

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Upcoming Events

### Thursday, Oct. 7

10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.: Flu Shot Clinic at Groton Area

1 p.m.: NEC Cross Country Meet at Webster

4 p.m. to 8 p.m.: Parent/Teacher Conferences

5 p.m.: Junior High Football hosting Webster Area

### Friday, Oct. 8 - NO SCHOOL

8 a.m. to Noon: Parent/Teacher Conferences

10 a.m.: Lake Region Marching Festival in Groton

Noon to 3:30 p.m.: Faculty Inservice

### Saturday, Oct. 9

Soccer Second Round Playoffs

Volleyball at Redfield Tourney

Pumpkin Fest in Groton

### Monday, Oct. 11

No School - Native American Day

### Tuesday, Oct. 12

12:43 p.m. to 2:43 p.m.: PSAT Pre-Administration

Volleyball at Tiospa Zina (7th/C match at 5 p.m., 8th/JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow)

7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

### Wednesday, Oct. 13

Elementary School LifeTouch Pictures, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

PSAT Testing for sophomores and juniors during first hour

### Thursday, Oct. 14

High School LifeTouch Pictures, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

3:30 p.m.: Region 1A cross Country Meet in Webster

4:00 p.m.: Junior High Football Jamboree in Groton  
Volleyball hosts Milbank (7th/C match at 6:55 p.m., 8th/JV at 6 p.m. with varsity to follow)

### Friday, Oct. 15

7 p.m.: Football at Sisseton

### Saturday, Oct. 16

Oral Interp at Florence

State Soccer in Sioux Falls

JV Volleyball Tourney in Milbank

## Soccer teams lose in first round

Groton Area's soccer teams had long journeys in the first round playoffs. The girls traveled to Dakota Valley (near Iowa) and lost, 1-0. The boys traveled out west to St. Thomas More and lost, 13-3.

## OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.  
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## City employees get 3% raise for 2022

The Groton City Council passed second reading of the 2022 Salaries with all full-time employees, except for the electric superintendent, receiving a 3 percent raise. The ordinance also implements an on-call pay for the three public works employees at a rate of \$200 a week. The electric department already has the \$200 a week on-call pay.

Lloyd Jark of Stratford was the low bidder for the safety deposit boxes. His bid was accepted for \$586. Garth Johnson also submitted a bid of \$20.

The lease for the airport land was renewed for two more years to Rix Farms. It is \$187.57 per acre for 95 acres at a total of \$17,819.15 per year.

The city will increase security unmetered light fee from \$8 per month to \$10 per month, and all 400 watt directional fixtures will be billed out at \$20 per month.

A preliminary schedule of events for the Wage Memorial Library was presented. They include the library board meeting at 6 p.m. on Oct. 19, Nov. 2 and Nov. 16; adult painting class from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Oct. 21 and Nov. 18, trick or treat / haunted house on Oct. 29, Tour of Home of Library on Dec. 4 and Christmas Crafts and snacks with a grand opening on Dec. 11.

April Abeln was recognized for her Distinguished Service Award from Heartland Consumer Power District.



**Volunteers for the Pumpkin Fest gathered earlier this week to put together items to be given away. Pictured are Joel Bierman, Scott Althoff, Valerie Baker, April Abeln, Karyn Babcock, Rebecca and Perry Blocker and Steve Gebur. The Groton Pumpkin Fest is set for this Saturday at the City Park.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



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**Brevin Flihs finished 19th place and Carter Simon finished 54th at the state golf meet. Pictured are the top 25 medalist at the state meet.** (Photo courtesy Kristie Flihs)

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## That's Life by Tony Bender A dog's life

Editor's note: Tony took a few vacation days this week. Until his return, here's one of our favorites from 2011.

She didn't come to greet me when I pulled into the driveway, a fairly rare occurrence, but even the best dogs are not perfect. Karma, our Springer Spaniel, just turned 12, but she's a high mileage dog. There was a time when her relentless circling around the house wore a path right down to the dirt, but the grass has proven more determined than she.

She's slowed down dramatically the last two years, and this winter was particularly hard on her. She's always been an outside dog, but stubbornly refused shelter in a dog house or the garage, instead planting herself, in hell or high water (except thunderstorms) on the mat at the front door. One tough girl. But, last winter she made a concession, and agreed to sleep on a sleeping bag in the garage.

When I went to check on her, she was shivering, although winter has given us her best, and it wasn't that cold. I didn't like the look in Karma's eyes; she refused to get up, and when I carried her inside, it hurt her. She was favoring a hind leg, and her back was tender. The road was filling up with a late snowstorm, so we decided to call Dean Christianson at the Ashley Vet Clinic lest we get snowed in with an ailing dog. Dean, a couple weeks in to calving season and already run ragged, met us at the clinic.

By this time, India, 10, was in tears. Dylan, 14, was away on an FBLA trip, or it would have been hard on him, too. We carried Karma in. Presented with all the new smells, Karma perked up at the vet clinic, embarrassing us with her newfound energy, and giving us hope at the same time. After a careful examination, Dean did some blood work and prescribed some arthritis medicine. "We may just have to treat her a couple of years," he said. A couple of years. Only I picked up on that.

Gosh, she's been a good dog. Almost psychic. Intuitively, she always did what I asked, although her hearing has become a little more selective over time. It happens in a marriage, too. So, sometimes, I would have to ask twice.

She spent years riding in the tractor with Melvin Blumhardt when he fed cattle across the road. He'd stop, and with one mighty leap she was in the cab. Melvin bragged down at the Duck Inn about how smart she was and how she saved him from an enraged cow by leaping 50 yards in a single bound, grabbing the cow by its neck and rolling it into Lemar Haas's pasture just before it crushed Melvin. That's how Melvin told it, anyway, and Karma never disputed a word.

I got talked into a St. Bernard puppy six months ago. Really, the words "St. Bernard" and "Puppy" ought not appear in the same sentence. They come in three sizes: "behemoth", "giant", and "is that a T-Rex?" So, Karma, in her advanced years, has had her paws full teaching Pike the ropes. Things like Spaniels eat first. But his incessant playfulness and his 100 pounds to her 80, has taken its toll. At least until summer is here, Karma will be warming her bones inside and the incorrigible Pike will remain an outside dog in order to provide a strong defense against package deliveries. Bob, our UPS guy is still getting through, though. "Me and Cujo have an understanding," he said.

Meanwhile, Karma sleeps most of the day, and when it is time to do her business outside, she lets you know. She was never formally trained. Just a smart dog. She did throw up on the bottom bunk in India's room the other night, which met with some disapproval, but with some notable exceptions, she has been reasonably well-mannered.

The other night, though, I was almost crowded out of bed. When I threw back the covers I found Karma staring at me.

Summer may be here quicker than she thinks.

Addendum: Karma nearly made it to her 15th birthday. She's missed.



## This Judge Gets It: SD Farmers Union President Appreciates Judge Ruling on Lawsuit Against Big Four Packers

After hearing the news that a federal judge in Minnesota ordered a class-action lawsuit against JBS, Tyson, National Beef, and Cargill to proceed, South Dakota Farmers Union President, Doug Sombke said after decades, finally a judge, "gets it."

"This judge gets it," explained Sombke, a fourth-generation Conde farmer. "My entire farming career, we have been fighting for fair prices. Every time we would try to prove price fixing, the previous judges always found a reason to protect the meat processing industry. So, they continued to get richer while family farmers and ranchers continue to lose profits."

Getting fair prices for farmers has been a front-and-center focus of South Dakota Farmers Union member-driven policy for decades. South Dakota's members were among the members who voted it into the National Farmers Union policy.

National Farmers Union is among the plaintiffs alleging that America's four largest beef packers conspired to suppress the price of cattle and increase the price of beef.

"We are pleased the effort to restore pricing transparency and competitiveness to the cattle markets is moving forward in the courtroom. This case is nearly two-and-a-half years old, and we look forward to the next step in the litigation," said Rob Larew, President, National Farmers Union in a September 29 news release.

The case now enters the discovery phase of the trial, where evidence and information will be presented to demonstrate how packers violated the Sherman Antitrust Act, the Packers and Stockyards Act, and the Commodity Exchange Act.

"As the case moves to discovery, Farmers Union will continue to hold the packers accountable. Malfeasance in the cattle markets has been very damaging to independent farmers and ranchers, and we look forward to continuing to advocate for our members in the courtroom," Larew said.

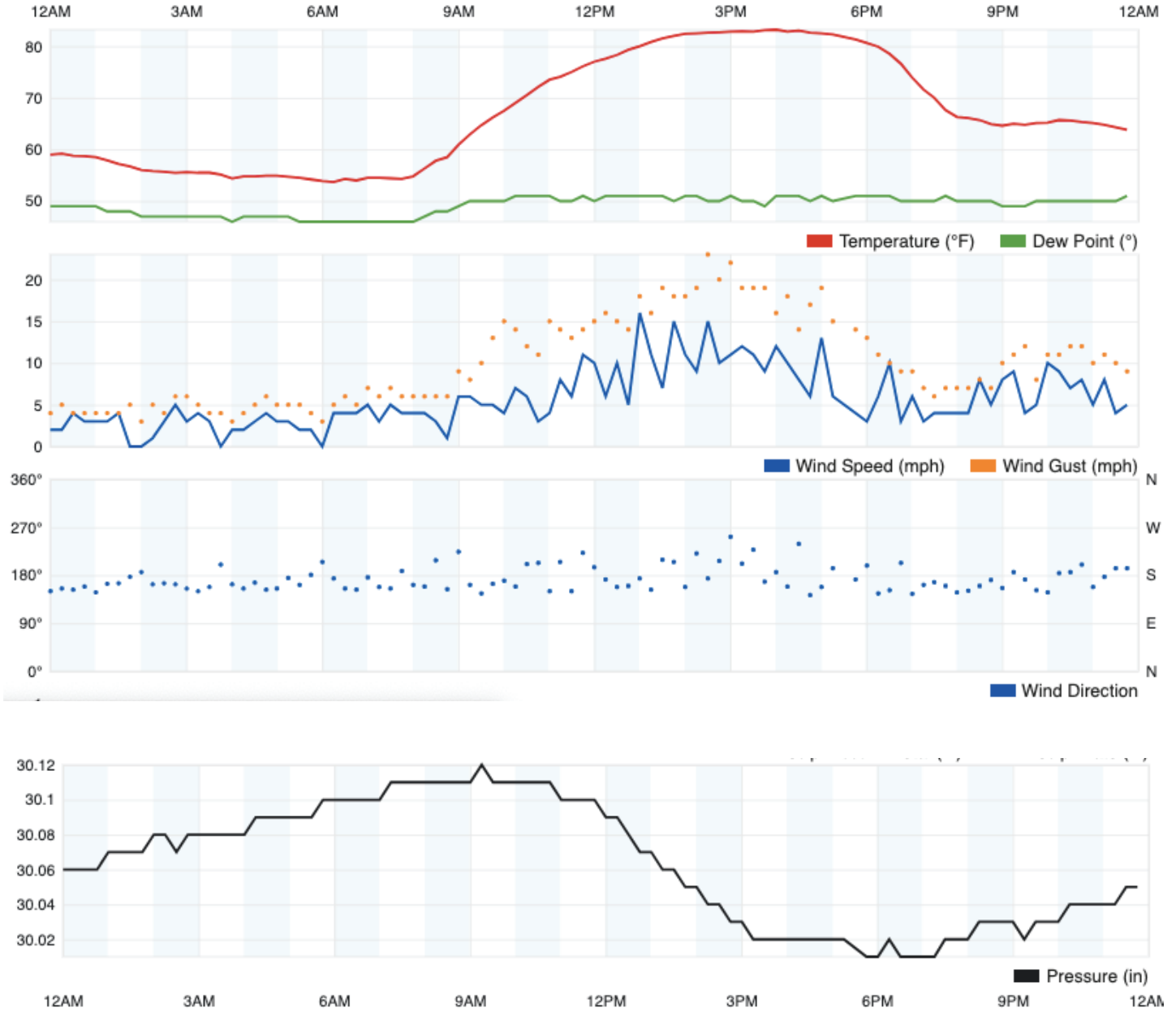


**Doug Sombke, South Dakota Farmers Union President.** (Courtesy of SDFU)

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



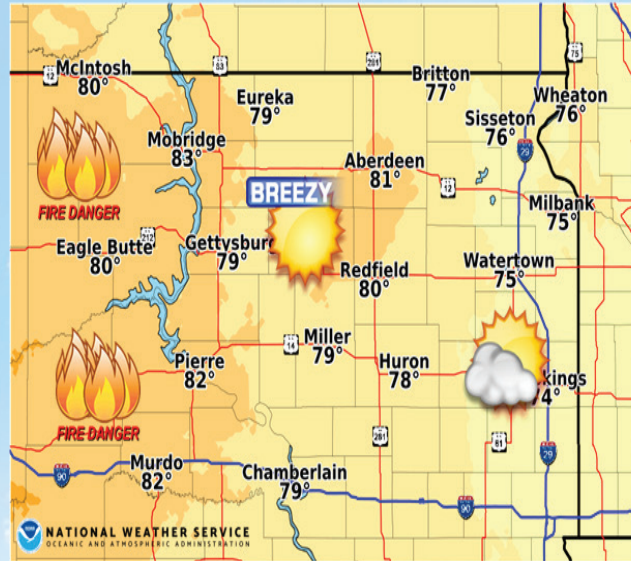
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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
				
Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy then Slight Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers
High: 82 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 78 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 79 °F

## Mild & Breezy Wednesday

High to Very High Grassland Fire Danger west of the Missouri River. Avoid operating equipment that may cause fire ignition



THU Oct 7, 2021	FRI Oct 8, 2021	SAT Oct 9, 2021	SUN Oct 10, 2021
			
75-84° 50-56°	76-84° 52-58°	70-76° 44-50°	62-70° 44-50°

## Rain & Cooler this Weekend

Best chance for 0.10 - 0.25" is north of a line from about Pierre to Watertown

Mild conditions are expected to continue through Friday. Additionally, breezy and dry conditions will lead to elevated grassland fire danger on Wednesday generally west of the Missouri River. Changes arrive this weekend however, with some cooler and wetter weather.

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## Today in Weather History

October 6, 1994: During the late afternoon hours, a small tornado traveled for 3 miles along an intermittent path east of Browns Valley, damaging several buildings on a local farmstead. Another tornado touched down east of Wilmot, South Dakota, in Roberts County. The tornado was on the ground for eight miles and destroyed several small farm buildings, a garage, damaged farm machinery, blew down a grain bin, and uprooted several trees. Several hogs were killed when their shed was destroyed, and minor damage was done to some homes. The tornado drove a 6-foot long 1x6 piece of lumber through the center of a large tree limb. 1952: Sleet fell at several locations, making it the earliest documented winter precipitation in Arkansas.

1967: A Canadian weather record one-day rainfall of 19.3 inches falls at Brynnor Mines at Ucluelet.

1981: The Netherlands' fourth-worst aircraft accident (at the time) occurred on this day. At 5:09 PM, the crew noted heavy rainfall in thunderstorms on the weather avoidance radar and received clearance to avoid this area. At 5:12 pm, the aircraft entered a tornado, which caused the right-wing to separate from the plane. All 17 occupants of the plane perished in the accident.

2010: A significant severe weather event struck northern Arizona with at least eight confirmed tornadoes. This event will go down in history as the most tornadoes to hit Arizona in a single day. An EF2 tornado was on the ground for 34 miles, ranking as the longest-tracked tornado in Arizona history.

2016: Around a half dozen tornadoes struck Kansas, including an EF-2 and EF-3 in Saline County.

1836 - A second early season snowstorm produced eleven inches at Wilkes Barre PA and 26 inches at Auburn NY. All the mountains in the northeastern U.S. were whitened with snow. (David Ludlum)

1984 - The temperature at Honolulu, Hawaii, reached 94 degrees to establish an all-time record at that location. (The Weather Channel)

1985 - A tropical wave, later to become Tropical Storm Isabel, struck Puerto Rico. As much as 24 inches of rain fell in 24 hours, and the severe flooding and numerous landslides resulting from the rain claimed about 180 lives. (Storm Data)

1987 - The western U.S. continued to sizzle. Afternoon highs of 85 degrees at Astoria OR, 101 degrees at Tucson AZ, and 102 degrees at Sacramento CA, equalled October records. It marked the fourth time in the month that Sacramento tied their record for October. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Cool Canadian air prevailed across the central and eastern U.S. Toledo OH reported a record low of 27 degrees. Limestone ME received an inch of snow. Warm weather continued in the western U.S. Boise ID reported a record high of 87 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Temperatures soared into the 90s across southern Texas. Afternoon highs of 93 degrees at Houston, and 96 degrees at Austin and Corpus Christi, were records for the date. Beeville was the hot spot in the nation with an afternoon high of 101 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)



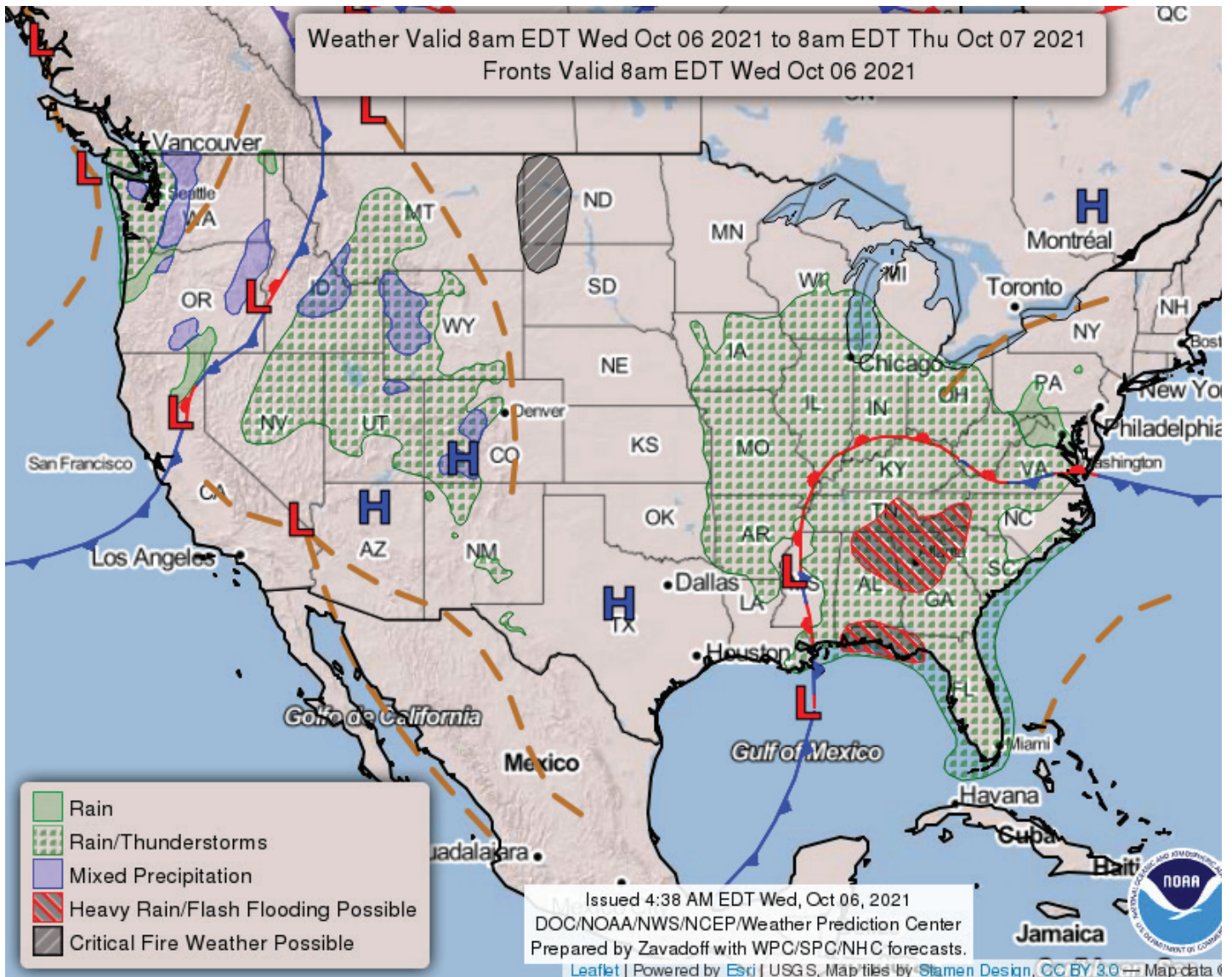
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 83 °F at 3:54 PM**  
**Low Temp: 54 °F at 6:08 AM**  
**Wind: 23 mph at 2:30 PM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

**Record High: 91° in 1993**  
**Record Low: 19° in 1912**  
**Average High: 65°F**  
**Average Low: 38°F**  
**Average Precip in Oct.: 0.47**  
**Precip to date in Oct.: 0.28**  
**Average Precip to date: 18.80**  
**Precip Year to Date: 15.70**  
**Sunset Tonight: 7:04:34 PM**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:37:25 AM**



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## IMPAIRED VISION

"What the eyes cannot see," says an old Dutch proverb, "the heart cannot crave." And the Italians seem to match it with one of their own: "If the eyes do not admire, the heart will not desire."

But long before these old proverbs shaped people's minds, David had his own proverb that addressed the same issue: "I will set before my eyes no vile thing."

Our eyes are the gateway to our heads, hearts, and souls. It is what we see, day after day, that shapes our thoughts and values and ultimately our behavior. What we see we desire and what we desire is what drives us in one direction or another. Our vision triggers our thoughts and our thoughts our behavior. Here's an example:

When Jericho was destroyed, no one was to take any of the spoils. But Achan disobeyed the order; he stole a beautiful garment, a bag of silver, and a bar of gold. This was unfortunate because disaster visited Israel because of his greed and thirty-six soldiers were left dead on the battlefield. Joshua was alarmed and decided to search the tents of his soldiers. He found the "accursed thing" in Achan's tent.

In making his confession before being stoned to death and being buried in a criminal's grave, Achan said, "I saw...I coveted...I took...and I hid."

What a graphic description of the path to sin: First we look. Then we desire. Then we decide. Then we sin. Then we try to find an excuse. Then we lie. Then we try to hide our wrongdoing. But it's too late. The consequences will come - to us and to others.

It all begins with a simple glance. Then the mind takes over, and the decision is made

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to keep our eyes upon You and our desires away from "things" that would defeat and destroy us. May we stay focused on You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I will set before my eyes no vile thing. Psalm 101:3

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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  
**Cancelled** 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



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## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

07-11-18-30-36, Mega Ball: 4, Megaplier: 3

(seven, eleven, eighteen, thirty, thirty-six; Mega Ball: four; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$45 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$20 million

### Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press undefined

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Central def. Pierre, 25-17, 25-20, 25-22

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Langford, 25-7, 25-16, 25-21

Arlington def. Deuel, 25-13, 25-19, 25-22

Baltic def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-16, 25-14, 25-17

Belle Fourche def. Faith, 25-11, 24-26, 7-25, 25-23, 15-9

Bennett County def. Red Cloud, 25-18, 22-25, 25-11, 25-13

Beresford def. Flandreau, 25-21, 22-25, 23-25, 25-21, 15-12

Bon Homme def. Freeman, 22-25, 25-21, 25-12, 25-18

Britton-Hecla def. Waubay/Summit, 25-22, 25-12, 25-12

Burke def. Avon, 25-6, 25-11, 25-15

Castlewood def. Florence/Henry, 25-19, 25-21, 23-25, 19-25, 16-14

Chadron, Neb. def. Rapid City Christian, 25-21, 16-25, 31-33, 25-15, 15-8

Chester def. Tri-Valley, 25-10, 25-9, 25-14

Crow Creek def. Marty Indian, 25-17, 25-10, 25-15

DeSmet def. Lake Preston, 25-14, 17-25, 25-18, 25-14

Deubrook def. Milbank, 21-25, 25-13, 25-19, 22-25, 15-3

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-21, 25-14, 25-11

Elkton-Lake Benton def. West Central, 25-18, 25-12, 25-17

Estelline/Hendricks def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-16, 25-7, 25-5

Ethan def. Wessington Springs, 25-11, 21-25, 25-23, 25-18

Faulkton def. Ipswich, 25-11, 25-15, 25-10

Garretson def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-9, 25-14, 25-14

Gayville-Volin def. Irene-Wakonda, 23-25, 25-18, 25-19, 25-13

Great Plains Lutheran def. Clark/Willow Lake, 25-16, 25-15, 25-22

Hamlin def. Sioux Valley, 16-25, 25-11, 18-25, 25-23, 15-11

Harding County def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-18, 27-25, 25-23

Highmore-Harrold def. Sully Buttes, 25-16, 25-22, 25-15

Huron def. Watertown, 25-19, 28-26, 25-19

Kadoka Area def. Lyman, 25-13, 25-18, 23-25, 25-20

Kimball/White Lake def. Chamberlain, 25-16, 25-22, 25-16

Leola/Frederick def. North Central Co-Op, 25-17, 25-13, 25-11

McCook Central/Montrose def. Howard, 25-21, 25-16, 25-12

McLaughlin def. Wakpala, 25-23, 19-25, 25-16, 25-16

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Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Miller, 22-25, 25-19, 18-25, 26-24, 15-12  
Northwestern def. Aberdeen Christian, 30-28, 22-25, 25-14, 25-6  
Parker def. Lennox, 25-13, 25-23, 25-10  
Platte-Geddes def. Parkston, 25-18, 25-14, 25-20  
Potter County def. Herreid/Selby Area, 25-19, 25-11, 25-19  
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-4, 25-13, 21-25, 25-14  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Brandon Valley, 25-12, 25-21, 25-22  
Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Sioux Falls Jefferson, 25-15, 26-24, 25-14  
Sioux Falls Washington def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-16, 25-20, 25-16  
Sturgis Brown def. Spearfish, 25-19, 25-17, 25-27, 25-18  
Tea Area def. Madison, 25-20, 10-25, 25-21, 25-22  
Timber Lake def. Lemmon, 25-20, 25-13, 25-14  
Vermillion def. Dell Rapids, 25-11, 25-12, 16-25, 10-25, 15-11  
Wagner def. Scotland, 25-9, 25-15, 25-17  
Warner def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 28-26, 25-10, 25-8  
Webster def. Wilmot, 25-19, 25-19, 25-18  
White River def. Todd County, 25-19, 25-7, 25-19  
Wolsey-Wessington def. Iroquois, 25-13, 25-12, 25-10  
Yankton def. Mitchell, 22-25, 25-21, 21-25, 25-18, 15-11

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Information from: ScoreStream Inc., <http://ScoreStream.com>

## Standing Rock elects 1st woman leader in more than 50 years

FORT YATES, N.D. (AP) — The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has elected a woman to be its next leader, according to results released Tuesday.

Janet Alkire would be the first woman to head the tribal council in more than half a century. Gates Kelley was elected Standing Rock chairwoman in 1946 and was the first woman to preside over a tribe in the United States, South Dakota Public Broadcasting reported.

Alkire received 829 votes to defeat current tribal Vice Chairman Ira Taken Alive, who came in with 762 votes. Taken Alive said he is contesting the results. Taken Alive edged Alkire in the July primary that advanced the top two vote-getters.

A 15-year Air Force veteran, Alkire has served as Standing Rock's executive director twice.

Alkire's platform included prioritizing youth and elderly wellness initiatives, homelessness, economic development and government transparency. She favors mental health, addiction treatment and rehabilitation for all members and is an advocate for child welfare.

The Standing Rock Reservation straddles the North Dakota and South Dakota border and is home to about 8,000 people

## State's role as trust fund destination is well planned

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota, a small state recognized for a massive stone sculpture of four U.S. presidents, has quietly built a reputation as a haven for the rich to store trust funds — all with the blessing of the state Legislature.

A report released by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists dubbed the "Pandora Papers" shows that in addition to the familiar offshore destinations, there are 81 secret accounts set up in the Mount Rushmore State, which for decades has passed an annual bill supporting the trust industry.

A legislative task force on the industry holds unadvertised meetings to update trust laws around the world and help the state keep the program enticing to investors, South Dakota Public Broadcasting reported

Monday. Republican state Sen. Tim Johns explained during a Senate Commerce and Energy meeting that task force members are appointed by the governor and recognized "as experts in their field."

"This body has been assembled with the goal of establishing and maintaining South Dakota's stature as the premier trust jurisdiction in the United States," Johns told the committee in January.

The Pandora Papers investigation involved 600 journalists from 150 media outlets in 117 countries. It shows that trusts in South Dakota have more than quadrupled over the past decade to \$360 billion in assets, including an increase of \$100 billion in the last three years.

There are 105 independent trust companies in South Dakota, as well as state-chartered banks employing about 500 people.

Republican state Sen. Lee Schoenbeck said those jobs are important and that he wants to keep the industry in South Dakota, no matter what the report shows.

"Or, as opposed to hiding it in Granada or Cancun or somewhere?" Schoenbeck said. "Those people that are throwing those rocks all the time, half of them want the business moved to their states. The other half just like to throw rocks."

Susan Wismer, a former Democratic lawmaker, has been a vocal opponent of the trust industry and the routine bill that comes up every session. She said attorneys from the trust fund task force tend to oversimplify the initiative.

"Legislators do not have a clue what it is that they are really voting on other than that these attorneys that deal with big money are telling them that it's good for South Dakota's economy to do this," Wismer said.

## What's in the Pandora Papers? And why does South Dakota feature so heavily?

Beverly Moran Vanderbilt University

(The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.)

Beverly Moran, Vanderbilt University

(THE CONVERSATION) A trove of confidential documents outlining how global elites squirrel away their wealth to avoid tax has been laid bare in the "Pandora Papers."

Consisting of around 12 million documents, the data was obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank that worked with media organizations around the world to publish details of the leaked information.

As well as giving an insight into the wealth of world leaders, former presidents and prime ministers, the Pandora Papers reveal how tax havens – including in the the U.S. – are used to hide money from tax authorities. Taxation expert Beverly Moran of Vanderbilt University walked The Conversation through three takeaways from the leaked documents.

How the super-rich use tax loopholes

The Pandora Papers come five years after a similar leak of documents called the "Panama Papers." Those documents showed how many of the world's wealthiest people routinely avoided any type of tax by placing their assets in tax havens – nations or jurisdictions with low tax rates.

In response to the Panama Papers, many countries took measures that made some of the techniques exposed in the Panama Papers obsolete. For example, after decades of offering rich people the greatest bank secrecy in the Western world, the Swiss forced their banks to open their books. The latest release also comes amid scrutiny over how little tax some wealthy individuals pay. The intergovernmental Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development recently pushed for a corporate minimum tax of 15% as another way to attack the tax haven problem.

The Pandora Papers reveal the tactics wealthy people developed to replace the no longer secret means they used in the past. In particular, the Pandora Papers shine a light on the role of shell companies in making it harder to tax high-net-worth individuals. Included in the leak are documents revealing aspects of the finances of hundreds of politicians from 90 countries.



The role of shell companies

A shell company is a legal entity that exists only on paper. It produces nothing and employs no one. Its value lies in a certificate that sits in a government office.

With this certificate, the shell company – whose sole purpose is to hold and hide assets – becomes one of a series of Russian dolls, each fit snugly into the next, creating a type of three-card monte in which the taxing authorities can never find assets nor owners. With a series of shell companies, a billionaire can house his or her assets far from the taxman's prying eyes.

For the billionaire to avoid the tax, the shell company must reside, for tax purposes, in a tax haven. In the past, that has meant a bank account in the Cayman Islands or Monaco. But as the Pandora Papers show, increasingly it could mean using a tax haven in the United States.

South Dakota as a tax haven

South Dakota is mentioned throughout the Pandora Papers because many wealthy people use the state as a tax haven. Indeed, of the 206 U.S.-based trusts identified in the Pandora Papers – which combined hold assets worth more than US\$1 billion – 81 are based on South Dakota.

South Dakota is a particularly good tax haven for a number of reasons. For one thing, it has strong secrecy protections thanks to its trust laws, which makes it easy to hide the true ownership of property. Trusts are said to offer some of the most powerful legal protections in the world.

According to the Pandora Papers, trust-friendly legislation in South Dakota has resulted in assets in trusts growing fourfold in the state over the past decade to \$360 billion.

But South Dakota also benefits from the same things all U.S. states have: comparatively strong rule of law, a stable currency and good infrastructure – especially when compared with other known tax havens outside of Europe. A wealthy person can easily fly to the United States, purchase property in the U.S., put assets in American banks and feel secure knowing that his or her contracts will be respected and protected by a stable and transparent legal system.

This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article here: <https://theconversation.com/whats-in-the-pandora-papers-and-why-does-south-dakota-feature-so-heavily-169291>.

## Several Western Power Providers Announce Plans to Explore Market Options

DENVER--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Oct 5, 2021--

Several electric providers that serve millions of customers in the Western United States announced plans today to evaluate regional market solutions together.

Members of the informal Western Markets Exploratory Group (WMEG) are exploring the potential for a staged approach to new market services, including day-ahead energy sales, transmission system expansion, and other power supply and grid solutions consistent with existing state regulations. The group hopes to identify market solutions that can help achieve carbon reduction goals while supporting reliable, affordable service for customers.

The group, which began discussions this summer, includes Xcel Energy-Colorado (PSCo), Arizona Public Service, Black Hills Energy, Idaho Power, NV Energy, Inc., PacifiCorp, Platte River Power Authority, Portland General Electric, Puget Sound Energy, Salt River Project, Seattle City Light, and Tucson Electric Power.

Discussions are in the early stages and are focused on developing long-term solutions to improve market efficiencies in the West. That includes incorporating lessons learned from existing regional markets as well as other efforts across the West.

"We are excited to join with the other companies to explore creating new ways of sharing resources to better serve our customers with affordable and reliable power," said Alice Jackson, president of Xcel Energy-Colorado. "We believe that a Western energy market is key to transforming the electricity system throughout the West, integrating more renewables onto the system, while reducing costs and maintaining reliability."

"Today's announcement represents the next step toward achieving Nevada's vision for a clean energy economy," said Doug Cannon, NV Energy president and chief executive officer. "By exploring opportunities to greater diversify and maximize Western energy resources, we will help bring cost savings, improved reliability and carbon reduction benefits to not only Nevada, but to the entire region."

"PacifiCorp has long believed that further connecting the West with new transmission, clean energy resources and market efficiencies will unlock greater savings, reliability and improved environmental outcomes for our customers across the six states we proudly serve," said Stefan Bird, President and CEO of Pacific Power, a unit of PacifiCorp. "Partnering with our neighboring electricity providers and exploring potential models to deliver on that promise is something we are excited to be a part of."

Many of the companies in the group are currently participating in, or preparing to join the California Independent System Operator's Western Energy Imbalance Market, or have announced plans to evaluate energy imbalance services. WMEG's discussions will not impact participation in or evaluation of those markets in the short-term, as the group is focused on long-term market solutions.

## Grass fire near Rapid City uncontained, growing in size

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A grass fire north of Rapid City is growing in size and prompting officials to warn additional residents they may need to evacuate.

Abnormally high temperatures, gusty winds and extremely dry conditions fueled a fire that began Monday afternoon. By Monday evening, the fire torched between 250 acres (1 square kilometer) and 300 acres (1.2 square kilometers) and burned uncontained, according to authorities.

Rapid City police helped evacuate the Marvel Mountain neighborhood earlier Monday and helped divert traffic around road closures. An unknown number of residents were evacuated.

It's not known what ignited the fire and so far, no structures have been damaged.

Early Monday evening, the fire crossed into Meade County, prompting officials there to warn residents that additional evacuations may be needed.

"Any residents who live north of the Pennington County line, west of Erickson Ranch Road, and south of Elk Creek Road are encouraged to be ready to evacuate if an order is given," Meade County Emergency Management said in an alert sent Monday evening.

Single-engine air tankers were dropping fire retardant on the north and west flanks of the fire. Additional air support was being summoned, officials said.

## French senators arrive in Taiwan amid tensions with China

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — A group of French senators arrived in Taiwan for a five-day visit Wednesday following a large Chinese show of force with fighter jets near the self-ruled island, and Beijing warned the trip will hurt its ties with France.

The group, led by senator Alain Richard, will meet with President Tsai Ing-wen, Taiwanese economic and health officials and the Mainland Affairs Council. Richard, a former French defense minister, previously visited Taiwan in 2015 and 2018, according to Taiwan's semi-official Central News Agency, and heads the Taiwan Friendship group in the French Senate.

China tried to discourage the visit, with its embassy in France saying ahead of the trip that it will not only damage China's core interests and undermine Chinese-French relations, but will also France's own "reputation and interests."

The visit is part of normal and regular parliamentary exchanges between France and Taiwan, which were not politicized in the past, said Mathieu Duchatel, director of the Asia Program at the Institut Montaigne in Paris.

China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory and opposes any international engagement with the island such as visits by foreign government officials. It also has aggressively poached Taiwan's remaining

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diplomatic allies.

In its most recent display of sustained military harassment, China flew fighter jets 149 times toward Taiwan over four days from Friday to Monday. The White House called the flights risky and destabilizing, while China responded that the U.S. selling weapons to Taiwan and its ships navigating the Taiwan Strait were provocative.

Taiwan's Defense Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng told legislators Wednesday that the situation "is the most severe in the 40 years since I've enlisted." Chiu was answering questions as the legislature decides whether to approve a special budget for air and naval defense purchases.

China and Taiwan split amid civil war in 1949. Today they have extensive trade and investment ties but no official relations, and China has increasingly mobilized military, diplomatic and economic pressure to undermine Tsai's independence-leaning administration.

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Associated Press video journalist Taijing Wu contributed to this report.

## **Nobel in chemistry honors pair for new way to make molecules**

STOCKHOLM (AP) — The Nobel Prize for chemistry has been awarded to German scientist Benjamin List of the Max Planck Institute and Scotland-born scientist David W.C. MacMillan of Princeton University.

They were cited for their work in developing a new way for building molecules known as "asymmetric organocatalysis."

The winners were announced Wednesday by Goran Hansson, secretary-general of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

The Nobel panel said List and MacMillan in 2000 independently developed a new way of catalysis.

"It's already benefiting humankind greatly," Pernilla Wittung-Stafshede, a member of the Nobel panel, said.

Speaking after the announcement, List said the award was a "huge surprise."

"I absolutely didn't expect this," he said, adding that he was on vacation in Amsterdam with his family when the call from Sweden came in.

List said he did not initially know that MacMillan was working on the same subject and figured his hunch might just be a "stupid idea" until it worked.

"I did feel that this could be something big," he said.

It is common for several scientists who work in related fields to share the prize. Last year, the chemistry prize went to Emmanuelle Charpentier of France and Jennifer A. Doudna of the United States for developing a gene-editing tool that has revolutionized science by providing a way to alter DNA.

The prestigious award comes with a gold medal and 10 million Swedish kronor (over \$1.14 million). The prize money comes from a bequest left by the prize's creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel, who died in 1895.

On Monday, the Nobel Committee awarded the prize in physiology or medicine to Americans David Julius and Ardem Patapoutian for their discoveries into how the human body perceives temperature and touch.

The Nobel Prize in physics was awarded Tuesday to three scientists whose work found order in seeming disorder, helping to explain and predict complex forces of nature, including expanding our understanding of climate change.

Over the coming days prizes will also be awarded for outstanding work in the fields of literature, peace and economics.

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Read more stories about Nobel Prizes past and present by The Associated Press at <https://www.apnews.com/NobelPrizes>

## **US woman in Bali 'suitcase murder' to be released Oct. 29**

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — A Chicago woman convicted of assisting her boyfriend in her mother's mur-



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der and stuffing the body in a suitcase on Indonesia's resort island of Bali in 2014 is being released early from a 10-year sentence, a prison official confirmed Wednesday.

Heather Mack, who was 18 when she was arrested a day after the discovery of Sheila von Wiese-Mack's body in the trunk of a taxi parked near the St. Regis Bali Resort, will be freed and deported to the United States on Oct. 29, said Lili, the Kerobokan Female Prison chief.

Lili, who goes by a single name, told The Associated Press that Mack received a total of 34 months of sentence reductions, which are often granted to prisoners on major holidays, including a six-month remission of sentence awarded to her by the Indonesian government during the country's Independence Day in August.

"She has shown to be a good person, she was entitled to the sentence reduction," Lili said. "She looked happy when she learned this ... and began to pack up excitedly."

Mack and her then-boyfriend, Tommy Schaefer, were detained in August 2014 and convicted in April 2015. Schaefer received an 18-year sentence.

Before Mack was convicted, she gave birth to her and Schaefer's daughter, Stella Schaefer. There were also reports of a troubled relationship between Mack and her mother, with officials confirming that police had been called to the family's Oak Park, Illinois, home dozens of times.

In 2016, Robert Bibbs, a cousin of Schaefer, pleaded guilty to helping to plan the killing in exchange for \$50,000 that Mack was expected to inherit, and was sentenced the next year to nine years in prison.

Upon her release, Mack can under Indonesian law be reunited with her daughter, who is now 6.

But her Indonesian attorney, Yulius Benyamin Seran, has said earlier that Mack, who has not seen the little girl for about 20 months because authorities halted prison visits during the coronavirus pandemic, had asked Indonesian authorities to let the girl remain with her foster family to avoid media attention.

Under Indonesian law, a deported foreigner will be rejected entry to Indonesia up to a maximum six months.

## Pope expresses 'shame' at scale of clergy abuse in France

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis expressed "shame" for himself and the Roman Catholic Church on Wednesday for the scale of child sexual abuse within the church in France and acknowledged failures in putting the needs of victims first.

The pope spoke during his regular audience at the Vatican about a report released Tuesday that estimated some 330,000 French children were abused by clergy and other church authority figures dating back to 1950.

"There is, unfortunately, a considerable number. I would like to express to the victims my sadness and pain for the trauma that they suffered," Francis said. "It is also my shame, our shame, my shame, for the incapacity of the church for too long to put them at the center of its concerns."

He called on all bishops and religious superiors to take all actions necessary "so similar dramas are not repeated."

The pope also expressed his "closeness and paternal support" to French priests in the face of a "difficult test," and called on French Catholics to "ensure that the church remains a safe house for all."

The report said an estimated 3,000 priests and an unknown number of other people associated with the Catholic Church sexually abused children, providing France's first accounting of the global phenomenon. The French church, like in other countries, has had to face up to shameful secrets that were long covered up.

The president of the independent commission that issued the findings, Jean-Marc Sauvé, underlined Tuesday that Catholic authorities had covered up the abuse spanning 70 years in a "systematic manner."

Victims welcomed the 2,500-page document as long overdue, and the head of the French Catholic bishops' conference asked for their forgiveness.

The report said the tally of 330,000 victims includes an estimated 216,000 people abused by priests and other clerics, and the rest by church figures such as Scout leaders and camp counselors. The estimates were based on a broader research by France's National Institute of Health and Medical Research into

sexual abuse of children in the country.

The commission urged the church to take strong action, denouncing its "faults" and "silence." It also called on the Catholic Church to help compensate the victims, particularly in cases that are too old to prosecute in French courts.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said Tuesday that Pope Francis learned about the report's findings "with sorrow."

"His thoughts go in first place to the victims, with a profound sadness for their wounds and gratitude for their courage to speak out," Bruni said.

Francis issued a groundbreaking church law in May 2019 that requires all Catholic priests and nuns to report clergy sex abuse and cover-ups involving their superiors to church authorities. He said in June that every bishop must take responsibility for the "catastrophe" of the sex abuse crisis.

## **Boris Johnson hailed by his party despite UK's economic woes**

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

MANCHESTER, England (AP) — Empty gas pumps, worker shortages, gaps on store shelves. It's an autumn of inconvenience in Britain, if not quite a winter of discontent.

But this week, Boris Johnson is in his element. The prime minister has shut his problems outside during the Conservative Party's annual conference, speaking to supportive crowds, posing for selfies and clowning around on a bicycle inside a vast convention center in Manchester.

Johnson ends the four-day conference Wednesday with a speech promising that Britain will emerge from Brexit and the coronavirus pandemic as a stronger, more dynamic country — even if the road is slightly rocky.

"There is no alternative," Johnson said Tuesday, adopting a phrase used by former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, an iconic figure for Conservatives. "The U.K. has got to (become) — and we can do much, much better by becoming — a higher-wage, higher-productivity economy."

Britain has been through a turbulent time since the party last met in person two years ago. Then, Johnson vowed to "get Brexit done" and take the U.K. out of the European Union after years of wrangling over exit terms.

That promise won Johnson a huge parliamentary majority in December 2019. He led Britain out of the EU last year, ending the U.K.'s seamless economic integration with a trading bloc of almost half a billion people. Britain also has been hammered by a coronavirus pandemic that has left more than 136,000 people in the U.K. dead, Europe's highest toll after Russia.

The pandemic, which put much of the economy on ice, and Brexit, which made it harder for EU citizens to work in the U.K., combined to throw the economy out of sync.

While not as dire as Britain's infamous "Winter of Discontent" in 1978-79, when thousands of striking workers crippled essential services, a crisis that ultimately led to Thatcher's election, the country has seen the most widespread economic disruption in years.

A shortage of truck drivers, due partly to a testing backlog and partly to an exodus of European workers, has snarled British supply chains. That has left supermarkets with some empty shelves, fast-food chains without chicken and gas pumps out of fuel.

After more than a week of fuel-supply problems, the government called in the army this week, getting scores of soldiers to drive tanker trucks. It also says it will issue up to 5,500 short-term visas for foreign truckers to come to the U.K.

Other struggling parts of the economy say they aren't getting the same quick action. Pig farmers protested outside the Conservative conference, saying a shortage of abattoir butchers means thousands of pigs may have to be slaughtered on farms, ending up in landfills rather than the food chain.

Meryl Ward, a pig farmer from central England, said it was "complete madness" that the government was refusing to issue visas to a small number of skilled European butchers to ease the crisis.

"It's a complete and utter waste," she said.

Johnson says businesses will have to tough it out by raising wages, improving pay and conditions to get British workers to fill the empty jobs. He said that too many sectors of the British economy relied on Eastern European workers willing to do tough jobs for low pay, and vowed the U.K. wouldn't go back "to the old, failed model where you mainline low-wage, low-skilled labor."

While Johnson argues that EU membership pushed down U.K. wages — a claim many economists contest — he has downplayed Brexit's role in the country's current economic woes, pointing out that the United States and China also have shortages of truck drivers. Critics say those countries don't also have the gaps on supermarket shelves that Britain is experiencing.

Johnson said supply-chain problems are just the "stresses and strains you'd expect from a giant waking up" as Britain rebounds from a pandemic economic contraction that was the sharpest of any major economy. Unemployment is under 5%, though the ending this month of a program that paid the wages of millions of furloughed workers could drive that number up.

Many Conservatives are worried the winter could bring a hit on voters' pocketbooks due to rising prices, soaring energy costs from a global surge in natural gas prices and a cut to welfare benefits.

Starting Wednesday, the government is withdrawing a 20 pound (\$27) a week welfare boost that helped more than 4 million families make ends meet during the pandemic. The government says the increase was always intended to be temporary, but anti-poverty groups, the opposition and some Conservatives are calling for it to be retained.

Danny Sriskandarajah, chief executive of Oxfam GB, said many people who rely on the benefit, known as Universal Credit, are low-paid workers.

"It cannot be right to take away a lifeline that analysis shows will push half a million more people into poverty, including 200,000 children," he said.

The squeeze on living standards could make it harder for Johnson to meet his key goal of "leveling up" the U.K. by spreading economic opportunity beyond the south of England, where most business and investment is centered. That promise helped him win working-class votes in areas that long were strongholds of the center-left Labour Party.

Voters will eventually judge whether the Conservatives have delivered on their promises. But for now, with most opinion polls giving the party a lead over a demoralized Labour, delegates in Manchester were as buoyant as their famously irrepressible leader.

They packed meeting halls and sipped warm white wine at sweaty receptions, as if Britain's pandemic-plagued months of lockdowns, masks and social distancing were a bad dream. The delegates were visibly younger, more diverse and less dominated by affluent residents of southern England than they had been for years.

"You wouldn't have seen this even 10, 15 years ago, the north turning out in such droves to support the Conservative Party," said Max Darby, a delegate who was born in the northern England town of Scunthorpe. "I think Boris has to be doing something right if people like me are more than happy — in fact proud — to vote Conservative."

## As Lebanese got poorer, politicians stowed wealth abroad

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A trove of leaked documents confirmed that for years, Lebanon's politicians and bankers have stowed wealth in offshore tax havens and used it to buy expensive properties — a galling revelation for masses of newly impoverished Lebanese caught in one of the world's worst economic meltdowns in decades.

Some of the newly outed holders of offshore accounts belong to the same ruling elite that is being blamed for the collapse and for derailing the lives of ordinary Lebanese who have lost access to savings and now struggle to get fuel, electricity and medicine.

Bold-faced names in the leaked documents include the longtime central bank governor, a pivotal figure



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in the failed policies that helped trigger the financial crisis, as well as Prime Minister Najib Mikati and his predecessor.

The documents, named the "Pandora Papers," were examined by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, with the first findings released Sunday. The ICIJ report exposes the offshore secrets of wealthy elites from more than 200 countries and territories.

It was based on a review of nearly 11.9 million records obtained from 14 firms that provide services in setting up offshore firms and shell companies. Clients of such firms are often trying to hide their wealth and financial activities.

Setting up an offshore company is not illegal, but reinforces the perception that the wealthy and powerful play by different rules — a particularly upsetting notion for many Lebanese.

The papers show how members of the political class were sending wealth abroad for years, even as they urged people to deposit money in Lebanon's banks, assuring them that it was safe, said Alia Ibrahim, a Lebanese journalist.

"We are not talking about regular citizens," said Ibrahim, a co-founder of Daraj, a Beirut-based independent digital media platform, and one of scores of journalists across the world who worked with ICIJ on the investigation into the documents.

"These are politicians who served in public office for years, and they are partly responsible for the current crisis Lebanon is going through," she said.

Lebanon is in the midst of what the World Bank says is one of the world's worst economic meltdowns in the past 150 years. More than 70% of the population has been thrown into poverty, their savings nearly wiped out in the crisis that began in late 2019 and was in part caused by decades of corruption and mismanagement by the political class.

Hundreds of thousands of people staged nationwide protests against corruption starting in late 2019. Yet two years later the same politicians still run the country in the same way, protected by the sectarian-based system.

One of the protesters, Samir Skaff, said that the Lebanese are not surprised to be told that the political class "is made up of a bunch of thieves."

"We have been saying that for years," he said.

Offshore companies, though not illegal, can be used to elude taxes or hide illicitly gained money. The leaks only add further confirmation to what Lebanese have long said about their ruling class — though repeated reports of graft or illicit activity in the past have failed to bring change.

One of the 14 firms listed by ICIJ as providing offshore services is Trident Trust, with 346 Lebanese clients making up the largest group, more than double the second-place country, Britain.

One focus of the revelations is Riad Salameh, who has been Lebanon's central bank governor for nearly 30 years.

Daraj reported that the documents showed Salameh founded a company called AMANIOR, based in the British Virgin Islands, in 2007. He is listed as its full owner and sole director, which Daraj said appeared to violate Lebanese laws forbidding the central bank governor from activity in any enterprise.

Salameh's office told The Associated Press that the central bank governor has no comment on the documents. ICIJ quoted him as saying that he declares his assets and has complied with reporting obligations under Lebanese law.

Salameh, 70, is being investigated in Switzerland and France for potential money laundering and embezzlement. Local media reported over the past months that Salameh and his brother as well as one of his aides have been involved in illegal businesses, including money transfers abroad despite the capital controls imposed at home. Salameh had denied making such transfers.

Other documents showed that Marwan Kheireddine, chairman of Lebanon's Al-Mawarid Bank, was involved in setting up a flurry of offshore businesses in the months just before the economic crisis hit in late 2019. In November that year, his bank and others began imposing capital controls that meant Lebanese could pull very little money out of their accounts even as the currency crashed, wrecking their savings' value.

The Pandora Papers reveal that in 2019, Kheireddine received control of an offshore firm in the British

Virgin Islands, which he then used to buy a \$2 million yacht.

In January 2019, he and his brother set up four firms in Britain on the same day, all based at the same London address, and all registered as "small companies," which Daraj said meant they are exempt from auditing. In 2020, Kheireddine bought a \$9.9 million New York penthouse sold by American actress Jennifer Lawrence, Lebanese media reported at the time.

Kheireddine is a former Cabinet minister and a senior member of the Lebanese Democratic Party. He did not respond to calls and a text message by the AP.

Prime Minister Mikati, a businessman who formed a new government last month, has owned a Panama-based offshore company since the 1990s. He used it in 2008 to buy property in Monaco worth more than \$10 million, Daraj reported from the documents.

The leaked documents also show that his son Maher was a director of at least two British Virgin Islands-based companies, which his father's Monaco-based company, M1 Group, used to obtain an office in central London.

Mikati released a statement saying his family fortune was amassed prior to his involvement in politics and was "compliant with global standards" and regularly scrutinized by auditors. Contacted by the AP, Mikati's media adviser Fares Gemayel said he had no comment.

Speaking to Daraj, Maher Mikati said it was common for people in Lebanon to use offshore companies "due to the easy process of incorporation" and denied the purpose was to evade taxes.

Mikati's predecessor as prime minister, Hassan Diab, was a co-owner of a shell company in the British Virgin Islands, Daraj reported.

Diab's office said in a statement Monday he helped establish the company in 2015, but it did not do any business and he resigned from the firm and gave up his shares in 2019.

"Is the setting up of a company against the law?" the statement said.

Diab's government resigned days after a massive Aug. 4, 2020, blast in Beirut that killed and wounded hundreds and destroyed the city's port and nearby neighborhoods. Diab was charged with intentional killings and negligence in the case. He denies any wrongdoing but has refused to be questioned by the judge leading the investigation.

## **Pandora Papers a worry for Czech PM Babis ahead of election**

By KAREL JANICEK Associated Press

PRAGUE (AP) — Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis is heading into a parliamentary election this week hit by yet another scandal that links him and hundreds of other wealthy people to offshore accounts.

Findings by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists dubbed the "Pandora Papers" shed light on how the elite and the corrupt used offshore accounts to shield their assets from taxes or to hide ill-gotten gains.

Here's a look at the previously hidden dealings making waves in the Czech Republic and the country's election taking place on Friday and Saturday:

### **WHAT DID BABIS DO?**

In 2009, Babis, a populist billionaire, put \$22 million into shell companies to buy 16 properties in southern France, including a chateau, the investigation found. They were not disclosed in Babis' required asset declarations, according to documents obtained by the journalism group's Czech partner, Investigace.cz.

Babis has denied any wrongdoing and alleged that the recent revelation was meant to harm him in the election.

"I don't own any offshore. I don't own any property in France," he said. "It's nasty, false accusations that are meant to influence the election. That's all."

The Czech Republic's organized crime police unit said it would investigate the situation. The country's political opposition is demanding that Babis prove his actions were in line with law.

### **WHAT'S THE POLITICAL SITUATION?**

Babis, 67, has had a turbulent term featuring numerous scandals, but all public polls favor his centrist

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ANO (YES) movement to win the election with about 25% of the vote.

Five opposition parties with policies closer to the European Union's mainstream have put aside their differences to create two coalitions aimed at ousting the euroskeptic prime minister from power.

Babis has led a minority coalition government of ANO and the leftist Social Democrats with support from the Communists, giving the far-left party an indirect share of power for the first time since 1989. The Communist Party vehemently opposes NATO and maintains friendly ties with the ruling communists in Cuba, China and North Korea.

Both the Social Democrats and the Communists might struggle to win parliamentary seats at all, this time around. The main challenge for Babis' main challengers is to get united.

The center-right Together coalition consists of the conservative Civic Democratic Party and Christian Democrats and the liberal-conservative TOP 09 party. The liberal Pirate Party and STAN, a group of mayors and independent candidates, formed a center-left coalition.

Each coalition is predicted to win about 20% of the vote.

Despite their differences on many issues, including climate change, same-sex marriage and the adoption of the euro, the opposition parties all support EU and NATO membership.

**BABIS' POPULIST CAMPAIGN PLEDGE: NO MIGRANTS**

Babis has bet on an aggressive campaign, with migration a major topic. He has promised voters that not a single illegal migrant would be allowed to enter the Czech Republic and accused the opposition — with no evidence — of inviting in refugees.

He has also pledged to protect the Czechs from the European Union, which he claims wants to destroy the country's sovereignty. The EU's plan to tackle climate change would also harm Czech people's way of life, Babis has claimed.

Targeting his key supporters, he increased pensions more than required and lowered income taxes amid a record deficit caused by the pandemic, a move that worries economists.

"Babis is trying to divide the society, to create an atmosphere of fear for some of their safety and present himself as the only one to protect them," Palacky University political scientist Tomas Lebeda said. "It's a classic strategy used by most populists, by Donald Trump, by (Hungarian Prime Minister) Viktor Orban."

Babis, who calls Hungary's nationalist leader his friend, invited Orban to join him at an election rally last week.

"It's obviously a reason for concern, not just for Europe, but above all for the Czech Republic, given what's been going on in Hungary," Lebeda said.

Although Orban is popular in his country, critics accuse him of autocratic tendencies, citing his seizing control of Hungary's media to control political narratives. Several journalists from the Czech, German and French media were denied access to a news conference Orban and Babis held in the northern city of Usti nad Labem.

**A POLITICIAN WHO'S ACTIONS ARE OFTEN QUESTIONED**

The Pandora Papers report is not the first time that Babis' wealth and business activity have become a political issue since his party won the 2017 election.

A quarter of a million Czechs rallied against him twice in 2019 over his alleged fraud involving EU funds and allegations of his cooperation with the country's communist-era secret police. The protests were by far the biggest anti-government demonstrations since the country's 1989 Velvet Revolution.

An EU investigation found that as prime minister Babis had a conflict of interest from his former business empire. When he took office, Czech law required him to transfer his Agrofert conglomerate of around 250 companies into two trust funds, but the EU concluded that he still controls them. The companies include two national newspapers and a popular radio station.

His resolve to run the government as a company was tested by the coronavirus pandemic. Babis went through five health ministers, and the Czech Republic has reported more than 30,400 COVID-19 deaths among a population of 10.7 million.

**IS AN EXTREME COALITION AHEAD?**



Depending on election's results, Babis may face the option of forming a coalition with the Communists or with Freedom and Direct Democracy, the most anti-migrant, anti-Muslim party in the Czech Republic.

Freedom and Direct Democracy hopes to equal if not better its showing in the last election, when it won 10.6% of the vote. It wants to lead the country out of the EU and hold a referendum on NATO membership.

Its leader, Tomio Okamura, has condemned the government for bringing to the country 170 Afghan citizens, including local staffers at the Czech embassy in Kabul and interpreters who helped the Czech armed forces and their families.

The group has also protested alleged discrimination against Czechs who are not vaccinated against the coronavirus.

## California oil spill renews calls to ban offshore drilling

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE and MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California has been a leader in restricting offshore oil drilling since the infamous 1969 Santa Barbara spill that sparked the modern environmental movement, and the latest spill off Huntington Beach is prompting fresh calls for an end to such drilling.

That's easier said than done, even in California. While the state hasn't issued a new lease in state water in five decades, drilling from existing platforms continues. Similarly, an effort in Congress that aims to halt new drilling in federal waters — more than 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) off the coast — wouldn't stop drilling that's already happening.

Speaking from Huntington Beach on Tuesday, California Gov. Gavin Newsom acknowledged it's easier to resist new drilling than to wind down what already exists.

"Banning new drilling is not complicated," he said. "The deeper question is how do you transition and still protect the workforce?"

Today, there are 19 oil and gas agreements in California's coastal waters and 1,200 active wells. In federal waters, there are 23 oil and gas production facilities off the state's coast.

A pipeline connected to one of those platforms in federal waters, run by Houston-based Amplify Energy, has spilled up to 126,000 gallons (572,807 liters) of heavy crude in one of the worst oil spills in recent California history.

Newsom said there is now a new sense of urgency to curb oil production, including by issuing more permits for well abandonment.

"It's time, once and for all, to disabuse ourselves that this has to be part of our future. This is part of our past," he said alongside other elected officials.

California remains the nation's seventh-largest oil producing state, and winding down the state's oil production has proved politically difficult. The industry employs more than 150,000 people and the state makes money from oil and gas leases.

Newsom highlighted the steps he's taken to curb reliance on oil since he took office in 2019, including a plan to end oil production in the state by 2045 and stop selling new gas-powered cars by 2035. Still, his administration continues to issue new oil drilling permits off shore and on land, though in 2020 it issued more permits to close wells than to open new ones, said Jacob Roper, a spokesman for the state Department of Conservation.

Offshore, there are nearly 1,200 active wells in California waters, according to state data compiled by FracTracker Alliance. About 370 wells are idle, while nearly 1,300 have been plugged. Five permits have been granted to drill new offshore wells during Newsom's tenure, according to the group.

Efforts to plug and decommission several state oil platforms are underway, but the process is costly and time consuming. It's expected to cost more than \$800 million to decommission wells in the Wilmington Oil Fields off the coast of Long Beach. The state has just \$300 million set aside.

"It boils down to finances and priorities," Democratic state Assemblyman Patrick O'Donnell said. "I would hope that as we move forward we look at those wells ceasing to operate as soon as possible."

California's congressional delegation, including both Democratic senators, have introduced legislation to

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permanently ban new oil and gas drilling in federal waters off the coast of California, Oregon and Washington.

The bill, which lawmakers hope to include in a multitrillion-dollar social and environmental package being pushed by Democrats, would not affect existing leases that have been issued to longstanding oil platforms that were built from the late 1960s to early 1990s. Many California oil platforms like Platform Elly, where the recent spill occurred, have reached or exceeded their expected lifespan.

"As they age, these platforms become more and more fragile" and corroded from ocean water, said Deborah Sivas, professor of environmental law at Stanford Law School.

She said California operates with "cognitive dissonance" when it comes to oil by continuing to issue permits for drilling even as the state takes aggressive steps to tackle climate change.

Speaking alongside Newsom on Tuesday, Rep. Alan Lowenthal, a Democrat representing parts of Orange County, said the federal government needs to do more.

"We have to come up with a plan to not only stop new drilling but to figure out how do we stop all drilling that's going on in California," he said.

No legislation to ban current offshore drilling is pending in Congress.

A spokesman for the Western States Petroleum Association called the spill a tragedy. Amplify Energy, the owner of the platform, is not an association member. While the spill is prompting calls for more restrictions on drilling, spokesman Kevin Slagle said he hopes "we don't resort to bans and mandates to address our energy future."

Any proposal to further restrict drilling in California is likely to increase demand for imports from Saudi Arabia, Ecuador and other countries, Slagle said. Imports account for more than half the state's oil use.

California's status as an oil-producing state has long bedeviled Democratic governors, including former Gov. Jerry Brown. While known internationally for his work fighting climate change, Brown drew criticism from environmental groups for not doing enough at home to crack down on drilling.

But he acted swiftly to resist new federal drilling off California's coast during the Trump administration, signing laws prohibiting the state from leasing new infrastructure, such as pipelines, to support federal drilling.

The Huntington Beach spill shows that regulations aimed at ensuring safe operation of offshore wells are more important than ever, environmental groups say.

"Incidents like this one really bring home the need for rigorous regulation of existing platforms" with frequent, regularly scheduled inspections, said Irene Gutierrez, a senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Even when wells no longer produce oil, they often sit idle for decades before they are plugged and abandoned. The State Lands Commission, which Newsom chaired as lieutenant governor, has begun the process of decommissioning Platform Holly off the coast of Santa Barbara and the manmade Rincon Island in Ventura County, but the process is expected to take years and cost tens of millions of dollars.

Newsom said he's proud of that work, even if it's not happening as fast as some people would like.

Daly reported from Washington, D.C. Associated Press journalist Amy Taxin in Huntington Beach contributed.

## Ship's anchor may have caused massive California oil spill

By STEFANIE DAZIO, MATTHEW BROWN and BRIAN MELLEY

LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) — A ship's anchor may have hooked, dragged and torn an underwater pipeline that spilled tens of thousands of gallons of crude oil into the ocean off Southern California, according to federal investigators who also found the pipeline owner didn't quickly shut down operations after a safety system alerted to a possible spill.

Questions remained about the timeline of the weekend spill, which fouled beaches and a protected marshland, potentially closing them for weeks along with commercial and recreational fishing in a major

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hit to the local economy.

Some reports of a possible spill, a petroleum smell and an oily sheen on the waters off Huntington Beach came in Friday night but weren't corroborated and the pipeline's operator, Amplify Energy Corp., didn't report a spill until the next morning, authorities said.

An alarm went off in a company control room at 2:30 a.m. Saturday that pressure had dropped in the pipeline, indicating a possible leak but Amplify waited until 6:01 a.m. to shut down the pipeline, according to preliminary findings of an investigation into the spill.

The Houston-based company took another three hours to notify the U.S. Coast Guard's National Response Center for oil spills, investigators said, further slowing the response to an accident for which Amplify workers spent years preparing.

However, Amplify CEO Martyn Willsher insisted that the company wasn't aware of the spill until it saw a sheen on the water at 8:09 a.m.

The company's spill-response plan calls for the immediate notification of a spill. Criminal charges have been brought in the past when a company took too long to notify federal and state officials of a spill.

On Tuesday, federal transportation investigators said the pipe was split open at a depth of about 98 feet (30 meters) and a nearly mile-long section was pulled along the sea floor, possibly by an anchor that hooked it and caused a partial tear, federal transportation investigators said.

"The pipeline has essentially been pulled like a bow string," Willsher said. "At its widest point, it is 105 feet (32 meters) away from where it was."

Huge cargo ships regularly cross above the pipeline as they head into the gigantic Los Angeles-Long Beach port complex. They are given coordinates where they are to anchor until unloading.

Anchored cargo ships continually move because of shifting winds and tides and an improperly-set anchor weighing 10 tons (9 metric tons) or more can drag "whatever the anchor gets fouled on," said Steven Browne, a professor of marine transportation at California State University Maritime Academy.

There was no indication whether investigators suspect that a particular ship was involved.

"We are going to make sure that we have answers as to how this happened, and to make sure that we hold the responsible party accountable," said Congresswoman Katie Porter, a Democrat who chairs the oversight and investigations subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee. She represents a district a few miles inland from the spill area.

The spill sent up to 126,000 gallons (572,807 liters) of heavy crude into the ocean but animal rescuers ashore have been pleasantly surprised to find few birds covered in oil.

During a two-hour boat tour off Huntington Beach coastline, an AP video journalist saw no visible oil. Pelicans and other sea birds floated on calm waters, and four dolphins swam by the boat.

Meanwhile, Coast Guard officials defended their decision to wait until Saturday morning to investigate a possible spill first reported Friday night — some 10 hours earlier — near a cluster of boats that were anchored off Huntington Beach.

At 2:06 a.m. Saturday, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said satellite images showed the strong likelihood of an oil slick. The report was made to the National Response Center, a hazardous spill hotline staffed by the Coast Guard.

Residents in nearby Newport Beach had also complained Friday evening about a strong stench of petroleum, and police put out a notice to the public about it.

The Coast Guard was alerted to a sheen on the water by a "good Samaritan" but did not have enough corroborating evidence and was hindered by darkness and a lack of technology to seek out the spill, Coast Guard Rear Adm. Brian Penoyer told The Associated Press.

Penoyer said it was fairly common to get reports of oil sheens in a major seaport.

"In hindsight, it seems obvious, but they didn't know that at that time," Penoyer said.

Speaking at a news conference Tuesday, Gov. Gavin Newsom repeated his calls for the U.S. to move beyond oil. Newsom last year signed an executive order banning the sale of new gas-powered vehicles by 2035.



"It's time, once and for all, to disabuse ourselves that this has to be part of our future. This is part of our past," he said from Bolsa Chica State Beach, where he was joined by local, state and federal officials to discuss the spill.

Associated Press journalists Michael Blood and Christopher Weber in Los Angeles, Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, Michael Biesecker in Washington, and Eugene Garcia and Amy Taxin in Huntington Beach, California, contributed to this report.

## Sunday's vote in Iraq clouded by a disillusioned electorate

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

BASRA, Iraq (AP) — Blinking under the garish lights of a hotel ballroom in southern Iraq, Wael Makhsusi argued his case to a young audience.

Microphone in hand, the engineer in his 30s stood onstage in Basra with other novice candidates in Sunday's parliamentary election. Among them were independents and hopefuls drawn from the protests that filled the streets two years ago with demonstrators angry about high unemployment, government corruption and lack of basic services like electricity and water.

If elected, Makhsusi told the crowd, he'd fight tirelessly for their rights, but a bespectacled man who stood up wasn't buying it. "You've painted such a rosy dream for us, but I am not convinced I should vote for you," the man said as the crowd burst into applause.

The scene last month underscored the difficulties faced by the candidates: They are telling Iraq's disillusioned youth, the country's largest demographic, to trust an electoral process that in the past has tainted by tampering and fraud. But apathy and distrust are widespread, and some of the same pro-reform activists whose protests in 2019 led to the vote now are calling for a boycott at the polls after a series of targeted killings.

"The election won't be perfect," acknowledged candidate Nouredine Nassar in Basra, but he added that even if it improves by only a third over those in the past, that will be "better than the current system."

Activists like Nassar are pinning their hopes on a redrawn map of electoral districts — a concession to the reformers — and argue that voting is the only path to change.

"We have a new generation, born after 2001, who are eligible to vote now," said Awatef Rasheed, an independent candidate in Basra. "I am relying on this generation."

The increased number of districts allows for better local representation and gives independents increased chances of winning. In addition, 70% of registered voters will use biometric cards, eliminating the multiple voting that plagued the 2018 election.

That balloting saw a turnout of only 44% of eligible voters — a record low since the U.S.-led invasion that topped Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

The electoral law changes fell short of demands by protesters. Activists had wanted more of the smaller districts, but after 11 months of talks, lawmakers agreed on 83, up from 18. The lines were drawn to facilitate a 25% participation quota by women for 329 parliament seats.

The smaller districts also favor powerful local tribes and religious figures, and the mainstream parties already have forged alliances with them.

Still, the new law paved the way for parties drawn from the protests to emerge, such as the Imtidad Movement, which is expected to do well in the southern province of Nasiriyah, a flashpoint in the demonstrations. One of its candidates is Makhsusi, who says he wants to chip away at the entrenched political establishment.

But it also helped better-funded and more experienced mainstream grassroots parties such as the Sadrist Movement of populist cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, whose party won the most seats in 2018. Its members already are anticipating a favorable outcome.

"The Sadrist Movement will get a lot of voters because we have our people in the whole city of Basra," said Mohammed al-Tamimi, a Sadrist official and the deputy governor of Basra.

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Their calculations rely on the assumption that people like Wissam Adnan won't vote. He is the founder of Jobs in Basra, a social media platform created to help the unemployed in the city.

"None of them have made any changes for the people, so why should we vote for them?" Adnan said of those in power. That's a popular opinion in Basra, which despite its oil wealth is plagued by poverty, joblessness and a crumbling infrastructure that delivers filthy tap water and chronic power outages.

"Given the absence of credible alternatives and the overwhelming sense among Iraqis that the system is immune to internal reforms, the choice of not voting can be the only means for a voter to express their rejection of the status quo," said Randa Slim, of the Washington-based Middle East Institute.

Over 600 people died in the October 2019 mass protests, known in Arabic as the Tishreen revolution for the month they occurred. Security forces used live ammunition and tear gas to disperse the crowds.

The protests died down after few months because of the brutal crackdown and the coronavirus pandemic. But since then, 35 people have been killed in targeted assassinations of activists, protest organizers and independent candidates, creating a climate of fear and intimidation. Another 82 people have been wounded in attempted killings that many suspect were carried out by militia groups, according to the Iraqi Human Rights Commission.

Calls for an election boycott rang out in particular after the slaying in Karbala this summer of prominent activist Ehab al-Wazni. There have been vocal demands for serious efforts in bringing weapons under the control of the state — a tall order in a country awash with militias and guns.

Among those groups seeking to consolidate their political dominance through the election are hard-line Shiite militias backed by Iran.

The United Nations is ramping up a rare monitoring mission that many hope will boost turnout, and Iraq's electoral commission is working to correct systemic flaws exploited by elites. But some parties are resorting to the well-worn tactics of buying votes through favors, jobs and cash.

Ali Hussein, a young religious scholar running as an independent, admitted he didn't know how to get people to vote for him.

"I have been shocked by the requests from people, asking for roads, electricity. Some candidates are giving people food for votes, or taking their personal information and telling them, 'I will hire you if you vote for me,'" he said. "It's created confusion about what our duties are supposed to be and we don't know how to talk to the people."

In the Baghdad suburb of Sadr City, women were promised new abayas - loose robes worn by many Iraqis - for voting for a specific candidate. In Basra's Zubair neighborhood, a party is helping residents sort out bureaucratic paperwork. Others said militias offered to protect their communities if they voted for their parties.

With such tactics arising long before election day, few have faith in U.N. poll watchers.

For months, the U.N. has been providing technical assistance to Iraq's electoral commission to close loopholes exploited by parties. According to three U.N. officials, a key condition was that ballots not be moved before an initial count in individual polling stations, eliminating the chances of manipulation.

Back at the Basra rally, a dark mood settled over the audience as Ali Abdel Hussein al-Eidani told the candidates that his son had been killed during the protests.

"Will you avenge him?" the elderly man asked, tears welling in his eyes.

The moderator, activist Ahmed Yaseri, stepped in to return the discussion to increasing turnout for the election.

"We want to see the future. We don't want more blood," he said.

## In California, some buy machines that make water out of air

By HAVEN DALEY undefined

BENICIA, Calif. (AP) — The machine Ted Bowman helped design can make water out of the air, and in parched California, some homeowners are already buying the pricey devices.

The air-to-water systems work like air conditioners by using coils to chill air, then collect water drops in

a basin.

"Our motto is, water from air isn't magic, it's science, and that's really what we're doing with these machines," said Ted Bowman, design engineer at Washington state-based Tsunami Products.

The system is one of several that have been developed in recent years to extract water from humidity in the air. Other inventions include mesh nets, solar panels and shipping containers that harvest moisture from the air.

Bowman said his company's machines — made for use at homes, offices, ranches and elsewhere — de-humidify the air and in doing so create water that's filtered to make it drinkable.

The technology works especially well in foggy areas and depending on the size can produce between 200 gallons (900 liters) and 1,900 gallons (8,600 liters) of water a day. The machines also operate efficiently in any area with high humidity, including California's coastline, he said.

The machines are not cheap, with prices ranging from \$30,000 to \$200,000. Still, in California, where residents have been asked to conserve water because one of the worst droughts in recent history has depleted reservoirs, some homeowners are buying them to meet their water needs.

Don Johnson, of Benicia, California, said he bought the smallest machine, which looks like a towering AC unit, hoping it would generate sufficient water to sustain his garden. But he found it puts out more than enough for his garden and his household.

"This machine will produce water for a lot less than you can buy bottled water at Costco for, and I believe, as time goes on and the price of freshwater through our utilities goes up, I think it's going to more than pay for itself," he said.

Besides the high price tag, the unit also requires a significant amount of energy to run. But Johnson said the solar panels on his roof produce enough power to operate the machine without additional energy costs.

Experts like University of California, Davis hydrology researcher Helen Dahlke said the technology makes sense for individual homeowners, especially in rural areas. But she said it is not a practical solution for California's broader water woes.

Dahlke said the focus should be on fighting global warming to prevent future droughts.

"We really actually need to curb climate warming to really make a difference again," she said.

## Ship anchor suspected in pipeline break that fouled beaches

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — An anchored cargo ship in the Pacific is not a fixed point — it's different than parking a car. Even then, with a multi-ton anchor and brawny steel chains resting on the seabed, the massive vessels can move from shifting winds, ocean currents and tides.

A probe is continuing into what caused an offshore pipeline break that spilled tens of thousands of gallons of crude oil off Southern California, but one emerging possibility is that a cargo ship — inadvertently or not — dragged its anchor along the ocean floor, catching the steel, concrete-covered oil pipe and pulling it over 100 feet (30 meters) until it was pierced or cracked open the way pressure fractures an egg shell.

Federal transportation investigators said preliminary reports suggest the failure may have been "caused by an anchor that hooked the pipeline, causing a partial tear."

"A ship at anchor will move around quite a bit as tides, winds change direction," said Steven Browne, a professor of marine transportation at California State University Maritime Academy.

"One explanation would be they did not drop the anchor directly on the pipeline," Browne said. "The ship moved and dragged the anchor along the bottom if it wasn't properly set. It could have potentially snagged on the pipe and dragged it."

Many questions remain unanswered.

With the probe continuing, investigators have not yet said if a ship was directed by port managers to anchor in the vicinity of the pipeline break. Typically, a ship would be given specific instructions from port managers on where to drop anchor, and its position would be closely monitored.

Browne said he has never heard of a cargo ship dragging an oil pipeline, but is aware of cases in which



phone cables have been lifted off the ocean floor. In such cases, ship personnel lower the anchor to free the snag, he said.

"Perhaps they didn't realize that they were dragging anchor," he added. In such a huge vessel, "They wouldn't necessarily know anything was caught on the bottom."

Ship traffic in the sister ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach is directed much like air traffic controllers oversee flights coming into and leaving airports.

The Marine Exchange of Southern California, in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard, manages an area extending 25 miles (40 kilometers) from the vast coastal complex where cargo is unloaded and shipped across the country. It uses an array of technology to schedule arrivals, anchoring and departures for thousands of vessels each year. Computers monitor the speed of ships and traffic mirrors a freeway, with lanes for ships moving in different directions.

The forces of nature often come into play.

"Usually, if a ship is dragging anchor it is because of a weather event - significant wind or a strong current," Browne said. "Because we are talking thousands of tons of steel and cargo, there is a lot of momentum involved in a ship."

"A ship at anchor will move around quite a bit as tides, winds change direction," he said.

Anchors on large ships can weigh 10 tons or more and are attached to hundreds of feet of steel chains. "Whatever the anchor gets fouled on will come along with the ship," Browne said.

The ports have been beset by long backups that have vessels spread out across the horizon off the coast. Browne said he wouldn't be surprised if ships are being anchored closer to pipelines, internet cables and other hazards "simply because there are so many ships in the area."

## **Bogaerts, Red Sox dent Cole, beat Yanks 6-2 in AL wild card**

By JIMMY GOLEN AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — As the ball sailed over the center field fence, landing 427 feet from the plate in a horde of happy Red Sox fans, Xander Bogaerts turned to the Boston dugout to flex his muscles before resuming his home run trot.

This is the matchup the Yankees wanted.

And the Red Sox were ready.

Bogaerts and Kyle Schwarber homered off Yankees ace Gerrit Cole, and Nathan Eovaldi took a shutout into the sixth inning in the AL wild-card game to help the Red Sox beat New York 6-2 on Tuesday night.

Bogaerts also cut down Aaron Judge at the plate in the sixth as Boston advanced to the best-of-five AL Division Series against the Rays.

Game 1 Thursday night in St. Petersburg, Florida.

"Now we go to the next one, and we've just got to be ready to face a great baseball team," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "Coming into the season, everybody talked about them being the best team in the big leagues, and we have a huge challenge. But we're ready for it."

The Yankees, who lead the majors with 27 World Series championships, have not won it all since 2009. After angling for a matchup with the Red Sox in a potential tiebreaker, the Yankees wound up in Boston for the wild-card game instead.

And the Red Sox beat them in the postseason for the third straight try.

"Guys are crushed," New York manager Aaron Boone said. "The ending is really cruel. But there's nothing better than competing for something meaningful."

A year after baseball took its postseason into neutral site bubbles to protect against the pandemic, a sellout crowd of 38,324 -- the biggest at Fenway Park since the 2018 World Series — filled the old yard to rekindle one of the sport's most passionate rivalries. Enough Yankee fans were among them to fuel a raucous back-and-forth of insulting chants.

"The Bogaerts homer in the first inning — I mean, talk about a pop. And, you know, the crowd went nuts, and you feed off that energy," Schwarber said. "You thrive for that, and Red Sox nation brought it

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tonight. We needed it, and you can't say enough about the crowd."

It was the fifth playoff matchup between the longtime foes, with Boston taking a 3-2 edge. That doesn't count the 1978 AL East tiebreaker -- technically regular season Game No. 163 -- that the Yankees won thanks to Bucky Dent's homer into the net above the Green Monster.

Boone was a New York third baseman when added to the heartbreak with his 11th-inning walk-off homer in Game 7 of the 2003 AL Championship Series.

The Red Sox haven't lost to them since.

They got their revenge the next year when they rallied after losing the first three games of the ALCS to eliminate the Yankees, then went on to win their first World Series title in 86 years. They won three more championships, in '07, '13 and in '18 when they knocked out the Yankees in the divisional round.

Any lingering pain disappeared into the center field bleachers in the first inning on Tuesday night.

Unlike Dent, who barely cleared the left-field wall that sits just 310 feet from home plate, Bogaerts drilled a line drive 427 feet to straightaway center. And unlike Carlton Fisk, who contorted his body to will the ball fair in Game 6 of the 1975 World Series, Bogaerts interrupted his home run trot only to flex for the Red Sox dugout.

With Dent in the crowd and Aaron Boone in the Yankees dugout, the Red Sox chased Cole in the third after he allowed Schwarber's solo shot and put two more men on with nobody out. In all, he was charged with three runs on four hits and two walks, striking out three in two-plus innings.

Cole said he felt "sick to my stomach."

"This is the worst feeling in the world," said the star who signed a \$324 million, nine-year deal to join the Yankees for the 2019 season.

Eovaldi only allowed two hits through five innings before giving up a solo home run to Anthony Rizzo -- Schwarber's teammate on the 2016 Cubs championship team -- that sparked the first excited cheers from the Yankees fans in the crowd.

With Boston leading 3-1, Judge followed with an infield single that finished Eovaldi, and reliever Ryan Brasier gave up a wall single to Giancarlo Stanton. Mistakenly waved home by third base coach Phil Nevin, Judge was easily thrown out at the plate -- 8-6-2 -- by the team that led the majors with 43 outfield assists during the season. (The Yankees made 22 outs at home this season, tied for the most in baseball.)

"That was better than a homer for me, personally," Bogaerts said. "I mean, if that run scores, it's 3-2. Stanton is at second base, the whole momentum is on their side. The dugout is getting pumped up."

"As Judge was out at home, I saw Stanton was pretty mad. He probably wanted a homer there, but also an RBI, and he didn't get that, and he probably felt like he didn't do much because that run didn't score. But that changed the game," he said.

In all, Eovaldi allowed one run on four hits in 5 1/3 innings, striking out eight.

Alex Verdugo hit an RBI double in the sixth, driving in a hustling Bogaerts from first, to make it 4-1 and then singled in two more in the seventh to give Boston a 6-1 lead.

Stanton, who singled high off the wall early, hit a solo homer in the ninth to make it 6-2. Joey Gallo followed with a deep drive to right that was caught at the warning track by Hunter Renfroe.

With one last "Yankees suck!" chant echoing through the ballpark, Garrett Whitlock got Gleyber Torres to pop up to center to end it.

The Red Sox poured out of their dugout and bullpen to celebrate at the pitcher's mound as "Dirty Water" played on the speakers. A few Yankees stood in the dugout and watched.

The teams swapped places twice in the last 10 days of the season, starting with the Yankees' three-game sweep in Boston Sept. 24-26 that moved them into the first wild-card spot. At one point, Major League Baseball ran through the tiebreaker scenarios and the Yankees had to choose whether they would want to play in Boston or Toronto to break a four-way tie.

They chose Boston.

Although the tiebreakers weren't necessary when both teams finished ahead of Toronto and Seattle -- with identical 92-70 records, Boston earned home-field by virtue of a 10-9 head-to-head record -- word

of the Yankees' decision inevitably made it to the Red Sox clubhouse.

"We knew about it. We don't really talk about it because we had some business to take care of ourselves," Red Sox center fielder Kiké Hernández said before the game. "They wanted us and they got us now, so win or go home. That's it."

#### TRAINER'S ROOM

Yankees: 3B Gio Urshela played despite bruising his thigh in the regular-season finale when he fell into the dugout after catching a foul popup.

Red Sox: Boston was without its regular DH, J.D. Martinez, who sprained his ankle in the regular-season finale. Martinez, who was playing the field in Washington, because there was no DH in an NL park, slipped on second base as he ran out to his position in the outfield.

#### UP NEXT

Yankees: Pitchers and catchers are due to report for spring training on Feb. 14.

Red Sox: Open the best-of-five ALDS against Tampa Bay on Thursday. The Rays went 11-8 against Boston this season.

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

## Delay after alarm puts California spill response in question

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

Amplify Energy's emergency response plan for a major oil spill like the one it's now dealing with in coastal Southern California depended heavily on a quick shutdown of the San Pedro Bay Pipeline if its sensors picked up a sudden loss of pressure. That's not what happened, investigators revealed Tuesday.

After an alarm went off in a company control room at 2:30 a.m. Saturday — signaling a rupture that would spill tens of thousands of gallons of crude into the Pacific Ocean — the company waited more than three hours to shut down the pipeline, at 6:01 a.m., according to preliminary findings of an investigation into the spill.

The Houston-based company took another three hours to notify the U.S. Coast Guard's National Response Center for oil spills, investigators said, further slowing the response to an accident for which Amplify workers spent years preparing.

"How come it took so long? That's a fair question," said Richard Kuprewicz, a pipeline consultant and private accident investigator from Redmond, Washington. "If you have any doubt, your action should be to shut down and close. ... Something's not quite right here."

Pipeline control room alarms don't always mean a leak and can be tripped by numerous factors — from a faulty signal from a sensor along the line, to a pump that goes offline and causes a sudden pressure change, according to Kuprewicz and other industry experts. But the alarms also are supposed to trigger immediate follow-up actions to quickly ascertain if anything is wrong.

It's uncertain why that process dragged out hours in San Pedro Bay, potentially worsening a spill that left some birds coated with oil and has stirred worries about broader environmental impacts.

The cause of the pipeline break just offshore from Los Angeles remains under investigation. Early findings point to a ship anchor possibly catching the line and dragging it across the seafloor, tearing a gash in the half-inch-thick (12.7 millimeter) steel pipe.

The timeline of the company's response appears to contradict statements from Amplify's CEO, Martyn Willshire, who told reporters on Monday that the company first became aware of the spill after receiving a report from a boat of a sheen in the water.

Willshire acknowledged the company's equipment was supposed to help detect spills, then said, "we did not have any notice that there was a leak" prior to the sheen report.

In documents released Tuesday detailing the company's actions, federal transportation officials did not comment on the time lag in shutting down the line or reveal any potential explanation that the Amplify executives may have offered.



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Company representatives did not respond to emailed questions about the delay between the alarm and the shutdown.

Problems with faulty leak detection procedures have plagued the industry for years, including during a massive 2010 oil spill that polluted 40 miles (64 kilometers) of Michigan's Kalamazoo River. In that case, an Enbridge Inc. pipeline leaked at least 843,000 gallons (3.2 million liters) of crude over 17 hours, even as alarms kept going off in a company control room.

The company later settled pollution violations in the case for \$176 million.

The accident spurred calls for more stringent leak detection rules and the installation of more automatic or remote-control shut-off valves that can quickly halt the flow of oil in a leak.

A dearth of such valves was also cited in another 2010 pipeline accident — a natural gas transmission line explosion in San Bruno, California, that left eight dead and dozens injured after the line continued burning like a massive blowtorch for almost 90 minutes before the line was shut down manually.

Federal officials began crafting new leak detection and valve rules under former President Barack Obama, but they were never finalized.

A new rule proposed last year under former President Donald Trump and now awaiting final approval would mandate more valves only for new or replaced oil pipelines, not the thousands of miles that are already in use. The change came after oil industry lobbying groups including the American Petroleum Institute said retrofitting lines with valves would cost up to \$1.5 million per device.

The pending rule does not set standards for leak detections, giving companies significant leeway in how sensitive to leaks their equipment needs to be, said Bill Caram with the Pipeline Safety Trust, a Bellingham, Washington-based group that advocates for safer pipelines.

"It makes us worry for our country's aging energy infrastructure," Caram said. "We fear this could become a bigger and bigger issue."

John Stody with the Association of Oil Pipe Lines said companies and industry groups are working hard to improve leak detection technologies. Fine-tuning equipment is part of that, to make sure companies can detect even small leaks but not have to respond to false alarms.

"If you're riddled with false alarms, people have a harder time reacting," Stody said.

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Follow Matthew Brown on Twitter: @MatthewBrownAP

## Virginia GOP candidate tests school fight message for 2022

By WILL WEISSERT and THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

LEESBURG, Va. (AP) — When Democrat Terry McAuliffe said during the Virginia governor's debate last week that he doesn't believe "parents should be telling schools what they should teach," his opponent pounced.

Republican Glenn Youngkin quickly turned the footage into a digital ad, then announced spending \$1 million on a commercial airing statewide proclaiming that "Terry went on the attack against parents." Youngkin's campaign has since founded a parent-led group to circulate petitions and distribute flyers rejecting "McAuliffe's disqualifying position," while scheduling a "Parents Matter" rally Wednesday in northern Virginia's Washington exurbs.

Youngkin is trying to capitalize on a surge of relatively small but vocal groups of parents organizing against school curriculums they view as "anti-American," COVID-19 safety measures and school board members whom they consider too liberal and closely aligned to teachers unions.

It's an effort to excite the GOP-leaning suburban voters Youngkin needs to win the Nov. 2 race. If the approach proves successful in Virginia, a one-time swing state that has become more reliably blue, Republicans across the country are likely to replicate his efforts during next year's midterms, when control of Congress is at stake.

"Glenn Youngkin is harnessing the energy of parents that are frustrated and fed up," said Youngkin spokesperson Macaulay Porter.

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Virginia's most active parental activist groups maintain they are nonpartisan and not seeking to influence the governor's race, instead focusing on school board elections and efforts to recall board members, especially in growing areas outside Washington. But many such organizations have ties to Republican donors and party-aligned think tanks, and are led by people who worked for the GOP and its candidates, which may make it easier to replicate the message nationally.

"The other side wants to say this is all geared toward helping candidates. I think it's the opposite," said Ian Prior, 44, a former Trump administration official who founded Fight for Schools, which aims to recall five school board members in Loudoun County, Virginia, where his two children attend school. "This exists, and smart candidates are picking up on it. Politically, I would say it's a byproduct."

Youngkin attended a fundraiser and rally last month for Fight for Schools, and his campaign has at times asked Prior's group for help building crowds for the Republican's campaign events. Last weekend, Prior's group co-organized a rally with about 100 people in front of the Loudoun County Supervisors Building in the leafy town of Leesburg to protest "divisive educational programs being advanced in our very own backyards."

"I'm glad that Mr. McAuliffe said that, that more people can see the truth and that the Democrat Party wants control," said Patti Hidalgo Menders, a 52-year-old Republican activist and mother of six sons, the youngest of whom is now in high school, who spoke at the event. "Our Founding Fathers created our country to be rights from God. It's not rights from our government. So that was a big wake-up call."

Loudoun County, across the Potomac River from Washington, is populated with thousands of political professionals. As has happened in other states, a recent school board meeting erupted into parental shouting matches as officials discussed teaching racial equality and determining transgender rights policies.

Attorney General Merrick Garland has directed federal authorities to strategize with law enforcement to address the increasing threats targeting school board members, teachers and others, citing "a disturbing spike in harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence" toward them.

"I was impressed with (Youngkin) when he reached out to parents when he saw how disappointed they were with the school boards," said Susan Cox, a Youngkin campaign volunteer and 58-year-old dance instructor from Sterling, Virginia, who attended the Leesburg rally and whose two children graduated from Loudoun County public schools.

McAuliffe supporters dismiss the blitz as Youngkin firing up the conservative base without appealing to the suburban swing voters who abandoned the GOP in droves during last year's presidential election.

"Youngkin is working to divide Virginians instead of keeping our children safe from COVID-19," said McAuliffe spokesperson Christina Freundlich.

Still, an effort to draw Loudoun County residents angry over school issues could squeeze McAuliffe in a typically low-turnout, off-year election. Last year, Democrat Joe Biden carried Loudoun County, population 420,000, with 61% of the vote. He won the state by 10 percentage points.

Republicans say Youngkin could win if he can get 40% of the Greater Washington area vote. But complaining about teaching racial awareness could also backfire in a county that has grown more diverse over the years. Just 53% of Loudoun's population is white, down from 69% as recently as 2010.

"Running a race in Loudoun County on this issue when it could create a backlash against nonwhite voters runs the risk of being counterproductive," said Mo Ellethee, a former campaign adviser to McAuliffe and other leading Virginia Democrats.

Many parent groups counter that their movement is multiracial and sprang out of the pandemic-driven surge in virtual learning — which gave parents of all backgrounds in-home views of what their children were being taught.

Sue Zoldak, founder of Do Better FCPS, which focuses on neighboring Fairfax County schools, is a former Republican National Committee consultant. She said her group was "not connected at all" to statewide races, only school board ones, which are nonpartisan.

"It's funny to me, the accusation that, 'Oh well, this is obviously a conservative-run movement,'" Zoldak said. "The only reason that we're the ones that speak up is because all the school boards are packed with

liberals.”

The funding behind such activism can be substantial. The Free to Learn Coalition launched in June with more than \$1 million in television advertising centered on public schools in Fairfax County and in Peoria, Arizona, as well as a New York City private school.

The schools were chosen to represent rural, suburban and urban areas, as well as the east and west. Within weeks, Free to Learn had heard from parents in every state and is now approaching 10,000 members, said its president, Alleigh Marré, who served as special assistant and chief of staff to the Air Force secretary during the Trump administration.

Her group followed up with a TV ad that aired during the Washington Football Team’s season opener. It decried Loudoun County officials for having spent lavishly on a “divisive curriculum promoted by political activists” and accused “powerful education unions” of using “dirty political campaign tactics to go after parents.”

More ads are planned elsewhere soon, said Marré, who lives in Virginia and has two children who have yet to reach school age. She said her group wants to build “like-minded coalitions of parents” and “elevate their voices where they can’t necessarily be ignored.”

Marré said parents who have criticized school policies have faced sanctions from school districts and sometimes had neighbors complain to their employers or seen things like their child’s soccer team playing time decrease — making it little surprise the issue came up at the gubernatorial debate.

“It’s something that is absolutely on the forefront of everyone’s mind,” Marré said. “It definitely has people fired up.”

Beaumont reported from Des Moines, Iowa.

## High court to hear Guantanamo prisoner’s state secrets case

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is set to hear arguments about the government’s ability to keep what it says are state secrets from a man who was tortured by the CIA following 9/11 and is now held at the Guantanamo Bay detention center.

At the center of the case being heard Wednesday is whether Abu Zubaydah, who was captured in Pakistan in 2002 and thought at the time to be a high-ranking member of al-Qaida, can get information related to his detention. Zubaydah and his lawyer want to question two former CIA contractors about Zubaydah’s time at a secret CIA facility in Poland where they say he was held and tortured.

A federal appeals court sided with Zubaydah, and said that though the government maintained that the information should be kept secret, a judge should determine whether any information he is seeking can be disclosed.

The case has its origins in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks when the CIA set up a detention and interrogation program designed to collect intelligence about terrorist plots against Americans. As part of that program, the agency set up secret prisons, so-called black sites, in other countries and used extreme interrogation techniques now widely viewed as torture.

Zubaydah, the first person in the CIA program, spent four years at CIA black sites before being transferred to Guantanamo Bay in 2006. According to a 2014 Senate report on the CIA program, among other things Zubaydah was waterboarded more than 80 times and spent over 11 days in a coffin-size confinement box.

He’s seeking information from former CIA contractors James Mitchell and John “Bruce” Jessen, who are considered the architects of the interrogation program.

Zubaydah wants evidence from them as part of a criminal investigation in Poland into his detention at a black site there. The U.S. government has never publicly acknowledged a CIA black site in Poland, though the former president of Poland has and its existence has also been widely reported in the media.

Zubaydah and his attorney note that Mitchell and Jessen have testified twice before in other situations, including hearings at Guantanamo, and that Mitchell wrote a book about his experience. They say they want nonprivileged information from the men such as the details of Zubaydah’s “torture in Poland, his

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medical treatment, and the conditions of his confinement.”

The Biden administration, like the Trump administration before it, says the information should not be disclosed because it would do significant harm to national security. The United States has declassified a significant amount of information about the former CIA program but certain information, including the locations of former CIA detention facilities, can't be declassified without a risk to national security, the administration says.

A federal court initially ruled that Mitchell and Jessen shouldn't be required to provide any information. But an appeals court ruled 2-1 that the lower court made a mistake in ruling out questioning entirely before attempting to separate what can and can't be disclosed.

In its briefs before the Supreme Court the government says Zubaydah was “an associate and longtime terrorist ally of Osama bin Laden.” Zubaydah's lawyers say the CIA was mistaken in believing he was a high-ranking member of al-Qaida.

## Brother, can you spare a coin — a \$1 trillion one?

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some politicians think they've found a silver bullet for the impasse over the debt limit, except the bullet is made of platinum: Mint a \$1 trillion coin, token of all tokens, and use it to flood the treasury with cash and drive Republicans crazy.

Even its serious proponents — who are not that many — call it a gimmick. They say it is an oddball way out of an oddball accounting problem that will have severe consequences to average people's pocketbooks and the economy if it is not worked out in coming days.

But despite all the jokes about who should go on the face of the coin — Chuck E. Cheese? Donald Trump, to tempt or taunt the GOP? — there's scholarship behind it, too. However improbable, it is conceivable the government could turn \$1 trillion into a coin of the realm without lawmakers having a say.

How is this possible when the treasury secretary can't simply print money to pay public debts? It's because a quirky law from more than 20 years ago seems to allow the administration to mint coins of any denomination without congressional approval as long as they're platinum.

The intent was to help with the production of commemorative coins for collectors, not to create a nuclear option in a fiscal crisis. Oops.

Specifically, the law says the treasury secretary “may mint and issue platinum bullion coins and proof platinum coins in accordance with such specifications, designs, varieties, quantities, denominations, and inscriptions as the Secretary, in the Secretary's discretion, may prescribe from time to time.”

This is that time, in the view of coin advocates. But Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, the White House and some Democrats slapped down the idea Tuesday, just as past leaders have done when the going got tough and radical quick-fixes emerged.

“The only thing kookier would be a politically inflicted default,” Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va, said of the coin.

Said Yellen, “What's necessary is for Congress to show that the world can count on America paying its debt.” A platinum coin, she told CNBC, “is really a gimmick.”

Sure it is, said Rohan Grey, a Willamette University law professor and expert on fiscal policy.

“The fact that (the coin) represents an accounting gimmick is a source of its strength, rather than a weakness,” Grey wrote in a 2020-21 study in the Kentucky Law Journal. “The idea of ‘fighting an accounting problem with an accounting solution’ is entirely coherent ... the debt ceiling itself can be viewed as one big, poorly designed accounting gimmick.”

The United States will hit the ceiling Oct. 18 unless Congress acts in time to suspend it. The two parties are in a stalemate in the Senate — Republicans unwilling to join Democrats in what used to be a routine exercise; Democrats holding back on using only their own votes to fix the problem.

That's what makes a shiny coin with a 1 and 12 zeroes tempting to some, if that untested and audacious path actually would work.

But fraught questions arise for lots of Democrats as well as Republicans: Would they have wanted President Donald Trump to be ordering up mega-coins like Diet Cokes to his desk? Do they want the next



president to have that power? Or even this one?

Other extraordinary possibilities have been floated, too, such as invoking the 14th Amendment's guarantee that the "validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law ... shall not be questioned," which some scholars argue could be used to override the debt limit.

The White House has looked at all such options "and none of those options were viable," press secretary Jen Psaki said. "So, we know that the only path forward here is through Congress acting."

The debt ceiling was instituted in the World War I era to make it easier for the U.S. to issue war bonds without needing congressional approval each time. Legislators only needed to stay under the approved total.

Raising or suspending the ceiling has been a mostly uncontroversial task until recent times, because the debt comes mostly from spending that has already been approved by Congress or covers payments mandated by law. Now everything is fodder for a fight to the last minute.

The Treasury can't introduce new currency into circulation, only the Fed can do that. In theory, the coin would be minted and deposited with the Fed and its value would make its way into Treasury's general account and used to pay a whole lot of bills.

In practice, no one knows precisely how it would work and what problems, like inflation, would result. Democrats do not seem willing to upend a messy process that for generations has nevertheless stood as the gold standard in global credit.

The idea of a \$1 trillion coin got attention in 2013 when President Barack Obama struggled to get Republicans on board. Donald Marron, a tax policy expert who had led the Congressional Budget Office during part of the Bush administration, thought it wasn't a great idea — but not a terrible one, either.

"Analysts have considered a range of other options for avoiding default, including prioritizing payments, asserting the debt limit is unconstitutional, and temporarily selling the gold in Fort Knox," Marron said then. "All raise severe practical, legal, and image problems. In this ugly group, the platinum coin looks relatively shiny."

Still, he said, it sounds like an Austin Powers sequel or a "Simpsons" episode: "It lacks dignity."

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Associated Press writers Josh Boak and Martin Crutsinger contributed to this report.

## **In budget turning point, Biden conceding smaller price tag**

By ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden and congressional Democrats' push for a 10-year, \$3.5 trillion package of social and environmental initiatives has reached a turning point, with the president repeatedly conceding that the measure will be considerably smaller and pivotal lawmakers flashing potential signs of flexibility.

In virtual meetings Monday and Tuesday with small groups of House Democrats, Biden said he reluctantly expected the legislation's final version to weigh in between \$1.9 trillion and \$2.3 trillion, a Democrat familiar with the sessions said Tuesday. He told them he didn't think he could do better than that, the person said, reflecting demands from some of the party's more conservative lawmakers.

Biden used those same figures during a Friday meeting in the Capitol with nearly all House Democrats, according to that person and a second Democrat familiar with the gathering. Both Democrats would describe the meetings only on condition of anonymity.

There has been no agreement on a final figure, and plenty of other unanswered questions — plus the possibility of failure — remain. Crucial unresolved matters include how to get virtually every Democrat in Congress to vote for a measure they've spent months fighting over and that Republicans will solidly oppose, and whether the shrunken price tag would be reached by dropping some proposals or by keeping most but at lower cost or shorter duration.

But by repeatedly conceding that the crown jewel of his own domestic agenda will have to shrink and providing a range for its cost, Biden is trying to push his party beyond months of stalemate and refocus bargain-brosers on nailing down needed policy and fiscal decisions.

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"I want to make sure that we have a package that everyone can agree on," Biden told reporters Tuesday in Howell, Michigan, where he went to try building public support for his plan. "It's not going to be \$3.5 trillion. It's going to be less than that."

Asked how he would trim \$1 trillion from his initial plan, Biden said, "My objective is to get everything that I campaigned on passed." He added, "It won't all happen at once." That seemed to suggest that some initiatives in the bill might not begin right away or might last only temporarily to save money.

Asked if there would be "means testing," or limits on the incomes of people who would qualify for initiatives, the president said, "Sure." Some moderates have wanted to impose such limits on some programs.

The social and environment bill is the heart of Biden's push to beef up federal efforts to help families and slow global warming.

It would require paid family and medical leave; extend tax breaks for families with children, low earners and people buying health insurance; expand Medicare coverage; prod energy companies to move toward cleaner fuels and provide free pre-kindergarten and community college. In a nod to his party's progressive instincts, it would be largely paid for by increasing taxes on the wealthy and corporate America.

Sens. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., have insisted on curbing the bill's cost and have been their party's highest-profile holdouts. Manchin has insisted on holding the package to \$1.5 trillion and has said he wants to means test some programs. Democratic leaders will need every vote in the 50-50 Senate and all but three in the House for victory.

In one indication of possible give-and-take, Manchin on Tuesday said, "I'm not ruling anything out," when asked if he would definitely oppose a price tag in Biden's range. Progressives consider Manchin's demand for a ceiling of \$1.5 trillion unacceptable, though an aide said the senator still wants the lower number.

In addition, progressive Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., said during Monday's virtual meeting with Biden that she wanted \$2.5 trillion to \$2.9 trillion, The Washington Post reported Tuesday. Jayapal leads the nearly 100-member Congressional Progressive Caucus.

As Democrats make painful decisions about scaling down the measure, they are battling over whether to finance as many initiatives as possible but for less than 10 years, or to pick out top priorities and fund them robustly.

Big proposed increases in housing may be cut. Expensive proposed Medicare dental benefits might have to be scaled back. And a proposed extension of a more generous children's tax credit might be temporary, effectively daring a future Congress to refuse to extend them.

That Medicare expansion, which also includes new coverage for hearing and vision, is competing for money against other proposals to expand Medicaid coverage and to extend bigger tax credits for people buying health insurance under President Barack Obama's health care law.

Biden's recalibration of his plan's cost has been accompanied by stepped up talks involving the White House, congressional leaders and lawmakers.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., met late Monday in the Capitol with White House officials including senior adviser Brian Deese and Susan Rice, who heads Biden's Domestic Policy Council. Last week, Deese and Rice were among White House aides who met Thursday night with Manchin and Sinema in the Capitol.

Top Democrats are now hoping to craft an agreement they can push through Congress by Oct. 31, along with a companion \$1 trillion measure financing highway, internet and other infrastructure projects.

The leaders had to abandon long shot hopes of passing those measures last week after divisions between progressives and moderates left them short of votes.

Their divisions remained despite Biden's extraordinary visit with House Democrats on Friday in an effort to unify his party. That same day, Pelosi scrapped a planned vote on the Senate-approved infrastructure bill, which is coveted by moderates but which progressives are holding hostage to force them to back the social and environment measure.

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Associated Press writer Jonathan Lemire in Howell, Michigan, contributed to this report.

## Head of NYPD sergeant union out after FBI raids office, home

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Federal agents raided the offices Tuesday of a New York City police union, the Sergeants Benevolent Association, and the Long Island home of its bombastic leader, who has clashed with city officials over his incendiary tweets and hard-line tactics.

FBI spokesperson Martin Feely said agents were “carrying out a law enforcement action in connection with an ongoing investigation.”

Agents were seen carrying boxes out of the union’s Manhattan headquarters and loading them into a van. The FBI also searched union president Ed Mullins’ home in Port Washington, Long Island, Feely said.

Mullins resigned as the union’s president Tuesday night, according to a message the union’s board sent to members. The board said he did so at its urging. The union represents about 13,000 active and retired NYPD sergeants and controls a \$264 million retirement fund.

“The nature and scope of this criminal investigation has yet to be determined. However, it is clear that President Mullins is apparently the target of the federal investigation,” the board’s message said. “We have no reason to believe that any other member of the SBA is involved or targeted in this matter.”

The union’s board said that while Mullins is presumed innocent, it asked him to step aside to ensure the union’s day-to-day operations continue unimpeded. The board said the union was cooperating with the investigation.

Messages seeking comment were left with Mullins and the union. Calls to Mullins’ cellphone went to a full voicemail box.

Mullins, a police sergeant detached to full-time union work, is in the middle of department disciplinary proceedings for tweeting NYPD paperwork last year regarding the arrest of Mayor Bill de Blasio’s daughter during protests over the Minneapolis police killing of George Floyd.

Mullins’ department trial began last month but was postponed indefinitely after one of his lawyers suffered a medical emergency.

Mullins’ lawyer denies he violated department guidelines, arguing arrest papers with Chiara de Blasio’s personal identifying information, such as her date of birth and address, were already posted online.

Mullins is also suing the department, claiming they were trying to muzzle him by grilling him and recommending disciplinary action over his online missives, which have included claims that officers were at war with city leaders.

Responding to Mullins’ union resignation, Mayor de Blasio tweeted: “Ed Mullins dishonored his uniform, his city and his union more times than I can count. It was just a matter of time before his endless hatred would catch up with him. That day has come.”

The Sergeants Benevolent Association runs a Widows and Children’s Fund, a scholarship fund for members’ children, and Blue Christmas, which distributes toys to needy children.

Mullins, a police officer since 1982, rose to sergeant, a rank above detective but below captain and lieutenant, in 1993 and was elected president of the sergeants union in 2002.

Under Mullins’ leadership, the union has fought for better pay — with contracts resulting in pay increases of 40% — and staked a prominent position in the anti-reform movement.

Though he’s a full-time union chief, city law has allowed Mullins to retain his sergeant’s position and collect salaries from both the union and the police department. Last year, Mullins made more than \$220,000 between the two, according to public records: \$88,757 from the union and \$133,195 from the NYPD.

The NYPD referred questions about Mullins to the FBI.

Along with Mullins’ periodic appearances on cable networks like Fox News and Newsmax — including one in which he was pictured in front of a QAnon mug — perhaps the union’s most powerful megaphone is its 45,000-follower Twitter account, which Mullins runs himself, often to fiery effect.

In 2018, amid a rash of incidents in which police officers were doused with water, Mullins suggested it was time for then-Commissioner James O’Neill and Chief of Department Terence Monahan to “consider

another profession" and tweeted that "O'KNEEL must go!"

O'Neill retorted that Mullins was "a bit of a keyboard gangster" who seldom showed up to department functions.

Last year, Mullins came under fire for tweets calling the city's former Health Commissioner, Dr. Oxiris Barbot, a "b——" and U.S. Rep. Ritchie Torres a "first-class whore."

Mullins was upset over reports Barbot refused to give face masks to police in the early days of the pandemic and angry with Torres' calls for an investigation into a potential police work slowdown in September 2020.

Torres, who is gay, denounced Mullins' tweet as homophobic.

On Tuesday, Torres referenced that tweet in reacting to the news of the raid, writing: "Ed Mullins, who famously called me a 'first-class whore' for daring to ask questions about the @SBANYPD, just got a first-class raid from the FBI."

In 2019, it wasn't tweets that got Mullins in trouble, but rather comments he made in a radio interview suggesting that slain Barnard College student Tessa Majors had gone to the park where she was killed to buy marijuana. Police later arrested three teens, saying she'd been stabbed during an attempted robbery.

Majors' family called Mullins' remarks on the radio show "deeply inappropriate" victim blaming and urged him "not to engage in such irresponsible public speculation."

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Associated Press reporters Karen Matthews and Tom Hays contributed to this report. Follow Michael Sisak on Twitter at [twitter.com/mikesisak](https://twitter.com/mikesisak)

## **Biden: Senate filibuster change on debt a 'real possibility'**

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — To get around Republican obstruction, President Joe Biden said Tuesday that Democrats are considering a change to the Senate's filibuster rules in order to quickly approve lifting the nation's debt limit and avoid what would be a devastating credit default.

The president's surprise remarks come as the Senate is tangled in a fiscally dangerous standoff over a vote that's needed to suspend the nation's debt limit and allow the federal government to continue borrowing to pay down its balances. Congress has just days to act before the Oct. 18 deadline when the Treasury Department has warned it will run short of funds to handle the nation's already accrued debt load.

Biden has resisted any filibuster rule changes over other issues, but his off-the-cuff comments Tuesday night interjected a new urgency to an increasingly uncertain situation.

"It's a real possibility," Biden told reporters outside the White House.

Getting rid of the filibuster rule would lower the typical 60-vote threshold for passage to 50. In the split 50-50 Senate, Vice President Kamala Harris can break a tie, allowing Democrats to push past Republicans.

The topic was broached during a private Democratic Senate lunch session Tuesday as senators were growing exasperated with Republican Leader Mitch McConnell's refusal to allow a simple vote on the debt limit. Instead, McConnell is forcing Democrats to undertake what they view as a cumbersome process taking days, if not weeks, that will eat into their agenda.

With Republicans putting up hurdles to the vote, Democratic senators have been discussing a range of options — including a carve-out to the chamber's filibuster rules.

But invoking a filibuster rules change seems highly unlikely, in part because all Democratic senators would need to be on board.

At his weekly press conference, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., did not embrace — or reject — the idea of changing the filibuster for this one specific issue.

Instead, Schumer simply repeated what he, Biden and others have said — that Republicans should "get out of the way" and allow Democrats to pass the measure that's already been approved and sent over from the House.

"The best way to get this done is for Republicans to just get out of the way," Schumer said.



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He said the burden to stand aside is on McConnell's shoulders.

McConnell, though, wants to force Democrats to use the process he favors, which gives Republicans ample time to remind voters about the unpopular vote.

Dug in Tuesday, McConnell refused to budge.

"They've had plenty of time to execute the debt ceiling increase," McConnell said about the Democrats. "They need to do this --- and the sooner they get about it, the better."

Once a routine matter, raising the debt limit has become politically treacherous over the past decade or more, used by Republicans, in particular, to rail against government spending and the rising debt load, now at \$28 trillion.

The fact is, both parties have contributed to the debt and the nation has run a deficit most years for decades.

The filibuster has been up for debate all year, as Biden and his allies consider ways to work around Republican opposition to much of their agenda.

Biden has not backed earlier calls to end the filibuster for other topics — namely voting law changes. But Tuesday's comments could signal a new phase.

At least one Democrat, Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., sounded resistant Tuesday. He and Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., have raised objections to ending the filibuster on other topics this year.

The standoff over the debt ceiling that started weeks ago as a routine political skirmish is now entering more serious territory, as the senators risk a rare federal default if no agreement is reached.

That could set off a cascading fiscal crisis, rippling through not just the government and financial markets, but the ordinary economy and the lives of Americans.

## **Dems edge toward pared-down spending plan to boost support**

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, LISA MASCARO and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

HOWELL, Mich. (AP) — President Joe Biden and congressional Democrats edged closer to agreement Tuesday on how sharply to cut back his ambitious social spending plan, even as the president made a public case that the package will help keep the nation from losing its "edge" in global competitiveness.

Biden went to Michigan to promote the proposal for expanded safety net, health and environmental programs, but after his speech he acknowledged the inevitable as Democrats focus on a now-\$2 trillion top-line for the package to win support.

"I want to make sure that we have a package that everyone can agree on," Biden told reporters. "It's not going to be \$3.5 trillion. It's going to be less than that."

"We're going to get it done."

On Capitol Hill, strong signs emerged that Democrats were coalescing around Biden's push for a package in the \$2 trillion range, a figure that seemed potentially acceptable to Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and other centrists with reservations. With all Republicans opposed, Biden can't spare the support of a single Democratic senator.

At the same time, new battle lines are being formed as Democrats decide which of the many programs they want to expand — health, education, childcare, climate change — will remain in the final proposal or be reduced or left behind.

And in a signal of how much still may change before the bill makes it to his desk, Biden later suggested he'd sign a bill that includes the so-called Hyde Amendment, which blocks federal funds from being used for abortions in most cases. Manchin wants it in the final bill, while progressive Democrats oppose it.

"I'd sign it either way," Biden told reporters.

In his speech at a union training facility, Biden called opponents of his plan "complicit in America's decline," as he argued his spending plan is critical to America's global competitiveness. He said he wanted to "set some things straight" about his agenda and cut through what he dismissed as "noise" in Washington.

"America's still the largest economy in the world, we still have the most productive workers and the most innovative minds in the world, but we're at risk of losing our edge as a nation," he said.

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The president went on to spell out his plans in greater detail than he has in some time, after spending the past week deep in the details of negotiations on Capitol Hill.

He highlighted popular individual parts of the plan, including funding for early childhood education and investments to combat climate change, rather than the expensive topline. And he emphasized that the trillions in spending would be drawn out over a decade and paid for by tax increases on corporations and the wealthiest Americans.

Polling suggests that elements in the social spending bill and a related \$1 trillion infrastructure bill — such as expanded child care opportunities and roads-and-bridges infrastructure projects — are popular with large parts of the public. But even some of the White House's closest allies have worried that the West Wing has not done enough to sell the spending. That brought Biden back on the road Tuesday, hitting the red-leaning district of Democratic Rep. Elissa Slotkin to sell his policies.

"These bills are not about left versus right or moderate vs progressive," Biden said. "These bills are about competitiveness versus complacency."

Back in Washington, a more immediate problem was mounting as Senate Republicans are putting up hurdles to raising the nation's debt limit, a routine vote that's needed to allow more borrowing and prevent a devastating credit default. Biden said Democrats are considering changing the chamber's filibuster rules, which would lower the typical 60-vote threshold to 50, to do it.

"It's a real possibility," Biden told reporters at the White House.

Meanwhile, negotiations continued on the pair of bills to boost spending on safety net, health and environmental programs and infrastructure projects. The \$3.5 trillion price tag on the social services portion of Biden's agenda has long been the sticking point, with progressives demanding the funding for their priorities and moderates balking at the eye-popping number.

But there was growing consensus — which Biden has expressed privately to lawmakers, and acknowledged publicly Tuesday — that the topline number will eventually shrink.

In multiple private meetings, Biden has now floated \$2 trillion as a figure for his signature package, including in a call late Monday with progressive House lawmakers, who still advocated for a higher amount, according to a person granted anonymity to discuss the private meeting.

Next to Biden, the Democrats with the most on the line over the shape and success of his spending plans are House members from swing districts whose reelections are essential if his party is to retain control of Congress.

Many of those targeted moderates — including Arizona Rep. Tom O'Halleran, Virginia Rep. Abigail Spanberger and nine other vulnerable Democrats — joined Biden for a virtual meeting Tuesday. He held a similar session the previous day with a dozen progressives.

And his Tuesday visit to Slotkin's district, which President Donald Trump narrowly won in 2020, was aimed at giving moderates like her cover to support his spending package.

While Slotkin backs the smaller, bipartisan \$1 trillion infrastructure bill that has passed the Senate, she prefers passing it in the House before negotiating the broader package of social programs.

"To be honest, it was hard for me to understand why leadership decided in the first place to tie the two bills together," Slotkin recently told The Detroit News. "That's not how we normally operate. It's not my preference."

Washington was gripped with the drama last week as lawmakers grappled with the massive Democrats-only social spending bill that has been linked with the infrastructure bill. Progressives have balked at voting for the infrastructure bill if the other bill shrinks.

Yet even as talk of that shrinkage increased, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., a leader of the progressives, said Tuesday, "There's a lot of discussion going on, but I'm confident at the end of the day it's going to be a good agreement."

"This cannot ultimately be a bill that does 18 new things, but it could do four or five or six big bold new things," said Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware, an ally of the president.

Lawmakers are considering cutting back some programs or limiting others to only people who qualify

based on need.

Biden's team huddled with the Democratic leaders late Monday at the Capitol as they rush to finish the latest draft — in "days, not weeks," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said.

One senator was moved to compare it all to dancing.

"The best image I know is a square dance: You come together, but then you go apart; you come together, but then you go apart," said Sen. John Hickenlooper of Colorado, describing his fellow Democrats. "There's a rhythm there, we just got to make sure we stay in rhythm. That's the challenge."

Associated Press writers Mike Householder in Howell, Michigan, and David Eggert in Lansing, Michigan, contributed to this report.

## Evidence suggests ship anchor snagged, dragged oil pipeline

By STEFANIE DAZIO, MATTHEW BROWN and BRIAN MELLE Y Associated Press

LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Evidence emerged Tuesday that a ship's anchor snagged and dragged an underwater pipeline that ruptured and spilled tens of thousands of gallons of crude oil off Southern California, an accident the Coast Guard acknowledged it did not investigate for nearly 10 hours after the first call came in about a possible leak.

The pipe was split open and a nearly mile-long section apparently pulled along the ocean floor, possibly by "an anchor that hooked the pipeline, causing a partial tear," federal transportation investigators said.

"The pipeline has essentially been pulled like a bow string," said Martyn Willsher, CEO of Amplify Energy Corp., which operates the pipeline. "At its widest point, it is 105 feet (32 meters) away from where it was." Huge cargo ships regularly cross above the pipeline as they head into the massive Los Angeles-Long Beach port complex. They are given coordinates where they are to anchor until unloading.

Even when anchored, cargo ships continually move from shifting winds and tides. If a ship fails to properly set its anchor in the ocean floor, those forces of nature come into play and can push the ship and drag the anchor along the bottom, potentially catching anything in its way, said Steven Browne, a professor of marine transportation at California State University Maritime Academy.

Anchors on large ships can weigh 10 tons or more and are attached to hundreds of feet of thick steel chains. "Whatever the anchor gets fouled on will come along with the ship," Browne said.

The spill sent up to 126,000 gallons (572,807 liters) of heavy crude into the ocean off Huntington Beach. It then washed onto miles of beaches and a protected marshland.

The beaches could remain closed for weeks or longer, a major hit to the local economy. Coastal fisheries in the area are closed to commercial and recreational fishing. On shore, animals rescuers have been pleasantly surprised to find few birds covered in oil.

The time of the spill was still unclear Tuesday, and there was no indication whether investigators suspect that a particular ship was involved.

Democratic Congresswoman Katie Porter, a Democrat who chairs the oversight and investigations subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee, said the panel would investigate the incident.

"We are going to make sure that we have answers as to how this happened, and to make sure that we hold the responsible party accountable," said Porter, who represents a district a few miles inland from the spill area.

Coast Guard officials defended their decision to wait until sunrise Saturday to investigate a possible spill first reported by a commercial ship at 8:22 p.m. Friday near a cluster of boats that were anchored off Huntington Beach.

That sighting was supported by a report to the National Response Center, a hazardous spill hotline staffed by the Coast Guard, at 2:06 a.m. Saturday from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which said satellite images showed the strong likelihood of an oil slick.

Residents in nearby Newport Beach had also complained Friday evening about a strong stench of petroleum, and police put out a notice to the public about it.

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The Coast Guard was alerted to a sheen on the water by a "good Samaritan" but did not have enough corroborating evidence and was hindered by darkness and a lack of technology to seek out the spill, Coast Guard Rear Adm. Brian Penoyer told The Associated Press.

He said the Coast Guard put out a broadcast to the many cargo and tanker ships anchored off the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports, along with oil rigs, seeking more information but did not receive any response.

Coast Guard Capt. Rebecca Ore later disputed that account. She said the Coast Guard did not broadcast any information to ships or oil platforms, and Penoyer later said he needed to check his facts.

Penoyer said it was fairly common to get reports of oil sheens in a major seaport.

"In hindsight, it seems obvious, but they didn't know that at that time," Penoyer said.

Federal pipeline safety investigators put the time of the spill at 2:30 a.m. Saturday, which is when they said an alarm sounded in the control room of an Amplify-owned offshore oil rig. It was an alert that pressure had dropped in the pipeline, indicating a possible leak.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration said the pipeline was shutoff at 6:01 a.m. Saturday.

Willsher, however, said the company was not aware of the spill until it saw a sheen on the water at 8:09 a.m.

The pipeline company did not report the spill Saturday until either 8:55 a.m., based on a state report, or 9:07 a.m., according to PHMSA. At that point, the Coast Guard had been on the water for a couple hours and discovered the spill as Amplify was making the report.

The company's spill-response plan calls for the immediate notification of a spill. Criminal charges have been brought in the past when a company took too long to notify federal and state officials of a spill.

Speaking at a news conference, Gov Gavin Newsom repeated his calls for the U.S. to move beyond oil. Newsom last year signed an executive order banning the sale of new gas-powered vehicles by 2035.

"It's time, once and for all, to disabuse ourselves that this has to be part of our future. This is part of our past," he said from Bolsa Chica State Beach, where he was joined by local, state and federal officials to discuss the spill.

During a two-hour boat tour off Huntington Beach coastline, an AP video journalist saw no visible oil. Pelicans and other sea birds floated on calm waters, and four dolphins swam by the boat.

Dozens of cargo vessels were seen anchored offshore, sharing space with about a half dozen oil platforms. Dozens of workers in white suits dotted the shoreline removing deposited oil.

The break in the line occurred about 5 miles offshore at a depth of about 98 feet (30 meters), investigators said. Those findings were included in an order from the Department of Transportation that blocked the company from restarting the pipeline without extensive inspections and testing.

The order did not identify the source of the investigators' information, and agency officials did not immediately respond to a request for further comment.

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Associated Press journalists Michael Blood and Christopher Weber in Los Angeles, Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, Michael Biesecker in Washington, and Eugene Garcia and Amy Taxin in Huntington Beach, California, contributed to this report.

## Ex-Facebook manager criticizes company, urges more oversight

By MARCY GORDON and BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — While accusing the giant social network of pursuing profits over safety, a former Facebook data scientist told Congress Tuesday she believes stricter government oversight could alleviate the dangers the company poses, from harming children to inciting political violence to fueling misinformation.

Frances Haugen, testifying to the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, presented a wide-ranging condemnation of Facebook. She accused the company of failing to make changes to Instagram after internal research showed apparent harm to some teens and being dishonest in its public fight



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against hate and misinformation. Haugen's accusations were buttressed by tens of thousands of pages of internal research documents she secretly copied before leaving her job in the company's civic integrity unit.

But she also offered thoughtful ideas about how Facebook's social media platforms could be made safer. Haugen laid responsibility for the company's profits-over-safety strategy right at the top, with CEO Mark Zuckerberg, but she also expressed empathy for Facebook's dilemma.

Haugen, who says she joined the company in 2019 because "Facebook has the potential to bring out the best in us," said she didn't leak internal documents to a newspaper and then come before Congress in order to destroy the company or call for its breakup, as many consumer advocates and lawmakers of both parties have called for.

Haugen is a 37-year-old data expert from Iowa with a degree in computer engineering and a master's degree in business from Harvard. Prior to being recruited by Facebook, she worked for 15 years at tech companies including Google, Pinterest and Yelp.

"Facebook's products harm children, stoke division and weaken our democracy," Haugen said. "The company's leadership knows how to make Facebook and Instagram safer but won't make the necessary changes because they have put their astronomical profits before people."

"Congressional action is needed," she said. "They won't solve this crisis without your help."

In a note to Facebook employees Tuesday, Zuckerberg disputed Haugen's portrayal of the company as one that puts profit over the well-being of its users, or that pushes divisive content.

"At the most basic level, I think most of us just don't recognize the false picture of the company that is being painted," Zuckerberg wrote.

He did, however, appear to agree with Haugen on the need for updated internet regulations, saying that would relieve private companies from having to make decisions on social issues on their own.

"We're committed to doing the best work we can, but at some level the right body to assess tradeoffs between social equities is our democratically elected Congress," Zuckerberg wrote.

Democrats and Republicans have shown a rare unity around the revelations of Facebook's handling of potential risks to teens from Instagram, and bipartisan bills have proliferated to address social media and data-privacy problems. But getting legislation through Congress is a heavy slog. The Federal Trade Commission has taken a stricter stance toward Facebook and other tech giants in recent years.

"Whenever you have Republicans and Democrats on the same page, you're probably more likely to see something," said Gautam Hans, a technology law and free speech expert at Vanderbilt University.

Haugen suggested, for example, that the minimum age for Facebook's popular Instagram photo-sharing platform could be increased from the current 13 to 16 or 18.

She also acknowledged the limitations of possible remedies. Facebook, like other social media companies, uses algorithms to rank and recommend content to users' news feeds. When the ranking is based on engagement — likes, shares and comments — as it is now with Facebook, users can be vulnerable to manipulation and misinformation. Haugen would prefer the ranking to be chronological. But, she testified, "People will choose the more addictive option even if it is leading their daughters to eating disorders."

Haugen said a 2018 change to the content flow contributed to more divisiveness and ill will in a network ostensibly created to bring people closer together.

Despite the enmity that the new algorithms were feeding, she said Facebook found that they helped keep people coming back — a pattern that helped the social media giant sell more of the digital ads that generate the vast majority of its revenue.

Haugen said she believed Facebook didn't set out to build a destructive platform. "I have a huge amount of empathy for Facebook," she said. "These are really hard questions, and I think they feel a little trapped and isolated."

But "in the end, the buck stops with Mark," Haugen said, referring to Zuckerberg, who controls more than 50% of Facebook's voting shares. "There is no one currently holding Mark accountable but himself."

Haugen said she believed that Zuckerberg was familiar with some of the internal research showing concerns for potential negative impacts of Instagram.

The subcommittee is examining Facebook's use of information its own researchers compiled about Ins-

stagram. Those findings could indicate potential harm for some of its young users, especially girls, although Facebook publicly downplayed possible negative impacts. For some of the teens devoted to Facebook's popular photo-sharing platform, the peer pressure generated by the visually focused Instagram led to mental health and body-image problems, and in some cases, eating disorders and suicidal thoughts, the research leaked by Haugen showed.

One internal study cited 13.5% of teen girls saying Instagram makes thoughts of suicide worse and 17% of teen girls saying it makes eating disorders worse.

She also has filed complaints with federal authorities alleging that Facebook's own research shows that it amplifies hate, misinformation and political unrest, but that the company hides what it knows.

After recent reports in The Wall Street Journal based on documents she leaked to the newspaper raised a public outcry, Haugen revealed her identity in a CBS "60 Minutes" interview aired Sunday night.

As the public relations debacle over the Instagram research grew last week, Facebook put on hold its work on a kids' version of Instagram, which the company says is meant mainly for tweens aged 10 to 12.

Haugen said that Facebook prematurely turned off safeguards designed to thwart misinformation and incitement to violence after Joe Biden defeated Donald Trump in last year's presidential election, alleging that doing so contributed to the deadly Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol.

After the November election, Facebook dissolved the civic integrity unit where Haugen had been working. That was the moment, she said, when she realized that "I don't trust that they're willing to actually invest what needs to be invested to keep Facebook from being dangerous."

Haugen says she told Facebook executives when they recruited her that she wanted to work in an area of the company that fights misinformation, because she had lost a friend to online conspiracy theories.

Facebook maintains that Haugen's allegations are misleading and insists there is no evidence to support the premise that it is the primary cause of social polarization.

"Today, a Senate Commerce subcommittee held a hearing with a former product manager at Facebook who worked for the company for less than two years, had no direct reports, never attended a decision-point meeting with (top) executives – and testified more than six times to not working on the subject matter in question. We don't agree with her characterization of the many issues she testified about," the company said in a statement.

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Associated Press writers Matt O'Brien in Providence, Rhode Island, and Amanda Seitz in Columbus, Ohio, contributed to this report.

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Follow Marcy Gordon at <https://twitter.com/mgordonap>.

## Missouri man executed for killing 3 workers in '94 robbery

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

BONNE TERRE, Mo. (AP) — A Missouri man was put to death Tuesday for killing three workers while robbing a convenience store nearly three decades ago, an execution performed over objections from racial justice activists, lawmakers and even the pope.

Ernest Johnson died from an injection of pentobarbital at the state prison in Bonne Terre. He silently mouthed words to relatives as the process began. His breathing became labored, he puffed out his cheeks, then swallowed hard. Within seconds, all movement stopped.

In his written last statement, Johnson said he was sorry "and have remorse for what I do." He said he loved his family and friends and thanked those who prayed for him.

Johnson was pronounced dead at 6:11 p.m., nine minutes after the dose was administered. A corrections department spokeswoman said four relatives representing all three victims were present. Johnson's witnesses included relatives and his lawyer. No relatives spoke after the execution.

Corrections spokeswoman Karen Pojmann said 59 demonstrators gathered on the edge of the prison grounds.

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It was the first execution in Missouri since May 2020 and just the seventh in the U.S. this year.

The state moved ahead with executing Johnson despite claims by his attorney that doing so would violate the 8th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits executing intellectually disabled people.

Johnson had a history of scoring extremely low on IQ tests, dating back to childhood. His attorney, Jeremy Weis, said Johnson also was born with fetal alcohol syndrome and lost about one-fifth of his brain tissue when a benign tumor was removed in 2008.

A representative for Pope Francis was among those who urged Republican Gov. Mike Parson to grant clemency, telling Parson in a letter that the pope "wishes to place before you the simple fact of Mr. Johnson's humanity and the sacredness of all human life." Parson announced Monday that he would not intervene.

It wasn't the first time a pope has sought to intervene in a Missouri execution. In 1999, during his visit to St. Louis, Pope John Paul II persuaded Democratic Gov. Mel Carnahan to grant clemency to Darrell Mease, weeks before Mease was to be put to death for a triple killing. Carnahan, who died in 2000, was a Baptist, as is Parson.

In 2018, Pope Francis changed church teaching to say capital punishment can never be sanctioned because it constitutes an "attack" on human dignity. Catholic leaders have been outspoken opponents of the death penalty in many states.

Racial justice activists and two Missouri members of congress — Democratic U.S. Reps. Cori Bush of St. Louis and Emmanuel Cleaver of Kansas City — also called on Parson to show mercy to Johnson, who is Black.

But Parson announced Monday he would not grant clemency, and the courts declined to intervene.

Johnson's crime shook the central Missouri city of Columbia nearly 28 years ago.

Johnson was a frequent customer of a Casey's General Store. Court records show that on Feb. 12, 1994, he borrowed a .25-caliber pistol from his girlfriend's 18-year-old son, with plans to rob the store for money to buy drugs.

In a 2004 videotaped interview with a psychologist shown in court, Johnson said he was under the influence of cocaine as he waited for the last customer to leave at closing time. Three workers were in the store: manager Mary Bratcher, 46, and employees Mabel Scruggs, 57, and Fred Jones, 58.

On the video, Johnson said he became angry when Bratcher, who claimed not to have a safe key, tried to flush it down the toilet. He shot the victims with the borrowed gun, then attacked them with a claw hammer. Bratcher also was stabbed in the hand with a screwdriver. Police found two victims in the store's bathroom, and the third in a cooler.

"This was a hideous crime," said Kevin Crane, the Boone County prosecutor at the time. "It was traumatic, and it was intense."

Police officers searching a nearby field found a bloody screwdriver, gloves, jeans and a brown jacket, and questioned Johnson within hours of the killings. At Johnson's girlfriend's house, officers found a bag with \$443, coin wrappers, partially burned checks and tennis shoes matching bloody shoe prints from inside the store.

Johnson had previously asked that his execution be carried out by firing squad. His lawyers argued that Missouri's lethal injection drug, pentobarbital, could trigger seizures due to the loss of the brain tissue when the tumor was removed.

Missouri law does not authorize execution by firing squad.

Johnson was sentenced to death in his first trial and two other times. The second death sentence, in 2003, came after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that executing the mentally ill was unconstitutionally cruel. The Missouri Supreme Court tossed that second death sentence, and Johnson was sentenced a third time in 2006.

Of the six previous U.S. executions this year, three were in Texas and three involved federal prisoners.

The peak year for modern executions was 1999, when there were 98 across the U.S. That number has gradually declined and just 17 people were executed last year — 10 involving federal prisoners, three in Texas and one each in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama and Missouri, according to a database compiled by the Death Penalty Information Center.

## State Department discloses number of nukes in US stockpile

By ROBERT BURNS AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a reversal of Trump administration policy, the State Department on Tuesday disclosed the number of nuclear weapons in the U.S. stockpile. It said this will aid global efforts to control the spread of such weapons.

The number of U.S. weapons, including those in active status as well as those in long-term storage, stood at 3,750 as of September 2020, the department said. That is down from 3,805 a year earlier and 3,785 in 2018.

As recently as 2003, the U.S. nuclear weapon total was slightly above 10,000. It peaked at 31,255 in 1967.

The last time the U.S. government released its stockpile number was in March 2018, when it said the total was 3,822 as of September 2017. That was early in the Trump administration, which subsequently kept updated numbers secret and denied a request by the Federation of American Scientists to declassified them.

“Back to transparency,” said Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists. He said the Biden administration was wise to reverse the prior administration’s policy.

Kristensen said disclosing the stockpile number will assist U.S. diplomats in arms control negotiations and at next year’s Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty conference, which will review the disarmament commitment made by nuclear powers who are treaty signatories, including the United States.

The Biden administration is conducting a nuclear weapons posture and policy review that is expected to be completed early next year.

At the Conference on Disarmament last February, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, “President Biden has made it clear: the U.S. has a national security imperative and a moral responsibility to reduce and eventually eliminate the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction.”

## Facebook whistleblower testifies: Five highlights

By BARBARA ORTUTAY and DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

A former Facebook employee told members of Congress Tuesday that the company knows that its platform spreads misinformation and content that harms children but refuses to make changes that could hurt its profits.

Speaking before the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, former Facebook data scientist Frances Haugen told lawmakers that new regulations are needed to force Facebook to improve its own platforms. But she stopped short of calling for a breakup of the company, saying it wouldn’t fix existing problems and would instead turn Facebook into a “Frankenstein” that continues to cause harm around the world while a separate Instagram rakes in most advertising dollars.

Efforts to pass new regulations on social media have failed in the past, but senators said Tuesday that new revelations about Facebook show the time for inaction has ended.

Here are some key highlights from Tuesday’s hearing.

### FACEBOOK KNOWS IT’S CAUSING HARM TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Haugen said Facebook knows that vulnerable people are harmed by its systems, from kids who are susceptible to feel bad about their bodies because of Instagram to adults who are more exposed to misinformation after being widowed, divorced or experiencing other forms of isolation such as moving to a new city.

The platform is designed to exploit negative emotions to keep people on the platform, she said.

“They are aware of the side effects of the choices they have made around amplification. They know that algorithmic-based rankings, or engagement-based rankings, keeps you on their sites longer. You have longer sessions, you show up more often, and that makes them more money.”

### THE WHISTLEBLOWER TOUCHED A NERVE

During the hearing, Tennessee Sen. Marsha Blackburn, the committee’s ranking Republican, said she’d just received a text from Facebook spokesperson Andy Stone pointing out that Haugen did not work on



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child safety or Instagram or research these issues and has no direct knowledge on the topic from her work at Facebook.

Haugen herself made it clear several times that she did not directly work on these issues but based her testimony on the documents she had and her own experience.

But Facebook's statement emphasized her limited role and relatively short tenure at the company, effectively questioning her expertise and credibility. That didn't sit well with everyone.

Facebook's tactic "demonstrates that they don't have a good answer to all these problems that they're attacking her on," said Gautam Hans, a technology law and free speech expert at Vanderbilt University.

## SMALL CHANGES COULD MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Making changes to reduce the spread of misinformation and other harmful content wouldn't require a wholesale reinvention of social media, Haugen said. One of the simplest changes could be to just organize posts in chronological order instead of letting computers predict what people want to see based on how much engagement — good or bad — it might attract.

Another was to add one more click before users can easily share content, which she said Facebook knows can dramatically reduce misinformation and hate speech.

"A lot of the changes that I'm talking about are not going to make Facebook an unprofitable company, it just won't be a ludicrously profitable company like it is today," she said.

She said Facebook won't make those changes on its own if it might halt growth, even though the company's own research showed that people use the platform less when they're exposed to more toxic content.

"One could reason a kinder, friendlier, more collaborative Facebook might actually have more users five years from now, so it's in everyone's interest," she said.

## A PEEK INSIDE THE COMPANY

Haugen portrayed Facebook's corporate environment as so machine-like and driven by metrics that it was hard to hit the brakes on known harms that, if addressed, might dent growth and profits.

She described the company's famously "flat" organizational philosophy -- with few levels of management and an open-floor workplace at its California headquarters that packs nearly the entire staff into one enormous room -- as an impediment to the leadership necessary to pull the plug on bad ideas.

She said the company didn't set out to make a destructive platform, but she noted that CEO Mark Zuckerberg holds considerable power because he controls more than 50% of the voting shares of the company and that letting metrics drive decisions was itself a decision on his part.

"In the end, the buck stops with Mark," she said.

## BIPARTISAN OUTRAGE

Democrats and Republicans on the committee said Tuesday's hearing showed the need for new regulations that would change how Facebook targets users and amplifies content. Such efforts have long failed in Washington, but several senators said Haugen's testimony might be the catalyst for change.

"Our differences are very minor, or they seem very minor in the face of the revelations that we've now seen, so I'm hoping we can move forward," said Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., the panel's chairman.

Still, Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota acknowledged that Facebook and other tech companies wield a lot of power in the nation's capital, power that has blocked reforms in the past.

"There are lobbyists around every single corner of this building that have been hired by the tech industry," Klobuchar said. "Facebook and the other tech companies are throwing a bunch of money around this town and people are listening to them."

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AP Technology Writer Matt O'Brien contributed to this report.

## Workers at all of Kellogg's U.S. cereal plants go on strike

By JOSH FUNK Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Work at all of the Kellogg Company's U.S. cereal plants came to a halt Tuesday as roughly 1,400 workers went on strike, but it wasn't immediately clear how much the supply of Frosted

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Flakes or any of the company's other iconic brands would be disrupted.

The strike includes plants in Omaha, Nebraska Battle Creek, Michigan; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Memphis, Tennessee.

The union and the Battle Creek-based company have been at an impasse at the bargaining table for more than a year, said Daniel Osborn, president of the local union in Omaha. The dispute involves an assortment of pay and benefit issues such as the loss premium health care, holiday and vacation pay and reduced retirement benefits

"The company continues to threaten to send additional jobs to Mexico if workers do not accept outrageous proposals that take away protections that workers have had for decades," said Anthony Shelton, president of the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union.

The threat to move work to Mexico doesn't sit well with Osborn.

"A lot of Americans probably don't have too much issue with the Nike or Under Armor hats being made elsewhere or even our vehicles, but when they start manufacturing our food down where they are out of the FDA control and OSHA control, I have a huge problem with that," Osborn said.

The company insists that its offer is fair and would increase wages and benefits for its employees that it said made an average of \$120,000 a year last year.

"We are disappointed by the union's decision to strike. Kellogg provides compensation and benefits for our U.S. ready to eat cereal employees that are among the industry's best," Kellogg spokesperson Kris Bahner said in a statement.

Osborn said he expects the company to try to bring non-union workers into the plants at some point this week to try to resume operations and maintain the supply of its products.

The company acknowledged that it is "implementing contingency plans" to limit supply disruptions for consumers.

The plants have all continued to operate throughout the coronavirus pandemic, but Osborn said that for much of that time workers were putting in 12-hour shifts, seven days a week to keep up production while so many people were out because of the virus.

"The level we were working at is unsustainable," Osborn said.

Kellogg's workers aren't the first food workers to strike during the pandemic.

Earlier this summer, more than 600 workers at a Frito-Lay plant in Topeka, Kansas, walked off the job to protest working conditions during the pandemic, including forced overtime. That strike ended in July when workers ratified a new contract.

Workers at Nabisco plants in five states went on strike in August to protest plans by Nabisco's parent, Mondelez International, to move some work to Mexico, among other issues, according to the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union, which also represents the Kellogg's workers. That strike ended last month when workers ratified a new contract.

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Associated Press writer Dee-Ann Durbin contributed to this report from Detroit.

## Outage highlights how vital Facebook has become worldwide

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The six-hour outage at Facebook, Instagram and Whatsapp was a headache for many casual users but far more serious for the millions of people worldwide who rely on the social media sites to run their businesses or communicate with relatives, fellow parents, teachers or neighbors.

When all three services went dark Monday, it was a stark reminder of the power and reach of Facebook, which owns the photo-sharing and messaging apps.

Around the world, the breakdown at WhatsApp left many at a loss. In Brazil, the messaging service is by far the most widely used app in the country, installed on 99% of smartphones, according to tech pollster Mobile Time.

WhatsApp has become essential in Brazil to communicate with friends and family, as well as for a variety

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of other tasks, such as ordering food. Offices, various services and even the courts had trouble making appointments, and phone lines became overwhelmed.

Hundreds of thousands of Haitians in their homeland and abroad fretted over the WhatsApp outage.

Many of the country's more than 11 million people depend it to alert one another about gang violence in particular neighborhoods or to talk to relatives in the U.S. about money transfers and other important matters. Haitian migrants traveling to the U.S. rely on it to find each other or share key information such as safe places to sleep.

Nelzy Mireille, a 35-year-old unemployed woman who depends on money sent from relatives abroad, said she stopped at a repair shop in the capital of Port-au-Prince because she thought her phone was malfunctioning.

"I was waiting on confirmation on a money transfer from my cousin," she said. "I was so frustrated."

"I was not able to hear from my love," complained 28-year-old Wilkens Bourgogne, referring to his partner, who was in the neighboring Dominican Republic, buying goods to bring back to Haiti. He said he was concerned about her safety because of the violence in their homeland.

"Insecurity makes everyone worry," he said.

In rebel-held Syria, where the telecommunication infrastructure has been disrupted by war, residents and emergency workers rely mostly on internet communication.

Naser AlMuhawish, a Turkey-based Syrian doctor who monitors coronavirus cases in rebel-held territory in Syria, said WhatsApp is the main communication method used with over 500 workers in the field.

They switched to Skype, but WhatsApp works better when internet service is shaky, he said. If there had been an emergency such as shelling that he needed to warn field workers about, there could have been major problems, he said.

"Luckily this didn't happen yesterday during the outage," he said.

But hospitals treating COVID-19 patients in the region were thrown into panic. They lost contact with oxygen suppliers who have no fixed location and are normally reached via WhatsApp. One hospital sent staff member searching for oxygen at nearly two dozen facilities, said Dr. Fadi Hakim of the Syrian American Medical Society.

In Lima, Peru, the breakdown complicated dental technician Mary Mejia's job. Like most Peruvian medical workers, she uses WhatsApp for a multitude of tasks, including scheduling appointments and ordering crowns.

"Sometimes the doctor will be working on a patient and I need to contact a technician for job," she said. "To have to step away and make a phone call? It trips us up. We've become so accustomed to this tool."

Millions of Africans use WhatsApp for all their voice calls, so "people felt they were cut off from the world," said Mark Tinka, a Ugandan who heads engineering at SEACOM, a South Africa-based internet infrastructure company.

Many Africans also use WhatsApp to connect with relatives in other countries. Tinka's stepdaughter lives in Caldwell, Idaho, and lost her father on Sunday, but could not speak with her family back in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, to arrange travel for the funeral.

"It's amazing just how little folks understand the impact of three or four content companies on the utility of the Internet," Tinka said.

Facebook said the outage was due to an internal error related to a "configuration change" but gave no details.

The outage came amid a crisis at Facebook, accused by a whistleblower on "60 Minutes" and on Capitol Hill of profiting from hate and division and suppressing research showing that Instagram contributes to body-image problems, eating disorders and thoughts of suicide in young women.

For small businesses, the outages meant hundreds or thousands of dollars in lost revenue.

Andrawos Bassous is a Palestinian photographer in the Israeli-occupied West Bank whose Facebook page has more than 1 million followers. He has worked with companies including Samsung and Turkish Airlines to create social media content. He said the social media blackout meant he was unable to book appointments or share videos online for companies that employ him.

"Imagine if you promised one of the companies you work for to share their product at a specific time and there is a blackout," Bassous said.

Sarah Murdoch runs a small Seattle-based travel company called Adventures with Sarah and relies on Facebook Live videos to promote her tours. She estimated the breakdown cost her thousands of dollars in bookings.

"I've tried other platforms because I am wary of Facebook, but none of them are as powerful for the type of content I create," Murdoch said. As for her losses, "it may only be a few people, but we are small enough that it hurts."

Heather Rader runs How Charming Photography in Linton, Indiana. She takes photographs for schools and sports teams and makes yard signs with the photos. She has her own website but said parents and other customers mostly try to reach her through social media.

She said she might have lost three or four bookings for photo sessions at \$200 a client.

"A lot of people only have a specific window when they can do ordering and booking and things like that," she said. "If they can't get a direct answer, they go to someone else."

Tarita Carnduff of Alberta, Canada, said she connects with other parents on Facebook just about every day, and the outage drove home for her how crucial that support is.

"As a parent with special needs kids, it is the only space I found others in similar positions," she said. "There's a lot of us that would be lost without it."

But for others, the breakdown led them to conclude they need less Facebook in their lives.

Anne Vydra said she realized she was spending too much free time scrolling and commenting on posts she disagreed with. She deleted the Facebook app on Tuesday.

"I didn't want it to come back," said Vydra, who lives in Nashville, Tennessee, and does voiceover work. She added: "I realized how much of my time was wasted."

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AP reporters Sarah El Deeb in Beirut; Jack Jeffery in Ramallah, West Bank; Evens Sanon in Port-au-Prince, Haiti; Diane Jeantet in Rio de Janeiro; Débora Álvares in Brasilia, Brazil; Joseph Pisani and Tali Arbel in New York; and Frank Bajak in Boston contributed to this report.

## Physics Nobel rewards work on climate change, other forces

By DAVID KEYTON and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Three scientists won the Nobel Prize in physics Tuesday for work that found order in seeming disorder, helping to explain and predict complex forces of nature, including expanding our understanding of climate change.

Syukuro Manabe, originally from Japan, and Klaus Hasselmann of Germany were cited for their work in developing forecast models of Earth's climate and "reliably predicting global warming." The second half of the prize went to Giorgio Parisi of Italy for explaining disorder in physical systems, ranging from those as small as the insides of atoms to the planet-sized.

Hasselmann told The Associated Press that he "would rather have no global warming and no Nobel Prize."

Manabe said that figuring out the physics behind climate change was "1,000 times" easier than getting the world to do something about it. He said the intricacies of policy and society are far harder to fathom than the complexities of carbon dioxide interacting with the atmosphere, which then changes conditions in the ocean and on the land, which then alters the air again in a constant cycle.

He called climate change "a major crisis."

The prize comes less than four weeks before the start of high-level climate negotiations in Glasgow, Scotland, where world leaders will be asked to ramp up their commitments to curb global warming.

The Nobel-winning scientists used their moment in the limelight to urge action.

"It's very urgent that we take very strong decisions and move at a very strong pace" in tackling global warming, Parisi said. He made the appeal even though his share of the prize was for work in a different area of physics.



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All three scientists work on what are known as "complex systems," of which climate is just one example. But the prize went to two fields of study that are opposite in many ways, though they share the goal of making sense of what seems random and chaotic so that it can be predicted.

Parisi's research largely centers around subatomic particles, predicting how they move in seemingly chaotic ways and why, and is somewhat esoteric, while the work by Manabe and Hasselmann is about large-scale global forces that shape our daily lives.

The judges said Manabe, 90, and Hasselmann, 89, "laid the foundation of our knowledge of the Earth's climate and how human actions influence it."

Starting in the 1960s, Manabe, now based at Princeton University, created the first climate models that forecast what would happen as carbon dioxide built up in the atmosphere.

Scientists for decades had shown that carbon dioxide traps heat, but Manabe's work offered specifics. It allowed scientists to eventually show how climate change will worsen and how fast, depending on how much carbon pollution is spewed.

Manabe is such a pioneer that other climate scientists called his 1967 paper with the late Richard Wetherald "the most influential climate paper ever," said NASA chief climate modeler Gavin Schmidt. Manabe's Princeton colleague Tom Delworth called Manabe "the Michael Jordan of climate."

"Suki set the stage for today's climate science, not just the tool but also how to use it," said fellow Princeton climate scientist Gabriel Vecchi. "I can't count the times that I thought I came up with something new, and it's in one of his papers."

Manabe's models from 50 years ago "accurately predicted the warming that actually occurred in the following decades," said climate scientist Zeke Hausfather of the Breakthrough Institute. Manabe's work serves "as a warning to us all that we should take their projections of a much warmer future if we keep emitting carbon dioxide quite seriously."

"I never imagined that this thing I would begin to study has such a huge consequence," Manabe said at a Princeton news conference. "I was doing it just because of my curiosity."

About a decade after Manabe's initial work, Hasselmann, of the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology in Hamburg, Germany, helped explain why climate models can be reliable despite the seemingly chaotic nature of the weather. He also developed ways to look for specific signs of human influence on the climate.

Meanwhile, Parisi, of Sapienza University of Rome, "built a deep physical and mathematical model" that made it possible to understand complex systems in fields as different as mathematics, biology, neuroscience and machine learning.

His work originally focused on so-called spin glass, a type of metal alloy whose behavior long baffled scientists. Parisi, 73, discovered hidden patterns that explained the way it acted, creating theories that could be applied to other fields of research, too.

All three physicists used complex mathematics to explain and predict what seemed like chaotic forces of nature. That is known as modeling.

"Physics-based climate models made it possible to predict the amount and pace of global warming, including some of the consequences like rising seas, increased extreme rainfall events and stronger hurricanes, decades before they could be observed," said German climate scientist and modeler Stefan Rahmstorf. He called Hasselmann and Manabe pioneers in this field.

When climate scientists with the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and former U.S. Vice President Al Gore won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, some who deny global warming dismissed it as a political move. Perhaps anticipating controversy, members of the Swedish Academy of Sciences, which awards the Nobel, emphasized that Tuesday's was a science prize.

"What we are saying is that the modeling of climate is solidly based on physical theory and well-known physics," Swedish physicist Thors Hans Hansson said at the announcement.

For a scientist who trades in predictions, Hasselmann said the prize caught him off guard.

"I was quite surprised when they called," he said. "I mean, this is something I did many years ago."

But Parisi said: "I knew there was a non-negligible possibility" of winning.

The award comes with a gold medal and 10 million Swedish kronor (over \$1.14 million). The money comes

from a bequest left by the prize's creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel, who died in 1895.

On Monday, the Nobel in medicine was awarded to Americans David Julius and Ardem Patapoutian for their discoveries into how the human body perceives temperature and touch.

Over the coming days prizes will be awarded in the fields of chemistry, literature, peace and economics.

Borenstein reported from Kensington, Maryland. Associated Press journalists Frank Jordans and Kerstin Sopke in Berlin, Ted Shaffrey in Princeton, New Jersey, Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo contributed to this report.

Read more stories about Nobel Prizes past and present at <https://www.apnews.com/NobelPrizes>.

## Russian film crew in orbit to make first movie in space

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian actor and a film director rocketed to space Tuesday on a mission to make the world's first movie in orbit, a project the Kremlin said will help burnish the nation's space glory.

Actor Yulia Peresild and director Klim Shipenko blasted off for the International Space Station in a Russian Soyuz spacecraft together with cosmonaut Anton Shkaplerov, a veteran of three space missions. Their Soyuz MS-19 lifted off as scheduled at 1:55 p.m. (0855 GMT) from the Russian space launch facility in Baikonur, Kazakhstan and arrived at the station after about 3½ hours.

Shkaplerov took manual controls to smoothly dock the spacecraft at the space outpost after a glitch in an automatic docking system.

The trio reported they were feeling fine and spacecraft systems were functioning normally.

Peresild and Klimenko are to film segments of a new movie titled "Challenge," in which a surgeon played by Peresild rushes to the space station to save a crew member who needs an urgent operation in orbit. After 12 days on the space outpost, they are set to return to Earth with another Russian cosmonaut.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the mission will help showcase Russia's space prowess.

"We have been pioneers in space and maintained a confident position," Peskov said. "Such missions that help advertise our achievements and space exploration in general are great for the country."

Speaking at a pre-flight news conference Monday, 37-year-old Peresild acknowledged that it was challenging for her to adapt to the strict discipline and rigorous demands during the training.

"It was psychologically, physically and morally hard," she said. "But I think that once we achieve the goal, all that will seem not so difficult and we will remember it with a smile."

Shipenko, 38, who has made several commercially successful movies, also described their fast-track, four-month preparation for the flight as tough.

"Of course, we couldn't make many things at the first try, and sometimes even at a third attempt, but it's normal," he said.

Shipenko, who will complete the shooting on Earth after filming the movie's space episodes, said Shkaplerov and two other Russian cosmonauts now on board the station — Oleg Novitskiy and Pyotr Dubrov — will all play parts in the new movie.

Russia's state-controlled Channel One television, which is involved in making the movie, has extensively covered the crew training and the launch.

"I'm in shock. I still can't imagine that my mom is out there," Peresild's daughter, Anna, said in televised remarks minutes after the launch that she watched teary-eyed.

Dmitry Rogozin, head of the Russian state space corporation Roscosmos, was a key force behind the project, describing it as a chance to burnish the nation's space glory and rejecting criticism from some Russian media.

"I expect the project to help draw attention to our space program, to the cosmonaut profession," Rogozin told reporters Tuesday. "We need a better visualization of space research. Space deserves being shown in a more professional, artful way."

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After congratulating the crew on a successful docking, Rogozin said he personally edited the film script to properly reflect the realities of the space flight.

"We describe some real emergencies that may happen out there," he said. According to the script, the cosmonaut character in the film needs an urgent surgery after being hit by space debris.

Some commentators argued, however, that the film project would distract the Russian crew and could be awkward to film on the Russian segment of the International Space Station, which is considerably less spacious compared to the U.S. segment. A new Russia lab module, the Nauka, was added in July, but it is yet to be fully integrated into the station.

On the space station, the three newcomers joined the station's commander Thomas Pesquet of the European Space Agency; NASA astronauts Mark Vande Hei, Shane Kimbrough and Megan McArthur; Roscosmos cosmonauts Novitskiy and Dubrov; and Aki Hoshide of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency.

After the hatches between the Soyuz and the station were opened, the trio floated in, beaming smiles and exchanging hugs with the station's crew.

"I feel like I'm dreaming," Peresild said during a brief televised hookup with Mission Control in Moscow.

Shipenko echoed that feeling: "We have been waiting for that for such a long time, and indeed now we feel like in a dream."

Novitskiy, who will star as the ailing cosmonaut in the movie, will take the captain's seat in a Soyuz capsule to take the film crew back to Earth on Oct. 17.

Before Russia took the lead in feature filmmaking in space, NASA had talked to actor Tom Cruise about making a movie in orbit.

NASA confirmed last year that it was in talks with Cruise about filming on the International Space Station with SpaceX providing the lift. In May 2020, it was reported that Cruise was developing the project alongside director Doug Liman, Elon Musk and NASA.

Last month, representatives for SpaceX's first privately chartered flight said the actor took part in a call with the four space tourists who orbited more than 585 kilometers (360 miles) high.

Liman told the AP that he was approached for the "impossible" mission by producer P. J. van Sandwijk who asked him simply if he wanted to shoot a movie in outer space. Details have been largely kept under wraps and no updates have been provided on the status recently, but as of January Liman said they were forging ahead.

"There's just a lot of technical stuff that we're figuring out," Liman said. "It's really exciting because when you make a film with Tom Cruise, you have to put stuff on the screen that no one's ever seen before."

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AP Film Writer Lindsey D. Bahr contributed to this report.

## Taliban meet with UK, Iran delegations amid economic woes

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Afghanistan's Taliban leaders met Tuesday with U.K. officials for the first time since taking power, a move the group hopes will pave the way for the country to refill cash-starved coffers as it teeters on the brink of economic collapse.

The Taliban said meanwhile they arrested 11 members of the rival Islamic State group.

The Taliban's meeting with British diplomats in the capital Kabul came a day after they met with an Iranian delegation — another first since assuming the helm — to discuss trade relations, a key driver of Afghanistan's economy.

The Taliban met with Sir Simon Gass, the British prime minister's high representative for Afghan transition, and Martin Longden, the chargé d'affaires of the U.K. mission to Afghanistan in Doha.

The meeting marked Britain's first diplomatic visit to the country since the Taliban seized Kabul on Aug. 15, and took control of Afghanistan following the U.S. exit.

After the meeting, Longden tweeted that "substantial discussions" were held with the Taliban leadership covering a wide range of topics, including the humanitarian crisis, terrorism and the importance for safe

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passage for U.K. and Afghan nationals, and the rights of women and girls.

He fell short of recognizing their government officially, a Taliban wish, and described the meeting as a “test.”

“It’s early days and unsurprisingly, there are points of difference between us. But such difficult challenges lie ahead for Afghanistan (and beyond),” he tweeted. “It’s right to test if we can engage pragmatically and find common ground — in the interests of both the UK and Afghan peoples.”

In a statement, the Taliban said it was committed to good relations with all countries. “In return, we want the international community to return the cash capital of the Afghan nation to our nation,” it said, referring to billions in Afghan assets frozen in U.S. accounts.

The Taliban met Monday with a delegation from neighboring Iran to regulate trade between the countries, Taliban spokesman Bilal Karimi said. They agreed to increase trading hours at the Islam Qala border crossing from eight hours per day to 24 and to better regulate the collection of tariffs and improve roadworks. Customs are a key source of domestic revenue for Afghanistan.

Afghanistan, an aid-dependent country, is grappling with a liquidity crisis as assets remain frozen in the U.S. and disbursements from international organizations that once accounted for 75% of state spending have been paused.

Meanwhile, Taliban officials said Tuesday they arrested 11 members of the Islamic State group, a rival and bitter enemy of the insurgents, in Kabul. The IS affiliate — based in eastern Nangarhar province — has claimed responsibility for a spate of recent attacks targeting Taliban forces in eastern Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Karimi posted on Twitter that the raid was carried out Sunday night in the Afghan capital’s Fifth Police District. He provided no further details. The raid came just hours after a bombing that targeted the Eid Gah Mosque in Kabul, killing at least five people.

IS claimed responsibility for the mosque attack late Monday, saying in a posting by its Amaq news agency that one of its suicide bombers targeted senior Taliban figures following a mourning service.

Sunday’s bombing was the deadliest attack in Kabul since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan with the chaotic departure of the last U.S. troops on Aug. 31. IS had also claimed responsibility for the horrific bombing on Aug. 26 that killed more than 169 Afghans and 13 U.S. military personnel outside the Kabul airport, where thousands of people were trying to reach the airport to escape Taliban rule.

The world has been watching whether the Taliban will live up to their initial promises of tolerance and inclusiveness toward women and ethnic minorities. However, Taliban actions so far, such as renewed restrictions on women and the appointment of an all-male government, have been met with dismay by the international community.

Protests against the Taliban’s policies toward women continued Tuesday, with a demonstration in a Kabul private school by female teachers and students who held up signs saying “Education is a right.” The protest was held indoors to avoid backlash from the Taliban, who have recently outlawed demonstrations held without permission from the government.

The U.N. continued to sound the alarm about the country’s dire economic situation, saying a humanitarian crisis is imminent. The world body’s children’s agency warned that half of Afghanistan’s children under age 5 are expected to suffer from severe malnutrition as hunger takes root amid serious food shortages.

“There are millions of people who are going to starve and there is winter coming, COVID raging, and the whole social system collapsed,” said Omar Adbi, UNICEF’s deputy executive director for programs, during a visit to a Kabul children’s hospital.

At the hospital, a woman named Nargis sat with her 3-year-old child, who was suffering from severe malnutrition. She had come from Kunar province in the northeast, where fighting between the Taliban and the Islamic State group has deprived communities of accessing basic needs, including food. Nargis declined to give her full name.

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Associated Press writers Rahim Faiez in Istanbul and Maamoun Youssef in Cairo contributed to this report.



## Arizona can't use COVID money for anti-mask grants, feds say

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

The Biden administration on Tuesday ordered Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey to stop using the state's federal pandemic funding on a pair of new education grants that can only be directed to schools without mask mandates.

In a letter to Ducey, the Treasury Department said the grant programs are "not a permissible use" of the federal funding. It's the latest attempt by the Biden administration to push back against Republican governors who have opposed mask mandates and otherwise sought to use federal pandemic funding to advance their own agendas.

Ducey, a Republican, created the grant programs in August to put pressure on school districts that have defied the state's ban on mask mandates.

He launched a \$163 million grant program using federal funding he controls, but he made it available only to schools without mask mandates. He also established a \$10 million program that offers vouchers to families at public schools that require masks or that tell students to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure.

In the letter, Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo said the conditions "undermine evidence-based efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19." He asked the state to explain how it will "remediate" the problem within 30 days.

C.J. Karamargin, a spokesperson for Ducey, said it's "baffling" why anyone would oppose the grant programs.

"Following the challenges during the 2020 school year, everyone's primary focus should be equipping families with the resources to get their kids caught up. That's exactly what this program does — giving families in need the opportunity to access educational resources like tutoring, child care, transportation and more," Karamargin said in a statement.

He said the governor's office is reviewing the letter and plans to respond.

Arizona is one of at least eight states that have laws or executive orders banning mask requirements in public schools.

The Education Department in August opened civil rights investigations into five Republican-led states that forbid mask mandates in schools, saying such actions may violate the rights of students with disabilities. The agency later added Florida to the list of states under investigation. It said it was watching several other states in case it needed to take action, including in Arizona.

The Education Department separately promised to repay school districts who have state funding withheld for defying bans on mask requirements. Last month, the agency sent nearly \$150,000 to the School Board of Alachua County in Florida after the state withheld pay for school board members because the district requires masks.

Education advocates have filed a lawsuit over Arizona's ban and several other state laws that restrict the power of local governments and school districts to impose COVID-19 requirements.

Those policies conflict with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recommends universal mask wearing for students and teachers in the classroom. The CDC issued the guidance in light of the rapid spread of the highly contagious delta variant of COVID-19.

## Vaccines are here. School's open. Some parents still agonize

By TALI ARBEL Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Eight days into the school year, all five of Amber Cessac's daughters, ages 4 to 10, had tested positive for COVID-19.

Having them all sick at once and worrying about long-term repercussions as other parents at their school, and even her own mother, downplayed the virus, "broke something inside of me," Cessac said.

"The anxiety and the stress has sort of been bottled up," she said. "It just felt so, I don't know, defeating and made me feel so helpless."

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Like parents everywhere, Cessac has been dealing with pandemic stress for over 18 months now.

There's the exhaustion of worrying about the disease itself—made worse by the spread of the more infectious delta variant, particularly among people who refuse vaccinations, which has caused a big increase in infections in children.

Online school disrupted kids' educations and parents' work. Then the return of in-person school this year brought rising exposures and community tension as parents fought over proper protocols. The politicization of masks, vaccines and shutdowns have worn many parents out. Deciding what's OK for children to do and what isn't can feel fraught.

"Parents are exhausted on a level we've not seen before," said Amanda Zelechowski, a Purdue University Northwest psychology professor who co-founded the website and nonprofit Pandemic Parenting. "We have been in survival mode for a year and a half now and it is relentless."

Schools are, for many, a constant worry. There's evidence that masks in schools help reduce virus spread, and a majority of Americans support requiring masks for students and teachers. But that breaks down sharply along partisan lines. Some Republican governors have tried to ban mask mandates. District policies on masks, testing and quarantines vary widely. Soon after schools reopened in August, the rate of coronavirus infections forced dozens of districts to back off in-person learning.

The charter school Cessac's four older daughters go to in the Austin, Texas, suburbs doesn't require masks. Her children, who are too young to be vaccinated, told her they were among only a handful of kids in their classes to wear masks. But she's sent them back to school as they recovered.

"It's not any better anywhere else," she said. "All the moms, we feel stuck in this situation. There's nothing we can do."

More than 5.5 million children in the U.S. have tested positive for COVID-19, with 20% of all child cases coming since this school year began, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Kids are at lower risk of severe illness or death, but at least 498 have died.

Vaccines have been available for children as young as 12 since May, but vaccination rates lag behind adults. Federal data show about half of 16- and 17-year-olds are vaccinated, while 43% of 12- to 15-year-olds are; two-thirds of U.S. adults are vaccinated.

And while a vaccine for younger children is expected before the end of the year, they remain more vulnerable. Many parents felt lost on how to best protect them. "You still had parents struggling with decisions, and what is safe for my family, and feeling left behind or invisible because other segments of society were able to move on," Zelechowski said.

Over a million students left U.S. public schools in the 2020 school year, which was marked by widespread remote classes. It's not yet clear what's happened this academic year, but fights over mask mandates have led some parents to alternatives.

Sheila Cocchi, a single mom still dealing with health problems after suffering COVID-19 in February, is paying a teacher to give her 10- and 14-year-olds classes at home for 10 hours a week along with an online program. She also works from home in Fernandina Beach, Florida, just north of Jacksonville.

"Last year, it was like OK, the whole world's gone crazy and we're all having to adjust to this. Now it's a different kind of stress," she said. "We're trying to get this under control as a nation, or at least as a state, and there's so many people who are not participating in that. I would like for my children to be in school as much as anyone."

Other parents say they know being back at school is what's best for their kids, and they just hope it's OK.

In Fort Worth, Texas, Heather Buen, who works for a local utility and is a Democratic politics organizer, keeps at her kids to wear masks and wash their hands, even when other children or even teachers don't.

"It's a lot of effort to maintain that," she said.

She thinks seeing their dad, an electrician, get COVID-19 helped scare them into sticking to preventive measures. The five children in school have not gotten sick, and Buen said she feels reassured because it seems more students and staff are wearing masks now than at the beginning of the school year. Still, parents from three districts, including hers, have sued, saying schools are violating students' constitutional rights because there's no mask mandate.

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The lawsuits, school board meeting fights, dissension between family members and friends is also a source of stress.

"The bashing on both sides, that's been the hardest thing," said Sarah Brazwell, who has a 3-year-old in day care and a 9-year-old in elementary school. She's not ready to get vaccinated and, despite overwhelming evidence that face coverings protect against the virus, she said wearing masks in her Florida Panhandle town is "a little pointless" because so few people do.

Child care — finding it, paying for it, worrying about the spread of sicknesses from it — has been a huge stress during the pandemic. Labor is in short supply and it can be difficult to find a spot. Infections and exposures, and even minor colds at day cares can mean children get sent home for days or weeks, forcing parents to scramble repeatedly for child care.

Deanna Manbeck, board president of her child's small, non-profit day care in Wilmington, Delaware, carries the weight of responsibility to the roughly 20 families there. Masks are required for teachers but not vaccines out of fear staff will quit.

"How could I tell parents that we can no longer care for their children and they have to find a new center over an optional mandate? As a mom, I want all teachers to be vaccinated — but we're not in the position to mandate them," she said.

Jeff Sheldon and his wife began interviewing nannies for their two sons, a 3-year-old and a baby, after day care closures and routine childhood illnesses kept their children home for weeks at a time this summer. He and his wife took sick days and worked from home. Their mothers also helped.

"We can't keep living with the uncertainty of class closing at a moment's notice," he said of the day care in Lincoln, Nebraska, noting that his older son has thrived there.

While Sheldon was more able than his wife, who works for the public school system, to work from home, the pandemic has underscored the burden for women in particular balancing child care and work, and millions of women have left the work force.

Taking a leave was a brief consideration for Dr. Ankita Modi, a pediatrician in Charlotte, North Carolina. She was upset the thought even crossed her mind, she said, but she was that desperate. In her school district, masks are optional, there's no remote school option and she says the contact tracing is ineffective. Local health officials agreed and threatened legal action against the district before agreeing on new procedures at the end of September.

Her youngest child, 11, isn't old enough to be vaccinated; the other two are. "It feels like you're knowingly putting them at a real concrete risk every day," she said. "That, as a parent, is really unnerving. I don't think anybody has slept well since school has started."

AP writer Bryan Anderson contributed to this story from Raleigh, North Carolina.

## French report: 330,000 children victims of church sex abuse

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Victims of abuse within France's Catholic Church welcomed a historic turning point Tuesday after a new report estimated that 330,000 children in France were sexually abused over the past 70 years, providing the country's first accounting of the worldwide phenomenon.

The figure includes abuses committed by some 3,000 priests and an unknown number of other people involved in the church — wrongdoing that Catholic authorities covered up over decades in a "systemic manner," according to the president of the commission that issued the report, Jean-Marc Sauvé.

The 2,500-page document was issued as the Catholic Church in France, like in other countries, seeks to face up to shameful secrets that were long covered up. Victims welcomed the report as long overdue and the head of the French bishops' conference asked for their forgiveness.

The report said the tally of 330,000 victims includes an estimated 216,000 people abused by priests and other clerics, and the rest by church figures such as scout leaders or camp counselors. The estimates are based on a broader research by France's National Institute of Health and Medical Research into sexual

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abuse of children in the country.

The study's authors estimate 80% of the church's victims were boys, while the broader study of sexual abuse found that 75% of the overall victims were girls.

The independent commission urged the church to take strong action, denouncing its "faults" and "silence." It also called on the Catholic Church to help compensate the victims, notably in cases that are too old to prosecute via French courts.

"We consider the church has a debt towards victims," Sauvé said.

Francois Devaux, head of the victims' group La Parole Libérée (The Liberated Word), said it was "a turning point in our history." He denounced the coverups that permitted "mass crimes for decades."

"But even worse, there was a betrayal: betrayal of trust, betrayal of morality, betrayal of children, betrayal of innocence," he added.

Martine, 73, and Mireille, 71, were sexually assaulted by a priest when they were teenage girls in high school. They both declined to give their last name due to privacy reasons, in part because some family members were not aware of the abuses.

"It brings on such terrible thoughts," Martine said. "For me, personally, I had to wait for my parents to die" because otherwise she said it was "not possible" to speak out.

"I think that each victim experienced it as if they were the only one (victim), and that's part of this phenomenon involving control and secrecy," Mireille said. "We are in a condition of submission ... in a mental captivity. So, we follow this person who suddenly takes power over us ... We are caught in a spider web."

A recognition of the fault is essential, she said, and financial compensation is "really symbolic ... it won't fix things but it means it will also cost them something."

Olivier Savignac, the head of victims association Parler et Revivre (Speak Out and Live Again), contributed to the investigation. He told The Associated Press that the high ratio of victims per abuser was particularly "terrifying for French society, for the Catholic Church."

Savignac assailed the church for treating such cases as individual anomalies instead of as a collective horror. He described being abused at age 13 by the director of a Catholic vacation camp in the south of France who was accused of assaulting several other boys.

"I perceived this priest as someone who was good, a caring person who would not harm me," Savignac said. "But it was when I found myself on that bed half-naked and he was touching me that I realized something was wrong ... It's like gangrene inside the victim's body and the victim's psyche."

The priest eventually was found guilty of child sexual abuse and sentenced in 2018 to three years in prison, including one year suspended.

The commission worked for 2 1/2 years, listening to victims and witnesses and studying church, court, police and news archives starting from the 1950s. Sauvé denounced the church's attitude until the beginning of the 2000s as "a deep, cruel indifference toward victims."

"Sometimes church officials did not denounce (the sex abuses) and even exposed children to risks by putting them in contact with predators," he stressed.

The president of the Conference of Bishops of France, Eric de Moulins-Beaufort, said French bishops "are appalled" at the conclusions of the report.

"I wish on that day to ask for pardon, pardon to each of you," he told the victims.

"No one expected such a high number (of victims) to come out of the survey and that is properly frightening and out of proportion with the perception that we've had on the ground," he told the AP.

Luc Crepy, the bishop of Versailles who heads an office fighting pedophilia, said "this is more than a shock. It is a deep feeling of shame."

Crepy said a process was underway to put together funds and create an independent commission to handle church compensation for the victims.

The report comes after a scandal surrounding now-defrocked priest Bernard Preynat rocked the French Catholic Church. Last year, Preynat was convicted of sexually abusing minors and given a five-year prison sentence. He admitted abusing more than 75 boys for decades.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said Pope Francis learned about the report's findings "with sorrow."



"His thoughts go in first place to the victims, with a profound sadness for their wounds and gratitude for their courage to speak out," he said.

Francis issued in May 2019 a groundbreaking new church law requiring all Catholic priests and nuns to report clergy sexual abuse and cover-ups by their superiors to church authorities. In June, Francis said a process of reform was necessary and every bishop must take responsibility for the "catastrophe" of the sex abuse crisis.

The shocking estimate of more than a quarter million potential victims dwarfs numbers released by other countries that have also faced national reckoning with church sexual abuse. But each country has investigated the problem in different ways.

Instead of limiting itself to specific cases, France's report made an estimate of the overall scale of the problem, extrapolating the number of victims based on study of specific incidents and nationwide surveys.

Masha Macpherson contributed from Paris and Nicolas Vaux-Montagny contributed from Lyon, France.

## Black colleges' funding hopes dim amid federal budget battle

By PIPER HUDSPETH BLACKBURN and ANNIE MA Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Optimism for transformational funding for the nation's historically Black colleges was running high after the Biden administration included \$45 billion for the schools in its massive multitrillion dollar spending plan.

That outlook quickly soured as the funding became ensnared in Democratic infighting over the size of the economic package and what it should cover. The latest iteration of the bill includes just \$2 billion that can go toward educational programs and infrastructure for Black colleges, and even that amount would be reduced to competitive grant funding rather than direct allocations.

That's especially disappointing for many smaller, private historically Black colleges that don't have the endowments as their larger and more well-known peers. They often struggle to upgrade their campuses and programs, hurting their ability to attract students.

The Biden administration's original \$3.5 trillion proposal called for sending at least \$45 billion to Black colleges and other minority-serving institutions to update their research programs, create incubators to help students innovate and help traditionally underserved populations.

Getting a slice of that would have been a boon to Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas, a private historically Black college. President Roderick L. Smothers said federal coronavirus relief money was instrumental in helping the university survive the pandemic with technology upgrades and student support, but he said Biden's original proposal provided the kind of money that would have had a long-term impact.

"We used the funds that we received to serve the students that we have, and now we're asking for additional funds to make sure that when we are on the other side of this global pandemic our institutions will be bigger and better and more resilient," Smothers said.

The college increased its enrollment by 43% between 2010 and 2019, the latest data available, but saw its endowment drop 18% during the same timeframe, according to federal data analyzed by The Associated Press. Overall, enrollment at the nation's roughly 102 Black colleges has been declining — from 326,827 in 2010 to 289,507 in 2019.

Beyond building upgrades, Smothers said Philander Smith College would have used the long-term federal funding to expand programs for its students, 81% of which are low income. That might include launching a public health school that would train students to tackle health disparities affecting racial minorities and help address the state's nursing shortage.

Democratic Rep. Bobby Scott of Virginia, who leads the U.S. House education committee, said historically Black colleges have received unprecedented levels of federal funding over the past two years, more than they have in the past decade combined. That includes \$1.6 billion under the Democrats' American Rescue Plan passed earlier this year.

The money has allowed them to pursue initiatives such as cancelling student debt during the COVID-19

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pandemic.

Scott, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, said the draft bill also includes \$27 billion for student aid at Black colleges and other institutions serving racial minorities. Still, he acknowledged the need for more funding.

"We'd like to do as much as we can," Scott said. "I'm not satisfied. I'm not satisfied with anything in the budget that's within our jurisdiction."

Scott said the Department of Education had committed to ensuring the grant program contained in the current bill would be structured so similar colleges would be competing with each other. It's a way to prevent larger ones with robust grant-writing departments from edging out smaller schools.

That's important to address vast differences between the colleges. The Associated Press analysis of enrollment and endowment data found wide disparities among the 102 historically Black colleges and universities, and a further divide between private and public institutions. Federal data, for example, showed that 11 HBCUs had endowments worth less than \$1,000 per pupil in the 2018-19 school year while nine had endowments worth more than \$50,000 per pupil.

In general, Black colleges have lacked the fundraising ability of other universities. The cumulative endowment for all historical Black colleges through 2019 was a little more than \$3.9 billion, about the same as the endowment for just the University of Minnesota. Advocates said the funding struggles and the role the colleges have played historically is why long-term federal assistance is needed.

Harry L. Williams, president of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, which represents public HBCUs, was surprised and disappointed by the reduced allocation for Black colleges in the latest Democratic economic plan, which likely will be trimmed to around \$2 trillion. He also said they should not be lumped in with other institutions serving racial minorities, which he said can include many large state universities.

Black colleges have a unique history, needs and financial challenges, Williams said.

Kevin Cosby, president of Simmons College of Kentucky in Louisville, agrees.

"To mix them with minority-serving institutions, which are are not historic institutions that do not have the legacy of historic discrimination, is not right," he said. "Historically Black colleges and universities should be separated as a protected class of institutions because, like the Black community, our experience in the United States of America is a unique experience."

Because of historical underfunding, Black colleges often have built up years of deferred maintenance, leaving buildings out of compliance with local codes or otherwise unable to accommodate students. Money from endowment returns is directed to annual operating costs, making it harder to invest in new programs and buildings — a "number one issue" for attracting students, Cosby said.

Last spring, Kentucky's general assembly passed long-awaited legislation that made it possible for his school to have a certified teacher program. The initiative is especially meaningful to Simmons because of the state's persistent teacher shortage and the school's founding mission to train formerly enslaved Kentuckians as teachers. But Cosby said not having longer-term funding from the federal government will make it more difficult for Simmons to get the program off the ground quickly.

"We need facility space, we need infrastructure, we need capital improvements, we need resources to hire teachers," he said. "We can only thrive as institutions to the degree that we have the resources."

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Hudspeth Blackburn is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

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The Associated Press' reporting around issues of race and ethnicity is supported in part by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## UN report warns of global water crisis amid climate change

By SUMAN NAISHADHAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Much of the world is unprepared for the floods, hurricanes and droughts expected to worsen with climate change and urgently needs better warning systems to avert water-related disasters, according to a report by the United Nations' weather agency.

Global water management is "fragmented and inadequate," the report published Tuesday found, with nearly 60% of 101 countries surveyed needing improved forecasting systems that can help prevent devastation from severe weather.

As populations grow, the number of people with inadequate access to water is also expected to rise to more than 5 billion by 2050, up from 3.6 billion in 2018, the report said.

Among the actions recommended by the report were better warning systems for flood- and drought-prone areas that can identify, for example, when a river is expected to swell. Better financing and coordination among countries on water management is also needed, according to the report by the U.N.'s World Meteorological Organization, development agencies and other groups.

"We need to wake up to the looming water crisis," said Petteri Taalas, secretary general of the World Meteorological Organization.

The report found that since 2000, flood-related disasters globally rose 134% compared with the previous two decades. Most flood-related deaths and economic losses were in Asia, where extreme rainfall caused massive flooding in China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal and Pakistan in the past year.

The frequency of drought-related disasters rose 29% over the same period. African countries recorded the most-drought related deaths. The steepest economic losses from drought were in North America, Asia and the Caribbean, the report said.

Globally, the report found 25% of all cities are already experiencing regular water shortages. Over the past two decades, it said the planet's combined supplies of surface water, ground water and water found in soil, snow and ice have declined by 0.4 inches (1 centimeter) per year.

Population growth will further strain water supplies, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, said Elfatih Eltahir, a professor of hydrology and climate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who wasn't involved in the report.

"The availability of water in rising populations shapes where water adaptation will be quite urgent," he said.

Despite some progress in recent years, the report found 107 countries would not meet goals to sustainably manage water supplies and access by 2030 at current rates.

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The Associated Press receives support from the Walton Family Foundation for coverage of water and environmental policy. The AP is solely responsible for all content. For all of AP's environmental coverage, visit <https://apnews.com/hub/environment>

## French child kidnap plot shows global sway of QAnon style

By LORI HINNANT Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The old music box factory had been abandoned for years on the outskirts of the Swiss mountain town, with paint curling at the edges of its dingy grey and yellow walls.

It was the perfect hiding place for the young French mother and her 8-year-old daughter at the heart of Operation Lima, an international child abduction plot planned and funded by a French group with echoes of the far-right extremist movement QAnon.

Lola Montemaggi had lost custody of her daughter, Mia, to her own mother months earlier because French government child protective services feared the young woman was unstable. Montemaggi found people online who shared the QAnon belief that government workers themselves were running a child trafficking ring. Then she turned to her network to do what she needed to do: Extract Mia.

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The April 13 kidnapping of the girl from her grandmother's home marked what is believed to be the first time that conspiracy theorists in Europe have committed a crime linked to the QAnon-style web of false beliefs that sent hundreds to storm the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. It shows how what was once a strictly U.S. movement has metastasized around the world, with Europol, the European umbrella policing agency, adding QAnon to its list of threats in June. QAnon influence has now been tracked to 85 countries, and its beliefs have been adapted to local contexts and languages from Hindi to Hebrew.

A California father this summer took his two children to Mexico and killed them under the influence of "QAnon and Illuminati conspiracy theories," federal authorities say. QAnon supporters also have been linked to at least six attempted kidnappings in the United States, convinced that children are falling victim to pedophiles, according to Mia Bloom, who documented the abductions for her book on QAnon published this summer.

"If someone is trying to get back their child and says they're with this cabal, there's now a support network where before QAnon it would not have existed," Bloom said.

Part of QAnon's loose collection of beliefs is specific to the United States, where the conspiracy theory began. But the conviction that there is a deep state conspiracy and cabals of government-sponsored child traffickers crosses borders, as does anti-vaccine rhetoric since the start of the pandemic.

The abduction of Mia was inspired by a former politician who promised to save child trafficking victims and lead France back to its former greatness. The AP pieced the story together from interviews with investigators and lawyers, as well as thousands of online messages, showing how QAnon-style beliefs draw in the vulnerable and connect them in often dangerous ways.

Two men charged in the abduction were charged — and two others were arrested Tuesday — in an unrelated far-right plot against vaccine centers and government ministries, a judicial official said on condition of anonymity to discuss the fast-moving investigation. Montemaggi was freed Monday after nearly six months in jail, but remains under judicial supervision until her trial.

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Montemaggi is a 28-year-old woman with glossy chestnut hair and pale eyes, a lilting voice and a smile whose very edges curved upwards. Two stars are tattooed on the fragile skin inside her wrist.

She had Mia when she was 20, but she and the baby's father turned her over to his parents days after the birth, according to their lawyer, who publicly described "social, professional, financial precariousness; maybe too much immaturity." Montemaggi would drop in for an afternoon from time to time.

One day, when Mia was 5, her mother took her out to play. The two never returned, said the lawyer, Guillaume Fort. It was a year before Montemaggi sent word about the child, Fort said.

By then, Montemaggi had joined France's 2018 anti-government Yellow Vest movement, according to people who spent time with her in protests, all wearing the group's iconic fluorescent safety vests.

In November 2019, Montemaggi turned 27. She was not celebrating.

"Today, on my birthday, I am disgusted," she wrote in a Facebook post on Nov. 12, 2019. "Since I awoke, this famous 'awakening' is hard, digesting all that I have learned, all that the TV and the politicians hide from us, all these lies, it's not easy."

Over the course of the next year, as France entered one of the world's strictest coronavirus lockdowns, Montemaggi's world grew progressively darker. She believed 5G towers were concealing population control devices, Bill Gates was plotting to spread the coronavirus, and governments everywhere were trafficking children either to molest them or to extract an essence for eternal youth. She pulled Mia out of school.

The month of her 28th birthday, she concluded that the French government was illegitimate and its laws no longer applied to her, beliefs central to what is known as the sovereign citizen movement. Like QAnon, the sovereign citizen movement started in the U.S., and its followers are anti-government extremists who believe that they don't have to answer to government authorities, including courts and law enforcement.

She urged others to join her and enlisted in a Telegram group for sovereign citizens in the Lorraine region. Montemaggi tended to leave short voice messages punctuated by a gentle laugh, trying to set up meetings, wishing people a happy New Year, or admonishing those she thought were insufficiently



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dedicated to the cause.

She told those around her she was going to empty her apartment, sell her furniture and "go under the radar with her daughter." Montemaggi had been losing weight for months, arguing so violently with her boyfriend that her family feared Mia was in danger.

To her new acquaintances on Telegram, she casually mentioned a court summons Jan. 11 that would prevent her from joining a proposed meeting, "a personal thing." She rejected the judge's authority to interfere in her life or her child's.

The judge thought otherwise. Montemaggi lost custody of her daughter to her own mother.

She could see Mia twice a month, never alone, at the grandmother's house in Les Poulières, a village about a 30-minute drive from Montemaggi's apartment. And she could not speak to her by phone.

Montemaggi had no plan, but her beliefs were hardening.

"There are no laws above us except for universal law," she said in one message over the winter to a Telegram correspondent. "There are no government laws. You have to understand that."

While the Capitol insurrection in the United States is the best-known example of violence tied to QAnon, it is far from the only one. Twenty-seven people in U.S. have been linked to QAnon violence unrelated to the riot, eight of whom also had ties to the sovereign citizen movement, according to recent research from the University of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. A quarter of the QAnon offenders were women – an unusually high percentage for alleged crimes.

In March 2020, a Kentucky mother who adhered to QAnon as well as an American sovereign citizen movement kidnapped her children from her grandmother, who was their guardian. In November the same year, a woman who had lost custody of her children shot her legal advisor in the head in Florida after deciding he had joined a cabal of child-stealing Satanists.

By the time the mob stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 this year, QAnon already had a solid foothold in Europe. At first, it was on the margins of protests against coronavirus lockdowns in Germany and Britain. But during the lockdowns, QAnon accommodated a range of other conspiracies and turned darker, first in the United States and then across the Atlantic.

It was around this time that the name of a disgraced French politician started circulating in French QAnon chats on Telegram.

Rémy Daillet-Wiedemann was finding new audiences for his previously obscure calls to overthrow France's government, resist the "medical dictatorship" of coronavirus restrictions and protect children from the government-linked pedophiles in their midst.

"In Europe, a tipping point came when everything got wrapped "under the banner of 'Save our Children,'" said Andreas Önnersfors, a Swedish researcher who studies the history of conspiracy theories.

Daillet-Wiedemann's name appeared 271 times in a QAnon Telegram group from October until April, when its chat history was scrubbed. Most of those mentions came amid a debate among the "digital soldiers" about whether his movement to overthrow the government was authentic, according to data shared with the AP by Jordan Wildon, an extremism researcher who archived the material before the chat history was erased.

The more Daillet-Wiedemann's theories aligned with the QAnon conspiracy, the more his audience grew. In early spring, a group of his supporters fell under surveillance by French antiterrorism investigators. Around the same time, one of Montemaggi's Telegram friends advised her to contact Daillet-Wiedemann about her custody troubles.

Daillet-Wiedemann, who had been living in self-imposed exile in Malaysia for years, had a network of a few hundred supporters, with a much smaller "hard core," according to François Pérain, the prosecutor in the region's main city of Nancy. He instructed one of his supporters to make a plan for Mia and for another French child in a similar situation, and wired 3,000 euros for transportation and equipment, Pérain said.

Five men, ages 23 to 60, came together in the plot they dubbed "Operation Lima" – an anagram of Lola and Mia's names. They gave themselves code names as well: Jeannot, Pitchoun, the Crow, Bruno, Bouga.

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A sixth man, a retired lieutenant-general from the French military, forged government paperwork for the mission in France's Vosges region, near Switzerland. That officer on Tuesday was among those detained in the plot to attack vaccine centers, the judicial official said.

The main planner went by the nickname Bouga and was an educator, according to his lawyer, Randall Schwerdorffer. He vetted Montemaggi with an online questionnaire before organizing what he considered "a legitimate intervention," the lawyer said. He declined to release his client's real name for reasons of privacy.

Concluding that Mia was in psychological danger, the men drew up a script for their roles in extracting her. Anti-terrorism investigators listening in on Daillet-Wiedemann's supporters overheard troubling discussions about "a camping trip" in the eastern borderlands but could make little sense of it.

On April 13, an anthracite gray Volkswagen van pulled into Les Poulières. Flashing official-looking paperwork, the two men inside claimed to be carrying out a welfare check on Mia for the government. The girl's grandmother agreed to their request to take her briefly away for an interview.

A quick call to the real child protective services revealed her mistake. By then Mia was long gone, on her way to a neighboring village.

There, Montemaggi waited in a black Peugeot with the other men. They caravanned to the Swiss border, then Montemaggi and two of the men entered the woods.

Over several hours, Montemaggi and the men hiked eastward, taking turns carrying Mia. When they reached Switzerland, another member of the network met them in his Porsche Cayenne. He took them not to a safehouse as expected but to a hotel.

As they were settling in for the night, the kidnapping alert flashed on television screens across France, one of only two dozen the nation has authorized in the past 15 years. The photos of Mia and her mother were beamed to millions of screens simultaneously.

That's when Daillet-Wiedemann stepped in again from Malaysia, Pérain said. He sent out a call for shelter that only one person answered — and only for one night.

By then, the antiterrorism investigators had connected the van from Les Poulières with the anti-government clique of Daillet-Wiedemann supporters under surveillance. They figured out that the coded language of the "camping trip" referred to the abduction in the Vosges region.

Most of the men were arrested in France the next day. None bothered to hide their role or their conviction that the kidnapping was actually a restitution. One 58-year-old man compared himself to Arsène Lupin, the fictional French gentleman thief.

"They passed from conspiratorial beliefs to very serious acts, and those who went into action didn't necessarily realize that they were on the wrong side of the law," Pérain said.

Mia and Montemaggi were still missing, but investigators now knew that they had crossed the border and were headed east.

On April 15, Montemaggi and Mia were driven to the decommissioned music box factory. It lacked electricity, running water and beds, but had something the young mother turned kidnapper needed more — isolation.

With no alternatives, Montemaggi spent three nights at the factory, chatting briefly with the artists and hikers who passed through during the day and trying to keep Mia amused. Witnesses said the pair baked a cake, played games and explored the surrounding clearing.

She told one woman she was going to take the girl to Saint Petersburg, Russia, but had no clear idea how. That period in the factory gave investigators the time they needed to find Mia and her mother before they left Switzerland.

The police arrived on Sunday morning. They spotted Mia first, checking her photo against the kidnap alert. Then her mother walked outside, and the game was up.

Montemaggi was taken into custody on kidnapping charges. Her family declined comment, as did her lawyer. Mia was reunited with her grandmother.

Daillet-Wiedemann posted a video praising the kidnappers.

"These are heroes. They are re-establishing the law. I congratulate them and will do everything to free them," he said in a YouTube video viewed 30,000 times.

He would not get the chance. Malaysia expelled him in June.

Now he himself is jailed on charges of conspiring in the organized abduction of a child. At his first court hearing, Dailet-Wiedemann declared himself a candidate for president, maintaining that the charges against him are political.

His YouTube channel went offline soon after Mia was returned to her grandmother's village home.

"Let them arrest me," he said at the time. "People will see that I'm on the front lines and that's how I will lead my revolution."

Judges on Monday finally agreed to Montemaggi's requests to be freed until trial, after months of insistence from her family and lawyer that she poses no danger to her daughter or anyone else.

"I've begun to put down in black and white my natural rights," she wrote to a Telegram acquaintance, weeks before she was arrested. "With this text, I'll ensure my rights are respected."

Bram Janssen in Sainte-Croix, Switzerland, and Nicolas Vaux-Montagny in Paris contributed to this report.

## **J&J seeks US clearance for COVID-19 vaccine booster doses**

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Johnson & Johnson asked the Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday to allow extra shots of its COVID-19 vaccine as the U.S. government moves toward expanding its booster campaign to millions more vaccinated Americans.

J&J said it filed a request with the FDA to authorize boosters for people 18 and older who previously received the company's one-shot vaccine. While the company said it submitted data on several different booster intervals, ranging from two to six months, it did not formally recommend one to regulators.

Last month, the FDA authorized booster shots of Pfizer's vaccine for older Americans and other groups with heightened vulnerability to COVID-19. It's part of a sweeping effort by the Biden administration to shore up protection amid the delta variant and potential waning vaccine immunity.

Government advisers backed the extra Pfizer shots, but they also worried about creating confusion for tens of millions of other Americans who received the Moderna and J&J shots. U.S. officials don't recommend mixing and matching different vaccine brands.

The FDA is convening its outside panel of advisers next week to review booster data from both J&J and Moderna. It's the first step in a review process that also includes sign-off from the leadership of both the FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If both agencies give the go-ahead, Americans could begin getting J&J and Moderna boosters later this month.

J&J previously released data suggesting its vaccine remains highly effective against COVID-19 at least five months after vaccination, demonstrating 81% effectiveness against hospitalizations in the U.S.

But company research shows a booster dose at either two or six months revved up immunity even further. Data released last month showed giving a booster at two months provided 94% protection against moderate-to-severe COVID-19 infection. The company has not yet released clinical data on a six-month booster shot.

FDA's advisers will review studies from the company and other researchers next Friday and vote on whether to recommend boosters.

The timing of the J&J filing was unusual given that the FDA had already scheduled its meeting on the company's data. Companies normally submit their requests well in advance of meeting announcements. A J&J executive said the company has been working with FDA on the review.

"Both J&J and FDA have a sense of urgency because it's COVID and we want good data out there converted into action as soon as possible," said Dr. Mathai Mammen, head of research for J&J's Janssen unit.

The vaccine from the New Brunswick, New Jersey, company was considered an important tool in fighting the pandemic because it requires only one shot. But its rollout was hurt by a series of troubles, including

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manufacturing problems at a Baltimore factory that forced J&J to import millions of doses from overseas. Additionally, regulators have added warnings of several rare side effects to the shot, including a blood clot disorder and a neurological reaction called Guillain-Barré syndrome. In both cases, regulators decided the benefits of the shot still outweighed those uncommon risks.

Rival drugmakers Pfizer and Moderna have provided the vast majority of U.S. COVID-19 vaccines. More than 170 million Americans have been fully vaccinated with the companies' two-dose shots while less than 15 million Americans got the J&J shot.

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

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 6, the 279th day of 2021. There are 86 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 6, 2014, the Supreme Court unexpectedly cleared the way for a dramatic expansion of gay marriage in the United States as it rejected appeals from five states seeking to preserve their bans, effectively making such marriages legal in 30 states.

On this date:

In 1683, thirteen families from Krefeld, Germany, arrived in Philadelphia to begin Germantown, one of America's oldest settlements.

In 1889, the Moulin Rouge in Paris first opened its doors to the public.

In 1927, the era of talking pictures arrived with the opening of "The Jazz Singer" starring Al Jolson, a feature containing both silent and sound-synchronized sequences.

In 1928, Chiang Kai-shek became president of China.

In 1939, in a speech to the Reichstag, German Chancellor Adolf Hitler spoke of his plans to reorder the ethnic layout of Europe — a plan which would entail settling the "Jewish problem."

In 1969, the New York Mets won the first-ever National League Championship Series, defeating the Atlanta Braves, 7-4, in Game 3; the Baltimore Orioles won the first-ever American League Championship Series, defeating the Minnesota Twins 11-2 in Game 3.

In 1973, war erupted in the Middle East as Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel during the Yom Kippur holiday. (Israel, initially caught off guard, managed to push back the Arab forces before a cease-fire finally took hold in the nearly three-week conflict.)

In 1976, President Gerald R. Ford, in his second presidential debate with Democrat Jimmy Carter, asserted that there was "no Soviet domination of eastern Europe." (Ford later conceded such was not the case.)

In 1979, Pope John Paul II, on a week-long U.S. tour, became the first pontiff to visit the White House, where he was received by President Jimmy Carter.

In 1981, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was shot to death by extremists while reviewing a military parade.

In 2010, social networking app Instagram was launched by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger.

In 2018, in the narrowest Senate confirmation of a Supreme Court justice in nearly a century and a half, Brett Kavanaugh was confirmed by a 50-48 vote; he was sworn in hours later.

Ten years ago: In a poor quality audio recording, a voice identified as that of Moammar Gadhafi called on Libyans to take to the streets and wage a campaign of civil disobedience against the country's new leader.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama offered 102 federal inmates the chance to leave prison early, bringing to 774 the number of sentences Obama had shortened. A jury in Norfolk, Virginia, acquitted a white police officer charged in the shooting death of a mentally ill Black man holding a knife.

One year ago: President Donald Trump, recovering from COVID-19, tweeted his eagerness to return to the campaign trail and said he still planned to attend an upcoming debate with Democrat Joe Biden in Miami;



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Biden said there should be no debate as long as Trump remained COVID positive. (The debate would be canceled.) Four weeks ahead of Election Day, senior national security officials provided assurances about the integrity of the elections in a video message, putting them at odds with Trump's effort to discredit the vote. The Food and Drug Administration released updated safety standards for makers of COVID-19 vaccines despite efforts by the White House to block them; the White House said the requirements could delay the availability of vaccines. A grand jury indicted the St. Louis couple who displayed guns while hundreds of racial injustice protesters marched on their private street. (Mark and Patricia McCloskey would plead guilty to misdemeanors; they were pardoned by Missouri Republican Gov. Mike Parson.) Eddie Van Halen, the guitar virtuoso whose speed, control and innovation propelled his band Van Halen into one of hard rock's biggest groups, died of cancer at 65.

Today's Birthdays: Broadcaster and writer Melvyn Bragg is 82. Actor Britt Ekland is 79. The former leader of Sinn Fein (shin fayn), Gerry Adams, is 73. Singer-musician Thomas McClary is 72. Musician Sid McGinnis is 72. Rock singer Kevin Cronin (REO Speedwagon) is 70. Rock singer-musician David Hidalgo (Los Lobos) is 67. Pro Football Hall of Famer Tony Dungy is 66. Actor Elisabeth Shue is 58. Singer Matthew Sweet is 57. Actor Jacqueline Obradors is 55. Country singer Tim Rushlow is 55. Rock musician Tommy Stinson is 55. Actor Amy Jo Johnson is 51. Actor Emily Mortimer is 50. Actor Lamman (la-MAHN') Rucker is 50. Actor Ioan Gruffudd (YOH'-ihn GRIH'-fihth) is 48. Actor Jeremy Sisto is 47. Actor Brett Gelman is 45. R&B singer Melinda Doolittle is 44. Actor Wes Ramsey is 44. Actor Karimah Westbrook is 43. Singer-musician Will Butler is 39. Actor Stefanie Martini is 31. U.S. Olympic swimming gold medalist Bobby Finke is 22.