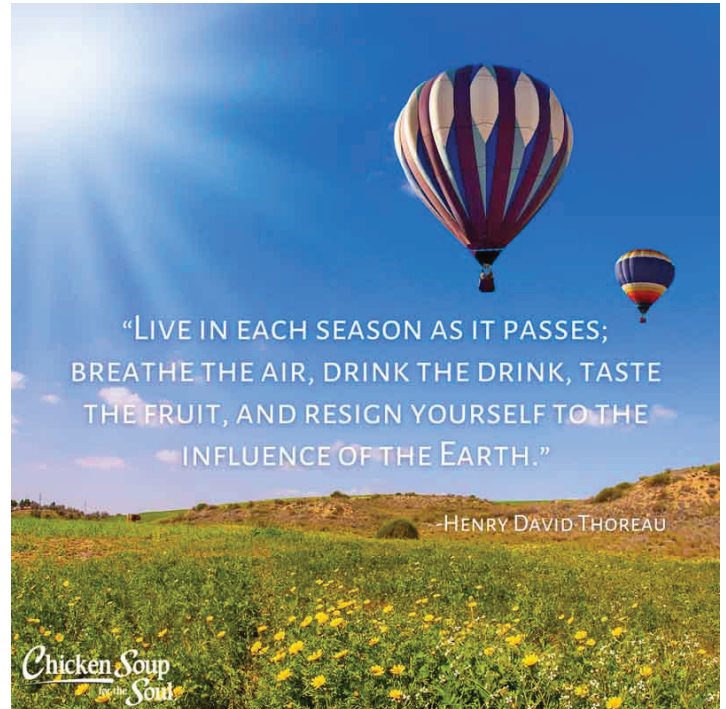


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Boring company hits primary wire

The boring company doing the installation of the new fiber line for James Valley Telecommunications hit a pair of primary electrical wires Wednesday afternoon. After several hours of trying to find the wire, with the help of the boring company, the lines were repaired and power was restored by 6:30 p.m.



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Sioux Falls to Host Emerald Ash Borer Tree Injection Workshop

Brookings, S.D. - As the season for emerald ash borer (EAB) treatments nears in South Dakota, state forestry experts want applicators in the Sioux Falls area to be prepared. The City of Sioux Falls, the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SDDANR) and South Dakota State University Extension are sponsoring a workshop for applicators to learn about where the borer is found in Minnehaha and Lincoln counties, the developmental stages of the insect and treatment options available to protect trees.

"This is an opportunity for applicators to learn about and discuss the systems available for injecting trees with demonstrations by Arborjet, ArborSystem, Rainbow and Warne Chemical (Chem-jet)," says John Ball, Professor, SDSU Extension Forestry Specialist and SDDANR Forest Health Specialist.

Ball will also discuss the EAB life cycle and identification of the insect and infested trees. Bryan Peterson, Urban Forestry Specialist for the City of Sioux Falls will be on hand to discuss tagging and reporting specifications for applicators.

The workshop will be held at Laurel Oak Park, 3401 E. 49th St., Sioux Falls, on Thursday, April 29. It will begin at 10 a.m. CST by the picnic shelter and run for about two hours. No registration is required, and it will be held "rain or shine."

"This is a great opportunity for those already offering emerald ash borer treatments in the area to refine their skills and for companies that are thinking about beginning to offer this service to learn more about it," Ball says.

Emerald ash borer was first detected in Sioux Falls in 2018 and now has spread though most of the city, Ball says. Since its initial discovery in Michigan in 2002, the Asian borer has killed more than 100 million ash trees in more than 30 states.

"The only means of protecting a green or white ash tree from being killed by this insect is through insecticidal treatments," Ball says.

For more information about this event, please contact Ball at 605-695-2503 or John.Ball@sdstate.edu.



Since its initial discovery in Michigan in 2002, the Asian borer has killed more than 100 million ash trees in more than 30 states.

(Photo courtesy SDSU Extension)

SD-DOH Confirms Detection of the Brazil Coronavirus Variant in South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Health (SD-DOH) can confirm that the P.1 variant (the ‘Brazil variant’) of COVID-19 has been detected in South Dakota. The findings were verified by an out-of-state commercial laboratory, and while only one case of the variant has been identified in Pennington County, it is safe to assume other cases may exist.

“We are closely monitoring this development and would like to use this opportunity to encourage state residents to get vaccinated as it’s the best way to be protected—and have proven nearly 100% effective against hospitalization and death,” said Daniel Bucheli, SD-DOH Communications Director. “With more access points than ever, its critical to protect yourself, your family and our communities.”

Existing concerns of the variant appearing in the Great Plains region is that the P.1 variant may impact the effectiveness of currently available COVID-19 vaccines, and negatively impact the effectiveness of monoclonal antibody therapy, which are used in treating COVID patients in hospitals. South Dakota joins Minnesota which has identified 5 cases and Nebraska with 2 cases.

The P.1 variant was first detected in the U.S. in January 2021 and was identified in travelers from Brazil. For additional information on all the variants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [click here](#).

Steering committees formed for girls’ softball, e-sports

By Dana Hess
For the S.D. Newspaper Association

PIERRE — At its meeting Tuesday, the South Dakota High School Activities Association Board of Directors approved the creation of steering committees that will explore the implementation of two new sports: girls’ softball and e-sports.

SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos said the committees will meet this summer, developing a broad outline for a handbook and the creation of competition seasons. Those outlines should be done by the board’s November meeting. If approved, the sports could be sanctioned by SDHSAA for the start of the fall 2022 school year.

Swartos noted that Wyoming has just started offering girls’ softball. “We’re the only one left that doesn’t do it,” Swartos said.

Some universities have started to offer scholarships in e-sports, Swartos said.

“E-sports is an emerging activity in our state,” Swartos said. “We see it as a cost friendly way to include kids who may not be involved in other activities.”

Nine nominated for activities board positions

By Dana Hess
For the S.D. Newspaper Association

PIERRE — At its annual meeting on Tuesday, the member schools of the South Dakota High School Activities Association nominated nine candidates for three positions on the board of directors.

Nominated for the West River At-Large position, open to athletic directors in schools located west of the Missouri River, were Kelly Messmer of Harding County, Todd Palmer of Sturgis, James Bagwell of Crazy Horse and Cooper Garnos of Lyman. The winner will serve a three-year term on the board.

Nominated for a five-year term in Division IV, athletic directors representing the smallest schools, were Kyle Courtney of Rapid City Christian, Brent Mareska of Tiospaye Topa, Jon Meyer of Waverly-South Shore and Eric Denning of Mount Vernon. The winner will replace Craig Cassens of Faulkton on the board.

There was only one nominee for the Division III representative, Elk Point-Jefferson Superintendent Derek Barrios. Running unopposed for a two-year term on the board, Barrios will replace Jerry Rasmussen of Dakota Valley.

Member schools will also vote on an amendment to the association's constitution which changes the date for the collection of enrollment numbers that determine school classifications. Currently the Average Daily Membership numbers are taken from figures disclosed by the S.D. Department of Education in December.

The change is being considered because of changes made by the education department. If the amendment passes, the ADM numbers will reflect numbers released by the education department in September. Classification appeals would still be held in January.

The September figures are "the same count that DOE uses for your state aid," SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos told member schools who took part in the annual meeting.

In order to earn a place on the board of directors, a candidate must receive the majority of votes cast in the election. If no candidate receives a majority, a run-off will be held between the two candidates who have received the most votes.

The constitutional amendment must receive a 60% favorable vote from the member schools that cast ballots.

Compressed state track meet gets SDHSAA approval

By Dana Hess
For the S.D. Newspaper Association

PIERRE — Despite hearing criticism from member schools, on Tuesday the board of directors of the South Dakota High School Activities Association approved a compressed schedule for this year's state track meet. The meet will be held on May 28 and 29.

This year's meet will be held over two days at three sites in Rapid City, Spearfish and Sturgis. Friday's Class B prelims and Saturday's finals will be held in Rapid City. Friday's Class A prelims will be held in Spearfish with Friday's Class AA prelims will be held in Sturgis.

This year's format was agreed on by a committee of track coaches and event organizers. It's decision on a two-day, three-site format was defended by Jordan Bauer, athletic director at Rapid City Central.

"There was a lot of thought that went into the schedule," Bauer said.

SDHSAA Assistant Executive Director John Krogstrand said a dramatic change was needed in the state track meet for safety reasons. "We are still in a pandemic," Krogstrand said.

Board member Tom Culver of Avon said he was struggling with the schedule because of the comments he has heard from other schools. "It's been unanimous against this schedule."

As some considered wholesale changes to the schedule, board member Randy Soma of Brookings said the committee that formulated the schedule wasn't getting enough credit.

"We're not taking what other people worked hard on into account," Soma said. "This whole year has not been perfect."

The two-day schedule was approved by the board on a vote of 5-3. Dissenting votes came from Culver, Mark Murphy of Aberdeen and Craig Cassens of Faulkton.

Changes approved for wrestling, volleyball, golf

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

PIERRE — After a successful first year, girls' wrestling in South Dakota is going through some changes. Those changes were approved Tuesday by the board of directors of the South Dakota High School Activities Association.

The April board meeting is traditionally the time when the SDHSAA board approves the first reading of rule changes offered by the athletic directors of member high schools. The second reading will be held at the board's June meeting.

The board approved girls' wrestling weight classes that included 106, 113, 120, 126, 132, 142, 154, 170, 190 and 285 pounds.

SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos said at the state meet each weight classification would be limited to one wrestler per school. In the first year of competition, schools were allowed multiple wrestlers in each weight class.

A girls' state championship event, similar to the one organized for boys, was approved by the board. With 150 girls participating in the first season and 90 wrestling at the state meet, schools asked for a more formalized championship format.

The format of the boys' wrestling tournament will change with the Thursday and Friday sessions for the team competition and Saturday set aside for the duals tournament.

SDHSAA Assistant Executive Director John Krogstrand said giving the duals tournament its own day would enhance the level of competition.

The size of the state championship field in Class A golf will be cut with a change that allows 50% rather than 60% of players to enter the tournament.

"Our field size has been troublesome," Krogstrand said, noting that it can take teams six hours to complete the tournament. "This will make a dynamic change in how that tournament flows."

A similar effort was approved to cut the field size in Class AA golf as well where golfers must now meet season averages in order to compete in the state tournament. The season average for boys is 94 and the season average for girls is 107.

That change should serve to cut down what has been a 114-player field which causes a round of golf to last more than six hours.

While considering rule changes in golf, the board discussed comments made earlier in the meeting by Jared Vasquez, activities director at Rapid City Stevens. Vasquez asked if any consideration was given to implementing a golf course difficulty formula that could be considered when golfers are qualifying for the state tournament.

"Some are really tough and some aren't," Vasquez said of the state's golf courses.

Krogstrand said a course formula wasn't in the works because the difficulty of a course is often determined by weather and tee and pin placement. Any site can be made more difficult, Krogstrand said, if an effort is made to "trick up a course."

In volleyball, a rule change will allow AA schools to play up to three matches against Class A and Class B opponents without a deduction of seed points.

"The level of competition has gotten pretty darn good in A and B," said SDHSAA Assistant Executive Director Jo Auch.

All of the proposed rule changes can be found on the association's website at SDHSAA.com.

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Greenhouse
opening this
Spring!**



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Opening First Week of May!

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UP YOUR YARD!**

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May Senior Menu

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
3 DRI-63 Chicken Rice Casserole Green Beans Spinach Salad Chocolate Pudding w/ Bananas Whole Wheat Bread	4 DRI-35 BBQ Beef Sandwich Potato Wedges Carrots & Peas Fruit Dessert	5 DRI-12 Baked Pork Chop Macaroni Salad Pineapple Strawberry Ambrosia Whole Wheat Bread
10 DRI-44 Swiss Steak w/Mushroom Gravy/Mashed Potatoes Carrots & Peas Rice and Raisins Whole Wheat Bread	11 Taco Salad Mexican Rice Seasonal Fresh Fruit Bread Stick	12 DRI-10 BBQ Chicken Breast Rosemary Red Potatoes Old Fashioned Slaw Fruit Cocktail Cake Whole Wheat Bread
17 DRI-5 Hot Pork Sandwich Coleslaw Baked Beans Pineapple Cookie	18 DRI-27 Lemon Baked Fish Rice Pilaf California Blend Veggies Fruit Crisp Whole Wheat Bread	19 DRI-1 Roast Beef Potatoes/Carrots Gravy Fruit Dinner Roll
24 DRI-65 Chicken Alfredo California Blend Vegetables Fruit French Bread Cookie	25 DRI-62 Stir Fry Beef w/Rice Oriental Blend Vegetables Honey Fruit Salad Whole Wheat Bread	26 DRI-41 Turkey Sub Sandwich Potato Salad Fruit Ice Cream Sundae

THURSDAY	FRIDAY
6 Chicken Fried Steak Mashed Potatoes/Gravy Corn Brownie Applesauce Whole Wheat Bread	7 Chicken Cordon Bleu Parslied Potato Carrots Melon Cuts Whole Wheat Bread
13 Bratwurst w/Bun Mashed Potatoes Sauerkraut Green Beans Fruit Sherbet	14 DRI-66 Sloppy Joe on Wheat Bun Oven Roasted Potatoes Broccoli Crunchy Cranberry Salad
20 DRI-4 Oven Fried Chicken Potato Salad Broccoli Peaches Whole Wheat Bread	21 DRI-50 Hamburger Cabbage Roll Hotdish Tomato Spoon Salad Pears Chocolate Cake Whole Wheat Bread
27 DRI-46 Ham Sweet Potatoes Peas Acini DePepi Fruit Salad Whole Wheat Bread	28 DRI-64 Lasagna Rotini Tossed Salad/Dressing Ambrosia Fruit Salad Cookie Whole Wheat Bread

#423 in a series

Covid-19 Update:

Not much has changed: There were 58,955 new case reports today, bringing us up to 31,821,943 total cases, which is 0.2% more than yesterday. One thing that has changed is that I can only get 14-day average hospitalizations now, so the best I can offer is that average, which is 45,755. This will be somewhat more work to track now, so I'll do my best with it. We have now lost 568,131 Americans to this virus; that's 0.1% more than yesterday. There were 796 deaths reported today.

Let's talk about this blood clotting phenomenon that is being reported after vaccination with one of the adenovirus-vectored vaccines. Now, blood clots—your run-of-the-mill everyday blood clots, not these fancy ones—are, themselves, a fairly common occurrence. They occur in around 900,000 Americans each year, killing around 100,000 of them. Brain clots are particularly common: About 795,000 strokes occur per year in the US, although not all are due to blood clots (about 13% of those are due to the opposite problem, uncontrolled bleeding in the brain). So if occasionally you hear about someone who was vaccinated and then later had a blood clot, don't go leaping to conclusions. We have seen no increase in the background rate of blood clots since we began this mass vaccination effort months ago—and it would have showed up by now if it was going to. But what we're talking about here is a fancy kind of clot, one called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST), clotting that interferes with drainage from the brain; this kind is very rare in walking-around life.

I want to be clear the vaccines in question are only the Oxford/AstraZeneca (not authorized in the US), Sputnik V (also not authorized in the US), and Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccines; the mRNA vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech are not associated with abnormal blood clotting at all. You will recall that these vaccines use a nonreplicating form of a cold virus to carry viral nucleic acid coding for spike (S) protein into the recipient's cells. We do not yet have certainty that this rare form of abnormal blood clot known as CVST accompanied by a deficiency of platelets is due to the vaccines, but most experts are fairly convinced it is.

I've had a look at a report in preprint (so not yet peer reviewed) from a group of scientists at the University Hospital Greifswald in Germany who have performed rather extensive laboratory explorations with the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. The head of the Institute of Immunology and Transfusion Medicine there, Dr. Andreas Greinacher, speaking with reporters, said they have presented what is in his opinion, "rock-solid evidence" that, according to the paper, the vaccine "rarely causes vaccine-induced thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT) that . . . is mediated by platelet-activating anti-platelet factor 4 (PF4) antibodies," the same mechanism of action we discussed a week or two ago when we talked about this whole thing.

They saw events occurring in two steps. Step 1 is when "following intramuscular injection, vaccine components and platelets come into contact, resulting in platelet activation." Platelets are cell fragments (also called thrombocytes) that play a role in normal clotting and some aspects of an immune response. The scientists think proteins from the adenovirus, possibly along with some proteins from the cell culture in which the virus was grown, are activating platelets. The activated platelets release PF4, which binds with these vaccine constituents to form very large molecules called complexes.

Step 2 is the generation of "an inflammatory co-signal that further stimulates the immune response" while EDTA, a calcium-binding agent used as a stabilizer in the vaccine, opens up the spaces between cells in the walls of tiny blood vessels, letting these huge complexes leak through and make their way into the bloodstream where they can trigger this immune response to PF4 seen all over the body. What seems to be happening is we're setting up an inflammatory process that stimulates antibody production against the PF4 presented by the complexes; it is these anti-PF4 antibodies which activate more platelets, leading to the formation of the abnormal clots.

So we have three things going on here: (1) formation of complexes between adenovirus proteins from the vaccine and platelet factor 4 (PF4); (2) microvascular leakage caused by EDTA, which permits these complexes to get into the bloodstream from tissue and then to circulate; and (3) inflammatory reactions to vaccine components. All of this sets the stage for an environment of anti-PF4 production, platelet ac-

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tivation, activation of white blood cells called neutrophils to further induce clotting mechanisms; and this cascade of events fuels the prothrombotic (clotting) response.

The thing is, everyone has the basic mechanism that would enable this clotting to occur, but in the vast majority of us it is kept in check so that the uncontrolled clotting doesn't ever start. When things go wrong, it starts when this adenovirus that carries the vaccine components comes into contact with platelets, and these platelets get activated en masse and start releasing chemical signals that induce B cells to produce antibodies to platelet factor 4, which further activates the platelets. That whole thing recruits white blood cells, and the response amplifies. So we have this cascading response that reinforces itself and gets bigger as it goes along.

Some of the aspects of the immune system triggered here are particularly hard to control. This research group is not offering much to explain why only some patients get this, just that it takes a perfect storm to set it off—"broadened reactivity of antibodies in a boosted immune response." This group of researchers is skeptical that women are really as much more vulnerable to these abnormal clotting events as they appear; they're thinking the reason this has shown up almost exclusively in women might be because most of the early recipients were health care workers, who tend to be disproportionately women. It would be good to remember, however, that in the US, by the time an adenovirus vaccine became available, most health care workers had already been vaccinated, so that effect should not have been particularly influential here, yet all of our small number of cases (except one possible) were in women. We also have to remember it is difficult to provide a good solid demographic analysis of the affected people in the US with less than 10 cases reported. Greinacher did acknowledge that women's greater tendency to develop autoimmune conditions may be a factor; but he said, "It's not a disease of young women."

At any rate, this group is hypothesizing that this is a "class effect" of using an adenovirus as vector. Hypothesizing means they aren't sure on this point, but they think any adenovirus-vectored vaccine is going to present issues with these abnormal clots. We do want to be clear, however, that this hypothesis is based on study of only one of these vaccines; they have not studied the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine, although that study is about to get underway, or the Sputnik V either. One difference that will need to be accounted for is that the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson product does not contain EDTA, and that could matter to the incidence of this side effect or to explicating EDTA's role in events.

We can say that the kind of rare blood clot that is being linked with vaccines is one that is hard to miss: Common symptoms are intense headache or severe abdominal pain which develop slowly. Lab tests would show a reduced level of platelets, which is unusual enough in cases of abnormal clotting that this could be considered sort of a marker for this condition. So if you're watching for these and responding to them, there is time to get treatment. We've already talked about the fact that one of the most common treatments you'd generally use for abnormal clotting, a drug called heparin, is very likely to worsen the problem. But with good awareness of that risk, something I'm going to guess is common in the health care community in this country by now, there are other medications which work well to treat the clotting; additionally, there is some idea an antibody product called intravenous immune globulin may also be beneficial in restoring platelets. Dr. Mark Crowther, hematologist and thrombosis expert for the American Society of Hematology, told CNN, "Any hospital in the United States would be well positioned to manage these blood clotting complications." The actual antibody problem underlying this condition generally burns itself out after a few weeks so that, if treatment is appropriate and prompt, we can bring people through it.

I think it is important to remember that the disease we're trying to prevent with these vaccines causes blood clots too. Devastating ones. Early in the pandemic before we figured out what was going on, even young patients were having strokes, enormous numbers of tiny clots were plugging up the filters on dialysis machines, and autopsies were showing organs jammed full of clots. Many physicians were saying they'd never seen anything like this. It's not difficult to figure out why they are encouraging patients to receive vaccines, even with a heightened risk of blood clots; it is simply implausible that the vaccine would pose a greater risk than the disease it prevents. Crowther said, "The vaccine, without question, reduces dramatically the risk of any of the Covid-associated blood clots." VITT is around one per million vaccinated people

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in the US. Being hospitalized and having a blood clot from Covid-19 is around a one in 500 to 600 risk in Americans in general—just being American positions you with that risk.

I don't know what's going to happen worldwide or in the US with respect to the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. I don't know whether it will even be submitted with an application for emergency use authorization (EUA) from the FDA. It appears we will hear on Friday after that Advisory Committee meeting what will happen in the US with the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

We're up to 215,951,909 doses administered out of 277,938,875 delivered doses of vaccines in the US. We're still averaging over three million doses per day. Almost 52 percent of adults, which is 41 percent of the population (over 134 million), has received at least one dose, and 26 percent (close to 88 million) have been fully vaccinated. Upwards of 80 percent of senior citizens have received at least one dose.

The CDC's latest ensemble forecast for deaths from Covid-19 was released today; the current projection represents a nice decline from the last. This one places deaths by May 15 between 579,000 and 596,000; the last one had the upper bound by May 8 at 598,000, so we're well off that, even allowing for the extra week included in the forecast. Maybe we're seeing a break. A couple more weeks, and I'll call it a trend, but it's something for now.

Even as it appears we might finally be preparing to wind down in the US, worldwide, new cases are setting records: 5.2 million in the past week, up from the previous record set in early January of 5.0 million. Only Europe is declining; all other regions are increasing, driven largely by India and Brazil in their regions. The rest of the world needs vaccines. A lot. Maybe they'll be smart enough to take them, although I've given up being surprised by human nature, so we'll see.

The CDC has preliminary data on a study of Covid-19 vaccine use in pregnancy. It included 35,000 people who received vaccine either during or shortly before pregnancy and is the largest study of vaccine use in pregnancy so far. There is at this point no significant increase in adverse pregnancy outcomes or effects and there were no meaningful differences in side effects reported either. Rates of miscarriage, prematurity, low birth weight, and birth defects in these vaccinated cases were consistent with those seen in pregnant people before the pandemic. The report, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, was according to Dr. Stephanie Gaw, maternal-fetal medicine specialist at the University of California, San Francisco, who spoke with the *New York Times*, "very reassuring, and I think it will really help providers and public health officials more strongly recommend getting the vaccine in pregnancy." We know pregnant people face serious risks from Covid-19 itself—more likely to become severely ill and more likely to die than nonpregnant women with symptoms. We do want to keep in mind these results are preliminary, but they look promising.

Here's a case where it is difficult not to be all judgey: An unvaccinated health care worker at a nursing home set off an outbreak leading to "dozens of infections." Some of those infected had been fully vaccinated; it makes sense to me that breakthrough infections would be more likely in this population with aging immune systems. Twenty-six residents and 20 staff were infected. Three residents died, two of them unvaccinated. Vaccinated people did fare better than unvaccinated ones in the outbreak; the vaccine showed 66 percent effectiveness for residents against infection and around 86 percent effectiveness in preventing symptomatic disease; that's pretty good, especially in the elderly. But it wasn't perfect—and we didn't expect it would be. It looks to me like these folks were not adequately protected by requiring those who come into contact with them to be vaccinated. To my way of thinking, the days should be approaching an end when we can tolerate people's refusal to be vaccinated when they endanger folks who haven't been given a choice about their exposure to virus spreaders cloaked as the blithely unprotected. There's got to be a social contract there somewhere that says this is not OK. Because it's not.

New York City has done a population-level antibody study of residents. Now you know that I'm not sold on antibody tests as an individual measure of much—not accurate enough—but they serve a valuable function for population studies where we can factor in sensitivity and specificity data. Findings were, as suspected before the study was undertaken, that nearly a quarter of residents had been infected; this is a phenomenally high proportion compared to pretty much anywhere else in the country. You may recall

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the dark days of last winter when the city was in crisis; those days undoubtedly accounted for much of this remarkable finding. The shocking, but probably not surprising, finding was the distribution of seropositivity (positive antibody results) among various racial groups. Hispanic residents showed 35 percent seropositivity, Blacks 33.5 percent, Asians 20 percent, and Whites 16 percent. We knew the burden of disease was unequal; this brings that home. There were some limitations to this study, primarily due to sampling—Black people were seriously underrepresented, for example; but it still adds to our understanding of just how this infection distributed itself in the population. It should also provide impetus to efforts to see that underserved populations have access to vaccine from trusted sources and outreach and education about vaccination so we can stop the carnage in those communities.

That's it for the day. Stay well. I'll be back.

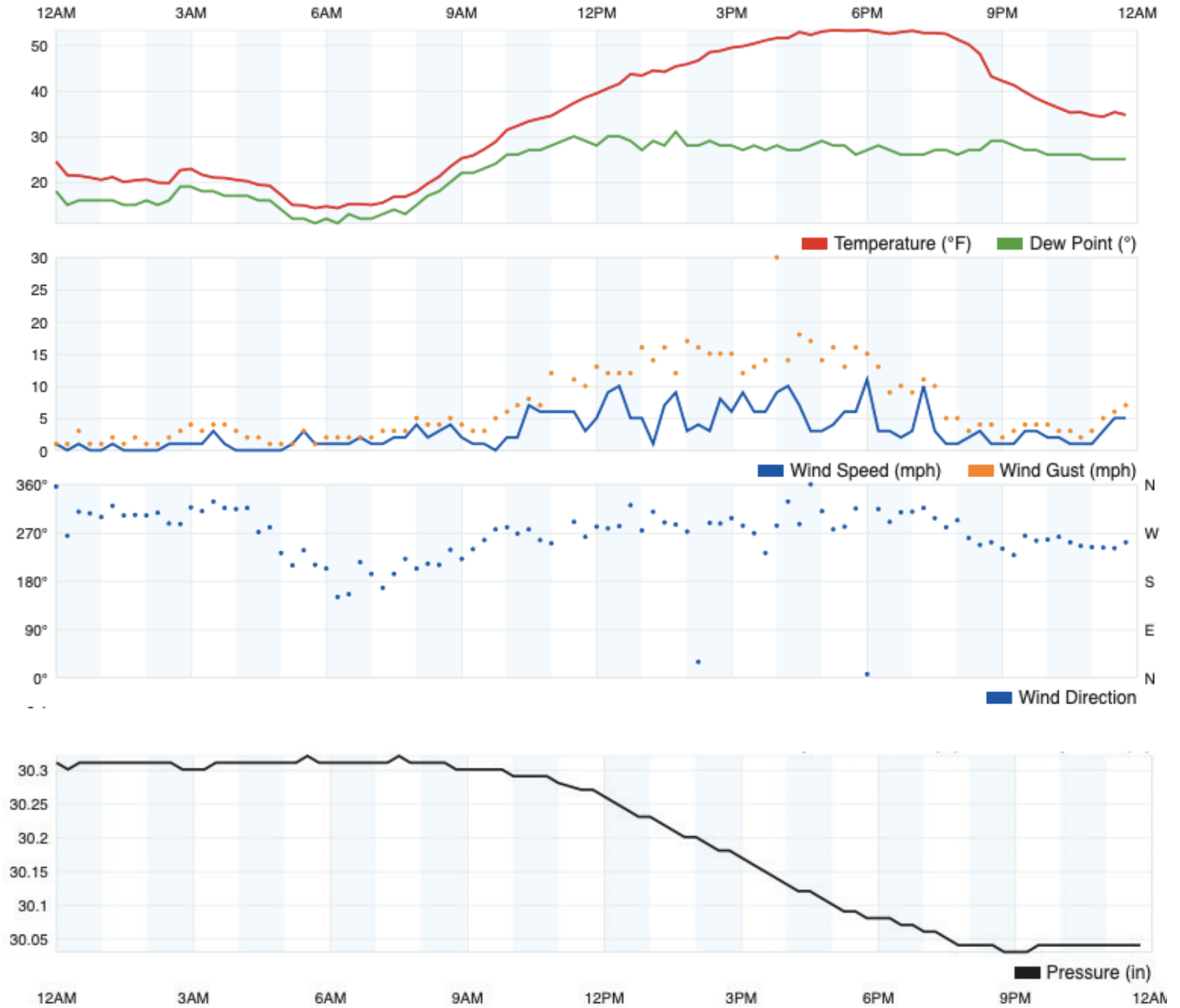
NOW HIRING

MJ's Sinclair of Groton is looking for someone to work weekends and nights. Stop out and see Jeff for an application.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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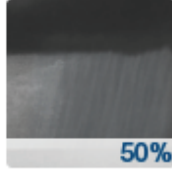
Today



Sunny then Increasing Clouds and Breezy

High: 61 °F

Tonight



Chance Showers and Patchy Fog

Low: 33 °F

Friday



Patchy Fog then Mostly Cloudy

High: 50 °F

Friday Night



Mostly Cloudy

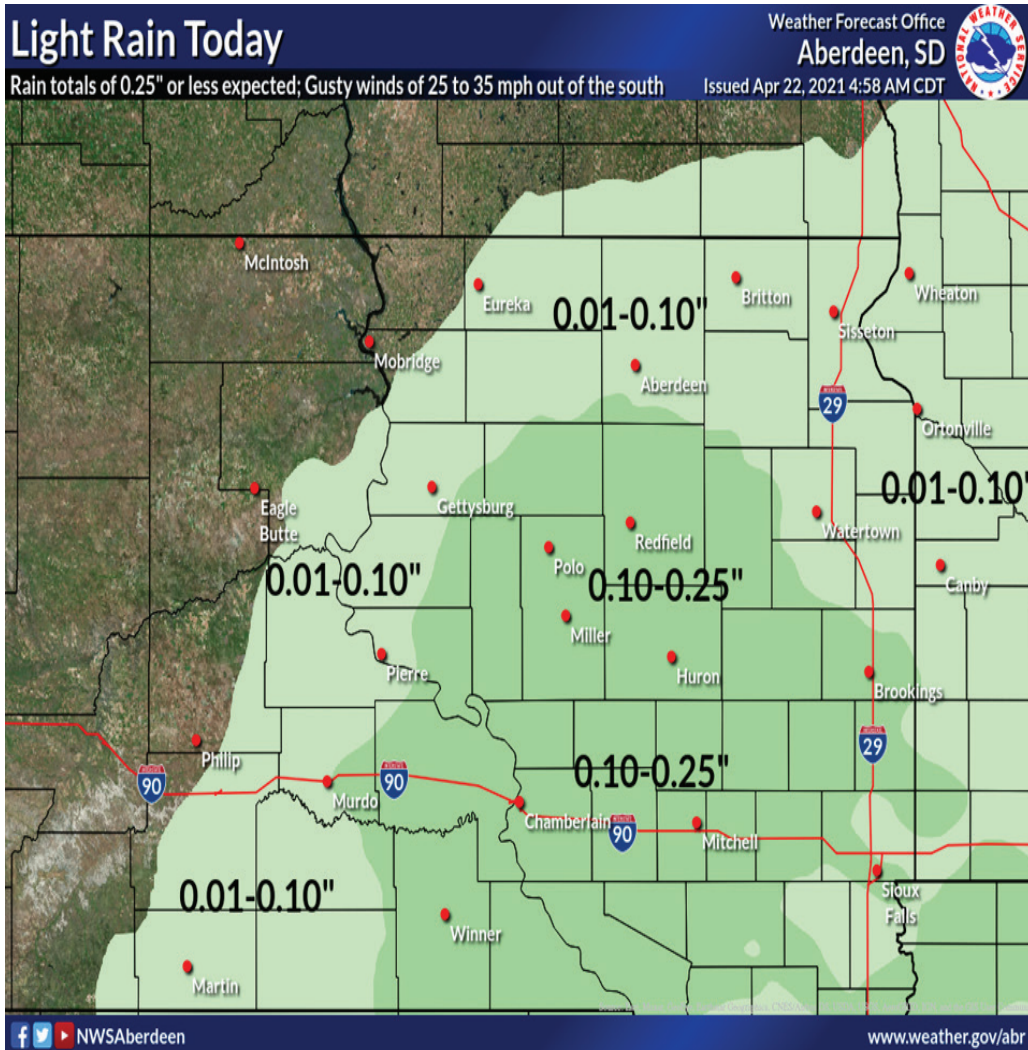
Low: 23 °F

Saturday



Sunny

High: 49 °F



Light rain will fall over much of the area today, although most areas will see a quarter inch of precipitation or less. Winds will be breezy this afternoon out of the south at 25 to 35 mph.

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Today in Weather History

April 22, 1968: A late season snow storm affected most of South Dakota, with the heaviest snowfall measuring 18 inches at Eagle Butte. Also, localized icing damaged utility lines, and 40 mph winds caused localized blizzard conditions. Some calf losses were reported.

April 22, 1992: With a fresh blanket of snow from a recent snowstorm helping to keep the air cool the high temperature at Sioux Falls only reached 31 degrees. This cold temperature is the latest below freezing high temperature on record in Sioux Falls.

April 22, 2001: Heavy snow of 7 to 15 inches fell across much of central and northeast South Dakota from early on the 22nd to early on the 23rd. Some freezing rain also brought heavy icing in Buffalo, Eastern Lyman, and far southern Roberts counties resulting in some downed trees and branches along with some downed power lines. This late season snowstorm caused many travel problems along with some accidents. There were many vehicles in the ditch along Interstate-29 in Roberts County. Many schools and events were either canceled or delayed on the 22nd and 23rd. The heavy snow also caused problems with ranchers and their livestock with some calves lost in the storm. Around 9:30 am on the 23rd in Kennebec, the heavy snow resulted in the roof of the 40 by 64-foot feed and seed warehouse to collapse. Late season record snowfalls were set at Aberdeen and Pierre. Some snowfall amounts included 7 inches at Timber Lake and Leola, 8 inches at Eagle Butte, Mobridge and Aberdeen, 9 inches at Kennebec and Pollock, 10 inches at Gettysburg, Selby, Redfield, and Webster, and 11 inches at Onida, Mission Ridge, Hosmer, and Columbia. Locations with snowfall amounts of a foot or more included, 12 inches at Britton, Ree Heights, Highmore, Blunt, Seneca, and Pierre, 13 inches at Murdo, Presho, Miller, and Wilmot, 14 inches at Roy Lake and southwest of Harrold, and 15 inches at Saint Lawrence.

1883: A tornado outbreak from Louisiana to Kansas claimed the lives of at least 127 people and injured over 800 others. One of the tornadoes destroyed the town of Beauregard, Mississippi.

1978: Lightning sometimes strikes tents. In this case, a tent containing some sleeping Girl Scouts was hit by lightning as they were camping at DeGray Lake in Arkansas. Two of the Girl Scouts suffered minor burns.

1999: A one million dollar air charter Boeing 727 flew into large hail. Although the plane and its 66 occupants landed safely, the aircraft was declared a total loss.

2003: Tropical Storm Ana became the first Atlantic tropical storm since records began in 1871 to form during the month April. Maximum sustained winds reached 55 mph. Starting as a non-tropical area of low pressure on the 18th about 210 miles south-southwest of Bermuda, it was classified as a sub-tropical storm early on the 20th, it gained full tropical characteristics near 0000 UTC on the 21st, developing an "eye" feature.

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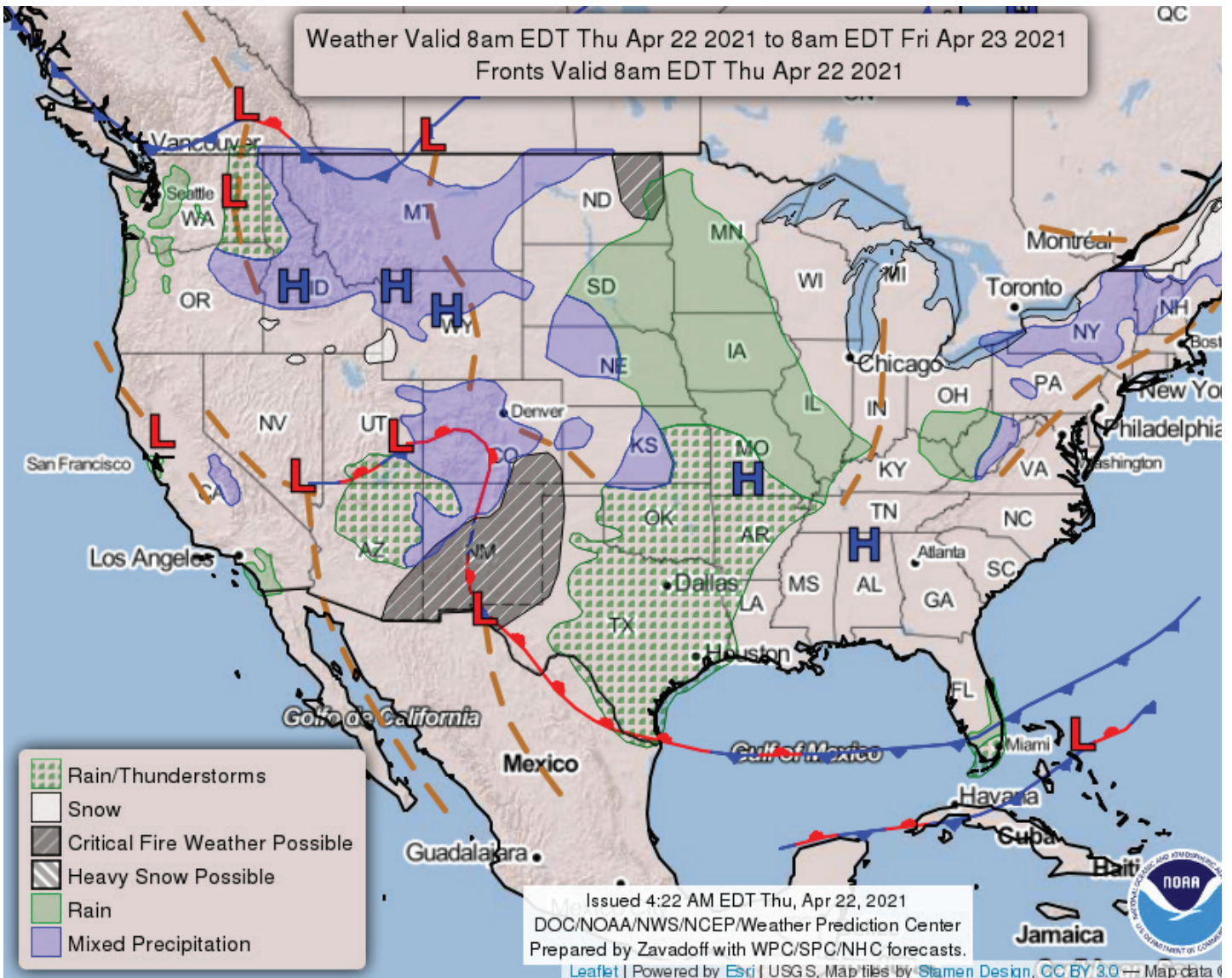
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 54 °F at 5:06 PM
Low Temp: 14 °F at 5:42 AM
Wind: 30 mph at 3:58 PM
Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 90° in 1908, 1990
Record Low: 15° in 2015
Average High: 61°F
Average Low: 34°F
Average Precip in Apr.: 1.11
Precip to date in Apr.: 2.33
Average Precip to date: 3.29
Precip Year to Date: 2.51
Sunset Tonight: 8:29 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:34 a.m.





ALL OR NOTHING – OR – ONE TOUCH AT A TIME

Crowds followed Jesus for many different reasons. Some out of curiosity. Some for His teachings. Some for the miracle of touch that brought healing. He did what no one else had ever done. He brought love and light, hope and healing, truth and salvation.

Keith Miller wrote an interesting book entitled *The Second Touch*. In it, he spoke of Jesus' healing of a blind man. There was one occasion when He touched a blind man's eyes and when he looked around he saw people "like trees walking." Then Jesus touched his eyes again, and his eyesight was fully restored. It was the "second touch" from Jesus that completed the miracle.

David needed a "second touch." Feelings of distress and defeat were overwhelming him. But they could not erase previous memories of God's goodness, greatness, and grace. So he asked God not to withhold His mercy from him and asked God to save him, once again, as he had in the past. Though his sin overtook him, he repented.

He began this Psalm by reminding God that on one occasion he waited patiently and God rescued him and planted his feet "on a rock." Now, once again, things were different. "God, come quickly! I need You! You saved me before – please do it again. This is more than I can handle. But it is not beyond You." And God reached out – again

There's good news here for all of us. David needed that "second touch." And, later on, he would need "more second touches." Every time he "needed a touch" he went to God and prayed. And God answered every prayer and gave him many "touches." That's the way God works. His outstretched hand is always waiting to "touch us" and retouch us.

When we go to God in prayer, we always expect "all or nothing." Often, however, our requests are granted in "bits and pieces," or "one at a time." Touch after touch after...

Prayer: May we never forget, Father that Your touch comes when we need it most. Increase our faith as we wait for Your "touches!" In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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2021 Community Events

- Cancelled** Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
- 03/27/2021 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/10/2021 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/24/2021 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/25/2021 Princess Prom (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/01/2021 Lions Club Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/31/2021 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 6/7-9/2021 St. John's Lutheran Church VBS
- 06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
- 06/19/2021 Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon
- 07/04/2021 Firecracker Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
- 07/11/2021 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 10am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/22/2021 Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/30/2021-08/03/2021 State "B" American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 08/06/2021 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/11/2021 Lions Club Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/12/2021 Sunflower Classic Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
- 09/18-19 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 10/08/2021 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/09/2021 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/29/2021 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2021 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/13/2021 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 11/25/2021 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

News from the Associated Press

FCS draft prospects generally opted not to play this spring

By STEVE MEGARGEE AP Sports Writer

There's a common thread linking most of the Football Championship Subdivision players who expect to hear their name called in the NFL draft.

They didn't participate in their schools' pandemic-delayed spring season.

"Ultimately, it just comes down to athletes taking care of their bodies," North Dakota State offensive tackle Dillon Radunz said. "You can go out and have fun and do that, and there's a certain purity to that, but next thing you know, some guy tears his ACL in the spring, and now he misses out on the spring season, and misses out on the fall season. Then he has to wait another whole year and a half just to play football again."

When the NCAA announced that the FCS season wouldn't start until February, it left draft prospects from those schools facing a dilemma. Do they stick with their schools for the spring season or use that time to get ready for the draft?

Most decided to start preparing for their future.

North Dakota State quarterback Trey Lance said playing a spring season wasn't feasible because of the way the schedule was designed. The FCS playoffs start Saturday, less than a week before the draft.

"I would have had to leave my team in the middle of the season (for the draft)," Lance said. "Here at North Dakota State, we play for national championships. That's the expectation every single year. So for me, if I was going to stay in school and play, I would have stayed and played the spring and the fall as well."

Lance and Radunz will likely be the first two players drafted from non-Football Bowl Subdivision programs next week. Lance is projected as a top-10 overall pick. Radunz seems likely to get taken in the second round.

They helped North Dakota State win an FCS title in 2019, the Bison's eighth championship in nine seasons. Lance and Radunz ended their college careers by playing in North Dakota State's lone game last fall, a 39-20 victory over Central Arkansas.

Radunz noted that even if he had played a spring season and avoided injury, the move could have caused long-term drawbacks. He believed playing a full college schedule in the spring and an NFL season in the fall ultimately might have shortened his career.

"You're just playing that much football in a short period of time, and it's just not good for a body, especially at this high level of play," Radunz said.

Here's a breakdown of some other draft prospects from schools outside the FBS ranks.

OT SPENCER BROWN, NORTHERN IOWA

Brown gained nearly 100 pounds while at Northern Iowa to develop into a 6-foot-8, 311-pound prospect. Brown opted out after Northern Iowa decided to delay its football season to the spring, but he did participate in the Senior Bowl and had an impressive pro day performance.

WR CADE JOHNSON, SOUTH DAKOTA STATE

Johnson was a 2019 finalist for the Walter Payton Award that goes annually to the top FCS player. Johnson entered the transfer portal when South Dakota State delayed its season, but he ultimately decided to enter the draft. He caught a combined 139 passes for 25 touchdowns over 2,500 yards in the 2018 and 2019 seasons.

OL QUINN MEINERZ, WISCONSIN-WHITewater

Meinerz, the lone Division III player on this list, also didn't play this fall because the pandemic prevented Wisconsin-Whitewater from having a fall season. The 6-3, 320-pound Meinerz gained plenty of attention in Senior Bowl workouts despite breaking his hand that week. He's most likely to play center in the NFL.

CB BRYAN MILLS, NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL

Mills, who is 6-1, made five interceptions and had eight pass breakups in 2019. He got a Senior Bowl invitation even though North Carolina Central didn't have a fall season in 2020.

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CB ROBERT ROCHELL, CENTRAL ARKANSAS

Rochell was the rare FCS draft prospect who played multiple games for his school over the last year. Central Arkansas played a nine-game schedule last fall, and Rochell appeared in seven of those games. He also got a Senior Bowl invitation. He intercepted four passes in 2018 and five in 2019.

DE ELERSON SMITH, NORTHERN IOWA

Smith had a huge season in 2019 with 14 sacks, 21 ½ tackles for loss, five forced fumbles and four pass breakups. He didn't play for Northern Iowa this spring after its fall season was pushed back. The 6-6, 252-pound Smith projects as an edge rusher in the NFL.

S CHRISTIAN UPHOFF, ILLINOIS STATE

Uphoff had 70 tackles, seven pass breakups and two interceptions for Illinois State in 2019 and earned a Senior Bowl invitation. Uphoff, who is 6-2 and 209 pounds, has NFL size and showed enough speed to return kicks at one point in his college career.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Wednesday:

Dakota Cash

07-14-18-28-31

(seven, fourteen, eighteen, twenty-eight, thirty-one)

Estimated jackpot: \$143,000

Lotto America

04-41-42-44-45, Star Ball: 8, ASB: 4

(four, forty-one, forty-two, forty-four, forty-five; Star Ball: eight; ASB: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$5.11 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$277 million

Powerball

21-25-32-63-67, Powerball: 6, Power Play: 2

(twenty-one, twenty-five, thirty-two, sixty-three, sixty-seven; Powerball: six; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$90 million

Noem issues order banning vaccine passports in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem has joined a handful of governors who have issued executive orders banning the development or use of COVID-19 vaccine passports in their states.

Vaccine passports are documents that could be used to verify coronavirus immunization status and allow inoculated people to more freely travel, shop and dine.

South Dakota has resisted government mandates and the state "is stronger for it," Noem said Wednesday in a statement. She encouraged all residents to get a COVID-19 vaccine but said the state will not require it.

"We are not going to restrict South Dakotans' exercise of their freedoms with un-American policies like vaccine passports. In our state, 'Under God, the people rule.' And that is how we will operate for as long as I am governor," Noem said.

South Dakota ranks 18th in the country for new COVID-19 cases per capita in the last two weeks and its death rate over the course of the pandemic is eighth highest, according to Johns Hopkins University researchers.

The governors of Florida, Texas, Montana, Idaho, Arizona, and Utah have issued executive orders against vaccine passport systems, citing government overreach into personal freedom and private health choices. New York was the first state to institute a passport system.

Rally cup sales would allow open drinking on Sturgis streets

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — A fundraising proposal by Sturgis officials calls for the city to sell souvenir cups to visitors during the city's annual motorcycle rally, which they could then fill with beer or wine and walk the streets of downtown with drinks in hand.

If approved by the city council, the proposed open container permit would last for a nine-day period during the rally and would be allowed between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. The initiative is labeled as a "case study" to see the positive and negative impacts of open containers on the downtown streets.

Proceeds from the selling of the event cups would be retained by the city and then given back as donations to various organizations through Sturgis Rally Charities and to fund an endowment for future donations, the Rapid City Journal reported. Sturgis Mayor Mark Carstensen said the money would have a major impact on the future of the rally.

"I do understand that people will be drinking on the streets, but in my opinion as you look down the street, they're drinking six inches on the other side of a wall (in bars and restaurants)," he said. "It would create more of an environment of staying downtown, pacing yourself and enjoying the people watching."

The proposal would allow the Sturgis Police Department, other law enforcement or safety personnel to rescind the open container policy, shut down the sales of the souvenir cups and post signs up that open containers are no longer allowed.

Rapid City man convicted in crime spree, including assault

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City man has been found guilty in a string of crimes that include aggravated assault, burglary and grand theft.

A jury in Pennington County convicted 34-year-old Bill Robertson Tuesday afternoon, KOTA-TV reported. Robertson was accused of stealing two pickup trucks, breaking into three homes and stabbing, assaulting or threatening five people during a nearly hour-long crime spree last July in Rapid City.

He was arrested after driving toward a police officer who shot at him multiple times, but did not hit him. The officer said he thought Robertson was trying to hit him.

At the time, police said Robertson's actions created "one of the largest crime scenes in Rapid City's history."

Debris pile apparent source of wildfire near Rapid City

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Department of Public Safety says no criminal charges are expected as a result of a large wildfire west of Rapid City.

A debris pile is believed to be the source of a fire that burned about 3.5 square miles (9 square kilometers) in late March. Department spokesman Tony Mangan said the owner of the property where the debris pile was located has a valid burn permit.

At least one home and two outbuildings were destroyed in the Schroeder Road fire, the Argus Leader reported. More than 150 personnel responded to the fire that caused more than 400 people to evacuate their homes near Rapid City and closed Mount Rushmore.

During the investigation, authorities conducted interviews with residents of the property and other witnesses with potential knowledge of the fire, Mangan said.

Grim list of deaths at police hands grows even after verdict

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

Just as the guilty verdict was about to be read in the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, police in Ohio shot and killed a Black teenager in broad daylight during a confrontation.

The shooting of Ma'Khia Bryant, 16, who was swinging a knife during a fight with another person in Columbus, is in some ways more representative of how Black and other people of color are killed during police encounters than the death of George Floyd, pinned to the ground by Chauvin and captured on video for all the world to see.

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Unlike Chauvin's case, many killings by police involve a decision to shoot in a heated moment and are notoriously difficult to prosecute even when they spark grief and outrage. Juries have tended to give officers the benefit of the doubt when they claim to have acted in a life-or-death situation.

While Tuesday's conviction was hailed as a sign of progress in the fight for equal justice, it still leaves unanswered difficult questions about law enforcement's use of force and systemic racism in policing. The verdict in the Chauvin case might not be quickly repeated, even as the list of those killed at the hands of police grows.

"This was something unique. The world saw what happened," said Salt Lake County District Attorney Sim Gill, who has examined over 100 use-of-force cases there. To have video, witnesses, forensic evidence and multiple police officers testify against one of their own is unique and "demonstrates how high the bar has to be in order to actually have that kind of accountability," he said.

Convictions like Chauvin's are extraordinarily rare. Out of the thousands of deadly police shootings in the U.S. since 2005, about 140 officers have been charged with murder or manslaughter and just seven were convicted of murder, according to data maintained by Phil Stinson, a criminologist at Bowling Green State University.

"This is a success, but there are so many more unjust murders that still need reckoning, that we still need to address," said Princess Blanding, a Virginia gubernatorial candidate whose brother was killed by a Richmond police officer. Marcus-David Peters, who was Black, was fatally shot by a Black officer during a mental health crisis after he ran naked onto an interstate highway and charged at the officer.

In Columbus, Bryant had been swinging a knife wildly at another girl or woman pinned against a car when the officer fired after shouting at the girl to get down, according to police and body camera video released within hours of the shooting. The mayor mourned the teen's death but said the officer had acted to protect someone else.

Kimberly Shepherd, who lives in the neighborhood where Bryant was killed, had been celebrating the guilty verdict in Floyd's killing when she heard the news about the teenager.

"We were happy about the verdict. But you couldn't even enjoy that," Shepherd said. "Because as you're getting one phone call that he was guilty, I'm getting the next phone call that this is happening in my neighborhood."

In Chauvin's case, by contrast, cellphone video seen around the world showed the white officer pressing his knee to the Black man's neck for more than nine minutes as Floyd gasped for air. It sparked protests across the U.S., and Chauvin's fellow officers took the extraordinary step of testifying against him.

"As we look to future prosecution, the question is going to be: Is this perhaps the beginning of a new era, where those walls of silence are not impenetrable?" said Miriam Krinsky, a former federal prosecutor and executive director of the reform-minded group Fair and Just Prosecution. Chauvin's case could also make future juries more skeptical of police, she said.

The day after Bryant was fatally shot, at least two other people were also killed by police in the United States.

On Wednesday morning, a deputy fatally shot and killed a Black man while serving a search warrant in eastern North Carolina. Authorities wouldn't provide details of the shooting but an eyewitness said that Andrew Brown Jr. was shot while trying to drive away, and that deputies fired at him multiple times. And in the San Diego suburb of Escondido, police said an officer fatally shot a man who was apparently striking cars with a metal pole.

On Thursday, a funeral will be held for Daunte Wright, a 20-year-old Black motorist who was shot during a traffic stop this month in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota, just a few miles from the courthouse as the Chauvin trial unfolded. In Chicago last month, 13-year-old Adam Toledo was fatally shot less than a second after he tossed a gun and began raising his hands as an officer had commanded.

Kim Potter, a white police officer, has been charged with second-degree manslaughter in Wright's shooting. The former police chief said Potter mistakenly fired her handgun when she meant to use her Taser; Potter resigned from the force afterward. Wright's family has called for more serious charges, comparing

her case to the murder charge brought against a Black officer who killed a white woman in nearby Minneapolis in 2017.

The Cook County state's attorney's office will decide whether to charge Eric Stillman, the white officer who shot Toledo on March 29 in Little Village, a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood of Chicago's southwest side. The boy, who was Latino, appeared to drop a handgun moments before the officer shot him. The graphic video of the boy's death sparked outrage, but some legal experts have said they don't believe Stillman could or should be charged under criteria established by a landmark 1989 Supreme Court ruling on the use of force by police.

Instead of just prosecuting officers after shootings happen, more must be done to prevent such encounters from happening in the first place, said Eugene Collins, who was a local organizer for the NAACP's Baton Rouge, Louisiana, branch when Alton Sterling, a Black man selling CDs in front of a convenience store, was shot and killed by a white police officer in July 2016. The two officers involved in the encounter weren't charged in his death.

"We're pulled over more, stopped and frisked more," said Collins, now head of the NAACP branch. "It's about putting responsibility on the policymakers."

Activists say the fight for police reform and a more just legal system is far from over.

Rachael Rollins, the first woman of color to become district attorney in Massachusetts, said it must start in part by breaking down the misconception that questioning the police or suggesting ways they can improve means "you don't back the blue."

"The police have an incredibly hard job, and believe me, I know there are violent people that harm community and police but that's not all of us. So we have to acknowledge that it's not working and we have to sit together to come up with solutions, but it's urgent," said Rollins, the district attorney for Suffolk County, which includes Boston.

"I'm afraid, I'm exhausted and I'm the chief law enforcement officer so imagine what other people feel like," she said.

Police chiefs hail Chauvin verdict as a key step to healing

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and JAKE BLEIBERG Associated Press

Not long after a jury convicted former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin of killing George Floyd, police chiefs across the U.S. started speaking up. And it wasn't to defend the police.

New Orleans Police Superintendent Shaun Ferguson said convicting Chauvin on Tuesday showed "police officers are not above the law." Charmaine McGuffey, the sheriff in Cincinnati, said it was a "necessary step" in healing a nation torn apart by police violence. Miami Police Chief Art Acevedo encouraged Americans to breathe "a collective sigh of relief."

Law enforcement leaders said Chauvin's conviction was a step toward restoring trust in the criminal justice system and repairing relations between police and the communities they serve. It was a major departure from years past, when even the highest levels would close rank around an officer following an on-duty killing.

But police leaders and activists alike cautioned that a single case will not end systemic racism or stamp out excessive force in departments nationwide.

"The American justice system has not always served all of her people well, and the death of George Floyd is a shocking example of where we can fail each other," said Madison, Wisconsin, Police Chief Shon Barnes, the city's first Black police leader. "As an officer of the law, I believe that today justice has prevailed. We hear you. This moment matters."

At Chauvin's trial, jurors saw video from bystanders and police body-worn cameras and heard witnesses describe how the white officer pinned his knee to Floyd's neck as the Black man cried out, "I can't breathe."

Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo testified against Chauvin, breaking the "blue wall of silence" that has long shrouded accountability around police wrongdoing. Arradondo told jurors that Chauvin's conduct violated department policy, went against training and "is certainly not part of our ethics or our values."

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Some large unions for rank-and-file officers also supported the verdict, but it's unclear whether that sentiment was universal when the general practice is to defend officers immediately.

Floyd's death last May gave rise to nightly protests across the U.S. and demands from activists to dismantle or radically rethink the role of police in society.

Since then, some police departments have instituted changes — such as banning chokeholds or setting timelines for the release of body-camera video of fatal police interactions — and many state legislatures are debating police reform bills.

Activists dedicated to systemic changes to American policing have criticized those steps as far too limited. But Chauvin's conviction gave cautious hope to many who have watched officers face no criminal consequences for other killings of Black Americans, from the 2014 chokehold death of Eric Garner in New York City to last year's suffocation of Daniel Prude in Rochester, New York.

Activist Isaac Wallner said Chauvin's conviction suggested the country may be starting to take Black communities' cries of police abuse seriously. But he said a single verdict won't make him feel safe in his hometown of Kenosha, Wisconsin, where no officers have been charged in last year's shooting of Jacob Blake.

"Until that day happens when police are afraid to abuse their badge, I'll continue to be afraid of the police," Wallner told The Associated Press. "As of right now, they're not afraid because too many of them have gotten off."

Law enforcement leaders in cities large and small said the verdict was just a first step.

"The work of doing justice for George Floyd doesn't end today," San Francisco Police Chief William Scott said. "My hope for all of us in criminal justice roles is that we rise to this moment, and learn the lessons that history has, frankly, been trying to teach us for decades."

Darin Balaam, the sheriff in Washoe County, Nevada, said, "It is past time we hold law enforcement officers who tarnish our profession and oath accountable for deplorable actions."

Acevedo, the Miami police chief and president of the Major Cities Chiefs Association, said law enforcement leaders across the country took the unusual step last year of decrying Chauvin's actions because the bystander video was "shocking to the conscious."

"Anyone who would question the righteousness of this conviction, I would say they really need to take a good, hard look at their own gut because I question their humanity," Acevedo told the AP on Wednesday.

Even some police unions supported the verdict.

Patrick Yoes, president of the National Fraternal Order of Police, said the "trial was fair and due process was served."

Unions for officers in Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Jose said the verdict "was just" and offered "an opportunity to improve how our nation is policed." And the usually pugnacious head of New York City's officers union, Patrick Lynch, said: "What Derek Chauvin did that day was not policing. It was murder."

Chauvin's Minneapolis police union thanked jurors for their dedication but also criticized elected officials for what it deemed political pandering and divisive comments about police.

"There are no winners in this case and we respect the jury's decision," the Police Officers Federation of Minneapolis said in a statement.

The verdict was especially profound and complicated for Black officers, who see the struggles of policing and race in both their work and personal lives.

Terrance Hopkins, president of the Black Police Association of Greater Dallas, said he was relieved Chauvin was convicted but acknowledged that "it's hard to see an officer take a fall like this."

"It helps me to do my job because this is how we build trust," said Hopkins, a senior Dallas police corporal. "The trust has been taken away by us not holding officers accountable."

Tattered relations between police and communities have been driven by centuries of poverty, poor schooling and a lack of economic opportunity in "inner cities and very diverse communities," said Malik Aziz, former executive director of the National Black Police Association and incoming chief in Prince George's County, Maryland. Officers alone can't address those issues, he said.

"Until we actually face those facts of any structural or institutional racism or discrimination or prejudice

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or poverty, then we'll continue to see these things flourish," Aziz said. "This should not be a day of celebration, but it should be a day for us to actually have a real dialogue."

Biden opening summit with ambitious new US climate pledge

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and CHRISTINA LARSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden will open a global climate summit with a pledge to cut at least in half the climate-wrecking coal and petroleum fumes that the U.S. pumps out, a commitment he hopes will spur China and other big polluters to speed up efforts of their own.

Biden is offering Americans and the world a vision of a prosperous, clean-energy United States where factories churn out cutting-edge batteries for export, line workers re-lay an efficient national electrical grid and crews cap abandoned oil and gas rigs and coal mines.

His commitment to cut U.S. fossil fuel emissions up to 52% by 2030 will come at the launch Thursday of an all-virtual climate summit for 40 world leaders, marking a return by the U.S. to global climate efforts after four years of withdrawal under President Donald Trump. Japan, a heavy user of coal, announced its own new 46% emissions reduction target Thursday before the summit opened, as the U.S. and its allies sought to create momentum.

The Biden administration's pledge would require by far the most ambitious U.S. climate effort ever undertaken, nearly doubling the reductions that the Obama administration had committed to in the landmark 2015 Paris climate accord.

The new urgency comes as scientists say that climate change caused by coal plants, car engines and other fossil fuel use is already worsening droughts, floods, hurricanes, wildfires and other disasters and that humans are running out of time to stave off most catastrophic extremes of global warming.

"The United States is not waiting, the costs of delay are too great, and our nation is resolved to act now," the Biden administration said in a statement. "Climate change poses an existential threat, but responding to this threat offers an opportunity to support good-paying, union jobs, strengthen America's working communities, protect public health, and advance environmental justice."

But Biden administration officials, in previewing the new target, disclosed aspirations and vignettes rather than specific plans, budget lines or legislative proposals for getting there. Administration officials briefing reporters in advance of Biden's announcement made no direct mention of politically tricky moves to wean the U.S. from oil, natural gas and coal. They emphasized the role of technology, including carbon capture and hydrogen power, which have yet to be affordably developed to scale.

Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris were scheduled to open the Earth Day summit from the White House East Room before world leaders, including the heads of China, Russia, India, Gulf oil states, European and Asian allies and island and coastal nations already struggling against the effects of climate change. Pope Francis will also take part.

Biden planned to join a second session of the livestreamed summit later in the morning on financing poorer countries' efforts to remake and protect their economies against global warming.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the summit will play out as a climate telethon-style livestream, limiting opportunities for spontaneous interaction and negotiation.

With the pledge from the United States and other emissions-cutting announcements from Japan, Canada, the European Union and the United Kingdom, countries representing more than half the world's economy will have now committed to cutting fossil fuel fumes enough to keep the earth's climate from warming, disastrously, more than 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit (1.5 degrees Celsius), the Biden administration said.

Biden, a Democrat, campaigned partly on a pledge to confront climate change. He has sketched out some elements of his \$2 trillion approach for transforming U.S. transportation systems and electrical grids in his campaign climate plan and in his infrastructure proposals for Congress.

His administration insists the transformation will mean millions of well-paying jobs. Republicans say the effort will throw oil, gas and coal workers off the job. They call his infrastructure proposal too costly.

"The summit is not necessarily about everyone else bringing something new to the table — it's really

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about the U.S. bringing their target to the world," said Joanna Lewis, an expert in China energy and environment at Georgetown University.

It's an urgent but hardly perfect time for the U.S. to try to spur action.

The world's top two climate offenders, China and the United States, are feuding over non-climate issues. Chinese President Xi Jinping waited until Wednesday to confirm he would even take part.

India, the world's third-biggest emitter of fossil fuel fumes, is pressing the United States and other wealthier nations to come through on billions of dollars they've promised to help poorer nations build alternatives to coal plants and energy-sucking power grids.

"Where is this money? There is no money in sight," Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said earlier this month, after a visit from Biden climate envoy John Kerry.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose nation by some assessments is the world's fourth-worst climate polluter, also accepted the U.S. invitation but is fuming over Biden calling him a "killer," as part of high tensions over Putin's aggressiveness abroad and U.S. sanctions.

And at home, political divisions exposed by Trump's presidency have left the United States weaker than it was at the 2015 Paris accord. Unable to guarantee that a different president in 2024 won't undo Biden's climate work, the Biden administration has argued that market forces — with a boost to get started — will soon make cleaner fuels and energy efficiency too cheap and consumer-friendly to trash.

Having the United States, with its influence and status, back in the climate game is important, said Lauri Myllyvirta, lead analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air in Helsinki.

But hoping the world will forget about the last four years seems like wishful thinking, he said.

"There is too much of an impulse in the U.S. to just wish away Trump's legacy and the fact that every election is now basically a coin toss between complete climate denial and whatever actions the Democrats can bring to the table," he said.

Sanctions-battered Iran, weary of pandemic, faces worst wave

By NASSER KARIMI and AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — As Iran faces what looks like its worst wave of the coronavirus pandemic yet, Tehran commuters still pour into its subway system and buses each working day, even as images of the gasping ill are repeatedly shown on state television every night.

After facing criticism for downplaying the virus last year, Iranian authorities have put partial lockdowns and other measures back in place to try and slow the virus' spread.

But in this nation of 84 million people, which faces crushing U.S. sanctions, many struggle to earn enough to feed their families. Economic pressure, coupled with the growing uncertainty over when vaccines will be widely available in the Islamic Republic, have many simply giving up on social distancing, considering it an unaffordable luxury. That has public health officials worried the worst of the pandemic still may be yet to come.

"I cannot stop working," said Mostafa Shahni, a worried 34-year-old construction worker in Tehran. "If I do, I can't bring home bread for my wife and two kids."

Iran is now reporting its highest-ever new coronavirus case numbers — more than 25,000 a day. Its daily death toll has surged to around 400, still below the grim record of 486 it reached in November.

During the peak of Iran's last surge, around 20,000 coronavirus patients were hospitalized across the country. Today, that figure has topped 40,000. The health ministry warns the number will climb to 60,000 in the coming weeks. Iran remains among the hardest-hit countries in the world and the worst-hit in the Middle East.

Across Tehran, Associated Press journalists have seen signs of the pandemic's toll.

At Tehran's Shohadaye Tajrish Hospital, orderlies pushed the bodies of two victims of the coronavirus across a parking lot to its morgue, one wrapped in white, the other in a black body bag. All of its wards on five floors of the hospital are reserved for coronavirus patients. One empty gurney held a bouquet of roses left for a recently deceased man. A heart-shaped balloon hovered over a still respirator.

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At the massive Behesht-e-Zahra cemetery, already reeling from the pandemic, workers laid cinder-block rows of new graves. Mourners in black wept at a stream of funerals. Officials plan to open a new morgue at the site to handle the wave of death, much wrought by what Iranians simply call "corona."

Saeed Khal, the director of Tehran's main cemetery, said workers buried 350 bodies there on Tuesday alone — at least 150 had died of coronavirus. The cemetery had never processed that many burials in a single day, not even during Iran's war with Iraq in the 1980s that saw 1 million people killed.

It was "one of the hardest and saddest days for my colleagues in the half-century-history of the cemetery," Khal told state TV.

So much is the influx that some burials are being delayed by a day, unusual for Iran which follows the Islamic practice of immediately burying the dead.

Outside the gates of Tehran's Imam Khomeini Hospital complex, where the capital's poor can receive free treatment at its 1,300 beds, scores crowded around one recent day as guards turned away routine cases and allowed in only test-confirmed coronavirus cases.

"They say the wards are full of corona patients," said Manijeh Taheri, who sought a regular thyroid treatment for her mother at the hospital. "I have no idea where to take her when such a huge complex has no place for my mother."

Field hospitals are being prepared in Tehran and other major cities. State TV has shown images at hospitals outside the capital with patients being treated in hallways.

"We are not going out of the red zone any time soon," Deputy Health Minister Alireza Raisi told state media.

President Hassan Rouhani blames the current surge on the fast-spreading variant of the virus first found in Britain, which the government says arrived from neighboring Iraq. Travel between the countries has been restricted since March, though people and commerce continue to cross each day. Overall, Iran has seen 2.2 million reported cases and 67,000 deaths in total.

Lawmaker Jalil Rahimi Jahanabadi blamed government mismanagement and continued U.S. sanctions for the virus' spread.

"Sanctions, challenges and wrong decisions will continue. We do not have sufficient vaccines so protect yourself and your relatives through personal health measures," he wrote on Twitter.

As of now, Iran has administered over 500,000 vaccine doses, according to the WHO. Supplies, however, remain limited. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has banned U.S. and British-made coronavirus vaccines, saying their import is "forbidden" because he does not trust those nations. Khamenei has approved the import of vaccines from "safe" countries, such as China and Russia, and has backed national efforts to produce a homegrown vaccine with help from Cuba.

But officials keep changing when they say the wider public will be vaccinated as it remains unclear when Tehran will have a promised 60 million doses of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine.

Amir Afkhami, an associate professor at George Washington University, said that over the past year, Iran's leadership could point to superpowers like the U.S. struggling to contain the virus. With vaccines rolled out in the West and economies reopening, this could become much more difficult to do, he said.

"Ultimately Iran is not self-sufficient when it comes to COVID-19 vaccine development, and it doesn't have the (intensive care unit) beds to absorb the patients it needs to so it really needs external help," Afkhami said.

Authorities across Iran have closed mosques, restaurants and parks during Ramadan, the Islamic holy fasting month being observed by Muslims around the world. An evening curfew for private cars is in place and travel between cities is banned. Parliament has been suspended for two weeks.

But the wider fatigue from the virus has seen people ignore warnings and host fast-breaking meals known as iftars indoors. Already, authorities blamed celebrations around the Iranian New Year known as Nowruz in March for contributing to this wave.

Masoud Mardani, an infectious disease specialist on Iran's COVID-19 national task force, has demanded a public curfew. But none so far has come.

DC statehood faces a crossroads with congressional vote

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Proponents of statehood for Washington, D.C., face a milestone moment in their decades-long movement to reshape the American political map.

The House will vote Thursday on legislation that would create the new state of Washington, Douglass Commonwealth, with one representative and two senators. A tiny sliver of land including the White House, the U.S. Capitol and the National Mall would remain as a federal district. The measure is expected to pass easily in the House and be sent to the Senate — where the real fight awaits.

For lifelong statehood proponents like Eleanor Holmes Norton, Washington's long-serving and nonvoting delegate in the House, the vote will be a culmination of a life's work.

"My service in the Congress has been dedicated to achieving equality for the people I represent, which only statehood can provide," Norton said at a Wednesday news conference. "My life as a third-generation Washingtonian has marched toward this milestone."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., wearing a "D.C. 51" face mask at the news conference, called Norton the "patron saint of D.C. statehood" and predicted the vote would "reaffirm the truth that all deserve a voice in our democracy."

The measure has received strong support from President Joe Biden's White House, which released a statement Tuesday calling Washington's current status "an affront to the democratic values on which our Nation was founded."

The White House statement praised Washington as worthy of statehood, with "a robust economy, a rich culture, and a diverse population of Americans from all walks of life who are entitled to full and equal participation in our democracy."

The bill is certain to face strong Republican opposition, given that the proposed 51st state would be overwhelmingly Democratic. An identical statehood bill passed the House in 2020, but it quickly died in the Republican-controlled Senate. Now, with the 2020 elections leaving Democrats in control of both chambers and the White House, Republican senators may resort to a filibuster to stymie the statehood bill.

A March hearing by the House oversight committee provided a preview of the Republican talking points, with a succession of GOP representatives claiming D.C. was unfit for statehood and calling the entire effort a cynical Democratic power play. Opponents proposed a variety of alternatives, from absolving Washingtonians of federal taxes to "retroceding" most of D.C. back into Maryland.

Another major opposition point is the contention that Congress does not have the authority to change D.C.'s status. Although every state other than the original 13 was admitted to the union via congressional vote, statehood opponents argue that D.C. is a special case that requires special steps.

Zack Smith, a legal fellow at the Heritage Institute, a conservative think tank, testified before Congress last month that since D.C.'s creation and limitations are enshrined in Article I of the Constitution, its status can only be changed through a constitutional amendment. He also argued that D.C. shouldn't be made a state at all and that the Founding Fathers "intended this to be a federal district outside the jurisdiction of any one state."

If the measure were to become law, Smith predicted a wave of lawsuits that would cloud the new state's actions and any congressional legislation it touched.

"You're basically looking at a lot of litigation," Smith told The Associated Press. "Every legislative act of this new state would be called into question. ... Things would be in a state of flux for years."

D.C. has long chafed under its relationship with Congress, which has the power to essentially veto or alter any local laws. Its population is larger than that of Wyoming or Vermont and its estimated 712,000 residents pay federal taxes, vote for president and serve in the armed forces, but they have no voting representation in Congress.

The limitations of D.C.'s reality were put in stark relief last summer during a series of angry protests over the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis in police custody and against general police brutality. After a

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night of widespread vandalism, President Donald Trump usurped D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser's authority and called in a massive multiagency federal force to downtown. The law enforcement forces cleared peaceful protesters from a public street so Trump could pose for a photo outside a church.

Ravi Perry, head of Howard University's political science department, said the events of the summer of 2020 were a crucial turning point for the perception of the D.C. statehood push, intertwining the issue with the country's ascendant racial justice movement. As recently as 2018, nationwide polls had shown the majority of Americans to be lukewarm at best on the topic, but those poll numbers changed dramatically in the past two years, he said.

"People have started to see D.C. statehood as the racial justice issue that it is," said Perry, who is also on the board of the pro-statehood group D.C. Vote. "There's been a major sea change, and a lot of that has been motivated by Trumpism."

Commonwealth panel acknowledges racism in honoring war dead

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The British government and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission have apologized after an investigation found that at least 161,000 mostly Africans and Indians who died fighting for the British Empire during World War I weren't properly honored due to "pervasive racism."

The investigation found that at least 116,000 people — and possibly as many as 350,000 — were either not commemorated by name or weren't commemorated at all, according to findings released Thursday. In addition, between 45,000 and 54,000 other casualties were "commemorated unequally."

"We apologize unreservedly for the historical wrongs found in this report and for failing to live up to founding principle of 'equality of treatment in death,'" the commission said after the findings were released.

Defense Secretary Ben Wallace apologized Thursday in the House of Commons and expressed "deep regret" for failures to properly commemorate Black and Asian service personnel who died fighting for the British Empire.

The commission appointed a committee to investigate claims of unequal treatment of war dead following a 2019 TV documentary presented by David Lammy, a lawmakers from the opposition Labour Party. The commission oversees the graves of more than 1.7 million service personnel from the former British Empire who died during the two world wars.

"No apology can ever make up for the indignity suffered by the unremembered," Lammy said. "However, this apology does offer the opportunity for us as a nation to work through this ugly part of our history — and properly pay our respects to every soldier who has sacrificed their life for us."

Professor David Olusoga described the failure to properly mark the soldiers' sacrifice as "one of the biggest scandals I've ever come across as an historian." He told the BBC that the most appalling war Britain has ever faced and that part of its impact was "the power of the way those who fell were memorialized."

"When it came to men who were black and brown and Asian and African, it is not equal, particularly the Africans who have been treated in a way that is, as I said, it's apartheid in death," he said. "It is an absolute scandal."

Low on beds, oxygen, India adds global high 314K virus cases

By ASHOK SHARMA Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India reported a global record of more than 314,000 new infections Thursday as a grim coronavirus surge in the world's second-most populous country sends more and more sick people into a fragile health care system critically short of hospital beds and oxygen.

The 314,835 infections added in the past 24 hours raise India's total past 15.9 million cases since the pandemic began. It's the second-highest total in the world next to the United States. India has nearly 1.4 billion people.

Fatalities rose by 2,104 in the past 24 hours, raising India's overall death toll to 184,657, the Health

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Ministry said.

A large number of hospitals are reporting acute shortages of beds and medicine and are running on dangerously low levels of oxygen.

The New Delhi High Court on Wednesday ordered the government to divert oxygen from industrial use to hospitals to save people's lives. "You can't have people die because there is no oxygen. Beg, borrow or steal, it is a national emergency," the judges said, responding to a petition by a New Delhi hospital seeking the court's intervention.

The government is rushing oxygen tankers to replenish supplies to hospitals.

Indian Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said on Thursday that "demand and supply is being monitored round the clock." He said in a tweet that to address the exponential spike in demand, the government has increased the quota of oxygen for the seven worst-hit states.

Lockdowns and strict curbs have brought pain, fear and agony to many people in New Delhi and other cities.

In scenes familiar across the country, ambulances are rush from one hospital to another, trying to find an empty bed. Grieving relatives line up outside crematoriums where the number of dead bodies has jumped several times.

"I get numerous calls every day from patients desperate for a bed. The demand is far too much than the supply," said Dr. Sanjay Gururaj, a doctor at Bengaluru-based Shanti Hospital and Research Center.

"I try to find beds for patients every day, and it's been incredibly frustrating to not be able to help them. In the last week, three patients of mine have died at home because they were unable to get beds. As a doctor, it's an awful feeling," Gururaj said.

Yogesh Dixit, a resident of northern Uttar Pradesh state, said earlier this week that he had to buy two oxygen cylinders at 12,000 rupees (\$160) each, more than twice the normal cost, for his ailing father because the state-run hospital in Lucknow had run out of supplies.

He bought two "because the doctors can ask for another oxygen cylinder at any time," he said, adding that he had to sell his wife's jewelry to meet the cost.

The main cremation ground at Lucknow, the state capital, received nearly 200 bodies on Sunday. "The bodies were everywhere, they were being cremated on sidewalks meant for walking. I have never such a flow of dead bodies in my life," said Shekhar Chakraborty, 68.

In Kanpur, also in Uttar Pradesh, 35 temporary platforms have been set up on Bithoor-Sidhnath Ghat along the Ganges River to cremate bodies.

The Health Ministry said that of the country's total production of 7,500 metric tons (8,300 U.S. tons) of oxygen per day, 6,600 metric tons (7,275 U.S. tons) was being allocated for medical use.

It also said that 75 railroad coaches in the Indian capital have been turned into hospitals providing an additional 1,200 beds for COVID-19 patients.

The Times of India newspaper said that the previous highest daily case count of 307,581 was reported in the U.S. on Jan. 8.

Floyd killing has prompted state reforms, but not everywhere

By PAUL J. WEBER and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — George Floyd's killing last year and the protests that followed led to a wave of police reforms in dozens of states, from changes in use-of-force policies to greater accountability for officers. At the same time, lawmakers in a handful of states have had success addressing racial inequities.

But those changes mask a more complicated legislative legacy to a movement that many hoped would produce generational change: Other states have done little or nothing around police and racial justice reforms, and several have moved in the opposite direction.

In Texas, where Floyd was raised and laid to rest, state Sen. Royce West this year helped introduce the "George Floyd Act" to overhaul policing. But the bill has languished for weeks after getting one hearing, and West, one of the state's most prominent Black lawmakers, acknowledges it faces long odds in the

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Republican-dominated Legislature.

"We have members of the Senate that just refuse to pass a bill with his name on it," he said.

He now hopes to take a different approach in hopes of getting a win — stand-alone bills without Floyd's name that would make piecemeal changes such as banning police chokeholds.

"You have to ask yourself whether or not you want symbolism over substance," West said. "And so if you don't have the votes to pass a bill named after George Floyd, then we got to make certain that we do some single-shot bills."

Across the country, the murder conviction Tuesday of a white Minneapolis police officer who held a knee to Floyd's neck for 9 1/2 minutes has renewed calls for policing reforms and legislative action to address long-standing racial inequities.

They will test over how far states will go in addressing police brutality and systemic racism in everything from education to health care to housing. Some seized on the verdict to promote legislative action or calls for change.

On Wednesday, Utah Gov. Spencer Cox, a Republican, signed a policing bill that will require officers to report any use of force and when they point a weapon at someone. Another GOP governor, Ohio's Mike DeWine, announced a legislative proposal to boost police oversight. And in Nebraska, the Legislature advanced a bill requiring greater law enforcement accountability and training, especially on how to de-escalate conflicts.

Ahead of the verdict Tuesday, members of California's Legislative Black Caucus gathered outside the Capitol to highlight police and criminal justice reform bills they hope to advance. Several of the proposals, including the creation of a system to decertify officers accused of misconduct, failed last year.

"The time is now for us to act," said state Sen. Steven Bradford, a Democrat who chairs the caucus. "No more kneeling and social media posts -- we've had enough of the performative acts. Real police reform is needed now."

Over the past year, at least 36 states have signed into law measures that would reform some police practices, according to an Associated Press analysis of data from the National Conference of State Legislatures. The new laws come from at least 1,800 police reform bills filed in statehouses across the U.S. since Floyd's killing, with the majority being introduced this year.

The proposals include statewide bans on chokeholds, limits on no-knock warrants, ending qualified immunity for officers and restrictions on use of tear gas and other crowd-control techniques. Statehouses also have focused on changing how fatal police shootings are investigated.

Earlier this month, Maryland lawmakers overrode the governor's veto to repeal what had been the nation's first Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights, replacing those protections with procedures that give civilians a role in the disciplinary process. Washington lawmakers, over some objections from law enforcement unions and Republicans, are moving ahead with nearly a dozen bills overhauling police tactics, use of force and oversight.

Many of the successful bills had bipartisan support, but sweeping reforms have been more difficult, even in heavily Democratic states, in part because of opposition from police unions. Several states have moved in the opposite direction, expanding the rights of officers or passing legislation that targets protesters like those involved in last summer's demonstrations.

In Oklahoma, where proposals to ban the use of police chokeholds never received a hearing in the GOP-controlled Legislature, a new law that targets protests grants immunity to motorists who kill or injure rioters. Other legislation targeting protesters has advanced in Arizona, Florida and Tennessee.

"These anti-protest bills were flying off the floor," said state Rep. Regina Goodwin, a Democrat from Tulsa. "What that says to me is that Oklahoma is either not aware of the critical issues that America faces as it relates to racism and police abuse, or folks are looking the other way because they can."

In a reaction to calls for redirecting some police funding to social services, Georgia's Republican-majority Legislature passed a bill aimed at preventing cities and counties from cutting police budgets by more than 5% a year, after Atlanta and another local government debated but rejected sharper cuts.

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One of the most hotly contested bills in the Republican-controlled New Hampshire Legislature this year would prohibit teaching about systemic racism and sexism in public schools and state-funded programs. Under the so-called "divisive topics" bill, which has already passed one chamber, prohibited subjects include the notion that New Hampshire or the U.S. are fundamentally racist or sexist and that individuals are inherently oppressive due to their race or gender.

"If that's the assumption we are going to make as a society, then we are never going to get to unity," said Republican state Rep. Keith Ammon.

Democratic state Rep. Latha Mangipudi called the bill a blow to diversity and democracy: "This refusal of truth is insidious because it denies the reality we see in our own lives, that we experience ourselves, that I have experienced," she told WMUR-TV earlier this month.

In states with divided governments, Democratic governors have had limited success in getting specific changes but have faced opposition to more wide-ranging police and racial equity reforms.

In North Carolina, the Republican-controlled legislature is expected to advance measures focused on removing problem officers and helping police with mental health needs. But lawmakers will likely avoid the larger recommendations from a task force commissioned last year by Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper to address racial inequities in policing, criminal justice and the court system.

Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers, a Democrat, on Wednesday ordered the Wisconsin State Patrol and other state law enforcement agencies to update their use-of-force policies to bar chokeholds, unless they are a last resort. He acted after the Republican-controlled Legislature ignored a police reform package he proposed last year after Floyd's killing.

In Minnesota, Democratic Gov. Tim Walz said after Tuesday's verdicts that he's ready to go on the offensive if there is no progress toward racial equity and police accountability. He said Minnesota's politically divided Legislature gives the state a "golden opportunity" to show the world "that equity, decency and humanity should know no political boundary."

"I will burn my political capital on this," he said.

In Biden climate show, watch for cajoling, conflict, pathos

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — It won't rival Netflix for drama, but 40 world leaders will try to save the planet from ever-worsening global warming in a two-day climate summit livestreamed for binge viewing.

While there will be many faces on screen, this will clearly be President Joe Biden's show.

Biden will convene the summit on Thursday, and what he says will call the shots for what's to come. He's trying to show that the United States is again serious about cutting pollution of heat-trapping gases with a new American goal for reducing emissions. Then he'll try to cajole other nations to ratchet up the pollution-cutting promises they made in 2015's Paris climate agreement. All of it via virtual diplomacy.

Along the way, there may be intrigue, potential conflicts and pathos. A viewer's guide:

HOW TO WATCH

All sessions will be livestreamed on the White House and State Department channels. Sessions are scheduled to run from 8 a.m. EDT to midday on Thursday and Friday.

THE THEME

It's simple: The U.S. is returning to the climate fight and wants to lead again.

After the United States helped negotiate the last two climate agreements — 1997's Kyoto Protocol and 2015's Paris accord — Presidents George W. Bush and Donald Trump backed out. The United States last year became the only country to leave the Paris deal.

For the Biden administration, this summit is "their version of 'we're baaack,'" said Henry "Jake" Jacoby, co-founder of the MIT Center for Global Change Science. "And they want to do that in a dramatic way."

That dramatic way is to announce one of the world's most ambitious national goals for cutting the gases that cause climate change: cutting them between 50% and 52% by 2030 compared with 2005.

"That is quite a welcome message after the four years we painfully witnessed," said Christiana Figueres,

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the former U.N. climate chief, who helped forge the Paris accord. "The fact that the United States is back is very important."

WHY WATCH

Human-caused climate change is getting worse around the globe. On average about 23 million people a year are displaced by weather-related storms, fires and floods, according to the World Meteorological Organization. Hundreds of billions of tons of snow and ice are lost each year. Sea level rise is accelerating.

In Paris, world leaders set two goals to limit global warming to 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit (2 degrees Celsius) and if possible to limit it to no more than 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit (1.5 degrees Celsius) compared with pre-industrial temperatures. However, the world has already warmed almost 2.2 degrees Fahrenheit (1.2 degrees Celsius).

"We are on the verge of the abyss," U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Monday.

Leaders still hope that somehow the more stringent Paris goal can be met even as scientists say it is less and less likely.

The leaders attending the summit represent "the group that will make it possible that we keep the 1.5-degree goal within reach," U.N. climate chief Patricia Espinosa told The Associated Press.

THE KEY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Paris agreement calls for ratcheting up 6-year-old commitments to cut carbon emissions with tougher goals aimed at 2030.

Biden's new target aims for cutting the country's greenhouse gas emissions from 50% to 52%, aiming to achieve it by emphasizing decarbonization across the government and economy.

That would put "the U.S. at the top of the pack," said former Obama White House environment official Kate Larsen, a director at the private research Rhodium Group. It would be about the same as the European Union but behind the United Kingdom.

After the U.S. announces its target, other nations will be invited to present tougher targets.

FOLLOW THE MONEY

Just as important is money, Espinosa said. That's because poorer nations, which are using polluting fossil fuels to develop, need financial help to switch to cleaner but more expensive fuels. The Paris agreement commits richer nations, like the United States, to spend billions of dollars to help poorer nations because it makes the world cleaner for everyone, she said.

Years ago, the developed world committed to \$100 billion in public and private financial help, much of which hasn't been paid. Eventually that needs to increase to \$1 trillion a year because that's how much it will take to get the world to decarbonize and help poorer nations adapt to rising sea levels, worsening storms and other climate harms, former climate chief Figueres said.

The U.S. promised \$3 billion in aid in Paris but paid only the first \$1 billion. Then Trump canceled the rest. Biden has put \$1.2 billion in his latest budget proposal.

"The U.S. is way behind on its commitment because of those four Trump years," Figueres said. "And needs to play catch up, not on its own, but hand-in-hand with all of the other industrialized nations."

Also look for private companies to contribute.

WHOM TO WATCH

This is Biden's show, and he will kick it off, formally announcing the 50% to 52% emissions cut. He'll be followed by the leaders of the world's biggest economies, which spew 80% of the greenhouse gases.

The U.S., which has put the most greenhouse gases in the atmosphere over decades, and current top carbon-polluting nation China, last week issued a joint statement saying they're working together to be more ambitious on climate. Chinese President Xi Jinping will deliver an important speech, the government announced. Also keep an eye on the leader of India, the third-biggest emitter.

Then there's the human factor. The tighter Paris goal of 1.5 degrees Celsius is because small island nations, such as the Marshall Islands and Jamaica, said further warming and sea level rise could wash them out of existence. Some of those leaders will talk at the summit.

"The message they will bring humanizes climate change," Figueres said. "Let's not only talk about giga-

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tons (of emissions), let's talk about human impact today, not just in the future."

ALSO STARRING

Others to closely watch: leaders of Japan and South Korea, who are being pressured to stop financing new coal power plants in other countries.

Brazil President Jair Bolsonaro will be on the spot because his country's 2030 goal is weaker than the nation's 2025 goal and there's pressure to stop Amazon deforestation. And Russia's Vladimir Putin, who has clashed with Biden, will also appear.

But there's more. Pope Francis will speak on Thursday, while Bill Gates and Michael Bloomberg are featured on Friday. Mayors, governors, financial leaders, numerous Biden appointees plus Vice President Kamala Harris and indigenous and youth activists will also get screen time.

THE SEQUEL

This all leads to formal climate negotiations in November in Glasgow, Scotland, which is the big follow-up to the Paris agreement. The United Nations is counting on nearly 200 nations to announce tougher emission cut targets before that meeting, which will hash out still lingering issues.

"This week is getting the ball rolling," said Nigel Purvis, a former State Department climate negotiator in Democratic and Republican administration.

Indonesia looking for submarine that may be too deep to help

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesia's navy ships on Thursday were intensely searching for a submarine that likely fell too deep to retrieve, making survival chances for the 53 people on board slim. Authorities said oxygen in the submarine would run out by early Saturday.

The diesel-powered KRI Nanggala 402 was participating in a training exercise Wednesday when it missed a scheduled reporting call. Officials reported an oil slick and the smell of diesel fuel near the starting position of its last dive, about 96 kilometers (60 miles) north of the resort island of Bali, though there has been no conclusive evidence that they are linked to the submarine.

"Hopefully we can rescue them before the oxygen has run out" at 3 a.m. on Saturday, Indonesia's navy chief of staff, Adm. Yudo Margono, told reporters.

He said rescuers found an unidentified object with high magnetism in the area and that officials hope it's the submarine.

The navy believes the submarine sank to a depth of 600-700 meters (2,000-2,300 feet) — much deeper than its collapse depth estimated at 200 meters (656 feet) by a firm that refitted the vessel in 2009-2012.

Ahn Guk-hyeon, an official from South Korea's Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering, said the submarine would collapse if it goes deeper than around 200 meters because of pressure. He said his company upgraded much of the Indonesian submarine's internal structures and systems but it lacks latest information about the vessel.

Frank Owen, secretary of the Submarine Institute of Australia, also said the submarine could be at too great a depth for a rescue team to operate.

"Most rescue systems are really only rated to about 600 meters (1,969 feet)," he said. "They can go deeper than that because they will have a safety margin built into the design, but the pumps and other systems that are associated with that may not have the capacity to operate. So they can survive at that depth, but not necessarily operate."

Owen, a former submariner who developed an Australian submarine rescue system, said the Indonesian vessel was not fitted with a rescue seat around an escape hatch designed for underwater rescues. He said a rescue submarine would make a waterproof connection to a disabled submarine with a so-called skirt fitted over the rescue seat so that the hatch can be opened without the disabled submarine filling with water.

Owen said the submarine could be recovered from 500 meters (1,640 feet) without any damage but couldn't say if it would have imploded at 700 meters (2,297 feet).

In November 2017, an Argentine submarine went missing with 44 crew members in the South Atlantic,

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almost a year before its wreckage was found at a depth of 800 meters (2,625 feet). In 2019, a fire broke out on one of the Russian navy's deep-sea research submersibles, killing 14 sailors.

Indonesia's military said Thursday that more than 20 navy ships, two submarines and five aircraft were searching an area where the submarine was last detected. A hydro-oceanographic survey ship equipped with underwater detection capabilities also was on its way to the site around the oil spills.

Margono said the oil slick may have been caused by a crack in the submarine's tank after the vessel sank. Neighboring countries are rushing to join the complex operation.

Rescue ships from Singapore and Malaysia are expected to arrive between Saturday and Monday. The Indonesian military said Australia, the United States, Germany, France, Russia, India and Turkey have also offered assistance. South Korea said it has also offered help.

"The news of the missing submarine is deeply concerning," Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne said during a visit to New Zealand. "We will provide any assistance that we can. There's no question that submarine search and rescues are very complex."

Australian Defense Minister Peter Dutton called the incident "a terrible tragedy." He told Sydney Radio 2GB that fact that the submarine is "in a very deep part of waters" makes it "very difficult for the recovery or for location."

"Our fervent prayers and hopes go out to the crew of KRI Nanggala, for their safety and resilience," Singapore's Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen wrote on Facebook.

Indonesia's navy said an electrical failure may have occurred during the dive, causing the submarine to lose control and become unable to undertake emergency procedures that would have allowed it to resurface. It was rehearsing for a missile-firing exercise on Thursday, which was eventually canceled.

The German-built submarine, which has been in service in Indonesia since 1981, was carrying 49 crew members, its commander and three gunners, the Indonesian Defense Ministry said. It had maintenance and overhaul in Germany, Indonesia and most recently in South Korea, from 2007 to 2012.

The world's largest archipelago nation with more than 17,000 islands has faced growing challenges to its maritime claims in recent years, including numerous incidents involving Chinese vessels near the Natuna islands.

Last year, President Joko Widodo reaffirmed the country's sovereignty during a visit to the islands at the edge of the South China Sea, one of the busiest sea lanes where China is embroiled in territorial disputes with its smaller neighbors.

Sheriff: Deputy fatally shot Black man while serving warrant

By GARY D. ROBERTSON and DENISE LAVOIE Associated Press

ELIZABETH CITY, N.C. (AP) — A North Carolina deputy shot and killed a Black man while serving a search warrant Wednesday, authorities said, spurring an outcry from community members who demanded law enforcement accountability and the immediate release of body camera footage.

Authorities wouldn't provide details of the shooting but an eyewitness said that Andrew Brown Jr. was shot while trying to drive away, and that deputies fired at him multiple times. The car skidded out of Brown's yard and eventually hit a tree, said Demetria Williams, who lives on the same street.

Williams said after hearing one gunshot, she ran outside, where she saw other shots being fired at the car. "When they opened the door he was already dead," Williams told The Associated Press. "He was slumped over." She said officers tried to perform chest compressions on him.

A car authorities removed from the scene appeared to have multiple bullet holes and a broken rear windshield.

The Pasquotank County Sheriff's deputy was placed on leave pending a review by the State Bureau of Investigation, Sheriff Tommy Wooten II said at a news conference. Court records show Brown was 42 years old and had a history of drug charges and a misdemeanor drug possession conviction.

Dozens of people gathered at the scene of the shooting in Elizabeth City, a municipality of about 18,000 people 170 miles (274 km) northeast of Raleigh, where they expressed their anger and rallied around

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Brown's family members. A large crowd later stood outside City Hall while the City Council held an emergency meeting, some holding signs proclaiming "Black Lives Matter" and "Stop killing unarmed Black Men." As the evening wore on, a group gathered in the parking lot of the sheriff's office and a crowd that grew to more than 200 blocked traffic on a main thoroughfare of the city, forcing cars to turn around.

"The police didn't have to shoot my baby," said Martha McCullen, an aunt of Brown who said she raised him after his parents died. McCullen stood on the stoop of Brown's rental home, her eyes moist with emotion.

"Andrew Brown was a good person," she said. "He was about to get his kids back. He was a good father. Now his kids won't never see him again."

Wooten said the deputy shot Brown about 8:30 a.m. The deputy was wearing an active body camera at the time of the shooting, said the sheriff, who declined to identify the officer or say how many shots he fired, citing a pending review by the State Bureau of Investigation. Wooten also did not say what the warrant was for.

Williams, the eyewitness who also was among those demonstrating outside City Hall on Wednesday evening, said Brown, who was known by neighbors as "Drew," wasn't a violent person.

"I didn't believe that (officers) really did that because he wasn't a threat to them. He was driving off even though he was trying to get away," Williams said.

During the emergency meeting, Black members of the City Council spoke emotionally about the fears of their community amid multiple police shootings across the country and implored investigators to remain transparent.

"I'm afraid as a Black man," an emotional Councilman Gabriel Adkins told his colleagues. "I'm afraid that I may be the next one that my family might have to see on the news that I was gunned down."

Adkins said businesses in the neighborhood of the shooting had begun boarding up their windows in anticipation of violence.

"Not only do we need transparency ... we need accountability," said City Councilman Darius Horton, who called for the immediate release of bodycam footage, the search warrant and a speedy explanation of what led to the shooting. "We need answers. ... Let's not hide behind anything."

Others councilors urged the community to remain calm until all of the facts about the shooting are known.

Brown's grandmother, Lydia Brown, and his aunt Clarissa Brown Gibson told The Associated Press that they learned about his death through a TV news report. Both said they want the shooting thoroughly investigated.

"I am very upset. Andrew was a good person," Lydia Brown said. The deputy "didn't have to shoot him like that."

Clarissa Brown Gibson said: "We want to know if he was served with a warrant, why the shooting over a warrant?"

Among those who gathered at the scene of the shooting was Keith Rivers, president of the Pasquotank County chapter of the NAACP.

"When is it going to stop? We just got a verdict yesterday," Rivers said in a phone interview, referring to the guilty verdicts handed down Tuesday in the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in the death of George Floyd. "Is it open season now? At some point, it has to stop. We have to start holding the people in charge accountable."

The State Bureau of Investigation will turn the findings of its review over to District Attorney Andrew Womble, who pledged a thorough and deliberate inquiry.

"What we are looking for at this time will be accurate answers and not fast answers," Womble told a news conference. "We're going to wait for the full and complete investigation ... and we'll review that and make any determinations that we deem appropriate at that time. This will not be a rush to judgment."

Elizabeth City is located near where the Pasquotank River empties into the Albemarle Sound. It is home to a U.S. Coast Guard air station, Elizabeth City State University and a medical center, all of which support numerous jobs. The city's population is more than 50% Black and about 40% white, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Nearly 23% of residents live in poverty.

Missile from Syria lands in Israel, triggers Israel strike

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — A Syrian anti-aircraft missile landed in southern Israel early Thursday, setting off air raid sirens near the country's top-secret nuclear reactor, the Israeli military said. In response, it said it attacked the missile launcher and air-defense systems in neighboring Syria.

Israeli media later described the Syrian missile as an "errant" projectile, not a deliberate attack deep inside Israel. In recent years, Israel has repeatedly launched air strikes at Syria, including at military targets linked to foes Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah militia, both allies of Syrian President Bashar Assad. Such strikes routinely draw Syrian anti-aircraft fire. Thursday's exchange was unusual because the Syrian projectile landed deep inside Israel.

Syria's state news agency SANA said the exchange began with an Israeli air strike on Dumeir, a suburb of the capital of Damascus. Dumeir is believed to house Syrian army installations and batteries as well as bases and weapons depots belonging to Iran-backed militias. SANA said four soldiers were wounded.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitoring group based in Britain that tracks Syria's civil war, said the Israeli strikes hit an air defense base belonging to the Syrian military and destroyed air defense batteries in the area. It said the Syrian military fired surface-to-air missiles in response.

Syrian media made no mention of an anti-aircraft missile landing deep inside Israel.

The Israeli military described the projectile that landed near the nuclear site as a surface-to-air missile, which is usually used for air defense against warplanes or other missiles. That could suggest the Syrian missile had targeted Israeli warplanes but missed and flew off errantly. However, Dimona, the Negev desert town where Israel's nuclear reactor is located, is some 300 kilometers (185 miles) south of Damascus, a long range for an errantly fired surface-to-air missile.

The Israeli army said it had deployed a missile defense system to intercept the projectile and that there had been no damage. The Israeli military later said in a statement that an initial investigation indicated that the Syrian missile was not intercepted.

The air raid sirens were sounded in Abu Krinat, a village just a few kilometers (miles) from Dimona. Explosions heard across Israel might have been the air-defense systems.

Apparent missile fragments were found in a swimming pool in Ashalim, a community approximately 20 miles (32 kilometers) southwest of Dimona. Israeli troops arrived at the scene and collected the fragments.

The military said that in response to the incoming missile, it launched an air strike at the battery that launched the anti-aircraft missile and other surface-to-air batteries in Syria.

The exchange between Israel and Syria comes against the backdrop of growing tensions between Israel and Iran, a key ally of Syria. Iran, which maintains troops and proxies in Syria, has accused Israel of a series of attacks on its nuclear facilities, including sabotage at its Natanz nuclear facility on April 11, and vowed revenge. It also threatened to complicate U.S.-led attempts to revive the international nuclear deal with Iran.

EXPLAINER: Why India is shattering global infection records

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL and KRUTIKA PATHI Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — The world's fastest pace of spreading infections and the highest daily increase in coronavirus cases are pushing India further into a deepening and deadly health care crisis.

India is massive — it's the world's second-most populous country with nearly 1.4 billion people — and its size presents extraordinary challenges to fighting COVID-19.

Some 2.7 million vaccine doses are given daily, but that's still less than 10% of its people who've gotten their first shot. Overall, India has confirmed 15.9 million cases of infection, the second highest after the United States, and 184,657 deaths.

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The latest surge has driven India's fragile health systems to the breaking point: Understaffed hospitals are overflowing with patients. Medical oxygen is in short supply. Intensive care units are full. Nearly all ventilators are in use, and the dead are piling up at crematoriums and graveyards.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Authorities were lulled into believing the worst was behind them when cases started to recede in September.

Cases dipped for 30 consecutive weeks before starting to rise in mid-February, and experts say the country failed to seize the opportunity to augment healthcare infrastructure and aggressively vaccinate.

"We were so close to success," said Bhramar Mukherjee, a biostatistician at the University of Michigan who has been tracking India's pandemic.

Despite warnings and advice that precautions were needed, authorities were unprepared for the magnitude of the surge, said K Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India.

Critics have pointed to the government deciding to not pause Hindu religious festivals or elections, and experts say that these may have exacerbated the surge.

"Authorities across India, without exception, put public health priorities on the back burner," Reddy said.

Consequently, India's 7-day rolling average of confirmed daily new cases has risen over the past two weeks from 6.75 new cases per 100,000 people on April 6 to 18.04 new cases per 100,000 people on April 20, possibly driven by new variants of the virus, including one that was first detected in India, experts say.

India's top health official Rajesh Bhushan would not speculate Wednesday why authorities could have been better prepared, saying: "Today is not the time to go into why did we miss, or did we miss, did we prepare?"

WHY IS INDIA'S HEALTH SYSTEM COLLAPSING?

India only spends a fraction of its gross domestic product on its health system, lower than most major economies.

As the virus took hold last year, India imposed a harsh, nationwide lockdown for months to prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed. This brought terrible hardship to millions, but also bought time to implement measures to plug critical gaps, like hiring additional health care workers on short-term contracts, establishing field hospitals and installing hospital beds in banquet halls.

But authorities didn't take a long-term view of the pandemic, said Dr. Vineeta Bal, who studies immune systems at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research in Pune city.

Suggestions for permanent improvements like adding capacity to existing hospitals or hiring more epidemiologists to help track the virus were widely ignored, she said. Now authorities are scrambling to resuscitate many emergency measures that had been ended once the numbers fell.

A year ago, India was able to avoid the shortages of medical oxygen that plagued Latin America and Africa after it converted industrial oxygen manufacturing systems into a medical-grade network.

But many facilities went back to supplying oxygen to industries and now several Indian states face such shortages that the Health Ministry has urged hospitals to implement rationing.

The government in October began building new plants to produce medical oxygen, but now, some six months later, it remains unclear whether any have come on line, with the Health Ministry saying they were being "closely reviewed for early completion."

Tanks of oxygen are being shuttled across the country to hotspots to keep up with the demand, and several state governments have alleged that many have been intercepted by other states en route to be used to meet local needs.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

India is faced with the massive challenge of trying to prevent its health care system from further collapse until enough people can be vaccinated to significantly reduce the flow of patients.

The good news is that India is a major vaccine producer, but even after halting large exports of vaccines in March to divert them to domestic use, there are still questions of whether manufactures can produce enough fast enough.

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"Vaccination is one way to slow down the spread — but this really depends on the speed and availability of the shots," said Reddy of the Public Health Foundation.

Already several states have said they have shortages in vaccines — although the federal government denies it.

India said last week it would allow the use of all COVID-19 shots that have been greenlit by the World Health Organization or regulators in the United States, Europe, Britain or Japan.

On Monday, it said it would soon expand its vaccination program from people aged 45 to include all adults, some 900 million people — well more than the entire population of the entire European Union and United States combined.

Meanwhile, Reddy said some states have had to implement new lockdowns but long-term, it was up to individuals as well to do their part.

"As a society, it's crucial that we maintain public health measures like masking, physical distancing and avoiding crowds," he said.

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Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, April 22, the 112th day of 2021. There are 253 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 22, 2005, Zacarias Moussaoui (zak-uh-REE'-uhs moo-SOW'-ee) pleaded guilty in a federal courtroom outside Washington, D.C. to conspiring with the Sept. 11 hijackers to kill Americans. (Moussaoui is serving a life prison sentence.)

On this date:

In 1864, Congress authorized the use of the phrase "In God We Trust" on U.S. coins.

In 1889, the Oklahoma Land Rush began at noon as thousands of homesteaders staked claims.

In 1898, with the United States and Spain on the verge of war, the U.S. Navy began blockading Cuban ports. Congress authorized creation of the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, also known as the "Rough Riders."

In 1915, the first full-scale use of deadly chemicals in warfare took place as German forces unleashed chlorine gas against Allied troops at the start of the Second Battle of Ypres (EE'-preh) in Belgium during World War I; thousands of soldiers are believed to have died.

In 1937, thousands of college students in New York City staged a "peace strike" opposing American entry into another possible world conflict.

In 1952, an atomic test in Nevada became the first nuclear explosion shown on live network television as a 31-kiloton bomb was dropped from a B-50 Superfortress.

In 1954, the publicly televised sessions of the Senate Army-McCarthy hearings began.

In 1970, millions of Americans concerned about the environment observed the first "Earth Day."

In 1994, Richard M. Nixon, the 37th president of the United States, died at a New York hospital four days after suffering a stroke; he was 81.

In 2000, in a dramatic pre-dawn raid, armed immigration agents seized Elian Gonzalez, the Cuban boy at the center of a custody dispute, from his relatives' home in Miami; Elian was reunited with his father at Andrews Air Force Base near Washington.

In 2004, Army Ranger Pat Tillman, who'd traded in a multi-million-dollar NFL contract to serve in Afghanistan, was killed by friendly fire; he was 27.

In 2015, a federal judge in Philadelphia approved a settlement agreement expected to cost the NFL \$1 billion over 65 years to resolve thousands of concussion lawsuits. A federal appeals court in San Francisco overturned home run leader Barry Bonds' obstruction of justice conviction, ruling 10-1 that his meander-

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ing answer before a grand jury in 2003 was not material to the government's investigation into illegal steroids distribution.

Ten years ago: Syrian security forces fired at protesters, killing at least 75 people around the country. A tornado ripped through Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, causing significant damage to the C Concourse.

Five years ago: Leaders from 175 countries signed the Paris Agreement on climate change at the United Nations as the landmark deal took a key step toward entering into force years ahead of schedule.

One year ago: Tyson Foods suspended operations at a pork plant in Waterloo, Iowa, that was blamed for fueling a massive coronavirus outbreak in the region; the plant was critical to the nation's pork supply. (At least three workers at the plant died after contracting the virus, which infected more than 1,000 other workers there.) Federal officials said two pet cats in New York state had tested positive for the coronavirus, marking the first confirmed cases in companion animals in the United States; the cats had mild respiratory illnesses. The Boston Red Sox were stripped of their second-round pick in the 2020 amateur draft for sign-stealing in 2018; former Red Sox manager Alex Cora was suspended through the 2020 postseason for his role in the Astros' sign-stealing operation. Actor Shirley Knight, a two-time Oscar nominee, died in Texas at the age of 83.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Estelle Harris is 93. Actor Jack Nicholson is 84. Singer Mel Carter is 82. Author Janet Evanovich is 78. Country singer Cleve Francis is 76. Movie director John Waters is 75. Singer Peter Frampton is 71. Rock singer-musician Paul Carrack (Mike and the Mechanics; Squeeze) is 70. Actor Joseph Bottoms is 67. Actor Ryan Stiles is 62. Baseball manager Terry Francona is 62. Comedian and entertainment executive Byron Allen is 60. Actor Chris Makepeace is 57. Rock musician Fletcher Dragge (DRAH'-guh) is 55. Actor Jeffrey Dean Morgan is 55. Actor Sheryl Lee is 54. Actor-talk show host Sherri Shepherd is 54. Country singer-musician Heath Wright (Ricochet) is 54. Country singer Kellie Coffey is 50. Actor Eric Mabius is 50. Actor Ingo Rademacher (RAH'-deh-mah-ker) is 50. Rock musician Shavo Odadjian (System of a Down) is 47. Rock singer-musician Daniel Johns (Silverchair) is 42. Actor Malcolm Barrett is 41. Actor Cassidy Freeman is 39. Actor Michelle Ryan is 37. Actor Zack Gottsagen is 36. Actor Amber Heard is 35. Singer-songwriter BC Jean (Alexander Jean) is 34. Drummer Tripp Howell (LANCO) is 32. Rapper/singer Machine Gun Kelly is 31.