

# Groton Daily Independent

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I am happy because I'm grateful. I choose to be grateful. That gratitude allows me to be happy.

*Will Arnett*

July 7-9  
Legion at Clark Tourney

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

July 8-11  
U12 State Tourney in Parker

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

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

July 13  
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

July 19-21  
Legion Regions at Redfield

July 22-24  
Jr. Teeners State Tourney at Hayti

July 23-24

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

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

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# ***CITY OF GROTON***

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

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

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

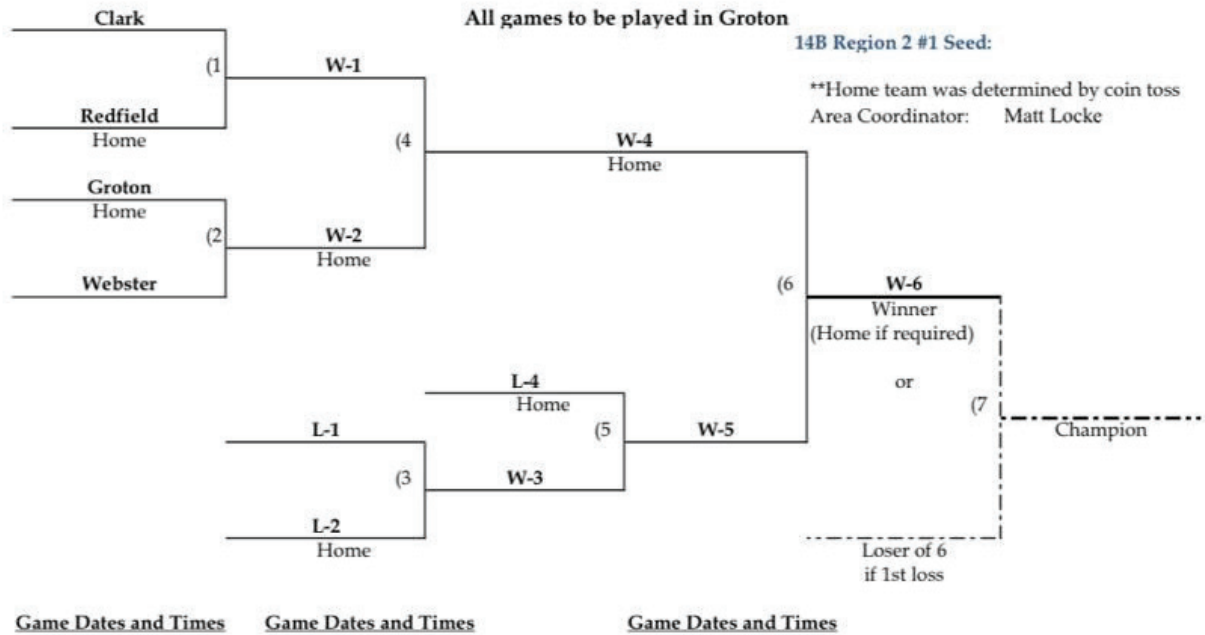


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Department of SD VFW Baseball  
14U Class B Region 2 Bracket

This weekend in Groton. We'll try to get more specifics for tomorrow's paper



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## GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

### School Board Meeting

July 11, 2022 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

#### AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

#### POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

#### CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of June 13, 2022 school board meeting as drafted or amended.
2. Approval of year ending (FY2022) district bills.

#### OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Approval of June 2022 Financial Report, Custodial Accounts, and Investments.
3. Authorize Business Manager to make necessary Contingency Fund transfers to cover year-ending deficit accounts in General Fund.
4. Approve Supplemental Budget to Capital Outlay and Special Education pursuant SDCL13-11.3.2.
5. Approval of June 2022 School Lunch Report.
6. Approval of June 2022 School Transportation Report.
7. Approve resignation of Jordyn Bortnem, MS/HS Special Education Teacher, for 2022-23 school year with liquidated damages penalty for breach of contract.
8. Continued discussion on district-wide capital planning.
9. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

#### ADJOURN

.....

#### ANNUAL REORGANIZATION BUSINESS:

1. Call to Order with members present.
2. Installation of incumbent board members, Tigh Fliehs, Deb Gengerke, and TJ Harder, followed by election of president and vice president as well as appointments to the various "ad hoc" committees.

#### POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

#### 8:00 PM – DISTRICT BUDGET HEARING – Revenue & Expenditures – Line Items

#### CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approve June 2022 District bills for payment.
2. Designate legal counsel/school attorney...Rodney Freeman of Churchill, Manolis, and Freeman of Huron.
3. Designate Business Manager as custodian of all district accounts.
4. Approve engagement letter for Eide Bailly to conduct FY2022 school district audit.

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5. Authorize Business Manager to continue existing funds and establish new accounts and to invest and reinvest funds in local institutions which serve the greatest advantage to the District and set business manager bond.
6. Authorize Business Manager to publish staff salaries.
7. Designate official bank depository... Dacotah Bank.
8. Adopt Groton Area School District Policy Manual with such revisions as previously approved.
9. Adopt Special Education Comprehensive Plan.
10. Authorize office personnel to administer Custodial Funds & NSLP (school lunch) funds, with oversight by business office management.
11. Authorize superintendent to administer or direct federal programs, with Consolidated Application (Title programs) and related ESSA compliance issues assigned to building principals.
12. Appoint superintendent to act as Asbestos Compliance Officer.
13. Authorize superintendent or designee to close school in emergency situations or inclement weather.
14. Authorize superintendent or designee to institute NSLP & School Breakfast Agreement.
15. Adopt Food Safety Plan, HACCP-Based Standard Operating Procedures.
16. Authorize superintendent or designee to institute ASBSD school bus mutual assistance pact.
17. Authorize business manager to transfer petty cash and incident payment funds (SDCL 13-18-16/17).
18. Approve peripheral sports and other volunteer school workers such as chain gang, line judges, Booster Club/PAC workers, assistant coaches, volunteer coaches, volunteer drivers, school board members etc. to be included in the school's worker's compensation insurance coverage.

## NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approve administrative negotiated agreement and signed administrator contracts for 2022-2023.
2. Open and approve newspaper quotes and designate official newspaper for FY2023.
3. Open and approve diesel/gas quotes.
4. Set dates and time for regular school board meetings.
5. Appoint board member to serve as voting member of the North Central Special Education Cooperative Governing Board for 2022-2023 school year.
6. Set salaries for board members...**presently at \$50/meeting; \$75/meeting for chairman; mileage as applicable.**
7. Set rate for substitute teachers for 2022-2023 school year...recommend \$130/day [Currently \$125/day].
8. Set rate for substitute bus drivers for 2022-2023 school year...recommend \$90/day [Currently \$65/day].
9. Establish activity admission & school lunch prices for 2022-2023.

		<u>Recommendations</u>
<b>Admission:</b>	Adult - \$5; Doubleheader - \$6	No Change
	Adult 10-punch ticket - \$45	No Change
	Adult All-Activities Pass - \$75	No Change
	1 <sup>st</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade - \$4	No Change
	1 <sup>st</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> grade activity ticket - \$25	No Change
	6 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade activity ticket - \$30	No Change

<b>Breakfast</b>	JrK-5 - \$2.50; 6-12 - \$3.00; Adult - \$3.25	No Change
<b>Lunch</b>	JrK-5 - \$3.25; 6-12 - \$3.75; Adult \$4.50	No Change

**Second Milk** \$0.25 **\$0.50**

10. Set rate for OST services for 2022-2023 school year [Recommend No Change].

## ADJOURN

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## *"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

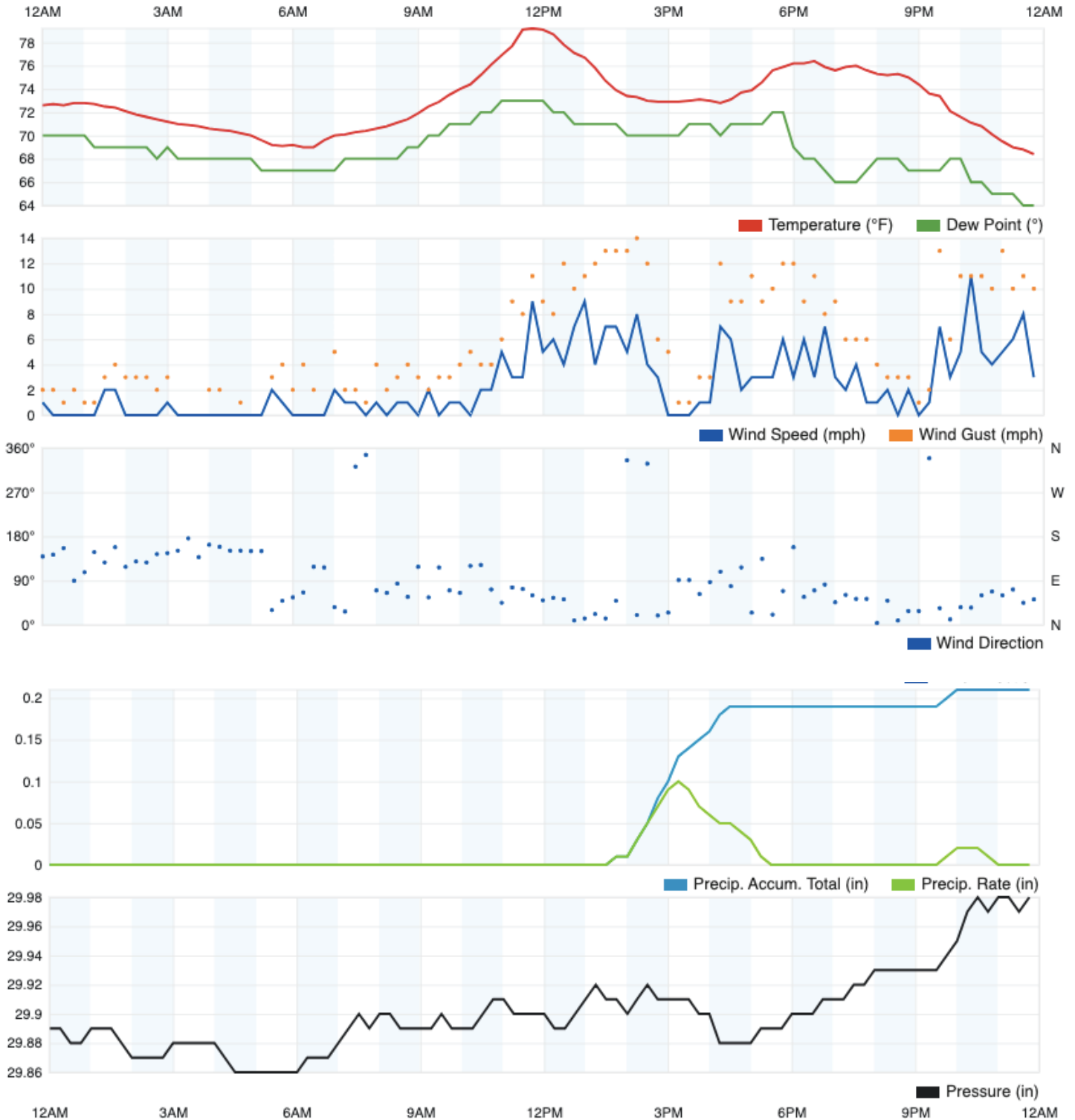


Call Kay Espeland 492-3507 or  
Alice Jean Peterson 216-2835

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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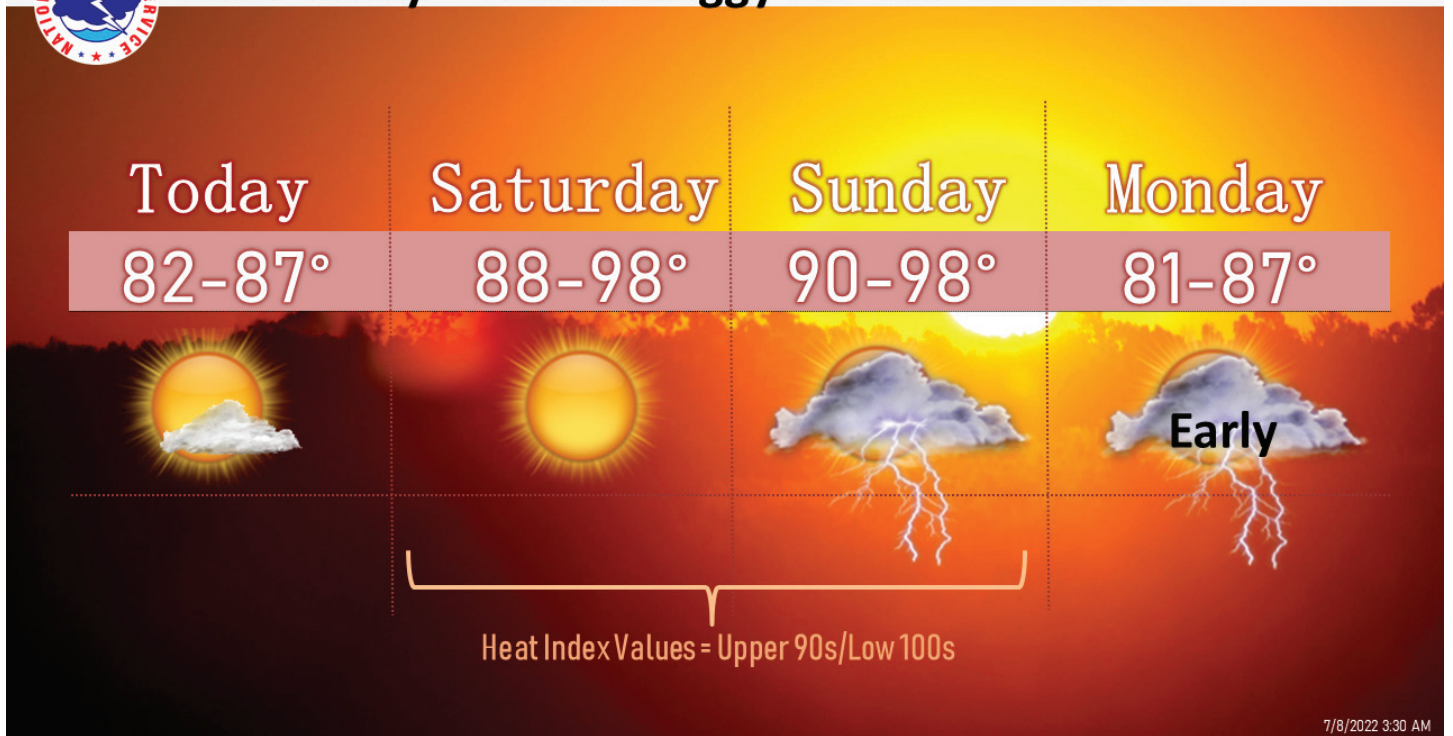
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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
				
Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Chance T-storms	Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms
High: 86 °F	Low: 67 °F	High: 92 °F	Low: 72 °F	High: 92 °F



## Mild Today – Hot & Muggy For The Weekend

NWS ABERDEEN  
WEATHER.GOV/ABR



Mild and dry conditions today with a return to hot and humid conditions for the weekend. A storm system Sunday into early Monday will bring the risk for severe weather followed by a return to milder conditions.



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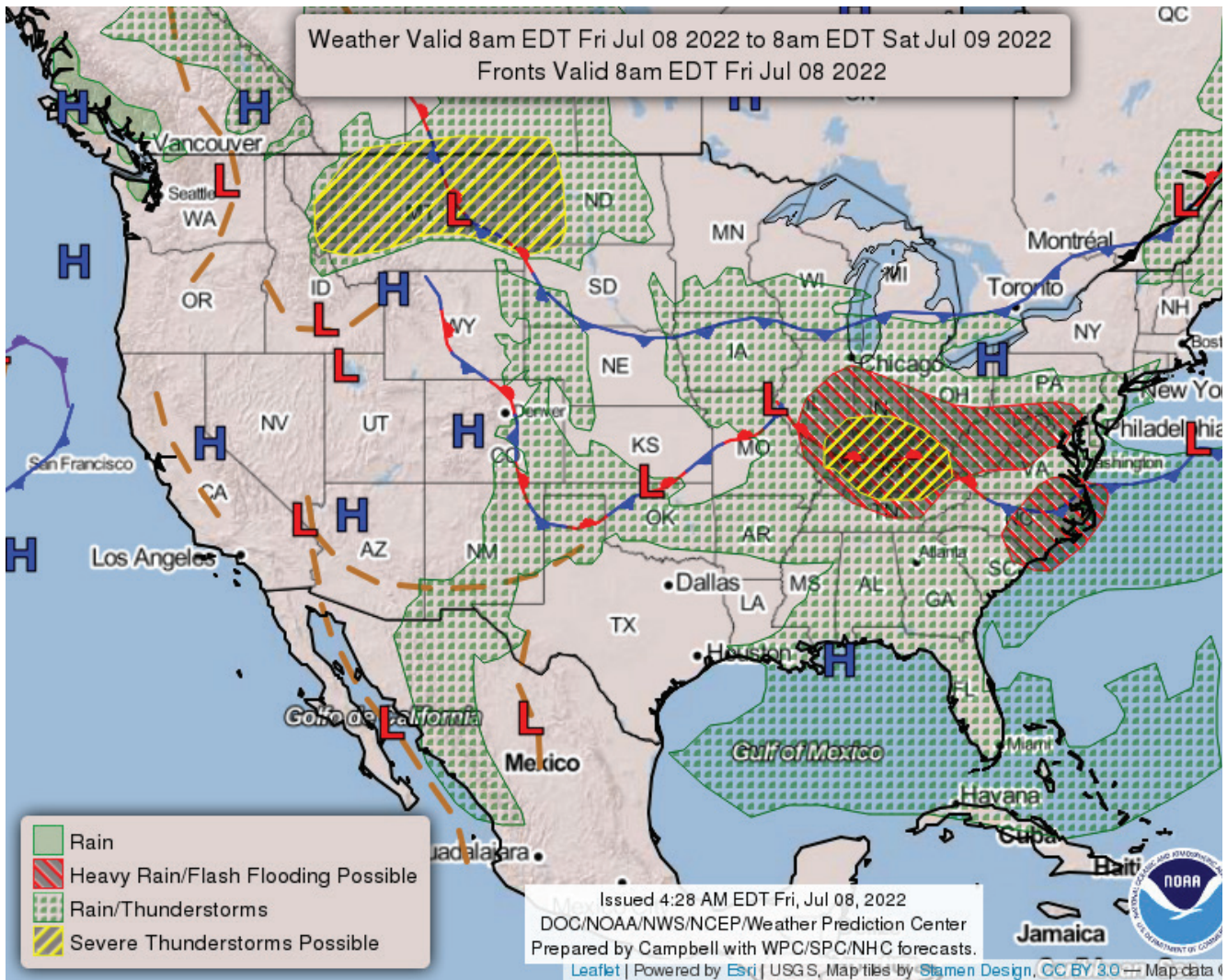
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 79.2 °F at 11:45 AM**  
**Low Temp: 68.4 °F at 11:45 PM**  
**Wind: 14 mph at 2:15 PM**  
**Precip: 0.21**

Day length: 15 hours, 33 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1936  
Record Low: 43 in 1905  
Average High: 85°F  
Average Low: 60°F  
Average Precip in July.: 0.94  
Precip to date in July.: 2.21  
Average Precip to date: 11.95  
Precip Year to Date: 13.79  
Sunset Tonight: 9:24:04 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:51:48 AM



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## Today in Weather History

July 8, 1922: Two tornadoes occurred near the southern border of South Dakota, with one at St. Charles in Gregory County, and the other on the south shore of Lake Andes, in Charles Mix County. The distance apart was about 30 miles. The tornado in Gregory County missed the town of Lake Andes. However, it destroyed about 29 cottages and five large barns. Fifteen people were injured, but no one was killed.

July 8, 1951: An F2 touched down in open country and moved northeastward, passing three miles northwest of Corona in Roberts County. Thirteen buildings were destroyed on a farm with only the house left standing. Three cows and 20 pigs were killed.

July 8, 2009: A tornado passed through the city of Dickinson, ND, on the far south side, mainly just south of the Heart River. From their eyewitness accounts, and from video obtained from the Dickinson Police Department, it is likely that this was a rain-wrapped tornado, and very difficult if not impossible to see. The tornado occurred before sunset, yet it was described as being as dark as night during the event. Over 450 structures were damaged, of which nearly 100 were declared destroyed or beyond repair. Numerous vehicles were damaged or destroyed; some were on their roofs. From that, it was determined that peak wind speeds in the tornado were on the order of 150 mph. [Click HERE](#) for more information.

July 8, 2011: Historical releases on the Oahe Dam of 160,000 CFS kept the Missouri River from Pierre to Chamberlain at record flood levels throughout July. Extensive sandbagging and levee building had been done earlier to hold back the river. Residents in the Pierre, Fort Pierre, and Oacoma areas continued to be the most affected by the river. Many homes, along with roads, crop, and pastureland remained flooded throughout the month. The Missouri River at Pierre continued from 5 to 6 foot above flood stage throughout July. The Missouri River at Chamberlain reached a record stage of 75.1 feet on July 8th. Flood stage at Chamberlain is 65 feet. The flooding on the river began in late May and continued into August.

July 8, 2013: A thunderstorm complex moving across central and north central South Dakota produced gusty winds up to 70 mph. These strong winds brought down several tree branches around the area with Dewey County the hardest hit location. In Timber Lake, downed tree branches fell on houses and vehicles causing damage.

1680: The first confirmed tornado death in the United States occurred in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The funnel was filled with, stones, bushes, and other things. The tornado also unroofed a barn and snapped many large trees.

1816 - Frost was reported in low places throughout New England. (David Ludlum)

1950 - The town of York, NE, was deluged with 13.15 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1975 - Three people were killed and six others were injured when lightning struck a walnut tree near Mayo, FL. The nine people were stringing tobacco under a tin shed when the bolt hit the nearby tree. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in the central U.S. produced wind gusts to 90 mph at Waterloo, IA, 6.38 inches of rain at Tescott, KS, and twenty-five minutes of ping-pong ball size hail at Drummond, OK. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty cities in the north central and northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Beckley, WV, equalled their all-time record with a high of 93 degrees. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms spawned seven tornadoes in Adams and Logan counties of eastern Colorado, and hail caused 2.3 million dollars damage in Adams, Logan and Washington counties. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2003: What may be the world's highest dew point temperature was recorded at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in the Persian Gulf. A dew point of 95 degrees was recorded at 3 PM while the air temperature was 108 degrees. The apparent temperature at that time would have been 172 degrees.

2009: An intense cold front brings heavy snow, hail, high winds and unusually cold temperatures to southern Peru. The severe conditions were blamed for the deaths of more than 246 children due to cold-related illnesses.

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## Secrets Revealed

A few feet from my desk is a closet used for storage. In that closet are boxes and boxes of information that, at one time, was very costly. Today, it is worth much more than it was when purchased.

The boxes inside the closet are made of ordinary cardboard. If someone opens the door and looks at them, there would be no reason to open them other than plain curiosity. They appear to have no value unless someone knows their contents.

They are like the Bible. Unless there is a desire to look inside and find out what it contains, it is useless. Most people are more likely to turn on a television or look at a magazine. But, if one stops, opens the Word and accepts its contents, life takes on an entirely new meaning and direction.

"My son," begins Solomon, "if you accept my words . . . and store up my commands . . . you will understand what is right and just and fair - and it will lead you to every good path, For wisdom will enter your heart."

The Proverbs contain clear and concise guidance for those who want to choose between right and wrong. God has planted some degree of morality in everyone's heart because we were made in His image. But only the Word of God spells out in exact words what is right and just and fair. Every law or rule or policy that has ever been written is an extension of what we find in His Word. But, only His Word is capable of penetrating the very core of our being - our hearts. When we allow it to do its work, we are changed from the inside out and become a new creation.

Prayer: Lord, people look in vain for ways to change what is wrong into what is right. Your Word is that way! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you Proverbs 2:1a

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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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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## News from the Associated Press

### Lone Mississippi abortion clinic seeks legal path to reopen

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS and DAVE KOLPACK Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Attorneys for Mississippi's only abortion clinic filed papers Thursday asking the state Supreme Court to block a new law that bans most abortions and to let the clinic reopen next week.

The clinic, Jackson Women's Health Organization, is at the center of the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that overturned Roe v. Wade and took away women's constitutional protection for abortion nationwide.

A Mississippi law that took effect Thursday bans most abortions, and the clinic performed its last procedures Wednesday. Clinic attorneys are making the same arguments that a trial court judge rejected Tuesday as the clinic tried to block the law from taking effect. They said that in 1998, the Mississippi Supreme Court ruled that the state constitution has a right to privacy that includes abortion.

"Absent relief, Mississippians will continue to be denied their rights under the Mississippi Constitution to privacy and bodily autonomy, as they are compelled by the State to endure the risks of pregnancy and bear children against their will," clinic attorney Rob McDuff wrote.

It was not immediately clear when the conservative state Supreme Court would consider the appeal.

Diane Derzis, owner of the Mississippi clinic, told The Associated Press that she will have staff available to reopen the facility if the state Supreme Court allows.

"I'm not hopeful, but there's always a possibility," Derzis said Thursday.

As for the legal filing and the effort to stay open, she said: "All of us needed to know we exhausted all possibilities."

The Mississippi clinic is best known as the Pink House because of its bright paint job. Some staff members were inside Thursday to do paperwork and follow-up appointments for a few patients. About 30 abortion opponents held a Christian worship service on a street next to the clinic.

"No more murdering innocent children here," said Dr. Coleman Boyd, a physician who has frequently protested outside the clinic. "Christ is exalted. Innocent bloodshed in this building is done."

Several of the abortion opponents yelled at Dr. Cheryl Hamlin as she arrived. Hamlin is an OB-GYN who has traveled from Boston the past five years to do abortions in Mississippi. She strode across the clinic parking lot and jabbed her finger at abortion protester John Busby, who called on her to repent.

"You're idiots," Hamlin said. "You don't care. You're going to hell. You. You are going to burn in hell. I'm so sick of you."

As Hamlin walked away, Busby called after her: "You're going to die in your sin, Cheryl, unless you repent for Jesus Christ."

Also Thursday, North Dakota's sole abortion clinic filed a state lawsuit seeking to block a trigger law banning abortion following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, the landmark 1973 ruling.

The Red River Women's Clinic argues the ban violates the rights to life, safety and happiness guaranteed by the state constitution that protect the right to abortion. It said the ban also infringes on the right to liberty because it "deprives patients of the ability to control decisions about their families and their health."

The North Dakota lawsuit is just the latest litigation to take aim at restrictions on abortions after the Supreme Court said the procedure was no longer protected by the U.S. Constitution.

The suit also questions Attorney General Drew Wrigley's statement that the ban would take effect July 28. The clinic argued that the Supreme Court released its opinion June 24 but has not yet issued its judgment, which it said is a necessary step to trigger the state ban. The clinic said the high court typically takes that step at least 25 days after the opinion.

In certifying the closure date, Wrigley said "there's not any ambiguity" in the Supreme Court decision. He said Thursday that his office is "carefully reviewing and evaluating" the complaint, but that he would not comment further until his response is filed.

Tammi Kromenaker, owner and operator of the Red River Women's Clinic in Fargo, has said the facility

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would move across the river to Moorhead, Minnesota, if necessary but she would explore every legal option to remain open in North Dakota.

"We have faced relentless attacks from North Dakota lawmakers who have long wanted us gone," Kromenaker said in announcing the lawsuit. "But we will fight this draconian ban like the other outrageous bans and restrictions that came before it."

"In the meantime, we will keep our doors open to provide abortion care to patients who need us," she said.

Also Thursday, national leaders advocating for abortion access were in South Carolina Thursday, when a committee considering a bill "to prohibit abortions" met for the first time to hear public testimony.

While a South Carolina law banning abortion around six weeks of pregnancy took effect on June 27, lawmakers are expected to return for a special session to further restrict the procedure.

Planned Parenthood Action Fund President Alexis McGill Johnson came to the statehouse one day after an appearance in North Carolina, where Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper signed an executive order protecting out-of-state abortion patients from extradition. She praised North Carolina as an abortion "refuge" and condemned South Carolina lawmakers' efforts.

"All of these laws are designed to create chaos and confusion for people seeking access to care," Planned Parenthood Action Fund President Alexis McGill Johnson told The Associated Press.

## Huge underground search for mysterious dark matter begins

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

LEAD, S.D. (AP) — In a former gold mine a mile underground, inside a titanium tank filled with a rare liquified gas, scientists have begun the search for what so far has been unfindable: dark matter.

Scientists are pretty sure the invisible stuff makes up most of the universe's mass and say we wouldn't be here without it — but they don't know what it is. The race to solve this enormous mystery has brought one team to the depths under Lead, South Dakota.

The question for scientists is basic, says Kevin Lesko, a physicist at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. "What is this great place I live in? Right now, 95% of it is a mystery."

The idea is that a mile of dirt and rock, a giant tank, a second tank and the purest titanium in the world will block nearly all the cosmic rays and particles that zip around — and through — all of us every day. But dark matter particles, scientists think, can avoid all those obstacles. They hope one will fly into the vat of liquid xenon in the inner tank and smash into a xenon nucleus like two balls in a game of pool, revealing its existence in a flash of light seen by a device called "the time projection chamber."

Scientists announced Thursday that the five-year, \$60 million search finally got underway two months ago after a delay caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. So far the device has found ... nothing. At least no dark matter.

That's OK, they say. The equipment appears to be working to filter out most of the background radiation they hoped to block. "To search for this very rare type of interaction, job number one is to first get rid of all of the ordinary sources of radiation, which would overwhelm the experiment," said University of Maryland physicist Carter Hall.

And if all their calculations and theories are right, they figure they'll see only a couple fleeting signs of dark matter a year. The team of 250 scientists estimates they'll get 20 times more data over the next couple of years.

By the time the experiment finishes, the chance of finding dark matter with this device is "probably less than 50% but more than 10%," said Hugh Lippincott, a physicist and spokesman for the experiment in a Thursday news conference.

While that's far from a sure thing, "you need a little enthusiasm," Lawrence Berkeley's Lesko said. "You don't go into rare search physics without some hope of finding something."

Two hulking Depression-era hoists run an elevator that brings scientists to what's called the LUX-ZEPLIN experiment in the Sanford Underground Research Facility. A 10-minute descent ends in a tunnel with

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cool-to-the-touch walls lined with netting. But the old, musty mine soon leads to a high-tech lab where dirt and contamination is the enemy. Helmets are exchanged for new cleaner ones and a double layer of baby blue booties go over steel-toed safety boots.

The heart of the experiment is the giant tank called the cryostat, lead engineer Jeff Cherwinka said in a December 2019 tour before the device was closed and filled. He described it as "like a thermos" made of "perhaps the purest titanium in the world" designed to keep the liquid xenon cold and keep background radiation at a minimum.

Xenon is special, explained experiment physics coordinator Aaron Manalaysay, because it allows researchers to see if a collision is with one of its electrons or with its nucleus. If something hits the nucleus, it is more likely to be the dark matter that everyone is looking for, he said.

These scientists tried a similar, smaller experiment here years ago. After coming up empty, they figured they had to go much bigger. Another large-scale experiment is underway in Italy run by a rival team, but no results have been announced so far.

The scientists are trying to understand why the universe is not what it seems.

One part of the mystery is dark matter, which has by far most of the mass in the cosmos. Astronomers know it's there because when they measure the stars and other regular matter in galaxies, they find that there is not nearly enough gravity to hold these clusters together. If nothing else was out there, galaxies would be "quickly flying apart," Manalaysay said.

"It is essentially impossible to understand our observation of history, of the evolutionary cosmos without dark matter," Manalaysay said.

Lippincott, a University of California, Santa Barbara, physicist, said "we would not be here without dark matter."

So while there's little doubt that dark matter exists, there's lots of doubt about what it is. The leading theory is that it involves things called WIMPs — weakly interacting massive particles.

If that's the case, LUX-ZEPLIN could be able to detect them. We want to find "where the wimps can be hiding," Lippincott said.

## Democrat Smith announces fellow House member as running mate

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Democratic lawmaker Jamie Smith, who is trying to unseat Gov. Kristi Noem in the November election, announced Thursday that he has selected fellow House member Jennifer Keintz for his running mate as lieutenant governor.

Smith made the announcement ahead of the Democratic Party's state convention, which starts Friday. The party convention will select the nominee for lieutenant governor, but no one else has announced their candidacy.

Keintz has held a seat in the House for one term, representing a mostly rural district in the northeast corner of South Dakota. She is also a real estate broker.

In a statement, Smith pointed to her experience advising home builders as well as serving on a county economic development board and the board of a nursing home.

"As Lieutenant Governor, Jennifer's experience will be vital as we advocate for the preservation and growth of rural South Dakota," he said.

Noem's campaign reacted to the announcement by issuing a statement from Lt. Gov. Larry Rhoden that said the pair of Democrats would bring liberal policies to the Republican-controlled state.

## Escaped North Dakota inmate arrested in South Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A man who escaped from a minimum-security lockup in Bismarck has been arrested in South Dakota.

David Corn, 35, was arrested by the Aberdeen Police Department on Wednesday night, the Bismarck Tribune reported.

An Aberdeen woman authorities say helped him flee from the Missouri River Correctional Center south



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of Bismarck was arrested earlier Wednesday.

The 35-year-old woman picked up Corn at the center Tuesday morning, according to North Dakota Highway Patrol documents. She is facing charges of felony conspiracy to commit escape and accomplice to escape, court records show.

Corn pleaded guilty in April to fleeing police, drug possession with intent to deliver, and unauthorized use of a vehicle. The charges were filed in Dickey County in November 2021.

A judge sentenced him to three years in prison and three years on probation, court records show. He'd been at the Bismarck correctional facility since May 26.

## Utilities: Grid work needed to meet electric vehicle demand

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Record-high gas prices have stoked interest in electric vehicles. But Black Hills power providers say improvements are needed in the electric grid to keep pace with anticipated sales.

The Biden administration has set an ambitious target to make half of all new vehicles sold in 2030 zero-emissions electric vehicles.

While that's the goal, electric utility providers say the state is not ready for that.

West River Electric Co-op spokesman Robert Raker says utilities are not producing enough electricity to meet the Biden administration's goal.

"We can't stop it. That's what people are wanting. So, we need to make sure that when these EVs come in, they start charging at night. So, what West River Electric has done is developed a rate that incentivizes charging at night," Raker said.

Raker said West River Electric charges a flat fee of \$30 a month to charge an electric vehicle at night when the demand for electricity is minimal, South Dakota Public Broadcasting reported.

The federal Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act has funding to build a national network of electric vehicle fast-charging stations.

The South Dakota Department of Transportation is looking for feedback on how and where to build a charging network in the state.

"So what we're trying to get our arms wrapped around is how could this look in South Dakota? I think we're seeing maybe a little bit of a shift in the consumer market," said Mike Behm, DOT's director of planning and engineering.

The department also wants input on how to fund the state's roads in an increasingly electric future since most of the current funding comes from gas and diesel taxes.

## Japan ex-leader Shinzo Abe assassinated while giving speech

By MARI YAMAGUCHI, CHISATO TANAKA and FOSTER KLUG Associated Press

NARA, Japan (AP) — Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, a divisive arch-conservative and one of his nation's most powerful and influential figures, has died after being shot during a campaign speech Friday in western Japan, hospital officials said.

Abe, 67, was shot from behind minutes after he started his speech in Nara. He was airlifted to a hospital for emergency treatment but was not breathing and his heart had stopped. He was later pronounced dead despite emergency treatment that included massive blood transfusions, hospital officials said.

Police arrested the suspected gunman at the scene of an attack that shocked many in Japan, which is one of the world's safest nations and has some of the strictest gun control laws anywhere.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and his Cabinet ministers hastily returned to Tokyo from campaign events around the country after the shooting, which he called "dastardly and barbaric." He pledged to carry out Sunday's parliamentary elections as planned.

Nara Medical University emergency department chief Hidetada Fukushima said Abe suffered major damage to his heart in addition to two neck wounds that damaged an artery, causing extensive bleeding. He was in a state of cardio and pulmonary arrest when he arrived at the hospital and never regained his vital signs, Fukushima said.

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Abe was Japan's longest-serving leader before stepping down in 2020.

Public television NHK aired a dramatic video of Abe giving a speech outside a train station in the western city of Nara. He is standing, dressed in a navy blue suit, raising his fist, when two gunshots are heard. The video then shows Abe collapsed on the street, with security guards running toward him. He holds his chest, his shirt smeared with blood.

In the next moment, security guards leap on top of a man in gray shirt who lies face down on the pavement. A double-barreled device that appeared to be a handmade gun is seen on the ground.

Nara prefectural police confirmed the arrest of Tetsuya Yamagami, 41, on suspicion of attempted murder. They said an explosives team raided the suspect's home to gather evidence. NHK reported that the suspect served in Japan's navy for three years in the 2000s and that he said he wanted to kill Abe because he had complaints that were not related to political views.

Other videos from the scene showed campaign officials surrounding Abe. The former leader was still highly influential in the governing Liberal Democratic Party and headed its largest faction, Seiwakai. Elections for Japan's upper house, the less powerful chamber of its parliament, are Sunday.

"I use the harshest words to condemn (the act)," Kishida said as he struggled to control his emotions. He said the government planned to review the security situation, but added that Abe had the highest protection.

Opposition leaders condemned the attack as a challenge to Japan's democracy. In Tokyo, people stopped on the street to grab extra editions of newspapers or watch TV coverage of the shooting.

When he resigned as prime minister, Abe said he had a recurrence of the ulcerative colitis he'd had since he was a teenager.

He told reporters at the time that it was "gut wrenching" to leave many of his goals unfinished. He spoke of his failure to resolve the issue of Japanese abducted years ago by North Korea, a territorial dispute with Russia and a revision of Japan's war-renouncing constitution.

That last goal was a big reason he was such a divisive figure.

His ultra-nationalism riled the Koreans and China, and his push to create what he saw as a more normal defense posture angered many Japanese. Abe failed to achieve his cherished goal of formally rewriting the U.S.-drafted pacifist constitution because of poor public support.

Loyalists said that his legacy was a stronger U.S.-Japan relationship that was meant to bolster Japan's defense capability. But Abe made enemies by forcing his defense goals and other contentious issues through parliament, despite strong public opposition.

Abe was a political blue blood who was groomed to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi. His political rhetoric often focused on making Japan a "normal" and "beautiful" nation with a stronger military and bigger role in international affairs.

Many foreign officials expressed shock over the shooting.

Abe said he was proud of working while leader for a stronger Japan-U.S. security alliance and shepherding the first visit by a serving U.S. president to the atom-bombed city of Hiroshima. He also helped Tokyo gain the right to host the 2020 Olympics by pledging that a disaster at the Fukushima nuclear plant was "under control" when it was not.

Abe became Japan's youngest prime minister in 2006, at age 52, but his overly nationalistic first stint abruptly ended a year later, also because of his health.

The end of Abe's scandal-laden first stint as prime minister was the beginning of six years of annual leadership change, remembered as an era of "revolving door" politics that lacked stability and long-term policies.

When he returned to office in 2012, Abe vowed to revitalize the nation and get its economy out of its deflationary doldrums with his "Abenomics" formula, which combines fiscal stimulus, monetary easing and structural reforms.

He won six national elections and built a rock-solid grip on power, bolstering Japan's defense role and capability and its security alliance with the U.S. He also stepped up patriotic education at schools and

raised Japan's international profile.

## **Facing pressure, Biden to sign order on abortion access**

By SEUNG MIN KIM and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden will take executive action Friday to protect access to abortion, the White House said, as he faces mounting pressure from fellow Democrats to be more forceful on the subject after the Supreme Court ended a constitutional right to the procedure two weeks ago.

The White House said Biden will speak Friday morning "on protecting access to reproductive health care services." The actions he was expected to outline are intended to try to mitigate some potential penalties women seeking abortion may face after the ruling but are limited in their ability to safeguard access to abortion nationwide.

Biden is expected to formalize instructions to the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services to push back on efforts to limit the ability of women to access federally approved abortion medication or to travel across state lines to access clinical abortion services.

Biden's executive order will also direct agencies to work to educate medical providers and insurers about how and when they are required to share privileged patient information with authorities — an effort to protect women who seek or utilize abortion services. He will also ask the Federal Trade Commission to take steps to protect the privacy of those seeking information about reproductive care online and establish an interagency task force to coordinate federal efforts to safeguard access to abortion.

The White House said it will also convene volunteer lawyers to provide women and providers with pro bono legal assistance to help them navigate new state restrictions after the Supreme Court ruling.

The order, after the high court's June 24 ruling that ended the nationwide right to abortion and left it to states to determine whether or how to allow the procedure, comes as Biden has faced criticism from some in his own party for not acting with more urgency to protect women's access to abortion. The decision in the case known as *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* overturned the court's landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling.

Since the decision, Biden has stressed that his ability to protect abortion rights by executive action is limited without congressional action.

"Ultimately, Congress is going to have to act to codify *Roe* into federal law," Biden said last week during a virtual meeting with Democratic governors.

The tasking to the Justice Department and HHS is expected to push the agencies to fight in court to protect women, but it conveys no guarantees that the judicial system will take their side against potential prosecution by states that have moved to outlaw abortion.

"President Biden has made clear that the only way to secure a woman's right to choose is for Congress to restore the protections of *Roe* as federal law," the White House said. "Until then, he has committed to doing everything in his power to defend reproductive rights and protect access to safe and legal abortion."

## **Assassination of Japan's Shinzo Abe stuns world leaders**

By EILEEN NG Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Friday's shocking assassination of Japan's former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in one of the world's safest countries stunned leaders and drew condemnation, with Iran calling it an "act of terrorism" while Spain slammed the "cowardly attack."

Abe, 67, was shot from behind in Nara in western Japan while giving a campaign speech. He was airlifted to a hospital but was not breathing and his heart had stopped. He was pronounced dead later at the hospital. Abe was Japan's longest-serving leader before stepping down in 2020 for health reasons.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who hastily returned to Tokyo from campaign events around the country, called the shooting "dastardly and barbaric."

Leaders from Turkey to Singapore condemned the attack, and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson called the shooting "despicable."

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"His global leadership through unchartered times will be remembered by many. My thoughts are with his family, friends and the Japanese people. The UK stands with you at this dark and sad time," Johnson tweeted.

Iran condemned the shooting as "an act of terrorism."

"As a country that has been a victim of terrorism and has lost great leaders to terrorists, we are following the news closely and with concern," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

People in Japan could be seen reading extra editions of the Friday paper with Abe's picture large on the front page, or stopping to watch the news on TV.

NHK public broadcaster aired dramatic footage of Abe giving a speech outside of a train station in the western city of Nara. He is standing, dressed in a navy blue suit, raising his fist, when two gunshots are heard. Footage then shows Abe collapsed on the street.

"We are shocked and saddened to hear about the violent attack against former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe," the White House said in a statement shortly afterward.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern earlier expressed her shock about the shooting. She said Abe was one of the first leaders she met after taking office and described him as deeply committed to his role, generous and kind.

"I recall him asking after the recent loss of our pet when I met him, a small gesture but one that speaks to the kind of person he is," Ardern said. "Events like this shake us all to the core."

In the NHK video, security guards are seen leaping on top of a man in a gray shirt who lies face down on the pavement. A double-barreled device that appeared to be a handmade gun is seen on the ground.

Police have arrested a suspected gunman at the scene. Under Japanese law, possession of firearms, as well as certain kinds of knives and other weapons, like bowguns, is illegal without a special license. Importing them is also illegal.

French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted that he was "deeply shocked by the odious attack" on Abe. He paid tribute to Abe as "a great prime minister" and said "France stands at the side of the Japanese people."

Many gave their condolences and expressed solidarity with Japan, and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced Saturday as a one-day national mourning as a mark of the deepest respect for Abe.

"Mr. Abe made an immense contribution to elevating India-Japan relations to the level of a special strategic and global partnership. Today, whole India mourns with Japan and we stand in solidarity with our Japanese brothers and sisters in this difficult moment," Modi said.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez sent his best wishes to Abe's family. "Spain stands together with the people of Japan in these difficult times," he tweeted.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Abe was one of Australia's closest friends and a "giant on the world stage," adding that "his legacy was one of global impact, and a profound and positive one for Australia. He will be greatly missed."

Italian Premier Mario Draghi offered his profound condolences and said Italy was embracing Abe's family, the government and the Japanese people.

"Italy is distraught over the terrible attack against Japan and its free, democratic debate. Abe was a great protagonist of Japanese and international political life in recent decades, thanks to his innovative spirit and reformist vision," Draghi said in a statement.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, who is in Bali as president of the Group of 20 nations' foreign ministers meeting in Bali, Indonesia, lamented Abe's "untimely demise" and said he "will always be remembered as a prime example for all."

In China however, Abe's shooting triggered unfavorable comments from tens of thousands of nationalist citizens on social media.

Some quipped, "Hope he's not OK," while dozens half-jokingly called the shooter "a hero" or "anti-Japan hero." Others said Abe's injuries were a comfort to the souls of people who had died in Japan's invasion of China during World War II.

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While not necessarily the view of most Chinese, the posts reflect strong public sentiment — encouraged by government propaganda — against right-wing Japanese politicians who question or deny that the military committed atrocities in China.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian declined to comment. He said China expressed sympathies with Abe's family and that the shooting shouldn't be linked with bilateral relations.

## **Shinzo Abe, divisive, powerful former Japan PM, assassinated**

By FOSTER KLUG and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Shinzo Abe, a divisive archconservative who was Japan's longest-serving prime minister and remained a powerful and influential politician after leaving office, has died after being shot during a campaign speech Friday. He was 67.

Abe was shot just minutes after he started speaking at the political rally in Nara and was pronounced dead hours later at a hospital, medical officials said.

Police arrested the suspected gunman at the scene of the attack, which shocked many in Japan, one of the world's safest nations with some of the strictest gun control laws. Near the suspect was a double-barreled device that appeared to be a handmade gun.

Abe, a political blueblood who was groomed to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, was perhaps the most polarizing, complex politician in recent Japanese history, angering both liberals at home and World War II victims in Asia with his hawkish push to revamp the military and his revisionist view that Japan was given an unfair verdict by history for its brutal past.

At the same time, he revitalized Japan's economy, led efforts for the nation to take a stronger role in Asia and served as a rare beacon of political stability before stepping down two years ago for health reasons.

"He's the most towering political figure in Japan over the past couple of decades," said Dave Leheny, a political scientist at Waseda University. "He wanted Japan to be respected on the global stage in the way that he felt was deserved. ... He also wanted Japan to not have to keep apologizing for World War II."

Japan had "a postwar track record of economic success, peace and global cooperation that he felt other countries should pay more attention to, and that Japanese should be proud of," Leheny said.

Public broadcaster NHK aired a dramatic video of Abe as he gave a speech outside a train station in the western city of Nara. He was standing, dressed in a navy blue suit, raising his fist, when two gun shots rang out.

Security guards were shown tackling a man in a gray shirt who lay face down on the pavement. After Abe collapsed, he held his chest, his shirt smeared with blood.

Nara prefectural police confirmed the arrest of a suspect and identified him as Tetsuya Yamagami, 41. NHK reported that he served in Japan's navy for three years in the 2000s.

Abe was a darling of conservatives but reviled by many liberals in Japan. And no policy was more divisive than his cherished, ultimately unsuccessful dream to revise Japan's war-renouncing constitution. His ultra-nationalism also angered the Koreans and China, both wartime victims of Japan.

That push for constitutional revision stemmed from his personal history. Abe's grandfather, former leader Kishi, despised the U.S.-drafted constitution, adopted during the American postwar occupation. For Abe, too, the 1947 charter was symbolic of what he saw as the unfair legacy of Japan's war defeat and an imposition of the victors' world order and Western values.

That constitution renounces the use of force in international conflicts, and limits Japan's military to self defense, although the country has a well-equipped modern army, navy and air force that work closely with the United States, Japan's top ally.

Poor public support for the changes doomed Abe's push, but the goal still enjoys backing from his ultra-conservative supporters.

Abe bristled against postwar treaties and the tribunal that judged Japanese war criminals. His political rhetoric often focused on making Japan a "normal" and "beautiful" nation with a stronger military and bigger role in international affairs.

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He also was a driving force for Japanese conservatives' efforts to whitewash wartime atrocities and push for an end of apologies over atrocities.

Supporters point to his efforts to raise Japan's profile on the international stage, and his proposal for a new order of like-minded democracies as a counter to China's rise, something Washington and others soon endorsed.

Abe was also a big influence on current Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's policies, pushing for the bolstering of military capability, including a preemptive-strike capability.

Abe stepped down as prime minister in 2020 because he said the ulcerative colitis he'd had since he was a teenager resurfaced.

He told reporters at the time that it was "gut wrenching" to leave many of his goals unachieved. In addition to the failure on constitutional revision, he was also unable to settle several other unfinished legacies of the war, including normalizing ties with North Korea, settling island disputes with neighbors and signing a peace treaty with Russia formally ending their hostilities in World War II.

Abe was praised in Washington for his push for a stronger U.S.-Japan relationship, which he saw as a means of bolstering Japan's defense capability. Japan hosts 50,000 U.S. troops as a bulwark in the region amid tensions with China and North Korea.

Abe charmed conservatives with his security policies because of fears of terrorism, North Korea's missile and nuclear weapons ambitions and China's military assertiveness.

But there has always been general public support for the pacifist constitution and divided views on amendments within Abe's governing party. Many lawmakers preferred to focus on economic growth.

Abe said he was proud of working for a stronger Japan-U.S. security alliance and shepherding the first visit by a serving U.S. president to the atom-bombed city of Hiroshima. He also helped Tokyo gain the right to host the 2020 Olympics by pledging that a disaster at the Fukushima nuclear plant was "under control" when it was not.

Abe became Japan's youngest prime minister in 2006, at age 52, but his overly nationalistic first stint abruptly ended a year later, also because of his health.

The end of that scandal-laden term was the beginning of six years of annual Japanese leadership change, remembered as an era of "revolving door" politics that lacked stability and long-term policies.

When he returned to office in 2012, Abe vowed to revitalize the nation and get its economy out of its deflationary doldrums with his "Abenomics" formula, which combined fiscal stimulus, monetary easing and structural reforms.

He won six national elections and built a rock-solid grip on power, bolstering Japan's defense role and its security alliance with the U.S. He also stepped up patriotic education at schools and raised Japan's international profile.

Abe left office as Japan's longest-serving prime minister by consecutive days in office, eclipsing the record of Eisaku Sato, his great-uncle, who served 2,798 days from 1964 to 1972.

## UK leader hopefuls jostle as Johnson digs in for final weeks

By JILL LAWLESS and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A field of candidates to replace departing Prime Minister Boris Johnson began to take shape Friday, even as some Conservative Party lawmakers pushed to get the scandal-tarnished leader out of office before his replacement is elected in the next couple of months.

Johnson announced his resignation on Thursday — a dizzying about-face after months spent insisting he would stay in his job amid mounting ethics scandals and growing Conservative discontent.

He quit as party leader with a statement to the nation outside 10 Downing St., but said he would stay in post as prime minister until his successor is chosen by the party. That decision didn't sit well with some of his Conservative colleagues, who worry Johnson lacks the authority to hang on, or could do mischief even as a caretaker prime minister.

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James Cleverly, appointed as education secretary on Thursday after his predecessor quit during a mass exodus of ministers, defended Johnson's decision to stay.

"It's right that he has stood down and it's right that he has put a team in place to continue governing whilst the selection procedure flows for his successor," Cleverly told Sky News. "And we should do that I think pretty quickly, pretty promptly."

Party officials are due to set out the timetable for a leadership contest on Monday, with the aim of having a winner by the end of the summer. The two-step process involves Tory lawmakers voting to reduce the field of candidates to two, who will go to a ballot of all party members across the country.

Lawmaker Tom Tugendhat, who chairs the House of Commons' influential Foreign Affairs Committee, became the second candidate to declare he is running, after Attorney General Suella Braverman. Former Health Secretary Sajid Javid and ex-Treasury chief Rishi Sunak — whose resignations this week helped topple Johnson — are also likely contenders, along with Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, Defense Secretary Ben Wallace and Transport Secretary Grant Shapps.

Even as contenders launch their campaigns, Johnson remains in office atop a caretaker administration formed from a dwindling band of loyalists alongside ministers who have agreed to stay in office to keep government running.

Johnson has promised not to make any major policy decisions in his remaining time, but many Conservatives say a lame-duck leader is the last thing the country needs amid Russia's war in Ukraine and a worsening cost-of-living crisis triggered by soaring food and energy prices.

Some also are wary of Johnson's intentions after a resignation speech in which he made clear he didn't want to leave, but had failed "to persuade my colleagues that it would be eccentric to change governments when we're delivering so much and when we have such a vast mandate."

George Freeman, who quit as science minister on Thursday, said he worried about a leadership election being held in "a febrile moment of midsummer madness, where we choose the wrong person in a hurry because of the instability."

Some had pushed for Johnson to give way and let Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab step in as temporary leader. But lawmaker Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, treasurer of the Conservative committee that runs party leadership contests, said "that ship has sailed."

"We must now live with the fact that Boris Johnson will be prime minister until a successor can be voted on," he said.

The main opposition Labour Party said that was unacceptable and vowed to call for a no-confidence vote in Johnson in the House of Commons next week, though prospects of its success were uncertain.

"He's a proven liar who's engulfed in sleaze and we can't have another couple of months of this, you know," Labour deputy leader Angela Rayner said. "So they do have to get rid of him, and if they don't, we will call a no-confidence vote because it's pretty clear — he hasn't got the confidence of the House or the British public."

The brash, 58-year-old politician who took Britain out of the European Union and has been at the helm through COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, has repeatedly defied the odds during a rollercoaster political career.

In recent months he managed to remain in power despite accusations 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 COVID-19 lockdown rules.

He was fined by police for attending one of the parties — the first prime minister ever sanctioned for breaking the law in office — but went on to survive a no-confidence vote last month in Parliament, though 41% of Conservative lawmakers tried to oust him.

He was brought down by one scandal too many — this one involving his appointment of a politician who had been accused of sexual misconduct.

Johnson faced days of questions, and gave days of conflicting answers, over what he knew about past allegations against Chris Pincher, a Conservative lawmaker who resigned as party deputy chief whip last week after allegedly groping two men at a private club. Pincher acknowledged he had got drunk and

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“embarrassed myself.”

Johnson offered shifting explanations about what he knew and when he knew it. That just brought concerns the prime minister couldn't be trusted to boiling point.

Javid and Sunak, key Cabinet members who were responsible, respectively, for fighting COVID-19 and inflation, resigned within minutes of each other Tuesday, setting off a wave of departures by their colleagues.

Johnson clung to power for days, defiantly telling lawmakers on Wednesday that he had a “colossal mandate” from the voters and intended to get on with the business of governing.

His resignation the next day was a humiliating defeat for a politician whose jokey bluster brought a celebrity status unmatched in British politics — but who was accused of behaving as if the rules didn't apply to him. The party acted once it decided that a leader with a rare ability to connect with voters had turned into a liability.

Conservative supporter Ernest William Lee said he “heaved a great sigh of relief” when Johnson announced he would leave.

“I'm sorry this country has got into this state,” Lee said. “It's a mess and it needs someone very strong — male or female, I don't care — to run it, run it properly and get it back on its feet.

“I hate being the laughing stock of Europe.”

## **Blatter and Platini acquitted on charges of defrauding FIFA**

By DANIELLA MATAR AP Sports Writer

BELLINZONA, Switzerland (AP) — Sepp Blatter and Michel Platini were acquitted on charges of defrauding FIFA by a Swiss criminal court on Friday, a rare positive outcome for the pair who were among soccer's most powerful figures before being embroiled in corruption investigations.

The case was centered around a \$2 million payment from FIFA to Platini with Blatter's approval in 2011, for work done a decade earlier. The verdict followed an 11-day trial last month at the Federal Criminal Court of Switzerland in Bellinzona.

“Following the decision of the judges of the Court of Bellinzona, this morning, I wanted to express my happiness for all my loved ones that justice has finally been done after seven years of lies and manipulation,” Platini said in a statement. “The truth has come to light during this trial.”

“I kept saying it: my fight is a fight against injustice. I won a first game. In this case, there are culprits who did not appear during this trial. Let them count on me, we will meet again. Because I will not give up and I will go all the way in my quest for truth.”

Swiss prosecutor Thomas Hildbrand had requested a 20-month suspended sentence for both Blatter and Platini.

Blatter announced his plan in June 2015 to resign early as president, in the fallout from a sprawling American corruption investigation. Less than four months later, a separate but cooperating case by Swiss prosecutors led to the Platini payment being investigated.

The fallout removed Blatter from office but also ended Platini's campaign to succeed his former mentor and saw the French soccer great removed as president of UEFA, the governing body of European soccer.

“Believe me, going from being a legend of world soccer to a devil is very difficult, especially when it comes to you in a totally unfair way,” Platini added.

Both Blatter and Platini have long denied wrongdoing and claim they had a verbal deal in 1998 for Platini to get extra salary that FIFA could not pay at the time. Platini signed a contract in August 1999 to be paid 300,000 Swiss francs (\$300,000) annually.

That defense first failed with judges at the FIFA ethics committee, which banned them from soccer, and later in separate appeals at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Platini finally got a legal victory in the first criminal case after losses in five civil courts, including at the European Court of Human Rights.

His ban by FIFA for unethical conduct expired in October 2021 and Friday's verdict should clear the way for Platini to return to work in soccer.



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Platini did not identify current FIFA president Gianni Infantino though it seemed clear he was one of the "culprits" referred to.

Infantino was the UEFA general secretary for six years under Platini and won the FIFA presidency in a February 2016 election as an emergency candidate after his boss was implicated in the criminal investigation. Platini has long claimed to be victim of a conspiracy to deny him the FIFA top job and filed a criminal complaint against Infantino and others in France last year.

Infantino faces re-election next March and Platini could yet try to challenge for a job he often described as a destiny for him.

Infantino faces his own legal jeopardy in a separate investigation by Swiss special prosecutors of his undisclosed meetings about the FIFA cases in 2016 and 2017 with former attorney general Michael Lauber.

Now aged 86 and seeming frail at court, Blatter was banned by FIFA ethics judges again last year into 2028 for alleged self-dealing in management bonuses.

He is also a suspect in a separate Swiss criminal proceedings — also led by prosecutor Hildbrand — probing \$1 million paid by FIFA in 2010 to the Trinidad and Tobago soccer federation controlled then by now-disgraced soccer official Jack Warner.

Blatter made a financial gain from the Swiss court Friday. He was awarded 20,000 Swiss francs (\$20,500) compensation for being morally wronged, the court said.

## 'Dad, that's it. She's dead': Another day of loss in Ukraine

By CARA ANNA and MSTYSLAV CHERNOV Associated Press

KHARKIV, Ukraine (AP) — She had gone out to feed the cats when the shelling began.

It was afternoon, a residential neighborhood, a time to get errands done. But there is nothing routine about life near the front line in Ukraine.

Kharkiv, the country's second-largest city and a short drive from the Russian border, lives with the low thunder of distant artillery and the sickening booms of shells exploding much closer to home.

Natalia Kolesnik, like other residents, learned to live with the risks. Then, in a grassy courtyard on a hot and sweaty Thursday, the shelling caught her.

She was one of three bodies on the littered ground.

One body appeared unrecognizable. A second, with a torn yellow dress and a blue slipper blown off, lay beside a splintered wooden bench. Next to it, there was a box of half-eaten fruit, cherries and apples, speckled with blood.

Inside a purse left on the bench, a mobile phone rang.

Kolesnik was nearby.

Her husband, Viktor, arrived in shock. He didn't want to let her go. He stroked her head.

"Dad, that's it," his son Olexander said, watching as first responders waited to close the body bag. "She is dead. Get up."

"Don't you understand?" his father asked.

"What don't I understand?" the son said. "This is my mother. Dad, please. Dad, please."

Kneeling, Viktor embraced what was left of his wife, one arm cradling her shoulder, his stubbled chin pressed against the grit on her face.

He picked up her left hand and placed it again, covering it with his own.

The pleading continued. Viktor again shoved his son's hand away.

"Dad, go."

"I can't go."

"Look, you are covered with blood. People need to carry her away."

Viktor began to close the body bag himself, then the first responders took over.

As neighbors watched from the edge of a field, and as authorities began their now-routine hunt for shrapnel, Viktor was left alone on a bench to cry.

"Why were these people killed? Terrible. I'm sick of it," neighbor Sergey Pershin said. "Every night we

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wake up 10 times and wait when they start shooting. What are these bastards doing? There are residential buildings here. Why are they shooting here? There is nothing here.”

It was just one day in Kharkiv, where hundreds have died in 19 weeks of war. As Russia reassembles its troops to try to capture more territory in eastern Ukraine, it is safe to say more dead are to come.

As of Sunday, the United Nations human rights office had verified at least 4,889 civilians killed across Ukraine since Russia's invasion, a number it said likely represented a vast undercount.

## Asian markets follow Wall St higher as recession fears ease

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Asian stock markets followed Wall Street higher Friday after two Federal Reserve officials said the U.S. economy might avoid a recession and a news report said China might boost construction spending to stimulate its struggling economy.

Tokyo's main stock market index gave up some of its gains following the shooting of a former Japanese prime minister, Shinzo Abe, but stayed in positive territory for the day.

Shanghai, Hong Kong and Sydney also advanced. Oil prices declined but stayed above \$100 per barrel.

Wall Street's benchmark S&P 500 index rose 1.5% on Thursday after a member of the Fed panel that sets interest rates, James Bullard, said a "soft landing" for the economy was the most likely scenario. Another panel member, Christopher Waller, said "fears of a recession are overblown."

"Investor recession fears ebbed," said Robert Carnell and Iris Pang of ING in a report.

The Nikkei 225 in Tokyo was up 0.6% at 26,654.15 at midday after a gunman shot Abe during a campaign event in the western Japanese city of Nara. The index was up 1.4% before the attack.

Abe, who oversaw an economic stimulus effort dubbed Abenomics, stepped down as prime minister in 2020.

The Shanghai Composite Index advanced 0.2% to 3,370.28 after Bloomberg News reported China might add 1.5 trillion yuan (\$220 billion) to spending on public works construction this year to stimulate economic growth. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong added 0.2% to 21,694.17.

The Kospi in Seoul rose 0.9% to 2,346.14 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 was 0.6% higher at 6,689.30.

India's Sensex opened up 0.5% at 54,462.63. New Zealand and Southeast Asian markets advanced.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 rose to 3,902.62 for its fourth daily increase. Roughly three-fourths of the stocks in the index gained.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 1.1% to 31,384 and the Nasdaq composite advanced 2.3% to 11,621.35.

Investors are uneasy that aggressive U.S. and European interest rate hikes to cool inflation that is running at a four-decade high might derail global economic growth.

Bullard, who is president of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, said "it would make a lot of sense" to raise the U.S. central bank's key interest rate by three-quarters of a percentage point, or triple the usual margin, at its meeting this month. That would repeat the dramatic mid-June rate hike, the Fed's biggest in 28 years.

Waller, speaking at a separate event, said he also supported a 0.75-percentage-point hike. He said the Fed might risk "causing some economic damage," but with a strong labor market, that shouldn't be too big.

The U.S. government is due to report June employment data.

On Thursday, official data showed the number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits topped the 230,000 mark for the fifth consecutive week. It was the highest level in almost six months.

Bloomberg News reported China's Ministry of Finance was considering a plan to allow local governments to raise money from bond sales to spend on building roads and other public works.

It wasn't clear whether that represented additional spending or was future bond sales brought forward to help shore up economic growth some forecasters say fell close to zero in the quarter ending in June after anti-virus controls shut down Shanghai and other industrial centers.

Markets also have been on edge about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which sent oil and other commodity

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prices soaring.

European markets gained Thursday after British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced his resignation following a series of departures from his Cabinet by members of his Conservative Party.

In energy markets, benchmark U.S. crude rose 29 cents to \$103.02 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract jumped \$4.20 to \$102.73 on Thursday. Brent crude, the price basis for international trading, gained 78 cents to \$105.43 per barrel in London. It advanced \$3.96 the previous session to \$104.65.

The dollar declined to 135.55 yen from Thursday's 136.11 yen. The euro edged down to \$1.0150 from \$1.0156.

## Muslim pilgrims pray at Mount Arafat as hajj reaches apex

By AMR NABIL Associated Press

MOUNT ARAFAT, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of Muslim pilgrims from around the world raised their hands to heaven and offered prayers of repentance on the sacred hill of Mount Arafat in Saudi Arabia on Friday, an intense day of worship considered to be the climax of the annual hajj.

Multitudes stood shoulder to shoulder, feet to feet, for the emotional day of supplication in the desert valley where Muslims believe the Prophet Muhammad delivered his final sermon, calling for equality and unity among Muslims.

The experience sent many pilgrims to tears. Muslims believe prayer on this day at Mount Arafat, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) east of the holy city of Mecca, is their best chance at salvation and spiritual renewal. The pilgrims set out for Arafat before dawn, chanting as they trekked. They remain there until nightfall in deep contemplation and worship.

"I feel I am so close to God," said Zakaria Mohammad, an Egyptian pilgrim praying as the sky brightened over the hilltop. "He gave me such joy. This is my feeling now — joy, great joy."

Men wore unstitched sheets of white cloth resembling a shroud, while women wore conservative dress and headscarves, their faces exposed.

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.

"God brought me here," said Khadije Isaac, who traveled to Mount Arafat from Nigeria, her voice clipped with emotion. "I cannot describe the happiness that I have."

Strict pandemic limits had upended the event for the past two years, effectively canceling one of the world's biggest and most diverse gatherings and devastating many pious Muslims who had waited a lifetime to make the journey. This year's pilgrimage marks the largest since the virus struck, although the attendance by 1 million worshippers remains less than half of the pre-pandemic influx.

All pilgrims selected to perform the hajj this year are under age 65 and have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Pilgrims spend five days carrying out a set of rituals associated with the Prophet Muhammad and the prophets Ibrahim and Ismail, or Abraham and Ishmael in the Bible, before him. The rituals began on Thursday with the circling of the Kaaba, the black cube in the center of Mecca's Grand Mosque, which Muslims around the world face during their daily prayers wherever they are in the world.

Around sunset on Friday, the pilgrims will march or take a bus 9 kilometers (5.5 miles) west to the rocky desert of Muzdalifa, where they comb the area for pebbles to carry out the symbolic stoning of the devil. That rite will take place on Saturday in the small village of Mina, where Muslims believe the devil tried to talk Ibrahim out of submitting to God's will.

Pilgrims stone the devil to signify overcoming temptation. The ritual is a notorious chokepoint for surging crowds. In 2016, thousands of pilgrims were crushed to death in a gruesome stampede. Saudi authorities never offered a final death toll.

In their most noticeable effort to improve access, the Saudis have built a high-speed rail link to ferry masses between holy sites. Pilgrims enter through special electronic gates. Tens of thousands of police

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officers are out in force to protect the areas and control crowds.

With so many people from so many places crammed together, public health is a major concern. Saudi Arabia's Health Ministry urged pilgrims to consider wearing masks to curb the spread of coronavirus, although the government lifted a mask mandate and other virus precautions last month.

The ministry also advised pilgrims to drink water and be aware of the signs of heat stroke in the desert, where temperatures can exceed 40 degrees Celsius (105 degrees Fahrenheit).

Once the hajj is over, men are expected to shave their heads, and women to snip a lock of hair in a sign of renewal.

Around the world, Muslims will mark the end of the pilgrimage with Eid al-Adha, or Festival of Sacrifice. The holiday commemorates the prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son Ismail at God's request. Muslims traditionally slaughter sheep and cattle, dividing the meat among the needy, friends and relatives.

## Beijing appears to retract vaccine mandate after pushback

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — The Chinese capital Beijing appears to have backed off a plan to launch a vaccine mandate for entry into certain public spaces after pushback from residents.

While not explicitly saying it had dropped the plan, a city official was quoted in state media late Thursday saying that people could enter venues with a negative virus test result and a temperature check, as has been the norm. They also said vaccinations would continue on the principle of "informed, voluntary consent."

An unidentified official in the pandemic control office said residents of the city could enter any sort of public venue with a negative PCR test done in the last 72 hours and a temperature check, according to a short question and answer post from the official Beijing Daily, the main paper of the city government, published late Thursday night.

The city announced Wednesday that starting next week, people had to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination before they can enter some public spaces including gyms, museums and libraries. It drew intense discussion as city residents worried how the sudden policy announcement would disrupt their lives.

A phone call to the Beijing government's press office to confirm the policy change did not go through. The phone had been set to "do not disturb" mode according to a recorded message.

Online and offline, some criticized the policy, worrying that it would force those who weren't vaccinated to get the shots, or lose out on access to many public spaces. The announcement was trending Thursday on the Chinese social networking service Weibo.

The government is concerned about the remaining numbers of unvaccinated people, especially those over age 60 who are vulnerable. In April, the Beijing government announced that over 80% of people over 60 had gotten a vaccine, some 3.4 million people.

## Biden to visit CIA as intelligence plays key role in Ukraine

By NOMAAN MERCHANT and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden will visit the CIA Friday at a time when his administration's support for Ukraine has pushed the work of the normally secretive intelligence agencies into the limelight.

Biden will commemorate the agency's 75th anniversary since its founding after World War II. While at the agency's headquarters in Virginia, Biden will meet with CIA officers who have worked on Ukraine to thank them for their work, according to a U.S. official who requested anonymity to discuss the plans.

Biden has established a more traditional relationship with the CIA and other agencies after former President Donald Trump repeatedly cast doubt on intelligence findings and attacked what he alleged was a "deep state" of opponents.

Still, there were tensions last year stemming from Afghanistan, with finger-pointing across the government during the fall of the American-backed government as the Taliban overran Kabul. Current and former intel-

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Intelligence officials worked frantically to evacuate Afghans who had helped the U.S. during the two-decade war.

The release of predictions that Russia would invade Ukraine in February was a public boost for spy agencies that are often criticized and facing new pressure to deliver insights on China and Russia. Biden authorized an unprecedented campaign to declassify findings about Russian President Vladimir Putin's intentions to launch a new war. It has been credited with building support for sanctions that crippled the Russian economy and the ramp-up of military support to Kyiv.

Douglas London, a former CIA officer who has criticized the agency's direction in recent years, said the war had shown the CIA was on its way to becoming "an elite spy service again."

"Its path to redemption has really been facilitated by Ukraine," said London, author of "The Recruiter: Spying and the Lost Art of American Intelligence."

But the intelligence community also underestimated Ukraine's ability to resist the Russian invasion and wrongly predicted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's government would fall within weeks.

The agencies are reviewing how they assess a foreign government's perceived "will to fight" — an issue the U.S. also badly misjudged in Afghanistan last year when it believed President Ashraf Ghani's government would hold out for months, only for Ghani to flee and the Taliban to take Kabul as the U.S. was trying to evacuate.

Sen. Angus King, a Maine independent who sits on the Senate Intelligence and Armed Services committees, said he's pushed intelligence officials to review why there were "two significant breakdowns in a year."

"The quality of the intelligence pre-invasion was excellent and absolutely world-class," King said in a recent interview. "The problem was the assessment of what would happen after the invasion."

Most of the intelligence community's work since the war began has been kept secret. U.S. officials have disclosed that they are providing Ukraine with information that Ukrainian forces have in turn used to hit high-value Russian targets, including the flagship Moskva.

The White House has tried to tamp down suggestions that the U.S. is directly helping Ukraine attack Russians out of concern that Russian President Vladimir Putin may see those suggestions as escalatory. Biden has said he wants to avoid a "third world war."

As Ukraine successfully repelled Russian forces in the first weeks of the war, and under pressure from lawmakers in Washington, the Biden administration loosened its rules on sharing intelligence and is now providing more information to the Ukrainians. It has also committed \$7 billion in weapons systems, ammunition, and other military aid since the war began in February.

But Ukrainian officials and observers say Ukraine is vastly outgunned by Russia in what's become a grinding war of attrition heavily reliant on artillery fire. Putin is believed by U.S. intelligence to have not given up on his initial aims to "neutralize" Ukraine in his eyes.

U.S. intelligence in the months ahead can be expected to have a large role in Ukraine. The U.S. is involved in shoring up the cyber defenses of Ukraine and other allies against Russia's capabilities to hack and steal from digital systems. Agencies are also on watch for election influence or interference from Russia amid expectations from top officials that Putin may use U.S. support for Ukraine as pretext to launch another campaign against an American election.

"Ultimately, the U.S. calculus is this: We want to do everything we can to support the Ukrainians while avoiding a direct conflict with the Russians," said Dale Buckner, a retired U.S. Army Green Beret who now leads the security firm Global Guardian.

## China demands end to US-Taiwan military 'collusion'

BEIJING (AP) — China has demanded the U.S. cease military "collusion" with Taiwan during a virtual meeting between the joint chiefs of staff from the two countries whose relationship has grown increasingly fractious.

Gen. Li Zuocheng told Gen. Mark Milley on Thursday that China had "no room for compromise" on issues affecting its "core interests," which include self-governing Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own territory to be annexed by force if necessary.

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"China demands the U.S. ... cease reversing history, cease U.S.-Taiwan military collusion and avoid impacting China-U.S. ties and stability in the Taiwan Strait," Li said.

The Chinese military would "resolutely safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said. "If anyone creates a wanton provocation, they will be met with the firm counterattack from the Chinese people."

Such language is fairly routine and Li was also quoted in a Defense Ministry news release saying China hoped to "further strengthen dialogue, handle risks, and promote cooperation, rather than deliberately creating confrontation, provoking incidents and becoming mutually exclusive."

The meeting follows fiery comments by Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe at a regional security conference last month that was also attended by U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin.

Wei accused the United States of trying to "hijack" the support of countries in the Asia-Pacific region to turn them against Beijing, saying Washington is seeking to advance its own interests "under the guise of multilateralism."

At the same meeting in Singapore, Austin said China was causing instability with its claim to Taiwan and its increased military activity in the area.

And in May, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called China the "most serious long-term challenge to the international order" for the United States, with its claims to Taiwan and efforts to dominate the strategic South China Sea, prompting an angry response from Beijing.

The U.S. and its allies have responded with what they term "freedom of navigation" patrols in the South China Sea, prompting angry responses from Beijing.

Despite not having formal diplomatic relations in deference to Beijing, Washington remains Taiwan's chief ally and supplier of defense weapons. U.S. law requires the government to treat all threats to the island as matters of "grave concern," although it remains ambiguous on whether the U.S. military would defend Taiwan if it were attacked by China.

The latest round of heated rhetoric comes ahead of a meeting between Blinken and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, on Saturday at a gathering of foreign ministers from the G20 bloc of industrialized nations in Indonesia that is expected to be overshadowed by disagreements over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

China has refused to criticize Moscow's aggression or even term it an invasion, while condemning Western sanctions against Russia and accusing the U.S. and NATO of provoking the conflict.

Along with Taiwan and the South China Sea, Washington and Beijing are also at odds over trade, human rights and China's policies in Tibet and toward mainly Muslim Turkic minorities in the northwestern region of Xinjiang.

## **Inflation, expenses rise sharply as priorities: AP-NORC poll**

By HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Concerns about inflation and personal finances have surged while COVID has evaporated as a top issue for Americans, a new poll shows, marking an upheaval in priorities just months before critical midterm elections.

Forty percent of U.S. adults specifically name inflation in an open-ended question as one of up to five priorities for the government to work on in the next year, according to a June poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. That's a sharp rise from 14% in December and less than 1% the year prior. Seventy-seven percent mention the economy in any way, up from 68% in December.

Now, too, Americans increasingly call their personal finances a major issue: 44% mention it, up from 24% in December and 12% the year before. That includes more mentioning gas or energy prices (33% now vs. 10% in December) and food costs (9% vs. less than 1%).

Those shifts may be advantageous to Republicans as they campaign to win control of Congress in this year's midterms; the economy has increasingly been a sore subject for President Joe Biden. Still, the economy isn't the only issue getting more attention this year. Many also prioritize other issues that are core to Biden and Democrats' agenda, including abortion, women's rights and gun policy, which could help

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Democrats as they try to pad — or at least protect — their razor-thin majority.

In a troubling sign for both parties, the poll finds many Americans say they think neither side of the aisle is better at focusing on the issues important to them or getting things done.

Sara Rodriguez said she's concerned about the impact of rising prices of goods, gas and oil on her household's finances, especially because her income isn't keeping up.

"We've had a savings built up and we're noticing that it's definitely going down fast because we don't make enough money to cover how much the cost of everything has risen," the 43-year-old quality control coordinator in Bristol, Connecticut, said.

Rodriguez and her husband and son have had to get to their workplaces and run errands using one car over the last couple of months because of her husband's broken-down truck.

"We just haven't had the money to get it back on the road," she said.

The rise in concerns about the economy is paired with a steep decline in the percentage naming COVID-19 as a top issue, even as new variants continue to emerge: Now just 4% mention it, down from 37% in December 2021 and 53% in December 2020.

Republicans remain more likely than Democrats to mention the economy and inflation or personal finances and gas prices as top issues, but the sharp changes since December are bipartisan.

Daniel Collier, a 39-year-old construction worker in Waynesville, Missouri, thinks lowering gas prices should be a priority.

"It's hurt me financially," he said. "I worry about being able to pay the rent, pay utilities."

He blames Biden for inflation and "poor" economic conditions, saying he thinks the president is "incompetent."

The poll shows 69% of Americans disapprove of how Biden is handling the economy, including 93% of Republicans and 43% of Democrats. In May, facing an inflation rate at a 40-year high, most Americans said in an AP-NORC poll that they worried about the impact of higher than usual prices on their finances.

For 22-year-old Jakyra Green, rising prices have been prohibitive.

"It's become very hard to even pay for anything, like rent, gas, and none of our wages are going up," the college student in Goshen, Indiana, said. "I just spend less or try to not go out the house anymore."

But Green identified other issues that concern her more. Abortion has long been on her mind as a priority, and it "feels real now" that the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade. She also identified racism in the U.S. as an important problem.

Mentions of abortion or women's rights increased sharply to 22% from just 8% in December following the Supreme Court's decision to strike down Roe v. Wade. The poll shows 12% of U.S. adults mention racial issues, similar to December 2021, but a notable decline from 2020, when 24% called out racism as a chief priority.

"I have these two compounding identities being Black and a woman," Green said, adding that it's very concerning that Black women experience higher maternal mortality rates than white women. "It's just so overwhelming right now in America."

Mentions of gun issues also ticked up to 30% from 24% in December 2021 — both significantly higher compared with 5% in December 2020. The December 2021 poll was conducted just after a deadly shooting at a Michigan high school, which likely explains the sharp increase from 2020.

Charles Hagemeyer sees "so many different issues" facing the country. The economy affects him the most personally, but he called out the mass shooting in Highland Park on July 4 as evidence of a guns problem in the U.S. The poll was conducted before that attack, but after tragedies in Buffalo and Uvalde, Texas.

"Gun violence is another big issue that's on my mind constantly," the 68-year-old Jacksonville, Florida, resident said. "You're afraid to go out anymore."

Hagemeyer thinks the country is past the point where gun control legislation could even be effective; still, he doesn't see lawmakers coming together to solve any problem. Both sides have an "us versus them" mentality, he said.

The poll shows a majority of Americans — 57% — don't think one party is better than the other at getting things done. Thirty-seven percent don't think either is better at focusing on their priorities; the remainder

split about evenly between the two parties. Politics is mentioned in some way as a top problem facing the country by 29% of Americans.

"It just doesn't seem like anybody in government wants to work with each other and try to solve some of the issues that the American people face," Hagemeyer said.

## Governors offer Democrats aggressive reply on guns, abortion

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Hours after a gunman killed seven people at a July 4th parade in suburban Chicago, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker tapped into the frustration of many fellow Democrats at the seeming inability of the U.S. to curb gun violence.

"If you're angry today, I'm here to tell you: Be angry. I'm furious," Pritzker said.

But at the White House, President Joe Biden was more focused on reassurance than anger.

"I know it can be exhausting and unsettling," he said, adding that "we're going to get through all of this."

In a summer marked by anger among Democrats over a string of mass shootings and the Supreme Court's decision to strip women of the constitutional right to an abortion, several governors, including Pritzker, are emerging as the party's leading voices of outrage. Their willingness to speak — and act — in aggressive terms stands in contrast to Biden, who is coming under growing criticism from some Democrats for lacking a sufficiently robust response to what some in his party see as existential threats.

Some Democrats warn that the lack of a strong response will be a problem if the party hopes to turn out enough voters to maintain their narrow grip on Congress in the fall midterm elections.

"The people that you're telling to vote aren't going to listen until we prove that we are handling this moment with urgency," Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., said in an interview, referring to the party generally. "We have a lot of tools at our disposal, I think we have a lot of assets at our disposal, and we have to use them."

In this moment, governors may have tools that are more conducive to swift action than the president. Well positioned heading into the fall campaign and presiding over statehouses where Democrats are in control, Pritzker and Govs. Kathy Hochul of New York and Gavin Newsom of California have wide latitude.

In New York, for instance, Hochul was undeterred by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that struck down a state law and allowed most people to carry a handgun for personal protection. She called a special session last week in which lawmakers passed new measures limiting where those licensed to have guns can carry them and toughening rules for obtaining the permits. The regulations include a novel requirement to screen applicants' social media accounts for threats.

"They may think they can change our lives with the stroke of a pen, but we have pens too," Hochul said defiantly of the Supreme Court's gun ruling.

In Illinois, Pritzker has said he would convene a special legislative session in coming weeks, with support of Democratic legislative leaders, to "more firmly protect" abortion rights and address some of the challenges the state faces as one of the few places in the Midwest where abortion remains legal.

Abortion rights will be on the California ballot in November, after legislators with Newsom's blessing agreed last month to place a proposal before voters that would guarantee a right to an abortion in the state constitution. The constitutional amendment is certain to drive turnout on both sides of the debate.

Newsom has been especially vocal in rallying against the repeal of abortion rights even before the Supreme Court ruled. When a draft Supreme Court opinion surfaced in May suggesting the conservative majority was poised to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, he delivered a withering critique of the national party, suggesting it was suffering from collective lethargy.

"Where is the Democratic Party?" he asked at the time, without naming anyone specifically but appearing to exclude Biden from criticism. "Why aren't we standing up more firmly? More resolutely? Why aren't we calling this out?"

With just a tenuous grip on Congress, however, Biden can't move legislation quickly. And even criticizing Republicans could be politically dangerous if he needs their support on key votes.



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"Forcefully calling out the other side isn't a luxury he has if he wants to get anything done the rest of the year on anything," said Democratic strategist Joe Trippi. "If you're Gavin Newsom, whose votes are you going to lose in the state senate or California assembly?"

The White House insists Biden isn't backing away from a fight. In a passionate prime-time speech last month, he lamented that gun violence had turned schools, supermarkets and other everyday places into "killing fields" and asked, "How much more carnage are we willing to accept?"

Shortly after the Supreme Court's abortion ruling, Biden called the decision the "realization of an extreme ideology and a tragic error." He's expected to deliver remarks on Friday about "protecting access to reproductive health care services," according to the White House.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Thursday that "you will hear more from him" on issues including abortion as she underscored the administration's central message that winning the mid-terms is the best path forward.

"The president has been very clear that he's going to do everything he can, that he has the legal authority to do, from here in the executive side," she said. "But we believe and he believes that the way that Roe goes into law or gets codified is if Congress acts. ... And so we have to continue to use our political capital, if you will, to fight as hard as we can. And to make sure we do the work that we need to have pro-choice congressional members."

Under increasing pressure, Biden will take executive action Friday to protect access to abortion, three people familiar with the situation said. They spoke anonymously to discuss his plans before they were announced.

Still, Biden is turning to governors. He convened a virtual roundtable last Friday with Pritzker, Hochul and seven other Democratic governors to discuss what steps were being taken in their states to protect abortion rights.

Biden reiterated that his administration will protect the rights of women to travel to other states for abortion services and ensure that abortion medication is available as widely as possible. But he acknowledged he didn't have votes in the U.S. Senate for more sweeping actions and laid out the stakes for November's elections and the need to increase Democrats' majorities.

"In the meantime, I want to hear what the governors are doing," he said.

With their reelections essentially secure, the aggressive action from some of the governors is sparking speculation about potential future presidential campaigns.

Pritzker, a billionaire businessman seeking his second term, raised chatter about a possible presidential bid when he spoke last month at the state Democratic party convention in New Hampshire, one of the early presidential nominating states. He has said he is focused on his job as governor and his reelection bid.

Newsom drew even more attention by running a television ad on Independence Day in Florida that was critical of Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, a potential 2024 presidential candidate. In the ad, which features images of DeSantis and former President Donald Trump, Newsom warns viewers that "freedom is under attack in your state."

"I urge all of you living in Florida to join the fight. Or join us in California, where we still believe in freedom — freedom of speech, freedom to choose, freedom from hate and the freedom to love," Newsom said.

## US hiring was likely solid in June despite recession fears

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. employers likely downshifted their pace of hiring in June, but to a level that remains solid despite fears that the economy faces the growing risk of a recession.

On Friday, the Labor Department is expected to report that the nation gained 275,000 jobs last month, according to economists surveyed by the data provider FactSet. That would be the lowest monthly gain of the past year, during which the job market has sustained a vigorous recovery from the pandemic recession. Before the pandemic struck in early 2020, monthly hiring that large would have been seen as a robust gain.

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The unemployment rate in June is thought to have remained at 3.6% for a fourth straight month, just above a 50-year low reached in 2019.

If the projections prove accurate, it will underscore the U.S. economy's unusual and seemingly contradictory circumstances. Growth has been negative for two straight quarters, consumers are slowing their spending with inflation at a four-decade high and home sales have fallen as the Federal Reserve has jacked up borrowing costs.

Yet many businesses are still scrambling to hire more people, with roughly two available jobs for every unemployed worker. And the number of people seeking unemployment benefits — a proxy for layoffs and an early indicator of a downturn — remains far below historic averages, although it has ticked up recently.

Still, hiring could weaken further in the coming months. The Fed wants job growth to slow, at least modestly, as part of its strenuous efforts to cool the economy and curb high inflation. The Biden administration, too, has sought to portray any pullback in hiring as part of a welcome transition to a more sustainable economy that will help keep inflation down.

Smaller monthly job increases "will be a sign that we are successfully moving into the next phase of recovery" that is "stable and steady," a senior White House official said Thursday.

Yet the transition to a more sustainable pace of growth and hiring is likely to be a bumpy one. If, for example, the Fed's rate cuts end up slowing growth too much, as many analysts fear, the economy could slide into a recession by next year. Already, signs of a slowdown are evident. In May, consumer spending, adjusted for inflation, fell for the first time since December. Sales of existing homes have fallen nearly 9% compared with a year ago.

And some companies are announcing layoffs, or have paused hiring. In particular, several large retailers, including Walmart and Amazon, have said they over-hired during the pandemic, with Walmart reducing its headcount by attrition.

Tesla is cutting about 3.5% of its total headcount. Netflix has laid off about 450 employees after it reported losing subscribers for the first time in more than a decade. The online automotive retailer Carvana and real estate companies Redfin and Compass have also announced job cuts.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell has held out hope that the economy will continue to expand even as the central bank raises borrowing costs at its fastest pace since the late 1980s. But Powell has also acknowledged that overseas factors, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has elevated gas and food prices, will make it difficult to avoid a recession.

Last month, he conceded that a recession "is not our intended outcome but it's certainly a possibility."

The job market has recovered much more rapidly from the pandemic recession than it did after previous downturns. If forecasts for June employment prove correct, the economy will have recovered all the private-sector jobs lost to the pandemic, a little over two years after the recession. It took nearly five years to reach that level after the 2008-2009 downturn.

Friday's jobs report for June will also provide an update on average wage growth. Pay increases have weakened in recent months but are still at far higher levels than before the pandemic.

Smaller pay gains could also help moderate inflation. It would reduce the pressure on companies — particularly small businesses, which typically have smaller profit margins — to raise prices to cover their higher labor costs. Over the past three months, average hourly pay has risen at about a 4.5% annual rate, down from a 6% pace at the end of last year.

Economists will also closely watch the proportion of Americans who were either working or looking for work in June. That figure has substantially increased from a year ago — from 61.6% to 62.3% — but is still a percentage point below its pre-pandemic level.

An increase in the number of people in the workforce would alleviate labor shortages and could make it easier for employers to fill jobs without having to offer significant pay increases. Any such trend would help ease inflationary pressures.

**Services planned Friday for 3 Highland Park parade victims**

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HIGHLAND PARK, Ill. (AP) — Memorial services and funerals for three of the seven people killed when a gunman opened fire on a July 4 parade are scheduled Friday, the first formal opportunity to grieve the deaths of two beloved grandfathers and a former synagogue preschool teacher shot Monday during the annual event in the northern Chicago suburb of Highland Park.

Services are scheduled for 63-year-old Jacquelyn Sundheim, 88-year-old Stephen Straus and 78-year-old Nicolas Toledo-Zaragoza through Friday.

Robert E. Crimo III, the accused 21-year-old gunman, was charged Wednesday with murdering seven people. Prosecutors have said they expect to bring attempted murder charges for each of the more than 30 people wounded in the attack on paradegoers gathered in the affluent suburb that is home to about 30,000 people near the Lake Michigan shore.

Services for another of the victims, 69-year-old Eduardo Uvaldo, are scheduled for Saturday.

Details for the remaining victims have not been made public. Authorities have identified them as 35-year-old Irina McCarthy and 37-year-old Kevin McCarthy who were attending the parade with their two-year-old son, and 64-year-old Katherine Goldstein, a mother of two.

Investigators said this week that the accused shooter, who lived in neighboring Highwood, legally purchased five weapons and planned the violent attack for weeks before he climbed to the roof of a business along the parade route and opened fire with a semi-automatic rifle.

Investigators reported that Crimo fled the parade by blending in with the crowd, then drove to the Madison, Wisc. area where he contemplated a second attack before returning to the Highland Park area where his car was spotted by police.

Questions remain about whether Crimo should have been able to legally purchase firearms in Illinois. Illinois State Police officials have defended approving his approval for a gun license in December 2019, months after police received reports that he had made suicidal and violent threats.

## WNBA's Griner pleads guilty at her drug trial in Russia

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — American basketball star Brittney Griner pleaded guilty Thursday to drug possession charges on the second day of her trial in a Russian court in a case that could see her sentenced to up to 10 years in prison.

The abrupt guilty plea by the Phoenix Mercury center and two-time Olympic gold medalist came amid a growing chorus of calls for Washington to do more to secure her freedom nearly five months after her arrest in February amid rising tensions between the U.S. and Russia over Ukraine.

A senior Russian diplomat said earlier that no action could be taken by Moscow on Griner's case until the trial was over, and her guilty plea could be an effort by her and her advisers to expedite the court proceedings.

Griner, 31, was detained at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport while returning to play basketball in Russia, and police said they found vape canisters containing cannabis oil in her luggage.

Speaking through an interpreter, Griner told the court she had no intention of committing a crime and had acted unintentionally because she had packed for Moscow in a hurry. The trial was then adjourned until July 14.

Griner emphasized "that she had committed this act through negligence, unintentionally," her lawyer, Maria Blagovolina, said outside the court in the Moscow suburb of Khimki after the guilty plea.

"We of course hope for the leniency of the court," she said. "Considering all the circumstances of the case, taking into account the personality of our client, we believe that the admission of guilt should certainly be taken into account."

Blagovolina added that other defense witnesses would be questioned at a later session.

Griner was escorted to the courtroom in handcuffs and clad in a bright red T-shirt with the name "Crenshaw" and sweat pants. She also held a photo of her wife, Cherelle.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Griner's guilty plea "will have no impact on any of

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the negotiations" involving her case.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington would continue to work for the release of Griner, as well as other Americans held by Moscow, including former Marine Paul Whelan.

"We will not relent until Brittney, Paul Whelan, and all other wrongfully detained Americans are reunited with their loved ones," he tweeted, noting that U.S. Embassy officials attended the trial again Thursday.

Elizabeth Rood, the embassy's deputy chief of mission, said after the hearing that she spoke to Griner in the courtroom and shared with her a letter from President Joe Biden that she read.

"She's eating well, she's able to read books and under the circumstances she's doing well," Rood said.

"I would like again to emphasize the commitment of the U.S. government at the very highest level to bring home safely Ms. Griner and all U.S. citizens wrongfully detained as well as the commitment of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow to care for and protect the interests of all U.S. citizens detained or imprisoned in Russia," Rood said.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov bristled at the U.S. description of Griner as "wrongfully detained" and warned that "attempts by the American side to make noise in public ... don't help the practical settlement of issues."

The White House said Biden called Cherelle Griner on Wednesday to assure her that he's doing all he can to win her 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.

Washington hasn't disclosed its strategy in the case and the U.S. may have little leverage with Moscow because of strong animosity over its actions in Ukraine. The State Department's designation of Griner as wrongfully detained moves her case under the supervision of its special presidential envoy for hostage affairs, effectively the government's chief hostage negotiator.

Asked about the possibility of Griner being swapped for a Russian jailed in the U.S., Ryabkov, the senior Russian diplomat, noted that until her trial is over "there are no formal or procedural reasons to talk about any further steps."

He warned that U.S. criticism, including a description of Griner as wrongfully detained and dismissive comments about the Russian judicial system, "makes it difficult to engage in detailed discussion of any possible exchanges."

"The persistence with which the U.S. administration ... describes those who were handed prison sentences for serious criminal articles and those who are awaiting the end of investigation and court verdicts as 'wrongfully detained' reflects Washington's refusal to have a sober view of the outside world," Ryabkov snapped.

Griner's trial was adjourned after its start last week because two scheduled witnesses did not appear. Such delays are routine in Russian courts and her detention has been authorized through Dec. 20, suggesting the proceedings could last months. Griner's legal team, however, said they expect the trial to conclude around the beginning of the August.

Although Griner's supporters initially kept a low profile, calls for Washington to act spiked after the trial's first day on July 1.

An organization called Win With Black Women wrote Biden saying Blinken has called Cherelle Griner, "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 media have speculated repeatedly 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. after being convicted 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 trade unpalatable to Washington.

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

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Whelan's brother, David, said he did not have enough information to know whether Griner's plea would be good or bad news for her and his brother.

"The conviction rate is so high in Russia, and so certain, that I could see the guilty plea as an attempt to just move the process forward," David Whelan said, noting the Russian government won't discuss "any release of Ms. Griner until she is convicted, sentenced, and potentially appeals or seeks a pardon."

Her plea probably means that Washington and Moscow "will be able to seek a resolution faster than they could have before. But it doesn't change the underlying calculus that the U.S. needs to find a concession that Russia will accept in order to return either or both Brittney Griner and Paul Whelan," he added.

Griner's agent Lindsay Kagawa Colas tweeted, "Brittney Griner was a model of courage today" who "deserves our compassion, understanding, love, and support." Colas thanked Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris for "confirming their commitment to bring BG and all Americans home and hope that out of respect for the sanctity of sport internationally, BG can return home as soon as possible."

The WNBA players' union said in a statement that it stood by Griner, noting the 99% conviction rate in Russian courts.

"You can't navigate it or even understand it like our own legal system," said WNBAPA Executive Director Terri Jackson. "What we do know is that the U.S. State Department determined that Brittney Griner was wrongfully detained for a reason and we'll leave it at that."

WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert said Griner "has the wholehearted and unconditional support of the entire WNBA and NBA family, who eagerly await her safe return, and the league will recognize BG as an honorary starter at this weekend's WNBA All-Star Game."

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.

## Biden awards Medal of Freedom to Biles, McCain, Giffords

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Thursday presented the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, to 17 people, including gymnast Simone Biles, the late John McCain, the Arizona Republican whom Biden served with in the Senate, and gun-control advocate Gabby Giffords.

"Today, she adds to her medal count," Biden said as he introduced Biles, a former foster child whose 32 Olympic and World Championship medals make her the most decorated U.S. gymnast in history.

"I don't know how you're going to find room," for another medal, Biden joked. The 25-year-old is an advocate for athletes' mental health, foster care children and sexual assault victims. She's also the youngest person to ever receive the medal, Biden said.

The Democratic president, who took office at a critical point during the coronavirus pandemic, also honored Sandra Lindsay, the Queens, New York, nurse who was the first person to be vaccinated against COVID-19 outside of clinical trials during a live television appearance in December 2020.

It was the first time Biden had awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. His recipient list included both living and deceased honorees, some of them representing various stages of the president's life, from the Catholic nuns who taught him as a boy growing up in Claymont, Delaware, to Republican lawmakers he served with in the Senate to a college professor like his wife, Jill, to advocates of tightening access to firearms.

Biden introduced Giffords as "one of the most courageous people I have ever known."

The former Arizona congresswoman founded the organization named Giffords to campaign for an end to gun violence and restrictions on access to guns. The Democrat almost died after she was shot in the head in January 2011 during a constituent event in Tucson.

Biden noted that he recently signed the most sweeping gun-control legislation in decades — though he and others would like even more restrictions — and credited Giffords and families like her own whose lives

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have been altered by gun violence for helping to make it happen.

"She's the embodiment of a single signature American trait: never, ever give up," Biden said.

Biden also recognized former Republican Sens. Alan Simpson of Wyoming and John McCain of Arizona, recalling a less partisan era of Washington in which members of different parties would argue over issues during the day and then meet over dinner at night.

McCain died of brain cancer in 2018. He spent more than five years in captivity in Vietnam while serving in the U.S. Navy. He later represented Arizona in the House and Senate, and was the 2008 Republican presidential nominee, competing against Democrats Barack Obama and Biden.

Biden said he didn't appreciate the political competition, but "I never stopped admiring John ... I knew his honor, his courage and commitment."

The 17 people receiving honors "have overcome significant obstacles to achieve impressive accomplishments in the arts and sciences, dedicated their lives to advocating for the most vulnerable among us, and acted with bravery to drive change in their communities, and across the world, while blazing trails for generations to come," the White House said.

Biden himself knows what it's like to receive the medal. Then-President Obama honored Biden's decades of public service by awarding him a Presidential Medal of Freedom "with distinction" during a ceremony shortly before they left office in January 2017.

Biden closed the ceremony by declaring, "This is America."

The other 13 medal recipients are:

— Sister Simone Campbell, a member of the Sister of Social Service and a former executive director of NETWORK, a Catholic social justice organization.

— Julieta Garcia, a former president of the University of Texas at Brownsville. Garcia was the first Latina to become a college president, the White House said.

— Fred Gray, one of the first Black members of the Alabama Legislature after Reconstruction. He was a prominent civil rights attorney who represented Rosa Parks, the NAACP and Martin Luther King Jr. and, at age 91, continues to practice law.

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

— Father Alexander Karloutsos, the assistant to Archbishop Demetrios of America. Karloutsos has counseled several U.S. presidents, the White House said. Biden said he is "one of my dear friends."

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

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

— Megan Rapinoe. The Olympic gold medalist and two-time Women's World Cup soccer champion captains the OL Reign in the National Women's Soccer League. She is a prominent advocate for gender pay equality, racial justice and LGBTQI+ rights. Biden said she is the first soccer player to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

— Simpson, who served in the Senate with Biden and has been a prominent advocate for campaign finance reform, responsible governance and marriage equality. Biden called Simpson the "real deal" and joked that "he never takes himself too seriously nor takes me seriously."

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

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

— Denzel Washington, a double Oscar-winning actor, director and producer. He also has a Tony award, two Golden Globes and the Cecil B. DeMille Lifetime Achievement Award. He is a longtime spokesperson for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Washington could not attend Thursday's ceremony after testing positive for COVID-19, the White House said. Biden said Washington will receive his medal "when he's

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able to get here.”

— Raúl Yzaguirre. A civil rights advocate, Yzaguirre was president and CEO of the National Council of La Raza for 30 years.

## James Caan, Oscar nominee for 'The Godfather,' dies at 82

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

James Caan, the curly-haired tough guy known to movie fans as the hotheaded Sonny Corleone of “The Godfather” and to television audiences as both the dying football player in the classic weeper “Brian’s Song” and the casino boss in “Las Vegas,” has died. He was 82.

His manager Matt DelPiano said he died Wednesday. No cause was given and Caan’s family, who requests privacy, said that no further details would be released at this time.

Al Pacino wrote in an emailed statement that, “Jimmy was my fictional brother and my lifelong friend. It’s hard to believe that he won’t be in the world anymore because he was so alive and daring. A great actor, a brilliant director and my dear friend. I loved him, gonna miss him.” Robert De Niro also wrote that he was, “very very sad to hear about Jimmy’s passing.”

A football player at Michigan State University and a practical joker on production sets, Caan was a grinning, handsome performer with an athlete’s swagger and muscular build. He managed a long career despite drug problems, outbursts of temper and minor brushes with the law.

Caan had been a favorite of Francis Ford Coppola since the 1960s, when Coppola cast him for the lead in “Rain People.” He was primed for a featured role in “The Godfather” as Sonny, the No. 1 enforcer and eldest son of Mafia boss Vito Corleone.

Sonny Corleone, a violent and reckless man who conducted many killings, met his own end in one of the most jarring movie scenes in history. Racing to find his sister’s husband, Corleone stops at a toll booth that he discovers is unnervingly empty of customers. Before he can escape he is cut down by a seemingly endless fusillade of machine-gun fire. For decades after, he once said, strangers would approach him on the street and jokingly warn him to stay clear of toll roads.

Caan bonded with Brando, Robert Duvall and other cast members and made it a point to get everyone laughing during an otherwise tense production, sometimes dropping his pants and “mooning” a fellow actor or crew member. Despite Coppola’s fears he had made a flop, the 1972 release was an enormous critical and commercial success and brought supporting actor Oscar nominations for Caan, Duvall and Pacino.

Caan was already a star on television, breaking through in the 1971 TV movie “Brian’s Song,” an emotional drama about Chicago Bears running back Brian Piccolo, who had died of cancer the year before at age 26. It was among the most popular and wrenching TV movies in history and Caan and co-star Billy Dee Williams, who played Piccolo’s teammate and best friend Gale Sayers, were nominated for best actor Emmys.

After “Brian’s Song” and “The Godfather,” he was one of Hollywood’s busiest actors, appearing in “Hide in Plain Sight” (which he also directed), “Funny Lady” (opposite Barbra Streisand), “The Killer Elite” and Neil Simon’s “Chapter Two,” among others. He also made a brief appearance in a flashback sequence in “The Godfather, Part II.”

But by the early 1980s he began to sour on films, though Michael Mann’s 1981 neo-noir heist film “Thief,” in which he played a professional safecracker looking for a way out, is among his most admired films.

Mann said “Jimmy was not just a great actor with total commitment and a venturesome spirit, but he had a vitality in the core of his being that drove everything from his art and friendship to athletics and very good times.”

Caan had begun to struggle with drug use and was devastated by the 1981 leukemia death of his sister, Barbara, who until then had been a guiding force in his career. For much of the 1980s he made no films, telling people he preferred to coach his son Scott’s Little League games. Scott Caan also grew up to be an actor.

“The fun of it was taken away,” he told an interviewer in 1981. “I’ve done pictures where I’d rather do time. I just walked out of a picture at Paramount. I said you haven’t got enough money to make me go

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to work every day with a director I don't like."

Short on cash, Caan was hired by Coppola for the leading role in the 1987 film "Gardens of Stone." The movie, about life at Arlington National Cemetery, proved too grim for most audiences, but it renewed Caan's acting career.

He returned to full-fledged stardom opposite Kathy Bates in "Misery" in 1990. In the film, based on Stephen King's novel, Caan is an author taken captive by an obsessed fan who breaks his ankles to keep him from leaving. Bates won an Oscar for the role.

Once again in demand, Caan starred in "For the Boys" with Bette Midler in 1991 as part of a song-and-dance team entertaining U.S. soldiers during World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars. The following year he played a tongue-in-cheek version of Sonny Corleone in the comedy "Honeymoon in Vegas," tricking Nicolas Cage into betting his girlfriend, Sarah Jessica Parker, in a high-stakes poker game so he can spirit her away and try to persuade her to marry him.

Other later films included "Flesh and Bone," "Bottle Rocket" and "Mickey Blue Eyes." He introduced himself to a new generation playing Walter, the workaholic, stone-faced father of Buddy's Will Ferrell in "Elf."

Adam Sandler, who acted with him in "Bulletproof" and "That's My Boy" tweeted that he, "Loved him very much. Always wanted to be like him. So happy I got to know him. Never ever stopped laughing when I was around that man. His movies were best of the best."

Caan didn't take a starring role in a TV series until 2003 but his first effort, "Las Vegas," was an immediate hit. When the series debuted, he was a casino surveillance chief dealing with cheaters and competitors of the fictional Montecito Resort and Casino.

His character rose to become boss of the Montecito but remained the tough guy who had learned judo in an undercover division of the U.S. government. Caan left the show during the fourth season and it was later canceled.

Born March 26, 1939, in New York City, Caan was the son of a kosher meat wholesaler. He was a star athlete and class president at Rhodes High School and, after attending Michigan State and Hofstra University, he studied at the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theater under Sanford Meisner.

Following a brief stage career, he moved to Hollywood. He made his movie debut in a brief uncredited role in 1963 in Billy Wilder's "Irma La Douce," then landed a role as young thug who terrorizes Olivia de Havilland in "Lady in a Cage." He also appeared opposite John Wayne and Robert Mitchum in the 1966 Western "El Dorado" and Harrison Ford in the 1968 Western "Journey to Shiloh."

Married and divorced four times, Caan had a daughter, Tara, and sons Scott, Alexander, James and Jacob.

## Putin to Ukraine: Russia has barely started its action

MOSCOW (AP) — With Russia's military action in Ukraine in its fifth month, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday warned Kyiv that it should quickly accept Moscow's terms or brace for the worst, adding ominously that Russia has barely started its action.

Speaking at a meeting with leaders of the Kremlin-controlled parliament, Putin accused Western allies of fueling the hostilities, charging that "the West wants to fight us until the last Ukrainian."

"It's a tragedy for the Ukrainian people, but it looks like it's heading in that direction," he added.

"Everybody should know that largely speaking, we haven't even yet started anything in earnest," Putin said in a menacing note.

He declared that Russia remains ready to sit down for talks to end the fighting, adding that "those who refuse to do so should know that the longer it lasts the more difficult it will be for them to make a deal with us."

"We are hearing that they want to defeat us on the battlefield," Putin said. "Let them try."

Earlier in the conflict, the Kremlin demanded that Kyiv acknowledge Russian sovereignty over the Crimean Peninsula, which it annexed in 2014, and recognize the independence of Moscow-backed separatist regions in eastern Ukraine. Moscow also said it expected Ukraine to bow to the existing situation on the ground, a reference to other land gains it has made since Russian troops rolled into Ukraine on Feb. 24.



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After failing to capture Kyiv and other big cities in Ukraine's northeast early in the campaign, the Russian military shifted its focus to the eastern industrial heartland of Donbas, where Moscow-backed separatists have fought Ukrainian troops since 2014.

Earlier this week, the Russian military claimed control of the Luhansk province, one of the two that make up Donbas, and is preparing to press its offensive into the second one, Donetsk.

In the early stages of the conflict, Russia won control of the southern Kherson region and part of neighboring Zaporizhzhia. Moscow is expected eventually to try to cut Ukraine off from its Black Sea coast all the way to the Romanian border. If successful, it would deal a crushing blow to the Ukrainian economy and also create a corridor to Moldova's separatist region of Transnistria, where Russia maintains a military base.

Putin reaffirmed his long-held claim that the West is using the conflict in Ukraine to try to isolate and weaken Russia.

"They simply don't need such a country as Russia," Putin said. "This is why they have used terrorism, separatism and internal destructive forces in our country."

He charged that Western sanctions against Russia have failed to achieve their goal of "sowing division and strife in our society and demoralizing our people."

"The course of history is unstoppable, and attempts by the collective West to enforce its version of the global order are doomed to fail," Putin said.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to the Ukrainian president, responded on Twitter: "There is no plan by the 'collective West'" and only a Russian army entered Ukraine.

## 'New normal' for 8-year-old twin wounded in July 4 shooting

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

Sports-loving Cooper Roberts and his 8-year-old twin brother, Luke, loved the Fourth of July parade in their bucolic Chicago suburb.

But now the family is envisioning a "new normal" for Cooper who was struck in the chest in a hail of gunfire that left dozens of others wounded and seven dead when a gunman opened fire on the parade in Highland Park, said Tony Loizzi, a family spokesperson, during a Zoom call with reporters Thursday.

Luke and the boys' mother, Keely Roberts, who is the superintendent of the 2,300-student Zion Elementary School District, also were hurt but not as seriously. Only the boys' father, Jason Roberts, was unscathed.

Already, Cooper has undergone several surgeries, and is on a ventilator at the University of Chicago Comer Children's Hospital, his spine severed and his condition critical. He is unconscious and unable to speak to his family, Loizzi said.

"It sounds as if that he'll have significant issues moving forward," he explained. The family later confirmed that Cooper was paralyzed from the waist down.

Luke, who was struck by shrapnel, is home. But some of the shards remain in his body because removing them would cause too much damage, Loizzi said. The twins are the youngest of six, and their four older sisters — ages 18 to 26 — are doting on Luke while Cooper is hospitalized.

Meanwhile, the boy's mother, who was shot twice in the foot and leg area, has undergone two surgeries and may need a third, Loizzi said.

"Quite frankly, she probably should not have been discharged," Loizzi said. But when she found out Cooper was on a ventilator, she "told her doctors and nurses that they should either discharge or she'd walk out on her own because she needed to be with her son," Loizzi said.

He said the school district where she works is getting offers of support from superintendents around the state, some of them retired. He said they want to help so she can heal and focus on her family.

"They're devastated," he said of the family, "but they're focusing all of their energy right now on Cooper. It's been a very emotional time for everybody in their circle. And if you know Keely, she's just a fighter. And it sounds like Cooper got that part of her in him because he's fighting as hard as he can."

Loizzi had few details about the shooting itself. He said he didn't know where the family was standing along the parade route when shots rang out or who helped them.

"To be honest, I have not had that conversation with Keely," he said. "I have tried not to focus on what exactly happened, and have really kept the focus on what we're doing to help her and her son."

Loizzi described the boy as having a "passion" for sports and the Milwaukee Brewers.

"Every time I talk to his mom about him, he's always very active," he added.

A GoFundMe has been set up to help the family with what Loizzi described as "the obvious ongoing treatment and therapy that Cooper will need." He said that Keely Roberts is a devoted school leader, who works tirelessly for her students and often sends emails in the wee hours of the morning.

"Now," he said, "she and her family need our support. So we just ask you to please continue to keep the Roberts family and all of those impacted by this tragedy in your thoughts and prayers."

## Lone Mississippi abortion clinic seeks legal path to reopen

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS and DAVE KOLPACK Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Attorneys for Mississippi's only abortion clinic filed papers Thursday asking the state Supreme Court to block a new law that bans most abortions and to let the clinic reopen next week.

The clinic, Jackson Women's Health Organization, is at the center of the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that overturned Roe v. Wade and took away women's constitutional protection for abortion nationwide.

A Mississippi law that took effect Thursday bans most abortions, and the clinic performed its last procedures Wednesday. Clinic attorneys are making the same arguments that a trial court judge rejected Tuesday as the clinic tried to block the law from taking effect. They said that in 1998, the Mississippi Supreme Court ruled that the state constitution has a right to privacy that includes abortion.

"Absent relief, Mississippians will continue to be denied their rights under the Mississippi Constitution to privacy and bodily autonomy, as they are compelled by the State to endure the risks of pregnancy and bear children against their will," clinic attorney Rob McDuff wrote.

It was not immediately clear when the conservative state Supreme Court would consider the appeal.

Diane Derzis, owner of the Mississippi clinic, told The Associated Press that she will have staff available to reopen the facility if the state Supreme Court allows.

"I'm not hopeful, but there's always a possibility," Derzis said Thursday.

As for the legal filing and the effort to stay open, she said: "All of us needed to know we exhausted all possibilities."

The Mississippi clinic is best known as the Pink House because of its bright paint job. Some staff members were inside Thursday to do paperwork and follow-up appointments for a few patients. About 30 abortion opponents held a Christian worship service on a street next to the clinic.

"No more murdering innocent children here," said Dr. Coleman Boyd, a physician who has frequently protested outside the clinic. "Christ is exalted. Innocent bloodshed in this building is done."

Several of the abortion opponents yelled at Dr. Cheryl Hamlin as she arrived. Hamlin is an OB-GYN who has traveled from Boston the past five years to do abortions in Mississippi. She strode across the clinic parking lot and jabbed her finger at abortion protester John Busby, who called on her to repent.

"You're idiots," Hamlin said. "You don't care. You're going to hell. You. You are going to burn in hell. I'm so sick of you."

As Hamlin walked away, Busby called after her: "You're going to die in your sin, Cheryl, unless you repent for Jesus Christ."

Also Thursday, North Dakota's sole abortion clinic filed a state lawsuit seeking to block a trigger law banning abortion following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, the landmark 1973 ruling.

The Red River Women's Clinic argues the ban violates the rights to life, safety and happiness guaranteed by the state constitution that protect the right to abortion. It said the ban also infringes on the right to liberty because it "deprives patients of the ability to control decisions about their families and their health."

The North Dakota lawsuit is just the latest litigation to take aim at restrictions on abortions after the Supreme Court said the procedure was no longer protected by the U.S. Constitution.

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The suit also questions Attorney General Drew Wrigley's statement that the ban would take effect July 28. The clinic argued that the Supreme Court released its opinion June 24 but has not yet issued its judgment, which it said is a necessary step to trigger the state ban. The clinic said the high court typically takes that step at least 25 days after the opinion.

In certifying the closure date, Wrigley said "there's not any ambiguity" in the Supreme Court decision. He said Thursday that his office is "carefully reviewing and evaluating" the complaint, but that he would not comment further until his response is filed.

Tammi Kromenaker, owner and operator of the Red River Women's Clinic in Fargo, has said the facility would move across the river to Moorhead, Minnesota, if necessary but she would explore every legal option to remain open in North Dakota.

"We have faced relentless attacks from North Dakota lawmakers who have long wanted us gone," Kromenaker said in announcing the lawsuit. "But we will fight this draconian ban like the other outrageous bans and restrictions that came before it."

"In the meantime, we will keep our doors open to provide abortion care to patients who need us," she said.

Also Thursday, national leaders advocating for abortion access were in South Carolina Thursday, when a committee considering a bill "to prohibit abortions" met for the first time to hear public testimony.

While a South Carolina law banning abortion around six weeks of pregnancy took effect on June 27, lawmakers are expected to return for a special session to further restrict the procedure.

Planned Parenthood Action Fund President Alexis McGill Johnson came to the statehouse one day after an appearance in North Carolina, where Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper signed an executive order protecting out-of-state abortion patients from extradition. She praised North Carolina as an abortion "refuge" and condemned South Carolina lawmakers' efforts.

"All of these laws are designed to create chaos and confusion for people seeking access to care," Planned Parenthood Action Fund President Alexis McGill Johnson told The Associated Press.

## Election officials face security challenges before midterms

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Election officials preparing for the upcoming midterms face a myriad of threats, both foreign and domestic, as they look to protect voting systems and run a smooth election while fighting a wave of misinformation that has been undermining public confidence in U.S. elections.

The nation's top state election officials gathered Thursday for the start of their annual summer conference, with a long list of challenges that begins with securing their voting systems.

While a top concern heading into the 2020 presidential election was Russia or another hostile nation waging a disruptive cyberattack, the landscape has expanded to include ransomware, politically motivated hackers and insider threats. Over the last year, a small number of security breaches have been reported at local election offices in which authorities are investigating whether office staff improperly accessed or provided improper access to sensitive voting technology.

Jen Easterly, who leads the nation's cybersecurity agency, said Russia, China and North Korea remain "very dynamic and complex cyber threats" and that criminal gangs pushing ransomware were also a concern. But she noted election security officials could not afford to prioritize one over the other.

"We can't just worry about one thing because if we focus too intently on one set of threats, we're very likely to miss them coming from another direction," Easterly told reporters, after a series of private meetings with state election officials.

The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency has been conducting physical assessments for state and local election officials, which includes site visits and reviews of security procedures such as video surveillance and access controls.

Physical security has always been a concern but an onslaught of threats since 2020 targeting election officials have added urgency to the effort. State and local election officials have reported being harassed

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in person and receiving death threats over social media and text message.

"We're seeing an exodus of people in the field. And some of it does relate to just the physical security threats that they're facing," said Kim Wyman, who leads election security efforts for the cybersecurity agency. "And what we're trying to do with this is give them tools to be able to deal with that."

The agency has also issued guidance on how to mitigate insider threats, which emphasizes the importance of chain of custody rules. The guidance also suggests the use of bipartisan teams when accessing sensitive equipment to ensure voting systems are protected.

State election officials have also been focused on boosting cybersecurity defenses at the local level, where staffing and resources are often limited.

In Ohio, Secretary of State Frank LaRose recently announced a third wave of security requirements for the state's county election boards, which includes increased video surveillance for voting equipment and more comprehensive security reviews of county systems.

"It's constant vigilance," LaRose said Thursday. "The threat is constantly emerging. The threat is constantly changing. And so we're evolving with it and making sure that our guard is up."

Election security became a national focus after the 2016 presidential election, when Russia probed state voter registration systems across the country looking for vulnerabilities.

In response, the Obama administration designated election systems as "critical infrastructure" -- on par with the nation's banks, dams and nuclear power plants. This freed up resources and funds for election officials, and a concerted effort was made to improve communications and intelligence sharing between the federal government and the states.

But the 2020 presidential election brought an unprecedented wave of false claims and conspiracy theories surrounding voting equipment and election procedures as former President Donald Trump sought to explain his loss to Democrat Joe Biden. Supporters and allies of Trump have been traveling across the country for more than a year claiming the election was stolen and spreading misinformation that has further increased distrust in U.S. elections.

Federal and state election officials and Trump's own attorney general have said there is no credible evidence the election was tainted. The former president's allegations of fraud were also roundly rejected by courts, including by judges Trump appointed.

But the false claims have persisted and have led to suspected security breaches at local election offices a handful of states.

Earlier this year, the clerk in Mesa County, Colorado, was indicted for a security breach at her election office. Authorities say Clerk Tina Peters allowed unauthorized people access to voting equipment and an unauthorized copy was made of the county's voting system that was later posted online. Peters has denied any wrongdoing.

In Colorado, Secretary of State Jena Griswold pushed for legislative changes this year to tighten security measures surrounding voting systems and increase penalties for those attempting to access them.

## Chauvin gets 21 years for violating Floyd's civil rights

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — A federal judge on Thursday sentenced Derek Chauvin to 21 years in prison for violating George Floyd's civil rights, telling the former Minneapolis police officer that what he did was "simply wrong" and "offensive."

U.S. District Judge Paul Magnuson sharply criticized Chauvin for his actions on May 25, 2020, even as he opted for the low end of a sentencing range called for in a plea agreement. Chauvin, who is white, pinned Floyd to the pavement outside a Minneapolis corner store for more than nine minutes as the Black man pleaded, "I can't breathe," and became unresponsive.

Floyd's killing sparked protests worldwide in a reckoning over police brutality and racism.

"I really don't know why you did what you did," Magnuson said. "To put your knee on a person's neck until they expired is simply wrong. ... Your conduct is wrong and it is offensive."

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Magnuson, who earlier this year presided over the federal trial and convictions of three other officers at the scene, blamed Chauvin alone for what happened. Chauvin was by far the senior officer present as police tried to arrest Floyd while responding to a 911 call accusing him of using a counterfeit \$20 bill to buy cigarettes. And Chauvin rebuffed questions from one of the other officers about whether Floyd should be turned on his side.

"You absolutely destroyed the lives of three young officers by taking command of the scene," Magnuson said.

Chauvin's plea agreement called for a sentence of 20 to 25 years to be served concurrent with a 22 1/2-year sentence for his state conviction of murder and manslaughter charges.

Because of differences in parole eligibility in the state and federal systems, it means that Chauvin will serve slightly more time behind bars than he would have on the state sentence alone. He would be eligible for parole after 15 years on the state sentence, but must serve almost 18 years of his federal time before he could be released.

He will also do his time in the federal system, where he may be safer and may be held under fewer restrictions than in the state system.

Chauvin attorney Eric Nelson had asked for 20 years, arguing that Chauvin was remorseful and would make that clear to the court. But Chauvin, in brief remarks, made no direct apology or expression of remorse to Floyd's family.

Instead, he told the family that he wishes Floyd's children "all the best in their life."

Chauvin wore an orange prison uniform and a protective mask, according to pool media reports from the courtroom. He waved at family and friends in the gallery as he entered. The media reports made no mention of visible reaction by Chauvin to any part of the hearing.

Prosecutor LeeAnn Bell asked Magnuson to give Chauvin the full 25 years possible in the plea deal, highlighting the "special responsibility" that he had as a police officer to care for the people in his custody.

"He wasn't a rookie," Bell said. "He knew what his training was. ... He admitted before this court that his conduct was wrong and he did it anyway."

Floyd's brother Philonise also asked for the maximum possible sentence, telling Magnuson the Floyd family had "been given a life sentence." He said afterward that he was upset that Chauvin didn't get more time behind bars.

Chauvin's mother, Carolyn Pawlenty, told Magnuson that her son didn't go to work intending to kill someone.

"Many things have been written about him that are totally wrong such as he's a racist, which he isn't, that he has no heart," she said. "I believe it is God's will for all of us to forgive."

Chauvin's guilty plea included an admission that he willfully deprived Floyd of his right to be free from unreasonable seizure, including unreasonable force by a police officer.

It also included a count for violating the rights of a Black 14-year-old whom he restrained in an unrelated case in 2017. John Pope, now 18, told Magnuson that Chauvin "didn't care about the outcome" of that restraint.

"By the grace of God I lived to see another day," Pope said. "It will continue to be a part of me for the rest of my life."

Magnuson has not set sentencing dates for the three other officers who were on the scene — Tou Thao, J. Alexander Keung and Thomas Lane — who were convicted in February of federal civil rights charges.

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 on aiding and abetting charges on Oct. 24.

## Nipsey Hussle's legacy inspires 3 years after his murder

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Even though Nipsey Hussle was gunned down outside a Los Angeles clothing

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store three years ago, the sting of his death remains fresh for those who revered the widely beloved rapper and community activist.

Several paid homage to Hussle's positive influence during a murder trial that ended Wednesday with a conviction for his killing. Some shed tears. One of his closest friends regrets being unable to protect Hussle. A witness battles with ongoing nightmares as if Hussle's fatal shooting happened yesterday. Some in the hip-hop community still look to his rap lyrics for teachable moments.

Like Hussle's popular catchphrase "The Marathon Continues," the memory of his impactful legacy is still at the forefront of many people's minds.

"I feel like we'll never forget the work that he put in and everything that he did for the community," said Slim Jxmmi of the rap group Rae Sremmurd in a recent interview. "That's why he's such a big figure in our community. Nipsey was tight. He was hard."

Rapper Rick Ross said Hussle is admired "more than ever" these days for his forward-thinking mentality as an entrepreneur and teaching through his thought-provoking rap lyrics.

"He's a legend, poet," said Ross, who has a tattoo of Hussle's face on his leg. "I loved him as a emcee when I first met him over a decade ago. I'm just happy to see the marathon still continues."

Hussle, who was born Ermias Asghedom, was shot and killed at age 33 on March 31, 2019, in the parking lot outside his store, The Marathon.

Eric R. Holder Jr., was found guilty Wednesday of the first-degree murder of the Grammy winner, who was on track to revitalize a South Los Angeles neighborhood where he grew up and was eventually gunned down. Hussle and Holder had known each other for years and grew up as members of the same gang, the Rollin' 60s.

Holder was also convicted on two counts of attempted voluntary manslaughter and two counts of assault with a firearm. He will be sentenced Sept. 15.

The verdict might have ended a three-year legal saga, but the nearly four-week trial resurfaced old emotions and admiration for Hussle.

"It shook me up," said Christian Johnson during his tearful testimony. He was inside a burger restaurant near Hussle's clothing store during the shooting. In security footage shown in court, Johnson can be seen ducking underneath a red table after hearing gunshots.

When Johnson stood up and peeked into the parking lot, he saw Hussle's body on the ground.

"I dream about it every night," said Johnson, who broke down in tears. He viewed himself as a huge fan of Hussle's work and had thought about approaching him for a photo before the shooting. "I walked outside and saw Nipsey laying there. That could've been me."

Former gang member Herman "Cowboy" Douglas, who worked at The Marathon, said Hussle's death still feels raw. He carries some guilt over the rapper who was like a "little brother" to him.

"I feel regret that I left his side," said Douglas, who overheard the initial conversation between Hussle and Holder. He was inside the clothing store when he heard the gunshots.

"I should've never left his side," he continued. "I did not see this coming. No way, no how."

In honor of Hussle, Douglas had a mural of the rapper painted outside his restaurant in Los Angeles. Countless other murals of Hussle have popped up along busy highways, on the sides of buildings and inside a school basketball court in the city.

Hussle, whose nickname is a play on a famous 1970s comedian, was given the moniker for his work ethic as he slung CDs. He spent years winning a devoted following through mixtapes and underground releases. He broke through with his first major-label album, eventually earning two posthumous Grammys in 2020.

Throughout Los Angeles, Hussle was a beloved figure for his philanthropic work that went well beyond the usual celebrity "giving back" ethos. He purchased the strip mall where The Marathon is located and planned to redevelop it into a mixed-use commercial and residential complex.

The plan was part of Hussle's broader ambitions to remake the neighborhood where he grew up and attempt to break the cycle of gang life that pulled him in when he was younger. The Los Angeles City Council is expected to rename the intersection of Crenshaw Boulevard and Slauson Avenue "Nipsey Hussle Square."

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After Hussle's death, an unexpected cease-fire developed between some rival gang members. In May, his family held the grand opening of The Marathon Collective, a cannabis dispensary in Canoga Park, California.

During the trial, Deputy District Attorney John McKinney showed a photo of a shrine dedicated to Hussle outside his clothing store. Among the candles and other tributes was a St. Louis Cardinals baseball cap, which gang expert Robert Freeman says was worn by the Black P Stones, a Blood-affiliated gang that were fierce longtime rivals of Hussle's Rollin' 60s Crips.

"He was loved by the Bloods and the Crips," Freeman said.

McKinney said after the verdict that Hussle will never be forgotten.

"As a community, we move forward from this, we move forward in the tradition of the Marathon," he said. "We move forward in the tradition of young people who are in a situation that Nipsey might have been in 15 years ago can look to his life as an example of how they can get out of that situation and get to a place where dreams are made."

## IRS asks Treasury watchdog to probe Comey, McCabe tax audits

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The IRS commissioner has asked the Treasury Department's internal watchdog to immediately review the circumstances surrounding intensive tax audits that targeted ex-FBI Director James Comey and former Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, frequent targets of Donald Trump's ire during his presidency.

IRS spokesperson Jodie Reynolds said Thursday the agency has officially referred the matter to the inspector general for tax administration after Commissioner Charles Rettig, who was nominated to the job by Trump and is a close ally of the former president, personally reached out.

Reynolds insisted it is "ludicrous and untrue to suggest that senior IRS officials somehow targeted specific individuals" for such audits.

The New York Times reported Wednesday that the former FBI leaders were subjected to rare IRS audits of their tax returns. The newspaper said Comey was informed of the audit in 2019 and McCabe learned he was under scrutiny in 2021. Rettig, whose term is set to expire in November, faced blistering criticism from Democrats for helping to shield Trump's tax returns from the public.

Trump repeatedly attacked Comey and McCabe over the FBI's Russia investigation that shadowed his presidency for years. Trump fired Comey in 2017 in the midst of that investigation, which ultimately was taken over by special counsel Robert Mueller, named to that job by Trump's Justice Department.

The FBI inquiry began in the summer of 2016, months before Trump was elected. The bureau had learned that a former Trump campaign aide had been saying, before it was publicly known, that Russia had dirt on Trump's Democratic rival for the White House, Hillary Clinton, in the form of stolen emails.

Those emails were hacked from Democratic email accounts by Russian intelligence. They were released by the anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks before the election in what U.S. officials have said was an effort to harm Clinton's campaign and help Trump's. Trump repeatedly called the investigation a "witch hunt."

A 2019 review by the Justice Department's inspector general knocked down multiple lines of attack against the Russia investigation, finding that officials properly opened the inquiry and that law enforcement leaders were not motivated by political bias. The watchdog did identify a number of problems in the investigation, leading the FBI to take steps aimed at fixing some fundamental operations, such as applying for surveillance warrants and interacting with confidential sources.

McCabe was fired in March 2018 after the Justice Department's inspector general concluded he had authorized the release of information to a newspaper reporter and then misled internal investigators about his role in the leak. The termination by Jeff Sessions, Trump's attorney general at the time, came hours before McCabe was due to retire.

McCabe won back his full pension as part of a settlement of his lawsuit arising from his firing. The settlement agreement vacated that decision, expunged from his personnel folder references to the firing and entitled McCabe, who joined the FBI in 1996, to his full pension.

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According to the IRS website the audits the two men and their wives underwent are part of a program that randomly selects tax returns to examine tax compliance and improve the system.

McCabe, in comments on CNN, where he is a law enforcement analyst, described the two audits as a "coincidence that ... really is almost impossible statistically" and said they raised questions that should be answered. He said it was "appropriate for the IRS to do the responsible thing and look into it and determine whether or not something, you know, went awry in this program."

Comey said in a statement that he could not say whether anything improper happened, "but after learning how unusual this audit was and how badly Trump wanted to hurt me during that time, it made sense to try to figure it out."

A Trump spokeswoman did not respond to a request for comment.

Asked Thursday whether Biden has confidence in Rettig, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre simply noted that his term is set to expire later this year.

"He is going to be up in November, so I will leave it there," Jean-Pierre said.

## Spectacle in Michigan race threatens GOP's bid for governor

By BRIAN SLODYSKO, SARA BURNETT and THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A leading contender for the Republican nomination for governor in Michigan was sued in the 1990s, accused of using racial slurs about Black people in the workplace and sexually harassing his employees.

One of his rivals pleaded not guilty in federal court on Thursday to misdemeanor charges after authorities said he rallied Donald Trump's supporters to storm the U.S. Capitol during the Jan. 6 insurrection. Another candidate is a chiropractor and self-help guru who hawked supplements he falsely claimed treated COVID-19.

And even the contender who has garnered mainstream support had an "admittedly lame" hobby acting in low-budget horror pictures, one of which included a zombie biting off a man's genitals.

In one of the most politically consequential states in the U.S., the Republican primary for governor is shaping up as a battle of whose personal baggage is the least disqualifying. In an otherwise favorable election year for Republicans, the spectacle surrounding the Aug. 2 contest could hobble the party's effort to defeat Democratic incumbent Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in the fall.

"Whitmer can attack every one of them," said Bernie Porn, a Lansing-based pollster with more than three decades experience surveying the state. "There are skeletons in the closet of most of the Republican candidates."

The GOP campaign has been fraught from the start. Two top candidates were kicked off the ballot for submitting false petition signatures, narrowing the field to five contenders.

There's little polling to suggest there's a clear front-runner among the remaining candidates. But Republicans insist Whitmer is still vulnerable this fall given rising prices for gas and food and her close ties to President Joe Biden, whose approval ratings remain low.

The allegations against businessman Kevin Rinke, who ran his family's suburban Detroit auto-dealership empire in the 1990s, are particularly graphic.

Four employees sued in 1992 alleging that Rinke repeatedly made vulgar and belittling sexual remarks to both men and women, creating a hostile work environment that was intended to make them quit.

In an interview with The Associated Press this week, Rinke called the allegations from two separate lawsuits "blatantly false." He acknowledged making payouts to former employees, but said it was less expensive than going to trial on the accusations. Court records indicate Rinke as well as the employees agreed to have the cases dismissed.

On one occasion Rinke is alleged to have said that women "should not be allowed to work in public" because "they are ignorant and stupid" while referring to a female employee with a vulgar term, a lawsuit states.

Court documents state that Rinke also referred to his own genitals as "golden" while threatening to



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sexually assault a used car manager if he didn't "do a good job." If the manager did a "great job," the court documents state, Rinke would have allowed the man to pleasure him sexually.

Much of Rinke's conduct was reported by his personal secretary, who alleged that he would inquire about her underwear, call her at home if she failed to say goodnight and would also phone to ask "which young stud" she was with while speculating about her sex life. Once, when employees were looking at pictures of newborn babies, Rinke commented on how well-endowed one of the baby boys was, the lawsuit states.

Another lawsuit filed in the same year by a Black employee alleged Rinke repeatedly made derogatory racist remarks directed at him during a holiday party in December 1991.

At the party, the lawsuit says, Rinke allegedly asked the employee where the car he drove was stolen from. When the employee responded that he did not steal, Rinke is alleged to have said, "You mean you aren't like the rest?" while using a racial slur. Rinke is accused of using the same racial slur several other times, including one instance in which he repeated a sexual stereotype about Black men's anatomies while encouraging the employee to expose himself to others at the party, according to court documents and the lawyer who represented the employees.

Rinke told the AP that the experience prepared him to run for public office "because in America, you can accuse anybody of anything."

"It wasn't true then. It wasn't true now," he added.

His rivals, however, say the allegations make him unelectable.

"He'll never be governor because Gretchen Whitmer will just beat his brains out," said Fred Wszolek, a longtime adviser to the family of former Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, who is running a super PAC backing Tudor Dixon, another GOP contender.

As an electoral battleground, Michigan has helped determine the winner of the past two presidential races. Trump and his allies sought to overturn the outcome of his 2020 loss in the state but were blocked by courts, and a GOP-led state Senate investigation concluded there was no widespread or systemic fraud.

But Ryan Kelley, a Grand Rapids-area real estate broker, has made election fraud and the lie that Trump won in 2020 a focus of his campaign. He was also recorded on video in Washington during the Jan. 6 insurrection directing a mob of Trump supporters toward a set of stairs leading to the U.S. Capitol. He used his phone to "film the crowd assaulting and pushing past U.S. Capitol police officers" and was part of a group that forced police to retreat, the FBI said. He pleaded not guilty during a court appearance Thursday.

Kelley, who organized armed protests inside the Michigan statehouse in the early days of the pandemic, did not respond to a request for comment made through his campaign. But he and his supporters have questioned the timing of his June arrest, arguing it was politically motivated.

The arrest, however, helped Kelley raise his profile, leading to an appearance on conservative pundit Tucker Carlson's widely watched Fox News program.

"I've seen the support grow tremendously," Kelley said.

Garrett Soldano, meanwhile, used his activism during the pandemic to launch a campaign. Soldano, a Kalamazoo chiropractor, created the Facebook group Michiganders Against Excessive Quarantine which gained roughly 380,000 members before the social media company shut it down amid a crackdown on the spread of misinformation and threats.

As a candidate, he's sought to appeal to social conservatives with an ad denigrating transgender rights and declaring that his preferred pronouns are "conservative, patriot."

Before his rise to prominence, the former Western Michigan University football player was a fire walking instructor and a self-help author of the book "God's True Law: A Parent's Guide to Raising Successful Children." He also hawked the supplement Juice Plus, which he falsely claimed could "dominate" any virus, including COVID-19, and had the added benefit of giving him "great bowel movements."

The Federal Trade Commission issued a letter to the multi-level marketing company that produces the supplement in 2020, warning about the false claims made by those selling Juice Plus, among them Soldano. The company has disavowed any claims that Juice Plus was an effective COVID-19 treatment.

In a statement that did not address his biography, Soldano's campaign said he looks forward to challenging "Queen Gretchen Whitmer."

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Tudor Dixon, the co-host of a conservative online news show, is the only woman running for the Republican nomination. She has garnered considerable Republican establishment support, including the endorsement of the wealthy DeVos family, as well as the anti-abortion group Michigan Right to Life.

Like Soldano, Dixon has also focused on the role she says parents should play in deciding educational curriculum, suggesting schools have become a hotbed of government-sponsored perversion. In social media posts, Dixon has called for school administrators to be prosecuted if it is found that children were provided with "access to sexually explicit" and "pornographic books in our schools."

But just over a decade ago, Dixon moonlighted as an actor in low-budget horror productions that have been criticized as being at odds with her current emphasis on family values.

She had a small role in the 2011 zombie movie *Buddy BeBop Vs. the Living Dead* in which she is eaten alive by zombies. The film, which was filmed in the Kalamazoo area and is still available on Amazon Prime, features one scene in which a zombie consumes the midsection of a pregnant woman. In another, a zombie bites off a man's genitals as he screams.

She also had a starring role in an online TV show called *Transitions*, which is about vampires and was made by the same director. The show has been scrubbed from public view online. But one clip shared with the AP shows a woman starting to undress for a male vampire before Dixon's character, a British vampire named Claire, emerges from a bathroom with a sword and slashes the woman's throat.

James Blair, a strategist for Dixon, downplayed her acting, explaining that the "not-so-entertaining entertainment" was made for adults— not children.

"Tudor's admittedly lame hobby acting from over a decade ago is in no way out of step with her mission to forge a family friendly Michigan," said Blair.

## Former Theranos exec Ramesh Balwani convicted of fraud

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Reporter

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — A jury on Thursday convicted former Theranos executive Ramesh "Sunny" Balwani of collaborating with disgraced Theranos CEO Elizabeth Holmes in a massive fraud involving the blood-testing company that once enthralled Silicon Valley.

The 12 jurors found Balwani guilty on all 12 felony counts of defrauding both Theranos investors and the patients who relied on wildly unreliable blood tests that could have jeopardized their health.

Balwani sat impassively as the verdicts were read in a San Jose, California, court, blinking frequently but rarely looking at the seven women and five men who convicted him.

The outcome puts Balwani and Holmes in similar situations. Holmes was convicted on four counts of investor fraud and conspiracy earlier this year. During that trial, Holmes tearfully accused Balwani of sexually and emotionally abusing her while the two were romantically involved. An attorney for Balwani has vehemently denied those charges.

Both Holmes, 38, and Balwani, 57, face up to 20 years in prison.

After the verdicts, U.S. District Judge Edward Davila raised Balwani's bail to \$750,000 from \$500,000 and set Nov. 15 as his sentencing date. Holmes, who is free on \$500,000 bail, is scheduled to be sentenced Sept. 26.

The dual convictions represent a resounding victory for federal prosecutors, who seized on the Theranos case as a rare opportunity to hold ambitious entrepreneurs accountable for engaging in technological hyperbole while pursuing fame and fortune. In the process, they hoped to discourage the practice of making bold and unproven promises about still-nascent products -- a startup strategy known as "fake it until you make it."

"We are gratified by the jury's hard work and attentiveness to the evidence presented. We appreciate the verdict and look forward to the sentencing proceedings," U.S. Attorney Stephanie Hinds said outside the courthouse.

Balwani didn't respond to requests for comment as he left court with his legal team.

After the verdicts were read and the jury was dismissed, Balwani walked over to his two brothers who were sitting behind him for what appeared to be a solemn discussion. The three stood quietly, heads bowed.

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While Holmes insinuated during her trial that Balwani manipulated her into making poor choices, Balwani's lawyers explicitly sought to shift all the blame for any misconduct squarely on Holmes.

As part of Balwani's defense, the lawyers pointed out that Holmes was not only CEO, but also a Silicon Valley star who persuaded investors to pour nearly \$1 billion into Theranos. Holmes boasted that her company had found a way to scan for hundreds of potential diseases with a device called the Edison that could test just a few drops of blood taken with a finger prick. Such technology could potentially revolutionize healthcare.

But it turned out that the Edison never worked properly, providing faulty test results that Theranos conducted as part of a deal to set up mini labs in Walgreen's pharmacies. The flaws in Theranos' vaunted technology prompted Holmes and Balwani to shift their testing to conventional machines made by other vendors and while drawing vials of blood from patients' veins — a far cry from Holmes' promises.

After committing about \$15 million of his own money to bolster Theranos and then becoming the company's chief operating officer in 2010, Balwani eventually oversaw the blood-testing lab that was delivering the inaccurate results and supervised the Walgreen's deal. That crucial detail may have influenced the jury to convict him of defrauding patients while another jury acquitted Holmes on the same charges.

Balwani also prepared many of the projections about Theranos' future revenue that helped the company raise money from investors. Those forecasts proved to be grossly exaggerated.

Unlike Holmes, who spent seven days on the witness stand during her trial, Balwani didn't testify in his own defense. After Holmes' trial, jurors who were interviewed by the media said they found her to be likeable if not entirely credible.

"The reason he didn't testify is probably because he knows he doesn't have Elizabeth's charisma," said Jill Huntley Taylor, a longtime jury consultant who also assists with trial strategy.

Balwani's decision not to tell his side of the story left jurors to make their decision based solely on the evidence, which included testimony from witnesses who depicted him as an often abrasive executive.

"Just because the jurors didn't hear from Balwani didn't mean they couldn't form opinions of him," Huntley Taylor said.

Balwani's defense mirrored Holmes's in one key aspect: Both depicted the pair as tireless workers who believed so deeply in Theranos' technology that they never sold their respective stakes in the Palo Alto, California, company. At one point in 2014, Holmes' fortune was estimated at \$4.5 billion while Balwani's Theranos holdings were valued at \$500 million.

But everything began to unravel in late 2015 after a series of explosive articles in The Wall Street Journal exposed rampant problems with Theranos' technology. By May 2016, Holmes had dumped Balwani as her business and romantic partner. Holmes is now the mother of an infant son fathered by her current partner, Billy Evans, who was by her side through most of her trial.

## **Injured Nadal out of Wimbledon; Kyrgios advances to final**

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Rafael Nadal withdrew from Wimbledon because of a torn abdominal muscle on Thursday, a day before he was supposed to play Nick Kyrgios in the semifinals.

It is the first time since 1931 that a man pulled out of the oldest Grand Slam tournament before a semi-final or final.

"I made my decision because I believe that I can't win two matches under these circumstances," Nadal said at a news conference at the All England Club. "I can't serve. It's not only that I can't serve at the right speed, it's that I can't do the normal movement to serve."

The 22-time major champion sighed occasionally while answering questions in English, then Spanish, for more than 20 minutes total. He twice described himself as "very sad."

Nadal said trying to continue to compete could make the injury worse.

The only other time in his career that Nadal gave a walkover to an opponent by pulling out of a Grand Slam tournament prior to a match came at the 2016 French Open, when he withdrew before the third

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round because of an injured left wrist.

The 40th-ranked Kyrgios, a 27-year-old from Australia, advanced to his first title match at a major tournament and becomes the first unseeded men's finalist at Wimbledon since Mark Philippoussis, who lost to Roger Federer in 2003.

"I hope your recovery goes well and we all hope to see you healthy soon," Kyrgios wrote in an Instagram post addressed to Nadal.

Kyrgios will meet either three-time defending champion and No. 1 seed Novak Djokovic or No. 9 Cam Norrie of Britain for the championship on Sunday; their semifinal will be played Friday.

The second-seeded Nadal, a 36-year-old from Spain, is 19-0 in Grand Slam action in 2022, including trophies at the Australian Open in January and the French Open in June. That put him halfway to a calendar-year Grand Slam for the first time in his career.

Nadal has been bothered by a stomach muscle for about a week, and the pain became nearly unbearable in the first set of his 4-hour, 21-minute victory via fifth-set tiebreaker against Taylor Fritz in the quarterfinals on Wednesday.

After that match, Nadal said he had considered stopping before it was over — and could not be certain whether he would feel well enough to play again Friday.

He wore two strips of athletic tape on his lower stomach and took a medical timeout to take painkilling pills; his father and sister motioned from the stands for him to quit.

On Thursday's off day, Nadal went to the All England Club for a light practice session. He was signed up on the official schedule to train on one of the competition courts but did not show up there, instead opting for practice courts to which fans don't have access.

Mostly content to hit forehands and backhands, Nadal did attempt a few serves — the part of his game that revealed the most obvious inability to play with full force and, he said, caused the most discomfort against Fritz. Those practice serves Thursday were generally tapped in, by Nadal's standards, not with any of the body-torquing effort he usually uses.

"I was thinking during the whole day about the decision to make," Nadal said.

It's not far from what went on with Nadal at Roland Garros, where he took repeated injections to numb the chronic pain in his left foot and insisted he had no idea when he might reach the point of not being able to take the court.

He tried a new treatment after leaving Paris, and that worked well enough, Nadal said, to allow him to walk without limping.

His level of play through five matches on Wimbledon's grass was such that he thought he had a chance to win a third title at the tournament, after those in 2008 and 2010.

The injury changed things, of course.

"I don't want to go out there, not be competitive enough to play at the level that I need to play to achieve my goal," he said.

Nadal said he thought he might be sidelined for about a month or so. The year's last Grand Slam tournament, the U.S. Open, starts Aug. 29.

## One scandal too many: British PM Boris Johnson resigns

By DANICA KIRKA, JILL LAWLESS and SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced his resignation Thursday after droves of top government officials quit over the latest scandal to engulf him, marking an end to three tumultuous years in which he tried to bluster his way through one ethical lapse after another.

Months of defiance ended almost with a shrug as Johnson stood outside No. 10 Downing St. and conceded that his party wanted him gone.

"Them's the breaks," he said.

The brash, 58-year-old politician who took Britain out of the European Union and steered it through COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine was brought down by one scandal too many — this one involving his

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appointment of a politician who had been accused of sexual misconduct.

The messiest of prime ministers did not leave cleanly. Johnson stepped down immediately as Conservative Party leader but said he would remain as prime minister until the party chooses his successor. The timetable for that process will be announced next week. The last leadership contest took six weeks.

But many want him to go now, with some Conservative politicians expressing fear he could do mischief even as a caretaker prime minister.

"It's very difficult to see how Boris Johnson, given the character that he is, is going to be able to govern for three months in quiet humility and contrition," said George Freeman, who resigned as science minister on Thursday.

Among the possible candidates to succeed Johnson: former Health Secretary Sajid Javid, former Treasury chief Rishi Sunak, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Defense Secretary Ben Wallace.

About 50 Cabinet secretaries, ministers and lower-level officials quit the government over the past few days because of the latest scandal, often castigating the prime minister as lacking integrity.

The mass resignations stalled the business of some parliamentary committees because there were no ministers available to speak on the government's behalf.

Johnson clung to power for days, defiantly telling lawmakers on Wednesday that he had a "colossal mandate" from the voters and intended to get on with the business of governing.

But he was forced to concede defeat Thursday morning after one of his closest allies, newly appointed Treasury chief Nadhim Zahawi, publicly told him to resign for the good of the country.

"In the last few days, I tried to persuade my colleagues that it would be eccentric to change governments when we're delivering so much and when we have such a vast mandate," Johnson said. "I regret not to have been successful in those arguments, and of course it's painful not to be able to see through so many ideas and projects myself."

He said it is "clearly now the will of the parliamentary Conservative Party that there should be a new leader of that party and therefore a new prime minister."

Critics said the speech showed Johnson, to the end, refusing to take responsibility for or admit his mistakes.

Many Britons reacted to news of his resignation with relief and surprise, given his habit of digging in.

"It felt like he can just keep on going and keep on ignoring it, so I was bit surprised this morning when saw it on my phone," Himmat Dalyway, an investment trader in his 20s, said outside an Underground station in London. "Are you still 100% sure that he is going?"

As Johnson gathered his cobbled-together Cabinet for a meeting after his resignation announcement, he promised not to rock the boat in his remaining weeks. He told members the government would not "seek to implement new policies or make major changes of direction."

It was a humiliating defeat for Johnson, who not only pulled off Brexit but was also credited with rolling out one of the world's most successful mass vaccination campaigns to combat COVID-19.

But the perpetually ruffled, shaggy-haired leader known for answering his critics with bombast and bluster was also dogged by allegations he behaved as if the rules did not apply to him.

He managed to remain in power despite accusations 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 COVID-19 lockdown rules.

When allegations of Downing Street parties emerged, Johnson told lawmakers "there was no party" and no rules were broken. But when photos of the prime minister raising a glass in front of a group of people surfaced, critics, some of them inside the Conservative Party, said Johnson had lied to Parliament — traditionally a resigning matter.

The prime minister was fined by police over the parties and survived a no-confidence vote last month in Parliament in which 41% of Conservative lawmakers tried to oust him.

Johnson became prime minister in July 2019, succeeding Theresa May, who resigned after Parliament rejected the Brexit agreement she negotiated with the EU. Johnson pushed his own Brexit deal through in an often messy and turbulent debate.

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With his mop of unruly blond hair, he often looked like a schoolboy who had just rolled out of bed and run to class with his pajamas under his clothes.

In his rise to power he showed many of the same habits and abilities that would carry him far but also spell his downfall: He was an ebullient, attention-loving mayor of London; a journalist who was fired for making up a quote and filed exaggerated stories about EU excesses; and a politician with an Eton- and Oxford-honed talent for colorful oratory and the thrust and parry of debate.

He became known for his light regard for the truth and his glib and offensive remarks. He called Papua New Guineans cannibals and likened Muslim women who wear face-covering veils to "letter boxes."

Recent disclosures that Johnson knew about sexual misconduct allegations against a Conservative lawmaker before he promoted him to a senior position in government proved to be one scandal too many.

The crisis began when Chris Pincher resigned as deputy chief whip amid accusations that he had groped two men at a private club. That triggered a series of reports about past allegations against Pincher.

Johnson offered shifting explanations about what he knew and when he knew it. That just heightened the sense that the prime minister couldn't be trusted.

Key Cabinet members Javid and Sunak, who were responsible, respectively, for fighting COVID-19 and inflation, resigned within minutes of each other Tuesday. That set off the wave of departures by their colleagues.

Now with a leadership election upon them, the Conservatives will have to decide whether they can stomach Johnson as a caretaker leader, a job that normally entails saying little and doing nothing.

"To be honest, I think a lot of the public will want to see him gone straightaway," said Tim Bale, a professor of politics at Queen Mary, University of London. "You know, they don't want to see him hanging around like a bad smell in Downing Street."

## **Biden trip promotes budding Arab-Israeli security ties**

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Once-unthinkable coordination between Israeli and Arab militaries is in the spotlight as Joe Biden makes his first Middle East trip as president, heightening debates over whether the U.S.-backed initiative between former enemies strengthens defenses against Iran or makes a regional war more likely.

Israeli-Arab security overtures have multiplied since the 2020 Abraham Accords negotiated under the Trump administration normalized relations between Israel and four Arab League nations. They have grown further since the Pentagon switched coordination with Israel from U.S. European Command to Central Command, or CENTCOM, last year. The move grouped Israel's military with former Arab opponents, including Saudi Arabia and other nations that have yet to recognize Israel.

Encouraging Arab nations to strengthen security ties and overall relations with Israel is one of the aims of Biden's travels to Israel and Saudi Arabia next week, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Thursday.

Already this year, robed Gulf Arab princes and other dignitaries watched from the deck of a warship as the U.S. launched training that had Israeli frogmen, sailors and defense technology splashing through the Red Sea in one of the increasing Israeli exercises alongside U.S. and Arab militaries.

An Israeli liaison officer is set to be assigned to U.S. Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain, a Gulf nation that recognized Israel only in 2020. Arab and Israeli defense officials increasingly consult around the region, exploring areas for security coordination and how to align the expertise, intelligence and weapons to implement it.

Republican and Democratic lawmakers introduced legislation last month that would direct the Pentagon to shape a joint air defense system for Israel and Arab nations against Iranian ballistic missiles and drones.

Kirby said Thursday the U.S. is stressing coordination of regional air defense systems as an early step in the alliance "so there really is effective coverage to deal with Iran," Kirby said.

CENTCOM members also are working together on maritime security, an Israeli official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the still largely behind-the-scenes Arab and Israeli security consultations.

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The idea is that CENTCOM can coordinate among these nations and “realize that vision of having regional defense,” the Israeli official said.

Biden has defended his upcoming meeting with Saudi rulers he had once shunned because of human rights abuses by saying he is acting partly at Israel’s request.

The Arab-Israeli security coordination is deepening frustrations of Palestinians, who already feel they were sold out by the Abraham Accords, which did nothing to end Israeli occupation.

American officials until now have given few details of the budding Israeli-Arab cooperation, mindful that Arab publics may oppose embracing a longtime enemy. The Pentagon declined a request for comment on this story. The Saudi embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

For Arab and Israeli leaders, “the No. 1 motivator is the common threat they both perceive from Iran and Iranian proxies,” said Daniel Shapiro, a former ambassador to Israel and a prominent advocate of the emerging coalition between Israel and individual Arab nations.

Especially to the extent Saudi Arabia comes on board, the security ties under CENTCOM raise prospects of a “truly unified Sunni Arab coalition to stand with Israel” against Shiite-led Iran, Shapiro said.

Israel considers Iran its greatest enemy, citing its nuclear program, military activities and support for hostile militant groups.

Gulf Arab states allied to the U.S. long have been wary of Iran’s support of militias and proxies. While lacking American-made sophisticated weaponry, Iran has an unmatched arsenal of ballistic missiles, drones and other arms.

Promoting greater regional integration with Israel’s modern military could soothe Saudi and Emirati complaints the U.S. is not doing enough to protect them from Iran. It potentially accustoms Arab nations to working with Israel, despite Israel’s failure to reach the kind of political resolution with the Palestinians that Arab nations long demanded as a condition for recognizing Israel.

The U.S. also hopes the coordination will mean that regional actors will take more responsibility for their own security, allowing the U.S. to ease its decades-long safeguarding of Arab oilfields and turn more attention to Russia and China.

And in the short term of U.S. elections, the effort helps the White House emphasize the security aspect of a potentially humbling presidential trip that’s intended partly to appeal to Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries for more oil, with no guarantee of success.

Opponents accuse Israel of exaggerating the Iranian threat.

“They want to get recognition from Arab states,” said Vali Nasr, an Iran and Middle East expert at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and a former adviser to the Obama administration. “And Iran is their ticket to that.”

Nasr said the risks include igniting Middle East hostility by uniting and enabling the most hawkish enemies of Iran, including Israel and the United Arab Emirates, and by allowing the deep grievances underlying Israeli-Palestinian hostility to fester.

The coordination “looks like the U.S. is handing off security to Israel in order to focus on Ukraine and China,” Nasr said. He said this could backfire by inflaming regional tensions that draw the United States back in.

Even stronger warnings came from now-Secretary of State Antony Blinken, in a 2017 article against President Donald Trump’s promotion of an “Arab NATO.” A Sunni Arab security alliance “could potentially pull the United States into the sectarian struggle between Sunni and Shia,” Blinken wrote then.

The current initiative under CENTCOM is no Arab NATO, and instead promotes coordination among Israel and Arab partners to counteract threats from Iran, a U.S. official said, speaking under condition of anonymity to discuss the security alliance.

An open working relationship with Saudi Arabia would be a big prize for Israel in its increasing regional integration. Saudi Arabia has been most reticent publicly about any cooperation with Israel. Observers and advocates on all sides of the security partnerships said they expect no big breakthroughs during Biden’s trip, although it is unclear whether the parties were trying to play down expectations.

Top Saudi officials have signaled their support for CENTCOM drawing Israel’s powerful modern military

into the fold with Arab nations. Visiting the United States this spring, Deputy Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman made a point of visiting CENTCOM headquarters in Florida, inquiring about coordinating regional air defense capabilities and other steps.

## Yellowstone floods reveal forecasting flaws in warming world

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 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.

Interior Secretary Deb Haaland was scheduled to visit Yellowstone Friday to survey the damage and ongoing repairs.

Within a matter of hours on June 12, 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



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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.

Smith says her partner keeps track of the weather on his computer and they were aware rain was coming and that the creek was running high. But they were not aware of flooding threat when they went to bed the night before, she said.

In a scramble to save belongings including her violins, the music teacher slipped on the wet kitchen floor and fell, shattering a bone in her arm. Smith recalls biting back tears and trudging 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 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 in some areas has increased up to 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 — would have an approximately 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 can get 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."

## Red flags missed: How July 4 suspect slipped through system

By BERNARD CONDON and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

Illinois' "red-flag" law could have stopped the suspect in the Independence Day parade shooting from buying a gun or at least delayed the purchase of the weapon he's accused of using to kill seven people and wound dozens.

Police in the Chicago suburb of Highland Park were called twice to the home of Robert Crimo III in 2019 — once after he tried to commit suicide and again when he allegedly threatened to "kill everyone" in his family. On either occasion, they could have immediately exercised part of the law that allowed them to seek a restraining order to prevent Crimo from buying guns for anywhere from 14 days to six months.

Obtaining such a delay could have bought critical time for police to seek more information to ask a judge for a longer order preventing a gun purchase.

But Highland Park police did not seek such an order, and they were not required to do so. And just four months after the reported threat that prompted officers to seize 16 knives, a sword and a dagger from Crimo's home, Illinois State Police approved him for a firearms permit. The agency explained the decision in part by saying that it didn't consider him a "clear and present danger" because he didn't consider himself such a danger.

"When police went to the home and asked the individual if he felt like harming himself or others, he responded no," the state police said in a statement this week, adding "importantly" that Crimo's father assured officers that the collection of knives seized from the home was his and would be stored safely.

That fateful decision in early 2020 to issue the then-19-year-old Crimo a firearms permit allowed him to legally purchase five guns, including the Smith & Wesson semi-automatic rifle authorities say he used from his rooftop perch to unleash more than 80 rounds on a Fourth of July parade below.

The episode highlights how, even in a state with some of the nation's most restrictive gun laws, opportunities can be missed to keep weapons from dangerous and disturbed people. While the authorities who crossed paths with Crimo contend their hands were tied by the law, several people familiar with Illinois' statutes told The Associated Press there were more than enough ways to block him from getting guns.

"Laws don't mean much unless they're followed," said Sean Holihan, the state legislative director for Giffords, a gun safety advocacy group. "This fell through the cracks. The law was written to make sure this wouldn't happen and it still did."

Added Nicholas Suplina, senior vice president for law and policy at Everytown for Gun Safety: "Red-flag laws are designed for precisely this kind of situation. ... It's an important tool in the gun violence prevention toolbox. But you got to take the tool out and use it."

A tool Highland Park police did make use of, they said, was the "clear and present danger" report filed with the state after their two visits to his home in 2019. Such reports are intended to alert state police to people who, if allowed to buy a gun, may pose an "imminent threat of substantial bodily harm to themselves or others."

Highland Park police did not respond to requests for comment.

Crimo's warning signs also included a voluminous and disturbing social media footprint that went back years and somehow escaped law enforcement scrutiny despite the fact that the aspiring rapper had thousands of followers on YouTube and songs on Spotify that collectively had millions of plays.

Stick-thin, dark-haired and heavily tattooed on his neck and face, Crimo went by the stage name Awake the Rapper and left a trail of clues in his videos of a fascination with violence, guns and suicide. One video titled "Toy Soldier" showed a cartoon figure brandishing a rifle on a city street, followed by drawings of a victim's chest spurting blood and police cars closing in.

In online chat rooms that reveled in mass murder and gore, Crimo apparently also posted video of a beheading and grainy news footage of a politician's infamous public suicide.

"Like a sleepwalker ... I know what I have to do," Crimo narrated in another rap video posted late last year. "Everything has led up to this. Nothing can stop me, even myself."

"We were not made aware of these videos," Christopher Covelli, deputy chief of the Lake County Sheriff's Office, told reporters.

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For its part, Illinois State Police defended the issuance of a gun permit for Crimo, noting that Highland Park police had declined to arrest the teen after his alleged threat in September 2019 because they could not meet the legal hurdle of “probable cause.” To deny a gun permit, they said, requires an even higher legal standard — “preponderance of evidence” — that he is a clear and present danger.

State police also noted in a statement that even though an unidentified family member reported the threat and spoke of a fear of returning home, family members denied Crimo was dangerous and didn’t want to press charges.

“When police went to the house, both the individual and his mother disputed the threat of violence. The individual told police he did not feel like hurting himself or others and was offered mental health resources,” the statement said.

Several months before, in April 2019, Crimo attempted to commit suicide by machete, according to a police report obtained by AP that noted a “history of attempts.” Other police reports show officers had visited the Crimo home frequently over the years for domestic violence disputes and other incidents.

Several experts described Crimo as the epitome of a “clear and present danger,” defined under Illinois law as a person who “communicates a serious threat of physical violence” or “demonstrates threatening physical or verbal behavior.”

But others weren’t so sure, noting that police are limited in how much they can act when an accuser reporting violent threats doesn’t want to press charges and family members are uncooperative.

Even if an order had been issued, it’s not a given that a judge would have extended the order beyond six months.

Robert Berlin, state attorney for DuPage County, the most active issuer of red-flag orders in Illinois, said that the dozens of cases he’s overseen almost always include family members assisting investigators.

And while Berlin declined to comment on Highland Park police actions, he said that he couldn’t recall a red-flag order ever issued in his county against someone who was not already in possession of a gun and was aimed solely at blocking future purchases.

After receiving his permit in January 2020, Crimo passed four background checks when buying firearms that year and the next, the state police noted, adding that the only offense that surfaced in his criminal history was a 2016 ordinance violation for possession of tobacco.

Crimo, now 21, was arrested after disguising himself in women’s clothing to make his escape. He now faces seven counts of first-degree murder. While investigators say he confessed to targeting parade-goers, they have not determined a motive.

Katherine Schweit, a retired FBI agent who spearheaded the agency’s active shooter program, said Crimo’s case underscores how difficult it can be to prevent such shootings, even with plenty of warning signs.

“It’s easy to see in the rearview mirror all of the pieces that tie together to an individual who clearly was on a trajectory toward violence,” Schweit said.

“But nobody was able to put it all together. ... Police and schools and friends and neighbors handled one tiny piece of this at a time.”

## Supreme Court Justice Breyer has options as a retiree

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Until last week when he swore in Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, his successor on the Supreme Court, Justice Stephen Breyer had a rigorous, intellectually challenging job with the highest of stakes. Now the 83-year-old retiree has no briefs to read and no opinions to write.

As a retired justice, Breyer can maintain an office at the Supreme Court if he wants to and also gets a clerk to help him. But like other retired justices he also gets to chart his own path based on his personality and interests. One example: Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, the court’s first female justice, in retirement founded a group that teaches students civics through computer games.

Here are some things Breyer might do in retirement:

JUDGE

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Just because Breyer has retired doesn't mean he has to stop hearing cases. A 1937 law allows retired Supreme Court justices to continue to hear and decide cases on lower federal courts, a practice called "sitting by designation." A number of retired justices have continued to sit on federal courts of appeal, the level below the Supreme Court, where judges hear cases in three-judge panels.

Justice David Souter, for example, has participated in nearly 500 cases as a judge on the Boston-based federal appeals court since his 2009 retirement from the Supreme Court. Those who know Breyer say they wouldn't be surprised if he joins Souter in not entirely hanging up his robe.

The court Souter sits on, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, would have a particular draw. Breyer was a judge there for 14 years, including four years as the chief judge, before becoming a justice. He was deeply involved in designing the courthouse itself, which was completed in 1998, and he still has a home in Cambridge in addition to one in Washington, D.C.

Breyer has a role as a different kind of judge too. For more than a decade he has been on the jury that awards the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize.

## TEACH

Before Breyer's title was "judge," it was "professor." Breyer, a graduate of Stanford and Harvard law, joined the faculty of his alma mater Harvard in 1967 and taught there for years.

As a professor Breyer was an expert in administrative law, the law surrounding government agencies. Law schools still use a textbook he co-authored. One of his students later became a court colleague. Justice Elena Kagan has called him "my favorite professor."

It'd be easy for Breyer to return to the classroom if that's what he wanted. A number of the current justices teach law school classes, either during the year or during the summer. International locations are particularly popular summer teaching locales — a way to get out of Washington. France might be an especially attractive location for Breyer, who speaks French. The Supreme Court's press office occasionally distributed copies of speeches he gave in French.

## WRITE

The author of seven books, Breyer has been one of the more prolific Supreme Court authors. Breyer's most recent book, "The Authority of the Court and the Peril of Politics," was published in 2021. It was a result of a talk he gave at Harvard about the power of the court and some of the challenges facing it.

Other retired justices have continued to write and to speak to groups, as Breyer has done frequently while a justice. The late justice John Paul Stevens, who served with Breyer for 16 years, published a memoir a year after leaving the court and followed that with a book detailing six amendments he believed should be made to the Constitution, including clarifying what he believed was a limited Second Amendment right to bear arms. He later called for the Second Amendment's repeal.

## OTHER PURSUITS

Breyer seemingly has no shortage of other interests to keep him occupied. In 2020, in an interview with The Wall Street Journal about how he was keeping busy during the early days of the coronavirus pandemic he mentioned daily 2-mile runs, meditation, reading nonfiction and French mysteries and family movie nights with his wife, one of his daughters and three of his six grandchildren, who were living with him in Cambridge. He also noted he was sharing cooking duties and detailed a recipe for an Italian pot roast.

In a statement after Breyer announced his retirement, Chief Justice John Roberts noted Breyer was a "reliable antidote to dead airtime" at lunches the justices share. Topics of interest ran from modern architecture to French cinema, Roberts noted, adding that he also had a "surprisingly comprehensive collection of riddles and knock-knock jokes."

## 'Fighting for one day': Louisiana abortion clinic still open

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

SHREVEPORT, La. (AP) — Fielding a call from a woman seeking an abortion, the director of Hope Medical Group for Women tried to answer as best she could.

Yes, federal protections for abortion had been overturned, she said. The clinic was still open — but there's a waiting list and a court hearing on Friday that could change everything, she added.

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"We are still fighting," clinic administrator Kathaleen Pittman told the woman before hanging up Wednesday.

By Pittman's own description, you have to be an optimist to work in abortion services. Now, with confused patients calling for help and a looming court date threatening to put an end to almost all abortions in the state, that optimism is being tested like never before.

For years, Louisiana's abortion clinics have operated under increasing layers of restrictions designed to limit who can get an abortion and when. Then the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that provided federal protection for abortions, leaving the decision up to individual states.

Like many states Louisiana has a trigger law designed to immediately halt abortions if *Roe* is overturned. But nearly two weeks after the June 24 ruling, the Shreveport clinic was still open and providing abortions to patients from all over Louisiana, as well as states like neighboring Texas and Mississippi.

The clinic filed for a temporary restraining order to allow the state's three clinics to remain open, arguing that multiple trigger provisions in the law make it unclear exactly when the ban takes effect, and that the law's medical exceptions are unclear.

A judge in New Orleans granted the temporary measure pending a Friday court hearing. The state's attorney general appealed directly to the Louisiana Supreme Court but on Wednesday the court declined to immediately intervene, leaving the abortion ban on hold.

At Hope, which is open Monday through Saturday, doctors perform abortions three days a week. The other days, doctors hold consultations with patients, who are also given an ultrasound. There is a state-mandated 72-hour waiting period between the consultation and an abortion.

There were about 20 consultations Wednesday — a relatively light load, Pittman said. She attributed that to the confusion surrounding future abortion access in the state, and patients worried they would come for a consultation but not be able to get an abortion.

Outside, volunteers escorted clients into the clinic — giving them tips like backing into parking spots so protesters have a harder time getting their license plate numbers. On the sidewalk, two anti-abortion protesters handed out plastic bags containing a paper rose, a scrunchy and flyers encouraging women not to have abortions.

The ticking clock of the legal battle is not lost on the staff.

Nurse Charla Roshto has worked at the clinic for over a dozen years. Despite the leak of a draft opinion weeks earlier, she didn't expect justices would go so far as to overturn *Roe*. She said she had to look at the news on a colleague's phone to believe it.

Now it's hard to figure out what to tell patients, she said. She used to be able to advise them clearly on when they'd be able to schedule their abortion and now she can't promise anything. She can direct them to websites and hopefully funds that can help them pay for travel to get an out-of-state abortion.

But, she said, even that can be hard because funders are concerned about the legal ramifications of helping patients cross state lines. She tells them to stay positive and keep their spirits up and, pointing to the calendar hanging on the wall, says that hopefully come Saturday the clinic will still be providing abortions.

After *Roe* was overturned Roshto had to call patients and tell them that their abortion was canceled. Then when the temporary restraining order was put in place, Roshto called them back to reschedule. She was relieved when she saw many were able to come back.

But even with all this uncertainty, Roshto says that each day the clinic is open and providing abortions is another person they can help.

"If we're fighting for one day, then we're fighting for one day," she said. "Some of these people really need that one day."

Caught up in the legal back-and-forth was a patient from Texas who drove nearly two hours for her consultation Wednesday. She didn't want to be identified due to the stigma still surrounding abortion.

She said she'd been in New Orleans for a family reunion when the news came down that *Roe* was overturned. She and her partner watched for over an hour, grappling with what it meant for them and others in a similar position. She already has two children — ages 9 and 13 — and said she and her partner weighed whether to keep this pregnancy, but finally decided it wasn't the right time for another child. Child care is

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so expensive, she said, and even baby formula is scarce.

Eight years ago, she'd gotten pregnant and at that time there was no way she felt able to have a baby so she'd come to Hope for an abortion. This time, she's prepared to keep the pregnancy if it turns out she can't get one.

She explored going to Kansas or California but the cost and the hassle were too much. But she's worried about other women possibly in much more desperate situations than she is.

"I feel like women should have rights, you know, my body, my choice. ... I stand by that 100%," she said.

In a small room, technician Nikki Jordan was giving patients ultrasounds. She has worked at the clinic since 1999; one of her daughters also works here. She empathizes with those coming in.

Jordan had her first child when she was 16. She had strong support from her mother but says not everyone has that. If women are no longer able to get legal abortions Jordan worries about what they'll do to themselves, things they'll find on the internet to terminate a pregnancy.

Working at the clinic, Jordan says she's found her purpose— doing her "part in the world," as she puts it. She tells patients her story, listens to theirs, and lets them know they're not going to hell for their choice.

"I just believe in a higher purpose. And I believe in what's right," she said.

When the Supreme Court decision came down, Haley Brand, Hope's director of patient advocacy, said her hand was shaking so much she spilled her coffee. But like everyone in the clinic, she's not ready to throw in the towel.

She said everyone at Hope, whether they work full-time or part-time or volunteer believes in reproductive justice and the power to decide one's own life course. She has been fielding phone calls from patients who are panicked or angry or just glad someone is answering the phone at the clinic.

"It's been a rollercoaster of events. It's been a rollercoaster of emotions," she said.

"But in 10 years, when I look back on everything that's happened over the last two weeks ... I will know that we did the best that we can for the people that we're trying to help. And I have no regrets over that."

## Florida man sentenced in death threat to Minnesota Rep. Omar

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — A federal judge sentenced a former Trump supporter to three years of probation and a \$7,000 fine for sending an email threatening to kill Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota and three other congresswomen.

David George Hannon, 67, also must undergo mental and substance abuse treatment and have no contact with Omar or Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, according to a report in the Tampa Bay Times.

Hannon, who pleaded guilty in April to threatening a federal official, sent the email after the four Democratic lawmakers held a news conference in July 2019 in response to criticism from former President Donald Trump, who said they should "go back" to the "crime-infested places" from which they came.

"He was doing that because Trump told him to," his daughter, Elizabeth Hannon Dillon, told the judge during the hearing on Wednesday. "He was a Trump supporter and now he regrets it."

This threat was "heinous and inappropriate in every regard," U.S. District Judge Kathryn Kimball Mizelle said. "This sort of behavior has no place in our society."

Sentencing guidelines called for about 10 months in prison, but Mizelle noted that a probation officer recommended against prison time, along with Hannon's expressions of remorse, lack of prior trouble, his age and health problems.

"I'm very, very sorry and very remorseful about my behavior that night," Hannon said as he stood before the judge, stooped and trembling.

Hannon emailed Omar's campaign with a subject line that read: "Your Dead You Radical Muslim," writing that Omar should get more security or she and the other women would be "six feet under."

Omar's staff immediately notified federal agents, but the FBI didn't visit Hannon at his Sarasota home until 19 months had passed and Trump was out of office.

Hannon admitted that he disparaged Omar's Islamic faith, but the judge declined to apply a hate crime

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adjustment to Hannon's sentence, which could have increased the sentencing guidelines.

"I do have remorse that I did target Ms. Omar," Hannon said. "But I don't have any hatred toward anyone whether their race, creed, color or nationality. This is the United States of America and whatever people do and say, they have a right to do that. But I had no right to write that email."

## With US dollar nearly equal to euro, impact is being felt

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. dollar has been surging so much that it's nearly equal in value to the euro for the first time in 20 years. That trend, though, threatens to hurt American companies because their goods become more expensive for foreign buyers. If U.S. exports were to weaken as a result, so, too, would the already-slumping U.S. economy.

Yet there's a positive side for Americans, too: A stronger buck provides modest relief from runaway inflation because the vast array of goods that are imported to the U.S. — from cars and computers to toys and medical equipment — become less expensive. A strengthened dollar also delivers bargains to American tourists sightseeing in Europe, from Amsterdam to Athens.

The U.S. Dollar Index, which measures the value of American money against six major foreign currencies, has jumped nearly 12% this year to a two-decade high. The euro is now worth just under \$1.02.

The dollar is climbing mainly because the Federal Reserve is raising interest rates more aggressively than central banks in other countries are in its effort to cool the hottest U.S. inflation in four decades. The Fed's rate hikes cause yields on U.S. Treasuries to rise, which attracts investors seeking richer yields than they can get elsewhere in the world. This increased demand for dollar-denominated securities, in turn, boosts the dollar's value.

Also contributing to the currency's appeal, notes Rubeela Farooqi of High Frequency Economics, is that despite concern about a potential recession in the United States, "the U.S. economy is on firmer footing compared to Europe."

Not since July 15, 2002, has the euro been valued at less than one dollar. On that day, the euro blew past parity with the dollar as huge U.S. trade deficits and accounting scandals on Wall Street pulled down the U.S. currency.

This year, the euro has sagged largely because of growing fears that the 19 countries that use the currency will sink into recession. The war in Ukraine has magnified oil and gas prices and punished European consumers and businesses.

In particular, Russia's recent reduction in natural gas supplies has sent prices skyrocketing and raised fears of a total cutoff that could force governments to ration energy to industry to spare homes, schools and hospitals. (European leaders have denounced Moscow's move as an effort to blackmail Europe for backing Ukraine and embracing Western sanctions in the aftermath of Russia's invasion.)

Economists at Berenberg bank have calculated that at current rates of consumption the added gas bill would be 220 billion euros (\$224 billion) over 12 months, or a whopping 1.5% of annual economic output.

"This war is a 'body-blow' to Europe," Robin Brooks, chief economist at the Institute of International Finance banking trade group, tweeted this week. "It undercuts Germany's growth model that's based on cheap Russian energy. Europe is facing a seismic shift, and (the) euro needs to fall to reflect that."

A European slowdown could eventually give the European Central Bank less leeway to raise rates and moderate economic growth to address its own inflation problem. The ECB has announced that it will raise its key interest rate by a quarter-point when it meets later this month and possibly by up to a half point in September. A weaker euro feeds inflationary pressures by making imports to Europe more expensive.

Analysts at UniCredit said global recession fears were a prime driver in foreign exchange markets "amid the general view that the Fed might ultimately have more opportunity than many other central banks" to raise rates. The analysts also noted the dollar's role as a globally recognized safe haven, in light of recent financial market turmoil, as another factor that's boosting demand for the buck.

In the meantime, the dollar's rise is complicating an already uncertain outlook for the United States, the

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world's biggest economy. On the one hand, the stronger greenback makes foreign goods less expensive for Americans and eases inflationary pressures. But not by much.

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics calculates that a 10% rise in the dollar over the past year, against the currencies of its trading partners, reduced inflation by about 0.4 percentage point. Though Zandi calls that a "meaningful" impact, he notes that consumer prices have soared 8.6% over the past year, the biggest year-over-year gain since 1981.

And a sturdier currency takes a toll on U.S. companies that do business overseas. For one thing, it erodes the profits of multinational companies that rely on overseas sales. The stronger dollar makes their foreign revenue worth less when they convert it to dollars and bring it home the United States. Microsoft, for example, last month downgraded the outlook for its April-June earnings "due to unfavorable foreign exchange rate movement."

Worse, a stronger dollar makes U.S.-made products more expensive in overseas markets, while giving foreign products a price edge in the United States.

"The stronger dollar," Zandi said, "weighs on (economic) growth as it results in reduced exports, more imports and thus a wider trade deficit."

Indeed, a growing trade gap subtracted 3.2 percentage points from U.S. economic growth in the January-March period. That was the main reason why the nation's gross domestic product — the broadest gauge of economic output — shrank at a 1.6% annual rate in the first quarter.

Economists say the risk of recession is already rising in the United States as the Fed raises borrowing costs and consumers deplete the savings they built up during the pandemic.

"The strength of the dollar," said Eswar Prasad, an economist at Cornell University and the Brookings Institution, "will certainly do no favors for U.S. exporters."

## Higher gas prices hurt pockets, make small dent in emissions

By SETH BORENSTEIN and TOM KRISHER Associated Press

As Congress and now the Supreme Court stymie the Biden administration's efforts to curb climate change, one thing the president doesn't want - sky high gas prices - actually is nibbling away at emissions of heat-trapping gas.

Gas prices in much of the United States shot past the \$5 a gallon mark last month before a slight drop, and Americans have responded by driving a bit less, two sets of data show. June gas sales are about 5% below pre-pandemic 2019 levels and 2.6% below a year ago, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Americans in April, the last month data was available, drove 6% fewer miles than the same month in 2019, according to transportation analyst Michael Sivak, a former University of Michigan professor who is a long-time tracker of driving and car-buying habits. That 6% drop is tiny compared to the 40% plunge in driving miles in April 2020 as the pandemic kicked in.

Yet, a 6% drop in driving roughly translates to only a 1% drop in overall U.S. carbon emissions, Sivak said. The U.S. climate goal is to cut carbon emissions in half by 2030 compared to 2005 levels.

"High fuel prices are a really difficult thing because they're a double-edged sword," said Samantha Gross, director of the energy security and climate initiative at the centrist Brookings Institution. "So prices that are high and expected to stay that way have more of a longer term ability to cut demand and my guess is the administration wouldn't mind seeing that, but the problem is that people hate it."

High gas prices are "unequivocally" good for fighting climate change because people use less fossil fuel and emissions go down, but the poorest people, who don't have other options also "suffer the most," said climate economist Solomon Hsiang, director of the Climate Impact Lab at the University of California, Berkeley. Carbon emissions are causing harm, especially to future generations, but for decades cheap gas has meant "no one is paying for that harm," he said.

Now people are paying more when they hit the gas station and some are changing their habits.

Richard Gowan, 56, of Brighton, Michigan, used to commute 26 miles to his Ann Arbor workplace twice



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per week in a 2021 Ford F-150 pickup. But with gas close to \$5 per gallon, he's cut one-quarter of the truck trips. "That one doesn't come out of the driveway near as much as it used to," he said while pumping gas near work.

To save money, he has subbed a small Jeep Renegade SUV, which gets substantially better fuel economy than the 24 miles per gallon he gets with the pickup, which he bought to tow a travel trailer. The towing still takes place because he doesn't want to give up family vacations, Gowan said.

He blamed the high gasoline prices on President Joe Biden's policies. He wants Biden to open up more drilling and predicts that engineering will eventually solve climate change.

In San Diego, where gasoline runs more than \$6 per gallon, Simmi Paul said her family also has reduced driving. Her daughter, a college student, now walks 10 minutes to work and takes public transportation to school rather than driving.

Even though the July 4th holiday weekend saw record number of people on the road, they were not driving as far "because they can't afford the cost of gas," said American Automobile Association spokesperson Devin Gladden. People who must drive, he said, "are trying to find ways they can combine some of their errands or perhaps if they are able to carpool for work they're finding ways to reduce the amount of gas they have to buy and put in their vehicles."

Biden has frequently said he doesn't want high gas prices, attacked oil companies' multi-billion dollar profits, proposed new offshore oil and gas drilling despite campaign promises and proposed a gas tax holiday, which congressional leaders said won't fly. Asked whether conservation should play a greater role in adjusting to high prices, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said: "Americans are going to do what they feel is right for themselves and for their family. That's not something for us to make a judgment on."

Biden confidants know high gas prices hurt people and the president politically.

"The fact is there's been a lot of studies on this — it's just psychologically that how people tend to view the economy is through inflation," said John Anzalone, a Democratic pollster who has worked for Biden. "People tend to focus on the pain points."

Look at the pump for the pain point.

It's about \$200 a week for Pat Blevins, 42, a carpenter from Waterville, Ohio, who was filling the tank of his 2016 Chevrolet Silverado at a gas station west of Toledo, Ohio, on Tuesday. "It likes to eat gas," he said of his truck, which he said gets around 15 miles per gallon.

When gasoline went past \$4 per gallon in the summer of 2008, American auto buyers quickly switched away from pickup trucks and large SUVs to smaller, more efficient vehicles. But when it hit that level again in early March, there was little impact on new-vehicle sales in the U.S., where about three-quarters of vehicles sold are SUVs and trucks.

"Even at \$5 per gallon, it's hard to find evidence of changing habits" and buying smaller gas-efficient cars, said Jeff Schuster, president of global forecasting for the LMC Automotive consulting firm.

It's partly because of the global computer chip shortage. Automakers have been sending the chips they get to factories that build larger, more profitable vehicles, Schuster said.

Still, if smaller cars and SUVs were more readily available, Schuster says he is confident that people would buy them.

Blevins said he will look at the new electric Silverado to replace his gasoline model "if it's worth the expense and if it can perform like a gas (truck) can."

Sivak thinks \$5 a gallon gasoline is for the moment the price that changes Americans' car habits, still much lower than the price paid in Europe and much of the rest of the world.

"When you talk about the real outcomes of the energy transition (to less carbon pollution) some of this does mean that things will get more expensive and we need to come up with better solutions on how we finance and ensure that everybody can participate in the energy transition and it's not just for the wealthy or privileged few," AAA's Gladden said.

Some economists, such as Hsiang, have called for a carbon tax of 25 cents to 50 cents a gallon above

market price “to address the harm from climate change” and reduce carbon pollution by cutting demand, but with proceeds partly returned to people and partly used for green energy projects. But at the same time, he said, “higher gas prices hurt poorer families more,” so the government should send them financial help but not subsidize cheap gas.

Biden’s proposed gas tax holiday “is a subsidy, it’s paying people to pollute,” Hsiang said.

Brookings’ Gross said Republicans are falsely blaming Biden for the gas shortage because he cancelled a pipeline that has little to do with gas prices. She said the worldwide spike in gas prices is mostly due to pent-up post pandemic demand and supply issues and the Ukrainian war.

“I really feel for Biden because he’s in this situation where he wants to do climate stuff and his base is like ‘yeah we want climate stuff’ and he ran on it and he feels strongly about it personally I think,” Gross said. “But he’s in this situation where he’s getting hammered on high gas prices.”

## 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.

A million pilgrims from across the globe gathered 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.

“This year the number of pilgrims is huge, thank God,” said Mohammad Qabbani, a pilgrim from Sudan. “There are no high numbers of COVID-19 cases. The situation is good.”

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 has again 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 of Saudi Arabia 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 that 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

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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 United States sent over 9,500.

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 worshippers — 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 cease-fire 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.

By Thursday evening, most pilgrims were arriving in Mina, a small village east of Mecca, where they will spend the night in a sprawling tent city grouped according to the part of the world they come from. On Friday, they rise at dawn to march to the sacred hill of Mount Arafat, where they ask for forgiveness for their sins.

## What's next for UK? Boris Johnson quits, but not gone yet

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Boris Johnson has resigned as Conservative Party leader after months of ethics scandals and a party revolt. But he remains Britain's prime minister — for now — while a successor is chosen.

With British politics in turmoil, here's a look at what will happen next:

**WHY IS BORIS JOHNSON RESIGNING?**

Johnson's resignation on Thursday comes after he weathered numerous scandals during a tumultuous three years in power in which he brazenly bent and sometimes broke the rules of British politics.

He survived a no-confidence vote last month. But recent revelations that Johnson knew about sexual misconduct allegations against a lawmaker before he promoted the man to a senior position in his government led to Johnson's resignation.

**SO IS JOHNSON STILL PRIME MINISTER?**

Yes, for now.

His resignation, which came after dozens of ministers quit his government in protest, sparks a party contest to replace him as leader. All Conservative lawmakers are eligible to run, and party officials could open the nominations within hours.

After candidates have come forward, Conservative lawmakers vote in a series of elimination rounds. The candidate with the lowest number of votes drops out, and voting continues until there are two contenders left. Depending on the number of candidates, the process could be completed within days.

The final two candidates will be put to a vote of the full party membership across the country — about 180,000 people — by postal ballot. That process is expected to take several weeks, with the exact timetable up to the 1922 Committee that runs party elections.

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The winner of the vote will become both Conservative leader and prime minister, without the need for a national election.

WHO COULD BECOME THE NEXT PRIME MINISTER?

Already the list of likely contenders is long and growing, from recently resigned Treasury chief Rishi Sunak, his successor in that job Nadhim Zahawi, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, Attorney General Suella Braverman and Defense Secretary Ben Wallace.

WHILE A NEW LEADER IS BEING CHOSEN, WILL BORIS JOHNSON REMAIN PRIME MINISTER?

Johnson has resigned as party leader, but he is still prime minister until his successor is elected.

His predecessor, Theresa May, remained in office for more than a month between announcing her resignation and the selection of Johnson as the new Tory leader.

But many Conservatives say Johnson can't stay in office — he has simply lost too many ministers through resignations to be able to govern. They are demanding he step down as prime minister and let an interim leader take the reins. If he does that, Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab is a likely caretaker candidate.

WHAT'S THE LIKELIHOOD OF JOHNSON LEAVING BEFORE A NEW PARTY LEADER IS PICKED?

Johnson shows no signs of going early.

He appointed several new Cabinet ministers on Thursday to replace those he has lost, and said they would "serve as I will until a new leader is in place."

If party officials press Johnson to quit sooner and he refuses, the chaos engulfing the government could worsen in the short term. Already the government has had to cancel business in Parliament because it has no ministers available to attend.

Gavin Barwell, who served as chief of staff to Prime Minister Theresa May, said "there was a "question whether the PM will be able to lead a caretaker government in the meantime -- will enough ministers agree to serve?"

Former Conservative Prime Minister John Major said letting Johnson stay in office for up to three months "is unwise, and may be unsustainable."

WHEN IS BRITAIN'S NEXT NATIONAL ELECTION?

Under Britain's political rules, the next election must be called by December 2024, with election day five weeks later.

But it could come sooner. Prime ministers with a majority in parliament can call snap elections at will, and Johnson's successor may want to seek a personal mandate by going to voters not long after being selected.

However, with the backdrop of war in Ukraine and a worsening cost-of-living crisis, they may choose to wait.

Whoever takes over from Johnson will try to rebuild the Conservative Party's popularity. Johnson led the party to a big parliamentary majority in December 2019, but months of scandal have tarnished both him and the party. Polls suggest that if an election were held now the Conservatives would lose and the opposition Labour Party would form the new government.

## Dems want to tax high earners to protect Medicare solvency

By ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democrats want to boost taxes on some high earners and use the money to extend the solvency of Medicare, the latest step in the party's election-year attempt to craft a scaled-back version of the economic package that collapsed last year, Democratic aides told The Associated Press.

Democrats expect to submit legislative language on their Medicare plan to the Senate's parliamentarian in the next few days, the aides said. It was yet another sign that Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., could be edging toward a compromise the party hopes to push through Congress this summer over solid Republican opposition. Manchin scuttled last year's bill.

Under the latest proposal, people earning more than \$400,000 a year and couples making more than \$500,000 would have to pay a 3.8% tax on their earnings from tax-advantaged businesses called pass throughs. Until now, many of them have been using a loophole to avoid paying that levy.

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That would raise an estimated \$203 billion over a decade, which Democrats say would be used to delay until 2031 a shortfall in the Medicare trust fund that pays for hospital care. That fund is currently projected to start running out of money in 2028, three years earlier.

Most U.S. businesses are pass throughs, which include partnerships and sole proprietorships and range from one-person law practices to some large companies. Owners count the profits as income when they pay individual income taxes, but such companies do not pay corporate taxes — meaning they avoid paying two levels of taxation.

Democrats this week also sent the parliamentarian a separate 190-page piece of the emerging Schumer-Manchin compromise aimed at lowering prescription drug costs for patients and the government. Provisions include requiring Medicare to negotiate drug prices, limiting beneficiaries' out-of-pocket costs to \$2,000 annually and increasing federal subsidies for copays and premiums for some low-income people.

With November elections for control of Congress approaching, Democrats hope the two proposals will be a remedy for a campaign season that so far looks bleak. Republicans are favored to win a majority in the House and could do the same in the Senate.

Democrats say both plans will show voters they are battling to curb health care costs and protect the widely popular Medicare program, positions they say will be dangerous for Republicans to oppose. Polls show widespread public alarm over recent months' historically high inflation rates, supply chain problems and other economic issues that along with President Joe Biden's dismal popularity ratings are pushing voters Republicans' way, the GOP says.

Asked for comment, a spokesperson for Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell noted that the Kentucky Republican told constituents this week that Democrats would make inflation "considerably worse" by reviving their economic bill.

"From an economic point of view, I can't think of anything they haven't screwed up," McConnell said.

Schumer and Manchin have been bargaining privately for weeks on a package aides say could include around \$500 billion in spending and tax credits, more than paid for with about \$1 trillion in revenue and other savings. Schumer has described the talks as productive but acknowledged that some issues remain unresolved.

Energy and environment programs, corporate taxes, IRS budget increases to strengthen tax enforcement and a renewal of soon-to-expire federal subsidies for people buying health insurance under President Barack Obama's health care law are also under discussion, aides say.

It remains uncertain what will emerge from the talks. The aides described the latest proposals and status of negotiations only on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose the information by name.

The suggestions of progress were emerging seven months after Manchin derailed a roughly \$2 trillion, 10-year social and environment bill, dealing a stunning blow to a cornerstone of Biden's domestic agenda.

The Democratic-run House approved the measure in November, but Manchin abruptly announced he could not support the legislation because of its cost and his worries that it would fuel inflation. Similar provisions lowering pharmaceutical prices and raising taxes on some upper-income people were in that bill.

The West Virginian's backing remains crucial in the 50-50 Senate. Democrats are using special procedures that would let them pass the pared-down package over expected unanimous GOP opposition with the tie-breaking vote of Vice President Kamala Harris.

Democrats are expected to unanimously back the Medicare solvency and prescription drug plans, one Democratic aide said. Manchin spokesperson Sam Runyon said the lawmaker "has always supported pathways" to keep Medicare solvent, and said his backing for lowering pharmaceutical costs "has never been in question."

Senate parliamentarian Elizabeth MacDonough will have to certify that the new bill's provisions adhere to the chamber's budget rules. Last year, she ruled that language making it easier for immigrants to remain in the U.S. had to be removed because it violated prohibitions against using the special procedures to enact significant policy changes.

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Medicare has 64 million beneficiaries. Its trust fund covering hospital services, called Part A, is financed largely from taxes deducted from peoples' paychecks.

That trust fund gained two years of solvency, until 2028, in last month's report by the program's board of trustees. It attributed the improvement to the economy's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic-spawned recession.

But both Medicare and Social Security face long-range financing problems, and the trustees suggested that lawmakers act "sooner rather than later" to strengthen them. Without congressional action, Medicare's hospital trust fund would be able to pay only 90% of its costs in 2028 and less thereafter, the trustees said.

The proposal to increase taxes on some wealthier Americans would raise \$203 billion over the coming decade, according to information examined by the AP that Congress' Joint Committee on Taxation provided to Senate Democrats. Federal actuaries told the Democrats that such financing would delay the trust fund's shortfall until 2031, another document showed.

## U.S. jobless claims rise to 235k, most in nearly six months

By MATT OTT AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — More Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week and while layoffs remain low, it was the fifth consecutive week that claims topped the 230,000 mark and the most in almost six months.

Applications for jobless aid for the week ending July 2 rose to 235,000, up 4,000 from the previous week and the most since mid-January, the Labor Department reported Thursday. First-time applications generally track with the number of layoffs. Until early June, claims hadn't eclipsed 220,000 since January and have often been below 200,000 this year.

The four-week average for claims, which evens out some of the week-to-week volatility, inched up by 750 from the previous week, to 232,500.

The total number of Americans collecting jobless benefits for the week ending June 25 rose by 51,000 from the previous week, to 1,375,000. That figure has hovered near 50-year lows for months.

On Wednesday, the Labor Department reported that U.S. employers advertised fewer jobs in May amid signs that the economy is weakening, though the overall demand for workers remained strong.

Employers posted 11.3 million job openings at the end of May, down from nearly 11.7 million in April. Job openings reached 11.9 million in March, the highest level on records dating back more than 20 years. There are nearly two job openings for every unemployed person.

The figures reflect the unusual nature of the post-pandemic economy: Inflation is hammering household budgets, forcing consumers to pull back on spending, and growth is weakening, heightening fears the economy could fall into recession. Yet companies are still scrambling to add workers. Demand has been particularly strong in travel- and entertainment-related services.

The Labor Department releases its May jobs report on Friday and analysts expect that employers filled more than 276,000 jobs. Though not an unhealthy number, it would be the lowest monthly figure in more than a year.

Some highly-visible companies have announced layoffs recently.

The CEO of electric car maker Tesla, Elon Musk, acknowledged that the company was cutting about 10% of its salaried workforce, or 3.5% of its total headcount.

Netflix laid off 150 employees in May and another 300 in June after the streaming entertainment giant reported losing subscribers for the first time in more than a decade.

Online automotive retailer Carvana is letting about 2,500 workers go, roughly 12% of its workforce.

Online real estate broker Redfin, under pressure from a housing market that's cooled due to higher interest rates, is laying off 8% of its workers. Another real estate company, Compass, is shedding 450 employees.

Crypto trading platform Coinbase Global is cutting about 1,100 jobs, about 18% of its global workforce, in the wake of collapsing cryptocurrency prices.

## 'Taken too soon': Remembering Highland Park shooting victims

By CLAIRE SAVAGE and HARM VENHUIZEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Two of the victims of a July Fourth parade massacre in a Chicago suburb left behind a 2-year-old son. Another was staying with family in Illinois after he was injured in car wreck.

For some, it was a tradition. They were avid travelers, members of their synagogue and professionals. But in a hail of gunfire they became victims in the nation's latest horrific mass shooting.

The victims were Kevin McCarthy, 37; Irina McCarthy, 35; Katherine Goldstein, 64; Stephen Straus, 88; Jacquelyn Sundheim, 63; Nicolas Toledo-Zaragoza, 78; and Eduardo Uvaldo, 69.

KEVIN and IRINA MCCARTHY

It was supposed to be a fun day for the couple, who brought their 2-year-old son, Aiden, with them to watch marching bands and patriotic floats.

Instead they were killed in the gunfire, leaving their son orphaned. A stranger scooped up the blood-covered toddler and handed him to Greg Ring as he took cover with his wife and three children 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 lay down in front of their car in shock.

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

The family was later able to identify the boy and reunite him with his grandparents. Friends of the McCarthys said Irina's parents would care for the boy going forward.

Irina Colon wrote on a GoFundMe page that the boy would "have a long road ahead to heal, find stability, and ultimately navigate life as an orphan."

STEPHEN STRAUS

Straus showed up to the parade early and was attending alone, according to his grandchildren, who ate dinner with him the night before.

The Independence Day parade was an annual tradition for Straus — one of the many ways the 88-year-old financial advisor stayed active and involved in his community. According to his family, Straus rode the train to work every day, walked and biked regularly, and loved to visit art museums and festivals.

"Despite his age, he was taken too soon," said grandson Maxwell Straus.

Maxwell and his brother, Tobias, fondly recalled going out for Sunday night dinners with their grandfather, a weekly routine that persisted despite the COVID-19 pandemic, when the grandsons would visit outside his window.

Losing their grandfather was a surreal experience, the brothers said. "You never really imagine something like that can happen to you or your loved ones," said Maxwell Straus.

Stephen Straus is survived by a brother, a wife, his son and four grandchildren.

JACQUELYN SUNDHEIM

Sundheim loved her synagogue, where she once taught preschoolers and coordinated bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies. She had worked there for decades and was a devoted, lifelong member known for her kindness and warmth, synagogue officials said in a statement.

"There are no words sufficient to express the depth of our grief for Jacki's death and sympathy for her family and loved ones," three synagogue leaders said in the statement.

Sundheim, 63, was survived by her husband, Bruce, and their daughter Leah, according to an email the synagogue sent to congregants.

KATHERINE GOLDSTEIN

Goldstein's husband described her as an easygoing travel companion who was always game to visit far-flung locales.

"She didn't complain," Craig Goldstein, a hospital physician, told The New York Times. "She was always along for the ride."

Goldstein was a mother of two daughters in their early 20s, Cassie and Alana. She attended the parade

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with her eldest daughter, Cassie, so she could reunite with friends from high school, Goldstein said.

He said his wife had recently lost her mother and had given thought to what kind of arrangements she might want when she dies.

He recalled that Katherine, an avid bird watcher, said she wanted to be cremated and to have her remains scattered in the Montrose Beach area of Chicago, where there is a bird sanctuary.

NICOLAS TOLEDO-ZARAGOZA

Toledo-Zaragoza had come to Illinois to visit his family about two months ago, his granddaughter, Xochil Toledo, told the Chicago Sun-Times.

His family wanted him to stay permanently because of injuries he had suffered after being hit by a car a couple of years ago during an earlier visit to Highland Park. The newspaper reported that he was hit by three bullets and died at the scene.

His death left behind a large, loving family mourning his loss.

Nicolas was a "loving man, creative, adventurous and funny," Toledo wrote in an online fundraising post, describing him as a father of eight and grandfather to many. "I love you abuelito."

EDUARDO UVALDO

For the Uvaldo family, like others in the Highland Park area, the Independence Day parade was an annual tradition, according to a GoFundMe page organized by his granddaughter, Nivia Guzman.

When gunfire erupted from a rooftop along the parade route, Eduardo Uvaldo was shot in his arm and the back of his head. His wife, Maria, was struck in the head by bullet fragments and his grandson was shot in the arm.

Eduardo Uvaldo was brought to the hospital where, after receiving treatment and evaluation from doctors, the family was told there was nothing left to do, Guzman wrote. A GoFundMe update shows he was taken off life support Tuesday.

Uvaldo died just before 8 a.m. on Wednesday at Evanston Hospital.

## Flood threat moves north as Sydney area emergency eases

SYDNEY (AP) — Floodwaters were receding in Sydney and its surrounding area Thursday as heavy rain threatened to inundate towns north of Australia's largest city.

Evacuation orders and official warnings to prepare to abandon homes were given to 60,000 people by Thursday, down from 85,000 on Wednesday, New South Wales state Premier Dominic Perrottet said.

But towns including Maitland and Singleton in the Hunter Valley, north of Sydney, were still threatened by inundation, Perrottet said.

Around 50 rescues were made in the past 24 hours, several of which involved people stranded in cars in floodwaters, he said.

Emergency Services Minister Steph Cooke said record-breaking rain that began around Sydney on Friday last week was easing.

"It is very pleasing to see that the weather situation is starting to ease after almost a week of relentless rain," she said.

The weather system that had brought heavy rain to a vast swath of New South Wales was moving further from the coast out to sea north of Sydney, Bureau of Meteorology manager Diana Eadie said.

Bulga, a town about 180 kilometers (110 miles) north of Sydney by road, experienced its highest flood level since 1952, she said.

Taree, some 320 kilometers (200 miles) north of Sydney by road, was drenched by 305 millimeters (12 inches) of rain overnight — almost a third of the town's annual rainfall average, Eadie said.

## Today in History: July 8, The "Great Grain Robbery"

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, July 8, the 189th day of 2022. There are 176 days left in the year.



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Today's Highlight in History:

On July 8, 1972, the Nixon administration announced a deal to sell \$750 million in grain to the Soviet Union. (However, the Soviets were also engaged in secretly buying subsidized American grain, resulting in what critics dubbed "The Great Grain Robbery.")

On this date:

In 1776, Col. John Nixon gave the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence, outside the State House (now Independence Hall) in Philadelphia.

In 1853, an expedition led by Commodore Matthew Perry arrived in Yedo Bay, Japan, on a mission to seek diplomatic and trade relations with the Japanese.

In 1907, Florenz Ziegfeld staged his first "Follies," on the roof of the New York Theater.

In 1947, a New Mexico newspaper, the Roswell Daily Record, quoted officials at Roswell Army Air Field as saying they had recovered a "flying saucer" that crashed onto a ranch; officials then said it was actually a weather balloon. (To this day, there are those who believe what fell to Earth was an alien spaceship carrying extra-terrestrial beings.)

In 1950, President Harry S. Truman named Gen. Douglas MacArthur commander-in-chief of United Nations forces in Korea. (Truman ended up sacking MacArthur for insubordination nine months later.)

In 1967, Academy Award-winning actor Vivien Leigh, 53, died in London.

In 1989, Carlos Saul Menem was inaugurated as president of Argentina in the country's first transfer of power from one democratically elected civilian leader to another in six decades.

In 1994, Kim Il Sung, North Korea's communist leader since 1948, died at age 82.

In 2000, Venus Williams beat Lindsay Davenport 6-3, 7-6 (3) for her first Grand Slam title, becoming the first Black female champion at Wimbledon since Althea Gibson in 1957-58.

In 2010, the largest spy swap between the U.S. and Russia since the Cold War unfolded as 10 people accused of spying in suburban America pleaded guilty to conspiracy and were ordered deported to Russia in exchange for the release of four prisoners accused of spying for the West.

In 2011, former first lady Betty Ford died in Rancho Mirage, California, at age 93.

In 2016, on the first day of a two-day summit in Warsaw, NATO leaders geared up for a long-term standoff with Russia, ordering multinational troops to Poland and the three Baltic states as Moscow moved forward with its own plans to station two new divisions along its western borders.

Ten years ago: A bomb in eastern Afghanistan killed six NATO service members on a day in which a total of 29 people died from roadside bombs and insurgent attacks. Roger Federer equaled Pete Sampras' record of seven men's singles titles at the All England Club and won his 17th Grand Slam title overall, beating Andy Murray 4-6, 7-5, 6-3, 6-4. Academy Award-winning actor Ernest Borgnine, 95, died in Los Angeles.

Five years ago: At the Group of 20 summit in Hamburg, Germany, world powers lined up against President Donald Trump on climate change, reaffirming their support for international efforts to fight global warming. After their first face-to-face meeting, Russian President Vladimir Putin said he thought Trump believed his denials of Russian meddling in the U.S. presidential vote.

One year ago: President Joe Biden said the U.S. military operation in Afghanistan would end on Aug. 31; in a speech in the White House East Room, Biden made an impassioned argument for exiting the nearly 20-year war without sacrificing more America lives, but acknowledged that there would be no "mission accomplished" moment to celebrate. Amid increasing coronavirus infections, Tokyo's governor said fans would not be allowed in Tokyo-area stadiums and arenas for the Olympics, which would begin in two weeks. Former South African president Jacob Zuma turned himself over to police to begin serving a 15-month prison term for contempt. Lawyer Michael Avenatti was sentenced to 2 1/2 years in prison for trying to extort up to \$25 million from Nike; Avenatti had gained fame representing porn star Stormy Daniels in lawsuits against Donald Trump. Fourteen-year-old Zaila Avant-garde of Louisiana spelled "murray" correctly to win the Scripps National Spelling Bee, becoming the first African American champion.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Steve Lawrence is 87. Actor Jeffrey Tambor is 78. Rock musician Jaimoe Johanson is 77. Ballerina Cynthia Gregory is 75. Actor Kim Darby is 75. Actor Jonelle Allen is 74. Children's

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performer Raffi is 74. Celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck is 73. Actor Anjelica Huston is 71. Writer Anna Quindlen is 70. Actor Kevin Bacon is 64. Actor Robert Knepper is 63. Country singer Toby Keith is 61. Rock singer Joan Osborne is 60. Writer-producer Rob Burnett is 60. Actor Rocky Carroll is 59. Actor Corey Parker is 57. Actor Lee Tergesen is 57. Actor Michael B. Silver is 55. Actor Billy Crudup is 54. Actor Michael Weatherly is 54. Singer Beck is 52. Comedian Sebastian Maniscalco is 49. Actor Kathleen Robertson is 49. Christian rock musician Stephen Mason (Jars of Clay) is 47. Actor Milo Ventimiglia (MEE'-loh vehn-tih-MEEL'-yuh) is 45. Singer Ben Jelen (YEL'-in) is 43. Actor Lance Gross is 41. Actor Sophia Bush is 40. Rock musician Jamie Cook (Arctic Monkeys) is 37. Actor Jake McDorman is 36. Actor Maya Hawke is 24. Actor Jaden Smith is 24.