

Groton Daily Independent

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July 7-9
Legion at Clark Tourney

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

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



The happiest people don't necessarily have the best of everything. They just make the best of everything.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

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
Jr. Legion Region

July 29-Aug. 2

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

Starts Sunday

All games to be played in Groton



Game Dates and Times

Date: Sunday 7/10
Game 1 - 12 PM
Game 2 - 2 PM
Game 3 - 5 PM
Game 4 - 7 PM

Game Dates and Times

Date: Monday 7/11
Game 5 - 5 PM
Game 6 - 7 PM

Game Dates and Times

Date: Tuesday 7/12
Game 7 - 6 PM (If required)

Random numbers were used to determine seeding

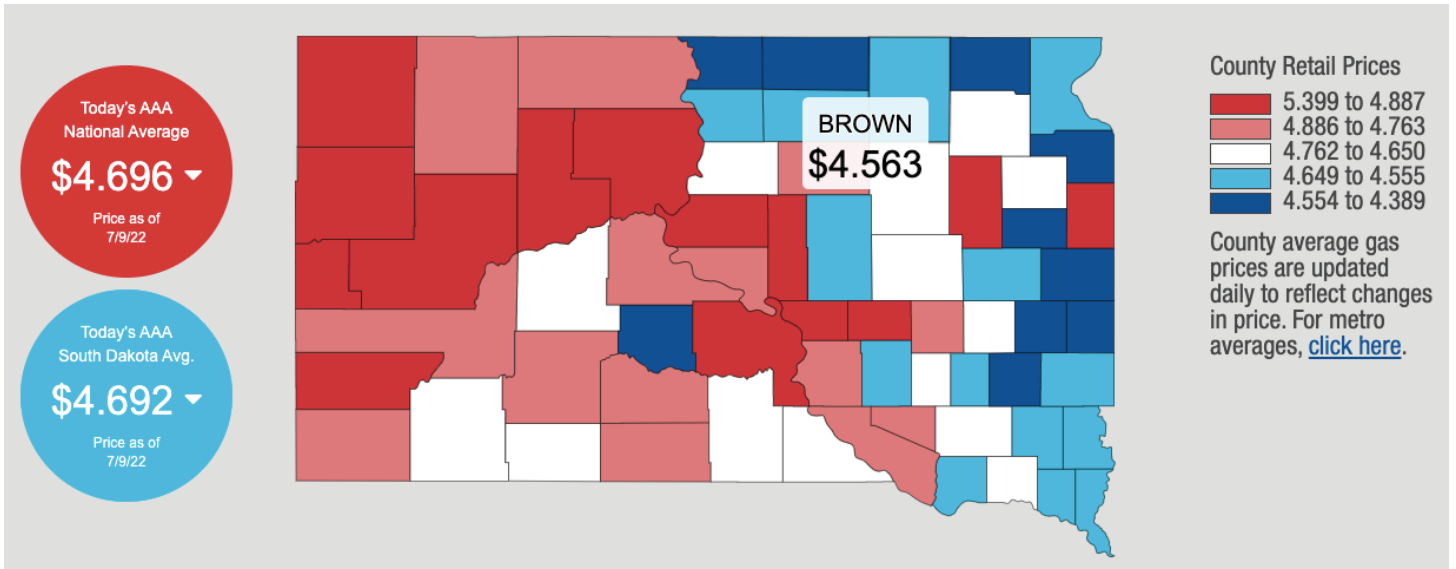
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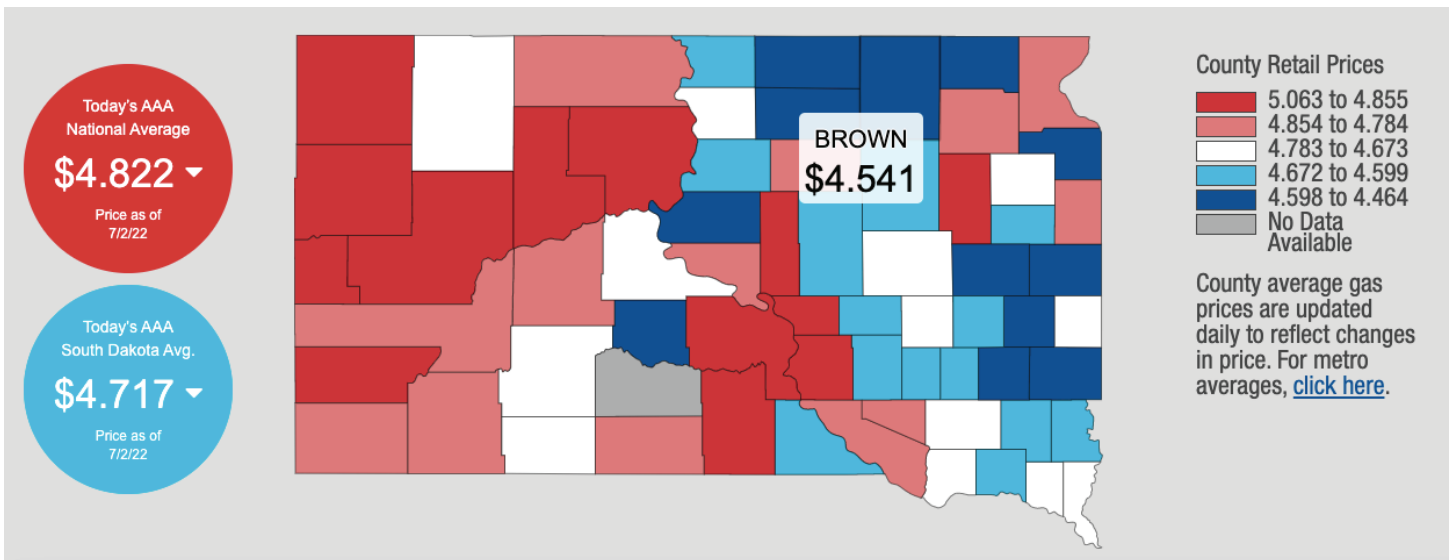
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$4.692	\$4.852	\$5.315	\$5.365
Yesterday Avg.	\$4.695	\$4.870	\$5.340	\$5.377
Week Ago Avg.	\$4.717	\$4.903	\$5.351	\$5.397
Month Ago Avg.	\$4.668	\$4.785	\$5.193	\$5.310
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.076	\$3.170	\$3.532	\$3.183

This Week



Last Week



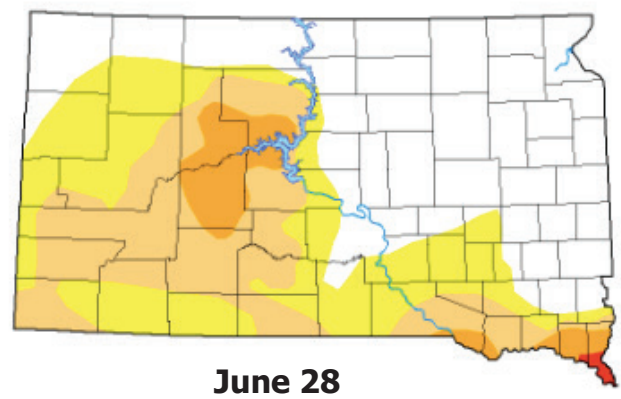
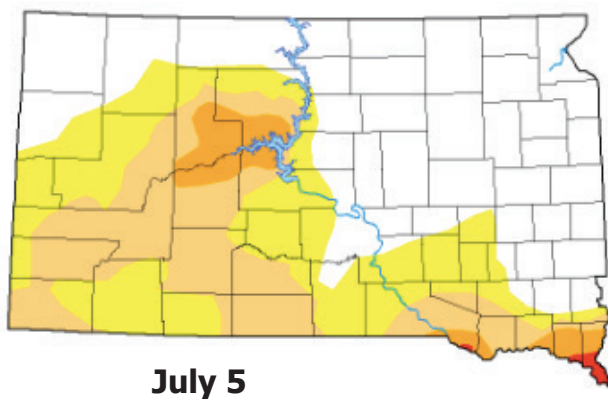
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Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



Locally heavy rainfall (more than 1 inch) this past week resulted in 1-category improvements to parts of Kansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota. Based on increasing short-term precipitation deficits and consistent with worsening soil moisture indicators, severe drought (D2) expanded across north-central Nebraska and extreme drought (D3) was added to more of northeastern Nebraska. Recent precipitation and reassessment of longer term SPI values supported a slight reduction of severe drought (D2) in southwestern Wyoming. Following a drier-than-normal June with above-normal temperatures (+3-4 degrees F), degradations were made to northeastern High Plains of Colorado. Recent monsoonal rainfall and the "convergence of evidence" of multiple indicators led to improvements for southern Colorado.

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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

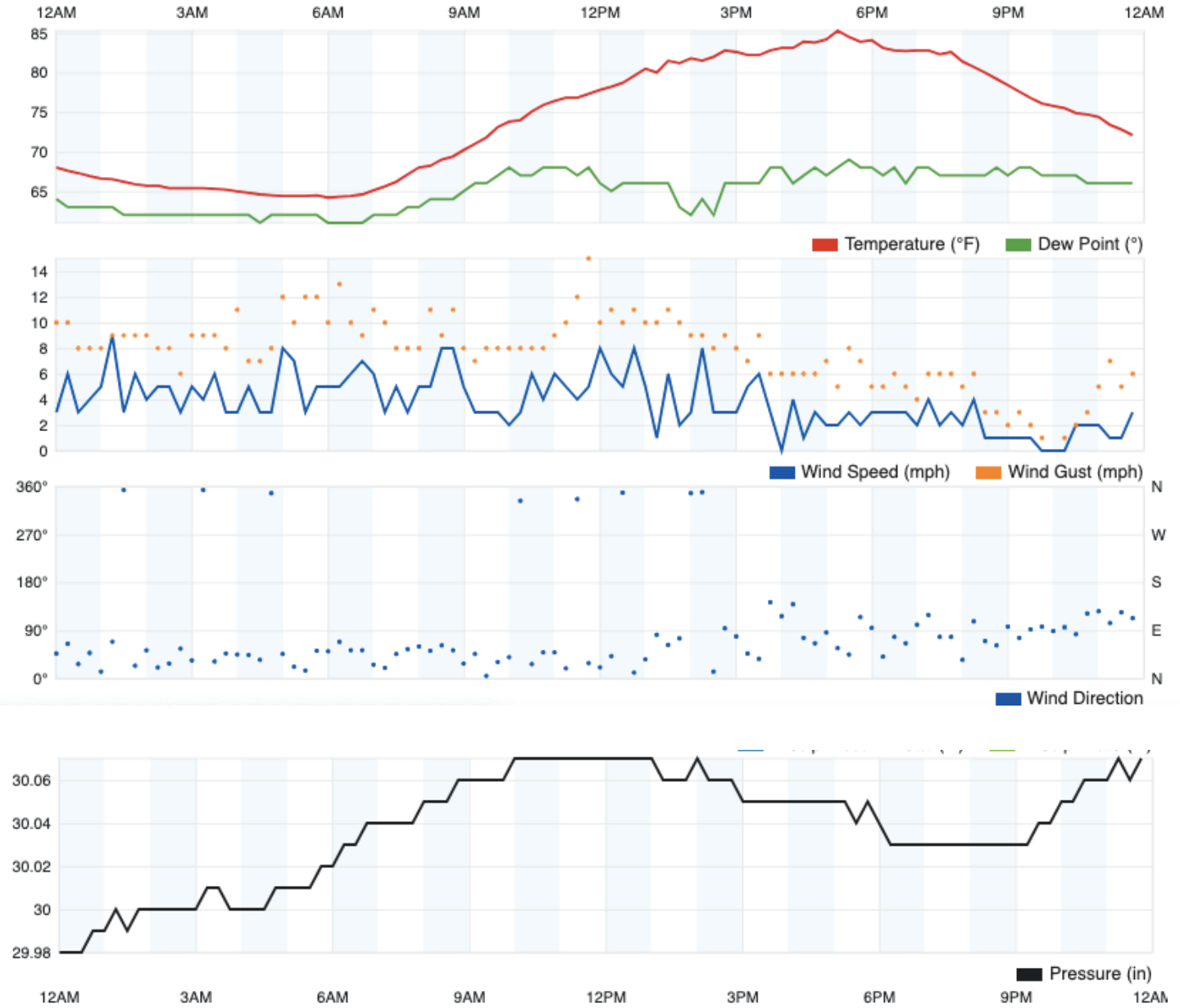


Call Kay Espeland 492-3507 or
Alice Jean Peterson 216-2835

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
				
Mostly Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear	Hot	Mostly Clear then Chance Showers	Mostly Sunny then Sunny and Breezy
High: 91 °F	Low: 74 °F	High: 94 °F	Low: 67 °F	High: 83 °F



Storm Risk Through The Weekend - Today/Tonight

July 9, 2022
4:18 AM

Overview

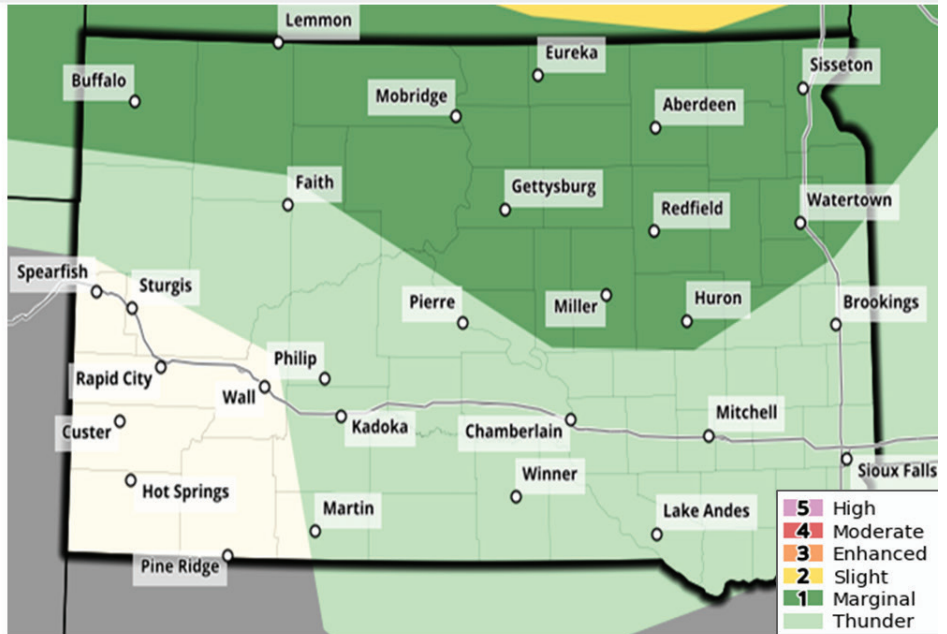
Storms could move in from North Dakota before dissipating.

Actions



Be weather aware and ready to act.
Have multiple ways to receive
warning information!

Severe Threats	Level	Lo	Med	Hi
Tornado	↓	Lo	Med	Hi
Hail	↓	Lo	Med	Hi
Wind	↓	Lo	Med	Hi
Flooding	↓	Lo	Med	Hi



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Storm risk for today and tonight, which is mainly for the overnight hours tonight as storms move down out of North Dakota

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Storm Risk Through The Weekend - Sunday

July 9, 2022
4:18 AM

Overview

Storms will develop along a front in North Dakota and track southeast across mainly northeast SD/western MN

Actions



Be weather aware and ready to act. Have multiple ways to receive warning information!

Severe Threats



Tornado



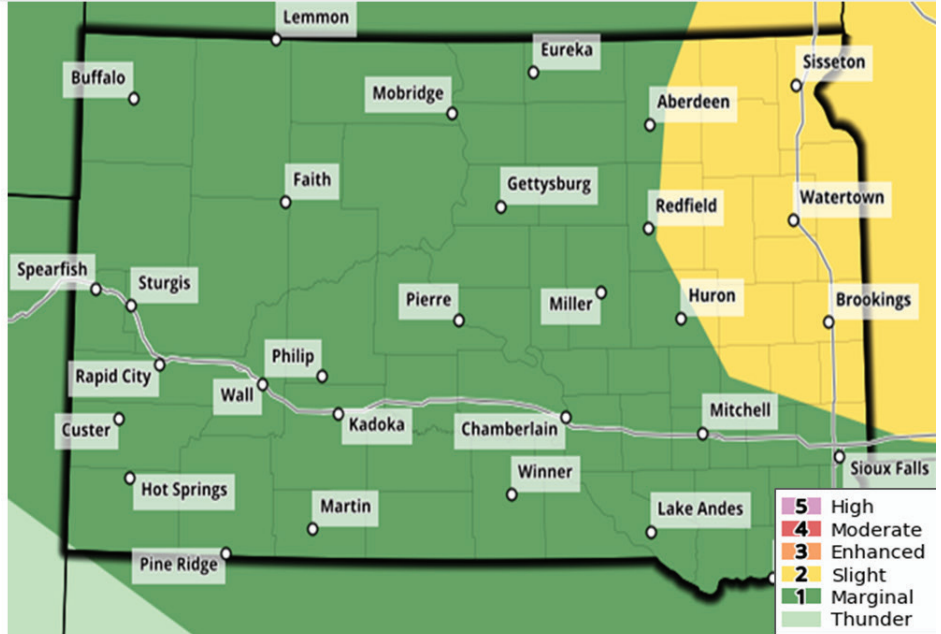
Hail



Wind



Flooding



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

The storm risk for Sunday is associated with a front and system moving through early in the day. Storms early could impact central and eastern counties with the best chance for severe storms in North Dakota and western Minnesota late in the afternoon.



Heat/Humidity Through The Weekend

July 9, 2022
4:18 AM

Maximum Heat Index Forecast

	7/9 Sat											7/10 Sun																										
	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm	11pm	12am	1am	2am	3am	4am	5am	6am	7am	8am	9am	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm	11pm
Aberdeen	85	88	89	93	95	95	96	97	97	96	95	91	85	84	83	79	78	76	76	76	75	75	77	85	88	90	95	99	99	98	96	93	91	90	87	85	79	77
Britton	84	85	88	89	91	91	91	91	92	92	89	85	77	75	74	74	73	73	73	73	74	75	76	78	84	88	91	95	95	94	92	90	89	87	83	77	74	72
Eagle Butte	77	82	88	91	94	97	98	100	100	100	97	92	87	83	78	77	73	73	72	72	71	72	74	75	78	82	85	86	87	88	88	88	87	85	83	81	76	74
Eureka	78	83	88	91	93	93	94	96	96	96	93	88	79	77	76	76	74	74	73	72	72	72	74	78	83	86	89	90	90	90	89	87	87	85	82	77	74	72
Gettysburg	77	83	85	87	91	93	94	95	96	96	93	87	85	79	78	77	75	74	73	73	73	76	78	83	85	88	91	91	91	89	87	86	85	82	77	74	72	
Kennebec	83	88	91	94	98	100	103	103	103	103	100	94	88	86	85	83	79	76	76	76	75	77	83	87	89	92	96	99	99	99	98	96	94	92	88	84	78	76
McIntosh	76	79	87	90	93	96	98	98	98	98	97	90	83	78	76	75	73	71	70	70	69	69	70	72	75	77	81	83	83	85	85	84	84	83	81	77	74	72
Milbank	77	84	86	89	89	90	91	90	90	90	87	84	77	76	74	73	72	72	72	73	73	74	76	79	84	87	92	96	98	100	100	97	94	92	88	84	77	75
Miller	83	86	87	90	90	92	93	93	94	93	91	87	79	78	77	77	76	75	74	74	74	75	78	85	89	92	95	97	97	97	95	93	92	90	86	83	77	75
Mobridge	78	85	89	92	96	98	99	100	100	101	99	93	86	79	77	76	75	73	72	72	73	74	76	78	79	85	89	92	91	91	90	88	88	88	85	81	76	74
Murdo	83	87	91	94	98	102	104	104	104	101	97	92	87	85	82	82	79	77	77	77	76	77	79	83	85	88	92	94	95	96	96	94	93	90	86	83	78	76
Pierre	79	85	90	94	96	99	102	103	102	103	99	94	89	87	85	83	79	77	77	77	76	76	78	83	84	87	91	94	94	95	94	92	91	90	87	84	79	77
Redfield	83	87	90	92	93	93	94	95	95	95	93	88	84	83	79	78	76	76	75	75	75	75	77	83	88	92	96	100	100	99	97	94	92	91	87	84	78	76
Sisseton	82	84	87	88	89	91	91	91	91	91	87	85	79	78	76	75	74	74	74	74	74	75	78	83	85	90	93	97	97	97	97	94	92	90	87	83	77	75
Watertown	77	83	85	86	88	89	89	89	89	88	86	83	77	76	75	73	72	73	72	72	72	72	75	78	83	87	91	94	97	98	99	96	93	90	87	83	77	74
Webster	77	82	83	85	86	85	88	87	87	86	83	78	76	74	73	73	72	72	72	72	72	73	75	77	79	84	88	92	93	93	92	90	88	86	82	77	74	72
Wheaton	78	83	86	88	88	90	90	90	90	90	86	85	79	77	75	75	73	73	73	72	72	73	76	78	82	86	90	93	94	96	96	94	92	89	85	82	76	74



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

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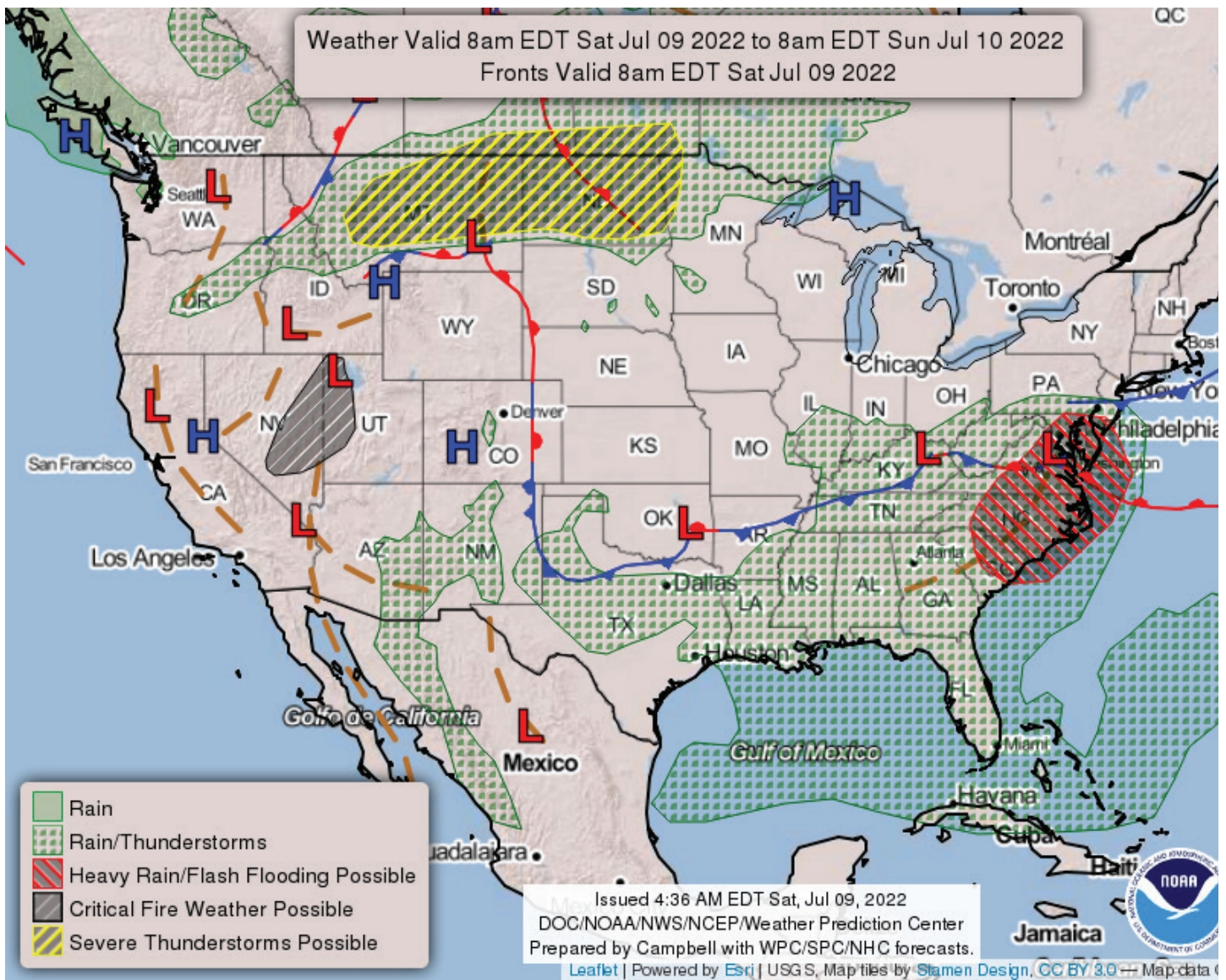
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 85 °F at 5:12 PM
Low Temp: 64 °F at 6:00 AM
Wind: 15 mph at 11:40 AM
Precip: 0.21

Day length: 15 hours, 31 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 115 in 1936
Record Low: 42 in 1981
Average High: 85°F
Average Low: 60°F
Average Precip in July.: 1.05
Precip to date in July.: 2.21
Average Precip to date: 12.06
Precip Year to Date: 13.79
Sunset Tonight: 9:23:35 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:52:37 AM



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Today in Weather History

July 9, 1938: A deadly, estimated F4 tornado moved ESE across the eastern edge of Andover to the north of Bristol. Seventeen buildings were destroyed at Andover, and at least one home was completely swept away. Seven homes and a church also suffered damage. One person was killed at the western edge of Andover, and a couple died in a house at the southern side of town. About two hours later, another estimated F4 tornado moved ENE from 2 miles northeast of White, South Dakota in Brookings County to Hendricks, Minnesota. Only one person was injured from this storm.

July 9, 1972: Wind gusts up to 89 mph caused considerable damage in the Pierre and Oahe Dam area. A drive-in movie screen was destroyed. A camper trailer was turned over pinning seven members of a family inside. Five of them were hospitalized. Numerous trees were uprooted at the Oahe Dam campground. A tourist information building was caved in. Hail broke out car windows on ten vehicles.

July 9, 2009: Severe storms developed over Fall River County and moved eastward across southwestern and south central South Dakota. The thunderstorms produced large hail and strong wind gusts. Two tornadoes were observed in Todd County, and two tornadoes touched down in southern Tripp County. A small EF-1 tornado tracked across Dog Ear Township from 311th Avenue to near the intersection of 289th Street and 312th Avenue, or a little over a one-mile track. The storm blew down large cottonwood trees.

July 9, 2013: A pair of severe storms moved across northeastern South Dakota during the evening hours of the 9th. These storms caused extensive damage to crops, mainly west of Frederick in Brown County where beans and corn fields were destroyed. As the storms moved from Barnard, through Columbia, and into the Groton area, the hail increased to baseball size. There was also some structural damage to siding along with broken windows.

1860 - A hot blast of air in the middle of a sweltering summer pushed the mercury up to 115 degrees at Fort Scott and Lawrence, KS. (David Ludlum)

1882 - Ice formed on the streets of Cheyenne, WY, during a rare summer freeze. (David Ludlum)

1936 - The temperature hit an all-time record high of 106 degrees at the Central Park Observatory in New York City, a record which lasted until LaGuardia Airport hit 107 degrees on July 3rd in 1966. (The Weather Channel)

1968 - Columbus, MS received 15.68 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a record for the state. (The Weather Channel)

1979: Hurricane Bob was born in the Gulf of Mexico, becoming the first Atlantic Hurricane to be given a male name.

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in Michigan. A tornado near Munising, MI, destroyed part of a commercial dog kennel, and one of the missing dogs was later found unharmed in a tree top half a mile away. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Twenty-three cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Alpena, MI, and Buffalo, NY, suffered through their sixth straight day of record heat. The percentage of total area in the country in the grips of severe to extreme drought reached 43 percent, the fourth highest total of record. The record of 61 percent occurred during the summer of 1934. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Morning thunderstorms produced very heavy rain in southern Lower Michigan and northern Indiana. Up to 5.6 inches of rain was reported in Berrien County, MI. Sioux Falls SD reported a record high of 108 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1997: Torrential rains in the Carpathian Mountains caused severe flooding in the Czech Republic, Poland, and German. In all, 104 people died as a result of the deluge. In the aftermath, authorities from each country blamed the others for the extent of the disaster.

2007: The Argentine capital experiences its first major snowfall since June 22, 1918, as wet snow spreads a thin white mantle over the area. The storm hits on Argentina's Independence Day holiday thus adding to a festive air. Thousands of Argentines cheer the event, throwing snowballs in the streets. Local radio stations dust off an old tango song inspired by the 1918 snowfall: What a night!

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Just Try!

Mrs. Burrell, my fourth-grade science teacher, often visited the students in her class at night to teach them how to identify the various constellations. Now and then she would ask, "Well, how many stars can you count tonight?" No one was ever able to give an accurate accounting. But we would giggle and make up some unreasonable number just to humor her.

However, on a clear night, it is possible to see about two thousand stars. With some of the large telescopes now used to research the universe, astronomers can take a photograph and count about thirty billion. Even so, there are still many more billions that are beyond the power of the eye of the telescope.

Sir James Jeans once suggested that there are as many stars as there are grains of sand on all the beaches of the planet. So, there's a good reason why no one has been able to number them.

Except One. "He determines the number of stars and calls each by name." Now, that may be difficult to believe. But, when we realize His power and might and majesty, it fits right into His character.

Numbers, however, are not as important as His love. However, our great God, Who created and named the stars and hung them in orbit, is more interested in us than He is in His stars. In fact, He loved us so much that He gave His only Son for our salvation. This God of measureless might is also a God of limitless love. And this very God extends an invitation to us to become one of His children.

Prayer: How blessed we are, Lord, that we are of such value to You that You willingly gave Your Son to save us. You know the stars, and us, by name. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: He determines the number of stars and calls each by name. Psalm 147:4

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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

Subscription Form

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

20-36-61-62-69, Mega Ball: 20, Megaplier: 3

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

Estimated jackpot: \$440,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 48,000,000

South Dakota Democrats strategize on abortion, elections

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Democrats are convening in Fort Pierre Friday as they look to reverse a slide that has dwindled their representation in the Statehouse to its lowest point in 60 years.

It's also been well over a decade since the Democratic Party won an election for a statewide office, but there have been some victories for progressives at the ballot box through citizen-initiated measures. Party activists will be discussing ballot measure strategy on Friday and Saturday, including whether to get behind a campaign to reverse a state law that banned abortions last month.

Democrats also believe the race for secretary of state is winnable and want to boost their candidates for governor and U.S. Senate. Here's what to watch from the two-day convention:

ABORTION

The state party has not always been clear-cut in its stance on the right to an abortion. In 2020, the party adopted a platform that said it supports the "right for women to make medical decisions for their own bodies," but did not specifically mention the procedure.

However, the party's stance and activism around the issue will likely come to the forefront at the convention because South Dakota banned abortions last month when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. Party Chair Randy Seiler said the convention would feature "a robust discussion about the various aspects of choice and women's reproductive rights and government control."

The party will also discuss whether to get behind ballot campaigns to overturn the state's current outright abortion ban, which only allows the procedure to save the pregnant woman's life and has no exceptions for instances of rape or incest.

The Democratic Party has backed ballot measure campaigns in the past and has seen some success. Most recently, it helped defeat a constitutional amendment that would have made it more difficult for ballot measures that raise taxes or spend significant government funds.

"South Dakota has an independent streak and a lot of prairie populism," Seiler said, adding that the defeat of the proposed constitutional amendment during the June primary sent "a clear message" that South Dakota voters value the ability to enact laws at the ballot.

SECRETARY OF STATE

The number of voters registered as Democrats has been shrinking in recent years, to the point that the Republican Party has an almost two-to-one advantage in registered voters. But Democrats are looking for winnable races as they hope for a momentum change and believe that the secretary of state's office might offer them an opportunity.

Last month, Republican candidate Monae Johnson beat out incumbent Secretary of State Steve Barnett for the GOP nomination. She formed her candidacy around "election integrity" in a nod to Republican fears that were instigated by former President Donald Trump's false claims that the 2020 election was stolen.

Seiler said he had been approached by moderate Republicans who suggested he run against Johnson,

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but added that several other Democrats have expressed interest in the nomination.

"Dumping Steve Barnett and basically nominating an election denier is going to have consequences" for the Republican Party, Seiler said. "I think secretary of state will be a competitive race this time."

OTHER CANDIDATES

Democrats will also select a candidate to run against former Attorney General Marty Jackley, the Republican who is a favorite to get his old job back in November. The party is also expected to nominate state Rep. Jennifer Keintz for lieutenant governor after gubernatorial candidate Jamie Smith, a House lawmaker, announced her as his running mate Thursday.

The convention will also give Democrats an opportunity to fundraise and strategize for the gubernatorial campaign, as well as for U.S. Senate candidate Brian Bengs.

Man sentenced to 40 years for fatal attack in St. Francis

ST. FRANCIS, S.D. (AP) — A man accused of a fatal attack after breaking into a St. Francis home last year has been sentenced to 40 years in federal prison.

U.S. District Court Judge Roberto Lange also ordered 23-year-old Isaiah Young to serve five years of supervised release for second-degree murder. Lange on Thursday imposed a 10-year sentence for assault with a dangerous weapon to run concurrently with the 40-year term.

Young was indicted by a grand jury in February 2021 and pleaded guilty in March.

Prosecutors say Young broke into a house in St. Francis on Jan. 24, 2021 with intentions of stealing electronics. He entered a bedroom, turned on the light and after grabbing a hammer assaulted a couple who had been sleeping. The indictment said that Young then picked up a knife and repeatedly stabbing both victims.

The woman died of her injuries. The man was hospitalized for his injuries, but survived.

This case was investigated by the FBI and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Law Enforcement Services. Young has been turned over to the U.S. Marshals Service.

Abe impersonated 'Super Mario' to promote Tokyo Olympics

By STEPHEN WADE AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Despite his prominence as Japan's longest serving prime minister, Shinzo Abe may have enjoyed his biggest moment at the closing ceremony of the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics before 70,000 at the city's renown Maracana stadium.

As a video was shown with Abe portrayed running late for the handover ceremony, the Japanese prime minister suddenly popped up on stage in Rio — to loud applause — dressed as Super Mario, the famous Nintendo video game character.

He doffed his red cap to the crowd, and there could be no mistake where the Games were going next. The lettering on his red cap spelled it out: Tokyo.

Abe died on Friday after he was shot giving a campaign speech in the western Japanese city of Nara.

Ever a showman, Abe pushed for the Tokyo Games from the start and then helped keep them on track after being postponed for a year by the COVID-19 pandemic.

He was in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2013, seated in the front row of a hotel ballroom when then-IOC President Jacques Rogge opened an envelope to reveal Tokyo as host of the 2020 Games. Seated at the heart of the Japanese delegation, Abe leaped to his feet, raised his arms high, and waved a flag festooned with the logo of Tokyo's bid committee.

Abe and Japan famously campaigned for those Games under the motto "a safe pair of hands." This was at a time when Sochi, Russia, and Rio de Janeiro were the focal point of relentless criticism for their preparations; Sochi for the 2014 Winter Olympics and Rio for the 2016 Summer Games.

Ironically, corruption charges would eventual haunt Tokyo's preparations.

And it was Abe who, in a closing speech to the International Olympic Committee before the vote in Buenos Aires, reassured members that the Fukushima nuclear disaster — which happened in 2011 — was

“under control.”

However, it wasn't so. That area of northeastern Japan is still battling to recover even a decade after the tragedy. Many in the region feel the Olympics detracted from the recovery, rather than helped speed it.

Tokyo defeated Istanbul 60-36 in the final round of secret voting in 2013. Madrid was eliminated after an initial tie with Istanbul in the first round of voting.

And it was Abe and IOC President Thomas Bach who had the final word in March 2020 in postponing the Games in the face of surging COVID-19 deaths. Bach said in a statement on Friday that the delayed Games went on — only because of Abe.

“Only his vision, determination and dependability allowed us to take the unprecedented decision to postpone the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020,” Bach said. He said that without Abe “these Olympic Games would never have happened.”

He called Abe “a man with a vision, full of determination and boundless energy to make his vision come true. What I appreciated most about him was that he was a man of his word.”

Bach said the Olympic flag at the IOC headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, would fly at half-staff for three days.

Abe was probably the No. 1 booster of Tokyo's 2020 Games, which he hoped would be a reminder that Japan was still a power in Asia despite the rise of China. But he stepped down from office, claiming poor health, late in August 2020 — just under 11 months before the delayed Games would actually open.

“I thought for him, not being able to be prime minister at the time of the Olympics, was somewhat heartbreaking,” David Leheny, a political scientist at Japan's Waseda University, said in an interview with The Associated Press. “He had put so much work into it, and I think for him it was emblematic of Japan reemerging as a leader on the global stage.”

Abe was replaced by Yoshihide Suga, who oversaw the Olympics but left office just weeks after they ended. Suga was criticized for his handling of the pandemic.

“Given how important the 1964 Tokyo Olympics were to many people — in announcing Japan's emergence after World War II — I think for Abe having the Olympics in Tokyo in 2020 was meant to be the same thing,” Leheny added. “And he certainly wasn't shy about making himself central to the process.”

US tells China its support for Russia complicates relations

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

NUSA DUA, Indonesia (AP) — China's support for Russia's war in Ukraine is complicating U.S.-Chinese relations at a time when they are already beset by rifts and enmity over numerous other issues, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told his Chinese counterpart on Saturday.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi blamed the U.S. for the downturn in relations and said that American policy has been derailed by what he called a misperception of China as a threat.

“Many people believe that the United States is suffering from a China-phobia,” he said, according to a Chinese statement. “If such threat-expansion is allowed to grow, U.S. policy toward China will be a dead end with no way out.”

In five hours of talks in their first-to-face meeting since October, Blinken said he expressed deep concern about China's stance on Russia's actions in Ukraine and did not believe Beijing's protestations that it is neutral in the conflict.

The talks had been arranged in a new effort to try to rein in or at least manage rampant hostility that has come to define recent relations between Washington and Beijing.

“We are concerned about the PRC's alignment with Russia,” Blinken told reporters after the meeting in the Indonesian resort of Bali. He said it is difficult to be “neutral” in a conflict in which there is a clear aggressor but that even it were possible, “I don't believe China is acting in a way that is neutral.”

The Chinese statement said the two sides had an in-depth exchange of views on Ukraine but provided no details.

The Biden administration had hoped that China, with its long history of opposing what it sees as inter-

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ference in its own internal affairs, would take a similar position with Russia and Ukraine. But it has not, choosing instead what U.S. officials see as a hybrid position that is damaging the international rules-based order.

Blinken said every nation, China included, stands to lose if that order is eroded.

The two men met a day after they both attended a gathering of top diplomats from the Group of 20 rich and large developing countries that ended without a joint call to end Russia's war in Ukraine or plan for how to deal with its impacts on food and energy security.

However, Blinken said he believed Russia had come away from G-20 meeting isolated and alone as most participants expressed opposition to the Ukraine war. However, the ministers were unable to come to a unified G-20 call for an end to the conflict.

"There was a strong consensus and Russia was left isolated," Blinken said of individual condemnations of Russia's actions from various ministers, some of whom shunned conversations with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

He noted that Lavrov had left the meeting early, possibly because he didn't like what he was hearing from his counterparts.

"It was very important that he heard loudly and clearly from around the world condemnation of Russia's aggression," Blinken said, adding: "We see no signs whatsoever that Russia at his point is prepared to engage in diplomacy."

On China, Blinken said he and Wang discussed a range of contentious issues from tariffs and trade and human rights to Taiwan and disputes in the South China Sea that have all been complicated by the Chinese position on Ukraine.

Wang called on the U.S. to lift tariffs on imports from China as soon as possible, stop interfering in his country's internal affairs and refrain from harming its interests in the name of human rights and democracy. He also accused the U.S. of using "salami-slicing" tactics on Taiwan, a self-governing island that China claims as its territory and says should come under its control.

Just two days earlier, the countries' top military officers had faced off over Taiwan during a virtual meeting. Blinken said he stressed U.S. concerns with China's "increasingly provocative rhetoric and activity near Taiwan and the vital importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait." He added that he had also raised human rights concerns regarding minorities in Tibet and in the western Xinjiang region.

Wang refuted some "erroneous U.S. views" on Xinjiang, Hong Kong and the South China Sea, the Chinese statement said.

U.S. officials had said ahead of time they didn't expect any breakthroughs from Blinken's talks with Wang. But they said they were hopeful the conversation could help keep lines of communications open and create "guardrails" to guide the world's two largest economies as they navigate increasingly complex and potentially explosive matters.

"We're committed to managing this relationship, this competition responsibly as the world expects us to do," Blinken said.

The United States and China have staked out increasingly confrontational positions, including on Ukraine, that some fear could lead to miscalculation and conflict. The U.S. has watched warily as China has refused to criticize the Russian invasion, while condemning Western sanctions against Russia and accusing the U.S. and NATO of provoking the conflict.

At the G-20 meeting, Wang made an oblique reference to China's policy on global stability, saying "to place one's own security above the security of others and intensify military blocs will only split the international community and make oneself less secure," according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

On Thursday, China's joint chiefs of staff chairman Gen. Li Zuocheng upbraided his U.S. counterpart Gen. Mark Milley over Washington's support for Taiwan.

Li demanded that the U.S. cease military "collusion" with Taiwan, saying China has "no room for compromise" on issues affecting its "core interests."

The meeting between Li and Milley followed fiery comments by Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe at

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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.

Russia continues to 'raise true hell,' Ukraine governor says

By MARIA GRAZIA MURRU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces are managing to "raise true hell" in Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland despite reports of them taking an operational pause, a regional governor said Saturday, while the government in Kyiv urged people in Russian-occupied southern areas to evacuate "by all possible means" ahead of a Ukrainian offensive.

Deadly Russian shelling was reported in Ukraine's east and south.

The governor of Luhansk, Serhyi Haidai, said Russia launched over 20 artillery, mortar and rocket strikes in the province overnight and its forces were pressing toward the border with neighboring Donetsk.

"We are trying to contain the Russians' armed formations along the entire front line," Haidai wrote on Telegram.

Last week, Russia captured the last major stronghold of Ukrainian resistance in Luhansk, the city of Lysychansk. Analysts predicted Moscow's troops likely would take time to rearm and regroup.

But "so far, there has been no operational pause announced by the enemy. He is still attacking and shelling our lands with the same intensity as before," Haidai said. In a later post, he claimed the bombardment of Luhansk was suspended because Ukrainian forces had destroyed ammunition depots and barracks used by the Russians.

Ukraine's deputy prime minister, Iryna Vereshchuk, appealed to residents of Russian-held territories in the south to evacuate so the occupying forces could not use them as human shields during a Ukrainian counteroffensive.

"You need to search for a way to leave, because our armed forces are coming to de-occupy," she said. "There will be a massive fight. I don't want to scare anyone. Everyone understands all of this anyway."

Speaking at a news conference late Friday, Vereshchuk said a civilian evacuation effort was underway for parts of the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. She declined to give details, citing safety considerations.

It was not clear how civilians were expected to safely leave Russian-controlled areas while missile strikes and artillery shelling continue in surrounding areas, or whether they would be allowed to depart or even hear the government's appeal.

The war's death toll continued to rise.

Five people were killed and eight more wounded in Russian shelling Friday of Siversk and Semyhirya in Donetsk province, its governor, Pavlo Kyrylenko, wrote on his Telegram channel on Saturday morning.

In the city of Sloviansk, named as a likely next target of Russia's offensive, rescuers said they pulled a 40-year-old man from the rubble of a building destroyed by shelling on Saturday morning. Kyrylenko had said multiple people were under the debris.

Russian missiles killed two people and wounded three others Saturday morning in the southern city of Kryvyi Rih, according to regional authorities.

"They deliberately targeted residential areas," Valentyn Reznichenko, the governor of the eastern Dnipropetrovsk region, asserted on Telegram. Kryvyi Rih's mayor, Oleksandr Vilkul, asserted in a Facebook post that cluster munitions had been used, and he urged residents not to approach unfamiliar objects in the streets.

Seven people were injured in a Russian rocket strike on Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, on Saturday morning and three of them were hospitalized, including a child, the regional governor, Oleh Syniehubov, wrote on Telegram.

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In the southern city of Mykolayiv, Mayor Oleksandr Senkevych in a Telegram post said a Russian missile attack was under way. He did not mention casualties.

Russian defense officials claimed Saturday that their forces destroyed a hangar housing U.S. howitzers in Ukraine, near the Donetsk province town of Chasiv Yar. There was no immediate response from Ukraine.

The British Defense Ministry reported Saturday that Russian forces in Ukraine were now being armed with "obsolete or inappropriate equipment," including MT-LB armored vehicles taken out of long-term storage.

The MT-LB entered service in the Soviet military in the 1950s and does not provide the same protection as modern armored vehicles.

"While MT-LBs have previously been in service in support roles on both sides, Russia long considered them unsuitable for most frontline infantry transport roles," the British ministry said on Twitter.

The Russians also have brought Cold War-era tanks out of storage.

Sri Lankans storm president's house, office in biggest rally

By KRISHAN FRANCIS Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Sri Lankan protesters stormed President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's residence and nearby office on Saturday as tens of thousands of people took to the streets of the capital Colombo in the biggest demonstration yet to vent their fury against a leader they hold responsible for the island nation's worst economic crisis.

It was not clear if Rajapaksa was inside his residence but footage showed hundreds of people inside the well-fortified house and on the grounds outside, some taking a dip in the garden pool and others in a jubilant mood.

A government spokesman, Mohana Samaranyake, said he had no information about Rajapaksa's whereabouts.

Sri Lanka's economy is in a state of collapse, muddling through with aid from India and other countries as its leaders try to negotiate a bailout with the International Monetary Fund. The economic meltdown has led to severe shortages of essential items, leaving people struggling to buy food, fuel and other necessities.

The turmoil has led to months of protests, which have nearly dismantled the Rajapaksa political dynasty that has ruled Sri Lanka for most of the past two decades.

The president's older brother resigned as prime minister in May after violent protests saw him seek safety at a naval base, while three other Rajapaksa relatives had quit their Cabinet posts earlier. Much of the public ire has been pointed at the Rajapaksa family, with protesters blaming them for dragging Sri Lanka into chaos with poor management and allegations of corruption.

A new prime minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, took over in May to help steer the country out of the crisis. Meanwhile, Rajapaksa has held on to power despite growing calls for him to quit.

On Saturday, as droves of people broke through barriers to occupy the president's residence, hundreds of protesters, some carrying national flags, also stormed his seaside office in another nearby building. Demonstrators have camped outside the entrance to his office for the past three months.

Videos posted on social media showed protesters storming the residence, chanting "Gota go home," calling the president by his nickname. Dozens were seen jumping into the pool, milling about the house and watching television. Outside the building, barricades were overturned and a black flag was hoisted on a pole.

At the president's office, security personnel tried to stop demonstrators who pushed through fences to run across the lawns and inside the colonial-era building.

At least 34 people including two police officers were wounded in scuffles as protesters tried to enter the residence. Two of the injured are in critical condition while others sustained minor injuries, said an official at the Colombo National Hospital who spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Thousands of protesters entered the capital from the suburbs earlier on Saturday after police lifted an overnight curfew. With fuel supplies scarce, many crowded onto buses and trains to come to the city to

protest, while others made their way on bicycles and on foot.

Protest and religious leaders called on Rajapaksa to step down, saying he has lost the people's mandate. "His claim that he was voted in by the Sinhala Buddhists is not valid now," said Ven. Omalpe Sobitha, a prominent Buddhist leader. He urged Parliament to convene immediately to select an interim president but said that Wickremesinghe did not enjoy the people's support.

Protest leaders in their proclamation demanded the resignation of not only the president and the government but all government officials and the country's ambassadors. They said that the protesters should have access to governance as a pressure group.

Last month, Wickremesinghe said the country's economy has collapsed. He said that the negotiations with the IMF have been complex because Sri Lanka was now a bankrupt state.

In April, Sri Lanka announced it is suspending repaying foreign loans due to a foreign currency shortage. Its total foreign debt amounts to \$51 billion of which it must repay \$28 billion by the end of 2027.

Police had imposed a curfew in Colombo and several other main urban areas on Friday night but withdrew it Saturday morning amid objections by lawyers and opposition politicians who called it illegal.

U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Julie Chung on Friday asked people to protest peacefully and called for the military and police "to grant peaceful protesters the space and security to do so."

"Chaos & force will not fix the economy or bring the political stability that Sri Lankans need right now," Chung said in a tweet.

Abe's body arrives in Tokyo as country mourns ex-PM's death

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The body of Japan's former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was returned to Tokyo on Saturday after he was fatally shot during a campaign speech in western Japan a day earlier.

Abe was attacked in the city of Nara and airlifted to a local hospital but died of blood loss despite emergency treatment including massive blood transfusions. Police arrested the attacker, a former member of Japan's navy, at the scene on suspicion of murder. Police confiscated the homemade gun he used, and several others were later found at his apartment.

The attacker, Tetsuya Yamagami, told investigators he plotted the shooting because he believed rumors that Abe was connected to an organization that he resents, according to police. Japanese media reported that the man had developed hatred toward a religious group his mother was devoted to. The reports did not specify the group.

A black hearse carrying Abe's body and accompanied by his wife, Akie, arrived at his home in Tokyo's upscale residential area of Shibuya, where many mourners waited and lowered their heads as the vehicle passed.

Abe's assassination ahead of Sunday's parliamentary election shocked the nation and raised questions over whether security for the former prime minister was adequate.

Police on Saturday said autopsy results showed that a bullet that entered Abe's upper left arm damaged arteries beneath both collar bones, causing fatal massive bleeding.

Some observers who watched videos of the assassination on social media and television noted a lack of attention in the open space behind Abe as he spoke.

A former Kyoto prefectural police investigator, Fumikazu Higuchi, said the footage suggested security was sparse at the event and insufficient for a former prime minister.

"It is necessary to investigate why security allowed Yamagami to freely move and go behind Mr. Abe," Higuchi told a Nippon TV talk show.

Experts also said Abe was more vulnerable standing on the ground level, instead of atop a campaign vehicle, which reportedly could not be arranged because his visit to Nara was hastily planned the day before.

In videos circulating on social media, the attacker, identified as 41-year-old Yamagami, can be seen with the homemade gun hanging from his shoulder, standing only a few meters (yards) behind Abe across a busy street, and continuously glancing around.

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A few minutes after Abe stood at the podium and started his speech — as a local party candidate and their supporters stood and waved to the crowd — Yamagami can be seen firing the first shot, which issued a cloud of smoke, but the projectile apparently missed Abe.

As Abe turned to see where the noise came from, a second shot went off. That shot apparently hit Abe's left arm, missing a bulletproof briefcase raised by a security guard who stood behind the former leader.

Abe fell to the ground, with his left arm tucked in as if to cover his chest. Campaign organizers shouted through loudspeakers asking for medical experts to provide first-aid to Abe, whose heart and breathing had stopped by the time he was airlifted to a hospital where he later pronounced dead.

According to the Asahi newspaper, Yamagami was a contract worker at a warehouse in Kyoto where he was a forklift operator and known as a quiet person who did not mingle with his colleagues. A next-door neighbor at his apartment told Asahi he never met Yamagami, though he recalled hearing noises like a saw being used several times late at night over the past month.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping, who early on had a frosty relationship with Abe, sent a condolence message to Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Saturday, a day after most other world leaders issued their statements.

Xi credited Abe with making efforts to improve China-Japan relations and said he and Abe had reached an important understanding on building better ties, according to a statement posted on China's Foreign Ministry website. He also told Kishida he is willing to work with him to continue to develop neighborly and cooperative relations.

Even though he was out of office, Abe was still highly influential in the governing Liberal Democratic Party and headed its largest faction, but his ultra-nationalist views made him a divisive figure to many.

When he resigned as prime minister, Abe blamed a recurrence of the ulcerative colitis he'd had since he was a teenager. He said then it was difficult to leave many of his goals unfinished, especially 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 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 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 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.

Japan is particularly known for its strict gun laws. With a population of 125 million, it had only 10 gun-related criminal cases last year, resulting in one death and four injuries, according to police. Eight of those cases were gang-related. Tokyo had no gun incidents, injuries or deaths in the same year, although 61 guns were seized.

Abe was proud of his work to strengthen Japan's security alliance with the U.S. and shepherding the first visit by a serving U.S. president, Barack Obama, 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.

He 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.

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.

French women push to cement abortion rights after US ruling

By BARBARA SURK and JADE LE DELEY Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The right to abortion in France hardly seems under threat — it's been inscribed in law for 47 years and enjoys broad support across the political spectrum. But more and more French women are asking: Could what happened in the U.S. happen here one day?

The decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to strip women of the right to abortion has reverberated across Europe's political landscape, forcing the issue back into public debate in France at a time of political upheaval.

With women increasingly taking leadership positions in French politics, lawmakers in both houses of parliament have proposed four bills to enshrine the right to abortion in the French Constitution in order to defend it from future threats.

The most notable initiative comes from President Emmanuel Macron's centrist alliance. His detractors on the left say Macron's party is being opportunist, while far-right critics accuse it of using the issue to distract from more pressing matters.

Abortion in France was decriminalized under a 1975 law named for Simone Veil, a prominent legislator, former health minister and key feminist who championed it.

"This right was fought for and was inalienable," said Yaël Braun-Pivet, the first woman elected speaker of the National Assembly, France's most powerful house of parliament. In her first address to the chamber last week, Braun-Pivet made the inscription of abortion rights into the French Constitution a top priority.

"It is my conviction as a woman today that we need to be the watchdog so that it stays in place forever," Braun-Pivet said.

Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne also expressed concerns over the potential effects of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on recent efforts to recriminalize abortion in Europe. Borne, only the second woman in French history to have been appointed prime minister, called the reversal of abortion rights in the U.S. a "historical turn in the wrong direction."

"It's a stark warning that women's rights should never be taken for granted," Borne said last week after meeting health care providers and reproductive health specialists in Paris. She called for inscribing these rights into the French Constitution and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

The European Union's parliament adopted a resolution Thursday condemning the U.S. decision and urging the addition of a sentence reading "Everyone has a right to safe and legal abortion" to the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights. Abortion is legal and practiced without much political opposition in most EU nations, but is banned in Malta and sharply restricted in Poland.

In France, a poll this week found a solid majority of respondents support the right to abortion, even including most voters who support Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally party and the conservative Republicans. The results were consistent with past surveys.

However the effort to inscribe abortion rights in the French Constitution may not succeed if Macron's political rivals decide they don't want to give him an easy win.

Macron's party lost its majority in the National Assembly in last month's election, while the leftist Nupes coalition became the biggest opposition force and Le Pen's National Rally won a record number of seats.

"The right to abortion is not questioned by anyone," Le Pen said on France-Info radio last week. Still, she blasted efforts to cement abortion rights in the constitution, accusing Macron's allies of "political diversion."

"They want to shift the focus from the main concerns for French people, which are purchasing power, security and out-of-control immigration," Le Pen said.

On the far left, lawmakers noted that Macron's party dismissed earlier efforts to enshrine abortion in the constitution. Mathilde Panot, leader of the hard-left France Unbowed parliamentary group, is now pushing Borne to propose a government bill on the issue instead of a bill that originated in parliament, which

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would speed up the process.

Last year, French lawmakers passed a law extending the abortion deadline from 12 to 14 weeks and allowing midwives to perform the procedure.

Feminist activists marched last weekend in Paris to show solidarity with American women and support French efforts to seek constitutional guarantees.

"People think that women will always have this right but considering the rise of conservative political and religious movements, we have our doubts," said Violaine De Filippis, a Parisian lawyer and feminist activist who joined the march.

Some experts say Macron's lawmakers are being alarmist.

Anne Levade, a public law professor at La Sorbonne University, said in a blog post that "clearly, there is no risk in France that abortion rights would ever be challenged, like they were in the U.S."

But Mathilde Philip-Gay, a law professor and specialist in French and American constitutional law, said France's Constitutional Court could also be influenced by politics if groups craft a long-term strategy to end the right to abortion.

"It is not on the agenda right now, but in 10 or 12 years, French judges could do the same thing that judges of the Supreme Court did," Philip-Gay said.

An inscription into France's constitution "could make it harder for abortion opponents to challenge these rights, but it couldn't prevent them from doing it in the long run."

For EU, Johnson exit won't change much; damage already done

By RAF CASERT and SAMUEL PETREQUIN Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — From his days stoking anti-European Union sentiment with exaggerated newspaper stories, to his populist campaign leading Britain out of the bloc and reneging on the post-Brexit trade deal he signed, outgoing U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been the bane of Brussels for all so many years.

Such was his impact on breaking the bonds between Britain and the EU that after Johnson was forced to announce Thursday that he would step down, the news brought little public jubilation in EU circles. Instead, there was just the numb acceptance of the inevitable and resignation that things will never be the same.

"I will not miss him," French finance minister Bruno Le Maire said, highlighting an open disdain unseen since the Europeans welcomed the U.S. election loss of Donald Trump in 2020. And while trans-Atlantic relations picked up quickly since the arrival of President Joe Biden, don't expect anything similar with a new British leader, politicians and experts said.

"Even with a new prime minister, I believe there will likely be few changes in the British government's position" on the main Brexit issues causing current divisions, said David McAllister, the leading EU legislator dealing with the United Kingdom.

Guy Verhofstadt, who was the top EU parliamentarian during the whole Brexit divorce proceedings, said Johnson's impact was such there is little to no chance another Conservative prime minister could steer a fundamentally different course.

"No one is under any illusion that Johnson's departure from Downing Street solves any of the underlying problems in the U.K.-EU relationship," Verhofstadt wrote in an opinion piece for The Guardian. "The damage done by the outgoing prime minister, through the project that he instrumentalized to achieve power, lives on."

The United Kingdom was always a halfhearted EU member since joining the bloc in 1973. When Johnson joined the Brussels press corps some three decades ago, he often enthralled his home readership with stories that had two fundamental elements: they put the EU in the darkest of lights, and they had little connection to reality.

As a Conservative politician, he threw his weight in the 2016 referendum on the U.K.'s EU membership behind arguments to leave the bloc. Johnson used his breezy manner and jokey style to sell the benefits of withdrawing from the EU, sometimes disregarding the facts. He was key to the Brexit campaign's victory in the cliff-edge 2016 Brexit referendum vote.

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Yet disdain never ran deeper than earlier this year when he started moves toward unilaterally rewriting parts of the post-Brexit deal he signed with the 27-nation bloc. The agreement set up a special system in Northern Ireland, which is part of the U.K., so trade with the Republic of Ireland — an EU member — could go on without setting up a physical border.

"I was there face to face with him. Line for line, comma for comma, and he doesn't want to respect it," EU chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier reminisced Friday, still showing bafflement at Johnson's tactics.

"The reputational damage has been huge to a country and society which has long been proud of its deep culture of 'My word is my bond' without even a written contract, let alone an international treaty," said Michael Emerson of the Center for European Policy Studies.

The bill to unilaterally break the agreement on trade in Northern Ireland is still in the House of Commons, and some lingering hope is left that London might step back from the brink.

"They have this law in the Parliament, so they are doing steps in that direction. But they have not crossed the line," said Jan Lipavský, the foreign minister of Czechia, which holds the EU presidency and is more widely known in English as the Czech Republic.

Yet a quick glance at the likely contenders to take over doesn't inspire hope for any fundamental change since it includes several Conservatives who have spent years steeping in Johnson's confrontational Brexit strategies.

"If you look at possible successors, there is no one who will fundamentally break with the Brexit line," said Rem Korteweg of the Clingendael Institute in The Hague, Netherlands. "The Conservative Party has a dominant Brexit core that you will have to convince to become prime minister."

Although the first years of Brexit have yielded anything but the bounty Johnson promised, any possible quest to return the U.K. to the EU is also as good as out of the question, with the main opposition Labour Party now centering to make the best of the Brexit situation instead.

Not that the EU would even want to welcome back the country with open arms.

With Ukraine, inflation-spurred economic issues and migration problems, "their plate is full," Korteweg said. "They are really not waiting for talks with the British, who will be looking for exceptions and exemptions anyway," he said.

Barnier, who led the EU in Brexit talks for years, doesn't see it happening either.

"It is not an issue at hand," Barnier said on Sud Radio. "Very frankly, what we need is a state of mind where the British government respects the treaties it negotiated."

In era of transparency, Arizona law limits filming police

By TERRY TANG Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Arizona's governor has signed a law that restricts how the public can video police at a time when there's growing pressure across the U.S. for greater law enforcement transparency.

Civil rights and media groups opposed the measure that Republican Gov. Doug Ducey signed Thursday. The law makes it illegal in Arizona to knowingly video police officers 8 feet (2.5 meters) or closer without an officer's permission.

Someone on private property with the owner's consent can also be ordered to stop recording if a police officer finds they are interfering or the area is not safe. The penalty is a misdemeanor that would likely incur a fine without jail time.

There needs to be a law that protects officers from people who "either have very poor judgment or sinister motives," said Republican Rep. John Kavanagh, the bill's sponsor.

"I'm pleased that a very reasonable law that promotes the safety of police officers and those involved in police stops and bystanders has been signed into law," Kavanagh said Friday. "It promotes everybody's safety yet still allows people to reasonably videotape police activity as is their right."

The move comes nearly a year after the U.S. Department of Justice launched a widespread probe into the police force in Phoenix to examine whether officers have been using excessive force and abusing people experiencing homelessness. It's similar to other investigations opened in recent months in Min-

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neapolis and Louisville.

The Phoenix Police Department, which oversees the nation's fifth-largest city, has been criticized in recent years for its use of force, which disproportionately affects Black and Native American residents.

The law has left opponents like K.M. Bell, staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona, incredulous.

Federal appellate courts already have ruled that recording police is "a clearly established right," according to Bell.

The law won't work in real-life scenarios.

"We're talking about people being in public and a place they have a right to be. We're not talking about, like somebody breaking into the (National Security Agency)," Bell said.

Kavanagh, who was a police officer for 20 years, amended the legislation so it applies to certain types of police actions, including questioning of suspects and encounters involving mental or behavioral health issues.

The law also makes exceptions for people who are the direct subject of police interaction. They can film as long as they are not being arrested or searched. Someone who is in a car stopped by police or is being questioned can also film the encounter.

"Those exceptions were based upon input from all sorts of people, including the ACLU," he said.

Rumblings two years ago about anti-police groups who deliberately approach officers while filming inspired draft legislation. There was a risk of an officer being injured or a suspect escaping or ditching evidence, Kavanagh said.

The Rev. Jarrett Maupin, a Phoenix activist, has represented victims of excessive force by police. Some of the cases received more publicity because video captured by bystanders was posted online.

In one case, a Black couple had police officers point guns at them in front of their children in May 2019 after their young daughter took a doll from a store without their knowledge. They received a \$475,000 settlement from the city.

Maupin believes the law is a tactic to help police avoid responsibility.

"Proximity is not a luxury in terms of documenting the actions of officers who engage in acts of brutality," Maupin said. Sometimes the victims and the bystanders have no choice but to be within the proximity that the bill now prohibits."

Bell said it's unlikely that other states might follow suit to limit police recording directly given questions about constitutionality.

The new law doesn't make exceptions for the press.

Media groups including The Associated Press said the measure raises serious constitutional issues. They signed onto a letter from the National Press Photographers Association, or NPPA, in opposition to the bill.

Setting one-size-fits-all conditions like "arbitrary distances" of 8 feet (2.5 meters) for filming police just doesn't work, said Mickey Osterreicher, general counsel for the NPPA. It's also unclear if someone is breaking the law if an officer approaches them within a few feet.

"What happens when you're in situations like we saw during all of the protests for the past couple of years, where you have multiple people with cameras? We're not just talking about journalists," Osterreicher said. "And you've got multiple police officers. Is everybody going to be running around with a ruler?"

Cellphone cameras have transformed policing with one of the biggest examples being the 2020 killing of George Floyd, but Kavanagh said a law like Arizona's wouldn't have made an impact since the video in that case was taken from a greater distance away.

Osterreicher argued a police officer could invoke the law even if the person filming is far enough away.

But that didn't happen in the Floyd case.

"Fortunately, those officers out of all the wrong things that they did, the one thing they didn't do was tell her to turn off the camera or try to interfere with her recording," Osterreicher said.

How a crowded GOP field could help Trump in 2024 campaign

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By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — As he considers another White House run, polls show former President Donald Trump is the most popular figure in the Republican Party. But it wasn't always that way.

Competing at one point against a dozen rivals for the GOP presidential nomination in 2016, Trump won only about a third of the vote in key early states. He even lost the Iowa caucuses, which kick off the nomination process.

But he was able to prevail nonetheless because those in the party who opposed his brand of divisive politics were never able to coalesce around a single rival to confront him. And with Trump mulling another White House bid as soon as this summer, the same dynamic could repeat.

With a growing list of candidates gearing up for their own presidential runs, even a Trump diminished by two impeachments and mounting legal vulnerabilities could hold a commanding position in a fractured, multi-candidate GOP primary.

"I fear it could end up the same way as 2016, which basically was everyone thought everyone else should get out," said Republican strategist Mike DuHaime, who advised former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's campaign that year. "I think every major candidate realized that he or she would have a better shot against Trump one-on-one. But of course each person thought he or she should be the one to get that shot and nobody got out of the way. ... And then it was too late."

The anxiety is mounting as a growing list of potential rivals take increasingly brazen steps, delivering high-profile speeches, running ads, courting donors and making repeat visits to early voting states.

That group now includes upward of a dozen could-be-candidates, including Trump's former Vice President, Mike Pence, his former Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, and Sens. Ted Cruz, Tom Cotton, Rick Scott, and Tim Scott, all of whom could run on the former president's policies. In the anti-Trump lane, figures like Rep. Liz Cheney and Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan are raising their profiles.

Meanwhile, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is increasingly seen as Trump's heir apparent, even by the former president's most loyal supporters, and viewed by Trump allies as his most formidable potential challenger.

While some, like former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, have said they will not challenge Trump if he does go forward with a run, others, like Christie, seem to be gunning for the fight, even if they seem to be longshot contenders.

"I'm definitely giving it serious thought. I'm not gonna make any decision probably until the end of the year," Christie said in a recent interview.

The former governor and 2016 candidate has urged the party to move on from Trump and his ongoing obsession with the 2020 election.

"For me, it's about the party needing to go in a new direction from a personality perspective, and to continue to have someone who can bring strong leadership, tough leadership, that the country needs, but doesn't have all of the other drama that goes along with it," he said. "I'm hearing the same things from donors that I'm hearing from voters — that they're very concerned that we can't put ourselves in a position to have 2024 be about anything but the good of the country."

Pompeo, who has had a busy travel schedule and plans to return to Iowa this summer, said in a recent interview that he has been spending time reading and listening to former President Ronald Reagan's speeches as he prepares for a possible run.

"We're getting ready to stay in the fight," he said in an interview last month as he courted evangelical Christians at a gathering in Nashville, Tennessee.

He said he and his wife would sit down after the midterm elections and "think our way through it, pray our way through it, and decide where's best to serve. It could be presenting ourselves for elected office again. We may choose a different path. But we're not gonna walk away from these things that I've been working on for 30 years now. They matter too much."

In the meantime, he sketched out a possible lane in much the same mold as Trump.

"He was a disruptor that was most necessary in 2016, there's no doubt about that," Pompeo said. And now the task is to take those set of understandings, those set of principles, and defend them and build

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upon them. And it's gonna take a lot of work to do that, leaders of real fortitude and character to do that."

The increasingly open talk comes as Trump faces a cascade of escalating legal troubles.

The congressional committee investigating the deadly Jan. 6 insurrection has revealed increasingly damaging information about Trump's final weeks in office, while the Department of Justice has launched its own sprawling probe. In Georgia, the prosecutor investigating Trump's potentially illegal meddling in the state's 2020 election last week ramped up her efforts by subpoenaing members of Trump's inner circle. And in New York, Trump, his namesake son and his daughter Ivanka have agreed to answer questions under oath beginning next week in the New York attorney general's civil investigation into his business practices.

Mick Mulvaney, a former South Carolina congressman who served as Trump's acting White House chief of staff, said the moves suggested potential candidates "might see an opening where none existed two months ago."

"Trump fatigue might be a real thing," he said, with voters asking themselves whether, if they vote for another candidate, they "can get the same policies without all the baggage."

At the same time, Trump has seen some of his endorsed primary candidates falter. Those who have won, including Ohio GOP Senate nominee JD Vance and Pennsylvania GOP Senate nominee Mehmet Oz, have done so with about 30% of the vote, meaning that two-thirds of party voters went against Trump's picks.

"I don't think anybody underestimates Trump. There's a reason he's the most sought-after endorsement in every single Republican primary," said GOP strategist Alex Conant. "That said, I think there's a recognition that a lot of Republican voters are looking to the future and ready for what's next."

To what extent remains an open question. During a trip to Iowa this week, Arkansas Sen. Cotton declined to weigh in on Trump's standing. But he said he hoped to be "an effective national leader, not only for my party but for the American people in my role in the Senate and any other future role I might serve."

Still, he argued, candidates should embrace Trump's legacy.

"I know that Donald Trump is very popular among our voters who appreciate the successes he delivered for four years in a very hostile environment. They don't want Republicans who are running against that legacy, because they view that legacy as a great success," he said Thursday in Cambridge, Iowa.

Meanwhile, Trump continues to move forward with his own events.

On Friday night, he campaigned in Las Vegas alongside Adam Laxalt, his pick for Nevada Senate. And on Saturday night, he will hold a rally in Anchorage, Alaska, to campaign with Republican Kelly Tshibaka, whom he has endorsed in her race against U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, and others, including former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, who is now running for Congress.

Conant said it made sense for candidates to continue testing the waters for now.

"A lot of potential candidates are realizing that 2024 may be their last best chance, regardless of what Trump does," he said. "There's a very vulnerable Democrat in the White House, Republicans seem likely to win, and if it's not Trump, they're basically sidelined for the next 10 years."

Still, Conant, who served as communications director to Florida Sen. Marco Rubio's 2016 presidential bid, noted the similarities.

"It looks like it's increasingly clear there's going to be a lot of people running for president. And while I think there's an appetite for something different, the alternative to Trump needs to coalesce around one candidate," he said. "That never happened in 2016. And it might not happen in 2024."

___ Associated Press writers Steve Peoples in New York and Tom Beaumont in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this report.

Grove of giant sequoias threatened by California wildfire

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, Calif. (AP) — The largest grove of giant sequoias in Yosemite National Park was closed Friday and hundreds of people ordered evacuated nearby as a wildfire burning through dense forest became the latest in recent years to threaten the world's largest trees.

A team was being sent to the Mariposa Grove to wrap some of the massive trunks in fire-resistant foil to protect them as the blaze burned out of control, said Nancy Phillippe, a Yosemite fire information spokes-

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person.

More than 500 mature sequoias were threatened but there were no reports of severe damage to any named trees, such as the 3,000-year-old Grizzly Giant.

The cause of the fire was under investigation and the rest of the park remained open as nearly 300 firefighters tried to control the flames with the help of two water-dropping helicopters and an air tanker dumping flame retardant, Phillippe said.

The giant sequoias, native in only about 70 groves spread along the western slope of California's Sierra Nevada range, were once considered impervious to flames but have become increasingly vulnerable as wildfires fueled by a buildup of undergrowth from a century of fire suppression and drought exacerbated by climate change have become more intense and destructive.

Lightning-sparked wildfires over the past two years have killed up to a fifth of the estimated 75,000 large sequoias, which are the biggest trees by volume.

There was no obvious natural spark for the fire that broke out Thursday next to the park's Washburn Trail, Phillippe said. Smoke was reported by visitors walking in the grove that reopened in 2018 after a \$40 million renovation that took three years.

The grove, which is inside the park's southern entrance, was evacuated and no one was injured.

The fire had grown to 466 acres (188 hectares) by Friday evening, authorities said.

Evacuation orders were issued Friday for the grove along with the nearby community of Wawona — which is surrounded by the park — and the Wawona Campground, where about 600 to 700 people were staying in a campground, cabins and an historic hotel.

A fierce windstorm ripped through the grove a year-and-a-half ago and toppled 15 giant sequoias, along with countless other trees.

The downed trees, along with massive numbers of pines killed by bark beetles, provided ample fuel for the flames, but winds Friday were calm and the fire was not spreading rapidly.

The park has used prescribed burns to clear brush around the sequoias, which helps protect them if flames spread farther into the grove.

"When the unwanted fires hit those areas, it tends to slow the rate of spread and helps us gain some control," Phillippe said.

In the Sierra foothills, 80 miles (128 kilometers) to the northwest of the Yosemite fire, some evacuation orders were lifted as containment grew to 70% on the Electra Fire that had burned 7 square miles (18 square kilometers).

The fire broke out near Jackson on Monday and temporarily forced about 100 people celebrating the July 4th holiday along a river to seek shelter in a Pacific Gas & Electric Co. facility.

Choose your reality: Trust wanes, conspiracy theories rise

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

Daniel Charles Wilson believes the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, were an inside job. The war in Ukraine is "totally scripted" and COVID-19 is "completely fake." The Boston Marathon bombing? Mass shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, and Buffalo, New York, and Uvalde, Texas? "Crisis actors," he says.

Wilson, a 41-year-old from London, Ontario, has doubts about free elections, vaccines and the Jan. 6 insurrection, too. He accepts little of what has happened in the past 20 years and cheerfully predicts that someday, the internet will make everyone as distrustful as he is.

"It's the age of information, and the hidden government, the people who control everything, they know they can't win," Wilson told The Associated Press. "They're all lying to us. But we're going to break through this. It will be a good change for everyone."

Wilson, who is now working on a book about his views, is not an isolated case of perpetual disbelief. He speaks for a growing number of people in Western nations who have lost faith in democratic governance and a free press, and who have turned to conspiracy theories to fill the void.

Rejecting what they hear from scientists, journalists or public officials, these people instead embrace

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tales of dark plots and secret explanations. And their beliefs, say experts who study misinformation and extremism, reflect a widespread loss of faith in institutions like government and media.

A poll conducted last year by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that just 16% of Americans say democracy is working well or extremely well. Another 38% said it's working only somewhat well.

Other surveys reveal how many people in the United States now doubt the media, politicians, science and even each other.

The distrust has gone so deep that even groups that seem ideologically aligned are questioning each others' motives and intentions.

On the day before Independence Day in Boston this year, a group of about 100 masked men carrying fascist flags marched through the city. Members proudly uploaded videos and photos of the march to online forums popular with supporters of former President Donald Trump and QAnon adherents, who believe a group of satanic, cannibalistic child molesters secretly runs the globe.

Instead of praise, the white supremacists were met with incredulity. Some posters said the marchers were clearly FBI agents or members of antifa — shorthand for anti-fascists — looking to defame Trump supporters. It didn't matter that the men boasted of their involvement and pleaded to be believed. "Another false flag," wrote one self-described conservative on Telegram.

Similarly, when an extremist website that sells unregulated ghost guns — firearms without serial numbers — asked its followers about their July 4th plans, several people responded by accusing the group of working for the FBI. When someone claiming to be Q, the figure behind QAnon, reappeared online recently, many conservatives who support the movement speculated that the new Q was actually a government plant.

This past week, when a Georgia monument that some conservative Christians criticized as satanic was bombed, many posters on far-right message boards cheered. But many others said they didn't believe the news.

"I don't trust it. I'm still thinking ff," wrote one woman on Twitter, referencing "false flag," a term commonly used by conspiracy theorists to describe an event they think was staged.

The global public relations firm Edelman, based in New York City, has conducted surveys about public trust for more than two decades, beginning after the 1999 World Trade Organization's meeting in Seattle was marred by anti-globalization riots. Tonia Reis, director of Edelman's Trust Barometer surveys, said trust is a precious commodity that's vital for the economy and government to function.

"Trust is absolutely essential to everything in society working well," Reis said. "It's one of those things that, like air, people don't think about it until they realize they don't have it, or they've lost it or damaged it. And then it can be too late."

For experts who study misinformation and human cognition, the fraying of trust is tied to the rise of the internet and the way it can be exploited on contentious issues of social and economic change.

Distrust and suspicion offered obvious advantages to small bands of early humans trying to survive in a dangerous world, and those emotions continue to help people gauge personal risk today. But distrust is not always well suited to the modern world, which requires people to trust the strangers who inspect their food, police their streets and write their news. Democratic institutions, with their regulations and checks and balances, are one way of adding accountability to that trust.

When that trust breaks down, polarization and anxiety increases, creating opportunities for people pushing their own "alternative facts."

"People can't fact check the world," said Dr. Richard Friedman, a New York City psychiatrist and professor at Weill Cornell Medical College who has written about the psychology of trust and belief. "They're awash in competing streams of information, both good and bad. They're anxious about the future, and there are a lot of bad actors with the ability to weaponize that fear and anxiety."

Those bad actors include grifters selling bad investments or sham remedies for COVID-19, Russian disinformation operatives trying to undermine Western democracies, or even homegrown politicians like Trump, whose lies about the 2020 election spurred the Jan. 6 attack.

Research and surveys show belief in conspiracy theories is common and widespread. Believers are more likely to get their information from social media than professional news organizations. The rise and fall of particular conspiracy theories are often linked to real-world events and social, economic or technological change.

Like Wilson, people who believe in one conspiracy theory are likely to believe in others too, even if they are mutually contradictory. A 2012 paper, for instance, looked at beliefs surrounding the death of Princess Diana of Wales in a 1997 car crash. Researchers found that subjects who believed strongly that Diana was murdered said they also felt strongly that she could have faked her own death.

Wilson said his belief in conspiracies began on Sept. 11, 2001, when he couldn't accept that the towers could be knocked down by airliners. He said he found information on the internet that confirmed his beliefs, and then began to suspect there were conspiracies behind other world events.

"You have to put it all together yourself," Wilson said. "The hidden reality, what's really going on, they don't want you to know."

UN says Ukraine bears share of blame for nursing home attack

By RICHARD LARDNER and BEATRICE DUPUY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two weeks after Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine, Kremlin-backed rebels assaulted a nursing home in the eastern region of Luhansk. Dozens of elderly and disabled patients, many of them bedridden, were trapped inside without water or electricity.

The March 11 assault set off a fire that spread throughout the facility, suffocating people who couldn't move. A small number of patients and staff escaped and fled into a nearby forest, finally getting assistance after walking for 5 kilometers (3 miles).

In a war awash in atrocities, the attack on the nursing home near the village of Stara Krasnyanka stood out for its cruelty. And Ukrainian authorities placed the fault squarely on Russian forces, accusing them of killing more than 50 vulnerable civilians in a brutal and unprovoked attack.

But a new United Nations report has found that Ukraine's armed forces bear a large, and perhaps equal, share of the blame for what happened in Stara Krasnyanka, which is about 580 kilometers (360 miles) southeast of Kyiv. A few days before the attack, Ukrainian soldiers took up positions inside the nursing home, effectively making the building a target.

At least 22 of the 71 patients survived the assault, but the exact number of people killed remains unknown, according to the U.N.

The report by the U.N.'s Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights doesn't conclude the Ukrainian soldiers or the Moscow-backed separatist fighters committed a war crime. But it said the battle at the Stara Krasnyanka nursing home is emblematic of the human rights office's concerns over the potential use of "human shields" to prevent military operations in certain areas.

This story is part of an ongoing investigation from The Associated Press and the PBS series "Frontline" that includes the War Crimes Watch Ukraine interactive experience and an upcoming documentary.

The aftermath of the attack on the Stara Krasnyanka home also provides a window into how both Russia and Ukraine move quickly to set the narrative for how events are unfolding on the ground — even when those events may still be shrouded by the fog of war. For Ukraine, maintaining the upper hand in the fight for hearts and minds helps to ensure the continued flow of billions of dollars in Western military and humanitarian aid.

Russia's frequently indiscriminate shelling of apartment buildings, hospitals, schools and theaters has been the primary cause of the war's thousands of civilian casualties. Ukraine and its allies, including the United States, have rebuked Moscow for the deaths and injuries and called for those responsible to be brought to justice.

But Ukraine also must abide by the international rules of the battlefield. David Crane, a former U.S.

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Defense Department official and a veteran of numerous international war crime investigations, said the Ukrainian forces may have violated the laws of armed conflict by not evacuating the nursing home's residents and staff.

"The bottom-line rule is that civilians cannot intentionally be targeted. Period. For whatever reason," Crane said. "The Ukrainians placed those people in a situation which was a killing zone. And you can't do that."

The Associated Press and the PBS series "Frontline," drawing from a variety of sources, have independently documented hundreds of attacks across Ukraine that likely constitute war crimes. The vast majority appear to have been committed by Russia. But a handful, including the destruction of the Stara Krasnyanka care home, indicate Ukrainian fighters are also to blame.

The first reports in the media about the Stara Krasnyanka nursing home largely reflected statements issued by Ukrainian officials more than a week after the fighting ended.

Serhiy Haidai, the governor of Luhansk, declared in a March 20 post to his Telegram account that 56 people had been killed "cynically and deliberately" by "Russian occupiers" who "shot at close range from a tank." The office of Ukraine's prosecutor general, Iryna Venediktova, said in a statement issued the same day that 56 elderly people died due to the "treacherous actions" of the Russian forces and their allies. Neither statement mentioned whether Ukrainian soldiers had entered the home before the fighting began.

The Luhansk regional administration, which Haidai leads, did not respond to requests for comment. The Ukrainian prosecutor general's office told The AP on Friday that its Luhansk division continues to investigate Russia's "indiscriminate shelling and forced transfer of persons" from the nursing home. About 50 patients were killed in the attack, the office said, fewer than it stated in March. The prosecutor general's office did not directly respond to the U.N. report, but said it also is looking into whether Ukrainian troops had been in the home.

Moscow-backed separatists have been fighting Ukrainian forces for eight years in the mostly Russian-speaking eastern industrial heartland, the Donbas, which includes the Luhansk and Donetsk regions. They have declared two independent "people's" republics, which were recognized by Russia just before the war began.

Viktorija Serdyukova, the human rights commissioner for the Luhansk separatist government, said in a March 23 statement that the Ukrainian troops were responsible for casualties at the nursing home. The residents had been taken hostage by Ukrainian "militants" and many of them were "burned alive" in a fire started by the Ukrainians as they were retreating, she said.

The U.N. report examined violations of international human rights law that have occurred in Ukraine since Russia invaded on Feb. 24. The Stara Krasnyanka attack totals just two paragraphs in the 38-page report. Although brief, this short section is the most detailed and independent examination of the incident that's been made public.

The Stara Krasnyanka section is based on eyewitness accounts from staff who survived the attack and information provided by relatives of residents, according to a United Nations official who wasn't authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is still working to fully document the case, the official said. Among the remaining questions are how many people were killed and who they were.

At the beginning of March, according to the U.N. report, "when active hostilities drew nearer to the care house," its management requested repeatedly that local authorities evacuate the residents. But an evacuation wasn't possible because Ukrainian forces were believed to have mined the surrounding area and blocked roads, the report said. The home is built on a hill and is near a key highway, which made the location strategically important.

On March 7, Ukrainian soldiers entered the nursing home, according to the U.N. Two days later, they "engaged in an exchange of fire" with the Moscow-backed separatists, "although it remains unclear which side opened fire first," the report said. No staff or residents were injured in this first exchange.

On March 11, 71 residents and 15 staff remained in the home with no access to water or electricity. That morning, the Luhansk separatist forces, which the U.N. referred to as "Russian-affiliated armed groups," attacked with heavy weapons, the report said.

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"A fire started and spread across the care house, while the fighting was ongoing," according to the U.N. An unspecified number of patients and staff fled the home and ran into a nearby forest and were eventually met by the separatist fighters, who gave them assistance, according to the U.N.

A correspondent for the state-owned Russia-1 news channel gained access to the war-ravaged home after the battle and posted a video to his Telegram account in April that accused the Ukrainian soldiers of using "helpless old people" as human shields.

The correspondent, Nikolai Dolgachev, was accompanied into the building by a man identified in the video as a Luhansk separatist soldier who goes by the call sign "Wolf." The extensive damage to the building, both inside and out, is visible in the video. A body is laying on the floor. The AP verified that the location in the video posted by Dolgachev is the care home by comparing it to other videos and photos of the building.

Dolgachev said the Ukrainian troops set up a "machine gun nest" and an anti-tank weapon in the home. In the video, he stops amid the rubble inside the building to rest his hand on the anti-tank weapon, which he incorrectly called a Tor. The Tor is a Russian-made surface-to-air missile.

Ian Williams, a military expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, reviewed the video and said the weapon is an RK-3 Corsar, a Ukrainian-built portable anti-tank guided missile.

While the opposing sides blame each other for the Stara Krasnyanka tragedy, the grim reality is that much of the war in Ukraine is being fought in populated areas, increasing the potential for civilian casualties. Those deaths and injuries become almost inevitable when the civilians are caught in the line of fire.

"The Russians are the bad guys (in this conflict). That's pretty clear," Crane said. "But everybody is accountable to the law and the laws of armed conflict."

Japan's ex-leader Shinzo Abe assassinated during a speech

By MARI YAMAGUCHI, CHISATO TANAKA and FOSTER KLUG Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was assassinated Friday on a street in western Japan by a gunman who opened fire on him from behind as he delivered a campaign speech — an attack that stunned a nation with some of the strictest gun control laws anywhere.

The 67-year-old Abe, who was Japan's longest-serving leader when he resigned in 2020, collapsed bleeding and was airlifted to a nearby hospital in Nara, although he was not breathing and his heart had stopped. He was later pronounced dead after receiving massive blood transfusions, officials said.

A hearse carrying Abe's body left the hospital early Saturday to head back to his home in Tokyo. Abe's wife Akie lowered her head as the vehicle passed before a crowd of journalists.

Nara Medical University emergency department chief Hidetada Fukushima said Abe suffered major damage to his heart, along with two neck wounds that damaged an artery. He never regained his vital signs, Fukushima said.

Police at the shooting scene arrested Tetsuya Yamagami, 41, a former member of Japan's navy, on suspicion of murder. Police said he used a gun that was obviously homemade — about 15 inches (40 centimeters) long — and they confiscated similar weapons and his personal computer when they raided his nearby one-room apartment.

Police said Yamagami was responding calmly to questions and had admitted to attacking Abe, telling investigators he had plotted to kill him because he believed rumors about the former leader's connection to a certain organization that police did not identify.

Dramatic video from broadcaster NHK showed Abe standing and giving a speech outside a train station ahead of Sunday's parliamentary election. As he raised his fist to make a point, two gunshots rang out, and he collapsed holding his chest, his shirt smeared with blood as security guards ran toward him. Guards then leapt onto the gunman, who was face down on the pavement, and a double-barreled weapon was seen nearby.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and his Cabinet ministers hastily returned to Tokyo from campaign events elsewhere after the shooting, which he called "dastardly and barbaric." He pledged that the election, which chooses members for Japan's less-powerful upper house of parliament, would go on as planned.

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

Even though he was out of office, Abe was still highly influential in the governing Liberal Democratic Party and headed its largest faction, Seiwakai, but his ultra-nationalist views made him a divisive figure to many.

Opposition leaders condemned the attack as a challenge to Japan's democracy. Kenta Izumi, head of the top opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, called it "an act of terrorism" and said it "tried to quash the freedom of speech ... actually causing a situation where (Abe's) speech can never be heard again."

In Tokyo, people stopped to buy extra editions of newspapers or watch TV coverage of the shooting. Flowers were placed at the shooting scene in Nara.

When he resigned as prime minister, Abe blamed a recurrence of the ulcerative colitis he'd had since he was a teenager. He said then it was difficult to leave many of his goals unfinished, especially 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 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 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 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.

Tributes to Abe poured in from world leaders, with many expressing shock and sorrow. U.S. President Joe Biden praised him, saying "his vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific will endure. Above all, he cared deeply about the Japanese people and dedicated his life to their service."

On Saturday, Biden called Kishida and expressed outrage, sadness and deep condolences on the shooting death of Abe. Biden noted the importance of Abe's legacy including through the establishment of the Quad meetings of Japan, the U.S., Australia and India. Biden voiced confidence in the strength of Japan's democracy and the two leaders discussed how Abe's legacy will live on as the two allies continue to defend peace and democracy, according to the White House.

Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose tenure from 2005-21 largely overlapped with Abe's, said she was devastated by the "cowardly and vile assassination." Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared Saturday a day of national mourning for Abe, and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres tweeted that he would remember him for "his collegiality & commitment to multilateralism."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian declined to comment, other than to say Beijing offered sympathies to Abe's family and that the shooting shouldn't be linked to bilateral relations. But social media posts from the country were harsh, with some calling the gunman a "hero" — reflecting strong sentiment against right-wing Japanese politicians who question or deny that Japan's military committed wartime atrocities in China.

Biden, who is dealing with a summer of mass shootings in the U.S., also said "gun violence always leaves a deep scar on the communities that are affected by it."

Japan is particularly known for its strict gun laws. With a population of 125 million, it had only 10 gun-related criminal cases last year, resulting in one death and four injuries, according to police. Eight of those cases were gang-related. Tokyo had no gun incidents, injuries or deaths in the same year, although 61 guns were seized.

Abe was proud of his work to strengthen Japan's security alliance with the U.S. and shepherding the first visit by a serving U.S. president, Barack Obama, 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.

He 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.

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.

Yosemite wildfire is latest threat to giant sequoia trees

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, Calif. (AP) — The largest grove of giant sequoias in Yosemite National Park was closed Friday and hundreds of people ordered evacuated nearby as a wildfire burning through dense forest became the latest in recent years to threaten the world’s largest trees.

A team was being sent to the Mariposa Grove to wrap some of the massive trunks in fire-resistant foil to protect them as the blaze burned out of control, said Nancy Phillippe, a Yosemite fire information spokesperson.

More than 500 mature sequoias were threatened but there were no reports of severe damage to any named trees, such as the 3,000-year-old Grizzly Giant.

The cause of the fire was under investigation and the rest of the park remained open as nearly 300 firefighters tried to control the flames with the help of two water-dropping helicopters and an air tanker dumping flame retardant, Phillippe said.

The giant sequoias, native in only about 70 groves spread along the western slope of California’s Sierra Nevada range, were once considered impervious to flames but have become increasingly vulnerable as wildfires fueled by a buildup of undergrowth from a century of fire suppression and drought exacerbated by climate change have become more intense and destructive.

Lightning-sparked wildfires over the past two years have killed up to a fifth of the estimated 75,000 large sequoias, which are the biggest trees by volume.

There was no obvious natural spark for the fire that broke out Thursday next to the park’s Washburn Trail, Phillippe said. Smoke was reported by visitors walking in the grove that reopened in 2018 after a \$40 million renovation that took three years.

The grove, which is inside the park’s southern entrance, was evacuated and no one was injured.

The fire had grown to 466 acres (188 hectares) by Friday evening, authorities said.

Evacuation orders were issued Friday for the grove along with the nearby community of Wawona — which is surrounded by the park — and the Wawona Campground, where about 600 to 700 people were staying in a campground, cabins and an historic hotel.

A fierce windstorm ripped through the grove a year-and-a-half ago and toppled 15 giant sequoias, along with countless other trees.

The downed trees, along with massive numbers of pines killed by bark beetles, provided ample fuel for the flames, but winds Friday were calm and the fire was not spreading rapidly.

The park has used prescribed burns to clear brush around the sequoias, which helps protect them if flames spread farther into the grove.

“When the unwanted fires hit those areas, it tends to slow the rate of spread and helps us gain some control,” Phillippe said.

In the Sierra foothills, 80 miles (128 kilometers) to the northwest of the Yosemite fire, some evacuation orders were lifted as containment grew to 70% on the Electra Fire that had burned 7 square miles (18 square kilometers).

The fire broke out near Jackson on Monday and temporarily forced about 100 people celebrating the July 4th holiday along a river to seek shelter in a Pacific Gas & Electric Co. facility.

Musk abandons deal to buy Twitter; company says it will sue

By BARBARA ORTUTAY, TOM KRISHER and MATT O'BRIEN Associated Press

Elon Musk announced Friday that he will abandon his tumultuous \$44 billion offer to buy Twitter after the company failed to provide enough information about the number of fake accounts. Twitter immediately fired back, saying it would sue the Tesla CEO to uphold the deal.

The likely unraveling of the acquisition was just the latest twist in a saga between the world's richest man and one of the most influential social media platforms, and it may portend a titanic legal battle ahead.

Twitter could have pushed for a \$1 billion breakup fee that Musk agreed to pay under these circumstances. Instead, it looks ready to fight to complete the purchase, which the company's board has approved and CEO Parag Agrawal has insisted he wants to consummate.

In a letter to Twitter's board, Musk lawyer Mike Ringler complained that his client had for nearly two months sought data to judge the prevalence of "fake or spam" accounts on the social media platform.

"Twitter has failed or refused to provide this information. Sometimes Twitter has ignored Mr. Musk's requests, sometimes it has rejected them for reasons that appear to be unjustified, and sometimes it has claimed to comply while giving Mr. Musk incomplete or unusable information," the letter said.

Musk also said the information is fundamental to Twitter's business and financial performance, and is needed to finish the merger.

In response, the chair of Twitter's board, Bret Taylor, tweeted that the board is "committed to closing the transaction on the price and terms agreed upon" with Musk and "plans to pursue legal action to enforce the merger agreement. We are confident we will prevail in the Delaware Court of Chancery."

The trial court in Delaware frequently handles business disputes among the many corporations, including Twitter, that are incorporated there.

Former President Donald Trump weighed in on his own social platform, Truth Social: "THE TWITTER DEAL IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE TRUTH". Musk said in May that he would allow Trump, who was banned from Twitter following the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol, back onto the platform.

Much of the drama surrounding the deal has played out on Twitter, with Musk — who has more than 100 million followers — lamenting that the company was failing to live up to its potential as a platform for free speech.

On Friday, shares of Twitter fell 5% to \$36.81, well below the \$54.20 that Musk agreed to pay. Shares of Tesla, meanwhile, climbed 2.5% to \$752.29. After the market closed and Musk's letter was published, Twitter's stock continued to decline while Tesla climbed higher.

"This is a disaster scenario for Twitter and its board," Wedbush analyst Dan Ives wrote in a note to investors. He predicted a long court fight by Twitter to either restore the deal or get the \$1 billion breakup fee.

On Thursday, Twitter sought to shed more light on how it counts spam accounts in a briefing with journalists and company executives. Twitter said it removes 1 million spam accounts each day. The accounts represent well below 5% of its active user base each quarter.

To calculate how many accounts are malicious spam, Twitter said it reviews "thousands of accounts" sampled at random, using both public and private data such as IP addresses, phone numbers, location and account behavior when active, to determine whether an account is real.

Last month, Twitter offered Musk access to its "fire hose" of raw data on hundreds of millions of daily tweets, according to multiple reports at the time, though neither the company nor Musk confirmed that.

One of the chief reasons Musk gave for his interest in taking Twitter private was his belief he could add value to the business by getting rid of its spam bots — the same problem that he's now citing as a reason to end the deal.

"This whole process has been bizarre," said Christopher Bouzy, founder of research firm Bot Sentinel, which tracks fake Twitter accounts used for disinformation or harassment. "He knew about this problem."

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It's odd that he would use bots and trolls and inauthentic accounts as a way of getting out of the deal." On the other hand, Bouzy said, the letter from Musk's legal team makes some valid critiques of Twitter's lack of transparency, including its apparent refusal to provide Musk with the same level of internal data it offers some of its big customers.

"It just seems as if they're hiding something," said Bouzy, who also believes the number of fake or spam Twitter accounts is higher than what the company has reported.

Musk's lawyer also alleged that Twitter broke the agreement when it fired two top managers and laid off a third of its talent-acquisition team.

The sale agreement, he wrote, required Twitter to "seek and obtain consent" if it deviated from conducting normal business. Twitter was required to "preserve substantially intact the material components of its current business organization," the letter said.

Musk's flirtation with buying Twitter appeared to begin in late March. That's when Twitter said he contacted members of its board — including co-founder Jack Dorsey — and told them he was buying up shares of the company and was interested in either joining the board, taking Twitter private or starting a competitor.

Then, on April 4, he revealed in a regulatory filing that he had become the company's largest shareholder after acquiring a 9% stake worth about \$3 billion.

At first, Twitter offered Musk a seat on its board. But six days later, Agrawal tweeted that Musk would not be joining the board after all. His bid to buy the company came together quickly after that.

When Musk agreed to buy Twitter for \$54.20 per share, he inserted a "420" marijuana reference into his price. He sold roughly \$8.5 billion worth of shares in Tesla to help fund the purchase, then strengthened his commitments of more than \$7 billion from a diverse group of investors including Silicon Valley heavy hitters like Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison.

Inside Twitter, Musk's offer was met with confusion and falling morale, especially after Musk publicly criticized one of Twitter's top lawyers involved in content-moderation decisions.

Groups opposing the takeover from the outset — including those advocating for women, minorities and LGBTQ people — cheered Friday's news.

"Despite what Musk may claim, this deal isn't ending because of Twitter bots or spam accounts. This deal is collapsing because of Elon Musk's own erratic behavior, embrace of extremists and bad business decisions," said Angelo Carusone, president of Media Matters, a left-leaning nonprofit watchdog group that's been critical of Musk's Twitter bid.

Musk, he said, "made it clear that he would roll back Twitters' community standards and safety guidelines, which would turn the platform into a fever swamp of dangerous conspiracy theories, partisan chicanery and white supremacist radicalization."

'Sopranos' actor Tony Sirico, 'Paulie Walnuts,' dies at 79

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Tony Sirico, who played the impeccably groomed mobster Paulie Walnuts in "The Sopranos" and brought his tough-guy swagger to films including "Goodfellas," died Friday. He was 79.

Sirico died at an assisted living facility in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, said his manager, Bob McGowan. There was no immediate information on the cause of death.

A statement from Sirico's family confirmed the death of Gennaro Anthony "Tony" Sirico "with great sadness, but with incredible pride, love and a whole lot of fond memories."

McGowan, who represented Sirico for more than two decades, recalled him as "loyal and giving," with a strong philanthropic streak. That included helping ex-soldiers' causes, which hit home for the Army veteran, his manager said.

Steven Van Zandt, who played opposite Sirico as fellow mobster Silvio Dante on "The Sopranos," saluted him on Twitter as "legendary."

"A larger than life character on and off screen. Gonna miss you a lot my friend," the actor and musician said.

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Michael Imperioli, who portrayed Christopher Moltisanti on "The Sopranos," called Sirico his "dear friend, colleague and partner in crime."

"Tony was like no one else: he was as tough, as loyal and as big hearted as anyone i've ever known," Imperioli said on Instagram.

Sirico was unconcerned about being cast in a string of bad guy roles, McGowan said, most prominently that of Peter Paul "Paulie Walnuts" Gualtieri in the 1999-2007 run of the acclaimed HBO drama starring James Gandolfini as mob boss Tony Soprano. (Gandolfini died in 2013 at age 51).

"He didn't mind playing a mob guy, but he wouldn't play an informant," or as Sirico put it, a "snitch," McGowan said.

Sirico, born July 29, 1942, in New York City, grew up in the Flatbush and Bensonhurst neighborhoods where he said "every guy was trying to prove himself. You either had to have a tattoo or a bullet hole."

"I had both," he told the Los Angeles Times in a 1990 interview, calling himself "unstable" during that period of his life. He was arrested repeatedly for criminal offenses, he said, and was in prison twice. In his last stint behind bars, in the 1970s, he saw a performance by a group of ex-convicts and caught the acting bug.

"I watched 'em and I thought, 'I can do that.' I knew I wasn't bad looking. And I knew I had the (guts) to stand up and (bull) people," he told the Times. "You get a lot of practice in prison. I used to stand up in front of these cold-blooded murderers and kidnapers — and make 'em laugh."

Sirico also was cast outside the gangster mold, playing police officers in the films "Dead Presidents" and "Deconstructing Harry." Among his other credits were Woody Allen films including "Bullets over Broadway" and "Mighty Aphrodite," and appearances on TV series including "Miami Vice" and voice roles on "Family Guy" and "American Dad!"

Sirico is survived by daughter Joanne Sirico Bello; son Richard Sirico; his brother, Robert Sirico, a priest; and other relatives.

Trump WH counsel Cipollone gives 1/6 testimony, new info

By LISA MASCARO and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former White House counsel Pat Cipollone "did not contradict" testimony of previous witnesses as he appeared Friday before the Jan. 6 committee, a grueling daylong private session that produced new information to be divulged in future public hearings, one lawmaker said.

Cipollone was a highly sought-after witness, especially after bombshell testimony that he tried to prevent Donald Trump from challenging the 2020 election results and worked to stop the defeated president from joining the violent mob that laid siege to the Capitol, they said.

"He did not contradict the testimony of other witnesses," Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., said late Friday on CNN.

Lofgren, a committee member, clarified that "not contradicting is not the same as confirming." In some cases the former White House lawyer was not present for the events described or "couldn't recall with precision" some details, she said.

"He was candid with the committee, he was careful in his answers," said Lofgren. "And I think we did learn a few things, which we will be rolling out in the hearings to come."

Cipollone's central role came into focus during a surprise committee hearing last week when former White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson described his repeated efforts to stop Trump from joining the mob at the Capitol.

In a stunning public hearing, Hutchinson testified that Cipollone warned her that Trump would be charged with "every crime imaginable" if the defeated president went to the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, trying to stop the certification of Joe Biden's election.

Hutchinson said Cipollone urged her to persuade her boss, chief of staff Mark Meadows, not to let Trump go to the Capitol.

Hutchinson testified that she was told Trump was irate when he was ultimately prevented by his security team from going to the Capitol that day. The Secret Service has disputed parts of her account detailing

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Trump's actions when she said he lashed out at the driver in the presidential motorcade.

At another key juncture, Cipollone was also part of a meeting on the Sunday before Jan. 6 with Justice Department officials at the White House threatening to resign if Trump went ahead with plans to install a new acting attorney general who would pursue his false claims of voter fraud.

During that meeting Cipollone referred to a letter that Jeffrey Clark, the attorney Trump wanted to install as head of the Justice Department, had proposed sending to Georgia and other battleground states challenging their election results as a "murder-suicide pact," according to previous testimony before the panel.

Cipollone and his lawyer, Michael Purpura, who also worked at the Trump White House, did not respond to requests for comment.

Once a staunch presidential confidant who had defended Trump during his first impeachment trial, Cipollone had been reluctant to appear formally for an on-the-record interview. Like other former White House officials, it is possible he claimed his counsel to the Republican president as privileged information he was unwilling to share with the committee.

Cipollone appeared for some eight hours before the panel and its investigators. Cipollone was subpoenaed for his testimony, but Lofgren said he appeared voluntarily.

"A grueling day," she said. "But it was well worth it."

Earlier this week, Trump responded to news of Cipollone's cooperation on his social media platform, Truth Social, calling it bad for the country.

"Why would a future President of the United States want to have candid and important conversations with his White House Counsel if he thought there was even a small chance that this person, essentially acting as a 'lawyer' for the Country, may someday be brought before a partisan and openly hostile Committee in Congress," the former president said.

The panel said Cipollone is "uniquely positioned to testify" in a letter accompanying the subpoena issued last week.

"Mr. Cipollone repeatedly raised legal and other concerns about President Trump's activities on January 6th and in the days that preceded," Chairman Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., said in a statement. "While the Select Committee appreciates Mr. Cipollone's earlier informal engagement with our investigation, the committee needs to hear from him on the record, as other former White House counsels have done in other congressional investigations."

Impassioned Biden signs order on abortion access

By SEUNG MIN KIM, ZEKE MILLER and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Friday condemned the "extreme" Supreme Court majority that ended a constitutional right to abortion and delivered an impassioned plea for Americans upset by the decision to "vote, vote, vote vote" in November. Under mounting pressure from fellow Democrats to be more forceful in response to the ruling, he signed an executive order to try to protect access to the procedure.

The actions Biden outlined are intended to head off some potential penalties that women seeking abortion may face after the ruling, but his order cannot restore access to abortion in the more than a dozen states where strict limits or total bans have gone into effect. About a dozen more states are set to impose additional restrictions.

Biden acknowledged the limitations facing his office, saying it would require an act of Congress to restore nationwide access to the way it was before the June 24 decision.

"The fastest way to restore Roe is to pass a national law," Biden said. "The challenge is go out and vote. For God's sake there is an election in November!"

Biden's action formalized 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. He was joined by Vice President Kamala Harris, HHS secretary Xavier Becerra and Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco in the Roosevelt Room as he signed the order.

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His executive order also directs 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 obtain abortion services. He is also asking the Federal Trade Commission to take steps to protect the privacy of those seeking information about reproductive care online and establish a task force to coordinate federal efforts to safeguard access to abortion.

Biden is also directing his staff to line up volunteer lawyers to provide women and providers with pro bono legal assistance to help them navigate new state restrictions.

The order 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 court's decision in the case known as *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* overturned the 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, and stressed that Democrats do not have the votes in the current Congress to do so.

"We need two additional pro-choice senators and a pro-choice house to codify *Roe*," he said. "Your vote can make that a reality."

Biden for the first time last week announced his support for changing Senate rules to allow a measure to restore nationwide access to abortion to pass by simple majority, rather than the usual 60-vote threshold required to end a filibuster. However, at least two Democratic lawmakers have made clear they won't support changing Senate rules.

He predicted that women would turn out in "record numbers" in frustration over the court's decision, and said he expected "millions and millions of men will be taking up the fight beside them."

On Friday, he repeated his sharp criticism of the Supreme Court's reasoning in striking down what had been a half-century constitutional right to abortion.

"Let's be clear about something from the very start, this was not a decision driven by the Constitution," Biden said. He accused the court's majority of "playing fast and loose with the facts."

He spoke emotionally of a 10-year-old Ohio girl reported to have been forced to travel out of state to terminate a pregnancy after being raped, noting that some states have instituted abortion bans that don't have exceptions for cases of rape or incest.

"A 10-year-old should be forced to give birth to a rapist's child?" an incredulous Biden nearly shouted. "I can't think of anything more extreme."

Biden added that in the November congressional elections, "The choice we face as a nation is between the mainstream or the extreme."

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

NARAL Pro-Choice America President Mini Timmaraju called Biden's order "an important first step in restoring the rights taken from millions of Americans by the Supreme Court."

But Lawrence Gostin, who runs the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health at Georgetown Law, described Biden's plans as "underwhelming."

"There's nothing that I saw that would affect the lives of ordinary poor women living in red states," he said.

Gostin encouraged Biden to take a more forceful approach toward ensuring access to medication abortion across the country and said Medicaid should consider covering transportation to other states for the purposes of getting abortions.

Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, the administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, recently told the AP that the agency had been looking at whether Medicaid could cover travel for abortions, but acknowledged that "Medicaid's coverage of abortion is extremely limited."

Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America President Marjorie Dannenfelser condemned Biden's order, saying, "President Biden has once again caved to the extreme abortion lobby, determined to put the full weight

of the federal government behind promoting abortion.”

Biden’s move was the latest scramble to protect the data privacy of those contemplating or seeking abortion, as regulators and lawmakers reckon with the aftermath of the Supreme Court ruling.

Privacy experts say women could be vulnerable if their personal data is used to surveil pregnancies and shared with police or sold to vigilantes. Online searches, location data, text messages and emails, and even apps that track periods could be used to prosecute people who seek an abortion — or medical care for a miscarriage — as well as those who assist them, experts say.

Privacy advocates are watching for possible new moves by law enforcement agencies in affected states — serving subpoenas, for example, on tech companies such as Google, Apple, Bing, Facebook’s Messenger and WhatsApp, services like Uber and Lyft, and internet service providers including AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile and Comcast. Local prosecutors may go before sympathetic judges to obtain search warrants for users’ data.

Last month four Democratic lawmakers asked the FTC to investigate Apple and Google for allegedly deceiving millions of mobile phone users by enabling the collection and sale of their personal data to third parties.

Japan’s tight gun laws add to shock over Abe’s assassination

By YURI KAGEYAMA Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in broad daylight Friday shocked a world that has come to associate Japan with relatively low crime and strict gun control.

Japan’s longest-serving prime minister, Abe was shot in the back while campaigning in the city of Nara for parliamentary candidates. He died at a hospital, two days before the election.

The suspect apparently circumvented the nation’s ultra-tight gun regulations by building his own weapon. Police said the 15-inch (40-centimeter) device was obviously homemade, and one expert compared it to a muzzle-loading gun. Authorities confiscated similar weapons when they raided the suspect’s nearby one-room apartment.

The motive of the man, who was taken into custody at the scene, remained unclear.

Fatal gun violence is virtually unheard of in Japan, and most Japanese go through life without ever handling, or even seeing, a real gun. Stabbings are more common in killings.

Major universities have rifle clubs, and Japanese police are armed, but gun ownership rights have been a distant issue for decades. Even police rarely resort to firing their pistols.

With a population of 125 million, the country had just 10 gun-related criminal cases last year, resulting in a single death and four injuries, according to police. Eight of those cases were gang-related.

The densely populated capital of Tokyo had zero gun incidents, injuries or deaths during that same year, although 61 guns were seized there.

“Japanese people are in a state of shock,” said Shiro Kawamoto, professor at the College of Risk Management at Nihon University in Tokyo.

“This serves as a wake-up call that gun violence can happen in Japan, and security to protect Japanese politicians must be re-examined,” Kawamoto said. “To assume this kind of attack will never happen would be a big mistake.”

Abe’s security team may face serious questions. But because such attacks are extraordinary in Japan, relatively light security is the norm, even for former prime ministers.

In remarks in Washington, U.S. President Joe Biden described the “profound impact” of the shooting “on the psyche of the Japanese people.”

“This is a different culture — they’re not used to” gun violence “as unfortunately we are. Here in the United States, we know how deep the wounds of gun violence go from communities that are affected. And this assassination is a tragedy that all the people of Japan are feeling.”

Japan’s last high-profile shooting occurred in 2019, when a former gang member was shot at a karaoke venue in Tokyo.

Under Japanese law, possession of firearms is illegal without a special license. Importing them is also illegal. The same rules apply to some kinds of knives and certain other weapons, like crossbows.

People who wish to own firearms must go through a stringent background check, including clearance by a doctor, and declare information about family members. They must also pass tests to show they know how to use guns correctly. Those who pass and purchase a weapon must also buy a special locking system for it at the same time.

Passing those hurdles will allow a license holder to shoot at clay targets. Hunting requires an additional license.

The weapon used in the attack on Abe was probably a "craft-made" firearm, according to N.R. Jenzen-Jones, the director of Armament Research Services, a specialist arms investigations firm.

He compared the weapon to a musket in which the gunpowder is loaded separately from the bullet.

"Firearms legislation in Japan is very restrictive, so I think what we're seeing here, with what's probably a muzzle-loading weapon, is not just an attempt to circumvent the control of firearms, but also the strict control of ammunition in Japan," he said.

Assassination of Japan's Shinzo Abe stuns world leaders

By EILEEN NG Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Leaders around the world condemned the assassination of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Friday as "despicable," "cowardly" and "terrorism" while recalling him as a man devoted to peace, security and international cooperation.

Tributes poured in as governments expressed sorrow and solidarity with Japan over the loss of Abe, who was Japan's longest-serving leader before stepping down in 2020 for health reasons.

Abe, 67, was shot from behind in Nara in western Japan while giving a campaign speech. He was airlifted to a hospital and later pronounced dead. The attack was especially shocking in one of the world's safest countries, where guns are strictly controlled.

U.S. President Joe Biden said he was "stunned, outraged, and deeply saddened." He visited the residence of Japan's ambassador to the U.S. on Friday to offer condolences. He placed a bouquet of flowers on a table set up near a koi pond and wrote in a condolence book that Abe was "a man of peace and judgment."

"This is a tragedy for Japan and for all who knew him," Biden said. "His vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific will endure. Above all, he cared deeply about the Japanese people and dedicated his life to their service."

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who hastily returned to Tokyo from campaign events around the country, condemned the "unforgivable act." He said campaigning as well as Sunday's elections for parliament's upper house will proceed.

"The free and fair election, which is the root of democracy, needs to be protected no matter what. We will not be defeated by violence," Kishida said.

Biden called Kishida "a very solid guy" and said he did not believe the killing was likely to have "any profound, destabilizing impact on Japanese security or Japanese solidarity."

Leaders from Turkey to Singapore condemned the attack. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and the French foreign ministry called the shooting "despicable," and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said it was "cowardly."

The U.N. Security Council stood in silent tribute to Abe after the current council president, Brazil's U.N. Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho, expressed "our sadness and shock at the senseless assassination."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Abe will be remembered "as a staunch defender of multilateralism, respected leader and supporter of the United Nations." Abe was committed to promoting peace and security, championing U.N. development goals and advocating for universal health coverage, Guterres said, according to his spokesman.

"I have fond memories of meeting Mr. Abe and his wife during their visit to the United Kingdom in 2016," Queen Elizabeth II said in a written statement. "His love for Japan, and his desire to forge ever-closer

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bonds with the United Kingdom, were clear."

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy tweeted his "deepest condolences to his family and the people of Japan at this difficult time," while South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol called the shooting "an intolerable criminal act," his office said.

Iran said it was "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.

Public broadcaster NHK aired a dramatic video of Abe giving a speech outside a train station in 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.

Jordan's King Abdullah II said he was shocked and saddened. "The world lost a great leader, and Jordan and I lost a true friend," the monarch tweeted.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern 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 arrested a suspect at the scene. Under Japanese law, possession of firearms is illegal without a special license. Importing them is also illegal.

Leaders from Germany, Pakistan, Sweden and the Philippines were also among those who gave condolences, and many countries including Spain and France expressed solidarity with Japan. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a day of national mourning on Saturday as a mark of 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.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Abe was a "giant on the world stage," adding that "his legacy was one of global impact, and a profound and positive one for Australia."

Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose time in office from 2005-2021 largely overlapped Abe's, said she was "deeply shocked and devastated" by the "cowardly and vile assassination."

Taiwan's government said "Abe spared no effort to push for the progress of Taiwan-Japan relations for many years," noting his efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic for the Japanese government to donate vaccines to Taiwan.

Italian Premier Mario Draghi 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.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt noted that Abe was killed "while campaigning for his fellow party members. All politicians should be safe while executing their work for democracy."

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

The International Olympic Committee praised Abe for his "vision, determination and dependability" that allowed it to postpone the 2020 Tokyo Olympics for one year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It said the Olympic flag will be flown at half staff at Olympic House in Lausanne for three days.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump said he hoped Abe's killer will be dealt with "swiftly and harshly." "Really BAD NEWS FOR THE WORLD!" he said on his social media platform. He said Abe "was a unifier like no other, but above all, he was a man who loved and cherished his magnificent country, Japan."

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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 died in Japan's invasion of China during World War II.

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 Japan's military committed atrocities in China.

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

Administration seeks Supreme Court OK on deportation policy

By MARK SHERMAN and PAUL WEBER undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration asked the Supreme Court on Friday to allow it to put in place guidance that prioritizes deportation of people in the country illegally who pose the greatest public safety risk.

The emergency request to the court follows conflicting decisions by federal appeals courts in recent days over a September directive from the Homeland Security Department that paused deportation unless individuals had committed acts of terrorism, espionage or "egregious threats to public safety."

The federal appeals court in Cincinnati overturned a district judge's order that put the policy on hold in a lawsuit filed by Arizona, Ohio and Montana.

But in a separate suit filed by Texas and Louisiana, a federal judge in Texas ordered a nationwide halt to the guidance and a federal appellate panel in New Orleans declined to step in.

The administration turned to the Supreme Court in the latter case, asking that the policy be allowed to be put in place nationwide, or at the very least, everywhere outside Texas and Louisiana.

The judge's order "is disrupting DHS's efforts to focus its limited resources on the noncitizens who pose the gravest threat to national security, public safety, and the integrity of our Nation's borders," Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar wrote in the Supreme Court filing.

The guidance, issued after Joe Biden became president, updated a Trump-era policy that removed people in the country illegally regardless of criminal history or community ties.

Even while disagreeing on many aspects of the immigration issue, the two administrations did find common ground in one respect, calling for the court to limit the power of "single district judges to dictate national policy."

Prelogar, following her predecessors in the Trump administration, bemoaned an explosion of lawsuits filed by states of one party against a president of the other party. Too many of those suits, she wrote, resulted in orders with nationwide effect. Judges typically decide cases in ways that only affect the parties before them.

The states have until Wednesday to respond, and an order from the Supreme Court is not expected before late next week.

The Biden administration request comes one day after Texas Gov. Greg Abbott issued an executive order authorizing state forces to apprehend migrants and return them to the U.S.-Mexico border, pushing the boundaries of their enforcement powers and the Republican's escalating efforts to curb the rising number of crossings.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre, asked Friday about the order, said "Immigration enforcement is a federal authority and states should not be ... meddling in it. That is just, especially Texas Gov. Abbott, who has a track record of causing chaos and confusion at the border."

It remained unclear Friday how Abbott's order would be carried out on the ground or whether any apprehensions or transports had already taken place. Ericka Miller, a spokeswoman for the Texas Department of Public Safety, said the state police agency could not discuss operational specifics.

Customs and Border Protection commissioner Chris Magnus, speaking at a news conference in Washington, said his agency has a shared interest with the Texas DPS and other agencies "in maintaining a safe, orderly, humane immigration process."

"We stand ready to work with Texas to achieve these goals but the challenge is when any state such as Texas takes unilateral action that just makes it harder for us to do this," he said.

Uvalde mayor: Police didn't get early chance to end massacre

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The mayor of Uvalde on Friday disputed a new report that alleges authorities missed chances to quickly end the massacre at a Texas elementary school, again reflecting the lack of definitive answers about the slow law enforcement response to one of the deadliest classroom shootings in U.S. history.

Mayor Don McLaughlin said no Uvalde police officer saw the gunman outside Robb Elementary School before he went inside and that none of them had an opportunity to fire on the shooter. His comments contradict a critique of the decision-making by law enforcement that was released this week by tactical response experts at Texas State University.

The differing accounts and public rebuke of the report reiterated how, more than six weeks after the May 24 shooting, questions remain about how and why police armed with rifles and bulletproof shields waited more than an hour before confronting the gunman in a fourth-grade classroom where 21 people were killed, including 19 children.

It also widened a rift between Uvalde officials and the state, particularly the Texas Department of Public Safety, which had troopers on the scene and has directed much of the blame to the local school district police chief. The new report was requested by DPS, and the findings were similar to the narrative and details that leaders of the state police force have previously given publicly.

"There were dozens of DPS troopers onsite by the time of the breach in the classroom," McLaughlin said in a statement.

Representatives of the Department of Public Safety did not respond to requests for comment. But on Friday, the DPS told lawmakers that Uvalde County District Attorney Christina Busbee was not authorizing the agency to publicly release a 77-minute video of the school hallway before the classroom was breached. Busbee did not immediately reply to a message seeking comment.

It is not the first time McLaughlin has lashed out at the agency. He has previously accused it of publicly giving an incomplete and one-sided account at the same time he says local officials have been instructed to not divulge information while the investigation is ongoing.

Col. Steve McCraw, who heads DPS, has largely blamed the inaction by law enforcement on Uvalde School District Police Chief Pete Arredondo, describing him as the incident commander during the shooting.

Arredondo told the Texas Tribune that he did not believe he was in charge of the scene. He has kept a low profile since the shooting and resigned last week from his elected position on the City Council.

The report this week was drafted by the university's Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training program. Authors of the 26-page report said they were contacted by DPS shortly after the shooting to assess the law enforcement response and that they had an approximately one-hour briefing led by an "investigating officer" who is not named.

One of the report's most striking details was how a Uvalde police officer, armed with a rifle, watched the gunman walk toward the campus but did not fire while waiting for permission from a supervisor to shoot. The supervisor "either did not hear or responded too late," according to the report.

McLaughlin said no Uvalde officer had a chance to shoot the gunman before entering the school, and that while an officer did see someone outside, the officer could not tell who it was.

"Ultimately, it was a coach with children on the playground, not the shooter," McLaughlin said.

Pete Blair, the executive director of the training center that published the report, did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment Friday.

A separate report on the shooting is being compiled by Texas legislators who have spent weeks interviewing more than 20 witnesses and first responders behind closed doors. It is unclear when those findings will be released.

8-year-old paralyzed in parade attack awake, asking for twin

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

An 8-year-old boy whose spine was severed in the shooting at a Fourth of July Parade is conscious for the first time since the attack and asking to see his twin brother, his family said Friday.

Doctors don't think Cooper Roberts suffered any brain damage from the bullets that hit his chest, the family announced in a statement Friday that confirmed he is paralyzed from the waist down.

The boy was removed from the ventilator. He is in serious condition and is in a great deal of pain, but improving.

He and his twin brother, Luke, who was struck by shrapnel and is home, loved the Fourth of July parade in their Chicago suburb.

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

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

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 raised more than \$800,000 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."

Appeals court: Congress can see some Trump financial records

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal appeals court on Friday narrowed the range of documents House Democrats are entitled to in their years-long investigation of Donald Trump's finances.

The decision from the federal appeals court in Washington almost certainly won't be the last word in the legal fight that began in 2019, when Trump was president and Democrats newly in charge of the House of Representatives subpoenaed a wealth of records from Trump's accounting firm, Mazars USA.

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A federal judge in Washington already had ruled that lawmakers were entitled to review a more limited set of records than they initially wanted.

The appellate panel narrowed the request even more. It held that the House Committee on Oversight and Reform should be given records of financial ties between foreign countries and Trump or any of his businesses for 2017-18. It also ordered Mazars to turn over documents between November 2016 and 2018 relating to the Trump company that held the lease granted by the federal government for the former Trump International Hotel located between the White House and the Capitol.

"We determine here that the Committee has shown the requisite need for some, but far from all, of the presidential information covered by its subpoena," Judge Sri Srinivasan wrote in an opinion joined by Judge Judith Rogers. The third judge who heard arguments in the case is Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, who dropped out of the case when President Joe Biden nominated her to the Supreme Court.

The committee first issued a subpoena in 2019, then renewed it in 2021.

Lower courts had first ruled broadly in favor of the committee, but the Supreme Court in 2020 ordered a new analysis.

In issuing its ruling Friday, the court raised the point of Trump's right to continue fighting the subpoena, noting that the question remained of whether Trump maintains executive privilege as a former president.

In addition, the Biden administration "has not opposed former President Trump's efforts to challenge the Committee's subpoena," Srinivasan wrote, adding that the administration's last word in this case "was to argue that the subpoena must be invalidated" under the Supreme Court's analysis.

The committee's hunt for records overlaps with other records that have already been released to investigators. In 2020, for instance, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of New York District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. in his demand for Trump's tax records, though the ruling kept the documents out of the public eye. Vance's office took possession of those records in February.

In that case, criminal charges have been brought against the Trump Organization and Chief Financial Officer Allen Weisselberg. They are due back in court on Aug. 12, postponed from a scheduled July 12 appearance.

Report finds 'unnecessary' force by agents at Rio Grande

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Border Patrol agents on horseback engaged in "unnecessary use of force" against non-threatening Haitian immigrants but didn't whip any with their reins "intentionally or otherwise," according to a federal investigation of chaotic scenes along the Texas-Mexico border last fall that sparked widespread condemnation.

In a 511-page report released Friday, Customs and Border Protection blamed a "lack of command control and communication" for mounted agents using their horses to forcibly block and move migrants during an influx of Haitians arriving last September at the U.S. border outside Del Rio, Texas.

"We're gonna learn from this incident and we'll find a way to do better," CBP Commissioner Chris Magnus said during a news conference announcing the report. "Not everyone's going to like all the findings but the investigation was comprehensive and fair."

Video and photos of the incident made it appear agents were whipping Haitians, which caused outrage among advocacy groups and civil rights leaders. The Biden administration promised a full investigation after many in the president's own party objected that such tactics with racial overtones were the kinds of policies the U.S. was supposed to be moving away from after years of hardline immigration tactics under President Donald Trump.

A former police chief, Magnus took over the nation's largest law enforcement agency in December and is being watched closely for shepherding the ongoing investigation. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in a statement Friday that "the organizational failures of policy, procedures, and training that the investigation identified were a disservice to the agents and the public they serve."

Last fall, Biden called images of what occurred "horrible" and "outrageous."

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"I promise you, those people will pay," the president said then. "There is an investigation underway right now and there will be consequences."

Asked if the politically charged environment marred the investigation, Magnus said "it was inevitable, certainly not surprising, that there was going to be a reaction to that from the community, from those in the media from elected officials, from different advocacy groups."

But he said he instructed investigators "that all of these things were to be put aside, to be disregarded."

"I was counting on them to do a fair, through, comprehensive investigation with no attention to this outside influence," Magnus said.

By September 19, 2021, around 15,000 Haitian migrants had crossed from Mexico into the United States and were concentrated in an encampment underneath the international bridge.

Magnus said the investigation began the day after the incident and included testimony from more than 30 people, among them witnesses and journalists. Investigators said they were unable to locate Haitian migrants involved to get their accounts — but used statements and court documents that some provided as part of lawsuits they filed against U.S. authorities.

Magnus said four Border Patrol personnel have been recommended for disciplinary action for their conduct, though he declined to discuss exactly what each had done to warrant possible punishment, or elaborate on what sanctions they could face. That comes after prosecutors in April declined to pursue criminal charges, he said.

Disciplinary actions are separate from Friday's findings and won't be announced until later. All four CBP officials have been on administrative duty since the investigation began, according to senior agency officials who briefed reporters before Friday's report was released.

Mark Morgan, a former acting CBP commissioner under Trump, dismissed the entire investigation as politically motivated since no Haitians were actually whipped.

"From the start, these agents have been smeared, lied about, and vilified by nearly everyone on the left," Morgan said in a statement.

Federal investigators said no migrant was struck with a whip, forced to return to Mexico or denied entry into the U.S. during the approximately 15 minutes that they were forcibly blocked and moved by mounted agents. One agent yelled inappropriate comments about a migrant's national origin including, "You use your women" while also narrowly missing crashing his horse into a child walking nearby while pursuing a migrant.

Agents acted with the permission of their supervisor, who was unable to get guidance from higher up the Border Patrol chain of command, the report said. Communication occurred on a radio channel that wasn't recorded, further complicating investigation into the incident.

The use of force drove migrants back into the Rio Grande, despite their having been well within U.S. territory and not presenting threats — which was counter to CBP's mission, the report found.

It also said the incident began after authorities from a state agency also working in the area at the time, the Texas Department of Public Safety, requested help from federal authorities.

That conclusion follows Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott this week authorizing state forces to apprehend migrants and return them to the U.S.-Mexico border — raising questions about his state's enforcement powers as top GOP leaders have slammed the Biden administration for failing to curb the rising number of crossings.

Magnus said Friday that his agency has "a shared interest with Texas" in "maintaining a safe, orderly, humane immigration process," and that federal officials "stand ready to work with Texas to achieve these goals."

"But the challenge is, when any state, such as Texas, takes unilateral action, that just makes it harder for us to do this," he added.

Djokovic moves into 8th Wimbledon final; will face Kyrgios

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

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WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — This deficit was less daunting for Novak Djokovic. The tension less palpable. It's not that he wants to fall behind in matches, of course. It's that when he does, he knows how to deal with it.

"It's amazing how the whole game can fall apart, really, just because you feel you're tense. Then no shots are really working properly. Your feet are static and slow," Djokovic said. "Something happens in a match, then all of a sudden it's completely different and you're flying. Everything flows."

The top-seeded Djokovic fashioned a second consecutive comeback victory at Wimbledon on Friday, beating No. 9 seed Cam Norrie of Britain 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 in the semifinals to run his winning streak at the All England Club to 27 matches in a row as he pursues a fourth straight championship on its grass courts.

"The more you experience these kind of situations, not the better you feel, but just more prepared you feel. You know what to expect," Djokovic said. "It's always really about handling your own nerves better than maybe your opponent is his own. This internal battle is always the greatest."

He will face first-time major finalist Nick Kyrgios for the trophy on Sunday.

"The job," Djokovic said, "is not finished."

The unseeded Kyrgios, a combustible 27-year-old from Australia who drew jeers for the mere mention of his name during Djokovic's on-court interview, did not need to play on Friday because 22-time Grand Slam champion Rafael Nadal withdrew with a torn abdominal muscle.

"Mouth-watering," is how Kyrgios described the upcoming matchup.

He has won both previous meetings against Djokovic, although both were on hard courts five years ago.

"One thing is for sure," Djokovic said. "There's going to be a lot of fireworks, emotionally, from both."

It will be the 32nd Grand Slam title match for Djokovic, breaking a tie for the men's record he shared with Roger Federer, and gives the 35-year-old from Serbia a shot at a 21st major title and seventh at Wimbledon. Only Federer, with eight, owns more at the grass-court tournament among men.

On the steamiest afternoon of the fortnight, with the temperature at 85 degrees Fahrenheit (29 degrees Celsius) and the air still, Djokovic often looked displeased early, gesticulating toward his guest box. But unlike in the quarterfinals, when he dropped the opening two sets against Jannik Sinner before winning in five, it took little time for Djokovic to assert his dominance.

Exactly what allows Djokovic to trail, then win — he has seven career comebacks from a two-set hole, including in the 2021 French Open final — is hard to know. He claimed a talking-to in the bathroom helped against Sinner. He joked that donning a white hat after the first set made a difference against Norrie.

Asked at Friday's news conference to explain the white bottle he appeared to inhale from during another match, Djokovic offered this tongue-in-cheek reply: "Magic potion."

"You'll find out soon," he added, "but I can't speak about it now."

Djokovic vs. Norrie began auspiciously enough for locals hoping to see one of their own get to a men's final, something only two-time Wimbledon champion Andy Murray has accomplished for Britain since the professional era began in 1968.

Roars came when the left-handed Norrie arose first from his seat; Djokovic was pouring some water on his hand and rubbing it in his hair. When Norrie's volley winner completed a break in that initial game, he hopped and threw an uppercut. Union Jack flags waved in the stands.

Was the championship won? No. A berth in the final earned? Not that, either. All in all, it was quite a celebration after one of what would become 35 games, five of 202 points, four of 154 minutes.

When Djokovic broke right back, he walked to grab his white towel and dabbed at his perspiration. To him, this was not a monumental achievement.

Just one tiny example of how versatile and superb Djokovic is came on one particularly marvelous point. He hit a spinning half-volley on the move, but Norrie replied with a lob. So Djokovic ran back toward the baseline, the net behind him, and conjured up a between-the-legs, facing-the-wrong-way, high-arching lob of his own that somehow landed in. Norrie ran to that, twisted his body to reply with a forehand and Djokovic ended the 14-stroke exchange with a drop volley winner.

Even the partisans on hand cheered with approval. Djokovic raised his right index finger to the sky.

Still, only two of Norrie's first 20 points came via winners he produced. Djokovic committed 12 unforced errors in the first set alone. One measure of how he restored order: Djokovic made 16 unforced errors over the last three sets combined.

Norrie, never before past the third round at a major, grew less sharp as Djokovic increased the pressure — within points and on the scoreboard. A particularly sloppy service game by Norrie, with a trio of unforced errors, helped Djokovic break to lead 5-3 in the second set.

"He kind of gifted me that," said Djokovic, who would take 11 of 13 games in a match-shifting stretch. He got broken three times in the first set, then never faced a break point the rest of the way.

Perhaps sensing their guy could use a boost, some fans offered chants of "Let's go, Norrie, let's go!" early in the third set. Didn't change a thing.

Djokovic broke to open the third. Did the same in the fourth.

"Just locked it down," Norrie said.

EXPLAINER: What's next for 3 other ex-cops in Floyd's death

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Now that former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin has been sentenced to federal prison, attention turns to the fates of three fellow ex-cops who are still working their way through a complicated web of state and federal court proceedings arising from the killing of George Floyd.

Tou Thao, J. Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane still await sentencing for their convictions on federal civil rights charges in February. Lane awaits sentencing in state court after pleading guilty to a reduced charge there, while Thao and Kueng are scheduled to stand trial in October on state charges of aiding and abetting both murder and manslaughter.

Kueng and Lane helped restrain Floyd while Chauvin, who is white, killed Floyd by kneeling on his neck for nearly 9 1/2 minutes despite the handcuffed and unarmed Black man's fading pleas that he couldn't breathe. Thao helped hold back an increasingly concerned group of onlookers at the scene outside a Minneapolis convenience store where Floyd tried to pass a counterfeit \$20 bill in August 2020.

Here's a look at what's still to come in the legal process that has flowed from a killing that led to worldwide protests and a national reckoning on racial injustice:

CHAUVIN'S FUTURE

U.S. District Judge Paul Magnuson sentenced Chauvin on Thursday to 21 years in prison on federal civil rights charges — 20 years stemming from Floyd's killing and a year more arising from Chauvin's earlier assault on a 14-year-old boy. With credit for seven months served, Chauvin still has 20 1/3 years to go — 245 months — on his federal sentence, plus five years of supervised release after that.

As of Friday, Chauvin was still in the state's maximum security prison at Oak Park Heights, where he's been held since his conviction in state court last year for murder and manslaughter, which got him a 22 1/2 year sentence. His state and federal sentences are running concurrently. But because of differences between state and federal parole rules, he'll actually serve a little more time behind bars on the federal sentence than he faced under his state sentence alone.

Chauvin knew that when he accepted a plea deal on the federal charges in December. But he presumably considered that preferable because he's been kept in solitary confinement in the state prison for his own safety. If he'd been in the general population at a state prison, he would have run the risk of running into people he had busted. Magnuson expressed hope at Thursday's sentencing that the Bureau of Prisons will keep him under easier conditions, and not too far from his family in Minnesota and Iowa. But his placement is up to the bureau, which could take weeks to move him.

While Chauvin gave up his right to appeal his federal conviction, his appeal of his state conviction is pending. He also faces a pair of federal civil rights lawsuits.

NEXT FEDERAL SENTENCINGS

Magnuson has not set sentencing dates for Thao, Kueng and Lane, who remain free on bail. Federal prosecutors have already asked the judge to give Thao and Kueng sentences that would be shorter than

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Chauvin's, but "substantially higher" than the 5 1/4 to 6 1/2 years they're seeking for Lane.

Thao's attorney, Robert Paule, is seeking a sentence of two years. The recommendation from Kueng's attorney, Thomas Plunkett, remains sealed and Plunkett did not immediately return a call seeking comment Friday.

Lane's attorney, Earl Gray, has asked for 27 months, which if granted would let Lane go free after two years. That's about when Lane would become eligible for release on his recommended state sentence. Lane's plea agreement on a state charge of aiding and abetting manslaughter calls for three years. Under Minnesota's system, assuming good behavior, inmates are entitled to parole after two-thirds of their sentence; in the federal system they become eligible after 85%.

Magnuson expressed some sympathy for the three Thursday, when he told Chauvin, "You absolutely destroyed the lives of three young officers by taking command of the scene." But evidence presented at their trial established that they failed to stop Chauvin while they could still have saved Floyd's life. Magnuson gave Chauvin a little break by imposing a sentence that was lower than what prosecutors sought, but did not indicate how he'd treat Thao, Kueng or Lane.

UPCOMING IN STATE COURT

Hennepin County District Judge Peter Cahill has scheduled Lane's sentencing for Sept. 21. Prosecutors and Gray are jointly recommending three years. He would serve that at the same time as his federal sentence, and in federal prison.

Cahill has set the trial for Thao and Kueng, who rejected offers of plea agreements earlier, to begin Oct. 24. But his order left open the possibility that deals could still be reached. He said the court would not accept a plea bargain unless the change-of-plea hearing was scheduled for "not more than 15 days" after the defendants' federal sentencings.

If Thao and Kueng go to trial, a major difference from Chauvin's will be that most proceedings won't be televised or livestreamed. Cahill made a rare exception for Chauvin's trial due to the dangers of COVID-19. But he ruled that the risks from the pandemic have abated to the point that he's bound by the state court system's normal restrictions on cameras, which allow them in "pre-guilt" phases only when all parties consent, but are easier for sentencings.

Minnesota Chief Justice Lorie Gildea was impressed enough with how smoothly live audiovisual coverage worked during Chauvin's trial that she asked a court advisory committee to consider whether the rules should be loosened. But a divided panel recommended in its final report last week that there be no major changes. Any liberalization would be up to the Minnesota Supreme Court, but there's no deadline for a decision.

EXPLAINER: 5 key takeaways from the June jobs report

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Inflation is raging. The stock market is tumbling and interest rates rising. American consumers are depressed and angry. Economists warn of potentially dark times ahead.

But employers? They just keep hiring.

The Labor Department reported Friday that America's dinged and dented economy managed to add a vigorous 372,000 jobs in June, well above the 275,000 that economists had expected. And the unemployment rate remained at 3.6%, just a tick above the 50-year low that was recorded just before the coronavirus pandemic flattened the economy in early 2020.

"The labor market's continued strength is simply astonishing, despite all the headwinds new hiring faces," said Christopher Rupkey, chief economist at the research firm FWDBONDS LLC, dismissing concerns that the economy might headed for a downturn sometime soon. "This isn't what a recession looks like."

The American job market has staged a remarkable comeback from the depths of the COVID-19 recession in the spring of 2020: In March and April that year, the United States lost a staggering 22 million jobs.

But the government's vast infusions of spending, including expanded unemployment benefits and relief checks to most households and ultra-low interest rates set by the Federal Reserve, fueled a propulsive recovery. Employers added a record 6.7 million jobs last year. And they've been tacking on an average of

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457,000 a month more so far in 2022.

The nation is now just 524,000 jobs short of the number it had in February 2020, just before COVID erupted. Counting last month's hiring, in fact, the private sector has regained all the jobs it lost to the pandemic recession. The remaining shortfall resides entirely on government payrolls.

The strong recovery does have a downside: It has fueled the hottest inflation in 40 years. And the Fed will likely see June's hiring spree as another reason to keep aggressively raising its benchmark short-term interest rate as it did in March, May and June to try to tame inflation. Higher rates will probably weaken the economy because they will make loans steadily more expensive for consumers and businesses.

Here are five takeaways from the June jobs report:

HIRING: STRONG BUT SLOWING

"The recent numbers usually would be consistent with a raging economic boom," noted Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics. But hiring has lost some momentum. From April through June, employers added an average 375,000 jobs a month, down from an average of 539,000 in the first three months of 2022 and a monthly average of 562,000 last year.

What's more, in its employment report Friday, the government said hiring was weaker during the spring than it had originally estimated. Its revisions lopped a combined 74,000 jobs from April and May payrolls.

PAY RAISES ARE GETTING SMALLER

Average hourly wages rose 0.3% from May to June and 5.1% over the past year. The year-over-year gain was the lowest since December. And it wasn't nearly enough to keep up with the 12-month jump in consumer prices, which reached a 40-year high of 8.6% in May.

Economists Sarah House and Michael Pugliesi of Wells Fargo said the Fed's policymakers would likely welcome "the tepid rise in earnings" because it might ease concerns that rising pay would fuel ever-higher prices, far above the central bank's 2% target. At the same time, the economists cautioned that decelerating pay gains are "another blow to households grappling with the highest inflation in more than a generation."

And as households lose purchasing power to higher prices, they may slash their spending, which typically accounts for about 70% of the economy's output.

MANUFACTURING JOBS ARE BACK

American factories added 29,000 jobs last month, restoring manufacturing payrolls to nearly 12.8 million, just above pre-pandemic levels.

Locked in at home during the pandemic and sitting on savings from relief checks and in some cases lower commuting costs, consumers have been eagerly buying up manufactured goods — everything from appliances to lawn furniture to cars. The Institute for Supply Management, a trade group of purchasing managers, says its manufacturing index has signaled growth for 25 straight months, although it dipped in June.

But factory boom may not last. Higher interest rates are raising borrowing costs. More expensive loans, in turn, could slow demand for factory goods and drive up the value of the U.S. dollar, which makes American-made products more expensive in foreign markets.

HELP WANTED AT RESTAURANTS, BARS AND HOTELS

As the COVID-19 threat recedes — or seems to — consumers have been shifting their spending away from manufactured goods and toward the services they had to forgo while hunkered down at home. Restaurants, bars and hotels, devastated in the early days of the pandemic, are now on a hiring spree. Eating and drinking establishments added nearly 41,000 jobs last month. Hotels tacked on nearly 15,000. Payrolls in both businesses, though, remain well below pre-pandemic levels.

Leisure and hospitality companies, including hotels, restaurants and bars, raised hourly wages 9.1% last month from a year ago, staying ahead of inflation, and 1% from May — three times the average month-over-month private-sector pay hike.

BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT DIPS

The unemployment rate for Black Americans dropped to 5.8% last month from 6.2% in May. At 21.2 million, the number of Black Americans in the labor force — which includes those either working or looking

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for work — tops pre-pandemic levels, though the figure dipped from May.

The number of whites in the labor force is 1.4 million short of where it stood in February 2020. White unemployment ticked up to 3.3% from 3.2% in May. Hispanic joblessness was unchanged at 4.3%.

In June, the percentage of Black Americans who either had a job or were looking for one — the so-called labor force participation rate — was 62.2%, down from 63% in May but exceeded the participation rate for whites (61.9% in June) for a third straight month.

Larry Storch, zany Cpl. Agarn on TV's 'F Troop,' dies at 99

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Larry Storch, the rubber-faced comic whose long career in theater, movies and television was capped by his "F Troop" role as zany Cpl. Agarn in the 1960s spoof of Western frontier TV shows, died Friday. Storch was 99.

Storch died of natural causes early Friday in his New York City apartment, according to his manager, Matt Beckoff.

Although "F Troop" lasted only two seasons on ABC, from 1965 to 1967, it became a cult favorite in reruns. Its devoted fans could recite almost all of the adventures of the incredibly incompetent soldiers of Fort Courage and the members of the nearby Native American tribe who only pretended to be at war with them.

As Agarn, Storch was the wild-eyed partner and protege of Forrest Tucker's wily Sgt. O'Rourke, who often schemed with Frank DeKova's Chief Wild Eagle to fleece unsuspecting visitors. Ken Berry's Capt. Parmenter was Fort Courage's clueless commander.

While "F Troop" brought him lasting fame, Storch appeared in scores of films and TV shows both before and after the show. He also enjoyed a long career in theater and as a comic at resorts in New York State's Catskill Mountains area.

He never regretted being best known for the series, his manager said.

"He embraced it. He loved being Agarn" and relished working with his co-stars, said Beckoff. Storch was the "kindest, sweetest person," who always had time for autograph-seekers and was generous to people in need, he said.

Storch's credits included "Funny Valentine," "Sweet 16," "Sex and the Single Girl," "S.O.B.," "Airport," "Treasure Island" and "Oliver Twist." On TV, he guest-starred on such shows as "Married... With Children," "Archie Bunker's Place," "Trapper John, M.D.," "Fantasy Island," "CHiPS," "The Love Boat," "Get Smart," "Love American Style," "Gilligan's Island" and "Car 54 Where Are You?"

His many theater appearances ranged from a brutal detective in a 1983 Broadway revival of "Porgy and Bess" to Chief Sitting Bull in the 2000 revival of "Annie Get Your Gun" with Reba McEntire.

Storch said in a 1998 interview that he was surprised to be considered for an Army comedy such as "F Troop," with it being well known that he served in the Navy during World War II. "All I knew about horses was that they give milk and can bite from both ends," he quipped.

Indeed, it was his Navy service that had greatly boosted his career. During the war, he had met a radio operator in the Marshall Islands named Bernie Schwartz who had told him, "I'm going to be a movie star." Storch, already a seasoned comic on the resort circuit, had tried to talk him out of it, warning him that the business could be tough.

They met again after the war, and Schwartz, who by now had changed his name to Tony Curtis, remembered the funny guy from the islands. Storch went on to appear in eight of Curtis' movies, including "Captain Newman," "Who Was That Lady?" and "The Great Race."

Laurence Samuel Storch was born in New York City where, he recalled proudly, he went on to become class clown at DeWitt Clinton High School and "was invited not to come back."

He practiced his comedy in Harlem theaters for \$2 a night before graduating to the famed training ground for comedians of his era, the Catskills.

His first big break came on TV in the early 1950s with "The Cavalcade of Stars," with Jackie Gleason.

That led to "The Larry Storch Show," a 1953 summer series. Regular movie and TV work followed. Storch was married to Norma Greve from 1961 until her death in 2003.

A look at high-profile political assassinations this century

By The Associated Press undefined

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Japanese former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was assassinated Friday by a gunman who opened fire on him as he delivered a campaign speech on a street in western Japan, shocking the country.

Here's a global look at other high-profile political assassinations in the 21st century:

— Oct. 15 2021: British lawmaker David Amess is stabbed to death by an Islamic State supporter while meeting with voters.

— July 7, 2021: Haitian President Jovenel Moïse is assassinated by gunmen who also wound his wife Martine in an overnight raid on their Port-au-Prince home. More than 40 people have been arrested in Haiti for the attack, including high-ranking police officers and a group of former Colombian soldiers.

— April 20, 2021: Chad President Idriss Deby Itno is killed while battling rebels in the north. Hours earlier he had been declared the winner of an election that would have given him another six years in power.

— Dec. 19, 2016: Russia's ambassador to Turkey Andrei Karlov is shot dead by a Turkish policeman shouting condemnation of Russia's military role in Syria, in front of a shocked gathering at a photo exhibit. The gunman was later killed in a shootout with police.

— June 16, 2016: British lawmaker Jo Cox is shot and stabbed to death by a far-right supporter in the English village of Birstall, part of her constituency.

— Feb. 6, 2013: Tunisian left-wing opposition leader Chokri Belaid is fatally shot outside his Tunis home. His killing — followed six months later by that of another left-wing leader, Mohammed Brahmi — plunged Tunisia into political chaos with effects reverberating to this day. No one has been convicted in either case.

— Sept. 11, 2012: U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens is killed when militants storm the U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya. Another three Americans died.

— Oct. 20, 2011: Longtime Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi is hunted and summarily killed by insurgents after being toppled in a NATO-backed uprising.

— March 2, 2009: Guinea-Bissau President Joao Bernardo Vieira is killed by renegade soldiers in his palace, hours after a bomb blast killed his rival in the West African nation.

— December 27, 2007: Benazir Bhutto, the first female prime minister in a Muslim-majority country as well as Pakistan's second nationally elected prime minister, was shot at then attacked by a suicide bomber at a political rally in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

— Feb. 14, 2005: Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri is killed by a suicide truck bomb on a seaside boulevard in Beirut. Another 21 people died and 226 were wounded in the attack, which is seen by many in Lebanon as the work of neighboring Syria.

— Dec. 29, 2003: Archbishop Michael Courtney, the pope's ambassador in Burundi, is shot by gunmen as he was returning from a funeral and died during surgery.

— March 12, 2003: Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic is shot dead in front of the Serbian government headquarters in Belgrade. He was a key leader of the revolt that toppled former President Slobodan Milosevic in October 2000. Twelve people were convicted in connection with the killing, which was carried out to halt his pro-Western reforms, according to a Serbian court ruling.

— May 6, 2002: Populist Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn is gunned down in a northern Netherlands city, days before a general election in which he was a candidate, by an animal rights activist.

— June 1, 2001: Nepal's King Birendra is killed when his son, Crown Prince Dipendra, opens fire on his family in the royal palace. The dead include Queen Aiswarya, a prince and five others. Officials said the shooting followed a dispute over the prince's marriage.

— Jan. 18, 2001: Congo President Laurent Kabila is assassinated in the presidential palace in the capital, Kinshasa, by one of his bodyguards, who was killed minutes later by security forces.

Gun applicants in NY will have to list social media accounts

By MARINA VILLENEUVE and MAYSOON KHAN Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — As missed warning signs pile up in investigations of mass killings, New York state is rolling out a novel strategy to screen applicants for gun permits. People seeking to carry concealed handguns will be required to hand over lists of their social media accounts for a review of their “character and conduct.”

It’s an approach applauded by many Democrats and national gun control advocacy groups, but some experts have raised questions about how the law will be enforced and address free speech concerns.

Some of the local officials who will be tasked with reviewing the social media content also are asking whether they’ll have the resources and, in some cases, whether the law is even constitutional.

Sheriffs haven’t received additional money or staffing to handle a new application process, said Peter Kehoe, the executive director of the New York Sheriffs’ Association. The law, he asserted, infringes on Second Amendment rights, and while applicants must list their social media accounts, he doesn’t think local officials will necessarily look at them.

“I don’t think we would do that,” Kehoe said. “I think it would be a constitutional invasion of privacy.”

The new requirement, which takes effect in September, was included in a law passed last week that sought to preserve some limits on firearms after the Supreme Court ruled that most people have a right to carry a handgun for personal protection. It was signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Democrat, who noted shooters sometimes telegraph their intent to hurt others.

Increasingly, young men have gone online to drop hints of what’s to come before executing a mass killing, including the gunman who killed 19 children and two teachers at an Uvalde, Texas, elementary school.

Under the law, applicants have to provide local officials with a list of current and former social media accounts from the previous three years. It doesn’t specify whether applicants will be required to provide access to private accounts not visible to the general public.

It will be up to local sheriff’s staff, judges or county clerks to scroll through those profiles as they check whether applicants have made statements suggesting dangerous behavior.

The law also will require applicants to undergo hours of safety training, prove they’re proficient at shooting, provide four character references and sit for in-person interviews.

The law reflects how the Supreme Court ruling has shifted responsibility to states for vetting those who carry firearms in public, said Tanya Schardt, senior counsel and director of state and federal policy for gun control advocacy organization Brady.

Her group said it was not aware of any other states requiring gun permit applicants to submit social media profiles.

The new approach, however, comes amid growing debate over the policing of social media posts and a legacy of unwarranted surveillance of Black and brown communities.

“The question should be: Can we do this in an anti-racist way that does not create another set of violence, which is the state violence that happens through surveillance?” said University of Pennsylvania social policy, communications and medicine professor Desmond Upton Patton, who also founded SAFElab, a research initiative studying violence involving youths of color.

Meanwhile, gun rights advocates are blasting the law.

“You’re also going to have to tell them your social media accounts because New York wants to thoroughly investigate you to figure out if you’re some of those dangerous law-abiding citizens who are taking the country by storm and causing crime to skyrocket,” Jared Yanis, host of the YouTube channel Guns & Gadgets, says in a widely viewed video on the new law. “What have we come to?”

Hochul, who also has tasked state police with routing out extremism online, didn’t immediately respond to a list of questions about the social media requirement, including how the state will address free speech and privacy concerns.

“Often the sticking point is: How do we go about enforcing this?” Metro State University criminal justice

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professor James Densley, cofounder of research initiative The Violence Project, said. "I think it starts to open up a bit of a can of worms, because no one quite knows the best way to go about doing it."

It can be tricky, he said, to decode social media posts by younger people, who could simply be expressing themselves by posting a music video.

"Where this will get tricky is to what extent this is expression and to what extent is this evidence of wrongdoing?" Densley said.

Spokespeople for the social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, 4Chan and Parler didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

New York should instead consider giving the job to a trained group tasked with figuring out how to best reach out to people online who are showing signs of radicalization or trauma and may need help, Patton said.

"There's a lot of nuance and contextual issues. We speak differently; how we communicate, that could be misunderstood," Patton said. "I'm concerned we don't have the right people or the right tools in place to do this in a way that's useful in actually preventing violence."

Adam Scott Wandt, a public policy professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, said that he supports gun control, but that he worries the New York law could set a precedent for mandatory disclosure of social media activity for people seeking other types of licenses from the state.

New York's law is rushed and vague, said Wandt, who teaches law enforcement personnel how to conduct searches on people through social media.

"I think that what we might have done as a state here in New York is, we may have confirmed their worst fears — that a slippery slope will be created that will slowly reduce their rights to carry guns and allow a bureaucracy to decide, based on unclear criteria, who can have a gun and who cannot," Wandt said. "Which is exactly what the Supreme Court was trying to avoid."

UK leader hopefuls jostle as Johnson digs in for final weeks

By JILL LAWLESS and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Former British Treasury chief Rishi Sunak formally launched his campaign to replace departing Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Friday, leaping to the front of what is set to be a large pack of Conservative Party contenders — even as some party lawmakers pushed to get the scandal-tarnished Johnson out of office before his replacement is elected over the summer.

Johnson announced his resignation on Thursday — a dizzying about-face after months of insisting he would stay in the job despite 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 on 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 that Johnson lacks the authority to hang on, or could do mischief even as a caretaker prime minister.

James Cleverly, who was appointed education secretary 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.

Party officials on Monday are expected to set out the timetable for a leadership contest, 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.

Sunak, whose resignation this week helped topple Johnson, launched his campaign with a slick video casting himself as a serious leader who could "grip this moment and make the right decisions."

"Do we confront this moment with honesty, seriousness and determination, or do we tell ourselves comforting fairy tales that might make us feel better in the moment, but will leave our children worse off tomorrow?" asked Sunak, one of the bookies' favorites to win the contest.

Also in the running are Tom Tugendhat, who chairs the House of Commons' influential Foreign Affairs

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Committee, and Attorney General Suella Braverman. Other likely contenders include former Health Secretary Sajid Javid, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, Defense Secretary Ben Wallace and Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi.

Tony Travers, professor of government at the London School of Economics, said the party would be seeking a leader "a bit less exciting" than Johnson.

"Less exciting, but competent," he said

Johnson remains in office atop a caretaker administration 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.

The prime minister's spokesman, Max Blain, said Johnson would abide by political convention and "stick with pre-agreed policies" during in his remaining time. But Johnson's limping government plans to push ahead with contentious legislation to rip up parts of its Brexit deal with the European Union, and with a plan to send asylum-seekers to Rwanda that is being challenged in the courts.

Some Conservatives 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 Thursday as science minister, said he worried about a leadership election in which "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."

The main opposition Labour Party said having Johnson stay in power was unacceptable. The party — whose two top leaders were cleared Friday by police of breaking pandemic restrictions by having curry and a beer with colleagues last year — vowed to call for a no-confidence vote in Johnson in the House of Commons next week. That would trigger a general election in the unlikely event it was successful.

The brash, 58-year-old politician who took Britain out of the EU 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, even though 41% of Conservative lawmakers tried to oust him.

But Johnson 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 "embarrassed myself."

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

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.

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."

Tear gas: Senators decry lack of federal safety assessment

By ANDREW SELSKY Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — In 2020, Black Lives Matter protesters were doused with tear gas, making them gasp for breath, their eyes feeling as if they were on fire. Bystanders, including children and pregnant women, were also exposed.

As police responded to mass protests across the nation two years ago with tear gas and other chemical munitions, more than a dozen U.S. senators asked the congressional watchdog to find out whether federal agencies have assessed how safe they are.

But the report by the Government Accountability Office skipped that question, dedicating only three paragraphs to the effects of "chemical irritants" and flash-bangs. Both of the U.S. senators from Oregon — where the Trump administration deployed militarized federal agents — believe the report leaves too many questions unanswered and are calling for regulation of the tear gas industry.

The GAO report noted there were incidents in which less-lethal force may have been used by federal agents in violation of policy, but provided no details.

"This report is completely inadequate," U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon, one of the report requesters, said through spokeswoman Molly Prescott. "Congress and the American people deserve to know the details to better understand the significant issues and damage done by inappropriate use of less-lethal force."

Portland, Oregon's largest city, was an epicenter of the protests, with months of nightly, often violent demonstrations and vandalism following the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis. Portland police used tear gas and pepper balls against protesters, and the Trump administration sent militarized federal agents to the city, starting in July 2020.

At least 1,315 federal officers were deployed to Oregon, according to a redacted document obtained by U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, from the Department of Homeland Security. They used more than a dozen different types of crowd-control devices, including 40 mm canisters loaded with tear gas or an oily extract of pepper plants, 40mm "direct impact rounds" loaded with tear gas or pepper compounds, smoke grenades and foggers that emit chemical irritants, the document showed.

Law enforcement officials say tear gas, if used properly, is an effective tool for crowd control. On Sunday, police in Akron, Ohio, used tear gas against people protesting the shooting of Jayland Walker, a Black man who was killed by police on June 27 in a hail of gunfire.

Wyden isn't satisfied with the GAO report and will keep pressing for answers, spokesman Hank Stern said.

Gretta Goodwin, a director of the GAO and lead author of the report released late last year, said her office was unable to answer the senators' question on whether federal agencies have assessed the safety and effectiveness of tear gas and other chemical munitions, or their impacts on underlying health conditions.

"We start out by looking to see what information is out there," Goodwin said over the phone. "We weren't really able to find anything."

Instead of government oversight, the multi-billion-dollar industry regulates itself, a situation Wyden believes must end.

"He will push ... for the appropriate federal agencies to oversee the manufacture of tear gas in our country, as well as to undertake an urgently needed non-industry and neutral study into the impact of these weapons on human health and the environment," Stern said.

The Associated Press previously found few studies exist on the health effects of tear gas, with many being old and focusing on military personnel, who tend to be healthier and in better physical condition than the general public.

The GAO found that three federal agencies — the Marshals Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Secret Service — don't even document when officers violate their agencies' policies while using these weapons.

"That needs to be known. That needs to be more transparent," Goodwin said.

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Among controversial tactics and actions taken by law enforcement during Black Lives Matter protests: "Kettling," in which police seal off escape routes while blanketing people in tear gas and firing pepperballs; and firing projectiles point-blank at people. Donovan LaBella suffered severe injuries while peacefully protesting in Portland when he was hit in the face by a projectile fired by a federal officer.

Samira Green, pregnant at the time, found herself enveloped by tear gas fired by Portland police on June 2, 2020.

"Literally, you cannot breathe anything. It is clenched," Green said, describing how her lungs seemed to seize up.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns that "long-lasting exposure or exposure to a large dose of riot control agent, especially in a closed setting" may cause blindness, glaucoma, severe chemical burns to the throat and lungs, respiratory failure and death.

The GAO report footnoted a 2016 study by Physicians for Human Rights and the International Network of Civil Liberties Organizations on health consequences of crowd-control weapons.

But the congressional watchdog agency should have noted that "our data is quite limited because there is no transparency about the weapons," said Rohini Haar, co-author of the 2016 study.

Tear gas, which is banned in warfare by the Chemical Weapons Convention, is getting more powerful, Haar said. Silicon is sometimes added to make tear gas last longer in the air and on surfaces, even though its health effects are unknown, said Haar, an emergency room physician and researcher at the University of California School of Public Health in Berkeley.

Haar said it's time for the U.S. government to either do its own research on riot-control agents or support others to conduct it.

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

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Experts warn against using herbs as abortion alternative

CLAIM: Herbs including pennyroyal, mugwort and parsley are viable alternatives to abortion.

THE FACTS: Experts strongly warn against trying to self-manage an abortion using any herbs, as many of these alleged remedies not only do not work but are dangerous or even deadly. In the weeks since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled to overturn constitutional protections for abortion, social media posts suggesting potentially toxic herbal remedies to end pregnancies have surged. TikTok videos touting herbal teas and essential oils as abortion alternatives have received massive engagement on the platform. Facebook and Instagram posts have instructed pregnant people to "avoid" herbs like pennyroyal, parsley, mugwort, rue, black cohosh and blue cohosh if they want to keep their pregnancies, with the subtext that people should try the herbs if they want to miscarry. The posts have alarmed obstetricians and toxicologists, who say herbal remedies are not only generally ineffective as abortion alternatives, but are often dangerous or even deadly for the pregnant person. "There are no herbal remedies, period, that are safe and effective for inducing an abortion or preventing pregnancy," Dr. Ryan Marino, a medical toxicologist who teaches at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, told The Associated Press. Dr. Mary Jane Minkin, a gynecologist and professor at the Yale University School of Medicine, also strongly urged women seeking an abortion not try any "herbal therapies." "This is how women can die. I am strongly urging women to contact their providers to talk about options, and if they don't have a provider, call the nearest Planned Parenthood," Minkin wrote in an email to the AP. For example, pennyroyal, a plant featured in many of the posts, contains a compound called pulegone that is toxic to the liver and potentially deadly. "There's no safe amount" of pennyroyal that can be ingested, Marino said, and applying the oil topically is also not advised. Mugwort and wormwood, herbs also recommended in several posts, contain a compound called thujone that can cause "very difficult-to-treat refractory seizures," he said. The herb rue can cause organ

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injury, black cohosh has been associated with liver injuries, and blue cohosh can make people sick to their stomach, he said. Even seemingly benign herbs like parsley if consumed in certain ways can be toxic to the liver, neurons and kidneys, Marino said. While such severe health effects might cause someone to lose a pregnancy, they can also cause the recipient to lose their life, he said. Representatives from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists also warn against taking herbs as alternatives to abortion and following advice from social media. Dr. Nisha Verma, a Darney-Landy fellow at ACOG, noted in an email that people can safely self-manage medication abortions under the guidance of medical professionals.

— Associated Press writer Ali Swenson in New York contributed this report with additional reporting from Graph Massara in San Francisco.

Imagery shared with false context amid Dutch farmer protests

CLAIM: A video shows a tank purchased by Dutch farmers who will use it to block distribution centers.

THE FACTS: The tank in the video wasn't purchased by protesters. Instead, the video shows a vintage tank being returned to its owner's warehouse after it was brought out to be featured at a museum. As thousands of farmers in the Netherlands protest the government's plans to slash emissions that livestock produce in their waste, old and out-of-context footage is circulating on social media with false claims that it shows the current demonstrations. A video of a tank being returned to a warehouse is spreading on Twitter with false claims that it was purchased by protesters. The video shows a tank with the number 34 emblazoned on its side, unloading from a truck and rolling down a street. "So, uh... Dutch farmers have purchased a tank to use to block distribution centres," read a tweet with the video shared more than 13,000 times. "Farmers in the #Netherlands have just purchased a British tank from Russian arms dealers – to use against Dutch police," another tweet read. Yet a closer look at the video shows the vehicle is actually a restored vintage tank. The numbers printed on the tank match those of a restored WWII Sherman Firefly tank that was featured in an advertisement for a June 2022 "Tankfest" event held by the Tank Museum in Bovington, U.K. An online document showing "Surviving Sherman Firefly tanks" also features a photo of the tank, explaining it was built in 1943 and is located in the Netherlands. The document identifies the owner of the tank as "Classic MV's." A Facebook page for Classic MV's, which did not respond to a request for comment, has posted several photos and videos of the tank in recent months. The footage includes the same background as is featured in the tweet, as well as showing the tank loaded on the same loading truck. Classic MV's explained in a June 29 Facebook post that the tank did not make it to its scheduled exhibition "due to issues with customs/export papers etc." Instead, the owner wrote, they participated in an event nearby. Separately, a post claiming to show tractors packing a roadway during the current protests actually contains a 2-year-old photo. And footage of a 2020 protest against pandemic restrictions in The Hague is circulating with false claims that it shows undercover police at a recent farmer protest.

— Ali Swenson

Posts mischaracterize Florida law on college campus surveys

CLAIM: Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has signed a bill requiring college students and professors to register their political views with the state.

THE FACTS: The 2021 law requires public universities in Florida to conduct annual "intellectual freedom" surveys, but it does not mandate respondents register their political views with the government. Criticism of the year-old Florida bill has reemerged online this week. Author Stephen King tweeted about the bill on Tuesday, stating, "DeSantis signs bill requiring Florida students, professors to register political views with state." King's tweet mirrored language used in a June 23, 2021, headline by Salon that was changed on Wednesday to say "DeSantis signs bill requiring survey of Florida students, professors on their political views." An editor's note stated that the headline was revised "to more accurately reflect the language of the bill in question." The initial headline, and King's tweet, are misleading because the survey is voluntary, according to multiple legal experts who reviewed the bill, including a University of Florida law professor. The bill requires the State Board of Education and The Board of Governors to create a survey to be administered annually by the Florida College System and the State University System that "considers the

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extent to which competing ideas and perspectives are presented" and how free members of the college communities feel "to express their beliefs and viewpoints." The boards are required to publish the results annually, beginning Sept. 1, but officials have not said what will be done with the findings, the AP has reported. Language included in communications to employees and students make it clear that participation was not mandatory and the survey was anonymous. "It is not required that faculty, staff and students have to register their political beliefs with the state of Florida," said Clay Calvert, a University of Florida law professor specializing in communications law and freedom of speech. "What's true is that state universities do have to administer surveys on intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity to students, faculty and staff. So that's where the disconnect is." Republican Rep. Spencer Roach, who sponsored the bill in the Florida House, called the recent interpretations calling it a mandatory registration "factually inaccurate." "That's not what the statutory language said," Roach told the AP. He explained that the law states the survey has to be objective, nonpartisan and statistically valid. "No one is requiring anyone on campus to declare their party affiliation," Roach added. When DeSantis signed the bill in June 2021, it didn't include many details about the survey. Many critics voiced concern that it could be used as a way to withhold state funds from universities if data suggests there is perceived bias on campus, despite factors that may skew the responses, Calvert said. The survey has been sent to students and employees within the state college and university systems, according to email communications reviewed by the AP. An email with the survey that was sent to faculty at the University of Florida in April stated: "Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You are free to not answer any question or withdraw from the survey at any time. All responses are anonymous." An email sent to students at the University of Florida and other system schools used similar language. Still, a union representing faculty at Florida's state universities discouraged members from taking it and argued that faculty members could be identified and targeted through certain questions, the AP has reported.

— Associated Press writer Sophia Tulp in New York contributed this report.

NASA did not attribute climate change to the Earth's orbit

CLAIM: NASA admitted that climate change is due to the Earth's orbit around the sun, not greenhouse gas emissions.

THE FACTS: NASA has not made such a determination, and it agrees with the scientific consensus that climate change is driven by greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activity, a spokesperson told The Associated Press. A blog post falsely claiming that NASA has acknowledged in the past that climate change is being caused by the Earth's "solar orbit," not human activity like consuming fossil fuels, spread widely on social media in recent days. The blog post, which is dated August 2019, claims that NASA has known for decades that changes to "planetary weather patterns are completely natural and normal." The post stated that, in 1958, NASA "first observed" that changes in the "solar orbit of the earth, along with alterations to the earth's axial tilt, are both responsible for what climate scientists today have dubbed as 'warming.'" The AP has previously debunked similar claims made in 2019. NASA has reached no such conclusion, Tylar Greene, a spokesperson for the agency, confirmed. "I am not aware of any official NASA statement or announcement making that claim or determination," Greene wrote in an email to the AP. "The information in this post isn't accurate." "Scientists are confident Earth's recent warming is primarily due to human activities — specifically, the direct input of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into Earth's atmosphere from burning fossil fuels or other anthropogenic activities," Greene added. The past eight years are the warmest years since modern record keeping began in 1880, he noted. The 2019 blog post asserted that climate change is explained by a theory promoted by the Serbian scientist Milutin Milankovitch about how changes in the Earth's solar orbit affect the planet's climate in the long-term. But Greene wrote that "Milankovitch cycles," which include the angle of the Earth's axis, the direction that Earth's spin axis is pointed, and the shape of the Earth's orbit, don't account for climate change. "These cycles affect the amount of sunlight and therefore, energy, that Earth absorbs from the Sun. Milankovitch cycles have played an important role in climatic changes during Earth's history," Greene wrote. "However, they are not responsible for the current period of rapid warming Earth has experienced since the pre-Industrial period

(the period between 1850 and 1900), and particularly since the mid-20th century.”

Wild species relied on by billions at risk, report warns

By FABIANO MAISONNAVE undefined

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Every day billions of people depend on wild flora and fauna to obtain food, medicine and energy. But a new United Nations-backed report says that overexploitation, climate change, pollution and deforestation are pushing one million species towards extinction.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services - or IPBES - report said Friday that unless humankind improves the sustainable use of nature, the Earth is on its way to losing 12% of its wild tree species, over a thousand wild mammal species and almost 450 species of sharks and rays, among other irreparable harm.

Humans use about 50,000 wild species routinely and 1 out of 5 people of the world's 7.9 billion population depend on those species for food and income, the report said. 1 in 3 people rely on fuel wood for cooking, the number even higher in Africa.

“It's essential that those uses be sustainable because you need them to be there for your children and grandchildren. So when uses of wild species become unsustainable, it's bad for the species, it's bad for the ecosystem and it's bad for the people,” report co-chair Marla R. Emery of the United States told The Associated Press.

Beyond the gloomy picture, the report also provides recommendations for policymakers and examples for the sustainable use of wild fauna and flora. A central point should be to secure tenure rights for Indigenous and local peoples, who have historically made sustainable use of wild species, the report said.

According to the study, Indigenous peoples occupy around 38,000,000 square kilometers (14,600,000 square miles) of land in 87 countries, equivalent to about 40% of terrestrial conserved areas.

“Their lands tend to be doing better in sustainability than other lands. And the common thread is the ability to continue to engage in customary practices,” said Emery, who is also a researcher with the U.S. Forest Service.

Emery argued it is essential to secure national and international systems, such as education, that promote the preservation of Indigenous languages, as it maintains the ability for older members to transfer traditional knowledge about sustainable practices to new generations.

An example of good practice is fishing arapaima, one of the world's largest freshwater fish, in Brazil's Amazon, co-chair of the report Jean-Marc Fromentin of France told the AP.

“It was a move from an unsustainable to a sustainable situation,” Fromentin said. “Some communities in Brazil created community-based management and then called some scientists to learn more about the fish's biology and to put in place an efficient monitoring system. It worked so well that the model went to other communities and countries like Peru.”

Gregorio Mirabal, the head of Coordinator of the Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin, who did not take part in the report, told the AP there had been already several U.N. studies stressing the importance of biodiversity and the threats posed by climate change, but they don't bring about solutions.

The Indigenous leader mentioned growing problems in the region such as water contamination from mercury used in illegal mining and oil spillages. Moreover, those who oppose these practices face violence, such as the recent murder of an Indigenous warrior in a mining area, in Venezuela.

“There is irrational exploitation of natural resources in the Amazon, but there is no social investment to improve the health, educational, cultural and food situation of the Indigenous peoples,” Mirabal said.

The report was approved by representatives of the 139 member countries gathered this week in Bonn, Germany. It involved dozens of experts, from scientists to holders of Indigenous knowledge. IPBES is an independent intergovernmental body and is not part of the U.N. system, but it has the support of the United Nations Environment Programme and other bodies.

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

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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. In all, 77% mention the economy in any way, up from 68% in December. But just 10% specifically mention jobs or unemployment, as U.S. employers continue to hire despite high inflation and weak economic growth.

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 issues that are core to Biden and Democrats' agenda, including abortion, women's rights and gun policy, which could help 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 are more likely than Democrats to mention inflation or personal finances 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 24% in 2020.

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"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 2021 poll was conducted just after a deadly shooting at a Michigan high school.

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.

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 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.

Shinzo Abe, powerful former Japan PM, leaves divided legacy

By FOSTER KLUG and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Shinzo Abe was a political blueblood groomed for power. Japan's longest serving prime minister, he was also perhaps the most polarizing, complex politician in recent Japanese history.

Abe, who was assassinated Friday, angered 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."

Abe, who died after being shot during a campaign speech, was 67.

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 believed that Japan's postwar track record of economic success, peace and global cooperation was something "other countries should pay more attention to, and that Japanese should be proud of," Leheny said.

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 Prime Minister Nobusuke 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.

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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.

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.

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

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Court of Switzerland in Bellinzona.

"First of all, I have to say that I'm very happy man," the 86-year-old Blatter told reporters on the courthouse steps. "I am a happy man because I also have to express thanks to the court today, to this city, for people in the court, the way they have analyzed the situation and they have explained why both of us we haven't done anything."

Swiss prosecutor Thomas Hildbrand had requested a 20-month suspended sentence for both Blatter and Platini. Instead both were cleared and were also awarded a sum for costs during the trial, while Blatter also received 20,000 Swiss francs (\$20,500) compensation for being morally wronged, the court said.

Blatter and Platini sat quietly at separate tables with their lawyers while the verdict was announced. Later, there was a burst of applause from the small public audience as both men started to walk out of the courtroom, after a brief conversation with each other and an exchange of wry smiles.

"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. "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."

The three federal judges said prosecutors didn't sufficiently prove their case, so they had to apply the principle of "in dubio pro reo" in which a defendant must not be convicted when doubts remain about their guilt.

Any appeal has to be announced within 10 days.

"FIFA takes note of the first instance judgement related to the indictment which was filed by the OAG (Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland) and will await the full, written, reasoned judgement in order to assess and decide the next procedural steps," FIFA lawyer Catherine Hohl-Chirazi said.

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.

"I don't know. I am so young, I have time in front of me," said the 67-year-old Platini, when asked if his time in soccer was over.

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. However, he laughed loudly when asked if he would run for the presidency.

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.

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

"My ban from football was not fair," Blatter said. "But I'm still here now and with this decision of the court it gives me not only more credit, because I still have some credit, but it gives me new stamina to work for FIFA, to work for football."

Blatter was asked if he had a message for Swiss compatriot Infantino.

"No, I will not speak about my countryman," he said. "But he will think about his attitude when he is now listening to the decision taken by this court."

Blatter 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.

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

By CARA ANNA and MSTITYSLAV 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.

"People suffered, for what?" neighbor Sergey Pershin said as he watched medics tend to several people wounded. "It's horrible. I'm so sick of it. Every night you wake up 10 times, you wait for it to end, wait until they start shooting. What are the bastards doing? There are residential buildings 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.

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."

Facing pressure to be more forceful, Biden took executive action on Friday to protect access to abortion, but noted the limits of what he could do without Congress acting and said, "For God's sake there is an election in November. Vote. Vote. Vote. Vote!"

But in this moment, governors may have unique 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

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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.

"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."

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.

Speaking at the White House on Friday about the abortion ruling, Biden showed anger and disgust, at times gritting his teeth as he discussed reports of a 10-year-old Ohio girl who was forced to travel out of state to terminate a pregnancy after being raped.

"Ten years old. 10 years old. Raped. Six weeks pregnant. Already traumatized, was forced to travel to another state. Imagine being that little girl. Just—I'm serious—just imagine being that little girl. Ten years old!" he said.

Still, without more federal options, 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.

Today in History: July 9, Trump chooses Kavanaugh

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, July 9, the 190th day of 2022. There are 175 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 9, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was read aloud to Gen. George Washington's troops in New York.

On this date:

In 1918, 101 people were killed in a train collision in Nashville, Tennessee. The Distinguished Service

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Cross was established by an Act of Congress.

In 1937, a fire at 20th Century Fox's film storage facility in Little Ferry, New Jersey, destroyed most of the studio's silent films.

In 1943, during World War II, the Allies launched Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily.

In 1944, during World War II, American forces secured Saipan as the last Japanese defenses fell.

In 1947, the engagement of Britain's Princess Elizabeth to Lt. Philip Mountbatten was announced.

In 1965, the Sonny & Cher single "I Got You Babe" was released by ATCO Records.

In 1982, Pan Am Flight 759, a Boeing 727, crashed in Kenner, Louisiana, shortly after takeoff from New Orleans International Airport, killing all 145 people aboard and eight people on the ground.

In 2004, a Senate Intelligence Committee report concluded the CIA had provided unfounded assessments of the threat posed by Iraq that the Bush administration had relied on to justify going to war.

In 2010, the largest U.S.-Russia spy swap since the Cold War was completed on a remote stretch of Vienna airport tarmac as planes from New York and Moscow arrived within minutes of each other with 10 Russian sleeper agents and four prisoners accused by Russia of spying for the West.

In 2015, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley relegated the Confederate flag to the state's "relic room" after the legislature passed a measure removing the flag from the grounds of the Statehouse in the wake of the slaughter of nine African-Americans at a church Bible study.

In 2018, President Donald Trump chose Brett Kavanaugh, a solidly conservative, politically connected federal appeals court judge, for the Supreme Court to fill the seat left vacant by the retirement of Justice Anthony Kennedy. (Kavanaugh would be confirmed in October after a contentious nomination fight.)

In 2020, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio used a roller to help paint "Black Lives Matter" in front of President Donald Trump's namesake Manhattan tower. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of a New York prosecutor's demands for Trump's tax records.

Ten years ago: Facing sagging jobs numbers, President Barack Obama sought to recast the November election as a fight over tax fairness, urging tax cut extensions for all families earning less than \$250,000 but denying them to households making more than that. The remains of six U.S. airmen lost over Laos in 1965 were laid to rest in a single casket at Arlington National Cemetery. Detroit's Prince Fielder became only the second player, after Ken Griffey Jr., to win multiple titles in the All-Star Home Run Derby, thrilling the crowd at Kauffman Stadium with eight splash shots into the right-field fountain and beating Toronto's Jose Bautista 12-7 in the final.

Five years ago: A cease-fire arranged by the United States, Russia and Jordan took effect in three war-torn provinces of southern Syria. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi (HY'-dahr ahl ah-BAH'-dee) celebrated with Iraqi troops in Mosul after they drove Islamic State militants from some of their last strongholds.

One year ago: Relaxing its COVID-19 guidelines, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said vaccinated teachers and students did not need to wear masks inside school buildings. The White House said President Joe Biden told Russian President Vladimir Putin in a phone call that Putin must "take action" against cybercriminals in his country, and that the U.S. reserved the right to "defend its people and its critical infrastructure" from future attacks.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-singer Ed Ames is 95. Actor Richard Roundtree is 80. Singer Dee Dee Kennebrew (The Crystals) is 77. Author Dean Koontz is 77. Football Hall of Famer O.J. Simpson is 75. Actor Chris Cooper is 71. TV personality John Tesh is 70. Country singer David Ball is 69. Business executive/TV personality Kevin O'Leary (TV: "Shark Tank") is 68. R&B singer Debbie Sledge (Sister Sledge) is 68. Actor Jimmy Smits is 67. Actor Tom Hanks is 66. Singer Marc Almond is 65. Actor Kelly McGillis is 65. Rock singer Jim Kerr (Simple Minds) is 63. Actor-rock singer Courtney Love is 58. Rock musician Frank Bello (Anthrax) is 57. Actor David O'Hara is 57. Actor Pamela Adlon is 56. Actor Scott Grimes is 51. Actor Enrique Murciano is 49. Rock singer-musician Isaac Brock (Modest Mouse) is 47. Musician/producer Jack White is 47. Rock musician Dan Estrin (Hoobastank) is 46. Actor-director Fred Savage is 46. Actor Linda Park is 44. Actor Megan Parlen is 42. R&B singer Kiely Williams (3lw) is 36. Actor Mitchel Musso is 31. Actor Georgie Henley is 27.