

Groton Daily Independent

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There will be no Little League practice today.

The U12 Baseball game for today in Britton has been moved to tomorrow @ 5:30 (2)

There will be a decision made by Noon regarding the status of the U8 and U10 game vs Watertown Rattlers.

There will be a decision made by noon regarding the Jr. Teener game @ Aberdeen AND the Legion game vs Sisseton.

Tuesday, May 31

Elementary Library Open 9-11 (Reading time 10 a.m.)

9:30 a.m.: Methodist Bible Study

5:30 p.m.: Legion hosts Sisseton, 5:30 DH

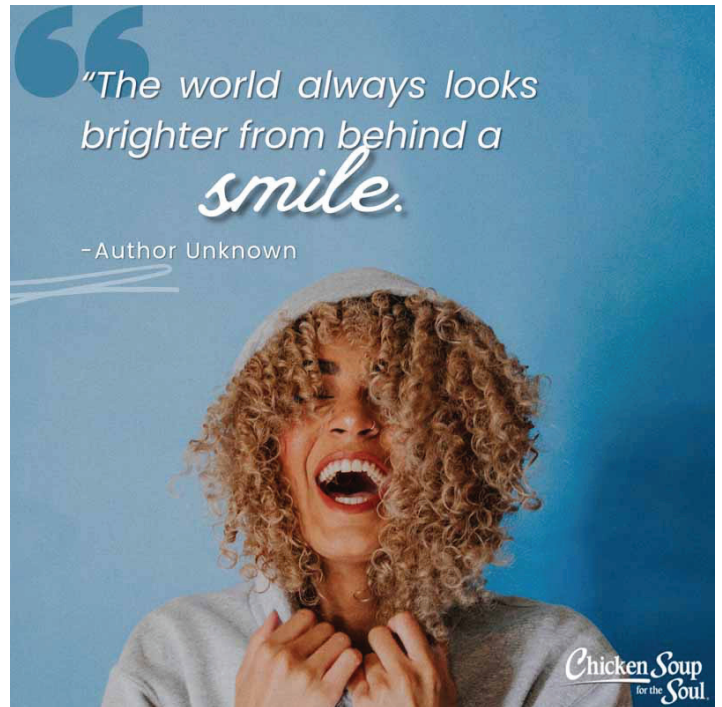
5 p.m.: Jr. Teeners at Aberdeen, DH

Postponed: U12 at Britton, DH

6:30 p.m.: U10 hosts Watertown (W/B), 1 game, Nelson Field

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

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



5:30 p.m.: U8 hosts Watertown (B/W), 2 game, Nelson Field

Wednesday, June 1

10 a.m.: Little Free Library reading time (south Methodist Church)

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, peas, mandarin-orange salad, whole wheat bread.

Noon: Groton Chamber Meeting at City Hall

5:30 p.m.: U12 at Britton, DH

6 p.m.: T-Ball practice

Thursday, June 2

Senior Menu: Roast beef with potatoes, Carrots, onions; gravy, fruit, whole wheat bread.

10 a.m.: Reading Time at Wage Memorial Library

5 p.m.: Legion at Watertown, 5 p.m. DH

5:30 p.m.: Jr. Teeners host Redfield, DH

5:30 p.m.: U12 vs. Borge at Aberdeen (north complex), DH

5:30 p.m.: U10 vs. Borge at Aberdeen, north complex, (R/B), DH

5:30 p.m.: U8 vs. Borge at Aberdeen, north complex, (R/B), DH

6 p.m.: U12 SB at Warner, DH

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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Morris delivers four hits to Groton Jr. Teeners win over Sisseston

Four hits from Nicholas Morris paved the way to victory for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U over Sisseston 14u 15-5 on Thursday. Morris doubled in the first, singled in the second, singled in the third, and singled in the fourth.

Sisseston 14u scored four runs in the fifth inning, but Groton Jr. Teeners 14U still managed to pull out the victory. Sisseston 14u batters contributing to the big inning included Hayden Hellwig, Bremer Despejler, Cash Opsal, and Derek Karst, all sending runners across the plate with RBIs in the inning.

In the first inning, Groton Jr. Teeners 14U got their offense started when Groton Jr. Teeners 14U scored on a stolen base during Morris's at bat. Then Morris doubled.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U tallied six runs in the third inning. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U's big bats in the inning were led by singles by Karsten Fliehs and Nick Groeblinghoff, a walk by Gavin Englund, and a double by Tristin McGannon.

Kellen Antonsen was credited with the victory for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Antonsen lasted four and two-thirds innings, allowing six hits and five runs while striking out six. Jarrett Erdmann threw one-third of an inning in relief out of the bullpen.

Hellwig took the loss for Sisseston 14u. Hellwig allowed nine hits and seven runs over two innings, striking out two.

Lj Crooks started the game for Sisseston 14u. The pitcher went two innings, allowing eight runs on eight hits and striking out two

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U collected 17 hits on the day. Morris, Fliehs, Antonsen, Erdmann, and McGannon all managed multiple hits for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Morris went 4-for-4 at the plate to lead Groton Jr. Teeners 14U in hits. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U stole 17 bases during the game as four players stole more than one. Morris led the way with four. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U was sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Fliehs made the most plays with eight.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U Takes Victory Over Sisseston 14u

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U was victorious over Sisseston 14u, 8-5

In the first inning, Groton Jr. Teeners 14U got their offense started. Nicholas Morris drove in two when Morris singled.

Gavin Englund took the win for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The righty went two innings, allowing one run on one hit and striking out three. Lincoln Krause and Karsten Fliehs entered the game out of the bullpen and helped to close out the game in relief.

Carter Stickland took the loss for Sisseston 14u. Stickland lasted four innings, allowing 11 hits and eight runs while striking out three.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U racked up 11 hits. Fliehs, Karter Moody, Tristin McGannon, and Nick Groeblinghoff all managed multiple hits for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Groeblinghoff, McGannon, Moody, and Fliehs each managed two hits to lead Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Fliehs led Groton Jr. Teeners 14U with three stolen bases, as they ran wild on the base paths with 13 stolen bases.

Sisseston 14u saw the ball well today, racking up six hits in the game. Reggie Lincoln and Justin Muehler each managed multiple hits for Sisseston 14u. Sisseston 14u was sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Tyler Munson made the most plays with three.

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Sisseston 14u 5 - 15 Groton Jr. Teeners 14U

📍 Home 📅 Thursday May 26, 2022

	1	2	3	4	5	R	H	E
SSSS	0	0	1	0	4	5	6	1
GRTN	2	6	6	0	1	15	17	0

BATTING

Sisseston 14u	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Steiner (3B)	2	1	1	0	0	1
L Crooks (P, CF)	1	1	0	0	1	0
C Stickland (SS)	1	1	1	0	1	0
H Hellwig (CF, P)	1	1	1	1	1	0
R White (C)	2	0	1	0	0	1
B Despejler (LF)	1	0	0	1	1	1
C Opsal (RF)	2	0	0	1	1	2
D Karst (1B)	0	0	0	0	3	0
J Hotzer (2B)	3	0	1	0	0	1
J Muehler	0	1	0	0	0	0
R Lincoln	1	0	0	0	0	0
L Carter	1	0	0	0	0	0
T Morgen	1	0	1	1	0	0
D Carter	1	0	0	0	0	0
M Lee	1	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	18	5	6	4	8	7

TB: C Stickland, J Hotzer, H Hellwig, T Morgen, R White, B Steiner, **HBP:** J Muehler, **SB:** J Muehler, C Stickland, H Hellwig, C Opsal, B Despejler, B Steiner, **LOB:** 7

PITCHING

Sisseston 14u	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
L Crooks	2.0	8	8	6	2	2	0
H Hellwig	2.0	9	7	6	2	2	0
Totals	4.0	17	15	13	4	4	0

L: H Hellwig, **P-S:** L Crooks 45-29, H Hellwig 50-28, **WP:** H Hellwig 2, **HBP:** L Crooks, H Hellwig, **BF:** L Crooks 17, H Hellwig 15

Groton Jr. Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T McGannon (CF)	3	3	2	2	0	1
K Flihs (C)	4	0	3	2	0	0
J Erdmann (LF, P)	4	1	2	0	0	1
N Morris (3B)	4	3	4	1	0	0
K Antonsen (P, LF)	4	1	3	0	0	0
G Englund (1B)	2	1	1	1	1	0
N Groeblichhoff (...)	1	1	1	1	1	0
L Krause (2B)	3	1	1	1	0	1
G Kroll (RF)	1	2	0	0	2	1
R Jangula (RF)	0	0	0	0	0	0
CR: K Moody	0	2	0	0	0	0
Totals	26	15	17	8	4	4

2B: T McGannon, L Krause, N Morris, **TB:** T McGannon 3, N Groeblichhoff, J Erdmann 2, L Krause 2, K Flihs 3, G Englund, K Antonsen 3, N Morris 5, **CS:** K Antonsen, **HBP:** T McGannon, N Groeblichhoff, **SB:** T McGannon 3, N Groeblichhoff, J Erdmann, L Krause, K Moody, G Englund, G Kroll 3, K Antonsen 2, N Morris 4, **LOB:** 5

Groton Jr. Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
K Antonsen	4.2	6	5	5	6	6	0
J Erdmann	0.1	0	0	0	2	1	0
Totals	5.0	6	5	5	8	7	0

W: K Antonsen, **P-S:** J Erdmann 13-4, K Antonsen 88-49, **HBP:** K Antonsen, **BF:** J Erdmann 3, K Antonsen 24

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Sisseston 14u 5 - 8 Groton Jr. Teeners 14U

📍 Home 📅 Thursday May 26, 2022

	1	2	3	4	5	R	H	E
SSSS	0	1	2	2	0	5	6	0
GRTN	4	1	3	0	X	8	11	1

BATTING

Sisseston 14u	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
M Dahle (2B)	3	1	1	1	0	0
J Muehler (LF)	2	1	2	1	1	0
T Munson (C)	1	1	0	0	2	1
R Lincoln (3B)	3	1	2	1	0	0
D Carter (SS)	1	0	0	0	2	1
C Stickland (P)	2	0	0	0	1	1
H Hellwig (1B)	3	0	0	0	0	1
L Carter (CF)	1	1	0	0	2	1
D Carter (RF)	1	0	1	1	1	0
Totals	17	5	6	4	9	5

2B: J Muehler 2, **TB:** M Dahle, D Carter, R Lincoln 2, J Muehler 4, **SB:** C Stickland, R Lincoln, J Muehler, L Carter, **LOB:** 7

PITCHING

Sisseston 14u	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
C Stickland	4.0	11	8	8	3	3	0
Totals	4.0	11	8	8	3	3	0

L: C Stickland, **P-S:** C Stickland 71-46, **HBP:** C Stickland, **BF:** C Stickland 26

Groton Jr. Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T McGannon (CF)	3	2	2	0	0	0
K Flihs (3B, P)	2	1	2	2	1	0
N Groeblichhoff (...)	3	0	2	1	0	1
N Morris (SS, 3B)	3	1	1	2	0	0
K Antonsen	2	1	0	0	1	0
G Englund (P)	0	0	0	0	0	0
L Krause (P, 2B)	2	1	1	0	0	1
K Moody (1B)	2	1	2	1	1	0
J Erdmann (C)	3	1	1	1	0	0
R Jangula (RF)	2	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	22	8	11	7	3	3

2B: T McGannon, **TB:** K Flihs 2, N Groeblichhoff 2, L Krause, T McGannon 3, J Erdmann, K Moody 2, N Morris, **HBP:** G Englund, **SB:** K Flihs 3, K Antonsen, L Krause, G Englund, T McGannon 2, J Erdmann, K Moody, N Morris 3, **LOB:** 6

Groton Jr. Teeners	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
G Englund	2.0	1	1	1	4	3	0
L Krause	1.1	5	4	4	3	0	0
K Flihs	1.1	0	0	0	2	2	0
Totals	4.2	6	5	5	9	5	0

W: G Englund, **P-S:** K Flihs 32-14, L Krause 43-18, G Englund 45-24, **BF:** K Flihs 6, L Krause 10, G Englund 10

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Locke Electric can't catch up to Clark Traders

Locke Electric fell behind early and couldn't come back in a 16-6 loss to Clark Traders on Saturday. Clark Traders scored on a wild pitch during Wesley Jones's at bat, a walk by Bryce DesLauriers, and a fielder's choice by Andrew Magedanz in the first inning.

Despite the loss, Locke Electric did collect eight hits in the high-scoring affair. Unfortunately, Clark Traders had ten hits on the way to victory.

Clark Traders got things started in the first inning. Aaron Severson's wild pitch allowed one run to score for Clark Traders.

Clark Traders scored six runs in the sixth inning. The offensive firepower by Clark Traders was led by Rhett Florey, Tyler Brinka, Bryce DesLauriers, and Bradyn Rusher, all driving in runs in the frame.

Rhett Florey was on the mound for Clark Traders. The righty allowed four hits and four runs over five innings, striking out five and walking zero.

Severson was on the hill for Locke Electric. Severson surrendered six runs on five hits over five innings, striking out four. Spencer Locke and Wilson Bonet entered the game as relief, throwing one inning and one inning respectively.

Locke Electric scattered eight hits in the game. Evan Erickson and Heath Giedt each collected multiple hits for Locke Electric. Giedt and Erickson each collected two hits to lead Locke Electric.

Clark Traders totaled ten hits in the game. Tyler Brinka, Brent Griffith, and Wesley Jones each had multiple hits for Clark Traders. Tyler Brinka went 3-for-4 at the plate to lead Clark Traders in hits.

JAMES VALLEY TELECOMMUNICATIONS 65TH ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, June 2, 2022
Groton Area High School Arena
11:30am Registration & Lunch
12:30pm Meeting

- Membership Gift
- Entertainment by OST kids
- Door Prizes (including a \$500 credit)
- Call 605-397-2323 for a FREE ride

**JAMES
VALLEY**
TELECOMMUNICATIONS



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Groton Post #39 Jr. Legion defeats W.I.N. in blow-out victory

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion sailed to an easy victory over WIN 9-2 on Thursday

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion fired up the offense in the first inning. Colby Dunker drew a walk, scoring two runs.

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion notched three runs in the fifth inning. Groton Post 39 Jr Legion's big bats in the inning were led by a walk by Caden McInerney, by Dunker, and an error on a ball put in play by Logan Ringgenberg.

Ryan Groeblichhoff led the Groton Post 39 Jr Legion to victory on the pitcher's mound. The righty allowed three hits and one run over three and a third innings, striking out five. Korbin Kucker and McInerney entered the game out of the bullpen and helped to close out the game in relief.

#6 took the loss for WIN. The bulldog went one and two-thirds innings, allowing one run on three hits.

#11 started the game for WIN. The pitcher allowed one hit and five runs over two innings, striking out five

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion racked up eight hits. Groeblichhoff and Bradin Althoff each collected multiple hits for Groton Post 39 Jr Legion. Groeblichhoff went 3-for-3 at the plate to lead Groton Post 39 Jr Legion in hits.

Runs at a premium as Post #39 Jr. Legion beats Lake Norden

Both teams were strong on the mound Friday, but Groton Post 39 Jr Legion defeated Lake Norden 3-2. Groton Post 39 Jr Legion pitchers allowed just three hits to Lake Norden.

Lake Norden captured the lead in the first inning. Aiden Abraham singled on the first pitch of the at bat, scoring one run.

In the top of the second inning, Groton Post 39 Jr Legion tied things up at two.

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion took the lead for good with one run in the fourth inning. In the fourth an error scored one run for Groton Post 39 Jr Legion.

Bradin Althoff was credited with the victory for Groton Post 39 Jr Legion. Althoff went five innings, allowing two runs on three hits and striking out eight. Caden McInerney threw two innings in relief out of the bullpen.

Tyson Stevenson took the loss for Lake Norden. The pitcher lasted seven innings, allowing three hits and three runs while striking out seven.

Ryan Groeblichhoff, Korbin Kucker, and Dillon Abeln all had one hit to lead Groton Post 39 Jr Legion.

Abraham went 2-for-3 at the plate to lead Lake Norden in hits. Dawson Noem led Lake Norden with two stolen bases, as they ran wild on the base paths with four stolen bases.

Lake Norden captures lead early to defeat Post #39

Groton Legion Post #39 watched the game slip away early and couldn't recover in a 15-3 loss to Lake Norden on Thursday. Lake Norden scored on a single by Cameron Thue, a walk by Carson Pederson, and a groundout by Ryker Warrington in the first inning.

Groton Legion Post #39 lost despite out-hitting Lake Norden seven to five.

Groton Legion Post #39 opened up scoring in the first inning, when Bradin Althoff singled on a 2-2 count, scoring one run.

Dawson Noem got the win for Lake Norden. The fireballer lasted three and two-thirds innings, allowing five hits and two runs while striking out six.

Tate Larson took the loss for Groton Legion Post #39. The righthander.

Groton Legion Post #39 tallied seven hits in the game. Douglas Heminger, Pierce Kettering, and Althoff each collected multiple hits for Groton Legion Post #39. Althoff, Kettering, and Heminger each managed two hits to lead Groton Legion Post #39.

Tyson Stevenson led Lake Norden with three stolen bases, as they ran wild on the base paths with eight stolen bases.

Deadwood Gaming Has Another Down Month

DEADWOOD, S.D. (05/23/2022) - According to statistics released today by the South Dakota Commission on Gaming, Deadwood's April 2022 gaming handle was down 13.03 percent over April of 2021, with slot machine handle decreasing by 13.73 percent, when compared to April 2021. The table game handle decreased by 7.20 percent when compared to 2021 April's table game handle. Deadwood's sports wagering operations also fell to \$368,517 in wagers in April, the lowest monthly total since sports wagering began last September. Deadwood gaming operators rewarded players with \$1,204,489 in "free-play" for the month of April, leaving taxable adjusted gross revenues of \$9,118,465 for April of 2022.

"Deadwood gaming numbers were impacted by severe weekend winter weather in April," said Mike Rodman, executive director of the Deadwood Gaming Association.

Deadwood kicks off its summer season this (Memorial) weekend with performances of Deadwood Alive's shootouts on Main Street and the evening performances of the Trial of Jack McCall, The Outlaw Square Concerts presented by Deadwood Live featuring Halestorm, Hank Williams, Jr. and Everclear, and the Backed When They Bucked outdoor rodeo at the Deadwood Event Center presented by the Western Legacy Foundation and the NAJA Shriners.

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Groton Legion Auxiliary Members helping to serve lunch after the Memorial Day Service are Lori Giedt, Coralea Wolter, Karen Wolter, Marjorie Overacker and Wendy Cooper. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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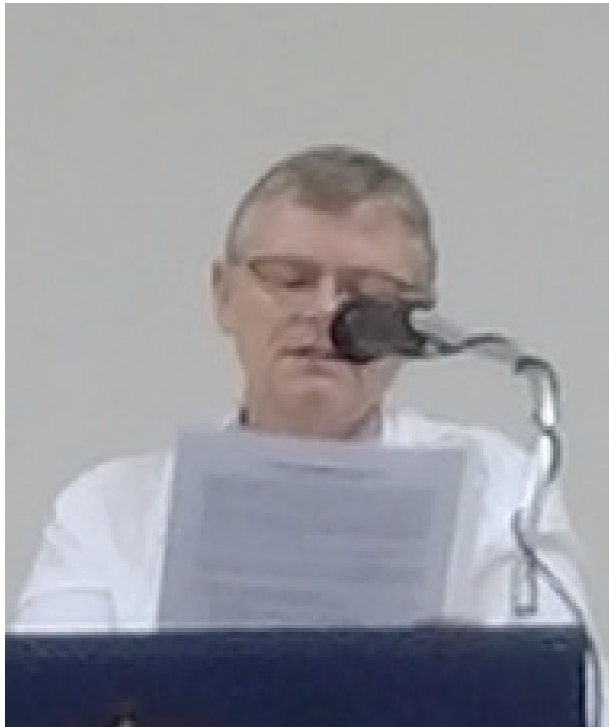
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Les Hinds was the guest speaker at the Memorial Day Program held at the American Legion Post home. The service was moved inside with the uncertainty of the weather. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM video.)



Legion Commander Robert Wegner was the Master of Ceremonies. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM video.)

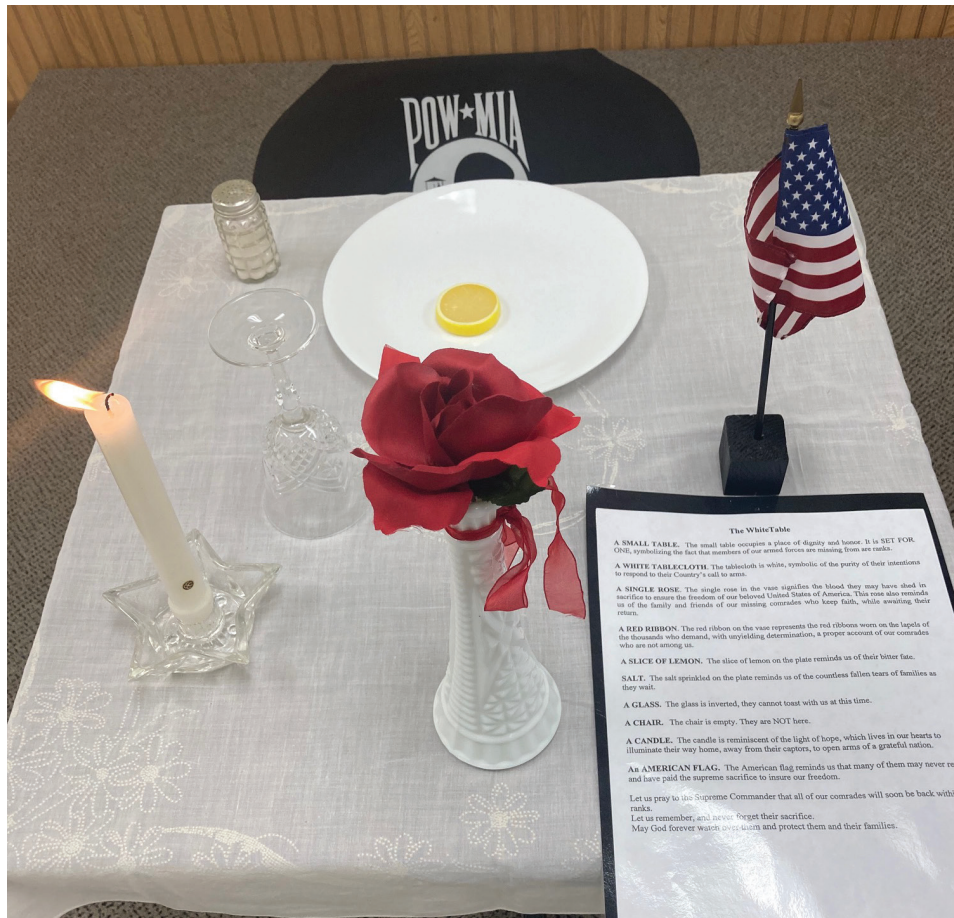


Debra McKiver and Tami Zimney did the reading of the Honor Roll.

(Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM video.)

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The White Table

A SMALL TABLE. The small table occupies a place of dignity and honor. It is SET FOR ONE, symbolizing the fact that members of our armed forces are missing from are ranks.

A WHITE TABLECLOTH. The tablecloth is white, symbolic of the purity of their intentions to respond to their Country's call to arms.

A SINGLE ROSE. The single rose in the vase signifies the blood they may have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America. This rose also reminds us of the family and friends of our missing comrades who keep faith, while awaiting their return.

A RED RIBBON. The red ribbon on the vase represents the red ribbons worn on the lapels of the thousands who demand, with unyielding determination, a proper account of our comrades who are not among us.

A SLICE OF LEMON. The slice of lemon on the plate reminds us of their bitter fate.

SALT. The salt sprinkled on the plate reminds us of the countless falling tears of families as they wait.

A GLASS. The glass is inverted, they cannot toast with us at this time.

A CHAIR. The chair is empty. They are NOT here.

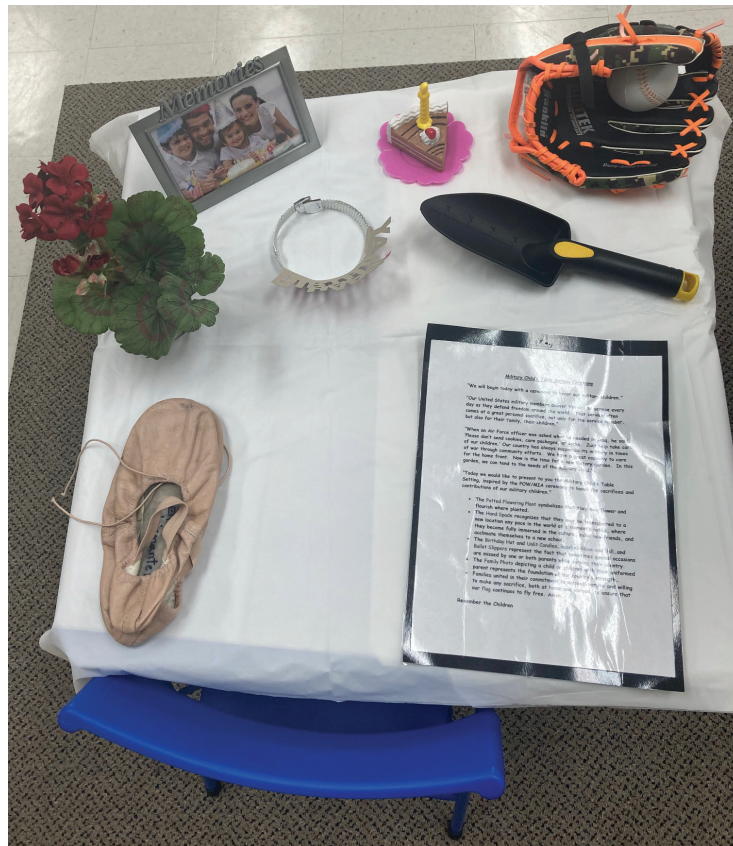
A CANDLE. The candle is reminiscent of the light of hope, which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors, to open arms of a grateful nation.

An AMERICAN FLAG. The American flag reminds us that many of them may never return, and have paid the supreme sacrifice to insure our freedom.

Let us pray to the Supreme Commander that all of our comrades will soon be back within our ranks.

Let us remember, and never forget their sacrifice.

May God forever watch over them and protect them and their families.



Military Child's Table Setting Ceremony

"We will begin today with a ceremony to honor our military children.

"Our United States military members answer the call to service every day as they defend freedom around the world. That service often comes at a great personal sacrifice, not only for the service member, but also for their family, their children.

"When an Air Force officer was asked what he needed in Ira, he said, 'Please don't send cookies, care packages, or socks. Just help take care of our children.' Our country has always supported its military in times of war through community efforts. We have a great capacity to care for the home front. Now is the time for a new Victory garden.

In this garden, we can tend to the needs of the military child.'

"Today we would like to present to you the Military Child's Table Setting, inspired by the POW/MIA ceremony to honor the sacrifices and contributions of our military children."

The Potted Flowering Plant symbolizes that they may flower and flourish where planted.

The Hand Spade recognizes that they may be transplanted to a new location any pace in the world at a moment's notice, where they become fully immersed in the culture, make new friends, and acclimate themselves to a new school.

The Birthday Hat and Unlit Candles..Baseball Glove and Ball...and

Ballet Slippers represent the fact that sometimes special occasions are missed by one or both parents while serving their country.

The Family Photo depicting a child or children with their uniformed parent represents the foundation of our country's strength...

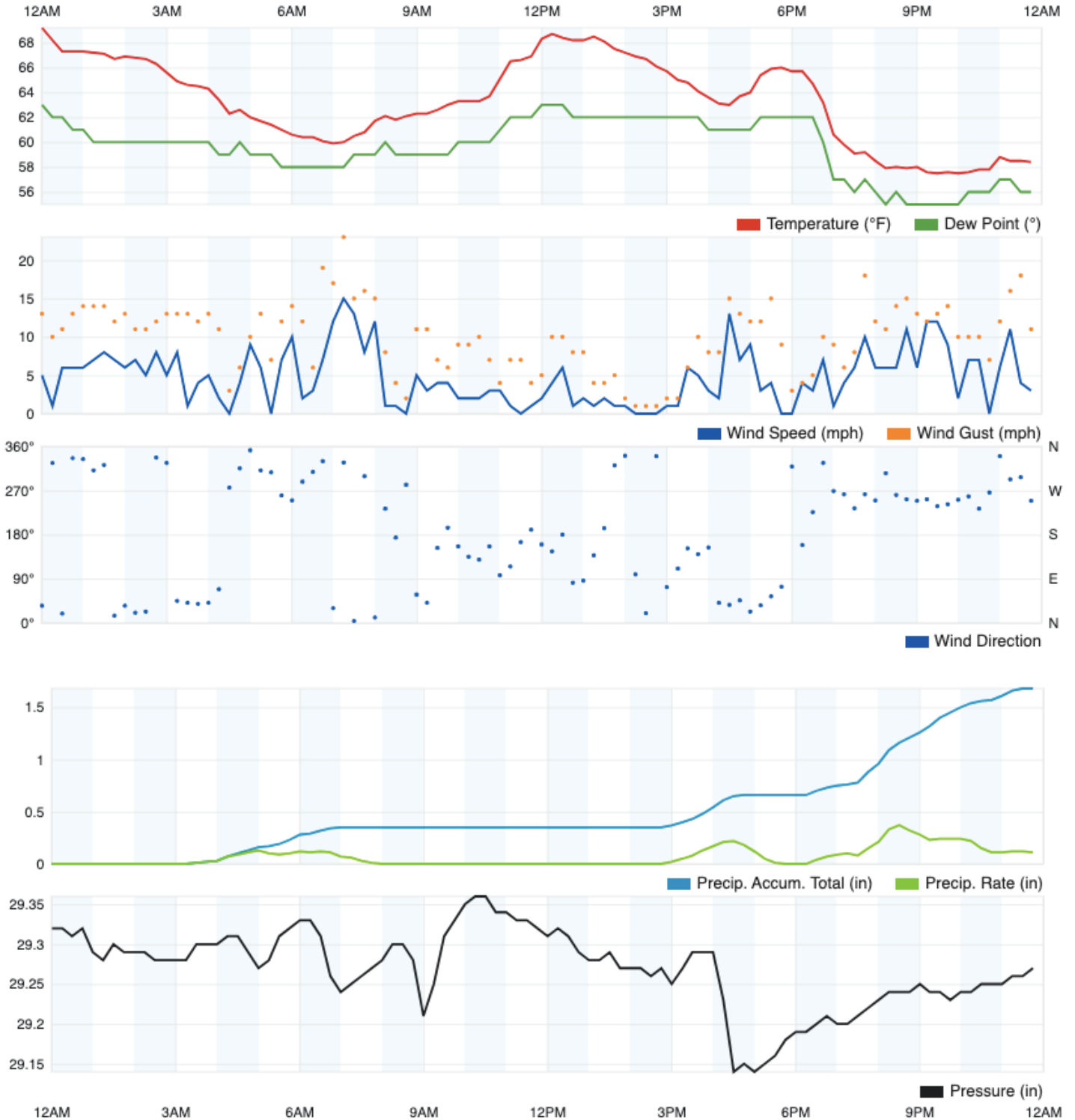
Families united in their commitment to national service and willing to make any sacrifice, both at home and abroad, to ensure that our flag continues to fly free. Amen

Remember the children

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Tuesday



Chance
Showers and
Breezy

High: 56 °F

Tuesday
Night



Decreasing
Clouds

Low: 43 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 68 °F

Wednesday
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 45 °F

Thursday



Sunny

High: 72 °F

Cool, Cloudy and Breezy Today

Tuesday, May 31st, 2022

Highs Around 60°

Light rain showers are possible this morning, then dry for most locations through Friday AM

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Updated: 5/31/2022 4:03 AM Central



Strong low pressure will shift further away today, but it will still influence the region with clouds, wind and cool temperatures. Northwest winds could gust up to 45 mph for some this morning. Also, be aware that several rivers are on the rise across northeastern South Dakota after recent rains - find more on that here <https://water.weather.gov/>.

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Today in Weather History

May 31, 1960: A late evening thunderstorm cut a path of destruction, principally from high winds from Beadle County, northeast to Roberts and Grant Counties. Twelve head of cattle electrocuted for a downed high tensions wire occurred at Wolsey. Winds with gusts of 65 to 75 mph were observed at Huron and Watertown. A grain elevator tipped over, and a windmill was destroyed near Willow Lake. A Steel corn crib was blown over at Hayti and damaged occurred to other farm buildings and implements.

1830: Shelbyville, Tennessee was turned into "a heap of ruins" as a tornado moved east through the center of the town. This tornado destroyed 15 homes and 38 businesses along with churches and other public buildings. Losses were estimated to be as high as \$100,000. A book was said to be carried seven miles away.

1889: The Johnstown, Pennsylvania disaster occurred, the worst flood tragedy in U.S. history. Heavy rains collapsed the South Fork Dam sending a thirty-foot wall of water rushing down the already flooded Conemaugh Valley. The wall of water, traveling as fast as twenty-two feet per second, swept away all structures, objects, and people. The flood killed around 2100 people.

1941 - Thunderstorms deluged Burlington KS with 12.59 inches of rain to establish a 24 hour rainfall record for the state. (The Weather Channel)

1985 - Severe thunderstorms spawned forty-one tornadoes across the Lower Great Lakes Region and southeastern Ontario which killed 74 persons. (Storm Data)

1987 - Thunderstorms in New England produced wind gusts up to 90 mph at Worcester, MA, and Northboro, MA, and hail an inch and a half in diameter at Williston, VT. Unseasonably hot weather prevailed in the northeastern U.S. The afternoon high of 94 degrees at Portland, ME, was a record for the month of May. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Hot and humid weather prevailed in the eastern U.S. Thirteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date. Cape Hatteras, NC, reported their first ninety degree day in May in 115 years of records. "Dust buster" thunderstorms in northwest Texas drenched Amarillo with more than three inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather and torrential rains in northern Indiana, northern Ohio and southern Lower Michigan. Saint John IND was drenched with four inches of rain in two hours, and Woodland MI was deluged with two inches in twenty minutes. Pittsburgh PA reported a record 6.55 inches of rain for the month of May, with measurable rain reported on twenty-five days during the month. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms developing along a warm front produced severe weather from northwest Texas to southeastern Louisiana. The thunderstorms spawned sixteen tornadoes, including thirteen in northwest Texas. One tornado hit the town of Spearman, TX, causing more than a million dollars damage, and seven other tornadoes were reported within twenty-five miles of Spearman. Thunderstorms over northwest Texas also produced baseball size hail at Monahans, and wind gusts to 80 mph at Paducah. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2013: The 2nd of the top 10 weather events for 2013 was EL Reno, Oklahoma tornado of May 31, 2013. Part of the multi-day storm outbreak caused \$2 billion in damage. The EF3 that traveled through the western suburbs of Oklahoma City was the largest tornado ever observed with a width of 2.6 miles. It took eight lives including four tornado chasers.

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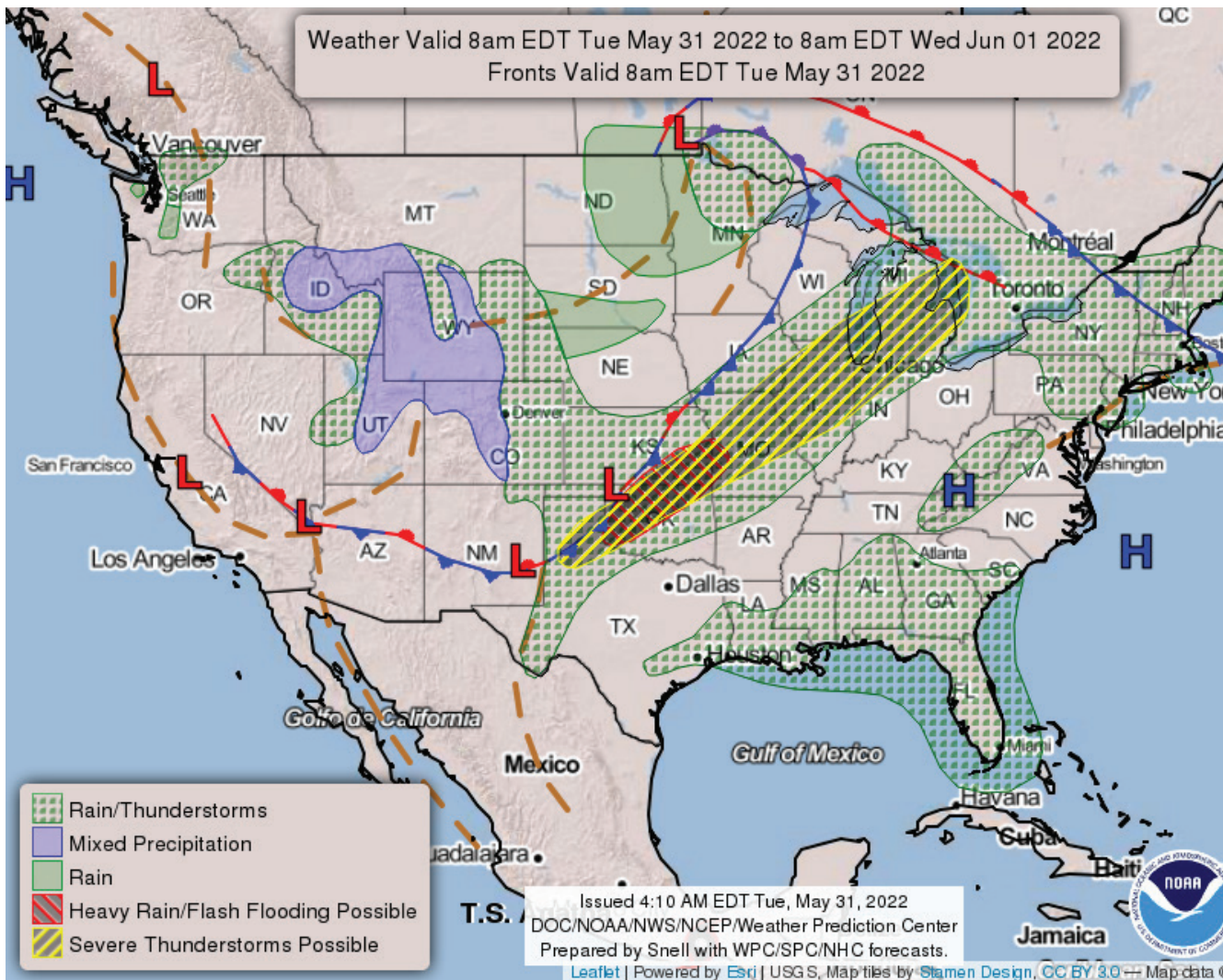
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 69 °F at 12:00 AM
Low Temp: 57 °F at 9:28 PM
Wind: 23 mph at 7:10 AM
Precip: 1.68

Day length: 15 hours, 28 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 1934
Record Low: 23 in 1897
Average High: 76°F
Average Low: 51°F
Average Precip in May.: 3.28
Precip to date in May.: 4.68
Average Precip to date: 7.25
Precip Year to Date: 11.18
Sunset Tonight: 9:14:26 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:45:15 AM



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HELP FOR THE BURDENED

One day Napoleon and a lady friend were walking together down a winding path in the countryside. They encountered some workmen who were carefully carrying a large, heavy load of material. Arrogantly, the lady said, "Move from the path and make way for Napoleon!"

"No!" interrupted Napoleon. "Respect the burden. Always respect the man with the burden."

God not only respects the man with the burden, but He willingly will relieve the burden and refresh the man or woman who has the burden. Listen to the experience of the Psalmist: "The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down."

No matter the weight or size of our burden or burdens, the Lord extends an offer to us to grant us His relief. "Humble yourselves, therefore under God's mighty hand that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your worries or cares or anxieties or problems or troubles or fears on Him because He cares for you!" (James 5:6-8)

I find it interesting that for me to accept the offer of God to "lift me up" I must first "let myself down." Notice, if you will that He begins His offer with the conditional word, "humble."

"I'd rather do it myself" is the way most of us try to "live life." We want to do it in our own strength on our own time and in our own way. But that does not suit God. If we want His help, we must get out of His way and say, "I surrender. I can't do anything without You, Lord."

Beginning with our salvation, and ending with Him in heaven, we must live life "bowed down" before Him.

Prayer: Lord, how foolish we are to try to live life on our terms rather than Yours. Help us to "give in and give up." In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down. Psalm 146:8

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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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Monday:

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 170,000,000

Powerball

27-28-51-68-69, Powerball: 22, Power Play: 2

(twenty-seven, twenty-eight, fifty-one, sixty-eight, sixty-nine; Powerball: twenty-two; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$168,000,000

Some Democrats voting in GOP contests to block Trump picks

By STEVE PEOPLES and AARON KESSLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Diane Murray struggled with her decision all the way up to Election Day.

But when the time came, the 54-year-old Georgia Democrat cast a ballot in last week's Republican primary for Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger. While state law allowed her to participate in either party's primary, she said it felt like a violation of her core values to vote for the Republican. But it had to be done, she decided, to prevent a Donald Trump -backed "election denier" from becoming the battleground state's election chief.

"I feel strongly that our democracy is at risk, and that people who are holding up the big lie, as we call it, and holding onto the former president are dangerous to democracy," said Murray, who works at the University of Georgia. "I don't know I'll do it again because of how I felt afterward. I just felt icky."

Raffensperger, a conservative who refused to support the former president's direct calls to overturn the 2020 election, probably would not have won the May 24 Republican primary without people like Murray.

An Associated Press analysis of early voting records from data firm L2 found that more than 37,000 people who voted in Georgia's Democratic primary two years ago cast ballots in last week's Republican primary, an unusually high number of so-called crossover voters. Even taking into account the limited sample of early votes, the data reveal that crossover voters were consequential in defeating Trump's hand-picked candidates for secretary of state and, to a lesser extent, governor.

Gov. Brian Kemp did not ultimately need Democrats in his blowout victory against his Trump-backed opponent, but Raffensperger probably did. The Republican secretary of state cleared the 50% threshold required to avoid a runoff election by just over 27,000 votes, according to the latest AP tallies. Based on early voting data alone, 37,144 former Democrats voted in the Republican primary. The total number of crossovers including Election Day votes, set to be revealed in the coming weeks, may be even higher.

Crossover voting, also known as strategic voting, is not exclusive to Georgia this primary season as voters across the political spectrum work to stop Trump-backed extremists from winning control of state and federal governments. The phenomenon is playing out in multiple primary contests, sometimes organically and sometimes in response to a coordinated effort by Trump's opponents.

While Trump railed against the practice over the weekend, there is nothing inherently wrong with crossover voting. Dozens of states make it legal and easy for voters to participate in either party's primary. And there are several isolated incidents of both parties engaging in strategic voting over the years.

Still, Trump warned conservatives about crossover voting while campaigning Saturday in Wyoming, another state where the former president's opponents are calling for Democrats to intervene — this time to help save Rep. Liz Cheney from a Trump-backed primary challenger. Cheney, like Raffensperger and Kemp, refused to embrace Trump's lies about the 2020 election. She also voted for his second impeachment after the Jan. 6 insurrection.

"Don't let the Democrats do what they did in another state last week," Trump told Wyoming supporters,

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complaining about what happens "when you allow Democrats to vote in a Republican primary."

While the practice has Trump's attention, it is often ineffective.

Trump's opponents encouraged Democrats to help defeat U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene in her Georgia primary last week. The congresswoman, who has embraced election lies and spoken at an event organized by a white nationalist, won by more than 50 percentage points.

And in some cases, Democrats have been too focused on their own competitive primaries to cast a Republican ballot. That was probably the case in Pennsylvania, where some Democrats openly encouraged their base to vote for the Republican candidate for governor, Doug Mastriano, whose extreme views they felt made him more beatable in November. On the same day, Democrats were deciding their own high-stakes Senate primary.

If the advance vote in Pennsylvania is any indication, few Democrats heeded the call to vote GOP.

Of Republican primary voters who cast early or absentee ballots this year, only 1.7 percent voted Democratic in the 2020 primary. Those 2,600 votes, even if ultimately bolstered by more Election Day participants, were unlikely to have moved the needle in an outcome in which Mastriano beat his closest rival by nearly 320,000.

On the forefront of the crossover movement, Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., has called for an "uneasy alliance" between Democrats, independents and Republicans to take down pro-Trump candidates in GOP primaries whenever and wherever possible. Some states have open primaries like Georgia that allow people to vote in either primary, while other states have more restrictive rules.

In an interview, Kinzinger said he was pleasantly surprised by the Democrats' response in some races. He said he never expected the movement to be an "earth-shattering game-changer" right away.

Kinzinger's political organization, Country First, targeted thousands of former Georgia Democrats with mailers and text messages urging them to support Raffensperger for the sake of democracy.

A Country First text message widely distributed to Georgia voters in the days before the election read: "Don't wait for until the general election to go after the extremes. Vote in the Republican Primary for the candidate that supports truth and democracy."

Kinzinger's team was also active in North Carolina's closely watched congressional race in North Carolina's 11th District, where voters ousted the polarizing pro-Trump freshman Rep. Madison Cawthorn in the Republican primary.

As was the case in Georgia, the AP found a sizable percentage of Republican early ballots were cast by voters who participated in the Democratic primary two years ago. Specifically, more than 14% of the 38,000 early or absentee votes cast in the Cawthorn race — more than 5,400 voters — came from a Democratic 2020 primary voter.

Cawthorn lost his primary by fewer than 1,500 votes.

Back in Georgia, Raffensperger's team pushed back on the idea that he won the GOP primary because of Democrats. The team suggested that a number of crossover voters were actually Republicans who voted Democratic in recent years to protest Trump.

"It is clear that Brad Raffensperger carried a majority of the Republican vote here in the state of Georgia, and that there are people who stopped voting in Republican primaries after 2016 who are now reengaged," said Jordan Fuchs, a consultant to the Raffensperger campaign.

An AP examination of voting records from before the Trump era shows at least a portion of Georgia's 37,000 party switchers in 2022 had been in the Republican camp before Trump took office. Roughly between 9,000 to 13,000 voted Republican in the 2010, 2012 and 2014 primaries, according to the L2 data.

Trump allies in the state, caught off guard by the crossover trend, were furious.

"It was a Democratic version of 'Operation Chaos,'" said Debbie Dooley, president of the Atlanta Tea Party, referring to the secret Nixon-era push to infiltrate liberal groups. "I did not realize just how heavily the Democrats were going to cross over."

Dooley launched a petition late last week to close Georgia's Republican primaries to non-Republicans. More than a dozen states have closed, or partially closed, primaries that block members of opposing parties from participating.

Meanwhile, Kinzinger said he's already crafting plans to execute a similar playbook in coming primaries in Michigan, Wyoming and Alaska. In addition to helping Sen. Lisa Murkowski, the Alaska Republican who voted to convict Trump in his second impeachment trial, Kinzinger said he's weighing whether to invest resources in trying to block former Gov. Sarah Palin's congressional bid.

"Donald Trump came in and took over the Republican Party with nationalism," Kinzinger said. "The American people have every right to determine who represents them in a congressional district, and if that's in a primary, that's in a primary. If they want to take back the Republican Party from the liar, they can do that, and I'm certainly going to help them."

Sievierodonetsk mayor says Russian forces seize half of city

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

LVIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces in a "frenzied push" have seized half of the eastern Ukrainian city of Sievierodonetsk that is key to Moscow's efforts to quickly complete the capture of the industrial Donbas region, the mayor told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

"The city is essentially being destroyed ruthlessly block by block," Oleksandr Striuk said. He said heavy street fighting continues and artillery bombardments threaten the lives of the estimated 13,000 civilians still sheltering in the ruined city that once was home to more than 100,000.

It's impossible to track civilian casualties amid the round-the-clock shelling, said the mayor, who believes that more than 1,500 residents have died of various causes since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February. Evacuation efforts from Sievierodonetsk have been halted because of shelling.

"Civilians are dying from direct strikes, from fragmentation wounds and under the rubble of destroyed buildings, since most of the inhabitants are hiding in basements and shelters," Striuk said.

Electricity to the city has been cut off and people need water, food and medicine, the mayor said: "There are food supplies for several more days, but the issue is how to distribute them."

Sievierodonetsk is important to Russian efforts to capture the Donbas before more Western arms arrive to bolster Ukraine's defense. Moscow-backed separatists already held territory in the region and have been fighting Ukrainian troops for eight years.

Military analysts described the fight for Sievierodonetsk as part of a race against time for the Kremlin. The city, which is 145 kilometers (90 miles) south of the Russian border, is in an area that is the last pocket of Ukrainian government control in the Luhansk region.

In his nightly video address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the situation in the Donbas remains "extremely difficult" as Russia has put its army's "maximum combat power" there.

At least three people were killed and six more wounded overnight in a Russian missile strike on the city of Sloviansk, west of Sievierodonetsk, Donetsk regional governor Pavlo Kyrylenko said in a Facebook post on Tuesday morning. A school was among several buildings damaged.

In neighboring Luhansk, two people were killed and four were wounded by shelling, Luhansk governor Serhiy Haidai said on Telegram on Tuesday. Haidai didn't specify when or where the attack occurred.

In big bid to punish Moscow, EU bans most Russia oil imports

By LORNE COOK and SAMUEL PETREQUIN Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — In the most significant effort yet to punish Russia for its war in Ukraine, the European Union agreed to ban the overwhelming majority of Russian oil imports after tense negotiations that exposed the cracks in the bloc's united .

From the moment Russia invaded on Feb. 24, the West has sought to hit Moscow's lucrative energy sector to cut off funding for its war. But any such move is a double-edged sword, especially in Europe, which relies on the country for 25% of its oil and 40% of its natural gas. European countries that are even more heavily dependent on Russia have been especially reluctant to act.

In a move unthinkable just months ago, EU leaders agreed late Monday to cut around 90% of all Russian oil imports over the next six months.

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Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo called the embargo a “big step forward” and Irish Prime Minister Micheal Martin hailed it as “a watershed moment.” But both leaders cautioned that Europe would need time to adjust to the impact — and any further bans on Russian energy would come slowly.

In response to the EU’s decision, Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia’s permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, said on Twitter: “Russia will find other importers.”

Russia has also not shied away from withholding its energy supplies, despite the economic damage it could suffer as a result. Russian energy giant Gazprom announced it would cut natural gas supplies to Dutch trader GasTerra on Tuesday and it is considering cutting off Denmark. It’s already turned the taps off to Bulgaria, Poland and Finland.

GasTerra said the move was announced after it refused Gazprom’s “one-sided payment requirements.” That’s a reference to Russian President Vladimir Putin’s demand that European nations pay for gas in rubles — an arrangement many have refused. GasTerra said homes would not be hit as it had bought gas elsewhere in anticipation of a shutoff.

Talks at EU headquarters in Brussels were set Tuesday to focus on ways to end the trading bloc’s dependence on Russian energy, by diversifying supplies and speeding up the transition to renewable sources and away, as much as possible given soaring energy costs, from fossil fuels.

Leaders are also expected to discuss how to help Ukraine export millions of tons of grain trapped inside the country as a global food crisis grows.

EU leaders plan to call on Russia to halt its attacks on transport infrastructure in Ukraine and lift its blockade of Black Sea ports so that food can be shipped. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said Russia has prevented the export of 22 million tons of grain, much of it meant for people across the Middle East and Africa. He accused Moscow of “deliberately creating this problem.”

In other developments:

— Russian forces have seized around half of a key city in eastern Ukraine, according to the mayor. Analysts have painted the battle for Sievierodonetsk as part of a race against time for the Kremlin: The city is key to Russian efforts to quickly complete the capture of the eastern industrial region of the Donbas before more Western arms arrive to bolster Ukraine’s defense.

— A court in Ukraine convicted two Russian soldiers on Tuesday of war crimes for the shelling of civilian buildings. It sentenced both to 11 1/2 years in prison, concluding the country’s second war crime trial held since the Russian invasion.

The EU oil embargo, tied up in a new package of sanctions that will also target Russia’s biggest bank and state media outlets accused of spreading propaganda, covers crude oil and petroleum products but has an exception for oil delivered by pipeline.

That exception was demanded by Hungarian Prime minister Viktor Orban, who made it clear that he could only support the new sanctions if his country’s oil supply security was guaranteed. Hungary gets more than 60% of its oil from Russia, much of it through the Soviet-era Druzhba pipeline.

The EU estimated that would mean around 90% of Russian oil is banned by the end of the year. That figure includes a ban on all Russian oil delivered by sea — which accounts for two-thirds of the EU’s imports — plus a decision by Germany and Poland to stop using oil from the northern branch of the Druzhba pipeline.

The sanctions package must still be finalized in coming days — and the leaders said the exemption for crude delivered by pipeline will be reviewed “as soon as possible,” though they did not specify when.

The compromise laid bear the increasing difficulty of reaching consensus among EU leaders when important national interests are in play — and the ways in which Hungary has emerged as thorn in the bloc’s side.

But despite the struggles, the sanctions package — the sixth targeting Russia’s invasion of Ukraine — was agreed in about a month, quite quickly for 27 countries with very different national interests.

Agreeing on another round of measures is likely to prove much tougher — especially because next on the docket is whether to target natural gas, which is much harder to cut off. That’s because it represents a larger percentage of Europe’s energy mix.

The compromise came after Zelenskyy urged leaders again to target Russia's oil. Only once Moscow "feels the price for what it is doing against Ukraine" will it be forced to "start seeking peace," he said in a video address.

Uvalde grieves, says goodbyes at visitations, funerals

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

UVALDE, Texas (AP) — It should have been the first day of a joyous week for Robb Elementary School students — the start of summer break. Instead, the first two of 19 children slain inside a classroom were being remembered at funeral visitations.

The gathering for 10-year-old Amerie Jo Garza was at Hillcrest Memorial Funeral Home on Monday in Uvalde, Texas, directly across from the grade school where the children, along with two teachers, were shot to death last week before the gunman himself was killed. Visitation for another 10-year-old, Maite Rodriguez, was at the town's other funeral home.

Over the next two-and-a-half traumatic weeks, people in the southwestern Texas town will say goodbye to the children and their teachers, one heart-wrenching visitation, funeral and burial after another. As family and friends unleash their grief, investigators will push for answers about how police responded to the May 24 shooting, and lawmakers have said they'll consider what can be done to stem the gun violence permeating the nation.

This week alone, funerals are planned for 11 children and teacher Irma Garcia.

On Monday, some mourners at Amerie's visitation wore lilac or lavender shades of purple — Amerie's favorites — at the request of her father, Angel Garza. Many carried in flowers, including purple ones.

The little girl who loved to draw had just received a cellphone for her 10th birthday. One of her friends told Angel Garza that Amerie tried to use the phone to call police during the assault on her fourth-grade classroom.

Among the mourners at Amerie's visitation were some of Maite's relatives. Like many people, they were attending both.

Maite's family wore green tie-dye shirts with an illustration showing Maite with angel wings. Before going into the funeral home, they stopped at the ditch to see the metal gate gunman Salvador Ramos crashed a pickup truck into before crossing a field and entering the school.

"How did he walk for so long?" asked Juana Magaña, Maite's aunt.

Hillcrest Memorial itself and the shooting will be forever linked. After Ramos wrecked the truck, two men at the funeral home heard the crash and ran toward the accident scene. Ramos shot at them. He missed and both men made it to safety.

Eliahna "Ellie" Garcia's funeral will be June 6 — the day after she was supposed to turn 10. Her family had been preparing a big birthday bash at her grandmother's house this coming weekend. She had been hoping to receive gifts related to the Disney movie "Encanto."

"She loved that movie and talked a lot about it," said her aunt, Siria Arizmendi.

Ellie was quiet even around family but loved doing videos and had been already practicing with her older sister a choreography for her quinceañera party — the celebration of a girl's 15th birthday — even though it was still five years away, Arizmendi said.

Ellie's older sister is doing OK, Arizmendi said, understanding their family and others face a long road to recovery.

"It is just sad for all the children," she said.

Funeral directors, embalmers and others from across Texas arrived to help. Jimmy Lucas, president of the Texas Funeral Directors Association, brought a hearse and volunteered to work as a driver, pitch in for services, or do whatever he could, he told NBC News. Other arriving morticians were there to help with facial reconstruction services given the damage caused by the shooter's military-style rifle.

Gov. Greg Abbott, speaking at a Memorial Day event in Longview, urged Texans to keep Uvalde in their prayers.

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"What happened in Uvalde was a horrific act of evil," Abbott said. "And as Texans, we must come together and lift up Uvalde and support them in every way that we possibly can. It is going to take time to heal the devastation that the families there have gone through and are going through, But be assured, we will not relent until Uvalde recovers."

The U.S. Department of Justice announced Sunday a review of the law enforcement response. Police have come under heavy criticism for taking well over an hour to kill Ramos inside the adjoining classrooms where he unleashed carnage.

Officials revealed Friday that students and teachers repeatedly begged 911 operators for help as a police commander told more than a dozen officers to wait in a hallway. Officials said the commander believed the suspect was barricaded inside an adjoining classroom and that there was no longer an active attack.

The revelation raised new questions about whether lives were lost because officers did not act faster to stop the gunman, who was ultimately killed by Border Patrol tactical officers.

Authorities have said Ramos legally purchased two guns not long before the school attack: an AR-style rifle on May 17 and a second rifle on May 20. He had just turned 18, permitting him to buy the weapons under federal law.

A day after visiting Uvalde and pledging, "We will," in response to people chanting, "Do something," President Joe Biden on Monday expressed some optimism that there may be some bipartisan support to tighten restrictions on the kind of high-powered weapons used by the gunman.

"I think things have gotten so bad that everybody's getting more rational, at least that's my hope," Biden told reporters before honoring the nation's fallen in Memorial Day remarks at Arlington National Cemetery.

"The Second Amendment was never absolute," Biden said. "You couldn't buy a cannon when the Second Amendment was passed. You couldn't go out and buy a lot of weapons."

A bipartisan group of senators talked over the weekend to see if they could reach even a modest compromise on gun safety legislation. Encouraging state "red flag" laws to keep guns away from those with mental health issues, and addressing school security and mental health resources were on the table, said Sen. Chris Murphy, who is leading the effort.

The group will meet again this week under a 10-day deadline to strike a deal.

Shanghai moves toward ending 2-month COVID-19 lockdown

BEIJING (AP) — Shanghai authorities say they will take some major steps Wednesday toward reopening China's largest city after a two-month COVID-19 lockdown that has throttled the national economy and largely bottled up millions of people in their homes.

Full bus and subway service will be restored as will basic rail connections with the rest of China, Vice Mayor Zong Ming said Tuesday at a daily news conference on the city's outbreak.

"The epidemic has been effectively controlled," she said, adding that the city will start the process of fully restoring work and life on Wednesday.

Schools will partially reopen on a voluntary basis for students and shopping malls, supermarkets, convenience stores and drug stores will continue to reopen gradually with no more than 75% of their total capacity. Cinemas and gyms will remain closed.

Officials, who set June 1 as the target date for reopening earlier in May, appear ready to accelerate what has been a gradual easing in recent days. A few malls and markets have reopened, and some residents have been given passes allowing them out for a few hours at a time. In online chat groups, some expressed excitement about the prospect of being able to move about freely in the city for the first time since the end of March, while others remained cautious given the slow pace and stop-and-go nature of opening up so far.

Workers were taking down some of the barriers that had been erected along sidewalks during the lockdown. A few people walked or biked on the still mostly empty streets. One man was getting his hair cut on the sidewalk, as a worker or volunteer in full protective clothing looked on.

More than half a million people in the city of 25 million won't be allowed out Wednesday — 190,000

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who are still in lockdown areas and another 450,000 who are in control zones because of recent cases.

Shanghai recorded 29 new cases on Monday, continuing a steady decline from more than 20,000 a day in April. Li Qiang, the top official from China's ruling Communist Party in Shanghai, at a meeting Monday was quoted as saying that the city had made major achievements in fighting the outbreak through continuous struggle.

The success came at a price. Authorities imposed a suffocating citywide lockdown under China's "zero-COVID" strategy that aims to snuff out any outbreak with mass testing and isolation at centralized facilities of anyone who is infected.

However, the latest economic data showed that Chinese manufacturing activity started to rebound in May as the government rolled back some containment measures.

Schools will reopen for the final two years of high school and the third year of middle school, but students can decide whether to attend in person. Other grades and kindergarten remain closed.

Outdoor tourist sites will start reopening Wednesday, with indoor sites set to follow in late June, the Shanghai tourism authority said. Group tours from other provinces will be allowed again when the city has eliminated all high- and medium-risk pandemic zones.

Beijing, the nation's capital, further eased restrictions Tuesday in some districts. The city imposed limited lockdowns, but nothing near a citywide level, in a much smaller outbreak that appears to be on the wane. Beijing recorded 18 new cases on Monday.

War crimes meeting held at Hague over Russia-Ukraine war

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Representatives of a group of nations working together to investigate war crimes in Russia's invasion of Ukraine are meeting in The Hague amid ongoing calls for those responsible for atrocities to be brought to justice.

Tuesday's coordination meeting at the European Union's judicial cooperation agency, Eurojust, of members of a Joint Investigation Team and International Criminal Court Prosecutor Karim Khan comes as Russian forces continue to pound Ukrainian towns.

Moscow's invasion of Ukraine has been widely condemned as an illegal act of aggression. Russian forces have been accused of killing civilians in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha and of repeated attacks on civilian infrastructure including hospitals and a theater in the besieged city of Mariupol that was being used as a shelter by hundreds of civilians. An investigation by The Associated Press found evidence that the March 16 bombing killed close to 600 people inside and outside the building.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, the AP and PBS series Frontline have verified 273 potential war crimes.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has denounced killings of civilians as "genocide" and "war crimes," while U.S. President Joe Biden has called Russian President Vladimir Putin "a war criminal" who should be brought to trial.

The joint investigation team, made up of Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland, that is meeting Tuesday in The Hague was established in late March, a few weeks after the ICC opened an investigation in Ukraine, after dozens of the court's member states threw their weight behind an inquiry. Khan has visited Ukraine, including Bucha, and has a team of investigators in the country gathering evidence.

Ukraine's prosecutor general, Iryna Venediktova, will be among those at the meeting. Her office has already opened more than 8,000 criminal investigations related to the war and identified over 500 suspects, including Russian ministers, military commanders and propagandists.

Last week, in the first case of its kind linked to the war, a Ukrainian court sentenced a captured Russian soldier to the maximum penalty of life in prison for killing a civilian. On Tuesday, a court in Ukraine convicted two Russian soldiers of war crimes for the shelling of civilian buildings and sentenced both to 11 1/2 years in prison.

Russia staunchly denies its troops are responsible for atrocities. The Defense Ministry said earlier this

month that “not a single civilian has faced any violent action by the Russian military.”

Analysts warn that the process of meting out justice will be long and complex as investigators piece together forensic and other evidence and seek to establish who ordered or knew about atrocities and failed to act to prevent or punish them.

The meeting in The Hague isn't the only place accountability is being sought.

Prosecutors in Poland, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, France, Slovakia, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland have opened investigations of their own. And there have been growing calls to set up a special tribunal to try Russia for the crime of aggression in Ukraine. The ICC can't prosecute the crime of aggression because neither Russia nor Ukraine are members of the court.

Lebanon's new parliament narrowly elects longtime speaker

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's longtime parliament speaker who has held the post for 30 years, was reelected Tuesday for a seventh four-year term with the minimum number of votes required and despite multiple crises plaguing the nation.

Still, the slim majority in favor of Nabih Berri was a reflection of a shift in public opinion in the crumbling economy on the verge of bankruptcy. His reelection was practically guaranteed — even though more than a dozen new lawmakers won seats running on a reform platform.

The new legislature is being ushered in as Lebanon remains in the grip of the worst economic and financial crisis in its modern history, rooted in decades of corruption and mismanagement by the ruling class, which has been running the country since the end of the civil war.

To most Lebanese, Berri, an 84-year-old former warlord, is a symbol of this entrenched sectarian-based political system and ruling class, which continues to hold despite rising discontent and the new reform-minded lawmakers to won seats. But as leader of the Shiite Amal movement, which is closely allied with the powerful Hezbollah, Berri is virtually untouchable. The two parties hold all 27 seats allotted to Shiites in parliament.

The May 15 election was the first since Lebanon's economic crisis began in late 2019, sparking nationwide mass protests against the political class.

The new parliament is deeply divided with no coalition holding majority seats in the 128-member legislature. The militant Hezbollah group and its allies lost the majority they had held since 2018, and now hold 61 seats — four short of an absolute majority.

The 128-seat assembly voted 65 in favor of Berri, while 23 ballots were blank and 40 were annulled.

The 13 independent candidates, drawn from the 2019 protest movement, and some of the Christian parties in parliament have said they will not vote for Berri, leaving him with a much slimmer support, mainly from Shiite parties belonging to the Hezbollah-led coalition. Berri was the only candidate for the post of speaker, which under Lebanon's power-sharing agreement is held by a Shiite.

Ahead of the session, some of the independents and new legislators, gathered outside Beirut's port — the scene of a massive explosion in August 2020 that killed more than 200 people — and met with families of the victims who perished in the blast. After the meeting, they walked to Parliament, surrounded by hundreds of supporters chanting “thawra,” revolution in Arabic.

The investigation into the port explosion, when hundreds of tons of improperly stored ammonium nitrate detonated, has been stalled for months amid legal challenges by officials charged by the investigative judge.

“Beirut has the right to know who killed her,” said independent legislator Yassin Yassin, in a reference to the bungled probe.

Reflecting the divisions in parliament, many of the annulled ballots Tuesday had slogans written on them such as “justice for the victims of the port blast” and “justice for Loqman Slim,” an anti-Hezbollah Shiite political activist who was found shot in his car last year.

The presence of the independent lawmakers in the legislature is a major achievement — they went into the vote fragmented and faced intimidation and threats by entrenched mainstream parties.

It sends a strong message to politicians who have for decades held on to their seats and continue to do so despite the economic meltdown, which has impoverished Lebanon and triggered the biggest wave of emigration since the 1975-90 civil war.

Tuesday's session is expected to reflect the legislature's divisions between pro- and anti-Hezbollah lawmakers who will likely find it difficult to work together to form a new government and enact desperately needed reforms.

In Commonwealth, queen's jubilee draws protests and apathy

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — After seven decades on the throne, Queen Elizabeth II is widely viewed in the U.K. as a rock in turbulent times. But in Britain's former colonies, many see her as an anchor to an imperial past whose damage still lingers.

So while the U.K. is celebrating the queen's Platinum Jubilee — 70 years on the throne — with pageantry and parties, some in the Commonwealth are using the occasion to push for a formal break with the monarchy and the colonial history it represents.

"When I think about the queen, I think about a sweet old lady," said Jamaican academic Rosalea Hamilton, who campaigns for her country to become a republic. "It's not about her. It's about her family's wealth, built on the backs of our ancestors. We're grappling with the legacies of a past that has been very painful."

The empire that Elizabeth was born into is long gone, but she still reigns far beyond Britain's shores. She is head of state in 14 other nations, including Canada, Australia, Papua New Guinea and the Bahamas. Until recently it was 15 — Barbados cut ties with the monarchy in November, and several other Caribbean countries, including Jamaica, say they plan to follow suit.

Britain's jubilee celebrations, which climax over a four-day holiday weekend starting Thursday, aim to recognize the diversity of the U.K. and the Commonwealth. A huge jubilee pageant through central London on Sunday will feature Caribbean Carnival performers and Bollywood dancers.

But Britain's image of itself as a welcoming and diverse society has been battered by the revelation that hundreds, and maybe thousands, of people from the Caribbean who had lived legally in the U.K. for decades were denied housing, jobs or medical treatment — and in some cases deported — because they didn't have the paperwork to prove their status.

The British government has apologized and agreed to pay compensation, but the Windrush scandal has caused deep anger, both in the U.K. and in the Caribbean.

A jubilee-year trip to Belize, Jamaica and the Bahamas in March by the queen's grandson Prince William and his wife Kate, which was intended to strengthen ties, appears to have had the opposite effect. Images of the couple shaking hands with children through a chain-link fence and riding in an open-topped Land Rover in a military parade stirred echoes of colonialism for many.

Cynthia Barrow-Giles, professor of political science at the University of the West Indies, said the British "seem to be very blind to the visceral sort of reactions" that royal visits elicit in the Caribbean.

Protesters in Jamaica demanded Britain pay reparations for slavery, and Prime Minister Andrew Holness politely told William that the country was "moving on," a signal that it planned to become a republic. The next month, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne told the queen's son Prince Edward that his country, too, would one day remove the queen as head of state.

William acknowledged the strength of feeling and said the future "is for the people to decide upon."

"We support with pride and respect your decisions about your future," he said in the Bahamas. "Relationships evolve. Friendship endures."

When then Princess Elizabeth became queen on the death of her father King George VI 1952, she was in Kenya. The East African country became independent in 1963 after years of violent struggle between a liberation movement and colonial troops. In 2013, the British government apologized for the torture of thousands of Kenyans during the 1950s "Mau Mau" uprising and paid millions in an out-of-court settlement.

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Memories of the empire are still raw for many Kenyans.

"From the start, her reign would be indelibly stained by the brutality of the empire she presided over and that accompanied its demise," said Patrick Gathara, a Kenyan cartoonist, writer and commentator.

"To this day, she has never publicly admitted, let alone apologized, for the oppression, torture, dehumanization and dispossession visited upon people in the colony of Kenya before and after she acceded to the throne."

U.K. officials hope countries that become republics will remain in the Commonwealth, the 54-nation organization made up largely of former British colonies, which has the queen as its ceremonial head.

The queen's strong personal commitment to the Commonwealth has played a big role in uniting a diverse group whose members range from vast India to tiny Tuvalu. But the organization, which aims to champion democracy, good governance and human rights, faces an uncertain future.

As Commonwealth heads of government prepare to meet in Kigali, Rwanda, this month for a summit delayed by the coronavirus pandemic, some question whether the organization can continue once the queen's eldest son, Prince Charles, succeeds her.

"Many of the more uncomfortable histories of the British Empire and the British Commonwealth are sort of waiting in the wings for as soon as Elizabeth II is gone," royal historian Ed Owens said. "So it's a difficult legacy that she is handing over to the next generation."

The crisis in the Commonwealth reflects Britain's declining global clout.

Zimbabwe was suspended from the Commonwealth under its authoritarian late President Robert Mugabe, and is currently seeking readmission. But many in its capital of Harare have expressed indifference to the queen's jubilee, as Britain's once-strong influence wanes and countries such as China and Russia enjoy closer relations with the former British colony.

"She is becoming irrelevant here," social activist Peter Nyapedwa said. "We know about (Chinese President) Xi (Jinping) or (Russian President Vladimir) Putin, not the queen."

Sue Onslow, director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London, said the queen has been the "invisible glue" holding the Commonwealth together.

But she says the organization has proven remarkably resilient and shouldn't be written off. The Commonwealth played a major role in galvanizing opposition to apartheid in the 1980s, and could do the same over climate change, which poses an existential threat to its low-lying island members.

"The Commonwealth has shown a remarkable ability to reinvent itself and contrive solutions at times of crisis, almost as if it's jumping into a telephone box and coming out under different guise," she said. "Whether it will do it now is an open question."

Not just any cake: A Bollywood homage to queen for Jubilee

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — When Ajay Chhabra was asked to design a pageant performance to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee, he knew what would make the perfect centerpiece: cake.

Not just any cake, but Elizabeth and Prince Philip's 1947 wedding cake. The four-tier, nine-foot (2.7-meter) confection was dubbed "the 10,000-mile cake" at the time because it was whipped up with sugar, dried fruit, rum and brandy from all corners of the Commonwealth, from South Africa to the Caribbean to Australia and the South Pacific.

Chhabra, a second-generation British Indian with Fijian heritage, wanted to use his segment of Sunday's Jubilee pageant to highlight how the queen, through her historic 70 years on the throne, united generations of Commonwealth citizens from places as far flung as Fiji.

"We're not recreating the 1947 wedding of the queen, but creating a sort of homage to it, with all the people and all the diversity that Britain has produced," he said.

On Sunday, more than 200 performers in vibrant saris will dance to Bollywood tunes around a moving, six-meter-tall (20-foot-tall) version of the queen's wedding cake, powered by a hidden electric vehicle. Its top tier, featuring a rendition of the queen's beloved corgis holding aloft a crown, pops up and down on

a hydraulic system.

The dancers, who range in age from 9 to 79, all have Commonwealth heritage.

"All those young people ... they don't see the world or 'being British' the way we did, or our parents did," Chhabra said.

His Bollywood-themed wedding party is just one of many colorful acts to parade down the Mall to Buckingham Palace in London on Sunday, the finale of a busy four-day weekend of festivities marking the monarch's Platinum Jubilee.

More than 10,000 people from across the U.K. and the Commonwealth have been involved in producing the pageant, which is expected to be seen by 1 billion people around the world.

A military showcase opens the spectacle, followed by a procession featuring a medley of carnival music, three-story-high beasts, Scottish bagpipers, stunt cyclists, maypole dancers and dozens of animal puppets — all telling the story of the queen's reign in their own ways.

The pageant will travel a three-kilometer (nearly two-mile) route and end in front of Buckingham Palace, where crowds will sing "God Save the Queen." Singers Ed Sheeran, Shirley Bassey and Cliff Richard will be among the celebrities paying tribute.

It's a huge celebratory moment, and the pageant's directors aren't keen to discuss the more controversial aspects of Britain's legacy in many Commonwealth countries. In the Caribbean, in particular, the Commonwealth has increasingly been characterized by fragmentation, not unity.

Prince William and his wife, Kate, were greeted with anti-slavery protests in March during a royal tour of the Caribbean, and Jamaica's prime minister bluntly told the couple the country intended to "move on" and remove the queen as head of state, following Barbados' move last year.

Pageant organizers emphasize that the event is a "people's pageant," focusing on how ordinary people are connected "through time, to each other, and to the queen."

It's a connection that Chhabra feels keenly in his own family. He says the queen is a symbol of continuity that unites his mother's generation with that of his young daughter, regardless of the time and distance separating the two.

"When I look at my mum's foundation story, she was 9 years old when the queen came to Fiji during her tour of the South Pacific in 1953. You know, her and all of her school friends were waving flags to welcome her," he said. "That's an exciting story that she brought with her from Fiji to London in the 1960s."

His 9-year-old daughter will take part in Sunday's pageant — an event that will become her story to tell future generations.

"In a world where things are very temporary and polarized, I think there are few things that bring us together," Chhabra said.

A 'terrible nightmare': Treating Ukraine's wounded civilians

By ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

POKROVSK, Ukraine (AP) — In wheelchairs and on stretchers, in ambulances and on train station platforms, they wait. Medical workers pull out ramps and wheel the patients onto the specially equipped train that will carry them westwards, away from the fighting raging in eastern Ukraine.

Run by the aid organization Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders), the train is a lifeline for the overwhelmed hospitals in cities and towns near Ukraine's front lines that are struggling to cope with an influx of war wounded on top of their usual flow of sick patients.

"Since the beginning of the war, the hospital capacity in the east is under pressure," said Yasser Kamaledin, MSF's emergency project coordinator for the medical evacuation train, which includes an intensive care unit.

"The idea of this activity is to support the hospitals that are closer to the front line, to empty some bed capacity so they can receive more patients from the attacks, the conflict, but also other chronic patients," Kamaledin said.

Since it started running on March 31, the train has ferried nearly 600 people to hospitals in safer areas

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of western Ukraine, he said, including around 30 more people on Sunday.

They included 40-year-old Mykola Pastukh. He was wounded Saturday near Sievierodonetsk by a mortar shell that landed as he tried to ferry humanitarian aid into the city, which has been under fierce attack as Russian forces intensify their efforts to seize Ukrainian territory in the east.

There was still shrapnel inside him, he said as he stood on the train platform nursing his right arm in a sling under his shirt. He needed surgery but the hospital in Lysychansk, a city close to Sievierodonetsk that was also under fierce Russian attack, just couldn't cope. So he was being evacuated to Lviv in western Ukraine for the operation.

There are other, regular evacuation trains going west and onto which older people and the sick are boarded, but the MSF train is especially equipped to care for patients.

The pressure on Ukraine's eastern hospitals is most evident after an attack, when casualties arrive one after the other.

Last week, medics wheeled a patient with severe head injuries into the hospital in the town of Pokrovsk as doctors, jaws clenched, triaged patients who were wounded when two rockets landed.

There were only a handful of wounded people. But the hospital is stretched. It has been operating with around half the staff it used to have, working with a backdrop of sandbags stacked up against boarded-up windows.

Before the war "when there was normal work, we had 10 surgeons, now we have five," said Dr. Ivan Mozhaiev. In his department, the 32-year-old is the only surgeon who remained out of five.

The radical change in the nature of their work since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24 has added an extra strain on the doctors and nurses who remain in hospitals near the fighting.

"Earlier we treated people from illnesses, sometimes there were traumas. Now we have to treat people from gunshot wounds," said Dr. Viktor Kriklii, head of surgery at a hospital in the eastern city of Kramatorsk.

The city itself has come under attack, including on April 8, when a missile struck Kramatorsk train station, killing more than 50 people and wounding more than 100.

Many medical staff have left, and the hospital has had to shut down several departments while still providing care for people from the city and nearby towns. Kriklii's section of the hospital has two surgery departments, which each used to have 15 surgeons. Now there are only six left for both. It's the same with nurses, with units operating on around half the staff levels they had before the war.

Kramatorsk hospital, in the Donetsk region of Ukraine, has had to deal with war injuries before. The region, along with neighboring Luhansk, is part of the Donbas, where Russia-backed separatists began fighting Ukrainian forces in 2014 and have controlled sections of eastern Ukraine since then.

Kriklii had to operate on the wounded then too, "but the scale now and then is incomparable," he said. In 2014, it was soldiers, but this is the first time that the medical staff in Kramatorsk are seeing many wounded civilians.

"We could not even dream in the most terrible nightmare" that civilians in Ukraine would suffer such injuries, he said, describing having to operate on young children whose limbs were blown off by explosions.

Despite the danger, and the physical and emotional toll of working under such conditions, Kriklii has no intentions of leaving.

"We are surgeons. Our task is to operate on the people and treat them. If everyone leaves, who is supposed to do the job?" he said. "Nobody says we are a suicide squad or looking for a way to die somewhere. But ... we do our job. And we will continue to do so."

Young caregivers 'exist in the shadows,' offer crucial help

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

PLANO, Texas (AP) — Ronan Kotiya leans over his father, fingers wrapped around a plastic tube he's about to slide from a tracheostomy hole in dad's neck.

"3, 2, 1, go," the 11-year-old says as he removes the tube. His mom slips a padded neck brace on her husband and lifts him into a sitting position on their bed.

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Ronan's 9-year-old brother, Keaton, waits nearby, ready to connect their dad, Rupesh Kotiya, to a portable ventilator.

"Ronan, do you want to suction daddy's mouth and then get ready to go?" Siobhan Pandya asks after her son steers dad's power wheelchair into the living room of the family's Plano, Texas, home.

"Thanks buddy, good job," a robotic voice crackles from a tablet Kotiya uses to speak.

So begins another weekend for the brothers — two Harry Potter fans with mouths full of braces, a knack for building with Legos and some heavy caregiving responsibilities.

Their 46-year-old father has Lou Gehrig's disease, a fatal illness that has taken his ability to speak and walk. A ventilator helps him breathe. He uses eye-tracking software on the tablet to say things, blinks to indicate yes or moves his mouth side to side for no.

As many 10 million children in the U.S. may provide some form of care at home, according to researcher Melinda Kavanaugh. Some kids are the only caregivers patients have, while others fill in when visiting nurses or other help is not available.

These children help cancer patients, military veterans, grandparents with heart disease or autistic siblings. They're often too young to drive, and their work frequently goes unnoticed outside the home.

"They exist in the shadows," said Kavanaugh, an associate professor of social work at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Kavanaugh and other researchers say the number of young caregivers is growing, and they need support. Caregiving is a task that children like Ronan and Keaton take seriously and something that their mom hopes will shape them into empathetic, strong young men.

But getting there first involves a daily struggle to balance being a kid with living in a very grown-up world.

Ronan grabs a handful of toy cars and kneels on a clinic floor at Texas Neurology in Dallas.

His opponent, a freckle-faced boy named Charlie, waits a few feet away, ready to smash cars together. First to tip over loses.

"Y'all are savages," says Evie, a skinny 9-year-old prone to spontaneous dance.

The children have gathered in the clinic on a sunny Saturday afternoon to learn more about caring for people with Lou Gehrig's disease, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. These seven children — ages 8 to 12 — help care for a parent or grandparent with ALS, an illness that destroys nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that control muscle movement.

Kavanaugh lined up several specialists to teach as part of a program called YCare that she has taken to several cities. A dietitian showed the kids how to make food the right consistency so patients don't choke. A respiratory therapist explained the important parts of a device that helps people cough to clear mucus.

In one training session, speech therapist Heather Gallas discusses eye tracking technology that allows patients to spell out words and communicate with a tablet.

She holds up a laminated letter board and asks the kids to try. Evie silently points to every letter in her name.

Then Keaton takes a turn.

S-U-C-T-I-O-N.

Gallas pauses, "Is that something your dad needs a lot?"

Keaton nods.

Aside from providing training, one of Kavanaugh's main goals was to simply let the young caregivers meet. Loneliness is a problem, one that grew worse during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"A 10-year-old at school is not going to talk about toileting or bathing their parent, but they are going to talk about it here," Kavanaugh said.

In the afternoon, the kids trade email addresses and phone numbers, and The ALS Association's Texas chapter starts making plans for a pizza party reunion this summer.

Doctors diagnosed Rupesh Kotiya with ALS in October 2014, a month before his boys turned 4 and 2. Ronan and Keaton have no memories of him without the illness.

They started pitching in with care a few years ago, first by wiping away their dad's tears or propping

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up his head during car rides.

Then they started helping Pandya move their father in and out of bed or onto the toilet. They pull down his shorts and underwear while she lifts him to the seat.

They also put on his socks and shoes, help change his shorts, crush medicines or mix mouthwash with water.

Pandya, a senior director with the skin care and cosmetics company Mary Kay, has daytime and evening caregivers for her husband during the week. But she has no paid assistance overnight or on the weekends, so the boys have had to step up.

"To be honest, they're doing tasks some adults don't want to do," Pandya said.

Pandya tries to balance the boys' caregiving with activities that offer some normalcy. Keaton takes tennis lessons and coding classes. Ronan plays striker on a youth soccer team.

Soccer balls, frisbees and basketballs lay scattered around the Kotiyas' small suburban backyard.

Both boys play piano, and Keaton paints prolifically. Stacks of his work fill shelves in their upstairs playroom.

Ronan, who wrote a short book about his dad, sees his father's fight against ALS as a superhero battle. He and his brother are among the many weapons used.

Keaton shows his frustration sometimes, especially with the amount of care his dad needs.

"He's been having a few accidents these last few days," Keaton said. "One time he went three times that day, and I was really looking forward to doing something that day, but I couldn't do it because ... yeah."

In the end, Pandya sees the boys' caregiving as a positive. She hopes Ronan and Keaton eventually look back and recognize how much they gained by helping someone they love.

"If you're caring for somebody that ... has a clock ticking, then you don't want to take that time away," she said. "Being able to wipe their tears or wipe their mouth or hold their hand, those are some of the memories that they're going to cherish."

The boys know their dad is getting worse.

Keaton says it is getting harder for his dad to blink. He remembers one recent night when Rupesh slept for over 12 hours and then took a long nap the next afternoon.

"I'm like, should I be worried?" he said.

Frustration, devotion and heartbreak all swirl around in their still-developing brains.

Therapist Sarah Sutton recently had the boys draw up bucket lists of things they want to do with their dad.

Keaton shares a love of food with Rupesh, so he asked for a trip to Italy. The family found a more practical alternative: a drive to an Italian food market and restaurants in nearby Dallas.

Sutton has seen the boys regularly for a few years. She's been trying to get them to recognize and understand all the emotions hitting them so they don't keep everything bottled up.

When they visit, she also tries to give them a fun activity they can control. Play — kids being kids — is crucial for development.

"We play out conflict. We play out resolution. We play out the stories that are going on inside us," Sutton says.

During a recent visit, Sutton breaks out the board game Candy Land. She tells the boys that each colored card in the game will represent an emotion, and they get to decide which ones.

Then they draw cards with the idea of discussing whatever feeling comes up.

Sutton also tries to nudge the boys into talking about their dad. They deflect, focusing instead on a painting on her wall. Then the singer Rick Astley comes up.

Keaton pretends to be a therapist. "Do you have a girlfriend?" he asks.

"No, you're an awful therapist," Ronan replies.

Ronan only allows at one point that his dad is "doing good."

Sutton draws double green in their game. That represents disgust or unfairness.

"I think it's unfair that terrible things happen to people," she says.

The boys avoid the bait. They eat Hershey's Kisses. They trade scribbles on an Etch A Sketch. Someone farts. The session devolves into fits of giggles.

"Have you guys been laughing like this all day?" Sutton says. "Laughter without any anger or fighting is

so wonderful.”

When the session ends, Sutton’s floor is strewn with candy wrappers.

The boys head for their mom’s waiting van so they can return home and set up a living room campout. Pandya started letting Ronan and Keaton roll out sleeping bags on their living room rug each weekend during the pandemic. It began as a treat when they couldn’t go anywhere else.

Rupesh started using a ventilator just before the pandemic hit. The boys stayed home from school for 17 months as Pandya tried to keep everyone from catching the virus.

She also has an ulterior motive in allowing the campouts: Having the boys sleep next to their parents’ bedroom instead of upstairs in their shared room makes it easier to summon their help.

The boys may have to get trash bags and gloves if their dad has an accident during the night.

Before they set up camp, the boys change into pajamas, and the family settles in the living room to watch the kids’ show “Legends of the Hidden Temple.”

Ronan and Keaton curl up on a couch and loveseat while Pandya changes her husband’s shirt and pours medicine into his feeding tube. The ventilator hums.

The show ends, and Keaton takes his turn to steer dad back to the bedroom, where Pandya lifts him onto the mattress.

Keaton uses a long wand to suction saliva pooling in his dad’s mouth.

Ronan then holds his father on his side as Pandya straightens her husband’s shirt and shorts.

After that, the boy pats his dad softly on his back and lays him flat.

Pandya finishes getting her husband ready for bed while Ronan and Keaton scamper back to the living room.

There, they sprawl on top of sleeping bags, munching chips and candy as they squeeze in a little more TV before crawling inside to sleep.

‘Very angry’: Uvalde locals grapple with school chief’s role

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

UVALDE, Texas (AP) — The blame for an excruciating delay in killing the gunman at a Texas elementary school — even as parents outside begged police to rush in and panicked children called 911 from inside — has been placed with the school district’s homegrown police chief.

It’s left residents in the small city of Uvalde struggling to reconcile what they know of the well-liked local lawman after the director of state police said that the commander at the scene — Pete Arredondo — made the “wrong decision” not to breach a classroom at Robb Elementary School sooner, believing the gunman was barricaded inside and children weren’t at risk.

Steven McCraw, the head of the Texas Department of Public Safety, said at the Friday news conference that after following the gunman into the building, officers waited over an hour to breach the classroom. Nineteen children and two teachers were killed in the shooting.

Arredondo, who grew up in Uvalde and graduated from high school here, was set to be sworn in Tuesday to his new spot on the City Council after being elected earlier this month. The 50-year-old has spent much of a nearly 30-year career in law enforcement in Uvalde, returning in 2020 to take the head police job at the school district.

When Arredondo was a boy, Maria Gonzalez used to drive him and her children to the same school where the shooting happened. “He was a good boy,” she said.

“He dropped the ball maybe because he did not have enough experience. Who knows? People are very angry,” Gonzalez said.

Another woman in the neighborhood where Arredondo grew up began sobbing when asked about him. The woman, who didn’t want to give her name, said one of her granddaughters was at the school during the shooting but wasn’t hurt.

Juan Torres, a U.S. Army veteran who was visibly upset with reports coming out about the response, said he knew Arredondo from high school.

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"You sign up to respond to those kinds of situations" Torres said. "If you are scared, then don't be a police officer. Go flip burgers."

After his election to the City Council, Arredondo told the Uvalde Leader-News earlier this month that he was "ready to hit the ground running."

"I have plenty of ideas, and I definitely have plenty of drive," he said, adding he wanted to focus not only on the city being fiscally responsible but also making sure street repairs and beautification projects happen.

At a candidates' forum before his election, Arredondo said: "I guess to me nothing is complicated. Everything has a solution. That solution starts with communication. Communication is key."

McCraw said Friday that minutes after the gunman entered the school, city police officers entered through the same door. Over the course of more than an hour, law enforcement from multiple agencies arrived on the scene. Finally, officials said, a U.S. Border Patrol tactical team used a janitor's key to unlock the classroom door and kill the gunman.

McCraw said that students and teachers had repeatedly begged 911 operators for help while Arredondo told more than a dozen officers to wait in a hallway. That directive — which goes against established active-shooter protocols — prompted questions about whether more lives were lost because officers didn't act faster.

Two law enforcement officials have said that as the gunman fired at students, law enforcement officers from other agencies urged Arredondo to let them move in because children were in danger, The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they had not been authorized to talk publicly about the investigation.

Arredondo started out his career in law enforcement working for the Uvalde Police Department. After spending 16 years there, he went to Laredo, a border city located 130 miles (209 kilometers) miles to the south, where he worked at the Webb County Sheriff's Office and then for a local school district, according to a 2020 article in the Uvalde Leader-News on his return to his hometown to take the school district police chief job.

Ray Garner, the police chief of the district in Laredo where Arredondo worked, told the San Antonio Express-News in a story published after the Uvalde shooting that when Arredondo worked in the Laredo district he was "easy to talk to" and was concerned about the students.

"He was an excellent officer down here," Garner told the newspaper. "Down here, we do a lot of training on active-shooter scenarios, and he was involved in those."

Arredondo, who spoke only briefly at two short news conferences on the day of the shooting, appeared behind state officials speaking at news conferences over the next two days, but was not present at McCraw's Friday news conference.

After that news conference, members of the media converged at Arredondo's home and police cruisers took up posts there. At one point, a man answering the door at Arredondo's house told a reporter for The Associated Press that Arredondo was "indisposed."

"The truth will come out," said the man before closing the door.

State Sen. Roland Gutierrez, a Democrat whose district includes Uvalde, said on CNN's "State of the Union" that he's asking a lot of questions after "so many things went wrong."

He said one family told him that a first responder told them that their child, who was shot in the back, likely bled out. "So, absolutely, these mistakes may have led to the passing away of these children as well," Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez said while issue of which law enforcement agency had or should have had operational control is a "significant" concern of his, he's also "suggested" to McCraw "that it's not fair to put it on the local (school district) cop."

"At the end of the day, everybody failed here," Gutierrez said.

Russians, Ukrainians fight block by block in eastern city

By YURAS KARMAU and ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

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KRAMATORSK, Ukraine (AP) — Russian troops pushed deeper into a key eastern Ukrainian city Monday, fighting street by street with Kyiv's forces in a battle that has left Sievierodonetsk in ruins. In a bid to pressure Moscow to end the war, the European Union agreed to embargo most Russian oil imports by the end of the year.

As Moscow's advance on Sievierodonetsk increased in intensity, Russian forces also shelled parts of Ukraine's northeast, and a struggle continued for control of a southern region. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, meanwhile, said Russia has prevented the export of 22 million tons of Ukrainian grain, contributing to a growing global food crisis.

Military analysts described the fight for Sievierodonetsk as part of a race against time for the Kremlin. The city is important to Russian efforts to quickly complete the capture of the eastern industrial region of the Donbas before more Western arms arrive to bolster Ukraine's defense. Moscow-backed separatists already held territory in the region and have been fighting Ukrainian troops for eight years.

"The Kremlin has reckoned that it can't afford to waste time and should use the last chance to extend the separatist-controlled territory because the arrival of Western weapons in Ukraine could make it impossible," Ukrainian military analyst Oleh Zhdanov said.

In a potential setback for Ukraine, U.S. President Joe Biden appeared to dismiss reports that the U.S. was considering sending long-range rocket systems to the country.

But the European Union approved additional sanctions on Russia. As part of a long-delayed financial support package to help Ukraine, EU leaders agreed Monday to embargo most Russian oil imports into the 27-nation bloc by year-end. The agreement came after Zelenskyy asked the EU to target Russian oil exports so Moscow "feels the price for what it is doing against Ukraine."

The embargo covers Russian oil brought in by sea, allowing a temporary exemption for imports delivered by pipeline. EU Council President Charles Michel said the agreement covers more than two-thirds of oil imports from Russia. Ursula von der Leyen, the head of the EU's executive branch, said the move will "effectively cut around 90% of oil imports from Russia to the EU by the end of the year."

In an effort to punish and divide the West over its support for Ukraine, Russia has cut off natural gas to a handful of European countries. In its latest move, Russian state gas giant Gazprom said it will halt gas supplies to Dutch gas trader GasTerra starting Tuesday.

Russia also ramped up its actions on the battlefield. In his nightly video address, Zelenskyy said the situation in the Donbas remains "extremely difficult" as Russia has put its army's "maximum combat power" there.

The Ukrainian military said Russian forces reinforced their positions outside Sievierodonetsk, a city 145 kilometers (90 miles) south of the Russian border in an area that is the last pocket of Ukrainian government control in Luhansk.

Sievierodonetsk Mayor Oleksandr Striuk said the city has been "completely ruined." Artillery fire has destroyed critical infrastructure and damaged 90% of the buildings, and power and communications have been largely cut to a city that was once home to 100,000 people, he said.

"The number of victims is rising every hour, but we are unable to count the dead and the wounded amid the street fighting," Striuk told The Associated Press in a phone interview, adding that Moscow's troops advanced a few more blocks toward the city center.

He said that only about 12,000 to 13,000 residents remain, sheltering in basements and bunkers to escape the Russian bombardment. The situation recalls the siege of Mariupol, which trapped residents and led to some of the worst suffering of the war. More than 20,000 are feared dead in Mariupol.

Striuk estimated that 1,500 civilians have died in Sievierodonetsk since the war began from Russian attacks and from dire conditions that include a lack of medicine and medical treatment.

A 32-year-old French journalist, Frédéric Leclerc-Imhoff, died Monday near Sievierodonetsk when he was hit by shrapnel from shelling while covering Ukrainian evacuations, according to his employer, French broadcaster BFM TV.

Zelenskyy said Leclerc-Imhoff was the 32nd media worker to die in Ukraine since Russia invaded on Feb. 24.

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Governors of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions — which make up the Donbas — said six civilians, including the journalist, were killed in shelling. Authorities in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, also reported one person died in shelling there.

Zelenskyy said Russian troops also shelled the Sumy region near the Russian border, and the struggle continued for the southern Kherson region, which has been largely controlled by Russian troops since the early days of the war. Russia-installed officials there said they would ask the Kremlin to annex it, while Kyiv, in turn, has vowed to liberate the region.

The Russian advance in Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk on either side of the strategically important Siverskiy Donetsk River is part of an all-out push, said Zhdanov, the Ukrainian military analyst. He said the intensity of the latest fighting and the influx of Russian troops have surprised Ukrainians, who are trying to hold out until more weapons arrive.

On Monday, Biden told reporters that there are no plans for the United States to send long-range rocket systems to Ukraine, amid reports that the move is being considered.

Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy head of Russia's Security Council, called it a "reasonable" decision. He said that "otherwise, if our cities come under attack, the Russian armed forces would fulfill their threat and strike the centers where such criminal decisions are made."

Medvedev added that "some of them aren't in Kyiv."

In the Kherson region, the Russia-installed deputy head of the regional administration, Kirill Stremousov, told Russia's Tass state news agency that grain from last year's harvest is being delivered to Russian buyers, adding that "obviously there is a lot of grain here."

Russia has pressed the West to lift sanctions against it as it seeks to shift the blame for the growing food crisis, which has led to skyrocketing prices in Africa.

Zelenskyy accused Moscow of "deliberately creating this problem" and said Russia's claim that sanctions are to blame is a lie. He said sanctions haven't blocked Russian food, and he accused Russia of stealing at least a half million tons of Ukrainian grain.

Empty spaces, broken hearts in a Texas town gutted by loss

By CLAIRE GALOFARO AP National Writer

UVALDE, Texas (AP) — Josie Albrecht drove frantically from house to house, retracing the school bus route she drives twice a day, delivering Uvalde's children safely to and from school.

When she'd picked them up, hours earlier, they wore giddy grins, excited for summer break just days away: soccer, softball, freedom. She'd planned a pizza party to celebrate that afternoon. But before she could pick them up and drive them home, a gunman walked into their school and started shooting.

Now, days later, she was drawn to the town square and the 21 white crosses erected there, one for each of the 19 children and two teachers whose deaths left gaping holes in the marrow of a small town.

"It's my job to take them home. I didn't take my babies home," Albrecht wailed, over and over.

In a town this small, 15,000 people, even those who didn't lose their own child lost someone -- their best friend, the little boy down the road who dribbled his basketball in the driveway, the kid who stood on the curb, backpack in hand, waiting for the bus. They see the empty spaces they left behind everywhere. The bus seats they won't sit in. A baseball glove they won't wear. Front doors they won't skip from to join the neighborhood game of tag. Rivers they won't fish in.

The town's rhythms have always centered around their children. Before the shooting shattered their world, "what's your son up to?" or "your daughter played a great game" were the most common exchanges when they run into people they knew, which was all the time because everyone knows everyone. If one of Albrecht's riders misbehaved, she'd remind them that she knew their parents and grandparents and aunts and uncles.

Some say now that closeness is both their blessing and their curse: They can lean on each other to grieve. But every single one of them is grieving.

Albrecht calls her little riders "my kids," and in the chaotic hours after the rampage, she was desperate

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to know if they'd made it home safe. She drove house to house. She reached the one where 10-year-old Rojelio Torres every morning waited at the curb with his little brother and sister. As he'd climb on, he'd always asked to sit in the back because that's where the "visiting" happens and he liked to visit. He was "like a bull," she said -- charismatic, funny. He loved hot Takis. But he wasn't home. His family stood shocked and weeping on the lawn. She knew.

A few days later, she brought a toy school bus to place at his cross at the memorial. "I love you and will miss you," she wrote on it, and drew a broken heart at the place where he used to sit, in the back.

She wept, agonizing that she couldn't save him, and a local doctor hugged her. "There was nothing you could do," said John Preddy, a family practitioner, who delivered two of these dead children and cared for them all their short lives, their scraped knees and runny noses.

His office a few blocks away is decorated in an old west style, with John Wayne memorabilia, because he wants the kids to have fun.

"You spend your life trying to keep them healthy and to watch these kids grow," he said. "He took away in a matter of seconds what their mothers and their fathers and their grandparents and I and everyone has done to try to make their lives good and make them healthy and move them ahead and make them successful in the world. That literally got snuffed out in a matter of seconds."

He looked around the square, which used to be a sleepy park, ringed by antique shops, the town's theater, a barber. And now it's the heart of their mourning: The mounds of flowers and gifts at the foot of the crosses are 2 feet tall -- a tangible expression of unspeakable grief. Days after the shooting, they added a 22nd cross for Joe Garcia, the husband of teacher Irma Garcia, who died trying to protect her students. Two days after the attack, he visited this memorial to her, brought her flowers, went home and died of a heart attack.

"This destroys lives," said Preddy, who's been a doctor here for 30 years. "It's our lives, these kids are our lives."

He tried to do the math: 19 children, each with parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles.

"When you start adding that up and you spread it out, there's thousands of connections that those kids have: teachers, bus drivers, people that cut their hair. All of that is interconnected," he said. "So they touch thousands of people's lives, these kids, pretty much everybody in town."

The mourners left things these children had cherished and will never touch again: a flower made from pipe cleaners, a wreath of crayons, Hot Wheels, a princess crown, a baseball on which someone had written "good game," a bag of chocolate-covered pretzels.

The white crosses are covered in messages written in Sharpie.

"Mommy loves you."

"I will eat a smore just for you."

"I will take care of your grandma."

As people arrived at the square, they hugged and pleaded: "Why? Why? Why? Why?"

They need answers, Preddy said.

The police have changed the account of their response many times, finally admitting days after the shooting that officers gathered in the hallway of the school waited more than an hour to storm the classrooms where the gunman was holed up, as children inside called 911 over and over, whispering pleas to save them.

The political questions are also thundering through town: How could a troubled young man walk out of a gun shop with a weapon made for war days after his 18th birthday, asked Preddy and many others.

Preddy, a gun-owning conservative, also wondered: How could this country have done nothing for a decade after 20 students and six adults were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut?

"Our kids can't live like this, they can't. We can't let my kids, my grandkids live like this for the rest of their lives and for their kids' lives," he said. "We just can't have that."

People are scared. The places where these kids would have played are closed or quiet. A sign hanging on the door of a candy shop said the community needed time to heal. At the city park, the swing sets

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were empty. No kids played in the wooden climbing castle where they used to carve their names and their crushes. The ones who died never will again.

"It feels empty, there's an emptiness to it," said Lydia Carrasco, a 76-year-old grandmother who likes to come to the park to eat breakfast and watch kids run around. "It just feels lonesome, that you don't see the children."

Down her road, her neighbor's boy was killed, and she used to love to hear him playing basketball in the driveway. She feels helpless, because she knows so many people who lost children, and she has no idea what to say to console them. She lost her own son earlier this month; he was 57. It's a hurt that's hard to explain: It feels unnatural, she said, to bury a child. They are supposed to outlive you, be your legacy, and then that's over, all of a sudden.

She likes to watch the kids play because it reminds her of when her own children were young and free and innocent. But it feels like her whole town has been robbed of that innocence.

Raquel Martinez and her four children stayed home for days, holding each other. They're scared, she said. Her two daughters, 15 and 11 years old, stood crying at a memorial. They'd both been taught by the two teachers who died, Irma Garcia and Eva Mireles. They were kind, the girls said, always smiling, always helpful. Their 8-year-old cousin was in the school at the time but made it out alive.

"Heartbreaking," Martinez said, doesn't sound like a big enough word for this. "Heart-shattering," she offered, instead.

The family left home for the first time a few days after the shooting to go to the grocery, then drop off flowers for their fallen teachers and children. Martinez kept her kids close.

"I don't feel safe anywhere," she said. "You'd never think this could happen here. How can you know where it's going to happen next and when?"

They'd had big plans for the summer, soccer, softball, playing outside with their friends. But they don't know about any of that anymore.

"That's the worst part about it," Martinez said. "They were almost out of school, just days away, they were getting ready to just be kids, be free."

Across town, 8-year-old Jeremiah Lennon sits quietly on his couch most of the time, staring off into space. Before all this, he was an excitable kid, said his grandma, Brenda Morales. He'd come home from school, eat, head outside to play tag or hide and seek with the neighborhood children.

"He's different now," Morales said. He doesn't eat much. He doesn't talk much, either. "He's changed. Everything's changed."

The third grader had been in classroom 112, just next to the rooms where the shooter holed up.

The 15 kids in his class sat on the ground in the corner, as quiet as they could be, he said. The gunman tried to get in but the door was locked. Jeremiah said he was mad at first, because they were missing recess. He was also terrified: "I was scared I would get shot, my friends would get shot."

He told his mom later that some of his classmates were crying, and he wanted to be brave and strong for them, so he did not let himself cry.

Outside the school's walls, word started spreading.

His mom, Ashley Morales, rushed to the civic center where parents were told they'd be reunited with their kids. She waited there for two hours; it seemed like an eternity. Then Jeremiah emerged, the last kid out. She hugged him and wept. "My baby, my baby, what would happen if I didn't have my baby?"

Their family has lived here generations. They're connected somehow to just about everyone in town, so when the names started to emerge of the children who died, they were stunned.

Three of Jeremiah's friends died, including a boy who lived across the courtyard of his apartment complex -- the boys had played together almost every day. Two of their cousins lost daughters, and a neighbor lost a daughter, too. Ashley's co-workers at a fast-food restaurant lost relatives; she asks them how they're doing and they try to put on a brave face and say they're OK, but she knows they are not.

Her mother, Brenda Morales, said they've struggled with guilt: Jeremiah made it out alive and so many others didn't.

"I don't know why he decided to kill my friends," said the boy, bouncing nervously on a trampoline. They don't know what to say, except that his friends are in heaven now with God.

They also don't know what to say when he tells them he doesn't want to go back to school in the fall.

"They'll kill me," he says.

He wants to be a police officer when he grows up, "so I can arrest bad guys, the people who have the guns." He wants his friends to feel safe again.

Every time they walk out of their apartment, he gazes across the courtyard to the door where his best friend had lived.

He reminds his mom: "My friend isn't there anymore."

Rising US traffic deaths put focus on one Philadelphia road

By CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Just one more step and the stroller would have been on the curb.

The thought haunts Latanya Byrd years after a driver racing down Roosevelt Boulevard in Philadelphia struck and killed her 27-year-old niece, Samara Banks, and three of Banks' young sons as they crossed the 12-lane road. Today, many of the conditions that led to the fatal 2013 crash still exist.

Since the crash, Byrd became an advocate for safer streets, fighting to get automated speed cameras placed along the boulevard where 10% to 13% of the city's traffic fatalities happened each year prior to the pandemic, city officials said.

And now, amid a national surge in traffic fatalities that federal officials have called a crisis and studies showing Black communities have been hit even harder during the pandemic, plans to redesign the city's "corridor of death" could be gaining traction.

Roosevelt Boulevard is an almost 14-mile maze of chaotic traffic patterns that passes through some of the city's most diverse neighborhoods and census tracts with the highest poverty rates. Driving can be dangerous with cars traversing between inner and outer lanes, but biking or walking on the boulevard can be even worse with some pedestrian crossings longer than a football field and taking four light cycles to cross.

"You would not design a street or a road like that today," said Christopher Puchalsky, policy director for Philadelphia's Office of Transportation, Infrastructure and Sustainability. "It feels like an expressway, but it's in the middle and between neighborhoods."

Many of the city's ideas for fixing Roosevelt have been championed under new federal strategies. In the wake of increasing fatalities, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg has pushed a "safe system" approach, encouraging cities and states to take into account more than just driver behavior when designing roads.

The Biden administration also created funding for safety improvements, including the bipartisan infrastructure law and a \$5 billion federal aid package to cities over the next five years. Federal officials have pledged to prioritize equity when making funding decisions in the wake of a disproportionate 23% jump in Black traffic fatalities in 2020.

"We'll certainly remind the federal government when we are applying for grants of the equity priorities that the leadership has set out," Puchalsky said.

Kelley Yemen, director of Philadelphia's Complete Streets program, said the city is hoping for federal money to begin a long-term redesign of Roosevelt outlined in a study released in 2019. The two options would either make the center lanes a restricted expressway, or cut speeds and convert car lanes to bicycle and transit lanes. Both carry billion-dollar price tags.

The study includes a series of smaller projects to improve safety at high-fatality stretches on the road by 2025, some already started, but residents are skeptical.

Eva Gbaa has been impatient to see changes. Her 17-year-old nephew, John "JJ" Gbaa Jr., was killed in a November 2018 hit-and-run as he tried to cross Roosevelt while walking home after hanging out with friends. He was alone at the time and a lot of the circumstances of the crash were unknown.

A passerby found JJ and called the police, but he died at a hospital. No arrest has been made, and the

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family still agonizes over how someone could leave the big-hearted boy to die.

"JJ would ask me for money ... but I didn't know until his friends told me after he passed that he would buy them food if they didn't have any," said John Gbaa Sr., JJ's father. "He loved people. He'd give out his last dollar to his friends."

JJ and his father had moved to Philadelphia in 2017 to be closer to family and JJ was making huge strides in school. He loved being near his cousins and he would hang on his aunt as she cooked traditional African rice dishes.

"He would say, 'Auntie, when I graduate, I will go to college and then I will take care of you.' But he never had the chance," Eva Gbaa said, tamping down tears. "I hope, I hope they do something to make sure no family goes through this, so it doesn't happen again."

The family has started a school in JJ's honor in their home country of Liberia, the John G. Gbaa Jr. Academy for kindergarten through eighth grade, in hopes of giving his dream of education to others. They pay the teachers and send food, clothing and books to the students with the help of small donations.

Around Philadelphia, aggressive driving during the pandemic drove fatalities to 156 in 2020, a sharp increase from 90 deaths in 2019. Preliminary data from the Philadelphia Police Department showed a decrease in 2021 to 133 fatalities, still above pre-pandemic levels.

The data doesn't include the race or ethnicity of the people killed, but an Associated Press analysis showed fatalities in neighborhoods where more than 70% of residents are people of color increased from about 50% in 2019 to more than 67% in 2021. The number of accidents happening in the poorest neighborhoods also increased slightly.

Sonia Szczesna, director of active transportation for the Tristate Transportation Campaign, a nonprofit transportation advocacy organization, said Black and brown communities and low-income communities are often the most impacted by high-fatality roads.

"They divide these communities, and often residents have to travel these roadways by bike or by foot without access to high-quality public transportation. So there is an inequity in this infrastructure," Szczesna said.

Data for the first four months of 2022 showed more pedestrians died on Philadelphia roads so far this year than people in cars. And hit-and-runs were higher in the first four months of this year than the same timeframe in the previous two years, worrying police and other city officials.

But fatalities on Roosevelt stayed steady during the pandemic rather than increasing, Yemen said, largely because, she believes, of the pilot speed cameras.

Byrd, who co-founded the nonprofit advocacy group Families for Safe Streets, lobbied hard for the speed cameras, writing hundreds of personal letters to legislators telling them about her niece and her kids. The cameras went live at eight intersections in June 2020, but only after state legislation, a city ordinance and negotiations with the Philadelphia Parking Authority, which manages the program.

More than 224,000 warning tickets for driving more than 11 mph over the speed limit were issued in the first 30 days of a 60-day warning period, but by February 2021, that number had dropped to fewer than 17,000 tickets, according to data from the parking authority. Overall, speeding is down by more than 91% on the road, city and parking authority officials said.

Despite the impact, the cameras will sunset in 2023 unless extended by the Legislature.

The Federal Highway Administration gave states the green light this year to tap into federal funding to install speed cameras, saying they can reduce the number of injury crashes by 50%.

Byrd's niece Samara Banks was 21 and pregnant with her first child in 2007 when she found a four-bedroom house a few blocks south of Roosevelt Boulevard.

Her family had reservations because she'd have to cross the boulevard any time she wanted to visit. But Banks' mother had just died and she needed the larger home so she could take in her four younger siblings and raise her own family.

Byrd said Banks was the kind of mom and auntie who always had something planned. "At all of the family get-togethers, she would always get all the kids in a circle and have them playing games and doing dances, or she'd make up these little skits for them to do. She always had a plan and the kids always

came first," Byrd said.

After spending a hot July day visiting and swimming and having water balloon fights with the kids, Banks decided to walk home rather than calling a cab to take her the mile across Roosevelt, as she usually did.

She was pushing her 7-month-old, Saa'mir Williams, and 23-month-old, Saa'sean Williams, in a double stroller. Her 4-year-old, Saa'deem Griffin, was holding onto the stroller and walking beside her.

Witnesses told police that two cars had been racing, weaving between other cars and speeding down the boulevard. One of the drivers lost control and slammed into the family, throwing Banks more than 200 feet and crumpling the stroller. She and the three children died.

Banks' younger sister and 5-year-old son, Saa'yon Griffin, were walking ahead and survived the crash.

Officials have since installed a traffic signal and pedestrian crossing at the intersection, renamed Banks Way in honor of the young mother. The two men accused of racing were eventually convicted or pleaded guilty to charges in the deaths. One of the men was a teenager when his own mother had died crossing Roosevelt Boulevard.

"It was hard. I would tell Saa'yon he needed to be strong, and I remember there was this once he just stomped his foot and said no," Byrd said. "He told me he was tired of being strong and he just wanted his mom and his brothers back. We all do."

Probe could shed light on police time lapse in Uvalde deaths

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

Since the Columbine High School massacre more than 20 years ago, police have been trained to quickly confront shooters in the horrific attacks that have followed.

But officers in Uvalde, Texas, took more than an hour to kill a shooter who massacred 19 children, a lapse of time that will likely be a key part of a Justice Department probe into the police response.

The rare federal review comes amid growing, agonized questions and shifting information from police. Authorities now say that several officers entered the elementary school just two minutes after alleged gunman Salvador Ramos and exchanged fire with him, but he wasn't stopped until a tactical team entered a classroom more than an hour later.

That's a confounding timeline for law enforcement experts like Jarrod Burguan, who was the police chief in San Bernardino, California, when the city was hit by a terrorist attack that killed 14 people in 2015. Officers entered that facility, a training center for residents with developmental disabilities, within two minutes of arriving.

"Columbine changed everything," Burguan said Monday. Officers are now trained to form up and enter buildings to confront shooters as quickly as possible to prevent them from killing more people. "This has been drilled into this industry for years now."

Justice Department officials probing the Texas slayings will examine a host of questions about the police response in Uvalde. A similar review that largely praised the response to the San Bernardino mass shooting was over 100 pages long.

In announcing the review, Justice Department spokesman Anthony Coley said it would be conducted in a fair, impartial and independent manner and the findings would be made public. It could take months. Handling the review is the department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

One key question for Maria Haberfeld, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York, is why a school district police chief had the power to tell more than a dozen officers to wait in a hallway at Uvalde's Robb Elementary.

"The key question for me is, who designated him to be in charge?" she said.

Officials have said he believed the suspect was barricaded inside adjoining classrooms and there was no longer an active threat. But school police officers don't typically have the most experience with active shooters, and Haberfeld questioned why people with more specialized training didn't take the reins.

A U.S. Border Patrol tactical team finally used a janitor's key to unlock the classroom door and kill the gunman, raising more questions about the choice of entry.

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"It's not some fortified castle from the Middle Ages. It's a door," she said. "They knew what to do. You don't need the key."

The Justice review won't investigate the crime itself, or directly hold police civilly or criminally liable. What it will likely do is examine things like how police communicated with each other, said Thor Eells, executive director of the National Tactical Officers Association. It's not yet known why the school chief, Pete Arredondo, thought the shooter was barricaded and he hasn't commented.

"I think we need to be a little patient on that and wait to ensure we understand what that mindset was," Eells said. "It goes back to communication. What information did they have?"

The review will also likely examine how well officers were prepared with gear like weapons and body armor. The shooter wore a tactical vest and was armed with an AR-15-style rifle, a powerful weapon capable of piercing basic bulletproof vests.

In previous shootings reviewed by the Justice Department, non-specialized law enforcement units did not have the kind of body armor needed to fully protect themselves.

At the 2016 massacre that killed 49 people and hurt dozens more in the LGBT community at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida, a detective on the scene exchanged gunfire with the suspect, knowing his handgun was "no match" for the weapon being fired in the club. Despite that, the first officers on the scene formed up in a team to enter the club quickly and begin searching for the shooter, according to the report.

In San Bernardino, meanwhile, only one of the first officers on scene had a shotgun and several did not have body armor. But they still used their training on active shooter situations to form up in a four-officer team to immediately enter the complex.

Moving quickly is important not only to stop a shooter from killing more people, but to help the wounded. In San Bernardino and Orlando, the Justice Department reviews credited the quick response in getting the wounded transported to treatment within a "golden hour" where victims are mostly likely to survive.

It is unclear what impact the delayed entry into the Texas classroom might have had on any of the children who were wounded and needed treatment more than an hour away in San Antonio.

Police do have to quickly analyze the risks to themselves and others in a violent, quickly changing situation — but they're also trained to stop people from getting hurt, Eells said.

"Making an entry into that room is very, very, very dangerous," he said. "But we are going to incur that risk, knowingly and willingly, because our priorities are to help those that cannot help themselves."

Hurricane Agatha sets May record, then weakens over Mexico

By JOSÉ MARÍA ÁLVAREZ Associated Press

PUERTO ESCONDIDO, Mexico (AP) — Hurricane Agatha made history as the strongest hurricane ever recorded to come ashore in May during the eastern Pacific hurricane center, making landfall on a sparsely populated stretch of small beach towns and fishing villages in southern Mexico.

The storm came ashore in Oaxaca state Monday afternoon as a strong Category 2 hurricane, with maximum sustained winds of 105 mph (165kph), then it quickly lost power as it moved inland over the mountainous interior.

Agatha was downgraded to a tropical storm late Monday, its sustained winds down to 70 mph (110 kph). The U.S. National Hurricane Center said the storm should dissipate overnight, but warned that the system's heavy rains still posed a threat of dangerous flash floods for Mexico's southern states.

Torrential rains and howling winds whipped palm trees and drove tourists and residents into shelters. Oaxaca state's civil defense agency showed families hustling into a shelter in Pochutla and a rock and mud slide that blocked a highway.

Heavy rain and big waves lashed the beach town of Zipolite, long known for its clothing-optional beach and bohemian vibe.

"There is a lot of rain and sudden gusts of strong wind," said Silvia Ranfagni, manager of the Casa Kalmar hotel in Zipolite. Ranfagni, who decided to ride out Agatha at the property, said, "You can hear the wind howling."

In the surfing town of Puerto Escondido, people took shelter and put up plywood to prevent windows

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from breaking in the strong winds.

The government's Mexican Turtle Center — a former slaughterhouse turned conservation center in Mazunte — closed to visitors because of the hurricane.

Agatha formed only on Sunday and quickly gained power. It was the strongest hurricane on record to make landfall in May in the eastern Pacific, said Jeff Masters, meteorologist with Yale Climate Connections and the founder of Weather Underground.

He said the region's hurricanes typically get their start from tropical waves coming off the coast of Africa.

"Since the African monsoon typically does not start producing tropical waves until early- or mid-May, there simply aren't enough initial disturbances to get many eastern Pacific hurricanes in May," Masters wrote in an email. "In addition, May water temperatures are cooler than they are at the peak of the season, and wind shear is typically higher."

Agatha hits southern Mexico coast as strongest May hurricane

By JOSÉ MARÍA ÁLVAREZ Associated Press

PUERTO ESCONDIDO, Mexico (AP) — Hurricane Agatha, the strongest hurricane on record to make landfall in May in the eastern Pacific, swept ashore on a stretch of tourist beaches and fishing towns Monday, then weakened moving inland over the mountains of southern Mexico.

Torrential rains and howling winds whipped palm trees and drove tourists and residents into shelters as Agatha pushed onto a coastal region that is sparsely populated except for a handful of small communities along the shore.

Oaxaca state's civil defense agency showed families hustling into a shelter in Pochutla and a rock and mud slide that blocked the highway between that town and the state capital.

Agatha made landfall about 5 miles (10 kilometers) west of Puerto Angel in late afternoon as a strong Category 2 storm, with maximum sustained winds of 105 mph (165 kph). But it quickly began losing strength as it moved inland.

Late Monday, it was downgraded to a tropical storm, with maximum sustained winds of 70 mph (110 kph). The U.S. National Hurricane Center said Agatha was expected to dissipate overnight, but warned that the system's heavy rains still posed a threat of dangerous flash flood.

Earlier in the day, wind, heavy rain and big waves lashed the beach town of Zipolite, long known for its clothing-optional beach and bohemian vibe.

"There is a lot of rain and sudden gusts of strong wind," said Silvia Ranfagni, manager of the Casa Kalmar hotel in Zipolite. Ranfagni, who decided to ride out Agatha at the property, said, "You can hear the wind howling."

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The U.S. National Hurricane Center said Agatha could drop 10 to 16 inches (250 to 400 millimeters) of rain on parts of Oaxaca, with isolated maximums of 20 inches (500 millimeters), posing the threat of flash floods and mudslides. It said lesser amounts could fall in adjacent states to the east and northeast.

EU leaders agree to ban 90% of Russian oil by year-end

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN and LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Union leaders agreed Monday to embargo most Russian oil imports into the bloc by year-end as part of new sanctions on Moscow worked out at a summit focused on helping Ukraine with a long-delayed package of new financial support.

The embargo covers Russian oil brought in by sea, allowing a temporary exemption for imports delivered by pipeline, a move that was crucial to bring landlocked Hungary on board a decision that required consensus.

EU Council President Charles Michel said the agreement covers more than two-thirds of oil imports from Russia. Ursula Von der Leyen, the head of the EU's executive branch, said the punitive move will "effectively cut around 90% of oil imports from Russia to the EU by the end of the year."

Michel said leaders also agreed to provide Ukraine with a 9 billion-euro (\$9.7 billion) tranche of assistance to support the war-torn country's economy. It was unclear whether the money would come in grants or loans.

Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, responded to the EU's decision on Twitter, saying: "As she rightly said yesterday, Russia will find other importers."

The new package of sanctions will also include an asset freeze and travel ban on individuals, while Russia's biggest bank, Sberbank, will be excluded from SWIFT, the major global system for financial transfers from which the EU previously banned several smaller Russian banks. Three big Russian state-owned broadcasters will be prevented from distributing their content in the EU.

"We want to stop Russia's war machine," Michel said, lauding what he called a "remarkable achievement."

"More than ever it's important to show that we are able to be strong, that we are able to be firm, that we are able to be tough," he added.

Michel said the new sanctions, which needed the support of all 27 member countries, will be legally endorsed by Wednesday.

The EU had already imposed five previous rounds of sanctions on Russia over its war. It has targeted more than 1,000 people individually, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and top government officials as well as pro-Kremlin oligarchs, banks, the coal sector and more.

But the sixth package of measures announced May 4 had been held up by concerns over oil supplies.

The impasse embarrassed the bloc, which was forced to scale down its ambitions to break Hungary's resistance. When European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen proposed the package, the initial aim was to phase out imports of crude oil within six months and refined products by the end of the year.

Both Michel and von der Leyen said leaders will soon return to the issue, seeking to guarantee that Russia's pipeline oil exports to the EU are banned at a later date.

Hungarian Prime minister Viktor Orban had made clear he could support the new sanctions only if his country's oil supply security was guaranteed. Hungary gets more than 60% of its oil from Russia and depends on crude that comes through the Soviet-era Druzhba pipeline.

Von der Leyen had played down the chances of a breakthrough at the summit. But leaders reached a compromise after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged them to end "internal arguments that only prompt Russia to put more and more pressure on the whole of Europe."

The EU gets about 40% of its natural gas and 25% of its oil from Russia, and divisions over the issue exposed the limits of the 27-nation trading bloc's ambitions.

In his 10-minute video address, Zelenskyy told leaders to end "internal arguments that only prompt Russia to put more and more pressure on the whole of Europe."

He said the sanctions package must "be agreed on, it needs to be effective, including (on) oil," so that Moscow "feels the price for what it is doing against Ukraine" and the rest of Europe. Only then, Zelenskyy said, will Russia be forced to "start seeking peace."

It was not the first time he had demanded that the EU target Russia's lucrative energy sector and deprive Moscow of billions of dollars each day in supply payments.

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But Hungary led a group of EU countries worried over the impact of the oil ban on their economy, including Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria. Hungary relies heavily on Russia for energy and can't afford to turn off the pumps. In addition to its need for Russian oil, Hungary gets 85% of its natural gas from Russia.

Orban had been adamant on arriving at the summit in Brussels that a deal was not in sight, stressing that Hungary needed its energy supply secured.

Von der Leyen and Michel said the commitment by Germany and Poland to phase out Russian oil by the end of the year and to forgo oil from the northern part of the Druzhba pipeline will help cut 90% of Russian oil imports.

The issue of food security will be on the table Tuesday, with the leaders set to encourage their governments to speed up work on "solidarity lanes" to help Ukraine export grain and other produce.

Biden sees chance of 'rational' Republican approach on guns

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Monday that the "Second Amendment was never absolute" and that, after the Texas elementary school shooting, there may be some bipartisan support to tighten restrictions on the kind of high-powered weapons used by the gunman.

"I think things have gotten so bad that everybody's getting more rational, at least that's my hope," Biden told reporters before honoring the nation's fallen in Memorial Day remarks at Arlington National Cemetery.

His comments came a day after he traveled to the shattered Texas community of Uvalde, mourning privately for three-plus hours with anguished families grieving for the 19 children and two teachers who died in the shooting. Faced with chants of "do something" as he departed a church service, Biden pledged: "We will."

After the Uvalde trip, Biden spent Sunday night at his home in Delaware. As he arrived at the White House for Memorial Day events, he was asked if he's now more motivated to see new federal limits imposed on firearms.

"I've been pretty motivated all along," he said. "I'm going to continue to push and we'll see how this goes."

In Congress, a bipartisan group of senators talked over the weekend to see if they could reach even a modest compromise on gun legislation after a decade of mostly failed efforts. That included encouraging state "red flag" laws to keep guns away from those with mental health problems. A congressional aide said the senators would meet virtually Tuesday and throughout the week.

"The Second Amendment was never absolute," Biden said. "You couldn't buy a cannon when the Second Amendment was passed. You couldn't go out and buy a lot of weapons."

Later, the president and first lady Jill Biden were joined by Vice President Kamala Harris, second gentleman Doug Emhoff, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at Arlington National Cemetery for a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Standing at attention under a cloudless sky in the late-May heat, Biden saluted as taps played, after laying the wreath of multi-colored flowers wrapped in red, white and blue ribbon in front of the tomb.

Delivering remarks honoring fallen servicemembers, he said "Memorial Day is always a day where pain and pride are mixed together."

"Today we are free because they were brave," the president said.

But Biden said the nation's experiment in democracy remains under threat, both abroad, in the form of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and in division at home. He called upholding democracy "the mission of our time."

"Our memorial to them must not be just a day when we pause and pray," Biden said. "It must be a daily commitment to act, to come together, to be worthy of the price that was paid."

In his earlier statements to reporters on guns, Biden said he'd not spoken to Republicans on the issue "but my guess is ... they're going to have to take a hard look."

There is nowhere near enough support from congressional Republicans for broader gun measures popu-

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lar with the public — like a new ban on assault-type weapons or universal background checks on gun purchases. Still, Democratic advocates hope meaningful measures could still pass.

Biden said he had taken some executive actions on guns “but I can’t outlaw a weapon” and can’t “change the background checks.”

He said he didn’t know where congressional negotiations stand, but “there’s realization on the part of rational Republicans” that “we can’t keep repeating ourselves.”

Before returning to Washington, the president and first lady, whose veteran son Beau died of cancer caused by a brain tumor in 2015, attended church Monday morning and laid flowers at their son’s grave.

“Today’s the day our son died,” Biden said at Arlington, telling families that he knows remembrances like Monday’s can “reopen that black hole” of pain.

But he said because of their commitment to the ideals of America, “A part of them is still with us no matter how long ago we lost them.”

The Bidens also hosted a breakfast in the White House’s East Room with about 130 members of veteran organizations, military family groups and senior Defense Department and other administration officials.

The president, the first lady and representatives from five Gold Star families who lost relatives in combat also planted a Southern magnolia tree on the White House South Lawn. The tree came from a sapling of a nearby magnolia planted by President Andrew Jackson in 1835.

As the group used shovels to toss dirt on the newly planted tree, Biden grinned and said “shovel brigade.” He and the first lady later held hands with those gathered in a circle around the tree and prayed silently.

Populist millionaire faces ex-rebel for Colombia presidency

By MANUEL RUEDA Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — Leftist Sen. Gustavo Petro celebrated his first-round lead in Colombia’s presidential election in the way most politicians would: in a conference room packed with hundreds of supporters as confetti rained down upon him.

The man he’ll meet in a June 19 runoff had a different approach.

Rodolfo Hernandez sat at his home kitchen table and spoke to his followers for five minutes on Facebook Live.

“Today the country that does not want to continue with the same politicians, that does not want the same people who have brought us to our current situation, has won,” he declared.

The 77-year-old populist rode a wave of disgust at the country’s condition to what until just weeks ago would have been a shocking place in the runoff, surging late in the campaign past more conventional candidates.

He ran an austere campaign — unaffiliated with any major party — that was waged mostly on social media with a message that centered on reducing corruption and cutting wasteful government spending.

He is now positioned to mount a serious challenge to Petro — a former rebel who himself has long been seen as a political insurgent and who would be Colombia’s first leftist leader if elected. Petro now, to some eyes at least seems like the more conventional candidate — even if he still frightens much of the country’s conservative establishment.

Hernandez got 28% of the vote in the six-candidate field on Sunday while Petro, as polls had projected, got 40%.

Hernandez is a self-made millionaire who got rich in real estate after growing up on a small farm. He says he has paid for his campaign with his own savings rather than depending on donations.

Some in Colombia compare him to former U.S. President Donald Trump and describe him as a right-wing populist. But others say the analogy is deceptive.

“This is not a hard right-wing candidate” said Will Freeman, a Princeton University scholar who specializes in Latin American politics and met with Hernandez in February for a lengthy interview. “One of the big things he talks about is poverty, inequality and hunger. When I spoke with him he said several times that he was dismayed by the idea that people are born into poverty in Colombia and don’t have opportunities

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to get out of that track.”

Hernandez has also said he is in favor of peace negotiations with the National Liberation Army — the last remaining sizable rebel group — which kidnapped and killed his daughter in 2004.

Freeman said that during the interview, Hernandez also expressed admiration for two other Latin American leaders: Mexico’s Andrés Manuel López Obrador and El Salvador’s Nayib Bukele — both often seen as heavy-handed populists but neither of them coming from a right wing background.

Hernandez got his start in politics in 2016, by running for mayor of his hometown of Bucaramanga. He has said he was tired of complaining about corrupt local officials and was convinced by his brother, who is a philosopher, to try to change how the city was run himself.

Leading a movement called “Logic, Ethics and Aesthetics” — which had the pi symbol as its logo — Hernandez won, and eventually left office in 2019, with approval ratings above 80%.

But his mayoral term was also marred by an investigation into allegations he took kickbacks from a waste disposal contractor. Hernandez denies the accusations and is fighting them in court.

As mayor, Hernandez became famous for publicly scolding police officers who sought bribes and notorious for slapping a city councilman who accused his son of corruption. Hernandez was suspended for several months over the incident. He also caused an uproar by saying that migrant women from neighboring Venezuela had become “factories for breeding poor children.”

He astonished Colombians in 2016 when, in a radio interview, he professed to be an admirer of Adolf Hitler. He later apologized and said he had meant to say Albert Einstein — a bizarre confusion that actually made sense because the physicist was the source of the statement that Hernández had misattributed to the dictator during the interview.

But the scandals have not appeared to affect Hernandez’s standing with voters hungry for change in a country struggling to recover economically from the pandemic and to overcome persistent violence.

Inflation in Colombia is the highest in two decades, the poverty rate rose by 8% in 2020, and armed groups continue to fight in some rural areas over territory abandoned by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia after that group signed a peace deal with the government in 2016.

Many Colombians blame these problems on the conservative parties that have been ruling the country for decades. In Sunday’s election, Federico Gutierrez, the candidate backed by the nation’s traditional parties only got 22% of votes.

“The success of Hernandez and Petro is a harsh rebuke to the ruling class” said Sergio Guzman, director of the Colombia Risk Analysis consulting firm. “It also means that Colombians want a radical version of change.”

Guzman said that with just three weeks until the run-off vote, Hernandez is well positioned to win over voters who supported Gutierrez but fear Petro’s economic proposals, which include higher taxes, reforms to the pension system and more government spending. Gutierrez on Sunday said he would back Hernandez because he didn’t want to “put Colombia’s future at risk.”

As a presidential candidate Hernandez has said he will cut government excesses, starting with a plan to turn the nation’s presidential palace into a museum. Hernandez has also said that he wants to sell buildings owned by Colombia’s diplomatic missions abroad to fund loans for Colombian students.

The candidate has railed against the nation’s ruling class and promised rewards for citizens who denounce corrupt public officials. He has also said that judges would have to present him with reports on how anti-corruption cases were advancing. And much like Petro, he has said that he wants to renegotiate Colombia’s trade agreements with other countries, in order to benefit local farmers.

Laura Gil a political scientist at Bogota’s Javeriana University said that many of Hernandez’s proposals are unfeasible and demonstrate he is a populist with “very little knowledge” of how government works.

“He is a Colombian Trump” Gil said, adding that if Hernandez wins he will take Colombia’s democratic institutions “to the limit.”

France blames ticket fraud for Champions League final chaos

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By ROB HARRIS AP Global Soccer Writer

PARIS (AP) — French authorities defended police on Monday for indiscriminately firing tear gas and pepper spray at Liverpool supporters at the Champions League final, while blaming industrial levels of fraud that saw 30,000 to 40,000 people try to enter the Stade de France with fake tickets or none at all.

UEFA ordered an independent report that it said would “examine decision making, responsibility and behaviors of all entities involved in the final” and be made public.

After a meeting into Saturday’s chaos, the French ministers of the sport and the interior shifted responsibility onto the Liverpool fans while not providing details on how they were sure so many fake tickets were in circulation. People with legitimate tickets bought through Liverpool and UEFA reported struggling to access the stadium.

“There was massive fraud at an industrial level and an organization of fake tickets because of the pre-filtering by the Stade de France and the French Football Federation, 70% of the tickets were fake tickets coming into the Stade de France,” Interior minister Gérald Darmanin said. “Fifteen percent of fake tickets also were after the first filtering ... more than 2,600 tickets were confirmed by UEFA as non-validated tickets even though they’d gone through the first filtering.

The French sports ministry provided no evidence for its claims and it did not respond to a follow-up email after hosting a combative news conference.

“A massive presence of these fake tickets of course was the issue why there were delays,” Darmanin said. “Three times the beginning of the match was delayed.”

The final, which Liverpool lost 1-0 to Real Madrid, kicked off 37 minutes late.

Liverpool chief executive Billy Hogan said it was “completely inappropriate” for the French authorities to be forming conclusions and commenting on numbers so early.

“At this stage I think it’s just not responsible to be making comments before we’ve actually gathered all the information,” Hogan said. “How can (the number of fans without tickets) be quantified at this stage, before we’ve had an independent and transparent investigation? There’s also been quotes about people with fake tickets. But, again, how do we know all the facts until we’ve had an investigation?”

Hogan said Liverpool was “reviewing legal avenues” on behalf of supporters.

“The Champions League final should be one of the finest spectacles in football and it resulted in one of the worst experiences of many supporters’ lives. So, I would say that all politicians and agencies involved in this event need to wait until a full and independent investigation is concluded before attempting to shift blame.”

Tear gas and pepper spray was targeted at Liverpool fans, impacting children — a tactic defended by Darmanin to prevent deaths.

“I’d like to thank the forces of law and order, also those who worked in the stadium because they were very calm and they were able to avoid drama and so thank you for organizing the pre-filtering but lifting it when there was too much pressure to avoid a drama,” Darmanin said. “That was a decision made by the prefecture to avoid any kind of deaths or seriously injured.”

French Sports minister Amélie Ouéda-Castéra blamed fans arriving at the stadium late for the crowd control issues, but did not say when they should have arrived at the stadium on the outskirts of Paris.

“We have seen, we have to improve in risky matches certain aspects with regard to managing the flows, first filtering, second filtering, and we have to make sure we look at electronic ticketing as closely as possible so we can avoid fraud as far as ticketing is concerned,” Ouéda-Castéra said. “That is something which is absolutely essential.”

Ouéda-Castéra did say supporters who couldn’t get into the stadium should be compensated, but ignored questions as she left the news conference where Ouéda-Castéra.

“We are extremely sorry for all the people whose experience was wasted all that evening,” Ouéda-Castéra said. “For the people who had bought tickets and were unable to attend the match. That’s why we have asked UEFA to really work on a compensation system for those people — 2,700, including British people — so that they get compensation.”

UEFA did not raise the issue of compensating fans in its statement about its own investigation. "Evidence will be gathered from all relevant parties and the findings of the independent report will be made public once completed," UEFA said, without giving a timeline. French authorities will set up a working group to prevent violence in stadiums and target troublemakers after seeing a spate of incidents this season in domestic games.

WHO: Monkeypox won't turn into pandemic, but many unknowns

By MARIA CHENG AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP) — The World Health Organization's top monkeypox expert said she doesn't expect the hundreds of cases reported to date to turn into another pandemic, but acknowledged there are still many unknowns about the disease, including how exactly it's spreading and whether the suspension of mass smallpox immunization decades ago may somehow be speeding its transmission.

In a public session on Monday, WHO's Dr. Rosamund Lewis said it was critical to emphasize that the vast majority of cases being seen in dozens of countries globally are in gay, bisexual or men who have sex with men, so that scientists can further study the issue. She urged those at risk to be careful.

"It's very important to describe this because it appears to be an increase in a mode of transmission that may have been under-recognized in the past," said Lewis.

"At the moment, we are not concerned about a global pandemic," she said. "We are concerned that individuals may acquire this infection through high-risk exposure if they don't have the information they need to protect themselves."

She warned that anyone is at potential risk for the disease, regardless of their sexual orientation. Other experts have pointed out that it may be accidental that the disease was first picked up in gay and bisexual men, saying it could quickly spill over into other groups if it is not curbed.

Last week, WHO said 23 countries that haven't previously had monkeypox have now reported more than 250 cases. On Monday, the U.K. announced another 71 monkeypox cases.

Lewis said it's unknown whether monkeypox is being transmitted by sex or just the close contact between people engaging in sexual activity and described the threat to the general population as "low."

Monkeypox is known to spread when there is close physical contact with an infected person, their clothing or bedsheets.

She also warned that among the current cases, there is a higher proportion of people with lesions that are more concentrated in the genital region and sometimes nearly impossible to see.

"You may have these lesions for two to four weeks (and) they may not be visible to others, but you may still be infectious," she said.

Last week, a top adviser to WHO said the monkeypox outbreak in Europe, U.S., Israel, Australia and beyond was likely linked to sex at two recent raves in Spain and Belgium. That marks a significant departure from the disease's typical pattern of spread in central and western Africa, where people are mainly infected by animals like wild rodents and primates.

Scientists haven't yet determined whether the monkeypox outbreak in rich countries can be traced to Africa, but the disease continues to sicken people on the continent.

On Monday, authorities in Congo said nine people have died of monkeypox in 2022. Dr. Aime Alongo, chief of the Sankuru health division in Congo, also said 465 cases have been confirmed, making it one of the worst-hit nations in West and Central Africa.

Nigerian authorities confirmed the country's first monkeypox death this year, in addition to six more cases. WHO says thousands of cases are reported from Nigeria and Congo every year.

Most monkeypox patients experience only fever, body aches, chills and fatigue. People with more serious illness may develop a rash and lesions on the face and hands that can spread to other parts of the body. No deaths have been reported in the current outbreak beyond Africa.

WHO's Lewis also said while previous cases of monkeypox in central and western Africa have been relatively contained, it was not clear if people could spread monkeypox without symptoms or if the disease

might be airborne, like measles or COVID-19.

Monkeypox is related to smallpox, but has milder symptoms. After smallpox was declared eradicated in 1980, countries suspended their mass immunization programs, a move that some experts believe may be helping monkeypox spread now, since there is now little widespread immunity to related diseases. Smallpox vaccines are also protective against monkeypox.

Lewis said it was also uncertain how much immunity people who were previously vaccinated against smallpox might still have, since that was at least more than four decades ago. She said WHO's priority was to stop the current spread of monkeypox before the disease became entrenched in new regions.

"If we all react quickly and we all work together, we will be able to stop this," she predicted. "We will be able to stop it before it reaches more vulnerable people and before it establishes itself as a replacement for smallpox."

O'Rourke bets shooting will shake up Texas governor's race

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Still mourning a Texas mass shooting, Democrat Beto O'Rourke gave his long-shot campaign a jolt by imploring a national audience that it was finally time for real action to curb the proliferation of high-powered guns in his home state and across America.

That was 2019, and the former congressman was running for president when he declared during a debate, "Hell, yes, we're gonna take your AR-15," weeks after a gunman targeting Mexican immigrants killed 23 people at a Walmart in O'Rourke's native El Paso.

Last week, following the massacre of 19 elementary school students and two teachers by an 18-year-old man with an AR-15-style rifle in Uvalde, Texas, O'Rourke — now campaigning for governor — again briefly seized the national political spotlight. This time, that meant crashing the news conference of the man he wants to unseat, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, and declaring — in a moment subsequently viewed widely online — that the carnage was "on you."

O'Rourke is betting that the tragedy can reset the governor's race in America's largest red state — despite Abbott twice previously winning election by landslides and having begun the campaign with \$55 million in the bank and despite gun culture looming larger in Texas than perhaps anywhere else.

It didn't work in 2019. O'Rourke's debate declaration won him praise from other Democrats on stage and a fundraising bump. But he dropped out of the race barely six weeks later.

It's too early to tell what will happen in the governor's race, but the shooting has already affected both parties. Abbott canceled his planned visit to the annual National Rifle Association meeting to remain in Uvalde. Also skipping it was Republican Texas Sen. John Cornyn, who is among those negotiating with Democratic colleagues on strengthening background checks and "red flag" laws allowing authorities to remove firearms from those determined to be a danger to themselves or others.

"I think it felt cathartic for a lot of people that maybe might have been on the fence," said Abel Prado, executive director of the Democratic advocacy group Cambio Texas. "It gives you, 'At least somebody's trying to stand up and do something, or at least say something.'"

O'Rourke spent two nights in Uvalde after the shooting, then headed to Houston for a rally against gun violence outside Friday's meeting of the NRA.

"To those men and women in positions of power who care more about your power than using that power to save the lives of those that you are supposed to serve we will defeat you and we will overcome you," O'Rourke told protesters who chanted his name and the phrase "Vote them out!"

Supporters hope O'Rourke recaptures the magic that saw him become a national Democratic star and nearly upset Republican Sen. Ted Cruz in 2018. But since then, O'Rourke's White House bid fizzled, former President Donald Trump easily won Texas in 2020 and Democrats who had hoped to flip scores of congressional and legislative seats in the state that year lost nearly every top race.

A Democrat also hasn't won Texas' governorship since 1990, and, just last year, the state loosened fire-arm restrictions enough to allow virtually any resident age 21 and older to carry guns without a license.

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Abbott signed that law alongside NRA CEO Wayne LaPierre and the group's president, Carolyn Meadows.

Of course, the domination of guns in Texas culture has long predated the law. Abbott once tweeted his embarrassment at his state lagging California in gun sales, and Cruz is fond of saying, "Give me a horse, a gun and an open plain, and we can conquer the world." Former Republican Gov. Rick Perry cruised to reelection in 2010 after using a laser-sighted handgun to kill a coyote while jogging.

Mass shootings are similarly not new in Texas. Tuesday's massacre in Uvalde and the El Paso killings followed a mass shooting at Santa Fe High School outside Houston that killed eight students and two teachers in 2018, and a church rampage in Sutherland Springs that left 25 people dead, as well as an unborn child, the year before.

Former Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson, a Republican long famous for carrying multiple guns nearly everywhere he went, said O'Rourke's most ardent supporters will be "even more determined to vote for Beto" after his confrontation with Abbott.

Still Patterson said the clash could backfire, alienating otherwise potentially sympathetic swing voters who might think O'Rourke was putting on a self-serving show.

"Sometimes your method overwhelms your message, and his method gutted whatever benefit he might have accrued," said Patterson, who, as a state senator, wrote Texas' original, 1995 concealed handgun law allowing Texans to take firearms more places than nearly anywhere in America at the time. "I think it's a net loss."

Abbott hasn't mentioned O'Rourke much since the shooting but answered questions about possible new state gun limits by slamming high crime rates in cities primarily run by Democrats.

"There are more people shot every weekend in Chicago than there are in schools in Texas," the governor said hyperbolically. Speaking of arguments that new firearms restrictions could make Americans safer, "Chicago and LA and New York disprove that thesis."

Abbott's campaign has also previously chided O'Rourke for his previous stand on guns, producing an online ad last year showing a cartoon of O'Rourke speeding the wrong direction down a one-way street, then off a cliff while the radio plays clips of his "Hell yes" comment and other strongly progressive positions he took as a presidential candidate.

O'Rourke's campaign insists he's not using the massacre for political gain. It transformed its fundraising apparatus into one accepting donations for relatives of those killed in Uvalde, and says O'Rourke attended the Abbott news conference at the urging of one of the victims' families.

He sat quietly in the audience for 10-plus minutes, intending only to listen, the campaign said. But, when Abbott said "there was no meaningful forewarning of this crime" other than the gunman posting about the shooting just moments before he began doing so, O'Rourke got angry — especially given that, after the El Paso shooting, the state's chief response was to loosen gun laws. He approached the stage and accused Abbott of "doing nothing" when the the Uvalde violence had been "totally predictable."

Also on stage was Uvalde Mayor Don McLaughlin, who responded with an obscenity and called O'Rourke "sick" for trying to make the shooting "a political issue."

But it nonetheless helped one Texan change her mind. Nicole Armijo, who works in her family's HVAC business in the border city of McAllen and has three kids, ages 10, 9 and 6, attending public school. She didn't vote for O'Rourke when he ran for Senate but plans to now because "the way we're doing things is not working."

"Maybe, Texas, it's not just about having a gun," said Armijo, who said she loves guns and hunting but would support expanded background checks. "Beto's kind of portrayed those thoughts: It's not about me or you. It's about everyone as a whole."

A dad's anguish outside Texas school while shooting unfolded

By JAKE BLEIBERG and ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

UVALDE, Texas (AP) — Javier Cazares raced to his daughter's school when he heard there was a shooting, leaving his truck running with the door open as he ran into the school yard. In his rush, he didn't

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bring his gun.

He spent the next 35 to 45 agonizing minutes scanning the children fleeing Robb Elementary School for his 9-year-old "firecracker," Jacklyn. All the while, he yearned to run in himself — and grew increasingly agitated, along with other parents, that the police weren't doing more to stop the gunman who holed up in a classroom, killing kids.

"A lot of us were arguing with the police, 'You all need to go in there. You all need to do your jobs,'" said Cazares, an Army veteran. "We were ready to go to work and rush in."

Nineteen children and two teachers were ultimately shot dead in the roughly 80 minutes the gunman spent inside the school in Uvalde, Texas, a small, predominantly Latino community that sits among vegetable fields halfway between San Antonio and the U.S.-Mexico border. The Justice Department has said it will review the law enforcement response.

This account of the deadliest school shooting since Sandy Hook is based on law enforcement's timeline, records and numerous interviews with Uvalde residents in the hours and days after the massacre.

Salvador Ramos was up early on May 24, sending ominous messages. The man authorities have identified as the gunman turned 18 the week before and promptly bought two AR-15-style rifles along with hundreds of rounds of ammunition.

In the pre-dawn hours in his grandparents' shaded neighborhood just a half-mile from the site he would turn into a killing ground, Ramos wrote "I'm about to" to a woman over Instagram and sent someone a private Facebook message saying he was going to shoot his grandmother.

Within hours, he'd done it.

Sometime after 11 a.m., a neighbor who was in his yard heard a shot and looked up to see Ramos run out the front door of his grandparents' home to a pickup truck parked along the narrow street. The 18-year-old seemed panicked and struggled to get the Ford out of park, Gilbert Gallegos, 82, said.

Ramos finally drove off, kicking a spray of gravel in the air. Moments later, his grandmother emerged from the single-story home covered in blood.

"This is what he did," Gallegos recalled her yelling. "He shot me."

Gallegos' wife called 911 while he took the wounded woman into their backyard. As they hid and waited for the police, more gunshots rang out.

By 11:28 a.m., Ramos had sped to Robb Elementary and crashed the pickup in a drainage ditch, authorities said. At that moment, video shows a teacher entering the school through a door that the teacher had emerged from and propped open a minute earlier, according to Steven McCraw, the head of the Texas Department of Public Safety.

That door was usually closed, and locked, per security protocol. But it stayed ajar.

Witnesses said Ramos jumped from the passenger side of the truck with a rifle and a backpack full of ammunition. After shooting at two men who emerged from a nearby funeral home, Ramos hopped a chain-link fence and headed toward the school — still shooting — as panicked people nearby called the police.

Authorities initially said Ramos exchanged fire with a school police officer before entering the building, but they later said the officer was not actually on campus and "sped" back upon hearing of the shooter.

But the officer initially headed for the wrong man, confronting someone who turned out to be a teacher — after passing within feet of Ramos, who was crouched behind a vehicle parked outside the school.

From his hiding place, Ramos went for the propped-open door, slipped through it and into adjoining fourth-grade classrooms at 11:33 a.m., authorities said. He rapidly fired off more than 100 rounds.

In one of those rooms, Miah Cerrillo, 11, covered herself with a friend's blood to look dead, she told CNN. After the shooter moved into the adjacent room, she could hear screams, more gunfire and music being blared by the gunman.

Two minutes after Ramos entered the school, three police officers followed him through the same door and were quickly joined by four more. Authorities said Ramos exchanged fire from the classroom with the

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officers in the hallway and two of them suffered "grazing wounds."

The first police on the scene were outgunned by Ramos' powerful, high-end rifle, according to a man who watched from a nearby home.

"After he started firing at the cops, the cops stopped shooting," said Juan Carranza, 24. "You could tell the firepower that he had was more powerful than the cops' weapons."

After shots started ringing out, a cafeteria worker who had just finished serving chicken tacos to 75 third-graders said a woman shouted into the lunchroom: "Code black. This is not a drill!"

The employees didn't know what "code black" meant but closed blinds, locked the doors and escorted students behind a stage, said the worker, who spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid publicity. Some staff then took refuge in the kitchen.

In the nearly half-hour after the first officers followed Ramos inside, as many as 19 piled into the hallway, authorities said.

In the meantime, students and teachers elsewhere in the building were trying to get out, some climbing out of windows with the help of police.

Cazares isn't sure exactly when he arrived on the scene, but when he did, he saw about five officers helping people escape. He kept a close watch to see if Jacklyn, who he later said loved gymnastics, singing and dancing, was among them.

About 15 to 20 minutes after he got to the school, he said he spotted officers arriving with heavy shields for the first time.

In the chaos, he felt that time was both "going so fast and it was going so slow."

But he added: "From what I saw, things could have been a lot different."

Other parents felt the same. One onlooker recalled a woman yelling at officers, "Go in there! Go in there!"

At 12:03, a student called 911 and whispered that she was inside the classroom with the gunman.

Minutes later, the Uvalde school district posted on Facebook that all campuses were going into lockdown but that "the students and staff are safe in the buildings. The buildings are secure."

The student called 911 again, minutes after her first call, to say there were multiple dead, and then called back soon after that, saying eight or nine students were still alive.

Thirty-four minutes passed from the time of that last call to the moment a U.S. Border Patrol tactical team used a school employee's key to unlock the classroom door and kill the gunman.

An open door had let him in. A locked door kept him in, and law enforcement out.

Police didn't breach the classroom faster because the commander inside the building — the school district's police chief, Pete Arredondo — believed the situation had morphed from an active shooting to a hostage situation, said McCraw, of the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Officers from other agencies urged the school police chief to let them move in because children were in danger, according to two law enforcement officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they had not been authorized to discuss the investigation publicly. McCraw said gunfire was "sporadic" for much of the time that officers waited in the hallway and that investigators do not know if children died during that time.

"It was the wrong decision," McCraw said.

Reporters from The Associated Press tried to speak to Arredondo at his home several times; on one visit, someone answered the door and said the police chief wouldn't talk. He also did not reply to a phone message left at the district's police headquarters.

The loss of so many young lives and the admission of errors by police have cast doubt, even for some Second Amendment-supporters in the Texas community, on a refrain the state's Republican leaders have used after this and other mass shootings: "What stops armed bad guys is armed good guys."

Cazares, a gun owner and supporter of the Second Amendment, said he shies away from politics — but

added that he thinks there should be stricter gun laws, including better background checks. He called selling the type of gun the assailant used to an 18-year-old "kind of ridiculous."

Cazares left school before officers killed Ramos at 12:50 p.m. He rushed to the hospital because his niece said she'd seen Jacklyn in an ambulance.

The entire family soon gathered there, pressing hospital staff for information for nearly three hours. Finally, a pastor, police officer and a doctor met with them.

"My wife asked the question, 'Is she alive or is she passed?'" Cazares said. "They were like, 'No, she's gone.'"

When he was finally able to see his daughter's body, Cazares vowed that her death would not be in vain. Later, he fought back tears as he pondered his daughter's last moments.

"She could be feisty," he said. "It kind of comforts our hearts that she would be one of the ones that was brave and tried to help as much as she could."

Abramovich completes \$3.2 billion sale of EPL team Chelsea

By STEVE DOUGLAS AP Sports Writer

The fast-tracked purchase of English soccer club Chelsea for 2.5 billion pounds (\$3.2 billion) — the highest price ever paid for a sports team — was completed Monday by a consortium fronted by Los Angeles Dodgers part-owner Todd Boehly.

It marked the end of the trophy-filled, 19-year tenure of Roman Abramovich, the Russian oligarch who was forced to sell the club in March after being sanctioned by the British government for what it called his enabling of Russian President Vladimir Putin's "brutal and barbaric invasion" of Ukraine.

The government said the proceeds of the sale will be used for humanitarian purposes in Ukraine.

"We are honored to become the new custodians of Chelsea Football Club," said Boehly, who attended some of the team's games in recent weeks. "We're all in — 100% — every minute of every match."

Chelsea has been operating under a government license since Abramovich's assets were frozen in March. The Boehly and Clearlake Capital consortium was one of around 250 initial proposed buyers, the club said, and that was narrowed down to 12 credible bids and then a shortlist of three final bidders.

"Many described the proposed transaction as 'unprecedented,' and it was," Chelsea said. "A transaction such as this would normally take nine months to a year to complete; we did it in less than three months."

The British government approved the sale last week after ensuring that Abramovich could not profit from it. The proceeds will be transferred to a frozen account and then used "to support the relief and rebuilding effort in Ukraine as soon as possible," the government said.

"Today's change of ownership marks a new chapter for Chelsea," the government added, "in the best interests of its fans, the club and the wider football community."

Boehly's group has pledged to invest an additional 1.75 billion pounds (\$2.2 billion) in Chelsea's men's, women's and academy teams and on infrastructure, such as the redevelopment of Stamford Bridge.

The consortium also features Dodgers principal owner Mark Walter, Swiss billionaire Hansjorg Wyss, and funding from private equity firm Clearlake.

"We are excited to commit the resources to continue Chelsea's leading role in English and global football," said Behdad Eghbali and José E. Feliciano, Clearlake's co-founders, "and as an engine for football talent development."

Funded by Abramovich's lavish investment, Chelsea's men's team won 21 trophies during his ownership, including the Champions League in 2012 and 2021, and is the reigning Club World Cup champion. The women's team won a league-and-cup double this season.

Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel was praised in the club statement for his "patience and support" during the process of the sale, and he can now start making signings to strengthen his squad that qualified for next season's Champions League — via a third-place finish in the Premier League — despite the off-field turmoil.

The club's ability to sell match tickets and commit to new player spending had been curbed by the sanctions against Abramovich.

Russians star in NHL playoffs as nation wages war in Ukraine

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer

A little more than a mile from the United Nations, where Russia's war in Ukraine is front and center, the crowd at Madison Square Garden chanted goaltender Igor Shesterkin's name in the final moments of a playoff victory.

Similar scenes played out in the nation's capital during the first round when Washington Capitals fans serenaded longtime captain Alex Ovechkin with chants of, "Ovi! Ovi!" Ovechkin has long been linked to Russian President Vladimir Putin, who ordered the invasion.

The NHL postseason has inadvertently become an intersection of sports and politics, with Russians starting on North American ice against the backdrop of the largest military conflict in Europe since World War II. While their countrymen in sports from soccer to tennis have been banned from competitions, Russians in the NHL have played on while keeping a low profile away from the rink.

"Everybody's doing the best they can under incredibly trying circumstances," Commissioner Gary Bettman told The Associated Press during a recent interview. "Our players play for their NHL teams, no matter where they're from. At this particular point in time, the Russian players are in an impossible situation."

A total of 56 Russians skated in the NHL during the regular season, roughly 5% of the total number of players, with 29 taking part in the playoffs, just under 8%. Some are the best the game has to offer, from Shesterkin backstopping the New York Rangers deep into the second round to Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov and Andrei Vasilevskiy pushing the Lightning to their fourth Eastern Conference final in five years in a bid for a third consecutive Stanley Cup championship.

The NHL never seriously considered a ban like Wimbledon made on players from Russia and Belarus, which aided in the invasion. It released a statement condemning the war, ended business operations and partnerships in Russia and stopped posting to Russian language social and digital media sites.

Individual players born there — either when it was the Soviet Union or Russian Federation — have continued to take the ice since Putin's forces invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24. The NHL said it was concerned about the well-being of players from Russia, adding, "We understand they and their families are being placed in an extremely difficult position."

"It's a quagmire and there's no easy way out of this," said Stefan Szymanski, professor of sport management at the University of Michigan. "The cleanest answers are to say, 'We will not ban any athletes,' or 'We will just ban all athletes,' and anything in between is going to be caught up in these gray areas."

Russian players have been largely quiet about what Putin deemed a "special military operation," which can carry a prison sentence back home for anyone who calls it a war. Ovechkin, who in 2017 campaigned for Putin, made a plea for peace, Calgary defenseman Nikita Zadorov posted the message "NO WAR" on Instagram and Carolina forward Andrei Svechnikov called it a "hard situation."

Agent Dan Milstein, a native of Ukraine who represents 14 Russian players under contract in the NHL including Kucherov and Vasilevskiy, told the AP in March that talking about the war in any way was a concern because of family members back home. He and several other NHLPA-certified agents who have Russian clients either declined to comment since or did not respond to messages seeking comment.

High-profile Russian players are largely attempting to stay off the radar off the ice while focusing on their job at the most important time of year. The on-ice success is not debatable, as Russians have accounted for 41 goals — 9% of the total scored in the playoffs — and 21 of 72 wins among goalies through Sunday.

"When you play, you forget everything," Pittsburgh star Evgeni Malkin said. "It's the best time to step on the ice and do what you do your whole life."

Whether they should be on the ice at all while their country wages war inside a neighbor's borders became a subject of some debate in far corners of the hockey community. Retired Hall of Fame goaltender Dominik Hasek, a Czech, has called for the NHL to suspend the contracts of all Russian players and said the public participation of Russian athletes is "a huge advertisement for the Russian country and its actions."

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Szymanski considers the Olympic truce from Ancient Greece one argument for a blanket ban on Russian athletes.

"Citizens of countries that are involved in war cannot be participating in sport," he said. "It's meant to be a celebration of the human spirit, not a means for waging war indirectly."

That, of course, includes sports as a form of propaganda and nationalistic achievement, with the 1936 Olympics in Nazi Germany a familiar example. Brendan Dwyer, the director of research and distance learning at the Center for Sport Leadership at Virginia Commonwealth, said any ban on Russian hockey players would be a blow to the Kremlin.

"Putin puts these athletes on a pedestal more than soccer, more than tennis," Dwyer said. "The one thing I continue to say is how important sports are for this regime. It goes back beyond this regime to communism, in general, and the USSR and the way they utilize sport as a way to show power internationally and hockey more so than any other sport."

Hockey has already been taken away from Russia.

The NHL stopped considering holding any future games there, and the International Ice Hockey federation banned Russian and Belarusian national team players from its competitions. The IIHF also stripped Russia of hosting duties for the 2023 world junior tournament and men's world championship while Sweden has said anyone who plays in the Russia-based KHL would not be eligible to play for its national team.

Yet the NHL continues to import Russian talent, such as Nashville signing top goaltending prospect Yarsolav Askarov. Or Philadelphia getting goalie Ivan Fedotov under contract several months after he backstopped the "ROC" team to a silver medal at the Beijing Olympics, where Russia was not allowed to participate under its own flag because of doping sanctions across multiple sports.

Bettman said the league is not hiding or downplaying the play of Russians in any way, whether it's Ovechkin chasing down Wayne Gretzky's career goals record or the likes of Kucherov and Minnesota's Kirill Kaprizov lighting it up in the playoffs.

"We're not running away from that," Bettman said. "Their performances are celebrated, as is Alex marching towards goal immortality. We celebrate it, and we celebrate every player's accomplishments because they're performing in the NHL for their NHL team for NHL fans."

Szymanski drew parallels to South Africa during apartheid when national teams were banned, while individual athletes in tennis and golf were allowed to continue participating in sports. He and Dwyer agree there are no easy answers on handling this conundrum, especially for a league like the NHL that has thrived because of the infusion of Russian talent in recent decades.

"I don't know if there's a better way through it," Dwyer said. "This is a very, very complicated situation."

Plane wreckage found in Nepal mountains; 21 bodies recovered

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Rescuers searching a mountainside in Nepal on Monday recovered the bodies of 21 of the 22 people who were on board a plane that crashed a day earlier, officials said.

The search is continuing for the remaining person, Kathmandu airport spokesman Tek Nath Sitaula said. Recovery efforts were delayed because some bodies were pinned under the plane's wreckage. Rescuers working with their bare hands had difficulty moving the metal debris.

Aerial photos of the crash site showed aircraft parts scattered on rocks and moss on the side of a mountain gorge.

The Tara Air turboprop Twin Otter lost contact with the airport tower on Sunday while flying on a scheduled 20-minute flight in an area of deep river gorges and mountaintops.

Relatives waited most of the day at the airport for news of their loved ones.

Four Indians and two Germans were on the plane, Tara Air said. The three crew members and other passengers were Nepali nationals, it said.

German news agency dpa reported that the two Germans were a man and a woman from the western state of Hesse.

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"Unfortunately, we have to assume at this point that the two people are no longer alive," dpa quoted a spokesperson for the Hesse state interior ministry as saying. "On the part of the Hessian police, relatives have already been informed and care measures initiated."

Local news reports said the passengers included two Nepali families, one with four members and the other with seven.

The army said the plane crashed in Sanosware in Mustang district close to the mountain town of Jomsom, where it was heading after taking off from the resort town of Pokhara, 200 kilometers (125 miles) west of Kathmandu.

According to tracking data from flightradar24.com, the 43-year-old aircraft took off from Pokhara at 9:55 a.m. and transmitted its last signal at 10:07 a.m. at an altitude of 12,825 feet (3,900 meters).

The plane's destination is popular with foreign hikers who trek on its mountain trails, and with Indian and Nepalese pilgrims who visit the revered Muktinath temple.

The wreckage was located by villagers who had been searching in the area for the Yarsagumba fungus, which is commonly referred to as Himalayan Viagra, according to local news reports.

The Setopati new website quoted a villager, Bishal Magar, as saying that they heard about the missing plane on Sunday but were only able to reach the site on Monday morning after following the smell of fuel.

Magar said it appeared the plane may have clipped the top of a smaller mountain and then slammed into a bigger mountain.

The Twin Otter, a rugged plane originally built by Canadian aircraft manufacturer De Havilland, has been in service in Nepal for about 50 years, during which it has been involved in about 21 accidents, according to aviationnepal.com.

The plane, with its top-mounted wing and fixed landing gear, is prized for its durability and its ability to take off and land on short runways.

Production of the planes originally ended in the 1980s. Another Canadian company, Viking Air, brought the model back into production in 2010.

War in Ukraine adds to food price hikes, hunger in Africa

By OMAR FARUK and KRISTA LARSON Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — It now costs Ayan Hassan Abdirahman twice as much as it did just a few months ago to buy the wheat flour she uses to make breakfast each day for her 11 children in Somalia's capital.

Nearly all the wheat sold in Somalia comes from Ukraine and Russia, which have halted exports through the Black Sea since Moscow waged war on its neighbor on Feb. 24. The timing could not be worse: The U.N. has warned that an estimated 13 million people were facing severe hunger in the Horn of Africa region as a result of a persistent drought.

Abdirahman has been trying to make do by substituting sorghum, another more readily available grain, in her flatbread. Inflation, though, means the price of the cooking oil she still needs to prepare it has skyrocketed too — a jar that once cost \$16 is now selling for \$45 in the markets of Mogadishu.

"The cost of living is high nowadays, making it difficult for families even to afford flour and oil," she says.

Haji Abdi Dhiblawe, a businessman who imports wheat flour into Somalia, fears the situation will only worsen: There is also a looming shortage of shipping containers to bring food supplies in from elsewhere at the moment.

"Somalis have no place to grow wheat, and we are not even familiar with how to grow it," he says. "Our main concern now is what will the future hold for us when we currently run out of supplies."

Another 18 million people are facing severe hunger in the Sahel, the part of Africa just below the Sahara Desert where farmers are enduring their worst agricultural production in more than a decade. The U.N. World Food Program says food shortages could worsen when the lean season arrives in late summer.

"Acute hunger is soaring to unprecedented levels and the global situation just keeps on getting worse. Conflict, the climate crisis, COVID-19 and surging food and fuel costs have created a perfect storm — and

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now we've got the war in Ukraine piling catastrophe on top of catastrophe," WFP Executive Director David Beasley warned earlier this month.

Even the cost of therapeutic food for malnourished children could rise 16% over the next six months because of the war in Ukraine and disruptions related to the pandemic, UNICEF says.

African countries imported 44% of their wheat from Russia and Ukraine between 2018 and 2020, according to U.N. figures. The African Development Bank is already reporting a 45% increase in wheat prices on the continent, making everything from couscous in Mauritania to the fried donuts sold in Congo more expensive for customers.

"Africa has no control over production or logistics chains and is totally at the mercy of the situation," said Senegalese President Macky Sall, the African Union chairperson, who has said he will travel to Russia and Ukraine to discuss the price woes.

Russian President Vladimir Putin pressed the West last week to lift sanctions against Moscow over the war in Ukraine, seeking to shift the blame from Russia to the West for a growing world food crisis that has been worsened by Ukraine's inability to ship millions of tons of grain and other agricultural products while under attack.

Putin told Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi that Moscow "is ready to make a significant contribution to overcoming the food crisis through the export of grain and fertilizer on the condition that politically motivated restrictions imposed by the West are lifted," according to the Kremlin.

Western officials have dismissed the Russian claims. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has noted that food, fertilizer and seeds are exempt from the sanctions imposed by the U.S. and many others on Russia.

Meanwhile, Ukraine has accused Russia of looting both grain and farm equipment from territories held by its forces. A Russia-installed official in southern Ukraine has confirmed that grain from last year's harvest there is being sent to buyers in Russia, according to a report Monday by Russia's Tass state news agency.

That grain, however, isn't make its way to Africa. In Cameroon, baker Sylvester Ako says he's seen his daily clientele drop from 300 customers a day to only 100 since bread prices jumped 40% because of the lack of wheat imports.

He's already let three of his seven employees go, and worries that he will have to shutter his Yaounde business entirely unless something changes.

"The price of a 50-kilogram (110-pound) bag of wheat now sells at \$60 — up from about \$30 — and the supply is not regular," Ako said.

Along with the shortfall in wheat imports, the African Development Bank is also warning of a potential 20% decline in food production on the continent because farmers are having to pay 300% more for their imported fertilizer.

The organization says it plans to address the issues through a \$1.5 billion plan that will provide farmers in Africa with certified seeds, fertilizer and other help. Reducing dependence on foreign imports is part of the strategy, but those economic transitions are likely to take years, not months.

Senegal's president says appetites can pivot more quickly. He's encouraging Africans to consume local grains that were once the staples of their diets.

"We must also change our eating habits," Sall said. "We dropped millet and started importing rice from Asia. Now we only know how to eat rice and we don't produce enough. We only know how to eat bread. We do not produce wheat."

Man in wig throws cake at glass protecting Mona Lisa

PARIS (AP) — A man seemingly disguised as an old woman in a wheelchair threw a piece of cake at the glass protecting the Mona Lisa at the Louvre Museum and shouted at people to think of planet Earth.

The Paris prosecutor's office said Monday that the 36-year-old man was detained following Sunday's incident and sent to a police psychiatric unit. An investigation has been opened into the damage of cultural artifacts.

Videos posted on social media showed a young man in a wig and lipstick who had arrived in a wheel-

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chair. The man, whose identity was unknown, was also seen throwing roses in the museum gallery to slack-jawed guests.

The cake attack left a conspicuous white creamy smear on the glass but the famous work by Leonardo da Vinci wasn't damaged.

Security guards were filmed escorting the wig-wearing man away as he called out to the surprised visitors in the gallery: "Think of the Earth! There are people who are destroying the Earth! Think about it. Artists tell you: think of the Earth. That's why I did this."

Guards were then filmed cleaning the cake from the glass. A Louvre statement confirmed the attack on the artwork involving a "patisserie."

The 16th-century Renaissance masterpiece has seen a lot in its over-500 years in existence.

The painting was stolen in 1911 by a museum employee, an event which increased the painting's international fame. It was also damaged in an acid attack perpetrated by a vandal in the 1950s, and has since been kept behind glass.

In 2009, a Russian woman who was angry at not being able to get French citizenship threw a ceramic cup at it, smashing the cup but not harming the glass or the painting.

Today in History: May 31, the Johnstown Flood

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, May 31, the 151st day of 2022. There are 214 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 31, 1889, some 2,200 people in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, perished when the South Fork Dam collapsed, sending 20 million tons of water rushing through the town.

On this date:

In 1790, President George Washington signed into law the first U.S. copyright act.

In 1859, the Big Ben clock tower in London went into operation, chiming for the first time.

In 1921, a race riot erupted in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as white mobs began looting and leveling the affluent Black district of Greenwood over reports a Black man had assaulted a white woman in an elevator; hundreds are believed to have died.

In 1949, former State Department official and accused spy Alger Hiss went on trial in New York, charged with perjury (the jury deadlocked, but Hiss was convicted in a second trial).

In 1962, former Nazi official Adolf Eichmann was hanged in Israel a few minutes before midnight for his role in the Holocaust.

In 1970, a magnitude 7.9 earthquake in Peru claimed an estimated 67,000 lives.

In 1977, the Trans-Alaska oil pipeline, three years in the making despite objections from environmentalists and Alaska Natives, was completed. (The first oil began flowing through the pipeline 20 days later.)

In 1989, House Speaker Jim Wright, dogged by questions about his ethics, announced he would resign. (Tom Foley later succeeded him.)

In 2009, Dr. George Tiller, a rare provider of late-term abortions, was shot and killed in a Wichita, Kansas, church. (Gunman Scott Roeder was later convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison with no possibility of parole for 50 years.) Millvina Dean, the last survivor of the 1912 sinking of the RMS Titanic, died in Southampton, England at 97.

In 2014, Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, the only American soldier held prisoner in Afghanistan, was freed by the Taliban in exchange for five Afghan detainees from the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. (Bergdahl, who'd gone missing in June 2009, later pleaded guilty to endangering his comrades by walking away from his post in Afghanistan; his sentence included a dishonorable discharge, a reduction in rank and a fine, but no prison time.)

In 2019, a longtime city employee opened fire in a municipal building in Virginia Beach, Virginia, killing 12 people on three floors before police shot and killed him; officials said DeWayne Craddock had resigned

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by email hours before the shooting.

In 2020, tens of thousands of protesters again took to the streets across America, with peaceful demonstrations against police killings overshadowed by unrest; officials deployed thousands of National Guard soldiers and enacted strict curfews in major cities.

Ten years ago: Democrat John Edwards' campaign finance fraud case ended in a mistrial when jurors in Greensboro, North Carolina, acquitted him on one of six charges but were unable to decide whether he'd misused money from two wealthy donors to hide his pregnant mistress while he ran for president. (Prosecutors declined to retry Edwards on the five unresolved counts.) President Barack Obama welcomed his predecessor back to the White House for the unveiling of the official portraits of former President George W. Bush and former first lady Laura Bush.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump welcomed Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc (nuh-WEE'-ihn SOO'-an FOOK) to the White House for talks focusing on the American trade deficit. A suicide attacker struck the fortified heart of the Afghan capital Kabul with a massive truck bomb that killed more than 150 people.

One year ago: Four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka withdrew from the French Open before her second-round match and said she would be taking a break from competition; she said she experienced "huge waves of anxiety" before speaking to the media, and that she had "suffered long bouts of depression." (Osaka had been fined for skipping the postmatch news conference after her first-round victory.) China's ruling Communist Party announced that all couples would be allowed to have three children instead of two.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-director Clint Eastwood is 92. Singer Peter Dinklage is 84. Humanitarian and author Terry Waite is 83. Singer-musician Augie Meyers is 82. Actor Sharon Gless is 79. Football Hall of Famer Joe Namath is 79. Broadcast journalist/commentator Bernard Goldberg is 77. Actor Tom Berenger is 72. Actor Gregory Harrison is 72. Actor Kyle Secor is 65. Actor Roma Maffia (ma-FEE'-uh) is 64. Actor/comedian Chris Elliott is 62. Actor Lea Thompson is 61. Singer Corey Hart is 60. Actor Hugh Dillon is 59. Rapper DMC is 58. Actor Brooke Shields is 57. TV host Phil Keoghan is 55. Jazz musician Christian McBride is 50. Actor Archie Panjabi is 50. Actor Merle Dandridge (TV: "Greenleaf") is 47. Actor Colin Farrell is 46. Rock musician Scott Klopfenstein (Reel Big Fish) is 45. Actor Eric Christian Olsen is 45. Rock musician Andy Hurley (Fall Out Boy) is 42. Country singer Casey James (TV: "American Idol") is 40. Actor Jonathan Tucker is 40. Rapper Waka Flocka Flame is 36. Pop singer Normani Hamilton (Fifth Harmony) is 26.