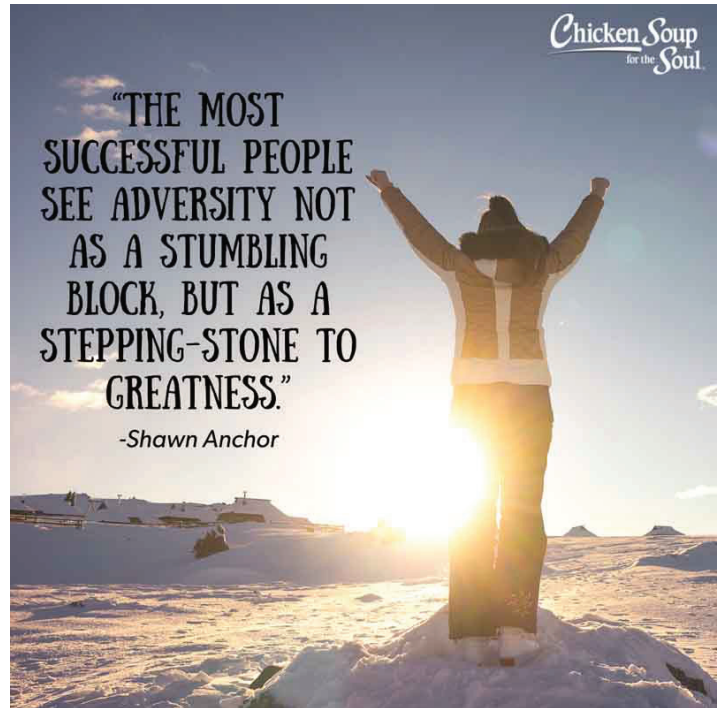


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UpComing Events

Monday, Dec. 6

4 p.m.: School Board planning/work session
5 p.m.: Junior High Wrestling at Sisseton
JH GBB hosts Langford. 7th at 6 p.m. with 8th to follow

Tuesday, Dec. 7

7 p.m.: City Council meeting at City Hall
GBB hosts Flandreau Indian. Varsity only at 6 p.m.
4 p.m.: 7th GBB at Tiospa Zina (7th only)

Thursday, Dec. 9

7 p.m.: MS/HS Christmas Concert

Friday, Dec. 10

GBB hosts Britton-Hecla. JV at 6 p.m. with Varsity to follow

Saturday, Dec. 11

Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

8 a.m. to Noon: ACT testing at GHS

10 a.m.: Wrestling Tourney at LaMoure

Boys Basketball at Britton-Hecla. JV at 1:30 p.m. followed by varsity game.

Monday, Dec. 13

4:30 p.m.: Junior High Wrestling at Webster

Junior High GBB hosts Warner. (7th at 6 p.m. followed by 8th grade game)

7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

Thursday, Dec. 16

Basketball Double Header with Hamlin at Groton. Girls JV at 4 p.m., Boys JV at 5 p.m., Girls Varsity at 6:15 p.m. followed by boys varsity.

Friday, Dec. 17

Brookings Bell Debate

Saturday, Dec. 18

Brookings Bell Debate

10 a.m.: Wrestling at Sioux Valley High School

Boys Basketball at Sioux Falls Lutheran. JV at 3 p.m. with varsity at 4 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

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Jack knifed Semi

Icy roads led to a semi that slid off of US12 Saturday evening and into the Dollar General parking lot.

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Tour of Homes

The Groton Tour of Homes was held Saturday evening. In the top photo, Bruce Babcock, a retired US Airforce Pilot, was a train engineer for the evening. The left photo features Karyn Babcock pointing out interesting tid-bits about the Cassels house that they have been working on.

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Emily and Weston Dinger had their home opened for the Tour of Homes held Saturday night.



Julie Schaller was a little camera shy, so Tina Kosel joined in the photo during the Tour of Homes. Schaller opened up her home and the Olde Bank building downtown for the Olive Grove Tour of Homes.

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Avantara-Groton is rapidly growing its team and hoping to invest in cook, dietary aides and Dietary Manager. Full and part time with after school hours available. Competitive wages, sign-on bonus, etc. Call Shana or Sarah to discuss your future employment opportunities today!

605-397-2365



G-Force advances to Semifinals at Douglas Robotics Tournament

Groton participated in the Douglas High School robotic tournament on Saturday, November 20th in Box Elder, SD. Groton teams participating in this tournament were: G-Force 9050A (Travis Townsend, Jace Kroll) Gear Heads 9050B (Jack Dinger, Ethan Clark, Axel Warrington), Galaxy 9050E (River Pardick, Corbin Weismantel, Kiana Sander-not present Dustin Pardick) Gladiators 9050F (Garrett Schultz, Bradyn Wienk)

22 teams were signed up for this tournament which included: Mitchell-4, Groton-4, Lead-3, Gillette, WY-7, Box Elder-3. After 44 qualifying matches Groton's rankings: Gear Heads-4th, G-Force-13th, Galaxy-16th, Gladiators-17th.

G-Force advanced to the semi-finals, but unfortunately was up against some tough competition and wasn't able to advance. Gear Heads day ended in the quarterfinals. Galaxy and Gladiators were not able to push past the Round of 16. New ideas and concepts are obtained from each tournament for building ideas.

Tournament champions were teams from Mitchell and Gillette. Congratulations to all the robotists who participated! On Saturday, December 11th Groton Robotics will travel down to Harrisburg.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! Groton will be hosting one tournament this year on Saturday, January 8th doors are open to anyone if your child is interested in robotics or to all those who just want to check it out! For more information check out the vex VRC robotics website, download the VEX via app and follow Groton Tiger Robotics on Facebook. Thanks to all who support Groton Robotics!

The Vex Robotics game this year includes a lot of defense. The main objective at the end of the one-minute thirty-second match is to have as many mobile goals on your side as possible, points double if your robot can get goals on their platform and balance. The field consists of two sides, red and blue with two teams on each side.



Purple rings are placed on the field as well that robots can pick-up and stack on their goal, BUT these are only worth 1 point each, most teams only focus on the mobile goals as these acquire the most points in the least amount of time. TIME, SPEED and PRECISE DRIVING IS A FACTOR!

Robots are constantly driving from side to side accruing as many mobile goals as they can. BUT the opponents want the mobile goals too, as fast as they are snatched and placed on your side the opponent can steal and drag back. Each robot is built to either push, pull, drag or lift the mobile goals (the red, yellow, and blue hexagon shaped objects) to their side.

Garrett Schultz and Bradyn Wienk from Gladiators as Garret tries to get mobile goals pulled over to his side for points. (Photo Credit-Laura Clark)

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Ethan Clark, Jack Dinger and Axel Warrington from Gear Heads waiting for scores to be tallied. (Photo Credit-Laura Clark)

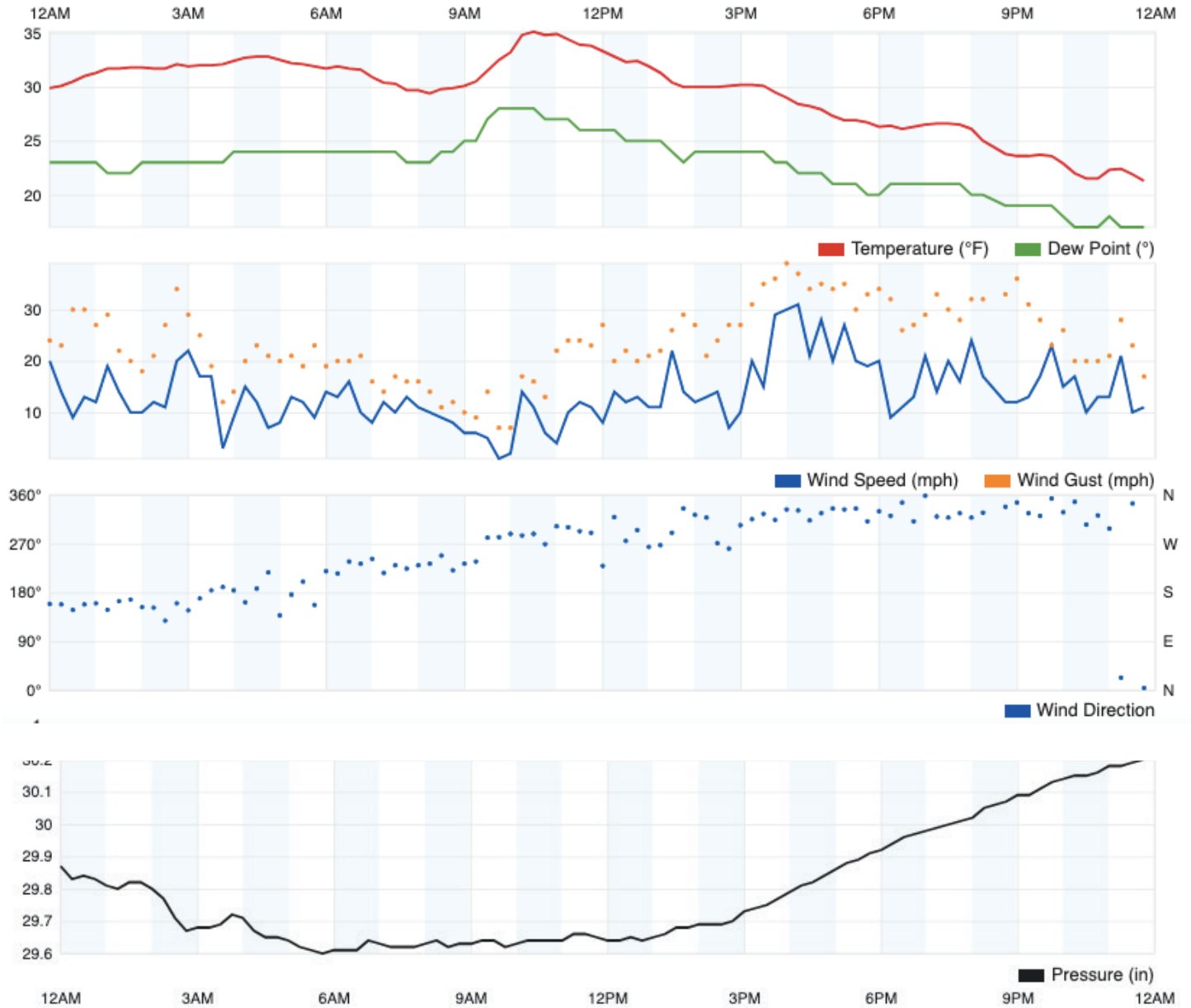
Kiana Sanders, Corbin Weismantel and River Pardick strategizing before the match. (Photo Credit-Laura Clark)



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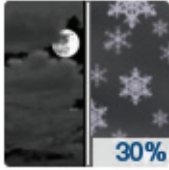



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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs




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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
				
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Snow	Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 13 °F	Low: 8 °F↑	High: 23 °F	Low: 10 °F	High: 34 °F


Today
7 to 24°

Tonight
0 to 15°

 * Coolest northeast
Flurries/Snow showers tonight

COLD TEMPERATURES
Warming Up Wednesday

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD
Updated: 12/6/2021 4:13 AM Central



High pressure has ushered in the coldest air of the season so far. Wind chills will be as low as -20 this morning. As the high shifts southeast tonight, flurries or light snow will develop as warmer air starts to move back in. Little to no accumulation is expected.

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Today in Weather History

December 6, 1969: An unusual period of almost continuous snow began in southern Minnesota and eastern South Dakota on the afternoon of the 5th and continued until late on the 10th. The Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport reported 88 2/3 consecutive hours of snowfall, which amounted to 14.2 inches total. The snowfall was 3-9 inches in the western half of Minnesota, with slightly lesser amounts in eastern South Dakota. Two inches snow fell at Summit and Sisseton; 2.5 inches at Watertown and Waubay; 3.0 inches at Clear Lake; 3.1 inches at Aberdeen; and 4.0 inches at Artichoke Lake, Webster, and Milbank.

December 6, 1913: A snowstorm from December 1st through the 6th dumps a record total of 45.7 inches in Denver, Colorado. This storm produced the most snow ever recorded in a single Denver snowstorm.

December 6, 1970: The National Christmas tree in 1970 was a 78 foot spruce from South Dakota. On the way to Washington, the train carrying the tree derailed twice in Nebraska. On the weekend before the lighting event, the tree toppled in gusty winds and required new branches to fill it out.

1886 - A great snowstorm hit the southern Appalachian Mountains. The three day storm produced 25 inches at Rome GA, 33 inches at Asheville NC, and 42 inches in the mountains. Montgomery AL received a record eleven inches of snow. Columbia SC received one to two inches of sleet. (4th-6th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1970 - A windstorm toppled the National Christmas Tree at the White House. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987 - Another in a series of storms brought high winds and heavy rain to the northwestern U.S., with heavy snow in some of the higher elevations. In northern California, Crescent City was drenched with 2.58 inches of rain, and winds gusted to 90 mph. Up to fourteen inches of snow blanketed the mountains of northern California, and snow and high winds created blizzard conditions around Lake Tahoe NV. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - The morning low at Bismarck, ND, was eleven degrees warmer than the record low of 25 degrees at Meridian MS, and during the afternoon half a dozen cities in the north central and northwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Alpena MI with a reading of 57 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Heavy snow blanketed the Central Rocky Mountain Region. Totals in the southern foothills of Colorado ranged up to 17 inches at Rye. Arctic air invaded the north central U.S. Lincoln NE, which reported a record high of 69 degrees the previous afternoon, was 35 degrees colder. International Falls MN was the cold spot in the nation with a morning low of 9 degrees below zero, and temperatures in northern Minnesota hovered near zero through the daylight hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

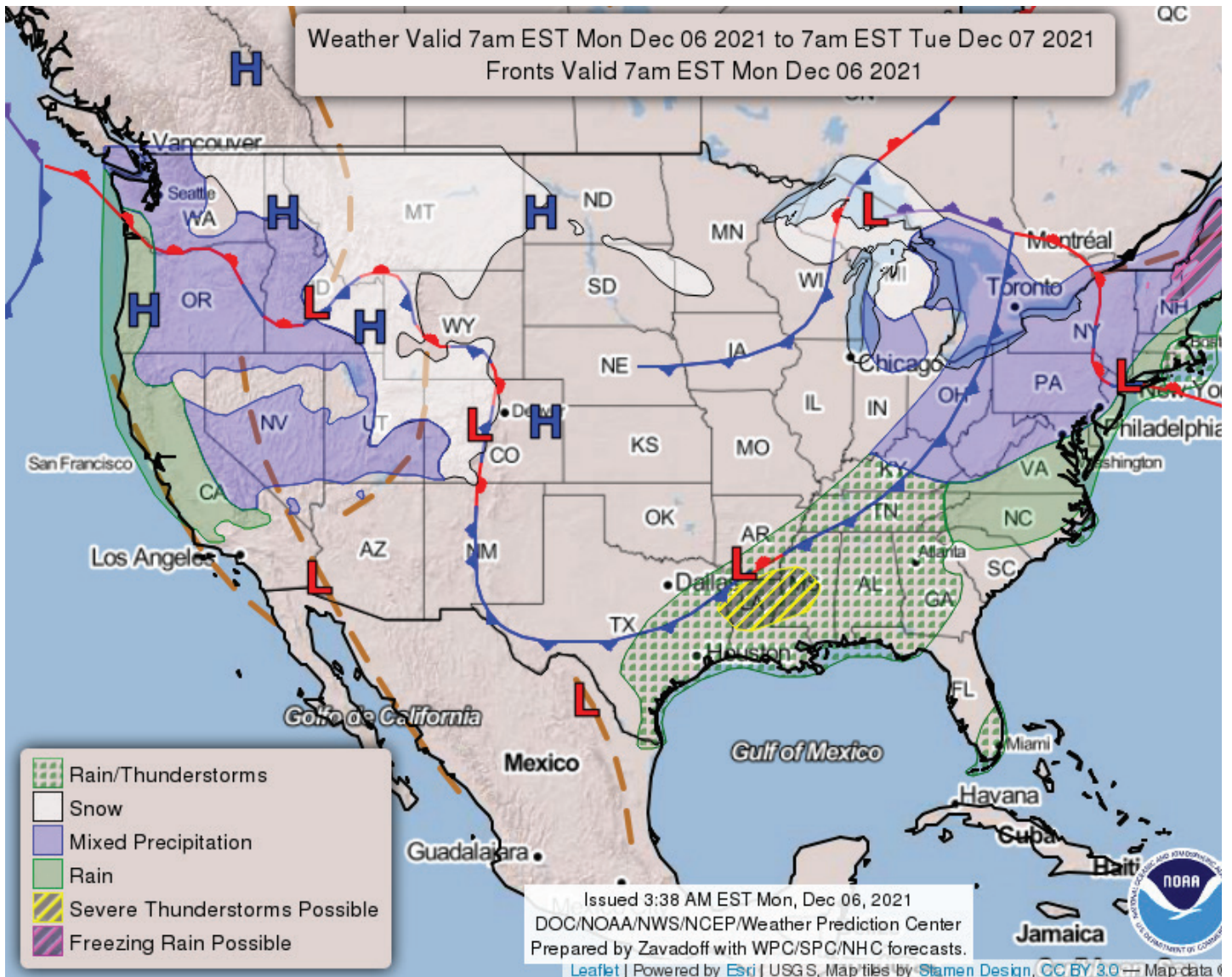
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 35.1 °F at 10:30 AM
Low Temp: 21.3 °F at 11:45 PM
Wind: 39 mph at 4:00 PM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 69° in 1939
Record Low: -30° in 1972
Average High: 32°F
Average Low: 11°F
Average Precip in Dec.: 0.12
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.06
Average Precip to date: 21.33
Precip Year to Date: 19.92
Sunset Tonight: 4:51:09 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:57:05 AM



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NEVER MIND, SANTA...

Chris was sitting in Santa's lap and going over a long list of presents that he wanted for Christmas. "I want a bicycle," he said, "and I also want a wagon, a chemistry set, a telescope, an electric train, a football, a Kindle FIRE, and a pair of rollerblades."

"That's a long list," said Santa. "I'll have to check carefully to see if you were a good boy."

After thinking for a moment Chris said, "Don't bother, Santa, I'll just settle for the rollerblades." Not many of us would be able to "pass" a really thorough investigation to discover if we were worthy of receiving a long list of gifts. We'd probably be like Chris and settle very quickly for very little. Nor would many of us want to have someone investigate our lives and then decide if we deserved a gift or not. We would be quite anxious – if not completely frightened.

But God is so very different. He knows everything there is to know about us and still offers us the most precious gift He has: His Son.

"Now, no one is likely to die for a good person," said Paul, "though someone might be willing to die for someone who is especially good. But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." Christ: the source of eternal life.

There you have it. It is not about whether or not we are good or deserving of eternal life through Him. It is because of God's great love that we can have the gift of eternal life!

Prayer: May we realize during this season, our Father, the great Gift we have because of Your love. May Your Son be our main interest and attraction this year. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Romans 5:5-11 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

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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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News from the Associated Press

Repairs discussed for trail system decimated by bomb cyclone

By ROB NIELSEN Yankton Press and Dakotan

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — A key component to the rebuilding of the Auld-Brokaw Maintenance and Recreational Trail System and stabilizing the banks of Marne Creek is about to commence.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has been providing notice of its intent to relevant parties of its plans to conduct an environmental study on the project meant to fix damages incurred during the 2019 bomb cyclone.

Yankton Public Works Director Adam Haberman told the Press & Dakotan that this is a very intricate requirement.

"It takes a number of things into consideration from an environmental aspect," he said. "It includes looking at things like geology, water quality, air quality, floodplain, wetlands, the aquatic environment, and threatened and endangered species," he said. "It looks at historical aspects of the area, archeological resources and it allows a lot of the agencies — like the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services, Game, Fish & Parks, the historic preservation office, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and all those types of entities — to come together, take a look and make sure that everything's good with this project in regards to their part of the environment."

He said that the study will take well into 2022 to complete.

"They'll actually go out and see if there's any of these endangered or threatened species that can be found along this corridor," he said. "Some of those things have to be done at certain times of the year. You can't just get it all done in November. ... It's a lot of coordination between agencies and making sure they're notified and have a chance to comment."

The damage to the trail system occurred in March 2019 when a bomb cyclone dumped more than three inches of rain on frozen and saturated ground, causing Marne Creek to rapidly swell. The heaviest damage to the trail and the creek's banks occurred along a stretch between the Fourth Street/Highway 50 overpass and Burleigh Street.

As the environmental assessment gets underway, Haberman said other important work is going on behind the scenes.

"Banner Engineering is working on the design still," he said. "They're at what we'd call a 30% design on the project. We're real close to taking that design, sitting down at the table with FEMA and going through the 30% design and getting their comments on that. Then we'll take that and be able to move deeper into design to get closer to the final design."

Bidding is anticipated to take place sometime in the fall of 2022.

At that point, it will be decided whether to finish the project all at once or in segments.

"All of the damages are included in this design," Haberman said. "When it comes to construction — depending on what the dollar amounts look like — we may have to pick and choose parts that are damaged to repair at one time. It would be favorable if we could do the whole project at one time, but it just depends on the dollars required."

An estimate of costs is not available at this time.

Haberman said there is ultimately a method to taking time on such a large project.

"We just want to make sure we're doing things right the first time when it comes to doing it how FEMA wants to see it done," he said.

He added the city will continue to work with state and federal partners to make sure the project is done correctly. "We're just happy to see the project taking steps forward," he said. "We're working really close with FEMA and the state Emergency Management Office to make sure we're doing everything correctly along the way so that, when we get to the end, we have a good product and good project put together and didn't miss something that could cause a bigger setback."

Rapid City police: 2 people dead in apparent murder-suicide

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City police are investigating an apparent murder-suicide that left two people dead late Saturday.

The Rapid City Police Department said in a statement that police were called to a business “for a report of an individual with a gunshot wound.”

When they arrived, police found two people with fatal gunshot wounds outside the business. The police department said that preliminary information gathered in the investigation shows that it was a murder-suicide.

Treasury wants more oversight of all-cash real estate deals

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration is looking to expand reporting requirements on all-cash real estate deals to help crack down on bad actors’ use of the U.S. market to launder money made through illicit activity.

The Treasury Department was posting notice Monday seeking public comment for a potential regulation that would address what it says is a vulnerability in the real estate market.

Currently, title insurance companies in just 12 metropolitan areas are required to file reports identifying people who make all-cash purchases of residential real estate through shell companies if the transaction exceeds \$300,000.

“Increasing transparency in the real estate sector will curb the ability of corrupt officials and criminals to launder the proceeds of their ill-gotten gains through the U.S. real estate market,” said Himamauli Das, acting director of Treasury’s Financial Crimes Enforcement Network.

Das said the move could “strengthen U.S. national security and help protect the integrity of the U.S. financial system.”

The metropolitan areas currently facing reporting requirements are Boston; Chicago; Dallas-Fort Worth; Honolulu; Las Vegas; Los Angeles; Miami; New York City; San Antonio; San Diego; San Francisco; and Seattle.

The U.S. real estate market has long been viewed as a stable way station for corrupt government officials around the globe and other illicit actors looking to launder proceeds from criminal activity.

The use of shell companies by current and former world leaders, and those close to them, to purchase real estate and other assets in the U.S. and elsewhere was recently spotlighted by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists’ publication of the “Pandora Papers.”

The leaked documents acquired by the consortium showed King Abdullah II of Jordan, former U.K. prime minister Tony Blair and other prominent figures used shell companies to purchase mansions, exclusive beachfront property, yachts and other assets for the past quarter-century.

The tax dodges can be legal but have spawned various proposals to enhance tax transparency and reinforce the fight against tax evasion.

The effort to push for new real estate market regulation comes as the Biden administration on Monday issued its “U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption.”

The strategy was published as President Joe Biden prepares to host the first White House Democracy Summit, a virtual gathering of leaders and civil society experts from more than 100 countries that is set to take place Thursday and Friday.

The strategy offers broad brushstrokes for confronting corruption at home and abroad. It includes calls for the U.S. government to shore up regulatory gaps, elevating anti-corruption in U.S. diplomatic efforts and bolstering the protection of civil society and members of the media, including investigative journalists, who expose corruption.

Myanmar's Suu Kyi gets 4 years in trial seen as political

By GRANT PECK Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Aung San Suu Kyi, the civilian leader of Myanmar who was ousted in a de facto coup this year, was convicted of incitement and another charge Monday and sentenced to four years in prison — in a trial widely criticized as yet a further attempt by the country's military rulers to roll back the democratic gains of recent years.

It also serves to cement a dramatic reversal of fortunes for the Nobel Peace laureate, who spent 15 years under house arrest for resisting the Southeast Asian nation's generals but then worked uncomfortably alongside them when they promised to usher in democratic rule.

Monday's verdict was the first expected in a series of cases against 76-year-old Suu Kyi, who was arrested when the army seized power on Feb. 1 and prevented her National League for Democracy party from starting a second five-year term in office following a landslide electoral victory.

If found guilty of all the charges she faces, Suu Kyi could be sentenced to more than 100 years in prison. She is being held by the military at an unknown location, and the court did not make clear Monday whether she would be moved to a prison or kept under some form of house arrest, according to a legal official, who relayed the verdict to The Associated Press and who insisted on anonymity for fear of being punished by the authorities.

The court did offer a 10-month reduction in the sentence for time served.

The army seized power claiming massive voting fraud in the November 2020 election in which its allied party lost many seats, but independent election observers did not detect any major irregularities. Opposition to the takeover sprang up almost immediately and remains strong, with armed resistance spreading after the military's violent crackdown on peaceful protests. The verdict could inflame tensions even further.

The cases against Suu Kyi are widely seen as contrived to discredit her and keep her from running in the next election since the constitution bars anyone sent to prison after being convicted of a crime from holding high office or becoming a lawmaker.

Yanghee Lee, the former U.N. Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar, described the charges as well as the verdict as "bogus," declaring that any trial held in the country is unfair as the judiciary is subservient to the military-installed government.

Rights groups also deplored the verdict, with Amnesty International calling it "the latest example of the military's determination to eliminate all opposition and suffocate freedoms in Myanmar."

But as is typical, China, a neighbor that has maintained friendly ties with Myanmar's military leaders, declined to criticize the verdict.

Beijing hopes "all parties in Myanmar will bear in mind the long-term interests of the country, narrow differences and carry on the hard-won democratic transition process," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told reporters Monday.

Suu Kyi is widely revered at home for her role in the country's pro-democracy movement — and was long viewed abroad as an icon of that struggle, epitomized by her 15 years under house arrest.

But since her release in 2010 and return to politics, she has been heavily criticized for the gamble she made: showing deference to the military while ignoring and, at times, even defending rights violations — most notably a 2017 crackdown on Rohingya Muslims that rights groups have labeled genocide.

While she has disputed allegations that army personnel killed Rohingya civilians, torched houses and raped women and she remains immensely popular at home, that stance has tarnished her reputation abroad.

The incitement charge centered on statements posted on the Facebook page of Suu Kyi's party after she and other party leaders were detained by the military. She was accused of spreading false or inflammatory information that could disturb public order. In addition, she was accused of violating coronavirus restrictions for her appearance at a campaign event ahead of the elections last year.

Government officials could not immediately be reached for more details about Monday's ruling by a special court, a legacy of British colonial rule that is most often used for political cases.

Suu Kyi's trials are closed to the media and spectators, and her lawyers, who had been a source of

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information on the proceedings, were served with gag orders in October forbidding them from releasing information.

Defense lawyers are expected to file appeals in the coming days for Suu Kyi and two colleagues who were also convicted Monday, the legal official who relayed the verdict said. They have argued that Suu Kyi and a co-defendant, former President Win Myint, could not be held responsible for the statements on which the incitement charge was based because they were already in detention when the statements were posted.

February's seizure of power was met by nonviolent nationwide demonstrations, which security forces quashed with deadly force. They have killed about 1,300 civilians, according to a detailed tally compiled by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

Amid the severe crackdown on peaceful protests, armed resistance has grown in the cities and countryside, to the point that U.N. experts have warned the country is sliding into civil war.

Protest marches on Sunday against the military government called for the release of Suu Kyi and others. An army truck deliberately sped into a march by about 30 young people in Yangon, the country's biggest city.

A verdict on Suu Kyi's second count of violating coronavirus restrictions is scheduled for Dec. 14. Other cases against her include the alleged unregistered import and use of walkie-talkies by her security guards; a violation of the Official Secrets Act, in which jailed Australian economist Sean Turnell is a co-defendant; and corruption charges.

The military-appointed election commission has also announced it intends to prosecute Suu Kyi and 15 other senior political figures for alleged fraud in the last election, which could result in her party being dissolved.

The military says its takeover was lawful and not a coup d'état because the 2008 constitution — implemented under military rule — allows it to take control in certain emergencies. It argues that the 2020 general election contained widespread irregularities and thus constituted such an emergency.

However, the state election commission and the independent poll watching group ANFREL both said there was no evidence of substantial electoral fraud, and the new government so far has not presented convincing proof. Critics assert that the takeover bypassed the legal process for declaring an emergency because two key members who are supposed to take part in those consultations, Win Myint and Suu Kyi, were arrested beforehand.

Top UAE adviser makes rare trip to Iran amid nuclear talks

By NASSER KARIMI and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — The national security adviser of the United Arab Emirates met Monday with Iran's hard-line president in Tehran, a major visit for the Gulf Arab federation that has long viewed the Islamic Republic as its main regional threat.

The visit by Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al Nahyan comes as the Emirates and Saudi Arabia are both negotiating with Iran amid efforts in Vienna to save Tehran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers.

The UAE, home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, reached a diplomatic recognition deal last year with Israel, increasing tensions with Tehran. The UAE has long served as a lifeline to the outside world for Iran amid international sanctions.

Sheikh Tahnoon, wearing a navy-blue thobe, black suit jacket and his signature aviator sunglasses, met first with Ali Shamkhani, the head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council. The two men smiled and shook hands in front of journalists before their meeting, a large map of Iran and the Persian Gulf looming behind them, with just a sliver of the Emirates visible on it.

Iranian state television quoted Shamkhani as saying that "warm and friendly" relations between the countries remain a priority and that they shouldn't be affected by other nations — likely a reference to the United States and Israel.

Sheikh Tahnoon later met with President Ebrahim Raisi, a hard-line protégé of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. A statement from the presidency quoted Raisi as welcoming "improved ties with the Emir-

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ates," including on economic issues.

"There should be no barrier in relation of the two Muslim nations of Iran and the Emirates," Raisi said. "It should not be affected by foreigners' dictation."

The Iranian presidency quoted Sheikh Tahnoon as inviting Raisi for a state visit to the UAE. A report by the UAE's state-run WAM news agency did not mention the invitation, but said the two "discussed prospects of consolidating bilateral ties and explored an array of issues of common interest."

Monday marked a series of political visits in the region against the backdrop of the Vienna talks in Europe. Syria's Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad also visited Tehran, and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was to visit Oman on a regional tour. Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was to travel to Qatar, which Prince Mohammed also planned to visit soon.

Sheikh Tahnoon's brother is Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi's powerful crown prince and long the de facto ruler of the Emirates, a federation of seven sheikhdoms. Under Sheikh Mohammed, the UAE has embarked on a rapid expansion of its military forces to counter what they see as the threat of Iran. The Emirates also hosts U.S. and French forces and its Jebel Ali port is the U.S. Navy's busiest port of call outside of America.

Sheikh Tahnoon also has held at least one meeting with the head of the Israeli Mossad intelligence service. Sheikh Mohammed has long feared a nuclear-armed Iran, according to U.S. diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks.

But the UAE has pulled back from the Saudi-led war in Yemen against the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels. Since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, the Emirates also has sought to mend diplomatic ties to Turkey, viewed with suspicion over offering a haven for Islamists, and Qatar, which the UAE boycotted for years with several other nations as part of a political dispute.

Ali Bagheri Kani, an Iranian deputy foreign minister leading the Vienna talks, also recently traveled to the UAE for talks.

As the meeting took place, however, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh criticized the Emirates for its purchase this past weekend of 16 billion euros worth of advanced Rafale jet fighters from France. The UAE also plans a \$23 billion purchase including advanced stealth F-35 fighters as well, after its recognition of Israel.

Khatibzadeh urged France to "behave more responsibly" and criticized the "militarizing of our region." "We are witnessing billions of dollars of arm sales to regional countries though they hold many meetings about our missiles," Khatibzadeh said, mentioning Iran's ballistic missile program. "With these actions, we become more determined to make our defense shield more active."

Talks over Iran's program in Vienna broke up last week after Tehran offered new demands. Khatibzadeh insisted Iran wasn't after a "temporary" agreement from the negotiations, which he described as resuming "later this week." European officials have yet to announce a time for the talks to restart.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Pope returning home after trip focused on helping migrants

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Pope Francis ended his visit to Greece on Monday by encouraging its young people to follow their dreams and not be tempted by the consumerist "sirens" of today that promise easy pleasures.

Francis briefly struggled to keep his balance on the steps while boarding the plane bound for Rome when caught by a gust of wind, and was helped on board by an aide.

Earlier, Francis met with students at a Catholic school in Athens in his final event of a five-day visit to Cyprus and Greece that has been dominated by his concern for the plight of migrants seeking entry to Europe.

He echoed a common theme he has raised with young people, encouraging them to stay fast in their

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faith, even amid doubts, and resist the temptation to pursue materialist goals. He cited Homer's epic poem "The Odyssey" and the temptation posed by the sirens who "by their songs enchanted sailors and made them crash against the rocks."

"Today's sirens want to charm you with seductive and insistent messages that focus on easy gains, the false needs of consumerism, the cult of physical wellness, of entertainment at all costs," he said. "All these are like fireworks: they flare up for a moment, but then turn to smoke in the air."

Two immigrant students were among those who greeted the pope, including an 18-year-old Syrian refugee, Aboud Gabro, who told the pope of his family's escape from Aleppo in 2014 after a bomb exploded on their home. They finally arrived in Greece after a perilous boat crossing from Turkey.

"It was hard being on a rock without water or food, waiting for dawn and and a coast guard ship to come save us," Gabro said.

Francis listened to his story, "a true modern-day odyssey," and expressed gratitude that he and his family had made it safely after "so many refusals and a thousand difficulties, you landed in this country." But he suggested it also showed a sense of adventure and people following their dreams.

"The meaning of life is not found by staying on the beach waiting for the wind to bring something new. Salvation lies in the open sea, in setting sail, in the quest, in the pursuit of dreams, real dreams, those we pursue with eyes open, those that involve effort, struggles, headwinds, sudden storms," he said. "So don't be paralyzed by fear: dream big! And dream together!"

Francis is returning to the Vatican with some important pre-Christmas events on his agenda: a scheduled meeting with the members of a French commission that investigated sexual abuse in the French Catholic Church, a scheduled meeting with Canadian Indigenous peoples seeking a papal apology for abuses at Catholic-run residential schools, and Francis' own 85th birthday on Dec. 17.

___ Derek Gatopoulos contributed to this report.

Unvaccinated Italians face new restrictions as holidays near

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — Italy is making life more uncomfortable for unvaccinated people this holiday season, excluding them from indoor restaurants, theaters and museums starting Monday to reduce the spread of coronavirus and encourage vaccine skeptics to get their shots.

Italian police can check whether diners in restaurants or bars have a "super" green health pass certifying that they are either vaccinated or have recently recovered from the virus. Smart phone applications that check people's health pass status will be updated and those who have merely tested negative in recent days for COVID-19 will no longer be allowed into concerts, movies or performances. The measures run through Jan. 15.

Authorities also imposed a requirement for a "basic" health pass, which can be obtained with a negative test, on local transport and to check into hotels.

In the capital, Rome, local transportation hubs were controlled by dozens of police checking both green passes and personal identification, finding a cooperative mood among commuters. Still, a 50-year-old Roman became the first to receive a 400-euro fine after getting off the bus at the northern Flaminio station without the "basic" health pass, said Stefano Napoli, deputy chief of Rome's municipal police force.

"It was about time that they checked it," said Sara Ben, a Rome commuter, noting the absence of controls on local transportation throughout the pandemic.

Milanese were enjoying the first long weekend of the season, including Tuesday's celebration for the patron saint of Saint Ambrose and Wednesday's national holiday, leaving the city a little more empty than usual. But few checks were evident around the main Central Station, either for regional trains or local buses and subways.

Commuter Veronica Bianchi said she wasn't checked on a regional train arriving in Milan and was not asked for her health pass. "But they didn't check the ticket either," she said.

She favors the government's moves to encourage more people to get vaccinated, and said she noted

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that people in their 20s like her are more apt to get the vaccine. "Frankly, I think we are tired of being locked down. I work in a young company, and it was a race to get the vaccine," Bianchi said.

The number of new COVID-19 infections in Italy has been on a gradual rise for the past six weeks, even before concerns arose about the new omicron variant.

That's a worrying trend as Italians look forward to holiday parties and getaways to spend time with friends and family, after being deprived of such festivities last year due to a steeper rise in contagion before vaccines were widely available.

While both Germany and Austria are moving toward making vaccines obligatory, Italy is instead tightening free-time restrictions on the unvaccinated at the most convivial time of the year — while allowing those who are vaccinated go about life more or less as usual.

With an eye on the holidays, Switzerland from Monday is allowing event organizers to bar anyone who hasn't been vaccinated or hasn't recovered from COVID-19, and Sweden introduced digital COVID-19 vaccination certificate for indoor events with more than 100 people indoors starting Dec. 1.

On Nov. 12, Danes reintroduced the phased-out coronavirus pass which must be shown by all those over the age of 15 when entering nightclubs, cafes, party buses and indoor restaurants but also at indoor events if there is more than 100 spectators / participants. It also applies to outdoor events where the number of people exceeds more than 1,000 spectators / participants.

Italy's vaccination rate is higher than many of its neighbors, at 85% of the eligible population aged 12 and older and 77% of the total population. But people in their 30s, 40s and 50s have proved the most reluctant to get vaccinated, with nearly 3.5 million still not having received their first doses.

They are also the same age range that is now being hardest hit by the virus, according to Silvio Brusaferrero, head of Italy's National Health Institute.

So far the delta variant remains prevalent, with only seven confirmed cases of omicron in Italy, related to two businessmen returning from southern Africa.

With the holiday shopping season heating up, many cities including Rome and Milan have ordered mask mandates even outdoors.

Public health officials say vaccinations, along with prudent public behavior including wearing masks in crowds indoors or out, are key to reducing infection levels as winter weather pushes more activities indoors. They credit Italy's relatively high level of immunization as one reason that the infection curve is not as steep as last winter, when broad restrictions were imposed with the spread of the delta variant.

"It is clear that after two years of the pandemic, we cannot easily close schools to physical classes and shut down economic activity," said Gianni Rezza, the health ministry's director of prevention.

"Therefore, you can try to keep the virus spread down with measures that are sustainable, and with proper use of the health pass. Then, the big bet is on the vaccinations," he said.

Paolo Santalucia in Rome, Jamey Keaten in Geneva, Jan Olsen in Copenhagen contributed.
Follow all AP stories on the pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>.

China attacks potential US diplomatic boycott of Olympics

BEIJING (AP) — China on Monday threatened to take "firm countermeasures" if the U.S. proceeds with a diplomatic boycott of February's Beijing Winter Olympic Games.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian accused U.S. politicians of grandstanding over the issue of not sending dignitaries to attend the events that China hopes will showcase its economic development and technological prowess.

Speaking to reporters at a daily briefing, Zhao said such a move would be an "outright political provocation," but gave no details on how China would retaliate.

U.S. President Joe Biden has said he is considering a boycott, under which American athletes would still compete, and an announcement is expected this week. Supporters of such a step cite China's poor record on human rights as justification, saying China is using the games to whitewash its ill treatment of

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civil rights activists, political dissidents and ethnic minorities.

"Without being invited, American politicians keep hyping the so-called diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympic, which is purely wishful thinking and grandstanding," Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing.

"If the U.S. side is bent on going its own way, China will take firm countermeasures," Zhao said.

The dispatching of high-level delegations to each Olympics has long been a tradition among the U.S. and other leading nations — then-president George W. Bush attended the opening of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Summer Games. First lady Jill Biden led the American contingent to the Summer Olympics in Tokyo this year and second gentleman Doug Emhoff led a delegation to the Paralympic Games.

The possibility of a diplomatic boycott comes as the U.S. attempts to stabilize turbulent relations with Beijing, even as it maintains a tough approach toward trade frictions and conflicts over China's actions on Taiwan, human rights, Hong Kong and the South China Sea.

Beijing has mounted a stiff response to all U.S. criticisms, denouncing them as interference in its internal affairs and slapping visa bans on American politicians it regards as anti-China.

It wasn't clear who the U.S. might have sent to Beijing for the games and Zhao's comments appeared to indicate that China has not extended any invitations.

Australia, whose ties with China have nosedived over a range of disputes, has also raised the possibility of a diplomatic boycott.

Turning outrage into power: How far right is changing GOP

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy appears to have settled on a strategy to deal with a handful of Republican lawmakers who have stirred outrage with violent, racist and sometimes Islamophobic comments.

If you can't police them, promote them.

The path to power for Republicans in Congress is now rooted in the capacity to generate outrage. The alarming language, and the fundraising haul it increasingly produces, is another example of how Donald Trump, the former president, has left his mark on politics, changing the way Republicans rise to influence and authority.

Success in Congress, once measured by bills passed and constituents reached, is now gauged in many ways by the ability to attract attention, even if it is negative as the GOP looks to reclaim a House majority next year by firing up Trump's most ardent supporters.

That has helped elevate a group of far-right lawmakers — including Reps. Lauren Boebert of Colorado, Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia and Paul Gosar of Arizona — whose inflammatory comments once would have made them pariahs.

Rather than face punishment for personal attacks that violate longstanding norms of Congress, they've been celebrated by conservatives, who have showered Boebert and Greene with campaign cash.

"We are not the fringe. We are the base of the party," Greene, who has previously endorsed calls to assassinate prominent Democrats, said last week on a podcast hosted by former Trump adviser Steve Bannon.

The hands-off approach by Republican leadership gives them license to spread hate speech, conspiracy theories and misinformation that can have real world consequences, while testing the resolve of Democrats, who already removed Gosar and Greene from their committees.

It's also a different tack from the one McCarthy took in 2019 when he stripped then-Rep. Steve King of Iowa of his committee assignments for lamenting that white supremacy and white nationalism had become offensive terms.

Boebert offers the latest example.

In two videos that surfaced recently she likened Rep. Ilhan Omar, a Minnesota Democrat who is one of three Muslims in Congress, to a terrorist concealing a bomb in a backpack. Boebert has also repeatedly referred to Omar as belonging to a "jihad squad," as well as "black-hearted" and "evil."

Her comments drew widespread condemnation and led to calls for Boebert to become the third GOP

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lawmaker this year to be removed from congressional committees. But instead of publicly apologizing to Omar, a defiant Boebert insisted that Omar should be the one to issue a public apology "to the American people" for her "anti-American" rhetoric, as well as past "anti-Semitic" comments, which Democrats condemned at the time.

In the uproar that followed, Omar received death threats, including a voicemail left by a man who called her a "traitor" and suggested she would be soon be taken "off the face of the (expletive) earth."

"We cannot pretend this hate speech from leading politicians doesn't have real consequences," Omar said Tuesday while calling on the Republican Party to "actually do something to confront anti-Muslim hatred in its ranks."

Boebert, meanwhile, burnished her image through an appearance on Fox News where she blamed Democrats who "want to cancel me" for the controversy. She has raked in \$2.7 million so far this year, making her one of the top Republican fundraisers, according to campaign finance disclosures.

McCarthy, who is in line to become speaker if Republicans retake the majority in the 2022 midterm elections, downplayed the controversy Friday. He credited Boebert for attempting to privately apologize in a phone call with Omar, while breezing past Boebert's refusal to do so publicly.

"In America, that's what we do," he said. "And then we move on."

But McCarthy has also indicated that there will be little consequence for personal attacks. Just last month he said those punished by Democrats could be in line for a promotion if he becomes speaker, floating the possibility that Gosar and Greene "may have better committee assignments" than before.

That also poses a vexing issue for Democrats. During a Wednesday caucus meeting House Speaker Nancy Pelosi condemned Boebert's behavior, but cautioned that restraint was needed.

"This is hard because these people are doing it for the publicity," Pelosi said, according to a person in the room, who insisted on anonymity to discuss private deliberations. "There's a judgment that has to be made about how we contribute to their fundraising and their publicity on how obnoxious and disgusting they can be."

In many cases, the incentive to outrage can outweigh the consequences.

Greene arrived in Congress this year with a well documented history of making inflammatory comments. A former adherent of the QAnon conspiracy theories, she once mused that a wealthy Jewish family may have used space lasers to spark California wildfires.

She's also harassed survivors of school shootings, accused Pelosi of committing crimes punishable by death and appeared in a 2019 video at the Capitol in which she argued Omar and another Muslim representative weren't "really official" members of Congress because they didn't take the oath of office on the Bible.

Since her election she's used her nonstop attacks and viral online moments to reap a \$6.3 million fundraising windfall — more than three times the cost of the average congressional campaign — while proving to be a speaking draw at Republican fundraisers around the country.

"If you say something bats— crazy, if you say something extreme, you are going to raise money," said Rep. Nancy Mace, R-S.C., who is one of the few Republicans to publicly criticize the rhetoric of her colleagues. Mace, who publicly feuded with Greene last week, said the Georgia lawmaker was a "grifter of the first order" who takes advantage of "vulnerable conservatives."

Gosar, who was censured last month after posting an animated video of himself killing Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, is nowhere near as prolific of a fundraiser. But he has become a celebrated figure for white nationalists and has made appearances at fringe right-wing events, including a gathering in Florida last February hosted by Nick Fuentes, an internet personality who has promoted white supremacist beliefs.

Still, some Republicans say just because the three have achieved a measure of fame doesn't mean they have accumulated real influence or staying power.

"There's always some gifted communicator who comes in," said Rep. Tom Cole, a 10-term Oklahoma Republican, who used the GOP class of 1994, when Republicans took over the House for the first time in decades, as an example. "We're a long way of knowing how long they'll stay. A lot of the brightest stars

of the 1994 class were gone within eight years.”

Besides he added: “The reality is the first six years, the only thing you are going to do is what they let you.”

Myanmar’s Aung San Suu Kyi: The Legal Challenges

The Associated Press undefined

The four-year prison sentence given to ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi on Monday on charges of incitement and failing to observe pandemic restrictions is one small shot in a legal offensive intended to deal her and her National League for Democracy party a crippling political blow.

Suu Kyi’s supporters and legal experts generally believe the cases against her have been contrived to discredit her and justify the military’s seizure of power in February.

Suu Kyi and her co-defendants have been charged under a wide range of laws and have pleaded not guilty to every charge.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS LAW

Suu Kyi is charged with having walkie-talkies that were operated by her security guards without a license. Maximum penalty is one year in prison and a fine. Verdict expected Dec. 13.

EXPORT-IMPORT LAW

Suu Kyi is charged with improperly importing the walkie-talkies. It was the first charge filed after her house was raided when the military seized power on Feb. 1, and was used to initially detain her. Maximum penalty is three years’ imprisonment and a fine. Verdict expected Dec. 13.

CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS

Suu Kyi is charged with two counts of violating coronavirus restrictions during campaigning for last year’s election, which her party won overwhelmingly and the military refuses to recognize. The offense falls under the Natural Disaster Management Law. Ousted president Win Myint also is charged under the law. Maximum penalty for each count is three years in prison and a fine. She was found guilty on one count on Monday and sentenced to two years in prison. A verdict on the second count is expected Dec. 14.

INCITEMENT

Suu Kyi was also found guilty on Monday of incitement, defined as spreading false or inflammatory information that could disturb public order, and sometimes referred to as sedition. Her co-defendants on the incitement charge were ousted President Win Myint and Myo Aung, the former mayor of the capital, Naypyitaw. They were also found guilty. Maximum penalty is two years in prison and a fine. All three received the maximum sentence of two years.

OFFICIAL SECRETS LAW

The Official Secrets Law, also known as the State Secrets Law, is a legacy of the British colonial era that criminalizes the possession, collection, recording, publishing or sharing of state information that is “directly or indirectly, useful to an enemy.” Suu Kyi’s co-defendants in the case are three former members of her Cabinet and Sean Turnell, an Australian economist who served as her adviser. The details of the alleged offense have not been made public, though state television has said Turnell had access to “secret state financial information” and tried to flee the country. Maximum penalty is 14 years in prison. Verdict expected next year.

ANTI-CORRUPTION LAW

A special court is hearing four corruption cases against Suu Kyi. She faces two charges covering her own actions, and two in which she allegedly conspired with other defendants to carry out corruption,

which involves abuse of authority. Testimony included an allegation by a former political ally of Suu Kyi that he handed her a bribe of \$600,000 and seven gold bars in 2017-18. Suu Kyi dismissed his allegations as "absurd."

Suu Kyi has also been charged with diverting money meant as charitable donations to build a residence, and misusing her position to obtain rental properties at lower-than-market prices for a charitable foundation named after her mother that she chaired. The Anti-Corruption Commission has alleged such actions deprived the state of revenue it would otherwise have earned.

Maximum penalty for each offense is 15 years in prison and a fine. No date yet set for verdict.

A fifth corruption charge, also involving the rental of real estate, has not yet gone to trial. The authorities announced last week they have filed a sixth charge against her and Win Myint in connection with granting permits to rent and buy a helicopter.

ELECTION-RELATED LAWS

Myanmar's election commission announced it is prosecuting Suu Kyi and 15 other political figures for alleged fraud in last November's general election. The action by the Union Election Commission could result in Suu Kyi's party being dissolved and unable to participate in a new election the military has promised will take place within two years of its takeover.

The commission said Suu Kyi, former President Win Myint, other leading figures from her party and the commission's former chairman were "involved in electoral processes, election fraud and lawless actions" related to the polls. An election commissioner announced that Suu Kyi and two colleagues are accused of violating the constitution and several election laws.

101-year-old returns to Pearl Harbor to remember those lost

By AUDREY McAVOY and GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — When Japanese bombs began falling on Pearl Harbor, U.S. Navy Seaman 1st Class David Russell first sought refuge below deck on the USS Oklahoma.

But a split-second decision on that December morning 80 years ago changed his mind, and likely saved his life.

"They started closing that hatch. And I decided to get out of there," Russell, now 101, said in a recent interview.

Within 12 minutes his battleship would capsize under a barrage of torpedoes. Altogether 429 sailors and Marines from the Oklahoma would perish — the greatest death toll from any ship that day other than the USS Arizona, which lost 1,177.

Russell plans to return to Pearl Harbor on Tuesday for a ceremony in remembrance of the more than 2,300 American troops killed in the Dec. 7, 1941, attack that launched the U.S. into World War II.

About 30 survivors and 100 other veterans from the war are expected to observe a moment of silence at 7:55 a.m., the minute the attack began.

Survivors, now in their late 90s or older, stayed home last year due to the coronavirus pandemic and watched a livestream of the event instead.

Russell is traveling to Hawaii with the Best Defense Foundation, a nonprofit founded by former NFL Linebacker Donnie Edwards that helps World War II veterans revisit their old battlefields.

He recalls heading topside when the attack started because he was trained to load anti-aircraft guns and figured he could help if any other loader got hurt.

But Japanese torpedo planes dropped a series of underwater missiles that pummeled the Oklahoma before he could get there. Within 12 minutes, the hulking battleship capsized.

"Those darn torpedoes, they just kept hitting us and kept hitting us. I thought they'd never stop," Russell said. "That ship was dancing around."

Russell clambered over and around toppled lockers while the battleship slowly rolled over.

"You had to walk sort of sideways," he said.

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Once he got to the main deck, he crawled over the ship's side and eyed the USS Maryland moored next door. He didn't want to swim because leaked oil was burning in the water below. Jumping, he caught a rope hanging from the Maryland and escaped to that battleship without injury.

He then helped pass ammunition to the Maryland's anti-aircraft guns.

After the battle, Russell and two others went to Ford Island, next to where the battleships were moored, in search of a bathroom. A dispensary and enlisted quarters there had turned into a triage center and place of refuge for hundreds of wounded, and they found horribly burned sailors lining the walls. Many would die in the hours and days ahead.

"Most of them wanted a cigarette, and I didn't smoke at that time but I, uh, I got a pack of cigarettes and some matches, and I lit their cigarettes for them," Russell said. "You feel for those guys, but I couldn't do anything. Just light a cigarette for 'em and let 'em puff the cigarettes."

Russell still thinks about how lucky he was. He ponders why he decided to go topside on the Oklahoma, knowing most of the men who stayed behind likely were unable to get out after the hatch closed.

In the first two days after the bombing, a civilian crew from the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard rescued 32 men trapped inside the Oklahoma by cutting holes in its hull. But many others perished. Most of those who died were buried in anonymous Honolulu graves marked as "unknowns" because their remains were too degraded to be identified by the time they were removed from the ship between 1942 and 1944.

In 2015, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency exhumed 388 sets of these remains in hopes of identifying them with the help of DNA technology and dental records. They succeeded with 361.

Russell's brother-in-law was among them. Fireman 1st Class Walter "Boone" Rogers was in the fireroom, which got hit by torpedoes, Russell said. The military identified his remains in 2017, and he's since been reburied at Arlington National Cemetery.

Russell remained in the Navy until retiring in 1960. He worked at Air Force bases for the next two decades and retired for good in 1980.

His wife, Violet, passed away 22 years ago, and he now lives alone in Albany, Oregon. He drives himself to the grocery store and the local American Legion post in a black Ford Explorer while listening to polka music at top volume. When he's not hanging out with other veterans at the legion, he reads military history and watches TV. He keeps a stack of 500-piece puzzles to keep his mind sharp.

For decades, Russell didn't share much about his experiences in World War II because no one seemed to care. But the images from Pearl Harbor still haunt him, especially at night.

"When I was in the VA hospital there in San Francisco, they said, 'We want you to talk about World War II.' And I said, I told them, I said, 'When we talk about it, people don't believe us. They just walk away.' So now people want to know more about it so we're trying to talk about it. We're trying to talk about it, and we're just telling them what we saw," he said. "You can't forget it."

Flaccus reported from Albany, Oregon.

India hosts Putin as it balances ties with Russia, US

By ASHOK SHARMA Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday to discuss defense and trade relations as India attempts to balance its ties with the United States.

The agenda for the annual summit includes political and defense issues, Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman Arindam Bagchi said. The two countries are expected to sign several agreements, particularly in trade and defense.

India and Russia have a long history of close ties. But recently, India has drawn closer to the United States, which it considers critical to countering China. India and China have had a months-long military standoff along their disputed border in eastern Ladakh, where deadly clashes erupted last year.

Russia, meanwhile, has expressed reservations over the formation of the Quad, a grouping involving the U.S., India, Japan and Australia formed in response to China's growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific

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region.

India is trying to navigate its defense relationship with Russia as it ramps up its military ties with the United States. India and Russia are discussing and likely to sign a 10-year military-technical agreement that could help in the transfer of new technologies to India.

India, a major buyer of military equipment, depended largely on the former Soviet Union during the Cold War. But it has been diversifying its purchases by opting for U.S. equipment as well. During the Donald Trump presidency, the U.S. and India concluded defense deals worth over \$3 billion. Bilateral defense trade increased from near zero in 2008 to \$15 billion in 2019.

India's acquisition of Russian S-400 missile systems which it considers to be critical in countering China could prove to be an irritant in Indo-U.S. ties.

Washington has asked its partners to stay away from Russian military equipment to avoid possible sanctions.

India and Russia are also expected to strengthen their trade deals. They have already set a target of \$30 billion in bilateral trade by the end of 2025.

O'Neil, Miñoso, Hodges, Kaat, Oliva, Fowler get baseball HOF

By BEN WALKER AP Baseball Writer

Buck O'Neil never uttered a single word of bitterness or regret about not being elected to the baseball Hall of Fame. Till the end, he urged those who loved and rooted for him to do the same.

Now, long after a near miss that left many wondering if he'd ever make it, they can rejoice.

O'Neil, a champion of Black ballplayers during a monumental, eight-decade career on and off the field, joined Minnie Miñoso, Gil Hodges and three others in getting chosen for the Hall of Fame on Sunday.

Former Minnesota Twins teammates Tony Oliva and Jim Kaat also were elected along with Bud Fowler by a pair of veterans committees.

"Jubilation," said Bob Kendrick, president of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, that O'Neil helped create.

"While we're all sad that Buck is not here, you just cannot not be happy for all of those who continued to beat that Buck O'Neil drum," he said.

Oliva and Kaat, both 83 years old, are the only living new members. Longtime slugger Dick Allen, who died last December, fell one vote shy of election.

The six newcomers will be enshrined in Cooperstown, New York, on July 24, 2022, along with any new members elected by the Baseball Writers' Association of America. First-time candidates David Ortiz and Alex Rodriguez join Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens and Curt Schilling on the ballot, with voting results on Jan. 25.

Passed over in previous Hall elections, the new members reflect a diversity of accomplishments.

This was the first time O'Neil, Miñoso and Fowler had a chance to make the Hall under new rules honoring Negro League contributions. The Major League Baseball color barrier wasn't broken until 1947 by Jackie Robinson.

Last December, the statistics of some 3,400 players were added to MLB's record books when the sport said it was "correcting a longtime oversight in the game's history" and reclassifying the Negro Leagues as a major league.

O'Neil was a two-time All-Star first baseman in the Negro Leagues and the first Black coach in the National or American leagues. He became the ultimate ambassador for the sport until his death in 2006 at 94, was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and already is honored with a life-sized statue inside the Hall of Fame.

For all O'Neil did for the game, many casual fans weren't entirely familiar with him until they watched the nine-part Ken Burns documentary "Baseball," which first aired on PBS in 1994.

There, O'Neil's grace, wit and vivid storytelling brought back to life the times of Negro Leagues stars Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson and Cool Papa Bell, plus the days of many more Black players whose names were long forgotten.

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Kendrick said it was too bad O'Neil won't be in Cooperstown for the induction ceremonies, "but you know his spirit is going to fill the valley."

O'Neil played 10 years in the Negro Leagues and helped the Kansas City Monarchs win championships as a player and manager. His numbers were hardly gaudy — a .258 career batting average, nine home runs.

But what John Jordan O'Neil Jr. meant to baseball can never be measured by numbers alone.

O'Neil was a coach with the Chicago Cubs and enjoyed a prolific career as a scout.

His impact is visible to this day.

Along with his statue in Cooperstown, the Hall's board of directors periodically present the Buck O'Neil Lifetime Achievement Award to a person whose "whose extraordinary efforts enhanced baseball's positive impact on society ... and whose character, integrity and dignity" mirror those shown by O'Neil.

In 2006, it appeared O'Neil would get to soak in deserved praise for his achievements and advocacy when the Special Committee on Negro Leagues convened to study candidates for the Hall of Fame. The panel indeed elected 17 new members but O'Neil was not among them, narrowly missing out.

O'Neil was chosen to speak on behalf of those newcomers, all deceased, on induction day. True to his nature, he didn't emit a single word of remorse or self-pity about his own fate of being left out.

Two months later, O'Neil died in Kansas City. Later that year, former President George W. Bush honored O'Neil's legacy with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor.

"I'm near tears," Burns tweeted. "Buck O'Neil is one of the greatest people I have met on this planet. I'm just so happy and pleased and know that somewhere Buck is already in an even bigger Hall of Fame."

Miñoso was a two-time All-Star in the Negro Leagues before becoming the first Black player for the Chicago White Sox in 1951. Born in Havana, "The Cuban Comet" was a seven-time All-Star while with the White Sox and Indians.

"Trailblazer among Afro-Latinos and Cubans, five-tool dynamo on the baseball diamond, 'Mr. White Sox' ... any description of his career now ends with the words 'Hall of Famer,'" Chicago chairman Jerry Reinsdorf said in a statement.

There was nothing mini about Saturnino Orestes Armas Miñoso on the field. He hit over .300 eight times with Cleveland and Chicago, led the AL in stolen bases three times, reached double digits in home runs most every season and won three Gold Gloves in left field.

Miñoso finished up, or so it seemed, in 1964. He came back at age 50 for the White Sox in 1976 — going 1 for 8 — and batted twice in 1980, giving him five decades of playing pro ball.

The White Sox retired his No. 9 in 1983 and he remained close to the organization and its players before his death in 2015.

Fowler, born in 1858, is often regarded as the first Black professional baseball player. The pitcher and second baseman helped create the popular Page Fence Giants barnstorming team.

Hodges became the latest Brooklyn Dodgers star from the pennant-winning "Boys of Summer" to reach the Hall, joining Robinson, Duke Snider, Roy Campanella and Pee Wee Reese.

An eight-time All-Star with 370 home runs and a three-time Gold Glove at first base, Hodges enhanced his legacy when he managed the 1969 "Miracle Mets" to the World Series championship, a startling five-game win over heavily favored Baltimore.

Hodges was still the Mets' manager when he suffered a heart attack during spring training in 1972 and died at 47.

His daughter, Irene, said she was with her 95-year-old mother when the vote was announced.

"She just pounded her heart and said I'm so happy for Gil. My dad was a great manager and a great player but above all else he was a great dad," she said in a statement released by the Mets.

Oliva was a three-time AL batting champion with the Twins whose career was cut short by knee problems.

"I was looking for that phone call a long time," Oliva said on MLB Network. "I had so many people work so hard for me to be elected. They said I should have been elected 40 years ago. To be alive to tell the people means a lot to me."

Kaat was 283-237 in 25 seasons and a 16-time Gold Glove winner.

"I never thought I was the No. 1 pitcher," he said. "I wasn't dominant. I was durable and dependable."

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I am grateful they chose to reward dependability.”

O’Neil and Fowler were selected by the Early Days committee. Hodges, Miñoso, Oliva and Kaat were chosen the by the Golden Days committee.

The 16-member panels met separately in Orlando, Florida. The election announcement was originally scheduled to coincide with the big league winter meetings, which were nixed because of the MLB lockout.

It took 12 votes (75%) for selection: Miñoso drew 14, O’Neil got 13 and Hodges, Oliva, Kaat and Fowler each had 12. Allen had 11.

Oliva was an eight-time All-Star and batted .304 in 15 seasons, all with the Twins. The Cuban-born outfielder known for hitting wicked line drives was the 1964 AL Rookie of the Year.

Kaat was a three-time All-Star, a three-time 20-game winner and pitched in four decades. He boosted the Twins into the 1965 World Series and won a ring as a reliever on the 1982 Cardinals.

Kaat became a longtime broadcaster after he finished playing. During this year’s playoffs, he apologized after saying on an MLB Network game telecast that teams should try to “get a 40-acre field full of” players who look like White Sox infielder Yoán Moncada, who is Cuban.

The remark prompted some viewers to recall the unfulfilled promise by the U.S. government that freed slaves would get 40 acres and a mule after the Civil War.

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

Historic playoff: Alabama-Cincinnati, Michigan-Georgia

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

IRVING, Texas (AP) — As college football’s postseason evolved from disconnected bowls to the BCS to the current four-team playoff, it never truly embraced the underdog the way the NCAA basketball tournament does.

From Tulane to Utah, Boise State to TCU and then UCF, the upstarts occasionally got a chance to play a blue blood in a big bowl game, but they never entered the postseason with a legitimate opportunity to win a national championship.

College football finally has its first Cinderella team: Cincinnati has broken the glass ceiling.

The Bearcats will play Alabama in the Cotton Bowl on New Year’s Eve after being selected to the College Football Playoff on Sunday. Michigan will face Georgia in the Orange Bowl semifinal on Dec. 31 and the winners will play for the national championship on Jan. 10 in Indianapolis.

Fourth-seeded Cincinnati is the first team to reach the CFP from a non-Power Five conference in the eight-year history of this postseason format. The Bearcats (13-0) won the American Athletic Conference and head into the postseason as the only unbeaten team in the country.

“It’s an historic day. It really is. In the world of sports, this is history,” AAC Commissioner Mike Aresco said. “This is something probably many, many people never thought they would see.”

Previously, no team from a so-called Group of Five conference had ever even come close to making the playoff.

“We don’t want to carry the flag for the non-big schools, so to speak. We just want to be us,” Cincinnati coach Luke Fickell said.

When the Bowl Championship Series started in 1998, Tulane went unbeaten in Conference USA and didn’t even get a spot in one of the glitzy bowl games. Former Tulane President Scott Cowen was among the first to attack the BCS as an exclusionary cartel.

Under then-coach Urban Meyer, Utah went unbeaten as a member of the Mountain West in 2004 and reached the Fiesta Bowl, but only got to play a so-so Pittsburgh team, meaning the Utes had no shot to finish No. 1.

Boise State created a brand out of being a potential BCS buster during its time in the Western Athletic Conference, winning a remarkable Fiesta Bowl against Oklahoma in 2007. TCU was in the Mountain West when it won a Rose Bowl against Wisconsin in 2010.

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Utah and TCU ended up getting scooped up by Power Five conferences. If you can't beat them, ask them to join you.

The playoff doubled the number of teams that had a chance to win the national title from two to four in 2014, but it didn't seem to help the little guys.

UCF won 25 straight games over 2017 and '18 and never did better than eighth in the selection committee's rankings. The Knights went so far as to declare themselves national champions after they were the only team in major college football to finish the 2017 season unbeaten.

Cincinnati set the foundation for this year's run by going unbeaten in the regular season last year before losing to Georgia on a late field goal in the Peach Bowl.

Aresco conceded this run has felt bittersweet at times for him. Cincinnati, along with UCF and Houston, will be leaving the American for the Big 12 soon.

The Bearcats made history with little debate. Playoff selection committee chairman Gary Barta said there was strong consensus for Cincinnati at No. 4 ahead of No. 5 Notre Dame, which had only one loss — at home against the Bearcats in early October. Ohio State finished sixth.

"This will be a real challenge for us in every way, shape and form," Alabama coach Nick Saban said.

The Bearcats might not have been so comfortably in the field had things gone differently at the Big 12 championship game Saturday. Oklahoma State, which was No. 5 in the CFP rankings going into the game, came up inches short of scoring a go-ahead touchdown in the final minute of its loss to Baylor.

Saban, who noted he played at Kent State in the Mid-American Conference, said Cincinnati's achievement is a positive development for the sport.

"I absolutely think that everyone who participates in college football Division I level should feel like they have an opportunity to get in the playoff," Saban said.

It is the third time two teams from the same conference are in the CFP and second time it has happened with the Southeastern Conference. For years ago, Alabama beat Georgia in overtime to win the national title.

As conference leaders consider expanding the playoff from four to 12 teams as soon as 2024, only two Power Five leagues will be represented this season: the SEC and Big Ten. The Atlantic Coast Conference missed out for the first time. The Big 12 was shut out for the second straight season and the Pac-12 for the sixth time will not have a team in the playoff.

The other big bowl games were also set:

Michigan State (10-2) vs. ACC champion Pitt (11-2) in the Peach Bowl on Dec. 30.

Notre Dame (11-1) vs. Oklahoma State (11-2) in the Fiesta Bowl on Jan. 1.

Pac-12 champion Utah (10-3) vs. Ohio State (10-2) in the Rose Bowl on Jan. 1.

Mississippi (10-2) vs. Baylor (11-2) in the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 1.

Cincinnati's reward for making history is a matchup with the defending national champions at the home of the Dallas Cowboys.

The Crimson Tide is in the playoff for the seventh time after handing Georgia its first setback of the season in the SEC title game Saturday.

Alabama (12-1) seemed to be a loss away from being eliminated from playoff contention heading into its game with Georgia. Instead, Bryce Young and the Tide lit up the Bulldogs' vaunted defense to earn the top seed.

Saban's Alabama dynasty has won three playoff championships to go along with three BCS titles since 2009.

Georgia (12-1) managed to stay in the field as the third seed, becoming the second team to lose its conference title game and make the playoff. Notre Dame did the same thing last season, when it lost a rematch with Clemson in its lone season playing in the ACC, a move prompted by pandemic-altered schedules.

The Bulldogs will be making their second CFP appearance when they meet second-seeded Michigan (12-1) in the Orange Bowl. Coach Jim Harbaugh and the Wolverines are in the playoff for the first time after winning the Big Ten for the first time since 2004. Michigan, which went 2-4 last season, is also the first team to make the playoff after being unranked in the preseason AP Top 25.

Follow Ralph D. Russo at <https://twitter.com/ralphDrussoAP> and listen at <http://www.appodcasts.com>

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Both sides planning for new state-by-state abortion fight

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the Supreme Court weighs the future of the landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, a resurgent anti-abortion movement is looking to press its advantage in state-by-state battles while abortion-rights supporters prepare to play defense.

Both sides seem to be operating on the assumption that a court reshaped by former President Donald Trump will either overturn or seriously weaken *Roe*.

"We have a storm to weather," said Elizabeth Nash, state policy analyst for the Guttmacher Institute, a research organization that supports abortion rights. "We have to weather the storm so that in the future — five, 10, 15 years from now — we're talking about how we managed to repeal all these abortion bans."

The institute estimates that as many as 26 states would institute some sort of abortion-access restrictions within a year, if permitted by the court. At least 12 states have "trigger bans" on the books, with restrictions that would kick in automatically if the justices overturn or weaken federal protections on abortion access.

The current case before the court, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, concerns a Mississippi law that bans abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy. *Roe v. Wade*, which was reaffirmed in a subsequent 1992 ruling in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, allows states to regulate but not ban abortion up until the point of fetal viability, at roughly 24 weeks.

The fate of the Mississippi case won't be known for months, but based on opening arguments, *Roe* appears to be in peril. All six of the court's conservative justices, including Trump appointees Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barret, indicated they would uphold the Mississippi law.

"There's no doubt that what we heard from the Supreme Court was incredibly disturbing," said Ianthe Metzger, director of state media campaigns for the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, one of the most prominent advocates of abortion access rights. "It wasn't really surprising but it was alarming."

Susan Arnall, director of outreach for the anti-abortion Right to Life League, said she was particularly encouraged by Justice Samuel Alito's emphasis on the concept of "viability" for the fetus as a guiding principle on when to ban the termination of a pregnancy. She predicts that modern advancements in medicine will continue to shrink the window in which a fetus is not viable, opening the door to a host of medically intricate state-level debates.

"Viability is something that is subject to medical science," Arnall said. "It's going to get intensely legal and intensely medical. It's going to be a battle of lawyers and doctors."

Both sides seem to have been preparing for this moment for years, particularly with Trump having installed more than 200 federal judges and three Supreme Court justices during his presidency. Pro-abortion-access groups donated \$8 million in 2018 and more than \$10 million in 2020, according to Open Secrets, a nonpartisan group that tracks political spending.

Those numbers outpace the public contributions of anti-abortion groups, which donated \$2.6 million in 2018 and \$6.3 million in 2020, according to Open Secrets. But the complexity of the network of nonprofits and "dark money" funds makes it difficult to produce a full accounting of the money flows.

While Washington is the primary current battleground, many leaders of the conservative movement are treating the judicial battle as won and *Roe*'s demise as an inevitability. The next battleground will be a shifting cat-and-mouse fight in state legislatures and in next year's elections across the country.

"People are realizing that seven months from now, we'll probably be dealing with this on a state level," said Brian Burch, president of CatholicVote. "This will become much more prominent in state electoral races, especially governor's races."

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Legislatures in many Republican-led states are poised for action depending on the Supreme Court's ruling. On Wednesday, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals vacated previous rulings that had blocked a Tennessee law that included banning abortions once a fetal heartbeat is detected — about six weeks — and ordered a rehearing by the full court.

"The battle has been happening in the statehouses for decades and it's going to intensify," Nash said.

The Supreme Court's ruling is expected around June, almost guaranteeing that the issue will dominate next fall's congressional elections as well as state-level races from coast to coast.

"That's perfect timing, just ahead of the midterms," said Arnall of the Right to Life League.

The ruling could set off a flurry of activity concerning medicinal abortions — a medical option that didn't exist when Roe became law. The pills were approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2000, with restrictions that included requiring an in-person clinic visit before someone could be prescribed the two-pill regimen and a ban on sending them through the mail.

Those restrictions were relaxed during the coronavirus pandemic. Women seeking the pills can now receive them in the mail after a long-distance consultation with a doctor and they don't need to visit a clinic. The FDA is scheduled to review that stance soon but either way, those policies are expected to come under immediate attack by Republican-held statehouses.

"Medicinal abortions will be very high on the agenda," Nash said. "This is the new frontier."

Texas, which has enacted a law effectively banning most surgical abortions after six weeks, has a new restriction that makes it a felony to provide the medical abortion pills after seven weeks of pregnancy and criminalizes sending the medication through the mail.

"A coordinated disinformation campaign by anti-choice, anti-freedom politicians and activists has again allowed Texas to push care out of reach — particularly for those already marginalized by our health care system," NARAL Pro Choice President Mini Timmaraju said in a statement. "There is no end to the cruel measures anti-choice extremists will push in their quest for power and control."

Despite the historic setbacks, proponents of abortion access claim they are prepared for the state-by-state fight and are devising multiple ways to help women seeking abortions travel to states where they can receive them. Metzger, of Planned Parenthood, predicted that the renewed threat will spark a massive wave of public support for abortion rights.

"There's no doubt that (abortion opponents) have been playing a 40-year game," Metzger said. "For us, it's just continuing to sound the alarm. People are seeing that the threat is very real. This is not a theoretical argument anymore."

This story has been corrected to show that the first name of the NARAL Pro Choice president is Mini.

Lawyer: Artist didn't know Michigan parents stayed in studio

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

A Detroit-area artist whose studio was where the parents of the Oxford High School student charged in a deadly shooting were found by police is cooperating with authorities and didn't know the couple had stayed overnight, his attorney said Sunday.

James and Jennifer Crumbley, who face involuntary manslaughter counts, were found early Saturday inside a Detroit commercial building. The couple's attorneys have said they didn't intend to flee, countering authorities who accused them of eluding capture for their alleged role in a school shooting that left four students dead. Their 15-year-old son, Ethan Crumbley, has been charged as an adult with murder, terrorism and other crimes.

The couple went to artist Andrzej Sikora's studio inside the downtown building Friday morning, but the artist was unaware of the charges against the couple or that they stayed after he left for the day, according to attorney Clarence Dass. He said Sikora had a "friendly relationship" with the Crumbleys but declined to give details, citing an active investigation.

Dass said when the artist awoke Saturday and heard news of authorities taking the couple into custody,

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he voluntarily contacted authorities. Authorities had been looking for the couple since Friday afternoon. "There was a lot of confusion and the Crumbleys went to him for safety. He didn't know about the charges," Dass said. "They were there in the daytime. He left in the early evening. He didn't even know they were still there."

Sikora, 65, has not been charged, but Detroit police have said the Crumbleys "were aided in getting into the building," and that a person who helped them may also face charges. Detroit police did not have further information Sunday.

Oakland County Undersheriff Michael McCabe confirmed Sunday that Sikora's attorney had reached out. McCabe said in a news release that authorities would interview Sikora on Monday afternoon.

Sikora, a Polish-born American artist who lives in Oakland County, has been in the country for years, Dass said. His work, largely murals, can be found around the Detroit area, including on homes and businesses.

Six students and a teacher were also injured in Tuesday's shooting at Oxford High School, roughly 30 miles (50 kilometers) north of Detroit.

On Friday, Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald's office made the rare decision to file charges against Ethan Crumbley's parents. Prosecutors accused them of failing to intervene on the day of the shooting despite being confronted with a drawing and chilling message — "blood everywhere" — that was found at their son's desk. They could each face up to 15 years in prison.

The Crumbleys committed "egregious" acts, from buying a gun on Black Friday and making it available to their son to resisting his removal from school when they were summoned a few hours before Tuesday's shooting, McDonald alleged.

Defense attorneys for the Crumbleys have argued that they never intended to flee and had made plans to meet their lawyers Saturday morning.

School district officials have said a third party will investigate the events at Oxford High School that occurred before the shooting. On Sunday, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel said her office could conduct the probe.

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

Skiing Santas back to shredding Maine slopes for charity

NEWRY, Maine (AP) — Santa is back to "sleighting" it on the ski slope.

More than 230 skiing and snowboarding Kris Kringles took to a western Maine resort on Sunday to raise money for charity.

The jolly ol' St. Nicks took a break last year because of the global pandemic. But they returned to kick off the ski season in full holiday garb, including white beards, red hats and red outfits.

A sea of red Santa suits descended the mountain, carving wide turns as their beards fluttered in the icy wind. At least one green-costumed Grinch snuck his way into the mix, disguised in Santa's coat and hat.

The event took place in the western Maine town of Newry, home to the Sunday River Ski Resort, the state's busiest.

Before dashing through the snow, the Santas must all donate a minimum of \$20, which helps support local education and recreation programs. The event raised several thousand dollars for the Sunday River Community Fund, a local charity.

Lawyer: Chris Cuomo accuser was disgusted by 'hypocrisy'

By DAVID BAUDER and JOCELYN NOVECK Associated Press Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — A woman who lodged a sexual harassment allegation against former CNN anchor Chris Cuomo was "disgusted" by what she saw as his hypocrisy and attempts to discredit women who made similar allegations against his brother, her lawyer said Sunday.

The woman's complaint became known shortly after CNN fired the "Cuomo Prime Time" anchor Satur-

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day night. Chris Cuomo had been criticized for breaching journalistic ethics by trying to help his brother, former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, beat his own harassment charges.

The woman, who has chosen to remain anonymous, took her allegations against Chris Cuomo to CNN on Wednesday through her lawyer, Debra Katz.

Katz did not give any specifics about the alleged behavior, believed to have occurred before Cuomo joined CNN in 2013. Prior to that, he worked at ABC News.

Chris Cuomo, through a spokesman, said the charges were untrue. "If the goal in making these false and unvetted accusations was to see Mr. Cuomo punished by CNN, that may explain his unwarranted termination," the spokesman said.

Katz also tied Cuomo's firing to the accusations, saying in a statement that "CNN acted promptly on my client's complaint and fired Mr. Cuomo."

CNN suspended Cuomo on Tuesday after learning through documents released by New York's attorney general that his actions in support of his brother were more extensive than previously known. A law firm was hired by CNN to look into Cuomo's actions, Cravath, Swaine & Moore, then determined the network had cause to fire him.

With the new misconduct allegations, the network had little taste for another investigation and CNN chief Jeff Zucker informed Cuomo of the firing on Saturday.

Katz said in Sunday's statement that her client was motivated by Cuomo's statements, regarding allegations against his brother, that he cared deeply and profoundly about issues of sexual misconduct. The woman also believed that Cuomo "played an active role in attempting to smear women" who had accused his brother, she said.

"Hearing the hypocrisy of Chris Cuomo's on-air words and disgusted by his efforts to try to discredit these women, my client retained counsel to report his serious sexual misconduct to CNN," the lawyer said.

The new misconduct allegation comes after a veteran TV executive, Shelley Ross, wrote a column for The New York Times in September saying Chris Cuomo had groped her at a party 16 years ago, when they both worked for ABC News. Cuomo told the newspaper "I apologized to her then, and I meant it."

In responding to criticism of his actions regarding his brother, Cuomo has said that he was simply trying to help him — telling his CNN audience shortly after Andrew Cuomo resigned in August that "it's never easy being in this business and coming from a political family."

"I never attacked, nor encouraged anyone to attack, any woman who came forward," Cuomo said on the air. "I never made calls to the press about my brother's situation."

However, in an email from last March newly released by the New York attorney general, Cuomo told one of his brother's aides that "I have a lead on the wedding girl." It was in reference to a woman who said in news reports she was uncomfortable with how the governor touched her when they met at a wedding.

Chris Cuomo, in testimony to Attorney General Letitia James' investigators, explained that a "source" had called him and suggested that maybe the accuser had "been put up to" making the accusation. He relayed that to his brother's aides, however they told him the woman had made her discomfort known soon after it happened.

Cuomo also testified to investigators — a month before he told CNN viewers he had not called the press about his brother's situation — that he had reached out privately to media figures to find out if there would be other accusers.

Cuomo has said he never tried to influence his own network's coverage of his brother's problems, and no evidence has emerged that he did.

His firing leaves a hole in CNN's weeknight lineup. Even while competing in the same time slot with industry heavyweights Sean Hannity on Fox News Channel and Rachel Maddow on MSNBC, Cuomo was generally the most-watched personality on CNN.

Michael Smerconish will substitute for him this week.

Associated Press reporter David Porter contributed to this report.

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Senate leader, presidential candidate Bob Dole dies at 98

By JOHN HANNA and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Bob Dole, who overcame disabling war wounds to become a sharp-tongued Senate leader from Kansas, a Republican presidential candidate and then a symbol and celebrant of his dwindling generation of World War II veterans, died Sunday. He was 98.

His wife, Elizabeth Dole, said in an announcement posted on social media that he died in his sleep.

Dole announced in February 2021 that he'd been diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. During his 36-year career on Capitol Hill, Dole became one of the most influential legislators and party leaders in the Senate, combining a talent for compromise with a caustic wit, which he often turned on himself but didn't hesitate to turn on others, too.

He shaped tax policy, foreign policy, farm and nutrition programs and rights for the disabled, enshrining protections against discrimination in employment, education and public services in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Today's accessible government offices and national parks, sidewalk ramps and the sign-language interpreters at official local events are just some of the more visible hallmarks of his legacy and that of the fellow lawmakers he rounded up for that sweeping civil rights legislation 30 years ago.

Dole devoted his later years to the cause of wounded veterans, their fallen comrades at Arlington National Cemetery and remembrance of the fading generation of World War II vets.

Thousands of old soldiers massed on the National Mall in 2004 for what Dole, speaking at the dedication of the World War II Memorial there, called "our final reunion." He'd been a driving force in its creation.

"Our ranks have dwindled," he said then. "Yet if we gather in the twilight it is brightened by the knowledge that we have kept faith with our comrades."

Long gone from Kansas, Dole made his life in the capital, at the center of power and then in its shadow upon his retirement, living all the while at the storied Watergate complex. When he left politics and joined a law firm staffed by prominent Democrats, he joked that he brought his dog to work so he would have another Republican to talk to.

He tried three times to become president. The last was in 1996, when he won the Republican nomination only to see President Bill Clinton reelected. He sought his party's presidential nomination in 1980 and 1988 and was the 1976 GOP vice presidential candidate on the losing ticket with President Gerald Ford.

Through all of that he carried the mark of war. Charging a German position in northern Italy in 1945, Dole was hit by a shell fragment that crushed two vertebrae and paralyzed his arms and legs. The young Army platoon leader spent three years recovering in a hospital and never regained use of his right hand.

To avoid embarrassing those trying to shake his right hand, Dole always clutched a pen in it and reached out with his left.

Dole could be merciless with his rivals, whether Democrat or Republican. When George H.W. Bush defeated him in the 1988 New Hampshire Republican primary, Dole snapped: "Stop lying about my record." If that pales next to the scorching insults in today's political arena, it was shocking at the time.

But when Bush died in December 2018, old rivalries were forgotten as Dole appeared before Bush's casket in the Capitol Rotunda. As an aide lifted him from his wheelchair, Dole slowly steadied himself and saluted his one-time nemesis with his left hand, his chin quivering.

In a vice presidential debate two decades earlier with Walter Mondale, Dole had famously and audaciously branded all of America's wars that century "Democrat wars." Mondale shot back that Dole had just "richly earned his reputation as a hatchet man."

Dole at first denied saying what he had just said on that very public stage, then backed down, and eventually acknowledged he'd gone too far. "I was supposed to go for the jugular," he said, "and I did — my own."

For all of his bare-knuckle ways, he was a deep believer in the Senate as an institution and commanded respect and even affection from many Democrats. Just days after Dole announced his dire cancer diag-

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nosis, President Joe Biden visited him at his home to wish him well. The White House said the two were close friends from their days in the Senate.

Biden recalled in a statement Sunday that one of his first meetings outside the White House after being sworn-in as president was with the Doles at their Washington home.

"Like all true friendships, regardless of how much time has passed, we picked up right where we left off, as though it were only yesterday that we were sharing a laugh in the Senate dining room or debating the great issues of the day, often against each other, on the Senate floor," Biden said. "I saw in his eyes the same light, bravery, and determination I've seen so many times before."

Biden ordered that U.S. flags be flown at half-staff at the White House and all public buildings and grounds until sunset Thursday.

Dole won a seat in Congress in 1960, representing a western Kansas House district. He moved up to the Senate eight years later when Republican incumbent Frank Carlson retired.

There, he antagonized his Senate colleagues with fiercely partisan and sarcastic rhetoric, delivered at the behest of President Richard Nixon. The Kansan was rewarded for his loyalty with the chairmanship of the Republican National Committee in 1971, before Nixon's presidency collapsed in the Watergate scandal.

He served as a committee chairman, majority leader and minority leader in the Senate during the 1980s and '90s. Altogether, he was the Republicans' leader in the Senate for nearly 11½ years, a record until Kentucky Sen. Mitch McConnell broke it in 2018. It was during this period that he earned a reputation as a shrewd, pragmatic legislator, tireless in fashioning compromises.

After Republicans won Senate control, Dole became chairman of the tax-writing Finance Committee and won acclaim from deficit hawks and others for his handling of a 1982 tax bill, in which he persuaded Ronald Reagan's White House to go along with increasing revenues by \$100 billion to ease the federal budget deficit.

"When Bob asked you to do something, that was it. I can tell you so many things we were able to solve by invoking Bob's name," said former GOP Sen. Pat Roberts, who served alongside Dole in Kansas' congressional delegation.

But some more conservative Republicans were appalled that Dole had pushed for higher taxes. Georgia Rep. Newt Gingrich branded him "the tax collector for the welfare state."

Dole became Senate leader in 1985 and served as either majority or minority leader, depending on which party was in charge, until he resigned in 1996 to devote himself to pursuit of the presidency.

That campaign, Dole's last, was fraught with problems from the start. He ran out of money in the spring, and Democratic ads painted the GOP candidate and the party's divisive House speaker, Gingrich, with the same brush: as Republicans out to eliminate Medicare. Clinton won by a large margin.

He also faced questions about his age because he was running for president at age 73 — well before Biden was elected weeks before turning 78 in 2020.

Relegated to private life, Dole became an elder statesman who helped Clinton get a chemical-weapons treaty passed. He also tended his wife's political ambitions. Elizabeth Dole ran unsuccessfully for the Republican presidential nomination in 2000, then served a term as senator from North Carolina.

Dole endeared himself to the public as the self-deprecating pitchman for the anti-impotence drug Viagra and other products.

He also continued to comment on issues and endorse political candidates.

In 2016, Dole initially backed former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush for the GOP presidential nomination. He later warmed to Donald Trump and eventually endorsed him.

But six weeks after the 2020 election, with Trump refusing to concede and promoting unfounded claims of voter fraud, Dole told The Kansas City Star: "It's a pretty bitter pill for Trump, but it's a fact he lost."

Trump issued a statement Sunday praising Dole as "an American war hero and true patriot for our Nation" who represented "Kansas with honor and the Republican Party was made stronger by his service."

In September 2017, Congress voted to award Dole its highest expression of appreciation for distinguished contributions to the nation, a Congressional Gold Medal. That came a decade after he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

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Congress honored Dole again in 2019 by promoting him from Army captain to colonel, in recognition of the military service that earned him two Purple Hearts.

Robert Joseph Dole was born July 22, 1923, in Russell, a western Kansas farming and oil community. He was the eldest of four children. His father ran a cream and egg business and managed a grain elevator, and his mother sold sewing machines and vacuum cleaners to help support the family during the Depression. Dole attended the University of Kansas for two years before enlisting in the Army in 1943.

Dole met Phyllis Holden, a therapist at a military hospital, as he was recovering from his war wounds in 1948. They were married and had a daughter, Robin. The couple divorced in 1972.

Dole began his political career while a student at Washburn University, winning a seat in the Kansas House. He met his second wife, Elizabeth Dole, while she was working for the Nixon White House. She also served on the Federal Trade Commission and as transportation secretary and labor secretary while Dole was in the Senate. They married in 1975.

Dole published a memoir about his wartime experiences and recovery, "One Soldier's Story," in 2005. The Dole Institute of Politics on the University of Kansas keeps an archive of World War II veterans from Kansas.

Woodward contributed from Washington. Associated Press writers Jennifer C. Kerr and Candace Smith contributed to this report.

Online:

National World War II Memorial: <http://www.wwiimemorial.com>

Video of the WWII memorial is available at: http://customwire.ap.org/dynamic/files/specials/interactives/wwii_memorial/index.html

Fauci says early reports encouraging about omicron variant

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

U.S. health officials said Sunday that while the omicron variant of the coronavirus is rapidly spreading throughout the country, early indications suggest it may be less dangerous than delta, which continues to drive a surge of hospitalizations.

President Joe Biden's chief medical adviser, Dr. Anthony Fauci, told CNN's "State of the Union" that scientists need more information before drawing conclusions about omicron's severity.

Reports from South Africa, where it emerged and is becoming the dominant strain, suggest that hospitalization rates have not increased alarmingly.

"Thus far, it does not look like there's a great degree of severity to it," Fauci said. "But we have really got to be careful before we make any determinations that it is less severe or it really doesn't cause any severe illness, comparable to delta."

Fauci said the Biden administration is considering lifting travel restrictions against noncitizens entering the United States from several African countries. They were imposed as the omicron variant exploded in the region, but U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has blasted such measures as "travel apartheid."

"Hopefully we'll be able to lift that ban in a quite reasonable period of time," Fauci said. "We all feel very badly about the hardship that has been put on not only on South Africa but the other African countries."

Omicron had been detected in about a third of U.S. states by Sunday, including in the Northeast, the South, the Great Plains and the West Coast. Wisconsin, Missouri and Louisiana were among the latest states to confirm cases.

But delta remains the dominant variant, making up more than 99% of cases and driving a surge of hospitalizations in the north. National Guard teams have been sent to help overwhelmed hospitals in western New York, and Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker issued an emergency order requiring any hospitals facing limited patient capacity to reduce scheduled procedures that are not urgent.

U.S. officials continued urging people to get vaccinated and to receive booster shots, as well as take

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precautions such as wearing masks when among strangers indoors, saying anything that helps protect against delta will also help protect against other variants.

Even if omicron proves less dangerous than delta, it remains problematic, World Health Organization epidemiologist Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove told CBS' "Face The Nation."

"Even if we have a large number of cases that are mild, some of those individuals will need hospitalizations," she said. "They will need to go into ICU and some people will die. ... We don't want to see that happen on top of an already difficult situation with delta circulating globally."

Two years into the outbreak, COVID-19 has killed over 780,000 Americans, and deaths are running at about 860 per day.

More than 6,600 new hospital admissions are being reported daily, according to tracking data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

COVID-19 cases and deaths in the U.S. have dropped by about half since the delta peak in August and September, but at more than 86,000 new infections per day, the numbers are still high, especially heading into the holidays, when people travel and gather with family.

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

Reaction to Bob Dole's death from US dignitaries, veterans

By The Associated Press undefined

U.S. dignitaries and military veterans are mourning former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, a World War II veteran and former Republican presidential candidate who served in Congress for 36 years. Dole, who had stage 4 lung cancer, died Sunday at age 98, according to his wife, Elizabeth.

"Bob was an American statesman like few in our history. A war hero and among the greatest of the Greatest Generation. And to me, he was also a friend whom I could look to for trusted guidance, or a humorous line at just the right moment to settle frayed nerves. I will miss my friend. But I am grateful for the times we shared, and for the friendship Jill and I and our family have built with Liddy and the entire Dole family. ... He had an unerring sense of integrity and honor. May God bless him, and may our nation draw upon his legacy of decency, dignity, good humor, and patriotism for all time." — President Joe Biden, who served with Dole in the Senate.

"Laura and I are saddened by the passing of a great patriot, Senator Bob Dole. This good man represented the finest of American values. He defended them in uniform during World War II. He advanced them in the United States Senate. And he lived them out as a father, husband, and friend. Our entire family benefitted from that friendship, including my father. I will always remember Bob's salute to my late dad at the Capitol, and now we Bushes salute Bob and give thanks for his life of principled service." — Former President George W. Bush, speaking of Dole's tribute to former President George H.W. Bush.

"Bob Dole was an American war hero and true patriot for our Nation. He served the Great State of Kansas with honor and the Republican Party was made stronger by his service. Our Nation mourns his passing, and our prayers are with Elizabeth and his wonderful family." — Former President Donald Trump.

"Senator Bob Dole was a war hero, a political leader, and a statesman — with a career and demeanor harkening back to a day when members of the Greatest Generation abided by a certain code, putting country over party. Our thoughts are with Elizabeth and the Dole family." — Former President Barack Obama.

"Bob Dole dedicated his entire life to serving the American people, from his heroism in World War II to the 35 years he spent in Congress. After all he gave in the war, he didn't have to give more. But he did. His example should inspire people today and for generations to come." — Former President Bill Clinton.

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“Whatever their politics, anyone who saw Bob Dole in action had to admire his character and his profound patriotism. Those of us who were lucky to know Bob well ourselves admired him even more. A bright light of patriotic good cheer burned all the way from Bob’s teenage combat heroics through his whole career in Washington through the years since. It still shone brightly, undimmed, to his last days. Bob Dole lived the kind of full, rich, and deeply honorable American life that will be impossible for any tribute today to fully capture.” — Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.

“America has lost an iconic statesman and tireless veterans advocate. Bob Dole distinguished himself in combat long before becoming one of the most respected voices in Congress. His leadership and determination led to the construction and dedication of the National World War II Memorial. America is a better country as a result of this great patriot’s service. The American Legion was proud to present Sen. Dole with our organization’s highest honor, the Distinguished Service Medal in 1997. Our condolences to his wife, Elizabeth, his family and many friends.” — American Legion National Commander Paul E. Dillard.

“Bob Dole was a giant of the Senate. I remember the large number of Republican and Democratic Senators gathering on the Floor to praise him when he stepped down from the Senate. Traveling with him, working with him and writing legislation with him are among my fondest memories of the Senate.” — Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., the longest-serving sitting senator.

“From the battlefield to the United States Senate, he served our country with great integrity. He was a man of his word. As Senate Majority Leader and presidential candidate, Senator Dole championed our men and women in uniform and the hidden heroes who care for them each day. ... From the Well of the House to the Floor of the Senate, from presidential candidate to elder statesman, he also never failed to raise his powerful voice on behalf of Americans living with disabilities. He was a force in enshrining essential protections into law with the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act, and he served as an inspiration himself to millions. As we honor his life, let us resolve to live up to his challenge and carry on his mission.” — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

“Over the last several years, I was fortunate to get to spend several Saturdays a year with Senator Dole. He made it his mission to greet fellow World War II veterans in Washington, D.C., when they came to visit the World War II Memorial, a memorial that Senator Dole helped make a reality. When Rhode Island veterans would come to Washington on Honor Flights, one of their true highlights was seeing Senator Dole. He was there to confer respect and honor upon others, and it was truly a privilege to be there at his side and see veterans and caregivers alike light up and connect with him. Senator Dole was both a great listener and storyteller and he always made sure our veterans knew: This is their memorial. It belongs to them.” — Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

“When I was at recovering at Walter Reed, Bob Dole was a patient too. He was 81 years old then, and he had his own private room, but he always did his rehab with the rest of us — cracking jokes and sharing stories about his Army days. I’ll always remember how that proud Veteran from an earlier generation took the time — during some of the most difficult moments of my life — to interact with us younger Soldiers, helping us recover from both our physical and psychological wounds. ... He was a true statesman and model of the Greatest Generation who never failed to answer the call to serve.” — Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., who lost both her legs while serving in Iraq.

“Senator Dole was many things -- a war hero, a father, a husband, a public servant; and to Kansans, a man who embodied everything good and decent about Kansas and about America. ... He was a larger-than-life presence in our nation’s politics and demonstrated a decency, a humility, and a civility that should serve as a model for those of us in public life.” — Gov. Laura Kelly, D-Kan.

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"As a public servant, private citizen, and true patriot, Senator Bob Dole showed total dedication to the American experiment and its deepest ideals, answering liberty's call at every turn. A combat hero, champion for those with disabilities, congressional leader from Kansas, and presidential candidate, Dole served this nation for 79 years. He lived a life of heroism and humor, courage and consequence, leadership and legacy that every American should strive for." — House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

Cruise ship with COVID-19 infections arrives in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A Norwegian Cruise Line ship with at least 10 passengers and crew members infected with COVID-19 docked Sunday in New Orleans, where health officials said they were trying to disembark people without worsening the spread of the coronavirus illness.

Local news outlets in New Orleans confirmed the Norwegian Breakaway had arrived in the city. The ship departed New Orleans on Nov. 28. The Louisiana Department of Health said in a late Saturday news release that over the past week, the ship made stops in Belize, Honduras and Mexico.

Norwegian Cruise Line issued a statement that confirmed a "handful of COVID-19 cases among guests and crew." The company said all of the identified cases involved people without symptoms of the illness.

Norwegian said it requires all passengers and crew members to have been vaccinated against the coronavirus prior to departure.

"We are testing all individuals on Norwegian Breakaway prior to disembarkation, as well as providing post-exposure and quarantine public health guidance by the (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)," the company's statement said. "Any guests who have tested positive for COVID-19 will travel by personal vehicle to their personal residence or self-isolate in accommodations provided by the company."

The state health department — which is working with the cruise line and state and local officials to contain the outbreak — said at least 10 people on the ship tested positive for COVID-19. More than 3,200 people were on board the ship, officials said.

Some disembarking passengers told WVUE-TV in New Orleans that they were notified about the positive cases on the ship, while others said they had no idea about the outbreak until being asked about it by a reporter.

"We didn't hear of this until we kind of heard you talking a second ago," said Don Canole, a passenger from North Carolina. "It would have been nice to have known. We would have taken maybe a few more precautions."

Passengers said they were tested for COVID-19 exposure on Saturday before disembarking Sunday. The cruise line also gave passengers take-home rapid tests as they left the ship, according to WVUE.

The company said no changes to scheduled future sailings on the Norwegian Breakaway are currently planned, and the ship was scheduled to depart again Sunday evening.

Cruise ships were an early source of outbreaks last year at the start of the coronavirus pandemic as some ships were rejected at ports and passengers were forced into quarantine. The CDC issued a no-sail order in March 2020, prompting a standstill that ended last June as cruise ships began to leave U.S. ports with new health and safety requirements.

Memorable moments from Bob Dole's life and political career

By JOHN HANNA and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bob Dole's political career began in 1950 with election to the Kansas Legislature and officially ended nearly five decades later, one step short of the White House. In retirement, Dole kept working into his 90s for the causes he cherished.

A look at some of the moments from a life in politics:

As a college student, Dole had planned to be a doctor. World War II changed his life's direction. He nearly died from injuries sustained as a second lieutenant leading an assault on German forces. After three years of surgeries and physical therapy, Dole regained the ability to dress, eat and walk. But he never

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recovered use of his right hand and arm, and much of his left hand was numb. Dole returned to college, earned a law degree and was elected county attorney. "The theory was, if I can't use my hands, I can use my head," he later recalled.

Dole was a senator already known for his biting remarks when President Gerald Ford chose him as his running mate. Dole shocked viewers of the 1976 vice presidential debate by declaring the wars of the 20th century so far — the two world wars, Korea and Vietnam — to be "Democrat wars" that had killed or wounded 1.6 million Americans. "Senator Dole has richly earned his reputation as a hatchet man tonight," his Democratic opponent, Minnesota Sen. Walter Mondale, responded.

Dole rebounded from his ticket's loss to Jimmy Carter and Mondale. He toned down his barbs, directing more of them toward himself. He once analyzed the 1976 presidential campaign this way: "President Ford was supposed to take the high road, and I was supposed to go for the jugular. And I did — my own."

During his nearly 36 years in Congress, Dole became known as a tough deal-maker, trusted to craft bipartisan compromises. "You've got to make the hard choices," Dole said. It was not for him to "vote no against all the hard things and vote yes for all the easy things, and you go out and make speeches about how tough you are."

In May 1996, Senate Majority Leader Dole surprised his colleagues by announcing that he would resign his seat to devote himself to his presidential campaign. "I will seek the presidency with nothing to fall back on but the judgment of the people," he said, "and nowhere to go but the White House or home."

As a 73-year-old presidential nominee, Dole faced questions about his age. It didn't help when he tumbled off a campaign stage in Chico, California, landing in the dirt. Dole tried to shift the focus to questions about the personal character of his opponent, President Bill Clinton. "If something happened along the route and you had to leave your children with Bob Dole or Bill Clinton," Dole told voters, "I think you would probably leave them with Bob Dole." Polling on the question suggested parents felt otherwise.

Hoping to revive his presidential campaign, Dole launched a round-the-clock marathon of events over the final 96-hour stretch to Election Day 1996. When a reporter asked whether Dole had brought enough clean clothes, he quipped, "We're going to stop at an underwear factory."

Dole chose comedian David Letterman's show for his first postelection appearance. He unleashed a sharp wit that had been mostly kept hidden during the campaign. Invited to dish about Clinton's weight, Dole demurred: "I never tried to lift him. I just tried to beat him." Asked whether he would consider accepting a post in Clinton's administration, Dole said, "Well, if he wanted to give me his job, I'd think about it."

"I suppose you could say my post-political career really began on that Friday night as viewers discovered that I wasn't the glowering, Social Security-devouring sourpuss" portrayed in Democratic campaign ads, Dole later wrote.

Dole was a driving force behind construction of the World War II Memorial on the National Mall. He spoke poignantly at its 2004 dedication before tens of thousands of fellow veterans in their 80s and 90s about "the physical and moral courage that makes heroes out of farm and city boys."

In 2012, looking frail and using a wheelchair, Dole returned to the Senate floor to rally support for passage of the U.N. treaty on the rights of the disabled, which was modeled after the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act he had shepherded through the Senate. The treaty, opposed by most of the Republican senators, failed despite his personal appeal.

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Two weeks later, Dole was back in the Senate as mourners passed by the casket of Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, whom Dole had befriended decades earlier as the men convalesced from their war injuries. Rising from his wheelchair and walking with help, Dole saluted Inouye's casket. He explained to a Roll Call reporter that he "wouldn't want Danny to see me in a wheelchair."

In 2014, at age 90, Dole embarked on a series of sentimental tours of his home state, with a campaign-style pace of three or four stops per day. Dole, living in Washington, said he wanted to thank the people back home for their support over the decades. Kansans lined up at libraries and courthouses and senior centers to shake his hand and share memories as he visited all 105 counties.

"I'm proof that it's never too late to join Twitter," Dole, then 92, tweeted from his new social media account in June 2016. Dole used the platform to criticize Rep. Tim Huelskamp of Kansas, a conservative Republican who was in a primary challenge from a candidate who campaigned as a pragmatist, Roger Marshall. In August, Marshall won the primary and his seat in the House, before winning a Senate seat four years later, also with Dole's endorsement.

In 2016, Dole initially backed former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush for the GOP presidential nomination. He later warmed to Donald Trump, but not to Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, telling The New York Times in January of that year that Cruz was an "extremist" whose nomination would cause "catastrophic" GOP losses, adding, "Nobody likes him." He later formally endorsed Trump.

In September 2018, then-President Trump signed legislation to award Dole the Congressional Gold Medal, one of the highest civilian honors bestowed in the U.S., in recognition of Dole's Army service and long political career. In many respects, Dole embodied the state motto of Kansas: "Ad astra per aspera" — to the stars through difficulties.

Another Dole moment in the public eye was a moving one: On Dec. 4, 2018, Dole made an emotional appearance before the casket of another World War II veteran, former President George H.W. Bush, in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. As an aide lifted Dole from his wheelchair, a clearly ailing Dole slowly steadied himself and saluted Bush with his left hand, chin quivering. Witnessed by many, it was a moving tribute to his onetime political rival.

Six weeks after the November 2020 election, when Trump still was refusing to concede to Democrat Joe Biden and promoting unfounded claims of voter fraud, Dole told The Kansas City Star, "The election is over." He said of Trump: "It's a pretty bitter pill for Trump, but it's a fact he lost."

Dole announced on Feb. 18, 2021, that he had been diagnosed with Stage 4 lung cancer and that he would start treatment in a few days. An outpouring of sympathy, prayers and well-wishes from across the political spectrum followed on social media. Dole said: "While I certainly have some hurdles ahead, I also know that I join millions of Americans who face significant health challenges of their own."

Hanna reported from Topeka, Kansas. Former Associated Press writer Connie Cass contributed to this report.

Violence as French far-right TV pundit holds campaign rally

By SYLVIE CORBET The Associated Press

VILLEPINTE, France (AP) — Anti-racism activists were beaten up Sunday as far-right former French TV pundit Eric Zemmour held his first presidential campaign rally near Paris, a few days after he formally

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declared his candidacy in a video that highlighted his anti-migrant and anti-Islam views.

As his supporters cheered and waved French flags in a northern suburb of the capital, thousands of others took to the streets of Paris to denounce his xenophobic platform.

France is holding its presidential election on April 10, with a runoff if needed on April 24. Zemmour has drawn comparisons in France to former U.S. President Donald Trump because of his rabble-rousing populism and ambitions of making the jump from the small screen to national leadership. The 63-year-old with multiple hate-speech convictions unveiled his campaign's slogan: "Impossible is not French," a quote attributed to Napoleon.

"If I win that election, it won't be one more (political) changeover, but the beginning of the reconquest of the most beautiful country in the world," Zemmour said.

Supporters at the rally sang France's national anthem, shouted "Zemmour, president!" and "We will win!" while brandishing the tricolor French flag. AP reporters saw some activists dressed in black with "No to racism" on their sweaters being beaten up by people at the rally and brutally taken out of the room. The scuffles continued outside the room between anti-racism activists and security guards.

"I'm not racist," Zemmour said. "We are defending our country, our homeland, our ancestral heritage (to) ... transmit our children France as we have known it."

Reporters from a French television show were booed and insulted by Zemmour's supporters ahead of his speech, leading them to be briefly escorted outside the room by security guards. They came back soon afterward but Zemmour harshly criticized the media in his speech.

"They are making up polemics about books I wrote 15 years ago, they snoop into my private life, call me all sort of names... My adversaries want my political death, journalists want my social death and jihadists want my death," he said.

Zemmour wants foreigners to "assimilate" French culture rather than keeping their identities. He wants to ban parents from giving children foreign names and restrict choices to typical French names Zemmour also wants to end nationality being acquired by birth on French soil and to deport foreign criminals and foreign jobseekers who don't find employment within six months.

"France is back, because the French people stood up. The French people stand up against those who want to make it disappear," he said.

His campaign rally Sunday, which was initially supposed to be held in a Paris concert hall, was moved to a bigger exhibition center in Villepinte for security reasons due to the protest against him by over 50 groups, including far-left political parties, unions and anti-racist groups. Police had feared clashes with Zemmour's far-right supporters.

In the Paris neighborhood of Barbès, thousands took to the streets Sunday, marching behind a banner reading "Paris will silence the far-right."

Pauline Salingue, a spokeswoman for the head of the New Anti-Capitalist Party, said people "shouldn't be seduced by these so-called anti-system profiles. Zemmour is a multi-millionaire. Zemmour earns tens of thousands of euros per month, so how can he pretend to represent the little people, as he likes to say? It is a very serious scam."

Zemmour has gained strength on France's political scene in recent months, starting to siphon off supporters from far-right National Party leader Marine Le Pen, who has long said she would run for the French presidency next year.

His rally came one day after France's main conservative Republicans party on Saturday picked its presidential candidate. Valérie Pécresse, the head of the Paris region and a former minister from 2007 to 2012, as its presidential candidate.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who defeated Le Pen in the 2017 presidential runoff, is expected to seek a second term but he has yet to declare his candidacy.

The far-left leader of the Rebel France party, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who is seeking the presidency for the third time, also staged a rally on Sunday, gathering several thousand supporters in Paris.

Other presidential candidates on the left include Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo for the Socialist party and

Yannick Jadot, a former Greenpeace activist, for the Greens.

Those attending rallies for Zemmour and Mélenchon were not required to show French COVID-19 health passes, in line with a decision from the Constitutional Council that said the passes should not be used to restrict access to political meetings.

Wearing a mask is mandatory in French public gatherings, yet many Zemmour supporters defied the restriction.

Coronavirus infections have jumped in France over the last few weeks, with daily new cases getting close to 40,000 on average and virus-related hospitalizations and deaths rising again.

Associated Press journalists Boubkar Benzabat and Patrick Hermansen in Paris, Florian Brunet and Philippe Marion in Villepinte contributed to the story.

Putin hopes WHO soon approves Russia's Sputnik V vaccine

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday voiced hope for a quick approval of the country's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine by the World Health Organization, saying the move is essential to expand its global supplies.

Speaking during a video call with Francesco Rocca, president of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Putin said receiving the WHO's vetting is necessary to spread the Russian vaccine more broadly around the world, including free supplies.

"We intend to expand such assistance," Putin said.

The Russian leader also argued that WHO's approval should open the door for Russians and others who have had the Sputnik V vaccine to travel more freely around the world. He said about 200 million people worldwide have received Sputnik V.

Putin was vaccinated with Sputnik V in the spring, and last month he received a booster shot of Sputnik Light, the one-dose version. He also said he took an experimental nasal version of Sputnik V days after receiving his booster shot, adding that he was feeling fine and felt no side effects.

The Gamaleya Institute that developed Sputnik V has said the vaccine should be efficient against the omicron variant of COVID-19, but announced that it will immediately start working on adapting it to counter the new variant.

Russia was the first country in the world to authorize a coronavirus vaccine, launching Sputnik V in August 2020, and has plentiful supplies. But uptake has been slow, blamed in part on conflicting signals from Russian authorities.

Russia in recent months has faced its deadliest and largest surge of coronavirus cases, with infections and deaths climbing to all-time highs and only slowing in the last few weeks. Russia has Europe's highest confirmed pandemic death toll at over 281,000, according to the government's coronavirus task force. But a report released Friday by the state statistics agency Rosstat, which uses broader criteria, put the the overall number of virus-linked deaths between April 2020 and October 2021 to over 537,000 — almost twice the official toll.

Putin, who despite a surge in infections in Russia has repeatedly argued that vaccinations should remain voluntary, emphasized Sunday that Russian authorities have been tried to use "persuasion and not pressure" and worked to dispel "prejudices and myths driving the aversion to vaccination."

Russia's quick approval of Sputnik V drew criticism abroad, because at the time it had only been tested on a few dozen people. But a study published in British medical journal The Lancet in February showed the Sputnik V is 91% effective and appears to prevent inoculated individuals from becoming severely ill with COVID-19.

Russia has actively promoted Sputnik V around the world but faced bottlenecks in shipping the amounts it promised. Countries in Latin America have complained about delays in getting the second Sputnik V shot.

The World Health Organization has been reviewing data about Russia's Sputnik V vaccine as part of

the approval process. Such approval could pave the way for its inclusion into the COVAX program that is shipping COVID-19 vaccines to scores of countries around the world based on need.

Follow all AP stories on the pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>.

As Iran nuclear talks hit snags, Israel seeks harder US line

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The long-delayed resumption of nuclear talks with Iran has gotten off to a rough start — with Iran digging in and its negotiating partners openly voicing frustration and pessimism.

After five days of talks in Vienna ended last week, the United States said Iran did not appear to be serious. European diplomats accused Iran of backtracking on previous promises. Even Russia, which has stronger relations with Iran, questioned Iran's commitment to the process. Israel, an outside observer with a stake in the outcome of the talks, has ramped up its rhetoric and is dispatching two top security officials to Washington for consultations.

"I call on every country negotiating with Iran in Vienna to take a strong line and make it clear to Iran that they cannot enrich uranium and negotiate at the same time," Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said Sunday. "Iran must begin to pay a price for its violations."

Perhaps the most encouraging outcome of last week's talks was an agreement to continue talking. When negotiators reconvene in coming days, it could become clearer if the wide gaps visible last week were a sign of posturing or a serious crisis.

The negotiations seek to revive the 2015 nuclear accord between Iran and six world powers. That agreement, spearheaded by President Barack Obama, granted Iran relief from crippling sanctions in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

But three years later, President Donald Trump, with strong encouragement from then-Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, withdrew from the deal, causing it to unravel. Since then, Iran has stepped up its nuclear activities -- amassing a stockpile of highly enriched uranium that goes well beyond the bounds of the accord.

Iran last week took a hard stance, suggesting everything discussed in previous rounds of diplomacy could be renegotiated. In the midst of the negotiations, the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog confirmed that Iran had begun enriching uranium up to 20% purity at its underground facility at Fordo -- a site where enrichment is not permitted under the deal.

Despite Iran's claims that its nuclear activities are for peaceful purposes only, the continued advances in its atomic program have further raised the stakes.

Last week's talks in Vienna came after a hiatus of more than five months and were the first in which Iran's new hard-line government participated. The United States, no longer a party to the agreement, was not in the room and negotiated remotely through mediators.

A senior U.S. State Department official said over the weekend that negotiators had expected Iran to "show seriousness" at the talks. He said that even Russia and China, important trading outlets for Iran that have traditionally taken a softer line, were concerned about the prospects for a deal.

"Every day that goes by is a day where we come closer to the conclusion that they don't have in mind a return" to the deal, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to brief reporters on the U.S. assessment.

European negotiators also expressed frustration. In a joint statement, senior diplomats from Germany, Britain and France said Iran has "fast-forwarded its nuclear program" and "backtracked on diplomatic progress."

"Unclear how these new gaps can be closed in a realistic time frame on the basis of Iranian drafts," they said.

Mikhail Ulyanov, a senior Russian diplomat in Vienna, said that Iran had offered a "radical revision" of previous understandings.

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"Technically, amendments are always possible," he said. "However, it is desirable that such amendments ... do not turn into a roadblock to progress."

On Sunday, Iran's Foreign Ministry issued a nine-page document that appeared to slightly step back from its tough positions.

"Other parties only need to show political determination and express readiness to take necessary practical steps," the document read. "Then, ways will be opened for the conclusion of a deal and settlement of differences."

But the document gave few specifics on what Iran might have in mind.

That is unlikely to satisfy Israel, which has returned to its role as possible spoiler.

Israel considers Iran to be its greatest enemy and it strongly opposed the 2015 deal.

It says it wants an improved deal that places tighter restrictions on Iran's nuclear program and addresses Iran's long-range missile program and its support for hostile proxies along Israel's borders.

Israel also says that the negotiations must be accompanied by a "credible" military threat to ensure that Iran does not delay indefinitely.

Bennett said Israel was using the time between rounds to persuade the Americans to "use a different toolkit" against Iran's nuclear program, without elaborating.

The head of Israel's Mossad intelligence service, David Barnea, was traveling to Washington on Sunday, and Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz, a former military chief, heads there later this week.

Israel's figurehead president, Isaac Herzog, delivered an uncharacteristically blunt message Sunday as he welcomed the new American ambassador to Israel, Thomas Nides.

"If the international community does not take a vigorous stance on this issue, Israel will do so. Israel will protect itself," Herzog said.

Despite Israel's support for Trump's withdrawal in 2018, prominent voices in the country are now saying in retrospect that the move was a blunder.

Former Prime Minister Ehud Barak wrote in the Yediot Ahronot daily Sunday that pulling out "was a delusional decision that allowed the Iranians to move forward quickly in the direction of becoming a nuclear threshold state."

Barak, who reportedly favored a military strike when he served as Netanyahu's defense minister early last decade, said Netanyahu, who is now Israel's opposition leader, had failed to put together with the U.S. a "Plan B in the form of a surgical military operation."

Over the past decade, Iran has greatly complicated any military operation by scattering its nuclear sites and hiding some deep underground. Israeli officials insist military action is still feasible.

Yoel Guzansky, a senior fellow and Iran expert at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies, said the Israeli threats should be taken seriously, especially in light of questions over America's willingness to use force in the region.

"I think the United States doesn't understand our red lines," he said. "They think we're bluffing, but we're not."

Over the weekend, Iran said it had tested a surface-to-air missile defense system near its Natanz nuclear facility. Late Saturday, people leaving nearby saw a light in the sky and heard a loud explosion.

"Any threat from the enemies will be met with a decisive and firm response," state TV quoted Lt. Cmdr. Ali Moazeni as saying.

Associated Press writers Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran, contributed reporting.

Dominican Republic expels, mistreats Haitians, activists say

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

DAJABON, Dominican Republic (AP) — Bien-Aimé St. Clair frowned as the stream of older Haitian migrants pushed past him. Accused of living in the Dominican Republic illegally, they knew they had no choice but

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to go back across the border to Haiti.

But St. Clair, 18, hesitated. He shouted at an immigration agent.

"Boss! Hey! I don't know anyone there," he yelled in Spanish, motioning toward Haiti as he stood on the frontier that the two countries share on the island of Hispaniola.

St. Clair was a child when his mother brought him to the Dominican Republic, and though his life has been hard -- his mom died when he was young, his father disappeared, and he was left alone to raise his disabled brother -- it's the only life he has known.

And now, he was being forced to leave, like more than 31,000 people deported by the Dominican Republic to Haiti this year, more than 12,000 of them in just the past three months -- a huge spike, observers say. As the rest of the world closes its doors to Haitian migrants, the country that shares an island with Haiti also is cracking down in a way that human rights activists say hasn't been seen in decades.

This story was produced with support from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

The increasing mistreatment of the country's Haitians, they say, coincided with the rise of Luis Abinader, who took office as president in August 2020.

They accuse the government of targeting vulnerable populations, separating children from their parents and racial profiling -- Haiti is overwhelmingly Black, while the majority Dominicans identify as mixed race. Dominican authorities, they say, are not only seeking out Haitians who recently crossed illegally into the Dominican Republic, but also those who have long lived there.

"We've never seen this," said William Charpentier, national coordinator for the nonprofit National Roundtable for Migration and Refugees. "The government is acting like we're at war."

They've arrested Haitians who crossed illegally into the Dominican Republic; Haitians whose Dominican work permits have expired; those born in the DR to Haitian parents but denied citizenship; even, activists say, Black Dominicans born to Dominican parents whom authorities mistake for Haitians.

Haitian officials and activists also say the government is violating laws and agreements by deporting pregnant women, separating children from parents and arresting people between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Meanwhile, activists say hostility against Haitians is spiraling as Abinader unleashed a flurry of anti-Haitian actions.

He suspended a student-visa program for Haitians, prohibited companies from drawing more than 20% of their workforce from migrant workers and ordered Haitian migrants to register their whereabouts.

He announced an audit of some 220,000 people previously awarded immigration status to determine if they still qualify, and he warned that anyone who provides transportation or housing to undocumented migrants will be fined. And he suspended pension payments owed to hundreds of former sugarcane workers -- most of them Haitian.

The measures follow Abinader's announcement in February that his administration would build a multi-million-dollar, 118-mile (190-kilometer) wall along the Haitian border.

The construction has begun. Meanwhile, life has become ever more miserable for Haitians who remain in the Dominican Republic and those, like St. Clair, who have been deported.

The teenager watched as the bus that dropped him off at the border pulled away, empty except for a machete, hammer and other work tools the other migrants were carrying when they were detained.

"Hey!" he yelled.

No response. St. Clair clicked his tongue and sighed.

Haiti and the Dominican Republic have long had a wary and difficult relationship, stained by a 1937 massacre in which thousands of Haitians were killed under Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo.

Racism and rejection of Haitians is still palpable, with Dominicans cursing them or making disparaging comments when they see them on the street.

Still, hundreds of thousands of Haitians were believed to live in the Dominican Republic, even before

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many fled Haiti in recent months in the wake of a presidential assassination, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake, a severe shortage of fuel and a spike in gang-related violence and kidnappings.

"We don't come here to take over the country. We're trying to survive," said Gaetjens Thelusma of the nonprofit group We Will Save Haiti.

The government has repeatedly said it treats migrants humanely. Abinader recently told the United Nations that his country had borne the burden of dealing with the ripples of Haiti's crises on its own, without much help from the rest of the world.

While his country has demonstrated solidarity and collaboration with Haiti and will keep doing so, he said, "I also reiterate that there is not and will never be a Dominican solution to the crisis in Haiti."

His own ministers have referred darkly to Haitians as invaders: Speaking in favor of the border wall, Dominican Migration Director Enrique García said in October that "we cannot lose our country."

"What option do you have when you can't handle your neighbor any longer? Protect your house, your property and your family," he told D'Agenda, a local TV news program.

And in early November, Jesús Vázquez, Dominican minister of the interior and police, inaugurated the first of several dozen offices where foreigners will be required to register.

He told reporters: "The main threat that the Dominican Republic faces nowadays is Haiti, and we are called upon to defend our homeland."

Rosemita Doreru was nine months pregnant when she was detained in early November inside a hospital in the capital of Santo Domingo. She was later deported, leaving behind three young children.

"Every day they ask me, 'When is Mom coming home? When is Mom coming home?'" said her partner, Guens Molière. "They cry almost daily."

She gave birth in Haiti; Molière remains angry that officials did not let him send her a suitcase with her clothes and items for their newborn before she was deported. And he does not know what will happen next -- he can't afford the \$260 that human smugglers are now charging to illegally cross pregnant women and those with young children into the Dominican Republic.

Doreru is not alone in her misery. On a recent afternoon in Dajabón, authorities deported more than 40 unaccompanied children and dozens of lactating women, said Rolbert Félicien with the nonprofit Institute of Social Wellbeing and Research. If the children's parents or relatives are not found, they are placed in an orphanage in Haiti.

Dozens of Haitian migrants interviewed in other Dominican cities and towns accused Abinader's administration of treating them "like dogs."

The treatment is not reserved only for those who entered the country unlawfully; on a bustling market day in the dusty border town of Dajabon, at least one Dominican official used a stun gun on migrants who crossed the border legally to buy and sell goods.

"Deportations exist in every country, but they are mistreating Haitians," said 25-year-old Sabrina Bierre, a street vendor who sells used clothes and other items in a section of Santo Domingo known as Little Haiti. "They are undocumented, but they're not animals."

Earlier this month, 26-year-old Véronique Louis gave birth to a daughter at a hospital in Santo Domingo. She returned days later for further treatment because they botched the cesarean, but medical staff denied her care, according to her husband, Wilner Rafael.

"They said they weren't treating Blacks, and that Haitians aren't people," he said. Louis nodded.

Louis now has an open wound that is a couple of inches wide and winces in pain every time she moves. A Haitian doctor from the community stops by on occasion to treat Louis at their cramped room, tucked inside a maze of dilapidated homes covered in soot.

These days, many Haitian migrants and those of Haitian descent stay home out of fear of the authorities, or leave the house one at a time to avoid abandoning a child if both parents are deported.

On a recent morning at the country's main migration office, dozens of Haitians clutching folders, papers and passports lined up in hopes of renewing work permits, something many said they've done repeatedly

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to no avail; activists accuse the government of refusing to process the paperwork so they have reason to arrest them.

"Things are bad for us right now," said Edouard Louis, who came to the Dominican Republic more than 30 years ago to work in sugarcane fields under a bilateral agreement. He now sells locks, chargers and USB cables at a small outdoor market in the outskirts of Santo Domingo, earning just enough to buy eggs and rice for sustenance.

His work permit expired last year, and despite repeated attempts to renew it, he hasn't received a response from the government. He still carries that permit along with older ones in a weathered black wallet in hopes that if he gets detained, he can prove to authorities that he crossed the border legally.

Those born in the Dominican Republic to Haitian immigrants are in a similar situation. Tens of thousands of them were never awarded citizenship and don't have the documents needed to work or attend university. The Dominican Republic awards citizenship only to those born to Dominican parents or legal residents as a result of a 2013 court ruling that the Organization of American States said "created a stateless situation never before seen in America."

The ruling was applied retroactively to those born between 1929 and 2010.

A year later, the government approved another law that offered a path to citizenship if they were born in the Dominican Republic, but a large majority have still not been able to do so, especially those whose parents do not have the required documents.

"I still cry about it," said 16-year-old Erika Jean, who was born in the Dominican Republic to Haitian parents and lives in Batey La Lima, an impoverished community surrounded by a massive sugarcane plantation in the southern Dominican coastal city of La Romana.

"I truly have an ugly future," she said. "I've lost all hope of obtaining the documents."

Luis Batista, a 70-year-old retired sugarcane worker who came to the Dominican Republic in 1972 on a government-sponsored work permit that has since expired, said: "We have absolutely nothing here. No papers. No pension. No medical care," he said.

In his neighborhood, children fly kites made of plastic bags, make face masks out of discarded cartons, tie a string around a bucket to bounce it on nearby potholes. Some homes are made of corrugated metal, with discarded rice bags stuffed into the holes of rickety wooden doors to keep out pests.

Batista said he is partially blind after spending years in burning sugar cane fields next to his wife, 68-year-old Ramonita Charles, whose father died while working in those fields and received no medical help from the company that employed him.

"They don't give us a pension. We don't have a job. We can't go out on the street," said Charles, who grew up working in sugarcane fields and is illiterate. She now sells eggs, chips, cookies and other small items out of a tin shack to sustain her four siblings, three children and her mother, a former sugarcane worker who is in her early 90s.

And now, there are the deportations.

"You go out and you don't know if you're going to come back home," she said.

The raids, deportations and mistreatment by the government have dissuaded some Haitians from crossing into the Dominican Republic, according to a human smuggler who only gave his first name as Luis Fernando.

He was born in Haiti but has lived in the Dominican Republic for 19 years. He paints and works in construction but also helps migrants cross illegally, paying Dominican officials anywhere from \$35 to \$90 to look the other way. In mid-November, he placed a group waiting to cross on hold.

"For now, it's best that they stay over there. Until things cool down," he said.

And yet, some still insist on making their way to the DR.

St. Clair, the teenager marooned in Dajabon, looked around as immigration officials who had detained him left and authorities prepared to close the border for the night. Gone was the stream of border crossers, the rumble of trucks and roar of motorcycles carrying plantains, onions and other goods.

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Apologetic UNICEF workers had told him they couldn't help -- he turned 18 in October and was now considered an adult.

St. Clair began walking back toward the Dominican Republic. One concerned immigration official yelled after him, "Where are you going to sleep? You don't have any money."

St. Clair didn't respond. As the sun set, he slipped past authorities, sneaked into the Dominican Republic and disappeared down a quiet street.

Pope chides Europe, comforts migrants on return to Lesbos

By NICOLE WINFIELD, TRISHA THOMAS and DEREK GATOPOULOS Associated Press

LESBOS, Greece (AP) — Pope Francis returned Sunday to the Greek island of Lesbos to offer comfort to migrants at a refugee camp and blast what he said was Europe's indifference and self-interest "that condemns to death those on the fringes."

"Please, let us stop this shipwreck of civilization!" Francis said at the Mavrovouni camp, a cluster of white U.N. containers on the edge of the sea lined by barbed wire fencing and draped with laundry drying in the air.

A maskless Francis took his time walking through the camp Sunday, patting children and babies on the head and posing for selfies. He gave a "thumbs up" after he was serenaded by African women singing a song of welcome.

It was Francis' second trip to Lesbos in five years. He lamented that little had changed since 2016, when Lesbos was at the heart of a massive wave of migration to Europe and when Francis brought 12 Syrian Muslim refugees from the island back home with him aboard the papal plane.

That concrete gesture of solidarity had raised hopes among current residents of the Lesbos camp, some of whom have given birth to children here while waiting for their asylum claims to be processed. But there were no papal airlifts on Sunday and Francis returns to the Vatican on Monday.

"It is a grace for us that the pope is coming here. We have a lot of problems here as refugees, a lot of suffering," said Enice Kiaku from Congo, whose 2-year-old son on her lap was born on Lesbos. But like little Guilain, she has no identity documents and is stuck.

"The arrival of the pope here makes us feel blessed, because we hope the pope will take us with him because here we suffer," Kiaku said as she waited in a tent for the pope to arrive.

Francis' five-day trip to Cyprus and Greece has been dominated by the topic of migration and Francis' call for European countries to show greater solidarity with those in need. He insisted Sunday that Europe must stop building walls, stoking fears and shutting out "those in greater need who knock at our door."

During the first leg of Francis' trip in Cyprus, the Vatican announced that 12 migrants who had crossed over from the breakaway Turkish Cypriot north would be relocated to Italy in the coming weeks. Cypriot officials, who say the European Union island nation can't accept more migrants, said a total of 50 would eventually be sent.

"I ask every man and woman, all of us, to overcome the paralysis of fear, the indifference that kills, the cynical disregard that nonchalantly condemns to death those on the fringes!" Francis said Sunday. "Let us stop ignoring reality, stop constantly shifting responsibility, stop passing off the issue of migration to others, as if it mattered to no one and was only a pointless burden to be shouldered by somebody else!"

He denounced that the Mediterranean Sea, "the cradle of so many civilizations," had become a vast cemetery where smuggling boats packed with desperate people too often sink.

"Let us not let our sea (mare nostrum) be transformed into a desolate sea of death (mare mortuum)," he said.

Sitting before him in a tent at the water's edge was Greek President Katerina Sakellaropoulou, EU Commission Vice President Margaritis Schinas and would-be refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq and Congo, among other countries.

Addressing the pope, Sakellaropoulou strongly defended Greece's response to the needs of migrants and thanked Francis for showing his support with his presence.

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"It is the strong message of hope and responsibility that is conveyed from Lesbos to the international community," she said.

The camp, where tents were only recently replaced with containers, is actually a temporary holding center that replaced another camp that burned down last year. It was built pending the construction on the island of a "closed controlled facility," essentially a detention camp. These new camps, which are funded by the EU but have run afoul of human rights organizations, are already running on three other Greek islands, Samos, Leros and Kos.

Francis listened intently as one camp resident, Christian Tango Mukaya, a Congolese father of three, thanked him for his show of solidarity and his appeal to Europe to let refugees in. Mukaya lost track of his wife and their third child in their journey and is hoping his visibility with the pope might reunite them.

"We always have this hope that one day we may all be together again," he told The Associated Press on the eve of Francis' arrival.

"We hope that the pope coming can bring change," he said. "We would like a better life. We plead with the pope to help us, to speak on our behalf to Europe."

More than 1 million people, many fleeing war in Iraq and Syria, crossed from Turkey into Greece during 2015 and 2016, with Lesbos the busiest Greek crossing point. The flow may have ebbed in Lesbos, but it hasn't stopped and anti-migrant sentiment in Greece and beyond has only hardened in the ensuing years, with the latest flashpoint on the EU's Polish border with Belarus.

Greece has recently built a steel wall along a section of the Greek-Turkish land border and is intercepting boats transporting migrants from the Turkish side. It denies allegations that it is carrying out summary deportations of migrants reaching Greek territory but human rights groups say numerous such pushbacks have occurred.

Amnesty International said the new EU-funded detention camps on Greek islands were in violation of Athens' commitments to provide international protection to those in need.

"Under international and EU law, asylum-seekers should only be detained as a matter of last resort," Amnesty said. "As we feared, Greek authorities are hiding behind the legally ambiguous concept of so-called closed-controlled centers to illegally deprive asylum-seekers of their liberty."

The rights group asked Greece "to urgently withdraw this decision and lift the restrictions."

Greek Migration Affairs Minister Notis Mitarachi defended Greece's response Sunday, saying it had "selflessly" responded to the crisis in 2015 and was continuing to provide asylum-seekers with protection. He demanded the EU do more to help front-line countries like Greece.

Gatopoulos contributed from Athens, Greece.

Follow all AP stories on global migration at <https://apnews.com/hub/migration>.

EXPLAINER: Jussie Smollett's turn to testify. Will he?

By DON BABWIN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — After two brothers spent hours telling a jury how Jussie Smollett paid them to carry out a fake racist and anti-gay attack on himself in downtown Chicago, the big question when the actor's trial resumes Monday will be whether or not he will tell his side of the story.

Attorneys rarely announce whether or not their clients will take the stand before they actually call them to testify, and Smollett's attorneys have not made their plans public.

The reasons why Smollett might want to testify begin with just how bizarre the case is. During the trial that started last Monday, what emerged was the story of a television star who cast two brothers as his attackers, gave them dialogue to recite, and paid for the rope he told them to fashion into a noose and loop around his neck.

As strange as that sounds, it is the only narrative that has come to the jury from the siblings, Abimbola and Olabinjo Osundairo. And some legal experts say the only chance Smollett has of beating charges that he lied to the police is by telling jurors his version of what happened on Jan. 29, 2019.

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"The jurors might be thinking, 'Who does this guy think he is, not getting up and telling his story?'" said Terry Ekl, a prominent Chicago-area defense attorney not involved in the case.

Ekl and other legal experts said jurors are not supposed to read anything into a defendant's decision not to testify but that when they return to the deliberation room they often do just that.

As to the importance of a defendant testifying, legal experts said one need look no further than the recent trial in Kenosha, Wisconsin, where Kyle Rittenhouse was acquitted of all charges after he testified that he fatally shot two men and wounded another because he feared for his own life.

"They won the case by putting him on," said Kathleen Zellner, a Chicago area defense attorney. "The jury believed him."

In Smollett's case, it may be important for him to testify because, as bizarre as the brothers' testimony was, they are the only witnesses to the incident who have testified. And, said Chicago-based defense attorney, Joe Lopez, Smollett's attorneys "haven't been able to impeach these brothers."

Nor have they located a white person that a woman told police she saw carrying a rope in the area earlier that night, leaving the brothers and Smollett as the only three people that the jury can conclude know what happened.

"I think they just want to hear his story and if they don't, the only one they've got is the prosecutions' story," said David Erickson, a former state appellate judge who teaches at Chicago Kent College of Law.

Another reason why Smollett might want to testify: He should be good at it.

"He's an actor. He should be testifying," Lopez said.

"He has the ability to communicate (and) he thinks he can take the witness stand and play a role," said Ekl.

Erickson said that when he teaches trial advocacy, he makes it clear from the outset that jurors vote for people they like. Right now, he said, he's sure they like the special prosecutor, Dan Webb. "Dan Webb is Everyman, he seems like a nice guy, a good next-door neighbor."

In contrast, they don't know Smollett, and have not heard his voice since he introduced himself during jury selection.

But testifying could pose all sorts of problems for Smollett, starting with his need to explain how the brothers knew they would run into him in the dead of a brutally cold night in an unfamiliar neighborhood as he returned from a sandwich shop. Unless he told them he would be there.

Also, if he's convicted, Smollett's words could land him in yet more trouble.

"You can't be penalized (by a judge) for not testifying but if he takes the stand and the judge believes he perjured himself, he can add (jail or prison) time," said Erickson.

Both Erickson and Ekl think Smollett will end up testifying, even if his attorneys beg him not to.

"I think you've got a guy who is so arrogant and self-centered, he really thinks he can make people believe what he says is true ... (and) schmooze a jury to get them to like him," Ekl said.

Check out the AP's complete coverage of the Jussie Smollett case.

AP Top 25: Alabama reclaims No. 1; Georgia slips to No. 3

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Alabama will head into the postseason the same way it started the regular season: No. 1 in the nation.

The Crimson Tide reclaimed the top spot in The Associated Press college football poll on Sunday after beating previously top-ranked Georgia.

Defending national champion Alabama, which was No. 1 for the first six weeks of this season in the AP Top 25 presented by Regions Bank, jumped three spots after dominating Saturday's Southeastern Conference title game.

Alabama received 50 of 62 first-place votes from the media panel. The Bulldogs fell to No. 3.

In between, Michigan was No. 2 for a second straight week after winning the Big Ten Conference championship for the first time since 2004. The Wolverines received 9 first-place votes.

Cincinnati slipped a spot to No. 4, though it is only four points behind Georgia and received three first-

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place votes. The Bearcats are the only remaining unbeaten FBS team in the country.

The College Football Playoff field was to be set later Sunday, with those same teams expected to hold the top four spots.

Notre Dame will head into the postseason at No. 5 after moving up a spot while idle, and Baylor jumped three places to No. 6 after beating Oklahoma State to win the Big 12 Conference title.

Ohio State is No. 7, ahead of Mississippi and Oklahoma State, which dropped four spots to No. 9 after the dramatic loss to Baylor.

Utah reached a season-high 10th after beating Oregon on Friday night to win the Pac-12 Conference.

POLL POINTS

Alabama is No. 1 in the AP poll for the 137th time, the most in the history of the ranking, which date to 1936.

Ohio State is second with 105 appearances at No. 1, and Oklahoma is third at 101.

IN-AND-OUT

Just one team moved back into the Top 25 after championship weekend: UTSA is No. 24 after winning Conference USA.

San Diego State fell out of the ranking after it lost the Mountain West Conference championship game to Utah State.

CONFERENCE CALL

SEC — 6 (Nos. 1, 3, 8, 22, 23, 25).

ACC — 4 (Nos. 13, 18, 19, 20).

Big Ten — 4 (Nos. 2, 7, 11, 17).

Big 12 — 3 (Nos. 6, 9, 14).

American — 2 (Nos. 4, 21).

Pac-12 — 2 (Nos. 10, 15).

Conference USA — 1 (No. 24)

Sun Belt — 1 (No. 16).

Independents — 2 (Nos. 5, 12).

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Teen shootings in Denver suburb renew focus on gun violence

By COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — It was lunchtime on a mild day in the sprawling Denver suburb of Aurora when a truck full of teens pulled into a high school parking lot where students were gathered, and gunfire rang out.

Three were wounded as others ran in fear.

One of the boys charged in the Nov. 19 shooting later told investigators he brought his armed friends to an expected gang fight because "it's the way it is in this town," court documents said.

The shooting was one of several involving teenagers within a two-week span that have placed renewed attention on a long-running problem of gun violence and gangs in the state's third largest city, where the police department has been under scrutiny for its treatment of Black residents. Activists and officials say easy access to guns is contributing to the problem, which has also been exacerbated by the pandemic and its effect particularly on the mental health of minority teens in the city.

Across the United States, shootings involving children and teenagers have increased in recent years, including 2021. A March report from the Children's Defense Fund found child and teen shooting deaths reached a 19-year high in 2017 and have remained elevated. Black children and teenagers were four times more likely than whites to be fatally shot.

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Aurora has seen an increase in Black and Latino families and immigrants from around the world as Denver has grown more expensive in recent years. These families of color have been hit harder health-wise but also economically by the COVID-19 pandemic, contributing to mental health problems, said Maisha Fields, an activist who works with youth and families in the city of about 379,000.

The Nov. 19 shooting started with an argument in the parking lot at Hinkley High School after the truckload of boys arrived. After the initial shots were fired, the pickup drove away, with at least two teens pointing guns from the windows, sending students running in fear, according to police.

Three 16-year-olds were later charged, including the boy who spoke to investigators about the gang fight. Fields, who is also vice president for organizing for the Brady gun control advocacy group, said the teen's attitude about the need to be armed gave her chills. It reminded her of the callousness that led to her brother, Javad Marshall-Fields, and his fiancée, Vivian Wolfe, being shot and killed in Aurora in 2005 as he was preparing to testify against a man charged in the fatal shooting of his friend at a concert.

Jason McBride, a violence prevention expert who works with teens for the Struggle of Love Foundation in Denver and Aurora, and Aurora City Council member Angela Lawson both said teens have showed them Snapchat posts, where messages disappear, offering guns for sale.

McBride thinks gangs are to blame for much of the problem — not necessarily the organized Crips and Bloods as in previous years, but smaller, loosely affiliated groups of teens who may not be associated with a particular neighborhood but who get into disputes on social media.

Some also create their own untraceable guns using a 3-D printer or by buying and assembling parts purchased online, McBride said.

Generational trauma caused by seeing relatives killed in shootings has also normalized them, he said. And being kept away from school, an escape from problems at home, has strained the mental health of some teens.

McBride said a 16-year-old recently told him he would use bullets if he got into a fight so he would not have to worry about messing up his clothes.

"That's the head space our kids are in," he said.

While shootings involving teens are not a new problem in Aurora, ones on or near school grounds are unusual, said Kyla Armstrong-Romero, who was president of the city's school board until stepping down last week after newly elected members took office. She said she hopes the attention given to the shootings near schools will ignite more interest in the work that needs to be done to prevent teen gun violence, which she said has often been underfunded.

Lawson agrees that social media fights and the effect of students being required to stay home last year have contributed to the violence. But she thinks gangs are only part of the reason for shootings.

The city's original anti-gang program ended after its funding — fines from drivers caught on camera going through red lights — disappeared when voters eliminated the cameras in 2018. In April, the city started a new youth violence prevention program funded by an increase in the marijuana sales tax. However, only three of the planned six positions, including one outreach worker, have been filled, Lawson said.

With a \$1.1 million budget, the city is in the process of recruiting for the remaining positions, city spokesperson Ryan Luby said. Some of the funding will also support community-led efforts, he said.

Teens in the city also need a dedicated place they can go, possibly one of the city's recreation centers, where they can participate in organized activities, get access to services including mental health counseling and just talk to others, Lawson said.

Stemming the violence though will also require help from parents, police and the wider community, she said.

"It's all hands on deck," Lawson said.

2nd party approves deal for Scholz's new German government

By GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germany's pro-business Free Democrats on Sunday approved a deal to form a new

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government with two center-left parties, moving Chancellor-designate Olaf Scholz a step closer to taking office as the country's new leader this week.

The Free Democrats reached an agreement last month to form a coalition with Scholz's Social Democrats and the environmentalist Greens, effectively crossing the aisle to ally with the two parties.

"This is a coalition agreement for policies of the center, which won't shift our country to the left but wants to move it forward," party leader Christian Lindner told a largely online party convention.

Delegates voted 535 to 37 to approve the agreement, with eight abstentions. After the Social Democrats backed it overwhelmingly on Saturday, only one more hurdle remains before parliament can elect Scholz on Wednesday. That is the result of a ballot of the Greens' 125,000-strong membership, which is expected on Monday — the biggest challenge for the deal but one it is expected to pass.

Germany's new government aims to step up efforts against climate change and do more to modernize the country, including improving its notoriously poor cellphone and internet networks. It also plans more liberal social policies, including legalizing the sale of cannabis for recreational purposes and easing the path to German citizenship, while pledging greater efforts to deport immigrants who don't win asylum.

At the Free Democrats' insistence, the prospective partners have said they won't raise taxes or loosen curbs on running up debt. Lindner is set to become Germany's new finance minister, and the party also will get the transport, justice and education ministries.

The Free Democrats governed West Germany as the Social Democrats' junior partner under Chancellors Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt from 1969 to 1982. But since then, they have allied largely with the center-right Union bloc of outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel.

However, the Union's election defeat in September and ensuing turmoil in the center-right bloc made the three-way alliance under Scholz a more realistic option.

Merkel, who has remained in office as a caretaker chancellor while the new government was being negotiated, will step down this week after 16 years at Germany's helm. She did not seek reelection. Her party will now go into opposition.

Follow AP's coverage of Germany's transition to a new government at <https://apnews.com/hub/germany-election>.

Indonesian rescuers dig through volcanic ash after 14 die

By NINIEK KARMINI and AGOES BASOEKI Associated Press

LUMAJANG, Indonesia (AP) — Rescuers were sifting through smoldering debris and thick mud in search of survivors a day after the highest volcano on Java island erupted with fury, killing at least 14 people with searing gas and ash.

Mount Semeru in Lumajang district in East Java province spewed thick columns of ash more than 12,000 meters (40,000 feet) into the sky in a sudden eruption Saturday triggered by heavy rains. Villages and nearby towns were blanketed and several hamlets buried under tons of mud from volcanic debris.

Authorities warned the thousands of people who fled the volcano's wrath not to return during Sunday's lull in activity. But some were desperate to check on livestock and possessions left behind. In several areas, everything — from the thinnest tree branch to couches and chairs inside homes — was caked with ash.

"There's no life there ... trees, farms, houses are scorched, everything is covered in heavy gray ash," said Haryadi Purnomo of East Java's search and rescue agency. He said that several other areas were virtually untouched.

Search and rescue efforts were temporary suspended on Sunday afternoon because of fears that hot ash and debris could tumble down from the crater due to heavy rains. On Saturday, a torrent of mud destroyed the main bridge connecting Lumajang and the neighboring district of Malang, as well as a smaller bridge.

The eruption eased pressure that had been building under a lava dome perched on the crater. But experts warned that the dome could still further collapse, causing an avalanche of the blistering gas and debris trapped beneath it.

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A thunderstorm and days of rain, which eroded and partly collapsed the dome atop the 3,676-meter (12,060-foot) Semeru, triggered the eruption, said Eko Budi Lelono, who heads the geological survey center.

Semeru, the stratovolcano in shape of a cone, is also known as Mahameru, meaning "The Great Mountain" in Sanskrit. It has erupted many times over the last 200 years. Still, as with other volcanoes — it is one of 129 under watch in Indonesia, the world's largest archipelago — more than 62,000 people call Sumeru's fertile slopes home. It last erupted in January, with no casualties.

Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 270 million people, is prone to earthquakes and volcanic activity because it sits along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," a horseshoe-shaped series of fault lines. Currently 54% of the country's population live on Java, the country's most densely populated area.

Officials said earlier they had hoped they could avoid casualties by closely monitoring the volcano.

National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said 56 people had been hospitalized, mostly with burns. He said rescuers were still searching for nine residents of Curah Kobokan village.

More than 1,300 villagers streamed into makeshift emergency shelters after Saturday's powerful eruption, but many others defied official warnings and chose to remain in their homes, saying they had to tend to their livestock and protect their property, said Purnomo.

"We'll do everything we can to evacuate them by preparing trucks and motorbikes for them to flee at any time," he said.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo said he instructed his Cabinet ministers and disaster and military officials to coordinate the response. The government pledged to relocate residents from hardest-hit villages to safer places in the next six months and to provide 500,000 rupiah (\$34.50) per month in compensation for each family while waiting for new houses.

Karmini reported from Jakarta, Indonesia.

Avalanche in Austria kills 3 skiers, injures 2

BERLIN (AP) — Three skiers have been killed and two injured in an avalanche in central Austria, authorities said Sunday. The victims included a rising young motorbike racer.

They were part of a group of 11 skiers, eight of whom were hit by a roughly 200-meter (655-foot) wide slab of snow as they ascended a slope during a ski tour on Saturday in the Tweng area, in Salzburg province.

Three of the skiers were buried by the avalanche, while another two were partly buried and able to free themselves, regional police said in a statement. Rescuers were able to locate two of the others with the help of their search devices; one was already dead and the other later died at a hospital in Klagenfurt.

The third buried skier wasn't carrying a search device. His body was located about four hours after the avalanche and recovered.

The victims were Austrian men, two of them aged 19 and the other 24. The two injured skiers were taken to a local hospital.

The KTM team said that 19-year-old Rene Hofer, a junior motocross world and European champion, was among the dead, the Austria Press Agency reported.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Dec. 6, the 340th day of 2021. There are 25 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 6, 1865, the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, abolishing slavery, was ratified as Georgia became the 27th state to endorse it.

On this date:

In 1790, Congress moved to Philadelphia from New York.

In 1889, The Mark Twain novel "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" was first published in Eng-

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land under the title "A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur" (it was published in the U.S. under its more familiar name four days later).

In 1907, the worst mining disaster in U.S. history occurred as 362 men and boys died in a coal mine explosion in Monongah, West Virginia.

In 1917, some 2,000 people were killed when an explosives-laden French cargo ship, the Mont Blanc, collided with the Norwegian vessel Imo at the harbor in Halifax, Nova Scotia, setting off a blast that devastated the Canadian city. Finland declared its independence from Russia.

In 1922, the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which established the Irish Free State, came into force one year to the day after it was signed in London.

In 1957, America's first attempt at putting a satellite into orbit failed as Vanguard TV3 rose about four feet off a Cape Canaveral launch pad before crashing down and exploding.

In 1962, 37 coal miners were killed in an explosion at the Robena No. 3 Mine operated by U.S. Steel in Carmichaels, Pennsylvania.

In 1969, a free concert by The Rolling Stones at the Altamont Speedway in Alameda County, California, was marred by the deaths of four people, including one who was stabbed by a Hell's Angel.

In 1973, House minority leader Gerald R. Ford was sworn in as vice president, succeeding Spiro T. Agnew.

In 1989, 14 women were shot to death at the University of Montreal's school of engineering by a man who then took his own life.

In 1998, in Venezuela, former Lt. Col. Hugo Chavez (OO'-goh CHAH'-vez), who had staged a bloody coup attempt against the government six years earlier, was elected president.

In 2007, President George W. Bush announced a plan to freeze interest rates on subprime mortgages held by hundreds of thousands of homeowners.

Ten years ago: Declaring the American middle class in jeopardy, President Barack Obama, speaking in Kansas, outlined a populist economic vision that would drive his reelection bid, insisting the United States had to reclaim its standing as a country in which everyone could prosper if provided "a fair shot and a fair share." A suicide bomber slaughtered 56 Shiite worshippers and wounded more than 160 others outside a shrine in Afghanistan's capital.

Five years ago: President-elect Donald Trump officially announced he would nominate retired Marine Gen. James Mattis to be his defense secretary, bringing his pick onstage at a rally in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

One year ago: President Donald Trump said his personal attorney Rudy Giuliani had tested positive for the coronavirus, making him the latest in Trump's inner circle to contract the disease. During a debate with her Democratic opponent, Rev. Raphael Warnock, ahead of two Georgia runoff elections that would determine control of the Senate, Republican Sen. Kelly Loeffler repeatedly refused to acknowledge that Trump had lost reelection.

Today's Birthdays: Comedy performer David Ossman is 85. Actor Patrick Bauchau is 83. Country singer Helen Cornelius is 80. Actor James Naughton is 76. Former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood is 76. R&B singer Frankie Beverly (Maze) is 75. Former Sen. Don Nickles, R-Okla., is 73. Actor JoBeth Williams is 73. Actor Tom Hulce is 68. Actor Wil Shriner is 68. Actor Kin Shriner is 68. Actor Miles Chapin is 67. Rock musician Rick Buckler (The Jam) is 66. Comedian Steven Wright is 66. Country singer Bill Lloyd is 66. Singer Tish Hinojosa is 66. Rock musician Peter Dinklage (R.E.M.) is 65. Rock musician David Lovering (Pixies) is 60. Actor Janine Turner is 59. Rock musician Ben Watt (Everything But The Girl) is 59. Writer-director Judd Apatow is 54. Rock musician Ulf "Buddha" Ekberg (Ace of Base) is 51. Writer-director Craig Brewer is 50. Actor Colleen Haskell is 45. Actor Lindsay Price is 45. Actor Ashley Madekwe is 40. Actor Nora Kirkpatrick is 37. Christian rock musician Jacob Chesnut (Rush of Fools) is 32. Tennis player CoCo Vandeweghe is 30. NBA star Giannis Antetokounmpo (YAH'-nihs an-teh-toh-KOON'-poh) is 27.