

# Groton Daily Independent

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July 5  
5 p.m.: Jr. Legion hosts Watertown, DH  
5:30 p.m.: U12 hosts Hannigan, 1 game  
5 p.m.: U10 vs. Flash at Foundation Fields, Watertown, DH (B/W)  
6 p.m.: U12 SB hosts Webster, DH  
6 p.m.: U10 SB at Britton, DH  
6 p.m.: U8 SB at Britton, DH

July 6  
5:30 p.m.: Jr. Teeners at Redfield, DH  
7:30 p.m.: U12 at Claremont, 1 game  
7:30 p.m. U10 at Claremont, 1 game, (R/B)  
5:30 p.m.: T-Ball Gold at Claremont

July 7  
5:30 p.m.: Jr. Teeners host Warner, DH  
6 p.m.: U8 at Webster, DH (R/B)  
6 p.m.: U8 SB at Mellette, 1 game  
7 p.m.: U10 SB at Mellette, 1 game  
8 p.m.: U12 SB at Mellette, DH

July 7-9  
Legion at Clark Tourney

July 8  
6 p.m.: T-Ball Scrimmage

July 8-11  
U12 State Tourney in Parker

July 11  
5:30 p.m.: U8 hosts Webster, DH (All Groups), Nelson Field  
5:30 p.m.: U8 hosts Doland, 1 game (All Groups), Falk Field  
6:30 p.m.: U10 hosts Doland, 1 game (R/W)  
6 p.m.: U12 SB at Webster, DH

July 12  
6 p.m.: Legion at Milbank, 1 game  
5:30 p.m.: Jr. Legion at Milbank, DH  
6 p.m.: U12 SB at Britton, DH  
6 p.m.: U8 SB at Clark, DH

July 13

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

**OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton**  
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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# ***CITY OF GROTON***

**ODD NUMBER HOUSES MAY  
WATER ON ODD NUMBER DAYS  
BETWEEN 5PM AND 10AM**

**EVEN NUMBER HOUSES MAY  
WATER ON EVEN NUMBER DAYS  
BETWEEN 5PM AND 10AM**

**ABSOLUTELY NO WATERING FROM  
10AM-5PM!**



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**A colorful rain band looking north on the Olive Grove Golf Course Saturday morning.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

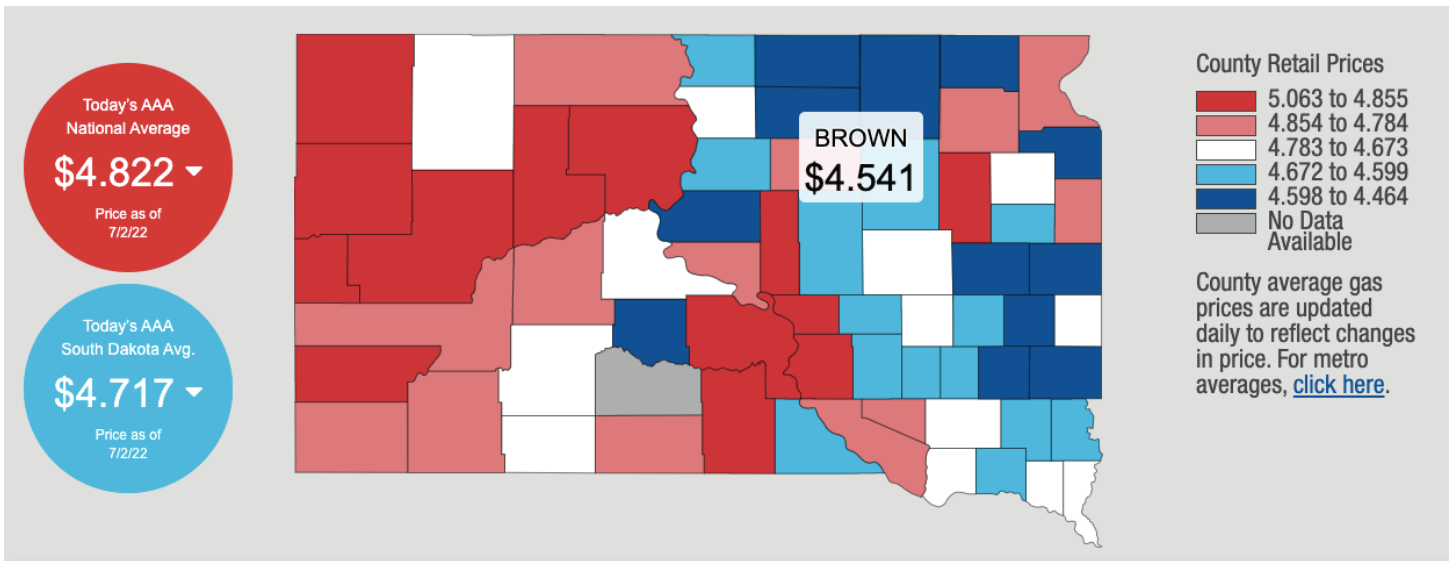
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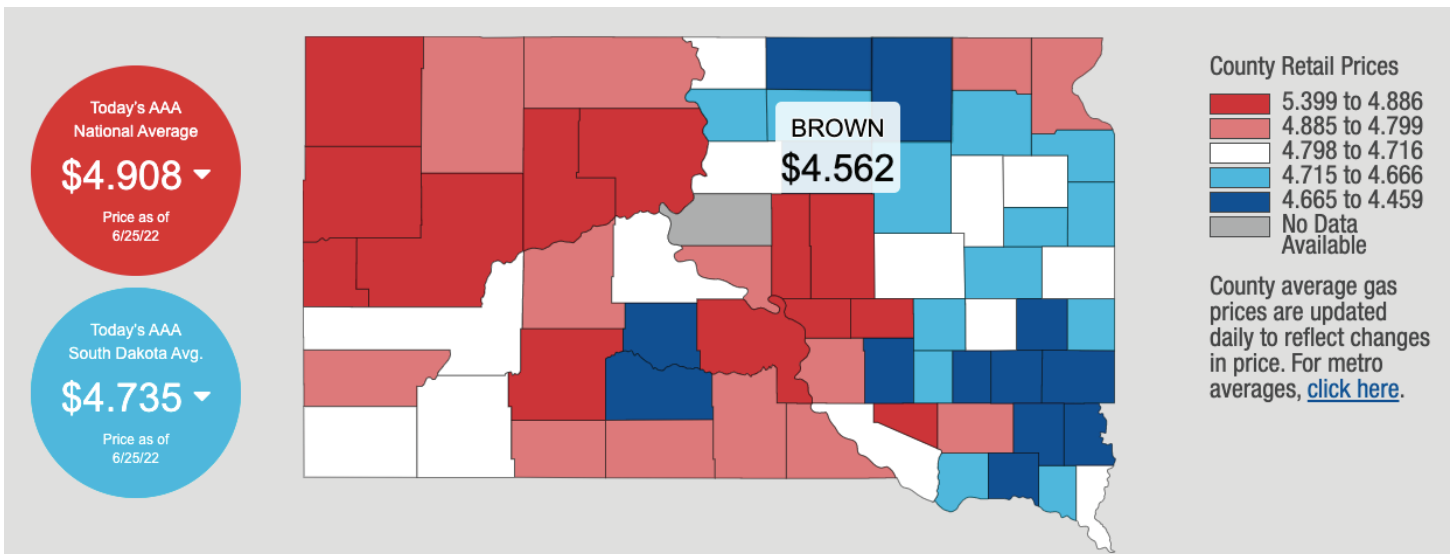
## South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$4.717	\$4.903	\$5.351	\$5.397
Yesterday Avg.	\$4.739	\$4.900	\$5.358	\$5.401
Week Ago Avg.	\$4.735	\$4.862	\$5.336	\$5.394
Month Ago Avg.	\$4.369	\$4.460	\$4.858	\$5.198
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.051	\$3.153	\$3.495	\$3.160

### This Week



### Last Week



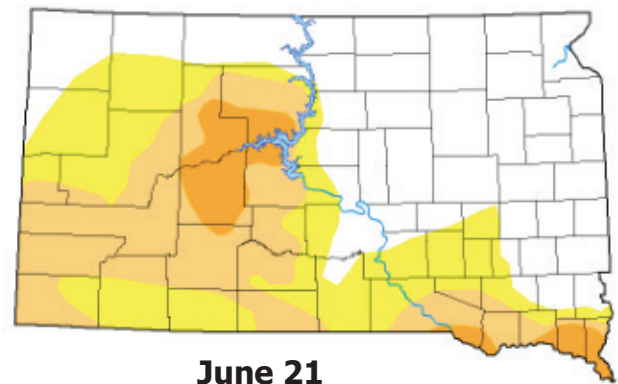
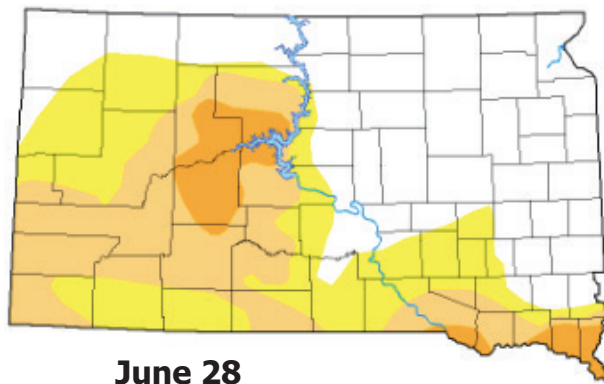
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## Drought Classification



## Drought Monitor

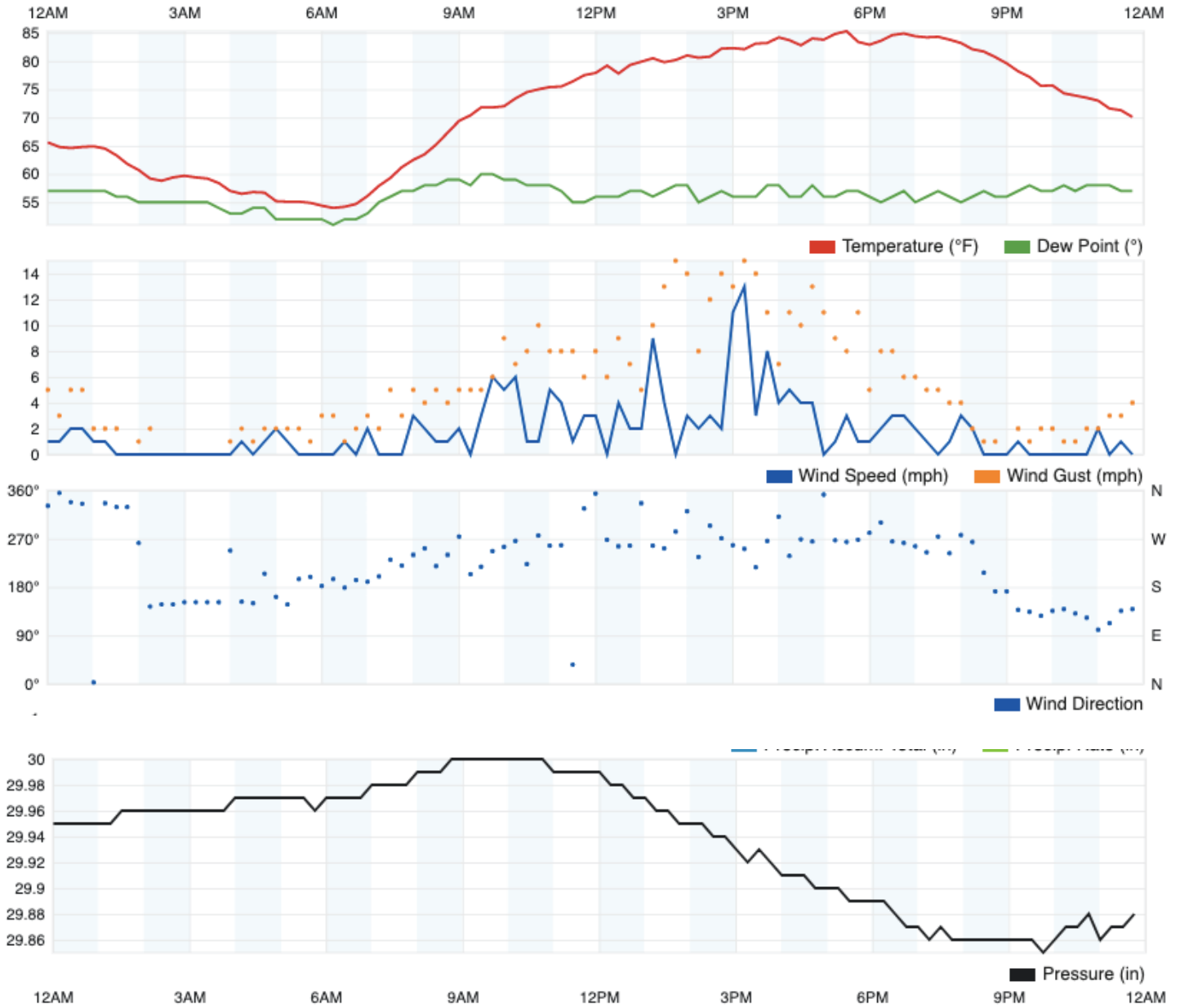


Extreme drought developed in far northeast Nebraska, and in adjacent portions of South Dakota and Iowa, near the Sioux City area. Here, on the short- and long-term precipitation deficits have combined with high evaporation rates to create significant soil moisture and groundwater shortages, which have recently been reported. Severe and extreme drought also expanded across northeast and central Colorado, southeast Wyoming, and parts of southwest Nebraska, where dry weather continued. North Platte, Nebraska may tie its second driest June on record, with 0.43 inches of rain having accumulated so far as of the morning of June 29. In southern Colorado, an early and active North American Monsoon has delivered heavy enough rainfall to cut into short- and long-term deficits, leading to widespread improvement of drought conditions in the southwestern part of the state. After recent heavy rains, drought conditions have continued to improve in northwest Wyoming. Heavy rain in central and south-central Kansas alleviated precipitation deficits and increased soil moisture and streamflow, such that drought conditions retreated to the west.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



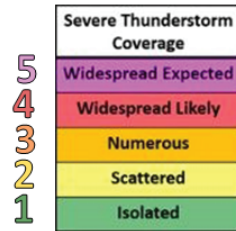
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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Independence Day
				
20%	20%	40%	70%	20%
Slight Chance T-storms then Sunny	Slight Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	T-storms Likely	Slight Chance T-storms
High: 84 °F	Low: 63 °F	High: 88 °F	Low: 68 °F	High: 87 °F

## SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS POSSIBLE

NOAA Updated: 7/2/2022 3:45 AM Central



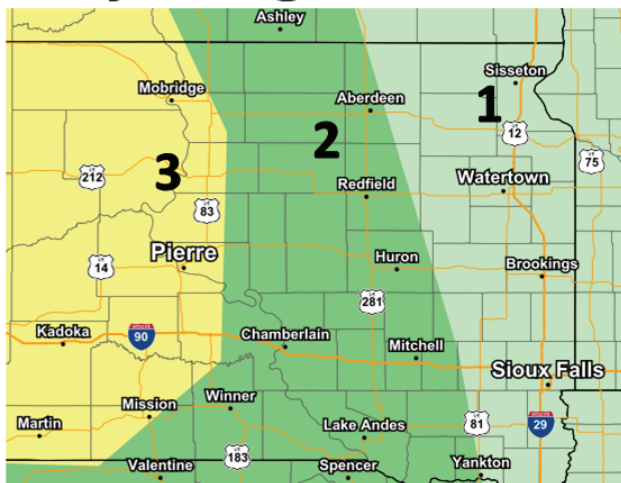
### MAIN THREATS



### ACTION

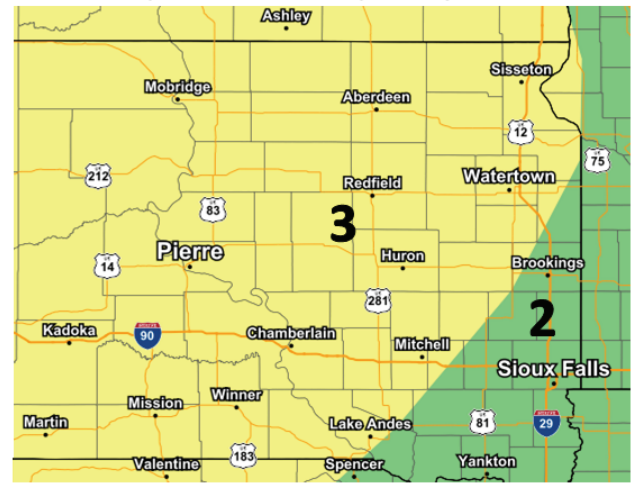
Monitor the weather and have a plan of action if severe weather approaches your area.

### Today & Tonight



Lower confidence in specific timing, but we do expect showers & thunderstorms to return to central SD this evening, with off and on showers & thunderstorms expanding across the area during the day Sunday and continuing through Sunday night.

### Sunday & Sunday Night



Heads up for those with outdoor plans this weekend, as there is the potential for strong to severe thunderstorms overnight tonight, as well as Sunday evening into the overnight hours. While damaging winds will be the main threat with the strongest storms, large hail, heavy rain, and lightning may also impact your area. There is lower confidence in specific timing of showers and thunderstorms, so remain weather aware! Expect isolated morning showers and thunderstorms over eastern South Dakota this morning. Showers and thunderstorms should return to central South Dakota this evening, with off and on showers and thunderstorms expanding across the area during the day Sunday and continuing through Sunday night.

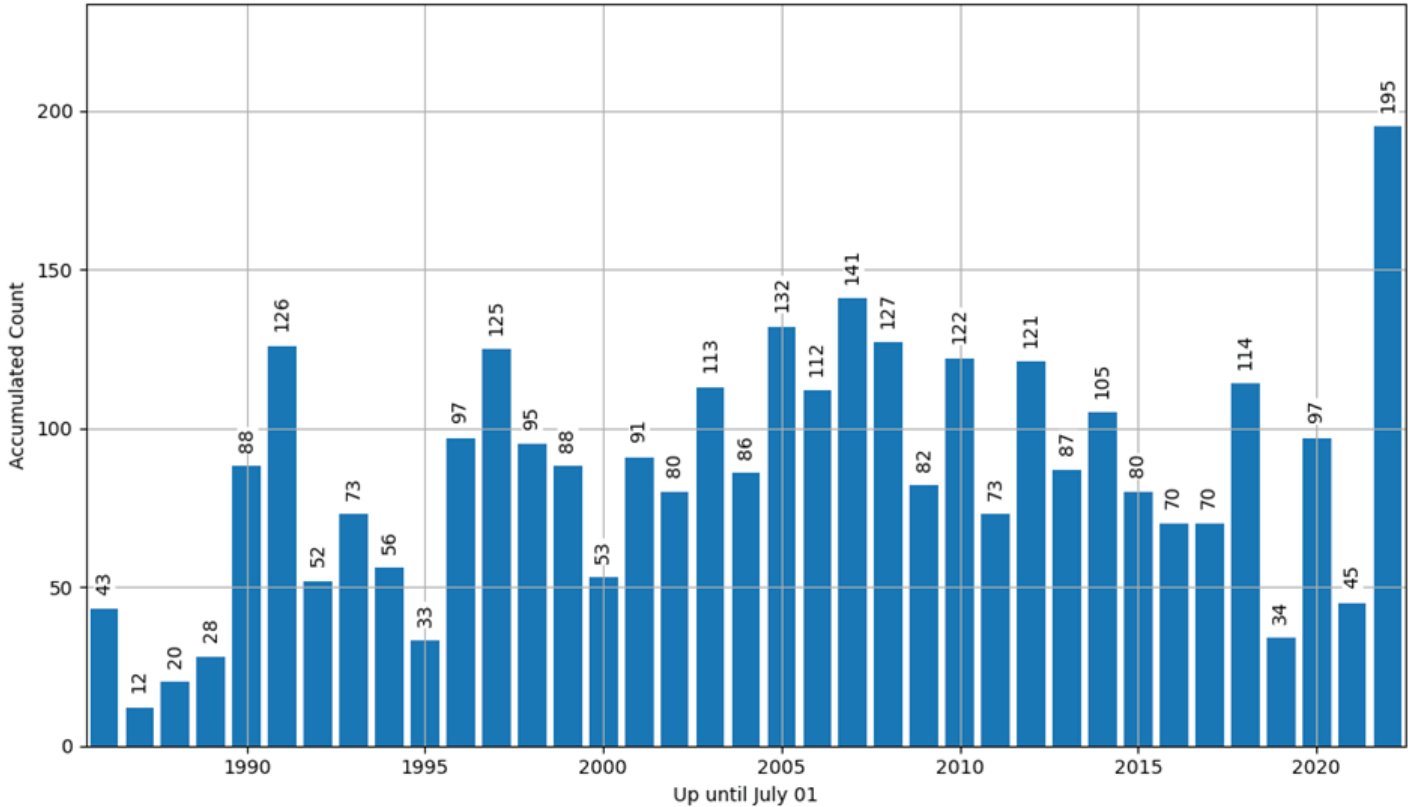
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## Year-To-Date Severe Weather Warnings Total number issued through July 1<sup>st</sup>

NWS WFO: Aberdeen (ABR)  
Severe Thunderstorm + Tornado Warning Count



Generated at 1 Jul 2022 12:27 PM CDT in 0.93s

IEM Autoplot App #44

We're now up to 195 warnings issued (tornado + severe thunderstorm) so far this year in the NWS Aberdeen forecast area (<https://bit.ly/3NDj2YG>). This is the most we've ever issued through July 1st since at least 1986, with second place being 141 warnings in 2007. In fact, we've already issued more warnings so far this year than all of last year (190)! The severe weather season has been extremely active elsewhere across the region too, with the Grand Forks, ND, Sioux Falls, SD and Twin Cities, MN NWS offices all in their top 3 for most severe weather warnings issued thus far in a season. Looking ahead through the foreseeable future, it doesn't appear we'll be slowing down much either. Stay weather-aware out there, and stay safe!



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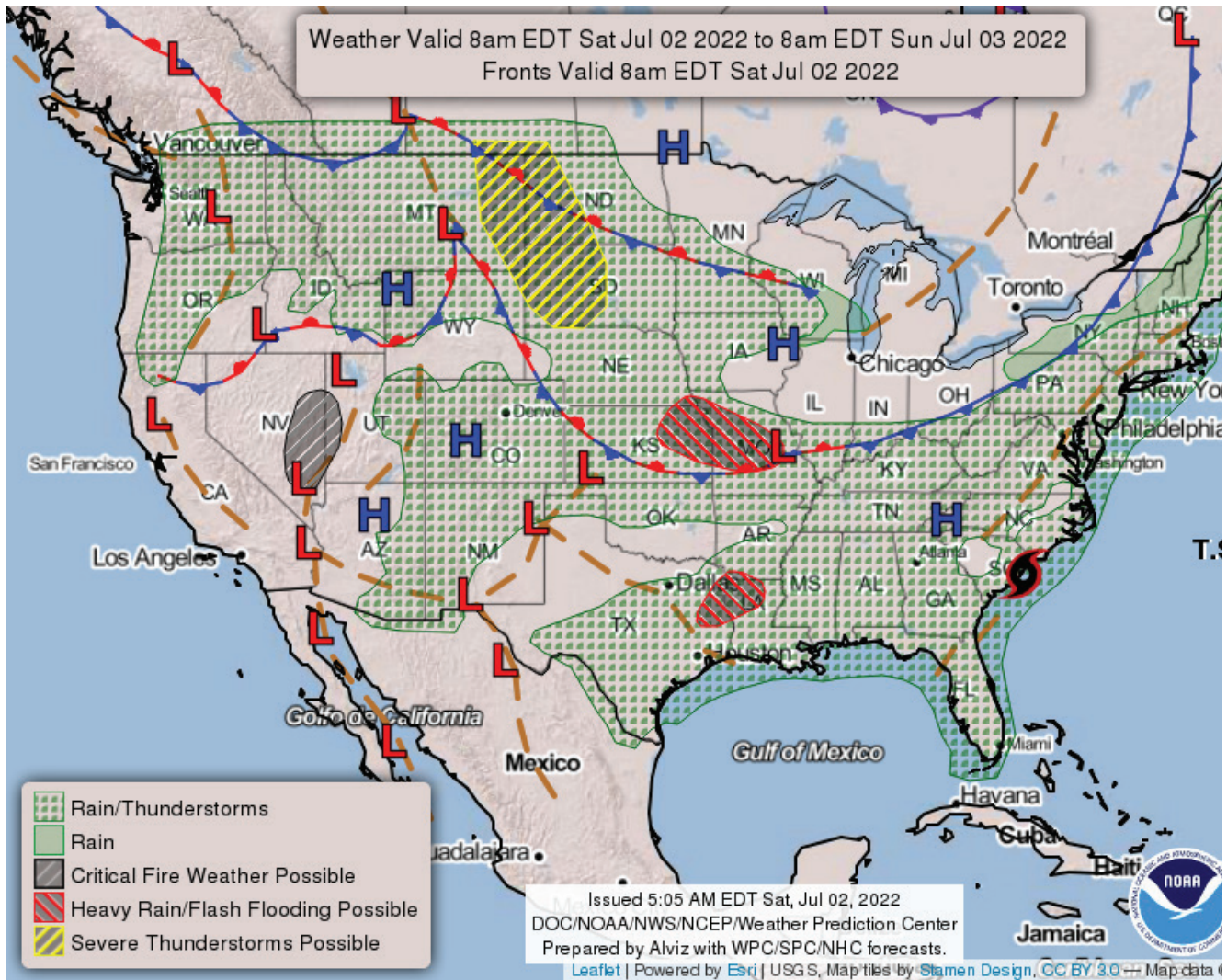
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 85 °F at 5:18 PM**  
**Low Temp: 54 °F at 6:18 AM**  
**Wind: 15 mph at 12:48 PM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

Day length: 15 hours, 39 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 103 in 1949  
 Record Low: 37 in 1945  
 Average High: 84°F  
 Average Low: 59°F  
 Average Precip in July.: 0.23  
 Precip to date in July.: 0.00  
 Average Precip to date: 11.24  
 Precip Year to Date: 11.58  
 Sunset Tonight: 9:26:13 PM  
 Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:47:27 AM



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## Today in Weather History

July 2, 1921: Barns were destroyed on two farms near Frederick in Brown County. A boy who could not make it to the cellar was killed in the open near a barn. This death is one of the earliest known from a significant, estimated F2 tornado in Brown County.

July 2, 1960: Hail shredded corn flattened grain and hay and pounded soybeans into the ground in a strip extending from Clinton to Montevideo in Minnesota. Leaves and bark were stripped from trees. Hailstones were reported to pile up to a depth of four feet in low spots. One farmer lost 2000 turkeys. Twelve barns demolished, many outbuildings destroyed and several homes damaged by winds. Near Appleton, 45 cars of a moving 174 car freight train derailed by the wind, one hanger destroyed, and two planes were damaged. In Big Stone County alone, the cost to repair power lines and poles estimated to be near 10,000 dollars. Total crop acreage affected was near 64,000 acres. The three counties of Big Stone, Swift, and Chippewa Counties, was designed a disaster area.

July 2, 2005: A line of severe thunderstorms with powerful straight-line winds moved from northeast Wyoming and southeast Montana across northwest South Dakota during the evening. Widespread wind gusts of 60 to 80 mph affected northwestern South Dakota; breaking tree limbs, downing trees, and knocking down snow fences. The high winds capsized a boat on the Belle Fourche Reservoir near Orman Dam. Five people, including an infant, were rescued by emergency personnel with no one injured. The strongest winds were reported north of Newell, near Castle Rock, where gusts estimated at 100 mph damaged a barn roof and ripped a chimney off a house. Hail to the size of quarters was also reported across parts of the area, and combined with the wind, caused some minor damage.

1833: The following is from the "History and Description of New England" published in 1860: "On the 2nd of July, 1833, this town (Holland, Vermont) was visited by a violent tornado, which commenced on Salem Pond in Salem, and passed over this place in a northeasterly direction. It was from half to three-quarters of a mile wide and prostrated and scattered nearly all the trees, fences, and buildings in its course. It crossed the outlet of Norton Pond and passed into Canada, and its path could be traced through the forests nearly to Connecticut River."

1843: An alligator reportedly fell from the sky onto Anson Street in Charleston, SC during a thunderstorm.

1987 - Thunderstorms in Colorado produced hail as large as golf balls northwest of Kiowa, which accumulated to a depth of twelve inches. Hail two and a half inches in diameter was reported at Black Forest. Hail damaged 900 acres of crops south of the town of Wiggins. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Twenty-six cities in the eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. The morning low of 47 degrees at Roanoke, VA, broke the July record set the previous day. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the south central U.S., with 158 reports of large hail and damaging winds through the day. Evening thunderstorms in northeastern Texas produced softball size hail which caused more than five million dollars damage at Allen, and wind gusts to 90 mph at Dallas, which injured eight persons and caused seven million dollars damage. Winnfield LA reported 29.52 inches of rain in six days, for a total of 62.50 inches for the first six months of the year. Midland, TX, reported an all-time record high of 112 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2001: In Michigan, frost and freezing temperatures were observed in some locations with Grant dropping to 29 degrees. Muskegon reported their coldest July temperature on record with 39 degrees. Other daily record lows included: Lansing: 38, Muskegon: 39, Flint: 40, Youngstown, Ohio: 40, and Grand Rapids, Michigan: 43 degrees.



## **"Fear Of The Lord?" What's That All About?**

We hear and read of it often. We know that we are somehow "obligated" to do it. We might wonder if it is something we feel. We may even be curious to know if others recognize it in our lives. We could think that if we go to church, read the Bible, give money to His work, meditate, pray, and witness, we are demonstrating our "fear" of Him.

I remember as a child "fearing" my father. And, that fear had many sides to it. I remember fearing his wrath if I disobeyed him, or if he caught me being disobedient to one of his standards. I also recall the fear I had of him finding out if I did not do my best, honor my mother, did not practice the piano, or caused problems at school.

When I understood what he wanted of or from me, and refused to do what he expected of me, that was the source of my fear. I knew that I would eventually have to face him, and knew that when I did, it would be "unpleasant." That's the way it is with God, too.

When we understand what He wants of and from us, and we do or do not do it, that's when and where our fear should begin. And, when we know what He wants from us, and turn from whatever it is that displeases Him, and look to Him for forgiveness, that is when our conversion begins. Turning from evil to God for salvation is the tipping point.

Following conversion comes devotion - which means that we dedicate our lives to wanting to know Him, obey Him, follow Him, serve Him, and fear that we do not dishonor Him by being disobedient. It is only His wisdom that will lead us to obedient, disciplined and righteous living.

Fear is a good thing if it keeps us close to our Heavenly Father

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we fear You because we love You and want to please You. Give us Your wisdom, as well as Your love, we pray. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7

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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  
-6/20/2022 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  
10/01/2022 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm  
10/07/2022 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am  
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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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

### Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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## News from the Associated Press

### Texas Supreme Court blocks order that resumed abortions

By PAUL WEBER, ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The Texas Supreme Court blocked a lower court order late Friday night that said clinics could continue performing abortions, just days after some doctors had resumed seeing patients after the fall of *Roe v. Wade*.

It was not immediately clear whether Texas clinics that had resumed seeing patients this week would halt services again. A hearing is scheduled for later this month.

The whiplash of Texas clinics turning away patients, rescheduling them, and now potentially canceling appointments again — all in the span of a week — illustrated the confusion and scrambling taking place across the country since *Roe* was overturned.

An order by a Houston judge earlier this week had reassured some clinics they could temporarily resume abortions up to six weeks into pregnancy. That was quickly followed by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton asking the state's highest court, which is stocked with nine Republican justices, to temporarily put the order on hold.

"These laws are confusing, unnecessary, and cruel," said Marc Hearn, attorney for the Center for Reproductive Rights, after the order was issued Friday night.

Clinics in Texas had stopped performing abortions in the state of nearly 30 million people after the U.S. Supreme Court last week overturned *Roe v. Wade* and ended the constitutional right to abortion. Texas had technically left an abortion ban on the books for the past 50 years while *Roe* was in place.

A copy of Friday's order was provided by attorneys for Texas clinics. It could not immediately be found on the court's website.

Abortion providers and patients across the country have been struggling to navigate the evolving legal landscape around abortion laws and access.

In Florida, a law banning abortions after 15 weeks went into effect Friday, the day after a judge called it a violation of the state constitution and said he would sign an order temporarily blocking the law next week. The ban could have broader implications in the South, where Florida has wider access to the procedure than its neighbors.

Abortion rights have been lost and regained in the span of a few days in Kentucky. A so-called trigger law imposing a near-total ban on the procedure took effect last Friday, but a judge blocked the law Thursday, meaning the state's only two abortion providers can resume seeing patients — for now.

The legal wrangling is almost certain to continue to cause chaos for Americans seeking abortions in the near future, with court rulings able to upend access at a moment's notice and an influx of new patients from out of state overwhelming providers.

Even when women travel outside states with abortion bans in place, they may have fewer options to end their pregnancies as the prospect of prosecution follows them.

Planned Parenthood of Montana this week stopped providing medication abortions to patients who live in states with bans "to minimize potential risk for providers, health center staff, and patients in the face of a rapidly changing landscape."

Planned Parenthood North Central States, which offers the procedure in Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska, is telling its patients that they must take both pills in the regimen in a state that allows abortions.

The use of abortion pills has been the most common method to end a pregnancy since 2000, when the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved mifepristone — the main drug used in medication abortions. Taken with misoprostol, a drug that causes cramping that empties the womb, it constitutes the abortion pill.

"There's a lot of confusion and concern that the providers may be at risk, and they are trying to limit their liability so they can provide care to people who need it," said Dr. Daniel Grossman, who directs the research group Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health at the University of California San Francisco.

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Emily Bisek, a spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood North Central States, said that in an “unknown and murky” legal environment, they decided to tell patients they must be in a state where it is legal to complete the medication abortion -- which requires taking two drugs 24 to 48 hours apart. She said most patients from states with bans are expected to opt for surgical abortions.

Access to the pills has become a key battle in abortion rights, with the Biden administration preparing to argue states can't ban a medication that has received FDA approval.

Kim Floren, who operates an abortion fund in South Dakota called Justice Empowerment Network, said the development would further limit women's choices.

“The purpose of these laws anyways is to scare people,” Floren said of states' bans on abortions and telemedicine consultations for medication abortions. “The logistics to actually enforcing these is a nightmare, but they rely on the fact that people are going to be scared.”

A South Dakota law took effect Friday that threatens a felony punishment for anyone who prescribes medication for an abortion without a license from the South Dakota Board of Medical and Osteopathic Examiners.

In Alabama, Attorney General Steve Marshall's office said it is reviewing whether people or groups could face prosecution for helping women fund and travel to out-of-state abortion appointments.

Yellowhammer Fund, an Alabama-based group that helps low-income women cover abortion and travel costs, said it is pausing operation for two weeks because of the lack of clarity under state law.

“This is a temporary pause, and we're going to figure out how we can legally get you money and resources and what that looks like,” said Kelsea McLain, Yellowhammer's health care access director.

Laura Goodhue, executive director of the Florida Alliance of Planned Parenthood Affiliates, said staff members at its clinics have seen women driving from as far as Texas without stopping — or making an appointment. Women who are past 15 weeks were being asked to leave their information and promised a call back if a judge signs the order temporarily blocking the restriction, she said.

Still, there is concern that the order may be only temporary and the law may again go into effect later, creating additional confusion.

“It's terrible for patients,” she said. “We are really nervous about what is going to happen.”

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) \_ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

01-27-29-38-62, Mega Ball: 12, Megaplier: 3

(one, twenty-seven, twenty-nine, thirty-eight, sixty-two; Mega Ball: twelve; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$370,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 20,000,000

## South Dakota's Noem applies for 2023 Rushmore fireworks

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem on Friday said she has applied for permission to hold a fireworks show at Mount Rushmore to celebrate Independence Day 2023, persisting even though the National Park Service has denied her requests for the past two years.

In 2020, a fireworks display, featuring a fiery speech from former President Donald Trump, was held at the monument after a decadelong hiatus. The Park Service has cited environmental concerns and objections from Native American tribes in denying subsequent permit applications.

A federal judge last year rebuffed the Republican governor's lawsuit that sought to force the Park Service to allow her to shoot fireworks over the granite monument. Noem has appealed that decision.

“As Americans all across our great country make preparations to celebrate their Independence Day, we

have once again been denied the opportunity to celebrate at our nation's enduring symbol of freedom, Mount Rushmore National Memorial," the governor said in a statement.

The Department of Interior declined to comment on Noem's application.

Noem is running for reelection and is widely considered to be a potential Republican contender for the 2024 White House ticket. She often cites 2020's fireworks celebration, when she shared the stage with Trump, as a highlight of her first term in office.

Her autobiography, which was released earlier this week, crescendos with her speech under the monument. In the book's final chapter, she writes: "The fireworks that night were something out of this world."

## Russians press assault on eastern Ukrainian city

By MARIA GRAZIA MURRU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces are pounding the city of Lysychansk and its surroundings in an all-out attempt to seize the last stronghold of resistance in eastern Ukraine's Luhansk province, the governor said Saturday.

Ukrainian fighters have spent weeks trying to defend the city and to keep it from falling to Russia, as neighboring Sievierodonetsk did a week ago. The Russian Defense Ministry said its forces took control of an oil refinery on Lysychansk's edge in recent days, but Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai reported Friday that fighting for the facility continued.

"Over the last day, the occupiers opened fire from all available kinds of weapons," Haidai said Saturday on the Telegram messaging app.

Luhansk and neighboring Donetsk are the two provinces that make up the Donbas region, where Russia has focused its offensive since pulling back from the northern Ukraine and the capital, Kyiv, in the spring.

Pro-Russia separatists have held portions of both provinces since 2014, and Moscow recognizes all of Luhansk and Donetsk as sovereign republics. Syria's government said Wednesday that it would also recognize the "independence and sovereignty" of the two areas and work to establish diplomatic relations with the separatists.

In Sloviansk, a major Donetsk city still under Ukrainian control, four people died when Russian forces fired cluster munitions late Friday, Mayor Vadym Lyakh said on Facebook. He said the neighborhoods that were hit did not contain any potential military targets.

Elsewhere, investigators combed through the wreckage from a Russian airstrike early Friday on residential areas near the Ukrainian port of Odesa that killed 21 people.

Ukrainian Prosecutor-General Iryna Venediktova said the investigators were recovering fragments from missiles that struck an apartment building in the small coastal town of Serhiivka. They also were taking measurements to determine the trajectory of the weapons, she said.

"We are taking all the necessary investigative measures to determine the specific people guilty of this terrible war crime," Venediktova said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said three anti-ship missiles struck "an ordinary residential building, a nine-story building" housing about 160 people. The victims of Friday's attack also included four members of a family staying at a "typical" seaside campsite, he said.

"I emphasize: this is a deliberate direct Russian terror, and not some mistake or an accidental missile strike," Zelenskyy said.

The British Defense Ministry said Saturday that air-launched anti-ship missiles generally do not have precision accuracy against ground targets. It said Russia likely was using such missiles because of a shortage of more accurate weapons.

The Kremlin has repeatedly claimed that the Russian military is targeting fuel storage sites and military facilities, not residential areas, although missiles also recently hit an apartment building in Kyiv and a shopping mall in the central city of Kremenchuk.

On Saturday, Kremenchuk Mayor Vitaliy Maletskyy said the death toll in the mall attack had risen to 21 and one person was still missing.



Ukrainian authorities interpreted the missile attack in Odesa as payback for the withdrawal of Russian troops from a nearby Black Sea island with both symbolic and strategic significance in the war that started with Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine.

Moscow portrayed their departure from Snake Island as a "goodwill gesture" to help unblock exports of grain.

## Ship sinks in storm off Hong Kong, dozens of crew in danger

HONG KONG (AP) — An industrial support ship operating in the South China Sea has sunk in a storm with the possible loss of more than two dozen crew members, rescue services in Hong Kong said Saturday.

Authorities dispatched planes and helicopters to aid in the rescue, with at least three people from the crew of 30 brought to safety as of 5:30 p.m. (1030 GMT) Saturday.

Photos released by the Hong Kong Government Flying Service showed one crew member being winched up to a rescue helicopter as big waves lashed the sinking vessels, which had broken up in two parts.

The accident occurred about 300 kilometers (186 miles) south of Hong Kong.

The Flying Service did not give the name or origin of the vessel. It said in a statement that crew members were negotiating difficulties brought on by Severe Tropical Storm Chaba, which was packing maximum winds of 110 kilometers (68 miles) per hour.

The storm made landfall in the western part of the coastal province of Guangdong later Saturday.

The Hong Kong service sent two fixed-wing aircraft and four helicopters for the rescue effort.

## South Africans struggle in the dark to cope with power cuts

By MOGOMOTSI MAGOME and SEBABATSO MOSAMO Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — South Africans are struggling in the dark to cope with increased power cuts that have hit households and businesses across the country.

The rolling power cuts have been experienced for years but this week the country's state-owned power utility Eskom extended them so that some residents and businesses have gone without power for more than 9 hours a day.

A strike by Eskom workers added to the utility's woes including breakdowns of its aging coal-fired power plants, insufficient generation capacity and corruption, according to experts.

The prolonged power cuts are hitting South Africans in the winter months of the Southern Hemisphere when many households rely on electricity for heat, light and cooking.

Small and large businesses have had to close down for prolonged periods or spend large amounts for diesel fuel to operate generators. Anger and frustration is widespread among business owners and customers at the power cuts, which Eskom calls load shedding.

The power blackouts are here to stay say experts who warn it will take years to substantially increase South Africa's capacity to generate power. South Africa mines coal and relies heavily on coal-fired plants, which causes noticeable air pollution. The country is looking to increase power production from solar and other renewable sources.

"The big picture is that we were at least expecting (heavy power cuts) this winter," said energy expert Hilton Trollip. "Eskom told us at the end of last year that there was a chronic power shortage ... What that means is that until we have a substantial amount of extra generation on the grid, we will continue to be at the risk of load shedding at any stage. The question then is how bad will the load shedding be?"

He lamented the impact of the blackouts on the economy.

"The most direct economic consequence is when businesses have to stop production because they don't have electricity ... whether you have a factory, a travel agency or you have a shop," said Trollip. "Whenever economic activity is disrupted because there is no electricity, that is a direct cost to the economy."

The power cuts are costing South Africa well over \$40 million per day and deterring investment, say economists. South Africa's economy, Africa's most developed, is already in recession and is suffering a 35% unemployment rate.

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Small businesses in the country's townships, suburbs and rural areas are among the hardest hit by the effects of the rolling blackouts, said Trollip.

Buhle Ndlovu, a teacher at a nursery school in Soweto, Johannesburg's largest township, said the power cuts increased her costs to run the school.

"We cater to about 40 children here. We need to feed healthy meals to them daily," said Ndlovu. "At the rate we charge we can't afford to take on additional costs to buy gas in order for us to cook. Loadshedding has really made it difficult for us."

She said it is a challenge to take care of children by candlelight until parents come to pick up their kids well after dark.

Some shops, however, are getting new business from the power cuts, like Uri's Power Center which is seeing brisk sales of power generators, batteries and other backup systems.

"I think people should definitely look to become less reliant on Eskom. I don't believe that the power situation is going to resolve itself any time soon," said owner Adam Zimmerman at his shop in the Randburg area. "We're all aware of Eskom problems and people have various options whether to invest in a generator to run their business or home."

On Friday, Eskom chief executive Andre de Ruyter said at a press conference that the crisis was receiving serious attention and that he had personally briefed President Cyril Ramaphosa about what the company is doing to keep the lights on.

## Russia's messages with missiles tell West to back off

By TAMER FAKAHANY and CARA ANNA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The latest in a litany of horrors in Ukraine came this week as Russian firepower rained down on civilians in a busy shopping mall far from the front lines of a war in its fifth month.

The timing was not likely a coincidence.

While much of the attritional war in Ukraine's east is hidden from sight, the brutality of Russian missile strikes on a mall in the central city of Kremenchuk and on residential buildings in the capital, Kyiv, unfolded in full view of the world and especially of Western leaders gathered for a trio of summits in Europe.

Were the attacks a message from Russian President Vladimir Putin as the West sought to arm Ukraine with more effective weapons to bolster its resistance, and to set Ukraine on the path to joining the European Union?

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko suggested as much when missiles struck the capital on June 26, three days after EU leaders unanimously agreed to make Ukraine a candidate for membership.

It was "maybe a symbolic attack" as the Group of Seven leading economic powers and then NATO leaders prepared to meet and apply further pressure on Moscow, he said. At least six people were killed in the Kyiv strike, which pummeled an apartment building.

The former commanding general of U.S. Army forces in Europe, retired Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, went further in connecting the attack and the meetings. "The Russians are humiliating the leaders of the West," he said.

A day after the Kyiv attack, as G-7 leaders met in Germany to discuss further support for Ukraine during their annual summit, Russia fired missiles at a crowded shopping mall in the central Ukrainian city of Kremenchuk, killing at least 19 people.

The timing of both attacks appeared to be juxtaposed with the European meetings of U.S. President Joe Biden, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron, all supporters of Ukraine.

Defying the evidence, Putin and his officials deny that Russia hit residential areas. Putin has denied that Russian forces targeted the Kremenchuk mall, saying it was directed at a nearby weapons depot. But Ukrainian officials and witnesses said a missile directly hit the mall.

It was hardly the first time that bursts of violence were widely seen as signals of Moscow's displeasure. In late April, Russian missiles struck Kyiv barely an hour after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy held a news conference with visiting U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

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"This says a lot about Russia's true attitude toward global institutions," Zelenskyy said at the time. Kyiv's mayor called the attack Putin's way of giving the "middle finger."

The Russian president recently warned that Moscow would strike targets it had so far spared if the West supplied Ukraine with weapons that could reach Russia. If Kyiv gets long-range rockets, Russia will "draw appropriate conclusions and use our means of destruction, which we have plenty of," Putin said.

On Friday, a day after Russian forces made a high-profile retreat from Snake Island near the Black Sea port city of Odesa following what Ukraine called a barrage of artillery and missile strikes, Russia bombarded residential areas in a coastal town near Odesa and killed at least 21 people, including two children.

While Russia's messaging can be blunt and devastating, Ukraine's signals under Zelenskyy have focused daily on seeking to amplify Moscow's cruelty to a world that day by day risks becoming weary of the war.

If interest fades, the concerted support seen at global summits could fade, too. and with it the urgency to deliver the heavier weapons that Ukraine craves.

Zelenskyy tends to pair pleas for more help with reminders that all of Europe ultimately is at stake.

He described the mall attack as "one of the most daring terrorist attacks in European history."

For all of Ukraine's indisputable suffering, it was a bold statement of some hyperbole in the context of extremist attacks with mass deaths in Paris, Nice, Brussels, Madrid and London in this century alone.

For Zelenskyy and Ukraine, the underlying demand cannot be reiterated enough: provide more heavy weapons, and faster, before Russia perhaps makes irreversible gains in the eastern industrial region of the Donbas, where street-by-street fighting grinds on.

In his nightly public addresses, Zelenskyy also makes sure to capture the traumatic toll on everyday life in Ukraine, appealing well beyond global leaders to the wider world.

This week, he accused Russia of sabotaging "people's attempts to live a normal life."

Images of the shopping mall's smoking debris said the rest.

## 'Revolutionary' high court term on abortion, guns and more

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Abortion, guns and religion — a major change in the law in any one of these areas would have made for a fateful Supreme Court term. In its first full term together, the court's conservative majority ruled in all three and issued other significant decisions limiting the government's regulatory powers.

And it has signaled no plans to slow down.

With three appointees of former President Donald Trump in their 50s, the six-justice conservative majority seems poised to keep control of the court for years to come, if not decades.

"This has been a revolutionary term in so many respects," said Tara Leigh Grove, a law professor at the University of Texas. "The court has massively changed constitutional law in really big ways."

Its remaining opinions issued, the court began its summer recess Thursday, and the justices will next return to the courtroom in October.

Overturing *Roe v. Wade* and ending a nearly half-century guarantee of abortion rights had the most immediate impact, shutting down or severely restricting abortions in roughly a dozen states within days of the decision.

In expanding gun rights and finding religious discrimination in two cases, the justices also made it harder to sustain gun control laws and lowered barriers to religion in public life.

Setting important new limits on regulatory authority, they reined in the government's ability to fight climate change and blocked a Biden administration effort to get workers at large companies vaccinated against COVID-19.

The remarkable week at the end of June in which the guns, abortion, religion and environmental cases were decided at least partially obscured other notable events, some of them troubling.

New Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson was sworn in Thursday as the first Black woman on the court. She replaced the retiring Justice Stephen Breyer, who served nearly 28 years, a switch that won't change the balance between liberals and conservatives on the court.

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In early May, the court had to deal with the unprecedented leak of a draft opinion in the abortion case. Chief Justice John Roberts almost immediately ordered an investigation, about which the court has been mum ever since. Soon after, workers encircled the court with 8-foot-high fencing in response to security concerns. In June, police made a late-night arrest of an armed man near Justice Brett Kavanaugh's Maryland home, and charged him with attempted murder of the justice.

Kavanaugh is one of three Trump appointees along with Justices Neil Gorsuch and Amy Coney Barrett who fortified the right side of the court. Greg Garre, who served as former President George W. Bush's top Supreme Court lawyer, said when the court began its term in October "the biggest question was not so much which direction the court was headed in, but how fast it was going. The term answers that question pretty resoundingly, which is fast."

The speed also revealed that the chief justice no longer has the control over the court he held when he was one of five, not six, conservatives, Garre said.

Roberts, who favors a more incremental approach that might bolster perceptions of the court as a non-political institution, broke most notably with the other conservatives in the abortion case, writing that it was unnecessary to overturn Roe, which he called a "serious jolt" to the legal system. On the other hand, he was part of every other ideologically divided majority.

If the past year revealed limits on the chief justice's influence, it also showcased the sway of Justice Clarence Thomas, the longest-serving member of the court. He wrote the decision expanding gun rights and the abortion case marked the culmination of his 30-year effort on the Supreme Court to get rid of Roe, which had stood since 1973.

Abortion is just one of several areas in which Thomas is prepared to jettison court precedents. The justices interred a second of their decisions, *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, in ruling for a high school football coach's right pray on the 50-yard line following games. It's not clear, though, that other justices are as comfortable as Thomas in overturning past decisions.

The abortion and guns cases also seemed contradictory to some critics in that the court handed states authority over the most personal decisions, but limited state power in regulating guns. One distinction the majorities in those cases drew, though, is that the Constitution explicitly mentions guns, but not abortion.

Those decisions do not seem especially popular with the public, according to opinion polls. Polls show a sharp drop in the court's approval rating and in people's confidence in the court as an institution.

Justices on courts past have acknowledged a concern about public perception. As recently as last September, Justice Amy Coney Barrett said, "My goal today is to convince you that this court is not comprised of a bunch of partisan hacks." Barrett spoke in at a center named for Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who engineered her rapid confirmation in 2020 and was sitting on the stage near the justice.

But the conservatives, minus Roberts, rejected any concern about perception in the abortion case, said Grove, the University of Texas professor.

Justice Samuel Alito wrote in his majority opinion that "not only are we not going to focus on that, we should not focus on that," she said. "I'm sympathetic as an academic, but I was surprised to see that coming from that many real-world justices."

The liberal justices, though, wrote repeatedly that the court's aggressiveness in this epic term was doing damage to the institution. Justice Sonia Sotomayor described her fellow justices as "a restless and newly constituted Court." Justice Elena Kagan, in her abortion dissent, wrote: "The Court reverses course today for one reason and one reason only: because the composition of this Court has changed."

In 18 decisions, at least five conservative justices joined to form a majority and all three liberals were in dissent, roughly 30% of all the cases the court heard in its term that began last October.

Among these, the court also:

- Made it harder for people to sue state and federal authorities for violations of constitutional rights.
- Raised the bar for defendants asserting their rights were violated, ruling against a Michigan man who was shackled at trial.

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— Limited how some death row inmates and others sentenced to lengthy prison terms can pursue claims that their lawyers did a poor job representing them.

In emergency appeals, also called the court's "shadow" docket because the justices often provide little or no explanation for their actions, the conservatives ordered the use of congressional districts for this year's elections in Alabama and Louisiana even though lower federal courts have found they likely violated the federal Voting Rights Act by diluting the power of Black voters.

The justices will hear arguments in the Alabama case in October, among several high-profile cases involving race or elections, or both.

Also when the justices resume hearing arguments the use of race as a factor in college admissions is on the table, just six years after the court reaffirmed its permissibility. And the court will consider a controversial Republican-led appeal that would vastly increase the power of state lawmakers over federal elections, at the expense of state courts.

These and cases on the intersection of LGBTQ and religious rights and another major environmental case involving development and water pollution also are likely to result in ideologically split decisions.

Khiara Bridges, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, law school, drew a link between the voting rights and abortion cases. In the latter, Alito wrote in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* that abortion should be decided by elected officials, not judges.

"I find it to be incredibly disingenuous for Alito to suggest that all that *Dobbs* is doing is returning this question to the states and that people can battle in the state about whether to protect fetal life or the interest of the pregnant person," Bridges said. "But that same court is actively involved in insuring that states can disenfranchise people."

Bridges also said the outcomes aligned almost perfectly with the political aims of Republicans. "Whatever the Republican party wants, the Republican party is going to get out of the currently constituted court," she said.

Defenders of the court's decisions said the criticism misses the mark because it confuses policy with law. "Supreme Court decisions are often not about what the policy should be, but rather about who (or which level of government, or which institution) should make the policy," Princeton University political scientist Robert George wrote on Twitter.

For now, there is no sign that either the justices or Republican and conservative interests that have brought so many of the high-profile cases to the court intend to trim their sails, Grove said.

That's in part because there's no realistic prospect of court reforms that would limit the cases the justices could hear, impose term limits or increase the size of the Supreme Court, said Grove, who served on President Joe Biden's bipartisan Supreme Court commission on court reforms.

## **Distrust remains after Navy report on tainted Hawaii water**

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER and CALEB JONES Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Lauren Wright continues to be leery of the water coming out of the taps in her family's U.S. Navy home in Hawaii, saying she doesn't trust that it's safe.

Wright, her sailor husband and their three children ages 8 to 17 were among the thousands of people who were sickened late last year after fuel from military storage tanks leaked into Pearl Harbor's tap water.

The family has returned to their military housing after spending months in Honolulu hotels, but they continue taking safety measures including taking short, five-minute showers. They don't drink their tap water or cook with it.

A Navy investigation released Thursday blamed the fuel leak and the water crisis that followed on shoddy management and human error. Some Hawaii residents, including Native Hawaiians, officials and military families said the report doesn't help restore trust in the Navy.

"I was at least hoping for some sort of remorse for the families and everybody involved in this," Wright said.

She said the ordeal has changed her view on the military from a decade ago when her husband first

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joined.

"I was the proud Navy spouse, you know, stickers and T-shirts," she said. "I feel like the Navy has failed at what they promised every service member. They failed at a lot of things. And I'm not so proud."

It's difficult to trust the Navy partly because Hawaii residents and officials for years have questioned the safety of the giant fuel storage tanks that have sat above an important aquifer since World War II, said Kamanamaikalani Beamer, a former trustee of the Commission on Water Resource Management.

"Releasing a report saying that they were lying to us is not a step towards building trust," he said. "De-fueling and getting the tanks out permanently, setting aside funds to remediate the water systems all across Oahu and replant our forests — when I see steps like that happening — that's a tangible step toward rebuilding trust."

Some Native Hawaiians said the report only deepened a distrust in the military that dates to at least 1893, when a group of American businessmen, with support from U.S. Marines, overthrew the Hawaiian kingdom. More recently, Native Hawaiians fought to stop target practice bombing on the island of Kahoolawe and at Makua Valley in west Oahu.

"There's no proof I should have faith in them," said Kalehua Krug, with Ka'ohewai, a cultural organization advocating for a clean aquifer for Oahu. "They've done nothing but lie for generations."

The Department of Defense recognizes the water problems "have damaged trust between the Department and the people of Hawaii, including Native Hawaiians — and it is committed to rebuilding that trust," Gordon Trowbridge, acting assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, said in a statement.

The investigation report released Thursday listed a cascading series of mistakes from May 6, 2021, when operator error caused a pipe to rupture and 21,000 gallons (80,000 liters) of fuel to spill when it was being transferred between tanks. Most of the fuel spilled into a fire suppression line and sat there for six months, causing the line to sag. A cart rammed into this sagging line on Nov. 20, releasing 20,000 gallons (75,700 liters) of fuel.

The report said officials defaulted to assuming the best about what was happening when the spills occurred, instead of assuming the worst, and this contributed to their overlooking the severity of situation.

The spill contaminated the Navy's water system. Fuel didn't get into the Honolulu municipal water supply. But concerns the oil might migrate through the aquifer and get into the city's wells prompted the Honolulu Board of Water Supply in December to shut down a key well serving some 400,000 people. The agency has been asking residents to conserve water because of this and unusually dry weather.

The tanks continue to pose a threat to Oahu's drinking water while they hold fuel, said Ernest Lau, manager and chief engineer of the water utility.

The report saying it will take more than two years to drain the facility is concerning, Lau said Friday.

"The fact that they built this massive facility in three years, so can't they find a way to do all the necessary work in less than two and a half years ... I think it can be done," he said, urging the Navy to look at shortening the timeline.

This week, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin "directed the establishment of a Joint Task Force led by a senior Navy admiral solely dedicated to a swift defueling effort, who will report to him through the commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, to oversee defueling of Red Hill as rapidly as safety allows," Trowbridge said. "The Department recognizes that what we say is far less important than what we do, which is why its most senior leaders are focused on this effort."

Kristina Baehr, an attorney who represents more than 100 military and civilian families who lodged claims against the Navy, said it was especially troubling to read in the report how pervasive the errors were.

"This is a national security issue," she said, noting many of her clients were still experiencing the effects of the tainted water. "And our families and military communities cannot be mission-ready if the government has made them sick."

**NY overhauls handgun rules in effort to preserve some limits**

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By MARINA VILLENEUVE Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — New York lawmakers approved a sweeping overhaul Friday of the state's handgun licensing rules, seeking to preserve some limits on firearms after the Supreme Court ruled that most people have a right to carry a handgun for personal protection.

The measure, signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul after passing both chambers by wide margins, is almost sure to draw more legal challenges from gun rights advocates who say the state is still putting too many restrictions on who can get guns and where they can carry them.

Hochul, a Democrat, called the Democrat-controlled Legislature back to Albany to work on the law after last week's high-court ruling overturning the state's longstanding licensing restrictions.

Backers said the law, which takes effect Sept. 1, strikes the right balance between complying with the Supreme Court's ruling and keeping weapons out of the hands of people likely to use them recklessly or with criminal intent.

But some Republican lawmakers, opposed to tighter restrictions, argued the law violated the constitutional right to bear arms. They predicted it too would end up being overturned.

Among other things, the state's new rules will require people applying for a handgun license to turn over a list of their social media accounts so officials could verify their "character and conduct."

Applicants will have to show they have "the essential character, temperament and judgment necessary to be entrusted with a weapon and to use it only in a manner that does not endanger oneself and others."

As part of that assessment, applicants have to turn over a list of social media accounts they've maintained in the past three years.

"Sometimes, they're telegraphing their intent to cause harm to others," Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Democrat, said at a news conference.

Gun rights advocates and Republican leaders were incensed, saying the legislation not only violated the Second Amendment, but also privacy and free speech rights.

"New Yorkers' constitutional freedoms were just trampled on," state Republican Chair Nick Langworthy said.

The bill approved by lawmakers doesn't specify whether applicants will be required to provide licensing officers with access to private social media accounts not visible to the general public.

People applying for a license to carry a handgun will also have to provide four character references, take 16 hours of firearms safety training plus two hours of practice at a range, undergo periodic background checks and turn over contact information for their spouse, domestic partner or any other adults living in their household.

Hochul's chief lawyer, Elizabeth Fine, insisted the state was setting out "a very clear set of eligibility criteria" and noted that the legislation includes an appeals process.

The measure signed into law Friday also fixes a recently passed law that barred sales of some types of bullet-resistant vests to the general public. The previous law inadvertently left out many types of body armor, including the type worn by a gunman who killed 10 Black people in a racist attack on a Buffalo supermarket.

The Supreme Court's ruling last week struck down a 109-year-old state law that required people to demonstrate an unusual threat to their safety to qualify for a license to carry a handgun outside their homes. That restriction generally limited the licenses to people who had worked in law enforcement or had another special need that went beyond routine public safety concerns.

Under the new system, the state won't authorize permits for people with criminal convictions within the past five years for driving while intoxicated, menacing or third-degree assault.

People also won't be allowed to carry firearms at a long list of "sensitive places," including New York City's tourist-packed Times Square.

That list also includes schools, universities, government buildings, places where people have gathered for public protests, health care facilities, places of worship, libraries, public playgrounds and parks, day care centers, summer camps, addiction and mental health centers, shelters, public transit, bars, theaters, stadiums, museums, polling places and casinos.

New York will also bar people from bringing guns into any business or workplace unless the owners put up signs saying guns are welcome. People who bring guns into places without such signs could be prosecuted on felony charges.

That's a reverse approach from many other states where businesses that want to keep guns out are usually required to post signs indicating weapons aren't allowed.

Gun advocates said the law infringes on rights upheld by the Supreme Court.

"Now we're going to let the pizzeria owner decide whether or not I can express my constitutional right," said Sen. Andrew Lanza, a Staten Island Republican. "This is a disgrace. See you in the courts."

## Russian missiles kill at least 21 in Ukraine's Odesa region

By FRANCESCA EBEL Associated Press

POKROVSK, Ukraine (AP) — A Russian airstrike on residential areas killed at least 21 people early Friday near the Ukrainian port of Odesa, authorities reported, a day after the withdrawal of Moscow's forces from an island in the Black Sea had seemed to ease the threat to the city.

Video of the attack before daybreak showed the charred ruins of buildings in the small town of Serhiivka, about 50 kilometers (31 miles) from Odesa. The Ukrainian president's office said warplanes fired three missiles that struck an apartment building and a campsite.

Ukrainian authorities interpreted the attack as payback for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Snake Island a day earlier, though Moscow portrayed their departure as a "goodwill gesture" to help unblock exports of grain.

Russian forces took control of the island in the opening days of the war in the apparent hope of using it as a staging ground for an assault on Odesa, Ukraine's biggest port and the headquarters of its navy.

"The occupiers cannot win on the battlefield, so they resort to vile killing of civilians," said Ivan Bakanov, head of Ukraine's security service, the SBU. "After the enemy was dislodged from Snake Island, he decided to respond with the cynical shelling of civilian targets."

Ukraine's military reported late Friday on social media that two Russian Su-30 warplanes bombed Snake Island with phosphorus bombs. Black-and-white aerial video showed two blasts hitting the island. The warplanes reportedly struck from the east, from Belbek, on the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula. The Russian military did not immediately comment.

Large numbers of civilians were killed in Russian bombardments earlier in the war, including at a hospital, a theater used as a shelter, and a train station. Until this week, mass casualties involving residents appeared to become less frequent as Moscow concentrated on capturing eastern Ukraine's Donbas region.

Russian missiles struck the Kyiv region last weekend after weeks of relative calm around the capital and an airstrike Monday on a shopping mall in the central city of Kremenchuk killed at least 19 people.

A U.S. defense official said Friday in Washington that Russian forces appeared to use an anti-ship missile in the mall attack, a type of weapon that the official said is not accurate against land targets. Russia's defense ministry spokesman claimed earlier this week that warplanes fired precision-guided missiles at a depot that contained Western weapons and ammunition, which detonated and set the mall on fire. Ukrainian authorities said that in addition to the direct hit on the mall, a factory was struck, but denied it housed weapons.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy noted that as in Monday's shopping mall attack in Kremenchuk, Russian forces on Friday appeared to use anti-ship missiles to hit Serhiivka.

"These missiles, Kh-22, were designed to destroy aircraft carriers and other large warships, and the Russian army used them against an ordinary nine-story building with ordinary civilian people," he said at a news conference Friday.

Twenty-one people — including an 11-year-old boy, his mother and the 42-year-old coach of a children's soccer team — were killed and 38 others, including six children and a pregnant woman, were hospitalized, Ukrainian officials reported. Most of the victims were in the apartment building.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov reiterated that Moscow is not targeting residential areas.



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Oleh Zhdanov, an independent Ukrainian military analyst, said the Russian pullback from Snake Island bears "colossal psychological significance" for Ukraine.

"Snake Island is key for controlling the Black Sea and could help cover the Russian attack if the Kremlin opted for an amphibious landing operation in Odesa or elsewhere in the region," he said. "Now those plans are pushed back."

Ukraine's military claimed a barrage of its artillery and missiles forced the Russians to flee the island in two small speedboats. The exact number of troops withdrawn was not disclosed.

Early in the war, the island became a symbol of Ukrainian defiance. When a Russian warship demanded that its defenders surrender, they supposedly replied: "Go (expletive) yourself."

Zelenskyy said that although the pullout did not guarantee the Black Sea region's safety, it would "significantly limit" Russian activities there.

In eastern Ukraine, Russian forces kept up their push to encircle the city of Lysychansk, the last stronghold of resistance in Luhansk, one of two provinces that make up the Donbas.

"The shelling of the city is very intensive," Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said. "The occupiers are destroying one house after another with heavy artillery and other weapons. Residents of Lysychansk are hiding in basements almost round the clock."

Haidai said the Russians were fighting for control of an oil refinery on the city's edge. But Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said Russian and separatist forces had taken control of the refinery as well as a mine and a gelatin factory.

Ukraine's presidential office said Russian strikes in the past 24 hours also killed civilians in eastern Ukraine — four in the northeastern Kharkiv region and another four in Donetsk province.

More help for Ukraine's fight was announced:

—The Pentagon said it will supply the country with \$820 million in new military aid, including surface-to-air missile systems and counter-artillery radar to respond to Russia's heavy reliance on long-range strikes. All told, the U.S. has provided more than \$8.8 billion in weapons and training to Ukraine.

—Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store announced 1 billion euros (\$1.04 billion) in aid to Ukraine.

In other developments, a pro-Moscow separatist news agency in eastern Ukraine reported that two more Britons it identified as mercenaries fighting for Ukraine are facing the same charges on which three other foreigners were recently sentenced to death. The news agency identified the pair as Dylan Healy and Andrew Hill, without providing further details. Britain's SkyNews said they had been captured in eastern Ukraine several weeks ago.

## Post-Roe, states struggle with conflicting abortion bans

By REBECCA BOONE and CLAIRE RUSH Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — In Arizona, Republicans are fighting among themselves over whether a 121-year-old anti-abortion law from the pre-statehood Wild West days, when Arizona was still a frontier mining territory, should be enforced over a 2022 version.

In Idaho, meanwhile, it is not clear whether a pair of laws from the early 1970s making it a felony to "knowingly aid" in an abortion or to publish information about how to induce one will be enforced alongside the state's newer, near-total ban.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruling overturning Roe v. Wade has advocates, prosecutors and residents of red states facing a legal morass created by decades of often conflicting anti-abortion legislation.

Politicians and state government attorneys are trying to sort out which laws and which provisions are in force. And abortion rights advocates who are going to court to protect the right to terminate a pregnancy are finding themselves doing battle on multiple fronts.

Lawyers in Idaho Attorney General Lawrence Wasden's office are going through all the state's abortion statutes with a fine-tooth comb, said Wasden spokesman Scott Graf.

"Following last week's decision, part of our subsequent work is to now review Idaho's existing abortion-related laws and examine them through a post-Roe legal lens," Graf said. "That work has commenced

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and will continue in the weeks ahead.”

On the abortion rights side, Hillary Schneller, senior staff attorney for the Center for Reproductive Rights, said Louisiana lawmakers had passed three “trigger” bans designed to go into effect in the event Roe was overturned.

When the Supreme Court decision came down, “state officials issued conflicting statements about those bans,” Schneller said. “We challenged all of them on vagueness grounds to try to get some clarity about what the status of the law is in Louisiana.”

Jennifer Sandman, a senior attorney for Planned Parenthood Federation of America, said the confusing and “very rapidly shifting landscape both legally and operationally” is putting more stress on abortion providers.

“I think multiple health care providers across the country are figuring out how to navigate that moment,” Sandman said.

In West Virginia, the American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit challenging an abortion ban that was put on the books in 1882. The organization says the law conflicts with newer ones and so should be void.

In Wisconsin, Attorney General Josh Kaul filed a lawsuit Tuesday challenging a 173-year-old abortion ban, arguing that modern generations never consented to it. The 1849 law prohibits abortion in every instance except to save the pregnant person’s life — conflicting with Wisconsin laws from the mid-1980s that ban the procedure after a fetus reaches the point that it could survive outside the womb with medical intervention.

Arizona GOP officials disagree over which abortion laws are enforceable. Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced Wednesday that a pre-statehood law banning all abortions is now enforceable, but Republican Gov. Doug Ducey has said a law he signed in March takes precedence over the 1901 ban.

When the Idaho Legislature passed a trigger law in 2020 that would automatically prohibit nearly all abortions 30 days after the fall of Roe, lawmakers took some steps to avoid conflicts by making it clear that the law would supersede other bans. Lawmakers put similar language in another ban passed earlier this year, saying the 2020 law would take precedence.

But they may have overlooked a few clauses in the decades-old statutes.

The 2020 trigger law says specifically that the person seeking the abortion can’t be charged with a crime, instead focusing prosecution efforts on the abortion provider. That would seem to override a 1973 law that makes it a felony for a person to undergo an abortion, but it’s not clear if another portion of the older law making it a felony to knowingly aid in an abortion could still be enforceable.

“It’s hard to see how much of it survives, because of all the conflicts,” Twin Falls County prosecutor Grant Loeb said of the nearly three dozen anti-abortion laws on the books in Idaho.

It will be up to individual county prosecutors, at first, to decide how to proceed, said Loeb, who is also president of the Idaho Prosecuting Attorneys Association. From there, judges will figure it out.

Ultimately, he expects Idaho legislators will have a lot of fine-tuning to do in the years ahead.

“I think every state doing this is going to have the same problems,” Loeb said.

Planned Parenthood is suing over both of Idaho’s newer laws. It has asked the Idaho Supreme Court to hear arguments in both cases on the same day in early August in hopes of getting a ruling before the trigger law takes effect.

Jared Keenan, Legal Director at American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona, said there has been “hectic” activity in the post-Roe v. Wade world.

“That’s the nature of civil rights litigation,” Keenan said. “I think that the difference here is that it has thrown a lot of organizations and a lot of attorneys into this sort of manic scramble all at the same time, which is not so common.”

## Holiday-travel chaos: Airlines brace for huge weekend crowds

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

The July Fourth holiday weekend is off to a booming start with airport crowds crushing the numbers

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seen in 2019, before the pandemic.

Travelers across the United States experienced hundreds of canceled flights and a few thousand delays on Friday, much as they did earlier this week.

Patricia Carreno arrived with friends at Los Angeles International Airport only to learn that their Alaska Airlines flight to Mazatlan, Mexico, had been canceled.

"We're probably going to drive down to Mexico — to Tijuana, the border — and just fly from there," she said.

The Transportation Security Administration screened more than 2.4 million travelers at airport checkpoints on Thursday, 17% more than on the same Friday before July Fourth in 2019. U.S. air travel is likely to set a pandemic-era record at least once over the weekend.

Traffic on the highway could be heavy too.

AAA predicts that nearly 48 million people will travel at least 50 miles or more from home over the weekend, slightly fewer than in 2019. AAA says car travel will set a record even with the national average price for gasoline hovering near \$5.

Leisure travel has bounced back this year, and that means particularly big crowds over three-day holiday weekends.

With many flights sold out over the July Fourth weekend, airlines will struggle to find seats for passengers like Carreno whose flights are canceled. Airlines told customers to check their flight's status before going to the airport.

If you're already at the airport when your flight is canceled, "it's time to flex your multitasking skills," said Sebastian Modak, editor-at-large of travel guide publisher Lonely Planet.

Modak advised heading straight to the airline's help desk, checking its app on your phone, and calling the airline's customer-service line — an international number might be answered sooner than a U.S. one for airlines that have both. He said driving or taking the bus or train will be a better option for shorter trips.

"There's no getting around the fact that this is going to be a summer of travel delays, cancellations, and frustrations," he said.

By early evening Friday on the East Coast, airlines had canceled about 500 U.S. flights and another 5,100 were delayed, according to FlightAware. Scattered thunderstorms in the New York City area made it likely the numbers would climb. From June 22 through Wednesday at least 600 flights were canceled, and between 4,000 and 7,000 were delayed per day, the tracking service said.

Airline executives blame the recent surge of canceled flights on the Federal Aviation Administration, which runs the nation's air traffic control system, but Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg disputes that claim.

Passengers are caught in the middle.

Mari Ismail, who flew to Atlanta on Friday, said it took a long time to check in and get through security before her flight from Baltimore.

"I got to my gate right as they started boarding, so it was a very lengthy process," she said.

Jordane Jeffrey said she booked a return trip from Atlanta to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for Monday, the holiday.

"I'm hoping there are no delays because I work that night," she said.

Airlines sometimes overbook flights with the expectation that some passengers won't show up. When there are more passengers than seats, airlines will offer cash or travel vouchers to people willing to take the next flight.

Earlier this week, a columnist for Inc. magazine wrote that Delta flight attendants offered \$10,000 cash to people who would leave a plane waiting to take off from Grand Rapids, Mich.

Delta spokesman Anthony Black would neither confirm nor deny the journalist's account, but he noted that the airline raised the compensation agents can offer in such cases to \$9,950 in 2017. That move followed a public-relations nightmare at United Airlines, when airport officers bloodied and dragged a 69-year-old doctor off a sold-out plane — a case that resulted in a lawsuit, confidential settlement, and jokes on late-night TV about United customer service.

Even with vacationers crowding into airports and on planes, the total number of people flying has not fully

recovered to pre-pandemic levels because of a decline in business and international travel. TSA screened 11% fewer people in June than it did in the same month of 2019.

Thursday marked only the 11th time since the pandemic started that TSA checked more people than it did on the same day in 2019, and just the second time since February.

Airlines could almost surely be carrying more passengers if they had enough staffing. Many U.S. airlines have trimmed their summer schedules after bad weather, air-traffic delays and a lack of enough employees caused widespread cancellations over the Memorial Day weekend.

Airlines paid thousands of workers to quit during the early days of the pandemic, when air travel plummeted and airline revenue dried up. They have been hiring recently, but it takes time to train pilots, who are in particularly short supply.

Now airlines competing for key employees are offering double-digit raises to pilots, who find themselves with leverage in negotiations over new contracts.

## **Kerry: Despite setbacks at home, US to make climate goals**

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. climate envoy John Kerry said Friday that setbacks for President Joe Biden's climate efforts at home have "slowed the pace" of some of the commitments from other countries to cut climate-wrecking fossil fuels, but he insisted the U.S. would still achieve its own ambitious climate goals in time.

Kerry spoke to The Associated Press after a major Supreme Court ruling Thursday limited the Environmental Protection Agency's options for regulating climate pollution from power plants. The ruling raised the prospect the conservative-controlled court could go on to hinder other efforts by the executive branch to cut the country's coal, oil and gas emissions. It came after Democrats failed in getting what was to be Biden's signature climate legislation through the narrowly divided Senate.

The Biden administration is striving now to show audiences at home and abroad that the U.S. can still make significant climate progress, and strike deals with other countries to do the same. Scientists say only a few years are left to stave off the worst levels of global warming, triggering ever more deadly droughts, storms, wildfires and other disasters.

Kerry, Biden's climate negotiator abroad, said he had not talked to foreign counterparts since the Supreme Court ruling, which some climate scientists called a gut punch and a disaster.

"But I'm confident they'll ask me questions," Kerry said. "But my answer is going to be look, we're going to meet our goals ... and the president is going to continue to fight for legislation from the Congress."

"We absolutely are convinced we can meet our goals," Kerry said.

Biden has pledged to cut the nation's greenhouse gas emissions in half by the end of the decade and to have an emissions-free power sector by 2035. Despite two Democrats joining with Republicans to block what was supposed to have been transformative legislation moving the United States to cleaner energy, Biden has managed to free significant funding for electric charging stations and some other moves. The EPA has pledged to release alternative regulation to limit climate damage from the power sector early next year.

Kerry cited continuing progress in climate efforts abroad this year, including more governments committing to faster cuts in emissions and more signing a U.S.-backed methane pledge targeting climate-damaging leaks, venting and flaring from natural gas industries.

"This decision by the Supreme Court ... is disappointing, but ... it doesn't take away our ability to do a whole bunch of things that we need to get done," Kerry said.

"President Biden has enormous authority to continue to move forward. We are going to move forward. I am absolutely confident about our ability to continue to offer leadership on a global basis, which we're doing right now."

Kerry also pointed to progress the United States was making in cutting fossil fuel emissions independently of the government efforts, including through electric cars and other marketplace technological

advances, and through clean-energy pushes from California and dozens of other states, mostly those led by Democrats.

Kerry described legislation on tax credits to encourage cleaner energy as common sense and doable. He declined to talk about the impact if even those failed to clear Congress.

"I wouldn't be a gloomy-doomy over this," he said. "I just say we got to work harder and fight harder."

Asked if it was possible to ask China and other major polluters to make fast moves away from fossil fuels when the U.S. was struggling to meet some of its own goals, Kerry said, "they'll make their own analysis. That will conceivably have an impact on what they decide to do or not."

The administration's setbacks getting major climate retooling through conservatives in Congress and the Supreme Court haven't hurt the momentum he's working for abroad in climate negotiations, Kerry insisted. "But I think it's slowed the pace at which some of these things could happen," he said.

"If the United States were able to accomplish more regarding our own goals, and we did so rapidly, that would put a lot of pressure on a lot of countries," he said.

## Amazon bars off-duty warehouse workers from its buildings

By HALELUYA HADERO AP Business Writer

Amazon is barring off-duty warehouse workers from the company's facilities, a move organizers say can hamper union drives.

Under the policy shared with workers on Amazon's internal app, employees are barred from accessing buildings or other working areas on their scheduled days off, and before or after their shifts.

An Amazon spokesperson said the policy does not prohibit off-duty employees from engaging their co-workers in "non-working areas" outside the company's buildings.

"There's nothing more important than the safety of our employees and the physical security of our buildings," Amazon spokesperson Kelly Nantel said. "This policy regarding building access applies to building interiors and working areas. It does not limit employee access to non-working areas outside of our facilities."

The notice of the new policy, dated Thursday, says the off-duty rule "will not be enforced discriminatorily" against employees seeking to unionize. But organizers say the policy itself will hinder their efforts to garner support from co-workers during campaigns.

"On our days off, we come to work and we engage our co-workers in the break rooms," said Rev. Ryan Brown, an Amazon warehouse worker in Garner, North Carolina, who's aiming to organize his workplace following the labor win on Staten Island, New York, where workers at an Amazon warehouse voted in April to unionize.

"This was a direct response to that, to try to stop organizing by any means necessary," Brown said.

Seattle-based Amazon had previously barred employee access to non-working areas beyond 15 minutes before or after their shifts. The company rescinded that policy in December, when it entered a settlement with the National Labor Relations Board to allow workers to organize more freely. Amazon also agreed to give workers a heads up in the event it chose to "reinstate a lawful rule regarding off-duty employee access" to its facilities. A spokesperson with the NLRB declined to comment on the company's new policy.

In the notice sent to employees, Amazon said it strived to create a safe environment for employees. "One part of this is knowing who is in our buildings at any given time, so we can quickly find and account for everyone in the event of an emergency," the notice said.

## Day 2 of free agency: LaVine, Nurkic decide to stay put

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

Zach LaVine is staying in Chicago. Same goes for Jusuf Nurkic in Portland.

Day 2 of NBA free agency on Friday brought another max deal — this time, going to LaVine, who secured the richest contract in Bulls history when he agreed to a \$215 million, five-year contract.

LaVine technically was a free agent, for about 18 hours. Klutch Sports, which represents LaVine, made

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the announcement of the max agreement, with the Bulls able to offer the Olympic gold medalist and two-time All-Star \$56 million more than any other club could this summer.

Nurkic got by far the biggest payday of his career, agreeing to a four-year, \$70 million contract with Portland. The center just completed his eighth NBA season, the last six of those coming with the Trail Blazers, for whom he averaged 15 points and 11.1 rebounds this past season.

Mitchell Robinson is another big man not moving elsewhere, agreeing Friday to a \$60 million, four-year contract to remain with the New York Knicks.

There are some players who will be changing addresses. Danilo Gallinari, according to a person familiar with his decision, intends to sign a two-year deal with the Eastern Conference champion Boston Celtics — once his waiving by the San Antonio Spurs is completed. Gallinari was sent to San Antonio this week in a trade that brought All-Star guard Dejounte Murray to Atlanta.

Also on the move: Bruce Brown Jr., a guard who has decided to leave Brooklyn and sign with Denver on a two-year deal worth just over \$13 million. Brown averaged a career-best 9 points per game this past season for the Nets.

Another deal that was put into motion earlier in the week was completed, when five-time All-Star John Wall — bought out by the Houston Rockets — announced he had agreed to a two-year deal with the Los Angeles Clippers. Wall was under contract for \$47.4 million this season, got bought out by Houston for about \$41 million, and will get the \$6.4 million difference from the Clippers. Wall hasn't played in the NBA since April 2021, and has appeared in 82 games, including playoffs, over the last 4 1/2 seasons.

The champion Golden State Warriors brought back one of their key free agents, retaining Kevon Looney — who appeared in all 104 of the team's games this past season — on a three-year deal that could be worth about \$26 million if the final year becomes fully guaranteed. But another two rotation pieces went elsewhere; Gary Payton II is headed to the Portland Trail Blazers and Otto Porter Jr. is signing with the Toronto Raptors.

LaVine's agreement was at least the fifth deal of at least \$200 million struck since free agency opened on Thursday. The others all came on Day 1, going to Nikola Jokic (\$264 million extension in Denver), Bradley Beal (\$251 million contract to stay in Washington), Devin Booker (\$224 million extension with Phoenix) and Karl-Anthony Towns (\$224 million extension with Minnesota).

And a sixth deal could very easily join that \$200 million club: Memphis' Ja Morant agreed to a \$193 million extension that could reach \$231 million based on what awards he qualifies for this coming season.

## **In a small village, prayers and hope for missing migrants**

By ALBA ALEMÁN, DELMER MARTÍNEZ and CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN Associated Press

SAN MARCOS ATEXQUILAPAN, Mexico (AP) — Clutching rosaries, residents of this mountain village stared at photographs of three of their own atop the altar at the local church, praying that teenagers Jair, Yovani and Misael were not among the 53 migrants who perished inside a stifling trailer in Texas.

The wait for confirmation has been agonizing for families from Mexico to Honduras. Now they hope for what before would have been dreaded -- capture by the Border Patrol, even hospitalization -- anything but the solemn finality that has been trickling out family by family across the region.

Then again, at least they would know.

Not far from the church, outside the Olivares family's neat two-story homes -- each sister's and their parents' all in a row -- a black tarp was hung to shade the dozens of people who have come each day to be with the parents of teenage brothers Yovani and Jair Valencia Olivares and the mother and father of their cousin, 16-year-old Misael Olivares Monterde.

Such a covering is customary for wakes, when the family home cannot accommodate all those who come to pay their respects. But in this case it is a vigil where residents of the town of 3,000 come to buoy the family's spirits, praying and swapping stories about the boys.

On Friday, the wait for one family ended in sadness. Word spread quickly through town that Misael was among the dead. More people congregated in front of the Olivares homes, offering hugs and condolences.

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Candles still burned on a makeshift altar at the home, where Teófilo Valencia and Yolanda Olivares Ruiz, parents of 19-year-old Jair and 16-year-old Yovani, hoped for a miracle.

A day earlier, Valencia had sat looking at his phone, reading the last messages he received from them. "Dad, now we're going to San Antonio," Yovani wrote at 11:16 a.m. Monday. A half-hour later, his brother wrote to their father that they were ready to work hard and pay for everything.

Hours later came the horrific discovery of the semitrailer abandoned beside railroad tracks on the outskirts of that south Texas city.

The cousins had left together June 21. Yolanda Olivares Ruiz, the brothers' mother, tucked Yovani's school certificate in his wallet as identification and stuffed three changes of clothes for each in backpacks, along with phone numbers of relatives in the U.S. and Mexico.

Hermelinda Monterde Jiménez spent the night before their departure talking with her son Misael. "He told me, 'Mom, wake me up,' and for a moment I thought about not doing it so he wouldn't go," she said. "But it was his decision and his own dream."

Their parents took out loans, using their homes as collateral to cover the \$10,000 smuggling fee for each cousin. They paid a portion up front and were scheduled to pay the rest after the boys arrived safely.

The youths wanted to work, save up money and return to open their own clothing and shoe store. They gave themselves four years.

By last Friday, June 24, they were in Laredo, Texas.

They told their parents that after the weekend they would be taken to their destination in Austin, where a cousin who had made the journey just months earlier awaited. In the past week, 20 some residents have departed the town for the United States.

The family did not hear of the ill-fated trailer until Tuesday. They tried to reach the boys, but the messages and calls didn't go through. They went that same day to government offices, providing whatever information could help in the search.

On Wednesday, Mexico's consul in San Antonio confirmed that residents of the Gulf coast state of Veracruz — in which San Marcos is located — were among the 27 Mexican victims. On Thursday, state lawyers traveled to San Antonio to assist in identifications.

Meanwhile, the Olivares wait and pray.

A week after his 18th birthday, Marcos Antonio Velasco set out from Mexico's capital for the United States, accompanied by his friend José Luis Vásquez Guzmán, who he had met back in his mother's hometown in the southern state of Oaxaca. This week, authorities confirmed that Vásquez Guzmán was one of the survivors from the trailer and was hospitalized in San Antonio.

The fears of Velasco's family grew when an official from Mexico's foreign ministry called Wednesday to say that their son's identification had been found in the trailer. Since then, they have shared information that could help identify their son, but have only been told to wait.

"I want to know where he is, if he is alive or dead," said his mother María Victoria Velasco.

The wait ended Thursday for the family of Jazmín Nayarith Bueso Núñez in El Progreso, Honduras. Their prayers for her safe return were not answered. She was confirmed as being among the dead in San Antonio.

Bueso Núñez suffered from lupus, an immunological disease, that had cost her a job in an assembly plant and whose treatments were very costly, her family said.

A family friend had offered to help her travel to the United States, where she hoped to find better-paying work to help support the 15-year-old son she left with her parents and to find treatment for her disease.

Before leaving June 3, the 37-year-old told her father she intended to migrate.

"Dad, I've come to say goodbye," José Santos Bueso said she told him on their last visit. "I'm going north."

He tried to talk her out of it, noting the dangers. "No, Dad, this is a special trip," she told him. "I was there, daughter, I tell her. 'There are no special trips.'" The only special trip was to travel by plane with a visa, he told her.

"The smuggler is making \$15,000. He says he's going to take me without worries," she told him.

She was in Laredo when they last spoke. She told him the smugglers were going to take their phones before going on, so she wouldn't be able to communicate for a time.

On Thursday, a relative in the United States who had been helping the family provide identity documents to authorities told them the sad truth, said her brother Erick Josué Rodríguez.

"The economic situation, the social situation that exists in our country is very, very difficult," Rodríguez said. "It is the reason that we see day after day, month after month caravans, migrants. It's because people have dreams and don't have opportunities."

Back in San Marcos Atexquilapan, Mexico, sisters Hermelinda and Yolanda walked late Thursday from their homes to the church carrying photographs of their sons. They were flanked by women bearing candles.

Inside, the mothers sat in the first row while the priest asked those gathered to pray.

"It is not that they are criminals," he said. "They went in search of their daily bread."

The townspeople prayed: "We ask you for these boys to have the dream of a better life, give them that consolation, that relief wherever they are, Lord, that answers are given because these families are suffering, they have an anguished heart."

## Experts: US Court fractures decades of Native American law

By FELICIA FONSECA and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — A U.S. Supreme Court ruling expanding state authority to prosecute some crimes on Native American land is fracturing decades of law built around the hard-fought principle that tribes have the right to govern themselves on their own territory, legal experts say.

The Wednesday ruling is a marked departure from federal Indian law and veers from the push to increase tribes' ability to prosecute all crimes on reservations — regardless of who is involved. It also cast tribes as part of states, rather than the sovereign nations they are, infuriating many across Indian Country.

"The majority (opinion) is not firmly rooted in the law that I have dedicated my life to studying and the history as I know it to be true," said Elizabeth Hidalgo Reese, an assistant law professor at Stanford University who is enrolled at Nambé Pueblo in New Mexico. "And that's just really concerning,"

Federal authorities largely maintained exclusive jurisdiction to investigate serious, violent crime on reservations across much of the U.S. when the suspect or victim is Native American. The 5-4 decision from the high court in a case out of Oklahoma means states will share in that authority when the suspect is not Native American and the victim is.

Criminal justice on tribal lands already is a tangled web, and the ruling likely will present new thorny questions about jurisdiction, possible triple jeopardy and how to tackle complicated crimes in remote areas where resources are stretched thin. States had power to prosecute crimes involving only non-Natives on reservations before this week's ruling.

"It will have an impact in Indian Country, so only the future will tell us if it's good or not," said Robert Miller, a law professor at Arizona State University and citizen of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe. "Is it better to have more criminal prosecutions, more governments enforcing crimes or less?"

Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote a scathing dissent joined by the court's three liberal members, saying "one can only hope the political branches and future courts will do their duty to honor this Nation's promises even as we have failed today to do on our own."

Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. of the Cherokee Nation said the court "failed in its duty to honor this nation's promises, defied Congress's statutes and accepted the lawless disregard of the Cherokee's sovereignty."

It's unclear how the decision ultimately will play out for tribes, but there is precedent. Congress established a law in 1953 that's known as PL-280, partly to relieve the federal government of funding public safety on some reservations. The law resulted in state authority over crime in several states, including Alaska and California where about three-fifths of the 574 federally recognized tribes are based.

As in the decision in Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta, tribes did not consent. Neither Congress then nor the Supreme Court now funded the expansion of state authority on tribal land.

"That's far from the first time," said Lauren van Schilfgaarde, a member of Cochiti Pueblo in New Mexico who directs the Tribal Legal Development Clinic at the UCLA. "Federal Indian law is just littered with cases



in which tribes were denied the opportunity to speak on their own behalf.”

Federal authorities have long been criticized for declining to prosecute cases in Indian Country — roughly a third, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Authorities in PL-280 states also have been criticized for a lack of response to crime in Indian Country, where law enforcement officers often must travel long distances to investigate reported crimes.

Tribes asserted that the federal government — with which they have a political relationship — is the appropriate sovereign entity to handle criminal matters. Congress maintains control over Native American and Alaska Native affairs, which are overseen by the Department of Interior.

States have no such obligation to tribes.

Kevin Washburn, dean of the University of Iowa’s law school, said it will be interesting to see how the priority question shakes out.

“That is, will feds take primacy or will state prosecutors take primacy in cases?” asked Washburn, who is Chickasaw and a former assistant Interior secretary for Indian Affairs. “And how do they decide who will be first or who will move at all?”

While the Supreme Court ruling is an expansion of power for states, it doesn’t come with a similar increase for tribes. A 1978 ruling stripped tribes of any criminal jurisdiction over non-Natives on their reservations. The reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act in 2013 restored some of that authority in limited domestic violence cases and further expanded it earlier this year.

Less than 1% of federally recognized tribes in the U.S. have implemented that authority. It raises the possibility of tribes, the state and the feds prosecuting a suspect for the same offense. Another U.S. Supreme Court ruling issued last month said tribal members prosecuted in certain tribal courts also can be prosecuted based on the same incident in federal court.

Most tribes can sentence convicted offenders to only a year in jail, regardless of the crime. A 2010 federal law increased tribes’ sentencing authority to three years for a single crime. Few tribes have met the federal requirements to use that authority, including having public defenders and law-trained judges.

Oklahoma has its own unique history on tribal affairs, including a 2020 U.S. Supreme Court decision known as *McGirt v. Oklahoma* that said a large chunk of the eastern part of the state remains a Native American reservation. That ruling, written by Gorsuch, left the state unable to prosecute Native Americans accused of crimes on tribal lands that include most of Tulsa, the state’s second-largest city with a population of about 413,000.

The Supreme Court refused to reconsider *McGirt*. Oklahoma filed a flurry of petitions related to the case, leading to the most recent decision on state power over crime on reservations that extends broadly across the U.S. Justice Brett Kavanaugh, writing for the majority, said the state’s interest lies in protecting all victims of crime.

Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum, a Republican, applauded the ruling and pledged to work with the state and the tribal nations “who are our partners in building a safe city.”

## California sets nation’s toughest plastics reduction rules

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Companies selling shampoo, food and other products wrapped in plastic have a decade to cut down on their use of the polluting material if they want their wares on California store shelves.

Major legislation passed and signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom on Thursday aims to significantly reduce single-use plastic packaging in the state and drastically boost recycling rates for what remains. It sets the nation’s most stringent requirements for the use of plastic packaging, with lawmakers saying they hope it sets a precedent for other states to follow.

“We’re ruining the planet and we’ve got to change it,” Sen. Bob Hertzberg, a Democrat, said before voting on the bill.

Under the bill, plastic producers would have to reduce plastics in single-use products 10% by 2027,

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increasing to 25% by 2032. That reduction in plastic packaging can be met through a combination of reducing package sizing, switching to a different material or making the product easily reusable or refillable. Also by 2032, plastic would have to be recycled at a rate of 65%, a massive jump from today's rates. It wouldn't apply to plastic beverage bottles, which have their own recycling rules.

Efforts to limit plastic packaging have failed in the Legislature for years, but the threat of a similar ballot measure going before voters in November prompted business groups to come to the negotiating table. The measure's three main backers withdrew it from the ballot after the bill passed, though they expressed concern the plastics industry will try to weaken the requirements.

States have passed bans on single-use plastic grocery bags, straws and other items, and plastic water bottles soon won't be allowed in national parks. But the material is still ubiquitous, used in everything from laundry detergent and soap bottles to packaging for vegetables and lunch meats. Most plastic products in the United States are not recycled, with millions of tons ending up in landfills and the world's oceans. It harms wildlife and shows up in drinking water in the form of microplastics.

Marine animals that live off the Pacific coast from crabs to whales are ingesting plastics that make their way into the ocean, said Amy Wolfrum, California ocean policy senior manager at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. She called the bill a "fantastic start" to addressing a major problem.

Plastic makers would form their own industry group tasked with developing a plan to meet the requirements, which would need approval from the state's recycling department. They'll be required to collect \$500 million annually from producers for a fund aimed at cleaning up plastic pollution. Maine, Oregon and Colorado have similar producer responsibility systems.

It does not ban styrofoam food packaging but would require it to be recycled at a rate of 30% by 2028, which some supporters said is a de facto ban because the material can't be recycled. The ballot measure would have banned the material outright. It would have given more power to the state recycling agency to implement the rules rather than letting industry organize itself.

Sen. Ben Allen, a Santa Monica Democrat who led negotiations on the bill, said it represented an example of two groups that are often at odds — environmentalists and industry — coming together to make positive change.

He called it a "strong, meaningful compromise that will put California at the forefront of addressing a major global problem."

Though they withdrew their ballot initiative, the measure's proponents said they remain concerned that industry will try to water down the bill. The initiative's three backers were Linda Escalante of the Natural Resources Defense Council; Michael Sangiacomo, former head of the waste management company Recology; and Caryl Hart, a member of the California Coastal Commission.

Joshua Baca of the American Chemistry Council, which represents the plastics industry, said the bill unfairly caps the amount of post-consumer recycled plastic that can be used to meet the 25% reduction requirement and limits "new, innovative recycling technologies."

The bill bans incineration and combustion of plastic, but leaves open the possibility for some forms of so-called chemical recycling.

Judith Enck, president of Beyond Plastics, said while California's bill goes farther than any other state when it comes to reducing plastic pollution, it still falls short. She said it will only result in about a 10% reduction in overall packaging because producers can make products refillable or switch to other materials. She also said that it relies too heavily on failed plastics recycling policies.

Plastic production is supposed to triple globally by 2050, she said.

## WNBA's Brittney Griner goes on trial in Russian court

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — American basketball star Brittney Griner went on trial Friday, 4 1/2 months after her arrest on charges of possessing cannabis oil while returning to play for a Russian team, in a case that has unfolded amid tense relations between Moscow and Washington.

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The initial session of the trial, which was adjourned until July 7, offered the most extensive public interaction between Griner and reporters since the Phoenix Mercury center and two-time U.S. Olympic gold medalist was arrested in February at Moscow's Sheremetyevo International Airport.

Griner, 31, was escorted into the courtroom in the capital's suburb of Khimki while handcuffed, carrying a water bottle and what appeared to be a magazine, and wearing a Jimi Hendrix T-shirt.

Police have said she was carrying vape canisters with cannabis oil when detained at the airport. She could face up to 10 years in prison if convicted of large-scale transportation of drugs.

The state-owned Tass news agency quoted Griner as saying in court that she understood the charges against her. Asked by the judge if she wanted to enter a plea, Griner responded, "At this moment, no, your honor. At a later date," according to Mediazona, an independent news site known for its extensive coverage of high-profile court cases.

Fewer than 1% of defendants in Russian criminal cases are acquitted, and unlike in U.S. courts, acquittals can be overturned.

Two witnesses were questioned by the prosecution: an airport customs official, who spoke in open court, and an unidentified witness in a closed session. according to the state news agency RIA-Novosti. The trial was then adjourned, it said, when two other witnesses did not show up.

Alexander Boykov, an attorney for Griner, said outside court that he did not want to comment "on the specifics of the case and on the charges" because it was too early to do so.

Boikov also told RIA-Novosti that she has been exercising and taking walks in the detention area. The Russian website Business FM said that Griner, who smiled at times at reporters, said she wishes she could work out more and that she was struggling because she doesn't understand Russian. Besides the WNBA's Mercury, she played in Russia for UMMC Ekaterinburg.

Elizabeth Rood, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, was in court and said she spoke with Griner, who "is doing as well as can be expected in these difficult circumstances."

"The Russian Federation has wrongfully detained Brittney Griner," Rood said. "The practice of wrongful detention is unacceptable wherever it occurs and is a threat to the safety of everyone traveling, working, and living abroad."

She said the U.S. government, from its highest levels, "is working hard to bring Brittney and all wrongfully detained U.S. nationals home safely."

At a closed-door preliminary hearing Monday, Griner's detention was extended for another six months, to Dec. 20.

Her case comes at an extraordinarily low point in Moscow-Washington relations. Griner was arrested less than a week before Russia sent troops into Ukraine, which aggravated already high tensions between the two countries. The U.S. then imposed sweeping sanctions on Moscow, and Russia denounced the U.S. for sending weapons to Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Friday denied politics played a role in Griner's detention and prosecution.

"The facts are that the famous athlete was detained in possession of prohibited medication containing narcotic substances," Peskov told reporters. "In view of what I've said, it can't be politically motivated," he added.

Griner's supporters had kept a low profile in hopes of a quiet resolution until May, when the State Department reclassified her as wrongfully detained and shifted oversight of her case to its special presidential envoy for hostage affairs — effectively the U.S. government's chief negotiator.

Griner's wife, Cherelle, has urged President Joe Biden to secure her release, calling her "a political pawn."

"It was good to see her in some of those images, but it's tough. Every time's a reminder that their teammate, their friend, is wrongfully imprisoned in another country," Phoenix Mercury coach Vanessa Nygaard said Monday.

Griner's supporters have encouraged a prisoner swap like the one in April that brought home Marine veteran Trevor Reed in exchange for a Russian pilot convicted of drug trafficking conspiracy.

Russian news media have repeatedly raised speculation that she could be swapped for Russian arms

trader Viktor Bout, nicknamed "the Merchant of Death," who is serving a 25-year sentence on conviction of conspiracy to kill U.S. citizens and providing aid to a terrorist organization.

Russia has agitated for Bout's release for years. But the wide discrepancy between Griner's case — which involves alleged possession of vape cartridges containing cannabis oil — and Bout's global dealings in deadly weapons could make such a swap unpalatable to the U.S.

Others have suggested that she could be traded along with Paul Whelan, a former Marine and security director serving a 16-year sentence on an espionage conviction that the U.S. has repeatedly described as a setup.

## Monkeypox cases triple in Europe, WHO says, Africa concerned

By MARIA CHENG and FARAI MUTSAKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The World Health Organization's Europe chief warned Friday that monkeypox cases in the region have tripled in the last two weeks and urged countries to do more to ensure the previously rare disease does not become entrenched on the continent.

And African health authorities said they are treating the expanding monkeypox outbreak as an emergency, calling on rich countries to share limited supplies of vaccines to avoid equity problems seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHO Europe chief Dr. Hans Kluge said in a statement that increased efforts were needed despite the U.N. health agency's decision last week that the escalating outbreak did not yet warrant being declared a global health emergency.

"Urgent and coordinated action is imperative if we are to turn a corner in the race to reverse the ongoing spread of this disease," Kluge said.

To date, more than 5,000 monkeypox cases have been reported from 51 countries worldwide that don't normally report the disease, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Kluge said the number of infections in Europe represents about 90% of the global total, with 31 countries in the WHO's European region having identified cases.

Kluge said data reported to the WHO show that 99% of cases have been in men — the majority in men that have sex with men. But he said there were now "small numbers" of cases among household contacts, including children. Most people reported symptoms including a rash, fever, fatigue, muscle pain, vomiting and chills.

Scientists warn anyone who is in close physical contact with someone who has monkeypox or their clothing or bedsheets is at risk of infection. Vulnerable populations like children and pregnant women are thought more likely to suffer severe disease.

About 10% of patients were hospitalized for treatment or to be isolated, and one person was admitted to an intensive care unit. No deaths have been reported.

Kluge said the problem of stigmatization in some countries might make some people wary of seeking health care and said the WHO was working with partners including organizers of gay pride events.

In the U.K., which has the biggest monkeypox outbreak beyond Africa, officials have noted the disease is spreading in "defined sexual networks of gay, bisexual, or men who have sex with men." British health authorities said there were no signs suggesting sustained transmission beyond those populations.

A leading WHO adviser said in May that the spike in cases in Europe was likely tied to sexual activity by men at two rave parties in Spain and Belgium.

Ahead of gay pride events in the U.K. this weekend, London's top public health doctor asked people with symptoms of monkeypox, like swollen glands or blisters, to stay home.

Nevertheless in Africa the WHO says that according to detailed data from Ghana monkeypox cases were almost evenly split between men and women, and no spread has been detected among men who have sex with men.

WHO Europe director Kluge also said the procurement of vaccines "must apply the principles of equity."

The main vaccine being used against monkeypox was originally developed for smallpox and the Euro-

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pean Medicines Agency said this week it was beginning to evaluate whether it should be authorized for monkeypox. The WHO has said supplies of the vaccine, made by Bavarian Nordic, are extremely limited.

Countries including the U.K. and Germany have already begun vaccinating people at high risk of monkeypox; the U.K. recently widened its immunization program to mostly gay and bisexual men who have multiple sexual partners and are thought to be most vulnerable.

Until May, monkeypox had never been known to cause large outbreaks beyond parts of central and west Africa, where it's been sickening people for decades, is endemic in several countries and mostly causes limited outbreaks when it jumps to people from infected wild animals.

To date, there have been about 1,800 suspected monkeypox cases in Africa, including more than 70 deaths, but only 109 have been lab-confirmed. The lack of laboratory diagnosis and weak surveillance means many cases are going undetected.

"This particular outbreak for us means an emergency," said Ahmed Ogwell, the acting director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control.

The WHO says monkeypox has spread to African countries where it hasn't previously been seen, including South Africa, Ghana and Morocco. But more than 90% of the continent's infections are in Congo and Nigeria, according to WHO Africa director, Dr. Moeti Matshidiso.

Vaccines have never been used to stop monkeypox outbreaks in Africa; officials have relied mostly on contact tracing and isolation.

The WHO noted that similar to the scramble last year for COVID-19 vaccines, countries with supplies of vaccines for monkeypox are not yet sharing them with Africa.

"We do not have any donations that have been offered to (poorer) countries," said Fiona Braka, who heads the WHO emergency response team in Africa. "We know that those countries that have some stocks, they are mainly reserving them for their own populations."

Matshidiso said the WHO was in talks with manufacturers and countries with stockpiles to see if they might be shared.

"We would like to see the global spotlight on monkeypox act as a catalyst to beat this disease once and for all in Africa," she said Thursday.

## **Biden to award Medal of Freedom to Biles, McCain, Giffords**

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden will present the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, to 17 people, including actor Denzel Washington, gymnast Simone Biles and the late John McCain, the Arizona Republican with whom Biden served in the U.S. Senate.

Biden will also recognize Sandra Lindsay, the New York City nurse who rolled up her sleeve on live television in December 2020 to receive the first COVID-19 vaccine dose that was pumped into an arm in the United States, the White House announced Friday.

Biden's honors list, which the White House shared first with The Associated Press, includes both living and deceased honorees from the worlds of Hollywood, sports, politics, the military, academia, and civil rights and social justice advocacy.

The Democratic president will present the medals at the White House next week.

Biden himself is a medal recipient. President Barack Obama honored Biden's public service as a longtime U.S. senator and vice president by awarding him a Presidential Medal of Freedom in January 2017, a week before they left office.

The honorees who'll receive medals from Biden "have overcome significant obstacles to achieve impressive accomplishments in the arts and sciences, dedicated their lives to advocating for the most vulnerable among us, and acted with bravery to drive change in their communities, and across the world, while blazing trails for generations to come," the White House said.

The honor is reserved for people who have made exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values or security of the United States, world peace or other significant societal public or private endeavors, the White House said.

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Biles is the most decorated U.S. gymnast in history, winning 32 Olympic and World Championship medals. She is an outspoken advocate on issues that are very personal to her, including athletes' mental health, children in foster care and sexual assault victims.

Lindsay became an advocate for COVID-19 vaccinations after receiving the first dose in the U.S.

McCain, who died of brain cancer in 2018, spent more than five years in captivity in Vietnam while serving in the U.S. Navy. He later represented Arizona in both houses of Congress and was the Republican presidential nominee in 2008. Biden said McCain was a "dear friend" and "a hero."

Washington is a double Oscar-winning actor, director and producer. He also has a Tony award, two Golden Globes and the Cecil B. DeMille Lifetime Achievement Award. He is a longtime spokesperson for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

The other 13 medal recipients are:

— Sister Simone Campbell. Campbell is a member of the Sister of Social Service and a former executive director of NETWORK, a Catholic social justice organization. She is an advocate for economic justice, overhauling the U.S. immigration system and health care policy.

— Julieta Garcia. A former president of the University of Texas at Brownsville, Garcia was the first Latina to become a college president, the White House said. She was named one of the nation's best college presidents by Time magazine.

— Gabrielle Giffords. A former U.S. House member from Arizona, the Democrat founded Giffords, an organization dedicated to ending gun violence. She was shot in the head in January 2011 during a constituent event in Tucson and was gravely wounded.

— Fred Gray. Gray was one of the first Black members of the Alabama Legislature after Reconstruction. He was a prominent civil rights attorney who represented Rosa Parks, the NAACP and Martin Luther King Jr.

— Steve Jobs. Jobs was the co-founder, chief executive and chair of Apple Inc. He died in 2011.

— Father Alexander Karloutsos. Karloutsos is the assistant to Archbishop Demetrios of America. The White House said Karloutsos has counseled several U.S. presidents.

— Khizr Khan. An immigrant from Pakistan, Khan's Army officer son was killed in Iraq. Khan gained national prominence, and became a target of Donald Trump's wrath, after speaking at the 2016 Democratic National Convention.

— Diane Nash. A founding member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Nash organized some of the most important 20th century civil rights campaigns and worked with King.

— Megan Rapinoe. The Olympic gold medalist and two-time Women's World Cup soccer champion captains the OL Reign in the National Women's Soccer League. She is a prominent advocate for gender pay equality, racial justice and LGBTQI+ rights who has appeared at Biden's White House.

Rapinoe, who was at training camp in Denver when the White House called to inform her of the honor, thought she was getting a prank or robocall when she saw her phone say "White House," U.S. Soccer said in a statement. She showed her phone to a teammate, who encouraged her to answer the call.

— Alan Simpson. The retired U.S. senator from Wyoming served with Biden and has been a prominent advocate for campaign finance reform, responsible governance and marriage equality.

— Richard Trumka. Trumka had been president of the 12.5 million-member AFL-CIO for more than a decade at the time of his August 2021 death. He was a past president of the United Mine Workers.

— Wilma Vaught. A brigadier general, Vaught is one of the most decorated women in U.S. military history, breaking gender barriers as she has risen through the ranks. When Vaught retired in 1985, she was one of only seven female generals in the Armed Forces.

— Raúl Yzaguirre. A civil rights advocate, Yzaguirre was president and CEO of the National Council of La Raza for 30 years. He served as U.S. ambassador to the Dominican Republic under Obama.

## Same-sex couples updating legal status after abortion ruling

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Emails and phone calls from same-sex couples, worried about the legal status of their marriages and keeping their children, flooded attorney Sydney Duncan's office within hours of the

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Supreme Court's decision eliminating the constitutional right to abortion.

The ruling last week didn't directly affect the 2015 decision that paved the way for same-sex marriage. But, Duncan said, it was still a warning shot for families headed by same-sex parents who fear their rights could evaporate like those of people seeking to end a pregnancy.

"That has a lot of people scared and, I think, rightfully so," said Duncan, who specializes in representing members of the LGBTQ community at the Magic City Legal Center in Birmingham.

Overturning a nearly 50-year-old precedent, the Supreme Court ruled in a Mississippi case that abortion wasn't protected by the Constitution, a decision likely to lead to bans in about half the states. Justice Samuel Alito said the ruling involved only the medical procedure, writing: "Nothing in this opinion should be understood to cast doubt on precedents that do not concern abortion."

But conservative Justice Clarence Thomas called on his colleagues to reconsider cases that allowed same-sex marriage, gay sex and contraception.

The court's three most liberal members warn in their dissent that the ruling could be used to challenge other personal freedoms: "Either the mass of the majority's opinion is hypocrisy, or additional constitutional rights are under threat. It is one or the other."

That prospect alarms some LGBTQ couples, who worry about a return to a time when they lacked equal rights to married heterosexual couples under the law. Many, fearful that their marital status is in danger, are moving now to square away potential medical, parental and estate issues.

Dawn Betts-Green and wife Anna Green didn't waste time shoring up their legal paperwork after the decision. They've already visited a legal clinic for families with same-sex parents to start the process of making a will.

"That way, if they blast us back to the Dark Ages again, we have legal protections for our relationship," said Betts-Green, who works with an Alabama-based nonprofit that documents the history of LGBTQ people in the South.

As a white woman married to a Black transgender man, Robbin Reed of Minneapolis feels particularly vulnerable. A decision undermining same-sex marriage or interracial unions would completely upend Reed's life, which includes the couple's 3-month-old child.

"I have no expectation that anything about my marriage is safe," said Reed, a legal aide.

Reed's employer, Sarah Breiner of the Breiner Law Firm, is setting up seminars in both the Twin Cities and the Atlanta area to help same-sex couples navigate potential legal needs after the court's decision. Breiner said helping people remain calm about the future is part of her job these days.

"We don't know what might happen, and that's the problem," Breiner said.

In a sign of what could come, the state of Alabama already has cited the abortion ruling in asking a federal appeals court to let it enforce a new state law that makes it a felony for doctors to prescribe puberty blockers and hormones to trans people under age 19. The decision giving states the power to restrict abortion means states should also be able to ban medical treatments for transgender youth, the state claimed.

Any attempt to undo same-sex marriage would begin with a lawsuit, and any possible rollback is years away since no major legal threat is on the horizon, said Cathryn Oakley, senior counsel and state legislative director with the Washington-based Human Rights Campaign, an LGBTQ advocacy organization.

"This is definitely a scary moment and people are nervous, but peoples' marriages are still safe," Oakley said.

Although the threat to same-sex couples feels particularly acute in conservative states, Oakley said she's heard of people all over the country in recent days seeking second-parent adoptions, which protect a family by having the names of both adoptive parents on the birth certificate. People also are completing medical directives in case one spouse is incapacitated and doing general estate planning, she said.

Ryanne Seyba's law firm in Hollywood, Florida, is offering free second-parent adoptions, which are similar to step-parent adoptions, for qualified same-sex couples to help ease some of the stress caused by the possible ripple effects of the abortion decision.

"We realized last week when (the ruling) came out we needed to do something," said Seyba of The Upgrade Lawyers.

A judge in Broward County plans to have a special day in August to finalize all the adoptions at once, Seyba said. If nothing else, completing the process should give nervous families more security, she said.

"If gay marriage goes away, we don't really know what's going to happen," she said. "It's better to be on the safe side."

## NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week

By The Associated Press undefined

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these are legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the facts:

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Posts misrepresent 2019 'satirical' amendment to Kentucky abortion law

CLAIM: Kentucky is considering legislation that would require women to submit to the state every month a statement from a doctor indicating if they are pregnant — or else face penalties.

THE FACTS: The legislation was an amendment proposed in jest by a Democratic lawmaker in 2019 to express her opposition to a bill banning abortions, and was not seriously considered. The only two abortion clinics in Kentucky halted the procedure on June 24 after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. Kentucky in 2019 passed a law declaring that abortion would become illegal "effective immediately" if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned. The measure contains a narrow exception allowing a physician to perform a procedure necessary to prevent the death or permanent injury of a pregnant woman. But online, some are sharing screenshots of a proposed amendment to that 2019 bill that was introduced by Democratic state Rep. Mary Lou Marzian as satire — and never seriously pursued. The amendment called for requiring women who live in Kentucky to receive monthly statements from doctors stating whether they are pregnant. It also required that those records be submitted to the state, or women would face arrest and fines, and went so far as to propose ankle monitors for pregnant women who didn't comply. Posts circulating on Facebook, Twitter and TikTok in recent days misrepresented the amendment as an active and serious proposal. "They are trying to require ALL girls /women to get monthly physicals to prove you aren't pregnant. This is the most insane thing I've ever seen," reads one Facebook post. But Marzian reiterated this week that the measure was from 2019 and meant to serve as commentary on the bill banning abortions. "Totally satire," Marzian told The Associated Press by phone. "It was an amendment, it was never heard in committee, I had no intention of ever moving it." Marzian, who supports abortion rights, said she has filed several measures over the years that were satirical in nature and designed to make her political opponents look like "morons." A fixture in the Kentucky House for nearly 30 years, Marzian withdrew from her reelection campaign earlier this year.

— Associated Press writer Angelo Fichera in Philadelphia contributed this report.

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Pentagon statement on SCOTUS abortion ruling mischaracterized

CLAIM: The Pentagon stated that any abortion laws enacted as a result of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* will not be recognized.

THE FACTS: This mischaracterizes a June 24 statement on the ruling from Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, which did not say the Pentagon would defy the court, nor did it say it would violate any state laws that may be enacted. Misleading posts about the Pentagon's response spread widely online shortly after the Supreme Court handed down its decision on abortion. While many popular posts did not share a source for the information, some vaguely cited news articles describing Austin's statement. "Nothing is more important to me or to this Department than the health and well-being of our Service members, the civilian workforce and DOD families," read the statement, which as of this week was the only official communication from the Pentagon on the matter. "I am committed to taking care of our people and ensuring



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the readiness and resilience of our Force. The Department is examining this decision closely and evaluating our policies to ensure we continue to provide seamless access to reproductive health care as permitted by federal law." The Twitter account BNN Newsroom on June 25 wrote in a since-deleted post that, "The Pentagon has stated that any abortion laws enacted as a result of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision will not be recognized." BNN did not respond to a request for comment. Later that day, the Twitter account Occupy Democrats also misinterpreted the content of the Pentagon release, tweeting, "President Biden's Pentagon defies the extremist Supreme Court, announces that it will not recognize any anti-abortion laws enacted by states as a result of the Supreme Court's decision." Occupy Democrats followed up with a tweet on June 26 linking to an article about Austin's statement with the caption "source." However, the brief article also did not suggest the statement meant the Pentagon was defying the court. Occupy Democrats did not return requests for comment. Pentagon spokesperson Maj. Charlie Dietz told the AP that claims the Pentagon is "ignoring the law are completely false." He pointed to Austin's statement, which he said was "the only statement made regarding the court cases," but declined to comment further. The court's overturning of the landmark Roe v. Wade ruling is likely to lead to abortion bans in roughly half the states. Kyndra K. Rotunda, a Chapman University professor who runs the school's Military and Veterans Law Institute, said the claims circulating online did not appear to be correct, adding that she saw no evidence in the statement, or otherwise, that the military would "refuse to follow state law." "I read Secretary Lloyd's statement to mean no more than what he says: they're going to explore it further," Rotunda wrote in an email to the AP. TRICARE, the health care program for service members, retirees and their families, covers abortions in cases of rape, incest or if a woman's life is in danger. The U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs website states that "Under current regulation, VA doesn't provide abortion or abortion counseling." Under existing federal law, a military member can seek an abortion outside of a military facility, in accordance with state law where they are located, but the Pentagon will not fund or perform the procedure except in cases of rape, incest or if a woman's life is in danger, Rotunda explained.

— Associated Press writers Sophia Tulp in New York and Josh Kelety in Phoenix contributed this report.

Bricks were stored on DC street for pre-scheduled construction

CLAIM: A photo shows pallets of bricks along a Washington, D.C., street that were intentionally placed in the area to encourage violent protesting after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade.

THE FACTS: The bricks were stored along the road for work on an unrelated construction project that had been planned months in advance. Residents were notified of the project about 10 days prior to June 24, the day the court released its decision. Hours after the Supreme Court removed constitutional protections for abortion, false claims spread online resurfacing an old, misleading narrative that pallets of bricks were being intentionally placed in U.S. streets, with the suggestion that they were planted to incite violence during expected protests. The idea previously circulated widely online during protests against racial injustice throughout the summer of 2020, and again in 2021 linked to protests in Kenosha, Wisconsin. On June 24, U.S. Rep. Lauren Boebert, a Republican Congresswoman from Colorado, tweeted a photo of the bricks and named the Capitol Police, asking them "why are there 20 pallets of bricks one block from the House Office Buildings?" While Boebert didn't ascribe a motive to the bricks' placement, many commenting and sharing her message did. "Meanwhile, someone paid to haul pallets of bricks in and deposited them just 2 blocks from the Capitol offices?" wrote one user. "It's as if they want violence and riot," commented another. But the claims are false. The bricks were stored along the 400 block of First Street by an alley paving contractor under a permit issued by the District Department of Transportation for an ongoing construction project. While the beginning of the project coincided with the day the Supreme Court announced the decision on abortion, the work had been scheduled well in advance, according to a spokesperson for DDOT and official notices sent by the agency and reviewed by The Associated Press. Geolocation data accessed through Google Maps confirms the image being shared online was taken along the 400 block of First Street, and a map of ongoing road projects published by DDOT also lists the same stretch as an alley currently under construction. A letter sent to residents and businesses along the construction route

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dated June 16 explained that DDOT was beginning an alley improvement project "on or about Thursday, June 23, 2022." The notice specified that the project would "include concrete/brick work." Reached on the phone Monday, the owner of a business located along the construction site, who did not want to be named, confirmed they received the notice, and said ongoing work was being done on the street. Even so, it was not known exactly when, or if, the Supreme Court would deliver a decision on the abortion case. The court on June 22 added June 24 as an additional decision day. Mariam Nabizad, a public affairs specialist for DDOT, told the AP that stacks of bricks were placed along the block the morning of June 24 "for scheduled and ongoing alley restoration work" by its contractors. "Our teams wrapped the stacks in plastic at the close of that work day, and also removed them from the area Saturday night," Nabizad wrote in an email. She added that the project work was identified on Sept. 7, 2021, and included in the city's PaveDC Plan that was distributed in October 2021.

— Sophia Tulp

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Tennessee lab isn't trying to open a portal to a parallel universe

CLAIM: Scientists at a laboratory in Tennessee are trying to figure out whether parallel universes exist by attempting to open a portal into another dimension.

THE FACTS: Scientists at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in eastern Tennessee conducted an experiment in 2019 to study a type of "exotic" neutron behavior, which some news outlets and social media posts inaccurately referred to as searching for "portals" to "parallel" realities. One such widely-shared post claimed the researchers were conducting an experiment straight out of a science fiction movie. "Scientists in Tennessee working at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in eastern Tennessee, have announced that they're trying to figure out whether or not parallel universes exist," claimed the Facebook post, which received more than 130,000 shares. "They revealed that they're trying to open a portal into another dimension." But the researchers say that claim really is fiction. "My reaction to reading a headline like that is to say, 'well, that sounds really cool. I wonder what they're doing because it really doesn't sound like my research,'" joked Leah Broussard, the scientist at Oak Ridge National Laboratory who led the project. Sara Shoemaker, a spokesperson for the lab, added that, while an entertaining idea, the research doesn't have anything to do with portals or parallel universes the way they've been described online. "A 'portal' in this case is a figurative concept used in the physics community," explained Shoemaker. "The team's experiments were not exploring a literal portal to a parallel universe." The research actually involved searching for potential interactions between neutrons and a type of theorized dark matter called "mirror matter." The theorized mirror sector, sometimes called a mirror universe, is thought to be "just another copy of the particles and the interactions we have in our universe," Broussard explained. She said that it is not the same thing as a parallel universe because it would exist in the same spacetime as, and "very much part of," our universe. She said her team sought to test a potential hypothesis that neutrons could, in some cases, be transforming into mirror neutrons, the dark-matter twin. Broussard's team designed an experiment to see if they could "watch neutrons going through a wall" that would normally stop them, she said. The process of the neutrons being sent through the wall has been figuratively described as moving through a "portal," but that doesn't mean that the neutrons are being sent to a mysterious other dimension, separate from our own, both she and Shoemaker said. Shoemaker added that past reporting by news outlets "had fun taking liberties with the concept," comparing the so-called portal to a doorway accessing alternate realities and other Hollywood tropes. Ultimately, the team did not observe any neutrons on the other side of the wall, meaning this particular experiment did not find evidence of such "mirror neutrons." Those results were outlined in the peer-reviewed, scientific journal Physical Review Letters in May.

## Court leaves dwindling paths for Biden's climate mission

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than 500 days into his presidency, Joe Biden's hope for saving the Earth from the most devastating effects of climate change may not quite be dead.

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But it's not far from it.

A Supreme Court ruling Thursday not only limited the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to regulate climate pollution by power plants but also suggests the court is poised to block other efforts by Biden and federal agencies to limit the climate-wrecking fumes emitted by oil, gas and coal.

It's a blow to Biden's commitment to slash emissions in the few years scientists say are left to stave off worse and deadlier levels of global warming. And it's a sign, to Democrats at home and allies abroad, of the dwindling options remaining for Biden to reverse the legacy of President Donald Trump, who mocked the science of climate change. Trump's three Supreme Court appointees provided half of the affirmative votes in Thursday's 6-3 ruling.

After the ruling, a veteran Democratic lawmaker acknowledged he saw little hope of Congress producing any meaningful climate legislation, either. "There's no easy fix from Congress from this mess," Rhode Island Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse said. The foreign allies whom Biden once spoke of leading to a global clean-power transformation are wondering if the United States can even lead itself.

The climate decision in some ways "may have broader impacts at least on the European populace that this is a country that, A: can't get things done and B: is going in a really bizarre direction domestically," said Max Bergmann, director of the Europe program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

And in a Houston neighborhood entering hurricane season, a man who had spent four decades advocating for the Black communities and other communities of color and poorer communities hit hardest by pollution and the record heat, cold, floods and storms of climate change reacted to the ruling like many others did — saying salvaging climate efforts depends on Biden now, and his willingness to act and lead.

"This is real," said Robert Bullard, an academic who became a pioneer in what became the U.S. environmental justice movement, of the multiplying natural disasters — the kind scientists say are influenced by the heating atmosphere -- wrecking cities on America's vulnerable Gulf of Mexico.

"Those communities that have been flooded out...some of those communities still have blue tarps on their houses," Bullard said. "So I don't think the Supreme Court and some of our elected officials are speaking about the urgency of where we are when it comes to our climate."

Biden's EPA still has meaningful moves left to make, but it must move quickly, Eric Schaeffer, a former director of civil enforcement at the agency, said in a statement. Among them: Speed up a new rule limiting carbon pollution from power plants, make long overdue updates to standards on toxic discharges from the plants and move faster to crack down on leaks of climate-damaging methane in natural gas as the Biden administration has already promised.

After Thursday's ruling, the EPA pledged to put forward a new proposed carbon rule for power plants by early next year.

Biden has pledged to cut the nation's greenhouse gas emissions in half by the end of the decade and to have an emissions-free power sector by 2035.

"Our fight against climate change must carry forward, and it will," Biden said in a statement after the ruling that offered no guarantees of success.

His team would "find ways that we can, under federal law, continue protecting Americans" from pollution and climate change, Biden said.

The dismay expressed at the Supreme Court action by many among what is a majority of people in America who say they care deeply about climate change reflected this was only the latest setback to Biden's early promises to slash emissions.

A divided Congress already handed Biden what's been the worst climate defeat of his term so far when two Democrats, including coal-state lawmaker Joe Manchin, joined Senate Republicans in refusing to pass Biden's Build Back Better package.

Climate parts of the legislation were meant to kickstart America's transformation into a land of electric cars, clean industry and energy-efficient buildings. Biden was able to move forward some smaller parts of his proposal, including electric car chargers.

And this year, in a development as dangerous for Biden's early climate hopes as the Supreme Court

ruling, a global oil and gas supply crunch has sent gas prices ping-pong off record highs. It's fueled inflation and voter anger against Biden, and potentially other Democrats.

The energy shortfall left Biden scrambling for additional oil and gas. It's also left it unclear whether he still feels he has the political capital to lead the U.S. move to renewable energy as decisively as he promised as a candidate and in his first months in office.

The ruling left policy experts, lawmakers and ordinary people saying Biden, Democrats and climate-minded Republicans still have some routes left to push through climate efforts.

One is ambitious, shrewd executive action — if Biden dares — to push through carefully targeted emission-cutting steps.

A second is climate action by California and the other blue states that earlier swung into action to challenge Trump's climate rollbacks in court.

A third option is a pitch that Biden and Democrats are throwing to voters more and more — elect enough Democrats in the midterms to allow Congress to pass laws thwarting rollbacks by conservatives, in Congress and on the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court ruling came as Biden was savoring a successful gathering with NATO allies, who have rallied behind the U.S. in confronting Russia's invasion of Ukraine. After Biden's early proclamations in summits at the outset of his term that "America is back!," the setback in the Supreme Court underscored to allies how vulnerable the U.S. president remains on the domestic front, including when it comes to fulfilling climate commitments.

As the ruling was released, Biden envoy John Kerry was flying out after an oceans conference in Portugal, still working for global and country-by-country commitments to cut emissions. Like Biden, Kerry's pledges on U.S. climate ambitions have grown more muted as obstacles grow.

The domestic climate setbacks have helped slow early global momentum for climate breakthroughs. They've weakened U.S. leverage as Kerry presses countries including China to swing away from coal and other damaging fossil fuels — something Biden had pledged the U.S. would lead on by example.

## Abortion, women's rights grow as priorities: AP-NORC poll

By HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new poll finds a growing percentage of Americans calling out abortion or women's rights as priorities for the government in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, especially among Democrats and those who support abortion access.

With midterm elections looming, President Joe Biden and Democrats will seek to capitalize on that shift.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in remarks immediately after the decision that "reproductive freedom is on the ballot in November." But with pervasive pessimism and a myriad of crises facing the nation, it's not clear whether the ruling will break through to motivate those voters — or just disappoint them.

"It does feel like a major setback," said 26-year-old Lauren Nelson of San Diego, who has been worrying about the environment her young niece will grow up in. She doesn't think the midterms will change the course that states are on. "You can't help but feel kind of helpless, as though there's not much that can be done."

Twenty-two percent of U.S. adults name abortion or women's rights in an open-ended question as one of up to five problems they want the government to work on, according to the poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. That's more than doubled since December, when an AP-NORC poll found a notable uptick in mentions of abortion from years before, likely in anticipation of the *Dobbs* ruling on abortion.

The new poll, which included interviews conducted before and after the Supreme Court's ruling, finds prioritization of the issues grew sharply following the decision.

The *Dobbs* ruling kicks decision-making on abortion back to states, and in the last week, Republican governors and legislatures have moved to introduce or advance legislation that bans or curtails abortions.

Polling conducted before the decision showed it was unpopular with a majority of Americans, who wanted

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to see the court leave Roe as is. A majority of Americans support abortion access in general, though many say there should be restrictions. About a third say abortion should be legal in all cases, roughly another third legal in most cases, about a quarter illegal in most cases. About 1 in 10 say it should be illegal in all cases.

Mentions of abortion specifically are not limited to Americans who support abortion rights; instead, the poll shows abortion is named as a priority by roughly a quarter of adults with hardline opinions on both sides of the issue — those who think abortion should be legal in all cases and those who think abortion should be illegal in all cases.

Earnestine Smith, a 68-year-old resident of Waukegan, Illinois, said the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe represents progress. The issue is one of her highest priorities right now.

"We want abortion abolished and done away with," she said. "We got to stand up and say no."

Still, it's significant that those with the most liberal views on abortion and those with the most conservative views are about equally likely to prioritize the issue; historically, research has shown opponents of abortion have been more likely to consider the issue important to them than those supporting abortion access.

And the new poll finds mentions of women's rights are almost exclusively by those who think abortion should be legal.

According to the poll, the percentage of women prioritizing abortion or women's rights was already higher in interviews conducted before the ruling than six months ago, 21% vs. 9% in December; it swelled to 37% in the days after. Mentions grew sharply among men, too, but the growth was concentrated in the wake of the ruling, from 6% in interviews conducted before to 21% after.

Lyle Gist said he wouldn't have thought of abortion as a top priority a few years ago. The court decision to overturn Roe, though unsurprising, makes it a major issue.

"I think the ramifications of this are substantial," said 36-year-old Gist of Los Angeles. Gist thinks that there will be ripple effects, including a "mass exodus" of people moving out of states with abortion bans.

In a small town in Louisiana in 1968, when abortion was illegal, Anne Jones carried a pregnancy to term and gave her daughter up for adoption. Jones, now 74 in Plano, Texas, worries about what the Republican Party might go after next -- like birth control -- and thinks it's hypocritical that lawmakers like Texas Gov. Greg Abbott want to "hold the woman accountable for the child that she may not be able to afford to keep" even as they limit health and social services for women and children.

"Politics in Texas has taken a wrong turn," she said. She wants to see abortion access made national law but remains skeptical that Biden and Democrats can do so.

The poll shows these issues have been increasingly important to Democrats, growing from just 3% in 2020 to 13% in 2021 and now 33%. In interviews before the ruling, 18% of Democrats mentioned abortion or women's rights; that was 42% after.

Among Republicans, 11% identify abortion or women's rights as a priority in the new poll, a modest increase from 5% who said that in December.

Steven Lefemine, who protests outside the Planned Parenthood in Columbia, South Carolina, called Roe's reversal a "major benchmark" but said lawmakers needed to do much more, including pursuing a constitutional amendment to protect unborn children.

"I'd like to see legislation that lives up to God's word," he said.

Biden and Democrats have vowed to fight for abortion access, but they've struggled with how to act given crippling opposition from Republicans in a sharply divided Senate. Biden said to reporters on Thursday that he would support an exception to the filibuster rule to codify Roe into law.

Roderick Hinton, who voted for Biden, wants to see the president move on court reform, saying the court's decisions "are not matching today's time." He was angry after the court overturned Roe -- that the older generation is "putting the screws" to younger Americans, including his two daughters.

Biden commissioned a review of the Supreme Court after promising to do so on the campaign trail, a response to rhetoric within the Democratic Party about expanding the court following former President Donald Trump's three conservative appointments. The report released last year exercised caution about

proposals to expand the court or set term limits.

"Their lifetime position is really crazy," Hinton said. "As neutral as the courts were, it's now becoming political. Their personal beliefs are being put in place."

## Zoroastrians confront depletion of their ancient faith

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Among the world's present-day religions, Zoroastrianism, founded more than 3,000 years ago, is one of the most ancient and historically influential. Yet even though its adherents maintain vibrant communities on four continents, they acknowledge their numbers are dauntingly small — perhaps 125,000 worldwide.

Starting Friday, about 1,200 attendees from 16 countries will be assessing their faith's prospects during the four-day World Zoroastrian Congress in New York City, the first one held in the United States since 2000.

The agenda reflects a keen awareness of the challenges facing their religion. Prospects for growth are limited, given that Zoroastrians don't seek to convert outsiders and — in many cases — don't consider the children of mixed marriages to be members of the faith. Yet there's also some cause for optimism.

"Have we ever been in a time like this?" wondered Arzan Sam Wadia, a Mumbai-born, New York-based architect who is co-chair of the congress.

"Should we all despair and give up — 'We can't do anything, let's just die peacefully' — or do we have hope for the future?" he told The Associated Press.

Here's some basic information about the faith:

### HISTORY

Founded more than 3,000 years ago, Zoroastrianism is one of the oldest monotheistic religions still in existence, predating Christianity and Islam by many centuries. Details of its origin are imprecise, however.

The prophet Zoroaster, also known as Zarathustra, is revered as the founder of the faith, which became dominant in Persia before Arab Muslims conquered the region in the 7th century.

Wary of persecution, many Zoroastrians left for destinations in western India, notably Mumbai and Gujarat. India's Zoroastrian population — known as Parsis — is larger than that of any other country, though the numbers there are declining while they increase in North America, Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

### BELIEFS

At its core, Zoroastrianism emphasizes a never-ending battle between good and evil — a contest between the religion's God, Ahura Mazda, and an evil spirit, Ahriman. Believers have the freedom to make good or bad choices; they were exhorted by Zoroaster to think good thoughts, say good words and do good deeds.

Scholars say these tenets and other aspects of Zoroastrianism had significant influence on other religions, notably Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism.

"You have these ideas that have fundamentally shaped Western society," said Jamsheed Choksy, a professor of Central Eurasian Studies at Indiana University. "Fighting the good fight, a purpose of existing to do good, to make the world flourish, to work together, to respect and love each other ... all that goes back to Zarathustra."

Traditional temples house a sacred fire intended to burn perpetually. Another ancient custom: raised, circular structures known as Towers of Silence, where dead bodies were placed to decompose rather than being buried.

### CULTURE

The Nowruz holiday, which incorporates ancient Zoroastrian traditions and marks the Persian New Year, remains a major event on the Iranian calendar. It is widely celebrated, on or around March 21, in other regions that once were part of the Persian empire.

For Zoroastrians who left Iran and settled in India or eventually in more distant regions, their communities became renowned for producing entrepreneurs and philanthropists. Becoming wealthy was encouraged within the faith, but with the proviso that riches should be used to help others.

Jamsetji Tata, born in India in 1839, became one of the most prominent industrialists and philanthro-

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pists of the 19th century, and the Tata Group that he founded is one of the world's largest multinational conglomerates.

Another flourishing conglomerate, the Wadia Group, was founded by Parsi shipbuilder Lovji Wadia in 1736. The company built scores of war vessels for Britain; its holdings today include a fashion magazine, a cricket team and manufacturers of textiles and biscuits.

However the most famous Parsi of modern times was neither an entrepreneur nor industrialist: Freddie Mercury, the legendary lead vocalist of the rock band Queen, was born Farrokh Bulsara in 1946 to parents from Gujarat who were living in Zanzibar.

## FUTURE

The possibility of further shrinkage of the global Zoroastrian community will be very much on the minds of attendees at the New York congress.

Several sessions will focus on Zoroastrians in their 20s and 30s. In describing the gathering, organizers promised that participants will come away "reassured that the destiny of the faith is secure in the hands of passionate and visionary young Zoroastrians."

Other topics on the agenda include entrepreneurship, interfaith collaboration and the role of women.

Wadia, the congress' co-chair, who is not related to the family behind the Wadia Group, has leading roles in two separate initiatives aimed at strengthening the religion's prospects.

One is a global survey being conducted by SOAS University of London that aims to shed light on factors that are promoting or inhibiting Zoroastrianism's growth and vitality.

Wadia also is program director of Zoroastrian Return To Roots, which organizes trips to India for young Zoroastrians who want to learn more about their religion's history and culture.

Wadia is convinced the faith will survive, but perhaps while undergoing major changes. In North America, for example, he believes that adherence to specific cultural traditions might diminish, even as Zoroastrians maintain a basic set of spiritual guidelines.

SOAS University's Almut Hintze, a professor of Zoroastrianism, has described the global community as "microscopically small" and worries about the decline of Parsis in India.

"However, Zoroastrians are doing well in the global diaspora," she said via email. "It could well be that numbers are going to stabilise, although secularisation and the marriage laws pose threats."

Choksy, the Indiana University professor, sees North America as the most promising region for growth. He estimates that the United States and Canada are now home to more than 30,000 Zoroastrians, higher than the latest figure for Iran.

"North America is where there's hope," Choksy said. "It's partly due to immigration, but also the communities have more children, they feel more stable. It's the bright light."

## COVID cases up by more than 30% in Britain last week

LONDON (AP) — The number of new coronavirus cases across Britain has surged by more than 30% in the last week, new data showed Friday, with cases largely driven by the super infectious omicron variants.

Data released by Britain's Office for National Statistics showed that more than 3 million people in the U.K. had COVID-19 last week, although there has not been an equivalent spike in hospitalizations. The number of COVID-19 deaths also fell slightly in the last week.

"COVID-19 has not gone away," said Dr. Mary Ramsay, of the Health Security Agency. "It is also sensible to wear a face covering in crowded, enclosed spaces," she said. Britain dropped nearly all its coronavirus measures, including mask-wearing and social distancing months ago and masks are rarely seen on public transport.

The latest jump in coronavirus cases comes after an earlier increase of about 40% last month, following the large street parties, concerts and festivities held to mark the platinum jubilee celebrations marking 70 years of Queen Elizabeth II's reign.

British officials said the latest wave of COVID-19 infections were likely caused by omicron subvariants BA.4. and BA.5. Omicron has tended to cause a milder disease than previous variants like alpha or delta,

but scientists warn its ability to evade the immune system means that people may be more susceptible to being reinfected, including after vaccination.

"The constant bombardment of waves we are seeing does cause clinical impact that is not to be underestimated," said Dr. Stephen Griffin, an associate professor of medicine at the University of Leeds, explaining that any infection can lead to long COVID.

Despite widespread immunization across Britain, the protection from vaccines is likely fading and omicron and its subvariants have evolved to become more infectious. Britain's Health Security Agency said they were seeing more outbreaks in care homes for older people and a rise in admissions to intensive care units of people over 65.

Dr. Jonathan Van-Tam, a former deputy chief medical officer for the U.K., told the BBC that COVID-19 is now "much, much, much closer to seasonal flu" than when it first emerged. Still, he said experts should be vigilant for any signs the virus was causing more severe illness.

Germany's Robert Koch Institute also reported a similar rise in the coronavirus, with cases increasing especially among older people, children and teenagers. France has seen a jump in the COVID-19 hospitalization rate and officials recently recommended that people begin wearing masks again on public transport.

Globally, the World Health Organization said this week that COVID-19 is increasing in more than 100 countries worldwide. The U.N. health agency warned that relaxed testing and surveillance measures mean it may be more difficult to catch emerging variants before they spread more widely.

## **Pope appoints first cardinal from Amazon rainforest**

by FABIANO MAISONNAVE and NICOLE WINFIELD undefined

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — When the Archbishop of the Brazilian city of Manaus Leonardo Steiner kneels before Pope Francis on August 27, the Brazilian clergyman will make history as the first cardinal to come from the Amazon region.

"The communities feel that the distance between Rome and the Amazon is now smaller," Steiner told The Associated Press in a written interview. "Perhaps this is the reason for the Amazonian people's joy with Pope Francis' move."

Steiner attributed his selection to four priorities of the pope: the desire to do more missionary work in the Amazon and to be attentive to the poor; to care for the Amazon "as our common home" and to be a Church that "knows how to contribute to the autonomy of Indigenous people."

Sprawling across nine countries, the Amazon region is larger than the European Union. It is home to 34 million people, of whom more than three million are Indigenous, belonging to around 400 ethnic groups, according to the Catholic Church.

There is a religious lens through which to see the acute environmental struggles playing out in the region as well: The Catholic Church's socio-environmental agenda is a contentious issue with numerous Brazilian Pentecostal churches. These have a powerful caucus in Brazil's parliament and have embraced the pro-agrobusiness beef caucus in Congress. Both Pentecostals and cattle industry advocates belong to far-right President Jair Bolsonaro's political base.

Cardinals are the most senior clergy below the pope. Often called "red hats" because of the color of their skullcaps, they serve as papal advisors. More important, together they select each pope, the leader of the world's 1.3 billion Catholics.

For observers of the church, it will come as no surprise that Francis has finally named an Amazonian cardinal, given the importance the region has had for his papacy and the attention he has shown it.

### **POPE FRANCIS' ENVIRONMENTAL AWAKENING**

Francis was first moved by the plight of the vast Amazon basin in 2007, during the Episcopal Council of Latin American Bishops Conference, according to the Brazilian priest and historian José Oscar Beozzo. Francis was at that time the archbishop of Buenos Aires, and helped write the official account of the conference. The final text advocates for the preservation of both the Amazon and Antarctica.

Francis then dedicated an entire synod, or meeting, of bishops from the region in 2019. In his environ-



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mental awakening, crystallized in his 2015 encyclical "Praised Be," he advocates for the preservation of the region's biodiversity and portrays Indigenous peoples as forest guardians. In 2018, he also visited Madre de Dios, a region in the Peruvian Amazon devastated by illegal mining and logging.

The pope made Steiner archbishop of Manaus just after the Amazon synod ended, tapping a Franciscan who clearly shares the same ethos and ideology as the pope's namesake, St. Francis. The pope may have noticed Steiner because he had a prominent position in the Brazilian bishops' conference and was acting as its secretary-general from 2011-2019. He also has serious Roman credentials, having served as the secretary general of the Franciscans' Pontifical Antonianum University in Rome, one of the major pontifical universities.

## CATHOLIC BISHOPS FROM AMAZON REGION MEET IN ROME

The Amazon synod was also notable for the theft of three Indigenous statues featuring a naked pregnant woman, that were part of a procession in the Vatican at the start of the meeting. Conservative critics had blasted the synod's "pagan" prayers and idolatry, and early one morning, thieves entered a Vatican-area church where the statues were displayed and tossed them into the Tiber River.

Francis publicly apologized to the Indigenous leaders present for the theft, and the statues were dredged from the river in time for the end of the meeting. One was placed prominently on display in the synod hall as the synod fathers voted on the final recommendations.

The main thief, an Austrian far-right activist Alexander Tschugguel, went on to become something of a celebrity within the traditionalist opposition to Francis because of the stunt. In the years since, the stunt itself has come to crystalize the loathing that conservatives and traditionalists have for this pope, where even crimes are justified to save the faithful from his "heresy."

## THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE AMAZON RAINFOREST

The Catholic Church's relationship with the Amazon began in 1617 when Franciscan missionaries arrived in the coastal region of Belem. Their opposition to the enslavement of Indigenous peoples strained the relationship with Portuguese authorities, who expelled Catholic missionaries from the region on three occasions, last in 1759.

In the beginning, Catholic denominations required missionaries to learn Indigenous languages to work in the Amazon and spread Christianity. Jesuit priests went as far as creating Nheengatu, a language based on the Tupi Indigenous language adapted with Portuguese words and grammar. For a time it became the most common language in the Amazon and remains spoken in some regions.

For Bezzo, the historian, Pope Francis is promoting a kind of "patriarchy" in the Amazon, similar to the five patriarchies in places such as Jerusalem and Constantinople during the early Middle Ages, an effort to elevate the status of the Amazon within the Catholic structure.

The synod, the creation in 2020 of the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon Region and now Steiner's elevation are all part of Francis' goal of placing the world's largest rainforest center stage, Bezzo said.

"His choice begins a very important moment of considering the Amazon as a region with its own church dynamics, one which welcomes the prominence of the region's Indigenous peoples."

Steiner, 71, is one of 21 new Cardinals announced by Pope Francis in late May. They include Giorgio Marengo, who has been the apostolic prefect of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Robert McElroy, bishop of San Diego and Peter Okpaleke, bishop of Ekwulobia, Nigeria.

Winfield reported from Rome.

Associated Press climate and environmental coverage receives support from several private foundations. See more about AP's climate initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Today in History: July 2, Amelia Earhart disappears

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, July 2, the 183rd day of 2022. There are 182 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 2, 1937, aviator Amelia Earhart and navigator Fred Noonan disappeared over the Pacific Ocean

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while attempting to make the first round-the-world flight along the equator.

On this date:

In 1566, French astrologer, physician and professed prophet Nostradamus died in Salon (sah-LOHN').

In 1776, the Continental Congress passed a resolution saying that "these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States."

In 1881, President James A. Garfield was shot by Charles J. Guiteau (gee-TOH') at the Washington railroad station; Garfield died the following September. (Guiteau was hanged in June 1882.)

In 1917, rioting erupted in East St. Louis, Illinois, as white mobs attacked Black residents; nearly 50 people, mostly Blacks, are believed to have died in the violence.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law a sweeping civil rights bill passed by Congress.

In 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Gregg v. Georgia, ruled 7-2 that the death penalty was not inherently cruel or unusual.

In 1979, the Susan B. Anthony dollar coin was released to the public.

In 1986, ruling in a pair of cases, the Supreme Court upheld affirmative action as a remedy for past job discrimination.

In 1990, more than 1,400 Muslim pilgrims were killed in a stampede inside a pedestrian tunnel near Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

In 1997, Academy Award-winning actor James Stewart died in Beverly Hills, California, at age 89.

In 2018, rescue divers in Thailand found 12 boys and their soccer coach, who had been trapped by flooding as they explored a cave more than a week earlier.

In 2020, a statement posted on his Twitter account revealed that former GOP presidential candidate Herman Cain was being treated for the coronavirus at an Atlanta-area hospital, less than two weeks after attending President Donald Trump's campaign rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma. (Cain died on July 30 of complications from the virus.) British socialite Ghislaine Maxwell was arrested in New Hampshire on charges that she had helped lure at least three girls – one as young as 14 – to be sexually abused by the late financier Jeffrey Epstein. (Maxwell would be convicted on five of six counts.)

Ten years ago: Jim Yong Kim began his new job as president of the World Bank, promising to immediately focus on helping poor countries navigate a fragile global economy. The U.S. Justice Department said British drugmaker GlaxoSmithKline would pay \$3 billion in fines for criminal and civil violations involving 10 drugs taken by millions of people.

Five years ago: New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie was photographed with his family soaking up the sun on a beach he had closed to the public for the Fourth of July weekend because of a government shutdown.

One year ago: After nearly 20 years, U.S. forces in Afghanistan vacated the biggest U.S. air base there, Bagram Airfield, as part of the final U.S. withdrawal from the country; an Afghan official said dozens of looters then stormed through the gates before Afghan forces regained control. The city of North Miami Beach ordered the evacuation of a condominium building after a review found unsafe conditions about 5 miles from the site of the deadly building collapse eight days earlier. The Supreme Court declined to take up the case of a florist who refused to provide services for a same-sex wedding, leaving in place a decision that she broke Washington state anti-discrimination laws.

Today's Birthdays: Former Philippine first lady Imelda Marcos is 93. Jazz musician Ahmad Jamal is 92. Actor Robert Ito is 91. Actor Polly Holliday is 85. Racing Hall of Famer Richard Petty is 85. Former White House chief of staff and former New Hampshire governor John H. Sununu is 83. Former Mexican President Vicente Fox is 80. Writer-director-comedian Larry David is 75. Luci Baines Johnson, daughter of President Lyndon B. Johnson, is 75. Actor Saul Rubinek is 74. Rock musician Roy Bittan (Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band) is 73. Actor Wendy Schaal is 68. Actor-model Jerry Hall is 66. Actor Jimmy McNichol is 61. Country singer Guy Penrod is 59. Rock musician Dave Parsons (Bush) is 57. Actor Yancy Butler is 52. Contemporary Christian musician Melodee DeVevo (Casting Crowns) is 46. Actor Owain (OH'-wyn) Yeoman is 44. Race car driver Sam Hornish Jr. is 43. NHL center Joe Thornton is 43. Singer Michelle Branch is 39. Actor Vanessa Lee Chester is 38. Figure skater Johnny Weir is 38. Actor Nelson Franklin is 37. Actor-singer Ashley Tisdale is 37. Actor Lindsay Lohan (LOH'-uhn) is 36. Actor Margot Robbie is 32. U.S. Olympic swimmer Ryan Murphy is 27.