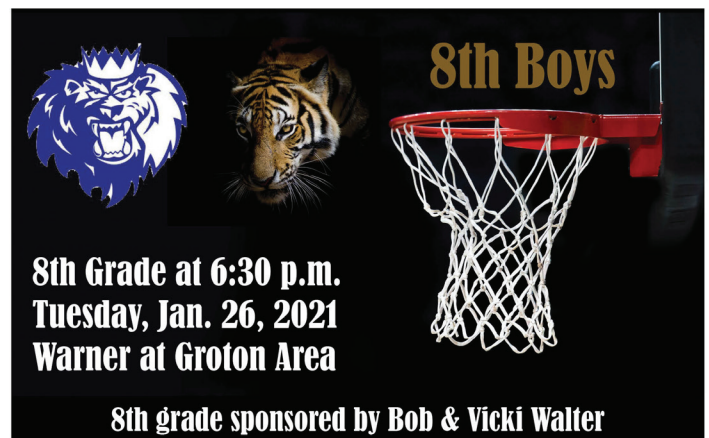


7th Boys

7th Grade at 5:30 p.m.  
Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021  
Warner at Groton Area

7th grade sponsored by Beauty Brew Coffee & Boutique

The poster features a blue tiger head logo on the left, a tiger's face in the center, and a basketball hoop on the right. The text is in white and gold.



8th Boys

8th Grade at 6:30 p.m.  
Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021  
Warner at Groton Area

8th grade sponsored by Bob & Vicki Walter

The poster features a blue tiger head logo on the left, a tiger's face in the center, and a basketball hoop on the right. The text is in white and gold.



Girls

JV at 6 p.m.  
followed by varsity  
Thursday, Jan. 28, 2021  
Northwestern at Groton Area

The poster features a yellow tiger head logo on the left, a tiger's face in the center, and a basketball hoop on the right. The text is in white and gold.

## Conde National League

**Team Standings:** Mets 19, Cubs 18, Giants 15, Pirates 14, Braves 14, Tigers 4

**Men's High Games:** Collin Cady 218; Butch Farmen 207, 200; Lance Frohling 204

**Men's High Series:** Butch Farmen 565, Lance Farmen 506, Collin Cady 503

**Women's High Games:** Tanah Messevou 179, Sam Bahr 176, Nancy Radke 175

**Women's High Series:** Sam Bahr 489, Tanah Messenou 471, Nancy Radke 468

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 3 of 72

## Upcoming Schedule

### Tuesday, Jan. 26

Junior High Games: Warner at Groton Area Arena. 7th at 5:30 p.m. and 8th at 6:30 p.m.

### Thursday, Jan. 28

Girls Basketball hosts Northwestern (JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity game).  
Northeast Conference Wrestling at Redfield, 4 p.m.

### Saturday, Jan. 30

Groton Area Wrestling Tournament, 10 a.m.  
Boys Basketball at DAK12-NEC Clash in Madison

### Monday, Feb. 1

Junior High Basketball at Redfield (7th at 5 p.m., 8th at 6 p.m.)

### Tuesday, Feb. 2

Boys Basketball at Langford (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity game)  
Girls Basketball hosting Aberdeen Roncalli with JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

### Thursday, Feb. 4

Doubleheader Basketball hosting Faulkton. Girls JV at 4 p.m., Boys JV at 5 p.m., Girls Varsity at 6:30 p.m. followed by Boys Varsity.

### Friday, Feb. 5

Wrestling at Lyman High School, 5 p.m.

### Saturday, Feb. 6

Girls Basketball at DAK12-NEC Clash in Madison.  
Boys Basketball at Tiospa Zina (C game at 1 p.m., JV at 2:30 p.m. followed by varsity.

### Monday, Feb. 8

Junior High Basketball hosts Webster. 5:30 p.m.  
School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

### Tuesday, Feb. 9

Girls Basketball hosts Tiospa Zina. JV game at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

### Wednesday, Feb. 10

LifeTouch Pictures in GHS Gym, 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

### Thursday, Feb. 11

Parent-Teacher Conference, 1:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
Basketball Doubleheader with Milbank in Groton. JV girls at 4 p.m. followed by JV boys, Varsity Girls and Varsity Boys.

### Saturday, Feb. 12

Basketball Doubleheader at Mobridge. JV girls at 1 p.m., JV boys at 2 p.m., Varsity Girls at 3 p.m. followed by Varsity Boys.

### Monday, Feb. 15

Junior High Basketball at Aberdeen Roncalli Elementary School (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)  
Boys Basketball at Aberdeen Roncalli (C game at 5 p.m., JV at 6:15 and Varsity at 7:30).

### Thursday, Feb. 18

Junior High Basketball hosts Mobridge-Pollock in the Arena. 7th at 6 p.m., 8th at 7 p.m.

### Friday, Feb. 19

Basketball Doubleheader with Deuel in Groton. JV girls at 4 p.m., JV boys at 5 p.m. followed by Varsity Girls and Varsity Boys.

### Saturday, Feb. 20

Regional Wrestling Tournament in Groton, 10 a.m.

### Tuesday, Feb. 23: GBB Region

### Thursday, Feb. 25: GBB Region

### Friday, Feb. 26

Boys Basketball hosts Aberdeen Christian. JV at 6 p.m. followed by Varsity.

### Tuesday, March 2: BBB Region

### Thursday, March 4: GBB SoDAK 16

### Friday, March 5: BBB Region

### Tuesday, March 9: BBB SoDAK 16

March 11-13: State Girls Basketball Tournament in Watertown

March 18-20: State Boys Basketball Tournament in Sioux Falls

## Learning Pacifism

The late Polish poet Stanislaw Lec once said, "Youth is the gift of nature, but age is a work of art." I'd like to believe that is true because looking back I am convinced that when I was younger, I was a complete moron—probably in all actuality, not even a primate. I'm not sure I am approaching art, either, unless it is something by Jackson Pollock, who got rich by spilling paint. (Somewhere in America there is a young man who just splashed paint all over a drop cloth and is listening to his mother tell him to clean it up when in fact he should sign it and tack it up on the walls of the Louvre.)

Please allow me a bit of navel-gazing in this week's installment. It's hard to ignore my navel since it marches two feet in front of me where ever I go. When it comes to offering insight, a navel is a lot like a crystal ball only with more lint. At my age, if you do any reflection at all, you are likely to realize that what you might believe are isolated behavioral incidents are actually patterns.

Though I consider myself to be a "logical pacifist," the record, which reaches back to childhood, would indicate a regular pattern of defiance in the face of common sense. Any military strategist will tell you that when confronted with superior numbers, a temporary retreat is an honorable option. Somehow, as a child, I imagined that there was more honor in taunting the enemy. In a War of Words, I almost always won. Unfortunately, I typically could not avoid the predictable escalation that followed my witty commentary.

In grade school, I once found myself and my newspaper delivery bag tangled in the handlebars with Mike Butler and Doug Krueger administering a vigorous beat-down after my critique of their masculinity. It started with them pelting me with crabapples as I peddled by on my paper route. They both had pretty good arms, and it hurt, but I yelled out that they threw like girls. But not in those words exactly. That is how I found myself with a black eye and bruised ego on Bernice Rollo's front steps, copies of GRIT blowing in the wind.

This was before I fully immersed myself in the tenets of pacifism, so sometime later, when I found Doug alone on his porch I asked if he wanted to go another round. Just me and him. "No, I'm good," he grinned. However, the only way I am going to fight Mike Butler is if he is in a wheelchair and I have a bat—and can sneak up on him. Even then, I still give him the edge. He probably still has knuckles on his knuckles.

Shakespeare said, "Discretion is the better part of valor," but I struggled with classical literature not to mention discretion. Once, Kurt Smith, who looked like a pro wrestler, chucked a snowball in my general direction, and true to form, I questioned his manhood. "You throw like Doug Krueger," I said, which would have been hilarious except Doug was with him.

Like Kurt needed the help. Next thing you know, I was tackled next to Harold Schlosser's barn and Kurt was shoving a dried cow turd into my mouth. If you are ever in a fight and are unsure of how it should be scored, here's the deal: if you find a cow turd in your mouth, it is difficult to claim victory. Remember to floss.

Fight fans were not clambering for a rematch, but we had one, anyway. For that contest, Kurt didn't have a wingman, but even if I was equipped with an air-to-surface missile, Vegas wouldn't have taken the odds. It was mano-a-mano. In other words, I was hopelessly outgunned. I made my stand in study hall after Kurt, who sat behind me, poked me in the back one too many times. Furious, I whirled around and snatched his prized gold pen, looked him in the eye, and broke it in half. At that point, logic, running about five seconds later than adrenaline, informed me that this was not going to be a fight but something closer to a suicide mission.

You know the drum solo in "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida?" That's what it sounded like as Kurt dribbled my forehead like a basketball in staccato fashion on my desk. He bounced my head up and down so hard, the desk got a concussion. It felt like the Irish were River Dancing on my face. There was not a darn thing I could do about it. I've seen rag dolls put up a better fight. Still, not ending up with a cow turd in my mouth



**That's Life**  
by Tony Bender

was a moral victory.

The Book of Proverbs says, "Pride goes before a fall." So does stupidity. And banana peels, too, as long as we're on the subject. But I still believe defiance has its place—like if it is 1776 and you are wearing tights and a wig. Of course, if you are wearing tights and a wig, you're just asking for it. That said, if Kurt Smith ever walks by me in tights and a powdered wig, I shall refrain from discussing fashion. We will talk about the weather, and I will call him "sir." I don't care if he has flowers in his hair and bells on his toes. I'm a pacifist, but common sense can be beaten into you, and I'd like to think I've learned a few things.

## Lessons from the Liver

It was my first month in the hospital as a new internal medicine intern at a large university hospital. Upper-level residents that I met during orientation asked me, "What is your first rotation?" When I answered, "hepatology," the looks I got in response told me I was in for a tough initiation.

The hepatology service included some of the sickest patients in the hospital. Each one had either end stage cirrhosis or a liver transplant, plus some acute condition requiring them to be in the hospital. They were so complicated, making clear to the newly minted Dr. Evans that a healthy liver is critical for the body to function normally.

Cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) is the undesirable result of many types of chronic liver disease. Many causes of liver disease occur at random, related to autoimmune or genetic origins. However, the most common reasons patients develop cirrhosis are alcohol related liver disease, hepatitis C, and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, all of which might be controlled if we catch them before cirrhosis develops.

Most people know that chronic heavy alcohol use can result in cirrhosis. We don't fully understand why some heavy drinkers develop cirrhosis and some don't, but longstanding alcohol abuse does typically result in some degree of liver damage. Though it can be very difficult, stopping alcohol intake can, in turn, stop progression of liver damage in most patients with alcohol related liver disease.

Hepatitis C, a viral infection which in some people becomes chronic and can ultimately lead to cirrhosis, has been the most common reason for liver transplant in the United States in recent years. With major developments in treatment for this disease over the last decade, we now have highly effective and well tolerated antiviral treatments to cure hepatitis C. This virus can reside in the liver and bloodstream without causing symptoms for decades. Current recommendations advise that we screen for hepatitis C in patients who have significant risk, including all Americans born between 1945 and 1965 in addition to other high risk groups. Talk to your doctor if that includes you.

Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is increasingly prevalent and now is among the most common reasons for liver failure. NAFLD is thought to be due to metabolic factors resulting in fatty deposition in the liver. It commonly occurs along with other metabolic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and high cholesterol. Treatment of NAFLD is focused on diet and exercise and controlling those other metabolic diseases.

That one month as a new physician on the hepatology service was enlightening. I learned so much about the importance of a healthy liver, and I continue to use those lessons regularly in primary care.

Kelly Evans-Hullinger, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices internal medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org) and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



By Dr. Kelly Evans-Hullinger ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 6 of 72

**#337 in a series**

## **Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller**

We continue to show small improvements. New cases are down to 152,900 today; they could go up some tomorrow when the weekend effects are off, but this looks good. We now have reported 25,319,400 cases in the US so far in this pandemic, a 0.6% increase from yesterday. Better yet, if we keep this up, it will be more than five days between 25 million and 26 million; let's take what we get there. Hospitalizations are down further to 110, 628. That can continue to drop for my money.

The worst-off state over the past few weeks, still with the country's highest infection rate, is Arizona; and even this state is showing declines in numbers. New-case numbers and hospitalizations have dropped to the lowest point in a month. Still, one in 141 Arizonans has been diagnosed just in the past week, so it's not over yet.

Finally, hospitalizations in Texas are declining. At record highs just days ago, it appears these numbers are showing real decreases for the seventh consecutive day. Looks like this might be real. Texas has been as hard-hit as any state, so these declines are a huge step out of the deepest of trouble. Let's hope they continue.

In an acknowledgement of the improving conditions in that state, the governor of California is easing restrictions over large parts of the state. We've been here before where conditions seemed to warrant and restrictions were lifted, only to result in a renewed surge. I most sincerely hope we do not see that this time; those folks are well overdue for a break. It looks like restaurants will be able to resume outdoor service and churches outdoor services, also that nail and hair salons will be able to reopen.

We have now lost 420,892 people to this virus, 0.4% more than yesterday's total. We keep it up at this rate, we'll hit half a million souls lost in about three weeks. Like everything else in this pandemic, all we've seen is acceleration. There were 1815 deaths reported today.

I frequently see claims about how the US is doing a whole lot better than other countries, that the only reason we have had so many deaths is that we have had so many cases. Of course, one might argue that a country with so many cases isn't really doing a whole lot better at all, but we'll set that aside for the moment to look at deaths. Here, I give you the top five countries in the world for per capita mortality, along with their per-100,000-residents death rate. This should settle any arguments on the matter.

United Kingdom: 142.53

Czech Republic: 140.91

Italy: 139.34

United States: 125.35

Spain: 117.80

We have another viral variant that's popped up, this one apparently originating in Brazil and called B.1.1.28.1 or P.1. (And before you ask, I have no idea where these names come from; that's something I intend to dig into when I get some time.) This variant is also expected to be more easily transmissible, like the UK (B.1.1.7) and the South African (B.1.351) variants, and we have now identified a case in the US (in Minnesota) in a person who had traveled from Brazil. We're not sure yet whether it is more virulent, that is, whether it makes people sicker; the other two do not appear to be more virulent.

Moderna announced today that it has completed viral neutralization tests of its vaccine against the B.1.1.28.1 variant; it appears this is not an immune escape, although there is some shifting in its antigenic footprint. What we do for this sort of testing is that we take plasma from a fully vaccinated person and test to see whether that plasma contains antibodies that neutralize the virus in the lab. The word is the immune response to the vaccine is slightly weaker against B.1.1.28.1 than it is against the original wild-type virus, but that the vaccine is still effective; Pfizer/BioNTech's vaccine is looking the same in the respect. Remembering how effective the vaccines have shown themselves to be, there's some cushion against variants like this one—and a good thing we have that. These vaccines have also tested as effective against the B.1.1.7 variant, and they are expected to perform similarly against B.1.351. Meanwhile, Moderna has begun testing on a booster for its vaccine which will more completely cover these new variants, so that

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 7 of 72

should be ready to go if it is needed. Moderna's chief medical officer, Dr. Tal Zaks, said in an interview with the New York Times, "We're doing it today to be ahead of the curve, should we need to. I think of it as an insurance policy. I don't know if we need it, and I hope we don't." BioNTech, Pfizer's partner in this vaccine endeavor says they're already talking to regulators about what sorts of clinical trials and safety reviews would be needed if such a modified vaccine is needed; they think they can have a new formulation ready within about six weeks. It seems unlikely full clinical trials would be needed; new flu vaccines do not require the whole clinical trial process for the new formulations on the same platforms each year. We talked just a few days ago about what enables drug companies to move this quickly; if you're interested, have a look at my Update #334 posted on January 22 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4367905969892442>. If our vaccines continue to hold and we can slow transmission enough to suppress the development of more scary variants, maybe we can actually get enough people vaccinated to slow this train down.

Not great news on the vaccine front is word that Merck has abandoned two vaccine candidates. The phase 1 trial for one of these began in August. Both were one-dose candidates and looked safe but they were not producing a strong enough response in recipients, and the company decide it was not worth engaging in the next step in the testing process. This happens in vaccine development more often than not; we were just exceptionally lucky that the first couple out of the gate were so wildly successfully. The rest will not all do as well. The Pasteur Institute, which was working with Merck on one of the vaccines, will continue working on a couple of other vaccine projects. And Merck will continue its work in partnership with Ridgeback Biotherapeutics on an antiviral called molnupiravir, initially designed for use against influenza. It has shown some promise in animal studies and early clinical trials against Covid-19; we should have final data by spring with preliminary data coming out sooner. The company is also working on another drug, MK-7110, which is designed to reduce the damaging effects of an overactive immune response to the coronavirus; a late-stage study is showing a more than 50 percent reduction in deaths or respiratory failure when administered to patients hospitalized with moderate or severe disease. Full data should be available for this one by the end of March.

There is another beneficiary of research on Covid-19, perhaps an unexpected one. A mountain gorilla at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park has received monoclonal antibody therapy. Several members of the troop tested positive after exhibiting coughing, and an elderly gorilla named Winston who has heart disease and other underlying conditions was found to have pneumonia. He received a therapy which is not approved for humans, so he didn't receive a dose that could have helped a sick person. The mountain gorilla is endangered in the wild, so these zoo populations are critical to preserving the species, which makes it particularly worthwhile to devote resources to treating them when they get sick. Gorillas are so physiologically similar to humans that most pathogens which infect humans also infect the gorillas. The zoo staff also received a limited number of doses of a "recombinant purified spike protein vaccine" for use in its gorilla troop; like the monoclonal antibody treatment, this vaccine is not one approved for use in humans. The gorillas who were infected all seem to be recovering well. The zoo will pass along the information they gleaned from treating this outbreak to other zoos worldwide.

The Buffalo Bills fans have been known since around 2010 as the Bills Mafia. I'm not a big football fan, so I'm not sure just what is behind that name, but I like it. At any rate, the group who takes that name prides themselves in supporting their team, pretty much no matter what, and in doing good work in the community—nice combination. Well, the Bills, a perennially hard-luck team, was in the playoffs this year, and then in a critical game against the Baltimore Ravens last weekend, the Ravens' quarterback, Lamar Jackson was sidelined by a possible concussion and the League's (belatedly) strict protocol around those events.

Losing your quarterback is a blow to any team whenever it happens, not just in the playoffs. If the Bills fans had reveled in Jackson's and the Ravens' misfortune, it wouldn't be the first time something like that occurred. That is not, however, what happened, not at all.

Instead, a Bills fan shared on Reddit that he'd donated \$25 to Jackson's favorite charity, Blessings in a Backpack, Louisville. This charity raises money to feed elementary school kids who wouldn't eat over the

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 8 of 72

weekends without their school lunches. Jackson has donated \$25,000 to the organization to expand their programs in Louisville where he played college ball. This is the sort of thing that can catch fire, I think especially now when we're all a bit more conscious of need outside our own. Blessings in a Backpack told WKBW TV they received over 10,400 donations from Bills fans the day of the big game, which came to over \$265,000. In one day. In gratitude, some Ravens fans reciprocated by donating money to Oishei Children's Hospital in Buffalo.

In the end, the Bills prevailed in the game, 17-3. I know in the football world and in the here and now, that matters; but in the real world and on into the future, I think the winning spreads out a bit more. Seems to me that a lot of children in Louisville won, plus those fans who reached into their pockets for someone somewhere else, the Ravens fans who did the same, and the world are all richer for this whole series of events initiated by just one guy with \$25. Never think your contribution is too small to make a difference.

I just knew we could be kinder if we tried. If we bothered to notice. If we got outside our own concerns to see the need around us. Bravo to all!

Be well. I'll be back.

Groton Area School District																
Active COVID-19 Cases																
Updated January 22, 2021; 8:28 AM																
JK	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Staff	Total	
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	

Updated January 25, 2021; 2:44 PM																
JK	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Staff	Total	
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 9 of 72

## Jan. 25th COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

South Dakota: Community Spread for week of Jan. 25:

None: Harding (no change) Hyde and Jerauld downgraded from minimal to none.

Moderate: Aurora, Deuel, McCook, Miner, Potter, Stanley, Todd, Ziebach downgraded from substantial to moderate; Faulk and Jones upgraded from minimal to moderate

Minimal: Bennett, Hand, Hanson downgraded from moderate to minimal, Bon Homme downgraded from substantial to minimal.

Substantial:

No Spread: Harding

Positive: +32 (107,185 total) Positivity Rate: 3.8%

Total Tests: 832 (858,297 total)

Total Persons Tested: 282 (397,521 total)

Hospitalized: +8 (6201 total) 161 currently hospitalized (-1)

Avera St. Luke's: 5 (-2) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 1 (+1) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Sanford Aberdeen: 3 (-1) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 1 (+0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Deaths: +0 (1705 total)

Recovered: +359 (101,797 total)

Active Cases: -327 (3678)

Percent Recovered: 95.0%

Vaccinations: +1667 (77350)

Vaccinations Completed: +1075 (18220)

Brown County Vaccinations: +126 (3730) 829 (+125) completed

Beadle (39) +1 positive, +12 recovered (50 active cases)

Brookings (33) +3 positive, +30 recovered (179 active cases)

Brown (75): +2 positive, +14 recovered (171 active cases)

Clark (4): +0 positive, +1 recovered (6 active cases)

Clay (14): +3 positive, +9 recovered (55 active cases)

Codington (73): +2 positive, +17 recovered (124 active cases)

Davison (55): +0 positive, +11 recovered (87) active cases)

Day (25): +0 positive, +1 recovered (26 active cases)

Edmunds (8): +1 positive, +3 recovered (27 active cases)

Faulk (13): +0 positive, +0 recovered (10 active cases)

Grant (36): +0 positive, +1 recovered (55 active cases)

Hanson (4): +0 positive, +2 recovered (8 active cases)

Hughes (31): +2 positive, +6 recovered (101 active cases)

Lawrence (35): +2 positive, +9 recovered (43 ac-

tive cases)

Lincoln (72): +3 positive, +26 recovered (248 active cases)

Marshall (5): +0 positive, +2 recovered (10 active cases)

McCook (22): +0 positive, +2 recovered (16 active cases)

McPherson (4): +1 positive, +1 recovery (28 active case)

Minnehaha (300): +15 positive, +91 recovered (866 active cases)

Pennington (166): +7 positive, +50 recovered (386 active cases)

Potter (3): +0 positive, +0 recovered (18 active cases)

Roberts (34): +1 positive, +4 recovered (39 active cases)

Spink (25): +1 positive, +3 recovered (29 active cases)

Walworth (14): +1 positive, +2 recovered (42 active cases)

### NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Jan. 25:

- 3.3% rolling 14-day positivity
- 58 new positives
- 1,847 susceptible test encounters
- 50 currently hospitalized (+1)
- 1,082 active cases (-15)
- 1,411 total deaths (0)

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 10 of 72

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased Among Cases	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
▲						
Aurora	445	412	810	12	Moderate	10.00%
Beadle	2597	2492	5461	39	Substantial	8.89%
Bennett	376	358	1111	9	Minimal	4.30%
Bon Homme	1482	1448	1963	23	Minimal	0.00%
Brookings	3369	3157	10753	33	Substantial	7.00%
Brown	4846	4600	11736	75	Substantial	9.01%
Brule	677	649	1760	8	Substantial	5.88%
Buffalo	416	403	857	12	Minimal	0.00%
Butte	948	905	2996	20	Substantial	7.07%
Campbell	121	112	233	4	Minimal	22.73%
Charles Mix	1208	1130	3703	15	Substantial	4.69%
Clark	332	320	901	4	Moderate	7.69%
Clay	1745	1676	4853	14	Substantial	8.82%
Codington	3713	3516	9057	73	Substantial	8.09%
Corson	459	442	960	11	Minimal	9.09%
Custer	721	690	2535	10	Substantial	13.33%
Davison	2879	2735	6044	56	Substantial	7.28%
Day	594	543	1621	25	Substantial	6.82%
Deuel	453	429	1046	7	Moderate	0.00%
Dewey	1384	1334	3626	18	Substantial	11.11%
Douglas	410	384	850	9	Moderate	8.82%
Edmunds	453	411	937	8	Substantial	6.38%
Fall River	498	471	2425	14	Substantial	7.32%
Faulk	330	307	639	13	Moderate	7.69%
Grant	902	811	2055	36	Substantial	27.18%
Gregory	498	459	1155	27	Moderate	17.07%
Haakon	240	229	499	9	Minimal	10.00%
Hamlin	662	599	1621	38	Substantial	9.09%
Hand	321	308	736	4	Minimal	3.85%
Hanson	329	319	654	4	Minimal	4.35%
Harding	90	89	164	1	None	0.00%
Hughes	2182	2052	6022	31	Substantial	7.79%
Hutchinson	748	693	2155	23	Substantial	6.45%

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 11 of 72

Hyde	134	131	384	1	None	0.00%
Jackson	269	253	880	13	Minimal	0.00%
Jerauld	265	246	527	16	None	0.00%
Jones	79	72	188	0	Moderate	14.29%
Kingsbury	600	555	1499	13	Substantial	16.07%
Lake	1130	1057	2973	16	Substantial	7.37%
Lawrence	2732	2644	7973	35	Substantial	6.82%
Lincoln	7369	7049	18585	72	Substantial	13.52%
Lyman	587	542	1794	10	Substantial	7.37%
Marshall	283	265	1076	5	Moderate	7.14%
McCook	713	678	1491	22	Moderate	11.36%
McPherson	233	201	528	4	Substantial	3.28%
Meade	2446	2334	7107	28	Substantial	12.25%
Mellette	237	229	689	2	Moderate	19.23%
Miner	261	230	527	7	Moderate	22.22%
Minnehaha	26775	25609	71937	300	Substantial	10.99%
Moody	597	545	1638	15	Substantial	16.67%
Oglala Lakota	2025	1924	6378	41	Substantial	13.16%
Pennington	12248	11678	36406	166	Substantial	12.43%
Perkins	328	292	724	11	Substantial	28.21%
Potter	343	322	769	3	Moderate	5.56%
Roberts	1096	1023	3877	34	Substantial	13.27%
Sanborn	323	308	633	3	Moderate	0.00%
Spink	755	701	1965	25	Substantial	8.33%
Stanley	311	295	847	2	Moderate	3.03%
Sully	134	115	277	3	Moderate	14.29%
Todd	1203	1162	3978	23	Moderate	6.12%
Tripp	650	626	1400	15	Moderate	8.89%
Turner	1036	953	2492	49	Substantial	11.11%
Union	1838	1695	5756	36	Substantial	15.57%
Walworth	700	642	1722	14	Substantial	16.46%
Yankton	2719	2625	8603	27	Substantial	5.57%
Ziebach	333	313	824	9	Moderate	8.33%
Unassigned	0	0	1956	0		

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 12 of 72

## South Dakota



### AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	4126	0
10-19 years	11913	0
20-29 years	19356	4
30-39 years	17635	14
40-49 years	15283	34
50-59 years	15100	91
60-69 years	12245	220
70-79 years	6540	385
80+ years	4982	957

### SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	55956	815
Male	51224	890

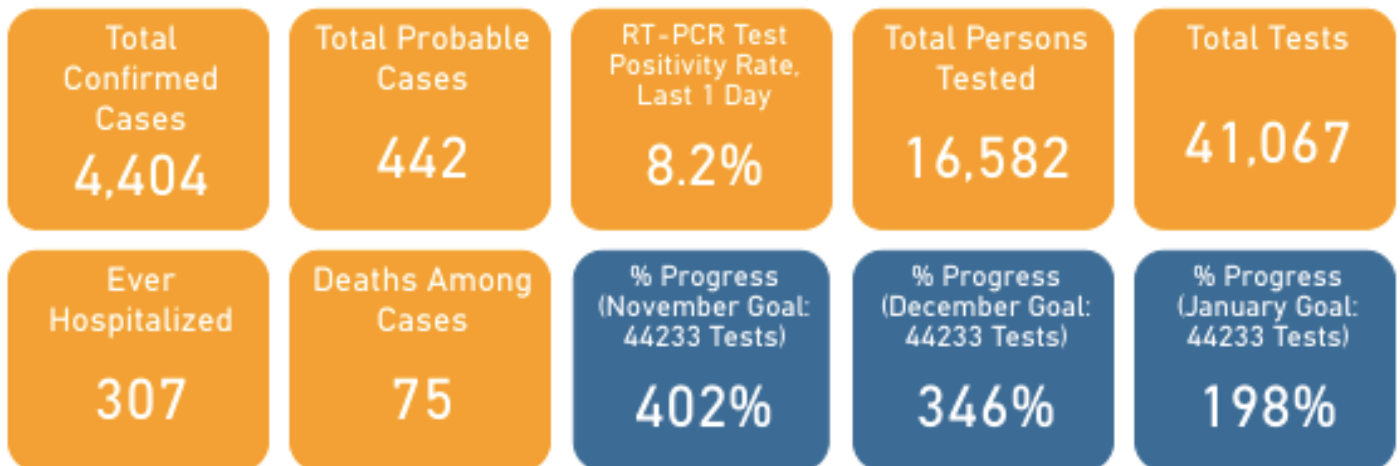
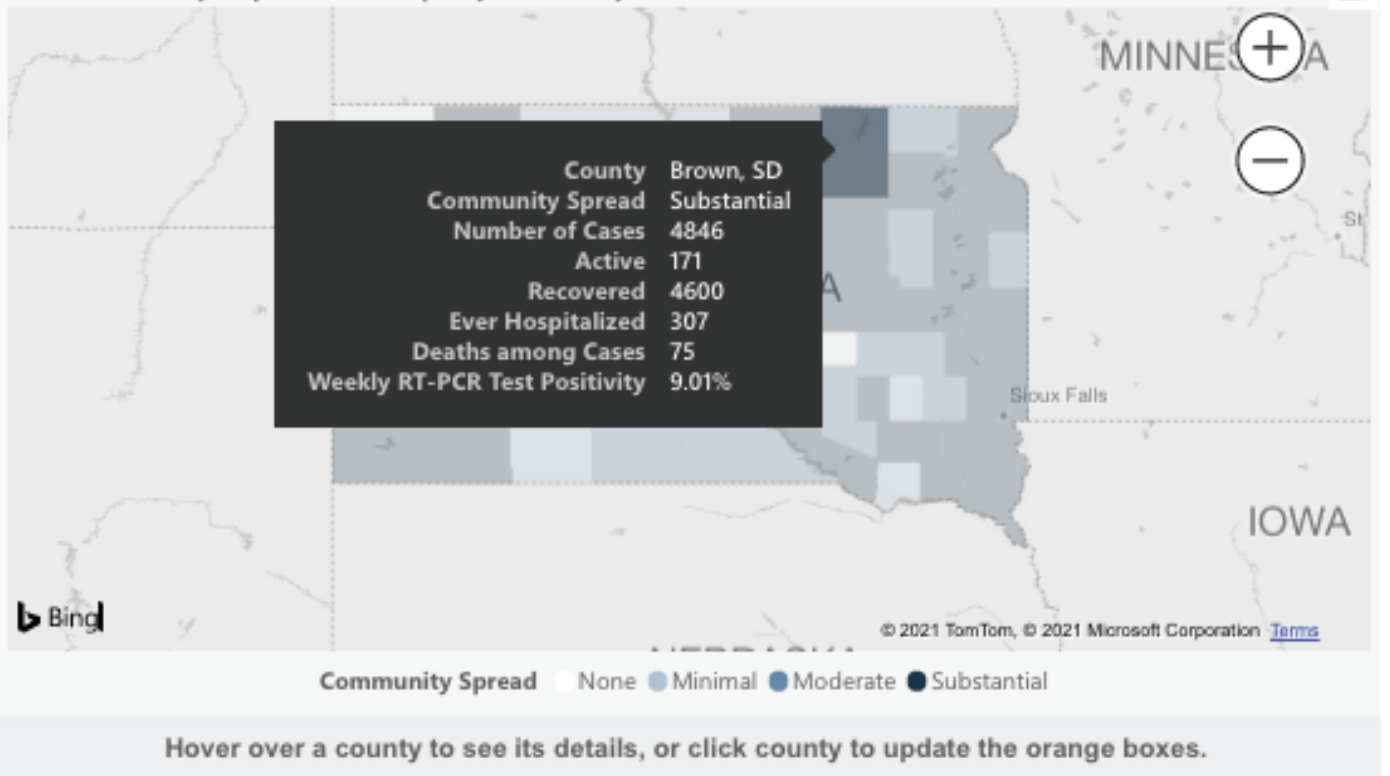
# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 13 of 72

## Brown County



### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



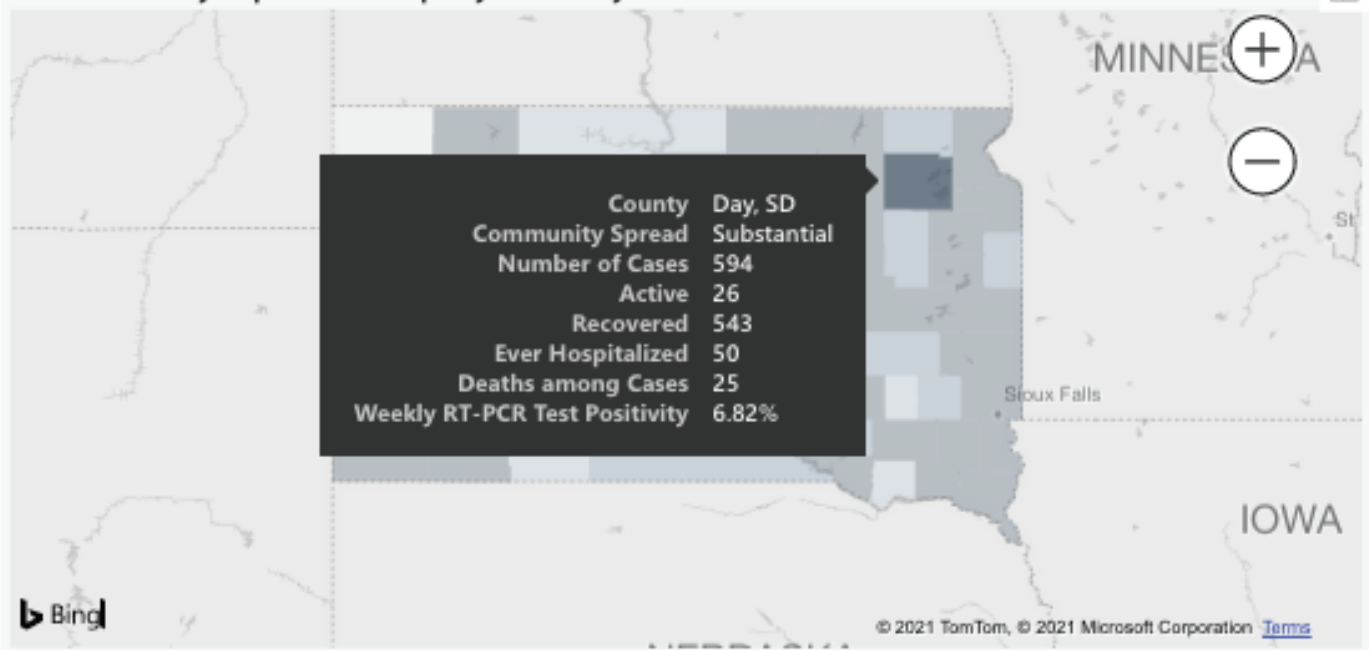
# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 14 of 72

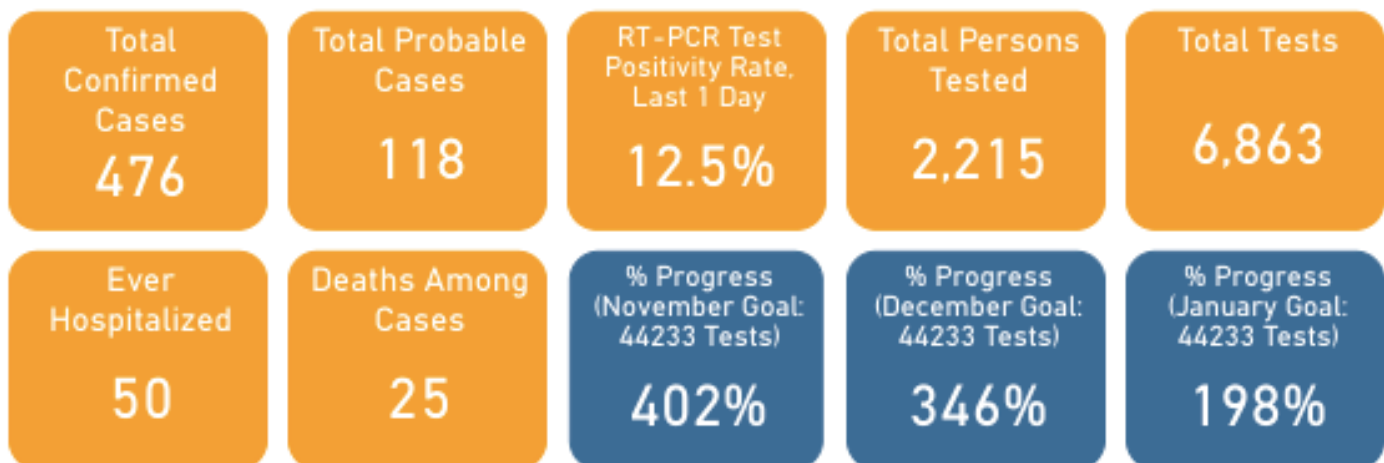
## Day County



### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 15 of 72

## Vaccinations

Total Doses Administered

77,350

Total Persons Administered a Vaccine

59,129

Manufacturer	Number of Doses
Moderna	39,714
Pfizer	37,636

Doses	Number of Recipients
Moderna - 1 dose	28,084
Moderna - Series Complete	5,815

County	# Doses	# Persons (1 dose)	# Persons (2 doses)	Total # Persons
Aurora	133	73	30	103
Beadle	1377	587	395	982
Bennett*	160	124	18	142
Bon Homme*	618	300	159	459
Brookings	2012	1,280	366	1,646
Brown	3730	2,072	829	2,901
Brule*	398	316	41	357
Buffalo*	13	11	1	12
Butte	297	269	14	283
Campbell	287	167	60	227
Charles Mix*	519	299	110	409
Clark	265	247	9	256
Clay	1142	748	197	945
Codington*	2400	1,562	419	1,981
Corson*	52	46	3	49
Custer*	526	402	62	464
Davison	1990	1,052	469	1,521
Day*	570	380	95	475
Deuel	316	214	51	265
Dewey*	122	116	3	119
Douglas*	280	210	35	245
Edmunds	273	187	43	230
Fall River*	599	457	71	528
Faulk	194	178	8	186
Grant*	453	417	18	435
Gregory*	363	289	37	326
Haakon*	167	81	43	124

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 16 of 72

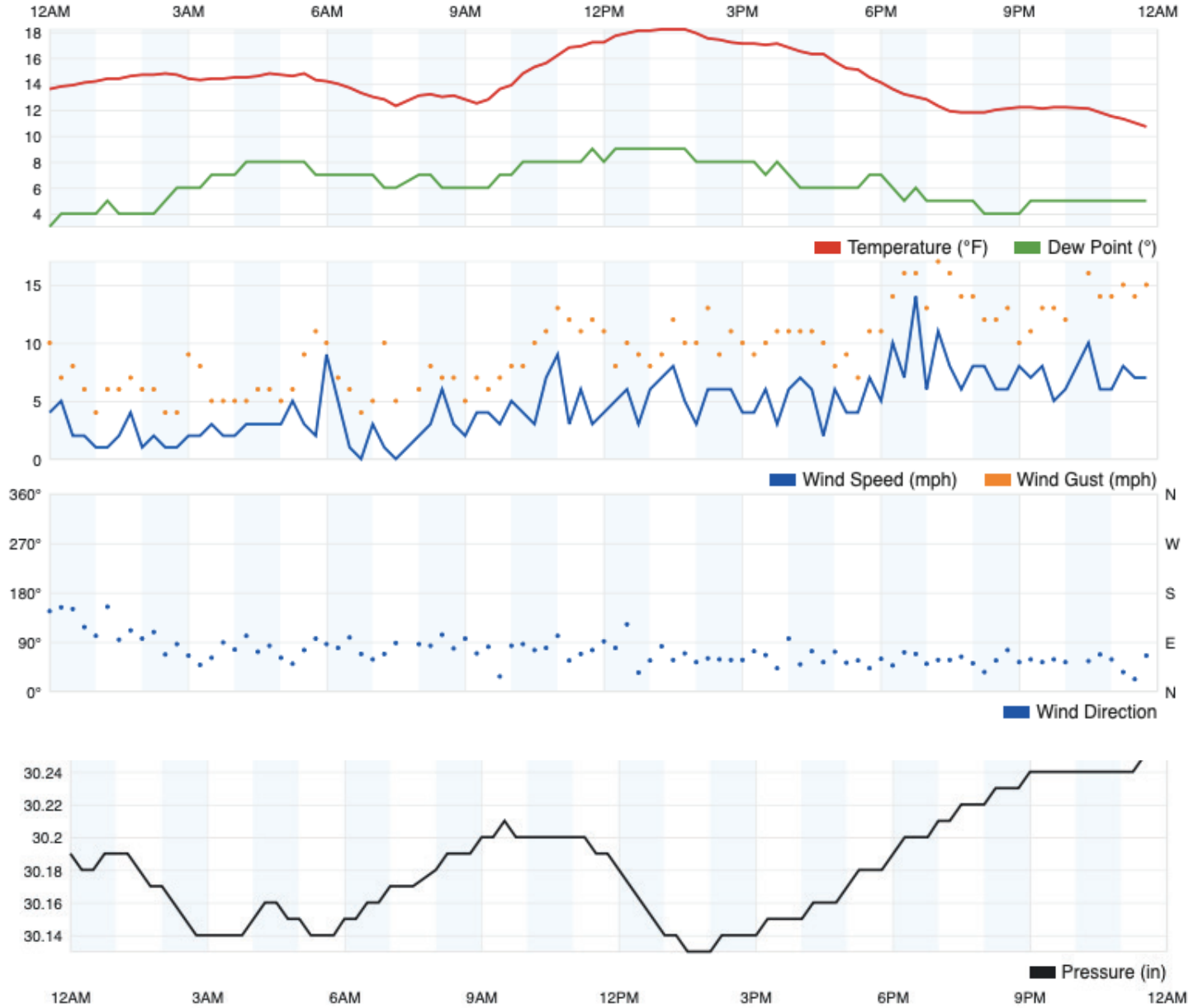
Hamlin	419	229	95	324
Hand	301	135	83	218
Hanson	101	45	28	73
Harding	4	4	0	4
Hughes*	1919	989	465	1,454
Hutchinson*	901	470	215	685
Hyde*	112	94	9	103
Jackson*	88	74	7	81
Jerauld	128	60	34	94
Jones*	128	94	17	111
Kingsbury	452	276	88	364
Lake	990	340	325	665
Lawrence	1291	1,155	68	1,223
Lincoln	8272	2,898	2,687	5,585
Lyman*	136	98	19	117
Marshall*	252	232	10	242
McCook	478	294	92	386
McPherson	44	20	12	32
Meade*	1070	844	113	957
Mellette*	11	9	1	10
Miner	181	129	26	155
Minnehaha	22363	8,987	6,688	15,675
Moody*	355	219	68	287
Oglala Lakota*	34	24	5	29
Pennington*	8203	5,771	1,216	6,987
Perkins*	95	67	14	81
Potter	149	121	14	135
Roberts*	785	723	31	754
Sanborn	219	147	36	183
Spink	650	574	38	612
Stanley*	279	125	77	202
Sully	63	31	16	47
Todd*	36	28	4	32
Tripp*	502	396	53	449
Turner	1003	541	231	772
Union	460	262	99	361
Walworth*	570	354	108	462
Yankton	2877	949	964	1,913
Ziebach*	17	17	0	17
Other	2156	1,000	578	1,578



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 17 of 72

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 18 of 72

Today



Cold

High: 7 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy

Low: -2 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 19 °F

Wednesday  
Night



Increasing  
Clouds

Low: 8 °F

Thursday



Partly Sunny

High: 26 °F

## Work Week Warm Up

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 1/26/2021 4:51 AM Central

**Today**

Cloudy with flurries.



H: 8 to 21°  
L: -9 to 9°

**Wednesday**

Mostly cloudy.



H: 10 to 28°  
L: -1 to 17°

**Thursday**

Partly to mostly cloudy.  
Warmest West River.



H: 19 to 41°  
L: 6 to 21°

**Friday**

Increasing clouds.



H: 23 to 41°  
L: 17 to 24°

High pressure will dominate this week. A few flurries are still possible today, but generally dry conditions are expected through Friday. Temperatures will begin to warm during the latter half of the week.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 19 of 72

## Today in Weather History

January 26, 1977: Four days of very strong winds occurred from the 26th through the 29th with a strong low pressure area over western Ontario. Strong northwest winds of 30 to 45 mph with gusts into the 60s caused widespread blowing and drifting snow with most roads closed with many traffic accidents. The winds combined with subzero temperatures to create wind chills of 60 to 80 below zero. Many schools were closed for several days.

January 26, 2014: A strong Alberta Clipper system generated light snow and strong winds across the region resulting in blizzard conditions. On Sunday morning, a band of moderate to heavy snow showers developed over North Dakota and swept down through our region producing cloud to ground lightning and thundersnow at times. Snowfall amounts were generally three inches or less. Wind gusts ranged from 45 to 55 mph at times. Several no travel advisories were issued due to poor visibilities in blizzard conditions with state officials closing a large portion of Interstate-29 from Brookings to the North Dakota border. January 2014 will go down as one of the windiest months across the region along with extreme temperatures swings, especially for northeast South Dakota. The constant bombardment from powerful clipper systems from the northwest was responsible for this unusual weather.

1772: Possibly the greatest snowfall ever recorded in Washington started on this day. When the storm began, Thomas Jefferson was returning home from his honeymoon with his new bride, Martha Wayles Skelton. The newlyweds made it to within eight miles of Monticello before having to abandon their carriage in the deep snow. Both finished the ride on horseback in the blinding snow. The newlyweds arrived home late on the night of January 26th. In Jefferson's "Garden Book," he wrote "the deepest snow we have ever seen. In Albermarle it was about 3. F. deep."

1937: The wettest month ever in Cincinnati, Ohio is January 1937 when 13.68 inches fell. Their average January amount is 3.00 inches of precipitation. The overabundance of precipitation over the Ohio River basin caused near record to record flooding in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky. On this day, the river gauge reached 80 feet in Cincinnati, the highest level in the city's history. The Ohio River reached 57 feet in Louisville, Kentucky on the 27th, also setting a new record by ten feet. Seventy percent of the city was under water at that time.

1978 - A paralyzing blizzard struck the Midwest. One to three feet of snow fell in Michigan, and 20 to 40 inches was reported across Indiana. Winds reached 70 mph in Michigan, and gusted above 100 mph in Ohio. The high winds produced snow drifts twenty feet high in Michigan and Indiana stranding thousands on the interstate highways. Temperatures in Ohio dropped from the 40s to near zero during the storm. (David Ludlum)

1983 - The California coast was battered by a storm which produced record high tides, thirty-two foot waves, and mudslides, causing millions of dollars damage. The storm then moved east and dumped four feet of snow on Lake Tahoe. (22nd-29th) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A winter storm spread heavy snow across the Middle and Northern Atlantic Coast States, with 18 inches reported at Vineland NJ, and wind gusts to 65 mph at Chatham MA. Snow cover in Virginia ranged up to thirty inches following this second major storm in just one week. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A snowstorm in the northeastern U.S. produced 19 inches at Austerlitz NY and Stillwater NY. A storm in the Great Lakes Region left 16.5 inches at Marquette MI, for a total of 43 inches in six days. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Snow and high winds created blizzard-like conditions in northwestern Vermont. Winds at Saint Albans gusted to 88 mph. In Alaska, the town of Cold Foot (located north of Fairbanks) reported a morning low of 75 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - A winter storm spread high winds from the northwestern U.S. to Wyoming and Colorado, with heavy snow in some of the high elevations. Stevens Pass WA received 17 inches of snow, half of which fell in four hours. In extreme northwest Wyoming, Togwotee Mountain Lodge received 24 inches of snow. Winds in Colorado gusted to 90 mph at Rollinsville. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

# Groton Daily Independent

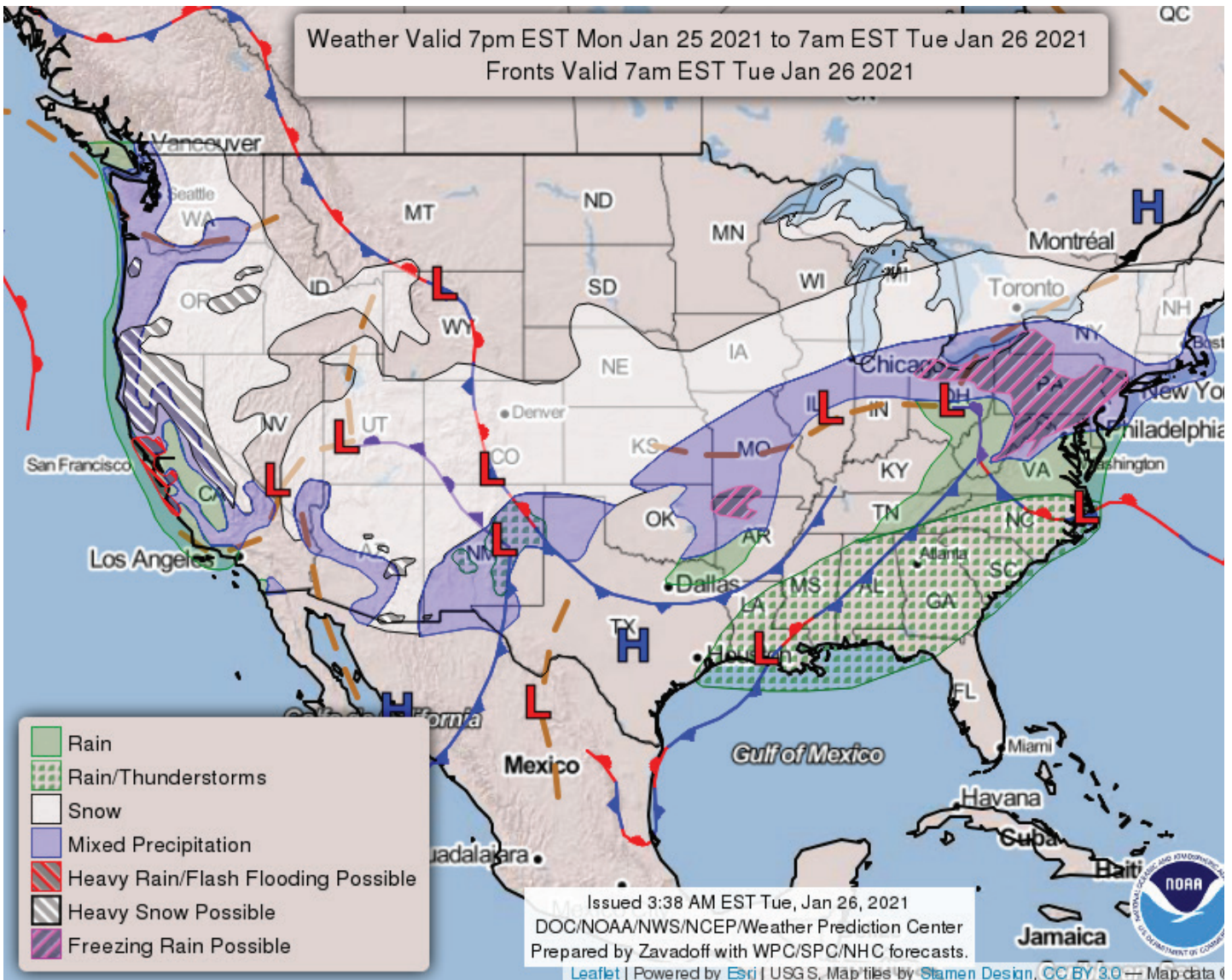
Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 20 of 72

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 18 °F at 1:38 PM**  
**Low Temp: 11 °F at 11:40 PM**  
**Wind: 18 mph at 10:49 PM**  
**Precip:**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 58° in 1947**  
**Record Low: -30° in 1950**  
**Average High: 23°F**  
**Average Low: 2°F**  
**Average Precip in Jan.: 0.39**  
**Precip to date in Jan.: 0.14**  
**Average Precip to date: 0.39**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.14**  
**Sunset Tonight: 5:32 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:00 a.m.**



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 21 of 72



## THROUGH IT ALL – TRUST!

Everyone seems to have a need to be safe and secure. We see warnings everywhere we look and watch for them everywhere we go. They alert us to potential dangers and advise us of impending problems. They are an important part of life.

There were several times in the life of David when he was forced to flee for his life. Even though he was God's anointed king, he was not immune to the injustice and hatred of others. Even Saul had a desire to destroy him.

Once when he was in danger, he stood his ground and said, "I trust in the Lord for protection, so why do you say to me, Fly like a bird to the mountain?" During this time of outward trouble, he looked inside himself and found what he needed: His Lord!

Our society has become heavily involved in seeking temporary solutions to eternal problems. More individuals than we want to admit are addicted to drugs – whether legal or illegal, prescribed or purchased without proper authority. But those solutions are temporary and only last for a short time and ultimately end in disaster.

But that is not true if we trust in the Lord. He is more than a stimulus or a sedative; He will become our Savior and remain with us throughout eternity. He does not destroy – He delivers. He does not control us - He transforms us to that which is good, pure, wholesome, and life-giving. No prayer is too hard for Him to answer, and there is no problem too complex for Him to solve.

Prayer: May we trust in Your power, Lord, to deliver us from sin and protect us from whatever would destroy us. May we accept Your salvation. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I trust in the Lord for protection, so why do you say to me, Fly like a bird to the mountain? Psalm 11:1

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 22 of 72

## News from the Associated Press

### Monday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Bridgewater-Emery 65, Mitchell Christian 29

Canistota 54, Ethan 46

Castlewood 76, Colman-Egan 36

Clark/Willow Lake 60, Great Plains Lutheran 27

Marty Indian 67, Avon 50

West Central 66, Garretson 59

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Castlewood 52, Colman-Egan 41

Herreid/Selby Area 63, Napoleon/Gackle-Streeter, N.D. 39

Mobridge-Pollock 59, Potter County 45

New Underwood 41, Kadoka Area 37

North Central Co-Op 61, South Border, N.D. 35

Sioux Falls Christian 60, West Central 57

Sisseton 59, Tiospa Zina Tribal 54

Vermillion 50, Lennox 46

Waverly-South Shore 59, Webster 40

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=

Dakota Valley vs. Spirit Lake, Iowa, ppd.

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

### Girl's Basketball Polls

By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Sportswriters Association high school girl's poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and total points.

Class AA

1. Aberdeen Central (11) 10-0 82 3

2. Washington (6) 6-2 71 1

3. Harrisburg (2) 9-1 85 2

4. Brandon Valley 8-2 41 T5

5. Mitchell 5-2 17 T5

Others receiving votes: Sioux Falls O'Gorman 9, Rapid City Stevens 1.

Class A

1. St. Thomas More (19) 11-0 95 1

2. West Central 10-1 74 2

3. Winner 11-1 59 3

4. SF Christian 10-1 37 4

5. Aberdeen Roncalli 12-0 19 5

Others receiving votes: Hamlin 1.

Class B

1. Corsica-Stickney(15) 11-2 88 1

2. Castlewood (3) 8-0 75 2

3. White River (1) 8-0 64 3

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 23 of 72

4. Hanson 10-1 27 5  
5. Ethan 8-2 22 4

Others receiving votes: Waverly-South Shore 6, Viborg-Hurley 3.

## Boy's Basketball Polls

By The Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Sportswriters Association high school boy's poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records, total points and last week's ranking.

Class AA

1. Washington (19) 8-0 95 1  
2. Yankton 10-2 75 2  
3. Mitchell 9-1 54 5  
4. Roosevelt 6-4 32 4  
5. Harrisburg 6-2 14 3

Others receiving votes: Rapid City Central 12, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 3.

Class A

1. Dakota Valley (19) 10-0 95 1  
2. Vermillion 9-0 71 4  
3. Sioux Valley 12-1 49 3  
4. SF Christian 9-2 47 2  
5. Dell Rapids 8-2 17 5

Others receiving votes: St. Thomas More 4, Winner 2.

Class B

1. De Smet (19) 11-1 95 1  
2. Platte-Geddes (2) 8-1 69 2  
3. Howard 10-1 62 3  
4. Canistota 9-1 38 4  
5. Dell Rapids St. Mary 9-3 13 RV

Others receiving votes: Viborg-Hurley 7, Elkton-Lake Benton 1.

## US Supreme Court won't hear Nevada church's COVID-19 case

By SCOTT SONNER Associated Press

RENO, Nev. (AP) — The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday refused a rural Nevada church's request to enter a legal battle over the government's authority to limit the size of religious gatherings amid the COVID-19 pandemic — after the church won an appeals court ruling last month that found Nevada's restrictions unconstitutional.

Attorneys general from 19 other states had recently joined in support of the unusual request from Calvary Chapel Dayton Valley east of Reno.

They were urging the Supreme Court to rule on the merits of the Nevada case to help bring uniformity to various standards courts across the country have used to balance the interests of public safety and freedom of religion.

The church's lawyers said in a court filing last Thursday they wanted the high court to "clarify for all that the First Amendment does not allow government officials to use COVID-19 as an excuse to treat churches and their worshippers worse than secular establishments and their patrons."

In a 5-4 decision in June, the Supreme Court refused Calvary Chapel's request for an emergency injunction blocking enforcement of Nevada's attendance limit at houses of worship.

But the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruled in favor of the church last month, finding it was unconstitutional for Nevada to treat casinos and other businesses more favorably than churches.

The church's latest plea for relief from the Supreme Court was in the form of a petition for a review of

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 24 of 72

the case on its merits. Such petitions are rare and their approval is even rarer, even though they require approval by only four justices.

The justices denied the request without explanation on Monday.

The 9th Circuit ruling sent the case back to the district court to determine how to proceed but in the meantime prevented the state from enforcing any church attendance limit more stringent than the current 25% of capacity limit on most businesses.

Judge Richard Boulware put the case on hold pending the Supreme Court's ruling on the church's petition. He instructed lawyers on both sides to provide an update on the status of any future filings planned within seven days of such a ruling.

Lawyers for the church said Monday they were disappointed in the high court's refusal to review the case. But they said the appellate court has made it clear government responses to COVID-19 "cannot treat churches worse than similarly situated businesses," at least in the 9th Circuit, which also includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho and Montana.

"We asked the Supreme Court to hear the case so there would be a national ruling confirming what the 9th Circuit held in December: government officials certainly have the authority to protect health and public safety, but the First Amendment — including the free exercise of religion — is never suspended," said David Cortman, senior counsel for the Alliance Defending Freedom.

"Although this victory for religious liberty remains a 9th Circuit matter, we are confident that Nevada will agree to a permanent injunction on the terms that the 9th Circuit unanimously announced, and we look forward to resolving this case soon," he said Monday in a statement emailed to AP.

Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford had argued the justices should let the federal court in Reno sort out the details before taking the extraordinary step of wading into the case. He wrote in court documents submitted last week the case "is a poor vehicle for addressing questions beyond those the Ninth Circuit already resolved in Calvary's favor."

Ashley Forest, a spokeswoman for Ford's office, said in an email on Monday that "while the Supreme Court won't hear the church's COVID case regarding attendance limits, Nevada heard the 9th Circuit clearly and appreciates the guidance on how best to protect this constitutional right."

Indoor religious gatherings in Nevada most recently had been subject to a hard cap of 50 churchgoers while attendance limits at many businesses including casinos were based on a percentage of the buildings' fire-code capacities.

Nevada currently imposes the 25% occupancy limit on all gathering places — including casinos, restaurants, bars, amusement and theme parks, gyms and fitness facilities and movie theaters.

The church's latest court filings argued that an attendance limit of 25% for houses of worship is prohibited under the First Amendment. It wants to be treated the same as essential businesses — like manufacturing facilities and professional offices, which currently have no capacity limits other than social distancing.

## South Dakota reports lowest daily COVID-19 total since July

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials on Monday reported 32 new cases of the coronavirus, the lowest daily total since late July.

The results came on a light day of processed tests, with 832, but continued a downward trend that began in the state in mid-November. Over the past two weeks, the rolling average number of daily new cases has decreased by 42.4%, according to Johns Hopkins University researchers.

There were about 434 new cases per 100,000 people in South Dakota over the past two weeks, which ranks 43rd in the country for new cases per capita. One in every 550 people in South Dakota tested positive in the past week, researchers said.

No new deaths were listed in Monday's update, keeping the fatality count at 1,705.

There were 161 people hospitalized with COVID-19, one fewer than Sunday. Of those patients, 37 required intensive care and 26 were on ventilators. Health officials say 43% of staffed hospital beds are available in South Dakota, with 5.8% are occupied by COVID-19 patients.



A total of 107,180 COVID-19 cases have been reported since the start of the pandemic.

## **New bill bans abortions based on Down syndrome diagnosis**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem has introduced a bill that would ban abortions based on a diagnosis of Down syndrome.

The bill was introduced Monday as part of South Dakota's legislative session. Noem first unveiled the proposal during her State of the State address earlier this month.

Noem's statement noted that Friday was the 48th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Roe versus Wade, which protects a woman's constitutional right to an abortion.

"The Declaration of Independence summarizes what we all know in our hearts to be true: God created each of us and endowed all of us with the right to life," Noem said in the statement. "This is true for everyone, including those with an extra chromosome."

Noem said she looks forward to the day when the Supreme Court "recognizes that all preborn children inherently possess this right to life, too."

The bill is likely to further endear her to conservatives, both in South Dakota and nationwide. Republican legislative leaders in South Dakota predicted it would sail through the House and Senate.

## **UK eyes quarantine hotels for travelers to curb variants**

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain appears ready to order some travelers arriving from abroad to isolate in hotels at their own expense in an attempt to stop the import of new virus variants.

Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zahawi said there would be an announcement Tuesday on plans for tighter border measures. The BBC reported that U.K. citizens and residents arriving from most of southern Africa and South America, as well as Portugal, will have to self-isolate in a hotel for 10 days at their own expense.

Quarantine hotels have been used to limit virus transmissions in countries including Australia, New Zealand, China, India and Singapore but the practice has not been widely adopted in Europe.

Zahawi did not give details of the planned announcement but said tightening border rules was "the right thing to do, because ... as we vaccinate more of the adult population, if there are new variants like the South African or the Brazilian variants, we need to be very careful."

Opposition politicians and public health officials have criticized Britain's Conservative government for not closing the country's borders earlier in the pandemic.

Current lockdown rules, imposed to slow the spread of a new, more transmissible virus variant first identified in southeast England, bar Britons from taking foreign holidays, although essential travel is allowed.

People arriving from overseas are already required to self-isolate in Britain, but enforcement is patchy.

Former Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt said the biggest problem was that many people already in the U.K. do not comply with self-isolation orders.

"I think the elephant in the room in this is not the 10,000 or so people who arrive in the U.K. every day, it is the 30,000 people in the U.K. already who are asked to quarantine by Test and Trace and are not doing so," Hunt told the BBC.

He backed calls for a self-isolation payment from the government so people exposed to the virus or infected did not lose income by staying at home.

"We may also need to enforce more compliance, but I think you can only do that if you are making people a reasonable offer to support them financially for any losses they may have from having to stay home," Hunt said.

People arriving in the U.K. from abroad also must show they have tested negative for COVID-19. Britain recently banned direct flights from South Africa, Brazil and Portugal — and barred entry to travelers from there and some nearby countries — in response to new variants of the virus.

The U.K. will soon become the fifth country in the world to record 100,000 COVID-19 deaths, after the United States, Brazil, India and Mexico — all of which have much larger populations than Britain's 67 mil-

lion people. As of Monday, the U.K.'s official coronavirus death toll was 98,531.

British authorities are banking on a successful vaccination program to help the country suppress the outbreak and ease its current lockdown. So far more than 6.5 million people have received the first of two doses of a vaccine, and the government aims to give 15 million people, including everyone over 70, a jab by Feb. 15.

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

## EU demands that vaccine makers honor their commitments

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union on Tuesday warned pharmaceutical giants that develop coronavirus vaccines to honor their contractual obligations after slow deliveries of shots from two companies hampered the bloc's vaunted vaccine rollout in several nations.

The bloc already lashed out Monday at pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, accusing it of failing to guarantee the delivery of coronavirus vaccines without a valid explanation. It also had expressed displeasure over vaccine delivery delays from Pfizer-BioNTech last week.

"Europe invested billions to help develop the world's first COVID-19 vaccines. To create a truly global common good," EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told the World Economic Forum's virtual event in Switzerland. "And now, the companies must deliver. They must honor their obligations."

The statement Tuesday highlighted the level of distrust that has grown between the 27-nation bloc and pharmaceutical companies over the past week. On Monday, the EU threatened to impose strict export controls on all coronavirus vaccines produced in the bloc to make sure that companies honor their commitments to the EU.

The EU said it provided 2.7 billion euros to speed up vaccine research and production capacity and was determined to get some value for that money with hundreds of millions of vaccine shots according to a schedule the companies had committed to.

"Europe is determined to contribute to this global common good, but it also means business," von der Leyen said Tuesday via videolink.

And Germany was firmly behind von der Leyen's view.

"With a complex process such as vaccine production, I can understand if there are production problems -- but then it must affect everyone fairly and equally," German Health Minister Jens Spahn told ZDF television. "This is not about EU first, it's about Europe's fair share."

The EU, which has 450 million citizens and the economic and political clout of the world's biggest trading bloc, is lagging badly behind countries like Israel and Britain in rolling out coronavirus vaccine shots for its health care workers and most vulnerable people. That's despite having over 400,000 confirmed virus deaths since the pandemic began.

The EU has committed to buying 300 million AstraZeneca doses with option on 100 million extra shots. Late last week, the company said it was planning to reduce a first contingent of 80 million to 31 million.

The shortfall of planned deliveries of the AstraZeneca vaccine, which is expected to get medical approval by the bloc on Friday, combined with hiccups in the distribution of Pfizer-BioNTech shots is putting EU nations under heavy pressure. Pfizer says it was delaying deliveries to Europe and Canada while it upgrades its plant in Belgium to increase production capacity.

The European Medicines Agency is scheduled to review the Oxford-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine Friday and its approval is hotly anticipated. The AstraZeneca vaccine is already being used in Britain and has been approved for emergency use by half a dozen countries, including India, Pakistan, Argentina and Mexico.

The delays in getting vaccines will be make it harder to meet early targets in the EU's goal of vaccinating 70% of its adults by late summer.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 27 of 72

The EU has signed six vaccine contracts for more than 2 billion doses, but only the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have been approved for use so far.

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

## Trump impeachment goes to Senate, testing his sway over GOP

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democrats delivered the impeachment case against Donald Trump to the Senate for the start of his historic trial, but Republican senators were easing off their criticism of the former president and shunning calls to convict him over the deadly siege at the U.S. Capitol.

It's an early sign of Trump's enduring sway over the party.

The nine House prosecutors carried the sole impeachment charge of "incitement of insurrection" across the Capitol on Monday night in a solemn and ceremonial march to the Senate along the same halls the rioters ransacked just weeks ago. In a scene reminiscent of just a year ago — Trump is the first president twice impeached — the lead House prosecutor, Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, stood before the Senate to read the House resolution charging "high crimes and misdemeanors."

But Republican denunciations of Trump have cooled since the Jan. 6 riot. Instead Republicans are presenting a tangle of legal arguments against the legitimacy of the trial and questioning whether Trump's repeated demands to overturn Joe Biden's election really amounted to incitement.

What seemed for some Democrats like an open-and-shut case that played out for the world on live television, as Trump encouraged a rally mob to "fight like hell" for his presidency, is running into a Republican Party that feels very differently. Not only are there legal concerns, but senators are wary of crossing the former president and his legions of followers — who are their voters. Security remains tight at the Capitol.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, asked if Congress starts holding impeachment trials of former officials, what's next: "Could we go back and try President Obama?"

Besides, he suggested, Trump has already been held to account. "One way in our system you get punished is losing an election."

Arguments in the Senate trial will begin the week of Feb. 8, and the case against Trump, the first former president to face impeachment trial, will test a political party still sorting itself out for the post-Trump era. Republican senators are balancing the demands of deep-pocketed donors who are distancing themselves from Trump and voters who demand loyalty to him. One Republican, Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio, announced Monday he would not seek reelection in 2022, citing the polarized political atmosphere.

For Democrats the tone, tenor and length of the upcoming trial, so early in Biden's presidency, poses its own challenge, forcing them to strike a balance between their vow to hold Trump accountable and their eagerness to deliver on the new administration's priorities following their sweep of control of the House, Senate and White House.

Biden himself told CNN late Monday that the impeachment trial "has to happen." While acknowledging the effect it could have on his agenda, he said there would be "a worse effect if it didn't happen." He said he didn't think enough Republican senators would vote to convict, though he said the outcome might have been different if Trump had six months left in his term.

Chief Justice John Roberts is not expected to preside at the trial, as he did during Trump's first impeachment, potentially affecting the gravitas of the proceedings. The shift is said to be in keeping with protocol because Trump is no longer in office.

Instead, Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., who serves in the largely ceremonial role of Senate president pro tempore, is set to preside.

Leaders in both parties agreed to a short delay in the proceedings that serves their political and practical interests, even as National Guard troops remain at the Capitol amid security threats on lawmakers ahead of the trial.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 28 of 72

The start date gives Trump's new legal team time to prepare its case, while also providing more than a month's distance from the passions of the bloody riot. For the Democratic-led Senate, the intervening weeks provide prime time to confirm some of Biden's key Cabinet nominees.

An early vote to dismiss the trial probably would not succeed, given that Democrats now control the Senate. The House approved the charge against Trump on Jan. 13, with 10 Republicans joining the Democrats.

Mounting Republican opposition to the proceedings indicates that many GOP senators will eventually vote to acquit Trump. Democrats would need the support of 17 Republicans — a high bar — to convict him.

Rand Paul of Kentucky said that without the chief justice presiding the proceedings are a "sham." Joni Ernst of Iowa said that while Trump "exhibited poor leadership," it's those who assaulted the Capitol who "bear the responsibility." New Sen. Tommy Tuberville of Alabama said Trump is one of the reasons he is in the Senate, so "I'm proud to do everything I can for him."

Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., is among those who say the Senate does not have the constitutional authority to convict a former president.

Democrats reject that argument, pointing to an 1876 impeachment of a secretary of war who had already resigned and to opinions by many legal scholars. Democrats also say that a reckoning of the first invasion of the Capitol since the War of 1812, perpetrated by rioters egged on by a president as Electoral College votes were being tallied, is necessary.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said failing to conduct the trial would amount to a "get-out-jail-free card" for others accused of wrongdoing on their way out the door. He said there's only one question "senators of both parties will have to answer before God and their own conscience: Is former President Trump guilty of inciting an insurrection against the United States?"

A few GOP senators have agreed with Democrats, though not close to the number that will be needed to convict Trump.

Mitt Romney of Utah said he believes "what is being alleged and what we saw, which is incitement to insurrection, is an impeachable offense. ... If not, what is?" Romney was the only Republican senator to vote for conviction when the Senate acquitted Trump in his first impeachment trial.

---

Associated Press writer Hope Yen contributed to this report.

## Italian premier resigns, setting off scramble for new allies

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte resigned Tuesday after a key coalition ally pulled his party's support over Conte's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, setting the stage for consultations this week to determine if he can form a third government.

Conte tendered his resignation to President Sergio Mattarella, who held off on any immediate decision other than to ask Conte to keep the government running in the near-term, Mattarella's office said. The president will begin consulting with leaders of political parties starting Wednesday.

Conte is hoping to get Mattarella's support to try to form a new coalition government that can steer the country as it battles the pandemic and an economic recession and creates a spending plan for the 209 billion euros (\$254 billion) Italy is getting in European Union recovery funds.

Conte's coalition government was thrown into turmoil earlier this month when a junior party headed by ex-Premier Matteo Renzi yanked its support. Conte won confidence votes in parliament last week, but fell short of an absolute majority in the Senate, forcing him to take the gamble of resignation.

Mattarella, Italy's largely ceremonial head of state, can ask Conte to try to form a broader coalition government, appoint a largely technical government to steer the country through the pandemic or dissolve parliament and call an election two years early.

The current coalition of the 5-Star Movement, Democratic Party and smaller Leu party are all hoping for a third Conte government. Conte's first government starting in 2018 was a 5-Star alliance with the right-wing League party led by Matteo Salvini that lasted 15 months. His second, with the Democrats, lasted

16 months.

Salvini and center-right opposition parties are clamoring for an early election, hoping to capitalize on polls prior to the government crisis that showed high approval ratings for the League and the right-wing Brothers of Italy party led by Giorgia Meloni.

Salvini has blasted the "palace games and buying and selling of senators" of recent days as Conte has tried to find new coalition allies, claiming that Conte is incapable of leading Italy through the crisis.

"Let's use these weeks to give the word back to the people and we'll have five years of a serious and legitimate parliament and government not chosen in palaces but chosen by Italians," Salvini said Monday.

Democratic leader Nicola Zingaretti says an early election is the last thing the country needs. He tweeted Monday: "With Conte for a new clearly European-centric government supported by an ample parliamentary base that will guarantee credibility and stability to confront the challenges Italy has ahead."

## Relative of virus victim asks to meet WHO experts in Wuhan

By EMILY WANG and DAKE KANG Associated Press

WUHAN, China (AP) — A relative of a coronavirus victim in China is demanding to meet a visiting World Health Organization expert team, saying it should speak with affected families who allege they are being muffled by the Chinese government.

China approved the visit by researchers under the auspices of the U.N. agency only after months of negotiations. It has not indicated whether they will be allowed to gather evidence or talk to families, saying only that the team can exchange views with Chinese scientists.

"I hope the WHO experts don't become a tool to spread lies," said Zhang Hai, whose father died of COVID-19 on Feb. 1, 2020, after traveling to the Chinese city of Wuhan and getting infected. "We've been searching for the truth relentlessly. This was a criminal act, and I don't want the WHO to be coming to China to cover up these crimes."

China's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The WHO team, which arrived in Wuhan on Jan. 14 to investigate the origins of the virus, is expected to begin field work later this week after a 14-day quarantine.

Zhang, a Wuhan native now living in the southern city of Shenzhen, has been organizing relatives of coronavirus victims in China to demand accountability from officials.

Many are angry that the state downplayed the virus at the beginning of the outbreak, and have attempted to file lawsuits against the Wuhan government.

The relatives have faced immense pressure from authorities not to speak out. Officials have dismissed the lawsuits, interrogated Zhang and others repeatedly and threatened to fire relatives of those who speak to the foreign media, according to interviews with Zhang and other relatives.

Zhang said chat groups of the relatives were shut down shortly after the WHO team's arrival in Wuhan, and he accused the city government of trying to silence them.

"Don't pretend that we don't exist, that we aren't seeking accountability," Zhang said. "You obliterated all our platforms, but we still want to let everyone know through the media that we haven't given up."

WHO says its visit to China is a scientific mission to investigate the origins of the virus, not an effort to assign blame, and that "in-depth interviews and reviews" of early cases are needed. It did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

China initially rejected demands for an international investigation after the Trump administration blamed Beijing for the virus, but bowed to global pressure in May for a probe into the origins.

On Monday, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top infectious disease official in the United States, said at the World Economic Forum that the origins of the virus that has brought the world to its knees are still unknown, "a big black box, which is awful."

The mission was repeatedly delayed by negotiations and setbacks, one of which prompted an unusual public complaint by the WHO head.

The arrival of the WHO mission has revived controversy over whether China allowed the virus to spread

globally by reacting too slowly in the early days.

From the beginning, WHO officials have been trying to get more cooperation from China, with limited success.

Audio recordings of internal WHO meetings obtained by The Associated Press and aired for the first time Tuesday show that even while the WHO praised China in public, officials were complaining privately about not getting enough information.

The U.N. agency has no enforcement powers, so it must rely on the goodwill of member countries.

Keiji Fukuda, a public health expert at the University of Hong Kong, has called the visit an "image building mission," with China eager to come off as being transparent and the WHO keen to show it's taking action.

"Both China and WHO hope to get some brownie points," said Fukuda, a former WHO official. "But it all comes down to what will the team have access to. Will they really be able to ask the questions that they want to ask?"

— Kang reported from Beijing.

## Angry farmers storm India's Red Fort in huge tractor rally

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Tens of thousands of protesting farmers drove long lines of tractors into India's capital on Tuesday, breaking through police barricades, defying tear gas and storming the historic Red Fort as the nation celebrated Republic Day.

They waved farm union and religious flags from the ramparts of the fort, where prime ministers annually hoist the national flag to mark the country's independence.

Thousands more farmers marched on foot or rode on horseback while shouting slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. At some places, they were showered with flower petals by residents who recorded the unprecedented rally on their phones.

Police said one protester died after his tractor overturned, but farmers said he was shot. Protesters laid his body on the road after draping it in an Indian flag and sat around it. Television channels showed several bloodied protesters.

Leaders of the farmers said more than 10,000 tractors joined the protest.

For nearly two months, farmers — many of them Sikhs from Punjab and Haryana states — have camped at the edge of the capital, blockading highways connecting it with the country's north in a rebellion that has rattled the government. They are demanding the withdrawal of new laws which they say will commercialize agriculture and devastate farmers' earnings.

"We want to show Modi our strength," said Satpal Singh, a farmer who drove into the capital on a tractor along with his family of five. "We will not surrender."

Riot police fired tear gas and water cannons at numerous places to push back the rows upon rows of tractors, which shoved aside concrete and steel barricades. Authorities blocked roads with large trucks and buses in an attempt to stop the farmers from reaching the center of the capital. Thousands, however, managed to reach some important landmarks.

"We will do as we want to. You cannot force your laws on the poor," said Manjeet Singh, a protesting farmer.

Authorities shut some metro train stations, and mobile internet service was suspended in some parts of the capital, a frequent tactic of the government to thwart protests.

The government insists that the agriculture reform laws passed by Parliament in September will benefit farmers and boost production through private investment.

Farmers tried to march into New Delhi in November but were stopped by police. Since then, unfazed by the winter cold, they have hunkered down at the edge of the city and threatened to besiege it if the farm laws are not repealed.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 31 of 72

The government has offered to amend the laws and suspend their implementation for 18 months. But farmers insist they will settle for nothing less than a complete repeal. They plan to march on foot to Parliament on Feb. 1, when the country's new budget will be presented.

The protests overshadowed Republic Day celebrations, in which Modi oversaw a traditional lavish parade along ceremonial Rajpath boulevard displaying the country's military power and cultural diversity.

The parade was scaled back because of the coronavirus pandemic. People wore masks and adhered to social distancing as police and military battalions marched along the route displaying their latest equipment.

Republic Day marks the anniversary of the adoption of the country's constitution on Jan. 26, 1950.

Farmers are the latest group to upset Modi's image of imperturbable dominance in Indian politics.

Since returning to power for a second term, Modi's government has been rocked by several convulsions. The economy has tanked, social strife has widened, protests have erupted against discriminatory laws and his government has been questioned over its response to the pandemic.

Agriculture supports more than half of the country's 1.4 billion people. But the economic clout of farmers has diminished over the last three decades. Once producing a third of India's gross domestic product, farmers now account for only 15% of the country's \$2.9 trillion economy.

More than half of farmers are in debt, with 20,638 killing themselves in 2018 and 2019, according to official records.

The contentious legislation has exacerbated existing resentment from farmers, who have long been seen as the heart and soul of India but often complain of being ignored by the government.

Modi has tried to allay farmers' fears by mostly dismissing their concerns and has repeatedly accused opposition parties of agitating them by spreading rumors. Some leaders of his party have called the farmers "anti-national," a label often given to those who criticize Modi or his policies.

Devinder Sharma, an agriculture expert who has spent the last two decades campaigning for income equality for Indian farmers, said they are not only protesting the reforms but also "challenging the entire economic design of the country."

"The anger that you see is compounded anger," Sharma said. "Inequality is growing in India and farmers are becoming poorer. Policy planners have failed to realize this and have sucked the income from the bottom to the top. The farmers are only demanding what is their right."

---

AP video journalist Rishabh R. Jain contributed to this report.

## Indonesia's confirmed coronavirus cases exceed 1 million

By NINIEK KARMINI and EDNA TARIGAN Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesia's confirmed coronavirus infections since the pandemic began crossed 1 million on Tuesday and hospitals in some hard-hit areas were near capacity.

Indonesia's Health Ministry announced that new daily infections rose by 13,094 on Tuesday to bring the country's total to 1,012,350, the most in Southeast Asia. The total number of deaths reached 28,468.

The milestone comes just weeks after Indonesian launched a massive campaign to inoculate two-thirds of the country's 270 million people, with President Joko Widodo receiving the first shot of a Chinese-made vaccine. Health care workers, military, police, teachers and other at-risk populations are being prioritized for the vaccine in the world's fourth most populous country.

Officials have said that Indonesia will require almost 427 million doses, taking into account the estimate that 15% of doses may be wasted during the distribution process in the vast nation of more than 17,000 islands, where transportation and infrastructure are limited in places.

Jakarta continues to be hardest hit city in Indonesia, confirming more than 254,000 cases as of Tuesday, including 4,077 deaths. Only 8.5% of a total 8,066 hospital beds in the city were left for new patients as of Tuesday, while beds with ventilators were filled.

Other provinces across the country's most densely populated island of Java, such as West Java, East Java and Yogyakarta, have also been seeing high bed occupancy rates, up to 95%, in the past few weeks.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 32 of 72

Even in Jakarta's neighboring province of Banten, the occupancy rates reached 100% last week.

Health Ministry data showed hospital capacity nationwide was at about 70%.

Abdul Kadir, the director general of health services at the ministry, called the situation "dire."

The government has issued a circular urging private hospital owners across the country to allocate up to 40% of beds for COVID-19 patients, Kadir said.

Health experts have warned that adding hospital beds is merely a quick fix that will eventually falter if the number of daily cases continues to rise.

Health policy expert Masdalina Pane from the Indonesian Epidemiologists Association said the government should instead amplify testing and tracing efforts as well as reinforcing health protocols and ensuring public compliance.

She said high positivity rates are a sign of insufficient testing and wide transmission of the virus, and efforts to force asymptomatic people to quarantine at home would help slow the spread of the virus.

The number of coronavirus-related cases and deaths has been rising dramatically since early December, prompting seven regional governments on the islands of Java and Bali to reimpose restrictions on public activity.

The virus has killed more than 11,000 people in Indonesia since Dec. 1, representing 40% of the total number of casualties since the outbreak started in early March.

"This is time for us to mourn as many of our brothers and sisters have died, including more than 600 healthcare workers, while dealing with pandemic," said Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin said Tuesday in a televised address.

He vowed his ministry will continue to proactively implement measures to curb the spread of the virus and urged people to observe health guidelines with discipline to reduce the burden of the country's healthcare system.

"This 1 million figure gives an indication that all Indonesian people must work together with the government to fight against the pandemic even harder," Gunadi said.

## 'THIS IS ME': Rioters flaunt involvement in Capitol siege

By MICHAEL BALSAMO, ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — These suspects weren't exactly in hiding.

"THIS IS ME," one man posted on Instagram with a hand emoji pointing to himself in a picture of the violent mob descending on the U.S. Capitol. "Sooo we've stormed Capitol Hill lol," one woman texted someone while inside the building. "I just wanted to incriminate myself a little lol," another wrote on Facebook about a selfie he took inside during the Jan. 6 riot.

In dozens of cases, supporters of President Donald Trump downright flaunted their activity on social media on the day of the deadly insurrection. Some, apparently realizing they were in trouble with the law, deleted their accounts only to discover their friends and family members had already taken screenshots of their selfies, videos and comments and sent them to the FBI.

Their total lack of concern over getting caught and their friends' willingness to turn them in has helped authorities charge about 150 people as of Monday with federal crimes. But even with the help from the rioters themselves, investigators must still work rigorously to link the images to the vandalism and suspects to the acts on Jan. 6 in order to prove their case in court. And because so few were arrested at the scene, the FBI and the U.S. Marshals Service have been forced to send agents to track suspects down.

"Just because you've left the D.C. region, you can still expect a knock on the door if we find out that you were part of criminal activity inside the Capitol," Steven D'Antuono, the assistant director in charge of the FBI's Washington office, said earlier this month. "Bottom line — the FBI is not sparing any resources in this investigation."

In the last few weeks, the FBI has received more than 200,000 photos and video tips related to the riot. Investigators have put up billboards in several states with photos of wanted rioters. Working on tips from co-workers, acquaintances and friends, agents have tracked down driver's license photos to match



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 33 of 72

their faces with those captured on camera in the building. In some cases, authorities got records from Facebook or Twitter to connect their social media accounts to their email addresses or phone numbers. In others, agents used records from license plate readers to confirm their travels.

More than 800 are believed to have made their way into the Capitol, although it's likely not everyone will be tracked down and charged with a crime. Federal prosecutors are focusing on the most critical cases and the most egregious examples of wrongdoing. And they must weigh manpower, cost and evidence when charging rioters.

A special group of prosecutors is examining whether to bring sedition charges against the rioters, which carry up to 20 years in prison. One trio was charged with conspiracy; most have been charged with crimes like unlawful entry and disorderly conduct.

Many rioters posted selfies inside the Capitol to their social media accounts, gave interviews to news outlets describing their experience and readily admitted when questioned by federal investigators that they were there. One man created a Facebook album titled "Who's House? OUR HOUSE" filled with photos of himself and others on Capitol grounds, officials said.

"They might have thought, like so many people that work with Trump, that if the president tells me to do it, it's not breaking the law," said Michael Gerhardt, an expert on impeachment and professor at the University of North Carolina School of Law.

Others made blunders, like a Houston police officer, who denied he went into the Capitol, then agreed to let agents look at the pictures on his phone. Inside his deleted photos folder were pictures and videos, including selfies he took inside the building, authorities said. Another man was wearing a court-ordered GPS monitor after a burglary conviction that tracked his every movement inside the building.

A retired firefighter from Long Island, New York, texted a video of himself in the Capitol rotunda to his girlfriend's brother, saying he was "at the tip of the spear," officials said. The brother happened to be a federal agent with the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service, who turned the video over to the FBI. A lawyer for the man, Thomas Fee, said that he "was not part of any attempt to take over the U.S. Capitol" and that "the allegation is that he merely walked through an open door into the Capitol — nothing more."

Another man who was inside the Capitol was willing to rat out another rioter who stole House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's lectern and emailed the video to an FBI agent, even signing his own name to it. "Hello Nice FBI Lady," he wrote, "Here are the links to the videos. Looks like Podium Guy is in one of them, less the podium. Let me know if you need anything else."

In another case, a man was on a flight leaving D.C. two days after the riot when he kept shouting "Trump 2020!" and was kicked off. An airport police officer saw the man get off the plane and the man was booked on another flight. Forty-five minutes later, the officer was watching a video on Instagram and recognized the man in a group of rioters. The man, who was wearing the same shirt as the day he stormed the Capitol, was arrested at the airport, authorities said.

Even defense attorneys have acknowledged that the evidence poses a problem for them.

"I'm not a magician," said an attorney for the man seen in a photo carrying Pelosi's lectern. "We've got a photograph of our client in what appears to be inside a federal building or inside the Capitol with government property."

Police at the Capitol planned only for a free-speech demonstration and were overwhelmed by the mob that broke through and roamed the halls of the Capitol for hours as lawmakers were sent into hiding. Five people died in the melee, including a Capitol police officer who was struck in the head with a fire extinguisher.

Trump was impeached after the riot on a charge of "inciting violence against the government of the United States." Opening arguments will begin the week of Feb. 8. He is the first president to be twice impeached and the first to face a trial after leaving office.

Unlike criminal cases, impeachment trials do not have specific evidence rules so anything said and done that day can be used. And several of the people charged have said in interviews with reporters or federal

agents that they were simply listening to the president when they marched to the Capitol.

Richer reported from Boston.

## The Latest: Portugal ponders asking EU to send medical help

By The Associated Press undefined

LISBON, Portugal -- Portugal's health minister says authorities are considering asking other European Union countries for help amid a steep surge in COVID-19 cases.

Portugal has had the world's worst rate of new daily cases and deaths per 100,000 people for the past week, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

Health Minister Marta Temido says sending patients to other EU countries is not uncommon in the bloc. But, she says, Portugal has the disadvantage of being geographically remote and hospitals across the continent are under pressure from the pandemic. She says the country may instead be asking for medical workers to be sent.

Portuguese hospitals are under severe strain, Temido told public broadcaster RTP. "We have beds available," she said. "What we're struggling with is finding staff."

That request may be difficult to fulfill, because all countries in the 27-nation bloc are dealing with their own pandemic strains, made more difficult now because of the emergence of virus variants.

### THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- COVID-19 variant brings new dimension to Europe's pandemic fight, upending plans to fight the virus
- Indonesia hits 1 million virus cases, hospitals in some hard-hit areas are near capacity
- U.S. virus numbers have dropped, but the effort to snuff out COVID-19 is becoming a race between the vaccine and the mutating virus
- Taiwan quarantines 5,000 people while looking for source of hospital cluster
- California reverses stay-at-home order as conditions improve
- Follow all of AP's pandemic coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>, <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

### HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Indonesia's confirmed coronavirus infections since the pandemic began crossed 1 million on Tuesday and hospitals in some hard-hit areas were near capacity.

Indonesia's Health Ministry announced that new daily infections rose by 13,094 on Tuesday to bring the country's total to 1,012,350, the most in Southeast Asia. The total number of deaths reached 28,468.

The milestone comes just weeks after Indonesian launched a massive campaign to inoculate two-thirds of the country's 270 million people, with President Joko Widodo receiving the first shot of a Chinese-made vaccine. Health care workers, military, police, teachers and other at-risk populations are being prioritized for the vaccine in the world's fourth most populous country.

Officials say Indonesia will require almost 427 million doses, due to an estimate that 15% of doses may be wasted during the distribution process in the vast nation of more than 17,000 islands, where transportation and infrastructure are limited in places.

Jakarta continues to be hardest hit city in Indonesia.

STOCKHOLM — Sweden's foreign minister says people in the Scandinavian country shouldn't expect to be able to travel globally during Easter, as Sweden extended its advice to avoid unnecessary trips to countries outside the European Union and Europe's Schengen travel area.

"Our assessment is that there will be uncertainty for several months globally. It is an overall assessment that is about what the situation at the destinations will look like," Foreign Minister Ann Linde said Tuesday.

Linde said the recommendation to avoid trips outside the EU will last until April 15. Easter is at the be-

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 35 of 72

ginning of April.

She added that traveling inside the 27-member EU is "in no way risk-free" although it is not advised against.

Sweden, which has opted for a much-debated COVID-19 approach of keeping large parts of society open, has had 11,005 confirmed virus deaths and over 547,100 cases.

**LONDON** — The U.K. is set to announce changes to its quarantine rules later Tuesday that could see anyone arriving in the country having to spend ten days in a hotel at their own expense.

Vaccines minister, Nadhim Zahawi, said there will be an "announcement on this issue later on today," but would not be drawn on what the changes would entail.

The British government has been reviewing its quarantine policies amid concerns over new variants of the coronavirus. Whether the changes will be universal and apply to everyone arriving, including British citizens, or just to those arriving from high-risk coronavirus countries, is unclear.

Zahawi told Sky News that "as we vaccinate more of the adult population, if there are new variants like the South African or the Brazilian variants, we need to be very careful."

**BEIJING** — Chinese airlines are offering refunded tickets as the coronavirus continues to spread in the country's northeast.

The offer Tuesday from the government's aviation authority comes amid a push to prevent people traveling during the Lunar New Year holiday next month.

China has largely curbed the virus' spread in most areas, but travel limits remain in place where outbreaks have been detected, including in the capital Beijing. Schools are going on break a week early and migrant workers have been told not to travel back to their hometowns.

The country's death toll from COVID-19 rose by one to 4,636 among 89,197 cases, the National Health Commission reported, with most new cases in the northeast where winter temperatures are well below freezing.

The National Health Commission on Tuesday reported 53 new cases in Heilongjiang province, with another seven in Jilin province just to the south. Beijing and the business hub of Shanghai both reported two new cases.

**TAIPEI, Taiwan** — Health authorities in Taiwan are quarantining 5,000 people while looking for the source of two new coronavirus cases linked to a hospital.

Officials said that they have not been able to identify how the husband and wife became infected after a brief hospital stay in the Taoyuan General Hospital, located in the city of Taoyuan just outside Taiwan's capital city. The man had stayed at the hospital for three days for health problems unrelated to COVID-19, while his wife looked after him.

Those asked to quarantine include patients who were discharged from the hospital between Jan. 6-19, and their caregivers.

Taiwan is on higher alert after the latest domestic cluster, which has now seen 15 cases from the hospital in Taoyuan.

Taiwan has been applauded for its swift and sustained efforts to contain COVID-19, with just seven deaths and fewer than 900 confirmed cases, despite its close proximity to China.

**AUSTIN, Texas** — The number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients in Texas continues to fall from record highs as the state nears the end of what has been its deadliest month of the pandemic.

State health officials Monday reported fewer than 13,000 people were being treated for the virus in Texas hospitals, marking the seventh consecutive day of declining patient loads.

Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins said the area was "starting to see some metrics go in the right direction" as the average number of daily new cases fell by 800.

More than 34,000 people have died from COVID-19 in Texas, the second-most in the nation behind

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 36 of 72

California. More than 5,000 new cases were reported statewide Monday.

Nationwide, coronavirus deaths and cases per day in the U.S. dropped markedly over the past couple of weeks but are still running at alarmingly high levels. The U.S. is recording just under 3,100 deaths a day on average, down from more than 3,350 less than two weeks ago.

**SEATTLE** — Seattle has joined other cities in approving extra pay for grocery store workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City Council on Monday approved legislation requiring large grocery stores to pay an extra \$4 an hour in hazard pay. The Seattle Times reports the legislation passed 8-0, clearing a requirement that it receive a three-quarter super-majority in order to go into effect immediately.

Mayor Jenny Durkan called the policy “a strong step forward in Seattle’s recovery.”

The new requirement applies to grocery companies with more than 500 employees worldwide and to stores larger than 10,000 square feet. It does not apply to convenience stores or farmers markets.

Covered businesses will have to pay their retail employees \$4 an hour on top of the pay they currently receive as long as the city’s coronavirus civil emergency remains in effect.

The California cities of Los Angeles, Long Beach and Berkeley have within the past month forwarded or approved similar “hazard pay” boosts for grocery workers.

**BOISE, Idaho** — Legislation to end coronavirus restrictions limiting private and public gatherings to 10 people or fewer has passed the Idaho House and is headed to the Senate. But the measure faces legal and constitutional questions.

The House voted 55-15 Monday to approve a concurrent resolution aimed specifically at a Dec. 30 health order by Republican Gov. Brad Little and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. The 10-person limit doesn’t apply to religious or political gatherings.

Backers of the resolution say they want to remove a portion of an emergency declaration by Little but leave the declaration in place. However, the resolution targets a health order, not an emergency declaration.

**NEW ORLEANS** — Hospitalizations for COVID-19 in Louisiana have dropped to the lowest level since late December — prior to a post-holiday season surge that saw the number hit a record high.

Figures posted by the state health department Monday showed the number of people hospitalized with the disease caused by the new coronavirus at 1,638. The number was 2,069 on Jan. 7, higher than the peak of just under 2,000 in the first deadly surge that hit the state in early 2020.

The Louisiana numbers are similar to a national trend. The number of COVID-19 patients in the hospital in the U.S. has fallen to about 110,000 from a high of 132,000 on Jan. 7.

**MINNEAPOLIS** — A new Brazilian variant of the coronavirus has made its first known appearance in the United States, in a person who had recently returned to Minnesota after traveling to that country, state health officials announced Monday.

The virus known as the Brazil P.1 variant was found in a specimen from a patient who lives in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area and became ill the first week of January, the Minnesota Department of Health said in a statement. Epidemiologists were re-interviewing the person to obtain more details about the person’s illness, travel and contacts.

There was no immediate indication that the variant was spreading in the state.

Viruses are constantly mutating, and new versions – called variants – often emerge. Health officials are also worried about variants that were first reported in the United Kingdom and South Africa. Researchers believe they may spread more easily than the virus that’s been sickening millions in the United States and that has caused nearly 420,000 deaths there.

**1 dead, several critically injured after tornado in Alabama**

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 37 of 72

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — One person is dead after a tornado tore through an Alabama city north of Birmingham Monday night, leaving the area with crumpled buildings and downed trees.

Fultondale Police Chief D.P. Smith said a young man trapped in the basement of his home was pronounced dead at the scene around 3 a.m. Tuesday, AL.com reported.

Smith said a tree fell onto the victim's home, causing it to collapse. The victim and his family took shelter in the basement and were trapped inside, Smith said.

The victim is believed to be a teen. Smith said several other family members were critically injured and one escaped harm.

At least a half dozen people have been hospitalized since the tornado hit the Fultondale area of Jefferson County late Monday night.

Injuries range from minor to severe but search and rescue efforts are still ongoing, said James Coker, the director of the Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency.

"Our current goal is always life safety," Coker said. "That is not only for the people who may have been injured but also the first responders who assist them."

Coker said Interstate 65 near Walker Chapel Road is closed due to downed power lines and debris. He also said workers are currently removing obstacles from the roadways.

Several residential homes and buildings were damaged in the storm, including a Hampton Inn hotel, which sustained significant structural damage.

Coker said residents are being urged to remain alert and stay out of the area to allow first responders to continue operations.

The damage is being evaluated to determine the strength of the tornado, the National Weather Service in Birmingham said.

A tornado watch has been lifted in Jefferson County but nearby areas including Clanton and western Georgia are still being monitored.

## **Biden walking a high wire with Russia ahead of Putin call**

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden has been quickly thrown into a high-wire balancing act with Russia as he seeks to toughen his administration's stance against Vladimir Putin while preserving room for diplomacy in a post-Donald Trump era.

The relationship is sure to be different from the one Putin enjoyed with Trump, who was enamored of the Russian leader and sought his approval, casting doubt on Russian interference in the 2016 elections and involvement in a massive hack last year. Despite this conciliatory approach, his administration toed a tough line against Moscow, imposing sanctions on the country, Russian companies and business leaders for issues ranging from Ukraine to energy supplies and attacks on dissidents.

Unlike his immediate predecessors, Biden has not held out hope for a "reset" in relations with Russia but has instead indicated he wants to manage differences with the former Cold War foe without necessarily resolving them or improving ties. And, with a heavy domestic agenda and looming decisions needed on Iran and China, a direct confrontation with Russia is not something he seeks.

When Biden first speaks with Putin, he's expected to call Putin out for the arrest of opposition figure Alexei Navalny and the weekend crackdown on his supporters, raise charges that Russian security services were behind the recent massive cybersecurity breach, and press allegations that Russia offered the Taliban bounties to kill American troops in Afghanistan.

At the same time, Biden must be mindful of his own proposal to extend for five years the last remaining U.S.-Russia arms control treaty that is due to expire in early February.

On Monday, Biden told reporters that he had not yet decided how to respond to the Navalny situation but expressed hope that the U.S. and Russia could cooperate in areas where both see benefit.

"I find that we can both operate in the mutual self-interest of our countries as a New START agreement and make it clear to Russia that we are very concerned about their behavior, whether it's Navalny, whether

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 38 of 72

it's SolarWinds or reports of bounties on heads of Americans in Afghanistan," Biden said.

Biden has already ordered the intelligence community to launch reviews of each of those issues, according to the White House, which on Friday said the U.S. proposal to extend New START would be accompanied by a reckoning on the other matters.

That approach has met with approval from some former U.S. diplomats who have dealt with Russia and are looking forward to how Biden's team, including national security adviser Jake Sullivan and his nominee to be the No. 3 at the State Department, Victoria Nuland, delineate the contours of Russia policy.

Nuland, in particular, is reviled by Putin and his aides for her support of pro-Western politicians in Ukraine and held the Europe portfolio at the State Department in President Barack Obama's second term. She and Sullivan are said to share opinions about how to deal with Moscow, taking a tough line on human rights and Russia's intentions in eastern and central Europe while keeping an open channel to the Kremlin on other matters.

But their starting position is complicated, they say, particularly given Putin's experience in dealing with Trump, who frequently undercut his own administration's hawkish stance on Russia by privately trying to cozy up to the Russian leader.

"It's hard but it's doable," said Daniel Fried, a U.S. ambassador to Poland and assistant secretary of state for European affairs in the George W. Bush administration. "They're going to have to figure this out on the fly, but it's important to pursue New START without hesitation and push back on the Navalny arrest and other issues without guilt."

"They need to do both and not let Putin tell them he won't accept New START unless they drop Navalny, SolarWinds or Afghanistan," said Fried, who is now with the Atlantic Council. "You have to push back and you can't let Putin set the terms."

Putin, however, may be cautious given his uncertain domestic standing in the aftermath of the pro-Navalny protests that took place in more than 100 cities over the weekend.

Biden's team has already reacted strongly to the crackdown on Navalny supporters over the weekend in which more than 3,700 people were arrested at the demonstrations across Russia, including more than 1,400 in Moscow.

Navalny, an anti-corruption campaigner and Putin's fiercest critic, was arrested Jan. 17 as he returned to Russia from Germany, where he had spent nearly five months recovering from nerve-agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin. Russian authorities deny the accusations.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki and State Department spokesman Ned Price have urged the immediate and unconditional release of Navalny, as well as those who were detained in the crackdown.

## Under Biden, China faces renewed trade pressure

By JOE McDONALD and PAUL WISEMAN AP Business Writers

BEIJING (AP) — The U.S.-Chinese trade war isn't going away under President Joe Biden.

Biden won't confront Beijing right away, economists say, because he wants to focus on the coronavirus and the economy. But he looks set to renew pressure over trade and technology grievances that prompted President Donald Trump to hike tariffs on Chinese imports in 2017.

Negotiators might tone down Trump's focus on narrowing China's multibillion-dollar trade surplus with the United States and push harder to open its state-dominated economy, which matters more in the long run, economists say. But no abrupt tariff cuts or other big changes are expected.

"I think Biden will focus more on trying to extract structural reforms," said Louis Kuijs of Oxford Economics. "It's going to take some time before we get any shift or explicit announcements."

Biden is evaluating tariffs on Chinese goods and wants to coordinate future steps with allies, White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Monday. She gave no indication of possible changes.

"The president is committed to stopping China's economic abuses," Psaki said.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian, appealed to Washington to learn from Trump's "erroneous policies" and adopt a "constructive attitude" but gave no indication of possible changes by Beijing.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 39 of 72

"Cooperation is the only correct choice for both sides," Zhao said Tuesday.

Trump acted on complaints that are shared by Europe and other traders, but Washington has little to show for its bruising war. It brought President Xi Jinping's government to the bargaining table but roiled global trade, raised consumer prices and wiped out jobs.

The last major development was a year ago, when Beijing promised in the "Phase One" agreement of January 2020 to buy more soybeans and other U.S. exports and stop pressuring companies to hand over technology.

China fell short on those purchases. Amid the coronavirus turmoil, it bought about 55% of what it promised. As for tech policy, some economists say those changes matter but question whether it counts as a win. They say Beijing might have made them anyway to suit its own plans.

China faces more opposition than ever in Washington due to its trade record, territorial disputes with neighbors, crackdown on Hong Kong, reports of abuses against ethnic Muslims and accusations of technology theft and spying.

"The ground has shifted in a significant way," said Nathan Sheets, a former Treasury undersecretary for international affairs in the Obama administration.

Katherine Tai, Biden's choice to succeed U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, sounded a hawkish note on China in a speech this month.

"We face stiffening competition from a growing and ambitious China," said Tai. "A China whose economy is directed by central planners who are not subject to the pressures of political pluralism, democratic elections or popular opinion."

That means China has to make changes if wants to make progress, said Raoul Leering, global trade analyst for ING. He said that while many of Trump's statements were "close to nonsense," he was right that China has more trade barriers and official intervention in the economy than the United States.

"It will depend on China, the speed at which they reform and change policies, to see whether Biden will roll back trade barriers," he said.

After 2 1/2 years and 13 rounds of talks, negotiators have yet to tackle one of the biggest irritants for China's trading partners — the status of politically favored state companies that dominate industries from banking to oil to telecoms.

Europe, Japan and other governments criticized Trump's tactics but echo complaints that Beijing steals technology and breaks market-opening promises by subsidizing and shielding companies from competition.

Those complaints strike at the heart of a state-led development model Communist Party leaders see as the basis of China's success.

They are building up "national champions" including PetroChina Ltd., Asia's biggest oil producer, and China Mobile Ltd., the world's biggest phone carrier by subscribers. The party in 2013 declared state industry the "core of the economy."

Outside the state sector, the party is nurturing competitors in solar power, electric cars, next-generation telecoms and other fields.

Beijing could offer to drop its claim to being a developing economy, a status it insists on despite having become one of the biggest manufacturers and a middle-income society, Leering said. Under WTO rules, that allows the Communist Party to protect industries and intervene more in the economy.

Giving that up "would be a very important gesture," Leering said.

Trump's opening shot in 2017 was a tax hike on \$360 billion worth of Chinese imports. Beijing retaliated with tariff hikes and suspended soybean imports, hitting farm states that voted for Trump in 2016.

The U.S. trade deficit with China narrowed by 19% in 2019 over a year earlier and by 15% in the first nine months of 2020.

That failed to achieve Trump's goal of moving jobs to the United States. Importers shifted instead to Taiwan, Mexico and other suppliers. The total U.S. trade deficit dipped slightly in 2019, then rose nearly 14% through November last year.

Meanwhile, the Congressional Budget Office estimates tariff hikes cost the average U.S. household nearly \$1,300 last year. Businesses postponed investments, undoing some of the benefits of Trump's 2017

corporate tax cut.

A study by the U.S.-China Business Council and Oxford Economics found the U.S. economy lost 245,000 jobs due to the tariffs. It said even a modest reduction would create 145,000 jobs by 2025.

Trump stepped up pressure by cutting off access to U.S. technology for telecom equipment giant Huawei Technologies Ltd. and other companies seen by American officials as possible security risks and a threat to U.S. industrial leadership. Americans were ordered to sell shares in Chinese companies Washington says have links to the military.

The Communist Party responded by vowing to accelerate its two-decade-old campaign to make China a self-reliant "technology power."

Psaki, the White House spokeswoman, said Biden also was reviewing those issues but gave no indication of possible changes.

Biden wants to hold Beijing accountable for "unfair and illegal practices" and make sure American technology doesn't facilitate its military buildup, Psaki said.

Zhao, the Chinese spokesman, called on Washington not to "politicize or weaponize" science and technology and to avoid "groundless accusations to smear China."

Biden's envoys have the option of fine-tuning Trump's penalties by dropping some in exchange for Chinese policy changes, said Kuijs. But he and other economists say rolling back tariffs and curbs on access to technology and financial markets is unlikely to be a priority.

"It is difficult to see a U.S. reversal of the recent hawkish trends in China policy," Sylvia Sheng of JP Morgan Asset Management said in a report.

Tech curbs are unlikely to be eased because Washington "regards China as a competitor," said Tu Xinquan, director of the Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing.

Tariff cuts look like the only short-term option, Tu said. He said Biden could defend getting rid of taxes the World Trade Organization says were improperly imposed.

"In that case, he wouldn't lose face," said Tu.

---

AP researcher Yu Bing in Beijing contributed.

---

Wiseman reported from Washington.

## Rubbish-covered lake brings to light Balkans waste problem

By DARKO VOJINOVIC Associated Press

PRIBOJ, Serbia (AP) — Trucks and building machines are parked on a river dam in southwest Serbia but not for construction work. Instead, huge cranes are being used to clear tons of garbage crammed at the foot of the power plant.

Serbia and other Balkan nations are overwhelmed by communal waste after decades of neglect and lack of efficient waste-management policies in the countries aspiring to join the European Union.

Burning rubbish dumps can be seen from the roads, plastic bags are hanging from trees and islands of waste are floating down the region's rivers. The problem usually comes into focus in winter, when swollen waters sweep over landfills, pushing the garbage toward hydropower dams.

This has been the case at the Potpec accumulation lake near the power plant after a spate of rainy and snowy weather in December and early January. The surface of the lake got covered in a thick layer of waste ranging from plastics to rusty metal scraps, tree trunks and even reportedly a coffin.

The garbage has been swept downstream by the Lim River, which feeds the Potpec dam. The Lim originates in neighboring Montenegro, passing through several municipalities and their waste sites in both Montenegro and Serbia.

"Based on a recent study, we found out that in these towns, in the five municipalities in Montenegro and three in Serbia, about 45,000 tons of waste are collected (per year)," said Predrag Saponjic, the Lim



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 41 of 72

River hydropower plant system manager. Looking at the rubbish-strewn lake, he added that "even if only a fraction of that waste ends up in the Lim River, we get this."

Environmentalists in the Balkans have warned that because most landfills aren't managed properly they leak toxic materials into rivers, threatening ecosystems and wildlife.

Bosnia too has reported a garbage pileup that endangers the hydroelectric dam on the Drina River, near the eastern town of Visegrad. The Lim is one of the tributaries of the Drina, which makes their waterways — and garbage flows — closely connected.

The two emerald-colored rivers — the Drina flows along the border between Serbia and Bosnia — during summer are favored by adventurers and water rafters who enjoy the winding waterways and seemingly pristine nature.

While Balkan nations have been struggling to recover following a series of wars and crises in the 1990s, environmental issues often come last for the countries whose economies are lagging far behind the rest of Europe and where public funds are vulnerable to widespread corruption.

Jugoslav Jovanovic, from Serbia's state-run Srbijavode company that is in charge of the country's water system, put the waste problem down to "our neglect and lack of care." Landfills are located too close to rivers and are overfilled rather than closed down over the years, he warned.

"If we find ourselves forced to do this year after year, then that's not really a solution," he said of the clearing operation. "We must find common ground and solve this by joining forces."

Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia have held meetings on the issue but little has been done. The Balkan countries also face other environmental emergencies, including dangerous levels of air pollution in many cities.

Experts predict the clearing of Potpec lake will take few weeks, depending on the weather. However, all the garbage from the water will end up again on a landfill in western Serbia.

Goran Rekovic, an activist from the nearby town of Priboj, said raising public awareness about pollution is a key goal, along with "institutional and systematic" solutions. These are needed also if Serbia and other Balkan countries wish to move closer to EU membership.

"This is not European Union's obligation. We should not be doing this for them," Rekovic said. "The reason why we should take care of our environment is for our own future generations."

---

Jovana Gec and Marko Drobnjakovic contributed to this report.

---

Follow all AP stories on the environment and climate change at <https://apnews.com/hub/Climate>.

## COVID-19 variant brings new dimension to Europe's pandemic

By BARRY HATTON Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — In the first week of December, Portugal's prime minister gave his pandemic-weary people an early Christmas gift: restrictions on gatherings and travel due to COVID-19 would be lifted from Dec. 23-26 so they could spend the holiday season with family and friends.

Soon after those visits, the pandemic quickly got out of hand.

By Jan. 6, Portugal's number of new daily COVID-19 cases surged past 10,000 for the first time. In mid-January, with alarm bells ringing as each day brought new records of infections and deaths, the government ordered a lockdown for at least a month and a week later shut the country's schools.

But it was too little, too late. Portugal has for almost a week had the most daily cases and deaths per 100,000 people in the world, according to statistics compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

Outside the country's overloaded hospitals now, long lines of ambulances wait for hours to deliver their COVID-19 patients.

Portugal's problems illustrate the risk of letting down pandemic guards when a new, fast-spreading variant is lurking unseen.

The pandemic's spread across Europe is increasingly being powered by an especially contagious virus

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 42 of 72

mutation first detected last year in southeast England, health experts say. The threat is prompting governments to introduce harsh new lockdowns and curfews.

Viggo Andreasen, an assistant professor in mathematical epidemiology at Roskilde University, west of Copenhagen, said the new variant is a game-changer.

"On the surface, things may look good but underneath, the (new) variant is looming," he told The Associated Press. "Everyone in the business knows that there is a new game on its way."

In Denmark, the variant is threatening to spin the pandemic out of control, despite relative early success in containing the spread of the virus. Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said this month "it is a race against time" to get people vaccinated and slow the variant's progress because it is already too widespread to stop.

The National Institute for Public Health and the Environment in the Netherlands last week reported rising cases of the variant and warned it will push higher the number of hospital admissions and deaths.

"There are essentially two separate COVID-19 epidemics: one epidemic involving the 'old' variant, in which infections are decreasing, and another epidemic involving the (new) variant, in which infections are increasing," it said.

The Netherlands went into a tough five-week lockdown in mid-December, closing schools and non-essential businesses as new infections spiked. Prime Minister Mark Rutte extended the lockdown by a further three weeks on Jan. 12, citing concerns about the new variant.

Last week, the Dutch government went a step further and introduced a 9 p.m.-to-4:30 a.m. curfew as well as limiting the number of guests people can have at home to one per day.

The discovery of the new variant has prompted other EU countries to stiffen their lockdown measures. Belgium has banned all nonessential travel for residents until March, and France may soon begin a third lockdown if its 12-hour daily curfew doesn't slow the spread of new infections.

Other mutated versions of the virus have surfaced in Brazil and South Africa.

The British variant will probably become the dominant source of infection in the United States by March, experts say. It has so far been reported in more than 20 states.

The U.S. government's top infectious-disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, says scientists are readying an upgrade for COVID-19 vaccines that will address the British and South African variants.

Moderna, the maker of one of the two vaccines being used in the U.S., says it is beginning to test a possible booster dose against the South African version — a variant Fauci said was "even more ominous" than the British one.

Pfizer, which makes a similar COVID-19 vaccine, says its shot appears effective against the strain from Britain, although questions remain about the South Africa variant.

Amid those fears, the United States is reinstating COVID-19 travel restrictions on non-U.S. travelers from the United Kingdom, 26 other European countries and Brazil, and adding South Africa to the list.

It's been a steep learning curve for Portugal.

Ricardo Mexia, head of Portugal's National Association of Public Health Doctors, said before relaxing restrictions at Christmas the Portuguese government should have strengthened its preparations for January, but it didn't.

"The problem has been not only not reacting promptly but also not being proactive" to get ahead of the problems, he told the AP. Authorities "need to be more assertive."

A Jan. 3 report by the Dr. Ricardo Jorge National Health Institute, which monitors the virus in Portugal, said tests had found 16 cases of the new variant in continental Portugal, 10 of them in travelers at Lisbon airport. It did not specify where they had come from.

Portuguese authorities scrambled to make up for lost time, adding even tighter restrictions to the lockdown just three days after it was announced. But new cases and deaths piled up.

Just over two weeks later, the virus monitoring agency estimated there had been cases of the new variant in Portugal in early December and warned that the proportion of COVID-19 cases attributed to the U.K. strain could reach 60% by early February.

Only on Saturday did the government, blaming the now-devastating COVID-19 surge on the variant, stop flights to and from the United Kingdom.

The World Health Organization's emergencies chief said earlier this month that the agency is assessing the impact of the new variants, but warned they are also being used as scapegoats.

"It's just too easy to lay the blame on the variant and say, 'It's the virus that did it,'" Dr. Michael Ryan told reporters in Geneva. "Well, unfortunately, it's also what we didn't do that did it."

AP writers Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen and Mike Corder in The Hague, Netherlands, contributed to this report.

## Nepal team that scaled K2 receive hero's welcome back home

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — A team of 10 Nepalese climbers who became the first to scale the world's second-highest peak during the harsh winter season received a hero's welcome on return home to Nepal on Tuesday.

Mountaineers, supporters, friends and family lined the Kathmandu airport to greet the climbers with garlands and cheers as a police band played tunes. They were then driven around city in open trucks.

"As a team we feel really proud; we feel really honored. I think we sent a really clear message to the world, if we unite nothing is impossible, so everybody is happy here," said Nirmal Purja, one of the members of the team who also holds the record for the fastest climb of the 14 highest peaks in the world.

The winter climb marks another achievement for Nepalese climbers who for decades worked as porters and guides for foreign mountaineers but now are setting their own records and running expeditions on the highest peaks.

"This expedition has risen the status of Nepali climbers to a new height, which is an achievement for all the mountaineering and shows that there is nothing that we cannot achieve if we attempt," said Mingma Sherpa, who organized the expedition.

K2 is the most prominent peak on the Pakistani side of the Himalayan range, and is second in height only to Mount Everest. K2 had remained the last peak above 8,000 meters (26,240 feet) in the world that was yet to be climbed in the winter.

The Nepalese team made sure that all 10 members reached the summit at the same time.

"All 10 of us worked together in the same level. We all took a big risk to our lives. We felt like it has to be justice for every team member," Purja said.

## Veteran activists campaign for Biden's immigration reform

By ANITA SNOW and MANUEL VALDES Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. (AP) — Immigrant rights activists energized by a new Democratic administration and majorities on Capitol Hill are gearing up for a fresh political battle to push through a proposed bill from President Joe Biden that would open a pathway to citizenship for up to 11 million people.

The multimillion-dollar #WeAreHome campaign was launched Monday by national groups including United We Dream and the United Farm Workers Foundation. It starts with ads on Facebook and other social media to reach lawmakers and the constituents who can pressure them.

"We are home," a young woman's voice declares in the first video spot showing immigrants in essential jobs such as cleaning and health care. "Home, even when they say we don't belong."

The effort is a longshot. Immigration remains a third rail dividing Republicans and Democrats in the U.S. and opponents of the measure have pledged to fight it. Although Democrats now account for 50 of 100 senators, with a deciding vote by Vice President Kamala Harris, the bill will need at least 60 votes to pass.

Opponents promised to launch their own social media blitz, as well as TV and radio ads. They also said they would write letters and meet virtually with members of Congress.

But organizers say they enjoy the momentum of a new administration and growing public support for giving people in the U.S. illegally a chance at citizenship. The activists note they are also more seasoned.

"The movement has matured," said Lorella Praeli, the Peruvian-born co-president of Community Change,

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 44 of 72

among the national groups leading the campaign. "It's more diverse, experienced."

Praeli, now 28, was brought to the U.S. when she was 10 so she could get better medical treatment after losing a leg in an accident. She became an immigrant activist in her teens.

Praeli honed her skills as Latino communities outreach director for Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign before addressing the 2016 Democratic National Convention.

She said the new battle is being waged on various levels, from grassroots organizing in communities to lobbying on Capitol Hill. Participating groups will bankroll the campaign with their own fundraising and the help of the New Venture Fund, a nonprofit social advocacy group.

"We need an early breakthrough on immigration," said Praeli. "We have 100 days to set the tone."

Patrice Lawrence, the Jamaica-born co-executive director for the UndocuBlack Network, said the campaign represents all immigrants "regardless of the color of our skin, where we live, if we work, how we pray or how old we are."

Glo H. Choi, of the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium, said comprehensive immigration reform is overdue.

"The temporary measures of the past have just been kicking the can down the road," said the Chicago-based community organizer who was brought to the U.S. as a child from South Korea.

The effort offers hope to immigrants like Daniela Murguia, a University of Washington graduate who lives in the Seattle suburb of Renton. Murguia's family brought her here from Mexico in 2008 when she was 11 and she has no legal status or protections. She recently raised millions of dollars in coronavirus pandemic aid for immigrants living in the U.S. illegally and lobbied to include such help in the state budget.

Under Biden's bill, most people like Murguia would wait eight years for citizenship, but those enrolled in the Delayed Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA; those with temporary protective status after fleeing violence-wracked countries; and farmworkers would wait three years. The bill includes protections for other kinds of immigrants, too.

Opponents note that President Ronald Reagan's 1986 amnesty for nearly 3 million immigrants was followed by a flood of new arrivals. But immigration enforcement has expanded greatly since, and Biden's proposal calls for more technology at land crossings, airports and seaports even as he halts construction of former President Donald Trump's signature border wall.

Still, Sen. Tom Cotton, an Arkansas Republican who supported the wall and is a staunch advocate of restrictive immigration laws, describes the bill as "open borders." He said it has "no regard for the health and security of Americans, and zero enforcement."

The Federation for American Immigration Reform, a major opponent of the bill, also considers it a kind of amnesty and vows to fight it.

"It would not only reward everyone who has violated our immigration laws in the past, but also induce millions more to come here illegally," said R.J. Hauman, head of the group's governmental relations. "In exchange for absolutely nothing."

NumbersUSA Deputy Director Chris Chmielenski suggested Biden may feel beholden to activists who helped elect him. The group favors reduced immigration.

"I think it has zero chance of passing," he said.

But the activists have changing public opinion on their side.

Seven in 10 voters said they preferred offering immigrants in the U.S. illegally a chance to apply for legal status, compared with about 3 in 10 who thought they should be deported to their birth country, according to AP VoteCast. The November survey of more than 110,000 voters showed 9 in 10 Biden voters and about half of Trump voters favored creating a way for people to legalize their status.

Veteran civil rights activist Dolores Huerta, an activist and co-founder of the United Farm Workers who now runs her own foundation, said the immigration reform push will benefit from the dramatic stories of children being separated from their parents under the Trump administration.

"I think that is going to make a difference," Huerta said. "Once people see the justice of the issue they will come onboard."

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 45 of 72

Immigrants say a proposal in the bill to replace the word "alien" with "noncitizen" in immigration laws already makes them feel a difference in the way they are viewed.

"I feel more hopeful, more confident," said Melissa Laratte, a member of National Domestic Workers Alliance, another group organizing the campaign. She arrived with her young son in Miami two years ago seeking asylum as a member of an opposition group in her native Haiti.

"They're trying to help us," she said.

Snow reported from Phoenix. Associated Press writers Claudia Torrens in New York and Gisela Salomon in Miami contributed to this report.

## Storm blankets Midwest with heavy snow, travel disruptions

By JOSH FUNK Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A major winter storm blanketed parts of the middle of the country with snow that was forecast to continue into late Tuesday in some areas, disrupting traffic and closing some coronavirus testing sites.

The National Weather Service said at least 4 inches (10 centimeters) of snow is expected across most of an area stretching from central Kansas northeast to Chicago and southern Michigan. Parts of southeast Nebraska and western Iowa could get more than three times that much by Tuesday morning.

The weather service forecast the light snowfall that began around sunset Monday in northern Illinois was expected to get heavier overnight, with accumulation totaling about 3 to 6 inches by early Tuesday. Meteorologist Bett Borchardt forecast snowfall could total up to 8 inches (20.32 centimeters) or more before it ends Tuesday evening.

The last comparable snowfall in the area occurred in November 2018, when 8.4 inches (21.34 centimeters) of snow fell.

A winter weather advisory was issued Monday for northwest Indiana, where the weather service forecast 3 to 5 inches of snow by the time the storm leaves the area Tuesday. A mix of freezing drizzle was expected in the southern parts of the region.

The break in the relatively mild winter in northern Illinois may mean the rest of the season could be more active, said weather service meteorologist Matt Friedlein.

"Now, more active does not necessarily mean more snow," Friedlein told the Chicago Sun-Times. "If we stay on the milder side of things, that could be more rain or more mixed precipitation."

The city of Chicago on Monday warned residents that hazardous conditions are likely to impact Tuesday morning commutes and some power outages are possible due to the wet nature of the snow and gusting winds. City officials have dispatched about 280 salt spreaders to clear the city's main streets and have created warming centers in libraries and park facilities for residents who have no heat because of the loss of power to their homes.

By late Monday, 120 flights had been cancelled at O'Hare and 48 flights at Midway international airports, with 15-minute delays at both facilities.

Gary Mayor Jerome Prince declared a snow emergency late Monday, placing restrictions on where vehicles can park and prohibiting the pushing of snow from private property onto city streets. In addition, Prince closed city-owned buildings and facilities until Wednesday.

Several coronavirus testing sites in Nebraska and Iowa were closing early Monday because of the snow. More than 10 inches (25 centimeters) of snow had already fallen in parts of eastern Nebraska by Monday evening.

National Weather Service meteorologist Taylor Nicolaisen said 10 to 15 inches (25 to 38 centimeters) of snow was likely between York, Nebraska, and Des Moines, Iowa, and that it has been at least 15 years since that area received more than a foot of snow in a single storm.

"This is historic snow," said Nicolaisen, who is based near Omaha, Nebraska.

Many schools and businesses closed Monday as the storm moved across the region. In western Iowa, Missouri Valley Superintendent Brent Hoelsing reworked the lyrics of the 1970s hit "I Will Survive" to tell

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 46 of 72

students in his district to "So Stay Inside."

Officials urged drivers to stay off the roads during the storm, especially during the heaviest snowfall in the afternoon and evening. Nebraska State Patrol troopers responded to more than 200 weather-related incidents Monday.

"Do not travel unless it's absolutely necessary," said Nebraska State Patrol Col. John Bolduc.

Roughly 250 semi trucks pulled off the road to wait out the storm at the Petro truck stop alongside Interstate 80 in York, Nebraska. Manager Rachael Adamson said she could see knee-high drifts and that the maintenance man had to go out every 30 minutes to shovel the sidewalks to keep up with the snow.

"We haven't had this much snow in quite a few years," Adamson said.

Iowa State Patrol Sgt. Alex Dinkla said road conditions deteriorated quickly and numerous vehicles slid off roads in central Iowa.

"The big thing that people are seeing is that this snow system is packing a big punch," Dinkla said to the Des Moines Register. "As we have seen this system move into Iowa, the road conditions go from zero snow on the road to an immediate totally covered roadway in just a matter of minutes."

A section of eastbound Interstate 80 was closed in central Nebraska Monday afternoon following a crash. And Missouri officials urged drivers not to travel on Interstates 29 and 35 in northwest Missouri into Iowa. The agency said most roads in the area were covered with snow and heavy snow continued falling Monday afternoon.

"If northern Missouri or Iowa are part of your travel plan, please re-route or find a warm, safe place to wait out the storm," the Missouri Transportation Department said.

Elsewhere in the U.S., a storm moving across the Southwest on Monday and Tuesday was forecast to bring gusty winds and snowfall, the weather service said. Over the weekend, more than a foot of snow fell in Southern California's mountains, making driving conditions hazardous. Interstate 5 was shut down Monday in the Tejon Pass between Los Angeles and the San Joaquin Valley. Wind, snow and ice also forced the closure of State Route 58 through the Tehachapi Pass.

Until recently, California had been experiencing significantly dry weather accompanied by relentless wildfires. A band of clouds suggested more rain could fall Tuesday in areas north and south of San Francisco Bay, bringing the threat of possible flash floods and landslides in areas scarred by the fires.

Forecasters at the Sacramento-area National Weather Service office predict an abundance of snow in the Sierra Nevada between late Tuesday and Friday that will make travel through the mountains difficult.

A major winter storm buried northern Arizona in snow on Monday while sending flurries to the outskirts of Las Vegas and Phoenix.

And most of Nevada was bracing for another series of powerful winter storms that could bring rare snowfall to the Las Vegas Strip late Monday or early Tuesday and several feet to the mountains above Lake Tahoe with winds up to 60 mph (96 kph) by Thursday.

Up to 6 inches (15 centimeters) of snow fell Monday in the Reno-Sparks area, where up to 10 inches (25 cm) is possible and up to 20 inches (50 cm) in the Sierra foothills above elevations of 5,000 feet (1,828 meters) on the edge of town by Thursday.

Three to 6 feet (91 cm to 1.8 meters) of snow is forecast in the Sierra above elevations of 7,000 feet

## Goade becomes first Native American to win Caldecott Medal

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Illustrator Michaela Goade became the first Native American to win the prestigious Randolph Caldecott Medal for best children's picture story, cited for "We Are Water Protectors," a celebration of nature and condemnation of the "black snake" Dakota Access Pipeline.

"I am really honored and proud," the 30-year-old Goade told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. "I think it's really important for young people and aspiring book makers and other creative people to see this."

Tae Keller's chapter book "When You Trap a Tiger," in which a young Korean-American explores her identity and her heritage through her grandmother's stories, won the John Newbery Medal for the out-

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 47 of 72

standing children's work overall of 2020. Keller, who was raised in Hawaii and now lives in New York, drew upon Korean folklore and family history for "When You Trap a Tiger," also named the year's best Asian/Pacific American literature.

"The book really did grow from the recognition of my grandmother as this full person with so much life and so many stories to tell," Keller, 27, told the AP. "I also did a great deal of research into Korean folklore and Korean history. There was a lot I heard growing up, but I had never had a fuller, deeper understanding of it all. I think that was the most rewarding part of writing this book."

Jacqueline Woodson, whose previous honors include a National Book Award, won her third Coretta Scott King Award for best work by a Black author for "Before the Ever After." And a tribute to Aretha Franklin, "R-E-S-P-E-C-T," received the King award for best illustration. The book was written by Carole Boston Weatherford, with images by Frank Morrison.

The awards were announced Monday by the American Library Association.

"We Are Water Protectors," written by Carole Lindstrom, was conceived in response to the planned construction of the Dakota pipeline through Standing Rock Sioux territory. Goade, a member of the Tlingit and Haida Indian tribes in Southeast Alaska, was sent a copy of the manuscript through her agent in 2018 and responded immediately to its political message and message of water as a universal force.

"I love how it balanced lyricism and poetry with a powerful message," says Goade, who used everything from watercolors to Gouache paint as she conjured moods ranging from the water's sensual blue waves to the harsh black of the snake/pipeline and the burning red of the snake's tongue.

The Newbery medal was established in 1922, the Caldecott in 1937. Goade, whose other books include "Encounter," is the first Native American to win in either category. Her next book is the picture story "I Sang You Down from the Stars," a collaboration with author Tasha Spillett-Sumner that comes out in April.

Goade's win was widely cheered on social media, including by Lindstrom, who tweeted to the illustrator: "I have no words to describe how proud of you I am. I love you so so much. You are so extremely talented and just an amazing person inside and out." Dr. Debbie Reese, founder of the educational resource American Indians in Children's Literature, noted that previous Caldecott awards had gone to stories about Natives that were created by non-Natives, citing Paul Goble's "The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses" and Gerald McDermott's "Arrow to the Sun."

"What I see in this year's winners is a respect for Native writing," Reese told the AP. "We are so much more than what the mainstream understands, and slowly — and hopefully surely as we move into the future — editors and readers are coming to understand who we were, and who we are."

Daniel Nayeri's "Everything Sad Is Untrue (a true story)" won the Michael L. Printz Award for best young adult novel, and Mildred D. Taylor, known for "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry" among other works, was given a "Literature Legacy" award.

Kekla Magoon, who has written or co-written "X: A Novel" and "How It Went Down," won a lifetime achievement award for young adult books.

Ernesto Cisneros' "Efrén Divided" won the Pura Belpré prize for outstanding Latinx author. Raul Gonzalez's "Vamos! Let's Go Eat" received the Belpré award for illustration. The Stonewall Book Award for best LGBT literature was given to Archa Shrivastav for "We Are Little Feminists: Families."

On the Internet: [ala.org](http://ala.org).

## **GOP Ohio Sen. Portman not seeking reelection, cites gridlock**

BY DAN SEWELL and THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — Ohio Sen. Rob Portman said Monday that he won't seek reelection to a third term in 2022, expressing dismay with the deep partisanship and dysfunction in American politics.

The career establishment Republican with a reputation for bipartisanship cited a political climate that has made it "harder to break through the partisan gridlock and make progress."

"Our country is very polarized," Portman said, adding that former President Donald Trump did not help

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 48 of 72

with the polarization. "It's shirts and skins right now. We need to tone it down."

The decision is one measure of the difficult politics facing many Republicans in Washington as they cede power in President Joe Biden's administration and watch their party split between hard-right Trump supporters and others eager to turn the page. Portman, a moderate who might see growing influence as Biden looks for allies, did not appear optimistic about the prospect of a new political climate.

Portman, 65, is among the longtime Republican lawmakers who often backed Trump, though not vociferously. Once dubbed "The Loyal Soldier" in a front-page profile story in his hometown Cincinnati Enquirer, Portman usually defended Trump or avoided criticism of him with carefully worded statements. After Trump called the presidential election rigged, citing no legitimate evidence, Portman said Trump had a right to a probe of any irregularities.

But immediately after the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol by a violent mob of Trump backers, Portman said Trump needed to go on national TV to tell his supporters to refrain from violence.

"Both in his words before the attack on the Capitol and in his actions afterward, President Trump bears some responsibility for what happened," Portman said.

His retirement adds another open seat for the GOP to defend in 2022 as it seeks to regain control of a Senate that Democrats hold by virtue of Vice President Kamala Harris being the tiebreaking vote. Sens. Richard Burr of North Carolina and Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, two other more mainstream Republicans in the Senate GOP caucus, have also said they won't seek reelection next year.

"There goes the kind of really thoughtful public official who listens, who works both sides, who tries to get things done," Republican pollster Christine Matthews said. "And right now the kind of candidate that's going to come out of a Ohio Republican primary is not going to be that kind of candidate. That's not the kind of energy that's in the Republican primary electorate right now."

Indiana Sen. Todd Young, former chair of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, said he wasn't worried about moderates fleeing the party.

"(Portman's departure) says nothing about the 2022 landscape," Young said. "It says a lot about Rob Portman that, two years out, he made the announcement so that Republicans have plenty of time to field a very strong candidate and to give that candidate sufficient time to run a strong campaign, which they will."

Eight-term Rep. Jim Jordan, an outspoken Trump supporter from western Ohio, and six-term Rep. Bill Johnson, from heavily pro-Trump southeast Ohio, are viewed as potential candidates for Portman's seat. Likewise, former Rep. Jim Renacci from central Ohio, a Republican who lost a Senate challenge to Democrat Sherrod Brown in 2018, is also considered a possible contender.

Portman's announcement came the same day that the Senate is receiving the House impeachment article against Trump for his role in the Capitol riot. While some Republican senators have criticized going ahead with the trial with Trump out of office, Portman said last week that he would listen to the evidence presented by both sides before deciding how to vote.

Republicans have 20 seats up for reelection in 2022, compared to 14 for Democrats. Those GOP seats include presidential battlegrounds Wisconsin, where Trump narrowly lost in November, and Florida, where he won by more than 3 percentage points.

Wisconsin Sen. Ron Johnson has not yet said whether he'll seek a third term. Meanwhile, six-term Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, who would turn 89 two months before the 2022 election, said he would decide this year whether to seek a seventh. Two-term Missouri Republican Roy Blunt has not said whether he'll seek a third.

Ohio, a perennial battleground for decades, has become more reliably Republican, carried by Trump by more than 8 percentage points in 2016 and 2020. Portman, like many mainstream GOP lawmakers viewed as insufficiently supportive of Trump, was considered likely to face a primary challenge from the right.

"Yeah, sure, some people are mad at him," said Ohio Republican strategist Ryan Stubenrauch. "But he wouldn't have faced a credible primary challenge. He does his job. He's a really good campaigner and well known across the state."

Portman twice won election to the Senate by wide margins. Before that, he served seven terms in the



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 49 of 72

House and a stint as President George W. Bush's budget director.

Still, Portman's departure offers a glimmer of hope for Democrats in the state. Besides Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown, most other statewide officials are Republican.

Tim Ryan, a 10-term Democratic representative from blue-collar eastern Ohio who ran unsuccessfully for the 2020 presidential nomination, said Monday that he is weighing a Senate campaign. "I haven't made a decision yet but I'm looking seriously at it," he wrote on Twitter.

Likewise, Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley, a rising star who lost a 2018 primary for governor, said she is weighing a Senate bid. "I've gotten a lot of encouragement, especially today, and will make my decision in the coming weeks," Whaley told The Associated Press.

Portman's first federal government job started in 1989, when he served as an associate legal counsel in the George H.W. Bush White House. Portman considered Bush a mentor, one whose genteel style was far from that of the abrasive Trump and some of his Republican supporters in Washington.

Portman was elected to Congress from southern Ohio in a 1993 special election and won six more elections before President George W. Bush tapped him to serve as U.S. trade representative in 2005. He traveled the globe, negotiating dozens of trade agreements. Bush then nominated him to be White House budget director in 2006.

Beaumont reported from Des Moines, Iowa.

Follow Dan Sewell at <https://twitter.com/dansewell>

## Trump impeachment goes to Senate, testing his sway over GOP

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democrats delivered the impeachment case against Donald Trump to the Senate late Monday for the start of his historic trial, but Republican senators were easing off their criticism of the former president and shunning calls to convict him over the deadly siege at the U.S. Capitol.

It's an early sign of Trump's enduring sway over the party.

The nine House prosecutors carried the sole impeachment charge of "incitement of insurrection" across the Capitol, making a solemn and ceremonial march to the Senate along the same halls the rioters ransacked just weeks ago. But Republican denunciations of Trump have cooled since the Jan. 6 riot. Instead Republicans are presenting a tangle of legal arguments against the legitimacy of the trial and questioning whether Trump's repeated demands to overturn Joe Biden's election really amounted to incitement.

What seemed for some Democrats like an open-and-shut case that played out for the world on live television, as Trump encouraged a rally mob to "fight like hell" for his presidency, is running into a Republican Party that feels very differently. Not only are there legal concerns, but senators are wary of crossing the former president and his legions of followers — who are their voters. Security remains tight at the Capitol.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, asked if Congress starts holding impeachment trials of former officials, what's next: "Could we go back and try President Obama?"

Besides, he suggested, Trump has already been held to account. "One way in our system you get punished is losing an election."

Arguments in the Senate trial will begin the week of Feb. 8, and the case against Trump, the first former president to face impeachment trial, will test a political party still sorting itself out for the post-Trump era. Republican senators are balancing the demands of deep-pocketed donors who are distancing themselves from Trump and voters who demand loyalty to him. One Republican, Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio, announced Monday he would not seek reelection in 2022, citing the polarized political atmosphere.

For Democrats the tone, tenor and length of the upcoming trial, so early in Biden's presidency, poses its own challenge, forcing them to strike a balance between their vow to hold Trump accountable and their eagerness to deliver on the new administration's priorities following their sweep of control of the House, Senate and White House.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 50 of 72

Biden himself told CNN late Monday that the impeachment trial "has to happen." While acknowledging the effect it could have on his agenda, he said there would be "a worse effect if it didn't happen."

Biden said he didn't think enough Republican senators would vote for impeachment to convict, though he also said the outcome might well have been different if Trump had six months left in his term.

In a Monday evening scene reminiscent of just a year ago — Trump is now the first president twice impeached — the lead prosecutor from the House, this time Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, stood before the Senate to read the House resolution charging "high crimes and misdemeanors."

Earlier, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said failing to conduct the trial would amount to a "get-out-jail-free card" for others accused of wrongdoing on their way out the door.

Republicans appear more eager to argue over trial process than the substance of the case, he said, perhaps to avoid casting judgment on Trump's "role in fomenting the despicable attack" on the Capitol.

Schumer said there's only one question "senators of both parties will have to answer before God and their own conscience: Is former President Trump guilty of inciting an insurrection against the United States?"

On Monday, it was learned that Chief Justice John Roberts is not expected to preside at the trial, as he did during Trump's first impeachment, potentially affecting the gravitas of the proceedings. The shift is said to be in keeping with protocol because Trump is no longer in office.

Instead, Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., who serves in the largely ceremonial role of Senate president pro tempore, is set to preside.

Leaders in both parties agreed to a short delay in the proceedings that serves their political and practical interests, even as National Guard troops remain at the Capitol amid security threats on lawmakers ahead of the trial.

The start date gives Trump's new legal team time to prepare its case, while also providing more than a month's distance from the passions of the bloody riot. For the Democratic-led Senate, the intervening weeks provide prime time to confirm some of Biden's key Cabinet nominees.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., questioned how his colleagues who were in the Capitol that day could see the insurrection as anything other than a "stunning violation" of the nation's history of peaceful transfers of power.

"It is a critical moment in American history," Coons said Sunday in an interview.

An early vote to dismiss the trial probably would not succeed, given that Democrats now control the Senate. The House approved the charge against Trump on Jan. 13, with 10 Republicans joining the Democrats.

Still, the mounting Republican opposition to the proceedings indicates that many GOP senators will eventually vote to acquit Trump. Democrats would need the support of 17 Republicans — a high bar — to convict him.

One by one, Republican senators are explaining their objections to the unprecedented trial and scoffing at the idea of trying to convict Trump now that he's no longer in office.

Rand Paul of Kentucky said that without the chief justice presiding the proceedings are a "sham." Joni Ernst of Iowa said that while Trump "exhibited poor leadership," it's those who assaulted the Capitol who "bear the responsibility." New Sen. Tommy Tuberville of Alabama said Trump is one of the reasons he is in the Senate, so "I'm proud to do everything I can for him."

Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., is among those who say the Senate does not have the constitutional authority to convict a former president.

Democrats reject that argument, pointing to an 1876 impeachment of a secretary of war who had already resigned and to opinions by many legal scholars. Democrats also say that a reckoning of the first invasion of the Capitol since the War of 1812, perpetrated by rioters egged on by a president as Electoral College votes were being tallied, is necessary.

A few GOP senators have agreed with Democrats, though not close to the number that will be needed to convict Trump.

Mitt Romney of Utah said he believes "what is being alleged and what we saw, which is incitement to insurrection, is an impeachable offense. ... If not, what is?" Romney was the only Republican senator to

vote for conviction when the Senate acquitted Trump in his first impeachment trial.

Associated Press writer Hope Yen contributed to this report.

## **Pets are back: Biden's 2 dogs settle in at White House**

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The patter of paws is being heard in the White House again following the arrival of President Joe Biden's dogs Champ and Major. The two German shepherds are the first pets to live at the executive mansion since the Obama administration.

Major burst onto the national scene late last year after Biden, then president-elect, broke his right foot while playing with the dog at their home in Wilmington, Delaware.

The Bidens adopted Major in 2018 from the Delaware Humane Association. Champ joined the family after the 2008 presidential election that made Joe Biden vice president.

The dogs moved into the White House on Sunday, following Biden's inauguration last week.

"The first family wanted to get settled before bringing the dogs down to Washington from Delaware," said Michael LaRosa, spokesperson for first lady Jill Biden. "Champ is enjoying his new dog bed by the fireplace and Major loved running around on the South Lawn."

The dogs were heard barking outside near the Oval Office on Monday as Biden signed an executive order lifting the previous administration's ban on transgender people serving in the military.

Last week, the Delaware Humane Association cosponsored an "indoguration" virtual fundraiser to celebrate Major's journey from shelter pup to first dog. More than \$200,000 was raised.

Major is the first shelter dog to ever live in the White House and "barking proof that every dog can live the American dream," the association said.

The Bidens had promised to bring the dogs with them to the White House. They plan to add a cat, though no update on the feline's arrival was shared on Monday.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki predicted, while on video answering questions from members of the public, that the cat will "dominate the internet" when it arrives.

Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, a self-described germaphobe, does not own any pets and had none with him at the White House.

Just like they do for ordinary people, pets owned by the most powerful people in the world provide their owners with comfort, entertainment, occasional drama and generally good PR.

"Pets have played an important role in the White House throughout the decades, not only by providing companionship to the presidents and their families, but also by humanizing and softening their political images," said Jennifer Pickens, author of a book about pets at the White House.

Pets also serve as ambassadors to the White House, she said. Pickens added that she hoped the Bidens' decision to bring a rescue dog to the White House might inspire others to adopt.

President Theodore Roosevelt had Skip, who is described by the White House Historical Association as a "short-legged Black and Tan mongrel terrier brought home from a Colorado bear hunt." Warren G. Harding had Laddie Boy, who sat in on meetings and had his own Cabinet chair. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had his beloved terrier Fala. At night, Fala slept in a special chair at the foot of the president's bed.

More recently, George H.W. Bush's English springer spaniel Millie was featured on "The Simpsons" and starred in a bestseller, "Millie's Book: As dictated to Barbara Bush." Hillary Clinton followed Bush's lead with a children's book about family dog Buddy and cat Socks: "Dear Socks, Dear Buddy: Kids' Letters to the First Pets."

When he declared victory in the 2008 presidential race, Barack Obama told his daughters: "You have earned the new puppy that's coming with us to the White House." Several months later, Bo joined the family, a gift from Sen. Ted Kennedy. A few years later, fellow Portuguese water dog Sunny arrived.

Among the stranger White House pets was Calvin Coolidge and first lady Grace Coolidge's raccoon Rebecca. She was given to the Coolidge family by a supporter who suggested the raccoon be served for

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 52 of 72

Thanksgiving dinner, according to the White House Historical Association. But instead she got an embroidered collar with the title "White House Raccoon" and entertained children at the White House Easter Egg Roll.

Some notable pets belonged to first kids, including Amy Carter's Siamese cat, Misty Malarky Ying Yang, and Caroline Kennedy's pony Macaroni. The Kennedy family had a veritable menagerie, complete with dogs, cats, birds, hamsters and a rabbit named Zsa Zsa.

President Harry Truman famously said that "If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog" — and many successors have followed Truman's advice. The first President Bush once said, "There is nothing like the unconditional love of a dog to help you get through the rough spots."

Associated Press writer Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

## Janet Yellen wins Senate approval as treasury secretary

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER and BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Monday approved President Joe Biden's nomination of Janet Yellen to be the nation's 78th treasury secretary, making her the first woman to hold the job in the department's 232-year history.

Yellen, a former chair of the Federal Reserve, was approved by the Senate on a 84-15 vote, becoming the third member of Biden's Cabinet to win confirmation. The 15 votes against her all came from Republicans.

She is expected to play a key role in gaining congressional approval of Biden's \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package, which is running into stiff opposition from Republicans who believe the price tag is too high.

Speaking on the Senate floor before the vote, Democratic Majority Leader Chuck Schumer noted the former Federal Reserve chairwoman had bipartisan support.

Schumer said Yellen has a "breathtaking range of experience" and support for her nomination reflected "just how well suited she is to manage the economic challenges of our time ... particularly during this moment of economic crisis."

Before the approval by the full Senate, Yellen had received unanimous backing from the Senate Finance Committee. Republicans on the panel said they had a number of policy disagreements with Yellen and the Biden administration in such areas as raising taxes on corporations and the wealthy, but believed it was important to allow Biden to assemble his economic team quickly.

At her confirmation hearing before the Finance Committee last week, Yellen had argued that without prompt action the nation faced the threat of a "longer, more painful recession." She urged quick action on the virus relief package that would provide an additional \$1,400 in payments to individuals making below \$75,000 annually as well as providing expanded unemployment benefits, further aid for small businesses and support for cities and states to prevent layoffs.

The plan also provides more support for vaccine production and distribution.

"She can take complicated economic theories and put them into understandable language — all while showing a real heart for the millions of Americans who are hurting through no fault of their own," Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., said before the vote.

During her confirmation hearing, Yellen faced substantial pushback on the plan from Republicans who argued that the package was too large, especially at a time that the federal budget deficit has soared above \$3 trillion. They also objected to such measures as an increase in the minimum wage to \$15 per hour.

Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, told Yellen that Biden's plan represented a "laundry list of liberal structural economic reforms."

As Treasury secretary, Yellen, 74, will occupy a pivotal role in shaping and directing Biden's economic policies. She enters the Treasury job after many years serving in other top economic jobs, including as the first woman to serve as chair of the Federal Reserve from 2014 to 2018.

An economist by training who was a professor at the University of California at Berkeley, Yellen will represent the Biden administration in global financial affairs and lead a sprawling department whose re-

sponsibilities cover overseeing IRS tax collections, making policy on banking regulations and serving as the administration's contact with Wall Street.

In her previous roles, Yellen developed an expertise in areas ranging from labor markets to international finance. Publicly, she frequently signaled concern about how economic policies affect ordinary people, especially disadvantaged communities.

She drew high marks for her stewardship at the Fed, where she employed record-low interest rates and massive bond buying, two policies begun by her predecessor Ben Bernanke, to support the economy as it struggled to emerge from a deep recession. She will now confront a new crisis brought on by a global pandemic.

Since leaving the Fed, Yellen has been a distinguished fellow in residence at the Brookings Institution, a liberal Washington think tank.

According to financial disclosure forms she provided during her confirmation, she collected more than \$7 million in speaking fees during more than 50 in-person and virtual engagements over the past two years, including with many Wall Street firms. Yellen has agreed to recuse herself from decisions that would affect certain financial organizations.

## US virus numbers drop, but race against new strains heats up

By JONATHAN DREW and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

Coronavirus deaths and cases per day in the U.S. dropped markedly over the past couple of weeks but are still running at alarmingly high levels, and the effort to snuff out COVID-19 is becoming an ever more urgent race between the vaccine and the mutating virus.

The government's top infectious-disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, said the improvement in numbers around the country appears to reflect a "natural peaking and then plateauing" after a holiday surge, rather than the arrival of the vaccine in mid-December.

The U.S. is recording just under 3,100 deaths a day on average, down from more than 3,350 less than two weeks ago. New cases are averaging about 170,000 a day after peaking at almost 250,000 on Jan. 11. The number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients has fallen to about 110,000 from a high of 132,000 on Jan. 7.

States that have been hot spots in recent weeks such as California and Arizona have shown similar improvements during the same period.

On Monday, California lifted regional stay-at-home orders in favor of county-by-county restrictions and ended a 10 p.m. curfew. The shift will allow restaurants and churches to resume outdoor operations and hair and nail salons to reopen in many places, though local officials could maintain stricter rules.

Elsewhere, Minnesota school districts have begun bringing elementary students back for in-person learning. Chicago's school system, the nation's third-largest district, had hoped to bring teachers back Monday to prepare for students to return next month, but the teachers union has refused. Illinois announced that more counties will be able to offer limited indoor dining.

"I don't think the dynamics of what we're seeing now with the plateauing is significantly influenced yet — it will be soon — but yet by the vaccine. I just think it's the natural course of plateauing," Fauci told NBC's "Today."

Ali Mokdad, a professor of health metrics sciences at the University of Washington, said that a predicted holiday surge was reduced by people traveling less than expected, and an increase in mask-wearing in response to spikes in infections has since helped bring the numbers down.

Caitlin Rivers, an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, said too few people have been vaccinated so far for that to have had a significant impact on virus trends. She said she can't predict how long it will take for the vaccines' effects to be reflected in the numbers.

Rivers said she is concerned that the more contagious variants of the virus could lead to a deadly resurgence later this year.

"I think we were on track to have a good — or a better, at least — spring and summer, and I'm worried that the variants might be throwing us a curveball," she said.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 54 of 72

Nationwide, about 19.3 million people, or less than 6% of the U.S. population, have received at least one dose of the vaccine, including about 3 million who have gotten the second shot, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About 55% of the 41 million doses distributed to the states by the federal government have been injected into arms, by the CDC's count.

The virus has killed over 419,000 Americans and infected more than 25 million, with a widely cited University of Washington model projecting the death toll will reach about 569,000 by May 1.

And health experts have warned that the more contagious and possibly more deadly variant sweeping through Britain will probably become the dominant source of infection in the U.S. by March. It has been reported in over 20 states so far. Other mutant versions are circulating in South Africa and Brazil. The variant from Brazil was detected for the first time in the U.S. in a Minnesota resident who recently traveled to the South American country, state health officials said Monday.

The more the virus spreads, the more opportunities it has to mutate. The fear is that it will ultimately render the vaccines ineffective.

To guard against the new variants, President Joe Biden on Monday added South Africa to the list of more than two dozen countries whose residents are subject to coronavirus-related limits on entering the U.S.

Most non-U.S. citizens who have been to Brazil, Ireland, Britain and other European nations will be barred from entering the U.S. under the rules re-imposed by Biden after President Donald Trump had moved to relax them.

Fauci said scientists are already preparing to adjust COVID-19 vaccines to fight the mutated versions.

He said there is "a very slight, modest diminution" of the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines against those variants, but "there's enough cushion with the vaccines that we have that we still consider them to be effective" against both.

Moderna, the maker of one of the two vaccines being used in the U.S., announced on Monday that it is beginning to test a possible booster dose against the South African variant. Moderna CEO Stephane Bancel said the move was out of "an abundance of caution" after preliminary lab tests suggested its shot produced a weaker immune response to that variant.

The vaccine rollout in the U.S. has been marked by disarray and confusion, with states complaining in recent days about shortages and inadequate deliveries that have forced them to cancel mass vaccination events and tens of thousands of appointments.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said shortages are preventing the city from opening more large-scale vaccination sites.

"Here you have New York City ready to vaccinate at the rate of a half-million New Yorkers a week, but we don't have the vaccine to go with it," de Blasio said. "A lot of other places in the country are ready to do so much more."

---

Associated Press writers around the U.S. contributed to this report.

---

Find AP's full coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

## Trump agreements seek to tie Biden's hands on immigration

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — During the Trump administration's final weeks, the Department of Homeland Security quietly signed agreements with at least four states that threaten to temporarily derail President Joe Biden's efforts to undo his predecessor's immigration policies.

The agreements say Arizona, Indiana, Louisiana and Texas are entitled to a 180-day consultation period before executive branch policy changes take effect. The Biden administration rejects that argument on grounds that immigration is solely the federal government's responsibility under the Constitution.

Former President Donald Trump relied heavily on executive powers for his immigration agenda because he was unable to build enough support for his policies in Congress. Now some of his supporters say Biden

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 55 of 72

is going too far in doing the same to reverse them.

The first legal test is in Texas, where the Republican governor and attorney general are challenging the Democratic president's 100-day moratorium on deportations, which took effect Friday.

The Homeland Security Department told lawmakers shortly before Biden's inauguration last week that it reached nine agreements, mostly with states, according to a congressional official speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss information that is not yet publicly available.

The department declined to comment, citing the lawsuit. The Trump administration, usually eager to trumpet immigration enforcement, stayed publicly quiet on the agreements, which were first reported by BuzzFeed News.

The nine-page agreements known as Sanctuary for Americans First Enactment, or SAFE, are expansive. They require that state and local governments get 180 days' notice of changes in the number of immigration agents, the number of people released from from immigration custody, enforcement priorities, asylum criteria and who qualifies for legal status.

Without offering evidence, the agreements say looser enforcement can hurt education, health care, housing and jobs.

Sheriff Sam Page of Rockingham County, North Carolina, on the Virginia border, signed an agreement on Dec. 22.

"Any incoming administration is likely to make changes in policy," the sheriff said. "Policy changes at the federal level affect us on the local level. It is our hope that the SAFE agreement will foster timely communications about any significant forthcoming policy changes. We are simply asking for notice of these changes."

Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry, a Republican, signed an agreement on Dec. 15 to "stem the tide of illegal immigration," spokesman Cory Dennis said.

"While some may attempt to blur the lines, there is a difference between legal and illegal immigration, and it is important to recognize that," he said. "Our office will continue to be a watchdog for any changes to immigration policies that may be detrimental to the people of Louisiana."

In Indiana, former state Attorney General Curtis Hill, a Republican, signed the agreement on Dec. 22. Rachel Hoffmeyer, spokeswoman for Gov. Eric Holcomb, said it will remain in place after an initial review.

Katie Conner, a spokeswoman for Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich, confirmed that the state signed, saying it "has numerous cooperative agreements with federal, state and local enforcement agencies, including DHS."

In addition to the deportation moratorium, the Biden administration suspended a policy to make asylum-seekers wait in Mexico for hearings in U.S. immigration court. Six of Biden's 17 first-day executive orders dealt with immigration, such as halting work on a border wall with Mexico and lifting a travel ban on people from several predominantly Muslim countries.

Hiroshi Motomura, a professor of immigration law and policy at the University of California at Los Angeles School of Law, called the agreements "a very unusual, last-minute sort of thing" and said they raise questions about how an administration can tie the hands of its successor. He believes a deportation moratorium was within a president's power.

Steve Legomsky, professor emeritus of the Washington University School of Law and former chief counsel for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, said the agreements are "a terrible idea" that could create "a race to the bottom," with states opposing immigration competing against each other to drive immigrants elsewhere.

"For our entire history, immigration policy has been understood to be the exclusive responsibility of the federal government," Legomsky said.

Keeping immigration enforcement with the federal government allows the nation to speak with a single voice as a matter of foreign policy and consistency across states, Legomsky said. We "can't have 50 conflicting sets of immigration laws operating at the same time," he said.

The Biden administration made similar arguments in a court filing Sunday after Texas asked a federal judge to block the deportation moratorium.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 56 of 72

Texas, which has led a challenge to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program to shield hundreds of thousands of young people from deportation, argued that the moratorium violated its agreement with Homeland Security. The state also argued that the moratorium violates federal rule-making procedures.

U.S. District Judge Drew Tipton in Victoria, Texas, who was appointed last year by Trump, held hearings on Friday and Monday to consider Texas' request.

Associated Press writers Ben Fox in Washington, Gary Robertson in Raleigh, North Carolina, Casey Smith in Indianapolis, Melinda Deslatte in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Anita Snow in Phoenix contributed to this report.

## **Biden more bullish on vaccines, open to 1.5M daily shot goal**

By JOSH BOAK and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Monday appeared to boost his goal for coronavirus vaccinations in his first 100 days in office, suggesting the nation could soon be injecting 1.5 million shots on an average per day.

Biden signaled his increasing bullishness on the pace of vaccinations after signing an executive order to boost government purchases from U.S. manufacturers. It was among a flurry of moves by Biden during his first full week to show he's taking swift action to heal an ailing economy as talks with Congress over a \$1.9 trillion stimulus package showed few signs of progress.

Biden reiterated that he believes the country is in a precarious spot and that relief is urgently needed, even as he dismissed the possibility of embracing a scaled-down bill to secure passage faster. Among the features of the stimulus plan are a national vaccination program, aid to reopen schools, direct payments of \$1,400 to individuals and financial relief for state and local governments.

"Time is of the essence," Biden said. "I am reluctant to cherry-pick and take out one or two items here."

Biden's new vaccination target comes after he and his aides faced criticism for the 100 million goal in his first 100 days in office. The U.S. has exceeded a pace of 1 million doses per day over the last week.

"I think we may be able to get that to ... 1.5 million a day, rather than 1 million a day," Biden said, "but we have to meet that goal of a million a day."

Biden added that he expects widespread availability of the vaccines for Americans by spring, with the U.S. "well on our way to herd immunity" necessary to end the pandemic by summer. Even so, he warned the nation was going to be "in this for a while, and could see between 600,000 and 660,000 deaths before we begin to turn the corner in a major way."

As of Sunday, the federal government had distributed 41.4 million vaccine doses to states and other jurisdictions. Of that, 21.8 million doses had been administered, or about 53%. About 3.2 million people had received their full two-dose vaccination, a little less than 1% of the population. That's according to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Already, more than 420,000 Americans have died from the coronavirus.

Biden's team held a call Sunday to outline the stimulus plan with at least a dozen senators, while the president also privately talked with lawmakers.

"There's an urgency to moving it forward, and he certainly believes there has to be progress in the next couple of weeks," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Monday. She warned that action needed to be taken before the U.S. reaches an "unemployment cliff" in March, when long-term unemployment benefits expire for millions of Americans.

But Republicans on Capitol Hill were not joining in the push for immediate action.

One key Republican, Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, said after Sunday's call that "it seems premature to be considering a package of this size and scope." Collins described the additional funding for vaccinations as useful while cautioning that any economic aid should be more targeted.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said Monday that "any further action should be smart and targeted, not just an imprecise deluge of borrowed money that would direct huge sums toward those



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 57 of 72

who don't need it."

Biden sought to downplay the rhetoric from GOP lawmakers, saying, "I have been doing legislative negotiations for a large part of my life. I know how the system works."

"This is just the process beginning," he added. "No one wants to give up on their position until there's no other alternative."

Monday's order will likely take 45 days or longer to make its way through the federal bureaucracy, during which time wrangling with Congress could produce a new aid package. That would be a follow-up to the roughly \$4 trillion previously approved to tackle the economic and medical fallout from the coronavirus.

The order was aimed at increasing factory jobs, which have slumped by 540,000 since the pandemic began last year.

"America can't sit on the sidelines in the race for the future," Biden said before signing the order in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. "We're ready, despite all we're facing."

Biden's order would modify the rules for the Buy American program, making it harder for contractors to qualify for a waiver and sell foreign-made goods to federal agencies. It also changes rules so that more of a manufactured good's components must originate from U.S. factories. America-made goods would also be protected by an increase in the government's threshold and price preferences, the difference in price over which the government can buy a foreign product.

It's an order that channels Biden's own blue-collar persona and his promise to use the government's market power to support its industrial base, an initiative that former President Donald Trump also attempted with executive actions and import taxes.

"Thanks to past presidents granting a trade-pact waiver to Buy American, today billions in U.S. tax dollars leak offshore every year because the goods and companies from 60 other countries are treated like they are American for government procurement purposes," said Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch and a critic of past trade agreements.

While Trump also issued a series of executive actions and tariffs with the goal of boosting manufacturing, he didn't attempt to rewrite the guidance for what constitutes a U.S.-made component or tighten the process for granting exemptions to buy foreign goods, a key difference from Biden's agenda, Biden's administration said.

The order also has elements that apply to the separate Buy America program that applies to highways and bridges. It aims to open up government procurement contracts to new companies by scouting potential contractors. The order would create a public website for companies that received waivers to sell foreign goods to the government, so that U.S. manufacturers can have more information and be in a more competitive position.

Past presidents have promised to revitalize manufacturing as a source of job growth and achieved mixed results. The government helped save the automotive sector after the 2008 financial crisis, but the number of factory jobs has been steadily shrinking over the course of four decades.

The number of U.S. manufacturing jobs peaked in 1979 at 19.5 million and now totals 12.3 million, according to the Labor Department.

Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar contributed to this report from Washington.

## Navalny's team calls new protests in Russia for his release

By DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Allies of jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who faces years in prison, called for new protests next weekend to demand his release, following a wave of demonstrations that turned out tens of thousands across the country in a defiant challenge to President Vladimir Putin.

Mass rallies took place Saturday in over 100 cities in what observers said was the largest outpouring of anger in years, and Navalny's supporters urged protesters to keep up the pressure.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 58 of 72

Navalny strategist Leonid Volkov tweeted Monday for more demonstrations on Jan. 31 in "all Russian cities. ... For Navalny's freedom. For our freedom. For justice."

During Saturday's protests, over 3,700 people were detained, according to OVD-Info, a human rights group that monitors political arrests. The group said the number was a record in its nine years of work. More than 1,400 detentions occurred in Moscow alone — also a record, according to Russian media.

Some of those detained were released without charges, but many others faced court hearings. In Moscow, courts have handed jail terms ranging from seven to 15 days to at least 30 detainees and fined 64 others.

Authorities also launched more than a dozen criminal investigations in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other Russian cities on charges of inciting unrest, involving minors in illegal activity, violence against police, blocking roads, hooliganism and damaging property. Navalny's team said Russia's Investigative Committee also is probing violations of virus-related restrictions.

Dozens of Navalny associates in various cities were detained in the days before the protests. Alexander Peredruk, senior partner of the Apologia of Protest legal aid group involved in the defense of over 1,000 detainees from the Saturday protests, called the authorities' response "unprecedented."

Navalny, an anti-corruption campaigner and Putin's fiercest critic, was arrested Jan. 17 as he returned to Russia from Germany, where he had spent nearly five months recovering from nerve-agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin. Russian authorities deny the accusations.

He was ordered jailed for 30 days but faces years in prison, with authorities accusing him of violating the terms of a suspended sentence in a 2014 conviction for financial misdeeds. Navalny has said the conviction was politically motivated.

Navalny's arrest and the detention of demonstrators sparked outrage both at home and abroad, and some Western officials suggested imposing additional sanctions on Russia for its jailing of Navalny.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki urged the immediate and unconditional release of Navalny, as well as those who were detained in the crackdown. Psaki did not say when President Joe Biden plans to speak to Putin.

Biden was asked if he would put sanctions on the people involved in the poisoning and arrest of Navalny and what that means for prospects of the extension of the New START nuclear arms treaty with Russia.

"I find that we can both operate in the mutual self-interest of our countries as a New START agreement and make it clear to Russia that we are very concerned about their behavior," he said, whether it involved Navalny or some other issue.

The European Union's foreign ministers on Monday condemned his arrest and the detention of thousands at the protests. "The Council considered it completely unacceptable, condemned the mass detentions, and the police brutality over the weekend," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said after chairing the meeting in Brussels.

The ministers, however, stopped short of weighing new sanctions. Borrell said "there has not been any concrete proposal on the table," but added that the ministers are "ready to act, depending on the circumstances."

In Russia, public indignation was further fueled by an investigation Navalny's team released into what they called "Putin's palace." A two-hour video posted on YouTube on Jan. 19 alleged a lavish "palace" was built for Putin on the Black Sea through an elaborate corruption scheme. It has since received over 86 million views.

The Kremlin has denied the estate had anything to do with the president. Speaking to students via video on Monday, Putin himself addressed the allegations, calling them an attempt to "brainwash our citizens" and saying that "none of what is mentioned there as my property has never belonged, and doesn't belong, to me or my close relatives."

Asked about Saturday's protests, Putin said that "all people have the right to express their point of view within limits, outlined by law." He referenced the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol and said that those taking part in it were facing "between 15 and 25 years, as if for domestic terrorism."

"They also came out with political slogans. But outside the law. Why should everything outside the law be allowed here? No," Putin said.

The Russian protests and crackdown appeared to have further strained Russia-U.S. relations.

U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price on Saturday condemned "the use of harsh tactics against protesters and journalists" and urged authorities to release Navalny and "all those detained for exercising their universal rights."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov accused Washington of interfering with Russia's "internal affairs," after the U.S. Embassy in Moscow put a warning on its website detailing times and places of rallies in different Russian cities and urging U.S. citizens to avoid them.

On Monday, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov lodged a protest to the U.S. Ambassador John Sullivan in connection to "social media posts in support of unlawful rallies" by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

The ministry said it has also deemed the statement of the U.S. State Department spokesman "inappropriate."

Associated Press writers Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow, Zeke Miller and Josh Boak in Washington and Lorne Cook in Brussels contributed.

## **EU pressures AstraZeneca to deliver vaccines as promised**

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union lashed out Monday at pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, accusing it of failing to guarantee delivery of coronavirus vaccines without valid explanation, and threatened to impose tight export controls within days on COVID-19 vaccines made in the bloc.

Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides said the EU, already facing heavy criticism for a slow vaccine rollout around its 27 nations, "will take any action required to protect its citizens and its rights."

The EU, which has 450 million citizens and the economic and political clout of the world's biggest trading bloc, is lagging badly behind countries like Israel and Britain in rolling out coronavirus vaccine shots for its health care workers and most vulnerable people. That's despite having over 400,000 confirmed virus deaths since the pandemic began.

The shortfall of planned deliveries of the AstraZeneca vaccine, which is expected to get medical approval in the bloc on Friday, combined with hiccups in the distribution of Pfizer-BioNTech shots is putting EU nations under pressure.

"EU member states are united: vaccine developers have societal and contractual responsibilities they need to uphold," Kyriakides said after two tense negotiating sessions with AstraZeneca that ended late Monday. Both sides will reconvene Wednesday.

The backlog is all the more galling since Kyriakides said the EU had paid 2.7 billion euros (\$3.28 billion) to several pharma companies to back the rapid development and ramp up the production potential of several vaccines.

She said Monday's talks ended "in dissatisfaction with the lack of clarity and insufficient explanations." The open lack of trust contrasted sharply with the exultant tone only a few months ago when the leading pharma giants made quick and massive strides toward a vaccine against a pandemic the likes of which had not been seen in over a century.

"With our Member States, we have requested from (AstraZeneca) a detailed planning of vaccine deliveries and when distribution will take place," she said in a Twitter message.

Kyriakides immediately got the support from the bloc's largest member on the vaccine export controls plan.

"We, as the EU, must be able to know whether and what vaccines are being exported from the EU," German Health Minister Jens Spahn said. "Only that way can we understand whether our EU contracts with the producers are being served fairly. An obligation to get approval for vaccine exports on the EU level makes sense." Humanitarian deliveries would be exempt.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen held urgent talks with AstraZeneca chief Pascal Soriot, and EU nations also met with AstraZeneca to encourage the British-Swedish company to ramp up

its vaccine production and meet its contractual targets.

The EU has committed to buying 300 million AstraZeneca doses with option on 100 million extra shots. Late last week, the company said it was planning to reduce a first contingent of 80 million to 31 million.

The European Medicines Agency is scheduled to review the Oxford-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine Friday and its approval is hotly anticipated. The AstraZeneca vaccine is already being used in Britain and has been approved for emergency use by half a dozen countries, including India, Pakistan, Argentina and Mexico.

AstraZeneca's announcement that it will deliver fewer vaccines to the EU early on has only increased pressure on the bloc, especially since Pfizer-BioNTech, the first vaccine to get EU approval, failed last week to keep up its promised deliveries to the EU. Pfizer has temporarily reduced vaccine deliveries to the EU and Canada as it revamps its plant in Belgium to increase overall production. Italy has threatened to sue Pfizer for the delays.

The political pressure started with von der Leyen's phone call to the AstraZeneca chief. "She made it clear that she expects AstraZeneca to deliver on the contractual arrangements foreseen in the advance purchasing agreement," said her spokesman Eric Mamer.

"She reminded Mr. Soriot that the EU has invested significant amounts in the company up front precisely to ensure that production is ramped up even before the conditional market authorization is delivered by the European Medicines Agency."

The company said in a statement that Soriot "stressed the importance of working in partnership and how AstraZeneca is doing everything it can to bring its vaccine to millions of Europeans as soon as possible."

The delays will make it harder to meet early targets in EU's goal of vaccinating 70% of its adult population by late summer.

The EU has signed six vaccine contracts for more than 2 billion doses, but only the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have been approved for use so far.

---

Geir Moulson in Berlin, and Danica Kirka in London, contributed to this report.

---

Follow all of AP's pandemic coverage at:

<https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

<https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine>

<https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## **Biden reverses Trump ban on transgender people in military**

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden signed an order Monday reversing a Trump-era Pentagon policy that largely barred transgender individuals from serving in the military.

The new order, which Biden signed in the Oval Office during a meeting with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, overturns a ban ordered by President Donald Trump in a tweet during his first year in office. It immediately prohibits any service member from being forced out of the military on the basis of gender identity.

The decision comes as Biden plans to turn his attention to equity issues that he believes continue to shadow nearly all aspects of American life. Ahead of his inauguration, Biden's transition team circulated a memo saying Biden planned to use his first full week as president "to advance equity and support communities of color and other underserved communities."

As he signed the order on Monday, Biden said, "What I'm doing is enabling all qualified Americans to serve their country in uniform."

"America is stronger, at home and around the world, when it is inclusive. The military is no exception," the order says. "Allowing all qualified Americans to serve their country in uniform is better for the military and better for the country because an inclusive force is a more effective force. Simply put, it's the right

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 61 of 72

thing to do and is in our national interest.”

The order directs the departments of Defense and Homeland Security to take steps to implement the order for the military and the Coast Guard. And it says they must reexamine the records of service members who were discharged or denied reenlistment due to gender identity issues under the previous policy.

It requires the departments to submit a report to the president on their progress within 60 days.

Austin, in a statement, voiced support for the change and said the Pentagon will work over the next two months to implement the new policy.

“I fully support the President’s direction that all transgender individuals who wish to serve in the United States military and can meet the appropriate standards shall be able to do so openly and free from discrimination,” said Austin, who also was formally sworn in as defense chief by Vice President Kamala Harris on Monday. “This is the right thing to do. It is also the smart thing to do.”

Congress members and advocates hailed the signing.

“This is the triumph of evidence-based policy over discrimination,” said Aaron Belkin, the executive director of the Palm Center, which researches and advocates against LGBTQ discrimination. “The inclusive policy will make it easier for trans troops to do their jobs and to fulfill their missions.”

The Trump policy triggered a number of lawsuits, including from transgender individuals who wanted to join the military and found themselves blocked.

“It is my highest goal to serve my country in the U.S. military and I’ve fought this ban because I know that I am qualified to serve,” said Nicolas Talbott, an aspiring service member involved in one of the lawsuits. “I’m thrilled and relieved that I and other transgender Americans can now be evaluated solely on our ability to meet military standards. I look forward to becoming the best service member I can be.”

Others disagreed. Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, said the move would divert “precious dollars from mission-critical training to something as controversial as gender reassignment surgery.”

Under Biden’s new policy, transgender servicemembers won’t be discharged based on gender identity.

The move to overturn the transgender ban is the latest example of Biden using executive authority in his first days as president to dismantle Trump’s legacy. His early actions include orders to overturn a Trump administration ban on travelers from several predominantly Muslim countries, stop construction of the wall at the U.S.-Mexico border, and launch an initiative to advance racial equity.

Until a few years ago service members could be discharged from the military for being transgender, but that changed during the Obama administration. In 2016, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that transgender people already serving in the military would be allowed to serve openly. And the military set July 1, 2017, as the date when transgender individuals would be allowed to enlist.

After Trump took office, however, his administration delayed the enlistment date and called for additional study to determine if allowing transgender individuals to serve would affect military readiness or effectiveness.

A few weeks later, Trump caught military leaders by surprise, tweeting that the government wouldn’t accept or allow transgender individuals to serve “in any capacity” in the military. “Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail,” he wrote.

After a lengthy and complicated legal battle and additional reviews, the Defense Department in April 2019 approved the new policy that fell short of an all-out ban but barred transgender troops and military recruits from transitioning to another sex and required most individuals to serve in what the administration called their “birth gender.”

Under that policy, currently serving transgender troops and anyone who had signed an enlistment contract before the effective date could continue with plans for hormone treatments and gender transition if they had been diagnosed with gender dysphoria.

But after that date, no one with gender dysphoria who was taking hormones or has transitioned to another gender was allowed to enlist. Troops that were already serving and were diagnosed with gender dysphoria were required to serve in the gender assigned at birth and were barred from taking hormones or getting transition surgery.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 62 of 72

As of 2019, an estimated 14,700 troops on active duty and in the Reserves identify as transgender, but not all seek treatment. Since July 2016, more than 1,500 service members were diagnosed with gender dysphoria; as of Feb. 1, 2019, there were 1,071 currently serving. According to the Pentagon, the department spent about \$8 million on transgender care between 2016 and 2019. The military's annual health care budget tops \$50 billion.

All four service chiefs told Congress in 2018 that they had seen no discipline, morale or unit readiness problems with transgender troops serving openly in the military. But they also acknowledged that some commanders were spending a lot of time with transgender individuals who were working through medical requirements and other transition issues.

Associated Press writer Amer Madhani contributed to this report.

## Italian premier to offer resignation as government wobbles

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte intends to offer his resignation on Tuesday, his office said Monday, a move seen as gamble that the embattled leader will get a fresh mandate from the president to try to forge a more viable coalition.

Conte survived two confidence votes in Parliament last week but crucially lost his absolute majority in the Senate with the defection of a centrist ally, ex-Premier Matteo Renzi. That hobbled his government's effectiveness in the middle of the pandemic, which has devastated Italy's long-stagnant economy.

Conte's office said Monday night that the premier will inform his Cabinet at a meeting Tuesday morning of his "will to go to the Quirinale (presidential palace) to hand in his resignation."

Then Conte intends to head to the palace to meet with President Sergio Mattarella, who, as head of state, can accept the resignation, possibly asking the premier to then see if he can assemble a more solid coalition that can command a dependable majority in Parliament.

Mattarella has frequently stressed the need for the nation to have solid leadership as it struggles with the COVID-19 pandemic, with its devastating effects on Italy's long-stagnant economy.

After consultations with leaders of both government and opposition parties, the president could also decide to tap someone else deemed to have better chances of forming a more solid government. If no one can forge a more viable, dependable coalition, Mattarella has the option of dissolving Parliament, setting the stage for an election two years early.

Conte has led a long-bickering center-left coalition for 16 months. Before that, for 15 months, he headed a government still with the populist 5-Star Movement, Parliament's largest party, but in coalition with the right-wing League party of Matteo Salvini.

That first government collapsed when Salvini yanked his support in a failed bid to win the premiership for himself.

Conte, while identified with the 5-Star Movement, doesn't head any party. So, in a departure from Italy's frequent political crisis, he won't be part of the formal consultations with Mattarella, who meets with party leaders coming in rapid succession to the palace for talks.

Key support for whatever government might come next could come from the centrist opposition party of former Premier Silvio Berlusconi. Just hours before the announcement by Conte's office, the media mogul said he was trusting the "political wisdom" of Mattarella to indicate the way out of the crisis.

"The high road is one only," Berlusconi said in a statement. That solution would be a "new government that would represent substantial unity of the country in a moment of emergency" or it could be a new election "to give back the (deciding) word to the Italian" voters.

By the end of February, the Italian government must inform the European Union how it intends to spend some 200 billion euros (\$250 billion) in recovery funds, focused on reforming the country's health and other institutional systems.

One of Renzi's issues with Conte was what he contended was too much decision-making power concen-

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 63 of 72

trated in the premier's hand on the funding programs.

Salvini said he had called a meeting of center-right leaders, including far-right-leader Giorgia Meloni and Berlusconi's fold to bolster the opposition's press for elections.

"The Italians need hospitals, open and safe schools, and a year of tax peace to give back breath and hope to families and businesses," Salvini said. "This isn't the government that can escort Italy out of this disaster."

The leader of a main coalition partner, the Democratic Party, pushed for a fresh mandate for Conte, who despite the euro-skepticism of the 5-Stars, has lately been professing staunch support for the European Union, in an apparent bid to woo centrist lawmakers now in the opposition.

The Democrats' leader, Nicola Zingaretti, rooted in a tweet for a new Conte government that would be "clearly pro-Europe and backed by a wide parliamentary base that would guarantee credibility and stability to face the great challenges that Italy has before it."

But analysts saw Conte's support from his own coalition as fluid.

"A new coalition government, either under Conte or a different prime minister, remains the most likely outcome," said London-based Wolfango Piccoli, co-president of Teneo analyst group.

But, "the bottom line is that Italy will continue to be governed by an executive that is not apt for the tough job ahead, just as it has been the case since the last election" in 2018, Piccoli wrote in a statement.

## Effort to put Tubman on \$20 bill restarted under Biden

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — With a change of administrations, it looks like Harriet Tubman is once again headed to the front of the \$20 bill.

Biden press secretary Jen Psaki said Monday that the Treasury Department is taking steps to resume efforts to put the 19th century abolitionist leader on the \$20 bill.

Obama administration Treasury Secretary Jack Lew had selected Tubman to replace Andrew Jackson, the nation's seventh president, on the \$20 bill.

But Tubman's fate had been in doubt since the 2016 presidential campaign based on critical comments by then-candidate Donald Trump, who branded the move "pure political correctness."

Trump administration Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin did not move forward with the decision by the Obama administration. Instead, Mnuchin in 2019 announced a delay in redesigning the \$20 bill in order to redesign the \$10 and \$50 bills first to improve security features to thwart counterfeiters.

The unveiling of the redesigned \$20 bill featuring Tubman, famous for her efforts spiriting slaves to freedom on the Underground Railroad, had been timed by the Obama administration to coincide with the 100th anniversary of passage of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote.

Under the schedule Mnuchin announced in May 2019, the redesigned \$20 bill would not have come out until 2028 with final designs for the bill not announced until 2026.

But Psaki told reporters during a briefing Monday that she and other officials were surprised to hear of the delays in putting Tubman on the \$20 bill. With a change in administrations, she said the Treasury Department was taking steps to resume efforts to put Tubman on the \$20 bill.

"It is important that our .... money reflect the history and diversity of our country and Harriet Tubman's image gracing the new \$20 note would certainly reflect that," Psaki said. "We are exploring ways to speed up that effort."

Psaki said specifics on a new timeline for introducing a redesigned \$20 with Tubman would be announced when finalized by the Treasury Department. Biden has selected Janet Yellen to be his Treasury secretary, the first woman to hold that position in the department's 232 years.

## Watchdog probes if DOJ officials tried to overturn election

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department's inspector general is launching an investigation to ex-

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 64 of 72

amine whether any former or current department officials “engaged in an improper attempt” to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

Inspector General Michael Horowitz said Monday that the investigation will investigate allegations concerning the conduct of former and current Justice Department officials but will not extend to other government officials.

The Justice Department watchdog investigation follows a report in The New York Times that a former assistant attorney general, Jeffrey Clark, had been discussing a plan with then-President Donald Trump to oust the acting attorney general and try to challenge the results of the 2020 race by falsely saying there had been widespread election fraud.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer demanded the inspector general launch a probe “into this attempted sedition.” The New York Democrat said it was “unconscionable a Trump Justice Department leader would conspire to subvert the people’s will.”

The watchdog’s probe is part of a growing number of efforts underway to investigate the attempts by Trump and his allies to subvert the election results. The moves culminated in a deadly Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol and a second impeachment of Trump, this time for inciting an insurrection. Also on Monday, the voting machine company Dominion Systems filed a defamation suit against Trump’s personal attorney Rudy Giuliani for his repeatedly false claims about widespread voting fraud in the election.

Election officials across the country, along with Trump’s former attorney general, William Barr, have confirmed there was no widespread fraud in the election. Republican governors in Arizona and Georgia, key battleground states won by Democrat Joe Biden, also vouched for the integrity of the elections in their states. Nearly all the legal challenges from Trump and his allies have been dismissed by judges, including two tossed by the U.S. Supreme Court.

## **EU urges Navalny’s release but no talk of Russia sanctions**

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union’s foreign ministers on Monday condemned the arrest of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny and the detention of thousands during protests backing the most well-known critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin but stopped short of weighing new sanctions against Russia.

“The Council considered it completely unacceptable, condemned the mass detentions, and the police brutality over the weekend,” EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said after chairing the meeting in Brussels. “We call on Russia for the release of Mr. Navalny and those detained.”

Navalny was arrested earlier this month when he returned to Moscow after spending months in Germany recovering from a poisoning in Russia with what experts say was the Soviet-era nerve agent Novichok.

More than 3,700 people were detained across Russia during Saturday’s nationwide protests in support of Navalny, according to OVD-Info, a human rights group that monitors political arrests. The group said the number was a record in its nine years of work. More than 1,400 of the detentions occurred in Moscow alone — also a record, according to Russian media.

Asked whether the EU ministers had discussed new sanctions against Russia, Borrell said “there has not been any concrete proposal on the table,” but added that the ministers are “ready to act, depending on the circumstances.”

The EU already imposed sanctions in October on six Russian officials and a state research institute over Navalny’s poisoning.

Borrell said he would visit Moscow next week for talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. The EU’s top diplomat said the long-standing invitation from Lavrov would be a good opportunity to discuss “all relevant issues,” and help prepare for a debate on Russia ties between EU leaders in March.

When it was suggested that he could make his visit conditional on meeting Navalny, Borrell said: “You don’t do things this way.”

On Sunday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian expressed concern about what he called Russia’s “authoritarian drift.” He told France-Inter radio that “all light must be shed” on Navalny’s poisoning.

“This was an assassination attempt,” Le Drian said.



Saturday's protests attracted thousands of people in major Russian cities, including an estimated 15,000 in Moscow. As they unfolded, the U.S. embassy spokeswoman in the city, Rebecca Ross, said on Twitter that the United States "supports the right of all people to peaceful protest, freedom of expression. Steps being taken by Russian authorities are suppressing those rights."

The embassy also tweeted a State Department statement calling for Navalny's release.

Putin's spokesman said the statements interfered in the country's domestic affairs and encouraged Russians to break the law.

## **Kerry: US will make up for 4 years of lost action on climate**

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — The world must take decisive action to build resilience to the devastating effects of climate change, U.S. climate envoy John Kerry told a global virtual summit Monday, pledging that President Joe Biden's new administration would play its role.

In a video message to the Climate Adaptation Summit hosted by the Dutch government, Kerry said, "We're proud to be back (in the Paris climate accord). We come back, I want you to know, with humility, for the absence of the last four years, and we'll do everything in our power to make up for it."

Biden, in his first hours in office last week, signed an executive order returning the United States to the historic 2015 Paris climate accord, reversing its withdrawal by Donald Trump, who ridiculed the science of human-caused climate change.

Kerry said the Biden administration is working to announce its own more ambitious target for cutting emissions soon.

Outlining the new administration's plans to promote climate adaptation, Kerry said it will "leverage U.S. innovation and climate data" to better understand and manage climate-related risks; increase the flow of finance to adaptation and resilience initiatives, work with institutions to improve resilience planning and promote greater collaboration.

Kerry was among world leaders who converged — virtually — on the Netherlands for the summit seeking to galvanize more action and funding to adapt the planet and vulnerable communities to the effects of climate change.

The meeting comes after a year in which the Earth hit or neared record hot temperature levels.

"We saw the heat waves. We saw the fires. We saw the (melting) Arctic," top NASA climate scientist Gavin Schmidt said earlier this month about the effects of the warming.

"Adaptation is not an option, it is an urgent task for this generation and those to come," Chile President Sebastián Piñera said in a video message.

The Netherlands-based Global Center on Adaptation last week called on governments and financiers around the globe to include funding for adaptation projects in their COVID-19 recovery spending.

World Bank President David Malpass said the bank's financing for adaptation measures rose from 40% of its climate finance in 2016 to more than over 50% in 2020, "and we've committed to making it half of our total climate finance for the next five years."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres highlighted the necessity of the funding, saying that a recent U.N. report calculated adaptation costs in developing countries to be around \$70 billion dollars annually and that they are likely to rise to \$280-500 billion in 2050.

"We've reached the point where it is an absolute fact that it's cheaper to invest in preventing damage, or minimizing it at least, than cleaning up," Kerry said.

Dutch Overseas Trade and Development Cooperation Minister Sigrid Kaag got the ball rolling by announcing that the summit's host nation will pump 20 million euros (\$24 million) into an adaptation fund for the world's least-developed nations and 100 million euros (\$121 million) into a program for sustainable farming in Africa's Sahel region.

Kaag said by using new and existing adaptation techniques, "we can build a climate-proof future together and promote sustainable economic growth in all parts of Africa."

President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon warned that if climate change is not reined in it could create "hundreds of millions of climate refugees in Africa by the middle of the century." He said Africa "has no choice but to adapt and chart a climate resilient future."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson used Monday's summit to announce a new Adaptation Action Coalition that brings together more than 120 countries along with the European Union and nearly 90 other organizations to double down on climate adaptation efforts.

The Dutch, for example, have centuries of experience in adapting to the threat of water from major rivers that run through the low-lying nation to its long North Sea coast. It shares and exports the know-how around the world to places like flood-prone Mozambique, where Dutch experts have helped strengthen drainage systems and coastal defenses.

Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://www.apnews.com/Climate>

## **Dominion Voting Systems sues Giuliani over election claims**

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Dominion Voting Systems filed a defamation lawsuit on Monday against Donald Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, who led the former president's efforts to spread baseless claims about the 2020 election.

The lawsuit seeks more than \$1.3 billion in damages for the voting machine company, a target for conservatives who made up wild claims about the company, blaming it for Trump's loss and alleging without evidence that its systems were easily manipulated. Dominion is one of the nation's top voting machine companies and provided machines for the state of Georgia, the critical battleground that Biden won and which flipped control of the U.S. Senate.

The company faced such a mountain of threats and criticism that one of its top executives went into hiding. The suit is based on statements Giuliani made on Twitter, in conservative media and during legislative hearings where the former mayor of New York claimed the voting machine company conspired to flip votes to President Joe Biden.

Dominion's lawsuit, filed in federal court in the District of Columbia, is among the first major signs of fallout for the former president's allies and the failed effort to subvert the 2020 election that ended with a Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol by a pro-Trump mob that claimed the election had been stolen.

"For Dominion — whose business is producing and providing voting systems for elections — there are no accusations that could do more to damage Dominion's business or to impugn Dominion's integrity, ethics, honesty, and financial integrity," the lawsuit says. "Giuliani's statements were calculated to — and did in fact — provoke outrage and cause Dominion enormous harm."

There was no widespread fraud in the election, which a range of election officials across the country including Trump's former attorney general, William Barr, have confirmed. Republican governors in Arizona and Georgia, key battleground states crucial to Biden's victory, also vouched for the integrity of the elections in their states. Nearly all the legal challenges from Trump and his allies have been dismissed by judges, including two tossed by the Supreme Court, which includes three Trump-nominated justices.

"Dominion brings this action to set the record straight, to vindicate the company's rights under civil law, to recover compensatory and punitive damages, and to stand up for itself, its employees, and the electoral process," the lawsuit read.

Giuliani did not respond to a reporter's message seeking comment.

During an episode of Giuliani's podcast, he charged that "Dominion had stolen the election 'technologically,'" the lawsuit alleges, and warned listeners that cybercriminals could steal the titles to their homes online. The lawsuit also details Giuliani pitching supplements to cure their achy joints and muscles, offering a special discount code as he held up the bottles.

The lawsuit also includes a photo of Giuliani holding a cigar, hocking cigars with a deal for \$20 off orders over \$100 after he pushed accusations about Dominion and falsely alleged that the election had been fixed by a Venezuelan company.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 67 of 72

The lawsuit argues that Giuliani worked in concert with Trump supporters and lawyers Sidney Powell, L. Lin Wood and conservative media outlets “determined to promote a false preconceived narrative about the 2020 election.”

Dominion has also sued Powell, who claimed that the company was created in Venezuela to rig elections for the late leader Hugo Chavez and that it has the ability to switch votes.

The lawsuit also alleges Giuliani’s false statements about Dominion and the election being “stolen” helped to perpetuate the violent mob that stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 as Congress was meeting to vote to certify Biden as the winner of the election.

“Having been deceived by Giuliani and his allies into thinking that they were not criminals — but patriots ‘Defend(ing) the Republic’ from Dominion and its co-conspirators — they then bragged about their involvement in the crime on social media,” the lawsuit states.

Associated Press Writer Michael Balsamo contributed to this report.

## **In ambulances, an unseen, unwelcome passenger: COVID-19**

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It’s crowded in the back of the ambulance.

Two emergency medical technicians, the patient, the gurney — and an unseen and unwelcome passenger lurking in the air.

For EMTs Thomas Hoang and Joshua Hammond, the coronavirus is constantly close. COVID-19 has become their biggest fear during 24-hour shifts in California’s Orange County, riding with them from 911 call to 911 call, from patient to patient.

They and other EMTs, paramedics and 911 dispatchers in Southern California have been thrust into the front lines of the national epicenter of the pandemic. They are scrambling to help those in need as hospitals burst with a surge of patients after the holidays, ambulances are stuck waiting outside hospitals for hours until beds become available, oxygen tanks are in alarmingly short supply and the vaccine rollout has been slow.

EMTs and paramedics have always dealt with life and death — they make split-second decisions about patient care, which hospital to race to, the best and fastest way to save someone — and now they’re just a breath away from becoming the patient themselves.

They gown up, mask up and glove up, “but you can only be so safe,” Hammond said. “We don’t have the luxury of being 6 feet apart from the patient.”

Statistics on COVID-19 cases and deaths among EMTs and paramedics — especially ones employed by private companies — are hard to find. They are considered essential health care workers but rarely receive the pay and protections given to doctors and nurses.

Hammond and Hoang work for Emergency Ambulance Service Inc., a private ambulance company in Southern California. They, like so many others, have long fostered goals of becoming first responders to serve their communities.

Hoang is attending nursing school. Hammond is one test away from becoming a paramedic. Both were called to a life in the medical field after traumatic experiences: Hammond had to call 911 after his mother had an allergic reaction, and Hoang witnessed a young bicyclist get hit by a car.

Yet as COVID-19 infections surge and the risks increase, they wonder: Is it worth risking your life — and the lives of your loved ones at home — for a small paycheck and a dream?

“It’s really hard to justify it beyond ‘I really want to help people,’” said Hammond, 25. “Is that worth the risk?”

For now, yes.

“I do want to do my part in helping people get better, in a sense,” said Hoang, 29.

And so their day starts at 7 a.m.

Wearing masks, Hoang and Hammond clean their ambulance and equipment, wiping down every surface

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 68 of 72

even if the previous crew scrubbed it already. They take no chances during their daylong shift covering the Orange County city of Placentia.

The 911 calls come in with limited information: a broken bone, chest pain, difficulty breathing, stomach-ache, fever. Every patient is a potential carrier of the coronavirus, whether they know it or not.

Sometimes, people know they're infected and tell 911 dispatchers before the EMTs arrive. Other times, the symptoms themselves — fever, shortness of breath — signal a possible case. But Hammond remembers one woman, suffering from hip pain, who didn't tell him or his partner about her coronavirus diagnosis.

He only found out afterward, saying it reinforced the importance of treating every patient as if they have tested positive.

"That was definitely a call where we learned a lot," Hammond said.

Unlike doctors and nurses, first responders must go inside homes. They walk into hot zones where everyone in a household is sick, where the virus is in the air. They lift immobile patients onto gurneys, their masked faces just inches apart.

They race to hospitals already overwhelmed with sick people, sometimes only to wait hours outside before their patient can be admitted. And then they do it all again when the next 911 call comes in.

"We don't know the end result," Hoang said. "We only know the beginning to the hospital."

Then there are those who direct the EMTs where to go. In Los Angeles County, 20 miles (32 kilometers) northwest from Hoang and Hammond, three young women stood before six screens apiece recently, talking into headsets with clear, clipped voices, marshaling other ambulance crews around a territory stretching from the mountains to the sea.

Ashley Cortez, Adreanna Moreno and Jaime Hopper work 12-hour shifts as dispatchers for Care Ambulance Service Inc. If the EMTs are the front lines, these women are the scouts.

They play chess with ambulances all day. When one gets stuck at a hospital for eight, 10 or 12 hours, the dispatchers must reposition the others to cover its area. When an EMT reports a positive COVID-19 test, the dispatchers must find a way to cover the ambulance's calls if the whole crew must quarantine. When one household has multiple coronavirus patients requiring two ambulances, the dispatchers have to plug the hole.

Their greatest fear is what's called a "level zero" — when there are no ambulances left to send to an emergency. In Los Angeles County, one of the nation's hardest-hit counties during the pandemic, the fear becomes a regular reality.

For Moreno, 28, the anxiety begins the night before her shift.

"I lay there and know I'm going to come in, and I know I'm going to have no units to run these calls," she said.

On Christmas weekend, Cortez watched as call after call piled up on her screen — with no ambulances available. Typically, it takes 30 seconds to send one out. That weekend, it took up to 15 minutes. And this was even before ambulances started languishing outside hospitals for hours.

"I was just in disbelief," said Cortez, 26.

There's not much more the dispatchers can do. They watch those screens. They listen to radio chatter. They rearrange the crews to cover the most territory possible. And they wonder what fresh horror awaits in a virus-ravaged world where the dangers are too many and the ambulances are too few.

"What if something happens to my daughter," Cortez said, "and there was nobody to send for her?"

## China pushes conspiracy theories on COVID origin, vaccines

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Chinese state media have stoked concerns about Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine, despite rigorous trials indicating it is safe. A government spokesperson has raised the unsubstantiated theory that the coronavirus could have emerged from a U.S. military lab, giving it more credence in China.

As the ruling Communist Party faces growing questioning about China's vaccines and renewed criticism of its early COVID-19 response, it is hitting back by encouraging conspiracy theories that some experts say could cause harm.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 69 of 72

State media and officials are sowing doubts about Western vaccines and the origin of the coronavirus in an apparent bid to deflect the attacks. Both issues are in the spotlight because of the rollout of vaccines globally and the recent arrival of a World Health Organization team in Wuhan, China, to investigate the origins of the virus.

Some of these conspiracy theories find a receptive audience at home. The social media hashtag "American's Ft. Detrick," started by the Communist Youth League, was viewed at least 1.4 billion times last week after a Foreign Ministry spokesperson called for a WHO investigation of the biological weapons lab in Maryland.

"It's purpose is to shift the blame from mishandling by (the) Chinese government in the pandemic's early days to conspiracy by the U.S.," said Fang Shimin, a now-U.S.-based writer known for exposing faked degrees and other fraud in Chinese science. "The tactic is quite successful because of widespread anti-American sentiment in China."

Yuan Zeng, an expert on Chinese media at the University of Leeds in Great Britain, said the government's stories spread so widely that even well-educated Chinese friends have asked her whether they might be true.

Inflaming doubts and spreading conspiracy theories might add to public health risks as governments try to dispel unease about vaccines, she said, saying, "That is super, super dangerous."

In the latest volley, state media called for an investigation into the deaths of 23 elderly people in Norway after they received the Pfizer vaccine. An anchor at CGTN, the English-language station of state broadcaster CCTV, and the Global Times newspaper accused Western media of ignoring the news.

Health experts say deaths unrelated to the vaccine are possible during mass vaccination campaigns, and a WHO panel has concluded that the vaccine did not play a "contributory role" in the Norway deaths.

The state media coverage followed a report by researchers in Brazil who found the effectiveness of a Chinese vaccine lower than previously announced. Researchers initially said Sinovac's vaccine is 78% effective, but the scientists revised that to 50.4% after including mildly symptomatic cases.

After the Brazil news, researchers at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a government-supported think tank, reported seeing an increase in Chinese media disinformation about vaccines.

Dozens of online articles on popular health and science blogs and elsewhere have explored questions about the effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccine at length, drawing on an op-ed published this month in the British Medical Journal that raised questions about its clinical trial data.

"It's very embarrassing" for the government, Fang said in an email. As a result, China is trying to raise doubts about the Pfizer vaccine to save face and promote its vaccines, he said.

Senior Chinese government officials have not been shy in voicing concerns about the mRNA vaccines developed by Western drug companies. They use a newer technology than the more traditional approach of the Chinese vaccines currently in use.

In December, the director of the Chinese Centers for Disease Control, Gao Fu, said he can't rule out negative side effects from the mRNA vaccines. Noting this is the first time they are being given to healthy people, he said, "there are safety concerns."

The Pfizer mRNA vaccine and another one developed by Moderna have passed both animal and human trials in which they were tested on more than 70,000 people.

The arrival of the WHO mission has brought back persistent criticism that China allowed the virus to spread globally by reacting too slowly in the beginning, even reprimanding doctors who tried to warn the public. The visiting researchers will begin field work this week after being released from a 14-day quarantine.

The Communist Party sees the WHO investigation as a political risk because it focuses attention on China's response, said Jacob Wallis, a senior analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

The party wants to "distract domestic and international audiences by pre-emptively distorting the narrative on where responsibility lies for the emergence of COVID-19," Wallis said.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying got the ball rolling last week by reviving earlier Chinese calls for a WHO investigation of the U.S. military lab.

State media have referenced past scandals at the lab, but China has given no reliable evidence to sup-

port the coronavirus theory.

"If America respects the truth, then please open up Ft. Detrick and make public more information about the 200 or more bio-labs outside of the U.S., and please allow the WHO expert group to go to the U.S. to investigate the origins," Hua said.

Her comments, publicized by state media, became one of the most popular topics on China's Twitter-like Sina Weibo.

China isn't the only government to point fingers. Former U.S. President Donald Trump, trying to deflect blame for his government's handling of the pandemic, said last year he had seen evidence the virus came from a Wuhan laboratory. While that theory has not been definitively ruled out, many experts think it is unlikely.

## 9 workers found dead in China gold mine explosions

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese rescuers have found the bodies of nine workers killed in explosions at a gold mine, raising the death toll to 10, officials said Monday.

Eleven others were rescued a day earlier after being trapped underground for two weeks at the mine in Shandong province. One person was still missing.

The cause of the accident at the mine, which was under construction, is under investigation. The explosions on Jan. 10 released 70 tons of debris that blocked a shaft, disabling elevators and trapping workers underground.

Rescuers drilled parallel shafts to send down food and nutrients and eventually bring up the survivors on Sunday.

Chen Yumin, director of the rescue group, told reporters that the nine workers recovered Monday died more than 400 meters (1,320 feet) below ground. He said there had been two explosions about an hour and a half apart, with the second explosion causing more damage.

Search efforts will continue for the remaining miner until he is found, said Chen Fei, the mayor of Yantai city, where the mine is located.

"Until this worker is found, we will not give up," he said at a news conference.

Chen and other officials involved in the rescue effort held a moment of silence for the victims, bowing their heads.

"Our hearts are deeply grieved. We express our profound condolences, and we express deep sympathies to the families of the victim," he said.

Authorities have detained mine managers for delaying reporting the accident.

Such protracted and expensive rescue efforts are relatively new in China's mining industry, which used to average 5,000 deaths per year.

Increased supervision has improved safety, although demand for coal and precious metals continues to prompt corner-cutting. A new crackdown was ordered after two accidents in mountainous southwestern Chongqing last year killed 39 miners.

## Budweiser joins Coke, Pepsi brands in sitting out Super Bowl

By MAE ANDERSON and DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — For the first time since 1983, when Anheuser-Busch used all of its ad time to introduce a beer called Bud Light, the beer giant isn't advertising its iconic Budweiser brand during the Super Bowl. Instead, it's donating the money it would have spent on the ad to coronavirus vaccination awareness efforts.

Anheuser-Busch still has four minutes of advertising during the game for its other brands including Bud Light, Bud Light Seltzer Lemonade, Michelob Ultra and Michelob Ultra Organic Seltzer. Those are some of its hottest sellers, particularly among younger viewers.

But the decision to not do an anthemic Budweiser ad — which over nearly four decades has made American icons of frogs chirping "Budweiser," guys screaming "Whassup!", and of course the Budweiser Clydesdales — showcases the caution with which some advertisers are approaching the first COVID-era

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 71 of 72

Super Bowl.

"We have a pandemic that is casting a pall over just about everything," said Paul Argenti, Dartmouth College professor of corporate communication. "It's hard to feel the exuberance and excitement people normally would."

The Anheuser-Busch move follows a similar announcement from PepsiCo., which won't be advertising its biggest brand, Pepsi, in order to focus on its sponsorship of the the halftime show. (It will be advertising Mountain Dew and Frito-Lay products). Other veteran Super Bowl advertisers like Coke, Audi and Avocados from Mexico are sitting out the game altogether.

These big-brand absences are just one more way Super Bowl LV will look very different from previous years. Attendance at the game will be limited to 22,000 people, about a third of the more than 65,890 capacity of Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida. And Super Bowl parties will be more likely to be smaller affairs with pods or families.

"I think the advertisers are correctly picking up on this being a riskier year for the Super Bowl," said Charles Taylor, marketing professor at Villanova University. "With COVID and economic uncertainty, people aren't necessarily in the best mood to begin with. There's a risk associated with messages that are potentially too light. ... At the same time, there's risk associated with doing anything too somber."

The pandemic has cut sharply into sales for many Super Bowl advertisers. With pricey ads costing an estimated \$5.5 million for 30 seconds during the Feb. 7 broadcast on CBS, some may have decided it's not worth it this year. Coca-Cola, for example, has been hard hit since half of its sales come from stadiums, movie theaters and other usually crowded places that have been closed during the pandemic. It announced layoffs in December, and said it said it wouldn't advertise this year to ensure it's "investing in the right resources during these unprecedented times."

To fill the void, newcomers like the TikTok rival Triller, online freelance marketplace Fiverr and online car seller Vroom are rushing in to take their place. Returning brands include M&M's, Pringles, Toyota and others.

Companies that are running ads this year face a number of challenges. Super Bowl ads are usually developed months in advance and shot in the fall, meaning that ads airing in two weeks were shot under costly pandemic conditions and without any idea how the presidential election would turn out. That further complicates the already delicate process of striking a tone that acknowledges what's happening with the world, managing to either entertain or tug at viewer heartstrings, and finding a way to tie it all back to their brand.

"It's a tough year to do an ad," Argenti said. "It will be a good year for creative companies who figure out how to thread that needle."

Monica Rustgi, Budweiser's vice president of marketing, said the brand is still calculating how much it will spend on vaccine awareness. But she said it will be a "multi-million dollar" commitment that includes donating airtime throughout this year for the nonprofit the Ad Council and COVID Collaborative's COVID-19 Vaccine Education Initiative.

Budweiser will still have a marketing presence around the big game. Starting Monday, the brand will air an ad that celebrates resilience during the pandemic, including a socially distanced birthday parade and athletes in Black Lives Matter jerseys. The ad, narrated by actress and director Rashida Jones, ends with health care workers getting vaccinated and talks about Budweiser's donation.

In the era of social media and digital advertising, brands aren't limited to running ads during one event, since consumers can see them online, everywhere from Facebook and Twitter to YouTube, Budweiser's Rustgi said. Budweiser's Super Bowl step-back also won't be long-term, she said.

"The Super Bowl is the most popular sports event, aside from the World Cup, that anybody is going to see," added Dartmouth's Argenti. "An event that draws that many people to the advertising is never going to go away."

---

Durbin reported from Detroit.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 206 ~ 72 of 72

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Jan. 26, the 26th day of 2021. There are 339 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 26, 2020, NBA legend Kobe Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter and seven others were killed when their helicopter plunged into a steep hillside in dense morning fog in Southern California; the former Lakers star was 41.

On this date:

In 1788, the first European settlers in Australia, led by Capt. Arthur Phillip, landed in present-day Sydney.

In 1907, Congress passed the Tillman Act, which prohibited corporations from making direct campaign contributions to federal election candidates.

In 1960, National Football League team owners chose Pete Rozelle to be the new commissioner, succeeding the late Bert Bell.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy appointed Dr. Janet G. Travell to be his personal physician; she was the first woman to hold the job.

In 1962, the United States launched Ranger 3 to land scientific instruments on the moon — but the probe ended up missing its target by more than 22,000 miles.

In 1988, the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical "Phantom of the Opera" opened at Broadway's Majestic Theater.

In 1992, Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton, appearing with his wife, Hillary, on CBS' "60 Minutes," acknowledged "causing pain in my marriage," but said past problems were not relevant to the campaign.

In 1993, Vaclav Havel (VAHTS'-lahv HAH'-vel) was elected president of the newly formed Czech Republic.

In 1994, a scare occurred during a visit to Sydney, Australia, by Britain's Prince Charles as college student David Kang lunged at the prince, firing two blank shots from a starter's pistol. (Kang was later sentenced to 500 hours of community service.)

In 1998, President Bill Clinton forcefully denied having an affair with a former White House intern, telling reporters, "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky."

In 2005, a U.S. Marine helicopter crashed in western Iraq, killing 30 Marines and a Navy medic aboard. A man parked his SUV on railroad tracks in Glendale, California, setting off a crash of two commuter trains that killed 11 people. (The SUV's driver, Juan Alvarez, was convicted of murder and sentenced to 11 consecutive life terms.)

In 2009, Nadya Suleman gave birth at Kaiser Permanente Bellflower Medical Center in California to six boys and two girls; criticism came after the public learned that the unemployed, single mother had gotten pregnant with the octuplets and six elder children through in vitro fertilization.

Ten years ago: Speaking in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, President Barack Obama campaigned vigorously for his revamped economic message, warning that other countries were grasping for first place in the global marketplace as the U.S. fell down on the job. Afghan President Hamid Karzai swore in the country's new parliament, marking the end of a drawn-out battle over whether the lawmakers would be able to start work despite ongoing investigations into electoral fraud.

Five years ago: The FBI arrested the leaders of an armed group that was occupying a national wildlife refuge in Oregon for more than three weeks during a traffic stop that left one man, Robert "LaVoy" Finicum, dead. Pope Francis held talks with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani at the Vatican, calling on Tehran to play a key role in stopping the spread of terrorism. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists announced that its symbolic "Doomsday Clock" remained at three minutes to midnight, citing rising tension between Russia and the U.S., North Korea's recent nuclear test and a lack of aggressive steps to address climate change. Character actor Abe Vigoda, 94, died in Woodland Park, New Jersey.

One year ago: The U.S. consulate in the Chinese city of Wuhan, the epicenter of the coronavirus epi-