

# Groton Daily Independent

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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

**Groton Daily Independent**

**PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445**

**Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460**



July 13

5 p.m.: Legion at Mobridge, 1 game

6:30 p.m.: Jr. Legion at Mobridge, 1 game

5:30 p.m.: U10 vs. Renegades in Watertown, DH, (R/B)

July 14

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

Jr. Teeners just be completed by this date

6 p.m.: U12 SB hosts Faulkton, DH

6 p.m.: U8 SB at Claremont, 1 game

7 p.m.: U10 SB at Claremont, 1 game

Jul 15-17

U10 State Tourney in Salem

July 18

6 p.m.: Jr. Legion hosts Frederick, DH

**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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## Electric Department requests second bucket truck

Todd Gay, Groton Electric Superintendent, came before the council about the need for a second bucket truck. "A lot of the work that Landon and I have to do require two bucket trucks," he said. He currently has \$205,000 left in the budget and getting a used bucket would cost from \$70,000 to \$140,000. He said if a purchase was made for \$140,000, there would be plenty of money left in the budget to get through the rest of the year for materials. After an executive session, the council authorized the purchase of a used bucket truck as long as it does not exceed \$150,000.

In another item, Todd said he was trying to purchase 40' poles and they are 27 weeks out right if an order is placed. He wants to get a load of poles, some 30' poles for street lights and secondary services and the rest 40' poles for primary services. They may have to get 45' poles and cut off the top.

The hook up fee for BDM went from \$4,000 to \$8,500 for water at the airport. Douglas Heinrich, City Finance Officer, said he had talked with Terry Herron, city supervisor, and Terry had suggested not doing the water at the this time due to the standing water around the runway. Darrell Hillestad said the runway is good, but there is water all around it and it will need to be dealt with. Hillestad said he has a \$1,000 quote from IMEG to have a borrow pit and then build a 6" drain tile to drain that to the creek. He would like to get it surveyed by fall. Councilman Kevin Nehls said the council has talked more about the airport than about the roads in town. "How many people use the airport?" he asked. The council agreed not to do the BDM water project right now and to proceed with the survey.

Dollar General submitted a completed license to sell alcohol and it has been submitted to the state. They have been unable to sell alcohol since June 1st as they allowed the license to expire by not completing the paper work. The council also suggested that they hold the license pending payment of the mowing bill. Heinrich said he would have to talk with the Department of Revenue to see if that could be done.

Dacotah Bank and SD FIT were designated as official banks and The Groton Independent as the official newspaper.

### Federal funding

The council approved the "Response to Resistance" and "Duty to Intervene" addition to the Groton Police Department Policy Manual. The update was required in order for the department to get federal funding. City Attorney Drew Johnson said, "This is a George Floyd spin-off. There is a lot of information in these additions."

Water restrictions are in place until further notice. No outdoor watering between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. and the odd/even house number watering mode is also in effect.

The council was reminded of the sixth annual Summer Fest set for this Sunday at the City Park.

Korbin Kucker was hired as a baseball groundskeeper at \$9.95 an hour.

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## Groton Senior Citizens

Groton Senior Citizens met for the June 13 meeting for a meeting and cards. Twelve members were present. President Sarge Likness opened the meeting with allegiance to the flag. Minutes and treasurer's reports were read and accepted. Old business was about the three trees that were planted on the west side of the community center that died. We planted them in memory of our members that passed away. There was no new business. Meeting was adjourned. Winners of the card games were David Kleinsasser in pinochle, Darlene Fischer in whist, and Eunice McColister and Balinda Nelson in canasta. Door prizes were won by Pat Larson, Elda Stange and Balinda Nelson. Lunch was served by Eunice McColister.

The June 20 meeting of the Groton Senior Citizens was held with 13 members present. Winners of the card games were Ruby Donovan in pinochle, Darlene Fischer in whist, and Eunice McColister and Pat Larson in canasta. Door prizes were won by Ruby Donovan, Darlene Fischer and Elda Stange. Watermelon was served by Balinda Nelson.

The June 27 meeting of the Groton Senior Citizens was held with a potluck dinner. Eleven members were present. President Sarge Likness had the flag pledge and table prayer. After dinner, Bingo was played with Tony Goldade and Dick Donovan winning in blackout. Cards were played after Bingo before going home. We celebrated Paper Paul's birthday with an Angel Food cake and ice cream. Cake was baked and decorated by Bev Sombke. Door prize winners were Darlene Fischer, Eunice McColister and Balinda Nelson.

## "Sunshine, Lollipops and Rainbows"

Wednesday, July 13 at Noon  
Ladies Luncheon & Program

Silent Auction  
10:30 - 11:30  
Door Prizes

Ty Eschenbaum  
will be the speaker

Advance tickets  
required \$10.00



Call Kay Espeland 492-3507 or  
Alice Jean Peterson 216-2835

## Effects of inflation landing harder on South Dakotans with entry-level jobs and low or fixed incomes

By: Kylie Carlson

When Tyson Wade of Britton, S.D., moved to Sioux Falls in 2021, he never expected that even with a steady job, he would struggle financially and be on the verge of homelessness.

But like everyone in South Dakota and across the U.S., Wade is enduring the effects of stubborn economic inflation that is driving up costs for basic necessities and which is having a much larger impact on young adults in entry-level positions, people with low-wage jobs or those who live on fixed incomes.

Wade, 20, works as an overnight stocker at a Hy-Vee grocery store. When he moved to the city, he signed a lease for an apartment in northeast Sioux Falls with two roommates, splitting the \$900 monthly rent payment three ways. Recently, each roommate's share of the rent increased \$50 per month — a smaller jump than many other renters across the state have seen but still a burdensome new cost.

Yet in addition to increased rent, Wade is paying significantly more for groceries, utilities and other necessary goods than even a few months ago. His grocery bill has gone up the most, nearly doubling in recent months from about \$80 to \$140 per month.

"Meats are the biggest thing; they're around \$7.29 now per pound," Wade said. "Paper towels, toilet paper, that stuff's all gone up at least a dollar."

While gas costing nearly \$5 a gallon may be a big budget expense for many South Dakotans, Wade is unable to drive due to an eye condition that affects his vision. Fuel and car insurance aren't in his list of bills,



**As prices for food and other goods continue to rise due to inflation, the resulting economic hardships are being disproportionately felt by people with low incomes or those in entry-level jobs.** Photo: News Watch file

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but lack of transportation also decreases his housing options.

Wade is now looking for an alternative living situation, but he and a potential roommate were denied a new application at his current apartment complex due to income restrictions.

## INFLATION DRIVING UP COSTS OF NECESSITIES

Here is a look at the average cost of some necessities in June 2022 compared to June 2021 in the United States, indicating how inflation and other factors have put more economic pressure on individuals and families to make ends meet.

Product	2021 cost	2022 cost	Percent increase
Gas	\$3.13 a gallon	\$4.77 a gallon	52%
Food	\$945 a month	\$1,193 a month	26%
Rent	\$1,899 a month	\$2,047 a month	8%

Note: Rent is national average for 2-bedroom apartment; food cost is for U.S. family of four; sources include American Automotive Association, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rent.com

"You have to make over three times rent, so we couldn't sign a new lease," he said. Wade asked about whether a co-signer could help secure the lease, but the apartment manager said a co-signer had to have a minimum 680 credit score or make well over three times the monthly rent, which will be difficult for Wade to pull off.

"We're hoping we'll be able to find a cosigner, otherwise I won't be living here anymore," he said.

Wade isn't the only South Dakotan faced with unexpected costs and hard choices. With the national inflation rate at 8.6%, and the Midwest inflation rate at 8.8% in late June, the cost of living is rising fast and many people are scrambling to keep up.

Food costs have gone up 12% in South Dakota, leading many to change their food budgets and causing some people on the economic margins to seek help providing food for themselves or their families.

Many communities have public food banks or distribution services available for those who may need assistance in securing food. The group Feeding South Dakota, a statewide provider of charitable food, is partnering with some local communities with a "mobile food pantry" to serve the growing need. Feeding South Dakota has permanent food bank locations in Sioux Falls and Rapid City, but the organization's website also allows users to find mobile options closest to them.

Many other localized organizations also give out food to those in need. First Families Now, based in Porcupine, S.D., serves needy residents of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

The group also runs donation drives to provide essential items such as heaters and blankets, clothing, and school supplies along with many other programs. The group is working to bring more resources to the communities it serves, including providing a tutor for local children, offering various activity classes, and focusing on healthy lifestyles and healing, said Executive Director Alice Phelps.

Phelps said the group continues to provide food and help to families in need, but has recently seen a drop in donations and people willing to donate as inflation has continue to push costs higher for everyone.

"I used to get a lot of monetary checks and stuff as well to help out, and I don't hardly get anything like that anymore," said Phelps. "The donation load has seemed to lighten up as well. When we give out food boxes, they're not as full as they used to be because I want to make sure that we spread it out evenly."

Increasing transportation costs — both in regard to high gas prices and in higher costs to buy a vehicle — are also adding difficulty to the lives of those on low or fixed incomes in South Dakota. With gas prices nearly doubled from a year ago, people in the communities served by First Families Now aren't able to come to distribution events, preventing families from accessing the resources they need.

"Those who can't come in, then we have my sons who go out into communities," she said. "There's many people who are really, really, really poor. They don't even have furniture in their house, much less food, so we try to make sure we transport stuff out there to them."

Phelps said that First Families Now is also in the planning stages of building "tiny homes" for those in need of safe, affordable homes to address the housing challenges that have been made worse by inflation on South Dakota reservations.

Across the state, housing has become more expensive with the rise in inflation, leaving some residents with

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few affordable options and others unable to afford buying a home or renting an apartment.

Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers are an option available to qualifying low-income families in some locations. These vouchers are funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and are awarded by local housing agencies. At this time, 23 local agencies



**First Families Now works with volunteers and community members to provide food and other necessities to those in need, but are receiving fewer donations and seeing fewer volunteers in 2022.** Photo: Courtesy First Families Now

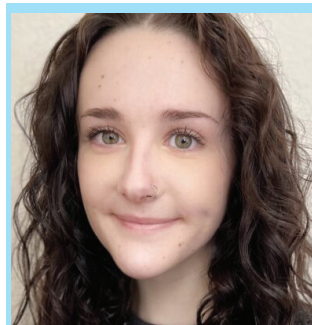
operate across the state to provide help through the voucher program. Twenty-six others provide affordable housing options through public housing programs.

Childcare is another necessity for many South Dakota families, and it has recently become tougher to obtain or maintain. Many childcare providers in South Dakota are in-home or small operations, and they have also faced higher costs for providing services to parents and children.

Shipping costs of products have also become more expensive, leading to higher costs of commodities like food, wipes, and infant formula. Often, those higher costs are passed on to customers who may already face difficulty in paying for child care necessary to care for children while keeping a job.

Nicole Jones, who runs BumbleBee Daycare in Marshall County, S.D., said she has faced increases in groceries and water and electric bills. These added expenses, coupled with shortages of many goods and supplies, have led to losses in new registrations and reduced operating hours for many childcare facilities in the state.

"We're losing some kids because of everything going up in price, and people aren't willing to pay [for childcare] because they can't afford it," said Jones.



## ABOUT KYLIE CARLSON

Kylie Carlson is the 2022 recipient of the Jeffrey B. Nelson Investigative Journalism Endowed Internship, and is working as a

reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A native of Britton, S.D., Carlson is a 2022 journalism graduate from South Dakota State University.

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## Groton Jr. Teeners Slides Into a Blow-Out Win Over Redfield

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U easily did away with Redfield 14U 14-1 on Wednesday

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U fired up the offense in the first inning, when Carter Simon grounded out, scoring one run.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U scored five runs in the third inning. Karter Moody, Tristin McGannon, Jarrett Erdmann, and Nicholas Morris all drove in runs in the frame.

Nick Groeblichhoff was the winning pitcher for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The righty allowed three hits and one run over four innings, striking out three. K Antonsen threw one inning in relief out of the bullpen.

Jackson Rude took the loss for Redfield 14U. The pitcher lasted three innings, allowing 11 hits and ten runs while striking out one and walking one.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U racked up 14 hits. Morris, Simon, Antonsen, McGannon, and Gavin Englund all managed multiple hits for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Englund, McGannon, Antonsen, Simon, and Morris each managed two hits to lead Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U didn't commit a single error in the field. Englund had eight chances in the field, the most on the team. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U tore up the base paths, as three players stole at least two bases. Simon led the way with three.

Jaxon Ethridge led Redfield 14U with two hits in two at bats.

## Groton Jr. Teeners Overcomes Redfield In Face Of Early 3-Run Inning

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U weathered a scare by Redfield 14U in the fifth inning where Groton Jr. Teeners 14U coughed up three runs, but Groton Jr. Teeners 14U still won 10-4 on Thursday. Redfield 14U scored its runs on a single by J Ethridge.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U got things moving in the first inning, when Nicholas Morris doubled on a 3-2 count, scoring two runs.

Carter Simon earned the victory on the pitcher's mound for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Simon allowed five hits and one run over three and two-thirds innings, striking out six. Karter Moody threw one and one-third innings in relief out of the bullpen.

H Binger took the loss for Redfield 14U. The hurler lasted four innings, allowing ten hits and ten runs while striking out two.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U racked up 11 hits in the game. Morris, Gavin Kroll, and Kellen Antonsen each managed multiple hits for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Morris went 3-for-3 at the plate to lead Groton Jr. Teeners 14U in hits. Morris led Groton Jr. Teeners 14U with three stolen bases, as they ran wild on the base paths with nine stolen bases. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U didn't commit a single error in the field. Jarrett Erdmann had the most chances in the field with eight.

K Hansen led Redfield 14U with two hits in two at bats.



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## Groton Jr. Teeners 14U 10 - 4 Redfield 14U

📍 Away 📅 Wednesday July 06, 2022

	1	2	3	4	5	R	H	E
GRTN	5	2	1	2	0	10	11	0
RDFL	0	0	0	1	3	4	6	3

### BATTING

Groton Jr. Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
J Erdmann (C)	2	2	1	0	1	0
T McGannon (3B)	2	2	1	0	0	1
K Flihs (1B)	1	0	0	0	0	0
C Simon (P, 3B)	4	0	1	1	0	1
N Morris (SS)	3	2	3	3	0	0
K Moody (1B, P)	2	0	0	1	1	0
R Jangula (LF)	2	1	0	0	1	0
K Antonsen (CF)	2	2	2	0	1	0
G Kroll (RF)	3	0	2	2	0	0
L Krause (2B)	3	0	1	0	0	0
G Englund	2	1	0	0	1	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>

**2B:** N Morris, **TB:** C Simon, N Morris 4, J Erdmann, G Kroll 2, T McGannon, K Antonsen 2, L Krause, **HBP:** J Erdmann, T McGannon, **SB:** N Morris 3, J Erdmann, K Moody, T McGannon 2, K Antonsen, K Flihs, **LOB:** 8

### PITCHING

Groton Jr. Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
C Simon	3.2	5	1	1	2	6	0
K Moody	1.1	1	3	3	2	2	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>

**W:** C Simon, **P-S:** C Simon 62-40, K Moody 30-16, **HBP:** C Simon, K Moody, **BF:** C Simon 18, K Moody 8

Redfield 14U	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
M Zaszrow (C)	0	0	0	0	1	0
I Jungwirth (C)	1	0	0	0	1	0
K Hansen (CF)	2	0	2	0	1	0
J Schmit (SS)	2	1	0	0	1	2
N Johnson (2B)	2	1	0	0	0	0
I Hauge (3B)	3	2	1	0	0	0
J Ethridge (RF)	3	0	1	2	0	2
J Boothe (LF)	2	0	0	0	0	1
H Binger (P)	2	0	1	0	0	1
J Ethridge (P)	1	0	0	0	0	1
E Falk (1B)	2	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>

**3B:** I Hauge, **TB:** I Hauge 3, H Binger, K Hansen 2, J Ethridge, E Falk, **HBP:** J Boothe, N Johnson, **SB:** J Ethridge 2, **LOB:** 7

Redfield 14U	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
H Binger	4.0	10	10	10	5	2	0
J Ethridge	1.0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

**L:** H Binger, **P-S:** J Ethridge 18-9, H Binger 99-51, **WP:** H Binger, **HBP:** H Binger 2, **BF:** J Ethridge 5, H Binger 28

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## Groton Jr. Teeners 14U 14 - 1 Redfield 14U

📍 Away 📅 Wednesday July 06, 2022

	1	2	3	4	5	R	H	E
GRTN	4	1	5	0	4	14	14	0
RDFL	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	1

### BATTING

Groton Jr. Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T McGannon (CF)	4	2	2	2	0	1
J Erdmann (LF)	3	2	1	0	0	0
C Simon (3B)	3	2	2	3	0	0
N Morris (SS)	3	1	2	1	1	0
K Flihs (C)	4	0	1	0	0	1
N Groeblinghoff (...)	3	1	1	1	0	1
K Antonsen (2B, P)	3	1	2	1	0	1
G Englund (1B)	2	2	2	0	0	0
L Krause (RF)	1	1	1	1	1	0
R Jangula (RF)	1	1	0	0	0	0
K Moody	1	1	0	1	0	0
G Kroll	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>

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

### PITCHING

Groton Jr. Te	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
N Groebling...	4.0	3	1	1	4	3	0
K Antonsen	1.0	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

**W:** N Groeblinghoff, **P-S:** K Antonsen 16-9, N Groeblinghoff 52-27, **BF:** K Antonsen 3, N Groeblinghoff 18

Redfield 14U	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
M Zastrow (1B)	3	0	0	0	0	0
K Hansen (CF)	2	0	0	0	0	0
J Schmitt (SS, P)	1	0	0	0	1	0
N Johnson (C)	1	1	0	0	1	0
I Hague (3B)	1	0	0	0	1	1
J Ethridge (RF)	2	0	2	0	0	0
J Boothe (LF)	2	0	1	1	0	0
H Binger (2B, SS)	2	0	0	0	0	1
E Falk (DH)	2	0	0	0	0	1
I Jungwirth	0	0	0	0	2	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>

**TB:** J Ethridge 2, J Boothe, **SB:** N Johnson, **LOB:** 5

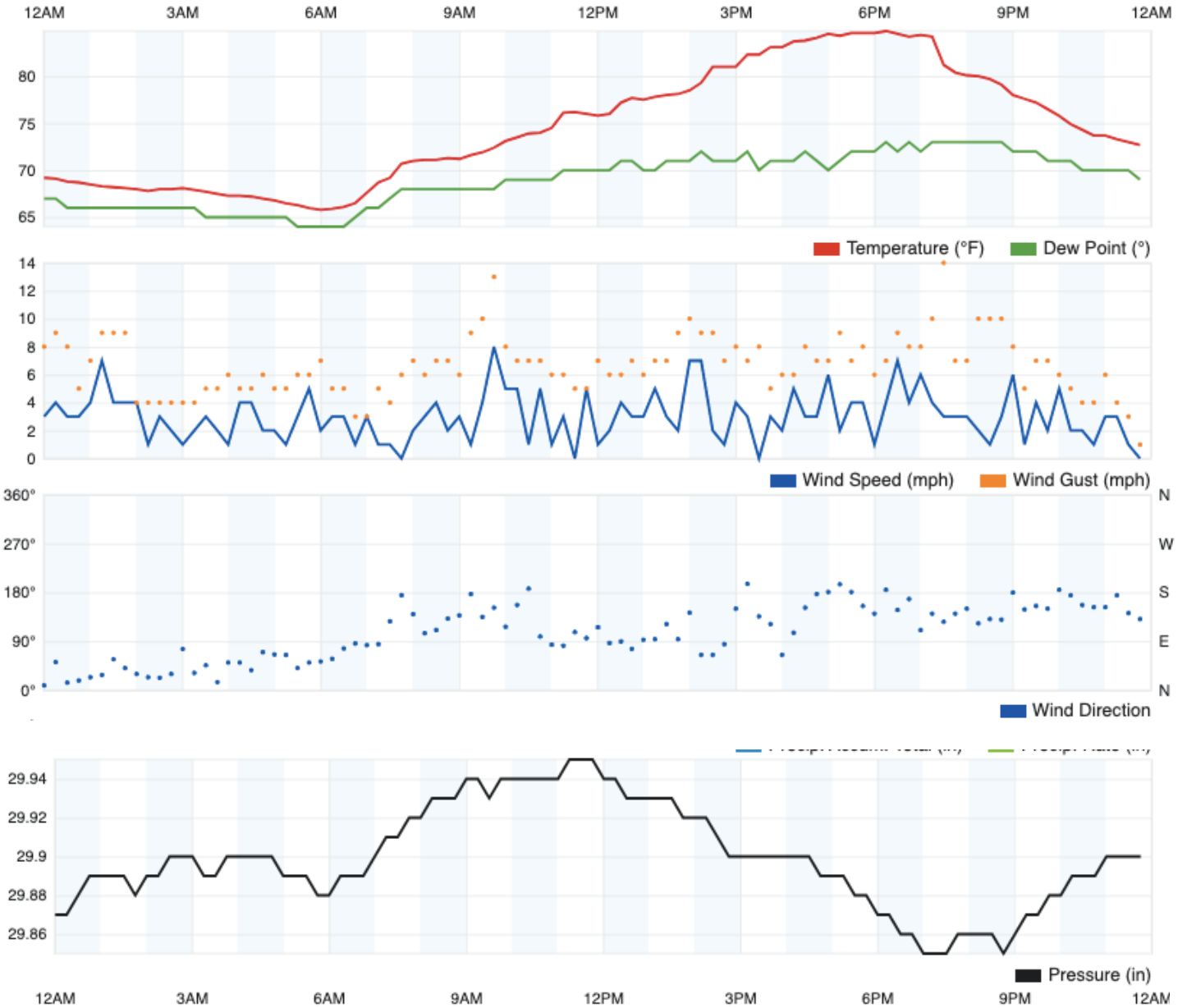
Redfield 14U	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
J Rude	3.0	11	10	10	1	1	0
J Schmitt	2.0	3	4	4	1	4	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>

**L:** J Rude, **P-S:** J Schmitt 51-28, J Rude 60-37, **HBP:** J Schmitt, J Rude 3, **BF:** J Schmitt 11, J Rude 24

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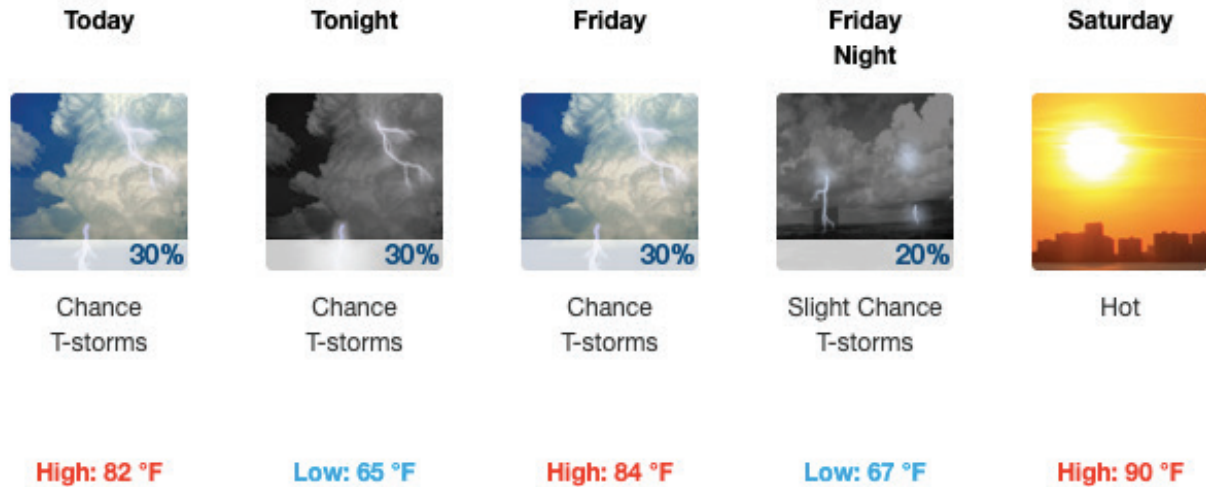
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs




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NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
Updated: 7/7/2022 4:29 AM Central



## Unsettled Weather Continues

Today	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
HI: 80 to 87°	HI: 80 to 89°	HI: 85 to 100°	HI: 89 to 94°
			
Patchy morning fog		Warmest west river	

Chances for thunderstorms will persist through Sunday. While there may be an isolated strong to severe storm today through Saturday, Sunday appears to have the greatest potential for widespread strong to severe storms as a front moves across the region. Warm and humid conditions will continue through the weekend, as well.

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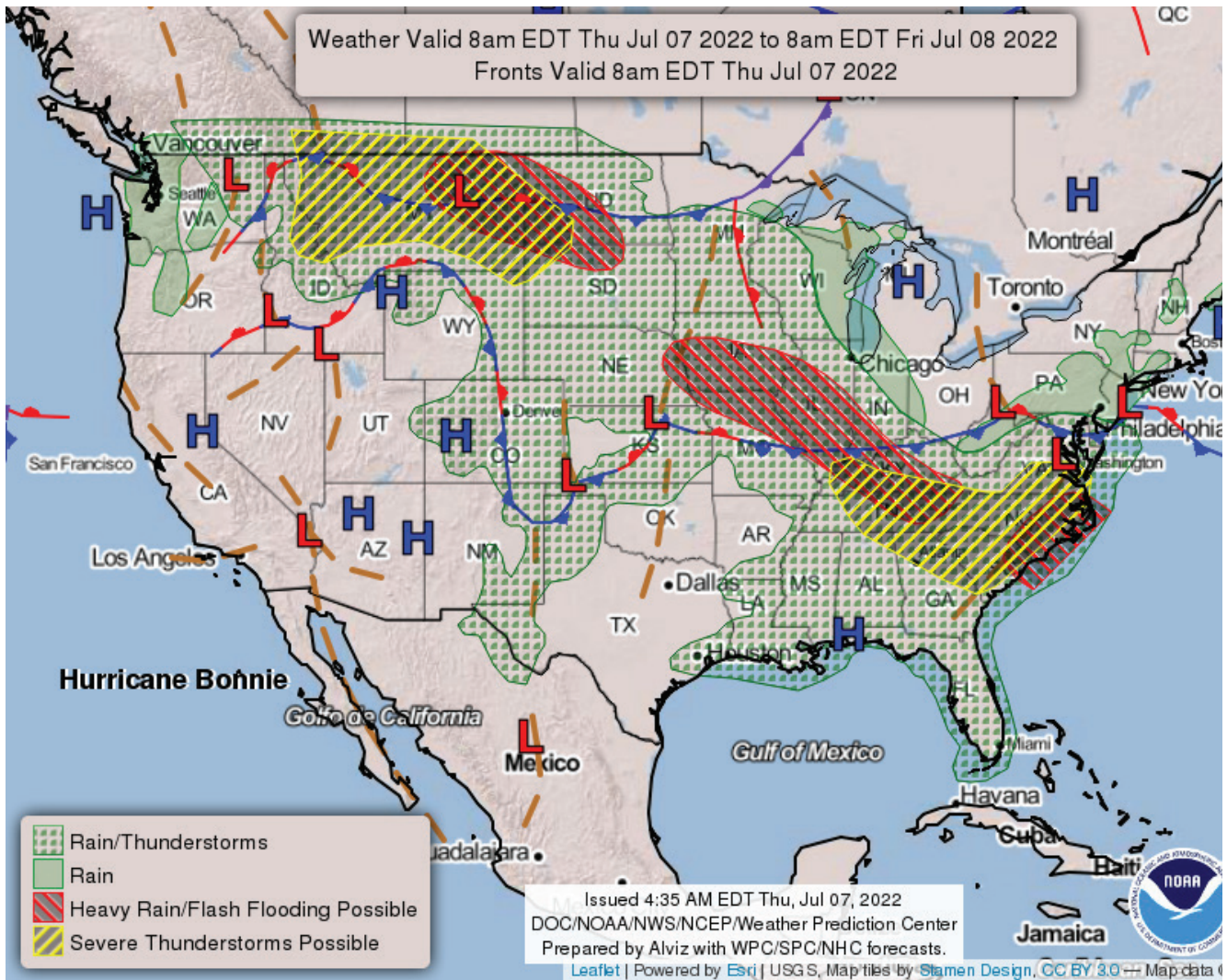
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 84.8 °F at 6:15 PM**  
**Low Temp: 65.8 °F at 6:00 AM**  
**Wind: 14 mph at 7:30 PM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

Day length: 15 hours, 34 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1936  
Record Low: 43 in 1922  
Average High: 85°F  
Average Low: 59°F  
Average Precip in July.: 0.82  
Precip to date in July.: 2.00  
Average Precip to date: 11.83  
Precip Year to Date: 13.58  
Sunset Tonight: 9:24:32 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:51:01 AM



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## Today in Weather History

July 7, 1959: A powerful and widespread windstorm began near Kadoka and moved northeastward across the state at a speed of 60 to 65 mph. Airplane hangers were damaged or destroyed at Murdo, Redfield, and Watertown. Fourteen barns were destroyed or severely damaged. Five trailer homes were overturned.

July 7, 1990: A teenager was injured by softball size hail while working in a field near Herreid. The large hail also injured many cattle in the area. Most homes and vehicles in town suffered damage. The Herreid School had 120 broken panes of glass.

July 6, 1994: Widespread rainfall of over 6 inches fell in Dewey, Potter, and Faulk Counties, causing damage to roads and flooded basements and fields. A teenage girl escaped injury when her car was washed away by the waters of a swollen creek about 5 miles east of Gettysburg. Some total storm amounts include; 6.80 inches in Orient; 6.70 at Faulkton; 5.80 in Milbank; 5.48 in Big Stone City; 5.02 in Ipswich; 4.50 in Gettysburg; 4.17 in Webster; 4.12 near Onaka; 4.02 in Leola; and 3.97 in Britton.

1905: The mercury soared to 127 degrees at Parker, Arizona to tie the state record established at Fort Mohave on the 15th of June in 1896. The current record for Arizona is 128 degrees set in Lake Havasu City on 6-29-1994.

1915 - A severe wind and thunderstorm caused heavy damage and 38 deaths in and near Cincinnati, OH. Many older buildings were demolished. The steamship Dick Fulton was overturned. (The Weather Channel)

1981 - Montana was in the midst of a snowstorm that dumped ten inches at Glacier National Park, and produced winds to 90 mph. Meanwhile, Denver, CO, set a record high with a reading of 101 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms spawned eight tornadoes in Colorado, and three in West Texas. Thunderstorms also produced softball size hail at Bula, TX. In the midst of a record thirty-nine day string of 100 degree days, the temperature at Tucson, AZ, dipped to 66 degrees, marking their third straight record low for the date. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty-eight cities in the north central and northeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Youngstown, OH, hit 100 degrees, and for the second day in a row, Flint, MI, reached 101 degrees, equalling all-time records for those two cities. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather during the day, with more than 100 reports of large hail and damaging winds from Ohio to Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Thunderstorm winds reached 90 mph in Sullivan County, NH, and golf ball size hail was reported in Pennsylvania. Twenty-four cities, mostly in the southwestern U.S., reported record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 105 degrees at Cedar City, UT, and 114 degrees at Moab, UT, were all-time records for those locations. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1991: During the early daylight hours of Sunday, July 7, 1991, a bow echo developed over southeast South Dakota and began racing east, producing very damaging winds. This bow echo was the start of a long-lived derecho that lasted 17 hours and affected areas from the Great Plains into western New York and Pennsylvania. Wind gusts in some places reached 80 to 100 mph. The strongest gust, 103 mph, was measured at Sioux Center, Iowa around mid-morning, and the roof of a school was blown off in nearby Orange City.

2004: A tornado occurred in the Rockwell Pass area of Sequoia National Park, California. Since the elevation of the tornado's ground circulation was approximately 3705 m (12,156 ft) MSL, this is the highest-elevation tornado documented in the United States.

2012: In Krymsk, Russia, nearly 11 inches of rain falls within a few hours on July 6th. The resulting flash floods occurred during the early morning hours on the 7. The flood wave, as high as 23 feet killed at least 172 people. The 10.83 inches is equivalent to three or four months' worth of precipitation in a typical year.

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## A Desperate Call

"Larry," he said to get my complete attention, "don't go next door and play with Richard. He's not good for you to be around."

"OK, Dad. I won't." (At least not while you're looking, I said to myself, under my breath.)

Not long after the warning, I heard his penetrating whistle that could be heard throughout the neighborhood. However, I was next door, on the roof of Richard's garage with some other friends having a great time. But now, the "good time" was over. I looked down from the roof, and there was my Dad standing at the foot of the ladder. I knew I was "busted." He spoke, I refused to obey, and the party was over.

"How long will you simple ones love your simple ways?" wrote Solomon. Or, if he was talking to me today it would mean, "Larry, why were you so careless to allow yourself to drift into temptation. Don't you remember that I gave you a warning? Why didn't you follow my advice?"

This verse contains a certain sadness: "How long..." We are all "slow learners!" We refuse to hear God." I warned you, didn't I? When will you ever 'grow-up' and accept the wisdom I offered you? I offered you my best: My wisdom that will last a lifetime and you rejected it.

Rejecting God's wisdom is very costly. In verse 25 there are some tragic words to describe the results of disobeying God: "Since you rejected me when I called...and ignored my advice...and would not accept my rebuke, I will laugh at you." God's grace has its limits. Hear Him today!

Prayer: Lord, how blest are those who hear Your Word, accept it and follow it. Rejecting His wisdom has its consequences. We must listen to You, Lord. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: How long will you who are simple love your simple ways? Proverbs 1:22

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## 2022 Community Events

- 01/30/2022 84th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)  
01/30/2022 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am – 1pm, Groton Community Center, 109 N 3rd St, Groton,  
04/07/2022 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  
06/20/2022 Ladies Invitational at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration 10am Start  
06/25/2022 How can we... "Love Groton"? United Methodist Church 9:30am  
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)  
07/20/2022 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar 11am-1pm at the Groton Legion  
07/21/2022 Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course  
07/22/2022 Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start  
Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20  
07/27/2022 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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## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

07-15-20-29-35

(seven, fifteen, twenty, twenty-nine, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$100,000

Lotto America

01-03-08-14-50, Star Ball: 1, ASB: 2

(one, three, eight, fourteen, fifty; Star Ball: one; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$16,390,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 400,000,000

Powerball

32-36-49-62-69, Powerball: 13, Power Play: 2

(thirty-two, thirty-six, forty-nine, sixty-two, sixty-nine; Powerball: thirteen; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$48,000,000

### Editorial Roundup: South Dakota

By The Associated Press undefined

Rapid City Journal. July 1, 2022.

Editorial: The people have a right to know

It is time for the people of South Dakota to demand access to public records.

The laws governing access for the public to information about their government and law enforcement agencies are bad. The enforcement of those laws is worse.

The Rapid City Journal recently won a split decision with the South Dakota Supreme Court to get access to court records involving a leader of the State Senate who got his case sealed more than two months early after word of his arrest for driving after drinking a little too much Coke and whiskey reached media outlets.

Even in siding with the Journal and saying that a judge can't write a memo in mid-December to retroactively seal a case in early October, the justices said they didn't believe any "government secrecy" was at play in the case.

The Senate Majority Leader got his case sealed simply by sending an email to a friendly state's attorney and district judge and the state Supreme Court still believes that this favor would have been granted to any member of the public.

We disagree.

But Gary Cammack's attorney got his case sealed early. In the nine months between our case reaching the supreme court and the decision, Cammack was installed in the South Dakota Hall of Fame and won his primary for his State Senate seat.

Fast forward to 30 days ago when two Rapid City Police officers shot a woman after she continued driving when police tried to stop her. During that chase, a male exited the car and got away. Items were thrown from the vehicle.

The woman was shot multiple times. Her car window was destroyed. There were bullet holes in the passenger side of the car.

Thanks to lax public record laws, we still don't know the woman's name. We don't know if she is alive. We don't know if she was arrested or charged. We don't know if her accomplice has been captured or charged.

As a society, we can't allow government officials to shoot a person and have that information covered

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up for more than a month.

Of course, the Rapid City Police can't investigate their own officers, so the state Department of Criminal Investigations took over. There are two officers and one witness/suspect/victim involved. There should be two body cameras and two dash cameras. Honestly, the only reason this investigation should take a week is if the woman who was shot was physically incapable to be interviewed.

Even then, with cameras, interviews with two officers and a load of evidence to corroborate those interviews, it should be pretty straight-forward.

However, the investigation has yielded no publicly available information in 30 days. The impeachment of an attorney general and the appointment of a new one can slow down that officer, but why would DCI not be able to finish its work? According to a state spokesperson, the agency that will sign off on the DCI investigation hasn't even been chosen.

Once again, information in South Dakota grinds to a halt, but the world keeps turning. Both officers already returned to duty at some level. Surely they would both like to know their fate in the matter, as well.

In November, voters will select candidates to represent them. This is your time make representatives and senators earn your vote. Call on them to commit to better laws regarding public information in order to earn your vote. Make them promise a more efficient and transparent government.

You pay for that. You deserve it.

Citizens have to stop shrugging their shoulders and shaking their heads and using their ballots to send people in Pierre who won't let the state continue to fail when it comes to open and honest government.

END

## Severe storms left thousands without power in South Dakota

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Xcel Energy says 55,000 customers lost service when a long line of severe thunderstorms rolled across South Dakota.

By Wednesday morning, 90% of power lost on Tuesday has been restored by more than 600 employees and contractors working in the field, according to the utility company.

The Sioux Falls National Weather Service office says the damaging winds, hail and flash flooding that moved through the region is know as a derecho.

The storms started along the North Dakota border before intensifying in Dewey County where 4 inch (10 centimeters) diameter hail was recorded near Parade.

Extensive damage was reported 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) north of Isabel, KCCR reported. The storms produced a 91 mph wind gust near the Potter/Sully County line. Damage to grain bins happened north of Onida in Sully County. The National Weather Service received a report of a roof being blown off a home in Highmore in Hyde County.

Trees were uprooted, roads were blocked and power was knocked out to Miller and St Lawrence.

The ADM-Benso-Quinn grain elevator outside Miller had at least three large grain bins damaged by the strong wind, which also toppled an 18-wheeler west of Miller and sent a camper into the ditch along Highway 14.

The National Weather Service also issued a pair of tornado warnings during the storm from Sully County to Hand County although no tornado touchdowns have been confirmed by the National Weather Service.

## Russia taking 'operational pause' in Ukraine, analysts say

By MARIA GRAZIA MURRU and OLEKSANDR STASHEVSKYI Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Foreign analysts say Russia may be temporarily easing its offensive in Ukraine as the Russian military attempts to reassemble its forces for a renewed assault.

On Wednesday, Russian forces made no claimed or assessed territorial gains in Ukraine "for the first time in 133 days of war," according to the Institute for the Study of War. The think tank based in Washington suggested that Moscow may be taking an "operational pause," but that it does not entail "the complete cessation of active hostilities."

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"Russian forces will likely confine themselves to relatively small-scale offensive actions as they attempt to set conditions for more significant offensive operations and rebuild the combat power needed to attempt those more ambitious undertakings," the institute said.

A Thursday statement from Russia's Defense Ministry seemed to confirm that assessment. It said Russian military units involved in combat in Ukraine had been given time to rest.

"The units that performed combat missions during the special military operation are taking measures to recover their combat capabilities. The servicemen are given the opportunity to rest, receive letters and parcels from home," read the statement, quoted by Russian state news agency Tass.

Shelling continued in Ukraine's east, where at least nine civilians were killed and six wounded in 24 hours, Ukrainian officials said.

Ukraine's presidential office said in its Thursday morning update that cities and villages in seven Ukrainian regions were shelled in the past day. Most of the civilian deaths occurred in Donetsk province, where fighting is ongoing. Seven civilians were killed there, including a child, the presidential office said.

Ten cities and villages came under shelling in Donetsk, and 35 buildings were destroyed, including a school, a vocational college and a hospital, officials said.

Donetsk is part of the Donbas, a mostly Russian-speaking industrial region where Ukraine's most experienced soldiers are concentrated. Pro-Russian separatists have fought Ukrainian forces and controlled much of the Donbas for eight years. Russian President Vladimir Putin recognized the independence of two self-proclaimed republics there just before Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Putin on Monday claimed victory in Luhansk, the other province constituting the Donbas, after Ukrainian forces withdrew from the last city they controlled there. The governor of Luhansk, Serhiy Haidai, denied Wednesday that the Russians had completely captured the province.

In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, a boarding school was hit, but no one was injured. The Kharkiv region, which lies along the border with Russia, is under daily shelling, and two civilians were killed there over the past 24 hours.

The Ukrainian military said Thursday that Russian forces also carried out shelling and helicopter strikes in the Sumy region in the northeast.

Even as the fighting continued, the British Defense Ministry said it thinks Russia's military is "reconstituting" its forces. A ministry intelligence assessment issued Thursday said the heavy shelling along the front line in Donetsk is likely intended to secure previous Russian gains.

Further hostilities were reported in the Black Sea where the Ukrainian military said Thursday that a Ukrainian flag had been planted on a strategic island that Russian troops withdrew from last month.

Ukraine's Operational Command South said in a statement that Ukrainian military units had cleared Snake Island, an outpost off Ukraine's southwestern coast vital for guaranteeing sea lanes out of the key port of Odesa. The command group also said the Ukrainian military had destroyed some 30 pieces of Russian military equipment, describing the discovery of "abandoned ammunition and vast ruins."

Russian troops withdrew from the island on June 30 in what Russia's Defense Ministry called "a goodwill gesture." But the ministry said Thursday that a Russian Aerospace Forces aircraft had launched a missile strike on the island as Ukrainian forces attempted to plant the flag.

"As a result, some of the Ukrainian military personnel were destroyed, the rest fled," the ministry said.

Ukraine also said that Russia fired two missiles targeting a Moldovan-flagged oil tanker in the Black Sea, setting it ablaze.

Ukraine's southern military command said the strike hit the Millennium Spirit, which has over 500 tons of diesel fuel on board. Ukraine says one missile struck the ship, while the other went wide. Social media images showed smoke rising off the coast of Odesa on Thursday morning.

The ship has been without a crew, drifting at sea since the start of the war in February. Russia did not immediately acknowledge the strike on the vessel. The ship's tracking devices have been down since it was abandoned by its crew.

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said it summoned the Turkish ambassador in Kyiv Thursday over what it de-

scribed as the theft of Ukrainian grain by a Russian ship.

The Russian ship Zhibek Zholy was allowed to leave Turkey's Black Sea coast after Turkish authorities briefly detained it at Ukraine's request. Ukraine summoned the ambassador to complain about the "unacceptable situation."

Turkey, with its Bosphorus Strait, is a key transit route for shipping out of the Black Sea. Ukraine has sought to pressure Ankara to stop Russian shipments of its grain, a vital source of revenue.

## Haiti's struggle worsened in year since slaying of president

By EVENS SANON and DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — A year has passed since President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated at his private home where an elite security team was supposed to protect him. Not only have authorities failed to identify and arrest all those who masterminded and financed the killing, but Haiti has gone into a freefall as violence soars and the economy tumbles.

Many have fled Haiti in the past year, making potentially deadly voyages aboard rickety boats filled with hundreds of Haitians that have repeatedly turned up on the shores of nearby nations. They chose to face that risk rather than go hungry and fear for their lives, as do many people who have stayed behind.

"Every day is a fight. It's a fight to stay alive. It's a fight to eat. It's a fight to survive," said Hector Duval, a plumber who now drives a motorcycle taxi to make more money since Haitians are afraid to board slow-moving buses and chance being killed by warring gangs.

Killings have soared and thousands of families have been driven from their homes by gangs battling over territory ever since Moïse was shot to death last July 7 at his home near the capital, Port-au-Prince.

An overwhelmed government is struggling to crack down on the gangs and reduce a spike in kidnappings linked to them. At the same time, attempts to form a coalition government have faltered in recent weeks and efforts to hold general elections have stalled, leaving many wondering where Haiti is headed.

Prime Minister Ariel Henry has promised to create a new provisional electoral council, which is responsible for organizing general elections, but that hasn't happened. There hasn't been a Parliament because the government failed to organize elections in 2019, and Moïse dismissed most lawmakers in early 2020 and ruled by decree for more than a year before he was killed.

Meanwhile, hopes for a trial for those arrested in the killing of the president have been derailed by the resignation of four judges appointed to oversee the investigation, with some saying they feared for their lives.

Henry himself has recognized the uncertainty hovering over the case. Last month, he tweeted: "I have the unpleasant feeling that those who conceived and financed this macabre plan are still running the streets and are still escaping our judicial system."

More than 40 people have been arrested in Haiti, including high-ranking police officers and a group of former Colombian soldiers. At least two of three suspects detained outside Haiti were extradited to the U.S., where they face charges including conspiring to commit murder or kidnapping outside the United States.

Many of the soldiers' relatives in Colombia are demanding a proper judicial process and an improvement in dire prison conditions.

"A lot of time there is no food, no potable water," Nataly Andrade, wife of retired Col. Giovanni Guerrero, told The Associated Press. She visited him in prison in May and was alarmed at how much weight he had lost. In recent weeks, at least eight inmates in southern Haiti, not connected to the Moïse case, have died from heat and malnutrition.

The United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti noted that the investigation seems to have stalled and called on authorities to bring those responsible to justice as soon as possible.

"Since this crime was committed, growing insecurity, linked to the proliferation of acts of violence committed by armed gangs, has terrorized Haitian citizens and monopolized public debate in a context where the challenges facing the country are increasing day by day," it said.

Moïse's widow, Martine, continues to demand justice. She issued a statement this month saying she would

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not attend any of Thursday's commemorations organized by the Haitian state, "whose head of government is the subject of serious suspicions of (involvement in) the assassination of the President of the Republic."

Henry has brushed away those allegations, firing a chief prosecutor last year who asked a judge to charge the prime minister in the killing and bar him from leaving the country. The prosecutor had noted that Henry spoke twice with a key suspect hours after the killing.

Henry's office has said the prime minister is unable to identify everyone who called him that day or determine the nature of the conversations since he couldn't take all the calls. The suspect remains at large.

Henry is urging Haitians to focus on turning around their country.

"It is imperative that Haitians work together to reconcile segments of our society that are too divided," he said. "This is a must if we want to restore security, deal with armed gangs and their sponsors, create a climate conducive to the holding of elections with a high turnout, in order to rebuild our democratic institutions."

But a growing number of Haitians blame Henry for the growing insecurity.

The United Nations says that almost seven kidnappings are reported a day and that in May alone more than 200 killings and 198 abductions were reported in the country of more than 11 million people. Those kidnappings included two busloads of children and three U.N. employees and their dependents. In addition, one gang recently seized control of part of Haiti's Court of First Instance, looting and burning case files and evidence.

"Even though we have a prime minister, no one is governing the country right now," Ralf Jean-Pierre, a businessman from Les Cayes who lives in Port-au-Prince, said as he scanned the street while talking, fearful he might be kidnapped at any moment.

He said life for him and his family has become extremely difficult because he can't ferry goods such as bananas, yams and tomatoes that grow in southern Haiti to the capital since warring gangs have taken over the main road connecting the two regions.

The lack of access also means that not enough aid is reaching those affected by a magnitude 7.2 earthquake that struck the south almost a year ago, killing more than 2,200 people and destroying or damaging hundreds of thousands of homes and other buildings.

Thousands have fled Haiti. The largest single incident came in late May, when 842 Haitians were stranded on the Cuban coast after their captain abandoned the boat. Hundreds of others have landed in Florida, while dozens have died at sea in recent months.

Claudia Julmiste, a nursing student, said she is trying to make ends meet by reselling underwear, bras and wigs that she buys in the neighboring Dominican Republic, although Haiti's double-digit inflation has hit her and many others hard.

"I'm trying to make the best of it here," she said. "I don't want to be one of those kids getting on a boat at sea to die, but Haiti is not offering anything."

## From Brexit to Partygate, a timeline of Johnson's career

LONDON (AP) — He was the mayor who basked in the glory of hosting the 2012 London Olympics, and the man who led the Conservatives to a thumping election victory on the back of his promise to "get Brexit done."

But Boris Johnson's time as prime minister was marred by his handling of the coronavirus pandemic and a steady stream of ethics allegations, from alcohol-fueled government parties that broke lockdown rules to how he handled a sexual misconduct scandal involving a senior party lawmaker.

Here is a timeline of events relating to Johnson's political career:

2001-2008: Serves as a member of Parliament in the House of Commons representing the constituency of Henley.

2008-2016: Serves as London mayor, overseeing 2012 London Olympics.

2016: Co-leader of the campaign to take Britain out of the European Union, in opposition to then-Prime Minister David Cameron, a fellow Conservative. Cameron resigns after voters approve Brexit in a national

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referendum on June 23, 2016.

2016-2018: Serves as Foreign Secretary under Cameron's successor, Prime Minister Theresa May. Johnson resigns in July 2018 in opposition to May's strategy for a "soft" Brexit that would maintain close ties with the EU.

June 7, 2019: Theresa May resigns as Conservative Party leader over her failure to persuade Parliament to back the Brexit agreement she negotiated with the EU. The party is split between those who back May and hard-liners, led by Johnson, who are willing to risk a no-deal Brexit in order to wring concessions from the EU.

July 23, 2019: Johnson is elected Conservative Party leader in a vote by party members. He takes office as prime minister the next day, inheriting a minority government that relies on votes from Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party to pass legislation. Johnson insists Britain will leave the EU on Oct. 31, with or without a deal.

Aug. 28, 2019: Johnson announces he will shut down Parliament until mid-October, giving opponents less time to thwart a no-deal Brexit.

Sept. 3, 2019: Twenty-one rebel Conservative Party lawmakers support legislation requiring the government to seek an extension of Brexit negotiations if it can't negotiate an agreement with the EU. The measure passes and the rebels are expelled from the party.

Sept. 5, 2019: Johnson asserts he would rather be "dead in a ditch" than ask the EU for another extension.

Sept. 24, 2019: U.K. Supreme Court rules government's suspension of Parliament was unlawful.

Oct. 19, 2019: Johnson asks the EU to delay Brexit again. New deadline set for Jan. 31.

Nov. 6, 2019: Parliament is dissolved and early elections are set for mid-December as Johnson seeks a mandate for his Brexit strategy.

Dec. 12, 2019: Johnson wins an 80-seat majority in the general election, giving him the backing to push through Brexit legislation. The victory makes Johnson the most electorally successful Conservative leader since Margaret Thatcher.

Jan. 23, 2020: The Brexit deal becomes law after approval by U.K. Parliament. European Parliament approves the deal six days later.

March 23, 2020: Johnson places U.K. in first lockdown due to COVID-19.

April 5, 2020: Johnson hospitalized and later moved to intensive care with COVID-19. He is released from the hospital on April 12, thanking the nurses who sat with him through the night to make sure he kept breathing.

Nov. 3-4, 2021: Johnson's government orders Conservative lawmakers to support a change in ethics rules to delay the suspension of Owen Paterson, a Johnson supporter who had been censured for breaching lobbying rules. The measure passes. A day later, facing an angry backlash from lawmakers of all parties, Johnson reverses course and allows lawmakers to vote on Paterson's suspension. Paterson resigns.

Nov. 30, 2021: Allegations surface that government officials attended parties in government offices during November and December 2020 in violation of COVID-19 lockdown rules. The scandal grows to reports of more than a dozen parties. Johnson denies the allegations, but opposition leaders criticize the government for breaking the law as people across the country made sacrifices to combat the pandemic.

Dec. 8, 2021: Johnson authorizes investigation into the scandal, dubbed "Partygate." Pressure builds for a leadership challenge, but fizzles.

Feb. 3: Johnson's longtime aide, Munira Mirza, quits Downing Street, followed by three other top aides.

March 23: The government announces a mid-year spending plan that's criticized for doing too little to help people struggling with the soaring cost of living. Treasury chief Rishi Sunak refuses to delay a planned income tax increase or impose a windfall profits tax on oil and gas companies benefiting from rising energy prices.

April 9: Johnson meets Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv, pledging a new package of military and economic support. The move helps bolster Johnson and his supporters, who argue the government should not focus on domestic political squabbles.

April 12: Johnson is fined 50 pounds (\$63) for attending one of the lockdown parties. Opposition parties

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characterize him as the first U.K. prime minister in history shown to have broken the law while in office. Johnson apologizes but insists he didn't know he was breaking the rules.

May 22,: Findings of the "Partygate" investigation are published, detailing 16 gatherings at Johnson's home and office and other government offices between May 2020 and April 2021. The report details excessive drinking among some of Johnson's staff, at a time when millions of people were unable to see friends and family.

May 26: The government reverses course on its tax decision on oil and gas companies and announces plans for a 25% windfall profits levy.

June 6: Johnson narrowly wins a vote of no confidence, with Conservative lawmakers voting 211 to 148 to back him. But the scale of the revolt — some 41% voted against him — shakes his grip on power.

June 15: Christopher Geidt quits as ethics adviser to Johnson, accusing the Conservative government of planning to flout conduct rules.

June 24: Johnson's Conservatives lose two former strongholds to opposition parties in special elections.

June 29: Parliament's cross-party Privileges Committee issues a call for evidence for a probe into whether Johnson misled Parliament over lockdown parties.

June 30: Chris Pincher resigns as Conservative deputy chief whip amid allegations he assaulted two guests at a private members' club in London. Previous sexual misconduct allegations emerge about Pincher. Questions swirl about whether Johnson knew about the claims when Pincher was given the job.

July 5: Johnson apologizes for his handling of the Pincher scandal and says he had forgotten about being told of the allegations. Two of Johnson's most senior Cabinet ministers, Treasury chief Rishi Sunak and Health Secretary Sajid Javid, quit the government.

July 6: Some three dozen junior ministers resign from the government, attacking Johnson's leadership.

July 7: Johnson agrees to resign as Conservative Party leader and prime minister.

## Griner's Moscow trial resumes amid calls for US to seek deal

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Jailed American basketball star Brittney Griner returns to a Russian court Thursday amid a growing chorus of calls for Washington to do more to secure her release nearly five months after she was arrested on drug charges.

Griner was detained in February at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport after vape canisters with cannabis oil allegedly were found in her luggage. She faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted of large-scale transportation of drugs.

The trial of the Phoenix Mercury star and two-time Olympic gold medalist began last week but the second session was adjourned because two scheduled witnesses did not appear. Such delays are not uncommon in Russian courts and her detention has been authorized through Dec. 20, suggesting the proceedings could last months.

It was unclear if Griner would testify Thursday.

Although Griner's supporters initially kept a low profile, calls for the United States to take action spiked after the trial's first day.

The State Department has designated her as wrongfully detained, moving her case under the supervision of its special presidential envoy for hostage affairs, effectively the government's chief hostage negotiator.

However, Washington hasn't made public its strategy in the case and the U.S. may have little leverage with Moscow because of strong animosity due to Russia's military actions in Ukraine. The White House said President Joe Biden called Griner's wife on Wednesday to assure her that he's doing all he can to obtain the athlete's release, as soon as possible. They spoke after Biden read a letter from Griner in which she said she feared she'd never return home.

The Rev. Al Sharpton, one of America's most prominent Black activists, this week called for Biden to arrange a prayer meeting with Griner, saying, "Four months is too long for this to have gone on, and I hope the President acts on her pleas to come home."



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An organization called Win With Black Women sent Biden a letter saying Secretary of State Antony Blinken "has called Cherelle Griner, Brittney's wife, assuring her and stating publicly that Brittney's safe return was a matter of personal priority; however, we are concerned that the rhetoric does not appear to align with the actions taken to date. We urge you to make a deal to get Brittney back home swiftly."

Russian news media have repeatedly speculated that Griner could be swapped for Russian arms trader Viktor Bout, nicknamed "the Merchant of Death," who is serving a 25-year sentence in the U.S. 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 alleged offense and Bout's global dealings in deadly weapons could make such a swap unpalatable to Washington.

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

Russia has shown no signs of backing off.

"This is a serious offense, confirmed by indisputable evidence ... Attempts to present the case as if the American was detained illegally do not hold up," Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexei Zaitsev said Wednesday.

"The law has been violated, and arguments about the innocent nature of Griner's addiction, which, by the way, is punishable in some U.S. states, are inappropriate in this case," he said.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov warned Thursday that "attempts by the American side to make noise in public ... don't help the practical settlement of issues." U.S. criticism, including a description of Griner as wrongfully detained and comments about the Russian judicial system, "makes it difficult to engage in detailed discussion of any possible exchanges," he said.

Ryabkov noted that until Griner's trial is over "there are no formal or procedural reasons to talk about any further steps."

## **Boris Johnson reached the top but was felled by his flaws**

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Boris Johnson wanted to be like his hero Winston Churchill: a larger-than-life character who led Britain through a time of crisis. He was felled by crises of his own making, as a trickle of ethics allegations became a flood that engulfed his government and turned his own party against him.

Johnson agreed to resign Thursday after the chorus of disapproval from within his own party became too much for him to withstand.

The move came after months of scandal that saw Johnson fined by police and criticized by an investigator's report for allowing rule-breaking parties in his office while Britain was in lockdown during the coronavirus pandemic.

Johnson urged his party and country to "move on" and focus on the U.K.'s struggling economy and the war in Ukraine. But two thumping special election defeats for Johnson's Conservative Party and allegations of sexual misconduct against a senior party official sealed the fate of a politician whose ability to survive scandals was legendary.

Johnson's career was always one of extremes. He took Britain out of the European Union and led the nation during a global health crisis that endangered his own life, but was toppled after flouting restrictions he imposed in response to COVID-19. Revelations of parties in Johnson's Downing Street office while the country was in lockdown in 2020 and 2021 caused outrage and tested the patience of the Conservative Party for its election-winning but erratic leader.

An investigation by senior civil servant Sue Gray criticized "failures of leadership and judgment" in Johnson's government for allowing multiple rule-breaking gatherings in 2020 and 2021. Dozens of people were issued police fines, including the prime minister, his wife Carrie Johnson and Treasury chief Rishi Sunak.

It was, seemingly, the final blow to the career of one of the most divisive politicians Britain has ever known. A sympathetic biographer, Andrew Gimson, called Johnson "the man who takes on the Establishment and wins." But for former member of Parliament Rory Stewart, who ran unsuccessfully against Johnson

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for the Conservative leadership in 2019, he was “probably the best liar we’ve ever had as prime minister.”

Johnson’s selection as Conservative leader and prime minister in July 2019 capped a rollercoaster journey to the top. He had held major offices, including London mayor and U.K. foreign secretary, but also spent periods on the political sidelines after self-inflicted gaffes.

Many times, Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson was written off as a lightweight who lacked the seriousness needed in a leader. He sometimes colluded in that impression, fostering the image of a ruffled, Latin-spouting populist with a mop of blond hair who didn’t take himself too seriously. He once said he had as much chance of becoming prime minister as of finding Elvis on Mars.

First elected to Parliament in 2001, he moved for years between journalism and politics, becoming well known as a newspaper columnist and guest on TV comedy quiz shows.

He sometimes made offensive remarks — calling Papua New Guineans cannibals and comparing Muslim women who wear face-covering veils to “letter boxes” — that caused furor and that he shrugged off as jokes.

His first big political post, as mayor of London between 2008 and 2016, suited his talents. He built a high global profile as cheerful ambassador for the city — an image exemplified when he got stuck on a zip line during the 2012 London Olympics, waving Union Jacks as he dangled in the air.

Critics blasted his backing for vanity projects including a little-used cable car and a never-built “garden bridge” over the River Thames, and warned he could not be trusted. As a young journalist, Johnson had been fired by The Times of London for making up a quote. He was once recorded promising to give a friend the address of a journalist that the friend wanted beaten up. He was sacked from a senior Conservative post for lying about an extramarital affair.

As Brussels correspondent for the Daily Telegraph, he specialized in exaggerated stories of EU waste and ridiculous red tape — tales that helped turn British opinion against the bloc, with far-reaching consequences.

Historian Max Hastings, Johnson’s former boss at the Telegraph, later called him “a man of remarkable gifts, flawed by an absence of conscience, principle or scruple.”

It was Brexit that gave Johnson his big chance. Johnson’s co-leadership of the campaign to take Britain out of the European Union helped the “leave” side secure a narrow victory in a 2016 referendum.

His bullish energy was essential to the victory. So, critics said, were the campaign’s lies — such as the false claim that Britain sent 350 million pounds a week to the EU, money that could instead be spent on the U.K.’s national health service.

The Brexit vote was a triumph for Johnson, but it did not immediately make him prime minister. Theresa May won a Conservative Party leadership contest and took the top job.

Johnson had to watch and wait for three years as May struggled to secure a divorce deal acceptable to both the bloc and Britain’s Parliament. When she failed, Johnson’s promise to “Get Brexit done” won him the prime minister’s job. In December 2019 he secured the Conservative Party its biggest parliamentary majority since Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s.

His first months in office were fraught. Lawmakers resisted his Brexit plans and he suspended Parliament — until the U.K. Supreme Court ruled the move illegal. Opponents said it was another example of Johnson’s rule-breaking and disregard for the law.

After several delays to the departure date, Johnson achieved his goal of leading Britain out of the EU on Jan. 31, 2020. Yet despite Johnson’s slogan, Brexit was far from “done,” with many issues still to be resolved, including the delicate status of Northern Ireland, an ongoing source of friction between Britain and the bloc.

And then the pandemic struck. Johnson initially appeared relaxed about the threat the new coronavirus posed to the U.K., and hesitated to impose restrictions on movement and business activity.

He changed course and imposed a lockdown in late March 2020, and days later came down with COVID-19 himself, spending several nights in intensive care in a London hospital. He later said it had been “touch and go” whether he would be put on a ventilator.

Johnson’s handling of the pandemic drew decidedly mixed reviews. By nature a laissez-faire politician,

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he bristled at having to impose restrictions, and early on spoke rashly of the pandemic being over within weeks.

The U.K. went on to have one of the highest coronavirus death tolls in Europe, and some of the longest lockdowns. But the government got one big thing right, investing early in vaccine development and purchases and delivering doses to the bulk of the population.

The vaccination success brought Johnson a poll boost, but his troubles were growing. He faced allegations over money from a Conservative donor that he'd used to refurbish his official apartment. And he suffered a huge backlash when the government tried to change parliamentary standards rules after a lawmaker was found guilty of illicit lobbying.

The final straw came when details emerged of parties held in Johnson's Downing Street office and home while the country was in lockdown.

The details were sometimes comic — staff smuggling booze into Downing Street in a suitcase, a supporter's claim that Johnson had been "ambushed with a cake" at a surprise birthday party. But the anger they sparked was real. Millions of Britons had followed the rules, unable to visit friends and family or even say goodbye to dying relatives in hospitals.

Hannah Bunting, a University of Exeter lecturer who has studied public trust in politicians, said that in the past, voters were "well aware of Johnson's flaws and this didn't dim his electoral popularity."

The party claims changed that, because people could "compare their actions to his," she said. "Most of us complied with government restrictions because we thought it was in everyone's interests. We made sacrifices to ensure people were safe."

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24 gave Britain's politicians and media more urgent things to focus on. It brought a reprieve from domestic woes for Johnson, who won international praise for his military, financial and moral support for Ukraine. He traveled to Kyiv twice to meet President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, a reliable and welcome ally.

But the special election defeats of June 2022 — one in a district that had voted Conservative for a century — drove home to Conservatives that anger at "partygate" had not gone away.

Soon after, Johnson was caught changing his story on the way he handled allegations of sexual misconduct by a senior member of his government. Ministers who had defended Johnson through thick and thin had finally had enough. They quit the government in droves, leaving Johnson no choice but to resign.

Johnson's run of miraculous escapes had finally come to an end.

## Tuna catch dries up for Kenya's local fisherfolk

By WANJOHI KABUKURU Associated Press

VANGA, Kenya (AP) — "Tuna is not for everyone," lamented 65-year-old Chapoka Miongo, a handline fisher on Kenya's south coast, from his dugout canoe.

He's one of many artisanal fishers in Shimoni, a bustling coastal town 82 kilometers (51 miles) south of Mombasa, dotted with dhows, dugout boats, outrigger canoes and skiffs anchored on the beach landing site. Scores of fishmongers, processors and traders line the shoreline awaiting the fisherfolk to return.

"My canoe is only suitable for the near shore and only those with the big boats and money can access tuna," he said. Miongo explained that warming waters due to climate change forced tuna species to alter their migration patterns, making it harder for local fishers to catch them. Fish stocks have also decreased due to a lack of sustainable fishing by larger vessels.

The Shimoni channel, previously a well-known haunt for tuna, benefits from the north and south easterly monsoons which can lead to substantial catches, according to records kept by the Kenya Fisheries Service.

But the current monsoon has been unkind to Miongo. He can barely fill his bucket: his modest catch of the day includes a motley batch of emperor fish.

Yellowfin tuna in particular, which fetches competitive prices at the market, can feel like a "lucky break" for fisherfolk, explained 60-year-old prawn fisher Mazera Mgala.

After a seemingly futile five-day hunt, scouting fish landing sites in Gazi Bay, the Shimoni channel and

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Vanga seafront for the yellowfin tuna, one weighing six and a half kilograms was finally caught by an outrigger canoe fisherman at the Shimoni channel.

Miongo and Mgala are among just over 1,500 fisherfolk who rely on the rich marine waters of the channel. In Miongo's three decades of fishing, he says large foreign ships, more young men opting for artisanal fishing due to a lack of white-collar jobs and higher education opportunities, and a changing climate are depleting livelihoods.

Vanga fisherman Kassim Abdalla Zingizi added that most artisanal fisherfolk lack the skills, knowledge and financial support to compete with larger foreign vessels, mostly from Europe and Asia, which deploy satellite tracking technologies to trace the various tuna shoals all over the Indian Ocean.

The Kenyan government is implementing an economic strategy that will address the effects of climate change on the livelihoods of those on the coast, as well as boost skills among artisanal fisherfolk and promote more sustainable fishing practices, said Dennis Oigara from the Kenya Fisheries Service.

Subsidies for large fisheries — which have long been blamed for destructive fishing practices — have featured prominently at World Trade Organization talks for over a decade with no resolution. Earlier this year the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, who is responsible for the region's tuna regulations, was criticized for not implementing measures to protect several tuna species from overfishing at its annual meeting.

After catch limits for two tuna species were exceeded between 2018 and 2020, conservation groups lambasted the tuna commission for what they called a "decade of failure" which left tuna stocks "increasingly in peril." The World Wildlife Fund for Nature called for a global boycott of yellowfin tuna.

The Maldivian government, which unsuccessfully proposed that members of the tuna commission reduce their catch by 22% from 2020, said it was "extremely disappointed" by the meeting's outcome.

Christopher O'Brien, the commission's executive secretary, said the number of active fishing vessels in the Indian Ocean are decreasing.

"There are currently over 6100 vessels licensed to fish for Indian Ocean tuna species. In 2020 there were just over 3300 active vessels," he explained. Miongo's and Abdalla's dugout and outrigger canoes are not among these 6100 vessels registered by the tuna commission, which is dominated by industrial fishing fleets.

The fisheries commission also agreed to set up two special sessions in the near future to iron out concerns over yellowfin tuna stocks, with the first slated for early 2023.

But the commission also passed a landmark resolution to study the effects of climate change on tuna fish stocks in the region, hailed as one of the conference's successes. The study aims to understand the complex relationship between climate change, tuna fisheries and tuna stocks with a view of informing future adaptation and mitigation measures. It's the second regional fisheries management organization to implement a resolution on climate change.

"We are hopeful that the adoption of this proposal will guide us to achieve the long-term sustainability of the stocks of tuna and tuna-like species," said Adam Ziyad, the director general of the Maldives ministry of fisheries, marine resources and agriculture.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says climate variability has led to reduced marine stocks, fish shifting from lower to higher latitude regions, coral bleaching and increased risk of conflict over scarce resources. These changes are already being felt by local fishing communities.

"Back in the day I would start fishing in the early morning and three to four hours later I would be through as I had caught enough fish," said Mazera Mgala, who started fishing in 1975 and would dive in the ocean in his youth among vibrant corals and abundant fish. "Nowadays, I stay longer at sea and still catch less." \_\_\_\_\_

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.

## Embattled UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson agrees to resign

By DANICA KIRKA, JILL LAWLESS and SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

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LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson agreed to resign Thursday after days of defections crippled the controversial leader and left him unable to govern.

Johnson finally agreed to step down after one of his closest allies, Treasury Chief Nadhim Zahawi, told the prime minister to resign for the good of the country. It was not immediately clear whether Johnson will stay in office while the Conservative Party chooses a new leader, who will automatically become prime minister as well. A formal announcement is expected later Thursday.

"Prime Minister: this is not sustainable and it will only get worse: for you, for the Conservative Party and most importantly of all the country," Zahawi said in a letter to Johnson. "You must do the right thing and go now."

Zahawi's intervention came after two more members of Johnson's Cabinet resigned, along with three junior officials, pushing the number of those who have left the government this week past 50.

Johnson on Wednesday rejected calls to resign, arguing that he had a mandate from the voters to remain in office. But by Thursday morning the man who has built a reputation for wriggling out of political controversies was forced to admit the reality of his situation.

Bernard Jenkin, a senior Conservative Party lawmaker, said he met with Johnson on Wednesday and advised him to stand down.

"I just said to him, 'Look, it's just when you go now, and it's how you go. You can go with some dignity or you can be forced out like Donald Trump, clinging to power and pretending he's won the election when he's lost,'" Jenkin told the BBC before Johnson agreed to resign.

Johnson, 58, managed to remain in power for almost three years, despite allegations that he was too close to party donors, that he protected supporters from bullying and corruption allegations, and that he misled Parliament and was dishonest to the public about government office parties that broke pandemic lockdown rules.

But recent disclosures that Johnson knew about sexual misconduct allegations against Chris Pincher, a Conservative lawmaker, before he promoted Pincher to a senior position turned out to be the last straw.

Last week, Pincher resigned as deputy chief whip after complaints he groped two men at a private club. That triggered a series of reports about past allegations leveled against Pincher — and shifting explanations from the government about what Johnson knew when he tapped him for a senior job enforcing party discipline.

Health Secretary Sajid Javid and Treasury chief Rishi Sunak resigned within minutes of each other Wednesday over the scandal. The two Cabinet heavyweights were responsible for tackling two of the biggest issues facing Britain — the cost-of-living crisis and COVID-19.

Javid captured the mood of many lawmakers when he said Johnson's actions threatened to undermine the integrity of the Conservative Party and the British government.

"At some point we have to conclude that enough is enough," he told fellow lawmakers Wednesday. "I believe that point is now."

Welsh Secretary Simon Hart resigned on Wednesday, and Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis followed suite early Thursday, telling Johnson in his resignation letter that "we are ... past the point of no return. I cannot sacrifice my personal integrity to defend things as they stand now." He was later followed by Education Secretary Michelle Donelan, who was only appointed to her post on Tuesday to replace Zahawi.

Johnson had attempted to defy the mathematics of parliamentary government and the traditions of British politics. It is rare for a prime minister to cling to power in the face of this much pressure from his Cabinet colleagues.

The closest parallel may be Margaret Thatcher, the long-time Conservative prime minister who in 1990 sought to remain in office after her authority was undermined by disagreements over Britain's relationship with what is now known as the European Union. But even she decided to resign after a number of Cabinet ministers told her it would be better for the party if she stepped aside.

Johnson may try to remain in office until the Conservative Party chooses a new leader, a process likely to take place over the summer. But some Conservatives said he should leave 10 Downing St. immediately

to end the chaos engulfing the government.

George Freeman, who quit as science minister on Thursday, tweeted that "Boris Johnson needs to hand in the seals of office, apologise to Her Majesty (Queen Elizabeth II) and advise her to call for a caretaker prime minister. To take over today so that ministers can get back to work and we can choose a new Conservative leader to try and repair the damage and rebuild trust."

## 1st bull run in Pamplona in 3 years takes place; no gorings

By IRENE YAGÜE and JOSEPH WILSON Associated Press

PAMPLONA, Spain (AP) — The first bull run in three years took place Thursday at the San Fermín festival in the Spanish city of Pamplona. No one was gored, but several runners took knocks and hard falls as tens of thousands people reveled in the return of one of Europe's most famous traditional events.

Six bulls guided by six tame oxen charged through Pamplona's streets for around two minutes and 35 seconds without provoking too much carnage among the thousands of observers and participants cramming the course.

Several runners were stomped, trampled or shoved to the cobblestone pavement. A animal's horn smacked at least two men in the head, but neither suffered a skewering.

The Pamplona hospital said six people were brought in for treatment. They included a 30-year-old American man who fractured his left arm and a 16-year-old Spanish boy who lost part of a finger in the bullring, where a pile-up of runners occurred at the entrance. Four Spanish men between the ages of 19 and 45 also were injured.

Ryan Ward, an American tourist from San Diego, California, said the risk of running with the bulls was well worth the rush.

"I feel like I need to cry. It's just so many emotions built up in me, running with 'mis amigos' (my friends). I don't know where they are, I lost everyone," he said after finishing the bull run unscathed.

"It felt like two seconds, it was probably like a minute when I actually had the bulls running by me, but it felt so quick, like a blink and it was gone," Ward continued. "It's amazing, incredible, one of the best experiences I've ever had."

Thursday's early morning bull run was the first of eight scheduled. The rest of day usually includes massive drinking, eating and attending cultural events.

Eight people were gored during the 2019 festival, the last held before the coronavirus pandemic. Sixteen people have died in bull runs since 1910, most recently in 2009.

The bulls that run each morning are killed in the afternoon by professional bullfighters. Animal rights activists have campaigned against the slaughter of the animals, but bullfights are still popular among segments of Spanish society and an integral part of the San Fermín festival.

The incredibly popular Pamplona festivities were canceled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic.

Spain's strong vaccination program has allowed life to return to more or less normal, but a recent uptick in cases led Pamplona authorities to recommend using face masks when necessary. That said, masks were a very rare sight among the throngs of people packing the city's square for the official kickoff of the party on Wednesday or during the first bull run.

Thousands of men, and some women, participate in the "encierros," or bull runs, trying to avoid the massive bulls and oxen that thunder along the narrow, twisting cobblestone streets of Pamplona's old quarter.

The course of 875 meters (956 yards) is sprayed with a substance to help prevent the bulls from slipping on the tight corners. The run usually is over within three heart-stopping minutes.

Expert bull runners, mostly locals, try to sprint at full steam just in the front of the bull horns before peeling off at the last second. The inexperienced, a group that includes most foreigners, do well enough to scramble out of the way, often ending up in piles of fellow runners.

Almost everyone in Pamplona this week wears the traditional white shirt and pants with red sash and neckerchief for the festival.

## **Inflation pushed 71M people into poverty since Ukraine war**

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A staggering 71 million more people around the world are experiencing poverty as a result of soaring food and energy prices that climbed in the weeks following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the United Nations Development Program said in a report Thursday.

The UNDP estimates that 51.6 million more people fell into poverty in the first three months after the war, living off \$1.90 a day or less. This pushed the total number globally at this threshold to 9% of the world's population. An additional 20 million people slipped to the poverty line of \$3.20 a day.

In low-income countries, families spend 42% of their household incomes on food but as Western nations moved to sanction Russia, the price of fuel and staple food items like wheat, sugar and cooking oil soared. Ukraine's blocked ports and its inability to export grains to low-income countries further drove up prices, pushing tens of millions quickly into poverty.

"The cost of living impact is almost without precedent in a generation... and that is why it is so serious," UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner said at the launch of the report.

The speed at which this many people experienced poverty outpaced the economic pain felt at the peak of the pandemic. The UNDP noted that 125 million additional people experienced poverty over about 18 months during the pandemic's lockdowns and closures, compared with more than 71 million who hit poverty in just three months after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February.

"The speed of this is very quick," said George Molina, UNDP chief economist and author of the report.

Among the 20 countries hit hardest by inflation are Haiti, Argentina, Egypt, Iraq, Turkey, the Philippines, Rwanda, Sudan, Ghana, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan. More people in these countries, some of which have been roiled by political turmoil like Sudan and Sri Lanka, are facing poverty, according to the UNDP. In countries like Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria and Yemen, the effects of inflation are felt deeply by those already at the lowest poverty line.

The total number of people living in poverty, or are vulnerable to poverty, stands at over 5 billion, or just under 70% of the world's population.

In Ghana, where the daily minimum wage is just \$1.80 a day, people are struggling under the weight of inflation. Albert Kowfie, a 27 year-old security guard in Accra, Ghana, said a loaf of bread costs the equivalent of over \$2 and commuting to work costs another 20 cents.

"It means that by the end of the first week (of work), everything is gone," he said, expressing frustration at the government for not doing more to alleviate the burden. "I don't answer my mother's calls anymore because I know she needs help since she is not on any pension, but what can I do?"

Another U.N. report released Wednesday said world hunger rose last year with 2.3 billion people facing moderate or severe difficulty obtaining enough to eat — and that was before the war in Ukraine.

There is a need for the global economy to step up, Steiner said, adding that there is enough wealth in the world to manage the crisis, "but our ability to act in unison and rapidly is a constraint".

The UNDP recommends that rather than spending billions on blanket energy subsidies, governments instead target expenditure to reach the most impacted people through targeted cash transfers that can prevent a further 52.6 million people from falling into poverty at \$5.50 a day.

For cash-strapped and debt-laden developing countries to achieve this, the UNDP called for an extension of debt payments that had been in place during the pandemic among the world's richest nations.

Steiner said doing so is not only an act of charity but is also "an act of rational self interest" to avoid other complex trends, such as economic collapse in countries and popular protests already taking place in communities across the world.

The war in Ukraine has roiled a region known as the world's bread basket. Before the war, Russia was the world's largest exporter of natural gas and the second biggest exporter of crude oil. Russia and Ukraine combined accounted for almost a quarter of global wheat exports and more than half of sunflower oil exports.

## A hajj closer to normal: 1 million Muslims begin pilgrimage

By AMR NABIL and ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

MECCA, Saudi Arabia (AP) — It is a scene that stirs hope — and relief — for Muslims around the world. One million pilgrims from across the globe amassed on Thursday in the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia to perform the initial rites of the hajj, marking the largest Islamic pilgrimage since the coronavirus pandemic upended the annual event — a key pillar of Islam.

The hajj is a once-in-a-lifetime duty for all Muslims physically and financially able to make the journey, which takes the faithful along a path traversed by the Prophet Muhammad some 1,400 years ago. Pilgrims spend five days carrying out a set of rituals intended to bring them closer to God.

That includes praying around the cube-shaped Kaaba, the holiest shrine in Islam. At the center of the Grand Mosque's courtyard on Thursday, thousands of unmasked pilgrims circled the Kaaba.

The crowds, visibly thinner than usual, moved counter-clockwise around the granite building in a blur, their hearts tilting toward the structure meant to symbolize the oneness of God in Islam. Wherever they are in the world, observant Muslims face the Kaaba to pray daily.

Pilgrims appeared to throw COVID-19 caution to the wind this year as they thronged the Grand Mosque — in sharp contrast to the social distancing and mask requirements of the past two years.

But there were still signs of vigilance. Typically, worshippers would fight the crowds for a chance to touch and kiss the black stone on the Kaaba's eastern corner, but the government banned this practice for the third year. Saudi authorities also distributed bottles of water from the holy Zamzam well instead of allowing pilgrims to drink from cups at the mosque. Thousands of medical workers were on hand to assist those in need.

This year, the hajj is open to just 1 million foreign and domestic pilgrims who have been fully vaccinated against the coronavirus, tested negative for COVID-19 and are between 18 and 65 years old. Authorities estimate 85% have arrived from abroad.

While this year's attendance is far below the pre-pandemic influx of 2.5 million pilgrims, it represents a significant step closer to normal after the kingdom restricted the event to a small number of Muslim residents for the past two years.

The ritual was almost scrapped in its entirety in 2020, when as few as 1,000 residents were permitted to take part. Some 60,000 residents attended last year. The unprecedented restrictions sent shockwaves through the Muslim world and devastated many believers, who often save up and wait for years to make the pilgrimage.

Although no longer in the shadow of the pandemic, this hajj is taking place amid Russia's war on Ukraine — a conflict that may be thousands of miles from the homes of many Muslims but has sent the prices of staple foods soaring and spread misery across the world.

This year's hajj also showcases de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's latest efforts to loosen social restrictions and transform the kingdom. Saudi Arabia officially began allowing women to perform the hajj without a male guardian, or "mahram," last year.

The hajj in Islam is meant to be a great equalizer and unifier among Muslims. Pilgrims wear simple clothing: For men, it's typical to wear a white draping garment, while women wear conservative dress and headscarves, forgoing makeup, nail polish and perfume to draw closer to God.

But even Mecca cannot escape the world's wealth gaps: The well-heeled may pay some \$3,000 a night for five-star hotels overlooking the Kaaba. For most people, however, the pilgrimage means sleeping in simple accommodations or on the ground around the mosque to perform daily prayers ahead of the hajj.

With many more people applying to perform the hajj each year than the kingdom can accommodate, the Saudi government controls the flow of visitors through annual quotas based on each nation's Muslim population.

The visa regulations have grown stricter after deadly incidents in recent years. In 2015, several thousand pilgrims were crushed to death in a stampede. This year, those quotas were sharply reduced. Indonesia sent just over 100,000 people, the world's largest contingent. The U.S. sent over 9,500 citizens.



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Shiite powerhouse Iran, Saudi Arabia's regional foe that in 2016 barred its citizens from making the pilgrimage amid an escalating sectarian rivalry, sent 39,000, less than half of its attendance in 2019. Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's special envoy for the hajj did not receive a visa because he is over 65, Iranian media reported.

As tensions eased between the rivals amid regional negotiations and a ceasefire in Yemen, hajj officials from the countries met last month for the first time in years.

Although the pandemic is far from over, with hundreds new infections a day in the kingdom, the government is glad of the influx. The event is a critical source of prestige and tourism for Saudi Arabia.

## Ukrainians cling to life at front line: 'We are patriots'

By CARA ANNA and VASILISA STEPANENKO Associated Press

KHARKIV, Ukraine (AP) — Viktor Lazar shares his war-side balcony with a pair of opera glasses and a tiny orange snake, his only companion in an apartment that seems to sit at the edge of the world.

The opera glasses, more of a joke, are hardly needed — the front line is visible without them. The rumbling of Russian and Ukrainian shelling is audible even now, although Lazar claims not to notice. Below his balcony is a crater, one of many. On the nearby street, a Grad rocket launcher rolls by.

Lazar estimates the Russians are just 10 kilometers (6 miles) away.

As the war grinds into its fifth month along deadly fault lines in Ukraine's east and south, Lazar and his few neighbors in Kharkiv's vast and shattered neighborhood of Saltivka represent a life without resolution in which many are trapped. New communities are being told to flee. Not all do.

While towns and villages around the capital of Kyiv have begun to rebuild after the Russians withdrew months ago and world powers discuss long-term recovery, others in eastern Ukraine still cannot sleep soundly.

The Soviet-era apartment blocks in Saltivka once housed a half-million people, one of the largest neighborhoods in Europe. Now perhaps only dozens remain. Some of the buildings are blackened, while others are crumbling slab by slab.

"This is my home," says the 37-year-old Lazar, who is shirtless in the soaring summer heat, revealing a machine gun tattoo on his right arm. He proclaims he's ready to fight the Russians, but his only weapons are kitchen knives.

A broken guitar hangs on the wall of his apartment. Lazar, a musician, dreams of holding a defiant concert in Saltivka's echoing, cat-roamed streets. In better days, he played for crowds in the plazas of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, which is showing signs of rebounding from the war — even though it's only a short distance from the border with Russia.

Saltivka, by comparison, is almost dead. Past a final subway station dedicated to heroes, all activity sputters out. Shops are closed and apartment blocks gape with broken windows. In one, a table-sized chunk of concrete twists slowly on a shred of rebar, waiting to fall.

Tall grass overtakes abandoned playgrounds scattered with fallen and ripened cherries. Soldiers' trenches are bare. In a few apartments now ripped open, laundry still hangs on the line.

From time to time, a car crunches along the debris. It might bring movers trying to salvage some furniture or volunteers bringing assistance.

Outside Lazar's building, people have assembled a modest kitchen with a mounted bell to ring when the day's food arrives. Near the teapot on a wood stove, ammunition boxes now hold bread slowly going stale.

Some electricity has returned but running water has not. Lazar ducks into a basement where water still gurgles for bathing. Two middle-aged women emerge from the darkness, looking fresh, and walk away.

But life is less an adventure for those with no options. Pavel Govoryhov, 84, sits in the entrance of a building now as fragile as himself. He has two canes at hand. For four months, he lived in the basement before moving back into his apartment. He tenses at sudden noises. Just speaking about his struggles brings him to tears.

"My children don't help me," he says. "Why do I need such a life?"

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In time, he knows, winter will return to the unheated apartment blocks without mercy.

The Russians could do the same. More than 600 civilians have been killed in the Kharkiv region north of Donetsk since the invasion, some in Saltiva. Ukrainian authorities have alleged that the Russians used banned cluster bombs.

Communities around the edges of Kharkiv are still in uncertain hands, reportedly part of Moscow's strategy to keep Ukrainian troops so distracted that they cannot be sent to places like Donetsk where the Russians are chewing away at entire cities.

"You don't wish this on anyone," says Bogdan Netsov, 14, who lives with his family in an apartment with curtains drawn.

In another Saltivka building, a scrawled sign in the stairway warns potential occupiers that "if you come in, you'll get killed."

This is where Viktor Shevchenko still calls home, even as he needs the light of his cellphone to see through its gloom in the daylight hours.

"This is me speaking for the whole world," he says, unshaven and fortified by tea. "We will push Russia away. Because we are patriots, and we live on our land."

Dishes lie smashed in his destroyed kitchen. A religious symbol from his Orthodox faith is scorched. A clock on the wall, like the neighborhood around him, has stopped working.

Shevchenko reaches for the clock and winds it.

"It runs," he says, with a touch of pride. "It runs."

On unsteady legs, he returns to the silence of Saltivka, the ticking clock in his hands.

## Russia's war in Ukraine to overshadow G20 talks in Bali

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Foreign ministers from the Group of 20 leading rich and developing nations are gathering in Indonesia's resort island of Bali for talks bound to be dominated by the conflict in Ukraine despite an agenda focused on global cooperation and food and energy security.

The one-day gathering will take place on Friday on the mostly Hindu "island of the gods" in the majority Muslim archipelago nation.

Underscoring the backdrop of tensions hanging over the meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Russia's top diplomat Sergey Lavrov stopped in various Asian capitals on their way to Bali, drumming up support and fortifying their ties in the region ahead of the talks.

The United States and its allies have sought to punish Russian President Vladimir Putin in as many ways as possible, including by threatening a boycott of the G-20's Bali summit in November unless Putin is removed from the forum.

So as this year's president of the G-20, Indonesia has been forced into playing a more constructive role on the world stage rather than acting just as an "event organizer." The country has sought to remain neutral in dealing with Russia's invasion of Ukraine and President Joko Widodo has been guarded in his comments.

Widodo was the first Asian leader to visit the warring countries. Ukraine is not a member of G-20, but Widodo has invited Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to the November summit along with Putin, hoping to appease all sides and limit any distractions from the forum's agenda.

Zelenskyy has said he won't attend if the war is continuing then and has opted to follow the discussions by video link. Widodo reportedly told Italian Prime Minister Marion Draghi, on the sidelines of the Group of Seven summit in Germany, that Putin also will not be coming. Moscow has said a decision has not yet been made.

That apparent compromise may be put to the test when the G-20 foreign ministers gather in Bali's heavily-guarded Nusa Dua tourist haven to lay the groundwork for the 17th summit of the West's economic powerhouses.

Strains between Washington and Beijing are also apparent: On Wednesday, China launched a scathing attack on the U.S. and NATO, just days before U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the Chinese

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foreign minister are due to meet in Bali.

Washington "observes international rules only as it sees fit," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told reporters in Beijing. He said the "so-called rules-based international order is actually a family rule made by a handful of countries to serve the U.S. self-interest."

A senior U.S. official, speaking on condition he not be further identified, said it would be important to focus on the G-20 agenda in Bali, but that it "clearly cannot be business as usual."

What is more important than a unanimous statement about the Russian invasion of Ukraine is what countries in the G-20 actually do to address the problems the world is facing now, he said.

A key aim of the talks will be to seek ways to improve food security at a time when Russia's invasion of Ukraine has choked global markets, pushing prices of meat, dairy products, cereals, sugar and vegetable oils sharply higher.

"These visits are not only important for Indonesians but also for other developing countries in order to prevent the people of developing and low-income countries from falling into extreme poverty and hunger," Widodo told reporters in Jakarta before his departure to Germany on June 26.

Russia and Ukraine account for a third of the world's wheat exports and Ukraine alone grows enough of the grain to feed 400 million people. But Moscow's blockade means Kyiv can only move 2 million tons a month, 60% less than usual.

Millions of tons of Ukrainian grain are sitting in silos waiting to be shipped through safe corridors in the Black Sea. Ukraine also is one of the world's largest exporters of corn and sunflower oil, but Russia's invasion halted most of that flow. Such disruptions threaten food supplies for many developing countries, especially in Africa.

The crisis is having inflationary ripple effects in Indonesia, including a shortage of flour that is compelling local companies to raise the politically-sensitive price of instant noodles, a hugely popular Indonesian staple.

Russia has pledged to increase its wheat exports to Indonesia. Last year, those amounted to only 2,955 tons compared with the 3 million tones imported from Ukraine.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi has told reporters it's important to achieve a resumption of grain exports from Ukraine and food and fertilizer exports from Russia to end shortages and reduce prices.

Rising costs of cooking oil prompted Indonesia, beset by student protests over skyrocketing food prices, to temporarily ban exports of palm oil products. Exports of crude palm oil, used in a wide variety of foods, cosmetics and other products, resumed a month later.

Indonesia and neighboring Malaysia are the world's largest exporters of palm oil, accounting for 85% of global production.

Foreign ministers headed to Bali on Thursday come from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the U.S., and the European Union.

Blinken is scheduled to meet with Wang, Beijing's top envoy, on Saturday. The meeting will be the latest high-level contact between U.S. and Chinese officials as Washington has questioned China's stance after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The two sides could also discuss a possible lifting of U.S. tariffs on imports from China by President Joe Biden's administration as it strives to counter inflation.

While in Bali, Lavrov is due to hold meetings with his counterparts from other countries, including China, Mexico, South Africa and Brazil on the sidelines of the G-20 foreign ministers. He also plans consultations with invited leaders of international organizations, according to Russia's embassy in Jakarta.

Members of the G-20 account for about 80% of the world's economic output, two-thirds of the world's population and about three-quarters of global trade.

## Yellowstone flooding reveals forecast flaws as climate warms

By MATTHEW BROWN and AMY BETH HANSON Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — The Yellowstone National Park area's weather forecast the morning of June 12 seemed fairly tame: warmer temperatures and rain showers would accelerate mountain snow melt and

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could produce "minor flooding." A National Weather Service bulletin recommended moving livestock from low-lying areas but made no mention of danger to people.

By nightfall, after several inches of rain fell on a deep spring snowpack, there were record-shattering floods.

Torrents of water poured off the mountains. Swollen rivers carrying boulders and trees smashed through Montana towns over the next several days. The flooding swept away houses, wiped out bridges and forced the evacuation of more than 10,000 tourists, park employees and residents near the park.

As a cleanup expected to last months grinds on, climate experts and meteorologists say the gap between the destruction and what was forecast underscores a troublesome aspect of climate change: Models used to predict storm impacts do not always keep up with increasingly devastating rainstorms, hurricanes, heat waves and other events.

"Those rivers had never reached those levels. We literally were flying blind not even knowing what the impacts would be," said Arin Peters, a senior hydrologist with the National Weather Service.

Hydrologic models used to predict flooding are based on long-term, historical records. But they do not reflect changes to the climate that emerged over the past decade, said meteorologist and Weather Underground founder Jeff Masters.

"Those models are going to be inadequate to deal with a new climate," Masters said.

Another extreme weather event where the models came up short was Hurricane Ida, which slammed Louisiana last summer and then stalled over the Eastern Seaboard — deluging parts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York with unprecedented rainfall that caused massive flooding.

The weather service had warned of a "serious situation" that could turn "catastrophic," but the predicted of 3 to 6 inches (8 to 15 centimeters) of rain for New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania was far short of the 9 to 10 inches (23 to 25 centimeters) that fell.

The deadly June 2021 heat wave that scorched the Pacific Northwest offered another example. Warmer weather had been expected, but not temperatures of up to 116 degrees (47C degrees) that toppled previous records and killed an estimated 600 or more people in Oregon, Washington state and western Canada.

The surprise Yellowstone floods prompted a nighttime scramble to close off roads and bridges getting swept away by the water, plus rushed evacuations that missed some people. No one died, somewhat miraculously, as more than 400 homes were damaged or destroyed.

As rock slides caused by the rainfall started happening in Yellowstone, park rangers closed a heavily-used road between the town of Gardiner and the park headquarters in Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming. It later washed out in numerous places.

The rain and snowmelt was "too much too fast and you just try to stay out of the way," Yellowstone Deputy Chief Ranger Tim Townsend said.

If the road hadn't been closed "we probably would have had fatalities, unquestionably," park Superintendent Cam Sholly said.

"The road looks totally fine and then it's like an 80-foot drop right into the river," Sholly said. "No way if someone was driving in the rain at night that they would have seen that and could have stopped."

Rock Creek, which runs through the city of Red Lodge and normally is placid and sometimes just ankle deep, became a raging river. When the weather service issued a flood warning for the creek, the water already had surged over its banks and begun to knock down bridges.

By the time the warning was sent, "we already knew it was too late," said Scott Williams, a commissioner for Carbon County, Montana, which borders Yellowstone.

Red Lodge resident Pam Smith was alerted to the floods by something knocking around in her basement before dawn. It was her clothes dryer, floating in water pouring through the windows.

In a scramble to save keepsakes, Smith slipped on the wet kitchen floor and fell, shattering a bone in her arm. She recalled holding back tears as she trudged through floodwaters with her partner and 15-year-old granddaughter to reach their pickup truck and drive to safety.

"I went blank," Smith said. "I was angry and like, 'Why didn't anybody warn us? Why was there no knock

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on the door? Why didn't the police come around and say there's flooding, you need to get out?"

Local authorities say sheriff's deputies and others knocked on doors in Red Lodge and a second community that flooded. But they acknowledged not everyone was reached as numerous rivers and streams overflowed, swamping areas never known previously to flood.

While no single weather event can be conclusively tied to climate change, scientists said the Yellowstone flooding was consistent with changes already documented around the park as temperatures warm.

Those changes include less snowfall in mid-winter and more spring precipitation — setting the stage for flash floods when rains fall on the snow, said Montana State University climate scientist Cathy Whitlock.

Warming trends mean spring floods will increase in frequency — even as the region suffers from long-term drought that keeps much of the rest of the year dry, she said.

Masters and other experts noted that computer modelling of storms has become more sophisticated and is generally more accurate than ever. But extreme weather by its nature is hard to predict, and as such events happen more frequently there will be many more chances for forecasters to get it wrong.

The rate of the most extreme rainstorms has increased by a factor of five, Masters said. So an event with a 1% chance of happening in any given year — commonly referred to as a "one in 100-year" event — now has a 5% chance of happening, he said.

"We are literally re-writing our weather history book," said University of Oklahoma Meteorology Professor Jason Furtado.

That has widespread implications for local authorities and emergency officials who rely on weather bulletins to guide their disaster response approaches. If they're not warned, they can't act.

But the National Weather Service also strives to avoid undue alarm and maintain public trust. So if the service's models show a only a slim chance of disaster, that information is likely left out of the forecast.

Weather service officials said the agency's actions with the Yellowstone flooding will be analyzed to determine if changes are needed. They said early warnings that river levels were rising did help officials prepare and prevent loss of life, even if their advisories failed to predict the severity.

Computer-based forecasting models are regularly updated to account for new meteorological trends due to climate change, Peters said. Even with those refinements, events like the Yellowstone flooding still are considered low-probability and so often won't make it into forecasts based on what the models say is most likely to occur.

"It's really difficult to balance that feeling that you've got that this could get really bad, but the likelihood of it getting really bad is so small," Peters said. He added that the dramatic swing from drought to flood was hard even for meteorologists to reconcile and called it "weather whiplash."

To better communicate the potential for extreme weather, some experts say the weather service needs to change its forecasts to inform the public about low probability hazardous events. That could be accomplished through more detailed daily forecasts or some kind of color-coded system for alerts.

"We've been slow to provide that information," North Carolina State University atmospheric scientist Gary Lackmann said. "You put it on people's radars and they could think about that and it could save lives."

## Mercury hold public rally in support of Brittney Griner

By JOHN MARSHALL AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — They shared laughs, smiles, memories. There also were tears, fears, unease.

Through the range of emotions, one common thread bonded them together: Brittney Griner.

Wearing "BG" shirts and holding signs, several hundred fans gathered for a public rally in support of Griner on Wednesday, hoping their sentiments would reach the WNBA player 6,000 miles away in a Russian jail cell.

"It's really painful and hard to watch, and it's really taken a toll on a lot of us," said Kelly Gedney of Surprise, Arizona. "We can feel the fear that she has. It's scary to me that she's in a cage when she is traveling to her court cases. She's been wrongfully detained and we're going to do everything we can to get her home."

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Griner has spent the past four months in a Russian prison and is currently on trial. She's accused of possessing vape cartridges containing cannabis oil when she arrived at the Moscow airport while returning to play for her Russian team, facing a prison term of up to 10 years if convicted.

The WNBA and U.S. officials have worked to free Griner, without success. Griner was able to send a handwritten letter to President Joe Biden, saying she feared spending the rest of her life in prison while pushing the administration to not forget about other American detainees.

President Biden called Griner's wife, Cherelle, on Wednesday to tell her that he is working to free her as soon as possible.

"One hundred thirty-nine days have passed since my wife has been able to speak to me, to our family and our friends," Cherelle Griner said during the rally, stopping to compose herself several times. "I'm frustrated my wife is not going to get justice. I know you all are frustrated, too. That's why you're here."

The rally at the Footprint Center, home of the Phoenix Mercury and Suns, was part celebration of Griner's accomplishments on and off the court with a call to action.

The rally featured videos of Griner giving back to the community, dancers and a dramatic poem reading as many of Mercury teammates sat together in chairs on the right side of the court.

Phoenix Suns player Torey Craig spoke, as did Mercury player Brianna Turner.

"To know BG is to know such a kind spirit, a nice person, such a giver — I can go on and on about the type of person she is," said Turner, who also was able to exchange letters with Griner. "We need to get her back home. She deserves to be home. She needs to be back with her family and friends. We are BG."

Arizona Congressman Greg Stanton, the former Phoenix mayor, also was on hand after pushing a resolution calling for Griner's immediate release passed by the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this week.

"Today was important, a show of unity, speaking in one voice that we expect our president, our administration to do what it takes to bring our fellow American back home," Stanton said.

## Ex-cop Chauvin to get federal sentence for Floyd's killing

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Derek Chauvin will learn his sentence Thursday for violating George Floyd's civil rights, with a deal in place that would extend the former Minneapolis police officer's time behind bars while shifting him to possibly more favorable conditions in a federal prison.

Chauvin agreed to a sentence of 20 to 25 years in his December plea to a federal charge in Floyd's killing. U.S. District Judge Paul Magnuson will make the final decision, with prosecutors seeking the full 25 on the grounds that Chauvin's actions were cold-blooded and needless.

The defense has asked for 20 years, saying Chauvin accepts responsibility for what he did, and has already gotten a 22 1/2-year prison sentence from a state court for murdering Floyd. Attorney Eric Nelson wrote that Chauvin's "remorse will be made apparent to this Court," suggesting Chauvin is likely to speak at Thursday's hearing.

Former U.S. Attorney Tom Heffelfinger said a judge could take such a statement into consideration during sentencing.

"This is his opportunity to say, 'I'm sorry, I didn't mean to, I didn't think, or whatever,'" Heffelfinger said. "In federal court it's very much to the inmate's advantage to be remorseful, and to demonstrate remorse, even more than at a state sentencing."

Chauvin briefly addressed Floyd's family at his state sentencing hearing in May 2021, offering condolences. Relatives of Floyd gave victim impact statements then, and have the right to do so Thursday. The family's attorneys did not respond to messages seeking comment on their plans.

In entering his federal plea, Chauvin for the first time admitted that he kept his knee on Floyd's neck — even as the Black man's pleaded, "I can't breathe," and then became unresponsive — resulting in Floyd's death. Chauvin, who is white, admitted he willfully deprived Floyd of his right to be free from unreasonable seizure, including unreasonable force by a police officer, during the May 2020 arrest.

Floyd's killing sparked protests in Minneapolis and around the world in a reckoning over police brutality

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and racism.

For his own protection, Chauvin has been held in isolation in a 10-by-10-foot room at the state's maximum security prison that he's allowed to leave for an average of one hour per day for exercise.

Defense attorney Eric Nelson said in a court filing last month that Chauvin might never be placed in a prison's general population because of the risks of him becoming a target.

Chauvin's plea deal calls for him to serve the federal sentence at the same time as the state one, and to serve it in federal prison. He's expected to serve more time behind bars than he would have faced on the state sentence alone.

However, experts say Chauvin might be safer, and live under fewer restrictions, in a federal prison. His security level and final destination will be up to the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, which could send him anywhere in the country.

Chauvin would run the risk in the general population of a Minnesota state prison of encountering inmates he had arrested or investigated. While he can't totally escape his notoriety in a federal prison elsewhere, he's unlikely to encounter inmates with whom he has a direct connection. If the bureau decides he's safe enough in the general population, he'd have more opportunities to move about the facility, to work and to participate in programming.

With credit for good time in the federal system, he could serve anywhere from 17 years to 21 1/4 years behind bars, assuming the judge sticks to the range in the plea agreement. In the state system alone, Chauvin could have become entitled to parole after about 15 years.

Three other former Minneapolis police officers — Tou Thao, J. Alexander Keung and Thomas Lane — were convicted in February of federal civil rights charges in Floyd's killing. Magnuson has not set sentencing dates for them.

Lane is also due to be sentenced Sept. 21 after pleading guilty in state court to aiding and abetting second-degree manslaughter. Thao and Kueng turned down plea deals and are due to be tried in state court Oct. 24 on aiding and abetting charges.

## **Police: Parade shooting suspect contemplated 2nd shooting**

By MICHAEL TARM, KATHLEEN FOODY and DON BABWIN Associated Press

HIGHLAND PARK, Ill. (AP) — The man charged with killing seven people at an Independence Day parade confessed to police that he unleashed a hail of bullets from a rooftop in suburban Chicago and then fled to the Madison, Wisconsin, area, where he contemplated shooting up an event there, authorities said Wednesday.

The suspect turned back to Illinois, where he was later arrested, after deciding he was not prepared to pull off another attack in Wisconsin, Lake County Major Crime Task Force spokesman Christopher Covelli said at a news conference following a hearing where the 21-year-old man was denied bond.

The parade shooting left another American community reeling — this time affluent Highland Park, home to about 30,000 people near the Lake Michigan shore. More than two dozen people were wounded, some critically, and hundreds of marchers, parents and children fled in a panic.

Covelli said it did not appear that the suspect had planned another attack in Wisconsin, but fled there, saw another Independence Day celebration and "seriously contemplated" firing on it. The assailant had ditched the semi-automatic rifle he used in Illinois, but he had another, similar rifle and about 60 more rounds with him, according to Covelli.

Police later found his phone in Middleton, Wisconsin, which is about 135 miles (217 kilometers) from Highland Park.

For hours before his arrest, police warned that the gunman was still at large and that he should be considered armed and dangerous. Several nearby cities canceled events including parades and fireworks. Most festivities in and around Wisconsin's capital city went ahead.

Madison Police Chief Shon Barnes told a news conference Wednesday that the FBI urged the department on Monday evening to prepare its SWAT team because investigators believed the gunman could

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be in the area. Barnes said he was not warned at the time that the shooter was considering carrying out further attacks.

Lake County Assistant State's Attorney Ben Dillon said in court that the gunman climbed up the fire escape of a building above the Highland Park parade, "looked down his sights, aimed" and fired at people across the street. He left the shells of 83 bullets and three ammunition magazines on the rooftop. He initially evaded capture by disguising himself as a woman and blending into the fleeing crowd, according to police.

Some of the wounded remained hospitalized in critical condition, Covelli said, and the death toll could still rise. Already, the deaths from the shooting have left a 2-year-old boy without parents, families mourning the loss of beloved grandparents and a synagogue grieving the death of a congregant who for decades had also worked on the staff.

Lake County State's Attorney Eric Rinehart said he planned to bring attempted murder and aggravated battery charges for each individual who was hurt.

"There will be many, many more charges coming," he said at a news conference, estimating that those charges would be announced later this month.

If convicted of the first-degree murder charges, the gunman would receive a mandatory life sentence without the possibility of parole.

The suspect, Robert Crimo III, wore a black long-sleeve shirt as he appeared in court by video. As the prosecutor described the shooting, he said little besides telling the judge that he did not have a lawyer.

On Tuesday, Thomas A. Durkin, a prominent Chicago-based lawyer, said he would represent Crimo and that he intended to enter a not guilty plea to all charges. But Durkin told the court Wednesday that he had a conflict of interest with the case. Crimo has been assigned a public defender.

Rinehart also left open the possibility of charging Crimo's parents, telling reporters that he "doesn't want to answer" that question right now as the investigation continues.

Steve Greenberg, the lawyer for Crimo's parents, told The Associated Press that the parents aren't concerned about being charged with anything related to their son's case.

Questions also arose about how the suspect could have skirted Illinois' relatively strict gun laws to legally purchase five weapons, including the high-powered rifle used in the shooting, despite authorities being called to his home twice in 2019 for threats of violence and suicide.

Police went to the home following a call from a family member who said Crimo was threatening "to kill everyone" there. Covelli said police confiscated 16 knives, a dagger and a sword, but said there was no sign he had any guns at the time, in September 2019. Police in April 2019 also responded to a reported suicide attempt by Crimo, Covelli said.

Illinois state police, who issue gun owners' licenses, said Crimo applied for a license in December 2019, when he was 19. His father sponsored his application, and he purchased the semi-automatic rifles in 2020, according to Covelli.

In all, police said, he purchased five firearms, which were recovered by officers at his father's home. He purchased four of the guns while he was under 21 and bought a fifth after his birthday last year.

The revelations about his gun purchases offered just the latest example of young men who were able to obtain guns and carry out massacres in recent months despite glaring warning signs about their mental health and inclination to violence.

The state police have defended how the application was handled, saying that at the time "there was insufficient basis to establish a clear and present danger" and deny the application, state police said in a statement.

Investigators who have interrogated the suspect and reviewed his social media posts have not determined a motive or found any indication that he targeted victims by race, religion or other protected status, Covelli said.

In 2013, Highland Park officials approved a ban on semi-automatic weapons and large-capacity ammunition magazines. A local doctor and the Illinois State Rifle Association quickly challenged the liberal suburb's stance. The legal fight ended at the U.S. Supreme Court's doorstep in 2015 when justices declined to hear



the case and let the suburb's restrictions remain in place.

Asked whether Crimo's case demonstrates flaws in state law, Rinehart said that "the gap in the state's gun laws would be that we don't ban assault weapons."

Under Illinois law, gun purchases can be denied to people convicted of felonies, addicted to narcotics or those deemed capable of harming themselves or others. That last provision might have stopped a suicidal Crimo from getting a weapon.

But under the law, who that provision applies to must be decided by "a court, board, commission or other legal authority."

The state has a so-called red flag law designed to stop dangerous people before they kill, but it requires family members, relatives, roommates or police to ask a judge to order guns seized.

Crimo, who goes by the name Bobby, was an aspiring rapper with the stage name Awake the Rapper, posting on social media dozens videos and songs, some ominous and violent.

## **Jury finds man guilty of murdering rapper Nipsey Hussle**

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A 32-year-old man who grew up on the same streets in the same gang as Nipsey Hussle was found guilty Wednesday of first-degree murder in the 2019 shooting of the Grammy-winning rapper, who rose above his circumstances to become an inspiration to the neighborhood where he was eventually gunned down.

The Los Angeles County jury also found Eric R. Holder Jr. guilty of two counts of attempted voluntary manslaughter for gunfire that hit other men at the scene. Prosecutors had sought two counts of attempted murder. Holder also was found guilty of two counts of assault with a firearm on the same men.

Holder, wearing a blue suit and face mask, stood up in the small court room next to his lawyer as the verdict was read. He had no visible reaction. His lawyer, Deputy Public Defender Aaron Jansen, conceded during the trial that Holder shot Hussle, 33, whose legal name is Ermias Asghedom, but had sought a lesser verdict of voluntary manslaughter.

Jansen said in an email that he was deeply disappointed in the first-degree murder verdict.

"It was always going to be tough given the high profile circumstances surrounding the case," Jansen said.

He added that he and Holder were grateful that the jury agreed that the attempted murder counts were overcharged. They plan to appeal the murder conviction, he said.

A jury of nine women and three men deliberated for about six hours over two days before reaching the verdict. Most of their deliberations took place Friday, and they promptly came to their unanimous decision Wednesday, briefly reconvening after a four-day break. A pair of typos on the verdict form discovered as the results were read forced jurors to briefly return to deliberations before the outcome could be made official, but they had no bearing on the outcome.

"We are both proud and I am a little relieved that the verdict came in a complete, absolute agreement with the charges that Eric Holder murdered Ermias Asghedom in cold blood," Deputy District Attorney John McKinney said outside the courtroom. "We hope that today is a day in which the Asghedom family and the friends and fans of Nipsey Hussle around the world will find some measure of closure."

No relatives of Hussle were in the room when the verdict was read, nor did any attend the trial.

The judge has a wide range of options when he sentences Holder on Sept. 15. The first-degree murder charge alone carries a sentence of 25 years to life in prison.

"Obviously nothing that happened here today can heal the wound, nothing that happened here today can restore Mr. Asghedom to this world, but we hope that there is some resounding peace in the fact that his killer will be in prison likely for the rest of his life," McKinney said.

The verdict brings an end to a legal saga that has lasted more than three years and a trial that was often delayed because of the pandemic.

Hussle and Holder had known each other for years growing up as members of the Rollin' 60s in South Los Angeles when a chance meeting outside the clothing store the rapper opened in his neighborhood led to the shooting, and his death.

The evidence against Holder was overwhelming, from eyewitnesses to surveillance cameras from local businesses that captured his arrival, the shooting and his departure.

The shooting followed a conversation the two men had about rumors that Holder had been acting as an informant for authorities. Jansen argued that being publicly accused of being a “snitch” by a person as prominent as Hussle brought on a “heat of passion” in Holder that made him not guilty of first-degree murder.

Hussle’s close friend Herman “Cowboy” Douglas, who was standing next to him when he was shot and testified at the trial, said the conversation he heard does not explain the killing for him.

“It feels good to get some closure, but I still need to know why,” Douglas said after the verdict.

After years of grinding that won him underground acclaim — his nickname was both a play on the name of comedian Nipsey Russell and a nod to the hustle the future hip-hop star showed in making music and selling CDs — Hussle had just released his major-label debut album and earned his first Grammy nomination when he was killed.

He was a widely beloved figure in Los Angeles, especially in the South LA area where he grew up and remained after gaining fame, buying property and opening businesses.

A year after his death, Hussle was mourned at a memorial at the arena then known as Staples Center, and celebrated in a performance at the Grammy Awards that included DJ Khaled and John Legend.

It was more than two years after that when the man who shot him would go on trial.

“Today was really about Nipsey Hussle and the legacy that he leaves behind,” McKinney said Wednesday. “This verdict and the story of his life will be talked about for sure at Crenshaw and Slauson, but the meaning of it will carry far beyond those streets.”

## Scramble as last Mississippi abortion clinic shuts its doors

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Mississippi’s only abortion clinic has been buzzing with activity in the chaotic days since the U.S. Supreme Court upended abortion rights nationwide — a case that originated in this conservative Deep South state, with this bright-pink medical facility that is closing its doors Wednesday.

Physicians at Jackson Women’s Health Organization have been trying to see as many patients as possible before Thursday, when, barring an unlikely intervention by the state’s conservative Supreme Court, Mississippi will enact a law to ban most abortions.

Amid stifling summer heat and humidity, clashes intensified Wednesday between anti-abortion protesters and volunteers escorting patients into the clinic, best known as the Pink House.

When Dr. Cheryl Hamlin, who has traveled from Boston for five years to perform abortions, walked outside the Pink House, an abortion opponent used a bullhorn to yell at her. “Repent! Repent!” shouted Doug Lane.

His words were drowned out by abortion rights supporter Beau Black, who repeatedly screamed at Lane: “Hypocrites and Pharisees! Hypocrites and Pharisees!”

Abortion access has become increasingly limited across wide swaths of the U.S. as conservative states enact restrictions or bans that took effect when the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 ruling that legalized abortion nationwide.

The court, reshaped by three conservative justices appointed by former President Donald Trump, issued the ruling June 24. But the Mississippi clinic has been inundated with patients since September, when Texas enacted a ban on abortion early in pregnancy.

Cars with license plates from Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas have been driving through Jackson’s Fondren neighborhood to bring women and girls— some of whom appeared to be teenagers — to the Pink House. Drivers parked on side streets near the clinic in the shade of pink and purple crepe myrtles, their car air-conditioners blasting as they waited.

Diane Derzis, who has owned the Mississippi clinic since 2010, drove to Jackson to speak at the Pink House hours after the Supreme Court ruling overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

“It’s been such an honor and a privilege to be in Mississippi. I’ve come to love this state and the people

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in it," Derzis told those gathered in the sweltering heat.

The Supreme Court ruling was in a case called *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* — the clinic's challenge of a 2018 Mississippi law to ban most abortions after 15 weeks. The Pink House had been doing abortions through 16 weeks, but under previous U.S. Supreme Court rulings, abortion was allowed to the point of fetal viability at about 24 weeks.

Mississippi's top public health official, Dr. Thomas Dobbs, was named in the lawsuit, but has not taken a public position about the case. The state's Republican attorney general urged justices to use the case to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and give states more power to regulate or ban abortion.

Derzis told *The Associated Press* after the ruling that she didn't regret filing the lawsuit that eventually undercut nearly five decades of abortion case law.

"We didn't have a choice. And if it hadn't been this lawsuit, it would have been another one," said Derzis, who also owns abortion clinics in Georgia and Virginia, and lives in Alabama.

The Mississippi clinic uses out-of-state physicians like Dr. Hamlin because no in-state doctors will work there.

As the Pink House prepared to close, Dr. Hamlin said she worries about women living in deep poverty in parts of the state with little access to health care.

"People say, 'Oh, what am I supposed to do?'" she said. "And I'm like, 'Vote.'"

Shannon Brewer, the Pink House director, agrees low-income women will be most affected by being unable to get abortions in-state.

Brewer told the AP the anti-abortion protesters know her by name and yell at her but she tunes them out.

"They don't say a lot to me anymore other than, you know, 'You're coming to work to kill babies,'" Brewer said. "I've been here for 20-something years. So, it's like when I get out of the car I don't really hear it because it's like the same thing over and over and over again."

Some staffers were expected to be in the Pink House on Thursday for paperwork ahead of its closure, but no procedures.

With the Mississippi clinic closing, Derzis and Brewer will soon open an abortion clinic in Las Cruces, New Mexico, about an hour's drive from El Paso, Texas, — calling it Pink House West. Hamlin said she is getting licensed in New Mexico so she can work there.

Mississippi and New Mexico are two of the poorest states in the U.S., but have vastly different positions on abortion politics and access.

Home to a Democratic-led legislature and governor, New Mexico recently took an extra step to protect providers and patients from out-of-state prosecutions. It's likely to continue to see a steady influx of people seeking abortions from neighboring states with more restrictive abortion laws.

One of the largest abortion providers in Texas, Whole Woman's Health, announced Wednesday that it is also planning to reopen in New Mexico in a city near the state line, to provide first- and second-trimester abortions. It began winding down operations in Texas after a ruling Friday by the state Supreme Court that forced an end to abortions at its four clinics.

Standing outside the Mississippi clinic on June 24, Derzis was pragmatic about the future of the building she had painted bright pink several years ago.

"This building will be sold and maybe someone will knock it down and make a parking lot here," Derzis said. "And that will be sad, but she served her purpose and many women had their abortions here."

## States move to protect abortion from prosecutions elsewhere

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT, GEOFF MULVIHILL and HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Democratic governors in states where abortion will remain legal are looking for ways to protect any patients who travel there for the procedure — along with the providers who help them — from being prosecuted by their home states.

The Democratic governors of Colorado and North Carolina on Wednesday issued executive orders to protect abortion providers and patients from extradition to states that have banned the practice.

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Abortions are legal in North Carolina until fetal viability or in certain medical emergencies, making the state an outlier in the Southeast.

"This order will help protect North Carolina doctors and nurses and their patients from cruel right-wing criminal laws passed by other states," Gov. Roy Cooper said in announcing the order.

The governors of Rhode Island and Maine also signed executive orders late Tuesday, stating that they will not cooperate with other states' investigations into people who seek abortions or health care providers that perform them.

Rhode Island Democratic Gov. Dan McKee said women should be trusted with their own health care decisions, and Democratic Lt. Gov. Sabina Matos said Rhode Island must do all it can to protect access to reproductive health care as "other states attack the fundamental right to choose."

Maine Democratic Gov. Janet Mills said she will "stand in the way of any effort to undermine, rollback, or outright eliminate the right to safe and legal abortion in Maine."

Their offices confirmed Wednesday that they are preemptive, protective moves, and that neither state has received a request to investigate, prosecute or extradite a provider or patient.

Their attempts to protect abortion rights come as tighter restrictions and bans are going into effect in conservative states after last month's *Dobbs v. Jackson* ruling in the U.S. Supreme Court, which overturned the nearly half-century-old holding from *Roe v. Wade* that found that the right to abortion was protected by the U.S. Constitution. The issue reverts to the states, many of which have taken steps to curtail or ban abortions.

Several states have put new restrictions already in place since the Supreme Court ruling and more are pressing to do so. In Louisiana on Wednesday, the state Supreme Court rejected the attorney general's request to allow immediate enforcement of laws against most abortions saying it was declining to get involved "at this preliminary stage." Enforcement was blocked by another court last week. Attorney General Jeff Landry tweeted that Wednesday's decision "is delaying the inevitable. Our Legislature fulfilled their constitutional duties, and now the Judiciary must. It is disappointing that time is not immediate."

The specific fears of Democratic officials are rooted in a Texas law adopted last year to ban abortions after fetal cardiac activity can be detected. The law lets any person other than a government official or employee sue anyone who performs an abortion or "knowingly engages in conduct that aids or abets" obtaining one.

The person filing the claim would be entitled to \$10,000 for every abortion the subject was involved with — plus legal costs.

The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to hear challenges to the Texas law so far.

Bernadette Meyler, a professor at Stanford Law School, said it's not clear whether judgments against out-of-state abortion providers would hold up in courts, especially if they are not advertising their services in states with bans.

But she also said it's not clear that the liberal states are on firm legal ground to protect their residents from any out-of-state litigation.

"Probably, they assume that some of the laws that they're passing won't be upheld or may not be upheld, and they're trying to come up with as much as possible in order to resist the effects of the *Dobbs* decision," Meyler said.

The resistance to cooperating with abortion-related investigations could hold up, though, she said. Places that declared themselves "sanctuary cities" and refused to cooperate with federal immigration investigations during former President Donald Trump's presidency were able to carry out similar policies.

In Raleigh, North Carolina, Planned Parenthood President Alexis McGill Johnson said her group and other advocates for abortion access are pushing for the protections. "Everywhere we can push the imagination of what a free and equal world looks like," she said, "we are working with those governors."

Connecticut was the first state to pass a law to protect abortion providers, patients and others from legal action taken by other states. Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont signed it in May, before the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

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"In accordance with Connecticut law, we will resist any attempt by another state to criminalize or intrude on a woman's private and lawful healthcare decisions," Connecticut Attorney General William Tong said in a statement last week.

The Democratic governors of Minnesota, New Mexico, Nevada, California and Washington and the moderate Republican governor in liberal Massachusetts all signed executive orders within days of the ruling to prohibit cooperation with other states that might interfere with abortion access.

"Residents seeking access will be protected, providers will be protected, and abortion is and will continue to be legal, safe and accessible, period," said New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, who has described the order as a preventative measure.

One of the largest abortion providers in Texas announced Wednesday that it's planning to move its operations to bordering New Mexico. Whole Woman's Health announced Wednesday that it is looking to establish a new clinic in a New Mexico city near the state line to provide first- and second-trimester abortions.

The Democratic-controlled Massachusetts House of Representatives approved a bill that aims to protect abortion providers and people seeking abortions from actions taken by other states. Delaware's Democratic governor signed legislation expanding abortion access, with various legal protections for abortion providers and patients, including out-of-state residents receiving abortions in Delaware.

New Jersey Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy signed two bills Friday that moved swiftly in the Democratic-led Legislature following the ruling. The new laws aim to protect the right of those from outside the state to get abortion services within its borders and bar extradition of people involved in reproductive health care services should they face charges in another state.

Murphy said he was "overwhelmingly angry" that he had to sign the bills, but equally as proud to do so. "These laws will make New Jersey a beacon of freedom for every American woman," he said during a signing ceremony in Jersey City, not far from the Statue of Liberty.

In Washington state, the governor prohibited the state patrol from cooperating with out-of-state abortion investigations or prosecutions, but he noted that he didn't have jurisdiction over local law enforcement agencies. The executive in the county surrounding Seattle said Tuesday that its sheriff's office and other executive branch departments will not cooperate with out-of-state prosecutions of abortion providers or patients.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown's office has said the state will refuse non-fugitive extradition for criminal prosecutions around abortion, but said an executive order is not needed.

Some progressive prosecutors around the U.S. have already declared that they won't enforce some of the most restrictive, punitive anti-abortion laws. Police in Nashville on Wednesday released a statement saying they "are not abortion police" a day after the city council passed a resolution calling on the department to make abortion investigations a low priority.

City council members in two other liberal cities in conservative states — New Orleans and Austin, Texas — have made called for similar resolutions.

## **In the midst of chaotic shooting, strangers save a young boy**

By MARTHA IRVINE AP National Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — A woman — stunned and speechless in the chaos of a July 4 parade massacre — walked up to Greg Ring and handed him a 2-year-old boy, covered in blood.

Ring had fled the scene in the Chicago suburb of Highland Park with his wife and three children to an area behind a popular pancake house.

"We kind of met eyes and didn't say anything.... I put my arms out, and she gave him to me," Ring said Wednesday, when describing the exchange with the unidentified woman, who then laid down in front of their car in shock.

The boy pointed in the direction of the parade route, saying "Mommy, Daddy, Mommy, Daddy."

Ring's wish to help the boy carried him back to the scene. He tucked the boy's face in his chest, so he

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couldn't see the carnage. But Ring quickly realized it was too dangerous.

"Active shooter! Get back down!" a police officer shouted. Ring fled again.

He and his family got to their car and took the boy to a Highland Park fire station. "I have a boy. He's not ours," he told the department staff, who asked him to keep the boy as authorities searched for the shooter and helped the wounded.

"They were getting ready for war," Ring said.

The family drove to Ring's in-laws, where they hunkered down. There, the boy sat with Ring's 4-year-old, watching a Mickey Mouse show.

"He asked my wife to wipe him off because he had blood on him that wasn't his," said Ring, an insurance broker from Highland Park.

They were later able to identify the boy and reunite him with his grandparents, with the help of other community members and the police, after his photo circulated on social media.

Aiden McCarthy's parents, Kevin and Irina, both died in the shooting, which left five others dead and more than two dozen wounded.

A family member said Irina's parents would care for the boy going forward.

"Aiden ... will have a long road ahead to heal, find stability, and ultimately navigate life as an orphan. He is surrounded by a community of friends and extended family that will embrace him with love, and any means available to ensure he has everything he needs as he grows," Irina Colon wrote on a GoFundMe account she created for the family and Aiden. Colon, who described Irina McCarthy as family on her Facebook page, has raised more than \$2 million so far.

One of hundreds of donors wrote, "Aiden, as a momma of another 2 year old boy, my heart is breaking for you. I am so sad your little heart has to endure such a devastating loss. No child should have to go through what you are. Stay strong, sweet boy!"

On Wednesday, Ring was still trying to process what happened at the July 4 parade. He said he's not a hero and just did what anyone would have done in the situation.

"I'm just filled with immense gratitude. I'm really sad. I don't know. I don't know how I feel. I have not slept for a minute the last two nights," he said.

"What could've happened — it is nothing short of a miracle that the five of us — me, my wife and my three kids — one of us or all of us isn't dead. I do not understand. Everybody around us was hit or got shot."

According to a report in the Chicago Sun-Times, Irina McCarthy was born in Russia and later immigrated to the Chicago area with her parents. Her father told the Sun-Times that she and husband Kevin met through their jobs — hers in pharmaceuticals and his at gene therapy startup. Aiden's paternal grandmother also was injured during the July 4 attack, the Sun-Times said.

The five others who died were identified as Katherine Goldstein, 64; Stephen Straus, 88; Jacquelyn Sundheim, 63; Nicolas Toledo-Zaragoza, 78; and Eduardo Uvaldo, 69.

## **EXPLAINER: Should red-flag law have stopped parade shooting?**

By MICHAEL TARM AP Legal Affairs Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Days after a rooftop gunman killed seven people at a parade, attention has turned to how the assailant obtained multiple guns and whether the laws on Illinois books could have prevented the Independence Day massacre.

Illinois gun laws are generally praised by gun-control advocates as tougher than in most states. But they did not stop Robert E. Crimo III from carrying out the attack in the Chicago suburb of Highland Park.

One focus is on the state's so-called red-flag law, which is intended to temporarily take away guns from people with potentially violent behavior. Nineteen states and the District of Columbia have such laws.

Here's a look at Illinois' red-flag and gun-licensing laws, and whether they could have been applied to Crimo:

WHAT IS ILLINOIS' RED-FLAG LAW?

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The law, which took effect on Jan. 1, 2019, authorizes judges to order the temporary removal of firearms from people deemed a danger to themselves or others by a judge, according to an explanation of the law by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, a state agency.

The court order, called a firearm restraining order, also bars them from buying guns.

The law is separate from domestic violence restraining orders and laws that mandate reporting of certain behavior by some professional, such as teachers.

Illinois' red-flag law, as in many states, is a civil matter. It is meant to be invoked within hours or days of someone making threats or displaying threatening behavior. It's not meant to be invoked as a result of a clear crime.

**DID CRIMO EVER DISPLAY THE KIND OF BEHAVIOR MEANT TO ACTIVATE THE LAW?**

It appears that he did. But it isn't clear just who knew about it and when, and whether law enforcement agencies took the behavior seriously enough.

Less than three years ago, police went to Crimo's home following a call from a family member who said he was threatening "to kill everyone" there, according to Christopher Covelli, a spokesman for the Lake County Major Crime Task Force.

Police confiscated 16 knives, a dagger and a sword, but said there was no sign he had any guns at the time, in September 2019. Earlier, in April 2019, police also responded to a reported suicide attempt by Crimo, Covelli said.

**DOES THAT MEAN CRIMO BOUGHT THE GUN LEGALLY?**

Yes. He legally purchased the Smith and Wesson M&P 15 semi-automatic rifle in Illinois within the past year.

Illinois state police, who issue gun owners' licenses, said in a statement that the then-19-year-old Crimo applied for a license in December 2019. Applicants under 21 require a parent or legal guardian to sponsor the application. His father sponsored his.

Sponsors must sign an affidavit that says the sponsor "shall be liable for any damages resulting from the minor applicant's use of firearms or firearm ammunition." The affidavit includes no specifics on liability if the sponsor's child uses a gun to commit a crime. It's also not clear if that liability extends beyond when the child turns 21, as Crimo did a year before the shooting.

State Police Director Brendan Kelly told reporters Wednesday that the father faces potential civil liability, and there is an ongoing investigation into criminal culpability. He said the matter would ultimately be decided in court.

A Crimo family attorney, Steve Greenberg, told the Chicago Tribune that the father was not aware of the threats when he helped his son with the application because his son lived with another relative at the time.

Asked if the suspect's parents might face any charges as a consequence of what their son did, Greenberg told The Associated Press that "there is zero chance they will be charged with anything criminal." He added: "They didn't do anything wrong."

**DID HIGHLAND PARK POLICE PASS INFORMATION ABOUT THE THREATS TO STATE POLICE?**

They did. State police confirmed that they got a warning from Highland Park police months before Crimo applied for his license. It's not clear if the state agency went through Highland Park's report before granting the license.

A statement from state police said only that "there was insufficient basis to establish a clear and present danger" to deny the application.

Under Illinois law, if Crimo had a felony conviction or had been committed for major mental health problems, he likely would not have gotten the license. He had no such record.

**IS THE LAW INVOKED OFTEN?**

It appears to be used infrequently, though related records are sometimes sealed so it's difficult to get a full picture. Illinois legislation in 2021 included provisions to increase awareness of the state's red-flag laws and how to use them.

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority cites tracking done by one advocacy group, Speak

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for Safety Illinois, that reports 34 firearm restraining orders were filed in 2019 and 19 in 2020. Most were granted.

One suburban Chicago county, DuPage County, accounted for 12 of the filings in each year, it said. And no other county, including Lake County, which includes Highland Park, filed more than two in those years.

The vast majority of filings were by law enforcement, with family members accounting for just five filings in 2019.

## WHO CAN REQUEST AN ORDER AND HOW IS A DECISION MADE?

A relative, roommate or law enforcement officer can make the request by filing an application with a local circuit court. In some cases, others can seek to initiate the process by contacting police.

Red-flag laws in some states permit doctors, teachers and colleagues to file requests, while others limit filings solely to law enforcement.

In Illinois, the burden of proving to a judge that someone is a significant threat falls on those who file the request. They can draw on multiple sources, including witness statements about violent behavior, drug abuse, police records or any threatening social media posts and emails.

If a judge sides with the petitioner, the court issues a firearm restraining order, which allows law enforcement to immediately seize any guns from the person deemed a threat and bars them from purchasing guns and ammunition.

If they have one, they also must turn in their firearm owner's identification card.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN ORDER IS ISSUED?

An emergency order can be issued the same day and remains in effect for up to 14 days. The judge can rule on it without the presence of the subject of the request.

If the emergency order is issued, it is followed by a full hearing after which a judge will decide if a longer, six-month order is warranted. The standard of proof is higher at such a hearing. Subjects of a hearing can argue before a judge why an order isn't called for.

If the six-month order is issued, it cannot be easily extended. If the person who filed the initial request believes the subject of the order still poses a danger, another hearing with the same levels of proof must be held again.

## DO RED-FLAG LAWS PREVENT VIOLENCE?

According to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, there's clear evidence that firearm restraining orders help prevent some suicides. It's less clear that they prevent deadly acts of gun violence, like mass shootings. The agency says the causes of such attacks are often too complex to draw clear links.

## Britain's Boris Johnson battles to stay as PM amid revolt

By DANICA KIRKA and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson battled to remain in office Wednesday, brushing off calls for his resignation after three Cabinet ministers and a slew of junior officials said they could no longer serve under his scandal-plagued leadership.

Johnson rejected demands that he step down during a stormy session of the House of Commons amid a furor over his handling of sexual misconduct allegations against a senior official. Later in the day, a delegation of some of his most trusted allies in the Cabinet paid a visit to the prime minister at 10 Downing Street to urge him to go, but he remained unmoved, Britain's Press Association reported.

The prime minister turned down suggestions he seek a "dignified exit" and opted instead to fight for his political career, citing "hugely important issues facing the country," according to the news agency. It quoted a source close to Johnson as saying he told colleagues there would be "chaos" if he quit.

The 58-year-old leader who pulled Britain out of the European Union and steered it through the COVID-19 outbreak is known for his ability to wiggle out of tight spots, managing to remain in power despite allegations that he was too close to party donors, that he protected supporters from bullying and corruption allegations, and that he misled Parliament about government office parties that broke pandemic lockdown rules.



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He hung on even when 41% of Conservative lawmakers voted to oust him in a no-confidence vote last month.

But recent disclosures that Johnson knew about sexual misconduct allegations against a lawmaker before he promoted the man to a senior position pushed him to the brink.

In holding on to his office, Johnson is attempting to defy the mathematics of parliamentary government and the traditions of British politics. It is rare for a prime minister to cling to power in the face of this much pressure from his Cabinet colleagues.

"He is now besmirching our democracy, and if he doesn't do the right thing and go of his own accord, then he'll be dragged out," Scottish National Party leader Ian Blackford told the BBC.

Many of Johnson's fellow Conservatives were concerned that he no longer had the moral authority to govern at a time when difficult decisions are needed to address soaring food and energy prices, rising COVID-19 infections and the war in Ukraine. Others worry that he may now be a liability at the ballot box.

On Wednesday, members of the opposition Labour Party showered Johnson with shouts of "Go! Go!" during the weekly ritual of Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons.

Labour Party leader Keir Starmer mockingly said of the resignations surrounding Johnson, "Isn't it the first recorded case of the sinking ship fleeing the rat?"

More damningly, members of Johnson's own Conservative Party — wearied by the many scandals he has faced — also challenged their leader.

"Frankly ... the job of the prime minister in difficult circumstances, when he's been handed a colossal mandate, is to keep going," Johnson replied with the bluster he has used to fend off critics throughout nearly three years in office. "And that's what I'm going to do."

Former Health Secretary Sajid Javid, who helped trigger the current crisis when he resigned Tuesday night, captured the mood of many lawmakers when he said Johnson's actions threaten to undermine the integrity of the Conservative Party and the British government.

"At some point we have to conclude that enough is enough," he told fellow lawmakers. "I believe that point is now."

Under party rules, another no-confidence vote cannot be held for another 11 months, but party members can change the rules. The 1922 Committee, a small but influential group of Conservative lawmakers, could decide as early as Monday whether to do that.

Javid and Treasury chief Rishi Sunak resigned within minutes of each other over the latest furor. The two Cabinet heavyweights were responsible for tackling two of the biggest issues facing Britain — the cost-of-living crisis and COVID-19.

In a scathing letter, Sunak said: "The public rightly expect government to be conducted properly, competently and seriously. ... I believe these standards are worth fighting for and that is why I am resigning."

The resignations of some 40 junior ministers and ministerial aides followed on Tuesday and Wednesday. A third Cabinet official, Welsh Secretary Simon Hart, quit late Wednesday, saying "we have passed the point" where it's possible to "turn the ship around."

As Johnson dug in, critics accused him of refusing to accept the inevitable and of behaving more like a president than a prime minister by referring to his "mandate." In Britain, voters elect a party to govern, not the prime minister directly.

Former International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell said late Tuesday that Johnson's time is finally up.

"It's a bit like the death of Rasputin: He's been poisoned, stabbed, he's been shot, his body's been dumped in a freezing river, and still he lives," Mitchell told the BBC. "But this is an abnormal prime minister, a brilliantly charismatic, very funny, very amusing, big, big character. But I'm afraid he has neither the character nor the temperament to be our prime minister."

The final straw for Sunak and Javid was the prime minister's handling of sexual misconduct allegations against Conservative lawmaker Chris Pincher.

Last week, Pincher resigned as deputy chief whip after complaints he groped two men at a private club.

That triggered a series of reports about past allegations leveled against Pincher — and shifting explanations from the government about what Johnson knew when he tapped the man for a senior job enforcing party discipline.

## **New report details missed chances to stop Uvalde shooting**

By PAUL J. WEBER and JAKE BLEIBERG Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A police officer armed with a rifle watched the gunman in the Uvalde elementary school massacre walk toward the campus but did not fire while waiting for permission from a supervisor to shoot, according to a sweeping critique released Wednesday on the tactical response to the May tragedy.

Some of the 21 victims at Robb Elementary School, including 19 children, possibly “could have been saved” on May 24 had they received medical attention sooner while police waited more than an hour before breaching the fourth-grade classroom, a review by a training center at Texas State University for active shooter situations found.

The report is yet another damning assessment of how police failed to act on opportunities that might have saved lives in what became the deadliest school shooting in the U.S. since the slaughter at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012.

“A reasonable officer would have considered this an active situation and devised a plan to address the suspect,” read the report published by the university’s Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training program.

Authors of the 26-page report said their findings were based off video taken from the school, police body cameras, testimony from officers on the scene and statements from investigators. Among their findings:

— It appeared that no officer waiting in the hallway during the shooting ever tested to see if the door to the classroom was locked. The head of Texas’ state police agency has also faulted officers on the scene for not checking the doors.

— The officers had “weapons (including rifles), body armor (which may or may not have been rated to stop rifle rounds), training, and backup. The victims in the classrooms had none of these things.”

— When officers finally entered the classroom at 12:50 p.m. — more than an hour after the shooting began — they were no better equipped to confront the gunman than they had been up to that point.

— “Effective incident command” never appears to have been established among the multiple law enforcement agencies that responded to the shooting.

The gunman, an 18-year-old with an AR-15-style semi-automatic rifle, entered the building at 11:33 a.m. Before that a Uvalde police officer, who the report did not identify, saw the gunman carrying a rifle toward the west hall entrance. The officer asked a supervisor for permission to open fire, but the supervisor “either did not hear or responded too late,” the report said.

When the officer turned back toward the gunman, he already gone inside “unabated,” according to the report.

The officer was 148 yards away from the door, which the report said was within the range of his rifle, and allegedly said he was concerned that an errant shot could have penetrated the school and injured students inside.

“Ultimately, the decision to use deadly force always lies with the officer who will use the force. If the officer was not confident that he could both hit his target and of his backdrop if he missed, he should not have fired,” the report read.

The report is one of multiple fact-finding reviews launched in the aftermath of the worst school shooting in Texas history.

A committee formed by Texas legislators has also interviewed more than 20 people, including officers who were on the scene, behind closed doors for several weeks. On Wednesday, the committee said Uvalde County Sheriff Ruben Nolasco has refused to meet with them and sent a letter trying to compel his testimony. Nolasco did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

It follows testimony last month in which Col. Steven McCraw, director of the Texas Department of Public

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Safety, told the state Senate that the police response was an "abject failure." He pinned particular blame on Chief Pete Arredondo, saying that as on-scene commander the Uvalde schools police chief made "terrible decisions" and stopped officers from confronting the gunman earlier.

Arredondo has tried to defend his actions, telling the Texas Tribune that he didn't consider himself the commander in charge of operations and that he assumed someone else had taken control of the law enforcement response. He said he didn't have his police and campus radios but that he used his cellphone to call for tactical gear, a sniper and the classroom keys.

According to the report released Wednesday, Arredondo and another Uvalde police officer spent 13 minutes in the school hallway during the shooting discussing tactical options, whether to use snipers and how to get into the classroom windows.

"They also discussed who has the keys, testing keys, the probability of the door being locked, and if kids and teachers are dying or dead," the report read.

McCraw said police had enough officers and firepower on the scene of the Uvalde school massacre to have stopped the gunman three minutes after he entered the building, and they would have found the door to the classroom where he was holed up unlocked if they had bothered to check it.

A lawyer for Arredondo and a spokeswoman for the Uvalde city police department did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Arredondo is on leave from his job with the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District and resigned from his position as a city councilor last week.

Public leaders, including Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, initially praised the police response in Uvalde. Abbott said officers reacted quickly and ran toward the gunfire with "amazing courage" to take out the killer, thereby saving lives. He later said he was misled. In the days and weeks after the shooting, authorities gave conflicting and incorrect accounts of what happened. The fallout has driven recriminations and rifts between local and state authorities. On Tuesday, Uvalde Mayor Don McLaughlin and state Sen. Roland Gutierrez released a letter asking Abbott to move administration of a victims relief fund from the local prosecutor's office to the Texas Department of Emergency Management. They wrote that they've received numerous complaints about District Attorney Christina Mitchell Busbee, "including the failure to timely deliver victim's compensation resources to those in need."

Busbee's office declined to comment Wednesday.

## Iranian TV: Revolutionary Guard accuses diplomats of spying

By AMIR VAHDAT and NASSER KARIMI Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iranian state TV said Wednesday that the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard has accused the deputy ambassador of the United Kingdom and other foreigners in the country of "espionage" and taking soil samples from prohibited military zones.

The country's state-run IRNA news agency reported that the foreigners had been arrested, but did not elaborate on when. The U.K. Foreign Office swiftly denied that its diplomat was arrested, calling the report "completely false."

Iran's state TV ran footage purporting to show the foreigners collecting samples from the ground while under drone surveillance.

The storm of accusations follows escalating tensions over a pickup in Tehran's arrests of foreigners and a rapid advancement of its nuclear work, while talks to revive the landmark 2015 atomic accord remain at a standstill. Iran has detained a number of Europeans in recent months, including two French citizens and a Swedish tourist, as it seeks to gain leverage in negotiations.

The report also comes after Iran, in a rare move, replaced the Revolutionary Guard's longstanding intelligence chief.

News outlets reported the deputy head of mission at the British Embassy, Giles Whitaker, and other foreigners faced "spying" charges after visiting various forbidden zones in the country while the Guard was carrying out missile tests.

The semiofficial Fars news agency, believed to be close to the Guard, claimed Whitaker was expelled

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from the area after offering authorities an apology.

The accusations splashed across Iranian media as the British public was transfixed by the political fortunes of Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who faces growing pressure to step down after defections from his Cabinet.

State TV broadcast a photo montage apparently showing Whitaker tour the southwestern desert collecting soil samples against the backdrop of eerie music.

"Even though there were signs in that area saying this was a forbidden area, he went further and took a sample and took a picture," the narrator said. "Intelligence agencies say that these people often pose as tourists, but are looking for military and missile sites to identify equipment and ammunition."

Iranian media also identified Maciej Walczak, a Polish scientist at Copernicus University in Poland, as among the accused foreigners. It similarly said he took samples of soil, water and salt from a forbidden area during a missile test in the country's south.

The report added that the Guard's intelligence wing detained the husband of Austria's cultural attaché in Iran after he took soil samples in the country's northeast.

Iran has in the past arrested dual nationals and those with Western ties, often on widely criticized espionage charges, and used them as bargaining chips in talks over other issues, such as nuclear negotiations. Tehran denies using detainees to further its political aims.

Talks to revive Tehran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers have stalled for months. A recent effort to break the deadlock between U.S. and Iranian negotiators ended without making progress in Doha last week.

The U.S. special envoy for Iran, Robert Malley, described the latest talks in Qatar as "more than a little bit of a wasted occasion."

"They have and, including in Doha, added demands that I think anyone looking at this would be viewed as having nothing to do with the nuclear deal, things that they've wanted in the past," Malley said in an interview with National Public Radio on Tuesday, undercutting Tehran's more upbeat assessments.

He added that the U.S. is working simultaneously to secure the release of four Americans detained in Iran, saying: "They've been used as pawns. But we are looking at steps that we could take that would facilitate their return in the shortest time possible."

Meanwhile, as a shadow war between Israel and Iran has escalated in Tehran and across the Middle East, Iran announced last month that the head of the Guard's intelligence arm, Hossein Taeb, had been replaced by Gen. Mohammad Kazemi, the former head of the Guard's security department.

The surprise move followed the deaths of several Guard officers in recent weeks.

## Appeals arguments heard on immigrants brought to US as kids

By KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Attorneys hoping to save an Obama-era program that prevents the deportation of thousands of people brought into the U.S. as children told a federal appeals court Wednesday that ending the program would cruelly disrupt the lives of thousands who have grown up to become tax-paying, productive drivers of the U.S. economy.

An attorney for the state of Texas, leading an effort to end the Deferred Action for Childhood arrivals program, argued that DACA recipients have cost the state hundreds of millions in health care and other costs.

The dueling views at the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans were exchanged as more than 100 DACA supporters held signs, beat drums and chanted outside of the courthouse. They called for preservation of the program that protects more than 600,000 people from deportation, and a path to citizenship for immigrants.

"I am undocumented, and I will speak out today," said Woojung "Diana" Park, 22, of New York. She said she was brought to the U.S. as a 1-year-old from South Korea. DACA, she said, "is the bare minimum that the U.S. government has offered immigrant communities after decades of fighting for basic human rights."

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A federal judge in Texas last year declared DACA illegal — although he agreed to leave the program intact for those already benefiting from it while his order is appealed.

The U.S. Justice Department defended the program, allied with the state of New Jersey, advocacy organizations such as the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund and a coalition of dozens of powerful corporations — including Amazon, Apple, Google and Microsoft — which argue that DACA recipients are “employees, consumers and job creators.”

Texas, joined by eight other Republican-leaning states, argues that DACA was enacted without going through proper legal and administrative procedures, including public notice and comment periods. Additionally, the states argue that they are harmed financially by allowing immigrants to remain in the country illegally.

DACA proponents argued that the program falls within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s power to prioritize enforcement. “DHS has limited resources,” argued Brian Boynton of the Justice Department. “It’s unable to remove 11 million people in the country. It has to decide who it’s going to target first.”

In court and in briefs, DACA backers have argued that Texas diminished its claims of financial injury by waiting six years to challenge the program. They also said the state ignores evidence that DACA recipients decrease Texas’ costs because many of them hold jobs with health insurance benefits, own homes and pay property taxes that support schools.

In addition, they claimed that Texas hasn’t shown DACA recipients would leave the state if the program were struck down. That point was met with skepticism by Judge James Ho, who noted that in a survey included with New Jersey’s legal arguments, more than 20% of DACA recipients said they were likely to leave if the program were abolished.

Boynton argued that the respondents’ answers were merely speculative and supporters of the program, in briefs, have questioned the methodology of the survey. But Ho again questioned whether the responses should be dismissed.

“This is a question about, literally, your entire life,” Ho told Boynton. “This is a pretty profound question to get wrong.”

Judd Stone, arguing for the state of Texas, said the state has shown that it expends millions of dollars on DACA recipients and that the end of the program would lead to some of those who receive that money leaving the state. “There is no evidence showing that either of those numbers are zero,” Stone said.

In court briefs and in news conferences in New Orleans and South Carolina on Wednesday, DACA supporters pressed the argument that ending DACA would have devastating consequences for immigrants who have only known the United States as their home.

“I’m a father of a 10-year-old, so getting DACA rescinded would put me in limbo of not knowing if I’m going to take my son to his next football game,” Yahel Flores, a DACA recipient and the Carolinas state director of the American Business Immigration Coalition, told reporters on a Zoom call.

In a court brief, DACA supporters said program beneficiaries “are parents of over a quarter-million U.S. citizens, and 70% of DACA recipients have an immediate family member who is a U.S. citizen.”

DACA has faced numerous court challenges since then-President Barack Obama created it by executive order in 2012. Former President Donald Trump moved to end the program. But a U.S. Supreme Court decision determined that he had not done it properly, bringing it back to life and allowing for new applications. That was followed by the Texas-led lawsuit.

Assigned to hear arguments at the 5th Circuit were Chief Judge Priscilla Richman, an appointee of President George W. Bush; and two Trump appointees, Ho and Judge Kurt Engelhardt.

## Biologists’ fears confirmed on the lower Colorado River

By BRITTANY PETERSON Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — For National Park Service fisheries biologist Jeff Arnold, it was a moment he’d been dreading. Bare-legged in sandals, he was pulling in a net in a shallow backwater of the lower Colorado River last week, when he spotted three young fish that didn’t belong there. “Give me a call when you get

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this!" he messaged a colleague, snapping photos.

Minutes later, the park service confirmed their worst fear: smallmouth bass had in fact been found and were likely reproducing in the Colorado River below Glen Canyon Dam.

They may be a beloved sport fish, but smallmouth bass feast on humpback chub, an ancient, threatened fish that's native to the river, and that biologists like Arnold have been working hard to recover. The predators wreaked havoc in the upper river, but were held at bay in Lake Powell where Glen Canyon Dam has served as a barrier for years — until now. The reservoir's recent sharp decline is enabling these introduced fish to get past the dam and closer to where the biggest groups of chub remain, farther downstream in the Grand Canyon.

There, Brian Healy has worked with the humpback chub for more than a decade and founded the Native Fish Ecology and Conservation Program.

"It's pretty devastating to see all the hard work and effort you've put into removing other invasive species and translocating populations around to protect the fish and to see all that effort overturned really quickly," Healy said.

As reservoir levels drop, non-native fish that live in warm surface waters in Lake Powell are edging closer to the dam and its penstocks — submerged steel tubes that carry water to turbines, where it generates hydroelectric power and is released on the other side.

If bass and other predator fish continue to get sucked into the penstocks, survive and reproduce below the dam, they will have an open lane to attack chub and other natives, potentially unraveling years of restoration work and upending the Grand Canyon aquatic ecosystem — the only stretch of the river still dominated by native species.

On the brink of extinction decades ago, the chub has come back in modest numbers thanks to fish biologists and other scientists and engineers. Agencies spend millions of dollars annually to keep intruders in check in the upper portion of the river.

Under the Endangered Species Act, government agencies are required to operate in ways that will not "jeopardize the continued existence" of listed animals. That includes infrastructure.

Even before the discovery of smallmouth bass spawning below the dam, agencies had been bracing for this moment. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation recently enlisted a team of researchers at Utah State University to map the nonnative fish in Lake Powell and try to determine which could pass through the dam first.

A task force quickly assembled earlier this year to address the urgency the low water poses for native fish. Federal, state and tribal leaders are expected to release a draft plan in August containing solutions for policymakers who intend to delay, slow and respond to the threat of smallmouth bass and other predators below the dam.

There are a variety of solutions, but many will require significant changes to infrastructure.

In the meantime, National Park Service, U.S. Geological Survey and Arizona Game and Fish Department are moving quickly to try to contain the issue. During an emergency meeting, they decided to increase their monitoring efforts in other shallow areas and block off the entire backwater where the smallmouth bass were found so they can't swim out into the river.

"Unfortunately, the only block nets we have are pretty large mesh, so it will not stop these smaller fish from going through, but it will keep the adults from going back out," Arnold said, noting it's the best they can do with available resources.

Experts say leaving more water in Lake Powell would be the best solution to ensure cool water can be released through the dam, although it's tough to do in a river under so much stress.

Last month, the Department of the Interior notified the seven western states that depend on Colorado River water that they must devise a way to conserve up to 4 million acre-feet of water in 2023 — more than Arizona and Nevada's share combined -- or face federal intervention. It is unclear where that conserved supply would be stored, but Healy says he hopes Lake Powell is being considered.

"If we want to protect some of the values for which Grand Canyon National Park was established, we need to really think about how water is stored," Healy said. "That issue needs to be at the table."

## Fed: Sharply higher rates may be needed to quell inflation

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve officials were concerned at their meeting last month that consumers were increasingly anticipating higher inflation, and they signaled that much higher interest rates could be needed to restrain it.

The policymakers also acknowledged, in minutes from their June 14-15 meeting released Wednesday, that their rate hikes could weaken the economy. But they suggested that such steps were necessary to slow price increases back to the Fed's 2% annual target.

The officials agreed that the central bank needed to raise its benchmark interest rate to "restrictive" levels that would slow the economy's growth and "recognized that an even more restrictive stance could be appropriate" if inflation persisted. After last month's meeting, the Fed raised its key rate by three-quarters of a point to a range of 1.5% to 1.75% — the biggest single increase in nearly three decades — and signaled that further large hikes would likely be needed.

The Fed has been ramping up its drive to tighten credit and slow growth with inflation having reached a four-decade high of 8.6%, spreading to more areas of the economy. Americans are also starting to expect high inflation to last longer than they had before — a sentiment that could embed an inflationary psychology and make it harder to slow price increases.

And with midterm elections nearing, high inflation has surged to the top of Americans' concerns, posing a threat to President Joe Biden and Democrats in Congress.

At a news conference after last month's Fed meeting, Chair Jerome Powell suggested that a rate hike of either one-half or three-quarters of a point was likely when the policymakers next meet late this month. The minutes released Wednesday confirmed that other officials agreed that such an increase would "likely be appropriate." A rate hike of either size would exceed the quarter-point increase that the Fed has typically carried out.

Last month, the Fed released projections that showed that the officials expect to raise their benchmark rate to 3.4% by the end of this year. At that level, the Fed's key rate would no longer stimulate growth and could weaken the economy. The minutes suggest that the policymakers could potentially raise rates above that level.

At the time of last month's meeting, the policymakers said the economy appeared to be expanding in the April-June quarter, with consumer spending "remaining strong." Since then, though, the economy has shown signs of slowing, with consumer spending falling in May, after adjusting for inflation, for the first time this year. Home sales are plunging as mortgage rates have jumped, accelerated by the Fed's rate increases.

The signs of economic sluggishness have intensified fears that high prices and rising rates could send the economy into a recession late this year or next year. Such concern has further complicated the Fed's policymaking because a recession would normally lead it to cut rates to stimulate growth.

Some economists described the Fed's assessment of the economy, as laid out in Wednesday's minutes, as outdated even though it is only three weeks old. Prices for oil, wheat and other commodities are falling, wage gains are moderating and growth is slowing. Those trends may mean that the Fed's policymakers, who have said they will be "nimble" in responding to economic data, won't raise rates as fast as financial markets expect.

"We very much hope that the sobering data since the June meeting will push members towards the smaller hike," of a half-point rather than three-quarters in July, said Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics. "They wanted to send a clear signal that they will not accommodate permanently higher inflation, but that job is done."

The Fed had been expected to raise rates by a half-point at last month's meeting but ended up announcing a three-quarter point hike instead. At his news conference afterward, Powell mentioned recent economic reports that had heightened concerns about high inflation. Those reports included inflation data for May, which showed that the pace of price increases reached a 40-year high.

Powell also cited a survey of consumer sentiment conducted by the University of Michigan that said con-

sumers' longer-term inflation expectations were starting to rise more quickly. That unnerved Powell and other Fed officials, because if people expect higher inflation, that sentiment can lead to an acceleration of prices. Workers could, for example, demand higher pay to cover their expectation of rising bills and expenses, leading companies, in turn, to raise prices further to offset their higher labor costs.

The Fed is seeking to convince the public that it will rise to the challenge and tame the pace of price increases, with the goal of keeping Americans' inflation expectations in check.

There is "a significant risk now facing the (Fed) that elevated inflation could become entrenched if the public began to question the resolve" of Fed officials to combat higher prices, the minutes said.

As a result, the minutes said, tighter credit and "clear and effective communications" are critical to controlling inflation.

## Democrats frustrated by party's response to abortion ruling

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — As Sen. Michael Bennet sought to encourage a small crowd of fellow Democrats not to give up the fight for abortion rights, Maryah Lauer stepped forward, bullhorn in hand, to exhort him to do more.

"Do you support ending the filibuster and expanding the court?" the 28-year-old called out from a quartet of fellow activists. "The Democrats are not doing enough."

The confrontation was a sign of the frustration among many Democrats after the Supreme Court's decision last month to strip women of the constitutional right to abortion. The question heading into this year's midterm elections is whether the outrage will energize Democrats to vote or leave them disillusioned and staying home.

From rallies like the one in Colorado Springs to the corridors of the White House, Democrats are pressing an urgent message that voters can't give up and tune out. President Joe Biden, who often embraces Washington's institutional traditions, called last week for an exception to the Senate's 60-vote filibuster rules to put *Roe v. Wade* into federal law.

But the president and his aides have rejected more dramatic steps like adding additional justices to the Supreme Court or opening clinics on federal lands in states that ban the procedure. And that has left some in the party's more activist circles worried.

"People want to feel like you're looking at every option," said Brian Fallon of Demand Justice, a Democratic group advocating court expansion, which Biden has rejected.

The party tried to vote abortion rights into federal law earlier this year, but the effort failed as Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia sided with Republicans opposing the bill. Manchin and Democratic Sen. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona say they oppose making an exception to the filibuster rule for abortion rights, and reiterated their stance hours after Biden's statement, rendering it impossible.

Instead, the Democratic message is shaping up to be: Elect more Democrats to protect abortion rights. That, however, risks falling flat among Democrats who argue that passionate calls to vote hardly translate automatically into people doing as they're asked.

"There has got to be some articulation of what they get for voting in the election," said Tresa Udem, a liberal Democratic pollster. "People want to hear real strategy, they want to hear real results."

The problem is there may not be a strategy that will lead to real results, other than winning elections.

The party needs at least two more senators to end the filibuster and vote on abortion rights, and many worry that even if such a bill should pass, the high court would simply strike down a law establishing a national right to abortion. Even drastic moves like packing the court with liberal justices — unlikely to pass anyway — would be just temporary wins, because the GOP could just expand the court again once it wins power and add conservative justices.

Still, many Democrats say they expect their voters to be outraged into action by the recent ruling. They argue that Biden has truly limited options and any despair about his inability to override the ruling will be overcome by Democratic anger against Republicans in November.



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"All the data shows Democratic intensity has gone up significantly in the last few weeks," said Simon Rosenberg of NDN, a Democratic thinktank. "People in the Democratic Party may be disappointed with their leaders, but they understand, more graphically than ever, the threat the new right represents."

A recent poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found a growing percentage of Americans calling out abortion or women's rights as priorities for the government. In an open-ended question, 22% of U.S. adults named abortion or women's rights as one of up to five problems they want the government to work on, more than double since December.

Democrats have been bracing for a difficult election for months, with numerous polls showing Biden's approval dropping even among members of his own party. Traditionally, the president's party in midterm elections is not nearly as motivated as the opposition one, leading to big losses for the incumbent's supporters. The anger at the Supreme Court decision is a possible political lifeline to incumbents like Colorado's Bennet, if it doesn't curdle into apathy or despair.

Though Bennet represents a state that has voted solidly Democratic in several consecutive elections, he could still be vulnerable in November if a Republican wave materializes. The GOP has nominated a challenger who, notably for a Republican, supports a ban on later-term abortions but otherwise backs abortion rights.

Bennet has relied on Colorado voters' strong support of abortion rights to win his two prior elections, and he knows he cannot afford complacency or apathy among his voters.

During his speech at the June 29 Colorado Springs rally, Bennet spoke about the Supreme Court ruling and addressed Democrats' frustration and despair. "Don't give up," he said. "We can't just accept things the way they are."

It was after Bennet's speech, when he joined local Democratic nominees onstage in a show of party unity, that Lauer and the others charged in. After talking to reporters offstage, Bennet spoke with the demonstrators.

He told them he was also frustrated at how his party had let things get to the point where the GOP appointed a 6-3 majority on the high court. He agreed with them on ending the filibuster and codifying Roe but opposed packing the court. If Democrats did that, he said, "we will guarantee the majority in the Senate will be an anti-choice Senate."

When the demonstrators continued to be frustrated that Bennet wouldn't agree to court-packing, he advised them, "There are not remotely 50 votes to do what you're suggesting in the Senate."

"Aren't there 50 Democrats?!" cried one. Others demanded Bennet use "your power" to change Manchin's position.

Bennet had to leave, but a staffer stepped in and said that Bennet couldn't change Manchin's position. She noted the West Virginia senator had, despite Bennet's pleas, killed his prized program, an expanded child tax credit for parents.

As the crowd broke up, the sense of frustration was palpable. Several rally goers approached Lauer and her companions to thank them for pushing Bennet. One attendee started yelling out the home address of the local Republican congressman, Rep. Doug Lamborn, urging people to "make his life miserable."

Lauer, who said she canvassed for Bennet's 2016 campaign, and the others said they weren't satisfied by their time with the senator.

"If they continue to do what we just witnessed, where they walk away, where they evade responsibility for doing their constitutional duties, I think that's a great way to lose," she said.

One of the other protesters, Chauncy Johnson, 22, said he doesn't want Republicans to win, but he was thinking of withholding his vote due to his frustration with the party.

"I want Democrats to get a rude awakening," he said.

## Work at a school or nonprofit? You could erase student loans

By CORA LEWIS and ADRIANA MORGA The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When Melissa Martinez applied to have her student loan debt forgiven more than a

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decade ago, the U.S. Department of Education told her she was ineligible.

Martinez, a professor, tried again this past year and managed to erase the last \$6,000 she owed for her doctorate. She wasn't alone — according to new federal figures, more than 145,000 borrowers have had the remainder of their federal student loan debt canceled through a program for people who work for schools, governments or nonprofits.

Hundreds of thousands more have completed the paperwork for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, and officials say many more likely qualify. An Oct. 31 deadline to apply under the less stringent rules is fast approaching.

There's a broader conversation underway in America about how to handle student loan debt. An estimated 43 million Americans carry student loans worth \$1.6 trillion, according to federal figures. Federal student loan payments were paused during the coronavirus pandemic and will remain so until at least Aug. 31. President Joe Biden is expected to make some sort of announcement about student loan relief before then.

Nearly all of the cancellations through the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program have come since last October, when the government temporarily relaxed the complex requirements. Before that, the program had rejected more than 90% of applicants, the Department of Education said in 2019.

A spokesperson for the Education Department said Wednesday that most borrowers who were denied then were deemed ineligible because they didn't meet employer eligibility requirements, their employment dates didn't align with the dates of their student loans, or they didn't have the required direct loans.

"I thought maybe it would work now," said Martinez, who graduated from the University of Texas, Austin in 2010 with a doctorate in educational administration.

Martinez said the money will go towards lowering credit card debt and building savings to have on hand for emergencies and unexpected expenses.

"Knowing that it's forgiven lifts some of the worry or stress off my shoulders," she said.

Even though the deadline is in October, Martinez advises people who may qualify for the loan forgiveness to apply as soon as possible. She found the process difficult to navigate, even with the relaxed rules. It took her five months to complete the paperwork and another three months to hear back from the program.

"I remember calling and staying on the line for an hour waiting," she said. Martinez also initially had her proof of employment denied, though it was approved when she re-sent the documents.

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, launched in 2007 to steer more graduates to public service, cancels federal student loan debt after 10 years of public interest work, or 120 payments. Teachers, librarians, nurses, public interest lawyers, military members and other public workers all qualify, along with people who work for non-profits.

So far, the forgiveness totals almost \$8.1 billion in federal loans, but that amount is just a fraction of the debt that could qualify. The average amount of debt forgiven through the program is \$64,968.

"The program seems really simple — people commit ten years to serving their country and communities and the government promises to end their student debt," said Kat Welbeck, Civil Rights Counsel at the Student Borrower Protection Center. "We've seen, throughout the 14 years, so many people set back by administrative hurdles and burdens, not knowing they had access to this program or being told they couldn't get access even though they worked in qualified employment."

Under the reformed rules, loan servicers count payments that had previously been deemed unacceptable, such as when borrowers mistakenly or unwittingly signed up for non-qualifying plans.

"I think it's a great incentive, especially for teachers. So many are overworked and underpaid, and they've got those loans that they're still working on," Martinez said.

The waiver period has been life-changing for loan holders who've been able to receive credit toward forgiveness for years they've worked in public service after previously being rejected, Welbeck said, describing joyful tears as loan balances drop to zero.

"There are so many more people to reach," Welbeck added. "And it's only a year, so we're operating with a sense of urgency."

Martinez encourages others to apply during the waiver period, despite the frustration. She says it was

worth the time and effort to get the balance of her student loan forgiven.

Borrowers who are currently jobless or not working in public service may still qualify for forgiveness, according to the Department of Education. And the months during the pandemic since March 2020 in which payments on federal loans have been paused count as credits towards the total number of payments required for the program.

The Biden administration on Wednesday proposed new rules for the program that are expected to take effect by July 2023. They would give borrowers more leeway if they're late on payments or don't pay in full.

Under the original rules, borrowers must make payments in full within 15 days of the due date to get credit toward their 120 monthly payments. The proposal would relax that, allowing borrowers to make progress even if they're late or make the payment in multiple installments.

The waiver that expires Oct. 31 was mostly meant to make up for widespread confusion about which types of loans and payment plans are eligible under the program. Some borrowers had made years of payments only to find out they weren't in an eligible plan or loan program.

The new proposed rules won't change which loans are eligible, but they aim to provide more flexibility so borrowers don't lose progress toward forgiveness because of late payments or paperwork problems.

## EU lawmakers back gas, nuclear energy as sustainable

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN and RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Union lawmakers voted Wednesday to include natural gas and nuclear in the bloc's list of sustainable activities, backing a proposal from the EU's executive arm that has been drawing fierce criticism from environment groups and now looks set to trigger legal challenges.

As the EU wants to set the best global standards in the fight against climate change, the decision could tarnish the bloc's image and question the region's commitment to reaching climate neutrality by 2050.

The European Commission earlier this year made the proposal as part of its plans for building a climate-friendly future, dividing member countries and drawing outcry from environmentalists over what they criticize as "greenwashing."

EU legislators from the environment and economy committees objected last month to the plan, setting up Wednesday's decisive vote in Strasbourg, France. But MEPs rejected their resolution in a 328-278 vote, with 33 lawmakers abstaining. The result was announced to a salvo of applause.

An absolute majority of 353 was needed to veto the proposal. If the European Parliament and member countries don't object to it by July 11, the so-called Taxonomy delegated act will enter into force and apply as of next year.

Greenpeace immediately said it will submit a formal request for internal review to the European Commission, and then take legal action at the European Court of Justice if the result isn't conclusive.

"It's dirty politics and it's an outrageous outcome to label gas and nuclear as green and keep more money flowing to (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's war chest, but now we will fight this in the courts," said Ariadna Rodrigo, Greenpeace's EU sustainable finance campaigner.

European Parliament rapporteur Bas Eickhout rued "a dark day for the climate and the energy transition."

The green labeling system from the European Commission defines what qualifies as an investment in sustainable energy. Under certain conditions, gas and nuclear energy will now be part of the mix, making it easier for private investors to inject money into both.

With the EU aiming to reach climate neutrality by 2050 and to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, the commission says the classification system is crucial to direct investments into sustainable energy. It estimates that about 350 billion euros of investment per year will be needed to meet the 2030 targets.

The question of nuclear power has divided environmentalists, energy experts and governments for years, with some arguing it's an important source of energy because it's produced with no emissions and thus "clean," while others say the risks of nuclear reactions are too great and infrastructure is slow and costly to build. Liquid natural gas, clearly a fossil fuel, is roundly criticized in environmental circles.

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Germany's industrial lobby group BDI welcomed the vote, saying it cleared the way for financing the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy.

"Gas is our bridge technology to the renewable age," said its deputy head, Holger Loesch.

The BDI called for more investments in gas infrastructure, including LNG terminals, to ensure sufficient supply amid the current energy crisis, but added that new gas power plants need to be capable of handling hydrogen eventually.

Introducing gas and nuclear into the equation has divided the 27 member countries amid Russia's war in Ukraine, and even the parliament's political groups.

Luxembourg's energy minister, Claude Turmes, said he deeply regretted the European Parliament's failure to bloc the commission's plan, adding that his country — together with Austria — would move ahead with legal efforts to block the labeling of nuclear and gas as sustainable.

Steffen Hebestreit, a spokesman for German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, said that "the German government stands by its position and considers nuclear energy as unsustainable."

"Nevertheless, the German government believes that the taxonomy is an important instrument for achieving climate protection targets, because it is clear that natural gas is an important bridging technology for us on the way to CO2 neutrality and the inclusion of the use of natural gas in the delegated act takes this into account," Hebestreit added.

Protests that had started on Tuesday continued Wednesday outside the EU legislature as lawmakers debated the issue.

Environmentalists warned the vote could set a precedent for lawmakers elsewhere to label polluting forms of energy as sustainable.

"We have now officially validated greenwashing by law," said Tsvetelina Kuzmanova of the climate think tank E3G.

"The process and the decision have been entirely political, not scientific, to only benefit a small number of member states," she said. "This would not stand a chance in court and will only create more uncertainty for financial markets and jeopardize (the) EU's climate ambition."

The youth activist group Fridays for Future said billions of euros could be pumped into gas infrastructure and nuclear power plants as a result of the decision, diverting much-needed funds from renewable alternatives.

One argument for rejecting the proposal is that it will boost Russian gas sales at a time when it is invading neighboring Ukraine, but the European Commission said it had received a letter from the Ukrainian government backing its stance.

European Commissioner Mairead McGuinness quoted from the letter from Ukraine's energy minister Tuesday: "I strongly believe that the inclusion of gas and nuclear in the taxonomy is an important element of the energy security in Europe, especially with a view to replacing Russian gas."

"I don't think we should second-guess this letter," McGuinness said.

Russia's war in Ukraine has prompted the 27-nation bloc to sever ties with some Russian fossil fuels. Member countries have agreed to ban 90% of Russian oil by year-end in addition to a ban on imports of Russian coal that will start in August.

But the EU hasn't included gas — a fuel used to power factories and generate electricity — in its own sanctions for fear of seriously harming the European economy. Before the war in Ukraine, it relied on Russia for 25% of its oil and 40% of its natural gas.

## South African president decries deaths of 21 teens in tavern

By MOGOMOTSI MAGOME Associated Press

EAST LONDON, South Africa (AP) — The deaths of 21 teenagers in a nightclub tragedy is a crime and South African officials must increase steps to prevent alcohol from being illegally sold to youths, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said Wednesday.

"We do not know yet exactly what killed our children. But we do know that the law was broken that

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night, and probably many nights before then," Ramaphosa said to more than a thousand mourners at the funeral in East London for the young people who died at a tavern nearly two weeks ago.

"We are losing our future generation to the scourge of underage drinking," the president said, urging police to determine the exact cause of their deaths and calling on officials to stop youngsters from being permitted access to bars.

"Blame must be laid at the feet of those who are making money off the dreams and lives of the young people of South Africa by breaking the law and selling them alcohol," he said.

Two rows of caskets in front of Ramaphosa symbolized the young lives lost.

"Today we shed bitter tears for the 21 young people that have died in this tragedy," Ramaphosa said. "These children should not have died. Their deaths could have been prevented had the law been adhered to."

Mournful hymns were sung by a large choir as the 19 coffins were carried into a large tent where the service was held in East London's Scenery Park township. Two families held private burials and the service organizers said the caskets on display were empty, in respect of the wishes of some families. The children are to be buried in various cemeteries later Wednesday and in the coming days, they said.

The tent was filled to capacity so many mourners sat outside.

It's still not known what caused the deaths of the children, one as young as 13, whose bodies were found in the Enyobeni tavern. They were under the legal drinking age of 18 in South Africa, said officials. Pathologists are studying the cause of death from blood samples. A stampede has been ruled out because the victims' bodies did not show serious injuries, said police.

Ramaphosa delivered the eulogy as he faces several challenges including South Africa's extended power cuts, wide-ranging allegations of corruption and questions about large amounts of cash reportedly found hidden in furniture in his own game farm.

"I have heard some say I have no business coming here to Scenery Park. Some have said I have bigger problems to fix," Ramaphosa said to the gathering. "But I ask them, what is more important in this country, and on this earth, than the lives of our children?"

Local residents were skeptical about the calls by Ramaphosa and other officials for effective action to stop alcohol sales to youngsters.

"Whatever they said today, it is going to end today. Those are the promises they always make, especially our president. It is going to be the last day we see them," Nwabisa Boozi, a resident of the nearby Mdantsane township.

"Everybody here is hurt about what happened, but we are still looking for answers as to what happened to our kids," said Boozi.

Ntombizonke Mgangala, the aunt of 17-year-old Sinothando Mgangala who died in the tragedy, said the family had finally accepted her death.

"Honestly, we have been wishing that she could just walk through the door. We did not really believe it, like we were in denial," Mgangala said.

"But seeing the coffin with her picture on it, it was painful and helped us to release her," she said.

She said although many people blamed the parents when the deaths happened, it is now clear that many of the teenagers had attended the event without their parents' consent.

"Other parents who were not affected were blaming us, saying we do not have control over our children. But it is now clear that these children do not listen to us," Mgangala said.

"I am encouraged that those parents were here today. And many said that the tavern owners, who are also parents, should help by refusing to sell liquor to them," she said.

## Sen. Graham to fight Georgia election subpoena, lawyers say

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Attorneys representing Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said Wednesday he intends to challenge a subpoena compelling him to testify before a special grand jury in Georgia investi-

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gating former President Donald Trump and his allies' actions after the 2020 election.

Graham was one of a handful of Trump confidants and lawyers named Tuesday in petitions filed by Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis as part of her investigation into what she alleges was "a multi-state, coordinated plan by the Trump Campaign to influence the results of the November 2020 election in Georgia and elsewhere."

Graham attorneys Bart Daniel and Matt Austin said in a statement Wednesday that the Republican senator "plans to go to court, challenge the subpoena, and expects to prevail," and they slammed the probe as politically motivated.

"This is all politics. Fulton County is engaged in a fishing expedition and working in concert with the January 6 Committee in Washington," they wrote, adding that, "As Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator Graham was well within his rights to discuss with state officials the processes and procedures around administering elections."

"Should it stand, the subpoena issued today would erode the constitutional balance of power and the ability of a Member of Congress to do their job," they went on. They also said they had been informed by Fulton County investigators that Graham "is neither a subject nor target of the investigation."

"Should witnesses choose to challenge an order that they testify before the Special Purpose Grand Jury, the District Attorney will respond in the appropriate court to compel their appearance," Fulton County district attorney's office spokesperson Jeff DiSantis said in an email.

In the petition submitted Tuesday, Willis wrote that Graham, a longtime Trump ally, made at least two telephone calls to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and members of his staff in the weeks after the November 2020 presidential election, which Trump lost to Democrat Joe Biden. During those calls, Graham asked about reexamining certain absentee ballots "to explore the possibility of a more favorable outcome for former President Donald Trump," she wrote.

Willis also filed petitions to compel cooperation from former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who was one of Trump's primary lawyers during the failed efforts to overturn the result of the election, as well as lawyers Kenneth Chesebro, Cleta Mitchell, Jenna Ellis, John Eastman and Jacki Pick Deason.

Giuliani was recovering Tuesday after undergoing surgery to have two heart stents put in, his son, Andrew Giuliani, said while filling in for him as co-host on radio's "The Rudy Giuliani Show."

Because she is trying to compel testimony from people who live outside of Georgia, Willis had to submit petitions for a judge's approval. The judge overseeing the special grand jury signed off on her petitions.

The next step is to deliver the documents to a prosecutor wherever each potential witness lives so that they can be presented to a local judge to hold a hearing. If that judge determines that the person is a "material and necessary witness" and that the trip to Atlanta to testify would not be an undue burden on the potential witness, the judge would issue a subpoena to compel the person to testify before the special grand jury. Someone who fails to comply with a subpoena can be found in contempt.

## **EXPLAINER: Fears of a natural gas emergency stalk Europe**

Associated Press undefined

It's not a summer heat wave that's making European leaders and businesses sweat. It's fear that Russia's manipulation of natural gas supplies will lead to an economic and political crisis next winter. Or, in the worst case, even sooner if Russia suddenly cuts off the gas.

Here are key things to know about the energy pressure game over the war in Ukraine:

**WHAT'S HAPPENED?**

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen warned Wednesday that countries and industry need to be ready in case Russia completely cuts off already limited natural gas supplies. Fears are growing that the Nord Stream 1 pipeline from Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea will not restart after a scheduled maintenance shutdown later this month.

Russia has already reduced gas supplies to a dozen EU countries, including Germany, the 27-country bloc's biggest economy, that heavily depend on energy from Russia to generate electricity and to power their industries. The cutback has led to accusations from business and political leaders that Russia is

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punishing Europe for its support of Ukraine, which Russia invaded four months ago.

Russian state-owned energy giant Gazprom has reduced supplies through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline running under the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany — Europe's major natural gas pipeline — by 60%. Supplies to Italy have been cut by half. Germany relies on Russia for 35% of its gas imports; Italy for 40%.

## WHY ARE THE REDUCTIONS A CONCERN?

Europe is scrambling to fill its underground gas storage ahead of the winter. Gas utilities fill reserves over the summer when, hopefully, they can buy less expensive gas and then draw from those reserves over the winter as heating demand rises. The current reductions will make refilling storage more difficult and expensive.

Diminishing energy supplies has brought closer the specter of a complete Russian gas shutoff that would make it impossible for Europe to get all the fuel it needs for next winter. Natural gas is used by several energy-intensive industries that are already facing higher costs and dialing back consumption, which has contributed to a slowing European economy.

Right now, Europe's underground storage caverns are 60% full. The European Commission's latest proposal is for each country to reach 80% by Nov. 1.

Economists Holger Schmieding and Salomon Fiedler at Berenberg bank say that if Russian does not resume deliveries through Nord Stream 1 after July 24, the EU "would likely be running on empty at the end of winter. To be on the safe side, some rationing of gas would likely set in beforehand."

On top of all that, an explosion and fire at an export terminal in Freeport, Texas, took a fifth of U.S. export capacity offline for months sending another shudder through the gas market. Most of the terminal's exports were going to Europe, Rystad Energy said.

## WHAT'S BEING DONE?

The EU, which before the war got some 40% of its gas from Russia, has outlined plans to cut imports by two-thirds by year's end and phase out Russian gas entirely by 2027. The bloc has already said it will block Russian coal starting in August and most Russian oil in six months. The goal is to reduce the \$850 million per day Russia was been reaping from oil and gas sales to Europe before the start of the war.

To compensate for reduced Russian supplies, European governments and utilities have bought expensive liquefied natural gas, or LNG, from the United States that is delivered by ship, as opposed to gas that comes by pipeline from Russia and is typically cheaper. But the war has driven energy prices higher, fueling record inflation in Europe and helping to maintain a steady revenue stream for Russia.

There are efforts to get more pipeline gas from Norway and Azerbaijan, while the accelerated rollout of renewable energy and conservation are expected to play smaller roles. Germany, which has no LNG import terminals, is bringing in four floating terminals, two of which should be operating this year.

Despite a focus on renewable energy, the crisis is pushing countries back to fossil fuels. Germany is rushing through legislation to restart coal-fired power plants as a temporary measure despite plans to exit coal entirely by 2030. Officials have also urged Germans to conserve energy.

The Dutch government says it will allow coal-fired power stations to operate at full capacity again to conserve natural gas that would otherwise be burned to produce electricity.

Europe's gas security is fragile despite all those measures. Liquefied gas export terminals in energy-producing countries like the U.S. and Qatar are running at full speed, meaning Europe is bidding against Asia for finite supplies.

On Wednesday, the European Parliament approved a proposal to define natural gas as environmentally sustainable energy, dismaying environmentalists and making it easier for private investors to inject money into gas-related projects.

## WHAT'S RUSSIA'S GAME?

Gazprom says it had to cut back the flows to Europe through Nord Stream 1 because Western sanctions stranded a key piece of equipment in Canada, where it had been taken for maintenance. European governments aren't buying it and call the reductions political.

Gazprom's steps have sent natural gas prices sharply higher after they had fallen in the wake of the winter heating season. That increases revenue for Russia at a time when it's under pressure from Western

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economic sanctions and adds to stress on Europe as it gives Ukraine political and military support.

Gazprom's maneuvers also can be seen as pushback against Western sanctions and as a deterrent to imposing further penalties. And bigger gas users have been put on notice that, just like smaller ones, they are not exempt from a possible cutoff.

Germany and Italy saw their supplies cut around the time their leaders joined French President Emmanuel Macron in Kyiv to meet President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and back EU candidate status for Ukraine.

"Cutting Nord Stream 1 flows to Europe seems clearly an effort by Putin to stall Europe's efforts to build gas stocks through the summer, ready presumably for another installment in the European energy wars this winter," said Tim Ash, senior emerging markets sovereign strategist at BlueBay Asset Management.

**WILL EUROPEANS SEE THE LIGHTS GO OUT OR FREEZE THIS WINTER?**

That is unlikely because EU law mandates that governments ration gas supplies to industry so that homes, schools and hospitals are spared. Countries that run short of gas also can ask for help from others that may be in better shape, though that depends on adequate pipeline connections.

The downside of rationing would be industrial cutbacks and shutdowns that could cost jobs and growth in an economy that is already squeezed by high inflation and could be headed for a recession.

Meanwhile, a complete cutoff could send already high gas prices soaring toward their record of 206 euros (\$217) per megawatt hour from March 7, further fueling inflation. At the start of 2021, before Russia massed troops on the border with Ukraine, spot gas cost about 19 euros per megawatt hour.

## Spain's famous Bull Run festival back after 2-year hiatus

By IRENÉ YAGÜE and CIARÁN GILES Associated Press

PAMPLONA, Spain (AP) — Thousands of revelers erupted in celebration Wednesday as the traditional "chupinazo" firework was ignited to start the San Fermín bull-run festival in the Spanish city of Pamplona, ending a two-year hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Rain did nothing to dampen the atmosphere as crowds, nearly all dressed in the traditional garb of white trousers and shirt with red sash and neckerchief, crammed the tiny town hall square for the noon event. After the firework exploded, the revelers continued spraying each other with red wine.

The highlight of the nine-day festival is the early morning "encierros," or bull runs, starting on Thursday, when thousands of thrill seekers scramble like mad to avoid six bulls as they charge along a winding, cobblestoned route to the city's bullring. Spectators watch from balconies and the wooden barricades set up to line the course. The rest of each day is for eating, drinking, dancing and cultural entertainment.

The festival was made world famous by Ernest Hemingway's 1926 novel "The Sun Also Rises." Before the pandemic made it impossible to hold in 2020 and 2021, it hadn't been suspended since the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s.

Pamplona's population of some 200,000 balloons to nearly a million on peak days during the festival, especially over the weekend, including many foreigners. Many visitors don't stop partying through the night or grab some sleep wherever they can outside.

Californian couple Sheyla and John Dowd, who work in Silicon Valley, were among those thrilled that the party is back so they could partake in it for the first time. Sheyla Dowd said she would watch while John tested his legs against the bulls and the other frantic sprinters.

"It's been a longtime bucket-list wish to come. We were prepared to come before COVID, and we've been waiting and waiting and waiting and we are very excited to be here today," she said. "I am going to be cheering him from the top saying 'go, run faster!'"

John Dowd added: "We have been looking forward to it. And oh yeah, where is the hospital again?"

Former soccer player and coach Juan Carlos Unzué had the honor of launching the little rocket from the town hall balcony. Unzué had to retire from coaching in 2018 after being diagnosed with the neurodegenerative disease ALS, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

"This 'chupinazo' is dedicated to all those health workers and people who helped us during the pandemic, and to all those suffering from ALS. Long live San Fermín," he shouted from a wheelchair to the seething throng below.



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Pamplona mayor Enrique Maya told Spanish state news agency EFE that although there was a lot of excitement this year, he was a little worried.

"We have the feeling there is such desire among people to have a good time that it might get out of hand," he said.

City officials have urged people to not forget that coronavirus infections are on the rise again and encouraged the use of masks. But the multitudinous runs and sideline parties will make this guideline very difficult follow.

Normally the festival is relatively incident-free with most injuries occurring during the runs or through alcohol-related accidents.

Eight people were gored during the last festival in 2019. Sixteen people have died in the bull runs since 1910. The last death occurred in 2009.

Animal rights protesters have also become a fixture in Pamplona. On the eve of this year's festival, dozens of activists dressed as dinosaurs and held "Bullfighting is Prehistoric" signs as they ran the bull-run route to protest what they see as animal cruelty, urging tourists not to participate.

The bulls used in the runs are killed by professional matadors in bullfights each afternoon in the city ring.

Bullfights are protected under the Spanish Constitution as part of the country's cultural heritage. The spectacle is still immensely popular although the movement against it has gained momentum. Animal rights groups cite Culture Ministry figures saying 90% of Spaniards did not attend any festival event involving bulls in 2014-2015, the last year the issue was surveyed.

A major cloud was thrown over the San Fermín festival by a gang-rape case in 2016 that shook the country, and city officials are highly sensitive to anything that may be seen as mistreatment of women.

Using the slogan, "Pamplona Free of Sexual Aggressions," organizers have started a campaign this year to give out information and advice at a city-center office to victims or witnesses of abuses, as well as to the general public.

The rape case eventually led to a bill that makes consent a key determinant in sexual assault cases, freeing victims of having to prove that violence or intimidation was used against them.

## Trump White House counsel Cipollone to testify to 1/6 panel

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pat Cipollone, Donald Trump's former White House counsel, is scheduled to testify Friday before the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, according to a person briefed on the matter.

Cipollone, whose reported resistance to Trump's schemes to overturn his 2020 election defeat has made him a long-sought and potentially revelatory witness, was subpoenaed by the select committee last week after weeks of public pressure to provide testimony to the panel.

The person briefed on the matter, who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to discuss private negotiations, said Cipollone agreed to appear before the committee for a private, transcribed interview.

As Trump's top White House lawyer, Cipollone was in the West Wing on Jan. 6, 2021, as well as for key meetings in the turbulent weeks after the election when Trump and associates — including Republican lawmakers and lawyer Rudy Giuliani — debated and plotted ways to challenge the election.

The agreement for Cipollone to speak to the panel follows last week's dramatic testimony from former Trump White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson. The young aide to former chief of staff Mark Meadows provided the committee with a striking account of what she saw and heard in those weeks and presented lawmakers with arguably their clearest case for how Trump or some of his allies could face criminal liability.

Cipollone is said to have stridently and repeatedly warned Trump and his allies against their efforts to challenge the election, threatening to resign as Trump eyed a dramatic reshuffling atop the Justice Department.

One witness said Cipollone referred to a proposed letter making false claims about voter fraud as a

"murder-suicide pact."

But while his interview with the committee could prove to be a breakthrough, it remained unclear whether Cipollone would try to limit what he is willing to talk about. As the administration's chief lawyer, he could argue that some or all of his conversations with Trump are privileged.

Nevertheless, the nine-member panel believes he is a crucial witness who can provide them with an even closer, first-hand recollection of the several and varied efforts by Trump allies to subvert the Electoral College, including a strategy to organize so-called alternate electors for Trump in seven swing states that Biden won. Lawmakers also said that Cipollone's name came up in a number of private depositions as a voice of reason against efforts to appoint a loyalist as attorney general who championed false theories of voter fraud and a plan to have Trump march to the Capitol on Jan. 6 alongside his supporters.

Hutchinson testified last week that days before the Capitol attack, Cipollone warned that there were "serious legal concerns" if Trump accompanied the protesters to the Capitol, saying, "We need to make sure that this doesn't happen." By the morning of Jan. 6, Cipollone was urging Hutchinson to "keep in touch" about any possible movements by the president and "please make sure we don't go up to the Capitol, Cassidy."

If Trump did go to the Capitol, Hutchinson recalled Cipollone saying, "we're going to get charged with every crime imaginable." He had previously identified obstruction of justice or defrauding the electoral count as among the possibilities, she said.

While Cipollone sat for an informal interview in April, the committee has reiterated that it required his cooperation on the record after it obtained evidence about which he was "uniquely positioned to testify."

"Our evidence shows that Pat Cipollone and his office tried to do what was right," Rep. Liz Cheney, the Republican vice-chair of the committee, said in a hearing last month. "They tried to stop a number of President Trump's plans for Jan. 6."

"We think the American people deserve to hear from Mr. Cipollone personally," She added.

## The next frontier for drones: Letting them fly out of sight

By MATT O'BRIEN and NATHAN ELLGREN Associated Press

REMINGTON, Va. (AP) — For years, there's been a cardinal rule for flying civilian drones: Keep them within your line of sight. Not just because it's a good idea — it's also the law.

But some drones have recently gotten permission to soar out of their pilots' sight. They can now inspect high-voltage power lines across the forested Great Dismal Swamp in Virginia. They're tracking endangered sea turtles off Florida's coast and monitoring seaports in the Netherlands and railroads from New Jersey to the rural West.

Aviation authorities in the U.S. and elsewhere are preparing to relax some of the safeguards they imposed to regulate a boom in off-the-shelf consumer drones over the past decade. Businesses want simpler rules that could open your neighborhood's skies to new commercial applications of these low-flying machines, although privacy advocates and some airplane and balloon pilots remain wary.

For now, a small but growing group of power companies, railways and delivery services like Amazon are leading the way with special permission to fly drones "beyond visual line of sight." As of early July, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration had approved 230 such waivers — one of them to Virginia-based Dominion Energy for inspecting its network of power plants and transmission lines.

"This is the first step of what everybody's expecting with drones," said Adam Lee, Dominion's chief security officer. "The first time in our nation's history where we've now moved out into what I think everyone's expecting is coming."

That expectation — of small drones with little human oversight delivering packages, assessing home insurance claims or buzzing around on nighttime security patrols — has driven the FAA's work this year to craft new safety guidelines meant to further integrate drones into the national airspace.

The FAA said it is still reviewing how it will roll out routine operations enabling some drones to fly beyond visual line of sight, although it has signaled that the permissions will be reserved for commercial

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applications, not hobbyists.

"Our ultimate goal is you shouldn't need a waiver for this process at all. It becomes an accepted practice," said Adam Bry, CEO of California drone-maker Skydio, which is supplying its drones to Dominion, railroad company BNSF and other customers with permission to fly beyond line of sight.

"The more autonomous the drones become, the more they can just be instantly available anywhere they could possibly be useful," Bry said.

Part of that involves deciding how much to trust that drones won't crash into people or other aircraft when their operators aren't looking. Other new rules will require drones to carry remote identification — like an electronic license plate — to track their whereabouts. And in the aftermath of Russia's war in Ukraine — where both sides have used small consumer drones to target attacks — the White House has been pushing a parallel effort to counter the potential malicious use of drones in the U.S.

At a gas-fired plant in Remington, Virginia, which helps power some of Washington's suburbs, a reporter with The Associated Press watched in June as Dominion Energy drone pilots briefly lost visual line of sight of their inspection drone as it flew around the backside of a large fuel tank and the top of a smoke stack.

That wouldn't have been legally possible without Dominion's recently approved FAA waiver. And it wouldn't have been technically possible without advancements in collision-avoidance technology that are enabling drones to fly closer to buildings.

Previously, "you would have to erect scaffolding or have people go in with a bucket truck," said Nate Robie, who directs the drone program at Dominion. "Now you can go in on a 20-minute flight."

Not everyone is enthused about the pending rules. Pilots of hot air balloons and other lightweight aircraft warn that crashes will follow if the FAA allows largely autonomous delivery drones the right of way at low altitudes.

"These drones cannot see where they are flying and are blind to us," said a June call to action from the Balloon Federation of America.

Broader concerns come from civil liberties groups that say protecting people's privacy should be a bigger priority.

"There is a greater chance that you'll have drones flying over your house or your backyard as these beyond-visual-line-of-sight drone operations increase," said Jeramie Scott, a senior counsel at the Electronic Privacy Information Center who sat on the FAA's advisory group working to craft new drone rules. "It'll be much harder to know who to complain to."

EPIC and other groups dissented from the advisory group's early recommendations and are calling for stronger privacy and transparency requirements — such as an app that could help people identify the drones above them and what data they are collecting.

"If you want to fly beyond visual line of sight, especially if you are commercial, the public has a right to know what you're flying, what data you are collecting," said Andrés Arrieta, director of consumer privacy engineering at the Electronic Frontier Foundation. "It seems like such a low bar."

## Saudi Arabia expecting 1 million in largest hajj since virus

By AMR NABIL Associated Press

MECCA, Saudi Arabia (AP) — One million Muslim pilgrims were converging on Saudi Arabia's holy city of Mecca on Wednesday for the largest hajj since the coronavirus pandemic severely curtailed access to one of Islam's five pillars.

Saudi Arabia's decision to allow some 850,000 Muslims from abroad to make the annual pilgrimage, which begins on Thursday, marks a major step toward normalcy after two years of a drastically scaled-down hajj restricted to Saudi residents.

The 1 million foreign and domestic pilgrims participating is still far less than the 2.5 million Muslims who traveled in 2019 for the pilgrimage, typically one of the world's largest gatherings. Those performing the ritual this year must be under 65, vaccinated against the coronavirus and have tested negative for COVID-19 within 72 hours of travel. The pilgrims are chosen from millions of applicants through an online

lottery system.

Saudi officials inspected the holy site on Wednesday and stressed their “readiness” to receive pilgrims with the goal of “maintaining public health.”

After the coronavirus struck in 2020, Saudi authorities allowed just 1,000 pilgrims already residing in the kingdom to attend, prompting historians to compare the disruption to the site’s storming by religious extremists and dramatic closure in 1979.

Last year, the hajj was similarly restricted to 60,000 fully vaccinated Muslims living in Saudi Arabia. The unprecedented curbs sent shock waves throughout the Muslim world, devastating many believers who had spent years saving up for the religious rite.

This year, however, Saudi authorities are keen to relax virus curbs. Religious pilgrimages brought in \$12 billion before the pandemic — accounting for the largest percentage of Saudi Arabia’s gross domestic product after oil.

Although virus cases have risen steadily to over 500 a day in Saudi Arabia, the government lifted the country’s indoor mask mandate and other virus precautions last month. Roughly 70% of the country has been vaccinated against the virus.

Pilgrims at the holy site this year are not required to be masked or socially distanced, as during the past two years. However, Muslims are still prohibited from kissing or touching the cube-shaped Kaaba, the metaphorical house of God at the center of Mecca that pilgrims circle as they complete the hajj.

The Quran says that all Islam’s followers who are physically and financially able should make the pilgrimage once in their lifetime. Pilgrims travel to Mecca from all over the world for five intense days of worship, carrying out a series of rituals.

The hajj follows a route the Prophet Muhammad walked nearly 1,400 years ago and is believed to trace the footsteps of the prophets Ibrahim and Ismail, or Abraham and Ishmael as they are named in the Bible.

## Judges keeping Capitol riot trials in DC amid bias claims

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For some of the Washington, D.C., residents who reported for jury duty last month, a pro-Trump mob’s assault on the U.S. Capitol felt like a personal attack.

Ahead of a trial for a Michigan man charged in the riot, one prospective juror said a police officer injured during the melee is a close friend. Another has friends who are congressional staffers or journalists who worked at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. A woman whose boyfriend lived near the Capitol recalled the terror she felt that day.

None of them served on the federal jury that swiftly convicted Anthony Robert Williams of storming the Capitol to obstruct Congress from certifying Joe Biden’s 2020 presidential electoral victory.

But their personal connections to the riot highlight the challenge facing judges and attorneys in choosing impartial jurors in Washington to decide the hundreds of criminal cases stemming from the insurrection — especially as lawmakers hold high-profile public hearings on the insurrection less than a mile from the courthouse.

One of the most serious cases brought by the Justice Department in the Capitol attack has already been delayed after defense attorneys argued that their clients couldn’t get a fair trial in the midst of televised hearings by the House committee investigating the riot.

And a growing number of defendants are pushing to have their trials moved out of Washington, saying the outcome of the first trials proves that the odds are unfairly stacked against Jan. 6 defendants in the nation’s capital.

“D.C. is a city that, as a whole, feels that it has been the victim of a crime,” attorneys in two cases against members and associates of the far-right Oath Keepers extremist group wrote in court papers seeking to have their trials moved to Virginia.

Prosecutors and judges see no evidence that Capitol rioters can’t get a fair trial in the district and believe the process of weeding out biased jurors is working. Judges presiding over Jan. 6 cases have consistently

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rejected requests to move trials, saying the capital has plenty of residents who can serve as fair jurors. Prosecutors' unblemished record so far in jury trials for Jan. 6 cases may speak to the strength of the evidence against the rioters, many of whom were captured on camera storming the Capitol and even bragged about their actions on social media.

It's the latest in a string of long-shot legal gambits from defendants charged with crimes ranging from low-level misdemeanors to felony seditious conspiracy. Already more than 300 people across the U.S. have pleaded guilty to crimes stemming from the deadly riot. Collectively, 72 jurors have unanimously convicted six Jan. 6 defendants of all 35 counts in their indictments.

The federal court in Washington — where all the Jan. 6 cases are being heard — has seen plenty of politically charged trials, including those for former Mayor Marion Barry, Iran-Contra figure Oliver North and ex-Trump adviser Roger Stone, prosecutors note.

It's exceptionally rare for judges to agree to move trials to a different location, even in the most high-profile cases. Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, for example, was tried in Boston over the objections of his attorneys even though a large number of people in the city were impacted by the attack, which killed three people and wounded more than 260 others.

If Williams, the Jan. 6 defendant, had had his way, his trial would have been held in his native Michigan. His lawyers argued that inflammatory media coverage of the Capitol attack tainted a jury pool that already was predisposed to view him as somebody who victimized them.

Chief Judge Beryl Howell denied Williams' request for a change of trial venue before jury selection started on June 27. One by one, the judge questioned 49 prospective jurors before seating 12 jurors and two alternates.

Howell disqualified several prospective jurors after questioning them about their personal connections or strong feelings about the events of Jan. 6. The judge asked a woman if her friendship with an officer whose ribs were broken during the riot would prevent her from being fair and impartial.

"My Christianity says, 'No,' but my feelings say, 'Yes,'" the woman replied.

A man married to a USA Today reporter said Jan. 6 is a frequent topic of discussion among their friends who work at the Capitol.

"It would be very difficult to separate those," he said before Howell excused him.

Howell also disqualified a woman who described herself as "very left biased" and a former New York City resident who said his "deep-rooted" dislike for former President Donald Trump predates his White House years.

The jurors picked for Williams' trial included a NASA engineer, a moving company employee, a paralegal, a Wall Street regulator and a former State Department employee. None of them expressed any strong opinions about Jan. 6.

More than three dozen Capitol riot defendants have asked to have their trials moved out of Washington, including at least nine who filed their requests in June. None has succeeded so far.

In denying one such request, U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan said she agreed with prosecutors that there is no reason to believe that Washington's entire population was so affected by the events of Jan. 6 that it can't seat an impartial panel.

"In any U.S. jurisdiction, most prospective jurors will have heard about the events of January 6, and many will have various disqualifying biases," she wrote.

Before a jury convicted retired New York City police officer Thomas Webster of assaulting a Capitol police officer during the riot, Webster's lawyer said a survey of Washington residents found that 84% believe Jan. 6 defendants were trying to overturn the 2020 election results and keep Trump, a Republican, in power. The defense attorney, James Monroe, also noted that 92% of the votes cast by Washington residents went to Biden, a Democrat.

"Given the lopsided political makeup of the District, it is impossible to panel a jury that is not entirely comprised of people preordained to find Webster — a presumed Trump supporter — guilty," Monroe wrote.

U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta rejected the motion, saying the survey shows that nearly half of the

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Washington residents polled "would keep an open mind in the context of a specific case."

Members of the Oath Keepers also failed to persuade Mehta to move their trial on seditious conspiracy charges from Washington to Alexandria, Virginia. Their lawyers noted that every Jan. 6 case tried before a jury in Washington has resulted in a conviction.

"That is true, but guilty verdicts are hardly unusual in federal criminal prosecutions," Mehta wrote. "The mere existence of other guilty verdicts does not mean that the jury pool is inherently tainted."

Williams' trial was the first for a Jan. 6 case since a House committee began holding hearings on the Capitol riot, which drew millions of TV viewers.

Defense attorney John Kiyonaga, who represents Capitol riot defendant Robert Morss, said the House committee hearings have "poisoned" the jury pool in Washington. Kiyonaga has asked for his client's trial to be moved to another district.

"The Committee has spoon fed to the entire nation a precisely choreographed rendition of January 6th defendants as 'insurrectionists' and murderous orchestrators of an attempted coup," Kiyonaga wrote.

A trial was scheduled to start in August for several members of the far-right Proud Boys extremist group charged with seditious conspiracy and accused of plotting to forcibly oppose the lawful transfer of presidential power on Jan. 6.

But U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly agreed to move the trial to December after lawyers for some Proud Boys members argued they couldn't pick an impartial jury in the midst of the House committee hearings.

Defense attorney Carmen Hernandez also cited "non-stop prejudicial publicity" from the House committee hearings as grounds for moving the Proud Boys trial to another district, but the judge hasn't ruled on that yet.

## Today in History: July 7, female cadets at West Point

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, July 7, the 188th day of 2022. There are 177 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 7, 1976, the United States Military Academy at West Point included female cadets for the first time as 119 women joined the Class of 1980.

On this date:

In 1846, U.S. annexation of California was proclaimed at Monterey (mahn-tuh-RAY') after the surrender of a Mexican garrison.

In 1865, four people were hanged in Washington, D.C. for conspiring with John Wilkes Booth to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln: Lewis Powell (aka Lewis Payne), David Herold, George Atzerodt and Mary Surratt, the first woman to be executed by the federal government.

In 1898, the United States annexed Hawaii.

In 1930, construction began on Boulder Dam (later Hoover Dam).

In 1946, Jimmy Carter, 21, married Rosalynn (ROH'-zuh-lihn) Smith, 18, in Plains, Georgia.

In 1948, six female U.S. Navy reservists became the first women to be sworn in to the regular Navy.

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan announced he was nominating Arizona Judge Sandra Day O'Connor to become the first female justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1990, the first "Three Tenors" concert took place as opera stars Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo and Jose Carreras performed amid the brick ruins of Rome's Baths of Caracalla on the eve of the World Cup championship.

In 2005, terrorist bombings in three Underground stations and a double-decker bus killed 52 victims and four bombers in the worst attack on London since World War II.

In 2010, Los Angeles police charged Lonnie Franklin Jr. in the city's "Grim Sleeper" serial killings. (Franklin, who was sentenced to death for the killings of nine women and a teenage girl, died in prison in March 2020 at the age of 67.)

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In 2013, Andy Murray became the first British man in 77 years to win the Wimbledon title, beating Novak Djokovic 6-4, 7-5, 6-4 in the final.

In 2016, Micah Johnson, a Black Army veteran who served in Afghanistan, opened fire on Dallas police, killing five officers in an act of vengeance for the fatal police shootings of Black men; the attack ended with Johnson being killed by a bomb delivered by a police robot.

Ten years ago: Jubilant Libyans chose a new parliament in their first nationwide vote in decades. The Obama administration declared Afghanistan the United States' newest "major non-NATO ally." Serena Williams beat Agnieszka Radwanska (ahg-nee-ESH'-kuh rahd-VAHN'-skuh) of Poland 6-1, 5-7, 6-2 to win a fifth Wimbledon singles championship; about five hours later, she and sister Venus were back on Centre Court to win the doubles final.

Five years ago: Islamic militants attacked a remote Egyptian army outpost in the Sinai Peninsula with a suicide car bomb and heavy machine gun fire, killing at least 23 soldiers in the deadliest attack in the turbulent region in two years. A federal appeals court dismissed Hawaii's attempt to challenge Trump administration rules for a travel ban on citizens from six majority-Muslim countries, saying it didn't have jurisdiction to address the issue.

One year ago: A squad of gunmen assassinated Haitian President Jovenel Moïse and wounded his wife in an overnight raid on their home. (More than 40 suspects have been arrested, including at least 18 Colombian soldiers and 20 Haitian police officers.) Former President Donald Trump sued Facebook, Twitter and Google's YouTube, claiming that he and other conservatives had been wrongfully censored. A federal judge ruled that the Air Force was mostly responsible for a former serviceman killing more than two dozen people at a Texas church in 2017 because it failed to submit his criminal history into a database, which should have prevented him from purchasing firearms. The Tampa Bay Lightning won the Stanley Cup for the second consecutive season, beating the Montreal Canadiens 1-0 to wrap up the series four games to one.

Today's Birthdays: Musician-conductor Doc Severinsen is 95. Pulitzer Prize-winning author David McCullough is 89. Rock star Ringo Starr is 82. Comedian Bill Oddie is 81. Singer-musician Warren Entner (The Grass Roots) is 79. Actor Joe Spano is 76. Pop singer David Hodo (The Village People) is 75. Country singer Linda Williams is 75. Actor Shelley Duvall is 73. Actor Roz Ryan is 71. Actor Billy Campbell is 63. Rock musician Mark White (Spin Doctors) is 60. Singer-songwriter Vonda Shepard is 59. Actor-comedian Jim Gaffigan is 56. R&B musician Ricky Kinchen (Mint Condition) is 56. Actor Amy Carlson is 54. Actor Jorja Fox is 54. Actor Cree Summer is 53. Actor Robin Weigert is 53. Actor Kirsten Vangsness is 50. Actor Troy Garity is 49. Actor Berenice Bejo (BEH'-ruh-nees BAY'-hoh) is 46. Actor Hamish Linklater is 46. Olympic silver and bronze medal figure skater Michelle Kwan is 42. Rapper Cassidy is 40. Country singer Gabbie Nolen is 40. Actor Ross Malinger is 38. Actor-comedian Luke Null (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 32. Pop singer Ally Hernandez (Fifth Harmony) (TV: "The X Factor") is 29. Pop musician Ashton Irwin (5 Seconds to Summer) is 28. Country singer Maddie Font (Maddie and Tae) is 27.