

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 11, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 278 ~ 1 of 56

## Groton Track Meet Cancelled

Due to wet conditions and Tuesday's forecast the Groton Invitational track meet has been cancelled.

### 1- Upcoming Events

1- Truss Pros Help Wanted

2- Dish Network Ad

3- Winter Storm Watch

3- Ken's Help Wanted Ad

4- High School Baseball

4- Senior Legion Baseball Ad

5- Baseball Box Scores

6- Hawaii - Alaskan Tour Ad

7- Groton Robotic Seniors bring home first place award at National Event!

11- DirectTV Ad

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## UpComing Events

### Monday, April 11

7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

1 p.m.: Senior Citizens meet at Groton Community Center

Emmanuel: 6:30 a.m.. Bible Study

School Breakfast: Frittata.

School Lunch: Lasagna hot dish, corn.

Senior Menu: Lasagna rotini, tossed salad with dressing, ambrosia fruit salad, cookie, whole wheat brea

### Tuesday, April 12

**Cancelled:** Track meet in Groton

Catholic: Turton Mass, 5 p.m.

Emmanuel: 7 p.m. Church Council

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

School Breakfast: Blueberry French Toast Bake.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, fries.

Senior Menu: Hot turkey sandwich, macaroni salad, mandarin orange dessert, sherbet.



**"SIT WITH ANIMALS QUIETLY AND THEY WILL SHOW YOU THEIR HEARTS. SIT WITH THEM KINDLY AND THEY WILL HELP YOU LOCATE YOURS."**

-AUTHOR UNKNOWN

### Wednesday, April 13

7 p.m.: "Way of the Cross" at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church

Catholic Mass: 5:00pm Turton, 8:30am Groton

Emmanuel: 6 p.m. Confirmation, 6:30 p.m. League School Breakfast; Eggs and sausage.

School Menu: Chicken nuggets, mashed potatoes.

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, buttermilk biscuits, banana pudding with bananas.

## Truss Pros Help Wanted

Truss Pros in Britton is looking to hire a CDL driver to deliver trusses in the tri-state area. Home every night. Competitive wage! Full benefit package!

To apply call 605-277-4937 or go to [www.uslbm.com/careers](http://www.uslbm.com/careers) and search for jobs in Britton, SD.

## OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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

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## Winter Storm Watch

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE  
National Weather Service Aberdeen SD  
353 AM CDT Mon Apr 11 2022

SDZ005-006-010-016-017-112200-  
/O.CON.KABR.WS.A.0003.220413T0000Z-220414T1200Z/  
McPherson-Brown-Edmunds-Potter-Faulk-  
Including the cities of Eureka, Aberdeen, Ipswich, Gettysburg, and Faulkton  
353 AM CDT Mon Apr 11 2022

...WINTER STORM WATCH REMAINS IN EFFECT FROM TUESDAY EVENING THROUGH THURSDAY MORNING...

\* WHAT...Heavy snow possible. Total snow accumulations of 2 to 6 inches possible. Highest amounts along the North Dakota/South Dakota border. Winds could gust as high as 45 mph.

\* WHERE...Potter, McPherson, Brown, Faulk and Edmunds Counties.

\* WHEN...From Tuesday evening through Thursday morning.

\* IMPACTS...Plan on slippery road conditions. Patchy blowing snow could significantly reduce visibility. The hazardous conditions could impact the morning or evening commute.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

Monitor the latest forecasts for updates on this situation.

&&



**HELP  
WANTED!**

**Part time deli clerk and part  
time cashier and stocker.  
Apply at Ken's Food Fair, Groton**

## High School Baseball

### **Groton Area out-hits competition, yet Elkton Blue Soxs takes the win**

Groton Area fell 8-5 to Elkton Blue Soxs on Sunday despite out-hitting them nine to eight.

Groton Area got things moving in the second inning, when Pierce Kettering singled on a 1-1 count, scoring one run.

In the bottom of the third inning, Elkton Blue Soxs tied things up at three when Nate Timm doubled on the first pitch of the at bat, scoring two runs.

Elkton Blue Soxs pulled away for good with three runs in the fourth inning. In the fourth Logan Kuehl singled on a 2-0 count, scoring one run and Ryan Krog grounded out, scoring two runs.

Krog took the win for Elkton Blue Soxs. The pitcher surrendered two runs on two hits over five innings, striking out 12.

Bradin Althoff took the loss for Groton Area. The lefthander surrendered three runs on four hits over two and two-thirds innings, striking out four.

Kuehl started the game for Elkton Blue Soxs. The righthander allowed seven hits and three runs over two innings, striking out two and walking one Jackson Cogley started the game for Groton Area. The righty allowed two hits and three runs over two and a third innings, striking out six

Groton Area totaled nine hits in the game. Kettering and Althoff each collected multiple hits for Groton Area. Althoff and Kettering all had two hits to lead Groton Area. Groton Area was sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Dillon Abeln had the most chances in the field with ten. Groton Area tore up the base paths, as two players stole at least two bases. Kettering led the way with two.

Elkton Blue Soxs collected eight hits on the day. Timm, Aiden Erickson, and Krog each racked up multiple hits for Elkton Blue Soxs.

- Seth Erickson

## **Senior Legion Baseball Meeting**



**Groton Legion Post #39 will be having a Baseball Meeting on Tuesday April 12, 2022 @7:00 at the Post Home. This meeting is for all Senior Legion age players who are eligible to play in the 2022 season. This meeting is required attendance for all players and their parents or legal guardian.**

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## Groton Area 5 - 8 Elkton Blue Sox

📍 Away 📅 Sunday April 10, 2022

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
GRTN	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	5	9	0
ELKT	0	0	3	3	0	2	X	8	8	3

### BATTING

Groton Area	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
P Kettering (CF, C)	3	2	2	1	1	1
D Abeln (C, P)	4	0	1	1	0	2
B Althoff (1B, P, LF)	2	1	2	1	2	0
J Bjerke (2B, 1B)	4	0	1	1	0	1
J Cogley (P, 2B, S...	3	0	0	0	1	3
C Dunker (3B)	3	0	1	0	0	1
K Hoover (SS, 2B)	3	1	1	0	0	0
N Morris (2B)	1	0	0	0	0	1
B Fliehs (LF, CF)	3	1	1	0	0	2
E Nehls (RF)	3	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>

**TB:** J Bjerke, P Kettering 2, B Fliehs, K Hoover, D Abeln, C Dunker, B Althoff 2, **HBP:** C Dunker, **SB:** J Bjerke, P Kettering 2, C Dunker 2, B Althoff, **LOB:** 8

### PITCHING

Groton Area	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
J Cogley	2.1	2	3	3	2	6	0
B Althoff	2.2	4	3	3	2	4	0
<b>D Abeln</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>

**L:** B Althoff, **P-S:** J Cogley 48-26, D Abeln 21-14, B Althoff 50-29, **WP:** J Cogley 2, D Abeln 2, B Althoff, **HBP:** J Cogley, D Abeln, **BF:** J Cogley 12, D Abeln 7, B Althoff 14

Elkton Blue Sox	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
A Erickson (SS, 3B)	3	3	2	0	0	1
L Kuehl (P, SS)	3	2	1	1	1	1
R Krog (3B, P)	4	1	2	4	0	0
J Hemmen (C)	2	0	0	0	1	2
N Timm (1B)	3	0	2	2	0	0
L Thompson (2B)	3	0	1	0	1	2
G Neill (LF)	4	0	0	0	0	2
A Neill (RF)	3	0	0	0	0	3
R Hunter (CF)	1	2	0	0	2	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>

**2B:** N Timm, **HR:** R Krog, **TB:** R Krog 5, A Erickson 2, N Timm 3, L Kuehl, L Thompson, **HBP:** A Erickson, N Timm, **SB:** A Erickson, L Kuehl 2, L Thompson, **LOB:** 8

Elkton Blue S	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
L Kuehl	2.0	7	3	3	1	2	0
R Krog	5.0	2	2	2	3	12	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>

**W:** R Krog, **P-S:** R Krog 100-59, L Kuehl 35-26, **WP:** R Krog 3, **HBP:** R Krog, **BF:** R Krog 21, L Kuehl 13

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## Groton Robotic Seniors bring home first place award at National Event!

Congratulations to G-Force-(Travis Townsend, Jace Kroll) and Gear Heads (Jack Dinger, Ethan Clark and Axel Warrington) for earning their way to the Us Open in Council Bluffs, Iowa!

The boys had a great tournament this weekend to finish off what really turned out to be a great year for GT Robotics. We traveled to Council Bluffs, IA for the CREATE US Open Competition. They competed against 48 teams from across the country, including Hawaii, in a game, that due to some different circumstances, was not entirely familiar to us. Needless to say, there were a few goose eggs for scores in their first few rounds, but they caught on quickly.

On the second day, Gear Heads actually got one of the highest qualifying round scores in the whole tournament! For the finals, 48 teams were condensed down to twelve alliance teams containing 4 teams a piece. G-Force (Travis Townsend, Jace Kroll) finished in the 1st place alliance, and Gear Heads (Ethan Clark, Jack Dinger, Axel Warrington) finished in the 5th place alliance. They did great.

I would really like to thank the school and the entire Groton community for all of the support they give the robotics program. In talking to other coaches at tournaments, funding for this or that always comes up. And for me, the conversation always boils down to how blessed our club is to have such great support from the community. Thank you! We couldn't do it without you!

Submitted by Coach Neil Warrington



**Coach-Neil Warrington, G-Force (Jace Kroll and Travis Townsend), Gear Heads (Axel Warrington, Jack Dinger and Ethan Clark). Hats off and THANK YOU to BK Custom T's for making the guys polo shirts in a VERY short amount of time!** (Courtesy of robotic parents)

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**Axel, Ethan and Jack getting 9050B ready for a match!** (Courtesy of robotic parents)



**Groton teams frantically planning, and regrouping-note they are the only ones there!** (Courtesy of robotic parents)



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**Fifth place Gear Heads (Ethan Clark, Axel Warrington and Jack Dinger) Posing with the star of the show 9050B!** (Courtesy of robotic parents)

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**FIRST PLACE ALLIANCE TEAMS- G-Force ((far right) Jace Kroll and Travis Townsend)** (Courtesy of robotic parents)



**G-Force (Jace Kroll and Travis Townsend) Posing with the star of the show 9050A!** (Courtesy of robotic parents)



**G-Force-Jace and Travis waiting for a match to start.** (Courtesy of robotic parents)

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## Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

### Should the Vikings trade down in the First Round of the 2022 NFL Draft?

With the NFL Draft coming up in less than three weeks, teams are at the point of the draft process where they move from evaluating players to evaluating what they should do in the draft. For the new Vikings' regime in their first draft, the question now becomes whether they should trade down from the 12th pick in the first round of this draft and accumulate more picks.

Recently the history of Vikings trading down in the first round has resulted in mediocre outcomes at best. In 2020, the Vikings traded the 25th pick to the San Francisco 49ers for the 31st pick, which the Vikings used to draft Jeff Gladney. That move did not pay off for the Vikings as they released Gladney after just one season because of his indictment for domestic violence. In 2021, the Vikings traded the 14th pick to the New York Jets for the 23rd pick, which the Vikings used to take Christian Darrisaw. Although Darrisaw only started ten games in 2021 because of injuries, he appears to have the potential to be the starting left tackle of the future for the Vikings.

The 2022 NFL Draft provides a unique opportunity for the Vikings to deeply consider another trade down in the first round. Four NFL teams have multiple first round picks after the Vikings pick at 12. The Philadelphia Eagles hold the 15th and 18th pick; the New Orleans Saints hold the 16th and 19th pick; the Green Bay Packers hold the 22nd and 28th pick; and the Kansas City Chiefs hold the 29th and 30th pick. Because of the extensive draft capital these teams have, they might try to reach out to a team like the Vikings to trade up and draft a player they highly covet.

There is also a rumor out there that the Los Angeles Chargers want to move up in the first round of the draft to get a right tackle for Justin Herbert. Since the Vikings are already set at the tackle positions, the Vikings would be a great trade partner with the Chargers. Currently, the Chargers have the 17th pick, which is only five spots behind the Vikings. Therefore, the Vikings would likely not receive a massive haul of draft picks from the Chargers for this trade. In my opinion, I would not do this trade if I was the Vikings as I do not see the reward in trading down for such little draft capital in return.

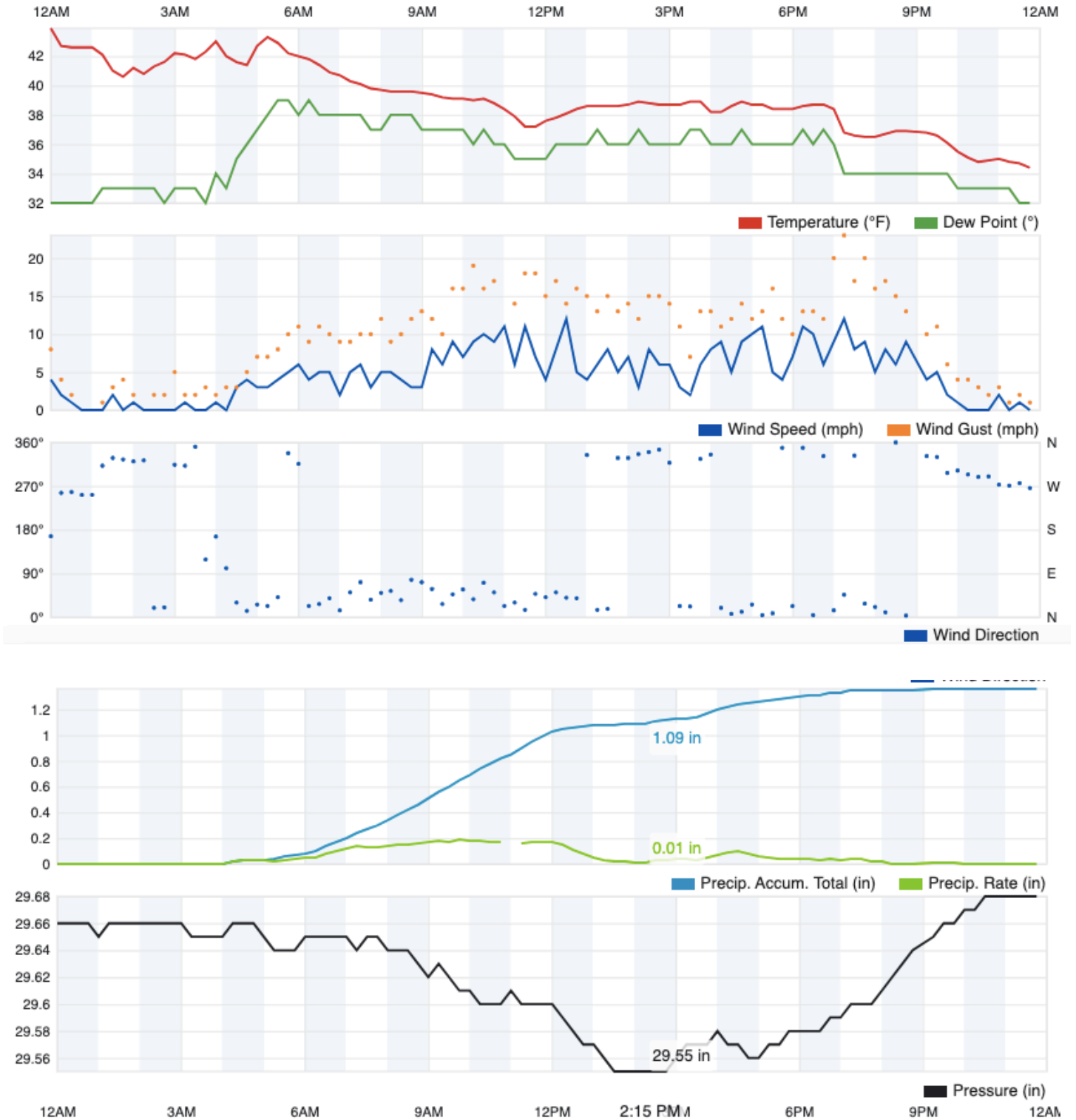
Ultimately, the best trade partner for the Vikings might be the Pittsburgh Steelers. As of now, the Steelers hold the 20th pick in the first round. There are rumors that the Steelers are extremely high on Malik Willis, the quarterback from Liberty. The only problem for the Steelers is, he probably will not make it to the 20th pick. If Malik Willis does make it to the Vikings at the 12th pick, the Steelers might start to feel the pressure and give the Vikings a call to move up to take him.

The question now becomes what the Steelers would be willing to trade to move up to the Vikings' 12th pick. Last year in 2021, the Chicago Bears moved from the 20th pick to the 11th pick in the draft to take quarterback, Justin Fields. For doing so, the Bears gave the Giants their first-round pick for the 2022 draft. It is uncertain if the Steelers would be willing to give up their first-round pick in the 2023 draft to move up eight spots in the 2022 draft. Nonetheless, if the Vikings receive the call from the Steelers on draft night, they could use the template from the Bears-Giants trade in 2021 to pry away a first-round pick from the Steelers in 2023. If that happens, the Vikings should be ecstatic about trading down in this year's draft.

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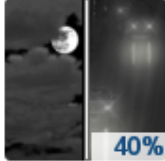



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Broton Daily Independent

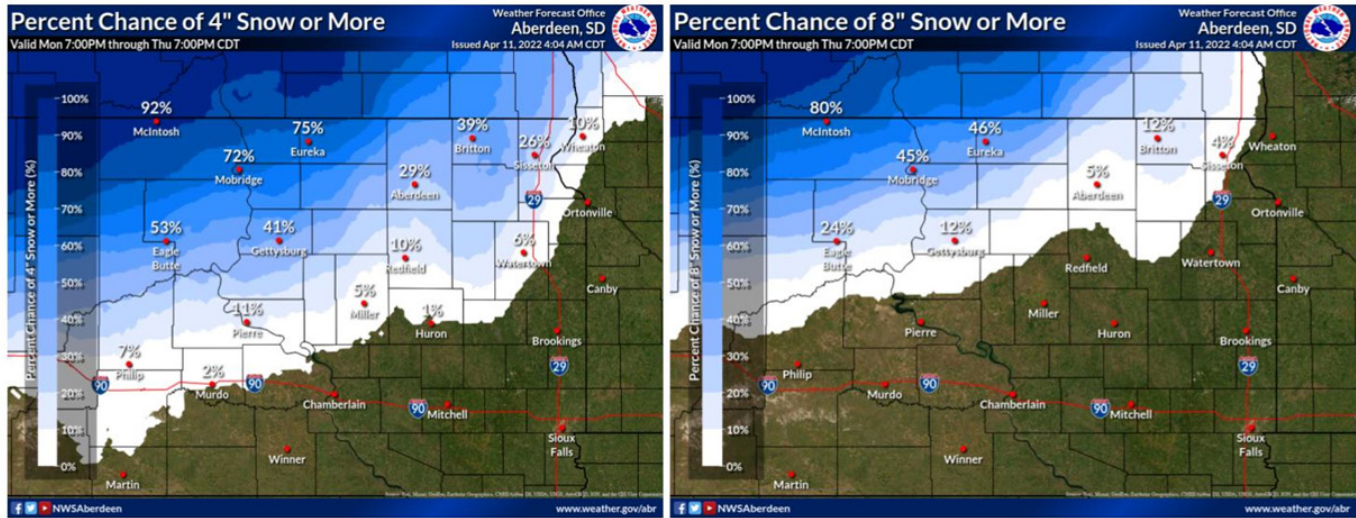
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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
				
20%	40%	80%	80%	80%
Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance Showers	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Rain	Rain and Breezy	Rain and Breezy then Rain/Snow	Rain/Snow Likely and Patchy Blowing Snow
High: 54 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 51 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 39 °F



## Snowfall Probability

April 11, 2022  
5:24 AM



There is a gradual shift to the northwest with the heaviest snowfall amounts.  
A winter storm watch remains in effect for north central South Dakota.



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

A powerful storm system will impact the area Tuesday through Wednesday, bringing high winds, moderate rainfall, and the potential for heavy wet snow. Significant accumulating snowfall will be possible in north-central South Dakota Tuesday night through Wednesday. Current trends show a slight northwest shift with the storm track with lower snowfall amounts possible.

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## Today in Weather History

April 11, 1993: Heavy wet snow fell over a portion of northeast South Dakota, mainly east of Aberdeen and north of Watertown. The snowfall began on the 10th and carried into the 11th. 2 to 6 inches were reported across the area. However, 8 inches were reported near Summit and 7 inches near Sisseton.

April 11, 2007: A large upper-level low-pressure area wrapped snow into far northeast South Dakota. Snow covered and slushy roads resulted from the heavy wet snow making travel tough. Some schools and events postponed or canceled. Snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Sisseton and Milbank, 7 inches at Castlewood, 8 inches at Bryant, 9 inches at Toronto and Clear Lake, and 12 inches at Summit.

April 11, 2008: An intense area of low pressure moving northeast across the Central Plains brought widespread heavy snow and strong winds to parts of central and northeast South Dakota. Snowfall amounts from 3 to 16 inches combined with north winds of 30 to 45 mph brought widespread blowing and drifting snow with blizzard conditions and heavy drifting affecting much of the area. A few thunderstorms also occurred, bringing rapid snowfall rates to some areas. Many vehicles went into the ditch with many other accidents occurring. Most roads became nearly impassable with no travel advised for parts of central and much of northeast South Dakota. There were many people stranded to wait out the storm. Also, many schools and businesses were closed on Friday the 11th. Snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at Faulkton, Ree Heights, Kidder, and Hayti, 7 inches at Garden City, Castlewood, Miller, Britton, and near Stephan, 9 inches at Waubay, Bryant, and Roy Lake, 10 inches at Big Stone City and Milbank, 11 inches at Wilmot, Watertown, and Victor, 15 inches at Summit, and 16 inches at Clear Lake.

1965: Severe thunderstorms in the Upper Midwest spawned fifty-one tornadoes killing over 250 people and causing more than 200 million dollars damage. Indiana, Ohio and Michigan were hardest hit in the "Palm Sunday Tornado Outbreak". Although no F5's were officially reported, at least 22 were rated as F3 or F4. This is the third deadliest day for tornadoes on record, behind the Super Outbreak of 4/3/1974, and the outbreak that included the Tri-State Tornado of 3/18/1925. Dr. Ted Fujita discovered suction vortices during the Palm Sunday tornado outbreak. It had been believed the reason why tornadoes could hit one house and leave another across the street completely unscathed was because the whole tornado would "jump" from one house to another. However, the actual reason is because most of the destruction is caused by suction vortices: small, intense mini-tornadoes within the main tornado.

1988: Sixteen cities in the western U.S., nine in California, reported new record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 95 degrees at Sacramento and 96 degrees at Bakersfield, California were the warmest of record for so early in the season.

1989: Forty-four cities in the south central and eastern U.S. reported new record low temperatures for the date. Lows of 25 degrees at Conway Arkansas, 29 degrees at Dallas/Fort Worth Texas, and 22 degrees at Ozark Arkansas, were April records. Lows of 26 degrees at Hot Springs Arkansas and 31 degrees at Shreveport Louisiana equaled April records.

2012: The deluge began around 3:30 a.m. Over the next few hours, fast-moving hailstones pummeled the area north of Amarillo, Tex., which had lately been sitting in dust due to a lack of precipitation, according to the news organization. The hail mixed with melting hail turning the dust to mud and the mix create four-foot high mounds that shut down a major highway for the next 18 hours.

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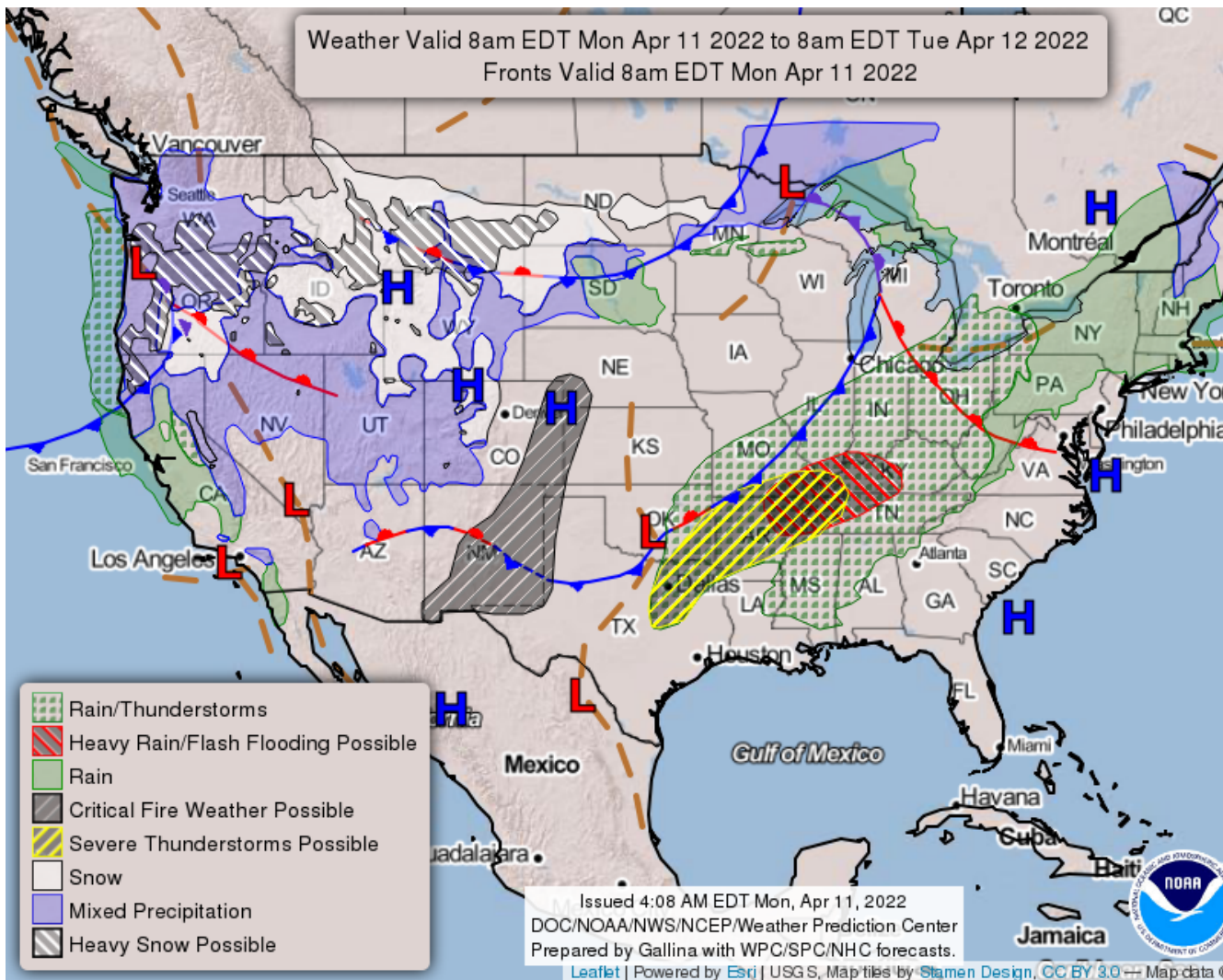
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 44 °F at 12:00 AM**  
**Low Temp: 34 °F at 11:59 PM**  
**Wind: 23 mph at 7:10 PM**  
**Precip: 1.36**

Day length: 13 hours, 22 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 86 in 1910  
Record Low: 8 in 1939  
Average High: 56°F  
Average Low: 30°F  
Average Precip in April.: 0.51  
Precip to date in April.: 1.66  
Average Precip to date: 2.57  
Precip Year to Date: 3.46  
Sunset Tonight: 8:14:47 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:50:08 AM





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## ONLY ONE KING IS ALL POWERFUL

Canute was the king of the Danes in the eleventh century. Under his leadership they overran Britain, the King of Denmark and then the King of Norway. He was recognized as the most powerful man of his time.

One day while standing at the seashore with the waves gently rolling back and forth over his feet, a group of his subjects stood before him and called out, "You are all powerful, O King! There is no one who dare disobey you and nothing can ever stop you."

As the waves lapped about his feet, he asked, "Will the sea obey me?"

"Command it, O King, and it will!" they responded.

"Sea," he shouted in a loud voice, "I command you to come no further. Waves, stop your rolling. Do not touch my feet!" Suddenly a large wave erupted from the sea and swept over him.

"Learn a lesson," he said as he took off his crown. "There is only one King who is all-powerful. It is He who rules the sea and holds the ocean. It is whom you ought to worship and praise and serve above all others."

How powerful is this "only one King?" The Psalmist wrote, "He stilled the storm to a whisper. The waves of the sea were hushed."

Often our lives are as troubled as an angry sea. Far too frequently the waves attack us and would wash us into the depths of the unknown. Thunder echoes in our ears and lightning strikes nearby filling our hearts with fear.

Then, just before we are swept under, He stills the storm.

Prayer: We thank You, Father, that the winds of life and the waves of disaster cannot destroy Your beloved. We praise You for Your power and attention. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: He stilled the storm to a whisper. The waves of the sea were hushed. Psalm 107:29

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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,  
04/07/2022 Groton CDE  
04/09/2022 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)  
04/09/2022 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)  
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  
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  
01/29/2023 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)

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## News from the Associated Press

### **Camper comes off hitch, sparks ignite grassfire in Watertown**

WATERTOWN, S.D. (AP) — A camper that came unhooked from a pickup hitch caused sparks that ignited a grassfire Saturday in Watertown, authorities said.

Watertown Fire Rescue was called to the scene about 1:10 p.m. and discovered a fast-moving blaze that was moving toward a farm and a residence.

Crews were able to contain the fire in about 20 minutes, department officials said. No structures were damaged in the 2.5-acre fire, the Watertown Public Opinion reported.

The incident remains under investigation.

### **Ousted PM Imran Khan's party walks out of Pakistan assembly**

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistani lawmakers from the party of ousted Premier Imran Khan collectively resigned from Parliament on Monday ahead of the vote to elect a new prime minister.

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, or Pakistan Justice Party, withdrew the nomination of former foreign minister and seasoned politician Shah Mahmood Qureshi as its candidate and more than 100 lawmakers walked out of the National Assembly.

"We boycott this election according to the decision of our party, and we are resigning," Qureshi said. His name, however, will stay on the ballot because of the last-minute decision.

The walkout followed an impassioned speech by Qureshi who lauded what he described as Khan's independence and refusal to bow to U.S. pressure.

After the walkout, opposition lawmakers are expected to start voting on the new prime minister, with opposition lawmaker Shahbaz Sharif as the only contender.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. AP's earlier story follows below.

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistani lawmakers convened Monday to choose a new prime minister, capping a tumultuous week of political drama that saw the ouster of Imran Khan as premier and a constitutional crisis narrowly averted after the country's top court stepped in.

The leading contender is Shahbaz Sharif, opposition lawmaker and a brother of disgraced former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. But his election will not guarantee a clear path forward — or solve Pakistan's many economic problems, including high inflation and a soaring energy crisis.

Khan, a former cricket star whose conservative Islamist ideology and dogged independence characterized his three years and eight months in office, was ousted early Sunday after losing a no-confidence vote in Parliament. Deserted by his party allies and a key coalition partner, his opposition pushed Khan out with 174 votes — two more than the required simple majority in the 342-seat National Assembly.

The opposition has selected Shahbaz Sharif as its candidate for prime minister, claiming it has enough votes in his favor.

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, or Pakistan Justice Party, has put forward former foreign minister and seasoned politician Shah Mahmood Qureshi as its candidate. But Khan and his party members later said they would resign collectively during Monday's session — likely further complicating the work of the assembly under a new premier.

In a show of strength and precursor to the political uncertainty ahead, Khan rallied hundreds of thousands of supporters late Sunday to protest his ouster, and describing the next government as an "imposed government." In cities across Pakistan, Khan's supporters marched, waving large party flags and vowing support. The youth, who make up the backbone of Khan's supporters, dominated the crowds.

Some were crying, others shouting slogans promising Khan's return.

Khan has also demanded early elections, though the balloting is not due before August 2023. He has tapped into anti-American sentiment in Pakistan, accusing Washington of conspiring with his opponents to

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topple him. His conspiracy theory resonates with his young support base, which often sees Washington's post 9/11 war on terror as unfairly targeting Pakistan.

Pakistan's political drama began on April 3 when Khan sidestepped an initial no-confidence vote demanded by the opposition by dissolving Parliament and calling early elections. The opposition, which accuses Khan of economic mismanagement, appealed to the Supreme Court. After four days of deliberations, the court ordered Parliament re-instated and the no-confidence vote went ahead. After a marathon Parliament session that started Saturday and that also saw the resignation of parliament speaker, Asad Qaiser. Khan was ousted early Sunday.

Khan claims the opposition colluded with Washington to topple him, allegedly because of his independent foreign policy favoring China and Russia. He was also criticized for a visit he made on Feb. 24 to Moscow, where he held talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin as Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine.

The U.S. State Department has denied any involvement in Pakistan's internal politics.

The road ahead will be stormy for the opposition coalition, which consists of parties that cross the political divide, from the left to the radically religious. The two largest parties are the Pakistan Muslim League, headed by Sharif, and the Pakistan People's Party, co-chaired by the son and husband of slain ex-Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

In Pakistan, a few wealthy and powerful families have dominated politics for decades, with power most often alternating between the Sharifs and Bhutto camps. Both political houses have been accused and occasionally convicted of widespread corruption — and both have denied the allegations.

Nawaz Sharif was unseated by the Supreme Court in 2015 after being convicted in connection with financial irregularities revealed in the so-called Panama Papers — a collection of leaked secret financial documents showing how some of the world's richest hide their money and involving a global law firm based in Panama. He was disqualified by Pakistan's Supreme Court from holding office.

Asif Ali Zardari, Bhutto's husband who served as president of Pakistan after the 2008 elections, has spent more than seven years in prison, convicted on corruption charges.

Both families have dismissed corruption allegations against them as being politically motivated.

Khan came to power in 2018, promising to break family rule in Pakistan but his opponents claimed he won the elections with help from the powerful military, which has ruled Pakistan for half of the country's 75-year history.

Ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was ousted in 1999 in a military coup and Benazir Bhutto's government was ousted several times after the military sided with her opposition. In Pakistani politics, where loyalties are often fluid, Bhutto's fiercest opposition came from Sharif's party.

Shahbaz Sharif has served three times as chief minister of Pakistan's largest, most influential Punjab province, where 60% of the country's 220 million people live. His son Hamza was elected by the Punjab provincial parliament last week as new chief minister, ousting Khan's nominee. Khan's party is challenging that election and the younger Sharif has yet to be sworn in.

## Elon Musk will not join board at Twitter in sudden reversal

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Less than a week after announcing that Tesla CEO Elon Musk would join its board of directors, Twitter has reversed course.

Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal announced the news, which followed a weekend of Musk tweets suggesting changes to Twitter, including making the site ad-free. Nearly 90% of Twitter's 2021 revenue came from ads.

"Elon's appointment to the board was to become officially effective on 4/9, but Elon shared that same morning that he would not be joining the board," Agrawal wrote in a reposted note originally sent to Tesla employees. "I believe this is for the best."

Agrawal didn't offer an explanation for Musk's apparent decision. He said the board understood the risks of having Musk, who is now the company's largest shareholder, as a member. But it, "believed having Elon as a fiduciary of the company, where he, like all board members, has to act in the best interests of the company and all our shareholders, was the best path forward," he wrote.

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Musk posted a few cryptic tweets late Sunday, including one showing a meme saying, "In all fairness, your honor, my client was in goblin mode," followed by one saying "Explains everything." Another, later tweet was of an emoji with a hand over its mouth.

He now has a 9% stake in Twitter, raising questions about how he might try to reshape the social media platform as Twitter's biggest shareholder.

Musk's 80.5 million Twitter followers make him one of the most popular figures on the platform, rivaling pop stars like Ariana Grande and Lady Gaga. But his prolific tweeting has sometimes gotten him into trouble, such as when he has used it to promote his business ventures, rally Tesla loyalists, question pandemic measures and pick fights.

In one famous example, Musk apologized to a British cave explorer who alleged the Tesla CEO had branded him a pedophile by referring to him as "pedo guy" in an angry — and subsequently deleted — tweet. The explorer filed a defamation suit, although a Los Angeles jury later cleared Musk.

He's also been locked in a long-running dispute with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission over his Twitter activity. Musk and Tesla in 2018 agreed to pay \$40 million in civil fines and for Musk to have his tweets approved by a corporate lawyer after he tweeted about having the money to take Tesla private at \$420 per share. That didn't happen but the tweet caused Tesla's stock price to jump. His lawyer has contended that the SEC is infringing on Musk's free speech rights.

Musk has described himself as a "free speech absolutist" and has said he doesn't think Twitter is living up to free speech principles — an opinion shared by followers of Donald Trump and several right-wing political figures who've had their accounts suspended for violating Twitter content rules.

But what's really has been driving Musk's Twitter involvement isn't clear. Other preoccupations with the service include arguing to make Twitter's algorithm viewable by the public, widening the availability of "verified" Twitter accounts, and blasting a profile photo initiative involving non-fungible tokens, or NFTs.

Musk has also called "crypto spam bots," which search tweets for cryptocurrency related keywords then pose as customer support to empty user crypto wallets, the "most annoying problem on Twitter."

Twitter's CEO and other board members have praised Musk, suggesting they might take his ideas seriously.

Agrawal's initial actions since taking over from co-founder Jack Dorsey in November have involved reorganizing divisions without making major changes. The company has long lagged behind its social media rivals and boasts far fewer users.

## French duel: Macron vs Le Pen fight for presidency

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron may be ahead in the presidential race so far, but he warned his supporters that "nothing is done" and his runoff battle with far-right challenger Marine Le Pen will be a hard fight. And she's ready for it.

The duel is starting Monday, after the two came out on top in Sunday's first-round vote. The centrist Macron is heading to an economically depressed area of northern France where a majority of voters chose Le Pen, close to her electoral stronghold of Henin-Beaumont.

Meanwhile, Le Pen's National Rally officials will meet Monday to plan strategy for the second round, scheduled on April 24. Le Pen summed up the standoff by saying voters are faced with "a fundamental choice between two opposing visions of the future."

Macron already faced Le Pen in the presidential runoff five years ago. But all opinion polls show the leader of the National Rally is much closer this time to a potential win.

Macron said he wants to court those who voted for the "extremes" or opted to stay at home. That's what he sought to do in the northern town of Denain Monday by campaigning on his rival's home ground. Le Pen garnered over 41% of votes there as opposed to 14% for Marcon.

Macron met with area residents, many of whom criticized his proposed pension changes which include raising the minimum retirement age from 62 to 65.

Denain's mayor, Anne-Lise Dufour-Tonini, told reporters she will vote for Macron "with no hesitation" in

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the second round, but intends to push for him to adopt more "leftist proposals."

On her third attempt to become France's first woman president, Le Pen was rewarded Sunday for her years-long effort to rebrand herself as more pragmatic and less extreme. Macron has accused Le Pen of pushing a dangerous manifesto of racist, ruinous policies. Le Pen wants to roll back some rights for Muslims, banning them from wearing headscarves in public, and to drastically reduce immigration from outside Europe.

In his speech on Sunday evening, Macron said his project would protect all religions and the freedom "to believe, or not."

The rise of food and energy prices is at the core of Le Pen's campaign, but Macron's team argue she wouldn't have the financial means to meet her promises.

"Our focus is now on the project and the values," Senator Francois Patriat, a member of Macron's party, said. The strategy consists in being "proud" of what has been done over the past five years, showing "a bit of humility," and "above all, some fighting spirit," he said.

Macron will use the next days to "go in the field," he said. Prior to Sunday's first round, Macron was absent from most of the electoral campaign as he spent most of his time focusing on diplomatic efforts over the war in Ukraine.

Le Pen's camp, meanwhile, is hoping to capitalize on anger at Macron over policies seen as favoring the rich.

"Now everything is possible," Aurélien Lopez Liguori, a municipal councilor with Le Pen's party in the southern city of Sete, told The AP. Compared with 2017, "now Macron has a record, a bad record." He credited Le Pen's proximity to the French during the campaign for closing the gap with Macron.

Le Pen party heavyweight Louis Aliot told news broadcaster France Info Monday that the party would strive to "speak directly to the French about their problems" and how Le Pen would lead the country if elected president.

Aliot accused Macron of stirring up millions of French to take to the streets during the yellow vest protests over perceived economic injustice and of having dismantled public hospitals despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There are plenty of issues on which he will need to explain himself," Aliot said.

French Minister for European Affairs Clément Beaune told the AP "we should not think that it's done."

The battle will go "project against project," he said.

Noting Macron's "pro-European" project, Beaune recalled that five years ago "Le Pen was proposing — must not forget it — to leave the euro (area), to break Europe when Brexit and Frexit were trendy."

Le Pen has dropped earlier threats to pull France out of the EU and abandon the euro if elected, but some of her proposals, including setting up a national border control, are contrary to EU rules.

Macron and Le Pen are to debate on national television next week.

With most votes from the 12-candidate first round counted by Monday morning, Macron had more than 27% and Le Pen had 23%. Hard-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon was third with close to 22%.

Macron improved on his first-round showing in 2017, despite his presidency being rocked by the yellow vest movement, the pandemic and Russia's war in Ukraine.

The election outcome will have wide international influence as Europe struggles to contain the havoc wreaked by that war. Macron has strongly backed European Union sanctions on Russia while Le Pen has worried about their impact on French living standards. Macron also is a firm supporter of NATO and of close collaboration among the EU 27 members.

The euro rose on Monday following the results to trade 0.27% higher at \$1.09, indicating general investor relief that Macron came out on top in the first round.

## Iowa's political swing makes Obama's wins harder to repeat

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

NEVADA, Iowa (AP) — In 2008, this overwhelmingly white state was Barack Obama's unlikely launching

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pad to become the nation's first Black president. Fourteen years later, Iowans aren't showing a similar embrace for the woman running to become its first Black governor.

Democrat Deidre DeJear is finding Iowa a much changed place, trending staunchly conservative, endorsing many aspects of Trumpism, with an electorate that is so far displaying little interest in her history-making candidacy.

Educated younger adults who were once reliable Democratic voters have fled rural Iowa seeking opportunities elsewhere. The strength of organized labor has eroded. Obama's general election victories in 2008 and 2012 seem like distant memories.

The changes are part of a broader transformation that has spread through the Northern Plains over the past two decades, making it increasingly difficult for Democrats to compete in the region even as they make inroads in other places like the Deep South and Sun Belt.

"Times are so different from Obama's 2008 campaign," said Dave Leshtz, a veteran Democratic organizer from Iowa City, after a DeJear event in the liberal enclave. "It's an entirely different state."

DeJear, a 36-year-old Des Moines businesswoman, cemented her status as a rising political star in 2018 when she became the first Black candidate to win a statewide primary in Iowa. She lost the general election for secretary of state, but she won national attention and invitations from Democratic presidential hopefuls to serve as a state adviser.

She is struggling to translate that lower-wattage fame into support from voters. Only 31% of likely Iowa voters said they know enough about DeJear — running unopposed in the June 7 primary — to form an opinion, according to The Des Moines Register's Iowa Poll, conducted in late February and early March.

Meanwhile, she posted an anemic \$8,500 fundraising balance in January, raising less than \$300,000 since announcing her candidacy in August. It paled next to Republican incumbent Gov. Kim Reynolds' \$4.8 million balance and \$3.8 million in contributions.

Story County Democrat Barb Wheelock attributed part of DeJear's struggle to racism, both inside the party and among the state's voters.

"I think it's part that she's Black and people don't think she'll do very well — the people in our state party, the people with the money," Wheelock, a 70-year-old retired physical therapist, said while attending a DeJear stop in Story County last month.

DeJear told The Associated Press that she suspected her race may be on some minds as she seeks supporters.

"Of course no one has said that to me outright," DeJear said. "But there is a question of whether or not a Black woman could win. That is definitely a question."

DeJear tried to put any such doubts aside as she bounded onto the stage at an event in Nevada, a small farm town in central Iowa. With an upbeat style and a trace of her native Mississippi accent, DeJear reminded the audience that Iowans boasted a groundbreaking legacy, including an Iowa Supreme Court decision that made Iowa the first state to desegregate public schools after the Civil War.

"I believe in what's possible," she said. "We made a conscientious decision that no matter what your skin color was, no matter what your race was, each and every one of our students should have access to a quality public education."

It was a nod to an Iowa progressive streak that carried well into the 21st century.

In 2009, the Iowa high court ruled gay marriage legal, making the state the third to allow it, after similar rulings in Massachusetts and Connecticut but five years before the U.S. Supreme Court. A year before, Iowa voters had not only backed Obama by a healthy margin in the general election, they overwhelmingly sent liberal Democrat Tom Harkin to the U.S. Senate for a fifth term.

Iowans ushered in the new millennium with Tom Vilsack, a Democrat and former mayor from rural south-east Iowa, as governor. And during the 1988 Democratic presidential caucuses, the Rev. Jesse Jackson finished a notable fourth, relying on support from rural Iowa.

But a sharp decline of union jobs and an exodus of young, college-educated adults, have altered Iowa's once dynamic political map.



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In a striking illustration, Obama carried the state in November 2008 by winning 52 of its 99 counties. Joe Biden, who on Tuesday will make his first trip to Iowa as president, lost the state in 2020, winning only six counties.

After decades of divided state government, Republicans have controlled the Legislature and the governorship for six consecutive years, cutting taxes and reining in voting and abortion rights. Today, five of Iowa's six members of Congress are Republicans.

State Rep. Ras Smith had hoped to interrupt the trend as a candidate for governor in this year's race. The 34-year-old Smith, who was voted the Iowa Democratic Party's "Rising Star" award recipient in 2019 and is Black, found it difficult to persuade some of the party's major donors in the state, who are white, to give him a look.

Despite Smith's promising profile and DeJear's 2018 breakthrough, some wealthy Iowa Democrats sought out others to run, including state Rep. Todd Pritchard, who is from rural northern Iowa and white.

Smith said some influential donors declined his invitation to meet to discuss his campaign. Among them, he said, was Fred Hubbell, the 2018 Democratic nominee for governor. A wealthy Des Moines-area businessman, Hubbell spent \$7 million of his own money in narrowly losing to Reynolds.

"It wasn't about the dollars," said Smith, who ended his campaign in January, leaving DeJear unopposed in the primary. "He didn't come to an event and was turned off. We didn't have coffee and I said something that pissed him off. That's the part that felt disrespectful. It was disrespectful."

Smith said he and Hubbell spoke by phone but never met despite several invitations. Hubbell did not respond to requests for comment.

"My party doesn't think it's nearly as racist," said Tom Courtney, a former state senator and longtime union activist from the once-booming manufacturing corridor along the Mississippi River, who is white. "But some of that is going on."

The sentiment stings for Iowa Democrats, as national party leaders, frustrated by the state's lack of diversity, are taking steps to shift the early presidential nominating contest away from the traditionally first-in-the-nation caucus state.

Hubbell endorsed DeJear in a written statement last month, two months after Smith's withdrawal made her the Democrats' only candidate. Hubbell has since contributed to DeJear's campaign, though her campaign declined to say how much. Smith has also endorsed DeJear, one of several Black Democratic women running for statewide office around the country this year.

Georgia Democrat Stacey Abrams is again seeking the governorship. Former North Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice Cheri Beasley is running for U.S. Senate as a Democrat. And Florida Rep. Val Demings is the leading Democrat to face Republican U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio.

But DeJear is the only Black woman campaigning in such a predominantly white state. In 2020, 90.4% of Iowans were white, according to census data. Roughly 62% of the nation's population was white, and more than 13% Black.

Still, DeJear, who campaigned for Obama as a college student at Drake University in Des Moines in 2008, is optimistic she can relight the flame.

"We also look to Obama and what he was able to accomplish," she said in the interview. "I believe that Iowans have this innate ability to see the humanity that exists in other folks. And that's what drives us."

## Ukrainian nuns open their monastery doors to the displaced

By RENATA BRITO Associated Press

HOSHIV, Ukraine (AP) — Beneath the ancient beech forests of the Carpathian Mountains, a quiet monastery in the western Ukrainian village of Hoshiv has transformed itself into a giant playground for a dozen children who've been displaced by the war with their families.

Nuns at the Greek Catholic Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family, 100 kilometers (60 miles) from Lviv, have granted refuge to some 40 people fleeing fighting with Russian forces in eastern and central Ukraine.

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The sound of birdsong and the gentle drone of prayers are a relief for 59-year-old Ryma Stryzhko, who fled from Kharkiv. "It seemed that the planes were flying in the middle of the house. And you could hear the sound of bombing," she recalled. She often had to duck behind cars as she was going to buy bread or medicines.

"After what we saw, (the monastery) is a paradise."

The monastery is in itself a symbol of resilience, built after Ukraine's independence in the early 1990s. The previous monastery in the village had been closed by communist authorities while the area was part of the Soviet Union, and the nuns sent to Siberia.

"All our prayers are now focused on peace in Ukraine, for our soldiers, for those innocent people who died, who were murdered," said Sister Dominica, the head nun.

Before the war, the 17 nuns led a tranquil life. In addition to their religious duties and charitable work, they also grew mushrooms, made their own pasta and painted icons to decorate the chapel. Now, they run after young children, provide support and counseling to their mothers and cook daily for dozens of guests.

"Everything in the monastery is focused on prayer and order," Sister Dominica explained. But when the Russian invasion began, they told local officials they could host up to 50 displaced people.

"We adjusted the prayer and work schedule to the people," she said.

Many of the children who are now laughing and hugging the nuns arrived traumatized.

"In the beginning, they were a little reticent. This is a new place for them. They came from cities where (there is shooting), where there are constant (air raid) sirens," she said.

But even among these peaceful surroundings, the nuns still get air raid alerts on their smartphones. They warn the rest of the residents by ringing the monastery bells — a less traumatic sound than the loud sirens in the cities — and direct them to the basement.

A makeshift chapel there is decorated with a painting of Mary and baby Jesus, a candle and a large cross made of branches. Mattresses, blankets and benches also line the basement. One of the walls had "The Prodigy" written in chalk, an apparent homage to the British dance-electronic band.

But even when there are no sirens, children happily use the cavernous underground space.

"We play, and read prayers," said Rostyslav Borysenko, a 10-year-old, who fled besieged Mariupol with his mother. "It helps."

His mother is still anxiously awaiting news of relatives and friends who couldn't escape Mariupol, or were evacuated to eastern areas controlled by Russian-backed separatists.

Despite being thousands of kilometers from the frontlines, conversation at the dinner table mostly revolved around war.

While the families break bread in the dining room, the nuns dine separately in the library, at a long table under a painting of the Last Supper. Among them is 44-year-old Sister Josefa, who was evacuated from a Kyiv monastery on the first day of the war.

"It's hard to leave the place you lived," she said. "Although I can live here ... my heart is there. And I'm waiting to go back."

## Can cancer blood tests live up to promise of saving lives?

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

Joyce Ares had just turned 74 and was feeling fine when she agreed to give a blood sample for research. So she was surprised when the screening test came back positive for signs of cancer.

After a repeat blood test, a PET scan and a needle biopsy, she was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma.

"I cried," the retired real estate broker said. "Just a couple of tears and thought, 'OK, now what do we do?'"

The Canby, Oregon, resident had volunteered to take a blood test that is being billed as a new frontier in cancer screening for healthy people. It looks for cancer by checking for DNA fragments shed by tumor cells.

Such blood tests, called liquid biopsies, are already used in patients with cancer to tailor their treatment and check to see if tumors come back.

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Now, one company is promoting its blood test to people with no signs of cancer as a way to detect tumors in the pancreas, ovaries and other sites that have no recommended screening method.

It's an open question whether such cancer blood tests — if added to routine care — could improve Americans' health or help meet the White House's goal of cutting the cancer death rate in half over the next 25 years.

With advances in DNA sequencing and data science making the blood tests possible, California-based Grail and other companies are racing to commercialize them.

And U.S. government researchers are planning a large experiment — possibly lasting seven years and with 200,000 participants — to see if the blood tests can live up to the promise of catching more cancers earlier and saving lives.

"They sound wonderful, but we don't have enough information," said Dr. Lori Minasian of the National Cancer Institute, who is involved in planning the research. "We don't have definitive data that shows that they will reduce the risk of dying from cancer."

Grail is far ahead of other companies with 2,000 doctors willing to prescribe the \$949 test. Most insurance plans don't cover the cost. The tests are being marketed without endorsements from medical groups or a recommendation from U.S. health authorities. Review by the Food and Drug Administration isn't required for this type of test.

"For a drug, the FDA demands that there is a substantial high likelihood that the benefits not only are proven, but they outweigh the harms. That's not the case for devices like blood tests," said Dr. Barry Kramer of the Lisa Schwartz Foundation for Truth in Medicine.

Grail plans to seek approval from the FDA, but is marketing its test as it submits data to the agency.

The history of cancer screening has taught caution. In 2004, Japan halted mass screening of infants for a childhood cancer after studies found it didn't save lives. Last year, a 16-year study in 200,000 women in the United Kingdom found regular screening for ovarian cancer didn't make any difference in deaths.

Cases like these have uncovered some surprises: Screening finds some cancers that don't need to be cured. The flip side? Many dangerous cancers grow so fast they elude screening and prove deadly anyway.

And screening can do more harm than good. Anxiety from false positives. Unnecessary costs. And serious side effects from cancer care: PSA tests for men can lead to treatment complications such as incontinence or impotence, even when some slow-growing prostate cancers would never have caused trouble.

The evidence is strongest for screening tests for cancers of the breast, cervix and colon. For some smokers, lung cancer screening is recommended.

The recommended tests — mammography, PAP tests, colonoscopy — look for one cancer at a time. The new blood tests look for many cancers at once. That's an advantage, according to Grail executive Dr. Joshua Ofman.

"We screen for four or five cancers in this country, but (many) cancer deaths are coming from cancers that we're not looking for at all," Ofman said.

Dr. Tomasz Beer of Oregon Health & Science University in Portland led the company-sponsored study that Joyce Ares joined in 2020. After a miserable winter of chemotherapy and radiation, doctors told her the treatment was a success.

Her case isn't an outlier, "but it is the sort of hoped-for ideal outcome, and not everyone is going to have that," Beer said.

While there were other early cancers detected among study participants, some had less clear-cut experiences. For some, blood tests led to scans that never located a cancer, which could mean the result was a false positive, or it could mean there's a mystery cancer that will show up later. For others, blood tests detected cancer that turned out to be advanced and aggressive, Beer said. One older participant with a bad case declined treatment.

Grail continues to update its test as it learns from these studies, and is sponsoring a trial with Britain's National Health Service in 140,000 people to see if the blood test can reduce the number of cancers caught in late stages.

Although Ares feels lucky, it's impossible to know whether her test added healthy years to her life or

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made no real difference, said Kramer, former director of the National Cancer Institute's Division of Cancer Prevention.

"I sincerely hope that Joyce benefited from having this test," Kramer said when told of her experience. "But unfortunately, we can't know, at the individual Joyce level, whether that's the case."

Cancer treatments can have long-term side effects, he said, "and we don't know how fast the tumor would have grown." Treatment for Hodgkin lymphoma is so effective that delaying therapy until she felt symptoms might have achieved the same happy outcome.

For now, health experts stress the Grail blood test is not a cancer diagnosis; a positive result triggers further scans and biopsies.

"This is a path in diagnostic testing that has never been tried before," Kramer said. "Our ultimate destination is a test that has a clear net benefit. If we don't do it carefully, we'll go way off the path."

## **NBA at 75: Adam Silver says game can 'change the world'**

By ADAM SILVER For The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — (EDITOR'S NOTE: The season-long celebration of the NBA's 75th anniversary is winding down. As part of The Associated Press series on the NBA's first 75 years, Commissioner Adam Silver wrote this essay on what the league could look like 25 years from now when it celebrates its 100th anniversary.)

What will the NBA look like at 100? While it is difficult to predict the future one year from now, let alone 25, I do know what will remain unchanged: Our bedrock principle that "sports have the power to change the world."

Our teams and players will continue to use the game of basketball to teach lifelong values, give back to our communities and bring awareness to critically important societal issues.

We will also continue to embrace being a global league. Our games are distributed in more than 200 countries and territories, our social media community exceeds 2 billion people, and 25% of the players in our league grew up outside of the United States. The NBA's reach is expansive, though in many ways we are just scratching the surface in terms of our international growth.

I expect live sports and entertainment to remain special. There is something truly remarkable about 20,000 people of different backgrounds gathering together in an arena to enjoy a shared experience. What makes NBA games unique — the proximity to the players, the fast-paced nature of the game and the energy derived from being around other people — will be as vital in 25 years as it is today.

What I do foresee changing is how fans around the world engage with the NBA. Today's fans can watch NBA basketball on their high-definition televisions or just as easily on their smartphones. But in 25 years, this notion of watching games on a "screen" may be irrelevant. Games will appear in any size — three-dimensionally — whether on a living room floor or in a ballroom. Watching basketball anywhere could feel like you are in an arena surrounded by thousands of fellow fans.

The game on the court will evolve as well, as a whole new group of players builds on the greatness of the generations that came before them. We may see different kinds of schedule formats and tournaments that create new league traditions. And perhaps, once air travel becomes faster, we will have franchises outside of North America.

And if we are more popular at our 100th anniversary than we are today, I know we will have remained true to our mission to inspire and connect people everywhere through the game of basketball.

## **Islamic State morphs and grows in Pakistan, Afghanistan**

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

JALALABAD, Afghanistan (AP) — Basheer was a young Taliban fighter barely out of his teens when the Islamic State group took over his village in eastern Afghanistan, nearly eight years ago. The militants rounded up villagers identified as Taliban and killed them, often beheading them, forcing their families to

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watch.

Basheer escaped and lived in hiding during the following years when IS controlled several districts in Nangarhar province. Over time, he rose in the Taliban ranks.

Now known as Engineer Basheer, he is the Taliban intelligence chief in eastern Afghanistan, with a leading role in the campaign to crush IS. He hasn't forgotten the atrocities he saw in his home district of Kot.

"I can't explain their cruelty in words, whatever comes into your mind, they have done more than that," he told The Associated Press in a recent interview at his headquarters in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar.

Since coming to power in Afghanistan eight months ago, the Taliban have touted their success in repressing the Islamic State group, but the militants have expanded into neighboring Pakistan, stepping up attacks there. Analysts say IS has morphed into a borderless terrorist group, one of the deadliest in a region that has spawned many violent, radical organizations.

In northwest Pakistan, the impact is brutally clear. The remains of an IS suicide bomber are still visible on the once ornate walls of a mosque, weeks after he blew himself up, killing more than 60 worshippers as they prayed. IS identified the bomber as an Afghan from Kabul.

The March 4 bombing at the Kusha Kisaldar Shiite mosque in the old city of Peshawar stunned Pakistanis, deepening their fear of the resurgence of terror attacks in their country, after a steady decline in the past decade.

The rise in attacks began last year and is accelerating, said Amir Rana, executive director of the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, an independent think tank that monitors militant activity in Pakistan.

By late March this year, Pakistan had seen 52 attacks by militants, compared to 35 in the same period last year, according to the institute's data. The attacks have also gotten deadlier. So far this year in Pakistan, 155 people have been killed in such attacks, compared to 68 last year.

The worst have been claimed by a ruthless Islamic State affiliate, known Islamic State in Khorasan Province or IS-K.

Meanwhile, IS attacks appear to have declined in Afghanistan.

IS-K first emerged in 2014 in eastern Afghanistan. By 2019, it held significant territory in Nangarhar province and had pushed into neighboring Kunar province. The U.S. military waged a massive air campaign against it, including targeting a suspected IS hideout with America's largest conventional bomb, known as the "mother of all bombs."

But IS survived, and it presented the greatest security challenge to the Taliban when they seized power in Afghanistan last August.

IS-K is a longtime enemy of the Taliban. The Taliban espouse a harsh interpretation of Islamic law and often used suicide attacks in their nearly 20-year insurgency against the United States and its Afghan allies. But they often blend tribal traditions with religious edicts and have reached out to Shiites. IS, meanwhile, opposes any group that does not accept its more radical, deeply anti-Shiite ideology and is notorious for atrocities meant to spread fear. IS, unlike the Taliban, see their battle as one to establish a unified Muslim world under a caliphate.

The Taliban responded with their characteristic heavy hand, sweeping through suspected IS strongholds. In October and November, residents reported bodies hanging from trees. They were told they were IS militants.

Basheer says the Taliban have succeeded in reining in the group.

"We got control of all those areas ... Right now, there might be some people who hid in houses (but they don't have any area under their control. There is no Daesh," he said, using the Arabic acronym for IS.

He said IS-K fighters are at a disadvantage because the Taliban are longtime masters of guerrilla warfare. The IS-K has no tactics that the Taliban don't already know or haven't used, he said.

Some militant watchers also say the Taliban's deep reach inside Afghan villages and links to mosques and madrassas in even the smallest hamlets have reduced the space for IS to operate.

Since the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan last year, Washington's ability to gather intelligence on IS has been drastically degraded, according to senior U.S. military officials.

The region is also increasingly inhospitable to America. Political turmoil has fueled anti-U.S. sentiment in

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Pakistan. In Afghanistan, the Taliban are imposing a rule that harks to their harsh government of the late 1990s. China is a major player in the region, quickly outstripping U.S. influence.

IS-K is not the only extremist group in the region. Others include Lashkar-e-Taiba, which is largely India-focused, China's Uyghur rebels of the East Turkestan group and Central Asia's rebel Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

The threat from IS has only become more fluid and difficult to control.

Dr. Amira Jadoon, assistant professor at the Combating Terrorism Center at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, said IS-K is weaker than it was in 2019. But it has morphed from an insurgency to a typical terrorist group, a subtle but important difference, she said.

"It's now a stronger terrorist group than it was in 2019, but perhaps a weaker 'insurgency' compared to its earlier peak years, since it lacks the same level of territorial control and is not controlling any civilian populations," Jadoon said.

A February U.N. report estimated the number of IS-K fighters at around 4,000 and said it "enjoys more freedom than at any time in recent history."

Not everyone agrees. Bill Roggio, whose Long War Journal tracks militant movements, said the Taliban sweep to power prompted some former member of the group who had defected to IS-K to return to the Taliban fold.

"The Taliban received a major boost after its victory in Afghanistan," said Roggio, who is also a senior fellow at the conservative Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

Unlike in Afghanistan, IS-K has not tried to lay claim to territory in Pakistan.

Instead, it has often piggy-backed on well-established anti-Shiite groups like Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, which has claimed scores of brutal attacks on Pakistan's Shiite Muslim minority. In both countries, the extreme Sunni Muslim group reviles Shiites as heretics and has targeted them mercilessly.

Rana, from the Pakistani militancy monitoring group, said IS likely aims to stir up tensions between Islamabad and Kabul. But he said Pakistani authorities still consider the Pakistani Taliban, a homegrown anti-government group, the main threat.

"This is quite a naïve and simplistic view," he said, warning that IS attacks are likely to only increase.

## Once a retail giant, Kmart down to 3 stores after NJ closing

By DAVID PORTER Associated Press

AVENEL, N.J. (AP) — The familiar sights and sounds are still there: the scuffed and faded floor tiles, the relentless beige-on-beige color scheme, the toddlers' clothes and refrigerators and pretty much everything in between.

There's even a canned recording that begins, "Attention, Kmart shoppers" — except it's to remind folks about COVID-19 precautions, not to alert them to a flash sale over in ladies' lingerie like days of old.

Many of the shelves are bare, though, at the Kmart in Avenel, New Jersey, picked over by bargain hunters as the store prepares to close its doors for good April 16.

Once it shuts, the number of Kmart stores in the U.S. — once well over 2,000 — will be down to three last holdouts, according to multiple reports, in a retail world now dominated by Walmart, Target and Amazon.

The demise of the store in the middle-class suburb, 15 miles (24 kilometers) south of New York City, is the tale of the death of the discount department store writ small.

"You're always thinking about it because stores are closing all over, but it's still sad," said cashier Michelle Yavorsky, who said she has worked at the Avenel store for 2 ½ years. "I'll miss the place. A lot of people shopped here."

In its heyday, Kmart sold product lines endorsed by celebrities Martha Stewart and Jaclyn Smith, sponsored NASCAR auto races and was mentioned in movies including "Rain Man" and "Beetlejuice." It was name-dropped in songs by artists from Eminem to the Beastie Boys to Hall and Oates; in 2003, Eminem bought a 29-room, suburban Detroit mansion once owned by former Kmart chairman Chuck Conaway.

The chain cemented a place in American culture with its Blue Light Specials, a flashing blue orb affixed

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to a pole that would beckon shoppers to a flash sale in progress. Part of its success was due to its early adoption of layaway programs, which allowed customers who lacked credit to reserve items and pay for them in installments.

For a time, Kmart had a little bit of everything: You could shop for your kids' back-to-school supplies, get your car tuned up and grab a meal without leaving the premises.

"Kmart was part of America," said Michael Lisicky, a Baltimore-based author who has written several books on U.S. retail history. "Everybody went to Kmart, whether you liked it or not. They had everything. You had toys. You had sporting goods. You had candy. You had stationery. It was something for everybody. This was almost as much of a social visit as it was a shopping visit. You could spend hours here. And these just dotted the American landscape over the years."

Kmart's decline has been slow but steady, brought about by years of falling sales, changes in shopping habits and the looming shadow of Walmart, which coincidentally began its life within months of Kmart's founding in 1962.

Struggling to compete with Walmart's low prices and Target's trendier offerings, Kmart filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in early 2002 — becoming the largest U.S. retailer to take that step — and announced it would close more than 250 stores.

A few years later, hedge fund executive Edward Lampert combined Sears and Kmart and pledged to return them to their former greatness, but the recession and the rising dominance of Amazon contributed in derailing those goals. Sears filed for Chapter 11 in 2018 and currently has a handful of stores left in the U.S. where it once had thousands.

Kmarts continue to operate in Westwood, New Jersey; Bridgehampton, on New York's Long Island, and Miami.

It didn't have to end this way, according to Mark Cohen, director of retail studies at Columbia University in New York and former CEO of Sears Canada. Trying to compete with Walmart on price was a foolish strategy, he said, and Lampert was criticized for not having a retail background and appearing more interested in stripping off the assets of the two chains for their cash value.

"It's a study in greed, avarice and incompetence," Cohen said. "Sears should have never gone away; Kmart was in worse shape, but not fatally so. And now they're both gone."

"Retailers fall by the wayside sometimes because they're selling things people don't want to buy," he continued. "In the case of Kmart, everything they used to sell, people are buying but they're buying it from Walmart and Target."

Transformco, which owns Kmart and Sears, did not respond to an email seeking comment and a phone number listed for the company was not taking messages.

Nationwide, some former Kmarts remain vacant while others have been replaced by other big-box stores, fitness centers, self-storage facilities, even churches. One former site in Colorado Springs, Colorado, is now a popular dine-in movie theater.

Employees at the Kmart in Avenel found out last month that the store would close.

Unlike 20 years ago, when news of impending Kmart closures around the country prompted an outpouring of support from loyal shoppers and a Detroit radio station even mounted a campaign to try and save a local store, the closing of the Avenel location was met mostly with an air of resignation.

"It's maybe a little nostalgic because I've lived my whole life in this area, but it's just another retail store closing," said Jim Schaber, a resident of nearby Iselin who said his brother worked in the shoe department at Kmart for years. "It's just another sign of people doing online shopping and not going out to the retail stores."

The closing packed a little more of an emotional punch for Mike Jerdonek, a truck driver who recalled shopping at Kmart in Brooklyn and Queens in his younger days.

"It's like history passing right in front of our eyes," he said as he sat in his car outside the Avenel store. "When I was younger I didn't have any money, so it was a good place to shop because the prices were cheap. And to see it gone right now, it's kind of sad."

## **Biden, Modi to speak as US presses for hard line on Russia**

By FATIMA HUSSEIN and ASHOK SHARMA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is set to speak with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday as he presses world leaders to take a hard line against Russia's Ukraine invasion.

India's neutral stance in the war has raised concerns in Washington and earned praise from Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who lauded India this month for judging "the situation in its entirety, not just in a one-sided way."

Most recently, India abstained when the U.N. General Assembly voted Thursday to suspend Russia from its seat on the 47-member Human Rights Council over allegations that Russian soldiers in Ukraine engaged in rights violations that the U.S. and Ukraine have called war crimes.

The vote was 93-24 with 58 abstentions.

In the virtual meeting, Biden will talk about the consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine "and mitigating its destabilizing impact on global food supply and commodity markets," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said in a statement Sunday.

They'll discuss "strengthening the global economy, and upholding a free, open, rules-based international order to bolster security, democracy, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific," she said.

India continues to purchase Russian energy supplies, despite pressure from Western countries to avoid buying Russian oil and gas. The U.S. has also considered sanctions on India for its recent purchase of advanced Russian air defense systems.

Last month, the state-run Indian Oil Corp. bought 3 million barrels of crude from Russia to secure its needs, resisting entreaties from the West to avoid such purchases. India isn't alone in buying Russian energy, however. Several European allies such as Germany have continued to do so, despite public pressure to end these contracts.

Indian media reports said Russia was offering a discount on oil purchases of 20% below global benchmark prices.

Iraq is India's top supplier, with a 27% share. Saudi Arabia is second at around 17%, followed by the United Arab Emirates with 13% and the U.S. at 9%, the Press Trust of India news agency reported.

Biden and Modi last spoke in March.

## **Biden to nominate new ATF director, release ghost gun rule**

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is nominating an Obama-era U.S. attorney to run the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, as his administration unveils its formal rule to rein in ghost guns, privately made firearms without serial numbers that are increasingly cropping up at crime scenes, six people familiar with the matter told The Associated Press.

Biden is expected to make the announcement nominating Steve Dettlebach, who served as a U.S. attorney in Ohio from 2009 to 2016, at the White House on Monday, the people said. They were not authorized to discuss the nomination publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

The administration will also release the finalized version of its ghost gun rule, which comes as the White House and the Justice Department have been under growing pressure to crack down on gun deaths and violent crime in the U.S.

Dettlebach's confirmation is likely to be an uphill battle for the Biden administration. Biden had to withdraw the nomination of his first ATF nominee, gun-control advocate David Chipman, after the nomination stalled for months because of opposition from Republicans and some Democrats in the Senate.

Both Republican and Democratic administrations have failed to get nominees for the ATF position through the politically fraught process since the director's position was made confirmable in 2006. Since then, only one nominee, former U.S. Attorney B. Todd Jones, has been confirmed. Jones made it through the Sen-



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ate in 2013 but only after a six-month struggle. Jones was acting director when President Barack Obama nominated him in January 2013.

The Biden administration's plan was first reported by Politico.

For nearly a year, the ghost gun rule has been making its way through the federal regulation process. Gun safety groups and Democrats in Congress have been pushing for the Justice Department to finish the rule for months. It will probably be met with heavy resistance from gun groups and draw litigation in the coming weeks.

On Sunday, the Senate's top Democrat, Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York, implored the administration to move faster.

"It's high time for a ghost gun exorcism before the proliferation peaks, and before more people get hurt — or worse," Schumer said in a statement. "My message is a simple one: No more waiting on these proposed federal rules." Ghost guns are "too easy to build, too hard to trace and too dangerous to ignore."

Justice Department statistics show that nearly 24,000 ghost guns were recovered by law enforcement at crime scenes and reported to the government from 2016 to 2020. It is hard to say how many are circulating on the streets, in part because in many cases police departments don't contact the government about the guns because they can't be traced.

The rule is expected to change the current definition of a firearm under federal law to include unfinished parts, like the frame of a handgun or the receiver of a long gun.

In its proposed rule released last May, the ATF said it was also seeking to require manufacturers and dealers who sell ghost gun parts to be licensed by the federal government and require federally licensed firearms dealers to add a serial number to any unserialized guns they plan to sell.

The rule would also require firearms dealers to run background checks before they sell ghost gun kits that contain parts needed to assemble a firearm.

For years, federal officials have been sounding the alarm about an increasing black market for homemade, military-style semi-automatic rifles and handguns. As well as turning up more frequently at crime scenes, ghost guns have been increasingly encountered when federal agents buy guns in undercover operations from gang members and other criminals.

Some states, like California, have enacted laws in recent years to require serial numbers to be stamped on ghost guns.

The critical component in building an untraceable gun is what is known as the lower receiver, a part typically made of metal or polymer. An unfinished receiver — sometimes referred to as an "80-percent receiver" — can be legally bought online with no serial numbers or other markings on it, no license required.

Police across the country have been reporting spikes in ghost guns being recovered by officers. The New York Police Department, for example, said officers found 131 unserialized firearms since January.

A gunman who killed his wife and four others in Northern California in 2017 had been prohibited from owning firearms, but he built his own to skirt the court order before his rampage. And in 2019, a teenager used a homemade handgun to fatally shoot two classmates and wound three others at a school in suburban Los Angeles.

## Ukrainian defenders dig in as Russia boosts firepower

By ADAM SCHRECK and CARA ANNA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — As Ukrainian forces dug in on Sunday, Russia lined up more firepower and tapped a decorated general to take centralized control of the war ahead of a potentially decisive showdown in eastern Ukraine that could start within days.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned Sunday in his nightly address to the nation that the coming week would be as crucial as any in the war, saying "Russian troops will move to even larger operations in the east of our state."

He also accused Russia of trying to evade responsibility for war crimes in Ukraine.

"When people lack the courage to admit their mistakes, apologize, adapt to reality and learn, they turn

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into monsters. And when the world ignores it, the monsters decide that it is the world that has to adapt to them," Zelenskyy said.

"The day will come when they will have to admit everything. Accept the truth," he added.

Experts have said that the next phase of the battle may begin with a full-scale offensive. The outcome could determine the course of the conflict, which has flattened cities, killed untold thousands and isolated Moscow economically and politically.

In an interview that appeared on "60 Minutes" Sunday night, Zelenskyy said Ukraine's fate as the war shifts to the south and east depends on whether the United States will help match an expected surge in Russian weaponry in those regions.

"To be honest, whether we will be able to (survive) depends on this," said Zelenskyy, speaking through a translator. "I have 100% confidence in our people and in our armed forces. But unfortunately, I don't have the confidence that we will be receiving everything we need."

Zelenskyy thanked President Joe Biden for U.S. military aide to date but added that he "long ago" forwarded a list of specific items Ukraine desperately needed and that history would judge Biden's response.

"He has the list," Zelenskyy said. "President Biden can enter history as the person who stood shoulder to shoulder with the Ukrainian people who won and chose the right to have their own country. (This) also depends on him."

Questions remain about the ability of Russia's depleted and demoralized forces to conquer much ground after their advance on the capital, Kyiv, was repelled by determined Ukrainian defenders. Britain's Defense Ministry reported Sunday that the Russian forces were trying to compensate for mounting casualties by recalling veterans discharged in the past decade.

In Washington, a senior U.S. official said that Russia has appointed Gen. Alexander Dvornikov, one of its most seasoned military chiefs, to oversee the invasion. The official was not authorized to be identified and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Until now, Russia has had no central war commander on the ground.

The new battlefield leadership comes as the Russian military prepares for what is expected to be a large, focused push to expand control in Ukraine's east. Russia-backed separatists have fought Ukrainian forces in the eastern Donbas region since 2014 and declared some territory there as independent.

Dvornikov, 60, gained prominence as head of the Russian forces deployed to Syria in 2015 to shore up President Bashar Assad's government during the country's devastating civil war. U.S. officials say he has a record of brutality against civilians in Syria and other war theaters.

Russian authorities do not generally confirm such appointments and have said nothing about a new role for Dvornikov, who received the Hero of Russia medal, one of the country's highest awards, from President Vladimir Putin in 2016.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan, speaking Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union," played down the significance of the appointment.

"What we have learned in the first several weeks of this war is that Ukraine will never be subjected to Russia," Sullivan said. "It doesn't matter which general President Putin tries to appoint."

Western military analysts say Russia's assault has increasingly focused on a sickle-shaped arc of eastern Ukraine — from Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, in the north to Kherson in the south.

The narrower effort could help Russia's problem, earlier in the war, of spreading its offensive too widely over too great a geographic area.

"Just looking at it on a map, you can see that they will be able to bring to bear a lot more power in a lot more concentrated fashion," by focusing mainly on eastern Ukraine, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Friday.

Newly released Maxar Technologies satellite imagery showed an 8-mile (13-kilometer) convoy of military vehicles headed south through Ukraine to Donbas, recalling images of a convoy that got stalled on roads to Kyiv for weeks before Russia gave up on trying to take the capital.

On Sunday, Russian forces shelled government-controlled Kharkiv and sent reinforcements toward Izyum

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to the southeast in a bid to break Ukraine's defenses, the Ukrainian military command said. The Russians also kept up their siege of Mariupol, a key southern port that has been under attack and surrounded for nearly 1 ½ months.

A Russian Defense Ministry spokesman, Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov, said Russia's military used air-launched missiles to hit Ukraine's S-300 air-defense missile systems in the southern Mykolaiv region and at an air base in Chuhuiv, a city not far from Kharkiv.

Sea-launched Russian cruise missiles destroyed the headquarters of a Ukrainian military unit stationed farther west in the Dnipro region, Konashenkov said. Neither the Ukrainian nor the Russian military claims could be independently verified.

The airport in Dnipro, Ukraine's fourth-largest city, was also hit by missiles twice on Sunday, according to the regional governor.

On Sunday night, Zelenskyy again called on Western countries to provide more assistance to Ukraine. During talks with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Zelenskyy said, he discussed "how to strengthen sanctions against Russia and ... force Russia to seek peace."

"I am glad to note that the German position has recently changed in favor of Ukraine. I consider it absolutely logical," Zelenskyy said.

The president of the European Commission said on CNN's "State of the Union" Sunday that Ukraine's response to a questionnaire she recently handed to Zelenskyy will enable her to decide whether to recommend the nation as a candidate to join the EU.

The process normally takes years, but Ursula von der Leyen has said Ukraine's application could take just weeks to consider.

"Yesterday, somebody told me: 'You know, when our soldiers are dying, I want them to know that their children will be free and be part of the European Union,'" von der Leyen said.

Ukrainian authorities have accused Russian forces of committing war crimes against civilians, including airstrikes on hospitals, a missile attack that killed at least 57 people at a train station and other violence discovered as Russian soldiers withdrew from the outskirts of Kyiv.

A day after meeting with Zelenskyy in Kyiv, Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer announced that he will meet Monday in Moscow with Putin. Austria, a member of the European Union, is militarily neutral and not a member of NATO.

Ukraine has blamed Russia for killing civilians in Bucha and other towns outside the capital where hundreds of bodies, many with their hands bound and signs of torture, were found after Russian troops retreated. Russia has denied the allegations and falsely claimed that the scenes in Bucha were staged.

Maria Vaselenko, 77, a resident of Borodyanka, said her daughter and son-in-law were killed, leaving her grandchildren orphaned.

"The Russians were shooting. And some people wanted to come and help, but they were shooting them. They were putting explosives under dead people," Vaselenko said. "That's why my children have been under the rubble for 36 days. It was not allowed" to remove bodies.

In Mariupol, Russia was deploying Chechen fighters, reputed to be particularly fierce. Capturing the city on the Sea of Azov would give Russia a land bridge to the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia seized from Ukraine eight years ago.

Residents have lacked food, water and electricity since Russian forces surrounded the city and frustrated evacuation missions. Ukrainian authorities think an airstrike on a theater that was being used as a bomb shelter killed hundreds of civilians, and Zelenskyy has said he expects more evidence of atrocities to be found once Mariupol no longer is blockaded.

The Institute for the Study of War, an American think tank, predicted that Russian forces will "renew offensive operations in the coming days" from Izyum, a town southeast of Kharkiv, in the campaign to conquer the Donbas, which comprises Ukraine's industrial heartland.

But in the view of the think tank's analysts, "The outcome of forthcoming Russian operations in eastern Ukraine remains very much in question."

## Scheffler gets Masters green jacket to go with No. 1 ranking

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — Scottie Scheffler looked like a Masters champion even before he slipped into his green jacket, the model of calm as he methodically worked his way around the most stressful course in major championship golf.

Sunday morning was different. That turned out to be the toughest test he had all day.

"I cried like a baby this morning. I was so stressed out. I didn't know what to do," Scheffler said after winning his first major. "I was sitting there telling (wife) Meredith, "I don't think I'm ready for this ... and I just felt overwhelmed."

And then he capped off his torrid two-month stretch with his grandest feat of all, leading the entire weekend and strolling to a 1-under 71 — with one lapse in concentration at the end when it didn't matter — for a three-shot victory over Rory McIlroy.

For a guy who had won three of his previous five tournament, who reached No. 1 in the world, why suddenly be overcome with doubt?

"I think because it's the Masters. I dreamed of having a chance to play in this golf tournament. I teared up the first time I got my invitation in the mail," Scheffler said.

"If you're going to choose a golf tournament to win, this would be the tournament," he said. "You don't know how many chances you're going to get. And so having a chance — I had a five-shot lead on Friday and then a three-shot lead going into today — I don't know if you get better opportunities than that. You don't want to waste them."

He felt peace between the ropes and never allowed himself to enjoy the moment until he took that famous walk up the 18th green, his ball 40 feet away and a five-shot lead.

"And you saw the results of that," he said with a laugh at his four-putt double bogey that only affected the margin of victory.

McIlroy holed out from the bunker on the final hole for a record-tying final round of 64. That pulled him within three shots, and his only hope for the final piece of the career Grand Slam was for the Sunday pressure at Augusta National to get to Scheffler.

No chance.

Not on Sunday. Not the last four days. Not the last two months.

"You get on those hot streaks, and you just got to ride them out because they, unfortunately, don't last forever," Justin Thomas said. "But he is doing it in the biggest tournaments. ... It's really, really impressive to see someone that young handle a moment this big so easily."

And to think that 56 days ago, Scheffler was still trying to win his first PGA Tour title. Now he's won four of the last six he has played, the best stretch since Jason Day in the summer of 2015.

The Sunday theater, thrilling and tragic, belonged to everyone else.

Scheffler overcame a nervy moment early in the round by chipping in for birdie. He delivered key putts to keep Cameron Smith at bay and never looked rattled, even as he was swatting at short putts at the end.

McIlroy was the runner-up. It was Smith who felt as though he let one get away. The Aussie was still in the game, three shots out of the lead, when he dumped his 9-iron in Rae's Creek on the par-3 12th hole for triple bogey and ended his hopes.

"Just a really bad swing at the wrong time," Smith said.

Smith closed with a 73 and tied for third with Shane Lowry, who birdied the 18th for a 69.

Tiger Woods was finishing up about the time Scheffler was getting started, and anyone who left missed quite a show. As for Woods, he found consolation in playing four rounds in his first tournament since a February 2021 car crash shattered his right leg. He shot 78 and finished at 13-over 301, his highest 72-hole score at the Masters and furthest (23 shots) he ever finished behind the winner.

Scheffler joined Ian Woosnam in 1991 as the only players to win a major — the Masters in both cases — in their debut at No. 1 in the world.

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Everyone should have seen this coming. He won the Phoenix Open in a playoff on Super Bowl Sunday. He followed that with a comeback win at Bay Hill to win the Arnold Palmer Invitational. He rose to No. 1 in the world by winning the Match Play two weeks ago in Texas.

And now this.

"He's sort of been head and shoulders above everyone else this week," McIlroy said.

Scheffler, who finished at 10-under 278, won \$2.7 million from the \$15 million prize fund. That brings his total to \$8,872,200 over his last six starts.

Scheffler's big moment came early in the round, and it was no less significant.

Starting the final round with a three-shot lead, he watched Smith open with two straight birdies to the cut the deficit to one, and then Scheffler's approach from the pine needles left of the third fairway came up short and rolled back down the slope.

His pitch was racing toward the hole when it banged into the pin and dropped for an unlikely birdie, and a two-shot swing when Smith from the same position made bogey.

No one got closer than three the rest of the way. Only the contenders changed.

The 12th hole remains the most riveting par 3 in golf, the scene of more collapses than comebacks. Smith became the latest victim.

Coming off birdie at No. 11, his shot was still in the air when he let his club slip through his hands and he slowly closed his eyes twice as it splashed into Rae's Creek. The next shot wasn't much better, but at least dry, and Smith's hopes ended there with a triple bogey.

He was three behind standing on the 12th tee. Three holes later, he was eight back.

From there, any hope resided with McIlroy. All he needed to complete the career Grand Slam was to match the best final round in Masters history and get some help from Scheffler. He only got one of those and had to settle for his first silver medal from Augusta.

Not that he didn't create some Sunday magic. McIlroy went bunker-to-bunker on the 18th hole, leaving himself right of the green and aiming some 25 feet right of the flag. It rode the slope all the way into the hole, setting off one of the loudest roars of the week.

Morikawa followed him in from the same bunker, different angle, and McIlroy could only laugh.

"This tournament never ceases to amaze," McIlroy said. "That's as happy as I've ever been on a golf course right there. Just having a chance — and then with Collin, we both played so well all day — and for both of us to finish like this, I was just so happy for him, too.

"I've never heard roars like on the 18th green."

The best ones were saved for Scheffler.

Scheffler still had five holes in front of him, with no evidence he was going to be anything but the smooth, smart operator who seized control on Friday in the toughest conditions to build a five-shot lead and never lost it.

## In France, it's Macron vs. Le Pen, again, for presidency

By JOHN LEICESTER and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Incumbent Emmanuel Macron will face far-right nationalist Marine Le Pen in a winner-takes-all runoff for the French presidency, after they both advanced Sunday in the first round of voting in the country's election to set up another head-to-head clash of their sharply opposing visions for France.

But while Macron won their last contest in 2017 by a landslide to become France's youngest-ever president, the same outcome this time is far from guaranteed. Macron, now 44, emerged ahead from Sunday's first round, but the runoff is essentially a new election and the next two weeks of campaigning to the April 24 second-round vote promise to be bruising and confrontational against his 53-year-old political nemesis.

Savvier and more polished as she makes her third attempt to become France's first woman president, Le Pen was handsomely rewarded Sunday at the ballot box for her years-long effort to rebrand herself as more pragmatic and less extreme. Macron has accused Le Pen of pushing an extremist manifesto of racist, ruinous policies. Le Pen wants to roll back some rights for Muslims, banning them from wearing

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headscarves in public, and to drastically reduce immigration from outside Europe.

On Sunday, she racked up her best-ever first-round tally of votes. With most votes counted, Macron had just over 27% and Le Pen had just under 24%. Hard-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon was third, missing out on the two-candidate runoff, with close to 22%.

Macron also improved on his first-round showing in 2017, despite his presidency being rocked by an almost unrelenting series of both domestic and international crises. They include Russia's war in Ukraine that overshadowed the election and diverted his focus from the campaign.

With polling suggesting that the runoff against Le Pen could be close, Macron immediately started throwing his energies into the battle.

Addressing supporters Sunday night who chanted "five more years," Macron warned that "nothing is done" and said the runoff campaign will be "decisive for our country and for Europe."

Claiming that Le Pen would align France with "populists and xenophobes," he said: "That's not us."

"I want to reach out to all those who want to work for France," he said. He vowed to "implement the project of progress, of French and European openness and independence we have advocated for."

The election outcome will have wide international influence as Europe struggles to contain the havoc wreaked by Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Macron has strongly backed European Union sanctions on Russia while Le Pen has worried about their impact on French living standards. Macron also is a firm supporter of NATO and of close collaboration among the European Union's 27 members.

Macron for months had looked like a shoo-in to become France's first president in 20 years to win a second term. But National Rally leader Le Pen, in a late surge, tapped into the foremost issue on many French voters' minds: soaring costs for food, gas and heating due to rising inflation and the repercussions of Western sanctions on Russia.

To win in round two, both Macron and Le Pen now need to reach out to voters who backed the 10 presidential candidates defeated Sunday.

For some of the losers' disappointed supporters, the runoff vote promises to be agonizing. Melenchon voter Jennings Tangly, a 21-year-old student of English at Paris' Sorbonne University, said the second-round match-up was an awful prospect for her, a choice "between the plague and cholera."

She described Macron's presidency as "abject," but said she would vote for him in round two simply to keep Le Pen from the presidential Elysee Palace.

"It would be a survival vote rather than a vote with my heart," she said.

Le Pen's supporters celebrated with champagne and chanted "We're going to win!" She sought to reach out to left-wing supporters for round two by promising fixes for "a France torn apart."

She said the second round presents voters with "a fundamental choice between two opposing visions of the future: Either the division, injustice and disorder imposed by Emmanuel Macron to the benefit of the few, or the uniting of French people around social justice and protection."

Some of her defeated rivals were so alarmed by the possibility of Le Pen beating Macron that they urged their supporters Sunday to shift their second-round votes to the incumbent. Melenchon, addressing supporters who sometimes shed tears, repeatedly said: "We must not give one vote to Mrs. Le Pen."

Describing herself as "profoundly worried," defeated conservative candidate Valerie Pécresse warned of "the chaos that would ensue" if Le Pen was elected, saying the far-right leader has never been so close to power. Pécresse said she would vote for Macron in the runoff.

To beat Le Pen, Macron will aim to pick apart her attempted rebranding as a less dangerous political force, a makeover that has even highlighted her love of cats.

Her softer image has won over some voters but made others even more suspicious.

Yves Maillot, a retired engineer, said he voted for Macron only to counterbalance Le Pen. He said he fears that her long-standing hostility to the EU could see her try to take France out of the bloc, even though she has dropped that from her manifesto.

"I don't think she's changed at all," he said. "It's the same thing, but with cats."

## Biden to nominate new ATF director, release ghost gun rule

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is nominating an Obama-era U.S. attorney to run the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, as his administration unveils its formal rule to rein in ghost guns, privately made firearms without serial numbers that are increasingly cropping up at crime scenes, six people familiar with the matter told The Associated Press.

Biden is expected to make the announcement nominating Steve Dettlebach, who served as a U.S. attorney in Ohio from 2009 to 2016, at the White House on Monday, the people said. They were not authorized to discuss the nomination publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

The administration will also release the finalized version of its ghost gun rule, which comes as the White House and the Justice Department have been under growing pressure to crack down on gun deaths and violent crime in the U.S.

Dettlebach's confirmation is likely to be an uphill battle for the Biden administration. Biden had to withdraw the nomination of his first ATF nominee, gun-control advocate David Chipman, after the nomination stalled for months because of opposition from Republicans and some Democrats in the Senate.

Both Republican and Democratic administrations have failed to get nominees for the ATF position through the politically fraught process since the director's position was made confirmable in 2006. Since then, only one nominee, former U.S. Attorney B. Todd Jones, has been confirmed. Jones made it through the Senate in 2013 but only after a six-month struggle. Jones was acting director when President Barack Obama nominated him in January 2013.

The Biden administration's plan was first reported by Politico.

For nearly a year, the ghost gun rule has been making its way through the federal regulation process. Gun safety groups and Democrats in Congress have been pushing for the Justice Department to finish the rule for months. It will probably be met with heavy resistance from gun groups and draw litigation in the coming weeks.

On Sunday, the Senate's top Democrat, Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York, implored the administration to move faster.

"It's high time for a ghost gun exorcism before the proliferation peaks, and before more people get hurt — or worse," Schumer said in a statement. "My message is a simple one: No more waiting on these proposed federal rules." Ghost guns are "too easy to build, too hard to trace and too dangerous to ignore."

Justice Department statistics show that nearly 24,000 ghost guns were recovered by law enforcement at crime scenes and reported to the government from 2016 to 2020. It is hard to say how many are circulating on the streets, in part because in many cases police departments don't contact the government about the guns because they can't be traced.

The rule is expected to change the current definition of a firearm under federal law to include unfinished parts, like the frame of a handgun or the receiver of a long gun.

In its proposed rule released last May, the ATF said it was also seeking to require manufacturers and dealers who sell ghost gun parts to be licensed by the federal government and require federally licensed firearms dealers to add a serial number to any unserialized guns they plan to sell.

The rule would also require firearms dealers to run background checks before they sell ghost gun kits that contain parts needed to assemble a firearm.

For years, federal officials have been sounding the alarm about an increasing black market for homemade, military-style semi-automatic rifles and handguns. As well as turning up more frequently at crime scenes, ghost guns have been increasingly encountered when federal agents buy guns in undercover operations from gang members and other criminals.

Some states, like California, have enacted laws in recent years to require serial numbers to be stamped on ghost guns.

The critical component in building an untraceable gun is what is known as the lower receiver, a part typically made of metal or polymer. An unfinished receiver — sometimes referred to as an "80-percent

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receiver" — can be legally bought online with no serial numbers or other markings on it, no license required.

Police across the country have been reporting spikes in ghost guns being recovered by officers. The New York Police Department, for example, said officers found 131 unserialized firearms since January.

A gunman who killed his wife and four others in Northern California in 2017 had been prohibited from owning firearms, but he built his own to skirt the court order before his rampage. And in 2019, a teenager used a homemade handgun to fatally shoot two classmates and wound three others at a school in suburban Los Angeles.

## Beer flows, Champagne bubbles as Macron, Le Pen reach final

ELAINE GANLEY Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Beer flowed at incumbent Emmanuel Macron's celebration of his first-round victory in the French presidential election, while Champagne corks popped across town to mark far-right leader Marine Le Pen's second-place showing.

It was a night of effervescence for both contenders and their supporters ahead of a showdown in two weeks to see who will become France's chief of state for the next five years. The two will be revisiting their 2017 match when centrist Macron, then an upstart never before elected to office, won by a landslide.

Flags, the national anthem and cheers — fueled with drinks as different as the programs of the two contenders — marked the end of a campaign that left 10 other candidates on the sidelines.

Macron was expected to capture a healthy first-round lead of around 28% support, ahead of Le Pen's 23%-24%, according to projections. Final official results were not yet available.

"One, two, five more years," Macron's supporters cried out. "Marine president" and "We will win," the hundreds of guests at Le Pen's electoral party chanted.

"Now, everything is possible," said Aurélien Lopez Liguori, a municipal councilor for Le Pen's National Rally party, in the southern town of Sete. Macron "will finally answer to the French people" for his "bad record."

He credited Le Pen's mostly quiet, close-to-the-people campaign, far from TV cameras, for her showing. "The French thanked us tonight."

It was anything but quiet at Le Pen's electoral venue in a park in eastern Paris. Cheers drowned out parts of her speech when poll projections were announced.

Le Pen, 53, a solid nationalist, has revamped her program and her style, campaigning on buying power and going decidedly people-friendly, to further distance herself from the far-right image that has haunted her anti-immigration party, work she began when she took over a decade ago. She has campaigned since September, longer than any other candidate, and as the campaign wound down took off in opinion polls.

In contrast, Macron, 44, came late to the campaign trail, occupied with affairs of state, including his active role in trying to stop the war in Ukraine. He has dominated polls from the start, but some in his entourage worried aloud about Le Pen's steady advance.

Supporter Julien Bon said he was joyful with Sunday night's results.

"It's better than what we had expected," he said, referring to recent opinion polls. "We are well on track. Now we must fight."

Le Pen's supporters at her electoral party came from around France and beyond.

"I couldn't support Marine Le Pen with my vote, but I would if I were French," said Hungarian guest Agnes Zsofia Magyar, who met Le Pen during the French politician's visit to Budapest to support leader Victor Orban and his nationalist Fidesz party. She works in Brussels with the party-linked Foundation for a Civil Hungary.

"I am sure that the French have decided to change systems," Magyar said, anticipating a Le Pen victory in the April 24 runoff and alluding to the drastic differences that populist Le Pen and pro-European Union Macron represent.

Macron asked his supporters to applaud all 10 candidates eliminated from Sunday's race, naming each, including far-left candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who came in third.

Melenchon gave his own orders at his electoral gathering: "We must not give a single vote to Le Pen."



"I think Marine Le Pen has a big chance of winning," said Gilles Lebreton, a European Parliament lawmaker for the far-right party. Her party counts on winning over supporters of Eric Zemmour, a far-right pundit whose decision to enter the race divided Le Pen's support base.

For Le Pen's National Rally, the second round begins Monday when Lebreton said party officials would meet to plan strategy for the second round.

## 2 killed and 10 wounded in Cedar Rapids nightclub shooting

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) — A shooting inside a crowded Cedar Rapids nightclub left a man and a woman dead and 10 people wounded early Sunday, authorities said.

Cedar Rapids Police Chief Wayne Jerman said investigators believe two men fired more than a dozen shots inside the Taboo Nightclub and Lounge just before 1:30 a.m. Sunday. He said officers who were just outside the club because of an earlier incident rushed inside just as 100-150 people streamed out of the bar and found the victims.

Officers helped treat the people who were wounded and rushed several of the victims to hospitals in squad cars.

The names of the man and woman who died were not released Sunday. Jerman said one of the people who were injured was in critical condition Sunday afternoon while the other injuries, which were all related to the gunfire, ranged from serious to minor.

The gunmen likely escaped as the crowd rushed out of the nightclub. Police were searching for suspects Sunday afternoon and no arrests had been reported.

Jerman said police haven't determined the motive for the shooting but investigators believe one of the victims was targeted.

"This is another mindless and senseless gun-related incident involving a reckless disregard for human life," Jerman said. "I remain livid and angered at the continued and blatant disregard and lack of respect for human life that continues. That said, I want to reassure the residents of this city that Cedar Rapids is a safe city."

The club's owner, Mod Williams, told the Cedar Rapids Gazette that he is working with police.

"It's an extremely disturbing thing that happened and currently I'm just being as cooperative as I can to help the police," Williams said.

Mayor Tiffany O'Donnell expressed dismay about the shooting and lauded the police response. She also urged residents to speak out against violence.

"Shock, anger, grief, disappointment — just a few of the emotions that I'm sure we all feel today," O'Donnell said. "And I can personally say that as a mother my heart goes out to those moms and dads today who are having the worst day of their lives. To the families of the injured, we are with you and we are praying for a swift recovery."

## Judge rules US military can't discharge HIV-positive troops

By DENISE LAVOIE AP Legal Affairs Writer

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — U.S. service members who are HIV-positive cannot be discharged or barred from becoming an officer solely because they're infected with the virus, a federal judge in Virginia ruled. Advocates say it's one of the strongest rulings in years for people living with HIV.

The cases involved two service members that the Air Force attempted to discharge, as well as Sgt. Nick Harrison of the D.C. Army National Guard, who was denied a position in the Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps.

U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema said in a written order dated April 6 that her ruling bars the military from taking those actions against the plaintiffs and any other asymptomatic HIV-positive service member with an undetectable viral load "because they are classified as ineligible for worldwide deployment ... due to their HIV-positive status."

Peter Perkowski, an attorney for the plaintiffs, called it "a landmark victory — probably the biggest ruling

in favor of people living with HIV in the last 20 years.”

“The military was the last employer in the country that had a policy against people living with HIV. Every other employer — including first responders — is subject to rules that prohibit discrimination based on HIV status,” he said.

The Department of Defense did not immediately respond to an emailed request seeking comment on the ruling or whether it intends to appeal.

The airmen, identified by pseudonyms in the 2018 lawsuit, argued that major advancements in treatment mean they can easily be given appropriate medical care and present no real risk of transmission to others.

In 2020, the Richmond-based 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a preliminary injunction barring the discharge of the airmen. In its ruling, the three-judge panel said the military’s rationale for prohibiting deployment of HIV-positive service members was “outmoded and at odds with current science.” The appeals court ruling left the injunction in place while their lawsuit was being heard.

The Department of Justice argued before the 4th Circuit that the Air Force determined the two airmen could no longer perform their duties because their career fields required them to deploy frequently and because their condition prevented them from deploying to the U.S. Central Command’s area of responsibility, where most airmen are expected to go. Central Command, which governs military operations in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia, prohibits personnel with HIV from deploying without a waiver.

The DOJ acknowledged that treatment lowers the risk of transmitting HIV, but said the risk is amplified on the battlefield where soldiers can often come into contact with blood.

An attorney for the airmen argued during a 2019 hearing that the odds of transmitting HIV in combat are infinitesimal and should not limit their deployment or lead to their discharge.

In its written ruling, the 4th Circuit panel said a ban on deployment may have been justified at a time when HIV treatment was less effective at managing the virus and reducing the risk of transmission.

“But any understanding of HIV that could justify this ban is outmoded and at odds with current science. Such obsolete understandings cannot justify a ban, even under a deferential standard of review and even according appropriate deference to the military’s professional judgments,” Judge James Wynn Jr. wrote in the unanimous 2020 ruling.

Brinkema said in this month’s written order that she had temporarily sealed her ruling in the case to give both sides a chance to seek redactions within 14 days. The judge ordered the secretary of the Air Force to rescind the decision to discharge the two airmen and ordered the Army to rescind its decision denying Harrison’s application to commission into JAG, and to reevaluate those decisions in light of her ruling.

Kara Ingelhart, senior attorney at Lambda Legal, one of the groups that brought the lawsuits, said in a news release that the ruling knocks down a barrier to preventing people living with AIDS from becoming officers, and “brings an end to the military’s ongoing discrimination against the approximately 2,000 service members currently serving while living with HIV.”

## Queen chats with COVID-19 patients, nurses at UK hospital

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II, after her own recent bout with COVID-19, empathized with patients, doctors and nurses at a London hospital last week as she listened to their stories about life on the front lines of the pandemic.

The monarch spoke to patients and staff at the Royal London Hospital during a virtual visit that marked the official dedication of the Queen Elizabeth Unit, a 155-bed critical care facility built in just five weeks at the height of the pandemic. Elizabeth tested positive for COVID-19 in February and suffered what Buckingham Palace described as “mild cold-like symptoms.”

“It does leave one very tired and exhausted, doesn’t it?” she told recovering COVID-19 patient Asef Husain and his wife, Shamina. “This horrible pandemic.”

The unit has treated about 800 coronavirus patients from across northeast London, with staff recruited from throughout the region, including retired doctors and nurses and even soldiers drafted in to help.

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With friends and family members barred from the hospital by strict virus-control measures, nurses did their best to comfort seriously ill patients, senior nurse Mireia López Rey Ferrer told Elizabeth.

"As nurses, we made sure that they were not alone," López Rey said. "We held their hands, we wiped their tears and we provided comfort. It felt at times that we were running a marathon with no finish line."

Hussain was the third member of his family hospitalized with COVID-19 at the end of December 2020. His brother died first, then his father passed away while Hussain was on a ventilator.

"I remember waking up one morning and just finding it really, really difficult to breathe," he said. "I remember waking my wife saying that I feel like there's no oxygen in the room. I remember me sticking my head out the window, just trying to breathe, trying to get that extra oxygen."

He was on a ventilator for seven weeks and only recently was able to stop using a wheelchair.

Nurses helped lift Hussain's spirits by arranging video calls on a tablet computer. Shamina Hussain told the queen that 500 friends and family around the world dialed in to one conference call to pray for her husband.

"So you have a large family, or a large influence on people," the queen quipped.

The couple smiled.

## 'Cabaret,' 'Life of Pi' win big at UK's stage Olivier Awards

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — An intimate, sold-out production of "Cabaret" was the big winner at Sunday's Olivier Awards, taking seven prizes including acting trophies for its high-voltage stars, Eddie Redmayne and Jessie Buckley. Literary adaptation "Life of Pi" took five awards including best new play.

"Cabaret" was named best musical revival at the ceremony, which saw the Oliviers — Britain's equivalent of Broadway's Tony Awards — return to live collective prizegiving after a three-year break imposed by the coronavirus pandemic.

Redmayne and Buckley won lead acting prizes for their roles as the Emcee and Sally Bowles in a production of "Cabaret" that transformed London's Playhouse Theatre into the Kit Kat Club in 1930s Berlin. Liza Sadovy and Elliot Levey won supporting performer awards for the same production, which continues its London run with new leads — and is rumored to be Broadway-bound.

Buckley, who was praised by Redmayne as "one of the greats," appeared overwhelmed to have won.

"It's my worst nightmare and my biggest dream all at once," she said.

"Life of Pi," adapted from Yann Martel's best-selling novel about a boy adrift at sea with a tiger, was voted best new play. Hiran Abeysekera was named the best actor in a play as title character Pi, while — in a first — the supporting actor prize went to seven performers who collectively play the show's puppet tiger.

Fred Davis, one of the seven, said it was "a landmark moment for puppetry."

A stage adaptation of a time-traveling 1980s film favorite, "Back to the Future — The Musical," was named best new musical.

The black-tie ceremony at London's Royal Albert Hall was the first full Oliviers show since 2019. Theaters were shut when Britain went into lockdown in March 2020, weeks before the scheduled 2020 Oliviers ceremony.

Britain's stage community came out in force Sunday to celebrate — but also to reflect on a tough couple of years that saw all U.K. theaters closed for months at a stretch, for the first time since World War II.

The war in Ukraine was also on many minds. Several award winners spoke in support of Ukraine's fight against Russian invasion, and the Ukrainian mezzo-soprano Kseniia Nikolaieva performed her country's national anthem during the show.

"Cabaret" director Rebecca Frecknall took the directing trophy, and said the war in Ukraine gave John Kander and Fred Ebb's musical about the collapse of democracy and rise of fascism in Germany added poignancy.

"In a way it's quite sad that every time it's on it feels like it's been written for today," she said.

In the non-musical categories, Sheila Atim was named best actress for multidimensional relationship drama "Constellations." Liz Carr won the best supporting actress prize for playing a determined doctor in

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a revival of 1980s AIDS-crisis play "The Normal Heart."

Carr, who uses a wheelchair, noted that she was the first disabled actor in 35 years to play the role, based on real-life medic Linda Laubenstein, also a wheelchair-user. She thanked director Dominic Cooke for taking a chance on a disabled performer, but added: "It shouldn't be a chance — it should just be a right."

"Constellations" was named best revival, while the prize for best new comedy or entertainment went to "Pride And Prejudice(asterisk) ((asterisk)sort of)," a comic all-female twist on the Jane Austen classic.

Kit Harington, Tom Felton, Emma Corrin and Jonathan Pryce were among the stars walking the sustainable green carpet, made from reusable grass, before the glitzy ceremony, which featured performances from best-musical nominees including "Frozen," "The Drifters Girl," "Back to the Future - The Musical" and "Get Up Stand Up! The Bob Marley Musical."

The show also included a musical tribute to a theater titan — composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim, who died last year aged 91.

The awards were founded in 1976 and named for the late actor-director Laurence Olivier. Winners are chosen by voting groups of stage professionals and theatergoers.

The last Oliviers ceremony, held largely remotely in October 2020, awarded work done before the pandemic. Venues began reopening in mid-2021, and shows are largely up and running again, though the number of international visitors, vital to sustaining West End shows, remains well below pre-pandemic levels.

Actor-singer Beverley Knight, a best-actress nominee for "The Drifters Girl," said the theater community was ready to celebrate after a difficult two years.

"We have been bereft of theater for so long, just had nothing. And people only realize the importance of the place that theater and live entertainment played in any society when it was taken away," she said.

"We bring in multimillions and that's week in, week out. So we are part of giving the economy buoyancy — but more than that, we feed the nation's soul."

## US doubts new Russian war chief can end Moscow's floundering

By ROBERT BURNS and HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russia has tapped a new Ukraine war commander to take centralized control of the next phase of battle after its costly failures in the opening campaign and carnage for Ukrainian civilians. U.S. officials don't see one man making a difference in Moscow's prospects.

Russia turned to Gen. Alexander Dvornikov, 60, one of Russia's most experienced military officers and — according to U.S. officials — a general with a record of brutality against civilians in Syria and other war theaters. Up to now, Russia had no central war commander on the ground.

The general's appointment was confirmed by a senior U.S. official who was not authorized to be identified and spoke on condition of anonymity.

But the White House national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said "no appointment of any general can erase the fact that Russia has already faced a strategic failure in Ukraine."

"This general will just be another author of crimes and brutality against Ukrainian civilians," Sullivan said. "And the United States, as I said before, is determined to do all that we can to support Ukrainians as they resist him and they resist the forces that he commands."

White House press secretary Jen Psaki echoed that thought. "The reports we're seeing of a change in military leadership and putting a general in charge who was responsible for the brutality and the atrocities we saw in Syria shows that there's going to be a continuation of what we've already seen on the ground in Ukraine and that's what we are expecting," she said.

The decision to establish new battlefield leadership comes as Russia gears up for what is expected to be a large and more focused push to expand Russian control in Ukraine's east and south, including the Donbas, and follows a failed opening bid in the north to conquer Kyiv, the capital.

Dvornikov gained prominence while leading the Russian group of forces in Syria, where Moscow has waged a military campaign to shore up President Bashar Assad's regime during a devastating civil war.

Dvornikov is a career military officer and has steadily risen through the ranks after starting as a platoon commander in 1982. He fought during the second war in Chechnya and took several top positions before

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being placed in charge of the Russian troops in Syria in 2015.

Under Dvornikov's command, Russian forces in Syria were known for crushing dissent in part by destroying cities, lobbing artillery and dropping what were often crudely made barrel bombs in sustained attacks that have displaced millions of Syrian civilians. The United Nations says the more than decade-long war has killed more than 350,000 people.

In 2016, Russian President Vladimir Putin awarded Dvornikov the Hero of Russia medal, one of the country's highest awards. Dvornikov has served as the commander of the Southern Military District since 2016.

Lt. Col. Fares al-Bayoush, a Syrian army defector, said Sunday that while the situation in Syria is different than in Ukraine because the Russian military was fighting insurgent groups and not Ukraine's professional army, he expects a similar "scorched-earth" strategy.

Al-Bayoush said he believes the aim of naming Dvornikov as Ukraine war commander is to turn the war into "rapid battles" in several places at the same time.

"I expected him to use the scorched earth policy that was used in Syria," al-Bayoush said, referring to Russian-backed attacks in Syria in which cities and towns were put under long sieges while being subjected to intense bombardment that left many people dead and caused wide destruction to infrastructure and residential areas. "He has very good experience in this policy."

"This commander is a war criminal," al-Bayoush said by telephone from Turkey.

Since Russia joined the war in Syria in September 2015, Assad's forces have taken control of most of the country after being on the verge of collapse. The Russian air force carried out thousands of airstrikes since, helping Russian-backed Syrian troops take areas after fighters were forced to choose between an amnesty in return for dropping their arms or being taken by buses into rebel-held areas.

The last major Russian-backed offensive in Syria lasted several months, until March 2020, when a truce was reached between Russia and Turkey, which supported rival sides.

Sullivan on Sunday said the Russian general has a record of brutality against civilians in Syria and "we can expect more of the same" in Ukraine. But he stressed that the U.S. strategy remains the same in supporting Ukraine and its president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"Our policy is unequivocal — that we will do whatever we can to help Ukraine succeed," Sullivan said. "Which means that we need to keep giving them weapons so that they can make progress on the battlefield. And we need to keep giving them military support and strong economic sanctions to improve their position, their posture at the negotiating table."

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, meanwhile, spoke by video conference Sunday to a small number of Ukrainian troops in the U.S. who are now returning to their country. The group has been in the U.S. since last fall for military schooling and were given training on new drones the U.S. sent to Ukraine last week for the war with Russia.

Austin thanked the Ukrainian troop members for their courage and service and pledged continued U.S. support and security aid, according to Pentagon spokesman John Kirby. Kirby said the small group was given some advanced tactical training, including on the Switchblade armed kamakazi drones, as well as instruction on patrol craft operations, communications and maintenance.

In an interview Saturday with The Associated Press, Zelenskyy acknowledged that despite his hopes for peace, he must be "realistic" about the prospects for a swift resolution given that negotiations have so far been limited to low-level talks that do not include Putin.

Zelenskyy renewed his plea for more weapons before an expected surge in fighting in the country's east. He said, with frustration in regards to supplies of weapons from the U.S. and other Western nations, "of course it's not enough."

Sullivan spoke on CNN's "State of the Union" and NBC's "Meet the Press. Psaki spoke on "Fox News Sunday."

## **Pakistan's PM vows to fight on after Parliament ousts him**

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

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ISLAMABAD (AP) — The ouster of Prime Minister Imran Khan in a parliamentary no-confidence vote early Sunday set Pakistan on an uncertain political path, with his supporters taking to the streets in protest and the political opposition preparing to install his replacement.

Tens of thousands of Khan supporters marched in cities across Pakistan, waving large party flags and vowing support. The youth, who make up the backbone of Khan's supporters, dominated the crowds.

In the southern Arabian Sea port city of Karachi more than 20,000 shouted slogans promising Khan's return to power. In the capital of Islamabad, the lights from thousands of supporters lit up the night sky as Khan made his way through the crowd atop a brightly colored truck.

Khan was brought down after a day of drama and often vitriolic remarks. His supporters accused Washington of orchestrating his ouster and his party walked out of Parliament shortly before the vote. In the end, 174 lawmakers in the 342-seat Parliament voted to depose him, two more than the required simple majority.

Khan's successor is to be elected and sworn in by Parliament on Monday. The leading contender is Shahbaz Sharif, a brother of disgraced former prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

Shahbaz Sharif heads the largest party in a diverse alliance of opposition factions that span the spectrum from the left to radically religious. Khan's nominee for prime minister will be his foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

In an interview on a local television channel Qureshi said the party was still debating whether its lawmakers will resign from Parliament after the prime minister's vote is taken.

Khan's ouster comes amid his cooling relations with the powerful military and an economy struggling with high inflation and a plummeting Pakistani rupee. The opposition has charged Khan's government with economic mismanagement.

Khan has claimed the U.S. worked behind the scenes to bring him down, purportedly because of Washington's displeasure over his independent foreign policy choices, which often favor China and Russia. He has occasionally defied America and stridently criticized America's post 9/11 war on terror. Khan said America was deeply disturbed by his visit to Russia and his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Feb. 24, the start of the devastating war in Ukraine.

The U.S. State Department has denied his allegations.

Elizabeth Threlkeld, a Pakistan expert at the U.S.-based The Stimson Center, said that even as prime minister, Khan often played the role of opposition leader.

"His removal would see him to a role he knows well, armed with a narrative of victimhood from unfounded claims of international interference," she said. "His base will remain loyal, though I expect both his controversial attempt to remain in power and reduced military backing will lose him less committed supporters."

Khan would seem to have few options going forward.

General elections are not scheduled before August 2023. Even if the new prime minister favors early elections, this would likely not happen before October. The Pakistan Election Commission, which oversees polls, told the Supreme Court last week it had still to finish re-aligning constituencies in line with the results of a 2017 census before polls could be held.

In the aftermath of Sunday's vote, giant steel containers stacked on top of each other blocked main roads leading to Parliament and to the diplomatic enclave in the capital of Islamabad. Khan has called on his supporters to gather late Sunday, after the end of the daily dawn-to-dusk fast during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center, predicted a turbulent time ahead for Pakistan.

"Khan's defeat would also leave Pakistan a bitterly partisan and divided place. He has not only intensified political rivalries, he has also defied and alienated key entities like the Army Chief and Pakistan's foreign office," said Kugelman. "It will take time for the country to pick up the pieces, and the coming months will be politically turbulent."

Sunday's vote capped a week-long constitutional crisis that had mesmerized the nation. It began last

Sunday when Khan sought to sidestep the no confidence vote by dissolving Parliament and calling early elections, It was then left to the Supreme Court to sort, eventually ruling to reinstate Parliament and demand the vote be he.

Khan has won international praise for his handling of the COVID pandemic opting for so called "smart lockdowns" where outbreaks occurred rather than countrywide closures that helped protect some industries like the construction sector. His reputation for fighting corruption has brought a record \$21 billion in deposits from overseas Pakistanis.

But he has not been able to overcome an increasingly strained relationship with the army, which has ruled Pakistan directly for more than half its 75-year history and indirectly from the sidelines when civilian governments ruled.

Khan's opponents say the army helped him win the 2018 elections after it had fallen out with Nawaz Sharif, who was convicted of corruption after being named in the so-called Panama Papers. These papers are a collection of leaked secret financial documents showing how some of the world's richest hide their money and involving a global law firm based in Panama.

Pakistan's Supreme Court disqualified Sharif from holding office. He lives in London in self-imposed exile after being convicted in a Pakistani court of corruption. He was sentenced to 10 years in jail.

Fissures in Khan's relationship with the army began last November after he squabbled with the powerful Army Chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa over the appointment of the new intelligence chief.

Last weekend, Bajwa appeared to distance himself from Khan's anti-U.S. attacks saying Pakistan wants good relations with Washington, its largest export trading partner and with China. He condemned Russia's war in Ukraine.

## 3 churches in Ukraine contemplate faith, hope and charity

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

BORODYANKA, Ukraine (AP) — It's almost Easter in Ukraine, where a trio of churches on the far edges of the capital considered faith, hope and charity on Sunday.

In Bucha, shocked into silence by atrocities that left bodies in the streets, about two dozen of the faithful gathered for the service while the exhumation of bodies continued from a mass grave in the churchyard.

In Makarov, a handful of members visited a badly damaged riverside church, at times moved to tears. Small golden crosses for rosaries lay scattered on the floor with the shattered glass.

And in Borodyanka, where Russian attacks ripped a blackened hole in a high-rise apartment building, volunteers and donations filled an almost untouched church a short walk away, while residents lined up at the door for food and other assistance. Many were elderly people who stayed behind while others fled.

On the day when Pope Francis called for an Easter truce in Ukraine to make way for a negotiated peace, church visitors invoked God in recalling their survival.

"Each person who was leaving, from any place, Makarov, Bucha, Hostomel or from Andriivka, the neighboring village which was destroyed to the ground; each one, even those who did not know the Lord's Prayer, he was speaking to God with his own words," said Alona Parkhomenko in Makarov, where the church exterior was speckled with bullet holes and the priest warned of falling glass.

The Russian retreat from the region surrounding Kyiv has enabled some of the millions of Ukrainians who fled over the border or to other parts of the country to return home. Some are finding their places of worship damaged or destroyed. Ukrainian authorities in late March said at least 59 spiritual sites including churches, mosques and synagogues had been hit.

In Makarov, the priest, Bogdan Lisechenko, said the church beside the river is in critical condition with spring rains looming. "Now we are taking out the icons, saving them because the water is coming," he said. "For now, we will close the windows to prevent looting."

For Easter, which in the Orthodox world is two weeks away, the priest said the blessing will be given in a church in another village that so far has escaped damage in the war.

## Israeli forces shoot, kill 2 Palestinians; one was unarmed

By TIA GOLDENBERG and LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israeli forces shot and killed two Palestinians, including an unarmed woman, in confrontations across Israel and the occupied West Bank on Sunday, Israeli and Palestinian officials said. It was the latest in a growing wave of violence that has broken out during the holy month of Ramadan.

The shootings came as Israeli troops combed the northern West Bank city of Jenin and the surrounding area, home to two of the Palestinians who staged deadly attacks against Israelis in recent weeks. Ramadan this year converges with major Jewish and Christian holidays. Protests during Ramadan last year boiled over into an 11-day war between Israel and Gaza militants.

"We will be at every place at any time as needed to cut off these terror attacks. Israel is going on the offensive," Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett told his Cabinet.

Four attacks by Palestinians in recent weeks have killed 14 people in one of the deadliest bursts of violence against Israelis in years. In response, Israel has stepped up its military activity in the West Bank.

At a military checkpoint near the West Bank city of Bethlehem, Israeli soldiers opened fire at a woman who the army said failed to heed calls to stop and ignored warning shots fired into the air.

The army said that soldiers aimed at the woman's lower body. But the Palestinian Health Ministry said the woman later died from her injuries in a hospital. Local news reports said she was a 47-year-old mother of six. The Israeli military confirmed the woman was found to be unarmed and said the incident was under investigation.

Palestinian assailants often carry out attacks at checkpoints in the West Bank. But Palestinians and human rights groups say the military often uses excessive force and in some cases has injured or killed people who were not involved in violence.

In the volatile southern West Bank city of Hebron, Israel's border police said an officer shot another woman who stabbed and lightly wounded him near the Cave of the Patriarchs, a holy site revered by Jews and Muslims. Palestinian officials said the woman was killed.

More violence broke out later Sunday as Israeli forces patrolled Jenin, considered a stronghold of Palestinian militants, as soldiers investigated the home of an attacker who killed three Israelis in a mass shooting last week. The army said soldiers came under fire from a gunman on a motorcycle and shot him. The man's condition wasn't immediately known.

Israel has taken a series of steps to try to calm the situation, including granting thousands of Palestinians from the Hamas-run Gaza Strip permits to work inside Israel. At the same time, it has been stepping up security measures in hopes of preventing further violence.

Defense Minister Benny Gantz signed orders Sunday placing two Palestinian citizens of Israel in administrative detention, a controversial practice that allows authorities to hold them without charge. One suspect was placed under detention for four months on suspicion that he was planning an attack, while the second suspect was jailed for six months for what it said was past involvement in militant activity, the Defense Ministry said.

Israel's Security Cabinet approved a plan to spend just over \$110 million to extend some 40 kilometers (25 miles) of the porous West Bank separation barrier. Some of the attackers are believed to have slipped into Israel without permits.

Late Saturday, Israel announced that it was tightening restrictions on movement in and out of Jenin, though it continued to allow laborers to enter Israel for work. A raid on the home of one of the assailants on Saturday sparked a gunbattle that left at least one Palestinian militant dead.

Jenin governor Akram Rajoub denounced the ongoing Israeli activity in the area, called the measures "an expression of collective punishment" meant to disrupt the lives of Palestinians rather than thwart attacks.

In Sunday's raid, the military said a "violent riot" broke out as forces were operating in the village of Yabad, home to one of the attackers. It said forces opened fire and shot one Palestinian who threw an explosive at them. It was unclear what his condition was.

Forces arrested at least eight suspects and found Israeli military ammunition and uniforms in one of the



suspect's homes as well as illegal arms, the military said.

Earlier, Brig. Gen. Ran Kochav, the chief military spokesman, told Israeli Army Radio that some 100 Palestinians marched toward Joseph's Tomb in the West Bank city of Nablus late Saturday and set it ablaze before they were dispersed by Palestinian security forces. Images on social media showed parts of the tomb inside the shrine smashed and charred.

Joseph's Tomb is a flashpoint prayer site. Some Jews believe the biblical Joseph is buried in the tomb, while Muslims say a sheikh is buried there. The army escorts Jewish worshippers to the site several times a year, in coordination with Palestinian security forces.

The incident drew condemnation from Israeli leaders. "The vandalism of Joseph's Tomb is a grave event and a serious violation of freedom of worship in one of the holiest places for every Jew," Gantz tweeted.

## Police said teen didn't need medical help before his death

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — A community task force reviewing the death of a Black teenager who was restrained for more than 30 minutes at a Kansas juvenile detention center found that an officer changed his answers on a form that otherwise would have led police to take the teen to a hospital instead of booking him into the detention center.

An official who oversees admissions to the Sedgwick County Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center, Jodi Tronsgard, told the task force last month that the officer initially reported that there were signs that 17-year-old Cedric Lofton needed medical attention before the officer changed his answers, The Wichita Eagle reported.

"What I learned after the intake is that the officer had presented this form and initially said yes, that there were signs of acute illness that appear to need immediate medical care. Yes, there were signs of intoxication with significant impairment in functioning," Tronsgard told the task force on March 7. "...So, he was informed that if you answer 'yes' to these questions, you have to leave and take the youth for a medical or mental health release. And then, hearing that, he goes and then responds 'no' to these questions."

Interim police Chief Lem Moore said he wasn't aware that the officer had changed his answers on the form until the newspaper asked about it. He said he has ordered a preliminary review of the case to determine if it's possible the officer falsified information. "If issues are found, a full investigation will be conducted," he said.

Lofton's foster father called authorities in September seeking help because the teenager was hallucinating. Police initially tried to persuade him to go to a mental health facility, but body camera video shows him refusing to go and then resisting when officers tried to force him.

Lofton then was taken to the detention center, where he was restrained after a struggle with staff members. He had to be resuscitated after he was held facedown, and he died two days later.

Sedgwick County District Attorney Marc Bennett declined to charge the detention center workers in January, citing the state's stand-your-ground self-defense law.

He said told the newspaper for Sunday's story that he also didn't have enough evidence when he reviewed the case to charge the officer with falsifying information on the form, but that he would be willing to examine any new information.

Emails obtained by the newspaper show that Bennett raised concerns that the Kansas Bureau of Investigation agent who was investigating Lofton's death had a pro-police bias, and the agent was later removed from the case. The agent did not ask the police officers who took Lofton to the detention center about the changed answers on the admission form.

Lofton's family's lawyer, Steven Hart, said the changed answers on the form raise additional questions about how police handled the case.

"That is the most disgusting display of a lack of professionalism — or care," Hart said. "Essentially, it was easier for them to drop him off than do what they knew was necessary and right."

County officials have said the FBI is reviewing Lofton's death.

## New York City Mayor Eric Adams tests positive for COVID-19

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City Mayor Eric Adams tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday, his 100th day in office, according to a spokesperson.

The first-term Democrat woke up with a raspy voice Sunday and took a PCR test that came back positive, spokesperson Fabien Levy said in a statement. Earlier Sunday, Levy had tweeted that Adams had taken a rapid test that came back negative but took the additional test out of an abundance of caution.

Adams has no other symptoms but has canceled all public events for the week and will be taking antiviral medications and working remotely, Levy said.

New York City has been experiencing a steady resurgence in virus cases over the past month. It's now averaging around 1,800 new cases per day — not counting the many home tests that go unreported to health officials. That's triple the number in early March, when the city began relaxing masking and vaccination rules.

Adams' past week was busy: The mayor attended the annual Gridiron Club dinner in Washington last Saturday, after which dozens of attendees tested positive. He also delivered remarks at the National Action Network convention on Wednesday and attended that night's gala, appeared in-studio on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" on Thursday before joining Robert De Niro at the ReelAbilities Film Festival, went to the New York Yankees' opening day Friday and was in Albany on Saturday.

## 'Sonic 2' steals weekend box office, but 'Ambulance' stalls

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

"Sonic the Hedgehog 2" sped to the top of the charts in its opening weekend, earning an impressive \$71 million according to studio estimates Sunday. Paramount's PG-rated sequel easily bested the weekend's other major newcomer, Michael Bay's "Ambulance," which faltered in theaters.

"Sonic 2," which brings back the first film's director, writers and cast, including James Marsden, Jim Carrey and Ben Schwartz, who voices the blue video game character, opened in 4,234 locations and actually surpassed its predecessor's opening weekend. The first "Sonic the Hedgehog" opened over the Presidents Day holiday weekend in February 2020, earning \$58 million in its first three days.

"The normal pattern domestically is that sequels slide a little bit," said Chris Aronson, the president of domestic distribution for Paramount. "But we certainly bucked that trend."

For a sequel to open 22% above the first, Aronson added, is "quite remarkable."

"Sonic 2" got mixed to positive reviews from critics and audiences were even more enthusiastic. They gave the CG/live-action hybrid a strong "A" CinemaScore.

"The filmmakers did a great job of being in service of not only the general audience but Sonic fans themselves," Aronson said. "Many feel it's a bigger, better film than the first one."

It's an important weekend not just for the "Sonic" franchise, but for PG-rated family films too. Comscore senior media analyst Paul Dergarabedian said that one of the big questions of the pandemic was whether families would return to movie theaters with seemingly limitless viewing options available at home. According to exit polls, families made up 58% of the "Sonic 2" audience.

"There's been some indication that they wanted to go back with movies like 'Sing 2,' but it's moved in fits and starts," said Dergarabedian. "This says once and for all that families want to go back. It's a really good indicator of things to come for family films in 2022 with 'Lightyear' and the next 'Minions' movie."

"Sonic 2" is also the latest in a string of theatrical hits for Paramount in 2022, including "Scream," "Jackass Forever" and "The Lost City," which is still in the top five.

"A lot of credit goes to our marketing and distribution teams," Aronson said. "We've been judicious about picking our dates and knowing who our audience was for each."

And their next release could be their biggest yet. "Top Gun: Maverick" opens on May 27.

Meanwhile, "Ambulance" got off to a bumpy start in its first weekend. With an estimated \$8.7 million in grosses, it opened behind Sony's "Morbius," down 74% in weekend two, and "The Lost City." Bay's nail-biter about a botched bank robbery was released by Universal and stars Jake Gyllenhaal, Yahya Abdul-

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Mateen II and Eiza González.

Its tepid launch proved a head-scratcher for many. Reviews weren't terrible (it's at a 69% on Rotten Tomatoes versus "Sonic 2's" 67%) and on paper "Ambulance" appears to be the kind of throwback, big screen blockbuster spectacle that would draw significant crowds to the theaters.

"This is a filmmaker who will forever be looked at as a blockbuster director, whether you like his movies or not. The bar is always raised for someone like that," Dergarabedian said. "But this is a different kind of movie and I think that's why we're seeing these numbers. It's not trying to be 'Transformers.' If Bay's name wasn't on it, expectations wouldn't be as high."

"Sonic 2" wasn't the only success of the weekend. A24's critical darling "Everything Everywhere All At Once" expanded nationwide in its third weekend in theaters and earned \$6.1 million from only 1,250 screens.

"A24 has done a spectacular job of rolling it out on a platform release and building buzz," Dergarabedian said.

The film, directed by the Daniels and starring Michelle Yeoh, will expand to more theaters in the coming weeks.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Sonic the Hedgehog 2," \$71 million.
2. "Morbius," \$10.2 million.
3. "The Lost City," \$9.2 million.
4. "Ambulance," \$8.7 million.
5. "The Batman," \$6.5 million.
6. "Everything Everywhere All At Once," \$6.1 million.
7. "Uncharted," \$2.7 million.
8. "Jujutsu Kaisen 0," \$825,000.
9. "Spider-Man: No Way Home," \$625,000.
10. "RRR," \$570,000.

## Christians mark Palm Sunday with Jerusalem procession

JERUSALEM (AP) — Thousands of Christian pilgrims took part in Palm Sunday celebrations in Jerusalem at the start of the Holy Week.

The holiday this year comes as tourists are returning to the Holy Land following two years of disruption during the pandemic. It also is taking place as tensions between Israelis and Palestinians are rising amid a spate of recent Palestinian attacks in Israel that have prompted military raids in the occupied West Bank in response.

Worshippers carried palm fronds and olive branches and marched from the top of the Mount of Olives to the Old City of Jerusalem.

Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and is the start of the church's most solemn week, which includes the Good Friday re-enactment of Jesus' crucifixion and death and his resurrection on Easter.

The procession made its way from the Mount of Olives past the Garden of Gethsemane where, according to biblical tradition, Jesus was betrayed, then finally into the alleyways of the Old City.

## Shanghai discharges thousands of patients, boosts supplies

BEIJING (AP) — Shanghai on Sunday discharged over 11,000 recovered COVID-19 patients and health authorities emphasized that they must be allowed to return home despite the lockdown that has severely restricted movement in China's largest city.

"We hope their family and community will not worry about them or discriminate against them," said Wu Jinglei, director of the Shanghai Health Commission.

The city of 26 million people reported 1,006 confirmed infections and nearly 24,000 asymptomatic cases

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in the last 24 hours. Shanghai has been under lockdown since March 28, and authorities said Saturday that the strict measures would be lifted in areas with no new cases in the last 14 days following another round of mass testing.

The United States on Saturday advised its citizens to "reconsider traveling to China due to "arbitrary enforcement" of local laws and COVID-19 restrictions, particularly in Hong Kong, Jilin province and Shanghai. U.S. officials cited a risk of "parents and children being separated."

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said in response that China was "strongly dissatisfied with and firmly opposed to the U.S. side's groundless accusation against China's epidemic response."

"It should be pointed out that China's anti-epidemic policies are science-based and effective, and we are fully confident that Shanghai and other places in China will prevail over the new wave of the epidemic," said Zhao.

Meanwhile, Shanghai authorities said that they have secured daily supplies for residents from online platforms, according to state-owned newspaper Global Times, following complaints about deliveries of food and other basic necessities as the lockdown enters its third week.

Residents have resorted to group buying of groceries because they are not allowed to leave their buildings. Posts circulating on social media platforms such as Weibo also show that some residents have not been able to have their food orders delivered, while others posted online that they're running out of food.

Some people said that as soon as you go to the grocery shopping app, a day's orders are already filled.

According to the Global Times, platforms such as JD.com as well as Alibaba's Ele.me delivery apps are working with authorities to ensure that everyone has access to vegetables, fruits and other produce.

Shanghai highlights the soaring human and economic cost of China's "zero-COVID" strategy that aims to isolate every infected person.

Separately, Erjiefang, an area in capital Beijing, was classified as high-risk on Saturday after eight local COVID-19 infections were reported there over the past two weeks.

And in Guangzhou, primary and middle schools will switch to online learning starting Monday after the metropolis of 18 million northwest of Hong Kong registered 23 local infections since Friday, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. An exhibition center was being converted into a makeshift hospital after authorities said earlier they would begin citywide mass testing.

China is facing one of its worst local outbreaks since the pandemic began. China is still closed to international travel, even as most of the world has sought ways to live with the virus.

## **Biden, Modi to speak as US presses for hard line on Russia**

By FATIMA HUSSEIN and ASHOK SHARMA Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — President Joe Biden is set to speak with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday as he presses world leaders to take a hard line against Russia's Ukraine invasion.

India's neutral stance in the war has raised concerns in Washington and earned praise from Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who lauded India this month for judging "the situation in its entirety, not just in a one-sided way."

Most recently, India abstained when the U.N. General Assembly voted Thursday to suspend Russia from its seat on the 47-member Human Rights Council over allegations that Russian soldiers in Ukraine engaged in rights violations that the U.S. and Ukraine have called war crimes.

The vote was 93-24 with 58 abstentions.

In the virtual meeting, Biden will talk about the consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine "and mitigating its destabilizing impact on global food supply and commodity markets," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said in a statement Sunday.

They'll discuss "strengthening the global economy, and upholding a free, open, rules-based international order to bolster security, democracy, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific," she said.

India continues to purchase Russian energy supplies, despite pressure from Western countries to avoid buying Russian oil and gas. The U.S. has also considered sanctions on India for its recent purchase of

advanced Russian air defense systems.

Last month, the state-run Indian Oil Corp. bought 3 million barrels of crude from Russia to secure its needs, resisting entreaties from the West to avoid such purchases. India isn't alone in buying Russian energy, however. Several European allies such as Germany have continued to do so, despite public pressure to end these contracts.

Indian media reports said Russia was offering a discount on oil purchases of 20% below global benchmark prices.

Iraq is India's top supplier, with a 27% share. Saudi Arabia is second at around 17%, followed by the United Arab Emirates with 13% and the U.S. at 9%, the Press Trust of India news agency reported.

Biden and Modi last spoke in March.

## America's homeless ranks graying as more retire on streets

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Karla Finocchio's slide into homelessness began when she split with her partner of 18 years and temporarily moved in with a cousin.

The 55-year-old planned to use her \$800-a-month disability check to get an apartment after back surgery. But she soon was sleeping in her old pickup protected by her German Shepherd mix Scrapy, unable to afford housing in Phoenix, where median monthly rents soared 33% during the coronavirus pandemic to over \$1,220 for a one-bedroom, according to ApartmentList.com.

Finocchio is one face of America's graying homeless population, a rapidly expanding group of destitute and desperate people 50 and older suddenly without a permanent home after a job loss, divorce, family death or health crisis during a pandemic.

"We're seeing a huge boom in senior homelessness," said Kendra Hendry, a caseworker at Arizona's largest shelter, where older people make up about 30% of those staying there. "These are not necessarily people who have mental illness or substance abuse problems. They are people being pushed into the streets by rising rents."

Academics project their numbers will nearly triple over the next decade, challenging policy makers from Los Angeles to New York to imagine new ideas for sheltering the last of the baby boomers as they get older, sicker and less able to pay spiraling rents. Advocates say much more housing is needed, especially for extremely low-income people.

Navigating sidewalks in wheelchairs and walkers, the aging homeless have medical ages greater than their years, with mobility, cognitive and chronic problems like diabetes. Many contracted COVID-19 or couldn't work because of pandemic restrictions.

Cardelia Corley, 65, ended up on the streets of Los Angeles County after the hours at her telemarketing job were cut.

"I'd always worked, been successful, put my kid through college," the single mother said. "And then all of a sudden things went downhill."

Corley traveled all night aboard buses and rode commuter trains to catch a cat nap.

"And then I would go to Union Station downtown and wash up in the bathroom," said Corley. She recently moved into a small East Hollywood apartment with help from The People Concern, a Los Angeles nonprofit.

A 2019 study of aging homeless people led by the University of Pennsylvania drew on 30 years of census data to project the U.S. population of people 65 and older experiencing homelessness will nearly triple from 40,000 to 106,000 by 2030, resulting in a public health crisis as their age-related medical problems multiply.

Dr. Margot Kushel, a physician who directs the Center for Vulnerable Populations at the University of California, San Francisco, said her research in Oakland on how homelessness affects health has shown nearly half of the tens of thousands of older homeless people in the U.S. are on the streets for the first time.

"We are seeing that retirement is no longer the golden dream," said Kushel. "A lot of the working poor are destined to retire onto the streets."

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That's especially true of younger baby boomers, now in their late 50s to late 60s, who don't have pensions or 401(k) accounts. About half of both women and men ages 55 to 66 have no retirement savings, according to the census.

Born between 1946 and 1964, baby boomers now number over 70 million, the census shows. With the oldest boomers in their mid 70s, all will hit age 65 by 2030.

The aged homeless also tend to have smaller Social Security checks after years working off the books.

Donald Whitehead Jr., executive director of the Washington-based advocacy group National Coalition for the Homeless, said Black, Latino and Indigenous people who came of age in the 1980s amid recession and high unemployment rates are disproportionately represented among the homeless.

Many nearing retirement never got well-paying jobs and didn't buy homes because of discriminatory real estate practices.

"So many of us didn't put money into retirement programs, thinking that Social Security was going to take care of us," said Rudy Soliz, 63, operations director for Justa Center, which offers meals, showers, a mail drop and other services to the aged homeless in Phoenix.

The average monthly Social Security retirement payment as of December was \$1,658. Many older homeless people have much smaller checks because they worked fewer years or earned less than others.

People 65 and over with limited resources and who didn't work enough to earn retirement benefits may be eligible for Supplemental Security Income of \$841 a month.

Nestor Castro, 67, was luckier than many who lose permanent homes.

Castro was in his late 50s living in New York when his mother died and he was hospitalized with bleeding ulcers, losing their apartment. He initially stayed with his sister in Boston, then for more than three years at a YMCA in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Just before last Christmas, Castro got a permanent subsidized apartment through Hearth Inc., a Boston nonprofit dedicated to ending homelessness among older adults. Residents pay 30% of their income to stay in one of Hearth's 228 units.

Castro pays with part of his Social Security check and a part-time job. He also volunteers at a food pantry and a nonprofit that assists people with housing.

"Housing is a big problem around here because they are building luxury apartments that no one can afford," he said. "A place down the street is \$3,068 a month for a studio."

## China makes semi-secret delivery of missiles to Serbia

By DUSAN STOJANOVIC Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — Russian ally Serbia took the delivery of a sophisticated Chinese anti-aircraft system in a veiled operation this weekend, amid Western concerns that an arms buildup in the Balkans at the time of the war in Ukraine could threaten the fragile peace in the region.

Media and military experts said Sunday that six Chinese Air Force Y-20 transport planes landed at Belgrade's civilian airport early Saturday, reportedly carrying HQ-22 surface-to-air missile systems for the Serbian military.

The Chinese cargo planes with military markings were pictured at Belgrade's Nikola Tesla airport. Serbia's defense ministry did not immediately respond to AP's request for comment.

The arms delivery over the territory of at least two NATO member states, Turkey and Bulgaria, was seen by experts as a demonstration of China's growing global reach.

"The Y-20s' appearance raised eyebrows because they flew en masse as opposed to a series of single-aircraft flights," wrote The Warzone online magazine. "The Y-20's presence in Europe in any numbers is also still a fairly new development."

Serbian military analyst Aleksandar Radic said that "the Chinese carried out their demonstration of force."

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic all but confirmed the delivery of the medium-range system that was agreed in 2019, saying on Saturday that he will present "the newest pride" of the Serbian military on Tuesday or Wednesday.

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He had earlier complained that NATO countries, which represent most of Serbia's neighbors, are refusing to allow the system's delivery flights over their territories amid tensions over Russia's aggression on Ukraine.

Although Serbia has voted in favor of U.N. resolutions that condemn the bloody Russian attacks in Ukraine, it has refused to join international sanctions against its allies in Moscow or outright criticize the apparent atrocities committed by the Russian troops there.

Back in 2020, U.S. officials warned Belgrade against the purchase of HQ-22 anti-aircraft systems, whose export version is known as FK-3. They said that if Serbia really wants to join the European Union and other Western alliances, it must align its military equipment with Western standards.

The Chinese missile system has been widely compared to the American Patriot and the Russian S-300 surface-to-air missile systems although it has a shorter range than more advanced S-300s. Serbia will be the first operator of the Chinese missiles in Europe.

Serbia was at war with its neighbors in the 1990s. The country, which is formally seeking EU membership, has already been boosting its armed forces with Russian and Chinese arms, including warplanes, battle tanks and other equipment.

In 2020, it took delivery of Chengdu Pterodactyl-1 drones, known in China as Wing Loong. The combat drones are able to strike targets with bombs and missiles and can be used for reconnaissance tasks.

There are fears in the West that the arming of Serbia by Russia and China could encourage the Balkan country toward another war, especially against its former province of Kosovo that proclaimed independence in 2008. Serbia, Russia and China don't recognize Kosovo's statehood, while the United States and most Western countries do.

## Spain probes private taxidermy museum with 1,000 animals

MADRID (AP) — Spain's Civil Guard says it is investigating a businessman in the eastern Valencia region who owned a private taxidermy collection with more than 1,000 stuffed animals, including just over 400 from protected species and at least one specimen of a North African oryx, already extinct.

The collection would fetch 29 million euros (\$31.5 million) on the black market, the Civil Guard said Sunday in a statement, adding that its owner could be charged with trafficking and other crimes against the environment.

It said the finding was the largest of protected stuffed specimens in Spain.

Investigating agents found the stuffed animals in two warehouses extending over 50,000 square meters on the outskirts of Bétera, a small town north of the eastern coastal city of Valencia.

Of the 1,090 stuffed animals found, 405 belonged to specimens protected by the CITES convention on wildlife protection.

They included the scimitar oryx, also known as the Sahara oryx, which the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, or IUCN, declared extinct in the wild in 2000, and at least two more species nearly extinct: the addax, or white antelope, originally from the Sahara desert and the Bengal tiger.

The agents also recorded stuffed specimens of cheetah, leopard, lion, lynx, polar bear, snow panther and white rhinoceros, among others, as well as 198 large ivory tusks from elephants.

The Civil Guard said it would investigate whether any documents exist justifying the ownership of the collection.

## Today in History: April 11, Civil Rights Act becomes law

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, April 11, the 101st day of 2022. There are 264 days left in the year.

On April 11, 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which included the Fair Housing Act, a week after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

On this date:

In 1814, Napoleon Bonaparte abdicated as Emperor of the French and was banished to the island of Elba. (Napoleon later escaped from Elba and returned to power in March 1815, until his downfall in the

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Battle of Waterloo in June 1815.)

In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln spoke to a crowd outside the White House, saying, "We meet this evening, not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart." (It was the last public address Lincoln would deliver.)

In 1899, the treaty ending the Spanish-American War was declared in effect.

In 1913, Postmaster General Albert S. Burleson, during a meeting of President Woodrow Wilson's Cabinet, proposed gradually segregating whites and Blacks who worked for the Railway Mail Service, a policy that went into effect and spread to other agencies.

In 1945, during World War II, American soldiers liberated the Nazi concentration camp Buchenwald in Germany.

In 1947, Jackie Robinson of the Brooklyn Dodgers played in an exhibition against the New York Yankees at Ebbets Field, four days before his regular-season debut that broke baseball's color line. (The Dodgers won, 14-6.)

In 1961, former SS officer Adolf Eichmann went on trial in Israel, charged with crimes against humanity for his role in the Nazi Holocaust. (Eichmann was convicted and executed.)

In 1970, Apollo 13, with astronauts James A. Lovell, Fred W. Haise and Jack Swigert, blasted off on its ill-fated mission to the moon. (The mission was aborted when an oxygen tank exploded April 13. The crew splashed down safely four days after the explosion.)

In 1980, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued regulations specifically prohibiting sexual harassment of workers by supervisors.

In 1996, 7-year-old Jessica Dubroff, who hoped to become the youngest person to fly cross-country, was killed along with her father and flight instructor when their plane crashed after takeoff from Cheyenne, Wyoming.

In 2013, comedian Jonathan Winters, 87, died in Montecito, California.

In 2020, the number of U.S. deaths from the coronavirus eclipsed Italy's for the highest in the world, topping 20,000. On the day before Easter, the Kansas Supreme Court allowed an executive order from Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly to remain in effect; it banned religious and funeral services of more than 10 people during the pandemic.

Ten years ago: George Zimmerman, the Florida neighborhood watch volunteer who fatally shot 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, was arrested and charged with second-degree murder. (He was acquitted at trial.) A California prison panel denied parole to mass murderer Charles Manson in his 12th bid for freedom.

Five years ago: In Dortmund, Germany, three bomb explosions went off near Borussia Dortmund's team bus ahead of a Champions League quarterfinal match, injuring one of the soccer team's players. (Prosecutors alleged that the bomber bet that Borussia Dortmund's shares on the stock exchange would drop in value and tried to disguise the attack as Islamic terrorism; he was convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to 14 years in prison.) Guitarist J. Geils, founder of The J. Geils Band, died in his Massachusetts home at age 71. David Letterman's mother, Dorothy Mengerling, a Midwestern homemaker who became an unlikely celebrity on her son's late-night talk show, died at age 95.

One year ago: A Black motorist, 20-year-old Daunte Wright, was shot and killed by a white police officer, Kim Potter, in suburban Minneapolis during a traffic stop. (Potter, who said she had confused her handgun for her Taser, would be convicted of first- and second-degree manslaughter and sentenced to two years in prison.) Iran's underground Natanz atomic facility was struck by a blackout that Iran blamed on "nuclear terrorism." Hideki Matsuyama won the Masters golf tournament in Augusta, Georgia, becoming the first Japanese golfer to claim the green jacket.

Today's Birthdays: Ethel Kennedy is 94. Actor Joel Grey is 90. Actor Louise Lasser is 83. Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Ellen Goodman is 81. Movie writer-director John Milius is 78. Actor Peter Riegert is 75. Movie director Carl Franklin is 73. Actor Bill Irwin is 72. Country singer-songwriter Jim Lauderdale is 65. Songwriter-producer Daryl Simmons is 65. Rock musician Nigel Pulsford is 61. Actor Lucky Vanous is 61. Country singer Steve Azar is 58. Singer Lisa Stansfield is 56. Actor Johnny Messner is 53. Rock musician Dylan Keefe (Marcy Playground) is 52. Actor Vicellous (vy-SAY'-luhs) Shannon is 51. Rapper David Banner is 48. Actor Tricia Helfer is 48. Rock musician Chris Gaylor (The All-American Rejects) is 43. Actor Kelli Garner is 38. Singer Joss Stone is 35. Actor-dancer Kaitlyn Jenkins is 30.