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## Calendar Update

On Monday the NEC ADs will meet and we should have the final dates for the region basketball games. Version C of the calendar is now posted on-line.

## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

## **State Selects CGL Group to Review Department of Corrections Governor Noem Takes Additional Personnel Action**

PIERRE, S.D. – The State of South Dakota has selected CGL Companies of Sacramento, CA to conduct a comprehensive review of Department of Corrections (DOC) operations.

The review will focus on safety and security, organizational climate, and policy content and compliance, including the agency organizational structure, staffing, equipment protocols, ancillary operations in education and prison industry, and training procedures.

“The Bureau of Human Resources’ internal review is making steady progress. We’re hearing the concerns of DOC staff and are taking action. Safety of staff and inmates at our correctional facilities remains my top priority,” said Governor Kristi Noem. “CGL has the necessary experience and expertise in correctional system management and operations to provide the review that we need.”

Governor Noem had previously instructed Interim DOC Secretary Reisch, BHR Commissioner Darin Seeley, and Department of Social Services Secretary Laurie Gill to commission an independent third party to review the prison system and offer additional recommendations.

CGL has conducted system-wide assessments of a dozen state prison systems. They have worked with more than 900 counties and municipalities, all 50 states, and 20 countries to provide system planning, operational reviews, program evaluations, facility design, and maintenance solutions.

The estimated cost of the review is \$166,410. CGL staff will commence initial project activity and data gathering as early as late August, with on-site reviews beginning in September. The review is expected to require four months from commencement to completion.

Additionally, Director of Pheasantland Industries Stefany Bawek has been terminated, and two other DOC employees have been relieved of their duties. Three other DOC employees have been reassigned to other roles following additional review by the Bureau of Human Resources (BHR).

Further updates will come from the Department of Corrections.

## Proposed content standards posted for public comment

PIERRE, S.D. – Proposed content standards in several subject areas are now posted for public comment on the South Dakota Department of Education’s website. The subject areas are:

Career and technical education (Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources; Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications; Finance; Health Science; Human Services; Manufacturing)

Fine arts

Social studies

“Content standards provide a road map for what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade,” said Secretary of Education Tiffany Sanderson. “They set broad expectations for student learning, and we look forward to South Dakotans weighing in on this important conversation.”

State law charges the Department of Education with preparing content standards for each grade. The Board of Education Standards, in turn, is responsible for hosting four hearings, to give members of the public the opportunity to provide input regarding the proposed standards.

The board will hold the first public hearing on these proposed standards at its Sept. 20 meeting at Holgate Middle School in Aberdeen. The hearing will begin at 9 a.m. (Central). The other three hearings will be held throughout the 2021-22 school year at board meetings in Sioux Falls, Pierre, and Rapid City. The board will take final action on the proposed standards at the last of these meetings.

In addition to making public comment at the four hearings, members of the public can submit written comment at any time, up until the final hearing, via an online tool or standard mail.

The proposed standards were developed through recommendations made by work groups and the Department of Education. Members of the work groups consisted of K-12 educators, postsecondary representatives, parents, representatives of business and industry, and other stakeholders.

To access the proposed standards and to provide public comment via the online tool, visit the Department of Education’s Content Standards: Under Review webpage. Comments sent by mail should be directed to: Department of Education, ATTN: Laura Scheibe or Shannon Malone, 800 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501.

## APPLY FOR AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN GRANTS

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Arts Council (SDAC) is now accepting applications for American Rescue Plan grant funds designated for South Dakota arts and cultural organizations. The submission deadline is Oct. 8.

Nonprofit arts and cultural organizations incorporated and located in the state of South Dakota may be eligible to receive emergency relief funding. Certain government or municipal agencies are also eligible to apply.

Complete information regarding eligibility, allowable use of funds, grant funding categories, grant performance period, as well as instructions to apply are posted at [https://artscouncil.sd.gov/grants/ARP\\_Grants.aspx](https://artscouncil.sd.gov/grants/ARP_Grants.aspx). All eligible organizations for American Rescue Plan funding are now also eligible to apply for the Residencies for Recovery program, supported by pandemic-relief funds from the S.D. Legislature.

Applications must be submitted through the GoSmart online grants system at <https://sdac.gosmart.org/>. New users to the system will need to build an account and create a profile. Questions and requests for grant consultation may be emailed to [sdac@state.sd.us](mailto:sdac@state.sd.us). Requests for technical assistance must be submitted by 3 pm CDT, Friday, Oct. 8. Exceptions to the submission deadline will not be made.

An office of the South Dakota Department of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council's mission is to provide grants and services to artists, arts organizations and schools across the state, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the South Dakota Legislature. The South Dakota Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism and the South Dakota Arts Council. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen.

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## Groton Falls To Winner Colome After Fifth Inning Score

The State B American Junior Legion Baseball Tournament is going on in Redfield. Groton stayed in it until the end, but Winner Colome pulled away late in a 7-5 victory on Friday. The game was tied at three with Winner Colome batting in the top of the fifth when Ethan Bartels singled on a 2-0 count, scoring one run.

Winner Colome got things moving in the first inning. An error scored one run for Winner Colome.

In the bottom of the third inning, Groton tied things up at three when Bartels's wild pitch allowed one run to score for Groton.

Bartels was credited with the victory for Winner Colome. Bartels went five innings, allowing three runs on two hits and striking out six. Aiden Barfuss threw two innings in relief out of the bullpen. Barfuss recorded the last six outs to earn the save for Winner Colome.

Ryan Groeblichhoff took the loss for Groton. The pitcher surrendered three runs on four hits over four innings, striking out four.

Kaleb Hoover started the game for Groton. The bulldog went two-thirds of an inning, allowing three runs on four hits, striking out one and walking zero

Cole Simon, Brandin Althoff, and Colby Dunker all had one hit to lead Groton.

Winner Colome saw the ball well today, racking up eight hits in the game. Barfuss and Bartels each collected multiple hits for Winner Colome. Winner Colome tore up the base paths, as two players stole at least two bases. Jack Peters led the way with two.

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**Fri, Aug 06**

11:00AM CDT Start

**Belle Fourche**

**@ Elk Point**

**BLFR 7, ELKP 4** Final

At American Legion Field,

**Fri, Aug 06**

1:30PM CDT Start

**Lake Norden**

**@ Clark Willow Lake**

**CLRK 4, LKNR 3** Final

At American Legion Field,

**Fri, Aug 06**

5:00PM CDT Start

**Winner Colome**

**@ Groton**

**WNRC 7, GRTN 5** Final

At American Legion Field,

**Fri, Aug 06**

7:30PM CDT Start

**Lennox**

**@ Redfield**

**RDFL 5, LNX 3** Final

At American Legion Field,

**Sat, Aug 07**

11:00AM CDT Start

**Lake Norden**

**@ Elk Point**

**Sat, Aug 07**

1:30PM CDT Start

**Groton**

**@ Lennox**

**Sat, Aug 07**

5:00PM CDT Start

**Belle Fourche**

**@ Clark Willow Lake**

**Sat, Aug 07**

7:30PM CDT Start

**Redfield**

**@ Winner Colome**



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## Chip Seal Project Underway

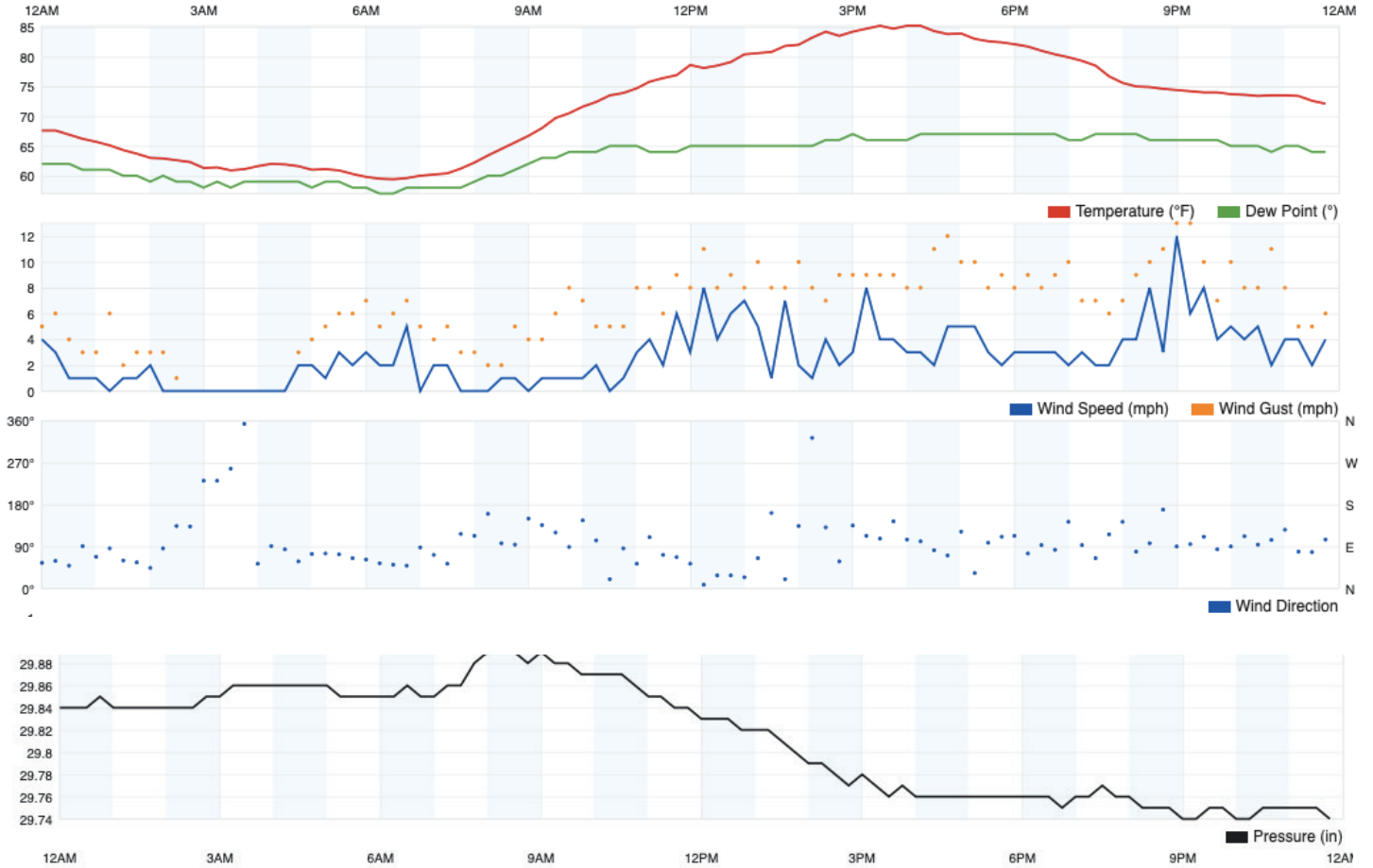
The chip seal project is well underway Saturday morning as downtown was completed. The TopKote crew started on the project yesterday.



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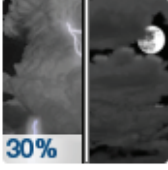



## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs





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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
				
Mostly Sunny then Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms then Mostly Cloudy	Hot	Mostly Clear	Hot
High: 87 °F	Low: 63 °F	High: 92 °F	Low: 66 °F	High: 96 °F

## Slight Risk

of severe thunderstorms

1 2 3 4 5

### Hazards

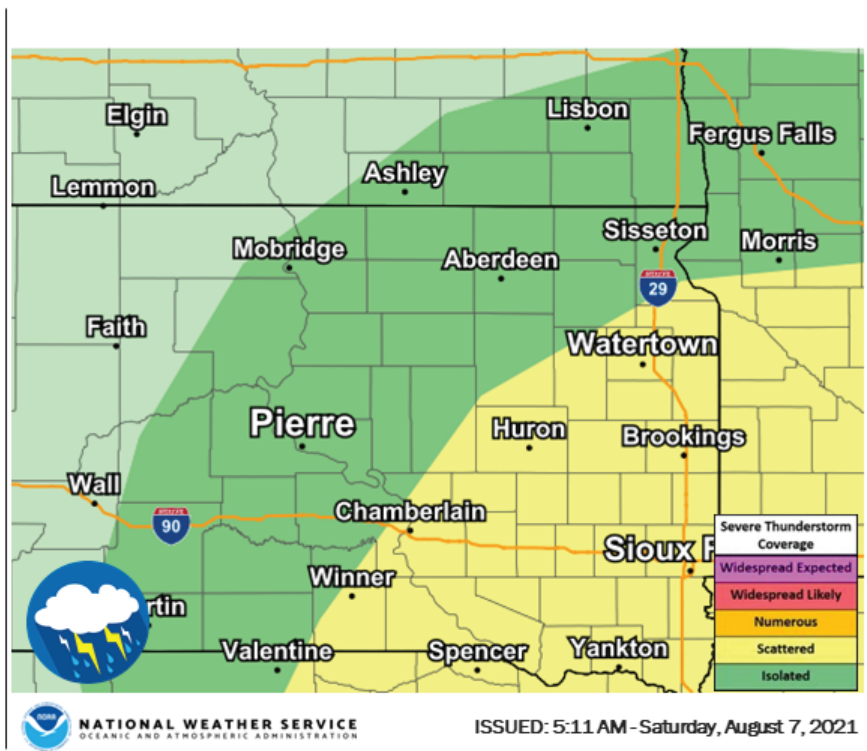
Thunderstorms have the potential to produce lightning, large hail, damaging winds and heavy rain. An isolated tornado cannot be ruled out.

### Timing

Storms may develop late this afternoon and spread northeast through the evening hours. The highest risk period will be from 3 pm – 12 am.

### Area

Much of the region has the chance of seeing a storm to sever thunderstorm, however best chances are over the southeast quarter of South Dakota and west central Minnesota.



Thunderstorms are possible later this afternoon and evening. Best chances exist over parts of eastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota. However, any storm that develops may become severe. Damaging winds, large hail and heavy rain are all possible. An isolated tornado cannot be ruled out.



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## Today in Weather History

August 8, 2010: Thunderstorms produced damaging winds and flash flooding from heavy rain along and near the Missouri River in southeast South Dakota during the late afternoon. Bon Homme and Yankton Counties were among the hardest hit areas. Avon in Bon Homme County, thunderstorm winds caused widespread damage to trees and power lines. The tree damage included large trees uprooted or blown down, and falling trees destroyed at least two houses. The damage to power lines caused a power outage over the town which lasted about 5 hours. The winds also destroyed a large shed and damaged a camper parked in the shed. In Tyndall, thunderstorm winds of 70 mph caused tree damage, including large trees blown down. The winds also blew down power lines, damaged several small sheds, and tore shingles off roofs. Thunderstorm winds also ripped through Yankton County. Near Napa, winds overturned several campers and caused widespread tree damage, including large trees blown down at a Lewis and Clark Lake campground.

1874: Swarms of Rocky Mountain locust invaded Denver, Colorado. Millions were seen cruising through the air. The insects were picked up by a thunderstorm gust front and carried into the city. The grasshoppers ravaged crops in surrounding counties for the last month.

2007: A tornado bounces across Staten Island and Brooklyn, New York, ripping off roofs and damaging dozens of buildings. The EF-2 twister hop-scotched through Brooklyn's Bay Ridge and Sunset Park neighborhoods around 6:30 am.

1904 - A flash flood near Pueblo, CO, washed a train from the tracks killing 89 passengers. A bridge, weakened by the floodwaters sweeping through the valley below, gave way under the weight of the train dashing all but the sleeping cars into the torrent drowning the occupants. Rail service was frequently interrupted in the Rocky Mountain Region and southwestern U.S. that summer due to numerous heavy downpours which washed out the railroad beds delaying trains as much as five days. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1918 - Philadelphia, PA, established an all-time record with a high of 106 degrees. New York City experienced its warmest day and night with a low of 82 degrees and a high of 102 degrees. Afternoon highs of 108 degrees at Flemington NJ and Somerville NJ established state records for the month of August. (The Weather Channel) (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1984 - El Paso, TX, normally receives 1.21 inches of rain in August. They got it in forty-five minutes, with four more inches to boot, during a storm which left Downtown El Paso under five feet of water. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - A rare outbreak of seven tornadoes occurred in New England. One tornado carved its way through Cranston RI and Providence RI causing twenty injuries. Rhode Island had not reported a tornado in twelve years, and three touched down in 24 hours. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1987 - Morning thunderstorms drenched Goldsboro, NC, with 3.37 inches of rain. Late morning thunderstorms in Arizona produced dime size hail, wind gusts to 50 mph, and two inches of rain, at Sierra Vista. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A dozen cities in the central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Waco, TX, with a reading of 107 degrees. The record high of 88 degrees at Marquette, MI, was their twenty-third of the year. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in Nebraska, Minnesota and Wisconsin, with wind gusts to 81 mph reported at McCool, NE. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Forty cities in the central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Valentine, NE, with a reading of 40 degrees, and Belcourt ND with a low of 37 degrees. Martin SD was the cold spot in the nation with a morning low of 30 degrees. Unseasonably hot weather prevailed over Florida and Washington State, with record highs of 100 degrees at Daytona Beach, FL, 101 degrees at Walla Walla, WA, and 103 degrees at Hanford, WA. (The National Weather Summary)

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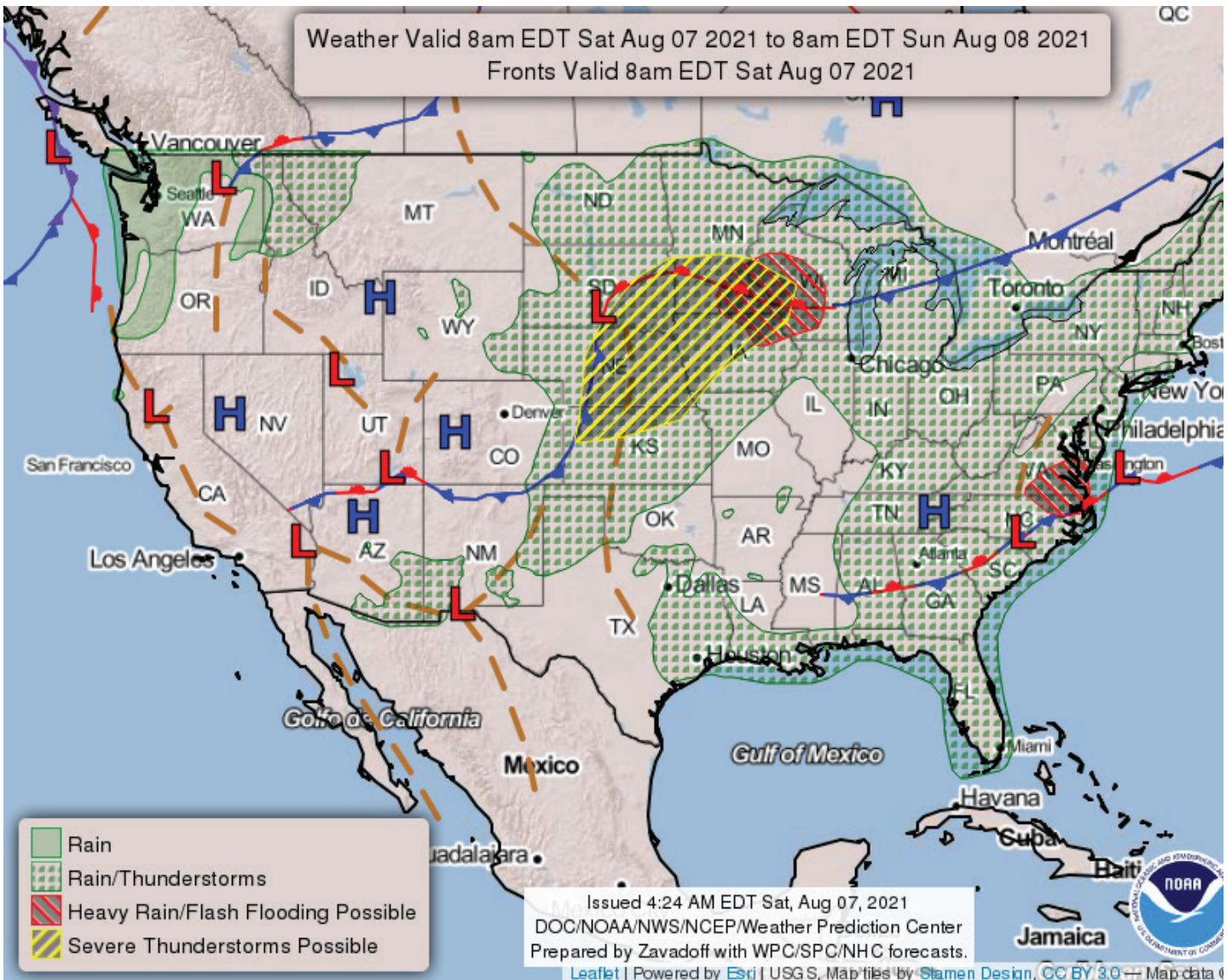
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 86 °F at 4:08 PM**  
**Low Temp: 59 °F at 6:23 AM**  
**Wind: 14 mph at 9:02 PM**  
**Precip: 0.05**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 102° in 1949**  
**Record Low: 42° in 1921**  
**Average High: 84°F**  
**Average Low: 59°F**  
**Average Precip in Aug.: 0.44**  
**Precip to date in Aug.: 0.07**  
**Average Precip to date: 14.54**  
**Precip Year to Date: 7.34**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:53 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:26 a.m.**



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## GLORIOUS THINGS!

The Psalmist wrote: "Glorious things are said of You!"

John Newton once was a slave trader. After becoming a Christian he became a powerful preacher, a leader in the fight against slavery, and a famous hymn writer.

One of his hymns contains those Glorious Things!

"He whose Word cannot be broken" reminds us of the faithfulness of God – a centerpiece of the Psalms. In psalm after psalm we hear the echo of God's faithfulness as He continually gave strength, hope and encouragement to the children of Israel. Though they often abandoned God and at times paid a dear price for forsaking Him, He was there every time they called on Him and He always answered their cry.

"I will supply your sons and daughters, and all their fear of wanting what they need remove." There never was a time in their history that God did not feed them, go before them, or watch over them. When they looked to Him for forgiveness, and repented of their sinful ways, His mercy met them at their point of need and His blessings followed. He was always with them to meet their needs, remove their fear, and grant them the desires of their heart as long as they obeyed His teachings and followed Him.

"Grace which, like the Lord, the Giver, Never fails from age to age." If there ever was a time in the history of our nation that we needed to be reminded that God's grace would "never fail" it is now. Everywhere we look, we see a need for His love, mercy, grace, salvation, and our nation's restoration and renewal. It is not His glory that has vanished – it is our unwillingness to share His grace with others. When we do, it will return.

Prayer: Lord, how disappointed You must be when You see what we can do to share Your grace, yet do nothing. Forgive us and enable us to do good. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 87:3 Glorious things are said of you,



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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  
08/29/2021 Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day at GHS Parking Lot (4-5 p.m.)  
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)  
12/04/2021 Olive Grove Tour of Homes  
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon



## News from the Associated Press

### **A cruising memorial: Mourners honor 3 young accident victims**

By ANNIE TODD Sioux Falls Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The sting of diesel gas and cigarette smoke tinged the air as people gathered. To passersby, it might have looked like a regular car meet, where people come to ogle at fast cars with paper tags still attached. But, this community came to celebrate the young lives of three of their own.

Car windows were decorated in red, white, blue and the occasional green, all with the same statement "RIP Sean, Bree, Kali, Gone But Never Forgotten 7-22-21." There were heart-shaped stickers with Sean, a birthdate, and a death date, on rear windows.

"This is something else, this makes me happy," Carollena Kaultman-Fuler, 19, said in response to the nearly 70 people gathered at Spencer Park on July 31 to remember the life of her cousin, Sean Morck, as well as Breeanne Gaffin and Kali Johnson, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported.

Morck, 22, Gaffin, 18, and Johnson, 16, died in a rollover crash on I-229 on the evening of July 22.

At the memorial, people popped the hoods of the tricked-out cars and the Wiz Khalifa and Charlie Puth song "See You Again" blared from car speakers.

Kaultman-Fuler, Sean's cousin, said he was a caring person. Others echoed that sentiment.

"He was a really good friend. He was an encourager, he helped me through a lot of stuff," 29-year-old Amber Snook said. She said they would go for drives around Sioux Falls and talk about life.

Kali Johnson's father remembers his oldest daughter as the Mother Goose-type.

"Very protective of all her friends and family," Kasey Johnson said. From her friends at church to those at the car club, she was fiercely protective of her little brother, making sure when they were younger that he never got too close to the edge of the park.

Johnson and his girlfriend laughed as they remembered how loud Kali could be especially when she was looking for strawberries in the fridge, or when she laughed at her own jokes.

"She always had something to say," Johnson said.

Jason Huston had known Bree Gaffin since she was 16 and had started hanging out with their car club.

Bree "always had a smile on her face," Huston, 48, said. "She wanted everyone to have fun and not be stupid. One of my greatest memories is she'd walk up and just hug you and say 'smile.' She's just a sweetheart.

"I got to see a part of her and she definitely lived life to the fullest," Huston said. "She was the motto YOLO, and she'll just be really, really, really missed. It's different without her being here."

Huston also lives with his family near the area where the rollover happened and says that something needs to be done about the curve northbound on I-229 near the Cliff Avenue exit.

"This corner here could have better guardrails, I mean I think if it had semi-style guardrails they would still be here with us," he said. "We live over there and seen several car accidents on that corner."

Later in the evening, around 9:15, people began making their way to their cars. Engines roared and one of the organized had to shout to be heard over the noise to make room in the caravan for Sean, Bree and Kali's families.

Police closed off the portion of Cliff Avenue near Spencer Park so the caravan could get on I-229 and have a cruise to the spot of the crash. Horns honked and emergency lights flashed as everyone took off in a line down the highway, going for one last ride with the members of their car family.

### **SD Lottery**

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

09-18-40-46-69, Mega Ball: 9, Megaplier: 2

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(nine, eighteen, forty, forty-six, sixty-nine; Mega Ball: nine; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$191 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$226 million

## The Perseverance Games: Surreal Olympics approach their end

By JENNA FRYER AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — The cauldron will be snuffed Sunday on the exhausting, enlightening, sometimes enraging 2020 Tokyo Olympics — held, actually, in 2021. These are the Games that were to be tolerated, not celebrated.

They will be both.

Imperfect but not impossible, these Olympics — willed into existence despite a pandemic that sparked worldwide skepticism and hard-wired opposition from Japan's own citizens — just might go down as the Games that changed sports for good.

These became the Olympics where the athletes had their say. The Olympics where mental health became as important as physical. The Olympics where tales of perseverance — spoken, documented and discussed loudly and at length — often overshadowed actual performance.

It wasn't only those who stood on the medals stand at the hyper-scrutinized pressure cooker in Tokyo, where spit tests for COVID-19 and sleeping on cardboard-framed beds were part of the daily routine. It was all of them.

Their voices were heard, in big ways and small, through hundreds of reminders that their mental and physical health were not for sale, not even to the \$15.5 billion behemoth that underwrites many of their grandest dreams.

Those voices were notably reflected in the words of Simone Biles, who, early on, reset the conversation when she pulled out of the gymnastics meet, declaring her well-being was more important than medals.

"It was something that was so out of my control. At end of the day, my mental and physical health is better than any medal," said Biles, who benched herself while battling "the twisties."

And by Naomi Osaka, the tennis player who lit the cauldron on Day 1, but only after spending the summer insisting that the world listen to her — really listen — instead of only watching her on the court. The planet's highest-paid female athlete and the host country's poster girl, she faced expectations that were hard to handle.

"I definitely feel like there was a lot of pressure for this," said Osaka.

Hundreds of athletes found some way to use their voices in ways they hadn't considered until the Tokyo Games — and the seismic 18 months that led up to it — all but commanded it.

They learned to talk about what it felt like to make sacrifices and accommodations for four years, then five, to come to the Games without friends and family, to put themselves out there, and to know they will be judged not on who they are but on how fast they run, how well they shoot, or whether they stick the landing.

"I've been afraid that my worth is tied to whether or not I win or lose," Allyson Felix wrote the morning before her bronze-medal run in the 400 meters made her the most decorated female track athlete in Olympic history. "But right now I've decided to leave that fear behind. To understand that I am enough."

They came in all shapes and sizes. A transgender weightlifter, a nonbinary skateboarder, and Quinn, the first openly transgender Olympian to win a gold medal. Teenage skateboarders, and surfers seeking gnarly waves — most of whom never dreamed of being on the Olympic stage, hugging and sharing tips and reminding us all that this is supposed to be fun.

They wove tales about sportsmanship: the high jumpers headed for a tension-filled tiebreaker for first, who stepped back and told a track official they should both win a gold.

And about advocacy: soccer players looking at a midday gold-medal game in the searing heat of the Olympic Stadium and deciding they deserved better. The world's top tennis players demanding their

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matches be rescheduled, a request that went unheeded until Paula Badosa left the court in a wheelchair with heatstroke and Daniil Medvedev told the chair umpire, "I can finish the match but I can die. If I die, are you going to be responsible?"

And about mental health: During a teary post-race interview, sprinter Noah Lyles conceded he came as much to run as to spread the gospel that became the slogan of these fraught Games held during fraught times: It's OK not to be OK.

And about gender equity and inclusion: The International Olympic Committee added five new sports and 18 new events for Tokyo to create an equal number of women and men for every sport, excluding baseball and softball. But when Britain's first female Black swimmer was denied use of a cap that fit her voluminous afro, the conversation on a lack of diversity in the pool became louder.

"I just want people to know that no matter your race or background, if you don't know how to swim, get in and learn to swim," Alice Dearing, co-founder of the Black Swimming Association, said after the women's open water marathon. "Don't let anyone tell you it's not for you."

IOC president Thomas Bach said two days before the close that the Tokyo Games "far exceeded my personal expectations," because when spectators were barred as a pandemic precaution he feared "these Olympic Games could become an Olympic Games without soul."

Instead, Bach said, he found the intimacy in the empty venues made for an intense atmosphere. "In many cases you did not realize that there were no spectators," he said. "Maybe in some cases you could even experience the feelings of the athletes closer and better than being surrounded by so many spectators."

It is Bach's job to call the Olympics a success. Maybe, though, that goal was met in Tokyo just by reaching the finish line. But of course there were highlights along the way.

— Italy shockingly establishing itself as a sprint power with a surprise win by Marcell Jacobs in the men's 100 meters followed by "four Ferraris" teaming to win the 4X100 relay for another gold medal.

— Lydia Jacoby, the first swimmer from Alaska in the Olympics won gold, and Caeleb Dressel collecting five golds in the pool.

— Sunisa Lee, the first Hmong American Olympian, winning gold in the women's all-around. And in these games where social media use soared and TikTok became the platform of choice for the Olympians, Lee blaming her bronze on the uneven bars from the distractions created by her new Internet fame.

— Streaming use surging among viewers, and NBC reporting that 3 billion minutes of content watched on its platforms were digital.

"I think the whole world will be quite happy that this event is going on in sports, in the times that we're living in right now," said Alexander Zverev after winning gold in men's singles tennis for Germany in front of countryman Bach.

Though there were intermittent protests — a group of 10 or so outside the tennis final, loud enough that the players could hear and another small crowd outside Olympic Stadium during the opening ceremony and before track and field events — the Japanese did have reason to celebrate. The host nation set a goal to win 30 medals in Tokyo and nearly doubled that number with 56 as of Saturday night.

Outside the Olympic bubble, COVID-19 cases soared in Tokyo to daily record highs, although Bach exonerated the Olympics because 11,000 athletes were placed away from the population and regular testing for everyone else produced extremely low rates of positives.

The pandemic still rages, and the Beijing Winter Games are set to open a mere six months from now. And COVID-19 is just one of the issues facing the next scheduled Olympics — the IOC has rejected several recent demands to move the Games from China over allegations of human rights violations.

"Our responsibility is to deliver the Games," said IOC spokesman Mark Adams. "It is the responsibility of others — the United Nations, who have been very supportive of the Olympic Games, and governments to deal with this — and not for us. The IOC has to remain neutral."

The IOC did get involved when Belarus attempted to return sprinter Krystsina Tsimanouskaya to her country after she criticized coaches on social media. It helped intervene as she instead went to Poland with a humanitarian visa. Then it booted two Belarus coaches from the Olympics, their credentials revoked

for their role in the Tsimanouskaya saga.

The Games, of course, will go on. They always do. Japan will hand the Summer Olympics flag to France on Sunday for the 2024 Paris Games. Tokyo organizers will end with a "Worlds We Share"-themed ceremony designed to make athletes and viewers "think about what the future holds" and "expresses the idea that each of us inhabits their own world."

The athletes did that already in Tokyo, where the Olympics will be forever remembered as the Games that persevered.

## Olympic Latest: France earns gold for 1st volleyball medal

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

France made sure its first Olympic volleyball medal would be gold, beating the Russians in five sets in a breakthrough win for a country that had no history of success.

The French had only qualified for the Olympics four times before this year and never made it past the quarterfinals. But they made it through the knockout stage to earn the gold despite being forced to a fifth set after blowing a 2-0 lead in the final.

Jean Patry rallied the French late in the fifth set with a kill and an ace to put them ahead 13-11. Antoine Brizard then surprised the Russians when he sent a soft shot over the net instead of setting it to give France match point and they won it 15-12 when Maxim Mikhaylov's shot went wide.

Argentina beat Brazil in five sets for the bronze medal.

### MEDAL ALERT

Malcom scored in the 108th minute and Brazil won its second consecutive gold medal in men's soccer with a 2-1 victory over Spain.

Brazil also won gold on home soil five years ago at the iconic Maracana Stadium. Neymar struck the winner in a 5-4 shootout after a 1-1 draw with Germany.

Brazil had a 1-0 lead at the half, but Mikel Oyarzabal tied it for Spain in the 61st minute off a cross from Carlos Soler.

The Brazilians won a penalty kick in the 37th minute after a collision between Spain goalkeeper Unai Simon and Matheus Cunha. Richarlison, who led the field in Japan with five goals, took the penalty, which sailed well over the goal to keep the game scoreless.

Brazil took the lead in first-half stoppage time when Davi Alves popped the ball high into the box to keep it in play and Cunha slotted it just inside the post.

Gil Bryan nearly scored in the 88th for Spain, but his shot hit the crossbar and the match went to extra time.

Spain won the gold medal in 1992 and was also seeking its second Olympic title.

Brazil advanced to the final 4-1 on a penalty shootout after a scoreless draw with Mexico in the semifinals while Spain got past host Japan 1-0 on Marco Asensio's goal in the 115th minute.

Mexico downed Japan 3-1 in the bronze medal match in Saitama on Friday.

### MEDAL ALERT

France won the Olympic gold medal in men's handball by beating Denmark 25-23 in the final.

France led by six goals early in the second half before Denmark came back to make it a one-goal game in the final minute. Ludovic Fabregas managed a steal and empty-net goal with six seconds left to secure the victory.

France was playing its fourth consecutive men's Olympic final after winning in 2008 and 2012 and losing to Denmark in 2016. The French women's team plays the Russian team for gold on Sunday.



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Spain beat Egypt 33-31 for the bronze medal.

## MEDAL ALERT

Mariya Lasitskene won the Russian team's first gold medal in track and field at the Tokyo Games.

The three-time women's high jump world champion added an Olympic gold medal to her collection with a winning height of 2.04 meters.

Lasitskene moved into first place when she cleared 2.02 meters on her first jump. She had missed early attempts before clearing 1.96, 1.98 and 2 meters.

Nicola McDermott of Australia was leading until she missed her first attempt at 2.02. She cleared it on her next attempt for a national record but missed all three attempts at 2.04.

Yaroslava Mahuchikh of Ukraine finished with bronze after clearing 2 meters.

## MEDAL ALERT

A Japanese team of All-Stars fulfilled a determined national mission to win the Olympic baseball gold medal for the first time, beating the United States 2-0 behind Munetaka Murakami's third-inning home run.

Masato Morishita and four relievers combined on a six-hitter, and the Japanese men (5-0) matched the accomplishment of the women's softball team, which upended the Americans for their second straight gold medal.

Several hundred people who appeared to be Olympic volunteers cheered on Japan in a largely empty 34,000-capacity Yokohama Stadium, some wearing orange Japan jerseys and matching facemasks on the warm and humid night.

America, the nation that introduced baseball to Japan in 1872, finished 4-2. Teams were denied access to all 40-man roster players and many eligible top prospects by Major League Baseball and its clubs, hindering the U.S. and other countries whose top players are in MLB.

There were no bad exchanges this time as the U.S. men won their first gold medal in a track race at the Tokyo Games with a victory in the 4x400-meter relay.

The U.S. men didn't reach the final of the 4x100-meter relay, but the 4x400 team of Michael Cherry, Michael Norman, Bryce Deadmon and Rai Benjamin was never really in trouble as they completed four laps of the Olympic oval in 2 minutes, 55.70 seconds. It was a fifth gold for the U.S. men in the 4x400 since 1996.

The Netherlands took silver in a national record 2:57.18 and Botswana won bronze in 2:57.27.

## MEDAL ALERT

Britain's Joseph Choong set an Olympic record to win the men's pentathlon Saturday, matching the gold medal won by Britain's Kate French in the women's event.

Choong finished third in the event's swimming, first in fencing, 14th in riding and 15th in laser-run to set a new Olympic mark of 1,482 points.

Egypt's Ahmed Elgendy won silver and Woongtae Jun of South Korea won bronze.

Britain is the first country to win the men's and women's individual modern pentathlon at the same Olympic Games.

## MEDAL ALERT

Allyson Felix has won her 11th Olympic medal, combining with her American teammates to finish the 4x400-meter relay in 3 minutes, 16.85 seconds for a runaway victory.

The team of Felix, Sydney McLaughlin, Dalilah Muhammad and Athing Mu was never in jeopardy in this one.

Poland finished second, 3.68 seconds behind, and Jamaica finished third.

Felix, who became the most-decorated woman in Olympic track history when she won bronze in the 400 on Friday night, now passes Carl Lewis with the most track medals of any U.S. athlete. Of the 11 medals,

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seven are gold.

## MEDAL ALERT

Iran's Sajad Ganjzadeh has won the Olympic gold medal in men's over-75 kilogram karate after final opponent Tareg Hamedi was given a disqualification penalty for kicking Ganjzadeh hard in the upper body or head.

Ganjzadeh left the Budokan tatami on a stretcher after falling motionless onto his back from the spectacular kick by Hamedi, who led the bout 4:1. Ganjzadeh moved his arms before he was carried away.

After the officials conferred, a hansoku penalty was issued to Hamedi and Ganjzadeh was declared the winner. Hamedi, who left the mat in tears, still won Saudi Arabia's second-ever silver medal, but missed out on its first gold.

Hamedi's amazing kick was the final strike of karate's Olympic debut tournament. The sport is not on the program for Paris in 2024, and its long-term Olympic future is up in the air.

Hamedi overcame Japan's Ryutarō Araga in the semifinals. Araga's bronze surprisingly was the host nation's only kumite medal in Tokyo. Karate proliferated in Japan and spread throughout the globe during the 20th century.

Uğur Aktaş of Turkey won the other bronze.

## MEDAL ALERT

Japan's Yui Susaki defeated China's Yanan Sun by technical superiority, 10-0, to win the women's free-style wrestling 50-kilogram final.

Susaki, 22, added Olympic gold to her two world titles. It was Japan's fourth Olympic gold in women's wrestling out of six weight classes.

Sun had won an Olympic bronze medal at 48kg in 2016.

Azerbaijan's Mariya Stadnik won her fourth Olympic medal. She won her match for bronze by technical superiority, 10-0 over Mongolia's Namuuntsetseg Tsogt Ochir. She previously had won two silvers and a bronze.

American Sarah Hildebrand defeated Ukraine's Oksana Livach by technical superiority, 12-1, for the other bronze.

## MEDAL ALERT

Neeraj Chopra has won India's first gold medal in Olympic track and field with a throw of 87.58 meters to clinch the javelin title at the Tokyo Games.

India's only previous medals in Olympic track and field were two silver medals won by Norman Pritchard in the 200-meters and the 200-meter hurdles at the Paris Games in 1900.

Chopra was the first athlete from India to win gold in javelin at the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games and he has set a new benchmark in Tokyo. He held off athletes from the Czech Republic to finish atop the podium.

Jakub Vadlejch took silver and former world champion Vitezslav Vesely bronze.

## MEDAL ALERT

Feryal Abdelaziz of Egypt has won the first Olympic karate gold medal in women's over-61 kilogram kumite, beating Azerbaijan's Iryna Zaretska to win Egypt's second Olympic gold medal since 1948.

The 22-year-old Abdelaziz went ahead on a yuko with 28 seconds left in a cagey final bout. She scored again three seconds later and hung on for a 2:0 victory celebrated with a primal scream.

Egypt has been competing at the Olympics since 1912, but Greco-Roman wrestler Karem Gaber's gold in Athens in 2004 was the nation's only other gold in the past 73 years.

Gong Li of China and Sofya Berultseva of Kazakhstan won bronze.

Japan's Ayumi Uekusa was eliminated before the finals, ending a rough Olympic year for the karate champion. Uekusa spoke out earlier this year against Japanese karate official Masao Kagawa, saying he

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had bullied her and injured her with a bamboo sword. Kagawa resigned.

## MEDAL ALERT

Sweden has defeated Jessica Springsteen and the U.S. jumping team in a jump off for the gold medal. Springsteen and teammates Laura Kraut and McLain Ward each moved cleanly through the shortened jump-off course and did so with a combined time of 124.2 seconds.

Peder Fredricson, the final Swedish rider, needed to circle the track in 40.30 seconds or better without error and cruised to a time of 39.01 for the country's record fourth gold medal but first since 1924. The Americans also entered this week with three golds.

France had a clear line to a second straight gold when its final rider, Penelope Leprevost, took the course. Needing to finish with fewer than five points to win without a jump off, Leprevost's horse refused twice, disqualifying her and the rest of the French team.

That left the Americans and Swedes tied for the lead with eight penalties apiece, necessitating the jump off.

Springsteen, the daughter of rockers Bruce Springsteen and Patti Scialfia, gets a silver in her Olympic debut.

## MEDAL ALERT

Jakob Ingebrigtsen of Norway surged ahead as he rounded the last curve and set an Olympic record to win the 1,500-meters at the Tokyo Games.

Ingebrigtsen ran behind world champion Timothy Cheruiyot for most of the race before kicking late to win the gold medal in 3 minutes, 28.32 seconds, beating the record of 3:31.65 set by Abel Kipsang of Kenya two days earlier in the heats.

Cheruiyot, who missed initial selection for the Olympics and was a late addition because another runner was cut from Kenya's team, took silver in 3:29.01.

Josh Kerr of Britain won bronze. Kipsang placed fourth.

## MEDAL ALERT

The Russian Olympic Committee's Abdulrashid Sadulaev defeated American Kyle Snyder 6-3 in the men's freestyle 97-kilogram final.

Snyder was the Olympic gold medalist at 97kg in 2016 and is a two-time world champion. Sadulaev was the Olympic gold medalist at 86kg in 2016 and is a four-time world champion.

Sadulaev led 6-0 in the final minute. Snyder scored two on a takedown and one on a step-out to make it 6-3 before Sadulaev held on.

Cuba's Reineris Salas defeated Azerbaijan's Sharif Sharifov for bronze. Salas, 34, had never won a world title or an Olympic medal. Sharifov, 32, won Olympic gold in the 84kg category at the 2012 London Olympics and earned bronze at 86kg in 2016.

In the other bronze medal match, Italy's Abraham Canyedo Ruano defeated Turkey's Suleyman Karadeniz 6-2.

## MEDAL ALERT

Russian Svetlana Romashina has won the seventh gold medal of her Olympic career, leading her team to gold in the artistic swimming team event.

Romashina has won or been on the winning team of every single event she's participated in at four Olympics.

The only other athletes who have won at least seven Olympic golds without ever claiming silver or bronze are Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt and American jumper Ray Ewry, who both won eighth golds in track and field.

The rest of the ROC team included: Vlada Chigireva, Aleksandra Patskevich, Marina Goliadkina, Svetlana

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Kolesnichenko, Alla Shishkina, Polina Komar and Maria Shurochkina.

Romashina teamed with Kolesnichenko to win the duet on Wednesday.

The Russians were heavy favorites in a sport they have dominated for more than two decades. Their last Olympic loss in what was then known as synchronized swimming came at the 1996 Atlanta Games.

Performing to "Parade of Planets" by Denis Gornizov, with planet designs on their swimsuits, ROC was awarded 98.8000 points for the free routine and finished with a total of 196.0979 points after also leading the technical routine.

China finished 2.5669 points behind to take the silver medal and Ukraine was 5.7961 behind for bronze.

## MEDAL ALERT

Sifan Hassan won the 10,000 meters for her second gold and third medal of the Tokyo Olympics after entering three long-distance races.

Hassan burst past world-record holder Letesenbet Gidey on the final turn and won in a time of 29 minutes, 55.32 seconds.

It completed an astonishing 5,000 and 10,000 double for the Ethiopian-born runner, who now competes for the Netherlands. She also won a bronze in the 1,500 meters. Her victory in the 10,000 was her sixth race in eight days in Tokyo.

Kalkidan Gezahegne of Bahrain took silver in 29:56.18 and Gidey, having led for most of the race, faded for the bronze as she had no answer to Hassan's finish.

Four runners didn't finish race on another humid night at the Olympic Stadium.

## MEDAL ALERT

Japan's Takuto Otoguro defeated Azerbaijan's Haji Aliyev 5-4 to win the men's freestyle wrestling 65-kilogram final.

Otoguro's best result had been a world title in 2018.

Aliyev was a 2016 Olympic bronze medalist at 57kg and a three-time world champion.

Bronze medalists were the Russian Olympic Committee's Gadzhimurad Rashidov and India's Bajrang Punia.

Jessica Springsteen's final ride at her first Olympics has put the American team in medal contention at the Equestrian Park.

Springsteen's horse, Don Juan van de Donkhoeve, front-hoofed a rail for a four-point penalty but was otherwise lightning quick and clean around the course.

Springsteen's ride followed a perfect circuit from Olympic veteran Laura Kraut for the Americans, and the U.S. entered the final round tied with Sweden and Belgium for second with four points. France leads with two.

The 29-year-old Springsteen -- daughter of rockers Bruce Springsteen and Patti Scialfa -- failed to qualify for the finals in the individual event earlier this week. She's picked up four penalty points in each of her three runs spanning the individual and team competitions.

German world champion Jonathan Horne has left the Budokan tatami on a stretcher after getting hurt in his elimination-round kumite bout in men's 75-kilogram Olympic karate.

Horne withdrew from the Olympic tournament about 30 minutes later.

Horne appeared to injure his arm during a sparring exchange with Georgia's Gogita Arkania. The 32-year-old karateka collapsed to the mat in pain and was eventually taken away for medical attention.

Horne was the world champion at 84 kilograms in 2018, and he won the European title at the same weight earlier this year. He was among the favorites in this lower division in the Olympic debut of karate, which concludes its three-day run Saturday night.

## MEDAL ALERT

Israel's Linoy Ashram won the gold medal in the rhythmic gymnastics individual competition, ending



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Russia's decades-long dominance in the sport.

Ashram, 22, edged out a pair of Russian identical twin sisters who were the favorites heading into Tokyo. Dina Averina, 22, placed second and her sister, Arina, fell to fourth place. Alina Harnasko of Belarus won the bronze medal.

Russia has swept the rhythmic gymnastics gold medals in every Olympics since 2000.

But Ashram's victory Saturday, her country's first ever in rhythmic gymnastics, breaks their streak. Her nearly flawless performance included a club routine set to Beyonce's "Crazy in Love" and dancing with a ribbon to a techno remix of the Jewish folk song "Hava Nagila" while dressed in a blue and white feathered leotard.

## MEDAL ALERT

The Danish team of Lasse Norman Hansen and Michael Morkov won the return of the men's Madison to the Olympics for the first time since 2008.

Hansen and Morkov won just three of the 20 sprints but were consistent enough through the 200-lap race to finish with 43 points. That was three more than Britain, which earned silver on a tiebreaker, and France, which took the bronze.

The much-loved Madison, once a staple of track cycling, returned to the Olympics for the first time since the 2008 Beijing Games. In fact, three riders who took part in the last Madison were still around 13 years later for its return: Morkov of Denmark, Kenny de Ketele of Belgium and Germany's Roger Kluge.

The race involves teams of two whipping each other around in a relay. One rider is considered in the race at a time, though they can switch at any juncture, and points are awarded to the top four finishers in each 10-lap segment.

## MEDAL ALERT

The U.S. has won its third consecutive gold medal in women's water polo, pounding Spain 14-5 in the final at the Tokyo Olympics.

Maddie Musselman scored three times and Ashleigh Johnson made 11 saves as the U.S. improved to 134-4 since it won gold at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games. After falling 10-9 to Hungary in group play in its first loss at the Olympics since the 2008 final, the U.S. ripped off four straight wins by a combined score of 63-26.

The U.S. joins the men's teams from Britain (1908-1920) and Hungary (2000-2008) as the only countries to win at least three straight water polo titles at the Olympics. The U.S. is the only team to medal in each of the six editions of the women's tournament at the Games.

Maica Garcia had two goals for Spain, which also lost to the U.S. in the 2012 final. The silver medal matches the country's best finish in the women's competition.

## MEDAL ALERT

Cao Yuan became the first diver to win gold medals in three different Olympic events with a thrilling duel off the 10-meter platform at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

Cao completed another dominating performance by the mighty Chinese team, which was nearly perfect at these games. Yang Jian took the silver, just 1.95 points behind his teammate in a scintillating capper.

Yang nailed his final dive, receiving a string of 9.0s and 9.5s for a forward 4 1/2 somersaults with a 4.1-degree of difficulty -- the hardest dive that anyone attempted.

Yang came up out of the water, pumping his fists.

But Cao was the final diver to go off the tower. While his dive wasn't as difficult, his marks were even better -- two perfect 10s, every other score a 9.5. That was enough to give him the gold with 582.35 points, with Yang taking the silver with 580.40.

Britain's Tom Daley was the only diver who gave the Chinese a real challenge before finishing with 548.25 for the bronze. He now had four Olympics medals in his career -- one gold and three bronze.

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China's only slip-up in Tokyo came in the 10-meter synchronized, where Cao and Chen Aisen settled for silver behind Daley and Matty Lee by a mere 1.23 points. That miniscule margin was the only thing stopping a perfect run at the Tokyo pool by the world's greatest diving nation..

The Chinese were 1-2 in all four individual events, to go along with three golds and a silver in synchronized. The 26-year-old Cao added to the golds he won on the 3-meter springboard at the 2016 Rio Games and in 10-meter synchro at the 2012 London Olympics. He also became only the second man to win medals in all four Olympic diving events after Russia's Dmitry Sautin.

Americans Jordan Windle and Brandon Loschiavo finished ninth and 11th, respectively.

A German coach has been suspended after she was filmed hitting an uncooperative horse during the Olympic women's modern pentathlon competition.

TV footage showed Kim Raisner leaning over a fence to strike the horse Saint Boy, which refused to jump the fences in the showjumping round. That cost German athlete Annika Schleu a chance at winning the gold medal.

The International Modern Pentathlon Union says it reviewed footage showing Raisner "appearing to strike the horse ... with her fist" and that "her actions were deemed to be in violation of (the rules)."

Raisner's suspension only applies for the rest of the Tokyo Olympics, which end Sunday. It wasn't immediately clear if she had been supposed to have any role in Saturday's men's competition in modern pentathlon.

Argentina won its second Olympic medal ever in men's volleyball, rallying to beat in five sets in the bronze medal game on Saturday.

The only other medal the Argentinians won in the sport came in Seoul in 1988 when they also beat Brazil for the bronze.

The Russians play France for the gold medal.

## MEDAL ALERT

Busenaz Sürmeneli of Turkey has won the women's welterweight gold medal in Tokyo, persevering through a difficult final against China's Gu Hong to win Turkey's first-ever boxing gold.

Sürmeneli won the final 3:0 with two even scorecards after a bout filled with holding and awkward exchanges. They were caused almost completely by Gu, whose awkward, hold-heavy style confounded opponents on her way to silver. Gu was docked a point early in the second round for holding, but would have won the fight on two judges' scorecards without the deduction.

Sürmeneli battered Gu late in the second round with the power and athleticism that made her arguably the most impressive fighter in the 100-woman Tokyo field. Turkey had won only two silvers and two bronzes in gold in its Olympic history before Sürmeneli's run to the first Olympic title at women's welterweight, one of two women's divisions added to the Olympics in Tokyo.

Oshae Jones of the United States and Lovlina Borgohain of India won bronze. Jones is one of four medalists for the most successful U.S. boxing team since 2000, while Borgohain is the third boxing medalist in India's Olympic history.

## MEDAL ALERT

Brazil's Hebert Sousa won the men's middleweight boxing gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics in shocking fashion when his bout with Ukraine's Oleksandr Khyzhniak was stopped by a third-round knockdown.

The top-seeded Khyzhniak thoroughly dominated Sousa for the first two rounds and appeared to be cruising to Ukraine's fifth-ever boxing gold. But Sousa caught Khyzhniak with a counter left hook during an exchange in the third, and Khyzhniak went to the canvas hard.

The referee waved off the bout while Khyzhniak got up begged to continue, adding another instance to a series of Tokyo stoppages that would be considered far too early in professional bouts.

Sousa, who beat second-seeded Gleb Bakshi of Russia in the semifinal, joins lightweight Robson Con-

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ceiçao as the only boxing gold medalists in Brazil's Olympic history. Conceiçao won his historic gold at home in Rio de Janeiro.

Bakshi and Eumir Marcial of the Philippines won bronze medals in likely the most talent-stacked division in Tokyo.

Hungary has earned the country's first medal in women's water polo, beating the Russian team 11-9 for bronze at the Tokyo Olympics.

Vanda Valyi scored three times for Hungary, which finished fourth in each of the last three Games. Rita Kesthelyi had two goals.

Hungary was clinging to a 10-9 lead in the final seconds when Alda Magyari stopped a long shot by the Russian Olympic Committee's Nadezhda Glyzina. Magyari then threw the ball into the open net for the clinching goal.

Hungary beat the U.S. in group play, handing the Americans their first loss at the Olympics since the 2008 final. It outlasted the Netherlands in the quarterfinals before losing to Spain.

Spain plays the U.S. for gold later Saturday.

Hungary's men's team — the winningest country in the the Olympics' oldest team sport with nine gold medals — also plays for bronze Sunday against Spain.

Glyzina, Anastasia Simanovich and Ekaterina Prokofyeva each scored two goals for the Russian team, which won bronze in 2016. Anna Karnaukh made six saves.

## MEDAL ALERT

The International Olympic Committee has closed a potential disciplinary case against two Chinese gold medalists who wore pin badges of Mao Zedong on the Olympic podium.

International Olympic Committee spokesman Christian Klaue says Chinese team officials gave assurances the athletes were warned and the incident will not be repeated.

At the medal ceremony Monday for the women's track cycling sprint, Bao Shanju and Zhong Tianshi wore pin badges of Mao, the founding leader of communist China.

The gesture tested the limits of Olympic Charter Rule 50, which prohibits political statements on the podium at the Tokyo Games. The rule will also apply at the 2022 Beijing Winter Games.

## MEDAL ALERT

Stoyka Krasteva of Bulgaria has capped her impressive run through the Tokyo Olympics with the women's flyweight boxing gold medal. She beat top-seeded Buse Naz Cakiroglu of Turkey 5:0.

The 36-year-old Krasteva, a 2012 Olympian who returned to boxing in 2019 after a break, dominated her final four opponents to win Bulgaria's fifth-ever boxing gold and its first since Daniel Petrov in 1996. Bulgaria had won just one bronze in boxing since 2004.

Cakiroglu lost the final decisively, but still won Turkey's third-ever silver medal in boxing and sixth medal overall. Teammate Busenaz Surmeneli has another shot at Turkey's first boxing gold in the welterweight final later Saturday.

Huang Hsiao-wen of Taiwan, the 2019 world champion, and Tsukimi Namiki of Japan won bronze in the lightest women's weight class.

## MEDAL ALERT

Galal Yafai has won Britain's first boxing gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics, beating Carlo Paalam of the Philippines 4:1 in the flyweight final.

Yafai, the 28-year-old younger brother of two professional boxers from Birmingham, is a two-time Olympian who had an impressive run in Tokyo. He finished by knocking down Paalam in the first round of the gold medal bout and going on for a comfortable win.

Britain's powerhouse team has won two silvers and two bronzes to go with Yafai's gold in Tokyo. Middle-

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weight Lauren Price fights Sunday for another gold.

Paalam fell just short of winning the first Olympic boxing gold medal in the history of the Philippines after knocking off defending gold medalist Shakhobidin Zoirov on his way to the final. The Filipino team is still heading home from Tokyo with two silver medals and a bronze after winning just five boxing medals in their entire previous Olympic history.

Ryomei Tanaka of Japan and Saken Bibossinov of Kazakhstan won bronze medals. Yafai beat Bibossinov in a thrilling semifinal.

## MEDAL ALERT

Nelly Korda has given the Americans a sweep of gold medals in golf, holding on for a one-shot victory in a thrill-a-minute finish to the Olympic women's golf competition.

Korda led by as many as three shots on the back nine. In the end, she needed two putts from just inside 30 feet on the 18th hole for par and a 2-under 69.

Mone Inami of Japan made bogey from a plugged lie in the bunker on the 18th hole and faced a playoff against Lydia Ko of New Zealand for the silver medal.

For the 23-year-old Korda, it was another glittering moment in her dream season. She won her first major championship six weeks ago and rose to No. 1 in the world for the first time. Now she has an Olympic gold medal and leaves no doubt who's the best in women's golf.

Xander Schauffele won the gold for the men last Sunday.

Aditi Ashok of India delivered one of the great putting performances to stay in reach. She had a 25-foot birdie putt on the 18th that slid by the hole and kept her off the podium by one shot.

## MEDAL ALERT

The U.S. has won its fourth straight Olympic men's basketball gold medal, holding off France 87-82.

Kevin Durant scored 29 points for the Americans and joined Carmelo Anthony as the only three-time gold medalists in men's basketball.

Durant already became the leading scorer in U.S. men's history in this tournament. He scored 30 points in the gold-medal games in 2012 and 2016, and nearly got there again this time.

France defeated the U.S. in the teams' opening game in this tournament, snapping the Americans' 25-game winning streak in the Olympics.

The French almost beat them again Saturday while attempting to win their first gold in men's basketball. They had to settle for a third silver, having also finished second to the U.S. in 1948 and 2000.

Slovenia and Australia will play later Saturday for the bronze medal.

## MEDAL ALERT

Germany has won the men's kayak four 500 meters to make Ronald Rauhe the first man to medal in canoe sprint in five Olympic Games.

The 39-year-old Rauhe is also the second-oldest gold medal winner in men's canoe sprint. Only Sweden's Gert Fredriksson was older at 40 in 1960.

The German kayak was trailing Spain at the 250-meter mark before rallying to win by 0.226 seconds. Spain won silver and Slovakia won bronze.

The men's kayak four 500 at the Tokyo Games replaced the kayak four 1,000, which was held from 1964 to 2016.

## MEDAL ALERT

Hungary has won the gold medal in the women's kayak four 500 meters. New Zealand's Lisa Carrington missed a fourth medal of the Tokyo Games when the Kiwi boat finished fourth.

Hungary finished 0.61 seconds clear of silver medalists Belarus and Poland won the bronze. The New Zealand kayak was in medal position halfway through the race before fading late.



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Carrington had already won three gold medals, in the single 200 and 500 and 500 pairs. She has five gold medals in her Olympic career and six overall.

## MEDAL ALERT

Christian Sorum and Anders Mol beat Russia in the men's beach volleyball gold medal match, earning Norway's first medal in the sport.

The top-seeded Norwegians beat the reigning world champions 21-17, 21-18 in an intermittent rain at the Shiokaze Park venue overlooking Tokyo Bay. With Qatar's victory over Latvia for the bronze earlier Saturday, all three countries on the podium -- and all six players -- are first-time medalists.

In fact, the only repeat medalist in either the men's or women's divisions was American April Ross, who won gold with Alix Klineman on Friday. Ross had also won silver in London and bronze in Brazil.

Viacheslav Krasilnikov and Oleg Stoyanovskiy led 8-4 before giving up six straight points, including one when Mol landed on Krasilnikov's foot. The Russians called timeout and limped to their bench for treatment, but the match resumed and Norway extended the lead to 15-11.

The second set was tied 12-12 before Norway scored four points in a row and never trailed again.

## MEDAL ALERT

Brazil's Isaquias Queiroz dos Santos won the men's 1,000 meters canoe sprint and Moldova's Serghei Tarnovschi took the bronze medal five years after his similar result in Rio de Janeiro was stripped because of a performance-enhancing drug violation.

China's Liu Hao, the 2019 world champion, won the silver medal.

Queiroz dos Santos was the Olympic silver medalist in 2016.

Tarnovschi was suspended for four years after his doping violation. He was able to return to the Olympics in Tokyo because of the one-year delay caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

China's Cao Yuan is on track to become the second man to win Olympic medals in all four diving events.

Cao and his teammate, Yang Jian, led 12 men into the final of men's 10-meter platform diving on Saturday. Cao totaled 513.70 points for six dives. Yang was second at 480.85. The Chinese had some of the highest degree of difficulty in the semifinals.

Cao already owns Olympic medals in 10-meter platform synchro, individual 3-meter springboard, and 3-meter springboard synchro.

Russia's Dimitriy Sautin was the first man to win medals in all four Olympic diving events.

Britain's Tom Daley, the 2012 bronze medalist, advanced to the final later Saturday in fourth.

American Jordan Windle finished ninth and his teammate, Brandon Loschiavo, was 10th to reach the 12-man final.

## MEDAL ALERT

China's Mengya Sun and Shixiao Xu have won the country's first medal in women's canoe sprint by winning the gold in the canoe double 500 at the Sea Forest Waterway.

The 2019 world champions finished 2 seconds clear of Ukraine's Anastasiia Chetverikova and Liudmyla Luzan. It was the second medal for Luzan, who took bronze in the single 200.

Canada's Laurence Vincente Lapointe and Katie Vincent took the bronze medal in third. Vincent won the silver medal in the 200.

## MEDAL ALERT

Qatar has won the bronze medal in men's beach volleyball, the first medal in the sport for the country — or any country in the Middle East.

Cherif Younousse Samba and Ahmed Tijan beat Latvia 21-12, 21-18 in the third-place match on Saturday morning at the Shiokaze Park venue. Younousse knuckled the winning point over Edgar Tocs' block at-

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tempt, then ran toward the stands pointing at the few fans who were there to cheer him on.

Then he dropped to his knees and planted his forehead in the sand.

Martins Plavins was trying to earn his second bronze medal, to go with the one he won in London. Instead, he and Tocs finish fourth -- just as the Latvian women did a day earlier.

## MEDAL ALERT

Peres Jepchirchir led a 1-2 Kenyan finish in the women's marathon, withstanding the heat and humidity while running through the streets of Sapporo.

Jepchirchir finished in a time of 2 hours, 27 minutes, 20 seconds in a race moved up an hour to avoid the heat. A smattering of fans lining the course applauded as the Tokyo Games moved north for the marathons and race walks. Her teammate Brigid Kosgei was second and American Molly Seidel, a relative newcomer to the marathon stage, took home the bronze.

A race that was moved to Sapporo to avoid the extreme heat in Tokyo found little relief on a winding course through the city. The starter's gun went off a minute after 6 a.m. local time under sunny skies and with a temperature reading of 77 degrees Fahrenheit (25 Celsius). It climbed to nearly 86 degrees (30) near the finish, with a humidity of around 65%.

There were 88 runners entered in the field, with more than a dozen recording a did not finish. That included world champion Ruth Chepngetich of Kenya.

## Thai police fire tear gas at protest over COVID response

BANGKOK (AP) — Thai riot police on Saturday fired water cannons, tear gas and rubber bullets to repel a crowd of several hundred young anti-government protesters who marched on an army base where Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha has his residence to demand his resignation.

The demonstrators threw rocks, bottles, fireworks and fired slingshots during the hourslong confrontation in the Din Daeng area of Bangkok, which was obscured by swirling smoke.

The rally was led by the Free Youth, a student protest group that drew tens of thousands to its protests last year. It's demanding Prayuth's resignation over his handling of the coronavirus crisis, which has seen the number of cases spiraling and the health care system stretched to the limit. Prayuth has been criticized for a slow vaccination program.

Thailand reported a new high of 21,838 confirmed cases on Saturday, with 212 more deaths. Bangkok and surrounding provinces have been under lockdown, including overnight curfew, for weeks.

According to the city's Erawan Medical Center emergency services, five people were hospitalized, including three police officers. The march was called off in the early evening but disturbances continued, with protesters battling the police and hurling objects.

The protesters are also calling for part of the budget for the monarchy and the military to be redirected into the COVID-19 fight.

Saturday's protest was originally planned in an area near the Grand Palace in the old part of the capital but switched to the compound of the 1st Infantry Regiment, where Prayuth — a former general who originally took power in a 2014 coup — continues to live.

The protest movement began last year with demands for sweeping political change, including unprecedented public calls for the reform of the powerful monarchy to make it more accountable.

After going dormant due to prosecutions, internal disagreements and the pandemic, protests have returned in recent weeks, fueled by the growing discontent over the government's response to the health crisis and its massive impact on the economy, which is reliant on tourism.

## 'Always working': Biden eyes 1st summer getaway as president

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — After more than six months of work combating the coronavirus, negotiating a bipartisan infrastructure bill and repairing the U.S. image abroad, President Joe Biden should be heading

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out on vacation and a traditional August break from Washington.

But with legislative work on the infrastructure bill keeping the Senate in session for a second straight weekend, and likely through next week, Biden hasn't gone far — just home to Wilmington, Delaware, as he has done most weekends since taking office.

"Every president is always working no matter where they are," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said, explaining that presidents can't ever really tune out.

Biden will spend some of next week at the White House before he decamps again, either for Delaware — he also owns a home in Rehoboth Beach — or Camp David, the official presidential retreat in Maryland's Catoctin Mountains, Psaki said.

The modern president is never completely free from work, tethered by secure telephone lines and other technology with a coterie of top aides and advisers always close by.

Like his predecessors, Biden travels with a large entourage of aides, Secret Service agents and journalists in an unmistakable motorcade of more than a dozen dark vehicles.

While the work is 24/7, presidents can — and very often do — change their surroundings when the August heat and humidity rise and Washington empties out.

George W. Bush often spent August clearing brush in the 100-degree heat that baked his central Texas ranch. Barack Obama worked on his golf game on the Massachusetts island of Martha's Vineyard. Donald Trump spent time at his home on his private golf club in central New Jersey.

Even when on a so-called vacation, presidents are still receiving briefings on national security, the economy and other issues, attending to matters of state and mapping future plans.

Biden and his aides are likely to discuss a range of issues, including getting the \$1 trillion infrastructure bill through the Senate, strategizing next steps to counter surging coronavirus infections and eyeing the Aug. 31 deadline for the U.S. pullout from Afghanistan.

"I would say a vacation for a president really means working two-thirds of a day as opposed to what they might do in Washington, giving themselves a little bit more time, perhaps for a round of golf in the afternoon or for lounging on a beach for a few hours," said Jeffrey Engel, director of the Center for Presidential History at Southern Methodist University.

"But a president's never off duty," Engel added. Bush, for example, would "sort of symbolize the vacation by having his regular morning security briefing at 8 a.m. instead of at 7 a.m."

With luck, no crises will upend Biden's trip, whenever he decides to leave Washington for longer than a long weekend.

Trump's first impeachment trial loomed over his 2019 Christmas holiday at his private Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida. He spent much of his final winter holiday in office stewing over his defeat in the 2020 presidential election, a loss he has refused to acknowledge.

Obama interrupted his Christmas vacation in Hawaii in 2012 to return to Washington after he was unable to negotiate a compromise with Congress to avoid across-the-board tax increases. Then he flew back to Honolulu to rejoin first lady Michelle Obama and their daughters.

Obama was on summer vacation on Martha's Vineyard in 2014 when he responded to the beheading of American journalist James Foley by Islamic State militants. He went back to Washington for a couple of days before returning to the island.

Bush was at his Texas ranch when Hurricane Katrina flooded New Orleans in late August 2005. Bill Clinton ordered airstrikes against al-Qaida terrorists from Martha's Vineyard in response to the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Bush's father, President George H.W. Bush, planned the U.S. response to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 from his family's oceanfront compound in Kennebunkport, Maine.

During weekends at home in Wilmington, Biden has ventured out to play golf, attend Mass and head to his sister's Pennsylvania home for family dinner.

He's been to the home in Rehoboth Beach just once so far, spending several days there with first lady Jill Biden in early June to celebrate her 70th birthday. They rode bicycles on a nearby trail.

It was unclear whether Biden will get more time at the beach this summer.

Rehoboth Beach is small, about 1 square mile (2.6 square kilometers) wide, and draws tens of thousands of visitors on summer weekends, posing a challenge for travel by motorcade. Biden arrived by helicopter in June, landing at a park near the house and being driven a short distance to his front door.

"Even presidents need the opportunity to unwind and let their hair down and relax," Rehoboth Beach Mayor Stan Mills said in an interview. "We're very proud of our community here in Rehoboth Beach. We're welcoming, refreshing. We're a happy place for so many, including the president of the United States."

## 'Reservation Dogs' smashes stereotypes of Indigenous people

By SEAN MURPHY Associated Press

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — Two Indigenous filmmakers are smashing the caricatures and stereotypes of Native Americans, who since the earliest days of film and TV have often played supporting roles or been portrayed as bloodthirsty killers standing in the way of white, westward expansion.

Sterlin Harjo, a Seminole and Muscogee filmmaker from Oklahoma, teamed up with Taika Waititi, a Maori director from New Zealand, on "Reservation Dogs," a new series debuting Monday on FX on Hulu that features four rough-and-tumble teenagers who cuss, fight and steal their way toward adulthood in a rural Oklahoma town. Filmed entirely on the Muscogee Nation reservation in eastern Oklahoma, the network says the half-hour comedy is the first show on cable TV in which all the writers, directors and regular characters on the series are Indigenous.

"To be able to tell a real story about real people through comedy, it's about time," Harjo, who directed "Mekko" and "Barking Water," said during a premiere of the series this week in Tulsa. "There's been 130-something years of cinema and we're finally showing ourselves as human beings, which shouldn't be radical, but it is pretty radical today."

Devery Jacobs, a Mohawk actor from Quebec, Canada, who plays one of the show's lead characters, said working on a set with so many Indigenous actors and crew was a breath of fresh air.

"On a lot of projects, I was the only Indigenous person for miles," Jacobs said. "Stepping on the set of 'Reservation Dogs' and seeing my community around me, a community of fellow Indigenous folks from different backgrounds, it was truly being welcomed home.

"I'd never experienced it before, and it just meant so much to me, and I know it's going to mean so much to audiences across Turtle Island and beyond," she said, using a term many Indigenous people, mainly in the northeastern part of North America, use to refer to the continent.

Waititi and Harjo, longtime friends collaborating for the first time, said the series arose out of discussions about the kind of show they'd like to see, and before they knew it had "come up with this idea about these kids who had turned into vigilantes and wanted to clean up their community," recalled Waititi, the Oscar-winning writer and director of "Jojo Rabbit," whose credits also include "Thor: Ragnarok" and the TV series "What We Do in the Shadows."

"We weren't entirely sure where it would be and then it just struck us that setting it here would be perfect."

Filmed mostly in the small eastern Oklahoma town of Okmulgee, where the Muscogee Nation is headquartered, the show's restless young characters are familiar beyond Indigenous communities and small towns, Waititi and Harjo said.

"The idea of just wandering around the suburb or a small community with nothing to do, wondering what the hell's out there for me and what am I going to do with my life," Waititi said. "That's the heart of what drives these kids ... a lot of teenagers all over the world, they feel like that."

Although the characters aren't identified as members of a specific Native American tribe, the Muscogee Nation was heavily involved in helping to scout locations, and a public premiere at its River Spirit Resort and Casino in Tulsa drew close to 2,000 people.

"The real value in this show and the representation is the authenticity of it," said Jason Salsman, a Muscogee Nation spokesman. "There have been so many years and instances of invisibility, mischaracterization and misappropriation of Native culture in film and movies."



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"This is a welcome change," he said.

Like many of the 39 federally recognized tribes in Oklahoma, the Muscogee Nation has been diversifying its economy with the help of an infusion of cash from tribal gambling approved by voters in 2004. The U.S. Supreme Court also upheld the boundaries of the Nation's reservation — 3 million acres (12,100 square kilometers), including most of the city of Tulsa — in a landmark decision last year on tribal sovereignty.

The show's production in Oklahoma comes at a time when the film and television industry is booming in the state. The Oklahoma Film and Music Office estimates the 33 film and television productions, including "Reservation Dogs," that qualified for a state rebate on qualifying expenditures in the last year had a direct fiscal impact of more than \$161 million. Other films shot in Oklahoma include Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon," "Stillwater" starring Matt Damon and this year's Academy Award-winning film "Minari."

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt, himself a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, signed into law earlier this year a bill that increases the cap on the film rebate from \$8 million to \$30 million annually, which is expected to draw more productions, diversify the state's workforce and beef up its film infrastructure.

That's welcome news for Oklahomans who work with the film industry, said Shane Brown, freelance photographer and videographer from Tulsa who was hired to work on "Reservation Dogs." Brown, who is also doing photo and video work for a couple of documentaries, said he's so busy he had to turn down job offers for work on other film productions.

"Everybody is busy," Brown said. "All of these independent, freelance positions, just whatever you need to crew up a film, everybody seems to have work."

## Allyson Felix's 11th Olympic medal comes in US 4x400 relay

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Allyson Felix won her 11th career Olympic medal Saturday, combining with her American teammates to finish the 4x400-meter relay in 3 minutes, 16.85 seconds for a runaway victory.

The team of Felix, Sydney McLaughlin, Dalilah Muhammad and Athing Mu was never in jeopardy in this one. It was America's seventh straight victory at the Olympics in the 4x400. Poland finished second, 3.68 seconds behind, and Jamaica finished third.

Felix, who became the most-decorated woman in Olympic track history when she won bronze in the 400 the night before, now passes Carl Lewis with the most track medals of any U.S. athlete. Of the 11 medals, seven are gold.

Paavo Nurmi of Finland holds the all-time mark in track with 12 medals from 1920-28.

"For me, I just really came out at peace and I wanted to soak it in completely," said Felix, who has a 2-year-old daughter back at home.

The win came on McLaughlin's 22nd birthday, and gave her another gold to go with the one she captured when she set a world record of 51.46 in the 400-meter hurdles earlier in the week.

The race featured four U.S. medalists from the individual races -- McLaughlin, Felix, Muhammad, who finished second in the hurdles, and Mu, who won gold in the 800.

It's an eclectic lineup: Two hurdlers, an 800 runner and Felix, who said she considers herself more of a 200 specialist. This was the sixth of Felix's medals that have come in the relays. Three more were in the 200 and two came in the 400, including the bronze Friday night.

"We all do different things and it was really cool to come together to close out the Olympic Games, and for me, my Olympic career," Felix said.

It wasn't so much the win that was in doubt but the world record of 3:15.17, set at the 1988 Seoul Games in the last relay the Soviet Union ran as an Olympic team.

By the time Mu collected the baton from Muhammad for the anchor lap, the clock read 2:28 and the record was out of reach. But the win was in the bag.

The four sprinters huddled and hugged. Felix is 35, and has detailed her long struggle simply to make the Tokyo Olympics. Mu turned 19 this summer, and there's a chance she'll need a mighty big medals case when it's all over.

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Minutes after the women won, the U.S. men also romped to the gold. The first win of the meet for the American men's sprinters came on the last event run on the Olympic oval and gave the U.S. a total of 26 medals — seven of them gold — with only the men's marathon remaining Sunday.

Other winners Saturday included Neeraj Chopra, who won India's first-ever gold medal in Olympic track and field with his victory in the javelin.

Another first went to Mariya Lasitskene. Her victory in the high jump gave the Russian team its first gold of the meet. The Russians were only allowed to send 10 track and field athletes to Tokyo.

Jakob Ingebrigtsen brought 1,500-meter gold to Norway, while Sifan Hassan, who runs for the Netherlands, added the 10,000-meter gold to the gold she won in the 5,000 and bronze she won in the 1,500. She's the first to try that triple at the Olympics.

## Fires rampage through forests in Greece; thousands evacuated

By MICHAEL VARAKLAS and ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

THRAKOMAKEDONES, Greece (AP) — Wildfires rampaged through Greek forests for yet another day Saturday, threatening homes and triggering more evacuations a day after hundreds of people were plucked off beaches by ferries in a dramatic overnight rescue.

One volunteer firefighter has died and at least 20 people have been treated in hospitals. Dozens of fires were burning across the country Saturday, blazes that one official described as "a biblical catastrophe."

Scores of homes, businesses and farms have been burnt over the last week in fires that broke out during Greece's most protracted and intense heat wave in three decades.

One massive fire advanced up the slopes of Mount Parnitha, a national park north of Athens that features some of the last substantial forests near the Greek capital. The blaze sent choking smoke across Athens, where authorities set up a hotline for residents with breathing problems. Overnight and throughout the day, fire crews struggled to contain constant flare-ups.

In apocalyptic scenes that went into the night, small ferries and other boats evacuated 1,400 people from a seaside village and beaches on Evia, an island of rugged, forested mountains popular with tourists and campers, after approaching flames cut off other means of escape. Behind them, towering flames and smoke blanketed the hills.

The scale of Greece's wildfires has been breathtaking, with more than 100 breaking out across the country over the past few days. Most were quickly tamed, but several rapidly burned out of control, consuming homes and causing untold ecological damage.

A local official in the Mani region of the Peloponnese estimated the wildfire there had destroyed around 70% of her area.

"It's a biblical catastrophe. We're talking about three-quarters of the municipality," East Mani Deputy Mayor Drakoulakou told state broadcaster ERT, pleading for more water-dropping aircraft.

Other local officials and residents in southern Greece, near Athens and on Evia, phoned in to television programs, appealing live on air for more firefighting help.

Civil Protection chief Nikos Hardalias said firefighters were battling 55 active fires by Saturday afternoon.

"We're continuing to fight a very big battle. All night our forces worked hard," Hardalias said, adding that he expected the fire north of Athens to be contained, barring any unexpected developments, within the day.

More than 850 firefighters, 40 ground teams, three aircraft, six helicopters and 215 vehicles were working to extinguish the flames north of Athens, Hardalias said, with Greek forces reinforced by French, Cypriot and Israeli firefighters.

In Evia, where 39 villages had been evacuated, six aircraft, four helicopters, 475 firefighters and 35 ground teams were operating, including Romanian and Ukrainian firefighters. The army sent 84 special forces personnel, while the navy was providing a torpedo boat, two landing craft and 15 smaller boats to assist in sea evacuations if necessary, Hardalias said.

Greece requested help through the European Union's emergency support system. Firefighters and aircraft were sent from France, Ukraine, Cyprus, Croatia, Sweden, Israel, Romania and Switzerland. Egypt said

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Saturday it was sending two helicopters, while 36 Czech firefighters with 15 vehicles left for Greece, and Greek authorities said Spain was also sending a plane.

Fires described as the worst in decades have also swept through stretches of neighboring Turkey's southern coast for the past 10 days, killing eight people. The top Turkish forestry official said 217 fires had been brought under control since July 28 in over half of the country's provinces, but firefighters still worked Saturday to tame six fires in two Turkish provinces.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis visited the fire department's headquarters in Athens Saturday and expressed his "deep sadness for what has happened."

Securing aid for everyone affected by the wildfires would be "my first political priority," he said, promising that all burnt areas would be declared reforestation zones.

"When this nightmarish summer has passed, we will turn all our attention to repairing the damage as fast as possible, and in restoring our natural environment again," Mitsotakis said.

Greece has been baked by its most protracted heat wave in 30 years, with temperatures soaring to 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit). Temperatures eased Friday but the winds picked up, further exacerbating the situation.

Evacuation orders for villages and neighborhoods have been constant, sent by push alerts to mobile phones in affected areas, while some police and firefighters have gone door-to-door urging people to leave.

The causes of the fires are under investigation. Hardalias said three people were arrested Friday — in the greater Athens area, central and southern Greece — on suspicion of starting blazes, in two cases intentionally. Police said the suspect detained north of Athens had allegedly lit fires at three separate spots in the area ravaged by the large blaze, which first broke out Tuesday.

Greek and European officials also have blamed climate change for the large number of fires burning through southern Europe, from southern Italy to the Balkans, Greece and Turkey.

In Turkey's seaside province of Mugla, a popular region for tourists, most fires appeared to be under control Saturday. Municipalities in the town of Marmaris and the wider Mugla province said cooling efforts were ongoing in areas where fires were brought under control. The forestry minister said blazes continued in the Milas area.

Municipal officials in Antalya, on the Turkey's Mediterranean coast, said a wildfire was still burning around the Eynif plain, where wild horses live. Wildfires in Manavgat, where blazes raged for days, were reported to be under control.

Massive fires also have been burning across Siberia in Russia's north for weeks, while hot, bone-dry, gusty weather has also fueled devastating wildfires in California.

## Golden, again: US beats France 87-82 for Tokyo title

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

SAITAMA, Japan (AP) — Nothing about the summer was easy for the U.S. men's basketball team, and neither was the gold-medal game.

The Americans expected nothing less.

And in the end, their Olympic reign lives on.

Kevin Durant scored 29 points and joined Carmelo Anthony as the only three-time men's gold medalists in Olympic history and the U.S. held off France 87-82 on Saturday to win the title at the Tokyo Games — ending a summer that started with sputters but closed with celebration.

"Every championship is special, and the group you're with is special, but I can be honest and say this is the most responsibility I've ever felt," said U.S. coach Gregg Popovich, who adds this gold to five NBA titles he's won as coach in San Antonio. "You're playing for so many people that are watching, and for a country, and other countries involved. The responsibility was awesome. I felt it every day for several years now. I'm feeling pretty light now and looking forward to getting back to the hotel."

Wine was awaiting, and so was a hero's welcome from the U.S. women's team — which plays for gold of its own Sunday — when the men returned to the team hotel. Later Saturday night, after Australia de-

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feated Slovenia for the bronze, Popovich and the team returned to the arena for their gold medals. One player would drape the prize over another's neck, then they watched the U.S. flag get raised and "The Star-Spangled Banner" blare for them one more time.

"Everybody was questioning us," U.S. forward Draymond Green. "This is special."

Durant sealed the win with two free throws with 8.8 seconds left, making the outcome academic. The lead was five, France's final possession was irrelevant, and it was over. The U.S. players gathered for a hug at midcourt, Durant, Green and Bam Adebayo wrapped themselves in American flags, Popovich had a long hug with his assistants and the journey was complete.

"I'm so happy for Pop, the staff, the players, the country," said a teary-eyed USA Basketball managing director Jerry Colangelo, who was overseeing the men's program for a fourth and final Olympics and won gold in each one. "It's a great way to finish."

Jayson Tatum added 19 points, Damian Lillard and Jrue Holiday each scored 11 for the U.S. — which knew nothing but gold would make this trip a success.

"I think it's more joy than relief, but definitely some relief," Lillard said. "Because of the expectations that get placed on Team USA, obviously it's going to be some relief."

Evan Fournier and Rudy Gobert each scored 16 for France, which now has three silver medals — all coming after gold-medal-game losses to the U.S. Guerschon Yabusele scored 13, Nando de Colo had 12 and Timothe Luwawu-Cabarrot scored 11 for France.

"They played better," Fournier conceded, as Popovich stopped to hug him. "They played better."

The mission was accomplished: Gold, again — the 16th time in 19 Olympic tries for the U.S. The Americans had a players-only meeting after the opening loss to France at these games, vowed to figure things out and never lost again.

"Each and every one of us put in that work every single day, from coaches to the trainers to the players," Durant said. "We all came in with that goal of, 'Let's finish this thing off. Let's build a family. Let's build this team. Let's grow this team every day.' ... Man, it's just incredible to be a part of something so special, and I'm bonding with these guys for life, this family for life."

For some, it adds to family legacies. Holiday now is an Olympic gold medalist, just like his wife Lauren was twice with the U.S. women's national soccer team. JaVale McGee now has Olympic gold, just like his mother Pamela won with the U.S. women in basketball at the 1984 Los Angeles Games. They're the first to do that in U.S. Olympic history; the only other known occurrence in Olympic history was a Russian mother-son combo who won medals in fencing and water polo in 1960 and 1980.

"It's an amazing feeling, man," said McGee, who adds gold to his three NBA titles. "I've got a gold medal. My mother has a gold medal. We're the first to do it, mother-son duo. It's an amazing feeling. You can't really explain it. Just knowing you're the best in the world, amazing, man."

For Milwaukee Bucks teammates Holiday and Khris Middleton, it's admission into a rare club: Before now, only Scottie Pippen (who did it twice), Michael Jordan, LeBron James and Kyrie Irving had won an NBA title and Olympic gold in the same year.

"Definitely a great summer," Holiday said.

And for Popovich, it completes an Olympic journey that started a half-century ago. He was playing for the United States Air Force Academy, tried unsuccessfully to make the 1972 U.S. Olympic team — "the powers that be actually selected Doug Collins instead of me, it's hard to believe," Popovich joked earlier this summer — then accepted the task of replacing Mike Krzyzewski as the U.S. coach for this Olympic cycle.

"Being part of the Olympics has been a dream," Popovich said.

Popovich insists this is not about his legacy, but his players and assistants might disagree.

"I'm just thrilled for Pop and for Jerry," U.S. assistant coach Steve Kerr said. "Pop has been thinking about this for the last four or five years. Jerry is the one who turned USA Basketball around after the '04 Olympic loss. ... We wanted to send Jerry out with the gold medal."

The U.S. missed its first eight 3-point tries before Durant got one to drop with 2:04 left in the opening quarter, starting what became a 21-8 run by the Americans on the way to a 39-26 lead midway through



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the second quarter.

Just as he did when the U.S. was down against Spain and Australia earlier in the knockout round, Durant stepped up at the biggest moments. He had 21 points by halftime, keeping the Americans afloat.

"He's phenomenal," Adebayo said.

France closed the half on a 13-5 spurt and got within 44-39 at the break, then within two early in the third quarter.

And after the U.S. briefly led by 14, Nicolas Batum — who saved his team with a last-second block to close out a win over Slovenia in the semifinals — beat the third-quarter buzzer with a 3-pointer that cut the U.S. lead to 71-63 entering the fourth. But the French never got the lead back.

This U.S. team was one that seemed vulnerable when the summer started with losses in its first two exhibitions, wasn't even complete when the Olympics started because three players were in the NBA Finals, lost Bradley Beal to virus-related issues before the games began, and had lost its last two games against France.

Didn't matter. Olympic champions, again.

"We're thrilled and honored to be able to represent the country the way we did," Popovich said. "The team progressed very rapidly in a very short period of time under some difficult circumstances, which I think made this win all the sweeter. We're glad it's over."

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## Some in US getting COVID-19 boosters without FDA approval

By PATTY NIEBERG Associated Press/Report for America

DENVER (AP) — When the delta variant started spreading, Gina Welch decided not to take any chances: She got a third, booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine by going to a clinic and telling them it was her first shot.

The U.S. government has not approved booster shots against the virus, saying it has yet to see evidence they are necessary. But Welch and an untold number of other Americans have managed to get them by taking advantage of the nation's vaccine surplus and loose tracking of those who have been fully vaccinated.

Welch, a graduate student from Maine who is studying chemical engineering, said she has kept tabs on scientific studies about COVID-19 and follows several virologists and epidemiologists on social media who have advocated for boosters.

"I'm going to follow these experts and I'm going to go protect myself," said Welch, a 26-year-old with asthma and a liver condition. "I'm not going to wait another six months to a year for them to recommend a third dose."

While Pfizer has said it plans to seek U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval for booster shots, health authorities say that for now, the fully vaccinated seem well protected.

Yet health care providers in the U.S. have reported more than 900 instances of people getting a third dose of COVID-19 vaccines in a database run by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an Associated Press review of the system's data found. Because reporting is voluntary, the full extent of people who have received third doses is unknown. It's also unknown if all of those people were actively trying to get a third dose as a booster.

"I don't think that anyone really has the tracking" in place to know how widespread it is, said Claire Hannan, executive director for the Association of Immunization Managers.

One entry in the CDC database shows a 52-year-old man got a third dose from a California pharmacy on July 14 by saying he had never received one and by providing his passport, rather than a driver's license, as identification. But when the pharmacy contacted the patient's insurance provider, it was told he had received two doses in March.

In Virginia, a 39-year-old man got a third shot from a military provider on April 27 after he showed a vaccine card indicating he had received only one dose. A review of records turned up his previous vaccines. The patient then told the provider that the time between his first and second doses was more than

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21 days, "so they spoke to their provider, who 'authorized' them to get a third shot," an entry states.

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis said at a recent news briefing that he knew of residents who had received third dose by using fake names, but neither his office nor the state health department could provide any evidence.

Despite a lack of FDA approval, public health officials in San Francisco said Tuesday that they will provide an extra dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine for people who got the single-shot Johnson & Johnson variety — referring to it as a supplement, rather than a booster.

Several studies are looking at booster shots for certain at-risk groups — people with weakened immune systems, adults over 60 years old and health care workers. But the verdict is still out on whether the general population might need them, said Dr. Michelle Barron, senior medical director for infection prevention at UHealth, a not-for-profit health care system based in Aurora, Colorado. She said the best data in favor of possible boosters is for people whose immune systems are compromised.

Israel is giving boosters to older adults and several countries, including Germany, Russia and the U.K. have approved them for some people. The head of the World Health Organization recently urged wealthier nations to stop administering boosters to ensure vaccine doses are available to other countries where few people have received their first shots.

Will Clart, a 67-year-old patient services employee at a Missouri hospital, got a third dose in May by going to a local pharmacy. Clart said he gave the pharmacist all of his information, but that the pharmacist didn't realize until after administering the shot that Clart's name was in the vaccine system.

"It sounded like there was a benefit to it. And there's also been talk that eventually we'll need a booster — mine was five or six months out and so I thought well I'll go ahead, that'll give me a booster," Clart said.

Ted Rall, a political cartoonist, explained in a Wall Street Journal op-ed that he got a booster because of a history of lung problems, including asthma, swine flu, and repeated bouts of bronchitis and pneumonia.

"I made up my mind after reading a report that states were likely to toss 26.2 million unused doses due to low demand. My decision had no effect on policy, and I saved a vaccine dose from the garbage," Rall said.

Welch, the graduate student from Maine, put the blame on people who have refused to get the vaccine for political reasons. About 60% of eligible people in the U.S. are fully vaccinated.

"Their absolute demand and screeches for freedom is trampling our public health and our communal health."

## Lawmaker says Taliban enter north Afghan provincial capital

By TAMEEM AKHGAR and KATHY GANNON Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Taliban fighters entered the capital of northern Afghanistan's Jawzjan province Saturday, a provincial lawmaker said, after sweeping through nine of 10 districts in the province.

The government did not deny lawmaker Mohammad Karim Jawzjani's claim that Taliban fighters had entered Sheberghan, but said the city had not fallen. If the city falls, it will be the second provincial capital in as many days to succumb to the Taliban. Several other of the country's 34 provincial capitals are threatened.

On Friday, the Taliban took control of the southwestern Nimroz provincial capital of Zaranj, where the government says it is still battling insurgents inside the capital.

Sheberghan is particularly strategic because it is the stronghold of U.S.-allied Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum, whose militias are among those resurrected to aid the Afghan National Security and Defense Forces.

Heavy airstrikes were reported by residents of Sheberghan who also said the Taliban had freed prisoners from the city jail. They requested to remain anonymous fearing retaliation from both sides.

Taliban fighters have swept through large swathes of Afghanistan at surprising speed, initially taking districts, many in remote areas. In recent weeks they have laid siege to several provincial capitals across the country as the last U.S. and NATO troops leave the country. The U.S. Central Command says the withdrawal is more than 95% complete and will be finished by Aug. 31.

The U.S. Air Force continues to aid the Afghan air force's bombing of Taliban targets in southern Helmand

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and Kandahar provinces as Afghan security forces try to prevent a Taliban takeover.

On Saturday, the U.S. and British embassies in Kabul repeated a warning to its citizens still there to leave "immediately" as the security situation deteriorated.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul also issued a statement Saturday condemning the Taliban's military onslaught saying it was contrary to the insurgent group's claim to support a negotiated peace settlement.

The statement called for an immediate end to fighting and a start to "negotiations to end the suffering of the Afghan people and pave the way for an inclusive political settlement that benefits all Afghans and ensures that Afghanistan does not again serve as a safe haven for terrorists."

On Friday, Taliban fighters assassinated Dawa Khan Menapal, the chief of the Afghan government's press operations for local and foreign media. It came just days after a coordinated attempt was made to kill acting defense chief Bismillah Khan Mohammadi in a posh and deeply secure neighborhood of the capital.

In a report to the U.N. Security Council on Friday the U.N. envoy for Afghanistan urged the council to demand the Taliban immediately stop attacking cities in their offensive to take more territory.

Deborah Lyons also called on the international community to urge both sides to stop fighting and negotiate to prevent a "catastrophe" in the war-torn country.

In Afghanistan's Helmand and Kandahar provinces in the south of the country thousands of Afghans were displaced by the fighting and living in miserable conditions.

In Helmand's provincial capital of Lashkar Gah, Afghanistan's elite commando forces aided by regular troops were trying to dislodge the Taliban but with little success, said Nafeeza Faiez, a provincial council member. Taliban are in control of nine of the city's 10 police districts.

Faiez said conditions for residents are desperate as they hunker down inside their homes, unable to get supplies or get to hospitals for treatment. Many of the public buildings have also been badly damaged in the fighting.

"People have no access to any service," she said

More than half of Afghanistan's 421 districts and district centers are now in Taliban hands. While many are in remote regions, some are extremely strategic, giving the Taliban control of lucrative border crossings with Iran, Tajikistan and Pakistan.

The insurgent force on Friday closed one of the country's most lucrative borders with Pakistan at Spin Boldak in southeastern Afghanistan. The Taliban were protesting a demand from Pakistan that all Afghans crossing the border must have Afghan passports and Pakistani visas.

The group said Pakistan was implementing the demands of the Afghan government and demanded that previous procedures in which identities were rarely checked as people crossed the border be reinstated.

Thousands of Afghans and Pakistanis cross the border daily and a steady stream of trucks passes through, bringing goods to land-locked Afghanistan from the Arabian Sea port city of Karachi in Pakistan.

Hundreds of people were waiting Saturday to pass through and more than 600 trucks, many loaded with perishable fresh foods, were backed up in both countries.

Islamabad's relationship with Kabul has been troubled, with both sides accusing each other of harboring militants. Afghan Taliban leaders live in Pakistan and Kabul is bitterly critical of Pakistan for aiding them and treating their fighters in hospitals in Pakistan. Islamabad meanwhile charges that Kabul provides a safe haven to the Pakistani Taliban, a separate militant group that regularly stages attacks in Pakistan.

## Once-gloomy scientist says future UK lockdowns unlikely

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A British scientist who gained prominence for issuing dire warnings about the spread of COVID-19 said Saturday the U.K. is unlikely to need future lockdowns, although new infections may rise significantly as social interactions increase.

Professor Neil Ferguson, an infectious disease expert at Imperial College London, told The Times of London that Britain is likely to move to a situation where the disease can be managed by vaccinations rather than "crisis measures" such as lockdowns.

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"I wouldn't rule it out altogether, but I think it's unlikely we will need a new lockdown or even social-distancing measures of the type we've had so far," he said. "The caveat to that is, of course, if the virus changes substantially."

Data released Friday showed the latest virus surge in the U.K. has eased, with the number of people testing positive for COVID-19 falling in most parts of the country. Based on its weekly survey of infection levels, the Office for National Statistics said infection rates appeared to be falling in England, Scotland and Wales, though not in Northern Ireland, with the biggest declines in younger age groups.

Public health experts credit the U.K.'s successful nationwide vaccination program for slowing the spread of COVID-19 even in the face of the more infectious delta variant, which was first discovered in India and is now the dominant form of the disease in Britain. With almost 74% of adults now fully vaccinated, the government plans to expand the program to teenagers.

The government reported 31,808 new infections across the U.K. on Friday, down 42% from the peak of the third wave in mid-July.

But many scientists warn that infection levels are still too high for complacency and that the reported figures may be inaccurate due to a drop in testing. Over the past week, the U.K. has reported an average of 26,513 new cases a day, up from fewer than 2,000 cases a day in late April. It still has the second-worst pandemic death toll in Europe after Russia, with over 130,000 confirmed deaths.

The sensitivity of the issue can be seen in the latest controversy surrounding Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The Guardian newspaper reported Friday that Johnson had been in close contact with a staff member who later tested positive for COVID-19, which should require Johnson to self-isolate for 10 days under rules designed to combat the disease.

But Johnson's refusal to self-isolate has sparked criticism from the opposition Labour Party, which says it's another example of "one rule for them and another for everyone else."

The drop in U.K. infection rates has surprised some scientists. Many had predicted a sharp rise this summer after the government lifted most remaining lockdown restrictions on July 19.

Ferguson urged caution.

"We're at a stage where we've got a huge amount of immunity in the population, but the virus is more transmissible than it's ever been, so we have this complicated trade-off," Ferguson said. "If we increase contacts, then we may well reach another point where we start seeing increasing case numbers again."

After successfully vaccinating most people over 50, Britain is now focusing on younger people.

One university is even offering cash prizes to students who have been fully vaccinated. All students at Sussex University are being entered into a drawing, with 10 winners receiving 5,000 pounds (\$6,937) if they can prove they are double-jabbed or exempt.

Professor Adam Tickell, the university's vice-chancellor, denied the move amounted to "bribing" students to get vaccinated.

"We're not bribing them," Tickell told the BBC. "We're just giving an incentive."

## Warm waters further threaten depleted Maine shrimp fishery

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Maine's long-shuttered shrimp fishing business has a chance to reopen in the coming winter, but the warming of the ocean threatens to keep the industry shut down.

Maine shrimp were once a winter delicacy, but the fishery has been shut down since 2013. Scientists have said environmental conditions in the warming Gulf of Maine are inhospitable for the cold water-loving shrimp.

An interstate regulatory board is scheduled to make a decision this fall about whether to extend a moratorium on the shrimp fishery that is slated to end this year. Scientists have not seen a lot of good signs that suggest reopening the fishery is a good idea, said Dustin Colson Leaning, a fishery management plan coordinator for the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which regulates the business.

"Looking at recent data hasn't been very encouraging, and as you know, the ocean temperature isn't cooling," Leaning said. "On the environmental side, it doesn't seem to be encouraging."



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A 2019 report from the Atlantic States commission found that the shrimp were depleted, the number of shrimp that were able to spawn was "extremely low," and "recent environmental conditions continue to be unfavorable" for the species. New data about the shrimp will become available this year, but it will be limited because a lot of scientific surveys were canceled by the coronavirus pandemic, Colson said.

The shrimp are small, pink shrimp that are also fished by Canadian fishermen, though the Canadian product can be challenging to find for U.S. consumers compared to the more ubiquitous farmed and Gulf of Mexico shrimp that stock supermarket freezers.

New England fishermen often caught millions of pounds of the fish every winter. The catch exceeded 10 million pounds in several years in the 1990s and topped that total as recently as 2011 before a collapse in 2013.

Maine's fishing industry could use them back, said Lester Durant, manager of Cundy's Harbor Wharf in Harpswell, where many shrimpers used to bring their catch to land.

"It was a great fishery, a nice product," Durant said. "We bought a lot of shrimp there years ago."

## Hochul moves into spotlight as scandal roils Cuomo's reign

By CAROLYN THOMPSON Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — As New York's lieutenant governor, Kathy Hochul has spent years on the road as the friendly face of the administration, visiting the far-flung coffee shops and factory floors of each of the state's 62 counties for countless ribbon-cutting ceremonies and civic cheerleading events.

Now, with Gov. Andrew Cuomo facing possible impeachment over sexual harassment allegations, her next stop may be the state Capitol of Albany.

Hochul would become the state's first woman governor if Cuomo were removed from office.

A centrist Democrat from western New York, she has worked deep in Cuomo's shadow for her two terms in office, but this week joined the chorus of politicians denouncing the governor after an independent investigation concluded he had sexually harassed 11 women while in office.

"I believe these brave women," Hochul wrote, calling Cuomo's behavior "repulsive and unlawful" in a statement Tuesday.

She also acknowledged what has been simmering for months: The possibility she will become governor.

"Because lieutenant governors stand next in the line of succession, it would not be appropriate to comment further on the process at this moment," she wrote.

To many New Yorkers, Hochul is an unknown quantity, serving since 2015 in a job that is mostly ceremonial. A typical afternoon in late July had her announcing job training funding in Utica, discussing manufacturing in Rome and touring downtown Cazenovia with the small town's mayor.

That has been nothing like the attention-demanding appearances of the determinedly high-profile Cuomo, who does most of his business in Albany and New York City and whose daily coronavirus briefings were national events at the height of the coronavirus.

Hochul has not been part of Cuomo's inner circle of aides and allies. Her name wasn't mentioned in the investigative report, released by Attorney General Letitia James, that detailed not only the harassment allegations against Cuomo but also efforts by his staff to discredit some of his accusers.

But at 62, Hochul is an experienced politician, a veteran of 11 campaigns that have taken her from town board to Congress, the latter representing a conservative western New York district after a surprising 2011 win in a special election to fill a vacancy in the U.S. House.

"Pragmatic would be a good way to describe her," said Jacob Neihsel, an associate political science professor at the University at Buffalo. "Someone who is pretty good at reading the tea leaves and coming around to where her constituency is."

Hochul's office declined an interview request.

A steelworker's daughter, Hochul, a lawyer, worked in Washington as an aide to former U.S. Rep. John LaFalce and later, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, both from New York, before holding her first public office, on the town board in Hamburg, near Buffalo.

From there, she became Erie County Clerk, where she made some news in 2007 for resistance to a

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plan by then-Gov. Eliot Spitzer to allow unauthorized immigrants get driver's licenses. Hochul and another western New York clerk explored a plan to have police arrest immigrants who tried to apply.

"It will be a deterrent, and that's what I'm looking for," Hochul told The Buffalo News at the time.

Her next move was to Congress, where in 2011 she had a surprising win in a special election in a district that had been in Republican hands for decades. She lost a bid for reelection a year later to Republican Chris Collins, despite an endorsement by the National Rifle Association. Collins later resigned from the U.S. House and pleaded guilty to insider trading.

Hochul moved to the left, politically, when Cuomo tapped her as his running mate in 2014 after his first lieutenant governor, former Rochester Mayor Robert Duffy, decided not to run for reelection.

She backed New York's SAFE Act, one of the nation's toughest gun control laws, as well as the state's Green Light Law, which let unauthorized immigrants get driver's licenses.

Hochul has not publicly expressed whether she would pursue a full term in 2022 if she were to step into the role.

An upstate candidate running for any statewide office in New York faces a daunting challenge, but even more so for the governor's office, which has historically drawn from New York City.

Neiheisel said given her record, it is difficult to predict what a "distinctly Hochul agenda" might look like, especially when faced with the state's still-active pandemic response and a recovery that will involve billions of dollars in federal aid.

"Given how little she's historically been in the news cycle, I really don't think she has the kind of name recognition that you would expect of somebody who is suddenly being thrust into a position of maybe being governor," Neiheisel said "She's going to have to do an awful lot, really fast, in order for there to be a serious conversation for keeping that job."

At a news briefing Wednesday, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, who has a famously contentious relationship with Cuomo, said he's gotten to know Hochul over the last few years and "she strikes me as a very reasonable person."

"I believe if Kathy Hochul becomes governor, she'll be an honest broker," he said. "We'll be able to work together."

In Buffalo, Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz worked alongside Hochul when he was county controller and she was Erie County Clerk. He said he saw Hochul easily stepping into the governor's office.

"I think it's fair to say that if that did happen, we certainly would have a friend in Albany," he said.

## **EXPLAINER: Olympic photos from far above — and underwater**

By The Associated Press undefined

TOKYO (AP) — Those amazing shots: Olympians captured from above, an airborne view of the most challenging of competitions, from gymnastics to track. Divers descending gracefully. Swimmers cutting through the clear water, their faces etched with determination, caught mid-stroke by a camera meticulously set up at the bottom of the pool.

How does that get done, anyway? Are there actual photographers lying underwater, looking up? Are there multiple photojournalists wandering the catwalks at events? Is it robotics?

No, no ... and yes.

Since the London Games in 2012, The Associated Press has been using a combination of robotics, ingenuity and creativity to make memorable photos from difficult places. The intricate setup — reconnaissance begins months beforehand and setup takes place many weeks in advance — ensures that the world catches glimpses of Olympians in ways it might otherwise never see.

AP photojournalists David J. Phillip, Morry Gash, Chris Carlson and Jeff Roberson have made it their business to ensure AP can deliver these photos to the world from the Olympic Games. Here, Gash and Phillip, sitting at the Olympics' Main Press Center demonstrating their joystick-driven camera control, go behind the scenes to explain a bit about how it all works.

WHAT WERE THE BEGINNINGS OF THIS?

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PHILLIP: In London, the original connection to the camera was a physical cable from wherever it was. We had everything wired together, it had to be a direct connection. And then it evolved to do being able to do it over a network. And now we're all the way up to where we can we can control every robotic we have from right here in the Main Press Center if we wanted. We could do it from anywhere in the world, really.

GASH: I'm doing it in a box, using a joystick. It's like a video game. Put two quarters in and go.

IS THERE A SPECIAL KIND OF CAMERA INSIDE THE ROBOTICS APPARATUS?

PHILLIP: No, they're all Sony cameras, regular Sony cameras mounted to the robotics.

HOW ON EARTH DOES ALL THIS GET SET UP IN ADVANCE?

PHILLIP: So we come on world press briefings. And during that time, we tour all the catwalks and venues and talk about where we want trusses or where we're going to put things. And then we coordinate with the local Olympic Committee and the IOC. A lot of places we have to have riggers help us. Sometimes they're hanging out with nothing to stop them while they're mounting our cameras, our robotics, for us. Once we do that, then we develop a plan back in Houston and we start building everything so that we have everything in working order before we come here. So then we pack it all up and it all ships from Houston to wherever we're going.

CAN YOU MOVE AN UNDERWATER CAMERA ONCE IT'S DOWN THERE?

PHILLIP: We move it after each session. We kind of look ahead to see what's what's the next event and what who's swimming and what lane. And the IOC provides the divers that do that for us now. In the early days, we used to have to jump in and move it ourselves. But now they have somebody that does this. We just basically tell them where we want it and they move it for us. So if there's any issues, I could bring the camera out and we could make some adjustments. But we didn't have any issues this year.

WHAT SPORTS DO YOU THINK WORK BEST WITH THIS? WHAT RESULTS HAVE YOU BEEN HAPPIEST WITH?

GASH: It's been great for gymnastics. Some of the stuff from track has been great. I don't know if there's one specific sport that it's best for. It works in a lot of places.

PHILLIP: We concentrated on what we knew would produce more unique images that would last. So you know, weightlifting, boxing. Obviously the underwater is a must-have. It's just such a unique perspective. That's the advantage of the robotics — you can do so many different things. We can zoom, we can turn it, and we learned to pan as well.

GASH: The diving ones, I was doing that manually. But now for track, I can program it to run at the same speed that they're running, depending on which race, and I can change the speed. So almost every race, I can get a pan.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THIS KIND OF PHOTOGRAPHY?

GASH: I just think it's unique. It's something you can't get otherwise. We're not allowed on the catwalks and can't shoot from them anyways, so it's just a totally different angle.

PHILLIP: It's definitely a unique perspective that that gives a better understanding about the complexity of the story. You can see it from all different angles and have a feeling for how and what it takes to do these sports. Morry's done a fantastic job of finding things and making things different. And the underwater has been my focus. But it takes a big team to make this work.

GASH: I love variety. So I like being able to go from gymnastics in the morning to track at night and do something totally different and figure it out each time.

## As Pandemic Olympics wane, Japan asks: What did Games mean?

By FOSTER KLUG Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Was it the strangest Olympics ever, staged during a deadly pandemic, with no fans? How about the angriest, awash in protests and fierce opposition from large swaths of the host nation?

The scariest, with fears of new coronavirus variants and surging cases plaguing Japan— though mostly dodging those in the Olympic “bubble” — throughout the two weeks of sports? Or maybe, as athletes banded together under moments of intense stress, the kindest?

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As tens of thousands of athletes, journalists and officials get ready to pack up and leave Monday, Japan will be left to pick over the answers to these questions, maybe for years. Amid the lingering glow from the televised pomp and the indisputable athletic drama, whatever you call these Olympics, it's worth stopping to consider how Japan sees them.

They were sold, well before the pandemic, as the symbol of Japan's recovery from the destruction of the 2011 tsunami and nuclear meltdown. The rhetoric now tends to focus on their link to the world overcoming coronavirus.

But does that really work in a country where thousands are still getting sick each day, let alone in other, even worse-hit nations that have sent athletes to Tokyo? Many here, while proud that Japan is on the verge of pulling off what many thought impossible or, in some corners, highly inadvisable, still believe these Games were forced on the country and that their real cost, possibly in lives lost, is yet to be paid.

Others are simply relieved they are over. And a large number maybe even enjoyed the ride, reveling in the sports themselves, Japan's surprisingly strong medal haul and the generally hospitable way the world was welcomed during a period of illness, fear and uncertainty.

Using some of the dozens of interviews conducted during and before these delayed and disputed Pandemic Games, The Associated Press takes a look at what some Japanese think they mean.

Is it representative of a nation of 126 million? Of course not. But the glimpses into the views of some of the people who lived through this Olympics offer a chance to cut through, in sometimes surprising ways, the government and IOC rhetoric that emphasized harmony and revitalization, and get a bit closer to the heart of the nation's sentiment.

## THE BEGINNING

It started with a muted opening ceremony and an empty stadium, with moments so quiet that the shouts of protesters could be heard from the streets outside. Many residents watched with mixed feelings, to say the least, isolated from the Games by organizers trying to keep the Olympic visitors from mingling with the public, forced to modify their lives during a record wave of virus cases and yet another state of emergency.

Many were opposed, and that feeling persisted. But there was nuance, too — a desire to put the country's best face forward, now that the inevitable was happening, and a notion that this spectacle could act as a salve.

"I am very emotional and teary-eyed while watching the TV because even during the pandemic, the Olympics will still go on," Riza Nagumo, 53, a housewife, said. "I was praying so much to have this Olympics be a very successful event, to heal the world."

At a normally bustling intersection in Tokyo's Shibuya neighborhood, large screens that usually blast advertisements and show television were switched off. Many bars and restaurants were closed, and public viewing locations across Japan were shut down amid rising infections.

"Everyone is just enduring this," said Harumi Wada, a Tokyo resident. "But to hold the Olympics, despite everything, I feel there's a dissonance, and I think that distrust toward the government is getting stronger."

## THE FAMILY

Despite the disruption, delays and disputes of these Games, the ban on spectators and big gatherings proved a surprising boon for some families.

While it's true that some bars and restaurants continued to see drinkers flouting pandemic restriction rules, even as late as Friday night, many Japanese stayed home with their relatives — and were delighted with the excuse to do so.

"We are often too busy in our daily life to have this kind of quality family time," said Ikuko Tozuka, 53, who gathered with her husband and two adult daughters in front of their TV screen in Oiso, west of Tokyo, to watch the Games. "So I am very happy that this Olympics has given us an opportunity to be together."

Hiroshi, the father, 58, even bought a new TV set to watch the Games with his family.

"It was actually good that this COVID-19 pandemic compelled us as a family to come together and watch the Games in this way," said Yu, his 26-year-old daughter.

## THE PROTESTERS



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Throughout the Games, small knots of protesters gathered to provide voice to what a much larger, mostly silent chunk of Japan was thinking. They chanted, "Cancel the Olympics." They carried banners reading, "No Olympics 2020 — Use that money for COVID-19" and "Is it more important than human life?"

Were these very public demonstrations representative of the whole country? It's complicated. Many said in polls they strongly opposed the Games; an unknown number may have been silently taking a wait-and-see attitude, hoping for the best.

In AP interviews conducted over the months between the postponement and the start of the Games, there could be found a feeling of resentment that the government had pushed ahead partly because of pressure from the IOC, which would have faced billions in lost television rights income without the Games. There was also fear over the Olympics spreading new strains of the coronavirus. The government's main medical adviser said it was "abnormal" to hold the Olympics during a pandemic.

"It's unethical to proceed with such a big event, with more than 10,000 athletes coming to Tokyo, all situated in one area," said Masa Yamagata, a Tokyo resident. "We can't enjoy it anyway. We can't celebrate it."

## PAST AS PRESENT

Along with the anger and fear, these Games had a nostalgic element for some older Japanese who remembered the Summer Games of 1964, when Japan celebrated its rebuilding from the war and the turbulent years that followed.

Some felt remorse — a sense of what might have been — because these Games would be so much more circumscribed than the last time they were in Tokyo.

There was also gratitude. Thanks to these Games, Seiichi Kuroki, 55, saw his relationship with his 85-year-old father, Masatoshi Kuroki, deepen as they talked about Masatoshi's role as a marshal at the opening ceremony of the 1964 Olympics.

"I am very grateful for that," Kuroki said. "He looks happy when I ask him questions such as, 'What were you doing then at the Games?' Because that is his legacy. "

There was a tinge of sorrow, however, for Takemasa Taguchi, as the 83-year-old remembered Tokyo's celebratory mood in 1964.

"I am so sad about this situation," Taguchi said. "I was hoping that we could have celebrated and danced together with people from all over the world."

## SOCIAL CHANGE

Some hoped the Games would bring change to Japanese society, where minorities still suffer from discrimination and prejudice. Few felt that the Games would solve all of Japan's social issues: Can an Olympics event ever live up to the expectations that are heaped on it? But with the world's attention focused on Japan, some saw movement forward on the issues they cared about.

Ahead of the Games, Makoto Kikuchi, a 34-year-old professional boxer, decided to come out as a lesbian.

"By speaking openly and becoming one of the out athletes, I hoped to be as helpful as possible for those who feel lonely," Kikuchi said.

The Tokyo Games included 179 openly gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and nonbinary athletes, according to Outsport.com. That's more than three times the number from the 2016 Games in Rio.

While same-sex marriages are not legally recognized here, Fumino Sugiyama, a transgender activist and former fencer on Japan's women's national team, said support of sexual diversity has slowly grown.

"It is truly great that a path has finally been created for athletes to be able to compete while being their authentic selves in sports," said the 39-year-old, who was nominated to the Japanese Olympic Committee's board of directors before the Games.

## French push against domestic abuse may overlook some police

By ARNO PEDRAM Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Chahinez Daoud was 31 years old in May when her former husband shot and burned her alive in the town of Merignac, near Bordeaux. Two months earlier, she had filed a complaint for domestic violence, but it was mishandled and no action was taken. She was among scores of women killed annually

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by a partner in France — 102 last year.

The police officer who took her complaint had himself been allegedly convicted of habitually beating his wife, according to a newspaper investigative report. This has spurred calls for action over the long-taboo subject of domestic violence by some French officers.

Yet despite a new official push to tackle domestic abuse, such violence by law enforcement remains unaddressed. Victims and lawyers are pushing for solutions such as training and independent internal police investigations.

"There were many human failings leading to my client not being protected," Solène Roquain-Bardet, Daoud's lawyer, told The Associated Press. "This latest news is astounding."

Daoud's ex-husband had been in prison for domestic violence against her until December 2020. After his release, he attacked her again, and in March this year, she filed another complaint at the Merignac police station. But the police officer's filing was illegible and never got properly forwarded to court authorities, according to a state review of how the case was handled.

State inspectors wrote that there are "serious doubts regarding the care with which the danger evaluation documents were completed."

One key fact missing from the state inspection document: The officer who took her complaint had himself allegedly been found guilty in February 2021 of "habitual violence" against his ex-wife, the Canard Enchaîné, a reliable, well-sourced weekly, reported last month.

He received a suspended 8-month prison sentence and was in disciplinary proceedings when he took Daoud's complaint. Only after her killing was he moved out of a public-facing job, according to Canard Enchaîné.

For Daoud's lawyer, "there's a leniency by the hierarchy which tells itself that, in the end, taking complaints is not that big a deal."

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin this month made fighting domestic abuse a top priority.

Regarding the officer who took Daoud's complaint, he told the daily Le Parisien that "his superiors should not have allowed him to be in contact with the public."

In another layer of dysfunction, the officer's conviction was not disclosed to state inspectors reviewing the events leading to Daoud's death. Darmanin said the IGPN police oversight agency was investigating whether there was an intentional attempt to hide that. If so, he said, "sanctions will be taken."

Police stations in the region where Daoud was killed declined to comment, citing the ongoing investigation, or to say whether other complaints the officer took were under review. The French Interior Ministry and the Ministry for Equality Between Women and Men did not respond to requests by The Associated Press for comment.

There are no known studies in France on the issue of intimate partner violence involving police, though the problem within law enforcement in France and elsewhere is not new. A 1991 U.S. study by Arizona State University professor Leanor Boulton Johnson found that 40% of a sample of 900,000 officers admitted to having committed domestic violence within the previous six months.

British TV network Channel 4 released in May its own investigation on domestic violence by British police, saying more than 125 women reported their officer partners in the last two years. It cited a Freedom of Information request by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism that found that from 2015 to 2018 there were almost 700 reports of domestic violence involving police officers and staff in Britain.

In France, Sophie Boutboul and Alizé Bernard, a journalist and former victim of domestic abuse by a police officer, co-wrote a 2019 book on the subject.

Bernard's ex-partner received a suspended 6-month prison sentence for inflicting violence over two years, but the judge decided to keep the information off his disciplinary records. "I took it as preferential treatment," Bernard told the AP.

The officer continued to train police for arrests and self-defense and kept his service revolver. And he worked near Bernard's home. When driving, she would plan detours to avoid his patrol area.

"I was scared, scared of stumbling into him patrolling, scared of being arrested, scared of what could

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happen," she said. "When I crossed (his patrol area) I was always with someone with a phone ready to record. You can't live like that."

Journalist Boutboul found a pattern in women victims of police domestic violence.

"The fear will often be exacerbated by specific threats," Boutboul said, things like "I'm the law," "The complaint will come to my desk," "I know the prosecutor."

The lack of statistics pushed feminist organizations to petition the government to organize a national count of violence by police. More than 20,000 people have signed on in the past two weeks.

The online magazine Bastamag, which specializes in social and ecology issues and keeps a record of police-related deaths, said that since 1990 about 40 people, mostly women and children, were fatally shot by a partner or parent in the police.

Most killings happened off duty, with the officer using his service weapon. In 12 cases, the officers also killed themselves, according to Bastamag.

In 2017, France's national hotline for domestic violence counted 93 calls from partners of police officers out of 1,328 calls, the latest figures available.

The small police union SUD Intérieur is a rare voice within French law enforcement to speak about the issue. It has called for an independent authority to investigate police actions, replacing the internal General Inspectorate of the National Police (IGPN) that now oversees alleged misconduct.

"We can't ask that the police control the police," a union official said, reiterating what critics have long contended: That police officers are often sympathetic to members of their ranks, a tendency that can influence investigations. He asked not to be identified for fear of retribution.

Boutboul questions why officers found guilty of a crime can remain on the job. "Why aren't there automatic procedures when there's a complaint for violence against police?" Boutboul asked.

The officer who took Chahinez Daoud's complaint in March was only removed from that position after her death.

"He shouldn't be taking complaints. He's in front of women victims of violence like he himself perpetrated," Boutboul said. "It's a vicious circle."

## US now averaging 100,000 new COVID-19 infections a day

The U.S. is now averaging 100,000 new COVID-19 infections a day, returning to a milestone last seen during the winter surge in yet another bleak reminder of how quickly the delta variant has spread through the country.

The U.S. was averaging about 11,000 cases a day in late June. Now the number is 107,143.

It took the U.S. about nine months to cross the 100,000 average case number in November before peaking at about 250,000 in early January. Cases bottomed out in June but took about six weeks to go back above 100,000, despite a vaccine that has been given to more than 70% of the adult population.

The seven-day average for daily new deaths also increased, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. It rose over the past two weeks from about 270 deaths per day to nearly 500 a day as of Friday.

The virus is spreading quickly through unvaccinated populations, especially in the South where hospitals have been overrun with patients.

Health officials are fearful that cases will continue to soar if more Americans don't embrace the vaccine.

"Our models show that if we don't (vaccinate people), we could be up to several hundred thousand cases a day, similar to our surge in early January," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director Rochelle Walensky said on CNN this week.

The number of Americans hospitalized with the virus has also skyrocketed and it has gotten so bad that many hospitals are scrambling to find beds for patients in far-off locations.

Houston officials say the latest wave of COVID-19 cases is pushing the local health care system to nearly "a breaking point," resulting in some patients having to be transferred out of the city to get medical care, including one who had to be taken to North Dakota.

Dr. David Persse, who is health authority for the Houston Health Department and EMS medical director,

said some ambulances were waiting hours to offload patients at Houston area hospitals because no beds were available. Persse said he feared this would lead to prolonged response times to 911 medical calls.

"The health care system right now is nearly at a breaking point ... For the next three weeks or so, I see no relief on what's happening in emergency departments," Persse said Thursday.

Last weekend, a patient in Houston had to be transferred to North Dakota to get medical care. An 11-month-old girl with COVID-19 and who was having seizures had to be transported on Thursday from Houston to a hospital 170 miles (274 kilometers) away in Temple.

In Missouri, 30 ambulances and more than 60 medical personnel will be stationed across the state to help transport COVID-19 patients to other regions if nearby hospitals are too full to admit them, Missouri Gov. Mike Parson announced Friday.

## Senate edges toward vote on Biden's \$1T infrastructure bill

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Edging toward a vote, senators are convening for a rare weekend session on the bipartisan infrastructure bill, which could wrap up swiftly with passage of the \$1 trillion package or drag out for days by opponents trying to slow President Joe Biden's big priority.

The president nudged senators along from the White House, praising their work so far as a potentially "historic investment" — on par with the building of the transcontinental railroad or interstate highway system — that will bring jobs and modernization to millions of Americans.

Senators appear on track to approve the bill, despite days of fits and starts.

"It's a bill that would end years of gridlock in Washington and create millions of good-paying jobs, put America on a new path to win the race for the economy in the 21st century," Biden said Friday.

Saturday's session will launch with a crucial 60-vote hurdle at midday that will determine if the bipartisan alliance between Republicans and Democrats holds on the public works package. Ten Republicans would be needed to join all Democrats to advance it past a filibuster; more votes would follow.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell has so far allowed the bill to progress, and his vote will be one to watch. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has vowed to keep senators in session until they finish.

Called the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the thick bill is a first part of Biden's infrastructure agenda. It would inject \$550 billion of new spending over the next five years on roads, bridges, waterworks, broadband and other projects to virtually every corner of the nation. If approved by the Senate, it would next go to the House.

For senators who have been slogging through debate — and months of give-and-take negotiations — it's a chance not only to send federal funds to their states, but also to show the country that Congress can work together in a bipartisan way to solve problems.

Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski said the needs back home in Alaska are obvious — including money for water systems in remote villages without running taps for handwashing during the COVID-19 pandemic. But as one of the negotiators, she also wants to demonstrate that lawmakers can reach across the aisle to govern.

"I'm really worried that everybody believes that we're as dysfunctional as we appear to be, and so to prove otherwise, it's kind of important," she said. "The Senate needs some demonstrated acts of bipartisanship."

The weekend action comes as Congress is under pressure to make gains on the president's infrastructure priorities — first with the bipartisan bill that's on track for passage as soon as this weekend, and quickly followed by Democrats' more sweeping \$3.5 trillion budget blueprint they plan to shoulder on their own.

If senators wrap up work on the bipartisan bill, they immediately will turn to the much more partisan undertaking on Biden's agenda, the outline for the \$3.5 trillion proposal. That plan would unleash billions on what the White House calls human infrastructure — child care support, home health care, education and other expenditures that are Democratic priorities that Republicans have pledged to reject. Debate on that will extend into the fall.



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Schumer has vowed to show progress on both before recessing the Senate for August.

For some Republicans, that back-to-back voting schedule is what they are trying to delay, hoping to slow or halt what appears to be a forward march by Democrats to make gains on the president's infrastructure goals.

Sen. Bill Hagerty, R-Tenn., an ally of Donald Trump's who had been the former president's ambassador to Japan, said he objected to expediting consideration of the bill.

"I could not, in good conscience, allow that to happen," Hagerty said in a statement early Friday. He said he was especially concerned that passing the bipartisan bill would pave the way for Democrats to move quickly to their \$3.5 trillion "tax-and-spend spree."

Overall, the infrastructure bill calls for billions in new spending above projected federal levels to create a nearly \$1 trillion package, in what could be one of the more substantial investments in years.

Senators had hoped to wrap up the 2,700-page bipartisan bill late in the week before many of them departed to attend funeral services Friday in Wyoming for former Sen. Mike Enzi, a Republican.

But the Senate ground to a halt with new problems as senators worked late into the night Thursday on amendments and to counter objections from Republican opponents of the plan to expedite the process.

An analysis of the bill from the Congressional Budget Office drew concerns, particularly from Republicans. It concluded that the legislation would increase deficits by about \$256 billion over the next decade.

But the bill's backers argued that the budget office was unable to take into account certain revenue streams — including from future economic growth.

Paying for the package has been a pressure point throughout the monthlong slog of negotiations after Democrats objected to a hike in the gas tax paid at the pump and Republicans resisted a plan to beef up the IRS to go after tax scofflaws.

Unlike Biden's bigger \$3.5 trillion package, which would be paid for by higher tax rates for corporations and the wealthy, the bipartisan package is funded by repurposing other money, including untapped COVID-19 aid, and other spending cuts and revenue streams.

Senators have spent the past week processing nearly two dozen amendments to the bipartisan package, with more possible on Saturday. So far, none has substantially changed the framework of the public works package.

One of the amendments generating the most attention involves cryptocurrency.

The bill would raise an estimated \$28 billion over 10 years by updating IRS reporting requirements for cryptocurrency brokers, just as stockbrokers report their customers' sales to the IRS.

Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., and others who wanted to narrow the definition of who must file those IRS forms are concerned that crypto miners, software developers and others would be subject to the new reporting requirement.

Toomey warned that the provision, as written, could have a "chilling effect on the development of this technology."

The White House weighed in late Thursday, suggesting it favored a different approach from Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., and other senators.

White House deputy press secretary Andrew Bates said the compromise amendment "would reduce tax evasion in the cryptocurrency market."

The House is away on recess and is expected to consider both Biden infrastructure packages when it returns in September.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., reiterated that her chamber will consider the infrastructure bills "together."

## COVID survivor: 'Have to start my life all over again'

By SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — As her father lay dying last August from the coronavirus at a Georgia hospital, Lindsay Schwarz put her hands on his arms and softly sang him lines from their favorite songs.

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Eugene Schwarz had been admitted three weeks earlier, but the hospital had not allowed his daughter to visit him for fear of spreading the virus. The 72-year-old looked nothing like the ebullient, crisply dressed cardiologist who used to kiss her on the forehead before heading off to work.

"I was hugging my father, and it didn't really feel like my father," Schwarz said.

Less than an hour after she was allowed to see him, he died.

Schwarz recalled the painful experience in a phone interview on Friday to raise awareness about the devastating impacts of COVID-19. She and other victims of the virus, including people who were infected months ago and are still experiencing severe symptoms, have organized rallies in Atlanta, New York, Washington D.C., Denver and more than a dozen other cities around the country on Saturday to encourage people to get vaccinated and wear a mask.

"I promise you that you do not want to even experience ten minutes of what I experienced," said Tanya Washington, with the group, COVID Survivors for Change.

Washington helped organize the rally in Atlanta. She lost her father to the coronavirus in March and recalled her harrowing final moments with him.

"Never in a million years did I think that I would have to take my dad off of oxygen dressed from head to toe in PPE and say goodbye to him," she said. "I couldn't touch him except through gloves. I couldn't kiss him except through a mask."

The rallies come amid a surge in infections around the country that are again straining hospitals, particularly in the South, where vaccination rates remain low. COVID survivors and those who have lost loved ones to the disease say they are frustrated by ongoing resistance to vaccines and misinformation about the virus.

"It has become a political issue, and it's not about that. It's a real virus, and it's killing everybody no matter what political thoughts you have," said Paula Schirmer.

Schirmer, 50, of Marietta, Georgia, her husband and three children contracted the virus in March 2020, but her symptoms have not gone away even more than a year later. She has difficulty remembering appointments and words — key to her job as an interpreter — and suffers from intestinal problems. The virus also took a toll on her mental health.

Schirmer's husband was hospitalized for nearly two months, and she twice received calls from nurses informing her that he was in a critical state. The experience has left her with post-traumatic stress disorder, she said.

"It was awful not knowing what was going to happen," she said.

The rallies also aim to push lawmakers for financial and medical help for COVID victims.

Marjorie Roberts, 60, said she continues to require regular medical care for damage from COVID. She has lung and liver problems and lost seven teeth. She can now barely walk several blocks and sometimes has no energy hours after waking up.

"I was living my life like it was golden. I was traveling," she said. "I literally have to start my life all over again."

Because of the pandemic, Schwarz has put off traveling to New York to bury her father's ashes at a cemetery where other members of the family have been laid to rest. That's made it hard to move forward.

"It's delayed closure," she said. "I don't want people to go through that."

## Weekend of fear looms for Californians in face of wildfires

By DAISY NGUYEN and NOAH BERGER Associated Press

GREENVILLE, Calif. (AP) — People living in the scenic forestlands of Northern California found themselves facing a weekend of fear as wildfires threatened to reduce thousands of homes to ashes.

The Dixie Fire that incinerated much of the gold rush-era town of Greenville threatened more than 10,000 buildings in the northern Sierra Nevada. It had engulfed an area larger than the size of New York City.

It was the largest current wildland blaze in the nation and the third-largest in recorded California history, according to the state Department of Fire and Forestry Protection.

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Wind-driven flames destroyed dozens of homes and most of Greenville's downtown on Wednesday and Thursday, and also heavily damaged Canyondam, a hamlet with a population of about three dozen people. The fire reached Chester but crews managed to protect homes and businesses there, officials said.

Charlene Mays kept her gas station in Chester open as long as she could, telling weary firefighters not to apologize for the trail of ash their boots left on the floor. But when the small town on the northwest shore of Lake Almanor lost power, Mays decided it was time for her to leave.

She ran home to grab a box of valuables, including her husband's class ring and some jewelry. The smoke was so thick it was hard to breathe. Chunks of ash broke apart as they hit the ground, making a sound like broken glass.

That was two days ago. Since then, Mays has been living in the parking lot of Lassen College in Susanville. Her husband stayed behind to maintain some water tanks firefighters were using. It's just her, a miniature pinscher chihuahua named Jedidiah and a pit bull named Bear.

Her home was still standing on Friday but her fate was bound with the direction of the wind. She wasn't alone.

"I've got probably 30 of my regular customers right here," she said.

The Dixie Fire, named for the road where it started, now spans an area of 679 square miles (1,760 square kilometers) and was just 21% contained. No injuries or deaths have been reported.

Weather at the fire site was expected to have higher humidity and calmer winds Saturday with temperatures topping 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius) instead of the 40-mph (64-kph) gusts and triple-digit highs recorded earlier in the week.

Still, the blaze and its neighboring fires, within a couple hundred miles of each other, posed an ongoing threat.

Heat waves and historic drought tied to climate change have made wildfires harder to fight in the American West. Scientists say climate change has made the region much warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.

Near Klamath National Forest, firefighters kept an eye on small communities that were ordered evacuated in the path of the Antelope Fire, which earlier had thrown up flames 100 feet (30 meters) high as it blackened bone-dry grass, brush and timber. It was just 20% contained.

Further northwest, some 500 homes scattered in and around Shasta-Trinity National Forest remained threatened by the Monument Fire and others by the McFarland Fire, both started by lightning storms last week, fire officials said.

About a two-hour drive south from the Dixie Fire, crews had surrounded about a third of the River Fire that broke out Wednesday near the town of Colfax and destroyed nearly 90 homes and other buildings. Evacuations for thousands of people in Nevada and Placer counties were lifted Friday. Three people, including a firefighter, were injured, authorities said.

Dale Huber walked into the fire zone Friday to check on his brother's home, which was reduced to rubble.

"It used to be a bunch of cool stuff, and now it's just trash," Huber said. "You can't fix it. We can tear it out and start over again or run away. I think he's decided he wants to rebuild here."

Smoke from the fires blanketed central California and western Nevada, causing air quality to deteriorate to very unhealthy levels. Air quality advisories extended through the San Joaquin Valley and as far west as the San Francisco Bay Area, where residents were urged to keep their windows and doors shut.

California is on track to surpass last year, which had the worst fire season in recent recorded state history. Since the start of the year, more than 6,000 blazes have destroyed more than 1,260 square miles (3,260 square kilometers) of land — more than triple the losses for the same period in 2020, according to state fire figures.

California's raging wildfires were among more than 100 large, active fires burning across 14 states, mostly in the West where historic drought conditions have left lands parched and ripe for ignition.

**Tokyo Olympics cost \$15.4 billion. What else could that buy?**

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By STEPHEN WADE AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — The official price tag for the Tokyo Olympics in \$15.4 billion, which a University of Oxford study says is the most expensive on record. What else could those billions buy?

The ballpark figure for building a 300-bed hospital in Japan in \$55 million. So you could put up almost 300 of these.

The average elementary school in Japan costs about \$13 million. For that price, you get 1,200 schools.

A quick search finds a Boeing 747 is priced at roughly \$400 million. Voila: 38 jumbo jets for the cost of the Tokyo Olympics.

The point is, Olympic Games are costly and may bump aside other priorities. In fact, several Japanese government audits say the real outlay for the Tokyo Games is even more than the official figure, perhaps twice as much. All but \$6.7 billion comes from public money from Japanese taxpayers. According to the latest budget, the IOC's contribution is \$1.3 billion. It also chipped in several hundred million more after the pandemic.

Olympic costs have been dissected in a study by the University of Oxford, which found that all Games since 1960 have had cost overruns averaging 172%. Tokyo's cost overrun is 111% or 244% depending on which cost figure you select.

"The IOC and host cities have no interest in tracking costs, because tracking tends to reveal cost overruns, which have increasingly become an embarrassment to the IOC and host cities," Oxford author Bent Flyvberg said in an email. Flyvberg also pointed out that costs would be reduced if the IOC picked up more of the bills rather than opening organizers' wallets.

Following costs is a tedious exercise, dotted with arguments about what are — and what are not — Olympic expenses. Flyvberg explained that numbers from different games can be "opaque and non-comparable" and require sorting and tracking.

"The problem is disentangling what is Olympics cost and what is just general infrastructure spending that would have happened anyways but was sped up for the Olympics." Victor Matheson, who studies sports economics at College of the Holy Cross, wrote in an email.

For example: The 1964 Tokyo Games, he says, "were either one of the cheapest or one of the most expensive Games depending on how much of the preparation costs count as the Olympics."

The 2008 Beijing Olympics, usually listed as costing more than \$40 billion, and the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics — priced at \$51 billion — are often singled out incorrectly as the most expensive.

"The numbers for Beijing and Sochi likely include wider infrastructure costs: roads, rail, airports, hotels, etc. Our numbers do not," Flyvberg wrote in an email.

The blur around costs — and who pays — allows the IOC to pitch the Olympics as a global party that brings the world together and promotes world peace. Everybody is seen to benefit, and the financial interests of the not-for-profit IOC are hidden behind national flags, pomp and ceremony, and heart-tugging stories about athletes winning gold and beating the pandemic.

Tokyo, of course, saw costs soar with the postponement. Officials say the delay added \$2.8 billion to the final total. The postponement and a subsequent ban on fans also wiped out virtually all ticket sales income, which was budgeted at \$800 million. That shortfall will have to be picked up by Japanese government entities — likely the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

Tokyo organizers raised a record \$3.3 billion from domestic sponsors, driven by giant Japanese advertising company Dentsu, Inc. But many sponsors complained openly in the runup to the Games that their investment was wasted without fans. Toyota, one of the IOC's top 15 sponsors, pulled its Games-related advertising off television in Japan because of public discontent about holding the Olympics in the middle of a pandemic.

The big winner appears to be the Switzerland-based International Olympic Committee, which by holding the Olympics — even without fans — assured broadcast rights income of \$3 billion to \$4 billion. The IOC is essentially a sports and entertainment business, and almost 75% of its income is from selling broadcast rights with another 18% from sponsors.

The IOC was able to drive the Games forward, partly because the terms in the so-called Host City Agree-



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ment favor the IOC and not the Japanese hosts.

In an interview last week, President Thomas Bach said financial interests were not at the center of the IOC's decision to postpone instead of cancel.

"We could have canceled the Games 15 months ago," Bach said. "Financially, it would have been the easiest solution for the IOC. But we decided at the time not to cancel the Games, not to draw on the insurance we had at the time."

The IOC has never said how much insurance coverage it has for such eventualities, nor what is covered.

So why did Tokyo want the Olympics? Why does any city? German sports economist Wolfgang Maennig said the Olympics offer little economic boost. So any value must be elsewhere. He has often likened the Olympics to throwing a big party for your friends and overspending, hoping they go away happy and remember you fondly.

"After three decades of empirical research, economists agree that the Olympics do not generate any significant positive effect on national (or even regional) income, employment, tax income, tourism etc.," Maennig, a 1988 Olympic gold medalist in rowing, wrote in a email.

He said any benefits were elsewhere and include home-field advantage and more medals for home athletes, new sporting facilities, enhanced international awareness and fast-track decision making around urban regeneration. Japan's Olympic performance has been in line with that; it has won more gold medals and overall medals than ever before.

Much of the Olympic benefit goes to construction companies and contractors. Tokyo built eight new venues. The two most expensive were the National Stadium, which cost \$1.43 billion, and the new aquatic center, priced at \$520 million. The next two Olympic organizers — Paris in 2024 and Los Angeles in 2028 — say they are cutting back drastically on new construction.

Though Tokyo probably suffered short-term economic losses from the pandemic and absence of fans, any losses are relatively small for a country with a \$5 trillion economy.

In another study of Olympic costs by Robert Baade and Victor Matheson, "Going for Gold: The Economics of the Olympics," they point out that Olympic investment is risky and only a few reap the benefits.

"The goal should be that the costs of hosting are matched by benefits that are shared in a way to include ordinary citizens who fund the event through their tax dollars," they wrote. "In the current arrangement, it is often far easier for the athletes to achieve gold than it is for the hosts."

## Jepchirchir beats heat in Sapporo to win Olympic marathon

By PAT GRAHAM AP Sports Writer

SAPPORO, Japan (AP) — There was an unfamiliar sight along the women's marathon course at the Tokyo Olympics: actual fans. Cheering, too.

At the end, a more familiar view — a Kenyan racer leading the way.

Peres Jepchirchir led a 1-2 Kenyan finish in the women's marathon, withstanding the heat and humidity while running through the streets of Sapporo, more than 500 miles (more than 800 kilometers) north of Tokyo.

Jepchirchir's winning time of 2 hours, 27 minutes, 20 seconds on Saturday was not fast — 10 minutes off her personal best — but it was still sizzling considering the conditions.

The start was moved up an hour to avoid the heat and a smattering of spectators lining the course applauded as the Tokyo Games went north for the marathons and race walks. Jepchirchir's teammate Brigid Kosgei was second and American Molly Seidel, a relative newcomer to the marathon stage, took home the bronze.

"I'm going to say too hot," said Jepchirchir, who gave Kenya back-to-back Olympic gold medals. "Despite the challenge of the weather, it was good."

The prevailing thought: Thank goodness for the time change. Seidel was at dinner when she heard the news.

"My jaw just dropped," she said. "I immediately got up and went to bed."

A race that was moved to Sapporo to avoid the extreme heat and humidity in Tokyo found little relief

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on a winding course through the city. The starter's gun went off near 6 a.m. under a sunny sky and with a temperature reading of 77 degrees Fahrenheit (25 Celsius). It climbed to nearly 86 degrees (30) near the finish, with a humidity of around 65%.

"The weather was really hot and tough for a competition," said Kosgei, the world record-holder in the event at 2:14.04. "We tried our best to finish."

There were 88 runners entered in the field and 15 recorded a "did not finish." That included world champion Ruth Chepngetich of Kenya.

The weather appeared to take its toll on Lonah Salpeter of Israel late in the race. Among the final four with around 4 kilometers to go, she suddenly stopped and walked to the side of the road. She still finished — 21 minutes behind.

Seidel pretty much forecasted this day when she was a kid. In fourth grade, she wrote a note to herself on her goals: Make the Olympics.

Even more specific: Earn a gold medal.

Bronze felt so satisfying. It was a surprise, too, given it was just her third marathon.

She screamed when she crossed the finish line and said "Hi" to her mom and dad into the camera.

"I came in today with not a whole lot of expectations," said Seidel, who is from Wisconsin. "I was hoping to be in the top 10.

"Just trying to like stick my nose where it didn't belong and just kind of get after it. I mean, Olympics only happens once every four years, you might as well take your shot."

Volunteers wearing yellow shirts stood along the course with signs that loosely translated into: "Refrain from watching here." But spectators lined the course anyway, sneaking a rare glimpse of the action at these Olympics where fans have been shut out due to coronavirus restrictions.

Their applause was heard.

"It's very exciting to go down the course and see people cheering and see people with the flags out," Seidel said.

The runners tried to stay cool any way possible. Aleksandra Lisowska of Poland grabbed an entire bag filled with water at one stop, quickly drinking one and then pouring another over her head. Andrea Deeltstra of the Netherlands had a bag of ice perched on top of her head.

Aliphine Tuliamuk of the United States was returning to racing after giving birth to her daughter in January. She didn't finish due to a nagging hip ailment.

This was her gold-medal moment: picking up her daughter out of her stroller after the race.

Some of these competitors got a taste of the furnace-type heat and humidity at the 2019 world championships in Doha. That race was run at midnight and the temperature still hit 88 degrees (31 C). It led to nearly 30 runners not reaching the finish line as Chepngetich captured gold.

Chepngetich was in the mix Saturday until late in the race when she began walking.

Working as a team, Jepchirchir and Kosgei were shoulder-to-shoulder late in the race until Jepchirchir made her move. Kenya's two medals gave it a total of seven in the women's Olympic marathon, the most of any country.

"I pushed on the pace (and when I opened the gap) it was like: 'Wow, I'm going to make it. I'm going to win,'" Jepchirchir said.

## Brazil Olympic skateboarding is tropical fairytale for girls

By MAURICIO SAVARESE and TATIANA POLLASTRI Associated Press

SAO CAETANO DO SUL, Brazil (AP) — No matter how much 9-year-old Brazilian Nicole Amaro pleaded with her dad to let her skateboard, Deivison wasn't swayed. He was afraid she'd get hurt, and held his ground.

Then, when things seemed hopeless, the impossible happened: Brazil was visited by a fairy.

Nicknamed Fadinha, or "Little Fairy" in Portuguese, 13-year-old Rayssa Leal became an overnight sensation after winning the silver medal in the Olympics's inaugural skateboarding competition. The board flips, slides and grinds of Brazil's youngest-ever medalist drew as much acclaim as her braces-filled smile

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and happy-go-lucky vibe — perhaps best embodied by her shuffling “fairy dance” while waiting to take her final run.

And back home, something magical happened. From Brazil’s posh neighborhoods to its working-class favelas, in skateparks and empty parking lots, a skateboarding frenzy has taken hold.

“My parents were worried, it took time for them to agree. But when they watched the Olympics, they realized it’s a great sport,” Amaro told The Associated Press at a skatepark in Sao Caetano do Sul, a wealthy city in Sao Paulo’s metropolitan region. She was receiving her first two-hour lesson and wobbling on her board — with the blessing of a watchful Deivison. Eight other girls and young women, aged between 4 and 20, also rode around.

Eduardo Braz, a former pro skateboarder who owns the skatepark, said he used to receive messages from one or two girls seeking classes on normal days before the Tokyo Olympics. Now, there are usually 20 reaching out to him, eager to learn.

“We nearly closed because of the pandemic,” Braz said. “Rayssa was a gift. Many girls used to feel a little shy around boys, but now things will be different for them.”

Brazilians were first introduced to Rayssa Leal in 2015, when a video showed the then 7-year-old attempting a heelflip over three stairs while wearing a blue dress. She tumbled twice, but on the third attempt — wearing wings — stuck the landing. American skateboard legend Tony Hawk shared the clip on social media, and what he called her “fairytale heelflip” went viral.

Hawk and Leal have since struck up a bond, and on her social media — where her number of followers has surged into the millions — she affectionately calls him Tio Toninho, or “Little Uncle Tony.” They met up in Tokyo and he joined her while she trained.

Upon her return to Maranhao state in Brazil’s poorer northeastern region, she was surprised to find a new mural painted on her school’s walls. It shows her mid-air doing a heelflip, and says “if you can dream, you can make it happen.”

Leal isn’t Brazil’s first female skateboarder, and pioneers — like her own idol, 32-year-old Leticia Bufoni — struggled to break in and gain acceptance. When Bufoni was 10, her dad snapped her board in half in an attempt to put an abrupt end to her hobby.

“I cried for hours,” she said in a press conference after competing in Tokyo. “He thought girls shouldn’t skate, because he had never seen a woman skate before.”

After Leal’s Olympic showing, no Brazilian parent can claim that again.

Professional skateboarder Sandro Dias said interest among girls that was growing before Leal’s medal has since exploded. He has organized a training camp to discover new talent outside Sao Paulo for over a decade and, among 60 participants in each session, there were only ever a couple of girls.

“Then we had 14 girls in the last one, before the Olympics, and we were so impressed. Now I’ve just stopped counting; there are just too many girls keen to come!” said Dias. Young people “want sports that reflect a lifestyle. And that’s what Rayssa brought.”

The sales of popular sporting goods company Netshoes started skyrocketing hours after Leal won her medal, and on the first full day afterward jumped 80% from the same day the prior week. Its best-selling item? The sneakers Leal wore during her Olympic runs. Sales of starter skateboards have surged, too, according to a spokesperson.

A brand new skateboard costs about 240 Brazilian reais, which is about \$45. A used one could cost less than 100 reais, or under \$20.

In Rio de Janeiro, Rennan Leta gave his stepdaughter Maria Clara a skateboard for Christmas last year, but she had only used it once. Few places near their home have smooth pavement, so the board collected dust by the washing machine.

Rayssa’s performance in Tokyo reignited the 8-year-old’s interest and the next day she set out to find to place to skate so she could “join the little fairy team,” Leta, a 26-year-old coordinator of a nonprofit, told the AP in a message. He filmed Maria Clara skating unsteadily and put it on Twitter, joking that she was training for the 2028 Olympics.

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"The 'little fairy' effect is enormous!" he wrote at the time. Two weeks later, she's riding down declines with perfect balance.

Skateboard mania has also reached one of Rio's most famous favelas, Cidade de Deus, which is dominated by drug traffickers and was made famous by the 2002 film City of God.

It's a far cry from the well-to-do city where Amaro's dad is paying for her lessons. But 8-year-old Ana Júlia dos Santos was able to start skateboarding a year ago, thanks to social project CDD Skate Arte, which works to empower children and prevent them from getting mixed up in trouble. Most are girls.

She watched Leal win her medal, and since then has been skating every day.

"I want to be just like Rayssa Leal, the little fairy of skateboarding, and win medals," dos Santos said, wearing an old black helmet with a pink chinstrap, her only protection.

Dos Santos's mom, Ingrid, told the AP that she has overcome her concern at seeing her daughter wipe out, and now is fully on board.

## 'Nothing's safe' as wildfire tears through California town

By DAISY NGUYEN and NOAH BERGER Associated Press

GREENVILLE, Calif. (AP) — Shelton Douthit and his team at the Feather River Land Trust in Northern California have been working to restore the lush natural habitat and protect Indigenous artifacts around Lake Almanor. Now, after a ferocious wildfire tore through the area, he knows "nothing's safe."

Driven by fierce winds and bone-dry vegetation, the Dixie Fire destroyed most of downtown and dozens of homes in the gold rush-era community of Greenville, growing to become the third-largest in California history. The museum, medical offices, fire equipment and structures significant to a Native American tribe were lost in the town of about 1,000.

"This fire is so intense that I think we're learning as a community, as a region, that this is not a normal fire. It's a beast," said Douthit, who is the trust's executive director.

The Dixie Fire, named for the road where it started, was still raging Friday and now spans an area of 676 square miles (1,751 square kilometers), greater than the size of New York City. No injuries or deaths have been reported, but the fire continued to threaten more than 10,000 homes Friday. It is just 35% contained.

Fire officials said the gusts were so strong on Thursday they uprooted a tree and knocked it over a garage.

"This is going to be a long firefight," said Capt. Mitch Matlow, spokesperson of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

About a two-hour drive south, firefighters are gaining the upper hand on the fast-moving River Fire that broke out Wednesday near the town of Colfax and destroyed nearly 90 homes and other buildings. More than 5,000 people were ordered to evacuate in Placer and Nevada counties, state fire officials said.

Dale Huber walked into the fire zone Friday to check on his brother's home, which was reduced to rubble.

"It used to be a bunch of cool stuff, and now it's just trash," Huber said. "You can't fix it. We can tear it out and start over again or run away. I think he's decided he wants to rebuild here."

The three-week-old Dixie Fire was one of 100 active, large fires burning in 14 states, most in the West where historic drought has left lands parched and ripe for ignition.

The fire's cause was under investigation. But Pacific Gas & Electric utility has said it may have been sparked when a tree fell on one of the utility's power lines.

Heavy smoke produced by the fire's intense, erratic winds was impeding firefighters' efforts Friday to look for hot spots from the air, forcing them to instead rely on infrared technology. The smoke also blanketed central California and western Nevada, causing air quality to deteriorate to very unhealthy levels.

By midday, the air quality index in Chester, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) northwest of Greenville, shot up to 998, more than triple the amount where hazardous levels begin, according to the U.S. Air Quality Index.

In Susanville, Randy Robbins watched quarter-sized pieces of ash fall as the fire crept 6 miles (10 kilometers) from his home.

"It's crazy to think this fire started 50 miles (80 kilometers) from our house, easily," he said. "You can't imagine how big it is. You look at a map, and you're like, 'How is that possible?'"



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Heat waves and historic drought tied to climate change have made wildfires harder to fight in the American West. Scientists say climate change has made the region much warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.

The flames heavily damaged Canyondam, a hamlet with a population of about three dozen people, and also reached Chester, but crews managed to protect homes and businesses there, officials said.

The fire was not far from the town of Paradise, which was largely destroyed in a 2018 wildfire sparked by PG&E equipment that killed 85 people, making it the nation's deadliest U.S. wildfire in at least a century.

Eva Gorman said she managed to grab photos off the wall, her favorite jewelry and important documents before fleeing. She was told that her home burned down but is waiting until she can see it with her own eyes to believe it's gone.

How could another California town could be reduced to ashes, she asked herself.

"That's what I keep thinking. It's happening, again," she said. "It's unfathomable."

## Pause on student loan payments extended through January

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

The Biden administration on Friday issued what it says will be the final extension to a student loan moratorium that has allowed millions of Americans to put off debt payments during the pandemic.

Under the action, payments on federal student loans will remain paused through Jan. 31, 2022. Interest rates will remain at 0% during that period, and debt collection efforts will be suspended. Those measures have been in place since early in the pandemic but were set to expire Sept. 30.

In announcing the decision, President Joe Biden said the economy is recovering "at a record rate." But he said the road to recovery will be longer for some Americans, especially those with student loans.

"This will give the Department of Education and borrowers more time and more certainty as they prepare to restart student loan payments," Biden said in a statement. "It will also ensure a smoother transition that minimizes loan defaults and delinquencies that hurt families and undermine our economic recovery."

The policy applies to more than 36 million Americans who have student loans that are held by the federal government. Their collective debt totals more than \$1.3 trillion, according to the latest Education Department data.

Questions about the moratorium had been swirling in recent weeks as its expiration date approached. Even as the economy improves, there have been concerns that borrowers are not ready to start payments again. Once the moratorium ends, those who were already behind on payments could have wages and benefits taken away as part of debt collection efforts.

Several Democrats, including Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, N.Y., and Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Mass., urged Biden to extend the moratorium through at least March 2022. In a June letter, they said restarting payments now would "drag down the pace of our economic recovery."

Schumer, Warren and Rep. Ayanna Pressley, D-Mass., applauded the extension in a joint statement Friday, saying it provides relief to millions of borrowers facing a "disastrous financial cliff."

"The payment pause has saved the average borrower hundreds of dollars per month, allowing them to invest in their futures and support their families' needs," the Democrats said.

The Trump administration initially suspended federal student loan payments in March 2020 and later extended it through January 2021. Biden moved to continue it through Sept. 30 soon after taking office.

The Education Department itself has raised concerns about administrative hurdles around suddenly restarting loan payments. In a November 2020 report, the department said it would be a "heavy burden" to reactivate millions of loans at the same time. It warned that some borrowers would likely fall behind on their payments, "at least initially."

On Friday, the Education Department said the final extension provides enough time to restart the process smoothly, and it gives borrowers a "definitive end date" to plan for.

"As our nation's economy continues to recover from a deep hole, this final extension will give students and borrowers the time they need to plan for restart and ensure a smooth pathway back to repayment,"

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Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said in a statement.

Student advocates welcomed the extension, saying it's a victory for borrowers who have suffered financial hardship during the pandemic. But Republicans criticized the move, saying the economy has rebounded strongly enough to resume payments.

"Students and families faced immense challenges last year, but the American economy continues to recover and there is no rational excuse for continued extensions of non-payment on student loans," said Sen. Richard Burr, the top Republican on the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

The Biden administration announced the relief as it faces mounting pressure from some Democrats to erase huge swaths of student debt. Schumer and Warren have urged Biden to use his authority to cancel \$50,000 in student debt for all borrowers, saying it would jumpstart the economy and help families hit hard by the pandemic.

They repeated that call in their statement on Friday, saying debt cancellation is "one of the most significant actions that President Biden can take right now to build a more just economy and address racial inequity."

But Biden has questioned whether he has the authority for that kind of mass cancellation, and legal scholars have come to differing conclusions. Earlier this year, Biden asked the Education and Justice departments to study the issue. Officials have said that work is still underway.

Biden has previously said he supports canceling up to \$10,000 in student debt, but he has argued it should be done by Congress.

## Arkansas judge blocks state from enforcing mask mandate ban

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — An Arkansas judge on Friday temporarily blocked the state from enforcing its ban on mask mandates after lawmakers left the prohibition in place despite a rising number of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

Pulaski County Circuit Judge Tim Fox issued a preliminary injunction against the law that Gov. Asa Hutchinson signed in April banning mask requirements by governmental entities. The ban was being challenged by two lawsuits, including one from an east Arkansas school district where more than 900 staff and students are quarantining because of a coronavirus outbreak.

Fox ruled the law violates Arkansas' constitution, saying it discriminates between public and private school students. He said it also infringes on the governor's emergency powers, as well as the authority of county officials and the state Supreme Court.

The law "cannot be enforced in any shape, fashion or form" pending further court action, Fox said.

Fox issued the ruling hours after lawmakers adjourned a special session that Hutchinson had called to consider rolling back the ban for some schools. Hutchinson had said the change was needed to protect children under 12 who can't get vaccinated as the state's virus cases and hospitalizations skyrocket.

Hutchinson faced heavy opposition from fellow Republicans, who had been inundated with calls and messages from opponents of masks in schools.

The governor, who has said he regretted signing the ban into law, said he agreed with Fox's decision but didn't plan to reimpose the statewide mask mandate he lifted in March. He also criticized lawmakers who opposed taking action, saying many of them had taken a "casual, if not cavalier, attitude" toward the state's COVID-19 crisis.

"What concerns me is many are simply listening to the loudest voices and not standing up with compassion, common sense and serious action," he told reporters.

Republican Attorney General Leslie Rutledge was talking with the governor and Legislature about the ruling to determine the next steps, her office said. Hutchinson, who was named as a defendant in the lawsuit along with the state and legislative leaders, left open the possibility of separately asking the state Supreme Court to uphold Fox's ruling if it's appealed.

There had been growing calls to lift the ban before school starts statewide later this month. The Marion School District, which joined with Little Rock's schools in challenging the ban, on Friday said 949 staff and

students have had to quarantine since classes began last week because of a coronavirus outbreak. The district said 54 students and 11 staff have tested positive for COVID-19.

Marion Superintendent Glen Fenter warned lawmakers that his district's experience could be a harbinger of what other schools will face. He said Friday he will consult with attorneys and will begin discussing the possibility of a mandate with the local school board.

"This gives us another opportunity again to potentially protect our students," he said.

Pediatricians and health officials have said masks in schools are needed to protect children, as the delta variant and Arkansas' low vaccination rate fuels the state's spiraling cases. The state on Monday reported its biggest one-day increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations since the pandemic began, and the Department of Health on Friday said only 28 intensive care unit beds were available in the state.

Only 37% of the state's population is fully vaccinated against the virus.

Arkansas ranks second in the country for new cases per capita, according to figures compiled by Johns Hopkins University researchers. The state reported more than 3,000 new virus cases on Friday, bringing its total since the pandemic began to more than 400,000. It also reported 22 new COVID-19 deaths.

Arkansas is among several Republican-led states that banned mask mandates, and GOP figures nationally have been criticizing efforts to require them in schools despite revised Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. Some school districts in Florida and Arizona are defying their state's prohibitions and requiring masks.

Opponents of lifting Arkansas' ban who testified before the Legislature repeatedly cited false and discredited claims about the virus, including a woman who falsely suggested COVID-19 doesn't exist.

"That's what's frustrating, is we're not making decisions on data, respected data," Democratic Rep. Denise Garner, who co-sponsored one of two proposals rejected by a House panel that would have allowed some schools to require masks.

The Republican sponsor of the mandate ban criticized the ruling, calling Fox a "liberal extremist judge."

"He is allowing government to threaten you with penalties if you don't wear a mask," Sen. Trent Garner tweeted. "But they made a mistake. They didn't know that we are ready to fight."

The House and Senate on Friday gave final approval to the only other item on the session's agenda, legislation aimed at preventing the state from resuming supplemental unemployment insurance payments to 69,000 people in the state.

A state judge last week ordered Arkansas to resume the payment, ruling that Hutchinson didn't appear to have the authority on his own to cut off the payments. Hutchinson was among more than two dozen GOP governors who ended their states' participation in the federally funded payments, which were scheduled to run through early September.

## **Aide who says Cuomo groped her files criminal complaint**

By MARINA VILLENEUVE Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — A woman who accused Gov. Andrew Cuomo of groping her breast at the governor's state residence has filed a criminal complaint against him, the Albany County Sheriff's office said Friday.

The complaint, filed Thursday with the sheriff's office, is the first known instance where a woman has made an official report with a law enforcement agency over alleged misconduct by Cuomo. Its filing is a potential first step toward bringing criminal charges.

"We take every complaint seriously," Albany County Undersheriff William Rice said Friday.

It's possible the Democratic governor could be arrested if investigators or the county district attorney determine he committed a crime, Albany County Sheriff Craig Apple told the New York Post.

"The end result could either be it sounds substantiated and an arrest is made and it would be up to the DA to prosecute the arrest," he told the newspaper, which was the first to report on the complaint. "Just because of who it is we are not going to rush it or delay it," Apple said.

Apple didn't return a phone message from The Associated Press.

The Cuomo aide who filed the report has accused him of reaching under her shirt and fondling her when

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they were alone in a room at the Executive Mansion last year. The woman also told investigators with the attorney general's office that Cuomo once rubbed her rear end while they were posing together for a photo.

The sheriff's office didn't immediately provide a copy of the complaint.

Cuomo's lawyer, Rita Glavin, didn't immediately address the criminal complaint in an online briefing with reporters, but said the groping allegation — which was also outlined in newspaper articles and in a report released by the New York attorney general's office — was fabricated.

"He is 63 years old. He has spent 40 years in public life and for him to all of the sudden be accused of a sexual assault of an executive assistant that he really doesn't know, doesn't pass muster," Glavin said.

The Albany County district attorney would not confirm that they received a complaint, saying they had no plans to release any information because "this is an ongoing matter that is under review," spokesperson Cecilia Walsh said in an email.

Calls for Cuomo's resignation or impeachment soared this week after an independent investigation overseen by the state attorney general's office concluded that Cuomo sexually harassed 11 women and worked to retaliate against one of his accusers.

The attorney general's report describes a series of times Cuomo allegedly acted inappropriately with the aide described as Executive Assistant #1, culminating with the groping encounter at the mansion in November 2020.

According to the woman, Cuomo pulled her in for a hug as she prepared to leave the governor's office at the mansion. Told that "you're going to get us in trouble," Cuomo replied, "I don't care," and slammed the door shut. He slid his hand up her blouse, and grabbed her breast over her bra, according to her account.

"I have to tell you, it was — at the moment, I was in such shock that I could just tell you that I just remember looking down seeing his hand, seeing the top of my bra," she told investigators.

She said she pulled away from Cuomo, telling him "You're crazy."

Cuomo has adamantly denied touching her breasts, saying "I would have to lose my mind to do such a thing."

Records confirm that the woman was at the mansion for several hours on Nov. 16 and had at least one interaction with the governor, but Glavin said she also sent emails to staff while she was in the building that didn't mention that anything upsetting had happened.

Mariann Wang, an attorney for two other accusers, said the governor's lawyers are ignoring any fear the employees had of being punished by Cuomo if they complained.

"The fact that any assistant might try to continue with her day or act 'normal' even after being harassed brutally is something many women who have been harassed at work understand," Wang said. "These women are trying to survive."

The woman told investigators she had initially planned to take the harassment claims "to the grave."

Prosecutors in several New York counties have said they are interested in investigating claims of inappropriate touching by Cuomo, but all had said they needed the women involved in the allegations to make a formal report.

The Albany Police Department, the primary law enforcement agency for the city, had been informed of the woman's allegations regarding the encounter at the mansion several months ago and had spoken to her lawyer, but didn't open an investigation at the time because she didn't make a report.

The criminal investigation comes as lawmakers were moving toward a likely impeachment proceeding over the allegations.

Lawyers working for the state Assembly sent a letter to Cuomo Thursday giving him until Aug. 13 to respond to the allegations against him or provide documents to bolster his defense.

The state Assembly's judiciary committee plans to meet Monday to discuss the possibility of impeachment proceedings. Nearly two-thirds of the legislative body have already said they favor an impeachment trial if he won't resign.

Glavin and a lawyer representing the governor's office, Paul Fishman, criticized the attorney general's office for not providing its findings to them ahead of time and claimed the investigators didn't take a strong enough look at the accusers' credibility. They also demanded an opportunity to see transcripts of



interviews witnesses gave to investigators.

Attorney General Letitia James' spokesperson, Fabien Levy, said the office will be providing interview transcripts to the Assembly, and said the women's accounts were "corroborated by a mountain of evidence."

"To attack this investigation and attempt to undermine and politicize this process takes away from the bravery displayed by these women," Levy said.

## **NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week**

By The Associated Press undefined

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these are legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the facts:

Post misrepresents Pfizer data on vaccine efficacy

CLAIM: Because 14 people in Pfizer's placebo group died and 15 people in the vaccinated group also died, Pfizer's own data shows its COVID-19 vaccine does not reduce the risk of dying from the disease.

THE FACTS: Those figures are irrelevant to the vaccine's efficacy, as they are simply a tally of all deaths that occurred among participants in both the placebo and vaccine groups in Pfizer's ongoing study. Pfizer's data shows that the vaccine is highly effective at preventing serious illness. Data from countries that have used the vaccine widely show it is also effective at preventing death from COVID-19. On July 28, Pfizer released updated data from its vaccine study showing that as of mid-March, the shots were 97% effective in preventing severe disease from COVID-19 up to 6 months later. The data also showed the shots' efficacy against COVID-19 symptoms dropped slightly with time: it peaked at 96% efficacy 2 months after the shots were administered and fell to 84% after 6 months. The Food and Drug Administration granted emergency use authorization for the company's vaccine in December 2020 after reviewing earlier data from Pfizer's ongoing study, which includes 44,000 participants. The newly released data includes 6 months of follow-up data that is required to get full FDA approval. It is expected that in any long-term study, some participants will die for unrelated reasons. Clinical trials monitor deaths to watch for any potential red flags. Pfizer's study states that 14 people in the placebo group and 15 people in the vaccinated group died before January 2021. The vast majority of the deaths were unrelated to COVID-19. Only two people in the placebo group died of COVID-19 and one person in the vaccinated group died of COVID-19 pneumonia, according to additional Pfizer data obtained by The Associated Press. The rest of the deaths were due to other factors, including heart disease and heart attacks. The report states that none of the deaths were related to the vaccine. A widely shared tweet misrepresented the significance of the death numbers to falsely suggest those deaths meant the Pfizer's vaccine doesn't reduce a person's chance of dying from the virus: "The pivotal clinical trial for the @pfizer #Covid vaccine shows it does nothing to reduce the overall risk of death. ZERO. 15 patients who received the vaccine died; 14 who received placebo died," the tweet reads. But those death figures, which include everyone in the study who died before January 2021, are irrelevant to the question of how efficient the vaccine is at preventing COVID-19 deaths. The claim made in the Twitter post "is not supportable by these data," said Dr. David J. Cennimo, an infectious disease expert at the Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. The fact that both the vaccinated group and the control group had a similar number of deaths from causes other than COVID-19 is to be expected, Cennimo said. "To exaggerate the example for learning, the Pfizer vaccine doesn't protect you from lightning strikes so equal numbers of people in the vaccine and the placebo control group should get hit by lightning," Cennimo said. In fact, the tweet's assertion that the Pfizer study aimed to measure efficacy against death is also wrong, Cennimo said. Rather, the study was designed to look at how effective the vaccine is at protecting against symptomatic illness. Since death from COVID-19 is a much rarer event than a COVID-19 infection, Cennimo said a much larger study sample is needed to answer that question. Real-world data from hundreds of millions of Pfizer vaccine doses administered in the United States, the United Kingdom and Israel show that the vaccine is exceedingly effective at protecting against death. A spokesperson for Pfizer told the AP the company could not comment on specific cases, but said, "No

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deaths were considered by the investigators to be related to the vaccine or placebo.”

— Associated Press writer Arijeta Lajka in New York contributed this report

Claim about resuscitation in breakthrough COVID-19 patients is false

CLAIM: Resuscitation is not possible for many vaccinated people who become seriously ill from COVID-19. In some cases, their hearts are too “stiff” to respond to paddles used to deliver an electric shock. Microclots in surrounding tissue may be the reason.

THE FACTS: Emergency room physicians say they have heard of no such issues involving people vaccinated for COVID-19 who become sick, and the claim, which circulated on Twitter, was not supported by any evidence. “This post makes zero sense,” said Dr. Howard Mell, an emergency medical physician in St. Louis and a spokesperson for the American College of Emergency Physicians. “It is flat out wrong.” Dr. Ryan Stanton, an emergency physician in Lexington, Kentucky, said he has only admitted one vaccinated person with COVID-19 at his hospital. The majority of his patients suffering from COVID-19 are unvaccinated. Studies have shown that COVID-19 vaccines approved for emergency use in the U.S. are highly effective at preventing severe disease. In cases where those inoculated against the disease become infected, the illness is far less severe than if they had not received the vaccine. Experts warn that those who are unvaccinated are more at risk for being hospitalized. “The vaccine has no regard whatsoever on my efforts of resuscitation,” Stanton said. “It makes it less likely that they will need resuscitation.” Mell said the claim being shared online is also off base because people who die of COVID-19 are more likely to experience respiratory arrest and defibrillation is not used to resuscitate those patients. Furthermore, Mell said that the post misrepresented what defibrillation is. “We don’t use the paddles to put electricity back into the heart,” he said. “When we shock somebody, we are actually stopping their heart, that is the goal of defibrillation.” Asked about the issue of microclots, experts said that clots are more likely to occur in people with COVID-19, not those who have been vaccinated. “For the most part, the people we are resuscitating who have had COVID-19, especially with the rising cases of delta, are by far not vaccinated individuals,” said Dr. Mark Conroy, emergency medicine physician at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. Those who receive the vaccine and experience a breakthrough case will see typically mild symptoms, though serious breakthrough cases may occur in those who are immunocompromised. Dr. David Hamer, an infectious disease expert at Boston University School of Medicine, said there is no evidence that people who experience breakthrough cases do not respond to treatment, including resuscitation. In fact, he said, in the cases he has seen they did not become that sick. “They were nowhere near needing to be resuscitated or end up in an ICU,” he said.

— Associated Press writer Beatrice Dupuy in New York contributed this report.

Post gives false advice on ‘best way to avoid COVID-19’

CLAIM: The best way to avoid COVID-19 altogether is to exercise, eat healthy and let your immune system beat it naturally.

THE FACTS: A screenshot of a tweet circulating widely on Instagram this week revived a harmful misconception that has proved pervasive throughout the COVID-19 pandemic: the false claim that letting your immune system fight the virus is safer than getting vaccinated. “The best way to avoid COVID altogether is to exercise, eat healthy and let your immune system beat it naturally,” the post reads. “The lazy way is to do none of the above and just let strangers stick an emergency cocktail in your arm countless times because some short guy on your TV told you to.” In reality, while being overweight or having chronic health conditions can increase your chances of suffering from COVID-19 complications, no combination of exercise or healthy food can shield you from becoming seriously ill or dying if you get the virus, experts say. Vaccination, on the other hand, provides robust protection from serious illness or death. “Many very healthy people can and do get severe COVID,” said Dr. Grant McFadden, director of the Biodesign Center for Immunotherapy, Vaccines and Virotherapy at Arizona State University. “In general, immunity from vaccination is stronger and more reliable than just recovering from a natural infection with the virus.” People who get COVID-19 also risk developing long-term symptoms that researchers are still working to

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understand, Columbia University Center for Infection and Immunity Director Dr. W. Ian Lipkin added. While breakthrough cases do occur in a small percentage of vaccinated people, studies show the vaccines are very good at reducing the severity of the illness. As COVID-19 infections surge due to the highly contagious delta variant of the coronavirus, vaccines have continued to offer strong protection. Ongoing research also suggests immunity from vaccines may outlast immunity from many COVID-19 cases, according to Sabra Klein, a microbiologist and immunologist at Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health. "Especially among those that have mild disease (not hospitalized) or are asymptomatic, immunity wanes within 6 months," Klein said. "So far, it is apparent that immunity following vaccination lasts longer." The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends people get vaccinated even if they have already been infected with COVID-19. The Food and Drug Administration granted emergency use authorization for the vaccines available in the U.S. after clinical trials involving tens of thousands of people showed the shots were safe and effective.

— Associated Press writer Ali Swenson in Seattle contributed this report.

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No, the delta variant is not why California is mailing ballots for upcoming election

CLAIM: California is mailing out ballots for the governor recall election because of the delta variant.

THE FACTS: The California Legislature passed a bill in February, months before the delta variant surge, requiring that mail-in ballots be sent to all registered voters ahead of an election. On Sept. 14, California will hold a recall election that could remove first-term Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, from office. In February, the state Legislature passed a bill mandating that all active registered voters get a ballot in the mail for the election even if they didn't ask for one. Ballots will be mailed this month. Even before the pandemic, more than half of California voters chose to mail in their ballots; in 2018 statewide elections, two-thirds of voters cast vote-by-mail ballots. False posts on Twitter claimed that the delta variant led the state to send out mail-in ballots, when in reality, the bill requiring it was signed before the ongoing delta surge. "Due to new 'delta variant' California will be mailing in ballots for recall election," a false tweet claims. Other conspiracy posts online suggested that the variant was somehow "planned" to affect election results. To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the bill expands mail-in voting for all elections before January 2022, a spokesperson with the California secretary of state told the AP in an email. "Voters can return their ballots by mail, drop box, or take advantage of the in-person voting options available in every California county during the September 14, 2021 Recall Election," the spokesperson said. The state enacted a similar bill earlier in the pandemic for the presidential election last year, the AP reported.

— Arijeta Lajka

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Report claiming 'excess' Biden votes doesn't show fraud

CLAIM: A state-by-state report of excess votes for President Joe Biden in the 2020 election suggests there was election fraud and affirms that former President Donald Trump actually won seven key states that were called for Biden.

THE FACTS: A former army captain's report that gained traction among some conservatives this week falsely claimed Trump won several states that he lost in the 2020 election. The report, which based its claims on assumptions related to voting and registration trends, provided no proof of fraud. Nevertheless, it amassed thousands of views on Telegram, Facebook, Twitter and conservative websites, with some headlines claiming it affirmed Trump won Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Nevada, Arizona, Georgia and Minnesota. It was also promoted by Trump's former chief strategist Steve Bannon and Trump himself, who said the report contained "election-changing" numbers that showed the 2020 election was fraudulent and he actually won "by a LOT." Trump has continued to falsely claim he won the election since his loss nine months ago. Biden defeated Trump in the 2020 presidential election, earning 306 electoral votes to Trump's 232. State officials from both parties, election security experts and former Republican Attorney General William Barr said the election went smoothly with no evidence of widespread fraud. Trump's recent claim that the report's findings could have changed the election results also have no merit, according to political scientists who reviewed the report. The report appears to use voting trends, population

growth data and registration records to create "heat maps" showing how far the 2020 results diverged from the author's predictions at the county, state and national levels. However, it doesn't disclose where these numbers originated or the methods by which the analysis was performed. It claims there was likely "Strong/Rampant" fraud in several states and counties nationwide, but appears to base the claim solely on how different the results were from a prediction, not on any actual examples of fraud. The author, Seth Keshel, identifies himself on LinkedIn as a tech company sales manager and former baseball analyst but does not identify any election experience. His report acknowledges that the state-by-state tallies of "excess votes" for Biden are "lenient" estimates that demand further research, but frequently repeats the false claim that the numbers suggest fraud. Harvard University political scientist Gary King reviewed the report and previously reviewed similar election claims from Keshel as part of a lawsuit in Arizona. In both situations, King said, the data showed no evidence of fraud and ignored the reality that voters act in ways that don't match up with predictive modeling. "There is zero valuable academic information here," King told the AP. "Voters, they're allowed to do what they want. They surprise us. It's incredible hubris to imagine your model is always right. That's just crazy." University of Georgia political scientist and pollster Trey Hood reviewed the report and came to the same conclusion. "This is certainly no method for uncovering voter fraud," Hood said. "It doesn't show anything." Contacted for response, Keshel said his analysis was an exhaustive process that took weeks to conduct. He said that given deadlines there was not time to go over the work in detail, but suggested that full forensic audits would help put the matter to rest.

## Biden nudges Senate over 'historic' \$1T infrastructure bill

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite a rocky week of fits and starts, President Joe Biden on Friday praised the Senate for edging the bipartisan infrastructure plan closer to passage, ahead of a key vote on the \$1 trillion package.

As Biden spoke from the White House, he compared the "historic investment" to building the transcontinental railroad or the interstate highway system — lofty themes he has touched on before as he nudges Congress along. The public works projects being unleashed will be powered by good-paying, blue-collar jobs, he said.

The president's note of encouragement offers a reset for lawmakers after frustrations mounted and tempers flared overnight as the Senate stalled out, unable to expedite the package to completion. Senators will be back for another weekend session.

"It's a bill that would end years of gridlock in Washington and create millions of good-paying jobs, put America on a new path to win the race for the economy in the 21st century," Biden said.

The public works expenditure will "enable us not only to build back but to build back better than before the economic crisis hit," he said.

It's nearing decision time for Congress, and particularly the Senate, to make gains on the president's infrastructure priorities — first with the bipartisan bill that's on track for passage as soon as this weekend, and quickly followed by Democrats' more sweeping \$3.5 trillion budget blueprint they plan to shoulder on their own.

Senators had hoped to wrap up the bipartisan bill late Thursday, before many of them departed to attend funeral services Friday in Wyoming for a colleague, the former Republican Sen. Mike Enzi.

But the Senate ground to a halt with new problems as senators worked late into the night on amendments and to counter objections from Republican opponents of the plan to expedite the process. A procedural vote was set for Saturday.

"We've worked long, hard and collaboratively to finish this important bipartisan bill." said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., just before midnight. In announcing Saturday's schedule, he said, "We very much want to finish."

Called the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the thick bill is a first part of Biden's infrastructure agenda and would inject billions of new spending on roads, bridges, waterworks, broadband and other



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projects to virtually every corner of the nation. If approved by the Senate, it would next go to the House. The late-night session stalled out as new debates emerged over proposed amendments to change the 2,700-page package. Senators have processed nearly two dozen amendments so far, and none has substantially changed the framework of the public works package. With more than a dozen amendments still to go, senators struggled to reach agreements.

A much anticipated analysis of the bill from the Congressional Budget Office also drew concerns, particularly from Republicans. It concluded that the legislation would increase deficits by about \$256 billion over the next decade, though the bill's backers argued that the budget office was unable to take into account certain revenue streams — including from future economic growth.

Sen. Bill Hagerty, R-Tenn., an ally of Donald Trump's and the former president's ambassador to Japan, said he objected to expediting consideration of the bill because of the high price tag.

"I could not, in good conscience, allow that to happen," Hagerty said in a statement early Friday. He said he was especially concerned that passing the bipartisan bill would pave the way for Democrats to move quickly to their \$3.5 trillion "tax-and-spend spree."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., encouraged the senators on but also reiterated that her chamber will consider the infrastructure bills "together."

"Whatever you can achieve in a bipartisan way, bravo," she said at a Capitol press conference. "We're going to do this when we can do it all."

One of the amendments generating the most attention Thursday involved cryptocurrency.

The bill would raise an estimated \$28 billion over 10 years by updating IRS reporting requirements for cryptocurrency brokers, just as stockbrokers report their customers' sales to the IRS.

Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., and others who wanted to narrow the definition of who must file those IRS forms are concerned that crypto miners, software developers and others would be subject to the new reporting requirement.

Toomey warned that the provision, as written, could have a "chilling effect on the development of this technology, and that's what I am most concerned about."

The White House weighed in late, suggesting it favored a different approach from Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., and other senators.

White House deputy press secretary Andrew Bates said the compromise amendment "would reduce tax evasion in the cryptocurrency market."

Overall, the infrastructure bill calls for \$550 billion in new spending over five years above projected federal levels for a nearly \$1 trillion package, in what could be one of the more substantial investments in the nation's roads, bridges, waterworks, broadband and the electric grid in years.

If senators wrap up work on the bipartisan bill, they will turn to the much more partisan undertaking on Biden's agenda: a \$3.5 trillion proposal for what the White House calls human infrastructure — child care support, home health care, education and other expenditures that are Democratic priorities that Republicans have pledged to reject. Debate will extend into the fall.

Schumer wants the Senate to pass both the bipartisan package and a budget blueprint for the bigger proposal before senators depart for an August recess.

## Capitol rioters enter 1st guilty pleas to assaulting police

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

A New Jersey gym owner and a Washington state man on Friday became the first people charged in the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol to plead guilty to assaulting a law enforcement officer during the deadly siege.

The pair of plea deals with federal prosecutors could be a benchmark for dozens of other cases in which Capitol rioters are charged with attacking police as part of an effort to halt the certification of President Joe Biden's election victory. Both defendants face more than three years in prison if a judge adheres to estimated sentencing guidelines spelled out in the plea agreements.

The estimated sentencing guidelines for Scott Kevin Fairlamb range from about 3 1/2 to 4 1/4 years in

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prison. But the judge isn't bound by that recommendation when he sentences Fairlamb, a 44-year-old former mixed martial arts fighter who owned Fairlamb Fit gym in Pompton Lakes, New Jersey. Fairlamb's lawyer and prosecutors can seek a sentence above or below those guidelines.

The sentencing guidelines in Devlyn Thompson's plea deal recommend a slightly higher sentence than Fairlamb, ranging from less than four years to 4 3/4 years in prison. After Fairlamb's hearing, Thompson, 28, of Puyallup, Washington, pleaded guilty to assaulting a police officer with a dangerous weapon, a baton.

The same judge who accepted Fairlamb's guilty plea ordered Thompson to be jailed in Seattle. Thompson had been free since his participation in the Capitol riot.

The pleas come less than two weeks after a group of police officers testified at a congressional hearing about their harrowing confrontations with the mob of insurrectionists. Five officers who were at the Capitol that day have died, four of them by suicide. The Justice Department has said that rioters assaulted approximately 140 police officers on Jan. 6. About 80 of them were U.S. Capitol Police officers and about 60 were from the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department.

Fairlamb, whose brother is a U.S. Secret Service agent, was one of the first people to breach the Capitol after other rioters smashed windows using riot shields and kicked out a locked door, according to federal prosecutors. After leaving the building, Fairlamb harassed a line of police officers, shouting in their faces and blocking their progress through the mob, prosecutors wrote in a court filing.

A video showed him holding a collapsible baton and shouting, "What (do) patriots do? We f—— disarm them and then we storm the f—— Capitol!"

Assistant U.S. Attorney Tejpal Chawla said Thompson was on the front lines of the most violent clashes that day, in a tunnel at the Capitol.

"This is one of the largest domestic terrorism events in U.S. history, where a group of individuals attacked the citadel of our constitutional democracy in an effort to overthrow the valid election results of the president of the United States," Chawla said.

Thomas Durkin, one of Thompson's attorneys, said Jan. 6 was a "horrible, horrible event" but disputed the prosecutor's characterization of the attack.

"I think it's dangerous to start throwing around 'domestic terrorism' in circumstances like this," he said.

U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth set a sentencing date of Sept. 27 for both Thompson and Fairlamb, who has been jailed since his Jan. 22 arrest at his home in Stockholm, New Jersey.

Thompson wasn't arrested after he was charged last month with one count of assaulting a Metropolitan Police officer. His attorneys said in a court filing that he has autism spectrum disorder.

Fairlamb's lawyer, Harley Breite, said he will ask the judge for a sentence below the government's recommended guidelines.

Fairlamb's involvement in the riot has "eviscerated large parts of his life," his attorney said.

"He has lost his business. The mortgage on his home where he lives with his wife is in peril. And he has been publicly disgraced," Breite said during an interview after Friday's remote hearing.

Breite said his client wanted to "pay the price for what he had done and then move on with his life."

"It wasn't so much about the deal. It was about his desire to own up to what he had done, make himself a better person for the future and move on," the lawyer added.

Fairlamb pleaded guilty to two counts, obstruction of an official proceeding and assaulting a Metropolitan Police Department officer. The counts carry a maximum of more than 20 years in prison.

Another video captured Fairlamb shoving and punching a police officer in the head after he left the Capitol, according to an FBI agent's affidavit.

"As a former MMA fighter, the defendant was well aware of the injury he could have inflicted on (the officer)," prosecutors wrote. "His actions and words on that day all indicate a specific intent to obstruct a congressional proceeding through fear, intimidation, and violence, including violence against uniformed police officers."

Fairlamb's brother was one of the Secret Service agents assigned to protect former first lady Michelle Obama, Breite said.

Fairlamb's social media accounts indicated that he subscribed to the QAnon conspiracy theory and pro-

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moted a bogus claim that former President Donald Trump would become the first president of "the new Republic" on March 4, prosecutors wrote. QAnon has centered on the baseless belief that Trump was fighting against a cabal of Satan-worshipping, child sex trafficking cannibals, including "deep state" enemies, prominent Democrats and Hollywood elites.

The rioters believed Trump's lies that he was robbed of a second term because of massive voter fraud nationwide. In fact, claims of massive fraud have been refuted by numerous judges, state election officials and even Trump's own administration.

On July 27, a House panel investigating the deadly riot heard emotional testimony from four police officers who tried to defend the Capitol when the mob of Trump supporters stormed the building.

At least nine people who were at the Capitol on Jan. 6 died during or after the rioting, including Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, who collapsed after he was sprayed by rioters with a chemical irritant. Four other police officers have died by suicide, including two Metropolitan Police officers who were found dead within the past month.

Police shot and killed a woman, Ashli Babbitt, who was part of a group of people trying to beat down the doors of the House chamber. Three other Trump supporters who died had suffered medical emergencies.

More than 560 people have been charged with federal crimes, and authorities are still searching for hundreds more. At least 165 defendants have been charged with assaulting, resisting or impeding officers or Capitol employees, including more than 50 people charged with using a deadly or dangerous weapon or causing serious bodily injury to an officer, the Justice Department said in July.

Fairlamb and Thompson are at least the 32nd and 33rd defendants to plead guilty. Most of the others have pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges, including parading, demonstrating or picketing in a Capitol building.

## **Tigray forces vow 'warm welcome' in face of new offensive**

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Ethiopia's spreading Tigray conflict faced a dangerous escalation Friday as an Amhara regional official said Amhara forces will launch an offensive on Saturday against Tigray forces who have entered the region and taken control of a town hosting a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

"This is the time for the Amhara people to crush the terrorist group," Sema Tiruneh, the Amhara region's head of peace and security, told the regional state-affiliated Amhara Media Corporation. "Everyone should come forward and defend themselves."

In response, Tigray forces' spokesman Getachew Reda told The Associated Press that "we'll extend a warm welcome." The conflict threatens to destabilize Africa's second most populous country, where thousands of people have already been killed in the nine-month war.

In a phone interview, Getachew said Tigray forces have crossed into the Amhara region, and the Afar region, in recent weeks in an attempt to break the blockade that Ethiopia's government has imposed on Tigray. Hundreds of thousands of people face famine conditions, and the United Nations and United States this week sent high-level officials to Ethiopia to urge more access for aid.

"We have to deal with anyone who's still shooting," Getachew said. "If it takes marching to Addis to silence the guns, we will. But I hope we'll not have to." Civilians shouldn't fear, he said in response to allegations by ethnic Amhara that the Tigray forces have carried out attacks.

"We're not after Amhara territory or the people of Amhara. ... As long as they are not shooting at our people, we have no problem," Getachew said.

Separately, Ethiopia's foreign ministry warned that the Tigray forces' incursion into Amhara and Afar "is testing the federal government's patience and pushing it to change its defensive mood which has been taken for the sake of the unilateral humanitarian cease-fire" currently in effect. The incursions have displaced some 300,000 people, it said.

Ethiopia could "deploy the entire defensive capability of the state" if overtures for a peaceful resolution to the conflict are not reciprocated, the statement said. The prime minister donated blood this week for

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the military and urged Ethiopians to do the same, following on military recruitment rallies in the capital and elsewhere.

Ethiopia declared the cease-fire in late June during a stunning turn in the war, as its military retreated from Tigray and the resurgent Tigray forces retook key towns and walked into the regional capital, Mekele, to cheers. The conflict erupted in Tigray in November after a falling-out between Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Tigray ruling party that had dominated Ethiopia's government for nearly three decades. Since then, thousands of people have been killed.

A new offensive by the Amhara regional forces would go against the federal government's command: "All federal and regional, civil and military institutions are ordered to respect the cease-fire," Ethiopia said in its declaration in June.

While the United Nations and United States raise the alarm about the Ethiopian government's continuing near-complete blockade of the Tigray region and its 6 million people, the Tigray forces have vowed to secure the region and pursue its "enemies." They have said the prime minister needs to go as one of several preconditions for talks.

"I personally would want him to go, but it's not for us to topple him," the Tigray forces' spokesman said of the prime minister. "We're not interested in occupying the corridors of power in Addis."

Despite international pressure for an immediate cease-fire by all parties, Getachew said the Tigray forces in talks with partners have rejected the idea of holding "discreet talks" with Ethiopia's government.

"If Abiy wants peace, he has to come out in public, he has to lift the blockade," the spokesman said.

Getachew also confirmed that the Tigray forces' aim in the Afar region is to control a crucial supply line to the rest of Ethiopia from neighboring Djibouti, on a major shipping lane. He called it "part of the game," saying people in Tigray are starving. "It's not to spite the other parts of Ethiopia," he said. "We'll cut off supply lines but we'll allow civilian supplies, won't worry."

In their most visible offensive yet, the Tigray forces on Thursday entered the Amhara town of Lalibela, a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its rock-hewn churches. While one resident told The Associated Press they arrived peacefully, Amhara regional spokesman Gizachew Muluneh on Friday said the "terror group" that entered the town is being "routed" by the public and the Ethiopian army. "Several of them have now surrendered," he added.

Ethiopia's government earlier this year declared the Tigray People's Liberation Front, or TPLF, a terrorist group instead of a political party.

UNESCO on Friday expressed concern about the expansion of the conflict into Lalibela.

"We don't have firsthand information on any actual damage being done," U.N. spokesman Farhan Haq told reporters.

The conflict has strained living conditions for millions of Ethiopians, and more across the country now fear it will affect them.

"There's serious suffering in Tigray. (The Tigray forces) had an opportunity to stop the military offensive," Tewodrose Tirfe with the Amhara Association of America told the AP. "Instead, they kept on pushing."

Ethiopia's prime minister repeated his commitment to the unilateral cease-fire just days ago, U.N. humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths told reporters on Friday after his meeting with Abiy. "I have no reason to doubt that at all," Griffiths said.

But regional forces vowing a new offensive could be another matter.

As the Tigray forces push on, they have become the focus of increasing warnings from the U.N. and U.S. amid pleas for an immediate cease-fire and peace talks without conditions.

## Want to pretend to live on Mars? For a whole year? Apply now

BY SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

Want to find your inner Matt Damon and spend a year pretending you are isolated on Mars? NASA has a job for you.

To prepare for eventually sending astronauts to Mars, NASA began taking applications Friday for four



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people to live for a year in Mars Dune Alpha. That's a 1,700-square-foot Martian habitat, created by a 3D-printer, and inside a building at Johnson Space Center in Houston.

The paid volunteers will work a simulated Martian exploration mission complete with spacewalks, limited communications back home, restricted food and resources and equipment failures.

NASA is planning three of these experiments with the first one starting in the fall next year. Food will all be ready-to-eat space food and at the moment there are no windows planned. Some plants will be grown, but not potatoes like in the movie "The Martian." Damon played stranded astronaut Mark Watney, who survived on spuds.

"We want to understand how humans perform in them," said lead scientist Grace Douglas. "We are looking at Mars realistic situations."

The application process opened Friday and they're not seeking just anybody. The requirements are strict, including a master's degree in a science, engineering or math field or pilot experience. Only American citizens or permanent U.S. residents are eligible. Applicants have to be between 30 and 55, in good physical health with no dietary issues and not prone to motion sickness.

That shows NASA is looking for people who are close to astronauts, said former Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield. And, he said, that's a good thing because it is a better experiment if the participants are more similar to the people who will really go to Mars. Past Russian efforts at a pretend Mars mission called Mars 500 didn't end well partly because the people were too much like everyday people, he said.

For the right person this could be great, said Hadfield, who spent five months in orbit in 2013 at the International Space Station, where he played guitar and sang a cover video of David Bowie's "Space Oddity."

"Just think how much you're going to be able to catch up on Netflix," he said. "If they have a musical instrument there, you could go into there knowing nothing and come out a concert musician, if you want."

There could be "incredible freedom" in a "year away from the demands of your normal life."

Attitude is key, said Hadfield, who has a novel "The Apollo Murders" coming out in the fall. He said the participants need to be like Damon's Watney character: "Super competent, resourceful and not relying on other people to feel comfortable."

## US hiring surges in July, but the variant is the wild card

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. employers added 943,000 jobs in July and drove the unemployment rate down to 5.4% in another sign the economy is bouncing back with surprising vigor from COVID-19. But there is growing fear the fast-spreading delta variant will set back the recovery.

The worry is that the resurgent virus could discourage people from going out and spending and trigger another round of shutdowns or other restrictions.

"That is a definite downside risk," said Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics. "The risk is from a more cautious consumer, if they don't want to engage in outside activities. ... You're also hearing about big companies that are delaying a return to work. That might be something that slows things down."

The Labor Department collected its data for the report in mid-July before the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention last week reversed course and recommended that even vaccinated people resume wearing masks indoors in places where the variant is pushing infections up.

Still, the July numbers looked good. They exceeded economists' forecast of more than 860,000 new jobs. Encouraged by their prospects, 261,000 Americans returned to the job market in July. And the unemployment rate fell from 5.9% in June.

Moreover, the report found that as customers come back and businesses scramble to find workers, they are raising wages: Average hourly earnings were up 4% last month from a year earlier.

The Labor Department also revised its jobs numbers for May and June, adding 119,000 jobs.

The stock market rose modestly on the news. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 0.4% and the S&P 500 0.2%, both reaching all-time highs.

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The economy lost over 22 million jobs in March and April 2020 in a practically overnight recession as the coronavirus forced businesses to shut down and people to stay home. Since then, the U.S. has recovered nearly 17 million jobs, meaning it is still almost 6 million short.

"If the pace of hiring over the last three months continues, all jobs lost due to the pandemic would be regained in seven months," Leslie Preston, senior economist at TD Economics, wrote in a research report. "However, the pace is likely to cool a bit and the risk of the delta variant looms."

The unexpectedly strong numbers come at a critical moment for President Joe Biden's agenda, with the Senate set to take up a \$1 trillion infrastructure bill this weekend before moving on to a more than \$3 trillion expansion of the social safety net pushed by the Democrats.

Biden said the jobs report validates his efforts to stabilize the economy and slow the spread of the virus, and he encouraged lawmakers to pass the rest of his agenda.

"The bottom line is this: What we're doing is working," Biden said, adding, "We've got a lot of hard work left to be done."

The U.S. is seeing an average of more than 98,000 new COVID-19 cases per day, up from fewer than 12,000 a day in late June — though still well below the peak of 250,000 reached in January. The vast majority of new cases are among people who have not gotten vaccinated.

Over the past week, a growing number of state and local governments and major employers have made masks and vaccinations mandatory in a move that could help beat back the virus and protect the economy.

A failure to contain the surge could lead to more closings and cancellations of various events and prompt schools to roll back plans to reopen, making it difficult for many parents to go back to work.

"The next 10 to 14 days are going to be critical to try to get it under control," said Labor Secretary Marty Walsh. "We need to get more people vaccinated. Where there are mask mandates in place, we need to follow that."

He added: "It's really important that we take this seriously so we don't get into a situation where we have to go into shutting down parts of our country."

Farooqi said she is optimistic the job rebound can continue despite the variant, but she is holding off on her forecast for August because "there are a lot of unknowns right now."

The rollout of vaccines encouraged businesses to reopen and consumers to return to shops, restaurants and bars. Many Americans are also in surprisingly strong financial shape because the lockdowns allowed them to save money and bank relief checks from the government.

As a result, the economy has bounced back with unexpected speed. The International Monetary Fund expects U.S. economic output to grow 7% this year, its fastest pace since 1984. And employers are advertising jobs — a record 9.2 million openings in May — faster than applicants can fill them.

Some businesses blame generous federal unemployment benefits — including an extra \$300 a week tacked on to regular state jobless aid — for discouraging Americans from seeking work. In response, many states have dropped the federal assistance even before it is scheduled to expire Sept. 6.

Walmart is offering up to \$5 more per hour to many warehouse employees as it tries to retain workers in the tight labor market.

Layne's Chicken Fingers, an eight-restaurant chain in Frisco, Texas, is raising wages, paying bonuses, offering health insurance and promising young workers the chance for advancement. Two of the four managers of its company-owned outlets are 19, and another just turned 20.

"We're finding they can handle it -- with a lot of oversight," said CEO Garrett Reed.

The Animal Humane Society near Minneapolis is running flat-out trying to find homes for animals. It has raised wages to \$15 an hour for staffers who take care of the cats and dogs and help visitors pick out pets.

Eileen Lay, the organization's chief financial and operating officer, knows what she's up against.

"My 16-year-old just got a \$15-an-hour job at Target," she said. "And he doesn't have to clean poop."

## **EXPLAINER: 5 key takeaways from the July jobs report**

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

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NEW YORK (AP) — Even in a July jobs report that was nearly universally hailed as a good one, pockets of weakness and concern are still clouding the celebration.

The numbers in the report were certainly strong, with employers adding 943,000 more jobs to their payrolls than they cut, a better hiring performance than economists expected. The unemployment rate also dropped in another encouraging sign, down by half a percentage point from June to 5.4%. And many economists expect further improvements.

The unemployment rate fell for many groups across the country, but not for all the right reasons. Among Black workers, for example, the decline may have been entirely due to people dropping out of the workforce, rather than from more people getting jobs.

There's also growing concern that the broad strength found in July jobs report may prove fleeting. The faster-spreading delta variant of the coronavirus is causing people to mask up and feel more anxious again, threatening the improvements.

"This is a good jobs report, but the delta variant is casting a significant shadow over the outlook at this time," said Russell Price, chief economist at Ameriprise.

Here are five takeaways from the July jobs report:

## ALREADY OUTDATED?

The strong numbers in Friday's report come from surveys done during the second week of July. That means they don't fully reflect the ramp-up in worries about the delta variant. It wasn't until July 27 that the Centers for Disease Control changed its guidelines for masks, for example. It asked all Americans in areas of high or substantial transmission to wear masks again indoors, even if they're vaccinated.

If case counts continue to worsen, customers could shy away from returning to stores, restaurants and other businesses. That could hit the number of jobs being offered. Worsening trends could also discourage potential workers from filling those job openings.

Beth Ann Bovino, chief U.S. economist at S&P Global Ratings, pointed to a recent report from LinkedIn that said hiring was 5.8% lower than in June. The report looks at how many users add new employers to their profiles throughout the month, and Bovino said it may be reflecting some of the delta effect that the government's jobs report may have missed.

## WIDESPREAD, BUT NOT UNIFORM, GAINS

Americans of many types got back to working in July. The unemployment rate dropped to 6.6% from 7.4% in June for Latino people, for example. For Asian Americans, it fell to 5.3% from 5.8%, and for white workers, it sank to 4.8% from 5.2%. The rate also dropped for Black Americans, down to 8.2% from 9.2%.

But the improvement for Black workers didn't come because many more of them got jobs. Employment numbers for the group were nearly unchanged from June. Instead, much of it was due to Black people dropping out of the workforce. Last month, 60.8% of all Black Americans were in the labor force, down from 61.6% in June.

Ameriprise's Price said he was puzzled by the diverging trends and couldn't immediately think of an explanation.

## LESS SUPPORT FROM THE FED?

Even with the pockets of concern, July's jobs report was strong enough that investors saw it as another sign that the time may be nearing for the Federal Reserve to pare back its support for the economy.

The Fed has been keeping short-term interest rates at a record low of nearly zero to juice the economy after it fell into its coronavirus-caused recession. The central bank has also been buying \$120 billion in bonds every month to help keep longer-term rates low. The moves have made it cheaper to borrow money, and prices across the housing and stock markets have jumped as a result.

With July's strong jobs numbers, investors are preparing for the Federal Reserve to say in upcoming months that it will slow its bond purchases. That would be the first step before it raises interest rates.

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Such expectations helped send the yield on the 10-year Treasury up to 1.28% from 1.21% late Thursday. That's a significant move for the bond market.

## BOUNCEBACK, BUT NOT FULL RECOVERY

Some of the strongest gains in jobs last month came from the areas that were hardest hit by the pandemic: the leisure and hospitality industries.

They accounted for 40% of the nation's job growth last month, with particularly strong gains for food services and drinking places as people streamed back into restaurants and bars.

Even with the gains, though, the number of jobs in the leisure and hospitality industries remain 10% below where they were in February 2020, before the pandemic crashed the economy.

Higher pay is also helping to attract workers to the industries, which tend to have some of the lowest-paying jobs. Leisure and hospitality workers made an average of \$18.55 per hour last month, according to preliminary figures. That's up 0.9% from June. Among all private-sector workers, average hourly earnings rose 0.4% to \$30.54.

## MORE PEOPLE AT WORK

Not only were more people working last month, more were at work as well.

Only 13.2% of employed people teleworked in July because of the pandemic. That's down from 14.4% in June. In May 2020, more than one out of every three workers, or 35.4%, were teleworking.

The numbers count everyone who worked from home at some point in the last four weeks specifically because of the pandemic. Asian American workers were the most likely to be among them, at 30.1% of their total workers. That compares with 12.3% for white workers, 10.8% for Black workers and 8% for Latino workers.

Of course, the delta variant may be upending things here as well. Several big employers have already pushed back their return-to-office dates because of worries about the delta variant. Amazon pushed its date for tech and corporate workers to January from September, for example.

## Barcelona president: Keeping Messi was a 'risky' investment

By TALES AZZONI AP Sports Writer

MADRID (AP) — Money came between Barcelona and Lionel Messi.

Barcelona said the player wanted to stay. The club wanted the same.

They even shook hands on a deal.

But in the end the club's dire financial situation made it impossible.

Letting Messi go was the only way of saving the club, and just like that Messi's era at Barcelona came to an end.

President Joan Laporta said Friday that keeping the Argentine star would be risky, and not even the greatest player in the world was worth jeopardizing the club's future.

"We think Barcelona is above all," Laporta said. "The club is over 100 years old and is above everyone, even above the best player in the world. The club goes over players, coaches, presidents."

Laporta spoke a day after the club announced the negotiations with Messi had ended.

Laporta blamed Barcelona's previous administration for the club's dire financial situation, which kept it from fitting Messi's new contract within the Spanish league's fair play regulations.

He said he hoped the league would have been more flexible with its rules but understood that it couldn't make an exception even if that meant losing Messi.

"There are objective reasons regarding the economical situation at the club and an investment of that volume with the contract of Messi was risky," Laporta said. "We wanted to assume those risks, but when we realized the real situation of the club after the audit, it meant that we would have put the club in great risk."

He said Messi and the club did everything to make the contract work but it wasn't possible without



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hurting Barcelona's finances. The first deal rejected by the league was a two-year contract payable in five years, and the second was a five-year contract.

"There comes a moment when you need to say 'enough'. You need to analyze rigorously with a cold head and look at the numbers," Laporta said. "And in the Spanish league we have to abide by the rules. We think they could be more flexible, but that's not an excuse, we knew the regulation. We couldn't abide by it because of the inheritance we had."

Laporta said Barcelona's losses doubled from about 200 million euros (\$235 million) to 400 million euros (\$475 million). The club's debt recently was at more than 1 billion euros (\$1.2 billion), and that wasn't only because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"There is no margin after a calamitous situation that was all down to the previous board of administration," he said.

Former President Josep Bartomeu resigned last year along with his board of directors amid his fallout with Messi and the club's financial struggles.

The Spanish league has prided itself in having some of the stricter economic controls for clubs in Europe, keeping them from overspending and going into heavy debt. With these controls it was able to create a much stable and stronger league in the last few years.

Barcelona's salary cap, which is roughly proportional to 70% of a club's revenue, was expected to be slashed even further this season. Laporta said for every 25 million the club spends on a player, it has to make up 100 million in cap space, which "is not an easy process." He said the club was already at its limit without the Messi contract.

Laporta said new funding recently secured by the league worth 2.7 billion euros (\$3.2 billion) would have helped but the club was against the deal because it would have hurt the team's broadcasting rights revenues for the next 50 years.

"We are not going to increase our salary limit by selling our audiovisual rights for the next 50 years," Laporta said. "This decision would have been risky."

League President Javier Tebas contested Laporta's argument and hinted that the new funding, which is also opposed by Real Madrid and still needs to be approved by the majority of the clubs, would be a solution to keep Messi at the club. He said Laporta had been initially in favor of the deal but suddenly changed his mind.

Messi is leaving after leading Barcelona into its most glorious years. He helped the club win 35 titles, including the Champions League four times, the Spanish league 10 times, the Copa del Rey seven times and the Spanish Super Cup eight times.

"Still trying to assimilate everything already knowing how difficult it will be," midfielder Sergio Busquets said on Instagram. "I can only thank you for what you have done for the club. You arrived as a kid and are leaving as the best player in history, having made this club grow to the height that it deserves."

The 34-year-old Messi was yet to make any public statements, and there was not immediate news on his future. Paris Saint-Germain was considered the front-runner to sign him after Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola all but ruled out the possibility of adding Messi to his squad.

"Leo wanted to stay, so he is not happy," Laporta said. "We all wanted him to stay. But for him right now it's a situation in which he has to confront reality. It's a reality that can't be changed. I wish him the best wherever he goes."

## Schools reopen with masks optional in many US classrooms

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

MCDONOUGH, Ga. (AP) — As Tussahaw Elementary opened this week for a new school year, teary-eyed mothers led in kindergartners dwarfed by backpacks and buses dropped off fifth graders looking forward to ruling their school. The biggest clue to the lingering COVID-19 crisis was the masks worn by students and teachers — but not all of them.

Georgia, like most states, is leaving it up to local schools to decide whether to require face coverings.

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And 43,000-student Henry County, like many districts worn out by months of conflict over masks, has decided not to insist on them.

Instead, they are "highly recommended."

Many parents Wednesday in this suburb south of Atlanta had mixed feelings about the policy. Some kept their children home in disagreement with it. Others sent their youngsters to class with face coverings.

Shatavia Dorsey, the mother of a kindergartner and a fifth grader, said her children are going to wear their masks at school regardless of the rules.

"They're not vaccinated because they're too young, and I don't know if someone else is carrying it in," said Dorsey, who is doubtful about the school system's ability to maintain in-person instruction amid rising infections.

With the delta variant spreading rapidly, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics have advised in recent weeks that everyone in schools wear masks in communities with substantial or high transmission.

Educators have had to contend with strong resistance to masks from some parents and political leaders. Some consider mask rules an intrusion on parents' authority to make decisions about their children's health.

California, Louisiana, New Jersey, Oregon and Washington state intend to require masks for all students and teachers regardless of vaccination status. At the other end of the spectrum, Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Iowa, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas and Utah have banned mask requirements in public schools.

Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida said Thursday the decision of whether to wear masks in school should be made by parents, adding: "What are the harmful effects of putting a kindergartner in a mask for seven hours? Have they talked about the emotional, the academic, the physiological? Why isn't CDC studying that?"

Outbreaks that have hit schools at the very start of the year have added to calls for more mask requirements.

In Marion, Arkansas, over 800 students and staff members have been quarantined because of exposure since classes began last week in the 4,000-student district.

Marion Superintendent Glen Fenter urged lawmakers to overturn the state law banning masks, warning that a "full-blown crisis" could lie ahead. And Republican Gov. Asa Hutchinson expressed regret over signing the ban in the first place and asked that it be lifted. But the GOP-controlled Legislature left it in place Friday.

Later in the day, an Arkansas judge blocked the state from enforcing the ban until further notice.

In yet another fight over the issue Friday, the Florida Board of Education applied pressure to discourage schools from making masks mandatory. The board said it will issue tuition vouchers so that parents who object to mask requirements can send their children to private school. The money would be taken out of public schools' funding.

From the beginning of the pandemic to the peak of infections in January, CDC data showed children 15 and under had the lowest infection rates. Now, though, school-age children have infection rates higher than adults 50 and older.

Henry County recorded 111 cases of COVID-19 in children ages 5 to 17 in the two weeks ending July 28. Its per capita rate is one of the highest in Georgia and higher than the nationwide figure.

Henry County Superintendent Mary Elizabeth Davis said she believes schools have learned how to prevent transmission, citing intensified cleaning, air filtration and use of hand sanitizer. The district is also offering its 6,000 employees \$1,000 bonuses to get vaccinated.

"We are highly recommending that individuals opt for a mask as an added layer of prevention, but we also know so much more today than we did a year ago," Davis said, wearing an "I got vaccinated" sticker. "And what we know today is that schools are not catalysts for community spread."

At least 28 of Georgia's more than 180 school districts are requiring masks, encompassing more than 38% of the state's public school students.

At Tussahaw Elementary, more than 60% of students were wearing masks in four classrooms visited by a reporter Wednesday, though some had pulled them down. In only one room, where the teacher was also unmasked, were a majority of students without face coverings.

What parents at Tussahaw really wanted was some normalcy — an end to trying to help children at home learn virtually, or cycling between in-person school and quarantine.

"We weathered the storm, but it's a lot better being back in the classroom," Bryant Thigpen said after dropping off his son for the first day of fifth grade. He said he thinks the school system should require masks — "at least until the cases go down."

Daniel Denny sent both his children to Tussahaw with masks but said face coverings should be up to parents.

"To each his own," he said. "You take care of your household how you choose."

Kimberly Vining, a parent of two middle school students, strongly approved of the policy, saying it will make things much easier for children with asthma or anxiety about wearing masks.

"I have faith in God and I'm not going to live in fear for a virus that has a 98% survival rate," she said.

Overall, 90% of Henry County students are back in person, while 10% are opting for all-virtual instruction or a combination of both.

Holley Freeman's 8-year-old daughter, Kalani, is one student who will be staying home and learning virtually. Freeman said that members of her household have health problems and that with no mask mandate, it would be unsafe for her daughter to go to school.

"I feel really upset that we didn't have a safe choice," Freeman said. "I feel really upset that our community betrayed us."

She said her daughter took the news hard: "She cried all the way home and cried all night and cried this morning, knowing she had to go online again."

## **Shots give COVID-19 survivors big immune boost, studies show**

By LAURAN NEERGAARD and MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writers

Even people who have recovered from COVID-19 are urged to get vaccinated, especially as the extra-contagious delta variant surges — and a new study shows survivors who ignored that advice were more than twice as likely to get reinfected.

Friday's report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention adds to growing laboratory evidence that people who had one bout of COVID-19 get a dramatic boost in virus-fighting immune cells — and a bonus of broader protection against new mutants — when they're vaccinated.

"If you have had COVID-19 before, please still get vaccinated," said CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky. "Getting the vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and others around you, especially as the more contagious delta variant spreads around the country."

According to a new Gallup survey, one of the main reasons Americans cite for not planning to get vaccinated is the belief that they're protected since they already had COVID-19. From the beginning health authorities have urged survivors to get the broader protection vaccination promises. While the shots aren't perfect, they are providing strong protection against hospitalization and death even from the delta mutant.

Scientists say infection does generally leave survivors protected against a serious reinfection at least with a similar version of the virus, but blood tests have signaled that protection drops against worrisome variants.

The CDC study offers some real-world evidence.

Researchers studied Kentucky residents with a lab-confirmed coronavirus infection in 2020, the vast majority of them between October and December. They compared 246 people who got reinfected in May or June of this year with 492 similar survivors who stayed healthy. The survivors who never got vaccinated had a significantly higher risk of reinfection than those who were fully vaccinated, even though most had their first bout of COVID-19 just six to nine months ago.

A different variant of the coronavirus caused most illnesses in 2020, while the newer alpha version was predominant in Kentucky in May and June, said study lead author Alyson Cavanaugh, a CDC disease detective working with that state's health department.

That suggests natural immunity from earlier infection isn't as strong as the boost those people can get

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from vaccination while the virus evolves, she said.

There's little information yet on reinfections with the newer delta variant. But U.S. health officials point to early data from Britain that the reinfection risk appears greater with delta than with the once-common alpha variant, once people are six months past their prior infection.

"There's no doubt" that vaccinating a COVID-19 survivor enhances both the amount and breadth of immunity "so that you cover not only the original (virus) but the variants," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government's top infectious disease expert, said at a recent White House briefing.

The CDC recommends full vaccination, meaning both doses of two-dose vaccines, for everyone.

But in a separate study published Friday in JAMA Network Open, Rush University researchers reported just one vaccine dose gives the previously infected a dramatic boost in virus-fighting immune cells, more than people who have never been infected get from two shots.

Other recent studies published in Science and Nature show the combination of a prior infection and vaccination also broadens the strength of people's immunity against a changing virus. It's what virologist Shane Crotty of California's La Jolla Institute for Immunology calls "hybrid immunity."

Vaccinated survivors "can make antibodies that can recognize all kinds of variants even if you were never exposed to the variant," Crotty said. "It's pretty sweet."

One warning for anyone thinking of skipping vaccination if they had a prior infection: The amount of natural immunity can vary from person to person, possibly depending on how sick they were to begin with. The Rush University study found four of 29 previously infected people had no detectable antibodies before they were vaccinated — and the vaccines worked for them just like they work for people who never had COVID-19.

Why do many of the previously infected have such a robust response to vaccination? It has to do with how the immune system develops multiple layers of protection.

After either vaccination or infection, the body develops antibodies that can fend off the coronavirus the next time it tries to invade. Those naturally wane over time. If an infection sneaks past them, T cells help prevent serious illness by killing virus-infected cells -- and memory B cells jump into action to make lots of new antibodies.

Those memory B cells don't just make copies of the original antibodies. In immune system boot camps called germinal centers, they also mutate antibody-producing genes to test out a range of those virus fighters, explained University of Pennsylvania immunologist John Wherry.

The result is essentially a library of antibody recipes that the body can choose from after future exposures — and that process is stronger when vaccination triggers the immune system's original memory of fighting the actual virus.

With the delta variant's super infectiousness, getting vaccinated despite a prior infection "is more important now than it was before to be sure," Crotty said. "The breadth of your antibodies and potency against variants is going to be far better than what you have right now."

## 'Four Ferraris': Italy race to shock 4x100 gold at Olympics

By GERALD IMRAY AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — There are some things track fans are used to: Nobody stops the Jamaican women at these Olympics and the tireless Sifan Hassan is a contender for a medal in every distance race she enters.

Other things might take some getting used to: Italy is a sprint power. It now owns the gold medal in the men's 4x100-meter relay to go with the shocking 100-meter gold that Marcell Jacobs won.

The Italian relay team made Jacobs a double Olympic champion Friday, as the country pulled off a stunner to equal Jacobs' solo triumph five nights earlier. Jacobs ran the second leg of Italy's 37.5-second trip around the track, and Filippo Tortu outraced Britain's Nethaneel Mitchell-Blake to the line.

Tortu, who was slightly behind at the changeover, dipped first for a .01-second victory.

"We are four Ferraris," Tortu said.

The triumph set off a second bout of Italian sprint celebrations on the track at the Olympic Stadium —



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two more than anyone expected when these Games opened.

Canada, featuring 200-meter champion Andre De Grasse, took bronze in 37.70. A Jamaican Olympic squad without Usain Bolt came in fifth to end a run of three straight relay wins for the island nation. (One was stripped because of a doping case.)

Jamaica with Bolt used to be a virtual guarantee for gold. At these Olympics, a Jamaican women's team with the world's three fastest sprinters was the surest thing going.

Elaine Thompson-Herah, the double-sprint champion in Tokyo, ran the second leg after an awkward, but legal, exchange with Briana Williams. She passed the baton to Shelly-Ann Fraser Pryce, the 100 silver medalist. Fraser-Pryce connected with Shericka Jackson, the 100 bronze medalist, and Jackson took the Jamaican women home in a national-record of 41.02 seconds. It was the night's least-surprising performance — but still impressive.

It also delivered a third gold of the games for Thompson-Herah, who won the 100, 200 and 4x100 relay in Bolt-like fashion.

"We got the national record, Elaine got her third gold medal, we're all going home with a gold medal, so we're just very grateful for the effort," Fraser-Pryce said.

The United States won silver in 41.45 while the U.S. men weren't in the stadium the day after a bad exchange doomed them to a sixth-place finish in their qualifying heat.

Earlier, Hassan kept her own run of medals in middle- and long-distance going with a bronze in the 1,500 meters to go with her gold at the start of the week in the 5,000. Her assignment is not over yet. She'll chase a third medal in the 10,000 final on Saturday night. It will be her sixth race in eight days.

The Ethiopian-born runner, who competes for the Netherlands, won every one of her races in Tokyo before Friday by running at the back or near the back of the field and unleashing her speed on the final lap.

But she changed those tactics in the 1,500 final by surging to the front straight away and pushing the pace hard. She couldn't hold it. Faith Kipyegon of Kenya lurked on Hassan's shoulder through the last lap and made her move on the final bend. Hassan couldn't respond.

Kipyegon went away to retain her Olympic title and set a new Olympic record of 3 minutes, 54.11 seconds. Laura Muir of Britain also pushed ahead of Hassan to take the silver medal.

"I think the body is very tired," said Hassan, who once again draped herself in a Dutch flag after her race. She made clear her aim for the 10,000 is no longer gold, it's just a medal.

"I (just) need this," she said, holding up her bronze. "Not gold."

Likewise, Allyson Felix needed any color medal to make history on Day 8 of the track and field competition in Tokyo. The 35-year-old American got it with a bronze in the 400 meters won in a romp by Shaunae Miller-Uibo of Bahamas, who beat Marileidy Paulino of the Dominican Republic by .84 seconds.

Felix now stands alone as the most-decorated female athlete in the history of Olympic track, with 10 medals. She won No. 10 less than three years removed from a difficult pregnancy that left her wondering if she'd make it back to this point.

When it was over, she lay on her back on the track, hands covering her face but with a smile peeking through from behind them.

"This one is very different, and it's very special," she said. "And it just took a lot to get here."

Also on Friday:

— Joshua Cheptegei of Uganda made his decision to come to the Olympics a highly-profitable one with a gold in the 5,000 meters to go with his silver in the 10,000. Cheptegei had said he was considering skipping Tokyo after an injury and a run of poor form.

— Liu Shiying of China won the women's javelin with a throw of 66.34 meters.

— The 50-kilometer race walkers were up at 5.30 a.m. in the northern city of Sapporo and Dawid Tomala won gold in what might be the event's last appearance at the Games. The 50K walk has been dropped from the schedule for Paris in 2024. Antonella Palmisano won the women's 20K walk.

**The long journey leads to an Olympic record for Felix**

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By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

TOKYO (AP) — She describes herself as “old.” She concedes she wasn’t sure she’d make it this far. There were times, though, when “making it” had nothing to do with the Olympics and everything to do with simply climbing out of her hospital bed.

No wonder Allyson Felix came to these, her last Olympics, with little fear of losing.

And it shouldn’t surprise anyone by now to learn that instead, on Friday night, she won.

Not the gold medal in the women’s 400 meters. But a bronze that might wind up taking center stage in her trophy case. It is medal No. 10, the one that put her all alone at the top of the record book.

On a humid, sticky evening filled with anticipation, Felix — the sprinter, turned mom, turned advocate, turned realist — became the most decorated female track athlete in the history of the Olympics.

The 35-year-old was beaming as she strode through the bottom of the stadium — the new bronze medal standing out against her white, “USA” sweat suit.

“A lot of times, I have tied my own work to what happens in these championships,” she said. “And I didn’t want to do that this time. I’ve been through too much. I always run for gold. But I just wanted to have joy no matter what happened tonight.”

Felix’s 10th Olympic medal broke a tie with Jamaican sprinter Merlene Ottey, and matches Carl Lewis, who was alone as the most decorated U.S. athlete in track. Felix could surpass Lewis on Saturday, when she is expected to be part of the U.S. 4x400 relay. Paavo Nurmi of Finland holds the all-time mark with 12 medals from 1920-28.

Felix started Friday’s race from the loneliest spot on the track: Lane 9, on the outside, with a phalanx of sprinters — each one younger, each one perhaps wondering if they could be the “Next Allyson Felix” — behind her where she could not see them.

Felix hasn’t spent much time over her storied career, one that spans five Olympics and the better part of two decades, running from Lane 9. It’s where the underdogs line up.

“It’s hard,” she said. “You just kind of feel like you’re out there alone.”

But when she took off, she avoided the one thing that destroys runners out there. She avoided the urge to take off too fast, only natural when you have no idea where the other runners are.

She ran a near-perfect race, considering the circumstances. She did not win. Very few expected her to. She finished 1.1 seconds behind Shaune Miller-Uibo, the sprint star from the Bahamas who ripped a gold away from Felix five years ago, when she dove over the finish line in Rio.

That one hurt. The second-place finishes in Athens and Beijing hurt, too. Felix, who spent years as one of the most proudly private athletes in the game, is often remembered for crying in the recesses of Olympic stadiums after earning silver.

“I never want to be satisfied with losing,” she said in Beijing, after the second straight loss at the Olympics to Jamaica’s Veronica Campbell-Brown.

After a semifinal race this week that was a wire-to-wire struggle, she acknowledged she wasn’t as young as she used to be. What went unsaid was that the final might not end up as a fairy tale.

“Obviously, I didn’t want to be in that position, because this is something I hoped I could accomplish,” she said. “But it was just being able to separate the two. I feel I have come a long way from all the other Games. It sounds cliché, but, honestly, it’s bigger than just me running out there.”

The milestone for Felix comes nearly three years after she helped spearhead a conversation about the way women are treated in track, and sports in general. She severed ties with Nike, which wrote in pay reductions to women’s contracts if they became pregnant.

She raced Friday wearing a shoe she designed for a company she created. (She also wore Nike gear, because that’s the company that sponsors the U.S. team).

Felix has spoken candidly about the struggle to come back from a difficult pregnancy that led to an emergency C-section and put the lives of both her and her baby, Cammy, in jeopardy.

She’s spoken of the pressure she felt to return quickly, even when her body wasn’t responding the way it once did.

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She also overcame one of her biggest hurdles — leaving her well-cultivated private image behind to become a spokesperson for something much bigger.

“I feel like it’s definitely been a journey for me to get to the point where I guess I had the courage to do so,” Felix said.

This week, she gave voice to the topic that’s been filtering through the Tokyo Olympics — how winning isn’t everything, and how the pressure to get to the podium can make the journey that much harder.

“When I line up for a race, I’m normally afraid,” she said in a heartfelt essay on social media, posted only hours before the race. “I’m not afraid of losing. I lose much more than I win. That’s life and I think that’s how it’s supposed to be.”

At the end of her race, Felix had nothing to be afraid of. Powering to the finish line, she edged Jamaica’s Stephanie Ann McPherson by .15 seconds for a bronze that might have been a disappointment in other years, but certainly wasn’t this time.

Felix said to get ready for the race Friday morning, she went back and looked at some videos of some of the struggles she and Cammy endured as they both faced their own sort of comeback.

“The really, really hard moments is what I tried to tap into,” she said. “There was a moment we weren’t sure if I was going to make it. And here I am, at the Olympics at 35 years old. So, you know, who could ask for more?”

## Hezbollah, Israel trade fire in dangerous Mideast escalation

By LAURIE KELLMAN and ZEINA KARAM Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The militant Hezbollah group fired a barrage of rockets toward Israel on Friday, and Israel hit back with artillery in a significant escalation between the two sides.

It was the third day of attacks along the volatile border with Lebanon, a major Middle East flashpoint where tensions between Israel and Iran, which backs Hezbollah, occasionally play out. But comments by Israeli officials and Hezbollah’s actions suggested the two were seeking to avoid a major conflict at this time.

Israel said it fired back after 19 rockets were launched from Lebanon, and Prime Minister Naftali Bennett swiftly convened a meeting with the country’s top defense officials. No casualties were reported.

“We do not wish to escalate to a full war, yet of course we are very prepared for that,” said Lt. Col. Amnon Shefler, spokesman for the Israel Defense Forces.

Israel has long considered Hezbollah, which is based in Lebanon, its most serious and immediate military threat. Friday’s exchanges came a day after Israel’s defense minister warned that his country is prepared to strike Iran following a fatal drone strike on an oil tanker at sea that his country blamed on Tehran.

The tensions come at a politically sensitive time in Israel, where a new eight-party governing coalition is already trying to keep the peace on another border under a fragile cease-fire that ended an 11-day war with Hamas’ militant rulers in Gaza.

Sirens blared across the Golan Heights and Upper Galilee near the Lebanon border Friday morning. Hezbollah said in a statement that it hit “open fields” in the disputed Shebaa farms area.

The group said it fired 10 rockets, calling it retaliation for Israeli airstrikes the day before. Israel said those strikes were in response to rocket fire from southern Lebanon in recent days that was not claimed by any group.

Shebaa Farms is an enclave where the borders of Israel, Lebanon and Syria meet. Israel says it is part of the Golan Heights, which it captured from Syria in 1967. Lebanon and Syria say Shebaa Farms belong to Lebanon, while the United Nations says the area is part of Syria.

“This is a very serious situation and we urge all parties to cease fire,” the force known as UNIFIL said. Force commander, Gen. Stefano Del Col, said the force was coordinating with the Lebanese army to strengthen security measures in the area.

Hezbollah’s decision to strike open fields in a disputed area rather than Israel proper, appeared calibrated to limit any response.

Shefler, the Israeli military spokesman, told reporters Friday that three of the 19 rockets fired fell within

Lebanese territory. Ten were intercepted by the defense system known as the Iron Dome.

Israel estimates Hezbollah possesses over 130,000 rockets and missiles capable of striking anywhere in the country. In recent years, Israel also has expressed concerns that the group is trying to import or develop an arsenal of precision-guided missiles.

Israel has repeatedly threatened to attack Lebanese border villages where it accuses Hezbollah of hiding rockets. An Israeli security official said Friday the military was carrying out airstrikes unlike any in years and was planning for more options. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military policy.

The attack sparked tensions between locals and Hezbollah. Videos on social media after the rocket attack showed two vehicles, including a mobile rocket launcher, being stopped by residents of Shwaya village. The windshield of one vehicle was smashed.

Some of the villagers could be heard saying: "Hezbollah is firing rockets from between homes so that Israel hits us back."

The Lebanese army said it arrested four people who were involved in the rocket-firing and confiscated the rocket launcher. It said Lebanese troops and U.N. peacekeepers are taking all the measures to restore calm.

Hezbollah issued a statement saying that the rockets were fired from remote areas, adding that the fighters were stopped in Shwaya on their way back.

"We lived a similar period in the 1970s, when Palestinian fighters were carrying out guerrilla attacks against Israel. We are now to the same status and this is causing tension," said Ajaj Mousa, a resident of nearby Kfarchouba.

The escalation also comes at a sensitive time in Lebanon, which is mired in multiple crises including a devastating economic and financial meltdown and political deadlock that has left the country without a functional government for a full year.

## Hiroshima marks 76th anniversary of US atomic bombing

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Hiroshima on Friday marked the 76th anniversary of the world's first atomic bombing, as the mayor of the Japanese city urged global leaders to unite to eliminate nuclear weapons just as they are united against the coronavirus.

Mayor Kazumi Matsui urged world leaders to commit to nuclear disarmament as seriously as they tackle a pandemic that the international community recognizes as "threat to humanity."

"Nuclear weapons, developed to win wars, are a threat of total annihilation that we can certainly end, if all nations work together," Matsui said.

The United States dropped the world's first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, destroying the city and killing 140,000 people. It dropped a second bomb three days later on Nagasaki, killing another 70,000. Japan surrendered on Aug. 15, ending World War II and Japan's nearly half-century of aggression in Asia.

Countries stockpiled nuclear weapons during the Cold War and a standoff continues to this day.

Matsui renewed his demand that Japan's government immediately sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga did not mention the treaty in his speech at the Hiroshima Peace Park ceremony, where aging survivors, officials and some dignitaries observed a minute of silence for the 8:15 a.m. blast. At a news conference later, Suga said he has no intention of signing the treaty.

"The treaty lacks support not only from the nuclear weapons states including the United States but also from many countries that do not possess nuclear arms," Suga said. "What's appropriate is to seek a passage to realistically promote nuclear disarmament."

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons took effect in January after years of civil effort joined by atomic bombing survivors, or hibakusha. But while more than 50 countries have ratified it, the treaty notably lacks the U.S. and other nuclear powers as well as Japan, which has relied on the U.S. nuclear



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umbrella for its defense since the war's end.

After the ceremony, Suga apologized for inadvertently skipping parts of his speech. The sections that were dropped included a pledge to pursue efforts toward achieving a nuclear-free world as head of the world's only country to have suffered atomic attacks, according to his speech posted on the Prime Minister's Office website.

Some said Suga skipping those parts of his speech spotlighted what could be seen as government hypocrisy over nuclear disarmament and the treatment of atomic bomb survivors.

"The important point is that his heart simply wasn't there," former Hiroshima Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba said on an online news conference later Friday.

Akiba has proposed a moment of silence by Olympic athletes and participants to mark the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings, urging the International Olympic Committee to take action and not just talk about world peace.

Although a moment of silence didn't occur at the Olympics on Friday, there will be "a moment of remembrance" at Sunday's closing ceremony for all lives lost, including those in Hiroshima, organizing committee spokesman Masa Takaya said.

Many survivors of the bombings have lasting injuries and illnesses resulting from the explosions and radiation exposure and face discrimination in Japanese society.

The government began to provide medical support to certified survivors in 1968 after more than 20 years of effort by them.

As of March, 127,755 survivors, whose average age is now almost 84, are certified as hibakusha and eligible for government medical support, according to the health and welfare ministry.

Suga announced last month that medical benefits will be extended to 84 Hiroshima survivors who had been denied aid because they were outside a government-set boundary. The victims were exposed to radioactive "black rain" that fell in the city after the bombing and fought a long legal battle for their health problems to be recognized.

Matsui urged Suga's government to further widen the support and quickly reach all those still suffering from the physical and emotional effects of radiation, including black rain survivors who were not part of the lawsuit.

Thursday's ceremony at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park was scaled down significantly because of the coronavirus pandemic and was also eclipsed by the Olympics being held in Tokyo, where even NHK public television quickly switched after the main speeches.

## **In New York City, impending vaccination rules prompt concern**

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Michael Musto can't bring himself to ask his regulars at his Staten Island restaurant, Cargo Cafe, to prove they've been vaccinated against the coronavirus.

So if New York City presses on with its plans to require eateries, bars, gyms and many other public gathering places to require patrons to show proof of vaccination before coming indoors, he will again shutter his dining room and move operations outside.

"I just don't see myself doing that, asking for proof," Musto said. Barely half of his neighborhood's residents have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, according to city statistics. Some remain defiant about getting vaccinated, even amid a new surge in infections in the city.

"But now do I have to turn my customers away? Do I have to turn business away?" Musto asked.

Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Tuesday that later this month the city will begin requiring anyone dining indoors at a restaurant, working out a gym or grabbing cocktails at a bar to show proof they've been inoculated. Workers at such establishments would also have to prove that they've had at least one shot of an approved vaccine.

The move is being closely watched by other U.S. communities — perhaps as a model but also as a possible example of governmental overreach.

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For months, the country has been forced into a reckoning over whether — and how — to curtail public life, including how and where people gather, whether they should be required to wear masks and how far to push them into getting vaccinated.

“Anything less than vaccination isn’t going to get us where we need to go,” the mayor, a Democrat, said earlier in the week.

“It’s pretty straightforward,” de Blasio said. “You check their vaccination status. If they have it, great. If they don’t, turn around.”

City officials said details are still being worked out, including enforcement and consequences for businesses that refuse to comply. Inspections would not begin until at least Sept. 13. When the city health department mandated masks, violations carried fines of up to \$1,000.

Some business owners could try to challenge the policy in court, perhaps arguing that the city overstepped its authority or is applying the rule inequitably. Some religious groups, for example, successfully challenged state pandemic rules that put capacity limits on houses of worship, but not on other liquor stores or bicycle shops.

Law professor Scott Burris, the director of Temple University’s Center for Public Health Law Research, said while legal challenges are possible, there is probably enough precedent for New York City’s impending vaccination rules to pass muster with courts.

“It’s really like a no shirt, no shoes, no service thing,” he said. Proof of vaccinations would be added to the list of conditions necessary to receive service.

New York City is not mandating that residents be vaccinated but is goading them into doing so by preventing them from partaking in some aspects of public life. Already, most children are required to show proof of vaccinations against a host of childhood diseases to enroll in public schools.

“We’re not going to see vaccination wagons out on Fifth Avenue lining people up,” Burris said. “We’re not going to see government order people to be vaccinated. It’s going to be delegated to employers and restaurants and gyms and so on.”

New York City has mostly reopened its economy after being roiled by the outbreak. Bars and restaurants have welcomed customers back inside their establishments.

Tourists like Vasu Pabbaraju, visiting from San Jose, California, are also returning. He and his family were snapping photos at Times Square before grabbing a table at a nearby Olive Garden.

If asked for proof of vaccination — he has an image of his card on his phone — he’d readily comply. “I won’t get offended by it. In fact, it puts me at ease knowing that I’ll be eating around other people who have been vaccinated,” he said.

Sarah Dubois, a visitor from Las Vegas, agreed. “I’d rather get things back to normal as quick as we can,” she said.

But her companion, Mitch Silver, from Waterbury, Connecticut, saw things differently.

“I don’t like the idea of it,” he said. “I don’t think it should be made mandatory by the government.”

Still, Silver said he would produce his vaccination card if asked.

Already, Broadway is requiring all audience members to show proof of vaccination to watch performances. The cast and crew would also have to be vaccinated.

But worry continued. On Wednesday, organizers canceled this year’s New York International Automobile Show because of the surge in the delta variant of COVID-19 and “the increased measures announced recently by state and local officials to stop its spread.”

Musto, the Staten Island restaurateur, said he would follow the rules and hopes it will help move the city forward in its goal to persuade more New Yorkers to get vaccinated.

“It’s a scare tactic maybe. Hopefully it will work,” said Musto, who said he and his employees have been vaccinated.

Musto had taken over the business just months before the outbreak prompted the city to shutter restaurants, bars and many other public places.

“I can’t afford to have everything shut down again,” he said. “If that happens, I might have to close permanently. I’m in no position to move backward.”

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## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Aug. 7, the 219th day of 2021. There are 146 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 7, 1998, terrorist bombs at U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania killed 224 people, including 12 Americans.

On this date:

In 1782, Gen. George Washington created the Order of the Purple Heart, a decoration to recognize merit in enlisted men and noncommissioned officers.

In 1789, the U.S. Department of War was established by Congress.

In 1942, U.S. and other allied forces landed at Guadalcanal, marking the start of the first major allied offensive in the Pacific during World War II. (Japanese forces abandoned the island the following February.)

In 1964, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, giving President Lyndon B. Johnson broad powers in dealing with reported North Vietnamese attacks on U.S. forces.

In 1971, the Apollo 15 moon mission ended successfully as its command module splashed down in the Pacific Ocean.

In 1989, a plane carrying U.S. Rep. Mickey Leland, D-Texas, and 14 others disappeared over Ethiopia. (The wreckage of the plane was found six days later; there were no survivors.)

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush ordered U.S. troops and warplanes to Saudi Arabia to guard the oil-rich desert kingdom against a possible invasion by Iraq.

In 2000, Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore selected Connecticut Sen. Joseph Lieberman as his running mate; Lieberman became the first Jewish candidate on a major party's presidential ticket.

In 2008, A U.S. military jury at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base gave Osama bin Laden's driver a surprisingly light 5-1/2-year sentence for aiding terrorism, making him eligible for parole in just five months. (The U.S. later transferred Salim Hamdan (sah-LEEM' hahm-DAH-N') to his home country of Yemen, which released him in January 2009.)

In 2010, Elena Kagan was sworn in as the 112th justice and fourth woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 2012, Jared Lee Loughner agreed to spend the rest of his life in prison, accepting that he went on a deadly shooting rampage at an Arizona political gathering in 2011 and sparing the victims a lengthy, possibly traumatic death-penalty trial.

In 2015, Colorado theater shooter James Holmes was spared the death penalty in favor of life in prison after a jury in Centennial failed to agree on whether he should be executed for his murderous attack on a packed movie premiere that left 12 people dead.

Ten years ago: The Treasury Department announced that Secretary Timothy Geithner (GYT'-nur) had told President Barack Obama he would remain on the job, ending speculation he would leave the administration. Former New York Governor Hugh Carey, 92, died on Shelter Island, New York. Former Oregon Governor and U.S. Senator Mark Hatfield, 89, died in Portland.

Five years ago: An accident on a 17-story waterslide at Schlitterbahn Waterpark in Kansas City, Kansas, claimed the life of a 10-year-old boy. Jim Furyk became the first golfer to shoot a 58 in PGA Tour history during the Travelers Championship in Connecticut with a 12-under 58 in the final round. (Furyk finished tied for fifth at 11 under, three strokes behind winner Russell Knox.) At the Rio Games, U.S. swimmer Katie Ledecky crushed her own world record in the 400 freestyle with a time of 3:56.46.

One year ago: Thousands of bikers poured into the small South Dakota town of Sturgis for the 80th Sturgis Motorcycle Rally despite fears that it could lead to a massive coronavirus outbreak. (Federal health officials later said the rally led to dozens of coronavirus cases in neighboring Minnesota; the Associated

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Press found that at least 290 people in 12 states tested positive for the coronavirus after attending the rally.) The military recovered the bodies of seven Marines and a Navy sailor who'd been killed when a Marine landing craft sank in hundreds of feet of water off the Southern California coast; another Marine had died after being rescued.

Today's Birthdays: Gospel singer Ben Moore is 80. Singer Lana Cantrell is 78. Former FBI Director Robert Mueller is 77. Actor John Glover is 77. Actor David Rasche is 77. Former diplomat, talk show host and activist Alan Keyes is 71. Country singer Rodney Crowell is 71. Actor Caroline Aaron is 69. Comedian Alexei Sayle is 69. Actor Wayne Knight is 66. Rock singer Bruce Dickinson is 63. Marathon runner Alberto Salazar is 63. Actor David Duchovny is 61. Country musician Michael Mahler (Wild Horses) is 60. Actor Delane Matthews is 60. Actor Harold Perrineau is 58. Jazz musician Marcus Roberts is 58. Country singer Raul Malo is 56. Actor David Mann is 55. Actor Charlotte Lewis is 54. Actor Sydney Penny is 50. Actor Greg Serano is 49. Actor Michael Shannon is 47. Actor Charlize Theron (shar-LEES' THEHR'-en) is 46. Rock musician Barry Kerch is 45. Actor Eric Johnson is 42. Actor Randy Wayne is 40. Actor-writer Brit Marling is 39. NHL center Sidney Crosby is 34. MLB All-Star Mike Trout is 30. Actor Liam James is 25.