

# Groton Daily Independent

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## UpComing Events

### Monday, Jan. 31

Junior High Boys Basketball with Redfield at Groton. 7th at 4 p.m. followed by 8th grade game

### Tuesday, Feb. 1

Boys Basketball hosts Langford Area with JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

### Thursday, Feb. 3

Basketball Doubleheader at Faulkton (5:15 p.m.: Girls JV in new gym, Boys JV in Competition Gym, Girls Varsity in Competition Gym at 6:20 p.m. followed by Boys Varsity.

5 p.m.: Junior High Wrestling Invitational in Groton

### Friday, Feb. 4

Wrestling triangular at Presho

### Saturday, Feb. 5

Girls basketball at Madison

10 a.m.: Wrestling at Stanley County

Boys Basketball with Clark/Willow Lake at Groton (7th grade at 1 p.m. followed by 8th grade, JV and Varsity).

### Monday, Feb. 7

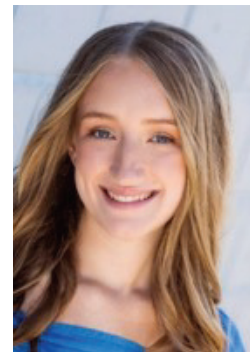
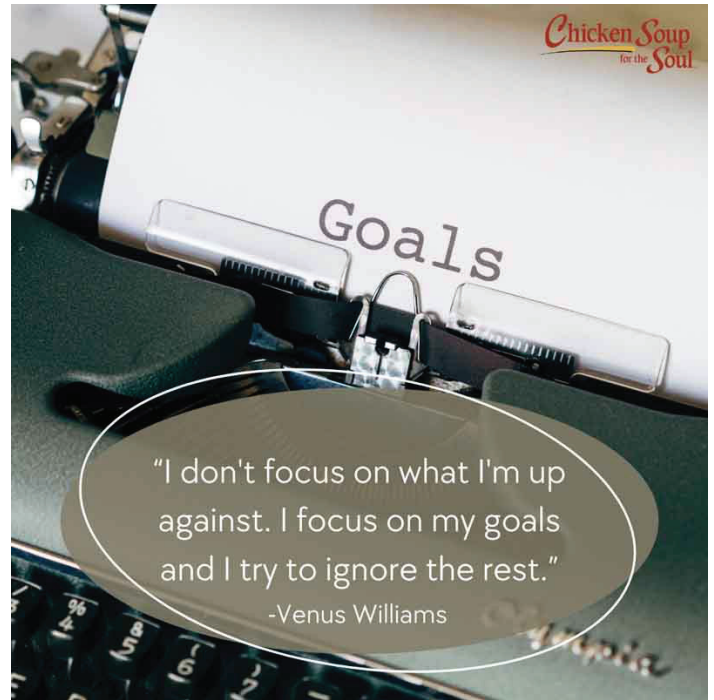
Junior High Boys Basketball at Aberdeen Christian. 7th grade at 6 p.m. followed by 8th grade.

Girls Basketball hosts Aberdeen Roncalli. C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV and then Varsity.

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

### Tuesday, Feb. 8

Girls Basketball hosting Tiospa Zina with JV game at 6 p.m. followed by Varsity.



**Brooklyn Imrie**  
2022  
Carnival of  
Silver Skates  
Queen

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

**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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## Glimpses From Greenfield 2022–Week 3

Last week, we took up a whole host of bills related to the medical cannabis program that was enacted at the ballot box in 2020. A 2021 summer study committee was convened to go over all 95 sections of the initiated measure with a fine-toothed comb. Certain areas that seemed to need tweaks and clarifications were identified. By-and-large, the proposed changes seek to uphold the will of the voters, while making the law more common sense. While I will not go over every proposal, I will give an example of one such modification that has passed the Senate. In the initiated measure, it allowed doctors to provide patients with medical cards so patients could seek out a dispensary to accommodate the patient. However, the initiated measure completely ignored the fact that nurse practitioners and physician assistants also have prescribing authority. Hence, one of the measures in the package of reforms called for a change in the definition of “practitioners” who may provide patients with medical marijuana permits. As an editorial note, the electorate spoke, so the legislature is trying to respect the decision of the people, while clarifying some language to make the program more practical in function.

In the recent past, the Secretary of State has brought forth bills to inject more of an electronic presence in the voting process. One bill attempted to allow for broad changes that would provide for online registration and voting. The legislature has rejected such measures for fear of exposing our system to fraud and abuse by those who would attempt to exploit vulnerabilities. SB 69 presents a baby step to increased use of an electronic system. Should this bill pass, people would be able to update their registration information, including changes to last names, addresses, phone numbers, and party affiliations. It is not a wholesale change to the process, but a number of Senators felt that it would be the proverbial foot-in-the-door to a wider swath in the future. The bill crept through the Senate on a vote of 20-15.

SB 72 contemplates putting anti-hazing legislation on the books as it relates to a student’s initiation or admission to a school, college, or university. The first question I asked when I saw the bill in caucus is “Why does it only relate to students in educational institutions?” As a baseball coach, it struck me that it is altogether possible that a summer team (or a dance studio or a taekwondo club, etc.) may not be under the auspices of a school, and those who participate may not be students at the time of an incident. Moreover, it establishes three different levels of crime for two different levels of infractions. “Reckless engagement” in hazing would be a Class 2 misdemeanor. “Committing an intentional act” of hazing would be a Class 1 misdemeanor. “Malicious engagement” in hazing would be a Class 6 felony. Hazing, under this bill, would be defined as a “forced activity that endangers the physical health or safety of the student OR that subjects the student to extreme mental stress.” A few examples of hazing were handed out to the lawmakers as we arrived at our desks. What struck some of us was that generally speaking the accounts provided were already covered under existing sections of the code. What really caused us to pause, though, was the question of what rises to the level of “extreme mental stress”. This is a highly subjective standard, and there was a relatively robust debate over whether this bill was needed and how it would be applied. I reiterate, if it is appropriate to apply to students in an academic environment, it should apply to those same individuals involved in outside activities. The bill limped over to the House on a 19-16 vote, but even some of the “Aye” votes have since expressed to me that they don’t think they voted the right way. I’m hoping the House will either iron out some of the perceived wrinkles or they will kill the bill altogether.

The Appropriations Committee continues to put in LONG days. Every day, we meet from 7:30 until noon, and nearly every day, we reconvene as a whole committee or in subcommittees after session adjourns and we work until the evening hours. We have a myriad of issues to work through as we determine what to recommend to the legislature in terms of state general fund allocations and other and federal funds expenditure authority. Generally speaking, we are committed to achieving the Governor’s recommendation to provide 6% increases to education, medical providers, and state employees. A real challenge arises when

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talking about what the real-world scenario of hyper-inflation will bare out relative to new monies coming into the treasury, coupled with increases in internet sales tax revenues, along with both huge boons to South Dakota tourism and new residents locating here. Given those considerations, we are discussing whether we can provide some element of sales tax relief that was promised in 2016 with the passage of the extra half-cent sales tax. Also, we are having sweeping discussions about how to best invest federal ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) dollars. We want to provide for long-term infrastructure investments that will pay dividends for decades to come. We do not take lightly the fact that the feds are blowing through dollars that will affect future generations, so we are trying our best to decide what projects will provide the greatest long-term dividends for the maximum number of people.

Many important debates and decisions hang in the balance. As such, I encourage you to let us know your thoughts and to pray for wisdom for each legislator as we wade through uncharted waters. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Brock

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## Lana's Annals-Report from Pierre, Week 3

As I begin, even though renaming a book Tale of Two Chambers (aka Tales of Two Cities) would be a lengthy and sordid tale, the open line would be unoriginally the same, "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." This pretty much defines the frenzy of bills that are forthcoming, the hearing delays due to legislator illness, and the overall time deadlines which must be met with bill drafting and submitting, and yes, the spats, which is entire different novel material! Some who are unaware of the process think we should be able to put the idea in the bill, debate it, and have it become law all within a few days. Not so! It is lengthy and tedious with lots of rhetoric in tow.

This week In local government, HB1084 requested our approval to allow a municipality to permit the use of a motorized foot scooter on streets or bike paths. It would be up to the city to adopt specific traffic regulations if they choose to instate the rule so seemed to be a good idea ,Thus the bill passed our committee and will now go to the House floor for debate.

HB1114, also in local government committee, would have required a hearing on a comprehensive plan in a joint jurisdictional area. The bill was mainly asking for a requirement that landowners who are affected with zoning should have letters mailed out to them 10 days prior to action. The argument was that some people do not get newspapers nor do they consult online news. We felt that for small communities the mailings would be workable; however, the law would relate to all and cost would be astronomical to large cities. The bill then went down in flames.

In education we listened to HB1080, which would prolong the requirement of reporting increases in teacher compensation. This measure would continue accountability for teacher salary increases. Opponent arguments on this were that with so many teachers retiring, perhaps with a salary of 65,000 and hiring a new teacher for 48500, it would then appear in reports that schools were no longer being accountable with pay. The sponsor pointed out, however, that there is a board who reviews teacher salaries and investigates causes for possible lower salary budget. We voted in favor of the bill.

Our committee also heard from DSU requesting permission for a new sports complex, from SDSU wanting to renovate the Stanley Marshall building, and from Lake Area who wants to build a laboratory, additional classes, and a skyway. All of these only requested spending authority as money seems to have been raised already for the projects. Now that said, it is wonderful that donors will fund these projects, but it is the burden of the state in most cases to cover future maintenance and repair. We did, however, send them over to Appropriations to have a further review of said projects.

HB1057 and 1058 on the House floor sought to regulate marijuana. The first dealt with preventing the flavor and shape of the product to be attractive to children. For example, the bill discouraged the use of sugars and shapes which may attract our most loved and vulnerable. The second one would have prevented the transfer of the medical marijuana card from one to another. Both, surprisingly, fell to defeat. The reasons behind the defeat of the first one was that some believed little ones who need marijuana distributed to them would find it more attractive to take so would offer little resistance. Hence both sides mainly had the same arguments ironically! The second bill was laid to rest as there may be circumstances where the caregiver may have to produce a card at the dispensary on behalf of someone in a nursing home, children's home, etc.

As session continues, I would respectfully ask that you stay tuned to the live stream sessions so that you will informed about issues, many of which will affect you. You are all invited and encouraged to visit committee meetings and floor sessions. If you have questions on any bills, please e-mail me. I would ask that you read the entire bill before addressing a concern.

Until next week, please think of at least one thing or person you are grateful for each day and thank God for that blessing. We are too quick sometimes to focus upon the negative so this may get us all thinking in another direction. It is worth a try!!

My e-mail is [lane.greenfield@sdlegislature.gov](mailto:lane.greenfield@sdlegislature.gov) or [lane.greenfield@gmail.com](mailto:lane.greenfield@gmail.com)  
Rep. Lana Greenfield



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## Weekly Vikings Roundup Conference Championship Week Roundup By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

### Cincinnati Bengals vs. Kansas City Chiefs

For the first time since 1988, the Cincinnati Bengals are heading to the Super Bowl. After falling behind 21-3 to the Kansas City Chiefs in the first half, the Bengals managed to complete the comeback thanks to the help of their defense, which held Patrick Mahomes to a measly three points in the entire second half.

In what was his fourth straight AFC Championship game, Patrick Mahomes went from looking like a superhero in the first half to a mere mortal in the second half. Although Mahomes finished with 275 yards passing and 3 touchdowns, he was only able to muster up just 55 yards in the second half. To make matters worse, Mahomes threw two interceptions, making it his first multi-interception game since week 6.

The game truly flipped on one moment at the end of the first half. With 0:05 remaining and the ball at the Bengals 1-yard line, the Chiefs decided to take one more shot to the endzone, despite leading 21-10. Mahomes threw a quick pass out to Tyreek Hill who got stuffed at the goal line as time expired, leaving valuable points on the board for the Chiefs as they headed into halftime. Based on the Bengals dominance in the second half and overtime, there is no doubt that play shifted momentum away from the Chiefs and into the Bengals hands.

In just two years, the Cincinnati Bengals have gone from the worst record in the NFL to the Super Bowl. Amazing what happens when you have a superstar quarterback like Joe Burrow.

Final Score: Bengals 27 – Chiefs 24.

### San Francisco 49ers vs. Los Angeles Rams

On March 18, 2021, the Los Angeles Rams put all their chips into the middle and said “all in” by trading their starting quarterback, Jared Goff, along with three first-round picks to the Detroit Lions for Matthew Stafford. Many were skeptical that the trade was too much for a quarterback with zero playoff wins to his name. However, after the Rams win today, there is no doubt that that trade paid off.

Despite being favored and at home, the Rams came into the NFC Championship game with an “underdog” feel to them. Rams’ head coach, Sean McVay, was on a six-game losing streak to his buddy and 49ers’ head coach, Kyle Shanahan; Matthew Stafford was facing a 49ers defense who had shut down the explosive offenses of the Cowboys and the Packers in previous playoff rounds, and the 49ers fans took over SoFi stadium so much that it was predicted the crowd would only be 35% Rams fans.

Nevertheless, the Rams made it an effort to rely on their stars to give themselves a 20-17 victory over the 49ers. Wide receivers, Cooper Kupp and Odell Beckham Jr., combined for a total of 255 yards receiving and two touchdowns. And when the game was on the line at the end, it was Aaron Donald and Von Miller who got to Jimmy Garoppolo to force the game-clinching interception. The Rams will now be the second team in a row to play a Super Bowl game in their home stadium.

Final Score: Rams 20 – 49ers 17.

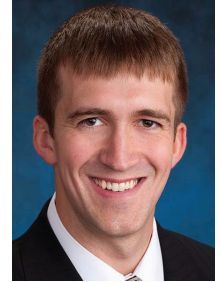
### Minnesota Vikings News

In other news, Vikings fans were the recipient of some exciting news this past Wednesday as the team hired its new General Manager, Kwesi Adofo-Mensah. Adofo-Mensah carries with him a unique background than the prototypical general manager. Having spent seven years in the 49ers’ organization and two years in the Browns’ organization, Adofo-Mensah worked on the “analytics” side of football. He will become the first general manager in NFL history with this sort of background. Although this might make fans nervous, every indication from those who have worked with Adofo-Mensah is that he is going to be a great General Manager for the Vikings.

Moreover, it appears that the Vikings have decided on three finalists for their head coach vacancy: Rams’ offensive coordinator Kevin O’Connell, 49ers’ defensive coordinator DeMeco Ryans, and Michigan Wolverines head coach Jim Harbaugh.

## Seeing Shadows

Will the groundhog see his shadow this year? Every year on February 2, people gather in the small town of Punxsutawney in western Pennsylvania to observe the annual Groundhog Day ceremony. If the groundhog does see his shadow, he may retreat to his den and winter will last another six weeks. If he does not see his shadow, spring may arrive early.



Andrew Ellsworth, MD

This tradition is nearly 140 years old. Organizers claim for the sake of folklore that the original groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil is still alive today, getting his longevity from drinking the “elixir of life.” But obviously, different groundhogs have been used through the years. The average lifespan of groundhog is only two or three years in the wild, and up to fourteen years in captivity. And besides, it’s inevitable that the groundhog’s eyesight would become less dependable as years go by. But I digress.

Like Punxsutawney Phil, some of us humans often see shadows in our vision. Eye floaters can be spots or shadows in our vision from a variety of causes. They often drift about when we move our eyes, and then dart away if we try to look at them, like a groundhog scurrying back to his burrow.

Most floaters are caused by age-related changes that occur as the vitreous, the jelly-like substance inside our eyes, becomes more liquid. Microscopic fibers within the vitreous clump up and cast tiny shadows on our retina, which we see as floaters.

Floaters are most visible when looking at a plain bright background like a white wall. They may appear as dark specks or clear strings. In general, floaters are not harmful and are nothing to worry about. However, a sudden increase in floaters may signal something worrisome, especially if you notice flashes of light or loss of peripheral vision. This may signal a retinal tear, a painless condition that requires prompt treatment to help save your vision.

As we age and the vitreous of the eye liquefies, it may sag and tug on the retina with enough force to tear it. Without treatment, the retinal tear may lead to a retinal detachment, when fluid accumulates behind the retina and separates it from the back of the eye. Untreated, this can result in permanent vision loss.

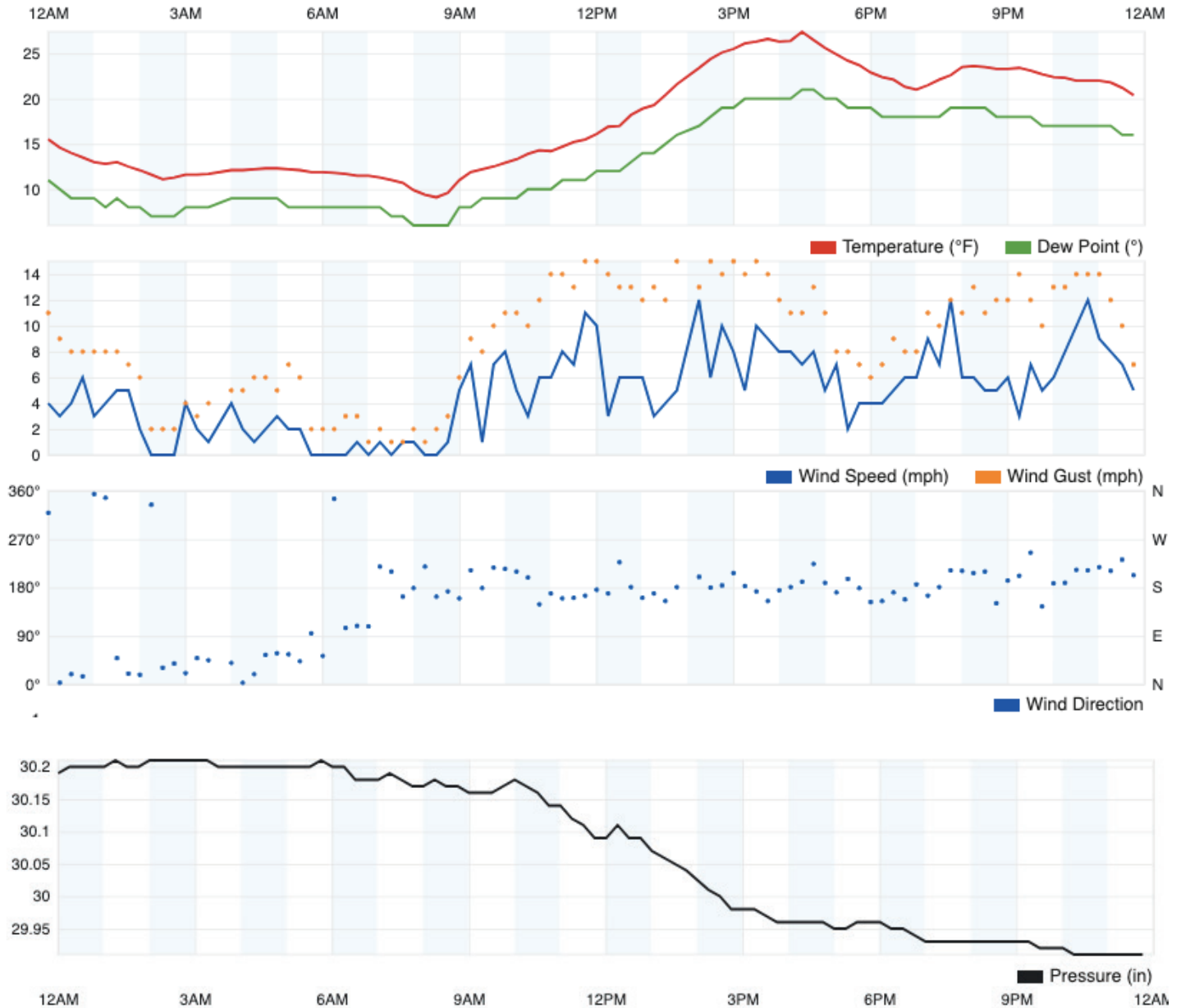
There are many reasons to go to the eye doctor once or twice per year for routine checkups to help maintain our vision. However, if you see a sudden increase in shadows, floaters, lights, or darkness of any side or sides in your vision, it’s time to leave your den and scurry back to the eye doctor regardless of the season.

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

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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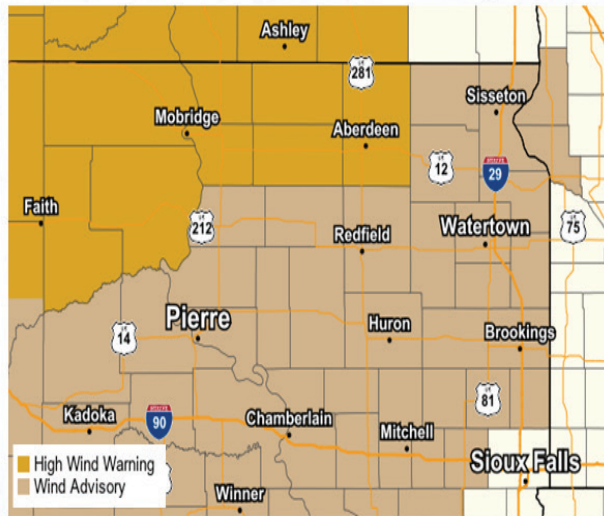
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<b>Today</b>	<b>Tonight</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Tuesday Night</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>
				
Mostly Cloudy	30% Chance Rain/Snow and Breezy then Mostly Cloudy and Windy	Partly Sunny and Blustery	Mostly Clear	Cold

## Strong Winds This Evening into Tuesday Morning

National Weather Service Graphic Created  
Aberdeen, SD 1/31/2022 4:22 AM

### Current Wind Hazards for Tonight



### Maximum Wind Gusts Today - Tuesday

	Maximum Wind Gust Forecast														Maximum
	1/31 Mon							2/1 Tue							
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm		
Aberdeen	20	22	20	24	37	47	47	43	40	40	32	24	20	47	
Britton	18	22	22	16	32	44	45	44	41	40	35	24	20	45	
Eagle Butte	18	20	36	41	51	56	54	44	36	32	30	20	20	56	
Eureka	16	18	14	30	43	51	54	48	40	39	33	24	20	54	
Gettysburg	21	23	22	38	47	52	52	46	37	35	30	20	20	52	
Kennebec	20	26	37	43	43	47	44	39	33	33	26	20	17	47	
McIntosh	20	23	39	44	54	60	59	44	39	36	30	22	18	60	
Milbank	10	15	18	21	32	45	48	47	44	43	35	22	20	48	
Miller	20	26	28	36	45	52	52	45	39	35	29	20	18	52	
Mobridge	18	20	26	36	48	52	51	41	32	32	28	20	20	52	
Murdo	20	31	40	43	43	47	45	37	33	32	25	20	17	47	
Pierre	15	20	32	37	47	52	47	39	33	31	26	18	15	52	
Redfield	17	24	25	28	40	46	47	43	43	38	31	23	20	47	
Sisseton	17	18	18	21	37	49	54	53	48	47	40	26	23	54	
Watertown	13	20	21	26	33	44	47	47	45	40	36	23	21	47	
Wheaton	14	20	22	24	18	41	47	47	46	43	37	23	20	47	

\*Table values in mph  
\*\*Created: 3 am CST Mon 1/31/2022  
\*\*\*Values are maximums over the period beginning at the time shown.

### What

Gusty west to northwest winds will develop this evening as a cold front sweeps through the region. Gusts of 45 to 60 mph are expected, with the highest gusts in northern SD.

### When

This evening through Tuesday morning



### Impacts

High winds may move loose debris, damage property and cause power outages. Travel will be difficult especially for high profile vehicles.

A cold front moving through the area tonight will bring very gusty northwest winds this evening through Tuesday morning. Travel will be difficult, especially for high profile vehicles.



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## Today in Weather History

January 31, 1969: Minnesota experienced many winter storms throughout the month of 1969, where several people had died from heart attacks and auto accidents. Many roads were blocked or iced over several times during the month. Considerable snow during January and frequent periods of strong winds resulted in many days of blowing and drifting snow across northeast South Dakota. There were also many days with freezing rain. The most significant icing occurred on the 22nd and the 27th. There were numerous days where the traffic was at a standstill due to blocked roads and closed airports. Many school closings occurred throughout the month, with many activities canceled. Many rural roads went long periods without being opened, resulting in hardships for farmers. Days of blowing snow were the 8th, 19th, 22nd, 23th, 24th, 26th, 27th, and 31st. Days of freezing rain were the 5th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, and the 22nd.

1911: Tamarack, California, was without snow the first eight days of the month, but by the end of January, they had been buried under 390 inches of snow, a record monthly total for the United States. By March 11, 1911, Tamarack had a record snow depth of 451 inches.

1950: Seattle, Washington experienced their coldest temperature on record with a reading of zero degrees.

1979: A winter storm that started on the previous day and ended on this day spread 2 to 4 inches of rainfall in 24 hours over much of coastal Southern California and two inches of snow in Palm Springs. Snow fell heavily in Palm Springs, and 8 inches fell at Lancaster. All major interstates into Los Angeles were closed. Snow drifts shut down Interstate 10 on both sides of Palm Springs, isolating the city.

1949 - The temperature at San Antonio, TX, plunged to a record low of one degree below zero. Helena MT reached 42 degrees below zero. (David Ludlum)

1966 - A blizzard struck the northeastern U.S. When the storm came to an end, twenty inches of snow covered the ground at Washington D.C. (David Ludlum)

1982 - A snowstorm struck Missouri, Illinois and Indiana. Twenty-five inches of snow at Greenville IL, located east of Saint Louis, paralyzed the community. The storm left 4000 motorists stranded for two days. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A storm in the Pacific Northwest produced wind gusts to 85 mph in Oregon, and nearly two inches of rain in twelve hours in the Puget Sound area of Washington State. Ten inches of snow at Stampede Pass WA brought their total snow cover to 84 inches. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty-one cities in the central and northeastern U.S. reported new record high temperatures for the date, with many occurring during the early morning hours. Temperatures in western New York State reached the 60s early in the day. Strong northerly winds in the north central U.S. produced wind chill readings as cold as 60 degrees below zero in North Dakota. (National Weather Summary)

1989 - The barometric pressure at Norway, AK, reached 31.85 inches (1078.4 mb) establishing an all-time record for the North American Continent. The temperature at the time of the record was about 46 degrees below zero (The Weather Channel). Severe arctic cold began to invade the north central U.S. The temperature at Great Falls MT plunged 85 degrees in 36 hours. Valentine NE plummeted from a record high of 70 degrees to zero in just nine hours. Northwest winds gusted to 86 mph at Lander WY, and wind chill readings of 80 degrees below zero were reported in Montana. Sixty-four cities in the central U.S. reported record highs for the date as readings reached the 60s in Michigan and the 80s in Kansas. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - High winds in Montana on the 28th, gusting to 77 mph at Judith Gap, were followed by three days of snow. Heavy snow fell over northwest Montana, with up to 24 inches reported in the mountains. An avalanche covered the road near Essex with six feet of snow. Snow and high winds also plagued parts of the southwestern U.S. Winds gusted to 54 mph at Show Low AZ, and Flagstaff AZ was blanketed with eight inches of snow. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

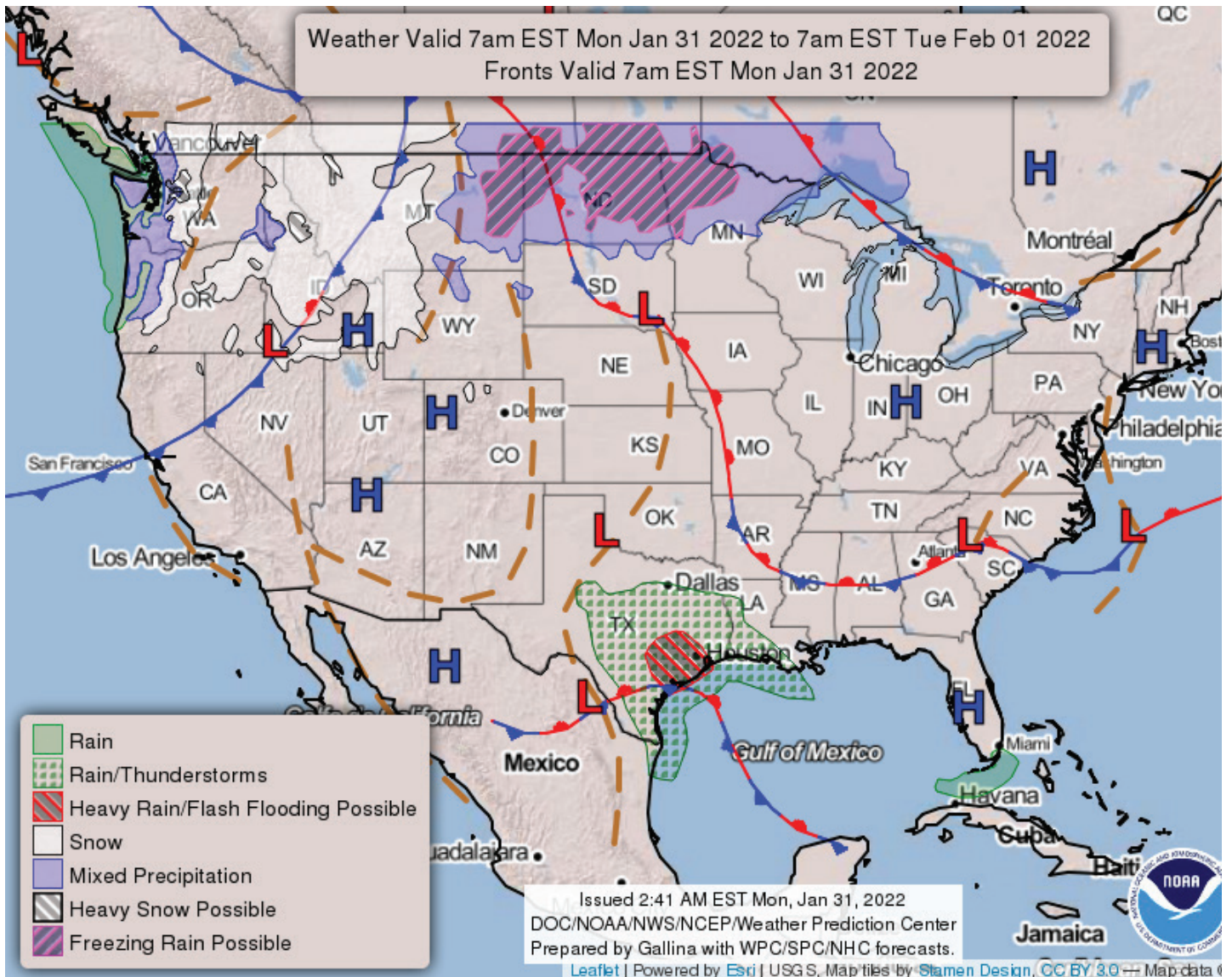
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 28 °F at 4:29 PM**  
**Low Temp: 9 °F at 8:29 AM**  
**Wind: 15 mph at 10:49 AM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

**Record High: 51 in 1924**  
**Record Low: -32 in 1996**  
**Average High: 25°F**  
**Average Low: 2°F**  
**Average Precip in Jan.: 0.55**  
**Precip to date in Jan.: 0.59**  
**Average Precip to date: 0.55**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.59**  
**Sunset Tonight: 5:39:19 PM**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:51:12 AM**



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## REJECTION IS NOT FINAL OR FATAL

One of the world's greatest violinists, Paganini, once commissioned a composer to write a concerto that would display the artist's magnificent skills. The violinist said that he wanted the concerto to include quiet melodies that would move the audience to a hushed silence. He also wanted it to contain bursts of music that would expose his ability to play loud and with breathtaking speed.

After several weeks the composer returned to the studio of Paganini and presented his concerto. After he reviewed it briefly, he turned to the composer and said, "This lacks life. It is not good enough for Paganini."

Later, while attending a concert by another violinist, Paganini heard him play the concerto that the composer had written for him. The performance moved him to tears, and the audience responded with applause that went on for many minutes. When the applause ended, Paganini went to the composer, dropped to his knees before the stunned audience, and kissed his hand. After a moment he looked humbly at the composer and admitted his mistake and asked for his forgiveness.

Years ago, a Psalmist wrote, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." Jesus referred to this verse when He spoke of being rejected by His own people. Although He was once rejected, Jesus is now the cornerstone - the most important part - of our salvation and His church. We must always be alert to what God wants to bring into our lives. Unless we are open to the gentle calling of His spirit, we may miss His best for us.

Prayer: Open our ears and our hearts to Your voice, O Lord, that we may always be ready to accept Your gift. Help us to never reject Your blessings, Your provision, or Your word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: – The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. Psalm 118:22



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## 2022 Community Events

- 01/30/2022 84th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)  
01/30/2022 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am – 1pm, Groton Community Center, 109 N 3rd St, Groton,  
04/09/2022 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)  
Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm  
04/23/2022 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)  
04/24/2022 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)  
05/07/2022 Lions Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)  
St John's Lutheran Church VBS 9-11am  
05/30/2022 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)  
Transit Fundraiser at the Community Center 4-7pm (Thursday Mid-June)  
06/17/2022 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 12pm Start  
06/18/2022 Groton Triathlon  
Ladies Invitational at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration 10am Start  
07/04/2022 Firecracker Couples Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start  
(4th of July)  
07/10/2022 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)  
Dacotah Bank Back To School Supply Drive  
Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar 11am-1pm at the Groton Legion  
Baseball Tourney  
07/21/2022 Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course  
Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start  
How can we... "Love Groton"? United Methodist Church 9:30am  
Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20  
Golf Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course 11a-1pm  
JVT School Supply Drive  
08/05/2022 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm  
08/12/2022 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament  
United Methodist Church VBS 5-8pm  
Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day 4-5pm GHS Parking Lot  
09/10/2022 Lions Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)  
6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3:30-5pm  
09/11/2022 Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 12pm  
Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport  
10/14/2022 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am (2nd Friday in October)  
10/01/2022 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm  
10/31/2022 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)  
10/31/2022 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm  
11/12/2022 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)  
11/24/2022 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)  
12/03/2022 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party at Olive Grove Golf Course  
Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm



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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## News from the Associated Press

### Car repair shop for needy residents expands to Sioux Falls

By MAKENZIE HUBER Sioux Falls Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Volunteers at the SHIFT Garage in northern Sioux Falls aren't just repairing vehicles, they're trying to change lives.

SHIFT Garage is a nonprofit volunteer-based vehicle repair shop that charges low-income customers at cost for replacements and repairs. They also accept donated vehicles, fix them up and sell them for a low cost to families.

While the nonprofit started in Rapid City about a decade ago, founder and director Joe Smith recently expanded to a second location in Sioux Falls late last year.

The goal is to help people get their vehicles up and running so they can return to their lives easily, he said. Overall, such a simple fix can make an impact on generational poverty, he added.

"A car breaking down shuts down your whole system when you're living paycheck to paycheck," Smith said. "You have to make a decision on financing and signing your life away to simply drive to work."

While there are plenty of nonprofits to address food and housing in the Sioux Falls area, reliable transportation needs more attention, he added.

Other nonprofits in Sioux Falls addressing transportation issues include Sioux Empire Wheels to Work, which matches single-parent families with donated and repaired vehicles, and Project CAR, which offers free car rides, the Argus Leader reported.

"They can't get groceries, get to work or get their kids to daycare without a car," Smith said. "And some solutions, like Lyft or Uber, are more expensive; Sioux Falls' public transportation can be unreliable; and your friends are only going to keep picking up the phone for a couple weeks."

After opening the shop in October 2021, Smith says the need for affordable car repair services is greater than ever. Inflation and the rising cost of used vehicles in the last year or so have only exacerbated the need.

Smith said he's seeing "crummier" cars coming in for repair than he saw in Rapid City years before because of it.

"When people got their tax returns last year, they needed it to survive and kept driving their old cars instead of saving it to purchase a newer vehicle," Smith said. "They didn't get maintenance done on that vehicle though, so when cars come to me they don't have just one problem they have four other problems."

The Rapid City location repairs about 150 vehicles and sells between 25 and 30 donated program vehicles a year. The demand is so high in Rapid City alone, where the nonprofit has more volunteers and twice the amount of working hours, that clients have to wait two months to fit in the schedule.

In just the last few months of 2021 after opening, SHIFT in Sioux Falls repaired 17 vehicles.

Chris Erickson, director of SHIFT West in Rapid City, used to work as a mechanic before volunteering at SHIFT and taking over the director role when Smith moved to Sioux Falls with his family last year.

"We want one-time customers at SHIFT," Erickson said.

That philosophy means not only making repairs on vehicles, but also holding education and budgeting classes for customers. There are classes in Rapid City currently and Smith plans to start classes in Sioux Falls later this year.

"When we repair these cars, we're putting a Band-Aid on a deeper problem," Smith said. "The car will help for a while, but they won't be driving that in five years. If the education can stick, that's what will help people long-term."

Most of the problems addressed at SHIFT are preventable. Erickson said they take the time to walk through with customers basic car maintenance, how to listen for problems and prevent issues so they can extend the lives of their vehicles.

"People in Rapid City we serve don't get a lot of education when it comes to mechanical issues," Chris

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said. "They don't teach it in schools, and with how busy mechanic shops are, they don't have time to tell you what to look for. It's more transactional at those shops."

Getting people get back in their cars doesn't just help them, it helps the Sioux Falls community, Erickson said.

"Instead of having a vehicle that sits in the driveway for five years, people can donate it and get it fixed here," Erickson said. "Our customers then take that car and make money at jobs, they go shopping at the grocery store, and they're less dependent on other nonprofits because they're able to pay for rent and food instead of paying for a car repair."

Smith is fast to point out that SHIFT isn't competing with other mechanics or garages in Sioux Falls, adding that he makes plenty of referrals on issues his volunteers "shouldn't mess with." Volunteers are not certified mechanics, just simply people who want to use their time and skills for a cause.

He plans to do more in Sioux Falls to address the growing need in the area soon and is looking for more volunteers and people to donate vehicles.

"To make a real dent in the need in Sioux Falls, we need to scale up more than we are," Smith said.

To qualify for SHIFT car repair, potential clients must fill out an application online demonstrating their need for the low-cost repair. While a board reviews all applications, the program focuses on helping single parents or low-income families.

For those interested in donating a vehicle, they can contact SHIFT online. The garage accepts vehicle donations and can provide a tax-deductible receipt. Monetary donations can also be made online.

Volunteers are also welcome to join the team. Those interested can apply online.

## **Virus, mild winter and supply issues have gardeners shopping**

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Gardening products on the store shelves? In January?

That's the case at Lewis Drug in Sioux Falls, where Christmas trees and snow blowers are displayed next to the seed rack. There have been days when the store has sold snow blowers and mowers on the same day, said Lewis Drug garden buyer Doug Schroeder.

"So it's all part of living where we live," Schroeder said.

Some of it is likely due to the mild winter, so far, but Schroeder said gardening really took root during the COVID-19 pandemic, as people quarantining at home looked for an outdoor activity they can take part in to pass the time.

"There are more and more people with COVID that have gotten into gardening than before," Schroeder said.

Schroeder recommends gardeners buy early to get a jump on rising prices created by high demand and nationwide supply chain problems. He said many people have been trained to stock up in the winter because of the issues with product shortages.

Lynn Lundquist's husband is already getting the itch to get into the garden.

"He looks at all the seed catalogs and starts to think what he wants to do and he's planning his garden, he'll have a nice garden," Lundquist said.

The next sign of spring will be seen in the greenhouses going up in the store parking lots in March, KELO-TV reported.

## **Boris Johnson gets 'partygate' report but questions linger**

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been handed an investigator's long-awaited report into lockdown-breaching government parties, the government said Monday — but findings about the most serious allegations have been withheld pending a police investigation.

The Cabinet Office said senior civil servant Sue Gray "has provided an update on her investigations to the Prime Minister."

Johnson's office says the report will be published and the prime minister will address Parliament about

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its findings later Monday.

But the "update" is unlikely to tell the full story about claims that have rocked Johnson's government. Some of Gray's findings are being withheld at the request of police, who have launched a separate investigation into whether several of the almost 20 gatherings she investigated broke COVID-19 laws.

Allegations that the prime minister and his staff flouted restrictions imposed on the country to curb the spread of the coronavirus have caused public anger, led some Conservative lawmakers to call for Johnson's resignation and triggered intense infighting inside the governing party.

Johnson has denied personal wrongdoing and said he has "absolutely no intention" of resigning.

But Johnson's grip on power has been weakened by allegations that he and his staff flouted restrictions they imposed on the country in 2020 and 2021 to curb the spread of the coronavirus with "bring your own booze" office parties, birthday celebrations and "wine time Fridays."

Publication of Gray's report was delayed when the Metropolitan Police force launched its own investigation last week into the most serious alleged breaches of coronavirus rules.

The force said it had asked for Gray's report to make only "minimal reference" to the events being investigated by detectives "to avoid any prejudice to our investigation."

Johnson's opponents accused the government of trying to water down a report that could trigger an attempt to oust the prime minister by his own party. Some Conservative lawmakers say they will push for a no-confidence vote if Gray finds Johnson was at fault or lied to Parliament about his actions.

It's unclear whether Gray's full findings will be published once the police investigation is finished.

Johnson, meanwhile, was trying to change the subject from his personal woes, marking the second anniversary of Brexit on Monday by touting economic opportunities outside the European Union.

The U.K. officially left the now 27-nation bloc on Jan. 31, 2020, though it remained part of the EU's economic structures for another 11 months.

Since then, the upheaval of the coronavirus pandemic has obscured the economic ructions caused by the end of frictionless trade with Britain's biggest economic partner. Britain's economy is growing after entering recession amid pandemic lockdowns, but trade with the EU has fallen since Brexit introduced customs checks and other hurdles.

Johnson vowed Monday to unlock the potential of Brexit, unveiling a "Brexit Freedoms" Bill that the government says will slash red tape for British businesses by amending laws that were carried over from the U.K.'s years as an EU member.

"In all the areas where the U.K. is strong — cyber, artificial intelligence, all the cutting-edge technologies of the future — we are going to make sure we do things differently and better, where appropriate," Johnson said on a visit to Tilbury, east of London, one of Britain's busiest ports.

Opponents say the bill will just make it easier for the government to change laws without Parliament's approval.

The government is also promising this week to give long-awaited details of plans to "level up" the country by expanding economic opportunity to neglected regions.

And Johnson plans a diplomatic push to try to ease tensions between Russia and Ukraine. His office says the prime minister will speak to Russian President Vladimir Putin by phone later Monday and visit Eastern Europe this week as part of efforts to deter Russia from invading its neighbor.

## **N. Korea confirms test of missile capable of striking Guam**

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea confirmed Monday it test-launched an intermediate-range ballistic missile capable of reaching the U.S. territory of Guam, the North's most significant weapon launch in years, as Washington plans steps to show its commitment to its Asian allies.

Sunday's launch could be a prelude to bigger provocations by North Korea such as nuclear and long-range missile tests that pose a direct threat to the U.S. mainland, as the North tries to further pressure the Biden administration to win sanction relief or international recognition as a legitimate nuclear state.



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The official Korean Central News Agency said the purpose of the test was verifying the overall accuracy of the Hwasong-12 missile that is being deployed in its military.

North Korea said the missile was launched toward waters off its east coast on a high angle to prevent flying over other countries. It gave no further details.

According to South Korean and Japanese assessments, the missile flew about 800 kilometers (497 miles) and reached a maximum altitude of 2,000 kilometers (1,242 miles) before landing in waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

The reported flight details make it the most powerful missile North Korea has tested since 2017, when the country launched Hwasong-12 and longer-range missiles in a torrid run of weapons firings to acquire an ability to launch nuclear strikes on U.S. military bases in Northeast Asia and the Pacific and even the American homeland.

KCNA published two sets of combination photos — one purporting to show the missile rising from a launcher and soaring into space and the other showing North Korea and nearby areas that it said were photographed from space by a camera installed at the missile's warhead. The Associated Press could not independently verify the authenticity of the images.

Lee Choon Geun, a missile expert and honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute, said he thinks the photos were taken from space — especially when the missile was soaring to its apogee, though he cannot independently prove there was no adjustment on the images. While it's rare to place a camera on a weapon, Lee said North Korea likely wanted to demonstrate its technological advancement to both foreign and domestic audiences.

The Hwasong-12 missile is a nuclear-capable ground-to-ground weapon with a maximum range of 4,500 kilometers (2,800 miles) when it's fired on a standard trajectory. It's a distance sufficient to reach Guam, home to U.S. military bases that in past times of tensions sent advanced warplanes to the Korean Peninsula in shows of force. In August 2017, at the height of animosities with the then-Trump administration, North Korea threatened to make "an enveloping fire" near Guam with Hwasong-12 missiles.

In 2017, North Korea also test-fired intercontinental ballistic missiles called Hwasong-14 and Hwasong-15 that experts say demonstrated their potential capacity to reach the mainland U.S. Some analysts say North Korea still needs to conduct additional ICBM test-flights to prove it has overcome the last remaining technological hurdles, such as protecting a warhead from the extreme heat and pressure of reentering the Earth's atmosphere.

In recent months, North Korea has launched a variety of weapons systems and threatened to lift a four-year moratorium on more serious weapons tests such as nuclear explosions and ICBM launches. Sunday's launch was the North's seventh round of missile launches in January alone, and other weapons tested recently include a developmental hypersonic missile and a submarine-launched missile.

Analyst Cheong Seong-Chang at the private Sejong Institute in South Korea said the Hwasong-12 launch was seen as partially breaking North Korea's weapons test moratorium. In April 2018, when North Korea suspended nuclear and ICBM tests ahead of now-dormant diplomacy with the Trump administration, Kim said North Korea didn't need to test intermediate-range missiles any longer as well.

Cheong said North Korea will likely test-launch its existing long-range missile if the United States spearheads fresh sanctions on it. Other experts said North Korea could also conduct a nuclear test.

North Korea has publicly vowed to add more powerful ICBMs and nuclear warheads in its arsenal. They include a longer-range ICBM with precision strike capability, a solid-fuel ICBM that improves a weapon's mobility, a multi-warhead missile, a spy satellite and a super-sized warhead.

After Sunday's launch, White House officials said they saw the latest missile test as part of an escalating series of provocations over the last several months that have become increasingly concerning.

The Biden administration plans to respond to the latest missile test in the coming days with an unspecified move meant to demonstrate to the North that the U.S. government is committed to allies' security in the region, according to a senior administration official who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity.

The official said the administration viewed Sunday's missile test as the latest in a series of provocations

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to try to win sanctions relief from the U.S. The Biden administration again called on North Korea to return to talks but made clear it doesn't see the sort of leader-to-leader summits Donald Trump held with Kim as constructive at this time.

South Korean and Japanese officials also condemned Sunday's launch, which violated U.N. Security Council resolutions that bans the country from testing ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons.

U.S.-led diplomacy aimed at convincing North Korea to abandon its nuclear program largely remains stalled.

"Even if Washington had the bandwidth to pay more attention to the North Korean nuclear issue, Pyongyang would likely continue to refuse direct talks because of the pandemic, keep perfecting its weapons technology, and maintain its high price tag for talks," said Duyeon Kim, an analyst at Washington's Center for a New American Security.

Observers say North Korea could suspend weapons tests during the Beijing Winter Olympics because China is its most important ally. But they say North Korea could test bigger weapons when the Olympics end and the U.S. and South Korean militaries begin their springtime military exercises.

## Celebrations for Year of the Tiger are muted, but bring hope

By DAVID RISING and KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — People across Asia prepared Monday for muted Lunar New Year celebrations amid concerns over the coronavirus and virulent omicron variant, even as increasing vaccination rates raised hopes that the Year of the Tiger might bring life back closer to normal.

The Lunar New Year is the most important annual holiday in China and falls on Tuesday, Feb. 1. Each year is named after one of twelve signs of the Chinese zodiac in a repeating cycle. The Year of the Tiger follows the Year of the Ox.

This will be the third new year in a row celebrated in the shadow of the pandemic. It was two days before the holiday in 2020 that China locked down Wuhan — a city of 11 million people — following the detection of the coronavirus there.

Some 85% of Chinese are now fully vaccinated, according to Our World in Data, and more Chinese have been traveling domestically this year, despite government warnings. Many people prepare to celebrate by buying red lanterns and other decorations for their homes, and food to mark the beginning of a new year.

Still, 63-year-old retiree Huang Ping lamented as he shopped at a Beijing flower market that the new year's "atmosphere has faded" with the closure of temples and seasonal fairs to prevent large crowds. He said he hoped for better times soon.

"I wish for the epidemic to pass as early as possible and for the economy to recover as well," he said.

Another retiree, Han Guiha, said he was planning on making the best of the situation.

"I'll stay at home enjoying good food and wine," the 62-year-old said. "I will make my house clean and beautiful. Right now the virus is spreading and we need to be careful."

Some 260 million people traveled in China in the first 10 days of the holiday rush starting Jan. 17 — fewer than before the pandemic but up 46% over last year. Overall, the government forecasts 1.2 billion trips during the holiday season, up 36% from a year ago.

This year the celebrations coincide with the Beijing Winter Olympics, which open near the end of the weeklong holiday. The Chinese capital has been tightening controls to contain coronavirus outbreaks ahead of the sporting event.

The Games are being held inside sealed-off "bubbles," and organizers have announced that no tickets will be sold to the general public and only selected spectators will be allowed.

"I'll watch the games with my kid, but of course on TV," said Wang Zhuo, a retail manager from Beijing.

In Hong Kong, which saw a surge in cases in January, people wore surgical masks as they shopped for red and tiger-themed holiday items. The city has closed schools because of the outbreaks and required restaurants to close at 6 p.m., forcing many to dine at home for traditional New Year's Eve family dinners.

With the Year of the Tiger, many are hoping the traditional powers attributed to the animal will help put

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the country on a path out of the pandemic, said Chen Lianshan, a Beijing university expert on Chinese folklore.

"The tiger is a protection against evil spirits and it can defeat demons and ghosts of all kinds, and the Chinese believe that the plague is one kind of an evil spirit," he said.

Elsewhere in Asia, there were signs that celebrations might not be as subdued as they were last year. Despite ongoing pandemic restrictions, most people are now vaccinated with at least two shots in many of the region's countries.

In the old quarter of Hanoi, people flocked on the weekend to the traditional market to get decorations and flowers for the festival, known as Tet in Vietnam.

Vietnam's daily case count remains at about 15,000 new infections but its low hospitalization and death rate has allowed the country to reopen for business and cautiously resume social activities.

More than 70% of Vietnamese are fully vaccinated, and 80% have had at least one shot, according to Our World in Data.

Still, the country has cancelled Tet fireworks and other large events to minimize risks this year.

In Thailand, where 69% of people are fully vaccinated, Bangkok decided this year not to hold traditional Lunar New Year celebrations in Chinatown for the second year in a row, but was going ahead with lighting seasonal lanterns on the district's main street.

In Singapore, Lunar New Year celebrations are more subdued due to coronavirus restrictions that allow residents to receive only five unique visitors a day, and preferably only one visit daily. The rules are likely to get in the way of the tradition of visiting relatives during the holiday.

"This year it will be rather quiet, as people are spacing out visiting over the next two weeks instead of on the first or second day of the new year," said Sebastian Lim, a Singapore resident.

Business was brisk at a flower market in the Taiwanese capital of Taipei on Monday as people made last minute purchases. Some 73% of Taiwanese are fully vaccinated.

"The pandemic is surely affecting it a bit, but people still like flowers, so they come out and buy flowers," said one shopkeeper, who only gave his name as Lee.

"But prices are lower because we have overproduction and we can't export some items — this is our biggest problem."

Ethnic Chinese shopkeepers in Myanmar face a bigger dilemma, as the new year coincides with the one-year anniversary of the military's seizure of power from the democratically-elected government.

Supporters of the growing anti-military movement have called for people to close their shops and businesses in a nationwide "silent strike" protest. Military leaders have warned that anyone who participates could face legal action, including charges of violating the country's counter-terrorism law.

But that has left shopkeepers who had planned to close anyway for the Lunar New Year to spend time with their families wondering what to do.

"Normally we are closed during Chinese new year, but don't know what to do this year," said Hu, a noodle vendor in Yangon who wouldn't give his full name out of fear of reprisal. "We want to close, but we have to be afraid of the authorities."

## Biden to meet Qatar leader as Europe energy crisis looms

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is hosting the ruling leader of Qatar at the White House on Monday as he looks for the gas-rich nation to step up once again to help the West as it faces the prospect of a European energy crunch if Russia invades Ukraine.

Qatar played a central role in aiding last summer's U.S. military evacuations of Afghan helpers and U.S. citizen in Afghanistan, hosts the biggest American air base in the Middle East and served as a go-between with the Taliban for the last three U.S. administrations as they tried to wind down America's longest war.

Now, with some 100,000 Russian troops massed at the Ukraine border, experts say Qatar — the world's second-biggest exporter of liquefied natural gas, or LNG — is eager to help Biden again but might only be

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able to offer limited assistance if Russia further disrupts the flow of energy supplies to Europe.

"Qatar sees this as an opportunity to further improve its relationship with the U.S. after Afghanistan," said Yesar Al-Maleki, an energy economist at the Middle East Institute in Washington. "But it is going to be very hard to do because there isn't excess supply."

Qatar is already producing at full capacity with much of its supply under contract to Asia. Even if some Pacific allies of the U.S. — including India, Japan and South Korea — are persuaded to divert some LNG orders it has contracted to Europe, it will only have a small impact in softening the blow, according to energy analysts.

The White House said that Biden and Qatar's ruling emir, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, would also use Monday's meeting to discuss Middle East security and the situation in Afghanistan, where humanitarian conditions have deteriorated in the aftermath of last year's U.S. military withdrawal and Taliban takeover. The leaders are also expected to discuss the status of U.S. efforts to resurrect the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

But efforts to draw contingency plans should Russia move to cut Europe from gas supplies is perhaps the most pressing matter on their agenda.

Natural gas future prices surged last week amid growing market fears a potential conflict could disrupt Russian exports transiting through Ukraine to Europe. The crunch has been worsened by Russia, which typically supplies about 40% of Europe's natural gas supply, reducing its exports by about 25% in the fourth quarter of 2021 compared with the same period in 2020 despite high worldwide prices.

Any Russian invasion into Ukraine would almost surely trigger economic sanctions from the U.S. and its European allies. That could lead to oil and gas shortages around the world and, most likely, higher energy prices that could send tremors through the global economy.

Biden administration officials said the two leaders will discuss the Ukraine situation but declined to comment on what, if any, commitment the president may ask of al Thani in addressing the mounting European energy crisis.

Russia has repeatedly said it has no intention of invading Ukraine even as the Biden administration has warned that military action could be "imminent." Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has dismissed concerns that Russia could cut off European gas supplies as "fake hysteria."

Biden administration officials heaped praise on Qatar for assisting the U.S. military evacuation of thousands of U.S. citizens and Afghans during the chaotic ending to the American war with the Taliban. Qatar continues to operate passenger flights for those fleeing Afghanistan and has served as a way station for the U.S. as it processes visas for thousands of people fleeing Taliban control. Qatar's ambassador in Kabul even personally escorted convoys of evacuees to the airport to help ensure their safe passage.

Biden, according to the White House, told al Thani in a private phone call last year that the Afghanistan evacuation "would not have been possible without the early support from Qatar to facilitate the transfer of thousands of people daily."

"Many countries have stepped up to help the evacuation and relocation efforts in Afghanistan, but no country has done more than Qatar," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said during a September visit to Doha. Blinken spoke last week with Qatari Foreign Affairs Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani about the Russian troop buildup, according to the State Department.

The relationship is improved after difficulties with President Donald Trump. The Republican supported a blockade launched in 2017 against Qatar by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt.

Trump also publicly accused Qatar of being "a very high level" funder of terrorism but later reversed his position on the blockade. Saudi Arabia and other neighbors have accused Qatar of tolerating or even encouraging support for extremist groups, including al-Qaida's Syria branch, the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas.

The White House is anticipating that al Thani may request in his conversations with administration officials that Biden, a Democrat, approve a \$500 million sale of M-9 Reaper drones. The request has been languishing since 2020, when Trump was still in office.

The Biden administration says the still developing contingency plan won't just lean on "one or two" sup-



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pliers. Instead, the effort would require “rather smaller volumes from a multitude of sources” to make up for a Russian cutoff, according to a senior Biden administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Suppliers in Australia — the world’s biggest LNG supplier — as well as Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the United States are among those that Biden administration officials have looked to assist if needed.

Biden and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in a joint statement Friday said that they were working to ensure “sufficient, and timely supply of natural gas to the EU from diverse sources across the globe to avoid supply shocks” as they build contingency plans.

Craig Pirrong, a professor of finance and energy markets at the University of Houston, noted Qatar’s and the United States’ LNG export facilities, which turn gas into liquid form so it can be transported over long distances, have been running near capacity for months as economies have recovered from the coronavirus pandemic and demand has picked up.

The world’s big suppliers could potentially eke out marginal additional supply if natural gas prices spike even higher, but analysts said a market squeeze could prove unavoidable.

“The market is going to allocate the gas to where the demand is high,” Pirrong said. “Supplies that would have otherwise gone to Asia will go to Europe, and that will cushion some of the impact in Europe. But it’s just not going to replace that much lost supply if the Russians cut off the gas.”

## UAE intercepts Yemen missile as Israeli president visits

By JON GAMBRELL and ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The United Arab Emirates intercepted a ballistic missile fired by Yemen’s Houthi rebels early Monday as the Israeli president, Isaac Herzog, was visiting the country, authorities said, the third such attack in as many weeks.

The attack only fuels ongoing tensions in the wider Persian Gulf, which has seen a series of attacks as Iran’s nuclear deal with world powers unravels and Yemen’s yearslong war rages on.

As negotiators in Vienna now attempt to revive the accord and Emirati-backed forces press on the Iran-backed Houthis, the rebels are launching their longest-range attacks yet — a major challenge for the Emirates, which advertises itself to international businesses as a safe corner of an otherwise-dangerous neighborhood.

The UAE’s state-run WAM news agency reported Monday’s interception, saying “the attack did not result in any losses, as the remnants of the ballistic missile fell outside the populated areas.”

It wasn’t immediately clear where the remnants fell. The country’s civilian air traffic control agency said there was no effect on air travel in the UAE, home to the long-haul carriers Emirates and Etihad.

The country’s top prosecutor has threatened that people who film or post images of such an incident would face criminal charges in the UAE, an autocratic federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula, making reporting on such incidents even more complicated for journalists.

Instead, the Emirati Defense Ministry released black-and-white footage it described as showing the destruction of a ballistic missile launcher in Yemen’s al-Jawf province some 30 minutes after the attack — just as it did after last week’s attack, leading analysts to suggest the Emiratis may be receiving Western intelligence assistance for its strikes.

Al-Jawf is some 1,350 kilometers (840 miles) southwest of Abu Dhabi.

Houthi military spokesman Yehia Sarei gave a press conference later Monday, claiming that the rebels had targeted “sensitive sites” in Abu Dhabi and Dubai with both Zulfikar ballistic missiles and drones, without offering evidence for his assertions.

He repeated the group’s warnings that the headquarters of international companies will be targeted in further attacks.

“The Emirates will remain an adversary as long as the actions of the Israeli enemy continue in Abu Dhabi and Dubai,” Sarei shouted from the podium.

Herzog, Israel’s largely ceremonial president, was in the UAE on Monday for the first official visit by an

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Israeli head of state to the Gulf Arab nation. The day before, he held extensive talks with Abu Dhabi's powerful Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in the capital, where he stressed Israel's support for the UAE's "security requirements" and condemned the recent attacks.

Herzog on Monday visited Dubai's Expo 2020 world's fair, which the Houthis had previously threatened to target. From the site's centerpiece dome, he delivered a carefully worded speech extolling Israel's innovations, its presence at the fair and growing economic cooperation with the UAE.

He arrived at the Israeli flag-raising ceremony surrounded by some dozen close protection officers in dark suits.

"Israelis and Emiratis are standing together, learning each other's cultures and languages," Herzog said, rattling off figures about the countries' cooperation: \$1 billion in trade, the establishment of a \$100 million research and development fund, 250,000 Israelis who so far have visited the UAE's coastal cities.

"I look forward to the great accomplishments that will undoubtedly emerge from the seeds planted right here, together," he added. "This was a decision not only to normalize ties but to shape a new tomorrow."

He urged more nations to recognize Israel as part of the so-called Abraham Accords before being swiftly shepherded away.

The AP, along with other international media, was ordered by Dubai's Expo 2020 not to release images or video of Herzog's visit to the site until the afternoon. Expo officials say the order came at the request of Israeli officials.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price condemned the Houthi attack. "While Israel's president is visiting the UAE to build bridges and promote stability across the region, the Houthis continue to launch attacks that threaten civilians," Price wrote on Twitter.

From Tehran, Saeed Khatibzadeh, Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson, condemned the Israeli president's visit to the UAE.

"Invasion, expansionism and crisis-making are part of the nature of Israel's policy," he told reporters, describing the normalization of relations with Israel as a source of "rift-making in the Islamic and Arab worlds."

When asked about Monday's Houthi missile attack on the UAE, Khatibzadeh struck a softer note, saying the "cycle of violence should come to an end."

In the hours after the attack, Syrian state-run media said an Israeli strike hit near Damascus. The Israeli military did not immediately acknowledge it.

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in December made his first official visit to the UAE and held talks with Sheikh Mohammed. The visits came after the UAE and Bahrain recognized Israel and established diplomatic relations in 2020 — a move condemned by Palestinian leaders as a betrayal of their cause.

Last week, a similar attack saw both Emirati and U.S. forces fire interceptor missiles bring down a Houthi missile near Al-Dhafra Air Base in Abu Dhabi, which hosts some 2,000 American troops. The U.S. military did not respond to requests for comment on Monday's missile interception.

The week before, a Houthi drone-and-missile attack struck an Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. fuel depot, killing three people and wounding six as South Korean President Moon Jae-in visited the UAE.

The attacks have helped propel benchmark Brent crude oil prices above \$90 a barrel, further squeezing a global economy grappling with inflation in the coronavirus pandemic.

Although the UAE has largely withdrawn its own forces from Yemen, it still supports militias fighting the Houthis, who seized Yemen's capital, Sanaa, in September 2014. A Saudi-led coalition, which the UAE is a part of, entered the conflict in March 2015.

Iran has denied arming the Houthis, though U.N. reports, independent analysts and Western nations point to evidence showing Tehran's link to the weapons. Experts, however, debate how much direct control Tehran exercises over the Houthis.

Attacks after the first round of Houthi missiles in January saw the Saudi coalition strike a prison and kill some 90 people, as well as knock Yemen off the internet for days.

While Emirati troops have been killed over the course of the conflict, until this month the war had not

affected daily life in the UAE, a country with a vast foreign workforce.

## Omicron amps up concerns about long COVID and its causes

By LAURA UNGAR and LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writers

More than a year after a bout with COVID-19, Rebekah Hogan still suffers from severe brain fog, pain and fatigue that leave her unable to do her nursing job or handle household activities.

Long COVID has her questioning her worth as a wife and mother.

"Is this permanent? Is this the new norm?" said the 41-year-old Latham, New York, woman, whose three children and husband also have signs of the condition. "I want my life back."

More than a third of COVID-19 survivors by some estimates will develop such lingering problems. Now, with omicron sweeping across the globe, scientists are racing to pinpoint the cause of the bedeviling condition and find treatments before a potential explosion in long COVID cases.

Could it be an autoimmune disorder? That could help explain why long COVID-19 disproportionately affects women, who are more likely than men to develop autoimmune diseases. Could microclots be the cause of symptoms ranging from memory lapses to discolored toes? That could make sense, since abnormal blood clotting can occur in COVID-19.

As these theories and others are tested, there is fresh evidence that vaccination may reduce the chances of developing long COVID.

It's too soon to know whether people infected with the highly contagious omicron variant will develop the mysterious constellation of symptoms, usually diagnosed many weeks after the initial illness. But some experts think a wave of long COVID is likely and say doctors need to be prepared for it.

With \$1 billion from Congress, the National Institutes of Health is funding a vast array of research on the condition. And clinics devoted to studying and treating it are popping up around the world, affiliated with places such as Stanford University in California and University College London.

### WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

Momentum is building around a few key theories.

One is that the infection or remnants of the virus persist past the initial illness, triggering inflammation that leads to long COVID.

Another is that latent viruses in the body, such as the Epstein-Barr virus that causes mononucleosis, are reactivated. A recent study in the journal *Cell* pointed to Epstein-Barr in the blood as one of four possible risk factors, which also include pre-existing Type 2 diabetes and the levels of coronavirus RNA and certain antibodies in the blood. Those findings must be confirmed with more research.

A third theory is that autoimmune responses develop after acute COVID-19.

In a normal immune response, viral infections activate antibodies that fight invading virus proteins. But sometimes in the aftermath, antibodies remain revved up and mistakenly attack normal cells. That phenomenon is thought to play a role in autoimmune diseases such as lupus and multiple sclerosis.

Justyna Fert-Bober and Dr. Susan Cheng were among researchers at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles who found that some people who have had COVID-19, including cases without symptoms, have a variety of these elevated "autoantibodies" up to six months after recovering. Some are the same ones found in people with autoimmune diseases.

Another possibility is that tiny clots play a role in long COVID. Many COVID-19 patients develop elevated levels of inflammatory molecules that promote abnormal clotting. That can lead to blood clots throughout the body that can cause strokes, heart attacks and dangerous blockages in the legs and arms.

In her lab at Stellenbosch University in South Africa, scientist Resia Pretorius has found microclots in blood samples from patients with COVID-19 and in those who later developed long COVID. She also found elevated levels of proteins in blood plasma that prevented the normal breakdown of these clots.

She believes that these clotting abnormalities persist in many patients after an initial coronavirus infection and that they reduce oxygen distribution to cells and tissue throughout the body, leading to most if not all symptoms that have been linked to long COVID.

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## IT CAN HIT NEARLY ANYONE

While there's no firm list of symptoms that define the condition, the most common include fatigue, problems with memory and thinking, loss of taste and smell, shortness of breath, insomnia, anxiety and depression.

Some of these symptoms may first appear during an initial infection but linger or recur a month or more later. Or new ones may develop, lasting for weeks, months or over a year.

Because so many of the symptoms occur with other illnesses, some scientists question whether the coronavirus is always the trigger. Researchers hope their work will provide definitive answers.

Long COVID affects adults of all ages as well as children. Research shows it is more prevalent among those who were hospitalized, but also strikes a significant portion who weren't.

Retired flight attendant Jacki Graham's bout with COVID-19 at the beginning of the pandemic wasn't bad enough to put her in the hospital. But months later, she experienced breathlessness and a racing heart. She couldn't taste or smell. Her blood pressure shot up.

In the fall of 2020, she became so fatigued that her morning yoga would send her back to bed.

"I'm an early riser, so I'd get up and push myself, but then I was done for the day," said Graham, 64, of Studio City, California. "Six months ago, I would have told you COVID has ruined my life."

Hogan, the New York nurse, also wasn't hospitalized with COVID-19 but has been debilitated since her diagnosis. Her husband, a disabled veteran, and children ages 9, 13 and 15 fell ill soon after and were sick with fever, stomach pains and weakness for about a month. Then all seemed to get a little better until new symptoms appeared.

Hogan's doctors think autoimmune abnormalities and a pre-existing connective tissue disorder that causes joint pain may have made her prone to developing the condition.

## POTENTIAL ANSWERS

There are no treatments specifically approved for long COVID, though some patients get relief from painkillers, drugs used for other conditions, and physical therapy. But more help may be on the horizon.

Immunobiologist Akiko Iwasaki is studying the tantalizing possibility that COVID-19 vaccination might reduce long COVID symptoms. Her team at Yale University is collaborating with a patient group called Survivor Corps on a study that involves vaccinating previously unvaccinated long COVID patients as a possible treatment.

Iwasaki, who is also an investigator with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which supports The Associated Press' Health and Science Department, said she is doing this study because patient groups have reported improvement in some people's long COVID symptoms after they got their shots.

Study participant Nancy Rose, 67, of Port Jefferson, New York, said many of her symptoms waned after she got vaccinated, though she still has bouts of fatigue and memory loss.

Two recently released studies, one from the U.S. and one from Israel, offer preliminary evidence that being vaccinated before getting COVID-19 could help prevent the lingering illness or at least reduce its severity. Both were done before omicron emerged.

Neither has been published in a peer-reviewed journal, but outside experts say the results are encouraging.

In the Israeli study, about two-thirds of participants received one or two Pfizer shots; the others were unvaccinated. Those who had received two shots were at least half as likely to report fatigue, headache, muscle weakness or pain and other common long COVID symptoms as the unvaccinated group.

## UNCERTAIN FUTURE

With few clear answers yet, the future is murky for patients.

Many, like Graham, see improvement over time. She sought help through a long COVID program at Cedars-Sinai, enrolled in a study there in April 2021, and was vaccinated and boosted.

Today, she said, her blood pressure is normal, and her sense of smell and energy level are getting closer to pre-COVID levels. Still, she wound up retiring early because of her ordeal.

Hogan still struggles with symptoms that include agonizing nerve pain and "spaghetti legs," or limbs that suddenly become limp and unable to bear weight, a condition that also affects her 13-year-old son.



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Some scientists worry that long COVID in certain patients might become a form of chronic fatigue syndrome, a poorly understood, long-lasting condition that has no cure or approved treatment.

One thing's for sure, some experts say: Long COVID will have a huge effect on individuals, health care systems and economies around the world, costing many billions of dollars.

Even with insurance, patients can be out thousands of dollars at a time when they're too sick to work. Graham, for example, said she paid about \$6,000 out of pocket for things like scans, labs, doctor visits and chiropractic care.

Pretorius, the scientist in South Africa, said there is real worry things could get worse.

"So many people are losing their livelihoods, their homes. They can't work anymore," she said. "Long COVID will probably have a more severe impact on our economy than acute COVID."

## Olympians worry as 'Winter' disappears from Winter Games

By HOWARD FENDRICH and PAT GRAHAM AP Sports Writers

BEAVER CREEK, Colo. (AP) — Ski racers settling into the start gate for Alpine World Cup events in the Rocky Mountains in early December squinted through sunshine that carried the temperature toward 50 degrees and glanced down at a course covered with pristine — and manufactured — snow.

If they looked up and across the way, beyond the finish line, they saw adjacent hills that were brown and barren as can be, with nary a trace of powder or any indication that this was a setting for athletes who would be heading to the Beijing Olympics that begin Feb. 4.

It is a troubling reality and — given their own reliance on the production of snow, continent-hopping flights powered by diesel fuel and other environment-unfriendly offshoots of their careers — hard-to-reconcile push-and-pull for many of those who will be competing in Alpine skiing or freestyle skiing or snowboarding or Nordic combined events or other outdoor sports that helped put the disappearing "Winter" in Winter Games.

"Climate change is here. It's happening. We're living in it right now. It's not something that's going to be in the distant future. It's here. And you see it with the fires in California, floods in Europe, higher snow levels, shorter winters, longer summers, droughts. It runs the whole gamut. Everywhere in the world is having some effect from it. And there's not really any turning back," said Travis Ganong, a 33-year-old from California going to China with the U.S. ski team.

"Selfishly, I hope winters are here in the future," he said. "But it's not looking good."

Global warming is altering, and endangering, his and other sports, perhaps permanently, and not just at the elite level. It affects folks who just want to ski or snowboard for fun and those who make a living from places offering such activities.

And, well, everyone on the planet, of course, because this affects far more than sports, of course.

Just one example: In December, Colorado set a record that stood since the 1880s for most consecutive days without snow. After warm temperatures and just an inch of snowfall by Dec. 30, wind-fueled wildfires destroyed hundreds of homes in the state.

The last eight years rank as the eight hottest on record for Earth, according to two U.S. science agencies, NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"The glaciers are receding. The winter is starting later and ending sooner," said John Kucera, the 2009 world champion in downhill who now is a coach for Canada's Alpine team. "For a sport like ours, we might pay for it sooner than some others. We are dependent on the climate and the weather and that dictates what we're able to do."

The fallout is widespread.

It's harder to find glaciers suitable for training, so athletes need to search for new locales — or even head indoors. It's harder to hold World Cup events, because too much wind or too much snow or too little snow leads to postponements or cancellations.

It's harder to find real snow anywhere, so competition increasingly comes on machine-made snow, which has its own deleterious effects on the environment. While the high speeds, steep inclines and

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sharp angles make danger a constant presence in Alpine skiing, no matter what sort of stuff is underfoot, injury-causing crashes are increasingly common in Nordic skiing and biathlon because the snow created by people produces harder, slicker tracks.

"We definitely have noticed a lack of snow everywhere. Places that, in December, November, used to be 'winter wonderlands,' we're seeing them with less and less snow. And some years, they're not getting any snow," said Taylor Fletcher, who grew up in Colorado, is based in Utah, and made his fourth Olympic team in Nordic combined.

Plenty of Winter Olympians share similar observations.

"I'm no meteorologist," Italy's Marta Bassino, last season's World Cup giant slalom discipline winner, said with a chuckle, "but I see it with my eyes."

Alexis Pinturault, a three-time Olympic medalist for France, recalls hitting the slopes at Tignes in his country's Alps 20 years ago, but notes "it's nearly impossible to ski there anymore." U.S. aerials skier Winter Vinecki remembers an event in Belarus where, instead of a season-appropriate setting, she competed amid water puddles. Explains Taylor Gold, an American snowboarder who is part of Protect Our Winters, an athlete-driven environmental group: "The absolute ideal scenario would be to have a halfpipe made entirely of natural snow, but that's just never possible anymore."

A study recently published in "Current Issues in Tourism" projected that without a dramatic reduction of global emissions of greenhouse gases, only one of the previous 21 Winter Olympics sites would be able to reliably provide fair and safe conditions by the end of this century.

Researchers from Austria, Canada and the U.S. determined that even with emissions on the lower end of the scale, just three of 12 European cities that have hosted Winter Games would be a reliable site by the 2050s.

"Part of what we do papers like this for is to get the message out that we have a large influence ... and so, if we act, (there is) hope of avoiding those worst-case scenarios," said Daniel Scott, a professor at the University of Waterloo who co-authored the study, "Climate change and the future of the Olympic Winter Games: athlete and coach perspectives."

"People are going to have to hold their elected officials accountable," Scott said, "because I pledge to lose weight every New Year's Eve — and that doesn't always pan out."

The International Olympic Committee says it will contractually obligate future hosts to be climate positive. The Beijing Games are supposed to be climate neutral; all venues are expected to be powered by renewable energy, and four ice rinks will use natural CO2 technology for cooling, replacing the hydrofluorocarbons that do more damage to the ozone.

Wyoming rancher Tom Johnston is overseeing the shaping of manufactured snow into Alpine courses in Beijing's mountains, which might be chilly but are missing real flakes. He has his own concerns about both of his pursuits: prepping ski slopes and, back home, producing alfalfa.

He deals with warmer-and-later-than-they-used-to-be winters in Colorado and Vermont that make staging World Cup races a challenge — and with drought conditions that affect his farm.

"There's going to be problems," said Johnston, who wonders whether the dates of future Games might need to shift. "But I think sports is the last worry about climate change, in my opinion, compared to food."

There are efforts being made. Some on an individual level. Some on a grander scale.

The National Ski Areas Association — a trade group that represents more than 300 Alpine resorts in the U.S. — started a "Climate Challenge" a decade ago to push its 300-plus members to monitor and reduce their carbon footprint. In the 2020-21 season, 31 ski areas participated.

Airline travel required by the World Cup calendar weighs on two-time Olympic champion Mikaela Shiffrin, especially when she thinks about stretches such as the one that carried female racers from Finland to Vermont to Canada to Switzerland across three weeks in November and December.

"I'm worried about my sport's future but, really way beyond that, just worried about our all our futures and how much time we have before it all truly catches up with us," said Shiffrin, who is from Colorado. "Sometimes I seriously consider just giving up races for the reason that it's one less plane ride to take."

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That would be a small contribution to a huge issue.”

Shiffrin and American snowboarder Maddie Mastro, among others, say they have cut down on eating meat, because that industry harms the planet. Vinecki grows her own fruits, vegetables and herbs in an aeroponic garden at home. Ganong rides a bicycle instead of driving a car, when possible, as do his American teammate Ryan Cochran-Siegle and Vincent Kriechmayr, an Austrian who won two golds at the 2021 Alpine world championships. Keely Cashman, a first-time U.S. Olympian in Alpine skiing, limits how much new racing equipment she gets.

Some figure it's too late.

“The reality is that ship has sailed, unfortunately, in my opinion. We haven't made the requisite changes. We've kind of missed the window,” said Bode Miller, who won a U.S.-record six Olympic Alpine medals from 2002-14. “So we're faced with what is, and that's a changing climate. And over my lifetime, and certainly my kids', we're going to see some really dramatic stuff go down.”

Miller is an investor in, and public face of, Alpine-X, a group working to build indoor sites for snow sports around the U.S.

Some ski racers use indoor spots in Europe for training in technical events. Could actual World Cup events be next? Don't forget: Figure skating and ice hockey used to be contested outdoors at the Olympics, so maybe it's not entirely far-fetched to envision other sports moving inside.

Another alternative: Finding new race sites or going to higher spots in the mountains, where temperatures are colder and real snow could be likelier.

“Nothing wrong with skiing indoors in New Jersey, but that's not exactly the same as staying at the top of the mountain at Deer Valley (in Utah) or staying at the top of the mountain in Austria,” said Ted Ligety, an American who won Olympic Alpine golds in 2006 and 2014. “There's no replacing the outdoor beauty, the fresh air.”

## Olympic athletes have 1 more thing to stress about: weather

By HOWARD FENDRICH and PAT GRAHAM AP Sports Writers

Mikaela Shiffrin describes herself as “super controlling over everything that's happening in my life,” so the two-time Olympic gold medalist is not all that fond of one particular can't-do-a-thing-about-it aspect of her chosen sport, Alpine skiing.

“The weather,” she said, “can literally change everything.”

The 26-year-old from Colorado is scheduled to open her Beijing Olympics on Feb. 7 as the defending champion in the giant slalom. A key word there is “scheduled,” because, as Shiffrin experienced at the 2018 Pyeongchang Games, nothing is certain when it comes to the vagaries of various elements such as temperature, wind, sunlight or precipitation.

In outdoor events, all of those factors can, and quite often do, alter the competition and the competitors themselves.

“On a more macro level, it takes a lot of mental effort to be ready to go out and compete in an Olympic event and when ... it doesn't happen ... it's, for sure, stressful and takes energy away from that level. It's unlike any other sport, in that sense, right?”

“There's just not that many sports that are that affected, and that exposed, by weather, both to affect the outcome of a race and to affect the outcome of an event,” said Mike Day, Shiffrin's main coach with the U.S. ski team. “It will have a big impact and has had a big impact in the past.”

Olympians say the weather might change their preparation and mindset before a contest. Once the contest begins, it might harm — or, it's also true, help — their result. All of which turns this into just another source of stress at a one-day-every-four-years spectacle already filled with them.

“That's like, probably, 90% of what we're thinking about,” said Keely Cashman, a 22-year-old Alpine skier from California heading to her first Olympics.

Snowfall is not in the forecast for the Yanqing mountain area during these Olympics. Strong wind is expected.

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Something else to contend with: the way light, and therefore visibility, switches as the sun moves across the sky over the course of a day, creating shadows that appear and recede. In an event like the downhill, where speeds can top 80 mph (130 kph), it's vital to be able to pick up on nuances along the course.

"You need to see everything on the slope," said Vincent Kriechmayr, a 30-year-old from Austria who won two golds at the 2021 Alpine world championships. "When we have bad light, you have to react: 'What's coming (toward) my skis?' ... When we see the slope, we can push."

As it is, the quality of the snow tends to deteriorate as more racers head down a hill.

It generally is considered better to go earlier to avoid ruts and bumps that develop. But if a headwind gives way to a tailwind, say, or if a cloudy day turns clear and the crystals of the snow shift, then advantages can, too.

"It's rare to have days where it's consistent. You do have them, but they're few and far between," said U.S. ski team member Bryce Bennett, who won a World Cup downhill at Val Gardena, Italy, in December. "The variables make it interesting. When you're on the good side of variables, you're psyched. When you're on the bad side, you're (angry)."

In action sports — think X Games — weather can almost singularly dictate the outcome.

A slate sky can dull the contrast between the background and the halfpipe for vaulting snowboarders, making it tough for riders to pick out landing spots. Wind can slow down athletes as they try to gain speed to execute tricks with 1440 degrees — or more — of spin. Shifting winds are most dangerous on the slopestyle course, where jumps are as high as 80 feet, because riders can't properly calibrate the speed needed to execute tricks.

"I feel like you'd be crazy if you weren't worried about that kind of thing," said freestyle halfpipe skier Carly Margulies, a 24-year-old from California. "But at the end of the day, you kind of just have to push that out (of mind)."

That's a common sentiment.

"I'm not God, so I can't do anything about it. You have to (accept) the situation and just focus on yourself, focus on the skiing that you can do, focus on the technique and on the energy," said Alexis Pinturault, the reigning Alpine World Cup overall champion and a three-time Olympic medalist for France. "Of course it makes a difference — and we know it."

What sort of difference can the weather make on the clock in Alpine skiing?

As much as a second, Pinturault estimates.

That's significant. The margin between gold and silver was no more than 13 hundredths of a second in half of the 10 women's or men's races at the 2018 Games.

Four years ago, Shiffrin wanted to enter five individual events in South Korea.

Fierce winds led to postponements, prompting her to drop two races.

"You only have so many weather days built into the schedule," said Shiffrin, who once again plans to participate in slalom, giant slalom, downhill, super-G and Alpine combined. "At the end of the day, you can make every move right. You can be rested and ready to go strong. And it still can be totally messed up for, essentially, reasons that are completely out of your control. I don't really love that idea."

## From Kabul, pregnant reporter fights NZ govt to come home

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — She reported on the difficult conditions mothers and babies face just to survive in desperate Afghanistan. Now, a pregnant New Zealand reporter has chosen Kabul as a temporary base for her uphill fight to return home because of her country's strict COVID-19 entry rules.

Charlotte Bellis, 35, is expecting her first child with her partner, freelance photographer Jim Huylebroek, a Belgium native who has lived in Afghanistan for two years. Bellis, who is 25 weeks pregnant with a daughter, told The Associated Press on Sunday that each day is a battle.

She said she has been vaccinated three times and is ready to isolate herself upon her return to New Zealand. "This is ridiculous. It is my legal right to go to New Zealand, where I have health care, where I



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have family. All my support is there," she said.

Bellis first wrote about her difficulties in a column published in The New Zealand Herald on Saturday. She had tried without success to enter New Zealand via a lottery-style system and then applied for an emergency return, but was rejected.

Thousands of New Zealand citizens wanting to return home have faced delays due to a bottleneck of people in the country's border quarantine system.

On Monday, New Zealand's COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins said officials had suggested Bellis amend her application or try again under different criteria.

"I want to be clear, there is a place in Managed Isolation and Quarantine for people with special circumstances like Ms Bellis. No one's saying there is not," Hipkins said. He said while officials had needed to make some difficult choices, the quarantine system had worked well overall by saving lives and preventing the health system from getting swamped.

However, Bellis insists the decisions have been arbitrary. She said she sent dozens of documents to the New Zealand authorities, including ultrasounds and physicians' letters specifying her due date is around May 19. Yet she said she was rejected because she was told her pregnancy didn't meet the criteria of "threshold of critical time threat."

"If I don't meet the threshold as a pregnant woman, then who does?" she asked.

Bellis had worked as an Afghanistan correspondent for Al Jazeera, the Qatar-based news network. In November, she resigned, because it is illegal to be pregnant and unmarried in Qatar. Al Jazeera did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Bellis then flew to Belgium, trying to get residency there, but said the length of the process would have left her in the country with an expired visa. She said she could have hopped from country to country on tourist visas while she waited to have her baby. She said this would have meant spending money on hotels without support or health care, while she fought to return to New Zealand.

In the end, she and her partner returned to Afghanistan because they had a visa, felt welcome and from there could wage her battle to return to her home. They have a house in Afghanistan and after "evaluating all of our options," returned to Kabul, she said.

Bellis said she has set herself a deadline for leaving Afghanistan once she is 30 weeks pregnant, to protect the health of herself and her baby. "I am giving myself to the end of February," she said. At that time, she will still have more than a month left on her Belgium visa so that she can re-enter the country, if she fails to get back to New Zealand by that time.

She said she tries to stay calm as she wages a paper war with New Zealand's quarantine system, but that she worries about how the stress she has been under will impact her baby.

"I am very concerned about a premature birth and ... also the implication of stress," she said.

Bellis has found an Afghan gynecologist, who promised she could call her if she wakes up in the night with a problem. Bellis toured the doctor's clinic which has basic facilities, including one incubator. The doctor told her the incubator is often occupied.

Bellis has found a lawyer who is handling her case pro bono and has submitted over 60 documents to the New Zealand government, answered countless questions, only to be rejected twice for entry to her home country.

On Sunday, she received another email from the New Zealand government, this one telling her to apply as a person in danger and that this will get her home, she said.

Bellis said that prior to returning to Afghanistan, she sought permission from the Taliban. She said she had feared arriving "with a little bump and not married" could be problematic.

Instead, the Taliban response was immediate and positive.

"I appreciate this isn't official Taliban policy, but they were very generous and kind. They said 'you are safe here, congratulations, we welcome you,'" said Bellis.

The Taliban have come under international criticism for repressive rules they imposed on women since sweeping to power in mid-August, including denying girls education beyond sixth grade. However, they

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have said that all girls and women will be allowed to attend school after the Afghan New Year at the end of March. While women have returned to work in the health and education ministries, thousands of female civil servants have not been allowed to return to their jobs.

As she ponders her next move, Bellis said she is contemplating whether to take the latest option offered by New Zealand — applying as a person in danger — because it would exonerate the government of responsibility for her earlier rejections.

“It gives them an opportunity to deny any responsibility and frankly that is not true,” she said. The government’s current COVID-19 policy has left “how many stranded around the world with no pathways to get home.”

Hipkins, the New Zealand minister, said officials had offered Bellis several options. Bellis said the only other option after her two rejections was Sunday’s offer — to apply as a person in danger.

“I encourage her to take these offers seriously,” said Hipkins.

## Rogan responds to Spotify protest, COVID advisories

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Following protests of Spotify kicked off by Neil Young over the spread of COVID-19 vaccine misinformation, the music streaming service said that it will add content advisories before podcasts discussing the virus.

In a post Sunday, Spotify chief executive Daniel Ek laid out more transparent platform rules given the backlash stirred by Young, who on Wednesday had his music removed from Spotify after the tech giant declined to get rid of episodes of “The Joe Rogan Experience,” which has been criticized for spreading virus misinformation.

“Personally, there are plenty of individuals and views on Spotify that I disagree with strongly,” wrote Ek. “It is important to me that we don’t take on the position of being content censor while also making sure that there are rules in place and consequences for those who violate them.”

Ek said that the advisories will link to Spotify’s fact-based COVID-19 hub in what he described as a “new effort to combat misinformation.” It will roll out in the coming days, Ek said. He did not specifically reference Rogan or Young.

Rogan responded to the fallout on Sunday, saying in a video on Instagram that he was only seeking to have conversations on his podcast with people who have “differing opinions.”

“I’m not trying to promote misinformation, I’m not trying to be controversial,” Rogan said. “I’ve never tried to do anything with this podcast other than to just talk to people.”

He also said that he schedules the guests on his podcast himself, and that he would try to book doctors with different opinions right after he talks to “the controversial ones.” Rogan noted that he earlier sat down on the show with Dr. Sanjay Gupta, the chief medical correspondent for CNN, Dr. Michael Osterholm, who is a member of President Joe Biden’s COVID-19 advisory board, and Dr. Peter Hotez from Baylor College of Medicine.

Rogan additionally welcomed the idea of adding advisories before podcasts related to COVID-19.

“Sure, have that on there. I’m very happy with that,” he said.

Britain’s Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, who have signed a multi-year deal to produce and host podcasts for Spotify under their production company Archewell Audio, on Sunday urged Spotify to tame virus misinformation.

“Last April, our co-founders began expressing concerns to our partners at Spotify about the all too real consequences of COVID-19 misinformation on its platform,” an Archewell spokesperson said in a statement. “We have continued to express our concerns to Spotify to ensure changes to its platform are made to help address this public health crisis. We look to Spotify to meet this moment and are committed to continuing our work together as it does.”

Earlier Sunday, Nils Lofgren, the Bruce Springsteen guitarist and a member of Crazy Horse, a frequent collaborator with Young, said he was joining Young’s Spotify revolt. Lofgren said he had already had the

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last 27 years of his music removed and requested labels with his earlier music to do likewise.

"We encourage all musicians, artists and music lovers everywhere to stand with us and cut ties with Spotify," wrote Lofgren in a statement.

On Friday, Joni Mitchell said she is seeking to remove all of her music from Spotify in solidarity with Young. Earlier, hundreds of scientists, professors and public health experts asked Spotify to remove a Dec. 31 episode from "The Joe Rogan Experience" in which he featured Dr. Robert Malone, an infectious-disease specialist who has been banned from Twitter for spreading COVID-19 misinformation.

## Russia, US, Ukraine to square off at UN Security Council

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. Security Council is scheduled to meet Monday for the first time on Russia's troop buildup and threatening actions against Ukraine at the request of the United States, and all key players are expected to square off in public over the possibility of a Russian invasion and its global impact.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said Russia's actions pose "a clear threat to international peace and security and the U.N. Charter." Council members "must squarely examine the facts and consider what is at stake for Ukraine, for Russia, for Europe, and for the core obligations and principles of the international order should Russia further invade Ukraine," she said Thursday in announcing the meeting.

Russia's deputy U.N. ambassador Dmitry Polyansky responded angrily, tweeting: "I can't recall another occasion when a SC (Security Council) member proposed to discuss its own baseless allegations and assumptions as a threat to intl (international) order from someone else. Hopefully fellow UNSC members will not support this clear PR stunt shameful for the reputation of UN Security Council."

Polyansky's reaction indicated that Russia may start the meeting asking for a procedural vote on whether it should go ahead. To block the meeting, Russia would need support from nine of the 15 members.

A senior official in the Biden administration said the United States is in regular contact with council members and is "confident" that there is "more than sufficient support" to hold the meeting.

"It goes right to the heart of the role of the Security Council itself," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly. "This preventive diplomacy is exactly what the council is supposed to be doing, and I think member states understand that."

Russia's massing of an estimated 100,000 troops near the border with Ukraine has brought increasingly strong warnings from the West that Moscow intends to invade. Russia is demanding that NATO promise never to allow Ukraine to join the alliance, and to stop the deployment of NATO weapons near Russian borders and roll back its forces from Eastern Europe. NATO and the U.S. call those demands impossible.

Assuming the meeting goes ahead, the council will first hear a briefing by a senior U.N. official followed by statements from its 15 members including Russia, the United States and European members France, Ireland, United Kingdom and Albania. Under council rules, Ukraine will also speak.

China's U.N. Ambassador Zhang Jun, whose country has close ties to Russia, indicated Beijing supports Moscow in opposing a council meeting.

"Both sides have shown willingness to continue their negotiations," he told several reporters on Friday. "Let them settle the differences through dialogue, through negotiations."

"Russia has said clearly they have no intention to have a war" and the Security Council should "help to deescalate the situation instead of adding fuel to the fire," Zhang said.

The head of Russia's Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev, on Sunday rejected Western warnings about an invasion.

"At this time, they're saying that Russia threatens Ukraine — that's completely ridiculous," he was quoted as saying by state news agency Tass. "We don't want war and we don't need it at all."

Thomas-Greenfield said of the U.S. and the other council members on ABC's "This Week" on Sunday: "We're going into the room prepared to listen to them, but we're not going to be distracted by their propaganda."

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"This is a period when we want to see calm," said Ireland's U.N. Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason, whose country is serving a two-year term on the council. "We want to see deescalation, diplomacy and dialogue. That's what we favor in relation to the current set of circumstances."

## Youngkin hustles to push swing state Virginia to the right

By WILL WEISSERT and SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin has used his first two weeks in office to push Virginia firmly to the right, attempting a dramatic political shift in a state once considered reliably Democratic that's being closely watched by others in the GOP.

In his opening days, the new governor issued executive orders methodically checking off his top campaign promises. The orders undermined classroom mask mandates, aimed to restrict how students are taught about racism, approved an investigation into a wealthy suburban Washington school district that's become a national symbol for battles over so-called parents rights, and attempted to scrap Virginia's participation in a carbon-limiting initiative meant to combat climate change.

Youngkin has also expanded the duties of a state diversity officer created by his Democratic predecessor to include being an "ambassador for unborn children" as Virginia dropped its opposition before the Supreme Court to a Mississippi law banning abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy.

"That has ruffled some feathers on the other side," said Republican state House Speaker Todd Gilbert, crediting Youngkin for sticking to his word. "I think they didn't believe him that he was going to try to see through those things."

It hasn't all gone smoothly. The governor's order weakening school mask mandates has been challenged in court. Many large schools districts have refused to comply with Youngkin's order, citing a Virginia law approved last year that says classroom policy should defer to federal guidance, which still calls for masking.

How Youngkin reacts will have profound implications for the governor himself — there's already intense buzz he could seek office higher office — and national Republicans who see him as a more palatable conservative alternative to former President Donald Trump. Democrats counter that Youngkin has taken a divisive approach in an attempt to appeal to the GOP's far right, the kind of thing that would delight Trump's base in a state that rejected the former president.

"This is not Texas," the House of Delegates Democratic leader, Eileen Filler-Corn, said on the chamber floor Friday. "Virginians will remember the first two weeks of the Youngkin administration and the overreach."

Even some in Youngkin's own party are wary.

The executive orders were "fulfilling campaign promises. They were certainly very fast-paced and ill-advised," said David Ramadan, a former Republican member of the Virginia House who endorsed Youngkin's opponent, Terry McAuliffe, and is now at George Mason University's Schar School of Policy and Government and a resident scholar at the University of Virginia's Center of Politics.

The political whiplash has already been acute. Youngkin's November win shook up a state that was seen as reliably blue in presidential races since it backed Barack Obama in 2008.

His efforts also follow Democrats controlling both chambers of the Virginia statehouse and governorship over the past two years. In that time, they abolished the death penalty, legalized marijuana and expanded LGBTQ and voting rights. Many statues celebrating the Confederacy — even in its old capital — were also removed as part of the state's reckoning with its history of slavery and racism.

Republicans hadn't won statewide office since 2009 before Youngkin's upset victory, which was only by 2 percentage points — about a fifth of Joe Biden's 2020 margin over Trump. Tom Davis, a former moderate Republican congressman who long represented northern Virginia's fast-growing, heavily Democratic Washington suburbs, said Youngkin's win could have been the result of voters' giving Democrats "a little bit of pushback" for how far left they tried to move the state.

"I think he's stayed within the mainstream," Davis said of Youngkin.

National Republicans are already holding up Youngkin as a model for conservative candidates elsewhere. They've highlighted his success at attracting Trump supporters without alienating moderates.



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"The fact that voters turned out, and that Glenn was able to create the coalition that he did, is going to be a success going into this year and of course builds momentum for everyone up and down the ballot across the country," said Republican Governors Association spokeswoman Joanna Rodriguez.

Youngkin could even offer an alternative to Trump as soon as the 2024 GOP presidential primary — despite a field likely to be crowded with more experienced gubernatorial colleagues, including Ron DeSantis of Florida. Youngkin might offer much of the former president's hard-line conservatism, the thinking goes, without the same hard personal edges.

"He came in on a positive note during a divisive time in politics and that's appealing to people," said Alice Stewart, a Virginia-based Republican strategist. She worked for Mike Huckabee when he was governor of Arkansas and speculation built that he could run for the 2008 presidential nomination — and he did, ultimately winning the Iowa caucuses.

"You'll have people from all sides — whether they want to just talk about it or profit off it — discussing him as a possible candidate," Stewart said of Youngkin.

Youngkin, who didn't agree to an interview, says he will serve all four years as governor, despite the building buzz. Still, he raised about \$2.2 million in around six weeks before even taking office, despite being barred by state law from seeking a consecutive term.

In other early steps, the governor has met with higher-education leaders, including the leaders of historically Black colleges and universities, to discuss his legislative push to expand school choice. And Youngkin faces an early test over whether he can secure legislative approval for a controversial Cabinet pick: Andrew Wheeler, who was Trump's EPA administrator.

Republicans retook the state House in November, but Democrats still hold Virginia's Senate. Youngkin, who often starts his days at the office before sunrise, quickly began contacting Democratic members of the legislature as governor-elect, vowing to be a unifier.

Democrats have been especially harsh in their criticism of Youngkin's first executive order, which attempts to root out elements of the academic framework known as critical race theory, or any "inherent divisive concept." On the House floor, Democratic Del. Don Scott questioned whether Youngkin was a man of faith — prompting the governor to take the unusual step of visiting the lawmaker's office for a closed-door meeting that lasted about a half hour.

Another Democrat who attended part of the meeting, Del. Lamont Bagby, said it was cordial and productive.

But in interviews with conservative media, Youngkin has sometimes taken a sharper tone. During a recent radio interview, he criticized teachers unions and "left-liberals." And Youngkin told "Fox News Sunday" that "Virginians spoke loudly, they want a new direction and this is what we delivered on Day 1."

Critics like Senate Democratic caucus chair Mamie Locke took issue with the governor's aggressive approach to executive orders and other early steps, such as the firing of the entire state parole board, which had faced criticism for accelerated, and sometimes chaotic, inmate releases at the start of the pandemic.

"That's not the way you start out saying, 'I'm going to hand you the right hand of fellowship,' as they say in the Baptist church," Locke said.

## Cyberattacks increasingly hobble pandemic-weary US schools

By CEDAR ATTANASIO Associated Press / Report for America

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — For teachers at a middle school in New Mexico's largest city, the first inkling of a widespread tech problem came during an early morning staff call.

On the video, there were shout-outs for a new custodian for his hard work, and the typical announcements from administrators and the union rep. But in the chat, there were hints of a looming crisis. Nobody could open attendance records, and everyone was locked out of class rosters and grades.

Albuquerque administrators later confirmed the outage that blocked access to the district's student database — which also includes emergency contacts and lists of which adults are authorized to pick up which children — was due to a ransomware attack.

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"I didn't realize how important it was until I couldn't use it," said Sarah Hager, a Cleveland Middle School art teacher.

Cyberattacks like the one that canceled classes for two days in Albuquerque's biggest school district have become a growing threat to U.S. schools, with several high-profile incidents reported since last year. And the coronavirus pandemic has compounded their effects: More money has been demanded, and more schools have had to shut down as they scramble to recover data or even manually wipe all laptops.

"Pretty much any way that you cut it, incidents have both been growing more frequent and more significant," said Doug Levin, director of the K12 Security Information Exchange, a Virginia-based nonprofit that helps schools defend against cybersecurity risk.

Precise data is hard to come by since most schools are not required to publicly report cyberattacks. But experts say public school systems — which often have limited budgets for cybersecurity expertise — have become an inviting target for ransomware gangs.

The pandemic also has forced schools to turn increasingly toward virtual learning, making them more dependent on technology and more vulnerable to cyber-extortion. School systems that have had instruction disrupted include those in Baltimore County and Miami-Dade County, along with districts in New Jersey, Wisconsin and elsewhere.

Levin's group has tracked well over 1,200 cyber security incidents since 2016 at public school districts across the country. They included 209 ransomware attacks, when hackers lock data up and charge to unlock it; 53 "denial of service" attacks, where attackers sabotage or slow a network by faking server requests; 156 "Zoombombing" incidents, where an unauthorized person intrudes on a video call; and more than 110 phishing attacks, where a deceptive message tricks a user to let a hacker into their network.

Recent attacks also come as schools grapple with multiple other challenges related to the pandemic. Teachers get sick, and there aren't substitutes to cover them. Where there are strict virus testing protocols, there aren't always tests or people to give them.

In New York City, an attack this month on third-party software vendor Illuminate Education didn't result in canceled classes, but teachers across the city couldn't access grades. Local media reported the outage added to stress for educators already juggling instruction with enforcing COVID-19 protocols and covering for colleagues who were sick or in quarantine.

Albuquerque Superintendent Scott Elder said getting all students and staff online during the pandemic created additional avenues for hackers to access the district's system. He cited that as a factor in the Jan. 12 ransomware attack that canceled classes for some 75,000 students.

The cancellations — which Elder called "cyber snow days" — gave technicians a five-day window to reset the databases over a holiday weekend.

Elder said there's no evidence student information was obtained by hackers. He declined to say whether the district paid a ransom but noted there would be a "public process" if it did.

Hager, the art teacher, said the cyberattack increased stress on campus in ways that parents didn't see. Fire drills were canceled because fire alarms didn't work. Intercoms stopped working.

Nurses couldn't find which kids were where as positive test results came in, Hager said. "So potentially there were students on campus that probably were sick." It also appears the hack permanently wiped out a few days worth of attendance records and grades.

Edupoint, the vendor for Albuquerque's student information database, called Synergy, declined to comment.

Many schools choose to keep attacks under wraps or release minimal information to prevent revealing additional weaknesses in their security systems.

"It's very difficult for the school districts to learn from each other, because they're really not supposed to talk to each other about it because you might share vulnerabilities," Elder said.

Last year, the FBI issued a warning about a group called PYSA, or "Protect Your System, Amigo," saying it was seeing an increase in attacks by the group on schools, colleges and seminaries. Other ransomware gangs include Conti, which last year demanded \$40 million from Broward County Public Schools, one of the nation's largest.

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Most are Russian-speaking groups that are based in Eastern Europe and enjoy safe harbor from tolerant governments. Some will post files on the dark web, including highly sensitive information, if they don't get paid.

While attacks on larger districts garner more headlines, ransomware gangs tended to target smaller school districts in 2021 than in 2020, according to Brett Callow, a threat analyst at the firm Emsisoft. He said that could indicate bigger districts are increasing their spending on cybersecurity while smaller districts, which have less money, remain more vulnerable.

A few days after Christmas, the 1,285-student district of Truth or Consequences, south of Albuquerque, also had its Synergy student information system shut down by a ransomware attack. Officials there compared it to having their house robbed.

"It's just that feeling of helplessness, of confusion as to why somebody would do something like this because at the end of the day, it's taking away from our kids. And to me that's just a disgusting way to try to, to get money," Superintendent Channell Segura said.

The school didn't have to cancel classes because the attack happened on break, but the network remains down, including keyless entry locks on school building doors. Teachers are still carrying around the physical keys they had to track down at the start of the year, Segura said.

In October, President Joe Biden signed the K-12 Cybersecurity Act, which calls for the federal cyber security agency to make recommendations about how to help school systems better protect themselves.

New Mexico lawmakers have been slow to expand internet usage in the state, let alone support schools on cyber security. Last week, state representatives introduced a bill that would allocate \$45 million to the state education department to build a cybersecurity program by 2027.

Ideas on how to prevent future hacks and recover from existing ones usually require more work from teachers.

In the days following the Albuquerque attack, parents argued on Facebook over why schools couldn't simply switch to pen and paper for things like attendance and grades.

Hager said she even heard the criticism from her mother, a retired school teacher.

"I said, 'Mom, you can only take attendance on paper if you have printed out your roster to begin with,'" Hager said.

Teachers could also keep duplicate paper copies of all records — but that would double the clerical work that already bogs them down.

In an era where administrators increasingly require teachers to record everything digitally, Hager says, "these systems should work."

## Trial to resume for cops accused of violating Floyd's rights

By AMY FORLITI, STEVE KARNOWSKI and TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Evidence about Minneapolis Police Department policies and training is expected to be the focus as testimony resumes for a second week in the federal trial of three former Minneapolis police officers charged with violating George Floyd's civil rights.

Federal prosecutors say former officers J. Alexander Kueng, Thomas Lane and Tou Thao didn't follow their training when they failed to act to save Floyd's life on May 25, 2020, as fellow officer Derek Chauvin knelt on the Black man's neck for 9 1/2 minutes while Floyd was handcuffed, facedown and gasping for air. Kueng knelt on Floyd's back, Lane held his legs and Thao kept bystanders back.

Inspector Katie Blackwell, the police department's former head of training, is expected to be back on the witness stand Monday.

Blackwell began her testimony last week, saying that officers are instructed that they have a duty to intervene if a fellow officer is using unreasonable force. She said officers are taught to use the least amount of force necessary and to stop once the person is no longer resisting. They also must render any necessary medical aid until medical personnel arrive "to make sure that we do everything we can to save a person's life."

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She said Kueng, Lane and Thao acted in a way that was "inconsistent" with department policies.

But Kueng's attorney, Thomas Plunkett, suggested the department failed the officers. Plunkett said when officers are trained in use-of-force scenarios, intervention is not taught.

"There's no intervention scenario, isn't that correct?" Plunkett said.

"Not one exactly for intervention," Blackwell said.

Blackwell also agreed that recruits are told that they should never argue with an instructor. Lane and Keung were rookies, while Chauvin was the most senior of the four officers at the scene that day.

Blackwell spent hours talking about policy and training. She said Thao took repeated refresher courses on use-of-force policies, including as recently as 2018 and 2019, and that Lane and Kueng had repeated lessons on the same subjects while attending the academy in 2019.

Officers had responded to a 911 call about Floyd, 46, trying to use a counterfeit \$20 bill at a corner store. Bystander cellphone video of the killing triggered worldwide protests and a reexamination of racism and policing.

Kueng, who is Black, Lane, who is white, and Thao, who is Hmong American, are charged with willfully depriving Floyd of his constitutional rights while acting under government authority. One count against all three officers alleges that they saw that Floyd needed medical care and failed to help. A count against Thao and Kueng contends that they didn't intervene to stop Chauvin. Both counts allege that the officers' actions resulted in Floyd's death.

Prosecutors have argued that the "willful" standard can be met by showing "blatantly wrongful conduct" that deprived Floyd of his rights.

Chauvin was convicted of murder and manslaughter in state court last year and pleaded guilty to a federal civil rights charge. Lane, Kueng and Thao also face a separate state trial in June on charges alleging that they aided and abetted murder and manslaughter.

## Rams rally to Super Bowl with stunning 20-17 win over Niners

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP) — After Matthew Stafford's wife leaped into his arms, he took a moment to soak it all in — this victory, this confetti-strewn field, this remarkable year of his life.

One year to the day after the quarterback agreed to join the star-studded Los Angeles Rams for a shot at a ring, their chances were dimming rapidly when they headed into the fourth quarter of the NFC championship game down by double digits to the mighty San Francisco 49ers.

But with three gritty scoring drives followed by a cathartic defensive stand, the Rams secured the right to stay home for the Super Bowl — and Stafford shone the brightest in this impressive constellation.

Travin Howard made a game-sealing interception with 1:09 to play, and the Rams roared back in the fourth quarter to secure a spot in the Super Bowl at their home stadium next month with a thrilling 20-17 victory Sunday night.

"You can't write the story any better," Stafford said. "I'm at a loss for words. I'm just having a blast playing ball with these guys and, shoot, we've got one more at the home stadium. Let's get it done."

Los Angeles will welcome the Cincinnati Bengals in two weeks for Super Bowl 56 in Rams owner Stan Kroenke's multibillion-dollar SoFi Stadium.

Stafford passed for 337 yards and hit Cooper Kupp with two touchdown passes for the Rams (15-5), who began the fourth quarter down 17-7. But after Kupp's second TD catch and a tying field goal on a drive extended by Jaquiski Tartt's brutal dropped interception, the Rams drove for Matt Gay's go-ahead, 30-yard field goal with 1:46 to play.

Los Angeles' defense then won it when Aaron Donald got hold of Jimmy Garoppolo and forced him to fling a pass toward JaMycal Hasty. The ball caromed high in the air off Hasty's hands and came straight down to Howard — and it was secured by the fourth-year pro who only recently got a prominent role on LA's defense.

"I've got total trust and confidence in that defense, man," said Stafford, the 13-year veteran who never



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won a playoff game before this month. "They've been unbelievable all year. Way to freakin' ice the game. I loved it."

Kupp finished with 11 catches for 142 yards in his latest spectacular game, while Odell Beckham Jr. punched his ticket to his first Super Bowl with yet another strong performance by Los Angeles' midseason acquisition, making nine catches for 113 yards.

"The story could not be written any better for us to play them in the NFC championship and then shut the door," Beckham said of the 49ers.

The Rams won their second conference title in the past four years under coach Sean McVay and moved one step from the franchise's second championship in the Super Bowl era.

Perhaps even more impressively, Los Angeles finally snapped a six-game losing streak against its San Francisco archrivals, who secured their playoff berth with an overtime comeback victory in Inglewood just three weeks ago.

"I think we knew what a great team this was, but our guys genuinely knew that what happened in the previous six games had nothing to do with what was going to happen when we kicked this one off," McVay said.

The Rams have only won twice when trailing by double digits in the second half during McVay's half-decade in charge — and both victories were in conference championship games.

Deebo Samuel and George Kittle caught touchdown passes from Garoppolo, who passed for 232 yards in a heartbreaker for the 49ers (12-8). While San Francisco's defense faltered late, coach Kyle Shanahan also punted twice from the Rams' half of the field and a third time from the 50, and that caution likely ended up costing the Niners.

"I thought we had them on the ropes, but we gave them a chance," Shanahan said. "When you give those guys too many chances, eventually they are going to make them."

San Francisco also will lament its late-game execution, but no mistake was bigger than the dropped interception by Tartt, who could have put the Rams in dire straits moments after McVay wasted his final timeout on a failed challenge early in the fourth quarter.

"I felt confident the entire game," Kittle said. "Felt we were calm. They just made real good play. The Rams have superstars all over the field."

Those stars started slowly: Stafford threw a tipped end-zone interception on the Rams' second drive, and the Niners answered a subsequent 97-yard LA scoring drive with yet another moment of brilliance from Samuel. The All-Pro caught an inside screen pass and rampaged through the Los Angeles defense, diving to the pylon for his first career postseason scoring catch.

The Rams appeared to be in real trouble when San Francisco's defense stopped them on downs near midfield in the third quarter and Garoppolo hit Kittle for his second TD pass moments later. But Los Angeles kept it close with a gritty drive ending in Kupp's 11-yard TD catch early in the fourth quarter.

## BOWLING AT HOME

After 54 consecutive Super Bowls without an NFL team playing in its home stadium, the Rams are the second team to do it in two seasons after Tampa Bay broke the streak last year.

## FUN WITH FLAGS

McVay unsuccessfully challenged two calls in the second half, failing to overturn a fourth-down spot for his offense or a potential Niners fumble. The decisions — and another wasted timeout before a first-down play — left Los Angeles with no timeouts and 10:01 to play.

## INJURIES

49ers: LB Demetrius Flannigan-Fowles hurt his knee in the first half and didn't return. ... LB Dre Greenlaw injured his calf in the first half. ... DE Arden Key was evaluated for a head injury at halftime.

Rams; TE Tyler Higbee injured his knee in the first half and didn't return. ... RB Cam Akers (shoulder) and WR Van Jefferson (knee) missed time in the first half, but returned.

## UP NEXT

49ers: The season is over. San Francisco made five NFC title games in the past 11 years, but won no rings.

Rams: A showdown with Joe Burrow and the impressive Bengals on Feb. 13 in the Super Bowl with two

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starting quarterbacks who were both No. 1 overall picks. The other came six years ago when Peyton Manning faced Cam Newton.

## On to Super Bowl: Bengals versus Rams, who will host game

By BARRY WILNER AP Pro Football Writer

Two years ago, the Cincinnati Bengals were the NFL's worst team. Now they're headed to the Super Bowl to play the Los Angeles Rams — in the Rams' home stadium.

Matching the biggest comeback in an AFC championship game, the Bengals rallied from an 18-point hole to stun Kansas City 27-24 in overtime Sunday for their first trip to the big game since the 1988 season. The team that won only two games in 2019, earning them the top overall draft pick that they used on quarterback Joe Burrow, pretty much dominated the Chiefs after the first quarter.

Rookie Evan McPherson made a 31-yard field goal to win it.

Then the Rams overcame a 10-point second-half deficit and took the NFC crown with a 20-17 victory over San Francisco when Matt Gay made a 30-yard field goal with 1:46 remaining. Los Angeles (15-5) had lost six consecutive times to the 49ers (12-8), but the visitors couldn't slow All-Pro receiver Cooper Kupp. Safety Jaquiski Tartt dropped a certain interception in the fourth quarter that helped LA tie the game.

Kupp finished with 11 catches for 142 yards and two touchdowns.

NFC

In a brutally physical game also highlighted by some clutch plays from Kupp and fellow All-Pro receiver Deebo Samuel of the 49ers, Matthew Stafford went 31 for 45 for 337 yards passing to get to his first Super Bowl. The Rams got there in the 2018 season, but lost to New England.

"We got one more at the home stadium, let's get it done," Stafford said.

Samuel wound up with four receptions for 72 yards and a 44-yard score. He rushed for an additional 26 yards.

The Rams have been to four previous Super Bowls, going 1-3; the only victory came in the 1999 season while they were based in St. Louis.

Los Angeles is an early 3 1/2-point favorite according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

"I'm blessed to be part of this team, with this group of guys, this coaching staff," added Stafford, who spent his first dozen NFL seasons in Detroit. "You can't write the story any better. I'm at a loss for words. I'm just having a blast playing ball with these guys ..."

AFC

The Bengals (13-7) reached their third Super Bowl; they lost to the 49ers in 1982 and 1989. Kansas City (14-6) hosted its fourth straight AFC championship contest, and is 2-2 in those. The Chiefs won the NFL title two years ago.

Cincinnati, winner of the AFC North, hadn't won a postseason game since 1991 before beating Las Vegas, then earned a road victory in the playoffs for the first time in franchise history when it eliminated top-seeded Tennessee. The AFC West champion Chiefs routed Pittsburgh and then won a classic in overtime against Buffalo to get to their fourth consecutive conference title game.

"We've been a second-half team all year," said Burrow, who missed six games in his rookie season with a knee injury. "You don't really want to be that way, but that's kind of how it's worked out. Our defense really stepped up in the second half and on offense we made plays when we had to. ... It was just a great overall team effort."

On Sunday, Burrow led them back and McPherson, making like a 10-year veteran, kicked four field goals in the game, including the winner after Vonn Bell's interception of Patrick Mahomes on the opening series of overtime got Cincinnati the ball.

"We're made for this moment. We never quit," Bell said. "Never quit fighting. We're a resilient group."

The other 18-point rally in the AFC championship game came in the 2006 season when Indianapolis beat New England 36-34. Burrow can take note that the quarterbacks in that contest were Peyton Manning and Tom Brady.

"We've overcome a lot of deficits this year," coach Zac Taylor said. "We always believe in all three of our

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phases. Everyone stepped up. We're not done yet."

## Bengals top Chiefs 27-24 in OT to clinch Super Bowl trip

By DENNIS WASZAK Jr. AP Pro Football Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Who Dey!? Not those same ol' Bungles. Not even close.

Joe Burrow and these young, hungry Cincinnati Bengals are Super Bowl-bound as unexpected and tenacious AFC champions.

Evan McPherson kicked a 31-yard field goal with 9:22 left in overtime after Burrow kept his cool while leading a furious second-half comeback. They got the Bengals to the NFL's big game for the first time in 33 years with a 27-24 victory over the Kansas City Chiefs for the AFC championship on Sunday.

"It's a special team that's capable of doing special things," said coach Zac Taylor, who was in elementary school the last time the Bengals went to the Super Bowl.

"We've said that from the get-go, whether people believed us or not," he added. "We believed. So we're not surprised."

And who could blame them?

The Bengals erased an 18-point deficit — tying an AFC title game record for largest comeback — to take a late 24-21 lead on McPherson's 52-yarder.

"I'd say nobody blinked an eye," the rookie kicker said of the Bengals falling behind big early. "I think we all thought we were going to come back and win the game."

But Harrison Butker's 44-yard kick as time expired in regulation sent it to overtime a week after his 49-yarder on the final play of regulation did the same against Buffalo.

And after the Bills' Josh Allen called tails and it came up heads for the overtime coin toss in that one — giving Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs the ball to seal a wild 42-26 victory — Cincinnati backup quarterback Brandon Allen called heads and the coin came up tails.

The Chiefs opened overtime again with the ball, but Vonn Bell intercepted Mahomes on the third play, and Burrow and the Bengals took over.

And now they're heading to the Super Bowl for the first time since 1989 after winning their first playoff overtime game.

"Usually when you lose the coin flip to those guys, you're going home," said Burrow, the Bengals' second-year quarterback. "Our defense really stepped up and made plays in the second half. And on offense we made plays when we had to. I thought the offensive line played really well all day. We started running the ball there at the end and that's exciting."

"Big win for us."

You might say that.

The Bengals (13-7) will play the Los Angeles Rams (15-5) in the Super Bowl at the Rams' home stadium on Feb. 13. Cincinnati lost to the 49ers in both of its previous trips to the Super Bowl.

Mahomes and the Chiefs (14-6) will be left to lament blowing a chance at a third straight Super Bowl appearance.

"When you're up 21-3 at any point in the game, you can't lose it," Mahomes said. "I put that on myself."

The Chiefs had a chance at a winning touchdown in the closing seconds of regulation, but sacks by Sam Hubbard on consecutive plays forced Kansas City to settle for the tying field goal.

"We're going to the Super Bowl," Hubbard said. "It sounds crazy to say that."

The Bengals have won six of their last seven games against the Chiefs, including two this season. But it didn't look good for Cincinnati early in this one.

The Chiefs got a touchdown on their first three possessions, with Mahomes finding Mecole Hardman for a 3-yard score that made it 21-3 — and had this one looking very much like a rout. Mahomes joined Tom Brady (2014), Joe Flacco (2012) and Aaron Rodgers (2010) as the only players with three games with three or more TD passes in a single postseason.

But Burrow kept the Bengals in it.

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He tossed a short pass to Samaje Perine, who avoided a tackle attempt by Charvarius Ward and raced into the end zone for a 41-yard touchdown with 1:05 left in the opening half.

The Chiefs appeared headed for their fourth straight touchdown drive to open the game, especially after Byron Pringle's 10-yard catch put Kansas City at the 15 with 13 seconds left — setting off chants from the fired-up Arrowhead Stadium crowd of "13 seconds!" who were still reveling in the Chiefs' stunning comeback last week against Buffalo.

A pass interference call on Eli Apple in the end zone put the ball on the 1, but the Chiefs couldn't get into the end zone on two tries, with Mahomes' pass to Tyreek Hill losing a yard and ending the half. It ended up costing them.

"I was hoping we could get the ball in the end zone," coach Andy Reid said. "I probably gave the wrong play, first of all. I could have given them something better than that. I'll take responsibility for that one."

McPherson's 31-yarder cut the Bengals' deficit to 21-13 with 2:58 left in the third quarter.

Cincinnati got the ball back at the Chiefs 27 moments later when B.J. Hill intercepted Mahomes' short pass intended for Demarcus Robinson. Two plays after Joe Mixon gained 2 yards on first-and-goal from the 5, Ja'Marr Chase went up over Rashad Fenton in the end zone to catch Burrow's toss for a touchdown. Burrow then found a wide-open Trent Taylor for the 2-point conversion to tie it at 21 with 14 seconds left in the third quarter.

The 18-point comeback by Cincinnati tied Indianapolis (vs. New England in 2006) for the largest in AFC championship history.

"I wouldn't call it surreal, I would say it's exciting," Burrow said. "I think if you would have told me before the season that we'd be going to the Super Bowl, I probably would have called you crazy. Then, you know, we play the whole season and nothing surprises me now."

## STATS

Burrow finished 23 of 38 for 250 yards with the two TDs and an interception. ... Mixon rushed for 88 yards on 21 carries, including 28 yards on the final 42-yard drive. ... Mahomes went 26 of 39 for 275 yards and TDs to Hardman, Travis Kelce and Tyreek Hill, and was intercepted twice.

## INJURIES

Bengals: TE C.J. Uzomah twisted his left knee in the first quarter and didn't return. He was on the sideline in the second half using crutches.

Chiefs: Backup TE Noah Gray left with an ankle injury and was ruled out in the second half.

## UP NEXT

Bengals: Head to Los Angeles to play the Rams in Cincinnati's third Super Bowl, and first since 1989.

Chiefs: Head home for the offseason.

## UN: Over 100 ex-Afghan forces, officials slain since August

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United Nations has received "credible allegations" that more than 100 former members of the Afghan government, its security forces and those who worked with international troops have been killed since the Taliban took over the country Aug. 15, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says.

In a report obtained Sunday by The Associated Press, Guterres said that "more than two-thirds" of the victims were alleged to result from extrajudicial killings by the Taliban or its affiliates, despite the Taliban's announcement of "general amnesties" for those affiliated with the former government and U.S.-led coalition forces.

The U.N. political mission in Afghanistan also received "credible allegations of extrajudicial killings of at least 50 individuals suspected of affiliation with ISIL-KP," the Islamic State extremist group operating in Afghanistan, Guterres said in the report to U.N. Security Council.

He added that despite Taliban assurances, the U.N. political mission has also received credible allegations "of enforced disappearances and other violations impacting the right to life and physical integrity" of former government and coalition members.



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Guterres said human rights defenders and media workers also continue “to come under attack, intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrest, ill-treatment and killings.”

Eight civil society activists were killed, including three by the Taliban and three by Islamic State extremists, and 10 were subjected to temporary arrests, beatings and threats by the Taliban, he said. Two journalists were killed — one by IS — and two were injured by unknown armed men.

The secretary-general said the U.N. missions documented 44 cases of temporary arrests, beatings and threats of intimidation, 42 of them by the Taliban.

The Taliban overran most of Afghanistan as U.S. and NATO forces were in the final stages of their chaotic withdrawal from the country after 20 years. They entered Kabul on Aug. 15 without any resistance from the Afghan army or the country’s president, Ashraf Ghani, who fled.

The Taliban initially promised a general amnesty for those linked to the former government and international forces, and tolerance and inclusiveness toward women and ethnic minorities. However, the Taliban have renewed restrictions on women and appointed an all-male government, which have met with dismay by the international community.

Afghanistan’s aid-dependent economy was already stumbling when the Taliban seized power, and the international community froze Afghanistan’s assets abroad and halted economic support, recalling the Taliban’s reputation for brutality during its 1996-2001 rule and refusal to educate girls and allow women to work.

Guterres said: “The situation in Afghanistan remains precarious and uncertain six months after the Taliban takeover as the multiple political, socio-economic and humanitarian shocks reverberate across the country.”

He said Afghanistan today faces multiple crises: a growing humanitarian emergency, a massive economic contraction, the crippling of its banking and financial systems, the worst drought in 27 years, and the Taliban’s failure to form an inclusive government and restore the rights of girls to education and women to work.

“An estimated 22.8 million people are projected to be in ‘crisis’ and ‘emergency’ levels of food insecurity until March 2022,” the U.N. chief said. “Almost 9 million of these will be at ‘emergency’ levels of food insecurity — the highest number in the world. Half of all children under five are facing acute malnutrition.”

On a positive note, Guterres reported “a significant decline” in the overall number of conflict-related security incidents as well as civilian casualties since the Taliban takeover. The U.N. recorded 985 security-related incidents between Aug. 19 and Dec. 31, a 91% decrease compared to the same period in 2020, he said.

The eastern, central, southern and western regions accounted for 75% of all recorded incidents, he said, with Nangarhar, Kabul, Kunar and Kandahar ranking as the most conflict-affected provinces.

Despite the reduction in violence, Guterres said the Taliban face several challenges, including rising attacks against their members.

“Some are attributed to the National Resistance Front comprising some Afghan opposition figures, and those associated with the former government,” he said. “These groups have been primarily operating in Panjshir Province and Baghlan’s Andarab District but have not made significant territorial inroads” though “armed clashes are regularly documented, along with forced displacement and communication outages.”

Guterres said intra-Taliban tensions along ethnic lines and competition over jobs have also resulted in violence, pointing to armed clashes on Nov. 4 between Taliban forces in Bamyán city.

In the report, the secretary-general proposed priorities for the U.N. political mission in the current environment, urged international support to prevent widespread hunger and the country’s economic collapse, and urged the Taliban to guarantee women’s rights and human rights.

## Socialists win reelection in Portugal, eye major investments

By BARRY HATTON Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — Portugal’s center-left Socialist Party won a third straight general election Sunday, returning it to power as the country prepares to deploy billions of euros (dollars) of European Union aid for the economy after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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In a ballot that took place amid a surge of coronavirus cases blamed on the omicron variant, and with around 1 million infected voters allowed to leave home to cast their ballots, the Socialists elected at least 112 lawmakers in the 230-seat parliament.

With 98.7% of votes counted, the Socialists had 41%, compared with 28% for their main rival, the center-right Social Democratic Party, which took at least 68 parliamentary seats. Eighteen seats remained to be allocated.

It was unclear whether the Socialists would reach 116 lawmakers, allowing it to enact legislation alone, or whether it would fall short of that number and need to cut deals for the support of smaller parties. Late results could come Monday.

Socialist leader António Costa, expected to return to his post as prime minister, immediately offered an olive branch to his adversaries. He said he would encourage alliances with other parties in parliament to overcome the country's pandemic-inspired economic difficulties.

"The mission is to turn the page on the pandemic and bring affected sectors back to life," Costa said in a victory speech.

The stakes are high for the next administration. Portugal, a country of 10.3 million people and the poorest in Western Europe, is poised to begin deploying 45 billion euros (\$50 billion) of aid as a member of the EU to help spur the economy after the pandemic.

Two-thirds of that sum is intended for public projects, such as major infrastructure, giving the next government a financial bonanza. The other third is to be awarded to private companies.

A parliamentary majority would smooth the next government's path in allocating those funds in a country whose economy has struggled to gain traction since the turn of the century.

The past two Socialist administrations were minority governments. Since coming to power in 2015, the Socialist Party relied on the support of their smaller allies in parliament — the Left Bloc and the Portuguese Communist Party — to ensure the annual state budget had enough votes to pass.

But two months ago their differences, especially over public health spending and workers' rights, were insurmountable, leaving prime minister Costa short of votes in parliament to pass his party's plan and triggering a snap election.

Costa may need to repeat his political shrewdness to forge another cross-party alliance in a fragmented parliament.

Some 10.8 million voters — 1.5 million of them living abroad — were eligible to choose lawmakers in the Republican Assembly, Portugal's parliament, where political parties then decide who forms a government.

Chega! (Enough!), a populist and nationalist party founded less than three years ago, collected around 7% of the vote. That might give it a dozen lawmakers, up from only one in the last parliament.

The Left Bloc captured some 4% of the vote, with about the same going to the Portuguese Communist Party. Other smaller parties could get one or more parliamentary seats and offer Costa their support.

Portugal's economy needs a shot in the arm, which the EU funds may provide.

The country has been falling behind the rest of the 27-nation EU since 2000, when its real annual gross domestic product per capita was 16,230 euros (\$18,300) compared with an EU average of 22,460 (\$25,330). By 2020, Portugal had edged higher to 17,070 euros (\$19,250) while the bloc's average surged to 26,380 euros (\$29,750).

The Socialists promised to increase the minimum monthly wage, earned by more than 800,000 people, to 900 euros (\$1,020) by 2026. It is currently 705 euros (\$800). The Socialists also want to "start a national conversation" about working four days a week instead of five.

## **Brrr! It got so cold in Florida, iguanas fell from trees**

By CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — A cold snap in Florida is different than in other places. We put on heavy coats when it's 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10 degrees Celsius).

No blizzard conditions here in the Sunshine State, but we have our issues as well when the thermometer

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drops.

The National Weather Service said Sunday it's all going to warm up nicely after the weekend. The low temperatures near freezing are quite rare in Florida, but at first glance the citrus, strawberry and tomato winter crops suffered no major damage. Farmers spray water onto the crops to help protect them from the cold.

As for iguanas, well, that's another matter. They are an invasive species, well accustomed to the trees of South Florida. When it gets cold, below 40 degrees Fahrenheit (about 4 degrees Celsius), they go into a sort of suspended animation mode. And they fall to the ground.

But they usually wake up with the sun's warmth.

It got cold in Florida this weekend. The National Weather Service reported that West Palm Beach hit 37 degrees Fahrenheit (about 3 degrees Celsius), the coldest morning of the past 12 years. Up the East Coast in Vero Beach, the record low was tied at 30 degrees Fahrenheit (about minus 1 degree Celsius), set in 1978.

Still, it's not like a white-out. The Gasparilla pirate parade in Tampa, which was not held last year because of the coronavirus pandemic, went off without a hitch Saturday in sunny but chilly weather. Thousands of people did pirate-y things, snagged beads from the parade route, and generally ate, drank and were merry.

Yet the unseasonably cold weather in Florida prompted one church on the Gulf of Mexico side of the state to rethink how it would welcome parishioners and visitors.

St. Michael the Archangel, on Siesta Key, canceled its two scheduled Masses on Sunday because it was too cold. The church is going through a renovation and has been holding Mass outdoors, as it did on Saturday afternoon in 49 degree Fahrenheit temperatures and with brisk winds making it feel even colder.

Masses have been held under a tent, but Saturday's wind dislodged one of the support posts and rendered the temporary structure unsafe. The Rev. Michael Cannon was offering the sacrament of communion Sunday -- drive-thru style -- but Mass would not be held, in anticipation of temperatures falling into the mid-20s shortly after sunrise in the Sarasota area.

"It would not be wise to have Masses with those kinds of temperatures," Cannon said.

The church is expected to be fully functional again with completed renovations by Easter.

And it'll be beach weather again in Florida soon. It always is.

## After the blizzard, the East Coast digs out under sunny sky

By MARK PRATT and MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The sun shone down on much of the East Coast on Sunday, a day after a vicious nor'easter brought blizzard conditions to many areas, and left more than 100,000 customers without power for a stretch that could last into Monday.

Winds that had gusted to more than 80 mph on Saturday died down on Sunday, and temperatures climbed into the upper teens and 20s as people emerged from their homes to dig out.

The storm dumped snow from Virginia to Maine, but Massachusetts bore the brunt of the fury, with the neighboring towns of Sharon and Stoughton getting more than 30 inches (76 centimeters) of snow.

More than 100,000 lost power at the height of the storm, mostly in Massachusetts. That had dropped to about 35,000 by Sunday afternoon, mostly on hard-hit Cape Cod. No other states reported widespread outages.

Utility Eversource said Sunday it had 1,700 crews working to restore electricity in Massachusetts, and customers will have their power back on "by the end of the day Monday, with most before then."

Authorities on Long Island reported three storm-related deaths. Suffolk County police said an elderly man fell into a swimming pool while shoveling snow in Southold and was pronounced dead after resuscitation attempts failed. Nassau County officials said two men aged 53 and 75 died in the town of Syosset while shoveling snow.

Massachusetts Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito said at a news conference that officials were not aware of any storm-related fatalities in the state.

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In and around New York City, snow totals ranged from a few inches north and west of the city to more than 2 feet (61 centimeters) in Islip on Long Island, according to the National Weather Service. Warren, Rhode Island got more than 2 feet (61 centimeters), and Norwich, Connecticut finished with 22 inches (56 centimeters). Some areas of Maine and New Hampshire also received more than a foot.

Winds gusted as high as 83 mph (134 kph) on Cape Cod. Coastal towns flooded, with wind and waves battering Weymouth, south of Boston, flooding streets with a slurry of frigid water, according to video posted on social media. Other videos showed a street underwater on Nantucket and waves crashing against the windows of a building in Plymouth.

A Rhode Island couple got married as planned Saturday during the blizzard, according to broadcast reports. Sally Faulkner and Adam Irujo had been planning a wedding for 14 months, so they went through with the nuptials on the steps of the Providence Public Library in front of a few family and friends.

Forecasters watched closely for new snowfall records, especially in Boston. The Boston area's modern snowfall record for a winter storm is 27.6 inches (70 centimeters), set in 2003.

The city tied its record for biggest single-day snowfall on Saturday, with 23.6 inches (60 centimeters), the National Weather Service said.

Like most major winter storms in New England, it drew comparisons to the infamous Blizzard of '78, which paralyzed the region for days.

"I was around for the Blizzard of '78, and this one was worse. The wind was tremendous," Joe Brescia, 72, said Sunday, tears streaming down his face from the bitter cold as he shoveled his sidewalk in Warwick, Rhode Island.

Bao Ha, 26, got a shock when he went outside Sunday morning.

"It's funny, it didn't look so bad when I looked out the window this morning," he said as he shoveled the sidewalk in front of his home in Waltham outside Boston, which according to the National Weather Service, got 16 inches (40 centimeters) of snow. "But it's light, so it's easy to shovel."

Climate change, particularly the warming ocean, probably influenced the strength of the storm, atmospheric researchers said.

Much warmer ocean waters "are certainly playing a role in the strengthening of the storm system and increased moisture available for the storm," said University of Oklahoma meteorology professor Jason Furtado. "But it isn't the only thing."

The storm had two saving graces: Dry snow less capable of snapping trees and tearing down power lines, and its timing on a weekend, when schools were closed and few people were commuting.

However, some school districts announced that classes were canceled Monday to allow for snow removal, including Attleboro and Quincy schools in Massachusetts. Warwick, Rhode Island, schools are going remote on Monday to accommodate snow removal.

The National Weather Service considers a storm a blizzard if it has snowfall or blowing snow, as well as winds of at least 35 mph (56 kph) that reduce visibility to a quarter-mile or less for at least three hours. In many areas, Saturday's storm met those criteria.

## Rain-fed landslides, flooding kill at least 19 in Brazil

By DÉBORA ÁLVARES Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — Landslides and flooding caused by heavy rains killed at least 19 people in Brazil's most populous state Sunday while high waters forced some 500,000 families from their homes over the weekend, authorities said.

Three people from the same family died when a landslide destroyed their house in the city of Embu das Artes, according to the municipal government, while four other people were rescued by firemen.

Four children died in Francisco Morato, Sao Paulo state Gov. João Doria said, and the state government said four other people died in Franco da Rocha. Deaths also were reported in Ribeirão Preto and Jaú.

Three of the deaths involved people who were swept away by flood waters, the state fire department said. Doria used a helicopter to survey damaged areas on Sunday and announced the equivalent of \$2.8 mil-



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lion in financial aid to affected cities.

Overflowing rivers forced 500,000 families to leave their homes, the state government said. Several roads and highways were blocked.

Because of disruptions caused by the rain, the city of Sao Paulo canceled scheduled vaccinations against the coronavirus.

Southeastern Brazil has been punished with heavy rains since the start of the year, with 19 deaths recorded in Minas Gerais state earlier this month.

## Spotify to add advisories to podcasts discussing COVID-19

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Following protests of Spotify kicked off by Neil Young over the spread of COVID-19 vaccine misinformation, the music streaming service said that it will add content advisories before podcasts discussing the virus.

In a post Sunday, Spotify chief executive Daniel Ek laid out more transparent platform rules given the backlash stirred by Young, who on Wednesday had his music removed from Spotify after the tech giant declined to get rid of episodes of "The Joe Rogan Experience," which has been criticized for spreading virus misinformation.

"Personally, there are plenty of individuals and views on Spotify that I disagree with strongly," wrote Ek. "It is important to me that we don't take on the position of being content censor while also making sure that there are rules in place and consequences for those who violate them."

Ek said that the advisories will link to Spotify's fact-based COVID-19 hub in what he described as a "new effort to combat misinformation." It will roll out in the coming days, Ek said. He did not specifically reference Rogan or Young.

Britain's Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, who have signed a multi-year deal to produce and host podcasts for Spotify under their production company Archewell Audio, on Sunday urged Spotify to tame virus misinformation.

"Last April, our co-founders began expressing concerns to our partners at Spotify about the all too real consequences of COVID-19 misinformation on its platform," an Archewell spokesperson said in a statement. "We have continued to express our concerns to Spotify to ensure changes to its platform are made to help address this public health crisis. We look to Spotify to meet this moment and are committed to continuing our work together as it does."

Earlier Sunday, Nils Lofgren, the Bruce Springsteen guitarist and a member of Crazy Horse, a frequent collaborator with Young, said he was joining Young's Spotify revolt. Lofgren said he had already had the last 27 years of his music removed and requested labels with his earlier music to do likewise.

"We encourage all musicians, artists and music lovers everywhere to stand with us and cut ties with Spotify," wrote Lofgren in a statement.

On Friday, Joni Mitchell said she is seeking to remove all of her music from Spotify in solidarity with Young. Earlier, hundreds of scientists, professors and public health experts asked Spotify to remove a Dec. 31 episode from "The Joe Rogan Experience" in which he featured Dr. Robert Malone, an infectious-disease specialist who has been banned from Twitter for spreading COVID-19 misinformation.

## North Korea tests longest-range missile since 2017

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea on Sunday fired what appeared to be the most powerful missile it has tested since President Joe Biden took office, as it revives its old playbook in brinkmanship to wrest concessions from Washington and neighbors amid a prolonged stalemate in diplomacy.

The Japanese and South Korean militaries said the missile was launched on a high trajectory, apparently to avoid the territorial spaces of neighbors, and reached a maximum altitude of 2,000 kilometers (1,242 miles) and traveled 800 kilometers (497 miles) before landing in the sea.

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The flight details suggest the North tested its longest-range ballistic missile since 2017, when it twice flew intermediate-range ballistic missiles over Japan and, separately, three intercontinental ballistic missiles that demonstrated the potential to reach deep into the American homeland.

Sunday's test was North Korea's seventh round of launches this month. The unusually fast pace of tests indicates its intent to pressure the Biden administration over long-stalled nuclear negotiations as pandemic-related difficulties put further stress on an economy broken by decades of mismanagement and crippling U.S.-led sanctions.

While desperate for outside relief, Kim has showed no willingness to surrender the nuclear weapons and missiles he sees as his strongest guarantee of survival. Analysts say Kim's pressure campaign is aimed at forcing Washington to accept the North as a nuclear power and convert their nuclear disarmament-for-aid diplomacy into negotiations for mutual arms reduction.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in called an emergency National Security Council meeting where he described the test as a possible "mid-range ballistic missile launch" that brought North Korea to the brink of breaking its 2018 self-imposed moratorium on the testing of nuclear devices and longer-range missiles.

Japanese Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi also told reporters that the missile was the longest-range the North has tested since its Hwasong-15 ICBM in November 2017.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un chaired a ruling party meeting on Jan. 20, where senior party members made a veiled threat to lift the moratorium, citing what they perceived as U.S. hostility and threats.

The latest launch suggests Kim's moratorium is already broken, said Lee Choon Geun, a missile expert and honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute.

In his strongest comments toward the North in years, Moon said the situation around the Korean Peninsula is beginning to resemble 2017, when North Korea's provocative run in nuclear and long-range missile testing resulted in an exchange of war threats between Kim and then-President Donald Trump.

Moon said the North's latest moves violated U.N. Security Council resolutions and were a "challenge toward the international community's efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, stabilize peace and find a diplomatic solution" to the standoff.

The North "should stop its actions that create tensions and pressure and respond to the dialogue offers by the international community including South Korea and the United States," Moon said, according to his office.

Moon's efforts to reach out to North Korea derailed after the collapse of the second Kim-Trump meeting in 2019, when the Americans rejected North Korea's demand for major sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of its nuclear capabilities.

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said Sunday's missile flew for around 30 minutes and landed in waters outside Japan's exclusive economic zone. There were no immediate reports of damage to boats or aircraft.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the United States condemned North Korea's testing activity and called on Pyongyang to refrain from further destabilizing acts. It said the latest launch did not "pose an immediate threat to U.S. personnel, territory, or that of our allies."

Still, White House officials said they saw the latest missile test as part of an escalating series of provocations over the last several months that have become increasingly concerning.

The Biden administration plans to respond to the latest missile test in the coming days with an unspecified move meant to demonstrate to the North that it is committed to allies' security in the region, according to a senior administration official who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity.

The official said the administration viewed the latest missile test as the latest in a series of provocations to try to win sanctions relief from the U.S. The Biden administration again called on North Korea to return to talks but made clear it doesn't see the sort of leader-to-leader summits Trump held with Kim as constructive at this time.

Takehiro Funakoshi, director-general for Asian and Oceanian Affairs at Japan's Foreign Ministry, discussed the launch in separate phone calls with Sung Kim, Biden's special envoy for North Korea, and Noh Kyu-

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duk, South Korea's nuclear envoy. The officials shared an understanding that Sunday's missile was of enhanced destructive power and reaffirmed trilateral cooperation in the face of the North Korean threat, Japan's Foreign Ministry said.

Experts say the North could halt its testing spree after the start of the Beijing Winter Olympics next week out of respect for China, its major ally and economic lifeline. But there's also expectation that it could significantly up the ante in weapons demonstrations once the Olympics end in February to grab the attention of the Biden administration, which has been focusing more on confronting China and Russia over its conflict with Ukraine.

"North Korea is launching a frenzy of missiles before the start of the Beijing Olympics, mostly as military modernization efforts. Pyongyang also wants to boost national pride as it gears up to celebrate political anniversaries in the context of economic struggles," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

"It wants to remind Washington and Seoul that trying to topple it would be too costly. By threatening stability in Asia while global resources are stretched thin elsewhere, Pyongyang is demanding the world compensate it to act like a 'responsible nuclear power,'" Easley added.

The U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said Washington had imposed sanctions against North Korea in the past few weeks and was looking at other options.

"We are open to having diplomatic discussions. We have offered this over and over to the DPRK. And they have not accepted it," Thomas-Greenfield said on ABC's "This Week."

"Our goal is to end the threatening actions that the DPRK is taking against their neighbors," she said, referring to North Korea's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

North Korea has justified its testing activity as an exercise of its right to self-defense. It has threatened stronger action after the Biden administration imposed fresh sanctions following two tests of a purported hypersonic missile earlier this month.

## **Biden calls for release of US hostage in Afghanistan**

Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Sunday called for the release of U.S. Navy veteran Mark Frerichs, who was taken hostage in Afghanistan nearly two years ago.

Frerichs, a civil engineer and contractor from Lombard, Illinois, was kidnapped in January 2020 from the capital of Kabul. He is believed to be in the custody of the Taliban-linked Haqqani network.

"Threatening the safety of Americans or any innocent civilians is always unacceptable, and hostage-taking is an act of particular cruelty and cowardice," President Joe Biden said in a statement to mark the second anniversary of the kidnapping on Monday. "The Taliban must immediately release Mark before it can expect any consideration of its aspirations for legitimacy. This is not negotiable."

The statement came as Afghanistan faces a thorny humanitarian crisis following the U.S. withdrawal in August. The Taliban quickly seized control of much of the country and the foreign aid that been flowing into the country largely halted, putting at risk the lives of millions of Afghans who could starve or freeze to death.

Charlene Cakora, Frerichs' sister, issued a statement saying that her family is "grateful" for Biden's words. "But what we really want is to have Mark home," she said. "We know the president has options in front of him to make that happen and hope Mark's safe return will become a priority for him personally."

## **US cities mark 1st anniversary of Thai grandfather's killing**

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — On their final night together, father and daughter watched the news and traded goodnight kisses on the cheek. The next morning, Vicha Ratanapakdee was assaulted while on a walk in San Francisco and died, becoming yet another Asian victim of violence in America.

On Sunday, Monthanus Ratanapakdee marked the one-year anniversary of her father's death with a rally

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in the San Francisco neighborhood where the 84-year-old was killed. She was joined by San Francisco Mayor London Breed, local leaders and several hundred people who came out to say they would stay silent no more.

"It's been traumatizing to see this again and again happen to people who look like you," said Natassia Kwan, an attorney and rally organizer. "Today, we're going to say it's not okay for our elders and women to be pushed into subway tracks, to be killed, to be beaten. We deserve better."

Hundreds of people in five other U.S. cities joined in the national event, all of them seeking justice for Asian Americans who have been harassed, assaulted, and even killed in alarming numbers since the start of the pandemic.

Ratanapakdee, who was raised in Thailand, feels compelled to speak out so people don't forget the gentle, bespectacled man who doted on his young grandsons and encouraged her to pursue her education in America.

"I really want my father's death to not be in vain," said Ratanapakdee, 49, a food safety inspector with the San Francisco Unified School District. "I wouldn't want anyone to feel this pain."

Asians in America have long been subject to prejudice and discrimination, but the attacks escalated sharply after the coronavirus first appeared in late 2019 in Wuhan, China. More than 10,000 hate incidents against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders were reported to the Stop AAPI Hate coalition from March 2020 through September 2021. The incidents involved shunning, racist taunting and physical assaults.

In San Francisco and elsewhere, news reports showed video and photos of older Asian people robbed and knocked down, bruised and stabbed on public streets. Preliminary data shows that reported hate crimes against Asian Americans in San Francisco surged from 9 victims in 2020 to 60 in 2021. Crime stats don't tell the whole story, however, as many victims are reluctant to report and not all charges result in hate crime enhancements.

High-profile victims nationally include Michelle Go, 40, who died after a mentally unstable man shoved her in front of a subway in New York City earlier this month. In March, a gunman shot and killed eight people at three Georgia massage spas, including six women of Asian descent ranging in age from 44 to 74. There's disagreement among officials whether those attacks were racially motivated, but the deaths have rattled Asian Americans, who see bias.

Organizers say Sunday's events in San Francisco, New York, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Chicago and Los Angeles are to honor victims, stand in solidarity and demand more attention to anti-Asian discrimination. But organizers say they also want to spark conversation in a community where both longtime Americans and newer immigrants are often lumped together as forever foreigners.

"The tiny window of visibility we had with the 'Stop Asian Hate' movement, it really was just a glimpse of what Asian Americans feel every day, that kind of pervasive disrespect and casual contempt at our parents, our languages, our families," said Charles Jung, a Los Angeles employment attorney and executive director of the California Asian Pacific American Bar Association.

"What we really want is to encourage Asian Americans to tell their stories," he said, "and finally break the silence."

Vicha Ratanapakdee encouraged his oldest daughter to move to the U.S. more than two decades ago to pursue a master's degree in business at the University of California at Berkeley. He and his wife were living with Ratanapakdee, her husband and the couple's two sons, now 9 and 12.

He was on his usual morning walk when authorities say Antoine Watson, 19 years old at the time, charged at him and knocked him to the ground. Ratanapakdee's father died two days later, never regaining consciousness.

"My mom told me that day was the best day for my father. He was happy to go out," said Ratanapakdee. "But it was a bad day for us, because he never came back again."

San Francisco's district attorney, Chesa Boudin, has charged Watson, who is Black, with murder and elder abuse but not with a hate crime, frustrating the family. Watson's attorney, Sliman Nawabi, has said his client was not motivated by race, and the assault stemmed from a mental-health breakdown.



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The brutal attack, caught on surveillance video, has galvanized Thai immigrants, said Chanchanit Martorell, executive director of the Thai Community Development Center in Los Angeles, which participated in Sunday's rally. His killing, and the overwhelming support from other Asian American communities, has made them rethink their place in the United States, she said.

"It really sparked this consciousness among Thai immigrants," she said, "that they're part of something larger."

While there's much more to do, the country has come a long way from 1982 when two white men in Detroit upset over the loss of auto jobs to Japan fatally beat Vincent Chin, says Bonnie Youn, a rally organizer in Atlanta and board member of the Georgia Asian Pacific American Bar Association.

A judge sentenced the two men to probation, saying they weren't the kind of people to go to prison.

Compare that to the March 16 shootings in Atlanta and a northern suburb, Youn said, when journalists worked to make sure the Asian names of six slain women were pronounced correctly and their stories were told with sensitivity.

In San Francisco on Sunday, Ratanapakdee and Breed led a short chant-filled march to the house where her father fell, and where flowers marked the pavement.

He loved the United States, she said, and would want people to "raise their voice."

"I know people are scared about anti-Asian hate in the community, and we must demand action for justice and all human rights," she said Sunday. "Please be strong in memory of my father."

## While NFL plays title games, world waits on Tom Brady

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — While the NFL conference championship games went on without Tom Brady for only the second time in 11 years, the world waits for the greatest quarterback of all time to make his future plans official.

An announcement is expected soon and a person close to Brady told The Associated Press his decision will be based on family priorities, not finances. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity Sunday because he wasn't authorized to speak on Brady's behalf.

Brady has already stated a desire to spend more time with his wife, supermodel Gisele Bundchen, and three children.

"She deserves what she needs from me as a husband and my kids deserve what they need from me as a dad, and I'm gonna spend some time with them and give them what they need, because they've really been giving me what I need the last six months to do what I love to do," Brady said on his SiriusXM podcast one day after the Los Angeles Rams eliminated the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Brady's contract is a complicated matter for the Buccaneers. He signed a \$25 million, one-year extension with three voidable years last March to free up salary cap space to allow the Buccaneers to return all 22 starters from the Super Bowl championship team.

Brady is scheduled to earn a base salary of \$8.925 million in 2022 with a signing bonus of \$15 million, a roster bonus of \$1,470,588, and an incentive bonus of \$1.875 million, while carrying a cap hit of \$20,270,588 and a dead cap value of \$32 million.

He'll be paid \$15 million of his \$20 million signing bonus on Friday. However, he would owe the team money if he retires.

"The Bucs would have the right to ask for \$16 million of Tom Brady's \$20 million signing bonus back. Whether the Bucs would exercise the right is a different story," Joel Corry, a former sports agent and NFL contract and salary cap expert, told the AP.

The Buccaneers could choose to let Brady keep the bonus because he rejuvenated the franchise and led them to their second Super Bowl title in his first season in Tampa after 20 years with the New England Patriots.

The team would benefit by waiting to process the retirement after June 2, as many NFL teams do each year.

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"By doing so, the \$24 million of bonus proration associated with the 'dummy or fake' 2023 through 2025 contract years would be a 2023 salary cap charge rather than part of the 2022 dead money, which would be \$8 million," Corry explained in his article for CBSSports.com. "The Buccaneers would pick up \$12,270,588 of 2022 cap room with Brady's 2022 salary and \$1.875 million of incentives deemed likely to be earned that have a cap charge coming off the books."

ESPN first reported Brady's retirement on Saturday, citing unidentified sources. Brady's company posted a tweet indicating he's retiring, and reaction came from around the world congratulating Brady on his career. Even the NFL's Twitter account posted a series of congratulatory messages.

But TB12sports deleted its tweet, and Brady's agent, Don Yee, said the three-time NFL MVP would be the only person to accurately express his future.

Brady informed Buccaneers general manager Jason Licht he has not made a decision, according to two people who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because of the private nature of the conversations.

Brady's father, Tom Brady, Sr., told multiple reporters that his son hasn't made a firm decision yet.

When Brady walks away, he'll do so as the NFL's career leader in numerous passing categories and most prolific winner. He'd also be going out at the top of his game.

Brady led the NFL in yards passing (5,316), touchdowns (43), completions (485) and attempts (719), but the Buccaneers lost at home to the Rams last Sunday in the divisional round after rallying from a 27-3 deficit to tie in the final minute.

Brady won six Super Bowls with the Patriots playing for coach Bill Belichick, and got better with age.

After turning 37, Brady won four Super Bowls and was 17-4 in the playoffs. He was 95-30, completed 65.2% of his passes for 35,371 yards, 265 TDs, 69 interceptions and 100.2 passer rating in the regular season in those eight seasons.

## US pledges to put Russia on defensive at UN Security Council

By JIM HEINTZ and ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. worked Sunday to ramp up diplomatic and financial pressure on Russia over Ukraine, promising to put Moscow on the defensive at the U.N. Security Council as lawmakers on Capitol Hill said they were nearing agreement on "the mother of all sanctions."

The American ambassador to the United Nations said the Security Council will press Russia hard in a Monday session to discuss its massing of troops near Ukraine and fears it is planning an invasion.

"Our voices are unified in calling for the Russians to explain themselves," Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said of the U.S. and the other council members on ABC's "This Week." "We're going into the room prepared to listen to them, but we're not going to be distracted by their propaganda."

Ukraine's ambassador to the U.S., Oksana Markarova, warned that Russian President Vladimir Putin is bent on waging an "attack on democracy," not just on a single country. It's a case that some senior foreign policy figures have urged President Joe Biden to make, including at the Security Council.

"If Ukraine will be further attacked by Russia, of course they will not stop in Ukraine," Markarova said on CBS's "Face the Nation."

Any formal action by the Security Council is extremely unlikely, given Russia's veto power and its ties with others on the council, including China. But the U.S. referral of Russia's troop buildup to the United Nations' most powerful body gives both sides a stage in their fight for global opinion.

Russia's massing of an estimated 100,000 troops near the border with Ukraine has brought increasingly strong warnings from the West that Moscow intends to invade. Russia is demanding that NATO promise never to allow Ukraine to join the alliance, and to stop the deployment of NATO weapons near Russian borders and roll back its forces from Eastern Europe. NATO and the U.S. call those demands impossible.

The head of Russia's Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev, on Sunday rejected Western warnings about an invasion.

"At this time, they're saying that Russia threatens Ukraine — that's completely ridiculous," he was quoted as saying by state news agency Tass. "We don't want war and we don't need it at all."

Ukraine's foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, countered that on Twitter, saying: "If Russian officials are

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serious when they say they don't want a new war, Russia must continue diplomatic engagement and pull back military forces."

The United States and European countries say a Russian invasion would trigger heavy sanctions.

On Sunday, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Bob Menendez, said that in the event of an attack, lawmakers want Russia to face "the mother of all sanctions." That includes actions against Russian banks that could severely undermine the Russian economy and increased lethal aid to Ukraine's military.

The sanctions under consideration would apparently be significantly stronger than those imposed after Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. Those penalties have been seen as ineffective.

Menendez also raised the prospect of imposing some punishments preemptively, before any invasion.

"There are some sanctions that really could take place up front, because of what Russia's already done — cyberattacks on Ukraine, false-flag operations, the efforts to undermine the Ukrainian government internally," the New Jersey Democrat said on CNN.

The desire to hit Russia harder financially over its moves on Ukraine has been a rare area of bipartisan agreement in Congress. But Republicans and Democrats have been divided over the timing of any new sanctions package.

Many GOP members are pushing for the U.S. to impose tough penalties immediately instead of waiting for Russia to send new troops into Ukraine. The Biden administration and many Democratic lawmakers argue that imposing sanctions now against Putin would remove any deterrent to invasion.

Sen. James Risch of Idaho, the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, told CNN he is "more than cautiously optimistic" that Republicans and Democrats will be able to resolve their differences over the timing of sanctions.

Russia has long resented NATO's granting of membership to countries that were once part of the Soviet Union or were in its sphere of influence as members of the Warsaw Pact.

NATO "has already come close to Ukraine. They also want to drag this country there," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Sunday, "although everyone understands that Ukraine is not ready and could make no contribution to strengthening NATO security."

Ukraine has sought NATO membership for years, but any prospects of joining appear far off as the country struggles to find political stability and attack corruption.

Sen. Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat and member of the Senate's Ukraine Caucus, suggested that Ukraine's backing off its NATO aspirations could expedite a diplomatic solution to the current crisis.

If Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy "decides that the future membership, if there's to be one in NATO for Ukraine, and the question of the Russian occupation of Ukraine are two things to put on the table, I think we may move toward a solution to this," Durbin said on NBC.

Ukraine has not shown signs of willingness to make concessions on potential alliance membership. It is not clear whether Durbin's suggestion has broader backing.

Lavrov also underlined Russia's contention that NATO expansion is a threat, saying the alliance has engaged in offensive actions outside its member countries.

"It is difficult to call it defensive. Do not forget that they bombed Yugoslavia for almost three months, invaded Libya, violating the U.N. Security Council resolution, and how they behaved in Afghanistan," he said.

The U.S. and NATO have formally rejected Russia's demands about halting NATO expansion, though Washington outlined areas where discussions are possible, offering hope there could be a way to avoid war.

## Clyburn, architect of Biden's court pledge, pushes his pick

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — At President Joe Biden's lowest moment in the 2020 campaign, South Carolina Rep. Jim Clyburn came to him with a suggestion: He should pledge to put the first Black woman on the Supreme Court.

After some cajoling, Biden made the promise at a Democratic debate, a move Clyburn credits with turn-

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ing out the Black support that helped Biden score a resounding victory in the South Carolina primary and ultimately win the White House.

Two years later, the hoped-for vacancy on the court has arrived with the retirement of Justice Stephen Breyer. Biden is standing by his pledge. And Clyburn, the highest-ranking Black member of Congress, has another ask.

"Judge (Michelle) Childs has everything I think it takes to be great," Clyburn said.

As the lobbying begins over filling the open court seat, Clyburn is harnessing his history with Biden and his stature as the No. 3 House Democrat to make a forceful case for his preferred choice, U.S. District Judge J. Michelle Childs, a jurist from his native South Carolina. It's a campaign he's making in public and in private, helping elevate Childs to an emerging short list of Black women who could soon make history.

In addition to Childs, early discussions about a successor include California Supreme Court Justice Leandra Kruger, as well as Ketanji Brown Jackson, a former Breyer clerk who is now on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Biden is also looking at U.S. District Court Judge Wilhelmina Wright from Minnesota and Melissa Murray, a New York University law professor who is an expert in family law and reproductive rights justice.

For Biden, the court opening is a chance to show Black voters that he has not forgotten his promises to them, particularly after his failure this month to deliver on voting rights legislation in the Senate. He said Thursday that having a Black woman on the court is "long overdue" and that he would announce his choice by the end of February.

Clyburn had a head start. He began making his case for Childs more than two years ago.

In December 2020, just weeks after Biden won the White House, Clyburn said he wrote to the then-president elect advocating that Childs be promoted from South Carolina's federal trial bench to the D.C. appeals court. A seat on court is often seen as a springboard for Supreme Court nominees.

"Everybody says, 'Well, that's the way you need to go, to go to the Supreme Court,'" Clyburn said, of the appellate level. "I've never agreed to that, but you know, I don't have to agree with all the rules that I have to play by."

Last month, Biden officially submitted Childs' name for an open slot on the circuit court. Her Senate hearing had been expected this coming week, which would have given Childs a closely watched audition of sorts, but staffers said Friday that had been delayed.

In interviews over recent days, Clyburn has argued that, if Childs were nominated, she could win the backing of South Carolina's two Republican senators, Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott — an enticing prospect for Biden, offering the possibility of a pick that could satisfy the party and also win bipartisan support.

On Sunday, Graham, a former Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, highly praised Childs as a "fair-minded, highly gifted jurist" who would bring important perspectives to the high court if chosen.

"In the history of our country we've only had five women serve and two African-American men. So let's make the court more like America," Graham told CBS' "Face the Nation." "But qualifications have to be the biggest consideration, and as to Michelle Childs, I think she's qualified by every measure."

A spokeswoman for Scott lauded Childs' "respected reputation as a judge in South Carolina" and said "he looks forward to engaging with her if she is the nominee."

Unlike most high court nominees, Childs isn't an Ivy League graduate or a former federal appellate clerk. The 55-year-old graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law. She also holds a master's degree from the university's business school, as well as a legal master's from Duke.

Clyburn, who often pushed for ethnic and educational diversity among Biden's Cabinet picks, said he felt Childs' education outside the Ivy League, coupled with her upbringing in a single-parent household, would give the court an important perspective it is now missing.

"We run the risk of creating an elite society," Clyburn told reporters. "We've got to recognize that people come from all walks of life, and we ought not dismiss anyone because of that."

During years in private practice in Columbia, Childs became the first Black female partner at one of the state's largest law firms, where she focused on employment and labor law. After several years as a state



court judge, she was appointed to the federal trial bench. In 2014, before the Supreme Court ruled that gay couples had a right to marry nationwide, she ruled in favor of a gay couple seeking to have their District of Columbia marriage recognized in South Carolina.

All of her experiences, Clyburn said, give Childs the "ability to empathize."

Asked in a 2020 Q&A with her alma mater what advice she would give a young lawyer, Childs opined on the meaning of success, stressing the importance of becoming "a person of courage and conviction."

"We all have a crucial role, individually and collectively, to be architects of society," she said. "Being successful is not just for the purpose of a place of comfort and satisfaction, but a place of responsibility and challenge."

## US pushes for better tap water but must win over wary public

By MICHAEL PHILLIS Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Angela Stamps won't drink water from her faucet, showers less and no longer takes the baths she once found relaxing. She doesn't cook with tap water and sometimes skips rinsing her produce.

Even though the amount of lead in Flint, Michigan's tap water has been well below a key state threshold for several years, she hasn't been able to stop worrying since going through the trauma of the city's lead crisis.

"I just don't trust it," she said.

As the Biden administration looks to spend billions of dollars to address inequalities in water quality and access, officials must try to overcome persistent public distrust of tap water. Experts say it will be especially difficult to overcome in Black and Hispanic communities, where suspicion can be entrenched because of past instances of being misled by public officials and high-profile lead crises in cities with large Black populations, including Flint and Newark, New Jersey.

"Problems in one place erode trust in other places," said David Switzer, a water quality and public policy researcher at the University of Missouri.

The issue will hit home in many cities and towns as the Biden administration pushes to replace millions of lead service lines in the U.S. that can leach lead into drinking water. In addition, tightened testing standards might reveal higher lead levels and put more communities on notice about problems.

Lead exposure can cause a host of health problems and is considered especially dangerous for young children because it can slow development and cause other troubles.

Already, 20% of adults nationally say they don't drink tap water — filtered or not — up from 14% before the Flint crisis, according to a study of federal survey data. The figures are higher among Black adults, with 35% saying they avoid drinking tap, up from 25% before Flint. Among Hispanic adults, the figure rose to 38%, up from 27%.

That distrust can translate to unnecessary spending on bottled water or make it more likely that adults reach for sugary drinks that can increase the risk of health problems such as diabetes and cavities, said Asher Rosinger, a Pennsylvania State University researcher who studies water access.

There's also the constant stress for parents who worry that tap water might poison their children, he said.

Though the vast majority of the country's water systems report that they meet federal health standards, problems such as elevated lead levels and health violations happen more often in lower-income areas that are predominantly Black or Hispanic, Switzer said.

Defective plumbing that tinges water brown or creates an odd taste can also turn people away from the faucet. Immigrants from countries with unsafe water might transfer that distrust to water that might be safer in the U.S. and pass that uneasiness on to their children, said Silvia R. González, who works on environmental equity and water issues at UCLA's Latino Policy and Politics Initiative.

"Thinking about my family, my dad will not drink the tap water, and therefore my brother does not drink the tap water," said Gonzalez, whose father immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico.

And if residents feel their local government is indifferent to their needs — a problem especially prevalent in Black and brown communities — that can foster distrust in drinking water, according to experts.

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"There's a legacy of mistrust and a healthy sense of paranoia that has kept us alive for centuries," said Robert Bullard, a professor at Texas Southern University who has researched and pushed for environmental justice for decades.

Philadelphia, which is 44% Black, is one of the few places that have run a public campaign to help save residents money and reduce plastic pollution by boosting trust in tap water. Murals on buildings and songs promote the city's drinking water.

Though it hasn't had a lead scandal, city surveys indicate that residents avoid the tap because of health concerns and taste. Among Black residents in 2021, more than 60% said they mostly drank bottled water, compared with 42% of Philadelphia's residents overall.

Monika Davis, who is Black, switched from bottled water to tap when she applied to become one of roughly a dozen residents enlisted by the city as ambassadors in 2019 to show up at events and talk to her neighbors about the safety and benefits of tap water.

She remembers her family boiling water as a precaution when she was growing up. Touring the water treatment plant and learning about the city's water quality helped convince her of its safety, she said.

The percentage of residents relying on bottled water declined after the campaign, but it rose again last year.

"It takes a lot to change a habit," Davis said.

For some, the Flint crisis reinforced suspicions that public officials are indifferent to Black and brown communities. Michigan officials had switched the city's water source to save money and initially downplayed the problem before the facts emerged and it became a major scandal.

"People rightly felt betrayed," said Mark Edwards, a water quality specialist at Virginia Tech.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says no amount of lead is considered safe for children. But many water systems have some lead and are required to take significant action when levels reach a federal threshold. Edwards said the CDC guidance might cause needless fear, muddling the difference between low levels and amounts that are truly concerning. Flint's levels are low but not zero.

Stamps cites the federal health goal of no lead to explain her skepticism, saying none should be in the water.

It's why experts say that it won't be enough to replace lead pipes and that public outreach efforts will be key.

In Flint, Michigan officials say lead levels have been lower for years and the state now has the strongest lead water protections in the country. They say they have worked to replace lead lines, upgrade infrastructure and be transparent by publishing testing data, but they acknowledge that rebuilding trust will take time and continued outreach.

A community lab that isn't affiliated with the government also tests water for free.

"The residents are still at a point where they are not trusting government," said Candice Mushatt, the Flint Community Lab's director, adding that residents value the lab's independence — it builds trust.

## Trump dangles prospect of pardons for Jan. 6 defendants

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

CONROE, Texas (AP) — Former President Donald Trump is dangling the prospect of pardons for supporters who participated in the deadly Jan. 6 storming of the U.S. Capitol if he returns to the White House.

"If I run and if I win, we will treat those people from January 6th fairly," Trump said Saturday night during a rally in Conroe, Texas. "And if it requires pardons, we will give them pardons because they are being treated so unfairly."

The offer represents an attempt by Trump to further minimize the most significant attack on the seat of government since the War of 1812. Participants smashed through windows, assaulted police officers and sent lawmakers and congressional staff fleeing for their lives while trying to halt the peaceful transition of power and the certification of rival Joe Biden's victory.

More than 700 people have been arrested and charged with federal crimes in connection with the riot,

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marking the largest investigation in the Justice Department's history. The tally includes more than 150 people charged with assaulting police officers, more than 50 charged with conspiracy, and charges of seditious conspiracy against the founder and leader of the far-right Oath Keepers militia group, and 10 other members or associates.

More than 100 police officers were injured, some critically, after Trump supporters stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, following a "Stop the Steal" rally by Trump near the White House in which he falsely claimed Biden had won election through massive voter fraud.

Two Republican senators on Sunday criticized Trump's suggestion of pardons as inappropriate. Maine Sen. Susan Collins, one of seven GOP senators who backed an unsuccessful bid to convict Trump on impeachment charges for his role in stoking the Jan. 6 riot, said it would be "very unlikely" she would support him if he ran in 2024.

"January 6th was a dark day in our history," she told ABC's "This Week." "We should let the judicial process proceed."

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., rejected Trump's comments as sending a wrong message that it's OK to defile the Capitol. For the Jan. 6 offenders, "I hope they go to jail and get the book thrown at them, because they deserve it," Graham told CBS' "Face the Nation."

As president, Trump used his pardon power to pardon or commute the sentences of numerous political allies, friends and associates, including his former chief strategist, Steve Bannon; his former campaign chair, Paul Manafort; his former national security adviser, Michael Flynn; and a longtime friend and political ally, Roger Stone.

Trump has criticized the Democrat-led House for its ongoing investigation of the riot.

While his supporters overran the Capitol on Jan. 6, Trump ignored desperate pleas from allies to forcefully disavow the attack and has repeatedly praised those who participated in the protest.

"It was a lot of love there," he said recently of those who attended the rally in an interview on Fox News. "Believe me, there was a lot of love and a lot of friendship and people that love our country."

Trump, who was impeached by the House for his role in inciting the insurrection but acquitted by the Senate, has been teasing a third run for the White House in 2024.

## Deadly Colorado blaze renews focus on underground coal fires

By MATTHEW BROWN and COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — A fire raging in an underground Colorado coal field in 1883 sent so much smoke pouring from cracks in the ground that the scene was likened to burning volcanoes and the state's first mining inspector deemed the blaze "impossible to extinguish."

Nearly 140 years later two fires still smolder in the now-abandoned coal field near Boulder — the same area where a wildfire last month destroyed more than 1,000 homes and buildings and killed at least one person.

It's still unknown what caused the December blaze that became the most destructive in Colorado history, but Boulder County authorities have said they're investigating the area's abandoned coal mines as one of several possible causes, along with power lines, human activity and other possibilities.

Could smoldering coal have started such a fire? History shows the answer is yes, with at least two Colorado blazes in the past 20 years blamed on mine fires that spread to the surface. And in Montana this past summer slow-burning coal reserves fanned by winds sparked a pair of blazes that burned a combined 267 square miles (691 square kilometers) on and around the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation.

Across the U.S. at least 259 underground mine fires burned in more than a dozen states as of last September, according to federal Office of Surface Mining data. There are hundreds and possibly thousands more undocumented blazes burning in coal seams that have never been mined, researchers and government officials say.

Globally, such fires are also a problem, including in India, Australia and South Africa. In China, the world's largest coal producer, an estimated 10 million to 200 million tons of the fuel annually burn or are left inac-

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cessible by fires, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

As climate change leads to drought across larges swaths of a U.S. West already seeing longer and more destructive fire seasons, experts say smoldering coal fires will pose a continuing threat.

Such fires can be ignited by lightning, humans and even spontaneously at temperatures as low as 86 degrees Fahrenheit (30 degrees Celsius), said Jurgen Brune a Colorado School of Mines engineering professor. Many are impossible to put out, slowly burning underground as the combustion feeds off a small amount of oxygen present in the coal, he said.

"Covering it up and trying to take away the oxygen from the fire puts out most fires. Not for coal fires," Brune said.

Underground coal seams burn unpredictably and can break through to the surface without warning long after a fire starts, he said.

"It's like trying to predict an earthquake," Brune said. "With all the technology we have today they are not coming any closer to predicting them. The same goes for a coal fire."

The fires emit toxic mercury and the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide, and cause sinkholes when the ground's surface collapses into burned cavities below. In Centralia, Pennsylvania, the fumes and subsidence from a coal fire that started beneath the town in 1962 got so bad that more than 1,000 people eventually relocated at a cost of \$42 million.

The estimated future cost to control the 200 known abandoned mine blazes across the U.S. is almost \$900 million, according to the Office of Surface Mining database.

In the wake of last summer's fires, local officials in Montana plan to map out burning seams across the state's southeast in coming months using a federal grant. Controlling them will be difficult and could cost a minimum of \$300,000 per site, said Bobbi Vannattan with the Rosebud Conservation District, which is helping to coordinate the mapping.

"The problem with coal seam fires is we don't know how deep they are or how wide they are until you get in there and start digging," she said.

In Colorado, officials were monitoring at least 38 underground coal fires as of 2019.

Boulder County Sheriff's Office spokesperson Carrie Haverfield declined to specify which mines were being investigated in relation to the Dec. 30 blaze or what prompted authorities' interest, which was first reported by KUSA-TV.

At least three efforts were made by authorities to quench or reduce damage from the blaze the state mine inspector first encountered more than a century ago at the abandoned Marshall Mine, located on park land in the vicinity of where investigators believe the recent fire started.

The first came in 1982, when federal officials drilled into the ground to investigate how far the fire extended and later sought to smother it with a 2-foot (60-centimeter) layer of dirt, according to a U.S. Geological Survey report.

In 2005, a small brush fire was traced back to a hot vent from the fire. Crews from Boulder removed vegetation in the area and federal officials tried to fill the vent and others with rocks to try to protect against another fire, according to the Office of Surface Mining. In 2016, after federal officials said the state had taken control of the site, workers excavated and filled in two areas where ground had subsided after fire consumed the underground coal.

When the site was visited two years later by workers for a state contractor, Tetra Tech, they found no evidence of fire — no melting snow, no smoky odors. The company recommended annual monitoring of the site because of its past erratic behavior but no new steps to abate the potential hazard.

"The fire's activity is very low and thus presents little potential to start a surface fire," Tetra Tech wrote in a 2019 report prepared for the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety.

Generally the responsibility of monitoring coal mine fires falls to the property owner, according to the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety. The Marshall Mine fire sits under an open space park owned by the city of Boulder near a state highway.

Boulder officials said they don't have responsibility to do work on the fire. However, the city is required to notify the state if rangers or trail crews at the popular hiking area see smoke or shifts, city spokesper-



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son Sarah Huntley said.

The state's mining division said it was not notified of any changes at the mine fire since the 2019 report. The state receives federal funding to help property owners monitor or mitigate abandoned coal mine fires. But the mining division cannot require any work be done at the sites, spokesperson Chris Arend said.

## The Latest: Federer, Djokovic congratulate Nadal on No. 21

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — The Latest at the Australian Open on Sunday (all times local):  
3:10 a.m. (Monday)

Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic have offered their congratulations to Rafael Nadal for breaking their three-way tie atop the men's Grand Slam standings and becoming the first member of the trio to win No. 21.

Federer and Djokovic both missed the Australian Open. Federer is recovering from his latest knee operation; Djokovic is not vaccinated against COVID-19 and he was deported when his visa was revoked after he flew to Melbourne.

Federer posted an Instagram message he addressed "to my friend and great rival."

"A few months ago we were joking about both being on crutches. Amazing. Never underestimate a great champion," Federer wrote. "Your incredible work ethic, dedication and fighting spirit are an inspiration to me and countless others around the world."

Djokovic praised Nadal's "amazing achievement" in a Twitter post that added: "Always impressive fighting spirit that prevailed another time."

1:15 a.m. (Monday)

Rafael Nadal got to 21 first.

The 35-year-old Spaniard has broken the men's record for most Grand Slam singles titles but he had to do it the hard way by coming back from two sets down to beat Daniil Medvedev in an Australian Open final that lasted 5 hours and 24 minutes. He was broken when serving for the championship at 5-4 in the fifth set but made no mistake the next time.

It was the second longest Australian Open final after Novak Djokovic beat Nadal in five sets in 5 hours and 53 minutes in 2012.

Nadal now has one more than Roger Federer and Djokovic, his long-time rivals in the so-called Big Three.

With the 2-6, 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-4, 7-5 win that started Sunday night and was delayed for a while in the second set when a protester jumped onto the court, Nadal also becomes just the fourth man in history to win all four of the sport's major titles at least twice.

Midnight

Rafael Nadal has rallied from two sets down to take the Australian Open final to a fifth set against U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev.

Nadal took the third and fourth sets 6-4, 6-4 after Medvedev had opened a 6-2, 7-6 (5) lead.

In the fourth, Nadal broke for a 5-3 lead and then had a set point but Medvedev saved and held to make the 20-time major winner have to serve it out again.

Nadal had no problem with that, holding at love. The match has already gone past 4 hours and 12 minutes.

The 35-year-old Spaniard's bid for a men's record 21st major title is still alive.

He missed a chance to serve out the second set when he was broken in a game that lasted more than 12 minutes and was interrupted by a court invader. Nadal had been facing breakpoint in the ninth game of that set when the protester jumped from the stands into the playing arena at Medvedev's end. Medvedev is still potentially one set from back-to-back major titles.

11 p.m.

Rafael Nadal has taken the Australian Open final to a fourth set against U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev.

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Nadal won the third set 6-4, breaking in the ninth game and then serving out at love, after Medvedev won the first two sets 6-2, 7-6 (5).

The 35-year-old Spaniard's bid for men's record 21st major title is still alive. He missed his chance to serve out the second set when he was broken in a game that lasted more than 12 minutes and was interrupted by a court invader.

Nadal had been facing breakpoint in the ninth game of the second set when the protester jumped from the stands into the playing arena at Medvedev's end.

Security quickly surrounded both players and detained the protester, who was carrying a banner with the words: "Abolish Refugee Detention." Medvedev broke serve in that game, held and then won the tiebreaker to get potentially within one set of claiming back-to-back major titles.

9:55 p.m.

Daniil Medvedev has taken a 6-2, 7-6 (5) lead in the Australian Open final against Rafael Nadal after a dramatic second set that was interrupted by a court invader and contained four service breaks.

Nadal was trying to serve for the set in the ninth game about 1 1/2 hours into the match and was facing a break point when a protester jumped from the stands into the playing arena at Medvedev's end.

Security quickly surrounded both players and detained the protester, who was carrying a banner printed with the words: "Abolish Refugee Detention." Nadal saved that point to get back to deuce, wasted a set point and then dropped the service game to allow Medvedev back into the set.

The U.S. Open champion clinched it on his first set point, on Nadal's serve, with a backhand passing shot and then waved both arms up for the crowd seeking some support.

8:30 p.m.

Daniil Medvedev has taken the first set 6-2 in the Australian Open final against Rafael Nadal.

The U.S. Open champion broke Nadal's serve twice and then served it out in 42 minutes. Nadal's first serve percentage was down to 54% compared with Medvedev's 82%.

Medvedev is bidding to be the first man in the Open era to win his second Grand Slam title at the next major tournament. He lost last year's Australian Open final to Novak Djokovic.

Nadal is chasing a men's record 21st Grand Slam singles title to break a tie for the mark he currently shares with Roger Federer and Djokovic.

7:50 p.m.

Rafael Nadal is serving first in the Australian Open final against Daniil Medvedev.

The 35-year-old Spaniard is chasing a men's record 21st Grand Slam singles title to break a tie for the mark he currently shares with Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic. Nadal is also aiming to be just the fourth man in history to win all four of the tennis majors at least twice.

U.S. Open champion Medvedev is bidding to be the first man in the Open era to win his second Grand Slam title at the next major tournament.

He lost last year's Australian Open final to Djokovic.

6:00 p.m.

Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova moved a step closer to a career Grand Slam in doubles when they won their first Australian Open title on Sunday, beating Anna Danilina and Beatriz Haddad Maia 6-7 (3), 6-4, 6-4.

The Czech pair already had two French Open's and a Wimbledon title along with Olympic gold medals. But their win on Sunday gave them their fourth Grand Slam title in five finals and their first on hard courts.

The top seeds were forced to fight all the way by their unseeded rivals, dropping a set for the first time at the tournament and battling 2 hours, 42 minutes before clinching their victory.

Siniakova first served for the match at 5-2 in the third set but Danilina of Kazakhstan and Haddad Maia of Brazil broke her serve to prolong the match. Krejčíková finally served out the match at the next opportunity.

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The pair have been doubles partners since junior tennis and won the French Open junior title against a partnership including Haddad Maia.

5:05 p.m.

Top-seeded Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova have rallied to level the Australian Open women's doubles final against unseeded Anna Danilina and Beatriz Haddad Maia after dropping the first set.

Danilina of Kazakhstan and Haddad Maia of Brazil took the first set 7-6 (3) but the Czech pair of Krejčíková and Siniakova leveled the match when they took the second set 6-4.

The top-seeds broke Haddad Maia's serve in the opening game of the second set and held that advantage to send the match into a deciding third set.

Krejčíková faced a break point in the sixth game but held to retain the top seeds' advantage.

The Czech pair are bidding for their first Australian Open title, after losing in last year's final, and are chasing their fourth Grand Slam doubles title, their first on a hard court. They won the French Open in 2018 and 2021 and Wimbledon in 2018.

The pair also are Olympic champions.

4:00 p.m.

The startling rise of Anna Danilina and Beatriz Haddad Maia as a doubles partnership continued Sunday when they took the first set of the Australian Open women's final 7-6 (3) against top-seeded Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova.

Danilina of Kazakhstan and Haddad Maia of Brazil have won all nine matches together since they became a doubles partnership, including the final of the Sydney International heading into the first Grand Slam of the year.

They twice led by a service break in Sunday's final before the Krejčíková and Siniakova rallied to take the set into a tie-breaker.

Danilina and Haddad Maia broke Siniakova in the third game of the first set and both held serve to go ahead 4-2. Krejčíková and Siniakova broke Danilina in the eighth game to level the match.

Siniakova dropped her serve again in the 11th game but the top-seeded pair again broke back immediately.

Danilina and Haddad Maia then took the first six points of the tie-breaker before clinching the first set 7-6 (3).

2:00 p.m.

Before Rafael Nadal and Daniil Medvedev take center stage in the men's singles final at the Australian Open on Sunday, top seeds Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova will face unseeded Anna Danilina and Beatriz Haddad Maia in the women's doubles final.

Krejčíková and Siniakova will be appearing in the final for the second year in a row after losing to Elise Mertens and Aryna Sabalenka in last year's final. The Czech pair will also be attempting to take a step closer to a career slam in doubles after winning the French Open in 2018 and 2021 and Wimbledon in 2018.

Krejčíková and Siniakova also were Olympic champions last year.

They reached the final with a 6-2, 6-3 win over Veronika Kudermetova of Russia and Belgium's Mertens who was attempting to win her second-straight Australian Open final.

"We had to go through a lot of tough matches to get to the final, so I think I can say for both of us that we're really proud and looking forward to the final," Krejčíková said after the semifinal victory.

Danilina of Kazakhstan and Beatriz Haddad Maia of Brazil beat the second seeded Japanese pairing of Shuko Aoyama and Ena Shibahara 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 in their semifinal. They are unbeaten in nine matches together.

## Northern Ireland marks 50 years since Bloody Sunday

LONDON (AP) — Hundreds of people gathered Sunday in Northern Ireland to mark 50 years since "Bloody

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Sunday," one of the deadliest days in the conflict known as The Troubles.

Thirteen people were killed and 15 others wounded when British soldiers fired on civil rights protesters on Jan. 30, 1972, in the city of Derry, also known as Londonderry.

Relatives of those killed and injured half a century ago took part in a remembrance walk Sunday, retracing the steps of the original march. Crowds gathered at the Bloody Sunday Monument, where political leaders including Irish Premier Micheal Martin laid wreaths in a ceremony.

The names of those who were killed and wounded were read out during the 45-minute memorial service.

Britain's government apologized in 2010 after an official inquiry found that the soldiers fired without justification on unarmed, fleeing civilians and then lied about it for decades. The report refuted an initial investigation that took place soon after the slayings that said the soldiers had been defending themselves against Irish Republican Army bombers and gunmen.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson told Parliament on Wednesday that Bloody Sunday was "one of the darkest days in our history" and that the country "must learn from the past."

One former British soldier was charged in 2019 in the killing of two of the protesters and the injury of four others. But prosecutors decided last year not to proceed with the case because there was no longer a prospect of conviction. Families of one of the victims have brought a legal challenge against that decision.

Martin, the Irish leader, said Sunday that there should be full accountability in all legacy issues.

"I don't believe this will be any amnesty for anybody," he said after meeting with the families of victims. "It is important because time is moving on too for many, many families and families need closure."

Michael McKinney, whose brother William was among the victims, criticized the British government's plans to make it harder to prosecute military veterans for alleged offenses committed years earlier.

"They are trying to deny us justice because they are scared to face justice. But we want to send a very clear warning to the British government. If they pursue their proposals, the Bloody Sunday families will be ready to meet them head on," McKinney said.

Irish President Michael D. Higgins is expected to deliver a message to the affected families later Sunday.

## Sudanese take to the streets in latest anti-coup protests

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Thousands of protesters took to the streets of Sudan's capital and other cities across the country Sunday for the latest in a months-long string of demonstrations denouncing an October military coup that plunged the country into turmoil. At least one person was killed when security forces violently dispersed protesters, a medical group said.

Protesters, mostly young men and women, marched in the streets of Khartoum and other cities, demanding an end to the military's takeover. They called for a fully civilian government to lead the country's now-stalled transition to democracy.

The coup has upended Sudan's transition to democratic rule after three decades of repression and international isolation under autocratic President Omar al-Bashir. The African nation has been on a fragile path to democracy since a popular uprising forced the military to remove al-Bashir and his Islamist government in April 2019.

The protests are called by the Sudanese Professionals Association and the Resistance Committees, which were the backbone of the uprising against al-Bashir and relentless anti-coup protests in the past three months.

Footage circulated online showed people beating drums and chanting anti-coup slogans in the streets of Khartoum and its twin city Omdurman. Protesters were also seen carrying Sudanese flags and other flags with photos of protesters reportedly slain by security forces printed on them.

They marched towards the presidential palace, an area in the capital that has seen deadly clashes between protesters and security forces in previous rounds of demonstrations.

Security forces fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse protesters in at least one location in the capital. At least three people suffered injuries from rubber bullets, said activist Nazim Sirag.

The Sudan Doctors Committee, a medical group tracking casualties among protesters, said a 27-year-



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old protester died in a Khartoum hospital after he sustained unspecified injuries to his chest during the protests. It did not elaborate.

There were protests elsewhere in the country including the eastern city of Port Sudan, western Darfur region and Madani, the capital city of Jazira province, about 135 kilometers (85 miles) southeast of Khartoum. Madani saw a massive anti-coup protest last week.

Ahead of the protests, authorities stepped up security in Khartoum and Omdurman. They deployed thousands of troops and police and sealed off central Khartoum, urging protesters to assemble only in public squares in the capital's neighborhoods.

The United Nations mission in Sudan on Saturday warned that such restrictions could increase tensions, urging authorities to let the protests "pass without violence."

Since the coup, at least 79 people have been killed and hundreds of others wounded in a widely condemned crackdown on protests, the doctors group said.

There were also mass arrests of activists leading the anti-coup protests and allegations of sexual violence, including rape and gang rape, in a Dec. 19 protest in Khartoum, according to the U.N.

The upheaval in Sudan worsened earlier this month following the resignation of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, who was the civilian face of the transitional government over the past two years.

The prime minister, who was ousted in the October coup only to be reinstated a month later under heavy international pressure, stepped down on Jan. 2 after his efforts to reach a compromise failed.

Sunday's protests came as the U.N. mission continued its consultations to find a way out of the ongoing crisis.

On Saturday, powerful Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, deputy head of the ruling Sovereign Council, and commander of the feared Rapid Support Forces, said they have accepted the U.N. efforts to resolve the crisis, but that U.N. envoy Volker Perthes "should be a facilitator not a mediator."

Dagalo did not elaborate but his comments showed the challenges the U.N. mission faces to find a common ground between rival factions in Sudan.

The pro-democracy movement has insisted on the removal of the generals from power and the establishment a fully civilian government to lead the transition.

The generals, however, said they will hand over power only to an elected administration. They say elections will take place in July 2023, as planned in a 2019 constitutional document governing the transitional period.

## Some asylum aspirants pin hopes on Trump-era policy

By MARIA VERZA and ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

REYNOSA, Mexico (AP) — A revived Trump-era policy to make asylum-seekers wait in Mexico for hearings in U.S. court is reviled by immigration advocates and repudiated by the Biden administration, which acted under a judge's order. Asylum hopeful Alexander Sánchez of Venezuela has a more favorable view.

"There is no other way to cross legally and, for that reason, I think it's good," he said at a migrant shelter in Reynosa, a Mexican border city where he has been living for nine months with his wife and their 5-year-old daughter.

Sánchez's optimism reflects the desperation of migrants who have seen asylum shut down under U.S. restrictions that deny humanitarian protections on grounds of preventing spread of the coronavirus, another Trump-era policy that the Biden administration supports.

The U.S. returned its first asylum-seekers from Brownsville, Texas, starting Jan. 25, under its "Migrant Protection Protocols" policy. It was barely noticed — the latest step in a slow-moving rollout across the border to make asylum hearings available to migrants who wait in Mexico.

So far, "MPP 2.0" pales compared to pandemic-related restrictions on seeking asylum at the border. Only 381 migrants had been returned to Mexico to wait for hearings from Dec. 6, when it resumed in El Paso, Texas, through Wednesday, according to the U.N. migration agency.

U.S. authorities expelled migrants more than 1.5 million times without an opportunity to claim asylum

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since March 2020 under the pandemic restrictions known as Title 42 authority, named for a 1944 public health law. In December alone, they were expelled nearly 80,000 times.

Walter Alexis Beltrán said staying at a camp of some 2,000 migrants in Reynosa's central plaza with his wife and 4-year-old daughter was better than living at home in El Salvador. The optometrist charges 25 cents to charge migrants' phones with a battery he purchased with his last savings.

Beltrán has been living at the camp for four months, disappointed that U.S. authorities sent him back to Mexico under Title 42 authority without a chance to make his case for asylum. He said he paid a smuggler \$4,500 to reach the U.S. from Mexico.

"MPP has advantages and disadvantages," Beltrán said amid a labyrinth of tents. "The disadvantage is that it's dangerous here."

Their hopes may be misplaced. Less than 1% of claims were granted among more than 70,000 people in MPP from its launch in January 2019 to when President Joe Biden suspended it on his first day in office a year ago, according to Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse. About half were pending and the rest denied or dismissed.

In August, U.S. District Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk, a Trump appointee in Amarillo, Texas, ordered that the policy be reinstated "in good faith," subject to Mexico's acceptance, triggering months of intense bilateral talks. Biden has been highly critical of the policy, largely because it exposes migrants to extreme violence while waiting in Mexico.

Despite the appearance of asylum being virtually banned, U.S. authorities process about six of every 10 people who cross illegally under immigration laws, which include the right to seek asylum. Nearly all of them — about 100,000 in December alone — are released or detained in the U.S. while judges consider their cases. The administration has not said why so many can seek asylum while remaining in the U.S. — and so many can't.

More clarity about U.S. policies is needed, said Abraham Barberi, founder of the Dulce Refugio de Matamoros migrant shelter east of Reynosa, who is in regular contact with U.S. authorities.

"Their goal is fewer people coming and discouraging people but they have to make clear who can come and who can't," Barberi said. "People need clear direction."

Talks to resume MPP began every other week after the judge's order in August and became more frequent as negotiators tackled a growing number of sticking points and logistics and as small migrant caravans moved through southern Mexico.

From the start, Mexico worried about returning people with court dates in the U.S. to the state of Tamaulipas, considered the border's most dangerous area. It lies across from Texas' Rio Grande Valley, the busiest corridor for illegal crossings.

The Biden administration started "MPP 2.0" in El Paso with plans to process 30 to 50 people a day there, according to a U.S. official who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. They fell far short, even after extending the policy to San Diego in early January.

Of 256 asylum-seekers returned from El Paso as of Jan. 12, Nicaraguans accounted for about three of every five with Venezuelans and Cubans making up most of the rest, according to Human Rights First, an advocacy group.

The Biden administration has declined to say how many asylum-seekers have been returned to Mexico with court dates in the U.S. since the policy resumed and has not provided a breakdown by nationality.

The Homeland Security Department said in response to questions that migrants can't choose to participate in MPP and that the policy is applied to those who cannot be expelled under pandemic restrictions. It hasn't said who those people are, but Mexico only accepts people from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador under the U.S. public health order. Others from Western hemisphere countries are released with orders to appear in court or detained in the U.S. until they can be flown home, making them prime candidates for MPP.

Migrants keep arriving at the Reynosa camp. Ruth Rubio, Marvin López and their 6-year-old daughter fled Honduras after two of Rubio's siblings were killed in gang violence. Without guidance from the U.S. government, they are waiting indefinitely to find out if there's a way to apply for asylum without crossing

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the border illegally. Rubio's 20-year-old daughter, who was wounded in Honduras, was allowed to wait in the U.S. pending an asylum decision.

They are interested in the reinstated policy to wait in Mexico for court hearings in the U.S. It is expected to expand soon to the Texas border cities of Laredo and Eagle Pass.

"If it's the only way (to get asylum in the U.S.), it's welcome," said Juan Antonio Sierra of the Pastoral for Human Mobility in Matamoros, a migrant aid group affiliated with the Catholic Church.

## **EXPLAINER: New federal law targets medical bill surprises**

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

Patients worried about getting hit with an unexpected bill after emergency care gained a layer of protection this month from a new federal law.

The No Surprises Act prevents doctors or hospitals in many situations from billing insured patients higher rates because the care providers are not in their insurer's coverage network.

The law won't eliminate billing surprises. But it is expected to ease concerns, especially in emergencies where patients may not have time to choose an in-network doctor. A closer look at the law:

### HOW ARE PATIENTS PROTECTED?

Insurers form networks of doctors and hospitals that agree to provide care for a discounted rate negotiated with the insurer.

Providers outside those networks often bill patients for the difference between what they charged and what the insurer covered. Insurers also may cover less of the remaining bill after the patient pays a deductible, which is the amount paid for care before most coverage starts.

In some cases, patients could receive the entire bill if the insurer doesn't cover anything outside its network.

The new law ends these billing surprises for most emergency care by essentially requiring that patients receive in-network coverage with no additional billing from the provider.

It also offers protection in care that isn't an emergency when people are treated at in-network hospitals by a provider outside their network. That can include radiology, lab work or care from an anesthesiologist.

The law also protects against out-of-network bills for air ambulances, but not ground ambulances.

Many states already regulate surprise medical bills. The federal law supplements those measures.

### WHAT OTHER PROTECTIONS ARE PROVIDED?

The No Surprises Act beefs up protection against insurer claim rejections for emergency visits.

Emergency departments are expensive places to seek care, and insurers have been trying to limit their use to only life-threatening emergencies.

They have denied coverage if they deem patient visits to be not emergencies. Doctors worry this practice will deter patients from seeking life-saving care when they need it.

Regulations behind the new law note that insurers cannot deny a claim solely based on a doctor's diagnosis. They also must consider the symptoms patients had when they arrived.

That means insurers should not deny a claim to a patient who rushed to the ER thinking she was having a heart attack but ultimately was diagnosed with heart burn.

### CAN THIS PROTECTION BE WAIVED?

In some cases that aren't emergencies, a doctor outside the network may ask a patient to waive their protections from the law. In exchange, they will provide an estimate of what the care will cost.

Those estimates also are available to uninsured patients.

Patients have to sign this waiver before the care. If the final bill comes in at least \$400 higher than the estimate, patients have a roughly four-month window in which they can dispute the amount.

If someone declines the waiver, the doctor may decline to treat them.

That could force people to choose between the doctor or hospital when only one is in the network.

"This law does not mean (patients) can sit back ... and not be engaged when it comes to where they're getting their health care," said Emily Bremer, a St. Louis-area insurance broker.

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## HOW CAN PATIENTS STILL BE SURPRISED?

Many people don't understand their insurance and how much it covers. That could lead to unpleasant surprises.

"This isn't necessarily going to protect people from big bills, but it is going to protect them from undiscounted bills," said Karen Pollitz, a senior fellow at the Kaiser Family Foundation, which studies health care issues.

Shoppers often focus on the premium, or cost of coverage, when they choose a plan and may not pay close attention to out-of-pocket expenses like deductibles. A high deductible can lead to a bill of several thousand dollars.

"Maybe now more consumers will understand the limitations of their insurance," said Laura Wooster, a senior vice president with the American College of Emergency Physicians.

## WHAT IF YOU STILL GET SURPRISED?

The law requires care providers to give patients a notice of whom they should contact if they have concerns about a bill.

Patients also may want to contact their insurer or the employer who administers the coverage.

Pollitz recommends comparing any bill with an explanation of benefits sent by the insurer. That should give patients a sense of whether the bill was processed properly.

It will show the undiscounted cost of care, what charges the insurer allows and what you may owe.

Many states offer consumer assistance programs that can help people sort out billing confusion or figure out how to contest a charge.

The federal government runs a website where people can lodge complaints and operates a toll-free number for the "No Surprises Help Desk," 800-985-3059.

## Beijing seals off more residential areas, reports 12 cases

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Beijing officials said Sunday they had sealed off several residential communities north of the city center after two cases of COVID-19 were found.

The Chinese capital is on high-alert as it prepares to host the Winter Olympics opening Friday.

Another 34 cases were confirmed among athletes and others who have come for the Games, the organizing committee said. In all 211 people have tested positive among more than 8,000 who had arrived by the end of Saturday. They include a Swedish cross-country skier and a snowboarder from Slovenia.

Everyone coming for the Olympics is being isolated from the general public for the duration of their stay in China to try to prevent cross-infection.

Residents in the Anzhenli neighborhood in Beijing's Chaoyang district were locked down on Saturday, and will not be allowed to leave their compound.

The city is also setting up 19 points in the area to test residents every day until Friday, officials said at a briefing on the pandemic, according to state-backed Beijing News.

While the number of cases is low compared to other countries in the region, China has doubled down on its "zero-tolerance" policy, which tries to break the chain of transmission as soon as it is found.

The Chinese capital reported a total of 12 cases of COVID-19 between 4 p.m. Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday, said Pang Xinghuo, the vice head of the Beijing Center for Disease Prevention and Control. All those cases came from people who were already under some kind of pandemic control measures.

The city conducted multiple rounds of testing for millions of residents this past week in Fengtai district, where some residential compounds were locked down.

The participants in the Games stay in hotels that have been surrounded by temporary walls. They can come and go only in special vehicles that take them directly to the venues or other Olympics facilities. The public is not allowed to enter the hotel properties or the venues, though a limited number of spectators will be let in for the events.

Anyone who tests positive inside the Olympics bubble is isolated in a hospital or quarantine hotel to try



to prevent the virus from spreading to other participants.

## 2nd trial in Floyd killing centers on clash of duty, code

By KATHLEEN FOODY Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A federal trial against three former Minneapolis police officers seeks to hold them responsible for not stopping George Floyd's murder — and perhaps strike a blow against long-standing police culture that breeds reluctance to rein in fellow officers.

The circumstances of Floyd's death — pinned under Officer Derek Chauvin's knee for more than nine minutes, recorded from multiple camera angles — may help prosecutors clear the bar for conviction on a charge that's rarely brought, in part because it can be difficult to prove. Regardless, several former federal prosecutors and legal experts see a message in the Department of Justice's pursuit of charges accusing J. Alexander Kueng, Thomas Lane and Tou Thao of violating Floyd's civil rights.

"This sends a real message to counterbalance that very strong cultural set of influences in policing that often prevent an officer from stepping forward and reporting or stopping misconduct," said Jonathan Smith, former chief of the department division that oversees police civil rights inquiries.

The federal charges require prosecutors to prove the ex-officers willfully deprived Floyd of his constitutional rights — meaning that they knew what they were doing was wrong and still went ahead.

Chauvin was convicted of state murder and manslaughter charges last year and pleaded guilty to a federal civil rights charge. Kueng, Lane and Thao also face a separate state trial on charges they aided and abetted murder and manslaughter.

Police departments and local prosecutors have their own means to punish officers who don't intervene. But high-profile examples show how risky it is, both personally and professionally, for officers who do intervene or who cooperate with investigations of fellow officers.

In Chicago, a key police witness against three Chicago officers charged with trying to cover up the 2014 shooting of Laquan McDonald testified that she was taunted as a "rat" by fellow officers who said her calls for assistance while on duty should be ignored.

In Florida late last year, an officer with less than three years experience pulled a sergeant by his belt away from a handcuffed suspect, apparently afraid he was about to pepper spray the man. The sergeant, a 21-year veteran, grabbed the officer — at one point placing his hand against her throat.

And in Buffalo, New York, Officer Cariol Horne was fired in 2008 after an arbitration process ruled that she had put other officers at risk when she stopped a fellow officer whose arm was around a handcuffed suspect's neck.

The Florida officer drew the support of her chief for stepping in, though his public comments came only after a Miami TV station published video of the conflict. Horne, the Buffalo officer, was ultimately granted a pension — but only after a lengthy court battle and a push to change state law.

Floyd's May 2020 killing prompted many police leaders to boost their own training on officers' duty to intervene when a fellow officer puts someone in danger.

Since mid-2020, 21 of the country's 100 largest police departments adopted policies on officers' duty to intervene and lawmakers in 12 states have approved similar laws, according to the Council on Criminal Justice's Task Force on Policing.

Minneapolis added a "duty to intervene" policy in 2016. Days after Floyd's murder, city officials agreed to strengthen it. The state Human Rights Department now can take the Minneapolis Police Department to court for any violations.

Joseph Giacalone, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a retired New York police sergeant, said officers know the consequences of federal prosecution far outweigh those of internal sanctions.

"Police know there's no limit to what the federal government can do," Giacalone said. "I definitely think now the risk of a federal charge is in the back of the mind."

Federal civil rights violations that result in death are punishable by up to life in prison or even death, but those sentences are extremely rare. Federal sentencing guidelines rely on complicated formulas that

indicate the officers in Floyd's killing would get much less if convicted.

During opening statements to jurors in the Floyd case, Kueng's defense attorney noted that Chauvin was the most senior officer present and called "all of the shots." Later in the week, the attorney sought to show the department instilled a sense of obedience in recruits and failed to show effective ways of intervening when force is misused.

For some experts, the case's spotlight on Kueng, Lane and Thao represents yet another opportunity to jolt individual police officers and department leaders into action and potentially prevent dangerous misconduct that erodes trust in the entire profession.

"We can't stop and think it was just Chauvin," said Kami Chavis, a professor at Wake Forest University School of Law. "Typically, within a police department, it's a small percentage of officers that are going to behave in that way. But when that small group is allowed to go unchecked, you are telegraphing to others what the culture is and that this is tolerated."

## Housework or sleep? Study says it depends when you were born

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

When Gen Xer Amy Rottier went shopping for her young children two decades ago, she drove to a mall and browsed for what she needed. Her millennial daughter, Helen, who is studying for a doctorate and doesn't have children, buys anything she needs with a click on her iPad.

The women, ages 50 and 25, respectively, illustrate the pace of change from one generation to the next in what people do in an average day. The changes were revealed in a study released last week by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Generation X women were more likely to do housework, care for children, read for pleasure and do lawn work, the study found. Millennial women were more inclined to exercise, spend leisure time on computers, take care of their pets and sleep.

The report uses American Time Use Survey data to capture how people lived at a point in time between the ages of 23 and 38. For Amy Rottier's generation, that was in 2003. For her daughter Helen, it was in 2019 — a year before the global coronavirus pandemic dramatically altered patterns of living. The report reflects changes for men as well as women.

Both generations spent the same amount of time working, and men worked longer hours than women because women were more likely to work part time. The two generations spent about the same time on leisure and sports activities, but Gen Xers were more likely than millennials to have children and own homes.

Even though viewing television was the top leisure activity for both generations, millennial men spent 18 minutes a day less watching TV than their Gen X counterparts. They appear to have shifted that time into playing games. On an average day, more millennials were participating in sports, recreation and exercise than their Gen X peers.

Changes in technology weighed heavily in people's choices, according to the report. Social media was in its infancy in 2003, smartphones weren't widespread and Cyber Monday hadn't yet been invented by retail marketing gurus.

"Millennials have an advantage in that they were able to do a lot of things from the comfort of their home, without getting in their car and going to a store or bank. It saves on time. For Generation X, that wasn't available when they were their age," said Michelle Freeman, the senior economist at the Bureau of Labor Statistics who wrote the report. "You can't ignore the technological improvements from 2003 to 2019, and that is definitely a factor."

Decisions about having children figured in, too.

"Taking care of kids, that was what I was doing the majority of my free time," said Amy Rottier, who has five children with her husband, Eric, in Madison, Wisconsin. "For me, at that point, leisure time was my husband telling me to take a bath and he would wrangle the kids and put them to bed."

As someone in her mid-20s now, Helen Rottier, who lives in Chicago, said the idea of having children is a distant proposition.

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"I'm still working on my degree, and then I want to get settled into my career," she said. "With my friends, we are now at the same age our parents were when we were born, and we aren't thinking of having kids yet."

Millennials were more likely to delay having families compared with members of Generation X, who were born between 1965 and 1980. Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, were more likely to have advanced degrees and less likely to be married than Gen Xers.

Gen Xers spent more time shopping for goods, which is likely because the act of physically going to a brick-and-mortar store took more time than shopping online. Millennial women spent less time per day reading for pleasure compared with Generation X women. Freeman said reading has declined for all age groups in the past two decades, going from 22 minutes a day on average in 2003 to 16 minutes a day in 2019.

Millennials also slept 22 minutes per day longer than their Gen X counterparts, which Freeman said may reflect shifting attitudes about the importance of sleep.

"My parents are baby boomers and they worked a lot," she said. "Sleeping a lot was considered lazy. We now respect the fact that more sleep is good for our health."

Without having children like their Gen X peers, millennials spent nearly twice as much time doing animal and pet care activities on a given day than Gen Xers did in 2003, according to the report. Then there's the difference on time spent gardening or keeping up a yard, which millennials spent about a half hour a day doing less, primarily because they were less likely to own a home.

"I don't know if I will ever have a house with a lawn," Helen Rottier said. "It may be different in the future, but right now, I don't see any appeal in a lawn. Why would I need to take care of a lawn?"

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Jan. 31, the 31st day of 2022. There are 334 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 31, 1958, the United States entered the Space Age with its first successful launch of a satellite, Explorer 1, from Cape Canaveral.

On this date:

In 1797, composer Franz Schubert was born in Vienna.

In 1863, during the Civil War, the First South Carolina Volunteers, an all-Black Union regiment composed of many escaped slaves, was mustered into federal service at Beaufort, South Carolina.

In 1865, the U.S. House of Representatives joined the Senate in passing the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution abolishing slavery, sending it to states for ratification. (The amendment was adopted in December 1865.)

In 1919, baseball Hall-of-Famer Jackie Robinson was born in Cairo (KAY'-roh), Georgia.

In 1945, Pvt. Eddie Slovik, 24, became the first U.S. soldier since the Civil War to be executed for desertion as he was shot by an American firing squad in France.

In 1961, NASA launched Ham the Chimp aboard a Mercury-Redstone rocket from Cape Canaveral; Ham was recovered safely from the Atlantic Ocean following his 16 1/2-minute suborbital flight.

In 1971, astronauts Alan Shepard, Edgar Mitchell and Stuart Roosa blasted off aboard Apollo 14 on a mission to the moon.

In 2000, an Alaska Airlines MD-83 jet crashed into the Pacific Ocean off Port Hueneme (wy-NEE'-mee), California, killing all 88 people aboard.

In 2001, a Scottish court sitting in the Netherlands convicted one Libyan, acquitted a second, in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. (Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi (AHB'-dehl BAH'-seht AH'-lee ahl-meh-GRAH'-hee) was given a life sentence, but was released after eight years on compassionate grounds by Scotland's government. He died in 2012.)

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In 2015, Bobbi Kristina Brown, the daughter of the late singer Whitney Houston, was found unresponsive in a bathtub at her Georgia townhome and was taken to an Atlanta-area hospital. (She died six months later.)

In 2016, Novak Djokovic maintained his perfect streak in six Australian Open finals with a 6-1, 7-5, 7-6 (3) victory over Andy Murray.

In 2020, the United States declared a public health emergency over the new coronavirus, and President Donald Trump signed an order to temporarily bar entry to foreign nationals, other than immediate family of U.S. citizens, who had traveled in China within the preceding 14 days. The Senate narrowly rejected Democratic demands to summon witnesses for President Donald Trump's first impeachment trial.

Ten years ago: Republican Mitt Romney routed Newt Gingrich in the Florida primary, rebounding from an earlier defeat. The breast-cancer charity Susan G. Komen for the Cure set off a furor by deciding to halt its partnerships with Planned Parenthood affiliates (Komen reversed itself three days later).

Five years ago: President Donald Trump nominated Neil Gorsuch, a fast-rising conservative judge, to the U.S. Supreme Court. (Gorsuch would be confirmed in April 2017 by a 54-45 vote.)

One year ago: Tens of thousands of people protested across Russia to demand the release of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny in a second wave of nationwide demonstrations that rattled the Kremlin; activists said police detained more than 5,100 protesters across the country, including more than 1,600 in Moscow. Thousands of ultra-Orthodox Israelis participated in a pair of funerals for two prominent rabbis in Jerusalem, flouting the country's ban on large public gatherings amid the pandemic. A World Health Organization team looking into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic visited the food market in the Chinese city of Wuhan that was linked to many early infections.

Today's Birthdays: Composer Philip Glass is 85. Former Interior Secretary James Watt is 84. Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands, the former queen regent, is 84. Actor Stuart Margolin is 82. Former U.S. Rep. Dick Gephardt, D-Mo., is 81. Blues singer-musician Charlie Musselwhite is 78. Actor Glynn Turman is 75. Baseball Hall of Famer Nolan Ryan is 75. Actor Jonathan Banks is 75. Singer-musician Harry Wayne Casey (KC and the Sunshine Band) is 71. Rock singer Johnny Rotten is 66. Actor Kelly Lynch is 63. Actor Anthony LaPaglia is 63. Singer-musician Lloyd Cole is 61. Rock musician Al Jaworski (Jesus Jones) is 56. Actor Minnie Driver is 52. Actor Portia de Rossi is 49. Actor-comedian Bobby Moynihan is 45. Actor Kerry Washington is 45. Bluegrass singer-musician Becky Buller is 43. Singer Justin Timberlake is 41. Actor Tyler Ritter is 37. Country singer Tyler Hubbard (Florida Georgia Line) is 35. Folk-rock singer-musician Marcus Mumford (Mumford and Sons) is 35. Actor Joel Courtney is 26.