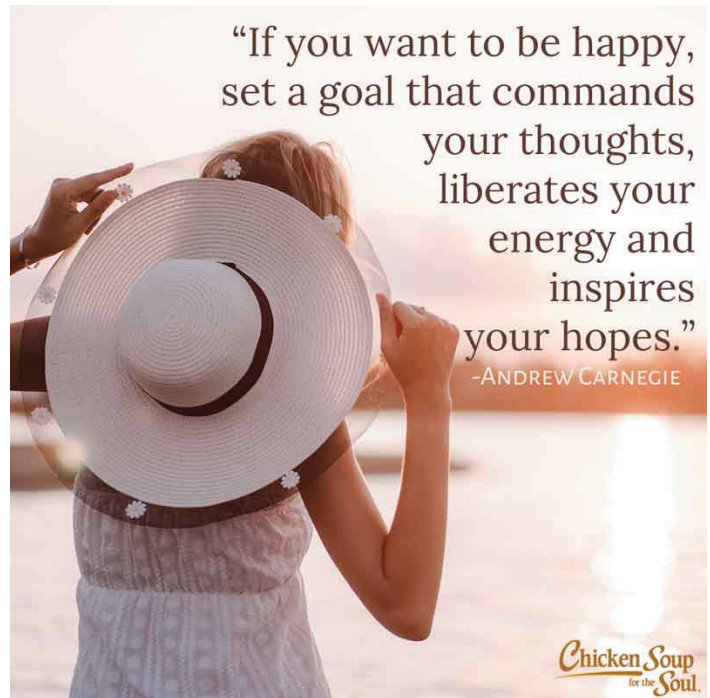


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## BRIDAL SHOWER

OPEN HOUSE BRIDAL Shower for Melynda Sletten, bride-to-be of Lance Larsen, will be held Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton. No RSVP needed. Hosted by aunts of the groom. They are registered at Amazon, Target, Wayfair and Menards Gift Cards.



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

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

## Bortnem is new MS/HS Special Ed Teacher

by Dorene Nelson



The Groton School District is getting ready for a new school year with the hiring of five new teachers and one new paraprofessional. Three of the five are filling positions for teachers who retired at the end of last year.

Jordyn Bortnem is the new middle school / high school special education teacher for the Groton Area School District. This will be her first year of teaching.

"I graduated from Brookings High School followed by receiving my Bachelor's Degree from Northern State University in special education with an early childhood endorsement," Bortnem stated. "I also am certified to coach various sports."

"When deciding what area of education to concentrate on, I chose special education since I believe it is the most rewarding area," she admitted. "Teachers in this area very often witness lots of growth in the special children who are in their charge."

"I have been assigned half of the students in grades six through eight," Bortnem explained. "I will work with these students in small groups as well as working with them individually."

"There are a few students who will need me to accompany them to their classes," she stated, "in order to help them individually and to reassure them that they have their completed assignments with them."

"One of my responsibilities is to teach math to the students that have been assigned to me," Bortnem said. "Obviously I will also work on any behavior issues these students may be struggling with."

"I decided to apply for this position in Groton because it is the size of school I'd like to work in," she smiled. "I also enjoy having the added attractions available in Aberdeen."

## Return to Wellness By Dr. Luke Mortimer, M.D.

I recently saw a patient I hadn't seen in more than 18 months. This patient had previously come to me somewhat routinely for arthritic knees. Together, we constructed a conservative treatment plan to help increase activity and prolong the life of those knees. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic put a dent in our plan. Prior to the pandemic, this patient had been a borderline diabetic with some other medical comorbidities. Upon their return, we found a lot had changed. The patient had gained 30 pounds, decreased activity, and could not move about very well. We had to revise our plan based upon the patient's current condition. I have observed, over the last few months, this scenario is not unusual.

With the pandemic, many people simply stopped moving and as a result their joint related complaints skyrocketed. This inactivity created a significant increase in pain and discomfort in those with underlying arthritis. As patients continue to return to society and have a difficult time picking up where they left off, what do we do to help them get back to their normal?

First, identifying the significance of their medical and orthopedic issues is key. Those with more combined orthopedic and medical issues may require a multidisciplinary approach amongst physicians. Success is more likely if the patient and orthopedic surgeon work together with the primary care physician to assist in management of weight, diabetes, cardiac and other issues that need specific attention. Great communication amongst providers is essential to maximize the benefit for the patient.

Second, developing a plan that will assist in overcoming these issues is the next goal. This may involve cautious use of anti-inflammatories or corticosteroid injections to help decrease inflammation. It may involve viscosupplementation or "gel" injections to assist with lubrication. Physical therapy to focus on getting specific muscle groups to unload the joint while also allowing increased movement may be a great place to begin. Walking, water walking, water aerobics, elliptical machine, bike riding, or hiking are great examples of low impact activities that promote good joint health. The overall goal is to get patients that stopped moving back to an active lifestyle. As many of my patients and colleagues say, "motion is the lotion".

We all know the pandemic has been difficult and affected us all in different ways. Getting outside, increasing activity, and developing goals to help people get moving again is paramount for overall health. A good conversation and developing a plan with your local health care team is a great way to begin your return to wellness.

Luke Mortimer, M.D. is a contributing Prairie Doc® columnist. He practices as a board-certified orthopedic surgeon in Rapid City and Spearfish, South Dakota and Gillette, Wyoming. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org) and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

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## Weekly Vikings Recap

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

On a beautiful Saturday night with the temperatures in the 70's, US Bank Stadium doors were open and the fans were in mid-season SKOL chant form. That wasn't enough though to push the Vikings to their first win of the preseason, losing to the Colts 12-10.

Both teams dressed most of their players, there were notable starters that remained on the bench.

Mike Zimmer was determined to have the Vikings play better on defense after the debacle against the Broncos. Neither team broke 300 yards in total offense nor scored an offensive touchdown. The Vikings "bend don't break" defense returns to hold the Colts to 4 field goals but the Vikings just managed a pick 6 and a field goal for themselves.

### 1st half:

Kirk Cousins started the game, playing the first 3 series and going 5 of 7 for 23 yards. Adam Thielen injures his calf on a 3rd down slant pass and limps off the field.

The Viking's defense stepped up following Cousins 2nd straight 3 & out. With the Colts up 3-0, Ehlinger drops back for a short pass, throws out to the right flat only to have the ball tipped at the line. 2nd-year linebacker Troy Dye gathers up the deflection and scampers 33 yards for the Viking's 1st touchdown of the year. A good sign for Zimmer as the Viking's defense failed to score a touchdown in the 2020 season.

Jake Browning took over for Cousins to finish the first half, going just 6 of 15 for 83 yards. He did help get the Vikings into field goal position late to take a 10-6 lead into halftime but his confidence level looked shaky for the 2nd week in a row.

### 2nd half:

The 2nd half was dedicated to Kellen Mond, the rookie 3rd round pick from Texas Tech. Mond goes 6 of 12 for 86 yards. Despite being a 3-year starter in the Big 12, Mond is learning quickly the speed of the NFL is much greater than the college game. A couple of nice passes to Chad Beebe highlighted his effort but it's obvious the Viking's backup QB role is a long way from being decided.

### Rookies standouts:

Chazz Surrat from North Carolina lead the team with 5 tackles and showed his speed and athleticism while competing for that 3rd linebacker spot with Nick Vigil and Troy Dye.

Imir Smith-Marsette from Iowa, hoping to get a shot at the 3rd wide receiver spot, showed off his return skills averaging 31 yards on 2 kickoffs and 17 yards on a lone punt return.

Despite the good night, it appeared Zimmer would prefer he not return kicks from deep in his endzone- this was confirmed in Zim's post-game presser.

### Preseason observations:

Offensively, the O-line is still a work in progress. Giving up 2 sacks and a couple of costly penalties that stymied drives are of concern but the run blocking looks improved. With Conklin sidelined, there is a big competition for the 3rd tight end position.

Defensively, the Vikings were able to put pressure on the QB but did not record a sack. New additions Michael Pierce and Dalvin Tomlinson have shored up the middle and will make the defensive line formidable upon the return of Danielle Hunter.

Bashaud Breeland played well at defensive back in pass coverage but last year's starter, Cameron Dantzer continues to struggle at the corner.

Special teams have improved significantly from a game ago in both returns and kick coverage. Vikings punter Britton Colquitt had a much better outing and kicker Greg Joseph goes 1 for 2 just missing a 51-yard field goal in the first half.

### Next up:

Lots of cuts will occur this week and Friday night lights in Kansas City versus the Chiefs.

### About the writers:

Jack(son) is a 3rd-year law student at Mitchell Hamline School of Law and Duane(dad) is an e-commerce software consultant. Lifetime Viking fans and family season ticket holders for the past 25 years. SKOL!!

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Dave Swain is in Aberdeen, South Dakota.

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North Roosevelt



**Strong winds hit Aberdeen last night, knocking down several power poles along N. Roosevelt St. Groton was spared the storm with only rain falling to the tune of 0.43. This was posted on Dave Swain's Facebook Page.**

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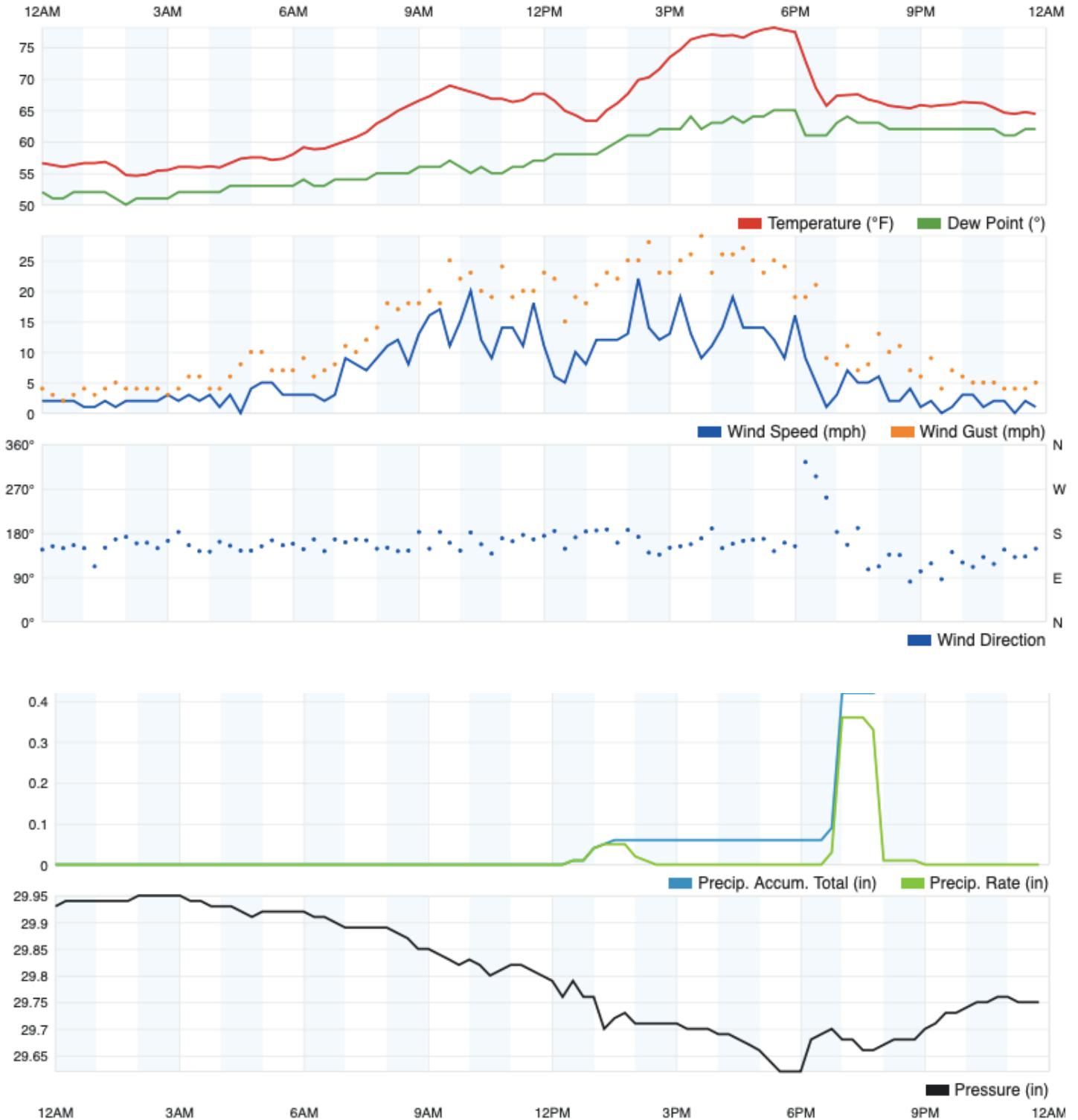
**Storm clouds tower above the Groton Water Tower last night. It will not be long and the old water tower will be coming down.**

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs







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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
				
Fog then Sunny	Mostly Clear then Slight Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms then Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 86 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 87 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 75 °F



## Unsettled Through The Week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
	Low Chance For Storms	Low Chance For Storms	Storms Likely
			
80s to Low 90s	80s to Low 90s	70s to Low 80s	70s to Low 80s

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

[www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr)

Created:  
8/23/2021 3:46 AM

Sunny today, but isolated to scattered storms are possible tonight into Tuesday. An active pattern continues through the week



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## Today in Weather History

August 23, 1960: Lightning and damaging winds caused damage to occur from Hand and Sanborn Counties to Marshall and Roberts Counties. A small airplane was destroyed, and the high winds broke windows in Miller. Also, roofs, TV antenna, utility lines, and trees were damaged in Kingsbury and Marshall Counties.

August 23, 1998: Winds gusting to 65 mph in and around Milbank, in Grant County, took the roof off a mobile home and wrapped it around a utility pole. The people inside the mobile home were uninjured. The Summit Dairy Barn had sustained significant damage. The high winds also blew a shed and a large tennis court fence down. Several trees along with many large tree branches were down all over town. Strong winds were also reported in Day and Roberts Counties. Winds of 60 mph also downed many tree branches north of Watertown.

1724: An event is known as the "Great Gust of 1724" occurred on this day. Almost all tobacco and much of the corn crops were destroyed by this violent tropical storm, which struck the Chesapeake Bay. Intense floods of rain and a huge gust of wind were seen on the James River. Some homes were wrecked, and several vessels were driven ashore. The storm was likely followed by a second hurricane just five days later causing rain for many straight days that caused the Virginia floods of 1724.

1906 - Thunderstorms deluged Kansas City, MO, with six inches of rain during the early morning, including nearly three inches in thirty minutes. (The Kansas City Weather Almanac)

1921 - Denver, CO, was drenched with 2.20 inches of rain in one hour, a record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1933 - The Chesapeake-Potomac hurricane moved over Norfolk VA and Washington D.C. A tide seven feet above normal flooded businesses in Norfolk, and damage in Maryland was estimated at seventeen million dollars. (David Ludlum)

1970 - Dry thunderstorms ignited more than one hundred fires in the Wenatchee and Okanogan National Forests of Washington State. Hot, dry, and windy weather spread the fires, a few of which burned out of control through the end of the month. More than 100,000 acres burned. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front brought autumn-like weather to the Northern and Central Plains Region. Afternoon highs were in the 50s and 60s across parts of Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska that just two days earlier were in the 90s or above 100 degrees. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rain in New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced hail an inch in diameter, wind gusts to 64 mph, and 2.62 inches of rain at Tucson AZ resulting in three million dollars damage. Cool weather prevailed in the northeastern U.S. Hartford CT reported a record low of 42 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced heavy rain with flash flooding in West Virginia. Pickens, WV, reported 4.80 inches of rain in 24 hours. Evening thunderstorms in Mississippi deluged Alta Woods with 4.25 inches of rain in less than an hour. Thunderstorms also produced heavy rain in southeastern Kentucky, and flooding was reported along Big Creek and along Stinking Creek. The Stinking Creek volunteer fire department reported water levels 12 to 14 feet above bankfull. Fort Worth TX hit the 100 degree mark for the first time all year. Strong winds ushering cool air into northwest Utah gusted to 70 mph, raising clouds of dust in the salt flats. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992: While South Florida residents were preparing for Hurricane Andrew, folks in western Montana were dealing with early season snowfall. Some snowfall amounts include 8.3" in Great Falls, 6.2" in Helena, and 5.1" in Cut Bank. This snowfall is the first significant snowfall on record in western Montana in August.

2005: Hurricane Katrina formed from Tropical Depression Twelve over the southeastern Bahamas. Katrina would become the costliest (\$81.2 billion) and one of the most deadly hurricanes (1,836 lives) in U.S. history.

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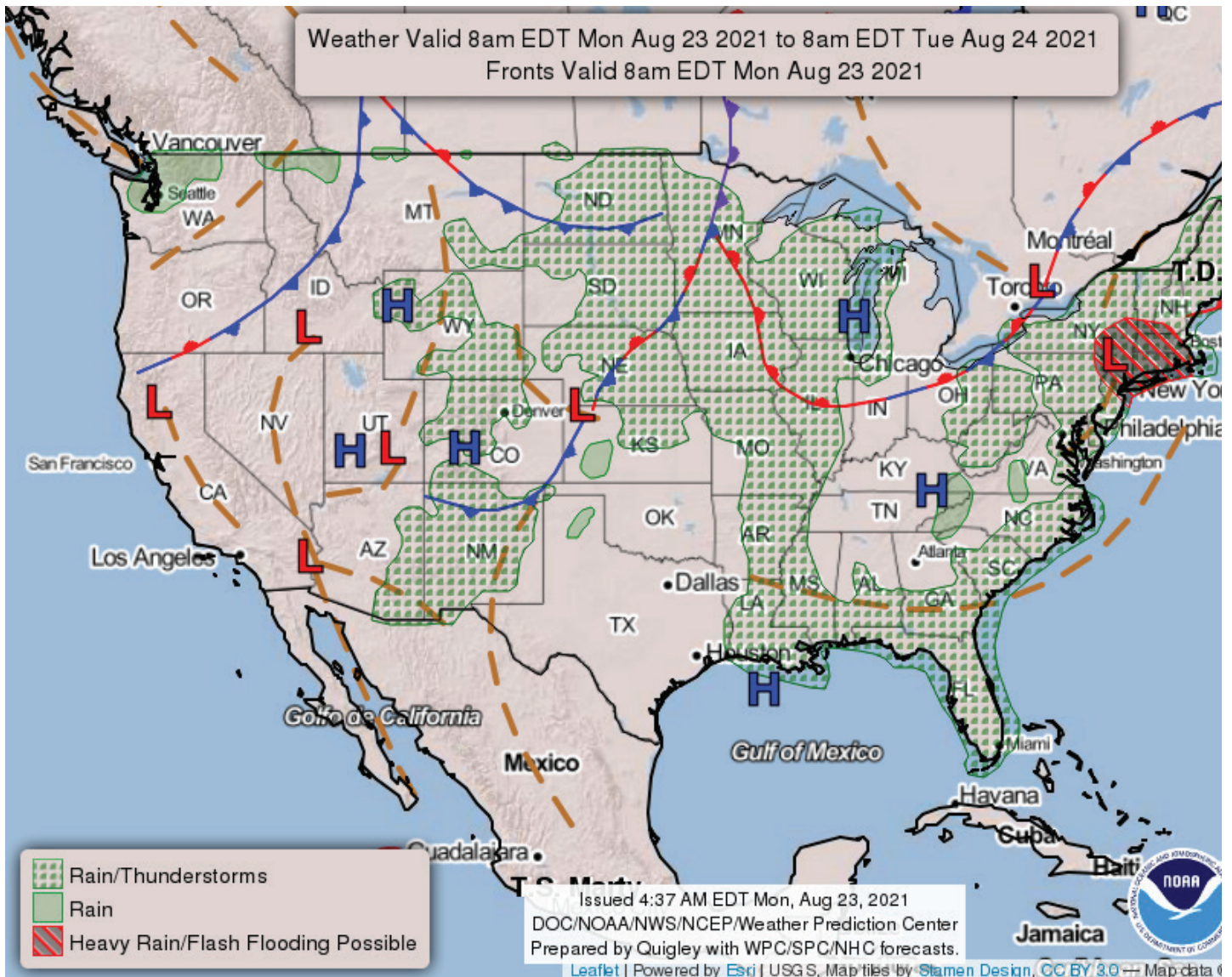
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 78 °F at 5:35 PM**  
**Low Temp: 54 °F at 2:09 AM**  
**Wind: 29 mph at 2:36 PM**  
**Precip: 0.43**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 106° in 2003**  
**Record Low: 39° in 1942, 1987**  
**Average High: 82°F**  
**Average Low: 55°F**  
**Average Precip in Aug.: 1.59**  
**Precip to date in Aug.: 1.66**  
**Average Precip to date: 15.69**  
**Precip Year to Date: 8.93**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:27 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:46 a.m.**



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## HIDDEN WITH GOD

Nine-one-one is the national number to use in the event of an emergency. When we use it, we know someone is there who will come to our rescue. Though we have heard stories of the misuse of that number and reports of incompetent responders answering calls of people in a crisis, it is comforting to know that help is available.

Psalm ninety-one and verse one is a number for Christians to "re-call" when there is a need for assurance and reassurance. It firmly states that our God is on guard and "standing by" to guide us through the crises of life.

The word "dwells" is such an important word for us to understand. It invites the believer "to remain, stay, tarry, endure, and find peace in one's abode." It suggests continuance and permanence. It is a place where God's people can "live" - forever. How comforting it is to know that our God is a "shelter" and a "refuge" in times of life's storms. For the Christian, He is our dwelling place for life.

Shortly after a submarine had been commissioned, the commanding officer took it to sea. It was to undergo various tests to make certain that it was trustworthy and ready for service. Shortly after leaving the christening he gave the order to "submerge." Several days later after he returned to shore, the reporters besieged him with many questions. Asked one, "How did the storms affect you?" "Storms? What storms?" he replied. "We were not aware of any storms. We were dwelling in a safe and secure place in the valleys between the ocean's mountains."

What comfort we have when we dwell in God.

Prayer: Thank You, God, for the peace we have because You love us and care for us and offer us Your protection. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 91:1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

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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  
10/29/2021 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

### **Officials: South Dakota's nursing shortage growing**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota is facing a shortage of nurses at a time when they are needed most, officials say.

The Rapid City Journal reports stress, long hours and fear of infection during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have caused more nurses than usual to leave the field, move to other states or retire early.

From 2015 to 2016, about 1,700 registered nurses left South Dakota. Last year, more than 2,500 nurses dropped out of the state workforce.

"The pandemic just kind of burned them out," said Michelle Bruns, a spokeswoman for the nursing program at Oglala Lakota College. "It's a tough situation."

The state higher-education system has not produced enough nursing graduates to keep up with a growing population and rising demand for health care services, and educators are scrambling to find ways to lure more students and produce degrees more quickly.

A shortage of nurses in other states has raised competition to attract new graduates and experienced providers, but South Dakota health care systems are at a competitive disadvantage because median pay for nurses in the state is the lowest in the nation, according to federal labor data.

### **Kabul airlift accelerating but still hampered by chaos**

By ROBERT BURNS and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden says the "hard and painful" airlift of Americans and tens of thousands of others from Afghanistan's capital is accelerating, but he would not rule out extending it beyond the Aug. 31 deadline he set before the Taliban's swift takeover.

In remarks at the White House on Sunday, one week after the Taliban completed their victory by capturing Kabul, Biden defended his decision to end the war and insisted that getting all Americans out of the country would have been difficult in the best of circumstances. Critics have blasted Biden for a grave error in judgment by waiting too long to begin organizing an evacuation, which became captive to the fear and panic set off by the government's sudden collapse.

"The evacuation of thousands of people from Kabul is going to be hard and painful, no matter when it started, when we began," Biden said. "It would have been true if we'd started a month ago, or a month from now. There is no way to evacuate this many people without pain and loss of heartbreaking images you see on television."

But there were signs of progress: over 24 hours that ended early morning Monday, 28 U.S. military flights evacuated approximately 10,400 people from Kabul, according to a White House official. In addition, 61 coalition aircraft evacuated approximately 5,900 people.

Biden said military discussions are underway on potentially extending the airlift beyond his Aug. 31 deadline. "Our hope is we will not have to extend, but there are discussions," he said, suggesting the possibility that the Taliban will be consulted.

Since Aug. 14, the U.S. has evacuated and facilitated the evacuation of approximately 37,000 people. Since the end of July, we have relocated approximately 42,000 people, the White House official said.

"We see no reason why this tempo will not be kept up," Biden said from the White House. The U.S. military says it has the capacity to fly 5,000 to more than 9,000 people out of Kabul per day.

Biden asserted, without a full explanation, that U.S. forces have managed to improve access to the airport for Americans and others seeking to get on flights. He suggested that the perimeter had been extended, widening a "safe zone."

"What I'm not going to do is talk about the tactical changes we're making to make sure we maintain as much security as we can," he said. "We have constantly, how can I say it, increased rational access to the airport, where more folk can get there more safely. It's still a dangerous operation but I don't want to go

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into the detail of how we're doing that."

Later Biden added: "We've discussed a lot with the Taliban. They've been cooperative in extending some of the perimeter."

He said groups of Americans in Kabul are being moved more efficiently and safely to the airport, but he did not provide details.

"Any American who wants to get home, will get home," he asserted.

Earlier Sunday, administration officials said the U.S. military is considering "creative ways" to get Americans and others into the Kabul airport for evacuation, and the Pentagon on Sunday ordered six U.S. commercial airlines to help move evacuees from temporary sites outside of Afghanistan.

Addressing a criticism cited by many Republicans, Biden said no Afghan evacuees are being flown directly to the United States from Afghanistan without prior screening. He said they are being screened in third countries.

Biden and his top aides have repeatedly cited their concern that extremist groups in Afghanistan will attempt to exploit the chaos around the Kabul airport.

"The threat is real, it is acute, it is persistent and something we're focused with every tool in our arsenal," said Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan.

The Biden administration has given no firm estimate of the number of Americans seeking to leave Afghanistan. Some have put the total between 10,000 and 15,000. Sullivan on Sunday put it at "several thousand."

Speaking on ABC's "This Week," Austin said that as Biden's Aug. 31 deadline for ending the evacuation operation approaches, he will recommend whether to give it more time.

Republicans in Congress stepped up their criticism of Biden's response. "If the Taliban is saying that Americans can travel safely to the airport, then there is no better way to make sure they get safely to the airport than to use our military to escort them," GOP Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa, an Army veteran, said on ABC's "This Week."

Ryan Crocker, who served as U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, told CBS' "Face the Nation" that Biden's management of the withdrawal was "catastrophic" and had unleashed a "global crisis."

Vice President Kamala Harris got plenty of reminders of the Afghanistan situation during her visit to Singapore. She dismissed multiple questions over what went wrong there during a press conference in Singapore after her meeting with the nation's prime minister.

Harris said that while there "will be and should be a robust analysis of what has happened," the current focus "has to be on evacuating American citizens, Afghans who worked with us and vulnerable Afghans, including women and children."

"We cannot be in any way distracted from what must be our primary mission right now, which is evacuating people from that region who deserve to be evacuated," she said.

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong offered support for the U.S. decision to withdraw from Afghanistan, saying the country understands the decision and that they were "grateful" for the U.S. efforts to combat terrorism in the region. He also announced that Singapore would offer use of its Air Force planes to help with the evacuation there.

A central problem in the evacuation operation is processing evacuees once they reach other countries in the region and in Europe. Those temporary waystations, including in Qatar, Bahrain and Germany, are sometimes reaching capacity, although new sites are being made available, including in Spain.

In an attempt to alleviate that, and to free up military aircraft for missions from Kabul, the Pentagon on Sunday activated the Civil Reserve Air Fleet. The Defense Department said 18 aircraft from American Airlines, Atlas Air, Delta Air Lines, Omni Air, Hawaiian Airlines and United Airlines will be directed to ferry evacuees from interim waystations. The airlines will not fly into Afghanistan. The six participating airlines have agreed to assist for a little less than two weeks, which roughly coincides with the currently planned duration of the airlift, which is to end Aug. 31.

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Associated Press writers Aamer Madhani, Lolita C. Baldor, Ellen Knickmeyer, Hope Yen, Alexandra Jaffe,

Jonathan Lemire and Matthew Lee contributed to this report.

## Gunfire at Kabul airport kills 1 amid chaotic evacuations

By AHMAD SEIR, RAHIM FAIEZ and JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A firefight just outside Kabul's international airport killed at least one Afghan soldier early Monday, German officials said, the latest chaos to engulf Western efforts to evacuate those fleeing the Taliban takeover of the country.

The airport shooting came as the Taliban sent fighters north of the capital to eliminate pockets of armed resistance to their lightning takeover earlier this month. The Taliban said they retook three districts seized by opponents the day before and had surrounded Panjshir, the last province that remains out of their control.

Afghanistan's security forces collapsed in the face of the Taliban advance, despite 20 years of Western aid, training and assistance. Tens of thousands of Afghans have sought to flee the country since, fearing a return to the brutal rule the Taliban imposed the last time they ran Afghanistan. That has led to chaos at the airport in Kabul, the main route out of the country.

Gunfire broke out near an entrance to the airport, where at least seven Afghans died a day earlier in a panicked stampede of thousands of people. The circumstances of the shooting, which occurred around dawn, remained unclear.

The German military tweeted that one member of the Afghan army was killed and three others were wounded by "unknown attackers." Emergency, an Italian humanitarian organization that operates hospitals in Afghanistan, said it had treated six patients with bullet wounds from the airport, none of whom were in life-threatening condition.

The U.S. military and NATO did not immediately acknowledge the shooting. There was no comment from the Taliban.

The tragic scenes around the airport have transfixed the world. Afghans poured onto the tarmac last week and some clung to a U.S. military transport plane as it took off, later plunging to their deaths. At least seven people died that day, in addition to the seven killed Sunday.

The Taliban blame the chaotic evacuation on the U.S. military and say there's no need for any Afghans to flee. They have pledged to bring peace and security after decades of war and say they won't seek revenge on those who worked with the U.S., NATO and the toppled Afghan government.

But their fighters have violently suppressed protests and beat people with batons as they try to control the crowds outside the airport perimeter. There have also been reports in recent days of the Taliban hunting down their former enemies. It's unclear if Taliban leaders are saying one thing and doing another, or if fighters on the ground are taking matters into their own hands.

German Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer told the Bild newspaper that the main obstacle to getting people out was the crowds outside the airport.

"We must switch much more to picking people up, so to speak, and we are doing that," Kramp-Karrenbauer said.

Asked about Taliban assurances of safe passage to the airport she said: "So far, I can say that what we need is being granted; the danger comes more from these uncontrollable crowds of people."

As the airlift continues, the U.S. government asked for 18 aircraft from American commercial carriers to assist in transporting Afghan refugees to their final destinations after their initial evacuation. The request fell under the Civil Reserve Air Fleet program, which was born in the wake of the Berlin airlift and can add to the military's capabilities during crises.

Early Monday, a Delta Air Lines flight landed in Dubai and later took off for Al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar, where evacuees are crowded into hangars.

Since Aug. 14, the U.S. has evacuated or facilitated the evacuation of more than 30,000 people on military and coalition flights. Tens of thousands of people — Americans, other foreigners and Afghans who assisted in the war effort — are still waiting to join the airlift, which has been slowed by security issues and U.S. bureaucracy hurdles.

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U.S. President Joe Biden said Sunday he would not rule out extending the evacuation beyond Aug. 31, the date he had set for completing the withdrawal of U.S. forces. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson plans to press Biden for an extension.

But Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen, in an interview with Sky News, said Aug. 31 is a "red line" and that extending the American presence would "provoke a reaction."

There are also concerns that a local affiliate of the Islamic State group might target the crowds outside the airport with suicide bombers or fire missiles at U.S. aircraft. Military planes have been executing corkscrew landings, and other aircraft have fired flares upon takeoff — both measures used to avoid missile attacks.

The Taliban and IS have different ideologies and have fought in recent years, but one concern about the Taliban's takeover is that they could again shelter extremist groups. The Taliban harbored al-Qaida while it orchestrated the 9/11 attacks, leading to the U.S. invasion in 2001. The Taliban now say they will not allow Afghanistan to be a base for attacks on other countries.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan, the Taliban have faced limited armed resistance from fighters in Baghlan province, some 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of Kabul. The anti-Taliban fighters claimed to have seized three districts in the Andarab Valley on Sunday, but the Taliban said Monday that they had cleared them out overnight.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the group's forces have also surrounded nearby Panjshir, the only one of Afghanistan's 34 provinces yet to fall to the fighters.

Several Taliban opponents have gathered there, including Amrullah Saleh, the vice president in the toppled government who claims to be the acting president. Ahmad Massoud, son of the slain commander of the Northern Alliance militias that partnered with the U.S. to drive the Taliban from power in 2001, is also in Panjshir.

In interviews with Arab media outlets over the weekend, Massoud said his fighters would resist any attempt to take the province by force but were open to dialogue with the Taliban.

Mujahid, the Taliban spokesman, said there had been no fighting in Panjshir yet and that his group is seeking a "peaceful solution."

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Faiez reported from Istanbul and Krauss from Jerusalem. Associated Press writers Geir Moulson in Berlin, Jill Lawless in London and Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates contributed to this report.

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More AP coverage of Afghanistan: <https://apnews.com/hub/afghanistan>.

## **The Latest: Pakistan gets Taliban assurance against attacks**

The Associated Press undefined

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan's interior minister says the Taliban have assured his country they will not allow the outlawed Pakistani Taliban — a separate militant group from the one in Afghanistan — to use Afghan soil for attacks against Pakistan.

Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Monday that his ministry has information that amid the Taliban sweep across Afghanistan, some of the leaders and members of the Pakistani Taliban, or Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, were freed from Afghan prisons.

Ahmed said Islamabad was in contact with the Taliban over the matter.

The Pakistani Taliban have claimed responsibility for several past attacks, including the 2014 deadly attack on a Peshawar school that killed 154 people, mostly schoolchildren.

Islamabad alleges the Pakistani Taliban have been hiding in Afghanistan for the past several years, after fleeing military operations launched against them inside Pakistan.

Ahmed also said that since last week, Pakistan has helped more than 2,000 foreigners and Pakistanis leave Afghanistan by air and land routes. Pakistan is issuing visas upon arrival to all diplomats, foreigners and journalists seeking to leave Kabul over security concerns.

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## MORE ON THE CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN:

- Gunfire at Kabul airport kills 1 amid chaotic evacuations
- Kabul airlift is accelerating but still hampered by chaos
- When the music stops: Afghan 'happy place' falls silent
- For Afghan refugees in India, hopes dim for returning home
- 'Imbecilic': Ex-UK leader Tony Blair slams Afghan withdrawal

— Find more AP coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/afghanistan>

## HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

**THE HAGUE, Netherlands** — Dutch authorities say that a temporary accommodation center for Afghan evacuees at an army barracks in the northern Netherlands is full and a second location is being opened.

The government agency that houses asylum seekers said on Monday that the camp in the remote village of Zoutcamp reached its capacity on Sunday night, with the arrival of 178 Afghan evacuees.

A new accommodation center is being opened to house more Afghans at another military barracks in the central town of Zeist.

The Dutch defense ministry says it has completed nine flights out of Kabul to airports in the region since the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan. Six flights carrying evacuees from Afghanistan have arrived in the Netherlands carrying a total of more than 800 people. That number includes Dutch nationals, Afghans and citizens of other countries.

**BEIJING** — China is once again criticizing the United States over Afghanistan, saying America cannot simply abandon the war-torn country.

"The United States is the root cause and the biggest external factor in the Afghan issue," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Monday. "It cannot just run away like this."

He called on the U.S. to help maintain stability, avoid chaos and rebuild Afghanistan.

"I hope the U.S. side can match its acts with words, take on its responsibilities in Afghanistan and put into practice its commitments to Afghanistan in terms of development and reconstruction, and humanitarian assistance," he told a daily briefing.

China has expressed readiness to work with all parties in Afghanistan, including the Taliban, to rebuild the war-torn nation.

**WARSAW, Poland** — A deputy foreign minister says Poland has so far evacuated over 400 people from Kabul, including Poles and Afghans who worked for Poland's diplomatic mission or pro-democracy efforts, with their family members. More flights are planned.

Marcin Przydacz said on Polish Radio 24 Monday that the situation at the Kabul airport was getting ever more tense, adding further pressure on the evacuations.

The International Monetary Fund thanked Poland for a successful evacuation of its staff from Kabul, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said on Twitter, following a phone call with the IMF managing director, Kristalina Georgieva. Poland is also to evacuate some 300 staff working for NATO in Afghanistan.

Seven planes have already brought evacuees to Poland and another one, with some 70 Afghan evacuees, was expected in Warsaw on Monday, according to Morawiecki's top aide, Michal Dworczyk.

Dworczyk said the plane was delayed in Uzbekistan for several hours due to "problems at the site," which he did not describe.

Another passenger plane is on the way to Uzbekistan, a stopover on the evacuation route. Evacuees from Kabul are brought there on military planes and then flown to Warsaw by the national carrier, LOT.

**LONDON** — Britain is urging the United States to extend its evacuation effort in Kabul beyond the current Aug. 31 deadline, saying without the Americans other countries will have no choice but to stop their

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own operations to help people fleeing the Taliban takeover.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson plans to press President Joe Biden at an emergency meeting of Group of Seven leaders on Tuesday convened by Britain.

Some U.K. military leaders have said Britain should keep troops at Kabul airport to continue the evacuation effort even if the Americans leave. But Armed Forces Minister James Heappey said Monday that "there is a hard reality that there would be no international airlift without the way that the U.S. are underpinning it."

He said that "whether or not the U.S. can be persuaded to stay is a matter for the prime minister tomorrow in the G-7 meeting." He said that an agreement from the Taliban would also be needed for an extension.

Biden has not ruled out extending the airlift beyond the Aug. 31 deadline he set before the Taliban's swift takeover in Afghanistan, but he said he hoped it would not be necessary.

Britain says its forces have evacuated more than 5,700 people — chiefly U.K. citizens and Afghans — from Kabul in the last 10 days, 1,821 of them in the past 24 hours.

**UNITED NATIONS** — The U.N. agency for children expects the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan to worsen due to a severe drought, the onset of winter and the coronavirus pandemic.

UNICEF says 10 million children in Afghanistan already survive on humanitarian assistance and around a million are expected to suffer from life-threatening malnutrition this year. It says some 4.2 million children, including 2.2 million girls, are out of school.

Afghanistan was a poor country, reliant on international aid, even before the Taliban took over earlier this month.

UNICEF director Henrietta Fore said in a statement on Monday that "this is the grim reality facing Afghan children and it remains so regardless of ongoing political developments and changes in government."

She says the agency is committed to remaining in Afghanistan and is scaling up its operations. UNICEF hopes to provide aid in areas that were unreachable because of the ongoing war.

**KABUL** — France's envoy to Afghanistan says French special forces backed by the U.S. army have helped 260 Afghans who worked with the European Union delegation to get to Kabul airport.

Ambassador David Martinon said in a tweet early on Monday that "they have been welcomed at the French Embassy's waiting area prior to boarding. Bravo to the EU."

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell says around 400 Afghans who worked with the bloc's delegation are to be granted protection in Europe. They're being sent to Spain for screening before being shared out among EU countries willing to grant them visas.

**BERLIN** — The German military says a firefight broke out at the Kabul airport's north gate early on Monday between Afghan security forces and "unknown attackers."

The military said in a tweet that one Afghan security officer was killed and another three were wounded in the early morning incident. It said that U.S. and German forces then also got involved, and that there were no injuries to German soldiers.

Later, the German military clarified that the Afghan officer was a member "of the Afghan army" — Afghan troops who are involved in securing the airport as part of the multinational operation.

There was no further information and it wasn't known who the attackers were. The Taliban, who are manning the outside perimeters of the Kabul airport, have until now not opened fire on NATO or Afghan troops within.

Monday's incident took place after at least seven Afghans died in a panicked crush of people trying to enter Kabul's international airport on Sunday, the British military said. Thousands were still trying to flee the country in a chaotic exodus a week after the Taliban takeover.

The German Defense Ministry said Monday that the country's military has evacuated more than 2,700 people from Kabul since the evacuations started, with people of 38 nationalities among those taken out. German A400M transport aircraft are shuttling between Kabul and Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

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COPENHAGEN, Denmark — A plane with Norwegian citizens from Afghanistan, others with links to Norway and also other foreign nationals landed in Oslo on Monday, the fourth flight in the past days to have landed in Norway.

The Scandinavian country's foreign ministry declined to say how many were on the plane or give details for safety reasons, the Norwegian news agency NTB said.

In neighboring Sweden, Foreign Minister Ann Linde said Monday that more than 170 people have been evacuated from Afghanistan. "I am pleased that we can now welcome local employees, at the same time as we continue to work to evacuate more local employees," she said.

Denmark too has been active in evacuating people from Afghanistan. Finland said that so far the total number of its evacuees was at 110. They include citizens from Finland and people with permanent Finnish residence, "along with other persons who have been working for Finland, the EU and NATO, together with their families."

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden is raising concerns that the Islamic State poses a threat as American troops seek to evacuate thousands of U.S. citizens and Afghan allies from Afghanistan.

Biden in remarks at the White House on Sunday noted that the terror group is a "sworn enemy of the Taliban" and said that the longer U.S. troops are on the ground increases the chance that the group will attempt to strike innocent civilians and American personnel near the Hamid Karzai International Airport.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has been warning Americans to avoid traveling to the airport in part because of concerns about Islamic State fighters.

The extremist group has long declared a desire to attack America and U.S. interests abroad and it has been active in Afghanistan for a number of years, carrying out waves of horrific attacks, mostly on the Shiite minority.

The group has been repeatedly targeted by U.S. airstrikes in recent years, and faced Taliban attacks.

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden says 11,000 individuals were evacuated from Kabul over the weekend and he remains committed to assisting all Americans who want to leave Afghanistan get out.

Biden added Sunday that his first priority is getting American citizens out of Afghanistan "as quickly and safely as possible."

In the president's words: "We're working hard and as fast as we can to get people out. That's our mission. That's our goal."

Biden also says he is also activating the civilian reserve air fleet provided by commercial airlines to help move evacuees from third country waystations on to the United States.

## Ukraine's leader vows to do all he can to bring back Crimea

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's president on Monday vowed to do all he can to bring back the peninsula of Crimea, annexed by Russia seven years ago, and urged international allies to support the effort.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke at the Crimean Platform summit, called by Ukraine to build up pressure on Russia over the 2014 annexation that has been denounced as illegal by most of the world. Russia's relations with the West have sunk to post-Cold War lows as a result.

In his opening remarks, Zelenskyy promised to "do everything possible to return Crimea, so that Crimea, together with Ukraine, becomes part of Europe."

"For this we will use all possible political, legal and first and foremost diplomatic means," Zelenskyy said, adding that Kyiv needs "effective support at the international level."

Top officials from 46 countries and blocs took part in the summit, including from the United States, the European Union and Turkey. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denounced the summit as an "anti-Russian event."

Zelenskyy charged that Russia has turned Crimea into a "military base" and "a foothold for Russia to

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boost its influence on the Black Sea region." He said Moscow has tripled its military presence in Crimea. In April, Russia increased troops near its borders with Ukraine, including in Crimea, eliciting international outrage.

On June 23, Russia said one of its warships in the Black Sea fired warning shots and a warplane dropped bombs in the path of the HMS Defender, a British Royal Navy destroyer, to chase it away from an area near Crimea that Moscow claims as its territorial waters. Britain, which like most other nations didn't recognize the annexation of Crimea, insisted the Defender wasn't fired upon and said it was sailing in Ukrainian waters.

All 30 NATO member states were represented at the summit.

"Occupation of Crimea casts doubts on the effectiveness of the entire international security system," Ukraine's president said. "Without restoring the trust in it, not a single state can be sure that it wouldn't become the next victim of occupation."

## As Cuomo exits, Hochul to take office minus 'distractions'

By MARINA VILLENEUVE Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Andrew Cuomo neared the end of his decade as New York's governor Monday, as he prepared to relinquish his tight grip on government to Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul in a midnight power transfer that will break another glass ceiling for women in state politics.

Cuomo, a Democrat, was set to end his term at 11:59 p.m., just under two weeks after he announced he would resign rather than face a likely impeachment battle over sexual harassment allegations.

Hochul was scheduled to be sworn in as New York's first female governor just after midnight in a brief, private ceremony overseen by the state's chief judge, Janet DiFiore.

The switch in leadership was happening in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Henri, which narrowly missed Long Island on Sunday but was dumping potentially dangerous amounts of rain over parts of the Catskill Mountains and Hudson River Valley, even after it was downgraded to a tropical depression.

The storm drew Cuomo back out into public view over the weekend, albeit briefly. He gave two televised briefings — warning New Yorkers to take the storm seriously with the same mix of scolding and reassurance that once made his daily COVID-19 briefings popular.

Perhaps if the storm had been catastrophic Cuomo might have been tempted to put off his resignation. But as the potential for danger diminished, he said there would be no change in his plans. "My final day is tomorrow," he said Sunday.

Hochul, also a Democrat, will inherit immense challenges as she takes over an administration facing criticism for inaction in Cuomo's distracted final months in office.

COVID-19 has refused to abate. Schools are set to reopen in the coming weeks, with big decisions to be made about whether to require masks for students or vaccination for teachers. The state's economic recovery from the pandemic is still incomplete.

Cuomo's resignation comes after an independent investigation overseen by state Attorney General Letitia James concluded there was credible evidence he'd sexually harassed at least 11 women, including an aide who said he groped her breast and has since filed a complaint with the Albany County Sheriff's Office.

Investigators also said Cuomo's senior staff retaliated against at least one of those women and worked to undermine the credibility of others.

Cuomo insists he didn't touch anyone inappropriately and called the allegations "unfair" and "untruthful," but said he wouldn't force the state to endure an impeachment trial he couldn't win.

Separately, Cuomo was facing a legislative investigation into whether he misled the public about COVID-19 deaths in nursing homes to protect his reputation as a pandemic leader and improperly got help from state employees in writing a pandemic book that may net him \$5 million.

Cuomo has offered few hints about his plans or where he'll live after leaving the Executive Mansion. He told New York magazine in a recent interview that he's "not disappearing."

In his resignation speech Aug. 10, he spoke with pride about his record of legalizing same-sex marriage, expanding paid family leave and boosting the statewide minimum wage to \$15.

Hochul will need to quickly build her own team of advisers who can help steer the administration for at least the next 16 months.

She plans to keep on Cuomo-era employees for 45 days to allow her time to interview new hires, but said she will not keep anyone found to have behaved unethically. At least 35 employees in the governor's office have left since February, according to staff rosters.

Hochul, who said she didn't work closely with Cuomo and wasn't aware of the harassment allegations before they became public, has vowed no one will ever call her workplace "toxic."

"I have a different approach to governing," Hochul said Wednesday in Queens, adding, "I get the job done because I don't have time for distractions, particularly coming into this position."

Hochul has already said she plans to run for a full four-year term next year.

She'll do so as the state Democratic Party grapples with an internal struggle between moderate and liberal New Yorkers.

Hochul, who once represented a conservative Western New York district in Congress for a year and has a reputation as a moderate, is expected to pick a left-leaning state lawmaker from New York City as her lieutenant governor.

State Democratic Party Chair Jay Jacobs praised Hochul as "formidable."

"She's very experienced and I think she'll be a refreshing and exciting new governor," he said.

## Henri hurls rain as system settles atop swamped Northeast

By DAVID KLEPPER, MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and DAVID PORTER Associated Press

WESTERLY, R.I. (AP) — The slow-rolling system named Henri is taking its time drenching the Northeast with rain, lingering early Monday atop a region made swampy by the storm's relentless downpour.

Henri, which made landfall as a tropical storm Sunday afternoon in Rhode Island, has moved northwest through Connecticut. It hurled rain westward far before its arrival, flooding areas as far southwest as New Jersey before pelting northeast Pennsylvania, even as it took on tropical depression status.

Over 140,000 homes lost power, and deluges of rain closed bridges, swamped roads and left some people stranded in their vehicles.

Beach towns from the Hamptons on Long Island to Cape Cod in Massachusetts exhaled from being spared the worst of the potential damage Sunday. Other areas of New England awaited the storm's return.

The National Hurricane Center said Henri is expected to slow down further and likely stall near the Connecticut-New York state line, before moving back east through New England and eventually pushing out to the Atlantic Ocean.

By Monday morning, the system was moving east at just 1 mph (2 kph).

Henri produced 3 to 6 inches (8 to 15 centimeters) of rainfall over many areas Sunday, with isolated higher totals. An additional 1 to 3 inches (3 to 8 centimeters) was forecast through Monday for parts of Long Island, New England, southeast New York, New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania.

New England officials fretted that just a few more inches of precipitation would be a back breaker following a summer of record rainfall.

"The ground is so saturated that it can flood with just another inch of rain," Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont warned late Sunday.

In the central New Jersey community of Helmetta, some 200 residents fled for higher ground, taking refuge in hotels or with friends and family, as flood waters inundated their homes Sunday.

"It came so quick — in the blink of an eye," said the town's mayor, Christopher Slavicek, whose parents were spending the night after fleeing their home. "Now there's clean up. So this is far from over."

President Joe Biden has declared disasters in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, opening the purse strings for federal recovery aid to those states.

"We're doing everything we can now to help those states prepare, respond and recover," said the president, who also offered condolences Sunday to Tennessee residents, after severe flooding from an

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unrelated storm killed at least 22 people and left dozens missing.

When Henri made landfall near Westerly, Rhode Island, it had sustained winds of about 60 mph (97 kph) and gusts of up to 70 mph (110 kph).

Some communities in central New Jersey were inundated with as much as 8 inches (20 centimeters) of rain by midday Sunday. In Jamesburg, television video footage showed flooded downtown streets and cars almost completely submerged. In Newark, Public Safety Director Brian O'Hara said police and firefighters rescued 86 people in 11 incidents related to the storm.

In Connecticut, about 250 residents from four nursing homes on the shoreline had to be relocated to other facilities. Several major bridges in Rhode Island were briefly shuttered Sunday, and some coastal roads were nearly impassable.

Other communities awaited for sunrise to survey the damage already wrought.

Linda Orlomoski, of Canterbury, Connecticut, was among those without power late into Sunday.

"It's supposed to get nasty hot and humid again on Tuesday," she said. "If we still have no power by then, that will be miserable."

Kunzelman reported from Newport, Rhode Island. Porter reported from New York. Associated Press writers William J. Kole in Warwick, Rhode Island, Michelle Smith in Providence, Rhode Island, Michael R. Sisak and Julie Walker from East Hampton, Will Lester in Washington, Philip Marcelo in Boston, Michael Melia in Hartford, Connecticut, Susan Haigh in Norwich, Connecticut, and Bobby Caina Calvin in New York contributed to this report.

## US VP Harris: Focus must stay on Afghan evacuation

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris asserted Monday that the U.S. must maintain its focus on evacuating Americans and vulnerable Afghans and shouldn't get distracted by questions over what went wrong in the chaotic U.S. exit from Afghanistan.

Speaking at a news conference in Singapore, Harris repeatedly declined to engage when asked what she felt should have been done differently in the withdrawal.

"There's no question there will be and should be a robust analysis of what has happened, but right now there's no question that our focus has to be on evacuating American citizens, Afghans who worked with us and vulnerable Afghans, including women and children," she said.

Harris took questions alongside Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong after the two met for about two hours to discuss issues ranging from the COVID-19 response to cybersecurity and supply chain cooperation. The news conference was dominated by Afghanistan, after the messy U.S. withdrawal sparked concerns about America's commitments to its allies globally.

Harris' visit to Singapore and Vietnam this week is seen as the first real test of the Biden administration's ability to reassure key allies of its resolve.

Prime Minister Lee offered his country's support for the U.S. decision to withdraw, however, and said Singapore was "grateful" for the U.S. efforts to combat terrorism in Afghanistan. He also offered the U.S. the use of the Singapore Air Force's transport aircraft to help with the evacuation, and said the country is now watching what the U.S. does next.

"What matters is how the U.S. repositions itself in the Asia Pacific, engages the broader region and continues to fight against terrorism, because that will determine the perceptions of the countries of the U.S.' global priorities and of its strategic intentions," he said.

Harris' Southeast Asian trip, which brings her to Singapore and then later to Vietnam this week, is aimed at broadening cooperation with both nations to offer a counterweight to China's growing influence in the region.

On Monday, the vice president's office announced a series of new agreements with Singapore aimed at combating cyberthreats, tackling climate change, addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and alleviating

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supply chain issues.

On cybersecurity, the Treasury and Defense Departments, as well as the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, have each inked a memorandum of understanding with their Singapore counterparts expanding information sharing and training to combat cyberthreats.

The two nations agreed to cooperate more closely to track COVID-19 variants and engage in research on coronavirus treatments. And the Department of Commerce is joining with the Singapore Ministry of Trade and Industry to create a partnership focused on strengthening trade throughout a handful of key industries.

The White House announced additional agreements between the two nations fostering cooperation on space exploration and defense issues as well. The announcements came Monday after Harris met with Singapore President Halimah Yacob and Prime Minister Lee.

Harris is set to visit the Changi Naval Base on Monday afternoon, where she'll speak to American sailors aboard the USS Tulsa, a combat ship.

On Tuesday, Harris will deliver a speech outlining the Biden administration's vision for the region, and meet with business leaders to discuss supply chain issues.

The trip marks Harris' second foreign trip in office — she visited Guatemala and Mexico in June — and will be the first time a U.S. vice president has visited Vietnam.

Singapore is the anchor of the U.S. naval presence in Southeast Asia and has a deep trade partnership with the U.S., but the country also seeks to maintain strong ties with China and a position of neutrality amid increasingly frosty U.S.-China relations.

Relations between the U.S. and China deteriorated sharply under Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, and the two sides remain at odds over a host of issues including technology, cybersecurity and human rights.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin made their first overseas trips to Japan and South Korea. Austin traveled to Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines last month and vowed U.S. support against Beijing's intrusions in the South China Sea.

Alexander Feldman, president and CEO of the US-ASEAN Business Council, said Harris will have to be careful in her conversations with Singapore's leaders not to focus too heavily on China, but to emphasize a positive, productive U.S. relationship with Singapore and Vietnam.

"Where she could fall into a trap is really trying to pit this as a U.S. versus China trip. It should be a U.S. trip to our friends and partners in Southeast Asia," Feldman said.

If China becomes the main focal point, he said, "that makes it harder for our friends to move forward across the region, not only in Singapore and Vietnam but beyond that."

Indeed, Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said in a recent interview that Singapore will "be useful but we will not be made use of" in its relations with both countries, and the nation's prime minister previously warned the U.S. against pursuing an aggressive approach to China.

Beijing, however, has seized on Harris' trip, with China's official Xinhua News Agency issuing an editorial Saturday on the visit portraying it as part of a drive to contain China.

Visits to Southeast Asia by senior Biden officials are aiming to "woo these countries to form a ring of containment against China. But Southeast Asian countries are reluctant to choose sides between China and the United States, and America's 'wishful plan' will end in failure," Xinhua said.

The U.S. approach is based on "outdated Cold War thinking and is intended to provoke troubles in their relations with China, create division and confrontation, and try to create a ring of containment," the editorial said.

## Lebanese hospitals at breaking point as everything runs out

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Drenched in sweat, doctors check patients lying on stretchers in the reception area of Lebanon's largest public hospital. Air conditioners are turned off, except in operating rooms and storage units, to save on fuel.

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Medics scramble to find alternatives to saline solutions after the hospital ran out. The shortages are overwhelming, the medical staff exhausted. And with a new surge in coronavirus cases, Lebanon's hospitals are at a breaking point.

The country's health sector is a casualty of the multiple crises that have plunged Lebanon into a downward spiral — a financial and economic meltdown, compounded by a complete failure of the government, runaway corruption and a pandemic that isn't going away.

The collapse is all the more dramatic since only a few years ago, Lebanon was a leader in medical care in the Arab world. The region's rich and famous came to this small Mideast nation of 6 million for everything, from major hospital procedures to plastic surgeries.

## THE NEW NORMAL

Ghaidaa al-Saddik, a second-year resident, had just returned from a week off after an exhausting year. Back on duty for a week, she has already intubated two critical patients in the emergency room, both in their 30s.

She struggles to admit new patients, knowing how short on supplies the hospital is, scared to be blamed for mistakes and questioning if she is doing her best. Many patients are asked to bring their own medicines, such as steroids. Others are discharged too soon — often to homes where power outages last for days.

"You feel like you are trapped," said al-Saddik.

The 28-year-old spends more nights in the staff dorms studying because at home, she has no electricity. She moved to an apartment closer to the hospital that she shares with two other people to save on rent and transportation. With the collapse of Lebanon's currency amid the crisis, her salary has lost nearly 90% of its value.

With fewer and fewer residents, she must now do the rounds for about 30 patients, instead of 10. Her mentor, a senior virologist, has left Lebanon — one of many in a brain drain of medical professionals.

"I want to help my people," she said. "But at the same time, what about me being a better doctor?"

## RUNNING ON EMPTY

The Rafik Hariri University Hospital is Lebanon's largest public hospital and the country's No. 1 for the treatment of coronavirus patients. Lebanon has so far registered nearly 590,000 infections and over 8,000 deaths.

The hospital, which depended on the state power company, had to start relying on generators for at least 12 hours a day. Since last Monday, the generators have been the only source of power, running non-stop. Most of the hospital's diesel, sold at the black market at five times the official price, is either donated by political parties or international aid groups.

To save on fuel, some rooms run only electrical fans in the sweltering summer heat. Not all hospital elevators are working. Bed capacity has been downsized by about 15% and the ER admits only life-threatening cases.

It is a perpetual crisis that has left the hospital always on the brink, says its director, Firas Abiad. There are "shortages of almost everything."

Every day, he struggles to secure more fuel — the hospital has a maximum two-day supply at any time. Shelves are thin on medicines, including for cancer patients and dialysis. A new aid shipment of blood serum will last just a few days.

"We can hardly get by," said Jihad Bikai, head of the ER. He recently had to send a critical patient to another hospital because he no longer has a vascular surgeon on staff.

## WHAT HAPPENED?

Lebanon's financial crisis, rooted in years of corruption and mismanagement, spilled out into the streets in late 2019, with antigovernment protests and demands for accountability. Political leaders have since failed to agree on a recovery program or even a new government — leaving the previous one in perpetual



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but stumped caretaker role.

The World Bank has described the crisis as among the worst in over a century. In just two and a half years, the majority of the population has been plunged into poverty, the national currency is collapsing and foreign reserves have run dry.

Power outages have for years forced a dependence on private generators but the crisis took on new dimensions this summer as fuel and diesel became scarce, disrupting the work of hospitals, bakeries, internet providers and many other businesses.

Then last August, a massive explosion at Beirut's port — when hundreds of tons of improperly stored ammonium nitrate ignited — destroyed entire neighborhoods of the city and killed 214 people. Thousands were injured, inundating hospitals, some of which lost members of their staff and were forced to shut down temporarily.

On a recent afternoon at the Rafik Hariri hospital, nurse Mustafa Harqous, 39, tried to ignore the ruckus outside the coronavirus ER: patients with oxygen masks waiting for a bed to free up, families pressing to visit sick relatives, others arguing over out-of-stock drugs.

He went about his work in the 25-bed room. Except for a month-old baby, the patients were mostly men in their 30s and 40s.

"Some people understand the shortages are not our fault," he said. "But many don't."

He worries how he will fill up his car for the drive home, an hour and a half away. The government, he said, is "leaving people in the middle of the sea with no rescue boat."

## NO WAY OUT

Reports say at least 2,500 doctors and nurses have left Lebanon this year. At the Rafik Hariri hospital, at least 30% of doctors and more than 10% of nurses left, most recently five in one day. Many private hospitals, who offer 80% of Lebanon's medical services, are shutting down because of lack of resources or turning away patients who can't pay.

Bikai, the 37-year-old ER chief, was offered a job in a neighboring country. His salary is barely enough to cover his son's dentist's bills. His wife, also a doctor, works by his side in the ER.

"There is a moment, when you are pushing hard to get over a mountain, and you get to a place, you can't move," he said. "I worry we'll get to that."

Abiad, the hospital director, struggles to remain positive for his staff.

"Our country is disintegrating in front of our eyes," he said. "The most difficult part is ... we can't seem to be able to find a way to stop this deterioration."

## Overstayed welcome? Henri takes its time drenching Northeast

By MALLIKA SEN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Henri was downgraded to a tropical depression as it churned deeper inland early Monday, with experts predicting it will settle for awhile near the New York-Connecticut border before heading back east. Here's everything to know about the Northeast weather that's tropical in name, but far from its titular home:

### IS HENRI STILL A HURRICANE?

No. The National Hurricane Center downgraded it to a tropical storm early Sunday and then to a tropical depression later in the day. It weakened as it made landfall in Rhode Island at midday. By Sunday evening, it was weaker still as it moved over parts of western Massachusetts and Connecticut.

### WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A HURRICANE, TROPICAL STORM AND DEPRESSION?

It's all about the wind. Specifically, the sustained wind speeds. The maximum sustained winds for a hurricane is anything above 74 mph. A tropical storm? 73 mph.

As of early Sunday evening, Henri's sustained winds topped out at 40 mph (64 kph), well below hurricane status.

It dropped to a tropical depression when sustained winds fell below 39 mph.

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But don't write Henri off. The greatest threat from a storm this size is water. Heavy rains cause storm surges and inland flooding, and historically, those things have threatened life and property more than high winds.

WHAT AREAS IS HENRI SUPPOSED TO AFFECT?

After coming ashore, Henri veered west, dumping massive amounts of rain on Connecticut and New York's Hudson River Valley, which could cause dangerous flooding. So far, the storm surge hasn't been significant like it was with 2012's Superstorm Sandy — the effects of which are still plaguing New York. It's forecast to bank east early Monday and skirt parts of Vermont and New Hampshire before heading out into the Gulf of Maine.

WHO IS HENRI? WHO IS BOB? WHO IS GLORIA?

A stormy trio. Henri had strengthened into a hurricane Saturday morning before losing steam Sunday. Had it made landfall as a hurricane, it would have been New England's first in 30 years. Bob was its predecessor, responsible for the deaths of 17 and \$1.5 billion in damage in August 1991. But with Connecticut in Henri's path, some might better remember Gloria — the September 1985 hurricane made landfall on both Long Island and Connecticut and caused eight deaths and nearly \$1 billion in damage.

JE M'APPELLE HENRI — WHY DO I SHARE A NAME WITH A STORM?

These storms have human names courtesy the World Meteorological Association, which draws up a list of 21 names for each Atlantic hurricane season.

SO WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS NEEDED FOR AN HENRI (OR BOB OR GLORIA)?

There are two ingredients needed for a storm to track this far up north: a tropical system itself and steering currents. Most tropical systems in the northern hemisphere run out or recur before they can make their way north, according to the National Weather Service.

OK, SO THIS IS PRETTY RARE. IS HENRI'S PATH CONNECTED TO CLIMATE CHANGE?

It's just a tropical weather phenomenon, the National Weather Service says. But at the same time, climate change isn't off the hook when it comes to tropical weather — global warming exacerbates hurricanes, making them stronger and wetter.

HOW DOES HENRI COMPARE TO SANDY?

Sandy's known as a superstorm around these parts, because it technically wasn't a hurricane when it did its worst to New York City, its suburbs and the Jersey Shore in October 2012. Henri has not been that hard on the city or the shore, but it could cause calamitous flooding in the saturated Hudson River Valley. Power outages throughout the greater region could last a week or more. And with Sandy, at least, there was more time to prepare. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo brought up Sandy in a Saturday news conference, saying Henri comparatively offered "short notice."

CUOMO? HE'S STILL AROUND?

Yes! Cuomo is governor until 11:59 p.m. EDT Monday, so he's technically still in charge for now.

WE'RE IN THE DOG DAYS OF AUGUST — ARE THERE STILL TOURISTS ON THE ATLANTIC COAST?

Oh, yes. School is back in session in parts of the east coast, but there are still thousands of tourists enjoying the beaches of Cape Cod, the Hamptons and elsewhere.

IS HENRI A FAST- OR SLOW-MOVING STORM?

Henri isn't winning any races. Its slow churn could be a good thing, increasing the chance it will falter quickly. But it could also mean a lot of concentrated rain, which translates to flooding.

WAIT, WAS HURRICANE BOB THE SAME AS 'THE PERFECT STORM'?

Nope, though both storms were in 1991. The so-called "perfect storm" — also known as the Halloween Storm — hit New England about two months later. It started as a nor'easter, in which form it inflicted the most damage. A hurricane eventually formed at its center — but it purposely went unnamed, because meteorologists worried it would be distracting.

SAY IT HAD BEEN NAMED, WHAT WOULD IT HAVE BEEN KNOWN AS?

Henri.

SERIOUSLY?

Yep! Atlantic hurricane names are recycled every six years, unless they're retired out of notoriety — we're

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never going to see another hurricane named Katrina, or even Bob, again. And the "H" name — Henri in 1991 — was next on the list when the storm struck.

SO THAT MOVIE ISN'T ABOUT BOB?

Correct. "The Perfect Storm" was a 2000 movie starring George Clooney and New England's own Mark Wahlberg, based on a book of the same name by Sebastian Junger. We're getting a little off-topic, here, though.

WHAT ABOUT IRENE?

2011's Irene was indeed a hurricane, but by the time it ravaged Vermont, it was technically a tropical storm.

## Harris meets with Singapore officials to begin Asia visit

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — The White House on Monday announced a series of new agreements with Singapore aimed at combating cyberthreats, tackling climate change, addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and alleviating supply chain issues. The announcements coincide with Vice President Kamala Harris' visit to the region, as part of the Biden administration's efforts to counter Chinese influence there.

On cybersecurity, the Treasury and Defense Departments, as well as the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, have each inked a memorandum of understanding with their Singapore counterparts expanding information sharing and training to combat cyber threats,

On climate, the two nations are launching the U.S.-Singapore Climate Partnership, a new effort between the Departments of Commerce, Energy, Transportation and Treasury and their counterparts in Singapore to develop new climate standards and collaborate on projects to expand clean energy infrastructure development and improve sustainability.

The two nations agreed to cooperate more closely to track COVID-19 variants and engage in research on coronavirus treatments. And the Department of Commerce is joining with the Singapore Ministry of Trade and Industry to create a partnership focused on strengthening trade throughout a handful of key industries.

The White House announced additional agreements between the two nations fostering cooperation on space exploration and defense issues as well. The announcements came Monday after Harris met with Singapore President Halimah Yacob, and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Harris' Southeast Asian trip, which brings Harris to Singapore and then later to Vietnam this week, is aimed at broadening cooperation with both nations to offer a counterweight to China's growing influence in the region.

On Monday morning, Harris participated in a welcome ceremony outside the Istana, the presidential palace, where she held her hand over her heart while a marching band played the Star Spangled Banner. She then walked around the courtyard, reviewing the band, accompanied by Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Loong then showed her a species of an orchid that was named in her honor, and Harris participated in a brief courtesy call with President Halimah Yacob, before heading into a series of bilateral meetings with the prime minister.

After her meetings, the vice president will participate in a joint news conference, and later visit the Changi Naval Base, where she'll speak to American sailors aboard the USS Tulsa, a combat ship.

On Tuesday, Harris will deliver a speech outlining the Biden administration's vision for the region, and meet with business leaders to discuss supply chain issues.

The trip marks Harris' second foreign trip — she visited Guatemala and Mexico in June — and will be the first time a U.S. vice president has visited Vietnam.

Singapore is the anchor of the U.S. naval presence in Southeast Asia and has a deep trade partnership with the U.S., but the country also seeks to maintain strong ties with China and a position of neutrality amid increasingly frosty U.S.-China relations.

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Relations between the U.S. and China deteriorated sharply under Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, and the two sides remain at odds over a host of issues including technology, cybersecurity and human rights.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin made their first overseas trips to Japan and South Korea. Austin traveled to Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines last month and he vowed U.S. support against Beijing's intrusions in the South China Sea.

Harris is expected to emphasize the need for a free and open Indo-Pacific region in her conversations with Singapore's and Vietnam's leaders.

Alexander Feldman, president and CEO of the US-ASEAN Business Council, said Harris will have to be careful in her conversations with Singapore's leaders not to focus too heavily on China, but to emphasize a positive, productive U.S. relationship with Singapore and Vietnam.

"Where she could fall into a trap is really trying to pit this as a U.S. versus China trip. It should be a U.S. trip to our friends and partners in Southeast Asia," Feldman said.

If China becomes the main focal point, he said, "that makes it harder for our friends to move forward across the region, not only in Singapore and Vietnam but beyond that."

Indeed, Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said in a recent interview that Singapore will "be useful but we will not be made use of" in its relations with both countries, and the nation's prime minister previously warned the U.S. against pursuing an aggressive approach to China.

Beijing, however, has seized on the visit, with China's official Xinhua News Agency issuing an editorial Saturday on Harris' trip portraying it as part of a drive to contain China.

Visits to Southeast Asia by senior Biden officials are aiming to "woo these countries to form a ring of containment against China. But Southeast Asian countries are reluctant to choose sides between China and the United States, and America's 'wishful plan' will end in failure," Xinhua said.

The U.S. approach is based on "outdated Cold War thinking and is intended to provoke troubles in their relations with China, create division and confrontation, and try to create a ring of containment," the editorial said.

While Harris navigates the challenging diplomacy surrounding the issue of China, she'll also face the task of reassuring key U.S. allies of America's commitment to Southeast Asia, in the wake of the tumultuous Afghanistan exit. Images of desperate Afghans mobbing American planes leaving Kabul have drawn comparisons to images from the fall of Saigon at the end of the Vietnam War.

Harris' aides have been careful to emphasize that while she remains deeply engaged on the situation in Afghanistan, the Southeast Asia trip was planned well before the recent events, and they say Harris' work in Singapore and Vietnam is important, independent of the developments in Afghanistan.

## For Afghan refugees in India, hopes dim for returning home

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Her memory of the assassination attempt is hazy. What she does know is that her father asked the Taliban to do it.

A former Afghan policewoman, Khatera Hashmi was shot multiple times on her way home from work last October in the capital of Ghazni province, south of Kabul.

As she slumped over, one of the attackers grabbed her by the hair, pulled a knife and gouged out her eyes.

Five months pregnant at the time, Hashmi survived the gruesome attack, as did her unborn child. Hashmi's father had vehemently opposed her decision to join the police force, and although she didn't elaborate on her father's involvement, she told The Associated Press that the police had arrested and imprisoned him.

After recovering from her wounds, she and her husband fled to India, leaving two children in the care of her mother-in-law. Her third child, a daughter, was born a few months after their arrival in India.

However, like thousands of other Afghan refugees in India, any plans they had of returning were dashed this month by the Taliban's shockingly swift takeover of the country.

What many thought would be a short, temporary escape has turned into a long-lasting exile.

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Another Afghan refugee is Mohammad Akbar Farhad, a 50-year-old artist. He too dreams of home while living in suspended animation abroad.

On a hot August afternoon at his apartment in New Delhi, his brush made brief, generous strokes on a huge oil painting depicting the ruins of the Bala Hissar, or High Fort, Kabul's ancient citadel that housed Afghan rulers for centuries.

"This is my only source of income," Farhad said, tracing the contours of the canvas with his fingers.

Back in Kabul, he faced repeated threats from Taliban sympathizers — always armed — who demanded he close his art studio. They said his work fell outside the bounds of Islamic law.

When the threats became more frequent, his entire family ran away to their village in the countryside. In their absence, their house was ransacked and his paintings torn to shreds.

"After that, I didn't even have the courage to touch my brush for months," he said.

Farhad fled with his family to India in 2018, expecting to return.

Earlier this year, the insurgents burned his art studio. All of his artwork was destroyed, leaving him crestfallen. And that was before the government in Kabul collapsed.

Concern for her loved ones back home fills Hashmi, the policewoman, with dread.

"I will never be able to go back to Afghanistan now, even if I wanted to," the 33-year-old said in her modest two-room apartment in New Delhi, where she lives with her husband and daughter Bahar, now seven months old.

Many Afghans fear the Taliban will erase the gains, especially for women, achieved in the decades since the U.S.-led invasion in 2001. When the militant group ran the country in the late 1990s, they imposed a harsh interpretation of Islamic law, forcing a sequestered life for many, particularly women and girls who were forbidden from education and most employment.

The Taliban now seek to present themselves as a more moderate force, offering amnesty to those who fought them and declaring the rights of women would be honored under Islamic law.

Hashmi is bitterly pessimistic.

"Women there won't be able to live in peace now. They won't even die in peace, even if they wish to," she said.

"Everything is gone," she said after a brief pause. Her husband, Mohammad Nabi, looked at her with tenderness but said nothing.

Nabi was a shop salesman back in Ghazni. The two fell deeply in love, and she made it clear before they got married that she planned to join the police.

"I saw what the Taliban did to women. I wanted to do something for them. I wanted women to get their rights," she said.

Nabi supported her decision, even though it would eventually make his wife a target, and the two began building a family together.

Hashmi's father threatened her, insisting she quit. She wouldn't budge.

After the attack that blinded her, the police said they arrested her father and sent him to a prison at Bagram Air Base outside Kabul. When the Taliban swept into the capital, Afghan forces at the former U.S. base surrendered. The prison had housed 5,000 inmates, including Taliban and Islamic State group fighters.

Imagining that her father might now be a free man fills Hashmi with horror.

"If I go back to Afghanistan, the Taliban might cut off my legs this time," she said.

But life in India remains difficult.

"Whenever I hold Bahar in my arms, I feel sad. My husband can't leave her alone. He can't even go to work. Sometimes we don't even have money to buy food," Hashmi said, winding her way back to the bedroom as Nabi holds her by the hand.

Although she says their love has grown while in exile, they also struggle. Food sometimes runs scarce because charity money from fellow refugees isn't enough. Phone calls home often cut out due to the poor cellular network. Being separated from her children is a nightmare.

And in particular, they fight to live a dignified life trapped within a complex bureaucratic process to register as refugees in India. The system strains under a yearslong backlog.

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As of 2019, Afghans accounted for around a third of the nearly 40,000 refugees registered in India, according to the U.N. refugee agency. But that figure excludes those who, like Hashmi's family, are not registered with the U.N.

"My wife gave her eyes for her country. But nobody helped us," Nabi said. "Not even our own government."

For these two Afghan families, the Taliban blitz toward Kabul left them feeling isolated and further from home than ever.

"I haven't slept properly for weeks," said Farhad, the painter. "All I think of is my country."

His son Hassan is angry at his country's politicians — and the U.S.

"America has failed us," he said.

This story corrects that Hashmi was five months pregnant at time of attack, not two months.

## Mental health online: Police posts of crises may traumatize

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

EDITOR'S NOTE — This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

The videos are difficult to watch.

In one, a man dangles over the edge of an Oklahoma City overpass, his legs swinging in midair as police grab his arms and pull him from the brink. In another, a woman hangs high above the Los Angeles Harbor as a half-dozen officers drag her, head-first, up the side of the bridge. The panicked voices of cops cry out, "We got you, we got you!" just before they pin her to the ground and pull out handcuffs.

The short clips were posted on official law enforcement social media accounts, part of a longstanding practice by police agencies to showcase their lifesaving efforts online — especially in 2021 as desperation grows for positive press amid accusations of excessive force and racism following George Floyd's murder, and rising gun violence and killings.

But with renewed attention on officer interactions with people who are suffering from mental health issues, experts and advocates are taking another look at these posts with an eye toward whether they exploit the very victims law enforcement just saved.

"It's like we were living in this tragedy with them," said Kevin Berthia, a mental health advocate who has survived his own suicide attempts. "Now how is that not creating trauma for anybody else? Who else is this triggering?"

The posts are easy to find on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Police departments nationwide may upload them without the permission of the person in crisis — though their identities are obscured — without a warning about contents and without consulting mental health professionals.

Debbie Plotnick, vice president for state and federal advocacy at Mental Health America, reviewed a half-dozen from around the country.

"Yes, they helped get a person down and that is commendable," she said, but added: "I'm not seeing that this has value in helping people's mental health."

While police say mental health is their priority, the footage appears to tell a different story. Law enforcement agencies have long tried to showcase the harrowing and dangerous work of fighting crime and saving lives, and the feeds also include officers delivering babies, acts of kindness and shows of strength.

The New York Police Department, along with images of smiling cops, often tweets detailed captions that include the exact pier someone jumped from or the number of pills they swallowed before the officers "saved" them. Other posts include videos from the scene.

Yet the American Association of Suicidology specifically suggests that any reporting on suicide or suicide attempts not include the method or location. The association recommends that photos and videos from the scene also be excluded, even if the person's identity is concealed.

The NYPD declined requests for comment.

Some experts fear copycats, saying such detailed posts — like the recent Los Angeles Police Department

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posts with body-cam footage of the woman's suicide attempt on the bridge — basically give a manual to vulnerable people.

"Here's a spot on the bridge where it literally took like six uniformed police officers to drag this person back over the side," said Jonathan Singer, president of the American Association of Suicidology.

The LAPD declined to comment, but said in a statement that it does not have a specific policy in these cases. The agency said it strives to protect the individual's identity but does not typically seek permission beforehand.

In the 55-second video — posted to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram less than a month after the incident — police were called to the bridge in San Pedro after the woman was seen climbing over the side. The scene is fraught with tension — rushing wind, the woman's panicked breathing, the squawking of the radios echoing off the bridge's metal, the clicking of handcuffs.

"Great teamwork resulted in her receiving the help she needed," the LAPD's posts said, with a link to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's website. "Remember, you are never alone and there is always help."

In Oklahoma City, the overpass video posted to the police department's Facebook page in May includes body-cam footage and interviews with responding officers. The man's face is blurred out, though the department did not seek his permission before posting the video.

The final clip shows the man being loaded into a police cruiser with the text: "After rescuing the man, officers took him to the hospital and started the process of getting him the help he needed." The phone number of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline follows.

Master Sgt. Gary Knight, a spokesperson for the Oklahoma City Police Department, said the goal was showing residents how the actions of the officers saved the man's life during the two-hour incident.

"The last thing we ever want to do is hinder somebody's recovery when they've been in a state of crisis," Knight said. "We're not out here to try to make somebody's condition worse. That's why we showed up in the first place — to try to help that person."

Daniel Reidenberg, executive director of the Minnesota-based Suicide Awareness Voices of Education, said such social media posts may actually deter viewers from calling 911, for fear they might also get handcuffed or arrested.

"It's too complex of an issue to boil down into a video like that," he said.

Ronnie Walker agrees. Her stepson died by suicide when he was a college junior, prompting her to form a now-international support group and online forum for other grieving families, the Hawaii-based Alliance of Hope For Suicide Loss Survivors.

"It was really devastating for everybody who knew and loved him," she said, speaking on the 26th anniversary of her stepson's death. "It was as if a grenade went off in our family and everyone was wounded, each in their own way."

Looking at the police posts, Walker said, could easily be traumatizing for people who have lost loved ones to suicide.

"I don't want to dismiss the heroism of the police or that they have kindness in their hearts," she said. "I just don't see some of those videos as portraying that or conveying that. It's more sensational."

The police department of Appleton, Wisconsin — a city of 74,000 north of Milwaukee — took a different approach. They had discussions for nearly a month before going public in February with an eight-minute suicide intervention video that is much less explicit than others. They also sought permission from the man who had been in crisis and his family and worked with mental health organizations.

"Is this going to be positive for our community? Is this actually going to cause the conversations that we want to happen around mental health?" Lt. Meghan Cash said. "Or is this just a video?"

In recent years, officials who oversee so-called suicide hot spots like San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge and the George Washington Bridge, which connects New York City and New Jersey, have worked to install prevention or deterrent systems.

About 30 people die by suicide annually on the Golden Gate Bridge, and another 150-plus people try to take their lives there each year. Many come in contact with the 36 members of the bridge patrol — whose

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captain, David Rivera, hopes new conversations around mental health, like Simone Biles' discussions at the Olympics, will encourage people to get help.

Rivera's department does not post publicly about suicide interventions, and instead chooses to privately honor its members and others who may have been involved in rescues, like bridge ironworkers, roadway staffers or officers from other police agencies.

"We can recognize them and write up a commendation," Rivera said.

Berthia, the mental health advocate, went to the bridge in 2005 with the intent to end his life. His encounter over the railing with a California Highway Patrol officer was captured in a photograph published on The San Francisco Chronicle's front page. The picture haunted him for years.

"It brought me back to the day," Berthia said. "It brought me back to the moment. It brought me back to the wind, and the smell."

Now, Berthia speaks nationally about suicide prevention, and says there's a long way to go on mental health awareness. Still, his message to people in crisis is a hopeful one.

"I need you here," he says, "I need you here. So please call or reach out, do whatever you've got to do."

Associated Press video journalists Angie Wang in Atlanta and Haven Daley in San Francisco contributed to this report.

## Budget clash pits moderate Democrats against Biden, Pelosi

By ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Outnumbered and with their party's most powerful leaders arrayed against them, nine moderate Democrats trying to upend plans for enacting President Joe Biden's multitrillion-dollar domestic program face a House showdown.

All the rebellious group must do to prevail is outmaneuver the White House, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and numerous progressive colleagues who've stood firmly against them. That's no small task.

The House meets Monday in what Democratic leaders hope will be just a two-day interruption of lawmakers' August recess. They want quick approval of a budget resolution setting up future passage — maybe this fall — of legislation directing \$3.5 trillion at safety net, environment and other programs over the next decade.

That huge measure, largely financed with tax increases on the rich and big business, comprises the heart of Biden's vision for helping families and combating climate change and is progressives' top priority.

The moderates have threatened to oppose the budget resolution unless the House first approves a \$1 trillion, 10-year package of road, power grid, broadband and other infrastructure projects that's already passed the Senate. With unanimous Republican opposition expected to the fiscal blueprint, moderates' nine votes would be more than enough to sink it in the narrowly divided House.

The moderates want Congress to quickly send the bipartisan infrastructure measure to Biden so he can sign it before the political winds shift. That would nail down a victory they could tout in their reelection campaigns next year.

"The House can't afford to wait months or do anything to risk passing" the infrastructure bill, Rep. Josh Gottheimer, D-N.J., said Friday. He's a leader of the nine moderate mavericks who each released statements reaffirming their desire that the infrastructure vote come first.

With most of Biden's domestic agenda at stake, it's unimaginable that Pelosi, D-Calif., would let her own party's centrists deal him an embarrassing defeat. That's especially true with the president already under fire over his handling of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and Democrats' prospects uncertain in the 2022 elections for control of Congress.

Some solution averting a Biden setback in the House seems likely, but it was unclear what that would be.

Pelosi, top House Democrat since 2003, has a long history of doing what it takes to line up the votes she needs on important issues.

She said in a weekend letter to Democratic members of the House that it was critical to pass the budget



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resolution this week and that any delay threatens the timetable for delivering “the transformative vision that Democrats share.”

“It is essential that our Caucus proceeds unified in our determination to deliver once-in-a-century progress for the children,” she wrote.

On Friday, her office released a letter from the chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus urging lawmakers to support the budget resolution. Four of the nine moderates who’ve demanded that the infrastructure bill pass first are members of that caucus.

The chair, Rep. Raul Ruiz, D-Calif., wrote that provisions like extended child tax credits and a path to citizenship for many immigrants would provide “an equitable recovery” for Hispanic and other families.

The House Blue Dog Coalition, a group that includes some of the most conservative congressional Democrats, has also said it wants the infrastructure measure passed as fast as possible, but has stopped short of threatening to oppose the budget resolution. Eight of its 19 members are among the nine moderates who have threatened to vote against the budget.

So far, neither the moderates nor the powerful forces confronting them were showing signs of budging.

Biden met virtually with Pelosi and other Democratic leaders and committee chairs late last week. In a show of solidarity, the White House and Pelosi issued similar statements afterward underscoring their determination to approve the measures soon and pointedly ignoring moderates’ demand to do infrastructure first.

“The president noted that these policies go to the heart of the values that he ran on,” the White House statement said. It said Biden “reiterated his enthusiasm” for signing the \$1 trillion infrastructure and \$3.5 trillion social and environment bills “as soon as possible.”

The House planned a Monday evening vote on a measure opening the door to passage later of the budget resolution, the infrastructure bill and a voting rights measure, another top Democratic goal.

Unless the moderates decide to oppose the procedural measure, Democrats controlling the chamber 220-212 should be able to push it through. To pass any legislation over solid GOP opposition, Democrats can lose no more than three votes.

If the procedural measure passes, leaders planned a vote on the budget resolution Tuesday. Statements from both sides last week showed they remained divided.

Among moderates, Rep. Henry Cuellar, D-Texas, said in an interview, “No progressive is going to cram something down my throat.” Rep. Jared Golden, D-Maine, said failure to pass the infrastructure bill quickly “leaves the nation’s economy and crumbling infrastructure hostage to political gamesmanship.”

On the other side, progressive leader Rep. Katie Porter, D-Calif., said in an interview that Democrats “not actively supporting” Biden’s priorities “are not moderates,” suggesting they’re conservative.

The group Justice Democrats, which recruits progressive candidates including challengers to congressional incumbents, released a fundraising appeal saying Gottheimer was being supported by “the worst of the political establishment.” It did not name who they were.

## Slow-moving storm Henri drenches Northeast US

By DAVID KLEPPER, MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and DAVID PORTER Associated Press

WESTERLY, R.I. (AP) — Tropical Storm Henri socked the Northeast with strong winds as it made landfall Sunday on the coast of Rhode Island and sent lashing bands of rain westward, knocking out power to over 140,000 homes and causing deluges that closed bridges, swamped roads and left some people stranded in their vehicles.

The storm was downgraded from a hurricane before reaching New England, leaving many to breathe a sigh of relief, but the National Hurricane Center warned the slow-moving storm would continue dumping heavy rains on wide swaths of the region well beyond the weekend.

Over two days, heavy, sustained rains flooded areas as far southwest as New Jersey, even as it took on tropical depression status.

The storm threatened to stall near the New York-Connecticut border overnight, before pivoting east and

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moving out toward the Atlantic Ocean on Monday. Some of the highest rain totals were expected inland. There were few early reports of major coastal damage due to wind or surf.

President Joe Biden on Sunday promised to provide federal help to the residents of affected states. The president declared disasters in much of the region, opening the purse strings for federal recovery aid.

Biden earlier had offered his condolences to the people of Tennessee, after severe flooding from an unrelated storm killed at least 22, including young children and elderly people, and left dozens of others missing.

When it made landfall near Westerly, Rhode Island, Henri had sustained winds of about 60 mph and gusts of up to 70 mph, according to the National Hurricane Center. By late Sunday, Henri had sustained winds of about 30 mph (48 kph) as it moved across Connecticut toward the New York state line.

Some of the worst rain arrived well before the storm's center. In Helmetta, New Jersey, some 200 residents fled for higher ground, taking refuge in hotels or with friends and family, as flood waters inundated their homes.

"It came so quick — in the blink of an eye," said the town's mayor, Christopher Slavicek, whose parents were spending the night after fleeing their home.

"Now there's clean up. So this is far from over," the mayor said.

Some communities in central New Jersey were inundated with as much as 8 inches (20 centimeters) of rain by midday Sunday. In Jamesburg, television video footage showed flooded downtown streets and cars almost completely submerged.

In Newark, Public Safety Director Brian O'Hara said police and firefighters rescued 86 people in 11 incidents related to the storm. He said "significant flooding" led to multiple vehicles submerged in flooded areas.

"This could have been a lot worse, particularly as it relates to wind," New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy said Sunday evening.

Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont said Henri was close to being in the "rear view mirror," but said there's still more work to do, even as mandatory evacuations were being lifted in some communities. About 250 residents from four nursing homes on the shoreline had to be relocated to other nursing homes.

Several major bridges in Rhode Island, which stitch together much of the state, were briefly shuttered Sunday, and some coastal roads were nearly impassable.

In Newport, Paul and Cherie Saunders rode out the storm in a home that her family has owned since the late 1950s. Their basement flooded with 5 feet of water during Superstorm Sandy nine years ago.

"This house has been through so many hurricanes and so many things have happened," said Cherie Saunders, 68. "We're just going to wait and see what happens."

Rhode Island has been hit by hurricanes and tropical storms periodically — including Superstorm Sandy in 2012, Irene in 2011 and Hurricane Bob in 1991. The city of Providence sustained so much flooding damage from a hurricane in 1938 and Hurricane Carol in 1954 that it built a hurricane barrier in the 1960s to protect its downtown from a storm surge coming up Narragansett Bay. That barrier — and newer gates built nearby — were closed for hours Sunday before reopening.

The National Weather Service recorded what could be the wettest hour ever in Central Park, with 1.94 inches of torrential rainfall pelting the park between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. Saturday. Earlier in the evening, thousands attending a Homecoming concert at the park were forced to disperse because of heavy rainfall.

After passing back through New England and sweeping out into the Atlantic over the next couple of days, the hurricane center predicted, Henri "will lose its identity."

Until then, areas from northeast Pennsylvania through New England braced for heavy rains.

Marshall Shepherd, director of the atmospheric sciences program at the University of Georgia and former president of the American Meteorological Society, said Henri was reminiscent in some ways of Hurricane Harvey, a slow-moving storm that decimated the Houston area in 2017.

"To the west side of the storm, you have a banding feature that has literally been stationary — sitting there and dumping rain. That will be a significant hazard for the New York and New Jersey area," Shepherd said.

After Tropical Storm Irene roared up the coast in August 2011, many were relieved when the New York

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City area largely was spared. But then the storm settled over the Green Mountains, and Irene became the biggest natural disaster to hit Vermont since an epic 1927 flood. Parts of the state got 11 inches of rain in just 24 hours. Irene killed six in Vermont, left thousands homeless, and damaged or destroyed more than 200 bridges and 500 miles of highway.

"I remember Irene and media outlets outside Vermont brushing it aside as if no big deal while it hit Vermont," Robert Welch, a podcaster, tweeted Sunday. "I'll relax when I see it at sea on radar."

In one of his final appearances as governor before he is set to step down at the end of Monday over a sexual harassment scandal, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said the state's primary concern were inland areas like the Hudson River Valley, north of New York City, which was projected to get inches of rain over the next few days.

"In the Hudson Valley you have hills, you have creeks, the water comes running down those hills and turns a creek into a ravaging river," Cuomo said.

Major airports in the region remained open as the storm approached, though hundreds of Sunday's flights were canceled. Service on some branches of New York City's commuter rail system was suspended through Sunday, as was Amtrak service between New York and Boston.

Power outages affected power to 130,000 homes across Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York.

Connecticut's largest electric utility said it had restored 20,000 customers but thousands like Linda Orlomoski, who lives in Canterbury, remained without power.

"I haven't seen any trucks at all in my neighborhood but the opposite end of my road had their power restored before 6 p.m. So close and yet so far!" she said. "It's supposed to get nasty hot and humid again on Tuesday. So if we still have no power by then, that will be miserable."

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Kunzelman reported from Newport, Rhode Island. Porter reported from New York. Associated Press writers William J. Kole in Warwick, Rhode Island, Michelle Smith in Providence, Rhode Island, Michael R. Sisak and Julie Walker from East Hampton, Will Lester in Washington, Philip Marcelo in Boston, Michael Melia in Hartford, Connecticut, Susan Haigh in Norwich, Connecticut, and Bobby Caina Calvin in New York contributed to this report.

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This story has been corrected to show that a quoted utility customer's last name is Orlomoski, not Oski.

## 22 dead, many missing after 17 inches of rain in Tennessee

By JONATHAN MATTISE and JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

WAVERLY, Tenn. (AP) — At least 22 people were killed and rescue crews searched desperately Sunday amid shattered homes and tangled debris for dozens of people still missing after record-breaking rain sent floodwaters surging through Middle Tennessee.

Saturday's flooding in rural areas took out roads, cellphone towers and telephone lines, leaving families uncertain about whether their loved ones survived the unprecedented deluge. Emergency workers were searching door to door, said Kristi Brown, a coordinator for health and safety supervisor with Humphreys County Schools.

Many of the missing live in the neighborhoods where the water rose the fastest, said Humphreys County Sheriff Chris Davis, who confirmed the 22 fatalities in his county. The names of the missing were on a board in the county's emergency center and listed on a city department's Facebook page.

"I would expect, given the number of fatalities, that we're going to see mostly recovery efforts at this point rather than rescue efforts," Tennessee Emergency Management Director Patrick Sheehan said.

The dead included twin babies who were swept from their father's arms, according to surviving family members, and a foreman at county music star Loretta Lynn's ranch. The sheriff of the county of about 18,000 people some 60 miles (96 kilometers) west of Nashville said he lost one of his best friends.

Up to 17 inches (43 centimeters) of rain fell in Humphreys County in less than 24 hours Saturday, shatter-

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ing the Tennessee record for one-day rainfall by more than 3 inches (8 centimeters), the National Weather Service said.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee toured the area, calling it a “devastating picture of loss and heartache.” He stopped on Main Street in Waverly where some homes were washed off their foundations and people were sifting through their water-logged possessions. All around the county were debris from wrecked cars, demolished businesses and homes and a chaotic, tangled mix of the things inside.

Shirley Foster cried as the governor walked up. She said she just learned a friend from her church was dead.

“I thought I was over the shock of all this. I’m just tore up over my friend. My house is nothing, but my friend is gone,” Foster told the governor.

The hardest-hit areas saw double the rain that area of Middle Tennessee had in the previous worst-case scenario for flooding, meteorologists said. Lines of storms moved over the area for hours, wringing out a record amount of moisture — a scenario scientists have warned may be more common because of global warming.

The downpours rapidly turned the creeks that run behind backyards and through downtown Waverly into raging rapids. Business owner Kansas Klein stood on a bridge Saturday in the town of 4,500 people and saw two girls who were holding on to a puppy and clinging to a wooden board sweep past, the current too fast for anyone to grab them. He hadn’t found out what happened to them.

Not far from the bridge, Klein told The Associated Press by phone that dozens of buildings in a low-income housing area known as Brookside appeared to have borne the brunt of the flash flood from Trace Creek.

“It was devastating: buildings were knocked down, half of them were destroyed,” Klein said. “People were pulling out bodies of people who had drowned and didn’t make it out.”

The Humphreys County Sheriff Office Facebook page filled with people looking for missing friends and family. GoFundMe pages were made asking for help for funeral expenses for the dead, including 7-month-old twins yanked from their father’s arms as they tried to escape.

The foreman at Lynn’s ranch, Wayne Spears, also was killed.

“He’s out at his barn and next thing you know, he goes from checking animals in the barn to hanging on in the barn to people seeing him floating down the creek. And that’s how fast it had come up,” the sheriff said.

A photo taken by someone at the ranch showed Spears in a cowboy hat clinging to a pillar in brown, churning water up to his chest.

“Wayne’s just one of those guys, he just does everything for everybody, if there’s a job to do,” said his friend Michael Pate, who met Spears at the ranch 15 years ago.

At the Cash Saver grocery in Waverly, employees stood on desks, registers and a flower rack as the waters from the creek that’s usually 400 feet (120 meters) from the store rushed in after devastating the low income housing next door. At one point, they tried to break through the ceiling into the attic and couldn’t, store co-owner David Hensley said.

The flood waters stopped rising as fast just as the situation was getting dire and a rescue boat came by. “We told him that if there’s somebody else out there you can get, go get them, we think we’re OK,” Hensley said.

At the beginning of a news conference on Tropical Storm Henri’s impact on New England, President Joe Biden offered condolences to the people of Tennessee and directed federal disaster officials to talk with the governor and offer assistance.

Just to the east of Waverly, the town of McEwen was pummeled Saturday with 17.02 inches (43.2 centimeters) of rain, smashing the state’s 24-hour record of 13.6 inches (34.5 centimeters) from 1982, according to the National Weather Service in Nashville, though Saturday’s numbers would have to be confirmed.

A flash flood watch was issued for the area before the rain started, with forecasters saying 4 to 6 inches (10 to 15 centimeters) of rain was possible. The worst storm recorded in this area of Middle Tennessee only dropped 9 inches (23 centimeters) of rain, said Krissy Hurley, a weather service meteorologist in Nashville.

“Forecasting almost a record is something we don’t do very often,” Hurley said. “Double the amount

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we've ever seen was almost unfathomable."

Recent scientific research has determined that extreme rain events will become more frequent because of man-made climate change. Hurley said it is impossible to know its exact role in Saturday's flood, but noted in the past year her office dealt with floods that used to be expected maybe once every 100 years in September south of Nashville and in March closer to the city.

"We had an incredible amount of water in the atmosphere," Hurley said of Saturday's flooding. "Thunderstorms developed and moved across the same area over and over and over."

The problem isn't limited to Tennessee. A federal study found man-made climate change doubles the chances of the types of heavy downpours that in August 2016 dumped 26 inches (66 centimeters) of rain around Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Those floods killed at least 13 people and damaged 150,000 homes.

An earlier version of this story had the incorrect name for a creek. It is Trace Creek, not Trent Creek.

Collins contributed to this report from Columbia, South Carolina. John Raby contributed from Charleston, West Virginia.

## Biden says US-led evacuation from Kabul is accelerating

By ROBERT BURNS and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Sunday the U.S.-led evacuation of Americans, at-risk Afghans and others from the Kabul airport accelerated this weekend, although it remains vulnerable to threats posed by the Islamic State extremist group.

One week after the Taliban completed its takeover of Afghanistan by capturing Kabul, Biden said discussions are underway among military officials about potentially extending the airlift beyond Biden's Aug. 31 deadline. "Our hope is we will not have to extend, but there are discussions," he said, suggesting the possibility that the Taliban will be consulted.

Since Aug. 14, one day before the Taliban entered Kabul, the airlift has evacuated 28,000 people, Biden said. He said that included 11,000 who had departed from Kabul in a 36-hour period this weekend, but he did not provide details. The number appeared to include flights by charter and non-U.S. military aircraft as well as the U.S. Air Force C-17 and C-130 transport planes that have been flying daily from the capital. The U.S. military is controlling air traffic on both the civilian and military sides of the airport.

Tens of thousands of people remain to join the airlift, which has been slowed by security issues and U.S. bureaucracy hurdles.

Biden asserted, without a full explanation, that U.S. forces have managed to improve access to the airport for Americans and others seeking to get on flights. He suggested that the perimeter had been extended, widening a "safe zone."

"What I'm not going to do is talk about the tactical changes we're making to make sure we maintain as much security as we can," he said. "We have constantly, how can I say it, increased rational access to the airport, where more folk can get there more safely. It's still a dangerous operation but I don't want to go into the detail of how we're doing that."

Later Biden added: "We've discussed a lot with the Taliban. They've been cooperative in extending some of the perimeter."

He said groups of Americans in Kabul are being moved more efficiently and safely to the airport, but he provided no details.

"Any American who wants to get home, will get home," he asserted.

Earlier Sunday, administration officials said the U.S. military is considering "creative ways" to get Americans and others into the Kabul airport for evacuation from Afghanistan amid "acute" security threats, and the Pentagon on Sunday ordered six U.S. commercial airlines to help move evacuees from temporary sites outside of Afghanistan.

Addressing a criticism cited by many Republicans, Biden said no Afghan evacuees are being flown directly to the United States from Afghanistan without prior screening. He said they are being screened in

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third countries.

Biden and his top aides have repeatedly cited their concern that extremist groups in Afghanistan will attempt to exploit the chaos around the Kabul airport.

"The threat is real, it is acute, it is persistent and something we're focused with every tool in our arsenal," said Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan.

Sullivan said on CNN's "State of the Union" that 3,900 people had been airlifted out of Kabul on U.S. military flights over the past 24 hours. A U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity to provide details not yet made public, said those people were flown on a total of 23 flights — 14 by C-17 transports and nine aboard C-130 cargo planes.

That represents an increase from 1,600 flown out aboard U.S. military planes in the previous 24 hours, but remains far below the 5,000 to 9,000 that the military says it has the capacity to airlift daily. Sullivan also said about 3,900 people were airlifted on non-U.S. military flights over the past 24 hours.

The Biden administration has given no firm estimate of the number of Americans seeking to leave Afghanistan. Some have put the total between 10,000 and 15,000. Sullivan on Sunday put it at "several thousand."

Speaking on ABC's "This Week," Austin said that as Biden's Aug. 31 deadline for ending the evacuation operation approaches, he will recommend whether to give it more time. Tens of thousands of Americans and others have yet to be flown out of the country.

Austin's interview with ABC aired Sunday but was taped Saturday. In a notice Sunday, the State Department urged people seeking to leave Afghanistan as part of an organized private evacuation effort not come to the Kabul airport "until you have received specific instructions" to do so from the U.S. Embassy's flight organizer. The notice said that others, including American citizens, who have received specific instructions from the embassy to make their way to the airport should do so.

Austin said the airlift would continue for as long as possible.

"We're gonna try our very best to get everybody, every American citizen who wants to get out, out," Austin said in the interview. "And we've got -- we continue to look at different ways to -- in creative ways -- to reach out and contact American citizens and help them get into the airfield."

The British military said Sunday another seven people had been killed in the unceasing crush of crowds outside the airport.

Republicans in Congress stepped up their criticism of Biden's response. "If the Taliban is saying that Americans can travel safely to the airport, then there is no better way to make sure they get safely to the airport than to use our military to escort them," GOP Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa, an Army veteran, said on ABC's "This Week."

Ryan Crocker, who served as U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, told CBS' "Face the Nation" that Biden's management of the withdrawal was "catastrophic" and had unleashed a "global crisis."

A central problem in the evacuation operation is processing evacuees once they reach other countries in the region and in Europe. Those temporary waystations, including in Qatar, Bahrain and Germany, are sometimes reaching capacity, although new sites are being made available, including in Spain.

In an attempt to alleviate that, and to free up military aircraft for missions from Kabul, the Pentagon on Sunday activated the Civil Reserve Air Fleet. The Defense Department said 18 aircraft from American Airlines, Atlas Air, Delta Air Lines, Omni Air, Hawaiian Airlines and United Airlines will be directed to ferry evacuees from interim waystations. The airlines will not fly into Afghanistan. The six participating airlines have agreed to assist for a little less than two weeks, which roughly coincides with the currently planned duration of the airlift, which is to end Aug. 31.

The civil airline reserve system was last activated in 2003 for the Iraq War. The commercial airliners will retain their civilian status but the military's Air Mobility Command will control the flights.

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Associated Press writers Aamer Madhani, Lolita C. Baldor, Ellen Knickmeyer, Hope Yen and Matthew Lee

contributed to this report.

## **Tigers slugger Miguel Cabrera hits 500th career home run**

TORONTO (AP) — Miguel Cabrera celebrated with his teammates on the Detroit Tigers. He took a curtain call on the road. He paid tribute to his family, his team and his native country.

It was quite a day, even for one of baseball's most accomplished sluggers.

Cabrera became the 28th major leaguer to hit 500 home runs, reaching the milestone in the sixth inning Sunday against the Toronto Blue Jays.

The 38-year-old Cabrera connected on a 1-1 pitch from left-hander Steven Matz, sending the ball over the scoreboard in right-center field. Measured at 400 feet, the homer tied it at 1.

Many of the 14,685 fans at Rogers Centre rose for a standing ovation as Cabrera rounded the bases. After celebrating with his teammates, he came out of the dugout to accept a curtain call, taking off his helmet and bowing to the crowd behind Detroit's dugout.

Cabrera, who won the Triple Crown and the first of back-to-back MVP awards in 2012, is the first Venezuelan to hit 500 homers. He is hoping to become the first hitter to reach 500 homers and 3,000 hits in the same season.

"It's something special for my country, for my family, to be able to do this," he said after Detroit's 5-3 victory. "I'm really happy."

Jeimer Candelario, who was on deck, was the first teammate to celebrate with Cabrera.

"When he hit that ball, I knew something special was about to happen and history was about to happen," Candelario said. "For me, being a part of that is a blessing. It helped us to win a ballgame, too."

Cabrera's 500th home run was hit No. 2,955 of his career, and he can reach that 3,000 milestone this year, too, if he can stay healthy and average one hit per game. Only six players have 3,000 hits and 500 homers: Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, Rafael Palmeiro, Albert Pujols, Alex Rodriguez and Eddie Murray.

His pursuit of these big numbers has become a bright spot for a Detroit team that finally seems to be emerging from a difficult rebuild, approaching a .500 record.

Cabrera is the sixth player born outside the United States to reach 500 homers. He joins Pujols, Palmeiro, Sammy Sosa, Manny Ramirez and David Ortiz, who reached the mark in 2015 and was the last to pull off the feat before Cabrera.

He is also the first player to reach the mark in a Tigers uniform.

"So proud for him and his family, and a career accomplishment so rare you may never get to be a part of this again," manager A.J. Hinch said. "We have no idea who the next person can be to pass this big number."

In 2012, Cabrera became the first player in 45 years to win the Triple Crown by leading the league in batting average, home runs, and RBIs.

When Cabrera made his major league debut with the Marlins in 2003, he was just 20 years old. He helped them win the World Series that year.

The Tigers acquired him in a trade with the Marlins in 2007, a year after losing the World Series to St. Louis, in the hopes that he would help them win a world championship for the first time since 1984.

However, the Tigers have never won it all with the slugging superstar. They lost in the 2012 World Series to San Francisco and later in the decade went into a rebuilding mode that bottomed out with 310 losses between 2017-19.

Cabrera's hitting and his jovial on-field demeanor made him popular in Detroit, but his production has dipped significantly in recent years as age and injuries caught up with him.

While other Tigers such as superstar pitcher Justin Verlander were traded away, Cabrera's declining value and huge contract made him difficult to move. His 500th homer was his 13th this season, his highest total since 2017.

Although Cabrera was in striking distance of both the home run and hit milestones when the season started, no one knew how those pursuits would go because of his recent struggles at the plate. He hom-

ered on opening day in the snow, but by the All-Star break, he had gone deep just seven times and there were doubts he could pull off the feat this year.

He has picked up the pace since then, hitting six home runs and reaching 500 with time to spare in 2021. Cabrera is just behind Hall of Famer Eddie Murray, who ranks 27th on the career list with 504 home runs.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/hub/MLB> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## **Jesse Jackson and wife remain under observation for COVID-19**

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The Rev. Jesse Jackson, and his wife, Jacqueline, remained under doctors' observation Sunday at a Chicago hospital and were "responding positively to treatments" for COVID-19, their son told The Associated Press.

The couple, married for nearly six decades, were admitted to Northwestern Memorial Hospital a day earlier. Physicians were "carefully monitoring their condition" because of their ages, Jonathan Jackson, one of the couple's five children, said in a statement.

Jesse Jackson is 79, and Jacqueline is 77.

"Both are resting comfortably and are responding positively to their treatments," Jonathan Jackson said. "My family appreciates all of the expressions of concern and prayers that have been offered on their behalf, and we will continue to offer our prayers for your family as well."

Jesse Jackson, a Chicago civil rights leader, is vaccinated against the virus and received his first dose in January during a publicized event as he urged others to receive the inoculation as soon as possible. The vaccination status of his wife, who is also an activist, was unclear. Family members said she has an unspecified underlying health condition that triggered concerns in recent days.

"We ask that you continue to pray for the full recovery of our parents. We will continue to update you on a regular basis," Jonathan Jackson said.

Jesse Jackson, who has Parkinson's disease, was hospitalized earlier this year for an unrelated gallbladder surgery.

A mentee of the Rev. Martin Luther King, he was crucial in guiding the modern civil rights movement on numerous issues, including voting rights. Despite his Parkinson's diagnosis, Jackson has stayed active and continued travel, even during the pandemic.

In recent weeks he has been arrested for civil disobedience, including last month during a sit-in at the Phoenix office of Democratic U.S. Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, who has faced pressure over her opposition to ending the filibuster to pass voting rights legislation.

A Northwestern spokesman did not have further information.

Follow Tareen on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sophiatareen>.

## **The Latest: Biden warns of IS threat to Kabul evacuation**

The Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden is raising concerns that the Islamic State poses a threat as American troops seek to evacuate thousands of U.S. citizens and Afghan allies from Afghanistan.

Biden in remarks at the White House on Sunday noted that the terror group is a "sworn enemy of the Taliban" and said that the longer U.S. troops are on the ground increases the chance that the group will attempt to strike innocent civilians and American personnel near the Hamid Karzai International Airport.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has been warning Americans to avoid traveling to the airport in part because of concerns about Islamic State fighters.

The extremist group has long declared a desire to attack America and U.S. interests abroad and it has been active in Afghanistan for a number of years, carrying out waves of horrific attacks, mostly on the Shiite minority.



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The group has been repeatedly targeted by U.S. airstrikes in recent years, and faced Taliban attacks.

## MORE ON THE CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN:

- British military: 7 Afghans killed in chaos at Kabul airport
- China both worries and hopes as US departs Afghanistan
- Europe fears Afghan refugee crisis after Taliban takeover
- AP PHOTOS: Two decades of war, and daily life in Afghanistan
- Biden vows to evacuate all Americans — and Afghan helpers

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## HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden says 11,000 individuals were evacuated from Kabul over the weekend and he remains committed to assisting all Americans who want to leave Afghanistan get out.

Biden added Sunday that his first priority is getting American citizens out of Afghanistan "as quickly and safely as possible."

In the president's words: "We're working hard and as fast as we can to get people out. That's our mission. That's our goal."

Biden also says he is also activating the civilian reserve air fleet provided by commercial airlines to help move evacuees from third country waystations on to the United States.

MILAN — Italy's defense minister has discussed the massive evacuation under way from Kabul in a phone call with his U.S. counterpart, including access to bases in Italy.

Lorenzo Guerini thanked the U.S. military for securing the airport in Kabul, and he exchanged ideas with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on how to "ensure the safe and effective flow of departures from Kabul," the Defense Ministry said in a statement.

Guerini said that close ties between the countries was key to helping "assist compatriots and Afghans who have worked with our institutions and organizations."

The Italian military has flown out of Kabul 2,100 Afghans workers and their families since June, most of those in the last week. Around 1,300 of those have been transferred to Italy.

BERLIN — The World Health Organization and UNICEF are calling for a "humanitarian airbridge" to be set up immediately to allow the unhindered delivery of medicines and other aid supplies to Afghanistan.

The two U.N. agencies said in a statement Sunday that they are "committed to stay and deliver for the people of Afghanistan."

But they added that "with no commercial aircraft currently permitted to land in Kabul, we have no way to get supplies into the country and to those in need." They noted that other humanitarian agencies face similar problems.

The agencies said that, even before the Taliban's recent takeover of Afghanistan, the country required the world's third-largest humanitarian operation, with more than 18 million people needing help.

They said that while the main focus in recent days has been the evacuation of foreigners and vulnerable Afghans, "the massive humanitarian needs facing the majority of the population should not -- and cannot -- be neglected."

LONDON -- Britain's ambassador to Afghanistan says British authorities have managed to evacuate more than 5,000 people, with 1,000 in the last 14 hours alone.

In a statement on Twitter, Laurie Bristow said the "huge effort" to move evacuees out of Afghanistan is "gathering pace" but that there is still "a huge amount of work to do."

Bristow said he is in the evacuation handling center in Kabul where soldiers, diplomats and forces have

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been "working around the clock to get our British nationals, Afghan colleagues and Embassy staff to safety."

In addition to the 4,000 or so U.K. nationals, there are thought to be around 5,000 Afghan allies, such as translators and drivers, who are earmarked for a seat on a British plane.

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Bahrain says its national carrier is flying people to the United States as part of efforts to evacuate people from Afghanistan a week after the Taliban takeover.

The U.S.-allied kingdom said Sunday that a Gulf Air flight will transport people from its Isa Air Base to Dulles International Airport south of Washington, DC.

The official statement said the flight was an "affirmation of the Kingdom of Bahrain's efforts to protect lives."

Earlier Sunday, the Pentagon activated the initial stage of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet program, asking for 18 aircraft from American carriers to help transport Americans and Afghans who aided the U.S. war effort.

The commercial airlines will be used to transport people from third countries to their final destinations, allowing the U.S. military to focus on evacuating people from Afghanistan.

PARIS — About 200 people, mostly Afghan nationals, gathered in Paris on Sunday to show solidarity toward evacuees and refugees from Afghanistan, one week after the Taliban took power in the country.

Many were brandishing posters writing "Afghanlivesmatter" and "Evacuation now."

Safi Matiullah, a 33-year-old Afghan who left his country two years ago and has been living in France for about nine months, said "we want to bring our family here."

Matiullah said his parents and sisters remained in Afghanistan amid "big danger" and he was not able to get in touch for two weeks.

Ezat, a co-organizer of the gathering who asked not to be identified by his last name, said the Taliban "are taking back all freedoms we had until now and for 20 years."

He called on France to welcome refugees because "it's not the Taliban who are fleeing the country, it's people whose lives are in danger."

Macron said Monday that France would "do its duty to protect those who are most at risk," but also said Europeans must "protect ourselves against significant irregular migratory flows."

France has evacuated almost 600 people from Kabul since Monday, most of them Afghan citizens who worked with the French government or French groups in Afghanistan.

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates— The world's largest organization of Muslim nations held an extraordinary session in Saudi Arabia on Sunday to discuss the situation in Afghanistan, with calls for it not to be turned into a hub for terrorism.

The secretary general of the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Yousef al-Othaimeen, pointed to the escalating humanitarian needs in Afghanistan and noted that "reconciliation is the key to bringing peace."

The OIC issued a statement after the meeting saying its member states called upon future Afghan leaders and the international community "to ensure that Afghanistan is never used again as a platform or haven for terrorists, and not allow terrorist organizations to have a foothold there."

The OIC urged Afghan parties to renounce violence, work together and protect and respect the right to life and security in compliance with "tolerant Islamic principles."

Member states agreed on the need to provide humanitarian assistance in areas that need it most, though no new specific commitments were announced. The meeting also called for dispatching a high-level delegation from the OIC to visit Afghanistan to convey the group's message of supporting peace and national reconciliation.

LONDON — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said he will convene a meeting of leaders from the Group of Seven nations on Tuesday for "urgent talks on the situation in Afghanistan."

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In a statement posted on Twitter, Johnson said it is "vital that the international community works together to ensure safe evacuations, prevent a humanitarian crisis and support the Afghan people to secure the gains of the last 20 years."

The U.K. holds this year's presidency of the G-7 nations, which is also made up of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States. The meeting, which will be held virtually, will also address plans to provide humanitarian assistance and support for Afghan refugees.

U.S. President Joe Biden said in a statement that the meeting would seek to help Afghans who aided the war effort and others considered targets under Taliban control of the country.

**MOSCOW** -- Russia's president has criticized Western nations for seeking to temporarily house Afghan refugees in Central Asian countries, citing security concerns for Russia.

Speaking at a meeting with top officials of the Kremlin's United Russia party on Sunday, Vladimir Putin blasted what he described as a "humiliating approach" by Western states.

The Russian president noted that there are no visa restrictions between Russia and its Central Asian allies, and said that Moscow doesn't "want militants appearing (in Russia) again under the guise of refugees."

"We don't want to repeat, even in part, something what we had in the 90s and in the mid-2000s, when there were hostilities in the North Caucasus," Putin said.

Thousands of people in Afghanistan have been looking for ways to leave the country after the Taliban took control of Kabul in a swift power grab, seeking to escape what they see as a return to ruthless fundamentalist rule. Hundreds have headed to the Central Asian nations of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, which share a border with Afghanistan.

**WASHINGTON** — The Pentagon said Sunday that it is formally seeking airlift help from commercial airlines to relocate evacuees from Afghanistan once they have gotten out of their country.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has activated the initial stage of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet program, asking for 18 aircraft: three each from American Airlines, Atlas Air, Delta Air Lines and Omni Air; two from Hawaiian Airlines; and four from United Airlines.

Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby said the Department does not anticipate a major impact to commercial flights from this activation.

According to Kirby, those aircraft will not fly into Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul. They will be used to move passengers from way stations once they leave Kabul, allowing the U.S. military to focus on the Afghanistan portion of the evacuation.

**THE HAGUE, Netherlands** — The Dutch military is sending extra troops to Kabul to bolster 62 soldiers already in the Afghan capital to help secure evacuation efforts and protect the country's consular team.

The ministry said Sunday that the extra forces already are on their way to Afghanistan. It did not say how many troops make up the fresh deployment.

A further company of marines and a company of paratroopers also are available for deployment.

Foreign Affairs Minister Sigrid Kaag tweeted earlier Sunday that she had spoken to her British counterpart Dominic Raab about cooperation of the two countries' military forces in Kabul.

**LONDON** — Britain's Ministry of Defense says the country's armed forces have evacuated nearly 4,000 people from Afghanistan since Aug. 13.

Though it did not provide further details, it's clear that the majority of those evacuated by British troops are Afghans who have helped Britain over the past 20 years.

In addition to 4,000 or so U.K. citizens, there are thought to be around 5,000 Afghan allies, such as translators and drivers, who are earmarked for a seat on a plane. As of last Wednesday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Britain had managed to get out over 2,000 Afghans and 300 or so U.K. citizens.

"Our Armed Forces continue to work tirelessly at Kabul Airport to ensure the safe evacuation of British

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nationals and Afghan civilians," the ministry said in a statement on Twitter.

**KYIV, Ukraine** -- A Ukrainian military plane evacuated 83 more people out of Kabul on Sunday, according to Ukraine's foreign minister.

Dmytro Kuleba tweeted that the plane carried 31 Ukrainians back to Kyiv, as well as "foreigners — Afghan women and children, human rights activists, journalists working with Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today.

"They're safe in Kyiv," Kuleba said in the tweet. "We don't abandon our people and help others," he said, adding that Ukrainian authorities were working on "further evacuations." Last week, a Ukrainian plane evacuated some 80 people out of Kabul.

Thousands of people in Afghanistan have been looking for ways to leave the country after the Taliban took control of Kabul in a swift power grab, seeking to escape what they see as a return of a ruthless fundamentalist rule.

**BERLIN** — The U.S. military says an Afghan woman gave birth aboard an Air Force C-17 that flew from the Middle East to Ramstein Air Base in Germany. The base is being used as a transit post for people being evacuated from Afghanistan.

The military's Air Mobility Command tweeted that the mother began having complications during the flight Saturday. It says: "The aircraft commander decided to descend in altitude to increase air pressure in the aircraft, which helped stabilize and save the mother's life."

On arrival at Ramstein, U.S. medical personnel came aboard and delivered the child in the aircraft's cargo bay. "The baby girl and mother were transported to a nearby medical facility and are in good condition," the military said.

**THE HAGUE, Netherlands** — The Dutch government is donating 10 million euros to fund aid such as food, clean drinking water and medical supplies for Afghans.

The foreign ministry said Sunday the money will go to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund that can be tapped by United Nations organizations and NGOs working in Afghanistan.

Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Tom De Bruijn says "we want to support the Afghan population under these difficult circumstances."

Meanwhile, the Dutch defense ministry said a plane it chartered arrived in the Netherlands on Sunday carrying 160 passengers from Afghanistan. It did not disclose the nationalities of the evacuees.

**MADRID** — Spain's government says that U.S. President Joe Biden and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez have agreed that the Rota and Morón military bases in Spain used by U.S. forces will temporarily take in Afghans who worked for the Americans and fear Taliban reprisals.

One Spanish plane carrying 64 people who worked for the U.S. landed late Saturday at Spain's Torrejón air base near Madrid.

Additionally, Spain has received another 230 evacuees this week from Kabul, mostly Afghans who worked for Spain and for the European Union. Fifty-five of these evacuees have already flown on to other EU countries.

**LONDON** — Tony Blair, the British prime minister who deployed troops to Afghanistan 20 years ago after the 9/11 attacks, says the U.S. decision to leave has "every Jihadist group round the world cheering."

In a lengthy essay posted on his website late Saturday, Blair said the decision to withdraw troops was "tragic, dangerous, unnecessary." He added that Britain has a "moral obligation" to stay until "all those who need to be are evacuated."

He said the exit was not in the West or Afghanistan's interest, with the Taliban reasserting itself across most of the country.

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He also warned that the decision by the U.S. to keep Britain largely in the dark about the withdrawal risks relegating the country to "the second division of global powers."

Blair accused U.S. President Joe Biden of making the decision on the back of "an imbecilic political slogan about ending 'the forever wars'."

**KABUL, Afghanistan** — The British military says seven Afghan civilians have been killed in the crowds near Kabul's international airport amid the chaos of those fleeing the Taliban takeover of the country.

The Defense Ministry said in a statement Sunday that "conditions on the ground remain extremely challenging but we are doing everything we can to manage the situation as safely and securely as possible."

The airport has been the focal point for thousands trying to flee the Taliban, who swept into Kabul a week ago after their lightning advance seized the country.

**ISLAMABAD** — The spokesman for Pakistan International Airlines says the airline has suspended flights from Kabul and is not evacuating anyone at the moment.

Abdullah Hafeez Khan says Sunday that the airline has no on-ground arrangements and lacks appropriate facilities at Kabul international airport to operate evacuation flights.

Khan said the suspension is temporary and the airline will resume its operations once the required arrangements are made there.

**NEW DELHI** — An Indian official says an air force transport plane has left Kabul for New Delhi carrying 168 people on board.

Arindam Bagchi, the External Affairs Ministry spokesperson, says the plane took off from Kabul on Sunday morning and the passengers include 107 Indian nationals. He didn't give the nationalities of 61 others evacuated from the Afghan capital.

Meanwhile, another group of 87 Indians who were evacuated from Kabul to Tajikistan on Saturday in an Indian air force plane are being flown to New Delhi on Sunday, Bagchi said in a tweet. Two Nepalese nationals also were evacuated on that flight.

India began evacuating its nationals last Sunday after the Taliban swept into Kabul.

The Press Trust of India news agency said around 400 Indians were believed to be stranded in Afghanistan. No official figure was available.

## **No containment, new threats from Northern California fire**

**PLACERVILLE, Calif. (AP)** — A wildfire burning for a week in Northern California continued to grow out of control, one of about a dozen big blazes in the drought-stricken state that have destroyed hundreds of homes and forced thousands of people to evacuate.

There was zero containment Sunday of the Caldor Fire, which had charred nearly 154 square miles (399 square kilometers) of trees and brush in the northern Sierra Nevada after breaking out Aug. 14. The cause was under investigation.

Firefighters hoped to take advantage of calmer weather and cooler temperatures a day after gusts pushed the fire across U.S. Route 50, threatening more remote communities in El Dorado County.

Erratic winds sent embers flying into tinder-dry fuel beds, starting new ignition points and challenging crews trying to chase down the flames in rugged terrain.

"We know this fire has done things that nobody could have predicted, but that's how firefighting has been in the state this year," Eldorado National Forest Supervisor Chief Jeff Marsolais said.

Multiple large wildfires have incinerated at least 700 homes, many in and around the Sierra Nevada communities of Greenville and Grizzly Flats. About 13,000 residences remained under threat in communities tucked away in scenic forests.

The fires have burned roughly 2,300 square miles (6,000 square kilometers) and have sent smoke as far

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as the East Coast. They were burning in grass, brush and forest that is exceptionally dry from two years of drought likely exacerbated by climate change.

Nine national forests in California have been closed because of the fire threat.

To the northwest of the Caldor Fire, the massive Dixie Fire also kept expanding. In five weeks, the blaze about 175 miles (282 kilometers) northeast of San Francisco became the second-largest in state history and blackened an area twice the size of Los Angeles. It was 37% contained.

In Southern California, evacuation orders remain in place for rural communities near the French Fire northeast of Bakersfield in Kern County. That blaze grew to about 21 square miles (54 square kilometers) and was 10% contained.

California is one of a dozen mostly Western states where 94 large, active fires were burning as of Sunday, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

Fires have intensified across the entire West, creating a nearly year-round season that has taxed firefighters. Fire patterns used to migrate in seasons from the Southwest to the Rockies, to the Pacific Northwest and then California, allowing fire crews to move from one place to the next, said Anthony Scardina, deputy regional forester for the U.S. Forest Service.

This story has been updated to correct that the stretch of highway closed by authorities is U.S. Route 50, not Interstate 50.

## Crush at Kabul airport kills 7 as Afghans try to flee

By AHMAD SEIR, TAMEEM AKHGAR and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — At least seven Afghans died in a panicked crush of people trying to enter Kabul's international airport, the British military said Sunday, as thousands were still trying to flee the country in a chaotic exodus a week after the Taliban takeover.

The Taliban moved to confront the first stirrings of armed resistance since capturing nearly all of Afghanistan in a matter of days earlier this month. Anti-Taliban fighters claimed to have seized three mountainous districts, and a prominent militia commander in the only province not yet under Taliban control pledged to fight back if attacked.

The British military on Sunday acknowledged at least seven deaths at the airport. Others may have been trampled, suffocated or suffered heart attacks as Taliban fighters fired into the air to try to drive back the crowds. Soldiers covered several corpses in white clothing. Other troops stood on concrete barriers, trying to calm the crowd.

Kabul's airport, now one of the only routes out of the country, has seen days of chaos since the Taliban entered the capital on Aug. 15. Thousands poured onto the tarmac last week, and several Afghans plunged to their deaths after clinging to a U.S. military cargo plane as it took off, some of the seven killed on Aug. 16.

The Taliban have pledged amnesty to those who worked with the U.S., NATO and the toppled Afghan government, but many Afghans still fear revenge attacks. There have been reports in recent days of the Taliban hunting down their former enemies. It's unclear if Taliban leaders are saying one thing and doing another, or if fighters are taking matters into their own hands.

Outside the airport on Saturday, Western troops in full combat gear tried to control crowds big enough to be seen in satellite photos. They carried away some who were sweating and pale. With temperatures reaching 34 degrees Celsius (93 F), the soldiers sprayed water from a hose on those gathered and gave out bottled water.

"The situation at Kabul airport remains extremely challenging and unpredictable," a NATO official said on condition of anonymity in keeping with regulations. The official was not able to confirm a precise number of casualties.

The U.S. Embassy, which has relocated to the military side of the airport, has told American citizens and others not to come to the airport until they receive precise instructions.

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President Joe Biden said the U.S.-led evacuation of Americans, at-risk Afghans and others from the Kabul airport picked up speed this weekend, although it remains vulnerable to threats from the Islamic State extremist group.

Biden told reporters at the White House that 11,000 people had been airlifted from Kabul in a 36-hour period this weekend, although he did not provide details. The number appeared to include flights by charter and non-U.S. military aircraft as well as the U.S. Air Force C-17 and C-130 transport planes that have been flying daily from the capital.

Biden said his first priority is getting American citizens out of the country "as quickly and safely as possible."

"We're working hard and as fast as we can to get people out," Biden told reporters at the White House. "That's our mission. That's our goal."

Earlier, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan told CNN that 3,900 people had been flown from Kabul on U.S. military flights in the past 24 hours, up from 1,600 the previous day. That's in addition to about 3,900 people airlifted on non-U.S. military flights over the past 24 hours. It remains far below the 5,000 to 9,000 that the military says it has the capacity to airlift daily.

Britain said it had airlifted more than 5,000 people, including 1,000 in the last 14 hours.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin activated the Civil Reserve Air Fleet program, requesting 18 aircraft from U.S. carriers to assist in transporting Afghan refugees after they are evacuated to other countries. The voluntary program, born in the wake of the Berlin airlift, adds to the military's capabilities during crises.

Biden has vowed to bring home all Americans from Afghanistan and to evacuate Afghans who aided the U.S. war effort. U.S. military helicopters have been used to collect 169 Americans from outside the airport. Tens of thousands of Americans and others are still hoping to fly out.

There also have been concerns about a potential attack on the airport by a local Islamic State affiliate. U.S. military planes have been executing corkscrew landings, and other aircraft have fired flares upon takeoff, measures used to prevent missile attacks.

The Taliban blame the chaotic evacuation on the U.S. military, saying there's no need for Afghans to fear them, even though their fighters shoot into the air and beat people with batons as they try to control the crowds outside the airport.

"All Afghanistan is secure, but the airport, which is managed by the Americans, has anarchy," Amir Khan Motaqi, a senior Taliban official, said Sunday. The U.S. "should not embarrass itself to the world and should not give this mentality to our people that (the Taliban) are a kind of enemy."

Speaking to an Iranian state television channel Saturday night, Taliban spokesman Mohammad Naeem also blamed the deaths at the airport on the Americans.

"The Americans announced that 'we would take you to America with us,' and people gathered at Kabul airport," Naeem said. "If it was announced right now in any country in the world, would people not go?"

The Taliban have sought to project a more moderate image than when they last ruled the country, from 1996 until the U.S.-led invasion following the 9/11 attacks, which al-Qaida carried out while being sheltered by the Taliban. During their earlier rule, women were largely confined to their homes, television and music were banned, and public executions were held — all under the Taliban's harsh version of Islamic rule.

This time, the Taliban are holding talks with Afghan officials from previous governments on a political transition and say they will restore peace and security after decades of war. Afghan officials familiar with the talks say the Taliban have said they will not announce a government until after the Aug. 31 deadline for the U.S. withdrawal.

But they already face stirrings of resistance.

In Baghlan province, some 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of Kabul, fighters calling themselves the "People's Uprising" claimed to have seized three districts in the Andarab Valley, nestled in the towering Hindu Kush mountains.

Khair Mohammad Khairkhwā, the former provincial head of intelligence, and Abdul Ahmad Dadgar, another leader in the uprising, said Taliban fighters had burned down homes and kidnapped children. Two other

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officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, made similar allegations. The Taliban did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In the nearby Panjshir province — the only one yet to fall under Taliban control — a group of militia leaders and officials from the ousted government have pledged to defend it against the Taliban, who circulated video showing their fighters heading toward the region.

The province is a stronghold of the Northern Alliance fighters who joined with the U.S. to topple the Taliban in 2001, and Ahmad Massoud, the son of a famous Northern Alliance commander assassinated days before the 9/11 attacks, has appeared in videos from there.

But it appears unlikely a few thousand guerrilla fighters will soon succeed where the Afghan national security forces failed despite 20 years of Western aid, assistance and training.

"If Taliban warlords launch an assault, they will of course face staunch resistance from us," Massoud said in an interview with the Al-Arabiya news network. But he also expressed openness to dialogue with the Taliban.

Akhgar reported from Istanbul and Gambrell from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writers Joseph Krauss in Jerusalem, Robert Burns and Darlene Superville in Washington, Amir Vahdat in Tehran, Iran, and Lolita C. Baldor in Washington contributed.

Afghanistan coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/afghanistan>

## **Pacquiao ponders ring retirement, political plans after loss**

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Manny Pacquiao sounded like a fighter on his way out and a politician on his way up. He might have concealed his battered face behind big sunglasses, but Pacquiao didn't hide behind excuses or denial after a discouraging unanimous-decision loss to Yordenis Ugás on Saturday night.

Yes, Pacquiao disclosed that his legs cramped throughout the fight on the Vegas Strip, depriving him of the mobility that has always made his power so dangerous.

The eight-division world champion still acknowledged the larger fact that was obvious even to most of his devoted fans around the world: He deserved his loss to Ugás, a talented opponent who probably wouldn't have been much trouble for prime Pacman.

And that might be a good reason to walk away.

"This sport is my passion," Pacquiao said. "That's why I'm still here fighting at the age of 42. I'm enjoying it, but sometimes you have to think about the response of your body. ... My mind, my heart, it's 100%. But my legs were cramping."

In the moments after he returned from a two-year ring absence with the loss to the rangy, resilient Ugás, Pacquiao repeatedly hinted he is planning to retire from boxing.

He is still alongside Canelo Álvarez as the two biggest active stars in the sport, yet Pacquiao (67-8-2) has never spoken so frankly about leaving behind 26 years in the pro fight game.

"I've done a lot for boxing, and boxing has done a lot for me," Pacquiao said. "I look forward to spending a lot of time thinking about my future in boxing."

Pacquiao's postfight comments included a sprinkling of such catchy, pre-written phrases — sort of like a stump speech by a politician.

Indeed, the Filipino senator's next fight is probably in the political ring: He is widely expected to enter the presidential race in the Philippines next month ahead of the May 2022 election.

"In my heart, I want to continue to fight," Pacquiao said. "But the thing is, I also have to consider my body. I've put it through a lot of things. Especially back in my country, there's a lot of things that I need to accomplish to help people. I want to be an inspiration to the Philippine people inside and outside the ring."

Countless athletes have struggled mightily to find worthwhile ways to fill their time after retirement. That wouldn't be a problem for Pacquiao: His chaotic life won't get less busy, but it could be a bit more focused



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with only one career to consider.

If Pacquiao retires, he leaves boxing as one of the greats of his generation. Along with his stunning array of championship belts and his groundbreaking mobility across the sport's weight classes, Pacquiao will be remembered for his utter fearlessness in taking on countless larger foes without blinking.

Freddie Roach, Pacquiao's devoted trainer for most of the past two decades, acknowledged being "a little worried" about the champ.

"He's boxed for a long time, and he's the best guy I've ever had," Roach said. "The best guy, the best fighter. I hate to see the day when he retires, but this could be it. We'll see what Manny decides."

Another scenario seems equally plausible at this point: Pacquiao doesn't win the presidency in nine months — he is behind several candidates in early polling — and he subsequently gets a highly lucrative opportunity to return to the ring late next year, when he will be nearly 44.

Given Pacquiao's competitive nature and his relatively expensive lifestyle, his self-awareness could be overcome by the rewards of the fight game.

But in the moments after this cramping, frustrated great lost for the first time in four years, Pacquiao was thinking deeply about both his current state and future priorities.

"This situation might finish my career in boxing," Pacquiao said. "But this is my statement to all the boxing fans all over the world: The most important thing is how we can help each other, especially in this pandemic."

More AP boxing: <https://apnews.com/hub/boxing> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Gov. Cuomo says storm won't stop his planned resignation

NEW YORK (AP) — New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo spent his second-to-last day in office projecting an image that he is still in control, and still fully engaged as the state dealt with heavy rain from Tropical Storm Henri.

The Democrat, who is set to resign at the end of the day Monday, appeared at a televised briefing Sunday surrounded by top state officials involved in the state's storm response.

Absent from the briefing was Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul, who is set to become governor in the first seconds of Tuesday morning.

"The lieutenant governor has been briefed on all of this and we're in constant communication," Cuomo said.

Asked if he still planned to leave office as planned, Cuomo said "Yes, my final day is tomorrow."

He said he asked his emergency management team that if any were thinking of leaving their jobs Tuesday, and not joining the new administration, that they stay in place "for the good of the state" until the storm crisis had passed.

Hochul's spokespeople didn't immediately respond to a question about her whereabouts. She did weigh in on the storm on Twitter, saying, "My team and I are continuing to closely monitor #Henri."

Hochul is scheduled to be sworn in at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday. Cuomo announced two weeks ago that he will resign from office rather than endure a likely impeachment battle in the state legislature over sexual harassment allegations.

Cuomo has insisted he did not touch anyone inappropriately and that some of the allegations against him are either false, exaggerated or unintentional, but he said he'd concluded that continuing to fight to stay in office would hurt the state.

## Cuomo's drive to dominate led to success, and his downfall

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

Back in 2018, when there was talk he might run for president, Andrew Cuomo insisted there was only one reason he would leave office early. And it wasn't the White House. "The only caveat," he said, "is if God strikes me dead."

Another possibility will be realized this week, when the Democrat resigns in disgrace, his allies gone, his

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legacy stained by allegations of sexual harassment. This ending was not brought about by a bolt from the heavens, but by 11 women who told their stories to investigators.

For those who watched Cuomo's daily COVID-19 briefings and saw a beacon of strength and competence, Cuomo's departure from the governor's mansion may seem a stunning reversal. For New Yorkers, and especially those who butted heads with Cuomo, it is a story about how his drive to dominate made him the master of New York politics and brought about his downfall.

"My natural instinct is to be aggressive, and it doesn't always serve me well," Cuomo acknowledged in a recent memoir detailing his response to the pandemic. "I am a controlling personality. ... But you show me a person who is not controlling, and I'll show you a person who is probably not highly successful."

But if equating control with success led to Cuomo's accomplishments, it also precipitated his undoing. Many of Cuomo's accusers told investigators that the governor used his power, and the threat of retaliation, to harass them, believing they would never report him.

"The Andrew Cuomo I've known since 1995 has always been about power and control," said Karen Hinton, a former aide to Cuomo when he was housing secretary under President Bill Clinton. "His bullying, his flirting, his sexual overtones are largely about controlling the person. He thought he'd get away with it because of that power and control."

Hinton is not among the 11 women at the center of the attorney general's report, but she has said Cuomo once gave her an uncomfortable hug in a hotel room that was "too long, too tight, too intimate."

The investigation overseen by New York Attorney General Letitia James and led by two outside lawyers substantiated accusations that Cuomo touched women inappropriately, commented on their appearance or made suggestive comments about their sex lives. Most of the women worked in state government.

Cuomo has apologized for some of his actions, and said others were misunderstood. He has said some of the accusations are "unfair and untruthful" and driven by politics. While he was initially defiant, he announced earlier this month that he plans to resign Monday. He will be replaced by Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul, who is set to become New York's first female governor.

But not before one last emergency to challenge Cuomo in his final days. The arrival of Tropical Storm Henri on Sunday put Cuomo back in the familiar role of responding to a natural disaster. Whether it was Superstorm Sandy, winter storms in Buffalo or just a typical upstate snowstorm, Cuomo the executive always seemed to be most engaged in times of natural disaster, sometimes even personally responding to motorists stranded in snowstorms (always captured on film, of course).

The son of former Gov. Mario Cuomo, Andrew seemed destined to follow in his father's steps. As a young man, he served as aide and campaign manager for his father before joining Clinton's cabinet. He returned to New York for a failed bid for governor in 2002, then won the attorney general's office four years later. In 2010, he ran for governor again and won.

Almost immediately, he began to leave his imprint on the state. He angered progressives by making deals with Republicans. He announced big economic development programs designed to turn around the upstate economy. He corralled votes for gay marriage, gun control and tax caps.

If he had won a fourth term in 2022, he would have surpassed his father's three terms in office.

Though he excels at the backroom deal-making culture of Albany, Cuomo never seemed as comfortable with the personal side of politics. He's not a baby kisser, but rather a political operator who knows how the sausage gets made and seems to enjoy the work.

Cuomo also appeared to delight in diminishing opponents and critics, be they reporters or political rivals. He mocked one GOP opponent as short, dismissed 2018 Democratic Primary challenger Cynthia Nixon as a "prosecco sipping" actress and regularly bedeviled his one-time friend turned nemesis, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio.

Cuomo declined to comment to The Associated Press through a spokesman, who also declined to comment on his behalf. Cuomo's remaining loyalists have instead taken to social media to defend his accomplishments as governor, a list that includes the very sexual harassment laws he is accused of violating.

It's not the only contradiction in his long career.

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He built more new bridges, train stations and airport facilities than any governor in decades, but he slashed funding to local governments struggling to pay for aging sewers and roads.

He bragged about investments in new businesses and in western New York, but many programs generated little besides state-funded commercials featuring Cuomo. Two of Cuomo's closest advisers were sentenced to jail for corruption related to spending on economic development. Investigations into Cuomo's role ended without charges.

He won an Emmy for his daily COVID-19 briefings and was so proud of the state's response that he wrote a book — even as his administration was accused of covering up deaths in nursing homes after it forced them to accept virus patients.

"The country was mesmerized by Gov. Cuomo's blunt talk about the pandemic, but he didn't even follow the experts," said Susan Lerner, executive director of Common Cause, a good government group that has long butted heads with Cuomo. "That's emblematic of his style: The performance looks great, but when you get into the details, there are big holes and very little substance."

State Sen. Liz Krueger, a Manhattan Democrat, said it's too soon to review Cuomo's performance as governor, given that there are criminal investigations into the harassment allegations and questions about his handling of nursing homes during the pandemic.

New York's attorney general is also examining whether Cuomo improperly had state employees help with his book about the pandemic.

Lawmakers will know more once Cuomo leaves office and they can assess whether his administration exaggerated some of its accomplishments.

"His legacy will also be based on what we learn," Krueger said.

Cuomo hasn't said where he will live after vacating the governor's mansion in Albany. The Westchester County home that he once shared with ex-partner Sandra Lee has been sold. Lee, the cookbook author and television chef, has since moved to California, though she's been seen recently in Europe with a new boyfriend.

His next professional steps are also unclear. With a law degree and deep experience in brokering deals, Cuomo could work as an attorney or a real estate development executive.

Could he try for a comeback? His campaign coffers remain flush, with \$18 million. Former Rep. Anthony Weiner and former Gov. Eliot Spitzer, who both stepped down amid sex scandals, tried to run for office in New York City. Both lost.

In today's post #MeToo climate, the public may be even less forgiving, according to Doug Muzzio, a political scientist at Baruch College.

"It will overshadow most voters' thinking," Muzzio said. "He has a lot of accomplishments. He has been a master builder. When he got elected, the state was in a \$10 billion budget hole. And he solved it without raising taxes. But will anyone remember that?"

## Don Everly of early rock 'n' roll Everly Brothers dies at 84

By KRISTIN M. HALL AP Entertainment Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Don Everly, one-half of the pioneering Everly Brothers whose harmonizing country rock hits impacted a generation of rock 'n' roll music, has died. He was 84.

Everly died at his home in Nashville, Tennessee, on Saturday, according to his attorney and family spokesperson Linda Edell Howard. His brother, Phil Everly, died in January 2014 at age 74.

"Don lived by what he felt in his heart," a statement from the family said. "Don expressed his appreciation for the ability to live his dreams ... living in love with his soul mate and wife Adela, and sharing the music that made him an Everly Brother. Don always expressed how grateful he was for his fans."

In the late 1950s and 1960s, the duo of Don and Phil drew upon their rural roots with their strummed guitars and high, yearning harmonies, while their poignant songs — many by the team of Felice and Boudleaux Bryant — embodied teenage restlessness and energy. Their 19 top 40 hits included "Bye Bye Love," "Let It Be Me," "All I Have to Do Is Dream" and "Wake Up Little Susie," and performers from the

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Beatles to Simon & Garfunkel cited them as key influences.

"The Everly Brothers are integral to the fabric of American music," said Jerry Lee Lewis in a statement. "With my friend Don's passing, I am reflective ... reflective on a life full of wonderful friends, spectacular music and fond memories. There's a lot I can say about Don, what he and Phil meant to me both as people and as musicians, but I am going to reflect today."

Songs like "Bye Bye Love" and "Wake Up Little Susie" appealed to the postwar generation of baby boomers, and their deceptively simple harmonies hid greater meaning among the lighter pop fare of the era.

The two broke up amid quarreling in 1973 after 16 years of hits, then reunited in 1983, "sealing it with a hug," Phil Everly said.

Although their number of hit records declined in the late 1980s, they had successful concert tours in the U.S. and Europe.

They were inducted into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in 1986, the same year they had a hit pop-country record, "Born Yesterday." Two years earlier, they had success with the up-tempo ballad "On the Wings of a Nightingale," written by Paul McCartney.

"As a singer, a songwriter and a guitar innovator, Don Everly was one of the most talented and impactful artists in popular music history," said Kyle Young, CEO of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, in a statement. The brothers were inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2001.

Don Everly was born in Brownie, Kentucky, to Ike and Margaret Everly, who were folk and country music singers. Phil Everly was born to the couple in Chicago, where the Everlys moved from Brownie when Ike grew tired of working in the coal mines.

The brothers began singing country music in 1945 on their family's radio show in Shenandoah, Iowa.

Their career breakthrough came when they moved to Nashville in the mid-1950s and signed a recording contract with New York-based Cadence Records.

Their breakup came dramatically during a concert at Knott's Berry Farm in California. Phil Everly threw his guitar down and walked off, prompting Don Everly to tell the crowd, "The Everly Brothers died 10 years ago."

The disputes between the brothers even went to court, when Don Everly sued the heirs of Phil Everly in 2017 over the copyright to three of their songs, including "Cathy's Clown." The case went all the way to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals.

But after Phil's death in 2014, Don said that he felt a spiritual message from his brother before he died.

"Our love was and will always be deeper than any earthly differences we might have had," Don Everly said in a statement in 2014.

While apart, they pursued solo singing careers with little success. Phil also appeared in the 1978 Clint Eastwood movie "Every Which Way but Loose." Don made a couple of records with friends in Nashville, performed in local nightclubs and played guitar and sang background vocals on recording sessions.

Don Everly said in a 1986 Associated Press interview that he and his brother were successful because "we never followed trends. We did what we liked and followed our instincts. Rock 'n' roll did survive, and we were right about that. Country did survive, and we were right about that. You can mix the two, but people said we couldn't."

Decades later, their impact on popular music is still evident. In 2013, Green Day's Billie Joe Armstrong and Norah Jones released a loving tribute to the Everlys on their collaborative album "Foreverly."

## New Orleans tourism industry worries as coronavirus rages

By REBECCA SANTANA and KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — It's a neighborhood bar and restaurant, but for two extended weekends every year, the "regulars" at Liuzza's by the Track include an overflow crowd of tourists grabbing drinks and settling in for meals on their way in and out of the nearby New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival.

Co-owner James Gonczi estimates that out-of-towners make up anywhere from 30% to 35% of his clientele during the seven-day festival each spring. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the festival hasn't

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happened for two years now.

It looked like the music would play this fall — organizers recruited The Rolling Stones to headline a rescheduled festival in October. But then the highly contagious delta variant exploded, forcing another cancellation.

Gonczi doesn't even want to talk about it. "I don't want to be depressed anymore," he says.

Jazz Fest usually draws hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world to the city. They come for the unique food, music and culture every year, playing a major part in a tourism and hospitality industry that drives the New Orleans economy.

This industry has been hammered by the pandemic, which has forced many bars, restaurants and music venues to close or limit their operations. At one point unemployment in the city was as high as 20%, and it hasn't recovered, with a 12% jobless rate now.

It seemed like decent times, at least, would roll again last spring, as vaccinations began and visitors started coming back. Occupancy rates rose above 50% this summer in downtown hotels, not bad compared to the single digits of the summer before, said Kelly Schultz, a spokeswoman for New Orleans & Company, which promotes the city as a tourist destination. But she said it hasn't been a full rebound, with international tourists, cruise ship passengers and business travelers not yet returning.

The tourism organization paused some of its advertising through September as polling showed travelers concerned about the delta surge. Louisiana has been a hot spot for this fourth wave, with hospitalizations repeatedly hitting record highs and medical staff voicing concerns about hospitals being overrun.

Losing Jazz Fest again should be a "giant wake-up call" to get more people vaccinated, Schultz said: "All of this is completely preventable with the vaccine."

Earlier this month, New Orleans began requiring everyone entering bars, restaurants, music clubs and even the Superdome to show proof of vaccination or a recent negative coronavirus test. Both the city and the state also require mask-wearing in stores and other indoor venues, but haven't returned to the closures or capacity limits for live music, restaurants and bars that were implemented when the pandemic began.

Many businesses are also taking their own precautions. When infections began to surge again, the Carnival Lounge reinstalled clear shields separating the stage from the crowd. Even so, a few bands have canceled amid concerns over rising infections, owner Jennifer Johnson said.

Live music events were one of the last things to freely open last spring, and venue operators fear they'll be the first to face restrictions if hospitalizations keep climbing.

"I just can't say enough how crushing it would be if live music has to shut down again," Johnson said.

Even before the mayor's announcement, dozens of venues already decided to mandate vaccines or negative coronavirus tests. Carnival is one, as is Palm & Pine, a French Quarter restaurant mixing southern, Caribbean and Central American influences. Palm & Pine took the step because its employees have children, and they noticed how many kids were getting sick during this fourth surge.

While Jazz Fest is by far the biggest event to be called off, August has been grim. An event drawing art lovers who wear white while checking out galleries was canceled, as was the Red Dress Run, which sends thousands of revelers dashing across the city. September's French Quarter Festival, featuring dozens of artists playing at outdoor venues, was called off next. Now many worry that the pre-Lenten parades and street parties of Mardi Gras, which draws tourists from around the world, will be shut down once again in 2022.

Losing Jazz Fest means Linda Green — often referred to as the Ya-Ka-Mein Lady for her signature noodle dish known as a hangover cure — won't be putting more than two dozen people to work at two of the festival's booths.

She hasn't done a big catering event since Mardi Gras of 2020. She's found other ways to make ends meet, including pop-ups at a local music venue. But losing Jazz Fest is crushing.

"I do all the festivals in the city," she said. "I can't do any right now. It hurts."

Many still hope this latest surge won't get worse, and this fall's tourist season can be saved. New Orleans has a higher vaccination rate than the rest of Louisiana and neighboring states, which could be important

as tourists decide where to spend vacation money.

At the Royal Sonesta Hotel in the French Quarter, the business growth that returned in mid-March is leveling off. Many guests who planned to come for Jazz Fest canceled, and new reservations have slowed a bit, said Al Groos, the hotel's manager. If they can weather this surge, they still might have a "very, very good fall," he said hopefully. "Not based on 2019 standards, but based on 2020," he added.

## Bus driver shortages are latest challenge hitting US schools

By AMY BETH HANSON and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — A Montana school district is dangling \$4,000 bonuses and inviting people to test drive big yellow school buses in hopes of enticing them to take a job that schools are struggling to fill as kids return to in-person classes.

A Delaware school district offered to pay parents \$700 to take care of their own transportation, and a Pittsburgh district delayed the start of classes and said hundreds more children would have to walk to school. Schools across the U.S. are offering hiring bonuses, providing the training needed to get a commercial driver's license and increasing hourly pay to attract more drivers.

The shortage of bus drivers is complicating the start of a school year already besieged by the highly contagious delta variant of COVID-19, contentious disagreement over masking requirements, and the challenge of catching up on educational ground lost as the pandemic raged last year.

The driver shortfall isn't new, but a labor shortage across many sectors and the pandemic's lingering effects have made it worse, since about half the workforce was over 65 and more vulnerable to the virus, said Joanna McFarland, co-founder and CEO of school ride-service company HopSkipDrive, which tracks school bus issues.

Her company conducted a survey in March that found nearly 80% of districts that responded were having trouble finding enough bus drivers.

"It's really at a breaking point," McFarland said.

First Student, a company that contracts bus service for school districts around the county, held test driving events they called "Big Bus, No Big Deal" in Montana and many other states this summer to give people an opportunity to try their hand at driving. The hope was that it could remove a barrier to those who otherwise might be interested in helping get kids safely to and from school, said Dan Redford, with First Student in Helena, Montana.

"We actually set up a closed course at the fairgrounds, and we invited the public to come in and learn that it's not a big deal to drive a big bus," Redford said. "They're actually pretty easy to drive. You sit up high. You've got plenty of view."

In Helena, the company has 50 bus drivers and needs 21 more before classes start on Aug. 30, a shortfall Redford called unprecedented.

Attendance ended up being light at Helena's event, but similar demos, like one held recently in Seattle, led to more applications.

The delta variant also drove the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to recommend universal mask wearing in schools, especially for children too young to be vaccinated. But in many areas, there's a wave of fierce anti-mask protest.

First Student lost some Helena drivers to mask requirements on buses, Redford said.

"I know I've had a lot of drivers that don't believe in that and don't want to have to deal with that," Redford said.

For parents, school bus headaches are coming at an especially difficult time.

Monica Huff was at home in quarantine with a likely case of COVID-19 on Wednesday when she learned that her 14-year-old son's school bus didn't show up at his stop in suburban Houston.

"I was worried. I was scared. ... I didn't know where he was," she said. She felt especially helpless because she couldn't leave to get him herself without putting others at risk of infection.

Eventually she learned that the elementary-school bus driver had picked up the older kids and brought

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them to the high school. She was relieved to know he arrived at school, though his late start time was also a concern since he's still making up some ground in his studies after falling behind during remote learning early last year.

"There's enough to worry about this year with people getting angry about masks," she said.

Republican Gov. Greg Abbott initially prohibited Texas school districts from requiring masks, but successful court challenges led the Texas Education Agency on Thursday to suspend enforcement of his ban while the challenges move through the courts.

In Florida, many of the largest school districts are using managers as drivers and implementing other stop-gap measures to get students to class as the school year begins against a statewide political fight over masks between Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, who wants to forbid mask mandates, and districts convinced they're needed to keep kids safe.

President Joe Biden on Wednesday ordered his education secretary to explore possible legal action against states that have blocked school mask mandates and other health measures meant to protect students against COVID-19.

Economic forces are also at play in the bus driver shortage. Driving a school bus requires a commercial driver's license that can take weeks to obtain. And people who have them can often find higher-paying work that doesn't require splitting the day for pickup and drop-off. Demand for commercial drivers is only increasing with the pandemic-related surge in online shopping, said McFarland with HopSkipDrive.

But working with kids driving a bus can be a rewarding profession, and the hours work well for stay-at-home parents or retirees seeking to supplement their income, contractors say. There's no requirement to work nights, weekends or holidays. Field trips and sporting events can add more hours for those who want them, said Redford with First Student.

His company allows bus drivers whose children are at least 1 year old to ride on the bus with them while they work, saving on daycare costs, Redford said.

One Michigan school district was able to find enough drivers by guaranteeing they could work enough hours in the district, including as janitors or in food service, to qualify for health insurance coverage, said Dave Meeuwssen, executive director of the Michigan Association of Pupil Transportation.

In suburban Salt Lake City, the Canyons School District was in dire straits about a month ago. It was down about 30 drivers, so its workforce would have been too small to staff all their routes, said spokesman Jeff Haney. Administrators put out the word that office staffers might have to get their commercial driver's licenses just to get all the kids to and from school.

"It was very alarming and very concerning," he said.

The district also increased bus-driver pay and offered a program to help people get their commercial licenses. In the weeks since, it has seen an uptick in applications. If they keep coming in at the same rate, the district should be staffed up for the year, Haney said.

Whitehurst reported from Salt Lake City.

## What's wrong with Arizona's 2020 audit? A lot, experts say

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — A cybersecurity firm plucked from relative obscurity to conduct an unprecedented review of ballots in Arizona's largest country is readying to present its findings to Republican lawmakers.

Experts say there should be little anticipation about the revelations from the Maricopa County audit — and whatever those revelations are, they cannot be taken seriously.

"There are too many flaws in the way this review was conducted to trust it," said Trey Grayson, a former Republican secretary of state in Kentucky who was the coauthor of a paper outlining the extensive problems.

Grayson cites a series of red flags, from biased and inexperienced contractors to conspiracy-chasing funders and bizarre, unreliable methods.

The report by Cyber Ninjas, a small cybersecurity firm based in Sarasota, Florida to lead the audit, is

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scheduled to be handed over Monday, but the findings will not immediately be made public.

Republicans in the state Senate launched the review of the county ballots in April in an effort to find irregularities that could support former President Donald Trump's false claims of a stolen election. The lawmakers did so despite the fact that the ballots had been counted and audited twice already. Courts in Arizona and other 2020 battleground states have rejected dozens of election suits as judges found no evidence to support claims of fraud.

A broad coalition of government and industry officials called the presidential election "the most secure in American history." Trump's attorney general, Bill Barr, said, "to date, we have not seen fraud on a scale that could have effected a different outcome in the election."

In Arizona, the number of problematic ballots reported was nowhere near Democrat Joe Biden's winning margin of 10,400 votes.

The state Senate president, Republican Karen Fann, insists the review was meant only to determine whether Arizona's election laws were good enough.

Still, leaders of the review have a history of making misleading claims about their findings, and those claims are amplified by Trump and his allies.

A look at what election experts cite as the top troubles with the election review in Maricopa County:

## BIASED CONTRACTORS

Fann selected Cyber Ninjas even though it had no prior experience in elections and never submitted a formal bid for the work. Its owner, Doug Logan, had tweeted support for conspiracy theories claiming Biden's victory was illegitimate. Logan deleted his Twitter account before his Arizona contract was announced.

"I'm tired of hearing people say there was no fraud," read one tweet that Logan retweeted. "It happened, it's real, and people better get wise fast."

The auditors recruited workers from Republican activist groups and did not live up to promises to screen them for biased social media posts. A former Republican state lawmaker who was at the riot at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 was spotted counting ballots for several days. His unsuccessful state House race was on thousands of the recounted ballots.

For a time, the official Twitter account tied to the audit leaders published attacks on Democrats and journalists covering the process. The account was later banned for violating Twitter's rules.

Standard election reviews are conducted by bipartisan teams following rigid procedures designed to prevent bias and human error from corrupting the results, said Jennifer Morrell, a former Utah elections official and partner at The Elections Group, a consulting firm.

"They're done in a way that's observable, that's independent, that's public," Morrell said.

## BIASED FUNDING SOURCES

The review was funded almost exclusively by groups led by prominent Trump supporters active in the movement to cast doubt on the 2020 election results.

As of July, five groups had raised nearly \$5.7 million for the effort. Among those leading the fundraising groups are Michael Flynn, Trump's former national security advisor; Sidney Powell, a onetime Trump lawyer who filed a number of baseless lawsuits challenging election results; Patrick Byrne, a former chief executive of Overstock.com; and correspondents from the pro-Trump One America News Network.

The money from pro-Trump groups dwarfs the \$150,000 contributed by the Arizona Senate, which commissioned the audit and hired Cyber Ninjas. Funding the audit with cash from interested parties who would like to see the effort replicated in other states raises serious doubts about the validity of the findings, said Ben Ginsberg, a prominent Republican election attorney.

"The audience is the funders," Ginsberg said. "The outside funding sources is really important to concentrate on in terms of talking about the legitimacy of the audit."

## INACCURATE CLAIMS

The findings discussed publicly so far have fallen apart under scrutiny, but not before taking hold with Trump and many of his supporters who believe his false claims of fraud.



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The auditors claimed a database directory was deleted from an election management server, alleging the potential illegal destruction of data.

But after Maricopa County's technical staff explained how the hard drives on the servers were arranged, the audit's lead digital analyst, Ben Cotton of the firm CyFIR, acknowledged that he had located all of the allegedly deleted files.

Logan has made a variety of claims about supposed irregularities that he said merited further research. He claimed there were thousands of mail ballots for which there was no record of a ballot being requested, and alleged that problems with paper and printers could allow for errors in counting ballots marked with Sharpies. Trump parroted the claims as evidence the election results are tainted. But all of them were wrong.

## CONSPIRACY HUNT

The auditors appear to be chasing down bizarre conspiracy theories.

Jovan Pulitzer, an inventor and former treasure hunter, has said technology he calls "kinematic artifact detection" was being used to look for altered ballots.

Pulitzer is the author of a series of books on lost treasures, including one titled "How to Cut Off Your Arm and Eat Your Dog." In 2000, he developed a barcode scanner called Cuecat that purported to link print magazine ads to the internet. It was later named one of the 50 worst inventions of all time by Time magazine.

One audit leader, John Brakey, said they were looking for evidence of bamboo in the ballot paper. That apparently was an attempt to test a theory that thousands of fraudulent ballots were flown in from Asia.

For a while, auditors held ballots under ultraviolet lights to look for watermarks. Maricopa County ballots do not contain watermarks, but some adherents of the Q-Anon theory believe Trump secretly watermarked ballots to catch fraud.

Cyber Ninja's Logan has said, citing no evidence, that he believes the CIA or its former employees may be involved with "disinformation" about election fraud, according to the Arizona Mirror. The website reported Logan's comments were made in "The Deep Rig," a conspiratorial film claiming the election was stolen from Trump.

Logan gave the filmmakers access to restricted areas of the Arizona ballot-counting operation, including the secure area where ballots were stored.

This story has been corrected to reflect the correct spelling of the first name of Trey Grayson, a former Kentucky secretary of state, and the first name of Sidney Powell, a onetime lawyer for President Donald Trump.

## Josephine Baker is 1st Black woman given Paris burial honor

PARIS (AP) — The remains of American-born singer and dancer Josephine Baker will be reinterred at the Pantheon monument in Paris, making the entertainer who is a World War II hero in France the first Black woman to get the country's highest honor.

Le Parisien newspaper reported Sunday that French President Emmanuel Macron decided to organize a ceremony on Nov. 30 at the Paris monument, which houses the remains of scientist Marie Curie, French philosopher Voltaire, writer Victor Hugo and other French luminaries.

The presidential palace confirmed the newspaper's report.

After her death in 1975, Baker was buried in Monaco, dressed in a French military uniform with the medals she received for her role as part of the French Resistance during the war.

Baker will be the fifth woman to be honored with a Pantheon burial and will also be the first entertainer honored.

Holocaust survivor Simone Veil, one of France's most revered politicians, was buried at the Pantheon in 2018. The other women are two who fought with the French Resistance during World War II — Germaine Tillion and Genevieve de Gaulle-Anthonioz — and Nobel Prize-winning chemist Curie.

The monument also holds the remains of 72 men.

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Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Baker became a megastar in the 1930s, especially in France, where she moved in 1925 as she was seeking to flee racism and segregation in the United States.

Baker quickly became famous for her "banana skirt" dance routines and wowed audiences at the Theatre des Champs-Elysees and later at the Folies Bergere in Paris.

She became a French citizen after her marriage to industrialist Jean Lion in 1937.

During World War II, she joined the French Resistance. Amid other missions, she collected information from German officials she met at parties and carried messages hidden in her underwear to England and other countries, using her star status to justify her travels.

A civil rights activist, she took part in 1963 in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom alongside the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., who made his "I Have A Dream" speech.

## Pop-up restaurants may stick around as COVID sees resurgence

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Pop-up restaurants, many started as stopgap measures by struggling chefs and owners, may have staying power as consumers continue to embrace takeout and delivery and the delta variant threatens to make dining in less of an option.

Pop-up restaurants can take a variety of forms, from a ramen maker appearing for one-night only at an established bar or restaurant, to a taco maker using an unused space to temporarily host diners, to a chef offering meatballs for delivery only.

Cheaper to operate than regular restaurants because they have less overhead and staffing costs, pop-ups let chefs and owners keep working and making a living during the early part of the pandemic when dining rooms were closed and the economy was teetering. They've helped bring buzz to existing restaurants that host them. And some have even morphed into permanent new businesses.

Now, as re-openings across the country are threatened by a rise in COVID-19 cases, pop-up creators and hosts are asking, "What next?"

The restaurant industry has been one of the hardest-hit during the pandemic. It is still down 1 million jobs from the pre-pandemic employment level of 12.3 million. Restaurant sales in 2020 totaled \$659 million, down \$240 million from expected levels, according to the National Restaurant Federation. Sales rebounded this year as the economy recovered and restrictions were lifted, but now some economists are paring back expectations for U.S. economic growth, partly because they expect fewer people to dine out.

"2021 is definitely a year of transition for the restaurant industry," said Hudson Riehle, senior vice president of research for the National Restaurant Federation. "The industry is still being substantially challenged by the COVID situation."

The flexibility of the take-out and delivery model helped Alex Thaboua meet those challenges. Thaboua is co-owner of Electric Burrito, which began as a pop-up at Mister Paradise bar in New York in 2020. A permanent location opened in May and is focused on take-out and delivery, so even if there is another lockdown, the restaurant will be able to operate, he said.

"This flexibility was something we found very important during our pop-up stages, when the world was getting locked down and heavy restrictions were being placed on businesses," he said. "We've designed our operations in a way that we can continue to operate with a lean team, with every safety precaution taken, to be able to serve guests in both a to-go and delivery capacity."

Hathorne, a restaurant in Nashville, has hosted about 10 pop-ups featuring local area chefs since the pandemic began. For the pop-ups, it is a way to get exposure and have access to a full kitchen. For Hathorne, it's a way to fill seats on nights they'd ordinarily be empty. Since reopening for in-person dining in October, the restaurant is open just Wednesday through Saturday.

"We knew, when we reopened, we were not going to be able to be open six or seven days a week because staffing and business wasn't going to be there," said John Stephenson, Hathorne's owner. "I knew that I wanted to utilize the space."

A Nashville chef for decades, Stephenson knew a number of chefs who were trying to stay afloat during

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the pandemic with projects like creating take-out dinners or starting food trucks, he said.

The first pop up at Hathorne started in October, with a Mexican theme from Julio Hernandez centered around his homemade tortilla. It was a success, and more pop ups followed. Currently, Hathorne hosts Michael Hanna's focaccia-based pizza company, St. Vito Focacciarria, every Sunday.

Hanna and his staff get work and "it keeps people coming in our doors," Stephenson says. The arrangement with St. Vito is long-term, so he hired Hanna as a chef. Hanna gets a percentage of the Sunday sales; Hathorne pays for all products and labor.

Stephenson said he plans to keep on having pop ups even after the pandemic wanes rather than re-opening full time.

Pop-ups can be a way to attract attention for new projects. William Eick bought a building to start his own restaurant earlier this year, but initially had trouble finding investors.

"Most people worried about getting involved in restaurants during the pandemic," he said. "So, we had to get creative. I thought, if we can run a pop up, we can put the proceeds and profits into building the restaurant."

In May he started Naegi, a pop-up serving fried chicken sandwiches from a window in the building he bought. The pop-up helped bring awareness to the permanent restaurant, Matsu, a more traditional Japanese restaurant with a tasting menu, which will open in a few weeks.

"It helped bring a lot of awareness, it helped start spreading word of mouth more than what we ever thought it would do," he said. He doesn't anticipate another lockdown coming to Oceanside, California, but if it does, he will just continue to operate Naegi, he said.

For Marisa Iocco, who co-owns Italian restaurant Spiga Ristorante in Needham, Mass., a pop-up was a way to stay positive during the pandemic. She opened Polpettiammo in April 2021 in Providence, R.I. It serves only meatballs, and just for takeout.

"During the pandemic it was a very challenging to survive," she said. The meatballs — which are also offered as appetizers at Spiga — are created in the kitchen at her main restaurant and finished in a kitchen in Providence, which has a staff of three.

She is considering a brick-and-mortar location in Providence and another delivery-only location in Boston and doesn't expect rising cases or future lockdowns will change those plans. But more than anything, creating something new during the pandemic gave her a "vitamin B12 shot" of energy.

"It really helps keep your mood positive," she said.

## Veterans are prized recruits as congressional candidates

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — With midterm election season rapidly approaching, Republicans and Democrats have something in common when it comes to recruiting candidates they hope will deliver majorities in Congress: a preference for military veterans.

Both parties anticipate a significant number of races where veterans will be opposing each other, using their military service as a foundation of their appeal even as they hold widely diverging views on issues.

Democrats are clinging to threadbare advantages in both the House and Senate, so the success of these candidates could determine the balance of power.

The chaotic winding down of the U.S. war effort in Afghanistan — combined with President Joe Biden's blaming his predecessor's policies for much of what occurred — could resonate with voters in ways not seen since opposition to the Iraq War helped Democrats retake the House in 2006.

"When the U.S. suffers a very public defeat ... historically, that's the kind of thing that does become an issue in the next election," said Aubrey Jewett, a political science professor at the University of Central Florida.

In few places are military matters more likely to dominate the debate than in Norfolk, Virginia, and the surrounding area. It's a swing congressional district along the Atlantic coast and home to the world's largest naval base. One in 5 residents are active military personnel, veterans or their relatives.

Rep. Elaine Luria, a Democrat, served as naval commander, including on aircraft carriers that once helped

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stage Afghanistan bombing runs. She defeated an incumbent Republican, Scott Taylor, a former Navy SEAL, in 2018 and again in a rematch in 2020.

Veteran candidates can be seen as more willing to put country above self, which often plays best among moderate voters and in swing districts without a dominant political ideology.

"One of the reasons you see veterans on veterans is because the thought process is that just neutralizes that advantage," Taylor said. "Both parties are looking for that."

This year, among those hoping to capture the Republican nomination and challenge Luria is another veteran, ex-Navy helicopter pilot Jen Kiggans, a state senator.

Luria, who sits on the House Armed Services, Homeland Security, and Veterans' Affairs Committees, said that in her district, someone who has served "instantly goes into this with a level of credibility and connection."

Kiggans believes that, too: "Understanding the nuances of military life and being a military family member, a military spouse, I think those are really all very important to representing the district well."

"There should be more of us," Kiggans, who deployed to the Middle East during her 10-year naval career, said of running against a fellow female veteran in Luria. "I think veterans truly understand a lot of issues that are important to the country and we love the country, we've fought for the country, we've sacrificed for the country."

The number of veterans who may face other veterans for congressional seats in 2022 won't be known until after next summer's primary season. In 2020, 17 House and Senate general election races featured two candidates' having military experience, according to With Honor Action, a nonpartisan organization that promotes veterans for elective office.

Similar veteran-against-veteran races occurred 21 times two years before that.

During that 2018 cycle, Democrats stressed recruiting candidates with military experience to appeal to swing voters — and ultimately won House control.

Now candidates will be addressing issues such as the mob attack on the U.S. Capitol in January and the fractious evacuation of Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, with their military backgrounds seen as giving them added credibility.

Roughly two-thirds of Americans said they did not think America's longest war was worth fighting, according to a poll released this past week from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. While 52% approve of Biden on national security, the poll was conducted Aug. 12-16 as the two-decade war in Afghanistan ended with the Taliban returning to power and capturing the capital of Kabul.

Republicans nearly took control of the House in 2020, when all 15 seats they flipped featured women, minority or veteran candidates.

Illinois Republican Rep. Adam Kinzinger, an Air Force veteran, said serving in Afghanistan "makes me believe in a cause bigger than myself," even though what's occurring there now has left him "very bitter."

None of Kinzinger's major challengers so far is a veteran. Still, veteran-on-veteran races are taking shape around the country.

Oregon Democratic Rep. Peter DeFazio is his state's longest-serving member of Congress and an Air Force Reserve veteran. He's gearing up for a possible second consecutive race against Republican Alek Skarlatos, a former Army National Guardsman who, along with four others, stopped a gunman during a 2015 terrorist attack on a Paris-bound train.

In suburban Houston, Democrat Matt Berg, who served in the Air Force, is hoping to unseat first-term Rep. Troy Nehls, an Army veteran who served combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It brings a more broad base appeal as a candidate," said Berg who noted that the district saw about a 5-percentage point drop between its 2020 support for Biden and its nonveteran Democrat who ran for Congress. "We do feel it will help us reach out to voters who felt that Nehls' military background was a pivotal factor."

The move into politics is not always smooth for veterans, considering that the military consistently polls as among the nation's most-respected, most trusted institutions — and Congress decidedly does not.

Rye Barcott, a former Marine who is co-founder and CEO of With Honor, said his group advises veterans

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considering a run that "it is a hardship post." He added: "It's going to be painful but you're doing it as a service to something larger than yourself."

The number of female veterans running for Congress as major party nominees has increased even more sharply from 14 in 2018 to 28 vying for seats in the House or Senate last year.

Still, Seth Lynn, executive director of Veterans Campaign, a nonprofit which helps make it easier for veterans to seek public office, said that since 2000, fewer than 25 House races pitting veterans against veterans featured at least one female candidate from a major party. None had two women running against each other.

That makes the potential Luria-Kiggans race something that hasn't happened in at least a generation.

Rebecca Burgess, founder of the advocacy group the CivMil Project, said she expects to see more congressional races involving matchups of female veterans. But a potentially even more potent reason is "the power of example" where more female veterans in Congress means mentors for those looking to emulate them.

Luria may have gotten a firsthand glimpse of that when she addressed a recent luncheon at Naval Station Norfolk. Navy Lt. Courtney Janowicz posed for a picture with the congresswoman and chatted about the pairs' shared experiences, having both worked on ships in shipyards.

Asked if she could eventually see herself following Luria's path into politics, Janowicz beamed before proclaiming, "I can see it now."

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Associated Press writer Padmananda Rama in Washington contributed to this report.

## Shame put Virginia on course to stronger tenant protections

By BEN FINLEY Associated Press

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (AP) — When four people facing eviction arrived at a Virginia Beach courthouse in early August, they never had to stand before a judge, a process that for many can be stressful and humiliating.

Instead, an attorney representing landlords told them their housing woes were being resolved: each tenant had either caught up on rent or qualified for Virginia's \$1 billion rental assistance program.

"For the most part, landlords and tenants are working together to get the rent paid," said the attorney, Michael Hipps.

The scene contradicted the image of a state that, up until a few years ago, was considered a civic embarrassment for its staggering rate of evictions. Five of Virginia's cities ranked in the national top 10, according to a 2018 report from the Eviction Lab at Princeton University.

Three years later, Virginia is offering stronger protections and assistance to tenants whose lives have been upended by the coronavirus pandemic. The state has even become a national leader in distributing federal rental assistance dollars, while evictions have fallen.

It's thanks in part to the glaring spotlight of Princeton's data, which appeared in The New York Times. The unwanted publicity put lawmakers, housing advocates and landlord groups on a path that began well before the virus spread.

"It was very embarrassing to be in the national news for something so terrible," said Del. Marcia Price, a Democrat from Newport News, which was ranked fourth nationally for evictions.

"I don't want to say the conversations started with that, but it definitely helped amplify the work and the voices of those who were speaking up," said Price, who has authored eviction-related legislation. "Everybody knew something had to be done."

Lawmakers ramped up attention on possible solutions, many of which came to fruition during the pandemic.

For instance, the state is temporarily requiring landlords to give tenants 14 days instead of five to make payments on late rent before landlords can file for eviction. The extra time is crucial for people who are paid every two weeks, housing advocates say. Some lawmakers hope to make the provision permanent.

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Virginia also was one of the first states to create a statewide rent relief program using federal coronavirus relief money.

From January through May, Virginia distributed more dollars than any other state from the first round of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, according to U.S. Treasury figures. By the end of June, Virginia ranked second only to Texas.

Virginia also distributed a higher percentage of those ERA funds — about 43% — than any other state, according to U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine's office.

As of late July, Virginia has spent more than \$335 million in rental relief funds and assisted more than 51,000 households, according to state figures.

Behind that large percentage was a state requirement that landlords tell tenants about the money and apply for it on their behalf, said Christine Marra, director of housing advocacy for the Virginia Policy Law Center.

"That, more than anything, has kept tenants housed," Marra said.

The mandate expired June 30. But it was reinstated last week. Virginia is also funding a campaign to make tenants aware of the money and help them apply for it.

Taneka Calloway, a personal care aide from Norfolk, is among those who've received aid.

Because of the pandemic, she lost work visiting clients. Her daughter was also suffering from a brain tumor, while her dad was sick with COVID-19.

"They sent me an email saying that I was approved for \$10,000 to cover the months from February into the end of my lease," Calloway told The Associated Press in late June.

Tiara Burton said the state relief program is also helping her.

Burton works as a customer service agent for a health insurance company. She lost her second job as a nanny with the pandemic, got into an accident and started falling behind on rent.

Fearing eviction, Burton showed up at an Aug. 2 hearing in Virginia Beach, only to be told by her landlord's attorney that the aid was approved.

Virginia's efforts, combined with a federal eviction moratorium, have helped reduce evictions, housing advocates say.

During 2021's first quarter, eviction filings were at 22% of what they were during pre-pandemic levels, according to Virginia Commonwealth University's RVA Eviction Lab.

Second-quarter filings were similar. But they're expected to rise as more data comes in, pointing to "the growing risk of eviction" for thousands of households, the lab said.

The rise in filings may have been landlords anticipating the expiration of some tenant protections as COVID-19 cases declined during spring, said Marra, of the Virginia Poverty Law Center.

But Patrick McCloud, CEO of the Virginia Apartment Management Association, cited other possible reasons. For instance, some tenants have refused to cooperate with landlords in applying for assistance, he said.

McCloud pushed back against Princeton's report, saying it counted court orders — not actual evictions — and therefore wasn't accurate. But he agrees it spawned change.

He credits Virginia's Rent Relief Program with keeping many renters in their homes. And he said the industry supports keeping it in place once federal relief funds run out.

But for all of its efforts, Virginia is still behind many other states on tenant protections, said Eric Dunn, director of litigation for the National Housing Law Project.

For instance, Washington state requires landlords to have good cause to evict someone, he said. And that person has a right to a lawyer.

"They're kind of in the middle of the pack now," Dunn said of Virginia.

Kathryn Howell, co-director of the RVA Eviction Lab, said the real challenges lie ahead. They include tackling more structural problems such as affordable housing and inequality. Black women, for example, are disproportionately evicted.

"The low-hanging fruit is what we've done," Howell said. "It's a step in the right direction. The next step is harder."

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## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Aug. 23, the 235th day of 2021. There are 130 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 23, 2008, Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama introduced his choice of running mate, Sen. Joe Biden of Delaware, before a crowd outside the Old State Capitol in Springfield, Ill.

On this date:

In 1305, Scottish rebel leader Sir William Wallace was executed by the English for treason.

In 1754, France's King Louis XVI was born at Versailles.

In 1775, Britain's King George III proclaimed the American colonies to be in a state of "open and avowed rebellion."

In 1912, actor, dancer, director and choreographer Gene Kelly was born Eugene Curran Kelly in Pittsburgh.

In 1914, Japan declared war against Germany in World War I.

In 1926, silent film star Rudolph Valentino died in New York at age 31.

In 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union agreed to a non-aggression treaty, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, in Moscow.

In 1962, John Lennon married his first wife, Cynthia Powell, in Liverpool, England. (The marriage lasted until 1968.)

In 1973, a bank robbery-turned-hostage-taking began in Stockholm, Sweden; the four hostages ended up empathizing with their captors, a psychological condition now referred to as "Stockholm Syndrome."

In 1979, Soviet dancer Alexander Godunov (GUD'-u-nawf) defected while the Bolshoi Ballet was on tour in New York.

In 2003, former priest John Geoghan (GAY'-gun), the convicted child molester whose prosecution sparked the sex abuse scandal that shook the Roman Catholic Church nationwide, died after another inmate attacked him in a Massachusetts prison.

In 2013, a military jury convicted Maj. Nidal Hasan in the deadly 2009 shooting rampage at Fort Hood, Texas, that claimed 13 lives; the Army psychiatrist was later sentenced to death. Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, the U.S. soldier who'd massacred 16 Afghan civilians, was sentenced at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, to life in prison with no chance of parole.

Ten years ago: A pair of judges in New York put an end to the sensational sexual assault case against Dominique Strauss-Kahn, setting him free after prosecutors questioned the credibility of the hotel housekeeper who'd accused the French diplomat. A magnitude 5.8 earthquake centered near Mineral, Virginia, the strongest on the East Coast since 1944, caused cracks in the Washington Monument and damaged Washington National Cathedral.

Five years ago: Standing amid piles of waterlogged debris, President Barack Obama promised a sustained national effort to rebuild flood-ravaged southern Louisiana. Actor Steven Hill, 94, died in New York City.

One year ago: A white police officer in Kenosha, Wisconsin, shot a black man, Jacob Blake, seven times as officers tried to arrest Blake on an outstanding warrant; the shooting left Blake partially paralyzed and triggered several nights of violent protests. (Blake, who was shot as he was about to get into an SUV with a pocketknife that had fallen from his pants, later said he'd been prepared to surrender after putting the knife in the vehicle. Officer Rusten Sheskey was not charged.) Demonstrators in Portland, Oregon, hurled rocks, bottles and fireworks at officers and set fires in the streets as they marched on a precinct station; police used tear gas to scatter the demonstrators. President Donald Trump announced emergency authorization to treat COVID-19 patients with convalescent plasma; some health experts said the treatment needed more study. Kellyanne Conway, one of Trump's most influential and longest serving advisers, announced that she would leave the White House at the end of the month. Takuma Sato won his second Indianapolis 500; it was held in front of empty grandstands because of the pandemic.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Vera Miles is 91. Actor Barbara Eden is 90. Political satirist Mark Russell is 89.

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Pro Football Hall of Famer Sonny Jurgensen is 87. Actor Richard Sanders is 81. Ballet dancer Patricia McBride is 79. Former Surgeon General Antonia Novello is 77. Pro Football Hall of Famer Rayfield Wright is 76. Country singer Rex Allen Jr. is 74. Actor David Robb is 74. Singer Linda Thompson is 74. Actor Shelley Long is 72. Actor-singer Rick Springfield is 72. Country singer-musician Woody Paul (Riders in the Sky) is 72. Queen Noor of Jordan is 70. Actor-producer Mark Hudson is 70. Actor Skipp Sudduth is 65. Rock musician Dean DeLeo (Army of Anyone; Stone Temple Pilots) is 60. Actor Jay Mohr is 51. Actor Ray Park is 47. Actor Scott Caan is 45. Country singer Shelly Fairchild is 44. Figure skater Nicole Bobek (BOH'-bek) is 44. Rock singer Julian Casablancas (The Strokes) is 43. Actor Joanne Froggatt is 41. Actor Jaime Lee Kirchner is 40. Neo-soul musician Actor Annie Ilonzeh is 38. Dance musician Sky Blu is 35. Actor Kimberly Matula is 33. Basketball player Jeremy Lin is 33.