

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 1 of 70

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Lady Tigers beat Redfield; take third spot in region seeding](#)
- [3- Region 1A Seeding](#)
- [4- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [5- Weather Pages](#)
- [8- Daily Devotional](#)
- [9- 2021 Community Events](#)
- [10- News from the Associated Press](#)



Upcoming Events

Thursday, Oct. 28

All State Chorus & Orchestra at Rapid City Civic Center

Friday, Oct. 29

All State Chorus & Orchestra at Rapid City Civic Center

Downtown Trick or Treat, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Methodist Church Trunk or Treat, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 30

All State Chorus & Orchestra at Rapid City Civic Center

Pumpkinstakes Oral Interp at Watertown

Tuesday, Nov. 2

Brookings Novice Debate

Volleyball Region 1A Tourney

NCRC Test at GHS, 8:30 a.m. to noon

Thursday, Nov. 4

Aberdeen Novice Online Debate

Volleyball Region 1A Tourney

Bowdle LDE

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

© 2021 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 2 of 70

Lady Tigers beat Redfield; take third spot in region seeding

It was a huge night for the Groton Area Volleyball Team. Not only did the Tigers beat Redfield, the win, in addition to De Smet losing to Arlington dropping them under .500 which reduced Webster's points, allowed Groton Area to move up from number four to number three in the region. So as it stands right now, Groton Area will take on Sisseton in the first round of the Region 1A Tournament. Due to a shortage of officials, only the top two seeded teams will host the regional tournament so Groton Area will play its match with Sisseton in Redfield. Clark/Willow Lake will take on Redfield in the other match in Redfield.

Meanwhile at Florence/Henry, Tiospa Zian will take on Florence/Henry and Webster will take on Milbank. These are not official yet but a glimpse of how it looks with the present seeding.

Groton Area won the first set, 25-22. The game was tied three times at the beginning and Redfield came back after trailing to tie the set at 20 and 22, but Groton Area would secure the final three points for the win. Madeline Fliehs had five kills in that set, Aspen Johnson had three kills and a block, Sydney Leicht had three kills and an ace serve, Anna Fjeldheim had a kill and Allyssa Locke and Elizabeth Fliehs each had an ace serve.

Redfield would go on a 10-point rally in the second set en route to a 25-16 win over the Tigers. Madeline Fliehs and Johnson each had two kills, Elizabeth Fliehs had a kill and an ace serve and Fjeldheim, Leicht and Locke each had a kill.

Then Groton Area dominated the third set with a 25-13 win. Madeline Fliehs had four kills, Johnson had three kills and a block, Elizabeth Fliehs had two ace serves and a kill, Fjeldheim had a kill and an ace serve, Maddie Bjerke and Leicht each had two kills and Locke had an ace serve.

The fourth set was close at the beginning with the game being tied four times and there were two lead changes. After it was tied at 11, Groton Area would take a 15-11 lead and would go on for the 25-21 win with Elizabeth Fliehs having the match winning ace serve. In that set, Johnson had four kills, Leicht had two kills, two ace serves and a block, Madeline Fliehs had two kills and two blocks, Fjeldheim had a kill and an ace serve, Alyssa Thaler and Bjerke each had a kill and Elizabeth Fliehs had an ace serve.

Thaler had 25 digs for the match while Locke had 15, Leicht 13, Elizabeth Fliehs had 12, Trista Keith 11, Fjeldheim eight, Madeline Fliehs and Bjerke each had five and Carly Guthmiller had four. Johnson and Madeline Fliehs each had three blocks and Leicht had two. Madeline Fliehs had 12 kills, Johnson 11, Leicht 10, Fjeldheim four, Bjerke three, Elizabeth Fliehs two and Thaler and Locke each had one. Groton Area had 12 ace serves while Redfield had five. Elizabeth Fliehs had five of them followed by Leicht with three and Fjeldheim and Locke each having two.









This was the last regular season game as Groton goes to 10-15 on the season while Redfield dropped to 13-13.

Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 17-25, 25-15 and 15-11. Emma Schinkel had a kill, four ace serves and a block, Marlee Tollifson had five kills, Faith Traphagen had four kills, Lydia Meier two kills and two ace serves, Shallyn Foertsch had an ace serve and Hollie Frost had a kill.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 3 of 70

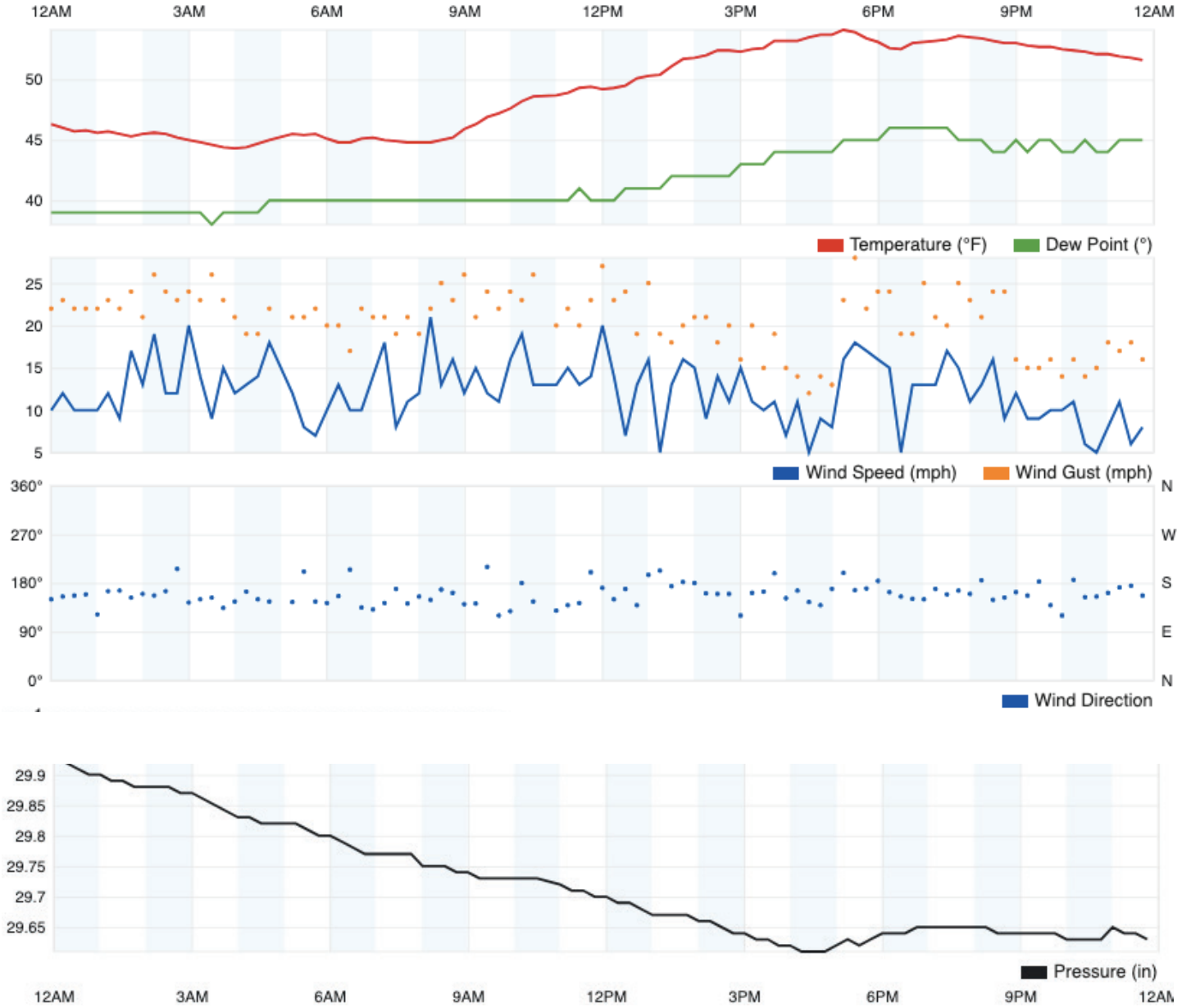
Region 1A Seeding

#	Name	Season			Seed Pts	Home			Away			Opponents		
		W	L	PCT	PTS	W	L	PCT	W	L	PCT	W	L	PC
1	 Florence/Henry	23	6	.793	42.552	14	1	.933	8	3	.727	299	334	.47
2	 Redfield	13	13	.500	40.346	8	7	.533	4	4	.500	327	286	.53
3	 Groton Area	11	15	.423	40.077	3	1	.750	5	9	.357	326	260	.55
4	 Webster Area	16	13	.552	39.897	11	4	.733	4	8	.333	273	334	.45
5	 Milbank	12	17	.414	38.379	9	12	.429	2	2	.500	312	399	.43
6	 Sisseton	9	17	.346	37.962	5	8	.385	3	6	.333	215	252	.46
7	 Clark/Willow Lake	8	15	.348	37.286	4	7	.364	3	8	.273	229	280	.45
8	 Tiospa Zina	6	24	.200	35.900	1	5	.167	1	12	.077	268	358	.42

Groton Daily Independent

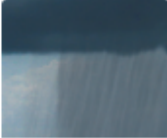




Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 4 of 70

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 5 of 70






Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
 80% → 30%				
Showers and Patchy Fog then Chance Showers	Gradual Clearing	Sunny and Breezy	Clear	Sunny
High: 52 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 29 °F	High: 58 °F

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Rain East Of The James Valley Today Dry Thurs Thru The Weekend



www.weather.gov/abr
Updated: 10/27/2021 3:42 AM Central

Today	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
				
Highs: 50s	Highs: Mid 50s	Highs: Mid 50s - Mid 60s	Highs: Upper 40s - Low 50s	Highs: Low 40s

Rain and clouds will persist across much of the area today with some clearing west river, but dry conditions are expected to follow and persist into the weekend. Temperatures will be seasonal with coolest air for Sunday and start of next week.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 6 of 70

Today in Weather History

October 27, 1991: The first winter storm of the season moved across western and northern South Dakota. The storm produced widespread snow and freezing rain. Strong winds also produced blowing snow which caused blizzard conditions. Snow amounts ranged from 3 to 11 inches. Many schools and businesses in western South Dakota were closed. Snow drifts, as high as 6 feet, made many roads impassable. Travel across western South Dakota was extremely difficult, if not impossible. Forty traffic accidents occurred in the Black Hills while five accidents were reported in Pierre. Many major roads were closed due to the snow and visibility. Rapid City airport was closed. Freezing rain downed power and telephone lines in Mobridge, Gettysburg, Belvidere, Midland, and Mission. Ice also broke six power poles in Walworth County. Some rural areas were without electricity for 30 hours.

1913: At least three people died, and more than a hundred people were injured when the Abercynon Tornado struck an area from Edwardsville to Cilfynydd in South Wales.

2006: An F1 tornado (waterspout) came ashore and caused significant damage on the west side of Apalachicola Florida.

1764 - A "very remarkable storm of snow with high winds" produced 22 inches at Rutland in central Massachusetts. (David Ludlum)

1929 - A snowstorm dumped 27 inches upon Ishpeming, MI, in 24 hours to establish a state record. (David Ludlum)

1962 - An early season winter storm over New England blanketed northern Maine with 7 to 16 inches of snow, and southeastern New England with up to 3 inches of snow. Worcester MA received a record 4.7 inches of snow. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced locally heavy rain from Virginia to New York State. Fallen leaves made roads and sidewalks slick, and also clogged sewers. Rainfall totals of 1.55 inches at Newark NJ, 1.54 inches at Harrisburg PA, 1.27 inches at Scranton PA, and 1.22 inches at Atlantic City NJ, were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Low pressure brought snow and gale force winds to the Great Lakes Region, and snow and high winds to the north central U.S. Winds gusted to 47 mph at Lansing MI, and reached 55 mph at Pierre SD. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Wintry weather invaded the northwestern U.S. A storm crossing the Central Rockies produced up to 23 inches of snow in the mountains east of Salt Lake City UT. "Indian Summer" continued in the Lower Ohio Valley and the Upper Great Lakes Region. Afternoon highs of 71 degrees at Marquette MI and 72 degrees at Sault Ste Marie MI were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

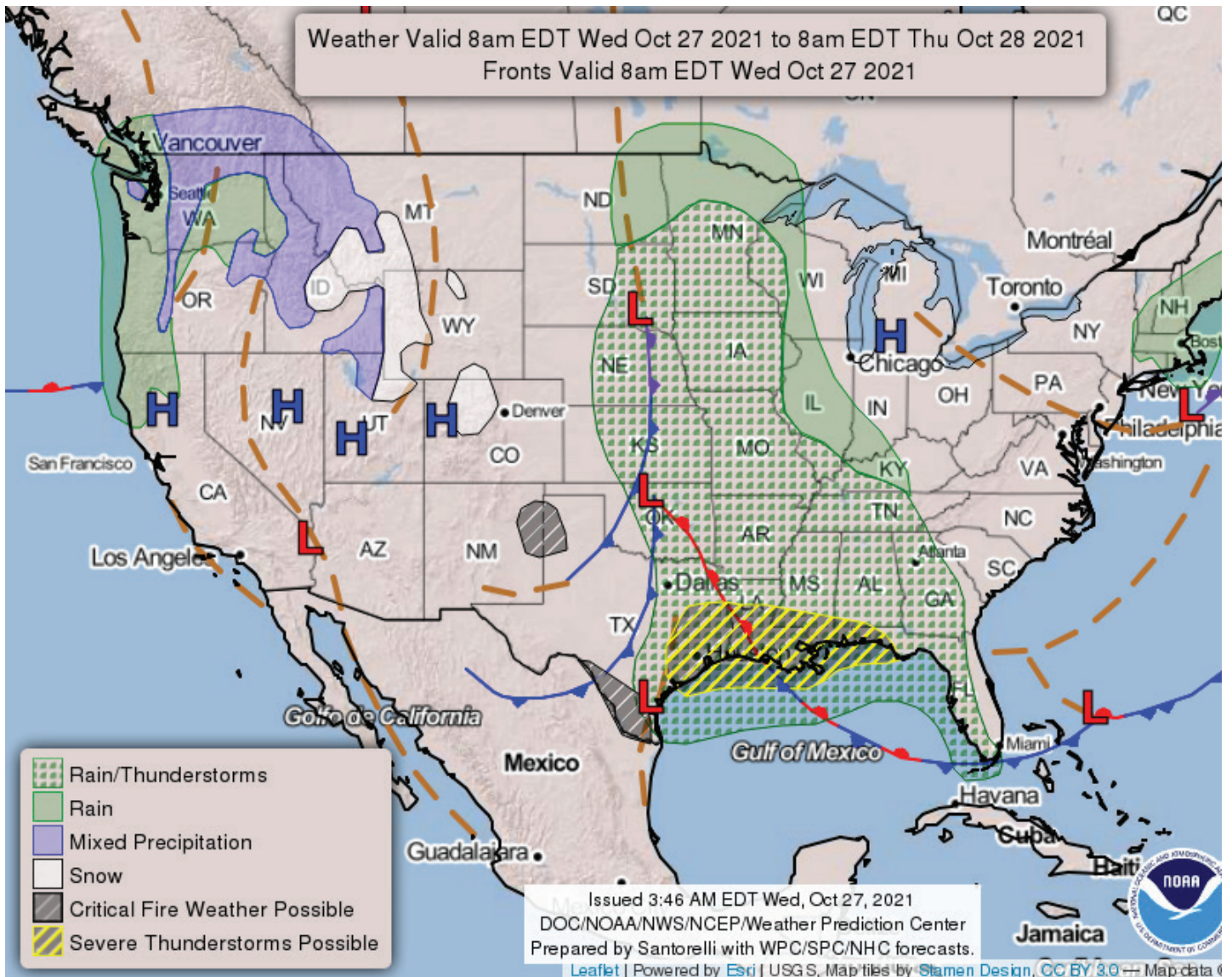
Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 7 of 70

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 54.1 °F at 5:15 PM
Low Temp: 44.3 °F at 4:00 AM
Wind: 28 mph at 5:30 PM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 83° in 1983
Record Low: 1° in 2020
Average High: 53°F
Average Low: 28°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 1.94
Precip to date in Oct.: 3.35
Average Precip to date: 20.27
Precip Year to Date: 18.77
Sunset Tonight: 6:28:23 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:05:25 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 8 of 70



WHO IS THE GREATEST?

Alexander was the son of a king and tutored by Aristotle, one of the world's most remarkable philosophers. Because of his many accomplishments as a great military leader, warrior, and king, he came to be known as Alexander the Great.

There is One, however, who is recognized as being even greater! He is acknowledged by an admirer as being "very great." The writer of Psalm 104 exclaimed confidently, "O Lord my God, You are very great!"

He is very great because He is the creator of the universe. With great certainty, the Bible's opening statement declares that "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." From nothing came everything reflecting His great power, glory, majesty and might.

He is very great because He is the sustainer of the universe. Imagine the power and wisdom of God as He sustains His universe. It functions flawlessly day and night, year after year and century after century. Nothing is ever left undone or incomplete. Season follows season and morning after night, and no star or planet has ever veered from where God placed it.

He is very great because He sent His Son to be our Savior. Sin thoroughly damaged His creation and every creature He formed out of the earth to reflect His image. One day this very great Savior will reclaim His creation and restore it to its original condition. He is working out His plan of redemption and reconciliation at this very moment and one day all things will be new, once again!

Prayer: We marvel, Heavenly Father, at Your greatness. Others come and go, but Your greatness, Lord, is forever. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty. Psalm 104:1

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 9 of 70

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

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 10 of 70

News from the  Associated Press

Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press undefined

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Central def. Watertown, 17-25, 25-18, 25-18, 25-20
Aberdeen Christian def. Herreid/Selby Area, 25-11, 25-12, 25-22
Aberdeen Roncalli def. Milbank, 25-8, 25-21, 25-16
Arlington def. DeSmet, 25-15, 25-20, 25-14
Avon def. Bon Homme, 25-17, 23-25, 25-22, 21-25, 15-7
Baltic def. Deubrook, 28-30, 25-12, 25-13, 25-18
Bridgewater-Emery def. Centerville, 25-9, 25-8, 25-8
Britton-Hecla def. Clark/Willow Lake, 28-26, 25-15, 25-7
Burke def. Lyman, 25-15, 25-6, 25-5
Canton def. Lennox, 25-21, 25-17, 19-25, 25-22
Colman-Egan def. Gayville-Volin, 25-17, 25-20, 25-20
Corsica/Stickney def. Colome, 25-14, 25-9, 25-11
Custer def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-21, 25-18, 21-25, 25-21
Dell Rapids def. Beresford, 25-17, 25-17, 25-21
Elk Point-Jefferson def. Vermillion, 12-25, 21-25, 25-20, 25-13, 15-7
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Estelline/Hendricks, 25-19, 25-19, 25-19
Faulkton def. Wolsey-Wessington, 25-8, 25-23, 25-11
Florence/Henry def. Waubay/Summit, 25-14, 25-19, 25-6
Freeman def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-14, 25-18, 25-19
Great Plains Lutheran def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-5, 25-10, 25-6
Groton Area def. Redfield, 25-22, 16-25, 25-13, 25-21
Hamlin def. Webster, 25-17, 25-13, 25-16
Hill City def. Belle Fourche, 17-25, 25-18, 25-16, 25-19
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Wessington Springs, 25-22, 25-23, 25-22
Huron def. Mitchell, 25-23, 25-10, 25-18
Irene-Wakonda def. Howard, 25-13, 25-20, 22-25, 25-19
Lakota Tech def. Kadoka Area, 25-23, 21-25, 14-25, 25-8, 15-7
Lemmon def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-20, 25-22, 25-22
McIntosh def. Tiospaye Topa, 23-25, 25-10, 25-6, 25-7
Miller def. Highmore-Harrold, 23-25, 25-12, 25-15, 25-16
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 25-15, 22-25, 25-23, 23-25, 15-12
Parker def. West Central, 25-20, 25-19, 25-18
Pierre def. Brookings, 25-14, 25-15, 25-15
Platte-Geddes def. Ethan, 25-22, 19-25, 21-25, 26-24, 15-9
Potter County def. Leola/Frederick, 25-18, 25-16, 25-23
Rapid City Central def. Spearfish, 25-12, 25-18, 25-9
Rapid City Stevens def. Sturgis Brown, 25-20, 25-23, 25-20
Scotland def. Menno, 25-21, 22-25, 25-19, 25-16
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Harrisburg, 25-15, 25-23, 25-20
Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-15, 25-13, 25-20
Sioux Falls Washington def. Sioux Falls Jefferson, 25-20, 18-25, 25-21, 11-25, 15-11
St. Thomas More def. Douglas, 25-17, 25-12, 25-21
Sunshine Bible Academy def. Lower Brule, 25-20, 15-25, 25-22, 25-17

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 11 of 70

Timber Lake def. Wall, 25-17, 25-15, 25-23
Todd County def. Crow Creek, 25-17, 21-25, 19-25, 26-24, 15-9
Warner def. Langford, 25-8, 25-7, 25-15
Yankton def. Tea Area, 25-23, 25-16, 25-14
Mitchell Christian Triangular=
Freeman Academy/Marion def. Mitchell Christian, 25-13, 25-10, 25-15
James Valley Christian def. Mitchell Christian, 25-4, 25-13, 25-6

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

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined
PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Tuesday:
Mega Millions
06-14-19-56-62, Mega Ball: 9, Megaplier: 4
(six, fourteen, nineteen, fifty-six, sixty-two; Mega Ball: nine; Megaplier: four)
Estimated jackpot: \$20 million
Powerball
Estimated jackpot: \$102 million

Xcel Energy requests electric rate hike of about 20%

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Xcel Energy wants to increase its electricity rate by about 20% over the next three years, adding an average \$15 to \$21 per month cumulatively to residential customers' bills.

Minneapolis-based Xcel filed its request with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, which must approve any increase.

The rate hike would generate about \$677 million over the three years with a big portion directed to building out transmission lines to connect to renewable power sources, the company said.

"It's really focused on the poles and wires part of our business and making the necessary infrastructure investments," said Chris Clark, Xcel's president for Minnesota and the Dakotas.

Xcel's residential customers have had stable rates for the past two years, so a rate hike in that amount might come as a jolt.

"To see a rate increase in the neighborhood of 20% — that is really large," said Annie Levenson-Falk, executive director of the Citizens Utility Board of Minnesota, an advocacy group for residential ratepayers.

Levenson-Falk said that consumers are already being battered by rising energy costs and escalating inflation in general is affecting costs for food and general household supplies, the Star Tribune reported.

Meanwhile, Minnesota natural gas customers have just begun paying off a \$660 million bill caused by the price run-up that followed a devastating winter storm in Texas. And Minnesota's largest natural gas utilities, CenterPoint and Xcel, are both planning to file for rate increases next week.

Xcel has 1.3 million electrical customers.

Man accused of fatal shooting, kidnapping in Jerauld County

WESSINGTON SPRINGS, S.D. (AP) — Bond of \$1 million cash has been set for a man accused in a fatal shooting and hostage situation in Jerauld County.

According to the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation, law enforcement officers responded to a Wessington Springs house early Sunday on a report of a man holding a female hostage following a fatal shooting inside the residence.

The female was eventually released and the man surrendered, DCI said. He is being held on possible charges of first-degree murder, aggravated assault, kidnapping and burglary.

DCI continues to investigate with assistance from the Jerauld County Sheriff's Office.

Sudan arrests 3 coup critics as pressure mounts on military

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Sudanese security forces detained three prominent pro-democracy figures overnight, their relatives and other activists said Wednesday, as internal and international pressure mounted on the country's military to walk back its coup.

The arrests came as protests denouncing Monday's takeover continued in the capital of Khartoum and elsewhere, and many businesses shut in response to calls for strikes. Security forces kept up their heavy-handed response, chasing demonstrators in several neighborhoods late Tuesday, according to activists who said some were shot and wounded. At least six people have been killed in protests so far, according to doctors.

The coup threatens to halt Sudan's fitful transition to democracy, which began after the 2019 ouster of long-time ruler Omar al-Bashir and his Islamist government in a popular uprising. It came after weeks of mounting tensions between military and civilian leaders over the course and pace of that process.

The African Union suspended Sudan — an expected move typically taken in the wake of coups. The AU Peace and Security Council tweeted the decision on Wednesday, saying it would remain in place "until the effective restoration of the civilian-led Transitional Authority," as the deposed government was known.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, meanwhile, called the military's takeover a "catastrophic development," warning that it would have "severe consequences" for Sudan's recent efforts to reintegrate into the international community after nearly three decades of isolation under al-Bashir.

"It is putting the country in a perilous situation and is calling the Sudan's democratic and peaceful future ... into question," he said in a statement Tuesday.

Following widespread international condemnation, the military allowed deposed Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and his wife to return home on Tuesday night. Hamdok, a former U.N. economist, was detained along with other government officials when the military seized power.

Several Western embassies in Khartoum said Wednesday they will continue to recognize Hamdok and his Cabinet as "the constitutional leaders of the transitional government" of Sudan.

In a joint statement, the embassies of the European Union, the U.S., the U.K., France and several other European countries called for the release of other detained officials and for talks between the military and the pro-democracy movement.

The new strongman, Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, has pledged to hold elections, as planned, in July 2023, and to appoint a technocrat government in the meantime.

But critics doubt the military is serious about eventually ceding control, noting that the coup came just weeks before Burhan was supposed to hand over the leadership of the top ruling body, the Sovereign Council, to a civilian. The council is made up of both civilian and military leaders but led by a general. Separately, Hamdok's transitional government ran day-to-day affairs.

The activists taken overnight were Ismail al-Taj, a leader of the Sudanese Professionals' Association, the group at the forefront of the protests that brought down al-Bashir; Sediq al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, a leader in Sudan's largest political party, known as Umma and brother of Foreign Minister Mariam al-Mahdi; and Khalid al-Silaik, a former media adviser to the prime minister.

The three have been outspoken critics of the military takeover — and have called for protests against the move. Already, tens of thousands of Sudanese have taken to the streets, and activists are planning a mass demonstration on Saturday.

Security forces confronting protesters have killed at least six people since Monday and wounded over 140 others, many in critical condition, according to physicians with the Sudan Doctors' Committee.

Al-Silaik was detained moments after he gave an interview to broadcaster Al-Jazeera, according to his

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 13 of 70

wife, Marwa Kamel. In the interview, he criticized the military's takeover, calling Hamdok and his government the legitimate administration of Sudan.

"What Gen. Burhan did is a complete coup. ... People will respond to this in the coming days," al-Silaik said.

Activists Nazim Siraj and Nazik Awad and the Umma party confirmed the arrests of the other two figures.

On Monday, Burhan, the head of the military, dissolved the Sovereign Council and the transitional government, and declared a state of emergency. He alleged that the military was forced to step in to prevent the country from sliding into civil war — but he had repeatedly warned he wanted to delay the transition to civilian leadership of the council.

NATO's Afghan mission hit by 'mission creep,' official says

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — NATO's security operation in Afghanistan became a victim of "mission creep" as the military organization allowed itself to be dragged into helping rebuild the impoverished, conflict-torn country, the official leading a process of drawing lessons from the mission said on Wednesday.

Assistant Secretary-General for Operations John Manza and NATO's 30 deputy national envoys are compiling a report on almost two decades of work in Afghanistan. They were tasked with the job after the Afghan president fled and the NATO-trained Afghan army collapsed when President Joe Biden announced that he was pulling U.S. troops out, paving the way for the Taliban to seize power.

Manza told European Union lawmakers that of the big lessons being discussed by his team — which also includes input from military and political experts, including from Afghanistan — "the most obvious one is mission creep."

NATO took over the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan in 2003, almost two years after a U.S.-led coalition invaded the country to oust the Taliban for harboring Osama bin Laden, the deceased al-Qaeda leader.

Manza explained that it initially had around 5,000 troops based mostly in and around the capital Kabul, but that within 3 years its focus shifted to "tackling the root causes of terrorism" by helping to rebuild a landlocked country riven by ethnic and tribal divisions and with a poorly educated population.

NATO troop numbers increased to around 60,000 by 2006, with military-civilian teams spread around the largely lawless country trying to foster economic growth and better governance in almost every province.

"This really substantial increase did not have the desired effects," Manza said. "The insurgency was still gaining strength. The nation was still suffering greatly from corruption and governmental performance was not improving."

Manza said: "you have to ask, and we've been asking this a lot in the committee I chair, were these goals realistic that we had at the time?" He said that even though the international community did not appear to be achieving its goals, "our response to the poor progress ... was to do more."

Under a "surge" ordered in 2009 by then U.S. President Barack Obama, NATO troops numbers climbed even more, to over 100,000 while international aid to Afghanistan was substantially increased. The excess aid money began fueling already rampant corruption.

"Now looking back, it was clear that this massive effort could not be sustained over a long period of time, so these were transient efforts in the various provinces," Manza said.

Manza shared initial findings of his committee's work with NATO defense ministers last week. He is due to submit his final report to the alliance's foreign ministers when they meet on Nov. 30-Dec. 1.

In Haiti, the difficult relationship of gangs and business

By ALBERTO ARCE and RODRIGO ABD Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Youri Mevs knew that the call was coming, and she was terrified.

Mevs is a member of one of the richest families in Haiti; she owns Shodecosa, Haiti's largest industrial park, which warehouses 93 percent of the nation's imported food. Like everyone else, she has watched with despair as her country descended into chaos since the assassination of President Jovenel Moise.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 14 of 70

Her office got the call one early morning in August. It was from Jimmy Cherizier -- aka Barbecue, a former policeman who leads the G9 gang coalition which controls the coastal strip of Port-au-Prince. Most of Haiti's food and gasoline flows through his domain, and he can stop it with a single word.

Barbecue's demand: \$500,000 a month, a "war chest" he claimed would be used to buy food for the hungry and fight for democracy.

Pay the price, no problems. Refuse, and Shodecosa would be ransacked, and the gangs also would block the roads around the port terminal owned by the Mevs family.

This story is part of a series, "Haiti: Business, Politics and Gangs," produced with support from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

Mevs knew the threat was credible. Three neighboring warehouses were looted in June. It came down to math: "How much do we make? Can we afford it?" The answer was no.

Should she fight back? Again, no. "We are not going to shoot a gun to defend a bag of rice."

There was nowhere to turn for help. In Haiti, there is no functioning government. For decades, the country was ruled by political strongmen supported by armed gangs; with Moise's killing, the state collapsed and the gangs were unbound.

Having lost their meal ticket — the government — the gangs have become independent predators. While some turned to kidnapping, like those who captured 17 missionaries and their relatives, Barbecue's men took control of the port district, gaining a stranglehold on the country's economy.

Mevs is far from poor. She is not starving, not struggling for survival -- in so many ways, she is unlike the migrants who are fleeing Haiti's misery. Like others of her caste, she traces her roots to ancestors who came to Haiti generations ago from Europe and the Middle East and built fortunes.

But like those emigrants, she and others among Haiti's wealthy elite have few illusions about life in Haiti. She wants her daughters to join those families moving abroad while the future of the country is settled. If life does not improve, she may have to sell what she owns and join them.

In the meantime, she vows to stand up and fight the political battle to rebuild the government and country. She accepts that the gangs are part of the Haitian eco-system, something to be dealt with constantly as she struggles to keep her business going.

But Barbecue and his gang are immensely powerful. Her money, her contacts with rival gangs, her political connections -- all may be to no avail.

On a hot October morning, Barbecue -- the name comes from his mother's occupation, selling food at a street stall -- receives reporters in his stronghold of Bellecour-Cité Soleil, a wretched neighborhood of tin shacks without water, electricity or any basic services.

Barbecue unboxes two new, American-made AK rifles with ammunition. Then surrounded by a dozen young, hooded men armed and dressed in brightly colored T-shirts and sneakers, he walks to the perimeter wall that encloses Terminal Varreux, the port owned by the Mevs family.

No, he insists. He did not ask for money from the Mevs in exchange for not looting their properties. "If I did that, they would have killed me by now," he says.

Barbecue fancies himself a man of the people and an enemy of the elite. He speaks blithely of a possible civil war of the poor against the rich and powerful "foreign" families who own Haiti.

This, he says, is what he believes: "Water, housing, school, university, security for all and not only for the 5% who have lighter skin" -- the rich families like the Mevs.

"I have hatred for those people, every time we look at them we can say that there are two Haitis. We have to put an end to the system of dispossession."

He mingles with the people of Bellecour-Cité Soleil, trying to present himself as not a gangster but as a revolutionary leader fighting for social change. He is not very successful.

Carrying a gun, he enters shacks without permission and does not say hello to the people living there

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 15 of 70

before launching into diatribes about their living conditions. Generally, the occupants look down in silence, extras in a movie they played no part in producing.

Barbecue gestures to a teenager who walks behind him. The youth pulls a wad of bills from his back pocket and gives some to Barbecue; he, in turn, hands the money to the woman of the house.

"Their position is that of mental slaves, they have not always understood the struggle," he says.

He says he can do little more for slum dwellers. And despite all appearances, he says he is not positioning himself for a political career. He claims not to have any political affiliation or party and says he does not see himself "as a candidate in a system that I see as corrupt."

Mevs and others dismiss nearly everything Barbecue says as posturing -- especially his claims that he is not corrupt but an enemy of corruption.

He has been accused -- by the United Nations and other international organizations -- of participation in three massacres between 2018 and 2020.

The bloodbaths, said to have been sponsored by high-ranking officials in the Moïse administration, left more than 200 people dead. Women were gang-raped, and entire neighborhoods were burned, displacing thousands.

Barbecue's extortion is brazen. And sometimes, a payoff is not enough to guarantee protection.

For 20 years, Giovanni Saleh, 44, rented a warehouse from the Mevs. It was located halfway between Cité Soleil and Shodecosa, the Mevs' industrial park.

Saleh can offer no explanation for what happened starting on the morning of June 6. He had complied with the rules. He had, he says, a "stable and correct" relationship with the gang.

"The last day I went to the warehouse I was preparing the food I used to leave for the gang every two weeks" -- cans of tomatoes, cartons of spaghetti, oil, beans, 20 sacks of rice. "I collaborated with them with food and some money on a regular basis."

Saleh says he received a call from Merci Dieu, a member of Barbecue's gang coalition: "We are going to block the area for a couple of days to ask for money from the government and trucks leaving the port, so come now and take whatever you need and then stay away for some days."

Two days later, a friend called Saleh to tell him that there were rumors of an attack against his warehouse. He called security, no answer. He checked the cameras online and they were off. He called police, called everyone he knew. Nobody would do anything.

Saleh lost \$3.5 million in goods over three days, as thousands of people directed by Barbecue and a colleague disassembled his warehouse box by box, bag by bag, shelf by shelf. Drone footage he took shows a constant and orderly flow of looters entering the warehouse from two directions.

Guards told him later that armed men fronting a mob had come to the door and knocked.

"Who would shoot? No one would shoot," Saleh said. "They opened the doors and left."

Saleh has sent his wife and two kids to Santo Domingo, and wants to join them. But for now he is rebuilding his business. He has taken out loans to reopen in the Mevs' industrial park.

Youri Mevs "may be making the same mistake I made. I thought that by dealing with them, they would protect me, but they didn't," he said. "They charge you, one way or the other, for protection, but instead of protecting you against other gangs or even the police, they turn against you."

Magalie Dresse lives in an elegant home in the heart of Port-au-Prince, with a well-tended garden where she does yoga in the morning. "I need the strength to go out there and handle what I'm going to find, which is not going to be positive."

Since 2004, her car has been attacked; she has survived two kidnapping attempts; the government expropriated some of her properties; and her factory was damaged by arson in riots, costing her \$400,000 in a single day.

And then there are the gangs. "At one point," she says, "we've had cash at home during the weekends in case a friend needed it for a ransom and banks were closed."

Dresse's business sends about 50 containers of art to the United States each year. But before they arrive at the port, they must pass through gang-controlled areas.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 16 of 70

"They can open them, check if there is something they want or even set them on fire," she says. So "we pay the police, then sometimes we have to pay a gang because they can barricade the route."

Later, she acknowledges that "some businesses" -- not hers -- "decide to have their own gangs on payroll. And that choice is the story of many companies in Haiti."

At the end of the day, she holds a cocktail party for friends and associates, and they swap stories about the impossibility of business life in a gangster nation.

"If you have \$5 million worth of merchandise to unload and deliver, \$50,000 (in bribes) is something you can deal with," says Geoffrey Handal, entrepreneur in the shipping industry and former president of the Franco-Haitian Chamber of Commerce.

But the uncertainty -- the possibility that Barbecue might close the port for three days, or block trucks -- is impossible to live with.

Political use of gangs in Haiti dates back to the 1960s, when Francois Duvalier created the Tonton Macoute, a civil force that spread terror in the population for decades. When deposed president Jean-Bertrand Aristide ruled early in this century, he also created his own armed gang, the "chimères," based in Cité Soleil.

Moise and his predecessor, Michel Martelly, used gangs for hire to control the coastal areas where a large number of votes were concentrated.

When Moise was assassinated, the gangs decided there was no need to serve as middlemen for politicians anymore. "Why would they accept being used if they could manage the business?" Handal asks.

Barbecue's revolutionary rhetoric is empty, he says. "If someone offers Barbecue 5% more than what he is making right now, he will change allegiances immediately."

For Handal, the issue is simple: How low must businesspeople stoop to succeed in a gangster nation? "Do you want to become one of them? Are you willing to have blood on your hands?"

Instead, Dresse says the solution is citizenship.

"We need people like us involved in politics with a long-term approach," she says. "We need to create a new political party."

Youri Mevs does not pay the \$500,000 extortion. She orders one of her managers to supply some of Barbecue's rivals: "Get them corn flakes, milk, pasta, tomato and soap." How much? "\$5,000."

She describes it as "looking for ways of compensating for the non-aggression." She does not believe in cash donations because "they will use them to buy ammunition," so she donates goods that cannot be used "to hunt me or people like me."

She has staked her future on the political system, one with overtones of the failed past.

When Moise's government began to fall apart, she decided she could no longer talk about "they" and "them" when she referred to her own country: "Because I belong to the caste, I know what the caste has done to this country and what the country is doing to my caste."

In 2016 she met Youri Latortue, a veteran politician who was then president of the Senate. Latortue asked her to help with a report about a corruption scheme during Martelly's administration.

In 2018 she became secretary general of Latortue's party, AAA, which has led the opposition against Martelly and Moise since the 2016 elections. Now Latortue is "waiting for the party nomination" and Mevs is running his campaign.

Latortue has been accused of a lot in the past, from corruption to running gangs. He denies it all, and has never been formally accused. He says he wants to break with the Haitian tradition of strongmen and militias; that can only happen, he says, "with a strong state, a strong public force, and institutions that guarantee the functioning of the state."

Latortue and Mevs have proposed a special police unit, trained by international experts, to fight the gangs. And they want to put Barbecue behind bars.

But in the meantime, Mevs has to deal with him.

At the AAA headquarters, a truck awaits to be loaded with the food she ordered that morning. This is how she rationalizes the payoff: "It is a donation from the political party to a neighborhood. ... It is popu-

lism, but people are hungry. There is nothing wrong in giving them food.”

Even if so, Latortue cannot be tied publicly to the shipment. “Some people could accuse me of giving them weapons because the place is at war,” he explains.

The two delivery men are tied to their phones, discussing the route. There are reports of gunfights, it is going to be a long route of discussions and shouts and detours along the way to the “backdoor entrance” of a barricaded front line.

The truck stops three times, on three parallel streets. Every corner is guarded by a dozen young men. They unload the truck into a house, a school, a party office.

Behind them, on empty streets, gunshots ring out and armed young men stand guard at a barricade. They call themselves a self-defense group. They are simply one of Port-Au-Prince’s gangs.

US asks UK court to permit extradition of WikiLeaks’ Assange

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The United States asked Britain’s High Court on Wednesday to overturn a judge’s decision that Julian Assange should not be sent to the United States to face espionage charges, promising that the WikiLeaks founder would be able to serve any prison sentence he receives in his native Australia.

In January, a lower court judge refused an American request to extradite Assange on spying charges over WikiLeaks’ publication of secret military documents a decade ago.

District Judge Vanessa Baraitser denied extradition on health grounds, saying Assange was likely to kill himself if held under harsh U.S. prison conditions. But Baraitser rejected defense arguments that Assange faces a politically motivated American prosecution that would override free-speech protections, and she said the U.S. judicial system would give him a fair trial.

An attorney for the U.S. government, James Lewis, argued Wednesday that the judge erred when she ruled Assange would be at risk of suicide if he were sent to the United States. He said American authorities had promised that Assange would not be held before trial in a top-security “Supermax” prison or subjected to strict isolation conditions, and would be allowed in the event of a conviction to serve any sentence in Australia.

Lewis said the assurances “are binding on the United States.”

U.S. authorities also argue that Assange does not meet the threshold of being so ill that he cannot resist harming himself.

“Once there is an assurance of appropriate medical care, once it is clear he will be repatriated to Australia to serve any sentence, then we can safely say the district judge would not have decided the relevant question in the way that she did,” Lewis said.

Several dozen pro-Assange protesters rallied outside London’s Royal Courts of Justice before the hearing, which is scheduled to last two days.

Assange, who is being held at London’s high-security Belmarsh Prison, had been expected to attend by video link, but his lawyer, Edward Fitzgerald, said Assange had been put on a high dose of medication and “doesn’t feel able to attend the proceedings.”

A video link later showed Assange appearing to listen to the hearing. During previous court sessions, his lawyers said he experienced physical and mental health problems.

Assange’s partner, Stella Moris, said outside court that she was “very concerned for Julian’s health. I saw him on Saturday. He’s very thin.”

“It is completely unthinkable that the U.K. courts could agree to this,” Moris said. “I hope the courts will end this nightmare, that Julian is able to come home soon and that wise heads prevail.”

The two justices hearing the appeal — who include England’s most senior judge, Lord Chief Justice Ian Burnett — are not expected to give their ruling for several weeks. That will likely not end the epic legal saga, however, since the losing side can seek to appeal to the U.K. Supreme Court.

U.S. prosecutors have indicted Assange on 17 espionage charges and one charge of computer misuse over WikiLeaks’ publication of thousands of leaked military and diplomatic documents. The charges carry

a maximum sentence of 175 years in prison.

The prosecutors say Assange unlawfully helped U.S. Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning steal classified diplomatic cables and military files that WikiLeaks later published. Lawyers for Assange argue that he was acting as a journalist and is entitled to First Amendment freedom of speech protections for publishing documents that exposed U.S. military wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Assange, 50, has been in prison since he was arrested in April 2019 for skipping bail during a separate legal battle. Before that he spent seven years holed up inside Ecuador's London embassy, where he fled in 2012 to avoid extradition to Sweden to face allegations of rape and sexual assault.

Sweden dropped the sex crimes investigations in November 2019 because so much time had elapsed, but Assange remains in prison. The judge who blocked extradition in January ordered that he must stay in custody during any U.S. appeal, ruling that the Australian citizen "has an incentive to abscond" if he is freed.

WikiLeaks supporters say testimony from witnesses during the extradition hearing that Assange was spied on while in the embassy by a Spanish security firm at the behest of the CIA — and that there was even talk of abducting or killing him — undermines U.S. claims he will be treated fairly.

Journalism organizations and human rights groups have urged President Joe Biden to drop the prosecution launched under his predecessor, Donald Trump.

Amnesty International Secretary-General Agnes Callamard said the charges were politically motivated and should be dropped.

"It is a damning indictment that nearly 20 years on, virtually no one responsible for alleged U.S. war crimes committed in the course of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars has been held accountable, let alone prosecuted, and yet a publisher who exposed such crimes is potentially facing a lifetime in jail," she said.

America 'on fire': Facebook watched as Trump ignited hate

By AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — The reports of hateful and violent posts on Facebook started pouring in on the night of May 28 last year, soon after then-President Donald Trump sent a warning on social media that looters in Minneapolis would be shot.

It had been three days since Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on the neck of George Floyd for more than eight minutes until the 46-year-old Black man lost consciousness, showing no signs of life. A video taken by a bystander had been viewed millions of times online. Protests had taken over Minnesota's largest city and would soon spread throughout cities across America.

But it wasn't until after Trump posted about Floyd's death that the reports of violence and hate speech increased "rapidly" on Facebook across the country, an internal company analysis of the ex-president's social media post reveals.

"These THUGS are dishonoring the memory of George Floyd and I won't let that happen," Trump wrote at 9:53 a.m. on May 28 from his Twitter and Facebook accounts. "Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts the shooting starts!"

The former president has since been suspended from both Twitter and Facebook.

Leaked Facebook documents provide a first-hand look at how Trump's social media posts ignited more anger in an already deeply divided country that was eventually lit "on fire" with reports of hate speech and violence across the platform. Facebook's own internal, automated controls, meant to catch posts that violate rules, predicted with almost 90% certainty that Trump's message broke the tech company's rules against inciting violence.

Yet, the tech giant didn't take any action on Trump's message.

Offline, the next day, protests — some of which turned violent — engulfed nearly every U.S. city, big and small.

"When people look back at the role Facebook played, they won't say Facebook caused it, but Facebook

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 19 of 70

was certainly the megaphone," said Lainer Holt, a communications professor at Ohio State University. "I don't think there's any way they can get out of saying that they exacerbated the situation."

Social media rival Twitter, meanwhile, responded quickly at the time by covering Trump's tweet with a warning and prohibiting users from sharing it any further.

Facebook's internal discussions were revealed in disclosures made to the Securities and Exchange Commission and provided to Congress in redacted form by former Facebook employee-turned-whistleblower Frances Haugen's legal counsel. The redacted versions received by Congress were obtained by a consortium of news organizations, including The Associated Press.

The Wall Street Journal previously reported that Trump was one of many high-profile users, including politicians and celebrities, exempted from some or all of the company's normal enforcement policies.

Hate speech and violence reports had been mostly limited to the Minneapolis region after Floyd's death, the documents reveal.

"However, after Trump's post on May 28, situations really escalated across the country," according to the memo, published on June 5 of last year.

The internal analysis shows a five-fold increase in violence reports on Facebook, while complaints of hate speech tripled in the days following Trump's post. Reports of false news on the platform doubled. Reshares of Trump's message generated a "substantial amount of hateful and violent comments," many of which Facebook worked to remove. Some of those comments included calls to "start shooting these thugs" and "f--- the white."

By June 2, "we can see clearly that the entire country was basically 'on fire,'" a Facebook employee wrote of the increase in hate speech and violence reports in the June 5 memo.

Facebook says it's impossible to separate how many of the hate speech reports were driven by Trump's post itself or the controversy over Floyd's death.

"This spike in user reports resulted from a critical moment in history for the racial justice movement — not from a single Donald Trump post about it," a Facebook spokesperson said in a statement. "Facebook often reflects what's happening in society and the only way to prevent spikes in user reports during these moments is to not allow them to be discussed on our platform at all, which is something we would never do."

But the internal findings also raise questions about public statements Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg made last year as he defended his decision to leave Trump's post untouched.

On May 29, for example, Zuckerberg said the company looked closely to see if Trump's words broke any of its policies and concluded that they did not. Zuckerberg also said he left the post up because it warned people of Trump's plan to deploy troops.

"I know many people are upset that we've left the President's posts up, but our position is that we should enable as much expression as possible unless it will cause imminent risk of specific harms or dangers spelled out in clear policies," Zuckerberg wrote on his Facebook account the night of May 29, as protests erupted around the country.

Yet, Facebook's own automated enforcement controls determined the post likely did break the rules.

"Our violence and incitement classifier was almost 90% certain that this (Trump) post violated Facebook's ... policy," the June 5 analysis reads.

That contradicts conversations Zuckerberg had with civil rights leaders last year to quell concerns that Trump's post was a specific threat to Black people protesting Floyd's death, said Rashad Robinson, the president of Color of Change, a civil rights advocacy group. The group also spearheaded a boycott of Facebook in the weeks following Trump's post.

"To be clear, I had a direct argument with Zuckerberg days after that post where he gaslit me and he specifically pushed back on any notion that this violated their rules," Robinson said in an interview with the AP last week.

To curb the ex-president's ability to stoke hateful reactions on its platform, Facebook employees suggested last year that the company limit reshares on similar posts that may violate Facebook's rules in the future.

But Trump continued to use his Facebook account, which more than 32 million follow, to fire up his sup-

porters throughout much of the remainder of his presidency. In the days leading up to a deadly siege in Washington on Jan. 6, Trump regularly promoted false claims that widespread voter fraud caused him to lose the White House, spurring hundreds of his fans to storm the U.S. Capitol and demand the results of a fair election be overturned.

It wasn't until after the Capitol riot, and as Trump was on his way out of the White House, that Facebook pulled him off the platform in January, announcing his account would be suspended until at least 2023.

There's a reason Facebook waited so long to take any action, said Jennifer Mercieca, a professor at Texas A&M University who closely studied the former president's rhetoric.

"Facebook really benefited from Trump and Trump's ability to draw attention and engagement through outrage," Mercieca said. "They wanted Trump to keep going on."

See full coverage of the "The Facebook Papers" here: <https://apnews.com/hub/the-facebook-papers>

Many progressives grudgingly accepting smaller economic bill

By ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Many progressives have started lining up behind an emerging social and environment bill that's neither as big nor as bold as they wanted, thanks to an outnumbered but potent band of party moderates who've enjoyed a disproportionate say in shaping the measure.

Democrats rolled past unanimous Republican opposition in August and pushed a 10-year, \$3.5 trillion fiscal blueprint of the plan through Congress. With talks continuing, the actual package — it reflects President Joe Biden's hopes for bolstering health care, family services and climate change efforts — seems likely to be around half that size. Prized initiatives like free community college and fines against utilities using carbon-spewing fuels are being jettisoned, and others are being curtailed.

Moderates' clout flows from the fraught arithmetic of a tightly divided Congress in which Democrats need all their votes in the 50-50 Senate and near unanimity in the House. That's made centrist Sens. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Krysten Sinema of Arizona power brokers who colleagues fear would vote no if they're dissatisfied, blowing up Biden's agenda and wounding the party's prospects in next year's midterm elections.

With party leaders eager to cut a deal and start moving the legislation in days, progressives are grudgingly assessing whether it's time to be pragmatic, back a compromise and declare victory.

An agreement would bring another bonus — freeing for final House approval a bipartisan, Senate-approved \$1 trillion package of road, water and broadband projects that progressives have sidetracked to pressure moderates to back the larger economic bill.

"Of course I don't like it," said progressive Sen. Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii, of the outsize influence moderates have had in compressing the package and erasing some of its provisions. "These are all things that we've been fighting for. For decades." But she said with Democratic unity needed, the party should use the bill to "open the door" to its priorities and then try extending and expanding them later.

"At the end of the day we have to accomplish something, we have to deal with the reality in which we're living," liberal Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., chairman of the House Rules Committee and an ally of House leaders, said of his party's slender congressional margins. "So the question is would we prefer not getting anything, or would we prefer something that can at least be a down payment on some of the transformational programs that we want."

Only a handful of House and Senate moderates are expressing qualms with the social and environment bill, prompting strong feelings by colleagues.

"At some point, you have to realize that legislating requires respect for the rest of the people you're working with," Rep. John Yarmuth, D-Ky., a progressive and chairman of the House Budget Committee, said of Manchin and Sinema. "And when you have forced a 50% cut essentially in a giant program, I think you've done a disservice to all the people you serve with."

"I'm pissed off, man," said freshman Rep. Jamaal Bowman, D-N.Y., one of the party's most progressive

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 21 of 70

members, singling out Manchin. "It's just unacceptable to me that one person from one state can have all this power and make these decisions that will crush my district and districts like mine across the country."

Manchin has pushed to limit some of the bill's benefits to lower-earning people. He's also insisted on an overall price tag of \$1.5 trillion, though Tuesday he told reporters he doesn't know "where it's going to end up." With West Virginia heavily reliant on coal production, he's forced Democrats to drop language fining utilities that don't move away from heavily polluting fuels and rewarding those that do, which was a pillar of their climate change plan.

Sinema has insisted on limiting the bill's cost. She's also opposed Democrats' initial plan to finance much of the measure by raising income tax rates on the wealthy and corporations, prompting them to consider alternatives such as clamping new levies on billionaires' wealth. She did say she backs requiring large corporations to pay a minimum tax.

Though many progressives have started touting the wins the measure will carry, they're not all finished. Many are waging late efforts to rescue or beef up teetering proposals like expanding Medicare and Medicaid coverage, providing paid family leave and letting Medicare negotiate lower drug prices from pharmaceutical companies.

"The vast majority of our priorities are in," said Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., who leads the Congressional Progressive Caucus. "But there's a couple of areas where that's still not the case. And so what we'll continue to do is push as hard as we can."

The 95-member group's priorities include climate change, housing, child care, Medicare expansion and helping immigrants become citizens. Democrats have struggled to include immigration provisions and efforts to add new dental, vision and hearing benefits to Medicare also encountered problems.

The preference to keep fighting for a more robust plan is being reinforced by progressive outside groups.

Leah Greenberg, executive director of Indivisible, the grassroots advocacy organization, said Manchin and Sinema are "enabling an agenda that's out of step with the Democratic Party." Ellen Sciales, spokesperson for the Sunrise Movement, a group of young environmental activists, said watering down climate change provisions would be "a death sentence for our generation."

But Biden and top congressional Democrats are pushing to end the party's infighting and wrap up the measure. As if reading from the same script, some are even using similar catchwords.

"We are on the verge of something major. Transformative, historic and bigger than anything else," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., told Democrats at a closed-door meeting Tuesday, according to a person familiar with the session who would only describe it on condition of anonymity.

"I kind of think that's transformative and historic," Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., another member of House leadership, said of the measure's components.

Iran's president says cyberattack meant to create 'disorder'

By JON GAMBRELL and NASSER KARIMI Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's president said Wednesday that a cyberattack which paralyzed every gas station in the Islamic Republic was designed to get "people angry by creating disorder and disruption," as long lines still snaked around the pumps a day after the incident began.

Ebrahim Raisi's remarks stopped short of assigning blame for the attack, which rendered useless the government-issued electronic cards that many Iranians use to buy subsidized fuel at the pump.

However, they suggested that he and others in the theocracy believe anti-Iranian forces carried out an assault likely designed to inflame the country as the second anniversary of a deadly crackdown on nationwide protests over gasoline prices approaches.

"There should be serious readiness in the field of cyberwar and related bodies should not allow the enemy to follow their ominous aims to make problem in trend of people's life," Raisi said. State television later aired footage of the president visiting a gas station in central Tehran.

The attack Tuesday also bore similarities to another months earlier that seemed to directly challenge Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as the country's economy buckles under American sanctions.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 22 of 70

On Wednesday morning, the state-run IRNA news agency quoted another official who claimed 80% of Iran's gas stations had begun selling fuel again. Associated Press journalists saw long lines at multiple gas stations in Tehran. One station had a line of 90 cars waiting for fuel. Those buying ended up having to pay at higher, unsubsidized prices.

The semiofficial ISNA news agency, which first called the incident a cyberattack, said it saw those trying to buy fuel with a government-issued card through the machines instead receiving a message reading "cyberattack 64411."

While ISNA didn't acknowledge the number's significance, that number is associated with a hotline run through Khamenei's office that handles questions about Islamic law. ISNA later removed its reports, claiming that it too had been hacked. Such claims of hacking can come quickly when Iranian outlets publish news that angers the theocracy.

Farsi-language satellite channels abroad published videos apparently shot by drivers in Isfahan, a major Iranian city, showing electronic billboards there reading: "Khamenei! Where is our gas?" Another said: "Free gas in Jamaran gas station," a reference to the home of the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The use of the number "64411" mirrored the attack in July targeting Iran's railroad system that also saw the number displayed. Israeli cybersecurity firm Check Point later attributed the train attack to a group of hackers that called themselves Indra, after the Hindu god of war.

Indra previously targeted firms in Syria, where President Bashar Assad has held onto power through Iran's intervention in his country's grinding war.

Abolhassan Firouzabadi, the secretary of the Supreme Council of Cyberspace, linked the attack to the Iran's rail system assault in July in comments reported by IRNA. He also said it affected all of Iran's 4,300 gas stations nationwide.

"There is a possibility that the attack, like a previous one on railway system, has been conducted from abroad," Firouzabadi said.

However, a former deputy telecommunications minister, Amir Nazemy, earlier wrote on Twitter that the "infrastructure of system of gas stations is an exclusive network and this sort of communications were not on the internet." That raises questions on whether someone inside of Iran with access to the system launched the cyberattack or otherwise facilitated it.

A previously unheard-of group claimed responsibility for the cyberattack hours afterward late Tuesday, in a message on the messaging app Telegram. It did not provide any evidence that it carried out the assault.

Cheap gasoline is practically considered a birthright in Iran, home to the world's fourth-largest crude oil reserves despite decades of economic woes.

Subsidies allow Iranian motorists to buy regular gasoline at 15,000 rials per liter. That's 5 cents a liter, or about 20 cents a gallon. After a monthly 60-liter quota, it costs 30,000 rials a liter. That's 10 cents a liter or 41 cents a gallon. Regular gasoline costs 89 cents a liter or \$3.38 a gallon on average in the U.S., according to AAA.

In 2019, Iran faced days of mass protests across some 100 cities and towns over rising gasoline prices. Security forces arrested thousands and Amnesty International said it believes 304 people were killed in a government crackdown. Tuesday's cyberattack came in the same month in the Persian calendar as the gasoline protests in 2019.

The attack also came on the birthday of the late Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi who, stricken with cancer, fled the country in 1979 just before the Islamic Revolution.

Iran has faced a series of cyberattacks, including one that leaked video of abuses at its notorious Evin prison in August.

The country disconnected much of its government infrastructure from the internet after the Stuxnet computer virus — widely believed to be a joint U.S.-Israeli creation — disrupted thousands of Iranian centrifuges in the country's nuclear sites in the late 2000s.

Iran, long sanctioned by the West, faces difficulties in getting up-to-date hardware and software, often

relying on Chinese-manufactured electronics or older systems no longer being patched by manufacturers. That would make it easier for a potential hacker to target. Pirated versions of Windows and other software are common across Iran.

Karimi reported from Tehran, Iran.

Democrats unveil billionaires' tax as Biden plan takes shape

By LISA MASCARO, AAMER MADHANI and ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pushing past skeptics, Senate Democrats on Wednesday unveiled a new billionaires' tax proposal, an entirely new entry in the tax code designed to help pay for President Joe Biden's sweeping domestic policy package and edge his party closer to an overall agreement.

The proposed tax would hit the gains of those with more than \$1 billion in assets or incomes of more than \$100 million a year, and it could begin to shore up the big social services and climate change plan Biden is racing to finish before departing this week for global summits.

The new billionaires' proposal, coupled with a new 15% corporate minimum tax, would provide alternative revenue sources that Biden needs to win over one key Democrat, Sen. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, who had rejected the party's earlier idea of reversing the Trump-era tax breaks on corporations and the wealthy to raise revenue.

Biden met late Tuesday evening with Sinema and another Democratic holdout, Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, at the White House.

"No senator wants to stand up and say, 'Gee, I think it's just fine for billionaires to pay little or no taxes for years on end,'" said Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, helming the new effort.

Biden and his party are zeroing in on at least \$1.75 trillion in health care, child care and climate change programs, scaling back what had been a \$3.5 trillion plan, as they try to wrap up negotiations this week.

Taken together, the new tax on billionaires and the 15% corporate minimum tax are designed to fulfill Biden's desire for the wealthy and big business to pay their "fair share." They also fit his promise that no new taxes hit those earning less than \$400,000 a year, or \$450,000 for couples. Biden insists all the new spending will be fully paid for and not piled onto the national debt.

While the new tax proposals have appeared agreeable to Manchin and could win over Sinema, whose support is needed in the 50-50 split Senate where Biden has no votes to spare, the idea of the billionaires' tax has run into criticism from other Democrats as cumbersome or worse.

Rep. Richard Neal, D-Mass., the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, said he told Wyden the billionaires' tax may be more difficult to implement than the route his panel took in simply raising rates on corporations and the wealthy.

Under Wyden's emerging plan, the billionaires' tax would hit the wealthiest of Americans, fewer than 800 people, starting in the 2022 tax year, according to a person familiar with the plan who insisted on anonymity to discuss it.

It would require those with assets of more than \$1 billion, or three consecutive years of income of \$100 million, to pay taxes on the gains of stocks and other tradeable assets, rather than waiting until holdings are sold.

A similar billionaires' tax would be applied to non-tradeable assets, including real estate, but it would be deferred with the tax not assessed until the asset was sold, though interest would have to be paid.

Overall, the billionaires' tax rate would align with the capital gains rate, now 23.8%. Democrats have said it could raise \$200 billion in revenue that could help fund Biden's package over 10 years.

"I've been talking about this for years," said Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., who campaigned for the presidency on a wealth tax, and backs Wyden's approach. "I've even made billionaires cry over this."

Republicans have derided the billionaires' tax as "harebrained," and some have suggested it would face a legal challenge.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 24 of 70

And key fellow Democrats were also raising concerns about the billionaires' tax, saying the idea of simply undoing the 2017 tax cuts by hiking top rates was more straightforward and transparent.

Under the House bill approved by Neal's panel, the top individual income tax rate would rise from 37% to 39.6%, on those earning more than \$400,000 a year, or \$450,000 for couples. The corporate rate would increase from 21% to 26.5%. The bill also proposes a 3% surtax on the wealthiest Americans with adjusted income beyond \$5 million a year.

With Sinema rejecting the House's approach to taxes and Manchin panning the new spending on programs, the senators have packed a one-two punch, throwing Biden's overall plan into flux.

That was also forcing difficult reductions, if not the outright elimination, of policy priorities — from paid family leave to child care to dental, vision and hearing aid benefits for seniors.

The once hefty climate change strategies are losing some punch, too, focusing away from punitive measures on polluters that raised objections from coal-state Manchin, in a shift toward instead rewarding clean energy incentives.

Manchin's resistance may scuttle one other tax idea — a plan to give the IRS more resources to go after tax scofflaws. He said he told Biden during their weekend meeting at the president's home in Delaware that that plan was "messed up" and would allow the government to monitor bank accounts.

All told, Biden's package remains a substantial undertaking — and could still top \$2 trillion in perhaps the largest effort of its kind from Congress in decades. But it's far slimmer than the president and his party first envisioned.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told lawmakers in a closed meeting Tuesday they were on the verge of "something major, transformative, historic and bigger than anything else" ever attempted in Congress, according to another person who insisted on anonymity to share her private remarks to the caucus.

Other leading Democrats began to lend their backing to the emerging deal.

"We know that we are close," said Rep. Joyce Beatty, D-Ohio, the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, after a meeting with Biden at the White House. "And let me be explicitly clear: Our footprints and fingerprints are on this."

From the White House, press secretary Jen Psaki said Biden still hoped to have a deal in hand to show foreign leaders the U.S. government was performing effectively on climate change and other major issues. But she acknowledged that might not happen, forcing him to keep working on the package from afar.

She warned about failure as opposed to compromise.

"The alternative to what is being negotiated is not the original package," she said. "It is nothing."

Democrats are hoping to reach an agreement by week's end, paving the way for a House vote on a related \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill before routine transportation funds expire Sunday. That separate roads-and-bridges bill stalled when progressive lawmakers refused to support it until deliberations on the broader Biden bill were complete.

Associated Press writers Farnoush Amiri, Darlene Superville and Colleen Long contributed to this report.

Authorities to present findings in 'Rust' movie-set shooting

By MORGAN LEE, SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN AND CEDAR ATTANASIO Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — Investigators plan to discuss their initial findings Wednesday in the fatal movie-set shooting in which Alec Baldwin fired a prop gun, killing a cinematographer and wounding the director.

The news conference by Santa Fe County Sheriff Adan Mendoza and District Attorney Mary Carmack-Altwies promises the first detailed public comments by investigators about the killing of 42-year-old Halyna Hutchins during a rehearsal at a New Mexico ranch.

The sequence of events on Oct. 21 has baffled Hollywood professionals and prompted calls to better regulate firearms of sets or even ban them in the age of seamless computer-generated imagery.

Court records say that an assistant director, Dave Halls, grabbed the gun from a cart and handed it to Baldwin, indicating the weapon was safe by yelling "cold gun." But it was loaded with live rounds, accord-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 25 of 70

ing to a written affidavit from a detective.

Baldwin, 63, who is known for his roles in "30 Rock," "The Departed" and "The Hunt for Red October" along with impression of former President Donald Trump on "Saturday Night Live," has described the killing as a "tragic accident."

Carmack-Altwives told The Associated Press prior to the news conference that the investigation is still in its early stages — far from any decisions about whether or not to file criminal charges.

She said those involved in the production were cooperating with law enforcement and that prosecutors won't fully review evidence until the completion of an initial investigation by the sheriff's office.

The gun Baldwin used was one of three that a firearms specialist, or "armorer," had set on a cart outside the building where a scene was being rehearsed, according to court records.

Director Joel Souza, who was standing behind Hutchins and was wounded, told investigators there should never be live rounds present whatsoever near the scene.

Authorities have seized three black revolvers, gun belts with holsters, ammunition boxes, a fanny pack with ammunition, several spent casings and articles of clothing and swabs of what were believed to be blood.

The production of "Rust" has been beset by workplace disputes from the start in early October. Hours before the shooting, several camera crew members walked off the set amid discord over working conditions, including safety procedures.

Baldwin in his role as actor appeared unlikely to be held criminally or civilly liable for the tragedy. As a producer, however, he is among a long list of associates on the film who could face some sort of liability.

Concerns have been raised about Halls' safety record by colleagues on two previous productions. Halls has not returned phone calls and email messages seeking comment.

Rust Movie Productions, the production company, says it is cooperating with Santa Fe authorities in their investigation and conducting its own internal review of procedures with the production shut down.

This story has been updated to correct the date of the fatal shooting to Oct. 21.

In Somalia, a rare female artist promotes images of peace

By HASSAN BARISE Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — Among the once-taboo professions emerging from Somalia's decades of conflict and Islamic extremism is the world of arts, and a 21-year-old female painter has faced more opposition than most.

A rare woman artist in the highly conservative Horn of Africa nation, Sana Ashraf Sharif Muhsin lives and works amid the rubble of her uncle's building that was partially destroyed in Mogadishu's years of war.

Despite the challenges that include the belief by some Muslims that Islam bars all representations of people, and the search for brushes and other materials for her work, she is optimistic.

"I love my work and believe that I can contribute to the rebuilding and pacifying of my country," she said.

Sana stands out for breaking the gender barrier to enter a male-dominated profession, according to Abdi Mohamed Shu'ayb, a professor of arts at Somali National University. She is just one of two female artists he knows of in Somalia, with the other in the breakaway region of Somaliland.

And yet Sana is unique "because her artworks capture contemporary life in a positive way and seek to build reconciliation," he said, calling her a national hero.

Sana, a civil engineering student, began drawing at the age of 8, following in the footsteps of her maternal uncle, Abdikarim Osman Addow, a well-known artist.

"I would use charcoal on all the walls of the house, drawing my vision of the world," Sana said, laughing. More formal instruction followed, and she eventually assembled a book from her sketches of household items like a shoe or a jug of water.

But as her work brought her more public attention over the years, some tensions followed.

"I fear for myself sometimes," she said, and recalled a confrontation during a recent exhibition at the City University of Mogadishu. A male student began shouting "This is wrong!" and professors tried to calm

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 26 of 70

him, explaining that art is an important part of the world.

Many people in Somalia don't understand the arts, Sana said, and some even criticize them as disgusting. At exhibitions, she tries to make people understand that art is useful and "a weapon that can be used for many things."

A teacher once challenged her skills by asking questions and requiring answers in the form of a drawing, she said.

"Everything that's made is first drawn, and what we're making is not the dress but something that changes your internal emotions," Sana said. "Our paintings talk to the people."

Her work at times explores the social issues roiling Somalia, including a painting of a soldier looking at the ruins of the country's first parliament building. It reflects the current political clash between the federal government and opposition, she said, as national elections are delayed.

Another painting reflects abuses against vulnerable young women "which they cannot even express." A third shows a woman in the bare-shouldered dress popular in Somalia decades ago before a stricter interpretation of Islam took hold and scholars urged women to wear the hijab.

But Sana also strives for beauty in her work, aware that "we have passed through 30 years of destruction, and the people only see bad things, having in their mind blood and destruction and explosions. ... If you Google Somalia, we don't have beautiful pictures there, but ugly ones, so I'd like to change all that using my paintings."

Sana said she hopes to gain further confidence in her work by exhibiting it more widely, beyond events in Somalia and neighboring Kenya.

But finding role models at home for her profession doesn't come easily.

Sana named several Somali artists whose work she admires, but she knows of no other female ones like herself.

Gulf Arab states, squeezed by climate change, still tout oil

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — The global energy transition is perhaps nowhere more perplexing than in the Arabian Peninsula, where Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies are caught between two daunting climate change scenarios that threaten their livelihoods.

In one, the world stops burning oil and gas to cut down on heat-trapping emissions, shaking the very foundation of their economies. In the other, global temperatures keep rising, at the risk of rendering unlivable much of the Gulf's already extremely hot terrain.

The political stability of the six Gulf states — Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman — is rooted in profits from fossil fuels. This includes exports that energy-hungry China and India will want even more over the next two decades.

"Climate action, it's almost an existential problem for an absolute monarchy based on oil exports," said Jim Krane, author of "Energy Kingdoms: Oil and Political Survival in the Persian Gulf."

"They need climate action to succeed without wrecking the oil market. That's a tough needle to thread."

In pledging "net-zero" emissions targets as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain have done this month, greenhouse gas emissions would be cut within their borders — while maintaining fossil fuel exports abroad.

Saudi Arabia, which supplies about one-tenth of the world's oil demand, made its announcement this week while hosting its first major climate change forum. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman set 2060 as Saudi Arabia's target.

It was an important announcement for a country with an estimated 265 billion barrels of oil reserves worth \$22.5 trillion at current prices. Saudi Arabia has expressed determination to pump oil until the last drop, but it could find little use for its greatest natural resource in a world that runs on cleaner forms of renewable and solar energy.

Gulf monarchies have used oil revenue to maintain domestic support, buy regional clout and expand influence. The money has built up national armies and provided citizens with cushy public sector jobs, free

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 27 of 70

health care and higher education, subsidized fuel, land to build homes on, marriage dowries and generous pensions.

Without this patronage system, Gulf monarchies might have to allow greater political participation or turn more repressive, said Krane, an energy studies fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy in Texas.

Gulf Arab states pledging "net zero" emissions are positioning themselves to be part of the multi-trillion-dollar clean energy industry, even as they keep earning from oil and gas.

At the Saudi Green Initiative Forum in Riyadh, President Joe Biden's climate envoy, John Kerry, told a roomful of princes and prime ministers from across the region that climate action can create "the biggest market opportunity the world has ever known."

"It's the biggest transformation that has ever taken place on this planet, since the industrial revolution, if we do it," Kerry said.

The "net zero" pledges also crucially enable the Gulf's ruling elite to wield influence at conferences like COP26, where climate action policies are being crafted, said Ellen Wald, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council and author of "Saudi Inc."

"It's important for them to have a seat at the table and be taken seriously at these conferences... because that way they get a say," she said.

Saudi Arabia is one of several countries lobbying behind the scenes ahead of the COP26 summit to change language around emissions, apparently trying to water down an upcoming U.N. science panel report on global warming, according to leaked documents.

Gulf Arab states are privately and publicly advocating for carbon capture technologies rather than a rapid phasing out of fossil fuels, warning that a hurried transition would leave poorer populations without access to energy.

Greenpeace, which obtained the leaked documents, has criticized the approach, saying these "yet unproven" carbon capture technologies allow nations to emit more greenhouse gases on the optimistic assumption they can be drawn out of the atmosphere later.

Meanwhile, national energy companies like Saudi Aramco, Abu Dhabi's ADNOC and Qatar Petroleum — now re-branded as Qatar Energy — are moving ahead with efforts to reduce emissions and boost investments in petrochemical products used in fertilizers, plastics, rubber and other polymers that are in huge demand globally.

Aramco, by far the world's biggest oil company, announced it would reach "net zero" by 2050 on its operations, a decade sooner than the Saudi government's pledge. ADNOC has pledged to decrease its greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2030.

Qatar Petroleum has already shipped one carbon-neutral cargo of LNG gas to Singapore and will be incorporating carbon capture technology in its expansion plans, according to a report by the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.

Speaking at the forum in Riyadh, ADNOC CEO Sultan Al-Jaber called on people to be "a bit mature and sober" in discussing the energy transition, insisting it will take time and must include oil and gas.

"We can't just come out of nowhere and all of a sudden speak about energy transition and completely ignore or underestimate the impact of oil and gas in helping meet global energy requirements," Al-Jaber said, noting that 80% of total energy requirements currently come from fossil fuels, with 60% of that oil and gas.

OPEC forecasts that while the push for alternative and renewable energy will usher in an era of declining demand for oil in some parts of the world, it will remain the world's No. 1 source of energy through 2045. It forecasts that of the 2.6 billion cars on the road by 2045, just 20% will be electric-powered.

Although all six Gulf states remain heavily reliant on fossil fuels for state spending, each has taken steps to try to diversify their economies, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE leading aggressive efforts to attract investment in new industries.

Still, over half of Saudi Arabia's revenue comes from oil, with \$150 billion expected this year alone as prices climb to \$85 a barrel.

"Oil exports are the lifeblood of the Saudi economy and the Saudi political system," said Krane. "It would be a disaster for Saudi Arabia if the rest of the world quickly weaned itself off oil."

Scientists say the world must invest in renewable energy to limit warming to 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit (1.5 degrees Celsius), although a new U.N. report finds that even governments' fresh pledges aren't strict enough to keep temperature rises below that by the end of the century.

Nearly all of the warming that has happened on Earth can be blamed on emissions of heat-trapping gases such as carbon dioxide and methane, and if the limit is surpassed scientists say the damage will be irreversible.

In remarks to reporters this month, Qatari Energy Minister Saad al-Kaabi questioned whether countries that have "net-zero" pledges have a plan on how to get there.

"For me to just come out and say, 'Net zero 2050'. Very sexy," he said. "I mean, looks great in the newspaper, but it's not the right thing."

Follow Aya Batrawy on twitter at <https://twitter.com/ayaelb>

Bad break: Braves' Morton fractures leg in Series opener

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Charlie Morton spun a curveball past Jose Altuve for a called third strike, his 16th pitch after taking a 102 mph comebacker off his right leg. Morton stumbled and started to fall. Turns out the leg was broken.

"I wouldn't think it's possible," catcher Travis d'Arnaud said. "It's incredible that he even like thought of going out there."

Morton's right fibula was fractured by Yuli Gurriel's one-hop screamer leading off the second inning of Tuesday night's World Series opener, a ball hit so hard it ricocheted to first baseman Freddie Freeman for an out.

By the time Morton faced Altuve leading off the third with a 5-0 lead, the leg had started to swell. Four relievers combined to pitch 6 2/3 innings and finish a 6-2 victory over the Houston Astros.

Morton's World Series was over soon after it started.

"You don't wish bad on anybody," Astros manager Dusty Baker said. "Charlie Morton is one of the best guys around, too."

After Gurriel, Morton struck out Chas McCormick on four pitches, then retired Martín Maldonado on a liner to first base.

"When the inning was over, we meet and talk about what's going on," d'Arnaud recalled. "He said, 'Oh, that one got me good.' He was kind of walking a little funny. I didn't think it was broken."

Braves manager Brian Snitker said an initial X-ray after the second failed to show a break.

"He wanted to keep going, because he was down in the tunnel and he was throwing against the wall," Snitker explained. "He said, 'It kind of hurts more when I run. I feel good when I throw.'"

Morton went back out for the third. Still reaching up to 95.9 mph, he struck out Altuve. The 37-year-old right-hander braced himself with both arms after the pitch and grimaced as he popped back up, then rubbed at his right ankle.

"To go out there and strike out the next guy with a broken leg, it blows my mind," d'Arnaud said, repeating for emphasis. "It blows my mind."

Head athletic trainer George Poulis and manager Snitker came to the mound, and Morton walked back to the dugout, favoring a leg. By the fifth inning, the Braves said Morton's next mound appearance was expected to be during spring training.

"That's Charlie," Snitker said. "He wants to be on this stage. God bless him, I hate it for him. Really hate it for him. He's such a great person, great person and teammate."

A.J. Minter came in and pitched 2 2/3 innings of one-run ball for the win.

"Whenever I got through with my first inning. I went up to the locker room real quick, and I heard the

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 29 of 70

news," Minter said. "You could tell he was devastated, but he wasn't going to show it."

Asked what was the longest he could envision someone throwing with a broken leg, d'Arnaud responded: "Maybe one pitch, and it probably went to the backstop."

"It's incredible that he even like thought of going out there, and I bet you it was so A.J. could have some more time to get ready. He sacrificed himself," the catcher said. "I don't think he knew it was broken right away, but he knew it was hurting. For him to sacrifice himself to make sure A.J. was ready and for him to strike out Altuve is incredible."

Morton threw 44 pitches — Hank Aaron's old number keeps popping up — and allowed one hit, Michael Brantley's one-out single in the first. Morton struck out three and walked two.

Morton pitched the final four innings and got the win for Houston in its Game 7 victory at the Los Angeles Dodgers in the 2017 World Series. A calming, respected clubhouse presence, he was looking forward for a chance to take center stage in his former ballpark, before opponents he considers friends.

"He cares about everybody in the clubhouse," d'Arnaud said. "Everybody knows his pedigree, and you wouldn't expect somebody with that pedigree to be that humble and that down to earth, that caring about every little detail about everybody, not just baseball, but their lives, their families. So it's definitely a tough, tough break for us. Like I said, I can't wait to see him and give him a hug."

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/hub/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Soler, Braves overcome Morton injury, top Astros in Game 1

By BEN WALKER AP Baseball Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — A healthy swing by Jorge Soler powered the Atlanta Braves to a smashing start in the World Series.

In the lineup for the first time since a positive COVID-19 test, Soler became the first player to begin a World Series with a home run and the Braves, despite the loss of pitcher Charlie Morton to a broken leg, hushed the Houston Astros 6-2 Tuesday night in Game 1.

Boosted by a strong bullpen effort, Adam Duvall's two-run homer and a late sacrifice fly from Freddie Freeman, the Braves coasted in their first Series appearance since Chipper Jones and their Big Three aces ascended in 1999.

"So much happened really quick," Atlanta manager Brian Snitker said.

Every Braves starter wound up getting a hit and more than four hours later, this was the scene in their dugout: outlandish outfielder Joc Pederson sipping a glass of red wine and smoking cigars with closer Will Smith.

That victory party lasted a couple of minutes until a security guard ambled over and told them it was a smoke-free building.

Jose Altuve, Carlos Correa and the Astros, meanwhile, mostly looked lost at the plate. This is their third World Series in five seasons — and first since their 2017 illegal sign-stealing scheme was revealed.

Before the game, Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said there were plenty of sleuths monitoring the dugouts, clubhouses and stands to guard against any possible shenanigans.

"There's a lot more people watching what goes on as a result of the issues that we've had," he said.

Game 2 is Wednesday night, with Braves lefty Max Fried starting against right-hander José Urquidy.

"You've just got to like blow this game off and then come back and realize that tomorrow's — that's the beauty of baseball," 72-year-old Astros manager Dusty Baker said. "Tomorrow's another day, and who knows? That's the way I look at it. Ball's going to bounce our way tomorrow."

Soler's no-doubt jolt into the left-field seats on Framer Valdez's third pitch quickly drained all the juice out of Minute Maid Park, quieting a boisterous, sellout crowd.

"The energy was amazing and electric, especially after we took a 1-0 lead after that home run," Soler said through a translator.

As for his feat?

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 30 of 70

"I didn't know that was a thing until I was told a little later on in the game," he said.

Fresh off dispatching the defending World Series champion Dodgers in the playoffs, the Braves weren't done, either. Aggressive in every way, they kept teeing off against their former, longtime National League rivals.

Moments later, Ozzie Albies stole a base and Austin Riley hit an RBI double, taking a rare swing at a 3-0 pitch.

Soler, who missed five playoff games after testing positive for the coronavirus, added an RBI grounder in the second. And when Duvall launched a two-run homer, it was 5-0 and the Braves had made even more October history — the only team to score in each of the first three innings in a World Series opener.

"I think we obviously swung the bats there early pretty well, and doing that on the road, kind of getting them first at-bat jitters out of the way, it's big," Duvall said.

At that point, Braves batters were far from the only ones making noise. The few Atlanta fans sprinkled in the sea of orange had started their familiar chop chant, too.

Right then, it looked as if everything was going right for the Braves.

But baseball can be a fickle game, and the fates can spin faster than the best curveball.

Because in the bottom of the third, Atlanta absorbed its own big hit.

As he struck out Altuve, Morton suddenly grimaced and took an awkward step. His teammates, Snitker and a trainer soon joined him on the mound, and just like that, Morton was gone.

Turned out a hard comebacker by Yuli Gurriel that ricocheted off Morton's leg to Freeman at first base for an out to begin the second had done more damage than anyone realized.

Morton stayed in for another inning, amazingly, before gingerly walking off with a fractured right fibula. The 37-year-old righty, the winning pitcher for the Astros in Game 7 of the 2017 World Series, will be replaced on the roster. He's expected to be OK for spring training.

"God bless him, I hate it for him. Really hate it for him," Snitker said. "He's such a great person, great person and teammate. I do, I really hate it for him because I know he's really looking forward to this run with us."

A.J. Minter replaced Morton and got the win, permitting one run in 2 2/3 innings while throwing a career-high 43 pitches. Atlanta relievers Luke Jackson, Tyler Matzek and Smith finished it.

Altuve and the Astros did little all night. The All-Star second baseman struck out three times — he'd never done that in 73 prior postseason games.

Alex Bregman, Yordan Alvarez and the Astros never seriously threatened in the later innings. Their only runs, in fact, came on shortstop Dansby Swanson's fielding error in the fourth and Correa's groundout in the eighth.

The game wasn't nearly as close as the score indicated. It was more like a romp — during the seventh-inning stretch, as fans did a sing-a-long to "Deep In The Heart of Texas," Braves backup catcher William Contreras locked arms with starter Travis d'Arnaud and did a little Texas two-step as they switched places warming up Jackson.

STATS AND STUFF

It was the first World Series action with a packed stadium since Game 7 at this very park in 2019, when a sellout crowd silently filed out after watching the Nationals rally past Houston. ... Soler and Duvall became the first teammates both acquired midseason to homer in the same World Series game. ... Soler returned late in the NLCS and went 1 for 2 with a double in a pair of pinch-hit appearances. ... The Astros fell to 0-4 in World Series openers. ... No team has won a World Series game in its own park since the Dodgers beat Boston in 18 innings in Game 3 of 2018. The visiting team won every game in 2019, and last year's Series was played at a neutral site in Arlington, Texas.

UP NEXT

Braves: After two fine playoff starts, Fried faltered in Game 5 of the NLCS at Dodger Stadium. With a chance to clinch, the Atlanta ace gave up five runs and eight hits in 4 2/3 innings.

Astros: Urquidy was tagged by Boston for six runs over 1 2/3 innings in his previous start in Game 3 of the ALCS. He has postseason pedigree, though, pitching five scoreless innings as a rookie to beat Wash-

ington in Game 4 of the 2019 World Series.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/hub/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Sudan strongman is seen as an insider with powerful allies

By SAMY MAGDY and ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The general leading Sudan's coup has vowed to usher the country to an elected government. But Abdel-Fattah Burhan has powerful allies, including Gulf nations and a feared Sudanese paramilitary commander, and he appears intent on keeping the military firmly in control.

Burhan first gained prominence in 2019, when he and other top generals toppled Omar al-Bashir, under pressure from mass demonstrations against the autocrat's 30-year rule.

He remained in charge for several months, until international pressure forced the military to reach a power-sharing deal with the protesters. That established a joint civilian-military Sovereign Council headed by Burhan that was supposed to rule Sudan until elections, set for 2023.

Burhan's record was relatively clean and he was not indicted by The International Criminal Court like al-Bashir and others for crimes against humanity during the Darfur conflict of the early 2000s. He was a rare non-Islamist among the top generals during al-Bashir's military-Islamist regime. That helped Sudan emerge from the international pariah status it had under al-Bashir.

On Monday, Burhan swept away the vestiges of civilian government. He dissolved the Sovereign Council and the transitional government, detained Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and other officials, and declared a state of emergency. Hamdok was released Tuesday, but others remain in custody.

The takeover came just weeks before Burhan, 61, was scheduled to be replaced by a civilian as head of the council. He has promised that the military will hand over power once a government is elected in July 2023.

Civilian control would not only undermine the military's political power, but also threaten its extensive financial resources and could lead to prosecutions for rights violations in the past 30 years.

Burhan has been backed in recent years by Egypt, led by a general-turned-president, and Gulf countries, particularly the United Arab Emirates. He trained in Egypt's military college and has made multiple visits since 2019 to the Emirates' de-facto ruler, Abu Dhabi crown prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

In a sign of the decisive behind-the-scenes role of Gulf countries, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with the foreign minister of regional heavyweight Saudi Arabia about Sudan on Tuesday. A State Department statement said both men condemned the military takeover.

On Monday, Egypt and some of the Gulf countries had avoided criticizing the coup, calling instead for calm and dialogue.

"There's a general preference for a strong military leader who is very transactional. That fits Gulf interests more than a democratic government," said Cameron Hudson, a former U.S. State Department official and Sudan expert at the Atlantic Council's Africa Center.

"They're fearful of what an Arab Spring success story looks like," he said, referring to the uprisings in 2011 that helped inspire the Sudanese protests.

Also standing behind Burhan is another general, one who is more feared: Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, commander of the Rapid Support Forces — a paramilitary unit that grew out of the al-Bashir-backed Janjaweed militias notorious for atrocities and rapes during the Darfur conflict.

RSF fighters were prominent in Monday's coup, taking part in arresting Hamdok and other senior officials and clamping down in the streets. The force is virtually a "de facto parallel army of tens of thousands of battle-tested fighters," said Suliman Baldo, senior adviser at The Sentry, an investigative and policy group focusing on war crimes in Africa.

Burhan has a long connection with Dagalo, who is also known as Hemedti. Burhan was a commander in Darfur, where the military and RSF waged a brutal campaign to crush an insurgency, Baldo said. As many as 300,000 people were killed and 2.7 million were displaced in a campaign of mass rape and abuse.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 32 of 70

He distanced himself from the atrocities, once telling the BBC, "I am not responsible for any bad actions in Darfur... As far as I'm concerned, I was fighting an enemy just as all regular forces do."

In 2015, Burhan and Dagalo coordinated the deployment of Sudanese troops and RSF fighters to Yemen to fight with the Saudi-led coalition against Iranian-aligned Houthi rebels. Their forces received hefty payments from the Saudis and Emiratis, building those countries' connections to the two commanders.

In the uprising against al-Bashir, Burhan and Dagalo refused orders to violently disperse the protesters and even met with them at their sit-in camp. Behind the scenes, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Emirates encouraged them to push out al-Bashir.

But protests continued after al-Bashir's fall, with demands for the military to give up. On June 2, 2019, security forces and RSF fighters attacked the protesters. More than 100 people were killed, and soldiers raped dozens of women. Prosecutors blamed paramilitary forces, but the bloodshed stained Burhan and Dagalo in the eyes of protesters.

"Burhan was responsible because he was the leader, it's that simple," said Osman Mirgany, a Khartoum-based columnist and editor of the daily al-Tayar. "He promised not to touch the sit-in and then a massacre occurred. From that point on, people realized he would never keep his promises."

For the military's opponents, that skepticism hangs over Burhan's promises of civilian rule. Baldo, of the Sentry group, said the general and Dagalo are both intent on remaining free from civilian oversight.

Moreover, he said, they are "concerned about being held accountable for atrocity crimes committed under their command" — in Darfur and in the 2019 sit-in killings and rapes.

—
Associated Press writer Jon Gambrell in Dubai contributed.

Half its original size, Biden's big plan in race to finish

By LISA MASCARO, AAMER MADHANI and ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Half its original size, President Joe Biden's big domestic policy plan is being pulled apart and reconfigured as Democrats edge closer to satisfying their most reluctant colleagues and finishing what's now about a \$1.75 trillion package.

How to pay for it all remained deeply in flux Tuesday, with a proposed billionaires' tax running into criticism as cumbersome or worse. That's forcing difficult reductions, if not the outright elimination, of policy priorities — from paid family leave to child care to dental, vision and hearing aid benefits for seniors.

The once hefty climate change strategies are losing some punch, too, focusing away from punitive measures on polluters in a shift toward instead rewarding clean energy incentives.

Pressure mounting, Biden met Tuesday evening with two holdout Democrats — Sens. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, according to a person who requested anonymity to discuss the private meeting. The president is pushing for an agreement before he departs for global summits later this week.

All told, Biden's package remains a substantial undertaking — and could still top \$2 trillion in perhaps the largest effort of its kind from Congress in decades. But it's far slimmer than the president and his party first envisioned.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told lawmakers they were on the verge of "something major, transformative, historic and bigger than anything else" ever attempted in Congress, according to another person who requested anonymity to share her private remarks to the caucus.

"We know that we are close," said Rep. Joyce Beatty, D-Ohio, the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, after a meeting with Biden at the White House. "And let me be explicitly clear: Our footprints and fingerprints are on this."

However, vast differences among Democrats remain over basic contours of the sweeping proposal and the tax revenue to pay for it.

From the White House, press secretary Jen Psaki said Biden still hoped to have a deal in hand to show foreign leaders the U.S. government was performing effectively on climate change and other major issues.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 33 of 70

But she acknowledged that might not happen, forcing him to keep working on the package from afar.

She warned about failure as opposed to compromise

"The alternative to what is being negotiated is not the original package," she said. "It is nothing."

More lawmakers journeyed to the White House for negotiations on Tuesday and emerged upbeat that the end product would be substantial, despite the changes and reductions being forced on them by Manchin and Sinema.

Together the two senators have packed a one-two punch — Manchin forcing supporters to pare back health care, child care and other spending and Sinema causing Democrats to reconsider their plans to reverse the Trump-era tax cuts on corporations and the wealthy.

Resolving the revenue side is key as Biden insists all the new spending will be fully paid for and not piled onto the national debt. He vows any new taxes will hit only the wealthy, those earning more than \$400,000 a year, or \$450,000 for couples, and corporations he says must quit skipping out on taxes and start paying their "fair share."

But the White House had to rethink its tax strategy after Sinema objected to her party's initial proposal to raise tax rates on corporations and the wealthy. With a 50-50 Senate, Biden has no votes to spare in his party.

Instead, to win over Sinema and others, the Democrats were poised to unveil a new plan for taxing the assets of billionaires. And on Tuesday they unveiled a proposal to require corporations with more than \$1 billion in income to pay a 15% minimum tax, winning Sinema's backing.

"Here's the heart of it: Americans read over the last few months that billionaires were paying little or no taxes for years on end," said Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, helming the effort.

Under Wyden's emerging plan, the billionaires' tax would hit the wealthiest of Americans, fewer than 1,000 people. It would require those with assets of more than \$1 billion, or three-years consecutive income of \$100 million, to pay taxes on the gains of stocks and other tradeable assets, rather than waiting until holdings are sold.

A similar billionaire's tax would be applied to non-tradeable assets, including real estate, but it would be deferred with the tax not assessed until the asset was sold.

Overall, the billionaires' tax rate had not been set, but it was expected to be at least the 20% capital gains rate. Democrats have said it could raise \$200 billion in revenue that could help fund Biden's package over 10 years.

Republicans deride the billionaires' tax and some have suggested it would face a legal challenge.

And key fellow Democrats were also raising concerns about the billionaires' tax, saying the idea of simply undoing the 2017 tax cuts by hiking top rates was more straightforward and transparent.

Rep. Richard Neal, D-Mass., the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, said, "Our plan looks better every day."

Under the bill approved by Neal's panel, the top individual income tax rate would rise from 37% to 39.6%, on those earning more than \$400,000, or \$450,000 for couples. The corporate rate would increase from 21% to 26.5%. The bill also proposes a 3% surtax on the wealthiest Americans with adjusted income beyond \$5 million a year.

Less concerned about the new taxes, Manchin is forcing his party to reconsider the expansion of health, child care and climate change programs he views as costly or unnecessary government entitlements.

Still being debated: plans to expand Medicare coverage with dental, vision and hearing aid benefits for seniors; child care assistance; free pre-kindergarten; a new program of four-weeks paid family leave, and a more limited plan than envisioned to lower prescription drug costs.

On climate change, coal-state Sen. Manchin rejected Biden's earlier clean energy strategy as too punitive on providers that rely on fossil fuels. Instead, the White House floated an idea to beef up grants and loans to incentive clean energy sources.

Manchin's resistance may scuttle one other tax idea — a plan to give the IRS more resources to go after tax scofflaws. He said he told Biden during their weekend meeting at the president's home in Delaware

that that plan was "messed up" and would allow the government to monitor bank accounts.

Democrats are hoping to reach an agreement by week's end, paving the way for a House vote on a related \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill before routine transportation funds expire Sunday. That separate roads-and-bridges bill stalled when progressive lawmakers refused to support it until deliberations on the broader Biden bill were complete.

Associated Press writers Farnoush Amiri, Darlene Superville and Colleen Long contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show Rep. Richard Neal is from Massachusetts, not New Jersey.

EXPLAINER: Brazil senators urge COVID charges for Bolsonaro

By MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — A Brazilian Senate committee is recommending that President Jair Bolsonaro face a series of criminal indictments for actions and omissions related to the world's second highest COVID-19 death toll.

The 7-to-4 vote Tuesday by the 11-member committee ended its six-month investigation of the government's handling of the pandemic and calls for prosecutors to put Bolsonaro on trial for charges ranging from charlatanism and inciting crime to misuse of public funds and crimes against humanity.

More than 600,000 people have died of COVID-19 in Brazil.

What lies ahead for Bolsonaro, who denies any wrongdoing:

WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS AGAINST BOLSONARO?

The most debated of the recommended charges is of inciting an epidemic that leads to deaths. Prison time for those convicted ranges between 20 and 30 years. Gustavo Badaró, a law professor at Sao Paulo University, argues that is a "thin legal case" because Bolsonaro did not start the pandemic himself.

Bolsonaro is also accused of violating health protocols, charlatanism, falsification of private documents, irregular use of public funds, crimes against humanity, violation of social rights and breach of presidential decorum.

Badaró argues the strongest case against Bolsonaro in the final report is the accusation of delaying or refraining from action required as part of a public official's duty for reasons of personal interest. Prison time for a conviction ranges from three months to one year, but as a sitting president that could be enough to suspend Bolsonaro from office.

Ricardo Barretto, a law professor at IDP university, says Bolsonaro's open challenge of health protocols and his defense of drugs that don't work against the coronavirus are also well substantiated. The president was repeatedly seen unmasked at gatherings that he encouraged himself. He also touted use of anti-malarial drug chloroquine as if it was a cure for the virus.

Senators had debated whether they should recommend charges of homicide and genocide against Bolsonaro, but they decided not to include those in the final report.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Brazil's prosecutor-general, Augusto Aras, who in the past has sided with the president and is widely seen as protecting him, has to decide whether the Senate inquiry warrants him opening an investigation. He would then have to get authorization from the Supreme Court to proceed since Bolsonaro is a sitting politician.

Sen. Omar Aziz, the chairman of the Senate inquiry, said he planned to deliver the committee's recommendations to Aras on Wednesday.

If the prosecutor-general presented charges against the president, the case would move to Brazil's Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Congress. Two-thirds of the 513 deputies would have to vote for the Supreme Court to suspend the president for at least six months and put him on trial.

Senators, however, do not expect Aras to move forward with charges against Bolsonaro.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 35 of 70

The inquiry also offers two alternatives for punishing Bolsonaro for crimes he allegedly committed.

The first is a request for an impeachment proceeding that would join more than 100 others in the files of Speaker Arthur Lira, who has stymied several attempts to remove Bolsonaro from office.

The second is to get a case against Bolsonaro at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, but there are no details on how or when that might occur.

WHO ELSE COULD BE CHARGED?

The Senate inquiry recommends charges against a total of 78 people and two companies.

It includes Bolsonaro's three eldest sons, Sen. Flavio Bolsonaro, federal Deputy Eduardo Bolsonaro and Rio de Janeiro city council member Carlos Bolsonaro. All three are accused of spreading false information about the pandemic online.

A former health minister, Gen. Eduardo Pazuello, and his successor, Marcelo Queiroga, are also on the list, which includes four other Cabinet ministers.

The report also names Wilson Lima, governor of the state of Amazonas, and his health secretary. The Amazonas capital, Manaus, experienced severe shortages of oxygen supply at the beginning of the year, causing many COVID-19 patients to die breathless.

Charges are also recommended for several businessmen who staunchly support Bolsonaro.

WHAT ARE THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS?

Bolsonaro faces a difficult reelection path for next October's election, and the probe is one of the reasons his popularity is at record lows. His nemesis, former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, leads all polls to return to the office he held in 2003-2010.

The end of the Senate inquiry gives some relief to the president, who won't have damaging daily news on the investigation being shown on primetime television. His allies in Congress are now expected to push for reforms and new measures to deal with another trigger for Bolsonaro's unpopularity — a sharp acceleration of inflation that has added to Brazil's economic woes with high unemployment.

Barretto, the IDP law professor, says the recommendations of charges against Bolsonaro could affect his political future even more if he loses reelection.

He notes other courts and prosecutors could prosecute the far-right politician for the same alleged crimes once he was out of office, regardless of the prosecutor-general's decision. They could also pursue charges of administrative dishonesty, a crime under Brazilian law that leads to a defendant losing his political rights for a conviction.

Brazil senators recommend Bolsonaro face charges over COVID

By DÉBORA ÁLVARES Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — A Brazilian Senate committee recommended on Tuesday that President Jair Bolsonaro face a series of criminal indictments for actions and omissions related to the world's second highest COVID-19 death toll.

The 7-to-4 vote was the culmination of a six-month committee investigation of the government's handling of the pandemic. It formally approved a report calling for prosecutors to try Bolsonaro on charges ranging from charlatanism and inciting crime to misuse of public funds and crimes against humanity, and in doing so hold him responsible for many of Brazil's more than 600,000 COVID-19 deaths.

The president has denied wrongdoing, and the decision on whether to file most of the charges will be up to Prosecutor-General Augusto Aras, a Bolsonaro appointee who is widely viewed as protecting him. The allegation of crimes against humanity would need to be pursued by the International Criminal Court.

Sen. Omar Aziz, the chairman of the inquiry, said he would deliver the recommendation to the prosecutor-general Wednesday morning. Aras' office said the report would be carefully reviewed as soon as it is received.

Regardless of whether charges are filed, the report is expected to fuel criticism of the divisive president,

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 36 of 70

whose approval ratings have slumped ahead of his 2022 reelection campaign — in large part because of Brazil's outsize COVID-19 death toll. The investigation itself has for months provided a drumbeat of damaging allegations.

Since the start of the pandemic, Bolsonaro has sabotaged local leaders' restrictions on activity aimed at stopping the virus' spread, saying the economy needed to keep humming so the poor did not suffer worse hardship. He also has insistently touted an anti-malaria drug long after broad testing showed it isn't effective against COVID-19, assembled crowds without wearing masks and sowed doubt about vaccines.

Bolsonaro has defended himself by saying he was among the few world leaders courageous enough to defy political correctness and global health recommendations, and that he hasn't erred in the slightest.

The report's author, Sen. Renan Calheiros, first presented the nearly 1,200-page document last week. It says that by insisting on treatment with the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine as "practically the only government policy to fight the pandemic, Jair Bolsonaro strongly collaborated for COVID-19's spread in Brazilian territory" and as a result is "the main person responsible for the errors committed by the federal government during the pandemic."

Committee members in the so-called G7 group of senators who aren't from Bolsonaro's base agreed on most of the points in Calheiros' report. They met Monday to hammer out final adjustments to the text.

Changes include recommending charges for 13 additional people, many of them current or former Health Ministry employees, as well as the governor of hard-hit Amazonas state. The final report recommends charges against two companies and 78 people in all, including Bolsonaro, administration officials, dozens of allies and the president's three sons, who are politicians.

It also adds an additional violation for allegedly spreading false news following Bolsonaro's live broadcast on social media last week claiming incorrectly that people in the U.K. who received two vaccine doses are developing AIDS faster than expected.

The report also contains recommendations for two counts of "crime of responsibility," which are grounds for impeachment. But Lower House Speaker Arthur Lira, a staunch Bolsonaro ally, would have to bring a vote on whether to open impeachment proceedings — something seen as highly unlikely considering Lira is currently sitting on more than 120 other impeachment requests, according to information from the legislative body.

Sen. Flávio Bolsonaro, one of the president's sons, called the report legally weak and politically motivated. "The intent of some senators on the investigative committee is to cause the maximum amount of wear and tear on the president," he told journalists.

Minutes after the inquiry was finished, former U.S. President Donald Trump said in a statement that he endorses the Brazilian leader.

"President Jair Bolsonaro and I have become great friends over the past few years. He fights hard for, and loves, the people of Brazil — just like I do for the people of the United States," Trump said. "Brazil is lucky to have a man such as Jair Bolsonaro working for them. He is a great President and will never let the people of his great country down!"

An earlier draft had recommended the president also be indicted for homicide and genocide, but that was scrapped even before its presentation last week. Some committee members opposed such charges, while others expressed concern that bombastic claims could undermine the report's credibility.

The Senate committee's final hearing on the inquiry Tuesday ended with a moment of silence for victims of the virus in Brazil.

Blackhawks GM resigns, team fined after sexual assault probe

By JAY COHEN and STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writers

CHICAGO (AP) — The Chicago Blackhawks mishandled allegations that an assistant coach sexually assaulted a player during the team's Stanley Cup run in 2010, according to an investigation commissioned by the franchise that cast a shadow over the NHL on Tuesday.

Stan Bowman, Chicago's general manager and president of hockey operations, resigned in the wake of

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 37 of 70

the findings by an outside law firm, and the NHL fined the team \$2 million for "the organization's inadequate internal procedures and insufficient and untimely response." Al MacIsaac, one of the team's top hockey executives, also is out.

Florida Panthers coach Joel Quenneville and Winnipeg Jets general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff, who were with the Blackhawks when the sexual assault allegations were first reported, were named in the damning report as well.

The Panthers declined to comment, citing NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman's plans to meet with Quenneville. Cheveldayoff said he shared everything he knows with Jenner & Block for its report.

"Further, I look forward to my discussion with Commissioner Bettman at the soonest possible date to continue to cooperate fully with the National Hockey League," Cheveldayoff said in a statement provided by the Jets to AP. "I will reserve any further comment until after that conversation has been conducted."

The Blackhawks hired Jenner & Block to conduct what they called an independent review in response to two lawsuits filed against the franchise: one by a player identified as John Doe alleging sexual assault by then-assistant coach Brad Aldrich in 2010 and another filed by a former student whom Aldrich was convicted of assaulting in Michigan.

The report, which team CEO Danny Wirtz called "both disturbing and difficult to read," was released by the franchise. Former federal prosecutor Reid Schar, who led the investigation, said the firm found no evidence that Wirtz or his father, Rocky, who owns the team, were aware of the allegations before the former player's lawsuit was brought to their attention ahead of its filing.

"It is clear that in 2010 the executives of this organization put team performance above all else," Danny Wirtz said. "John Doe deserved better from the Blackhawks."

In a statement released through his attorney, Susan Loggans, John Doe said he was "grateful for the accountability" shown by the Blackhawks.

"Although nothing can truly change the detriment to my life over the past decade because of the actions of one man inside the Blackhawks organization, I am very grateful to have the truth be recognized, and I look forward to continuing the long journey to recovery," John Doe said.

Danny Wirtz said he has instructed the organization's lawyers to try to "reach a fair resolution consistent with the totality of the circumstances." But Loggans said there hadn't been any settlement talks.

"I'm waiting to see if there's any action behind their repentance that they expressed today," she told The Associated Press.

Bowman, the son of Hall of Fame coach Scotty Bowman, said he was stepping aside because he didn't want to be a distraction. He also resigned his position as GM of the U.S men's hockey team at the 2022 Winter Olympics.

"Eleven years ago, while serving in my first year as general manager, I was made aware of potential inappropriate behavior by a then-video coach involving a player," he said in a statement released by the Blackhawks. "I promptly reported the matter to the then-president and CEO who committed to handling the matter.

"I learned this year that the inappropriate behavior involved a serious allegation of sexual assault. I relied on the direction of my superior that he would take appropriate action. Looking back, now knowing he did not handle the matter promptly, I regret assuming he would do so."

According to the report, the encounter between John Doe, then 20, and Aldrich, then 27, occurred on May 8 or 9 in 2010. Doe told investigators that Aldrich threatened him with a souvenir baseball bat before forcibly performing oral sex on him and masturbating on the player's back, allegations that he also detailed in a lawsuit. Aldrich told investigators the encounter was consensual.

On May 23, right after Chicago advanced to the Stanley Cup Final, Bowman, MacIsaac, former team president John McDonough, former executive vice president Jay Blunk and then-assistant general manager Cheveldayoff met with then-coach Quenneville and mental skills coach Jim Gary to discuss the allegations. (McDonough and Blunk are no longer employed in the NHL.)

Schar said accounts of the meeting "vary significantly."

"What is clear is that after being informed of Aldrich's alleged sexual harassment and misconduct with a player no action was taken for three weeks," Schar said.

According to the report, Bowman recalled that, after learning of the incident, Quenneville shook his head and said it was hard for the team to get to where it was, and they could not deal with this issue now.

The report found no evidence of any investigation or contact with human resources before McDonough informed the team's director of human resources about the allegations on June 14 — a delay that violated the Blackhawks' sexual harassment policy and had "consequences," according to Schar.

"During that period, Aldrich continued to work with and travel with the team," Schar said. "On June 10th, during an evening of celebration after the Blackhawks' Stanley Cup win the previous day, Aldrich made an unwanted sexual advance towards a Blackhawks intern, who was 22 years old at the time.

"Also after the Stanley Cup win, Aldrich continued to participate in celebrations in the presence of John Doe, who had made the complaint."

While announcing in July that he was willing to participate in the team's probe, Quenneville said in a statement that he "first learned of these allegations through the media earlier this summer." Cheveldayoff said in a statement that he had no knowledge of the allegations until he was asked if he was aware of anything prior to the end of Aldrich's employment with the Blackhawks.

Bettman said he would "reserve judgment" on Quenneville and Cheveldayoff, and he plans to meet with them to discuss their roles in the situation.

The NHL said \$1 million of the Blackhawks' fine will help fund organizations in the Chicago area "that provide counseling and training for, and support and assistance to, survivors of sexual and other forms of abuse."

On June 16, 2010, according to the report, Aldrich was given the option of resigning or being part of an investigation into what happened with John Doe. Aldrich signed a separation agreement and no investigation was conducted.

Aldrich received a severance and a playoff bonus, according to the report, and he was paid a salary "for several months." He hosted the Stanley Cup for a day in his hometown, and his name was engraved on the iconic trophy.

The former player's lawsuit, filed May 7 in Cook County Circuit Court, alleges Aldrich also assaulted another unidentified Blackhawks player. The former player who sued and is referred in the document as John Doe is seeking more than \$150,000 in damages.

Aldrich was sentenced to nine months in prison for the Michigan assault.

Kyle Davidson was elevated to interim GM for the Blackhawks, and USA Hockey said it expects to announce a replacement for Bowman soon.

AP Hockey Writer Stephen Whyno reported from Washington. AP Sports Writer Tim Reynolds in Miami contributed to this report.

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/hub/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Coroner IDs suspect in Boise mall shooting that killed 2

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — The suspect in a Boise mall shooting that killed two people and injured four others has died, the Boise Police Department said Tuesday.

The Ada County Coroner identified the suspected shooter as Jacob Bergquist, a 27-year-old Boise man. Coroner Dotti Owens said Bergquist's cause of death was still pending, but he died late Tuesday morning at a hospital.

Owens identified one of the people killed as Jo Acker, a 26-year-old security guard who worked at the mall. Family members said she died while trying to stop the shooter.

"Jo you were always kind of loving you always had such an enormous heart of gold," Acker's sister

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 39 of 70

Shawna Lee Lannigan wrote on Facebook. "You were and are and always will be a hero. I love you to the ends of this earth and beyond."

The Boise Police Department first got the call that shots had been fired at the Boise Towne Square Mall at about 1:50 p.m., with callers describing a white man dressed in black, in possession of multiple guns.

In a prepared statement released Tuesday afternoon, the police department said evidence shows the shooter was first contacted by a security guard who was shot and killed at the scene. Police said the shooter then fired several rounds, shooting a glass escalator and a second victim who died of his injuries at a hospital.

The Ada County Coroner identified the slain man as Roberto Padilla Arguelles, 49, of Rupert, who was pronounced dead at a hospital.

The shooter then walked through the mall, firing rounds into the floor, which led to a 52-year-old woman and a 23-year-old woman being injured. Another man was injured when he fell while trying to escape the mall.

About three minutes after the initial report, responding officers saw the suspect running from mall area. They exchanged gunfire with the suspect outside a nearby business along a busy road, according to the police department.

A 68-year-old woman who was in her car on the road was shot and wounded in the gunfight, according to police. A Boise police officer was also injured when he was shot at through his vehicle window. The officer's hat was struck by the gunfire, and shards of glass hit the officer, the police department said. He was treated and released from a hospital.

Police found 18 spent shell casings inside the mall, and the investigation shows that the shooter had multiple guns and ammunition, the department said.

Boise Police Chief Ryan Lee said Tuesday afternoon that law enforcement officers had searched a Boise home and investigators were combing through social media sites and other evidence in an effort to understand Bergquist's motives.

"Anything to help us understand motivation," Lee said. "We've been working with our partners at the local, state and federal level to conduct interviews with people who knew him," Lee said, "to try to understand anything we can about why this event happened, and why it happened in the location that it did."

Bergquist was known to Boise police from previous reports of disorderly conduct or trespassing, Lee said. "We have had contact with him in the past. We did not have any reason to arrest him," he said.

Bergquist never worked at the mall, but was frequently there and had previously been contacted by security guards for disorderly behavior, Lee said.

Potential legal woes mount after 'Rust' shooting tragedy

By STEFANIE DAZIO, LINDSEY BAHR and ANTHONY MCCARTNEY Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Alec Baldwin the actor, who pulled the trigger on a prop gun while filming "Rust" in New Mexico and unwittingly killed a cinematographer and injured a director, likely won't be held criminally or civilly liable for the tragedy.

But Alec Baldwin the producer might be, along with several others in leadership positions for the Western. Experts predict a tremendous legal fallout from the tragedy, definitely in civil lawsuits and potentially in criminal charges. In addition to Baldwin, a call sheet for the day of the shooting obtained by The Associated Press lists five producers, four executive producers, a line producer and a co-producer. They, as well as assistant director Dave Halls and armorer Hannah Gutierrez, could all face some sort of liability even if they weren't on location Thursday.

The payouts — which could be covered in part by insurance held by the production company, Rust Movie Productions — would likely be in the "millions and millions" of dollars.

"There was clearly negligence on the set," said Adam Winkler, a professor at the UCLA School of Law and a gun policy expert. "The producers had a duty to preserve the safety of the crew. There were obvious hazards on the set."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 40 of 70

Santa Fe-based District Attorney Mary Carmack-Altwies told the AP on Tuesday that the investigation remains in the preliminary phase and her office was far from making any decisions about whether any charges would be filed. She added that those involved in the production were cooperating with law enforcement.

There are "a lot of people involved and a lot of moving parts," the first-term elected prosecutor said of the circumstances surrounding the shooting death on the set of "Rust."

Authorities said Friday that Halls, the assistant director, had handed the weapon to Baldwin and announced "cold gun," indicating it was safe to use. But it was loaded with live rounds. Cinematographer Halyna Hutchins was fatally shot, and director Joel Souza, who was standing behind her, was wounded.

Baldwin, who is known for his roles in "30 Rock" and "The Hunt for Red October" and his impression of former President Donald Trump on "Saturday Night Live," has described the killing as a "tragic accident."

The production of "Rust" has been beset by disputes from the start in early October and included seven crew members walking off the set just hours before the shooting. The Los Angeles Times, citing two crew members it did not name, reported that five days before the shooting, Baldwin's stunt double accidentally fired two live rounds after being told the gun didn't have any ammunition.

Alarmed by the misfires, a crew member told a unit production manager in a text message, "We've now had 3 accidental discharges. This is super unsafe," according to a copy of the message reviewed by the newspaper.

Winkler called the previous misfires — and an apparent lack of any action taken after them — "a recipe for a very significant liability in damages."

"You can't have a dangerous situation, know about it and then do nothing," he said.

Rust Movie Productions, the production company, says it is cooperating with Santa Fe authorities in their investigation.

"Though we were not made aware of any official complaints concerning weapon or prop safety on set, we will be conducting an internal review of our procedures while production is shut down," Rust Movie Productions said in a statement to The Los Angeles Times.

Although New Mexico law defines involuntary manslaughter in part as a lawful act that resulted in death from "an unlawful manner or without due caution and circumspection," defense attorney Nina Marino said she doubts any criminal case would be filed.

"If a local agency in New Mexico was going to go forward with criminal charges, that would have a real chilling effect on further filming taking place in New Mexico, and I think New Mexico appreciates the business," said Marino, who specializes in white collar cases as a co-founder of the Kaplan Marino law firm.

Any film requires insurance coverage and any policy for a Western would hit upon the use of horses, other animals and firearms. The call sheet for Thursday alone mentions multiple guns, several horses and a daily snake wrangler.

An insurer would likely cover any accidental events, but the company might not pay for negligence claims on a movie set, according to Julie Shapiro, law professor and director of Loyola Law School's Entertainment and Media Law Institute.

The insurance company will do its own investigation, Shapiro said, to determine if negligence occurred. The exact wording of the policy will determine what the company would pay.

While Baldwin, the other producers, the assistant director and the armorer might be named as parties in a civil lawsuit, not all may be found to be liable — particularly if they played no role in the safety aspects of the production or only held a vanity credit. The plaintiffs would likely go after the production company's deeper pockets.

"How much? To what extent will insurance cover it? This is a loss of life — there is no dollar amount you can place," Shapiro said.

On-set fatalities have led to safety reforms in the past. But Jeff Harris — founding partner at Harris Lowry Manton LLP and the lead attorney in two high-profile trials involving accidental deaths on television and film sets, including stuntman John Bernecker on "The Walking Dead" and camera assistant Sarah Jones

on "Midnight Rider" — said incidents like these are rare if the cast and crew follow regulations that are standard for the use of firearms in the film industry.

"They're not complicated," Harris said. "They've been around for years. And it struck me — you don't have this happen if basic safety policies are being followed. The end."

Bahr reported from Pittsburgh. Associated Press writer Morgan Lee in Santa Fe, New Mexico, contributed to this report.

FDA panel backs Pfizer's low-dose COVID-19 vaccine for kids

By LAURAN NEERGAARD and MATTHEW PERRONE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. moved a step closer to expanding COVID-19 vaccinations for millions more children as government advisers on Tuesday endorsed kid-size doses of Pfizer's shots for 5- to 11-year-olds.

A Food and Drug Administration advisory panel voted unanimously, with one abstention, that the vaccine's benefits in preventing COVID-19 in that age group outweigh any potential risks. That includes questions about a heart-related side effect that's been very rare in teens and young adults despite their use of a much higher vaccine dose.

While children are far less likely than older people to get severe COVID-19, ultimately many panelists decided it's important to give parents the choice to protect their youngsters — especially those at high risk of illness or who live in places where other precautions, like masks in schools, aren't being used.

"This is an age group that deserves and should have the same opportunity to be vaccinated as every other age," said panel member Dr. Amanda Cohn of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The FDA isn't bound by the panel's recommendation and is expected to make its own decision within days. If the FDA concurs, there's still another step: Next week, the CDC will have to decide whether to recommend the shots and which youngsters should get them.

Full-strength shots made by Pfizer and its partner BioNTech already are recommended for everyone 12 and older but pediatricians and many parents are clamoring for protection for younger children. The extra-contagious delta variant has caused an alarming rise in pediatric infections -- and families are frustrated with school quarantines and having to say no to sleepovers and other rites of childhood to keep the virus at bay.

In the 5- to 11-year-old age group, there have been over 8,300 hospitalizations reported, about a third requiring intensive care, and nearly 100 deaths.

States are getting ready to roll out the shots — just a third of the amount given to teens and adults — that will come in special orange-capped vials to avoid dosage mix-ups. More than 25,000 pediatricians and other primary care providers have signed up so far to offer vaccination, which will also be available at pharmacies and other locations.

But for all that anticipation, there also are people who strongly oppose vaccinating younger children, and both FDA and its advisers were inundated with an email campaign seeking to block the Pfizer shot.

Dr. Jay Portnoy of Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri, said despite over 4,000 emails urging him to vote against the vaccine, he was persuaded by the data showing it works. Portnoy said he also was representing "parents I see every day in the clinic who are terrified of sending their children to school. ... They need a voice also."

Panelists stressed they weren't supporting vaccine mandates for young children — and the FDA doesn't make mandate decisions. FDA vaccine chief Dr. Peter Marks also said it would be highly unusual for other groups to mandate something that's cleared only for emergency use. Several advisers said they wished they could tailor the shots for the highest-risk youngsters, a decision that would fall to the CDC.

Dr. James Hildreth of Meharry Medical College said he ultimately voted in favor of the vaccine "to make sure that the children who really need this vaccine — primarily Black and brown children in our country — get it."

Pfizer studied 2,268 elementary schoolchildren given two shots three weeks apart of either a placebo or

the kid dose. Vaccinated youngsters developed levels of virus-fighting antibodies just as strong as teens and young adults who got the full-strength shots. More important, the vaccine proved nearly 91% effective at preventing symptomatic infection — based on 16 cases of COVID-19 among kids given dummy shots compared to just three who got vaccinated.

The kid dosage also proved safe, with similar or fewer temporary side effects — such as sore arms, fever or achiness — that teens experience. At FDA's request, Pfizer more recently enrolled another 2,300 youngsters into the study, and preliminary safety data has shown no red flags.

But that study isn't large enough to detect any extremely rare side effects, such as the heart inflammation that occasionally occurs after the second full-strength dose, mostly in young men and teen boys. The panel spent hours discussing if younger children, given a smaller dose, might face that side effect, too.

Statistical models developed by FDA scientists showed that in most scenarios of the continuing pandemic, the vaccine would prevent far more COVID-19 hospitalizations in this age group than would potentially be caused by that rare heart problem.

FDA's models suggested the vaccine could prevent 200 to 250 hospitalizations for every 1 million youngsters vaccinated — assuming that virus spread remained high, something that's hard to predict. FDA scientists also said younger kids likely won't have as much risk of heart inflammation as teens but if they did, it might cause about 58 hospitalizations per million vaccinations.

"I do think it's a relatively close call," said adviser Dr. Eric Rubin of Harvard University. "It's really going to be a question of what the prevailing conditions are but we're never going to learn about how safe this vaccine is unless we start giving it."

Moderna also is studying its vaccine in young children, and Pfizer has additional studies underway in those younger than 5.

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.

World Series a father-and-son family affair for Snitkers

By KRISTIE RIEKEN AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — No matter how this year's World Series ends, a Snitker will get a championship ring.

This edition of the Fall Classic is a family affair with Atlanta Braves manager Brian Snitker in the dugout opposite his son, Houston Astros co-hitting coach Troy Snitker.

Close their whole lives, they'll be rivals when the teams take the field Tuesday night for Game 1.

"Quite honestly, tomorrow at 7:09 or whatever, he's going to want to kick my (butt)," dad said Monday.

But on the eve of the game, the elder Snitker still found time to play the role of proud papa when talking about his son's success.

"I kind of validated the fact that maybe I did something right, the way he turned out," he said. "He's a heck of a young man."

And later Monday the family got together one last time before they had to go their separate ways for the start of the series.

"We talked about this last night at dinner, how we needed to just enjoy this," Brian Snitker said. "You're never guaranteed this. Who knows when you're going to get back. Enjoy it and relish in it."

And for anyone wondering, it was dear old dad who picked up the check.

Troy Snitker grew up in clubhouses and dugouts, following his father as he toiled as a minor league skipper for most of his childhood. Brian taught his son so much during that time, but as he watched him bounce around teams from Macon, Georgia, to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, it was not what he said, but what he did that served as the most important lesson.

"Just his work ethic," the 32-year-old Snitker said. "I think that's the biggest thing that I've taken away from him, being able to watch him from a young age at the ballpark. He's so consistent, hard working. He's the same guy every day when you're in the clubhouse with him."

The 66-year-old Snitker spent 15 seasons a manager for various Braves' farm teams before working as Atlanta's third base coach from 2007-2013. He was the manager of the Triple-A Gwinnett Braves from 2013 until becoming the big league club's interim manager when Fredi González was fired in May 2016.

Brian got the job full-time in 2017 and has led the Braves to the postseason in each of the last four seasons.

"He's just, he's been through so much in his career where there were plenty of times where he could have easily decided to go do something else," his son said. "But he stuck with it."

Troy Snitker coached in college for a bit before joining the Double-A Corpus Christi Hooks as their hitting coach in 2018. He spent just one season there before moving on to work for Houston's major league club.

Brian Snitker is impressed with the way his son has incorporated the things he learned about baseball growing up with his dad with the newer side of the sport.

"I love the fact that he's meshed (things)," Brian Snitker said. "Because I raised him in a dugout, on a bus, on the field a long, a long time ago before analytics were ever invented. I think he's a good blend of the old-school way of doing things and he's very open and gets all the new information that's out there. I think it's a good mix."

The entire family is, of course, thrilled about two Snitkers being in the World Series. But for Ronnie Snitker, wife of Brian Snitker and Troy Snitker's mom, navigating through this week might be a bit difficult.

No telling yet what she'll wear, how she'll represent her family's teams.

"I think she's just slightly overwhelmed at the moment trying to get her mind around the concept that this is actually happening," Troy Snitker said.

The men were asked Tuesday who Ronnie would be rooting for.

"She's decided she's just going to cheer the whole time no matter what happens," Troy Snitker said. "She'll probably cry the whole time, though."

And after the Snitker men finishing raving about each other, they both agreed that the true star of this week is Ronnie.

"If it wasn't for her, he or I wouldn't be here honestly," her husband said. "She's allowed Troy and myself to follow our dream, and we're very appreciative."

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/hub/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Civil rights pioneer seeks expungement of '55 arrest record

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Months before Rosa Parks became the mother of the modern civil rights movement by refusing to move to the back of a segregated Alabama bus, Black teenager Claudette Colvin did the same. Convicted of assaulting a police officer while being arrested, she was placed on probation yet never received notice that she'd finished the term and was on safe ground legally.

Now 82 and slowed by age, Colvin has asked a judge to end the matter once and for all. She wants a court in Montgomery to wipe away a record that her lawyer says has cast a shadow over the life of a largely unsung hero of the civil rights era.

"I am an old woman now. Having my records expunged will mean something to my grandchildren and great grandchildren. And it will mean something for other Black children," Colvin said in a sworn statement.

Supporters sang civil rights anthems and clapped as Colvin entered the clerk's office and filed the expungement request Tuesday. Her attorney, Phillip Ensler, said he was seeking all legal documents to be sealed and all records of the case erased.

Montgomery County District Attorney Daryl Bailey later said he agreed with the request to clear Colvin's record, removing any doubt it would be approved.

"I guess you can say that now I am no longer a juvenile delinquent," Colvin told a crowd that included relatives, well wishers and activists.

Also present was famed civil rights attorney Fred Gray, now 90, who's not currently involved in her case.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 44 of 70

Recalling her arrest, Colvin told the crowd: "My mindset was on freedom."

"So I was not going to move that day," she said. "I told them that history had me glued to the seat."

Colvin left Alabama at age 20 and spent decades in New York, but relatives always worried what might happen when she returned for visits since no court official ever said she had finished probation, according to Ensler.

"Her family has lived with this tremendous fear ever since then," he said. "For all the recognition of recent years and the attempts to tell her story, there wasn't anything done to clear her record."

Currently living in Birmingham before a move to stay with relatives in Texas, the octogenarian Colvin made her request to a juvenile court judge oddly enough since that's where she was judged delinquent and placed on what, for all practical purposes, amounted to a lifetime of probation, Ensler said.

Montgomery's city bus system, like the rest of public life across the Deep South, was strictly divided along racial lines in the 1950s. Blacks had to use one water fountain while whites used another; the front of a bus was for white people while Blacks had to take the back by law.

Parks, a 42-year-old seamstress and activist with the NAACP, gained worldwide fame after refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man on Dec. 1, 1955. Her treatment led to the yearlong Montgomery Bus Boycott, which propelled the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. into the national limelight and often is considered the start of the modern civil rights movement.

A 15-year-old high school student at the time, Colvin got fed up and refused to move even before Parks.

A bus driver called police on March 2, 1955, to complain that two Black girls were sitting near two white girls and refused to move to the back of the bus. One of the Black girls moved when asked, a police report said, but Colvin refused.

The police report said Colvin put up a struggle as officers removed her from the bus, kicking and scratching an officer. She was initially convicted of violating the city's segregation law, disorderly conduct and assaulting an officer, but she appealed and only the assault charge stuck.

The case was sent to juvenile court because of Colvin's age, and records show a judge found her delinquent and placed her on probation "as a ward of the state pending good behavior." And that's where it ended, Ensler said, with Colvin never getting official word that she'd completed probation and her relatives assuming the worst — that police would arrest her for any reason they could.

Ensler said it's "murky" as to whether Colvin is actually still on probation, but she never had any other arrests or legal scrapes. She even became a named plaintiff in the landmark lawsuit that outlawed racial segregation on Montgomery's buses. Still, Colvin said, the trauma endured, particularly for relatives who constantly worried for her.

"My conviction for standing up for my constitutional right terrorized my family and relatives who knew only that they were not to talk about my arrest and conviction because people in town knew me as 'that girl from the bus,'" she said.

Ensler said it was uncertain when a judge might rule.

Reeves is a member of the AP's Race and Ethnicity team.

Bowman out as GM of US men's Olympic hockey team

By JAY COHEN and STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writers

CHICAGO (AP) — Stan Bowman has resigned as general manager of the U.S men's hockey team at the 2022 Winter Olympics after an investigation into sexual assault allegations in 2010 with the Chicago Blackhawks revealed he knew about the situation and did not report it to authorities.

USA Hockey announced the move Tuesday, saying a replacement would be named in the near future.

Bowman resigned his job with the Chicago Blackhawks earlier Tuesday after the release of an independent review in response to two lawsuits filed against the franchise: one by a player identified as John Doe alleging sexual assault by then-assistant coach Brad Aldrich in 2010 and another filed by a former student whom Aldrich was convicted of assaulting in Michigan.

"In light of what's happened today, I think it's in the best interests of USA Hockey for me to step aside," Bowman said in a statement. "I'm grateful to have been selected and wish our team the very best in Beijing."

AP Hockey Writer Stephen Whyno reported from Washington. AP Sports Writer Tim Reynolds in Miami contributed to this report.

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/hub/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

DNA brings pain, closure to family of John Wayne Gacy victim

By KATHLEEN FOODY The Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — In the fall of 1976, Carolyn Sanders received an exciting postcard from her brother. "I'll see you soon cause I love you," Francis Wayne Alexander — known to his family as Wayne — wrote to his younger sister. She hadn't spoken with him since his 1975 wedding and hoped the brief note meant he was coming to visit the family on Long Island, New York, for Christmas.

It was the final communication Sanders can remember receiving from her brother, who on Monday was confirmed to be among the victims of John Wayne Gacy, who was convicted of killing 33 young men and boys in the Chicago area in the 1970s and was executed in 1994.

Alexander's family spent the next 40-plus years hoping he had a reason for staying away, trying not to linger on the possibilities.

Decades without a word didn't stop the family from wistfully mentioning Alexander, hoping he would call or even show up for a holiday. Sanders typed his name into Facebook from time to time and their brother Richard Clyde checked some genealogical sites.

"I always hoped that he was still out there, and for some reason couldn't call," Sanders told reporters on Tuesday. "Not even ... wanting to think of what that reason could be."

It's not clear exactly when Alexander was killed. Investigators said the last known record they found is a parking ticket from January 1976 and that financial records showed he made very little money that year, suggesting he was killed sometime from early 1976 to mid-March of 1977.

Sanders said their mother, who is 87, spoke to Alexander every month and last remembered speaking to him in November 1976, when Alexander asked her to mail his birth certificate to California because he hoped to get a security job.

When Alexander didn't call the following month, Sanders said their mother contacted a California police department to search for him.

Police couldn't locate him at the address the family provided, and their mother wrongly believed the inquiry would prompt a missing persons investigation, said Sanders, who was 14 years old at the time.

This summer, a detective from the Cook County Sheriff's Office contacted the family in search of DNA to test against human remains from a cold case.

Lt. Jason Moran didn't mention Gacy's name at first. Learning the time and location where the remains were discovered still made Sanders fear the worst.

The wait for DNA confirmation that her brother was among Gacy's victims was "excruciating," Sanders said.

"I remember him as a jokester and yet sensitive," she said. "We were seven years apart and he would have tea parties with me. He loved me. He loved us all."

Investigators don't know how Gacy came to know and target Alexander, who was born in North Carolina and lived in New York before moving to Chicago in the mid-1970s. They said he lived in an area Gacy frequented and where some of his other victims had lived.

Alexander's remains were among 26 sets that police found in the crawl space under Gacy's home just outside Chicago in 1978. Eight victims, including Alexander, were buried before police could determine who they were.

Sheriff Tom Dart's office exhumed the remains in 2011 and called on anyone who had a male relative disappear in the Chicago area in the 1970s to submit DNA. Moran said the sheriff's office also partnered

with the DNA Doe Project, a nonprofit that compares DNA from unidentified crime victims to genealogical databases.

They found potential relatives for the individual known as Victim #5 — distant cousins of Alexander — and the sheriff's office then asked Alexander's mother for immediate family members' DNA samples.

Clyde, who provided one of the samples that confirmed his brother's identity, said the advancement of DNA testing and genealogical data "brought Wayne to us."

"It's a miracle," he added.

Sanders said her family is still in shock but that everyone will rely on each other and their faith as they mourn her brother.

"He suffered, I'm sure," she said. "But he's not suffering anymore."

Facebook froze as anti-vaccine comments swarmed users

By DAVID KLEPPER and AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In March, as claims about the dangers and ineffectiveness of coronavirus vaccines spun across social media and undermined attempts to stop the spread of the virus, some Facebook employees thought they had found a way to help.

By altering how posts about vaccines are ranked in people's newsfeeds, researchers at the company realized they could curtail the misleading information individuals saw about COVID-19 vaccines and offer users posts from legitimate sources like the World Health Organization.

"Given these results, I'm assuming we're hoping to launch ASAP," one Facebook employee wrote, responding to the internal memo about the study.

Instead, Facebook shelved some suggestions from the study. Other changes weren't made until April.

When another Facebook researcher suggested disabling some comments on vaccine posts in March until the platform could do a better job of tackling anti-vaccine messages lurking in them, that proposal was ignored at the time.

Critics say the reason Facebook was slow to take action on the ideas is simple: The tech giant worried it might impact the company's profits.

"Why would you not remove comments? Because engagement is the only thing that matters," said Imran Ahmed, the CEO of the Center for Countering Digital Hate, an internet watchdog group. "It drives attention and attention equals eyeballs and eyeballs equal ad revenue."

In an emailed statement, Facebook said it has made "considerable progress" this year with downgrading vaccine misinformation in users' feeds.

Facebook's internal discussions were revealed in disclosures made to the Securities and Exchange Commission and provided to Congress in redacted form by former Facebook employee-turned-whistleblower Frances Haugen's legal counsel. The redacted versions received by Congress were obtained by a consortium of news organizations, including The Associated Press.

The trove of documents shows that in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Facebook carefully investigated how its platforms spread misinformation about life-saving vaccines. They also reveal rank-and-file employees regularly suggested solutions for countering anti-vaccine content on the site, to no avail. The Wall Street Journal reported on some of Facebook's efforts to deal with anti-vaccine comments last month.

Facebook's response raises questions about whether the company prioritized controversy and division over the health of its users.

"These people are selling fear and outrage," said Roger McNamee, a Silicon Valley venture capitalist and early investor in Facebook who is now a vocal critic. "It is not a fluke. It is a business model."

Typically, Facebook ranks posts by engagement — the total number of likes, dislikes, comments, and reshares. That ranking scheme may work well for innocuous subjects like recipes, dog photos, or the latest viral singalong. But Facebook's own documents show that when it comes to divisive public health issues like vaccines, engagement-based ranking only emphasizes polarization, disagreement, and doubt.

To study ways to reduce vaccine misinformation, Facebook researchers changed how posts are ranked for more than 6,000 users in the U.S., Mexico, Brazil, and the Philippines. Instead of seeing posts about vac-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 47 of 70

cines that were chosen based on their popularity, these users saw posts selected for their trustworthiness.

The results were striking: a nearly 12% decrease in content that made claims debunked by fact-checkers and an 8% increase in content from authoritative public health organizations such as the WHO or U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Those users also had a 7% decrease in negative interactions on the site.

Employees at the company reacted to the study with exuberance, according to internal exchanges included in the whistleblower's documents.

"Is there any reason we wouldn't do this?" one Facebook employee wrote in response to an internal memo outlining how the platform could rein in anti-vaccine content.

Facebook said it did implement many of the study's findings — but not for another month, a delay that came at a pivotal stage of the global vaccine rollout.

In a statement, company spokeswoman Dani Lever said the internal documents "don't represent the considerable progress we have made since that time in promoting reliable information about COVID-19 and expanding our policies to remove more harmful COVID and vaccine misinformation."

The company also said it took time to consider and implement the changes.

Yet the need to act urgently couldn't have been clearer: At that time, states across the U.S. were rolling out vaccines to their most vulnerable — the elderly and sick. And public health officials were worried. Only 10% of the population had received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. And a third of Americans were thinking about skipping the shot entirely, according to a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Despite this, Facebook employees acknowledged they had "no idea" just how bad anti-vaccine sentiment was in the comments sections on Facebook posts. But company research in February found that as much as 60% of the comments on vaccine posts were anti-vaccine or vaccine reluctant.

"That's a huge problem and we need to fix it," the presentation on March 9 read.

Even worse, company employees admitted they didn't have a handle on catching those comments. And if they did, Facebook didn't have a policy in place to take the comments down. The free-for-all was allowing users to swarm vaccine posts from news outlets or humanitarian organizations with negative comments about vaccines.

"Our ability to detect (vaccine hesitancy) in comments is bad in English — and basically non-existent elsewhere," another internal memo posted on March 2 said.

Los Angeles resident Derek Beres, an author and fitness instructor, sees anti-vaccine content thrive in the comments every time he promotes immunizations on his accounts on Instagram, which is owned by Facebook. Last year, Beres began hosting a podcast with friends after they noticed conspiracy theories about COVID-19 and vaccines were swirling on the social media feeds of popular health and wellness influencers.

Earlier this year, when Beres posted a picture of himself receiving the COVID-19 shot, some on social media told him he would likely drop dead in six months' time.

"The comments section is a dumpster fire for so many people," Beres said.

Anti-vaccine comments on Facebook grew so bad that even as prominent public health agencies like UNICEF and the World Health Organization were urging people to take the vaccine, the organizations refused to use free advertising that Facebook had given them to promote inoculation, according to the documents.

Some Facebook employees had an idea. While the company worked to hammer out a plan to curb all the anti-vaccine sentiment in the comments, why not disable commenting on posts altogether?

"Very interested in your proposal to remove ALL in-line comments for vaccine posts as a stopgap solution until we can sufficiently detect vaccine hesitancy in comments to refine our removal," one Facebook employee wrote on March 2.

The suggestion went nowhere until mid-April, when Lever said the company stopped showing previews of popular comments on vaccine posts.

Instead, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced on March 15 that the company would start labeling posts about vaccines that described them as safe.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 48 of 70

The move allowed Facebook to continue to get high engagement — and ultimately profit — off anti-vaccine comments, said Ahmed of the Center for Countering Digital Hate.

“They were trying to find ways to not reduce engagement but at the same time make it look like they were trying to make some moves toward cleaning up the problems that they caused,” he said.

It’s unrealistic to expect a multi-billion-dollar company like Facebook to voluntarily change a system that has proven to be so lucrative, said Dan Brahmy, CEO of Cyabra, an Israeli tech firm that analyzes social media networks and disinformation. Brahmy said government regulations may be the only thing that could force Facebook to act.

“The reason they didn’t do it is because they didn’t have to,” Brahmy said. “If it hurts the bottom line, it’s undoable.”

Bipartisan legislation in the U.S. Senate would require social media platforms to give users the option of turning off algorithms tech companies use to organize individuals’ newsfeeds.

Sen. John Thune, R-South Dakota, a sponsor of the bill, asked Facebook whistleblower Haugen to describe the dangers of engagement-based ranking during her testimony before Congress earlier this month.

She said there are other ways of ranking content — for instance, by the quality of the source, or chronologically — that would serve users better. The reason Facebook won’t consider them, she said, is that they would reduce engagement.

“Facebook knows that when they pick out the content ... we spend more time on their platform, they make more money,” Haugen said.

Haugen’s leaked documents also reveal that a relatively small number of Facebook’s anti-vaccine users are rewarded with big pageviews under the tech platform’s current ranking system.

Internal Facebook research presented on March 24 warned that most of the “problematic vaccine content” was coming from a handful of areas on the platform. In Facebook communities where vaccine distrust was highest, the report pegged 50% of anti-vaccine pageviews on just 111 — or .016% — of Facebook accounts.

“Top producers are mostly users serially posting (vaccine hesitancy) content to feed,” the research found.

On that same day, the Center for Countering Digital Hate published an analysis of social media posts that estimated just a dozen Facebook users were responsible for 73% of anti-vaccine posts on the site between February and March. It was a study that Facebook’s leaders in August told the public was “faulty,” despite the internal research published months before that confirmed a small number of accounts drive anti-vaccine sentiment.

Earlier this month, an AP-NORC poll found that most Americans blame social media companies, like Facebook, and their users for misinformation.

But Ahmed said Facebook shouldn’t just shoulder blame for that problem.

“Facebook has taken decisions which have led to people receiving misinformation which caused them to die,” Ahmed said. “At this point, there should be a murder investigation.”

Seitz reported from Columbus, Ohio.

See full coverage of the “The Facebook Papers” here: <https://apnews.com/hub/the-facebook-papers>

“Buy it when you see it.” Retailers dread holiday shortages

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Perfect Pigg, a gift shop owned by Ginger Pigg, is the go-to place for residents of Cumming, Georgia, to pick up gift items like kids toys and home goods.

But this year, store shelves might be a little sparse. Because of bottlenecks in the global supply chain, many stores like Pigg’s are scrambling to try to get all the inventory they can ahead of the crucial holiday shopping season.

“I’m a little stressed,” said Pigg, who has about 60% of the Christmas inventory she usually has at this

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 49 of 70

time. Some stock she ordered in July hasn't arrived yet. "I feel like I've done everything I could do," she said. "I'm hoping and praying it all comes in."

The global supply chain has been buffeted by a multitude of problems, from factories having to close due to COVID-19 surges, a lack of containers to ship items in, backups at ports and warehouses, and a shortage of truckers.

While bigger retailers like Walmart and Target have the power to buy their own containers, use air freight and take other steps to make sure they get inventory, smaller retailers are at the mercy of their vendors, who are increasingly suspending delivery guarantees and sometimes not communicating at all.

For Pigg, a pepper jelly she sells usually has a two-week turnaround time; now it takes four to six weeks to arrive, with no guarantee it will arrive at all. An order she placed for the jelly in July got delivered in October. And she's having trouble getting miscellaneous things, like shopping bags, and candles, due to shortages of the wicks and glass jars the candles come in.

"It's just been one thing after another," she said.

Last year, Renee Silverman, owner of Irv's Luggage in Vernon, Illinois, didn't buy luggage ahead of the holidays – no one was traveling. This year, people are traveling and in need of luggage – but now the problem is finding luggage to sell them.

Inventory that was supposed to come in August and September has been pushed back to December due to supply problems. Silverman has tried spreading orders between five or six vendors, such as Samsonite and Ricardo Beverly Hills.

Meanwhile, prices are rising due to a surge in shipping costs. At this time last year, ocean freight rates from China to the U.S. West Coast were \$3,847 per 40-foot container. Now, the same container will cost \$17,377 to ship, according to Freightos, a Hong Kong-based online freight marketplace.

Most vendors Silverman works with have raised prices one or two times over the past six months to offset the rising costs — normally they raise prices once every several years. So, she tried to place orders ahead of the price increases.

"I feel like I have 14 plates spinning in the air, not knowing what's coming when," she said. "Vendors don't call back or don't have answers."

Most of the delays involve inventory coming from China, and to a lesser extent Thailand, she said. Her vendors have told her the delays stem from ports being backed up.

The average time it takes for ocean freight to go door-to-door has increased 45% over the last year, from 51 days to 74 days, according to Freightos. Ports in Los Angeles and Long Beach, California, account for 40% of all shipping containers entering the United States. As of Monday evening, 73 container ships were at anchor, waiting to unload.

Normally, there's no wait for container ships to unload, said Kevin Ketels, a lecturer in global supply chain management at Wayne State University.

"These are major delays," he said.

Rob Pickering, owner of five Snapdoodle Toys & Games stores in the Seattle area, said ordering for the holidays has "been a real struggle."

Big holiday orders that are typically placed in August were instead moved up to July. So, the company's warehouse and stockrooms are fuller than normal for this time of year.

Still, some items that Pickering ordered in June and July haven't arrived. Some smaller toy makers have already stopped taking and filling any more orders for the holidays. Some popular items, including Ravensburger puzzles and Bruder trucks, both imported from Germany, are likely to be gone from shelves long before Christmas, Pickering said.

"We are telling our customers to buy it when you see it, and don't plan on hoping to buy it later in the season," he said.

Some retailers have shifted production or created their own private label products to try to have more control over the stock they have on shelves.

Chris Lynch is co-founder of Everyday California, in La Jolla, California, a clothing brand with an online store and retail store, along with an adventure tour business.

He has been experiencing supply chain issues "across the board," he said. COVID-19 cases surged in Vietnam in July and August, forcing some factories that make hats and other headwear to shut down. And there have been transportation problems with manufacturers in China, where he gets items like hoodies and sweatshirts.

Lynch shifted some production closer to home. He's making popular items like hats and T-shirts in Tijuana, Mexico. But he's still facing delays due to a shortage in raw materials.

Christine Noh, CEO of Nohble, an independent chain of five shoe and apparel stores in New York and New Jersey, says she is terrified about the upcoming holiday season. Her inventory is down 58% and half the shelves in her warehouse are empty. Big shoe brands like Nike and Adidas were heavily affected when factories in Vietnam closed.

Noh started a private label line to help make sure to have enough stock in stores. The line makes fleece athletic sets and basic tees. It's manufactured in Bangladesh, where she has a relationship with the factory.

"When we're placing an order with them, we have more communication and visibility," she said. And she elected to air freight some of the clothes to make sure they come in.

Timing is key because of the short holiday window.

"If everything shows up in January, that's not really helpful," she said. "Hence, there's a feeling of everyone holding their breath collectively."

—
This article has been corrected to show the correct name of Nohble shoe store is Nohble, not Nohbles.

Enforcement of indoor vaccine mandates proves uneven in US

By CALEB JONES and OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Go out for a night on the town in some U.S. cities and you might find yourself waiting while someone at the door of the restaurant or theater closely inspects your vaccination card and checks it against your photo ID. Or, conversely, you might be waved right through just by flashing your card.

How rigorously vaccination requirements are being enforced varies from place to place, even within the same state or city.

Proof of vaccination is required in several American cities to get into restaurants and bars, enjoy a concert or a play, catch a movie or go to a ballgame.

Ticket agents dutifully ascertain the vaccination status of everyone passing through the turnstile at pro sports venues in some cities from Seattle and New York, and restaurant hosts do the same in many places. In other locations, vaccine checks are cursory at best. Sometimes it's practically done on the honor system.

"There are some businesses that say they check for vaccination proof, but they are not even checking," said Jay Matsler, of Palm Springs, California, who was visiting San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf with his partner during a stop of their cruise along the California coast.

"We actually tell them, 'I'm sorry, you're not enforcing this. We're not going to give you our business,'" Matsler said. He said they were recently in Prague and Paris and had to show their vaccination cards and IDs at every indoor space they visited.

Some places around the U.S. are afraid of losing business if they insist on proof. Some say they don't have enough staff to conduct such checks amid a nationwide labor shortage. Some object on principle.

And some don't want to risk ugly confrontations. At an Italian restaurant in New York City, a request that a group of customers show vaccination proof led to a brawl.

During the first month enforcement in New York, inspectors issued warnings to 6,000 businesses for not checking patrons' status, and 15 were fined \$1,000 for being repeat offenders. The indoor dining area at an In-N-Out Burger joint in San Francisco was shut down this month by health authorities for not demanding proof of vaccination.

Public health authorities see the requirements as vital tools in slowing COVID-19 at a time when 1,500 or more Americans are dying each day from the virus. Such rules face deep opposition in conservative states, meaning they are mainly in effect in Democratic-run locations.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 51 of 70

At the Highway Inn restaurant in Honolulu on Monday, the hostess asked diners for proof of vaccination or a negative test before seating them indoors. The information on their cards must match their IDs, and they must also give contact information that the restaurant keeps on record for two weeks in case of an outbreak.

Russell Ryan, the restaurant's co-owner, said business declined when the vaccine requirement for restaurants first went into effect in mid-September. A few unvaccinated people "stormed off in a huff," he said, but most have complied, and business has returned as more people have gotten vaccinated.

"Generally, it has been less confrontational than we feared," Ryan said. "We thought that we'd get some zealots who want to make a stand for whatever reason."

In many places in the U.S., precisely how to enforce the vaccination rule is left up to businesses.

At a movie theater on a recent night in San Francisco, teenagers at the concession stand glanced at patrons' cellphone photos of their vaccination cards before handing them their popcorn, candy and drinks.

At the city's Opera House, however, an usher closely examines the proof of vaccination and compares it against a picture ID. Anyone who fails to show proof will be asked to leave.

San Francisco health inspectors checking on the food permits of restaurants also routinely look to see whether businesses are complying with the proof-of-vaccination rules, but the city relies largely on complaints of violations phoned in to its 311 line.

Since the city's mandate went into effect on Aug. 20, only one restaurant has been penalized — the In-N-Out at Fisherman's Wharf that was closed for the day on Oct. 14 after refusing to ask for proof of vaccination despite several warnings from the city. The burger place now serves only takeout. A spokesman said the company refuses to be "the vaccination police for any government."

In Los Angeles County, health inspectors found 38 venues that needed more training on vaccine rules out of about 250 bars, lounges, nightclubs, breweries, wineries and distilleries checked between Oct. 8 and Oct. 17. When the county visited 78 bars the next week, they found about 15% of them weren't in compliance with customer vaccine verification rules, triggering more training.

New Orleans is also among the big cities that have imposed such rules, and Los Angeles plans to roll out its own requirements next week.

In New York City, big venues, like Broadway theaters and museums, tend to enforce the rules strictly. A neighborhood cafe might not.

"The vast, vast, vast majority of restaurants and all the other businesses are saying, 'Yes, we're going to work with this. We're going to make it work for our employees, for our customers, keep everyone safe,'" Mayor Bill de Blasio said.

Rick Camac, dean of restaurant and hospitality management at the Institute of Culinary Education in New York, said some of the regulations are ambiguous about how restaurants should work, so some establishments differ on the details, such as whether they require paper or electronic cards. Enforcement is also tough for workers who are trained in hospitality and may not be equipped to handle angry customers, he said.

"They don't want to play police officer," he said. "They want to guide you to your table and have that be the starting point for a great experience."

Some business owners around the U.S. have opted to close their dining rooms and offer only takeout or outdoor seating.

In Honolulu, hostess Ku'uipo Lorenzo greeted customers Ashley and Martin Day as they arrived at the Highway Inn for authentic Hawaiian food. They were seated at a table after Ashley produced her vaccine card and her unvaccinated husband showed a recent negative COVID-19 test.

"We have different perspectives," Ashley Day said. "I think we both agree that it should probably be a testing mandate rather than a vaccine mandate."

But the Days look forward to when tests and vaccines aren't needed to dine out.

"I think we'd like to see things open up again," said Ashley.

Associated Press writer Lindsay Whitehurst in Salt Lake City contributed to this report.

'70s radical David Gilbert granted parole in Brink's robbery

By MICHAEL HILL and KAREN MATTHEWS Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Former Weather Underground radical David Gilbert has been granted parole after 40 years behind bars for his role in a deadly 1981 Brink's robbery that was a violent echo of left-wing extremism born in the 1960s, the state corrections department said Tuesday.

Gilbert, 76, has been imprisoned since shortly after the infamously botched armored car robbery in which a guard and two police officers were killed. He became eligible for parole only after his 75 years-to-life sentence was shortened by Gov. Andrew Cuomo in August, hours before he left office.

Gilbert appeared before the state parole board Oct. 19 and was subsequently granted parole, Thomas Mailey, a spokesperson for the New York state corrections department, said Tuesday.

He will be able to leave Shawangunk Correctional Facility in the Hudson Valley next month.

Supporters — including his son, San Francisco District Attorney Chesa Boudin — lobbied to have Gilbert join other defendants in the case who have been released from prison.

In an email, Boudin said, "I am so grateful to the parole board and to everyone who has supported my father during his more than 40 years in prison. I'm thinking about the other children affected by this crime and want to make sure that nothing I do or say further upsets the victims' families. Their loved ones will never be forgotten."

But even the prospect of Gilbert's release had angered some local officials in the Hudson Valley and family members who said his release would insult the memory of the slain men.

In a statement, Rockland County Executive Ed Day called the decision a "cruel and unjust slap in the face to the families" of those killed.

"Former Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Parole Board should be ashamed for allowing this domestic terrorist to walk free on our streets," Day said. "There's no reason that David Gilbert should not have to face the full consequences of his heinous crimes, no matter how much time has passed."

Gilbert and other former members of the Weather Underground, a militant group that grew out of the anti-Vietnam War movement, had joined with members of the Black Liberation Army in the Oct. 20, 1981, robbery. They stole \$1.6 million in cash from an armored car outside the Nanuet Mall near the Hudson River community of Nyack.

Brink's guard Peter Paige and two Nyack police officers, Sgt. Edward O'Grady and Officer Waverly Brown, were killed in the holdup and ensuing shootout at a nearby roadblock.

Though unarmed, Gilbert was charged with robbery and murder, since people were killed during the crime. Also charged was Chesa Boudin's mother, Kathy Boudin. The boy was 14 months old when his parents were imprisoned.

In a sometimes raucous trial, Gilbert and two other defendants cast themselves as freedom fighters and deemed the proceedings illegitimate. At one court session, Gilbert and defendant Judith Clark raised their fists and shouted "Free the land!"

Kathy Boudin avoided a harsher sentence by pleading guilty and was paroled in 2003. Clark was granted parole in 2019, three years after Cuomo commuted her sentence. She had been denied parole after her first hearing two years earlier.

Gilbert was not eligible for parole until 2056 before Cuomo commuted his sentence. The former governor said Gilbert made significant contributions to AIDS education and prevention programs, and worked as a tutor, law library clerk, paralegal assistant, teacher's aide and aide in various prison programs.

Chesa Boudin was raised by his parents' Weather Underground compatriots, Bill Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn.

He ran a progressive campaign for San Francisco district attorney in 2019 in which he said visiting his parents in prison showed him the criminal justice system was broken.

Matthews reported from New York City.

Congress plans fixes for US military's AWOL weapons problems

By KRISTIN M. HALL and JUSTIN PRITCHARD Associated Press

Congress is set to force America's armed services to keep better track of their guns and explosives, imposing new rules in response to an Associated Press investigation that showed firearms stolen from U.S. bases have resurfaced in violent crimes.

Under the proposals, the Department of Defense would tell both lawmakers and civilian law enforcement authorities more about guns that vanish from military armories, shipments and warehouses.

Overall, AP has found that at least 2,000 firearms from the Army, Marines, Navy or Air Force were lost or stolen during the 2010s.

Even as guns kept disappearing, the Department of Defense in recent years stopped advising Congress of most losses or thefts. That was one finding of an investigation which showed how assault rifles, pistols, armor-piercing grenades and other weapons have made their way onto the nation's streets.

Lawmakers in both the House and Senate responded by writing stricter accountability into each chamber's version of the National Defense Authorization Act. That bipartisan, must-pass legislation sets policy priorities for the Pentagon.

In coming weeks, lawmakers will hammer out differences between the two defense authorization act versions as the legislation marches toward the president's desk. For example, the Senate envisions more reporting to the FBI while the House focuses on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

In interviews, military officials have acknowledged numerous problems with how they keep track of weapons through the military's vast supply chains.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Mark Milley, told senators in June that he would seek a "systematic fix" within the Department of Defense -- regardless of what Congress did. Spokespeople for the Army and Marines have said their service branches are making changes to how they account for weapons.

Those internal efforts have not persuaded some lawmakers.

"We are concerned that DOD has seemingly not yet developed a coherent strategy to improve its ability to account for military weapons and equipment," Democratic leaders on the House Committee on Oversight and Reform wrote Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and the leaders of the service branches in a letter dated Monday.

The lawmakers requested a progress briefing by Nov. 19. Spokespeople for the Army, Marines, Navy and Air Force said the branches would respond directly to the committee.

The letter also focused on a technology that some units of the Air Force and Army have used to track guns, but that could let even low-tech enemies detect U.S. troops.

When embedded in military guns, thin radio frequency identification tags — RFID, as the technology is known — can streamline weapon counts and distribution. But field testing for AP showed that, outside armories, the electronic signals the tags emit could become an unwanted tracking beacon from distances greater than some armed services seemed to realize.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense called the tracking potential for enemies a significant security problem, and under questioning the Navy told AP it would abandon the technology in weapons. Still, RFID tags are used in many aspects of military logistics and lawmakers on the committee asked the Pentagon to detail how widely the technology is deployed and to explain the security risks those uses bring.

Pritchard reported from Los Angeles. Contact him at <https://twitter.com/JPritchardAP>. Hall reported from Nashville, Tennessee. Contact her at <https://twitter.com/kmhall>.

Email AP's Global Investigations Team at investigative@ap.org or <https://www.ap.org/tips/>. See other work at <https://www.apnews.com/hub/ap-investigations>.

Russia, Ukraine see record daily deaths, low vaccinations

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — The daily number of COVID-19 deaths in Russia hit another high Tuesday amid a surge in infections that has forced the Kremlin to order most Russians to stay off work starting this week.

Sluggish vaccination rates have allowed the virus to spread quickly across Eastern Europe. Ukraine and Bulgaria also reported record daily death tolls on Tuesday.

Russia's national coronavirus task force reported 1,106 deaths in 24 hours, the most since the start of the pandemic. The number brought the country's official pandemic death toll to 232,775, Europe's highest by far.

Russia registered 36,446 new daily coronavirus cases, slightly fewer than the past few days.

In a move intended to stem the spread of the virus, Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered a nonworking period between Oct. 30 and Nov. 7, when the country will observe an extended holiday.

During that time, most state organizations and private businesses are to suspend operations, and most stores will close along with kindergartens, schools, gyms and most entertainment venues. Restaurants and cafes will only be open for takeout or delivery. Food stores, pharmacies and businesses operating key infrastructure can stay open.

Access to museums, theaters, concert halls and other venues will be limited to people holding digital codes on their smartphones to prove they have been vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19, a practice that will remain in place after Nov. 7.

The new restrictions have encouraged more people to get immunized.

Olga Korina, a 82-year-old Moscow resident, said she was reluctant to receive a vaccine but changed her mind after she saw that a proof of vaccination would be required to attend concerts.

"Everything will be closed for us, and I love music so much," she said.

Putin has told local officials to order unvaccinated people older than 60 to stay home and to close nightclubs and other entertainment venues. Russian authorities also have strengthened the enforcement of mask mandates on public transportation and in indoor venues.

The Russian leader encouraged the worst-affected regions to start the off-work time earlier and possibly extend it beyond Nov. 7. Six of Russia's 85 regions began the idle period on Monday, and more joined them Tuesday. Moscow is to suspend work for most people on Thursday.

Russian authorities expect the time off will help limit the spread of contagion by keeping people out of offices and public transportation.

However, the sales of airline tickets and hotel bookings at Russia's Black Sea resorts surged on the news of the extended holiday, forcing authorities in southern Russia to shut down entertainment venues and limit access to restaurants and bars to customers with the digital health codes. Tour companies also reported a surge in demand for package vacations to Egyptian resorts.

The government has blamed the quick spread of the virus and soaring deaths on low vaccination rates. Only about 49 million Russians — about a third of the country's nearly 146 million people — are fully vaccinated.

"It's important to speed up the pace of vaccination, otherwise we won't be able to control the spread of infection," Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said at a Cabinet meeting.

Health Minister Mikhail Murashko reported that nearly 90% of hospital beds are filled with over 268,000 COVID-19 patients, adding that authorities need to expand hospital capacity in the country.

"It's a colossal load on the health care system," he said.

Russia was the first country in the world to authorize a coronavirus vaccine, launching Sputnik V in August 2020. It has abundant supplies of the vaccine, but citizens have been slow to get shots, a trend blamed in part on conflicting signals from authorities.

In neighboring Ukraine, the vaccine uptake has been even slower. About 16% of the country's 41 million people have been fully vaccinated. Confirmed cases and deaths have increased over the past week, and the Ukrainian Health Ministry on Tuesday reported a record 734 deaths in 24 hours.

Bulgaria, the European Union's least-vaccinated nation with about 25% of the adult population fully

inoculated, reported 5,863 new confirmed cases and 243 deaths Tuesday, both national daily records. Medical personnel are concerned the latest wave of infections may overwhelm the country's ailing health care system.

In the Baltics, which border Russia, authorities in Estonia are considering new coronavirus restrictions on top of the ones that took effect a day ago. Still, Estonia is seeking to avoid a general lockdown like the one neighboring Latvia has imposed to counter the rapid spread of the virus. Latvia's lockdown, which started Oct. 21 and runs until Nov. 15, includes a nationwide curfew, closes most stores and suspends entertainment, sports and cultural events.

Yuras Karamanau in Kyiv, Ukraine, and Veselin Toshkov in Sofia, Bulgaria, contributed to this report.

Follow AP's pandemic coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

Senators put YouTube, TikTok, Snap on defensive on kids' use

By MARCY GORDON and MATT O'BRIEN AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senators put executives from YouTube, TikTok and Snapchat on the defensive Tuesday, questioning them about what they're doing to ensure young users' safety on their platforms.

Citing the harm that can come to vulnerable young people from the sites — ranging from eating disorders to exposure to sexually explicit content and material promoting addictive drugs — the lawmakers also sought the executives' support for legislation bolstering protection of children on social media. But they received little firm commitment.

"The problem is clear: Big Tech preys on children and teens to make more money," Sen. Edward Markey, D-Mass., said at a hearing by the Senate Commerce subcommittee on consumer protection.

The subcommittee recently took testimony from a former Facebook data scientist, who laid out internal company research showing that the company's Instagram photo-sharing service appears to seriously harm some teens. The subcommittee is widening its focus to examine other tech platforms, with millions or billions of users, that also compete for young people's attention and loyalty.

"We're hearing the same stories of harm" caused by YouTube, TikTok and Snapchat, said Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., the panel's chairman.

"This is for Big Tech a big tobacco moment ... It is a moment of reckoning," he said. "There will be accountability. This time is different."

To that end, Markey asked the three executives — Michael Beckerman, a TikTok vice president and head of public policy for the Americas; Leslie Miller, vice president for government affairs and public policy of YouTube's owner Google; and Jennifer Stout, vice president for global public policy of Snapchat parent Snap Inc. — if they would support his bipartisan legislation that would give new privacy rights to children, and ban targeted ads and video autoplay for kids.

In a lengthy exchange as Markey tried to draw out a commitment of support, the executives avoided providing a direct endorsement, insisting that their platforms already are complying with the proposed restrictions. They said they're seeking a dialogue with lawmakers as the legislation is crafted.

That wasn't good enough for Markey and Blumenthal, who perceived a classic Washington lobbying game in a moment of crisis for social media and the tech industry. "This is the talk that we've seen again and again and again and again," Blumenthal told them. Applauding legislative goals in a general way is "meaningless" unless backed up by specific support, he said.

"Sex and drugs are violations of our community standards; they have no place on TikTok," Beckerman said. TikTok has tools in place, such as screen-time management, to help young people and parents moderate how long children spend on the app and what they see, he said.

The company says it focuses on age-appropriate experiences, noting that some features, such as direct messaging, are not available to younger users. The video platform, wildly popular with teens and younger children, is owned by the Chinese company ByteDance. In only five years since launching, it has gained

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 56 of 70

an estimated 1 billion monthly users.

Early this year after federal regulators order TikTok to disclose how its practices affect children and teenagers, the platform tightened its privacy practices for users under 18.

Pressed by Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., about a 19-year-old said to have died from counterfeit pain medication he bought through Snapchat, Stout said, "We're absolutely determined to remove all drug dealers from Snapchat." She said the platform has deployed detection measures against dealers but acknowledged that they are often evaded.

Stout made the case that Snapchat's platform differs from the others in relying on humans, not artificial intelligence, for moderating content.

Snapchat allows people to send photos, videos and messages that are meant to quickly disappear, an enticement to its young users seeking to avoid snooping parents and teachers. Hence its "Ghostface Chillah" faceless (and word-less) white logo.

Only 10 years old, Snapchat says an eye-popping 90% of 13- to 24-year-olds in the U.S. use the service. It reported 306 million daily users in the July-September quarter.

Miller said YouTube has worked to provide children and families with protections and parental controls like time limits, to limit viewing to age-appropriate content. The offshoot YouTube Kids, available in around 70 countries, has an estimated 35 million weekly users.

"We do not prioritize profits over safety. We do not wait to act," she said.

The three platforms are woven into the fabric of young people's lives, often influencing their dress, dance moves and diet, potentially to the point of obsession. Peer pressure to get on the apps is strong. Social media can offer entertainment and education, but platforms have been misused to harm children and promote bullying, vandalism in schools, eating disorders and manipulative marketing, lawmakers say.

The panel wants to learn how algorithms and product designs can magnify harm to children, foster addiction and intrusions of privacy. And Blumenthal especially asked the executives whether independent research had been conducted on the impact on young people of the platforms. He said the lawmakers want to receive information from the companies on such research soon.

TikTok, in its first time testifying before Congress, received especially fierce criticism during the hearing, particularly from conservative Republican lawmakers who highlighted its Chinese ownership. The company says it stores all TikTok U.S. data in the United States, with a backup facility in Singapore.

"TikTok actually collects less data than many of our peers," Beckerman said.

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, told Beckerman that he dodged questions more than any witness he's ever seen in Congress.

TikTok's privacy policy states, "We may share all of the information we collect with a parent, subsidiary or other affiliate of our corporate group." Senators drilled down on whether "other affiliate" includes ByteDance and what that means for Chinese access to data.

O'Brien reported from Providence, Rhode Island.

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

Virus cut access to courts but opened door to virtual future

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

Just two reporters were allowed inside a Georgia courtroom to serve as the eyes and ears of the public when jury selection began for the men charged with murdering Ahmaud Arbery. Pandemic restrictions also kept reporters and the public out of the courtroom during the sex-trafficking trial of music star R. Kelly.

And in an Ohio courtroom, a federal judge relegated the press to an overflow room to listen to an audio feed for the trial of a Chinese national charged with trying to steal trade secrets from U.S. companies.

A year-and-a-half into the coronavirus pandemic, courts across the U.S. are still grappling with how to balance public health concerns with the constitutional rights of a defendant and the public to have an open trial. There's no standard solution. Some courts are still functioning entirely virtually. Others are back in

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 57 of 70

person. And many are allowing only limited public access.

"This is a fundamental constitutional right that the public has — to have open courts and to be able to see what's happening in real time in a courtroom," said David Snyder, executive director of the First Amendment Coalition, which has prodded California courts to improve public access during the pandemic.

COVID-19 space constraints have led judges across the U.S. to exclude or limit public and media attendance at trials.

During Kelly's trial, which concluded last month with his conviction, a federal judge in New York barred the press and public from the courtroom because jurors were sitting six feet apart in the gallery normally used by observers. Onlookers could watch a live video feed in an overflow courtroom, but it offered no view of the jury and only limited images of the defendant, witnesses and exhibits. At one point, prosecutors played a recording that jurors listened to with headphones, with no audio available for the press and public.

The judge rejected a request by media groups, including The Associated Press, to allow pool reporters in the courtroom for much of the trial, letting six reporters in only when the verdict was announced.

A similar scenario played out last week in Ohio, where a federal judge cited the pandemic while keeping the public out of the courtroom for the trial of Yanjun Xu, a Chinese official accused of trying to steal trade secrets from U.S. aviation and aerospace companies. There was no public access to jury selection. Audio of the trial was played for media in a conference room.

Overflow rooms are better than nothing but often leave observers unable to see the full context of what's occurring, like the reaction of jurors as evidence is presented, said New York attorney Rachel Strom, who represented media in the R. Kelly case.

"We don't know what we missed by not having someone actually in the courtroom," Strom said.

After the AP and other media filed legal motions, a Georgia judge granted just two media pool seats in the courtroom right before the start of jury selection in the trial of three white men charged with chasing and killing Arbery. Graphic cellphone video of the 25-year-old Black man being shot sparked outrage nationally last year, and the trial is being closely watched as a referendum on how the legal system treats Black victims. The judge has since allowed a third reporter and a photographer into the courtroom.

In another high-profile case, the press and public initially were allowed to listen remotely to court proceedings as pop star Britney Spears sought to end her father's conservatorship over her finances. But Los Angeles County Superior Court canceled the remote access after someone recorded a hearing, and the court refused to reinstate it for a September hearing when Spears was freed from her father's oversight. The court instead allowed more people into the courtroom.

USA Today recently asked the California Supreme Court to order the restoration of remote audio for the public and media.

"No one should have to risk their health to exercise their constitutional right of access by travelling to, and attending, court in person," USA Today said in its court filing. It also suggested the remote audio program should continue "even when the pandemic ends."

The California request highlights how the pandemic has shifted expectations about what qualifies as public access.

"As courts open back up, they should strongly consider keeping some amount of remote access available to the public," said Lin Weeks, an attorney at the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press.

Many courts now are routinely using video conferencing in civil lawsuits, for bail proceedings in criminal cases and for family law disputes such as child-custody and divorce cases. Some also are using video conferencing to select jurors or to conduct entire jury trials.

Court officials say the virtual proceedings have saved time and money for attorneys, jurors, litigants and defendants, who no longer have to travel to a courthouse, take extensive time off work or arrange child care. Courts also have seen fewer no-shows among those summoned to virtual jury pools and, as a result, greater diversity on juries.

"It has been a lifeline as we've tried to keep the justice system moving during the pandemic, but it's also been transformational," said Sean O'Donnell, a superior court judge in King County, Washington, home of Seattle.

King County judges have conducted about 700 online trials, including about 50 with jurors. During a trial that O'Donnell presided over last week, the judge, attorneys, witness and jurors appeared on a 20-tile Zoom screen that the public could view on YouTube. Two jurors sat in clothes closets. One participated from his vehicle. Another was chided by O'Donnell to remove his cat from the camera view. A witness testified from Oregon, a couple hundred miles away.

Despite those oddities, the virtual trial progressed much like a regular trial, with attorneys taking turns questioning witnesses and evidentiary documents displayed on the screen for all to see. There even were periodic breaks where participants stood up and stretched.

Conducting the trial virtually also freed up space at the courthouse. To accommodate social distancing, in-person trials are using as many as three separate courtrooms — one for the actual trial, a second for the public to view it remotely and a third for the jury to use during breaks and deliberations, O'Donnell said.

Across Hawaii's chain of islands, the ability to observe courts virtually has increased public access during the pandemic.

John Burnett, a reporter for the Hawaii Tribune-Herald, wasn't able to cover state Supreme Court or U.S. District Court proceedings before the pandemic because it required a 50-minute plane ride from Hawaii, also known as the Big Island, where his newspaper is based, to Honolulu on the island of Oahu. Now he regularly listens by phone to federal court cases and watches state Supreme Court arguments on YouTube.

"I think they should become permanent things because let's face it, we're talking about public information here," Burnett said. "If we can't get our boots on the actual ground, at least if we can have virtual ground — that's as good of a substitute as we could possibly hope for."

David A. Lieb reported from Jefferson City, Missouri. Associated Press writers Russ Bynum in Brunswick, Georgia, Tom Hays in New York and Jennifer Kelleher in Honolulu contributed to this report.

Queen Elizabeth II won't attend climate conference in person

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II has canceled her planned appearance at the U.N. climate conference in Glasgow, accepting doctors' advice to rest just days after spending the night in a hospital for tests.

The 95-year-old monarch announced Tuesday that she has "regretfully" decided that she will no longer travel to Glasgow to attend the reception on Nov. 1 — a move that will dash the hopes of Britain's Conservative government, which is anxious to show the importance of the session to the fate of the planet. The climate conference runs from Oct. 31 to Nov. 12 and her attendance was meant to kick it off in style and splendor.

"Her Majesty is disappointed not to attend the reception but will deliver an address to the assembled delegates via a recorded video message," Buckingham Palace said.

The news came after the sovereign held virtual audiences Tuesday at Windsor Castle — the first since revelations that her doctors ordered her to rest last week.

The sovereign greeted the ambassadors from South Korea and Switzerland during her first technology-aided appearance since she was driven to London's King Edward VII's Hospital on Oct. 20 for "preliminary investigations." She returned to her Windsor Castle home at lunchtime the next day and has been taking on light duties since.

The queen underwent the medical tests after she canceled a scheduled trip to mark 100 years since the creation of Northern Ireland, and the palace said she had "reluctantly" accepted advice to rest for a few days. The matter was not related to COVID-19.

Her doctors ordered rest last week after the monarch who likes to be seen by the people carried out a hectic series of events. She held audiences with diplomats, had a reception at Windsor Castle for global business leaders and attended the horse races at Ascot.

Her hospital visit last week came amid general disquiet about Elizabeth's health. Days earlier, she was seen using a walking stick at a Westminster Abbey service marking the centenary of the Royal British Legion,

an armed forces charity. Although she had used a cane in 2003, it was after she underwent knee surgery.

The queen's husband, Prince Philip, died in April 2021 at 99. Elizabeth has enjoyed robust health throughout her life, becoming Britain's longest-lived and longest-reigning monarch. She is due to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee — 70 years on the throne — next year.

White House eyes new climate change strategies in Biden bill

By LISA MASCARO and MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House is zeroing in on a package of clean energy strategies for President Joe Biden's big domestic policy bill that officials believe could reach similar greenhouse gas emission reduction goals as an initial proposal that was quashed by opposition from a centrist Democrat.

The Biden administration discussed the proposals Monday at the White House with the leaders of about a dozen environmental and justice groups, according to a senior administration official who requested anonymity to share the plans. A new approach was needed after coal-state Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., rejected the White House's earlier clean energy plan.

The emerging proposals would expand grants and loans in the agriculture and industrial sectors to help them shift to clean energy providers with fewer greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming, the official said. There would also be new, refundable home improvement tax credits for tapping solar and other renewable energy sources. The official said momentum was building as the group coalesced around the new ideas.

The new strategies come as the president and Democrats in Congress are struggling to wrap up talks on Biden's now-scaled-back package of at least \$1.75 trillion in social services and climate change investments before he departs later this week for two global summits overseas.

Vice President Kamala Harris visited the afternoon meeting with the leaders of some of the nation's leading environmental and justice organizations and reiterated the president's commitment to the goals of the package — even as she acknowledged the sometimes grueling process to achieve consensus in the party.

"The president and I and our administration are unwavering in our commitment to these issues. Absolutely unwavering," she said. "But you know, there's an old saying, you don't want to watch sausage be made and you don't want to watch a bill being made."

A cornerstone of Biden's climate change strategy had been a clean energy plan that would have rewarded power providers that use clean sources and penalized those that don't.

But that approach had to be scrapped when Manchin objected. With Republicans fully opposed to Biden's big package, the president needs the support of all Democrats in the 50-50 split Senate, with no votes to spare.

The senior administration official said the administration was not wedded to one clean-energy strategy as a "silver bullet."

Instead, officials are coalescing around a new package of strategies that could potentially achieve similar emission reduction goals without adding new costs to the overall package.

A plan backed by Democrats offers tax credits and spending to boost renewable power such as wind and solar and sharply increase the number of electric vehicles. Advocates think the plan, plus executive branch action such as a pending Environmental Protection Agency rule to curb methane emissions, and action by states, should be enough to meet or nearly meet Biden's goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030, compared with 2005 levels.

Biden said at a town hall last week that he expects to spend the \$150 billion that had been targeted for the clean-energy program on climate programs. Advocates say the money would most likely be used as block grants to states to pursue their own emissions cuts.

It's unclear if the new proposals would be acceptable to Manchin, whose home state is a leading producer of coal and natural gas. He has preferred an approach that does not favor one industry over the other as coal begins to be phased out for cleaner energy sources.

The new strategies appear to use more incentives to encourage clean energy use rather than penalties

for failing to make the transition, which could help win over Manchin. But climate change advocates have argued that penalties are needed to get industries to more quickly turn to cleaner sources as the world races to confront the dire threats of climate change.

A major fight emerged in recent days over a proposal to include a so-called "methane fee" in the budget package. The fee would be imposed on energy companies that leak methane pollution during oil and gas production. Methane, the main component of natural gas, is a leading cause of global warming, especially in the short term.

"My hope is, it's going to be in," Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, said of the methane fee.

"We negotiated a methane fee, we tried to do it in a way that Sen. Manchin and his folks would be more receptive of, and we're still talking about it and continuing to work through it," Carper told reporters Monday.

Manchin said Tuesday he is talking to Carper and others about the methane fee, but does not want to "punish" energy companies "just for the sake of punishing" them. Some House Democrats from Texas also oppose the methane fee, saying it could cost thousands of jobs in the energy industry and increase energy costs for Americans.

Supporters called the fee a common-sense provision that only kicks in when methane pollution exceeds agreed-upon targets. The fee would give the oil and gas industry a financial incentive to capture methane rather than burn or "flare" excess gas produced at well sites, supporters say.

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., said a methane fee is crucial to meeting Biden's climate goals as he heads to a climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland next week.

"Letting corporations pollute for free is not a climate solution," Whitehouse said.

The grants and loans for the agricultural sector would help rural electric cooperatives transition to cleaner energy sources, which could be of interest to Manchin in his rural state.

Similarly, industrial steel, cement and aluminum plants could tap funds to beef up their use of greener sources, the official said. There would also be expanded home improvement tax credits.

Biden wants a deal in hand before he arrives in Scotland for the United Nations climate conference amid hopes to reposition the U.S. as a world leader on the issue.

150 people arrested in US-Europe darknet drug probe

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Law enforcement officials in the U.S. and Europe have arrested 150 people and seized more than \$31 million in an international drug trafficking investigation stemming from sales on the darknet, the Justice Department said Tuesday.

The arrests are connected to a 10-month investigation between federal law enforcement officials in the U.S. and Europol in Europe. Prosecutors allege those charges are responsible for tens of thousands of illegal sales in the U.S., the United Kingdom, Australia, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

The Justice Department says investigators have seized over \$31.6 million in cash and virtual currency and 45 guns.

The darknet is a part of the internet hosted within an encrypted network and accessible only through specialized anonymity-providing tools, most notably the Tor Browser.

Investigators also recovered a slew of illegal drugs, including counterfeit medication and opioid pills, along with more than 152 kilograms of amphetamine, 21 kilograms of cocaine and 32.5 kilograms of MDMA, according to prosecutors.

Those arrested include 65 people in the U.S., 47 in Germany, 24 people in the United Kingdom, four in Italy, four in the Netherlands, three in France, two in Switzerland and one person in Bulgaria.

Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco said investigators found darknet vendors were running fake laboratories in their homes to create fake pills — designed to look like prescription pain pills — that are laced with fentanyl, methamphetamine and other illegal drugs.

The operation was specifically designed to target "drug distributors who use the darknet to traffic these illicit drugs and items like pill presses, which are fueling the ongoing opioid crisis plaguing our communities," Monaco said.

The Justice Department said its investigation was ongoing and investigators were still working to identify other individuals behind darknet accounts.

While the Justice Department has carried out similar investigations in the past, investigators were particularly concerned when they started seeing a surge in opioid sales on the darknet during the pandemic.

"Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, more people have turned to the darknet than ever before to buy drugs," Monaco said.

"Before I close, I want to address those who remain on the darknet, those who are peddling illegal drugs and thinking they are safe behind layers of digital anonymity. My message to you is simple: There is no dark internet. We can and we will shine a light," Monaco said.

UN chief: 'Leadership gap' undermines global climate efforts

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — The head of the United Nations says a "leadership gap" is undermining the world's efforts to curb global warming, days before presidents and prime ministers from around the globe gather for a climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters Tuesday that time is running out to cut greenhouse gas emissions and meet the goals of the 2015 Paris accord to avert global warming that he said could become "an existential threat to humanity."

"The clock is ticking," he said in New York at the presentation of a U.N. report highlighting the difference between what scientists say is needed and what countries are doing to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas being pumped into the atmosphere. "This is a moment of truth."

"The emissions gap is the result of a leadership gap," Guterres said. "But leaders can still make this a turning point to a greener future instead of a tipping point to climate catastrophe."

The new report by the U.N. Environment Programme found fresh pledges by governments to cut emissions are raising hopes but aren't strict enough to keep global warming from exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century.

It concluded that recent announcements by dozens of countries to aim for "net-zero" emissions by 2050 could, if fully implemented, limit a global temperature rise to 2.2 degrees Celsius (4 F). That's closer but still above the less stringent target agreed upon in the Paris climate accord of capping global warming at 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 F) compared to pre-industrial times.

"Every ton of carbon dioxide emissions adds to global warming," French climate scientist Valerie Masson-Delmotte, who co-chaired an August U.N. climate science report, told the United Nations on Tuesday. "The climate we experience in the future depends on our decisions now."

The European Union, the United States and dozens of other countries have set net-zero emissions targets. However, the UNEP report said the net-zero goals that many governments announced ahead of a U.N. climate summit in Glasgow next week remain vague, with much of the heavy lifting on emissions cuts pushed beyond 2030.

Guterres said scientists were clear on the facts of climate change, adding that "now, leaders need to be just as clear in their actions."

"They need to come to Glasgow with bold, time-bound, front-loaded plans to reach net zero," he said.

Guterres made a direct plea to China, the top carbon polluter, to make carbon-cutting efforts go faster than previously proposed because "that would have an influence on several other countries." China hasn't updated its required emissions cut pledge.

The report came out as the U.N. General Assembly focused on climate change in a marathon session of speeches Tuesday. The presidents of vulnerable island nations Palau and the Maldives used the opportunity to plea for the world to do more because their countries are at risk of being wiped out.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 62 of 70

"Our homes, our blue economy, our health and our overall well-being have been ravaged by the climate crisis," Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr. told the General Assembly. "We must take radical action now."

"The fate of small islands today is the fate of the world tomorrow," Maldives President Ibrahim Solih said. Australia became the latest country to announce a net-zero target on Tuesday, but experts swiftly pointed out that it doesn't stack up.

The U.N. Environment Programme is one of several agencies to examine the gap between government pledges and the Paris goals. Its executive director echoed the need for speed on curbing emissions.

"To stand a chance of limiting global warming to 1.5 C, we have eight years to almost halve greenhouse gas emissions," said Inger Andersen. "Eight years to make the plans, put in place the policies, implement them and ultimately deliver the cuts."

Leaders, diplomats, scientists and environmental activists will meet in Glasgow from Oct. 31-Nov. 12 to discuss how countries and businesses can adjust their targets to avert the more extreme climate change scenarios that would result in a significant sea-level rise, more frequent wild weather and more droughts.

Guterres said he would use a trip to the Group of 20 meeting in Italy to press all countries, including major emerging economies such as China, to do more on climate change.

"If there is no meaningful reduction of emissions in the next decade, we will have lost forever the possibility of reaching 1.5 degrees," he said.

Guterres said past climate summits had acknowledged that while all countries have to curb emissions, some are more able to do so than others, with leadership coming from the richest and most developed.

"But the level of emissions of the emerging economies is such that we also need the emerging economies to go an extra mile," he said. "Only if everybody does the maximum, it will be possible to get there."

The UNEP report emphasized several measures that can help boost efforts to curb global warming, including clamping down on emissions of the potent but short-lived greenhouse gas methane. It also emphasized the need to ensure pandemic recovery funds are spent on environmentally friendly measures.

The report found that most countries have missed the opportunity to use COVID-19 recovery spending to stimulate the economy while backing climate action.

"Despite these alarm bells ringing at fever pitch, we see new evidence today in the (UNEP) Emissions Gap Report that governments' actions so far simply do not add up to what is so desperately needed," Guterres told diplomats later Tuesday.

Seth Borenstein in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

Follow AP's climate coverage at <http://apnews.com/hub/climate>

AP FACT CHECK: Biden tale of Amtrak conductor doesn't add up

By HOPE YEN and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is spinning a convoluted tale of an Amtrak conductor who congratulated him during his vice presidency for logging more miles riding the train home to Delaware than by flying on Air Force Two.

"I apologize because some have heard this," Biden told a crowd Monday in New Jersey, starting up a story he has repeated in various forms at least five times, dating back to the 2020 campaign.

"I swear to God. True story," he said Monday, for emphasis.

But it's a mangled one.

By his own accounting, Biden's Amtrak miles over the years only surpassed his Air Force Two miles after the conductor who supposedly informed him of that fact had died. Moreover, the conductor had retired about two decades before the conversation Biden claims to have had with him while boarding a train.

BIDEN: "I commuted every single day, 263 miles a day, on Amtrak from the time I got elected United States senator. As a matter of fact, when I was vice president, I used to like to take the train home when my mom was very sick and dying, and I'd come home every weekend to make sure I'd take the train

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 63 of 70

home. ...

"And I'm getting on one Friday, and then one of the senior guys on Amtrak, Angelo Negri — I got to know all the conductors really well; they became my friends. ... And Ang walks up to me and goes, 'Joey, baby!' Grabs my cheek. And I thought the Secret Service was going to blow his head off. ... I said, 'What's up, Ang?' He said, 'Joey, I read in the paper — I read in the paper you traveled 1,000 — 1.2 million miles on Air Force planes' — because they keep meticulous tabs of it. I said, 'Yeah.' ... He said, 'You know how many miles you traveled on Amtrak, Joey?' And I said, 'No.' He said, 'The boys and I figured it out ... He says, 'You travel 2 million...' — I think it was 180, but — '2,200,000 miles.'

"I said, 'How did you get that answer?' He said, 'Well, 267 miles a day. We figured you traveled 119 days a year for 36 years, and then you traveled as vice president.' And then he goes, 'So, Joey, I don't want to hear this about the Air Force anymore.'"

THE FACTS: The tale as Biden spins it is wrong. Negri could not have had that conversation because he was already deceased by the time Biden logged 1.2 million miles on Air Force Two.

Biden refers to a train ride he made to Delaware when he was vice president and his mother was sick and dying. He explains it happened shortly after he had flown 1.2 million miles, spurring Negri's comment about his mileage on Amtrak in comparison. On previous occasions when Biden has told the story, he's also indicated that it all happened around his "fourth or fifth year" as vice president — or 2012-2013 — although in a rendition of the story told to a crowd in Scranton, Pennsylvania, last week, Biden suggested it was in his seventh year, which would be 2015.

In any event, Biden's mother, Catherine Eugenia "Jean" Finnegan Biden, died in 2010, well before the middle of his vice presidency.

It's plausible that Biden logged 1.2 million train miles as vice president by early 2016, based on accounts around the time by Biden and David Lienemann, the vice president's official photographer. But Negri had long retired as an Amtrak conductor, in 1993, and died in May 2014.

Biden made Amtrak trips between Washington and his home in Delaware on most days as a senator when Congress was in session so he could help raise his sons. The Amtrak round trip is actually 220 miles or 354 kilometers, not over 260 miles (418 km) as he described it.

It is well possible that he had some warm conversations with Negri, and his stepdaughter told CNN the two were friends. It's also possible that Biden spoke with another Amtrak conductor in late 2015 or early 2016 after his apparent milestone on Air Force Two.

But Biden distorts the timeline in a way that makes the story false. He's been telling it, with variations, with more frequency as he pitches his infrastructure plan. Monday's remarks were at New Jersey Transit's rail maintenance facility in Kearny.

Biden's tale has drawn repeated criticism from conservative groups. When asked to square the facts in May, White House principal deputy press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said she wasn't familiar with the details.

EDITOR'S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures.

Find AP Fact Checks at <http://apnews.com/APFactCheck>

Follow @APFactCheck on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/APFactCheck>

Bueckers, Boston, Clark headline AP preseason All-Americans

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

Paige Bueckers made history as a freshman and is poised for an even better sophomore season.

UConn's sensational guard was the latest Huskies player to be honored as a preseason Associated Press All-America on Tuesday. She was a unanimous choice from the 29-member national media panel that selects the AP Top 25 each week.

Bueckers was joined on the five-player team by fellow sophomore Caitlin Clark of Iowa, junior Aliyah

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 64 of 70

Boston of South Carolina, and seniors NaLyssa Smith of Baylor and Rhyne Howard of Kentucky. Boston and Howard were on the preseason team last year.

Bueckers became the first freshman ever to win the AP's Player of the Year award last March as she helped UConn reach the Final Four. She averaged 20 points, 5.8 assists and 4.9 rebounds last season.

"Paige is Paige," UConn coach Geno Auriemma said. "Paige is better than she was last year. Paige is a little more comfortable than she was last year. She's not as hesitant to take shots as she was last year."

While Bueckers is the latest Huskies great to be honored as a preseason All-America, Clark is the first in Iowa's history. She averaged an NCAA-best 26.6 points to go along with seven assists and six rebounds a game. Clark is a big reason the Hawkeyes are ranked ninth, its highest preseason ranking since 1996.

"I'm really happy for Caitlin to be recognized as one of the top basketball players in the nation," Iowa coach Lisa Bluder said. "I'm excited to see where her journey will take her as her enthusiasm for learning and improving has never waned."

Boston has South Carolina back in a familiar position: No. 1 in the preseason AP Top 25 for a second consecutive year. She helped the Gamecocks reach the Final Four last year, averaging 13.7 points, 11.5 rebounds and 2.6 blocks.

"Aliyah Boston is one of those highly ranked recruits who came in as a good player and immediately set her mind to do what it would take to become a great player," South Carolina coach Dawn Staley said. "She has committed to the game like a pro would, adding layers every year – mid-range and 3-point shot came last season, and this season she will take advantage of the way she has changed her body to leverage her footwork and agility even more than before."

Howard spent a lot of the offseason working on her strength and fitness. She averaged 20.7 points, 7.3 rebounds and 3.8 assists for the Wildcats last year.

Kentucky coach Kyra Elzy said Howard "is in the best shape of her life. Her fitness has gone to another level as she has committed to the weight room this offseason."

"I am so proud of her because she has taken on a vocal leadership role with this team and it is starting to show," she said.

Smith has continued to develop her game under the guidance of new Baylor coach Nicki Collen. Smith averaged 18 points, 8.9 rebounds and shot 56% from the field last season.

"There's a fearlessness about how she plays," said Collen, who takes over the Big 12 powerhouse for Kim Mulkey. "I think she's not afraid of the spotlight. I think she's also someone that, you know, if you don't run actions to her or through her that she's going to get touches anyway because she's going to find a way to get to the boards, and so I think that that's the biggest part of it."

All five players were honored last spring on the AP All-America teams. Bueckers, Boston, Howard and Smith were all on the first team while Clark made second team.

The AP started choosing a preseason All-America team before the 1994-95 season.

The Associated Press' 2021-22 preseason All-America women's basketball team, with school, height, year and votes from a 30-member national media panel (key 2020-21 statistics in parentheses):

Paige Bueckers, UConn, 5-foot-11, sophomore, 29 of 29 votes (20.0 ppg, 5.8 apg, 4.9 rpg)

Aliyah Boston, South Carolina, 6-5, junior, 26 of 29 votes (13.7 ppg, 11.5 rpg, 2.6 bpg.)

NaLyssa Smith, Baylor, 6-2, senior, 24 of 29 votes (18.0 ppg, 8.9 rpg, 56.1 fg%)

Caitlin Clark, Iowa, 6-0, sophomore, 21 of 29 votes (26.6 ppg, 7.1 apg, 5.9 rpg)

Rhyne Howard, Kentucky, 6-2, senior, 18 of 29 votes (20.7 ppg, 7.3 rpg 3.8 apg.)

Others receiving votes: Elissa Cunane, N.C. State; Haley Jones, Stanford; Naz Hillmon, Michigan; Ashley Owusu, Maryland, Ashley Joens, Iowa State; Kierstan Bell, Florida Gulf Coast; Sam Thomas, Arizona.

AP Sports Writers Stephen Hawkins and Pat Eaton-Robb contributed to this story.

More AP women's college basketball: <https://apnews.com/hub/womens-college-basketball> and <https://>

twitter.com/AP_Top25

Grammys CEO on a mission to regain music community's trust

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

BURBANK, Calif. (AP) — When Harvey Mason jr. took the helm at the Recording Academy, the Grammy-nominated producer knew there would be an uphill climb. He's heard firsthand from some in the music community that the academy wasn't a fit for them, the award voting process was ineffective, and that the organization lacked diversity.

Those critical responses have fueled Mason's mission as the academy's CEO to right the wrongs and listen to the voices of the unheard. He's already replaced the nominations review committee with a new member peer-driven voting system, overhauled the leadership with two co-presidents, increased membership and committed to hiring more diverse candidates with an inclusion rider for next year's Grammy Awards.

So far, Mason feels like the academy — which annually produces the Grammys — is moving in the right direction to regain the trust of the music community.

"We're learning and we're changing," Mason said in an interview at his studio in Burbank, California. He's a successful producer who has worked with Beyoncé, Chris Brown and Whitney Houston. He was elected president and CEO of the academy in May after holding the interim title last year, becoming the first Black person to hold the position. He was previously chair of the academy's board.

Mason succeeded Deborah Dugan who was ousted five months after she took the position — just days before the 2020 Grammys. She claimed that the awards are rigged and filled with conflicts of interests in the nomination process, then reported sexual harassment and pay disparities.

After taking over, Mason soon faced Grammy backlash from The Weeknd who angrily slammed the awards, calling them "corrupt" after the pop star received zero nominations despite having last year's biggest single, "Blinding Lights." The singer says he will boycott future Grammys and not allow his label to submit his music.

Other artists have called out the Grammys including Drake, Frank Ocean, Nicki Minaj and 50 Cent, who said the award show was "out of touch." Others took aim at the transparency of the "secret" review committee, which selected the eight nominees for each of the Grammys' top four awards.

Some claimed committee members favored projects based on personal relationships, promoted projects they favored and worked on.

In April, the academy eliminated its anonymous nominations review committee — a group that determined the contenders for key awards at the prestigious music show.

Mason said he's gotten his "butt kicked" during conversations with artists who have vented frustrations. But he's continuing outreach efforts across all genres to build a strong partnership with the music community, promote the academy's initiatives and programs and to stress the importance of becoming a member.

"I don't do it because I want them to love the academy, and I guess partially I do," he said. "But I do it because what we're doing is really important and partnership with the artist community is something we rely on."

Despite the academy's turbulent past, Royce da 5'9" has been a supporter of Mason's direction.

"(Harvey is) a good addition to the Grammys," said the rapper, who was nominated for his first Grammy in his nearly two-decade career last year. "I think just adding more Black people to the board in different states would really help. I think that's key."

With the new peer-driven system, Mason instituted the 10-3 initiative — which allows the academy's nearly 12,000 members to vote for up to 10 categories in three genres. All voters can vote for the top four awards. The first round of Grammy voting began Friday.

Mason said it's imperative to create a diverse membership at the academy with the hopes of eliminating past mishaps.

"We want to get the awards right, but also it's a little bit me explaining the process," said Mason, who said he relates to those who are disappointed with the voting process. The producer said there were mo-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 66 of 70

ments when he should've won or been nominated for a Grammy, but it didn't happen.

"A lot of people who felt (frustrated) didn't understand that the nominees and the winners are voted on by you and you and you," said Mason, who's been nominated five times. He followed the music footsteps of his father, Harvey Mason Sr., a 10-time Grammy-nominated jazz drummer of the group Fourplay.

"If you're not here and you're not in with us, we can't count on you to vote accurately," he continued. "We can't count on you to determine who the best nominees and winners are. Of course, it's subjective. But we got to have the right people voting, the right people nominating, the right people deciding who the winner should be."

Mason said the academy recently had a breakthrough when 83% of the 2,710 music professionals asked to join the academy as new members in June did so. The makeup of this year's class of invitees: 48% women, 32% African American, 13% Hispanic and 4% Asian or Pacific Islander.

Strides are being made, but some want more from the academy's programs such as Women in the Mix — a 2019-launched initiative that spotlights female producers and engineers. The program aims to facilitate mentorship among women in the industry.

Only 2% of music producers and 3% engineers/mixers across popular music are women, according to a study by the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

"We hope to see the numbers improve," said Stacy L. Smith, founder of the inclusion initiative. She wants to make sure that programs like Women in the Mix meaningfully "increase participation throughout the industry."

"For women, this includes improving nominations and wins in critical categories, including producer of the year," she said. "For women of color, this means seeing the numbers increase across all the major categories. For people of color overall, this includes recognizing their accomplishments, artistry, and vision across categories and major awards."

Smith said the biggest challenge for Mason is to ensure that inclusion consistently goes beyond "making statements and is a central part of the academy's work."

Mason believes he and the academy are doing just that. He said he'll be the "meanest and toughest one" when holding people accountable for the inclusion rider, which will ensure equity and inclusion in hiring at all levels of production for next year's Grammys. The 64th Grammy Awards telecast is scheduled for Jan. 31.

The academy released the rider requirement Oct. 19.

"We've been functioning under the idea of making sure we're inclusive and really diverse and equitable," he said. "We are holding each other accountable to make sure this stuff is done right. You're not going to find an organization that cares more about diversity and changing and heading in that direction than us."

Majority in US concerned about climate: AP-NORC/EPIC poll

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, EMILY SWANSON and NATHAN ELLGREN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden heads to a vital U.N. climate summit at a time when a majority of Americans regard the deteriorating climate as a problem of high importance to them, an increase from just a few years ago.

About 6 out of 10 Americans also believe that the pace of global warming is speeding up, according to a new survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago.

As Biden struggles to pass significant climate legislation at home ahead of next week's U.N. climate summit, the new AP-NORC/EPIC poll also shows that 55% of Americans want Congress to pass a bill to ensure that more of the nation's electricity comes from clean energy and less from climate-damaging coal and natural gas.

Only 16% of Americans oppose such a measure for electricity from cleaner energy. A similar measure initially was one of the most important parts of climate legislation that Biden has before Congress. But Biden's proposal to reward utilities with clean energy sources and penalize those without ran into objections from a coal-state senator, Democrat Joe Manchin of West Virginia, leaving fellow Democrats scrambling

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 67 of 70

to come up with other ways to slash pollution from burning fossil fuels.

For some of the Americans watching, it's an exasperating delay in dealing with an urgent problem.

"If you follow science, the signs are here," said Nancy Reilly, a Democrat in Missouri who's retired after 40 years as a retail manager, and worries for her children as the climate deteriorates. "It's already here. And what was the first thing they start watering down to get this bill through? Climate change."

"It's just maddening," Reilly said. "I understand why, I do — I get the politics of it. I'm sick of the politics of it."

After President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the Paris climate accord, the Biden administration hoped to help negotiate major emissions cuts globally to slow the rise of temperatures. But it's unclear whether Biden will be able to get any significant climate legislation through Congress before the U.N. summit starts Sunday.

In all, 59% of Americans said the Earth's warming is very or extremely important to them as an issue, up from 49% in 2018. Fifty-four percent of Americans cited scientists' voices as having a large amount of influence on their views about climate change, and nearly as many, 51%, said their views were influenced by recent extreme weather events like hurricanes, deadly heat spells, wildfires and other natural disasters around the world.

Over the last 60 years, the pollution pumped out by gasoline and diesel engines, power plants and other sources has changed the climate and warmed the Earth by 1.7 degrees Fahrenheit, making the extremes of weather more extreme.

In east Tennessee's Smoky Mountains, leaf-peeper websites this year are advising fall foliage tourists that leaves are taking days longer than normal to turn from green to fiery orange and red. It's not evidence of climate change as a one-off instance, but typical of the changes Americans are seeing as the Earth heats up.

"Normally you get the four seasons, fall, spring, and winter, and it goes in that way. But lately, it's not been that," said Jeremy Wilson, a 42-year-old who votes independent and works the grounds at a scenic chairlift park that runs people up to the top of the Smoky Mountains. "It's been either way hotter, or way colder."

Seventy-five percent of Americans believe that climate change is happening, while 10% believe that it is not, the poll found. Another 15% are unsure.

Among those who say it is happening, 54% say that it's caused mostly or entirely by human activities compared to just 14% who think — incorrectly, scientists say — that it's caused mainly by natural changes in the environment. Another 32% of Americans believe it's a mix of human and natural factors.

And while Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say climate change is happening, majorities of both parties agree that it is. That breaks down to 89% of Democrats and 57% of Republicans.

The poll also gauged Americans' willingness to pay for the cost of cutting climate-wrecking pollution as well as mitigating its consequences.

Fifty-two percent said they would support a \$1 a month carbon fee on their energy bill to fight climate change, but support dwindles as the fee increases.

"I would say, like 5, 10 dollars, as long as it's really being used for what it should be," said Krystal Chivington, a 46-year-old Republican in Delaware who credits her 17-year-old daughter for reviving her own passion for fighting climate change and pollution.

It's not ordinary consumers who should bear the brunt of paying to stave off the worst scenarios of climate change, said Mark Sembach, a 59-year-old Montana Democrat who works in environmental remediation.

"I think it needs to fall a great deal on responsible corporations that's — and unfortunately ... most corporations aren't responsible," Sembach said. "And I think there needs to be a lot of pushback as to who ultimately pays for that."

The AP-NORC poll of 5,468 adults was conducted Sept. 8-24 using a combined sample of interviews from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population, and interviews from opt-in online panels. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 1.7 percentage points. The AmeriSpeak panel is recruited randomly using address-based sampling

methods, and respondents later were interviewed online or by phone.

Iran says cyberattack closes gas stations across country

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A cyberattack crippled gas stations across Iran on Tuesday, leaving angry motorists stranded in long lines.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, which rendered useless the government-issued electronic cards that many Iranians use to buy subsidized fuel at the pump.

It bore similarities to another attack months earlier that seemed to directly challenge Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as the country's economy buckles under American sanctions. Those economic problems worsen as the U.S. and Iran have yet to jointly re-enter Tehran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers.

State television quoted an unnamed official in the country's National Security Council acknowledging the cyberattack, hours after it aired images of long lines of cars waiting to fill up in Tehran. Associated Press journalists also saw lines of cars at Tehran gas stations, with the pumps off and the station closed.

"I have been waiting a couple of hours for the gas stations to reopen so that I can fill up," said a motorcyclist who gave his name only as Farzin. "There is no fuel wherever I go."

The semiofficial ISNA news agency, which first called the incident a cyberattack, said it saw those trying to buy fuel with a government-issued card through the machines instead receive a message reading "cyberattack 64411." Most Iranians rely on those subsidies to fuel their vehicles, particularly amid the country's economic problems.

While ISNA didn't acknowledge the number's significance, that number is associated with a hotline run through Khamenei's office that handles questions about Islamic law. ISNA later removed its reports, claiming that it too had been hacked. Such claims of hacking can come quickly when Iranian outlets publish news that angers the theocracy.

Farsi-language satellite channels abroad published videos apparently shot by drivers in Isfahan, a major Iranian city, showing electronic billboards there reading: "Khamenei! Where is our gas?" Another said: "Free gas in Jamaran gas station," a reference to the home of the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

State TV said Oil Ministry officials were holding an "emergency meeting" to solve the problem. Some gas stations that accept only cash and are not in the subsidy card network continued pumping fuel.

The use of the number "64411" mirrored an attack in July targeting Iran's railroad system that also saw the number displayed. Israeli cybersecurity firm Check Point later attributed the train attack to a group of hackers that called themselves Indra, after the Hindu god of war.

Indra previously targeted firms in Syria, where President Bashar Assad has held onto power through Iran's intervention in his country's grinding war.

Cheap gasoline is practically considered a birthright in Iran, home to the world's fourth-largest crude oil reserves despite decades of economic woes.

Subsidies allow Iranian motorists to buy regular gasoline at 15,000 rials per liter. That's 5 cents a liter, or about 20 cents a gallon. After a monthly 60-liter quota, it costs 30,000 rials a liter. That's 10 cents a liter or 41 cents a gallon. Regular gasoline costs 89 cents a liter or \$3.38 a gallon on average in the U.S., according to AAA.

In 2019, Iran faced days of mass protests across some 100 cities and towns over gasoline prices rising. Security forces arrested thousands and Amnesty International said it believes 304 people were killed in a government crackdown. Tuesday's cyberattack came in the same month in the Persian calendar as the gasoline protests in 2019.

The attack also came on the birthday of the late Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi who, stricken with cancer, fled the country in 1979 just before the Islamic Revolution.

Iran has faced a series of cyberattacks, including one that leaked video of abuses at its notorious Evin

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 69 of 70

prison in August.

The country disconnected much of its government infrastructure from the internet after the Stuxnet computer virus — widely believed to be a joint U.S.-Israeli creation — disrupted thousands of Iranian centrifuges in the country's nuclear sites in the late 2000s.

Follow Jon Gambrell on Twitter at www.twitter.com/jongambrellAP.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 27, the 300th day of 2021. There are 65 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 27, 1978, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin (men-AH'-kem BAY'-gihn) were named winners of the Nobel Peace Prize for their progress toward achieving a Middle East accord.

On this date:

In 1787, the first of the Federalist Papers, a series of essays calling for ratification of the United States Constitution, was published.

In 1858, the 26th president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, was born in New York City.

In 1904, the first rapid transit subway, the IRT, was inaugurated in New York City.

In 1938, Du Pont announced a name for its new synthetic yarn: "nylon."

In 1941, the Chicago Daily Tribune dismissed the possibility of war with Japan, editorializing, "She cannot attack us. That is a military impossibility. Even our base at Hawaii is beyond the effective striking power of her fleet."

In 1954, U.S. Air Force Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. was promoted to brigadier general, the first Black officer to achieve that rank in the USAF.

In 1986, the New York Mets won the World Series, coming from behind to defeat the Boston Red Sox, 8-5, in game 7 played at Shea Stadium.

In 1995, a sniper killed one soldier and wounded 18 others at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. (Paratrooper William J. Kreutzer was convicted in the shootings, and condemned to death; the sentence was later commuted to life in prison.)

In 1998, Hurricane Mitch cut through the western Caribbean, pummeling coastal Honduras and Belize; the storm caused several thousand deaths in Central America in the days that followed.

In 2001, in Washington, the search for deadly anthrax widened to thousands of businesses and 30 mail distribution centers.

In 2004, the Boston Red Sox won their first World Series since 1918, sweeping the St. Louis Cardinals in Game 4, 3-0.

In 2018, a gunman shot and killed 11 congregants and wounded six others at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue in the deadliest attack on Jews in U.S. history; authorities said the suspect, Robert Bowers, raged against Jews during and after the rampage. (Bowers, who is awaiting trial, has pleaded not guilty; prosecutors are seeking a death sentence.)

Ten years ago: European leaders clinched a deal they hoped would mark a turning point in their two-year debt crisis, agreeing to have banks take bigger losses on Greece's debts and to boost the region's weapons against market turmoil.

Five years ago: A jury in Portland, Oregon, delivered an extraordinary blow to the government in a long-running battle over the use of public lands when it acquitted all seven defendants, including group leader Ammon Bundy, who were involved in the armed occupation of a national wildlife refuge in 2014. Law enforcement officers dressed in riot gear evicted protesters from private land in the path of the Dakota Access oil pipeline, dramatically escalating a months-long dispute over Native American rights and

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 112 ~ 70 of 70

the project's environmental impact.

One year ago: Amy Coney Barrett was formally sworn as the Supreme Court's ninth justice, her oath administered in private by Chief Justice John Roberts. Seeking the support of suburban women while campaigning in Michigan, President Donald Trump said, "We're getting your husbands back to work," as he criticized restrictions put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19. The Los Angeles Dodgers won their first World Series title since 1988, beating the Tampa Bay Rays 3-1 in Game 6 in a series played in the neutral site of Arlington, Texas, because of the coronavirus. (Dodgers star Justin Turner was removed from the game following the seventh inning after testing positive for COVID-19; he returned to the field to celebrate with teammates in violation of coronavirus protocols.) Disgraced self-improvement guru Keith Raniere was sentenced to 120 years for turning some adherents into sex slaves branded with his initials and for sexually abusing a 15-year-old.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-comedian John Cleese is 82. Author Maxine Hong Kingston is 81. Country singer Lee Greenwood is 79. Producer-director Ivan Reitman is 75. Rock musician Garry Tallent (Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band) is 72. Author Fran Lebowitz is 71. Rock musician K.K. Downing is 70. TV personality Jayne Kennedy is 70. Actor-director Roberto Benigni is 69. Actor Peter Firth is 68. Actor Robert Picardo is 68. World Golf Hall of Famer Patty Sheehan is 65. Singer Simon Le Bon is 63. Country musician Jerry Dale McFadden (The Mavericks) is 57. Internet news editor Matt Drudge is 55. Rock musician Jason Finn (Presidents of the United States of America) is 54. Actor Sean Holland is 53. Actor Channon Roe is 52. Actor Sheeri Rappaport is 44. Actor David Walton is 43. Violinist Vanessa-Mae is 43. Actor-singer Kelly Osbourne is 37. Actor Christine Evangelista is 35. Actor Bryan Craig is 30. Actor Troy Gentile is 28.