

# Groton Daily Independent

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The Angel tree will be out at Lori's pharmacy and the next level nutrition place starting **TODAY!** Thanks for supporting the Angel tree

## UpComing Events

### Tuesday, Nov. 15

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Oral Interp regions at Aberdeen Central

4 p.m.: JH GBB hosts Britton-Hecla (7th at 4 p.m. followed by 8th)

### Thursday, Nov. 18

5 p.m.: JH GBB hosts Aberdeen Roncalli (7th at 5 p.m. followed by 8th)

6 p.m.: Football Team Awards Banquet at Olive Grove Golf Course

### Friday, Nov. 19

McGovern Debate & Oral Interp at Mitchell

### Saturday, Nov. 20

McGovern Debate & Oral Interp at Mitchell

1 p.m.: JH GBB at Moberidge (7th at 1 p.m., 8th grade to follow)

### Sunday, Nov. 21

7 p.m.: Snow Queen Contest at GHS Gym

**Wed-Fri., Nov. 24-26:** No School - Thanksgiving Vacation

**Groton Daily Independent**  
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## Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

In week 10, the Vikings visited the Los Angeles Chargers in their brand new Sofi Stadium (US Bank Stadium on steroids). This was the game added to the new 17-game NFL schedule, and it would prove to be yet another tough matchup for the purple.

### First Half:

Penalties, penalties, penalties. There were seven penalties in the first half, two hands to the face, one pass interference, and a holding call that wiped a touchdown off the scoreboard. These helped the Chargers keep it close in the first half.

All of the first-half scores occurred in the second quarter, with the Vikings hitting a pair of field goals while the Chargers kicked one in as well.

After the second Minnesota field goal, Eric Kendricks picked off a pass, giving the Vikings excellent field position. Kirk Cousins and the Vikings' offense took advantage, and with the help of a great play by Justin Jefferson, they found the end zone to go up by 10 points. Unfortunately, the Vikings' defense once again allowed points right before the half, giving up a touchdown and going into halftime with only a three point lead.

### Second Half:

The second half did not start well for the Vikings. The Chargers would get the kickoff, and after a 10-play drive, they would score on a short pass to running back Austin Ekeler. The "here we go again" feeling was starting to come in for the thousands of Vikings fans in attendance. But this time, Kirk Cousins engineered a 9-play, 55-yard drive, and rather than go for another field goal, Mike Zimmer gets aggressive. On fourth down, Cousins tosses a 1-yard pass over the middle to Conklin. Vikings take the lead 20-17.

Moving to the fourth quarter, the Vikings put together another long drive, scoring from a yard out on a Dalvin Cook dive. The scoring drive lasted 12 plays and 7:04 minutes. Vikings up 27-17.

It was now time the Viking fans had become all too familiar with- a nice lead in the fourth quarter and a conservative playbook.

The Vikings give up a field goal with 5:00 minutes to go, but for once the Vikings' offense were able to put together a game-ending drive to seal the win. Highlights included a long third-down conversion to Jefferson, a 17 yard gain by Thielen to set up fourth down, and instead of punting the ball deep from the Charger 39 yard line, Mike Zimmer decided to go out and win the game. A short toss to Dalvin Cook around the right side on fourth down sealed the victory, and the Vikings run out the clock in the "V"iking formation.

The final score of the game: Viking 27 - Chargers 20.

### Statistical Leaders:

Kirk Cousins 25 for 37, 294 yards, 2 TD

Dalvin Cook 24 carries for 94 yards rushing, 1 TD

Justin Jefferson 9 catches for 143 yards, 0 TD

Tyler Conklin 3 Catches 2 TDs

### Next game:

It's Packer week and US Bank Stadium will be hopping as the first place Green Bay Packers come to town. Aaron Rodgers missed the Packers' week 9 matchup, but returned in week 10 to help Green Bay beat Seattle 17-0. The Packers appear to have a good defense this season, giving up only 18 points per game. Offensively they are not as octane as people would expect, averaging only 21 points per game. Needless to say, when the Packers come to Minnesota, get ready for a memorable game. The Vikings try to get to .500 and keep the playoffs in their sight.

SKOL!!!

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## Healthy Eating Is Success

Obesity affects approximately 40 percent of American adults, and I've been one of them for nearly as long as I can remember. There are innumerable schemes that promise effortless, or nearly effortless, weight loss, and many diets that claim to be the best approach.

Most of us recognize that if something seems too good to be true, it probably is. It's much simpler to identify the miracle potion advertised on our social media feed as snake oil, than it is to sort through all the conflicting and seemingly changeable advice on what makes a healthy diet. Should we be cutting out fat, or cutting back on carbs? Is there a particular combination of foods or spices or supplements we should be eating to be slim and trim and healthy?

In truth, obesity is a tenacious disease, and many people successfully lose weight with any of a multitude of diets. Many people are also unsuccessful with those very same diets.

Between my second and third years of medical school, I had a month without work or structured academic obligations to study for the important Step 1 board exam. Every morning, I would get up and exercise for an hour before I hit the books. I would prepare healthy meals, and snack on carrots and celery while I read. I was determined to lose some of my excess pounds and set a good example for my future patients.

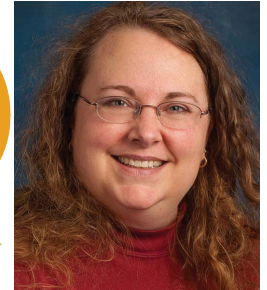
At the end of that month, I'd lost two pounds. This was not at all what I had anticipated. I was frustrated, angry, and hurt. I felt that my efforts had failed. I felt that "I" had failed.

Let's think about what "success" means. Although we may want to get down to our ideal body weight, very few people with obesity actually achieve that goal, especially without surgical help. From a medical perspective, losing just five to ten percent of your body weight improves your health in a variety of ways. More importantly, the lifestyle changes that can lead to that weight loss have health benefits of their own.

With the wisdom of nearly 30 years in medicine, I realize that by focusing on the scale, I hadn't seen something even more important. Eating fruits and vegetables reduces the risk of heart disease, strokes, cancer, and many other chronic diseases. Daily exercise strengthens hearts and bones. In short, even without weight loss, exercise and a healthy diet are good for you.

Experts may debate the nuances of the "best" diet, but there are some fundamentals which can bring success with or without the loss of pounds. Eat a variety of produce, and lots of it. Watch the sodium. Minimize processed foods. Avoid added sugars and trans fats. Your diet isn't something you are "on" or "off". Your diet is the way you nourish your body every day, and success is the choices you make that support your health.

Debra Johnson, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices family medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org) and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show celebrating its twentieth season of truthful, tested, and timely medical information, broadcast on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



**Debra Johnston, MD**

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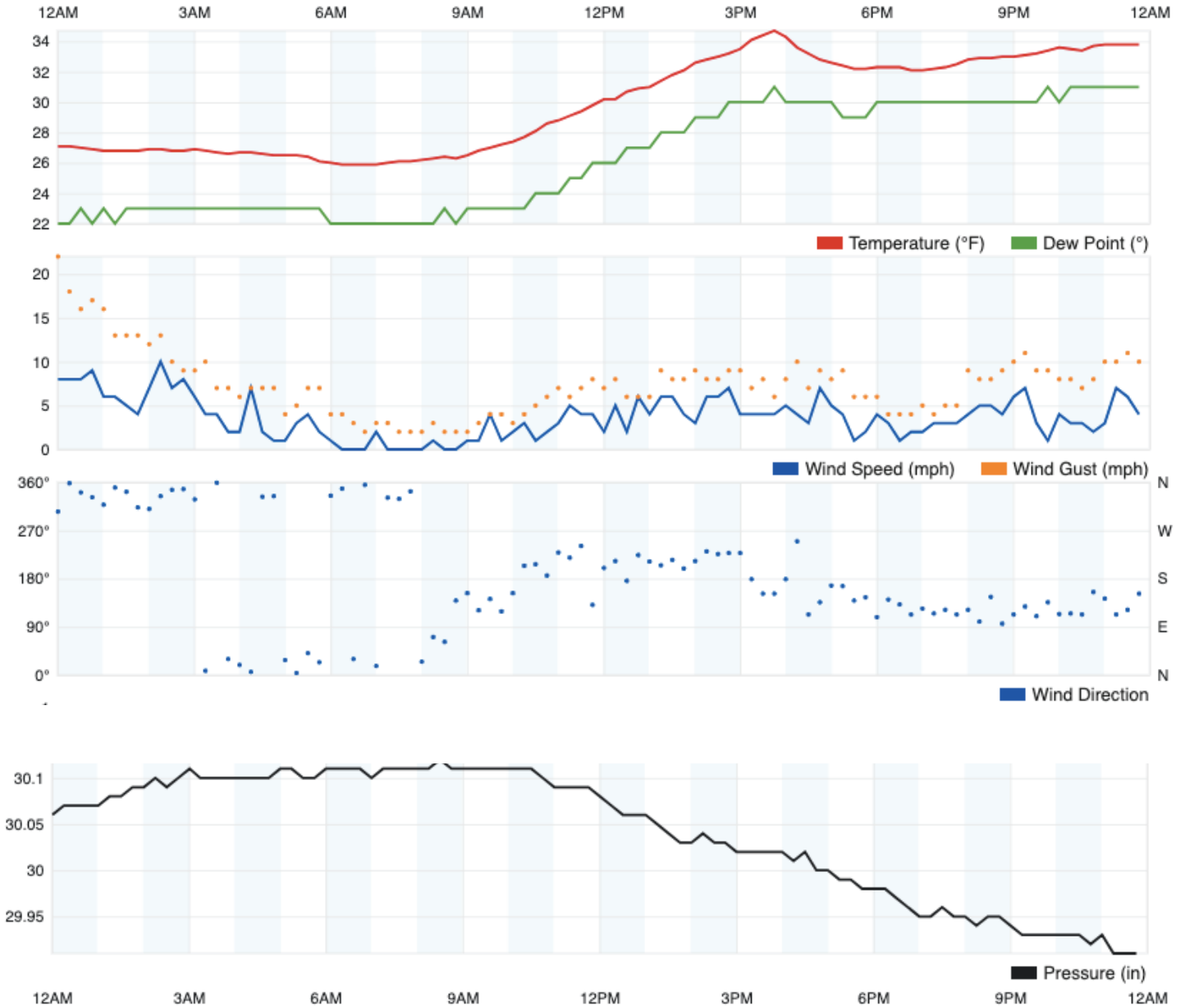


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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Mostly Cloudy

High: 48 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 33 °F

Tuesday



Partly Sunny

High: 58 °F

Tuesday  
Night



Partly Cloudy  
then Mostly  
Clear and  
Breezy

Low: 27 °F

Wednesday




Mostly Sunny  
and Breezy

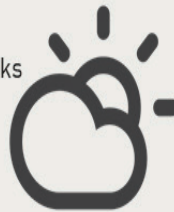
High: 36 °F

Monday  
November 15

## Warmer

Mostly Cloudy with some sunny breaks

 Upper 30s-Upper 40s  
NE SD-West Central MN,  
50s-60s West of James  
Valley-Central SD



### 4-Day Outlook

**Tue** **Wed** **Thu** **Fri**

45-67° 32-42° 29-40° 37-53°

Windy conditions return on Tuesday into Wednesday.  
Elevated Fire Danger West on Tuesday.  
Cooler temps expected Wednesday into Thursday.  
Dry weather persists.

 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 11/15/2021 3:37 AM Central



Warmer conditions are expected to filter back in for most locales today underneath mostly cloudy skies. There will be sunny breaks here or there from time to time. Windy conditions are anticipated to return Tuesday into Wednesday. Temps will remain mild Tuesday with elevated fire danger conditions developing by afternoon. A cold front sweeps through later in the day ushering in cooler weather on gusty northwesterly winds that persist through the day on Wednesday.

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## Today in Weather History

November 15, 1988: A mixture of sleet, freezing rain and snow fell from north central South Dakota into west central Minnesota before changing over to all snow by the afternoon of the 15th. Snow continued across Minnesota during the morning hours on the 16th, along with increasing winds. The winds and falling snow created near zero visibility due to blowing snow in the northwest and west central Minnesota. A 60 mph wind gust was recorded in Morris, MN. Snow and blowing snow blocked roads, caused power outages and closed schools. Snow in many locations accumulated over a sheet of ice that coated roads from preceding rainfall.

2007: Tropical Cyclone Sidr, a Category 4 storm on the Saffir-Simpson scale, brings torrential rain 150-mph winds and a four ft storm surge to the Bangladesh coast. At least 3200 people die, and millions are left homeless. Since records began in 1877, Sidr obtained the title of the second-strongest cyclone to make landfall in Bangladesh.

1900 - A record lake-effect snowstorm at Watertown, NY, produced 45 inches in 24 hours. The storm total was 49 inches. (14th-15th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1967 - A surprise snow and ice coating paralyzed Boston during the evening rush hour. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms spawned twenty-two tornadoes in eastern Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma. A tornado moving out of northeastern Texas killed one person and injured ninety-six others around Shreveport LA causing more than five million dollars damage. Tornadoes in Texas claimed ten lives, and injured 191 persons. A tornado caused more than nineteen million dollars damage around Palestine TX. Severe thunderstorms spawned eighteen tornadoes in Mississippi and seven in Georgia the next day, and thunderstorms in southeastern Texas produced wind gusts to 102 mph at Galveston, and wind gusts to 110 mph at Bay City, killing one person. There were a total of forty-nine tornadoes in the south central U.S. in two days. The tornadoes claimed eleven lives, injured 303 persons, and caused more than seventy million dollars damage. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Oklahoma and northeastern Texas to northern Indiana and southern Wisconsin from mid morning through the pre-dawn hours of the following day. Thunderstorms spawned forty-four tornadoes, including thirteen in Missouri, and there were more than two hundred reports of large hail or damaging winds. A tornado in central Arkansas hit Scott and Lonoke killing five people, injuring sixty others, and causing fifteen million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A tornado hit Southside, AR, killing one person, injuring ten others, and causing more than two million dollars damage, and a tornado near Clarksville AR injured nine persons and caused more than two million dollars damage. A tornado moving through the southwest part of Topeka KS injured twenty-two persons and caused nearly four million dollars damage. A tornado near Jane MO killed one person and injured twelve others, and a tornado moving across the southwest part of O'Fallon MO injured ten persons. Severe thunderstorms also produced hail three and a half inches in diameter east of Denison TX, and wind gusts to 85 mph at Kirksville MO. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along a powerful cold front began to produce severe weather in the Middle Mississippi Valley before sunrise, and by early the next morning thunderstorms had spawned seventeen tornadoes east of the Mississippi River, with a total of 350 reports of severe weather. There were one hundred reports of damaging winds in Georgia, and five tornadoes, and there were another four tornadoes in Alabama. Hardest hit was Huntsville AL where a violent tornado killed 21 persons, injured 463 others, and caused one hundred million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms in Kentucky produced hail three inches in diameter in Grayson County, and wind gusts to 110 mph at Flaherty. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the eastern U.S. through the morning and afternoon hours. Severe thunderstorms spawned 23 tornadoes, and there were 164 reports of damaging winds. There were fourteen tornadoes in New Jersey, central and eastern New York, and eastern Pennsylvania, and 122 reports of damaging winds. A tornado at Coldenham NY killed nine school children and injured eighteen others, and thunderstorm winds gusted to 100 mph at Malvern PA. Thunderstorms spawned a total of thirty-nine tornadoes east of Great Plains in two days, and there 499 reports of large hail and damaging winds. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



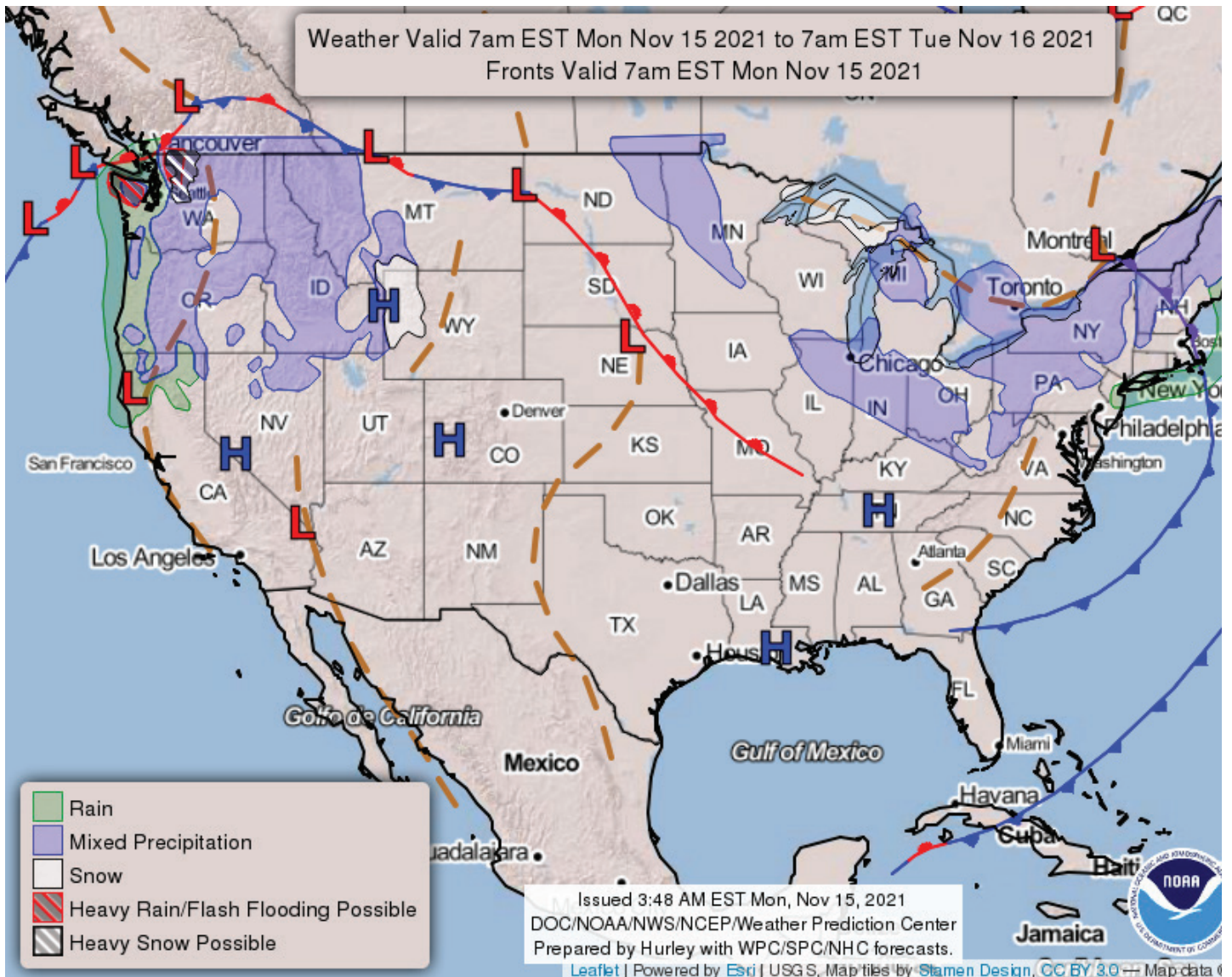
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 34.7 °F at 3:45 PM**  
**Low Temp: 25.9 °F at 6:45 AM**  
**Wind: 22 mph at Midnight**  
**Precip: 0.00**

**Record High: 72° in 1953**  
**Record Low: -8° in 1900**  
**Average High: 43°F**  
**Average Low: 20°F**  
**Average Precip in Nov.: 0.42**  
**Precip to date in Nov.: 0.16**  
**Average Precip to date: 20.89**  
**Precip Year to Date: 19.88**  
**Sunset Tonight: 5:03:46 PM**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:31:43 AM**



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## OUR WONDER WORKING GOD!

All of us know individuals whose lives have gone from pinnacles of prosperity to places of poverty. We know that temptations overtake some individuals, and they soon become enslaved and imprisoned by harmful habits. Once they were blest, but now they are in bondage. There seems to be a pattern of self-destruction that overcomes many who are not satisfied with the gifts of God. They apparently will not allow His grace and goodness to satisfy them. They always want "more!"

This is what happened to the people of Israel. It seems that the more God gave them, the less satisfied they were. Finally, their greed led them to slavery. But, thank God, their story does not end there. His love and mercy eventually brought redemption and restoration to them. When? When they repented and returned to the Covenant He made with them. God always keeps His Word.

Not only did He rescue them from their captors, but "they were laden with silver and gold." When we allow God to redeem us by His grace, His Word promises us that "It is He who will supply all of our needs from His riches in glory because of what Jesus Christ has done for us." God will honor His Word with us, as He did with Israel.

He also empowers those whom He redeems: "From among their tribes no one faltered." When God redeems us, we are called to serve Him faithfully. He has a plan for each of our lives, and that plan contains many opportunities for us to serve Him. And, for each of those opportunities He gives us, we know that He will empower us, and we will not falter or fail if we are faithful to Him.

Prayer: Father, if we have strayed from the plan You have for us, please forgive and restore us to the joy of serving You. There are no real riches but those found in You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold, and from among their tribes no one faltered. Psalm 105:37

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## 2021 Community Events

- Cancelled** Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)  
03/27/2021 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)  
04/10/2021 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm  
04/24/2021 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)  
04/25/2021 Princess Prom (Sunday after GHS Prom)  
05/01/2021 Lions Club Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)  
05/31/2021 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)  
6/7-9/2021 St. John's Lutheran Church VBS  
06/17/2021 Groton Transit Fundraiser, 4-7 p.m.  
06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove  
06/19/2021 U8 Baseball Tournament  
06/19/2021 **Postponed to Aug. 28th:** Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon  
06/26/2021 U10 Baseball Tournament  
06/27/2021 U12 Baseball Tournament  
07/04/2021 Firecracker Golf Tournament at Olive Grove  
07/11/2021 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 10am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)  
07/22/2021 Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course  
07/30/2021-08/03/2021 State "B" American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton  
08/06/2021 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course  
08/13/2021 Groton Basketball Golf Tournament  
**Cancelled** Lions Club Crazy Golf Fest 9am Olive Grove Golf Course  
08/29/2021 Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day at GHS Parking Lot (4-5 p.m.)  
09/11/2021 Lions Club Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)  
09/12/2021 Sunflower Classic Golf Tournament at Olive Grove  
09/18-19 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport  
10/08/2021 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)  
10/09/2021 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm (Saturday before Columbus Day)  
10/29/2021 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm  
10/29/2021 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)  
11/13/2021 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)  
11/11/2021 Veteran's Day Program at the GHS Arena  
11/21/2021 Groton Area Snow Queen Contest  
11/25/2021 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)  
11/30/2021 James Valley Telecommunications Holiday Open House 10am-4pm  
12/04/2021 Olive Grove Tour of Homes  
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## News from the Associated Press

### South Dakota officials: Gang activity becoming more violent

By SHANNON MARVEL Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) —

Street gang members in Rapid City are becoming less fearful of consequences.

That's according to Tony Harrison, captain of Investigations for the Pennington County Sheriff's Office, who has been investigating street gang activity in Rapid City and Pennington County over the course of his 25-year career in law enforcement.

Since the beginning of his career, Harrison said street gangs in the area have become noticeably more prone to use violence than in past years.

"The fear of consequences seems to be less," he said. "Consequences can be many things, it could be getting assaulted by another person, arrested, put in jail, killed. Some of the consequences are implemented by the legal system and some of them are implemented by the gang's own justice system."

Harrison said there are several large street gangs in Rapid City, including the Boyz, North Side Gangster Disciples, and the North Side Family, the Rapid City Journal reported.

"There are also offshoots of those gangs, because they didn't like the way things were going and maybe started their own gang," he said. "That doesn't include members that come from Denver, Sioux Falls or Minneapolis and try to start their own set."

Many gang members start young, Harrison said.

"I have seen pictures of toddlers dressed in gang attire. In terms of dealing with kids who claim activity, they can start at the age of 10," he said. "If you showed me an 8-year-old throwing gang signs, I wouldn't be shocked. But for a lot of them, that's how they grew up. So that's all they know and they kind of emulate that activity. Some of it's very generational. It's very much a unique hybrid of criminal activity and a social calling where they are looking for a sense of belonging, they're looking for a desire to be wanted and needed, which often times they don't have in their personal lives."

Most of the gang violence in the area goes unreported.

"It's internal fights and assaults. We don't know the amount of crime that's committed because that's part of the gang subculture," Harrison said. "You don't snitch."

Erik Bringswhite, a former gang member, explains gang violence like this: "Hurt people hurt people" and everyone in the community is impacted.

"Many mistakenly believe that it doesn't affect them," Bringswhite said. "But it does because this trauma is strange. Nobody is immune. So how I see the trauma on the north side reflected back at us is through negative personal opinions, through biases and even prejudices. And that — if we look at how hurt people hurt people — that means their healing is our healing. And our healing is their healing."

Bringswhite was actively involved in Rapid City's gang activity for over 30 years. Now, he's the founder of I Am Legacy, a local non-profit offering resources and support to the Indigenous community.

The organization is working to help provide an outlet and services to the youth before they become wrapped up in the criminal justice system and doing away with the fallacy where that way of life is the only option.

"Gravitating towards something that ultimately is going to cause you or someone around you pain, hurt, and suffering is a poor, poor attempt at surviving," Bringswhite said. "I don't even know if you can call it surviving because you're really limiting your choices to the penitentiary or cemetery. We're seeing that here and all of it is preventable."

Bringswhite knows better than most the real fear and trauma of gang life in Rapid City.

"The level of fear, they say it's hella toxic here. If the system doesn't get you, the Indians will. It is kind of true. But the level of fear that people, especially our youth, are living with isn't sustainable," he said. "A person cannot live with that level of intense emotion and be OK. It's going to have lasting effects on

their psyche, their physical state. It may even be doing damage to their hearts.”

Bringswhite said a generational aspect plays a large role in why Rapid City youth are gravitating toward gang activity.

“That’s embedded. I think a part of that is the system has a part to play in that,” he said. “Many of these issues here are the product of colonization. None of this was an Indigenous issue. These are all products and outcomes of the strategies of us trying to assimilate and not really doing a good job of it.”

To be born on a reservation is essentially to be born into captivity, Bringswhite explained.

“We don’t have many resources here, we don’t have corporate sponsors or anybody that’s investing in the health, wellness and healing of these certain demographics in the community. But everyone has an opinion about them,” he said. “Everybody wants to pass the buck to law enforcement. ‘Hey, this is your job man,’ but it’s not. These are community issues that deserve the entire community’s strategies and solutions. Because trauma is a strange, strange animal.”

## Pipeline would store carbon dioxide emissions from ethanol

By AMY R. SISK The Bismarck Tribune

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A pipeline aiming to pick up carbon dioxide produced by ethanol plants across the Midwest is slated to inject the gas underground in Oliver and Mercer counties, and discussion surrounding the project is heating up.

The Midwest Carbon Express pipeline would cross under the Missouri River north of Bismarck, transporting as much as 12 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year. Pipeline developer Summit Carbon Solutions says that would be equal to removing the annual carbon emissions of 2.6 million cars.

Summit announced the pipeline this past spring, and the company has met with farmers in recent weeks to explain the project, The Bismarck Tribune reported.

The line would end west of Center and south of Beulah, sending the carbon dioxide down 10 to 15 injection wells for storage in rock formations, said Wade Boeshans, executive vice president of the pipeline developer, which is part of Iowa-based Summit Agricultural Group. Boeshans previously worked as president of BNI Energy, which operates BNI Coal’s Center Mine next to the Milton R. Young Station, a coal-fired power plant where another large carbon capture project is under development.

The Summit project involves capturing the emissions of 31 ethanol plants across Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and the Dakotas, including at Tharaldson Ethanol in Casselton. Ethanol producers seek to lower the carbon intensity of their operations to make their fuel more attractive to markets along the West Coast that have enacted policies promoting low-carbon fuels as a means to address climate change.

“We anticipate the market for low-carbon fuels will grow,” Boeshans said. “One of the restraining factors to growth right now is the availability of low-carbon fuels. This project brings a significant volume of low-carbon fuel to market.”

The pipeline system would extend 2,000 miles and cost \$4.5 billion, putting it on par with the Dakota Access oil pipeline in terms of its size. Dakota Access runs 1,200 miles and was built at a cost of \$3.7 billion.

The Midwest Carbon Express would include a number of small branches that connect to the main pipeline to gather carbon dioxide from ethanol plants. The greenhouse gas is generated during the fermentation process at ethanol plants and typically released into the atmosphere. Ethanol is generally made from corn.

The pipeline project has drawn praise from North Dakota officials, but some people in other states have already expressed opposition, including farmers and environmentalists in Iowa. News reports there indicate critics have economic and safety concerns.

“This is just the latest case of someone insisting on putting a pipeline or an easement on our property,” farmer Beth Richards told Iowa Public Radio earlier this month. “I’ve lost track of how many times our family has had to deal with this.”

Some farmers say they worry the company might resort to eminent domain to build the project, a process in which unwilling landowners would be forced to let the pipeline cross their property, according to the Globe Gazette of Mason City, Iowa.

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Boeshans said he's optimistic Summit can negotiate agreeable terms with all landowners along the route. He acknowledged eminent domain was a possibility in some spots, "but that's not where we start," he said.

"What I hear consistently from landowners is strong support for the project," he said. "They understand the value of it. On most of this land, there's corn growing on the surface of it, especially if you go east of Bismarck."

Boeshans said the pipeline would be made of carbon steel, with all welded joints examined via X-ray, exceeding federal pipeline safety standards. The line would undergo regular inspections and have a leak detection system in place, as well as shutoff valves, he said.

The project is expected to create as many as 17,000 construction jobs and support up to 500 permanent jobs, according to Summit.

The company is aiming to start construction in the second quarter of 2023 and begin operations in the second quarter of 2024, Boeshans said.

The pipeline will require permits in several states, including one from the North Dakota Public Service Commission. Summit has not filed its application yet with the PSC, but it intends to early next year, Boeshans said. The North Dakota Industrial Commission would be involved in permitting the injection site.

A map provided by Summit of the pipeline's North Dakota route shows it would enter the state in McIntosh County to the southeast of Bismarck and make its way northwest to the injection site. A branch crossing through southeastern North Dakota would pick up carbon dioxide from Tharaldson Ethanol and connect near the state line on the South Dakota side.

The Midwest Carbon Express project would seek to make use of a federal tax credit for carbon dioxide storage, as are a number of other carbon capture projects planned for North Dakota.

Boeshans said the project is in line with Gov. Doug Burgum's goal to make the state carbon neutral by 2030. The governor envisions achieving the goal by not only capturing the emissions of North Dakota's fossil fuel industry, but also by importing carbon dioxide from other states to send deep underground where the geology allows for it. Western North Dakota's rock formations are ideal, experts say. Research is ongoing to determine the feasibility of projects in the eastern half.

The idea is to store the gas in rock formations with the right characteristics, sealed above by layers of impermeable rock so that the gas never escapes upward into drinking water or the atmosphere. The Summit project, like others proposed for North Dakota, would include monitoring wells to gauge the location of the plume of carbon dioxide expected to form underground.

"At the end of the day I think what's important to understand about this project is that it's strategic to North Dakota's two largest industries: energy and ag," Boeshans said. "This sustains the corn market and ethanol industry ... while (helping to) achieve that goal of net-zero carbon emissions here in the state."

The North Dakota Oil and Gas Division, meanwhile, is considering ways it could help facilitate more carbon dioxide pipelines. The division wants to use artificial intelligence and other technology to model ideal corridors and routes for future lines.

## Freidel carries S. Dakota St. over Stephen F. Austin 83-71

NACOGDOCHES, Texas (AP) — Noah Freidel had 25 points, hitting five 3-pointers, as South Dakota State beat Stephen F. Austin 83-71 on Sunday.

Baylor Scheierman had 14 points and 10 rebounds for South Dakota State (2-1). Matt Dentlinger added 10 points. Alex Arians had eight rebounds.

Gavin Kensmil had 23 points and 13 rebounds for the Lumberjacks (2-1). David Kachelries added 12 points and eight assists. Latrell Jossell had 12 points.

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## Hemphill scores 14 to carry Drake past South Dakota 99-50

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — ShanQuan Hemphill registered 14 points as Drake easily beat South Dakota 99-50 on Sunday.

Roman Penn and Tremell Murphy each had 13 points for Drake (2-0), with Garrett Sturtz had 12 points and eight rebounds. Eleven of 12 Bulldogs scored at least five points in the win as Drake shot 54% (32 of 59).

Xavier Fuller had 11 points for the Coyotes (1-1). Kruz Perrott-Hunt added 10 points. South Dakota was held to 31% shooting, making 15 of 49.

Drake is 32-0 when scoring 80 points or more for coach Darian DeVries.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-basketball> and [http://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](http://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

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## UK police: Blast outside hospital was terrorist incident

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A blast in a taxi outside a hospital in England that killed a man was caused by an improvised explosive device and is being treated as a terrorist incident, but the motive remains unclear, police said Monday.

Russ Jackson, the head of Counterterrorism Policing in northwest England, said Sunday's explosion at Liverpool Women's Hospital was caused by "the ignition of an explosive device" that was brought into the vehicle by a passenger.

The male passenger died in the explosion and fire that followed, and the taxi driver was injured.

Jackson said "enquiries will now continue to seek to understand how the device was built, the motivation for the incident and to understand if anyone else was involved in it."

Three men in their 20s were arrested elsewhere in the city under the Terrorism Act on Sunday, and a fourth was detained on Monday. All are believed to be "associates" of the dead passenger, police said.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was due to chair a meeting of the government's COBRA crisis committee on Monday in response to the blast.

Suspensions about a motive for the explosion have been aroused by the timing — just before 11 a.m. on Remembrance Sunday, the moment people across Britain hold services in memory of those killed in wars.

Jackson said investigators had not found a link to remembrance events, "but it is a line of inquiry we are pursuing."

"Although the motivation for this incident is yet to be understood, given all the circumstances, it has been declared a terrorist incident," he said at a press briefing.

He said the passenger had been picked up by the cab a 10-minute drive away and asked to be taken to the hospital, where the explosion occurred. The driver, named locally as David Perry, managed to escape from the car. He was treated in hospital and released.

Police said officers had searched two addresses in the city linked to the passenger, and found "significant items" at one of them,

Liverpool Mayor Joanne Anderson said the taxi driver locked the doors of his cab so the passenger couldn't leave. Police did not confirm that account.

"The taxi driver, in his heroic efforts, has managed to divert what could have been an absolutely awful disaster at the hospital," Anderson told the BBC.

The prime minister also said the driver appeared to have behaved "with incredible presence of mind



and bravery.”

Nick Aldworth, a former senior terrorism investigator in Britain, said the taxi appeared to have sustained “a lot of fire damage with very little blast damage.”

He said that “whatever was in that vehicle was either a low yield or didn’t work properly, or possibly an incendiary. So I think it’s very much open to debate at the moment about what has happened.”

Britain’s official threat level from terrorism stands at “substantial,” the middle rung on a five-point scale, meaning an attack is likely. The Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre sets the threat level based on intelligence about international terrorism at home and overseas.

## After final word from attorneys, Rittenhouse jury takes over

By SCOTT BAUER, MICHAEL TARM and AMY FORLITI Associated Press

KENOSHA, Wis. (AP) — Attorneys were set to make closing arguments Monday at Kyle Rittenhouse’s trial in the shootings of three men during street unrest in Wisconsin, the last word before a jury begins deliberating in a case that underscored Americans’ bitter divisions on issues of guns, protests and policing.

Rittenhouse, 18, of Antioch, Illinois, faces charges ranging from intentional homicide — punishable by life in prison — to an underage weapons charge that could mean a few months in jail if convicted.

Rittenhouse, 17 at the time, traveled the few miles from his home across the state border to Kenosha on Aug. 25, 2020, as the city was in the throes of damaging protests that followed a white police officer’s shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, after a call to a domestic disturbance.

Bystander video captured the critical minutes when Rittenhouse, with a Smith and Wesson AR-style semiautomatic rifle, shot and killed Joseph Rosenbaum, 36, and Anthony Huber, 26, and wounded Gaige Grosskreutz, 28.

Rittenhouse is white, as are the three men he shot. The case raised questions about racial justice, policing, firearms and white privilege that polarized people far outside Kenosha.

Rittenhouse has argued self-defense in the shootings, leaving prosecutors with the burden of proving that his fear for his safety and his use of deadly force were unreasonable. Some legal experts watching the trial said the prosecution struggled to do so.

Perhaps in recognition of that, prosecutors asked Judge Bruce Schroeder to let the jury consider several lesser charges if they acquit on the original counts. Schroeder indicated on Friday that he would allow some of what prosecutors sought when he gave the jury instructions on Monday.

Prosecutors, led by Kenosha County Assistant District Attorney Thomas Binger, sought to portray Rittenhouse as the aggressor the night of the shootings. Binger also highlighted Rittenhouse’s youth and inexperience, noting to jurors that of all the people armed in Kenosha that night, only Rittenhouse shot people.

But key witnesses seemed to strengthen Rittenhouse’s self-defense claims.

Videographer Richie McGinniss testified that Rosenbaum chased Rittenhouse and lunged for his rifle right before Rittenhouse shot him. Ryan Balch, a military veteran in Rittenhouse’s group that night, testified that Rosenbaum threatened to kill Rittenhouse and others if he got them alone.

Grosskreutz, the only man shot who survived, acknowledged that he had a gun in his hand as he approached Rittenhouse and that it was pointed at him.

Among the trial’s most compelling moments was Rittenhouse’s own testimony. In some six hours on the stand — most of it poised and matter-of-fact — he said he was afraid Rosenbaum would take his gun and shoot both him and others. He said he never wanted to kill anyone.

“I didn’t do anything wrong. I defended myself,” Rittenhouse said.

With prosecutors trying to focus jurors on the totality of what Rittenhouse did, starting with his decision to come to Kenosha with a gun, the defense tried to steer them toward the roughly 3 minutes that began with Rosenbaum’s pursuit of Rittenhouse — the period at the heart of his self-defense claim.

After closing arguments, names were to be drawn to determine which 12 of the 18 jurors who heard testimony will deliberate.

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With a verdict near, Gov. Tony Evers said that 500 National Guard members would be prepared for duty in Kenosha if local law enforcement requested them.

This story has been updated to correct Gaige Grosskreutz's age to 28.

Bauer reported from Madison and Forliti reported from Minneapolis.

Find AP's full coverage of the Rittenhouse trial: <https://apnews.com/hub/kyle-rittenhouse>

## **Biden's \$1T infrastructure bill historic, not transformative**

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The \$1 trillion infrastructure bill that President Joe Biden signs into law represents a historic achievement at a time of deeply fractured politics. But the compromises needed to bridge the political divide suggest that the spending might not be as transformative as Biden has promised for the U.S. economy.

Faced with flagging support as the U.S. continues to slog through a pandemic and rising inflation, the president has treated infrastructure as proof that government can function again. Ahead of Monday's signing ceremony, he instructed his Cabinet on Friday to rigorously police the coming investments in roads, bridges, water systems, broadband, ports, electric vehicles and the power grid to ensure they pay off.

"It's hard, but we can still come together to get something big done for the American people," Biden said. "It will create millions of new jobs. It will grow the economy. And we'll win the world economic competition that we're engaged in in the second quarter of the 21st century with China and many other countries around the world."

Biden held off on signing the hard-fought infrastructure deal after it passed on Nov. 5 until legislators would be back from a congressional recess and could join in a splashy bipartisan event. The gathering Monday on the White House lawn will include governors and mayors of both parties and labor and business leaders. On Sunday night before the signing, the White House announced Mitch Landrieu, the former New Orleans mayor, would coordinate the implementation of the infrastructure spending.

The president began the process of selling it to the broader public with a trip last week to the Port of Baltimore. He'll go to New Hampshire on Tuesday to visit a bridge on the state's "red list" for repair and to Detroit on Wednesday for a stop at General Motors' electric vehicle assembly plant.

In order to achieve a bipartisan deal, the president had to cut back his initial ambition to spend \$2.3 trillion on infrastructure by more than half. The bill that becomes law on Monday in reality includes about \$550 billion in new spending over 10 years, since some of the expenditures in the package were already planned. Yet the administration still views the bill as a national project with a broad range of investments and the potential ways to improve people's lives with clean drinking water and high-speed internet.

Historians, economists and engineers interviewed by The Associated Press welcomed Biden's efforts. But they stressed that \$1 trillion was not nearly enough to overcome the government's failure for decades to maintain and upgrade the country's infrastructure. The politics essentially forced a trade-off in terms of potential impact not just on the climate but on the ability to outpace the rest of the world this century and remain the dominant economic power.

"We've got to be sober here about what our infrastructure gap is in terms of a level of investment and go into this eyes wide open, that this is not going to solve our infrastructure problems across the nation," said David Van Slyke, dean of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

Biden also tried unsuccessfully to tie the infrastructure package to passage of a broader package of \$1.85 trillion in proposed spending on families, health care and a shift to renewable energy that could help address climate change. That measure has yet to gain sufficient support from the narrow Democratic majorities in the Senate and House. Biden continues to work to appease skeptics of the broader package such as Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., while also holding on to the most liberal Democrats.

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The haggling over infrastructure has shown that Biden can still bring together Democrats and Republicans, even as tensions continue to mount over the Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol by supporters of Donald Trump who falsely believe that Biden was not legitimately elected president. Yet the result is a product that might not meet the existential threat of climate change or the transformative legacy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, whose portrait hangs in Biden's Oval Office.

"Yes, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is a big deal," said Peter Norton, a history professor in the University of Virginia's engineering department. "But the bill is not transformational, because most of it is more of the same."

Norton compared the limited action on climate change to the start of World War II, when Roosevelt and Congress reoriented the entire U.S. economy after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Within two months, there was a ban on auto production. Dealerships had no new cars to sell for four years as factories focused on weapons and war materiel. To conserve fuel consumption, a national speed limit of 35 mph was introduced.

"The emergency we face today warrants a comparable emergency response," Norton said.

For his part, Biden has treated compromise as both a necessity and a virtue. It's evidence to the rest of the world that democracies can function and counters the economic and technological rise of an authoritarian China. When the agreement with Republican senators was first announced in June, he noted that everyone had to give up a little in order to achieve an infrastructure deal that eluded former presidents Barack Obama and Trump.

"Neither side got everything they want in this deal," Biden said at the time. "That's what it means to compromise."

The agreement ultimately got support from 19 Senate Republicans, including Senate GOP leader Mitch McConnell. Thirteen House Republicans also voted for the infrastructure bill. An angry Trump issued a statement attacking "Old Crow" McConnell and other Republicans for cooperating on "a terrible Democrat Socialist Infrastructure Plan."

McConnell says the country "desperately needs" the new infrastructure money but has indicated that he plans to skip Monday's signing ceremony, telling WHAS radio in Louisville, Kentucky, that he has "other things" to do.

There are multiple ways of analyzing the size of the infrastructure bill. White House aides anchored their research to the historical benchmark of building the interstate highway system from 1957 to 1966. By that metric, Biden can rightly claim that the additional \$550 billion in infrastructure spending would be more than double the cost of the highway system when adjusted by inflation.

But the bill also addresses years of deferred repairs and the removal of lead water pipes, reflecting the fact that the government failed to adequately fund infrastructure for several decades. Judged by the size of the need, Biden's spending is a merely a start to close a massive gap.

Yale University economist Ray Fair studied the size of the U.S. infrastructure gap in a September research paper. He found a sharp decline in infrastructure investment as a percent of the overall U.S. economy starting in 1970, a trend shared by no other country, though some nations did begin to invest less in infrastructure somewhat later.

"The overall results thus suggest that the United States became less future-oriented, less concerned with future generations, beginning around 1970," Fair concluded. "This change has persisted."

When Fair looked at Biden's infrastructure bill, he examined the size of the shortfall if infrastructure investments had continued at the 1970 pace. He found that Biden's spending covered about 10% of a \$5.2 trillion gap.

"The bottom line is that the current infrastructure bill is quite modest," Fair said.

## 'You can't even cry loudly': Counting Ethiopia's war dead

By CARA ANNA, DAVID KEYTON and NAT CASTANEDA Associated Press

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP) — The man who counts the dead sees them everywhere.

They're in the handwritten lists of names smuggled out of a region cut off from the world by war. They're

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in the images of people shot and tossed off a cliff, tortured and pushed into a river, left unburied for days. They're announced by grieving families in social media posts.

They are the first thing he sees in the morning when he checks his messages. They are the last thing he sees at night, when they enter his dreams.

He has been living with the dead for a year, since war erupted last November in Ethiopia's Tigray region. Tigrayans, a minority of some 6 million, were encircled as a falling-out with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize winner, turned deadly. It became an ethnic clash when Amhara fighters from a neighboring region allied with Ethiopia's government poured in.

Many Tigrayans joined the fight. But the man who counts the dead is in Sweden and could not.

So he quickly decided what he could do to help. In his small, neat apartment at the end of a metro line in Stockholm, Desta Haileselassie would apply his computer science background and research skills to compiling a list of Tigrayan victims, name by name.

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This story was funded by a grant from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

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It is slow, difficult work. Almost all communication with Tigray has been cut off, and foreign media is banned. Many in the diaspora have waited for months to know whether loved ones are alive, terrified to receive messages from home even as they yearn for news.

In the confused first days and weeks, Desta issued pleas on social media for help. He told anguished families that a list of the dead would be a memorial of a war Ethiopia's government seemed determined to hide. He made dozens of phone calls, then hundreds more.

The work took over his life. He stopped hiking, swimming or going to the gym, and he sleeps poorly. The guitar and keyboard he once played sit in his Stockholm apartment, untouched.

He has collected handwritten testimonies and photographs that make him feel sick or bring him to tears. He tries to calm weeping family members from afar, never meeting them in person. Months of exhaustion have collected under his eyes.

"There are days when I end up crying the whole evening," Desta says softly. "A very, very hard job to do, but I have to do it ....This is the least I can do to help my people."

Now, a year on, he has confirmed 3,080 names of the dead. The Associated Press has verified 30 of them chosen randomly, speaking with families and friends.

Victim Number 2,171 was Gebretsadkan Teklu Gebreyesus, shot dead by soldiers in the presence of his two young sons, the AP confirmed. Victim 1,599, Zeray Asfaw, was a bridegroom pulled from his wedding party and killed along with his best man, his friends and the father of the bride while the women screamed. Victim Number 2,915 was Amdekiros Aregawi Gebru, an ambulance driver gunned down while driving a woman in labor to a clinic, making it there before bleeding to death.

Desta has another 1,000 names he's still trying to verify.

"It's very, very disturbing, I'm very sorry," he says as he shows photos of corpses on the ground.

His list does not include ethnic Amhara, who are some of the war's latest victims after Tigray forces started moving toward Ethiopia's capital.

The Amhara Association of America has its own list of the dead, starting with the killing of hundreds of Amhara in the Tigray community of Mai Kadra in the earliest days of the war. The list has reached 1,994.

The two ethnicities are separate even in death. The United Nations says that while war crimes may have been committed on all sides, the most atrocities have been reported against Tigrayans by Ethiopian soldiers and their Eritrean allies.

One thing all agree on, including experts: The lists represent just a fraction of the dead.

Desta is certain that every Tigrayan has lost someone, whether to fighting or to house-to-house massacres or to starvation under an Ethiopian government blockade. To emphasize the shattered connections, he often mentions when a victim is a parent, or is killed alongside one. The word "mother" appears 43 times.

"His mother alone had to cry over her son's body all day long," one entry says.

Desta too has lost loved ones, 19 of them. The self-contained 36-year-old gently deflects questions,

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saying every victim on his list is like family.

But the thought of adding one name especially close to him is too much to bear. It brings him to tears when her name is mentioned. The single photo on display in the room where he works shows him embracing her as she smiles.

He calls her Amlishaway.

She is his mother.

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Victim Number 51: Haben Sahle

Desta's list includes 102 children. The news of the death of a 15-year-old boy was among the first to reach him.

Haben Sahle was a top student in the border town of Zalambessa and an only son. When the war engulfed Tigray, connection with him was lost.

In faraway California, the boy's uncle, Angesom, received the first word in a phone call weeks later, in December. It was a well-intended lie.

Relatives in neighboring Eritrea told Angesom that family members in Zalambessa were fine. But Angesom knew that in their culture, the death of a loved one usually wouldn't be shared over the phone.

A trio of Ethiopian Orthodox priests broke the terrible news in a surprise visit the following Sunday.

"When priests come to your house without warning, something's wrong," Angesom says.

The priests hadn't known the boy. They didn't know how he died. It took five more months for Angesom to reach his sister by phone for details.

She told him Ethiopian soldiers, and allied ones from Eritrea, were seeking out and killing men and teenage boys. Decades of rivalries and resentments over Tigray leaders' long, often repressive hold on power had turned into slaughter.

As the soldiers approached their home, Haben Sahle's mother said no one was there but her. But the soldiers fired at random and shot her son hidden inside.

As she recounted the killing, Angesom could finally begin to grieve.

"For six horrible months, I didn't eat normal, sleep normal, work normal," he says.

The distance was made worse by fears that Ethiopian authorities were monitoring phone calls. You could only ask loved ones vaguely if they were OK and had food and water, Angesom says.

Now silence has descended again, and he hasn't reached his family in Tigray for the past four months. If he could speak with them again, he would tell them this: He will be their voice forever.

"If this is not genocide," he says, "there will be nothing that will be labeled as genocide."

With Angesom's confirmation of the teenager's death, Desta added him to his list. More than 90% of the names there are of men and boys, reflecting survivors' accounts that they were often singled out for killing. His work had barely begun.

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Victim Number 70: Sibhat Berhe Desta. "Killed with other civilians by the Eritrean soldiers near Goda Bottle and Glass Share Company."

On Dec. 23, a phone connected.

It was Desta's brother in the Tigray capital, and he was in tears. Nineteen of their family members had been killed.

They were cousins and uncles from their mother's birthplace. Desta knew some of them well. He had grown up with them, played with them as a child during visits to the village.

"I have a strong attachment to that place," he says. He recalls Sibhat Berhe Desta as "a very protective and generous uncle. That's what I vividly remember about him."

His brother told him that on Dec. 2, Eritrean soldiers had forced their relatives to do manual labor while they stripped down a glass factory and carted the pieces away, part of widespread looting. Then the soldiers killed them.

Family members were forbidden to bury the bodies for 20 days, a grotesque practice widely reported

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in the war and meant as further insult to the dead.

"I was shocked, but over time I got so emotional," Desta says. His voice wavers, then steadies.

He has not yet grieved. First, the fighting must end, he says.

Until then, as he counts the dead, he worries about his mother.

"She's a very brave woman, and she's my best friend," Desta says. He covers his face and cries. "She's always been there."

In December, he was excited yet terrified to see a social media message from a friend about his mother. It said that with no other way to communicate inside Tigray, she had walked more than 130 kilometers, or 80 miles, from her home to the regional capital, Mekele, to see whether relatives were still alive.

In her late 50s, she hiked through mountainous terrain, sometimes sleeping in caves, taking part in a perilous migration by many Tigrayans searching for loved ones in the chaos. Walking along roads patrolled by hostile forces meant almost certain death.

She could have been killed any second, Desta thought.

On Jan. 4, or 62 days after the war began, he finally reached his mother by phone. She confirmed that she had gone to Mekele on foot twice and kept both journeys a secret from him. She didn't want him to worry.

He was angry at her risk-taking, then relieved.

As they chatted, he decided not to mention his work counting the dead. She didn't need any more stress.

But as they slipped back into daily conversations, he hit "record" each time, and saved the digital files.

He feared each call might be their last.

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Victim Numbers 333 and 334: Meaza Goshu and Kalayou Berhe. "Killed a few days after their wedding."

Victim Number 933: Mariamawit Alemayo, 6 years old. "Killed from heavy artillery shelling in Shire by the Eritrean soldiers. She was the only child to her mom."

Victim Number 1,577: Aba Gebreselassie. "He was an Orthodox Christian monk."

The death toll is one of the biggest unknowns of Ethiopia's war.

Among the world's most successful projects in counting the dead is The Kosovo Memory Book. It is a near-comprehensive, well-funded list of people killed in a war in a small geographic area that lasted for less than two years in the 1990s. But the Kosovo Memory Book is still updated even now.

Determining Ethiopia's death toll will be considerably more difficult, says Michael Spagat, chair of the nonprofit Every Casualty Counts, which focuses on how to count the dead in conflict.

The group discovered Desta's efforts as well as a parallel project by researchers centered at Ghent University in Belgium. Their lists are similar, Spagat says, but they capture "a relatively small fraction of it all."

The Belgian researchers fear that, too.

"If they're killing 10 people per village, then it's easily in the tens of thousands," says Tim Vanden Bempt, whose wife is Tigrayan. For months, he was tweeting a name from the list of dead every hour. That ended when a renewed government blockade on Tigray cut off the flow of information.

Spagat, an economics professor, calls the work ahead in Ethiopia "challenging in the extreme." With communications links severed, it's impossible to conduct even a standard sample survey of households to estimate the dead.

It's likely that Ethiopian authorities will never help, a stance he describes as common among governments in similar situations around the world.

"In many cases, they have done the killing," he says. "They'd rather it stay as buried as possible."

The warring sides have claimed tens of thousands of deaths among fighters alone.

Spagat's hopes are with the network of Ethiopian Orthodox priests in communities who traditionally are informed when residents die. But Tigrayan leaders in the church say scores of priests and other clergy members have been killed, too.

Despite the painstaking work to bring Ethiopia's dead out of the shadows, Spagat puts the chances of reaching a final toll at "possibly never."

The war has not just taken lives. In a nation that takes vast pride in its 3,000-year history, it has also

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ruptured Ethiopia's culture of honoring the dead.

It is usually the responsibility of the elderly to announce the death of a loved one. Now many families are scattered, with members missing or unreachable. With Tigray cut off from the world, people often don't know whether to mourn.

"When we're mourning, we're not even together," says a Tigrayan woman in the diaspora, speaking on condition of anonymity out of fear for loved ones still in Ethiopia. "You can't even cry loudly because of what's going on."

Victim on the Amhara side: Mekonen Girma, a farmer

The victims on the Amhara list are arranged by community rather than by number. While Tigray forces say they are fighting to pressure Ethiopia's government to end the blockade of their homeland, some Amhara have described house-to-house killings and other atrocities against civilians as revenge in communities like Chenna Teklehaymanot.

Once again, no one knows how many people have been killed. Tewodrose Tirfe, the chairman of the Amhara Association of America, is trying to find out.

"The numbers are probably much higher. We just don't have the bandwidth to investigate every atrocity," he says. But knowing he's drawing attention to victims means he "at least can feel at peace."

His team seeks out Amhara survivors like Zewditu Tikuye, who says her husband, farmer Mekonen Girma, was killed in the town of Kobo in July as Tigray forces swept in.

Zewditu fled her home as her husband stayed behind with their cattle. She heard about his death from people who buried him.

"Someone told me he was killed in a very cruel way," she says. "I wish I died with him."

She is bewildered because she says her husband had no interest in politics. Now she raises seven children alone.

"I have no idea why this war is going on," she says. "I don't even know if my relatives are still alive."

Amhara and Tigrayans had lived peacefully for many years and even intermarried, she says. But she is not sure they can coexist in the future.

The war has also split Ethiopia's diaspora, estimated at more than 2 million people. Horrified Tigrayans distance themselves from Amhara friends who cheer advances by Ethiopian forces, and vice versa. Once-favorite Ethiopian restaurants, a taste of home, are now avoided.

Tewodrose had not known of Desta's efforts to count the dead. He believes as many people as possible should document the horrors of the war.

But his group only counts Amhara. And Desta only counts Tigrayans.

"I have to prioritize my people," Desta says.

A red-and-yellow Tigray flag is displayed on his computer rather than the Ethiopian one. He says he no longer feels Ethiopian and is ready to throw away his passport at any time.

Victim Number 3,081: Yet to come

It's impossible not to fear the worst.

Starvation is sweeping Tigray, and even basic medicines are running out under the blockade. The government has again bombarded the region with airstrikes. Residents say they kill civilians, including children.

Tigray forces, which one of Desta's brothers has joined, are approaching the capital, Addis Ababa. Ethiopia's government calls this an "existential war."

Desta hasn't spoken with his mother since June 26. The phone no longer rings through in a new blackout. Every day's attempt meets silence.

Their last conversation was a normal one, much like the chats many Tigrayans had until a year ago. Sometimes, to escape the dead, Desta tries to feel that sense of normalcy again.

Alone in his apartment, he turns to his dozens of recorded calls with his mother in Tigray.

He presses "play."

Anna reported from Nairobi, Kenya.

Ethiopia coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/ethiopia-erasing-ethnicity>

## **A complicated relationship: Biden and Xi prepare for meeting**

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping have slurped noodles together in Beijing. They've shared deep thoughts about the meaning of America during an exchange on the Tibetan plateau. They've gushed to U.S. business leaders about developing a sincere respect for each other.

The American president has held up his relationship with Xi as evidence of his heartfelt belief that good foreign policy starts with building strong personal relationships.

But as the two leaders prepare to hold their first presidential meeting on Monday, the troubled U.S.-China relationship is demonstrating that the power of one of Biden's greatest professed strengths as a politician — the ability to connect — has its limits.

"When it comes to U.S.-China relations, the gaps are so big and the trend lines are so problematic that the personal touch can only go so far," said Matthew Goodman, who served as an Asia adviser on the National Security Council in the Barack Obama and George W. Bush administrations.

White House officials have set low expectations for Monday's virtual meeting: No major announcements are expected and there's no plan for the customary joint statement by the two countries at the end, according to administration officials.

The public warmth — Xi referred to Biden as his "old friend" when Biden visited China in 2013 while the then-U.S. vice president spoke of their "friendship" — has cooled now that both men are heads of state. Biden bristled in June when asked by a reporter if he would press his old friend to cooperate with a World Health Organization investigation into the coronavirus origins.

"Let's get something straight: We know each other well; we're not old friends," Biden said. "It's just pure business."

Biden nonetheless believes a face-to-face meeting — even a virtual one like the two leaders will hold Monday evening — has its value.

"He feels that the history of their relationship, having spent time with him, allows him to be quite candid as he has been in the past and he will continue to be," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said in previewing the encounter.

Biden and Xi, ages 78 and 68 respectively, first got to know each other on travels across the U.S. and China when both were vice presidents, interactions that both leaders say left a lasting impression.

Of late, there have been signs that there could be at least a partial thawing after the first nine months of the Biden administration were marked by the two sides trading recriminations and by unproductive exchanges between the presidents' top advisers.

Last week, for example, the U.S. and China pledged at U.N. climate talks in Glasgow, Scotland, to increase their cooperation and speed up action to rein in climate-damaging emissions.

Monday's meeting — the two leaders' third engagement since Biden became president — comes amid mounting tensions in the U.S.-China relationship. The two held long phone calls in February and September where they discussed human rights, trade, the pandemic and other issues.

Biden has made clear that he sees China as the United States' greatest national security and economic competitor and has tried to reframe American foreign policy to reflect that belief.

His administration has taken Beijing to task over committing human rights abuses against ethnic minorities in northwest China, squelching pro-democracy efforts in Hong Kong and resisting global pressure to cooperate fully with investigations into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic.

Tensions have also risen as the Chinese military has flown increasing numbers of sorties near the self-ruled island of Taiwan, which Beijing considers part of its territory.



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Chinese officials have signaled that Taiwan will be a top issue for the talks. Biden has made clear that his administration will abide by the long-standing U.S. "One China" policy, which recognizes Beijing but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei. Chinese military forces held exercises last week near Taiwan in response to a visit by a U.S. congressional delegation to the island.

The president intends, in part, to use the conversation to underscore the need to establish "guardrails" in the relationship to ensure that the two sides in the midst of their stiff competition avoid "unintended conflict," according to a senior administration official who briefed reporters on White House planning for the meeting and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The official said the video call is expected to last "several hours," adding that the White House was hopeful that the two leaders' seeing each other would allow for greater depth to their conversation than their two earlier calls this year.

Other U.S. presidents have held that bonding with a geopolitical adversary can be a good foreign policy strategy. George W. Bush faced ridicule after his first meeting with Russia's Vladimir Putin when he claimed that he had "looked the man in the eye" and "was able to get a sense of his soul." Bush would go on to host the Russian leader at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, and bring him to his father's estate in Kennebunkport, Maine, where the 43rd and 41st presidents took the Russian president fishing.

Putin ultimately frustrated Bush and the relationship was broken after Russia's 2008 invasion of its neighbor Georgia.

Donald Trump went from disparaging North Korea's Kim Jong Un as "rocket man" to declaring the two "fell in love" in an exchange of letters as the U.S. president unsuccessfully attempted to persuade Kim to give up the regime's nuclear weapons program.

Biden's personal approach to foreign policy is in part informed by the fact that he's been on the international scene for much of the last half-century, author Evan Osnos noted in the biography "Joe Biden: The Life, the Run, and What Matters Now."

"You can drop him into Kazakhstan or Bahrain, it doesn't matter — he's gonna find some Joe Blow that he met 30 years ago who's now running the place," Julianne Smith, a Biden adviser, told Osnos.

With Beijing set to host the Winter Olympics in February and Xi expected to be approved by Communist Party leaders to serve a third five-year term as president next year — unprecedented in recent Chinese history — the Chinese leader may be looking to stabilize the relationship in the near term.

Slowing economic growth and a brewing housing crisis also loom large for Beijing. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in a CBS' "Face the Nation" interview aired Sunday warned the deepening of Beijing's problems could "have global consequences."

At the same time, Biden, who has seen his polling numbers diminish at home amid concerns about the lingering coronavirus pandemic, inflation and supply chain problems, is looking to find a measure of equilibrium on the most consequential foreign policy matter he faces.

Biden would have preferred to hold an in-person meeting with Xi, but Xi has not left China since before the start of the coronavirus pandemic. The virtual meeting was proposed after Biden mentioned during a September phone call with the Chinese leader that he would like to be able to see Xi again.

## US journalist freed from Myanmar jail with ex-diplomat's aid

By GRANT PECK and DAVID RISING Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — American journalist Danny Fenster, sentenced only days ago to 11 years hard labor in Myanmar, has been freed and is on his way home, former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Bill Richardson said Monday.

Richardson said in a statement that Fenster had been handed over to him in Myanmar and would return to the U.S. via Qatar over the next day and a half.

"This is the day that you hope will come when you do this work," Richardson said in a statement emailed from his office. "We are so grateful that Danny will finally be able to reconnect with his loved ones, who have been advocating for him all this time, against immense odds."

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Richardson said he negotiated Fenster's release during a recent visit to Myanmar when he held face-to-face meetings with Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, Myanmar's military ruler.

Fenster, the managing editor of the online magazine Frontier Myanmar, was convicted Friday of spreading false or inflammatory information, contacting illegal organizations and violating visa regulations.

Fenster's sentence was the harshest punishment yet among the seven journalists known to have been convicted since Myanmar's military ousted the elected government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi in February.

U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price condemned the decision, saying in a statement that it was "an unjust conviction of an innocent person."

Frontier Myanmar Editor-in-Chief Thomas Kean welcomed the news of Fenster's release, while calling for the country's military rulers to release all journalists still behind bars.

"Danny is one of many journalists in Myanmar who have been unjustly arrested simply for doing their job since the February coup," he said.

According to the United Nations, at least 126 journalists, media officials or publishers have been detained by the military since February and 47 remain in detention, including 20 charged with crimes.

Of the seven journalists known to have been convicted, six are Myanmar nationals and four were released in a mass amnesty on Oct. 21.

Richardson, who also served as governor of New Mexico and secretary of energy in the Clinton administration, has a record of acting as a sort of freelance diplomat.

He is best known for traveling to nations with which Washington has poor, if any relations — such as North Korea — to obtain the freedom of detained Americans.

Recently he has been involved in seeking freedom for U.S. citizens detained in Venezuela, another country with which Washington has strained ties.

Richardson has a long history of involvement with Myanmar, starting in 1994 when as a member of U.S. Congress he met Suu Kyi at her home, where she had been under house arrest since 1989 under a previous military government.

He last visited Myanmar in 2018 to advise on the crisis involving the country's Muslim Rohingya minority. More than 700,000 Rohingya fled to refugee camps in Bangladesh after Myanmar's military in 2017 launched a brutal crackdown.

In an interview with The Associated Press after his most recent visit to Myanmar, Richardson had said his talks there had focused on facilitating humanitarian assistance to the country, particularly the provision of COVID-19 vaccines,

He said his staff had been in touch with Fenster's family, and when asked if there was hope for Danny Fenster's release, he replied: "There's always hope. Don't ask any more."

Shawn Crispin, Southeast Asia representative for the Committee to Protect Journalists, said Fenster "never should have been jailed or sentenced on bogus charges in the first place."

"Myanmar's military regime must stop using journalists as pawns in their cynical games and release all the other reporters still languishing behind bars on spurious charges," Crispin added.

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Associated Press writer Jon Gambrell in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, contributed to this report.

## **Austrian unvaccinated lockdown starts amid COVID resurgence**

By GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Austria took what its leader called the "dramatic" step Monday of implementing a nationwide lockdown for unvaccinated people who haven't recently had COVID-19, perhaps the most drastic of a string of measures being taken by European governments to get a massive regional resurgence of the coronavirus under control.

The move, which took effect at midnight, prohibits people 12 years old and older who haven't been vaccinated or recently recovered from leaving their homes except for basic activities such as working, grocery

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shopping, going for a walk — or getting vaccinated.

The lockdown is initially being imposed until Nov. 24 in the Alpine country of 8.9 million. It doesn't apply to children under 12 because they cannot yet officially get vaccinated — though the capital, Vienna, on Monday opened up vaccinations for under-12s as part of a pilot, and reported high demand.

Officials have said that police patrols will be stepped up and unvaccinated people can be fined up to 1,450 euros (\$1,660) if they violate the lockdown.

"We really didn't take this step lightly and I don't think it should be talked down," Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg told Oe1 radio. "This a dramatic step — about 2 million people in this country are affected ... what we are trying is precisely to reduce contact between the unvaccinated and vaccinated to a minimum, and also contact between the unvaccinated."

"My aim is very clearly to get the unvaccinated to get themselves vaccinated and not to lock down the vaccinated," Schallenberg added. "In the long term, the way out of this vicious circle we are in — and it is a vicious circle, we are stumbling from wave to lockdown, and that can't carry on ad infinitum — is only vaccination."

About 65% of the population is fully vaccinated, a rate that Schallenberg has described as "shamefully low."

Authorities are concerned about rising infections and increasing pressure on hospitals. Austria on Sunday recorded 849.2 new cases per 100,000 residents over the previous seven days. Its situation is far worse than that of neighboring Germany, where case rates on Monday hit the latest in a string of records, with 303 new cases per 100,000 residents over seven days.

Berlin on Monday became the latest of several German states to limit access to restaurants, cinemas, museums and concerts to people who have been vaccinated or recently recovered - shutting out unvaccinated people who have tested negative. Under-18s are exempted.

On Thursday, the German parliament is due to vote on a new legal framework for coronavirus restrictions drawn up by the parties that are expected to form the country's next government. Those plans are reportedly being beefed up to allow tougher contact restrictions than originally envisioned.

Germany has struggled to bring new momentum to its vaccination campaign, with just over two-thirds of the population fully vaccinated, and is trying to ramp up booster shots.

Outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel issued a new appeal on Saturday for holdouts to get vaccinated. "Think about it again," she said. The country's disease control center called last week for people to cancel or avoid large events.

To Germany's west, the Netherlands on Saturday night implemented a partial lockdown that is due to run for at least three weeks, forcing bars and restaurants to close at 8 p.m. In the northern city of Leeuwarden, hundreds of young people gathered in a central square, setting off fireworks and holding flares, before riot police moved in to push protesters out.

In Austria, the leader of the far-right opposition Freedom Party vowed to combat the new restrictions by "all parliamentary and legal means we have available." Herbert Kickl said in a statement that "2 million people are being practically imprisoned without having done anything wrong."

The government's next move, however, may well be to tighten the screws.

Health Minister Wolfgang Mueckstein told ORF television that he wants to discuss further measures on Wednesday, and said that one proposal on the table is limits on going out at night that would also apply to the vaccinated.

Schallenberg sounded a more cautious note. "Of course I don't rule out sharpening" the measures, he said, but he indicated that he doesn't expect restrictions on bars and the like at present. He said further measures could include requiring full medical masks in more places, more working from home and requiring vaccinated people to get tested before going to events.

Follow AP's pandemic coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

## EU moves to add airlines, others to Belarus sanctions list

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union on Monday ratcheted up pressure on Belarus by agreeing to slap new sanctions on President Alexander Lukashenko's regime and others accused of helping him wage a "hybrid attack" against the bloc using migrants.

The 27-country EU has already imposed four sets of sanctions on the Belarus authorities and senior officials over the disputed election in August last year that returned Lukashenko to office and the security crackdown on peaceful protesters that followed.

But as tensions mount on the Belarus border with EU members Poland, Latvia and Lithuania, the bloc's foreign ministers extended those measures to add airlines, travel agents and others accused of helping to bring migrants to Minsk.

"Today's decision reflects the determination by the European Union to stand up to the instrumentalization of migrants for political purposes. We are pushing back on this inhuman and illegal practice," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in a statement.

EU headquarters said the bloc "will now be able to target individuals and entities organizing or contributing to activities by the Lukashenko regime that facilitate illegal crossing of the EU's external borders." A list of those to be hit by the asset freezes and travel bans is expected to be finalized in coming days.

The EU believes Lukashenko began luring migrants to Belarus in recent months as part of a retaliatory attack meant to destabilize the bloc. The EU has been deeply divided over how to manage migrants since well over 1 million people entered in 2015.

A few thousand migrants are stuck in makeshift camps in freezing weather after Poland reinforced its border with 15,000 soldiers, in addition to border guards and police. At least nine have died. Many people want to head further west, often to Germany.

Lukashenko brushed aside the threat of fresh EU measures.

"We will defend ourselves. That's it, there's nowhere to retreat further," he was quoted as saying by the state news agency Belta.

Lukashenko also denied that his government has organized the migrant influx, saying that "it isn't worth the effort," and he insisted that the people involved are resisting Belarusian efforts to encourage them to return to their home countries.

"These people, I must say, are very stubborn: no one wants to return. And understandably so: They have nowhere to come back to. They have no place to live there, they know there's nothing to feed their children with. Moreover, some are simply afraid for their lives," he said.

Asked about the danger that more sanctions might only make things worse, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said: "I don't have the impression that Belarus behaves constructively without sanctions. That wasn't the case in the past."

"We are far from the end of the spiral of sanctions," Maas added.

Belarus flag carrier Belavia is among the airlines likely to be hit, and Maas warned other companies to follow the example of Turkish Airlines by restricting flights to the Belarus capital.

"Those that don't must expect tough sanctions. The situation is so dramatic that I can no longer rule out the denial of overflight rights or landing permission in the European area," he said.

Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said "we need to make Minsk airport a no-fly zone." He said the EU must ensure that planes likely to be bringing in migrants bound for Europe "wouldn't land in Minsk, or actually any Belarusian airport. It is very crucial to do that."

The EU says that the authoritarian Belarusian regime has for months invited migrants to Minsk, many of them Iraqis and Syrians, with the promise of help to get them across the borders of the three countries, which form the eastern flank of both the 27-nation EU and NATO.

In response, the three are beefing up their borders. In an interview Sunday, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said he and his two Baltic counterparts are discussing whether to call for emergency consultations at the NATO military alliance.

Numerous clashes and attempted crossings have been reported at the border, but under a state of emergency in Poland only the security forces have access, and the incidents are impossible to independently verify.

Daria Litvinova in Moscow and Geir Moulson in Berlin contributed to this report.

## India opens to vaccinated foreign tourists after 18 months

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India began on Monday allowing fully vaccinated foreign tourists to enter the country on regular commercial flights, in the latest easing of coronavirus restrictions as infections fall and vaccinations rise.

Tourists entering India must be fully vaccinated, follow all COVID-19 protocols and test negative for the virus within 72 hours of their flight, according to the health ministry. Many will also need to undergo a post-arrival COVID-19 test at the airport.

However, travelers from countries which have agreements with India for mutual recognition of vaccination certificates, such as the U.S., U.K. and many European nations, can leave the airport without undergoing a COVID-19 test.

This is the first time India has allowed foreign tourists on commercial flights to enter the country since March 2020, when it imposed one of the toughest lockdowns in the world in an attempt to contain the pandemic. Fully vaccinated tourists on chartered flights were allowed to enter starting last month.

It comes as coronavirus infections have fallen significantly, with daily new cases hovering at just above 10,000 for over a month.

To encourage travelers to visit India, the government plans to issue 500,000 free visas through next March. The moves are expected to boost the tourism and hospitality sector which was battered by the pandemic.

"The pandemic devastated the industry but things will return to normal once foreign tourists start to arrive," said Jyoti Mayal, President of the Travel Agents Association of India.

Mayal said coastal states like Kerala and Goa in the country's south and Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh in the Himalayan north are already witnessing a surge in domestic tourists. All four states are heavily dependent on earnings from tourism, and Mayal said foreign travelers scheduling their visits there would also help lift the local economy.

"Tourism is a very resilient industry and the upcoming season looks very promising. We are hopeful of generating more jobs than we lost during the pandemic," she said.

With more than 35 million reported coronavirus infections, India is the second-worst-hit country after the U.S. Active coronavirus cases stand at 134,096, the lowest in 17 months, according to the health ministry.

Nearly 79% of India's adult population has received at least one vaccine dose while 38% is fully vaccinated. The federal government has asked state administrations to conduct door-to-door campaigns to accelerate the vaccine campaign.

Fewer than 3 million foreign tourists visited India in 2020, a drop of more than 75% from 2019, when tourism brought nearly \$30 billion in earnings.

## New outbreak prompts China to lock down university campus

BEIJING (AP) — China has confined nearly 1,500 university students to their dormitories and hotels following an outbreak of COVID-19 in the northeastern city of Dalian.

The order was issued Sunday after several dozen cases were reported at Zhuanghe University City and hundreds of students were transferred to hotels for observation.

Students were attending class remotely and having their meals delivered to their rooms.

The lockdown is the latest example of China's zero-tolerance approach to the outbreak, which has brought considerable disruption to people's lives and livelihoods.

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Quarantines, obligatory testing and travel restrictions have become the new normal for those even remotely caught up in outbreaks. The country's vaccination rate is among the world's highest and authorities have begun administering booster shots as winter descends.

While those measures have met little open resistance, the recent killing of a quarantined person's pet dog by health workers brought a wave of complaints online. The incident in the central city of Shangrao prompted local authorities to issue a statement saying the pet owner and health workers had "reached an understanding."

Following the incident, the China Small Animal Protection Association called for a quarantine system to care for pets caught in such situations.

"Pets are people's spiritual partners and should not be harmed under the pretext of fighting the pandemic," it said in a statement. "If you bring the hand of doom down on an innocent life without the slightest ability to defend itself, then how can you even talk about humanitarianism?"

Among other new measures, Beijing starting Wednesday will require all people arriving from other parts of the country by plane, train, bus or car to produce a negative virus test taken over the previous 48 hours.

Despite isolated cases in various parts of the country, China has been able to suppress major outbreaks over the past year, with its total number of reported cases standing at 98,315 with 4,636 deaths.

On Monday, the National Health Commission announced 32 new cases of local transmission over the previous 24 hours, 25 of them in Dalian.

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This story has been corrected to say that Dalian is a northeastern Chinese city, not a northwestern one.

## Critics: Greece criminalizes migration, prosecutes helpers

By ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

CHIOS, Greece (AP) — Among the prison inmates of the Greek island of Chios, three young men from Afghanistan and Somalia are serving dramatically long sentences: 50 years for two of them, a staggering 142 for the third.

But these are not violent criminals, even according to their trial verdicts. They were convicted for steering inflatable dinghies carrying them and other migrants after they say smugglers abandoned them in the Aegean Sea between Turkey and Greece.

"I didn't think saving people is a crime," said Hanad Abdi Mohammad, 28, a soft-spoken Somali charged as a smuggler after arriving in Greece last December and sentenced to 142 years.

Mohammad told journalists and European Parliament lawmakers visiting the three in prison last week that he had no choice but to drive the boat. The smuggler forced him to take over, hitting him in the face and threatening him with a gun before abandoning the dinghy in rough seas. And people's lives were at stake. Even with hindsight, he said, "I would do it again, as long as I am saving lives."

Critics say the men's cases, as well as prosecutions or threats of criminal proceedings against aid workers, illustrate the expanding arsenal of techniques authorities in Greece and other countries are using to deter asylum-seekers.

"It's not possible that someone who comes to claim asylum in Greece is threatened with such heavy sentences simply because they were forced, by circumstances or pressure, to take over handling a boat," said Alexandros Georgoulis, one of the lawyers representing the three imprisoned in Chios.

Greek authorities, he said, "are essentially baptizing the smuggled as the smuggler."

Mohammad's journey is also a stark indication of the chaos asylum-seekers may experience as they migrate between two countries long divided by deep-seated mistrust.

Fearing for their lives after the smuggler fled, the nearly three dozen panicked passengers abandoned their quest to reach Greece. Mohammad says he called the Turkish coast guard repeatedly, begging for a rescue. But when it arrived, the Turkish patrol boat circled the migrants' vessel sharply, sending water into the dinghy and gradually pushing it toward Greece. In the chaos, two women fell overboard and drowned.

The Greek coast guard rescued the survivors, and Mohammad helped other passengers onto the rescue

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boat. He admitted to having driven the boat after the smuggler left. It didn't cross his mind that would lead to him being prosecuted as a smuggler.

Aid workers and volunteers have also found themselves in the crosshairs of Greek authorities. In one widely publicized case, Syrian human rights worker Sarah Mardini, a refugee herself, and volunteer Sean Binder were arrested and detained for months in 2018 on suspicion of espionage, money laundering and a litany of other offenses. They deny all charges, and say they were doing nothing more than helping rescue people.

It's not just Greece. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Germany, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Spain and Greece have initiated 58 investigations and legal proceedings since 2016 against private entities involved in search and rescue.

"I think it's important to challenge these in the courts, to not at all sit back and accept that we should be cast as smugglers or spies because I offered CPR, (or) more often than not just a smile, to someone in distress," Binder told the AP. "It is preposterous that we should be cast as criminals. I don't accept it... It doesn't matter who you are, you don't deserve to drown in the sea."

Binder and Mardini go on trial on the island of Lesbos on on misdemeanor counts of espionage, forgery and unlawful use of radio frequencies on Nov. 18. They face a maximum eight-year sentence, convertible into a fine. They are still under investigation for felonies which could carry 25 years.

Dimitris Choulis, a lawyer on the island of Samos who frequently represents asylum-seekers and is not involved in Binder's case, thinks criminal prosecutions or threats of prosecution are partly designed to deter nongovernmental organizations from documenting practices such as the illegal summary deportation of migrants before they can apply for asylum.

"The only way to stop humanitarian organizations from watching what is happening in the Aegean is to criminalize rescue," said Choulis, who along with Georgoulis is representing the three men imprisoned in Chios.

Greek officials strenuously deny the country performs illegal pushbacks despite mounting indications to the contrary. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis dismissed such claims again last Tuesday, saying his government follows a "tough but fair" migration policy.

Most cases involving NGOs are intended more to intimidate than to win convictions, Choulis argues, noting most remain in the investigative phase. Three years after his arrest, Binder has yet to be charged with any of the felonies he's under investigation for.

In July, Greek police announced a felony investigation into 10 people, including four foreign NGO workers, on migrant smuggling allegations. No charges have resulted so far.

The short but often perilous sea crossing from Turkey to nearby Greek islands is a popular route into Europe for people fleeing conflict and poverty in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. To crack down on smuggling, Greece introduced a law in 2014 imposing severe penalties on people smugglers: 10 years imprisonment for each smuggled person, or 15 years per person if there was danger to life, and life imprisonment if someone died.

But smugglers quickly adapted. Instead of ferrying people themselves, they persuaded or forced their passengers to drive the boats, something borne out by numerous testimonies of arriving asylum seekers. The result has been the convictions of migrants as smugglers.

"Our prisons are full of asylum-seekers who drove a boat," Choulis said. "This is absurd."

Although the sentences are draconian - apart from Mohammad's 142 years, Afghans Amir Zaheri and Akif Rasouli, both in their 20s, received 50 years each - actual servable time under Greek law is capped at 20 years, reducible to 12 with good behavior. With prison work counting toward sentence reduction, they could be released after about eight years.

Still, that's a long time to spend incarcerated instead of building a new life.

Zaheri, accompanied by his pregnant wife and young child, and Rasouli arrived in the same boat about two years ago. From different parts of Afghanistan, they had never met before. Like in Mohammad's case, the smuggler abandoned their dinghy and the passengers took turns steering, they said.

Both were tried as smugglers. They saw their court-appointed lawyer for the first time at their trial, which lasted just a few minutes. The judge spent a minute each asking them questions, Rasouli said.

"For one minute, 50 years," he said. "I cried for one month."

With new lawyers now representing them, Zaheri and Rasouli have an appeal hearing set for March. No appeal hearing date has yet been set for Mohammad.

Lorne Cook in Brussels contributed

Follow AP's migration coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/migration>

## China stock exchange for entrepreneurs launches in Beijing

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — A stock exchange set up in the Chinese capital to serve entrepreneurs opened trading Monday with 81 companies amid a crackdown on tech giants that has wiped more than \$1 trillion off their market value abroad.

The Beijing Stock Exchange joins other mainland Chinese exchanges in Shanghai and the southern city of Shenzhen. They are mostly off-limits to foreign investors, but some companies have shares traded in Hong Kong, a separate Chinese territory that is open to global capital.

The ruling Communist Party has promised more support for entrepreneurs who generate wealth and jobs but is tightening control over tech companies. They are under pressure to invest their own money in Beijing's industry plans.

President Xi Jinping said in September the Beijing exchange would "create a service-innovation-oriented main position for small and medium-size enterprises," the ruling party's term for private companies.

Chinese stock exchanges were set up to raise money for state-owned companies, which prompted entrepreneurs to go abroad for capital.

Investors are uneasy about the status of China's entrepreneurs after the ruling party tightened control on tech companies by launching data-security and other crackdowns last year. Investors have knocked more than \$1 trillion off the value of Tencent Holding and other tech giants on Wall Street and the Hong Kong exchange.

The Beijing exchange will accept smaller companies and wider price swings than Shanghai or Shenzhen, according to official media.

After their first day, prices will be allowed to fluctuate by a daily limit of 30% before trading is suspended. The Shanghai and Shenzhen exchanges are 10% one way or the other for the main bourse and 20% for their high-tech and small company boards.

On Monday, a maker of industrial parts, Henan Tongxin Transmission Co., soared by just over 500% in its market debut. Most other companies, many of which moved from other exchanges, rose or fell by single digit margins.

The Beijing Stock Exchange has yet to announce an index to track the overall market's movement. The name is a potential challenge: BSE already is used for India's main exchange and indexes.

Shenzhen added a separate trading board in 2004 for private enterprises. Shanghai added a board for technology companies in 2019.

## AP Exclusive: 'Sesame Street' debuts Asian American muppet

By TERRY TANG Associated Press

What's in a name? Well, for Ji-Young, the newest muppet resident of "Sesame Street," her name is a sign she was meant to live there.

"So, in Korean traditionally the two syllables they each mean something different and Ji means, like, smart or wise. And Young means, like, brave or courageous and strong," Ji-Young explained during a



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recent interview. "But we were looking it up and guess what? Ji also means sesame."

At only 7 years old, Ji-Young is making history as the first Asian American muppet in the "Sesame Street" canon. She is Korean American and has two passions: rocking out on her electric guitar and skateboarding. The children's TV program, which first aired 52 years ago this month, gave The Associated Press a first look at its adorable new occupant.

Ji-Young will formally be introduced in "See Us Coming Together: A Sesame Street Special." Simu Liu, Padma Lakshmi and Naomi Osaka are among the celebrities appearing in the special, which will drop Thanksgiving Day on HBO Max, "Sesame Street" social media platforms and on local PBS stations.

Some of Ji-Young's personality comes from her puppeteer. Kathleen Kim, 41 and Korean American, got into puppetry in her 30s. In 2014, she was accepted into a "Sesame Street" workshop. That evolved into a mentorship and becoming part of the team the following year. Being a puppeteer on a show Kim watched growing up was a dream come true. But helping shape an original muppet is a whole other feat.

"I feel like I have a lot of weight that maybe I'm putting on myself to teach these lessons and to be this representative that I did not have as a kid," Kim said. But fellow puppeteer Leslie Carrara-Rudolph — who performs Abby Cadabby — reminded her, "It's not about us ... It's about this message."

Ji-Young's existence is the culmination of a lot of discussions after the events of 2020 — George Floyd's death and anti-Asian hate incidents. Like a lot of companies, "Sesame Street" reflected on how it could "meet the moment," said Kay Wilson Stallings, executive vice-president of Creative and Production for Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization behind "Sesame Street."

Sesame Workshop established two task forces — one to look at its content and another to look at its own diversity. What developed was Coming Together, a multi-year initiative addressing how to talk to children about race, ethnicity and culture.

One result was 8-year-old Tamir. While not the show's first Black muppet, he was one of the first used to talk about subjects like racism.

"When we knew we were going to be doing this work that was going to focus on the Asian and Pacific Islanders experience, we of course knew we needed to create an Asian muppet as well," Stallings said.

These newer muppets — their personalities and their looks — were remarkably constructed in a matter of a months. The process normally takes at least a couple of years. There are outside experts and a cross-section of employees known as the "culture trust" who weigh in on every aspect of a new muppet, Stallings said.

For Kim, it was crucial that Ji-Young not be "generically pan-Asian."

"Because that's something that all Asian Americans have experienced. They kind of want to lump us into this monolithic 'Asian,'" Kim said. "So it was very important that she was specifically Korean American, not just like, generically Korean, but she was born here."

One thing Ji-Young will help teach children is how to be a good "upstander." "Sesame Street" first used the term on its "The Power of We" TV special last year, which featured Tamir.

"Being an upstander means you point out things that are wrong or something that someone does or says that is based on their negative attitude towards the person because of the color of their skin or the language they speak or where they're from," Stallings said. "We want our audience to understand they can be upstanders."

In "See Us Coming Together," Sesame Street is preparing for Neighbor Day where everyone shares food, music or dance from their culture. Ji-Young becomes upset after a kid, off screen, tells her "to go back home," an insult commonly flung at Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. But she feels empowered after Sesame Street's other Asian American residents, guest stars and friends like Elmo assure her that she belongs as much as anyone else.

The fact that Ji-Young was created to counter anti-Asian sentiment makes her more special to Kim in some ways.

"I remember like the Atlanta shootings and how terrifying that was for me," Kim said. "My one hope, obviously, is to actually help teach what racism is, help teach kids to be able to recognize it and then speak out against it. But then my other hope for Ji-Young is that she just normalizes seeing different kinds of

looking kids on TV.”

Vanessa Leung, co-executive director of Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, is excited about Ji-Young. The organization was not involved in Ji-Young’s creation but previously consulted on anti-racism content for Sesame Workshop. It matters when Asian American families, especially with many of them being immigrant families, can see themselves reflected in an institution like “Sesame Street,” Leung said.

“It sparks curiosity and early understanding of the diversity of our community, the beauty in the diversity of our community,” Leung said.

Ji-Young will be heavily present throughout the show’s 53rd season next year, Stallings reassured. She also won’t just be utilized for content related to racial justice. She will pop up in various digital programs, live-action and animated.

As the new kid on the street, Ji-Young is looking forward to showing her friends and neighbors aspects of Korean culture such as the food. She loves cooking dishes like tteokbokki (chewy rice cakes) with her halmoni (grandmother). And she already has one “Sesame Street” friend who wants a sample.

“I would love to try it,” said Ernie, who joined Ji-Young’s interview. “You know, I’ve tried bulgogi. I really like bulgogi. I’m gonna guess that maybe old buddy Bert has not tried Korean food.”

Having already made several famous friends on “Sesame Street,” is there anyone Ji-Young still really wants to meet?

“The Linda Lindas because they’re so cool,” Ji-Young said, referring to the teenage punk rock band. “And they rock out and they’re cool girls and most of them are Asian. They’re my heroes. If we can get the Linda Lindas on ‘Sesame Street,’ I would show them around.”

Terry Tang is a member of The Associated Press’ Race and Ethnicity team. Follow her on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ttangAP>

## Jeffrey Epstein faces trial by proxy: Ghislaine Maxwell

By TOM HAYS and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — After disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein died by suicide behind bars, a judge invited his accusers to court to vent their anger at a man they called a coward for taking his own life to escape accountability for sexually abusing them.

The coming weeks will still see, in a way, Epstein prosecuted by proxy: his former girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell, will stand trial in Manhattan federal court. Some of his accusers, identified in court by pseudonyms or first names, will get a chance to play a key role as government witnesses.

Maxwell, 59, has pleaded not guilty to charges she groomed underage victims to have unwanted sex with Epstein. She has vehemently denied wrongdoing.

“I have not committed any crime,” the jailed Maxwell blurted out at a recent pretrial conference. She was made to wear shackles coming and going from the courtroom, accentuating the severity of the allegations — although the restraints were gone at a hearing last week.

The questioning of jurors by Judge Alison J. Nathan begins Tuesday as a pool of over 600 potential jurors is whittled down to 12 — and six alternates — just before opening statements start Nov. 29 in Maxwell’s highly anticipated trial.

Epstein, who died at 66, was arrested on multiple sex-trafficking charges in New York in 2019. His lawyers contended the charges violated a 2008 non-prosecution deal with federal prosecutors in Miami that secretly ended a federal sex abuse probe involving at least 40 teenage girls. After pleading guilty to state charges in Florida instead, he spent 13 months in jail and paid settlements to victims.

The New York case took a shocking turn when Epstein killed himself while awaiting trial two years ago. After his death, prosecutors turned their sights on Maxwell. The wealthy, Oxford-educated British socialite was the daughter of British publishing magnate Robert Maxwell, who died in 1991 after falling off his yacht — named the Lady Ghislaine — near the Canary Islands while facing allegations he’d illegally looted

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his businesses' pension funds.

Behind the scenes of a lavish lifestyle, prosecutors say, Maxwell seized the role of satisfying Epstein's proclivity for luring young victims into "sexualized massages." They plan to show jurors a picture of Maxwell and Epstein swimming nude together to illustrate their close relationship.

The trial's drama will revolve around testimony from four women who say they and others were victimized as teens from 1994 to 2004 at Epstein's estate in Palm Beach, Florida, his posh Manhattan townhouse and at other residences in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and London.

Prosecutors say there's evidence Maxwell knew that the victims, including a 14-year-old, were below the age of consent and arranged travel for some between Epstein's homes. Defense lawyers are still trying to reduce or eliminate the testimony of one of the four because she was 17 at the time in a jurisdiction where that wasn't legally underage.

And prosecutors this past weekend asked the judge to let them reveal to the jury statements Epstein made to an employee about Maxwell's involvement with procuring underage girls.

The indictment said Maxwell "would try to normalize sexual abuse for a minor victim by, among other things, discussing sexual topics, undressing in front of the victim, being present when a minor victim was undressed, and/or being present for sex acts involving the minor victim and Epstein."

The Epstein and Maxwell cases have fueled a cottage industry of podcasts and documentaries, like Netflix's "Jeffrey Epstein: Filthy Rich," as well as conspiracy theories and conjecture.

Reports that investigators seized Maxwell's address books have sparked speculation that the trial could explore Epstein's connections to Prince Andrew, former President Bill Clinton and former O.J. Simpson lawyer Alan Dershowitz. But the judge has made clear there will be no name-dropping at trial, saying only certain pages of an address book — showing a section naming the alleged victims under the heading "massage" — will come into evidence.

And she blocked prosecutors' attempt to introduce emails they said would show Maxwell tried select women for other men, saying she was using her access to women "as a form of social currency with other influential men with whom she sought to ingratiate herself."

Epstein's name, however, is expected to come up frequently, and Maxwell's lawyers have complained that Maxwell has already suffered from the negative publicity surrounding him. A questionnaire used to screen potential jurors inquired whether they had ever posted anything or an opinion about Maxwell or Epstein on social media.

The defense has signaled it wants to portray Maxwell as a victim of sorts.

"Jeffrey Epstein was a brilliant man who was flawed by enduring personality traits familiar to psychiatrists," her lawyers said in a recent court filing. "Like many people who achieve great power and wealth, Jeffrey Epstein exploited the 'Halo effect' to surround himself with people who would serve his needs."

Nathan has four times rejected Maxwell's bail requests, noting the ease with which the holder of U.S., French and British citizenships could use wealth and global connections to flee.

The judge also questioned Maxwell's integrity, saying that she told authorities after her July 2020 arrest that she possessed around \$3.5 million in assets, when she later admitted controlling \$22.5 million with her husband.

In a letter to Nathan last week, defense lawyer Bobbi Sternheim said her client "is eager for her day in court."

Maxwell "looks forward to her trial and to walking out of the courthouse uncuffed and unshackled following her acquittal," wrote the lawyer who has repeatedly complained about Maxwell's jail conditions, contending Maxwell's been punished for Epstein's suicide by guards who shine a light into her cell every 15 minutes and treat her harshly.

At a hearing last year where Maxwell was denied bail, some Epstein accusers made clear they believe she was equally culpable.

One called Maxwell "a sexual predator who groomed and abused me and countless other children and young women." In a statement read aloud by a prosecutor, another said, "Without Ghislaine, Jeffrey could

not have done what he did.”

## Foreign students returning to US, but below pre-COVID levels

By COLLIN BINKLEY and PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

International students are returning to U.S. colleges in stronger numbers this year, but the rebound has yet to make up for last year’s historic declines as COVID-19 continues to disrupt academic exchange, according to a new survey.

Nationwide, American colleges and universities saw a 4% annual increase in international students this fall, according to survey results released Monday by the Institute of International Education. But that follows a decrease of 15% last year — the steepest decline since the institute began publishing data in 1948.

The upturn is better than many colleges were forecasting over the summer as the delta variant surged. But it also reflects continued obstacles as visa backlogs persist and as some students show reluctance to study abroad during the pandemic.

Universities and U.S. officials hope this year’s uptick is the start of a long-term rebound. As international travel ramps up, there’s optimism that colleges will see growth past their pre-pandemic levels.

“We expect a surge following the pandemic,” Matthew Lussenhop, an acting U.S. assistant secretary of state, told reporters. This year’s increase indicates that international students “continue to value a U.S. education and remain committed to pursuing studies in the United States,” he added.

Overall, 70% of U.S. colleges reported an uptick in international students this fall, while 20% saw decreases and 10% remained level, according to the institute. That’s based on a preliminary survey of more than 800 U.S. schools. The nonprofit plans to issue full nationwide data next year.

At least some of the increase is due to new students who hoped to come to the U.S. last year but delayed their plans because of the pandemic. All told, there was a 68% increase in newly enrolled international students this year, a dramatic increase compared with last year’s decrease of 46%.

For many schools, even a modest upturn is a relief. Over the summer, officials at U.S. universities worried that the delta variant would dash any hopes of a rebound. But for many, that did not come to pass.

In August, U.S. embassies and consulates in India reported that they had recently issued visas to a record 55,000 students even after starting the process two months late because of COVID-19. Embassies in China reported that they had issued 85,000 student visas.

At the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, more than 10,000 international students enrolled this fall, which nearly offsets a 28% decline from last year.

“What we’re seeing now is a return to normal for our international populations,” said Andy Borst, director of undergraduate admissions at the university. The rebound is fueled by new undergraduates, with those from India up nearly 70% over pre-pandemic levels.

“We just had this pent-up demand,” Borst said. “A lot of Big Ten schools saw increases beyond what we were expecting.”

At some schools with big brands overseas, enrollments rebounded past their 2019 figures. More than 17,000 international students enrolled at New York University this fall, up 14% over 2019, according to school data.

At the University of Rochester, another top destination for international students in New York, enrollments from abroad surged 70% over 2019 levels, driven by a boom in graduate students, according to school data.

Most students were able to arrive on campus within the first weeks of the semester, but many dealt with visa backlogs at U.S. embassies and consulates, not to mention costly flights and cancellations, said Jennifer Blask, the university’s head of international admissions.

The vast majority of U.S. colleges returned to in-person learning by this fall, but not all international students are physically on campus. After last year’s shift to remote learning, many schools have continued offering online classes to students abroad, allowing thousands to stay enrolled from afar.

Out of all international students enrolled at U.S. colleges this year, the survey found that about 65% were taking classes on campus.

For Chinese students unable to arrive for this semester, NYU is continuing to let them use its academic

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center in Shanghai, which is traditionally for U.S. students studying abroad. The university also let international students use its London and Abu Dhabi locations last year, but has since returned them to use for study abroad programs.

For some colleges, the new flexibility of online learning helped avoid further enrollment setbacks. In the past, students at the University of San Francisco might have been able to start the term a week late if they faced visa or travel problems. Now, those facing visa delays can arrive halfway through the term or later, and in the meantime study online from abroad.

Facing travel restrictions inside Vietnam, graduate student Vinh Le was unable to get to Ho Chi Minh City's airport in time for the start of fall classes. Instead, he studied online for more than two months until he could get his first vaccine shot, which allowed him to travel.

Taking classes online was challenging because of the time difference, he said, but professors were "very supportive" and recorded their lectures to be watched any time. He ended up making it to the University of San Francisco on Nov. 1.

International students are seen as important contributors to U.S. campuses for a variety of reasons. Colleges say they help provide a diverse mix of cultures and views on campus. Many end up working in high-demand fields after graduating. And some colleges rely on the financial benefits of international students, who are typically charged higher tuition rates.

Although many colleges have avoided a second year of declines, there's still concern that the upturn may be isolated to certain types of colleges. The new survey found that, last year, community colleges suffered much steeper declines than four-year universities, with a 24% backslide nationwide.

Researchers are still analyzing this year's data, but some worry that community colleges may continue to lag behind.

There are also questions about whether the rebound will continue past this year. New vaccine requirements for foreign travelers could make it harder for some students to get here, and colleges are expecting continued competition from colleges in Australia, Canada and other nations looking to boost their international populations.

Still, officials at many colleges are optimistic. More vaccines are being sent overseas, and newly lifted travel bans promise to reduce barriers to travel. Some also credit President Joe Biden for sending a message that America wants students from abroad.

In July, the administration issued a statement promising a "renewed" commitment to international education, saying it would work to make overseas students feel welcome.

Rachel Banks, senior director of public policy and legislative strategy for NAFSA, an international education association, said that's a shift from the Trump administration.

"In the last administration, there was a lot of negativity and negative rhetoric around international students," Banks said. "Biden is now trying to telegraph to the world that there's interest in having international students coming here."

## Thousands of military families struggle with food insecurity

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — It's a hidden crisis that has existed for years inside one of the most well-funded institutions on the planet and has only worsened during the coronavirus pandemic. As many as 160,000 active-duty military members are having trouble feeding their families.

That estimate by Feeding America, which coordinates the work of more than 200 food banks around the country, underscores how long-term food insecurity has extended into every aspect of American life, including the military.

The exact scope of the problem is a topic of debate, due to a lack of formal study. But activists say it has existed for years and primarily affects junior-level enlisted service members — ranks E1 to E4 in military parlance — with children.

"It's a shocking truth that's known to many food banks across the United States," said Vince Hall, Feeding America's government relations officer. "This should be the cause of deep embarrassment."

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The group estimates that 29% of troops in the most junior enlisted ranks faced food insecurity during the previous year.

"It is what it is," said James Bohannon, 34, a Naval E4 (petty officer third class) in San Diego who relies on food assistance to keep his two daughters fed.

"You know what you're signing up for in the military," he said, after emerging from a drive-thru food distribution organized by the local Armed Services YMCA branch. "But I'm not going to lie. It's really tough."

In addition to modest pay for junior enlisted ranks, the frequent moves inherent to military life make it difficult for military spouses to find steady work. Also, the internal military culture of self-sufficiency leaves many reluctant to speak about their difficulties, for fear they will be regarded as irresponsible.

The problem is exacerbated by an obscure Agriculture Department rule that prevents thousands of needy military families from accessing the SNAP government assistance program, commonly known as food stamps.

"It's one of these things that the American people don't know about, but it's a matter of course among military members. We know this," said Sen. Tammy Duckworth, an Illinois Democrat and former Blackhawk pilot who lost both legs in a helicopter crash in Iraq. "We're the mightiest military on the face of the earth and yet those who are on the lower rung of our military ranks are -- if they are married and have a child or two-- they're hungry. How can you focus on carrying out the mission and defending our democracy. If you're worried about whether or not your kid gets dinner tonight?"

Meredith Knopp, CEO of a food bank in St. Louis and an Army veteran, said the problem cuts across all branches of the military. She recalls being a young officer in Texas when she was approached by a new private with a baby.

"They were getting ready to turn off his electricity because he couldn't pay his bills," she said. "It was shocking to me."

Perhaps the best indication of how entrenched the problem has become is that a robust network of military-adjacent charitable organizations such as the Armed Services YMCA and Blue Star Families has developed an infrastructure of food banks near most major domestic bases.

San Diego may be one of the epicenters of the phenomenon, with high housing costs and multiple military bases within driving distance. For Brooklyn Pittman, whose husband, Matthew, is in the Navy, the move to California from West Virginia this year was a financial shock.

"We had a nice savings built up and then we moved out here and it was rough," she said. "We still had student loans and everything on top of everything else."

Their savings quickly disappeared and the small income she earns from dog-sitting didn't come close to covering the shortfall. For a while, the couple considered sleeping in their car on the base grounds until the next paycheck.

Pittman was one of 320 families participating in the Armed Services YMCA's late October drive-thru food distribution. The organization had been hosting events like this for more than 10 years, but when the pandemic struck, expanded operations from six sites to 11 around the country and doubled the frequency of the San Diego-area events.

There's a diversity of opinion as to how much of a stigma the issue carries within military communities.

Kelly Klor, who works on food insecurity issues for Blue Star Families, recalls a period of financial hardship 13 years ago as a young mother in Texas whose husband had just enlisted. The family pinched pennies at every opportunity, never eating out and relying on the local public library for entertainment. But they still depended on WIC — a similar program to food stamps that serves mothers and children — in order to afford expensive baby formula for her infant daughter.

"I felt embarrassed pulling out my vouchers," she said. "But at the same time, I was thinking 'Should it be this hard?'"

Klor recalls treating her financial trouble as a taboo subject, even though she suspected many families around her were in the same situation.

"It seemed like it wasn't something that you share with other people," she said.

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But Maggie Meza, a Blue Star Families representative in San Diego, recalls the communal poverty as common knowledge and a bonding element among families.

"It was like 'Your husband's a sergeant, my husband's a sergeant. We're both broke. Let's go find some free stuff,'" she said.

One of the strangest aspects of the problem is a mysterious Agriculture Department regulation that prevents thousands of needy military families from receiving food stamps. Families living outside the base grounds receive a Basic Allowance for Housing to help cover most of their costs.

But the 2008 Food and Nutrition Act dictates that the allowance counts as income in calculating eligibility to receive SNAP benefits, and that ends up disqualifying thousands of military families. The allowance doesn't count as income for tax reasons or for WIC benefits.

Food security activists say they're confused by both the original rule and the fact that it has endured for more than 12 years.

"No one seems to know why it's still a law," said Hall, the Feeding America official.

Dorene Ocamb, chief development officer for the Armed Services YMCA, speculated that the regulation is "just a case of unintended consequences."

Added Sen. Duckworth: "I couldn't tell you where it comes from. I can only tell you that they won't change it."

A spokesman for the USDA said in an email reply that the department is "taking a fresh look at our authorities with respect to this policy."

The issue is more than just a humanitarian problem. It directly impacts national security, said Josh Protas, vice president of public policy for MAZON, an organization that has done extensive research on military hunger.

Armed forces members enduring food insecurity are more likely to be distracted in the field and less likely to re-enlist, he said. That talent loss may be generational because military service tends to run in families.

"We're doing a disservice to future recruitment efforts," Protas said. "We could be losing good people because they can't support their families."

Several people involved in the issue criticized the Pentagon for turning a blind eye to the problem.

"The denial by the Pentagon has been frustrating," Protas said. "It's embarrassing for our leaders to acknowledge the problem."

Colleen Heflin, a professor of public administration at Syracuse University, said the lack of Pentagon interest has led to a critical shortage of proper study or data. "In my experiences, it's hard to explain this to Department of Defense officials," she said. "They find it embarrassing and something they would not like to acknowledge."

But Ocamb pushes back against the criticism that the military is burying the issue.

She acknowledges that there are "some optics that people are trying to work around" but says most base commanders welcome the assistance and points out that the Navy literally owns the San Diego property where the ASYMCA food distributions take place.

"I think the military knows this is a complex issue and they rely on partners like us," she said. "This concept that the military wants to sweep this under the rug ... then why do they let us keep doing this on Navy-owned ground?"

Some of those who had complained about Pentagon reluctance to face the issue say the attitude has changed in recent months under the administration of President Joe Biden.

Shannon Razzadin, president of the Military Family Advisory Network, says she has felt a change in attitude from the Pentagon this year, and partially credits first lady Jill Biden for publicly championing the issue.

"They are focused on understanding it in the Pentagon," she said. "Six months ago, I wouldn't have said that."

Efforts to secure Pentagon comment on this issue were unsuccessful. But a Pentagon official told The Associated Press that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin would be publicly speaking on the subject in the near future.

There are fresh attempts by Congress to tackle the problem. Duckworth has sponsored a bill that would establish a Basic Needs Allowance payment for military families in need. Rep. James McGovern, D-Mass., has appealed for a serious Pentagon study of the problem and a repeal of the USDA's Basic Allowance for Housing regulation.

"At this stage, there's no excuse for anyone in the top echelons of the Pentagon to say they don't know this is a problem," McGovern said. "It's not rocket science. This is solvable ... somebody take responsibility and solve it."

## Dallas boy, 9, is youngest of 10 killed at Houston festival

By RANDALL CHASE and MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

A promising college student expected to graduate in the spring. A visitor from Washington state. And a 9-year-old boy who had been in a coma for more than a week.

The death toll stemming from a crowd surge during a Travis Scott performance at the Astroworld music festival in Houston rose to 10 on Sunday. The latest victim is also the youngest, 9-year-old Ezra Blount, of Dallas, who had been in a medically induced coma since Nov. 5.

The dead ranged from 9 to 27 years old. Hundreds more were injured.

City officials are investigating what caused the pandemonium at the sold-out event attended by about 50,000 fans. Scott, a rapper known for his high-energy concerts, has said he would cover funeral costs for the victims.

### 'THEIR PRECIOUS YOUNG SON'

Ben Crump, an attorney representing the Blount family, said in a news release Sunday night that he was "committed to seeking answers and justice" on behalf of the family.

"The Blount family tonight is grieving the incomprehensible loss of their precious young son," Crump said. "This should not have been the outcome of taking their son to a concert, what should have been a joyful celebration. Ezra's death is absolutely heartbreaking."

Treston Blount, Ezra's father, described what happened Nov. 5 in a post on a GoFundMe page that he set up to help defray Ezra's medical expenses. He said Ezra was sitting on his shoulders when a crowd surge crushed them. The father lost consciousness and when he came to, Ezra was missing, Blount said. A frantic search ensued until Ezra was eventually found at the hospital, severely injured.

The child incurred severe damage to his brain, kidney, and liver after being "kicked, stepped on, and trampled, and nearly crushed to death," according to a lawsuit his family has filed against Scott and the event's organizer, Live Nation. The Blount family is seeking at least \$1 million in damages.

### 'SUPER GLUE OF THE FAMILY'

Bharti Shahani, a high-achieving student at Texas A&M University, died Wednesday night, attorney James Lassiter said during a news conference with the family.

Shahani had been hospitalized since she was critically injured at the concert.

Bharti's relatives described her as diligent in her electronics systems engineering studies and someone who always thought of others — including that she had signed up to donate her organs when she died.

Astroworld was supposed to be a rare escape, her sister Namrata Shahani said.

"For the first time in her life, she just wanted to have fun, and that was taken from her," Namrata said.

Namrata said her sister's last words to her were, "Are you OK?"

Her cousin, Mohit Bellani, attended the concert too. He said Shahani had two heart attacks on the way to the hospital. "Bharti was the glue of the family. She was the super glue of the family" he said.

### 'LOVED HIS MOM'

Franco Patino, 21, was working toward a mechanical engineering technology degree at the University of Dayton, with a minor in human movement biomechanics, his father, Julio Patino, told The Associated Press. He was a member of Alpha Psi Lambda, a Hispanic interest fraternity, and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, and was working in an engineering co-op program.

Patino described his son as a charismatic, energetic leader who was active in his community and intent



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on helping people with disabilities. His son was working on a new medical device and wanted to find a way to help his mother walk again after she was severely injured in an automobile accident in Mexico two years ago, Patino said.

Through tears, Patino described how his son — who enjoyed weight lifting, football and rugby — used his strength to break a door and free his mom from the wreckage.

"He loved his mom," Patino said. "He said everything that he was doing, it was trying to help his mom. The entire goal."

Julio Patino, of Naperville, Illinois, was in London on business when the phone rang around 3 a.m. He answered it and heard his wife, Teresita, crying. She said someone had called from a hospital about Franco and that a doctor would be calling her soon. After 30 minutes, she called back with the doctor on the line.

"The doctor was giving us the news that our son had passed away," Patino said.

Patino said he had last spoken with his son about 2 p.m. Friday, when he reassured his father he was fine.

"I just said, 'OK, just be careful,'" Patino said.

## 'HUGE HOLE IN OUR LIVES'

Jacob "Jake" Jurinek, 20, was a junior at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, where he was "pursuing his passion for art and media," his family said in a statement Sunday. He was just short of his 21st birthday.

He was attending the concert with Patino, his friend and former high school football teammate, according to Patino's father, Julio Patino. He was deeply committed to his family and was known as "Big Jake" by his younger cousins.

He will be missed by his father, Ron Jurinek, with whom Jake became especially close after his mother died in 2011.

"In the decade since, Jake and Ron were inseparable — attending White Sox and Blackhawks games, sharing their love of professional wrestling, and spending weekends with extended family and friends at Jake's favorite place, the family cottage in Southwestern Michigan," the family's statement said.

"We are all devastated and are left with a huge hole in our lives," his father, Ron Jurinek, added in an emailed statement.

## 'GOOD STUDENT, ATHLETE, SO POLITE'

Memorial High School ninth-grader John Hilgert, 14, was the youngest of those who died. Mourners began tying green ribbons around trees at the school over the weekend in his memory.

He was at the concert with classmate Robby Hendrix, whose mother, Tracy Faulkner, spoke with the Houston Chronicle. The boys had hoped to get a good spot to watch the show.

"Everything about that night was a tragedy," Faulkner told the newspaper. "John was a good student and athlete and so polite. He was the sweetest and smartest young man."

## 'LIFE OF THE PARTY'

Madison Dubiski, 23, lived in Houston. She was a varsity cheerleader in high school and member of a community service group called the National Charity League, according to a former classmate who spoke to the Houston Chronicle.

"She was definitely the life of the party and loved by so many people," Lauren Vogler told the newspaper.

She was her mom's best friend and she loved watching her brother play sports, family friend Claudia Sierra said.

## 'HARD-WORKING MAN'

Mirza "Danish" Baig, who identified himself on Facebook as a district manager for AT&T, and appeared to be a devoted Dallas Cowboys fan, was among those who died at the the concert, his brother Basil Baig said on Facebook.

"He was (an) innocent young soul who would always put others before him. He was a hard-working man who loved his family and took care of us. He was there in a heartbeat for anything. He always had a solution to everything," Basil Baig told ABC News.

Baig's funeral was held Sunday in Colleyville in the Dallas-Forth Worth area. Messages left with Basil Baig were not returned.

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County officials identified him as Mirza Baig, but his brother said on Facebook he went by Danish. He was 27.

## LOVED TO DANCE

Brianna Rodriguez's family told People magazine that she was among those who perished at the concert. She was 16, a student at Heights High School and loved dancing, according to the family the magazine spoke with. Her family has not responded to a message left by AP.

Outsider her school, pink ribbons and balloons adorned the fence, spelling out "Bri."

"Brianna was someone who performed with the band and was someone who could always make anyone smile," the Heights High School band said in a tweet.

Her high school dance team remembered her in an Instagram post, saying that she was with the group for three years, served as the junior social officer and "never failed to put a smile on everyone's face.

"She was a wonderful friend, teammate, dancer, sister, daughter, and leader. The bulldog community is deeply saddened and will honor her in every way we can. We love you Brianna," the team said in the post.

## COMPUTER SCIENCE STUDENT

Axel Acosta Avila, 21, was a computer science major at Western Washington University. His father, Edgar Acosta, told KOMO-TV his son was among the victims who died at the festival.

The school in Bellingham, Washington, released a statement Sunday: "By all accounts, Axel was a young man with a vibrant future. We are sending our condolences to his family on this very sad day."

Acosta Avila was initially identified by family with the single last name, Acosta, but his father said Monday that his full name should be used.

## ASPIRING BORDER AGENT

Rodolfo "Rudy" Pena, 23, of Laredo, Texas, was a student at Laredo College and wanted to be Border Patrol agent, his friend Stacey Sarmiento said. She described him as a people person. Officials identified him as Rodolfo Pena, but friends called him Rudy.

"Rudy was a close friend of mine," she said. "We met in high school. He was an athlete. ... He brought happiness anywhere he went. He was easy to get along with. It was like positive vibes from him at all times."

"We all came to have a good time ... it was just horrible in there," she added.

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Associated Press writers Jamie Stengle and Juan Lozano in Houston contributed to this report. Chase reported from Dover, Delaware, and Catalini reported from Trenton, New Jersey.

## 9-year-old Dallas boy dies after Astroworld festival crush

HOUSTON (AP) — A 9-year-old Dallas boy has become the youngest person to die from injuries sustained during a crowd surge at the Astroworld music festival in Houston.

Ezra Blount of Dallas died Sunday at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, family attorney Ben Crump said.

Ezra was placed in a medically induced coma after suffering serious injuries in the Nov. 5 crush of fans during a performance by the festival's headliner, rapper Travis Scott.

He is the 10th person who attended the festival to die.

"The Blount family tonight is grieving the incomprehensible loss of their precious young son," Crump said in a news release Sunday night. "This should not have been the outcome of taking their son to a concert, what should have been a joyful celebration."

Treston Blount, Ezra's father, described what happened Nov. 5 in a post on a GoFundMe page that he set up to help defray Ezra's medical expenses. He said Ezra was sitting on his shoulders when a crowd surge crushed them. The father lost consciousness and when he came to, Ezra was missing, Blount said. A frantic search ensued until Ezra was eventually found at the hospital, severely injured.

The child incurred severe damage to his brain, kidney, and liver after being "kicked, stepped on, and trampled, and nearly crushed to death," according to a lawsuit his family has filed against Scott and the event's organizer, Live Nation. The Blount family is seeking at least \$1 million in damages.

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The others who died ranged in age from 14 to 27. Some 300 people were treated at the festival site and 13 were hospitalized.

Houston police and fire department investigators have said they are reviewing surveillance video provided by concert promoter Live Nation, as well as dozens of clips people at the show widely shared on social media. Investigators also planned to speak with Live Nation representatives, Scott and concertgoers. Scott and the event organizers are now the focus of a criminal investigation.

## National Public Radio books editor Petra Mayer dies at 46

WASHINGTON (AP) — Petra Mayer, books editor for National Public Radio, died Saturday of what's believed to be a pulmonary embolism, the news organization said. She was 46.

Mayer is remembered for her reporting at Comic-Con and helping put together NPR's Book Concierge, an annual interactive guide that filters titles based on interest to recommend to readers. She was an occasional guest on "Pop Culture Happy Hour" podcast episodes, and her colleagues said she was a proud nerd who loved science fiction and comics.

NPR's senior vice president for news, Nancy Barnes, said in an email to staff that she died suddenly at Holy Cross Hospital in Maryland.

"Petra was NPR through and through," Barnes wrote.

Mayer joined NPR Books team in 2012 after working as an associate producer and director for "All Things Considered" on the weekends, handling the show's books coverage.

Her biography on NPR's website said she first joined as an engineering assistant in 1994 while attending Amherst College, but left a few years later for a news writing job at Boston's WBUR and for a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University. She returned to NPR in 2000.

## Buttigieg's star rises as \$1T Biden agenda shifts toward him

By HOPE YEN, TOM BEAUMONT and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pete Buttigieg, the transportation secretary who holds the purse strings to much of President Joe Biden's \$1 trillion infrastructure package, was holding forth with reporters on its impact — the promise of more electric cars, intercity train routes, bigger airports — when a pointed question came. How would he go about building racial equity into infrastructure?

The 39-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, and 2020 Democratic presidential candidate laid out his argument that highway design can reflect racism, noting that at least \$1 billion in the bill will help reconnect cities and neighborhoods that had been racially segregated or divided by road projects.

"I'm still surprised that some people were surprised when I pointed to the fact that if a highway was built for the purpose of dividing a white and a Black neighborhood ... that obviously reflects racism," he said.

Racial equity is an issue where Democratic priorities and Buttigieg's future align. One of his greatest shortcomings as a White House candidate was his inability to win over Black voters. How he navigates that heading into the 2022 midterms will probably shape the fortunes of Biden's agenda and the Democratic Party, if not his own prospects.

Republicans seeking to exploit the issue pounced on Buttigieg's words.

"I heard some stuff, some weird stuff from the secretary of transportation trying to make this about social issues," said Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. "To me, a road's a road." Texas Sen. Ted Cruz tweeted sarcastically: "The roads are racist. We must get rid of roads."

But Buttigieg didn't engage and was off to his next stop, the climate summit in Scotland. There he stood for almost a dozen interviews as he promoted provisions of Biden's bill that would build a network of electric vehicle charging stations. He also engaged with young climate activists and took photos with former President Barack Obama.

On racism in roadways, he said simply: "I don't know who it hurts to acknowledge that harm was done and to propose doing something to fix it."

His department later announced it would grant extra discretionary aid to help as many as 20 U.S. com-

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munities remove portions of interstates, redesign rural main streets and repurpose former rail lines. That could help places from Syracuse, New York, where many residents back a plan to tear down portions and build a walkable grid, to racially divided areas in New Orleans and St. Paul, Minnesota.

As Biden prepares to sign the infrastructure bill on Monday, eyes are turning to the man still best known as "Mayor Pete," a newcomer whose promise of "generational change" and real-world sensibility of fixing potholes launched him to the top of the early Democratic primary contests during the 2020 campaign.

Quickly endorsing Biden after abandoning the race, Buttigieg now stands to become one of the more powerful brokers in Washington, handling the largest infusion of cash into the transportation sector since the 1950s creation of the interstate highway system.

"Armed with that much money and significant latitude in how to spend it, Buttigieg is poised to be the most influential secretary of transportation ever," said Jeff Davis, a senior fellow at the Eno Center for Transportation. The department was founded in 1967.

In all, about \$120 billion of the \$550 billion in new transportation spending in the bill would come in the form of competitive grants that give Buttigieg discretion in how the money is used.

A separate social spending bill pending in the House would pour billions more dollars into the Transportation Department, which already expects to see its annual budget surge by over 50% to \$140 billion.

"It's a whole lot of money," says Ray LaHood, a former Republican congressman from Illinois and transportation secretary under Obama, who in comparison presided over the release of \$48 billion in transportation money in the 2009 Recovery Act. Since then, LaHood said, major federal investments in transportation have been stagnant, creating pent-up demand for road, bridge and Amtrak projects that can quickly launch.

It's both a boon and challenge to Buttigieg, who revealed in August that he was going to become a dad with husband Chasten. He took several weeks of paternity leave to care for the twins, returning in October as Republicans criticized him for leaving his post. More recently, he juggled time keeping watch over his infant son, who was ill for three weeks and hospitalized for a respiratory illness, while he worked to address national supply chain problems.

"When somebody welcomes a new child into their family, and goes on leave to take care of that child that's not a vacation, it's work," he said last month. "I'm not going to apologize."

Starting this week, Buttigieg will join other Cabinet members to pitch the plan around the country.

"Look, a lot of this sells itself because communities never needed to be persuaded that their bridge needed to be fixed or that their airport needed an upgrade or that their ports needed investment," Buttigieg said. "They've been trying to get Washington to catch up to them."

Anthony Foxx, who was Obama's transportation secretary from 2013 to 2017, said a big challenge will be the massive operational details in the department, where Buttigieg is supported by veteran hands. Many programs are new, requiring clear guidelines to states and localities on what they are eligible for and how the money is to be awarded. "They will be managing multiple plans with very high dollar figures, creating pressure on administrative staff," Foxx said.

On Sunday, Biden named former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, who oversaw the city's rebuilding effort after it was devastated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, to be a watchdog on the disbursement of the money.

Once many programs are in place, after six to nine months, Foxx said, "that's when the magic happens on what to fund and what may not cut the mustard." The winners would come in the form of hundreds of grant announcements for medium-sized road projects that could accelerate into spring 2023 with the first awards for multibillion-dollar bridges, intercity rail and New York's Gateway tunnel.

As a mayor, Buttigieg was attuned to calls to fix roads and potholes. He relished talking about state-of-the-art sewer system. Now that message will be national with the stakes far greater.

"The currency of politics is exposure, and he's getting a lot of exposure," said Larry Grisalano, who was Buttigieg's advertising consultant.

At the White House, staff warmly refer to him as "Secretary Mayor Pete," and Biden has compared Buttigieg to his late son Beau. The White House celebrated Chasten's birthday with cupcakes. "You're the

best, man," Biden said after Buttigieg spoke at the White House over the summer.

Yet in a city laden with ambition, Buttigieg's potential to move farther onto the national stage can make him a target.

Nina Smith, Buttigieg's former traveling campaign press secretary, said as Biden's top lieutenant on the bill, Buttigieg has the opportunity to lead an effort to "eradicate past injustices." Buttigieg during the 2020 campaign was never able to win over large shares of Black voters.

"That's an added responsibility that I think he's very much aware of and making a central part of the work," said Smith, a Democratic political consultant.

Beaumont reported from Des Moines, Iowa.

## Mar-a-Lago-trespasser deported to China 2 years later

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — A Chinese businesswoman convicted of trespassing at President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago club and lying to Secret Service agents was deported over the weekend, federal authorities said, more than two years after serving her sentence.

Yujing Zhang was turned over to immigration officials in December 2019 after serving her eight-month sentence. But she was held at the Glades County Detention Center for three times as long as her prison term mainly because of deportation delays during the COVID-19 pandemic, immigration authorities told the Miami Herald.

At the time of her sentencing, the then 33-year-old Zhang went to Mar-a-Lago "to meet the president and family and just make friends." When an incredulous judge questioned her about whether she thought she could really meet the Trumps, Zhang laughed loudly and said she hoped to meet other people, too.

Zhang then told U.S. District Judge Roy Altman that the president told reporters that he had invited Zhang to Mar-a-Lago. But Altman said that was another lie.

It's unclear what Zhang's motives were, but the judge said it was clearly about more than getting a photo opportunity.

After serving her sentence and while still detained by U.S. immigration officials, Zhang grew desperate to expedite her return to China. The newspaper reported she filed a petition in December 2020 to speed up the process, but was not successful.

Zhang wrote in English that she had been held at the Glades County Detention Center, had no money to call her family in China, and needed an attorney to gain her freedom and go home, according to court documents.

## Anti-corruption party holds lead in Bulgaria's elections

By VESELIN TOSHKOV Associated Press

SOFIA, Bulgaria (AP) — A newly founded anti-corruption party held a narrow lead in the preliminary vote count from Bulgaria's parliamentary elections Sunday.

A parallel count conducted by Gallup International gave the centrist We Continue the Change party 26.3% of the votes, leading the center-right opposition GERB party of former Prime Minister Boyko Borissov by just over three percentage points.

Founded only few weeks ago by two Harvard graduates, Kiril Petkov and Asen Vasilev, the party quickly won support due to their resolute anti-graft actions and pledges to bring transparency, zero tolerance for corruption and reforms to key sectors in the European Union's poorest member.

"We will be the number one political force," Petkov told reporters after initial results were released. "We will have a majority of 121 MPs in the 240-seat parliament and Bulgaria will have a regular coalition Cabinet."

It could be days before the final official results are announced. If they confirm the initial counts, Petkov would be handed a mandate to form a new government.

Petkov said his party was open to coalition talks with all the parties that were part of last year's protests against Boyko Borissov's government. Investigations by the current caretaker government showed alleged

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corruption cases.

"Now is the time to show that Bulgaria has embarked on the road of change and there is no turning back," said Petkov.

After Bulgaria held inconclusive general elections in April and July, many hoped this third attempt to elect 240 lawmakers would result in a government that can lead the country out of its health and economic crises.

Five other parties appeared headed to winning spots in the 240-seat chamber, according to the exit poll. They include the ethnic Turkish MRF party with 11.4%, the Socialist Party with 10.4% support, the anti-elite There is Such a People party with 9.3%, the liberal anti-corruption group Democratic Bulgaria with 6.4%, and the nationalist Revival party with 5%.

The vote Sunday for a new parliament and a new president came amid a surge of coronavirus infections. The Balkan country is the least vaccinated in the EU, with less than one-third of its adults fully vaccinated. Bulgaria reported 334 COVID-related deaths last week in a single day, a pandemic record.

The Gallup International exit poll also suggested that President Rumen Radev has a commanding lead in his quest for a second five-year term but will still have to face runner-up Anastas Gerdzhikov in a Nov. 21 runoff as voter turnout remained below the needed 50%.

Radev, a vocal critic of Borissov, said Sunday that he voted for freedom, legality, and justice.

"These are the values I stand for," he said after casting his ballot. "The stakes are huge and will determine whether the process of consolidating statehood will continue or those acting from behind the scenes will regain institutional power."

Some 6.7 million people were eligible to vote. The Central Election Commission said preliminary voter turnout was nearly 40%, lower than in previous elections.

## **UK: 3 arrested over car explosion outside Liverpool hospital**

LONDON (AP) — British police arrested three men under terrorism laws Sunday after a car exploded outside a hospital in Liverpool, killing one man and injuring another.

Counter-terrorism police said the three men, whose ages ranged from 21 to 29, were detained in the Kensington area of the northwest England city under the Terrorism Act.

Police also cordoned off another residential street in the city. They did not disclose details of the operation.

Police were called to reports of a blast involving a taxi at Liverpool Women's Hospital on Sunday morning. Photos showed a vehicle in flames near the hospital's main entrance.

Merseyside Police said in a statement that the vehicle, a taxi, "pulled up at the hospital shortly before the explosion occurred. Work is still going on to establish what has happened and could take some time before we are in a position to confirm anything."

The male passenger of the car died and the driver was being treated for non life-threatening injuries, police said.

The explosion occurred just before 11 a.m. on Remembrance Sunday, the time people across Britain pause in memory of those killed in wars.

Police said the explosion had not been declared a terrorist attack and they were keeping an open mind about the cause, but counter-terrorism police were leading the investigation.

Britain's interior minister, Home Secretary Priti Patel, said she was "being kept regularly updated on the awful incident."

The Liverpool Women's Hospital said it immediately restricted visiting access until further notice and diverted patients to other hospitals "where possible."

Fire services said they extinguished the car fire rapidly, and a person had left the car before the fire "developed to the extent that it did."

## **'Watered-down hope': Experts wanted more from climate pact**

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP) — While world leaders and negotiators are hailing the Glasgow climate pact as

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a good compromise that keeps a key temperature limit alive, many scientists are wondering what planet these leaders are looking at.

Crunching the numbers they see a quite different and warmer Earth.

"In the bigger picture I think, yes, we have a good plan to keep the 1.5-degree goal within our possibilities," United Nations climate chief Patricia Espinosa told The Associated Press, referring to the overarching global goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times.

United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the conference host, agreed, calling the deal a "clear road map limiting the rise in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees."

But many scientists are far more skeptical. Forget 1.5 degrees, they say. Earth is still on a path to exceed 2 degrees (3.6 Fahrenheit).

"The 1.5C goal was already on life support before Glasgow and now it's about time to declare it dead," Princeton University climate scientist Michael Oppenheim told The Associated Press in an email Sunday.

A few of the 13 scientists the AP interviewed about the Glasgow pact said they see just enough progress to keep alive the 1.5-degree Celsius limit — and with it, some hope. But barely.

The optimists point to many agreements that came out of Glasgow, including a United States-China deal to work harder together to cut emissions this decade, as well as separate multi-nation agreements that target methane emissions and coal-fired power. After six years of failure, a market-based mechanism would kick-start trading credits that reduce carbon in the air.

The 1.5-degree mark is the more stringent of two targets from the historic 2015 Paris climate accord. United Nations officials and scientists consider it key because a 2018 scientific report found dramatically worse effects on the world after 1.5 degrees.

The world has already warmed 1.1 degrees (2 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial time, so this is really about a few tenths of a degree more. The United Nations calculated that to limit warming to 1.5 degrees, countries need to cut their emissions in half by 2030. Emissions are now going up, not down, by about 14% since 2010, Espinosa said.

German researcher Hans-Otto Portner said the Glasgow conference "got work done, but did not make enough progress."

"Warming will by far exceed 2 degrees Celsius. This development threatens nature, human life, livelihoods, habitats and also prosperity," said Portner, who co-chairs one of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change scientific reports the United Nations relies on.

Instead of big changes in bending the temperature curve as the United Nations had hoped for from Glasgow, they got only tiny tweaks, according to scientists who run computer simulations.

"Heading out of Glasgow we have shaved maybe 0.1C off of warming ... for a best-estimate of 2.3C warming," Breakthrough Institute climate scientist and director Zeke Hausfather said in an email. Hausfather has done climate modeling with colleagues for Carbon Brief.

MIT professor Jon Sterman said his Climate Interactive team crunched some preliminary numbers after the Glasgow deal came out and it didn't match leaders' optimism.

"There is no plausible way to limit warming to 1.5 or even 2 (degrees) if coal is not phased out ... and as rapidly as possible, along with oil and gas," he said.

On Saturday, India got a last-minute change to the pact: Instead of the "phase out" of coal and fossil fuel subsidies, the subsidies are to be "phased down." Several of the scientists said that regardless of what the deal says, coal needs to end, not just decrease, to lessen future warming.

"Lessening' will do less to slow the harmful effects of climate change than 'eliminating,'" former NASA chief scientist Waleed Abdalati, who runs environmental research at the University of Colorado, said in an email.

Before the pact was finished, Climate Action Tracker, which also analyzes pledges to see how much warming they would lead to, said emission-cut pledges would lead to 2.4 degrees of warming.

The 1.5 figure "is balanced on a knife edge," said tracker scientist Bill Hare of Australia.

One paragraph in the pact — which calls on countries whose emission-cutting goals aren't in line with

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1.5- or 2- degree limits to come back with new stronger goals by the end of next year — gives hope, Hare said.

But U.S. climate envoy John Kerry said Saturday night that paragraph probably doesn't apply to the United States, the second-largest coal emitter and the largest historically, because the U.S. goal is so strong.

Jonathan Overpeck, a climate scientist who is dean of the University of Michigan's environment school said the pact provided "watered down hope. ... We got an incomplete plan for slower action."

"I went into the (conference) thinking 1.5C was still alive, and it appears the world's leaders just didn't have the backbone for that," Overpeck said in an email.

Some progress was made, said University of Illinois climate scientist Donald Wuebbles, one of the key authors of the U.S. national climate assessment. "But the probability of getting to 1.5 degrees is much reduced, even to the point of almost being impossible. Even being able to get to 2 degrees is less likely."

But some scientists held out hope.

"For the first time, I can really see a potential path forward to limiting warming to 1.5C," Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann said in an email. "But it will require both (a) countries making good on their current pledges and (b) further ratcheting up their current commitments."

Johan Rockström of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact and Research in Germany highlighted the "optimistic" scenario he and a few others see if all the countries that have promised net-zero emissions by mid-century actually achieve the goal — something most haven't started concrete action on.

In that case, warming could be limited to 1.8 degrees or 1.9 degrees, Rockström said.

"That is a significant progress, but far from sufficient," he said.

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Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>

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Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears

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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.

## In gun debate, Rittenhouse verdict unlikely to be last word

By SARA BURNETT Associated Press

Kyle Rittenhouse walked the streets of Kenosha, Wisconsin, a rifle slung around his chest and shoulder.

The weapon was supposed to be for hunting on a friend's property up north, the friend says. But on that night in August 2020, Rittenhouse says he took the Smith & Wesson AR-style semi-automatic with him as he volunteered to protect property damaged during protests the previous evening. Before midnight, he used it to shoot three people, killing two.

After a roughly two-week trial, a jury will soon deliberate whether Rittenhouse is guilty of charges, including murder, that could send him to prison for life. Was the then-17-year-old forced to act in self-defense while trying to deter crime, as he and his defense attorneys say? Or did Rittenhouse — the only person in a well-armed crowd to shoot anyone — provoke people with his weapon, instigating the bloodshed, as prosecutors argue?

It's a similar debate to what has played out across the country around the use of guns, particularly at protests like the one in Kenosha over the shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, by a white police officer or in other cities over pandemic-related restrictions. In Rittenhouse, some see a patriot defending an American city from destruction when police were unwilling or too overwhelmed to do so. Others see an irresponsible kid in over his head, enamored with brandishing a firearm, or someone looking for trouble or people to shoot.

On the streets of Kenosha that night, Rittenhouse was notable to some for his apparent youthfulness. But, for a while anyway, he was just another person with a gun.

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The Kenosha protest was one of many that year to draw armed militias or counterprotesters. Protesters, too, were armed, Kenosha Police Officer Pep Moretti and others testified.

"We were surrounded all night," Moretti said, adding "there was probably more people armed with weapons than not."

The shooting occurred as the coronavirus pandemic raged in the U.S. and three months after the killing of George Floyd, a Black man, by a white police officer in Minneapolis prompted protests — some violent — in cities big and small. The election between President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden was heating up, with an increase in homicides and calls to "defund the police" a major focus.

All of those factors, experts say, led to a historic spike in the number of background checks to buy or possess a firearm, a key barometer of gun sales. In 2020, the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System database reported almost 39.7 million background checks for gun purchases — more than double the 14.4 million in 2010.

Rittenhouse wasn't old enough to buy a firearm. But in May 2020 he gave money to his sister's boyfriend, Dominick Black, with whom he had gone shooting in northern Wisconsin, and Black bought the Smith & Wesson for him. The gun was supposed to remain in a safe at the home of Black's stepfather, Black testified.

Then on Aug. 23, a white Kenosha police officer responding to a domestic disturbance call shot Blake, who investigators said was armed with a knife. The shooting sparked the protests where people damaged buildings and started fires, at one point burning over 100 vehicles in the lot of a car dealership.

Black said that was when his stepfather got the guns out of his safe in the garage and brought them into the house.

On Aug. 25, Rittenhouse traveled to Kenosha from his home in Illinois. He and Black helped clean up businesses damaged in the unrest, then went back to Black's house. When they left again for the scene of the protests, they both took their guns.

Richie McGinniss, the chief video director for The Daily Caller, a conservative news site, arrived in Kenosha after working at other protests around the country. This protest was different because Wisconsin law allows some people to openly carry weapons, and he testified that as he followed Rittenhouse through the night, he sensed something bad could happen.

Ryan Balch said he carried an AR-style rifle that night and wore body armor to protect himself from protesters who were armed. The former Army infantryman said he patrolled streets with Rittenhouse, who told Balch he was 19 and an EMT, and thought he seemed like "a young and impressionable kid and "a little underequipped and underexperienced."

Gaige Grosskreutz, a protester and volunteer medic, carried a loaded pistol. A supporter of the 2nd Amendment right to bear arms, he said it was the same as any other day: "It's keys, phone, wallet, gun."

Grosskreutz became the third person shot by Rittenhouse that night. He testified that he drew his weapon because he believed Rittenhouse, who had already fatally shot Joseph Rosenbaum and Anthony Huber, was an active shooter. He said Rittenhouse shot him in the arm right after Grosskreutz unintentionally pointed his pistol toward the 17-year-old.

Rittenhouse, who faces a misdemeanor charge of possession of a dangerous weapon by a person under 18 in addition to homicide charges, testified he did nothing wrong and was defending himself when he fired his rifle. Prosecutors say the former police youth cadet who liked to play video shooting games was taking those fantasies to the streets.

For a lot of people, Rittenhouse is the face of gun owners in America, said David Yamane, a sociology professor at Wake Forest University who studies gun culture.

But that is a misconception, he said. In Kenosha, the more typical gun owner was the father who took weapons out of a safe amid unrest, or Grosskreutz, who carried a concealed pistol as a matter of course.

And while Rittenhouse's core supporters believe he did nothing wrong from start to finish, a much larger group of gun owners "are somewhere in between," Yamane said. While they support Rittenhouse's right to defend himself in the moment, they also think he had no business being there, and that "two people died and one person was injured for no good reason."

Former gun industry executive Ryan Busse, now senior policy adviser to the gun-safety group Giffords, calls Rittenhouse the “avatar” of a customer the NRA and gun companies have been appealing to, including by marketing and selling products with names like the Ultimate Arms Warmonger.

Among much of society, whether Rittenhouse is guilty or not guilty won’t change anyone’s minds about guns, he said.

“What’s dangerous is he’s going to become a mascot or a martyr,” Busse added. “Every time there’s a Rittenhouse, it moves the window of what’s acceptable. I think Rittenhouse has moved the window.”

This story has been updated to correct the spelling of Officer Moretti’s last name.

Find AP’s full coverage on the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse at: <https://apnews.com/hub/kyle-rittenhouse>

## **EXPLAINER: What is the defense strategy in Arbery killing?**

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Travis and Greg McMichael said they armed themselves and sped after Ahmaud Arbery because they thought he was a burglar, and they wanted to catch him and hold him until police arrived.

When the 25-year-old Black man turned and fought during the chase, they said, Travis McMichael shot him in self-defense.

That’s what the defense is arguing in the trial of three white men accused in the killing of Arbery, who was shot three times in February 2020 near Brunswick, on the Georgia coast. The McMichaels, a father and son, and neighbor William “Roddie” Bryan are charged with murder and other crimes.

The defense strategy depends on Georgia’s citizen’s arrest and self-defense laws.

### **WHAT DOES THE DEFENSE SAY HAPPENED?**

Greg McMichael, 65, told police he saw Arbery “hauling ass” past his house and believed he had committed burglaries nearby. McMichael ran inside, grabbed a handgun and shouted to his son, who emerged with a shotgun.

The two men jumped in a pickup truck and pursued Arbery through their subdivision. Arbery was on foot. Seeing the chase in progress, Bryan climbed into his own pickup and recorded video on his cellphone as he joined the pursuit.

Bryan, 52, told an investigator he used his truck several times to block Arbery and edge him off the road. Greg McMichael told police he shouted at Arbery to stop.

At the end, Bryan’s video shows Greg McMichael in the bed of his pickup truck with a handgun and Travis McMichael, 35, outside the truck with a shotgun.

Defense attorneys say Arbery lunged toward Travis McMichael and his gun, and that’s when Travis McMichael shot him.

### **WHAT IS A CITIZEN’S ARREST?**

Greg McMichael told a police officer they chased Arbery to keep him from leaving the subdivision. He said they wanted “to hold him” until police could “come and you know, check him out.”

A state law on the books at the time said: “A private person may arrest an offender if the offense is committed in his presence or within his immediate knowledge. If the offense is a felony and the offender is escaping or attempting to escape, a private person may arrest him upon reasonable and probable grounds of suspicion.”

The actual words “citizen’s arrest” didn’t appear in the statute, and there was no obligation for a person who was trying to detain someone to declare that intention. Republican Gov. Brian Kemp signed legislation mostly repealing the law in May.

Arbery had appeared several times on security video inside a house under construction near the McMichaels’ house.

Travis McMichael had seen him outside the house about two weeks earlier and feared Arbery was reaching for a gun that night when he reached toward his pocket, Robert Rubin, an attorney for McMichael said

in his opening statement.

Arbery's behavior at the unfinished house would cause a reasonable person to believe a crime had been committed, Rubin said. That's also why the McMichaels felt they needed to arm themselves, he said.

Prosecutor Linda Dunikoski said during her opening statement that Arbery was unarmed and gave the men no reason to suspect him of wrongdoing. They just assumed he had committed a crime, she said.

Melissa Redmon, a former prosecutor and now a law professor at the University of Georgia, said it could be a "hard sell" to convince a jury there was probable cause to initiate a citizen's arrest.

"That's based on what it appears they knew at the moment they confronted Mr. Arbery or, rather, the lack of information they had at the moment they confronted Mr. Arbery," she said.

**HOW DID ARBERY'S KILLING LEAD TO THE LAW'S REPEAL?**

The citizen's arrest law was approved in 1863 to round up escaped slaves and was later used to justify the lynching of Black people.

There had long been a push to repeal it. Arbery's shooting broadened a national outcry over racial injustice and prompted state lawmakers to act.

The repeal legislation says witnesses and bystanders can't detain people. Restaurant and shop employees can still detain people they believe stole something or who leave without paying. Licensed security guards and private detectives can also detain people.

Deadly force can't be used to detain someone unless it's in self-protection, protecting a home, or preventing a forcible felony.

Though the repeal law has taken effect, the defense is able to cite the old law since it was in effect at the time of Arbery's slaying.

**WHAT CONSTITUTES SELF-DEFENSE?**

It is tragic that Arbery died, Rubin said. "But at that point, Travis McMichael is acting in self-defense. He did not want to encounter Ahmaud Arbery physically. He was only trying to stop him for the police," Rubin said.

Georgia law allows the use of deadly force if a person reasonably believes another person is about to kill or gravely injure him or someone else. There's no obligation to retreat first, as Georgia recognizes a person's right to "stand your ground."

But Georgia law does not allow someone to use force if he is the aggressor, unless he withdraws from the fight and effectively communicates that, and the other person continues to use or threaten to use force against him.

When he raised the shotgun, Travis McMichael was hoping to "de-escalate the situation," but Arbery turned toward McMichael "swinging aggressively" with his fists, Rubin said. McMichael shot him out of fear that Arbery would get the gun and shoot him or his dad, Rubin said.

Prosecutors will likely argue Arbery was allowed to defend himself against a man who had been chasing him and was pointing a gun at him, Redmon said. A Georgia Bureau of Investigation agent said during a June hearing that he believed Arbery acted in self-defense.

Ultimately, the jury will have to consider the moments before the shotgun blasts rang out and decide which man was the aggressor and therefore not legitimately acting in self-defense, Redmon said.

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Associated Press writer Russ Bynum in Brunswick, Georgia, contributed to this report.

## **Signs abounded that deadly Ecuador prison attack was coming**

By ALLEN PANCHANA and GONZALO SOLANO Associated Press

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador (AP) — The signs that an attack was imminent inside the largest prison in Ecuador's coastal city of Guayaquil could not have been clearer.

There had been talk among inmates of the Litoral Penitentiary for days that a group was going to attack another. Then, early Friday morning, police arrested three men trying to smuggle two rifles, five handguns, three grenades, sticks of dynamite and hundreds of rounds of ammunition into the lockup.

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Hours later police announced what the prisoners inside Litoral already knew: The three men detained belonged to a prison gang that was stockpiling weapons.

What happened hours later confirmed there were many more weapons already inside. Late Friday, a brutal attack was launched and clashes among rival gangs lasted for hours into early Saturday. When the dust settled and authorities had regained control, they found at least 68 inmates dead and 25 wounded in what was only the most recent massacre in Ecuador's troubled penitentiary system.

So far this year, at least 334 inmates have died in different clashes in the Guayaquil prison, including 119 inmates in an attack in September.

The Associated Press contacted a prisoner in one of the 12 cell blocks — or pavilions — that make up the prison to hear firsthand what happened before and during the deadly confrontation, and how gangs operate inside the lockup. AP confirmed the identity of the inmate, who asked not to be identified for fear of being killed. He has served five years of a 25-year sentence for murder but says he is not a member of any gang and tries to stay neutral.

In the days before the attack, inmates had already heard that an attack was coming and that the target would be Pavilion Two, the "transitory" pavilion where new inmates arrive and are held until space is found to accommodate them, he said.

The rumors turned out to be true.

The inmate said the shooting began at 7 p.m. Friday and he hid under his cement bunk in a cell of about eight square meters (about 85 square feet) that held 12 inmates. He asked that his cell block not be identified to prevent gang members from finding out who he is.

For years until 2020, the Litoral Penitentiary was controlled by the "Choneros." But after the killing last year of its leader, Jorge Luis Zambrano, an internal dispute began over control of the gang. Authorities consider factions of the gang responsible for the massacres inside the prison.

Prison officials talk of at least six factions: the "Lobos," "JR," "Tiguerones," the "Fito," "Samir" and "Ben10." Police have not said which group was behind Friday's attack. They say some gangs have connections with Mexico's Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation drug cartels.

"Here you sleep with one eye open," the inmate said. And now, he said, word is spreading inside the prison of attacks on other pavilions in a few days. "They want to break you ... and gain control of the drug-trafficking routes and micro-trafficking," or local drug sales.

At the Litoral Penitentiary, he said, "everything is arranged with massacres, extortion. If you don't cooperate you die, they decide who lives, who dies, who gets rich."

The Litoral is designed for 5,000 inmates but currently holds more than 8,500. The arrested leaders of Ecuador's main drug trafficking gangs are held there. They are disputing not just international drug trafficking — Ecuador is a drug transit country neighboring Colombia and Peru — but local sales as well.

Pablo Arosamena, the governor of Guayas state where Guayaquil is located, recently told reporters that profits from internal drug sales in Ecuador are very high. While a kilogram brick of cocaine can be sold outside Ecuador for \$35,000, when broken down and sold to users inside Ecuador the same amount can earn up to \$100,000, he said.

Authorities say they are trying to control what goes on in the prison and, among other things, have installed a network of cellphone jammers to prevent inmates — and gang leaders — from communicating with the outside world.

But it doesn't seem to be working: AP spoke to the inmate inside Litoral using a cellphone. What they do "is useless, here we have a better signal here than outside," he said.

One question often asked after a massacre is how the gangs get so many weapons inside the prison. The inmate said that there is collusion between the prisoners and guards and that weapons enter in food trucks and are sometimes even brought in by "members of the police" themselves.

"The mafia always works by squeezing the families of" people working inside the prison, he said.

Such is the control of the prisons by gangs that members sometimes even leave the prison and return bringing weapons, like the three men arrested Friday hours before the attack.

"They are emissaries of the bosses. They can leave, but they have to return because if they don't return

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(to the prison) they die. Here the bosses control everything," the inmate said

Gen. Marco Villegas, the police's prison control delegate, said the three inmates who tried to smuggle in the weapons would have jumped a wall to get to the street where someone would be waiting for them with the guns to bring back over the wall.

Authorities have declared successive states of emergencies in the prison system trying to end the killings and have sent hundreds of police in for searches, but without any discernable success.

According to Ecuador's constitution, in force since 2008, regular police officers cannot remain inside prisons, and soldiers cannot enter at all, even in situations of extreme violence. That leaves only the guards.

"The government is responsible for omission," said lawyer Joffre Campaña, founder of Goberna & Derecho, a group that researches legal issues related to governance.

He said the prison crisis won't be solved by states of emergencies or search raids.

"It is a structural, complex problem, and they only give us temporary and populist answers," Campaña said.

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Associated Press writer Gonzalo Solano in Quito, Ecuador, contributed to this report.

## White House confident Biden's bill will pass House this week

By HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's top economic adviser expressed confidence Sunday that the White House's \$1.85 trillion domestic policy package will quickly pass the House this week and said approval couldn't come at a more urgent time as prices of consumer goods spike.

"Inflation is high right now. And it is affecting consumers in their pocketbook and also in their outlook for the economy," said Brian Deese, director of the National Economic Council.

"This, more than anything, will go at the costs that Americans face," he said, before adding that the House will consider the legislation this coming week. "It will get a vote, it will pass."

The House has been moving toward approval of the massive Democrat-only-backed bill even as the measure faces bigger challenges in the Senate, where Sens. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., have insisted on reducing its size.

In a letter Sunday to Democratic colleagues, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., counseled "time and patience" for working through a bill of this size.

Consumer prices have soared 6.2% over the last year, the biggest 12-month jump since 1990. Deese acknowledged that prices may not fully return to a more normal 2% level until next year due to the lingering effects of COVID-19, but he said the measure will go a long way toward "lowering costs for American families."

"We're confident this bill, as it moves through the process, is going to be fully paid for, and not only that, it's actually going to reduce deficits over the long term," he said.

Biden on Monday planned to sign a related \$1 trillion infrastructure bill, a bipartisan effort that was passed earlier this month after the president and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., pledged action on Biden's broader package expanding health, child, elder care and climate change by mid-November.

House progressives had threatened to hold up the infrastructure bill without a firm commitment of immediate action on the broader package.

House centrists say they will vote for the package as early as this week if an upcoming Congressional Budget Office analysis affirms White House estimates that the bill is fully paid for. The measure would be covered with changes to corporate taxes, such as a new corporate minimum tax, while raising taxes on higher-income people.

On Friday, Pelosi wrote Democratic members reaffirming her plan to push ahead soon, noting that CBO estimates released so far on pieces of the plan have been consistent with White House projections.

"We are on a path to be further fortified with numbers from the Congressional Budget Office," she said.

Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich., one of 13 House Republicans who voted for the infrastructure bill, said he's not convinced that the broader package will get House approval this week.

"I don't think the votes are there yet," he said. "A good number of Democrats had demanded and are going to receive a CBO report as to whether is, it really paid for? What does it do when you expand Medicare? What does that do to the solvency?"

"Somehow, I don't think we're going to get these answers ... for Pelosi to get the votes set before the end of the week."

The bill is expected to face changes in the Senate. With Republican opposition and an evenly split 50-50 Senate, Biden has no votes to spare.

Manchin in particular has been vocal about the risk of aggravating budget shortfalls and already has managed to bring the bill down from Biden's original \$3.5 trillion price tag. Last week, Manchin again sounded the alarm over "the threat posed by record inflation."

Deese appeared on CNN's "State of the Union" and ABC's "This Week" and Upton spoke on CNN.

## Gadhafi's son announces candidacy for president of Libya

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The son and one-time heir apparent of late Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi announced Sunday his candidacy for the country's presidential election next month, Libya's election agency said.

Seif al-Islam, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court on charges of crimes against humanity related to the 2011 uprising, submitted his candidacy papers in the southern town of Sabha, 650 kilometers (400 miles) south of the capital of Tripoli, the High National Elections Commission said in a statement.

Gadhafi's son was captured by fighters in the town of Zintan late in 2011, the year when a popular uprising, backed by the NATO, toppled his father after more than 40 years in power. Moammar Gadhafi was killed in October 2011 amid the ensuing fighting that would turn into a civil war.

In a video shared by an election official, Seif al-Islam addressed the camera, saying that God will decide the right path for the country's future. The 49-year old, who earned a PhD at the London School of Economics, wore a traditional Libyan robe, turban and spectacles. It was the first time in years that he appeared in public.

The second-born son to the longtime dictator, he was seen as the reformist face of the Gadhaf regime before the 2011 uprising. He was released in June 2017 after more than five years of detention. This July, he told The New York Times in an exclusive interview that he was considering a run for the country's top office. His candidacy is likely to stir controversy across the divided country.

Seif al-Islam is wanted by the ICC on charges of crimes against humanity allegedly committed in the first weeks of the 2011 uprising. ICC spokesman Fadi El Abdallah declined to comment on Seif al-Islam's candidacy.

"The Court doesn't comment on political issues, as for the legal side there is a pending warrant of arrest and that hasn't changed," he said.

Gadhafi's son, who has deeply rooted links to tribes across Libya, is the first major presidential hopeful to submit his candidacy to run for the country's highest post. Also widely expected to announce their bids are powerful military commander Khalifa Hifter, Parliament Speaker Agila Saleh and former Interior Minister Fathi Bashaga.

Seif al-Islam's campaign may focus on the failure of political parties and armed groups to establish a government capable of stabilizing and uniting the fractured country since the 2011 overthrow and killing of his father. However, he is highly likely to face stiff resistance from armed groups and militias particularly in the capital, Tripoli, and the western town of Misrata.

Abdel-Rahman el-Swahili, a lawmaker from Misrata, voiced his rejection to Seif al-Islam's candidacy, saying that Gadhafi's son should be prosecuted, not running for president.

"Those who believe in the possibility of Libya's returning to the era of dictatorship after all these sacrifices, are delusional," he wrote on Facebook.

A group of elders and militia leaders in the western town of Zawiya also announced their rejection of the candidacies of Seif al-Islam and Hifter, warning about the return of civil war. They threatened in a state-

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ment to shut polling stations if the elections proceeded with the current laws.

The election agency began the registration process for presidential and parliamentary hopefuls last week. Potential candidates have until Nov. 22 to register to run for the country's highest post, while parliamentary hopefuls have until Dec. 7 to register their candidacies.

Libya is set to hold presidential elections on Dec. 24, after years of U.N.-led attempts to usher in a more democratic future and bring the country's war to an end. Following the overthrow and killing of Gadhafi, oil-rich Libya spent most of the last decade split between rival governments — one based in the capital, Tripoli, and the other in the eastern part of the country.

The announcement of Seif al-Islam's candidacy came after an international conference in Paris on Friday expressed support for holding "free, fair, inclusive and credible presidential and parliamentary elections" on Dec. 24.

The long-awaited vote still faces challenges, including unresolved issues over laws governing the elections, and occasional infighting among armed groups. Other obstacles include the deep rift that remains between the country's east and west, split for years by the war, and the presence of thousands of foreign fighters and troops.

Gadhafi the dictator had eight children, most of whom played significant roles in his regime. His son Muatassim was killed at the same time Gadhafi was captured and slain. Two other sons, Seif al-Arab and Khamis, were killed earlier in the uprising. Another son, al-Saadi Gadhafi, was released in September after more than seven years of detention in the capital of Tripoli following his extradition from neighboring Niger.

Associated Press writher Mike Corder contributed from The Hague, Netherlands.

## **UK's Johnson: Climate deal sounds 'death knell' for coal**

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson hailed the U.N. climate summit as a "game-changing agreement" that sounded the "death knell for coal power" on Sunday -- although he added that his delight at the progress on fighting climate change was "tinged with disappointment."

Johnson said it was "beyond question" that the deal coming out of the Glasgow conference marks an important moment in the use of coal because most of western Europe and North America have agreed to pull the plug on financial support for all overseas fossil fuel projects by this time next year.

But in a major shift demanded by coal-dependent India and China, the Glasgow Climate pact used watered-down language about "phasing down" the use of coal instead of "phasing out" coal. Johnson, however, said the compromise did not make "that much of a difference."

Ending coal is seen as the key to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which cause the Earth to warm up and produce rising seas and more extreme weather including droughts, storms and wildfires.

"It's an immense thing to get a commitment from 190 countries to phase down or phase out coal," Johnson told a press conference. "The direction of travel is pretty much the same."

Still, he acknowledged that some countries did not live up to the ambition of the summit. He accepted that the Glasgow summit did not deliver the "full solution" to climate change, but said the world was "undeniably heading in the right direction."

"We can lobby, we can cajole, we can encourage, but we cannot force sovereign nations to do what they do not wish to do," he said. "It's ultimately their decision to make and they must stand by it."

He and conference President Alok Sharma both underlined that the Glasgow Climate Pact was the first time that coal had been mentioned in U.N. climate agreements. But Sharma said China and India would have to "justify" their actions.

"On the issue of coal, China and India are going to have to justify to some of the most climate vulnerable countries what happened," he told Sky News on Sunday.

## **Troopers faulted in truck-bicyclists crash case in Nevada**

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Troopers investigating a crash last year that killed five bicyclists on a stretch of

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Nevada highway did not suspect the driver of the box truck that hit them was impaired, although a blood test later found he had a potentially lethal level of methamphetamine in his system, a Las Vegas television station reported.

KLAS-TV said it reviewed hours of trooper body-camera video, photos, internal documents and court records about the wreck that resulted in an agreement that let driver Jordan Alexander Barson plead guilty to two counts of driving under the influence causing death. He originally faced 14 felonies.

The lead prosecutor said the evidence against Barson was weakened because Nevada Highway Patrol troopers at the scene didn't find probable cause to require a blood sample for testing. Instead, Barson submitted to a voluntary blood draw two hours after the crash.

"They didn't get a search warrant in the case, and that had to do with they didn't suspect DUI," former Deputy Clark County District Attorney Thomas Moskal told the station. Moskal has since left the district attorney's office.

"Ultimately, that had negative consequences down the road," he said.

Barson, 45, is serving 16 to 40 years in state prison for the crash that killed Las Vegas residents Aksoy Ahmet, 48; Michael Murray, 57; Gerrard Nieva, 41; Erin Ray, 39; and Tom Trauger, 57.

The wreck happened the morning of Dec. 10, 2020, on U.S. 95 between Boulder City and Searchlight, roughly 60 miles (95 kilometers) south of Las Vegas.

About 20 bicyclists were riding into a strong headwind during an annual recreational ride through scenic desert in Nevada and California.

Barson was working for an Arizona-based courier service. He had driven from Arizona to Las Vegas for a pickup and was on his way back to Arizona.

He told investigators he fell asleep at the wheel and had no memory of striking the bicyclists and an escort vehicle in the right southbound lane of the four-lane divided highway.

"I don't have reason to believe he's under the influence, but he's obviously distraught," a trooper said in one of 16 body camera videos obtained by KLAS-TV through a public records request.

"He thinks he fell asleep. I tend to really believe that," another trooper said.

As troopers worked to identify the dead, they put Barson through a field sobriety test and tried to convince him to submit to a voluntary blood draw.

During the test, Barson "raised his arms, performed an improper turn" and "used his arms to balance," a trooper wrote. The trooper later filed a report deeming the results "unsatisfactory." He said Barson was "shaking uncontrollably" and was an "emotional wreck given the severity of the incident."

Barson eventually submitted to a voluntary blood draw at a hospital. The results showed he had 948 nanograms per milliliter of methamphetamine in his system, documents said. That was more than nine times the 100 nanograms per milliliter limit that prosecutors use in court to prove impairment.

A toxicologist later wrote that the amount of meth in Barson's blood is often seen in overdose patients.

A 2013 U.S. Supreme Court ruling requires police to get a warrant before obtaining a blood draw from a driver suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Nevada law requires law enforcement to establish probable cause to take a driver's blood. If Barson didn't agree to a voluntary draw, troopers would have to call a judge for a telephonic warrant, a common practice.

Troopers asked Barson five times to submit to the voluntary blood draw, KLAS-TV reported. They told him he would have his license suspended, which is standard procedure, if they called a judge for a warrant. They also told him he may no longer be able to work if he couldn't drive.

On the fifth try, Barson nodded yes.

Moskal said the question of whether Barson gave "free and voluntary" consent meant the evidence about methamphetamine would never make it to a jury.

Lacking probable cause, troopers released Barson. He returned home to Kingman, Arizona, where he admitted during an interview four days later that he consumed meth around 4 p.m. the day before the crash.

Barson told troopers he did not sleep well but set out the following morning on his regular work route



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between Las Vegas, the Colorado River town of Bullhead City, Arizona, and Kingman.

Two weeks after Barson's blood results came back, a Nevada Highway Patrol drug recognition expert filed a report based on what she saw in the trooper videos.

She said it was clear to her Barson was under the influence of a stimulant. However, no trooper with current training as a drug recognition expert responded to the scene.

Tom Trauger's widow, Donna, pointed to the two counts of DUI resulting in death that Barson pleaded guilty to. One named three bicyclists as victims. One named two.

"He is certainly serving time for the crime that he committed," she said, "but he is not serving the correct sentence for the crimes that he committed and that's because the troopers didn't do their jobs that day."

Tom Trauger had joined the planned 130-mile (209-kilometer) bicycle trek to celebrate. One rider was retiring, and another had a birthday.

"His pure joy was just being out there on a beautiful day riding his bike," Donna Trauger said.

KLAS-TV said Gov. Steve Sisolak, a Democrat, declined an on-camera interview about the case and issued a statement through a spokeswoman expressing condolences to the victims' loved ones for what he called a horrendous loss of life. The statement said Sisolak remains committed to working with state and local partners to make Nevada's roads safer.

The Nevada Highway Patrol and state Department of Public Safety also declined several on-camera interview requests, KLAS-TV reported.

In a statement, the department called safety and lives a priority "for every trooper who has taken an oath to keep our roadways and our communities safe."

"The Department has reviewed this investigation thoroughly and continues to be committed to improving investigative techniques, providing necessary resources and ongoing training for troopers," the statement said.

The Highway Patrol did not explain what, if anything, has changed since the crash.

## Disney's 'Eternals' tops domestic box office for 2nd weekend

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Disney and Marvel's "Eternals" took a steep drop in its second weekend in theaters, but it's still hanging on to first place ahead of newcomers like "Clifford the Big Red Dog."

"Eternals" added \$27.5 million over the weekend, bringing its domestic total to \$118.8 million, according to studio estimates Sunday. The film, directed by Oscar-winner Chloé Zhao and starring Angelina Jolie, Kumail Nanjiani and Gemma Chan, fell 61% from its debut. Though not uncommon for a big superhero tentpole, it was significantly steeper than the 52% drop seen by the last Disney and Marvel offering, "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings."

Both played exclusively in theaters, but the main difference is that "Shang-Chi" simply got better ratings from audiences and critics. "Shang-Chi" also became available to stream on Disney+ this weekend. "Eternals" has made \$281.4 million globally to date.

Second place went to "Clifford the Big Red Dog," which opened in theaters during the week and was also available to stream at home for Paramount+ subscribers. It made an estimated \$16.4 million from 3,700 theaters over the weekend and \$22 million across its five days in release.

Though critics were not impressed (it has a 48% on Rotten Tomatoes), audiences were more forgiving, giving it a promising A CinemaScore. And "Clifford" managed to do this in the face of uncertain moviegoing conditions for families.

"There's been a lot of talk about family audiences and whether or not they want to go to the movie theater," said Paul Dergarabedian, Comscore's senior media analyst. "I think this is a really solid debut. It shows there is a demand for family films on the small screen and the big screen."

Blockbusters rounded out the top five with "Dune" in third place with \$5.5 million, "No Time to Die" in fourth with \$4.6 million and "Venom: Let There Be Carnage" in fifth with \$4 million. Notably, "Venom 2" this weekend became only the second pandemic-era film to cross the \$200 million mark at the domestic box office. The other was "Shang-Chi."

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More and more awards hopefuls are entering the specialty box office as well, and many are making their way into the top 10. This weekend Kenneth Branagh's semi-autobiographical film "Belfast" made \$1.8 million from 580 screens in its debut. In its second weekend, "Spencer," featuring Kristen Stewart as Princess Diana, pulled in \$1.5 million from 1,265 screens. And even in its fourth weekend, Wes Anderson's "The French Dispatch" continues to do well, adding \$1.8 million and bringing its total to \$11.6 million.

Outside the top 10, the Julia Child documentary "Julia" opened on five screens to \$20,796.

"These films are in fewer theaters, but there is a demand for independent film which is one of the categories that everyone thought would be really hurt by the pandemic," said Dergarabedian. "We're really seeing signs of a much more normalized marketplace."

Next weekend, "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" faces off against the Will Smith awards hopeful "King Richard."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Eternals," \$27.5 million.
2. "Clifford the Big Red Dog," \$16.4 million.
3. "Dune," \$5.5 million.
4. "No Time to Die," \$4.6 million.
5. "Venom: Let There Be Carnage," \$4 million.
6. "Ron's Gone Wrong," \$2.2 million.
7. "The French Dispatch," \$1.8 million.
8. "Belfast," \$1.8 million.
9. "Spencer," \$1.5 million.
10. "Antlers," \$1.2 million.

Follow AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/lldbahr>

## Japan's former princess leaves for US with commoner husband

By YURI KAGEYAMA Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — A Japanese princess who gave up her royal status to marry her commoner college sweetheart arrived in New York on Sunday, as the couple pursued happiness as newlyweds and left behind a nation that has criticized their romance.

The departure of Mako Komuro, the former Princess Mako, and Kei Komuro, both 30, was carried live by major Japanese broadcasters, showing them boarding a plane amid a flurry of camera flashes at Haneda Airport in Tokyo.

Photos posted online showed the couple arriving at JFK Airport.

Kei Komuro, a graduate of Fordham University law school, has a job at a New York law firm. He has yet to pass his bar exam, another piece of news that local media have used to attack him, although it is common to pass after multiple attempts.

"I love Mako," he told reporters last month after registering their marriage in Tokyo. They did so without a wedding banquet or any of the other usual celebratory rituals.

"I want to live the only life I have with the person I love," he said.

Although Japan appears modern in many ways, values about family relations and the status of women often are seen as somewhat antiquated, rooted in feudal practices.

Such views were accentuated in the public's reaction to the marriage. Some Japanese feel they have a say in such matters because taxpayer money supports the imperial family system.

Other princesses have married commoners and left the palace. But Mako is the first to have drawn such a public outcry, including a frenzied reaction on social media and in local tabloids.

Speculation ranged from whether the couple could afford to live in Manhattan to how much money Kei Komuro would earn and if the former princess would end up financially supporting her husband.

Mako is the niece of Emperor Naruhito, who also married a commoner, Masako. Masako often suffered

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mentally in the cloistered, regulated life of the imperial family. The negative media coverage surrounding Mako's marriage gave her what palace doctors described last month as a form of traumatic stress disorder.

Former Emperor Akihito, the father of the current emperor, was the first member of the imperial family to marry a commoner. His father was the emperor under whom Japan fought in World War II.

The family holds no political power but serves as a symbol of the nation, attending ceremonial events and visiting disaster zones, and remains relatively popular.

Mako's loss of royal status comes from the Imperial House Law, which allows only male succession. Only male royals have household names, while female imperial family members have only titles and must leave if they marry commoners.

Mako is the daughter of the emperor's younger brother, and her 15-year-old brother is expected to eventually be emperor.

Complicating the former princess's marriage, announced in 2017, was a financial dispute involving Kei Komuro's mother. That issue was recently settled, according to Kyodo news service.

When Kei Komuro returned from the U.S. in September, the couple was reunited for the first time in three years. They met while attending Tokyo's International Christian University a decade ago.

In announcing their marriage, the former princess, a museum curator, made her choice clear.

"He is someone I cannot do without," she said. "Marriage is that decision needed for us to live on, staying true to our hearts."

Yuri Kageyama is on Twitter <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>

This story corrects that the princess gave up her royal status, not the throne.

## Italian Coast Guard rescues 550 migrants from stormy seas

By TRISHA THOMAS and FRANCES D'EMILIO undefined

ROCCELLA JONICA, Italy (AP) — The Italian Coast Guard on Sunday safely brought to shore more than 550 migrants, many of them young men or boys from Egypt, from storm-tossed waters off the southern "toe" of Italy's mainland, as human traffickers increasingly use a new route.

One rescue began Saturday night and ended early Sunday when the 303 migrants, soaked and shivering, stepped on to the port of Roccella Jonica in the the Calabria region.

Later Sunday, after an Italian customs police boat spotted spotted another fishing vessel in difficulty off Calabria, coast guard crews ferried 250 migrants to the same port, Associated Press journalists in Roccella Jonica reported.

While most migrants seeking to reach Italy in the central Mediterranean depart from Libya or Tunisia, authorities say an increasing number of traffickers' boats are plying a route that begins in Turkey and ends at the southern tip of the Italian peninsula.

Those rescued from traffickers' unseaworthy rubber dinghies and wooden boats that depart from North Africa are usually taken to Lampedusa, a tiny Italian island, or to ports in Sicily. Those sailing from Turkey are generally taken to Calabria or Puglia in the "heel" of the Italian mainland.

The charity Resqship tweeted Sunday that after it alerted authorities about an overcrowded wooden boat with 100 migrants south of Lampedusa, the Italian coast vessel evacuated them to safety.

In Roccella Jonica, Red Cross volunteers early Sunday handed the migrants plastic clogs, blankets, food and protective face masks as part of COVID-19 precautions. Authorities recently set up a tent structure to serve as temporary housing but it's only for up to 120 people, so some of the migrants were driven to other shelters.

As of Nov. 12, 57,833 migrants had arrived in Italy by sea this year.

In 2020, more than 31,000 arrived. In 2019, when anti-migrant leader Matteo Salvini used his post as interior minister to try to thwart charity boats from disembarking people they rescued at sea, just under 10,000 arrived.

D'Emilio reported from Rome. AP photographer Alessandra Tarantino contributed from Roccella Jonica.

Follow all AP stories on global migration at <https://apnews.com/hub/migration>.

## **Al-Jazeera says bureau chief detained by Sudanese forces**

By FAY ABUELGASIM Associated Press

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP) — The Qatar-based satellite news network Al-Jazeera said Sunday its bureau chief in Sudan was detained by security forces, a day after mass protests against last month's military coup.

The network said on Twitter that Sudanese forces raided the home of El Musalmi El Kabbashi and detained him.

The development comes after security forces fired live ammunition and tear gas Saturday to disperse protesters denouncing the military's tightening grip on the country.

The Sudan Doctors Committee said a 15-year-old protester died Sunday of gunshot wounds to his stomach and thigh, raising the death toll to six people.

In a later statement, Al-Jazeera said El Kabbashi had been arrested at his home in Khartoum, the Sudanese capital. The broadcaster said it held the Sudanese military responsible for his safety.

"Al-Jazeera condemns in the strongest terms the reprehensible actions of the military and calls on the authorities to release El Kabbashi immediately and to allow its journalists to operate unhindered, free to practice their profession without fear or intimidation," the channel said.

Sudanese officials could not be immediately reached for comment.

Thousands of pro-democracy protesters took to the streets across Sudan on Saturday to rally against the military coup last month. The takeover has drawn international criticism and massive protests in the streets of the capital of Khartoum and elsewhere in the country.

The killings Saturday took place in Khartoum and its twin city of Omdurman. The dead included four people killed by gunshots and one who died from being hit by a tear gas canister. The 15-year-old who died of his wounds Sunday brought to six the number of fatalities, the doctors committee said. Several other protesters were wounded, including from gunshots, it said.

That brought the tally since the Oct. 26 coup to at least 21 protesters dead, according to the medical group.

Saturday's rallies, called by the pro-democracy movement, came two days after coup leader Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan reappointed himself head of the Sovereign Council, Sudan's interim governing body. Thursday's move angered the pro-democracy alliance and frustrated the United States and other countries that have urged the generals to reverse their coup.

The newly appointed body held its first meeting, chaired by Gen. Burhan Sunday in Khartoum, the council said on its Facebook page. In a statement after the meeting, the council said it would form "a civilian government" in the coming days.

The pro-democracy movement condemned "the excessive use of force" against the protesters Saturday. The Forces for the Declaration of Freedom and Change said their struggle to establish a full civilian government "will not stop" and called for mass demonstrations on Wednesday.

The Sudanese military seized power Oct. 25, dissolving the transitional government and arresting dozens of officials and politicians. The takeover upended a fragile planned transition to democratic rule, more than two years after a popular uprising forced the removal of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir and his Islamist government.

Associated Press writer Samy Magdy in Cairo contributed.

## **Workers at federal prisons are committing some of the crimes**

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than 100 federal prison workers have been arrested, convicted or sentenced

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for crimes since the start of 2019, including a warden indicted for sexual abuse, an associate warden charged with murder, guards taking cash to smuggle drugs and weapons, and supervisors stealing property such as tires and tractors.

An Associated Press investigation has found that the federal Bureau of Prisons, with an annual budget of nearly \$8 billion, is a hotbed of abuse, graft and corruption, and has turned a blind eye to employees accused of misconduct. In some cases, the agency has failed to suspend officers who themselves had been arrested for crimes.

Two-thirds of the criminal cases against Justice Department personnel in recent years have involved federal prison workers, who account for less than one-third of the department's workforce. Of the 41 arrests this year, 28 were of BOP employees or contractors. The FBI had just five. The Drug Enforcement Administration and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives each had two.

The numbers highlight how criminal behavior by employees festers inside a federal prison system meant to punish and rehabilitate people who have committed bad acts. The revelations come as advocates are pushing the Biden administration to get serious about fixing the bureau.

In one case unearthed by the AP, the agency allowed an official at a federal prison in Mississippi, whose job it was to investigate misconduct of other staff members, to remain in his position after he was arrested on charges of stalking and harassing fellow employees. That official was also allowed to continue investigating a staff member who had accused him of a crime.

In a statement to the AP, the Justice Department said it "will not tolerate staff misconduct, particularly criminal misconduct." The department said it is "committed to holding accountable any employee who abuses a position of trust, which we have demonstrated through federal criminal prosecutions and other means."

Attorney General Merrick Garland has said his deputy, Lisa Monaco, meets regularly with Bureau of Prisons officials to address issues plaguing the agency.

Federal prison workers in nearly every job function have been charged with crimes. Those employees include a teacher who pleaded guilty in January to fudging an inmate's high school equivalency and a chaplain who admitted taking at least \$12,000 in bribes to smuggle Suboxone, which is used to treat opioid addiction, as well as marijuana, tobacco and cellphones, and leaving the items in a prison chapel cabinet for inmates to retrieve.

At the highest ranks, the warden of a federal women's prison in Dublin, California, was arrested in September and indicted this month on charges he molested an inmate multiple times, scheduled times where he demanded she undress in front of him and amassed a slew of nude photos of her on his government-issued phone.

Warden Ray Garcia, who was placed on administrative leave after the FBI raided his office in July, allegedly told the woman there was no point in reporting the sexual assault because he was "close friends" with the person who would investigate the allegation and that the inmate wouldn't be able to "ruin him." Garcia has pleaded not guilty.

Garcia's arrest came three months after a recycling technician at FCI Dublin was arrested on charges he coerced two inmates into sexual activity. Several other workers at the facility, where actresses Felicity Huffman and Lori Loughlin spent time for their involvement in the college admissions bribery scandal, are under investigation.

Monaco said after Garcia's arrest that she was "taking a very serious look at these issues across the board" and insisted she had confidence in the bureau's director, Michael Carvajal, months after senior administration officials were weighing whether to oust him.

In August, the associate warden at the Metropolitan Detention Center in New York City was charged with killing her husband — a fellow federal prison worker — after police said she shot him in the face in their New Jersey home. She has pleaded not guilty.

One-fifth of the BOP cases tracked by the AP involved crimes of a sexual nature, second only to cases involving smuggled contraband. All sexual activity between a prison worker and an inmate is illegal. In the most egregious cases, inmates say they were coerced through fear, intimidation and threats of violence.

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A correctional officer and drug treatment specialist at a Lexington, Kentucky, prison medical center were charged in July with threatening to kill inmates or their families if they didn't go along with sexual abuse. A Victorville, California, inmate said she "she felt frozen and powerless with fear" when a guard threatened to send her to the "hole" unless she performed a sex act on him. He pleaded guilty in 2019.

Theft, fraud and lying on paperwork after inmate deaths have also been issues.

Earlier this month, three employees and eight former inmates at the notorious New York City federal jail where financier Jeffrey Epstein killed himself were indicted in what prosecutors said was an extensive bribery and contraband smuggling scheme. The Justice Department closed the jail in October, citing deplorable conditions for inmates. Last year, a gun got into the building.

One of the charged employees, a unit secretary, was also accused of misrepresenting gang member Anthony "Harv" Ellison as a "model inmate" to get him a lesser sentence.

The Bureau of Prisons, which houses more than 150,000 federal inmates and employs about 37,500 people, has lurched from crisis to crisis in the past few years, from the rampant spread of coronavirus inside prisons and a failed response to the pandemic to dozens of escapes, deaths and critically low staffing levels that have hampered responses to emergencies.

In interviews with the AP, more than a dozen bureau staff members have also raised concerns that the agency's disciplinary system has led to an outsize focus on alleged misconduct by rank-and-file employees and they say allegations of misconduct made against senior executives and wardens are more easily brushed aside.

"The main concern with the Bureau of Prisons is that wardens at each institution, they decide if there's going to be any disciplinary investigation or not," said Susan Canales, vice president of the union at FCI Dublin. "Basically, you're putting the fox in charge of the henhouse."

At the federal prison in Yazoo City, Mississippi, the official tasked with investigating staff misconduct has been the subject of numerous complaints and multiple arrests. The bureau has not removed him from the position or suspend him — a deviation from standard Justice Department practice.

In one instance, a prison worker reported that the official assaulted him inside a housing unit, according to a police report obtained by the AP. Internal documents detail allegations that the official grabbed the officer's arm and trapped him inside an inmate's cell, blocking his path.

The same official was arrested in another instance when a different employee contacted the local sheriff's office, accusing him of stalking and harassing her. The AP is not identifying the official by name because some of the criminal charges were later dropped.

In both instances, the victims said they reported the incidents to the prison complex warden, Shannon Withers, and to the Justice Department's inspector general. But they say the Bureau of Prisons failed to take any action, allowing the official to remain in his position despite pending criminal charges and allegations of serious misconduct.

A bureau spokesperson, Kristie Breshears, declined to discuss the case or address why the official was never suspended.

Breshears said the agency is "committed to ensuring the safety and security of all inmates in our population, our staff, and the public" and that allegations of misconduct are "thoroughly investigated for potential administrative discipline or criminal prosecution."

The bureau said it requires background checks and carefully screens and evaluates prospective employees to ensure they meet its core values. The agency said it requires its employees to "conduct themselves in a manner that fosters respect for the BOP, Department of Justice, and the U.S. Government."

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Sisak reported from New York.

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On Twitter, follow Michael Balsamo at [twitter.com/mikebalsamo1](https://twitter.com/mikebalsamo1) and Michael Sisak at [twitter.com/mike-sisak](https://twitter.com/mike-sisak) and send confidential tips by visiting <https://www.ap.org/tips>

## Residents seek role in federal probe into Minneapolis police

By MOHAMED IBRAHIM Associated Press/Report for America

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Terrance Jackson remembers driving down Lake Street in 2002 when he saw police arresting his cousin for driving with an invalid license. When he pulled over and offered to take his cousin's car home to keep it from being towed, things went badly.

One officer grabbed his hand and bent it back "to try to get me to react," Jackson said. When his shoe came off as he was being restrained, another officer threw it across the parking lot.

Jackson, 63, is one of more than a thousand people who have recounted their run-ins with Minneapolis police to activist groups that plan to share their stories with U.S. Justice Department officials conducting a civil rights investigation into the police force. The effort is aimed at making sure community members have a say in the probe launched the day after former officer Derek Chauvin was convicted of murdering George Floyd.

Investigators are looking into whether Minneapolis police have shown a "pattern or practice" of policing that is unlawful or unconstitutional. They are also examining the police department's use of force, including against protesters, its treatment of people suffering from behavioral health issues, its systems of accountability and whether officers have engaged in discriminatory policing.

The inquiry could lead to a consent decree under which the department would be legally required to make certain changes.

A Justice Department spokeswoman declined to comment on the civil rights probe's progress or say how much weight investigators might place on the civilian accounts that groups provide them, because the probe is ongoing.

But a former Justice Department official, Christy Lopez, said such accounts can help steer investigations. And those helping gather the civilian accounts say they think the stories will make it hard for investigators to ignore the abuse.

"It's one thing to see things in a document. It's another thing for someone to tell you, 'This is what happened to me,' or 'This is what the police did to me,'" said Michelle Gross, a member of one of the groups, Communities United Against Police Brutality.

"That kind of information puts a face to the problem and it also shows the pattern," she said.

The Associated Press submitted a records request to the police department seeking information on Jackson's 2002 encounter with officers, but a spokesman said the department had no record of the event.

The Justice Department investigation wasn't affected by the campaign for a ballot initiative that Minneapolis voters rejected in early November to replace the city's police department with a reimagined public safety agency that would have relied less on armed officers. And a state investigation remains ongoing.

Pattern-or-practice investigations became a tool to combat police misconduct in the 1990s, when the acquittal of four Los Angeles police officers in the beating of Rodney King sparked riots in the city and protests across the country. After an independent commission determined King's assault was ultimately due to institutional failure within the Los Angeles Police Department, Congress authorized the attorney general to investigate whether "a pattern or practice of conduct by law enforcement officers" was violating people's civil rights.

From the first such investigation in Pittsburgh in 1997, through 2016, the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division conducted nearly 70 formal probes of police departments nationwide resulting in 40 reform agreements, according to agency data.

The Minneapolis probe was the first of three Justice Department investigations of local law enforcement launched during the Biden administration. It is also investigating policing in Louisville, Kentucky, following the death of Breonna Taylor and in Phoenix over excessive force allegations.

If investigators find a pattern or practice of unconstitutional policing in Minneapolis, federal and city officials will negotiate required changes, or a consent decree. A federally appointed monitor oversees progress and reports to a federal judge. Insufficient progress or failure to follow the decree could result in the federal government taking control of the department.

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It could look similar to the agreement between the Justice Department and the city of Ferguson, Missouri, that followed the 2014 killing of Michael Brown, a Black teenager, by a white police officer. The agreement changed the Ferguson police force's policies on the use of force, body-worn cameras, searches and seizures, and responses to protests.

Lopez, who led the group within the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division that conducted pattern-or-practice investigations from 2010 to 2017, said stories from community members can help direct investigators toward particular officers, units, tactics or types of interactions. The number of complaints and consistency between them can alert investigators to patterns of unlawful policing that only community members would experience, and they can then go verify those accounts with documentation from the city such as arrest records and police bodycam footage, she said.

That proved true in Ferguson when accounts from members of the public helped Lopez's team identify issues within the municipal court system, which was also part of the ensuing agreement.

"In Ferguson, if you had gone in there and just looked at lethal shootings and use of force, because that was what happened to Michael Brown, you would have focused on that," she said. "But in talking with people, that's where we really learned about the depth of the concern about fines and fees, and how they were using the courts to violate people's rights. We would have missed that entirely if we hadn't talked to people and heard their stories."

Iris Roley, a founder of the Cincinnati Black United Front, said her community played a significant role in crafting the agreement between their city and federal officials after the killings of Jeffrey Irons and Roger Ownesby Jr. by Cincinnati officers in 2000. Roley said her group collected more than 400 accounts of police brutality and misconduct from members of the community who were brave enough to come forward despite fearing retaliation.

"What we did when we listened to our community — the Black community — we took complaints and turned complaints into training, and we took training and turned that into policy," she said.

Roley said the agreement brought changes to police department policies, including on its officers' use of force. But she said the document hasn't been a cure-all, and that policing continues to evolve and requires constant oversight.

Lopez said investigators aim to complete inquiries and issue findings within a year, but that it varies from case to case, with Ferguson taking six months but others taking years. Though it may take another year to negotiate the consent decree with Minneapolis and get it entered into court, Lopez said investigators are always aware of the urgency to deliver their findings and kickstart the improvement process.

"There's always tension between the fierce urgency of now — which is a very, very real thing — and wanting to use this opportunity you have to learn everything you can about a department because you know that's how you develop the best remedy to fix the problem," she said.

Gross' group in Minneapolis has gathered more than 1,400 citizen accounts. In some cases, activists are asking people to share their stories directly with investigators.

Jackson said he hopes his story and others will help bring much-needed change to the city's police force.

"When I was growing up in north Minneapolis, we had officers in our community and we played with their kids, they got nothing but respect. They knew everybody's family, they were from the neighborhood," he said. "It's a whole different thing now."

Mohamed Ibrahim is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

## UN climate boss: 'Good compromise' beats no deal on warming

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP) — It was no deal or a lump of coal at Glasgow climate talks and for Patricia Espinosa, the United Nations' climate secretary, there was no choice.



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"No deal was the worst possible result there. Nobody wins," Espinosa said in an interview with The Associated Press Sunday, about 15 hours after nearly 200 nations agreed on what is now being called the Glasgow Climate Pact.

The world got a climate deal that outside experts said showed progress, but not success. It didn't achieve any of the three U.N. goals: Pledges that would cut world carbon dioxide emissions by about half, \$100 billion in yearly climate aid from rich countries to poor ones and half that money going to help the developing world adapt to the harms of a warming world.

Even more disappointing, a big world economy — India — which is already seeing droughts and extreme heat from global warming was the nation that watered down the final Glasgow deal.

"I am satisfied," Espinosa said. "I think this is a very positive result in the sense that it gives us a very clear guidance on what we need to do in the coming years."

One climate deal itself won't do the trick to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times, the U.N.'s overarching goal, Espinosa said. But she said it sets the stage, creating a carbon market, allowing more money to flow from rich to poor nations, even if poor nations were unsatisfied and said it isn't enough.

"It doesn't fully satisfy everyone," she said. "But it brings us forward. It's a good compromise."

Compromise was essential when a last minute proposal almost killed her possible deal.

India, the third-largest carbon-polluting country whose development is coal-centric said it couldn't live with historic language calling for a phase out of coal and an end to fossil fuel subsidies. For many of the countries, especially small island nations facing threats from rising seas, ending coal was key in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and trying to keep warming to a level that would allow their nations to live. Many countries were telling Espinosa and conference president Alok Sharma that the coal phase-out language "has to be in there."

But no deal or a deal without India was unacceptable.

A series of small negotiations erupted. Many on camera, which Espinosa said was important for the world. Small island nations got consulted. They didn't like it, but they like Espinosa, and U.S. climate envoy John Kerry said had no choice. India would have preferred no coal language at all, Espinosa said. Instead India proposed "phased out" become "phase down" and country after country said they hated the idea, but accepted it.

"I think it's a clear example of a compromise," Espinosa said.

Is it blackmail?

"Some people see it like this, but I would say this is really the essence of multilateral negotiation," the veteran Mexican diplomat said. "Everybody comes to the table with some specific concerns, puts it on the table and is participating in good faith."

The way Espinosa sees it, the fact that India had to make the change was because the negotiations pushed and pushed India to do more. If talks hadn't been pushing for more change, there wouldn't have been the drama, she said.

Still, it's not what Espinosa wanted.

"We would have preferred a very clear statement about a phasing out of coal and (the) elimination of fossil fuel subsidies," Espinosa said, but she understands India's needs.

And even the phrase "phase down" may mean more than what it seems Espinosa said: "When you say phase down you're not saying what is the limit and therefore zero can be the limit."

But somehow it wasn't the most tense moment of the two-week climate negotiations for Espinosa. That came Friday, the ostensible last day.

"I was worried," Espinosa said. "I was looking at the at the clock and I was thinking, 'OK, how can we make this still work if the text does not receive broad support?'"

In the end, a day later, a hold-your-nose deal to many nations because of the coal controversy was struck. Espinosa then asked her staff to run out and get some celebratory sushi and wine.

"We had this very short toast and they we had to leave, because the premises were going to shut down,"

she laughed.

Follow all AP stories on climate change at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>.

## **Austria orders nationwide lockdown for the unvaccinated**

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — The Austrian government has ordered a nationwide lockdown for unvaccinated people starting at midnight Sunday to combat rising coronavirus infections and deaths.

The move prohibits unvaccinated people 12 and older from leaving their homes except for basic activities such as working, grocery shopping, going for a walk — or getting vaccinated.

Authorities are concerned about rising infections and deaths and that soon hospital staff will no longer be able to handle the growing influx of COVID-19 patients.

“It’s our job as the government of Austria to protect the people,” Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg told reporters in Vienna on Sunday. “Therefore we decided that starting Monday ... there will be a lockdown for the unvaccinated.”

The lockdown affects about 2 million people in the Alpine country of 8.9 million, the APA news agency reported. It doesn’t apply to children under 12 because they cannot yet officially get vaccinated.

The lockdown will initially last for 10 days and police will go on patrol to check people outside to make sure they are vaccinated, Schallenberg said, adding that additional forces will be assigned to the patrols.

Unvaccinated people can be fined up to 1,450 euros (\$1,660) if they violate the lockdown.

Austria has one of the lowest vaccination rates in Western Europe: only around 65% of the total population is fully vaccinated. In recent weeks, Austria has faced a worrying rise in infections. Authorities reported 11,552 new cases on Sunday; a week ago there were 8,554 new daily infections.

Deaths have also been increasing in recent weeks. On Sunday, 17 new deaths were reported. Overall, Austria’s pandemic death toll stands at 11,706, APA reported.

The seven-day infection rate stands at 775.5 new cases per 100,000 inhabitants. In comparison, the rate is at 289 in neighboring Germany, which has already also sounded the alarm over the rising numbers.

Schallenberg pointed out that while the seven-day infection rate for vaccinated people has been falling in recent days, the rate is rising quickly for the unvaccinated.

“The rate for the unvaccinated is at over 1,700, while for the vaccinated it is at 383,” the chancellor said.

Schallenberg also called on people who have been vaccinated to get their booster shot, saying that otherwise “we will never get out of this vicious circle.”

This story corrects that the lockdown applies to 12 and older, not just over 12.

Follow AP’s pandemic coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

## **US Catholic bishops may dodge rebuke of Biden over abortion**

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

While some US Catholic bishops continue to denounce President Joe Biden for his support of legal abortion, their conference as a whole is likely to avoid direct criticism of him at its upcoming national meeting.

The highest-profile agenda item is a proposed “teaching document” about the sacrament of Communion. Months of work on the document, by the conference’s Committee on Doctrine, coincided with sometimes heated debate among the bishops as to whether Biden and other Catholic politicians who support abortion rights are unworthy of receiving Communion.

A draft of the document circulating ahead of the Nov. 15-18 meeting in Baltimore breaks little new ground, though its language could be toughened during the gathering. The draft mentions abortion only once and doesn’t name Biden or other politicians, though it says at one point, “Lay people who exercise

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some form of public authority have a special responsibility to embody Church teaching.”

A member of the doctrine committee, Bishop Michael Olson of Fort Worth, Texas, said he and his colleagues decided that the document should avoid any trace of partisan politics.

Yet Olson remains an outspoken critic of Biden’s abortion stance, saying the president has “upped the scale of scandal.”

“He’s gone on record as saying abortion is a fundamental right while presenting himself as an exemplary Catholic,” Olson told The Associated Press. “The issue of public confusion is really at stake here.”

While some bishops have made clear that they would deny Communion to Biden, there is no national policy on the matter. Cardinal Wilton Gregory, the archbishop of Washington, has affirmed that Biden is welcome to receive Communion there.

Last month, after a private meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican, Biden said the subject of abortion was not raised, but indicated he had the pontiff’s general support.

“We just talked about the fact he was happy that I was a good Catholic and I should keep receiving Communion,” Biden said.

One conservative bishop, Thomas Tobin of Providence, Rhode Island, had urged Francis to confront Biden over abortion.

“Please challenge President Biden on this critical issue,” Tobin tweeted before the Vatican meeting. “His persistent support of abortion is an embarrassment for the Church and a scandal to the world.”

Throughout the year, Francis and some of his high-level aides have sought to tone down the anti-Biden sentiment with USCCB ranks, calling for dialogue and an approach to Communion that is pastoral rather than punitive.

The friction between U.S. bishops and Catholic politicians who support abortion rights is a decades-old phenomenon; it reached a notably intense phase in 2004 when John Kerry, a Catholic, won the Democratic presidential nomination.

But Biden’s election — as only the second Catholic president after John F. Kennedy, and the first with an explicit record in favor of legal abortion — created an unprecedented dilemma for the bishops.

Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, formed a working group last year to assess the “complex and difficult situation” posed by the newly elected president’s stances on abortion and other issues that differ from official church teaching. Before disbanding, the group proposed the drafting of a new document addressing the issue of Communion — a project assigned to the doctrine committee.

Among the outspoken Biden critics is Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco — the hometown of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, also a Catholic. Cordileone has made clear his view that Pelosi and Biden should refrain from receiving Communion.

Cordileone told AP he’s not expecting the proposed document to single out Biden, but he wants it to send a firm message regarding Catholics in public life and their stance on abortion.

He cited several “grave evils” that pose threats to society — such as human trafficking, racism, terrorism, climate change and a flawed immigration system.

“The difference with abortion,” he added, “is that it is the only one of these grave evils that many people in public life are explicitly promoting.”

The incoming chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, hopes the proposed document will ease the divide between bishops who favored an explicit rebuke of Biden and those who opposed it.

“Sometimes you say, well, to be in the middle is kind of the position of weakness,” he told Catholic News Service. “These days the position of strength and courage is often in the middle.”

Lori stressed the importance of unity within the bishops’ ranks at a time of political polarization in the U.S.

“We have to be careful of not allowing ourselves to go down no-exit, partisan alleys where there is no life at the end of it,” he told CNS.

In a panel discussion Thursday sponsored by the National Catholic Reporter, Bishop John Stowe of Lex-

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ington, Kentucky, who does not favor rebuking the president, criticized the proposed teaching document as simultaneously bland and divisive. He said he would vote against it but predicted it will win the two-thirds majority to be adopted.

For some prominent politicians, denial of Communion is not an abstract issue.

Dick Durbin, a practicing Catholic and the No. 2 Democrat in the U.S. Senate, says he has been barred from receiving Communion in his home diocese of Springfield, Illinois, for 17 years under the directives of two successive bishops. Even though he has found a welcoming church in the archdiocese of Chicago, he remains discomfited by the situation.

"It's not a happy experience," Durbin said in a recent interview with the Jesuit publication America. "I am careful when I go to a church that I have never been to before."

The bishops' meeting will include an address from Gomez, who is facing criticism from Catholic racial-justice activists for saying recently that some contemporary social movements and theories — such as social justice, "wokeness" and intersectionality — represent "dangerous substitutes for true religion."

"Today's critical theories and ideologies are profoundly atheistic," Gomez said. "They deny the soul, the spiritual, transcendent dimension of human nature."

The Washington-based clergy network Faith in Public Life circulated a petition — signed by several prominent activists — denouncing the remarks by Gomez.

"Racial justice movements have awakened our nation's conscience to the epidemic of police killings and systemic racism," said John Gehring, the network's Catholic program director, in a statement announcing the petition. "Catholic bishops and other religious leaders should be in the streets with these movement organizers, not demeaning them."

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## White House to host 1st summit of tribal nations since 2016

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden will announce steps Monday to improve public safety and justice for Native Americans during the first tribal nations summit since 2016, the White House said.

Leaders from more than 570 tribes in the United States are expected to join the two-day event, with nearly three dozen addressing the gathering. The summit is being held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected Native Americans and Alaska Natives at disproportionate rates.

Biden and first lady Jill Biden are set to speak on Monday, with Vice President Kamala Harris to follow on Tuesday. Several members of Biden's Cabinet will also participate.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the summit coincides with National Native American Heritage Month and is being hosted by the White House for the first time. The summit was not held during the previous Trump administration. Past conferences were held at the Interior Department.

Biden will use the summit to announce steps to improve public safety and justice for Native Americans and to protect private lands, treaty rights and sacred places, Psaki said.

American Indians and Alaska Natives are more than twice as likely to be victims of a violent crime, and at least two times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted compared to other races, according to the Association on American Indian Affairs.

Since taking office in January, Biden has taken steps several steps that the White House says demonstrate his commitment to tribal nations.

Among them are naming Deb Haaland, a former congresswoman from New Mexico, as the first Native American to lead the Interior Department, the powerful federal agency that has wielded influence over U.S. tribes for generations. Haaland is a member of the Laguna Pueblo.

Biden's coronavirus relief plan included \$31 billion for tribal communities, and the administration also has worked closely with tribal leaders to help make COVID-19 vaccination rates among Native Americans

among the highest in the country, the White House said.

Biden also recently became the first president to issue a proclamation designating Oct. 11 as Indigenous People's Day, giving a boost to longstanding efforts to refocus the federal holiday celebrating Christopher Columbus toward an appreciation of Native peoples.

Earlier this year, Jill Biden spent two days in April visiting the Navajo Nation's capital in Window Rock, Arizona.

## Queen sprains back, misses Remembrance Sunday service

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II missed out on the Remembrance Sunday service in London to pay tribute to Britain's war dead because she sprained her back, Buckingham Palace said Sunday.

The service is one of the most important events on the 95-year-old monarch's calendar, and was meant to be her first public appearance after taking a few weeks off to rest under doctor's orders.

British media reported that the back sprain was not believed to be related to the recent medical advice to rest that prompted other cancellations.

"The Queen, having sprained her back, has decided this morning with great regret that she will not be able to attend today's Remembrance Sunday service at the Cenotaph," officials said just hours ahead of the ceremony. "Her Majesty is disappointed that she will miss the service."

The queen spent a night in a London hospital last month after being admitted for medical tests. It was her first such stay in eight years. On Oct. 29, the palace said she had been told by doctors to rest for two weeks and only take on light duties.

She canceled plans to attend the U.N. climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland, but sent a video message.

But officials stressed at the time that "it remains the queen's firm intention" to be present for the national Remembrance Sunday service. On Thursday, Buckingham Palace said the monarch planned to watch the ceremony at the Cenotaph war memorial in central London from a balcony, as she has for several years.

The queen served in World War II as an army driver and mechanic, and is head of Britain's armed forces. She attaches great importance to Remembrance Sunday, a solemn ceremony to remember the sacrifices made by fallen servicemen and women. The national service, which follows Armistice Day on Nov. 11, is traditionally marked by the wearing of poppies and a national two-minute silence observed at 11 a.m.

On Sunday, other royals and politicians led the ceremony in London's Whitehall, with hundreds of military personnel and veterans lined up around the Cenotaph memorial. It was the first time the event had returned to normal since the pandemic began.

After Royal Marine buglers sounded the "The Last Post," Prince Charles, 73, laid the first wreath on the queen's behalf, as he has done since 2017. He was followed by other royals and Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The queen has continued to work from home, doing desk-based duties, during her period of rest. She has spent most of the time at Windsor Castle, west of London, although she made a weekend visit to Sandringham, the royal family's eastern England estate.

She has missed several other events, including the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall on Saturday. Officials also said she will miss the opening of the Church of England's governing General Synod on Tuesday.

Penny Junor, a royal biographer, said the queen may be entering a new phase of her reign where she will not be seen as much in public.

"It's very sad for the queen, because this is the one event in the year that she really, really likes to be at," she said. "We're so used to seeing her out and about and looking years younger than she is that I think we've been lulled into thinking she can go on at this kind of pace forever. Clearly she can't."

Britain's longest-lived and longest-reigning monarch, Elizabeth is due to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee — 70 years on the throne — next year.