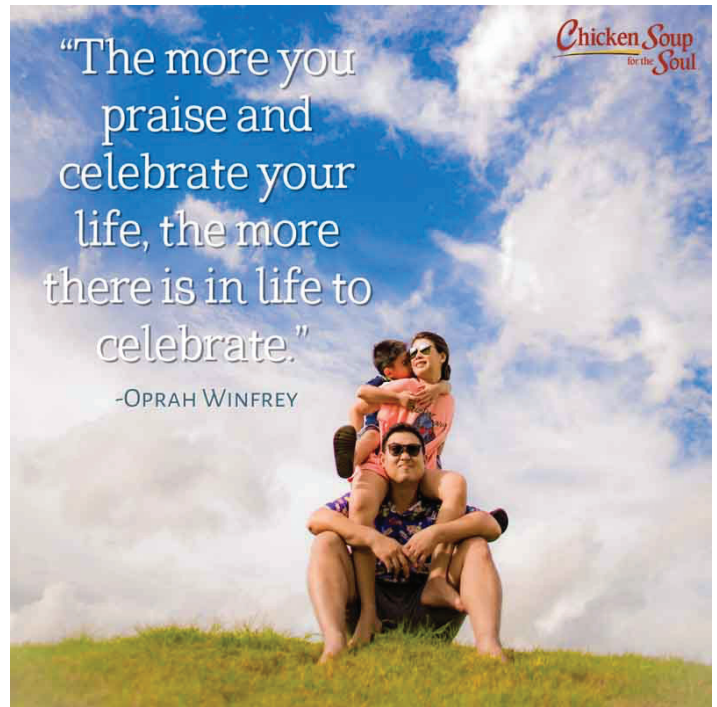


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**OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton  
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.



## Guest Column by The Community Coach

by Paula Jensen

### True or False | Collaborative leadership exists in my community?

I recently shared a big discovery in my community coaching work – the main thing holding back our vision of thriving rural communities is the absence of collaborative leadership.

Collaborative leaders are rare in our small towns because we think it will be faster and easier if we just do it ourselves. This was a hard realization for me. A couple decades ago, I was one of those individualistic leaders launching multiple new projects and events in my community, expecting others to get onboard with me and be as excited about my idea as I was.

This individualistic culture among leaders in rural communities works to serve our own needs over the needs of the community as a whole. In this culture-type, we are seen as autonomous, and our social networks tend to be influenced by the attitudes and preferences of only a few individuals. Then, we often sit back, complain, and wonder why no one

wants to get involved.

True collaboration can only develop when organizations and leaders recognize that none of us can truly succeed without the assets and innovation of others. So, how do you get started with a collaborative leadership model? Here are 13 characteristics, in no particular order, I've learned and practiced on my path to becoming a more collaborative leader.

**Gather your Crowd** - A collaborative leader engages a team-approach rather than a single-person approach to projects or initiatives. If you cannot find others passionate about the project, maybe it's not the right time to launch.

**Build Relationships** - A collaborative leader knows how to compromise and build trust between multiple constituencies.

**Share Leadership** - A collaborative leader distributes power, authority, and responsibility across the group and fosters shared commitments that everyone can agree live with.

**Work from Strengths** - A collaborative leader helps a team identify individual assets, then links and leverages those assets to create new opportunities.

**Breakdown the Silos** - A collaborative leader can build a network between a wide range of community partners that offers resources and support for the betterment of the community.

**Include Everyone** - A collaborative leader can exercise inclusion through the power of ideas, the power of communication, and the power of listening.

**Establish Communication** - A collaborative leader practices open and frequent communication by creating a system that engages the team and informs the community.

**Lead with Questions** - A collaborative leader can help diverse groups of people solve problems and resolve conflicts by asking powerful questions. Start with three magic words, "How might we...?"

**Embrace Innovation** - A collaborative leader is entrepreneurial (i.e., able to see and capitalize on opportunities to do good work and improve results) and is visionary about the future.

**Focused Conversations** - A collaborative leader has the ability to help the team discover what's possible through good questions that lead to balanced conversation, lots of listening, next steps and accountability.

**Adaptability is Key** - A collaborative leader understands change is inevitable and can react as circumstances shift and new opportunities emerge.

**Mobilize Action** - A collaborative leader explores with the team the potential barriers to success, then sets a plan of action with built-in accountability and success measures.

**Steward & Celebrate** - A collaborative leader recognizes that relationships, if not nurtured and celebrated,

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can deteriorate over time, and break down the success that has been achieved.

Collaboration is the essential ingredient for our survival and success as thriving rural communities. Don't be overwhelmed by the length of this list, just pick one or two. Start by building from your existing strengths, then through practice and implementation a collaborative leader will emerge. I encourage you to take this list, when you're ready, to the local coffee shop and start a conversation by asking, How would you answer this question -- True or False | Collaborative leadership exists in my community?

The Community Coach. Having a passion for community leadership and development is what drives Paula Jensen's personal and professional life. Paula resides in her hometown of Langford, South Dakota, population 318+. She serves as a Strategic Doing practitioner, grant writer and community coach with Dakota Resources based in Renner, South Dakota. Dakota Resources is a mission-driven 501c3 Community Development Financial Institution working to connect capital and capacity to empower rural communities. Contact her at [paula@dakotaresources.org](mailto:paula@dakotaresources.org).



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**City  
Council  
Meeting**

**Tuesday,  
July 6,  
2021  
7 p.m.**

**City Hall, 120 N Main**

## Weekly Vikings Roundup By Dominique Clare

It is already July, which means that the next month will have a Vikings preseason game. While preseason football is notoriously boring, it's always good to see the new additions early. With how many new additions the Vikings have it will actually be worth watching.

The last week has been relatively quiet for the Vikings. There are still talks of Harrison Smith getting extended, but the biggest news was Vikings popular announcer Paul Allen announcing that Everson Griffen really wants to play for the Vikings again.

While the Vikings should still sign a free agent or two, they are pretty set at defensive end.

This week, we continue our roster breakdown with the defensive line. This is one of the groups I am most excited about. This is going to be a special unit after being a liability for the team last season.

Danielle Hunter (DE)– There isn't any convincing that needs to be done on Danielle Hunters behalf. The only concern is if he can bounce back to his pre-injury form or not. All reports so far have indicated that Hunter looks good and is expected to have no limitations during camp.

Prior to missing the 2020 season with a neck injury, Danielle Hunter became the youngest player in NFL history to reach 50 sacks. He is a game changer and is enough by himself to completely change the Vikings defensive line. The good news for the Vikings, is that they are getting a lot more back than Danielle Hunter.

Michael Pierce (NT) – During the 2020 NFL Free Agency period, the Vikings brought in Michael Pierce, a big run stuffer from the Baltimore Ravens. Due to COVID-19, Pierce opted out of the 2020 NFL season.

The Vikings really missed Pierce's presence last season. If you don't believe me go watch the game where Alvin Kamara broke the NFL record for touchdowns in a single game. Their interior defensive line was an issue last season, but should be a strength this year.

Dalvin Tomlinson (DT) – Mike Zimmer clearly took his run defense failures personally last season. Despite getting Pierce back, the Vikings still brought in Dalvin Tomlinson. Like Pierce, Tomlinson is a big run stuffer who immediately upgraded the Vikings interior defensive line.

With Pierce and Tomlinson in the middle, it is going to be very hard for teams to run the football. Tomlinson comes to the Vikings from the New York Giants. Many Giants fans expressed how they were sad to see him go after he signed with the Vikings.

Stephen Weatherly (DE) – Weatherly spent his first 4 seasons with the Vikings. Last season he signed with the Carolina Panthers where he started a career high 9 games. Back with the Vikings he finds himself with the potential for a bigger role.

Many people think the Vikings need to upgrade this position prior to the season starting. I am actually okay with Weatherly. He only has to play slightly above average with Pierce, Tomlinson, and Hunter lined up next to him.

Sheldon Richardson (DT) – Sheldon Richardson is another person who spent time with the Vikings prior to last season and came back to the team. He is an interesting free agent addition to the team. He is good enough to be a starter but the Vikings are so good right now that he finds himself as a backup rotational pierce.

Richardson can also play defensive end, so the Vikings can use him or draw up some packages that utilize him more.

The rest – The Vikings drafted Patrick Jones (DE) this year and DJ Wonnum (DE) last year. Both those young players will provide amazing depth. Don't count either of them out for a starting position either. Wonnum showed some promise last season playing alongside as struggling unit.

Another defensive lineman I'm excited about is Jaylen Twyman. I feel he is going to be a special player. Unfortunately he was recently shot while visiting family in Washington D.C., but is expected to make a full recovery.

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## That's Life by Tony Bender

### Near death experiences on Independence Day

Every Independence Day I reminisce about celebrations past, the fireworks shot from a barge as viewed from Douglas Island with Juneau's mountains and cruise ships providing the backdrop, the most spectacular show I've ever seen. Then there were the fireworks in Frederick, SD, where we'd lean back on the hoods of cars at the ball field, slathered in bug spray, to watch a great small town display that drew hundreds from surrounding towns.

And there was the time at Uecker Yards when Teddy Uecker tried to burn down the City of Hettinger, ND. One of his rockets set the dry grass of the adjacent airport alight with a north wind that pushed the flames towards an unsuspecting city.

The late great Jim Howe, his daughter Maureen's boyfriend, and I immediately leaped the barbwire fence and tore off our shirts to beat the flames out. It was nip and tuck, yet while we were singeing chest hair and eyebrows, Ted cackled like Nero, because the man loves anarchy. Really, he should be locked up.

The next day, when I brought my stinky, sooty, smokey clothes to Carmel's Cleaners, Carmelo Bonomo lifted an eyebrow and shook his head. Apparently, I wasn't the first one in. He should have cleaned them for free, after all we'd saved the whole damn town.

But most prominent in my memories are the adventures I had in Frederick, driving around shooting bottle rockets into each other's car windows and the bottle rocket that went straight down a neighbor's chimney with an explosion that billowed black soot into the air.

There were the escapades with my friend Whitey, who I think got his nickname from his dad, Bob, our baseball coach, probably because he liked Whitey Ford, and also because Whitey had platinum—almost white—hair, and all of Whitey Ford's velocity and none of his control. It was always quiet in center field when Whitey pitched. There were two probable outcomes; he'd strike them out or plunk them in the ribs. Not even the most suicidal of batters crowded the plate. Whitey always won, though. He was a switch hitter like Mickey Mantle and a pretty good stick, too.

I still don't know for sure why we were friends. He had a mean streak, although the hit batsmen were by accident. He couldn't possibly have hit them on purpose. But about that mean streak, here's an example: One day Gare Bare's dad sent us to retrieve the geese which sometimes wandered too far to down to the Maple River that cut through their property. If you know anything about geese, you know they can't be herded, and they're mean as Whitey's fastball was. You had to catch and carry the geese one at a time. One day, Whitey offered to hold my goose while I crawled over the barbwire fence, a rare moment of kindness you might imagine, but once I'd straddled the fence, he put a goose up close and it bit me right on the rear. It left a bruise. He wasn't cruel for the sake of cruelty, however. There had to be humor involved.

Another time, when we were lighting off fireworks in the street in front of my house, I knelt down, concentrating deeply, to light a firecracker with a whole string of Black Cats hanging out of my back pocket. Whitey was standing behind me. You see where this is going don't you? Suddenly, my butt exploded. He'd lit them off! It felt like the worst spanking you could imagine, but thankfully it blew the pocket off my jeans. Afterward, my pocket flapped in the wind, attached only by the rivets at the top corners, while Whitey rolled in the grass laughing so hard he hyperventilated.

And there was the day we were shooting off Roman candles when he decided to aim his at me, but his Roman candle didn't shoot straight. Mine did, though, and I began bouncing them off his chest until he retreated. Now, Whitey was fast, a darn fine running back and a good sprinter, but he wasn't fast enough to outrun a Roman candle, and I was merciless, so by the time the thing finally petered out, I'd pretty much burned the white T-shirt off his back. Vengeance was mine.

This is the part where I offer a somewhat sincere disclaimer: Kids, don't try this at home or at least without adult supervision, unless the adult is Whitey. All sorts of bad things could happen. But if you decide to go after Whitey, I'll understand and look the other way. With him if you don't strike first, he will.

© Tony Bender, 2021



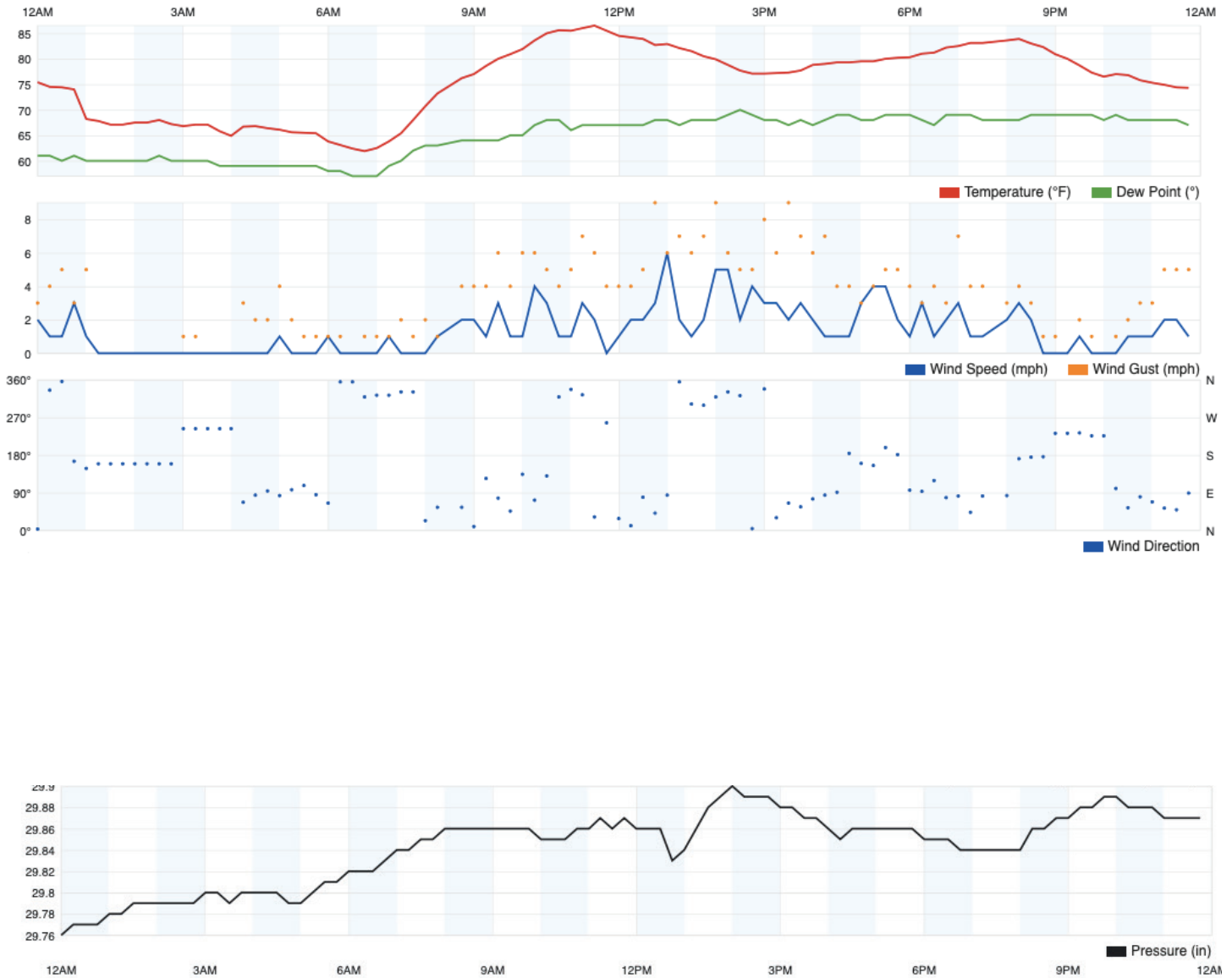
## Yard of the Week

The Groton Garden Club sponsors the "Yard of the Week" and this week, the Jerry and Elizabeth Abernathy yard at 108 E 3rd Ave. is the Yard of the Week. Elizabeth Abernathy is pictured above in front of their yard. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
 90% → 30%			 20%	 40%
T-storms then Chance T-storms	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear then Slight Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms
<b>High: 71 °F</b>	<b>Low: 52 °F</b>	<b>High: 75 °F</b>	<b>Low: 54 °F</b>	<b>High: 81 °F</b>



**Today**

 **Highs 70s**  
Showers &  
Thunderstorms

**Wednesday**

**Highs 70s to low 80s**  
Mostly Sunny and  
Dry

 National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD  
weather.gov/abr

Ongoing showers and thunderstorms will come to an end across central South Dakota this morning, then across northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota this afternoon. High pressure will bring dry conditions to the region tonight and Wednesday.



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## Today in Weather History

July 6, 1963: A farmer died near Waubay, in Day County, when the barn was destroyed while he was inside. Winds of 110 mph were recorded at FAA in Watertown before the roof and wind instruments were blown away.

July 6, 1982: A severe thunderstorm produced a series of five microbursts over Sioux Falls. The microbursts caused extensive damage. Winds were estimated to have reached 125 mph, and the Airport recorded a peak gust of 82 mph. Damage, which was heaviest in the south-central and northeast sections of the city, included thousands of trees uprooted or damaged. Several semi-trailers were blown over, critically injuring one man and slightly injuring two others. Several other minor injuries occurred mainly from flying glass. Five cars were rolled over by the high winds, and several others damaged flying debris. Damage at the airport included a portion of a hangar roof blown off and three light aircraft flipped over.

July 6, 1994: Widespread rainfall of over 6 inches fell in Dewey, Potter, and Faulk Counties, causing damage to roads and flooded basements and fields. A teenage girl escaped injury when her car was washed away by the waters of a swollen creek about 5 miles east of Gettysburg. Some total storm amounts include; 6.80 inches in Orient; 6.70 at Faulkton; 5.80 in Milbank; 5.48 in Big Stone City; 5.02 in Ipswich; 4.50 in Gettysburg; 4.17 in Webster; 4.12 near Onaka; 4.02 in Leola; and 3.97 in Britton.

1893 - A violent tornado killed 71 persons on its forty-mile track across northwestern Iowa. Forty-nine persons were killed around Pomeroy, where eighty percent of the buildings were destroyed, with most leveled to the ground. Photos showed most of the town without a wall or tree left standing. (The Weather Channel)

1928 - A hailstorm at Potter, NE, produced a stone which was 5.5 inches in diameter, and seventeen inches in circumference, weighing a pound and a half. (David Ludlum)

1985 - Lightning struck a large transformer in Salt Lake County sending a 200 foot fireball into the air and blacking out almost the entire state for up to five hours. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - Thunderstorm rains during the mid morning hours, and again during the evening, produced major flash-flooding at Leavenworth, KS. The official rainfall total was 10.37 inches, but unofficial totals exceeded twelve inches. At nearby Kansas City, the rainfall total of 5.08 inches was a daily record for July. (Storm Data)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in twenty-one states east of the Rockies, with severe weather reported in Kentucky and Indiana for the second day in a row. A thunderstorm produced more than five inches of rain in one hour near Reynolds, IL. Rochester, NY, was soaked with 3.25 inches, a record 24 hour total for the month of July. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty-six cities in the north central and northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 98 degrees at International Falls, MN, and 101 degrees at Flint, MI, equalled all-time records. Highs of 96 degrees at Muskegon, MI, and 97 degrees at Buffalo, NY, were records for July. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Unseasonably hot weather prevailed in the southwestern U.S. Ten cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Las Vegas, NV, with a reading of 115 degrees. Hanksville, UT, reached 112 degrees, Bullhead City, AZ, hit 120 degrees, and Death Valley, CA, soared to 126 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

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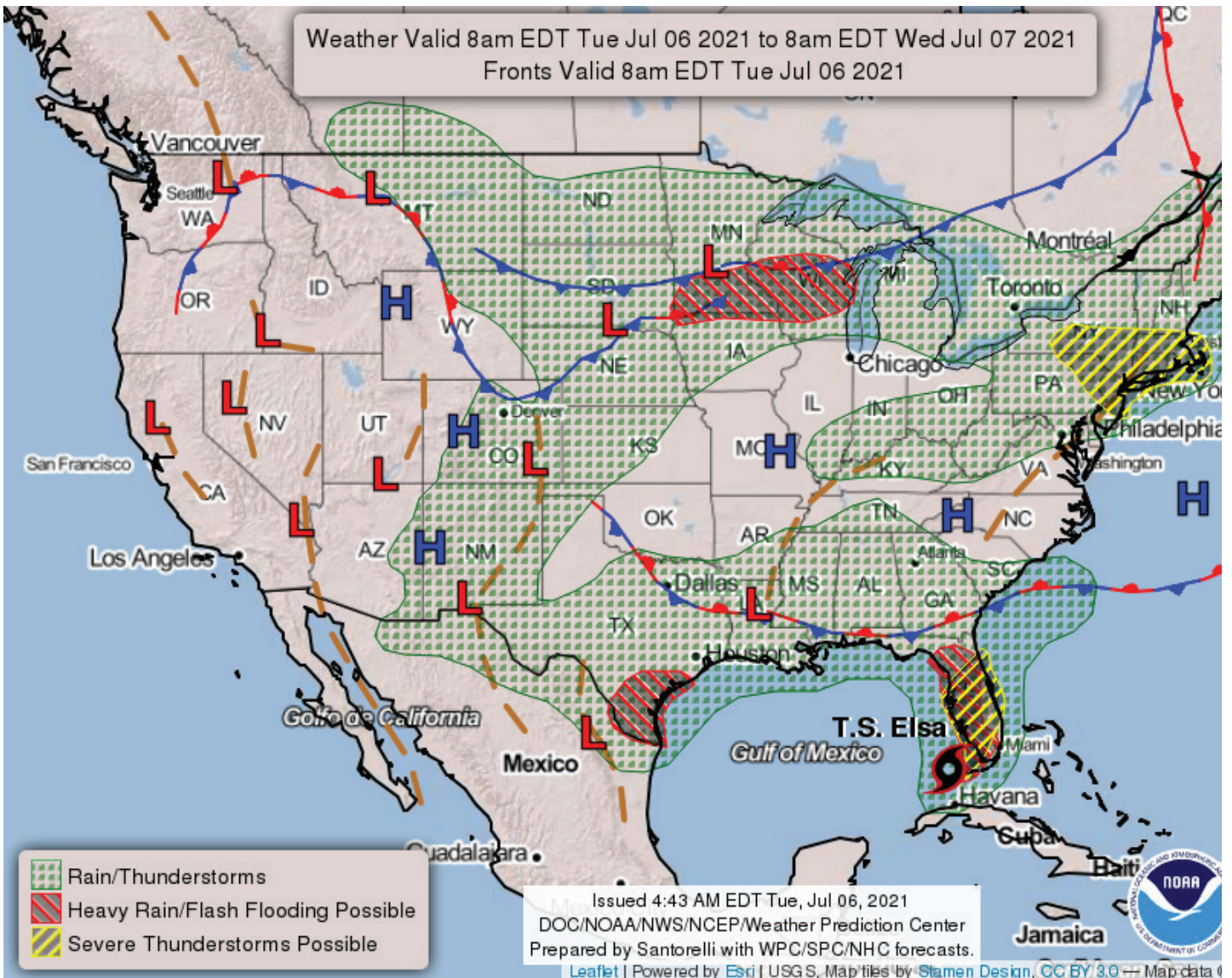
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 86.5 °F at 11:30 AM**  
**Low Temp: 61.9 °F at 6:45 AM**  
**Wind: 9 mph at 2:00 PM**  
**Precip: .63 this morning**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 115° in 1936**  
**Record Low: 42° in 1942**  
**Average High: 84°F**  
**Average Low: 59°F**  
**Average Precip in July.: 0.59**  
**Precip to date in July.: 0.63**  
**Average Precip to date: 11.60**  
**Precip Year to Date: 5.38**  
**Sunset Tonight: 9:24 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:53 a.m.**



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## DISCOVERING THE GOODNESS OF GOD

If God is good, why do the godly suffer pain and sorrow and grief? If God is fair, why do the faithful fail? If God cares, why does He allow Christians to be persecuted? If God is powerful, why are innocent people harassed, beaten, and murdered?

And why are the ungodly prosperous? Why are the ungodly happy? Why are the ungodly recipients of any good thing? After all, they are ungodly!

The writer of Psalm 73 had a problem with bad people living godless lives and receiving earthly rewards. He was a bit angry when he saw their lavish lifestyles. They appeared to have everything their hearts desired, lived lives of ease and were healthy. Their riches multiplied even though they scoffed at God and threatened His children. What's up?

So the writer of the Psalm became frustrated. He avoided evil and when he sinned, he immediately confessed and asked God to forgive him. He read God's Word, engaged in prayer and tried to live a godly life. But all he got from God was trouble - all day, every day! Finally he asked God, "Am I wasting my time? Why should I bother to be godly?"

Fortunately, he went to the right place for his answer. "Finally," he concluded when he went to the sanctuary to worship, "I understood their end!" Wrongs in this life will be corrected in the next! Remember: Dives lived in pleasure and Lazarus in pain. But there came a day when things were reversed: Dives was tormented by flames, and Lazarus went to live lavishly in his Father's Kingdom.

The ungodly leave their treasures at death but the godly only begin to enjoy their rewards with their Father - forever.

Prayer: Give us a strong faith, Father, to look beyond what is to what will be when we are at last with You. May we focus on what matters most - YOU! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Look at these wicked people - enjoying a life of ease while their riches multiply. Psalm 73:12

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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

### **Police: 1 dead, 1 critically injured in Rapid City shooting**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Police say an overnight shooting in Rapid City has left one man dead and one man in critical condition.

Authorities were called to the scene about 1:30 a.m. Monday for a report of shots fired. Officers found the two shooting victims in a car in the parking lot of an apartment complex.

Both were transported to a hospital, where one man died.

Police chased down a car that fled the scene, after which five people ran from the vehicle. Two of them were arrested for obstruction and one was arrested on a drug charge. Police are searching for the other two occupants.

It was the second shooting at the apartment complex in the last month.

### **USD volleyballer first to sign sponsorship deal**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A University of South Dakota volleyball player has become the first college athlete in the state to sign a sponsorship deal after the NCAA cleared the way for college athletes to make money off their names and likenesses.

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported Saturday that Brooklyn Bollweg signed an endorsement deal Friday with Silverstar Car Wash. As per the deal, she created and published a sponsored post for the Silverstar chain on her social media accounts on Saturday morning. Silverstar has eight locations in the Sioux Falls area and two more under construction.

Bollweg is a junior defensive specialist for the Coyotes. She says the ability for athletes to profit off their names is a “cool opportunity.”

“It was nerve-wracking to be the first one to go through it,” she said. “I know there’s probably a lot of other people who are signing things and in the works of processes like this, but I don’t know if anyone did it this quick.”

Silverstar regional manager Andrea Vetos said in a statement that Bollweg will forever be known as a trailblazer.

Specific terms of the contract haven’t been disclosed.

### **Body of 16-year-old boy recovered from Lake Yankton**

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — The body of a 16-year-old northeastern Nebraska boy has been recovered from Lake Yankton, which lies on the Nebraska/South Dakota border.

Witnesses reported the teen was attempting to cross the lake on a personal floatation device Sunday afternoon when he tried to stand on it, fell into the water and did not resurface, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission said in the news release Monday.

Five Nebraska conservation officers responded, along with officials from the Cedar County Sheriff’s, US Army Corps of Engineers and South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks. The boy’s body was found around 8:30 p.m.

Officials had not released his name by Monday afternoon.

### **Complaints drudge up obscure ordinance on use of campers**

MADISON, S.D. (AP) — An increasing number of primarily social media complaints from residents in Madison and Lake County have brought to light a little-known county ordinance banning people from occupying their campers or recreational vehicles outside of a campground.

Lake County Planning and Zoning Officer Mandi Anderson said the ordinance has gone undetected for many years until a recent barrage of postings that have led to heated debate among residents. Some who

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are opposed to the rule say it infringes on property rights and there should be nothing wrong with letting visitors use a camper for a short time.

"I didn't realize it was this out of hand," Anderson said.

One theory for the ordinance, Anderson said, is that people who construct large lakeside homes on small lots do not want to be inundated with noise from adjoining property when three campers pull in for the weekend and 50 people take up temporary residence, The Madison Daily Leader reported.

Anderson said citations are only issued if the matter is not addressed after the property owner has been notified about the ordinance and has been given an opportunity to comply. She emphasized she does not drive around looking for violators, but only responds to complaints.

She noted it's often not possible to determine whether a camper or RV is parked or in use.

## **Air Force plans training exercise over northern plains**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The U.S. Air Force is planning a massive training exercise over the northern plains states.

The Bismarck Tribune reported Monday that the maneuvers are set for July 19-23 in the skies over the Powder River Training Complex. The training area is the largest in the continental United States. It covers nearly 35,000 square miles of air space over the Dakotas, Montana and Wyoming.

Officials at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota say multiple types of aircraft will be involved in the exercises and nonmilitary aircraft should avoid the area. Residents can expect loud noises.

The Federal Aviation Administration in 2015 approved quadrupling the training airspace. The expanded complex officially opened in September of that year. The first large-scale exercises were held that December.

## **Israeli violinist headed to Rushmore Music Festival**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — An Israeli violinist is set to headline the Rushmore Music Festival later this month.

The Rapid City Journal reported Friday that Hagai Shaham will perform at concerts July 24 and July 25 in Rapid City and Spearfish as part of the festival.

The festival is one of two events in the United States where Shaham will appear this year. The Rushmore Music Festival begins July 10 and will offer 11 family-friendly concerts open to the public at various venues, including Black Hills State University.

Organizers are planning for socially distanced crowds and encourage people to wear masks and get vaccinated to slow the spread of COVID-19 at the concerts.

## **Protesters scale Rapid City grain mill**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Protesters climbed a grain mill in downtown Rapid City and hung an giant upside down American flag on the building to protest mistreatment of American Indians.

The Rapid City Journal reported the "Fourth of You Lie" protest began at a park on Sunday evening. Candi Brings Plenty, an organizer with the American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota, read a list of demands that included forming releasing police disciplinary records, calling for external reviews of police brutality allegations and creating an American Indian commission.

Dozens of protesters marched through the streets. The protest was intended to end at the Pennington County jail but continued to the Dakota Mill and Grain Silo after a group of protesters broke off and headed there to hang the flag, which was emblazoned with the words "Land Back."

## **Tropical Storm Elsa gaining strength, lashing Florida Keys**

By FREIDA FRISARO and ANDREA RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE (AP) — The weather was getting worse in southern Florida early Tuesday as Tropical Storm Elsa began lashing the Florida Keys, prompting a hurricane watch for the peninsula's upper Gulf Coast.

In addition to damaging winds and heavy rains, the Miami-based National Hurricane Center warned of

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life-threatening storm surges, flooding and isolated tornadoes. A hurricane watch was issued for a long stretch of coastline, from Egmont Key at the mouth of Tampa Bay to the Steinhatchee River in Florida's Big Bend area.

The weather posed new threats to the ramped-up rescue effort at the collapsed South Florida condo building. Bands of rain were expected to soak the rubble of the Champlain Towers South, which collapsed June 24, killing at least 28 people and leaving 117 people missing. The crews have worked through rain, but must pause when lightning threatens, and a garage area in the rubble already filled with water on Monday, officials said.

Elsa's maximum sustained winds strengthened to 60 mph (95 kph) early Tuesday. A slow strengthening is forecast through Tuesday night and Elsa could be near hurricane strength before it makes landfall in Florida. Its core was about 50 miles (80 kilometers) southwest of Key West, Florida, and 270 miles (435 kilometers) south of Tampa. It was continuing to move to the north-northwest at 12 mph (19 kph).

Three to 5 inches of rainfall with localized totals of up to 8 inches of rain are expected through Wednesday across the Keys and into southwest and western portions of the Florida Peninsula. The forecast included the possibility of tornadoes across South Florida Tuesday morning and across the upper peninsula later in the day.

Gov. Ron DeSantis expanded a state of emergency on Monday to cover a dozen counties where Elsa was expected to make a swift passage on Wednesday, and President Joe Biden approved an emergency declaration for the state ahead of the storm.

Forecasters predicted Elsa would then hit coastal Georgia and South Carolina. Georgia's coast was under a tropical storm watch, as was the South Carolina coast from the Mouth of St. Marys River to South Santee River.

Cuban officials evacuated 180,000 people against the possibility of heavy flooding from a storm that already battered several Caribbean islands, killing at least three people. But Elsa spent Sunday and much of Monday sweeping parallel to Cuba's southern coast, sparing most of the island from significant effects.

It made landfall in Cuba near Cienega de Zapata, a natural park with few inhabitants, and crossed the island just east of Havana. Tuesday's rainfall across parts of Cuba was expected to reach 10 inches (25 centimeters) with isolated maximums of 15 inches (38 centimeters), resulting in significant flash flooding and mudslides. But there were no early reports of serious damage on the island.

"The wind is blowing hard and there is a lot of rain. Some water is getting under the door of my house. In the yard the level is high, but it did not get into the house," Lázaro Ramón Sosa, a craftsman and photographer who lives in the town of Cienega de Zapata, told The Associated Press by telephone.

Sosa said he saw some avocado trees fall nearby.

Tropical storm conditions were continuing over central and western Cuba Tuesday morning, even as the storm reached Florida. Tropical storm warnings were posted for the Florida Keys from Craig Key westward to the Dry Tortugas and for the west coast of Florida from Flamingo northward to the Ochlockonee River.

Elsa's westward shift spared the lower Florida Keys a direct hit, but the islands were still getting plenty of rain and wind on Tuesday.

Margarita Pedroza, who lives on a boat off Key West, told WPLG that a stronger storm would have forced her ashore, but she was riding this one out. "Just batten down the hatches and get ready for it," she told the television station.

"It doesn't seem like it's as strong as some of the other storms that have come around, so hopefully the winds won't be as strong and maybe it'll be some rain, but hopefully not too much rain," she said.

Elsa was the first hurricane of the Atlantic season until Saturday morning and caused widespread damage on several eastern Caribbean islands Friday. As a tropical storm, it resulted in the deaths of one person on St. Lucia and of a 15-year-old boy and a 75-year-old woman in the Dominican Republic.

Elsa is the earliest fifth-named storm on record, said Brian McNoldy, a hurricane researcher at the University of Miami.

## Storm threat hangs over renewed search at Florida condo site

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON and BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

SURFSIDE, Fla. (AP) — A ramped-up rescue effort at the collapsed South Florida condo building faced new threats from the weather as a tropical storm approached the state.

On Monday, lightning forced crews to pause the search for victims of the June 24 collapse in Surfside and a garage area in the rubble filled with water, officials said.

The latest forecasts showed Tropical Storm Elsa moving westward, mostly sparing South Florida, but the area near the collapsed building experienced thunderstorms, and another day of unsettled weather was expected.

The delays frustrated rescue crews, Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said.

"Truly they live to save lives, and they've pushed ahead no matter what is thrown in their way," she said at an evening news conference.

Still, crews got a big boost when the unstable remaining portion of the Champlain Towers South building came down Sunday. The demolition — prompted by fears that the structure could fall — allowed rescuers into previously inaccessible places, including bedrooms where people were believed to be sleeping at the time of the disaster, officials said.

Four more victims were discovered, raising the death toll to 28 people. Another 117 people remained unaccounted for.

"The site is busier and more active now than I've seen it since we began, now that the damaged building is down," Surfside Mayor Charles Burkett said, adding that heavy equipment was now able to move freely around the site.

Rescuers hoped to get a clearer picture of voids that may exist in the rubble as they search for anyone still trapped under the fallen wing of the building, but they found very few voids, Miami-Dade Assistant Fire Chief Raide Jadallah told family members late Monday.

No one has been rescued alive since the first hours after the collapse, but rescuers were still holding out hope of reuniting loved ones.

"We continue to remain focused on our primary mission, and that is to leave no stone unturned and to find as many people as we can and to help bring either some answers to family and loved ones or to bring some closure to them," City of Miami Fire Rescue Capt. Ignatius Carroll said.

## Pope Francis eats breakfast, takes walk 2 days after surgery

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis ate breakfast, read the newspapers and took a walk Tuesday as he continued recovering from intestinal surgery, the Vatican said.

A statement from the Vatican spokesman, Matteo Bruni, said tests performed following the pontiff's Sunday surgery to remove half of his colon yielded "good" and normal result.

"His Holiness Pope Francis rested well during the night," Bruni said. "This morning he had breakfast, read some newspapers and got up to walk. The post-operative recovering is regular. Routine control tests are good."

Francis, 84, underwent three hours of surgery Sunday for what the Vatican said was a narrowing of the large intestine. The Vatican said doctors removed the left side of his colon.

He is expected to stay in Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic, which has a special suite reserved for popes, through the week, assuming no complications.

The Vatican has given few details about the pope's diagnosis or the procedure he underwent, saying only that he had entered the hospital for planned surgery for a diverticular stenosis, or narrowing of the colon.

It's a common problem that affects some 80% of people over age 80 but can require surgery if the lining of the colon becomes so scarred that it begins to obstruct it, said Dr. Yann Parc, head of staff at the Saint Antoine Hospital in Paris. Parc was not involved in the pope's care.

The surgery generally entails removing the left side of the colon and then joining up the remaining



healthy parts of the large intestine.

"It looks like the pope had this pathology, and understandably the Italian surgeons have removed that part and stitched it to the rectum to recreate a normal digestive transit," Parc said.

Doctors have said a risk of the operation is that the connection between the joined-up parts of the colon can sometimes fail, causing more pain and possibly an infection. Such a failure is very rare and would require another surgery.

Francis has enjoyed relatively robust health, though he lost the upper part of one lung in his youth due to an infection. He also suffers from sciatica, or nerve pain, that makes him walk with a pronounced limp.

He had a busy schedule in the run-up to Sunday's surgery, including participating in a daylong July 1 meeting with Lebanon's Christian patriarchs, suggesting he was not in excruciating pain before the procedure.

Francis' next routine appointment with the public would normally be on Sunday, July 11. He customarily appears on Sundays at a window overlooking St. Peter's Square, blesses the faithful below and speaks for a few minutes, often about current events.

If he remains hospitalized, Francis might opt to do what one of his predecessors did while recovering at Gemelli. During some of his many stays there, St. John Paul II sometimes appeared at his hospital room's window to wave and bless well-wishers gathered outside.

## 6 students among 9 arrested in alleged Hong Kong bomb plot

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Nine people, including six secondary school students, were arrested in Hong Kong on Tuesday for allegedly plotting to set off homemade bombs in courts, tunnels and trash cans as political tensions rise in the city where China is tightening its grip.

Police said they were detained on suspicion of engaging in terrorist activity under a harsh national security law that Beijing imposed a year ago as part of a crackdown on dissent in the former British colony that has long enjoyed freedoms not seen on the Chinese mainland.

Hong Kong authorities have used the law, enacted in response to anti-government protests that rocked the city in 2019, to arrest many of the city's prominent activists. Others have fled abroad as a result.

If the allegations are true, the group appears to represent a more radical fringe of the protest movement, which has demanded broader democratic freedoms for Hong Kong just as its liberties are under threat. Police said the group was attempting to make the explosive triacetone triperoxide, or TATP, which has been widely used in bombings in Europe and elsewhere, in a makeshift laboratory in a hostel.

Police accused the group of planning to use the explosive to bomb courts, cross-harbor tunnels, railways and trash cans on the street "to maximize damage caused to the society."

Since the 2019 anti-government protests, Hong Kong police have arrested several people over alleged bomb plots and for making TATP, including 17 detained that year in overnight raids that also seized explosives and chemicals.

Nine people between 15 and 39 years old were arrested Tuesday, according to Senior Superintendent Li Kwai-wah of the Hong Kong Police National Security Department.

Hong Kong chief executive Carrie Lam said at a weekly news briefing that she hopes the members of the public will "openly condemn threats of violence."

"They should not be wrongly influenced by the idea that ... breaking the law is in order, if you're trying to achieve a certain cause," she said. "They should not be influenced into thinking that they can find excuses to inflict violence."

Authorities said they seized equipment and raw materials used to make the TATP, as well as a "trace amount" of the explosive. They said they also found operating manuals and about 80,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$10,300) in cash.

Police froze about 600,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$77,200) in assets that they say may be linked to the plot. Authorities said all nine planned to set off the bombs and then leave Hong Kong for good.

The arrests come as China is increasing its control over Hong Kong, despite a promise to protect the

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city's civil liberties for 50 years after the city's 1997 handover from Britain. In the most glaring example of that campaign, police arrested at least seven top editors, executives and journalists of the Apple Daily newspaper, which was an outspoken pro-democracy voice, and froze its assets, forcing it to close two weeks ago.

Also Tuesday, Lam also said that an envelope of "white powder" had been sent to her office. Police said the substance was still being analyzed but that they did not believe it to be dangerous.

## Wreckage found in Russia after plane went missing

By DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Wreckage from a plane that went missing Tuesday in Russia's Far East region of Kamchatka was found around five kilometers (three miles) away from a runway at an airport on the coast where it was supposed to land, officials said.

An Antonov An-26 plane with 22 passengers and six crew members, flying from the city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky to the town of Palana on the Okhotsk Sea coast, missed a scheduled communication and disappeared from radar as it was on approach for landing.

The governor of Kamchatka, Vladimir Solodov, told the Interfax news agency that the aircraft's fuselage was found on land near the coast, while other wreckage was found nearby in the Okhotsk Sea.

According to Russian media reports, none of the 28 people on board have survived the crash.

The plane belonged to a company called Kamchatka Aviation Enterprise. The plane has been in operation since 1982, Russian state news agency Tass reported. The company's director, Alexei Khabarov, told the Interfax news agency that the plane was technically sound before taking off in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky.

A criminal investigation into the incident has been launched. Kamchatka Aviation Enterprise's deputy director, Sergei Gorb, said that the plane "practically crashed into a sea cliff," which wasn't supposed to be in its landing trajectory.

The plane was on approach for landing when contact was lost about 10 kilometers (six miles) away from Palana's airport. The head of the local government in Palana, Olga Mokhireva, was aboard the flight, spokespeople of the Kamchatka government said.

In 2012, an Antonov An-28 plane belonging to Kamchatka Aviation Enterprise crashed into a mountain while flying from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsk and coming in for a landing in Palana. A total of 14 people were on board and 10 of them were killed. Both pilots, who were among the dead, were found to have alcohol in their blood, Tass reported.

## With McCain in mind, Sinema reaches for bipartisanship

By LISA MASCARO and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than for her shock of purple hair or unpredictable votes, Democratic Sen. Kyrsten Sinema is perhaps best known for doing the unthinkable in Washington: She spends time on the Republican side of the aisle.

Not only does she pass her days chatting up the Republican senators, she has been known to duck into their private GOP cloakroom — absolutely unheard of — and banter with the GOP leadership. She and Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell talk often by phone.

Sinema's years in Congress have been a whirlwind of political style and perplexing substance, an antiwar liberal-turned-deal-making centrist who now finds herself at the highest levels of power. A key negotiator of the bipartisan infrastructure compromise, she was among those President Joe Biden first called to make the deal — and then called upon again as he worked furiously to salvage the agreement from collapse. A holdout to changing the Senate's filibuster rules, she faces enormous pressure to act as voting rights in her own state and others hang in the balance.

"If anybody can pull this off it's Kyrsten," said David Lujan, a former Democratic colleague of Sinema's in the Arizona statehouse. "She's incredibly smart, so she can figure out where people's commonalities are and get things done."

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The senator's theory of the case of how to govern in Washington will be tested in the weeks ahead as Congress works to turn the infrastructure compromise into law and mounts a response to the Supreme Court decision upholding Arizona's strict new voting rules.

She is modeling her approach on the renegade style of the late Sen. John McCain, the fellow Arizonan she strives to emulate, but aspiring to bold bipartisanship is challenging in the post-Trump era of hardened political bunkers and fierce cultural tribalism. Many in her own party scoff at her overtures to the GOP and criticize her for not playing hardball.

Her name is now uttered alongside West Virginia's Sen. Joe Manchin as the two Democrats standing in the way of changing the filibuster rules requiring 60 votes to advance legislation — a priority for liberals working to pass Biden's agenda in the split 50-50 Senate. This year she cast a procedural vote against raising the minimum wage and has opposed the climate change-focused Green New Deal, even though she's not fully opposed to either policy. She declined a request for an interview.

"It's the easiest thing in the world for politicians to declare bipartisanship dead and line up on respective sides of a partisan battle," she said in a statement to The Associated Press. "What's harder is getting out of our comfort zones, finding common ground with unlikely allies, and forming coalitions that can achieve durable, lasting results."

Sinema arrived in Washington with a burst of energy and a swoosh of fashion. She quickly became known as one of the best vote counters in the House, on par with Speaker Nancy Pelosi, because of her visits to the other side of the aisle. She voted against Pelosi more than once for speaker.

Her maiden speech in the Senate drew from McCain's farewell address, a marker of where she was headed. She changed the decades-old Senate dress code by simply wearing whatever she wants — and daring anyone to stop her. The purple wig was a nod to the coronavirus pandemic's lockdown. (In off hours, she has been spotted wearing a ring with an expletive similar to "buzz off.")

"People may debate her sincerity, but the truth is, she makes an active decision that she's going to work well with other people — and I haven't seen her slip up," said Republican Rep. Patrick McHenry of North Carolina, who served with her in the House.

Sinema's status as a bipartisan leader fascinates those who've watched her decades-long rise in Arizona politics, where she began as a lonely left-wing activist who worked for Ralph Nader's 2000 Green Party presidential campaign and then slowly retooled herself into a moderate advocate of working across the aisle.

"Ideologically, it does surprise me," Steven Yarbrough, a Republican who served 12 years with Sinema in the Arizona legislature, said of her transformation. "But given how smart and driven she is, well, that doesn't surprise me at all."

That Sinema even made it that far seemed improbable. Her parents divorced when she was young, and she moved with her mother and stepfather from Tucson to the Florida panhandle, where she lived in an abandoned gas station for three years.

Driven to succeed, she graduated from the local high school as valedictorian at age 16 and earned her bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University in Utah at age 18, leaving the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in which she'd been raised, after graduation.

Sinema landed in Phoenix, where she earned several more degrees — including a law degree and a doctorate — worked as a social worker and then a lawyer, vociferously protested the Iraq War and fought for immigrant and LGBTQ rights at a time when Arizona was veering right. In 2004 she was elected to the state legislature representing a fairly liberal area and initially was a backbencher who lobbed rhetorical bombs from the left.

But Sinema has written and spoken extensively of how she discovered the merits of moderation while serving in the GOP-controlled state legislature. She wrote a book titled "Unite and Conquer" about the need for leftists to compromise and cut deals.

In 2006, she co-chaired a bipartisan group to fight a gay marriage ban on the ballot and had to decide whether to simply condemn the ban or try to defeat it, said Steve May, the Republican former state lawmaker who collaborated with her.

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An avid consumer of polling, she helped hit upon a strategy of targeting older, retired heterosexual couples who could also lose benefits under the ballot measure due to their unmarried status. They narrowly succeeded in defeating it. (Another ban passed two years later.)

"She came from doing speeches and leading protests, and she learned she can actually win," May said.

When a congressional seat opened up in a bluing stretch of Phoenix's eastern suburbs, Sinema ran and won.

She had remade herself into the ideal candidate for a state that was slowly becoming competitive. And in 2018, she seized the moment, winning the open Senate seat.

Her infrastructure work is only one of several bipartisan "gangs" in the Senate where she is testing her theory of governance. She is about to roll out a minimum wage proposal with Republican Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah and is involved with others on immigration law changes.

"Kyrsten is always honest and straightforward, two often underrated qualities that are the mark of a successful legislator," said Sen. John Thune, the South Dakota Republican whip, who is among those Sinema often seeks out for conversation.

In a statement to the AP, Thune said that "while we certainly don't see eye-to-eye on every issue," he trusts that she is transparent with him, and he respects her "sincere pursuit of bipartisanship."

Charming and funny in private conversations, Sinema prides herself on competing in marathons and triathlons, while maintaining a notoriously colorful wardrobe — even in her Green Party days, she referred to herself as a "Prada socialist."

Dashing from the Senate recently, she brushed off reporters' questions about the infrastructure talks. On that day she wore a faux tuxedo bib dress paired with a suit jacket. Why?

She does what she wants, she suggested, by way of a shrug, before she climbed into a waiting car.

## Israel blocks law that keeps out Palestinian spouses

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's parliament early on Tuesday failed to renew a law that bars Arab citizens from extending citizenship or residency rights to spouses from the occupied West Bank and Gaza, in a tight vote that raised doubts about the viability of the country's new coalition government.

The 59-59 vote, which came after an all-night session of the Knesset, marked a major setback for Prime Minister Naftali Bennett.

The new Israeli leader, who had hoped to find a compromise between his hard-line Yamina party and the dovish factions in his disparate coalition, instead suffered a stinging defeat in a vote he reportedly described as a referendum on the new government. The vote means the law is now set to expire at midnight Tuesday.

The Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law was enacted as a temporary measure in 2003, at the height of the second intifada, or uprising, when Palestinians launched scores of deadly attacks inside Israel. Proponents said Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza were susceptible to recruitment by armed groups and that security vetting alone was insufficient.

Under it, Arab citizens, who comprise a fifth of Israel's population, have had few if any avenues for bringing spouses from the West Bank and Gaza into Israel. Critics, including many left-wing and Arab lawmakers, say it's a racist measure aimed at restricting the growth of Israel's Arab minority, while supporters say it's needed for security purposes and to preserve Israel's Jewish character.

The law has been renewed annually and appeared to have the support of a large majority in parliament, which is dominated by hard-line nationalist parties. But former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party and his allies decided to oppose it to embarrass Bennett and harm his coalition, which includes a collection of eight parties across the political spectrum, including a small Islamist Arab party.

Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked, a member of Bennett's Yamina party, said the opposition move to block the law's renewal would lead to thousands more applications for citizenship. She accused Netanyahu and his allies of choosing "petty and ugly politics, and let the country burn."

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Amichai Chikli, a renegade member of Yamina who voted with the opposition, said the outcome was a sign of deeper issues.

"Israel needs a functioning Zionist government, and not a mismatched patchwork that is reliant on" the votes of Arab lawmakers, said Chikli. He was the only member of his party to oppose the new coalition-led government last month.

Netanyahu, ousted by the new coalition after 12 years as prime minister, made clear his political goals.

"With all due respect for this law, the importance of toppling the government is greater," Netanyahu said Monday.

Bennett reportedly proposed a compromise with liberal members of the coalition that would have extended the law by six months while offering residency rights to some 1,600 Arab families, a fraction of those affected. But the measure was defeated, in part because two Arab members of the coalition abstained. The vote exposed the deep divisions and the fragility of the new government.

The decision, however, gave some hope to Arab families that have been affected by the law. The law has created an array of difficulties for thousands of Palestinian families that span the war-drawn and largely invisible frontiers separating Israel from east Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, territories it seized in the 1967 war that the Palestinians want for a future state.

"You want your security, it's no problem, you can check each case by itself," said Taiseer Khatib, an Arab citizen of Israel whose wife of more than 15 years, from the West Bank city of Jenin, must regularly apply for permits to live with him and their three children in Israel.

"There's no need for this collective punishment just because you are Palestinian," he said during a protest outside the Knesset on Monday ahead of the vote.

The law has been continually renewed even after the uprising wound down in 2005 and the number of attacks plummeted. Today, Israel allows more than 100,000 Palestinian workers from the West Bank to enter on a regular basis.

Male spouses over the age of 35 and female spouses over the age of 25, as well as some humanitarian cases, can apply for the equivalent of a tourist permit, which must be regularly renewed. The holders of such permits are ineligible for driver's licenses, public health insurance and most forms of employment. Palestinian spouses from Gaza have been completely banned since the militant Hamas group seized power there in 2007.

The law does not apply to the nearly 500,000 Jewish settlers who live in the West Bank, who have full Israeli citizenship. Under Israel's Law of Return, Jews who come to Israel from anywhere in the world are eligible for citizenship.

Israel's Arab minority has close familial ties to Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and largely identifies with their cause. Arab citizens view the law as one of several forms of discrimination they face in a country that legally defines itself as a Jewish nation-state.

Palestinians who are unable to get permits but try to live with their spouses inside Israel are at risk of deportation. Couples that move to the West Bank live under Israeli military occupation.

The citizenship law also applies to Jewish Israelis who marry Palestinians from the territories, but such unions are extremely rare.

## Building collapse lawsuits seek to get answers, assign blame

By MARYCLAIRE DALE and CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

Even as the search continues over a week later for signs of life in the mangled debris of the fallen Champlain Towers South, the process of seeking answers about why it happened and who is to blame is already underway in Florida's legal system.

Authorities have opened criminal and civil investigations into the collapse of the oceanfront condominium building, which left at least 28 confirmed dead and more than 117 unaccounted for. Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle pledged to bring the matter soon before grand jurors, who could

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recommend criminal charges or simply investigate the cause to suggest reforms.

And at least five lawsuits have been filed on behalf of residents who survived or are feared dead. One lawyer involved in the litigation said the collapse raises widespread concerns about infrastructure issues and the trust we put in those responsible for them.

"We deserve to be able to walk into buildings without worrying that they're going to come crumbling around us and to know that our loved ones can go to bed at night without worrying that they're going to plummet 12 stories to the ground below in their sleep," said Jeffrey Goodman, whose Philadelphia-based firm filed suit on behalf of the children of missing resident Harold Rosenberg.

The lawsuits filed to date accuse the Champlain Towers South Condominium Association, and in some cases a local architect and engineer, of negligence for failing to address serious structural problems noted as far back as 2018. A Surfside town building inspector had also been part of the discussions, and Goodman's firm has given notice of plans to add the town as a defendant.

"The role of building owners and architects and engineers and inspectors and safety professionals is to make sure that buildings are safe for their occupants to be in," Goodman said.

At a hearing Friday, a judge appointed a receiver to represent the condominium association's interests given the trauma experienced by board members, one of whom remains missing. The board has about \$48 million in insurance coverage, while the oceanfront land is valued at \$30 million to \$50 million, the judge was told.

The judge said he hoped the litigation could be resolved quickly, perhaps within a year. Until then, he authorized the receiver, attorney Michael Goldberg, to provide \$10,000 each to residents for temporary housing and \$2,000 to cover funeral expenses.

Attorney Robert Mongeluzzi, who also represents the Rosenberg family and is seeking access to the site, said cases such as these are not just about the money.

"They want to make this a quest to find out what happened," Mongeluzzi said. "We believe that evidence is still there."

Attorneys for the condominium association did not respond to emails seeking comment, nor did board members themselves.

One prior case with possible legal parallels involves the 2013 collapse in Philadelphia of an unbraced wall of a building that was being demolished. It toppled onto an adjacent Salvation Army store, killing six people and injuring 13, with one woman found alive 13 hours later losing both legs and forced to endure more than 30 surgeries before her death this year.

In the trials that followed, a civil jury found the Salvation Army, the building's owner and his architect largely responsible, and the parties agreed to pay \$227 million in damages.

On the criminal side, the architect received immunity in exchange for cooperating with prosecutors, while a food cart operator-turned-contractor was acquitted of third-degree felony murder charges but sentenced to 15 to 30 years for involuntary manslaughter; a forklift driver who was taking prescription drugs for an injury also went to prison.

The collapse also prompted the city of Philadelphia to send inspectors out to examine demolition sites and led to toughened regulations.

In Florida, a grand jury is still reviewing the 2018 collapse of a pedestrian bridge at Florida International University that killed six people. And both manslaughter and third-degree felony murder charges were filed following the 1996 accidental crash of ValuJet 592 in the Everglades that killed 110 people.

Denis Bender, a tort law professor at Chapman University in Orange County, Calif, who studies wide-scale disasters, sees a growing tendency in such cases not just to seek damages but to pursue criminal charges, often for negligence. That may be because, more and more, we see them happen in real or near-real time, as happened with the harrowing images beamed from Surfside around the world in the last week.

"I think it's increasing because of the media and social media — not necessarily because there's a drum-beat out there, but everybody's horrified by what they can see. And there's this cry for justice," Binder said.

"On something spectacular like this, in today's world, there's great pressure to find fault," he said. "And there's enough evidence already (in Surfside) that people have made bad decisions."

## Romania's monument 'ambulance' races to save country's past

By STEPHEN McGRATH Associated Press

MICASASA, Romania (AP) — On a scorching summer day in the remote Transylvanian village of Micasasa, 39-year-old Romanian architect Eugen Vaida is busy coordinating a team of volunteers helping to breathe new life into a centuries-old castle on the brink of ruin.

"It's in an advanced state of degradation and it's a monument of national importance," Vaida, who in 2016 launched the Ambulance for Monuments project, told The Associated Press.

The Ambulance for Monuments has a simple task: to race around the Balkan country, giving critical care to as many historical buildings as possible that are in an advanced state of decay before it's too late.

Since it launched, Ambulance for Monuments has rescued 55 historical structures, including medieval churches, historic fortification walls, old watermills and ancient UNESCO World Heritage Sites, from descending into complete ruin.

Situated in a broad valley at the foothills of the Carpathian Mountain basin, the dilapidated 16th-century Brukenthal Castle, which was once home to influential aristocrats and used as a primary school until just after the turn of the century, is one such endangered building being revived by the project.

More than two decades of neglect have left the old castle in serious need of attention.

"It probably would have gotten to a stage where it could barely be saved, it would have gotten to a ruin, and a ruin you cannot build again," Vaida said. "Heritage is not renewable."

The castle's interior boasts around 600 square meters (6,460 square feet), but its roof is leaking, its timbers rotting and part of a key structural wall that supports it is compromised by decades of neglect. A month-long revamp, like all of Vaida's projects, is supported by dozens of volunteers who are playing an important role in preserving Romania's past.

"Young people are starting to get more aware about their cultural identity," said Vaida, who became fascinated with heritage objects as a child. "It's our cultural identity this heritage, which is important for our spiritual development."

One person directly involved in the efforts to save the endangered building from ruin is Micasasa's mayor, 30-year-old Timotei Pacurar. For him, saving the village's most significant and perhaps most neglected historic building holds a poignant significance.

"When I started school, I was here in this room, in the first class — we have a lot of good memories here," Pacurar told the AP. "I was disappointed to see that the building almost collapsed."

Pacurar stands in his crumbling childhood classroom, which he shared with his best friend and Micasasa's deputy mayor, Adrian Suciu. When the pair won the local election, saving the historic building was high up on their list. Both have been helping out with manual labor on the project.

"Unfortunately, this place was ruined in only 20 years," Suciu said. "I'm very happy that this event with the Ambulance for Monuments is happening, because as you can see it has been raining all over the place."

The castle is one of several hundred monuments in Romania in a state of advanced degradation. Over the years, poor state management, weak legislation and a lack of funding have all taken a toll on Romania's impressive heritage, Vaida says.

"In the last 30 years, it's not just that communities have abandoned buildings, but also the support of the state was very, very low," Vaida said.

Civic initiatives like the Ambulance for Monuments are stepping in to help preserve what they can. The project's aim is not to fully restore buildings — since that would require expertise that isn't available — but to rescue as many "immovable monuments" as possible from being lost to history.

"We have churches that are on the tentative list of UNESCO from the 14th century that have marvelous paintings on which it's actually raining," said Vaida, who was repairing the castle's roof.

The local town hall supplied materials for the Micasasa intervention, while local residents — as with almost all interventions — provided housing and food for the volunteers, who often include students in fields such as architecture, archeology, structural engineering and history.

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Erika Nagy, a 24-year-old architecture student in her final year in the U.K., has volunteered in Micasasa for more than two weeks.

"I first heard about Ambulance for Monuments from my very close friend," Nagy said. "Old buildings and old architecture is a part of us — and I think we should keep them around."

Among group's prominent supporters is Prince Charles, who has longstanding ties to Romania where his Prince of Wales Foundation owns old properties and promotes heritage and nature preservation.

"The Prince of Wales believed in this project from the beginning," Vaida said. "He visited two years ago and he spoke with everyone — trying to find out their life stories and why they are coming to save their own heritage."

As the evening draws in on a Saturday, the volunteers are busy measuring, sawing and hammering away at the castle's roof timbers. The overhaul is a labor-intensive task, but it will help keep the storied, centuries-old castle from becoming irreparable.

"The future is in our hands, and we can change things," Pacurar said. "We can make this building look good again — like a treasure for our community."

Over the past couple of years, Vaida, who spends most of his time driving between interventions, has used a franchise system to expand the project, which now covers around 60% of Romania. He also has ambitions to adopt his ambulance project internationally in countries with similar problems.

But for now, rescuing as much of Romania's architectural heritage is his chief aim.

"Over the next five years, (the plan) is to expand over the whole (Romanian) territory," he said. "Every Romanian should at some point come to put a tile or a nail on a roof to save their own cultural identity."

## 'Voice' stars Gwen Stefani, Blake Shelton wed in Oklahoma

By The Associated Press undefined

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — "The Voice" coaches Gwen Stefani and Blake Shelton celebrated their nuptials over the Fourth of July holiday during a weekend wedding in Oklahoma.

The pop star and the country star posted photos on Monday of their wedding including an image of the couple posing under a twilight sky. A representative for Shelton said they married in his home state of Oklahoma and the No Doubt singer tagged the wedding photos with Saturday's date.

In one photo, Shelton was dressed in jeans and driving a golf cart decorated with white tulle, while Stefani showed off her white boots under her wedding dress and held up a bouquet of white flowers.

The two singers announced their engagement in October. The two stars met as judges on the singing competition show years ago. After Shelton divorced Miranda Lambert and Stefani divorced her husband Gavin Rossdale in 2015, the two later began dating. They have released a couple of duets together, including "Nobody But You" and "Happy Anywhere."

## After troops exit, safety of US Embassy in Kabul top concern

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — As the end to America's "forever war" rapidly approaches, the U.S. Embassy and other diplomatic missions in Kabul are watching a worsening security situation and looking at how to respond.

In the countryside, districts are falling to the Taliban in rapid succession. America's warlord allies are re-arming their militias, which have a violent history, raising the specter of another civil war once the U.S. withdrawal is finished, expected in August.

A U.S. Embassy spokesperson told The Associated Press that security assessments are frequent these days. Speaking on condition of anonymity in line with briefing rules, she said the embassy is currently down to 1,400 U.S. citizens and about 4,000 staff working inside the compound the size of a small town.

A well-fortified town, that is. Besides its own formidable security, the embassy lies inside Kabul's Green Zone, where entire neighborhoods have been closed off and giant blast walls line streets closed to outside



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traffic. Afghan security forces guard the barricades into the district, which also houses the Presidential Palace, other embassies and senior government officials.

The only route out is Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport, currently protected by U.S. and Turkish troops. Before America can declare its war over, the security of the airport will have to be settled. Ankara is in talks with Washington, the United Nations and the Afghan government to decide who will protect the airport and who will foot the bill.

For now, the airport is running without interruption, except for restrictions imposed by a deadly third COVID surge that has prompted some countries to suspend flights to Kabul. However, India is not one of them — as many as eight flights arrive weekly from India — and as a result, the virus' delta variant, first identified in India, is rampant in Afghanistan.

In Kabul, it's common to hear speculation about when and if the U.S. Embassy will evacuate and shut down, with images resurrected of America's last days in Saigon at the end of the Vietnam war.

Already, long before the last U.S. and NATO troops began packing to leave, American diplomats arriving at the airport were taken to the heavily fortified U.S. Embassy by helicopter. The 4-mile road trip through Kabul's chaotic traffic was considered too dangerous.

Suicide bombers struck along that road with uncomfortable frequency.

For many of Washington's new diplomats to Afghanistan, their view of the country and Kabul is limited to what they see from the confines of the sprawling embassy compound, hidden deep inside the Green Zone and protected by 10-foot blast walls, heavily armed U.S. Marines, explosive-sniffing dogs and cameras at every corner.

An American employee of Resolute Support, the name of NATO's military mission in Afghanistan, who arrived in the country last November, had not been outside the giant gates of the mission by June.

Citing security concerns, the U.S. spokesperson said she couldn't reveal evacuation plans, or even if that's a part of today's conversation, but said the embassy has detailed plans for every scenario to protect its staff.

If there is an evacuation, it wouldn't be the first.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul shut down in 1989, when the former Soviet Union left the country after negotiating an end to its 10-year invasion of Afghanistan. The pro-communist government collapsed three years later, followed by a brutal civil war carried out by most of the same U.S.-allied warlords who still operate in Kabul today — another reason why fear of a new civil war resonates.

The Taliban have issued statements saying they are not looking for a military takeover of Kabul. Washington has repeatedly warned that a military move on the Afghan capital would return the insurgent movement to pariah status, denying it international recognition and assistance.

Still, not long after President Joe Biden announced in mid-April that American troops would be gone by Sept. 11, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani expressed concern that Afghan forces might not be able to protect all the diplomatic missions in Kabul, according to an official familiar with the discussions. There were even suggestions that smaller embassies move into the U.S. compound for their protection.

The U.S. Embassy responded with an immediate so-called "ordered lockdown," further restricting staff movements and new arrivals.

On April 27, the U.S. Embassy's chargé d'affaires, Ross Wilson, tweeted that non-essential U.S. personnel would leave. The spokesperson would not say how many people left under that order, saying only that staff numbers are constantly being assessed.

Wilson blamed the departure on "increasing violence & threat reports in Kabul." He also posted a U.S. Embassy site warning to all American citizens to leave Afghanistan immediately on any available commercial flight. And to Americans planning to visit Afghanistan, the order was clear: don't.

The Australian Embassy closed, and most other Western embassies reduced their staff.

Most expatriate or foreign staff with international aid organizations in Kabul also left, said Naemat Rohi, deputy director of Akbar, an umbrella organization representing 167 aid organizations, including 87 international charities.

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"They said they were going on R&R, but that was just so as not to create panic among their local staff, but they were leaving for their security reasons," he said.

The exodus prompted the Taliban to issue multiple statements assuring aid groups and Afghans working for Western organizations they had nothing to fear.

But that hasn't reassured interpreters who worked for the U.S. military. The spokesperson said some might be evacuated from Afghanistan but relocated to a third country while their immigration visas to the U.S. are processed. Thousands of applications are in the pipeline. Thousands more that were denied are being appealed.

The Taliban's quick successes in northern Afghanistan, particularly the rapid surrender of Afghan soldiers in several instances, has heightened security fears in Kabul, where the presence of the heavily armed warlords resurrects images of the 1990s civil war.

Marshal Rashid Dostum, an Uzbek warlord accused of war crimes, some against personal enemies who were once his allies, holds a military base on a hilltop overlooking Kabul's posh Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood. His militia has an uneasy relationship with Ghani's government and other powerful warlords, including the new Defense Minister Bismillah Khan.

Heavily armed guards patrol Wazir Akbar Khan streets, lined with marble mansions of government officials, many of them former warlords. Though united today against the Taliban, they have a brutal history of fighting each other.

For some, a Taliban play for Kabul seems inevitable.

"After the takeover of the districts and some provinces, the Taliban will make a try to enter Kabul," said Torek Farhadi, a former adviser to the Afghan government. "They will face the regular army, but also the warlords who have accumulated huge wealth out of war related contracts."

## US left Afghan airfield at night, didn't tell new commander

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

BAGRAM, Afghanistan (AP) — The U.S. left Afghanistan's Bagram Airfield after nearly 20 years by shutting off the electricity and slipping away in the night without notifying the base's new Afghan commander, who discovered the Americans' departure more than two hours after they left, Afghan military officials said.

Afghanistan's army showed off the sprawling air base Monday, providing a rare first glimpse of what had been the epicenter of America's war to unseat the Taliban and hunt down the al-Qaida perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks on America.

The U.S. announced Friday it had completely vacated its biggest airfield in the country in advance of a final withdrawal the Pentagon says will be completed by the end of August.

"We (heard) some rumor that the Americans had left Bagram ... and finally by seven o'clock in the morning, we understood that it was confirmed that they had already left Bagram," Gen. Mir Asadullah Kohistani, Bagram's new commander said.

U.S. military spokesman Col. Sonny Leggett did not address the specific complaints of many Afghan soldiers who inherited the abandoned airfield, instead referring to a statement last week.

The statement said the handover of the many bases had been in the process soon after President Joe Biden's mid-April announcement that America was withdrawing the last of its forces. Leggett said in the statement that they had coordinated their departures with Afghanistan's leaders.

Before the Afghan army could take control of the airfield about an hour's drive from the Afghan capital Kabul, it was invaded by a small army of looters, who ransacked barrack after barrack and rummaged through giant storage tents before being evicted, according to Afghan military officials.

"At first we thought maybe they were Taliban," said Abdul Raouf, a soldier of 10 years. He said the the U.S. called from the Kabul airport and said "we are here at the airport in Kabul."

Kohistani insisted the Afghan National Security and Defense Force could hold on to the heavily fortified base despite a string of Taliban wins on the battlefield. The airfield also includes a prison with about 5,000 prisoners, many of them allegedly Taliban.

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The Taliban's latest surge comes as the last U.S. and NATO forces pull out of the country. As of last week, most NATO soldiers had already quietly left. The last U.S. soldiers are likely to remain until an agreement to protect the Kabul Hamid Karzai International Airport, which is expected to be done by Turkey, is completed.

Meanwhile, in northern Afghanistan, district after district has fallen to the Taliban. In just the last two days hundreds of Afghan soldiers fled across the border into Tajikistan rather than fight the insurgents.

"In battle it is sometimes one step forward and some steps back," said Kohistani.

Kohistani said the Afghan military is changing its strategy to focus on the strategic districts. He insisted they would retake them in the coming days without saying how that would be accomplished.

On display on Monday was a massive facility, the size of a small city, that had been exclusively used by the U.S. and NATO. The sheer size is extraordinary, with roadways weaving through barracks and past hangar-like buildings. There are two runways and over 100 parking spots for fighter jets known as revetments because of the blast walls that protect each aircraft. One of the two runways is 12,000 feet (3,660 meters) long and was built in 2006. There's a passenger lounge, a 50-bed hospital and giant hangar-size tents filled with supplies such as furniture.

Kohistani said the U.S. left behind 3.5 million items, all itemized by the departing U.S. military. They include tens of thousands of bottles of water, energy drinks and military ready-made meals, known as MRE's.

"When you say 3.5 million items, it is every small items, like every phone, every door knob, every window in every barracks, every door in every barracks," he said.

The big ticket items left behind include thousands of civilian vehicles, many of them without keys to start them, and hundreds of armored vehicles. Kohistani said the U.S. also left behind small weapons and the ammunition for them, but the departing troops took heavy weapons with them. Ammunition for weapons not being left behind for the Afghan military was blown up before they left.

Afghan soldiers who wandered Monday throughout the base that had once seen as many as 100,000 U.S. troops were deeply critical of how the U.S. left Bagram, leaving in the night without telling the Afghan soldiers tasked with patrolling the perimeter.

"In one night, they lost all the goodwill of 20 years by leaving the way they did, in the night, without telling the Afghan soldiers who were outside patrolling the area," said Afghan soldier Naematullah, who asked that only his one name be used.

Within 20 minutes of the U.S.'s silent departure on Friday, the electricity was shut down and the base was plunged into darkness, said Raouf, the soldier of 10 years who has also served in Taliban strongholds of Helmand and Kandahar provinces.

The sudden darkness was like a signal to the looters, he said. They entered from the north, smashing through the first barrier, ransacking buildings, loading anything that was not nailed down into trucks.

On Monday, three days after the U.S. departure, Afghan soldiers were still collecting piles of garbage that included empty water bottles, cans and empty energy drinks left behind by the looters.

Kohistani, meanwhile, said the nearly 20 years of U.S. and NATO involvement in Afghanistan was appreciated but now it was time for Afghans to step up.

"We have to solve our problem. We have to secure our country and once again build our country with our own hands," he said.

## Wildlife, air quality at risk as Great Salt Lake nears low

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The silvery blue waters of the Great Salt Lake sprawl across the Utah desert, having covered an area nearly the size of Delaware for much of history. For years, though, the largest natural lake west of the Mississippi River has been shrinking. And a drought gripping the American West could make this year the worst yet.

The receding water is already affecting the nesting spot of pelicans that are among the millions of birds dependent on the lake. Sailboats have been hoisted out of the water to keep them from getting stuck in the mud. More dry lakebed getting exposed could send arsenic-laced dust into the air that millions breathe.

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"A lot of us have been talking about the lake as flatlining," said Lynn de Freitas, executive director of Friends of the Great Salt Lake.

The lake's levels are expected to hit a 170-year low this year. It comes as the drought has the U.S. West bracing for a brutal wildfire season and coping with already low reservoirs. Utah Gov. Spencer Cox, a Republican, has begged people to cut back on lawn watering and "pray for rain."

For the Great Salt Lake, though, it is only the latest challenge. People for years have been diverting water from rivers that flow into the lake to water crops and supply homes. Because the lake is shallow — about 35 feet (11 meters) at its deepest point — less water quickly translates to receding shorelines.

The water that remains stretches across a chunk of northern Utah, with highways on one end and remote land on the other. A resort — long since closed — once drew sunbathers who would float like corks in the extra salty waters. Picnic tables once a quick stroll from the shore are now a 10-minute walk away.

Robert Atkinson, 91, remembers that resort and the feeling of weightlessness in the water. When he returned this year to fly over the lake in a motorized paraglider, he found it changed.

"It's much shallower than I would have expected it to be," he said.

The waves have been replaced by dry, gravelly lakebed that's grown to 750 square miles (1,942 square kilometers). Winds can whip up dust from the dry lakebed that is laced with naturally occurring arsenic, said Kevin Perry, a University of Utah atmospheric scientist.

It blows through a region that already has some of the dirtiest wintertime air in the country because of seasonal geographic conditions that trap pollution between the mountains.

Perry warns of what happened at California's Owens Lake, which was pumped dry to feed thirsty Los Angeles and created a dust bowl that cost millions of dollars to tamp down. The Great Salt Lake is much larger and closer to a populated area, Perry said.

Luckily, much of the bed of Utah's giant lake has a crust that makes it tougher for dust to blow. Perry is researching how long the protective crust will last and how dangerous the soil's arsenic might be to people.

This year is primed to be especially bleak. Utah is one of the driest states in the country, and most of its water comes from snowfall. The snowpack was below normal last winter and the soil was dry, meaning much of the melted snow that flowed down the mountains soaked into the ground.

Most years, the Great Salt Lake gains up to 2 feet (half a meter) from spring runoff. This year, it was just 6 inches (15 centimeters), Perry said.

"We've never had an April lake level that was as low as it was this year," he said.

More exposed lakebed also means more people have ventured onto the crust, including off-road vehicles that damage it, Great Salt Lake coordinator Laura Vernon said.

"The more continued drought we have, the more of the salt crust will be weathered and more dust will become airborne because there's less of that protective crust layer," she said.

The swirling dust also could speed the melting of Utah's snow, according to research by McKenzie Skiles, a snow hydrologist at the University of Utah. Her study showed that dust from one storm made the snow so much darker that it melted a week earlier than expected. While much of that dust came from other sources, an expansion of dry lakebed raises concerns about changes to the state's billion-dollar ski industry.

"No one wants to ski dirty snow," she said.

While the lake's vast waters are too salty for most creatures except brine shrimp, for sailors like Marilyn Ross, 65, it's a tranquil paradise with panoramas of distant peaks.

"You get out on this lake and it's better than going to a psychiatrist, it's really very calming," she said.

But this year, the little red boat named Promiscuous that she and her husband have sailed for more than 20 years was hoisted out of the water with a massive crane just as the season got underway. Record-low lake levels were expected to leave the boats stuck in the mud rather than skimming the waves. Low water has kept the other main marina closed for years.

"Some people don't think that we're ever going to be able to get back in," Ross said.

Brine shrimp support a \$57 million fish food industry in Utah but in the coming years, less water could make the salinity too great for even those tiny creatures to survive.

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"We're really coming to a critical time for the Great Salt Lake," said Jaimi Butler, coordinator for Great Salt Lake Institute at Westminster College in Salt Lake City. She studies the American white pelican, one of the largest birds in North America.

They flock to Gunnison Island, a remote outpost in the lake where up to 20% of the bird's population nests, with male and female birds cooperating to have one watch the eggs at all times.

"Mom goes fishing and dad stays at the nest," Butler said.

But the falling lake levels have exposed a land bridge to the island, allowing foxes and coyotes to come across and hunt for rodents and other food. The activity frightens the shy birds accustomed to a quiet place to raise their young, so they flee the nests, leaving the eggs and baby birds to be eaten by gulls.

Pelicans aren't the only birds dependent on the lake. It's a stopover for many species to feed on their journey south.

A study from Utah State University says that to maintain lake levels, diverting water from rivers that flow into it would have to decrease by 30%. But for the state with the nation's fastest-growing population, addressing the problem will require a major shift in how water is allocated and perceptions of the lake, which has a strong odor in some places caused treated wastewater and is home to billions of brine flies.

"There's a lot of people who believe that every drop that goes into the Great Salt Lake is wasted," Perry said. "That's the perspective I'm trying to change. The lake has needs, too. And they're not being met."

## **In Myanmar, the military and police declare war on medics**

By KRISTEN GELINEAU and VICTORIA MILKO Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) —

The clandestine clinic was under fire, and the medics inside were in tears.

Hidden away in a Myanmar monastery, this safe haven had sprung up for those injured while protesting the military's overthrow of the government. But now security forces had discovered its location.

A bullet struck a young man in the throat as he defended the door, and the medical staff tried frantically to stop the hemorrhaging. The floor was slick with blood.

In Myanmar, the military has declared war on health care — and on doctors themselves, who were early and fierce opponents of the takeover in February. Security forces are arresting, attacking and killing medical workers, dubbing them enemies of the state. With medics driven underground amid a global pandemic, the country's already fragile healthcare system is crumbling.

"The junta is purposely targeting the whole healthcare system as a weapon of war," says one Yangon doctor on the run for months, whose colleagues at an underground clinic were arrested during a raid. "We believe that treating patients, doing our humanitarian job, is a moral job....I didn't think that it would be accused as a crime."

Inside the clinic that day, the young man shot in the throat was fading. His sister wailed. A minute later, he was dead.

One of the clinic's medical students, whose name like those of several other medics has been withheld to protect her from retaliation, began to sweat and cry. She had never seen anyone shot.

Now she too was at risk. Two protesters smashed the glass out of a window so the medics could escape. "We are so sorry," the nurses told their patients.

One doctor stayed behind to finish suturing the patients' wounds. The others jumped through the window and hid in a nearby apartment complex for hours. Some were so terrified that they never returned home.

"I cry every day from that day," the medical student says. "I cannot sleep. I cannot eat well."

"That was a terrible day."

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The suffering caused by the military's takeover of this nation of 54 million has been relentless. Security forces have killed at least 890 people, including a 6-year-old girl they shot in the stomach, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which monitors arrests and deaths in Myanmar. Around 5,100 people are in detention and thousands have been forcibly disappeared. The military, known as the

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Tatmadaw, and police have returned mutilated corpses to families as tools of terror.

Amid all the atrocities, the military's attacks on medics, one of the most revered professions in Myanmar, have sparked particular outrage. Myanmar is now one of the most dangerous places on earth for health-care workers, with 240 attacks this year -- nearly half of the 508 globally tracked by the World Health Organization. That's by far the highest of any country.

"This is a group of folks who are standing up for what's right and standing up against decades of human rights abuses in Myanmar," says Raha Wala, advocacy director of the U.S.-based Physicians for Human Rights. "The Tatmadaw is hell-bent on using any means necessary to quash their fundamental rights and freedoms."

The military has issued arrest warrants for 400 doctors and 180 nurses, with photos of their faces plastered all over state media like "Wanted" posters. They are charged with supporting and taking part in the "civil disobedience" movement.

At least 157 healthcare workers have been arrested, 32 wounded and 12 killed since Feb. 1, according to Insecurity Insight, which analyzes conflicts around the globe. In recent weeks, arrest warrants have increasingly been issued for nurses.

Myanmar's medics and their advocates argue that these assaults violate international law, which makes it illegal to attack health workers and patients or deny them care based on their political affiliations. In 2016, after similar attacks in Syria, the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution demanding that medics be granted safe passage by all parties in a war.

"In other country's protests, the medics are safe. They are exempt. Here, there are no exemptions," says Dr. Nay Lin Tun, a general practitioner who has been on the run since February, and now provides care covertly.

Medics are targeted by the military because they are not only highly respected but also well-organized, with a strong network of unions and professional groups. In 2015, doctors pinned black ribbons to their uniforms to protest the appointment of military personnel to the Ministry of Health. Their Facebook page quickly gained thousands of followers, and the military appointments stopped.

This time, the protest by medics started days after the military ousted democratically elected leaders, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, from power. From remote towns in the northern mountains to the main city of Yangon, they walked off their jobs on military-owned facilities, pinning red ribbons to their clothes.

The response from the military was fierce, with security forces beating medical workers and stealing supplies. Security forces have occupied at least 51 hospitals since the takeover, according to Insecurity Insight, Physicians for Human Rights and the Johns Hopkins Center for Public Health and Human Rights.

On March 28, during a strike in the city of Monywa, a nurse was fatally shot in the head, according to AAPP. On May 8, hundreds of miles away in northern Kachin state, a doctor was arrested, tied up and also fatally shot in the head while passing a military base.

Rather than acknowledging its attacks on medical workers, the military is instead accusing them of genocide for not treating patients — despite itself being accused of genocide against the country's Rohingya Muslim minority.

"They are killing people in cold blood. If this is not genocide, what shall I call it?" military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun said during an April 9 press conference broadcast live on national television.

A military spokesperson responded to written questions submitted by The Associated Press only by sending an article that blamed supposed election fraud for the country's problems. Suu Kyi's party won the November election in a landslide, and independent poll watchers have largely found it free of significant issues.

The crackdown on health care is hitting an already vulnerable system at a critical time. Even before the takeover, Myanmar had just 6.7 physicians per 10,000 people in 2018 — significantly lower than the global average of 15.6 in 2017, according to the World Bank.

Now, testing for COVID-19 has plummeted, and the vaccination program has stalled, with its former head, Dr. Htar Htar Lin, arrested and charged with high treason in June. Even if vaccines are available,

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people are afraid of being arrested just by going to the hospital, one medic told the AP.

Given the military's crackdown on information, there are no independent figures on current COVID cases and deaths. The state media has reported almost 160,000 positive cases and 3,347 deaths. But experts say that is an undercount, and there are clear signs another COVID surge is happening in the country.

"What we're seeing is really a human rights emergency that is turning into a public health disaster," says Jennifer Leigh, an epidemiologist and Myanmar researcher for Physicians for Human Rights. "We're definitely seeing echoes of what happened in Syria, where health workers and the health facility was systematically targeted."

The crackdown has forced doctors to make excruciating choices and find new ways to reach patients.

As an emergency physician at a government hospital, Dr. Zaw had been on the frontlines of the fight against COVID. In January, the first vaccines arrived from India, giving the exhausted doctor a rush of hope.

But after months of fighting a virus, she found herself instead fighting for democracy. Going on strike was an agonizing decision; as a doctor, she believed in caring for those in need. However, doing so meant working for and legitimizing the generals who overthrew her government.

The solution was providing care in secret, says Zaw, whom the AP is identifying by a partial name to protect her from retaliation.

In February, she helped set up a clinic tucked away in another monastery in another part of Myanmar, with supplies donated from a COVID facility where she had previously volunteered. A generator keeps the equipment running during the frequent power cuts. Select contacts in nearby townships who know the clinic's location direct the sick and wounded there.

Zaw fled the housing the government provides public doctors. She has since moved three times to avoid detection, and sent her family to a safehouse.

Now, she lives above the clinic, sleeping alongside seven other doctors and nurses on mats separated only by curtains. It has become too risky to leave the compound; she knows the soldiers are hunting for the clinic, and for her.

"Because of them, our hopes, our dreams, are hopeless," she says. "Some of the medical students and some of our doctors are dying because of them."

Sometimes, Zaw and her colleagues are tipped off by informants the night before a raid, giving them time to dismantle the clinic and hide the equipment. But on one recent day, they only had time to hide themselves. There was almost no warning, just the frantic shouts from the monks that the soldiers were already at the gate.

Zaw raced to a nearby building with her colleagues. Moments later, she watched through a window as soldiers stormed her clinic, frightening the patient she had just been treating for hypertension and diabetes. Normally shy and soft-spoken, she fought the urge to run out and hit them.

Volunteers told the soldiers that no government doctors were working there. The soldiers eventually left, and Zaw returned to her patient. She knows she was lucky that day, but she intends to keep treating the sick — even if her efforts end in her death.

"All people have to die one day," Zaw says. "So I'm prepared."

While some medics have gone underground, others have fled from the cities to the border areas.

Before the military takeover, it was difficult to persuade government doctors from the cities to work in states like Kachin, where ethnic armed groups have long battled the Tatmadaw, according to the founder of an underground clinic and medical training organization there. Since February, however, government doctors have come to Kachin to provide care and train others in emergency medicine, says the founder, who spoke anonymously to avoid retaliation. The group now has between 20 and 30 trainers.

Their clinic shifts locations constantly, sometimes operating out of a tent. The medics treat the injured from landmines, homemade bombs and battles with security forces.

The fear of being discovered is intense; the founder frets over a new car parked in front of his house and new faces in the neighborhood. His wife packed emergency bags filled with clothing, supplies and

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cash. Security forces recently abducted someone in front of one medic's home, he says, and were probably looking for the medic.

"Every day since I started doing this, I know my life is in danger," he says.

The war on medics is already taking a severe toll on those who need health care, especially the young. Under a tarp in the jungle pounded by relentless rain, 20-year-old Naing Li stared helplessly at her firstborn child, just five days old. The newborn's breathing had grown labored, and his tiny body felt like it was on fire.

She could do nothing. Her husband was back in their village in western Myanmar, near the embattled town of Mindat, fighting advancing soldiers. And there were no medics around to help — not here in the jungle where she had fled with her baby, and not in their village either.

The baby is among about 600,000 newborns who aren't receiving essential care, putting them at risk of illness, disability and death, according to UNICEF, the U.N. children's agency. A million children are missing out on routine immunizations. Nearly 5 million are not receiving Vitamin A supplements to prevent infection and blindness, and more than 40,000 are no longer getting treated for malnutrition.

At the same time, COVID is spreading rapidly along Myanmar's porous border with Bangladesh, India and Thailand, alarming health experts.

"This has the potential to turn into a very big and very bad public health crisis," says Alessandra Dentice, UNICEF's Myanmar representative.

Naing Li and her baby had already survived one crisis — a difficult labor at home. They hadn't been able to go to a hospital in nearby Mindat, where the military launched a bloody assault and declared martial law. The fighting closed the few private clinics that had remained open.

Little Mg Htan Naing was healthy when he entered into this chaotic world on May 16, looking like his mother. But five days later, in the jungle, the swaddled infant struggled to breathe.

By the next morning, Naing Li was desperate enough to risk returning home for help. When she arrived, however, she found her husband, 23-year-old Naing Htan, struck in the back by shrapnel.

The couple could only watch as their son slipped away. At 11 a.m., Mg Htan Naing died in his mother's arms.

Men in Myanmar are not supposed to cry in front of others, but the father could not contain his grief.

"I cried out loud in agony even though I am a man," he says.

Even if the couple had found a doctor in time, they likely would have faced the challenge of finding medicine. Healthcare workers interviewed by the AP said soldiers are blocking aid and have taken medical equipment and drugs from clinics during raids.

A Mindat resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid retaliation, said she and her family stored medicine in preparation before the fighting broke out. But with water supplies cut and no way to properly clean themselves, they worry about diseases.

"It is very difficult here," she says. "If we get sick, we cannot go to the clinic. We have to take whatever medicine we have at home."

The collapse of the public hospital system has also put pressure on aid groups.

In Shan and Kachin states, Médecins Sans Frontières has taken on more than 3,045 patients who would otherwise have been treated under the government's AIDS program. The clinics have been forced to cut the life-saving HIV/AIDS medicine they distribute to patients from three-month supplies to one.

Many aid groups have shut down or drastically scaled back operations. After the military takeover, aid groups stopped coming to a camp for 1,000 displaced people in Kachin state, a women's advocate says. A weekly free government clinic closed.

Now, the children and elderly there are suffering from diarrhea and malnourishment. There is no one to perform surgeries or deliver babies. Food is scarce, and most people are relying on traditional medicines.

"We are barely scraping by," she says. "I feel death is just around the corner for us."

For countless others, like Mg Htan Naing, death has already come. The baby's parents buried him in



their garden, then fled. His father blames his son's death not on the doctors on strike, but on the soldiers who drove them from Mindat.

This is what haunts the country's caretakers of the sick and wounded: The people they could have saved, if only they had not been under attack.

"Given the chance, we could have stopped bleeding, we could have saved the patients, we could have prevented deaths. It hurts," says the Yangon doctor. "The people dying are not just nobodies. They are our country's future generations."

## Canadiens beat Lightning 3-2 in OT, avoid Stanley Cup sweep

By JOHN WAWROW AP Hockey Writer

MONTREAL (AP) — Josh Anderson delivered in overtime, and Montreal killed Tampa Bay's chance for a Stanley Cup sweep.

Anderson said the Canadiens weren't done, and he was right — at least for one night.

The speedy winger scored his second goal 3:57 into overtime, and the Canadiens avoided elimination by defeating the defending champion Lightning 3-2 in Game 4 on Monday.

"We didn't want to end it tonight in front of our fans. We expected to go to Tampa tomorrow," Anderson said. "I think everybody in that locker room did, you know, packed our bags this afternoon."

The series shifts to Tampa Bay for Game 5 on Wednesday night.

Carey Price stopped 32 shots for Montreal, and rookie defenseman Alexander Romanov also scored. The Canadiens also went 5 for 5 on the penalty kill, including a four-minute high-sticking penalty issued to captain Shea Weber with 1:01 remaining in regulation.

"Webby is our leader," forward Brendan Gallagher said. "I think we would have killed it for anyone, but he's been a rock for us since he's come to our team."

Pat Maroon and Barclay Goodrow scored for Tampa Bay, and Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 18 shots.

The Lightning are attempting to become the NHL's second team to win consecutive championships in the salary-cap era, which began in 2005. The Pittsburgh Penguins accomplished the feat with titles in 2016 and 2017.

Tampa Bay, which won the Cup last year by defeating Dallas in six games, is one resilient bunch, too. It is 13-0 over the past two playoffs when coming off a loss.

"Sometimes you play pretty good and it's a break here, a break there that just doesn't go your way. You just go to keep working through it," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. "No hanging our heads but I liked a lot of things we did tonight."

Montreal became the first team to score in OT to avoid a sweep in the Stanley Cup Final since the Bruins did it in 1946 against the Canadiens, according to STATS.

The Canadiens also avoided becoming the first team to get swept in the final round since Detroit won four straight over Washington to win the championship in 1998.

They drew some inspiration from Anderson, who provided his teammates with a rallying cry a day earlier when he said: "We're not finished yet."

"We understood the hole that we were in, but we just kind of talked about it: Find a way to win one game here," Gallagher said. "(Anderson) stepped up and scored a couple of big goals for us. It's going to be the same thing next game."

Interim coach Dominique Ducharme's lineup changes paid off, with Romanov stepping up in just his third career playoff game. Anderson was shifted to a new line, playing alongside Nick Suzuki and rookie Cole Caufield in Ducharme's bid to add more speed.

Anderson got his second career playoff overtime goal after he forced a turnover at the blue line and outraced Jan Rutta and Yanni Gourde to a loose puck along the left boards. He then directed the puck toward the net, where Caufield got a piece of it but pushed it wide.

Anderson jumped back in front and knocked the puck past Vasilevskiy inside the left post. His follow-through put him on the ice, where he celebrated the goal while on his back.

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Montreal was outscored 14-5 in the first three games, including a sloppy 6-3 loss in Game 3 on Friday. They got off to a better start Monday, thanks to Price stopping 12 shots in the opening period and Anderson converting Suzuki's centering pass at 15:39 for Montreal's first lead of the series.

Though Tampa Bay rallied twice to tie, the Canadiens never relinquished the lead.

The Lightning are 0-4 in OT this postseason, and 0-5 when giving up the first goal.

"We have confidence in the power play. We had some good looks throughout the game, but at the end of the day you want to bear down and score one there, but it didn't happen," said Lightning defenseman Victor Hedman, who had a shot from the slot get a piece of Price's blocker and go off the left post during a power-play chance late in the second period. "That was a close game overall."

Montreal is accustomed to overcoming adversity. The Canadiens entered the playoffs with the worst record among the 16 qualifiers before rallying from a 3-1 series deficit against Toronto. Montreal then swept Winnipeg in the second round and eliminated Vegas in six games in the semifinals to advance to its first final appearance in 28 years.

The Canadiens improved to 8-1 when facing elimination on home ice in the final.

The Lightning still get a chance to clinch the title on home ice and celebrate with their fans and — more importantly — family. It was something Tampa Bay was unable to do in the restricted-access bubble in Edmonton, Alberta, in September, when it defeated Dallas in six games for the title.

On Saturday, Canadian health officials denied the NHL an exemption to allow Lightning players' immediate family members to travel to Montreal.

Tampa Mayor Jane Castor may have got her wish in suggesting, a day earlier, that perhaps the Lightning "take it a little bit easy" in order to win back home.

Montreal still faces a daunting climb.

In NHL playoff history, only four teams have rallied to win a series after losing the the first three games, with Toronto the only one to do so in the final in beating Detroit to win the Cup in 1942. The Los Angeles Kings were the last team to overcome a 3-0 series deficit by beating San Jose in a 2014 first-round series.

## Galesburg, an American crossroad, tunes out feuding Congress

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

GALESBURG, Ill. (AP) — Pickup trucks and cars rumble north across East Main Street's railroad tracks into Galesburg, Illinois, past the red-brick Lindstrom's appliances building that has occupied the same corner for more than 100 years.

An edifice from more prosperous days, the Orpheum Theater near the remodeled Amtrak station anchors one end of a downtown lined with banks, antique shops, eateries and empty storefronts. The bronze likeness of Galesburg's most famous native, the poet Carl Sandburg, stands watch at the other end. A plaque commemorates the spot where Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas drew thousands to their 1858 U.S. Senate campaign debate.

In this town in the heart of the Midwest, the fights in Washington seem distant. On cable TV, Democrats and Republicans feud over things like abolishing the filibuster in the Senate, creating a commission to investigate the Jan. 6 assault on the Capitol or whether Democrats should use a complicated budget process to ram through President Joe Biden's agenda.

But in interviews with close to 30 people over three days in Galesburg, conversations are dominated by issues much closer to home, like rising local crime, racial strife and whether life can return to an approximation of normal after a deadly pandemic.

And their voices matter because it is places like Galesburg, among a few dozen swing congressional districts in the country that will have an outsize voice in the midterm elections next year, with control of Congress and the fate of President Joe Biden's agenda in the balance. In 2020, voters here favored President Donald Trump but also their incumbent Democratic congresswoman, Cheri Bustos.

"If Trump could win and the Democrat won, you're looking at the top tier of competitive places," said David Winston, a Republican pollster. "Wherever you see independents playing an overwhelming role,

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those are the districts to follow.

Both parties will be trying to persuade a restive, anxious electorate.

Outside a popular coffee shop, Margaret Tolley bemoaned the rash of shootings, not in Chicago 200 miles (320 kilometers) away, but just blocks away in her hometown.

"Galesburg has had so many shootings this year," said Tolley, a 70-year-old retired 4th-grade teacher and lifelong resident. "I mean, where is this coming from? It makes me crazy. I hate this. I mean, this is Galesburg!"

Galesburg, a city of just under 30,000 people in western Illinois, is starting to emerge from the fog of the COVID-19 pandemic and to address long-festering conflicts from the Trump era.

"People are trying to figure out how to be OK with each other," said Kim Thierry, a 59-year-old retired state employee. "Can we be friends?"

The halfway point between Rock Island on the Mississippi River and Peoria 100 miles (160 km) southeast, Galesburg is represented by Bustos, a moderate Democrat who is not seeking re-election. The district is one of only seven in the country to choose Trump for president and a Democrat for Congress.

Once a Democratic bastion powered by organized labor, Galesburg has drifted more Republican as union jobs have waned.

An outbreak in crime has stirred emotions here, and Democrats are on guard against Republican accusations that their policies are to blame.

By early February, Knox County State's Attorney Jeremy Karlin, a Democrat elected in November, was juggling three deadly shootings.

"Here, it's meth," said Karlin, 52. "Meth touches half the cases I have. And it's not the meth you make in your house. It's the meth that comes across the border in 90 to 100% pure form."

Even a 42-year-old city alderwoman was in court after police said they found methamphetamine tucked in a cigarette pack inside her car during a traffic stop, according to The Register Mail in Galesburg.

Methamphetamine is a newer and pernicious problem here, and people would prefer to recall the town's more sanguine beginnings.

Settled more than 180 years ago, Galesburg was built around Knox College, founded by Presbyterians seeking a Christian school on the western frontier. The city soon became home to Illinois' first anti-slavery society.

Today, the liberal arts college just off downtown with its Tudor-Gothic campus shaded by towering elms, enrolls about 1,100. Notable alumni include newspaper chain pioneer Ellen Browning Scripps and John Podesta, a top adviser to Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama.

The largest local employer is BNSF Railway, with 1,300 workers for the nation's largest freight carrier. But it is a lonely vestige of Galesburg's once defining blue-collar past.

A Maytag factory closed 16 years ago, part of a wave of thousands lost of union manufacturing jobs over the past 40 years.

While Biden talks about a massive infrastructure plan as a potential boon for organized labor, some union representatives here say it cannot cure Galesburg's ills. Some prefer the more modest bipartisan package in play in Washington.

The compromise bill could "put people to work and make people move to this community," said Jeremy Schultz, 44, an electrical workers union organizer. "I'd like to see all of it, but I don't think that's realistic."

Schultz said Trump was effective in stoking economic anxiety and appealing to cultural issues like gun rights. "A lot of them fill their heads with things that are pretty slanted," Schultz said of Trump supporters.

Not all the economic signs are gloomy. Thai and Korean restaurants have moved into old pharmacies and dime stores downtown. A midweek, noon-hour music and food fair and in-person Knox College orientation drew families to nearby spas and brew pubs, sprinkling a sense of post-pandemic renewal over downtown.

Still, the restaurants that have helped downtown survive are struggling to add staff and maintain hours. Brad Clark, president of Tompkins State Bank, says he also has had trouble filling teller positions, a common theme among the local businesses.

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Like other, more conservative Galesburg voters, Clark blames extended federal unemployment benefits for encouraging workers to stay idle, and fears they are nudging inflation upward.

"Employers are having to pay more to get people back to work," said Clark, 59. "So what's that going to do to inflation and the whole economy?"

Though the pandemic has killed more than 150 people here, the vaccination rate of 42% as of June was well below the Illinois state average of 53%. Overall, concern over the coronavirus seems to be fading.

But the hangover from the 2020 election has not. Debra Florio, 70, a retired nurse, believes Trump's false claims that he actually won. On the other side, John Bento, 54, an electrical engineer, remains incensed by the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol insurrection.

The disconnect in their views is likely to form the lines of the coming congressional election. Cultural fault lines over race are also readily evident.

Last summer, Mayor John Pritchard fought a resolution sought by the NAACP to acknowledge "institutionalized racism" in policing, hiring and public health. Pritchard, who is 66 and white, rejected the idea that racism is at the heart of disparities today.

Brittany Grimes, president of the local NAACP, challenged him with a report that found most of Galesburg's 14-percent Black population — thousands of citizens — were living in poverty.

The confrontation exposed a long-simmering tension that became much more personal.

Mark Kleine, a business owner and philanthropist, blamed the NAACP's request on pressure from national forces to "dredge up stuff about systemic racism."

"All these people think a town like ours has to get on the bandwagon," said Kleine, 63. "We really don't, because we don't have those problems."

Tiana Cervantez, 44, a school board member, wiped a tear from her eye as she recalled the angry opposition to the resolution from "people I had known my whole life."

Pritchard was defeated for a third term in April by a 53-year-old Knox College professor, Peter Schwartzman, who supported the resolution.

In the race to fill Bustos seat, the battle has not yet been joined.

## Hunt for Capitol attackers still on 6 months after Jan. 6

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

The first waves of arrests in the deadly siege at the U.S. Capitol focused on the easy targets. Dozens in the pro-Trump mob openly bragged about their actions on Jan. 6 on social media and were captured in shocking footage broadcast live by national news outlets.

But six months after the insurrection, the Justice Department is still hunting for scores of rioters, even as the first of more than 500 people already arrested have pleaded guilty. The struggle reflects the massive scale of the investigation and the grueling work still ahead for authorities in the face of an increasing effort by some Republican lawmakers to rewrite what happened that day.

Among those who still haven't been caught: the person who planted two pipe bombs outside the offices of the Republican and Democratic national committees the night before the melee, as well as many people accused of attacks on law enforcement officers or violence and threats against journalists. The FBI website seeking information about those involved in the Capitol violence includes more than 900 pictures of roughly 300 people labeled "unidentified."

Part of the problem is that authorities made very few arrests on Jan. 6. They were focused instead on clearing the building of members of the massive mob that attacked police, damaged historic property and combed the halls for lawmakers they threatened to kill. Federal investigators are forced to go back and hunt down participants.

The FBI has since received countless tips and pieces of digital media from the public. But a tip is only the first step of a painstaking process — involving things like search warrants and interviews — to confirm people's identities and their presence at the insurrection in order to bring a case in court. And authorities have no record of many of the attackers because this was their first run-in with the law.

"Most of these people never showed up on the radar screen before," said Frank Montoya Jr., a retired

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FBI special agent who led the bureau's field offices in Seattle and Honolulu. "You watch the movies and a name comes up on the radar screen and they know all the aliases and the last place he ate dinner, all with a click of a button. Unfortunately, that's not how it is in reality."

The FBI has been helped by "sedition hunters," or armchair detectives who have teamed up to identify some of the most elusive suspects, using crowdsourcing to pore over the vast trove of videos and photos from the assault.

Forrest Rogers, a business consultant who helped form a group of sedition hunters called "Deep State Dogs," said the group has reported the possible identities of about 100 suspects to the FBI based on evidence it collected.

Sometimes, a distinctive article of clothing helps the group make a match. In one case, a woman carrying a unique iPhone case on Jan. 6 had been photographed with the same case at an earlier protest, Rogers said.

"It's seeking justice," he said. "This is something that's unprecedented in the history of our country." Rogers asked, "Where else have you had several thousands of people who commit a crime and then immediately disperse all over the United States?"

John Scott-Railton is a senior researcher at the Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto who has been collaborating with journalists and others to identify suspects using digital clues. He said that while much is known about the "small fish" who committed crimes that day, a deeper understanding is needed of the actions of organized group leaders.

"We all need to be in a place where we can have conversations about what Jan. 6th was that go beyond a bunch of individuals motivated by a set of ideologies who showed up at the Capitol," he said.

Those being sought include many accused of violent attacks on officers. One video released by the FBI shows an unidentified man attacking officers with a baton. In another, a man is seen ripping the gas mask off an officer who screamed in pain as he was being crushed into a doorway by the angry mob.

In some cases, social media platforms have turned over incriminating posts that defendants tried to delete after their gleeful celebrations of the siege gave way to fears of being arrested. Often, the attackers' own family, friends or acquaintances tipped off authorities.

In one case, the FBI used facial comparison software to find a suspect on his girlfriend's Instagram account. Agents then went undercover, secretly recorded the man at work and got him on tape admitting to being in the crowd, which he described as "fun."

"The more of these people you identify — potentially through search warrants and social media communications — you're going to be able to identify others," said Tom O'Connor, who focused on counterterrorism as a special agent before leaving the bureau in 2019. "Those people who have been arrested will then be given the opportunity to cooperate and identify other persons involved."

The FBI has offered a reward of up to \$100,000 for information leading to the arrest of the person responsible for planting the pipe bombs in Washington on Jan. 5. Footage shows a person in a gray hooded sweatshirt, a mask and gloves appearing to place one of the explosives under a bench outside the Democratic National Committee and the person walking in an alley near the Republican National Committee before the bomb was placed there. It remains unclear whether the bombs were related to planning for the insurrection.

Justice Department officials say arresting everyone involved in the insurrection remains a top priority. Authorities recently arrested the 100th person accused of assaulting law enforcement as well as the first person accused of assaulting a member of the press — a man prosecutors say tackled a cameraman.

"They will find them," said Robert Anderson Jr., former executive assistant director of the FBI's Criminal, Cyber, Response, and Services Branch. "I don't care how long it takes. If they are looking for them, they will find them."

More than a dozen Jan. 6 defendants have pleaded guilty, including two members of the Oath Keepers militia group who admitted to conspiring with other extremists to block the certification of President Joe Biden's victory.

Most of the other plea deals reached so far are in cases where defendants were charged only with mis-

demeanors for illegally entering the Capitol. The only defendant who has been sentenced is an Indiana woman who pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor and was spared any time behind bars.

## As Tokyo Olympics approach, virus worries rise in Japan

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The pressure of hosting an Olympics during a still-active pandemic is beginning to show in Japan.

The games begin July 23, with organizers determined they will go on, even with a reduced number of spectators or possibly none at all. While Japan has made remarkable progress to vaccinate its population against COVID-19, the drive is losing steam because of supply shortages.

With tens of thousands of visitors coming to a country that is only 13.8% fully vaccinated, gaps in border controls have emerged, highlighted by the discovery of infections among the newly arrived team from Uganda, with positive tests for the highly contagious delta variant.

As cases grow in Tokyo, so have fears that the games will spread the virus.

"We must stay on high alert," Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga told reporters on July 1. Noting the rising caseloads, he said "having no spectators is a possibility."

Seiko Hashimoto, president of the Tokyo organizing committee, agreed.

"It's not that we are determined to have spectators regardless of the situation," Hashimoto said Friday.

Organizers, the International Olympic Committee and others are expected to meet this week to announce new restrictions because of the fast-changing coronavirus situation.

Amid the criticism, Suga went to Tokyo's Haneda international airport June 28 to inspect virus testing for arrivals. He vowed to ensure appropriate border controls as a growing number of Olympic and Paralympic athletes, officials and media begin entering Japan for the games.

On Monday, Tokyo confirmed 342 new cases, the 16th straight day of an increase. On Saturday, the capital reported 716 cases, highest in five weeks.

At a meeting of government advisers, experts warned of the possibility of infections exploding during the games, projecting daily caseloads exceeding 1,000. They said that would severely strain health care systems. In a worst-case scenario, there could be thousands of infections a day, causing hospitals to overflow, they said.

Ryuji Wakita, director-general of the National Institute of Infectious Diseases and the head of a government COVID-19 advisory board, urged tighter border controls to detect and isolate infected arrivals at airports to prevent infections from spreading from Tokyo to the suburbs.

In a case that has shocked many in Japan, a member of the Ugandan team tested positive upon arrival June 19 at Narita International Airport and was quarantined there. The rest of the nine-member team was allowed to travel more than 500 kilometers (300 miles) on a chartered bus to their pre-Olympics camp in the western prefecture of Osaka.

Days later, a second member of the team from East Africa tested positive for the virus, forcing seven town officials and drivers who had close contact with them to self-isolate. The team itself is isolating at a hotel. Health officials said both infected Ugandans had the delta variant.

On Saturday, an athlete from Serbia also tested positive, causing the cancellation of his team's training in the central city of Nanto. The government also has acknowledged that four other people arriving for the Olympics tested positive after entering the country earlier this year.

Experts say the cases show that Japan's border health controls can be easily breached.

"There will be more people coming in. ... We should use this as a lesson so that similar problems won't be repeated elsewhere in Japan," Osaka Gov. Hirofumi Yoshimura told a recent regional governors' meeting where leaders adopted an urgent request for tighter border controls.

Under revised guidelines on health measures sent to 530 municipalities hosting Olympic training, airport officials will isolate an entire group if any member tests positive, and they will stay at designated facilities until the athletes' village opens July 12. Hosting towns can request guests to stop training and isolate

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themselves until they clear contact tracing and virus tests.

Dozens of municipalities in Japan have canceled their hosting arrangements because of virus worries, and many of them decided to use those facilities as vaccination sites.

In Tokyo, infections are spreading among the young and middle-aged who are largely unvaccinated. The more serious cases requiring hospitalization are gradually replacing the elderly, 26% of whom are now fully vaccinated, according to experts.

Japan's fully vaccinated rate of 13.8% is slightly above the world average of 11.3% but low compared with 47.4% in the United States and 49.5% in the U.K., according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Our World in Data.

Adding to the worries is uncertainty about Japan's vaccination campaign.

Workplace inoculations began in mid-June, with thousands of companies applying to vaccinate employees. But the government then indefinitely halted taking new applications for workplace and large-scale vaccination sites due to tight vaccine supplies.

"The progress exceeded our expectations," said vaccinations minister Taro Kono, noting that daily shots have likely reached 1.2 million or more. He said Japan will receive only one-third of the Pfizer-BioNTech Pfizer vaccine supply it had hoped to receive by late July.

"Confusion is spreading across Japan," because of this slowdown, said Kamon Iizumi, the Tokushima governor who also heads the National Governors' Association.

A vaccination center in Kagawa had to suspend shots for 30,000 people, and plans were put on hold for 6,500 companies in Gifu, in central Japan. Other areas including Osaka, Kobe and parts of Tokyo also were forced to suspend planned vaccinations from this week.

"What a disappointment," said Yukio Takano, head of Tokyo's Toshima district. "We have worked so hard to accelerate the rollouts and now we have to put on the brakes. ... What was the rush for?"

Japan began vaccinating medical workers in mid-February and the elderly in mid-April. Despite initial delays due to bungled reservations and shortages, the pace picked up in mid-May when vaccine imports stabilized and staff was secured to meet a primary target of fully vaccinating all 36 million elderly by the end of July.

Suga set up military-run mass vaccination centers in late May and added workplace and college campus venues to accelerate the progress.

On June 21, Japan eased its third state of emergency to less-stringent measures that focused on shorter operating hours at bars and restaurants in Tokyo and other metro areas until July 11.

Experts suggest, however, that a resurgence might require another emergency declaration during the Olympics. If so, organizers may have to reconsider their current limit of 10,000 people or 50% capacity at venues to perhaps barring all spectators.

Kengo Sakurada, president of Sompo Holdings and the head of an influential business lobby, said on June 30 that the current vaccination rate is not enough to hold a safe Olympics.

He said he supports having no spectators for events because the damage from a worse outbreak would be far greater.

"I would take the safer option," he said.

## Al Sharpton to eulogize Arkansas teen fatally shot by deputy

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — The Rev. Al Sharpton and an attorney who represented George Floyd's family are speaking at the memorial Tuesday for a white Arkansas teenager shot dead by a deputy, a case that has drawn the attention of civil rights activists nationally.

Sharpton planned to deliver the eulogy at the memorial for Hunter Brittain, the 17-year-old who was shot dead by a Lonoke County sheriff's deputy during a traffic stop June 23.

The ceremony will also feature remarks by Ben Crump, who represented Floyd's family after he died when a white Minneapolis police officer used his knee to pin the handcuffed Black man's neck to the ground.

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Crump and another attorney for Floyd's family, Devon Jacob, are representing Brittain's family.

The Arkansas State Police is investigating Brittain's fatal shooting by Sgt. Michael Davis, who was fired by Lonoke County Sheriff John Staley last week for not turning on his body camera until after the shooting. Staley said the only footage police have is from the aftermath.

The shooting in predominantly white Lonoke County has drawn the attention of Sharpton and other civil rights activists and follows nationwide protests against police violence and racial injustice last year in the wake of Floyd's death. Davis is white.

Authorities have released few details about the shooting. Brittain's family has said the teenager was unarmed and was holding a jug of antifreeze. Brittain's family and friends have held protests nightly outside the Lonoke County sheriff's office and have complained about the lack of information released.

## Tropical Storm Elsa crosses west Cuba and heads for Florida

By ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Tropical Storm Elsa swept across a mostly rural section of western Cuba with strong rain and winds Monday, then moved into the Florida Straits for a possible close brush with the lower Florida Keys and the Dry Tortugas on Tuesday.

The storm made landfall in Cuba on Monday afternoon near Cienega de Zapata, a natural park with few inhabitants. It headed northwestward across the island, passing Havana just to the east.

Back over water, Elsa's maximum sustained winds strengthened to 60 mph (95 kph) late Monday. Its core was about 20 miles (35 kilometers) north-northeast of Havana and 80 miles (130 kilometers) south-southwest of Key West, Florida. It was moving to the north-northwest at 12 mph (19 kph).

There were no early reports of serious damage as Elsa passed over Cuba.

"The wind is blowing hard and there is a lot of rain. Some water is getting under the door of my house. In the yard the level is high, but it did not get into the house," Lázaro Ramón Sosa, a craftsman and photographer who lives in the town of Cienega de Zapata, told The Associated Press by telephone.

Sosa said he saw some avocado trees fall nearby.

Though Havana missed the brunt of the storm, many people in the capital stayed in place.

"For now, I staying at home. We have to wait for the night and see exactly what happens," Aida Herrera, who lives next to the Malecon boulevard facing the sea, told AP.

Elsa had spent Sunday and much of Monday sweeping parallel to Cuba's southern coast before heading on to land, sparing most of the island from significant effects. As a precaution, Cuban officials had evacuated 180,000 people against the possibility of heavy flooding from a storm that already battered several Caribbean islands, killing at least three people.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center said the storm was expected to be near the Florida Keys early Tuesday and would then pass near or over portions of Florida's west coast by late Tuesday and into Wednesday.

Tropical storm warnings were posted for the Florida Keys from Craig Key westward to the Dry Tortugas and for the west coast of Florida from Flamingo northward to the Ochlockonee River.

Elsa was the first hurricane of the Atlantic season until Saturday morning and caused widespread damage on several eastern Caribbean islands Friday. As a tropical storm, it resulted in the deaths of one person on St. Lucia and of a 15-year-old boy and a 75-year-old woman in separate events in the Dominican Republic.

Elsa is the earliest fifth-named storm on record, said Brian McNoldy, a hurricane researcher at the University of Miami.

## Finally! Bucks, Suns set for the NBA Finals after long waits

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Basketball Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — Chris Paul walked up the stairs and took a seat in front of the NBA Finals logo, a climb that took him 16 years to complete.

The Phoenix Suns and Milwaukee Bucks are used to enduring long waits.

They came into the NBA together in 1968 and between them have managed to win one championship.



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They've combined for only one trip to the finals since the mid-1970s.

Now here they both are, a couple of unfamiliar contestants to finish off a most unusual season.

"Walking into here, seeing Mr. Larry on every poster," Suns center Deandre Ayton said, referring to the Larry O'Brien Trophy, "it gave me goosebumps."

Imagine the feeling if he's on the first Suns team to win an NBA championship.

Game 1 is Tuesday night in Phoenix, which hasn't hosted an NBA Finals game since Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls completed their first three-peat here in 1993. The Suns' only other chance was in 1976, when they lost to Boston.

Giannis Antetokounmpo's status remains unknown, with Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer saying he had no update on the injured superstar's knee.

"Without him, we have to do it by committee," Bucks guard Khris Middleton said.

It's a whole new setting for the 36-year-old Paul, who acknowledged one of the differences. Home teams usually practice at their training facility, but the workout on the eve of the NBA Finals is in the arena.

"It's still basketball," the point guard said. "I think we're all locked in to the goal at hand."

Milwaukee won a championship in 1971, so long ago that Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was still known as Lew Alcindor when he and Oscar Robertson were perhaps the top tandem in the league. The Bucks had drafted Alcindor with the No. 1 pick in 1969 after winning a coin flip against the Suns.

The Bucks got back in 1974 but haven't been seen in the finals since.

They have been closing in over the last few years. Milwaukee had the best record in the NBA in both 2018-19 and 2019-20 and was two games away from the NBA Finals in that first season. They came back better after acquiring guard Jrue Holiday before this season.

"To get these four wins is going to be difficult but really excited for it," Holiday said.

The Suns had been going nowhere, not even making the playoffs since 2010. They were 19-63 just two seasons ago, tying for the second-worst record in the league.

But an undefeated run in their eight restart games in the Walt Disney World bubble last summer sent them into this season with momentum, and they entered it with a new leader when they acquired Paul from Oklahoma City.

Besides Paul's All-Star play, the Suns needed the right veteran to bring out the best in young stars Devin Booker and Ayton. Phoenix finished with the second-best record in the league, knocked out the defending champion Lakers in the first round, swept MVP Nikola Jokic's Denver Nuggets and then shook off the absence of Paul for two games to beat the Clippers in the Western Conference finals.

Paul was out for coronavirus health and safety protocols, which every team had to work around this season. Numerous stars also dealt with injuries and the Bucks are hoping Antetokounmpo can overcome his.

The two-time MVP missed Games 5 and 6 of the East finals after hyperextending his left knee when he leaped to defend a lob in Game 4, but Middleton and Holiday led the Bucks past Atlanta in both games.

"I think guys have done a great job of adjusting with him out, with him not out there in two of the most important games of our season," Middleton said.

Some things to know about the series:

## GIANNIS UPDATE

Budenholzer didn't give many details on Antetokounmpo, beyond saying he was getting better.

"He did court work, so he's making progress and we're pleased he's making progress," Budenholzer said.

## SEASON SERIES

The Suns won a pair of games that were as close as can be. Their 125-124 home victory on Feb. 10 came when Antetokounmpo scored a season-high 47 points but missed a jumper at the buzzer, and they pulled out a 128-127 victory in Milwaukee on April 19 when Booker knocked down a free throw with 0.3 seconds remaining in overtime.

## FLYING INTO THE FINALS

The Bucks haven't been behind since Game 4 of the East finals, never trailing in either of the last two games. Nine of the 12 wins in the postseason for the NBA's highest-scoring team have come by double

digits.

## CROWDER'S CHANCE

With both franchises being absent so long, the Suns' Jae Crowder is the only player on either side with NBA Finals experience. He played for the Miami Heat when they lost last year to the Lakers.

"I'm very grateful for the opportunity, but I'm looking for a different outcome than I had last time honestly," the forward said. "That's all fine that I've been here before, but I haven't won anything."

## FOES TO FRIENDS

Booker will often be matched up against Holiday or Middleton, and after the series ends they will all get on a plane together. All three are set to play in the Olympics for the U.S. team, which will start practicing without them this week before heading to Tokyo.

## Demolition widens search at condo site, but storms threaten

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON and BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

SURFSIDE, Fla. (AP) — Rescuers searched through fresh rubble Monday after the last of the collapsed Florida condo building was demolished, which allowed crews into previously inaccessible places, including bedrooms where people were believed to be sleeping at the time of the disaster, officials said.

But they faced a new challenge from thunderstorms that hit the area as Tropical Storm Elsa approached the state.

Four more victims were discovered in the new pile, Miami-Dade Assistant Fire Chief Raide Jadallah told family members, raising the death toll to 28 people. Another 117 people remain unaccounted for.

The demolition late Sunday was crucial to the search-and-rescue effort, officials said, and raised the prospect that crews could increase both the pace of their work and the number of searchers at the site, although the chance of finding survivors 12 days after the June 24 collapse has diminished.

"We know that with every day that goes by, it is harder to see a miracle happening," said Maggie Castro, a firefighter and paramedic with the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department who briefs families daily.

Teams had been unable to access areas closest to the remaining structure because of its instability, Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said.

"Truly we could not continue without bringing this building down," she said at a news conference.

Part of the existing debris pile was also helping to support the remaining structure, City of Miami Fire Rescue Capt. Ignatius Carroll said. Rescuers were still holding out hope of reuniting loved ones.

"We continue to remain focused on our primary mission, and that is to leave no stone unturned and to find as many people as we can and to help bring either some answers to family and loved ones or to bring some closure to them," Carroll said.

The newly accessible area includes master bedrooms where people were believed to be sleeping when the building collapsed, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said.

"We will be able to access every part of that pile, which they hadn't been able to do up to this point," DeSantis said. "I think it's going to move the pace. I think the momentum is very strong."

Crews could be seen climbing a mound of debris at the site Monday alongside a piece of heavy equipment that was picking up rubble. Jadallah said rescuers focused on a stairwell section, but inclement weather hampered the search, particularly in a garage area that was filling with water. Crews had to pump out water.

The latest forecasts showed the storm moving westward, mostly sparing South Florida, but the area near the collapsed building experienced thunderstorms, and the National Weather Service issued a severe thunderstorm warning for Miami Beach, which is just south of Surfside.

Lightning caused temporary stops to the search, frustrating rescue crews, Levine Cava said. "Truly they live to save lives, and they've pushed ahead no matter what is thrown in their way."

After the demolition, workers immediately began clearing some of the new debris, and the search resumed around midnight, officials said. It had been called off Saturday to allow specialists to drill holes for explosives needed for the demolition.

"As a result of the contractor who brought it down, he did it in such a way that literally we actually were

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back on the original pile in less than 20 minutes," Jadallah told family members of those missing earlier Monday, drawing applause in a rare upbeat moment for the twice-daily meetings.

Rescuers hoped to get a clearer picture of voids that may exist in the rubble as they search for those believed to be trapped under the fallen wing of the Champlain Towers South. Crews, however, have found very few voids, Jadallah said.

No one has been rescued alive since the first hours after the collapse.

During the demolition, a loud rat-a-tat of explosions echoed from the structure. Then the building began to fall, one floor after another, cascading into an explosion of dust. Plumes billowed into the air as crowds watched the scene from afar.

Some residents had pleaded to return to their homes one last time before the demolition to retrieve belongings, but they were denied. Others wondered about the pets left behind. Officials said they found no signs of animals after making three final sweeps, including the use of drones to peer into the abandoned structure.

Levine Cava said teams are working to save personal items and have asked residents to catalog what they're missing to match with items as soon as they are recovered.

"The world is mourning for those who lost their loved ones and for those who are waiting for news from the collapse," she said at the news conference. "To lose your home and all your belongings in this manner is a great loss as well."

The decision to demolish the remnants of the building came after concerns mounted that the damaged structure was at risk of falling, endangering the crews below. Parts of the remaining building shifted on Thursday, prompting a 15-hour suspension in the work.

## Fallout continues from biggest global ransomware attack

By FRANK BAJAK AP Technology Writer

BOSTON (AP) — The single biggest ransomware attack yet continued to bite Monday as more details emerged on how a Russia-linked gang breached the exploited software company. The criminals essentially used a tool that helps protect against malware to spread it globally.

Thousands of organizations — largely firms that remotely manage the IT infrastructure of others — were infected in at least 17 countries in Friday's assault. Kaseya, whose product was exploited, said Monday that they include several just returning to work.

Because the attack by the notorious REvil gang came just as a long Fourth of July weekend began, many more victims were expected to learn their fate when they return to the office Tuesday.

REvil is best known for extorting \$11 million from the meat processor JBS last month. Security researchers said its ability to evade anti-malware safeguards in this attack and its apparent exploitation of a previous unknown vulnerability on Kaseya servers reflect the growing financial muscle of REvil and a few dozen other top ransomware gangs whose success helps them afford the best digital burglary wares. Such criminals infiltrate networks and paralyze them by scrambling data, extorting their victims.

REvil was seeking \$5 million payouts from the so-called managed service providers that were its principal downstream targets in this attack, apparently demanding much less — just \$45,000 — from their afflicted customers.

But late Sunday, it offered on its dark web site to make available a universal decryptor that would unscramble all affected machines if it's paid \$70 million in cryptocurrency. Some researchers considered the offer a PR stunt, while others thought it indicates the criminals have more victims than they can manage.

Sweden may be hardest hit — or at least most transparent about the damage. Its defense minister, Peter Hultqvist, bemoaned in a TV interview "how fragile the system is when it comes to IT security." Most of the Swedish grocery chain Coop's 800 stores were closed for a third day, their cash registers crippled. A Swedish pharmacy chain, gas station chain, the state railway and public broadcaster SVT also were hit.

A wide array of businesses and public agencies were affected, including in financial services and travel, but few large companies were hit, the cybersecurity firm Sophos said. The United Kingdom, South Africa,

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Canada, Argentina, Mexico, Indonesia, New Zealand and Kenya were among countries affected, researchers said.

In a statement Sunday, deputy U.S. national security adviser Anne Neuberger urged all victims to alert the FBI. A day earlier, the FBI said in an alert that the attack's scale "may make it so that we are unable to respond to each victim individually."

The vast majority of ransomware victims are loathe to publicly admit it, and many avoid reporting attacks to law enforcement or disclosing if they pay ransoms unless required by law.

President Joe Biden said Saturday that he ordered a "deep dive" by U.S. intelligence into the attack and that the U.S. would respond if it determines the Kremlin is involved. In Geneva last month, Biden sought to pressure Russian President Vladimir Putin to end safe haven for REvil and other ransomware gangs that operate with impunity in Russia and allied states as long as they avoid domestic targets. The syndicates' extortionary attacks have worsened in the past year.

On Monday, Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was asked if Russia was aware of the attack or had looked into it. He said no but suggested it could be discussed during U.S.-Russian consultations on cybersecurity issues. No date has been set for such consultations, and few analysts expect the Kremlin to crack down on a crime wave that benefits Putin's strategic objectives of destabilizing the West.

Kaseya said Monday that fewer than 70 of its 37,000 customers were affected, though most were managed service providers with multiple downstream customers. Most managed service providers were apt to know by Monday if they were hit but that may not be true for many of the small and medium-sized organizations they serve, said Ross McKerchar, chief information security officer at Sophos. The MSPs are flying blind because the very software tool they use to monitor customer networks was knocked out by the attack.

The hacked Kaseya tool, VSA, remotely maintains customer networks, automating security and other software updates.

In a Monday report on the attack, Sophos said a VSA server was breached with the apparent use of a "zero day," the industry term for a previously unknown software security hole. Like other cybersecurity firms, it faulted Kaseya for aiding the attackers by asking customers not to monitor its on-premise "working" folders for malware. From inside those folders, REvil's code could work undetected to disable the malware- and ransomware-flagging tools of Microsoft's Defender program.

Sophos said REvil made no attempt to steal data in this attack. Ransomware gangs usually do that before activating ransomware so they can threaten to dump it online unless they are paid. This attack was apparently bare bones, only scrambling data.

In a Sunday interview, Kaseya CEO Fred Vocola would not confirm the use of a zero day or offer details of the breach — except to say that it was not phishing and that he was confident that when an investigation by the cybersecurity firm is complete, it would show that not just Kaseya but third-party software were breached by the attackers.

## 'Superman,' 'Lethal Weapon' director Richard Donner dies

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Filmmaker Richard Donner, who helped create the modern superhero blockbuster with 1978's "Superman" and mastered the buddy comedy with the "Lethal Weapon" franchise, has died. He was 91.

Donner died Monday in Los Angeles, his family said through a spokesperson.

Donner gained fame with his first feature, 1976's "The Omen." A then-unheard-of offer followed: \$1 million to direct 1978's "Superman." Donner channeled his love of the character into making the film, repeatedly facing off with producers over the need for special effects that would convince the audience that a superhero could really fly. In the title role, Donner cast Christopher Reeve, who was associated with "Superman" for the rest of his life.

By the 21st century, the genre was dominating the box office in the U.S. and thriving overseas. The heads of Marvel Studios and DC Entertainment—producers of most of today's superhero fare— both worked for

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Donner when they were starting out in Hollywood.

Steven Spielberg, who produced "The Goonies," wrote in a statement that, "Dick had such a powerful command of his movies, and was so gifted across so many genres. Being in his circle was akin to hanging out with your favorite coach, smartest professor, fiercest motivator, most endearing friend, staunchest ally, and — of course — the greatest Goonie of all. He was all kid. All heart. All the time. I can't believe he's gone, but his husky, hearty laugh will stay with me always."

Tributes also poured in on Twitter Monday, including from "Goonies" star Sean Astin.

"Richard Donner had the biggest, boomiest voice you could imagine," Astin wrote. "He commanded attention and he laughed like no man has ever laughed before. Dick was so much fun. What I perceived in him, as a 12 year old kid, is that he cared. I love how much he cared."

Director Kevin Smith tweeted that, "Richard Donner made the devil a child in *The Omen*, invented the modern day comic book movie with *Superman*, and reinvented the buddy cop movie with *Lethal Weapon*. I got to meet with him last year about a project. Guy was a natural born storyteller. Thanks for all the flicks, Dick!"

Filmmaker Edgar Wright added, "Richard Donner's big heart & effervescent charm shone in his movies through the remarkable performances of his cast, which is no mean feat. You remember all the characters in *Superman*, *Lethal Weapon*, *The Goonies* & more, because Donner knew how to capture that magic onscreen."

Wright said he, only met Donner once but said, "He was funny, charming and so full of stories (and happy to indulge my geeky questions)."

Donner followed "Superman" with an indie, "Inside Moves," in 1980 and "The Toy" with Richard Pryor in 1982. In 1985, he made the kids' adventure classic "The Goonies" and "Ladyhawke," which would introduce him to his future wife, Lauren Shuler Donner.

The two married the following year. In 1993, they founded The Donners Company, which has produced such hits as "Deadpool," "The Wolverine" and the "X-Men" franchise. Adjusted for inflation, his films have generated more than \$1 billion in box office receipts.

"Let me tell you: Dick Donner directing is truly the sexiest man alive," Shuler Donner said at a film academy tribute to the director in 2017.

She said a director's personality often reveals itself onscreen.

"If you look at Dick's movies, Dick is fun, larger than life, loud, strong, with a big mushy heart," she said. "His confidence, his fearlessness, his humor are what make people adore him and has wrapped around me like a protective cloak."

"The combination of learning moviemaking from Richard Donner and falling in love with him has made me personally and professionally a better producer and a happier, loving person," she continued, calling "Ladyhawke" their "personal love story."

"I'm the hawk and he's the wolf," she said.

In 1987, Donner cast Mel Gibson and Danny Glover as a mismatched police pair in the buddy-cop action film "Lethal Weapon." The film was a smash, spawning several sequels and a TV show.

"He was a master storyteller," Gibson said in 2017. "He was humble. He had this sign over this door that said 'Leave your ego at the door,' and there was no ego around him. It was hard for me to walk into the room, actually."

Donner followed up with the Bill Murray hit "Scrooged" in 1988 and "Lethal Weapon 2" the next year.

His other credits include "Maverick," "Conspiracy Theory" and "Radio Flyer."

Born Richard Donald Schwartzberg on April 24, 1930, in New York City, Donner changed his name when he set out to become an actor.

"I would have been an out-of-work actor now if it wouldn't have been for the great director Marty Ritt," Donner said.

He recalled Ritt telling him, "Your problem is you can't take direction," and suggesting he pursue directing instead.

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"And because I'd been hanging with him a little bit, he said, 'You're my assistant on the next show,' and that turned my life around," Donner said. "I never went back to acting."

He started working in television, directing episodes of "Gilligan's Island," "Perry Mason" and "The Twilight Zone."

Away from the camera, Donner was known for his extraordinary kindness and generosity, covering college tuition for one "Goonies" star (Jeff Cohen, now an entertainment attorney) and paying for life-saving rehab for another (actor Corey Feldman).

Donner told The Associated Press in a 1985 interview that the young cast helped him through the production.

"I never had kids of my own, and they became like my family," he said.

Cohen, Feldman and "Lethal Weapon" star Rene Russo were among those lauding Donner for his kindness at the 2017 film academy tribute.

"You were charming and funny and witty and all these amazing (things), but the thing that killed me is you were kind," Russo said. "You were so kind, and that's what makes you the sexiest man in the world."

Along with his wife, Donner was also a passionate animal advocate, rescuing dozens of dogs over the years and fighting against the captivity of killer whales.

Though a few of Donner's films generated Oscar nominations, he was never nominated. But he got his chance to thank the academy — and his many friends and colleagues — at that tribute.

"This industry is my friend, and it's been the greatest gift in the world to me," Donner said. "You guys are all my Oscar."

## Not just another Manic Monday: Federer, Djokovic, Kerber win

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Excitement and adoration greeted every point claimed by Roger Federer — "aaahs" and applause for a sliced backhand return or a 94 mph sliding wide ace, an unreachable drop volley or a forehand flicked suddenly and ferociously.

It all got to be too much for his opponent at the All England Club, No. 23 seed Lorenzo Sonego. So in the latter stages of his 7-5, 6-4, 6-2 loss to the eight-time champion, Sonego would win a point and mark the occasion by waving his arms to ask the crowd for some love, as if to say, "Hey, I'm here, too, OK?"

The match was the last at Centre Court on what was Wimbledon's last Manic Monday: As of next year, no longer will all 16 women's and men's fourth-round singles matches be scheduled on one day, a tradition vanishing along with that of a Middle Sunday without any play. And yet, amid all the chaos of a packed schedule, one could be forgiven for imagining Federer held the stage to himself.

He's coming off a pair of knee operations last season and he's participating in a Grand Slam tournament for the last time before turning 40. So who knows how many of these he has left? Even Federer himself didn't really know what he would be able to muster this fortnight.

"Well, I mean, I guess to some extent it's nice to see that the work I put in paid off, that I'm able to play at this level," said Federer, who only had played eight matches in 2021 before last week.

"I can actually wake up in the morning and feel all right. ... It's very rewarding and it's a good feeling," he said. "Now we'll see how much more I got left in the tank."

The raucous support he received created a more vibrant atmosphere than at other contests spread around the grounds, whether involving victories for past title winners Novak Djokovic and Angelique Kerber — she ended 17-year-old American Coco Gauff's run — or for one of the 11 players who earned a debut trip to the quarterfinals at the grass-court major.

"We'll look back in 20 years, 50 years, from now and this is it," Federer said. "This was the last Middle Sunday, the last Manic Monday."

The main stadium's retractable roof was shut when rain arrived late in the first set, a delay of more than 20 minutes that, not incidentally, was followed by an immediate double-fault by Sonego on break point to fall behind 6-5.

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That was the only opening Federer really needed as he moved into his record-extending 18th quarterfinal at Wimbledon. At 39, with his milestone birthday arriving Aug. 8, Federer is the oldest Wimbledon quarterfinalist in the Open era, which began in 1968.

Djokovic made it to his 12th quarterfinal at the All England Club while continuing his pursuit of a calendar-year Grand Slam, never troubled a bit while defeating No. 17 Cristian Garín 6-2, 6-4, 6-2.

"It's not a secret that I am trying to win as many Slams as possible," said the top-seeded Djokovic, who needs to win three more matches this week to equal the men's record of 20 major singles titles currently shared by Federer and Rafael Nadal.

Next up for him is Hungary's Marton Fucsovics, one of five first-time men's quarterfinalists who advanced Monday, alongside Canada's Denis Shapovalov and Felix Auger-Aliassime, Italy's Matteo Berrettini, and Russia's Karen Khachanov, who emerged from a 13-break fifth set to edge American Sebastian Korda 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 5-7, 10-8.

"Yeah, 13 breaks, it's tough to explain," the 25th-seeded Khachanov said. "On the other side, it's easy to explain. When you are returning, let's say, better, you start to read the serves better, and then in play, in the rallies, both of us were more stressed, more tight."

Korda's take? "I don't know what was happening out there," said the son of 1998 Australian Open champion Petr and brother of the No. 1 women's golfer at the moment, Nelly.

Khachanov meets Shapovalov on Wednesday, while Berrettini faces Auger-Aliassime.

Federer doesn't know his next opponent. That's because the match between two-time major finalist Daniil Medvedev and Hubert Hurkacz was suspended because of rain in the fourth set at No. 2 Court, which doesn't have a roof.

"It's not fair, but it's how it goes. These guys are young, they can recover. It's not a problem for them," Federer said with a knowing smile about the two 20-somethings. "Unfortunately they're very, very good, too."

And then, joking some more, Federer added: "Hopefully it rains again tomorrow."

The women's quarterfinals are Tuesday: No. 1 Ash Barty vs. Alja Tomljanovic; Kerber vs. Karolina Muchova; Karolina Pliskova vs. Viktorija Golubic, and Aryna Sabalenka vs. Ons Jabeur.

Australia's Barty and Tomljanovic, Belarus' Sabalenka, Tunisia's Jabeur, the Czech Republic's Pliskova and Switzerland's Golubic have never been to the Wimbledon quarterfinals.

Kerber, a three-time major champion who beat Serena Williams in the 2018 Wimbledon final, produced the steadier play after her match against Gauff began with five service breaks in a row in blustery conditions.

After dumping a forehand into the net to trail 3-2 after 15 minutes, Gauff whacked her calf with her racket. Later, she admonished herself for another miss by smacking her shoe.

"Disappointed. I know I can do better," said Gauff, beaten by eventual champion Simona Halep in Wimbledon's fourth round two years ago. "But it's just going to give me more motivation to go back and practice and come back stronger."

## Israel looks to renew law that keeps out Palestinian spouses

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's parliament was set to vote Monday on whether to renew a temporary law first enacted in 2003 that bars Arab citizens of Israel from extending citizenship or even residency to spouses from the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

Critics, including many left-wing and Arab lawmakers, say it's a racist measure aimed at restricting the growth of Israel's Arab minority, while supporters say it's needed for security purposes and to preserve Israel's Jewish character.

The law creates an array of difficulties for Palestinian families that span the war-drawn and largely invisible frontiers separating Israel from east Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, territories it seized in the 1967 war that the Palestinians want for a future state.

"You want your security, it's no problem, you can check each case by itself," said Taiseer Khatib. His wife

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of more than 15 years, from the West Bank city of Jenin, must regularly apply for permits to live with him and their three children in Israel.

"There's no need for this collective punishment just because you are Palestinian," he said.

Israel's dominant right-wing parties strongly support the law, and it has been renewed every year since being enacted. But Israel's new government includes opponents of the measure, and the right-wing opposition led by former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — aiming to embarrass the government — has warned it won't provide the votes needed to renew the law.

Ahead of the vote, Israel's new prime minister, Naftali Bennett, called on Netanyahu to join him in renewing the law. "Harming state security for a quarter of a political point is not the right thing to do," he said.

Parliamentary debates stretched late into the night Monday, and it remained unclear when the vote to renew the temporary law would be held. It was set to expire Tuesday night.

Dozens of families held a demonstration outside the Knesset, Israel's parliament, ahead of the vote, which was expected late Monday.

"We want stability in this country, like anyone else," said Maryam Abu Arar, from the West Bank town of Bethlehem, who requires a permit to live with her husband and four children in Israel. "We want to live in a democratic country, with peace and security for us as well."

The Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law was enacted as a temporary measure in 2003, at the height of the second intifada, or uprising, when Palestinians launched scores of deadly attacks inside Israel. Proponents said Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza were susceptible to recruitment by armed groups and that security vetting alone was insufficient.

The law has been continually renewed even after the uprising wound down in 2005 and the number of attacks plummeted. Today, Israel allows more than 100,000 Palestinian workers from the West Bank to enter on a regular basis.

"It was passed in the middle of the intifada, and now we are in a very different period in time," said Yuval Shany, a legal expert at the Israel Democracy Institute. Not only are attacks far rarer, but Israel has vastly improved its technological abilities to monitor Palestinians who enter, he said. "I don't think the security argument is very strong at this point in time."

Because of the law, Arab citizens have few if any avenues for bringing spouses from the West Bank and Gaza into Israel. The policy affects thousands of families.

Male spouses over the age of 35 and female spouses over the age of 25, as well as some humanitarian cases, can apply for the equivalent of a tourist permit, which must be regularly renewed. The holders of such permits are ineligible for driver's licenses, public health insurance and most forms of employment. Palestinian spouses from Gaza have been completely banned since the militant Hamas group seized power there in 2007.

The law does not apply to the nearly 500,000 Jewish settlers who live in the West Bank, who have full Israeli citizenship. Under Israel's Law of Return, Jews who come to Israel from anywhere in the world are eligible for citizenship.

Israel's Arab minority, which makes up 20% of the population, has close familial ties to Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and largely identifies with their cause. Arab citizens view the law as one of several forms of discrimination they face in a country that legally defines itself as a Jewish nation-state.

"This law sees every Palestinian as an enemy and as a threat, just because of his ethnic and national affiliation," said Sawsan Zaher, a lawyer with Adalah, an Arab rights group that has challenged the law in court. "The political message is very racist and very dangerous."

Palestinians who are unable to get permits but try to live with their spouses inside Israel are at risk of deportation. Couples that move to the West Bank live under Israeli military occupation. If their children are born in the West Bank, they would be subject to the same law preventing spouses from entering Israel, though there is an exception for minors.

The citizenship law also applies to Jewish Israelis who marry Palestinians from the territories, but such unions are extremely rare.

Human Rights Watch pointed to the law as an example of the widespread discrimination faced by Pales-



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tinians — both inside Israel and in the territories it controls — in a report earlier this year that said such practices amount to apartheid.

Israel rejects such allegations and says Jewish and Arab citizens have equal rights. Arab citizens have the right to vote, and the new government for the first time includes an Arab faction, which is opposed to the citizenship law.

But even as Defense Minister Benny Gantz, a political centrist, recently urged the right-wing opposition to support the law on security grounds, he also evoked demographic concerns.

"This law is essential for safeguarding the country's security and Jewish and democratic character, and security considerations need to be put before all political considerations," Gantz said in a statement.

Ahmad Tibi, a prominent member of an Arab opposition party, called on fellow lawmakers to strike the law down.

"They should look at the eyes of these children and these families and then vote to prevent this most racist law," he said as he met with the demonstrators. "These families should be allowed to live normally as all other families, wherever they decide to live."

## Vatican: Pope alert and well a day after intestinal surgery

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis was "in good, overall condition, alert" and breathing on his own Monday, the Vatican said a day after the pontiff underwent a three-hour operation that involved removing half of his colon.

Francis, 84, is expected to stay in Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic, which has a special suite reserved for popes, for about seven days, assuming no complications, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said.

The Vatican has given few details about the procedure, but an Italian newspaper reported, without citing sources, that surgeons began the operation laparoscopically but ended up having to operate with wider incisions after encountering unspecified complications.

Monday's brief medical bulletin — which came more than 12 hours after the end of Sunday's surgery and contained the first details from the Vatican — mentioned no such complications. The Holy See said the pope needed the procedure because of a narrowing of a portion of his large intestine that doctors say can be quite painful.

When the Vatican announced on Sunday afternoon that Francis had been admitted to hospital, it said the operation had been planned.

"His Holy Father is in good, overall condition, alert and breathing spontaneously," Bruni said in a written statement, adding the operation lasted about three hours.

The procedure generally entails removing the left side of the colon and then joining up the remaining healthy parts of the large intestine. But the Vatican didn't elaborate.

Doctors said a risk of the operation is that the connection between the joined-up parts of the colon can sometimes fail, causing more pain and possibly an infection. Such a failure is very rare but would require another surgery.

Without citing sources or specifying what happened, Rome daily *Il Messaggero* reported that "complications" arose during the surgery. The newspaper said that led surgeons to switch from working laparoscopically to operating through a larger incision.

Laparoscopy is a surgical procedure often dubbed "keyhole surgery" that typically allows surgeons access with very small incisions. In the kind of surgery the Vatican said the pope was getting, laparoscopy is commonly used, experts have said.

Patients having laparoscopic surgery generally require shorter hospital stays.

Before the Vatican bulletin was released, Cardinal Enrico Feroci said he had heard from another cardinal, Angelo De Donatis, that the pope was doing OK.

"He told me that the pope is well," the Italian news agency ANSA quoted Feroci as saying. De Donatis is the vicar of the Rome diocese.

Get-well messages continued to pour in for the pope. Italian Premier Mario Draghi's office said he "ex-

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presses affectionate wishes for a rapid convalescence and quick healing.”

Italian state TV said among those praying for Francis was his ailing predecessor in the papacy, Benedict XVI, who has been living a life of prayer and meditation in a monastery on Vatican grounds since he retired in 2013, saying he didn't have the strength to adequately carry out papal duties. The TV report cited the emeritus pontiff's personal secretary as saying Francis was in Benedict's prayers.

Francis is staying in a special, 10th floor suite that the hospital keeps available for use by a pontiff, after Pope John Paul II stayed there several times for various medical problems.

It was unclear when the Vatican might issue a new medical update.

Francis' next routine appointment with the public would normally be on Sunday, July 11, when he customarily appears at a window overlooking St. Peter's Square and blesses the faithful below and speaks for a few minutes, often about current events.

If he were still hospitalized then, Francis might opt, if he feels up to it, to do what one of his predecessors did when recovering at Gemelli Polyclinic. St. John Paul II, during some of his multiple hospital stays, appeared at his room's window to wave and bless well-wishers gathered outside.

## Johnson says restrictions to ease, UK must live with virus

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain plans to scrap laws requiring face masks and social distancing later this month, Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed Monday, even as he acknowledged that lifting the restrictions will drive surging coronavirus cases higher.

Johnson said legal controls will be replaced by “personal responsibility” when the country moves to the final stage of its lockdown-lifting roadmap. That's scheduled to happen on July 19, though Johnson said a final decision would come on July 12.

The change will mean people can throw away masks after months of enforced face-covering, though they will still be recommended in some enclosed spaces such as public transport.

The removal of social distancing rules will allow nightclubs to reopen for the first time in 16 months, and people to once again order drinks at the bar in a pub. No longer will customers have to scan a phone app to provide their contact details when entering a venue.

The government will also stop instructing people to work from home if they can, leaving employers free to bring staff back to offices.

Britain has recorded more than 128,000 coronavirus deaths, the second-highest toll in Europe after Russia, and infections are rising due to the highly transmissible delta variant, which was first found in India. Confirmed cases have shot up from about 2,000 a day earlier this year to 25,000 a day in the past week. But the number of deaths is broadly stable, at fewer than 20 a day.

Public health officials say Britain's vaccination program has weakened the link between infections and deaths, though not severed it. So far, 86% of U.K. adults have received at least one vaccine dose and 64% are fully vaccinated. The government aims to give everyone over 18 both shots by mid-September.

Johnson said Britain would have to “learn to live with this virus” — a major shift in tone from a leader who has previously painted COVID-19 as an enemy to be vanquished.

“I want to stress from the outset that this pandemic is far from over,” he said Monday, predicting that cases could hit 50,000 a day by July 19. “We must reconcile ourselves, sadly, to more deaths from COVID.”

But, he said, “if we can't reopen our society in the next few weeks, when we will be helped by the arrival of summer and by the school holidays, then we must ask ourselves ‘when will we be able to return to normal?’”

That message was welcomed by lockdown-skeptic lawmakers in Johnson's governing Conservative Party, who say the economic and social damage of such long-lasting virus restrictions outweighs the public health benefits, and Britain's populist press, which have dubbed July 19 “freedom day.”

Performing arts and hospitality businesses also welcomed the announcement. Mark Davyd, chief executive of the Music Venue Trust, tweeted: “I feel oddly numb, like I almost can't believe it. Lots of work to

do, but we might actually have made it through.”

But public health officials and scientists urged caution, saying ditching masks and social distancing altogether could be dangerous. Psychologist Stephen Reicher, a member of the government’s scientific advisory committee, said “proportionate mitigations” against the spread of the virus, such as masks in crowded places, should stay in place.

Johnson said he would “obviously wear a mask in crowded places ... simply as a matter of personal courtesy.”

The British government, which enforced one of the longest lockdowns in the world, has lifted restrictions for England in a series of steps that began with reopening schools in March. The fourth and final stage was delayed last month to provide time for more people to be vaccinated amid the rapid spread of the delta variant.

The changes announced by Johnson apply in England. Other parts of the U.K. — Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland — are following their own, broadly similar, roadmaps out of lockdown.

Keir Starmer, leader of the opposition Labour Party, said the government was being “reckless.”

“A balanced approach, a proper plan, would say keep key protections,” he said. “One of them would be masks in enclosed places and on public transport — that’s a commonsense position. More ventilation, that’s happening in other countries, is absolutely essential and proper payments for those that need to self-isolate.”

Paul Hunter, professor in medicine at the University of East Anglia, said it made sense to ease restrictions in the summer, when schools are closed, people spend more time outdoors and other respiratory infections are at a low level.

“The disease burden associated with a larger peak during the summer would likely be less than one during the winter,” Hunter said.

But Richard Tedder, a virologist at Imperial College London, said easing up while infections are still rampant “comes with the very real risk of facilitating the escape of variants which will be even more resistant to vaccines and potentially more infectious.

“Failing to recognize this is playing with fire,” he said.

## **Amazon begins new chapter as Bezos hands over CEO role**

By ALEXANDRA OLSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Amazon founder Jeff Bezos stepped down as CEO on Monday, handing over the reins as the company navigates the challenges of a world fighting to emerge from the coronavirus pandemic.

Andy Jassy, who ran Amazon’s cloud-computing business, replaced Bezos, a change the company announced in February.

Bezos, Amazon’s biggest shareholder with a stake worth about \$180 billion, will still hold sway over the company he started out of his Seattle garage in 1995. He takes over the role of executive chair, with plans to focus on new products and initiatives.

Jassy takes the helm of a \$1.7 trillion company that benefited greatly from the pandemic, more than tripling its profits in the first quarter of 2021 and posting record revenue as customers grew ever more dependent on online shopping.

At the same time, Amazon faces activism from a restive workforce just as a rapid economic recovery causes a labor crunch that has retailers, manufacturers and other companies competing for workers with higher wages and other benefits. The company defeated an attempt by workers to unionize at an Alabama warehouse earlier this year, but faces a more formidable challenge as the International Brotherhood of Teamsters launches a broader effort to unionize Amazon workers.

In a blog post to employees earlier this year, Bezos said he planned to devote more time to side projects, including his space exploration company Blue Origin, his philanthropic initiatives and overseeing The Washington Post, which he owns.

First up, the richest man in the world by Forbes’ estimate will fulfill his childhood dream of traveling to

space. Bezos, 57, will blast into space on July 20 when Blue Origin makes its first flight with a crew, bringing along his younger brother Mark, an investor and volunteer firefighter.

Bezos founded Amazon as an online bookstore and built it into a shopping and entertainment empire that is the second-largest private employer in the U.S., behind Walmart. Amazon, which is buying the MGM movie studio in its latest major acquisition, now makes movies and sofas, owns a grocery chain and has plans to send satellites into space to beam internet service to Earth.

Jassy, who has been with Amazon since 1997, ran the cloud-computing business that powers video-streaming site Netflix and many other companies, making it one of Amazon's most profitable businesses.

Among Jassy's challenges are growing calls for tighter regulation on tech giants. A report by the House Judiciary Committee in October called for possibly breaking up Amazon and others, making it harder for them to acquire companies and imposing new rules to safeguard competition.

## Spain restricts nightlife as virus surges among the young

By ARITZ PARRA Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Faced with soaring numbers of new coronavirus infections among unvaccinated young people, some Spanish regions are reinstating curbs on nightlife only weeks after dropping them.

Fearing that the surging contagion could strain health care services as stressed employees try to go on summer holidays, health officials in several parts of the country are also rushing to get COVID-19 vaccine shots to people under 30.

Spain's strict vaccination rollout has so far focused on older, more vulnerable groups, leaving the vaccination of teenagers and people in their 20s for the summer.

So far, 40% of Spain's 47 million people have been fully vaccinated, one of the highest levels in Europe, but that falls to one in ten vaccinated in the 20-29 age group and a meager 0.7% for those under 20.

"We have to thank the youth for the extra, longer effort that we have demanded from them, as they are only starting to get vaccinated now," said Fernando Simón, who coordinates the country's response to health emergencies.

Simón said Monday there's a danger that infections among young people spread to vulnerable older groups like those waiting for a second vaccine dose or people not vaccinated at all.

"We are in a complicated situation regarding transmission and we hope that this doesn't turn into a grave situation at hospitals," he said.

The 14-day contagion rate Monday among those 20 to 29 was more than three times the national average of 204 new cases per 100,000 residents.

Simón said the delta virus variant that has been blamed for rising infections in other countries like Portugal and Britain is not yet the main driver of new confirmed cases in Spain.

New infections have also spread among Spanish teenagers as a result of trips and parties to celebrate the end of the school year. Thousands have been forced to go into isolation nationwide after more than 1,000 infections were tied to student trips to Spain's Mallorca islands. At least 700 others have tested positive in mass screenings in the northern Navarra region among students who went to a beach resort last month.

Authorities in Navarra are seeing more than 500 new infections a day, a level not reached since the country's second virus resurgence in October. In response, they announced that bars and nightclubs will go back to closing at 1 a.m. instead of 3 a.m.

Nightlife will be completely shut down in at least 16 towns in the northern Cantabria region, which leads the nation's infection tallies.

A spike in coronavirus infections is also hitting the northeastern Catalonia region. Authorities there have invited people over 16 to receive their virus shots after a seven-fold increase of infections in the past two weeks, reaching more than 3,000 new confirmed cases in the past few days.

The rebound in cases has so far led to comparatively lower hospital admissions than previous surges because COVID-19 leads to fewer complications among young people, but health care centers and contagion contact tracers are struggling to handle an overload of cases.

A federation of nightlife business owners has issued a statement saying that their industry is being used as a "scapegoat" for the new surge in infections and urged authorities instead to crack down on illegal booze parties.

## Identifying the remains a burdensome task in condo collapse

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — As crews peel away layer after layer of the collapsed condo tower in South Florida, the death toll increases — and so does the burden of collecting and identifying the dead, as rescuers and pathologists balance the rigors of their duties with relatives' desperate need for closure.

Nobody has been found alive since the first hours of the June 24 disaster that killed at least 27 people in the town of Surfside, so updating the families has so far been a matter of delivering bad news. And what crews are finding is often not intact.

"It's not necessarily that we are finding victims. We are finding human remains," Miami-Dade County Assistant Fire Chief Raide Jadallah said to audible gasps and moans on a recent day when he had the delicate task of briefing relatives at a family assistance center set up in a hotel near the site.

With more than 115 people still unaccounted for, the task could soon overwhelm the local medical examiner's office, and the federal government has sent a team of five people from the University of Florida to help with DNA analysis. More help could be on the way, said Jason Byrd, commander of the Florida Mortuary Operations Response System.

The medical examiner has already run into problems. When pathologists were trying to deliver one woman's body in time for a funeral, some faulty DNA testing meant they had to cut off a finger and rush it to a lab to log her fingerprint, an official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the incident.

Time is a complicating factor as well, as experts say DNA analysis becomes less reliable as bodies start to decompose.

But the way the building collapsed, with its 12 floors pancaking on top of each other, may make some of the work relatively straightforward as crews clear debris from the top and work their way down, according to Dennis Dirkmaat, who chairs the Department of Applied and Forensic Sciences at Mercyhurst University.

They "remove the uppermost layer in a horizontal manner, locate all of the individuals found there," said Dirkmaat, who worked on recovery and identification of victims from United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania on 9/11. "You know exactly where they're located. You can eventually place them in a particular apartment or a particular location."

Lt. Col. Oz Gino, the commander of an Israeli search and rescue battalion working at the Florida site, said his team used blueprints of the building to create detailed 3D images of the disaster site to aid in the search. They also gathered information from families of the missing to build a room-by-room model laying out where people would have been sleeping during the pre-dawn collapse.

The pace of finding victims' remains has been slow so far, with efforts focused on searching for anyone who may still be alive. That part of the process should take a couple of weeks before it turns into a recovery phase, which could also run for weeks.

Many of the building's occupants are Jewish, and emergency workers are being careful to heed religious sensitivities as they handle what they find.

In the Jewish faith, the whole body and all its parts, including limbs, blood and tissue, must be collected in preparation for burial. Bodies should not be left overnight or exposed in the open as they are considered to be made in the image of God.

Jadallah said every time crews find human remains, they remove them and clean the area. They also work with a rabbi to ensure any religious rituals are done properly.

The medical examiner has honored the wishes of some relatives not to perform autopsies, which are not mandatory unless there is a criminal investigation. They are forbidden in Jewish tradition on the grounds that the body must not be violated after death.

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Mark Rosenberg, the head of a team from the nonprofit burial society Chesed Shel Emes, said he has about 20 people near the collapse site who are summoned every time someone is pulled from the rubble to say prayers.

And Yossi Landau, who leads volunteers with the Israeli organization Zaka, which assists in identifications after accidents, disasters and bombings, said his group deployed a crew to the site to assist with burial preparation.

It's a race against the clock, since Jewish tradition also says burials must be timely: The remains of Leon and Christina Oliwkowicz, an elderly couple from Venezuela, were identified June 27 and their funeral was held the following day.

"You have to bury the body in its entirety," Rosenberg said, "and as soon as possible."

## Southwest, American delays hint at hard summer for travelers

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

This summer is already shaping up to be a difficult one for air travelers.

Southwest Airlines customers have struggled with thousands of delays and hundreds of canceled flights in the past three weeks because of computer problems, staffing shortages and bad weather.

American Airlines is also grappling with a surge in delays, and it has trimmed its schedule through mid-July at least in part because it doesn't have enough pilots, according to the pilots' union.

At the same time, the number of Americans getting on planes is at a pandemic-era high. Just under 2.2 million travelers were screened at U.S. airports on Friday, the highest number since early March 2020.

Travelers are posting photos of long airport lines and describing painful flights.

"It was ridiculously crowded," Tracey Milligan said of airports after a round trip from her New Jersey home to Miami last week.

Milligan and her 6-year-old daughter endured hours-long delays on both legs of the trip. Before the flight to Florida, she said, JetBlue agents first told passengers there was a discrepancy with the plane's weight, then they were missing three crew members because the airline was short-staffed, then there was a weather delay.

"I really wanted to start screaming and cursing everybody out, but that doesn't get you anywhere, and security will come and remove you from the plane," she said.

At least the passengers on Milligan's flights kept their cool. Airlines have seen a surge in unruly passengers, and some experts predict it will get worse this summer as planes become even more crowded.

There have been more than a dozen days in June and July when more than 2 million travelers went through U.S. airports, according to figures from the Transportation Security Administration. Airlines say that domestic leisure travel is back to 2019 levels, although the lack of business travelers means that overall, the number of passengers over the past week is still down slightly compared with the same days in 2019.

For the July Fourth weekend, U.S. airlines scheduled nearly twice as many flights between Thursday and Monday as they did over the same days last year, according to data from aviation researcher Cirium.

The weekend highlights the rapid turnaround boosting an industry that was fighting for survival last year. The recovery has been faster than many expected — including, apparently, the airlines themselves.

Since the start of the pandemic, U.S. airlines have received \$54 billion in federal aid to help cover payroll expenses. In return, they were prohibited from furloughing or laying off workers. However, they were allowed to persuade tens of thousands of employees to take buyouts, early retirement or leaves of absence.

Now some are finding they don't have enough people in key roles, including pilots.

As Southwest officials braced for crowded flights over the holiday weekend, they offered to double pay for flight attendants and other employees who agree to extra work through Wednesday.

"The staffing shortage is across the board. On the pilot side, it's a training backlog," said Casey Murray, president of the Southwest Airlines Pilots Association. "Southwest came into the summer with very little margin."

Murray said many pilots coming back from leave are still getting federally required training to refresh

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their skills and aren't yet eligible to fly. When storms cause long delays, pilots can reach their FAA limit on the number of hours they are allowed to work, and there aren't enough backups to step in, he said. On top of that, he said, Southwest pushed for an "aggressive" summer schedule to capitalize on rising travel demand.

Since June 14, Southwest has averaged more than 1,300 daily flights delays — a staggering 40% of its schedule — according to figures from tracking service Flightaware.com.

Southwest spokeswoman Brandy King said most delays were caused by weather, and that with fewer flights than before the pandemic, it's harder for Southwest to recover from long thunderstorms.

At American Airlines, unions say labor shortages are contributing to delays and the scrubbing of up to 80 flights a day from the schedule through mid-July. In echoes of Southwest, the pilots' union at American said management did not act quickly enough to retrain 1,600 pilots who were temporarily furloughed then rehired last year or replace the 1,000 who retired.

Delta canceled dozens of flights over Thanksgiving last year and again around Easter this year because of staffing problems.

Airlines that pushed people to quit a year ago are now beginning to hire again, which could help fix staffing shortages. Delta, for example, plans to hire more than 1,000 pilots by next summer, starting with about 75 by this August.

Passengers whose flights aren't canceled or delayed still risk being on board with troublesome plane mates. Airlines have reported more than 3,200 incidents of unruly passengers since Jan. 1. Most involve people refusing to wear masks, as required by the federal government. Some of those passengers face large fines.

Andrew Thomas, a frequent flyer who teaches international business at the University of Akron and has tracked air rage for more than 20 years, believes conditions are ripe for even more incidents on planes this summer because travelers are more stressed than ever.

"The problem was there before COVID, and now you are putting more people in the sky and you exacerbate this with the masks," Thomas said. "Service levels are atrocious. Planes are packed, they are not feeding you, it's hard to get food in an airport. The only thing that's easy to get is alcohol, which is not a good thing."

## **EXPLAINER: What kind of surgery did Pope Francis have?**

By MARIA CHENG AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP) — Pope Francis has had surgery to remove part of his left colon in what the Vatican has described as a planned procedure. Doctors say the bowel problems that the 84-year-old pope was experiencing are very common in older people, although only about 10% to 20% of people with similar problems require surgery. Here's a look at what we know about the operation and what the pope's doctors will be watching out for:

### **WHAT KIND OF SURGERY DID THE POPE HAVE?**

According to the Vatican, Pope Francis had the left part of his bowel removed in a three-hour operation Sunday at a Rome hospital. Officials said it was required because the pope's bowel had narrowed.

Dr. Manish Chand, an associate professor of surgery at University College London who specializes in colorectal surgery, said the pope had likely been experiencing painful symptoms long before the bowel procedure. He was not involved in the pope's care.

Although minor symptoms can be treated with antibiotics, Chand said in some older people, the pain becomes so severe that removing part of the colon is the only way to fix it.

"That leads to scarring of the colon, which results in a narrowing part of the colon," Chand said, explaining that prevents normal bowel movements. "There aren't any drugs we can use to remedy the situation, so the only way to rid patients of the pain is by removing that narrowed portion of the bowel and join the two healthy ends of the bowel together."

### **WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF COMPLICATIONS?**

Although the pope's surgery was planned, it was not minor.

"This is a major operation, so as with any big operation, you want to make sure a patient's heart and lungs are recovering and progressing the way they should after something like this," said Dr. Walter Longo, chief of colon and rectal surgery at Yale University School of Medicine. Longo said the primary concern is ensuring that the two parts of the bowel that surgeons have stitched together remain attached.

"The biggest risk is that this fails, and the patient experiences more pain, a fever, and there's evidence of infection," Longo said. "If that happens, then another operation would be needed to hook (the colon) back together." He said that is extremely rare and that only two to three out of 100 surgeries would result in a repeat surgery.

Chand said if there are no complications, he would expect the pope to experience an almost immediate improvement in his quality of life and be back to eating regularly within days.

**WHAT ARE DOCTORS WATCHING OUT FOR NOW?**

The Vatican said Francis is expected to spend a week in Rome's Gemilli Polyclinic recuperating. Given the pope's previous respiratory issues — he is missing part of his right lung after having it removed following a severe bout of pneumonia in his youth — Chand said doctors would need to monitor his breathing carefully.

"In the case of having previous problems with the lung, there is always a concern after the major abdominal surgery of the risk of getting a chest infection," Chand said. He said the pain might make it difficult for the pope to breathe deeply, preventing the lungs from expanding fully and getting rid of any fluid that could cause problems.

On Monday, Vatican officials said the pope was breathing on his own.

**HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR THE POPE TO RECOVER?**

Chand said even if the pope began to feel better soon, it would take weeks for someone to recover from losing half their colon and that he would likely feel very fatigued. Longo said it would likely take the pope about four to six weeks of recovery before he might be able to resume his normal duties.

"This is a big operation for a man in his 80s, even though I understand he was in fine condition before," Longo said. "There's no question he will require a lot of physical therapy and recovery time."

Longo recommended that the pope increase his fiber intake in the future and predicted he would be back to normal within several months.

Shortly before his surgery, the pope announced Sunday that he would visit Slovakia and Hungary for a few days in mid-September.

## **Census takers worry that apartment renters were undercounted**

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

Census taker Linda Rothfield's government-issued iPhone kept directing her back to apartments in San Francisco that she already knew were vacant. When she did find apartments that were occupied, she was sometimes turned away because of the pandemic.

"I had a few landlords who said, 'It's COVID. You can't come in,'" Rothfield said.

In a national headcount turned upside down by natural disasters, political turmoil and a deadly virus, apartment renters proved particularly hard to count last year. That has former census takers and experts worried that the tally failed to account for all of them.

Overlooking people in the nation's 44 million rental homes carries a potentially high price. Because the census helps determine how \$1.5 trillion in federal money is spent each year, the lower numbers would mean less government help to pay for schools, roads and medical services in those communities.

Around 36% of homes in the U.S. are occupied by renters, up from 33% during the last census a decade ago.

Under the best of circumstances, renters are among the hardest people to count because they tend to be more transient and are more likely to live below the poverty line. They also tend to be disproportionately people of color, who also are traditionally undercounted in the census, according to The Leadership Conference Education Fund, a civil rights group.



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Incomplete data on the race or ethnic background of renters could also hinder the formation of Black- or Hispanic-majority political districts.

Renters typically have lower self-response rates than homeowners, so the government relies more on census takers knocking on their doors, said Jeri Green, a former senior adviser at the Census Bureau, who served as a consultant to the National Urban League during the 2020 census.

"This is a population that was at risk of being missed prior to COVID," Green said. "We know it's a challenge for the Census Bureau to accurately enumerate renters."

During the 2010 census, renters were undercounted by 1.1%, but the rate was higher for some tenants. Black male renters between ages 30 and 49 were undercounted by 12.2%, and Hispanic male renters between ages 18 and 29 were undercounted by 8.6%, according to the Leadership Conference Education Fund.

Delays from the pandemic caused the Census Bureau to eliminate a step ahead of the door-knocking phase where census supervisors meet with building managers or landlords to find out which apartments were vacant or occupied, so census takers won't waste their time knocking on vacant units, the agency said in a statement.

"We were, however, able to inform the landlords or managers that enumerators would be visiting and asking for their cooperation prior to the start of the operation," the statement said, adding that bureau officials were confident in the work of census takers.

In cases where renters did not respond to census questionnaires, or census takers were unable to interview them, the Census Bureau had to use other, less reliable methods to count them. Those methods included using administrative records from the Internal Revenue Service or the Social Security Administration, asking neighbors or postal workers for information or using a last-resort statistical technique.

Some 60% of census supervisors surveyed by the Governmental Accountability Office for a study on 2020 census operations reported that their census takers had difficulties completing caseloads because they were unable to get into apartment buildings.

"The pandemic made communication with the building managers difficult," the GAO said in a report issued in March. "Specifically (supervisors) told us that enumerators were often turned away from accessing multi-unit buildings because of the pandemic."

Nathan Bean, a census supervisor in Chicago, said that even when he was able to reach property managers by phone last summer, they would often say, "We aren't going to answer your calls. We aren't going to answer your questions."

How much renters were undercounted, if they actually were missed, will not be known until December and early next year with the release of a survey that measures the accuracy of the count.

The Census Bureau already has released 2020 census figures used for deciding how many congressional seats each state gets, and those numbers showed how just a few dozen people being counted or overlooked made a big difference. If 89 more people had been tallied, New York would not have lost a congressional seat. If 26 people had been missed in Minnesota, the Gopher State would have lost a seat.

Numbers used for redrawing congressional and legislative districts will not be ready until August.

Jan Rice, who worked as a census taker in Denver, said she was frustrated that she was prohibited from contacting apartment managers on her own so she could get information on occupied units and remove vacant units from the database, sparing other census takers from wasting their time. When she tried it, her supervisor told her, "Your job is to knock on doors," she said.

"It killed our productivity," Rice said. "If you don't count them correctly, you don't give them a voice."

## Rural Kentucky health officials press on, one shot at a time

By PIPER HUDSPETH BLACKBURN Associated Press/Report for America

TAYLORSVILLE, Ky. (AP) — John Rogers waited months after becoming eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. It was only after talking with friends that the 66-year-old retiree from rural Spencer County, Kentucky, was persuaded to get the shot.

"They said, 'You know, the vaccine may not be 100%, but if you get COVID, you're in bad shape,'" Rog-

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ers said. "You can die from it."

With the nation falling just short of President Joe Biden's goal of dispensing at least one shot to 70% of all American adults by the Fourth of July, public health officials in places like Spencer County have shifted the emphasis away from mass vaccination clinics toward getting more information out in a more targeted way about the benefits of getting inoculated.

Health departments have offered the vaccine at concerts, parades and fairs and plan to make it available at back-to-school events. They have encouraged local doctors to raise the issue with patients and promoted shots by way of printed materials and social media.

The hope is that word of mouth will ease fears and misperceptions about the vaccine and change people's minds, one person at a time if necessary.

That's especially important in places like Spencer County, an area of rolling green hills and farmland southeast of Louisville, where the state reports that about 22% of eligible adults are at least partially vaccinated. Public health officials there think the numbers are improving and may already be higher.

Biden administration officials are increasingly turning their attention nationwide to some 55 million unvaccinated adults seen as persuadable, a group they have dubbed the "movable middle."

Many of those being targeted are under 30, an age group that has an especially low vaccination rate. But they also include people like Rogers, who said many people in his community are hesitant to get shots because "they just don't trust the government."

Rogers, who worked for a packaging supplier in nearby Shelbyville, said he shook off the skepticism and is now looking forward to a summer of "things going back to normal as they can be."

Nationally, resistance to getting vaccinated tends to run higher in conservative and rural parts of the country. Overall, 49% of all Kentuckians have received at least one dose, compared with about 55% nationwide.

Stephanie Lokits, who oversees vaccination efforts in the county for the public health department, has watched immunizations slow since a peak in March, when clinics drew hundreds of residents. Now only 10 to 20 trickle through a weekly vaccine clinic held in the county seat of Taylorsville, a town of 1,600 with an old theater, a courthouse, some empty storefronts and a few small businesses slowly finding their way out of the pandemic.

While Kentucky has seen a decline in cases in the past seven weeks, nearly all confirmed infections and deaths reported in the past month have been in unvaccinated residents.

"I think that the philosophy that we have really tried to go by is that every single shot that we can get administered to a person is a positive thing," Lokits said. "I think that's kind of the place where a lot of health departments and a lot of providers are at."

Lauren Slone, a nurse practitioner leading the vaccine effort at a community health center in Taylorsville, said she has learned through conversations with her patients that misconceptions about long-term effects pose real problems.

She has found that most people she talks to eventually get vaccinated. The challenge, she said, is "getting people to talk to me about it in the first place."

While appointments in the center aren't filling up as quickly as she would like, Slone thinks an effort to distribute information at local middle and high schools led to more vaccine appointments.

"I thought, you know, one way to get adults in is when teenagers know about it," Slone said. "If your teenager asks to get it, then maybe that encourages you a little bit as well."

A June drive-thru clinic held after the information push was well-attended by young adults. That's another good sign, Slone said. Only one-third of Kentuckians 18 to 29 have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, compared with 83% of residents 65 and up.

Still, getting the word out can be harder in a rural county, because some residents aren't on social media or don't have consistent access to the internet. And in spread-out, sparsely populated places like Spencer County, some people may not feel the need to get the vaccine as quickly, said district health department director Roanya Rice.

Also, Spencer County has lower cases per-capita than neighboring counties and the state as a whole,

meaning the threat can seem far away to some.

Rogers, now fully vaccinated, is enjoying the freedom to take off his mask for good, eat at a restaurant or visit with relatives without worrying.

"I waited a long time," he said. "I should have gotten it a long time ago."

## Tale of rescue after falling several floors in Fla. collapse

By KELLI KENNEDY Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — When 16-year-old rising volleyball star Deven Gonzalez was pulled from the rubble of her Miami condo building, her initial reaction amid the shock was to tell firefighters that she had to compete in a major tournament in a few days.

The teen's world revolved around volleyball. She played beach volleyball, on her high school team and with a competitive travel club team. From her hospital bed where she's undergone multiple surgeries for a broken femur, she apologized profusely to her coach for missing their final practice.

"I said, 'Let's focus on you right now and not volleyball,'" said club coach Amy Morgan, who described Gonzalez as extremely determined, passionate and unrelenting in pursuing her goals.

Gonzalez lived with her parents on the ninth floor of Champlain Towers South. She and her mother, Angela Gonzalez, fell several stories before being rescued on the fifth floor, she told her coach. Her mother was among the survivors pulled from the rubble and is still hospitalized with serious injuries, Morgan told The Associated Press.

At least two dozen were killed in the building's partial collapse June 24. Deven Gonzalez's father, attorney Edgar Gonzalez, is among the more than 120 still missing. The family's eldest daughter, Taylor, who was not in the building at the time of the collapse, has been a source of strength for her mom and sister, according to Morgan and Joslyn Varona, a family friend who has posted frequent updates on Facebook.

"This is a strong and wonderful family," Varona said. "They have a lot of faith."

Deven Gonzalez still hasn't been able to see her mother because they are in separate parts of the hospital, but she briefly video chatted with her a few days ago on her mother's birthday when Angela Gonzalez's intubation tube was removed, Morgan said.

Deven Gonzalez was conscious when the building collapsed and throughout her traumatic rescue, her coach said. She remembers the details vividly and is having trouble sleeping, haunted by nightmares.

"I don't know if she's completely come to terms with everything. She has and she hasn't," said Morgan, who added that Gonzalez was unaware of the extent of the tragedy and the worldwide attention it's received.

"She says, 'My dad's still missing. My dad's still missing,'" Morgan said. "She gets really choked up about it."

The teen even took her first few steps recently.

"It's going to be a nasty, hard painful road, but I think she can do it," Morgan said.

Angela Gonzalez will undergo surgery for her extensive injuries this week, but has been responsive when asked questions, Varona said in her Facebook posts.

"There has not been any news on Edgar," Varona wrote. "We are still praying and hoping for a miracle."

Varona said she has set up a letter writing campaign to encourage the family.

Edgar and Angela Gonzalez were extremely involved with their daughter's volleyball goals, the coach said. Her mom was like the team therapist, always listening and encouraging the girls.

Edgar is a kind, gentle and jolly father, Morgan said. After one tournament, he helped prepare a massive BBQ feast for the team. The family was about to leave for Orlando when the building collapsed. Edgar was so excited he'd been packed for two weeks.

"They're so loving, so supportive," Morgan said. "I see a lot of (Gonzalez's) strength coming from her parents."

The tragedy has been difficult on the close-knit volleyball team, which met for practice Thursday night and allowed parents to participate. Everyone sat in a circle and held hands as they prayed. Many cried.

"Deven is such a hardworking and loving person," her teammate Liyah Deveaux said Sunday. "We can't wait for her to get back on her feet. We love and miss her so much."

A GoFundMe site has raised more than \$100,000 for the family.

"We're really trying to help and be supportive, but we feel absolutely helpless that we can't make it better," Morgan said. "Every single one of us would be in there digging through the rubble. If we could be there, we'd be doing it."

## NYC temporary morgue lingers, a reminder of pandemic's pain

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — On a sun-soaked morning last month, a dozen mourners gathered by a freshly dug grave to bury four people who were cast into limbo as New York City contended with COVID-19.

Each was among hundreds of people whose bodies have lingered in a temporary morgue that was set up at the height of the city's coronavirus crisis last year and where about 200 bodies remain, not all of them virus victims.

The fenced-off temporary morgue on a pier in an industrial part of Brooklyn is out of sight and mind for many as the city celebrates its pandemic progress by dropping restrictions and even setting off fireworks. But the facility — which the city plans to close by the end of the summer — stands as a reminder of the loss, upheaval and wrenching choices the virus inflicted in one of its deadliest U.S. hotspots.

James Brown, George Davis, Diane Quince and Charles Varga died of various causes between three and nine months before their mid-June burial in Staten Island's airy Ocean View Cemetery. Officials found no next of kin.

"But we know that they lived, not friendless, but with friends and family," Edwina Frances Martin, Staten Island's public administrator of estates, told a handful of Brown's friends and volunteers who attend such funerals. "Because now they're all part of our family. And we're a part of theirs."

Some New Yorkers are troubled that hundreds of others at the morgue still wait to be laid to rest.

"Still these bodies wait — for what?" asks Kiki Valentine, a Brooklyn minister and funeral services assistant. She wrote to officials to seek an explanation and propose steps she feels could help, such as publishing public obituaries for the deceased.

Virus deaths alone peaked above 800 a day citywide at one point in April 2020 — deaths from all causes usually average about 150 — and overwhelmed funeral homes, cemeteries and hospital morgues. The temporary morgue was established that month to give families more time to arrange funerals after the city shortened its timeframe for holding remains before burying them in a public cemetery on remote Hart Island. There is no rule for how long bodies can stay at the temporary facility.

"There was way too much death for the system to handle," recalls Amy Koplou, the executive director of the Hebrew Free Burial Association, which is interring some Jewish people who were at the temporary morgue.

"We feel really good that we are able to bury these people who have been unburied and in limbo for so long," she said.

Still, Koplou feels the medical examiner's office did its best in a maelstrom. Many cases require considerable searching for relatives, a will or other indications of the deceased's wishes, she noted.

As the medical examiner's office prepares to close the temporary facility, the agency has stopped taking newly deceased people there, and investigators are working to contact relatives and determine final arrangements for the roughly 200 whose remains are left, spokesman Mark Desire said via email last week.

That's down from 750 when the agency briefed City Council members in early May, saying investigators had found relatives in most cases but was awaiting their decisions or had stopped hearing back from them.

Desire didn't respond to questions about where bodies removed from the facility have been taken, why the temporary morgue stayed in use after the 2020 surge subsided or how many of the deceased there are virus victims.

Brooklyn Borough President and mayoral hopeful Eric Adams has asked City Hall to ensure that every effort is made to reach relatives of the deceased and help with applications for government-paid funeral reimbursement, spokesman Ryan Lynch said. (The city can provide up to \$1,700, and a federal program specific to COVID-19 deaths allows up to \$9,000. Burial on Hart Island is free.)

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Meanwhile, Rabbi Regina Sandler-Phillips — who has organized volunteers to keep at-home vigils for the dead around the world, especially the unclaimed and unnamed — ventures periodically to an unobtrusive spot near the temporary morgue. She goes to bear witness “to what is not seen, and those who are not named,” she says.

The pain surrounding the facility’s creation and continued use “highlights the difficulties of how we honor the dead,” she says.

The group at the Ocean View cemetery on June 17 was there to bear witness, too.

“We don’t want them to go to their final resting place alone,” said Diane Kramer, a volunteer with a charity called the Foundation for Dignity. It works with Martin’s office, which arranged the burial at the private cemetery.

Little information could be confirmed about Davis, who was 76, and Quince, 62.

Varga, 81, had a background in information science and business consulting, spoke four languages and worked in recent years on a documentary film about homelessness, according to his social media profiles.

He was in poor health, said friend Sandra Andrews, who said he was estranged from his relatives but became a father figure to her after they met in 2010. She said she tried to find out what happened to him after he was hospitalized in February but learned of his Feb. 2 death only from The Associated Press.

“I didn’t get an opportunity to properly say goodbye to him,” she said by email.

Brown, 51, was a taxi driver and dispatcher on and off for 30 years, according to co-worker Desereeanne Fisher and boss Anton Kumar.

They said Brown was hardworking and sometimes even slept in the office, where co-workers still have his beloved bowling ball.

He told friends he’d been disconnected from his family since childhood, but he was “a friend to everybody,” Fisher said, wiping tears. “Anything you needed, he would do for you.”

Brown fell and hit his head at a convenience store this past March 2 and was found dead in his van minutes later, killed by a blood clot, Fisher said. She said his colleagues wanted to arrange and chip in for a funeral but hit roadblocks because they weren’t relatives.

“It’s been no closure” since his death, she said, relieved to know he’d finally been buried in a shady plot, with a plaque dedicated by his friends.

“He might not have had family,” she said, “but he had a lot of people that loved him.”

## **New infrastructure deal must focus on climate, activists say**

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Climate activists and their Democratic allies in Congress are pressing with renewed urgency for huge investments to slow global warming, after a bipartisan infrastructure plan cut out some of President Joe Biden’s key climate initiatives.

Supporters say a larger, Democratic-only package now being developed in Congress must meet Biden’s promise to move the country toward carbon-free electricity, make America a global leader in electric vehicles and create millions of jobs in solar, wind and other clean- energy industries.

But passage of a larger, multitrillion-dollar bill faces significant hurdles, even if Democrats use a procedural method that requires only a simple majority. It’s far from certain, in an evenly divided Senate, that moderate Democrats will agree to an expansive measure that could swell to as high as \$6 trillion.

On the other hand, a less costly bill that does not fully address climate change risks losing support from large numbers of liberal Democrats who have pledged action on an issue that Biden has called “the existential crisis of our times.”

Elimination of climate measures in the bipartisan plan comes as the effects of climate change, like worsening disasters such as hurricanes, wildfires and drought, are increasing. Scientists urge immediate action to slash greenhouse emissions to avoid the worst consequences of global warming.

“The bipartisan infrastructure deal is not a climate bill,” said Jamal Raad, executive director of Evergreen Action, an advocacy group that has pushed for urgent action on climate change. “And we know

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that fossil fuel lobbyists in Washington are already hard at work to eliminate key climate provisions from the (Democrat-only) package.

"To meet this moment, Democrats must stand firm and pass a package that makes historic investments in climate, jobs and justice," he said.

Even the bipartisan agreement is not certain to pass a closely divided Congress. A framework announced June 24 by Biden and a bipartisan group of senators does not include legislative provisions and many details need to be worked out.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Ron Wyden, D-Ore., called the bipartisan deal inadequate when his state and others in the West face a record heat wave and destructive wildfires. "It will not include comprehensive clean energy policy, and I am not willing to support throwing climate change overboard," Wyden said. "The two bills have to be directly connected."

The \$973 billion bipartisan deal includes money to build a national network of electric vehicle charging stations, purchase thousands of electric buses and upgrade the electrical grid. It also would spend \$55 billion to improve drinking water and wastewater systems and \$47 billion in resiliency efforts to tackle climate change.

But many climate-related proposals were cut out, including plans promoted by Biden to make electricity carbon-free by 2035 and spend hundreds of billions in tax incentives for clean energy such as wind and solar power and technologies that capture and store carbon emissions.

In La Crosse, Wisconsin, last week, Biden highlighted projects that would get more money from the bipartisan bill, such as hybrid buses and road repair equipment. And the White House says climate considerations will be a key part of a plan for infrastructure, jobs and education that would be determined solely by Democrats through a "budget reconciliation" process in Congress.

Activists say the bipartisan framework falls short on nearly every important climate commitment Biden laid out in his initial proposal in the spring, including energy upgrades for buildings, a Civilian Climate Corps and massive spending on environmental justice.

The White House, saying it is holding firm on Biden's ideas, released a memo last week reaffirming its commitment to bolster the electric vehicle market, make buildings and property more resilient to harsh weather patterns and ensure the country's electrical grid becomes carbon-free by 2035.

Environmental groups say that is not enough.

"This is a historic, narrow opportunity to combat the climate crisis, and we can't afford to kick the can down the road any further," said Lauren Maunus, advocacy director for the Sunrise Movement, another environmental group. "When Democrats agree to water it down more, they're condemning Americans to untold devastation."

The push on climate comes as some on the left express disappointment at several recent Biden administration actions on the environment. While generally supportive of Biden's approach, environmentalists are troubled by decisions to go forward with a huge Trump-era oil project on Alaska's North Slope and to defend two oil pipelines in the upper Midwest, the Dakota Access Pipeline and Enbridge Energy's Line 3 replacement project.

Environmentalists also are frustrated by the administration's failure to revive a ban on federal coal sales imposed under President Barack Obama.

While Biden made "good decisions" in rejecting the Keystone XL oil pipeline and drilling on Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, his administration's support for other oil projects and pipelines undermines Biden's commitment to slow global warming, said Drew Caputo of the environmental law firm Earthjustice.

"We're not going to successfully fight climate change if we trade pipeline for pipeline" and oil project for oil project, he said. "We have to transform the economy. Investing in expensive fossil fuel infrastructure like pipelines really puts the administration's ability to deal with climate change at risk."

A letter signed by 134 House Democrats calls on Biden to ensure the infrastructure legislation includes "robust" spending that "matches the scale of the challenge climate science tells us we face."

The letter, led by Reps. Mike Levin of California, Andy Kim of New Jersey and Sharice Davids of Kansas, outlines five climate priorities in the reconciliation package, including a carbon-free grid by 2035, replace-

ment of lead water pipes and service lines, and a commitment that 40% of program benefits are reserved for poor and minority communities harmed by toxic pollution from refineries and other sites.

Levin, who serves on a House climate change panel, said in an interview that he is confident Biden "sees the climate crisis as the existential threat to the future that it is" and "will act as the moment needs."

Asked about concerns by some activists that Democrats may shy away from spending trillions on climate change, Levin said, "Don't agonize, organize," borrowing a quote often used by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

There's uncertainty about what Democrats ultimately will approve, Levin acknowledged, "but also continued optimism to do the right thing."

Levin cited a bill approved by the House last week authorizing \$715 billion for roads, rail, public transit and water over five years. The bill, which will probably serve as a marker in infrastructure negotiations, includes money for electric vehicle charging stations and other elements designed to counter climate change. Transportation is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S.

House Transportation Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio, D-Ore, the bill's primary author, said the threat of climate change means "we have to rebuild in ways that we never even thought about before. It's going to be expensive, but the good news is, it's going to create millions of good-paying jobs."

## In crosshairs of ransomware crooks, cyber insurers struggle

By FRANK BAJAK AP Technology Writer

BOSTON (AP) — In the past few weeks, ransomware criminals claimed as trophies at least three North American insurance brokerages that offer policies to help others survive the very network-paralyzing, data-pilfering extortion attacks they themselves apparently suffered.

Cybercriminals who hack into corporate and government networks to steal sensitive data for extortion routinely try to learn how much cyber insurance coverage the victims have. Knowing what victims can afford to pay can give them an edge in ransom negotiations. The cyber insurance industry, too, is a prime target for crooks seeking its customers' identities and scope of coverage.

Before ransomware evolved into a full-scale global epidemic plaguing businesses, hospitals, schools and local governments, cyber insurance was a profitable niche industry. It was accused of fueling the criminal feeding frenzy by routinely recommending that victims pay up, but kept many from going bankrupt.

Now, the sector isn't just in the criminals' crosshairs. It's teetering on the edge of profitability, upended by a more than 400% rise last year in ransomware cases and skyrocketing extortion demands. As a percentage of premiums collected, cyber insurance payouts now top 70%, the break-even point.

Fabian Wosar, chief technical officer of Emsisoft, a cybersecurity firm specializing in ransomware, said the prevailing attitude among insurers is no longer: Pay the criminals. It's likely to be cheaper for all involved.

"The ransomware groups got way too greedy too quickly. So the cost-benefit equation the insurers initially used to figure out whether or not they should pay a ransom — it's just not there anymore," he said.

It's not clear how the single biggest ransomware attack on record, which began Friday, will impact insurers. But it can't be good.

Pressure is building on the industry to stop reimbursing for ransoms.

In May, the major cyber insurer AXA decided to do so with all new policies in France. But it is so far apparently alone in the industry, and governments are not moving to outlaw reimbursement.

AXA is among major insurers that have suffered ransomware attacks, with operations in Thailand hard-hit. Chicago-based CNA Financial Corp., the seventh-ranked U.S. cybersecurity underwriter last year, saw its network crippled in March. Less than a week earlier, the cybersecurity firm Recorded Future published an interview with a member of the Russian-speaking ransomware gang, REvil, that is skilled in pre-attack intelligence-gathering and happens to be behind the current attack. He suggested it actively targets insurers for data on their clients.

CNA would not confirm a Bloomberg report that it paid a \$40 million ransom, which would be the highest reported ransom on record. Nor would it say what or how much data was stolen. It said only that systems

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where most policyholder data was stored “were not impacted.”

In a regulatory filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, CNA also said that its losses might not be fully covered by its insurance and “future cybersecurity insurance coverage may be difficult to obtain or may only be available at significantly higher costs to us.”

Another major insurance player hit by ransomware was broker Gallagher. Although it was hit in September, only this past week (June 30) did it disclose that the attackers may have stolen highly detailed data from an unspecified number of customers — from passwords and Social Security numbers to credit card data and medical diagnoses. Company spokeswoman Kelli Murray would not say if any cyber insurance policy contracts were on compromised servers. Nor would she say whether Gallagher paid a ransom. The criminals, from the RagnarLocker gang, apparently never posted information about the attack on their dark web leak site, suggesting that Gallagher paid.

Of the three insurance brokers that ransomware gangs claimed to have attacked in recent weeks, posting stolen data on their dark web sites as evidence, two, in Montreal and Detroit, did not respond to phone calls and emails. The third, in southern California, acknowledged being hobbled for a week.

By the time the Colonial Pipeline and major meat processor JBS were hit by ransomware in May, insurers were already passing higher coverage costs to customers.

Cyber premiums jumped by 29% in January in the U.S. and Canada from the previous month, said Gregory Eskins, an analyst at top commercial insurance broker Marsh McLennan. In February, the month-to-month jump was 32%, in March it was 39%.

In a bid to turn back ransomware-related losses — Eskins said they amounted to about 40% of cyber insurance claims in North America last year — policy renewals are carrying new, stricter rules or lowered coverage limits.

“The price has to match the risk,” said Michael Phillips, chief claims officer at the San Francisco cyber insurance firm Resilience and a co-chair of the public-private Ransomware Task Force.

A policy might now specify that reimbursement for extortion payments can’t exceed one-third of overall coverage, which typically also encompasses recovery and lost income and can include payments to PR firms to mitigate reputational damage. Or an insurer may cut coverage in half, or introduce a deductible, said Brent Reith of the broker Aon.

While some smaller carriers have dropped coverage altogether, the big players are instead retooling.

Then there are hybrid insurers like Resilience and Boston-based Corvus. They don’t simply ask potential customers to fill out a questionnaire. They physically probe their cyber defenses and actively engage clients as cyber threats occur.

“We’re monitoring and making active recommendations not just once a year but throughout the year and dynamically,” said Corvus CEO Phil Edmundson.

But is the overall industry nimble enough to absorb the growing onslaught?

The Government Accountability Office warned in a May report that “the extent to which cyber insurance will continue to be generally available and affordable remains uncertain.” And the New York State Department of Finance said in a February circular that massive industry losses were possible.

Both insured and insurers, stingy about sharing experiences and data, shoulder the blame for that, the U.K. Royal United Services Institute said in a new report. Most ransomware attacks go unreported, and no central clearinghouse on them exists, though governments are beginning to pressure for mandatory industry reporting. As a business sector, insurers are not especially transparent. In the U.S. they are regulated not by the federal government but by the states.

And for now, cyber insurers are mostly resisting calls to halt reimbursements for ransoms paid.

In a May earnings call, the CEO of U.K.-based Beazley, Adrian Cox, said “generally speaking network security is not good enough at the moment.” He said it is up to government to decide whether payments are bad public policy. CEO Evan Greenberg of the leading U.S. cyber insurer, Chubb Limited, agreed in the company’s annual report in February that deciding on a ban is government’s purview. But he did endorse outlawing payments.



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Jan Lemnitzer, a Copenhagen Business School lecturer, thinks cyber insurance should be compulsory for businesses large and small, just as everyone who drives must have car insurance and seat belts. The Royal United Services Institute study recommends it for all government suppliers and vendors.

While he considers banning ransom payments problematic, Lemnitzer says it would be a "no-brainer" to compel insurers to stop reimbursing for them.

Some have suggested imposing fines on ransom payments as a disincentive. Or the government could retain a percentage of any cryptocurrency recovered from ransomware criminals, the proceeds going to a federal ransomware defense fund.

Such measures could bite into criminal revenues, said attorney Stewart Baker of Steptoe and Johnson, a former NSA general counsel.

"In the long run, it probably means that resources that are currently going to Russia to pay for Ferraris in Moscow will instead go to improve cybersecurity in the United States."

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, July 6, the 187th day of 2021. There are 178 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 6, 1854, the first official meeting of the Republican Party took place in Jackson, Michigan.

On this date:

In 1777, during the American Revolution, British forces captured Fort Ticonderoga (ty-kahn-dur-OH'-gah).

In 1885, French scientist Louis Pasteur tested an anti-rabies vaccine on 9-year-old Joseph Meister, who had been bitten by an infected dog; the boy did not develop rabies.

In 1917, during World War I, Arab forces led by T.E. Lawrence and Auda Abu Tayi captured the port of Aqaba (AH'-kah-buh) from the Ottoman Turks.

In 1933, the first All-Star baseball game was played at Chicago's Comiskey Park; the American League defeated the National League, 4-2.

In 1942, Anne Frank, her parents and sister entered a "secret annex" in an Amsterdam building where they were later joined by four other people; they hid from Nazi occupiers for two years before being discovered and arrested.

In 1944, an estimated 168 people died in a fire that broke out during a performance in the main tent of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus in Hartford, Connecticut.

In 1945, President Harry S. Truman signed an executive order establishing the Medal of Freedom.

In 1957, the Harry S. Truman Library, the nation's first presidential library, was dedicated in Independence, Missouri.

In 1971, jazz trumpeter and singer Louis Armstrong died in New York at age 69.

In 1988, 167 North Sea oil workers were killed when explosions and fires destroyed a drilling platform.

In 2005, New York Times reporter Judith Miller was jailed after refusing to testify before a grand jury investigating the leak of undercover CIA operative Valerie Plame's identity (Miller was jailed for 85 days before agreeing to testify).

In 2015, Pope Francis received a hero's welcome in Guayaquil, Ecuador's biggest city, as he celebrated the first public Mass of his South American tour.

Ten years ago: Jury selection began in the perjury trial of former baseball pitcher Roger Clemens, who was accused of lying under oath to Congress when he denied ever using performance-enhancing drugs during his career (the proceedings ended abruptly in a mistrial; Clemens was later acquitted in a retrial).

Five years ago: President Barack Obama scrapped plans to cut American forces in Afghanistan by half before leaving office. Double-amputee Olympian Oscar Pistorius was sentenced to six years in a South African prison for murdering girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp. (An appeals court would increase that sentence to 13 years.) Philando Castile, a Black elementary school cafeteria worker, was killed during a traffic stop

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in the St. Paul suburb of Falcon Heights by Officer Jeronimo Yanez. (Yanez was later acquitted on a charge of second-degree manslaughter.) Former Fox News Channel anchor Gretchen Carlson sued network chief executive Roger Ailes, claiming she was cut loose after she had refused his sexual advances and complained about harassment in the workplace, allegations denied by Ailes. (Carlson later settled her lawsuit for a reported \$20 million.) The augmented-reality game Pokemon Go made its debut in the U.S., Australia and New Zealand.

One year ago: The Trump administration formally notified the United Nations of its withdrawal from the World Health Organization; President Donald Trump had criticized the WHO's response to the coronavirus pandemic. (The pullout was halted by President Joe Biden's administration.) Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp declared a state of emergency and authorized the activation of up to 1,000 National Guard troops after a weekend of gun violence in Atlanta left five people dead; the victims included an 8-year-old girl, killed while riding in a car near a Wendy's that had been burned after a Black man was shot by a white police officer in the restaurant's parking lot in June. Amy Cooper, the white woman who called police during a videotaped dispute with a Black man in New York's Central Park, was charged with filing a false report. (The case was dismissed after Cooper completed a counseling program.) Country Music Hall of Famer Charlie Daniels, a singer, guitarist and fiddler who had a hit with "Devil Went Down to Georgia," died in Tennessee at the age of 83. Agents for Patrick Mahomes said the Kansas City Chiefs quarterback had agreed to a 10-year contract extension worth as much as \$503 million, giving the Super Bowl MVP the richest-ever sports contract. Oscar-winning Italian composer Ennio Morricone, who created the theme for "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly," died at 91.

Today's Birthdays: The 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is 86. Singer Gene Chandler is 81. Country singer Jeannie Seely is 81. Actor Burt Ward is 76. Former President George W. Bush is 75. Actor-director Sylvester Stallone is 75. Actor Fred Dryer is 75. Actor Shelley Hack is 74. Actor Nathalie Baye is 73. Actor Geoffrey Rush is 70. Actor Allyce Beasley is 70. Rock musician John Bazz (The Blasters) is 69. Actor Grant Goodeve is 69. Country singer Nanci Griffith is 68. Retired MLB All-Star Willie Randolph is 67. Jazz musician Rick Braun is 66. Actor Casey Sander is 66. Country musician John Jorgenson is 65. Former first daughter Susan Ford Bales is 64. Hockey player and coach Ron Duguay (doo-GAY') is 64. Actor-writer Jennifer Saunders is 63. Rock musician John Keeble (Spandau Ballet) is 62. Actor Pip Torrens is 61. Actor Brian Posehn is 55. Actor Robb Derringer is 54. Political reporter/moderator John Dickerson is 53. Actor Brian Van Holt is 52. Rapper Inspectah Deck (Wu-Tang Clan) is 51. TV host Josh Elliott is 50. Rapper 50 Cent is 46. Actors Tia and Tamera Mowry are 43. Comedian-actor Kevin Hart is 42. Actor Eva (EH'-vuh) Green is 41. Actor Gregory Smith is 38. Rock musician Chris "Woody" Wood (Bastille) is 36. Rock singer Kate Nash is 34. Actor Jeremy Suarez is 31. San Diego Padres infielder Manny Machado is 29. NBA star Zion Williamson is 21.