

# Groton Daily Independent

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**PROM GRAND MARCH**

On GDILIVE.COM  
Saturday, April 24, 2021, 7:00 p.m.  
Groton Area High School Gym

**PRINCESS PROM**

On GDILIVE.COM  
Sunday, April 25, 2021, 4:30 p.m.  
Groton Area High School Gym



**OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton  
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

## Interstate 29 Two-way Traffic to Begin

WATERTOWN, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Transportation says crews have begun construction on the northbound lanes of Interstate 29 from mile marker 224 at the Peever Exit to mile marker 239, north of Sisseton.

The crews have installed traffic control signs and delineator tubes on the south bound lanes for the two-way traffic begins Monday, April 26, 2021.

Work on the project includes overlaying the existing pavement and improving bridge decks and guardrails on the northbound lanes. This project also includes an asphalt overlay of S.D. Highway 10 at Exit 232.

The prime contractor on this \$17 million project is Michels Corporation of Brownsville, Wisconsin. The project is scheduled to be complete by November, 2021

For complete road construction information, visit <https://sd511.org> or dial 511.

## Governor Noem Joins Lawsuit against President Biden over 'Social Cost of Carbon'

PIERRE, SD – Yesterday, Governor Kristi Noem joined Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry and 8 other state attorneys general in suing to prevent the Biden Administration from establishing a damages value to the "social cost of greenhouse gases," which would kill thousands of American jobs and impose more burdens and harms to the American people.

"After a year of misguided lockdowns in response to the COVID pandemic, the last thing that America needs is more burdensome regulation that will cripple our economy," said Governor Kristi Noem. "President Biden's attempt to implement a 'social cost of greenhouse gases' value will result in government sticking their hands into virtually every aspect of our day-to-day lives. With this lawsuit, we are committed to fighting off such unconstitutional overreach."

In a recent Executive Order, President Biden established a "working group" to establish a damages value based upon global environmental damages from climate changes. This value would be called the "social cost of carbon," as well as methane and nitrous oxide. Carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide are by-products of everyday activities in America, because they are among the most common and prevalent by-products of human economic activity. The President further required federal agencies to immediately begin applying such value in regulatory actions and other decision-making.

The Biden executive fiat has wide-ranging impacts on decisions made by virtually every federal agency, including the Departments of Interior, Commerce, Energy, Transportation, Environmental Protection, Defense, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services and the U.S. Treasury. These values have the ability to fundamentally transform the entire regulatory structure of the federal government, which would have devastating impacts on the lives of everyday Americans.

In addition to Louisiana and South Dakota – the following states joined in the lawsuit filed this morning in the United States District Court for the Western District of Louisiana: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Texas, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

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## Death Notice: Dolores Bailey

Mass of Christian Burial for Dolores (Dee) Baily, 91, of Groton will be 10:30 a.m. Thursday, May 6, 2021 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Groton. Father Tom Hartman will officiate. Inurnment will follow on Friday at the Mayfield Cemetery, rural Irene at 1:30 p.m.

Dolores passed away Monday, March 23rd, 2020 at Avantara Groton.

## GFP Asks Public to Leave Animals Alone

PIERRE, S.D. - South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) is reminding people that it is important to leave wild animals alone.

"Every spring and summer, people find young wild animals that appear to be alone or orphaned," said GFP senior wildlife biologist, Eileen Dowd Stukel. "The vast majority of the time, these animals are intentionally left alone as their mother is temporarily away finding food for herself and her young."

Each year GFP receives numerous phone calls from people who find baby animals, and while people think they are being helpful, picking up the creatures can actually be harmful.

"By taking these young animals into captivity, you expose them to diseases and stress," warns Dowd Stukel. "You may also expose yourself, your family and pets to parasites, injuries and diseases such as rabies."

These are among the many reasons it is illegal to keep wild animals as pets.

A young wild animal has the best chance of surviving when in the care of its parents, which are very devoted to their young and almost never abandon them. If you see a young animal that is alone, stay away from it and keep children and pets away as well.

Learn more at [gfp.sd.gov/wildlife-rehab](http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife-rehab).

## Governor Noem Bans Vaccine Passports in South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. – Yesterday, Governor Kristi Noem signed Executive Order 2021-08, which bans government-instituted vaccine passports in South Dakota.

"Since the start of the COVID pandemic, we have provided the people of South Dakota with up-to-date science, facts, and data and then trusted them to exercise their personal responsibility to make the best decisions for themselves and their loved-ones," said Governor Kristi Noem. "We've resisted government mandates, and our state is stronger for it."

"I encourage all South Dakotans to get vaccinated against COVID-19, but we are not going to mandate any such activity," continued Governor Noem. "And 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."

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## SDDVA Secretary Whitlock's April Column

### South Dakota to Dedicate First State Veterans Cemetery

It's hard to believe that 20 months ago we broke ground for South Dakota's first state veteran's cemetery. The day was cold and wet, but the hearts of those in attendance were warm and full of pride knowing that we were soon going to provide and maintain a dignified final-resting place to honor all eligible veterans and dependents.

The City of Sioux Falls gifted over 60 acres of land for the cemetery. The funding received for Phase 1, from the National Cemetery Administration and the State of South Dakota, allowed for us to construct the main entrance, maintenance building, administration building, scattering garden, committal service shelter, Avenue of Flags, a memorial wall, 610 pre-placed crypts, 999 in-ground cremains sites, and 660 columbarium niches, all in a beautifully landscaped setting in accordance with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs standards.

The cemetery will be expanded as needed and will eventually be capable of providing a final resting place for more than 28,000 veterans and family members.

Our major partners during the construction phase included: the National Cemetery Administration, Stockwell Engineers, Inc., the LA Group, Koch Hazard, Heyer Engineering, Journey Construction, State Engineers Office; as well as numerous subcontractors. We are thankful for all who shared their expertise, commitment, and dedication to this great project.

The staff of the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery is dedicated to providing an honorable place of rest for our veterans; to preserve the dignity, beauty, and serenity of this state-of-the-art facility; and to honor all who sacrificed so much, making possible the freedoms we enjoy today.

The South Dakota Veterans Cemetery conveys peace through natural beauty and is a source of pride to veterans, families, and all of South Dakota. The sacrifices our veterans laid upon the altar of freedom will never be forgotten.

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will hold the first Memorial Day ceremonial program and a dedication/ribbon cutting ceremony at the State Veterans Cemetery on Monday, May 31, at 2:00 pm (CT). Watch for more detailed information on logistics to be announced in the coming month.

Our greatest duty to the men and women who served this great country is to never, ever forget what they have done for each of us and what they have done for us as a nation.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

## The Life of George Alberts, Jr.

George Alberts, Jr. was born December 6, 1926 to George Alberts, Sr and Alma (Yelkin) Alberts in Putney Township. He attended rural school in Putney Township and graduated from Groton High School In 1944.

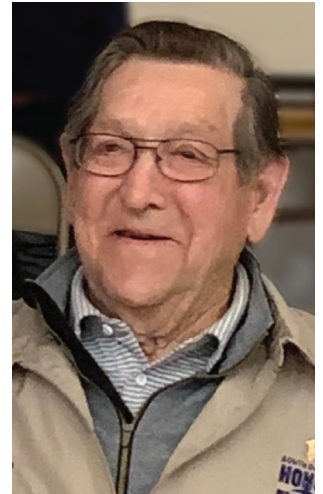
After high school, George enlisted in the US Air Force. He was a weatherman and an accomplished sharp shooter. He received his honorable discharge in October of 1946. He was happy to be able to go on the Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. All his life he was proud to be a patriot.

After his service, he returned to Putney to farm. He married Doris Schliemann on June 5, 1950 at St Lawrence Catholic Church in Milbank, SD. He farmed until his retirement in 1989. He enjoyed golfing, fishing and searching for antiques. He loved having his grandchildren visit in the summer and meeting his family at Lewis and Clark Lake for a weekend of boating and fishing.

He belonged to St Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church and was 4th degree Knights of Columbus. He was a member of the Groton American Legion, Moose Lodge 590 and the Elks Club in Aberdeen.

Celebrating his life is his wife, Doris, three children, Marilyn (David) Anderson of Van Meter, Iowa, Michael Alberts of Groton, Brenda Henley of Littleton, Colorado, four grandchildren, two step- grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, five step-great grandchildren and one sister Mavis Kirschenmann of Aberdeen.

He was preceded in death by his parents, four brothers and one sister.



**Weber  
Landscaping  
Greenhouse  
opening this  
Spring!**



**We will have a full greenhouse of beautiful  
annuals and vegetables.**

**Opening First Week of May!**

**Located behind 204 N State St, Groton  
(Look for the flags)**

**LET US HELP YOU BRIGHTEN  
UP YOUR YARD!**

## #425 in a series

### Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

I did not ever want to get a quarter of the way from 400 to 500 in this series. Not at all, yet here we are. This is going to end before #500, right?

Not much change. We had 66,389 new cases reported today. We now have 31,951,438 cases thus far in the US, 0.2% more than yesterday. The 14-average for hospitalizations is 45,710. There have now been 569,875 deaths, 0.2% more than yesterday. There were 913 deaths reported today.

On April 23, 2020, one year ago today, we had reported 865,252 cases and had lost 44,300 lives to this virus. One of those who had died was a World War II veteran, 100 years old, whose twin brother died in the 1919 influenza pandemic—two brothers lost a century apart, both in pandemics, strikes me as a poignant sort of bookending. We learned that the first US death from Covid-19 hadn't really happened in Washington State on February 28 as we had long thought; post-mortem testing of tissue samples turned up deaths in California on February 6 and February 17 that were from the virus. We talked about endotheliitis and blood clots; since that sort of thing has come up just lately again, I thought you might want to have a look. If so, here's a link to my Update #60: <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3534441259905588>.

A weird new symptom was being reported in a large proportion of infected patients: loss or alteration of the sense of smell or taste. We were still short of tests. We were starting to think we shouldn't rush to use ventilators on patients; the success rate with mechanical ventilation was depressingly small. The FDA commissioner felt the need to warn Americans not to eat or inject disinfectant in an attempt to prevent or cure yourself of Covid-19. What with all the outbreaks in meat packing plants and farm picking and packing operations, there had been a lot of angst about whether eating food contaminated with the virus was a source of infection, and the word coming out was that this was one part of our lives that looks to be pretty safe. And in all the months since, I still have not heard of a single case of Covid-19 acquired by ingestion. I really don't think this is a thing. There were also dumb rumors about cell phone towers and 5G wireless technology spreading the virus, further evidence that whole lot more people should have been paying attention in middle school science class.

Worldwide, we were up to 2.7 million cases and 190,000 deaths. Wuhan, China, the city where the virus first appeared, was reopening, so far without incident.

As for today, although we don't typically focus much here on the rest of the world—primarily because I don't have the bandwidth, not because I don't care about them—I'll update the following: India and Brazil are in crisis mode, running out of oxygen, room in hospitals, and nearly all other resources as well. Pakistan is in deep trouble as well, and Germany's locking down for the weekend due to scary increases in caseloads. This virus isn't done with the world yet, however many we manage to vaccinate. We really need to find ways to get vaccines out everywhere.

Early in the day, we are getting some indication of CDC expert analysis of this blood clotting complication of the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine. They are apparently calling this condition thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS)—thrombosis is blood clotting, and thrombocytopenia is a deficiency of platelets, or thrombocytes, so the name is definitely descriptive of the syndrome we're seeing in these cases. I found it interesting they are not using the name applied by European experts, VITT, or vaccine-induced thrombosis and thrombocytopenia—wondering whether this is because they are not yet ready to attribute it to vaccine. Just speculating here, but it seems curious.

In the meeting of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, Dr. Tom Shimabukuro of the CDC, made the point that there is no increased risk of TTS associated with either the Moderna or the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines. He told the committee that, out of the 5.2 million doses of these vaccines in the database as of April 17, there had been 10 cases of that rare kind of brain blood clot called CVST. Five of them had medical histories which would explain the tendency to form these clots, so were ruled out. The other five did not develop the platelet deficiency characteristic of this condition and so were ruled out too. Essentially, there is no reason to think these vaccines lead to any clotting problems.

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Shimakukuro told the committee members that symptoms appear from several days to one to two weeks following administration of the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine and are similar to what's been seen following administration of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine in Europe, also pointing out the danger of treating the condition with heparin, something we've discussed before, and told the committee members, "We will certainly continue our enhanced surveillance for this."

Dr. Michael Streiff, a clotting expert at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, told the group, "So far, it appears to be a thrombotic response to receiving an adenoviral vector vaccine against SARS-COV-2. It's unclear what causes this to develop." He did finally put some numbers to the incidence of cases with respect to the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, something I've had a hard time putting together, what with every country reporting its own data. Streiff said, "based on the European experience, and the United Kingdom experience," that incidence is anywhere from one case in 100,000 to one in 250,000 vaccine recipients. In Europe, some cases appeared up to 24 days after vaccination and that he doesn't believe we have enough information to screen patients for risk, adding that awareness of the problem is helping patients receive appropriate treatment. "Recognition that this syndrome exists is helping to improve outcomes." The CDC has reached out to more than 10,000 health care providers to inform them of what to look for, so that seems to be covered.

Dr. Peter Marks, head of the FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee, told the New York Times that the FDA "is prepared to move quickly as we possibly can" after "the adequate discussion has occurred" at today's ACIP meeting. I am writing this midday; I'll come back and edit in the committee's decision when we have one. The possibilities are that they could recommend stopping use of the vaccine (highly unlikely, probably impossible given what we know so far), recommend resuming with no changes (probably also very unlikely), or recommend resumption with a warning about adverse side effects (most probable). They could also include a warning to highest-risk populations to avoid it, but I'm not seeing anything in the early reporting out of this meeting that there is any real focus on that at all; guessing we don't really have a risk profile built. We talked the other night about how hard that would be to do with so very few cases. If they do recommend resuming administration of this vaccine, nothing could happen until the director of the CDC, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, signs off on that recommendation. If the pause lifts, there are more than nine million doses of the vaccine ready to be administered. There is a real demand for this one-dose, easy-to-store vaccine.

This is a late afternoon update: We did get information on additional cases that have turned up through the agency's investigation. There were six to begin with that kicked off this investigation, all in women. One of those women died. We now have a total of 13 reported cases among women 18 to 49, two cases among women 50 and older, and no men at all. The rate of reported cases is seven per million doses given to women 18 to 49 and 0.9 per million in women 50 and older. Of the 15, 12 were CVST (the brain blood clots); the other three were other kinds of clots accompanied by thrombocytopenia. There have been a total of three deaths, and seven individuals are still hospitalized.

The ACIP meeting is over now, and the Committee's recommendation is to put the vaccine back into distribution without further warnings. The group voted that the vaccine is safe and effective and that its benefits outweigh the known risks. It does seem likely the CDC will include information on the rare blood clots in the instructions and fact sheets that go out.

The European Medicines Agency, their counterpart to our FDA, said (again), this time at a news conference today, that the benefits of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine outweigh the risks, pointing out increasing infection rates and the danger of infection. They said they will continue to review cases but are listing these cases of "blood clots with low platelets" as "very rare side effects of the vaccine." Of course, individual members of the Union will make decisions for their own populations, and I really don't know where that will leave this vaccine in terms of acceptance and deployment.

Also on the subject of vaccination, Dr. Walensky said at today's White House Covid-19 briefing that the CDC is recommending that pregnant people get vaccinated. Citing recent studies showing no safety concerns for mother or fetus, she indicated that, while decisions should be made in consultation with a



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physician, the agency is recommending the vaccine. The recommendation on the agency website is not yet changed, but I would assume we'll see that soon enough.

Also on the same subject, We have two new studies available from the UK in preprint evaluating vaccine effectiveness in those countries. The Covid-19 Infection Survey, a collaboration of the University of Oxford, the UK Office of National Statistics, and the Department for Health and Social Care, analyzed 1.6 million test results from swabs taken from 373,000 people up to the beginning of this month. All infections—symptomatic or not—were reduced by 70 percent after two doses of either the Pfizer/BioNTech or the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine; symptomatic infections were reduced by 90 percent. People over 75 were as well protected as younger people, which is really remarkable. This is going to matter a lot going forward as it is becoming more evident herd immunity through vaccination is just a pipe dream, at least in the US.

If you're still wavering about vaccination (unlikely, I'd guess, if you're still reading my Updates), consider this: A new CDC report on analysis of the records of more than 3000 patients found that nearly 70 percent of recovered individuals were still having health problems as much as six months later. That is an enormous number if you think about the tens of millions of cases we've had just in this country. Those most likely to experience continuing problems were 65 and older, women, Black, and people with three or more underlying health conditions. However—and note this well—60 percent were people with no underlying health conditions at all, previously completely healthy folks. So you can't assume that, because you're young or fit or healthy or eat nutritious and organic food or your parents lived to be 99, you're going to come through this "flu" just dandy. No guarantees here at all, no matter how clean-living you are.

The most common complaints for which people were seen include lingering respiratory issues and fatigue or newly developing skin, mental health, digestive, and heart problems. Included in the conclusions was this: "Clinicians and health care systems should be aware of the possibility of medical encounters related to a previous diagnosis of COVID-19 beyond the acute illness." Not exactly a one-and-done thing, is it? Please get vaccinated and spare yourself—and the folks around you.

Moderna announced today in a briefing that they hope to have boosters "to potentially have late summer, early fall, that boost for the variants authorized to be able to be used in the marketplace for boosting people." They are particularly interested in targeting B.1.351, the variant first identified in South Africa and which seems to hold the greatest potential to reduce the effectiveness of our immune responses. CEO Stephane Bancel called the preclinical data encouraging and indicated they should have clinical data next month. For those who received a different (non-Moderna) vaccine for your first round of vaccination, I'll mention here that what I'm seeing from experts is the suggestion that it won't matter if you mix and match once you've been fully vaccinated the first time around; so it seems likely anyone who is interested in a Moderna booster would be OK to receive one. Bancel also mentioned the company is looking to increase their production capacity for next year. Looks smart to me; with the vaccination rates we're likely to end up with, I think boosters are in our future for a very long time to come.

That's all for tonight. Take care. We'll talk again.

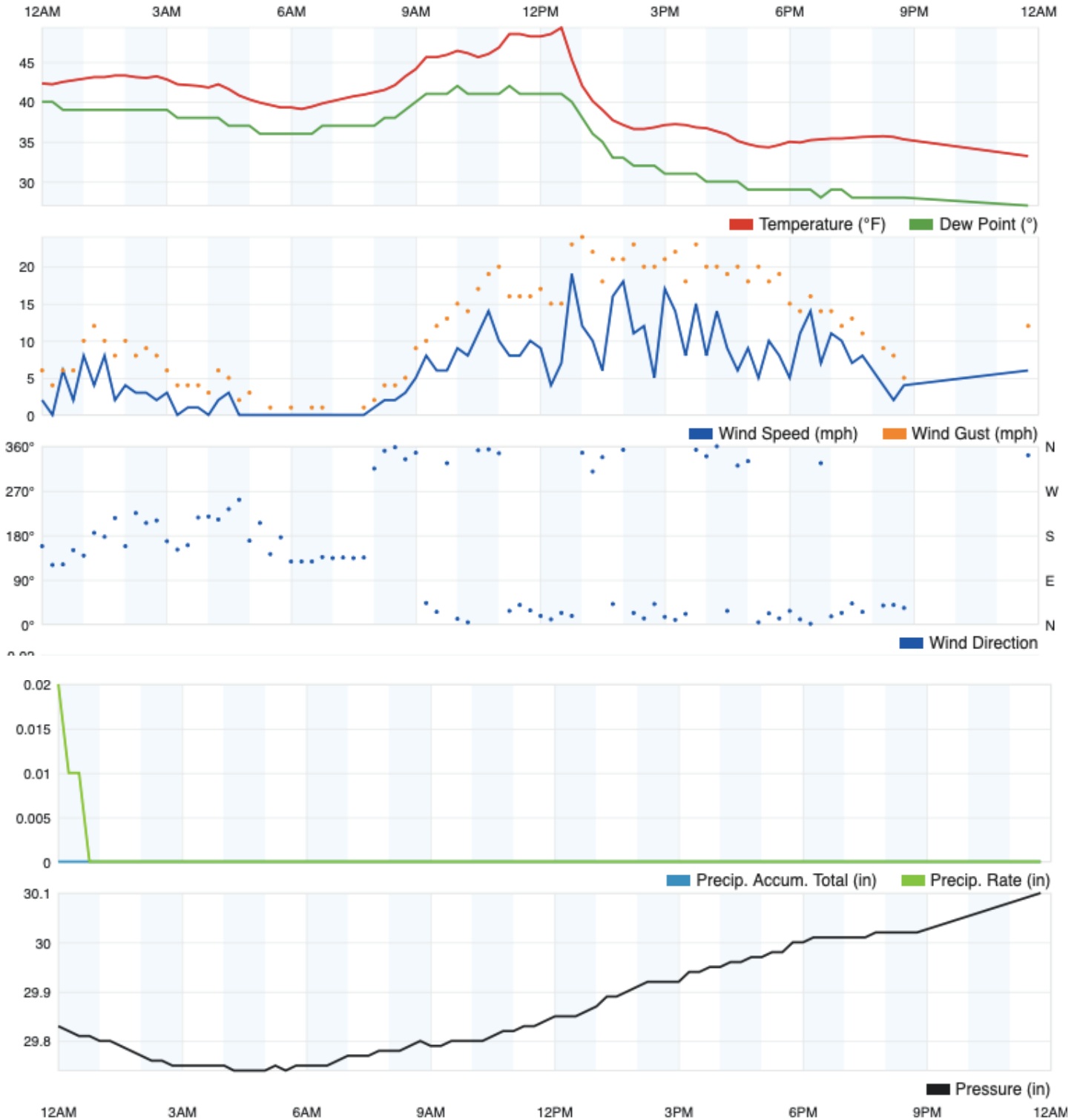
## NOW HIRING

**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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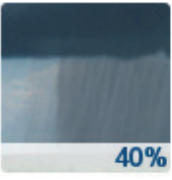
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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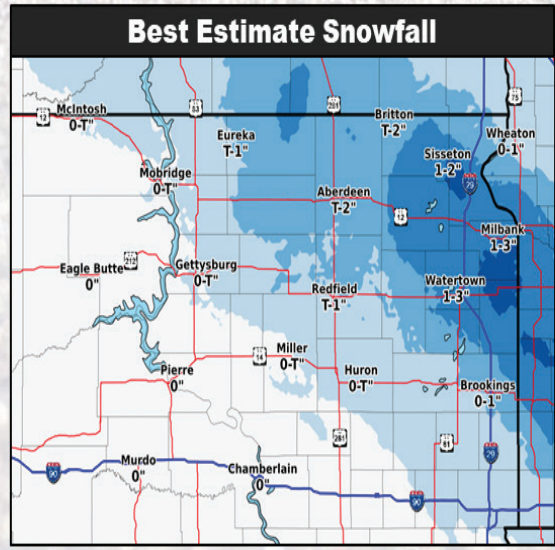
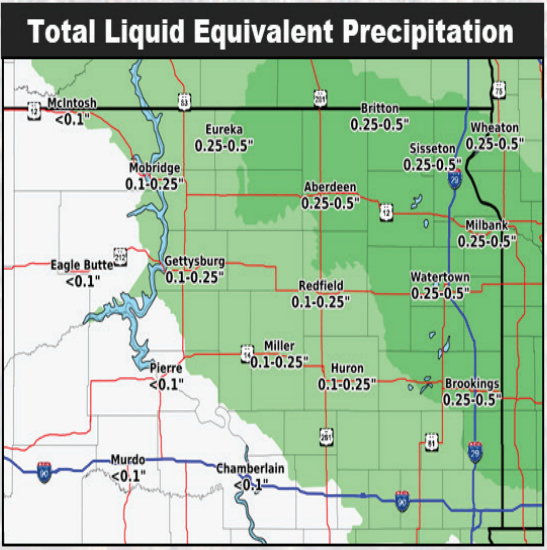
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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
				
Sunny	Partly Cloudy then Rain/Snow	Rain/Snow then Showers and Breezy	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Showers	Chance Showers
High: 49 °F	Low: 30 °F	High: 44 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 55 °F



## Winter Weather Tonight Through Sunday Morning

Rain is expected to move into the region from the west to east this evening before turning to snow tonight for areas along and east of the James River Valley. Most areas west of the James River Valley will see little to no snow. High uncertainty remains as to the exact snow totals and locations of the most intense snow bands, although presently highest amounts are expected to be on the Coteau with locally higher amounts possible.



Visit [www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr) for a detailed local forecast

Updated: 4/24/2021 4:47 AM CT



Rain is expected to enter the region from west to east this evening before turning mostly into snow for the James River Valley and east tonight. High uncertainty remains as to the exact snow totals and locations of the most intense snowbands.

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## Today in Weather History

April 24, 1948: A significant F2 tornado moved northeast from South of Castlewood to near Goodwin. Barns were destroyed on two farms. Also on this day, two other tornadoes were observed in South Dakota. One moved from Turner County on into Minnehaha County, injuring two people. The other touchdown 3 miles Southeast of Sioux Falls, destroying barns and other buildings on the west edge of Brandon.

1880: Several tornadoes affected parts of central and southwest Illinois. One tornado of F4 intensity touched down near Jerseyville and killed one person along the 18-mile path. Another F4 tornado passed just north of Carlinville and lifted near Atwater, destroying 50 buildings. Six people died in Christian County by an F5 tornado, which tracked from 9 miles southwest of Taylorville to near Sharpsburg.

1908: Severe thunderstorms spawned eighteen tornadoes over across the Central Gulf Coast States claiming the lives of 310 persons. The state of Mississippi was hardest hit. A tornado near Hattiesburg, Mississippi killed 143 persons and caused more than half a million dollars damage. Four violent tornadoes accounted for 279 of the 310 deaths. The deadliest of the four tornadoes swelled to a width of 2.5 miles as it passed near Amite, Louisiana. The tornado also leveled most of Purvis Mississippi.

2003: The temperature soared to a maximum of 70 degrees in Juneau, Alaska. This is the earliest record of 70-degree reading to occur in Juneau.

2010: April Tornado Outbreak- During a significant severe weather outbreak across the South on April 22-25, 142 tornadoes raked the region, including 77 on April 24 alone. Ten died from the long-track tornado that swept across Mississippi on April 24. A long-lived twister left a trail of destruction extending over 149 miles from Louisiana through Mississippi, resulting in 10 deaths and 75 injuries. This EF4 storm, which grew to a width of 1.75 miles, sported the fourth longest track in Mississippi history. This storm destroyed part of Yazoo City, Mississippi. The Swiss Reinsurance Company estimated insured damages with this outbreak at \$1.58 billion. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the NWS Office in Jackson, Mississippi.

1899 - Two women and one son lived to tell the story of being picked up by a tornado and carried more than a fourth of a mile, flying far above the church steeples, before being gently set down again. The young boy and one of the ladies said they had the pleasure of flying alongside a horse. The horse "kicked and struggled" as it flew high above, and was set down unharmed about a mile away. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. Up to seven inches of rain drenched Virginia in three days. Morgantown WV received 4.27 inches in 24 hours, and flooding was reported in south central West Virginia. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Low pressure produced high winds and severe thunderstorms in the Southern Plains Region. Strong thunderstorm winds destroyed two mobile homes at Whitt TX injuring two persons. Winds associated with the low pressure system gusted to 70 mph at Guadalupe Pass TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Twenty cities in the central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Russell KS was the hot spot in the nation with a reading of 101 degrees. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather from Colorado to Wisconsin. Hail four and a half inches in diameter was reported at Sargeant NE. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Southern High Plains to north central Kansas. Thunderstorms spawned ten tornadoes, including one which injured four persons and caused 1.5 million dollars damage at Shattuck OK. Thunderstorms also produced softball size hail at Wheeler TX, wind gusts to 85 mph southwest of Arnett OK, and 13.45 inches of rain near Caldwell TX, which resulted in the worst flooding in recent memory for that area. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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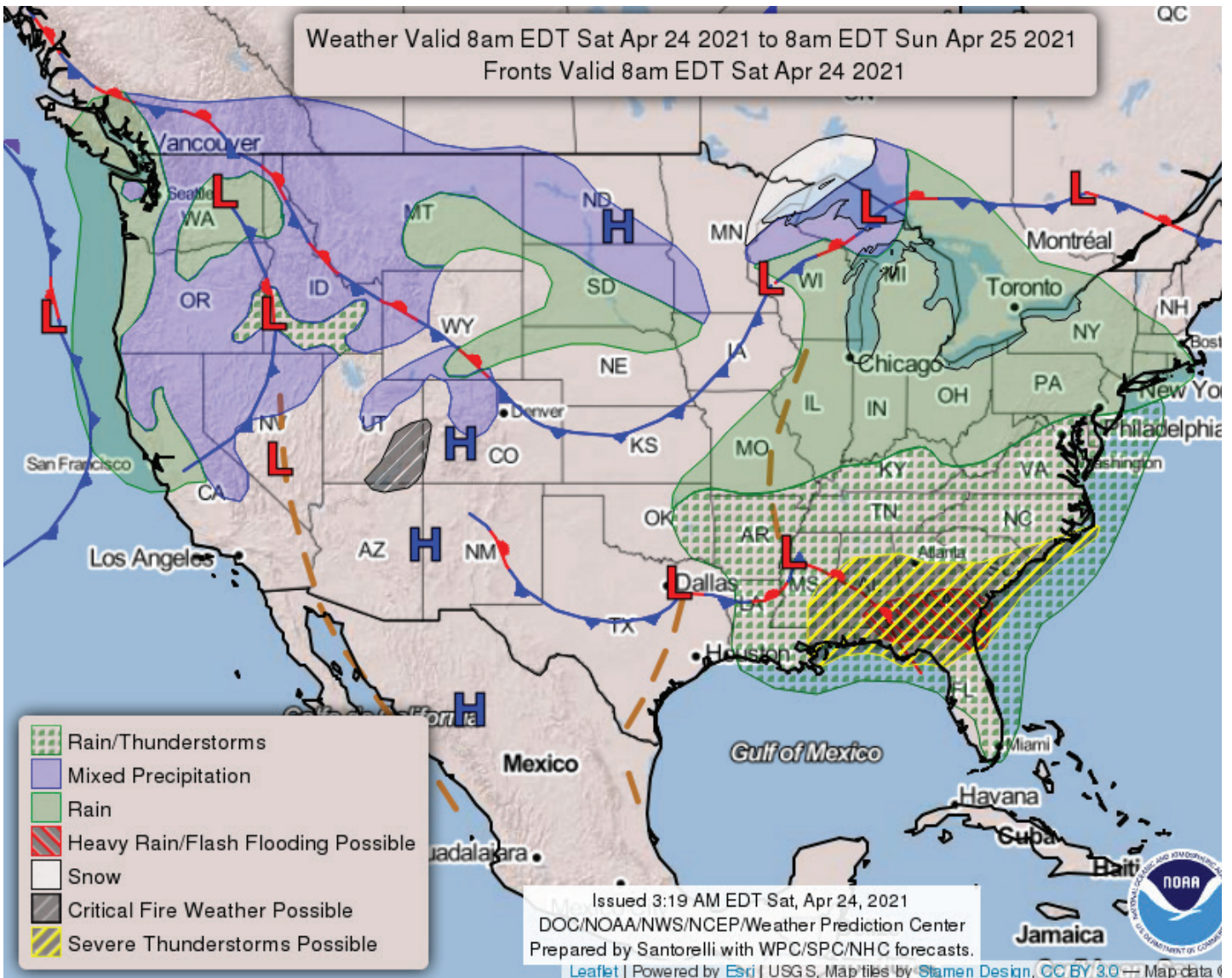
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 49 °F at 12:27 PM**  
**Low Temp: 33 °F at 11:53 PM**  
**Wind: 24 mph at 12:53 PM**  
**Precip: 0.02**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 92° in 1962**  
**Record Low: 17° in 1956**  
**Average High: 62°F**  
**Average Low: 35°F**  
**Average Precip in Apr.: 1.25**  
**Precip to date in Apr.: 2.47**  
**Average Precip to date: 3.43**  
**Precip Year to Date: 2.65**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:32 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:31 a.m.**



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## "SOUL FOOD"

"Mother," cried Sally as she climbed into bed, "you forgot my soul!"

"What do you mean, Sweetheart?" asked her Mom. "I don't understand."

"Well, when we said our prayers, you didn't say, 'I pray the Lord my soul to keep.' What if God forgets about my soul tonight? What will happen?"

It is difficult to watch television, listen to the radio, or read a paper or magazine without the ever-present emphasis to lose weight, get in shape, have cosmetic surgery, or try a new shampoo. We are constantly challenged to nourish our bodies more carefully, strengthen our muscles to become healthier or do something to look more appealing.

Certainly, God expects us to care for our bodies. He created us in His image and gave us the breath of life. But too often we are encouraged to care for our bodies at the expense of caring for our souls.

David longed desperately for God's presence in his life. He compared his need for God to that of a thirsty deer panting for water. "My soul," he cried, "thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?"

The Psalmist had a "thirst" in his soul that could only be satisfied by God's "living water" – much like a deer panting for water. It's a condition that is universal in all creation.

God places in each of our hearts a thirst that cannot be quenched by the waters of this world. As appealing as they are – fame and fortune, power and prestige, wealth and well-being – nothing will ever satisfy the thirst that God has planted deep within us. As Jesus said, only those who "hunger and thirst for righteousness" and find it in Him, will ever be satisfied. Have you been satisfied by His offer to "come and drink freely?"

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for being the solution to that never-ending, always-present thirst we all desire to satisfy. May we find our solution in You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I thirst for God, the living God. When can I go and stand before him? Psalm 42:2

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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

### Hot Tea: Community near Sioux Falls becoming the place to be

By MAKENZIE HUBER Sioux Falls Argus Leader  
TEA, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls is overflowing.

With dramatic increases in house prices and a lack of available houses in the Sioux Falls market, people are starting to look to surrounding communities.

But for areas like Tea, this surplus in growth has been in the works for years. While Harrisburg has been the state's fastest-growing city for decades, Tea is right behind it.

Once a small town of just around 800 residents, President of the Tea City Council Casey Voelker has seen his hometown expand to more than 6,500 people, according to a 2020 estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The city's growth rate is at 8%, said Dan Zulkosky, Tea's city administrator. For comparison, Sioux Falls' growth rate in 2020 was 2.7%.

That growth in Tea is partially because of the overflow from Sioux Falls, but also its own planned expansion and accommodation for businesses, the Argus Leader reported.

"We're planning for controlled growth," Voelker said. "We want to make sure we're growing in a way that's smart for our community and maintains the character of our community."

The Tea School District is in dire need of expansion and has been since before the pandemic.

Competing businesses are coming to the city. A Fareway was the only grocery store in town, located in the former Sunshine Foods building. Now, a new Hy-Vee Dollar Fresh will be built across the street.

The city can't seem to hand out building permits fast enough. Between 2019 and 2020 alone, the number of residential building permits increased by 40%. By the end of 2021, the city is planning to have 200 housing lots built and sold, and they're planning to have 100 commercial lots sold as well, Voelker said.

All this is to say: Tea is growing. Fast.

The City of Sioux Falls is essentially tapped out for its sewer capacity, said Bradyn Neises, a broker with Bender Commercial. So, communities south of Sioux Falls like Tea and Harrisburg are looking to expand north — and that starts with the sewer.

Access to a sewer line is crucial for homes and businesses to succeed, he said.

The city is working on a \$10 million sewer line to connect with the Sioux Falls sewer and wastewater treatment plant, making Tea an attractive option for developers. The city expects to finish the project by 2022 or earlier.

"You have to give credit to Tea," Neises said. "They're providing services and sewer capacity, they're continuing to push northeast and annex land. They're using their advantage of where growth is happening."

While Harrisburg has been the fastest-growing city in the state for decades, "people are looking at Harrisburg to move to as a bedroom community," Neises said.

The same can be said for Tea, but it has its own work hub that's expanding and contributing to the city's growth: Bakker Landing, a 270-acre industrial and retail hub alongside I-29, stretching from Highway 106 to Sioux Falls' 85th Street.

Sixteen land sales in 2020 were in Tea, totaling \$8.8 million in sales. Seven of those major land sales were in Bakker Landing, about two-thirds of the total major land sales in Tea last year.

Two of the most noteworthy announcements included Silencer Central moving its headquarters to Bakker Landing and the construction of a Casey's super store, said Joel Ingle, a developer with Harr & Lemme Commercial Real Estate.

Sundowner Investments Group, led by Dan Lemme and being marketed by Harr & Lemme Commercial Real Estate, bought 126 acres of northern Bakker Landing around 2006, anticipating growth around 85th Street in Sioux Falls. In 2017, the company purchased the remaining 144 acres on the southern half of the property, quickly developing it and grading roads to bring in businesses.



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The area is as busy as its ever been, and that momentum isn't slowing down any time soon, Voelker said. "With each of those developments that fell through, there was someone right behind them ready to make a deal," Voelker said.

For many businesses that have added a location or moved operations to Bakker Landing, access to Highway 106 and an interchange on I-29 has been the primary selling point, Ingle said.

Just a mile down I-29, there's access to I-229, and in about five years there'll be access to the eastern side of Sioux Falls and Brandon once Veteran's Parkway completes its loop in Tea.

"In our view it's pretty rare to assemble property for interstate exposure and interchange accessibility in these two area," Ingle said. "We didn't make the decision to develop this area based on the Veteran's Parkway project. But, obviously, that project adds tremendous value to what we have. I know that some of the business owners have considered long-term that they'll have a highway that's starting or ended right by their door."

The City of Tea started construction earlier this month on a \$16 million construction project on Highway 106, also called Gateway Boulevard. The project will ease traffic flow, widening the road to four lanes and adding stoplights. The city is also constructing a water tower near the interstate.

"There are all these large capital projects happening and ending in Tea," Voelker said. "It's more than coincidence they're happening at the same time. The area is ripe and ready to go."

After those two major roadway projects are completed, businesses, restaurants, banking and professional services will pop up to cater to extra traffic spurred by the new roadways and access points — that'll mean more jobs, more revenue and more people planning to call Tea their home.

Once filled, Ingle anticipates that Bakker Landing will result in nearly 5,000 additional jobs in that area alone.

"The higher traffic counts, the more valuable the property is," Ingall said. "The reality is that when Veteran's Parkway is completed, the traffic counts will multiply exponentially to what they are at today. ... When you start to get 40,000 to 50,000 cars a day, you'll dramatically change the interest of businesses coming to that area."

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

04-28-29-30-60, Mega Ball: 25, Megaplier: 3

(four, twenty-eight, twenty-nine, thirty, sixty; Mega Ball: twenty-five; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$277 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$104 million

## Driver killed in 1-car crash near Whitewood in western S.D.

WHITEWOOD, S.D. (AP) — A 49-year-old woman has in a one-vehicle crash east of Whitewood in western South Dakota.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol said a 2002 Mercury Sable was traveling eastbound on Interstate 90 around 11:30 a.m. on Thursday when the vehicle left the road and rolled.

The driver was not wearing a seatbelt and was thrown from the vehicle. She died at the scene. Her name was not immediately released.

## Out of the cave: French isolation study ends after 40 days

By RENATA BRITO Associated Press

LOMBRIVES CAVE, France (AP) — Ever wonder what it would feel like to unplug from a hyperconnected

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world and hide away in a dark cave for 40 days?

Fifteen people in France did just that, emerging Saturday from a scientific experiment to say that time seemed to pass more slowly in their cavernous underground abode, where they were deprived of clocks and light.

With big smiles on their pale faces, the 15 left their voluntary isolation in the Lombrives cave to a round of applause and basked in the light of day while wearing special glasses to protect their eyes after so long in the dark.

"It was like pressing pause," said 33-year-old Marina Lançon, one of the seven female team members in the experiment, adding she didn't feel there was a rush to do anything.

Although she wished she could have stayed in the cave a few days longer, she said she was happy to feel the wind blowing on her face again and hear the birds sing in the green trees of the French Pyrénées.

For 40 days and 40 nights, the group lived in and explored the cave without a sense of time as part of the Deep Time project. There was no sunlight inside, the temperature was 10 degrees Celsius (50 F) and the relative humidity stood at 100%. The cave dwellers had no contact with the outside world, no updates on the pandemic nor any communication with friends or family.

Scientists at the Human Adaption Institute leading the 1.2 million-euro \$1.5 million) "Deep Time" project say the experiment will help them better understand how people adapt to drastic changes in living conditions and environments, something much of the world can relate to because of the coronavirus pandemic.

As expected, those in the cave lost their sense of time.

"And here we are! We just left after 40 days ... For us it was a real surprise," said project director Christian Clot, adding for the majority of the participants, "in our heads, we had walked into the cave 30 days ago."

At least one team member estimated the time underground at 23 days.

In partnership with labs in France and Switzerland, scientists monitored the 15-member group's sleep patterns, social interactions and behavioral reactions via sensors. One of the sensors was a tiny thermometer inside a capsule that participants swallowed like a pill. The capsules measure body temperature and transmit data to a portable computer until they are expelled naturally.

The team members followed their biological clocks to know when to wake up, go to sleep and eat. They counted their days not in hours but in sleep cycles.

On Friday, scientists monitoring the participants entered the cave to let the research subjects know they would be coming out soon. They said many in the group miscalculated and thought they had another week to 10 days to go.

"It's really interesting to observe how this group synchronizes themselves," Clot said earlier in a recording from inside the cave. Working together on projects and organizing tasks without being able to set a time to meet was especially challenging, he said.

Although the participants looked visibly tired, two-thirds expressed a desire to remain underground a bit longer in order to finish group projects started during the expedition, Benoit Mauvieux, a chronobiologist involved in the research, told The Associated Press.

## ASEAN leaders demand Myanmar coup leaders end killings

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Southeast Asian leaders demanded an immediate end to killings and the release of political detainees in Myanmar in an emergency summit with its top general and coup leader Saturday in the Indonesian capital, Indonesia's president said.

The leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations also told Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing during the two-hour talks in Jakarta that a dialogue between contending parties in Myanmar should immediately start, with the help of ASEAN envoys, Indonesian President Joko Widodo said.

"The situation in Myanmar is unacceptable and should not continue. Violence must be stopped, democracy, stability and peace in Myanmar must be returned immediately," Widodo said during the meeting. "The interests of the people of Myanmar must always be the priority."

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The messages conveyed to the Min Aung Hlaing was unusually blunt and could be seen as a breach of the conservative 10-nation bloc's bedrock principle forbidding member states from interfering in each other's domestic affairs. But Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said that policy should not lead to inaction if a domestic situation "jeopardizes the peace, security, and stability of ASEAN and the wider region" and there is international clamor for resolute action.

"There is a tremendous expectation on the part of the international community on how ASEAN is addressing the Myanmar issue. The pressure is increasing," Muhyiddin said and added that the current ASEAN chairman, Brunei Prime Minister Hassanal Bolkiah, and the regional bloc's secretary general, should be allowed access to Myanmar to meet contending parties, encourage dialogue and come up with "an honest and unbiased observation."

Daily shootings by police and soldiers since the Feb. 1 coup have killed more than 700 mostly peaceful protesters and bystanders, according to several independent tallies.

It was not immediately clear if and how Min Aung Hlaing responded to the blunt messages.

It was the first time he traveled out of Myanmar since the coup, which was followed by the arrests of Aung San Suu Kyi and many other political leaders.

ASEAN's diversity, including the divergent ties of many of its members to either China or the United States, along with a bedrock policy of non-interference in each other's domestic affairs and deciding by consensus, has hobbled the bloc's ability to rapidly deal with crises.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi expressed hopes on the eve of the summit that "we can reach an agreement on the next steps that can help the people of Myanmar get out of this delicate situation."

Following the coup, ASEAN, through its current chair Brunei, issued a statement that did not explicitly condemn the power grab but urged "the pursuance of dialogue, reconciliation and the return to normalcy in accordance with the will and interests of the people of Myanmar." Amid Western pressure, however, the regional group has struggled to take a more forceful position on issues but has kept to its non-confrontational approach.

Critics have said ASEAN's decision to meet him was unacceptable and amounted to legitimizing the overthrow and the deadly crackdown that followed. ASEAN states agreed to meet Min Aung Hlaing but did not address him as Myanmar's head of state in the summit, a Southeast Asian diplomat told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity for lack of authority to discuss the issue publicly.

The London-based rights watchdog Amnesty International urged Indonesia and other ASEAN states to investigate Min Aung Hlaing over "credible allegations of responsibility for crimes against humanity in Myanmar." As a state party to a U.N. convention against torture, Indonesia has a legal obligation to prosecute or extradite a suspected perpetrator on its territory, it said.

"The Myanmar crisis triggered by the military presents ASEAN with the biggest test in its history," said Emerlynne Gil of AI. "This is not an internal matter for Myanmar but a major human rights and humanitarian crisis which is impacting the entire region and beyond."

Indonesian police dispersed dozens of protesters opposing the coup and the junta leader's visit.

More than 4,300 police fanned out across the Indonesian capital to secure the meetings, held under strict safeguards amid the pandemic. Indonesia has reported the highest number of COVID-19 infections and deaths in Southeast Asia.

The leaders of Thailand and the Philippines skipped the summit to deal with coronavirus outbreaks back home. Laos also canceled at the last minute. The face-to-face summit is the first by ASEAN leaders in more than a year.

Aside from Myanmar, the regional bloc groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

## Biggest space station crowd in decade after SpaceX arrival

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The International Space Station's population swelled to 11 on Saturday

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with the jubilant arrival of SpaceX's third crew capsule in less than a year.

It's the biggest crowd up there in more than a decade.

All of the astronauts — representing the U.S., Russia, Japan and France — managed to squeeze into camera view for a congratulatory call from the leaders of their space agencies.

"In this tough situation around the world, I believe you have brought courage and hope for all of us," Japanese Space Agency President Hiroshi Yamakawa said from his country's flight control center, referring to the global pandemic.

A recycled SpaceX capsule carrying four astronauts arrived at the space station a day after launching from NASA's Kennedy Space Center. The Dragon capsule docked autonomously with the orbiting outpost more than 260 miles (420 kilometers) above the Indian Ocean. The hatches swung open a couple hours later, uniting all 11 space travelers.

"Man, it is awesome to see the 11 of you on station," said NASA's acting administrator, Steve Jurczyk. He noted that this will be the norm, now that SpaceX is regularly flying crews.

The newcomers will spend six months at the space station. They'll replace four astronauts who will return to Earth in their own Dragon capsule Wednesday to end a half-year mission. NASA deliberately planned for a brief overlap so the outgoing SpaceX crew could show the new arrivals around.

Although this was SpaceX's third crew flight for NASA, it was the first to use a vehicle that's flown before, an essential part of Musk's push to the moon and Mars. The Dragon capsule was used for SpaceX's first crew launch last May, while the Falcon rocket soaring Friday hoisted crew two in November.

It was the first time two SpaceX crew Dragons were parked there at the same time — practically side by side.

NASA astronauts Shane Kimbrough and Megan McArthur — the commander and pilot of the returning Dragon — monitored their capsule's flat screen computers during the morning rendezvous. They could have taken control if necessary, but the autonomous system did its job, much like a self-driving car.

Also checking into the space station: France's Thomas Pesquet and Japan's Akihiko Hoshide. Both have lived there before, as has Kimbrough. But it was the first station visit for McArthur. She flew up in the same seat and the same capsule — named Endeavour — as her husband, Bob Behnken, did on SpaceX's debut crew mission.

The European Space Agency's director general, Josef Aschbacher, joked that the space station needs expansion with so many on board.

Pesquet — the first European to fly on a commercial crew capsule — noted that the space station has changed quite a bit since his last visit four years ago, with more people and types of spacecraft.

"We're so happy to see our friends," he said. "We wish we could keep them a little bit longer, but not too long as well, because 11 people is a lot on a space station."

The all-time record is 13, set during NASA's space shuttle era.

The current population includes six Americans, two Russians, two Japanese and one French. It will shrink by four on Wednesday when three Americans and one Japanese depart for home and a splashdown in the Gulf of Mexico.

NASA turned to private companies for space station deliveries after the shuttles retired in 2011. SpaceX began supply runs in 2012, honing its skills before launching astronauts and ending NASA's reliance on Russia. NASA also hired Boeing for taxi service, but the company's Starliner capsule isn't expected to fly astronauts until next year.

## Key moments in closing arguments of Chauvin trial

By AMY FORLITI, STEPHEN GROVES and TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — After nearly three weeks of testimony including heart-wrenching bystander statements and technical medical information, attorneys in Derek Chauvin's murder trial presented their closing arguments.

Prosecutors played to emotion as they sketched moments from George Floyd's life and described his

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struggle under Chauvin's knee. Defense attorney Eric Nelson tried to raise doubts about Floyd's cause of death, and to portray Chauvin as a "reasonable officer."

Jurors deliberated for little more than a day before proclaiming Chauvin guilty of second-degree murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter.

Here are some highlights from the closing arguments.

"HIS NAME WAS GEORGE PERRY FLOYD, JR."

That opening line by prosecutor Steve Schleicher set the stage for his sometimes emotional closing argument, reminding jurors who Floyd was, that others cared for him, and that he died surrounded by strangers, writhing on the ground and repeating "I can't breathe."

To Mary Moriarty, former chief public defender for Hennepin County, that opening line was key because "that brought everyone back to why we are all there."

"BELIEVE YOUR EYES"

Schleicher repeatedly told jurors to trust that they saw the life squeezed out of Floyd on bystander video.

"This case is exactly what you thought when you saw it first ... You can believe your eyes. ... It's what you felt in your gut. It's what you now know in your heart. This wasn't policing. This was murder," Schleicher said.

But Nelson argued it was not that simple. He used the pandemic-altered courtroom as a prop, describing how cameras and plastic barriers had at times obscured his view of witnesses and jurors.

"Things block your perspective. Things can affect your perspective," he said. "But your perception is how you interpret what it is you see."

He said the perspective and perception of each witness was different, depending on when they arrived at the scene, their vantage point and their own life experiences. And he reminded jurors that Chauvin's actions had to be analyzed from the perspective of a reasonable police officer who had all the information.

## CRITICAL MOMENT OF FLOYD'S DEATH

Nelson tried to turn around one of the most riveting moments of the trial — when a prosecution witness pinpointed what he said was Floyd's moment of death.

Dr. Martin Tobin, a lung and critical care specialist, testified that Floyd died about five minutes after he was pinned facedown on the pavement with his hands cuffed behind his back and Chauvin's knee on his neck.

"You can see his eyes. He's conscious, and then you see that he isn't," Tobin said. "That's the moment the life goes out of his body."

Nelson tried to convince jurors that there was more to that moment, saying "at the very precise moment that Mr. Floyd takes his last breath" three things happened: Floyd took his last breath, Chauvin reacted to frantic onlookers by pulling out his Mace and shaking it, and an off-duty fire firefighter who has emergency medical training walked up from behind and startled Chauvin.

The firefighter testified that she wanted to provide medical help or tell officers how to do it.

"All of these facts and circumstances simultaneously occur at a critical moment. And that changed Officer Chauvin's perception of what was happening," Nelson said.

## CAUSE OF FLOYD'S DEATH

Despite numerous prosecution witnesses who said Floyd died from a lack of oxygen due to the restraint, Nelson told jurors that Floyd's death was consistent with a sudden heart rhythm problem, and he hammered on his key arguments from trial — that drug use and Floyd's medical issues played a role.

Schleicher said jurors didn't have to accept the "amazing coincidence" that Floyd died from heart disease while he was being restrained. Nelson said to "poo poo" all of the other factors was "just really a preposterous notion."

Nelson misstated the law when he said the state had to convince jurors that the other factors played no role in Floyd's death. On rebuttal, prosecutor Jerry Blackwell told jurors that the law says prosecutors had to prove only that Chauvin's actions were a substantial causal factor in his death, not the biggest factor, and that contributing causes do not relieve Chauvin of criminal liability.

Moriarty said she was surprised the state didn't object to Nelson's comment, or that Judge Peter Cahill didn't interrupt and reread the jury instructions.

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Blackwell left jurors with these final words: "You were told ... that Mr. Floyd died because his heart was too big. ... The truth of the matter is that the reason George Floyd is dead is because Mr. Chauvin's heart was too small."

## USE OF VIDEO

It was no surprise that prosecutors played videos during their closing argument to burn into jurors' minds the image of Chauvin kneeling on Floyd's neck.

But Nelson also played clips from the bystander video that he said showed Chauvin's actions were reasonable and from officers' body camera footage, including an angle that gave jurors Chauvin's perspective as he arrived on the scene.

Nelson played clips that emphasized Floyd's size and strength and showed the struggle with officers. At one point, he played a video from a camera across the street, pointing out that the squad car was rocking "back and forth, back and forth" under the force of officers wrestling with Floyd.

Moriarty was surprised that Nelson played so much video. "It was very painful because then people had to hear all over again George Floyd begging for his life," she said.

9:29 vs 16:59

Schleicher used the phrase "9 minutes, and 29 seconds" like a drumbeat in his closing to remind jurors of how long Chauvin had his knee on Floyd. He highlighted Floyd's desperate struggle — using his knuckles, his shoulder, and even his face — to lift himself to draw a breath.

Nelson pointed jurors in a different direction, saying what really mattered was what happened before then.

"Nine minutes and 29 seconds — it's not the proper analysis because the nine minutes and 29 seconds ignores the previous sixteen minutes and 59 seconds," Nelson said, adding that a reasonable police officer would consider everything that happened.

## DEFENSE: CHAUVIN WAS A "REASONABLE POLICE OFFICER"

During an argument that stretched nearly three hours, Nelson returned to the mantra of "reasonable police officer" dozens of times.

Nelson described how Chauvin would have sized Floyd up, recognized that two "rookie officers" were struggling to get him into a squad car, realized that more force was needed and guessed that Floyd was under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

"A reasonable officer wants to keep his fellow officers safe," Nelson said. "A reasonable police officer takes into consideration the safety of civilians. ... A reasonable police officer takes into account the safety of the person that they are arresting."

The phrase was a key element at trial because Chauvin was authorized to use force as long as that force would be considered reasonable by an objective officer in the same situation. Jurors were told to examine the evidence from that view rather than from their own perspective, and they couldn't use hindsight as a factor.

In the end, jurors didn't buy it.

## A 9-YEAR-OLD-GIRL WOULD KNOW BETTER

Prosecutors said Chauvin's actions were so wrong that even a 9-year-old girl knew better.

Schleicher and Blackwell both mentioned the girl — the younger cousin of the teenager who shot the bystander video that touched off weeks of protests — at every opportunity.

"He knew that kneeling on somebody's neck, in addition to the positional asphyxia, just the pressure is dangerous," Schleicher said of Chauvin. "Anyone can tell you that, a 9-year-old can tell you that, did tell you that."

Blackwell showed jurors an image of the girl wearing a shirt that said "Love" as she watched the fatal encounter.

"You don't need a Ph.D., you don't need an M.D. to understand how fundamental breathing is to life," Blackwell said.

## BLAMING THE BYSTANDERS

Nelson suggested that Chauvin and other officers thought the bystanders were a threat, describing how

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"this crowd grew more and more upset."

"You never underestimate a crowd's potential because a reasonable police officer has to be aware and alert to his surroundings," Nelson told jurors.

About 15 onlookers are seen on bystander and police body camera video standing on the sidewalk, shouting at Chauvin to get off of Floyd. Several testified about the trauma of watching Floyd die and the guilt of feeling powerless to intervene.

Blackwell told jurors that the bystanders, whom he called "a bouquet of humanity," all saw that Floyd was suffering and they wanted to intervene. He said they were torn "between the sanctity of life and wanting to intervene, and their respect for authority and police officers."

"If those bystanders did not respect this badge, they could very easily have taken the law into their own hands and simply have removed Mr. Chauvin. ... But none of them did that. None of them did that because they respected this badge even if it tore them up inside," Blackwell said.

"Instead, they call the police on the police. Instead, they picked up their phones to memorialize what they were seeing so that it could not be forgotten and so that it could not be misrepresented. Instead, they waited for their day to come in and ... talk with you, not, ladies and gentlemen, to tell their story, but to tell the truth about what they experienced."

## COMMON SENSE AS THE 46TH WITNESS

Jurors heard dueling definitions of what common sense should tell them about the case.

Nelson said the prosecutors' expert medical witnesses ignored Floyd's health problems in declaring that Chauvin's force killed Floyd, saying that doing so "defies medical science and it defies common sense and reason."

Blackwell told jurors to trust their common sense as they sifted through the evidence and testimonies of 45 witnesses, urging them to make it the 46th witness.

"Common sense will continue talking with you all the while, because while you've heard hours and hours and hours of discussions here in the closing, ultimately, it really isn't that complicated," Blackwell told jurors.

The case is "so simple that a child can understand it," Blackwell said. "In fact, a child did understand it, when the 9-year-old girl said, 'get off of him.' That's how simple it was. Get off of him. Common sense."

## Biden to recognize atrocities against Armenians as genocide

By AAMER MADHANI, MATTHEW LEE and ZEYNEP BILGINSOY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Saturday plans to follow through on a campaign pledge to formally recognize that atrocities committed against the Armenian people by the Ottoman Empire more than a century ago in modern-day Turkey were genocide, according to U.S. officials.

A presidential proclamation to mark Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day is expected to use the term genocide to describe the killings and deportations of hundreds of thousands of Armenians. U.S. presidents for decades have acknowledged Remembrance Day to mark the events of 1915 to 1923 but have avoided using the term "genocide" to sidestep alienating Turkey.

During a telephone call Friday, Biden informed Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, of his plan to issue the statement, said a person familiar with the matter who was not authorized to publicly discuss the private conversation and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Separate statements afterward by the two governments made no mention of Biden's plan. The White House said Biden told Erdogan he wants to improve ties and find "effective management of disagreements." The two also agreed to a bilateral meeting at the NATO summit in Brussels in June.

Biden, who pledged as a candidate to recognize the massacre as genocide, arguing that "silence is complicity," wanted to speak with Erdogan before making the formal recognition, according to officials familiar with Biden's deliberations and plans. The officials were not authorized to publicly discuss the matter before Biden issued the proclamation and they spoke on condition of anonymity.

In a tweet Saturday, Turkey's foreign ministry said: "Lies do not just twist history, they also take innocent lives." The ministry posted the names of 31 Turkish diplomats and their relatives killed by Armenian militant

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groups in the 1970s and 1980s. Turkey says both Armenians and Turks were killed during World War I.

Friday's call was the first between the presidents since Biden took office more than three months ago. The delay had become a worrying sign in Turkey. Erdogan had good rapport with President Donald Trump and had been hoping for a reset despite past friction with Biden.

Erdogan reiterated his long-running claims that the U.S. is supporting Kurdish fighters in Syria who are affiliated with the Iraq-based Kurdistan Workers' Party, known as the PKK. The PKK has led an insurgency against Turkey for more than three decades. In recent years, Turkey has launched military operations against PKK enclaves in Turkey and in northern Iraq and against U.S.-allied Syrian Kurdish fighters. The State Department has designated the PKK a terrorist organization but has argued with Turkey over the group's ties to the Syrian Kurds.

According to the Turkish government statement after the call, Erdogan also raised concerns about the presence in the United States of cleric Fethullah Gulen, who is accused by Turkey of orchestrating a failed 2016 coup attempt. Gulen, who has lived in Pennsylvania since the late 1990s, denies involvement in the coup.

Biden, during the 2020 campaign, drew ire from Turkish officials after an interview with The New York Times in which he spoke about supporting Turkey's opposition against "autocrat" Erdogan. In 2019, Biden accused Trump of betraying U.S. allies after Trump's decision to withdraw troops from northern Syria, which paved the way for a Turkish military offensive against the Syrian Kurdish group.

In 2014, when he was vice president, Biden apologized to Erdogan after suggesting in a speech that Turkey helped facilitate the rise of the Islamic State group by allowing foreign fighters to cross Turkey's border with Syria.

Lawmakers and Armenian American activists have lobbied Biden to make the genocide announcement on or before Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, which presidents typically mark with a proclamation.

Salpi Ghazarian, director of the University of Southern California's Institute of Armenian Studies, said the recognition of genocide would resonate beyond Armenia as Biden insists that respect for human rights will be a central principle in his foreign policy.

"Within the United States and outside the United States, the American commitment to basic human values has been questioned now for decades," she said. "It is very important for people in the world to continue to have the hope and the faith that America's aspirational values are still relevant, and that we can in fact do several things at once. We can in fact carry on trade and other relations with countries while also calling out the fact that a government cannot get away with murdering its own citizens."

Turkey's foreign minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, warned the Biden administration this past week that recognition would "harm" U.S.-Turkey ties.

## India virus patients suffocate amid oxygen shortage in surge

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — Indian authorities scrambled Saturday to get oxygen tanks to hospitals where COVID-19 patients were suffocating amid the world's worst coronavirus surge, as the government came under increasing criticism for what doctors said was its negligence in the face of a foreseeable public health disaster.

For the third day in a row, India set a global daily record of new infections. The 346,786 confirmed cases over the past day brought India's total to more than 16 million, behind only the United States. The Health Ministry reported another 2,624 deaths in the past 24 hours, pushing India's COVID-19 fatalities to 189,544. Experts say even those figures are likely an undercount.

The government ramped up its efforts to get medical oxygen to hospitals using special Oxygen Express trains, air force planes and trucks to transport tankers, and took measures to exempt critical oxygen supplies from customs taxes. But the crisis in the country of nearly 1.4 billion people was only deepening as overburdened hospitals shut admissions and ran out of beds and oxygen supplies.



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"Every hospital is running out (of oxygen). We are running out," Dr. Sudhanshu Bankata, executive director of Batra Hospital, a leading hospital in the capital, told New Delhi Television channel.

In a sign of the desperation unfolding over the shortages, a high court in Delhi warned Saturday it would "hang" anyone who tries to obstruct the delivery of emergency oxygen supplies, amid evidence that some local authorities were diverting tanks to hospitals in their areas. The court, which was hearing submissions by a group of hospitals over the oxygen shortages, termed the devastating rise in infections a "tsunami."

At least 20 COVID-19 patients at the critical care unit of New Delhi's Jaipur Golden Hospital died overnight as "oxygen pressure was low," the Indian Express newspaper reported.

"Our supply was delayed by seven-eight hours on Friday night and the stock we received last night is only 40% of the required supply," the newspaper quoted the hospital's medical superintendent, Dr. D.K. Baluja, as saying.

On Thursday, 25 COVID-19 patients died at the capital's Sir Ganga Ram Hospital amid suggestions that low oxygen supplies were to blame.

India's infection surge, blamed on a highly contagious variant first detected here, came after Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared victory over the coronavirus in January, telling the virtual gathering of the World Economic Forum that India's success couldn't be compared with anywhere else.

"In a country which is home to 18% of the world population, that country has saved humanity from a big disaster by containing corona effectively," Modi said.

But health experts and critics say a downward trend in infections late last year lulled authorities into complacency, as they failed to plug the holes in the ailing health care system that had become evident during the first wave. They also blame politicians and government authorities for allowing super-spreader events, including religious festivals and election rallies, to take place as recently as this month.

"It's not the virus variants and mutations which are a key cause of the current rise in infections," Dr. Anant Bhan, a bioethics and global health expert, tweeted this week. "It's the variants of ineptitude and abdication of public health thinking by our decision makers."

Dr. Vineeta Bal, who studies immune systems at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research in Pune city, said that at the heart of India's "paralyzing" oxygen shortage was the sense of complacency that took hold as cases declined.

When the virus first erupted in India last year, Modi imposed a harsh, nationwide lockdown for months to keep hospitals from being overwhelmed. But the government relaxed restrictions in the face of widespread financial hardship and Modi has refrained from ordering a new lockdown.

But a pandemic doesn't just end, Bal noted. Summing up the authorities' response, she said: "Failure of governance, failure of anticipation, failure of planning, compounded by this sense that we've conquered (the virus)."

Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah as well as opposition politicians this month took part in mass election rallies in five populous states with tens of thousands of supporters who were not wearing masks or social distancing.

In addition, religious leaders and hundreds of thousands of devout Hindus descended on the banks of the Ganges River in the northern Indian city of Haridwar last month for a major Kumbh festival. Experts have described these as super-spreader events.

"Political and religious leaders have been exemplary on television for not following the restriction that they're saying ordinary people should follow," Bal said.

Last week, the Supreme Court told Modi's government to produce a national plan for the supply of oxygen and essential drugs for the treatment of coronavirus patients.

The government said Saturday it would exempt vaccines, oxygen and other oxygen-related equipment from customs duty for three months, in a bid to boost availability.

In addition, Modi's emergency assistance fund, dubbed PM CARES, in January allocated some \$27 million for setting up 162 oxygen generation plants inside public health facilities in the country. Three months on, only 33 have been created, according to the federal Health Ministry.

But the Defense Ministry is set to fly 23 mobile oxygen generating plants within a week from Germany

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to be deployed at army-run hospitals catering to COVID patients. Each plant will be able to produce 2,400 liters of oxygen per hour, a government statement said Friday.

That's coming too late for hospitals in the capital and hard-hit states such as Maharashtra, which have turned to social media to plead with authorities to replenish their oxygen supplies. Early Saturday, Bankata's Batra hospital reported severe shortage of oxygen for its 190 admitted patients.

When the news anchor asked Bankata what happens when a hospital issues an SOS call as his had done, Bankata replied: "Nothing. It's over. It's over."

Hours later, the hospital received supplies to run for few hours.

Fortis Healthcare, a chain of hospitals across India, said Saturday that one of its hospitals in New Delhi "is running out of oxygen" and was suspending admissions. In a tweet, it said it had been waiting for fresh supplies since the morning.

As the oxygen scarcity deepened, local officials in several states disrupted movement of tankers and diverted supplies to their areas.

On Friday, the Press Trust of India news agency reported that a tanker-truck carrying oxygen supplies in Delhi's neighboring state of Haryana went missing. Days before, the news agency reported, a minister in Haryana blamed Delhi authorities for looting an oxygen tanker when it was crossing their territory.

"Unfortunately, many such incidents have occurred and have dire effect on hospitals in need of oxygen supplies," said Saket Tiku, president of the All India Industrial Gases Manufacturers Association.

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 them fast enough to bring down infections in time in the world's second most populous country.

India said this week 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.

## **From scarcity to abundance: US faces calls to share vaccines**

By MARLON GONZÁLEZ and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP) — Victor Guevara knows people his age have been vaccinated against COVID-19 in many countries. His own relatives in Houston have been inoculated.

But the 72-year-old Honduran lawyer, like so many others in his country, is still waiting. And increasingly, he is wondering why the United States is not doing more to help, particularly as the American vaccine supply begins to outpace demand and doses that have been approved for use elsewhere in the world, but not in the U.S., sit idle.

"We live in a state of defenselessness on every level," Guevara said of the situation in his Central American homeland.

Honduras has obtained a paltry 59,000 vaccine doses for its 10 million people. Similar gaps in vaccine access are found across Africa, where just 36 million doses have been acquired for the continent's 1.3 billion people, as well as in parts of Asia.

In the United States, more than one-fourth of the population — nearly 90 million people — has been fully vaccinated and supplies are so robust that some states are turning down planned shipments from the federal government.

This stark access gap is prompting increased calls across the world for the U.S. to start shipping vaccine supplies to poorer countries. That's creating an early test for President Joe Biden, who has pledged to restore American leadership on the world stage and prove to wary nations that the U.S. is a reliable partner after years of retrenchment during the Trump administration.

J. Stephen Morrison, senior vice president and director of the Global Health Policy Center at the Center for Strategic & International Studies in Washington, said that as the U.S. moves from vaccine scarcity to abundance, it has an opportunity to "shape the outcomes dramatically in this next phase because of the assets we have."

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Biden, who took office in January as the virus was raging in the U.S., has responded cautiously to calls for help from abroad.

He has focused the bulk of his administration's vaccination efforts at home. He kept in place an agreement struck by the Trump administration requiring drugmakers that got U.S. aid in developing or expanding vaccine manufacturing to sell their first doses produced in the country to the U.S. government. The U.S. has also used the Defense Production Act to secure vital supplies for the production of vaccine, a move that has blocked the export of some supplies outside the country.

White House aides have argued that Biden's cautious approach to promises around vaccine supply and delivery was validated in the wake of manufacturing issues with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and the subsequent safety "pause" to investigate a handful of reported blood clots. In addition, officials say they need to maintain reserves in the U.S. to vaccinate teenagers and younger children once safety studies for those age groups are completed and if booster shots should be required later.

The White House is aware that the rest of the world is watching. Last month, the U.S. shared 4 million vaccine doses with neighboring Canada and Mexico, and this past week, Biden said those countries would be targets for additional supplies. He also said countries in Central America could receive U.S. vaccination help, though officials have not detailed any specific plans.

The lack of U.S. vaccine assistance around the world has created an opportunity for China and Russia, which have promised millions of doses of domestically produced shots to other countries, though there have been production delays that have hampered the delivery of some supplies. China's foreign minister Wang Yi said this month that China opposes "vaccine nationalism" and that vaccines should become a global public good.

Professor Willem Hanekom, director of the Africa Health Research Institute and a vaccinologist, said wealthy countries have a stake in the success of vaccination efforts in other corners of the world.

"Beyond the moral obligation, the problem is that if there is not going to be control of the epidemic globally, this may ultimately backfire for these rich countries, if in areas where vaccines are not available variants emerge against which the vaccines might not work," Hanekom said.

The U.S. has also faced criticism that it is not only hoarding its own stockpiles, but also blocking other countries from accessing vaccines, including through its use of the law that gives Washington broad authority to direct private companies to meet the needs of the national defense.

Adar Poonawalla, chief executive of the Serum Institute of India, the world's largest maker of vaccines and a critical supplier of the U.N.-backed COVAX facility, asked Biden on Twitter on April 16 to lift the U.S. embargo on exporting raw materials needed to make the jabs.

India is battling the world's fastest pace of spreading infections. Its government has blocked vaccine exports for several months to better meet needs at home, exacerbating the difficulty of poor countries to access vaccine.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' 2020 annual report also raised eyebrows for a section titled "Combatting malign influences in the Americas," which said the U.S. had convinced Brazil to not buy the Russian shot.

The U.S. Embassy denied exerting any pressure regarding vaccines approved by Brazil's health regulator, which has not yet signed off on Sputnik V. Since March 13, Brazil has been trying to negotiate supply of U.S. surplus vaccines for itself, according to the foreign ministry.

There are also concerns that the U.S. might link vaccine sharing to other diplomatic efforts. Washington's loan of 2.7 million doses of AstraZeneca's shots to Mexico last month came on the same day Mexico announced it was restricting crossings at its southern border, an effort that could help decrease the number of migrants seeking entry into the United States.

Those sort of parallel tracks of diplomacy will be closely watched as the Biden administration decides with whom to share its surplus vaccine, particularly in Central America, home to many countries where migrant families and unaccompanied children are trying to make their way to the U.S.

"What we would hope to avoid is any perception that increased access to lifesaving vaccines in Central

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America is in exchange for increased tightening of border security," said Maureen Meyer, vice president for programs at the Washington Office on Latin America.

As the wait for vaccines continues in Honduras, desperation is growing.

Last week, a private business group announced it would try to buy 1.5 million vaccine doses to help government efforts, though it was unclear how it might obtain them. In March, authorities in Mexico seized 5,700 doses of purported Russian vaccines found in false bottoms of ice chests aboard a private plane bound for Honduras. The company owner who chartered the plane said he was trying to obtain vaccines for his employees and their families. The vaccine's Russian distributor said the vaccines were fake.

Lilian Tilbeth Hernández Banegas, 46, was infected with COVID-19 in late November and spent 13 days in a Tegucigalpa hospital. The first days she struggled to breathe and thought she would die.

The experience has made the mother of three more anxious about the virus and more diligent about avoiding it. The pandemic rocked her family's finances. Her husband sells used cars, but hasn't made a sale in more than four months.

"I want to vaccinate myself, my family to be vaccinated, because my husband and my children go out to work, but it's frustrating that the vaccines don't arrive," Hernández said.

There's plenty of blame to go around, said Marco Tulio Medina, coordinator of the COVID-19 committee at the National Autonomous University of Honduras, noting his own government's lackadaisical approach and the ferocity of the vaccine marketplace. But the wealthy can do more.

"There's a lack of humanism on the part of the rich countries," he said. "They're acting in an egotistical way, thinking of themselves and not of the world."

## Jerusalem tension triggers Gaza-Israel fire exchange

By FARES AKRAM and JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired some three dozen rockets into Israel overnight Saturday, while the Israeli military struck back at targets operated by the ruling Hamas group. The exchange came as tensions in Jerusalem spilled over into the worst round of cross-border violence in months.

The barrage of rocket fire came as hundreds of Palestinians clashed with Israeli police in east Jerusalem. The clashes, in which at least four police and six protesters were injured, have become a nightly occurrence throughout the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and show no signs of stopping.

The U.N. envoy to the region, Tor Wennesland, condemned the violence and said the United Nations was working with all sides to restore calm.

"The provocative acts across Jerusalem must cease. The indiscriminate launching of rockets towards Israeli population centers violates international law and must stop immediately," he said. "I reiterate my call upon all sides to exercise maximum restraint and avoid further escalation, particularly during the Holy month of Ramadan and this politically charged time for all."

The U.S. also appealed for calm, while neighboring Jordan, which serves as the custodian for Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites, condemned Israel's actions.

Jerusalem, home to holy sites sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, has long been a flashpoint in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 2014, similar tensions erupted into a 50-day war between Israel and Gaza's ruling Hamas militant group.

The Israeli military said a total of 36 rockets were fired into Israel throughout the night. It said six rockets were intercepted, while most of the others landed in open areas. There were no reports of injuries or serious damage, but the incoming rocket fire set off air-raid sirens throughout southern Israel.

In response, the army said fighter jets and helicopters struck a number of Hamas targets in Gaza, including an underground facility and rocket launchers. Hamas did not claim responsibility for the rocket fire, but Israel considers the group responsible for all fire emanating from the territory.

The military imposed limits on outdoor gatherings in southern Israel early Saturday but lifted the restrictions several hours later and allowed people to resume their normal routines.

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Israel and Hamas, an Islamic group sworn to Israel's destruction, are bitter enemies that have fought three wars and numerous skirmishes since Hamas seized control of Gaza in 2007.

Although neither side appears to have an interest in escalating tensions, Hamas sees itself as the defender of Jerusalem and may feel obligated to act, or at least tacitly encourage rocket attacks by other groups, ahead of upcoming Palestinian parliamentary elections. Hamas' armed wing has warned Israel "not to test" its patience.

At dawn, hundreds of people in Gaza challenged nightly curfews imposed by Hamas to curb the coronavirus outbreak and took to the streets in an act of solidarity with fellow Palestinians in Jerusalem, burning tires.

The Palestinians want east Jerusalem to be the capital of their future state. Its fate has been one of the most divisive issues in the peace process, which ground to a halt more than a decade ago.

Palestinians have clashed with Israeli police on a nightly basis since the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan nearly two weeks ago.

The tensions began when police placed barricades outside the Old City's Damascus Gate, where Muslims traditionally gather to enjoy the evening after the daytime fast.

The clashes intensified Thursday evening when hundreds of Palestinians hurled stones and bottles at police, who fired a water cannon and stun grenades to disperse them. Dozens of Palestinians were wounded in the melee.

At the same time, a far-right Jewish group known as Lahava led a march of hundreds of protesters chanting "Arabs get out!" toward the Damascus Gate. The group, led by a disciple of the late racist rabbi Meir Kahane, is allied with elements of a far-right party elected to Israel's parliament last month.

The show of force came in response to videos circulated on TikTok showing Palestinians slapping religious Jews at random. Other videos made in response to them appear to show Jews assaulting Arabs. After keeping them a few hundred yards (meters) away from Damascus Gate, police used water cannon, stun grenades and mounted police to push far-right protesters back toward mostly Jewish west Jerusalem.

In all, police said 44 people were arrested and 20 officers were injured.

There were concerns the violence could reignite following Friday noon prayers at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, but thousands of worshippers dispersed peacefully after Muslim religious leaders called for restraint.

But in the evening the clashes resumed as dozens of Palestinians marched toward an entrance to the walled Old City of Jerusalem. Police said the protesters threw stones and fireworks and damaged both civilian and police cars.

Palestinian medical officials said six Palestinians were injured, with two hospitalized. Israeli police said four officers were hurt.

Early on Saturday, Jordan strongly condemned "the racist attacks on Palestinians."

Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi tweeted: "As the occupying power under international law, Israel is responsible for stopping these attacks & for the dangerous consequences of failing to do so."

Jordan has had a peace agreement with Israel since 1994, but relations in recent years have been chilly, in part because of recurring disputes over Israeli actions in Jerusalem.

The U.S. Embassy said it was "deeply concerned" about the violence in recent days. "We hope all responsible voices will promote an end to incitement, a return to calm, and respect for the safety and dignity of everyone in Jerusalem," it said.

The Old City is home to a sensitive holy site known to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary and to Jews as the Temple Mount. The site, home to the Al Aqsa mosque compound, is the third-holiest site in Islam. It also is the holiest site in Judaism, revered as the spot where the biblical Temples once stood.

The sprawling hilltop compound has seen clashes on a number of occasions over the years and was the epicenter of the 2000 Palestinian intifada, or uprising.

## Indonesia navy declares lost sub sunk, all 53 aboard dead

By EDNA TARIGAN and FADLAN SYAM Associated Press

BANYUWANGI, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesia's navy on Saturday declared its missing submarine had sunk

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and cracked open, killing 53 crew members aboard, after finding items from the vessel over the past two days.

Military chief Hadi Tjahjanto said the presence of an oil slick as well as debris near the site where the submarine's last dive on Wednesday off the island of Bali were clear proof the KRI Nanggala 402 sank. Indonesia earlier considered the vessel to be only missing.

Navy Chief Yudo Margono told a press conference in Bali, "If it's an explosion, it will be in pieces. The cracks happened gradually in some parts when it went down from 300 meters to 400 meters to 500 meters ... If there was an explosion, it would be heard by the sonar."

The navy previously said it believes the submarine sank to a depth of 600-700 meters (2,000-2,300 feet), much deeper than its collapse depth of 200 meters (655 feet), at which point water pressure would be greater than the hull could withstand.

The cause of the disappearance was still uncertain. The navy had previously said an electrical failure could have left the submarine unable to execute emergency procedures to resurface.

Margono said that in the past two days, searchers found parts of a torpedo straightener, a grease bottle believed to be used to oil the periscope, debris from prayer rugs and a broken piece from a coolant pipe that was refitted on the submarine in South Korea in 2012.

"With the authentic evidence we found believed to be from the submarine, we have now moved from the 'sub miss' phase to 'sub sunk,'" Margono said at the press conference, in which the found items were displayed.

Margono said rescue teams from Indonesia and other countries will evaluate the findings. He said no bodies have been found so far. Officials previously said the submarine's oxygen supply would have run out early Saturday.

An American reconnaissance plane, a P-8 Poseidon, landed early Saturday and had been set to join the search, along with 20 Indonesian ships, a sonar-equipped Australian warship and four Indonesian aircraft.

Singaporean rescue ships were also expected Saturday, while Malaysian rescue vessels were due to arrive Sunday, bolstering the underwater hunt, officials said earlier Saturday.

Family members had held out hopes for survivors but there were no sign of life from the vessel. Indonesian President Joko Widodo had ordered all-out efforts to locate the submarine and asked Indonesians to pray for the crew's safe return.

The German-built diesel-powered KRI Nanggala 402 has been in service in Indonesia since 1981 and was carrying 49 crew members and three gunners as well as its commander, the Indonesian Defense Ministry said.

Indonesia, 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.

## Stephen Curry, Warriors welcome back fans and beat Nuggets

By JANIE McCAULEY AP Sports Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Stephen Curry's pregame warmup had a little added flair with so many more people watching again. He loved seeing all the familiar ushers as he drove up to the arena three hours early. He thanked the fans before tipoff for being patient and persistent through a pandemic.

Curry scored 32 points, Draymond Green added 19 assists and 12 rebounds, and the Golden State Warriors welcomed back fans for the first time since the pandemic began by beating the Denver Nuggets 118-97 on Friday night.

"Just a little bit different of a buzz inside and outside the arena," Curry said. "I know you got to take it slow and obviously keep everybody safe but ramp up how many people can get in the building and slowly but surely get back to a full, packed house where that energy is second to none. Us on the floor, we live off of that. You try to bring it when it's an empty arena, you do your best but it makes such a difference with fans."

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Nikola Jokic scored 19 points for Denver in a matchup of MVP candidates with Curry, who received a rare technical with 33.7 seconds left in the third when he wanted a foul call. Michael Porter Jr. led the Nuggets with 26 points, hitting seven 3-pointers.

Denver forward Will Barton went down 59 seconds into the game with a strained right hamstring and didn't return. He hit the floor awkwardly on the baseline beneath the Nuggets basket.

"Our guys regrouped," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. "Will went down. He went down early and then we had to find other guys to step in and play. But I think all of you guys are fishing for we lost this game because of Will's injury. Don't make that excuse for us. Will Barton went down, he's hurt and we feel for him. But we all get paid on the first and 15th, do your job. We didn't do our job tonight — I didn't, the players didn't, and it's unacceptable."

Fans chanted "M-V-P! M-V-P!" for Curry, who shot 11 for 18 with four 3s and also grabbed eight rebounds in his 12th 30-point performance over the past 13 games and 29th of the season.

"I'm not surprised. I think it's a no-brainer," Mychal Mulder said.

Jordan Poole knocked down a corner 3-pointer to beat the buzzer ending the third as Golden State got another big boost from its bench to win a third straight home game. Poole finished with 15 points and Kelly Oubre Jr. 23 in his new reserve role.

"It's a new role for Kelly but you can see how he's embraced it, how he's handled it," coach Steve Kerr said.

The Warriors began a stretch with nine of their final 13 games at home — where they hadn't played with fans in the building for 409 days. Attendance was 1,935, with the team having hoped for about 2,000 people.

Fans were greeted with a special video board message — welcome home — limited number of player family members and guests had been the only ones in attendance.

The depleted Warriors welcomed back Juan Toscano-Anderson from the concussion protocol after he took a dangerous fall and cut his head at Boston last week. He entered at the 6:08 mark of the first quarter to loud cheers and contributed nine points and eight rebounds.

"Having fans is always fun, especially after playing in empty gyms," Toscano-Anderson said. "I appreciate all the fans. Shoutout to all the essential workers who have made this possible."

Golden State shot 53.6% and had 39 assists.

"You have to find a way to get stops and we were just unwilling to do that tonight," said a disgusted Malone, whose Denver team shot 38.6%.

## CURRY THE ENTERTAINER

Curry clearly loved having fans to entertain again, going through a dazzling warmup in which he kicked basketballs high toward the enormous video scoreboard and had fun — waving to a cheering group above the tunnel once done with his pregame work.

The two-time MVP took a moment before tipoff to thank the fans for their patience during this "unprecedented situation."

"There was such a great energy in the building tonight and a reminder of what we've missed," Kerr said. "Only I guess a couple thousand but it felt like a lot more. Just such a welcome sight."

## FIRST FAN

Anthony Calvo, 27, of San Ramon, was honored as the first fan back at Chase Center. New Warriors COO Brandon Schneider greeted him at the door about 4:50 p.m. after Calvo arrived to take his COVID test at 10:30 a.m.

An employee of the City of Redwood City who helps secure school supplies for teens in need, he planned to connect after the game with wife Kerissa for their planned Big Sur weekend getaway.

He received a No. 1 First Fan Back uniform and signed gear from the team.

## TIP-INS

Nuggets: Barton was injured on Golden State's home floor after Jamal Murray tore the ACL in his left knee late in the game here against the Warriors on April 12 and needed surgery. ... Denver had won its

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previous two on the road.

Warriors: F Damion Lee and G Kent Bazemore are both in the league's COVID-19 health and safety protocols. ... The Warriors didn't practice Thursday or hold a shootaround Friday and Kerr expects limited practices down the stretch to keep his team fresh. "The players need rest more than they need work at this point," he said.

UP NEXT

Nuggets: Host Houston on Saturday in a road-home back-to-back looking to sweep the three matchups this season with the Rockets.

Warriors: Host Sacramento on Sunday having lost four of five to the Kings.

## Chocolate chip diplomacy: Biden courts Congress with gusto

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The pictures always make it look so presidential: Joe Biden sitting in a tall-back chair, surrounded by the arrayed members of Congress invited for a meeting at the White House.

But inside the Oval Office, lawmakers tell a different story, of a president so warm, so engaged, so animated — standing up, sitting down, calling on lawmakers by name, swapping stories about their hometowns — and so determined to make them get to work and get things done.

On their way out the door, they are offered a chocolate chip cookie, that most American of snacks, a to-go boost for the potential partnership between this White House and the Congress.

"It was the day that you will remember, not so much because you were in the Oval Office, but because of the attention the president gave to us — the personal attention, the commitment, the authenticity and the seriousness of caring about people, and especially people who have been marginalized," said Rep. Joyce Beatty, D-Ohio, the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

"Very presidential with a personal flair," she said.

The outreach to Capitol Hill is nothing out of the ordinary. New presidents typically check the box of inviting lawmakers to the White House at the start of an administration to set the stage for the legislating to come.

Donald Trump held impromptu White House sessions on a range of topics in freewheeling, often televised gatherings unlike many the country had ever seen. Barack Obama took a more measured approach, even though he, too, sweetened the White House visits with M&Ms candies to go.

Biden has hosted more than 100 lawmakers for a visit during his first 100 days, from powerful committee chairs to influential caucus leaders, Republicans and Democrats alike. Part get-to-know-you sessions, part strategy building, the private meetings are often seen as a bit of political theater for all sides to at least appear to be putting their best selves forward.

But unlike his immediate predecessors, Biden is a veteran of Capitol Hill, who not only knows many of the lawmakers personally, but also understands the rhythms of their workdays in Congress. Digging deep into the roster of lawmakers, he is bringing in the subcommittee chairs handling infrastructure, the former small-town mayors with executive office know-how and those who, despite years on Capitol Hill, have never seen the inner sanctum of the Oval Office.

The invitations convey his understanding of the value of sharing power, assigning prominence and tapping into the pent-up desire of even the most partisan legislators to legislate.

Sending them off with pockets full of cookies wrapped with the golden seal of the presidency doesn't hurt, either, a little chocolate chip cookie diplomacy to carry back to the Hill.

"President Biden has always believed in engaging Congress as a co-equal branch of government," said Rep. Joe Neguse, D-Colo., a rising member of party leadership, who shared his cookies with his staff. "And the proof is in the results — his agenda has moved through Congress very swiftly."

As the president rounds the 100-day milestone, the proceeds of his many hours of outreach will be put to the test as Congress considers the administration's priorities, particularly Biden's \$2.3 trillion infrastructure package.



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The president was able to quickly usher passage of the massive \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 rescue, signed into law last month, but the next bills to revamp election laws, gun control and immigration will be more difficult in the narrowly divided House and Senate, with slim Democratic majorities and the need for some Republican bipartisanship.

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., the chair of the Veterans Affairs Committee, was among an early group visiting the White House at the start of the administration to discuss virus aid.

The senator had never attended an Oval Office meeting, and as the group went around the room, the president "did mostly listening," Tester said.

But when it was done, "The instructions were: Get the damn thing passed."

Still, for all the overtures, the White House quickly rebuffed a group of 10 Republican senators who ventured to the White House with an alternative virus aid package the administration dismissed as insufficient.

"It's very disappointing," said Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio.

As the Republicans made their opening offer that day, Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, even showing charts with his ideas and assessments, Portman said the president told them staff would follow up. But it turns out staffers were shaking their heads silently no, signaling the go-it-alone strategy to come.

Republican Sen. Todd Young of Indiana said the atmosphere "was friendly, it was accommodating, there was a whole lot of listening, and back-and-forth exchange. But we never heard back." He said, "That's very troubling."

The next day, the Senate Democratic leader, Chuck Schumer, announced they would move forward under the so-called budget reconciliation procedure, and the coronavirus bill was eventually approved on a straight party-line vote, all Republicans opposed.

Conspicuously absent from the invite list have been some of the top Republican leaders.

The White House considered the COVID-19 relief an emergency package, which needed to be approved swiftly, unlike the infrastructure bill that is expected to take months to bring to passage as the president reaches for bipartisanship.

Over the course of a week, Biden met with the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and his 30-minute session with the Congressional Black Caucus stretched for two hours.

The president "knows that all politics is personal," said White House deputy press secretary Andrew Bates. "He enjoys hosting members of both parties and looks forward to holding more bipartisan meetings to find common ground."

At Monday's meeting with the former mayors and governors about his infrastructure plan, Biden opened with a direct approach about the importance of investing in the United States, particularly as the country competes with China.

"The president very much stressed that he wants to work with Republicans on this, but we are serious," said Rep. Norma Torres, D-Calif., a former mayor.

As the Republicans suggested alternatives, balking at Biden's proposal to raise the corporate tax rate from 21% to 28% to pay for it, the president gave them an assignment.

"I will wait to hear from you," Biden told the group, as Torres recalled. But he also put them on a quick timeline and said he wanted "a reasonable compromise."

And then there are the meetings that sometimes go without notice.

At the end of a Rose Garden ceremony over gun violence, as the crowd of lawmakers and families of those killed in mass shootings began to disperse, Biden quietly did a U-turn and gathered some of them inside the Oval Office, discussing gun control legislation in Congress.

"Joe Biden is nothing if not gracious, and generous with his time," said Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., who was among those in the room that afternoon, and had a cookie.

"We've known him for a lot of years. He's Joe, even though he's Mr. President."

## Dispute over Russian pipeline tests Biden's Europe outreach

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By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pressure is growing on President Joe Biden to take action to prevent the completion of a Russian gas pipeline to Europe that many fear will give the Kremlin significant leverage over U.S. partners and allies. Yet such action could provoke an enormous rift in trans-Atlantic relations, notably with Germany, at a time when Biden has made restoring good ties with Europe a priority.

As the Nord Stream 2 pipeline nears completion, U.S. lawmakers from both parties have stepped up demands on a reluctant White House to impose new sanctions on Russian and European companies to halt the project. But prospects of that happening would seem slim: Germany continues to support the project as it steps up consumption of natural gas, and the pipeline is roughly 95% finished.

Biden has said he opposes the pipeline, which is owned by Russian state company Gazprom, with investment from several European companies. He has been keen to portray himself as tough on Russian President Vladimir Putin while being a strong supporter of Eastern European countries like Poland and Ukraine that are dead set against it as it bypasses both.

Of potentially greater concern to the U.S., the Russia-to-Germany pipeline would increase Western Europe's already heavy dependence on Russian energy while U.S.-Russian tensions are soaring over a number of issues, including Ukraine, election interference, cyber intrusions and the crackdown on opposition figure Alexei Navalny and his supporters.

At the same time, the administration is seeking broad European support, especially from Germany, the continent's economic powerhouse, for its planned withdrawal from Afghanistan, climate change measures and efforts to counter China's increasingly global assertiveness. It's not clear if sanctions targeting businesses from Germany and elsewhere would undermine efforts to advance those goals and repair relations that were frayed during Donald Trump's presidency.

On Wednesday, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously signed off on legislation that would require the administration to either impose sanctions on 20 companies involved in the pipeline's financing and construction or explain why they deserve exemptions. In January, the Trump administration hit several Russian firms and ships with penalties for their involvement, but Biden has not expanded the list.

The legislation was sponsored by vocal administration critic Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas. But it also won support from some of Biden's strongest Democratic foreign policy supporters in the Senate, like committee chair Bob Menendez of New Jersey, Chris Coons of Delaware and Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire.

"I think, right now, as we see Putin trying to eliminate his biggest opposition leader, Navalny, in prison, the best shot we can make is to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, if we are going to get his attention," Shaheen said.

Democrats agreed to support the sanctions after Republicans promised to drop opposition to two of Biden's top State Department nominees. The bipartisan support suggests the administration will be hard-pressed to ignore it. Biden was already stung by criticism in February for not expanding on the Trump administration's sanctions.

"We share an overall attitude towards Nord Stream 2 with many on Capitol Hill, and that is the position that it is a bad deal," State Department spokesperson Ned Price said Thursday. "We will continue to do everything we can, including consistent with legislation that's already on the books, to oppose its construction and finalization."

But the administration has yet to take a position on the new legislation, which congressional aides on both sides of the aisle believe has a good chance of passing. It would give Biden 15 days from the date of passage to make a determination on whether to hit the 20 companies and vessels with sanctions.

The sanctions — which would apply to German, Russian, Polish and Austrian entities — would freeze their assets, make it difficult for them to do any international business and possibly affect their executives.

Even if Biden vetoes the legislation, he will face another deadline for action in mid-May when the State Department must submit to Congress an update on the administration's compliance with previous laws aimed at protecting European energy security that require sanctions on unspecified companies involved in the construction of the pipeline that bypasses both Poland and Ukraine.

On Tuesday, Chancellor Angela Merkel defended Germany's cooperation with Russia on Nord Stream 2. She noted that Russian gas already flows freely into Europe along other routes, including the existing Nord Stream 1 pipeline under the Baltic Sea to Germany.

"I would like to point out that the gas delivered through Nord Stream 2, which isn't yet flowing, is no worse than the gas from Nord Stream 1, that which flows through Ukraine, and that which comes across Turkey from Russia," Merkel said.

## Summit shows Biden's big vision on fighting climate change

By MATTHEW DALY and CHRISTINA LARSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — What did the world learn at Joe Biden's global summit about his vision of the battle to save the world's climate?

For two days, Biden and his team of climate experts pressed his case that tackling global warming not only can avert an existential threat, but also benefit the U.S. economy — and the world's as well.

The virtual summit, based at the White House and featuring more than 40 world leaders whose views were beamed to a global online audience, offered fresh details on how the U.S. might hope to supercharge its efforts on climate while leveraging international action to spur new technologies to help save the planet.

Biden opened the conference by announcing a goal to cut up to 52% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 — double the target set by President Barack Obama in the 2015 Paris climate accord. The 2030 goal vaults the U.S. into the top tier of countries on climate ambition.

"This goal is eyebrow-raising, but it has to be," said Marshall Shepherd, a climate expert at the University of Georgia. "To move the needle on the climate crisis, we need bold actions like this rather than individual or incremental actions only."

While new targets from the U.S. and others got mostly positive reviews, they still fall a bit short of what some scientists say is necessary to avoid a potentially disastrous 1.5 degree Celsius rise in global temperatures.

Bill Hare, director of Climate Analytics, a climate science think tank in Berlin, said his team's calculations showed the U.S. needs to reduce emissions 57% by 2030 to stay on a 1.5 degree Celsius pathway. He calls the new target "really a major improvement," but also "not quite enough."

Still, the U.S. goal is ambitious, and reflects lessons learned, not only by Biden — Obama's vice president — but by his team of battle-tested aides, including climate envoy John Kerry and White House adviser Gina McCarthy. Both served in the Obama administration.

Biden and his team "absorbed the lessons of the Obama years," including watching the "stumbles" in climate foreign policy at a disappointing 2009 Copenhagen summit, said Hare. "What shocked me is just how fast this moved," less than 100 days after Biden took office.

The 78-year-old Biden, known as a cautious, mainstream politician during four decades in public life, as president has shown a willingness to take aggressive action on issues from virus relief to immigration.

"In so many areas, he is much bolder than Obama, right out of the gate, and that's certainly true on climate," said Nathaniel Keohane, a former Obama White House adviser who now is a senior vice president of the Environmental Defense Fund.

The message from the White House is clear, Keohane added: "The United States is ready to go all-in to beat the climate crisis."

As the conference wrapped up Friday, Biden said he has come to see the economic opportunities of the climate fight as the silver lining in a cloud that threatens the world's very future.

"My mother would always say when something very bad would happen in our family, 'Out of everything bad, Joe, something good will come,'" said Biden, whose life has repeatedly been touched by tragedy.

On climate, the good that Biden hopes will emerge is the chance to remake the global economy and produce millions of jobs in clean energy and technology that will be needed to slow global warming.

"Is there anything else you can think of that could create as many good jobs going into the middle of the 21st century?" he asked.

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The climate crisis also has provided an opportunity for the U.S. to work with longtime rivals such as Russia and China. While Biden has often disagreed with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Russian leader now is "talking about how you capture carbon from space," Biden said.

Despite their differences, "two big nations can cooperate to get something done ... that benefits everybody," Biden said.

Biden's re-entry into the Paris agreement and his decision to host the summit were welcomed by world leaders.

"I'm delighted to see that the United States is back ... in climate politics. Because there can be no doubt about the world needing your contribution if we really want to fulfill our ambitious goals," Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel told Biden.

"We are all so delighted to have the United States back" in the climate game, added South Africa's President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa.

Even after four years of inaction on climate change under President Donald Trump, "the United States still has cachet," said Alice Hill, a senior fellow for energy and environment at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington. She pointed to the attendance of world leaders on both friendly and otherwise chilly terms with the U.S., including China, Russia, Germany and Brazil.

Kerry, who has worked on climate issues in a long career as a senator and former secretary of state, said the next 10 years are crucial to slow global warming and "avoid the worst consequences" of the climate crisis.

"This has to be the decade of decision," Kerry said.

But even as Biden opts to go big on climate, his plan faces obstacles, including continued resistance from congressional Republicans and the reality that businesses are struggling to create needed technology on an affordable scale.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell has dismissed Biden's plans, including a \$2.3 trillion infrastructure package, as costly and ineffective.

The infrastructure bill includes up to \$1 trillion in spending on clean energy and climate change, including 500,000 charging stations for electric vehicles, expansion of solar and wind power and technology to capture and store carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants. About \$174 billion would go to help put school children, commuters and truckers into electric vehicles and buses, \$50 billion to make infrastructure more resilient against volatile weather linked to climate change, and \$100 billion to update the power grid.

The administration has pitched the bill as the "American Jobs Plan," and Moody's Analytics estimates gains of about 2.7 million jobs.

Failure to adopt the package could doom Biden's commitments to cut carbon emissions in half, although officials say substantial progress can be made through administrative regulations by the Environmental Protection Agency, Transportation Department and other agencies.

The White House says officials will continue to reach out to Republicans and will remind them that the proposal's ideas are widely popular with a wide swath of Americans.

## Summit catapults world ahead in crucial year to curb warming

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The world moved closer to curbing the worst of global warming after this week's climate summit. But there's still a long way to go, and the road to a safer future gets even rockier from here.

With the world trying to prevent more than another half-degree of warming (0.3 degrees Celsius) or so to achieve the most stringent of goals set by the 2015 Paris climate accord, scientists and politicians alike say this decade is crucial for any chance of getting that done. And that means 2021 is a "make-or-break year for people and the planet," U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said.

Everything culminates in November with heavyweight climate negotiations in Glasgow, Scotland. While these climate meetings happen annually, every five or so years there is a weightier session of the type that in the past has led to major deals or disappointments. It's that time again.

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By November, the U.N. climate negotiating process calls for 200 nations to ratchet up commitments to cut emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases by 2030. The rich countries need to come up with more money to help the poor countries develop greener power and adapt to climate change's harsh realities. And nations need to agree on a price on carbon pollution after several years of gridlock. They must figure out essentially how to make it all work.

"Glasgow is the world's last best hope," said U.S. special climate envoy John Kerry.

There will be important stops in Germany in May for a minister's level meeting, in a British seaside town in June for a meeting of leaders of big economies and a final push at U.N. headquarters in September, but everything is about what President Joe Biden called "a road that will take us to Glasgow."

Biden's summit, organized in less than 100 days, was designed to send the world off on a fast start toward Glasgow, and experts said it did so. They figure it pushed the globe anywhere from one-eighth to more than halfway along the journey, with mixed opinions on whether the United States did enough.

"If it were 100 miles to Glasgow, we have just done the first 12 miles on the lowlands, and we have a 88 hard miles to go, with a lot of difficult terrain to cross before we get there," said Bill Hare, director of the German think tank Climate Analytics. Hare said while countries showed a significant increase in ambition to fight climate change, he was "hoping for slightly more."

Climate scientist Zeke Hausfather, who directs climate issues at the Breakthrough Institute, was more optimistic: "I'd say this gets us about half the way (say, 50 miles) to where we need to get by Glasgow."

Nate Hultman, director of the University of Maryland's Center for Global Sustainability, was even more optimistic: "This has ended up being a critical international moment that provided a strong boost. ... We're now, I'd say, about 70 miles toward Glasgow."

For his part, Kerry concluded the climate summit by saying that countries representing more than half of the world's economic output have committed to a path that would achieve the Paris goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times. Beyond that level, environmental problems get substantially worse, with possible dangerous tipping points, scientists say. The world has already warmed 1.2 degrees Celsius (2.2 degrees Fahrenheit).

Hare's calculations show the world didn't quite make as much progress as Kerry claims. For example, to be on the path to limit warming to 1.5 degrees, the United States needs to cut greenhouse gas emissions 57% below 2005 levels by 2030, he said. The Biden target announced this week was 50% to 52%. The European Union's goals also came close but didn't quite get there. The only major economy now on track with 1.5 degrees is the United Kingdom, Hare said.

But there's disagreement on that because of the different ways calculations can be made. The Rhodium Group, a research institute, said Biden's target puts America in line with the 1.5 degrees goal.

Climate Action Tracker, a group of scientists including Hare who monitors nations' pledges of carbon pollution cuts, calculated that targets announced since last September cut about 12% to 14% from the emissions gap. That emissions gap is that big area between what nations promise to do and the pollution reductions needed by 2030 to limit future warming to the 1.5 degrees goal. The announcements cut somewhere between 2.9 billion and 4.1 billion tons (between 2.6 billion and 3.7 billion metric tons) of carbon from the gap, the tracker calculated.

With the new targets from the United States, the United Kingdom, European Union, Japan and Canada, the new emissions gap is 22 billion to 26 billion tons (20 billion to 24 billion metric tons) of carbon pollution. Hare chastised Australia's efforts as "really disgraceful" and said Brazil made a weaker pledge than in 2015, while Russia didn't offer anything substantive.

"The Earth Day summit substantially improved the odds of a successful global climate summit in November," said Nigel Purvis, a climate negotiator in the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. "With new action by rich nations and new assistance for poor nations, the world should be able to make additional progress in 2021."

Poorer nations that haven't made big pollution cut promises yet, especially India, are waiting to see if promises about financial help become more concrete before they commit to bigger pollution cuts, Hare said. But there's hope there because of Biden's promise to double public climate finance available to de-

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veloping countries by 2024 and Germany's announcing 4 billion euros a year extra, Hare said.

Also important was South Korea's promise to stop financing coal power plants in other countries, Hare said. Activists hope China and Japan will follow suit, but they haven't yet.

Alice Hill, a senior fellow for energy and environment at the Council on Foreign Relations, said this week's summit "did not alone lead to the kind of enormous leap toward that what we need in fighting climate change."

While the U.N.'s Guterres noted strengthened commitments, he said, "There is still a long way to go."

Former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg, Guterres' special envoy for climate ambitions and solutions, told The Associated Press that "There's no question we moved forward. ... But now comes the hard work — actually delivering results."

## Nets back atop East after beating Celtics 109-104

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — After Kyrie Irving piled up the points in two previous games against Boston, his shot wasn't there Friday night.

He made up for it with every other aspect of his game.

Irving just missed a triple-double despite an awful shooting night, Joe Harris scored 20 points and the Brooklyn Nets regained first place in the Eastern Conference with a 109-104 victory over the Celtics on Friday night.

"We know that we're not going to have it right away some games, so we've just got to battle through," Irving said.

He had torched his former team for 77 points in 67 minutes in a pair of victories this season, but this time shot just 4 for 19 and missed all six of his 3-pointers.

But he scored 15 points, including the finishing free throws with 1.6 seconds left, and added 11 assists, nine rebounds and four steals as the Nets finished a season sweep of the Celtics, just the third in their franchise history.

"He didn't have his typical scoring night, but it's few and far between that he doesn't score the ball at a prolific rate," Nets coach Steve Nash said. "He didn't, but he definitely disrupted the basketball defensively and overall he draws a lot of attention, so I thought he was great in a lot of different ways than we're accustomed to."

Jayson Tatum had 38 points and 10 rebounds but was doing it mostly alone in the first half, when he had 25 of the Celtics' 51 points.

Payton Pritchard (22 points) and Marcus Smart (19) got it going after halftime, but the Celtics couldn't overcome 19 turnovers that gave Brooklyn a whopping 32-0 advantage in fast-break points.

"Any time you turn the ball over a lot and you give a team like Brooklyn opportunities to get out in transition, get easy shots and stuff like that, it's going to be tough to win games," Pritchard said.

Both teams were without two of their three best players. Kevin Durant missed a third straight game with a bruised left thigh, remaining sidelined along with James Harden (right hamstring).

Jaylen Brown missed his second straight game with left shoulder bursitis, while Kemba Walker rested his left knee on the second night of Boston's back-to-back after beating Phoenix on Thursday.

Boston cut Brooklyn's 17-point lead to 98-95 with about 3 1/2 minutes left after consecutive 3-pointers by Pritchard and Tatum. But Harris answered with a 3-pointer and Irving passed ahead to Jeff Green for a dunk to quickly push the lead back to eight.

Green had 19 points for Brooklyn, which won for only the third time in six games. But that's good enough to move back ahead of idle Philadelphia, which has dropped three in a row.

Brooklyn piled up a 17-0 advantage in fast-break points in the first half and threatened to blow it open but couldn't contain Tatum, whose 3-pointer with 3.4 seconds left capped his 16-point second quarter and cut it to 60-51 at halftime.

The Nets got their running game going again, with Harris making consecutive 3-pointers off passes from

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Irving to cap a 10-0 spurt that pushed the lead to 86-70 in the final minute of the third.

## TIP-INS

Celtics: Evan Fournier returned after missing nine straight games because of health and safety protocol reasons but missed all seven shots. ... Brown's injury isn't severe but he doesn't have full range of motion, coach Brad Stevens said, adding the guard would be day to day.

Nets: Mike James scored eight points after signing a 10-day contract Friday. The nine-year pro has played mostly in Europe and spent the last two seasons with CSKA Moscow and averaged 17.8 points in 41 games this season. ... Nash said it was possible but probably not likely that Tyler Johnson (right knee soreness) could return Sunday.

## NO REST — OR MAYBE SOME — FOR THE WEARY

With Durant and Harden injured, Irving had played more than 37 minutes in three straight games, including on back-to-back nights Tuesday and Wednesday.

"I'm not comfortable with it, but I don't know what choice we have," Nash said. "We're limited on our bodies, we're limited on our ballhandlers. So we're in that difficult position right now."

The Celtics are in a similar spot with Tatum, but Stevens said he will get a day of rest in the near future.

## SEASON SWEEPS

The Nets' other sweeps of Boston came in 1993-94 and 1996-97. They went 4-0 in both seasons.

## UP NEXT

Celtics: At Charlotte on Sunday.

Nets: Host Phoenix on Sunday.

## 7 deputies on leave after fatal shooting of Black man

By ALLEN G. BREED and JONATHAN DREW Associated Press

ELIZABETH CITY, N.C. (AP) — Seven North Carolina deputies have been placed on leave in the aftermath of a Black man being shot and killed by members of their department serving drug-related search and arrest warrants, authorities said Friday.

The disclosure comes as calls increase for the release of deputy body camera footage amid signs, including emergency scanner traffic, that Andrew Brown Jr. was shot in the back and killed as he was trying to drive away.

Pasquotank County Sheriff's Office Maj. Aaron Wallio confirmed the number of deputies on leave due to the shooting in an email Friday. Sheriff Tommy Wooten II has previously said that multiple deputies fired shots and were placed on leave after Brown was killed Wednesday morning.

Wallio's email also said that another three deputies have recently resigned, but he later clarified that the resignations were unrelated to the shooting. He said the department has about 55 total sworn deputies.

Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper joined calls for the swift release of the body camera footage, saying that initial reports of what happened "are tragic and extremely concerning."

"The body camera footage should be made public as quickly as possible," he said in a tweet Friday night.

Earlier in the day, the City Council in Elizabeth City unanimously voted to send a letter to the sheriff, local prosecutor and State Bureau of Investigation demanding release of body camera footage. The measure also directed city staff to petition a local court to release the footage if the sheriff denies the council's request. Wooten has confirmed that at least one deputy was wearing an active body camera but hasn't given a timetable for releasing it.

"Doing nothing is not an option," said Councilman Michael Brooks.

The council's measure isn't binding on the Pasquotank County Sheriff's Office, which is a separate entity from city government. In North Carolina, a judge must generally sign off on release of body camera footage, but the law says anyone can file a petition in court seeking its release. A coalition of news outlets including The Associated Press also filed a petition Friday asking a local judge to release the footage.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Friday that President Joe Biden is aware of Brown's death, but that Biden would likely leave decisions over the timetable for releasing body camera footage to local authorities.

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"Obviously, the loss of life is a tragedy and obviously we're thinking of the family members and the community," Psaki said at her daily briefing.

Wooten has said deputies from his department including a tactical team were attempting to serve drug-related search and arrest warrants when Brown was shot, but he has offered few other details. Nearby Dare County had issued two arrest warrants for Brown on drug-related charges including possession with intent to sell cocaine. Brown, 42, had a criminal history dating back to the 1990s, including past drug convictions.

Recordings of scanner traffic compiled by broadcastify.com from the morning of the shooting include emergency personnel indicating that Brown was shot in the back. An eyewitness has said that deputies fired shots at Brown as he tried to drive away, and a car authorities removed from the scene appeared to have multiple bullet holes and a shattered back window.

"We are responding. Law enforcement on scene advises shots fired, need EMS," says one woman, who refers to the address where the warrant was served.

"EMS has got one male 42 years of age, gunshot to the back. We do have viable pulse at this time," said a male voice. Someone then said that first responders were trying to resuscitate the man.

The sheriff, district attorney and state medical examiner didn't immediately respond to emails Friday asking for comment on the scanner traffic. The State Bureau of Investigation, which is looking into the shooting, declined to comment.

WAVY-TV first reported on Friday the number of deputies who were on leave or had resigned.

During demonstrations Thursday night, protesters questioned why deputies opened fire in a residential area down the street from an elementary school. Brown's car came to rest in front of a house near yellow road signs marking the approach to the school.

"That means they fired a shot in a school zone," Quentin Jackson, regional director for the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, said while addressing a group of fellow demonstrators.

People in the crowd nodded and shouted, "Yeah." One man yelled, "And they fired into a moving vehicle."

"When does this stop?" Jackson asked. "When does it stop?"

On Wednesday night, hours after the shooting, Mike Gordon, who lives in the house where Brown's car hit a tree and came to a stop, showed a reporter a bullet hole next to his front door that went through an antique wall clock and all the way into his kitchen.

"I'm happy and thankful to the Lord that my wife and I wasn't home," he said.

Still, Gordon, a former military police officer, said he's thankful for the work law enforcement does, and he hoped people would reserve judgment until the facts come out.

"You never know what had happened or what went wrong," he said. "But it doesn't matter now. The young man is gone."

## In court, Ghislaine Maxwell pleads not guilty to new charges

By LARRY NEUMEISTER and TOM HAYS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Ghislaine Maxwell faced her trial judge in person for the first time Friday as lawyers squabbled over exactly when she should be tried on sex trafficking charges that allege that she procured teenage girls for Jeffrey Epstein to sexually abuse at his posh residences.

Maxwell, a British socialite and one-time girlfriend of the financier, pleaded not guilty to sex trafficking conspiracy and an additional sex trafficking charge that were added in a rewritten indictment released last month by a Manhattan federal court grand jury. The new indictment stretched the timespan of the charges from three years to a decade.

Wearing a prison blue short-sleeved smock, Maxwell sat with her lawyers before U.S. District Judge Alison J. Nathan took the bench in a courtroom where everyone wore masks and sat apart from one another to protect against the coronavirus. Members of the media were in the jury box.

Maxwell answered "Yes, your honor" when she was asked if she had seen the indictment and "I have, your honor" when asked if she had ample opportunity to review it.

Her lawyers maintain they need months of additional preparation because of the new charges, making it impossible to keep a July 12 trial date. Prosecutors have said the new charges should not require sub-



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stantial additional work because they add a single victim to the three already described in the indictment. The judge didn't make an immediate decision on a possible new date for the trial, but told lawyers she wants to avoid a long delay.

As Maxwell was led out of court by deputy marshals, she kissed two of her lawyers on the cheek through her mask and waved to two spectators, including her sister.

Epstein and Maxwell accuser Danielle Bensky, a client of high-profile attorney David Boies, sat among several spectators directly behind the black-haired Maxwell. Her view of the defendant was partially obscured by a man whose black jacket was emblazoned with "US Marshal."

"I think it's incredibly vindicating to see her sit there," Bensky said outside court. "I do think that it's hard to do and it's painful, but it's good too."

The Associated Press does not name victims of sexual assault unless they come forward publicly, as Bensky has. Her accusations are not part of the indictment.

Outside court, Boies said he hoped to have at least one of over a dozen Epstein accusers he represents at every court hearing involving Maxwell prior to her trial. One of his clients is among the four women whose claims are outlined in the indictment.

"I think it's important they have access to what's going on and that the court knows this case is important to them," he said.

Epstein took his own life at a Manhattan federal jail in August 2019 while awaiting a sex-trafficking trial.

Maxwell, 59, has been in custody at a federal lockup in Brooklyn since her arrest last July at a \$1 million New Hampshire estate where her lawyers say she went to live to avoid the spotlight of media attention and to remain safe from threats. Prosecutors, though, say she took steps to hide her whereabouts and movements.

Outside court, Maxwell attorney David Markus called his client "courageous and tough."

He said it was difficult for Maxwell's sister, Isabel, to be in court as well.

The lawyer said two of Maxwell's brothers wanted to be there, too, but were unable to come from England because of COVID-19 restrictions.

"But they are behind their sister 1,000%," he said.

Maxwell has failed three times in her bid to be granted bail, despite offering a \$28.5 million package and agreeing to live with electronic monitoring and armed guards who would ensure she does not leave a New York City residence. The U.S. citizen also has offered to give up citizenship in the United Kingdom and France. A bail appeal hearing is scheduled next week before the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

In court documents, prosecutors say Maxwell recruited at least three teenage girls, including a 14-year-old, between 1994 and 1997 for Epstein to sexually abuse. The superseding indictment says another teenage girl was recruited in the early 2000s, when she was 14. The indictment alleges Maxwell sometimes joined in the abuse.

A lawyer for Maxwell requested the in-person arraignment Friday, citing "media coverage" and a "debacle" that occurred during a remote hearing in a related civil case before another judge, when members of the public clogged up a line provided by the court for people outside the courthouse to listen in.

## No sign of Indonesian sub as air dwindles, search resumes

By EDNA TARIGAN and NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — The oxygen supply for the 53 crew members of an Indonesian submarine missing in waters off Bali is believed to have run out early Saturday with no sign of the vessel while the search resumed, bolstered by the arrival of a sonar-equipped Australian warship.

The KRI Nanggala 402 went missing after its last reported dive Wednesday off the resort island, and concern is mounting it may have sunk too deep to reach or recover in time. The navy chief said the submarine was expected to run out of oxygen early Saturday morning.

"We will maximize the effort today, until the time limit tomorrow at 3 a.m.," military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Achmad Riad told reporters Friday. A news conference was scheduled for later Saturday morning.

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There have been no signs of life from the submarine, but family members held out hope that the massive search effort would find the vessel in time.

"The family is in a good condition and keeps praying," said Ratih Wardhani, the sister of 49-year-old crewman Wisnu Subiyantoro. "We are optimistic that the Nanggala can be rescued with all the crew."

Twenty-four Indonesian ships and a patrol plane were mobilized for the search, focusing on the area where an oil slick was found after the submarine disappeared during an exercise. Rescuers made similar massive searches in the previous two days.

An American reconnaissance plane, P-8 Poseidon, was expected to join the search Saturday and a second Australian ship was due soon.

"These two Australian ships will help expand the search area and extend the duration of the search effort," Australian Navy Rear Adm. Mark Hammond said.

Singaporean and Malaysian rescue ships were also expected in the coming days.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo canceled a visit to Banyuwangi port, where some rescue ships left earlier, to prepare for a weekend regional summit in Jakarta, officials said. He asked Indonesians to pray for the crew's safe return, while ordering all-out efforts to locate the submarine.

"Our main priority is the safety of the 53 crew members," Widodo said in a televised address on Thursday. "To the family of the crew members, I can understand your feelings and we are doing our best to save all crew members on board."

There's been no conclusive evidence the oil slick was from the sub. Navy Chief of Staff Adm. Yudo Margono said oil could have spilled from a crack in the submarine's fuel tank or the crew could have released fuel and fluids to reduce the vessel's weight so it could surface.

Margono said an unidentified object exhibiting high magnetism was located at a depth of 50 to 100 meters (165 to 330 feet) and officials held out hope it is the submarine.

The navy said it believes, however, that the submarine sank to a depth of 600-700 meters (2,000-2,300 feet), much deeper than its collapse depth, at which water pressure would be greater than the hull could withstand. The vessel's collapse depth was estimated at 200 meters (655 feet) by a South Korean company that refitted the vessel in 2009-2012.

The cause of the disappearance is still uncertain. The navy has said an electrical failure could have left the submarine unable to execute emergency procedures to resurface.

Submarine accidents are often disastrous.

In 2000, the Russian nuclear submarine Kursk suffered internal explosions and sank during maneuvers in the Barents Sea. Most of its 118 crew died instantly, but 23 men fled to a rear compartment before they later died, mainly of suffocation. In November 2017, an Argentine submarine went missing with 44 crew members in the South Atlantic, almost a year before its wreckage was found at a depth of 800 meters (2,625 feet).

But in 2005, seven men aboard a Russian mini-sub were rescued nearly three days after their vessel was snagged by fishing nets and cables in the Pacific Ocean. They had only six hours of oxygen left before reaching the surface.

The German-built diesel-powered KRI Nanggala 402 has been in service in Indonesia since 1981 and was carrying 49 crew members and three gunners as well as its commander, the Indonesian Defense Ministry said.

Indonesia, 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.

## US to resume J&J COVID vaccinations despite rare clot risk

By LAURAN NEERGAARD and MIKE STOBBE Associated Press

U.S. health officials lifted an 11-day pause on COVID-19 vaccinations using Johnson & Johnson's single-dose shot on Friday, after scientific advisers decided its benefits outweigh a rare risk of blood clot.

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The government uncovered 15 vaccine recipients who developed a highly unusual kind of blood clot out of nearly 8 million people given the J&J shot. All were women, most under age 50. Three died, and seven remain hospitalized.

But ultimately, federal health officials decided that J&J's one-and-done vaccine is critical to fight the pandemic — and that the small clot risk could be handled with warnings to help younger women decide if they should use that shot or an alternative.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the J&J vaccine has important advantages for some people who were anxiously awaiting its return. And the Food and Drug Administration updated online vaccine information leaflets for would-be recipients and health workers, so that shots could resume as early as Saturday.

"This is not a decision the agencies reached lightly," FDA Acting Commissioner Janet Woodcock told reporters late Friday.

CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky added that the pause should increase confidence in vaccine safety, showing "that we are taking every one of those needles in a haystack that we find seriously."

The U.S. decision — similar to how European regulators are rolling out J&J's shot — comes after advisers to the CDC debated in a daylong meeting just how serious the risk really is. Panelists voted 10-4 to resume vaccinations without outright age restrictions, but made clear that the shots must come with clear warnings about the clots.

"I think we have a responsibility to be certain that they know this," said Dr. Sarah Long of Drexel University College of Medicine, who voted against the proposal because she felt it did not go far enough in warning younger women.

The committee members all agreed the J&J vaccine "should be put back into circulation," panel chairman Dr. Jose Romero, Arkansas' health secretary, said in an interview after the vote. "The difference was how you convey the risk ... It does not absolve us from making sure that people who receive this vaccine, if they are in the risk group, that we inform them of that."

European regulators earlier this week made a similar decision, deciding the clot risk was small enough to allow the rollout of J&J's shot. But how Americans ultimately handle J&J's vaccine will influence other countries that don't have as much access to other vaccination options.

Dr. Paul Stoffels, J&J's chief scientific officer, pledged that the company would work with U.S. and global authorities "to ensure this very rare event can be identified early and treated effectively."

At issue is a weird kind of blood clot that forms in unusual places, such as veins that drain blood from the brain, and in patients with abnormally low levels of the platelets that form clots. Symptoms of the unusual clots, dubbed "thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome," include severe headaches a week or two after the J&J vaccination — not right away — as well as abdominal pain and nausea.

The government initially spotted six cases of the rare clots, with nine more cases coming to light in the last week or so. But even the first handful of reports raised alarm because European regulators already had uncovered similar rare clots among recipients of another COVID-19 vaccine, from AstraZeneca. The AstraZeneca and J&J shots, while not identical, are made with the same technology.

European scientists found clues that an abnormal platelet-harming immune response to AstraZeneca's vaccine might be to blame -- and if so, then doctors should avoid the most common clot treatment, a blood thinner called heparin.

That added to U.S. authorities' urgency in pausing J&J vaccinations so they could tell doctors how to diagnose and treat these rare clots. Six patients were treated with heparin before anyone realized that might harm instead of help.

Dr. Jesse Goodman of Georgetown University closely watched Friday's deliberations and said people should be made aware of the clotting risk but that it shouldn't overshadow the benefits of COVID-19 protection.

"We need to treat people as adults, tell them what the information is and give them these choices," said Goodman, a former vaccine specialist at the FDA.

Two-dose vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna, which are made differently and haven't been linked to

clot risks, are the mainstay of the U.S. vaccination effort. But many states had been counting on the easier-to-store, one-dose option to also help protect hard-to-reach populations including people who are homeless or disabled.

The CDC's advisers struggled to put the rare clot cases into perspective. COVID-19 itself can cause a different type of blood clots. So can everyday medications, such as birth control pills.

The side effect debate isn't the only hurdle facing J&J. The FDA separately uncovered manufacturing violations at a Baltimore factory the company had hired to help brew the vaccine. No shots made by Emergent BioSciences have been used — J&J's production so far has come from Europe. But it's unclear how the idled factory will impact J&J's pledge to provide 100 million U.S. vaccine doses by the end of May and 1 billion doses globally this year.

## **Biden working group targets jobs for fossil fuel communities**

By CUNEYT DIL Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — Six large regions nationwide that have economies reliant on fossil fuels have been targeted for federal investment and aid to create renewable energy jobs, as detailed in a new report from President Joe Biden's administration.

The report released Friday is part of Biden's plan to reduce America's use of coal and other fossil fuels in order to fight climate change. The White House held a global summit this week and Biden announced he intends to cut U.S. coal and petroleum emissions in half by 2030.

The report, from a working group comprising several federal agencies, identifies \$37.9 billion in currently available funding across a wide variety of departments that can help support job creation, rural infrastructure and reclaiming abandoned mine lands.

"President Biden is committed to providing federal leadership in partnership with coal, oil and gas, and power plant communities to create good-paying union jobs, spur economic revitalization, remediate environmental degradation, and support energy workers," the report says.

One of the hardest-hit areas is coal country. The report seeks an immediate focus on the 25 most coal-dependent areas, with Appalachia top of the list, in addition to Alaska and states in the west such as Wyoming and Utah. The Department of Energy will begin taking applications for a \$75 million fund for carbon capture and storage technology, the report says.

Another \$19.5 million in awards will be available for extracting critical minerals that can be used to develop batteries, magnets and components for electric vehicles.

The report also identifies available funding and grants to expand rural broadband, upgrade water treatment facilities affected by coal and promote infrastructure projects that can create jobs.

It is the group's first report on coal and power plant communities since Biden's executive order in late January that aims at "tackling the climate crisis at home and abroad."

Experts say greenhouse gas emissions are heating the Earth's climate dangerously and worsening floods, droughts and other natural disasters.

The group plans to hold a series of town hall meetings between Biden officials and the top coal communities, which also include areas in Illinois, New Mexico, Arizona, Indiana and Texas.

Coal employment has declined from 175,000 jobs in 1985 to 40,000 jobs in 2020, according to the report.

In West Virginia, Republican leaders have opposed the Democratic president's climate change agenda. Republican Attorney General Patrick Morrisey said Friday he could go to court to fight against Biden's pledged "transformational changes" to reduce pollutants.

"We should not be rushing to this plan for 2030," Morrisey said.

Republican West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice, a businessman with investments in coal companies, said he opposed Biden's plan to speed up the reduction of coal use but said, "at the same time, with our diversification and where we're going in West Virginia, we'll be okay."

Others are more supportive of Biden's efforts. The nation's largest coal miners' union said Monday it would accept the president's plan to move away from coal and other fossil fuels in exchange for a "true

energy transition” that includes thousands of jobs in renewable energy and spending on technology to make coal cleaner.

Cecil Roberts, president of the United Mine Workers of America, said ensuring jobs for displaced miners — including 7,000 coal workers who lost their jobs last year — is crucial to any infrastructure bill taken up by Congress.

Brian Anderson, a West Virginian who is director of the National Energy Technology Laboratory, is leading Biden’s energy communities working group.

“More West Virginians need a seat at the table, and I’m confident that Brian will act in the best interest of the people of our state,” Republican U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito said in a tweet.

## America’s gas-fueled vehicles imperil Biden’s climate goals

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — For President Joe Biden to reach his ambitious goal of slashing America’s greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030, huge reductions would have to come from somewhere other than one of the worst culprits: auto tailpipes.

That’s because there are just too many gas-powered passenger vehicles in the United States — roughly 279 million — to replace them in less than a decade, experts say. In a typical year, automakers sell about 17 million vehicles nationwide. Even if every one of the new ones were electric, it would take more than 16 years to replace the whole fleet.

What’s more, vehicles now remain on America’s roads for an average of nearly 12 years before they’re scrapped, which means that gas-fueled vehicles will predominate for many years to come.

“We’re not going to be able to meet the target with new-car sales only,” said Aakash Arora, a managing director with Boston Consulting Group and an author of a study on electric vehicle adoption. “The fleet is too big.”

So unless government incentives could somehow persuade a majority of Americans to scrap their cars and trucks and buy electric vehicles, reducing tailpipe emissions by anything close to 50% would take far longer than the Biden timetable. Last year, fewer than 2% of new vehicles sold in the United States were fully electric.

“If every new vehicle sold today was an electric vehicle and it was entirely powered by renewable energy overnight, it would take 10 years or more for us to achieve a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions,” said Chris Atkinson, a professor of mechanical engineering and director of smart mobility at Ohio State University.

Which means that other sectors of the economy would have to slash greenhouse gas emissions deeply enough to make up the shortfall in the auto industry.

Transportation as a whole, which includes not only cars and trucks but also ships and airplanes, is the single largest source of such pollution. Of the nearly 6.6 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide that were emitted in the United States in 2019, transportation produced 29%. Next was electricity generation at 25%. Then came factories at 23%, commercial and residential buildings at 13% and agriculture at 10%.

Electricity generation is the most likely source of faster reductions. That sector has already made major strides. Last year, carbon emissions from electricity generation were 52% lower than the government had projected they would be in 2005, according to government’s Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. The reasons: more use of natural gas, solar and wind power, as well as reduced demand as the economy has evolved to achieve gains in energy efficiency.

Biden, who unveiled his goals at a climate summit with world leaders Thursday, has yet to detail the greenhouse gas reductions that his administration envisions for each sector of the economy. Overall, the reductions are intended to limit global warming as part of the president’s vision of a nation that produces cutting-edge batteries and electric cars, a more efficient electrical grid and caps abandoned oil rigs and coal mines.

Gina McCarthy, Biden’s top climate adviser, appeared to signal Thursday that deeper cuts in emissions

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would have to come from sectors other than the auto industry to reach the goals. She defended the administration's decision not to set a specific deadline for ending sales of new gas-powered cars or for achieving net-zero emissions from the transportation sector.

"We have a whole lot of ways" to cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in half without a transportation goal, McCarthy said.

For the transportation sector, the government says it will improve vehicle efficiency, invest in low-carbon renewable fuels and produce transit, rail and bicycling improvements. The administration also wants to convert the 650,000-vehicle federal vehicle fleet to battery power.

To increase sales of electric vehicles, the administration plans to spend \$15 billion to build a half-million charging stations by 2030, as well as offer unspecified tax credits and rebates to cut the cost.

Swapping the entire fleet of gas burners for electric vehicles could take even longer than 20 years. Todd Campau, associate director of automotive for IHS Markit, estimates that the number of mostly gas-powered vehicles on U.S. roads, will keep growing — to 284 million by 2025.

"The situation is only getting worse as far as the volume that needs to be exchanged," Campau said.

He and others say it would take highly attractive government incentives to lure additional people out of their gas-burners — something like a reprise of the 2009 cash-for-clunkers program proposed by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York, but on a vastly larger scale. The Schumer plan proposes rebates of at least \$3,000 for people to scrap combustion vehicles for electrics.

Bill Hare, director of Climate Analytics, a Berlin-based climate think tank, predicted that pollution reductions in the transportation sector will come after 2030 as the electric vehicle fleet grows.

"What you would then end up seeing is more or less complete decarbonization of the transport sector — but by 2050," he said.

Even if tailpipe emissions can't be cut quickly, Biden's goals can be reached with significant cuts in electric powerplant emissions as well as reductions in methane pollution from oil wells and cuts in hydrofluorocarbons used in refrigeration and air conditioning, said Kate Larsen, director at Rhodium Group, a research firm. Studies show that electric power emissions can be cut 80% by 2030 with a mix of investment and regulations, Larsen said.

"That will get us the bulk of the way," she said. "We won't see 50% reductions across the board."

Zero emissions electric generation sets the stage for converting cars and many other pollution sources to electricity, she said.

Even countries that are ahead of the U.S. in electric vehicle adoption, mainly in Europe and China, estimates are that sales still won't put enough electric vehicles in use to reach 2030 carbon dioxide reduction goals, according to a Boston Consulting report. In Europe, which has strong incentives and strict pollution limits, the market share of battery-only and plug-in hybrids jumped from 3% to 10.5% last year. That's far from enough.

"If half of new cars sold around the world in 2035 are zero-emission vehicles, 70% of the vehicles on roads will still be burning gasoline or diesel," the report said.

Faster adoption could be limited, too, by a lack of factory capacity to make batteries. The U.S., for instance, has only four plants that are either built or in the works. It would need 50 to electrify the entire fleet, said OSU's Atkinson.

Even so, a switch from internal combustion to electric vehicles is well under way, and Boston Consulting says it will accelerate. The company foresees new plug-in hybrid and battery electric vehicle sales rising from 12% of the global market in 2020 to 47% in 2025. It notes that battery costs are falling and automakers plan to introduce 300 new EV models by 2023, giving consumers a huge array of choices.

"There's a path for this to move quite quickly," said Nathan Niese, an author of the Boston Consulting report. "Business is moving in that direction. The government can just be the accelerator on top of that."

## Court record: Chauvin to be sentenced June 16 in Floyd death

By AMY FORLITI Associated Press

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MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Derek Chauvin, the former Minneapolis police officer convicted of murder and manslaughter for pressing his knee against the neck of George Floyd as the Black man said he couldn't breathe, will be sentenced in June, according to an online court docket for the case.

Online records say Chauvin will be sentenced June 16 at 1:30 p.m. by Peter Cahill, the Hennepin County judge who oversaw the trial that included nearly three weeks of testimony from bystanders, medical experts and police use-of-force trainers.

Chauvin, 45, was convicted Tuesday of all three counts against him: second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. Under Minnesota statutes he'll only be sentenced on the most serious one — second-degree murder.

While that count carries a maximum sentence of 40 years, experts say he won't get that much. They say that for all practical purposes, the maximum he would face is 30 years, and he could get less.

Under Minnesota sentencing guidelines, the presumptive second-degree murder sentence for someone with no criminal record like Chauvin would be 12 1/2 years. Judges can sentence someone to as little as 10 years and eight months or as much as 15 years and still be within the advisory guideline range.

But in this case, prosecutors are seeking a sentence that goes above the guideline range, called an "upward departure." They cited several aggravating factors, including that Floyd was particularly vulnerable, that Chauvin was a uniformed officer acting in a position of authority, and that his crime was witnessed by multiple children — including a 9-year-old girl who testified that watching the restraint made her "sad and kind of mad."

Both sides are expected to file written arguments on whether there were aggravating factors, and Cahill will make a finding before the sentencing hearing.

Even if aggravating factors are found to be present, experts say Cahill likely wouldn't sentence Chauvin to anything more than 30 years — because previous Supreme Court rulings indicate anything more than that would risk a reversal on appeal.

No matter what sentence Chauvin gets, in Minnesota it's presumed that a defendant with good behavior will serve two-thirds of the penalty in prison and the rest on supervised release, commonly known as parole.

That means if Chauvin is sentenced to 30 years, he would likely serve about 20 behind bars, as long as he causes no problems in prison. Once on supervised release, he could be sent back to prison if he violates parole conditions.

Chauvin is currently in Minnesota's only maximum-security prison, and is in a single cell for his safety.

He did not testify at trial, and it's not known if he will make a statement at sentencing.

Meanwhile, Cahill ruled Friday that the prospective juror list, juror profiles, questionnaires and the original verdict form with the foreperson's signature will remain nonpublic until further court order.

Cahill told jurors early on that their names would be kept under seal until he deemed it safe to release them. In Friday's order he said the case is still of high interest and he'll keep jurors' names sealed "to protect those jurors desiring to remain anonymous from unwanted publicity or harassment." He said jurors who wish to speak about the case may do so.

He said he would wait at least 180 days before reviewing his decision on juror confidentiality.

## Summit shows Biden's big vision on fighting climate change

By MATTHEW DALY and CHRISTINA LARSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — What did the world learn at Joe Biden's global summit about his vision of the battle to save the world's climate?

For two days, Biden and his team of climate experts pressed his case that tackling global warming not only can avert an existential threat, but also benefit the U.S. economy — and the world's as well.

The virtual summit, based at the White House and featuring more than 40 world leaders whose views were beamed to a global online audience, offered fresh details on how the U.S. might hope to supercharge its efforts on climate while leveraging international action to spur new technologies to help save the planet.

Biden opened the conference by announcing a goal to cut up to 52% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions

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by 2030 — double the target set by President Barack Obama in the 2015 Paris climate accord. The 2030 goal vaults the U.S. into the top tier of countries on climate ambition.

"This goal is eyebrow-raising, but it has to be," said Marshall Shepherd, a climate expert at the University of Georgia. "To move the needle on the climate crisis, we need bold actions like this rather than individual or incremental actions only."

While new targets from the U.S. and others got mostly positive reviews, they still fall a bit short of what some scientists say is necessary to avoid a potentially disastrous 1.5 degree Celsius rise in global temperatures.

Bill Hare, director of Climate Analytics, a climate science think tank in Berlin, said his team's calculations showed the U.S. needs to reduce emissions 57% by 2030 to stay on a 1.5 degree Celsius pathway. He calls the new target "really a major improvement," but also "not quite enough."

Still, the U.S. goal is ambitious, and reflects lessons learned, not only by Biden — Obama's vice president — but by his team of battle-tested aides, including climate envoy John Kerry and White House adviser Gina McCarthy. Both served in the Obama administration.

Biden and his team "absorbed the lessons of the Obama years," including watching the "stumbles" in climate foreign policy at a disappointing 2009 Copenhagen summit, said Hare. "What shocked me is just how fast this moved," less than 100 days after Biden took office.

The 78-year-old Biden, known as a cautious, mainstream politician during four decades in public life, as president has shown a willingness to take aggressive action on issues from virus relief to immigration.

"In so many areas, he is much bolder than Obama, right out of the gate, and that's certainly true on climate," said Nathaniel Keohane, a former Obama White House adviser who now is a senior vice president of the Environmental Defense Fund.

The message from the White House is clear, Keohane added: "The United States is ready to go all-in to beat the climate crisis."

As the conference wrapped up Friday, Biden said he has come to see the economic opportunities of the climate fight as the silver lining in a cloud that threatens the world's very future.

"My mother would always say when something very bad would happen in our family, 'Out of everything bad, Joe, something good will come,'" said Biden, whose life has repeatedly been touched by tragedy.

On climate, the good that Biden hopes will emerge is the chance to remake the global economy and produce millions of jobs in clean energy and technology that will be needed to slow global warming.

"Is there anything else you can think of that could create as many good jobs going into the middle of the 21st century?" he asked.

The climate crisis also has provided an opportunity for the U.S. to work with longtime rivals such as Russia and China. While Biden has often disagreed with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Russian leader now is "talking about how you capture carbon from space," Biden said.

Despite their differences, "two big nations can cooperate to get something done ... that benefits everybody," Biden said.

Biden's re-entry into the Paris agreement and his decision to host the summit were welcomed by world leaders.

"I'm delighted to see that the United States is back ... in climate politics. Because there can be no doubt about the world needing your contribution if we really want to fulfill our ambitious goals," Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel told Biden.

"We are all so delighted to have the United States back" in the climate game, added South Africa's President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa.

Even after four years of inaction on climate change under President Donald Trump, "the United States still has cachet," said Alice Hill, a senior fellow for energy and environment at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington. She pointed to the attendance of world leaders on both friendly and otherwise chilly terms with the U.S., including China, Russia, Germany and Brazil.

Kerry, who has worked on climate issues in a long career as a senator and former secretary of state,



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said the next 10 years are crucial to slow global warming and “avoid the worst consequences” of the climate crisis.

“This has to be the decade of decision,” Kerry said.

But even as Biden opts to go big on climate, his plan faces obstacles, including continued resistance from congressional Republicans and the reality that businesses are struggling to create needed technology on an affordable scale.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell has dismissed Biden’s plans, including a \$2.3 trillion infrastructure package, as costly and ineffective.

The infrastructure bill includes up to \$1 trillion in spending on clean energy and climate change, including 500,000 charging stations for electric vehicles, expansion of solar and wind power and technology to capture and store carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants. About \$174 billion would go to help put school children, commuters and truckers into electric vehicles and buses, \$50 billion to make infrastructure more resilient against volatile weather linked to climate change, and \$100 billion to update the power grid.

The administration has pitched the bill as the “American Jobs Plan,” and Moody’s Analytics estimates gains of about 2.7 million jobs.

Failure to adopt the package could doom Biden’s commitments to cut carbon emissions in half, although officials say substantial progress can be made through administrative regulations by the Environmental Protection Agency, Transportation Department and other agencies.

The White House says officials will continue to reach out to Republicans and will remind them that the proposal’s ideas are widely popular with a wide swath of Americans.

## Resilient redwood forest a beacon of hope for California

By MARTHA MENDOZA Associated Press Writer

BIG BASIN REDWOODS STATE PARK, Calif. (AP) — Eight months after a lightning siege ignited more than 650 wildfires in Northern California, the state’s oldest park — which was almost entirely ablaze — is doing what nature does best: recovering.

Big Basin Redwoods State Park is closed, but during a backcountry guided tour earlier this week, clusters of chartreuse shoots were budding on blackened redwood branches and trunks. Bright yellow bush poppies, white violets and star lilies dotted the scorched landscape. Hillsides of purple California lilac shrubs were fixing nitrogen in the soil. And new Knobcone pine trees, which need temperatures above 350 degrees to pop open their cones and drop their seeds, were sprouting.

“I think nature is finding a way,” State Parks senior environmental scientist Joanne Kerbavaz said.

Scientists, parks advocates and conservations say the resiliency of Big Basin Redwoods State Park is cause for hope well beyond the Santa Cruz mountains. In California, COVID-19 infections and deaths have dropped rapidly as a widespread vaccine rollout appears to be turning the corner. And in the burned communities that lost homes in last year’s fires, construction vehicles crowd narrow roads to lay new foundations.

At first glance, Big Basin Redwoods State Park is a mess. The entire 18,000-acre (7,284-hectare) park, which has about 1 million visitors a year, burned hard and fast for 24 hours and is still smoldering in a few spots, causing nearly \$200 million in damage.

More than 100 structures were destroyed, including the historic park headquarters, tent cabins, picnic tables, viewing platforms and trail railings. Dozens of bridges are gone, and logs litter the forest floor. In some places, smoldering subterranean root balls are still smoking, leaving dangerous underground ash pits, Kerbavaz said.

Since last August, damage assessors have been trying to identify what toxins, hazards and other waste needs to be removed. The park doesn’t look much different than it did a week after the fire, when an Associated Press reporter and photographer hiked the renowned Redwood Trail and confirmed that most of the ancient redwoods, about 2,000 years old and among the tallest living things on Earth, had survived.

The next eight to 10 months will be spent cleaning up the park, hauling out hulks of charred vehicles,

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rubble from collapsed roads and bridges and damaged campground structures. It will be up to a year before the public is allowed any safe access on trails beyond a small coastal area of Rancho Del Oso, which should open around Memorial Day, State Parks District Superintendent Chris Spohrer said.

But no one should expect a straight rebuilding of what was lost, he said.

"Everything is on the table," Spohrer said. "We need to be setting expectations for the public that when they come back, it will not look the same."

When Big Basin opened in 1902, it marked the genesis of redwood forest conservation. But ideas about buildings, layout and land use have changed over 119 years.

"Think of it as reimaging and re-envisioning, not rebuilding," Spohrer said.

Conservationists and advocates support a wide open planning process. They also urge quick action because state and federal officials are currently funding wildfire recovery efforts and new infrastructure projects, a rare opportunity to tap into taxpayer dollars for public lands.

"I'd hate to ever suggest we think that a fire is a good thing, but there is no question it wiped the slate clean — and that's something you just don't see in any other existing park," said Sara Barth, executive director of Sempervirens Fund, which in 1900 spearheaded efforts to protect six square miles (15.5 sq. km.) of old-growth redwood forest that is now in the center of Big Basin.

The state now can consider ways to make it more equitable and accessible to people who haven't, in the past, been visiting, Barth said.

"When Big Basin was established, it was a beacon for the state parks system," she said. "In this fire and rebirth, you have an opportunity again."

Sam Hodder, president of Save the Redwoods League, said the public can take inspiration as the forest quickly recovers.

"The trees themselves will tell about resilience and recovery and the broader California landscape," he said. "While this is a difficult and heartbreaking situation to be in, it does give us an opportunity to think about doing things differently, that takes into consideration climate resilience and acknowledges that fire is an inevitable inhabitant of this landscape."

Redwoods are designed to be fire resistant. In old-growth forests, most trees have burn scars dating back hundreds of years.

On Aug. 19, 2020, as trees ignited and animals fled, the only sounds in Big Basin were the roar of wildfire and the thundering crash as large trees fell.

These days, tree tops are filled with birdsong. And on the forest floor, the lizards, skinks and salamanders that buried themselves deep in decayed organic matter as fire rolled by above are clambering back into the creeks.

## Kentucky's Clarke mourned by teammates, basketball world

By GARY B. GRAVES AP Sports Writer

The death of former Kentucky guard Terrence Clarke following a car accident in Los Angeles sparked an outpouring of grief and support from around basketball, including reaction by Los Angeles Lakers superstar LeBron James.

The university announced Clarke's death from a two-car crash in a release Thursday night. A player-organized candlelight public vigil outside the team dormitory was announced for Friday night, hours after Wildcats coach John Calipari arrived in California to be with Clarke's family and wrote on his web site that he was "still trying to process what has happened to a kid we all loved."

Teammates and players the 19-year-old Clarke was preparing to compete with and against in the NBA, including James, also posted condolences on social media.

On CoachCal.com, Calipari recalled how the Boston native remained upbeat through an injury that limited him to just eight games, and his personality's impact on teammates.

"His heart was overflowing with love for his family, his friends and his teammates," Calipari wrote. "He was as caring of a person as I have ever coached. His enthusiasm and energy — not just for basketball,

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for life — are what we all hope to have in our journey.”

“Terrence had figured that part out — that if you wake up every day with a smile on your face and a joy in everything you do, this life is beautiful.”

Kentucky 7-footer Olivier Sarr, who this week followed his teammate into the NBA draft, posted a picture of himself being comforted by Clarke on Instagram. Sarr wrote, “Lil bruh... I love you Forever” with a broken heart emoji and a message in French before ending, “Rest easy.”

Former Kentucky player and Philadelphia 76ers rookie Tyrese Maxey tweeted, “My heart is extremely heavy right now!” and offered prayers to his Clarke’s family.

On Instagram, James posted a picture of Clarke and wrote, “REST IN PARADISE NEPHEW!!! with several emojis.

Boston Celtics player Jaylen Brown, who mentored Clarke and had him as a guest at multiple games last season, posted several photos of himself with Clarke and asked that his name be called at this summer’s NBA draft. Fellow NBA players such as Atlanta Hawks guard Trae Young and the Indiana Pacers’ Cassius Stanley also expressed their sorrow in posts.

Clarke’s fatal accident came a day after he and Kentucky teammate Brandon Boston Jr. signed with Klutch Sports Group.

Los Angeles Police Department Sergeant John Matassa, who works in the Valley Traffic Division, told ESPN that Clarke was a solo occupant in a vehicle that ran a red light going “at a very high rate of speed” in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles at approximately 2:10 p.m. PDT.

Matassa said surveillance video showed that Clarke collided with another vehicle preparing to turn left, hit a street light pole and then a block wall. Clarke was taken to Northridge Hospital Medical Center and later pronounced dead.

Matassa said the other driver, who was in a truck, did not claim any injuries. Clarke was driving a 2021 Hyundai Genesis and not wearing his seat belt properly, according to Matassa.

Celtics coach Brad Stevens heard reports about the crash and Clarke’s death shortly after his team beat the Phoenix Suns on Thursday night. Clarke was familiar to the Celtics, their players and even Stevens’ son.

“Not sure how much I want to talk about the game, when you consider he’s a Boston kid ... those kids are important to us here,” Stevens said. “I never met him. My son looks up to him. Hard to talk about a basketball game.”

## **LGBT activists not excited by Jenner’s campaign for governor**

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

Though Caitlyn Jenner is one of the most famous transgender people in America, the announcement of her candidacy for California governor was greeted hostilely by one of the state’s largest LGBTQ-rights groups and by many trans activists around the country.

“Make no mistake: we can’t wait to elect a #trans governor of California,” tweeted the group, Equality California. “But @Caitlyn\_Jenner spent years telling the #LGBTQ+ community to trust Donald Trump. We saw how that turned out. Now she wants us to trust her? Hard pass.”

Jenner — the former Olympic gold medalist and reality TV personality -- is a Republican and supported Trump in 2016. She later criticized his administration for some discriminatory actions against transgender people, but has failed to convince many trans-rights advocates that she is a major asset to their cause.

“Caitlyn Jenner is a deeply unqualified hack who doesn’t care about anyone but herself,” tweeted trans activist Charlotte Clymer. “Her views are terrible. She is a horrible candidate.”

Jennifer Finney Boylan, a transgender writer and professor at Barnard College, appeared on multiple episodes of Jenner’s TV show, “I Am Cait” and considers her a friend. But she’s not an admirer of Jenner’s politics.

“I wish her well personally,” Boylan said via email. “But I can’t see how the conservative policies she is likely to embrace will help Californians.”

Wyatt Ronan of the Human Rights Campaign, a major national LGBTQ-rights organization, said Jenner

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"is not the leader California needs."

"Her support of Donald Trump, the most virulent and vocal anti-LGBTQ president in American history, and her decision to hire Trump's inner circle for her campaign are just two examples why," he said.

David Badash, editor of an LGBTQ-oriented news and opinion site called The New Civil Rights Movement, noted that Jenner's campaign website outlined no policy positions and offered two options to those visiting the site: "Shop" and "Donate."

Badash questioned why Jenner would run as a Republican at a time when GOP legislators in more than 20 states have been pushing bills aimed at curtailing transgender youths' ability to play school sports and receive gender-affirming medical care.

Some activists found reason to welcome Jenner's announcement, saying it was further evidence that transgender Americans are running for office more frequently.

Rodrigo Heng-Lehtinen of the National Center for Transgender Equality Action Fund noted that in the 2020 election, Sarah McBride of Maryland became the first openly trans person elected to a state Senate seat and Stephanie Byers of Kansas became the first openly trans Native American elected to a state legislature.

In Vermont, Christine Hallquist won the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in 2018, but lost the general election to incumbent Republican Phil Scott.

"Voters want leaders who will deliver results for their communities, no matter who they are," Heng-Lehtinen said.

Attorney Sasha Buchert, co-director of the Transgender Rights Project at the LGBTQ-rights group Lambda Legal, said when the public sees transgender people in public life it "serves to expand public awareness of the reality and diversity of trans lives."

"It matters to us what policies candidates support — and what their track record might be — on a full range of issues, not just trans rights and inclusion," Buchert added. "That is the lens one should always use in evaluating any candidate, including Caitlyn Jenner."

## Go forth and spend: Call for action closes US climate summit

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, CHRISTINA LARSON and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — World leaders shared tales of climate-friendly breakthroughs — and feverish quests for more — to close President Joe Biden's virtual global climate summit on Friday, from Kenyans abandoning kerosene lanterns for solar to Israeli start-ups straining for more efficient storage batteries.

It was an exhortational end to an unusual pandemic-era summit hosted from a specially created TV-style set in the White House East Room. Biden's two-day gathering briefly united the heads of global rivals America, China and Russia — on screens, anyway — long enough to pledge cooperation on climate. It also saw the U.S. and a half-dozen allies commit to significant new efforts and financing to reduce climate-damaging emissions.

Friday's closing message: Go forth and spend, making good on pledges for rapid transitions to cleaner vehicles, power grids and buildings to stave off the worst of global warming.

"The commitments we've made must become real," declared Biden, who is seeking \$2.3 trillion from Congress for legislation that would partly go for electric charging stations, for laying out an efficient new national electrical grid and for capping abandoned oil and gas rigs and coal mines. "Commitment without doing anything is a lot of hot air, no pun intended."

"We're gonna do this together," Biden said, speaking live to a final Zoom-style screen of leaders of national governments, unions and business executives around the world.

His closing message echoed the sentiments of Kenyan President Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta, who told the summit: "We cannot win this fight against climate change unless we go globally to fight it together."

Compared to the United States and other wealthy but carbon-addicted nations, Kenya stands out as a poorer country closing the technology gap despite limited financial resources. It has become a leading user and producer of geothermal and wind power. Small solar panels that charge lights and mobile phones have become cheap enough for some poor households to replace their kerosene lanterns. Opposition has

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stalled work on what would be its first dirtier-burning coal-fired power plant.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meanwhile, described scientists at hundreds of Israeli start-ups working to improve crucial battery storage for solar, wind and other renewable energy.

Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen of Denmark renewed her country's pledge to end oil and gas exploration in the North Sea, switching from offshore oil and gas rigs to wind farms.

Biden convened the summit showcasing the United States' own high-profile return to international climate efforts after President Donald Trump's withdrawal. Biden used the summit to announce he intended to cut U.S. coal and petroleum emissions in half by 2030, nearly doubling the previous target.

Publicly, there had been no firm word up until this week that Presidents Xi Jinping of China and Vladimir Putin of Russia would accept Biden's summit invite, given disputes with the U.S. over nonclimate issues.

But they did, despite concerns that international isolation and domestic political conflict under Trump had weakened the United States.

"Nations still want to come to the party that the U.S. throws," said Alice Hill, a senior fellow for energy and environment at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Xi, whose country is the world's No. 1 climate polluter, held out the possibility in his summit speech of moving faster to slow China's building of new coal-fired power plants.

He pledged to "strictly control coal power," which sends a strong domestic message to Chinese provincial officials on future coal projects, said Yan Qin, a carbon analyst with the Refinitiv Carbon group.

South Korea's announcement at the summit that it would stop funding new coal-fired power plants abroad increased pressure on China and Japan, which still do, analysts said.

Friday also featured billionaires Bill Gates and Mike Bloomberg, steelworker and electrical union leaders and executives for solar and other renewable energy.

"We can't beat climate change without a historic amount of new investment," said Bloomberg, who has spent heavily to promote replacing coal-fired power plants with increasingly cheaper renewable energy.

It was all in service of an argument officials say will make or break Biden's climate vision: Pouring trillions of dollars into clean-energy technology, research and infrastructure will speed a competitive U.S. economy into the future and create jobs while saving the planet.

While technological development and wider use has helped make wind and solar power strongly competitive against coal and natural gas in the U.S., Biden said investment also would bring forward thriving, clean-energy fields "in things we haven't even thought of so far."

Republicans are sticking to the arguments that Trump made in pulling the U.S. out of the Paris climate accord. They point to China as the world's worst climate polluter and say any transition to clean energy hurts American oil, natural gas and coal workers.

Biden envoy John Kerry stressed the presidential political selling point that rebuilding creaky U.S. infrastructure to run more cleanly would put the U.S. on a better economic footing long-term.

"No one is being asked for a sacrifice," Kerry said. "This is an opportunity."

## **EXPLAINER: Can Chauvin get his convictions tossed on appeal?**

By MICHAEL TARM AP Legal Affairs Writer

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The unique circumstances surrounding Derek Chauvin's trial in George Floyd's death could offer the former Minneapolis police officer some shot at winning a retrial on appeal, though most legal experts agree it's a long shot.

Chauvin, who is white, knelt on Floyd's neck for nearly 9 1/2 minutes last May, killing the 46-year-old Black man and sparking some of the largest protests in U.S. history. His conviction on murder and manslaughter charges was seen by many across the country as a civil-rights milestone.

Here's a look at some of the issues Chauvin's lawyers might cite in their expected appeal, and their chances of prevailing.

**WHAT ARE POSSIBLE ISSUES THE DEFENSE COULD RAISE ON APPEAL?**

The defense has said it was impossible for Chauvin to get a fair trial in Minneapolis because of pretrial

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publicity and community pressure on jurors to convict. That claim is sure to underpin any appeal.

As they arrived at and left the courthouse each day for testimony, jurors passed clear signs that the city was preparing for renewed protests. The courthouse downtown was encircled by razor wire and guarded by armed troops. Most storefront windows were boarded up.

A prime target of an appeal would be key rulings by trial Judge Peter Cahill, including that the trial should remain in Minneapolis rather than be moved and that jurors should be sequestered only for deliberations.

Cahill also refused to delay the trial after Minneapolis announced a \$27 million settlement with Floyd's family during jury selection. The defense says that suggested guilt before jurors even heard evidence.

The defense has decried as prosecutorial misconduct remarks by the state during closings, including that aspects of the defense case were "nonsense." That claim could make its way into an appeal.

**HAVE RETRIALS EVER BEEN GRANTED BECAUSE JURORS FELT PRESSURED?**

Yes, though it's rare.

A U.S. appeals court in 1999 vacated white Detroit police Officer Larry Nevers' conviction in the beating death of a Black motorist, noting how at least one juror had learned the National Guard was on standby in case Nevers was acquitted and violence ensued.

"The Court cannot imagine a more prejudicial extraneous influence than that of a juror discovering that the City he or she resides in is bracing for a riot," it said, adding that letting the conviction stand would send the wrong message that rights to an impartial jury "do not extend to an obviously guilty defendant."

Similarly, an appeals court in Florida ordered a new trial for a plain-clothed Hispanic officer, William Lozano, who fatally shot Black motorcyclist Clement Lloyd in 1989. A passenger on the motorcycle also died. Protests erupted in Miami.

At the 1991 Miami trial, jurors convicted Lozano of manslaughter. The appellate ruling overturning the conviction highlighted how some jurors admitted they feared an acquittal would renew protests. At his 1993 retrial in Orlando, Lozano was acquitted.

**COULD COMMENTS BY POLITICIANS LEAD TO A RETRIAL FOR CHAUVIN?**

Judge Cahill seemed to think that's at least a possibility.

He rebuked U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters on Monday for telling a crowd in a Minneapolis suburb days before deliberations started that, if Chauvin wasn't convicted of murder, "we've got to get more confrontational."

Cahill called the California Democrat's comments "disrespectful to the rule of law," saying elected officials shouldn't comment about ongoing trials. "Their failure to do so, I think, is abhorrent," he said.

Cahill indicated that Waters' comments could be appealable.

"I'll give you that Congresswoman Waters may have given you (the defense) something on appeal that may result in this whole trial being overturned," he said in court Monday.

**HOW DOES THE DEFENSE SHOW JURORS WERE IMPROPERLY INFLUENCED?**

Mike Brandt, a leading Minneapolis-based criminal attorney who closely followed the Chauvin trial, said Chauvin's attorneys have heavy lifting to do before they can argue on appeal that jurors were unduly influenced or pressured.

He said appellate courts won't simply let Chauvin's lawyers theorize that jurors might have heard Waters' comments. Rather, they must offer proof that specific jurors heard the comments and that those comments influenced their votes to convict, he said.

The same goes for statements by prosecutors allegedly disparaging the defense case and for the contention that jurors found Chauvin guilty because they feared triggering angry protests if they didn't.

The defense must present compelling evidence — typically admissions from jurors themselves — that such statements and fears caused them to find Chauvin guilty, Brandt said.

**WHAT ARE THE ODDS CHAUVIN WINS HIS APPEAL?**

The odds are heavily against Chauvin, Brandt and other legal experts say.

Even if appellate judges find Chauvin's judge made erroneous rulings, they still must answer a decisive question: If Cahill had ruled differently, such as by granting a change-of-venue motion, is it conceivable the trial's outcome could have been different? If the answer is no, Brandt said, they won't toss the verdicts.

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An appeals court may also look favorably on Cahill's reasoning in denying a change of venue. Cahill had noted that media scrutiny of Floyd's death was nearly as intense across Minnesota, suggesting that any alternate city would have faced the same challenge of preventing news from tainting the jury.

Also, higher courts have repeatedly ruled that jury selection is an effective way to counteract unflattering media accounts of a defendant and to ensure even-handed jurors are impaneled.

And Brandt said Cahill gave Chauvin's lawyers more latitude than usual in questioning potential jurors about biases and in striking ones they thought couldn't be fair — latitude appellate courts would likely note.

## France opens terrorism probe in police station stabbing

By ANGELA CHARLTON and MICHEL EULER Associated Press

RAMBOUILLET, France (AP) — French authorities opened a terrorism investigation and detained three people after a police official was stabbed to death inside a police station outside Paris. Officers shot and killed the attacker at the scene Friday, authorities said.

The attack stunned the quiet residential neighborhood near the famed historic chateau of Rambouillet, and prompted renewed French government promises to fight extremism and protect police.

Anti-terrorism prosecutor Jean-Francois Ricard told reporters that his office took over the probe because the attacker had staked out the station ahead of time, because of statements he made during the attack, and because he targeted a police official.

Ricard did not provide details on the attacker's identity, motive or purported terrorist ties. His national anti-terrorism prosecutor's office opened an investigation into murder of a person of public authority in relation with a terrorist group.

French media reports identified the attacker as a 37-year-old French resident with no criminal record or record of radicalization. A French judicial official said the suspect was born in Tunisia and that witnesses heard him say "Allahu akbar," Arabic for "God is great," during the attack. The judicial official was not authorized to be publicly named speaking about an ongoing investigation.

Police searched the attacker's home, also in Rambouillet, and detained three people in his entourage, according to the official.

French Prime Minister Jean Castex rushed to the scene with other officials and pledged the government's "determination to fight terrorism in all its forms." Islamic extremists and others have carried out multiple terror attacks in France recent years, including several targeting police.

The official killed Friday was a 49-year-old administrative employee who worked for the national police service, a national police spokesperson told The Associated Press. Police only released her first name, Stephanie.

She had left the station briefly to extend the time on her parking space, and was attacked in the entry passage as she returned, said Valerie Pecresse, president of the Paris region.

"Police are symbols of the republic. They are France," Pecresse told reporters at the scene, adding: "The face of France" was targeted.

The attack took place southwest of Paris just inside the police station in the town of Rambouillet, about 750 meters (yards) from a former royal chateau that is sometimes used for international peace negotiations.

Security cordons ringed the area after the stabbing. Masked police employees clustered outside the station, while uniformed officers in bulletproof vests stood watch around the neighborhood.

"There is a sort of well-known signature on this attack, an attack with a knife, on the throat, against a woman police officer in a police building," Francois Bersani, a police union official at the scene, told The AP.

The prime minister noted that the surrounding Yvelines region has seen two particularly brutal Islamic extremist attacks on public servants in recent years: last year's beheading of a teacher by a Chechen extremist, and the 2016 fatal stabbing of a police couple in their home by a Frenchman who claimed allegiance to the Islamic State group.

Friday's attack came as President Emmanuel Macron's government is toughening its security policies amid voter concerns about crime and complaints from police that they face increasing danger. The shift

comes as France prepares for regional elections in June in which security is a big issue, and for a presidential election next year in which Macron's main challenger could be far-right leader Marine Le Pen, if he seeks a second term.

## **SolarWinds hacking campaign puts Microsoft in the hot seat**

By FRANK BAJAK AP Technology Writer

BOSTON (AP) — The sprawling hacking campaign deemed a grave threat to U.S. national security came to be known as SolarWinds, for the company whose software update was seeded by Russian intelligence agents with malware to penetrate sensitive government and private networks.

Yet it was Microsoft whose code the cyber spies persistently abused in the campaign's second stage, rifling through emails and other files of such high-value targets as then-acting Homeland Security chief Chad Wolf — and hopping undetected among victim networks.

This has put the world's third-most valuable company in the hot seat. Because its products are a de facto monoculture in government and industry — with more than 85% market share — federal lawmakers are insisting that Microsoft swiftly upgrade security to what they say it should have provided in the first place, and without fleecing taxpayers.

Seeking to assuage concerns, Microsoft this past week offered all federal agencies a year of "advanced" security features at no extra charge. But it also seeks to deflect blame, saying it is customers who do not always make security a priority.

Risks in Microsoft's foreign dealings also came into relief when the Biden administration imposed sanctions Thursday on a half-dozen Russian IT companies it said support Kremlin hacking. Most prominent was Positive Technologies, which was among more than 80 companies that Microsoft has supplied with early access to data on vulnerabilities detected in its products. Following the sanctions announcement, Microsoft said Positive Tech was no longer in the program and removed its name from a list of participants on its website.

The SolarWinds hackers took full advantage of what George Kurtz, CEO of top cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike, called "systematic weaknesses" in key elements of Microsoft code to mine at least nine U.S. government agencies — the departments of Justice and Treasury, among them — and more than 100 private companies and think tanks, including software and telecommunications providers.

The SolarWinds hackers' abuse of Microsoft's identity and access architecture — which validates users' identities and grants them access to email, documents and other data — did the most dramatic harm, the nonpartisan Atlantic Council think tank said in a report. That set the hack apart as "a widespread intelligence coup." In nearly every case of post-intrusion mischief, the intruders "silently moved through Microsoft products "vacuuming up emails and files from dozens of organizations."

Thanks in part to the carte blanche that victim networks granted the infected Solarwinds network management software in the form of administrative privileges, the intruders could move laterally across them, even jump among organizations. They used it to sneak into the cybersecurity firm Malwarebytes and to target customers of Mimecast, an email security company.

The campaign's "hallmark" was the intruders' ability to impersonate legitimate users and create counterfeit credentials that let them grab data stored remotely by Microsoft Office, the acting director of the Cybersecurity Infrastructure and Security Agency, Brandon Wales, told a mid-March congressional hearing. "It was all because they compromised those systems that manage trust and identity on networks," he said.

Microsoft President Brad Smith told a February congressional hearing that just 15% of victims were compromised through an authentication vulnerability first identified in 2017 — allowing the intruders to impersonate authorized users by minting the rough equivalent of counterfeit passports.

Microsoft officials stress that the SolarWinds update was not always the entry point; intruders sometimes took advantage of vulnerabilities such as weak passwords and victims' lack of multi-factor authentication. But critics say the company took security too lightly. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., verbally pummeled Microsoft for not supplying federal agencies with a level of "event logging" that, if it had not detected the SolarWinds



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hacking in progress, would at least have provided responders with a record of where the intruders were and what they saw and removed.

"Microsoft chooses the default settings in the software it sells, and even though the company knew for years about the hacking technique used against U.S. government agencies, the company did not set default logging settings to capture information necessary to spot hacks in progress," Wyden said. He was not the only federal lawmaker who complained.

When Microsoft on Wednesday announced a year of free security logging for federal agencies, for which it normally charges a premium, Wyden was not appeased.

"This move is far short of what's needed to make up for Microsoft's recent failures," he said in a statement. "The government still won't have access to important security features without handing over even more money to the same company that created this cybersecurity sinkhole."

Rep. Jim Langevin, D-R.I., had pressed Smith in February on the security logging upsell, comparing it to making seat belts and air bags options in cars when they should be standard. He commended Microsoft for the one-year reprieve, but said a longer-term conversation is due about it "not being a profit center." He said "this buys us a year."

Even the highest level of logging doesn't prevent break-ins, though. It only makes it easier to detect them.

And remember, many security professionals note, Microsoft was itself compromised by the SolarWinds intruders, who got access to some of its source code — its crown jewels. Microsoft's full suite of security products — and some of the industry's most skilled cyber-defense practitioners — had failed to detect the ghost in the network. Not until alerted to the hacking campaign by FireEye, the cybersecurity firm that detected it in mid-December, did Microsoft responders discover the related breach of their systems.

The intruders in the unrelated hack of Microsoft Exchange email servers disclosed in March — blamed on Chinese spies — used wholly different infection methods. But they gained immediate high-level access to users' email and other info.

Across the industry, Microsoft's investments in security are widely acknowledged. It is often first to identify major cybersecurity threats, its visibility into networks is so great. But many argue that as the chief supplier of security solutions for its products, it needs to be more mindful about how much it should profit off defense.

"The crux of it is that Microsoft is selling you the disease and the cure," said Marc Maiffret, a cybersecurity veteran who built a career finding vulnerabilities in Microsoft products and has a new startup in the works called BinMave.

Last month, Reuters reported that a \$150 million payment to Microsoft for a "secure cloud platform" was included in a draft outline for spending the \$650 million appropriated for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency in last month's \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief act.

A Microsoft spokesperson would not say how much, if any, of that money it would be getting, referring the question to the cybersecurity agency. An agency spokesman, Scott McConnell, would not say either. Langevin said he didn't think a final decision has been made.

In the budget year ending in September, the federal government spent more than half a billion dollars on Microsoft software and services.

Many security experts believe Microsoft's single sign-on model, emphasizing user convenience over security, is ripe for retooling to reflect a world where state-backed hackers now routinely run roughshod over U.S. networks.

Alex Weinert, Microsoft's director of identity security, said it offers various ways for customers to strictly limit users' access to what they need to do their jobs. But getting customers to go along can be difficult because it often means abandoning three decades of IT habit and disrupting business. Customers tend to configure too many accounts with the broad global administrative privileges that allowed the SolarWinds campaign abuses, he said. "It's not the only way they can do it, that's for sure."

In 2014-2015, lax restrictions on access helped Chinese spies steal sensitive personal data on more than 21 million current, former and prospective federal employees from the Office of Personnel Management.

Curtis Dukes was the National Security Agency's head of information assurance at the time.

The OPM shared data across multiple agencies using Microsoft's authentication architecture, granting access to more users than it safely should have, said Dukes, now the managing director for the nonprofit Center for Internet Security.

"People took their eye off the ball."

## Feds fund mental health crisis teams to stand in for police

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When police respond to a person gripped by a mental health or drug crisis, the encounter can have tragic results. Now a government insurance program will help communities set up an alternative: mobile teams with mental health practitioners trained in de-escalating such potentially volatile situations.

The effort to reinvent policing after the death of George Floyd in police custody is getting an assist through Medicaid, the federal-state health insurance program for low-income people and the largest payer for mental health treatment. President Joe Biden's recent coronavirus relief bill calls for an estimated \$1 billion over 10 years for states that set up mobile crisis teams, currently locally operated in a handful of places.

Many 911 calls are due to a person experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crisis. Sometimes, like with Daniel Prude in Rochester, New York, the consequences are shocking. The 41-year-old Black man died after police placed a spit hood over his head and held him to the pavement for about two minutes on a cold night in 2020 until he stopped breathing. He had run naked from his brother's house after being released from a hospital following a mental health arrest. A grand jury voted down charges against the officers.

Dispatching teams of paramedics and behavioral health practitioners would take mental health crisis calls out of the hands of uniformed and armed officers, whose mere arrival may ratchet up tensions. In Eugene, Oregon, such a strategy has been in place more than 30 years, with solid backing from police.

The concept "fits nicely with what we are trying to do around police reform," Eugene Police Chief Chris Skinner said. The logic works "like a simple math problem," he adds.

"If I can rely on a mechanism that matches the right response to the need, it means I don't have to put my officers in these circumstances," Skinner explained. "By sending the right resources I can make the assumption that there are going to be fewer times when officers are in situations that can turn violent. It actually de-conflicts, reducing the need for use of force."

Eugene is a medium-size city about 100 miles (160 kilometers) south of Portland, known for its educational institutions. The program there is called Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets, or CAHOOTS, and is run by the White Bird Clinic. CAHOOTS is part of the local 911 emergency response system but operates independently of the police, although there's coordination. Crisis teams are not sent on calls involving violent situations.

"We don't look like law enforcement," White Bird veteran Tim Black said. "We drive a big white cargo van. Our responders wear a T-shirt or a hoodie with a logo. We don't have handcuffs or pepper spray, and the way we start to interact sends a message that we are not the police and this is going to be a far safer and voluntary interaction."

CAHOOTS teams handled 24,000 calls in the local area in 2019, and Black said the vast majority would have otherwise fallen to police. Many involve homeless people. The teams work to resolve the situation that prompted the call and to connect the person involved to ongoing help and support.

At least 14 cities around the country are interested in versions of that model, said Simone Brody, executive director of What Works Cities, a New York-based nonprofit that tries to promote change through effective use of data.

"It's really exciting to see the federal government support this model," Brody said. "I am hopeful that three years from now we will have multiple models and ideally some data that shows this has actually saved people's lives." Portland, Oregon, launched its own crisis teams in February and the program has already expanded to serve more areas of the community.

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About 1,000 people a year are shot dead by police, according to an analysis by the Treatment Advocacy Center, which examined several publicly available estimates. Severe mental illness is a factor in at least 25% of such shootings, it estimated. The center advocates for improved mental health care.

Mobile crisis teams found their way into the COVID-19 relief bill through the efforts of Oregon Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden, who chairs the Finance Committee, which oversees Medicaid.

"Too often law enforcement is asked to respond to situations that they are not trained to handle," Wyden said. "On the streets in challenging times, too often the result is violence, even fatal violence, particularly for Black Americans."

Wyden's legislation includes \$15 million in planning grants to help states get going. The Congressional Budget Office estimates the program could take a couple of years to fully implement. The \$1 billion will be available to states for five years, beginning next April. Wyden said it's a "down payment" on what he hopes will become a permanent part of Medicaid.

The idea may be well-timed, said Medicaid expert MaryBeth Musumeci, of the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. The coronavirus pandemic has worsened society's pervasive mental health and substance abuse problems. At the same time, protests over police shootings of Black people have created an appetite for anything that could break the cycle.

"All of those things coming together are putting increased focus on the need for further developing effective behavioral health treatment models," Musumeci said.

In Rhode Island, nurse turned malpractice lawyer Laura Harrington is helping coordinate a grassroots campaign to incorporate crisis teams into the state's 911 system. She said she's been surprised at the level of interest.

"I don't want to get into blaming," Harrington said. "We could blame social services. We could blame people who don't take their medications. We could blame the police. I want to move forward and solve problems."

## SpaceX launches 3rd crew with recycled rocket and capsule

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — SpaceX launched four astronauts into orbit Friday using a recycled rocket and capsule, the third crew flight in less than a year for Elon Musk's rapidly expanding company.

The astronauts from the U.S., Japan and France should reach the International Space Station early Saturday morning, following a 23-hour ride in the same Dragon capsule used by SpaceX's debut crew last May. They'll spend six months at the orbiting lab.

It was the first time SpaceX reused a capsule and rocket to launch astronauts for NASA, after years of proving the capability on station supply runs. The rocket was used last November on the company's second astronaut flight.

Embracing the trend, spacecraft commander Shane Kimbrough and his crew weeks ago wrote their initials in the rocket's soot, hoping to start a tradition.

"If you have rapid and complete reusability, then that is the gateway to the heavens. That's what we're trying to get done, and the support of NASA makes a huge difference," Musk said after the launch.

Just a week ago, NASA awarded SpaceX a nearly \$3 billion contract to provide the lunar lander that will deliver astronauts to the surface of the moon — Musk's Starship, intended to be fully reusable to attain his ultimate prize of carrying astronauts to Mars and building a city there.

Flying in a recycled capsule Friday provided a bit of déjà vu for NASA astronaut Megan McArthur. She launched in the same seat in the same capsule as her husband, Bob Behnken, did during SpaceX's first crew flight. This time, it was Behnken and their 7-year-old son waving goodbye. McArthur blew kisses and offered virtual hugs.

Also flying SpaceX on Friday: Japan's Akihiko Hoshide and France's Thomas Pesquet, the first European to launch in a commercial crew capsule.

It was a stunning scene: The launch plume glowed against the dark sky, reflecting the sunlight at high

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altitude.

Despite the early hour, spectators lined surrounding roads to watch the Falcon take flight an hour before sunrise. Liftoff was delayed a day to take advantage of better weather along the East Coast in case of a launch abort and emergency splashdown.

"You're seeing a piece of history happening here," said Lance Bryan, visiting from Burnsville, Minnesota. "It's, in this case, good history versus some other things that can happen that have been in our backyard practically."

Hours after liftoff, SpaceX was notified of a piece of space junk that might come dangerously close to the capsule. So flight controllers ordered the astronauts to put on their spacesuits and lower their visors just in case. There was no danger, and the unidentified debris turned out to be farther than initially thought, passing about 28 miles (45 kilometers) from the vehicle.

"We don't know what the object was or how big it was, but it did not come close to Dragon," said NASA spokesman Rob Navias.

A masked Musk met briefly with the astronauts at NASA's Kennedy Space Center before they boarded white gull-winged Teslas from his electric car company. The astronauts' spouses and children huddled around the cars for one last "love you" before the caravan pulled away and headed to the pad in the predawn darkness.

"From now on, I'll see you on a screen!" tweeted Pesquet's partner, Anne Mottet.

Visibly weary, Musk later said he doesn't sleep the night before a crew launch and this one was no exception.

"It gets a little bit easier, but still pretty intense, I have to say," said Musk, who started his space company in 2002.

NASA limited the number of launch guests because of COVID-19, but passengers for SpaceX's first privately purchased flight made the cut. Tech billionaire Jared Isaacman, who's bought a three-day flight, watched the Falcon soar with the three people who will accompany him. Their capsule is still at the space station and due back on Earth with four astronauts next Wednesday. It will be refurbished in time for a September liftoff. Another crew flight for NASA will follow in October.

For Friday's automated flight, SpaceX replaced some valves and thermal shielding, and installed new parachutes on the capsule, named Endeavour after NASA's retired space shuttle. Otherwise, the spacecraft is the same vehicle that flew before.

"We're thrilled to have a crew on board Endeavour once again," SpaceX Launch Control radioed just before liftoff.

All four astronauts clasped hands as Kimbrough noted it was the first time in more than 20 years that U.S., European and Japanese astronauts had launched together.

The first-stage booster touched down on an ocean platform nine minutes after liftoff.

SpaceX picked up the station slack for NASA after the space agency's shuttles retired in 2011, starting with supply runs the following year. The big draw was last year's return of astronaut launches to Florida, after years of relying on Russia for rides.

"It's awesome to have this regular cadence again," said Kennedy's director Robert Cabana, a former shuttle commander.

Boeing, NASA's other contracted crew transporter, isn't expected to start launching NASA astronauts until early next year. First, it needs to repeat a test flight of an empty Starliner capsule, possibly in late summer, to make up for its software-plagued debut in December 2019.

Last Friday, SpaceX beat out two other companies, including Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin, to land astronauts on the moon for NASA in three or more years. They'll descend to the lunar surface in Starship, the shiny, bullet-shaped rocketship that Musk is testing in the skies over southeast Texas, near the Mexican border.

Musk said Starship should be ready to carry people in a couple years, although he expects to smash more of them before getting there. The 2024 deadline for putting astronauts on the moon, which was set by the Trump administration, is doable, he added.

"It's a great time to be here, and we're very excited," said the European Space Agency's Frank De Winne,

an astronaut turned manager. The space station eventually will come to an end, he noted, but the partnership will continue amid hopes of "European astronauts one day walking on the surface of the moon."

## Imprisoned Putin foe Navalny to end his hunger strike

By DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny said Friday he is ending his hunger strike after getting medical attention and being warned by his doctors that continuing it would put his life at risk.

In a message posted to his Instagram account, Navalny said he will continue to demand a visit from his doctor to address numbness in his legs and arms — his main demand. But he said he would halt the strike on its 24th day after having been examined by doctors who were not affiliated with the prison, something he called "a huge progress."

He also acknowledged the mass pro-Navalny protests across Russia on Wednesday and the support he received from around the globe.

"Thanks to the huge support of good people across the country and around the world, we have made huge progress," Navalny said in his message from behind bars. "Two months ago, my requests for medical help were prompting smirks. I wasn't given any medications. ... Thanks to you, now I have been examined by a panel of civilian doctors twice."

Another reason he was ending the hunger strike was that some of his supporters were refusing to eat in a show of solidarity with him, Navalny said.

"Tears flowed from my eyes when I read that. God, I'm not even acquainted with these people, and they do this for me. Friends, my heart is full of love and gratitude for you, but I don't want anyone physically suffering because of me," said the 44-year-old politician, who is President Vladimir Putin's most prominent critic.

He said he would start "coming out of the hunger strike" on Friday and the process of ending it will take 24 days.

Navalny was arrested in January upon his return from Germany, where he had spent five months recovering from a poisoning with the nerve agent that he blames on the Kremlin — accusations that Russian officials reject.

He was promptly put on trial for violating terms of a suspended sentence stemming from a 2014 embezzlement conviction, which he says was politically motivated. He was ordered to serve 2½ years in prison.

Navalny began the hunger strike March 31, after developing severe pain in his back and loss of sensation in his legs. Prison officials have said he was getting all the medical help he needs, but Navalny insisted he effectively received no treatment.

Navalny's doctors said Saturday they feared he was close to dying because his test results showed sharply elevated levels of potassium, which can bring on cardiac arrest, and heightened creatinine levels that indicated impaired kidneys.

He was transferred Sunday from a penal colony east of Moscow to the hospital ward of another prison in Vladimir, a city 180 kilometers (110 miles) east of the capital.

The day after mass protests demanding his freedom swept across Russia, a team of his doctors released a letter urging him to end the hunger strike.

The letter revealed that Navalny was taken to a regular hospital Tuesday in Vladimir, where he underwent tests and was examined by specialists "in accordance" with requests from his doctors. It said they were given the results of those tests through Navalny's lawyers and family on Thursday.

The doctors said they would continue to insist on access to Navalny but also urged him "to immediately stop the hunger strike in order to save life and health," saying that they considered being examined by "civilian" doctors from outside the prison and undergoing "objective tests" enough to end the strike.

In another statement after Navalny announced an end to hunger strike, his team of doctors said more tests were needed to figure out the diagnosis and demanded he be transferred to a well-equipped hospital in Moscow and offered adequate pain relief.

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"He has been experiencing pain for two months," said the statement, published in the Novaya Gazeta newspaper. "It's been two months since the symptoms occurred, but a proper diagnosis hasn't been determined so far."

Dr. Alexei Erlikh, an intensive care specialist and one of the five doctors on the team, told The Associated Press that Navalny, who had spent a long time in a coma after his poisoning in August, shouldn't be viewed as just a patient who starved himself.

"This is a patient who starved following an unknown damage of his nervous system by an unknown substance, with an unknown degree of further risk," Erlikh said.

Navalny's arrest in January triggered mass protests — the biggest show of defiance the Kremlin has encountered in years. The authorities responded with harsh crackdown, arresting thousands and jailing hundreds. Navalny's aides and associates across Russia were also targeted with detentions and raids. Some of his top allies have been slapped with criminal charges and put under house arrest.

Last week, Russian authorities took the pressure to a new level, with the Moscow prosecutor's office petitioning a court to label as his Foundation for Fighting Corruption and his network of regional offices as extremist groups. Human rights activists say such a move would paralyze their activities and expose their members and donors to prison sentences of up to 10 years.

Navalny will face some tough days, his close ally Lyubov Sobol, who spent more than 30 days on a hunger strike in 2019, told the AP: "As a person who was on hunger strike for a long time, I know that the coming days will be very difficult. The first week of coming out of the hunger strike is effectively the same hunger strike — you can't eat normal food, it can result in very grave consequences for your health."

She said it will be especially difficult for Navalny in prison, without access to "normal" — let alone specialized — food.

"It's hard for me to say that we can take a breather and all relax. No, Navalny's life and health are still under threat," Sobol said.

## Italy's Uffizi discovers lost frescoes during COVID shutdown

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — The Uffizi Gallery in Florence used the winter COVID shutdown to push ahead with renovations, discovering lost frescoes that will greet visitors when the leading repository of Italian Renaissance art reopens on May 4.

Uffizi director Eike Schmidt said the six months of closure were put to good use: renovating 14 new rooms that will open to the public next month, and discovering frescoes that would otherwise have remained hidden.

But he hopes that the most recent reopening — the third during the pandemic — will be the last.

"We very much hope that now we will be able to open stably and without further closures. We hope so for the museum, but we hope it also for the world and for human society," Schmidt said.

The previously hidden frescoes include a life-size figure of a young Cosimo II de Medici — part of the Renaissance family that commissioned the Uffizi — dating from the 1600s, as well as decorative plant motifs from the 1700s on the walls and ceiling of nearby rooms.

They are located in the museum's west wing, which is where the new visitors' entrance will be when the Uffizi reopens.

Schmidt said the new entrance facing the Arno River would provide "a glorious introduction" for visitors. Classic statuary will be added to the entrance in the future.

Workers also completed restoration on new rooms dedicated to 16th Century high and late Renaissance art from central and northern Italy, beyond Tuscany. They complete the sweep through art history from the Middle Ages with Giotto, to the Renaissance masters Botticelli, Raphael and Michelangelo, beyond to the counter-reformation and Venetian galleries.

"You can now seamlessly walk through, or hike through, art history if you wish to do so," Schmidt said.

Under the Uffizi's new entry system, visitors will buy tickets, deposit coats and bags in the west wing and cross through a courtyard to the east wing, where they will pass through metal detectors and pick

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up audio guides before starting their rounds of the museum.

The number of visitors at the museum last year dropped to about a quarter of those in 2019 due to the COVID lockdowns in the spring and fall, with some 1.2 million people visiting in 2020, down from 4.4 million a year earlier.

Booking requests have already started coming in for the summer months, which the museum will be able to satisfy now that an opening date is official, Schmidt said.

With prospects for the resumption of international tourism only beginning to come into focus, Schmidt expects the gallery will operate at about half its capacity for the foreseeable future. Pre-pandemic, peak visitation reached as many as 12,000 people a day.

"Actually to visit the museum now and over the next few months will mean you will really feel even more as if you are part of the de Medici family," Eike said. "Especially if you come in the early morning, you might be in the Botticelli room to yourself for two or three minutes before someone else arrives. That never, ever happens."

The Uffizi has been closed since Nov. 5 except for two weeks in January when Tuscany was under Italy's lowest level of restrictions. Italy on Monday begins a gradual reopening. Along with museums being allowed to open their doors, restaurants in low-risk zones on Monday will be allowed to offer outdoor dining before a 10 p.m. curfew.

## In possible Oscar preview, 'Nomadland' wins at Spirit Awards

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

Chloé Zhao's "Nomadland" won best feature at the 36th Independent Spirit Awards in a ceremony that turned the annual beach soiree into a virtual, mostly pre-taped event, and, possibly, an Oscar preview.

The Spirits, usually held in a giant tent on the Southern California coast, have sometimes been a laid back dress rehearsal for the Academy Awards. "Moonlight," "Spotlight," "Birdman" and "12 Years a Slave" all won at the Spirits before taking best picture at the Oscars the next day, though top winners ("The Farewell" won the Spirits' top prize in 2020) have diverged the last few years. But many of the same contenders overlapped this year, including "Minari," "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," "Promising Young Woman" and "Sound of Metal."

And "Nomadland" has been on a steady march to the Oscars. The film's Spirit win follows others at the Golden Globes, the BAFTAs, the producers guild and the directors guild. Zhao also won best director Thursday at the Spirits, an honor she's heavily favored to win at the Academy Awards.

It was a fitting victory for Zhao's modest drama about rootlessness and community in the American West. Three years earlier on the day of the Spirit Awards, Zhao and Frances McDormand first met to discuss the project.

Most of the other Oscar nominees went home with Spirit awards, too. Yuh-Jung Youn, the Academy Awards favorite, won best supporting female actor for "Minari." Paul Raci, the 72-year-old veteran working actor who's soaked up his moment in the sun, won best supporting male actor for "Sound of Metal." Emerald Fennell, the writer-director, of "Promising Young Woman," took best screenplay.

In one twist, best male lead actor went to Riz Ahmed for his performance in "Sound of Metal" — an award that has usually gone this year to the late Chadwick Boseman for his final performance in "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom."

Carey Mulligan ("Promising Young Woman") took best lead female actor in the category that's perhaps most up for grabs at the Academy Awards. Previous awards have been split between Viola Davis ("Ma Rainey's Black Bottom"), McDormand and Mulligan.

Put on by the nonprofit Film Independent, the Spirits were hosted by Melissa Villaseñor of "Saturday Night Live" and broadcast Thursday night on IFC. The show, removed from the beach, did everything it could to virtually mimic the experience of the awards, including grouping Zoomed-in attendees by table, featuring virtual wine and bourbon bars and hosting a karaoke afterparty. Josh Welsh, president of Film Independent, called it "the first ever pants-optional Spirit Awards."

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The nominees were especially diverse. None of the best feature nominees — “Nomadland,” “Minari,” “First Cow,” “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom,” “Never Rarely Sometimes Always” — were directed by white men. All of the directing nominees — Zhao, Fennell, Eliza Hittman (“Never Rarely Sometimes Always”), Kelly Reichardt (“First Cow”) and Lee Isaac Chung (“Minari”) — were women or people of color.

Nominees at the Spirits, the premier independent film awards, have to be made for less than \$22.5 million.

The Robert Altman Award, an honor for a film’s ensemble, went to Regina King’s feature film directorial debut “One Night in Miami...,” the fictional account of a 1960s meeting of Muhammad Ali, Malcolm X, Sam Cooke and Jim Brown. The disability rights movement documentary “Crip Camp” won best documentary. Best first film went to Darius Marder’s “Sound of Metal.”

The Spirit Awards also this year began expanding into television. Among those winners was Michaela Coel’s “I May Destroy You” for best new scripted series and for best ensemble in a new scripted series.

## **FDA: N95 masks, now plentiful, should no longer be reused**

By MARTHA MENDOZA and JULIET LINDERMAN Associated Press

The Biden administration has taken the first step toward ending an emergency exception that allowed hospitals to ration and reuse N95 medical masks, the first line of defense between frontline workers and the deadly coronavirus.

Thousands of medical providers have died in the COVID-19 pandemic, many exposed and infected while caring for patients without adequate protection.

Critical shortages of masks, gowns, swabs, and other medical supplies prompted the Trump administration to issue guidelines for providers to ration, clean, and reuse disposable equipment. Thus, throughout the pandemic, once a week many doctors and nurses were issued an N95 mask, which is normally designed to be tossed after each patient.

Now U.S. manufacturers say they have vast surpluses for sale, and hospitals say they have three to 12 month stockpiles.

In response, the government says hospitals and healthcare providers should try to return to one mask per patient.

“The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is recommending health care personnel and facilities transition away from crisis capacity conservation strategies,” said the agency in a letter to healthcare personnel and facilities earlier this month.

The letter is not an order: hospitals are still legally permitted to sterilize and reuse N95s. But in the coming weeks or months, the FDA will issue updated guidance and, eventually, require hospitals to revert to single-use, said Suzanne Schwartz, director of the FDA’s office of strategic partnerships and technology innovation.

“The ability to decontaminate was purely a last resort, an extreme measure,” Schwartz said. “From the FDA’s perspective, there is a need for us to move back towards contingency and conventional strategies, which is, you use the respirator for the interaction, and then you dispose of it and get a new one. We are in unison, in sync, with both NIOSH and OSHA in that position.”

The National Nurses Union, the largest professional association of registered nurses in the country, calls the new guidance “a tiny step in the right direction.” But the organization, representing 170,000 nurses, said the direction “ultimately fails” to protect nurses because it allows employers to use their discretion about what normal N95 supply is.

“But we know the reality— there is ample N95 supply,” said the union in a statement urging the administration to update their standards and enforce them.

ICU nurse Mike Hill, who works at a Northern California Sutter Hospital and is a member of the California Nurses Association, said he and his colleagues still don’t have unlimited access to N95 masks.

“I think it’s ridiculous for Sutter to want to do extended use when the masks are inexpensive, like a dollar apiece. They should want to make sure to protect the nurses, we’re the frontline workers,” he said. “It puts the patients and us at risk for infection. They were never intended for extended use.”



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Hill's colleague, Sutter nurse Janine Paiste-Ponder, 59, was among hundreds of medical caregivers who died after exposure to COVID-19 at the workplace in the past year. Following her July 2020 death, a California's Division of Occupational Safety and Health investigation at Sutter Health's Alta Bates Summit Medical Center led to nearly \$300,000 in fines for numerous COVID-related workplace safety violations.

Prestige Ameritech Executive Vice President Mike Bowen, whose Fort Worth, Texas, factory is the largest U.S.-manufacturer of surgical masks, said the devices were designed to be used only once, not reused from one patient to the next.

He said he has millions of unsold masks, as do other U.S. manufacturers which invested and ramped up during the pandemic.

"While nurses pleaded for clean masks, American N95 makers were filling their warehouses with N95s that hospitals weren't buying. Starting today, America's healthcare workers can and should demand clean, new N95 masks," he said. "The N95 mask shortage is over," he said.

Congresswoman Anna Eshoo said the deadly shortages were "a national embarrassment and should never happen again."

"This is welcome news and demonstrates our progress toward crushing COVID-19," said the California Democrat. "We must make sure this type of shortage never happens again by reinvesting in a sustainable supply of high-quality, American-made PPE."

## Justice at last: Convictions of 39 UK postal workers quashed

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — In a ruling that reversed one of the biggest miscarriages of justice in British legal history, 39 people who ran local post offices had their convictions for theft, fraud and false accounting overturned Friday because of what an appeals court said was clear evidence of "bugs, errors or defects" in an IT system.

The decision follows a years-long, complex legal battle that could see Britain's Post Office face a huge compensation bill for its failures following the installation, from 1999, of what turned out to be the defective Horizon computerized accounting system in local branches.

Dozens of staff were convicted after the Fujitsu-supplied system pointed to an array of financial misdemeanors that bewildered the postal workers. Six others had their convictions quashed previously, while another 700 or so workers also are believed to have been prosecuted between 2000 and 2014.

What is clear is that those convicted had their lives and livelihoods ruined — beyond the prison sentences that some of them received. From being pillars of their local communities, they became pariahs. Jobs, homes and marriages were lost as a result of wrongful convictions, and some did not live long enough to see their names cleared by Britain's Court of Appeals.

Confirmation that the convictions were quashed was met with cheers and tears. A few bottles of bubbly were also popped.

Harjinder Butoy, who was convicted of theft and jailed for more than three years in 2008, described the Post Office as "a disgrace" after his conviction was overturned. Butoy, who ran a local post office in the north England city of Nottingham, said his conviction had "destroyed" his life over 14 years.

"That's not going to be replaced," he said outside the Royal Courts of Justice after the convictions were quashed, adding that those responsible for the needless prosecutions "need to be punished, seriously punished."

Announcing the court's ruling on Friday, Lord Justice Timothy Holroyde said the Post Office "knew there were serious issues about the reliability" of Horizon and had a "clear duty to investigate" its defects.

In the written ruling on behalf of the three-member panel, Holroyde said the Post Office's "failures of investigation and disclosure were so egregious as to make the prosecution of any of the 'Horizon cases' an affront to the conscience of the court."

Holroyde said three of the appeals made to the court were dismissed because "the reliability of Horizon data was not essential to the prosecution case."

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In a statement, Neil Hudgell from Hudgell Solicitors, who represented 29 of the former officials, said it is "almost impossible" to relay the impact on those caught up in the scandal.

"They are honest, hard-working people who served their communities but have had to live with the stigma of being branded criminals for many years, all the while knowing they have been innocent," he said.

He called on Prime Minister Boris Johnson to announce a "judge-led public inquiry," with the power to summon witnesses.

"The time has come now for people at the Post Office who were involved in any way relating to these unsafe convictions to feel the uncomfortable breath of the law on their necks as our clients did," he said.

Johnson welcomed the court's ruling, too, saying the prosecutions were "an appalling injustice" that left a trail of devastation.

"Our thoughts are very much with the victims and we'll have to make sure that people get properly looked after because it's clear that an appalling justice has been done," he said.

The Criminal Cases Review Commission, which investigates potential miscarriages of justice, encouraged any other former Post Office employees to consider challenging their convictions. The commission is already in the process of reviewing another 22 cases.

Post Office chairman Tim Parker said in a statement that the organization is "extremely sorry for the impact on the lives of these postmasters and their families that was caused by historical failures."

Tom Hedges, who was convicted of theft and false accounting and given a seven-month suspended sentence in 2011, opened a bottle of prosecco outside the Royal Courts of Justice after his conviction was quashed.

He said his 93-year-old mother had recommended he celebrate with a bottle of the Italian sparkling wine.

"She said, 'Just remember your name is Hedges not Rothschild, so get prosecco, not Bollinger!'"

## Sen. Johnson on others getting shots: 'What do you care?'

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Republican Sen. Ron Johnson, of Wisconsin, questioned the need for widespread COVID-19 vaccinations, saying in a radio interview "what do you care if your neighbor has one or not?"

Johnson, who has no medical expertise or background, made the comments Thursday during an interview with conservative talk radio host Vicki McKenna. Contrary to what medical experts advise, Johnson has said he doesn't need to be vaccinated because he had COVID-19 in the fall. On Thursday, he went further, questioning why anyone would get vaccinated or worry about why others have not.

"For the very young, I see no reason to be pushing vaccines on people," Johnson said. "I certainly am going to vigorously resist any kind of government use or imposing of vaccine passports. ... That could be a very freedom-robbing step and people need to understand these things."

Johnson's comments come as health officials in the U.S. and around the world urge people to get vaccinated for COVID-19 as soon as possible, saying that reaching herd immunity is the best shot at stopping the uncontrolled spread of the virus.

Herd immunity occurs when enough people have been vaccinated or have immunity from natural infection that the virus can't easily spread and the pandemic fizzles out. Nobody knows for sure what the herd immunity threshold is for the coronavirus, but many experts say it's 70% or higher. And the emergence of variants is further complicating the picture.

In Wisconsin, more than 41% of the population has received at least one shot of vaccine and roughly 30% has been fully vaccinated. But demand for vaccinations has slowed in parts of the U.S. in a worrisome sign.

Johnson, a former plastics manufacturer with a bachelor's degree in business and accounting, said he doesn't think people should feel pressured to get vaccinated.

"The science tells us the vaccines are 95% effective, so if you have a vaccine quite honestly what do you care if your neighbor has one or not?" Johnson said. "What is it to you? You've got a vaccine and science is telling you it's very, very effective. So why is this big push to make sure everybody gets a vaccine? And it's to the point where you're going to shame people, you're going to force them to carry a card to prove

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that they've been vaccinated so they can still stay in society. I'm getting highly suspicious of what's happening here."

The interview ended before Johnson explained what he was suspicious of.

On Friday, Johnson issued a statement doubling down on his earlier comments.

"Everyone should have the right to gather information, consult with their doctor and decide for themselves whether to get vaccinated," Johnson said, noting his support for former President Donald Trump's Operation Warp Speed program to quickly develop a vaccine. "Now I believe government's role (and therefore my role) is to help ensure transparency so that people have as much information as possible to make an informed decision for themselves."

Johnson said it was legitimate to question whether people with a low risk of suffering a serious illness from COVID-19 should get vaccinated. He promised to "vigorously oppose" vaccine passports.

Republicans have portrayed vaccine passports as a heavy-handed intrusion into personal freedom and private health choices. They currently exist in only one state — a limited government partnership in New York with a private company — but that hasn't stopped GOP lawmakers in a handful of states from rushing out legislative proposals to ban their use.

Johnson has not said yet whether he will seek a third term in 2022. A number of Democrats have already announced they are running, including Milwaukee Bucks executive Alex Lasry, state Treasurer Sarah Godlewski and Outagamie County Executive Tom Nelson.

Nelson tweeted that Johnson's "scientifically illiterate beliefs are deadly and will only prolong the Covid crisis. Time for a new Senator."

Godlewski also blasted Johnson, saying he "is literally campaigning against widespread vaccines. His denial of science isn't just irresponsible, it's downright dangerous, and Wisconsinites deserve so much better."

## **EXPLAINER: What does Japan's virus state of emergency mean**

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan on Friday declared a state of emergency to curb a rapid coronavirus resurgence, the third since the pandemic began. The measures in parts of Japan, including Tokyo, have so far failed to curb infections caused by a more contagious new variant of the virus.

Here's a look at how the state of emergency differs from previous ones, what measures are included, and whether Japan can control infections before the Tokyo Olympics in July.

### HOW BAD IS JAPAN'S SITUATION?

Japan, with about 550,000 cases and fewer than 10,000 deaths, is better off than much of the world, though not so good when compared with other places in Asia. It has not imposed any hard lockdowns. Infections briefly dipped in March, but have since risen above five times to exceed 5,000 Wednesday. Experts have warned that a new variant of the virus, detected earlier in Britain, is rapidly spreading among younger people in offices and classrooms, causing more serious cases, overburdening hospitals and disrupting regular medical care. Testing remains insufficient despite calls for increased testing for new variants at elderly homes and for the young.

### WHO IS AFFECTED?

The latest state of emergency covers Tokyo and the western metropolises of Osaka, Kyoto and Hyogo, home to about a quarter of Japan's population of 126 million. The 17-day emergency begins Sunday and lasts until May 11, just after the end of Japan's "golden week" holidays, to discourage traveling. The scheduled end, ahead of an expected visit to Japan of International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach in mid-May, has led to criticism that the government is putting the Olympic schedule over people's health.

### WHAT CAN A STATE OF EMERGENCY DO?

Emergency measures were toughened under a law revised in February, and the state of emergency now allows prefectural governors in the areas to issue binding orders for businesses to shorten hours or close in exchange for daily compensation of up to 200,000 yen (\$1,850), while imposing fines of up to 300,000 yen (\$2,780) for violators.

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## WHAT WILL CHANGE FROM EARLIER MEASURES?

Department stores, malls, theme parks, bars and restaurants serving alcohol, as well as theaters and museums, will close. Restaurants that do not serve alcohol and public transportation services are asked to finish early. Groceries and schools will stay open, but universities are asked to return to online classes. The third emergency is similar to the first one a year ago and tougher than a second one in January that was limited to 8 p.m. closure requests for bars and restaurants.

## WILL THE PUBLIC COMPLY?

Residents are asked to avoid nonessential outings, work from home and stick to mask-wearing and other safety measures, but those are non-mandatory requests. Experts worry whether the requests will be followed as many people are increasingly fatigued by restraints and less cooperative, and they have largely ignored ongoing social distancing requests in Tokyo, Osaka and other areas since earlier this month.

## HOW DOES THE EMERGENCY AFFECT THE OLYMPICS?

Tokyo Olympic organizers and the government have repeated their determination to hold the July 23-Aug. 8 games, while a majority of the public support their cancellation or further postponement. The surge in cases has caused a rerouting of the Olympic torch relay after its March 25 start in Fukushima. Suga on Friday said Japan has no choice but to follow the IOC decision to hold the games and that Japan will do its utmost to ensure safety. "The IOC has the authority to decide and the IOC has already decided to hold the Tokyo Olympics," he said.

## WHAT ABOUT JAPAN'S VACCINATIONS?

Japan's inoculation campaign lags behind many countries, with imported vaccines in short supply. Japan's attempts to develop its own vaccines are still in the early stages. Inoculations started in mid-February and have covered only about 1% of the Japanese people. The rapid rise of the new patients in hospitals has raised worry of further staff shortages and a slowdown of vaccinations. Some top officials have mentioned the Games being held without audiences, or canceled in worst-case scenarios. Organizers have postponed a decision on what to do with fans until June.

## **Indian hospitals plead for oxygen, country sets virus record**

By NEHA MEHROTRA and ASHOK SHARMA Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India put oxygen tankers on special express trains as major hospitals in New Delhi begged on social media on Friday for more supplies to save COVID-19 patients who are struggling to breathe. More than a dozen people died when an oxygen-fed fire ripped through a coronavirus ward in a populous western state.

India's underfunded health system is tattering as the world's worst coronavirus surge wears out the nation, which set a global record in daily infections for a second straight day with 332,730.

India has confirmed 16 million cases so far, second only to the United States in a country of nearly 1.4 billion people. India has recorded 2,263 deaths in the past 24 hours for a total of 186,920.

The fire in a hospital intensive care unit killed 13 COVID-19 patients in the Virar area on the outskirts of Mumbai early Friday.

The situation is worsening by the day with hospitals taking to social media to plead with the government to replenish their oxygen supplies and threatening to stop admissions of new patients.

A major private hospital chain in the capital, Max Hospital, tweeted that one of its facilities had one hour's oxygen supply in its system and had been waiting for replenishment since early morning. Two days earlier, they had filed a petition in the Delhi High Court saying they were running out of oxygen, endangering the lives of 400 patients, of which 262 were being treated for COVID-19.

The government started running Oxygen Express trains with tankers to meet the shortage at hospitals, Railroad Minister Piyush Goyal said. The air force also airlifted oxygen tanks and other equipment to areas where they were needed, and flew doctors and nurses to New Delhi, the government said.

"We have surplus oxygen at plants which are far off from places where it is needed right now. Trucking oxygen is a challenge from these plants," said Saket Tiku, president of the All India Industrial Gases

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Manufacturers Association. "We have ramped up the production as oxygen consumption is rising through the roof. But we have limitations and the biggest challenge right now is transporting it to where its urgently needed. "

The Supreme Court told Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government on Thursday that it wanted a "national plan" for the supply of oxygen and essential drugs for the treatment of coronavirus patients.

The Press Trust of India news agency said the Defense Ministry will fly 23 mobile oxygen generating plants from Germany to help with the shortage. Each plant will be able to produce 2,400 liters of oxygen per hour, it said.

The New Delhi government issued a list of a dozen government and private hospitals facing an acute shortage of oxygen.

At another hospital in the capital, questions were raised about whether low oxygen supplies had caused deaths.

The Press Trust of India news agency reported that 25 COVID-19 patients had died at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in the past 24 hours and the lives of another 60 were at risk amid a serious oxygen supply crisis. It quoted unidentified officials as saying "low pressure oxygen" could be the cause of their deaths.

Ajoy Sehgal, a hospital spokesperson, would not comment on whether the 25 patients died from a lack of oxygen. He said an oxygen tanker had just entered the hospital complex and he hoped it would temporarily relieve the depleted supplies.

The New Delhi Television channel later cited the hospital chairman as saying the deaths cannot be ascribed to a lack of oxygen.

On the outskirts of Mumbai, the fire early Friday was the second deadly incident involving COVID-19 patients at a hospital this week.

The fire on the second-floor ICU was extinguished and some patients requiring oxygen were moved to nearby hospitals, said Dilip Shah, CEO of Vijay Vallabh hospital. Shah said there are 90 patients in the hospital, about 70 kilometers (43 miles) north of Mumbai, India's financial capital.

The cause of the fire is being investigated, he said. An explosion in the ICU air conditioning unit preceded the fire, PTI quoted government official Vivekanand Kadam as saying.

On Wednesday, 24 COVID-19 patients on ventilators died due to an oxygen leak in a hospital in Nashik, another city in Maharashtra state.

In New Delhi, Akhil Gupta was waiting for a bed for his 62-year-old mother, Suman. On April 2, she tested positive and was asymptomatic for 10 days. Then she developed a fever and started experiencing difficulty breathing.

For the next two days, her other sons, Nikhil and Akhil, drove around the city, visiting every hospital in search of a bed. Sometimes they took their mother with them, sometimes they went on their own. They looked everywhere to no avail.

On Friday, they got their mother into the emergency room at the Max Hospital in Patparganj, where she was put on oxygen temporarily as she waited in line for a bed to open up inside.

"Now the doctors are asking us to take her away because they don't have enough oxygen to keep her in the emergency room. But we're not even getting any ambulance with oxygen to transport her to some other facility," said Akhil Gupta.

The family decided to stay at Max and continue waiting for a bed.

"What else can we do?" said Akhil.

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."

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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 to be used for their needs.

Ashok Kumar Sharma, 62, was finally put on oxygen on Monday in his home in West Delhi. It only happened after days of frantically searching for an oxygen cylinder from various hospitals, clinics and private distributors.

"I called at least 60 people looking for oxygen, but everyone's numbers were switched off," said Kunal, Sharma's son.

Kunal's father was diagnosed with pneumonia on April 14, and a few days later, tested positive for COVID-19. The doctors recommended he be put on oxygen immediately. When Kunal could not find any, he put out an SOS on social media.

"But there is so much black marketeering going on. People contacted me selling cylinders for 3 times, 4 times the original price," said Kunal. He finally acquired one from a personal contact.

"It's horrible how people are taking advantage of our helplessness," he said.

## US drop in vaccine demand has some places turning down doses

LEAH WILLINGHAM, HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and MICHELLE R. SMITH Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Louisiana has stopped asking the federal government for its full allotment of COVID-19 vaccine. About three-quarters of Kansas counties have turned down new shipments of the vaccine at least once over the past month. And in Mississippi, officials asked the federal government to ship vials in smaller packages so they don't go to waste.

As the supply of coronavirus vaccine doses in the U.S. outpaces demand, some places around the country are finding there's such little interest in the shots, they need to turn down shipments.

"It is kind of stalling. Some people just don't want it," said Stacey Hileman, a nurse with the health department in rural Kansas' Decatur County, where less than a third of the county's 2,900 residents have received at least one vaccine dose.

The dwindling demand for vaccines illustrates the challenge that the U.S. faces in trying to conquer the pandemic while at the same time dealing with the optics of tens of thousands of doses sitting on shelves when countries like India and Brazil are in the midst of full-blown medical emergencies.

More than half of American adults have received at least one vaccine dose, and President Joe Biden this week celebrated eclipsing 200 million doses administered in his first 100 days in office. He also acknowledged entering a new phase to bolster outreach and overcome hesitancy.

Across the country, pharmacists and public health officials are seeing the demand wane and supplies build up. About half of Iowa's counties have stopped asking for new doses from the state, and Louisiana didn't seek shipment of some vaccine doses over the past week.

Some are urging federal officials to send more vaccine to places where there's demand — rather than allocate them based on population — including Massachusetts Republican Gov. Charlie Baker, who said on Thursday they could administer two to three times more doses per day if they had more supply.

In Mississippi, small-town pharmacist Robin Jackson has been practically begging anyone in the community to show up and get shots after she received her first shipment of vaccine earlier this month and demand was weak, despite placing yard signs outside her storefront celebrating the shipment's arrival. She was wasting more vaccine than she was giving out and started coaxing family members into the pharmacy for shots.

"Nobody was coming," she said. "And I mean no one."

In Barber County, Kansas, which has turned down vaccine doses from the state for two of the past four weeks, Danielle Farr said she has no plans to be vaccinated. The 32-year-old said she got COVID-19 last year, along with her 5- and 12-year-old sons and her husband.

Blood tests detected antibodies for the virus in all four of them, so she figures they're already protected.

"I believe in vaccines that have eradicated terrible diseases for the past 60, 70 years. I totally and fully

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believe in that," said Farr, who works at an accounting firm. "Now a vaccine that was rushed in six, seven months, I'm just going to be a little bit more cautious about what I choose to put into my body."

Barbara Gennaro, a stay-at-home mother of two small children in Yazoo City, Mississippi, said everybody in her homeschooling community is against getting the vaccine. Gennaro said she generally avoids vaccinations for her family in general, and the coronavirus vaccine is no different.

"All of the strong Christians that I associate with are against it," she said. "Fear is what drives people to get the vaccine — plain and simple. The stronger someone's trust is in the Lord, the least likely they are to want the vaccine or feel that it's necessary."

Another challenge for vaccinations in a rural state like Mississippi is that in many cases, doses are being shipped in large packages with one vial containing at least 10 doses.

During a news conference in early April, Republican Gov. Tate Reeves said Mississippi officials have requested that the federal government send the vaccines in smaller packaging so it's not going to waste.

"If you're in New York City, and you're sending a package to one of the large pharmacies in downtown Manhattan, there are literally millions and millions of people within walking distance most likely of that particular pharmacy," Reeves said. "Well, if you're in rural Itta Bena, Mississippi, that's just not the case."

To combat the hesitancy, Louisiana continues to increase its outreach work with community organizations and faith-based leaders, set up a hotline to help people schedule appointments, and work to find free transportation to a vaccination center. The health department is sending out more than 100,000 mailers on Monday to encourage people to get vaccinated, and robocalls from regional medical directors are going out to landline phones around the state.

In New Mexico, state officials are exploring the recruitment of "community champions" — trusted residents of regions with vaccine hesitancy who can address concerns about safety and efficacy. Question-and-answer style town halls are also a possibility. And video testimonials about coronavirus vaccines already have been recorded.

Nirav Shah, director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the president of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, said now that everyone qualifies to get vaccinated, public health officials are encountering three groups: "not able," "not now" and "not ever."

The first group, he said, isn't able to get their shots because there's some kind of barrier. The "not nows" have earnest questions about vaccine safety, efficacy and whether they need the shot.

He said they're not prepared to write off "not evers," but instead are "working to find trusted messengers like doctors, family members, community members" to give them good information.

In Corinth, Mississippi, pharmacist Austin Bullard said a lot of people were waiting to become vaccinated until a one-dose shot became available. The news about the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and the risk for blood-clotting — however slim — has scared people about getting any type of vaccination.

"I do feel like there has been more hesitancy across the board since then," he said.

## Tokyo under 'emergency orders' with Olympics 3 months away

By STEPHEN WADE and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Only three months before the postponed Olympics are set to open, Tokyo and Japan's second largest metropolitan area of Osaka have been placed under emergency orders aimed at stemming surging cases of the coronavirus.

The measures, which take place during Japan's "golden week" holiday period, are meant to limit travel and keep people out of public places. They are to end on May 11, just ahead of a widely reported visit to Hiroshima by International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach.

Bach said this week that the visit, reported for May 17-18, is still in the "planning phase." But Bach's presence was immediately criticized by opposition lawmakers who say the Olympics are being prioritized ahead of public safety.

"Japan should decide its own public health policies. There is no reason we should be told by Mr. Bach what to do," said Yuichiro Tamaki, the head of the Democratic Party for the People.

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Bach said the duration of the state of emergency had nothing to do with his planned visit to the city, where he would greet the Olympic torch relay. Hiroshima was destroyed in 1945 by the American detonation of an atomic bomb over the city, and is a favorite backdrop for visiting politicians and dignitaries.

"This (state of emergency) is absolutely in line with the overall policy of the government," Bach said. "But it is not related to the Olympic Games. It is related to the golden week."

Japan's third state of emergency is to include shutdown orders for bars, department stores, malls, theme parks, as well as theaters and museums. Even restaurants that do not serve alcohol are being asked to close early, as well as public transportation. Schools will stay open, but universities are asked to return to online classes.

"I hope that the situation is going to be better as soon as possible," Seiko Hashimoto, the president of the organizing committee, said Friday in an online briefing.

Japan has attributed about 10,000 deaths to COVID-19, good by global standards but poor by standards in Asia. It has vaccinated less than 1% of the population and has not enforced lockdowns with people becoming impatient and less cooperative as cases have again accelerated.

Hashimoto said several test events would continue during the emergency period, but without fans. The Olympics open on July 23.

She was asked again if there were any plans to cancel the Olympics. The question had disappeared at briefings, but has surfaced again in the last several weeks.

"As the organizing committee, we are not thinking about cancellation," Hashimoto said.

The IOC gets almost 75% of its income from selling television rights and has seen that cash flow stalled by the postponement. It needs the games to happen, which will be followed in six months by the boycott-threatened Beijing Winter Olympics.

Tokyo is officially spending \$15.4 billion to organize the Olympics, with several government audits suggesting the number is much larger.

The IOC and organizers are hoping to muffle more cancellation questions next week by rolling out the second edition of the "Playbooks," guides that are to explain how the Olympics can be held safely in a pandemic.

The first edition rolled out in February was vague. Next week promises to offer more details and is likely to include requirements that 15,400 Olympic and Paralympic athletes be tested almost daily while in Japan.

The IOC has said vaccinations are not required to participate in the Olympics, but it has encouraged all athletes to be vaccinated.

The Playbooks are not expected to offer a decision on venue capacities, nor if any fans will be allowed at all. Fans from abroad have already been banned.

Hashimoto, who participated in seven Olympics as an athlete and won a bronze medal in speedskating at the 1992 Albertville Games, has been open about her concerns. Between 70-80% of the Japanese public polled say they games should not go on.

"I understand a lot of people are worried and also healthcare workers might be worried," Hashimoto said. "I think about the feelings of those people — every day I think about this."

## 'Look after my babies': In Ethiopia, a Tigray family's quest

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

Gunfire crackled near the straw-woven home of Abraha Kinfu Gebremariam. He hoped it drowned out the cries of his wife, curled up in pain, and the newborn twin daughters wailing beside her.

The violence had broken out in northern Ethiopia's Tigray region at the worst possible time for Abraha and his family. Their village of Mai Kadra was caught in the first known massacre of a grinding war that has killed thousands of ethnic Tigrayans like them.

Abraha pleaded with his wife, writhing from post-childbirth complications, to be silent, as any noise could bring gunmen to his door. His two young sons watched in fear.

"I prayed and prayed," Abraha said. "God didn't help me."



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He was terrified his family would not survive.

This story was funded by the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

Five months after it began, the armed conflict in Ethiopia has turned into what witnesses describe as a campaign to destroy the Tigrayan minority. Thousands of families have been shattered, fleeing their homes, starved, murdered or still searching for each other across a region of some 6 million people.

Amid the heartbreak, the sight of a tall, silent man carrying a grimy pink bassinet slung around his neck with tiny twin girls would still bring out the kindness of strangers, even from the ethnicity targeting them.

The bloodshed in Mai Kadra began in November as Abraha's wife, Letay, was enjoying the final stretch of a seemingly normal pregnancy. She was four days late but untroubled. The number of the ambulance for the health clinic was in hand, ready to call.

But then the sounds of fighting grew closer. The shooting and screams sent Letay, her husband and their sons, 5-year-old Micheale and 11-year-old Daniel, into hiding in the tall, parched grass near their home.

They lay for hours under the hot sun. There was nothing to eat or drink. Letay rested on her side.

"Don't worry, I'm OK," she told her worried husband. That night, they crept indoors to sleep.

The next day, Letay went into labor.

The gunfire continued in Mai Kadra, and most of the neighbors had fled. Frightened and feeling alone, Abraha and his wife decided not to risk going to the clinic. They would deliver their baby at home.

An elderly neighbor from the ethnic group fighting the Tigrayans, the Amhara, had not left. She agreed to help.

Abraha had never seen childbirth. Like most men across Tigray, he hovered outside the door, praying. The delivery was quiet and fast, just three hours long. Finally, he peeked inside.

He had longed for a daughter. Now, nestled beside his wife, he saw two. His joy was tempered by anxiety.

"Here something awful was happening in our village," he said. "I wondered, 'How can I do this?'"

But in the hours ahead, he forgot about the babies. Something was badly wrong with his wife. Her afterbirth wasn't coming out.

Letay's pain grew. She tried to breastfeed the twins, but couldn't. As she lost herself in agony, the babies began to cry.

The family tried to comfort them, in vain. They kept the exhausted Letay awake because of their belief that otherwise the afterbirth would fall back into her.

"I don't know what wrong I did to my God for these troubles," Abraha said, starting to cry.

Four days after Letay delivered, her afterbirth was expelled. But she wept day and night in pain.

Abraha despaired. By now, from neighbors' accounts, the family understood they were trapped in a massacre. Ethnicity had become deadly, with reports of both Amhara and Tigrayans being shot or slaughtered.

"If I took my wife to the clinic, they might kill me," Abraha said. "It was very difficult to decide."

He waited until he could bear it no longer. A week after Letay gave birth, he asked the Amhara neighbor to take her for help.

But the clinic could not, or did not, help her. Abraha doesn't know whether ethnic tensions played a role.

On the ninth day after giving birth, Letay beckoned Abraha closer.

"Look after my babies," she said. "I'm going to die. I don't have hope. I'm very sorry."

She was gone the next day.

In Tigray culture, the community gathers when someone dies. Even strangers take part, throwing a little dirt on the grave.

But as Abraha emerged from his home for the first time since the war began, only a handful of people stepped forward to help carry his wife's body to the church. Fewer than a dozen neighbors were there.

It was daylight. The burial was short. There were no speeches. The churchyard likely was full of fresh graves from the hundreds killed in Mai Kadra, but Abraha didn't notice his surroundings.

He returned home, where the babies he had almost forgotten about were waiting. Wrapped up in his

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wife's final days, he had little idea how the girls were fed or even survived.

Abraha found himself struggling. Washing the tiny, wriggling girls terrified him. Without diapers, he rinsed and reused pieces of cloth. And with two babies instead of one, everything seemed to run short.

He wondered if he was failing. The twins cried most of the time. Trapped in a home just a few paces in size, Abraha got little sleep.

When he broke down and cried, his sons comforted him.

"We need you, be strong," they said.

Abraha didn't leave the house. His son Daniel tried to visit the market one day and saw some 10 bodies piled onto a vehicle, with another four in the dirt. He never went to the market again.

The Amhara neighbor went out for the family's food and helped with the children. For another measure of safety, an acquaintance from a different ethnic group, the Wolkait, managed to get the ethnicity changed on Abraha's identity card. On paper he became Wolkait, too.

It happened just in time. When Amhara militia members came to his home, Abraha showed the altered ID. He addressed them in Amharic, Ethiopia's main language, not daring to speak a word of his native Tigrinya.

He also showed them his baby girls.

Any suspicions disappeared. The militia came to the house several times after that. They offered Abraha a little money and tried to comfort him for his loss.

"They thought I was one of them," Abraha said.

His family was safe, for now. But he knew they couldn't stay. The fake Wolkait identity had worked almost too well. Abraha's brother-in-law, 19-year-old Goytom Tsegay, said Amhara special forces tried to recruit him.

Life in Mai Kadra was more dangerous by the day. Every night, Abraha heard someone else had been killed. A month after the fighting began, he decided to leave.

He didn't even know where to go.

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The family packed light, so the Amhara who now controlled Mai Kadra would not notice they were leaving for good. Abraha, his children and his brother-in-law carried just five pieces of the local injera bread, a tin of milk and two liters of water, plus a change of clothes for the twins.

A woman in the community brought the pink bassinet for the babies. Abraha hid a small book of photos of his wife and children under its mattress, along with his wife's jewelry. He was scared the militia would find them, but he couldn't bear to leave them behind.

The family walked to the checkpoint on the edge of town, accompanied by the Amhara neighbor. She chatted with fighters there. This family is Amhara, she said.

Sympathetic, the militia unknowingly helped the fleeing Tigrayan family. They stopped a car on the road and arranged a ride, saving Abraha and his children a six-hour walk to the city of Humera near the Sudanese border.

Blinded by grief and nervousness, Abraha hardly looked out the window during the drive, one he had made many times. Other desperate families were fleeing on foot through the lowland farms, trying to stay out of sight of the militia, clutching whatever possessions they had left.

In Humera, also under growing Amhara control, Abraha's family went to the hospital to ask for milk. Again, one glance at the babies in his arms won new friends.

"All the staff was sorry for me, even the cleaners," he said.

A fellow Tigrayan, one of the few remaining on staff, quietly took them to her home and suggested they go to Sudan for safety. It was a four-hour walk away.

Abraha had heard that the Amhara youth militia and soldiers from nearby Eritrea roamed the route. Both have been accused of beating or shooting people trying to flee.

"We were very afraid we would be killed," he said.

The family started their final walk before dawn. They stayed off the roads, crossing fields instead, asking fellow Tigrayans they met for the safest way. They stopped sometimes to hide in the grass and give milk to the crying babies.

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The heat quickly grew with the rising sun. The flat expanse of Sudan came into sight, then the narrow Tekeze river.

Frantic Tigrayans jostled for places aboard the boats that would ferry them across the border. Many were waiting. It was loud and chaotic, and the twins began to wail.

The sight of Abraha, the bassinet and what it carried stilled some in the crowd. To Abraha's astonishment, the family was waved to the front and given a reduced price for the crossing.

He and the babies were ushered to a boat of their own that was lashed together from a dozen 20-liter jerrycans. It was flat, with no guardrail.

Abraha couldn't swim. But as he settled into place in the center of the boat and its bottom scraped free of his country, he felt the burden of the past month ease.

"I was 100% sure the babies would grow up, that things would change from that moment," he said. "My stress melted away. There were no more fears for our lives."

Even the twins had become quiet. He looked down. They had fallen asleep.

The family arrived in Sudan exhausted, with the twins badly underweight. Megan Donaghy, a nurse midwife with Doctors Without Borders, wondered what had happened to their mother.

Abraha pulled out a picture and said, "This is my wife." The entire family smiled as they looked at it.

"And that's when I cried, when I saw her face," Donaghy remembered. "She was just this beautiful, vibrant woman, a young woman, who loved her family, and here they were in tattered clothes, run-down, tired, hungry, with these sweet little babies."

A fellow refugee, Mulu Gebrencheal, a mother of five, came across the family and wept. She has since become an informal adviser on the babies' care. Abraha and his sons are quick learners, she said, but she mourns for the twins.

"Even the hug of a mother is very sweet," she said. "They've never had this. They never will."

Months after arriving in Sudan, the twins lay on their backs under tiny mosquito nets on metal-frame beds, gnawing a fist or smiling up at the besotted men who have become experts in infant care. On their tiny wrists, the girls take turns wearing a single protective amulet given to them by a local woman.

But for Abraha, a painful task remained. He had finally managed to reach his relatives inside Tigray for the first time since the war began. His sister picked up the phone, and he asked her to invite other family members to an important call the following day.

He made his way alone back to the border with Ethiopia, where refugees come with their phones for a clearer signal. He forced himself to begin with the good news.

His family, excited, clamored for details of his wife.

"Did she give birth?" they asked.

"Yes, twins," Abraha replied. Joyful, his family pressed for more.

"Boys or girls?"

"Who looks like whom?"

"How was the labor?"

Finally, Abraha calmed them, and continued.

"But," he said, "I couldn't save her life."

His family began to cry. He joined them. He worried about what awful things might have happened to his sister and others that they were hiding from him even now.

As the tears calmed, his family tried to comfort him.

"God has his own plan."

"Try to be strong."

"Look after the babies, and the boys."

"You're all they have."

That evening, Abraha returned to what he and his children now call home, thanks to those who helped them get out alive. He picked up the baby girls and again searched their faces for traces of their mother.

His family agrees, one of the babies does look like Letay.

In the fear and despair following their birth, the twins were left unnamed. There was no time. Finally, Abraha's young son Micheale christened them himself.

One of the girls was named Aden, or "paradise."

The other, who reminds people of her mother, was named Turfu, or "left behind."

## Norwegian climber 1st to test positive on Mount Everest

By BINAJ GURBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — The coronavirus has conquered the world's highest mountain.

A Norwegian climber became the first to be tested for COVID-19 in Mount Everest base camp and was flown by helicopter to Kathmandu, where he was hospitalized.

Erlend Ness told The Associated Press in a message Friday that he tested positive on April 15. He said another test on Thursday was negative and he was now staying with a local family in Nepal.

An ace mountain guide, Austrian Lukas Furtenbach, warned that the virus could spread among the hundreds of other climbers, guides and helpers who are now camped on the base of Everest if all of them are not checked immediately and safety measures are taken.

Any outbreak could prematurely end the climbing season, just ahead of a window of good weather in May, he said.

"We would need now most urgently mass testing in base camp, with everyone tested and every team being isolated, no contact between teams," said Furtenbach. "That needs to be done now, otherwise it is too late."

Furtenbach, leading a team of 18 climbers to Mount Everest and its sister peak Mount Lhotse, said there could be more than just one case on the mountain as the Norwegian had lived with several others for weeks.

A Nepalese mountaineering official denied there were any active cases on the mountains at the moment.

Mira Acharya, director at the Department of Mountaineering, said she had no official information about the COVID-19 cases and only reports of illnesses like pneumonia and altitude sickness.

Mountaineering was closed last year due to the pandemic and climbers returned to Everest this year for the first time since May 2019.

The popular spring climbing season in Nepal, which has eight of the highest peaks in the world, began in March and ends in May.

## Denmark tells some Syrians to leave, separating families

By DAVID KEYTON Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — An email brought Faeza Satouf's world to a standstill.

The 25-year-old Syrian refugee had fled the civil war with her family in an all-too-familiar journey across the sea to Europe, where they finally arrived in Denmark and were granted asylum in 2015. Yet six years later, she was being told she had to go back — alone, and soon.

Ten years after the start of the uprising against Bashar al-Assad's regime, Denmark has become the first European country to start revoking the residency permits of some Syrian refugees, arguing that the Syrian capital, Damascus, and neighboring regions are safe. Yet few experts agree with Denmark's assessment.

"There are no laws in Syria that can protect me like here in Denmark," Satouf said with palpable anxiety. "My father is sought after in Syria, so of course I will be arrested upon my return."

In the past six years, Satouf has learned Danish, graduated from high school with flying colors and is now studying to be a nurse while working in a supermarket. She can't understand why a country that encouraged integration and which needs nurses amid a pandemic would expel her and others, mainly women.

For now, the decision affects only people from certain areas of Syria who got their initial asylum because they were fleeing civil war. It doesn't include those who can prove a specific threat to their lives, such as men who could face conscription into Assad's army.

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"This is very much down the line of gender," said Satouf's lawyer, Niels-Erik Hansen. "When I have a male client, I will send him right away to the Immigration Service and he will get asylum within three weeks. A female client will get rejected ... and we will have to take this case to the refugee board. So when I look into the pile of cases that I'm representing at the board, it's like 90% women and 10% male."

Because Denmark has no diplomatic relations with Syria, those who refuse to leave the country cannot be sent to Syria. Instead, they are sent to deportation centers, separated from family, unable to work and withdrawn from education programs.

Single women are likely to be sent to the Kaershovedgaard deportation center, a remote complex of buildings about 300 kilometers (185 miles) west of Copenhagen. Access is strictly limited, but Red Cross photos show rudimentary infrastructure where cooking is banned and activities are restricted. Even Danish language lessons are not allowed.

"It is like a prison, but they are allowed to go out in the daytime," said Gerda Abildgaard, who has visited the center for several years for the Red Cross.

The policy is the product of a left-wing Social Democratic-led government, whose immigration stance has come to resemble that of far-right parties after years of large migrations peaked in 2015 with 1 million new arrivals in Europe. The large numbers of people coming from Africa and the Middle East energized populist movements across the continent, pushing parties that had a more welcoming position to embrace stricter policies.

It's a dilemma that Democrats are facing in the U.S., as a surge of young migrants at the Southern border tests President Joe Biden's campaign promise to accept more refugees than in the Trump era.

Though the numbers of asylum-seekers in Denmark have since plummeted, particularly during the pandemic, Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen reiterated in January a vision of having "zero asylum-seekers."

The Danish government argues that it made clear to the Syrians from the beginning that they were being offered only temporary protection.

"It's a cornerstone of our legislation ... that you get temporary protection, and as soon as you don't need protection anymore, you will have to leave Denmark," said Rasmus Storklund, a Social Democratic lawmaker and member of Parliament's Immigration and Integration Committee.

Standing in front of the deportation center's heavy gates, Abildgaard pleads: "But is Syria safe again? It's only Denmark who says that. All the other European countries don't say that. Only Denmark."

This week, experts who contributed to reports on which the Danish authorities based their assessment condemned that conclusion, warning in a joint statement published by Human Rights Watch that "conditions do not presently exist anywhere in Syria for safe returns."

In government-controlled areas, including in the suburbs of Damascus and many parts of central Syria previously held by opposition rebels, the security situation has stabilized, but entire neighborhoods are destroyed, and many people have no houses to return to. Basic services such as water and electricity are poor to nonexistent.

Moreover, forced conscription, indiscriminate detentions and forced disappearances continue.

In a borderless European Union, Denmark tightening migration regulations means that people facing deportation may flee to neighboring Sweden or to Germany, which welcomed refugees in past years but where there is little political will now to take more.

"This is also a lack of solidarity with the rest of Europe," said Hansen, Satouf's lawyer. "As the first country that starts to withdraw residence permits for these refugees, we are, in fact, pushing people to go to other European countries."

Denmark's approach marks a dramatic transformation of a nation that was the first to sign the 1951 U.N. Refugee Convention, and which was long seen as a paragon of openness and tolerance.

"We used to be known as one of the most humanitarian countries in Europe, with a lot of freedom, a lot of respect for human rights," says Michala Bendixen, the head of Refugees Welcome Denmark, a non-governmental group. Now, she notes, Denmark's policies look much more like those of countries with hard-line immigration policies, like Hungary.

The ultimate goal, Bendixen believes, is "making it less attractive for refugees and foreigners to arrive in Denmark."

On Wednesday, hundreds of people gathered in front of parliament to protest the deportation orders, surrounded by Danish friends, classmates and work colleagues.

Addressing the crowd, a nervous Satouf told her story.

Others also spoke: A brother and sister facing separation, siblings whose residence permits were expiring the next day, a high school student surrounded by her Danish classmates, a single woman who couldn't comprehend how Denmark, with its claim to uphold and defend women's rights, could be doing this.

"They say I should marry someone who has political asylum to stay here," said Nevien Alrahal who traveled to Denmark with her elderly father and who faces her final appeal on Friday. "That's a choice I don't want to make."

## Beyond the Pandemic: London's West End readies for next act

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Noah Thomas saw his name in lights, and then the lights went out.

The young actor was still in drama school when he was cast to play the lead role in the London West End musical "Everybody's Talking About Jamie." Thomas made his professional debut in early 2020. Weeks later, as the coronavirus pandemic washed over Britain, the city's theaters closed.

"It was a bit of a rude awakening," Thomas said. "As the months ticked on — month one, month two, month three — you think, 'This is a lot bigger than any of us could have anticipated.'"

More than a year on, the West End is preparing, with hope and apprehension, to welcome audiences back.

Plagues, fires, war — London has survived them all. But it has never had a year like this. The coronavirus has killed more than 15,000 Londoners and shaken the foundations of one of the world's great cities. As a fast-moving mass vaccination campaign holds the promise of reopening, The Associated Press looks at the pandemic's impact on London's people and institutions and asks what the future might hold.

The pandemic has devastated British theater, a world-renowned cultural export and major economic force. The stages that collectively employ 300,000 people were ordered shut a week before the country went into full lockdown in March 2020. They have remained closed for most of the last 13 months, endangering thousands more related jobs in bars, restaurants and hotels that cater to theater-goers.

"We were the first to be closed," producer Nica Burns said. "And we were the last to come back."

One of those sidelined when theaters went dark was Neil Maxfield, who turned his love of musicals into a job leading walking tours of London's West End, the district that is home to more than three dozen theaters and long-running juggernaut shows including "Les Miserables," "The Lion King," "Hamilton" and "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child."

"I just love the West End," said the energetic Maxfield, sporting the top hat that he wears on tours. "I love how vibrant it is, I love how versatile it is — that mixture of not just musical theater but plays as well, and new things coming in all the time."

But for most of the past year, the West End has been spookily deserted, the streets resounding to road crews and construction work rather than nighttime crowds.

Some wonder if its energy will ever return. When lockdown froze much of the economy, the British government stepped in to support jobs. Many theater workers fell through the cracks; as freelancers, they weren't eligible for the payments given to furloughed employees. Many took jobs as delivery drivers or retail workers; some were forced to leave London because of sky-high rents.

"When you get told that you don't apply for such and such government funding or benefit schemes, you sort of think, 'Oh wow, OK. So I really didn't get into this for the money,'" said Thomas, whose face still adorns the Apollo Theatre marquee as Jamie, a working-class teenager who dreams of being a drag queen.

But actors, the 22-year-old said, "stand our ground."

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"We're coming back to do our jobs. We're not going to give up what we do, what we've trained to do," he said.

"Everybody's Talking About Jamie" is set to reopen on May 20, one of the first West End shows to return once the government allows indoor venues to admit limited audiences on May 17.

Burns, who owns the Apollo and five other London theaters, has invested in hand sanitizer stations, one-way arrows and an electronic ticketing system. She has had seats removed so mask-wearing, temperature-checked audience members can keep a distance from one another. Cast and crew members will be tested every 48 hours and kept apart from audiences and front-of-house staff.

The producer says reopening is a "leap into the dark," but she's encouraged by what she observed during a brief period in December when theaters opened up — only to close days later for another national lockdown.

"I watched audiences leave the theaters much, much happier than when they arrived," Burns said.

About a third of West End theaters plan to reopen in the coming weeks, but it will be a long way from normality. Big, expensive shows can't afford to run at the half-capacity limit demanded by social distancing requirements. The government is aiming to remove attendance limits on June 21, but may keep them in place if the virus starts to surge again.

Although two-thirds of British adults have had at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine, the government is nervous about new virus variants that may resist existing shots.

Even if British audiences return, U.K. theaters will have to do without international tourists for the foreseeable future. Theater and music businesses have also lobbied, so far unsuccessfully, for a government-backed insurance program in case live events have to be canceled because of COVID-19.

Julian Bird, chief executive of the Society of London Theatre, an umbrella group, said the industry is crying out for certainty that the government will follow the reopening road map it created earlier this year.

"People are risking money, they're spending actual money," Bird said. "And that is all at risk if the government changes its mind now."

Those working in the industry are confident theaters and other cultural institutions will survive. Artists are resilient, and the government, after strong criticism, has handed out more than 1.2 billion pounds (\$1.7 billion) in grants and loans to arts and culture organizations.

But many worry about the damage already done. Nickie Miles-Wildin, associate director of Graeae Theatre Company, which is run by deaf and disabled artists, fears a setback for hard-won diversity in the theater.

"My fear with that is that it's potentially going to be those more diverse voices that we've lost along the way," she said. "That, for me, is what is potentially going to be incredibly sad — it will still feel like a very white, non-disabled, straight middle-class thing."

For its millions of fans, London's West End has a special magic, an energy rivaled only by its New York competitor, Broadway. London-born actor Hiba Elchikhe, 28, who plays the title character's best friend in "Everybody's Talking About Jamie," is confident that will endure.

"Honestly, there is nothing like it," she said. "I've worked overseas. I've worked in other places. And for me, there's nothing like playing your hometown. The kind of buzz — leaving the theater, seeing posters everywhere, the buses having the theater posters. It really is electric."

"And I don't believe that this (pandemic) is going to hinder it in any way. I think people are really craving to be back in theaters."

## Shooting revives criticism of Israel's use of deadly force

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Hours after Israeli soldiers shot and killed Osama Mansour at a temporary checkpoint in the occupied West Bank, the military announced that it had thwarted a car-ramming attack — but the facts didn't seem to add up.

By all accounts, Mansour had initially stopped his car when ordered to do so. His wife, the mother of his five children, was sitting in the passenger seat. And after the soldiers sprayed the vehicle with gunfire,

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killing him and wounding her, they declined to arrest her as an accomplice.

Witnesses say the soldiers killed Mansour for no apparent reason, part of what rights groups say is a pattern of fatal shootings of Palestinians by Israeli forces under questionable circumstances. The debate over the soldiers' conduct echoes that over the high-profile police killings of Black Americans in the United States.

The conviction this week of former Minneapolis, Minn., police officer Derek Chauvin in the killing of George Floyd, who police initially said had died of a "medical incident" during a "police interaction," drew attention to the accuracy of official statements about deadly encounters.

In its initial statement, the Israeli military said the vehicle had accelerated "in a way that endangered the lives of the soldiers" and that forces opened fire to "thwart the threat." But shortly afterwards, the military said the shooting was under investigation, without elaborating.

A military spokeswoman declined to answer detailed questions about the incident submitted by The Associated Press, including whether the army still believes it thwarted an attack.

Somaya, the widow of the deceased, says her husband took her to see a doctor in the early hours of April 6. On the drive back to their home village of Biddu they passed through the village of Bir Nabala, just outside Jerusalem.

They saw Israeli troops and armored jeeps up ahead, a common sight in the occupied West Bank, where Israeli forces often carry out overnight arrest raids.

"I said 'There's a checkpoint, Osama, stop,'" she told the AP. "He said 'I see it,' and he stopped like the other cars."

She said two soldiers came over to the car with their rifles pointed at them. One of them ordered Osama to shut off the ignition, and he complied. The soldier asked where they were from and what they were doing, and they told him, she said.

"He said 'Fine, OK, go.' So we started the car, we moved forward, and a second later they opened fire," she said. "I froze out of fear, with broken glass falling over my head and the sound of bullets. It was very scary."

She said the car veered back and forth. She called out to her husband to go faster, then saw that he was slumped between the seats and took the wheel until they reached some people who helped them get to a hospital.

"There was blood all over the floor, so much blood," she said. "I was asking about Osama, I was crying out for him. They said he was in the operating room, for four hours he was in the operating room, and finally they said he had died."

The Israeli human rights group B'Tselem says it interviewed two witnesses who largely corroborated her account. Roy Yellin, a spokesman for the group, said the fact that Somaya was not arrested strongly indicates that the military did not think it was an attack. She has been summoned for questioning next week, but there's no indication Israel views her as a suspect.

"The army is not very conservative about detaining Palestinians who are suspected of anything," Yellin said, pointing to the routine arrests of protesters and stone-throwers.

B'Tselem has documented several similar incidents in recent years, in which Israeli forces said they opened fire to prevent car-ramming attacks, killing or wounding Palestinians, only to later back away from the claims without making arrests or pressing charges.

"There's a very trigger-happy approach in the West Bank in which Palestinians are guilty until proven otherwise," Yellin said.

The army's suspicions are not always unfounded.

In recent years, Palestinians have carried out a series of stabbings, shootings and car-ramming attacks that have killed or wounded Israeli soldiers and civilians. Military checkpoints in the West Bank are a frequent target. Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 war, and the Palestinians want it to form the main part of their future state. Defenders of the military say soldiers must make split-second decisions in life-or-death situations.

International law and the Israeli military's rules of engagement say lethal force can be used in life-



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threatening situations. But rights groups say Israel often falls short of that standard and rarely punishes wrongdoing by its security forces. B'Tselem says it stopped referring such cases to military authorities in 2016 after concluding that doing so was ineffective.

Yellin says Israel only prosecutes wrongdoing in rare cases in which there is overwhelming evidence. Even then, soldiers often get light sentences.

The military said it investigates every incident in the West Bank in which a person is killed. "In cases where a deviation from the rules is found, steps are taken according to the circumstances of the case," it said.

The military pointed to an incident in March 2019 in which a soldier shot and killed a Palestinian after mistaking him for another individual suspected of throwing stones at passing Israeli vehicles. Under a plea bargain, the soldier was sentenced to three months in prison and demoted, it said.

The International Criminal Court will likely scrutinize Israel's handling of such cases as part of a probe it launched earlier this year into possible war crimes. Israel has condemned the investigation, which was requested by the Palestinians, and says the court is biased against it.

Earlier this month, Israel said it would send a formal letter to the ICC rejecting its mandate. Israel denied committing any such crimes and said it was able to investigate and prosecute any violations by its forces. That was two days after Mansour was shot dead.

Israel is not a party to the ICC, but Israelis could be subject to arrest in other countries if the court hands down warrants.

In the meantime, with little hope for accountability, Somaya is left to raise her five children alone. "After Osama, what am I supposed to do with my life?" she said. "It's over."

## Vocabulary, lightning round added to National Spelling Bee

By BEN NUCKOLS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Scripps National Spelling Bee is undergoing a major overhaul to ensure it can identify a single champion, adding vocabulary questions and a lightning-round tiebreaker to this year's pandemic-altered competition.

The 96-year-old bee has in the past included vocabulary on written tests but never in the high-stakes oral competition rounds, where one mistake eliminates a speller. The only previous tiebreaker to determine a single champion was a short-lived extra written test that never turned out to be needed.

The changes, announced this week, amount to a new direction for the bee under executive director J. Michael Durnil, who started in the job earlier this year.

Both new elements, however, also signal a departure from what for many observers is the core appeal of the bee: watching schoolchildren who have such mastery of roots and language patterns that they can figure out how to spell the trickiest words in the dictionary, even if they've never heard them before.

The 2020 bee was canceled because of the pandemic, the first time since World War II that the bee wasn't on the calendar. This year's event will be mostly virtual, and the in-person finals on July 8 have been moved from the bee's longtime home in the Washington area to an ESPN campus in Florida.

The bee had co-champions from 2014-16, and the 2019 bee ended in an eight-way tie after organizers ran out of words difficult enough to challenge the top spellers, whose preparation with personal coaches and comprehensive study guides was no match for the vaunted Scripps word list.

Durnil did not directly criticize the previous bee but said ending with one winner was a priority.

"I think the spellers don't enter into our competition thinking that they're going to have to share the ultimate distinction of the spelling champion with anybody else," Durnil told The Associated Press. "From a competitive standpoint, we owe it to the spellers to identify the champion of the spelling bee."

In the lightning round, spellers would have 90 seconds to spell as many words as they can correctly. The rapid-fire tiebreaker would only be used if the bee gets toward the end of its allotted time and can't get to a single winner in the traditional way, by eliminating spellers for getting a word wrong. The remaining spellers would get the same words in the lightning round and be isolated from one another.

Adding vocabulary, Durnil said, brings more academic rigor to the bee in keeping with its educational

mission.

Siyona Mishra, a finalist in the bee in 2015 and 2017 who now coaches younger spellers — kids can't compete after eighth grade — said there was a contradiction in Scripps' justification for the changes.

"Simultaneously saying that vocab questions on (the) live stage are being added to encourage understanding of words doesn't really match up with their addition of a lightning round of spelling," Mishra wrote in an email. "Adding a lightning round will only emphasize to spellers that memorizing and immediately recognizing a word is what is more important than really learning the words."

Memorizing definitions is not a core element of spellers' training, said Zaila Avant-Garde, a 14-year-old from Hardey, Louisiana, who will be competing in this year's bee.

"I just kind of pick up the definition. It seeps into me from looking at them. It's not like I specifically dedicate time to studying vocabulary," Zaila said. "Will I now study it? I'm not really sure."

Zaila stressed that she didn't mind the addition of vocabulary or the lightning round, which she said "will be really entertaining to watch or even to compete in."

Scripps said live vocabulary rounds — in which spellers are given multiple-choice questions about word definitions — are being used in some regional bees this year, but some spellers were caught off guard by the change.

"I think it's unfortunate that these changes were rolled out so late in the process," Scott Remer, a former speller and spelling coach who wrote a book about how to train for the bee, said in an email. "Many students (including my tutees) have been studying hard for nationals for many months without any certainty about the format of the bee."

Amber Born, who competed in the bee from 2010-13, said the lightning round "emphasizes speed over skill in a contest where that shouldn't be the deciding factor."

"I would prefer they just asked harder words," Born added, "but it probably wouldn't be as interesting on TV."

## Evidence in Chauvin case contradicted first police statement

By CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Moments after former officer Derek Chauvin was convicted of murder in George Floyd's death, copies of the original Minneapolis police statement began recirculating on social media. It attributed Floyd's death to "medical distress" and made no mention that the Black man had been pinned to the ground at the neck by Chauvin, or that he'd cried out that he couldn't breathe.

Many were posting the release to highlight the distance between the initial police narrative and the evidence that led to the conviction Tuesday, including excruciating video shot by a teenage bystander of Chauvin with his knee on Floyd's neck, even after Floyd had stopped moving.

And while Chauvin's conviction is a high-profile case of video rebutting initial police statements, criminal justice experts and police accountability advocates say the problem of inaccurate initial reports — especially in fatal police encounters — is widespread.

"If it wasn't for this 17-year-old who took the video, Derek Chauvin would in all likelihood still be on the police force training officers," said Andre Johnson, a University of Memphis professor of communication studies. "Sadly, this has been going on for a while, and it's just now coming to light for a lot of Americans because of video evidence."

For their part, police officials say they give the most accurate information they can during fast-moving and complicated investigations. But the frequency with which misleading information is published cannot be ignored, critics say.

In 2014, the New York Police Department's narrative of Eric Garner's death was that he'd gone into cardiac arrest. It made no mention of an officer's extended chokehold on Garner, shown in a bystander video that captured repeated pleas that he couldn't breathe. A grand jury declined to indict the since-fired officer Daniel Pantaleo, who said he was using a legal maneuver called a seat belt.

A year later, then-policeman Michael Slager said he shot Walter Scott because he'd grabbed for the

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officer's stun gun. But bystander video of the North Charleston, South Carolina, shooting showed Slager chase Scott after he fled a traffic stop and fatally shoot him in the back. Slager was charged with murder in state court, but released after a hung jury. He later pleaded guilty to federal civil rights violations.

As the chorus of complaints about misinformation on such interactions grows, so do calls for body cameras for police. Roughly 80% of departments with 500 officers or more are now using cameras, but video storage can be costly.

Official police video is also increasingly showing discrepancies in initial police narratives, though generally the images are withheld for days or sometimes months during internal investigations.

Chicago police were ordered by a court to release dashcam video of the 2014 killing of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald more than 13 months after the shooting. It was initially ruled a justified shooting based on an officer narrative that McDonald had approached police while refusing to drop a knife. The video showed then-officer Jason Van Dyke shooting the teen 16 times as he walked away. Van Dyke was found guilty of second-degree murder.

Johnson said it shouldn't take video evidence of Black Americans being mistreated or killed for people to support policing changes. He noted that when there is video evidence, it's often scrutinized and still rejected by some as fake or deceptive.

"Why does it have to take the video evidence, the activism, the testimony?" asked Johnson, who is Black. "It takes all that because since the inception of policing, we as Americans have taken the police at their word. But this is nothing new to communities of color."

"The question is, Have police now begun to lose the default position that they're truthful?" he said. "I think it's beginning to erode."

Police and prosecutors in several cities have released body camera videos more quickly after recent fatal encounters. Some experts say that's in part to quell the potential for large-scale protests against racial injustice and police brutality that took place nationwide after Floyd's death. Others say it's a move to regain the trust of the community amid demands for transparency.

Officials in Columbus, Ohio, released initial body camera footage of the fatal police shooting of 16-year-old Ma'Khia Bryant just hours after it happened Tuesday. More footage released Wednesday showed a chaotic scene where the teen charged at two people with a knife.

The release was a departure from the Columbus Division of Police protocol, and it came as the agency faces immense public scrutiny following two other high-profile killings by city police and one by the county sheriff's department in Columbus since Dec. 3.

Meanwhile, in Tennessee, a district attorney came under fire for initially refusing to release body camera video after an officer shot and killed a student in a Knoxville high school April 12.

Activists, political leaders and media outlets had demanded that Knox County District Attorney Charme Allen's office release the footage.

Just hours after Knoxville police officer Jonathon Clabough fatally shot 17-year-old Anthony J. Thompson Jr., Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Director David Rausch said the teen had fired shots as officers entered the bathroom, striking an officer.

But, after Allen released the video Wednesday to comply with a judge's order, it showed Thompson was holding a handgun in his sweatshirt front pocket, fired only one shot and didn't strike any of the four officers. It was Clabough who accidentally shot fellow Officer Adam Wilson during the scuffle, officials said.

Allen told reporters she had spoken extensively with Thompson's family, who begged her not to release the video so close to his funeral.

"My preference would be not to do this today, but I'm under pressure from you (the media), from politicians and activist groups," she said. "I get it. You should be able to see the video. I just think the timing, we have to come up with a better process."

In Minneapolis, police spokesperson John Elder previously told The Associated Press that he did not visit the scene on May 25, 2020, as he usually does after major events, and he was not able to review body camera footage of Floyd's death for several hours. Elder released the initial description after being briefed

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by supervisors, who he learned later also had not been to the scene.

After the bystander video surfaced, the department realized the statement was inaccurate and immediately requested an FBI investigation, he said. By then, state investigators had taken over, and he was unable to issue a corrected statement.

"I will never lie to cover up the actions of somebody else," Elder said.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, April 24, the 114th day of 2021. There are 251 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 24, 1980, the United States launched an unsuccessful attempt to free the American hostages in Iran, a mission that resulted in the deaths of eight U.S. servicemen.

On this date:

In 1800, Congress approved a bill establishing the Library of Congress.

In 1877, federal troops were ordered out of New Orleans, ending the North's post-Civil War rule in the South.

In 1915, in what's considered the start of the Armenian genocide, the Ottoman Empire began rounding up Armenian political and cultural leaders in Constantinople.

In 1960, rioting erupted in Biloxi, Miss., after Black protesters staging a "wade-in" at a whites-only beach were attacked by a crowd of hostile whites.

In 1962, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology achieved the first satellite relay of a television signal, between Camp Parks, California, and Westford, Massachusetts.

In 1967, Soviet cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov was killed when his Soyuz 1 spacecraft smashed into the Earth after his parachutes failed to deploy properly during re-entry; he was the first human spaceflight fatality.

In 1974, comedian Bud Abbott, 78, died in Woodland Hills, Calif.

In 2003, U.S. forces in Iraq took custody of Tariq Aziz (TAH'-rihk ah-ZEEZ'), the former Iraqi deputy prime minister. China shut down a Beijing hospital as the global death toll from SARS surpassed 260.

In 2005, Pope Benedict XVI formally began his stewardship of the Roman Catholic Church; the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said in his installation homily that as pontiff he would listen to the will of God in governing the world's 1.1 billion Catholics.

In 2009, Mexico shut down schools, museums, libraries and state-run theaters across its overcrowded capital in hopes of containing a deadly swine flu outbreak.

In 2013, in Bangladesh, a shoddily constructed eight-story commercial building housing garment factories collapsed, killing more than 1,100 people.

In 2019, avowed racist John William King was executed in Texas for the 1998 slaying of James Byrd Jr., who was chained to the back of a truck and dragged along a road outside Jasper, Texas; prosecutors said Byrd was targeted because he was Black.

Ten years ago: Pope Benedict XVI offered an Easter Sunday prayer for diplomacy to prevail over warfare in Libya and for citizens of the Middle East to build a new society. Taliban militants staged a massive jailbreak in Kandahar, Afghanistan, as some 480 inmates escaped through a tunnel that had been dug over a matter of months.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama, visiting Hannover, Germany, defended international trade deals in the face of domestic and foreign opposition, saying it was "indisputable" that they strengthened the economy and made Americans businesses more competitive. Billy Paul, 80, a jazz and soul singer best known for the No. 1 hit ballad and "Philadelphia Soul" classic "Me and Mrs. Jones," died in Blackwood, New Jersey.

One year ago: The recorded U.S. death toll from the coronavirus passed the 50,000 mark. Republican

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governors in Georgia, Oklahoma and Alaska allowed some businesses to reopen with restrictions, although health experts warned that it was too soon to ease lockdown orders. President Donald Trump signed a \$484 billion measure to aid employers and hospitals under stress from the pandemic. The Food and Drug Administration issued an alert about the dangers of using a malaria drug that Trump had repeatedly promoted for coronavirus patients. The parent company of Lysol and another disinfectant warned that its products should not be used as an internal treatment for the coronavirus, a day after Trump wondered aloud about that prospect during a White House briefing. Harold Reid, who sang bass for the Grammy-winning country group the Statler Brothers, died in Virginia at the age of 80.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director-producer Richard Donner is 91. Actor Shirley MacLaine is 87. Actor-singer-director Barbra Streisand is 79. Former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley is 79. Country singer Richard Sterban (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 78. Rock musician Doug Clifford (Creedence Clearwater Revival) is 76. R&B singer Ann Peebles is 74. Former Irish Taoiseach (TEE'-shuk) Enda Kenny is 70. Actor-playwright Eric Bogosian is 68. Rock singer-musician Jack Blades (Night Ranger) is 67. Actor Michael O'Keefe is 66. Rock musician David J (Bauhaus) is 64. Actor Glenn Morshower is 62. Rock musician Billy Gould is 58. Actor-comedian Cedric the Entertainer is 57. Actor Djimon Hounsou (JEYE'-mihn OHN'-soo) is 57. Rock musician Patty Schemel is 54. Actor Stacy Haiduk is 53. Rock musician Aaron Comess (Spin Doctors) is 53. Actor Aidan Gillen is 53. Actor Melinda Clarke is 52. Actor Rory McCann is 52. Latin pop singer Alejandro Fernandez is 50. Country-rock musician Brad Morgan (Drive-By Truckers) is 50. Rock musician Brian Marshall (Creed; Alter Bridge) is 48. Actor Derek Luke is 47. Actor-producer Thad Luckinbill is 46. Actor Eric Balfour is 44. Actor Rebecca Mader is 44. Country singer Rebecca Lynn Howard is 42. Country singer Danny Gokey is 41. Actor Reagan Gomez is 41. Actor Austin Nichols is 41. Actor Sasha Barrese is 40. Contemporary Christian musician Jasen Rauch (Red) is 40. Singer Kelly Clarkson is 39. Rock singer-musician Tyson Ritter (The All-American Rejects) is 37. Country singer Carly Pearce is 31. Actor Joe Keery is 29. Actor Jack Quaid is 29. Actor Doc Shaw is 29. Actor Jordan Fisher is 27. Golfer Lydia Ko is 24.