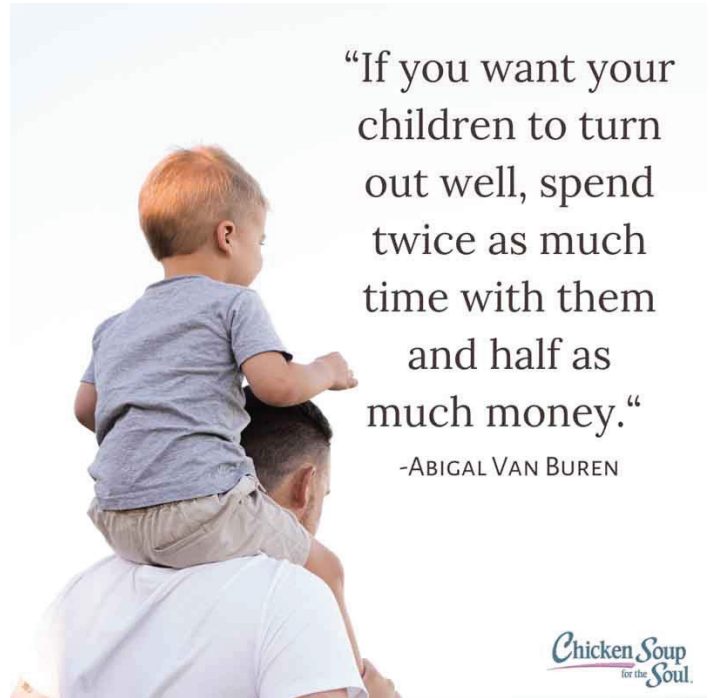


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“If you want your children to turn out well, spend twice as much time with them and half as much money.”

-ABIGAL VAN BUREN

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Britton






OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Groton Area School 2021-22 Staff Salaries

Groton Area School District 06-6

2021-22 Administrator Salaries	2021-22 Auxiliary Staff Salaries
Schwan, Brett ^ * 74,373.21	Bahr, Loren 3,242.07
Schwan, Joseph ^ 108,306.43	Bahr, Loren 27.00/hr
Sombke, Kiersten ^ 70,706.93	Bartell, Karin 17,955.00
Weber, Michael ^ 78,590.89	Bisbee, Amanda 15,441.31
.....	Clocksene, Brandon 31,606.45
2021-22 Certified Teacher Salaries	Dolan, Kristen 14,615.37
Adams, Ray 52,238.18	Donley, Don (bus driving) 13,413.50
Bortem, Jordyn 42,250.00	Dunker, Natasha ^ 16,101.98
DeHoet, Lindsey 46,812.88	Farmen, Clayton Jr. ^ 36,420.80
Dinger, Emily 52,709.14	Farmen, Clayton Jr. (bus driving) 6,506.75
Donley, Don 64,719.86	Fliehs, Claire ^ 12,698.40
Duncan, Kayla * 48,261.35	Fliehs, Duane ^ 14,185.60
Eichler, Emily 50,576.06	Foertsch, Teri 15,249.78
Erdmann, Julie 55,222.61	Franken, Adam (.5 bus driving) 6,300.75
Erickson, Rebecca * 55,783.77	Groeblichhoff, Joni ^ 16,497.55
Fjeldheim, Susan 47,376.82	Gustafson, Beth ^ 34,394.37
Fordham, Austin * 48,683.85	Guthmiller, Joel (bus driving) 12,554.50
Franken, Adam ^ * 59,375.19	Hjermstad, Randy ^ 22,937.10
Gerlack, Kyle * 48,030.00	Hoffman, Jan 19,331.55
Gibbs, Ann 51,656.08	Johnson, Karen 7,594.97
Gonsoir, Kristen * 65,702.95	Kampa, Rita ^ 30,030.89
Grieve, Lynette * 60,630.05	Krueger, Heidi ^ 27,273.20
Guthmiller, Joel * 54,969.45	Krueger, Jill 15,501.16
Hanten, Sarah 49,776.99	Krueger, Lois ^ 27,901.96
Harry, Janene 57,327.70	Lewandowski, Rebecca 16,327.08
Hawkins, Lance * 59,220.97	Lipp, Kami 17,341.54
Helvig, Aaron ^ * 62,449.98	Madsen, Brenda ^ * 18,522.63
Helvig, Jill 47,407.48	McInerney, Linda 14,889.70
Hendrickson, Shelby 44,553.51	Miller, Lynn 13,459.80
Hubsch, Becky 48,550.00	Mitchell, Jamie 15,441.30
Kjellsen, Greg * 57,037.10	Monson, Stan 5,643.00
Kjellsen, Jordan * 44,458.85	Morton, Darlene 8,223.39
Kurth, Travis * 58,000.38	Nehls, Mike ^ 48,057.40
Kurtz, Diane 58,470.74	Padfield, Chuck 6,619.20
Kurtz, Sydney 46,754.48	Peterson, Kristi ^ . * 41,860.00
Lone, Janel 53,548.72	Pigors, Tom ^ 36,420.80
Milbrandt, Julie * 50,630.55	Schinkel, Jasmine ^ 16,280.71
Pederson, Rachael 51,400.00	Sippel, Lisa 15,189.94
Peterson, Todd 47,018.08	Tietz, Deb 24,583.67
Schuring, Alexa 43,246.35	Ulmer, Melissa 17,359.92
Schwan, Jodi ^ 46,648.93	Wattier, Sue ^ 31,449.60
Smith, Melissa 47,305.81	Weber, Kim ^ 24,910.43
Spier, Joie * 44,362.50	Wimmer, Bertha ^ 27,913.60
Thorson, Scott 52,342.41
Tietz, Lindsey * 51,473.14	2021-22 Off Staff Salaries
VanGerpen, Emily 47,200.00	Activity Trip Bus Drivers 11.00/hr
Vogel, Dustin 45,260.84	Auxiliary Adult Subs 12.10/hr
Wanner, Shaun * 62,986.10	Auxiliary Student Subs 9.75/hr
Weisenberger, Carrie 50,571.70	Bus Driver Subs 65.00/day
Winburn, Debra 56,827.51	Certified Teacher Subs 125.00/day
Yeigh, Desiree * 48,999.01	Dolan, Brian * 14,576.25
Zoellner, Anne 52,399.31	Duncan, Seth * 2,957.50
.....	Erickson, Seth * 2,957.50
Certified Staff - 180 days, unless noted	Hanson, Chelsea * 4,647.50
^ Indicates additional contract days	Harry, Aubray * 1,425.94
* Indicates additional extra-curricular	Kucker, Chris * 2,957.50
.....	Locke, Matt * 5,070.00
Auxiliary Staff - 171 days, unless noted	Scepaniak, Ryan * 5,492.50
^ Indicates additional contract days	Strom, Jenna * 2,957.50
* Indicates additional extra-curricular	Traphagen, Trent * 3,380.00
.....	Zoellner, Darin * 5,070.00
Published once at the total approximate cost of \$117.01. 20235	

Americans with Disabilities Act Day

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem has proclaimed July 26 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Day in South Dakota.

“On the 31st Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, we celebrate the contributions Americans with disabilities have made to our state. Today, we rededicate ourselves to empowering every individual with equal access and equal opportunity,” reads Governor Noem’s proclamation.

The ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodations, commercial facilities, telecommunications, and state and local government services.

South Dakota Department of Human Services Cabinet Secretary Shawnie Rechtenbaugh said, “The ADA Act is one of the most important civil rights laws in the history of this country. This is a celebration of those Americans who refuse to be defined by a medical condition and instead, triumph in face of adversity. I am proud to support these South Dakotans and ask that our friends and neighbors across the state join us in this celebration

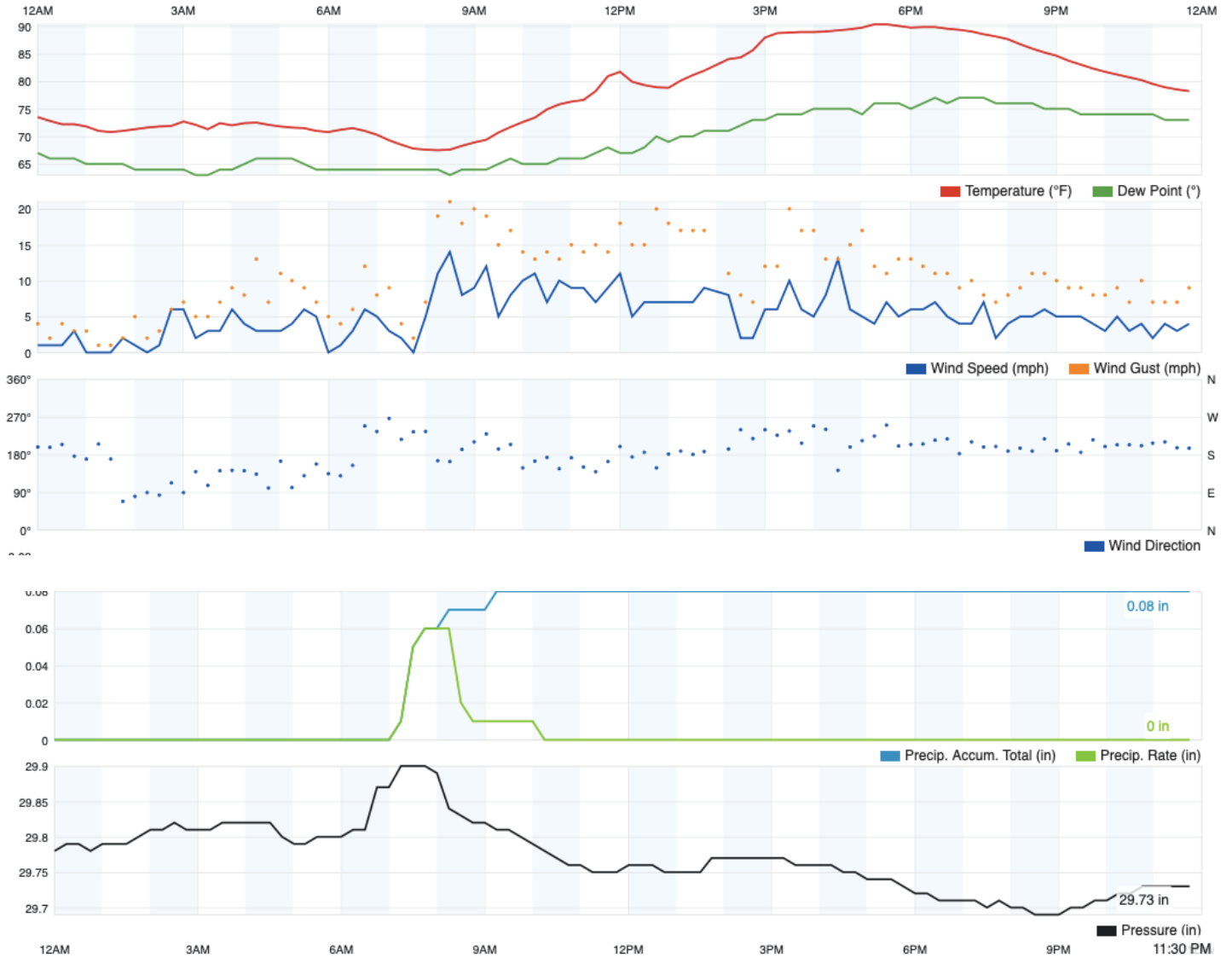
For more information on the ADA, please visit <https://www.adaanniversary.org/home>.

The proclamation coincides with the 31st anniversary of the signing of the ADA by President George H.W. Bush in 1990.

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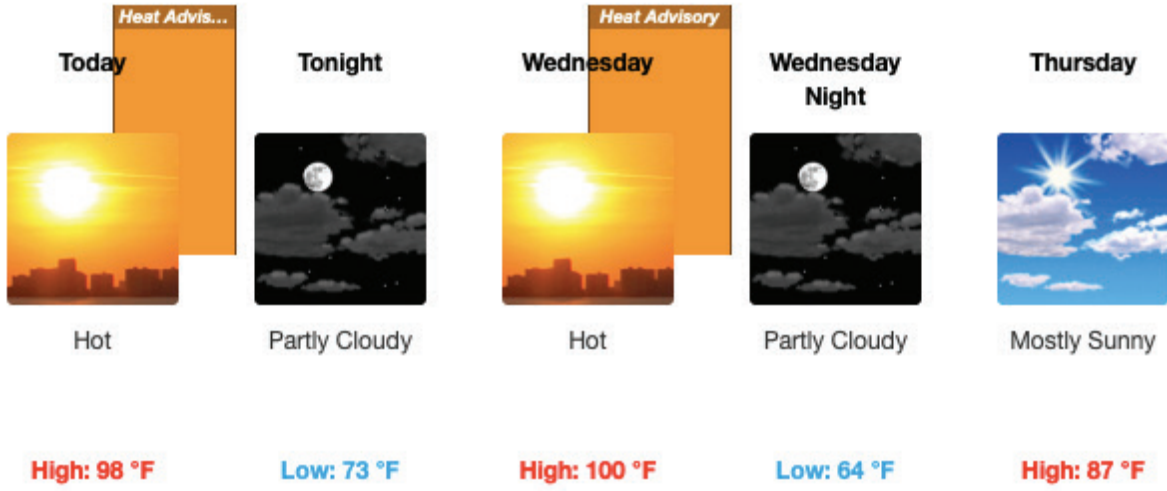
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

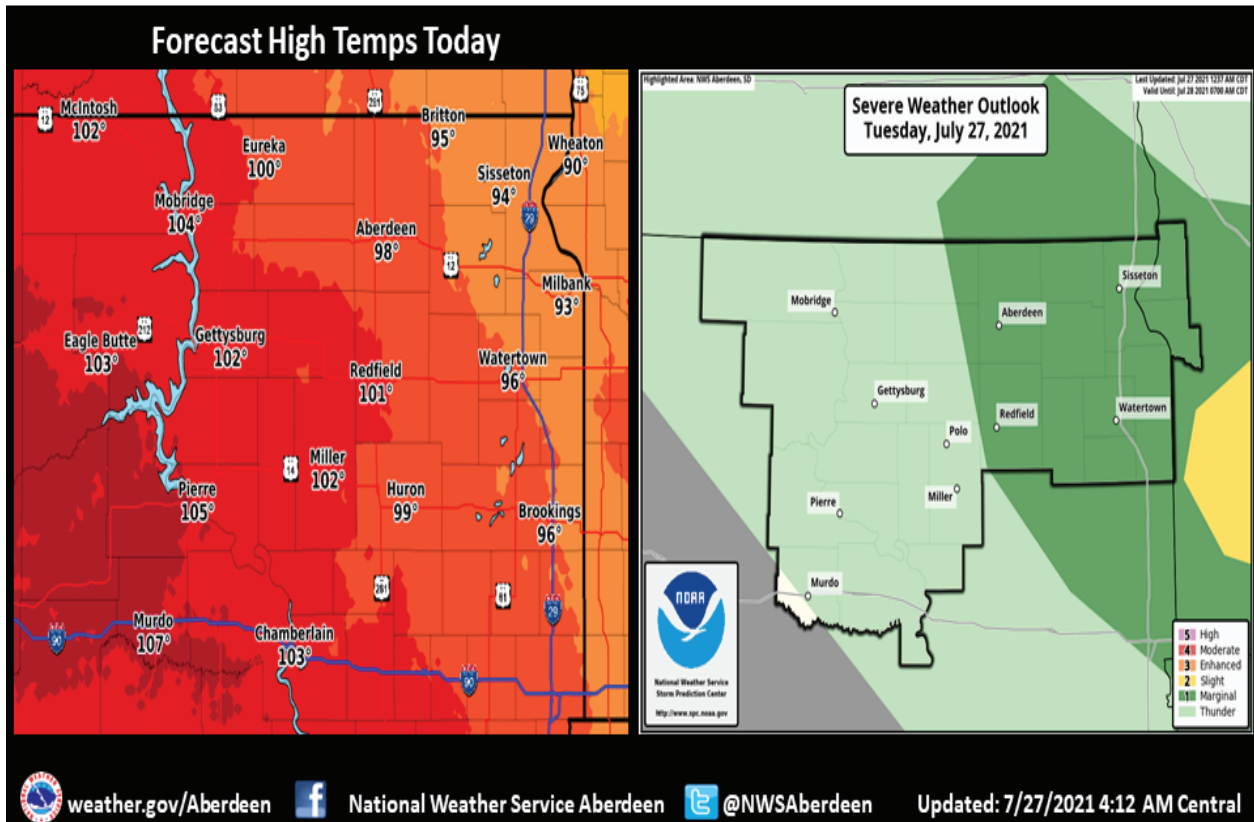


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Another Hot One Today With Storms Possible Tonight



It's going to be another hot one today across most of the area. A heat advisory will remain in effect for the afternoon hours for most locales with the exception of far northeast South Dakota and west-central MN. Highs today will reach the 90s each to the low 100s west. Another upper wave moves through the region tonight which could lead to a few storms for northeast SD and west-central MN. A couple storms may be on the stronger side, but the better chance for seeing organized severe weather looks to be in portions of southern MN.

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Today in Weather History

July 26, 1963: An estimated F2 tornado moved northeast from 4 miles northeast of Raymond. Barns and outbuildings were destroyed on one farm, and the home was unroofed. Asphalt was ripped off a state highway.

1874: Torrential rainfall brought flash flooding to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

1890: During the morning hours, an estimated F3 tornado went through the southern part of Lawrence, Massachusetts. The tornado left 500 people homeless as the tornado destroyed 35 homes and damaged 60 others.

1897: Jewel, Maryland received 14.75 inches of rain in a 24 hour period. This record is currently the oldest, state rainfall record in the United States. All other state rainfall records are in the 1900s and 2000s.

1921: On the summit of Mt. Wellenkuppe, in Switzerland, the temperature reached 100 degrees by 10 am. The summit had an elevation of 12,830 feet and was covered in snow.

1931: A swarm of grasshoppers descends on crops throughout the American heartland, devastating millions of acres. Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota, already in the midst of a bad drought, suffered tremendously from this disaster.

1979: Tropical Storm Claudette stalled over Alvin, Texas, inundating the town with 45 inches of rain in 42 hours. The total included 43 inches in 24 hours, which is the maximum 24-hour rainfall in American history.

1819 - Twin cloudbursts of fifteen inches struck almost simultaneously at Catskill, NY, and Westfield, MA. Flash flooding resulted in enormous erosion. (David Ludlum)

1943 - Tishomingo, OK, baked in the heat as the mercury soared to 121 degrees, a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1960 - The temperature at Salt Lake City, UT, hit 107 degrees, an all-time record high for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced hail two inches in diameter in McHenry County, IL, and wind gusts to 70 mph at Auburn, ME. A wind gust of 90 mph was recorded at Blairstown, NJ, before the anemometer broke. The high winds were associated with a small tornado. The record high of 88 degrees at Beckley, WV, was their sixth in a row. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced large hail and damaging winds in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region, and in the south central U.S. Eight cities in the northwestern and north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Salem, OR, hit 103 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Morning thunderstorms produced heavy rain in southeastern Texas, with more than three inches reported at the Wildlife Refuge in southwestern Chambers County. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in Montana, with wind gusts to 62 mph reported at Helena. Eight cities from Maine to Minnesota reported record high temperatures for the date, including Newark, NJ, with a reading of 99 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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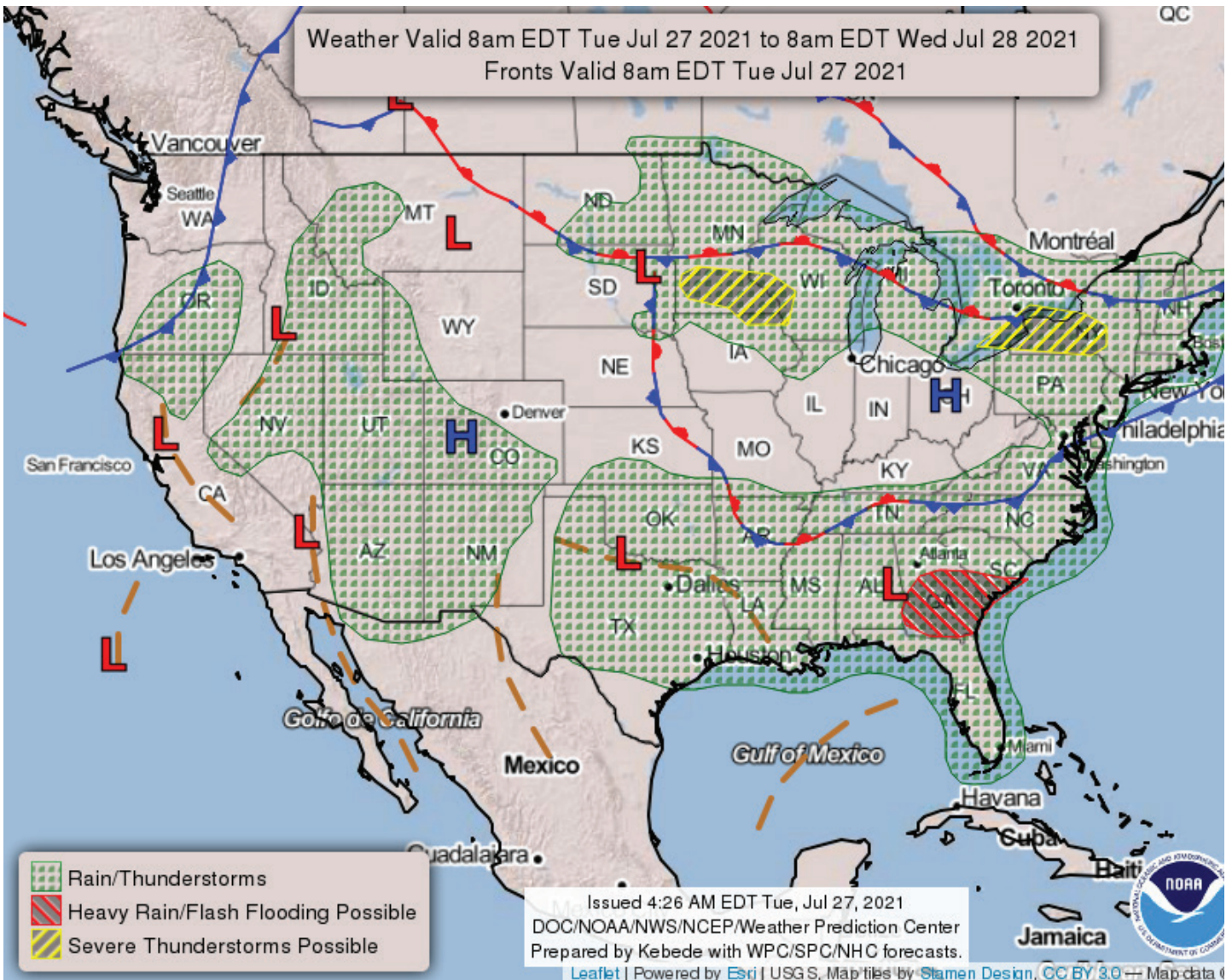
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 90.3 °F at 5:15 PM
Low Temp: 67.5 °F at 8:15 AM
Wind: 21 mph at 8:30 AM
Precip: 0.08

Today's Info

Record High: 110° in 1931
Record Low: 41° in 2013
Average High: 85°F
Average Low: 60°F
Average Precip in July.: 2.68
Precip to date in July.: 2.50
Average Precip to date: 13.69
Precip Year to Date: 7.25
Sunset Tonight: 9:07 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:14 a.m.



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IT'S ALL ABOUT CHOICE

A reader recently wrote and asked a question that many of us ask at one time or another: "If there is a God, and if He is a good and loving God, why does He allow sin and suffering?"

A simple answer is that God gave Adam and Eve, as He does each of us, the opportunity and freedom to make choices and live with the consequences. However, there was a tremendous liability that came with their choice and freedom that continues to affect us. Their decision to disobey God and take what was not theirs has resulted in the sin and suffering that grips our world today. We live with the consequences of their choice,

But it seems that we all make decisions that are not in keeping with what is in our best interests. Consider the history of Israel. The psalmist wrote, "My people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts."

Without choice there could be no love or liberty, grace or goodness, caring or compassion. We are free to choose what is right and righteous or what is destructive and devastating. This is true of individuals and nations alike. We continue to have sin and suffering because of wrong choices and their never-ending consequences,

And why do we make wrong choices? Again our psalmist has the answer: "If my people would but listen to me...I would subdue their enemies."

We do not have to make wrong choices, but, we make wrong choices because we do not listen to the Word of God and follow His directions.

Prayer: We pray, Father, that we will allow Your Word to speak to our hearts and guide our decisions. Then the consequences will bring Your blessings. In Jesus' Name, Amen!

Scripture For Today: My people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts. Psalm 81:11-12

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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

Noem jumps into border policy debate on border visit

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

MCALLEN, Texas (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem's whirlwind tour of the U.S. border with Mexico on Monday was filled with climbing into military vehicles, visiting with troops and positioning herself as tough on an issue that's sure to loom large in 2024 presidential debates.

The Republican governor flew to McAllen, Texas, to check in on the roughly 50 National Guard members who volunteered for a 30-day deployment. She heard how troops have encountered many children crossing and are eager to be stationed where even more people cross the border each night. By the end of the day, she had doubled down on border policy, saying she was considering extending the National Guard's assignment for more months.

"The reality of it is astonishing," Noem told The Associated Press after meeting with the troops. "What our soldiers are seeing is a porous border."

The ambitious governor's first visit to the border gives her a chance to pick up where former President Donald Trump left off in making hard-line immigration measures a driving force of the Republican Party. Noem eagerly joined the political fight with President Joe Biden after a surge in border crossings, sending the South Dakota Guard members to aid Texas' push to arrest people crossing the border illegally and charge them with state crimes.

"This is a national security threat behind us," Noem said at a news conference near a border wall. "What we see happening behind us is an open border. The drugs that come into South Dakota come over this border."

But the governor has also stepped into a border policy debate that has no easy answers. She described how National Guard members are eager to help with border security, but have also been thrust into an environment where it's difficult to determine why people are crossing.

Large numbers of migrants have been showing up at the U.S. border with Mexico, with many turning themselves over to U.S. Border Patrol agents in seeking legal asylum status. U.S. officials reported this month that they had encountered 55,805 members of families with children in June, up 25% from the previous month. That figure still remains far below the high of 88,587 in May 2019.

For any Republican eyeing a 2024 presidential bid, a trip to the U.S.-Mexico border may become as necessary as visiting early primary states. Among the governors who have joined Gov. Greg Abbott's initiative, Noem and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis are the only ones to stage a news conference with the border as a backdrop.

Noem posed for photos with troops stationed on the Rio Grande River, inspected night-vision-enabled military trucks, and munched on burgers with her National Guard escort.

However, Noem's trip comes with its own political baggage: She was fiercely criticized for accepting \$1 million from a Republican donor to fund the deployment. Military experts said it set a troubling precedent that sent a message that military troops could be deployed at the behest of private donors.

But Noem brushed aside those concerns, and instead cast the donation as proof she is fiscally conservative. By accepting the donation, she argued, she was saving taxpayer money. And she was already eager to join the border fight when Tennessee billionaire Willis Johnson called with his \$1 million offer — she was just deliberating whether to send police officers or National Guard troops.

Noem said many others have reached out to offer donations to fund the deployment. She said she would evaluate any further offers, but added that she would like to see Texas help fund the deployment if it lasts beyond the initial two months she committed.

Meanwhile, Texas authorities last week began arresting people along the border on trespassing charges. At least 10 people were jailed, but the number of migrant arrests could increase to as many as 100 or 200 per day, according to authorities.

As Noem made her first foray into border policy, she appeared ready to double-down on a tough-on-immigration stance that is sure to be a talking point for years to come.

"A lot of times you can't speak to the reality of something unless you see it," she said.

Follow Stephen Groves on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/stephengroves>

Patrol identifies 3 people who died in Sioux Falls crash

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Highway Patrol on Monday identified three people who died in a single-vehicle crash along an interstate in Sioux Falls.

The patrol said 22-year-old Sean Morck, of Sioux Falls, 18-year-old Breeanne Gaffin, of Worthing, and 16-year-old Kali Johnson, of Canton, died Thursday when their car left Interstate-229, hit a tree and caught fire.

All three occupants were pronounced dead at the scene.

The crash remains under investigation.

Body recovered from submerged vehicle likely missing woman

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — The body of a woman has been found in a submerged vehicle in an Aberdeen lake.

Police were called Saturday about a suspicious object in Richmond Lake. Divers responded and found the submerged vehicle near the west bridge.

The vehicle was tied to a missing person's case from Aberdeen. Officials said the body is believed to be a woman reported missing by family members in April.

The investigation is ongoing.

Explosion at German chemical complex declared extreme threat

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — An explosion at an industrial park for chemical companies shook the German city of Leverkusen on Tuesday, sending a large black cloud rising into the air. Several people were injured and five remain missing.

Germany's Federal Office for Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance classified the explosion as "an extreme threat" and asked residents to stay inside and keep windows and doors closed, German news agency dpa reported.

Operators of the Chempark site in Leverkusen, about 20 kilometers (13 miles) north of Cologne on the Rhine river, said the cause of the explosion was unclear.

Currenta, the company operating the chemical park, said in a statement that several employees were injured, at least two of them severely, and that five people remain missing.

Police in nearby Cologne said they did not have any information on the cause or size of the explosion, but that a large number of police, firefighters, helicopters and ambulances had been deployed to the scene. They asked all residents to stay inside and warned people from outside of Leverkusen to avoid the region.

They also shut down several nearby major highways.

Daily Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger reported that the explosion took place in the Buerrig neighborhood at a garbage incineration plant of the chemical park.

The paper reported that the smoke cloud was moving in a northwestern direction toward the towns of Burscheid and Leichlingen. It said firefighters from all over the region had been called in to help extinguish the fire.

Leverkusen is home to Bayer, one of Germany's biggest chemical companies. It has about 163,000 residents and borders Cologne, which is Germany's fourth biggest city and has around 1 million inhabitants. Many residents work at Bayer, which is one of the biggest employers in the region.

The scene of the explosion, the chemical park, is located very close to the banks of the Rhine river. Currenta has three facilities in the region. More than 70 different companies are based at the locations in Leverkusen, Dormagen and Krefeld-Uerdingen.

At first Jan. 6 hearing, police to detail violence, injuries

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats are launching their investigation into the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection Tuesday with a focus on the law enforcement officers who were attacked and beaten as the rioters broke into the building — an effort to put a human face on the violence of the day.

The police officers who are scheduled to testify endured some of the worst of the brutality. They were punched, trampled, crushed and sprayed with chemical irritants. They were called racial slurs and threatened with their own weapons as the mob of then-President Donald Trump's supporters overwhelmed them, broke through windows and doors and interrupted the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's presidential win.

"We're going to tell this story from the beginning," said Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin, a Democrat who sits on the new House panel that is investigating the attack. "The moral center of gravity is these officers who put their lives on the line for us."

Testifying will be Capitol Police officers Harry Dunn and Aquilino Gonell and Metropolitan Police officers Michael Fanone and Daniel Hodges.

In previous interviews, Dunn has said that attackers yelled racial slurs and fought him in what resembled hand to hand combat as he held them back. Gonell, an Iraq veteran, detailed surgery on his foot and injuries from which he struggled to recover. Fanone has described being dragged down the Capitol steps by rioters who shocked him with a stun gun and beat him. Hodges was beaten and crushed between two doors, and his bloody face and anguished screams were caught on video.

The panel's first hearing comes as partisan tensions have only worsened since the insurrection, with many Republicans playing down, or outright denying, the violence that occurred and denouncing the Democratic-led investigation as politically motivated. Democrats now want to launch the probe — and win public support for it — by reminding people how brutal it was, and how the law enforcement officers who were sworn to protect the Capitol suffered grave injuries at the hands of the rioters.

"What we really want to try to communicate during the hearing is what it was like to be on the front lines for these brave police officers," said House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, another member of the panel. "How vastly outnumbered they were, how well militarized the members of the crowd were."

The hope, Schiff said, is to "inform the public of what really happened that day, particularly in light of the efforts to whitewash that part of our history now."

The chairman of the committee, Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson, says the hearing will "set the tone" of the probe, which will examine not only Trump's role in the insurrection but the right-wing groups involved in coordination before the attack, white supremacists among them.

It will also look at the security failures that allowed hundreds of people to breach the Capitol and send lawmakers running for their lives. Some of those who broke in were calling for the deaths of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and then-Vice President Mike Pence, who was hiding just feet away from the mob.

Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney, one of two Republicans on the panel, will give opening remarks after Thompson — an effort by Democrats to appear as bipartisan as possible. The House Republican leader, Kevin McCarthy, withdrew the participation of other Republicans last week after Pelosi rejected two of them, saying their "antics" in support of Trump, and his lies that he won the election, weren't appropriate for the serious investigation. Monday evening, the House voted against a resolution offered by the GOP leader to force the members to sit on the panel.

McCarthy has stayed close to Trump since the insurrection and has threatened to pull committee assignments from any Republican who participates on the Jan. 6 panel. On Monday, he called Cheney and Illinois Rep. Adam Kinzinger, who is also sitting on the committee, "Pelosi Republicans," an effort that Cheney immediately called "childish."

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"We have important work to do," Cheney said Monday as the committee met to prepare.

Outside the same meeting, Kinzinger said that "for too long, we've been pretending that Jan. 6 didn't happen." He said he never expected to be in this position, "but when you have these conspiracies that continue to thrive, when you have lies and misinformation that continue to thrive, it's essential for us as members of Congress to get to the answers."

Shortly after the insurrection, almost every Republican denounced the violent mob — and Trump himself, who told his supporters to "fight like hell" to overturn his defeat. But many have softened their tone in recent months and weeks.

And some have gone farther, with Georgia Rep. Andrew Clyde saying a video of the rioters looked like "a normal tourist visit" and Arizona Rep. Paul Gosar repeatedly saying that a woman who was shot and killed by police as she was trying to break into the House chamber was "executed." Others have falsely claimed that Democrats or liberal groups were responsible for the attack.

On Tuesday, a group of GOP members plans to hold a news conference about the insurrectionists who were arrested, calling them "prisoners."

The officers testifying have become increasingly politically active in recent months, and went from office to office in May to lobby Senate Republicans to support an outside commission to investigate the insurrection. The Senate GOP ultimately rejected that effort, even though that panel would have been evenly split between the parties.

In June, the group watched from the gallery as the House voted to form its own investigation instead.

After that vote, members of the group said they were frustrated with the Republican response — only Cheney and Kinzinger had voted for the panel. Fanone, shaken, said "it's very personal for me." Dunn said he couldn't believe that so many of them would vote against an investigation.

"I didn't think it would be that close," Dunn said. "I thought it would be, everybody wants to get to the bottom of it."

Associated Press writers Eric Tucker, Kevin Freking and Padmananda Rama contributed to this report.

'About time': Gay athletes unleash rainbow wave on Olympics

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — When Olympic diver Tom Daley announced in 2013 that he was dating a man and "couldn't be happier," his coming out was an act of courage that, with its rarity, also exposed how the top echelons of sport weren't seen as a safe space by the vast majority of LGBTQ athletes.

Back then, the number of gay Olympians who felt able and willing to speak openly about their private lives could be counted on a few hands. There'd been just two dozen openly gay Olympians among the more than 10,000 who competed at the 2012 London Games, a reflection of how unrepresentative and anachronistic top-tier sports were just a decade ago and, to a large extent, still are.

Still, at the Tokyo Games, the picture is changing.

A wave of rainbow-colored pride, openness and acceptance is sweeping through Olympic pools, skateparks, halls and fields, with a record number of openly gay competitors in Tokyo. Whereas LGBTQ invisibility used to make Olympic sports seem out of step with the times, Tokyo is shaping up as a watershed for the community and for the Games — now, finally, starting to better reflect human diversity.

"It's about time that everyone was able to be who they are and celebrated for it," said U.S. skateboarder Alexis Sablone, one of at least five openly LGBTQ athletes in that sport making its Olympic debut in Tokyo.

"It's really cool," Sablone said. "What I hope that means is that even outside of sports, kids are raised not just under the assumption that they are heterosexual."

The gay website Outsports.com has been tallying the number of publicly out gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and nonbinary athletes in Tokyo. After several updates, its count is now up to 168, including some who petitioned to get on the list. That's three times the number that Outsports tallied at the last Olympics in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. At the London Games, it counted just 23.

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"The massive increase in the number of out athletes reflects the growing acceptance of LGBTQ people in sports and society," Outsports says.

Daley is also broadcasting that message from Tokyo, his fourth Olympics overall and second since he came out.

After winning gold for Britain with Matty Lee in 10-meter synchronized diving, the 27-year-old reflected on his journey from young misfit who felt "alone and different" to Olympic champion who says he now feels less pressure to perform because he knows that his husband and their son love him regardless.

"I hope that any young LGBT person out there can see that no matter how alone you feel right now you are not alone," Daley said. "You can achieve anything, and there is a whole lot of your chosen family out here."

"I feel incredibly proud to say that I am a gay man and also an Olympic champion," he added. "Because, you know, when I was younger I thought I was never going to be anything or achieve anything because of who I was."

Still, there's progress yet to be made.

Among the more than 11,000 athletes competing in Tokyo, there will be others who still feel held back, unable to come out and be themselves. Outsports' list has few men, reflecting their lack of representation that extends beyond Olympic sports. Finnish Olympian Ari-Pekka Liukkonen is one of the rare openly gay men in his sport, swimming.

"Swimming, it's still much harder to come out (for) some reason," he said. "If you need to hide what you are, it's very hard."

Only this June did an active player in the NFL — Las Vegas Raiders defensive end Carl Nassib — come out as gay. And only last week did a first player signed to an NHL contract likewise make that milestone announcement. Luke Prokop, a 19-year-old Canadian with the Nashville Predators, now has 189,000 likes for his "I am proud to publicly tell everyone that I am gay" post on Twitter.

The feeling that "there's still a lot of fight to be done" and that she needed to stand up and be counted in Tokyo is why Elissa Alarie, competing in rugby, contacted Outsports to get herself named on its list. With their permission, she also added three of her Canadian teammates.

"It's important to be on that list because we are in 2021 and there are still, like, firsts happening. We see them in the men's professional sports, NFL, and a bunch of other sports," Alarie said. "Yes, we have come a long way. But the fact that we still have firsts happening means that we need to still work on this."

Tokyo's out Olympians are also almost exclusively from Europe, North and South America, and Australia/New Zealand. The only Asians on the Outsports list are Indian sprinter Dutee Chand and skateboarder Margielyn Didal from the Philippines.

That loud silence resonates with Alarie. Growing up in a small town in Quebec, she had no gay role models and "just thought something was wrong with me."

"To this day, who we are is still illegal in many countries," she said. "So until it's safe for people in those countries to come out, I think we need to keep those voices loud and clear."

AP Sports Writers Andrew Dampf and Paul Newberry contributed to this report. Paris-based AP multi-media journalist John Leicester is covering his eighth Olympics. Follow him on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/johnleicester>

More AP Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/2020-tokyo-olympics> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Cardinal, 9 others on trial at Vatican in money scandals

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — A trial opened Tuesday within the Vatican City's imposing walls of 10 defendants, including a once-powerful cardinal, in a case based on a sprawling probe into the allegedly criminal management of the Holy See's portfolio of assets, including donations by countless Catholics from the pews.

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Among the defendants is an Italian prelate, Angelo Becciu, a longtime Vatican diplomat whom Pope Francis raised to cardinal's rank in 2018. After a web of scandals started unraveling during a two-year investigation, Francis gave Becciu the boot last year as chief of the Catholic church's saint-making office. Not waiting for find out the eventual verdict of a Vatican court, Francis also has removed Becciu's rights as a cardinal.

Less than three months ago, it would have been impossible for a cardinal to be in the dock in Vatican City State, which has its own justice system and even a jail. But Francis had a Vatican law changed so that Vatican-based cardinals and bishops can be prosecuted and judged by the Holy See's lay criminal tribunal as long as the pontiff signs off on that. Previously, Vatican cardinals could only be judged by their peers, a court of three fellow cardinals.

Becciu, 73, is charged with embezzlement and with pressing a Monsignor to recant information he supplied to prosecutors about the handling of the disastrous Vatican real estate investment in London. Becciu has denied any wrongdoing.

Since a nearly 500-page indictment was issued in early July, prosecutors have filed some 30,000 pages of supplemental documentation.

Defense lawyers say they haven't sufficient time to study the material.

The presiding judge, Giuseppe Pignatone, is a retired chief prosecutor of Rome who earlier in his career took on the Mafia and economic wrongdoing in Sicily.

To accommodate the largest criminal trial in the Vatican's modern history, the hearings are being held in a large hall converted into a courtroom in the Vatican Museums.

A pool of reporters accredited with the Vatican is being allowed to follow the proceedings in court, but their accounts aren't allowed to be filed until after the day's hearing ends.

Defendants are alleged to have had various roles in actions that effectively cost the Holy See tens of millions of dollars in donated funds through poor investments, dealings with shady money managers and purported favors to friends and family.

Looming large in the indictment is the London deal approved by the Vatican secretariat of state. An initial 200 million euros (now nearly \$240 million) was sunk into a fund operated by an Italian businessman. Half that money went into the real estate venture in the swank Chelsea neighborhood, an investment which eventually cost 350 million euros. By 2018, the original investment was losing money, and the Vatican scrambled to find an exit strategy.

Defendants include Cecilia Marogna, who was hired by Becciu as an external security consultant. Prosecutors allege she embezzled 575,000 euros in Vatican funds that Becciu had authorized for use as a ransom to free Catholic hostages abroad. Marogna has contended that charges she ran up were reimbursement of her intelligence-related expenses and other money was her compensation.

Inside a KKK murder plot: Grab him up, take him to the river

By JASON DEAREN Associated Press

PALATKA, Fla. (AP) — Joseph Moore breathed heavily, his face slick with nervous sweat. He held a cell-phone with a photo of a man splayed on the floor; the man appeared dead, his shirt torn apart and his pants wet.

Puffy dark clouds blocked the sun as Moore greeted another man, who'd pulled up in a metallic blue sedan. They met behind an old fried chicken shack in rural north Florida.

"KIGY, my brother," Moore said. It was shorthand for "Klansman, I greet you."

Birds chirped in a tree overhead and traffic whooshed by on a nearby road, muddling the sound of their voices, which were being recorded secretly.

Moore brought the phone to David "Sarge" Moran, who wore a camouflage-print baseball hat emblazoned with a Confederate flag patch and a metal cross. His arms and hands were covered in tattoos.

A nervous, giddy chuckle escaped Moran's mouth.

"Oh, shit. I love it," he said. "Motherf----- pissed on himself. Good job."

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"Is that what y'all wanted?"

"Yes, hell yeah," Moran said, his voice pitched high.

It was 11:30 a.m. on March 19, 2015, and the klansmen were celebrating what they thought was a successful murder in Florida.

But the FBI had gotten wind of the murder plot. A confidential informant had infiltrated the group, and his recordings provide a rare, detailed look at the inner workings of a modern klan cell and a domestic terrorism probe.

That investigation would unearth another secret: An unknown number of klansmen were working inside the Florida Department of Corrections, with significant power over inmates, Black and white.

Thomas Driver took a pull off a cigarette, and exhaled the smoke at Warren Williams. Driver, a white prison guard, and Williams, a Black inmate, faced each other.

It was a humid August day in 2013, about a year and a half before the clandestine murder photo reveal.

The two men stood in a sweltering prison dorm room in rural north Florida's Reception and Medical Center, a barbed wire-encircled complex built among farmland an hour south of the Georgia state line. The RMC is the state's prison hospital where new inmates are processed.

Williams, a quiet, 6-foot-1, 210-pound inmate, suffered from severe anxiety and depression. He was serving a year, records show, for striking a police officer. Williams agreed to plead no contest in exchange for a reduced sentence, and an order to receive a mental health evaluation and treatment under county supervision.

He found himself in front of Driver after he lost his identification badge, a prison infraction.

Williams told Driver to stop blowing smoke at him, he'd report later. Driver blew more, and Williams told him to stop again.

When Driver continued, Williams jumped him and they hit the ground. As they struggled, Williams bit Driver and gained an advantage, according to both men's accounts of the fight.

A group of guards responded, and beat Williams so badly that he required hospitalization, his mother and lawyer said.

Driver, in turn, needed a battery of precautionary tests for HIV and hepatitis C because of the bite. They would all be negative, but the ordeal enraged him.

He wanted revenge.

More than a year later, in December 2014, a wooden cross ignited in a field hidden by tall trees.

Dozens of hooded klansmen gathered around for a "klonklave," a meeting of the Florida Traditionalist American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Members of a biker club were being "naturalized" as citizens into the Invisible Empire of the Klan.

Security was tight. The bikers were worried about recording devices, and were checking people.

Driver, known by his fellow klansmen as "Brother Thomas," was there with Sarge Moran, who was also a prison guard. Moran had worked for the Florida Department of Corrections for decades; he'd also been a klansman for years. He had been disciplined more than once by the corrections department for violent incidents, according to records obtained by The AP. Despite this, Moran had been kept in a position of power over inmates.

Moran and Driver wanted to discuss an urgent matter with Joseph Moore, the group's "Grand Night Hawk," in charge of security.

Moore was a U.S. Army veteran. When not in his klan "helmet," he often wore a baseball hat pinned with military medals, including a Purple Heart. He commanded respect and fear from his klan brothers, and often regaled them with stories of his work killing targets overseas as part of an elite U.S. military squad.

The three men moved away for a private talk, and had another klansman keep watch nearby so they weren't overheard.

The guards gave Moore a paper with a picture of Williams, his name and other information. Driver de-

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scribed the fight, and how he and his family had worried for weeks about a false positive test for hepatitis C. "Do you want him six feet under?" Moore asked. Driver and Moran looked at each other, then said yes.

The very existence of a plot to murder a Black man by Ku Klux Klan members working in law enforcement evokes past tragedies like the 1964 "Mississippi Burning" case, where three civil rights workers were slain by klansmen. Sheriff's deputy Cecil Price Sr. was implicated in the deaths and was convicted of violating the young men's civil rights.

Today, researchers believe that tens of thousands of Americans belong to groups identified with white supremacist extremism, the klan being just one. These groups' efforts to infiltrate law enforcement have been documented repeatedly in recent years and called an "epidemic" by legal scholars.

FBI Director Christopher Wray said at a March Senate hearing that "racially motivated violent extremism," mostly by white supremacists, accounts for the most rapidly rising share of domestic terrorism cases.

"That same group of people ... have been responsible for the most lethal attacks over the last, say, decade," Wray added.

During the Jan. 6 insurrection in the U.S. Capitol, "Thin Blue Line" flags flew alongside white supremacist signs and banners, and more than 30 current and former police officers from a number of departments around the nation were identified as attendees.

"White supremacist groups have historically engaged in strategic efforts to infiltrate and recruit from law enforcement," said an FBI document released by a congressional committee in September, about four months before the Capitol riots. In the intelligence assessment, written in 2006, the FBI said some in law enforcement were volunteering "professional resources to white supremacist causes with which they sympathize."

While the FBI would not confirm if it had produced a more recent assessment of the ongoing threat, recent cases have confirmed that the problem the agency described in 2006 continues.

In November, a Georgia deputy was caught on an FBI wiretap boasting about targeting Black people for felony arrests so they couldn't vote, and recruiting colleagues into a group called "Shadow Moses." In 2017, an interim police chief in Oklahoma was found to have ties to an international neo-Nazi group. In 2014, two officers in Fruitland Park, Florida, were outed as klansmen and forced to quit.

Despite repeated examples, white supremacists who are fired from law enforcement jobs after being discovered can often find jobs with other agencies. There is no database officials can check to see if someone's been identified as an extremist.

In 2020, an officer in Anniston, Alabama, was hired by a county sheriff's department just a few years after the Southern Poverty Law Center posted a video of him speaking at a white nationalist League of the South meeting.

"There's no trail that follows them even if they're fired. It's spreading the problem around," said Greg Ehrie, former chief of the FBI's New York domestic terrorism squad, who now works with the Anti-Defamation League.

Domestic terrorism experts have been calling for better screening to help identify extremists before they're hired. Some states, such as California and Minnesota, have tried to pass new screening laws, only to be prevented by police unions, whose legal challenges argued successfully that such queries violate free speech rights.

Without screening, white supremacists who get inside can operate with impunity, targeting Black and other people of color, and recruiting others who share their views.

"Unless your name ends up in an FBI wiretap" an officer will go undetected, said Fred Burton, a former special agent with the U.S. Diplomatic Security Service. "There are loopholes in the background investigative process."

Warren Williams got out of prison a few months after his fight with Driver, the prison guard. It was just before Christmas, and he arrived at his mother's single-story brick house in Palatka, a small town in north

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Florida. It was cramped with his three little sisters.

The street dead-ended at some railroad tracks, beyond which flowed the St. Johns River. The wide, rushing waterway runs through town on its way back out to sea to the northeast, near Jacksonville.

After months in a prison cell, Williams longed to fish the St. Johns again. He looked forward to spending days outdoors in his landscaping job, and to writing poems and music in his free time.

Palatka, with a population split almost equally between Black and white, had been devastated by the 2008 Great Recession. Many of its prized murals were fading, and there were more shuttered shops in the old downtown than open ones. A coal-fired power plant on the river is Palatka's largest employer, as well as a paper mill that fills the air with a sour stench.

Williams struggled with anxiety, and sometimes had violent outbursts. His mother called these episodes his "protective mode." But he was home, where she could watch him. He'd been adhering to his probation requirements, and made his mandated meetings.

And in the 21st Century, the klan was not among Williams' list of worries. Images of burning crosses and klansmen targeting Black people for violence seemed anachronistic.

But the symbols of the group's reign in Palatka endure. Each time Williams met with his probation officer, he passed the statue of a Confederate soldier in front of the Putnam County courthouse in downtown Palatka, the county seat. The gangly live oak trees in the court square are mesmerizing to some observers, but to others they're a painful reminder of past lynchings.

Jim Crow Florida was one of the most dangerous places in the South to be Black. In that era, a Black man in Florida was more at risk of being lynched — an execution without trial, often by gun or hanging — than in any other state, according to a University of Georgia study of lynching records.

In 1925, the KKK controlled Putnam County. A klansman named R.J. Hancock was elected sheriff and he helped unleash a reign of terror, where lynch mobs dominated civic life. To stop it, Florida's governor threatened to declare martial law in 1926.

But the klan and its ilk have endured. Today it's just one group in a modern, decentralized white supremacy movement.

"It's surprising that we're even having a conversation about something that was prevalent in the 1920s, taking place 100 years later," said Terrill Hill, Williams' attorney and Palatka's mayor. "It's frustrating. It's angering."

It was a chilly and overcast January day when Joseph Moore, the klan's Grand Night Hawk, arrived at a small house tucked behind tall trees. The air smelled like pine.

It was the home of Charles Newcomb, a stone-faced, chain-smoking former prison guard who was the klan's Exalted Cyclops, a local chief. Newcomb had left his job at the prison, but he remained close to "Sarge" Moran. He wanted to discuss the "Brother Thomas issue" with Moore.

"I look at it this way brother. That was a direct ... attempted murder on him," Newcomb said, referring to Williams' biting Driver. "I don't care how you look at it."

"We just need to do our deed, and where it falls, it falls," Newcomb said. "Because he's a piece of trash anyway."

Because of Moore's professed background as an elite government assassin, Newcomb trusted him to help execute the plan.

"I'd like to see things done in a professional manner," Moore said, with the tone of an experienced hit-man. "There are skills and techniques and things that survive the test of time. If you bury somebody in, say, an open field or whatever ... it is going to be dug up."

"But if you bury somebody in a graveyard over top of somebody that's already been buried, it's never going to be uncovered for a septic tank."

Both agreed they should take a trip to Palatka to scope out Williams' neighborhood.

"One night we find him out there and I can walk right up, put him out of his misery," Newcomb said.

Newcomb wanted to ensure Driver had an alibi.

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"What we need is Brother Thomas (Driver) to be at work," Newcomb said. "And when we do it when Thomas is at work, (he) has an alibi."

Joseph Moore was a husband and father, a veteran and klansman. He was also a confidential informant being paid to provide information to the FBI.

It's life-threatening work. If his klan brothers found out, Moore had no doubt how it would end.

The relationship carried considerable risk for the FBI, too. Moore had suffered a mental breakdown and was hospitalized following an honorable discharge from the U.S. Army in 2002, where he'd been trained as a sniper.

He'd walked into a hospital in New Jersey, drunk, wearing a tactical vest. His pockets were stuffed with a few thousand dollars in cash. He was carrying a plane ticket to Jordan, and told police he'd planned to fight with the Peshmerga in the Kurdish region of Iraq. He would spend four months under medical observation.

The FBI and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, or ATF, have long relied upon informants to investigate domestic extremist groups, with mixed results. Federal investigators have on occasion been fooled and manipulated by informants. And the effort is expensive. Informants often work in secret for years, and if they're found out, placed into protective custody.

In 2008, Moore appeared at the FBI's Gainesville office because he wanted them to investigate the local sheriff's office. His brother-in-law had been arrested on a drug-related charge, and Moore thought that a crooked deputy had planted the drugs. An FBI agent met with Moore, and eventually recruited him to join an investigation into a member of a different Florida klan group suspected of planning a murder.

During that investigation, Moore's wife had grown suspicious of his activities. She demanded answers. Eventually, he told her — and her family — about his FBI work. It was a basic violation of the rules and the FBI fired him.

A few years later, Moore's cellphone lit up with an unknown number. The voice, however, was familiar. It was an agent who'd known him from his previous work with the FBI, asking to meet about a new investigation into another violent klan cell. Because of Moore's success infiltrating the klan before, the agency recruited him again.

The FBI bought him a computer and phone so he could make contact online with the new klan group. Within a few weeks, Moore had scheduled a meeting with the Grand Dragon and second-in-command at a Dollar General parking lot in Bronson, Florida.

The klansmen checked Moore's drivers license and tested him in an exchange of klan jargon.

Moore told them that he'd killed people before, including a hit in China in 2005. He was lying. He'd never seen a battlefield and the medals he wore were fakes.

But the leaders were impressed. They invited Moore to be "naturalized." He filled out an application, paid a \$20 fee along with \$35 in annual dues.

He also signed a "blood oath," part of which read, "I swear ... to be Klannish in all things, to accept the life of the Brotherhood of Service, to regenerate our country and to the white race and maintain the white blood and natural superiority with which God has enabled it."

The Grand Dragon told him that a violation of his blood oath was punishable by death.

On January 30, 2015, less than two years after Moore had signed his klan oath, the murder plot was in motion.

Moore's tires crunched on Newcomb's driveway as he pulled his SUV past a weathered sign on a fence post. It featured a pistol barrel pointed at would-be trespassers. WARNING: There is Nothing Here Worth Dying For.

Moore found Newcomb excited about a new idea he'd had for how to kill Williams.

"I have several bottles of insulin in here if you wanted to do it that way," Newcomb said.

"Do we do it fast and get the hell out? Or do we want to grab him up and take him somewhere and shoot him with insulin?" Newcomb asked.

Moore masked his surprise. He'd thought they were just doing reconnaissance, and now Newcomb was

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planning to strike.

"It'd be quieter," Newcomb said, "if we can grab him up, throw his ass in the car and take off with him somewhere. And we'll just inject his happy ass with a bunch of insulin and let him start doing his floppin'."

An insulin overdose is an excruciating death marked by uncontrollable tremors. For a medical examiner, it's difficult to detect. A person's blood sugar declines naturally when they die, whether the person is diabetic or not. And syringe pricks are so small that, unless you're looking for them specifically, they're nearly undetectable.

"I've got two full needles ready, and then I got two other bottles with us," Newcomb said.

"Is that your wife's meds?" Moore asked.

Newcomb said they were, but that she had plenty extra.

He went into his garage and returned with a child's fishing pole, decorated with images of the cartoon character "Dora the Explorer."

"If we was gonna grab him up and take him down towards the river he'll need a fishing pole like he's been fishin' right?" Newcomb asked, rhetorically. "I wanna make it look realistic."

They were looking at the fishing pole when "Sarge" Moran pulled into the driveway. He apologized for being late.

"Sarge. I brought some insulin. Me and Brother Joe (Moore) was talking, and if we can just kinda grab his ass up," Newcomb said before Moran interrupted.

"Are we going to grab him now?"

"I mean, we're going down to look at some things right now and see if a chance presents itself," Newcomb said.

"I'm following y'all's orders. Whatever orders are given," Moran responded eagerly. "I'm here to serve. I'm at the will and pleasure of."

The three klansmen piled into Moore's SUV and pulled onto a two-lane highway, driving under Spanish-moss-draped tree branches.

They had the cooler of syringes, the Dora the Explorer fishing rod, and Newcomb's handgun, which he rested between his legs.

They fell silent as they drove past dirt roads that led back into dense Florida brush.

Then Newcomb's cell phone rang. His young daughter's voice was at the other end of the line.

"Y'all don't need to bother me today unless it's very, very important. OK?" he scolded. His voice softened. "All right. I love you. Bye bye."

Without missing a beat, Newcomb returned to his plans. A gun sat between his legs as he spoke.

"What I was thinking, though, is if we could grab that package up and take him to the river, which is not that far from him," Newcomb said. "Put his ass face down and give him a couple of shots, because I've got two completely full and they're already ready to go.

"If I set that fishing pole like he's been fishin', and give him a couple shots and we sit there and wait on him, then we can kind of lay him like he's kind of tipping over into the water and he's breathed in just a little bit."

Moran had other logistical issues on his mind. What would they do with the body?

"If we're going to do a complete disposal. If we're going to chop up the body," he said, before being cut off.

Newcomb said they had lots of options.

"I mean, if we have to do pow pow, we will," he said, referring to shooting Williams.

Whatever they decided, Moran said, they needed to protect themselves. They'd brought face shields and coats to cover their skin in case things got messy.

After his initiation into the klan, the FBI had authorized Moore to start recording the group's two main leaders. Initially, they did not know the klansmen included active law enforcement personnel.

After the klansmen brought Moore into the murder plot, however, the FBI widened the scope of the people he could record. The FBI had outfitted Moore's SUV with recording devices that broadcast live to

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agents as they drove to Palatka.

Also, the FBI had made a number of moves to keep Williams safe. They held him in a safe house. They placed police vehicles around his neighborhood so when the klansmen arrived, the FBI agents, Florida Highway Patrol and Palatka police were clearly visible.

When the klansmen drove into Williams' neighborhood, the sight of police patrol cars unnerved them. "Can't make too many rounds with him sitting there," Newcomb said, eyeing a squad car.

Moore tried to play it cool as he turned the car to head back to Newcomb's house.

"I just hate that we didn't get to achieve our goal today," Newcomb said.

"We'll catch that fish," Moran reassured him.

Later Moore dialed his FBI contact, and described breathlessly what he'd recorded. "He actually loaded up a couple of insulin syringes and he was ready to grab him," he said, panting. "It's all on the recording."

Williams lay on the floor of his mother's house, pretending to be dead. The prior day he'd received a strange phone call from his probation officer, asking him to come to the office the next day.

Williams was confused. He'd met with the officer that very day, and hadn't been in any trouble in the hours since.

He told his mother about the call, and she told him to go.

"If you didn't do anything wrong, just head on down there and talk to him," she said.

When he'd arrived at the mystery meeting there were unfamiliar faces in the room. They were federal domestic terrorism investigators.

They told him his life was in danger. He'd need to go into protective custody.

But first, they wanted to go to his house and take a photograph.

On the way, Williams saw his mother, Latonya Crowley, in a car at a stoplight on her way out of town for the weekend. The agents waved her down and she turned around and tailed their dark blue van back to her home.

Inside, the agents poured water on Williams' pants. They'd torn his shirt to appear as if he'd been shot.

When they were done, the FBI placed Williams in a safe house. Not even his mother knew where he was. They would only speak by phone until the men who wanted to kill Williams were in custody.

A few weeks later, Moore waited for Driver outside a Starbucks in a strip mall parking lot.

He'd already shown Moran the staged murder photo of Williams lying on the floor, video recording his gleeful response. The day before, he'd done the same with Newcomb, who told Moore "good job" and hugged him.

Driver was his last assignment. In their last discussion about Williams, Driver had said he'd stomp Williams' "larynx closed" if he had the chance. Moore had said either he or someone he contracted with would finish the job.

They greeted each other, and Moore told Driver to sit in his car.

"We remembered how emotional this was for you and wanted — thought you might want some closure."

Moore handed Driver the phone with the photo of Williams' supposedly lifeless body.

"Let us know what you think," Moore said.

"That works," Driver said curtly.

"That what you wanted?"

"Oh, yes," Driver said, relaxing into a chuckle.

Sarge Moran was at home when a prison colleague called: Could he come in on his day off to get fitted for new uniforms? Authorities arrested him when he arrived, and held him in the prison where he'd spent decades as a guard.

Driver and Newcomb were arrested at their homes.

In August, 2017, Newcomb and Moran stood trial at the Columbia County Courthouse in Lake City. Joseph Moore was the state's star witness, testifying against the men he'd spent years befriending. For a time,

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the government protected Moore's family; his current whereabouts are unknown.

In the end, a jury convicted Moran and Newcomb of conspiracy to commit murder. They were each sentenced to 12 years. Driver received four years after pleading guilty, and is due out this year.

Because of threats in Florida prisons, Driver was moved secretly to another state to serve his time, according to a source with knowledge of the case. Even though they are in prison, neither Newcomb nor Moran were in Florida's inmate locator system and could not be reached for comment.

Even though three current and former Florida prison guards were exposed as klansmen, the state's Department of Corrections says it found no reason to investigate whether other white supremacists were employed in its prisons.

There were no other "investigative leads," Michelle Gladly, the department's director of public relations, said in a statement to The AP. "However, any allegation of a staff member belonging to a group such as those mentioned, would be investigated on an individual basis."

Those in violation of a "willful breach" of the department's core values can be fired or face arrest.

On a recent visit to the prison where the three klansmen worked, numerous cars and trucks in the employee and volunteer parking lots were decorated with symbols associated with white supremacy: Confederate flags, QAnon symbols and Thin Blue Line flag decals.

Williams and his family live today with uncertainty and paranoia.

"My fears? That maybe some of the other klan members could come around, and try to find us and harm us," his mother, Latonya Crowley, told The AP in her first interview about the ordeal.

Looking back, Crowley remembers weird occurrences around the house before the FBI got involved.

In one instance, a neighbor said they saw two white men — they looked like police — in Crowley's yard at daybreak. "No police came to my house," Crowley remembered replying to the news, dismissively.

A bag of her trash full of her empty insulin containers — she's diabetic - also disappeared. She wonders if that's why Newcomb thought to use insulin.

But Williams and Crowley are thankful, too. The FBI saved his life, and the state of Florida prosecuted the men who threatened him.

Williams has filed a lawsuit against the klansmen and the Florida Department of Corrections.

Williams' attorney is frustrated that Florida hasn't investigated more thoroughly to see if there are more white supremacists working for the state prisons, and wants them to take responsibility. Florida, for its part, has sought to have the case dismissed and declined further comment on it.

Williams is haunted by Driver's imminent release and the specter of other klansmen have made it impossible for him to move on.

"In the state of mind that he's in today, I don't see him getting better," Crowley said.

Eric Tucker in Washington and Randy Herschaft in New York contributed to this story.

Follow Jason Dearen on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/@JHDearen>

Olympics Latest: Kuo takes weightlifting gold for Taiwan

TOKYO (AP) — The Latest on the Tokyo Olympics, which are taking place under heavy restrictions after a year's delay because of the coronavirus pandemic:

MEDAL ALERT

Kuo Hsing-Chun has won Taiwan's first gold medal of the Tokyo Olympics with a dominant performance in the women's 59-kilogram weightlifting category.

In both the snatch and the clean and jerk, even Kuo's first lift was higher than any other athlete managed in three attempts.

Kuo lifted a total 236 kilograms, beating second-place Polina Guryeva of Turkmenistan by 19kg, but failed on a final attempt to break her own clean and jerk world record.

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Kuo's chances were helped by the lack of an entry from China in the category and a doping ban for 2016 Olympic gold medalist Sukanya Srisurat of Thailand.

Japan took its first weightlifting medal of the Tokyo Olympics as Mikiko Andoh lifted a total 214kg.

MEDAL ALERT

American Carissa Moore has made history by winning surfing gold. The sport is making its Olympic debut at the Tokyo Games.

Moore is a child prodigy from Hawaii who grew up to be the youngest world champion surfer. She persevered after struggling to gain momentum in the early heats at the Tokyo Games.

Moore beat Bianca Buitendag of South Africa, who won silver. The 17th-ranked Buitendag pulled off upset after upset to deliver some of the contest's biggest moments in her path to the Olympic podium.

Japan's Amuro Tsuzuki took home bronze after handily winning her heat against American Caroline Marks.

MEDAL ALERT

Brazilian surfer Italo Ferreira has won gold in the last day of competition at the sport's historic debut.

Ferreira won in the finals against Kanoa Igarashi of Japan, despite the Brazilian crashing off an air to land on a broken board.

The incident required a quick board switch near the beginning of the heat, which didn't seem to rattle the man who had so little growing up that he learned to surf on a cooler.

By the time the clock ran out, Ferreira turned to the ocean, collapsed his hands together in a prayer and wept, nearly knocked over by his emotions and the waves crashing onto shore.

Igarashi, the hometown hero who surfed a career best earlier in the day, won silver.

Australian Owen Wright took home bronze after a close match against top-rated Gabriel Medina.

MEDAL ALERT

Germany's Ricarda Funk has won a surprise gold medal in women's kayak slalom. Heavy favorite Jessica Fox of Australia slipped to third when she touched two gates on the final run.

Funk took the lead from Spain's defending gold medalist Maialen Chourraut of Spain with a time of 105.50 seconds on a clean run. Then she had to wait for Fox, who came to the Olympics as the favorite to win gold in both the kayak and canoe slalom events.

Fox, the top-ranked paddler in the world, struggled from the start when she touched the fourth gate of 25 for an immediate 2-second penalty. She was still ripping through the course and her splits were ahead of Funk until she again touched gate No. 24 to earn another penalty.

Fox finished 1.23 seconds off the lead and held her face in her hands at the finish line, knowing she had lost the gold medal. Chourraut took silver.

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MEDAL ALERT

Yang Haoran and Yang Qian have given China a sweep in the first two mixed team shooting events, beating Americans Lucas Kozeniesky and Mary Tucker in 10-meter air rifle.

Yang and Yang won the gold medal match 17-13, giving China its eighth medal in nine shooting events

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at the Tokyo Olympics.

Russians Sergey Kamenskiy and Yulia Karimova won the bronze medal match 17-9 over South Korea's Kwon Eunji Nam Taeyun.

The gold is Yang Qian's second of the Tokyo Olympics after she won the women's individual 10-meter rifle. Yang Haoran also took the bronze in the men's individual event.

Pang Wei and Jiang Ranxin won gold in 10-meter air pistol mixed team earlier at Asaka Shooting Range.

Canada has won its first Olympic medal in softball, taking the bronze with a 3-2 victory over Mexico.

Canada won behind 2 1/3 innings of scoreless, one-hit relief from Danielle Lawrie, the sister of former major leaguer Brett Lawrie.

Lawrie, a veteran of Canada's 2008 Olympic team and the 2009 and 2010 USA college player of the year at the University of Washington, relieved with runners at the corners in the fifth and retired Victoria Vidales on a groundout. Lawrie struck out four, fanning Brittany Cervantes to end it.

Kelsey Harshman broke a 2-2 tie in the fifth with a sacrifice fly for the Canadians, who went 4-2, finishing behind the U.S. (5-0) and Japan (4-1).

In a game played in intermittent light rain, Emma Entzminger put Canada ahead with a two-run single in the second off Danielle O'Toole (0-2). Mexico tied the score on RBI singles by Cervantes in the third off starter Sara Groenewegen and by Suzy Brookshire in the fifth against Jenna Caira.

MEDAL ALERT

Jolanda Neff has won the women's mountain bike race at the Tokyo Olympics. She led a Swiss sweep of the medal stand while capping a long comeback from a career-threatening crash in the North Carolina mountains.

Sina Frei and Linda Indergand tried to chase down their countrywoman but never had a chance. They were left battling among themselves, at one point riding side-by-side, before Frei pulled ahead to take silver and left Indergand with bronze.

Neff took the lead when world champion Pauline Ferrand-Prevot crashed on a slippery section of rocks on the first loop in the mountains southwest of Tokyo. She soon built her advantage to more than a minute over a field that included France's Loana Lecomte, the winner of every World Cup race this season, and reigning Olympic champ Jenny Rissveds.

Japan's wildly successful judo team has finally missed out on a medal at the Tokyo Olympics.

Women's 63-kilogram judoka Miku Tashiro was eliminated by Poland's Agata Ozdoba-Blach in the second round Tuesday at the Budokan. Tashiro is the No. 3-ranked player in her weight class, but she lost by ippon midway through her second bout.

The 33-year-old Ozdoba-Blach only earned her first major international gold medal two months ago at an IJF Grand Slam event in Russia.

Japan is the most successful nation in Olympic history in its homegrown martial art, and Japan has won more Olympic medals in judo than in any other sport.

Japan has won four golds, one silver and one bronze from the six weight classes contested over the first three days at its home Olympics.

Takanori Nagase is still in contention for Japan's seventh judo medal after reaching the semifinals of the 81-kilogram division.

Two-time Olympic boxer Daisuke Narimatsu of Japan has dropped out of the lightweight division at the Tokyo Games due to injury after winning his opening bout.

The Olympics Boxing Task Force said Tuesday that Narimatsu wouldn't be able to weigh in for his next bout, which is scheduled for Saturday. Narimatsu was slated to face Kazakhstan's Zakir Safiullin in the round of 16.

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Narimatsu beat Fiston Mbaya by unanimous decision in his opening bout at the Kokugikan on Sunday, but Narimatsu told Japanese media he injured his head in the bout.

The 31-year-old Narimatsu is one of Japan's top amateur boxers. He competed at the Rio Olympics, winning his opening bout before losing to Carlos Balderas of the U.S.

Japan has won only five boxing medals in its Olympic history. Ryōta Murata won its only gold in London before moving on to a solid pro career as a middleweight champion.

MEDAL ALERT

China has won another gold medal in Olympic diving.

Chen Yuxi and Zhang Jiaqi won the women's 10-meter synchronized platform, giving the diving powerhouse its second gold of the Tokyo Games.

Chen and Zhang totaled 363.78 points over five rounds on Tuesday. They received two perfect 10s for execution on their second dive.

Jessica Parratto and Delaney Schnell of the U.S. took silver in just their second competition as a pair. They totaled 310.80.

Gabriela Agundez Garcia and Alejandra Orozco Loza of Mexico earned bronze at 299.70.

China won its first gold in Tokyo in women's 3-meter synchro springboard and earned silver in men's 10-meter platform synchro.

Sebastian Coe says he supports a review of marijuana's status as a doping substance after American sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson was banned ahead of the Tokyo Olympics.

The president of World Athletics says a review is now sensible and "it should be" done.

Coe was at the U.S. Olympic trials last month when the 21-year-old Richardson won the 100 meters in 10.86 seconds. Her result was disqualified and she accepted a 30-day ban after she tested positive for a chemical found in marijuana.

Richardson said she had smoked to help cope with her mother's recent death.

Coe says "I am sorry for her that we have lost an outstanding talent" from the Tokyo Games but adds the existing rules were interpreted correctly.

He says he has asked the independent Athletics Integrity Unit to work with the World Anti-Doping Agency on reassessing marijuana's place on the prohibited list.

Coe says Richardson's absence is "a loss to the competition" but he predicts "she will bounce back."

Two superstar surfers have been dethroned at the Olympics, where their sport is making its debut.

Hometown hero Kanoa Igarashi of Japan landed an incredible 360 aerial reverse on the beach he grew up on. The nearly-perfect maneuver sent him flying for seven seconds above the water and scored him a 9.33, enough to defeat Brazilian Gabriel Medina, the world's top-ranked surfer.

Bianca Buitendag of South Africa chose to wait out the clock again to pull off yet another major upset, this time against American phenom Caroline Marks, who simply could not catch a good enough wave.

The finals now come down to Igarashi and the dominating Brazilian Italo Ferreira, and Buitendag against American Carissa Moore, the reigning world champion.

The U.S. women have fallen to Japan 20-18 in their final pool-play game in 3-on-3 basketball.

Despite the loss, the Americans will head into the knockout round as the top seed after compiling a 6-1 record over four days. The semifinals and medal games for the sport's Olympic debut are set for Wednesday.

With the score of Tuesday's game tied at 17, Japan's Mio Shinozaki made a 2-pointer to give her team the lead for good.

Serbia's men were 6-0 coming into Tuesday and have locked up a spot in the semifinals.

The U.S. men did not qualify for the tournament.

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UPSET ALERT

Japan's tennis superstar is out of the Tokyo Olympics.

Naomi Osaka lost to former French Open finalist Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic 6-1, 6-4 in the third round of the Tokyo tournament.

The second-ranked Osaka, who was born in Japan and grew up in the United States, struggled with her usually reliable groundstrokes.

The 42nd-ranked Vondrousova produced a series of drop-shot winners and other crafty shots that drew Osaka out of her comfort zone.

Osaka won her opening two matches in straight sets following a two-month mental-health break. But conditions were different Tuesday with the roof closed because it was raining outside.

Naomi Osaka has lost the opening set of her third-round Olympic tennis match against Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic.

Vondrousova won 6-1 against the host country's superstar.

Osaka won her opening two matches in straight sets following a two-month mental-health break. But conditions are different Tuesday with the roof closed because it's raining outside.

Osaka lit the Olympic cauldron in Friday's Tokyo Games opening ceremony.

The 42nd-ranked Vondrousova was the 2019 French Open runner-up.

— More AP Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/olympic-games> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Thailand sends COVID-19 patients to hometowns by train

By CHALIDA EKVITTHAYAVECHNUKUL and ELAINE KURTENBACH Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Authorities in Thailand began transporting some people who tested positive for the coronavirus from Bangkok to their hometowns on Tuesday for isolation and treatment to alleviate the burden on the capital's overwhelmed medical system.

A train carrying more than 100 patients and medical workers in full protective gear left the city for the northeast.

It will drop patients off in seven provinces, where they will be met by health officers and taken to hospitals.

Medical authorities in Bangkok said Monday that all ICU beds for COVID-19 patients at public hospitals were full and that some of the sick were being treated in emergency rooms. Officials said they have asked army medics to help out at civilian hospitals.

"We will continue this service until no COVID-19 patients who cannot get beds in Bangkok are left," said Deputy Prime Minister and Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul.

He said buses, vans and even aircraft might be deployed to send people back to less badly affected provinces.

Thailand initially kept coronavirus cases in check but outbreaks have flared in recent months.

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha's government is facing harsh criticism over its handling of a delta variant-fueled surge and slow vaccination program, amid reports of people dying in the streets or in their homes while waiting for treatment.

Of Thailand's total of nearly 500,000 confirmed cases and more than 4,000 fatalities, 137,263 cases and 2,176 deaths have been recorded in Bangkok.

Most of the 4,451 beds for COVID-19 patients in the city of about 15 million are occupied by people with mild or no symptoms. Hospitals are beginning to urge such patients to isolate at home or in community isolation centers.

Bangkok Gov. Aswin Kwanmuang said the city government will coordinate with the State Railway to install 240 beds in 15 railway carriages in a maintenance shed in the city's huge Bang Sue station as a "pre-admission center" for coronavirus patients without symptoms.

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He visited the station on Tuesday to inspect the carriages. He said they should be ready for use by Friday. The government said supplies of medical oxygen are sufficient and manufacturers have been asked to ensure enough is available. But people ill with coronavirus who are unable to find places for treatment are not always able to get supplemental oxygen.

Meanwhile, some temples in the devoutly Buddhist country have begun to offer free cremations as the number of deaths rises, the government said.

Tokyo records record virus cases days after Olympics begin

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Tokyo reported its highest number of new coronavirus infections on Tuesday, days after the Olympics began.

The Japanese capital reported 2,848 new COVID-19 cases, exceeding the earlier record of 2,520 cases on Jan. 7.

It brings Tokyo's total to more than 200,000 since the pandemic began last year.

Tokyo is under its fourth state of emergency, which is to continue through the Olympics until just before the Paralympics start in late August.

Experts have warned that the more contagious delta variant could cause a surge during the Olympics, which started Friday.

Experts noted that cases among younger, unvaccinated people are rising sharply as Japan's inoculation drive loses steam due to supply uncertainty. Many serious cases involve those in their 50s. They now dominate Tokyo's nearly 3,000 hospitalized patients and are gradually filling up available beds. Authorities reportedly plan to ask medical institutions to increase their capacity to about 6,000.

Japan's vaccination drive began late and slowly, but picked up dramatically in May for several weeks as the supply of imported vaccines stabilized and Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's government pushed to inoculate more people before the Olympics.

The government says 25.5% of Japanese have been fully vaccinated, still way short of the level believed to have any meaningful impact on reducing the risk for the general population.

Still, Japan has kept its cases and deaths much lower than many other countries. Nationwide, it has reported 870,445 cases and 15,129 deaths as of Monday.

Suga's government has been criticized for what some say is prioritizing the Olympics over the nation's health. His public support ratings have fallen to around 30% in recent media surveys, and there is little festivity surrounding the Games.

Human Rights Watch: Israeli war crimes apparent in Gaza war

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Human Rights Watch on Tuesday accused the Israeli military of carrying out attacks that "apparently amount to war crimes" during an 11-day war against the Hamas militant group in May.

The international human rights organization issued its conclusions after investigating three Israeli airstrikes that it said killed 62 Palestinian civilians. It said "there were no evident military targets in the vicinity" of the attacks.

The report also accused Palestinian militants of apparent war crimes by launching over 4,000 unguided rockets and mortars at Israeli population centers. Such attacks, it said, violate "the prohibition against deliberate or indiscriminate attacks against civilians."

The report, however, focused on Israeli actions during the fighting, and the group said it would issue a separate report on the actions of Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups in August.

"Israeli forces carried out attacks in Gaza in May that devastated entire families without any apparent military target nearby," said Gerry Simpson, associated crisis and conflict director at HRW. He said Israel's "consistent unwillingness to seriously investigate alleged war crimes," coupled with Palestinian rocket fire at Israeli civilian areas, underscored the importance of an ongoing investigation into both sides by the

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International Criminal Court, or ICC.

There was no immediate reaction to the report by the Israeli military, which has repeatedly said its attacks were aimed at military targets in Gaza. It says it takes numerous precautions to avoid harming civilians and blames Hamas for civilian casualties by launching rocket attacks and other military operations inside residential areas.

The war erupted on May 10 after Hamas fired a barrage of rockets toward Jerusalem in support of Palestinian protests against Israel's heavy-handed policing of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, built on a contested site sacred to Jews and Muslims, and the threatened eviction of dozens of Palestinian families by Jewish settlers in a nearby neighborhood. In all, Hamas fired over 4,000 rockets and mortars toward Israel, while Israel has said it struck over 1,000 targets linked to Gaza militants.

In all, some 254 people were killed in Gaza, including at least 67 children and 39 women, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Hamas has acknowledged the deaths of 80 militants, while Israel has claimed the number is much higher. Twelve civilians, including two children, were killed in Israel, along with one soldier.

The HRW report looked into Israeli airstrikes. The most serious, on May 16, involved a series of strikes on Al-Wahda Street, a central thoroughfare in downtown Gaza City. The airstrikes destroyed three apartment buildings and killed a total of 44 civilians, HRW said, including 18 children and 14 women. Twenty-two of the dead were members of a single family, the al-Kawlaks.

Israel has said the attacks were aimed at tunnels used by Hamas militants in the area and suggested the damage to the homes was unintentional.

In its investigation, HRW concluded that Israel had used U.S.-made GBU-31 precision-guided bombs, and that Israel had not warned any of the residents to evacuate the area ahead of time. It also found no evidence of military targets in the area.

"An attack that is not directed at a specific military objective is unlawful," it wrote.

The investigation also looked at a May 10 explosion that killed eight people, including six children, near the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun. It said the two adults were civilians.

Israel has suggested the explosion was caused by a misfired Palestinian rocket. But based on an analysis of munition remnants and witness accounts, HRW said evidence indicated the weapon had been "a type of guided missile."

"Human Rights Watch found no evidence of a military target at or near the site of the strike," it said.

The third attack it investigated occurred on May 15, in which an Israeli airstrike destroyed a three-story building in Gaza's Shati refugee camp. The strike killed 10 people, including two women and eight children.

HRW investigators determined the building was hit by a U.S.-made guided missile. It said Israel has said that senior Hamas officials were hiding in the building. But the group said no evidence of a military target at or near the site and called for an investigation into whether there was a legitimate military objective and "all feasible precautions" were taken to avoid civilian casualties.

The May conflict was the fourth war between Israel and Hamas since the Islamic militant group, which opposes Israel's existence, seized control of Gaza in 2007. Human Rights Watch, other rights groups and U.N. officials have accused both sides of committing war crimes in all of the conflicts.

Early this year, HRW accused Israel of being guilty of international crimes of apartheid and persecution because of discriminatory policies toward Palestinians, both inside Israel as well as in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel rejected the accusations.

In Tuesday's report, it called on the United States to condition security assistance to Israel on it taking "concrete and verifiable actions" to comply with international human rights law and to investigate past abuses.

It also called on the ICC to include the recent Gaza war in its ongoing investigation into possible war crimes by Israel and Palestinian militant groups. Israel does not recognize the court's jurisdiction and says it is capable of investigating any potential wrongdoing by its army and that the ICC probe is unfair and politically motivated.

Disbelief, support in Japan after Naomi Osaka's elimination

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — "Masaka" — or, in English, "No way." That's how an incredulous Japan reacted Tuesday to the unexpectedly early loss of Naomi Osaka at the Tokyo Olympics, erasing her chances for gold.

And people quickly turned to an outpouring of sympathy.

"Watching you gave me courage. You don't have to win a medal. Watching you play is enough for all your fans," said Yuji Taida, a novelist.

Japanese media relayed urgent reports on her loss, with "masaka" in the headlines.

"Her mother's motherland. Her dream to stand at the pinnacle, with the rising sun on her heart, was not to be," reported Sports Hochi, a Japanese daily sports newspaper.

The stock of Japanese tennis racket maker Yonex, one of her major corporate sponsors, plunged Tuesday, just as she lost to former French Open finalist Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic 6-1, 6-4 in the third round. The stock recouped some of the losses but ended down 1.8%.

The disappointment came just four days after Osaka left the nation teary-eyed by running up a Mount Fuji-like set at the National Stadium and lighting the Olympic cauldron with her torch to open the Olympics.

For many here, the Japan-born Osaka, whose father is Haitian, has grown to personify a ray of hope for diversity in a nation long linked with discrimination and intolerance for differences.

"Undoubtedly the greatest athletic achievement and honor I will ever have in my life," Osaka had written on Instagram about her role in her first Olympics.

Some Japanese said it broke their hearts to imagine how much Osaka had wanted to win the gold for her country.

"She has her principles about her pride for Japan, and playing for Japan, while also being proud of her diverse roots in having a Haitian father and living in the U.S.," said lawyer Atusko Nishiyama, who was already starting to worry Osaka might get attacked for her loss.

Nishiyama said she had been impressed by Osaka's statements on Black Lives Matter, such as last year when she wore masks bearing names of black people who had been killed.

"Compared to her courage, it is so sad some people are still at a very low level," Nishiyama said.

While news reports speculated whether it hurt her not to play for two months and referred to how Osaka had talked about her bouts with depression and then sat out Wimbledon, Japan's response was overwhelmingly one of doting love.

Japanese media made a point to say Osaka had answered "hai," or "yes" in Japanese, when asked a question by reporters in Japanese and noted that tears were running down her cheeks.

Shotaro Akiyama, a university student who loves to play tennis, said he hoped Osaka wouldn't give up.

"The opponent just played a smarter game this time," he said. "She will have another chance at the gold."

Follow Tokyo-based Associated Press journalist Yuri Kageyama on Twitter <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>. More AP Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/2020-tokyo-olympics> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

EXPLAINER: Why Olympic beach volleyball players wear bikinis

By JIMMY GOLEN AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — No, members of women's teams are not required to wear bikinis when they play beach volleyball at the Olympics.

Yes, TV cameras do tend to linger on their glutes when they hold their hands behind their backs to pass signals to each other. And no, that's not a problem for the players who believe that those who see the sport will stay.

"I have always felt like when you get somebody drawn in, however you get them into beach volleyball, they fall in love with the sport," said American April Ross, a three-time Olympian. "So, hopefully that happens also."

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Beach volleyball has been one of the most popular sports at the Summer Games since it was added to the program in 1996. It has fast action, a party atmosphere and some telegenic American stars who have paraded to the podium to claim six of the 12 possible gold medals.

But there's also no doubt that some who tune in on TV are there to ogle the women as they leap and dive across the sand in their bikinis. In 2012, the London tabloids ran photo spreads from the beach volleyball venue without a set or spike in sight; it was also the focus for then-mayor and current British prime minister Boris Johnson, who penned a guest newspaper column during the Olympics that were taking place in his city.

The attention on the bikinis intensified in Tokyo after a viral social media post misidentified a team that protested a beach handball dress code as playing beach volleyball. Beach handball, which is not an Olympic sport, requires women to wear bikinis, and the European federation fined the Norwegians for wearing shorts as a protest at a competition 5,500 miles away in Bulgaria.

In Tokyo this week, the German gymnastics team wore full-legged unitards that went down to their ankles, eschewing the traditional bikini cut that ends high on the hip. The athletes said they were trying to combat the sexualization of young women and girls in their sport, which is trying to recover from a decades-long sexual abuse scandal.

The head of broadcasting at the Tokyo Games said this week said their feeds will not highlight sexualized images of female athletes, instead focusing on "sport appeal, not sex appeal."

But beach volleyball players embrace their gear — and to them, equipment is precisely what the bikinis are — and choose it in almost all circumstances over more conservative attire.

WHAT ARE THE RULES?

The FIVB issued 22 pages of uniform guidelines for Tokyo, covering everything from fabric and color to names and numbers and how big manufacturers' logos can be. Teammates also have to match.

An appendix has drawings of potential styles for women, including short sleeves and tank tops, long sleeves for modesty and long sleeves for warmth, long pants and shorts, and a one-piece bathing suit or a bikini. The men wear tank tops and board shorts, which can go over long-sleeved shirts and tights in cold weather.

There are also options for teams with religious dress codes.

"The FIVB beach volleyball uniform guidelines allow for a variety of different options," the international federation said. "Beach volleyball welcomes all, and these uniform regulations ensure that our sport is culturally and religiously inclusive."

WAIT — THERE IS MEN'S BEACH VOLLEYBALL, TOO?

Although the women's side of the sport traditionally gets more attention -- including the prime-time U.S. broadcast slots -- a mirror-image men's tournament has shared the sand at every Olympics since the sport joined the Summer Games in Atlanta.

Although the men wear tank tops and swimming trunks at the Olympics and on the international tour, they may play shirtless on the AVP domestic tour. Many choose to do so.

SO WHY BIKINIS?

"Beach volleyball was a sport that was developed in Hawaii and Southern California and on the beaches of Rio," Ross said. "And you play, and it's hot, and then you go and jump in the water."

One-piece bathing suits won't work, because the sand gets inside and chafes; in fact, the players say, the less material that can trap sand, the better. Ross and her partner Alix Klineman, who helped design their own uniforms, also said it's important that the straps don't restrict her movement or breathing.

"For us, this is what feels most comfortable," Klineman said. "You're not wearing more clothing in really hot weather; getting sand stuck in places is not fun. But I totally respect other people wanting to be more covered if that's what makes them more comfortable."

Beach volleyball matches also proceed in all kinds of weather, including the rain from the leading edge of Typhoon Nepartak that dampened the Skiokaze Park venue this week. In Beijing, the Olympic championship was played in a downpour.

"This," said American Misty May-Treanor, who was soaking wet but with a gold medal to show for it, "is

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just another reason why we play in bathing suits.”

DO PLAYERS EVER WEAR SOMETHING ELSE?

Some teams did wear leggings and long sleeves under their uniforms on the cooler nights in 2012, dismayed the London tabloids, but even then most opted for the traditional board shorts and bikinis.

Four years later, after the FIVB expanded Olympic qualifying in an attempt to spread the sport to new countries, the Egyptians played in long sleeves, a loose-fitting top, full-length pant legs and hijabs to cover their heads.

“I have worn the hijab for 10 years,” said Doaa Elghobashy, a member of the first beach volleyball team from her country to compete in the Olympics.

“It doesn’t keep me away from the things I love to do,” she said. “And beach volleyball is one of them.”

More AP Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/2020-tokyo-olympics> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Ex-US Sen. Mike Enzi of Wyoming dies after bicycle accident

GILLETTE, Wyo. (AP) — Retired Sen. Mike Enzi, a Wyoming Republican known as a consensus-builder in an increasingly polarized Washington, has died. He was 77.

Enzi died peacefully Monday surrounded by family and friends, former spokesman Max D’Onofrio said.

Enzi had been hospitalized with a broken neck and ribs three days after a bicycle accident near Gillette on Friday. He was stabilized before being flown to a hospital in Colorado but remained unconscious, D’Onofrio said.

Enzi fell near his home about 8:30 p.m. Friday, family friend John Daly said, around the time Gillette police received a report of a man lying unresponsive in a road near a bike.

Police have seen no indication that anybody else was nearby or involved in the accident, Lt. Brent Wasson told the newspaper.

A former shoe salesman first elected to the Senate in 1996, Enzi became known for emphasizing compromise over grandstanding and confrontation to get bills passed.

His “80-20 rule” called on colleagues to focus on the 80% of an issue where legislators tended to agree and discard the 20% where they didn’t.

“Nothing gets done when we’re just telling each other how wrong we are,” Enzi said in his farewell address to the Senate in 2020. “Just ask yourself: Has anyone ever really changed your opinion by getting in your face and yelling at you or saying to you how wrong you are? Usually that doesn’t change hearts or minds.”

Wyoming voters reelected Enzi by wide margins three times before he announced in 2019 that he would not seek a fifth term. Enzi was succeeded in the Senate in 2021 by Republican Cynthia Lummis, a former congresswoman and state treasurer.

Enzi’s political career began at 30 when he was elected mayor of Gillette, a city at the heart of Wyoming’s then-booming coal mining industry. He was elected to the Wyoming House in 1986 and state Senate in 1991.

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His family expressed appreciation for prayers and support they've received but asked for privacy, D'Onofrio said. The family is planning "a celebration of a life well-lived," he said in a statement, and plans to share details later.

Enzi is survived by his wife; two daughters, Amy and Emily; a son, Brad; and several grandchildren.

Without the crowd's roar, Tokyo Olympians search for spirit

By CLAIRE GALOFARO AP National Writer

TOKYO (AP) — The beloved American gymnast Sam Mikulak flipped off the parallel bars, stuck the landing and blew a kiss toward the camera. Those watching the men's Olympics gymnastic competition on television back home knew they'd seen magic.

"Beautiful!" the broadcast announcer exclaimed. "Wow, that was fantastic!"

But all around Mikulak, the stretches of wooden benches meant to seat thousands sat mostly empty. Cheers erupted from a far back corner of the stands, where Simone Biles and the rest of the women's team screamed as loud as lungs could muster to cut through the eerie quiet of the pandemic Olympic venue.

In arenas across Tokyo, athletes accustomed to feeding off the deafening roar of the crowd are searching for new ways to feel Olympic enthusiasm.

They're rooting for each other as loudly as they can. Some are trying to envision fans at home in their living rooms, leaning into TV screens. They're blasting playlists in backstage training rooms. The lucky few permitted to compete with headphones keep their phones in their pockets, tuned to songs with a beat to replace the thrill of applause.

But others were surprised to find the silence motivating — like another day at the gym rather than the most prestigious competition on Earth. For them, the emptiness numbs the nerves and lets them fully focus on their sport.

"It's kind of nice," said Mikulak, a three-time Olympian whose parallel bar routine helped usher him to finals. It barely feels like an Olympics to him, he said, but when he stuck that landing and heard his own team cheering, that felt like enough.

"We created our own bubble. We had our own cheering section," he said. "We created our own atmosphere. That's what we thrive in, having each other's backs."

The next day, they returned the favor. The US men's gymnastics team stood in the back waving an American flag and screaming for their female counterparts before the stadium fell quiet again, like the others scattered across Tokyo.

At the Sea Forest Waterway rowing venue, grandstands that stretch for nearly 2,000 meters (yards) are empty all the way to the finish line. The events are so quiet, rowers can hear the ripple of their own wake and the flap of hundreds of national flags whipping in the breeze on the shoreline. What is typically a swelling crescendo of chants and rush of adrenaline over the final 250 meters to the finish line replaced by the labored breathing wracking their lungs.

"When you cross the line and you're hurting, and you feel like you are going to pass out and you don't hear the 'USA! USA!', chant it hurts a little bit more," said US women's rower Ellen Tomek, competing in

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her third Olympics and reminding herself that people are rooting for her from home. "Everyone is cheering us on, but when you are hurting and sad and you can't look up for your mom in the stands, it sucks."

Other athletes, too, are trying to capture the energy of those fans at home, absent here but still somewhere in the world cheering them on.

Japanese gymnast Mai Murakami said she was thrilled that her home country hosted the Olympics because she hoped many of her admirers could see her perform in person. When even Japanese citizens were barred from attending, she was devastated.

"I get influence from the crowd, and that motivates me," she said through a translator. The silence rattled her, she said, and she made a mistake in her bars performance. "This is my first experience without crowds, so I haven't had that experience before. I couldn't imagine how it would be, so I tried to have no emotion."

She tried to picture her fans watching on TVs and computers, applauding her from across the city. That brought comfort.

Agatha Bednarczuk, a Brazilian beach volleyball player, won a silver medal in front of her home country in 2016. This Olympics, she said, feels very different.

"In Brazil, we had the biggest support. There were many, many people cheering for us, and here we had silence," she said, drawing a flat line with her hand. "We need to put our emotion in the game, because we can't receive emotion from them. For me, it's very important to play with emotion so I had to bring it from inside."

Many say they are reminding themselves that they made it here — to the Olympics, a lifelong dream for many despite extraordinary odds including a pandemic that has killed millions and postponed the Games, and for a time threatened to sink them entirely.

"I think that Olympic Games is enough of its own," said Greece men's water polo goaltender Emmanouil Zerdevas. "It's a bit sad, but it is my first time in the Olympic Games, so I'm still happy to be here."

At the silent skateboarding venue, U.S. skater Jagger Eaton found a mood booster in the phone he occasionally fished out of his right pocket while competing to change the music. Skateboarders, unlike other athletes, are able to shut out the quiet by wearing headphones as they compete. Eaton chose the aptly named "Rollin N Controllin" by rapper Dusty Locane as his soundtrack to launch himself into the first-ever Olympic skateboard event, men's street.

"It got me right in the groove," said Eaton, who struggled to skate for an empty crowd. "That's why I am wearing headphones. When I wear headphones, I can create my own hype."

But others have been surprised to find peace in the silence — and a stronger connection to their sport than they tend to feel when the pressure is on.

"Normally, coming into the finish line, when qualification is on the line, it's deafening," said U.S. women's rower Michelle Sechser. "It's the hardest part of the race. Your heart is pounding, your legs are pounding, your breathing is rapid. And it's absolutely silent. It makes it almost like Nirvana."

Associated Press National Writer Claire Galofaro is on assignment in Tokyo for the Olympics. Follow her on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/clairegalofaro>. AP sports writers Jim Vertuno, John Leicester, Jay Cohen, Josh Dubow and Jimmy Golen contributed to this report.

Ex-US Sen. Mike Enzi of Wyoming dies after bicycle accident

GILLETTE, Wyo. (AP) — Retired Sen. Mike Enzi, a Wyoming Republican known as a consensus-builder in an increasingly polarized Washington, has died. He was 77.

Enzi died peacefully Monday surrounded by family and friends, former spokesman Max D'Onofrio said.

Enzi had been hospitalized with a broken neck and ribs three days after a bicycle accident near Gillette on Friday. He was stabilized before being flown to a hospital in Colorado but remained unconscious, D'Onofrio said.

Enzi fell near his home about 8:30 p.m. Friday, family friend John Daly said, around the time Gillette police received a report of a man lying unresponsive in a road near a bike.

Police have seen no indication that anybody else was nearby or involved in the accident, Lt. Brent Was-

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son told the newspaper.

A former shoe salesman first elected to the Senate in 1996, Enzi became known for emphasizing compromise over grandstanding and confrontation to get bills passed.

His "80-20 rule" called on colleagues to focus on the 80% of an issue where legislators tended to agree and discard the 20% where they didn't.

"Nothing gets done when we're just telling each other how wrong we are," Enzi said in his farewell address to the Senate in 2020. "Just ask yourself: Has anyone ever really changed your opinion by getting in your face and yelling at you or saying to you how wrong you are? Usually that doesn't change hearts or minds."

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Tropical storm to bring rain, wind, waves to northeast Japan

ICHINOMIYA, Japan (AP) — An offshore tropical storm brought wind and rain to the Tokyo region and affected some Olympic events Tuesday as it headed toward northeastern Japan, where stormier conditions were forecast.

The Japan Meteorological Agency predicted Nepartak would bring heavy rains, strong winds and high waves to northeastern Japan in advance of its landfall around midday Wednesday north of the capital region.

The tropical storm had winds of 72 kilometers per hour (44.7 mph) around midday Tuesday off Chiba on Japan's central-eastern coast, the agency said. It forecast the storm would maintain its current strength

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through the day but would weaken before making landfall near the city of Akita, about 570 kilometers (340 miles) northeast of Tokyo.

Storm and high wave warnings were issued for the coastal areas of Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures.

Some traffic disruptions are expected in the northern region. Shinkansen super-express train services were to be suspended from Tuesday evening possibly until Wednesday morning, according to East Japan Railway Co.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato at a regular news conference urged residents in the northern region to use caution and evacuate early in case of increased risks of flooding or mudslide.

At the Olympics, some surfing events planned for Wednesday were moved to Tuesday, but the storm gave the competitors big waves for their final day of competition. Archery, rowing and sailing also adjusted their schedules.

EXPLAINER: US pays \$4B to Afghan forces; Who is watching?

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The U.S. and NATO have promised to pay \$4 billion a year until 2024 to finance Afghanistan's military and security forces, which are struggling to contain an advancing Taliban. Already, the U.S. has spent nearly \$89 billion over the past 20 years to build, equip and train Afghan forces.

Yet America's own government watchdog says oversight of the money has been poor, hundreds of millions of dollars have been misspent and corruption is rife in the security apparatus.

Monitoring where the future funding goes will become virtually impossible after Aug. 31, when the last coalition troops leave. Here is a look at some of the issues:

U.S. SPENDING SINCE 2001

Nearly \$83 billion has been spent to build, equip, train and sustain Afghanistan's National Defense and Security Forces, which include the military, national police and the elite special forces.

That figure covers a wide range of items. For example, the U.S. spent nearly \$10 billion for vehicles and aircraft. It spent \$3.75 billion on fuel for the Afghan military between 2010-2020.

Separately, another \$5.8 billion went into economic and government development and infrastructure since 2001, with the expressed goal of winning public support and blunting the Taliban insurgency. The figures are from reports by John Sopko, the Special Inspector General on Afghanistan Reconstruction, or SIGAR, tasked with monitoring how U.S. taxpayer dollars are spent.

The U.S. allocation for 2022 is \$3.3 billion. It will include \$1 billion to support the Afghan Air Force and Special Mission Wing, \$1 billion for fuel, ammunition and spare parts, and \$700 million to pay salaries for Afghan soldiers.

It is difficult to see how the Afghan government will be able to pay to keep its military running after 2024.

More than 80% of the Afghan government budget is paid by the U.S. and its allies, according to SIGAR. Economic projections suggesting Kabul could carry more of the financial burden have been either wrong or vastly exaggerated, Sopko reported. Afghanistan's growth rate was to be 3.4% in 2021 but instead shrunk by 2%. In the last 4 of 7 years, Afghanistan has missed its economic growth targets.

WASTE AND CORRUPTION

Much of the billions injected into Afghanistan the past two decades has gone largely unmonitored, leading to runaway corruption by both Afghans and foreign contractors.

Sopko has issued dozens of reports identifying waste, mismanagement and outright corruption.

In one instance, the U.S. spent \$547 million to buy and refurbish 20 G222 military transport aircraft for the Afghan Air Force. Sixteen of them were later sold as junk to Afghan scrap dealers for \$40,257 because the American refurbishers delivered flawed and unsafe aircraft.

A retired U.S. air force general, contrary to retirement rules, had links to the firm that refurbished the planes, according to a report by Sopko earlier this year. The report said the Justice Department informed the watchdog agency in May 2020 that it would not prosecute any criminal or civil cases connected to the G222 program.

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Of \$7.8 billion provided since 2008 to Afghan civilian authorities for buildings and vehicles, only \$1.2 billion went to buildings and vehicles that were used as intended. Only \$343.2 million worth of what was acquired was maintained in good condition, Sopko said earlier this year.

The Afghan army and police force officially have around 320,000 members, but SIGAR says the number is closer to 280,000. The discrepancy is attributed to the presence of so-called ghost soldiers, where corrupt officials pad the personnel numbers to collect money, reported SIGAR.

Sopko said in one of his reports that lack of oversight allowed bribery, fraud, extortion and nepotism, "as well as the empowerment of abusive warlords and their militias."

"Corruption significantly undermined the U.S. mission in Afghanistan by damaging the legitimacy of the Afghan government, strengthening popular support for the insurgency, and channeling material resources to insurgent groups."

WHAT KIND OF MILITARY IS LEFT?

For all the time, training and money funneled by the U.S. into the Afghan military as a whole, the small, elite commando forces appear to be the only units capable of standing as a bulwark against the Taliban.

As Taliban swept through districts in recent weeks, regular army and police have in many instances either negotiated their surrender to Taliban or simply walked off their bases. Often, their superiors left them without resupplies of ammunition, troops and sometimes even food as they faced the advancing insurgents.

Throughout the war, U.S. air support has been a crucial edge for Afghan forces on the battlefield. So building Afghan capabilities to carry out the role was vital, and the U.S. spent more than \$8.5 billion to support and develop the Afghan Air Force and the Special Mission Wing.

However, the Afghan air force risks being largely grounded once the coalition leaves. The Afghans' fleet of fighter jets is serviced by U.S. contractors, who are leaving along with the troops. Afghan officials say the coalition never gave them the training or infrastructure to carry out maintenance themselves.

The same holds for much of the arsenal of armored vehicles and heavy weapons the Americans have left for the Afghan military.

Several Afghan officials who spoke to The Associated Press were deeply critical of the U.S. and NATO failure to invest in factories to make spare parts, manufacturing plants to produce ammunition and training to produce skilled Afghan mechanics.

"Every bullet had to come from America," said Gen. Dawlat Waziri a former Afghan Defense Ministry official. "Why weren't we making them here?"

Bill Roggio, senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, said the coalition failed the Afghan government and military by making them overdependent on Western support.

More broadly, "the U.S. trained the wrong kind of army — a Western-styled army — when it needed to train an army capable of fighting the Taliban," said Roggio, who is also senior editor of The Long War Journal.

"The commandos, Special Forces and Air Force have performed well, but the regular Afghan Army, which make up a bulk of the fighting force, is not up to task," he said.

MONITORING BILLIONS OF DOLLARS

It's been several years since U.S. officials have been able to physically monitor U.S.-funded projects, because deteriorating security countrywide drastically restricted U.S. Embassy personnel's movements.

By 2016, U.S. advisers couldn't even meet Afghan security officials at their Kabul offices without heavily armored convoys, and later they could only go by helicopter, said Sopko's July report.

Staff at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul has been reduced to mostly essential personnel since mid-April. An embassy official told the AP that 1,400 Americans remain at the embassy, mostly restricted to the compound.

Roggio said the U.S. and NATO had a hard enough time monitoring aid when they were in Afghanistan; it will be virtually impossible once they leave.

"And with the Taliban rampaging across the country," he added, "the incentive for Afghan officials to plunder the cash only increases."

Senators, White House in talks to finish infrastructure bill

By LISA MASCARO, ALEXANDRA JAFFE and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senators and the White House are locked in intense negotiations to salvage a bipartisan infrastructure deal, with pressure mounting on all sides to wrap up talks and show progress on President Joe Biden's top priority.

Despite weeks of closed-door discussions, senators from the bipartisan group blew past a Monday deadline set for agreement on the nearly \$1 trillion package. Instead they hit serious roadblocks over how much would be spent on public transit and water infrastructure and whether the new spending on roads, bridges, broadband and other projects would be required to meet federal wage requirements for workers. They're also at odds over drawing on COVID-19 funds to help pay for it.

Republican negotiator Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio, who took the lead in key talks with a top White House aide, insisted the bipartisan group was "making progress."

"This is heading in the right direction," Portman told reporters at the Capitol. "It's a big, complicated bill."

Biden struck a similarly upbeat tone, telling reporters at the White House he remained optimistic about reaching a compromise.

This is a crucial week after more than a monthlong slog of negotiations since Biden and the bipartisan group first celebrated the contours of the nearly \$1 trillion bipartisan agreement in June, and senators were warned they could be kept in session this weekend to finish the work.

The White House wants a bipartisan agreement for this first phase, before Democrats go it alone to tackle broader priorities in a bigger \$3.5 trillion budget plan that's on deck. A recent poll from The Associated Press-NORC found 8 in 10 Americans favor some increased infrastructure spending, and the current package could be a political win for all sides as lawmakers try to show voters that Washington can work. Securing the bipartisan bill is also important for some centrist Democrats before engaging in the broader undertaking.

But as talks drag on, anxious Democrats, who have slim control of the House and Senate, face a timeline to act on what would be some of the most substantial legislation in years. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer wants progress on both packages before the August recess, and he told senators to brace for a Saturday or Sunday session.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Biden himself "worked the phones all weekend," and the administration was encouraged by the progress. But Psaki acknowledged "time is not endless."

Adding to the mix, Donald Trump issued a statement Monday disparaging Senate Republicans for even dealing with the Democrats on infrastructure, though it's unclear what influence he has. The former president had failed at an infrastructure deal when he was in office.

"It's time for everyone to get to 'yes,'" Schumer said as he opened the Senate.

Schumer said Trump is "rooting for our entire political system to fail" while Democrats are "rooting for a deal."

The bipartisan package includes about \$600 billion in new spending on public works projects, with broad support from Republicans and Democrats for many of the proposed ideas.

Yet there was little to show Monday after a grinding weekend of talks, putting the deal at risk of stalling out.

The Democrats and the White House had sent what they called a "global" offer to Republicans on remaining issues late Sunday, according to a Democratic aide close to the talks and granted anonymity to discuss them.

But Republicans rebuffed the ideas, saying the new proposal attempted to reopen issues that had already been resolved, according to a GOP aide also granted anonymity to discuss the private talks.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said it's time for Biden to become more involved. "I think it's imperative that the president indicates strongly that he wants a bipartisan package," she said.

A top Biden aide, Steve Ricchetti, was tapped for the direct talks as Portman fielded information to the other senators in the group, several senators said.

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Democratic Sen. Jon Tester of Montana said, "There were too many cooks in the kitchen."

While much of the disagreement has been over the size of spending on each category, labor issues have also emerged as a flashpoint.

Democrats are insisting on a prevailing-wage requirement, not just for existing public works programs but also for building new roads, bridges, broadband and other infrastructure, according to another Republican granted anonymity to discuss the private talks.

At the same time, transit funding has been a stubborn source of disagreement for the past several days.

Pennsylvania Sen. Pat Toomey, the top Republican on the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, which oversees public transit, raised questions about the size of the transit funding increase. He cited, in part, previous COVID-19 federal relief money that had already been allocated to public transit.

Democrats and public transit advocates don't want spending to go any lower than what's typically been a federal formula of about 80% for highways and 20% for transit. They see expanded public transit systems as key to easing traffic congestion and combating climate change.

Psaki has previously said transit funding "is obviously extremely important to the president — the 'Amtrak President,' as we may call him."

The senators also appeared to still be debating money for public water works and removal of lead pipes after Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, raised questions about the amount.

Also unresolved is how to pay for the bipartisan package after Democrats rejected a plan to bring in funds by hiking the gas tax drivers pay at the pump and Republicans dashed a plan to boost the IRS to go after tax scofflaws.

Funding could come from repurposing COVID relief aid, reversing a Trump-era pharmaceutical rebate and other streams. It's possible the final deal could run into political trouble if it doesn't pass muster as fully paid for when the Congressional Budget Office assesses the details.

The final package would need the support of 60 senators in the evenly split 50-50 Senate to advance past a filibuster — meaning at least 10 Republicans along with every Democratic member. A test vote last week failed along party lines as Republicans sought more time to negotiate.

Meanwhile, Democrats are readying the broader \$3.5 trillion package, which would go beyond public works to include child care centers, family tax breaks and other priorities. It is being considered under budget rules that allow passage with 51 senators in the split Senate, with Vice President Kamala Harris able to break a tie. That package would be paid for by increasing the corporate tax rate and the tax rate on Americans earning more than \$400,000 a year.

Associated Press writers Hope Yen and Josh Boak contributed to this report.

Biden's 1st visit to intel agency to contrast with Trump's

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is making his first visit to an agency of the U.S. intelligence community, looking to emphasize his confidence in national security leaders after his predecessor's incendiary battles against what he often derided as the "deep state."

Biden is scheduled Tuesday afternoon to visit the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, which oversees the 17 U.S. intelligence organizations. The White House said in a statement that Biden intends to express "admiration for their work and underscore the importance for our national security of intelligence collection and analysis free from political interference."

President Donald Trump visited the Central Intelligence Agency on his first full day in office, praising the agencies but also airing personal grievances. Standing in front of CIA's memorial wall with stars marking each of the officers who have died while serving, Trump settled scores with the media and repeated false claims about the size of his inauguration crowd.

The relationship between the intelligence community and the president "went downhill from that very day," said Glenn Gerstell, who then served as general counsel of the National Security Agency and stepped

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down last year.

Trump would go through four permanent or acting directors of national intelligence in four years and engaged in near-constant fights with the intelligence community.

In particular, he was angry about its assessment that Russia had interfered on his behalf in the 2016 presidential campaign and its role in revealing that Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate Biden, an action that ultimately led to Trump's first impeachment. Trump eventually fired the inspector general at the national intelligence office — the internal watchdog who brought that pressure to light.

By contrast, Biden has repeatedly insisted that he would not exert political pressure on intelligence agencies, a message repeated by his top appointees. He also came to office with a long history of working with intelligence officials as vice president and serving in the Senate.

The president has already called on National Intelligence Director Avril Haines with several politically sensitive requests. Perhaps the most prominent is an enhanced review of the origins of COVID-19 as concerns increase among scientists that the novel coronavirus could have originated in a Chinese lab. Biden set a 90-day timeframe and pledged to make the results of the review public.

Haines and CIA Director Bill Burns are also investigating a growing number of reported injuries and illnesses possibly linked to directed energy attacks in what's known as "Havana syndrome." The CIA recently appointed a new director of its task force investigating Havana syndrome cases, an undercover official who participated in the hunt for Osama bin Laden. And intelligence agencies are having to adapt to the military withdrawal from Afghanistan, with growing concerns that the Taliban may topple the U.S.-backed central government.

Haines and Burns have also said that their review of COVID-19 origins may be inconclusive, probably disappointing lawmakers and observers who have pushed for more aggressive action against China.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Monday that Biden was not likely to make Trump "a central part of his message" during his visit.

"He's someone who believes in the role of the intelligence community of civil servants," she said. "He believes they're the backbone of our government and certainly he'll make that clear."

Harry Coker, a former National Security Agency and CIA senior official who advised the Biden transition team, said he expected the president to discuss threats from China and his priorities for dealing with Beijing. Coker also expected Biden to address sagging morale within the national intelligence office and make clear his interest in "wanting the truth whether anyone perceives it to be good or bad."

Former officials said Biden's choice of visiting the national intelligence director before the CIA was significant because it makes clear he wants Haines to be considered his principal intelligence adviser. When her office was created in 2005 to better coordinate intelligence sharing following the 9/11 attacks, it subsumed a leadership role once held by the CIA director. Since then, agencies and leaders have periodically fought for preeminence, causing concerns that some agencies' views are more strongly heard than others.

"I think we've had a couple of presidents in a row where the supremacy of the DNI was put in some question either through the selection of people they chose in the job or how they engaged with the community," said Larry Pfeiffer, a former senior official at both the CIA and the intelligence office who now leads the Hayden Center at George Mason University.

Pfeiffer said he strongly supported Biden's visit and also hoped the president would eventually visit the memorial wall where Trump spoke in January 2017.

Associated Press journalist Aamer Madhani contributed to this report.

Northern lights: Alaska teen shocks with Olympic swim gold

By PAUL NEWBERRY AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Alaska is renowned for its majestic natural beauty. The snowy peaks. The glistening glaciers. The sparkling fjords.

An Arctic paradise, for sure.

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Swimming?

That's never been much of a thing in the 49th U.S. state. Until now.

Seventeen-year-old Lydia Jacoby pulled off a stunning victory in the women's 100-meter breaststroke on Tuesday, upsetting American teammate and defending champion Lilly King.

Alaska — of all places — has a champion at the pool.

"I was definitely racing for a medal. I knew I had it in me," said Jacoby, who hails from Seward (population: 2,733). "I wasn't really expecting a gold medal, so when I looked up and saw the scoreboard it was insane."

Only a handful of Alaska swimmers had even qualified for the U.S. Olympic trials. Jacoby was the first to ever make the team.

When she touched the wall first, it set off a giddy celebration back home.

"A lot of big-name swimmers come from big, powerhouse clubs," Jacoby said. "Me coming from a small club, in a state with such a small population, really shows everyone that you can do it no matter where you're from."

Jacoby's winning time was 1 minute, 4.95 seconds. Tatjana Schoenmaker of South Africa claimed the silver in 1:05.22, while King gave the Americans another medal by taking the bronze in 1:05.54.

Jacoby's shocking win salvaged what had been a bit of a disappointing morning for the Americans.

Britain went 1-2 in the men's 200 freestyle. Russia did the same in the men's 100 backstroke. And the Australian women claimed their second gold of the Tokyo Games.

Through the first three finals, the U.S. had only managed a pair of bronze medals, losing a men's backstroke race at the Olympics for the first time since 1992.

Then the high schooler came through.

Jacoby was third at the turn, trailing Schoenmaker and King. But, with her head bobbing furiously out of the water, the teenager surged past King and glided to the wall just ahead of the South African.

Looking at the scoreboard with a bit of disbelief, Schoenmaker reached across the lane rope for a hug when the enormity of her accomplishment finally hit. Then it was King bounding over from two lanes away to congratulate America's new breaststroke queen.

"I'm so excited for Lydia," King said. "I love to see the future of American breaststroke coming up like this and to have somebody to go at it head-to-head in the country. I definitely knew she was a threat and saw a lot of myself in her effort."

Jacoby's unique journey has also added a bit of intrigue to a swimmer who is heading into her senior year of high school in one of her country's most remote outposts.

"She practically swims in iced-over lakes in Alaska," teammate Gunnar Bentz said.

That's a bit of a stretch, of course, but Jacoby did have to deal with her local pool closing during the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing her to train about 2 1/2 hours away in the state's biggest city, Anchorage.

Jacoby never let the hardships get her down.

"She's so sweet. She's just a ray of sunshine," American backstroker Regan Smith said. "I had a ton of confidence in her, absolutely."

The U.S. men have always had plenty of confidence in the backstroke, but one of the sport's longest streaks finally ended Tuesday.

Russian swimmers swept the top two spots in the 100-meter back, with Evgeny Rylov claiming the gold medal in 51.98 and teammate Kliment Kolesnikov taking the silver in 52.00.

Defending Olympic champion Ryan Murphy settled for the bronze in 52.19.

Amazingly, it was the first backstroke defeat for the U.S. men at the Olympics since the 1992 Barcelona Games.

They won 12 straight golds over the last six Olympics, including Murphy's sweep of the 100 and 200 back at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

"Winning an Olympic gold medal means you're the best in the world," Murphy said. "Being third in the world is no slouch."

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World record-holder Kaylee McKeown gave the Aussie women another gold medal with a victory in the women's 100 backstroke, setting an Olympic record.

Her winning time of 57.47 was just off the world mark she set this year of 57.45. The silver went to Canadian Kylie Masse in 57.72, while former world record-holder Smith was relegated to bronze at 58.05.

Coming into these Olympics, Australia had not won an individual women's title since 2008. They've already got two in Tokyo — plus a relay gold — with McKeown's victory coming after Ariarne Titmus' triumph Monday in the 400 freestyle.

"My legs were definitely hurting with the last 20 to go," McKeown said. "But you know I've trained for that and I knew I had a really strong backend and a really good chance to be on the podium."

Britain's sweep in the 200 free was led by Tom Dean capturing the gold in 1 minute, 44.22 seconds, while teammate Duncan Scott picked up the silver at 1:44.26. The bronze went to Brazilian Fernando Scheffer in 1:44.66.

Dean's victory was even more remarkable considering he has twice had COVID-19 during the buildup to the Games.

"It was quite tough," he said. "It was tough having a lot of time out the water. And obviously it requires a slow buildup because of the nature of the disease. So it's tough and it was a very bumpy ride this season."

He didn't have to worry about defending champion Sun Yang, who was banned from the Tokyo Olympics for a doping violation.

Titmus and Katie Ledecky both advanced to Wednesday's final of the 200 freestyle, setting up another showdown after their thrilling race in the 400 where the Terminator rallied for the victory with a blazing final lap.

Titmus was the top qualifier in the semis at 1:54.82, while Ledecky — the defending Olympic champion — cruised to the third-best time of 1:55.34.

Ledecky had a relatively easy day compared with Monday, when she raced three times for a total of 2,100 meters.

She'll have another big morning Wednesday, when she competes in the finals of the 200 free and the 1,500 free — her shortest and longest events — about an hour apart.

"It'll be a good challenge," Ledecky said. "It's been fun to train for both of them."

Follow Paul Newberry on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/pnewberry1963> and his work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/paulnewberry>

More AP Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/2020-tokyo-olympics> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

GLIMPSES: At Olympic beaches, surf's definitely up

The Associated Press undefined

TOKYO (AP) — On the beach about 60 miles east of Tokyo, Olympic surfers are enjoying waves created by an approaching typhoon that has disrupted some outdoor events — and made the proceedings feel even more dramatic, both in life and on camera.

The storm is a major win for competitive surfing, given that Tsurigasaki Beach is not generally known for powerful waves, according to Olympic surfing forecaster Kurt Korte. The beach is popular for surfing in Japan — but is hardly a world class location like Hawaii or Tahiti.

Surfers again had powerful waves from the storm but were gifted Tuesday with rain that tamed the winds — as ideal a forecast as could be expected this time of year for this beach.

For photographers trying to capture the moments, the contrast of murky water makes an image pop even more than during sunny, placid days with bluer waves. The three layers — competitor on surfboard, foamy waves and background water — are brought out in even more stark relief, adding to the drama.

More AP Olympic coverage: <https://www.apnews.com/OlympicGames> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

GLIMPSES: As rain arrives and typhoon nears, Olympics endure

By The Associated Press undefined

TOKYO (AP) — The rains came to Tokyo on Tuesday morning.

After many days of blistering sunshine and summer humidity, enough to cause discomfort and heatstroke at some venues in recent days, the rain cooled Tokyo by about 10 degrees Tuesday morning, taking the edge off.

But worries about the effect of Tropical Storm Nepartak and its accompanying drenching have led to changes in Olympic events and some cancellations of practices as preparations for the storm proceed.

The storm is expected to make landfall in Japan on Tuesday evening.

More AP Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/olympic-games> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Biden says US combat mission in Iraq to conclude by year end

By ROBERT BURNS, AAMER MADHANI and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Monday the U.S. combat mission in Iraq will conclude by the end of the year, an announcement that reflects the reality on the ground more than a major shift in U.S. policy.

Even before Biden took office, the main U.S. focus has been assisting Iraqi forces, not fighting on their behalf. And Biden did not say if he planned to reduce the number of troops in Iraq, now about 2,500.

The announcement comes on the heels of Biden's decision to withdraw fully from Afghanistan nearly 20 years after the U.S. launched that war in response to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Together, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have heavily taxed the U.S. military and kept it from devoting more attention to a rising China, which the Biden administration calls the biggest long-term security challenge.

For years, U.S. troops have played support roles in Iraq and in neighboring Syria, which was the origin of the Islamic State group that swept across the border in 2014 and captured large swaths of Iraqi territory, prompting the U.S. to send troops back to Iraq that year.

Speaking to reporters during an Oval Office session with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, Biden said his administration remained committed to a partnership with Iraq — a relationship that has been increasingly complicated by Iranian-backed Iraqi militia groups. The militias want all U.S. troops out of Iraq immediately and have periodically attacked bases that house American troops.

Dan Caldwell, a senior adviser to Concerned Veterans for America, said U.S. troops will remain at risk.

"Regardless of whether their deployment is called a combat mission, U.S. troops will remain under regular attack as long as they remain in Iraq," Caldwell said in a statement. "An American military presence in Iraq is not necessary for our safety and only risks the loss of more American life."

Biden said the U.S. military will continue to assist Iraq in its fight against the Islamic State group, or ISIS. A joint U.S.-Iraq statement said the security relationship will be focused on training, advising and intelligence-sharing.

"Our shared fight against ISIS is critical for the stability of the region and our counterterrorism operation will continue, even as we shift to this new phase we're going to be talking about," Biden said.

The shift from a U.S. combat role to one focused on training and advising the Iraqi security forces was announced in April, when a joint U.S.-Iraqi statement said this transition allowed for the removal from Iraq of any remaining U.S. combat forces on a timetable to be determined later. It did not specify what combat functions the U.S. was engaged in then, nor did Biden get into such specifics on Monday.

"We're not going to be, by the end of the year, in a combat mission," he said.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki declined to say how many troops would remain in Iraq by year's end.

"The numbers will be driven by what is needed for the mission over time, so it is more about moving to a more advising and training capacity from what we have had over the last several years," she said.

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The U.S. troop presence has stood at about 2,500 since late last year when then-President Donald Trump ordered a reduction from 3,000.

The Iraqi government in 2017 declared victory over the Islamic State group, which is now a shell of its former self. Still, it has shown it can carry out high-casualty attacks. Last week, the group claimed responsibility for a roadside bombing that killed at least 30 people and wounded dozens in a busy suburban Baghdad market.

In his remarks alongside Biden, al-Kadhimi thanked the United States for its support.

Back home, al-Kadhimi faces no shortage of problems. Iranian-backed militias operating inside Iraq have stepped up attacks against U.S. forces in recent months, and a series of devastating hospital fires that left dozens of people dead and soaring coronavirus infections have added fresh layers of frustration for the nation.

For al-Kadhimi, the ability to offer the Iraqi public a date for the end of the U.S. combat presence could be a feather in his cap before elections scheduled for October.

Biden administration officials say al-Kadhimi also deserves credit for improving Iraq's standing in the Mideast. Last month, King Abdullah II of Jordan and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi visited Baghdad for joint meetings — the first time an Egyptian president has made an official visit since the 1990s, when ties were severed after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait.

The Iraqi prime minister made clear before his trip to Washington that he believes it's time for the U.S. to wind that mission down.

"There is no need for any foreign combat forces on Iraqi soil," al-Kadhimi told The Associated Press last weekend.

The U.S. mission of training and advising Iraqi forces has its most recent origins in President Barack Obama's decision in 2014 to send troops back to Iraq. The move was made in response to the Islamic State group's takeover of large portions of western and northern Iraq and a collapse of Iraqi security forces that appeared to threaten Baghdad. Obama had fully withdrawn U.S. forces from Iraq in 2011, eight years after the U.S. invasion.

Pentagon officials for years have tried to balance what they see as a necessary military presence to support the Iraqi government's fight against IS with domestic political sensitivities in Iraq to a foreign troop presence.

The vulnerability of U.S. troops was demonstrated most dramatically in January 2020 when Iran launched a ballistic missile attack on al-Asad air base in western Iraq. No Americans were killed, but dozens suffered traumatic brain injury from the blasts. That attack came shortly after a U.S. drone strike killed Iranian military commander Qassim Soleimani and senior Iraqi militia commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis at Baghdad International Airport.

Associated Press writer Samya Kullab contributed to this report.

Senators, White House in talks to finish infrastructure bill

By LISA MASCARO, ALEXANDRA JAFFE and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senators and the White House were locked in intense negotiations Monday to salvage a bipartisan infrastructure deal, with pressure mounting on all sides to wrap up talks and show progress on President Joe Biden's top priority.

Despite weeks of closed-door discussions, senators from the bipartisan group blew past a Monday deadline set for agreement on the nearly \$1 trillion package. Instead they hit serious roadblocks over how much would be spent on public transit and water infrastructure and whether the new spending on roads, bridges, broadband and other projects would be required to meet federal wage requirements for workers. They're also at odds over drawing on COVID-19 funds to help pay for it.

Republican negotiator Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio, who took the lead in key talks with a top White House aide, insisted the bipartisan group was "making progress."

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"This is heading in the right direction," Portman told reporters at the Capitol. "It's a big, complicated bill." Biden struck a similarly upbeat tone, telling reporters at the White House he remained optimistic about reaching a compromise.

This is a crucial week after more than a monthlong slog of negotiations since Biden and the bipartisan group first celebrated the contours of the nearly \$1 trillion bipartisan agreement in June, and senators were warned they could be kept in session this weekend to finish the work.

The White House wants a bipartisan agreement for this first phase, before Democrats go it alone to tackle broader priorities in a bigger \$3.5 trillion budget plan that's on deck. A recent poll from The Associated Press-NORC found 8 in 10 Americans favor some increased infrastructure spending, and the current package could be a political win for all sides as lawmakers try to show voters that Washington can work. Securing the bipartisan bill is also important for some centrist Democrats before engaging in the broader undertaking.

But as talks drag on, anxious Democrats, who have slim control of the House and Senate, face a timeline to act on what would be some of the most substantial legislation in years. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer wants progress on both packages before the August recess, and he told senators to brace for a Saturday or Sunday session.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Biden himself "worked the phones all weekend," and the administration was encouraged by the progress. But Psaki acknowledged "time is not endless."

Adding to the mix, Donald Trump issued a statement Monday disparaging Senate Republicans for even dealing with the Democrats on infrastructure, though it's unclear what influence he has. The former president had failed at an infrastructure deal when he was in office.

"It's time for everyone to get to 'yes,'" Schumer said as he opened the Senate.

Schumer said Trump is "rooting for our entire political system to fail" while Democrats are "rooting for a deal."

The bipartisan package includes about \$600 billion in new spending on public works projects, with broad support from Republicans and Democrats for many of the proposed ideas.

Yet there was little to show Monday after a grinding weekend of talks, putting the deal at risk of stalling out.

The Democrats and the White House had sent what they called a "global" offer to Republicans on remaining issues late Sunday, according to a Democratic aide close to the talks and granted anonymity to discuss them.

But Republicans rebuffed the ideas, saying the new proposal attempted to reopen issues that had already been resolved, according to a GOP aide also granted anonymity to discuss the private talks.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said it's time for Biden to become more involved. "I think it's imperative that the president indicates strongly that he wants a bipartisan package," she said.

A top Biden aide, Steve Ricchetti, was tapped for the direct talks as Portman fielded information to the other senators in the group, several senators said.

Democratic Sen. Jon Tester of Montana said, "There were too many cooks in the kitchen."

While much of the disagreement has been over the size of spending on each category, labor issues have also emerged as a flashpoint.

Democrats are insisting on a prevailing-wage requirement, not just for existing public works programs but also for building new roads, bridges, broadband and other infrastructure, according to another Republican granted anonymity to discuss the private talks.

At the same time, transit funding has been a stubborn source of disagreement for the past several days.

Pennsylvania Sen. Pat Toomey, the top Republican on the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, which oversees public transit, raised questions about the size of the transit funding increase. He cited, in part, previous COVID-19 federal relief money that had already been allocated to public transit.

Democrats and public transit advocates don't want spending to go any lower than what's typically been a federal formula of about 80% for highways and 20% for transit. They see expanded public transit systems

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as key to easing traffic congestion and combating climate change.

Psaki has previously said transit funding "is obviously extremely important to the president — the 'Amtrak President,' as we may call him."

The senators also appeared to still be debating money for public water works and removal of lead pipes after Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, raised questions about the amount.

Also unresolved is how to pay for the bipartisan package after Democrats rejected a plan to bring in funds by hiking the gas tax drivers pay at the pump and Republicans dashed a plan to boost the IRS to go after tax scofflaws.

Funding could come from repurposing COVID relief aid, reversing a Trump-era pharmaceutical rebate and other streams. It's possible the final deal could run into political trouble if it doesn't pass muster as fully paid for when the Congressional Budget Office assesses the details.

The final package would need the support of 60 senators in the evenly split 50-50 Senate to advance past a filibuster — meaning at least 10 Republicans along with every Democratic member. A test vote last week failed along party lines as Republicans sought more time to negotiate.

Meanwhile, Democrats are readying the broader \$3.5 trillion package, which would go beyond public works to include child care centers, family tax breaks and other priorities. It is being considered under budget rules that allow passage with 51 senators in the split Senate, with Vice President Kamala Harris able to break a tie. That package would be paid for by increasing the corporate tax rate and the tax rate on Americans earning more than \$400,000 a year.

Associated Press writers Hope Yen and Josh Boak contributed to this report.

Koreas restore communication channels, agree to improve ties

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The leaders of North and South Korea restored suspended communication channels between them and agreed to improve ties, both governments said Tuesday, amid a 2 ½ year-stalemate in U.S.-led diplomacy aimed at stripping North Korea of its nuclear weapons.

While the move could certainly help ease animosities on the Korean Peninsula, it's unclear whether Pyongyang would go as far as to revive previous vigorous cooperation programs with Seoul and get back to the nuclear talks with Washington. Some experts say North Korean leader Kim Jong Un merely intends to burnish his international image or use South Korea as leverage ahead of a potential resumption of talks with the U.S.

Since April, Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in exchanged personal letters several times and decided to normalize the cross-border communication channels as a first step toward improving relations, Moon's office said.

The two leaders agreed to "restore mutual confidence and develop their relationships again as soon as possible," senior Blue House official Park Soo Hyun said in a televised briefing. Park said the two Koreas subsequently reopened communication channels on Tuesday morning.

North Korea's state media quickly confirmed the South Korean announcement.

"Now, the whole Korean nation desires to see the North-South relations recovered from setback and stagnation as early as possible," the official Korean Central News Agency said. "In this regard, the top leaders of the North and the South agreed to make a big stride in recovering the mutual trust and promoting reconciliation by restoring the cutoff inter-Korean communication liaison lines through the recent several exchanges of personal letters."

Last year, North Korea cut off all communication channels with South Korea in protest of what it called South Korea's failure to stop activists from floating anti-Pyongyang leaflets across their border. An angry North Korea later blew up an empty, South Korean-built liaison office just north of the countries' border.

Many experts said the provocative North Korean action signaled the North had grown frustrated that Seoul has failed to revive lucrative inter-Korean economic projects and persuade the U.S. to ease interna-

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tional sanctions on the North.

Moon, who espouses greater reconciliation with North Korea, earlier shuttled between Pyongyang and Washington to facilitate a first summit between Kim and then-President Donald Trump. But North Korea abruptly turned the cold shoulder to Moon after a second Kim-Trump summit fell apart in early 2019 due to disputes over U.S.-led sanctions.

Since taking office in January, the administration of President Joe Biden has called on North Korea to return to the talks. But North Korea has insisted it won't rejoin the talks unless the U.S. withdraws its hostile policy against the North, an apparent reference to the sanctions.

Some experts earlier said North Korea may be compelled to reach out to the U.S. or South Korea if its economic difficulties worsen. Mismanagement, storm damage and border shutdowns during the coronavirus pandemic have further depleted North Korea's broken economy and Kim in recent speeches called for his people to brace for prolonged COVID-19 restrictions. While his remarks may indicate the potential for a worsening economic situation, outside monitoring groups haven't seen signs of mass starvation or social chaos in the country of 26 million people.

Nam Sung-wook, a professor at Korea University, said the restoration of the communication channels won't likely lead to dramatic improvement in ties, such as another Moon-Kim summit.

"North Korea knows it has to sit down for talks with the Biden administration one day. It thinks South Korea still has an effective value ... to make Biden move" in a direction that it favors, Nam said. "North Korea can also build up an (international image) that it's willing to continue dialogue" with the outside world.

According to Moon's office, the recent letters exchanged between Moon and Kim didn't discuss holding a summit or phone talks between them.

Park Won Gon, a professor of North Korea studies at Seoul's Ewha Womans University, said North Korea may intend for steps to help South Korean liberals supporting greater North Korea ties win next March's presidential elections.

He said it's unlikely North Korea's agreement to restore the communication lines meant its pandemic-related difficulties worsened to a level that forced it to reach out to get urgent assistance. He cited reports that North Korea is still refusing to receive aid even from China, its major ally, due to worries that aid deliveries could spread the virus.

After Tuesday's announcement by their governments, liaison officials from the Koreas had phone conversations via three channels including a military hotline. On two of them, they agreed to talk twice a day as they did in the past, according to Seoul's unification and defense ministries.

The Koreas remain split along the world's most heavily fortified border since the 1950-53 Korean War ended in an armistice, not a peace treaty. Tuesday marks the 68th anniversary of the signing of the armistice.

About 28,500 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea to deter potential aggression from North Korea.

Moderna expanding kids vaccine study to better assess safety

By MATTHEW PERRONE and LINDA A. JOHNSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Moderna said Monday it plans to expand the size of its COVID-19 vaccine study in younger children to better detect rare side effects, such as a type of heart inflammation recently flagged by U.S. health authorities.

The company said it is in talks with the Food and Drug Administration to enroll more study participants under age 12. It had intended to test the vaccine in about 7,000 children, with some as young as 6 months. The Cambridge, Massachusetts-based company said via email it hasn't decided on how many kids might be added.

The announcement comes as U.S. COVID-19 cases are rising and schools prepare to welcome students back to classrooms. At the same time, regulators continue to review cases of a rare type of heart inflammation called myocarditis that has been reported in a small number of teenagers who got the Moderna or Pfizer shots.

Pfizer said on Monday that if it makes changes to its vaccine testing in children, it will provide an update then. The New York-based company is testing its vaccine in up to 4,500 children in the United States and

Europe.

The FDA said in a statement it could not comment on its discussions with companies, but added "we do generally work with sponsors to ensure the number of participants in clinical trials are of adequate size to detect safety signals."

The news was first reported by the New York Times.

U.S. officials and independent medical experts said last month the benefits of the vaccines far outweigh the risks of the side effect, which has been reported in several hundred people younger than 30. But any vaccine safety issues could slow uptake, particularly among parents wary of taking any health risk with their children.

Currently, Pfizer has the only U.S. vaccine authorized for children 12 years and up, while Moderna is expecting an FDA ruling on its application in the coming days.

While teens receive the same dose as adults, younger children may need smaller doses. That additional complexity adds time to drugmakers' research and application timelines.

Moderna said Monday it expects to have enough data to apply for FDA authorization in younger kids by late this year or early 2022.

Pfizer has previously said it expects to apply in September for children ages 5 through 11. Results for two younger age groups that began testing a little later should be available by October or November, according to the company.

Johnson reported from Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

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Peru's new first family leaving behind rural, Andean home

By FRANKLIN BRICEÑO Associated Press

CHUGUR, Peru (AP) — The humble two-story, adobe home of the Castillo family, located in one of the poorest districts of Peru deep in the Andes, feels a little empty now. Lilia Paredes packed up the family's belongings within the last week, neatly folding her husband's shirts and picking some plates and silverware in between visits from farmers from nearby villages stopping by to say goodbye.

A neo-baroque presidential palace awaits Paredes, her husband and Peruvian President-elect Pedro Castillo, and their two children — should the family chose to live in the historic building.

Castillo, will be sworn in as president Wednesday, less than two weeks after he was declared the winner of the June 6 runoff election. The leftist rural teacher, who has never held office, defeated his opponent, right-wing career politician Keiko Fujimori, by just 44,000 votes.

Paredes is not sure where she, her husband and two children will live starting Wednesday. She also does not know where the children will go to school once classes begin.

"We don't have any property in Lima," she told The Associated Press last week on her foggy patio in Chugur while she rubbed her hands amid the cold of the Andean winter. "We are people from the countryside, and almost always, the provincial have to wait years to have a property in the capital. If they tell me to live in another place, it would also be the same, we are not kings to live in a palace, we go to work."

Castillo's supporters included the poor and rural citizens of the South American nation. He popularized the phrase "No more poor in a rich country," and stunned millions of Peruvians and observers by advancing to the runoff.

The economy of Peru, the world's second-largest copper producer, has been crushed by the coronavirus pandemic, increasing the poverty level to almost one-third of the population and eliminating the gains of a decade.

The typical presidential transition process was derailed after Fujimori tried to overturn the result, asking election authorities to annul thousands of votes alleging fraud, an accusation she could never prove. That left the Castillo family little time to make plans and say their goodbyes.

Unlike all of Peru's former presidents of the last 40 years, the Castillos have no home in Lima. Paredes, also a teacher, said she and her husband have to decide whether they will live in the presidential residence, but it is likely they will call it home. She has seen it from the outside but has never stepped inside, not even on guided tours that were offered during pre-pandemic times.

Choosing their home is a significant decision given Castillo's anti-elite rhetoric. His campaign slogan could be called into question if the family moves into the ornate presidential palace.

Paredes is taking to Lima some bags with food, including peas, beans, sweet corn flour and cheese that the family makes at home after milking their cows at dawn. The family's house - which Castillo built more than 20 years ago - will be in the care of Paredes' elder sister.

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The family has also packed study materials for Arnold, 16, and Alondra, 9. Paredes would like her children to attend a university and a state college. She said Arnold wants to study civil engineering because he likes math.

"Alondrita will continue studying in a public school, but I would like it to be one of nuns," Paredes said. If that happens, it will be the first time in decades that the children of a president enroll in public education. The powerful in Peru have long preferred private schools.

Some local media outlets had suggested that Paredes would wear an haute couture dress from a Lima-based designer, but she categorically denied that option. She chose Lupe de la Cruz, a seamstress from a town near Chugur, to make two suits for her.

"I like simple... My husband likes what I wear, and I like what he wears," she said.

Paredes recently brought de la Cruz two cuts of brown and green wool fabric. The seamstress showed her a fashion magazine, and the next first lady chose the designs of two discreet suits.

"She does not like embellishments nor scandalous colors," de la Cruz said days later at her workshop, cluttered with fabrics, scissors, needles, threads and rulers.

Before leaving for Lima, Paredes and her family attended a service in the Nazarene church that is located a few yards (meters) from their home. Pastor Victor Cieza invited dozens of pastors from other evangelical churches from the surrounding villages.

The church with yellow walls and a tin roof filled up with neighbors dressed in hats and woolen ponchos like those worn by Castillo. Some sang accompanied by a guitar; others reflected on vanity and the importance of humility.

"Everyone knows us, we will never forget where we are from and where we have to return because the positions are not forever," Paredes said at the end of the service.

Confusion besets new police reform laws in Washington state

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Washington state is embarking on a massive experiment in police reform and accountability following the racial justice protests that erupted after George Floyd's murder last year, as nearly a dozen laws took effect Sunday.

But two months after Gov. Jay Inslee signed the bills, law enforcement officials remain uncertain about what they require, leading to discrepancies around the state in how officers might respond — or not respond — to certain situations, including active crime scenes, welfare checks and mental health crises.

"When you take the legislation and apply it, that's when you really learn how effective it's going to be," said Rafael Padilla, the police chief in Kent, a south Seattle suburb. "The challenge is — I'm going to be very frank — the laws were written very poorly, and the combination of them all at the same time has led to there being conflicts in clarity and in what was intended versus what was written."

The laws, passed by a Legislature controlled by Democrats and signed by a Democratic governor, constitute what is likely the nation's most ambitious police reform legislation. They cover virtually all aspects of policing, including the background checks officers undergo before they're hired; when they are authorized to use force and how they collect data about it; and the establishment of an entirely new state agency to review police use of deadly force.

Supporters said they would create the nation's strongest police accountability and help undo racial inequity in the justice system — "a mandate from the people to stop cops from violating our rights and killing people," said Sakara Remmu, of the Washington Black Lives Matter Alliance. According to the advocacy group Moms Demand Action, police have killed 260 people in Washington state since 2013. Disproportionately, they were Black — including Manuel Ellis, whose death in Tacoma last year led to murder or manslaughter charges against three officers and spurred some of the legislation.

Rep. Jesse Johnson, the first-term Federal Way Democrat who sponsored bills on police tactics and use of force, acknowledged some clarifications are necessary — but said that's not uncommon in complex legislation.

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"We have to create new policies, because what we were doing before was not working," Johnson said. "What we wanted to do with these bills is set an expectation that officers de-escalate and that there's less lethal enforcement of the law. A lot of the pushback we're getting is because it's a paradigm shift."

The measures ban chokeholds, neck restraints and no-knock warrants, and limit the use of tear gas and military equipment. Inspired by the officers who stood by in Minneapolis as their colleague Derek Chauvin pressed a knee to Floyd's neck, they require officers to intervene when a colleague engages in excessive force and to report misconduct by other officers.

They restrict when officers can engage in car chases; make it easier to decertify police for bad acts; make it easier to sue individual officers; and require police to use "reasonable care" in carrying out their duties, including exhausting appropriate de-escalation tactics before using force.

Law enforcement officials have embraced some of the changes and said they share the lawmakers' goals. But uncertainty about how to comply, combined with a greater possibility of being decertified or held personally liable in court, puts officers in a tough position, they say.

"The policing reforms may have the positive impact of reducing the number of violent interactions between law enforcement and the public," Steve Strachan, executive director of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, said in a statement. "However, we owe it to the public we serve to be candid and share that we are deeply concerned that some policing reforms may have unintended outcomes that result in increased levels of confusion, frustration, victimization, and increased crime within our communities."

For example, the restriction on military-grade weaponry would inadvertently ban some less-lethal impact weapons, including the shotguns police use to fire beanbag rounds.

Johnson said the context makes clear the intent was to embrace, not ban, less-lethal weapons. He expected the state attorney general to clarify that until the Legislature can fix the wording next year.

But in the meantime, some departments, including Spokane police and the King County Sheriff's Office, have hung up their beanbag weapons, while others, including Kent and Auburn south of Seattle, will continue using them.

Even more significant is a change in when officers can use "physical force" — a term that isn't defined in the new law, but which is typically interpreted to mean force as minor as handcuffing someone. The attorney general has been tasked with developing a model policy on using force by next July, but for now, agencies have been consulting with lawyers to determine what the new law means.

Historically, police have been authorized to use force to briefly detain someone if they have reasonable suspicion — a commonsense notion, based on specific facts, that someone might be involved in a crime. They could then conduct further investigation to see if there is probable cause for an arrest.

But under one of the new laws, police now need probable cause — a higher standard, based on evidence that the person committed or was about to commit the crime — before they use force. They can also use force if there's an imminent threat of injury; they can use deadly force only to protect against an imminent threat of serious injury or death.

The higher standard is designed to keep police from using force against the wrong person — something that happens too often, especially in communities of color, Johnson said.

But it also means police might sometimes have to let the bad guy go, at least temporarily.

If officers show up at a burglary scene, for example, and they see someone partially matching the description of the suspect — but don't have confirmation it's the same person — they can ask that person to stop voluntarily. If the person leaves, officers can't use force to detain them while figuring out if they have the right suspect, they say. An arrest would have to come later, once probable cause is established.

The Criminal Justice Training Commission, which operates the state's police academy, already emphasizes de-escalation tactics and began training on the duty to intervene last year even before the law was adopted. But it has had to modify its teaching to cover the probable cause requirement for using force.

During a recent training scenario, instructor Ken Westphal encouraged recruits taking statements from a convenience store owner who had been threatened by a customer to ask, "How did that make you feel?"

The officers needed to show that the owner felt fear — an element of the crime of felony harassment —

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to develop probable cause, Westphal said. Otherwise, they wouldn't have authority to detain the suspect loitering around the corner if he ran.

"There is nobody else in the country having to do this," Westphal said afterward. "We have always worked in reasonable suspicion. Now, those force options aren't there unless you have probable cause."

But even that approach is not universal. Some departments, including Kent, say in cases of violent crimes or residential burglary, they will arrest suspects for obstruction if they flee, even if they don't yet have probable cause for the underlying crime.

"I'm not letting violent felons take off," Padilla said. "I understand why the Criminal Justice Training Commission is doing what it's doing, but you can see how even experts who have decades in the field do not agree on what these laws mean."

Other departments, including the King County Sheriff's Office, won't arrest people in such circumstances. Obstruction — or "contempt of cop" — is sometimes considered a frivolous charge, filed when officers lack evidence of other crimes, and it's unclear if prosecutors will pursue it.

Similar concerns abound regarding mental health calls. Police often respond to people in crisis who are not committing crimes, sometimes in the company of a "designated crisis responder." Under existing law, the crisis responder can order the person to be involuntarily taken into custody for psychiatric care, but according to the advocacy group Disability Rights Washington, police are increasingly refusing to show up.

That's because officers aren't sure they still have the authority to use force to detain or transport those subjects, absent imminent harm or probable cause, officials say. Further, police are now required to exhaust appropriate de-escalation tactics; that can include simply leaving the scene.

These laws are taking effect as police have left the state or the profession in droves. Seattle is down hundreds of officers following clashes with protesters, criticism and talk of "defunding" last year. With a huge increase in early retirements and officers leaving for jobs in Idaho, Montana and elsewhere, the Kent Police Department is losing 21 of its 70 uniformed patrol officers this year, Padilla said. He blamed anti-police sentiment and the new laws.

Given limited resources, departments must decide whether it's worth responding to such noncriminal mental health calls when officers might only leave anyway.

Several law enforcement agencies in Thurston County said Monday they intend to largely stop handling "community care" situations such as suicidal people, welfare checks and drug overdoses, instead letting crisis responders, firefighters or emergency medics handle such calls.

Such statements drew criticism. In a blog post, Kim Mosolf of Disability Rights Washington and Enoka Herat of the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington accused some departments of "dangerously misinterpreting" the law.

Nothing in the measure overrules the ability of police to assist on mental health calls, they said. In fact, police continue to have strong liability protections under the Involuntary Treatment Act.

Sgt. Tim Meyer, a spokesman for the King County Sheriff's Office, noted that responding to new laws or court rulings is nothing new for law enforcement.

"As we get more familiar with the application of these bills, we're going to adapt and continue to serve the community," Meyer said.

Warming rivers in US West killing fish, imperiling industry

By DAISY NGUYEN Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Baby salmon are dying by the thousands in one California river, and an entire run of endangered salmon could be wiped out in another. Fishermen who make their living off adult salmon, once they enter the Pacific Ocean, are sounding the alarm as blistering heat waves and extended drought in the U.S. West raise water temperatures and imperil fish from Idaho to California.

Hundreds of thousands of young salmon are dying in Northern California's Klamath River as low water levels brought about by drought allow a parasite to thrive, devastating a Native American tribe whose diet and traditions are tied to the fish. And wildlife officials said the Sacramento River is facing a "near-complete

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loss" of young Chinook salmon due to abnormally warm water.

A crash in one year's class of young salmon can have lasting effects on the total population and shorten or stop the fishing season, a growing concern as climate change continues to make the West hotter and drier. That could be devastating to the commercial salmon fishing industry, which in California alone is worth \$1.4 billion.

The plummeting catch already has led to skyrocketing retail prices for salmon, hurting customers who say they can no longer afford the \$35 per pound of fish, said Mike Hudson, who has spent the last 25 years catching and selling salmon at farmers markets in Berkeley.

Hudson said he has considered retiring and selling his 40-foot (12-meter) boat because "it's going to get worse from here."

Winter-run Chinook salmon are born in the Sacramento River, traverse hundreds of miles to the Pacific, where they normally spend three years before returning to their birthplace to mate and lay their eggs between April and August. Unlike the fall-run Chinook that survives almost entirely due to hatchery breeding programs, the winter run is still largely reared in the wild.

Federal fisheries officials predicted in May that more than 80% of baby salmon could die because of warmer water in the Sacramento River. Now, state wildlife officials say that number could be higher amid a rapidly depleting pool of cool water in Lake Shasta. California's largest reservoir is filled to only about 35% capacity, federal water managers said this week.

"The pain we're going to feel is a few years from now, when there will be no naturally spawned salmon out in the ocean," said John McManus, executive director of the Golden State Salmon Association, which represents the fishing industry.

When Lake Shasta was formed in the 1940s, it blocked access to the cool mountain streams where fish traditionally spawned. To ensure their survival, the U.S. government is required to maintain river temperatures below 56 degrees Fahrenheit (13 Celsius) in spawning habitat because salmon eggs generally can't withstand anything warmer.

The warm water is starting to affect older fish, too. Scientists have seen some adult fish dying before they can lay their eggs.

"An extreme set of cascading climate events is pushing us into this crisis situation," said Jordan Traverso, a spokeswoman for the California Department of Wildlife and Fish.

The West has been grappling with a historic drought and recent heat waves worsened by climate change, stressing waterways and reservoirs that sustain millions of people and wildlife.

As a result, the state has been trucking millions of salmon raised at hatcheries to the ocean each year, bypassing the perilous downstream journey. State and federal hatcheries take other extraordinary measures to preserve the decimated salmon stocks, such as maintaining a genetic bank to prevent inbreeding at hatcheries and releasing them at critical life stages, when they can recognize and return to the water where they were born.

Fishermen and environmental groups blame water agencies for diverting too much water too soon to farms, which could lead to severe salmon die-off and drive the species closer to extinction.

"We know that climate change is going to make years like this more common, and what the agencies should be doing is managing for the worst-case scenario," said Sam Mace, a director of Save Our Wild Salmon, a coalition working to restore wild salmon and steelhead in the Pacific Northwest.

"We need some real changes in how rivers are managed if they're going to survive," she added.

On the Klamath River near the Oregon state line, California wildlife officials decided not to release more than 1 million young Chinook salmon into the wild and instead drove them to hatcheries that could host them until river conditions improve.

Much is riding on this class of salmon because it could be the first to return to the river if plans to remove four of six dams on the Klamath and restore fish access to the upper river go according to plan.

Across the West, officials are struggling with the similar concerns over fish populations.

In Idaho, officials recognized that endangered sockeye salmon wouldn't make their upstream migration

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through hundreds of miles of warm water to their spawning habitat, so they flooded the Snake River with cool water, then trapped and trucked the fish to hatcheries.

And environmentalists went to court this month in Portland, Oregon, to try to force dam operators on the Snake and Columbia rivers to release more water at dams blocking migrating salmon, arguing that the effects of climate change and a recent heat wave were further threatening fish already on the verge of extinction.

Low water levels are also affecting recreational fishing. Officials in Wyoming, Colorado, Montana and California are asking anglers to fish during the coolest parts of the day to minimize the impact on fish stressed from low-oxygen levels in warm water.

Scientists say the salmon population in California historically has rebounded after a drought because they have evolved to tolerate the Mediterranean-like climate and benefited from rainy, wet years. But an extended drought could lead to extinction of certain runs of salmon.

"We're at the point where I'm not sure drought is appropriate term to describe what's happening," said Andrew Rypel, a fish ecologist at the University of California, Davis. He said the West is transitioning to an increasingly water-scarce environment.

Hudson, the fisherman, said he used to spend days at sea when the salmon season was longer and could catch 100 fish per day.

This year, he said he was lucky to catch 80 to sell at the market.

"Retiring would be the smart thing to do, but I can't bring myself to do it because these fish have been so good to us for all these years," Hudson said. "I can't just walk away from it."

Associated Press writer Gillian Flaccus in Portland, Oregon, and Jim Anderson in Denver contributed to this report.

See AP's complete coverage of the drought: <https://apnews.com/hub/droughts>.

Russia edges Japan, China for gold in men's gymnastics

By WILL GRAVES AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Nikita Nagornyy huddled with the rest of the Russian men's gymnastics team, stared at the scoreboard and waited.

And waited.

And waited.

What in reality was only a few moments seemed like forever to the group representing the Russian Olympic Committee.

In a way it was.

For a quarter-century, the Russians had ceded the top of the medal stand at the Olympics to rivals. Japan. China. The United States.

No more.

When the score for Nagornyy's floor routine finally flashed — 14.600, just enough to slide past Japan and into first — the reigning world champion erupted in joy, tears and gleeful shouts of his country's name.

"Everyone here deserves this medal," Nagornyy said. "I knew we'd win all along and we just confirmed it."

Just barely.

Russia's team total of 262.500 was just ahead of Japan's 262.397 and China's 261.8934. The Russians took the lead after the third rotation, though their grasp on gold appeared tenuous when Abliazin stepped out of bounds on floor exercise. Dalaloyan, competing on a heavily taped left Achilles tendon just three months removed from surgery, bounded out of bounds too.

Rising Japanese star Daiki Hashimoto drilled a 15.1 on high bar to slip by China into first. Russia's hopes of gold fell to Nagornyy, who was born just five months before the 1996 Olympic team triumphed in Atlanta. An early wobble forced him to scrub his initial routine. He improvised brilliantly, avenging a loss to

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Japan in Brazil five years ago.

"At the Olympics in Rio, we were weaker than the Japanese," said Abliazin, who was on the 2016 team alongside Nagornyy and Belyavskiy. "Now we are already stronger. We proved it at the world championships (in 2019) and proved it again."

The fact the Russian flag and the country's national anthem weren't part of the ceremony — part of the International Olympic Committee's penalty for doping problems in the country — hardly mattered. It didn't change the way the gold felt hanging around their necks. Or the validation the performance provided for a team that is now the best in the world.

"To beat Japan at their home is a great result," Abliazin said. "I think we can do even more."

They just might if they can get healthy. Two days after sobbing at the end of qualifying, Dalaloyan pushed aside the ache in his leg and was perhaps even better. He stuck the dismount on his vault, his feet seemingly suction-cupped to the mat.

Even though the momentum from a tumbling pass during his floor routine carried him onto the blue carpet, he recovered to post a 14.066, vital during a meet where every hundredth of a point counted.

"The emotions covered all the pain I felt," Dalaloyan said. "So I feel fantastic. The emotions of the victory and the medal are great. We started calmly, but there were nerves at the end. It became very passionate."

The passion could be felt in the roar of the Japanese after the 19-year-old Hashimoto — Japan's heir apparent to two-time Olympic champion Kohei Uchimura — delivered a nervy high bar set. Their cheers echoed throughout the mostly empty Ariake Gymnastics Centre, and for a few minutes, it appeared it might be enough to overcome both the Chinese and the Russians.

Hashimoto didn't let himself go quite that far.

"I knew I wasn't performing by myself," he said. "I wanted to do it for everyone else. I'm exhilarated. I was very happy when I was done. I didn't even consider the color of the medal. I just knew I had delivered."

Silver, but not quite gold. While admitting a tinge of disappointment in the final result, Hashimoto was quick to point out the Japanese didn't lose so much as the Russians won. Other opportunities, however, likely await for a team whose members are all 25 or younger.

"Come Paris, we are set on going for gold," Tanigawa said.

It figures to be tight all the way through. Japan captured gold in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. The Chinese edged Russia for a world title in 2018, then flipped positions a year later. The margins have been razor thin all the way. That's not likely to change.

Great Britain came in fourth. The U.S. appeared poised to come in fourth before a messy floor exercise in the final rotation, the only real mistake in an otherwise solid meet for the Americans in three-time Olympian Sam Mikulak's final meet before retiring.

"Throughout this whole experience these guys were rock solid," Mikulak said of teammates Shane Wiskus, Yul Moldauer and Brody Malone. "Just really cool to see these first-timers go out and shine like that. We really have a strong future for Team USA."

More AP Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/2020-tokyo-olympics> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Singer Pink backs beach handball team on 'sexist' clothing

By JARI TANNER Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — U.S. pop singer Pink has offered to pay a fine given to the Norwegian female beach handball team for wearing shorts instead of the required bikini bottoms.

Pink said she was "very proud" of the team for protesting against the rule that prevented them from wearing shorts like their male counterparts.

In a tweet posted on Sunday, Pink said: "The European handball federation SHOULD BE FINED FOR SEXISM. Good on ya, ladies." She added that "I'll be happy to pay your fines for you. Keep it up."

At the European Beach Handball Championships in Bulgaria last week, Norway's female team was fined 1,500 euros (\$1,770) for what the European federation called improper clothing and "a breach of clothing regulations." The rules stipulate that women must wear bikini bottoms while men wear shorts.

The Norwegian Handball Federation didn't contest the decision, seen by the Norwegian team and several others as unfair, and announced earlier that it was ready to pay the fine.

The European Handball Federation acknowledged the commotion that the incident had triggered in media outlets and social media, and said Monday that it would donate the amount paid by the Norwegian Handball Federation "to a major international sports foundation which supports equality for women and girls in sports".

"We are very much aware of the attention the topic has received over the past days, and while changes cannot happen overnight, we are fully committed that something good comes out of this situation right now which is why the EHF has donated the fine for a good cause promoting equality in sports," European Handball Federation President Michael Wiederer said in a statement.

Wiederer said that handball already was ahead of other sports in some respects, such as the parity given to the men's and women's competitions. He said such parity had been achieved in beach handball much sooner than it had in soccer, for example.

The Norwegian women posted a photograph of themselves on Instagram wearing shorts and told their followers: "Thank you so much for all the support. We really appreciate all the love we have received."

This story has been corrected to show the Norwegian Handball Federation, not the women's team, paid the fine.

As drought cuts hay crop, cattle ranchers face culling herds

By BRITTANY PETERSON Associated Press

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — With his cattle ranch threatened by a deepening drought, Jim Stanko isn't cheered by the coming storm signaled by the sound of thunder.

"Thunder means lightning, and lightning can cause fires," said Stanko, who fears he'll have to sell off half his herd of about 90 cows in Routt County outside of Steamboat Springs, Colorado if he can't harvest enough hay to feed them.

As the drought worsens across the West and ushers in an early fire season, cattle ranchers are among those feeling the pain. Their hay yields are down, leading some to make the hard decision to sell off animals. To avoid the high cost of feed, many ranchers grow hay to nourish their herds through the winter when snow blankets the grass they normally graze.

But this year, Stanko's hay harvest so far is even worse than it was last year. One field produced just 10 bales, down from 30 last year, amid heat waves and historically low water levels in the Yampa River, his irrigation source.

Some ranchers aren't waiting to reduce the number of mouths they need to feed.

At the Loma Livestock auction in western Colorado, sales were bustling earlier this month even though its peak season isn't usually until the fall when most calves are ready to be sold. Fueling the action are ranchers eager to unload cattle while prices are still strong.

"Everybody is gonna be selling their cows, so it's probably smarter now to do it while the price is up before the market gets flooded," said Buzz Bates, a rancher from Moab, Utah who was selling 209 cow-calf pairs, or about 30% of his herd.

Bates decided to trim his herd after a fire set off by an abandoned campfire destroyed part of his pasture, curbing his ability to feed them.

Weather has long factored into how ranchers manage their livestock and land, but those choices have increasingly centered around how herds can sustain drought conditions, said Kaitlynn Glover, executive director of natural resources at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

"If it rained four inches, there wouldn't be a cow to sell for five months," said George Raftopoulos, owner of the auction house.

Raftopoulos says he encourages people to think twice before parting with their cows. Having to replace them later on might cost more than paying for additional hay, he said.

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Culling herds can be an operational blow for cattle ranchers. It often means parting with cows selected for genetic traits that are optimal for breeding and are seen as long-term investments that pay dividends.

Jo Stanko, Jim's wife and business partner, noted her cows were bred for their ability to handle the region's temperature swings.

"We live in a very specialized place," she said. "We need cattle that can do high and low temperatures in the same day."

As the Stankos prepare to shrink their herd, they're considering new lines of work to supplement their ranching income. One option on the table: offering hunting and fishing access or winter sleigh rides on their land.

The couple will know how many more cattle they'll need to sell once they're done storing hay in early September. They hope to cull just 10, but fear it could be as many as half the herd, or around 45 head.

Already, the family sold 21 head last year after a disappointing hay harvest. This year, the crop is even worse.

"With the heat, it's burning up. I can't cut it fast enough," Jim Stanko said of the hay crop.

The Associated Press receives support from the Walton Family Foundation for coverage of water and environmental policy. The AP is solely responsible for all content. For all of AP's environmental coverage, visit <https://apnews.com/hub/environment>.

Inflation fears and politics shape views of Biden economy

By JOSH BOAK and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is banking on the idea of making life more affordable for middle-class families — and that's where the recent bout of inflation poses both a political and an economic risk.

The U.S. economy may be poised for the fastest growth since 1984, but many Americans are not feeling all that confident about the economy, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Republican lawmakers have attacked the Biden administration over inflation as the country reopened from the coronavirus pandemic, and feelings about the economy are settling along partisan lines.

Fewer than half, 45%, judge the economy to be in good shape, while 54% say it's in poor shape. Views are similar to what they were in AP-NORC polls in June and in March, despite increases in vaccinations and the flow of aid from Biden's \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package. The results suggest that Americans not only filter their thoughts about the economy through their politics but also see uncertainty as the country is still 6.8 million jobs below pre-pandemic levels.

John Novak, a 52-year-old school maintenance worker from Hudson, Wisconsin, is tired of seeing higher gasoline prices and six-month waits to buy a refrigerator. He blames the size of the aid package.

"Everything just costs more, and no one's really making more other than if you get government money, which I did get some, but I'd rather have prices lower," said Novak, who voted for President Donald Trump last year. "It's a tough spot. We're kind of coming out of this pandemic and then when you pour too much money in you just can't get enough of what you want."

The Biden administration is keenly aware that inflation is a potent weapon that could be used politically against Democrats. While pledging to stay vigilant against price increases, officials say that the recent burst reflects the complex nature of restarting an economy that had been shuttered because of the pandemic and that inflation will only be elevated temporarily as a result.

There are some early signs of inflation lessening as the Manheim Used Vehicle Value Index fell during the first 15 days of July. Meanwhile, the economy has been adding nearly 605,000 jobs a month since Biden became president and economic growth is tracking above 7%.

"There's no better way to contradict false messaging than by posting strong performance," said Jared Bernstein, a member of the White House Council of Economic Advisers. "When you're in the midst of a recovery with these kinds of numbers, I think it makes it harder for people on the other side to paint a false version of reality."

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Still, political identity is infusing views on the economy. About 6 in 10 Democrats call the economy good, while three-quarters of Republicans say conditions are poor.

That spills over to how Americans are judging Biden's handling of the economy, with 52% approving and 47% disapproving overall. Biden's approval rating overall is somewhat higher, at 59%, as is his approval rating for his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, at 66%.

About 8 in 10 Democrats, but only about 1 in 10 Republicans, approve of Biden on the economy. Republicans are somewhat more likely to approve of Biden's handling of the coronavirus pandemic (about 3 in 10 do) and even issues like health care and infrastructure (about 2 in 10 do).

Federal Reserve officials have estimated that the economy could grow at roughly 7% this year. But the U.S. central bank is also tasked with keeping inflation at a 2% target, and there are signs that the pressures pushing up prices have yet to fade as there are limited supplies of houses, autos and the raw materials used by many manufacturers.

The solid demand is supposed to lead to additional supply, which can then help inflation ease. But the outlook for inflation that Fed Chair Jerome Powell considers to be temporary has become somewhat more hazy. Consumer prices jumped 5.4% for the year ended in June. Stripping out volatile food and energy costs, they're up 4.5%, the biggest increase since 1991.

"We don't have another example of the last time we reopened a \$20 trillion economy," Powell told the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee this month. "We're humble about what we understand."

Joseph Smith, 72 and a retiree in Alexandria, Virginia, said he worries that the constant focus on inflation by Powell and Republicans has been spooking consumers.

"The Fed is sort of hindering the economy by talking about inflation all the time," said Smith, who supported Biden last year and feels the president has brought "real stability" to the government with his straight talk on the coronavirus and the economy.

Republican lawmakers have blamed Biden's spending for the inflation and say his plans for another \$4.1 trillion in new spending to be paid for through taxes on the wealthy and corporations will only cause prices to keep rising. They frame it as a return to the runaway price increases of the 1970s, even though economists who are concerned about inflation say that's not the case. But the message is connecting with Republican voters.

"As Joe Biden's inflation crisis rages, he just can't stop fueling it with more reckless government spending," said Florida Sen. Rick Scott, who is chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee. "Americans are experiencing 1970s-style inflation again, and it's because of Joe Biden's failed economic policies."

Those kinds of criticisms are being echoed by voters in a sign of the challenge before Biden as he tries to broaden the appeal of his policies.

Gregory Holman, 58, a hotel property manager in Grants Pass, Oregon, said he couldn't find an affordable used car. He said it was the fault of too much government spending and graded Biden accordingly.

"I'd give him an F," Holman said. "He's just a failure at everything he does."

The AP-NORC poll of 1,308 adults was conducted July 15-19 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3.7 percentage points.

Olympics Latest: Japan upsets China in table tennis

TOKYO (AP) — The Latest on the Tokyo Olympics, which are taking place under heavy restrictions after a year's delay because of the coronavirus pandemic:

MEDAL ALERT

Japan ended China's overwhelming dominance in table tennis by winning Olympic gold in mixed doubles in a major upset.

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Jun Mizutani and Mima Ito beat a Chinese team that has often seemed unbeatable. China won all four gold medals at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games and the team of Xu Xin and Liu Shiwen was a heavy favorite this time.

Mizutani won bronze in singles in Rio and Ito is considered by some to be China's biggest threat in the female ranks.

China won the first two games 11-5 and 11-7 but Japan took the next three 11-8, 11-9 and 11-9. China then won the sixth game 11-6 to set up a deciding seventh game which Japan dominated. The host country took an 8-0 lead and held on for an 11-6 victory.

China's table tennis team is so strong that world champion Liu didn't even make the women's singles' team and is only playing team events.

MEDAL ALERT

Maksim Khramtsov has won the gold medal in men's 80-kilogram taekwondo at the Tokyo Olympics by beating Saleh El-Sharabaty of Jordan 20-9 in the final despite what the Russian Olympic Committee said was a broken bone in his right arm or wrist.

Khramtsov is among the sport's top athletes as a two-time European champion and he cemented his reputation with a dominant run at Makuhari Messe convention center despite his injury.

Khramtsov still won his four bouts by a combined 68-16.

El-Sharabaty's silver was the second medal in Jordan's Olympic history. Ahmad Abughaush won gold in taekwondo in Rio de Janeiro for Jordan's first medal.

Seif Eissa of Egypt and Toni Kanaet of Croatia won bronze.

MEDAL ALERT

Matea Jelić has won Croatia's first gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics by beating Lauren Williams of Britain 25-21 in the women's taekwondo 67-kilogram final.

Jelić trailed by six points with less than 20 seconds remaining at the Makuhari Messe convention center but she incredibly landed three head kicks in the waning moments to charge back in front. The 23-year-old Jelić is the current European champion and she reached final with a 15-4 semifinal victory over former U.S. bronze medalist Paige McPherson.

Williams' last-minute loss followed teammate Bradley Sinden's painfully similar defeat to Ulugbek Rashitov of Uzbekistan on Sunday in a gold medal bout.

Hedaya Malak of Egypt and Ruth Gbagbi of Ivory Coast won bronze.

MEDAL ALERT

The team representing the Russian Olympic Committee rode remarkable performances by Artur Dalaloyan and Nikita Nagornyy to edge Japan and China in a taut men's team gymnastics final.

The victory marked the first Olympic title for the Russians since the 1996 Atlanta Games.

Russia's total of 262.500 points was just good enough to hold off the sport's other two superpowers. Japan used a brilliant high bar routine by Daiki Hashimoto in the final rotation to surge past China for second with a score of 262.397.

The Chinese were undone by a fall from Lin Chaopan on floor exercise during the first rotation.

MEDAL ALERT

Hidilyn Diaz has become the first Olympic gold medalist from the Philippines after winning the women's 55-kilogram weightlifting category.

Diaz overtook Liao Qiuyun of China on her last lift in the clean and jerk to win with a total 224 kilograms. That was one more than Liao.

China had won all three events so far and was hoping to sweep the gold medals in the eight competitions its athletes have entered. Liao came into the competition as the world record holder with a total 227kg.

Zulfiya Chinshanlo of Kazakhstan took bronze with 213kg. Chinshanlo won what was then the 53-kilo-

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gram class at the 2012 London Olympics but was stripped of her gold medal after a positive test for two banned steroids.

The U.S. women have won all six of their games through the first three days of 3-on-3 basketball's debut at the Olympics.

Kelsey Plum spotted up behind the arc for the game-winning 2-pointer in a 21-19 victory over China to close out the day's action for the Americans.

They play one more pool game Tuesday against Japan. The U.S. will be the top seed for Wednesday's semifinals and medal games.

Serbia is the lone undefeated team on the men's side.

Shots from inside the arc are worth one point and shots from outside the arc are worth two in 3-on-3. First team to 21 wins unless 10 minutes have gone by. The team that's ahead gets the victory in that case.

The U.S. men did not qualify for the eight-team tournament.

MEDAL ALERT

Cheung Ka Long won Hong Kong's second Olympic gold medal in its history by beating defending champion Daniele Garozzo 15-11 in the men's foil fencing final.

Cheung secured the win with a video review for the last point and then ran to celebrate with his coach. Garozzo earlier needed medical treatment after straining a thigh muscle when Cheung led 6-5.

Hong Kong's only previous Olympic win was gold for Lee Lai Shan in women's windsurfing in 1996.

Alexander Choupenitch won bronze for the Czech Republic after beating Takahiro Shikine of Japan 15-8.

MEDAL ALERT

Sofia Pozdniakova won an all-Russian fencing final 15-11 to take goal in women's saber and consign teammate Sofya Velikaya to a third consecutive silver medal in the event.

Pozdniakova is the daughter of Russian Olympic Committee president and four-time gold medalist Stanislav Pozdnyakov. He was watching in the arena. Russia is competing under the guise of the ROC at the Tokyo Games in the latest doping-related sanctions from the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Velikaya was individual saber runner-up at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics. She also has a team gold from 2016.

Manon Brunet of France won the bronze medal after beating Anna Marton of Hungary 15-6.

The women's 1,500-meter freestyle has made its Olympic debut at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

The men have long raced the metric mile, but it wasn't until Tokyo that a women's event was added. That gives long-distance swimmers such as Katie Ledecky another chance to claim a medal.

The first heat of the evening preliminaries featured only three swimmers. Sixteen-year-old Canadian Katrina Bellio touched first in 16 minutes, 24.37 seconds, prompting the arena announcer to declare she held a unique place in history — the first Olympic record holder.

When Bellio was asked if she heard the announcement, she gushed in disbelief and declared, "Oh my gosh. I didn't know that. Wow."

Later, world governing body FINA clarified that the Olympic record would not be officially recognized until after the last of five heats. Still, no one can take away that Bellio touched before anyone else in the first 1,500 race in Olympic history.

Russian athletes are in the lead halfway through the men's gymnastics team final.

The Russian athletes led host Japan and China by just over 2.6 points with three rotations remaining. Russia is searching for its first Olympic gold since Sydney in 2000. Artur Dalaloyan has led the way for his team despite competing on a surgically repaired Achilles tendon in his left leg.

Japan topped qualifying, with China second. The Chinese were nicked by an early fall on floor by Lin Chaopan during the first rotation of the finals.

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MEDAL ALERT

Judo superstar Shohei Ono has won his second Olympic gold medal after an epic lightweight final against Georgia's Lasha Shavdatuashvili.

Ono and Shavdatuashvili went 5:26 into golden score before the Japanese champion finally threw Shavdatuashvili for a waza ari. He used both legs to get Shavdatuashvili airborne and put him harshly onto his left side.

Shavdatuashvili showed no fear against Ono, who hasn't lost a judo match since 2015. Ono was called for two penalties in golden score against the Georgian contender, who fought more aggressively and dramatically avoided being caught in a match-ending throw one minute before Ono ended it.

Ono is Japan's fourth gold medalist in six weight classes so far in Tokyo in judo, the nation's homegrown martial art. Japanese judokas have also won one silver and one bronze.

South Korea's An Changrim claimed one bronze medal after a thrilling bout with Azeri No. 1 seed Rustam Urujov, and Mongolia's Tsogbaatar Tsend-Ochir claimed the other bronze.

World Rowing officials say the remaining members of the Dutch team have tested negative for COVID-19 but will continue to stay away from other teams when not competing in Tokyo.

Dutch rower Finn Florijin tested positive after making his Olympic debut in men's single sculls on Friday. He was removed from competition. Coach Josy Verdonkschot, who oversees several Dutch women's teams, then tested positive on Sunday. Both are in isolation.

Team officials say the rest of the team has since tested negative and none of the remaining rowers and coaches are still considered close contacts of Florijin and Verdonkschot.

The decision to keep the team away from other rowers is being done "out of respect for the other stakeholders."

MEDAL ALERT

Nora Gjakova has won Kosovo's second gold medal in judo at the Tokyo Olympics with an ippon victory over France's Sarah Leonie Cysique in the women's 57-kilogram division.

Gjakova joined Distria Krasniqi, who won gold at 48kg on Saturday, as the second and third gold medalists in Kosovo's entire Olympic history. Majlinda Kelmendi won Kosovo's first at Rio de Janeiro in 2016, also in judo.

Gjakova was declared the winner 2:45 into the bout when Cysique was given a hansuko make penalty for what officials claimed was a deliberate dive onto her head in an attempt to escape a hold. Cysique seemed baffled by the decision, but Gjakova celebrated the biggest victory of her career.

Gjakova reached the final with a shocking semifinal victory over Japan's Tsukasa Yoshida, becoming the first judoka to beat the home nation's entrant before the final. Yoshida rallied to claim a bronze medal. Canada's Jessica Klimkait won the other bronze.

The team final in men's gymnastics is underway, with Japan, China and the team of Russian athletes expected to fight for the top spot.

The three teams have spent the last five years battling for supremacy. The Japanese are looking to defend the Olympic title they won in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. China captured the world championship in 2018, with Russia rising to the top in 2019.

The Japanese posted the top score in qualifying. The scores reset in the final and the format adjusts to one that requires each team to count each score. The teams were allowed to drop their lowest score during qualifying.

The U.S. and Great Britain have the best chance at reaching the podium if one of the top three falters, though both programs were well off the pace in qualifying.

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Top-ranked tennis player Novak Djokovic remains on course for a Golden Slam after a 6-4, 6-3 win over Jan-Lennard Struff of Germany at the Tokyo Games.

Djokovic is attempting to become the first man to win all four Grand Slam titles and Olympic gold in the same calendar year.

The Serb already won the Australian and French Opens as well as Wimbledon this year. He now needs the Tokyo title and the U.S. Open trophy to complete the unique collection.

Steffi Graf was the only tennis player to achieve the Golden Slam in 1988.

Djokovic will next face 16th-seeded Alejandro Davidovich Fokina of Spain. Davidovich Fokina edged John Millman of Australia 6-4, 6-7 (4), 6-3.

MEDAL ALERT

South Korea has defended its Olympic men's archery team title at the Tokyo Games.

Energetic 17-year-old Kim Je-deok came up clutch in the semifinals to hold off host nation Japan and then again in a 6-0 win over Chinese Taipei during the gold-medal match at Yumenoshima Park Archery Field.

One of the tricky things was trying to figure out an inconsistent wind on the eve of a possible typhoon moving into the region. The impending high wind and rain has already led to moving some of the following day's matches to a different time.

In the bronze medal match, Hiroki Muto helped Japan beat the Netherlands in a shoot-off with a walk-off arrow that nearly landed in the heart of the target.

The U.S. has rallied to beat Japan 2-1 to win their Olympic softball group stage, and the right to bat last in the gold medal game.

Kelsey Stewart hit a game-ending home run leading off the seventh inning, and the United States rallied late to beat Japan 2-1 Monday and win the Olympic softball group stage.

"It's like you dream about when you're a little kid, about hitting a home run at the Olympics, let alone a walk-off," Stewart said.

In August 2018, Stewart's single capped a three-run 10th inning off Japan ace Yukiko Ueno that gave the U.S. a 7-6 win at the Women's Softball World Championship in Chiba, earning the Olympic berth.

She had been 1 for 12 with no RBIs at the Olympics before she drove the 98th pitch from Yamato Fujita (0-1) just over the glove of leaping right fielder Yuka Ichiguchi for the first U.S. home run of the tournament.

American players ran onto the field to celebrate their second straight walk-off win.

MEDAL ALERT

Tom Pidcock has won the Olympic men's mountain bike race, extending Britain's dominance from the road and track to the dirt.

Leaving reigning champion Nino Schurter and his Swiss teammate Mathias Flueckiger behind on the fourth of seven laps, the 21-year-old multidiscipline prodigy proceeded to dominate the toughest course in Olympic history.

Flueckiger gave chase in vain and was left with a silver medal. David Valero Serrano of Spain won a surprise bronze.

Pidcock, who splits time between the road and mountain biking, won the World Cup race at Nove Mesto earlier this year to become an Olympic favorite. But then he was hit by a car and broke his collarbone on a training ride, keeping him off a bike for about a week in June, and some wondered whether he'd have the same legs for the Tokyo Games.

Turns out they were even better.

Imagine if gymnast Simone Biles didn't make the cut for the Olympic all-around.

That's how Brady Ellison viewed his squad's early exit from the team archery competition. He and his U.S. teammates were knocked out in the quarterfinals of the men's team competition at the Yumenoshima

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Park Archery Field. On a windy afternoon, the combination of Ellison, Jack Williams and Jacob Wukie lost 5-1 to Japan.

The U.S. men's team earned silver medals in each of the last two versions of the Olympics.

"I mean, walking away here without a medal wasn't even a reality for this team," Ellison said. "It would be like Simone Biles not making the cut in the all-around. I don't know what else to say."

MEDAL ALERT

Vincent Hancock has become the first skeet shooter to win three Olympic gold medals, giving the Americans a sweep after Amber English won the women's event.

Hancock repeated as gold medalist in 2008 and 2012, but had a disappointing finish at the 2016 Rio Games.

The 38-year-old from Fort Worth, Texas, hit his first 26 targets in the Tokyo final and set an Olympic record with 59 of 60 overall. He beat Denmark's Jesper Hanen by four.

Kuwait's Abdullah Al-Rashidi won bronze after taking bronze at the Rio Games as an Independent Olympic Athlete.

MEDAL ALERT

Slovenia's Benjamin Savsek has won the men's canoe slalom ahead of the Czech Republic's Lukas Rohan and Germany's Sideris Tasiadis.

Savsek is ranked No. 7 in the world. He knew he had the time to beat after a clean run with no time penalties, and pumped his fist as he crossed the finish line. He didn't have long to wait to see his time of 98.25 seconds hold up as the winner.

Rohan's run included a gate touch and 2-second penalty and he finished 3.71 seconds off the lead. Tasiadis, who came in ranked No. 1 in the world and won silver in 2012, was a distant 5.45 seconds slower than Savsek.

MEDAL ALERT

Britain's Tom Daley and Matty Lee have won gold in men's 10-meter synchronized diving, ending any chance of a sweep by China at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

Daley and Lee sealed their victory with a brilliant final dive and received one perfect 10 from the judges. Every other mark but one was a 9.0 or 9.5.

Daley and Lee finished with a total score of 471.81 points, edging China's Cao Yuan and Chen Aisen by a mere 1.23. It was the first Olympic gold for Daley, long the star of British diving. He had previously claimed a pair of bronze medals.

The Chinese team had a strong final dive, waiting at the edge of the pool for their scores to be posted. When the marks went up, the British contingent in the mostly empty stands erupted in cheers. Daley and Lee, watching nervously from the pool deck, pumped their fists and embraced when they realized the gold was theirs.

The bronze went to Russia's Aleksandr Bondar and Viktor Minibaev with 439.92.

MEDAL ALERT

American shooter Amber English has set an Olympic record to knock off reigning women's skeet champion Diana Bacosi of Italy.

English, ranked No. 1 in the world, hit 56 of 60 targets to bounce back from just missing the U.S. Olympic team for the 2012 and 2016 Games.

Bacosi matched English by hitting 47 of 50 shots to reach the final, but missed on her third attempt and a chance to repeat as Olympic champion.

China's Wei Meng took bronze after tying a world record in qualifying.

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Organizers of the Tokyo Olympics say 153 people accredited for the Games have tested positive for COVID-19 in Japan since July 1.

The total includes 19 athletes who tested positive in Japan from July 1 through Sunday. Some of those athletes are residents of the Olympic Village, where 16 people have tested positive.

Those people left the apartment blocks overlooking Tokyo Bay to stay in quarantine hotels.

The International Tennis Federation says Dutch player Jean-Julien Rojer has tested positive for COVID-19 and been withdrawn from the doubles tournament with partner Wesley Koolhof.

The eighth-seeded pair were scheduled to play Marcus Daniell and Michael Venus of New Zealand. Daniell and Venus received a walkover into the quarterfinals.

Rojer has been placed in isolation.

A second judo athlete has dropped out of the Olympics before facing Israel's Tohar Butbul in the 73-kilogram division.

Olympic officials say Sudan's Mohamed Abdalrasool didn't show up to face Butbul in their round of 32 bout Monday despite weighing in for the bout earlier.

The International Judo Federation didn't immediately announce a reason why Abdalrasool didn't compete, and the governing body didn't respond to requests for comment. Sudanese Olympic officials also didn't immediately comment.

Algeria's Fethi Nourine was sent home from the Tokyo Games and suspended by the IJF on Saturday after he withdrew to avoid a potential round of 32 matchup with Butbul. Nourine was supposed to face Abdalrasool for the right to meet Butbul.

Abdalrasool is the world's 469th-ranked judoka in his weight class, while the accomplished Butbul is seventh.

Nourine also quit the World Judo Championships in 2019 right before he was scheduled to face Butbul.

Momiji Nishiya of Japan has won the first ever Olympic skateboard competition for women.

The 13-year-old gave the host nation a sweep of golds in the street event a day after Yuto Horigome won the men's event.

Rayssa Leal, a 13-year-old from Brazil, won the silver. That's her country's second in skateboarding after Brazilian Kelvin Hoefler took silver on Sunday in the men's event.

The women's bronze went to Funa Nakayama, also from Japan.

The men's volleyball team from Russia has beaten the United States in pool-play action.

The Russians took control when they held off two match points before taking the second set 27-25 to go up 2-0. The Americans rallied to win the third set before falling 25-23 in the final set for their first loss of the tournament.

The U.S. had swept France in its opening pool play match. The ROC team is now 2-0 after beating Argentina in their first match.

In an earlier pool play match Monday, Iran beat Venezuela 3-0 for its second straight win.

Naomi Osaka is into the third round of the Tokyo tennis tournament.

The host country's superstar stepped up her game when she needed to in a 6-3, 6-2 win over 49th-ranked Viktorija Golubic of Switzerland to reach the last 16 at Ariake Tennis Park.

The second-ranked Osaka will next face either 2019 French Open runner-up Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic or Mihaela Buzarnescu of Romania.

The men's surfing contest at the Olympics has been delayed 90 minutes due to low tide at Tsurigasaki beach, about 90 miles east of Tokyo.

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The International Surfing Association, the sport's Olympic governing body, said low tide combined with the shifting weather has destabilized the quality of the surf conditions for the sport's big debut.

The call came at the end of the eight 1-on-1 heats for the women's competition, and now the men's game is pushed back to start at 1:18 p.m. local time.

Such delays are not unusual in competitive surfing, as it is perhaps the only organized sport that is both dependent on an uncontrollable variable — the weather — and defined by a literal uneven playing field — the ocean.

MEDAL ALERT

Caeleb Dressel is off on his quest for six swimming gold medals at the Tokyo Games, leading off an American victory in the men's 4x100-meter freestyle relay.

Dressel gave the U.S. a lead it never relinquished, swimming the first leg in a blistering 47.26 seconds.

Blake Pieroni and Bowe Becker kept the Americans out front before Zach Apple turned in an anchor leg of 46.69 to leave no doubt at the end.

The U.S. won in 3 minutes, 08.97 seconds, the third-fastest relay in history. Italy took the silver in 3:10.11, with the bronze going to Australia in 3:10.22.

MEDAL ALERT

Australia's Ariarne Titmus has defeated American Katie Ledecky in the 400-meter freestyle at the Tokyo Olympics.

Titmus won one of the most anticipated races of the games, capturing the gold medal with the second-fastest time in history.

Titmus, who trailed by nearly a full body-length at the halfway mark of the eight-lap race, turned on the speed to touch in 3 minutes, 56.69 seconds.

Defending Olympic champion and world-record holder Ledecky settled for the silver this time in 3:57.36 -- the fourth-fastest time ever recorded.

No one else was even close. The bronze went to China's Li Bingjie in 4:01.08.

MEDAL ALERT

Britain's Adam Peaty has repeated as Olympic champion in the men's 100-meter breaststroke at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

Peaty was perhaps the surest best at the Olympic pool, being the first man to break both 58 and 57 seconds in his signature event. He posted the fifth-fastest time in history (57.37 seconds) to blow away the field.

Arno Kamminga of the Netherlands claimed the silver in 58.00, while the bronze went to Italy's Nicolo Martinenghi in 58.33. American Michael Andrew was next in 58.84 -- the second straight final in which a U.S. swimmer finished fourth and was denied a medal.

The Olympic archery schedule has been altered for Tuesday due to expected high wind and rain from a forecasted typhoon.

The morning sessions involving first- and second-round matches are officially delayed until noon local time at the Yumenoshima Park Archery Field. But the afternoon session has been postponed.

The plan is to make up the matches Wednesday and Thursday. The individual finals for the men and women at the Tokyo Games are still scheduled for Friday and Saturday.

It's the first time the Olympic archery scheduled has been majorly influenced by weather, according to World Archery. At the 2008 Beijing Games, there was an hour delay.

MEDAL ALERT

Maggie MacNeil has captured Canada's first gold medal at the pool with a victory in the women's 100-me-

ter butterfly.

The reigning world champion touched first in 55.59 seconds, edging out China's Zhang Yufei (55.64) for the top spot. Australia's Emma McKeon took the bronze in 55.72, beating American teenager Torri Huske by one-hundredth of a second.

Huske went out fast, as is her style, and appeared to be close to the front with about 10 meters to go. But she faded on her final strokes and just missed a spot on the podium.

The U.S. team was denied a medal for the first time in the swimming competition.

Defending champion and world-record holder Sarah Sjöström of Sweden was seventh.

AP Interview: US calls on China to be responsible power

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — A senior U.S. diplomat called on China to rise above their differences and work with the United States on difficult global issues such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic as a responsible global power.

Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, speaking in an interview with The Associated Press after talks Monday with Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Vice Foreign Minister Xie Feng, also said the U.S. welcomes vigorous economic competition with China but does not want it to veer into conflict.

China has bristled at American criticism on issues from human rights to its territorial ambitions and said repeatedly that the U.S. cannot expect cooperation while also suppressing China's development, a charge that Sherman denied.

"There are some things that rise above specific differences that are the global responsibility of great powers," Sherman said in a phone interview shortly after she wrapped up successive meetings with Xie and Wang in the Chinese city of Tianjin.

The meetings were the second face-to-face talks between top diplomats of the two countries since President Joe Biden took office in January, coming four months after testy exchanges between Secretary of State Antony Blinken and veteran Chinese diplomat Yang Jiechi in Anchorage, Alaska, in March.

Sherman, who was sworn in in April, described the meetings as another step in the process of trying to work through critical issues with China.

"We will see whether, in fact, there's follow up and we are able to move another step," she said. "There's no way to know in the early stages of building this relationship whether we will get to all the places that we hoped for."

She said they had frank conversations on issues that divide them, ticking off a long list of U.S. concerns including what she called "the crimes against humanity" against Muslims in China's Xinjiang region, the crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong, China's use of its economic size to pressure others, and its "aggressive actions" around Taiwan and in the South and East China Seas.

Sherman also pressed for the release of some Americans and Canadians detained in China, saying "people are not bargaining chips," and raised concern about pressure on foreign journalists in China. China has tried two Canadians on national security charges in apparent retaliation for Canada's arrest of a Chinese tech executive wanted in the U.S.

Xie accused the U.S. of trying to contain China's development and said it should change course, embrace fair competition and work with China on the basis of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence, according to a Foreign Ministry summary of his remarks. China calls criticism of its policies in Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Taiwan interference in its internal affairs.

Sherman said the U.S. welcomes vigorous competition and believes it is important for China to grow and better the lives of its people, but in a way that is in accord with international rules and does not diminish any other country.

"We do expect ... them to understand that human rights are not just an internal matter, they are a global commitment which they have signed up for" under the U.N. Universal Declaration on Human Rights, she said.

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Sherman, a Democrat who previously worked on North Korea and Iran talks in the Clinton and Obama administrations, said that China and the U.S. could work together on climate, anti-narcotics efforts and regional issues such as North Korea, Iran, Afghanistan and Myanmar.

Each side shared concerns and issues that they hope can be resolved, she said. "I hope that we see those resolutions for the sake of many people whose lives and futures depend on it. But we will have to see."

VIRUS DIARY: A really, really, REALLY long Olympic journey

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

SOMEWHERE OVER THE PACIFIC (AP) — My location was Haneda Airport in Tokyo. My destination was the Main Press Center for the Olympics — also in Tokyo.

Turns out the quickest route was through Seattle.

Let me explain.

Among the requirements to cover the Tokyo Olympics were two negative COVID-19 test results within 96 hours and 72 hours of travel.

This wasn't easy to begin with. The 96-hour test would have to be on Sunday, July 18, right about the time the final group in the British Open was on the sixth hole. I missed the Open for the first time since 1996 — Tiger Woods' last major as an amateur — because of the UK quarantine laws and the difficulty of getting home and tested in time for the Tokyo flight.

I made it through the Sunday and Monday tests, both results were returned on Wednesday, my flight was Thursday. Life was good.

I thought my flight from Atlanta was 11 a.m. It was at 11:39 a.m. No big deal, right? I've spent a lifetime erring on the side of being early rather than late, so I never gave this another thought.

Then I landed at Haneda.

The quarantine employee looked at my boarding pass, my 72-hour test result and her log. She called her supervisor (bad sign). They called another supervisor (really bad sign). They took me to a room for questions, and I finally realized the issue.

The negative test is required within 72 hours of the flight leaving for Japan. Mine was 72 hours and 39 minutes. There was no budging.

Their recommendation was to call the clinic — it was 2 a.m. in Jacksonville, Florida — and "negotiate." When I called that night (Friday morning in Florida), the clinic said no go.

I asked about taking the test at Haneda — another test was required before entry, anyway. They said I technically had not "entered" Japan. The testing area was on the other side of the entry desk. I had no choice but to sign a form that entry was denied.

All the while, my colleagues at the AP were contacting IOC officials for help. Antony Scanlan, the head of the International Golf Federation with a long history at the Olympics, was calling everyone he could for help. The answers all contained some variation of the phrase, "Very strict."

Short answer: No.

I had two options: Go to a quarantine hotel for six full days and be tested three times. If all went well, I could get to Kasumigaseki Country Club in time for the final round. The other was to return to the U.S. for another test and then come back. This sounded absurd.

However, that would mean a 6:20 p.m. flight to Seattle on Saturday (arriving about noon on Saturday), testing in the airport when I arrived, and then returning to Tokyo on the 11:35 a.m. flight on Sunday that would arrive Monday afternoon, and then start the entry process over. I could be at work on Tuesday.

The quickest route.

(If you're wondering — as I did: Because of severe travel restrictions in both places, Delta has suspended its nonstop service to Honolulu).

Total air miles: somewhere around 17,000. Time spent in the main cabin: roughly 35 hours. I looked out the window when we landed in Seattle and saw snow-capped Mount Rainier, so I sent a photo to a friend in Florida who replied, "Mount Fuji?"

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Uh, no.

So the itinerary thus far is Jacksonville to Atlanta to Tokyo to Seattle to Tokyo. Golf hasn't even started, and I've already made three trips across the International dateline in a span of three days. I had estimated my door-to-door travel time at 22 hours.

I was off by three days.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Doug Ferguson successfully entered Japan on his second try and made it to the Main Press Center on Monday afternoon.

Virus Diary, an occasional feature, showcases the coronavirus pandemic through the eyes of Associated Press journalists around the world. Doug Ferguson is the golf writer for the AP. Follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/dougferguson405>

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, July 27, the 208th day of 2021. There are 157 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 27, 1996, terror struck the Atlanta Olympics as a pipe bomb exploded at Centennial Olympic Park, directly killing one person and injuring 111. (Anti-government extremist Eric Rudolph later pleaded guilty to the bombing, exonerating security guard Richard Jewell, who had been wrongly suspected.)

On this date:

In 1866, Cyrus W. Field finished laying out the first successful underwater telegraph cable between North America and Europe (a previous cable in 1858 burned out after only a few weeks' use).

In 1909, during the first official test of the U.S. Army's first airplane, Orville Wright flew himself and a passenger, Lt. Frank Lahm, above Fort Myer, Virginia, for one hour and 12 minutes.

In 1919, race-related rioting erupted in Chicago; the violence, which claimed the lives of 23 Blacks and 15 whites, lasted until Aug. 3.

In 1921, Canadian researcher Frederick Banting and his assistant, Charles Best, succeeded in isolating the hormone insulin at the University of Toronto.

In 1953, the Korean War armistice was signed at Panmunjom, ending three years of fighting.

In 1960, Vice President Richard M. Nixon was nominated for president on the first ballot at the Republican National Convention in Chicago.

In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed the Kerner Commission to assess the causes of urban rioting, the same day Black militant H. Rap Brown told a press conference in Washington that violence was "as American as cherry pie."

In 1974, the House Judiciary Committee voted 27-11 to adopt the first of three articles of impeachment against President Richard Nixon, charging he had personally engaged in a course of conduct designed to obstruct justice in the Watergate case.

In 1980, on day 267 of the Iranian hostage crisis, the deposed Shah of Iran died at a military hospital outside Cairo, Egypt, at age 60.

In 1981, 6-year-old Adam Walsh was abducted from a department store in Hollywood, Fla., and was later murdered. (His father, John Walsh, became a well-known crime victims' advocate.)

In 1995, the Korean War Veterans Memorial was dedicated in Washington by President Bill Clinton and South Korean President Kim Young-sam.

In 2015, the Boy Scouts of America ended its blanket ban on gay adult leaders while allowing church-sponsored Scout units to maintain the exclusion for religious reasons.

Ten years ago: A Russian space official (Vitaly Davydov) said that once the mammoth International Space Station was no longer needed, it would be sent into the Pacific Ocean. Ervin Santana pitched the first solo

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no-hitter for the Angels in nearly 27 years, striking out 10 and leading Los Angeles over Cleveland 3-1. Former New York Yankees pitcher Hideki Irabu, 42, was found dead of an apparent suicide in the affluent Los Angeles suburb of Rancho Palos Verdes.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama, addressing cheering delegates at the Democratic convention in Philadelphia, implored Americans to elect Hillary Clinton to the White House, casting her as a candidate who believed in the optimism that drove the nation's democracy and warning against the "deeply pessimistic vision" of Republican Donald Trump. More than a year after Freddie Gray, a Black man, suffered a broken neck in a Baltimore police van, the effort to hold six officers criminally responsible for his death collapsed when the city abruptly dropped all charges in the case.

One year ago: Congressional leaders from both parties praised the late civil rights icon and Democratic Rep. John Lewis as a moral force for the nation in a memorial service in the Capitol Rotunda. The world's biggest COVID-19 vaccine study began with the first of 30,000 planned volunteers helping to test shots created by the National Institutes of Health and Moderna Inc. The White House said President Donald Trump's national security adviser, Robert O'Brien, was self-isolating after becoming the highest-ranking official to test positive for the coronavirus. More than a dozen Miami Marlins players and staff tested positive for COVID-19 in an outbreak that stranded the team in Philadelphia, disrupting the major league baseball schedule on the fifth day of the pandemic-delayed season.

Today's Birthdays: TV producer Norman Lear is 99. Actor John Pleshette is 79. Actor-director Betty Thomas is 74. Olympic gold medal figure skater Peggy Fleming is 73. Singer Maureen McGovern is 72. Rock musician Tris Imboden (formerly with Chicago) is 70. Actor Roxanne Hart is 67. Comedian-actor-writer Carol Leifer is 65. Comedian Bill Engvall is 64. Jazz singer Karrin Allyson is 59. Country singer Stacy Dean Campbell is 54. Rock singer Juliana Hatfield is 54. Actor Julian McMahon is 53. Actor Nikolaj Coster-Waldau (NIH'-koh-lye KAH'-stur WAHL'-dah) is 51. Comedian Maya Rudolph is 49. Rock musician Abe Cunningham is 48. Singer-songwriter Pete Yorn is 47. Former MLB All-Star Alex Rodriguez is 46. Actor Seamus Dever is 45. Actor Martha Madison is 44. Actor Jonathan Rhys (rees) Meyers is 44. Actor/comedian Heidi Gardner is 38. Actor Blair Redford is 38. Actor Taylor Schilling is 37. MLB All-Star pitcher Max Scherzer is 37. Singer Cheyenne Kimball is 31. Golfer Jordan Spieth (speeth) is 28. Actor Alyvia Alyn Lind is 14.