

Groton Daily Independent

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OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Groton Legion Post #39 Beats LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth By 13 Runs

Groton Legion Post #39 had everything working on Monday, winning big over LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth 14-1

Groton Legion Post #39 notched six runs in the fifth inning. Jackson Cogley, Darien Shabazz, Chandler Larson, and Brodyn DeHoet each had RBIs in the frame.

Alex Morris toed the rubber for Groton Legion Post #39. The righty went five innings, allowing one run on four hits, striking out eight and walking zero.

Colin F was on the hill for LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth. The pitcher allowed eight hits and eight runs over four innings, striking out two. Jesse K threw one inning out of the bullpen.

Groton Legion Post #39 scattered 12 hits in the game. Shabazz, Peyton Johnson, and Jonathan Doeden each managed multiple hits for Groton Legion Post #39. Johnson and Shabazz each managed three hits to lead Groton Legion Post #39. Groton Legion Post #39 didn't commit a single error in the field. Pierce Kettering had the most chances in the field with eight.

Jackson Throws Shutout As Groton Legion Post #39 Defeats LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth

Jackson Cogley didn't allow a single run against LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth, throwing a complete game shutout and leading Groton Legion Post #39 to a 14-0 victory on Monday

Groton Legion Post #39 secured the victory thanks to 11 runs in the third inning. Groton Legion Post #39's offense in the inning came from singles by Brodyn DeHoet, Jonathan Doeden, DeHoet, Pierce Kettering, and Cogley, doubles by Alex Morris and Jayden Zak, a sac fly by Cogley, and an error on a ball put in play by Zak.

Groton Legion Post #39 notched 11 runs in the third inning. Morris, DeHoet, Zak, Cogley, Doeden, and DeHoet each had RBIs in the big inning.

One bright spot for LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth was a single by Ben G in the first inning.

Cogley was the winning pitcher for Groton Legion Post #39. The pitcher allowed two hits and zero runs over three innings, striking out three and walking one.

William C took the loss for LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth. William allowed 12 hits and 13 runs over two innings, striking out one and walking one.

Groton Legion Post #39 racked up 14 hits in the game. DeHoet, Kettering, Doeden, and Morris each racked up multiple hits for Groton Legion Post #39. Kettering and DeHoet all had three hits to lead Groton Legion Post #39. Groton Legion Post #39 didn't commit a single error in the field. Morris had three chances in the field, the most on the team.

Groton Legion Post #39'S Early Lead Over LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth Sets Stage For Victory

Groton Legion Post #39 grabbed an early lead on its way to a 12-6 victory over LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth on Monday. Groton Legion Post #39 scored on a walk by Brodyn DeHoet, a walk by Jackson Cogley, a single by Jayden Zak, and a walk by Jace Kroll in the first inning.

LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth scored four runs in the sixth inning, but Groton Legion Post #39 still managed to pull out the victory. LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth batters contributing to the big inning included Danny F, Ben G, and Colin F, all knocking in runs in the inning.

Groton Legion Post #39 notched five runs in the third inning. The offensive firepower by Groton Legion Post #39 was led by Pierce Kettering, Alex Morris, and Chandler Larson, all driving in runs in the frame.

Peyton Johnson pitched Groton Legion Post #39 to victory. The southpaw surrendered six runs on five hits over six innings, striking out nine. Darien Shabazz threw one inning in relief out of the bullpen.

Boston M took the loss for LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth. The righthander allowed six hits and nine runs over three and two-thirds innings, striking out five.

Groton Legion Post #39 had nine hits in the game. Morris and Zak all managed multiple hits for Groton Legion Post #39. Morris went 3-for-4 at the plate to lead Groton Legion Post #39 in hits. Morris led Groton Legion Post #39 with three stolen bases, as they ran wild on the base paths with seven stolen bases.

Ben led LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth with two hits in three at bats.

Morris's Walk-Off Gives Groton Legion Post #39 Victory Over LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth

It came down to the wire on Monday, with Groton Legion Post #39 taking victory on a dramatic walk-off single in the late innings that sealed their victory over LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth. The game was tied at two with Groton Legion Post #39 batting in the bottom of the fifth when Alex Morris singled on the first pitch of the at bat, scoring one run.

The pitching was strong on both sides. Jackson Cogley struck out six, while Jesse K sat down three.

Groton Legion Post #39 opened up scoring in the first inning. Jonathan Doeden tripled on a 1-2 count, scoring one run.

LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth evened things up at two in the top of the fourth inning. Jesse drove in one when Jesse singled.

Cogley pitched Groton Legion Post #39 to victory. The righty lasted five innings, allowing two hits and two runs while striking out six.

Jesse took the loss for LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth. Jesse allowed six hits and three runs over four innings, striking out three.

Morris, Douglas Heminger, Darien Shabazz, Doeden, Pierce Kettering, and Cogley each collected one hit to lead Groton Legion Post #39. Groton Legion Post #39 didn't commit a single error in the field. Kettering had the most chances in the field with six.

LEGION Claremont Honkers Youth didn't commit a single error in the field. Colby D had four chances in the field, the most on the team.

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Bids accepted at Board Meeting

It was a really short school board meeting Monday night as the board then prepares for the upcoming school year.

Diesel/gas bids and newspaper quotes were accepted.

MJ's Sinclair was awarded the diesel and gas bid. Ken's of Groton also submitted bids. MJ's bids are listed with Ken's in (). #2 Diesel \$2.806 (2.895), #1 Diesel \$3.00 (\$3.148), Ethanol \$2.58 (\$2.658), Lead Free: \$2.832 (\$2.898), E85 \$1.54 (\$1.761).

The Groton Independent was designated as the official newspaper for the district. A bid was also submitted by the Reporter & Farmer of Webster.

Staff changes were approved with Emily Dinger moving from MS+15 to MS+30, Sarah Hanten from BS+15 to BS+30, and Janene Harry from BS+30 to BS+45.

Bus #11 was declared as surplus and to be disposed of. It is the oldest bus in the fleet and would now require in excess of \$2,000 in repairs and even then, there is no guarantee that it would pass inspection.



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Britton

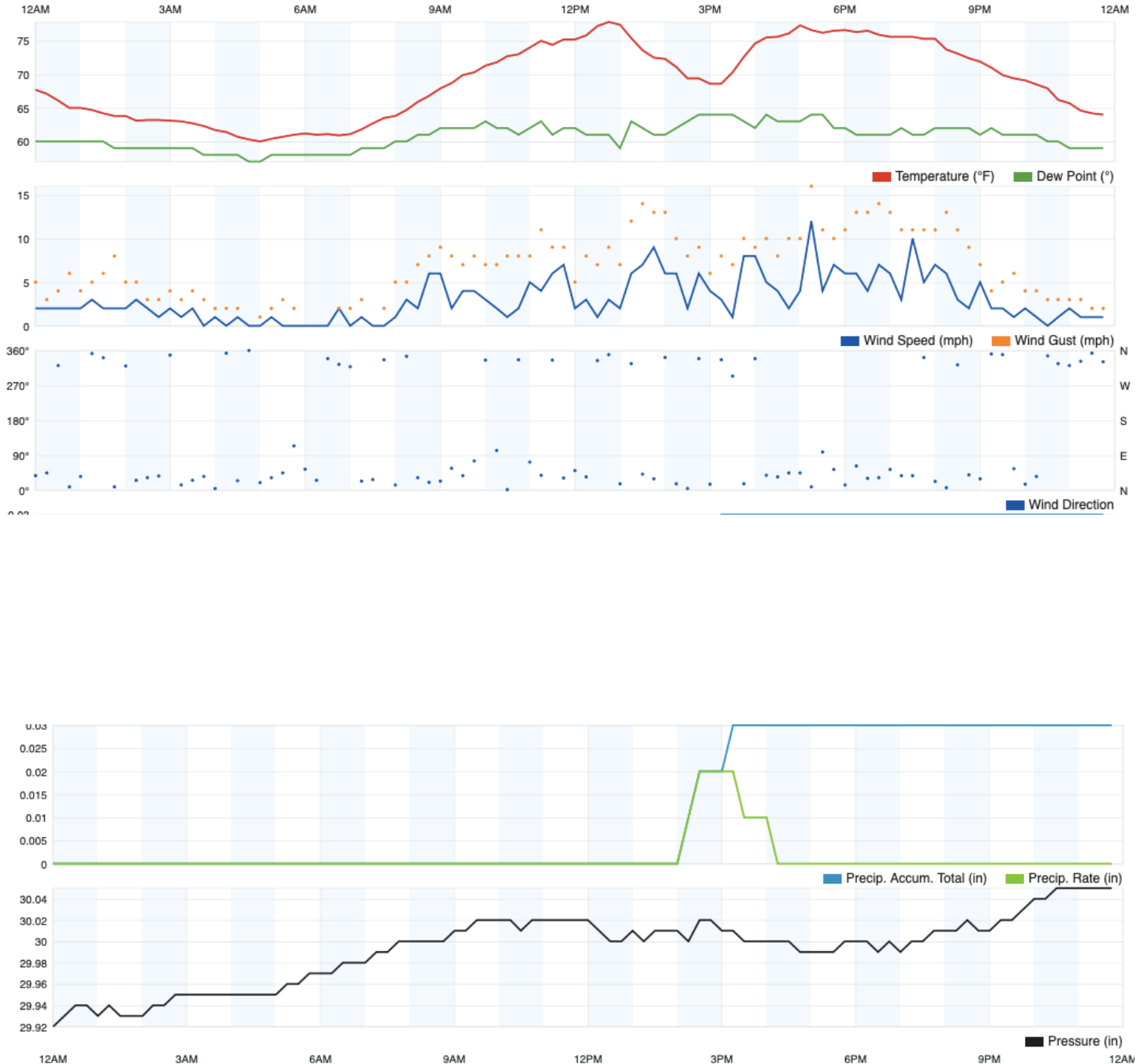
Day shift
and night
shift
assemblers!



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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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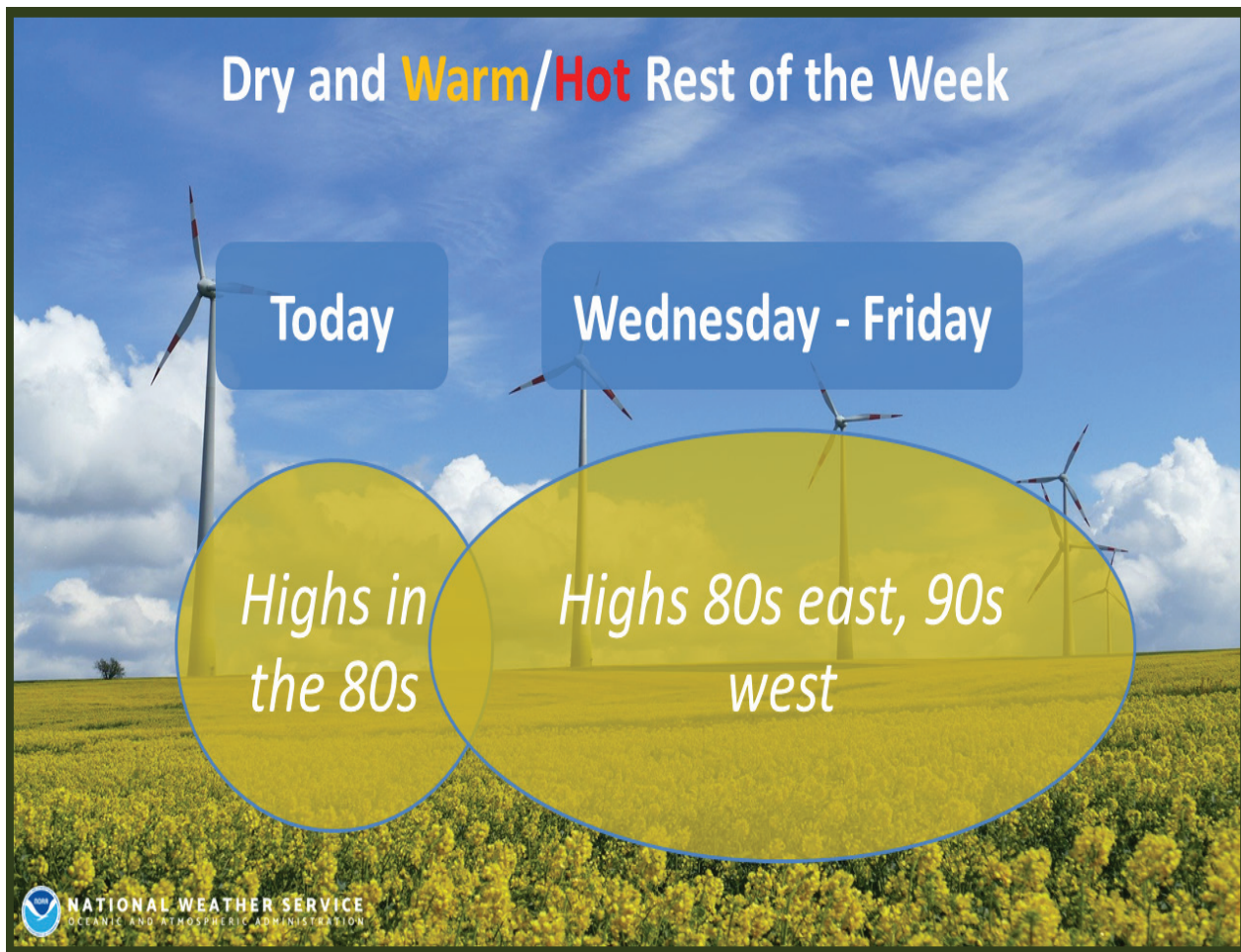
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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
				
Patchy Fog then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Hot	Mostly Clear	Hot
High: 86 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 91 °F	Low: 60 °F	High: 93 °F

Dry and **Warm/Hot** Rest of the Week

Today Wednesday - Friday

Highs in the 80s Highs 80s east, 90s west



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

A ridge of high pressure aloft will provide for dry conditions and warming temperatures over the forecast area for the rest of the work week. #sdwx #mnwx

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Today in Weather History

June 29, 1927: This estimated F2 tornado moved northeast from near Claremont, passing along the northwestern edge of Britton. The Claremont area had a \$12,000 loss as a large silo was destroyed. A dozen homes had roof damage in Britton.

June 29, 2005: Torrential rains of three to seven inches fell across far eastern Brown, western and northern Day, and most of Marshall Counties in the early morning and again in the afternoon hours. One location measured five inches of rain in two hours. Many township roads and highways were flooded along with thousands of acres of cropland. Water surrounded several homes resulting in people being rescued. Some of the houses were flooded. Many bridges were damaged, and roads and culverts were washed out. In Day County, 30 roads were washed out, and 15 bridges needed repairs. Some rainfall amounts include 5.04 inches in Britton, 3.34 at 8N of Columbia, and 2.08 in Aberdeen. Total June rainfall for some locations in Marshall and Day Counties was between 11 and 12 inches. The flooding continued into early July before receding by July 10th.

1826: Thomas Jefferson made his last entry in his weather observation log on this date, just six days before he died. The weather held a fascination for Jefferson as he made regular weather observations. He bought his first thermometer while working on the Declaration of Independence and his first barometer shortly after that.

1904: Tornado hits Karacharov Village area of Moscow killing about 24 people.

1931 - The temperature at Monticello FL hit 109 degrees to establish an all-time record for the state. (The Weather Channel)

1954 - Hurricane Alice dumped as much as 27 inches of rain on the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The Rio Grande River at Laredo reached a level 12.6 feet above its previous highest mark, and the roadway of the U.S. 90 bridge was thirty feet below the high water. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Ohio Valley and the Great Lakes Region, with reports of large hail and damaging winds most numerous in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan. Thunderstorms spawned four tornadoes in Michigan. A tornado near Clare MI was accompanied by softball size hail. In Colorado, an untimely winter-like storm blanketed Mount Evans with six inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Alpena, MI, reported a record low of 39 degrees while Jackson, MS, equalled their record for the month of June with an afternoon high of 105 degrees. Thunderstorms in the central U.S. soaked Springfield MO with 3.62 inches of rain, a record for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Southern and Central High Plains Region. Thunderstorms in Colorado produced softball size hail at Kit Carson, while pea to marble size hail caused ten million dollars damage to crops in Philips County, CO. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1998: "The Corn Belt Derecho of 1998" in the following states NE, IA, IL, IN, KY. A derecho which originated in far southeast South Dakota moved across Illinois during the afternoon and evening and continued as far east as Ohio the next morning. Every county in central Illinois sustained some damage, as these severe thunderstorms passed. Winds gusted in the 60 to 80 mph range, with some localized microbursts producing winds more than 100 mph. Significant damage occurred in the microburst areas, including the towns of Morton, McLean, LeRoy, and Tolono. In Tolono, 22 cars of a southbound 101-car Illinois Central freight train were blown off the tracks. It was unknown how many vehicles were picked up by the wind, but 16 cars were turned over, and another six derailed but remained upright. The train was en route to Centralia from Chicago with a load of mixed freight, including plastic pellets and meal. The freight cars empty weighed about 60,000 pounds, while a full one weighs about 260,000 pounds. Overall, 12 people were injured, and damage was estimated at around \$16 million.

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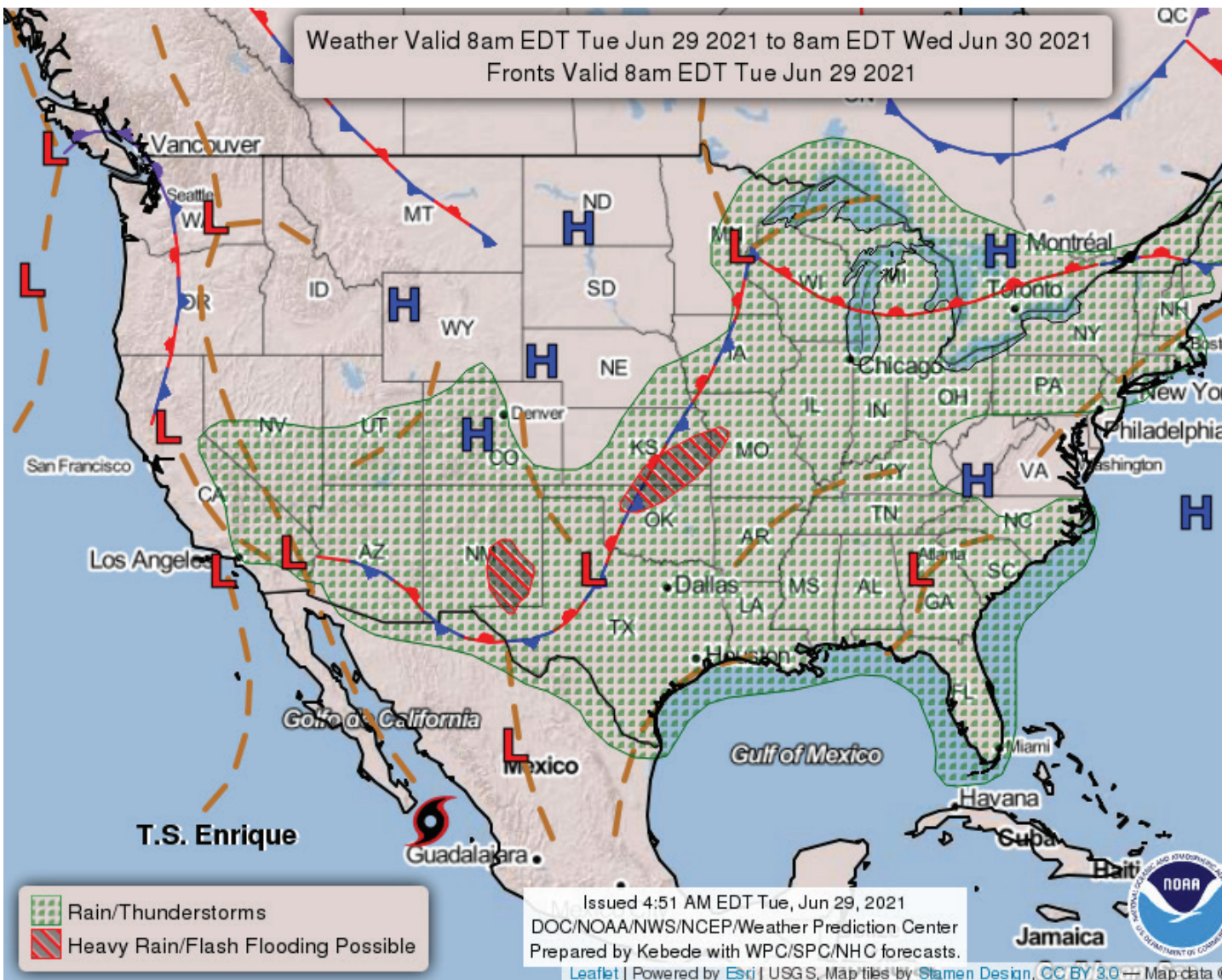
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 78 °F at 12:40 PM
Low Temp: 60 °F at 4:56 AM
Wind: 17 mph at 1:35 PM
Precip: .03

Today's Info

Record High: 107° in 1931
Record Low: 42° in 1900
Average High: 83°F
Average Low: 58°F
Average Precip in June.: 3.51
Precip to date in June.: 0.81
Average Precip to date: 10.76
Precip Year to Date: 4.75
Sunset Tonight: 9:26 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:49 a.m.



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I NEED YOU RIGHT NOW, GOD!

Someone has called this Psalm an "Arrow Prayer." David was in a life-threatening situation and needed help. There was no time for flowery words or trite phrases. It was now or never: If God did not respond immediately, it would be all over for him. He was frightened!

And because of the urgency of this situation, there are different ways to describe his immediate need: "Hasten, Lord; Please God, come quickly; Please God, rescue me right now; Come quickly, Lord, and help me!"

At the time David offered this prayer there were some who were trying to kill him, humiliate him, put him to shame and rejoice over the problems he was facing. Some of his closest friends threatened to destroy him. He was disappointed. He felt empty and forsaken. Those whom he had trusted betrayed him and those whom he had helped turned against him. This happens to us all.

David felt empty, broken, alone and forgotten by everyone but his Lord. So, he did what he always did: he turned to God during a critical life-crisis and begged for immediate assistance. He knew that God alone could and would help him, save him, sustain him and shield him from harm. We, too, often do the same.

But in the midst of his cry for help, David did as he always did: he praised God. Tucked away in the middle of this "Arrow Prayer" David said, "May those who long for Your saving help always say, 'The Lord is Great.'"

What a wonderful lesson for each of us. When we face moments of distress let us never forget that God will deliver us!

Prayer: Lord, may we always remember to praise You for Your grace and goodness even when our faith is weak. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Hasten, O God, to save me; come quickly, Lord, to help me. Psalm 70:1

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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
06/17/2021 Groton Transit Fundraiser, 4-7 p.m.
06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
06/19/2021 U8 Baseball Tournament
06/19/2021 **Postponed to Aug. 28th:** Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon
06/26/2021 U10 Baseball Tournament
06/27/2021 U12 Baseball Tournament
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
08/13/2021 Groton Basketball Golf Tournament
08/28/2021 Lions Club Crazy Golf Fest 9am 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

Disability services funding boost isn't full fix, gives hope

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota is setting aside an unprecedented amount of money for residents with developmental challenges this year, but those who work in the field say it still might not be enough to stem high staff turnover rates and lengthy waitlists for those who need services.

Statewide, more than 5,000 South Dakotans have some form of developmental disability, such as autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy or Down syndrome. The state's Department of Human Services has allocated an additional \$28 million to agencies that provide housing and daily support services to those who can't always care for themselves.

The additional funding is a 14% increase, bringing the annual allocation for community service providers to more than \$200 million for the 2022 fiscal year, which starts Thursday.

Officials with community support providers say the additional funding will allow their organizations to raise wages to stabilize high turnover rates that have led to hundreds of South Dakotans who are waiting to be admitted to support programs.

In Sioux Falls, LifeScape had more than 130 job vacancies this spring, for direct support professionals, case managers, nurses and teachers. That worker shortage meant the nonprofit couldn't admit nearly 60 adults who needed varying levels of support.

"We have empty beds in homes and we know we have a waiting list," LifeScape CEO Steve Watkins told the Argus Leader. "But if we brought somebody in, it would probably tip us over."

Watkins said the high number of vacancies are due to a result of the high demands of the job, and the industry's struggle to compete with the private sector. Both LifeScape and Black Hills Works are using the extra money to increase wages and make the jobs more appealing.

But industry experts say the size of this year's funding boost shows just how far behind past Legislatures have been in keeping funding for community support providers in line with the true costs of providing services that the state is obligated to pay. From 2009 and 2021, these community support providers received an annual average increase of about 1.5%, far behind rises in inflation and the cost of living.

The Department of Human Services is now required to do rate modeling updates at least every five years to keep up. That work is going on this summer. Watkins and Sioux Falls Rep. Chris Karr are optimistic it will identify efficiencies for community service providers, find deficiencies in the rate model the state's been using for more than a decade, and build on the increase made in this year's budget.

"The state really got behind us this year and came up with a number that was just fantastic," Watkins said. "It doesn't solve the problem, but it certainly moves the needle and gives everybody hope."

'Excruciating:' Florida collapse search stretches to Day 6

By RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

SURFSIDE, Florida (AP) — The slow work of sifting through the remnants of a collapsed Florida condo building stretched into a sixth day Tuesday, as families desperate for progress endured a wrenching wait for answers.

"We have people waiting and waiting and waiting for news," Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava told reporters Monday. "We have them coping with the news that they might not have their loved ones come out alive and still hope against hope that they will. They're learning that some of their loved ones will come out as body parts. This is the kind of information that is just excruciating for everyone."

The work has been deliberate and treacherous. Just two additional bodies were found Monday, raising the count of confirmed dead to 11. That leaves 150 people still unaccounted for in the community of Surfside, just outside Miami.

Authorities are meeting frequently with families to explain what they're doing and answer questions. They have discussed with families everything from how DNA matches are made to help identify the dead,

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to how will next of kin be contacted, to going into "extreme detail" about how they are searching the mound, the mayor said.

Armed with that knowledge, she said, families are coming to their own conclusions.

"Some are feeling more hopeful, some less hopeful, because we do not have definitive answers. We give them the facts. We take them to the site," she said. "They have seen the operation. They understand now how it works, and they are preparing themselves for news, one way or the other."

Rescuers are using bucket brigades and heavy machinery as they work atop a precarious mound of pulverized concrete, twisted steel and the remnants of dozens of households. The efforts include firefighters, sniffer dogs and search experts using radar and sonar devices.

Authorities said it's still a search-and-rescue operation, but no one has been found alive since hours after the collapse on Thursday.

The pancake collapse of the building left layer upon layer of intertwined debris, frustrating efforts to reach anyone who may have survived in a pocket of space.

"Every time there's an action, there's a reaction," Miami-Dade Assistant Fire Chief Raide Jadallah said during a news conference Monday. "It's not an issue of we could just attach a couple of cords to a concrete boulder and lift it and call it a day." Some of the concrete pieces are smaller, the size of basketballs or baseballs.

From outside a neighboring building on Monday, more than two dozen family members watched teams of searchers excavate the building site. Some held onto each other for support. Others hugged and prayed. Some people took photos.

Authorities insisted they are not losing hope.

Deciding to transition from search-and-rescue work to a recovery operation is agonizing, said Dr. Joseph A. Barbera, a professor at George Washington University. That decision is fraught with considerations, he said, that only those on the ground can make.

Barbera coauthored a study examining disasters where some people survived under rubble for prolonged periods of time. He has also advised teams on where to look for potential survivors and when to conclude "that the probability of continued survival is very, very small."

"It's an incredibly difficult decision, and I've never had to make that decision," Barbera said.

The building collapsed just days before a deadline for condo owners to start making steep payments toward more than \$9 million in repairs that had been recommended nearly three years earlier, in a report that warned of "major structural damage."

South African court orders ex-president to jail for contempt

By MOGOMOTSI MAGOME Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma has been found guilty of contempt of court and sentenced to 15 months in prison for defying a court order to appear before an inquiry probing wide-ranging allegations of corruption during his tenure from 2009 to 2018.

Zuma was not in court for the ruling on Tuesday and has been ordered to hand himself over within five days to a police station in his hometown of Nkandla in KwaZulu-Natal province or in Johannesburg.

If Zuma fails to turn himself in within five days South Africa's minister of police and the police commissioner have been ordered to take him into custody within three days.

This is the first time in South Africa's history that a former president has been sentenced to prison.

The country's apex court, the Constitutional Court, ruled that Zuma defied an order by the country's highest court by refusing to cooperate with the commission of inquiry, which is chaired by deputy chief justice Raymond Zondo.

"The Constitutional Court holds that there can be no doubt that Mr. Zuma is in contempt of court. Mr. Zuma was served with the order and it is impossible to conclude anything other than that he was unequivocally aware of what it required of him," said acting chief justice Sisi Khampepe.

She added that in determining the jail sentence for Zuma, the court found it impossible to conclude that

he would comply with any other order.

"Mr. Zuma has repeatedly reiterated that he would rather be imprisoned than to cooperate with the commission or comply with the order made," said Khampepe.

Zuma has previously expressed his unwillingness to appear before the commission, which has so far heard evidence directly implicating Zuma in wrongdoing.

In a previous 21-page letter written to Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng, which the court has described as "scandalous," Zuma claimed that he was ready to be sent to prison.

In his letter which he released to the public, Zuma claimed that the commission chairman, Zondo, was biased against him and that evidence presented against him was politically motivated.

Some former Cabinet ministers, high-ranking government officials and executives of state-owned enterprises are among witnesses who have implicated Zuma in corruption.

Several have testified that while president Zuma allowed members of the controversial Gupta family to influence his appointment of Cabinet ministers and lucrative contracts at state-owned companies.

Zuma is also facing additional legal woes as he is standing trial to face charges related to bribes that he allegedly received during South Africa's 1999 arms procurement deal.

He has pleaded not guilty to the charges and his lawyers have applied for the lead prosecutor in his case to step down because of alleged bias against Zuma.

House to vote on bill launching probe of Jan. 6 insurrection

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new committee to investigate the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol would have 13 members and the power to subpoena witnesses, according to legislation released by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. The House is expected to vote on the bill this week.

The effort comes after Senate Republicans blocked the formation of an independent, bipartisan commission to probe the attack, in which hundreds of former President Donald Trump's supporters violently broke into the Capitol and interrupted the certification of President Joe Biden's victory.

The new, partisan House panel would have eight members appointed by Pelosi and five appointed "after consultation with" Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy. A Pelosi aide said the speaker is considering including a Republican among her appointments, which would bring the likely partisan split to 7-6. The aide was granted anonymity to discuss her thinking.

Pelosi said in a statement Monday that Jan. 6 was "one of the darkest days in our nation's history" and that the committee will seek the truth about it.

"The Select Committee will investigate and report upon the facts and causes of the attack and report recommendations for preventing any future assault," she said.

Many Republicans were concerned about such a partisan probe, since majority Democrats are likely to investigate Trump's role in the siege and the right wing groups that were present for it. Almost three dozen House Republicans voted to create an independent panel, which would have had an even partisan split among members. Seven Republicans in the Senate supported moving forward on that bill, but that was short of the 10 Senate Republicans who would be necessary to pass it.

As laid out in Pelosi's legislation, the new select committee would have subpoena power and no specific end date. The panel can issue interim reports as it conducts the probe.

Trump is not explicitly referenced in the legislation, which directs the select committee to investigate "facts, circumstances and causes relating to the January 6, 2021, domestic terrorist attack upon the United States Capitol Complex and relating to the interference with the peaceful transfer of power." The panel would also study "influencing factors that fomented such an attack on American representative democracy while engaged in a constitutional process."

The House passed the bill to form an independent commission last month, and Pelosi, D-Calif., said it was her preference to have an independent panel lead the inquiry. But she said last week that Congress could not wait any longer to begin a deeper look at the insurrection so she would form the select panel.

She has not said who will lead it.

Still, Pelosi said that the select committee could be complementary to an independent panel, should one ever be formed, and that she is "hopeful there could be a commission at some point." Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has said he might hold a second vote, but there's no indication that any GOP votes have changed.

Many Republicans have made clear that they want to move on from the Jan. 6 attack, brushing aside the many unanswered questions about the insurrection, including how the government and law enforcement missed intelligence leading up to the rioting and the role of Trump before and during the insurrection.

Others in the GOP have gone further, with one suggesting the rioters looked like tourists and another insisting that a Trump supporter named Ashli Babbitt, who was shot and killed while trying to break into the House chamber, was "executed."

Two officers who battled the rioters, Metropolitan Police Officer Michael Fanone and Capitol Police Officer Harry Dunn, have been lobbying Republicans to support an independent commission and met with McCarthy on Friday. Afterward, they said they had asked McCarthy to denounce GOP comments downplaying the violence.

In the absence of an independent commission, Fanone said he asked McCarthy for a commitment not to put "the wrong people" on the new select panel and that McCarthy said he would take it seriously. McCarthy's office did not respond to requests for comment on either the meeting or the legislation to form the select committee.

The officers also asked McCarthy to denounce 21 Republicans who voted earlier this month against giving medals of honor to the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police to thank them for their service on Jan. 6. Dozens of those officers suffered injuries, including chemical burns, brain injuries and broken bones.

McCarthy, who voted for the measure, told them he would deal with those members privately.

Seven people died during and after the rioting, including Babbitt and three other Trump supporters who died of medical emergencies. Two police officers died by suicide in the days that followed, and a third officer, Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, collapsed and later died after engaging with the protesters. A medical examiner later determined he died of natural causes.

The Latest: Russia records highest daily virus death toll

By The Associated Press undefined

MOSCOW — Russian authorities have reported 652 new coronavirus deaths on Tuesday — the highest daily tally in the pandemic. The new record comes as Russia struggles to cope with a surge in infections and deaths and low vaccine uptake.

Russia's state coronavirus task force has been registering over 20,000 new coronavirus cases and around 600 deaths every day since last Thursday. On Tuesday, 20,616 new contagions were recorded.

Russian officials have blamed the surge, which started in early June, on Russians' lax attitude toward taking necessary precautions, growing prevalence of more infectious variants and laggard vaccination rates. Although Russia was among the first countries to announce and deploy a coronavirus vaccine, only about 14% of the population has received at least one shot.

Russia's coronavirus task force has reported nearly 5.5 million confirmed coronavirus cases in the pandemic and 134,545 deaths.

MORE ON THE PANDEMIC

- Virus outbreak in Fiji batters economy, tests health system
- Fearing COVID, Malawian women forgo prenatal care
- Australia battles variant clusters; Sydney and Darwin are in lockdown
- Portugal, Spain and Hong Kong announce new restrictions on travelers from Britain

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apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

BUDAPEST — Hungary will donate half a million COVID-19 vaccines to other countries in Central and Southeast Europe as its vaccination drive slows and supplies pile up.

An early vaccination leader in the European Union, Hungary has struggled in recent weeks to use up its available stocks of vaccines. With 67% of its adult population having received at least a first dose, until recently Hungary had the second-highest vaccination rate in the 27-member EU.

But other European countries like Belgium and Finland have since caught up as most Hungarians who want a vaccine have already received one. While a daily average of 60,000 first-dose shots were being given in mid-May, on Tuesday that number was scarcely over 9,000.

Speaking to reporters in Poland on Monday, Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said that Hungary would provide Bosnia and Montenegro with 200,000 doses each of the Chinese-manufactured Sinopharm vaccine, noting that the jab has been approved for emergency use in both countries.

"The more protected our neighbors are, the safer Hungary will be from a health perspective," Szijjarto said.

The foreign minister said on Sunday that Hungary would donate 100,000 doses of an unspecified vaccine to the Czech Republic, since "there is plenty of vaccine available so the Hungarian government can help those who are less well off."

Hungary — the only EU country to approve the Sinopharm vaccine — purchased 5 million doses of the jab, contributing to the early surge in its vaccination program.

But according to figures from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, more than 3.1 million of the country's Sinopharm doses remain unused.

LOS ANGELES — Health officials in Los Angeles County are recommending, but not making mandatory that people wear masks indoors in public places regardless of their vaccination status.

The recommendation in the nation's most populous county is aimed at preventing the spread of the highly transmissible delta variant of the coronavirus.

The county public health department suggests that people wear masks when inside grocery or retail stores as well as at theaters and family entertainment centers and in workplaces when people's vaccination statuses are not known.

The county experienced a surge in cases and deaths over the winter. To date, the county has recorded a total of 1.2 million coronavirus cases and more than 24,000 deaths from COVID-19.

CANBERRA, Australia — Australia has removed age restrictions for adults who want the AstraZeneca vaccine as the delta variant of the coronavirus spreads.

Australian health authorities had initially advised against using AstraZeneca for adults under age 50 and then younger than 60 because of the greater risk of rare blood clots in younger people.

The general leading the Australian military's pandemic response told Nine Network on Tuesday that increasing the availability of AstraZeneca is a risk-based judgment. Lt. Gen. John Frewen says supplies of Australian-manufactured AstraZeneca are adequate.

Only 5% of the Australian population is fully vaccinated. The only other vaccine available in Australia is Pfizer, but manufacturers cannot meet demand.

The cities of Sydney, Perth and Darwin are in lockdown.

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma National Guard troops who have been assisting the state's response to the coronavirus pandemic will begin ending their assignment this week.

The State Health Department said that the soldiers will begin transitioning out of the agency beginning Thursday.

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Over a 15-month deployment, Guard troops helped sanitize long-term-care facilities, distribute personal protective gear and transport testing specimens and supplies around the state.

Data from Johns Hopkins University shows Oklahoma's seven-day rolling average of newly confirmed coronavirus infections increased over the last two weeks, from 120.29 new cases per day on June 12 to 196.43 per day on June 26. The average for COVID-19 deaths increased from 1.29 per day to 4.29.

MOSCOW — Restaurants and cafes in Moscow on Monday began requesting that patrons provide proof of vaccination or a negative coronavirus test as the Russian capital faces a surge of new infections.

According to a decision by city authorities last week, all Moscow restaurants, cafes and bars must only admit customers who have been vaccinated, have recovered from COVID-19 in the past six months or can provide a negative coronavirus test from the previous 72 hours.

As proof of vaccination for entering a restaurant, customers must visit a government website and get a QR code, a digital pattern designed to be read by a scanner.

In one concession to desperate restaurant owners, the city officials agreed that the QR codes aren't needed for the next two weeks at establishments with outdoor terraces. Underage customers won't have to provide documentation if accompanied by their parents.

The new restrictions come as Moscow has registered infection levels on par with last winter and recorded all-time high daily numbers of coronavirus deaths.

MADRID — Almost 5,000 people are in quarantine after vacationing high school students triggered a major COVID-19 outbreak on the Mediterranean island of Mallorca, a senior official said Monday.

Authorities have confirmed almost 1,200 positive cases from the outbreak, Spain's emergency health response coordinator, Fernando Simón said.

The partying teens celebrating the end of their university entrance exams last week created a "perfect breeding ground" for the virus as they mixed with others from around Spain and abroad, Simón told a news conference.

Mallorca health authorities carried out mass testing on hundreds of students after the outbreak became clear. It is believed to have spread as hundreds of partying students gathered at a concert and street parties.

Officials have so far traced 5,126 travelers to Mallorca. More than 900 COVID-19 cases in eight regions across mainland Spain have been traced back to the outbreak.

CAPE CANAVERAL Fla. — Disney Cruise Line is postponing its first test cruise since the pandemic brought the cruise industry to a standstill after a handful of participants had inconsistent test results for COVID-19, the company said Monday.

The Disney Dream had been scheduled to set sail Tuesday from Port Canaveral, Florida, with 300 employees who had volunteered for the "simulation" cruise. But the trip was postponed until next month, pending approvals, because a small number of employees had inconsistent results for COVID-19, "which is considered positive by the CDC," Disney said in a statement.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, had approved the cruise line's request to conduct a two-night test cruise.

The federal government is starting to allow cruises to sail again, but only if nearly all passengers and crew are vaccinated against the virus. Republican Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill banning business from requiring proof of vaccination, so cruise lines must prove the effectiveness of their COVID-19 safety protocols on test cruises.

Last weekend, Celebrity Edge departed Fort Lauderdale, Florida, becoming the first cruise ship to leave a U.S. port in 15 months. Saturday's sailing kicked off the cruise lines' return to business with Carnival vessels already scheduled to depart from other ports next month.

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Abu Dhabi, the oil-rich capital of the United Arab Emirates, has announced that a wide range of public places will soon be accessible only to those vaccinated against the

coronavirus in a bid to encourage more people to get shots.

The Emirati government on Monday said that starting August 20, authorities will begin restricting access to shopping malls, restaurants, cafes, sporting activities, museums, gyms, schools and universities. The unvaccinated will effectively be barred from entering any business in the city except for supermarkets and pharmacies.

Abu Dhabi has already rolled out a "green pass" system that limits public access to those who have either received the shot or can show a negative virus test.

It comes as the country increasingly bets its economic reopening on its speedy vaccination campaign. The government says at least 93% of Abu Dhabi's population has received at least one dose of the vaccine.

The neighboring travel hub of Dubai, home to long-haul carrier Emirates, also has introduced some vaccination restrictions on mass entertainment and sporting events. However, malls and other businesses remain open to the unvaccinated.

The UAE boasts one of the world's fastest inoculation campaigns, with 15.1 million doses administered to its population of some 9 million. The country has relied heavily on the Chinese state-backed Sinopharm shot.

Biden taking bipartisan infrastructure deal on the road

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden will look to sell voters on the economic benefits of the \$973 billion infrastructure package while in Wisconsin on Tuesday, hoping to boost the bipartisan agreement that is held together in large part by the promise of millions of new jobs.

Biden will travel to La Crosse, population 52,000, and tour its public transit center, followed by a speech about the infrastructure package announced last week.

The president presented his message to Democratic donors on Monday that the agreement was a way for the United States to assert the principles of democracy and the economic might that can come from dramatic investments in the country's economic future.

"This infrastructure bill signals to the world that we can function, we can deliver," Biden said. "We can do significant things, show that America is back."

White House officials issued an internal memo that highlights how the largest investment in transportation, water systems and services in nearly a century would boost growth. The memo notes that the total package is four times the size of the infrastructure investment made a dozen years ago in response to the Great Recession and the biggest since Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s.

It also emphasizes an analysis suggesting that 90% of the jobs generated by the spending could go to workers without college degrees, a key shift as a majority of net job gains before the pandemic went to college graduates.

"This is a blue-collar blueprint to rebuild America," the memo says.

Potential economic gains were a shared incentive for the group of Democratic and Republican senators who agreed to the deal on Thursday. But the process briefly fell into disarray late last week as Biden suggested the deal would be held up until he also received a separate package for infrastructure, jobs and education that would be determined solely by Democrats through the budget reconciliation process.

Biden said Saturday that this was not a veto threat, and by Sunday the package appeared back on track.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Monday that Biden is "eager" for both bills to be approved by Congress and that the president is going to "work his heart out" to make it happen.

"The president intends to sign both pieces of legislation into law," Psaki said at her daily briefing.

Approval of both bills by Congress remains a long haul with this summer's initial votes expected in July. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell questioned the legislative process ahead and mounted fresh obstacles while speaking Monday in Kentucky.

McConnell said he has not yet decided whether he will support the bipartisan package, but he wants Biden to pressure House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer to say they will allow the bipartisan arrangement to pass without mandating that the much larger and broader follow-

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up bill be in place.

"I appreciate the president saying that he's willing to deal with infrastructure separately, But he doesn't control the Congress," McConnell said at a press conference in Louisville.

The two bills had always been expected to move in tandem, and that is likely to continue as Biden drops his veto threat but reaches across the aisle for the nearly \$1 trillion bipartisan package as well as his own broader package. The Democratic leaders are pressing ahead on the broader bill, which includes Biden's families and climate change proposals, as well as their own investments in Medicare, swelling to some \$6 trillion.

The prospect of additional economic gains might be a way to garner public support and soothe partisan tensions. Biden also faces pressure from Democrats such as New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who told NBC's "Meet the Press" that the spending isn't as huge as it might seem because the sums are spread out over multiple years.

The eight-page White House memo comes from Brian Deese, director of the National Economic Council, and senior adviser Anita Dunn. It indicates that the \$110 billion for roads and bridges would help relieve traffic and congestion that costs the economy over \$160 billion annually. The memo justifies the \$48.5 billion planned for public transit by citing studies that link light rail and buses to increased earnings and employment for workers. It defends the \$66 billion for repairs and upgrades for rail lines by saying that current delays and disruptions weigh on growth.

The bipartisan agreement also would help nurture the market for electric vehicles, improve broadband access, repair water lines and create resilience against damage from extreme weather events.

Meanwhile, the White House and Congress are pushing ahead on separate infrastructure legislation, a top priority of the administration that is shared by many lawmakers interested in securing federal funds for long-sought road, highway, bridge and other construction projects back home.

This week, the House is scheduled to vote on a highway, transit and water infrastructure bill that would invest up to \$715 billion over five years. It overlaps parts of the bipartisan agreement and could become a building block toward the Democrats' broader package coming later this summer or fall.

The bill contains many of the priorities that Biden has set, including \$45 billion to replace lead water service lines throughout the nation and \$4 billion for electric vehicle charging stations, as well as a big boost in spending for transportation programs focusing on repairing existing roads and bridges.

It also opens the door to nearly 1,500 requests from lawmakers that would fund specific projects back in their congressional districts, moving Congress a step closer toward a return to earmarked spending.

'It definitely feels early': GOP's long race to 2024 begins

By JILL COLVIN and THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

WEST DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — In the past week alone, Nikki Haley regaled activists in Iowa, Mike Pence courted donors in California and Donald Trump returned to the rally stage, teasing a third campaign for the White House.

The midterms are more than a year away, and there are 1,225 days until the next presidential election. But Republicans eyeing a White House run are wasting no time in jockeying for a strong position in what could emerge as an extremely crowded field of contenders.

The politicking will only intensify in the coming weeks, particularly in Iowa, home to the nation's leadoff presidential caucuses and a state where conservative evangelicals play a significant role in steering the direction of the GOP. Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas is slated to visit on Tuesday, and others, including Pence, South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem and former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo are expected to appear in July.

The flurry of activity is a sign that there is no clear frontrunner to lead the GOP if Trump opts against a 2024 campaign.

"It definitely feels early, but it doesn't feel like it's a bad idea based on the situation," said Mike DuHaime, a longtime Republican strategist. "The party has changed, the voters are changing and I think the process has changed. And I think many of the candidates have realized that."

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For now, a central question in Republican politics is whether Trump, who continues to advance lies about his loss last year to Joe Biden, will run again. The former president has said he will make a decision after next year's midterms.

In the meantime, he faces mounting legal vulnerabilities, including the potential that prosecutors in Manhattan may file criminal charges against his company as soon as this week. Trump is also under investigation by a district attorney in Georgia for attempting to pressure elections officials to change results in his favor.

Still, Trump, who left office in January under the cloud of impeachment for inciting a riot at the U.S. Capitol, is flirting with a political future. Returning to the rally stage last weekend for the first time as a private citizen, Trump looked every bit the candidate as an enthusiastic crowd of thousands in Ohio chanted, "Four more years!"

"We won the election twice," he said. "And it's possible we'll have to win it a third time."

The specter of Trump has been especially challenging for Republicans like Pence. As a conservative evangelical Christian who was Trump's unflinchingly loyal vice president, Pence would seem appealing to many of the party's activists. But his decision to follow the constitutional process and certify Biden's win angered many in the GOP.

Though he still heaps praise on Trump's accomplishments, Pence has worked more recently to forge his own identity, splitting with his former boss in particular over the severity of the deadly Jan. 6 riot, which forced him into hiding but which many Republicans have sought to minimize.

That balancing act came into sharp relief Thursday as Pence delivered a speech at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in front of a sold-out crowd of more than 800 people during a swing through California that included meetings with donors and a headline speech at a Republican National Committee dinner.

After being booed and jeered the week before at a conservative conference in Florida, Pence appeared to have a newfound sense of swagger as he delivered his strongest rebuttal to date of Trump's continued insistence that he could have unilaterally overturned the results of the last election. Many of Trump's supporters continue to blame Pence for Trump's loss, even though he had no power to overturn the results.

"The truth is, there's almost no idea more un-American than the notion that any one person could choose the American president," Pence said, adding that he would "always be proud that we did our part, on that tragic day, to reconvene the Congress and fulfill our duty under the Constitution and the laws of the United States."

It's been a similar tightrope act for Haley, Trump's former ambassador to the United Nations and a former governor of South Carolina, who sharply criticized Trump after the Jan. 6 Capitol riot but has since largely avoided the subject.

At a Thursday dinner during a three-day swing across Iowa, Haley presented herself to about 500 Republican activists as a next-generation conservative figure.

Like Pence, Haley spent much of her speech praising Trump's time in office and sharing anecdotes of her work with him that lit chuckles throughout the hall, while ignoring the deadly siege at the Capitol as well as Trump's monthslong campaign to cast doubt on the outcome of the 2020 election, even though there is no evidence of the widespread fraud he alleges.

"I saw firsthand as ambassador to the United Nations that Donald Trump put America first, sometimes in the most interesting of ways," she said.

Haley was also the guest on a popular conservative radio talk show Friday and headlined fundraisers for statehouse and county leaders, including Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds.

"There are a lot of reasons why I love Iowa," she said. "But maybe the biggest reason is that Iowa loves to elect badass Republican women."

The activity is not surprising to activists in the states that will ultimately have first say in picking their party's candidates.

"It takes a while to court states like New Hampshire and Iowa," said Greg Moore, the New Hampshire state director of Americans for Prosperity, a conservative political advocacy group founded by the Koch brothers. "And it's fine and dandy if you're President Trump and you have a prebuilt infrastructure in the

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state and just have to turn the key. But for everyone else, you have to build that.”

So far, polls and interviews suggest voters are a long way from picking favorites, though Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is frequently mentioned as a possible Trump successor. He is notably one of the few leading Republicans who has yet to visit Iowa this year.

At last week’s GOP event in California, retiree Bob Egbert, 75, praised Trump but doubted a third run would be good for the party. Egbert likes what he sees in DeSantis and considered Pence’s low-key personality as a liability with voters.

“I think he would be a nice, bland candidate,” said Egbert, a Republican. “I don’t think that’s what we need.”

Former California Gov. Pete Wilson, a Republican, predicted a “spirited contest” in 2024, but declined to identify a favorite among the emerging candidates.

As for Trump?

“It is, after all ... his decision. It’s a decision he shares with his family,” Wilson said. “He is much admired. It’s obvious from what has occurred he is much feared and demonized by this (Biden) administration.”

Colvin reported from Wellington, Ohio. Associated Press writer Michael R. Blood contributed to this report from Simi Valley, California.

Slow tourism start on Greek island but businesses optimistic

By ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

KOKKARI, Greece (AP) — The picturesque seaside village of Kokkari on the Greek island of Samos is unusually quiet for this time of year. Sunbeds on its long pebble beach lie mostly empty; customers in the shops are few and far between.

About a month after Greece officially opened to international visitors, the uncertainty of travel during a pandemic is still taking its toll on the country’s vital tourist industry.

Greece’s travel receipts fell more than 75% last year compared with 2019, dropping from 18.2 billion euros to 4.3 billion euros. The government says it hopes to reach half the 2019 visitor level this year.

But the season’s start has been slow. Business owners are putting on a brave face, opening hotels, shops and restaurants, hoping the season will pick up as the summer wears on, vaccine drives speed up and confidence in travel increases.

Greece was one of the first European Union countries to declare itself open to tourism this year, allowing visitors in from mid-May with either a negative coronavirus test, proof of vaccination or proof of recent recovery from COVID-19. Apart from accepting EU-approved vaccine certificates, it also recognizes China’s and Russia’s vaccines.

But in a shifting landscape where countries’ travel rules for their own nationals keep changing, the uncertainty has made many hesitant to make holiday bookings.

“The situation is really liquid right now,” said Alexandros Malagaris, who runs two hotels and a scuba diving center in Kokkari. “Of course, tourism is very sensitive to everything that happens in the world, and the pandemic is a really serious situation.”

Although demand at his dive center was already high, hotel bookings were low. “But we are confident that come July they will pick up,” he said. “We are already looking forward to a really strong August and September and it seems that our season will be extended till the middle of October.”

His hopes were echoed by other Samos business owners looking to offset last year’s losses. Beyond the pandemic, the island also faced damage from a powerful October earthquake and a severe storm in February.

Petra Marheinecke, a German woman who has run a gift and garment store in Kokkari since 1994, opened her shop in early June.

“But it’s really not worth it to open. Many shops are closed, and because of the earthquake (some of the) shops are broken, completely broken, and it’s not busy at all,” she said. “We opened to survive, to pay

our rent, to pay the people which are working with us, my staff. But of course, I hope it's getting better."

Marheinecke used to employ four people, but she's been forced to cut back to just one and shorten her opening hours to make ends meet until business picks up, she said.

In early June, hotels were operating at around 20-25% capacity on average, said Manos Vallis, president of the Samos hoteliers' association and head of the Doryssa Hotels and Resorts group, which runs six hotels and has a seventh under construction. But there was optimism that would increase, with more last-minute bookings than usual and Greeks expected in August. Vallis estimated the year would close with around 65% hotel capacity.

"This year, I believe no hotelier opened their hotel for profit. We all opened our hotels because we had to open, because you understand that if you're shut after a year, you're off the market," said Vallis. "We'll be forgotten both as a destination and as hotels."

For some visitors, however, the lack of crowds was part of the attraction.

"I won't hide it, we prefer it when it's quieter," said Alain Dumeslil, who wandered down to the cove of Agios Isidoros with his wife Corinne after swimming in the turquoise sea nearby. From Nice in France, the couple frequently visit Greece in late September when most tourists have left.

"Now, I'd say it's still quiet," he said. "But you can feel that people are preparing. The restaurant owners are repainting their chairs, the terraces are being organized — we can see the potential of Samos."

Business owners said many visitors so far were people who vacation on Samos every year.

Thanassis Safis, who runs a restaurant in Kokkari harbor, said repeat customers he was in touch with were waiting for the travel situation to stabilize.

"There is the will. It's the flights that aren't available," he said.

For now, his restaurant is only open for dinner on weekdays, instead of from lunch onward. But he's managing to fill nearly all his tables.

As a young entrepreneur in his 30s who launched his restaurant in 2015 at the height of Greece's financial crisis, he said he remains optimistic.

"We've been through many difficulties but we're always positive," he said. "It was very difficult in 2015 but we were very patient, and we endured, and we succeeded. It needs patience and a lot of willpower."

Fearing COVID, struggling Malawian women forgo prenatal care

By GREGORY GONDWE Associated Press

BLANTYRE, Malawi (AP) — Prenatal services at the health clinic were free, but the motorcycle taxi fare cost more than Monica Maxwell could afford. Just four weeks before delivering her baby, she cobbled together 1,400 kwacha (\$1.75) for the 50-kilometer (31-mile) round trip. It was only her third visit -- fewer than her first two pregnancies. The money she made selling tomatoes at the local market dried up due to the pandemic. Her husband's income selling goat meat also dwindled.

"It was the most difficult period of our lives. We had no money for our daily survival," Maxwell, 31, said as she waited outside with other women to be seen by a medical midwife. "Mostly we stayed home."

In a country where hospitals are so bare that women are expected to bring their own razor blades for cutting their babies' umbilical cords, the deepening poverty brought on by the pandemic is further imperiling women's lives.

Officials say far fewer pregnant women in Malawi are getting the health care they need amid the pandemic, with many forgoing medical visits and relying solely on traditional birth attendants, who provide emotional support and administer traditional herbal treatments but are technically banned by the government from delivering babies because of their lack of formal training. Many families can't afford clinic visits, or, like Maxwell, the transportation to get there; they also fear they'll catch coronavirus in a medical facility.

At risk are the gains that Malawi — a largely rural sliver of a country, with 18 million people — has made over the past decade to combat its poor record of maternal deaths. Malawian women face a 1-in-29 lifetime risk of death related to a pregnancy or birth, according to the United Nations Population Fund. The country has 439 such deaths per 100,000 live births — a figure it had worked to reduce from 984 per 100,000 in

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2004, as women got better access to medical care, especially in emergencies.

Still, Malawi's rate is the third-highest in southern Africa. The rates are 19 per 100,000 births in the United States and 7 per 100,000 in the United Kingdom.

This story is part of a yearlong series on how the pandemic is impacting women in Africa, most acutely in the least developed countries. AP's series is funded by the European Journalism Centre's European Development Journalism Grants program, which is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. AP is responsible for all content.

Malawian hospitals also suffered staffing shortages when nurses were mobilized to treat coronavirus patients — leading to some lack of experienced personnel for births, said Young Hong, of the United Nations Population Fund.

"Not only did the pandemic affect availability of manpower, it also exerted much pressure on the entire health system, including the stock out of certain medicines, equipment, basic medical supply like surgical gloves," said Hong, who noted that eight Malawian women die daily of pregnancy complications, far higher than the COVID-19 toll. "This had a huge impact on the quality of maternal health service provision during the pandemic."

At the Ndirande Health Center, just northeast of the country's commercial capital of Blantyre, about 100 women visited daily for prenatal services before the pandemic. When COVID-19 emerged, that number dropped by half, and now is as low as 15 to 20 patients, said Jacqueline Kolove, a nursing officer at the clinic.

Sometimes even the women who come for prenatal care are afraid to deliver at the clinic during the pandemic, preferring to give birth at home. Malawian women are encouraged to give birth without medical intervention, and many here believe that emergency measures such as cesarean sections are shameful and a sign of weakness. Deciding to give birth at home, though, can be deadly — most women live too far away to make it in time if a dangerous complication arises.

"We explain to them why such a decision might have the dire consequences ... sometimes even calling their husbands and parents to try to reason with them," Kolove said.

At Ndirande and other clinics, nurses, aides and medical midwives give pregnant women ultrasounds and use equipment to listen to the vital signs of mother and baby. A woman can undergo a cesarean section if needed, and medications are available to stop severe bleeding. Clinic staff take medical courses, observe simulated births, and become licensed.

Traditional birthing attendants learn from elders who pass down knowledge through generations and use little to no medical equipment — they listen to women's bellies by placing their ears there, for example, and gather herbs to induce labor. They say certain herbs, boiled into a dark-green liquid, can address situations such as breech babies who needs to change positions.

The government banned traditional birthing attendants' delivery work in 2007, but the practice has continued, with the ban rarely enforced. Some attendants charge nothing, and they've seen an increase in women coming to them during the pandemic. Attendants such as Lucy Mbewe, who's 56 and estimates she's delivered 4,000 babies since 1983, say their work is key for women who can't afford anything else.

Even the colorful African cloth that is widely used to wrap babies, carry them on mothers' backs or create makeshift diapers can be a potential obstacle to care, Mbewe noted. "The government hospitals recommend that a woman who is going to deliver needs to carry with her at least 10 pieces of cloth, which is a deterrent to those that cannot even afford to put food on the table," she said.

At government facilities, Malawian women are even expected to bring a covering for the delivery bed, buckets for water, and sometimes candles or flashlights. Mbewe provides clothing and soap when she helps women give birth. She pays for transportation home. Some women are so grateful they return to pay her; she uses that money to care for other needy clients, she said.

But medically trained midwives say the mounting use of attendants has caused a spike in complicated

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deliveries, with women going to the hospital only once it's too late to save them. Mbewe says the complications are caused not by the traditional caregivers, but are attributable to expectant mothers getting pregnant at younger ages — a trend confirmed by a government report.

Midwives and health officials also say they're fighting against misinformation about the virus and vaccines that deters women from seeking proper medical care. Malawi didn't have a full social lockdown and has seen a dramatic rise in coronavirus cases, part of a surge across southern Africa. Experts believe cases are undercounted, and apprehension about the vaccine is widespread.

The Malawian government has administered less than 213,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine. And officials destroyed about 20,000 expired doses provided by COVAX, the U.N.-backed program to ship vaccines to poor countries. Across all of Africa, just 1% of the population of 1.3 billion people in 54 countries has had one dose of the vaccine, according to the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Nurses and midwives say some women fear they'll secretly be given the vaccine if they deliver at a medical facility.

"They feel, as health workers, we are giving them the COVID-19 vaccine instead of oxytocin," said Kolove, the nursing officer at the Ndirande Health Center, referring to medicine that strengthens contractions and reduces the risk of bleeding. "They feel we are cheating them. As a result, there are some cases where women refuse."

Medical staff also understand that they and the women they treat are at a higher risk of contracting coronavirus. The medically trained midwives try to educate women, and they take every precaution possible against the virus, even though their work delivering babies makes keeping a physical distance impossible, said Keith Lipato, president of the Association of Malawian Midwives.

"We make sure that all midwives are screened and tested so that those with signs and symptoms are excused from work, and given the necessary medical treatment so that they do not infect clients and patients," Lipato said.

The precautions don't persuade many expectant mothers, though. Five months into her pregnancy, Margret Kosamu has yet to visit a health clinic. Instead, the 30-year-old has turned to a traditional birth attendant for just two visits. Her family's farming income has dropped, but it's not just an issue of money; she fears visiting a medical facility could kill her, not save her life.

"One is more likely going to contract the virus at the hospital than here," she said of the attendant's care.

Lipato and other medical workers fear that the pandemic will have long-lasting effects on women's health in Malawi and beyond.

Patricia Gunde, 26, has not received any prenatal services during her first pregnancy. She prefers instead to receive the herbs her attendant says will keep her healthy and hasten labor. Gunde has no plans to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

"I am afraid," she said. "I have heard many stories about it."

With the traditional birth attendant, she feels at ease because women are seen one at a time.

When the attendant brings Gunde in for care, neither wears a mask.

Myanmar junta gains hold on jade profits as fighting flares

By ELAINE KURTENBACH and JERRY HARMER Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — The military takeover in Myanmar has given the junta full control of the country's lucrative and conflict-ridden jade mining, providing it with profits and leverage for consolidating power, researchers said Tuesday.

A flareup in fighting around the mines in Hpakant, in remote Kachin state, also is adding to instability in the border region, independent research group Global Witness said in its report.

Army and ethnic guerrilla forces have been fighting in Kachin for years. But they had largely cooperated to share in profits from mining of the world's richest jade deposits, making the industry a hotbed for corruption instead of a national asset that could be invested for the public good.

Global Witness estimates the annual losses in the tens of millions of dollars.

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It and other experts say the Feb. 1 coup has disrupted the de facto ceasefire that had held around the mines, with fighting breaking out even in the jade-producing zone.

"It's an extremely unstable situation where the rule of law is just completely broken down," Keel Dietz, one of the report's authors, told The Associated Press.

The civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi made halting progress in cleaning up the industry after taking power in 2016. It suspended issuing or renewing jade mining permits. A new law restricts licenses to a maximum of three years, adding to the incentive to mine illicitly and as quickly as possible.

Now the military, known as the Tatmadaw, controls who can mine and who can't and can dole out licenses to buy loyalty and try to splinter rival groups, Dietz said.

Global Witness and other groups are calling for stronger sanctions against the junta to help counter what has become a free-for-all rush to dig out as much of the precious stone as possible.

"It is up to the international community to limit the amount of funding the military can receive from selling Myanmar's natural resources by preventing the import of those resources and blocking financial transactions that pay for them," the report says.

In an earlier report, Global Witness documented how the industry is dominated by networks of military elites, drug lords and crony companies. The situation has barely changed, those familiar with the region say.

That has created incentives for both sides in the conflict to maximize production, at a huge cost to the environment. Nearly a half-million people migrate into the region to work in the mines or to pick through mine tailings, hunting for stones that might have valuable jade inside. Hundreds of have died from landslides on the unstable slopes of the open-pit mines.

Profits from the industry are seized by those controlling the mines and trade routes.

"Jade probably has been the military's most lucrative sector except petroleum. Other mining like copper has made them a lot of money too. Rare earths less so, although not insignificant," said Edith Mirante, director of Project Maje, which researches Myanmar's environmental issues.

The U.S. government and United Kingdom have imposed sanctions on Myanmar Gems Enterprise, on key military-controlled companies, military leaders, their family members and other companies either controlled by or linked to the army.

The potential impact of sanctions against the gemstone industry is limited, however, since nearly all jade and a large share of other precious stones and pearls produced in Myanmar go to China, often through illicit channels.

Many of the mining operations are conducted by Chinese companies allied with Myanmar partners. Over the decades, the military have often extracted huge revenues from mining while the Kachin have arrangements to tax smuggling routes into China, the destination for most of the jade mined in the region.

Now, with people in Kachin protesting against the coup, antagonisms are deepening, said David Dapice, an expert on Southeast Asia at Harvard University's Ash Center.

"A lot of fighting is over the share of who gets what," with none of those involved prepared to trust each other, he said in an email. "The military has circled the wagons anyway and is not in a compromising mood."

At times in the past, fighting has spilled over the border, killing or injuring Chinese civilians.

But the graver, longer term problem is lawlessness, a breakdown in the rule of law that "has the potential to supercharge other illegal activities, such as narcotics production and animal trafficking, that the Chinese government is likely more concerned about than it is about jade," Dietz said.

"Instability breeds instability and I think that's really important especially for the Chinese government to understand. This is a disaster brewing right on their border," he said.

NASA looks at Louisiana delta system, eyes global forecasts

By JANET McCONNAUGHEY Associated Press

MIKE ISLAND, La. (AP) — Erosion, sinking land and sea rise from climate change have killed the Louisiana woods where a 41-year-old Native American chief played as a child. Not far away in the Mississippi River delta system, middle-school students can stand on islands that emerged the year they were born.

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NASA is using high-tech airborne systems along with boats and mud-slogging work on islands for a \$15 million, five-year study of these adjacent areas of Louisiana. One is hitched to a river and growing; the other is disconnected and dying.

Scientists from NASA and a half-dozen universities from Boston to California aim to create computer models that can be used with satellite data to let countries around the world learn which parts of their dwindling deltas can be shored up and which are past hope.

"If you have to choose between saving an area and losing another instead of losing everything, you want to know where to put your resources to work to save the livelihood of all the people who live there," said lead scientist Marc Simard of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

While oceans rise because of climate change, the world's river deltas — home to seafood nurseries and more than 300 million people -- are sinking and shrinking.

To figure out where to shore up dying deltas, NASA is studying water flowing in and out of Louisiana's Atchafalaya and Terrebonne basins, sediment carried by it, and plants that can slow the flow, trap sediment and pull carbon from the air.

Louisiana holds 40% of the nation's wetlands, but they're disappearing fast -- about 2,000 square miles (5,180 square kilometers) of the state have been lost since the 1930s. That's about 80% of the nation's wetland losses, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Using two kinds of radar and a spectrometer that measures more colors than the human eye can distinguish, high-altitude NASA airplanes have been collecting information such as water height, slope, sediment, and the types and density of plants. Some measurements are as precise as a couple of centimeters (less than an inch).

On boats and islands, scientists and students from across the country take samples and measure everything from currents to diameters of trees. Their findings will be used to calibrate the airborne instruments.

"I've been working here 15 years, and one of the toughest parts about working in a delta is you can only touch one little piece of it at any one time and understand one little piece of it at one time," said Robert Twilley, a professor of oceanography and coastal sciences at Louisiana State University. "Now we have the capability of working with NASA to understand the entire delta."

The Mississippi River drains 41% of the continental United States, collecting 150 million tons (130 million metric tons) of sediment per year. But, largely because of flood-prevention levees, most sediment shoots into the Gulf of Mexico rather than settling in wetlands.

"Deltas are the babies of the geological timescale. They are very young and fragile, in a delicate balance of sinking and growing," NASA states on the Delta-X project website.

In geological time, young means thousands of years. On that scale, Louisiana's Wax Lake Delta is taking its first breaths. It dates to 1942, when the Army Corps of Engineers dug an outlet from the lake to reduce flood threats to Morgan City, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) away. Sediment from the Atchafalaya River filled the lake, then began creating islands in the Gulf.

The new islands are thick with black willows and, in spring, thigh-high butterweed topped with small yellow flowers.

Older wetlands in areas surveyed by Delta-X aircraft are more diverse, their soil rich with humus from generations of plants. Along nearby Hog Bayou, blue buntings and scarlet tanagers dart through magnolia branches and skinks skitter up trees. In swamps, ospreys nest atop bald cypresses and alligators float in the water below.

In addition to working at LSU, Twilley has spent about nine years as executive director of Louisiana Sea Grant College Program, which uses the Wax Lake Delta as a classroom for middle- and high-school students.

"We take kids and make them stand on land that was formed the year they were born," Twilley said.

In contrast, the adjacent Terrebonne Basin is shrinking so rapidly that the government is paying to move the Isle de Jean Charles band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Indians from a vanishing island to higher ground.

That band isn't the only Native American group losing ground.

"The wooded areas we used to run through as children -- they're dead," said Chief Shirell Parfait-Dardar

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of the Grand Caillou/Dulac Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha Indians, based less than 50 miles (80 kilometers) from the Wax Lake Delta.

"Ghost forests" are common in degrading deltas where salt water intrudes as land sinks and erodes, LSU's Twilley said.

Louisiana is considering two projects that would divert Atchafalaya River sediment to build land in the Terrebonne Basin, but a decision is more than a year away, according to the state Coastal Restoration and Preservation Authority.

Delta-X's study gets downright granular. A California Institute of Technology team that studies how sediment moves and is deposited on Earth and other planets will analyze the amounts of sediment in high- and low-tide water samples, breaking the particles down into about 100 sizes.

One way LSU researchers measure how much land has been formed by sediment involves sprinkling white feldspar dust on the ground.

They return to see how deeply it's buried by new sediment. They do that by injecting liquid nitrogen into hollow tubes to freeze the dirt and muck around them. When the tubes are pulled up, the frozen "popsicles" show a white ring. They measure from there to the top.

In the Terrebonne Basin, such sedimentation can't keep up with subsidence and sea level rise. "Thus the wetlands basically drown," Twilley said.

Planes and boats went out in March and April and will go out again in fall for a second set of measurements. And two international satellites are scheduled for launch next year, each carrying one of the two kinds of radar used over Louisiana.

To gauge how plants affect water movement, long-wavelengths of L-band radar can measure water level changes in open and vegetated channels, NASA's Simard said. And high-frequency Ka-band radar can measure surface height of open water, showing how it slopes -- and where it's moving.

"All of the tools they're bringing to bear is really impressive," said Indiana University sedimentary geologist Douglas Edmonds, who is not part of the project but has worked with many of the researchers.

"The project itself is putting a finger on a really essential question for a lot of deltas around the world -- how this deltaic land is formed and what processes take it away," he said.

It's imminent: After nearly 20 years US to leave Bagram

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

BAGRAM, Afghanistan (AP) — For nearly 20 years, Bagram Airfield was the heart of American military power in Afghanistan, a sprawling mini-city behind fences and blast walls just an hour's drive north of Kabul. Initially, it was a symbol of the U.S. drive to avenge the 9/11 attacks, then of its struggle for a way through the ensuing war with the Taliban.

In just a matter of days, the last U.S. soldiers will depart Bagram. They are leaving what probably everyone connected to the base, whether American or Afghan, considers a mixed legacy.

"Bagram grew into such a massive military installation that, as with few other bases in Afghanistan and even Iraq, it came to symbolize and epitomize the phrase 'mission creep,'" said Andrew Watkins, Afghanistan senior analyst for the Brussels-based International Crisis Group.

U.S. Central Command said last week that it's well past 50% done packing up Bagram, and the rest is going fast. American officials have said the entire pullout of U.S. troops will most likely be completely finished by July 4. The Afghan military will then take over Bagram as part of its continuing fight against the Taliban — and against what many in the country fear will be a new eruption of chaos.

The departure is rife with symbolism. Not least, it's the second time that an invader of Afghanistan has come and gone through Bagram.

The Soviet Union built the airfield in the 1950s. When it invaded Afghanistan in 1979 to back a communist government, it turned it into its main base from which it would defend its occupation of the country. For 10 years, the Soviets fought the U.S.-backed mujahedeen, dubbed freedom fighters by President Ronald Reagan, who saw them as a front-line force in one of the last Cold War battles.

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The Soviet Union negotiated its withdrawal in 1989. Three years later, the pro-Moscow government collapsed, and the mujahedeen took power, only to turn their weapons on each other and kill thousands of civilians. That turmoil brought to power the Taliban who overran Kabul in 1996.

When the U.S. and NATO inherited Bagram in 2001, they found it in ruins, a collection of crumbling buildings, gouged by rockets and shells, most of its perimeter fence wrecked. It had been abandoned after being battered in the battles between the Taliban and rival mujahedeen warlords fleeing to their northern enclaves.

After dislodging the Taliban from Kabul, the U.S.-led coalition began working with their warlord allies to rebuild Bagram, first with temporary structures that then turned permanent. Its growth was explosive, eventually swallowing up roughly 30 square miles.

"The closure of Bagram is a major symbolic and strategic victory for the Taliban," said Bill Roggio, senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

"If the Taliban is able to take control of the base, it will serve as anti-U.S. propaganda fodder for years to come," said Roggio who is also editor of the foundation's Long War Journal.

It would also be a military windfall.

The enormous base has two runways. The most recent, at 12,000 feet long, was built in 2006 at a cost of \$96 million. There are 110 revetments, which are basically parking spots for aircraft, protected by blast walls. GlobalSecurity, a security think tank, says Bagram includes three large hangars, a control tower and numerous support buildings. The base has a 50-bed hospital with a trauma bay, three operating theaters and a modern dental clinic. There are also fitness centers and fast food restaurants. Another section houses a prison, notorious and feared among Afghans.

Jonathan Schroden, of the U.S.-based research and analysis organization CNA, estimates that well over 100,000 people spent significant time at Bagram over the past two decades. "Bagram formed a foundation for the wartime experience of a large fraction of U.S. military members and contractors who served in Afghanistan," said Schroden, director of CNA's Center for Stability and Development.

"The departure of the last U.S. troops from there will likely serve as the final turn of the page for many of these folks with respect to their time in that country," he said.

For Afghans in Bagram district, a region of more than 100 villages supported by orchards and farming fields, the base has been a major supplier of employment. The U.S. withdrawal affects nearly every household, said Darwaish Raufi, district governor.

The Americans have been giving the Afghan military some weaponry and other material. Anything else that they are not taking, they are destroying and selling it to scrap dealers around Bagram. U.S. officials say they must ensure nothing usable can ever fall into Taliban hands.

Last week, the U.S. Central Command said it had junked 14,790 pieces of equipment and sent 763 C-17 aircraft loaded with material out of Afghanistan. Bagram villagers say they hear explosions from inside the base, apparently the Americans destroying buildings and material.

Raufi said many villagers have complained to him about the U.S. leaving just their junk behind.

"There's something sadly symbolic about how the U.S. has gone about leaving Bagram. The decision to take so much away and destroy so much of what is left speaks to the U.S. urgency to get out quickly," said Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia Program at the U.S.-based Wilson Center.

"It's not the kindest parting gift for Afghans, including those taking over the base," he said.

Inevitably, comparisons to the former Soviet Union have arisen.

Retired Afghan Gen. Saifullah Safi, who worked alongside U.S. forces at Bagram, said the Soviets left all their equipment when they withdrew. They "didn't take much with them, just the vehicles they needed to transport their soldiers back to Russia," he said.

The prison in the base was handed over to the Afghans in 2012, and they will continue to operate it. In the early years of the war, for many Afghans, Bagram became synonymous with fear, next only to Guantanamo Bay. Parents would threaten their crying children with the prison.

In the early years of the invasion, Afghans often disappeared for months without any reports of their whereabouts until the International Red Committee of the Red Cross located them in Bagram. Some re-

turned home with tales of torture.

"When someone mentions even the word Bagram I hear the screams of pain from the prison," said Zabihullah, who spent six years in Bagram, accused of belonging to the faction of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a warlord designated a terrorist by the U.S. At the time of his arrest it was an offense to belong to Hekmatyar's party.

Zabihullah, who goes by one name, was released in 2020, four years after President Ashraf Ghani signed a peace deal with Hekmatyar.

Roggio says the status of the prison is a "major concern," noting that many of its prisoners are known Taliban leaders or members of militant groups, including al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. It's believed about 7,000 prisoners are still in the prison.

"If the base falls and the prison is overrun, these detainees can bolster the ranks of these terror groups," Roggio said.

In collapsed building's twin, most residents are staying put

By TERRY SPENCER and RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

SURFSIDE, Fla. (AP) — About a block from the Miami-area beachfront condominium tower that collapsed sits its sister building, erected a year later by the same company, using the same materials and a similar design. It has faced the same tides and salty air.

This has made some residents of Champlain Towers North worried enough to leave, though most have remained, saying they are confident their almost 40-year-old, 12-story building is better maintained. They say their building doesn't have the same problems with cracking in support beams and in the pool area that 2018 engineering reports show the south tower had.

The collapse of Champlain Towers South in the town of Surfside on Thursday has drawn attention to older high-rise buildings throughout South Florida and prompted Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava to order a 30-day audit of whether such buildings under her jurisdiction are complying with a required recertification of structural integrity at 40 years. She said she wants any issues raised by inspections to be immediately addressed. She's also urged municipalities within the county to follow suit. Miami, for example, has launched a 45-day audit of buildings six stories and higher that are 40 years old or older.

Inspectors performed a quick-hit examination of the north building and Surfside Mayor Charles Burkett said nothing was found that indicates the tower is in danger of collapse.

That didn't reassure everyone.

"I'm petrified of returning," said Rebecca Weinstock, a snowbird who bought a sixth-floor condo in the north building four years ago with her husband. She is in New York, where she was when the south tower collapsed early Thursday, killing at least 11 people and leaving 150 missing.

While she agrees the north building is well maintained, she said that's not enough to satisfy her that it's completely safe. It was completed in 1982, one year after the south tower, and built by the same developer, Nathan Reiber, through his firm, Nattel Construction. The possibility that the collapse was caused by a design or construction flaw means she won't be returning anytime soon.

"I am out my investment, I am out my apartment, I am out my future, but we are talking about lives here," she said. The only way she'll return, she said, is if two independent engineers — not from South Florida — agree it's safe.

North tower residents who want to temporarily relocate are being offered federal assistance, just as survivors from the south tower are.

But most residents interviewed Monday are taking the position of Philip and Nora Zyne, who are staying put in their fifth-floor condo. The Zynes bought their condo 12 years ago, and have lived there full time for six. They have several friends and acquaintances who lived in the south tower and remain missing.

"I've never seen any major structural issues" in the north building, said Philip Zyne, an attorney. "I'm not worried at all right now. I do want to get a full structural engineering and forensic examination done."

Zyne said he's seen numerous inspectors in his building since the collapse, and only a small number of

people packing up to go.

"It's not a mass exodus by any means. I'd say maybe a quarter of the building has left," he said.

Salomon Gold, who spent 10 years as the condo association president for the north tower and 20 on the board, is convinced the building is safe, saying he and the other board members never skimped on maintenance. He compared the building collapse to airplanes: Just because one crashes doesn't mean others of that same make and model will.

"We are in good shape," said Gold, 89. The current condo association president, Naum Lusky, declined comment Monday.

Surfside Mayor Burkett said a deep-dive inspection of the north tower will be conducted Tuesday by an engineering firm hired by the residents. The town will inspect other older buildings soon. Given the results of the preliminary examination of the north tower, he said he doesn't see a reason to order an evacuation. Still, he said, he's not sure he would stay there.

"If you asked me if I wanted to spend the night in that building, I'd be a little ... I wouldn't be willing to do that until we went through it," he said.

Esther Drachman and her husband aren't taking any chances. Drachman's 91-year-old mother-in-law lives in the north tower.

"My mother-in-law is bedridden, so we took her out and brought her to our house," Drachman said. "We just felt like we couldn't get her out in five minutes" if a rapid evacuation became necessary.

Drachman said her mother-in-law wasn't worried or very aware of the details of the disaster. She said she and her husband are waiting to see if a thorough inspection turns up any problems.

"We'll see if that building's fine," Drachman said. "And if it is, we'll put her back in."

Crews spend 5th day atop shaky pile of collapsed concrete

By TERRY SPENCER and RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

SURFSIDE, Fla. (AP) — Rescuers searching for a fifth day for survivors of a Florida condo building collapse used bucket brigades and heavy machinery Monday as they worked atop a precarious mound of pulverized concrete, twisted steel and the remnants of dozens of households.

Authorities said their efforts were still a search-and-rescue operation, but no one has been found alive since hours after the collapse on Thursday. Two more bodies were recovered Monday, bringing the confirmed death toll to 11. They were later identified as 50-year-old Frank Kleiman and 50-year-old Michael David Altman in a Miami-Dade Police news release that also named 52-year-old Marcus Joseph Guara as one of the bodies recovered on Saturday. More than 150 others are still missing in the community of Surfside, just outside Miami.

The pancake collapse of the building left layer upon layer of intertwined debris, frustrating efforts to reach anyone who may have survived in a pocket of space.

"Every time there's an action, there's a reaction," Miami-Dade Assistant Fire Chief Raide Jadallah said during a news conference. "It's not an issue of we could just attach a couple of cords to a concrete boulder and lift it and call it a day." Some of the concrete pieces are smaller, the size of basketballs or baseballs.

Underscoring the risks of the work, he noted that families who rode buses to visit the site on Sunday witnessed a rescuer tumble 25 feet down the pile. Workers and victims must both be considered, he said.

"It's going to take time," he said. "It's not going to happen overnight. It's a 12-story building."

Relatives continued their visits on Monday. From outside a neighboring building, more than two dozen family members watched teams of searchers excavate the building site. Some held onto each other for support. Others hugged and prayed. Some people took photos.

The intense effort includes firefighters, sniffer dogs and search experts using radar and sonar devices.

Early Monday, a crane lifted a large slab of concrete from the debris pile, enabling about 30 rescuers in hard hats to move in and carry smaller pieces of debris into red buckets, which are emptied into a larger bin for a crane to remove. The work has been complicated by intermittent rain showers, but the fires that hampered the initial search have been extinguished.

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Jimmy Patronis, Florida's chief financial officer and state fire marshal, said it was the largest deployment of such resources in Florida history that was not due to a hurricane. He said the same number of people were on the ground in Surfside as during Hurricane Michael, a devastating Category 5 hurricane that hit 12 counties in 2018.

"They're working around the clock," Patronis said. "They're working 12 hours at a time, midnight to noon to midnight."

Andy Alvarez, a deputy incident commander with Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, told ABC's "Good Morning America" that rescuers have been able to find some voids, or spaces, inside the wreckage, mostly in the basement and the parking garage.

"We have been able to tunnel through the building," Alvarez said. "This is a frantic search to seek that hope, that miracle, to see who we can bring out of this building alive."

Others who have seen the wreckage up close were daunted by the task ahead. Alfredo Lopez, who lived with his wife in a sixth-floor corner apartment and narrowly escaped, said he finds it hard to believe anyone is alive in the rubble.

"If you saw what I saw: nothingness. And then, you go over there and you see, like, all the rubble. How can somebody survive that?" Lopez told The Associated Press.

Authorities on Monday insisted they are not losing hope.

"We're going to continue and work ceaselessly to exhaust every possible option in our search," Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said Monday.

Deciding to transition from search-and-rescue work to a recovery operation is agonizing, said Dr. Joseph A. Barbera, a professor at George Washington University. That decision is fraught with considerations, he said, that only those on the ground can make.

Barbera coauthored a study examining disasters where some people survived under rubble for prolonged periods of time. He has also advised teams on where to look for potential survivors and when to conclude "that the probability of continued survival is very, very small."

"It's an incredibly difficult decision, and I've never had to make that decision," Barbera said.

As time goes on, he said, teams will begin a process called "rapid delayering, where you take more risk by moving larger amounts of rubble, because you recognize you're running up against the time factor for survival."

How long a person can survive depends on a host of issues, including the availability of water, the severity of any injuries and the degree to which they are trapped, Barbera said.

"The human dimension is huge -- the uncertainty that you could be leaving someone alive behind by ending too early," Barbera said. "Families continue to have hope, as do rescuers, which is why you continue to see them pushing so hard within these difficult conditions."

The ultimate decision to move into the recovery phase, he said, will have to be made "with the involvement of the political authority because they're the ultimate authority over this."

The building collapsed just days before a deadline for condo owners to start making steep payments toward more than \$9 million in repairs that had been recommended nearly three years earlier, in a report that warned of "major structural damage."

A federal team of scientists and engineers are conducting a preliminary investigation at the site and will determine whether to launch a full probe of what caused the building to come down. The National Institute of Standards and Technology also investigated disasters such as the collapse of the twin towers on 9/11, Hurricane Maria's devastation in Puerto Rico and a Rhode Island nightclub fire that killed 100 people. Previous investigations have taken years to complete.

US: Big drop in migrant kids at largest emergency shelter

By JULIE WATSON and AMY TAXIN Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The number of migrant children housed at the Biden administration's largest emergency shelter for those who crossed the U.S.-Mexico border alone has dropped by more than 40% since

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mid-June, a top U.S. official said Monday, touting progress at the facility that has been criticized by child welfare advocates.

Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra told reporters that 790 boys were housed at Fort Bliss Army base in El Paso, Texas, and the last girl left Monday. All the girls were reunited either with relatives in the U.S. or a sponsor such as a family friend or sent to licensed facilities, which have a higher standard of care, according to the agency responsible for caring for migrant children.

In mid-June, the administration reported about 2,000 boys and girls were at the Fort Bliss facility amid child welfare advocates' concerns about inadequate conditions. A high of 4,800 children were housed there in May.

Becerra said his agency was evaluating whether it can close some of the emergency shelters that the government opened in the spring as record numbers of unaccompanied children crossed the border. He declined to say whether Fort Bliss would be among them.

"Because we've been successful in managing the flow, we are prepared to begin the demobilization of several of our emergency intake sites," Becerra said.

He made his second visit to Fort Bliss since it opened in March and said more services and staffing have been added, including case managers who have helped get children released to relatives in the U.S. or placed in licensed facilities more quickly.

In transcripts of interviews done by attorneys and filed in federal court in Los Angeles last week, migrant children described their desperation to get out of Fort Bliss and the other large shelters set up by the Biden administration.

The children were interviewed from March to June by attorneys monitoring a longstanding settlement governing custody conditions for migrant children.

Some of the children said they did not know if anyone was working to reunite them with their families, giving them anxiety. Others did not have enough access to a mental health counselor, had trouble sleeping because lights were kept on at night and were avoiding meals because the food smelled foul. Several said they spent their days sleeping and had been in the facilities, like Fort Bliss, for more than a month.

Vice President Kamala Harris visited El Paso on Friday, and her spokeswoman, Symone Sanders, told reporters that President Joe Biden has instructed Becerra to "do a thorough investigation" and report back about the conditions in the tent camp at Fort Bliss, which advocates have called particularly troubling.

"The administration is taking this very seriously. Extremely seriously," Sanders said.

A White House official said later Friday that conditions have improved, adding that Biden did not order a formal investigation request and that the agency was already looking into the facility.

Shaw Drake, staff attorney and policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas, applauded the reduction in the number of children housed at Fort Bliss but questioned why it has taken this long to see real progress in releasing kids from the government's unlicensed shelters.

Drake praised the Biden administration for helping get children out of overcrowded holding facilities for adult migrants by opening more than dozen emergency shelters quickly. But he said "immediately after that, the focus should have been to reunify children with sponsors, and it seemed like that languished and left kids in places like Fort Bliss far too long."

A rise in the number of migrant children crossing the southwest border alone has challenged the Biden administration. The Department of Health and Human Services has more than 14,200 migrant children in its care, down from 22,000 two months ago.

Becerra said more children are in licensed shelters now than unlicensed facilities, a reversal from a government report in May. He said officials are working to get more beds made available at licensed facilities.

"We have continued to expand our capacity, and as a result, we're able to discharge more of these children into the hands of a responsible, vetted custodian, which then frees up a bed for another child," he said.

Despite the improvements, Becerra said the shelters are not a solution and urged Congress to fix what he called a broken immigration system.

Virus outbreak in Fiji batters economy, tests health system

By AILEEN TORRES-BENNETT and NICK PERRY Associated Press

SUVA, Fiji (AP) — A growing coronavirus outbreak in Fiji is stretching the health system and devastating the economy. It has even prompted the government to offer jobless people tools and cash to become farmers.

The Pacific nation got through the first year of the pandemic without any significant outbreaks and just two virus deaths.

But an outbreak of the highly contagious delta variant two months ago has grown to the point where Fiji is adding about 250 new cases each day.

The government has so far resisted calls for a lockdown, in part to try and protect an economy which had already shrunk by 19% last year after international tourism evaporated.

Nearly half of all jobs were connected to tourism in the island nation that's known for its white-sand beaches, clear water and welcoming people.

"Business-wise, it's very bad," said George Bernard, who owns a business servicing fire extinguishers. He fears life will never be the same. "I'm just trying to survive," he said.

A vaccination campaign is in full swing but has been hindered by misinformation that vaccines are unsafe or even evil. So far, about 29% of the population of just under 1 million have gotten their first dose, while 2% have been fully vaccinated.

Bernard, who has heard some of the rumors, said he is in no rush to get vaccinated. "Sometimes, I have second thoughts," he said.

Nazia Hussain has been selling vegetables from her roadside stall, and she uses some of the profit to help her family members who lost their jobs at supermarkets and stores in the capital, Suva.

"I have been doing this so I can save some money to do some shopping for my family," she said. But business had been slow, and people had little money to spend.

Hussain said she'd believed the vaccine was a good thing and had taken the jab herself.

Fiji's government has delivered nearly 40,000 packages of food rations to people who have been isolating at home or are in targeted lockdown areas. It has also allowed people to spend money early from their retirement savings.

A new program starting next month offers people who have lost their jobs and have access to rural land about \$200 worth of tools, planting materials and cash.

"Applicant must be an aspiring crop farmer with an intention to take on full-time farming as a core activity," the program states.

During the current outbreak, 15 people have died and nearly 7% of those being tested are testing positive, indicating the virus is continuing to spread. Australia and New Zealand have sent vaccines, money and medical teams to help Fiji's overburdened health system.

Fiji's government has directed people in some areas, including Suva, to stay home and only go out for essential purposes. It has also imposed a nighttime curfew.

James Fong, the country's permanent secretary for health, told reporters that a complete, nationwide lockdown would spark a socio-economic catastrophe in Fiji.

But many worry that will happen anyway if the outbreak isn't brought under control.

"Our numbers are going through the roof now. We must unite against this virus," wrote Fred Wesley, the editor-in-chief of the Fiji Times. "Together Fiji! United we must stand!"

Brazil to redeploy troops to Amazon to fight deforestation

By DÉBORA ÁLVARES Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — Brazil's president is sending troops back to the Amazon to bolster policing against logging and other illegal land clearance, acting amid international criticism of a surge in deforestation and just two months after withdrawing a similar military mission.

President Jair Bolsonaro's decree calls for soldiers to go to the states of Para, Amazonas, Mato Grosso

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and Rondonia through the end of August. The order, which was published Monday in Brazil's official gazette, didn't provide details about the number of troops to be deployed nor the cost of the operation.

Vice President Hamilton Mourão told reporters earlier this month that the deployment could be extended beyond two months with the arrival of the dry season, when people burn forest to clear land for farming and ranching.

Amazon deforestation had edged upward for several years, then it surged after the 2018 election of Bolsonaro, who repeatedly called for development of the rainforest. The destruction has elicited an international outcry and, more recently, an effort by U.S. President Joe Biden's administration to urge Bolsonaro to get tough on illegal logging.

This will mark the third time that Bolsonaro has dispatched troops to the Amazon, following two "Operation Green Brazil" deployments, the most recent of which ended in April. Each mission involved thousands of soldiers. Still, environmental experts have said the military was ill-prepared and had limited efficacy.

In 2020, deforestation in Brazil's Amazon reached a level unseen since 2008, according to official data.

And 98.9% of deforestation had indications of illegality, either done near springs, in protected areas or carried out without requisite authorization, according to data released this month by the MapBiomass Project, a network of nonprofits, universities and technology companies that studies Brazilian land use. Brazil's environmental regulator levied fines in just 5% of these cases, the group found.

Márcio Astrini, executive secretary of the Climate Observatory, a network of environmental nonprofit groups, called the latest military deployment a "smokescreen" that will allow the government to claim to be fighting deforestation. He noted a previously successful initiative, largely funded by the Norwegian and German governments, has been suspended since 2019.

"The government has adopted a series of measures that simply destroys the state's monitoring capacity, like stopping environmental fines," Astrini said. He added that the regulator has also ceased destroying machinery used for illegal logging.

Bolsonaro's plan to send soldiers comes as the U.S. administration has called for curbing Amazon deforestation in order to help arrest climate change. Bolsonaro has said Brazil lacks enough funds to do so on its own, despite the fact the nation did so at the start of this century.

The U.S. has made clear it would only be willing to contribute once Brazil registers concrete progress, of which there has so far been no sign. Talks between the U.S. and Brazil's environment ministry have stalled, three Brazilian government officials told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly.

The decision to deploy troops is partially meant to demonstrate the government's good intentions to the U.S., one of the officials added.

On June 23, Environment Minister Ricardo Salles announced his resignation, giving up his post amid sharp criticism of his tenure and two investigations into his actions involving allegedly illegal timber operations. He has denied all wrongdoing.

Danny weakens to a tropical depression, heavy rains continue

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Tropical Storm Danny weakened to a tropical depression hours after it made landfall Monday evening on South Carolina's coast but the system continued to dump heavy rains on the state and portions of Georgia.

At 11 p.m. Danny had top sustained winds of 35 mph (56 kph) and was about 50 miles (80 kilometers) west-northwest of Beaufort, South Carolina, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said. The system was moving to the west-northwest at 16 mph (26 kph). It added that continued weakening is forecast, and Danny is expected to dissipate on Tuesday.

The fourth named storm of this Atlantic hurricane season formed close to South Carolina's coast during the afternoon Monday. Forecasters said it could be a rainmaker as far inland as the north Georgia Piedmont area and in northeast Alabama.

Dangerous surf conditions also were expected along parts of the Southeast seacoast, along with a threat

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of isolated tornadoes near the coast.

Tropical storm force winds were already recorded Monday afternoon in some spots in South Carolina just hours after Danny formed. A weather station at Folly Beach — just outside Charleston — recorded a wind gust of 41 mph (66 kph) during the day, the Miami-based hurricane center said.

A tropical storm warning was posted earlier Monday from Edisto Beach to South Santee River in South Carolina. All warnings were discontinued Monday night.

Still, the depression could produce between 1 and 3 inches (3 to 8 centimeters) of rain with higher amounts in some coastal areas of Georgia and South Carolina. Forecasters said heavier rainfall could occur in some scattered spots but the region has been dry, limiting the potential threat of any widespread flooding.

Still, forecasters warned that some local flooding remained a possibility in urban areas along the coast and up to 1 to 2 inches of rain were possible elsewhere around South Carolina and in north Georgia and northeast Alabama.

Some brushed off the storm's potential impact.

In Savannah, Georgia, all systems were go for Tuesday night's Savannah Bananas home baseball game as organizers eyed the storm. Officials for the collegiate summer league team planned to cover the field with tarp on Monday in preparation for the game.

"For us, being on the coast and being in Savannah, we get some nasty pop-up storms that can dump an inch of rain in just a few hours," Bananas President Jared Orton said Monday. "This one doesn't look like much more than just a nice, passing day of rain. I think we're good to go as long as the sun comes out tomorrow."

Northwest US faces hottest day of intense heat wave

By GENE JOHNSON and SARA CLINE Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — The hottest day of an unprecedented and dangerous heat wave scorched the Pacific Northwest on Monday, with temperatures obliterating records that had been set just the day before.

Seattle hit 108 degrees Fahrenheit (42 Celsius) by evening — well above Sunday's all-time high of 104 F (40 C). Portland, Oregon, reached 116 F (46.6 C) after hitting records of 108 F (42 C) on Saturday and 112 F (44 C) on Sunday.

The temperatures were unheard of in a region better known for rain, and where June has historically been referred to as "Juneuary" for its cool drizzle. Seattle's average high temperature in June is around 70 F (21.1 C), and fewer than half of the city's residents have air conditioning, according to U.S. Census data.

The heat forced schools and businesses to close to protect workers and guests, including some places like outdoor pools and ice cream shops where people seek relief from the heat. COVID-19 testing sites and mobile vaccination units were out of service as well.

The Seattle Parks Department closed one indoor community pool after the air inside became too hot — leaving Stanlie James, who relocated from Arizona three weeks ago, to search for somewhere else to cool off. She doesn't have AC at her condo, she said.

"Part of the reason I moved here was not only to be near my daughter, but also to come in the summer to have relief from Arizona heat," James said. "And I seem to have brought it with me. So I'm not real thrilled."

The heat wave was caused by what meteorologists described as a dome of high pressure over the Northwest and worsened by human-caused climate change, which is making such extreme weather events more likely and more intense.

Zeke Hausfather, a scientist at the climate-data nonprofit Berkeley Earth, said Monday that the Pacific Northwest has warmed by about 3 degrees F (1.7 degrees C) in the past half-century. That means a heat wave now is about 3 degrees warmer than it would have been before — and the difference between 111 degrees and 114 is significant, especially for vulnerable populations, he noted.

"In a world without climate change, this still would have been a really extreme heat wave," Hausfather said. "This is worse than the same event would have been 50 years ago, and notably so."

The blistering heat exposed a region with infrastructure not designed for it, hinting at the greater costs

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of climate change to come. Blackouts were reported throughout the region as people trying to keep cool with fans and air conditioners strained the power grid.

"We are not meant for this," Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said of the Pacific Northwest in an interview Monday on MSNBC. "This is the beginning of a permanent emergency ... we have to tackle the source of this problem, which is climate change."

In Portland, light rail and street car service was suspended as power cables melted and electricity demand spiked.

Heat-related expansion caused road pavement to buckle or pop loose in many areas, including on Interstate 5 in Seattle. Workers in tanker trucks in Seattle were hosing down drawbridges with water at least twice a day to prevent the steel from expanding in the heat and interfering with their opening and closing mechanisms.

Democratic U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell said in a statement Monday that the heat illustrated an urgent need for the upcoming federal infrastructure package to promote clean energy, cut greenhouse gas emissions and protect people from extreme heat.

"Washington state was not built for triple digit temperatures," she said.

In many cities in the region, officials opened cooling centers, including one in an Amazon meeting space in Seattle capable of holding 1,000 people. Officials also reminded residents where pools, splash pads and cooling centers were available and urged people to stay hydrated, check on their neighbors and avoid strenuous activities.

The closure of school buildings halted programs such as meal services for the needy, child care and summer enrichment activities. In eastern Washington state, the Richland and Kennewick school districts paused bus service for summer school because the vehicles aren't air-conditioned, making it unsafe for students to travel in them.

Orchardists in central Washington tried to save their cherry crops from the heat, using canopies, deploying sprinklers and sending out workers in the night to pick.

Alaska Airlines said it was providing "cool down vans" for its workers at Seattle-Tacoma and Portland international airports, where temperatures on the ramp can be 20 degrees higher than elsewhere.

The heat wave stretched into the Canadian province of British Columbia, with the temperature in the village of Lytton reaching 115 F (46 C) Sunday afternoon, marking an all-time high recorded in Canada.

In Multnomah County, Oregon, which includes Portland, nearly 60 outreach teams have worked since Friday to reach homeless people with water, electrolytes and information on keeping cool, said county spokeswoman Julie Sullivan-Springhetti.

The county had 43 emergency department and urgent care clinic visits for heat illness from Friday to Sunday. Typically, there would be just one or two, Sullivan-Springhetti said.

Dr. Jennifer Vines, the Multnomah County health officer, said she believed there would be deaths from the heat wave, though how many remained to be seen.

"We are worried about elderly and we are certainly worried about people with frail health, but kids can also overheat easily," Vines said. "Even adults who are fit and healthy — in temperatures like these — have ended up in the emergency department."

The heat was heading east, where temperatures in Boise, Idaho, were expected to top 100 F (38 C) for at least seven days starting Monday.

Ethiopia declares immediate, unilateral cease-fire in Tigray

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Ethiopia's government declared an immediate, unilateral cease-fire Monday in its Tigray region after nearly eight months of deadly conflict as Tigray fighters occupied the regional capital and government soldiers retreated in a region where hundreds of thousands are suffering in the world's worst famine crisis.

The cease-fire could calm a war that has destabilized Africa's second most populous country and threatened to do the same in the wider Horn of Africa, where Ethiopia has been seen as a key security ally for

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the West. It comes as the country awaits the results of national elections that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed promoted as the centerpiece of reforms that won him the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize.

Abiy's transformation from making peace to waging war has appalled many observers since the fighting in Tigray erupted in November. Since then, the world has struggled to access much of the region and investigate growing allegations of atrocities including gang rapes and forced starvation. Thousands of people in the region of 6 million have been killed.

Ethiopia's statement was carried by state media shortly after the Tigray interim administration, appointed by the federal government, fled the regional capital, Mekele, and called for a cease-fire on humanitarian grounds so that desperately needed aid can be delivered.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement that he had spoken with the prime minister and "I am hopeful that an effective cessation of hostilities will take place."

Meanwhile, Mekele residents cheered the return of Tigray forces for the first time since Ethiopian troops took the city in late November and Abiy declared victory. The Tigray fighters, loyal to the former regional ruling party that for years dominated Ethiopia's government before being sidelined by the new prime minister, undermined the declaration by waging a guerrilla war in the region's rough terrain.

As Tigray forces occupied the airport and other key positions in Mekele and broadcast a message telling residents to stop celebrating and go home, retreating Ethiopian soldiers shot at students at Mekele University, killing two and wounding three, said a nurse at Ayder hospital, who spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear of retaliation.

Ethnic Tigrayans, even those who didn't support the former ruling Tigray People's Liberation Front before the war, say they have been targeted harshly for suspected links with the Tigray fighters. Ethiopia has denied it.

But Abiy in an interview aired last week alarmed observers by recalling that aid to Tigray during Ethiopia's devastating 1980s famine had bolstered the Tigray fighters who eventually overthrew the ruling regime. Such a thing will "never happen" now, he said.

Monday's cease-fire declaration signaled a new approach, at least for a while.

The cease-fire "will enable farmers to till their land, aid groups to operate without any military movement around and engage with remnants (of Tigray's former ruling party) who seek peace," Ethiopia's statement said, adding that efforts to bring Tigray's former leaders "to justice" continue.

Ethiopia said the cease-fire will last until the end of the crucial planting season in Tigray. The season's end comes in September. The government ordered all federal and regional authorities to respect the cease-fire — crucial as authorities and fighters from the neighboring Amhara region have been accused of atrocities in western Tigray.

"The government has the responsibility to find a political solution to the problem," the head of the interim administration, Abraham Belay, said in calling for the cease-fire, adding that some elements within Tigray's former ruling party are willing to engage with the federal government.

There was no immediate comment from the Tigray fighters, with whom Ethiopia had rejected talks. And there was no immediate comment from neighboring Eritrea, whose soldiers have been accused by Tigray residents of some of the worst atrocities in the war.

"If Abiy has a genuine desire to find a political solution, first he has to undo the terrorist label against the elected government of Tigray," said Desta Haileselassie Hagos, who leads efforts to compile a list of those killed in the war. Abiy also needs to order the Eritrean soldiers to leave, he said.

Tigray in recent days has seen some of the fiercest fighting of the conflict. International pressure on Ethiopia spiked again last week after a military airstrike on a busy market killed more than 60 people, and after Doctors Without Borders said three staffers had been murdered in a separate incident.

Amid the upheaval on Monday, the United Nations children's agency said Ethiopian soldiers entered its office in Mekele and dismantled satellite communications equipment, an act it said violated the world body's immunity. UNICEF last week warned that at least 33,000 severely malnourished children face "imminent risk of death" without more aid reaching Tigray's people.

At U.N. headquarters in New York, the United States, United Kingdom and Ireland called for an emergency open meeting of the Security Council. The U.N.'s most powerful body has discussed Tigray behind closed doors but not in an open session. They need support from nine of the 15 council members to hold an open meeting.

Argentine family among missing in Florida building collapse

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON and KELLI KENNEDY Associated Press

SURFSIDE, Fla. (AP) — The remains of 11 people have been found after the collapse of a 12-story beachfront condominium building in Florida, authorities said Monday. The Associated Press has been reporting brief descriptions of the dead and the missing.

Miami-Dade police released late Monday the names and ages of three men who died in the collapse. They said the body of Marcus Joseph Guara, 52, was discovered on Saturday but only identified on Monday. Authorities say they found on Monday the remains of Michael David Altman, 50, and Frankie Kleiman, 55, who had recently gotten married.

Late on Sunday, police identified the remains of Leon and Christina Oliwkowicz, an elderly couple from Venezuela with ties to Jewish communities in Florida and Chicago. They also found the bodies of Luis Bermudez, a young man with muscular dystrophy, and his mother, Ana Ortiz, who were from Puerto Rico.

Authorities said 150 other people remain unaccounted for as rescuers search through the rubble of Champlain Towers South. Among them are Linda March, whose penthouse apartment was ripped apart, leaving her office chair and a set of bunkbeds next to the abyss.

CATTAROSSO FAMILY

Argentine Graciela Cattarossi is a beloved mother and friend who works as an independent photographer for hotels, magazines, banks and airlines from different parts of the world, said Kathryn Rooney Vera, a friend who has known Cattarossi since 2008.

The most important thing in her world, however, is her 7-year-old daughter Stella.

Cattarossi, 48, a single mother, lived in Champlain Towers South with Stella and her own parents, Graciela and Gino Cattarossi. All four were missing Monday, along with Cattarossi's sister, Andrea, an architect in Pilar, Argentina, who was visiting.

Vera said Cattarossi is a dedicated mother whose devotion to her child is "unparalleled." She also described her as a "very hard worker, a beautiful person and beloved by everyone."

Cattarossi and Vera were exchanging text messages on Wednesday night, just hours before the building collapsed. The photographer took professional photos of Vera's fourth pregnancy years ago and presented them as a gift to celebrate what they believed would be Vera's last child.

"She was happy to know that I was pregnant again," said Vera. "We are devastated by what happened." Vera said that Graciela Cattarossi has lived in Miami for decades.

ANA ORTIZ and LUIS BERMUDEZ

Luis Bermudez, of San Juan, Puerto Rico, had battled muscular dystrophy for years and used a wheelchair. The 26-year-old man lived with his mother, Ana Ortiz, on the seventh floor of the Champlain Towers South. They were identified among the 11 who died after the building collapsed Thursday.

His father, also named Luis Bermudez, texted the AP saying "my son is a hero." He also wrote on Facebook that he could not believe he's gone.

"Now rest in peace and without any obstacles in heaven," he wrote. "I will see you soon my Luiyo."

In honor of Luis, family members on Monday laid flowers in the ocean at a beach near the site of the building collapse.

Ortiz, 46, had just gotten married to Frankie Kleiman. Alex Garcia, the couple's close friend, told The Miami Herald he had set them up on a blind date. Kleiman lived with his wife and stepson on the same floor as his brother Jay Kleiman, who was in town for a funeral, and their mother Nancy Kress Levin. The

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Kleimans and their mother are still missing.

Ortiz was described as a woman who was committed to giving her son the best possible life. "She's a rock star," Garcia told the Herald. "And on top of that a super mom."

LEON and CRISTINA OLIWKOWICZ

Leon Oliwkowicz, 80, and his wife Cristina Beatriz de Oliwkowicz, 74, lived on the 8th floor of the condo tower for several years, according to Venezuelan journalist Shirley Varnagy, a close friend of their family.

They had already sent their children to live in the U.S. from Venezuela, and then joined them as the economic and political crisis worsened in their native country, said Rabbi Moshe Perlstein, dean of the Yeshivas Ohr Eliyahu-Lubavitch Mesivta, an Orthodox Jewish School in Chicago where one of their daughters, Leah Fouhal, works as an office manager.

Perlstein flew to Florida to support Fouhal after the disaster as she waited anxiously to learn her parents' fate. Late Sunday, authorities announced that their bodies had been recovered.

"On Friday, she was there and she was standing a few blocks away, and smoke was coming from the (collapsed building). And she tells me, 'I just hope I'll be able to bury my parents instead of their ashes...' And then, thank God she was able to bury her parents, not the ashes," he said.

"The Jewish people have unfortunately known too many cases where we have buried ashes. We don't want to bury people, but it's better than burying ashes," he said as he prepared for their funeral on Monday.

Perlstein said the couple was known for their generosity: Three years ago, they donated a valuable Torah scroll to the school in memory of Leon Oliwkowicz's parents.

"He was a person that enjoyed when he gave, he was happy. He loved giving," Perlstein said. "With his wife, they were very dedicated to their children, helping the children, doing anything they could for their children," he said. "It was their life -- giving to the family and giving charity to others."

Other Venezuelans who were caught in the collapse included Moisés Rodán, 28; Andrés Levine, 27; and Luis Sadovnik, 28, who remained missing along with his Argentine wife, Nicole Langesfeld, Varnagy said. The parents of Rodán, Levine and Sadovnik were able to travel to the U.S. from Venezuela after the disaster, she said.

"Some did not have a visa, others had an expired passport, but with diplomatic collaboration they were able to arrive," Varnagy said.

LINDA MARCH

Among the missing was Linda March, who eagerly traded a cramped New York apartment for fresh air and ocean views after surviving a COVID-19 infection. She even bought a bright pink bicycle to cruise around Miami with, best friend Rochelle Laufer said.

March rented Penthouse 4, and was using the second bedroom of the furnished apartment as her office, Laufer told The Associated Press on Sunday.

Thursday's partial collapse of the condominium building left the penthouse's interior exposed, with bunk beds and an office chair still intact just inside the broken edge where the rest of the 12-story structure crumbled into a pile of debris.

Another friend, Dawn Falco, said she had been talking on the phone with March until just two hours before the disaster. Falco said she immediately began searching for word on her friend, who she said never leaves the house "without a smile."

"My heart is breaking as I see the office chair that she just purchased next to the bunkbeds," Falco said.

Florida was a new start for the 58-year-old attorney. In the past decade, she'd lost her sister and mother to cancer, her father died a few years later and she and her husband divorced. She had no children.

"She would say to me, 'I'm all alone. I don't have family,' and I would say, 'You're my sister, you don't have to be born sisters. And I said you always have me,'" Laufer recounted through tears.

Laufer said March loved the ocean views but hated the incessant noise from nearby construction and had decided to break her lease. "She was looking for another apartment when this happened," Laufer

said sadly.

Still, Laufer had been planning to visit her friend this fall.

"I joked I'm going to take the top bunk when I visit," she said.

She's up! Bat girl 60 years in making reaches Yankee Stadium

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Gwen Goldman exchanged fist bumps with the New York Yankees she had been admiring for decades from afar, walked onto the field and waved to the crowd.

She got to be a Yankees' bat girl on Monday night at age 70 — a full 60 years after she was turned down because of her gender.

Shaking with excitement, she beamed while recounting how it felt to be at Yankee Stadium on this day for the game against the Los Angeles Angels.

"I don't know where to start, of which was the best, what did I enjoy the most?" she said during a news conference in the fourth inning.

"The whole piece, from walking in the front door of the stadium at Gate 2, to coming up to a locker with my name on it that said Gwen Goldman, and suiting up, then walking out onto the field. It took my breath away. It's obviously taking my words away also.

"It was a thrill of a lifetime — times a million. And I actually got to be out in the dugout, too. I threw out a ball, I met the players. Yeah, it goes on and on. They had set up a day for me that is something that I never would have expected."

Goldman retired in 2017 as a social worker at Stepping Stones Preschool, a public school in Westport, Connecticut.

She used the Hebrew word "dayenu" — which translates to "it would have been enough" — to describe the different parts of her experience.

"It just kept coming and coming," he said.

Goldman had been rejected by then-Yankees general manager Roy Hamey, who wrote her in a letter on June 23, 1961: "While we agree with you that girls are certainly as capable as boys, and no doubt would be an attractive addition on the playing field, I am sure you can understand that it is a game dominated by men a young lady such as yourself would feel out of place in a dugout."

Current Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said he had been forwarded an email written by Goldman's daughter, Abby. In a letter dated this June 23, Cashman wrote "it is not too late to reward and recognize the ambition you showed in writing that letter to us as a 10-year-old girl."

"Some dreams take longer than they should to be realized, but a goal attained should not dim with the passage of time," Cashman added. "I have a daughter myself, and it is my sincere hope that every little girl will be given the opportunity to follow her aspirations into the future."

Wearing a full Yankees uniform, Goldman threw out a ceremonial first pitch to New York player Tyler Wade, then stood alongside manager Aaron Boone for the national anthem.

"I think it's really cool," Boone said after meeting her. "I think you're going to see her probably take balls out at some point to home plate. ... Hopefully it's an experience of a lifetime for her and a long one in coming."

New York extended the invitation as part of the Yankees' annual HOPE week, which stands for Helping Others Persevere & Excel.

She posed with the umpires when the lineup cards were brought out. After the third inning, the Yankees played a video that included the letters and a Zoom session in which Cashman, assistant general manager Jean Afterman and pitcher Gerrit Cole were among those informing her of the invitation.

She then was introduced to the crowd, walked up the Yankees dugout steps onto the field and waved her cap as fans applauded.

"I didn't hold it against them. I loved the Yankees," she said. "I never in my wildest dreams — never thought that 60 years later, Brian Cashman would make this become a reality."

Despite warning, town deemed condo building in 'good shape'

By CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

Despite an engineer's warning of major structural problems, a town building official told board members their Florida high-rise condominium was in "very good shape" almost three years before it collapsed, according to minutes of that meeting released Monday.

The Surfside official, Rosendo "Ross" Prieto was quoted as making those comments at a meeting of the Champlain Towers South board on Nov. 15, 2018. That was just over a month after engineering firm Morabito Consultants issued a report describing key flaws in the structure.

The discussion with Prieto came as Champlain Towers was beginning to explore what work was needed under city and county ordinances for the building to meet a 40-year recertification that was to arrive in 2021.

The board meeting minutes say that Prieto told them in 2018 the Morabito engineering report had collected the necessary information and "it appears the building is in very good shape."

A day later, Prieto told the then-town manager of Surfside he thought the meeting was a success and credited Champlain Towers with getting a good early start on the recertification process.

"The response was very positive from everyone in the room," Prieto wrote in the email, also released by town officials. "All the main concerns over their forty-year recertification process were addressed."

Yet there is no evidence any of the critical concrete structure work ever started, the documents show. Owners of the 136 units had been told earlier this year they would have to pay their share of a \$15 million assessment — \$9.1 million of which was major work — by July 1. That assessment ranged from about \$80,000 for a one-bedroom unit to more than \$330,000 for a penthouse.

Prieto no longer works at Surfside and efforts to locate him Monday for comment were not immediately successful. Prieto previously told the Miami Herald he didn't remember getting the Morabito report and declined to comment on the November 2018 board meeting.

The minutes were forwarded to Surfside officials on Sunday by an attorney for the board, according to the town.

The Morabito report focused attention on the pool deck, which was found to have waterproofing underneath that had failed and had been laid flat instead of sloping to drain off water. This threatened not only the concrete slab under the pool but also other structural areas.

"Failure to replace the waterproofing in the near future will cause the extent of the concrete deterioration to expand exponentially," said the report, which also cited "abundant cracking" in concrete columns and beams.

While numerous theories have emerged, no definitive cause has been identified in Thursday's collapse of the 12-story Champlain Towers South building that left at least 10 people confirmed dead and 151 missing.

One problem that surfaced back in 2019 involved work at another building adjacent to Champlain Towers South.

"We are concerned that the construction next to (Champlain) is too close," board member Mara Chouela wrote in an email to Prieto in January 2019. The construction work, she added, is "digging too close to our property and we have concerns regarding the structure of our building."

Prieto responded that Surfside didn't have an official role in that issue. "There is nothing for me to check. The best course of action is to have someone monitor the fence, pool and adjacent areas for damage or hire a consultant to monitor these areas," he wrote.

Champlain Towers South resident Steven Rosenthal, who lived on the seventh floor and escaped the collapse, said in a negligence lawsuit filed Sunday by his attorney Robert McKee that there were ample signs of danger.

The building board, the lawsuit says, had warnings and other sources of information years ago indicating "the risk or potential indicators of severe building damage or collapse."

Rosenthal, the lawsuit adds, "lost his home. He lost his personal property obtained over the years. He

has been forced into a life with no home or possessions.”

At least two other lawsuits have been filed in the tower’s collapse, including one filed Monday by resident Raysa Rodriguez, who also argued that problems had been brought to the attention of the condo association over the years.

Rodriguez “herself previously experienced issues with the deteriorating building, including on one occasion when a chunk of concrete fell out of the garage ceiling and landed behind her parked car,” the lawsuit states. Her lawsuit said that she sent the association a photo showing a crack in the concrete above her parking space in the garage.

Surfside Mayor Charles Burkett said during a news conference Monday that the minutes of the building board meeting were of some concern but did not elaborate. He said the town continues to gather documentation on the history of Champlain Towers South and inspections of its structural integrity, and is posting them online as they become available.

“We will be 100% transparent,” Burkett said.

Judge dismisses gov’t antitrust lawsuits against Facebook

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and MARCY GORDON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge on Monday dismissed antitrust lawsuits brought against Facebook by the Federal Trade Commission and a coalition of state attorneys general, dealing a significant blow to attempts by regulators to rein in tech giants.

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg ruled Monday that the lawsuits were “legally insufficient” and didn’t provide enough evidence to prove that Facebook was a monopoly. The ruling dismisses the complaint but not the case, meaning the FTC could refile another complaint.

“These allegations — which do not even provide an estimated actual figure or range for Facebook’s market share at any point over the past ten years — ultimately fall short of plausibly establishing that Facebook holds market power,” he said.

The FTC said in a statement that it is “closely reviewing the opinion and assessing the best option forward.” The agency has 30 days in which to file a new complaint.

Boasberg closed that avenue for the states, however, in dismissing outright their separate complaint.

The U.S. government and 48 states and districts sued Facebook in December 2020, accusing the tech giant of abusing its market power in social networking to crush smaller competitors and seeking remedies that could include a forced spinoff of the social network’s Instagram and WhatsApp messaging services.

The FTC had alleged Facebook engaged in a “a systematic strategy” to eliminate its competition, including by purchasing smaller up-and-coming rivals like Instagram in 2012 and WhatsApp in 2014. New York Attorney General Letitia James said when filing the suit that Facebook “used its monopoly power to crush smaller rivals and snuff out competition, all at the expense of everyday users.”

Facebook, in an e-mailed statement, said: “We are pleased that today’s decisions recognize the defects in the government complaints filed against Facebook. We compete fairly every day to earn people’s time and attention and will continue to deliver great products for the people and businesses that use our services.”

Richard Hamilton Jr., a former prosecutor and Justice Department antitrust attorney, said the judge, while finding the FTC’s arguments insufficient, gave the agency a sort of road map for how to bulk up its case in another round.

“Whether government or private entity, you still need to sufficiently plead the case,” Hamilton said. He noted that as Boasberg saw it, the FTC failed to demonstrate how it arrived at the claim that Facebook controls 60% of the market in social networking and how that market power is measured.

Alex Harman, competition policy advocate for Public Citizen, a consumer advocacy group, said: “Courts really have a hard time with that market definition for some reason. It’s Exhibit A for why we need the laws changed.”

Rebecca Allensworth, a law professor at Vanderbilt University who specializes in antitrust, said the ruling “illustrates the problems regulators face right now bringing antitrust suits in markets without prices, like

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Facebook's, but also Google's, and in markets where huge, dominant firms offer suites of products that don't neatly fit into the mold of well-defined markets like aluminum ingot or crude oil."

An ambitious package of legislation to overhaul the antitrust laws, which could point toward breaking up Facebook as well as Google, Amazon and Apple, was approved by the House Judiciary Committee last week and sent to the full U.S. House.

"As the FTC and 48 state attorneys general have alleged, Facebook is a monopolist and it has abused its monopoly power to buy or bury its competitive threats," Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., who heads the Judiciary panel, and Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I., the legislation's lead sponsor, said Monday. "In the weeks ahead, we will work to advance this legislation to restore choice, innovation and opportunity for American businesses and consumers."

Rep. Ken Buck of Colorado, the chief Republican sponsor of the legislation, said the ruling "shows that antitrust reform is urgently needed. Congress needs to provide additional tools and resources to our antitrust enforcers to go after Big Tech companies engaging in anticompetitive conduct."

Last October the Trump Justice Department, joined by about a dozen states, brought a landmark antitrust suit against Google, accusing the company of using its dominance in online search to stifle competition and innovation at the expense of consumers. As it stands, the case isn't scheduled to go to trial in federal court for nearly three years.

US troops in Syria attacked after airstrikes on militias

By ROBERT BURNS and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. troops in eastern Syria came under rocket attack Monday, with no reported casualties, one day after U.S. Air Force planes carried out airstrikes near the Iraq-Syria border against what the Pentagon said were facilities used by Iran-backed militia groups to support drone strikes inside Iraq.

Iraq's military condemned the U.S. airstrikes, and the militia groups called for revenge against the United States.

Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby said the militias were using the facilities to launch unmanned aerial vehicle attacks against U.S. troops in Iraq. It was the second time the administration has taken military action in the region since Biden took over earlier this year.

There was no indication that Sunday's attacks were meant as the start of a wider, sustained U.S. air campaign in the border region. But a spokesman for the U.S. military mission based in Baghdad, Col. Wayne Marotto, wrote on Twitter Monday that at 7:44 p.m. local time "U.S. forces in Syria were attacked by multiple rockets." He said there were no injuries and that attack damage was being assessed.

Marotto later tweeted that while under rocket attack, U.S. forces in Syria responded in self-defense with artillery fire at the rocket-launching positions.

Kirby said the U.S. military targeted three operational and weapons storage facilities — two in Syria and one in Iraq. In its release of videos of the strikes by Air Force F-15 and F-16 aircraft, the Pentagon described one target as a coordination center for the shipment and transfer of advanced conventional weapons.

Kirby said the airstrikes were "defensive," saying they were launched in response to the attacks by militias. "The United States took necessary, appropriate, and deliberate action designed to limit the risk of escalation — but also to send a clear and unambiguous deterrent message," Kirby said.

The Pentagon said the facilities were used by Iran-backed militia factions, including Kata'ib Hezbollah and Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada.

A Pentagon spokeswoman, Navy Cmdr. Jessica McNulty, said Monday that each strike hit its intended target and that the U.S. military was still assessing the results of the operation.

"The targets selected were facilities utilized by the network of Iran-backed militia groups responsible for the series of recent attacks against facilities housing U.S. personnel in Iraq," McNulty said. She said those groups have conducted at least five such "one-way" drone attacks since April.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, speaking to reporters in Rome on Monday, said Biden has been clear that the U.S. will act to protect American personnel.

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"This action in self-defense to do what's necessary to do to prevent further attacks, I think sends a very important and strong message. And I hope very much that it is received," he said. "I think we've demonstrated with the actions taken last night and actions taken previously, that the president is fully prepared to act and act appropriately and deliberately to protect us."

Two Iraqi militia officials told The Associated Press in Baghdad that four militiamen were killed in the airstrikes near the border with Syria. Both spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to give statements. They said the first strike hit a weapons storage facility inside Syrian territory, where the militiamen were killed. The second strike hit the border strip.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based group that closely monitors the Syrian conflict through activists on the ground, reported that at least seven Iraqi militiamen were killed in the airstrikes.

The Iran-backed Iraqi militia factions vowed revenge for the attack and said in a joint statement they would continue to target U.S. forces. "We ... will avenge the blood of our righteous martyrs against the perpetrators of this heinous crime and with God's help we will make the enemy taste the bitterness of revenge," they said.

The Popular Mobilization Forces, an Iraqi state-sanctioned umbrella of mostly Shiite militias — including those targeted by the U.S. strikes — said their men were on missions to prevent infiltration by the Islamic State group and denied the presence of weapons warehouses.

Iraq's military condemned the strikes as a "blatant and unacceptable violation of Iraqi sovereignty and national security." It called for avoiding escalation, but also rejected that Iraq be an "arena for settling accounts" — a reference to the U.S. and Iran. It represented rare condemnation by the Iraqi military of U.S. airstrikes.

In Iran, foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh accused the U.S. of creating instability in the region. "Definitely, what the U.S. is doing is disrupting the security of the region," he said on Monday.

U.S. military officials have grown increasingly alarmed over drone strikes targeting U.S. military bases in Iraq, which became more common since a U.S.-directed drone killed Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani near the Baghdad airport last year. Iraqi militia leader Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis was also killed in the attack. The strike drew the ire of mostly Shiite Iraqi lawmakers and prompted parliament to pass a nonbinding resolution to pressure the Iraqi government to oust foreign troops from the country.

Sunday's strikes mark the second time the Biden administration launched airstrikes along the Iraq-Syria border region. In February, the U.S. launched airstrikes against facilities in Syria, near the Iraqi border, that it said were used by Iranian-backed militia groups.

The Pentagon said those strikes were retaliation for a rocket attack in Iraq earlier that month that killed one civilian contractor and wounded a U.S. service member and other coalition troops.

At that time, Biden said Iran should view his decision to authorize U.S. airstrikes in Syria as a warning that it can expect consequences for its support of militia groups that threaten U.S. interests or personnel.

"You can't act with impunity. Be careful," Biden said when a reporter asked what message he had intended to send.

Biden taking bipartisan infrastructure deal on the road

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden will look to sell voters on the economic benefits of the \$973 billion infrastructure package while in Wisconsin on Tuesday, hoping to boost the bipartisan agreement that is held together in large part by the promise of millions of new jobs.

Biden will travel to La Crosse, population 52,000, and tour its public transit center, followed by a speech about the infrastructure package announced last week.

The president presented his message to Democratic donors on Monday that the agreement was a way for the United States to assert the principles of democracy and the economic might that can come from dramatic investments in the country's economic future.

"This infrastructure bill signals to the world that we can function, we can deliver," Biden said. "We can

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do significant things, show that America is back.”

White House officials issued an internal memo that highlights how the largest investment in transportation, water systems and services in nearly a century would boost growth. The memo notes that the total package is four times the size of the infrastructure investment made a dozen years ago in response to the Great Recession and the biggest since Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal in the 1930s.

It also emphasizes an analysis suggesting that 90% of the jobs generated by the spending could go to workers without college degrees, a key shift as a majority of net job gains before the pandemic went to college graduates.

“This is a blue-collar blueprint to rebuild America,” the memo says.

Potential economic gains were a shared incentive for the group of Democratic and Republican senators who agreed to the deal on Thursday. But the process briefly fell into disarray late last week as Biden suggested the deal would be held up until he also received a separate package for infrastructure, jobs and education that would be determined solely by Democrats through the budget reconciliation process.

Biden said Saturday that this was not a veto threat, and by Sunday the package appeared back on track.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Monday that Biden is “eager” for both bills to be approved by Congress and that the president is going to “work his heart out” to make it happen.

“The president intends to sign both pieces of legislation into law,” Psaki said at her daily briefing.

Approval of both bills by Congress remains a long haul with this summer’s initial votes expected in July. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell questioned the legislative process ahead and mounted fresh obstacles while speaking Monday in Kentucky.

McConnell said he has not yet decided whether he will support the bipartisan package, but he wants Biden to pressure House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer to say they will allow the bipartisan arrangement to pass without mandating that the much larger and broader follow-up bill be in place.

“I appreciate the president saying that he’s willing to deal with infrastructure separately, But he doesn’t control the Congress,” McConnell said at a press conference in Louisville.

The two bills had always been expected to move in tandem, and that is likely to continue as Biden drops his veto threat but reaches across the aisle for the nearly \$1 trillion bipartisan package as well as his own broader package. The Democratic leaders are pressing ahead on the broader bill, which includes Biden’s families and climate change proposals, as well as their own investments in Medicare, swelling to some \$6 trillion.

The prospect of additional economic gains might be a way to garner public support and soothe partisan tensions. Biden also faces pressure from Democrats such as New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who told NBC’s “Meet the Press” that the spending isn’t as huge as it might seem because the sums are spread out over multiple years.

The eight-page White House memo comes from Brian Deese, director of the National Economic Council, and senior adviser Anita Dunn. It indicates that the \$110 billion for roads and bridges would help relieve traffic and congestion that costs the economy over \$160 billion annually. The memo justifies the \$48.5 billion planned for public transit by citing studies that link light rail and buses to increased earnings and employment for workers. It defends the \$66 billion for repairs and upgrades for rail lines by saying that current delays and disruptions weigh on growth.

The bipartisan agreement also would help nurture the market for electric vehicles, improve broadband access, repair water lines and create resilience against damage from extreme weather events.

Meanwhile, the White House and Congress are pushing ahead on separate infrastructure legislation, a top priority of the administration that is shared by many lawmakers interested in securing federal funds for long-sought road, highway, bridge and other construction projects back home.

This week, the House is scheduled to vote on a highway, transit and water infrastructure bill that would invest up to \$715 billion over five years. It overlaps parts of the bipartisan agreement and could become a building block toward the Democrats’ broader package coming later this summer or fall.

The bill contains many of the priorities that Biden has set, including \$45 billion to replace lead water

service lines throughout the nation and \$4 billion for electric vehicle charging stations, as well as a big boost in spending for transportation programs focusing on repairing existing roads and bridges.

It also opens the door to nearly 1,500 requests from lawmakers that would fund specific projects back in their congressional districts, moving Congress a step closer toward a return to earmarked spending.

House to vote on bill launching probe of Jan. 6 insurrection

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new committee to investigate the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol would have 13 members and the power to subpoena witnesses, according to legislation released by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Monday. The House is expected to vote on the bill this week.

The effort comes after Senate Republicans blocked the formation of an independent, bipartisan commission to probe the attack, in which hundreds of former President Donald Trump's supporters violently broke into the Capitol and interrupted the certification of President Joe Biden's victory.

The new, partisan House panel would have eight members appointed by Pelosi and five appointed "after consultation with" Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy. A Pelosi aide said the speaker is considering including a Republican among her appointments, which would bring the likely partisan split to 7-6. The aide was granted anonymity to discuss her thinking.

Pelosi said in a statement that Jan. 6 was "one of the darkest days in our nation's history" and that the committee will seek the truth about it.

"The Select Committee will investigate and report upon the facts and causes of the attack and report recommendations for preventing any future assault," she said.

Many Republicans were concerned about such a partisan probe, since majority Democrats are likely to investigate Trump's role in the siege and the right wing groups that were present for it. Almost three dozen House Republicans voted to create an independent panel, which would have had an even partisan split among members. Seven Republicans in the Senate supported moving forward on that bill, but that was short of the 10 Senate Republicans who would be necessary to pass it.

As laid out in Pelosi's legislation, the new select committee would have subpoena power and no specific end date. The panel can issue interim reports as it conducts the probe.

Trump is not explicitly referenced in the legislation, which directs the select committee to investigate "facts, circumstances and causes relating to the January 6, 2021, domestic terrorist attack upon the United States Capitol Complex and relating to the interference with the peaceful transfer of power." The panel would also study "influencing factors that fomented such an attack on American representative democracy while engaged in a constitutional process."

The House passed the bill to form an independent commission last month, and Pelosi, D-Calif., said it was her preference to have an independent panel lead the inquiry. But she said last week that Congress could not wait any longer to begin a deeper look at the insurrection so she would form the select panel. She has not said who will lead it.

Still, Pelosi said that the select committee could be complementary to an independent panel, should one ever be formed, and that she is "hopeful there could be a commission at some point." Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has said he might hold a second vote, but there's no indication that any GOP votes have changed.

Many Republicans have made clear that they want to move on from the Jan. 6 attack, brushing aside the many unanswered questions about the insurrection, including how the government and law enforcement missed intelligence leading up to the rioting and the role of Trump before and during the insurrection.

Others in the GOP have gone further, with one suggesting the rioters looked like tourists and another insisting that a Trump supporter named Ashli Babbitt, who was shot and killed while trying to break into the House chamber, was "executed."

Two officers who battled the rioters, Metropolitan Police Officer Michael Fanone and Capitol Police Officer Harry Dunn, have been lobbying Republicans to support an independent commission and met with

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McCarthy on Friday. Afterward, they said they had asked McCarthy to denounce GOP comments downplaying the violence.

In the absence of an independent commission, Fanone said he asked McCarthy for a commitment not to put "the wrong people" on the new select panel and that McCarthy said he would take it seriously. McCarthy's office did not respond to requests for comment on either the meeting or the legislation to form the select committee.

The officers also asked McCarthy to denounce 21 Republicans who voted earlier this month against giving medals of honor to the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police to thank them for their service on Jan. 6. Dozens of those officers suffered injuries, including chemical burns, brain injuries and broken bones.

McCarthy, who voted for the measure, told them he would deal with those members privately.

Seven people died during and after the rioting, including Babbitt and three other Trump supporters who died of medical emergencies. Two police officers died by suicide in the days that followed, and a third officer, Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, collapsed and later died after engaging with the protesters. A medical examiner later determined he died of natural causes.

Trump Org lawyers make last pitch against prosecution

By TOM HAYS and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Lawyers for the Trump Organization met again Monday with prosecutors in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office in a last bid to forestall a potential indictment stemming from a long-running investigation into the former president's company.

Trump Organization lawyer Ron Fischetti told The Associated Press the meeting came as a grand jury nears a vote on an indictment this week following a more than two-year investigation into Trump's business affairs.

He said prosecutors have told him Trump himself will not be charged at this time — "at least not with what's coming down this week" — but added the investigation is continuing.

"There is no indictment coming down this week against the former president," Fischetti said in a telephone interview Monday. "I can't say he's out of the woods yet completely."

The Manhattan district attorney's office declined to comment.

The former Republican president, however, issued a blistering statement in which he derided District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr.'s office as "rude, nasty, and totally biased in the way they are treating lawyers, representatives, and some of the wonderful long-term employees and people within the Trump Organization."

"After hundreds of subpoenas, over 3 million pages of documents, 4 years of searching, dozens and dozens of interviews, and millions of dollars of taxpayer funds wasted, they continue to be 'in search of a crime,'" Trump alleged, calling the investigation a "continuation of the greatest Witch Hunt of all time."

In recent months, investigators in Vance's office have focused on fringe benefits the company gave to top executives, such as use of apartments, cars and school tuition.

Investigators have scrutinized Trump's tax records, subpoenaed documents and interviewed witnesses, including Trump insiders and company executives.

Another person familiar with the investigation confirmed there were communications between defense lawyers and prosecutors on Monday. The person declined to give any details of the talks.

Such final exchanges are considered formalities that rarely change the course of an investigation in a late stage, suggesting the grand jury is near a vote.

The person was not authorized to discuss the case and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Fischetti, who did not attend Monday's meeting, said the gathering had been arranged "for the Trump Organization — not Donald Trump himself."

"We're just waiting," Fischetti said, adding he expects to know this week whether charges will be brought.

The prospective charges this week, he said, "are limited to a couple of Trump Org employees who didn't

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declare taxes on fringe benefits" they received. The company itself also could be charged, he added.

Lawyers representing Donald Trump's company also met virtually with prosecutors for more than 90 minutes last Thursday.

It isn't illegal for a company to offer employees tuition help, lease them cars or let them use company-owned apartments, but such arrangements can be subject to income tax.

Fischetti has called the possibility of charges "absolutely outrageous" and politically motivated. He said it would be extremely unusual for prosecutors to seek criminal charges over unpaid tax on fringe benefits.

Some of the scrutiny has been focused on longtime Trump Organization chief financial officer Allen Weisselberg.

Vance's investigation of Weisselberg, 73, stemmed in part from questions about his son's use of a Trump apartment at little or no cost, cars leased for the family and tuition payments made to a school attended by Weisselberg's grandchildren.

Weisselberg's attorney, Mary Mulligan, has declined to comment.

In addition to fringe benefits, prosecutors have looked into whether the Trump Organization lied about the value of real estate holdings to lower taxes or to obtain bank loans or insurance policies on favorable terms. They have also looked into the company's role in paying hush money to two women who say Trump had affairs with them, accusations Trump has denied.

Amish put faith in God's will and herd immunity over vaccine

By JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

When health care leaders in the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch country began laying out a strategy to distribute COVID-19 vaccines, they knew it would be a tough sell with the Amish, who tend to be wary of preventive shots and government intervention.

Early on, they posted flyers at farm supply stores and at auctions where the Amish sell handmade furniture and quilts. They sought advice from members of the deeply religious and conservative sect, who told them not to be pushy. And they asked three newspapers widely read by the Amish to publish ads promoting the vaccine. Two refused.

By May, two rural vaccination clinics had opened at a fire station and a social services center, both familiar places to the Amish in Lancaster County. During the first six weeks, 400 people showed up. Only 12 were Amish.

The vaccination drive is lagging far behind in many Amish communities across the U.S. following a wave of virus outbreaks that swept through their churches and homes during the past year. In Ohio's Holmes County, home to the nation's largest concentration of Amish, just 14% of the county's overall population is fully vaccinated.

While their religious beliefs don't forbid them to get vaccines, the Amish are generally less likely to be vaccinated for preventable diseases such as measles and whooping cough. Though vaccine acceptance varies by church district, the Amish often rely on family tradition and advice from church leaders, and a core part of their Christian faith is accepting God's will in times of illness or death.

Many think they don't need the COVID-19 vaccine now because they've already gotten sick and believe their communities have reached herd immunity, according to health care providers in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Indiana, home to nearly two-thirds of the estimated 345,000 Amish in the U.S.

"That's the No. 1 reason we hear," said Alice Yoder, executive director of community health at Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health, a network of hospitals and clinics.

Experts say the low vaccination rates are a reflection of both the nature of the Amish and the general vaccine hesitancy found in many rural parts of the country.

Because many Amish work and shop alongside their neighbors and hire them as drivers, they hear the skepticism, the worries about side effects and the misinformation surrounding the vaccine from the "English," or non-Amish, world around them even though they shun most modern conveniences.

"They're not getting that from the media. They're not watching TV or reading it on the internet. They're getting it from their English neighbors," said Donald Kraybill, a leading expert on the Amish. "In many

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ways, they are simply reflecting rural America and the same attitudes.”

In one case, an anti-vaccine group took out a full-page newspaper ad showing a smashed buggy with the words “Vaccines can have unintended consequences.”

Public health officials trying to combat the confusion and hesitancy have put up billboards where the Amish travel by horse and buggy, sent letters to bishops and offered to take the vaccines into their homes and workplaces, all without much success.

“It’s not due to lack of effort,” said Michael Derr, the health commissioner in Holmes County, Ohio. “But this thing is so politically charged.”

Some health clinics that serve the Amish are hesitant to push the issue for fear of driving them away from getting blood pressure checks and routine exams.

One local business and the organizers of a community event told the health department in Holmes County that it would no longer be welcome if it brought the vaccine to them, Derr said.

Staff members at the Parochial Medical Center, which serves the Amish and Mennonites in Pennsylvania’s Lancaster County, encourage patients to get the vaccine, but many have little fear of the virus, said Allen Hoover, the clinic’s administrator.

“Most of them listen and are respectful, but you can tell before you’re finished that they’ve already made up their mind,” he said.

The clinic, he said, hardly sees any virus cases now after dealing with as many as five a day last fall. “I would suspect we’ve gained some kind of immunity. I know that’s up for debate, but I think that’s why we’re seeing only a spattering right now,” Hoover said.

Relying on possible herd immunity when little testing has taken place among the Amish is risky, said Esther Chernak, director of the Center for Public Health Readiness and Communication at Drexel University in Philadelphia.

“It’s not a community living on an island, not interacting with other people,” she said. “They don’t have zero interaction with the outside world, so they’re still exposed.”

Also, how long someone remains immune after having COVID-19 isn’t clear, and many experts advise getting vaccinated because it brings a higher level of protection.

Close to 180 million Americans — 54% of the population — have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Experts say low vaccination rates could allow the virus to mutate and make a comeback.

During the first months of the pandemic, the Amish followed social distancing guidelines and stopped gathering for church and funerals, said Steven Nolt, a scholar at the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania.

But when non-Amish neighbors and local elected officials began pushing back against state and federal mandates, they resumed the gatherings, he said. What followed was a surge of outbreaks last summer, Nolt said.

Most now say they have already had the virus and don’t see a need to get vaccinated, said Mark Raber, who is Amish and a member of a settlement in Daviess County, Indiana, which has one of the state’s lowest vaccination rates.

“As long as everything stays the same, I don’t think I’ll get it,” he said.

Changing those opinions will require building trusting relationships with the Amish, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a report looking at outbreaks in those communities last year.

What won’t work, health care providers say, is bombarding the Amish with statistics and vaccine lotteries because of their general mistrust and rejection of government help. The Amish don’t accept Social Security benefits.

Trevor Thain, who owns Topeka Pharmacy in northern Indiana, where there are 25,000 Amish, worked with the CDC on bridging communication gaps in LaGrange County, where just 18% of all residents are fully vaccinated.

Since the vaccine became available, they’ve immunized 4,200 people, perhaps only 20 of them Amish, he said.

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A few weeks ago he put out flyers offering private appointments or doses dispensed inside homes. Only a few Amish people responded, Thain said, including one who came with a request: "Don't tell my family."

Welcome back, Wimbledon: Slam returns to rain, fans, upsets

By CHRIS LEHOURITES AP Sports Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Shortly after 1:30 p.m. on Monday, two years minus two weeks from the last time a meaningful match was played at Wimbledon, a voice blared over the loudspeakers: "Good afternoon and welcome to Centre Court."

Then came an announcement welcoming "special guests in the Royal Box," including a woman who developed one of the COVID-19 vaccines, prompting the first of the day's several standing ovations from spectators. And, eventually, came the words, "We've waited awhile for this," before the introduction of Novak Djokovic and the opponent he would go on to beat 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 with the help of 25 aces, Jack Draper, a 19-year-old wild-card entry from England ranked 253rd.

It was, in some respects, as if Wimbledon had never left, as if the All England Club hadn't decided to cancel the oldest Grand Slam tournament for the first time since World War II a year ago because of the pandemic.

There was raucous cheering from the stands — even before two-time champion Andy Murray played, and won, his first singles match at the place in four years. There was rain — so much rain that play on courts without a roof was delayed more than 4 1/2 hours, 11 matches were suspended in progress because of darkness and more than 20 others were postponed until Tuesday.

And there was tennis — and reminders of how sports are unpredictable and can bring such joy and disappointment. A pair of Americans picked up the most newsworthy victories: Frances Tiafoe eliminated French Open runner-up and No. 3 seed Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 6-4, 6-3, while 2017 U.S. Open champion Sloane Stephens beat two-time Wimbledon winner and No. 10 seed Petra Kvitova 6-3, 6-4.

Tiafoe had been 0-11 against opponents ranked in the Top 5.

"That guy is special. He's going to do a lot of great things, win a ton of Grand Slams," Tiafoe said about Tsitsipas, then broke into a wide smile and added: "But not today."

Murray, whose title at 2013 made him the first British man to win Wimbledon in 77 years, has been working his way back after a pair of hip operations and he tested the locals' patience during a topsy-turvy 6-4, 6-3, 5-7, 6-3 win over No. 24 seed Nikoloz Basilashvili at Centre Court.

"Amazing reception when I came out. Great atmosphere the whole match," Murray told the crowd after blowing a 5-0 lead and two match points in the third set. "So thanks for that."

Tiafoe and Stephens are among 34 Americans in the singles brackets (21 women, 13 men), the most at Wimbledon since there were 35 in 1998. Others who won on Day 1 included qualifier Denis Kudla, who knocked off No. 30 Alejandro Davidovich Fokina 5-7, 6-4, 7-6 (4), 6-3, 6-3; 2020 Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin, 2017 U.S. Open runner-up Madison Keys, Danielle Collins and Lauren Davis.

Other seeded men who lost: No. 19 Jannik Sinner of Italy and No. 27 Reilly Opelka of the U.S.

"Not playing last year was very, very disappointing, and it feels a little bit weird that there was such a big gap in between grass seasons. But to have a crowd and the size of the crowd that we had today — I, at one point, felt like it was back to normal," said No. 23 Keys, who beat British qualifier Katie Swan 6-3, 6-4 without facing a break point.

"It was just very, very nice to be back in a situation where you felt an amazing crowd," Keys said, "even if they were cheering, obviously, for my opponent and wanted her to win. It was just so nice to have energy and people who are excited to watch tennis."

The coronavirus still looms over the event.

Fans must wear masks around the grounds (although not while watching a match) and show proof they either are fully vaccinated or had COVID-19 in the past six months. All players and their entourages have to stay at one London hotel, where they take regular tests and are subject to contact tracing.

Britain's only seeded woman in singles, No. 27 Johanna Konta, was forced to withdraw Sunday night

because she must self-isolate for 10 days after one of her team members tested positive for COVID-19. The top-seeded Djokovic got off to a slow start in his bid for a record-tying 20th Grand Slam title and sixth at Wimbledon.

It would have been so easy — so understandable, even — for Draper to be fazed by the moment and the opponent, the setting and the stakes, right away. This was his Grand Slam main draw debut, after all. But he stole the first break to lead 2-1 and wound up taking that set by saving 7 of 7 break points.

Djokovic took two tumbles onto his backside in the first set, losing his footing on the slick grass behind the baseline. This was his first competitive singles match on the surface since edging Roger Federer in the 2019 final.

“To be honest, I don’t recall falling this many times on the court,” Djokovic said with a laugh. “Well, quite slippery, whether it’s because the roof is closed or it was raining quite a lot the last few days, I don’t know.”

A 125 mph service winner gave Draper the opening set after 37 minutes. He shook his racket, then pumped his right fist.

The crowd roared.

And two hours later, it was all over.

Djokovic cleaned up his act considerably, going from just six winners and nine unforced errors in the opening set to a combined 41 winners and 15 unforced errors the rest of the way.

“I’m really glad,” he said, speaking for many, “that the sport is back.”

Make-A-Wish clarifies policy after confusion on vaccinations

By GLENN GAMBOA AP Business Writer

The Make-A-Wish Foundation is disputing what it calls a “misinformation” campaign about whether children who aren’t vaccinated against COVID-19 will be eligible to have their wishes granted.

The foundation says these children are in fact still eligible.

An edited video of Make-A-Wish Foundation CEO Richard Davis that went viral on social media over the weekend caused a stir by seeming to suggest that only vaccinated children would be eligible to have wishes granted. Stars like actor Rob Schneider and numerous donors declared that if the foundation had decided not to grant wishes to unvaccinated children, they would no longer support it.

The confusion arose from the fact that the video clip that went viral cuts off before Davis had finished his explanation in the two-minute, 22-second video about which children would be eligible. The outbreak of COVID-19 led Make-A-Wish to postpone granting some wishes — for all children, whether vaccinated for not — that might put them at risk.

The video, emailed on June 9, was meant to inform families of Make-A-Wish children and foundation volunteers that certain types of wishes, including those involving air travel or large crowds, would resume being granted again in September and that planning to fulfill them could begin. But certain wishes for unvaccinated children that are currently deemed to be risky will continue to be on hold until medical guidance changes.

“We respect everyone’s freedom of choice,” Davis says in the full video, in which he also acknowledges that some children may be too young or too ill to be vaccinated. “We can’t wait until Sept. 15, when we can expand the types of life-changing wishes we can grant.”

To clarify the “misinformation and falsehoods on social media and in some media outlets,” the foundation issued a simpler statement:

“Make-A-Wish has not, does not and will not deny wishes to children who are not vaccinated... Make-A-Wish will continue to grant wishes to children who are not vaccinated.”

The foundation said it had expected some backlash about its decision to delay granting wishes for some Make-A-Wish children. But it made that choice because it “focused on listening to medical experts and doing what was right and in the best interest of the health and safety of all our wish families.”

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the foundation has granted over 6,500 wishes to children and their families, regardless of vaccination status.

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The foundation also said it continues to work with Make-A-Wish kids to reimagine their wishes, stressing that any child fighting a critical illness is eligible for a wish.

Nor will a child's vaccination status be taken into account "in time-sensitive situations involving an end-of-life diagnosis," where a special process will be used to fulfill the child's wish.

EXPLAINER: 'Heat dome' atop Northwest sends temps soaring

By CHRIS GRYGIEL Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Portland, Oregon, broke its all-time heat record on Saturday. It then broke it again on Sunday, registering a temperature of 112 degrees Fahrenheit (44 Celsius) — besting the record set a day earlier by 4 degrees.

Seattle, known nationally for its mild weather and rainy days, hit 104 F (40 C) on Sunday. The National Weather Service said that was an all-time record for the city and was the first time the area recorded two consecutive triple digit days since records began being kept in 1894.

And it was predicted that temperatures would be even hotter on Monday. What is going on?

The Pacific Northwest is experiencing a days-long heat wave that forecasters have called "historic," dangerous and a harbinger of things to come as climate change affects global weather patterns.

WHY IS IT SO HOT IN THE NORTHWEST NOW?

The temperatures started rising Friday and aren't expected to cool until Tuesday, with the mercury registering more than 30 degrees higher than normal in many areas of Washington and Oregon. The cause is a "heat dome" that has affected parts of the West for about two weeks. Justin Pullin, a weather service meteorologist in Seattle, said a strong ridge of high pressure is causing temperatures more associated with Arizona than the Northwest.

"The heat that we've experienced over the last couple days ... is highly unusual and has been historic. We're talking all time temperature records that are being broken, in some cases by 5, 10 degrees," Pullin said.

ARE THE SCORCHING TEMPERATURES CAUSING PROBLEMS?

Normal routines have been disrupted as governments and private businesses react to the unprecedented weather and try to keep people cool. In Eugene, Oregon, the U.S. track and field trials were halted Sunday afternoon and fans were asked to evacuate the stadium due to extreme heat.

Officials in Portland, Oregon, shut down light rail and street cars until Tuesday due to high temperatures and some districts halted summer school bus service and people braced for possibly the hottest day of the scorcher. And the city's Parks & Recreation department closed outdoor pools Monday, saying it was too hot and dangerous for employees to be outside.

In Seattle, the school district on Monday canceled summer meal service at schools "to protect our students, families, and staff" so people wouldn't be venturing out at mid-day.

And there were persistent worries about wildfires in the region that was already dealing with an epic drought. Fire crews were positioned ahead of time in areas where fire risk was high and counties and cities across the region enacted burn bans — in some cases even temporarily prohibiting personal fireworks for the July 4 holiday weekend.

HOW HAVE PEOPLE BEEN BEATING THE HEAT?

Cooling centers were opened in public libraries, community buildings, malls and elsewhere so people could find indoor spaces with air conditioning. The lack of air conditioning is a concern in Seattle, where only 44% of households have indoor cooling, according to U.S. Census figures. That number has actually jumped lately, as only a few years ago authorities estimated just a third of homes in the Northwest's largest city had air conditioning.

One advantage that some areas of the Northwest have is access to cooling water — with a large river running through Portland and Seattle being located between an ocean inlet and a large fresh water lake.

People have flocked to beaches and coastal areas, where temperatures have been high but generally milder than more interior parts of the region.

WHEN WILL IT END?

People in Seattle generally look forecasts with highs in the mid-80s and cringe. But after temperatures well into the 100s in the region for days it will seem like relief as forecasters say cooler marine air will start moderating temperatures on Tuesday.

"We have one more day of extreme heat across the region before temperatures gradually cool down," said Pullin, the meteorologist.

Driven by pandemic, Venezuelans uproot again to come to US

By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

DEL RIO, Texas (AP) — Marianela Rojas huddles in prayer with her fellow migrants, a tearful respite after trudging across a slow-flowing stretch of the Rio Grande and nearly collapsing onto someone's backyard lawn, where, seconds before, she stepped on American soil for the first time.

"I won't say it again," interrupts a U.S. Border Patrol agent, giving orders in Spanish for Rojas and a dozen others to get into an idling detention van. "Only passports and money in your hands. Everything else — earrings, chains, rings, watches — in your backpacks. Hats and shoelaces too."

It's a frequent scene across the U.S.-Mexico border at a time of swelling migration. But these aren't farmers and low-wage workers from Mexico or Central America, who make up the bulk of those crossing. They're bankers, doctors and engineers from Venezuela, and they're arriving in record numbers as they flee turmoil in the country with the world's largest oil reserves and pandemic-induced pain across South America.

Two days after Rojas crossed, she left detention and rushed to catch a bus out of the Texas town of Del Rio. Between phone calls to loved ones who didn't know where she was, the 54-year-old recounted fleeing hardship in Venezuela a few years ago, leaving a paid-off home and once-solid career as an elementary school teacher for a fresh start in Ecuador.

But when the little work she found cleaning houses dried up, she decided to uproot again — this time without her children.

"It's over, it's all over," she said into the phone recently, crying as her toddler grandson appeared shirtless on screen. "Everything was perfect. I didn't stop moving for one second."

Last month, 7,484 Venezuelans were encountered by Border Patrol agents along the U.S.-Mexico border — more than all 14 years for which records exist.

The surprise increase has drawn comparisons to the midcentury influx of Cubans fleeing Fidel Castro's communist rule. It's also a harbinger of a new type of migration that has caught the Biden administration off guard: pandemic refugees.

Many of the nearly 17,306 Venezuelans who have crossed the southern border illegally since January had been living for years in other South American countries, part of an exodus of nearly 6 million Venezuelans since President Nicolás Maduro took power in 2013.

While some are government opponents fearing harassment and jailing, the vast majority are escaping long-running economic devastation marked by blackouts and shortages of food and medicine.

With the pandemic still raging in many parts of South America, they have had to relocate again. Increasingly, they're being joined at the U.S. border by people from the countries they initially fled to — even larger numbers of Ecuadorians and Brazilians have arrived this year — as well as far-flung nations hit hard by the virus, like India and Uzbekistan.

U.S. government data shows that 42% of all families encountered along the border in May hailed from places other than Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras — the traditional drivers of migratory trends. That compares with just 8% during the last sharp increase in migration in 2019. The Border Patrol recorded more than 180,000 encounters in May, a two-decade high that includes migrants' repeated attempts to cross.

Compared with other migrants, Venezuelans garner certain privileges — a reflection of their firmer financial standing, higher education levels and U.S. policies that have failed to remove Maduro but nonetheless

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made deportation all but impossible.

The vast majority enter the U.S. near Del Rio, a town of 35,000 people, and they don't try to evade detention but rather turn themselves in to Border Patrol agents to seek asylum.

Like many of the dozens of Venezuelans The Associated Press spoke to this month in Del Rio, 27-year-old Lis Briceno had already migrated once before. After graduating with a degree in petroleum engineering, she couldn't get hired in the oil fields near her hometown of Maracaibo without declaring her loyalty to Venezuela's socialist leadership. So she moved to Chile a few years ago, finding work with a technology company.

But as anti-government unrest and the pandemic tanked Chile's economy, sales plunged and her company shuttered.

Briceno sold what she could — a refrigerator, a telephone, her bed — to raise the \$4,000 needed for her journey to the U.S. She filled a backpack and set out with a heart lock amulet she got from a friend to ward off evil spirits.

"I always thought I'd come here on vacation, to visit the places you see in the movies," Briceno said. "But doing this? Never."

While Central Americans and others can spend months trekking through the jungle, stowing away on freight trains and sleeping in makeshift camps run by cartels on their way north, most Venezuelans reach the U.S. in as little as four days.

"This is a journey they're definitely prepared for from a financial standpoint," said Tiffany Burrow, who runs the Val Verde Border Humanitarian Coalition's shelter in Del Rio, where migrants can eat, clean up and buy bus tickets to Miami, Houston and other cities with large Venezuelan communities.

They first fly to Mexico City or Cancun, where foreign visitors are down sharply but nearly 45,000 Venezuelans arrived in the first four months of 2021. Smugglers promoting themselves as "travel agencies" have cropped up on Facebook, claiming to offer hassle-free transport to the U.S. in exchange for about \$3,000.

"We're doing things the way they do things here — under the table," a smuggler said in a voice message a migrant shared with the AP. "You'll never be alone. Someone will always be with you."

The steep price includes a guided sendoff from Ciudad Acuna, where the bulk of Venezuelans cross the Rio Grande. The hardscrabble town a few hundred wet steps from Del Rio is attractive to both smugglers and migrants with deeper pockets because it had been largely spared the violence seen elsewhere on the border.

"If you're a smuggler in the business of moving a commodity — because that's how they view money, guns, people, drugs and everything they move, as a product — then you want to move it through the safest area possible charging the highest price," said Austin L. Skero II, chief of the U.S. Border Patrol's Del Rio sector.

But the number of smugglers caught with weapons has recently increased in the area, and agents who normally hunt down criminals are tied up processing migrants.

The uptick in migrants crossing is "purely a diversion tactic used by the cartels" to carry out crime, Skero said as a group of Haitians carrying young children emerged from a thicket of tall carrizo cane on the riverbank.

Once in the U.S., Venezuelans tend to fare better than other groups. In March, Biden granted Temporary Protected Status to an estimated 320,000 Venezuelans. The designation allows people coming from countries ravaged by war or disaster to work legally in the U.S. and gives protection from deportation.

While new arrivals don't qualify, Venezuelans requesting asylum — as almost all do — tend to succeed, partly because the U.S. government corroborates reports of political repression. Only 26% of asylum requests from Venezuelans have been denied this year, compared with an 80% rejection rate for asylum-seekers from poorer, violence-plagued countries in Central America, according to Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse.

"I can write their asylum requests almost by heart," said Jodi Goodwin, an immigration attorney in Harlingen, Texas, who has represented over 100 Venezuelans. "These are higher-educated people who can

advocate for themselves and tell their story in a chronological, clean way that judges are accustomed to thinking.”

Even Venezuelans facing deportation have hope. The Trump administration broke diplomatic relations with Maduro when it recognized Juan Guaidó as Venezuela’s rightful leader in 2019. Air travel is suspended, even charter flights, making removal next to impossible.

Meanwhile, as the migrants leave Del Rio to reconnect with loved ones in the U.S., they are confident that with sacrifice and hard work, they’ll get an opportunity denied them back home.

Briceno said that if she had stayed in Venezuela, she would earn the equivalent of \$50 a month — barely enough to scrape by.

“The truth is,” says Briceno, hustling to catch a bus to Houston where her boyfriend landed a well-paying oil industry job, “it’s better to wash toilets here than being an engineer over there.”

US warns that Islamic State extremists still a world threat

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

ROME (AP) — As the U.S. works on its military withdrawal from Afghanistan, members of the global coalition fighting the Islamic State group met Monday to chart future steps against the extremist group.

The meeting came just a day after the U.S. launched airstrikes against Iran-backed militias near the Iraq-Syria border

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio co-chaired the gathering of senior officials from the seven-year-old, 83-member bloc. Participants were taking stock of current efforts to ensure the complete defeat of IS, whose remnants still pose a threat in Iraq and Syria and have shown signs of surging in parts of Africa.

Amid significant other international priorities, including taming the coronavirus pandemic and stepping up the fight against climate change, the coalition is hoping to stabilize areas liberated from IS, repatriate and hold foreign fighters accountable for their actions and combat extremist messaging.

Blinken and Di Maio urged representatives of the 77 other countries and five organizations that make up the coalition not to drop their guard.

“We must step up the action taken by the coalition, increasing the areas in which we can operate,” said Di Maio.

Outside of Iraq and Syria, he said there was an “alarming” surge in IS activity, particularly in the Sahel, Mozambique and the Horn of Africa. He called for the coalition to create a special mechanism to deal with the threat in Africa.

Blinken noted that despite their defeat, IS elements in Iraq and Syria “still aspire to conduct large-scale attacks.”

“Together, we must stay as committed to our stabilization goals as we did to our military campaign that resulted in victory on the battlefield,” he said.

Blinken announced a new U.S. contribution of \$436 million to assist displaced people in Syria and surrounding countries and called for a new effort to repatriate — and rehabilitate or prosecute — some 10,000 IS fighters who remain imprisoned by the Syrian Defense Forces.

“This situation is simply untenable,” Blinken said. “It just can’t persist indefinitely.” However, no countries present made any new commitment to repatriating their citizens and it was unclear if the number of detainees could be reduced in any significant way in the near-term.

Blinken also announced sanctions against Ousmane Illiassou Djibo, a native of Niger, who is a key leader of the Islamic State affiliate in the greater Sahara. Djibo was designated a global terrorist, meaning that any of his U.S. assets are frozen and Americans are barred from any transactions with him.

In addition to the meeting on IS, foreign ministers of countries concerned about the broader conflict in Syria met in Rome ahead of a critical U.N. vote on whether to maintain a humanitarian aid corridor from Turkey. Russia has resisted reauthorizing the channel amid stalled peace talks between the Syrian government and rebel groups.

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Two senior U.S. officials said Blinken told the Syria conference that the U.S. believes the corridor must be reauthorized and expanded to prevent more deaths. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to publicly discuss the private diplomatic conversations, said Blinken made clear that any U.S.-Russia cooperation on Syria would be dependent on Moscow agreeing to the extension. Russia, however, wasn't present at the meeting.

Last week, the U.N. special envoy for Syria, Geir Pederson, said there were worrying signs that the Islamic State may be getting stronger in the country and called for a boost in cooperation to counter it. Pederson has also joined calls for new international talks on ending Syria's civil war.

Since the Syrian conflict erupted in March 2011, numerous high-level gatherings aimed at ending the fighting and guiding the country to a political transition have failed. The U.N., U.S., Russia and many other countries support a 2015 Security Council resolution endorsing a road map to peace in Syria that calls for a new constitution followed by U.N.-supervised elections.

Blinken, who also met with Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi and President Sergio Mattarella on Monday, hailed the state of U.S.-European relations, noting that Italy, France and Germany — the three countries he visited on his current European tour — are the only members of NATO, the Group of Seven and the European Union.

"We share a deep commitment to promoting democracy and human rights," he said. "We see the same big challenges on the horizon. And we recognize that we can't tackle them alone."

Blinken and Di Maio downplayed differences between the U.S. and Italy over China, saying there was an increasing awareness of the complexities and dangers of dealing with Beijing.

At landmark US Hindu temple, a timely rite of rejuvenation

By PETER SMITH Associated Press

PENN HILLS, Pa. (AP) — When throngs gathered to rededicate the oldest major Hindu temple in the United States, there was poignance -- prayers for continued recovery from the pandemic that struck many loved ones in India -- and the elation of coming together after more than a year of restrictions.

And there was joy.

Shouts of the divine name "Govinda!" rose Sunday from the crowd of worshippers at the Sri Venkateswara Temple, atop a steep hill just east of Pittsburgh. Dressed in festive saris and other traditional clothing, they gazed up toward a gopuram — an ornamented temple tower whose white, newly restored facade gleamed brilliantly in the mid-day sun.

High above, priests stood on scaffolding and lifted ceremonial urns, pouring holy waters onto golden spires atop the gopuram.

They repeated the ritual on three smaller towers at the center of the temple. There were drumbeats and the horn-like fanfares of a nathaswaram, a traditional Indian reed instrument, and floral petals soon came wafting down on the devotees from a helicopter overhead.

Known as Maha Kumbhabhishekam, a reference to the sprinkling of holy water from ceremonial urns, the festival is traditionally held at Hindu temples once every 12 years to reharmonize and boost the spiritual energies of the temple and its deities.

Several hundred devotees from surrounding states arrived throughout Sunday, culminating five days of prayers, chants and other rituals at outdoor fire altars. More than 20 priests took part, wearing yellow or saffron vestments around their waists; most were visiting from other North American temples.

The Sri Venkateswara Temple is much smaller than its massive prototype, a temple by the same name in the southern Indian city of Tirupati. Still, this Pittsburgh suburb has become a pilgrimage destination for Hindus throughout North America and a landmark in the growing landscape of Hinduism in America. There are now hundreds of temples across the country, and about 1 percent of American adults now identify as Hindu, according to a 2019 Pew Research Center report.

Kalathur Raghu, one of the temple's founding members, recalled a much smaller ceremony on a chilly November day in 1976 to dedicate the new temple. "I think none of us expected to get to this level when we started," he said.

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The temple is dedicated to Venkateswara, considered an incarnation of Vishnu, a deity associated with protection and preservation who is also known by Govinda. The stone murti, or statue, of Venkateswara stands at the holiest spot in the temple. Images of other deities stand nearby, such as those of Lakshmi, goddess of prosperity, and Bhoodevi, goddess of the earth.

Devotees streamed into the temple Sunday afternoon to offer devotions to the deities at their newly rededicated shrines. There, priests chanted and bathed the statues in water, milk, honey and other traditional offerings, while devotees cupped their hands and received priests' blessings.

A Maha Kumbhabhishekam has both practical and spiritual significance.

The ceremony is typically held every 12 years because it is believed that over time, the spiritual energies at a temple need to be ceremonially reharmonized. (In the earlier years of the Sri Venkateswara Temple, the intervals between ceremonies were longer than 12 years.)

On a practical level, the temple is temporarily deconsecrated in the weeks leading up to the ceremony, enabling repairs in areas normally off-limits to all but priests. At the Sri Venkateswara Temple, contractors renovated everything from ventilation to weather-worn ornamentation.

Volunteers also prepared for months. In days before the festival, women in saris wove garlands from thousands of mango leaves and carnations to decorate the tent and other festival areas.

"For one and a half years we were miserable" during the pandemic, said Nagamani Kasi, the temple's joint treasurer. "We didn't get to do anything. ... This is like going back to normal and enjoying it. It's good timing."

The festival also included a large distribution of food to a nearby health center, which followed several other donations for pandemic relief locally and to India.

The ceremonies began officially last Wednesday in a tent in the temple parking lot.

Priests took turns chanting from the Vedas, four ancient scriptural texts, and tending to sacred fires at seven altars. Smaller idols of Venkateswara and other deities stood in front.

The scent of incense and woodsmoke mingled with the humid summer air as the amplified voices of the priests rang out for hours each day. The priests chanted at times in unison, at other times in a call-and-response led by the clarion voice of Sri Venkateswara Temple head priest Samudrala Venkatacharyulu.

At various points, priests led devotees in processions around the tent.

The prayers are not just on behalf of the devotees but that the "whole universe be healthy and happy" and that the coronavirus "go away soon," said Venkatacharyulu. He arrived here in 1982 at age 21 from the mother temple in India for a two-year assignment, which has stretched to nearly 40 and counting, in what he calls the "America Tirupati."

Hinduism historically had a tiny following in the United States, but its American profile grew following a 1965 congressional act that opened the doors to more immigrants from Asia and elsewhere.

Pittsburgh drew Indian immigrants to engineering, medical and educational careers, and the Hindu community began to coalesce by the early 1970s, when a small group of children met in a theater basement to study classical Indian dance. "We would go and do a little prayer and then start the dance class," recalled the instructor, Mani Manoharan.

Community leaders concluded "we have to have a temple" and mobilized funds and other volunteer efforts, recalled Raghu. The Sri Venkateswara Temple in Tirupati contributed funds and sent craftsmen and priests to help.

The Pittsburgh region's Indian population was "not a large community at that time," Raghu said, "but we had the passion."

UN rights chief: Reparations needed for people facing racism

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The U.N. human rights chief, in a landmark report launched after the killing of George Floyd in the United States, is urging countries worldwide to do more to help end discrimination, violence and systemic racism against people of African descent and "make amends" to them — including through

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reparations.

The report from Michelle Bachelet, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, offers a sweeping look at the roots of centuries of mistreatment faced by Africans and people of African descent, notably from the transatlantic slave trade. It seeks a "transformative" approach to address its continued impact today.

The report, a year in the making, hopes to build on momentum around the recent, intensified scrutiny worldwide about the blight of racism and its impact on people of African descent as epitomized by the high-profile killings of unarmed Black people in the United States and elsewhere.

"There is today a momentous opportunity to achieve a turning point for racial equality and justice," the report said.

The report aims to speed up action by countries to end racial injustice; end impunity for rights violations by police; ensure that people of African descent and those who speak out against racism are heard; and face up to past wrongs through accountability and redress.

"I am calling on all states to stop denying — and start dismantling — racism; to end impunity and build trust; to listen to the voices of people of African descent; and to confront past legacies and deliver redress," Bachelet said in a video statement.

While broaching the issue of reparation in her most explicit way yet, Bachelet suggested that monetary compensation alone is not enough and would be part of an array of measures to help rectify or make up for the injustices.

"Reparations should not only be equated with financial compensation," she wrote, adding that it should include restitution, rehabilitation, acknowledgement of injustices, apologies, memorialization, educational reforms and "guarantees" that such injustices won't happen again.

Bachelet, a former president of Chile, hailed the efforts of advocacy groups like the Black Lives Matter movement, saying they helped provide "grassroots leadership through listening to communities" and that they should receive "funding, public recognition and support."

The U.N.-backed Human Rights Council commissioned the report during a special session last year following the murder of Floyd, a Black American who was killed by a white police officer in Minneapolis in May 2020. The officer, Derek Chauvin, was sentenced to 22-1/2 years in prison last week.

Protests erupted after excruciating bystander video showed how Floyd gasped repeatedly, "I can't breathe!" as onlookers yelled at Chauvin to stop pressing his knee on Floyd's neck.

The protests against Floyd's killing and the "momentous" verdict against Chauvin are a "seminal point in the fight against racism," the report said.

The report was based on discussions with over 340 people — mostly of African descent — and experts; more than 100 contributions in writing, including from governments; and review of public material, the rights office said.

It analyzed 190 deaths, mostly in the U.S., to show how law enforcement officers are rarely held accountable for rights violations and crimes against people of African descent, and it noted similar patterns of mistreatment by police across many countries.

The report ultimately aims to transform those opportunities into a more systemic response by governments to address racism, and not just in the United States — although the injustices and legacy of slavery, racism and violence faced by African Americans was clearly a major theme.

The report also laid out cases, concerns and the situation in roughly 60 countries including Belgium, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Colombia and France, among others.

"We could not find a single example of a state that has fully reckoned with the past or comprehensively accounted for the impacts of the lives of people of African descent today," Mona Rishmawi, who heads a unit on non-discrimination in Bachelet's office. "Our message, therefore, is that this situation is untenable."

Compensation should be considered at the "collective and the individual level," Rishmawi said, while adding that any such process "starts with acknowledgment" of past wrongs and "it's not one-size-fits-all." She said countries must look at their own pasts and practices to assess how to proceed.

Rishmawi said Bachelet's team found "a main part of the problem is that many people believe the misconceptions that the abolition of slavery, the end of the transatlantic trade and colonialism have removed

the racially discriminatory structures built by those practices.

"We found that this is not true," said Rishmawi, also denouncing an idea among some "associating blackness with criminality ... there is a need to address this."

The report called on countries to "make amends for centuries of violence and discrimination" such as through "formal acknowledgment and apologies, truth-telling processes and reparations in various forms."

It also decried the "dehumanization of people of African descent" that was "rooted in false social constructions of race" in the past to justify enslavement, racial stereotypes and harmful practices as well as tolerance for racial discrimination, inequality and violence.

People of African descent face inequalities and "stark socioeconomic and political marginalization" in many countries, the report said, including unfair access to education, health care, jobs, housing and clean water.

"We believe very strongly that we only touched the tip of the iceberg," Rishmawi said, referring to the report. "We really believe that there is a lot more work that needs to be done."

Excited tennis fans return to Wimbledon after 1-year break

By CHRIS LEHOURITES AP Sports Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Cheery fans, dreary skies.

Wimbledon is back after a one-year hiatus and the gray, overcast weather felt right at home at an event notorious for its rain delays.

"Perfect spectator weather," said Hannah Scott, a 26-year-old mask-wearing graduate student from London who was among the first fans to arrive on the grounds on Monday. "You're not going to burn in the sun."

Last year, because of the coronavirus pandemic, Wimbledon was canceled for the first time since World War II. It's going ahead this year but with a reduced capacity at the start. Organizers, however, are planning to have a full crowd of 15,000 at Centre Court for the men's and women's finals in two weeks.

The usual flower-filled grounds greeted the many fans that poured through gates early Monday. Stands selling food, drinks and souvenirs were staffed and doing business right from the start, while stewards were helping spectators find their way around.

The weather, of course, played its part, too, delaying the start of play for about two hours.

"One of the things that we thought long and hard about, worked hard to deliver, is a familiar feel about The Championships," All England Club chief executive Sally Bolton said. "So when people arrive at the gates this morning, as they are doing now, what they will see and feel is something very familiar — a Championships that we've all missed for two years."

Arlo Godwin, a 10-year-old boy from London, was soaking up the wet weather and everything else Wimbledon had to offer on his first visit to the club.

"I'm always excited," said Godwin, who was with his mother. "I was looking forward to it last year but it didn't happen. But I watched a lot of Roland Garros."

Godwin said his favorite player is Novak Djokovic, who was first up on Centre Court in the traditional spot for the defending men's champion, but he and his mother have tickets for Court No. 2.

"We're seeing (Andrey) Rublev and then Dan Evans, which is good because he's British. And Venus Williams, too," Godwin said with excitement in his voice.

Alas, a few hours later, the matches involving Evans and Williams were among those postponed until Tuesday because of the rain.

Helen Godwin was also visiting Wimbledon for the first time — after many failed attempts to in recent years to secure tickets online. When she finally got them, the fact Monday is a school day for Arlo didn't matter at all.

"A cheeky day off school," said Helen, a 48-year-old doctor who has worked to set up a vaccine clinic during the pandemic. "This is a much more educational day."

The walkways around the many courts at the All England Club are usually packed with people, as is the hill behind Court No. 1 where you can watch matches on a big-screen television — a place often called Murray Mount or, in years past, Henman Hill. This year the atmosphere is so far much tamer, with plenty

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of space for pedestrians to walk between courts.

And there's even some extra space in the gift shop, where Scott made her first stop after passing through the gates.

"I'm not supposed to be here. I got the ticket from a friend who couldn't make it," said Scott, who bought a Wimbledon towel as a consolation gift for her disappointed friend and then used some tennis lingo to get herself in the mood. "Order of play change."

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, June 29, the 180th day of 2021. There are 185 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 29, 1927, the first trans-Pacific airplane flight was completed as U.S. Army Air Corps Lt. Lester J. Maitland and Lt. Albert F. Hegenberger arrived at Wheeler Field in Hawaii aboard the Bird of Paradise, an Atlantic-Fokker C-2, after flying 2,400 miles from Oakland, California, in 25 hours, 50 minutes.

On this date:

In 1520, Montezuma II, the ninth and last emperor of the Aztecs, died in Tenochtitlan (tay-nohch-TEET'-lahn) under unclear circumstances (some say he was killed by his own subjects; others, by the Spanish).

In 1613, London's original Globe Theatre, where many of Shakespeare's plays were performed, was destroyed by a fire sparked by a cannon shot during a performance of "Henry VIII."

In 1767, Britain approved the Townshend Revenue Act, which imposed import duties on glass, paint, oil, lead, paper and tea shipped to the American colonies. (Colonists bitterly protested, prompting Parliament to repeal the duties — except for tea.)

In 1776, the Virginia state constitution was adopted, and Patrick Henry was made governor.

In 1946, authorities in British-ruled Palestine arrested more than 2,700 Jews in an attempt to stamp out extremists.

In 1956, film star Marilyn Monroe married playwright Arthur Miller in a civil ceremony in White Plains, New York. (The couple also wed in a Jewish ceremony on July 1; the marriage lasted 4 1/2 years).

In 1967, Jerusalem was re-unified as Israel removed barricades separating the Old City from the Israeli sector.

In 1970, the United States ended a two-month military offensive into Cambodia.

In 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a trio of death sentences, saying the way they had been imposed constituted cruel and unusual punishment. (The ruling prompted states to effectively impose a moratorium on executions until their capital punishment laws could be revised.)

In 1995, the space shuttle Atlantis and the Russian Mir space station linked in orbit, beginning a historic five-day voyage as a single ship. A department store in Seoul (sohl), South Korea, collapsed, killing at least 500 people. Actor Lana Turner died in Century City, California, at age 74.

In 2006, the Supreme Court ruled, 5-3, that President George W. Bush's plan to try Guantanamo Bay detainees in military tribunals violated U.S. and international law.

In 2009, disgraced financier Bernard Madoff received a 150-year sentence for his multibillion-dollar fraud. (Madoff died in prison in April 2021.)

Ten years ago: In the first ruling by a federal appeals court on President Barack Obama's health care overhaul, a panel in Cincinnati handed the administration a victory by agreeing that the government could require a minimum amount of insurance for Americans. Greece fended off bankruptcy as lawmakers backed austerity measures in the face of riots that left more than 100 injured.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama and the leaders of Mexico and Canada, meeting in Ottawa, pushed back forcefully against the isolationist and anti-immigrant sentiments roiling Britain and championed by GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump.

One year ago: New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said he had a plan to cut the city police department

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budget by \$1 billion; the announcement came a week after a "defund the police" protest became a full-blown occupation outside City Hall. (The City Council would approve a plan to shift \$1 billion from policing to education and social services in the coming year.) Two published studies revealed that at least 285 U.S. children had developed a serious inflammatory condition linked to the coronavirus. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell became the highest-ranking Republican in Congress to encourage Americans to wear a mask as protection against the coronavirus. A divided Supreme Court reasserted a commitment to abortion rights, striking down a Louisiana law requiring that doctors who perform abortions have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals. Former police officer Joseph James DeAngelo, the Golden State Killer who terrorized Northern California in the 1970s, pleaded guilty to 13 counts of murder in exchange for a life sentence instead of a possible death penalty. Comedy writer, actor and director Carl Reiner died at his California home at 98.

Today's Birthdays: Songwriter L. Russell Brown is 81. Singer-songwriter Garland Jeffreys is 78. Actor Gary Busey is 77. Comedian Richard Lewis is 74. Actor-turned-politican-turned-radio personality Fred Grandy is 73. Rock musician Ian Paice (Deep Purple) is 73. Singer Don Dokken (Dokken) is 68. Rock singer Colin Hay (Men At Work) is 68. Actor Maria Conchita Alonso is 66. Actor Kimberlin Brown (TV: "The Bold and the Beautiful") is 60. Actor Sharon Lawrence is 60. Actor Amanda Donohoe is 59. Actor Judith Hoag is 58. Violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter is 58. R&B singer Stedman Pearson (Five Star) is 57. Actor Kathleen Wilhoite is 57. Producer-writer Matthew Weiner is 56. Actor Melora Hardin is 54. Actor Brian D'Arcy James is 53. Actor Christina Chang is 50. Rap DJ and record producer DJ Shadow is 49. Actor Lance Barber is 48. Actor-dancer Will Kemp is 44. Actor Zuleikha Robinson is 44. Rock musician Sam Farrar is 43. Actor Luke Kirby is 43. Singer Nicole Scherzinger is 43. Comedian-writer Colin Jost (johst) is 39. Actor Lily Rabe is 39. R&B singer Aundrea Fimbres is 38. NBA forward Kawhi Leonard is 30. Actor Camila Mendes (TV: "Riverdale") is 27.