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Thursday, Aug. 11

First allowable day of volleyball and cross country practice

Silver Skates Registration Dates Set

The Silver Skates board has started planning for the Jan 29, 2023 Carnival and we hope to make this 85th one a very special one! Please mark your calendars for the registration dates to get your child involved in this community tradition!

Registration at the Warming House -- skaters must be present at one of these dates to be measured for their costumes.

Sunday, Sept 11 from 10:00 - 2:00

or

Monday, Sept 12 from 4:00 - 6:00

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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



Help Wanted

Want a fun job with flexible hours? We're looking for 16 year olds and older with smiling faces! Free meals and we'll work around your schedule. Are you a mom wanting some hours while your kids are in school or a teenager wanting to earn some money or an adult looking for work? Daytime – evening – week-end hours are available and we'll make the hours work for you! Stop in for an application. Dairy Queen, 11 East Hwy 12 in Groton.

CLEANER WANTED

SATURDAY CLEANER NEEDED IN FERNEY, SD, 830 am to 130 pm. \$15 an hour. Must be dependable and be willing to work around customers coming into the family owned business. Please call Stephanie at 605-381-1758.

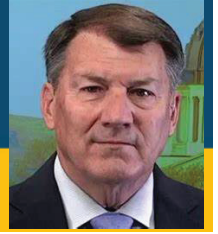
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Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

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MIKE ROUNDS United States Senator for
SOUTH DAKOTA



THE ROUNDS REPORT

What a week! It was crunch time for the United States Senate as we approached our August in-state work period. As a result, it was a week full of votes, meetings and more votes. We ended up extending the work week through a marathon weekend session with votes going all night long and into Sunday.

This week, the Senate passed a bill to help veterans who have been exposed to burn pits. We also approved the accession of Finland and Sweden to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and voted through the night on the Inflation Reduction Act, also known by many of us as a reckless tax and regulation bill.

I'm looking forward to the next few weeks in South Dakota. I'll be visiting with folks all over the state including stops in Deadwood, Milbank, Mitchell, Presho, Spearfish, Sioux Falls, Rapid City and Wessington Springs. I really am looking forward to the next few weeks, but I'd like to catch you up on a few things first. Here's my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota groups I visited with: I met with Senator Thune's summer interns this week (Had to ask them about their softball loss against our team!) and representatives from both Sanford and Avera who were in town for a conference.

Other meetings: I met two nominees for executive positions with the Department of State before they came in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on which I serve. Representatives from Jordan visited my office. They are stationed at the Jordanian Embassy here in Washington, D.C. We discussed the cybersecurity concerns facing both of our countries. I also visited with a representative from the proposed National American Indian Veterans organization (I'm the prime sponsor on the bill), as well as representatives from the Concerned Veterans of America organization. I've had the opportunity to serve as co-chair of our Senate Prayer Breakfast for the past 18 months. This week, our speaker was my friend Senator Angus King from Maine. I also participated in a Senate Bible Study. Our verse of the week was Ephesians 6:12.

Met with South Dakotans from: Brandon, Pierre and Sioux Falls.

Topics discussed: The Inflation Reduction Act (which I voted against), the Greatest Generation Commemorative Coin Act (which was signed into law this week), access to healthcare for rural South Dakotans and the challenge of getting airline flights back into South Dakota.

Votes taken: 51 – These covered a lot of subjects. Earlier in the week, we again voted on the PACT Act, a bill to help veterans who have been exposed to burn pits. I voted for this bill. While it was not perfect, we unsuccessfully tried to make it better through amendments. We remain committed to making sure veterans receive the care and benefits they have earned.

We also voted on the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO. I also voted for this because it sends a message of unity and strengthens the alliance against Russia's clear threat.

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The majority of votes this week were related to the Democrats' so-called Inflation Reduction Act. However, this legislation does nothing to actually reduce inflation. Instead, it's filled with Democrat wish list items, like Green New Deal policies and provisions that perpetuate the failure of Obamacare. This is all paid for by raising taxes, putting additional surcharges on petroleum products and increasing IRS audits by growing the size of the agency. The IRS will now have more employees than the Pentagon, State Department, FBI and Border Patrol Agents COMBINED.

In the United States Senate, 60 votes are required to pass most pieces of legislation. Reconciliation is the exception. The Democrats capitalized on this to pass their partisan agenda at a 51-50 vote, including the vice president's vote as a tie-breaker. As part of the reconciliation process, there's no limit on the number of amendments that can be considered, which can make for a very large number of votes over a concentrated period of time. Vote-a-rama, as we call it, began at 11:31 PM on Saturday and we adjourned at 3:42 PM on Sunday afternoon. Yes, you're reading that right: 16 hours and 11 minutes straight through the night and into the next day without stopping. There were no breaks, just one vote after the next. After all the amendment votes were completed, I voted against final passage of this partisan legislation.

Legislation signed into law: Last week, I mentioned my Greatest Generation Commemorative Coin Act had passed unanimously through the House and Senate. This week, it was signed into law! This act authorizes the U.S. Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. Proceeds from coin sales will go toward much-needed repairs and maintenance to the memorial at no cost to taxpayers.

Classified briefings: I had a classified Armed Services briefing on global nuclear threats and also on U.S. nuclear deterrence strategy. I attended a classified briefing on the U.S. Navy's deployment of directed energy weapons and a Foreign Relations Committee classified briefing on the current situation involving China and Taiwan.

My staff in South Dakota visited: Baltic, Carthage, Clear Lake, Elk Point, Gary, Huron, Lane, Volga, Wattertown, Webster and Wessington Springs.

Staff happenings: Two of my summer interns in Washington, D.C. and Pierre finished their internships this week. We are grateful for all of their hard work! We offer internships in all of my offices. You can find more information at www.rounds.senate.gov/internships.

Steps taken: 58,479 (or 27.4 miles)

Nursing Home to Close in Armour Staffing Challenges Continue to Have Devastating Impact on Long Term Care

Another South Dakota nursing home is closing its doors. Today, Avantara announced the upcoming closure of its nursing home in Armour. The closure is due to a combination of the ongoing underfunding of Medicaid, the current staffing crisis, and costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the addition of this closure, more than ten percent of licensed nursing facilities in South Dakota will have closed their doors in the last five years. Other recent closures include centers in Salem, Lennox, Clear Lake, Ipswich, Custer, Hudson, Sioux Falls, Huron, Madison, Mobridge, Tripp, Bryant, and Rosholt.

"Nursing homes face unprecedented pressures right now. On top of years of Medicaid underfunding, they are also experiencing severe staffing shortages and have been on the front lines of the COVID battle for over two years," said Mark B. Deak, Executive Director of the South Dakota Health Care Association (SDHCA). "Oftentimes, there aren't enough staff to accept new admissions."

South Dakota's Medicaid reimbursement rates are below those of all our neighboring states. In 2021, the estimated statewide costs of unreimbursed care totaled more than \$56 million. A significant majority (55%) of the total resident population in nursing homes relies on Medicaid to pay for their care. In addition to the closures, this disparity fuels staffing challenges, including difficulty hiring caregivers and high turnover among nursing center staff.

While emergency support funds from federal and state sources have helped nursing homes keep their doors open through the worst of the pandemic, long term care providers remain in a state of great fiscal strain. Improving ongoing Medicaid reimbursement is the most important step that can be taken to stop the closure crisis.

"Communities across our state are losing access to services that allow their elderly loved ones to receive needed care near their family and friends. I fear that more closures are still to come," Deak said.

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Highway Patrol Rally Tally, Tuesday, Aug. 9, 2022

Highway Patrol Sturgis Rally Daily Information

Compiled from 6 a.m. Saturday August 6, 2022, to 6 a.m. Tuesday August 09, 2022

Item	Sturgis	Rapid City District	District Total	Last Year to Date
DUI Arrests	43	18	61	50
Misd Drug Arrests	35	24	59	57
Felony Drug Arrests	26	5	31	30
Total Citations	314	240	554	643
Total Warnings	1199	786	1985	1786
Cash Seized	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1862.00
Vehicles Seized	0	0	0	0
For Drug Poss.	0	0	0	0
For Serial No.	0	0	0	0
Non-Injury Crashes	6	12	18	13
Injury Crashes	12	10	22	24
Fatal Crashes	1	1	2	1
# of Fatalities	1	1	2	1

Fatal Crashes:
None to report.

Injury Crashes:

At 10:21 a.m., Monday, South Dakota Highway 34, mile marker 3, six miles west of Belle Fourche: A 2003 Harley-Davidson FLTHI motorcycle was westbound on South Dakota Highway 34 when it slowed down to make a right-hand turn. It was reared end by a westbound 2018 Honda GLI800 motorcycle. The 68-year-old male driver of the Harley-Davidson motorcycle was thrown from the motorcycle. He suffered minor injuries and was taken to the Spearfish hospital. The 70-year-old male driver of the Honda was not injured. Neither driver was wearing a helmet.

At 10:40 a.m., Monday, U.S. Highway 14A, mile marker 25, 10 miles west of Lead: A 2014 Cam-Am Spyder RT Limited motorcycle was southbound on U.S. Highway 14A when the driver over-corrected. The vehicle went into the west ditch and rolled. The driver was thrown from the motorcycle. The 75-year-old male driver sustained serious non-life threatening injuries and was taken to the Lead Deadwood hospital. He was wearing a helmet.

At 11:04 a.m., Monday, intersection of Alkali Road and 132nd Avenue, at Buffalo Chip entrance: A 2005 Toyota 4Runner stopped at the entrance of the Buffalo Chip and then entered Alkali Road where the driver failed to see a 2005 Harley-Davidson VRSC that was eastbound on Alkali Road. The motorcycle driver swerved to miss the vehicle, but lost control of the motorcycle. The 68-year-old male driver of the motorcycle sustained minor injuries and was transported to the Sturgis hospital. He was wearing a helmet. The 26-year-old female driver of the Toyota was not injured. She was wearing a seatbelt.

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At 12:20 p.m., Monday, U.S. Highway 85, mile marker 4, 19 miles south of Lead: A 2007 Harley-Davidson Road King was northbound on U.S. Highway 85 when the driver failed to negotiate a right-hand curve. The motorcycle went into the east ditch. The 51-year-old male driver suffered minor injuries and declined medical treatment. He was not wearing a helmet.

At 1:06 p.m., Monday, U.S. Highway 16A, mile marker 39, 13 miles west of Hermosa: A 2007 Harley-Davidson FLHX motorcycle was westbound on U.S. Highway 16A when the driver failed to negotiate a corner. The driver hit a guardrail, suffered minor injuries, and was taken to the Rapid City hospital. He was not wearing a helmet.

At 4:30 p.m., Monday, South Dakota Highway 87, mile marker 66, seven miles northeast of Custer: A 2005 Suzuki Vulcan motorcycle was southbound on South Dakota Highway 87, when the driver exited a turn, left the roadway and entered the ditch. The 67-year-old male driver was thrown from the motorcycle and suffered minor injuries. He was taken to the Custer hospital. He was wearing a helmet.

At 8:10 p.m., Monday, U.S. Highway 14A, mile marker 35, two mile west of Lead: A 1982 Honda Goldwing motorcycle was westbound on U.S. Highway 14A when the driver failed to negotiate a left-hand curve. The motorcycle tipped over onto its side. The 25-year-old male driver sustained minor injuries, but was not transported. He was wearing a helmet.

At 8:49 p.m., Monday, intersection of Interstate 90 and Deadwood Avenue, within city limits of Rapid City: A 2017 Harley-Davidson Road King was southbound on Deadwood Avenue when it failed to stop for the red traffic signal. It collided with a 2019 Harley-Davidson Heritage Classic motorcycle which was making a left turn northbound onto Deadwood Avenue after exiting Interstate 90. The 24-year-old male driver of the Road King motorcycle received serious non-life threatening injuries, but was not transported. He was not wearing a helmet. The 40-year-old male driver of the Heritage Classic motorcycle sustained minor injuries while the 16-year-old male passenger suffered serious non-life threatening injuries. Both were wearing helmets.

2022 Sturgis Rally Vehicle Count - Through Day Four

STURGIS, S.D. – Vehicle traffic counts from the South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) for vehicles entering Sturgis for the 82nd Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally Aug. 5-14, 2022, are available and will be updated daily.

Traffic counts at nine locations entering Sturgis for the 2022 Rally are as follows:

Friday, Aug. 5: 56,855 entering: Up 11.4% from the previous five-year average

Saturday, Aug. 6: 62,199 entering: Up 5% from the previous five-year average

Sunday, Aug. 7: 60,672 entering: Up 6.8% from the previous five-year average

Monday, Aug. 8: 62,050 entering: Up 3.3% from the previous five-year average

4 Day Total:: 2022: 241,776 Vehicles

Previous 5-Year Average: 227,147 Vehicles

Once compiled, a full report (including traffic counts across the greater Black Hills area) will be available on the SDDOT website at <https://dot.sd.gov/transportation/highways/traffic> the week of Aug. 22, 2022.



Kettering participates in All-Star Game

Pierce Kettering participated in the SD Baseball Coaches Association American Legion All-Star game held in Parkston, SD on Monday, August 8. Players are nominated by their coaches to participate in the game and selected to play. These players must have finished their last year of American Legion baseball eligibility or have graduated from high school. Pierce played on the Black team and is pictured with Groton Coaches Seth Erickson and Dalton Locke.

(Photos courtesy of Kara Pharis. Information provided by Joni Groeblichhoff)





Groeblinghoff earns Big Stick Award

Ryan Groeblinghoff received the Big Stick Award during the SD American Legion State Class "B" Jr. Baseball Tournament held in Clark, SD August 5-7. Recipients must have at least 8 at bats during the tournament and Ryan batted 6 for 10 with a .600 average. This award is sponsored by the SD Umpires Association and recipients are given a plaque and will also receive an engraved bat with their name and batting average. Ryan is pictured with Commissioner and Region 2A Sr. Athletic Officer John Kirchner. (Photo courtesy of Dan Sudbeck, Chairman State Athletic Commission)

SUPPORT



Groton Robotics



@ Groton's Family Fun Night

Thursday, August 11th



—5:30-7:30—



Robot demonstrations, meet the coaches,
sign up your 6th-12th grade child!

HOT DOGS, BRATS, HAMBURGER'S AND CHIPS

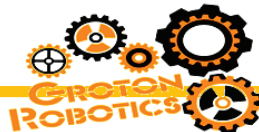
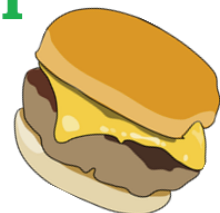


available to purchase



ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT

GROTON ROBOTICS



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How I Became a Pirate



When: Wednesday- August 10, 2022

Time: 2:00pm

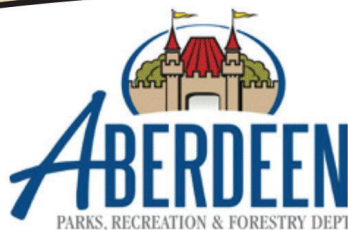
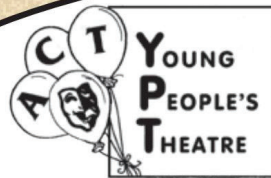
Where: Groton High School (Old Gym)

Entry Fee: \$0

Sponsored by: Wage Memorial Library, Groton Area
Chamber of Commerce, Groton Lions Club and Bahr's Jungle
Lanes & Lounge
Snacks Provided by: Dacotah Bank

Book, Music and Lyrics by Janet Yates Vogt and Mark Friedman

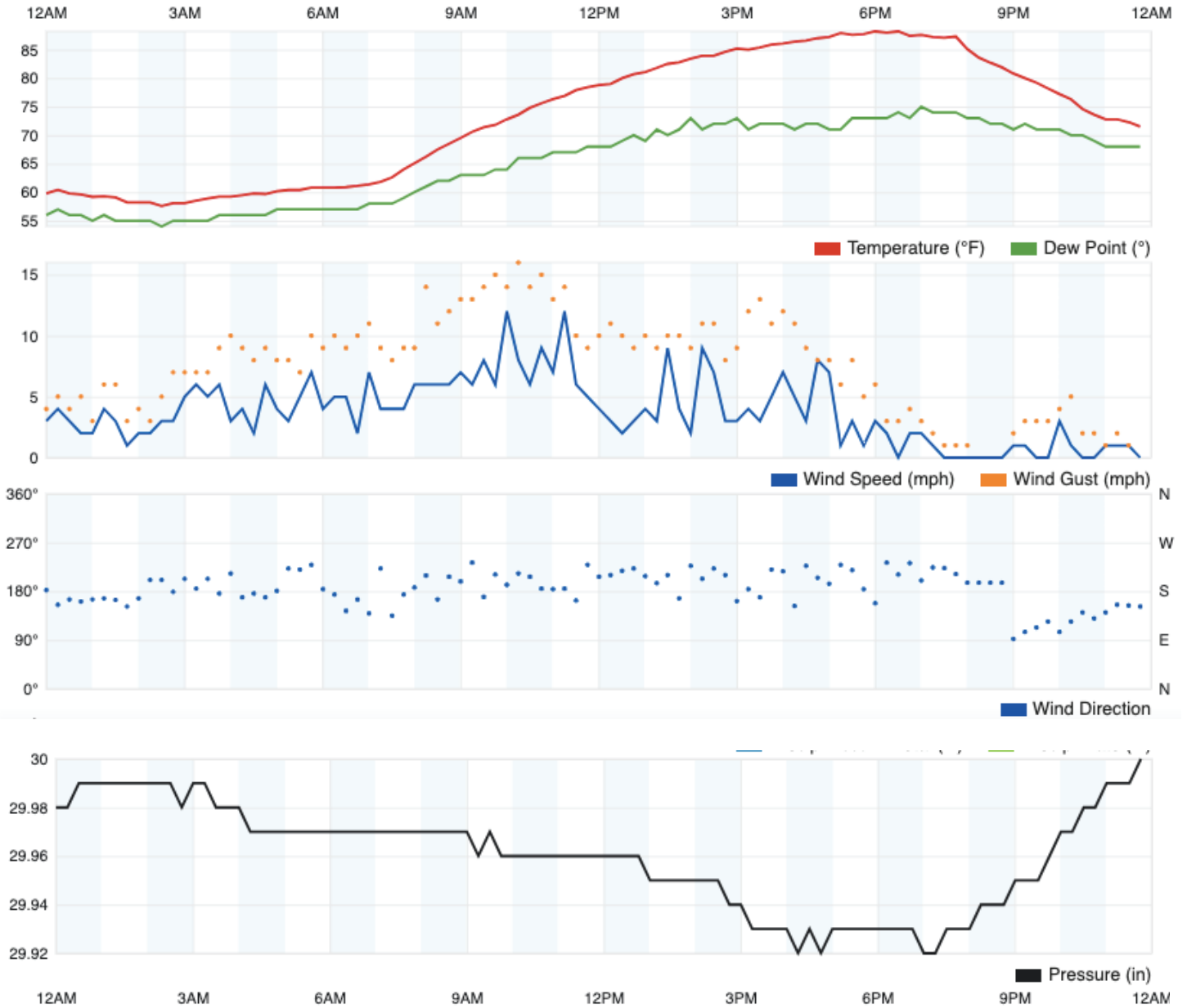
Based on the book "How I Became a Pirate" Written by Melinda Long, Illustrations by David Shannon



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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Sunny

High: 84 °F

Tonight



Increasing
Clouds

Low: 63 °F

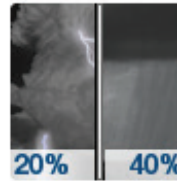
Thursday



Partly Sunny

High: 82 °F

Thursday
Night



Slight Chance
T-storms then
Chance
Showers

Low: 67 °F

Friday



Partly Sunny

High: 89 °F

Easterly Winds, but Dry Today Highs in the 80s and Low 90s



 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 8/10/2022 4:14 AM Central

A high pressure north of the area will bring easterly winds but otherwise pleasant weather conditions today.

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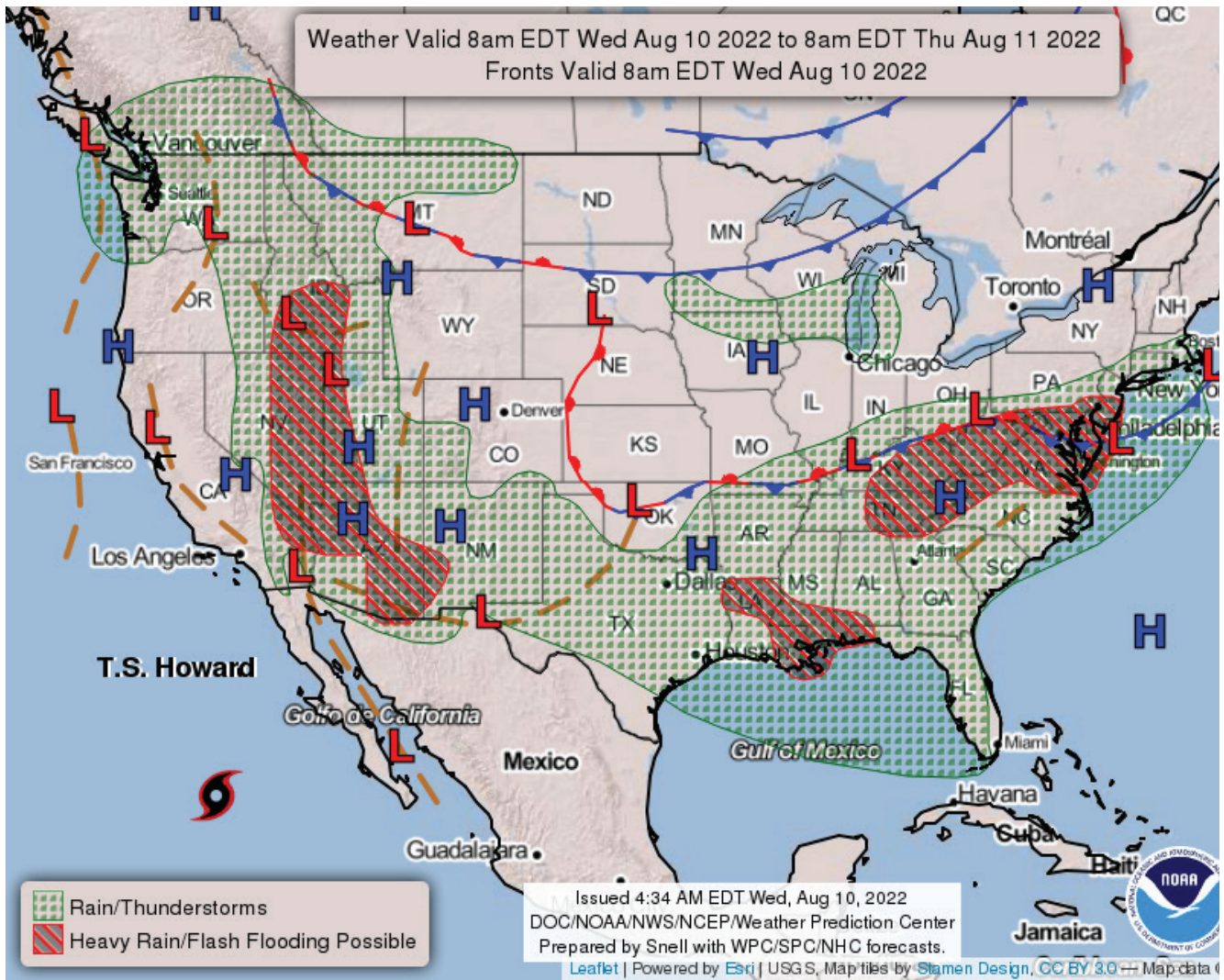
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 88.2 °F at 6:30 PM
Low Temp: 57.6 °F at 2:30 AM
Wind: 16 mph at 10:15 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 23 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1947
Record Low: 42 in 1985
Average High: 84°F
Average Low: 58°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 0.73
Precip to date in Aug.: 0.65
Average Precip to date: 14.83
Precip Year to Date: 15.19
Sunset Tonight: 8:49:29 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:27:10 AM



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Today in Weather History

August 10, 1886: An estimated F3 tornado moved southeast from 10 miles northwest of Aberdeen. This massive tornado destroyed four homes and a dozen barns. This is the earliest significant tornado on record for Brown County.

August 10, 2007: Several supercell thunderstorms developed along a frontal boundary during the evening bringing large hail, damaging winds, along with a couple of tornadoes. An EF0 tornado touched down north of Timber Lake with no damage reported. Another EF0 tornado touched down briefly north of Trail City with no damage occurring. Wakpala, in Corson County, and Mobridge saw golf ball sized hail. The hail broke some windows and damaged the siding on several houses in the Mobridge area.

1884: An earthquake, centered near New York City and registering a magnitude 5.5, hit the region a little after 2 PM. The tremor made houses shake, chimneys fall, and residents wonder what the heck was going on, according to a New York Times article two days later. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the USGS.

1856: A hurricane destroyed Isle Dernieres or Last Island, a pleasure resort south-southwest of New Orleans on this day. The highest points of the island were under five feet of water. The resort hotel was destroyed, along with the island's gambling establishments. Over 200 people perished, and the island lost all its vegetation and split in half. Only one cow remained on the island after the catastrophe. The Last Island is now just a haven for pelicans and other seabirds. The steamer Nautilus foundered during the storm. The lone survivor clung to a bale of cotton and washed ashore sometime later.

1882 - Sandusky OH noted a four minute snow squall during the morning, frost was reported in the suburbs of Chicago, and a killing frost was reported at Cresco IA. (The Weather Channel)

1898 - The temperature at Pendleton OR climbed all the way to 119 degrees at set a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1924 - Colorado's deadliest tornado killed a woman and nine children in one house along its twenty-mile path east southeast of Thurman. Mennonite men had left the farm to provide possible aid, as the 200-yard wide storm was first seen while far away.(The Weather Channel)

1936 - The temperature soared to 114 degrees at Plain Dealing, LA, and reached 120 degrees at Ozark AR, to establish record highs for those two states. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - Hurricane Allen came ashore above Brownsville, TX, dropping fifteen inches of rain near San Antonio, and up to 20 inches in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Tidal flooding occurred along the South Texas coast. Hurricane Allen packed winds to 150 mph, and also spawned twenty-nine tornadoes. Total damage from the storm was estimated at 750 million dollars. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Unseasonably hot weather continued in the southeastern U.S. Ten cities in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina reported record high temperatures for the date. Macon GA hit 101 degrees. A tropical depression deluged southeastern Texas and southwestern Louisiana with torrential rains. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Citizens of Bluefield, WV, where the Chamber of Commerce provides free lemonade on days when the temperature warms into the 90s, were able to celebrate their record high of 90 degrees. Eight other cities also reported record high temperatures for the date,including Bismarck ND with a reading of 102 degrees.(The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thirty-eight cities in the south central and southeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Asheville NC with a reading of 48 degrees, and Victoria TX with a low of 63 degrees. Oklahoma City OK reported a record cool afternoon high of 71 degrees, and the daily high of 64 degrees at Raleigh NC established a record for August. In Arizona, a record sixty-four day streak of 100 degree days at Phoenix came to an end.(The National Weather Summary)



Standing Boldly

Scripture: Esther 4:7-14 (English Standard Version)

7 and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. 8 Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him on behalf of her people. 9 And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to go to Mordecai and say, 11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days."

12 And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. 13 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. 14 For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Insight

The story of Esther and the victory of God's people over their long-standing enemies provide both encouragement and a warning to us today. Even when God seems absent, He's operating behind the scenes to care for His people and protect them from their enemies. The survival of the Jewish people also means the continuance of the hope for the Messiah who would come. We also learn that God's judgment can't be hindered by anyone.

Adapted from Understanding the Bible: The History Books. Read it at DiscoverySeries.org/Q0416.

Comment

In a small Illinois town, domestic violence comprises 40 percent of all crimes in the community. According to a local pastor, this issue is often hidden in our faith communities because it's uncomfortable to talk about. So instead of shying away from the problem, local ministers chose to exercise faith and courageously address the issue by taking classes to recognize the signs of violence and supporting nonprofit organizations working on the issue. Acknowledging the power of faith and action, a local minister said, "Our prayers and compassion, coupled with some tangible support, can make an important difference."

When Esther, Queen of Persia, was hesitant to speak out against a law that authorized the genocide of her people, she was warned by her uncle that if she remained silent, she and her family wouldn't escape but would perish (Esther 4:13-14). Knowing it was time to be bold and take a stand, Mordecai queried, "Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" (v. 14). Whether we are called to speak out against injustice or to forgive someone who's caused us distress, the Bible assures us that in challenging circumstances, God will never leave or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5-6). When we look to Him for help in moments where we feel intimidated, He'll give us "power, love, and self-discipline" to see our assignment through to the end (2 Timothy 1:7).

Reflect and Prayer: What might God be asking you to do? What tools have you already been given to answer the call?

Heavenly Father, thank You for placing a unique calling over my life. Help me to overcome my fears and step out in faith.

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2022-23 Community Events

- 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
07/24/2022: 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
No Date Set: 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)
No Date Set: 6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3:30-5pm
09/11/2022: Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10 a.m.
09/02-04: 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
12/10/2022: Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm
01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
07/04/2023 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start (4th of July)
07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

01-08-10-25-32, Mega Ball: 13, Megaplier: 3

(one, eight, ten, twenty-five, thirty-two; Mega Ball: thirteen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$65,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 35,000,000

Federal court denies tribe a review of uranium license

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A federal appeals court on Tuesday denied the Oglala Sioux Tribe's request for a review of a U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission decision to grant a license for a potential uranium mine in southwestern South Dakota despite the tribe not being individually consulted on the potential impact to cultural resources.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit found that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission complied with federal law when it granted Powertech, Inc., a subsidiary of enCore Energy in Texas, a license to mine uranium at a 10,000-acre site near Edgemont, South Dakota. The company plans to use a mining method that injects a water-based solution underground, dissolves the uranium and draws it to the surface for processing.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe has mounted a years-long effort to halt the project, arguing that the project would endanger cultural and environmental resources on land that historically belonged to the Great Sioux Nation.

The tribe did not participate in a 2013 survey for historical and cultural resources because it disapproved of the methods and timing. It later argued against the license before the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board.

Although the board found that the tribe was not adequately consulted, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission kept the license in place because the tribe had failed to show it suffered "irreparable harm" from the licensing process. Federal regulators tried several times to reach an agreement with the tribe to conduct a survey, but they could not agree to a method.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe did not immediately comment on the ruling.

The federal court in its order found that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission had "satisfied its statutory obligations" during the license review process.

The decision clears the way for other permits for the project to potentially move forward. The Environmental Protection Agency has issued permits in 2020, but an appeal of that decision had been halted until the court ruled on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's license.

Powertech is also seeking South Dakota state permits. Those too have been put on hold while federal permits are challenged in court.

EnCore Energy did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the court's ruling.

Uranium was mined in open pits and tunnels in the Edgemont area from the 1950s to the 1970s, a process that left behind unreclaimed mines, buried radioactive waste and health concerns.

The uranium previously mined at the site was used for American nuclear weapons. However, this time it would be used for nuclear power plants. Powertech says nuclear energy is environmentally friendly since it's carbon-free.

Austin pledges military training, support for Baltics

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

RIGA, Latvia (AP) — The U.S. will conduct more military exercises with Baltic nations such as Latvia, and look to provide increased training, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Wednesday, saying the U.S. may bring in additional troops from America if needed to bolster the region against any possible threat from Russia.

Speaking at a press conference with Latvia's Defense Minister Artis Pabriks, Austin said plans to do continuous rotations of forces into the Baltics will likely use troops from U.S. brigades in Romania and other parts of Europe, but "we can also bring in forces from the United States."

Austin is the first U.S. defense secretary to visit Latvia in nearly three decades, underscoring the increased importance of the Baltic nations, who sit at Russia's western edge. They have watched Russia's invasion of Ukraine and fear that they could be the next victims of Moscow's aggression. The Pentagon said the last defense chief to go to Latvia was William Perry in 1995.

Pabriks told reporters that his top priorities are to get more U.S. military enablers, adding that in order to defend his country, his troops need "nitty gritty training" on a daily basis. He added that Latvia also needs additional financial assistance from the U.S. in order to buy new military equipment, and to beef up its air defense and coastal defense.

In two days of meetings in this Baltic capital, just a few hours' drive from the Russian border, Austin repeatedly re-enforced America's commitment to helping the region defend itself. He met with U.S. troops on Tuesday, including members of the Security Force Assistance Brigade that provides training to allies. He said Wednesday that he is looking to maintain use of the SFAB in the Baltic region going forward.

Austin's visit comes as the Russian war in Ukraine is in its sixth month, as Russia continues to make slow but incremental progress but has met growing counterattacks by Ukrainian forces in Russian-occupied areas of southern Ukraine. Ukraine has also been battling to hold off the Kremlin's forces in the industrial Donbas region in the east.

In a possible escalation of the fighting, powerful explosions rocked a Russian air base in Crimea on Tuesday and sent towering clouds of smoke over the landscape. Russia's Defense Ministry denied the Saki base on the Black Sea had been shelled and said instead that munitions had blown up there. But Ukrainian social networks were abuzz with speculation that it was hit by Ukrainian-fired long-range missiles.

In a rapid-fire series of meetings on Wednesday with top Latvian leaders, including President Egils Levits at Riga Castle, Austin pledged America's steadfast commitment to stand with the Baltic region against any Russian aggression. The three Baltic nations - Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia - are all former Soviet republics, and were seized and annexed by Josef Stalin during World War II. They gained independence with the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, and joined NATO in 2004, putting themselves under the military protection of the U.S. and its Western allies.

"We will enhance our rotational deployments in the region and intensify our training with our Baltic allies to further strengthen our combat credible posture in the region," Austin said, as the start of his meeting with Latvian Prime Minister Arturs Krisjanis Karins at the Council of Ministers on Wednesday morning.

During the press conference, Pabriks acknowledged worries about the threat from neighboring Belarus, which is a Russian ally. He said he doesn't consider Belarus an independent nation and is instead just part of Russia. He said Latvia is routinely concerned about the threat along that border and watches it closely.

The U.S. has deployed an additional 20,000 U.S. troops to Europe -- for a total of about 100,000 --- in order to reassure NATO allies, beef up training and exercises and shift the focus of the forces to the alliance's eastern flank. Of those, the U.S. now has about 500 troops in Latvia, an increase over the 100 that were in the country as of last December.

In March, shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, NATO began to explore how best to shore up the defense of the eastern flank, from Estonia in the north through Latvia, Lithuania and Poland down to Bulgaria and Romania on the Black Sea.

"On land, our new posture should include substantially more forces in the eastern part of the Alliance, at higher readiness, with more prepositioned equipment and supplies," said NATO Secretary-General Jens

Stoltenberg, at the time. "In the air, more allied air power, and strengthened integrated air and missile defense."

Austin first stopped first at Lielvarde Air Base where he and Pabriks met with U.S. and Latvian troops. Standing in a hanger, with a Black Hawk helicopter in the background, Pabriks flatly told Austin and the service members that "if something happens on the border – we are ready to die."

Austin assured Pabriks and the troops that "if something happens, and ... the sovereign territory of Latvia is questioned or challenged, we're gonna be here to work with our partners."

NATO only began stationing troops on its eastern flank after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014. Until late last year, only around 5,000 troops were deployed in the Baltic states and Poland on a rotational basis.

Now, NATO says, hundreds of thousands of troops are on heightened alert, with America's 100,000 troops in Europe, and 40,000 troops under direct NATO command, supported by around 150 ships and a similar number of aircraft.

Austin's visit also comes as Latvia moves to increase its own defenses, and the nation's president eyes a plan to reinstate national conscription for men, and for women on a voluntary basis. The draft could be reintroduced next year after a hiatus of over 15 years.

Ukraine says 9 Russian warplanes destroyed in Crimea blasts

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's air force said Wednesday that nine Russian warplanes were destroyed in massive explosions at an air base in Crimea amid speculation they were the result of a Ukrainian attack that would represent a significant escalation in the war.

Russia denied any aircraft were damaged in Tuesday's blasts — or that any attack took place.

Ukrainian officials have stopped short of publicly claiming responsibility for the explosions, while poking fun at Russia's explanation that munitions at the Saki air base caught fire and blew up and also underscoring the importance of the peninsula that Moscow annexed eight years ago.

In his nightly video address several hours after the blasts, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowed to retake the peninsula, saying that "this Russian war against Ukraine and against all of free Europe began with Crimea and must end with Crimea — its liberation."

On Wednesday, Russian authorities sought to downplay the blasts, saying all hotels and beaches were unaffected on the peninsula, which is a popular tourist destination for many Russians. The explosions, which killed one person and wounded 13, sent tourists fleeing in panic as plumes of smoke towered over the nearby coastline. They knocked out windows and caused other damage in some apartment buildings.

Russian warplanes have used Saki to strike areas in Ukraine's south on short notice, and Ukrainian social networks were abuzz with speculation that Ukrainian-fired long-range missiles hit the base.

Officials in Moscow have long warned Ukraine that any attack on Crimea would trigger massive retaliation, including strikes on "decision-making centers" in Kyiv.

A Ukrainian presidential adviser, Oleksiy Arestovych, who is more outspoken than other officials, cryptically said Tuesday that the blasts were caused either by a Ukrainian-made long-range weapon or were the work of guerrillas operating in Crimea.

The base on the Black Sea peninsula that dangles off southern Ukraine is at least 200 kilometers (some 125 miles) away from the closest Ukrainian position — out of the range of the missiles supplied by the U.S. for use in the HIMARS systems.

The Ukrainian military has successfully used those missiles, with a range of 80 kilometers (50 miles), to target ammunition and fuel depots, strategic bridges and other key targets in Russia-occupied territories. HIMARS could also fire longer-range rockets, with a range of up to 300 kilometers (about 185 miles), that Ukraine has asked for.

But U.S. authorities have refrained from providing them thus far, fearing that it could provoke Russia

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and widen the conflict. But the explosions in Saki raised speculation on social media that Ukraine might have finally got the weapons.

Ukrainian military analyst Oleh Zhdanov said that the Ukrainian forces could have struck the Russian air base with a Ukrainian Neptune anti-ship missile that has a range of about 200 kilometers (about 125 miles) and could have been adapted for use against ground targets and could be fired from Ukrainian positions near Mykolaiv northwest of Crimea.

The Ukrainian military also might have used Western-supplied Harpoon anti-ship missiles that can also be used against ground targets and have a range of about 300 kilometers (about 185 miles), he said.

"Official Kyiv has kept mum about it, but unofficially the military acknowledges that it was a Ukrainian strike," Zhdanov said.

If Ukrainian forces were, in fact, responsible for the blasts, it would be the first known major attack on a Russian military site in Crimea, which the Kremlin annexed in 2014. A smaller explosion last month at the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in the Crimean port of Sevastopol was blamed on Ukrainian saboteurs using a makeshift drone.

During the war, Russia has reported numerous fires and explosions at munitions storage sites on its territory near the Ukrainian border, blaming some of them on Ukrainian strikes. Ukrainian authorities have mostly remained silent about the incidents.

Meanwhile, Russian shelling hit areas across Ukraine on Tuesday night into Wednesday, including the central region of Dnipropetrovsk, where 13 people were killed and 11 others were wounded, according to the region's governor Valentyn Reznichenko.

Reznichenko said the Russian forces fired at the city of Marganets and a nearby village. Dozens of residential buildings, two schools and several administrative buildings were damaged by the shelling.

"It was a terrible night," Reznichenko said. "It's very hard to take bodies from under debris. We are facing a cruel enemy who engage in daily terror against our cities and villages."

The Russian forces also continued shelling the nearby city of Nikopol across the Dnieper River from the Russia-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe's largest.

Ukraine and Russia have accused each other of shelling the power station, Europe's biggest nuclear plant, stoking international fears of a catastrophe.

China reaffirms threat of military force to annex Taiwan

BEIJING (AP) — China on Wednesday reaffirmed its threat to use military force to bring self-governing Taiwan under its control, amid threatening Chinese military exercises that have raised tensions between the sides to their highest level in years.

The lengthy policy statement issued by the Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office and its news department followed almost a week of missile firings and incursions into Taiwanese waters and airspace by Chinese warships and air force planes.

The actions have disrupted flights and shipping in a region crucial to global supply chains, prompting strong condemnation from the U.S., Japan and others.

An English-language version of the Chinese statement said Beijing would "work with the greatest sincerity and exert our utmost efforts to achieve peaceful reunification."

"But we will not renounce the use of force, and we reserve the option of taking all necessary measures. This is to guard against external interference and all separatist activities," the statement said.

"We will always be ready to respond with the use of force or other necessary means to interference by external forces or radical action by separatist elements. Our ultimate goal is to ensure the prospects of China's peaceful reunification and advance this process," it said.

China says the threatening moves were prompted by a visit to Taiwan last week by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, but Taiwan says such visits are routine and that China used that merely as a pretext to up its threats.

In an additional response to Pelosi's visit, China said it was cutting off dialogue on issues from maritime

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security to climate change with the U.S., Taiwan's chief military and political backer.

Taiwan's foreign minister warned Tuesday that the Chinese military drills reflect ambitions to control large swaths of the western Pacific, while Taipei conducted its own exercises to underscore its readiness to defend itself.

Beijing's strategy would include controlling the East and South China seas via the Taiwan Strait and imposing a blockade to prevent the U.S. and its allies from aiding Taiwan in the event of an attack, Joseph Wu told a news conference in Taipei.

Beijing extended the ongoing exercises without announcing when they would end, although they appear to have run their course for the time being.

China's Defense Ministry and its Eastern Theater Command both issued statements saying the exercises had achieved their targets of sending a warning to those favoring Taiwan's formal independence and their foreign backers.

Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen and her Democratic Progressive Party administration are "pushing Taiwan into the abyss of disaster and sooner or later will be nailed to the pillar of historical shame!" Defense Ministry spokesperson Col. Tan Kefei was quoted as saying in a statement posted to the ministry's website.

Troops taking part in the exercises had "effectively tested integrated joint combat capabilities," the Eastern Theater Command said on its Twitter-like Weixin microblog.

"The theater troops will monitor changes in the situation in the Taiwan Strait, continue to conduct military training and preparations, organize regular combat readiness patrols in the Taiwan Strait, and resolutely defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity," spokesperson Col. Shi Yi was quoted as saying.

Taiwan split with the mainland amid civil war in 1949 and the island's 23 million people overwhelmingly oppose political unification with China, while preferring to maintain close economic links and the status quo of de-facto independence.

Through its maneuvers, China has pushed closer to Taiwan's borders and may be seeking to establish a new normal in which it could eventually control access to the island's ports and airspace.

Along with lobbing missiles into the Taiwan Strait, the nearly week-long drills saw Chinese ships and planes crossing the center line in the strait that has long been seen as a buffer against outright conflict.

The U.S., Taipei's main backer, has also shown itself to be willing to face down China's threats. Washington has no formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan in deference to Beijing, but is legally bound to ensure the island can defend itself and to treat all threats against it as matters of grave concern.

That leaves open the question of whether Washington would dispatch forces if China attacked Taiwan. U.S. President Joe Biden has said repeatedly the U.S. is bound to do so — but staff members have quickly walked back those comments.

Beyond the geopolitical risks, an extended crisis in the Taiwan Strait — a significant thoroughfare for global trade — could have major implications for international supply chains at a time when the world is already facing disruptions and uncertainty in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

In particular, Taiwan is a crucial provider of computer chips for the global economy, including China's high-tech sectors.

In response to the drills, Taiwan has put its forces on alert, but has so far refrained from taking active countermeasures.

On Tuesday, its military held live-fire artillery drills in Pingtung County on its southeastern coast.

Australia's recent change of government was a chance to "reset" its troubled relationship with China, but the new administration must "handle the Taiwan question with caution," a Chinese envoy said Wednesday.

China has brushed aside foreign criticism of its actions, and its ambassador to Australia said Wednesday he was "surprised" that Australia had signed a statement with the United States and Japan that condemned China's firing of missiles into Japanese waters in response to Pelosi's visit.

Xiao Qian told the National Press Club China wanted to resolve the situation peacefully, but "we can never rule out the option to use other means."

"So when necessary, when compelled, we are ready to use all necessary means," Xiao said. "As to what

does it mean by 'all necessary means?' You can use your imagination."

Stranded whale euthanized after removal from French river

PARIS (AP) — A beluga whale that captured French hearts when it showed up in the Seine River had to be euthanized Wednesday after it was successfully removed from the French waterway, authorities said.

A rescue team was preparing to transfer the whale to a saltwater pool in Normandy. The male marine mammal was first spotted in the Seine last week after having accidentally veered off its normal path to the Arctic.

During the rescue operation, the dangerously thin animal began to have breathing difficulties, and so experts decided the most humane thing to do was to euthanize the creature.

"During the journey, the veterinarians confirmed a worsening of its state, notably its respiratory activities, and at the same time noticed the animal was in pain, not breathing enough," Florence Ollivet Courtois, a French wild animal expert, said. "The suffering was obvious for the animal, so it was important to release its tension, and so we had to proceed to euthanize it."

Conservation group Sea Shepherd France said veterinary exams after the beluga's removal from the river showed it has no digestive activity. Members of the organization had tried unsuccessfully since Friday to feed fish to the whale.

Courtois said the whale experienced distress after it was moved to a refrigerated truck and during the approximately 160-kilometer (99-mile) drive to the Normandy coast.

The whale was expected to spend several days recuperating in the saltwater pool in the northeastern French port town of Ouistreham before being towed out to sea.

The rescue team said ahead of time that the transfer carried a risk of the whale dying because of the stress involved in the process. However, the move was deemed necessary because the animal would not have been able to survive in much longer in the Seine's fresh water.

"The decision to euthanize the beluga was taken as it was too weakened to be put back into water," Guillaume Lericolais, the subprefect of France's Calvados region, said.

Jury picked, evidence next in 2nd trial in Gov. Whitmer plot

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and ED WHITE Associated Press

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) — Federal prosecutors are set to begin building their case against two men described as leaders of a 2020 scheme to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, their second chance to get convictions after a jury couldn't deliver a unanimous verdict last spring.

Opening statements are planned for Wednesday in federal court in Grand Rapids, in western Michigan. A jury was selected Tuesday. Some people were dismissed for health reasons or for political beliefs they couldn't set aside.

"It's not disqualifying to have views one way or the other," U.S. District Judge Robert Jonker told the jury pool. "It's disqualifying if the views become more important than what the law or the evidence is."

Adam Fox and Barry Croft Jr. are charged with agreeing to kidnap Whitmer, a Democrat, as part of a plot to shock the country into chaos in the final days of the 2020 presidential election. They're also charged with conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction. Croft faces a third charge.

Two co-defendants were acquitted in April and two more pleaded guilty.

Fox, 39, lived in the Grand Rapids area and Croft, 46, is from Bear, Delaware. They regularly communicated with other anti-government extremists who were angry with Whitmer and various public officials over COVID-19 restrictions.

The jury will hear secretly recorded conversations and see text messages and social media posts favoring violence. At the same time, defense attorneys will attack the credibility of undercover FBI agents and informants who fooled the group into thinking they were allies.

The plot to kidnap Whitmer followed training in Wisconsin and Michigan and two trips to scout her second home in northern Michigan, according to evidence at the first trial.

Lawyers for Fox and Croft will argue they were shielded by the First Amendment and entrapped by the government at every turn.

Daniel Harris and Brandon Caserta were found not guilty in April. Ty Garbin and Kaleb Franks pleaded guilty and will testify again for prosecutors.

Garbin told jurors at the first trial that the goal was to cause national chaos with a kidnapping close to the election between Joe Biden and then-President Donald Trump.

Whitmer, who will not be called as a trial witness, disclosed Monday night that she tested positive for COVID-19 for the first time and was experiencing mild symptoms.

Veterans health bill marks a personal victory for Biden

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As President Joe Biden rattled off policy proposals in this year's State of the Union address, he hit an emotional note when talking about veterans who suffer from cancer after serving on military bases where toxic smoke billowed from burning trash.

"One of those soldiers was my son Maj. Beau Biden," he said.

The president was careful to avoid drawing a direct line between the burn pits and his son's fatal cancer, but he left no doubt that he believes there's a connection. The tragic death from seven years ago makes a ceremony Wednesday, when Biden plans to sign legislation expanding federal health care for veterans, among the most personal moments for him since taking office.

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., who chairs the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, said Biden was a driving force behind the measure, which passed last week.

"He was continually pushing because whether Beau died of this or not, I think Joe thinks that it had some impact, and so he wanted this fixed," Tester said. "And because he thinks it was the right thing to do. So different president, different set of priorities, this would have probably never happened."

Burn pits were used in Iraq and Afghanistan to dispose of chemicals, cans, tires, plastics, medical equipment and human waste. However, 70% of disability claims involving exposure to the pits were denied by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The legislation will direct officials to assume that certain respiratory illnesses and cancers were related to burn pit exposure, helping veterans get disability payments without having to prove the illness was the result of their service.

"Veterans who have been sickened to the point of being unable to work, unable to take care of their families, won't have to spend that time fighting the government to get the healthcare they earned," said Jeremy Butler, head of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. "This is monumental."

Butler is expected to attend the ceremony, along with Le Roy and Rosie Torres, husband and wife advocates for veterans health care who started the organization Burn Pits 360. Le Roy developed constrictive bronchitis after serving in Iraq, making breathing difficult.

Biden will be introduced by Danielle and Brielle Robinson, the wife and daughter of Sgt. 1st Class Heath Robinson, who died of cancer two years ago. The legislation is named for Heath, and Danielle attended Biden's State of the Union address as a guest of first lady Jill Biden.

Although the provision involving burn pits has garnered the most attention, other health care services will be expanded as well.

Veterans who have served since the Sept. 11 attacks will have a decade to sign up for VA health care, double the current five years.

And there's more help for veterans from the Vietnam War. The legislation adds hypertension to list of ailments that are presumed to be caused by exposure to Agent Orange, a herbicide used by the U.S. military to clear vegetation.

In addition, veterans who served during the war in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Guam, American Samoa and Johnston Atoll will also be considered to have been exposed to the chemical.

The legislation is considered to be the largest expansion of veterans health care in more than three

decades, but it became an unlikely political football shortly before it passed.

On the day that the Senate was expected to grant it final approval, Republicans unexpectedly blocked it. Veterans who had traveled to Washington for a moment of triumph were devastated.

"All the veterans were down there because they were expecting to celebrate," Butler said. "And then they were absolutely stabbed in the back."

Republicans said they were concerned about technical changes to how the legislation was funded. Democrats accused them of throwing a fit because they were unhappy about a separate deal to advance Biden's domestic agenda on climate change, taxes and prescription drugs.

Instead of going home, some veterans began holding what they called a "fire watch" outside the Capitol, an impromptu vigil to keep public pressure on the Senate.

They stayed around the clock, despite the stifling summer heat and torrential thunderstorms. Jon Stewart, the comedian who has advocated for veterans, joined them as well. Biden wanted to go but couldn't because he was isolating with a coronavirus infection, so he spoke to the demonstrators in a video call when VA Secretary Denis McDonough dropped off pizza.

Days after the demonstration began, the Senate held another vote, and the measure passed with overwhelming bipartisan support.

Veterans were in the gallery watching the vote take place.

"Every single person I was with was bawling. Just bawling," said Matt Zeller, a former Army captain who was among the demonstrators. "I cried for a solid five minutes."

'We're back, baby': New bill boosts US climate credibility

By CHRISTINA LARSON and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After a moment when hopes dimmed that the United States could become an international leader on climate change, legislation that Congress is poised to approve could rejuvenate the country's reputation and bolster its efforts to push other nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions more quickly.

The head-snapping turn of events, which has generated a joyful case of whiplash among Democrats and environmentalists, is a reminder of how domestic politics is intertwined with worldwide diplomacy.

Advocates feared that last month's breakdown in negotiations in Congress had undermined efforts to limit the catastrophic effects of global warming. Now they're energized by the opportunity to tout an unprecedented U.S. success.

"This says, 'We're back, baby,'" said Jennifer Turner, who works on international climate issues as director of the Woodrow Wilson Center's China Environment Forum in Washington.

The legislation, which also has provisions on taxes and prescription drugs, includes about \$375 billion over the next decade for clean energy development and financial incentives for buying electric cars, installing solar panels and weaning the power grid off fossil fuels. Although the proposals were downsized during difficult negotiations, it's the single biggest investment in climate change in U.S. history, and a significant shift from years of inaction that limited Washington's clout overseas.

The Senate passed the legislation on Sunday, and the House is expected to approve it on Friday. Then it goes to President Joe Biden for his signature.

Poor nations remain concerned that rich countries like the United States have not fulfilled financial commitments to help them cope with global warming and transition to clean energy, something the legislation does not address. But Biden can still point to it as evidence that the U.S. political system can address the world's most pressing problems.

"Our ability to have credibility on the global stage depends on our ability to deliver at home," said Ali Zaidi, the White House deputy national climate adviser. "We are the pace car. That helps other people go faster and faster."

After President Donald Trump withdrew from the Paris climate accord, Biden entered office pledging to rejoin the fight against global warming. He set an ambitious new target for reducing greenhouse gas

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emissions — at least 50% below 2005 levels by 2030 — and began proposing policies to put the country on track.

The legislation that Biden is expected to sign is estimated to reduce emissions between 31% to 44%, according to an analysis by the Rhodium Group, an independent research firm. Further regulatory steps by the administration could close the rest of the gap.

"It's good that finally the U.S. is trying to catch up after years of dragging its feet on climate change and this investment will go a long way to undoing some of the harm caused by the administration of President Trump," said Mohamed Adow, director of Power Shift Africa, a think tank based in Nairobi, Kenya.

The movement on the bill comes just three months before the next U.N. conference on climate change, which is known as COP27 and will take place in Egypt.

"Let's hope this legislation is the start of more international cooperation in the lead up to the COP27 summit, where the most vulnerable get the support they need," Adow said.

Although the U.S. will still face entrenched skepticism, the progress in Washington may also give John Kerry, the White House's special envoy on climate, more momentum going into the conference in November.

"It puts wind in his sail, it gives him a real credibility boost," Turner said. "This will change the whole dynamic."

Several experts said the U.S. will be empowered to put more pressure on China, India and other nations that have high emissions but have been unwilling to cut back for economic reasons.

"This restores some diplomatic legitimacy to the U.S. as an influential player in international climate negotiations," said Scott Moore, director of China Programs and Strategic Initiatives at the University of Pennsylvania.

Shayak Sengupta, a fellow at the Observer Research Foundation America, a Washington-based affiliate of a think tank in India, was less enthusiastic.

"Considering that this bill is long over due after years of U.S. climate inaction, many countries may view this as the 'bare minimum' of the U.S.'s historical and moral responsibility for climate," he said.

Sengupta emphasized that poor nations are still looking for rich countries to fulfill their \$100 billion commitment for financial assistance to address global warming, an issue that's been a sore spot during international negotiations.

There will be no shortage of other challenges, too. If Republicans retake Congress or the White House, they could unravel Biden's progress. Supply chains could struggle to accommodate increased demand for equipment like solar panels and batteries. China's foreign ministry on Friday announced the country is cutting off direct climate talks with the U.S. in response to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan, severing a rare point of longstanding, if sometimes tumultuous, cooperation between the two countries.

However, experts said China will still take notice if the U.S. succeeds in becoming a clean energy powerhouse.

"For a while now, China has been leading in clean energy investment globally," said Xizhou Zhou, an expert in climate and sustainability at S&P Global, a global research firm. "They will probably see this legislation as a competitive move."

Deborah Seligsohn, an expert on China's politics and energy at Villanova University and a former U.S. diplomat in Beijing, said the result could be lower prices globally.

"To the extent the U.S. starts really investing in things that compete with key Chinese businesses — in solar, wind, electric vehicles, batteries — I think you're going to see Chinese businesses interested in ramping up their competitiveness in these industries, by making better products and bringing prices down," she said.

That could have a ripple effect around the world.

"Developing countries may see prices for renewable energy going down, and adoption going up," Seligsohn said.

Vibhuti Garg, an energy economist focused on India, said U.S. investment in clean energy research could pay dividends in poorer nations that don't have the same resources to develop new technologies.

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"The U.S. can share the technology know-how with other countries, especially the Global South," she said. Aditya Ramji, from the Institute of Transportation Studies at University of California, Davis, said that cooperation — along with financial help — will be critical.

"At some point there will have to be discussions on how they can provide intellectual property access or lower costs to countries like India and others to leverage electric vehicle technology," he said.

Climate activists said the U.S. legislation is just one step on a larger path towards climate action. More progress is needed to put the world on track to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit), a target that some scientists believe is slipping out of reach.

"We need to fight for political commitments in other countries," said climate activist Luisa Neubauer, a leading figure in the Fridays for Future activist movement.

"That's the only way we will manage to turn this from a year of fossil fuel backlash to a year of climate justice," she said.

Kenyans waiting for results of close presidential election

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Kenyans are waiting for the results of a close but calm presidential election in which the turnout was lower than usual.

Tuesday's election was likely the final try by longtime opposition leader Raila Odinga, who on his fifth attempt was backed by former rival and outgoing President Uhuru Kenyatta. The other top contender is Deputy President William Ruto, who fell out with the president earlier in their decade in power.

Voters have expressed little hope of real change and frustration with rising prices and widespread corruption in East Africa's economic hub. Both top candidates are long known to Kenyans, Odinga as a democracy campaigner and former political detainee and Ruto as a wealthy populist who plays up his humble youth as a contrast to the dynasties that produced Odinga and Kenyatta.

The president's backing of Odinga cut across the usual ethnic lines that have long defined elections and contributed to violence. This time there is no candidate from Kenya's largest ethnic group, the Kikuyu, though both top candidates chose Kikuyu running mates.

Official election results must be announced within a week of the vote, but there's some anticipation a winner might be known Wednesday. The electoral commission still must verify results forms coming from across the country. More than 95% of results forms from the over 46,000 polling centers had been sent to the commission before noon Wednesday.

A runoff election will be held if no candidate receives more than 50% of votes.

The commission has said it expected turnout to be above 60%, far lower than the 80% in the previous election in 2017. More than 22 million people were registered to vote, but some told The Associated Press they doubted they would bother, dispirited by economic challenges including high national debt and widespread unemployment.

A relatively uneventful election might be welcome. On the eve of the vote, Kenya's government reminded people that "this will be a CONTEST, not a FIGHT. A contest must have a winner, and a loser. In a fight, life can sometimes be lost."

Kenyans tend to say elections are calm and troubles come later. More than 1,000 people were killed after 2007 election results were announced and Odinga alleged massive rigging. In 2017, the high court overturned the election results, a first in Africa, after Odinga alleged irregularities. He boycotted the fresh election and declared himself the "people's president," drawing accusations of treason.

A handshake with Kenyatta calmed that crisis, set up their unusual alliance and angered Ruto, who still accuses the president of betrayal.

Both Odinga and Ruto have said they will accept the results as long as the vote is free and fair.

Already, reported troubles include the failure of about 200 voting kits out of more than 46,000 across the country. The electoral commission called it "not widespread" and "normal" for technology to break down at times. But some local reports also cited people saying they were unable to vote when the kits didn't

recognize them and polling workers wouldn't use the paper voters' register as a backup, which was allowed.

Such frustrations occurred even after Kenya budgeted \$347 million, or more than \$15 per voter, for one of Africa's most expensive elections.

Kenyans have a week from the announcement of official results to file any court challenges. The court has two weeks to rule. A fresh election would be held within 60 days.

Japan PM names new Cabinet, shifting some over church ties

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida reshuffled his Cabinet on Wednesday in an apparent bid to distance his administration from the conservative Unification Church over its ties to the assassinated leader Shinzo Abe and senior ruling party members.

The reshuffle was the second in just 10 months since Kishida took office following the July election victory that had been expected to ensure long-term stability until 2025. But Abe's shocking assassination on July 8 and its impact on politics increased uncertainty as public support for Kishida's Cabinet plunged.

Kishida told reporters Tuesday that a "strict review" of candidates' ties to the church would be a "pre-requisite" in the new lineup of Cabinet officials and Liberal Democratic Party executives.

He said he had instructed his ministers and other senior officials to clarify their connection to the Unification Church "so that we can achieve political and administrative work that can be trusted by the people."

Abe was fatally shot while giving a campaign speech two days before the parliamentary election. Police and media reports say the suspect targeted Abe over suspected ties to the Unification Church, which the man hated because his mother's massive financial donations to the church ruined his family.

Abe, in his video message to the church affiliate the Universal Peace Foundation, in September 2021, praised its work toward peace on the Korean Peninsula and its focus on family values. Some experts say Abe's video appearance may have motivated the suspect.

The ties between the church and Japan's governing party go back to Abe's grandfather, Nobusuke Kishi, who served as prime minister and shared U.S. concerns over the spread of communism in Japan in the 1960s.

The church since the 1980s has faced accusations of devious recruitment and brainwashing of its adherents into making huge donations.

On Wednesday, Tomihiro Tanaka, president of the church, which now calls itself the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, told a news conference that the church-related UPF that Abe was linked to is more politically active and involved in election campaigns.

But he denied any "political interference" with specific parties and said that Kishida's call for his party members to distance themselves from the church was "regrettable."

Tanaka said the church and its affiliate groups have naturally developed closer ties with the Liberal Democratic Party conservatives than others because of their shared anti-communist stance.

"We've worked together with politicians who have clear views against communism in order to build a better country," Tanaka said. "We are pursuing the activity not only in Japan but as part of our global network against communism."

Kishida said the main purpose of the reshuffle was to "break through one of biggest postwar crises" such as the coronavirus pandemic, inflation, growing tensions between China and self-ruled Taiwan and Russia's war on Ukraine. He was expected to further explain the new Cabinet at a news conference later Wednesday.

A survey released Monday by the NHK public television showed support for Kishida's Cabinet fell to 46% from 59%.

Most of the respondents said they think politicians have not sufficiently explained their ties to the Unification Church. Kishida's plan to hold a state funeral for Abe has also split public opinion because of Abe's archconservative stances on national security and wartime history. Critics also see a state funeral as the government attempt to glorify Abe's legacy.

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Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno, who retained his post, announced the new lineup, including five who kept their posts, another five who were brought back and nine first-timers.

Seven ministers who acknowledged their ties to the church were removed. They include Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi, Abe's younger brother, who said that church followers were volunteers in his past election campaigns, and Public Safety Commission Chairman Satoshi Ninoyu, who attended an event organized by a church-related organization.

Kishi was replaced by former Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada, and Taro Kono, who previously served as a vaccination tsar during the pandemic as well as foreign and defense minister, returned to the Cabinet as digital minister.

Along with Matsuno, Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi, Economy Minister Daishiro Yamagiwa, Transportation Minister Tetsuo Saito, Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki also kept their jobs.

Economy and Trade Minister Koichi Hagiuda, who also had church ties, was shifted to head the party policy research committee and replaced by former Economy Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura. Katsunobu Kato was appointed health minister for the third time, tasked with coronavirus measures.

The new Cabinet suggested Kishida tasked veterans with key policies such as diplomacy, defense, economic security and pandemic measures while carefully keeping a power balance among party wings to solidify unity amid growing speculation of a power struggle within Abe's faction.

Despite criticism that Japanese politics is dominated by older men, the majority of the Cabinet members are still men older than 60, with only two women.

They include Sanae Takaichi, an ultra-conservative close to Abe who was appointed economic security minister, and Keiko Nagaoka, a first-timer who became education minister and replaced Shinsuke Suetsumu, who also acknowledged his Unification Church links.

Gender Minister Seiko Noda, who admitted to sending a message to a church-related group's event in 2001 that was attended by her aide, was replaced by Masanobu Ogura in his first Cabinet post.

EXPLAINER: Fighting in Ukraine endangers big nuclear plant

By The Associated Press undefined

Russia and Ukraine have accused each other of shelling Europe's largest nuclear power plant, stoking international fears of a catastrophe on the continent. A look at the plant and the situation around it:

EUROPE'S BIGGEST NUCLEAR PLANT

The Zaporizhzhia plant is in southern Ukraine, near the town of Enerhodar on the banks of the Dnieper River. It is one of the 10 biggest nuclear plants in the world.

Built during the Soviet era, it has six reactors with a total capacity of 5,700 megawatts. Three of the reactors are in operation.

Before the war, the plant accounted for about half of the electricity generated by nuclear power in Ukraine. The country has 15 reactors at four active plants, and also is home to the decommissioned Chernobyl plant, the site of the 1986 nuclear disaster.

RUSSIANS TAKE CONTROL

Russian troops overran the plant shortly after invading Ukraine on Feb. 24.

During the fighting in early March, Russian and Ukrainian forces exchanged fire near the plant. The skirmishes resulted in a fire at its training complex.

The Russians have left the Ukrainian staff in place to keep the plant operating, and it has continued to supply electricity to government-controlled parts of Ukraine.

The fighting around the plant has fueled fears of a disaster like the one at Chernobyl, where a reactor exploded and spewed deadly radiation, contaminating a vast area in the world's worst nuclear accident.

Russian forces occupied the heavily contaminated Chernobyl site soon after the invasion but handed control back to the Ukrainians after withdrawing from the area at the end of March.

RUSSIA AND UKRAINE TRADE ACCUSATIONS

Ukraine has accused Russia of storing troops and weapons at the plant and using its grounds to launch

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strikes against Ukrainian-controlled territory across the Dnieper. Ukrainian officials and military analysts say Moscow's forces have cynically employed the plant as a shield, knowing that the Ukrainians would be hesitant to fire back.

Russia has denied the accusations and, in turn, accused Ukrainian forces of repeatedly shelling the plant.

A series of attacks on the plant over the past few days has damaged some of its auxiliary equipment but not its reactors, and there has been no threat of a radiation leak, according to Russian authorities.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Ukrainian shelling of the plant on Sunday caused a power surge and smoke, triggering an emergency shutdown and forcing the staff to lower output from two of the reactors.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov warned that the Ukrainian shelling of the plant is "fraught with catastrophic consequences for vast territories, for the entire Europe," while the Russian Foreign Ministry has accused Ukraine of "taking the entire Europe hostage."

Ukrainian officials countered by accusing Russian forces of planting explosives at the plant in preparation for an expected Ukrainian counteroffensive in the region. They also have accused Russia of launching attacks from the plant using Ukrainian workers there as human shields and shelling the place themselves.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that the Russian shelling and mining of the plant amount to "nuclear blackmail."

Zaporizhzhia Gov. Oleksandr Starukh said that while the reactors are well protected by their thick concrete containment domes, it is impossible to guarantee their safe operation because of the Russian troops' presence. He noted, too, that the storage sites at the plant for spent nuclear fuel are not as well protected as the reactors.

Mark Wenman, a nuclear expert at London's Imperial College, said the plant's reactors are designed "to protect against natural disasters and or man-made incidents such as aircraft crashes or reactor accidents."

"I do not believe there would be a high probability of a breach of the containment building even if it was accidentally struck by an explosive shell, and even less likely the reactor itself could be damaged by such," he said. He added that the spent fuel is also stored in "very robust steel and concrete containers that are designed to withstand very high-energy impacts."

CALLS FOR INTERNATIONAL MONITORING

Rafael Mariano Grossi, director-general of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, told The Associated Press last week that the situation surrounding the Zaporizhzhia plant "is completely out of control," and he issued an urgent plea to Russia and Ukraine to allow experts to visit the complex to stabilize matters and avoid a nuclear accident.

"Every principle of nuclear safety has been violated" at the plant, Grossi said. "What is at stake is extremely serious and extremely grave and dangerous."

Grossi said the supply chain of equipment and spare parts has been interrupted, "so we are not sure the plant is getting all it needs." He noted that the IAEA also needs to perform highly important inspections to ensure that nuclear material is being safeguarded.

Grossi added that there have been instances of friction and reports of violence between the Russians and the Ukrainian staff.

"When you put this together, you have a catalog of things that should never be happening in any nuclear facility," Grossi said.

RUSSIA AND UKRAINE CLASH OVER IAEA VISIT

The IAEA has sought in vain to send an inspection team to the plant for months.

Moscow has said it welcomes a visit to the plant by the IAEA, but it is unclear whether it is ready to actually help arrange such a trip.

Ukraine previously opposed Grossi's visit to the site for as long as it remains under Moscow's control, demanding the Russian military withdraw.

This week, however, Ukrainian officials appeared to warm up to such a trip, with Ukraine's ombudsman, Dmytro Lubinets, urging the U.N. and IAEA to send a delegation to help "completely demilitarize the territory" and provide security guarantees to plant employees.

Serena's Choice: Williams' tough call resonates with women

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Serena Williams said it plainly: It isn't really fair. A male athlete would never have to make the same choice.

But after a trailblazing career that both transformed and transcended her sport, Williams, who turns 41 next month, has told the world she'll soon step away from tennis to focus on having a second child and making her daughter, Olympia, a big sister. Her explanation in a lengthy Vogue essay resonated with women in sports and well beyond, many of whom could relate only too well to her words, "Something's got to give." And to the idea that, no, you really can't have it all — at least, not all at the same time.

Many noted that Williams' achievements, which included winning a major when two months pregnant, had made her seem superhuman. But, said Sherie Randolph, even ordinary women are expected to seamlessly combine work and motherhood.

"Society makes women think they can have everything all at once — be the best hands-on-mom and at the top of the field," said Randolph, a history professor at Georgia Tech and founder of a Black feminist think tank who's working on a book about African American mothers.

"But that just is not borne out in reality for most women," she said. "What ends up happening is that working mothers are just worn out and overworked trying to labor at the highest level of two demanding jobs — motherhood and their profession." As if to prove her point, Randolph's 4-year-old son constantly interrupted her thoughts about Williams' decision as she tried to discuss them in a phone call.

In explaining how her daughter yearned to be a big sister, Williams noted she didn't want to be pregnant again as an athlete: "I need to be two feet into tennis or two feet out."

"Believe me," the 23-time Grand Slam champion also wrote, "I never wanted to have to choose between tennis and a family. I don't think it's fair. If I were a guy I wouldn't be writing this because I'd be out there playing and winning while my wife was doing the physical labor of expanding our family."

"Maybe I'd be more of a Tom Brady if I had that opportunity," she added, a reference to the 45-year-old superstar quarterback who recently retired, then reversed his decision 40 days later.

Many women, discussing Williams' announcement, reflected on their own agonizing choices in the name of "having it all."

"Even as a woman who sits at a desk, whose body is not taxed by the work at hand, I have felt that searing pulling apart of myself — towards my career, and towards my family," said Jo McKinney, 57, a New York advertising executive.

"Now, looking back, I wish that every time I chose my family over my job ... it didn't label me as unambitious," she said. "I got goosebumps as I read Serena's piece because she said what many of us feel and are afraid to voice: It's not fair, and something's got to give."

Such dilemmas are exacerbated in sports, said Lisa Banks, a prominent Washington employment attorney specializing in both gender and sports cases.

"Having it all is a subjective thing," she said. "You can have it all, but can you have it at the same time and the same level, if you're going through pregnancies? No, you miss some time, you miss training. You're necessarily at a disadvantage."

The issue has been illustrated vividly in track and field. U.S. sprinters Allyson Felix and Alysia Montano became advocates for mothers when they split with Nike over contract clauses that reduced salaries when they became pregnant.

Four-time Olympic champion sprinter Sanya Richards-Ross retired after the 2016 Olympics before starting a family with her husband, former NFL defensive back Aaron Ross.

"I always knew I didn't want to start a family while I was still competing," she said. "I feel being an athlete is the most selfish role you could have because it's always all about you. Resting, recovering, training. Everything is so hyper-focused on the athlete. And being a parent is the opposite of that."

Of Williams' decision, she said, "I don't want to say it's unfair, but it's a harsh reality and harsh truth

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that as an elite female athlete, we definitely have to consider a lot of things our male counterparts don't."

Distance runner Kara Goucher, who also fought battles over pregnancy pay, said people are starting to acknowledge the issue, and careers are lasting longer. But she added: "You see the dad at the Super Bowl holding his kids. The reason he's able to do that ... is because someone else is there taking care of their children. That's not how it is for mothers."

Like Williams when she won the Australian Open in 2017, beach volleyball player Kerri Walsh Jennings was newly pregnant when she won a gold medal in London in 2012.

"I think at some point, you gotta make that choice," she said. "Ultimately it's very clear that that clock is ticking. Usually, being a mama wins out."

But Walsh Jennings expects Williams to keep building her legacy. (Williams has become a venture capitalist with her Serena Ventures, and is a fashion designer, among other things.) "She has earned the right to stop and breathe, and to grow her family," she said.

Tennis legend Chris Evert, who won 18 Grand Slam singles titles, retired at 34 and started a family two years later. "The motherhood/tennis career subject is not one I experienced," she said in an email message. "I wanted and chose to spend every second with my children. That was my choice but doesn't mean it's the right choice for everyone.

"As far as Serena, I think this is the right time," Evert said. "She's squeezed everything she could out of her game. ... She's transcended tennis and become a leader on many important cultural, social and gender issues. She has lived an extraordinary life and will undoubtedly continue to crash the glass ceiling."

One thing is clear: The U.S. Open, after which Williams strongly hinted she'll retire, will be a huge draw. Ticket sales were sharply up on Tuesday, said Kirsten Corio, chief commercial officer for the U.S. Tennis Association.

A mother of two herself, Corio said of Williams' announcement that "the realization is a little bit crushing, that as a woman you can't do both as an athlete at the top of your game."

"It's a lot of emotions to process, both as a fan of sports and of working moms," she said. "The one emotion that I can boil it down to, really, is just gratitude."

Dearica Hamby was also feeling gratitude. Williams, said the WNBA player for the Las Vegas Aces, has been "an example for a lot of us, especially mothers being able to compete at such a high level."

Still, Hamby, who like Williams has a daughter, 5-year-old Amaya, said the tennis star's call was a hard one — and it's a discussion she's been having a lot lately with coaches and players.

"You're almost forced to choose," she said of motherhood and pro sports. "It's the reality of the world we live in. I mean, are men gonna start having kids? It's the hard reality of the world."

In race to win, UK Conservatives accused of ignoring crises

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — As Britain swelters through a roasting summer, and braces for a cold financial reckoning in the fall, calls for the Conservative government to act are getting louder.

But the Conservatives are busy choosing a new leader, through a prolonged party election whose priorities often seem remote from the country's growing turmoil.

Britons' energy bills have soared — and further hikes are coming — as the war in Ukraine squeezes global oil and gas supplies. The Bank of England is predicting a long, deep recession later this year alongside 13% inflation. Meanwhile, temperatures in Britain hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) in July for the first time ever, and millions are facing limits on water use as England's green and pleasant land dries to a desiccated brown.

There is little sense of crisis among Conservatives as Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and former Treasury chief Rishi Sunak crisscross the country wooing the 180,000 party members who will choose a successor to departing Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Under Britain's parliamentary system, the winner of the Tory leadership race — to be announced Sept. 5 — will also become prime minister, without the need for a national election.

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Conservative members are largely middle-aged or older, mostly middle-class or affluent, and their views don't always reflect those of the country as a whole.

"I'd like to see some true Conservative policies," said Helen Galley, a lawyer and local Conservative official attending a candidates' meeting in the English seaside town of Eastbourne. "Low taxation, smaller state, less regulation, freeing industry and commerce from EU regulations. ... Some self-reliance and sense of responsibility for yourself."

Those priorities are mirrored in the campaign pitches of Truss and Sunak, who say they will tackle the cost-of-living crisis through long-term measures to boost the economy. Truss says she would cut individual and corporate taxes rather than give people "handouts." Sunak says he'll tackle inflation before lowering taxes, and will offer unspecified help to people struggling to pay their bills.

Critics say neither candidate is grasping the scale of the crisis. Millions of households face a financial squeeze in October, when a cap on household energy bills tied to wholesale prices is next raised. Consulting firm Cornwall Insight forecasts the average household will then be paying over 3,500 pounds (\$4,200) a year for gas and electricity, more than double the amount a year earlier — with a further hike due in the new year.

Martin Lewis, a consumer champion who runs the popular Money Saving Expert website, has warned that "we are facing a potential national financial cataclysm," with millions unable to heat their homes this winter.

Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who led the U.K. during the global financial crisis of 2008, called for Johnson, Truss and Sunak to get together and draw up an emergency budget in preparation for a "financial time bomb" in October.

"It's not just that they're asleep at the wheel — there's nobody at the wheel at the moment," Brown, a member of the opposition Labour Party, told broadcaster ITV.

Brown's call was echoed by Tony Danker of business group the Confederation of British Industry, who said "we simply cannot afford a summer of government inactivity while the leadership contest plays out."

But with Parliament adjourned for its summer recess and Johnson whiling away his last weeks in office, big policies are on hold. The few government announcements in recent weeks have been decidedly modest — one was a plan from a "Chewing Gum Task Force" to get sticky stains off city streets.

Johnson's spokesman, Max Blain, said the outgoing leader is barred from making "major fiscal interventions" during the transition period, and any new cost-of-living remedies must be for the next prime minister to decide.

"The Conservative Party -- and therefore the government -- is having a completely different conversation to the public," said Alan Wager, a research associate at the U.K. in a Changing Europe think-tank. "And it's quite a serious time to be having this very big disjuncture."

Anti-poverty and environmental protesters have dogged Truss and Sunak at campaign events — a reminder of the world outside the Conservative bubble. In Eastbourne, several climate activists who had infiltrated the crowd stood to heckle Truss for failing to tackle the climate crisis. They were removed to chants of "Out, out, out" from the Conservative audience.

The environment has scarcely featured in the contest. Both Truss and Sunak say they will keep the government's target of cutting Britain's carbon emissions to net zero by 2050, while offering policies that would make that harder.

Truss supports fracking and renewed North Sea oil and gas extraction and says she will suspend green levies used to fund renewable energy projects. Sunak wants to ban new onshore wind farms, though he supports offshore wind and more nuclear power to cut Britain's carbon footprint.

Party polls suggest Truss likely has an unassailable lead in the contest. Sunak is regarded with suspicion by some Tories for quitting the scandal-plagued government last month, a move that helped bring Johnson down. The former finance minister has been painted by opponents as a high-taxing, high-spending near-socialist because of the billions he spent to prop up the economy during the coronavirus pandemic.

Truss styles herself as a disruptor who will "be bold" in slashing taxes and ripping up red tape — a message many Tories are keen to hear.

Party member Robbie Lammas, part of a "Liz for Leader" contingent at the Eastbourne event, said he likes Truss's "more optimistic view" of the economy.

"It's good to be bold and good to challenge orthodoxy," he said.

Another audience member, Wilhelmina Fermore, said she was "on the fence," but leaning toward supporting Truss because "she's more engaging and I think that she relates to people on the street."

Yet what appeals to the Conservative Party does not necessarily appeal to the country. And Chris Curtis, head of political polling at research company Opinium, says the candidates' economic promises will soon collide with stark reality.

"Liz Truss can believe all she likes that she's going to be able to solve this thing through tax cuts, but there's a big chunk of the population that's about to get hammered," he said.

"Talking about how you are going to help those people is not the kind of thing that will appeal to Conservative Party members ... (but) there is going to have to be a new massive intervention to help people this autumn."

China's youth face bleak job market as COVID slows economy

BEIJING (AP) — Liu Qian, job-hunting with a new master's degree, said two employers interviewed her and then said the positions had been eliminated. Others asked her to take lower pay.

She is one of 11 million new graduates desperate for work in a bleak job market as anti-virus controls force factories, restaurants and other employers to close. The survivors are cutting jobs and wages.

"Am I not worth it?" Liu asked. "From the moment I started looking for a job, I felt as if my future were smashed by a machine, and I don't know if I can piece it together."

Liu, 26, said some employers balked when she asked for a monthly salary of 8,000 yuan (\$1,200). The average graduate last year was paid the equivalent of 9,800 yuan (\$1,500) per month, according to Liepin, a job-hunting platform.

There were almost two graduates competing for every job opening in the three months ending in June, up from 1.4 the previous quarter, according to the China Institute for Employment Research and Zhaopin.com, another job-hunting website.

China's job drought echoes the struggles of young people worldwide to find work in depressed economies but is especially sensitive politically in a year when President Xi Jinping is expected to try to extend his time in power.

Graduates often come from urban families who are the biggest winners from China's economic growth, an important source of political support. The ruling party needs them, especially those with technical training, to start their careers to propel industry development.

Luckily, a publishing house hired Liu in late July, two months after her graduation.

The official unemployment rate in June for people aged 16 to 24 was almost 20%, compared with 5.5% for all ages. That is expected to rise once the latest graduates are taken into account.

Premier Li Keqiang, the top economic official and No. 2 in the ruling party, said in March the government hoped to generate 13 million new jobs this year but did not say how many might be lost to companies closing. Li said 16 million people were expected to be looking for work.

Li promised "pro-job policies" including tax and fee cuts totaling 2.5 trillion yuan (\$400 billion) for employers.

One-third of companies surveyed between last March and this April said they plan to hire fewer fresh graduates, according to Liepin. It said 27%, most of them state-owned, would hire more and 18% had no plans to change course.

China's unusually severe approach towards COVID-19 has kept case numbers low, but the cost is soaring.

The economy shrank in the three months ending in June from with the previous quarter as factory activity and consumer spending plunged. The ruling party has stopped talking about being able to hit this year's official 5.5% growth target.

Repeated lockdowns that shut down factories and offices in Shanghai and other industrial centers for

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weeks at a time have disrupted the traditional labor market, said Zhang Chenggang of the Capital University of Economics and Business.

Companies are "slashing hiring needs" due to a "life-saving mindset," Zhang said.

"In the future, we will face the challenges of technology," he said. "Uncertainty in the labor market may even increase. So for university students, the most important thing is the ability to adapt."

Uncertainties loom over various industries. Internet companies are shedding jobs after the ruling party tightened control by launching data-security and anti-monopoly probes. Real estate is slumping after regulators cracked down on use of debt.

Tao Yinxue, a 2021 graduate, left an internship in an educational institute before graduating, worried over a government crackdown on the industry that has wiped out tens of thousands of jobs.

In April, she quit a job at a financial company when she realized it was promoting virtual currencies, which is "actually not legal in our country."

"The students tend to seek stability," said Xing Zhenkai, a Liepin researcher.

Two out of five graduates surveyed want to work for state-owned enterprises that are viewed as safer and supported by the government, said Xing.

Tao is preparing to take the civil service exam for Anhui province, west of Shanghai, while looking for other jobs. She has sent more than 120 resumes and contacted nearly 2,000 possible employers online.

With less posts and more people looking for jobs, "companies can be more selective," Tao said. "They would prefer those with experience rather than a green hand like me."

Other graduates are putting off work, opting to stay in school or take exams for government jobs that might pay less than the private sector but offer more stability and social status, Zhang said.

Frustration over severe competition for government-backed jobs exploded into an online outcry when pop star Jackson Yee, also known as Yi Yangqianxi, appeared on the shortlist of candidate performers at the National Theater of China.

Chinese public on social media, including Yee's fans, questioned if he had abused his celebrity privilege in the recruitment process to get a position that's a bonus to him but would give other contenders a real break.

Yee denied getting special treatment but announced he would give up the position.

Anti-virus controls have shut down in-person job fairs and postponed civil service exams that lead to jobs for hundreds of thousands of people every year.

Fang Zhiyou, an accounting graduate in the central province of Hubei, said a delay for her civil service exam from March to July disrupted her job hunt. She is waiting to find out how she did.

"If not for the pandemic, my exam would not have been delayed and I would not have struggled for so long," said Fang. "I hate the pandemic forever."

Fang would rather work for the government but said she would accept a job doing accounting for a manufacturer.

Graduate numbers have surged following an initiative begun in 2019, ahead of the pandemic, to increase training for technical skills the government said were "urgently needed." More job seekers are expected to enter the labor market in the coming years.

"If I don't have a job this year, for sure it will become more difficult next year," Fang said.

Takeaways: Trump tightens grip on GOP, narrow Squad victory

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After an uneven start, Donald Trump's election-year tour of revenge succeeded in ousting Republican members of Congress, boosting Trump-backed "America First" candidates who beat back the establishment and strengthening his grip on the party.

Meanwhile, Ron Johnson, the most vulnerable Republican senator up for reelection, will take on Wisconsin's Democratic lieutenant governor in November in one of this year's most closely watched Senate contests.

And a member of the Squad of progressive lawmakers survived a tough primary challenge from a

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Democratic rival running on a pro-police platform, while voters in Vermont are poised to send a woman to Congress for the first time in the state's 231-year history.

Takeaways from election results Tuesday night:

TRUMP'S GRIP

As the midterm primary season reaches its final contests, Trump's grip on the Republican Party is strengthening.

In the spring and early summer, his endorsement record, a metric he touts as testament to his enduring popularity, was uneven. In Georgia, a fixation of Trump's after top Republican officials rejected his entreaties to overturn the 2020 election, most of the former president's hand-picked candidates were defeated at the ballot box.

But as the season ground on, his enduring sway is apparent.

Consider the following.

Trump opened August with his slate of vehement election-deniers beating establishment-backed candidates in Arizona.

By the time the race reached Wisconsin on Tuesday, Tim Michels, a wealthy Trump-backed businessman, won the Republican primary for Wisconsin governor. He defeated former Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch, an establishment backed candidate.

And in Connecticut on Tuesday, Leora Levy surged to an unexpected victory over a more moderate rival in a liberal-leaning state that has historically drawn moderate GOP candidates. On Monday, just hours after the FBI searched his Florida estate, Trump held a tele-town hall rally for her. Another rival credited his late endorsement for her win.

Meanwhile, most of the 10 Republican members of Congress who voted to impeach him have either retired or lost. That includes Michigan Rep. Peter Meijer who lost his race last week along with Washington State Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, who conceded on Tuesday. Rep. Liz Cheney, the vice chair of the House Jan. 6 committee investigating Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election, will be on the Wyoming ballot next week and is widely expected to lose.

Those developments, combined with the rush of support from Republicans after the FBI executed a search warrant at Trump's Florida estate on Monday, were clear reminders of Trump looming presence.

SQUAD VICTORY

Minnesota Rep. Ilhan Omar's detractors spent heavily to oust the divisive lawmaker and member of the progressive Squad.

They failed. Again.

Omar narrowly defeated her centrist challenger, former Minneapolis City Councilmember Don Samuels, all but guaranteeing her victory in November in an overwhelmingly Democratic district centered around Minneapolis. It was the second time a well-financed group had mobilized unsuccessfully against her.

Almost since her arrival in Congress, Omar has attracted bipartisan criticism. First, she drew condemnation after suggesting in 2019 that Israel's supporters were pushing U.S. lawmakers to take a pledge of "allegiance to a foreign country" and claiming congressional support for Israel was "all about the Benjamins, baby," which many saw as an antisemitic trope about Jews buying influence.

That drew a \$2.5 million negative advertising blitz, which was financed by the pro-Israel lobby, attacking her ahead of the 2020 election.

This year, pro-police groups as well as a mysterious super PAC spent over \$750,000 criticizing Omar and backing Samuels. His north Minneapolis base suffers from more violent crime than other parts of the city, and he helped organize a campaign to stop sharp cuts in police funding pushed by progressive activists, including Omar, following the killing of George Floyd by police.

Other members of the Squad — Reps. Cori Bush of Missouri and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan — had easier victories last week.

TOUGH FIGHT IN WISCONSIN SENATE RACE

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If you take his word for it, Johnson shouldn't be running. The Wisconsin Republican had pledged to step down after two terms, only to reverse himself this year.

Now, after coasting to victory in his primary Tuesday, Johnson's reward will be a hard-fought campaign against Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes that could determine the balance of power in the narrowly divided U.S. Senate. It's also certain to saturate the airwaves as millions of political advertising dollars flood the state.

It will be the first time Johnson won't be running against former Sen. Russ Feingold, the Democrat he ousted from office and defeated again six years later. He's also the only Republican senator up for reelection in a state Joe Biden won in 2020.

The matchup offers a study in contrasts. Johnson, 67, is a multimillionaire businessman whose father was a corporate treasurer. At 35, Barnes is close to half his age and the product of a working-class Milwaukee family. He would be the first Black senator from Wisconsin if elected.

Johnson has the former president's backing. He has also been a major ally.

After the 2020 election, an aide to Johnson told then-Vice President Mike Pence's staff in a text message that he wanted to hand-deliver to Pence fake elector votes from his state and neighboring Michigan. Pence's staff rebuffed their request.

Johnson also met with Wisconsin lawmakers in 2021 and talked about dismantling the state's bipartisan elections commission and having the GOP-controlled Legislature take over presidential and federal elections.

VERMONT'S GLASS CEILING

Vermont has been represented in Congress by white men ever since it became the 14th state to join the union in 1791.

That's poised to change after state Senate leader Becca Balint advanced from Tuesday's Democratic primary to face Republican Liam Madden in a general election contest that will determine who will be Vermont's next representative in the U.S. House.

Vermont is a liberal-leaning state and a Republican last won the seat in 1988, making Balint the overwhelming favorite in November. If she wins, Balint will not only be the first woman to represent Vermont in Congress, but the first openly gay person, too.

It may seem unusual that such a liberal-leaning state has not elected a woman to Congress. But there hasn't been much opportunity. As the second-least populated state, Vermont gets to send only one representative to the U.S. House.

Current Democratic Rep. Peter Welch has held the seat for the past 15 years, giving it up to run for the Senate. Current U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders had it the 15 years before that. And Republican Jim Jeffords also held the seat for 15 years before he was elected to the Senate.

Although the pace of turnover has moved at glacier speed, there is an upside for Balint: The seat offers a reliable springboard to the U.S. Senate. Sanders' term is up in 2024. So far, the 80-year-old has not said whether he intends to run again.

Afghan man charged in killings of Muslims in New Mexico

By STEFANIE DAZIO and MARIAM FAM Associated Press

The ambush killings of four Muslim men in Albuquerque, New Mexico, shook the community but inspired a flood of information, including a tip that led to the arrest of a local Muslim man originally from Afghanistan who knew the victims, authorities said.

Muhammad Syed, 51, was arrested on Monday after a traffic stop more than 100 miles (160 kilometers) away from his home in Albuquerque. He was charged with killing two victims and was identified as the prime suspect in the other two slayings, authorities announced Tuesday.

The Muslim community is breathing "an incredible sigh of relief," said Ahmad Assed, president of the Islamic Center of New Mexico. "Lives have been turned upside down."

It wasn't immediately clear whether Syed had an attorney to speak on his behalf.

The first killing last November was followed by three more between July 26 and Aug. 5.

Police Chief Harold Medina said it was not clear yet whether the deaths should be classified as hate

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crimes or serial killings or both.

Syed was from Afghanistan and had lived in the United States for about five years, police said.

"The offender knew the victims to some extent, and an interpersonal conflict may have led to the shootings," a police statement said, although investigators were still working to identify how they had crossed paths.

When asked specifically if Syed, a Sunni Muslim, was angry that his daughter married a Shiite Muslim, Deputy Police Cmdr. Kyle Hartsock did not respond directly. He said "motives are still being explored fully to understand what they are."

Assed acknowledged that "there was a marriage," but he cautioned against coming to any conclusions about the motivation of Syed, who occasionally attended the center's mosque.

Police said Syed gave them a statement but didn't disclose details.

The slayings drew the attention of President Joe Biden, who said such attacks "have no place in America." They also sent a shudder through Muslim communities across the U.S. Some people questioned their safety and limited their movements.

"There is no justification for this evil. There is no justification to take an innocent life," Nihad Awad, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said at a Tuesday news conference in Washington, D.C.

He called the killings "deranged behavior."

The earliest case involves the November killing of Mohammad Ahmadi, 62, from Afghanistan.

Naeem Hussain, a 25-year-old man from Pakistan, was killed Friday night. His death came just days after those of Muhammad Afzaal Hussain, 27, and Aftab Hussein, 41, who were also from Pakistan and members of the same mosque.

Ehsan Chahalmi, the brother-in-law of Naeem Hussain, said he was "a generous, kind, giving, forgiving and loving soul that has been taken away from us forever."

For now, Syed is charged in the killings of Aftab Hussein and Muhammad Afzaal Hussain because bullet casings found at the crime scenes were linked to a gun found at his home, authorities said.

Investigators consider Syed to be the primary suspect in the deaths of Naeem Hussain and Ahmadi but have not yet filed charges in those cases.

The announcement that the shootings appeared to be linked produced more than 200 tips, including one from the Muslim community that police credited with leading them to the Syed family.

Police said they were about to search Syed's Albuquerque home on Monday when they saw him drive away in a Volkswagen Jetta that investigators believe was used in at least one of the slayings.

Officers followed him to Santa Rosa, about 110 miles (177 kilometers) east of Albuquerque, where they pulled him over. Multiple firearms were recovered from his home and car, police said.

Syed's sons were questioned and released, according to authorities.

Prosecutors expect to file murder charges in state court and are considering adding a federal case, authorities said.

Shiites make up the second largest branch in Islam after Sunnis.

Aneela Abad, general secretary at the Islamic center, said the two Muslim communities in New Mexico enjoy warm ties.

"Our Shiite community has always been there for us and we, Sunnis, have always been there for them," she said.

Muhammad Afzaal Hussain had worked as a field organizer for Democratic Rep. Melanie Stansbury's campaign.

"Muhammad was kind, hopeful, optimistic," she said, describing him as a city planner "who believed in democracy and social change, and who believed that we could, in fact, build a brighter future for our communities and for our world."

Native Americans urge boycott of 'tone deaf' Pilgrim museum

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By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

PLYMOUTH, Mass. (AP) — Native Americans in Massachusetts are calling for a boycott of a popular living history museum featuring Colonial reenactors portraying life in Plymouth, the famous English settlement founded by the Pilgrims who arrived on the Mayflower.

Members of the state's Wampanoag community and their supporters say Plimoth Patuxet Museums has not lived up to its promise of creating a "bi-cultural museum" that equally tells the story of the European and Indigenous peoples that lived there.

They say the "Historic Patuxet Homesite," the portion of the mostly outdoor museum focused on traditional Indigenous life, is inadequately small, in need of repairs and staffed by workers who aren't from local tribes.

"We're saying don't patronize them, don't work over there," said Camille Madison, a member of the Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe on Martha's Vineyard, who was among those recently venting their frustrations on social media. "We don't want to engage with them until they can find a way to respect Indigenous knowledge and experience."

The concerns come just two years after the museum changed its name from Plimoth Plantation to Plimoth Patuxet as part of a yearlong celebration of the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower landing.

At the time, the museum declared the "new, more balanced" moniker reflected the importance of the Indigenous perspective to the 75-year-old institution's educational mission.

"Patuxet" was an Indigenous community near "Plimoth," as the Pilgrim colony was known before becoming modern day Plymouth. It was badly decimated by European diseases by the time the Mayflower arrived, but one of its survivors, Tisquantum, commonly known as Squanto, famously helped the English colonists survive their first winter.

"They've changed the name but haven't changed the attitude," said Paula Peters, a member of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe who worked for nearly 20 years at the museum, most recently as marketing director. "They've done nothing to ingratiate themselves with tribes. Every step they take is tone deaf."

Museum spokesperson Rob Kluin, in a statement emailed to The Associated Press, said the museum has expanded the outdoor Wampanoag exhibit, raised more than \$2 million towards a new Indigenous programs building and has "several initiatives in place" to recruit and retain staff from Native communities. He declined to elaborate.

The statement also cited a pair of grants the museum received to boost its Native American education programming. That included more than \$160,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities to host a workshop this summer for teachers on how to incorporate Indigenous voices into their history lessons.

The museum also noted that its new director of Algonquian Exhibits and Interpretation is an Aquinnah Wampanoag who serves on his tribe's education committee.

Carol Pollard, whose late brother Anthony "Nanepashemet" Pollard played a key role in the development of the museum's Indigenous programming as a leading Wampanoag historian, was among those dismayed at the state of the site.

Last week, large gaps were evident in the battered tree bark roof of the large wetu, or traditional Wampanoag dwelling, that is a focal point of the Indigenous exhibit. Neither of the two museum interpreters on site was wearing traditional tribal attire. Meanwhile, on the Pilgrim settlement part of the museum, thatched roofs on the Colonial homes had been recently repaired, and numerous reenactors milled about in detailed period outfits.

"I know my brother would be very disappointed," said Pollard, who also worked as a gardener at the museum until last summer. "I guarantee you, people dressed in khakis and navy blue tops was not my brother's vision."

Former museum staffers say museum officials for years ignored their suggestions for modernizing and expanding the outdoor exhibit, which marks its 50th anniversary next year.

That, coupled with low pay and poor working conditions, led to the departure of many long-standing Native staffers who built the program into a must-see attraction by showcasing authentic Indigenous farming, cooking, canoe building and other cultural practices, they say.

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"For more than a decade now, the museum has systematically dismantled the outdoor exhibit," the Wampanoag Consulting Alliance, a Native group that includes Peters and other former museum staffers, said in a statement late last month. "Many steps taken to provide equal representation to Wampanoag programming have been removed, and the physical exhibit is in deplorable condition. The result has been the virtually complete alienation of the Wampanoag communities."

Kitty Hendricks-Miller, a Mashpee Wampanoag who was a supervisor at the Wampanoag exhibit in the 1990s and early 2000s, says she worries about what non-Indigenous families and students are taking away from their visits to the museum, which remains a school field trip rite of passage for many in New England.

As Indian education coordinator for her tribe, she's been encouraging teachers to reach out to Native communities directly if they're seeking culturally and historically accurate programs.

"There's this unwillingness to acknowledge that times have changed," said Casey Figueroa, who worked for years as an interpreter at the museum until 2015. "The Native side of the Plymouth story has so much more to offer in terms of the issues we're facing today, from immigration to racism and climate change, but they went backwards instead. They totally blew it."

At 75, India's Kashmir challenge shifts foreign policy focus

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — For decades, India has tried to thwart Pakistan in a protracted dispute over Kashmir, the achingly beautiful Himalayan territory claimed by both countries but divided between them.

That relentless competition made Pakistan always the focus of New Delhi's foreign policy.

But in the last two years, since a deadly border clash between Indian and Chinese soldiers in Kashmir's Ladakh region, policy makers in New Delhi have been increasingly turning their focus to Beijing, a significant shift in policy as the nation celebrates 75 years of independence.

India's ever-growing economy, which is now vastly larger than Pakistan's, combined with Beijing's increasingly assertive push for influence across Asia, mean that "New Delhi has increasingly grown Beijing-centric," said Lt. Gen. D.S. Hooda, who from 2014 to 2016 headed Indian military's Northern Command, which controls Kashmir, including Ladakh.

Kashmir has suffered insurgencies, lockdowns and political subterfuge since India and Pakistan gained independence from British colonial rule in 1947, and has been at the heart of two of the four wars India has fought with Pakistan and China. The three countries' tense borders meet at the disputed territory, in the world's only three-way nuclear confrontation.

Starting in the 1960s, India was an active member of the Non-Aligned Movement, a grouping of over 100 countries that theoretically did not align with any major power during the Cold War. Despite disputes with neighboring Pakistan and China, India's nonaligned stance remained a bedrock of its foreign policy, with its diplomats focused mainly on upending Pakistan's claim to Kashmir.

"Kashmir was in a way central to our foreign policy concerns," said Kanwal Sibal, a career diplomat who was India's foreign secretary in 2002-2003.

But the current military standoff between India and China over their disputed border in Ladakh set off a grave escalation in tensions between the two Asian giants. Despite 17 rounds of diplomatic and military talks, the tense standoff continues.

For decades, India believed China did not represent a military threat, said Hooda, the former military commander. But that calculus changed in mid-2020 when a clash high in Karakoram mountains in Ladakh's Galwan Valley set off the military tensions.

"Galwan represents a strategic inflection point," said Constantino Xavier, a fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress, a New Delhi-based policy group. It "helped create a new Indian consensus about the need to reset the entire relationship with China, and not just solve the boundary issue."

Soldiers from the two sides fought a medieval-style battle with stones, fists and clubs, leaving at least 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers dead.

The fighting came a year after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist-led government

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stripped Kashmir of its statehood, scrapped its semi-autonomy, and clamped down on local politicians, journalists and communications.

The government also split the Muslim-majority region into two federally administered territories — Ladakh and Jammu-Kashmir — and ended inherited protections on land and jobs.

The government insisted the moves involved only administrative changes, part of a long-held Hindu nationalist pledge to assimilate overwhelmingly Muslim Kashmir into the country.

Pakistan reacted with fury to India's changes, asserting that Kashmir was an international dispute and any unilateral change in its status was a violation of international law and U.N. resolutions on the region.

But the main diplomatic challenge to New Delhi's moves in Kashmir came from an unexpected rival: China.

Beijing scathingly criticized New Delhi and raised the issue at the United Nations Security Council, where the Kashmir dispute was debated -- again inconclusively -- for the first time in nearly five decades.

India's line of argument remained consistent: To the international community it insisted that Kashmir was a bilateral issue with Pakistan. To Pakistan it reiterated that Kashmir was an Indian internal affair. And to critics on the ground, it stubbornly asserted that Kashmir was an issue of terrorism and law and order.

Initially, New Delhi had faced a largely peaceful anti-India movement in the portion of Kashmir it held. However, a crackdown on dissent led to a full-blown armed rebellion against Indian control in 1989. A protracted conflict since then has led to tens of thousands of deaths in the region.

Kashmir turned into a potential nuclear flashpoint as India and Pakistan became nuclear-armed states in 1998. Their standoff attracted global attention, with then-U.S. President Bill Clinton describing Kashmir as "the most dangerous place in the world."

Many Indian foreign policy experts believe New Delhi was successful over the decades in blocking foreign pressure for change in Kashmir, despite deep sentiment against Indian rule in the region.

Now, New Delhi policymakers face the fundamental challenge of a China that is exerting more power in Asia and supporting Pakistan's stance on Kashmir.

Pakistan "now operates in a more complicated political role as a partner of Chinese power," said Paul Staniland, a professor of political science at the University of Chicago. "This gives it some clout and influence."

With geopolitical rivalries deepening in the extended region, Kashmiris have been largely silenced, with their civil liberties curbed, as India has displayed zero tolerance for any form of dissent.

China's rise as a global power has also pushed India closer to the U.S. and to the Quad, a new Indo-Pacific strategic alliance among the U.S., India, Australia and Japan that accuses Beijing of economic coercion and military maneuvering in the region upsetting the status quo.

India's old nonaligned stance, rooted in the Cold War era when rivalries were playing out thousands of miles (kilometers) from its borders, has come to an end. The entire region has become a focus of geo-strategic competition and great power rivalry close to India's borders.

"We recognize the need to hedge against China to curb its ambitions by making it known that there is a new line of security that is being built against any aggressiveness by China, which is at the core of the Quad," said Sibal, the former diplomat.

With the Quad now central to discussions among India's strategic thinkers, New Delhi has massively ramped up infrastructure along its long, treacherous and undemarcated border with China. Beijing views the Quad as an attempt to contain its economic growth and influence.

"This is how we are sending a signal to China that we are ready to join with others to curb you," Sibal said.

Michels wins Wisconsin GOP governor primary, will face Evers

By SARA BURNETT and SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Tim Michels, a wealthy businessman endorsed by former President Donald Trump, won the Republican primary for Wisconsin governor on Tuesday and will face Democratic Gov. Tony Evers in a contest that could reshape elections in the marquee battleground.

Michels defeated former Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch, who was endorsed by former Vice President Mike Pence and had backing from establishment Republicans, including ex-Gov. Scott Walker.

In his victory speech, Michels promised to focus on jobs and the economy and said he would stand up for

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people who "have been left behind by the Democratic Party that just wants to focus on the social issues."
"As governor, my number one priority is to take care of the hardworking people of Wisconsin," Michels said.

Evers' campaign called Michels "the most extreme and divisive nominee possible, one that will tell Donald Trump anything just to keep his endorsement."

Both Michels and Kleefisch falsely claimed the 2020 presidential election was rigged, a lie Trump has pushed in an effort to overturn his loss to Joe Biden. Federal and state election officials and Trump's own attorney general have said there is no credible evidence the election was tainted. The former president's allegations of fraud were also roundly rejected by courts, including by judges Trump appointed.

Michels said decertifying the results of the 2020 contest was not a priority but said "everything will be on the table." He supports other changes to voting and elections, including dismantling the bipartisan commission that runs Wisconsin elections.

The governor's race was the latest proxy war between Trump and Pence, one-time partners who have backed opposing candidates in other swing states as they try to push the GOP in different directions. The results Tuesday added to Trump's record of wins, following victories for his preferred candidates last week in closely watched races for governor and Senate in Arizona.

Meanwhile, Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, who supported Trump's second impeachment, conceded defeat in her Washington state congressional district after being overtaken in late vote tallies by a GOP challenger endorsed by the former president. And in next Tuesday's slate of contests, Rep. Liz Cheney, who also backed Trump's impeachment and is the vice chair of the House panel probing his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection, faces a challenging primary race.

Those developments, combined with the rush of support from Republicans after the FBI executed a search warrant at Trump's Florida estate on Monday, were fresh reminders of the former president's enduring grip on the GOP.

Back in Wisconsin, Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes won the Democratic nomination to face Republican Sen. Ron Johnson, one of Trump's most vocal supporters. The matchup is among the last to be set before the November general election, when control of the currently 50-50 split Senate is up for grabs, and Democrats see Wisconsin as one of their best opportunities to flip a seat.

Wisconsin's most powerful Republican, state Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, held off a Trump-backed challenger. Trump endorsed Adam Steen after Vos rejected the former president's pressure to decertify the 2020 results. Vos said his victory showed "you don't have to be a lapdog to whatever Donald Trump says."

Tuesday's outcomes have far-reaching consequences beyond Wisconsin, a state that is almost evenly split between Republicans and Democrats and where 2022 will be seen as a bellwether for the 2024 presidential race. The person elected governor this fall will be in office for the presidential election and will be able to sign or veto changes to election laws passed by the Republican-controlled Legislature. The next governor and U.S. senator also may sway decisions on issues from abortion to education and taxes.

"We're a 50-50 state and so every race in Wisconsin, just by definition, is going to be decided by a few percentage points one way or another," said former Gov. Jim Doyle, a Democrat. "And those few percentage points in Wisconsin may well determine what the course of the nation is in the coming years."

Elsewhere Tuesday, a Trump-backed candidate won the GOP primary for Senate in Connecticut, a state that's long been home to the Republican establishment. Republican National Committee member Leora Levy, whom Trump endorsed last week, will face two-term Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal after she defeated former state House Minority Leader Themis Klarides, who had support from the state party.

Voters in Vermont — the only state to never have a woman in its congressional delegation — chose a woman, Becca Balint, as the Democratic nominee for the state's lone House seat. She is favored in the race to replace Rep. Peter Welch, who won the Democratic nomination for the Senate seat long held by Patrick Leahy, who is retiring. And Minnesota Republicans chose Dr. Scott Jensen, a COVID-19 vaccine skeptic endorsed by the state GOP, to face Gov. Tim Walz.

But the most-watched races were in Wisconsin, where Trump has kept up his pressure campaign to cancel Biden's 2020 victory. Biden won the state by nearly 21,000 votes, four years after Trump narrowly

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won the state by roughly the same margin. The 2020 outcome has been upheld in two partial recounts, a nonpartisan audit, a review by a conservative law firm and multiple lawsuits.

Evers has made voting and elections a focus of his own campaign, telling voters he's the only candidate who will defend democracy and "we are that close to not having our vote count in the state of Wisconsin."

Both Michels and Kleefisch said overturning the 2020 election results was not a priority. But they said they would dismantle the bipartisan commission that runs Wisconsin elections and would support prohibitions on voters having someone else turn in their absentee ballots, as well as ballot drop boxes located anywhere other than staffed clerk offices.

Michels is co-owner of Wisconsin's largest construction company and has touted his work to build his family's business. He lost the 2004 Senate race to Democratic Sen. Russ Feingold, and has been a major donor to GOP politicians.

At a rally on Friday, Trump praised Michels as an "incredible success story." He criticized Kleefisch as part of the "failed establishment" and also took aim at Vos. He told supporters that Michels was the better choice to defeat Evers.

Michels pledged that "we are going to have election integrity here in Wisconsin." He also said he will bring "law and order" back to Wisconsin, criticized Evers' handling of schools and blamed Biden for rising prices.

GOP state Rep. Tim Ramthun also made a long-shot bid for governor.

In her concession speech, Kleefisch said, "The fight now is truly against Tony Evers and the liberals who want to take away our way of life."

Barnes, in his victory speech in Milwaukee, emphasized his middle-class background and upbringing while casting Johnson as "self-serving" and "an out-of-touch politician" who cares only about special interests and wealthy donors.

"It is time for a change, everybody," said Barnes, who would be Wisconsin's first Black senator if elected. "It's time for us to be represented by somebody who shares our experiences."

Johnson called Barnes the "most radical left candidate" Democrats could have chosen.

"This is a contest between radical left socialism versus freedom and prosperity," he said.

Kobe Bryant crash photos lawsuit to be heard by LA jury

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Kobe Bryant was one of the most photogenic sports figures in Los Angeles and images of him seen by millions around the world — smiling in victory, grimacing in agony — keep his memory alive.

But some photos of him should never be seen, his widow says, and she's seeking unspecified millions in compensation for snapshots taken of the NBA star's corpse that were circulated after he was killed in a helicopter crash with their daughter and seven others in 2020.

Vanessa Bryant's invasion of privacy trial against the Los Angeles County sheriff's and fire departments begins Wednesday in a U.S. District Court just over a mile from where Kobe Bryant played most of his career with the Lakers.

Vanessa Bryant claims deputies did not take the photos for investigative purposes and shared them with firefighters who responded to the crash scene. The lawsuit said a deputy showed the photos to bar patrons and a firefighter showed them off-duty colleagues.

"Mrs. Bryant feels ill at the thought that sheriff's deputies, firefighters, and members of the public have gawked at gratuitous images of her deceased husband and child," according to the lawsuit. "She lives in fear that she or her children will one day confront horrific images of their loved ones online."

Kobe Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter Gianna, and other parents and players were flying to a girls basketball tournament when their chartered helicopter crashed in the Calabasas hills west of Los Angeles in fog. Federal safety officials blamed pilot error for the wreck.

Vanessa Bryant has also sued the helicopter charter company and the deceased pilot's estate.

The county has argued that Bryant has suffered emotional distress from the deaths, not the photos, which were ordered deleted by Sheriff Alex Villanueva. They said the photos have never been in the

media, on the internet or otherwise publicly disseminated and that the lawsuit is speculative about harm she may suffer.

A law prompted by the crash makes it a crime for first responders to take unauthorized photos of deceased people at the scene of an accident or crime.

The county already agreed to pay \$2.5 million to settle a similar case brought by two families whose relatives died in the Jan. 26, 2020, crash.

Vanessa Bryant did not settle her case, indicating she's seeking more.

The litigation has at times been ugly.

When the county sought a psychiatric evaluation of Bryant to determine if she suffered emotional distress because of the photos, her lawyers criticized the "scorched-earth discovery tactics" to bully her and other family members of victims to abandon their lawsuits.

The county responded by saying they were sympathetic to Bryant's losses and dismissed her case as a "money grab."

Grand jury declines to indict woman in Emmett Till killing

By MICHAEL GOLDBERG and ALLEN G. BREED Associated Press/Report for America

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — A Mississippi grand jury has declined to indict the white woman whose accusation set off the lynching of Black teenager Emmett Till nearly 70 years ago, most likely closing the case that shocked a nation and galvanized the modern civil rights movement.

After hearing more than seven hours of testimony from investigators and witnesses, a Leflore County grand jury last week determined there was insufficient evidence to indict Carolyn Bryant Donham on charges of kidnapping and manslaughter, Leflore County District Attorney Dewayne Richardson said in a news release Tuesday.

The decision comes despite recent revelations about an unserved arrest warrant and the 87-year-old Donham's unpublished memoir.

The Rev. Wheeler Parker, Jr., Emmett Till's cousin and the last living witness to Till's Aug. 28, 1955, abduction, said Tuesday's announcement is "unfortunate, but predictable."

"The prosecutor tried his best, and we appreciate his efforts, but he alone cannot undo hundreds of years of anti-Black systems that guaranteed those who killed Emmett Till would go unpunished, to this day," Parker said in a statement.

"The fact remains that the people who abducted, tortured, and murdered Emmett did so in plain sight, and our American justice system was and continues to be set up in such a way that they could not be brought to justice for their heinous crimes."

Ollie Gordon, another one of Till's cousins, told The Associated Press that some justice had been served in the Till case, despite the grand jury's decision.

"Justice is not always locking somebody up and throwing the keys away," Gordon said. "Ms. Donham has not gone to jail. But in many ways, I don't think she's had a pleasant life. I think each day she wakes up, she has to face the atrocities that have come because of her actions."

A third cousin, Deborah Watts, who leads the Emmett Till Legacy Foundation, said the case is an example of the freedom afforded to white women to escape accountability for making false accusations against Black men.

"She has still escaped any accountability in this case," Watts said. "So the grand jury's decision is disappointing, but we're still going to be calling for justice for Emmett Till. It's not over."

An email and voicemail seeking comment from Donham's son Tom Bryant weren't immediately returned Tuesday.

In June, a group searching the basement of the Leflore County Courthouse discovered the unserved arrest warrant charging Donham, then-husband Roy Bryant and brother-in-law J.W. Milam in Till's abduction in 1955. While the men were arrested and acquitted on murder charges in Till's subsequent slaying, Donham, 21 at the time, was never taken into custody.

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The 14-year-old Chicago boy was visiting relatives in Mississippi when he and some other children went to the store in the town of Money where Carolyn Bryant worked. Relatives told the AP that Till had whistled at the white woman, but denied that he touched her as she'd claimed.

In an unpublished memoir obtained last month by the AP, Donham said Milam and her husband brought Till to her in the middle of the night for identification but that she tried to help the youth by denying it was him. She claimed that Till then volunteered that he was the one they were looking for.

Till's battered, disfigured body was found days later in a river, where it was weighted down with a heavy metal fan. The decision by his mother, Mamie Till Mobley, to open Till's casket for his funeral in Chicago demonstrated the horror of what had happened and added fuel to the civil rights movement.

Following their acquittal, Bryant and Milam admitted to the abduction and killing in an interview with *Look* magazine. They were not charged with a federal crime, and both have long since died.

In 2004, the U.S. Department of Justice Department opened an investigation of Till's killing after it received inquiries about whether charges could be brought against anyone still living.

Till's body was exhumed, in part to confirm it was he. A 2005 autopsy found that Till died of a gunshot wound to the head, and that had fractures in his wrist bones, skull and femur.

In 2006, the FBI launched its Cold Case Initiative in an effort to identify and investigate racially-motivated murders. Two years later, Congress passed the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act.

The Justice Department said the statute of limitations had run out on any potential federal crime, but the FBI worked with state investigators to determine if state charges could be brought. In February 2007, a Mississippi grand jury declined to indict anyone, and the Justice Department announced it was closing the case.

But federal officials announced last year that they were once again closing their investigation, saying there was "insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that she lied to the FBI."

Timothy Tyson, the North Carolina historian who interviewed Donham for his 2017 book, "The Blood of Emmett Till," said the newly rediscovered warrant did nothing to "appreciably change the concrete evidence against her." But he said the renewed focus on the case should "compel Americans" to face the racial and economic disparities that still exist here.

"The Till case will not go away because the racism and ruthless indifference that created it remain with us," Tyson wrote in an email Tuesday. "We see generations of Black children struggle against these obstacles, and many die due to systemic racism that is every bit as lethal as a rope or a revolver."

For Gordon, the renewed attention on the Till case has been a reminder of the social progress it helped spark.

"It helps the younger generations identify how far we've come with the many liberties and civil rights that we've gained since Emmett's death," Gordon said. "As his mother would say, his death was not in vain."

US inflation will likely stay high even as gas prices fall

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans may finally be catching a break from relentlessly surging prices — if just a slight one — even as inflation is expected to remain painfully high for months.

Thanks largely to falling gas prices, the government's inflation report for July, to be released Wednesday morning, is expected to show that prices jumped 8.7% from a year earlier — still a sizzling pace but a slowdown from the 9.1% year-over-year figure in June, which was the highest in four decades.

The forecast by economists, if it proves correct, would raise hopes that inflation might have peaked and that the run of punishingly higher prices is beginning to ease slightly. There have been other hopeful signs, too, that the pace of inflation may be moderating.

At the same time, an array of other economic developments are threatening to keep intensifying inflation pressures. The pace of hiring is robust and average wages are up sharply. And even as gas prices fall, inflation in services such as health care, rents and restaurant meals is accelerating. Price changes in services tend to be sticky and don't ease as quickly as they do for gas, food or other goods. Those trends

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suggest that overall inflation may not drop significantly anytime soon.

President Joe Biden has already pointed to falling gas prices as a sign that his policies — such as releases of oil from the nation's strategic reserve — are helping combat the higher costs that have hammered household budgets, particularly for lower-income families.

Yet Republicans will push ongoing high inflation as a top campaign issue in this fall's elections, with polls showing that high prices have driven Biden's approval ratings down sharply.

On Friday, the House is poised to give final congressional approval to a revived tax-and-climate package pushed by Biden and Democratic lawmakers. The bill, which among other things aims to ease pharmaceutical prices by letting the government negotiate Medicare's drug costs, is expected to cut the federal budget deficit by \$300 billion over a decade.

Yet economists say the measure, which its proponents have titled the Inflation Reduction Act, will have only a minimal effect on inflation over the next several years, though it could slow price increases a bit more later this decade.

Economists have forecast that Wednesday's inflation report will show that consumer prices rose 0.2% from June to July, according to FactSet. That would mark a steep drop from the 1.3% jump from May to June.

But excluding the volatile food and energy categories, so-called core inflation likely stayed high. Economists project that core prices rose 0.5% from in July, still a sharp rise, though down from the 0.7% jump in June. Such an increase would leave core prices 6.1% higher than a year ago, up from a 5.9% year-over-year increase in June.

If overall inflation did ease in July, it will largely reflect a 16% plunge in prices at the gas pump from their peak in mid-June, when gas hit a national average of \$5 a gallon. The average price fell to about \$4.20 by the end of July and was just \$4.03 by Tuesday. The continuing drop means that lower gas prices will likely pull inflation down further in August.

Other items may have also helped lower price gains in July: Food costs, though they likely kept rising, probably did so at a slower pace than in June. Prices for used cars, clothing and rental cars may have fallen, too.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has said the Fed needs to see a series of declining monthly core inflation readings before it would consider pausing its interest rate increases. Though the Fed more closely tracks a different inflation measure, it also monitors the figures in Wednesday's report, known as the consumer price index.

The Fed has raised its benchmark short-term rate at its past four rate-setting meetings, including a three-quarter point hike in both June and July — the first increases that large since 1994. A blockbuster jobs report for July that the government issued Friday — with 528,000 jobs added, rising wages and an unemployment rate that matched a half-century low of 3.5% — solidified expectations that the Fed will announce yet another three-quarter-point hike when it next meets in September.

Financial markets are betting that the Fed will raise rates several more times this year, to a range of 3.5% to 3.75%, but will ultimately have to cut rates by next summer because traders expect the higher rates to cause a recession.

Some trends do point to lower future inflation. The supply chain snags that have elevated prices for cars, furniture, appliances and other goods are easing.

The number of ships waiting to be unloaded at the Los Angeles/Long Beach port has fallen for six straight months, according to Oxford Economics. Shipping costs have generally leveled off or declined, including for trucking and rail services, Oxford said, though they remain high.

And a drop in Americans' expectations for future inflation may also keep higher prices from becoming entrenched. Such expectations can be self-fulfilling: If people believe inflation will stay high or worsen, they are likely to take steps — such as demanding higher pay — that can then send prices higher in a self-perpetuating cycle. Companies often raise prices to offset higher their higher labor costs.

But a survey by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, released Monday, showed that Americans now expect lower inflation in the next few years than they did a month ago. Yung-Yu Ma, chief investment

strategist at BMO Wealth Management, said lower inflation expectations may allow the Fed to react less aggressively to reports, such as last month's burst of hiring, that suggest the economy is still strong and that inflation could remain high.

"It's a modestly good sign," Ma said of the inflation expectations data. "It gives them a little bit of room to not take a more aggressive approach."

Did Trump break the law? FBI search raises fresh questions

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The year was 2016, the presidential candidate under investigation was Hillary Clinton and the FBI director at the time, James Comey, laid out the factors the Justice Department weighs in deciding whether to charge someone with mishandling classified records.

Fast forward to 2022 and that tutorial proves instructive as another candidate from that election, Donald Trump, is entangled in an FBI probe related to sensitive government documents.

Whether an FBI search of Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence is a prelude to criminal charges is unknown. The action Monday nonetheless focuses attention on the thicket of statutes that govern the handling of government records, though the department's own history of prosecutorial discretion — some high-profile investigations have ended without charges or in misdemeanor plea deals — makes it hard to forecast with certainty what might happen this time.

"These are statutes that have historically not been enforced to the fullest extent," said University of Texas law professor Stephen Vladeck.

Much remains uncertain about Monday's search, including precisely what documents the FBI was looking for — Trump says agents opened a safe — or why it acted when it did. But people familiar with the matter say it relates to an ongoing Justice Department investigation into the discovery of classified material in boxes of White House records the National Archives and Records Administration recovered from Mar-A-Lago earlier this year.

To obtain a search warrant, the Justice Department would have had to persuade a judge that probable cause existed that a crime was committed, though what statute officials think may have been violated is unclear.

Multiple federal laws require the safekeeping of government secrets. One potentially relevant statute makes it a crime to remove classified information and retain it in an unauthorized location. Another makes it illegal to mishandle national defense information, including maps, photographs and documents, or transmit it to a person not authorized to receive it.

But if past is any precedent, the mere mishandling of classified information isn't always enough for a felony conviction — or any charges at all.

"It often comes down to whether there are aggravating factors in these cases," said David Laufman, a Washington lawyer who as head of the Justice Department's counterintelligence and export control section oversaw the Hillary Clinton investigation.

Those include, he said, how much classified information was mishandled, the extent to which the person knew they were in possession of classified information and how sensitive the material was and whether its exposure placed at risk U.S. national security.

The FBI said as much in 2016 when it closed without recommending charges an investigation into whether Clinton mishandled classified information via a private email server she used as secretary of state. Comey said agents had determined that she had sent and received emails containing classified information but that there was no indication she had intended to break the law. He said no reasonable prosecutor would have brought such a case.

To prove his point, he said a review of past Justice Department cases established that each prosecution involved some combination of: an intentional mishandling of classified records; the vast exposure of materials in a way that suggested willful misconduct, disloyalty to the U.S. or obstruction of justice.

In another notable case, former CIA Director David Petraeus was permitted in 2015 to plead guilty to a

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misdeemeanor charge of the unauthorized removal and retention of classified information, avoiding prison as he admitted sharing notebooks containing government secrets with his biographer. That resolution came two years after an FBI search of his home and despite an acknowledgment by Petraeus that he knew the information he was sharing was classified.

It remains to be seen what arguments Trump might raise as the investigation progresses. His lengthy statement disclosing the search did not address the substance of the probe, complaining instead that the FBI's action was a "weaponization of the Justice System and an attack by Radical Left Democrats."

Christina Bobb, a lawyer for Trump, said in an interview that aired on Real America's Voice on Tuesday that supporting documentation for the warrant remained sealed and that she had not seen it. But she said investigators said they were "looking for classified information that they think should not have been removed from the White House, as well as presidential records."

She asserted that the president himself gets to decide what is a presidential record, and it is true that Trump could argue that as president until Jan. 20, 2021, he was the original classification authority and had declassified on his own the classified material recovered from Mar-a-Lago.

But, law professor Vladeck said, it would be a "pretty stunning" argument by Trump to claim as his defense that he had "declassified all of our crown jewels" and, by doing so, effectively admit that he was a "threat to our national security."

And, Laufman said, "The fact that he has legal authority doesn't mean...that anything he might have chosen to take from the White House and squirrel away at Mar-a-Lago is declassified. The declassification process does not exist in Donald Trump's head. It's not self-executing."

It is also possible he might say he was unaware of the content of the boxes as they were being packed. His son Eric told Fox News that boxes were among items that got moved out of the White House during "six hours" on Inauguration Day. But even if that's the case, he would still have had a legal obligation once he learned of the presence of classified information to return it, Laufman said.

There are other statutes that could come into play that don't explicitly concern classified information. One particular law makes it a felony for someone in possession of government records to willfully mutilate, obliterate or destroy them. That law is punishable by up to three years in prison and says that anyone convicted of it is disqualified from holding future office, though the qualifications of who can run for president are established by the Constitution.

In any event, key unanswered questions remain, including whether the investigative focus is on "the act of keeping all this material at Mar-a-Lago" or on what the material actually is, Vladeck said.

Given that mystery, he said, "We won't know for sure until we know for sure."

Anne Heche in critical condition, on ventilator after crash

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Anne Heche remained hospitalized on a ventilator to help her breathe and faced surgery Tuesday, four days after the actor was injured in a fiery car crash.

"Shortly after the accident, Anne became unconscious, slipping into a coma and is in critical condition," spokeswoman Heather Duffy Boylston said in an email. "She has a significant pulmonary injury requiring mechanical ventilation and burns that require surgical intervention."

Pulmonary means having to do with the lungs. No further details were provided by Duffy Boylston, who is Heche's friend and podcast partner.

On Aug. 5, Heche's car smashed into a house in the Mar Vista area of Los Angeles' westside. Flames erupted, and Heche, who was alone in the car, was pulled by firefighters from the vehicle embedded in the house. It took nearly 60 firefighters more than an hour to douse the flames, the Los Angeles Fire Department said.

A native of Ohio, Heche first came to prominence on the NBC soap opera "Another World" from 1987 to 1991, for which she won a Daytime Emmy Award.

Her film career took off in the late 1990s, with Heche playing opposite stars including Johnny Depp

("Donnie Brasco") and Harrison Ford ("Six Days, Seven Nights").

In a 2001 memoir, "Call Me Crazy," Heche talked about her lifelong struggles with mental health and a childhood of abuse.

She was married to camera operator Coleman Laffoon from 2001 to 2009. The two had a son together. She had another son during a relationship with actor James Tupper, her co-star on the TV series "Men In Trees."

Heche has worked consistently in smaller films, on Broadway, and on TV shows in the past two decades. She recently had recurring roles on the network series "Chicago P.D." and "All Rise," and in 2020 was a contestant on "Dancing With the Stars."

Afghan man charged in killing of 2 Muslims in Albuquerque

By STEFANIE DAZIO and MARIAM FAM Associated Press

Police announced a breakthrough Tuesday in the killings of four Muslim men in Albuquerque, New Mexico, charging a man from Afghanistan — himself a Muslim — with two of the slayings and identifying him as a prime suspect in the other killings that put the entire community on edge.

Muhammad Syed, 51, was taken into custody a day earlier after a traffic stop more than 100 miles away, authorities said.

Three of the four ambush shootings happened in the last two weeks. Police Chief Harold Medina said it was not clear yet whether the deaths should be classified as hate crimes or serial killings or both.

Investigators received a tip from the city's Muslim community that pointed toward Syed, who has lived in the U.S. for about five years, police said.

Police were looking into possible motives, including an unspecified "interpersonal conflict."

When asked specifically if Syed, a Sunni Muslim, was angry that his daughter married a Shiite Muslim, Deputy Police Cmdr. Kyle Hartsock did not respond directly. He said "motives are still being explored fully to understand what they are."

Ahmad Assed, president of the Islamic Center of New Mexico, acknowledged that "there was a marriage," but he cautioned against coming to any conclusions about the motivation of the suspect, who he said attended the center's mosque "from time to time."

"Knowing where we were, you know, a few days ago to where we are today is an incredible sigh of relief that we're breathing," he said. "Lives have been turned upside down."

The exact nature of the relationships between Syed and the victims — and the victims to one another — remained unclear. But police said they continue to investigate how they crossed paths before the shootings.

The slayings drew the attention of President Joe Biden, who said such attacks "have no place in America." They also sent a shudder through Muslim communities across the U.S. Some people questioned their safety and limited their movements.

When told about the arrest before the suspect's identity was made public, Muhammad Imtiaz Hussain, brother of one of the victims, Muhammad Afzaal Hussain, said he felt relieved but needed to know more about the assailant and the motive.

"This gives us hope that we will have (the) truth come out," he said. "We need to know why."

It was not immediately clear whether Syed had an attorney who could speak on his behalf.

Naeem Hussain, a 25-year-old man from Pakistan, was killed Friday night. His death came just days after those of Muhammad Afzaal Hussain, 27, and Aftab Hussein, 41, who were also from Pakistan and members of the same mosque.

The earliest case involves the November killing of Mohammad Ahmadi, 62, from Afghanistan.

For now, Syed is charged in the killings of Aftab Hussein and Muhammad Afzaal Hussain because bullet casings found at the crime scenes were linked to a gun found at his home, authorities said.

Investigators consider Syed to be the primary suspect in the deaths of Naeem Hussain and Ahmadi but have not yet filed charges in those cases.

Police said they were about to search Syed's Albuquerque home on Monday when they saw him drive

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away in a Volkswagen Jetta that investigators believe was used in at least one of the slayings.

Officers followed him to Santa Rosa, about 110 miles east of Albuquerque, where they pulled him over. Multiple firearms were recovered from his home and car, police said.

Syed's sons were questioned and released, according to authorities.

Prosecutors expect to file murder charges in state court and are considering adding a federal case, authorities said.

Shiites make up the second largest branch in Islam after Sunnis.

Aneela Abad, general secretary at the Islamic center, said the two Muslim communities in New Mexico enjoy warm ties.

"Our Shiite community has always been there for us and we, Sunnis, have always been there for them," she said.

Muhammad Afzaal Hussain had worked as a field organizer for Democratic Rep. Melanie Stansbury's campaign.

"Muhammad was kind, hopeful, optimistic," she said, describing him as a city planner "who believed in democracy and social change, and who believed that we could, in fact, build a brighter future for our communities and for our world."

Federal judge denies LIV golfers bid for PGA Tour postseason

By JANIE McCAULEY AP Sports Writer

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — A federal judge in California ruled Tuesday that three golfers who joined Saudi-backed LIV Golf will not be able to compete in the PGA Tour's postseason.

U.S. District Judge Beth Labson Freeman made her decision in San Jose after attorneys for the sides each spoke for about an hour. Freeman said she didn't consider the golfers faced irreparable harm because of the big money they were guaranteed by joining LIV, a key issue in the case.

"There simply is no irreparable harm in this case," PGA Tour attorney Elliot Peters said.

The three suspended golfers were seeking a temporary restraining order, which Freeman denied. Talor Gooch, Matt Jones and Hudson Swafford claimed they should be able to play where they want to, each saying in letters last month to the PGA Tour, "I am a free agent and independent contractor." They are among 10 players who filed an antitrust lawsuit against the PGA Tour last week — including Phil Mickelson.

Robert Walters, an antitrust litigator representing the golfers, noted this would be their opportunity on a big playoff stage, "effectively the Super Bowl of golf" because of its "significant income opportunities." Freeman responded that the LIV Tour earnings potential was also great and asked whether players might have been able to wait until the conclusion of the PGA Tour season to depart for the new tour.

Walters argued there were only 48 spots and they would have filled up according to LIV Golf CEO Greg Norman, to which Freeman said she agreed with that stance but that the golfers stood to gain far more financially joining LIV than the money they might have earned on the PGA Tour.

"This is an extraordinarily attractive financial opportunity but it's much more than that," Walters said, saying the harm done is that "players lose intangible benefits" such as qualifications for the major tournaments as well as other marquee invitationals.

"This is the holy grail because everybody wants to compete in and prevail in major championships, but it's not just the majors," Walters said. He noted that the PGA Tour inferred these golfers would put a "taint" or "stench" on the tour's image by playing, perhaps even wearing LIV Tour gear in PGA Tour tournaments.

"We're disappointed that Talor Gooch, Hudson Swafford and Matt Jones won't be allowed to play golf. No one gains by banning golfers from playing," LIV Golf said in a statement.

The first of three FedEx Cup playoff events begin Thursday. Two tournaments offer \$15 million prize funds, and the player who wins the FedEx Cup at East Lake in Atlanta gets \$18 million — thus the urgency for Freeman to rule. This case could go to trial next year, with the possibility of an injunction hearing in late September or early October, according to Peters.

Peters said lifting the suspensions of the golfers and allowing them to play would "change the status quo" for the PGA Tour and "give them a fabulous platform" to promote the LIV tour while competing in

a PGA event.

"I think it's a huge problem," he said. "... The Commissioner needs the ability to protect the Tour. This is a very dire situation for the Tour."

Gooch (No. 20), Jones (No. 65) and Swafford (No. 67) are among nine players who have joined LIV Golf and finished the regular season among the top 125 in the FedEx Cup standings. The other six who joined LIV Golf are not asking to play in the tour's postseason.

PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan issued a memo to members that included: "With today's news, our players, fans and partners can now focus on what really matters over the next three weeks: the best players in the world competing in the FedEx Cup Playoffs, capping off an incredibly compelling season with the crowning of the FedEx Cup champion at the Tour Championship."

Nebraska woman charged with helping daughter have abortion

By JOSH FUNK Associated Press

OMAHA, Nebraska (AP) — A Nebraska woman has been charged with helping her teenage daughter end her pregnancy at about 24 weeks after investigators uncovered Facebook messages in which the two discussed using medication to induce an abortion and plans to burn the fetus afterward.

The prosecutor handling the case said it's the first time he has charged anyone for illegally performing an abortion after 20 weeks, a restriction that was passed in 2010. Before the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June, states weren't allowed to enforce abortion bans until the point at which a fetus is considered viable outside the womb, at roughly 24 weeks.

In one of the Facebook messages, Jessica Burgess, 41, tells her then 17-year-old daughter that she has obtained abortion pills for her and gives her instructions on how to take them to end the pregnancy.

The daughter, meanwhile, "talks about how she can't wait to get the 'thing' out of her body," a detective wrote in court documents. "I will finally be able to wear jeans," she says in one of the messages. Law enforcement authorities obtained the messages with a search warrant, and detailed some of them in court documents.

In early June, the mother and daughter were only charged with a single felony for removing, concealing or abandoning a body, and two misdemeanors: concealing the death of another person and false reporting. It wasn't until about a month later, after investigators reviewed the private Facebook messages, that they added the felony abortion-related charges against the mother. The daughter, who is now 18, is being charged as an adult at prosecutors' request.

Burgess' attorney didn't immediately respond to a message Tuesday, and the public defender representing the daughter declined to comment.

When first interviewed, the two told investigators that the teen had unexpectedly given birth to a stillborn baby in the shower in the early morning hours of April 22. They said they put the fetus in a bag, placed it in a box in the back of their van, and later drove several miles north of town, where they buried the body with the help of a 22-year-old man.

The man, whom The Associated Press is not identifying because he has only been charged with a misdemeanor, has pleaded no contest to helping bury the fetus on rural land his parents own north of Norfolk in northeast Nebraska. He's set to be sentenced later this month.

In court documents, the detective said the fetus showed signs of "thermal wounds" and that the man told investigators the mother and daughter did burn it. He also wrote that the daughter confirmed in the Facebook exchange with her mother that the two would "burn the evidence afterward." Based on medical records, the fetus was more than 23 weeks old, the detective wrote.

Burgess later admitted to investigators to buying the abortion pills "for the purpose of instigating a miscarriage."

At first, both mother and daughter said they didn't remember the date when the stillbirth happened, but according to the detective, the daughter later confirmed the date by consulting her Facebook messages. After that he sought the warrant, he said.

Madison County Attorney Joseph Smith told the Lincoln Journal Star that he's never filed charges like this related to performing an abortion illegally in his 32 years as the county prosecutor. He didn't immediately respond to a message from the AP on Tuesday.

The group National Advocates for Pregnant Women, which supports abortion rights, found 1,331 arrests or detentions of women for crimes related to their pregnancy from 2006 to 2020.

In addition to its current 20-week abortion ban, Nebraska tried — but failed — earlier this year to pass a so-called trigger law that would have banned all abortions when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

A Facebook spokesman declined to talk about the details of this case, but the company has said that officials at the social media giant "always scrutinize every government request we receive to make sure it is legally valid."

Facebook says it will fight back against requests that it thinks are invalid or too broad, but the company said it gave investigators information in about 88% of the 59,996 times when the government requested data in the second half of last year.

FBI's search of Trump's Florida estate: Why now?

By ZEKE MILLER, ERIC TUCKER and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI's unprecedented search of former President Donald Trump's Florida residence ricocheted around government, politics and a polarized country Tuesday along with questions as to why the Justice Department — notably cautious under Attorney General Merrick Garland — decided to take such a drastic step.

Answers weren't quickly forthcoming.

Agents on Monday searched Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate, which is also a private club, as part of a federal investigation into whether the former president took classified records from the White House to his Florida residence, people familiar with the matter said. It marked a dramatic escalation of law enforcement scrutiny of Trump, who faces an array of inquiries tied to his conduct in the waning days of his administration.

From echoes of Watergate to the more immediate House probe of the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection, Washington, a city used to sleepy Augusts, reeled from one speculative or accusatory headline to the next. Was the Justice Department politicized? What prompted it to seek authorization to search the estate for classified documents now, months after it was revealed that Trump had taken boxes of materials with him when he left the White House after losing the 2020 election?

Garland has not tipped his hand despite an outcry from some Democrats impatient over whether the department was even pursuing evidence that has surfaced in the Jan. 6 probe and other investigations—and from Republicans who were swift to echo Trump's claims that he was the victim of political prosecution.

All Garland has said publicly is that "no one is above the law."

A federal judge had to sign off on the warrant after establishing that FBI agents had shown probable cause before they could descend on Trump's shuttered-for-the-season home — he was in New York, a thousand or so miles away, at the time of the search.

Monday's search intensified the months-long probe into how classified documents ended up in boxes of White House records located at Mar-a-Lago earlier this year. A separate grand jury is investigating efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election, and it all adds to potential legal peril for Trump as he lays the groundwork for a potential repeat run for the White House.

Trump and his allies quickly sought to cast the search as a weaponization of the criminal justice system and a Democratic-driven effort to keep him from winning another term in 2024 — though the Biden White House said it had no prior knowledge and current FBI Director Christopher Wray was appointed by Trump five years ago.

Trump, disclosing the search in a lengthy statement late Monday, asserted that agents had opened a safe at his home, and he described their work as an "unannounced raid" that he likened to "prosecutorial misconduct."

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Justice Department spokesperson Dena Iverson declined to comment on the search, including whether Garland had personally authorized it. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said the West Wing first learned of the search from public media reports and the White House had not been briefed in the run-up or aftermath.

"The Justice Department conducts investigations independently and we leave any law enforcement matters to them," she said. "We are not involved."

About two dozen Trump supporters stood in protest at midmorning Tuesday in the Florida summer heat and sporadic light rain on a bridge near the former president's residence. One held a sign reading "Democrats are Fascists" while others carried flags saying "2020 Was Rigged," "Trump 2024" and Biden's name with an obscenity. Some cars honked in support as they passed.

Trump's Vice President Mike Pence, a potential 2024 rival, tweeted Tuesday, "Yesterday's action undermines public confidence in our system of justice and Attorney General Garland must give a full accounting to the American people as to why this action was taken and he must do so immediately."

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell echoed Pence, saying, "Attorney General Garland and the Department of Justice should already have provided answers to the American people and must do so immediately."

"The FBI director was appointed by Donald Trump," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., when asked about GOP allegations that the raid showed the politicization of the Justice Department. She added, "Facts and truth, facts and law, that's what it's about."

Trump was meeting late Tuesday at his Bedminster, New Jersey, club with members of the Republican Study Committee, a group headed by Rep. Jim Banks of Indiana that says it is committed to putting forth his priorities in Congress.

The FBI reached out to the Secret Service shortly before serving a warrant, a third person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press. Secret Service agents contacted the Justice Department and were able to validate the warrant before facilitating access to the estate, the person said.

The Justice Department has been investigating the potential mishandling of classified information since the National Archives and Records Administration said it had received from Mar-a-Lago 15 boxes of White House records, including documents containing classified information, earlier this year. The National Archives said Trump should have turned over that material upon leaving office, and it asked the Justice Department to investigate.

Christina Bobb, a lawyer for Trump, said in an interview that aired on Real America's Voice on Tuesday that investigators said they were "looking for classified information that they think should not have been removed from the White House, as well as presidential records."

There are multiple federal laws governing the handling of classified records and sensitive government documents, including statutes that make it a crime to remove such material and retain it at an unauthorized location. Though a search warrant does not necessarily mean criminal charges are near or even expected, federal officials looking to obtain one must first demonstrate to a judge that they have probable cause that a crime occurred.

Two people familiar with the matter, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation, said the search Monday was related to the records probe. Agents were also looking to see if Trump had additional presidential records or any classified documents at the estate.

Trump has previously maintained that presidential records were turned over "in an ordinary and routine process." His son Eric said on Fox News on Monday night that he had spent the day with his father and that the search happened because "the National Archives wanted to corroborate whether or not Donald Trump had any documents in his possession."

Trump himself, in a social media post Monday night, called the search a "weaponization of the Justice System, and an attack by Radical Left Democrats who desperately don't want me to run for President in 2024."

Trump took a different stance during the 2016 presidential campaign, frequently pointing to an FBI investigation into his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton, over whether she mishandled classified information

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via a private email server she used as secretary of state. Then-FBI Director James Comey concluded that Clinton had sent and received classified information, but the FBI did not recommend criminal charges.

Trump lambasted that decision and then stepped up his criticism of the FBI as agents began investigating whether his campaign had colluded with Russia to tip the 2016 election. He fired Comey during that probe, and though he appointed Wray months later, he repeatedly criticized him, too, as president.

The probe is hardly the only legal headache confronting Trump. A separate investigation related to efforts by him and his allies to undo the results of the 2020 presidential election — which led to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol — has also been intensifying in Washington. Several former White House officials have received grand jury subpoenas.

And a district attorney in Fulton County, Georgia, is investigating whether Trump and his close associates sought to interfere in that state's election, which was won by Democrat Joe Biden.

Rep. Scott Perry says FBI agents seized his cellphone

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Rep. Scott Perry said his cellphone was seized Tuesday morning by FBI agents carrying a search warrant.

The circumstances surrounding the seizure were not immediately known. Perry, though, has been a figure in the congressional investigation into President Donald Trump's actions leading up to the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection.

Former senior Justice Department officials have testified that Perry, a Pennsylvania Republican, had "an important role" in Trump's effort to try to install Jeffrey Clark — a top Justice official who was pushing Trump's baseless claims of election fraud — as the acting attorney general.

In a statement Tuesday, Perry said three agents visited him while he was traveling Tuesday with his family and "seized my cell phone." He called the action "banana republic tactics."

"They made no attempt to contact my lawyer, who would have made arrangements for them to have my phone if that was their wish," Perry said. "I'm outraged — though not surprised — that the FBI under the direction of Merrick Garland's DOJ, would seize the phone of a sitting Member of Congress."

The lawmaker, representing Pennsylvania's 10th District, was cited more than 50 times in a Senate Judiciary report released in October 2021 outlining how Trump's effort to overturn his election defeat to Joe Biden brought the Justice Department to the brink of chaos and prompted top officials there and at the White House to threaten to resign.

Perry, who has continuously disputed the validity of Biden's victory in Pennsylvania, has said he obliged Trump's request for an introduction to Clark, then an assistant attorney general whom Perry knew from unrelated legislative matters. The three men went on to discuss their shared concerns about the election, Perry has said.

The Justice Department found no evidence of widespread fraud in Pennsylvania or any other state, and senior Justice officials dismissed Perry's claims.

The Senate report outlined a call Perry made to then-acting Deputy Attorney General Rich Donohue in December 2020 to say the department wasn't doing its job with respect to the elections. Perry encouraged Donohue to elicit Clark's help because he's "the kind of guy who could really get in there and do something about this," the report said.

Perry has said his "official communications" with Justice Department officials were consistent with the law.

The Justice Department's inspector general conducted a search in June of Clark's Virginia home.

Perry slammed the Justice Department's decision to serve him with a warrant as an "unnecessary and aggressive action."

"My phone contains info about my legislative and political activities, and personal/private discussions with my wife, family, constituents, and friends," Perry said. None of this is the government's business."

The seizure of Scott's cellphone was first reported by Fox News Channel.

Large explosions rock Russian military air base in Crimea

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By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Powerful explosions rocked a Russian air base in Crimea and sent towering clouds of smoke over the landscape Tuesday in what may mark an escalation of the war in Ukraine. At least one person was killed and several others were wounded, authorities said.

Russia's Defense Ministry denied the Saki base on the Black Sea had been shelled and said instead that munitions had blown up there. But Ukrainian social networks were abuzz with speculation that it was hit by Ukrainian-fired long-range missiles.

Videos posted on social networks showed sunbathers on nearby beaches fleeing as huge flames and pillars of smoke rose over the horizon from multiple points, accompanied by loud booms. Crimea Today News said on Telegram that witnesses reported fire on a runway and damage to nearby homes as a result of what it said were dozens of blasts.

Russia's state news agency Tass quoted an unidentified ministry source as saying the explosions' primary cause appeared to be a "violation of fire safety requirements." The ministry said no warplanes were damaged.

Ukraine's Defense Ministry said sarcastically on Facebook: "The Ministry of Defense of Ukraine cannot establish the cause of the fire, but once again recalls the rules of fire safety and the prohibition of smoking in unspecified places."

A presidential adviser, Oleksiy Arestovych, said cryptically in his regular online interview that the blasts were caused either by a Ukrainian-made long-range weapon or were the work of partisans operating in Crimea.

During the war, Russia has reported numerous fires and explosions at munitions storage sites on its territory near the Ukrainian border, blaming some of them on Ukrainian strikes. Ukrainian authorities have mostly remained mum about the incidents.

If Ukrainian forces were, in fact, responsible for the blasts at the air base, it would be the first known major attack on a Russian military site on the Crimean Peninsula, which the Kremlin annexed in 2014. A smaller explosion last month at the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in the Crimean port of Sevastopol was blamed on Ukrainian saboteurs using a makeshift drone.

Russian warplanes have used the Saki base to strike areas in Ukraine's south on short notice.

One person was killed, said Crimea's regional leader, Sergei Aksyonov. Crimean health authorities said nine people were wounded, one of whom remained hospitalized. Others were treated for cuts from shards of glass and released.

Officials in Moscow have long warned Ukraine that any attack on Crimea would trigger massive retaliation, including strikes on "decision-making centers" in Kyiv.

For his part, Ukraine's president vowed to retake Crimea from Russia.

"This Russian war against Ukraine and against all of free Europe began with Crimea and must end with Crimea — its liberation," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday in his nightly video address. "Today it is impossible to say when this will happen. But we are constantly adding the necessary components to the formula for the liberation of Crimea."

Earlier Tuesday, Ukrainian officials reported at least three Ukrainian civilians were killed and 23 wounded by Russian shelling in 24 hours, including an attack not far from the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

The Russians fired over 120 rockets at the town of Nikopol, across the Dnieper River from the plant, Dnipropetrovsk Gov. Valentyn Reznichenko said. Several apartment buildings and industrial sites were damaged, he said.

Ukraine and Russia have accused each other of shelling the power station, Europe's biggest nuclear plant, stoking international fears of a catastrophe.

The governor of the region where the plant is situated, Oleksandr Starukh, said Tuesday that radiation levels were normal. But he warned that an accident could spread radiation whichever way the wind blows, carrying it to Moscow and other Russian cities.

A Russian-installed official in the partially occupied Zaporizhzhia region said an air defense system at the plant would be reinforced in the aftermath of last week's shelling. Evgeny Balitsky, head of the Kremlin-backed administration, told Russian state TV that power lines and other damaged portions of the plant were restored.

The Ukrainians in recent weeks have been mounting counterattacks in Russian-occupied areas of southern Ukraine while trying to hold off the Kremlin's forces in the industrial Donbas region in the east.

Also Tuesday, a U.S. official said Iran has agreed to supply Russia with drones for use in the war in Ukraine. The official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive information, said "during the last several weeks, Russian officials conducted training in Iran as part of the agreement for UAV transfers from Iran to Russia."

The White House released satellite images in mid-July indicating that Russians had visited an Iranian airbase to see weapons-capable drones. But U.S. officials said later that month that they had seen no evidence yet of Iran supplying Russia with the drones.

Ukrainian officials this month said Iran has transferred drones to Russia and some have been used in combat.

Serena Williams says 'countdown has begun' to retirement

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

Saying "the countdown has begun," 23-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams announced Tuesday she is ready to step away from tennis so she can turn her focus to having another child and her business interests, presaging the end of a career that transcended sports.

In an essay released Tuesday by Vogue magazine, and a post on Instagram — the sorts of direct-to-fans communication favored these days by celebrities, a category she most definitely fits — Williams was not completely clear on the timeline for her last match, but she made it sound as if that could be at the U.S. Open, which begins Aug. 29 in New York.

"There comes a time in life when we have to decide to move in a different direction. That time is always hard when you love something so much. My goodness do I enjoy tennis. But now, the countdown has begun," Williams, who turns 41 next month, wrote on Instagram. "I have to focus on being a mom, my spiritual goals and finally discovering a different, but just (as) exciting Serena. I'm gonna relish these next few weeks."

Williams, one of the greatest and most accomplished athletes in the history of her — or any other — sport, wrote in the essay that she does not like the word "retirement" and prefers to think of this stage of her life as "evolving away from tennis, toward other things that are important to me."

"I feel a great deal of pain. It's the hardest thing that I could ever imagine. I hate it. I hate that I have to be at this crossroads," she wrote. "I keep saying to myself, I wish it could be easy for me, but it's not. I'm torn: I don't want it to be over, but at the same time I'm ready for what's next."

That she would be publicly contemplating the end of her playing days is not all that surprising, given her age — her 10 Grand Slam titles after turning 30 are unsurpassed — her history of injuries and her recent record: one victory in a singles match in the past 12 months (that win arrived Monday in Toronto; she is scheduled to play again on Wednesday).

"Serena Williams is a generational, if not multigenerational, talent who had a profound impact on the game of tennis, but an even greater influence on women in sports, business and society. At a time when our nation and the world have wrestled with essential issues of identity, Serena has stood as a singular exemplar of the best of humanity after breaking through countless barriers to her participation and ultimate success," U.S. Open tournament director Stacey Allaster said. "She leaves an indelible legacy of grace and grit that will inspire athletes, female and male, for many generations to come. We can't thank her enough for all she has done for our sport."

Williams' status as an athlete, and a groundbreaker, is obvious to everyone.

She was the first Black woman since Althea Gibson in 1958 to win a Grand Slam title; Williams and her

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older sister, seven-time major singles champion Venus, helped broaden the sport's audience and attract new players.

"I grew up watching her. I mean, that's the reason why I play tennis," Coco Gauff, an 18-year-old African-American who was the runner-up at this year's French Open, said Tuesday. "Tennis being a predominantly white sport, it definitely helped a lot, because I saw somebody who looked like me dominating the game. And it made me believe that I could dominate, too."

U.S. Tennis Association spokesman Chris Widmaier said the organization would "be operating under the assumption that this will be Serena Williams' last U.S. Open."

It is the year's final Grand Slam event and one she has won six times, most recently in 2014, to go along with seven titles apiece at Wimbledon and the Australian Open, plus three at the French Open, across a career remarkable for its peaks and its longevity.

She also owns 14 Grand Slam doubles championships, all won with Venus, part of a remarkable tale of two siblings from Compton, California, both of whom grew up to be ranked No. 1, win dozens of trophies and dominate tennis for stretches — a story told in the Oscar-winning film "King Richard."

Venus, who is 42 and still competing, was the first in the family to break through, reaching her first Grand Slam final at the 1997 U.S. Open. But it was Serena who soon surpassed her sister, winning the 1999 U.S. Open at age 17 and then going on to add 22 more such triumphs (Venus won seven major singles titles), eventually establishing herself as a one-of-a-kind superstar, known for far more than her talent with a racket in hand.

The younger Williams was armed with as effective a serve as there's ever been, powerful forehands and backhands, instincts and speed that allowed her to cover every inch of a court and switch from defense to offense in a blink, and an enviable will to win. That unflinching desire to be the best helped make her the best — and also sometimes got her into trouble with chair umpires during matches, most infamously during the 2018 U.S. Open final she lost to Naomi Osaka, a woman more than a decade younger who grew up idolizing Williams, as have so many of today's players.

The official Twitter feed for Wimbledon posted this message Tuesday above a photo of Williams: "Some play the game. Others change it."

"I don't particularly like to think about my legacy. I get asked about it a lot, and I never know exactly what to say. But I'd like to think that thanks to opportunities afforded to me, women athletes feel that they can be themselves on the court," Williams wrote. "They can play with aggression and pump their fists. They can be strong yet beautiful. They can wear what they want and say what they want and kick butt and be proud of it all."

The American has won more Grand Slam singles titles in the professional era than any other woman or man. Only one player, Margaret Court, collected more, 24, although the Australian won a portion of hers in the amateur era.

"I'd be lying if I said I didn't want that record. Obviously I do. But day to day, I'm really not thinking about her. If I'm in a Grand Slam final, then yes, I am thinking about that record," Williams said. "Maybe I thought about it too much, and that didn't help. The way I see it, I should have had 30-plus Grand Slams."

But, Williams went on to write, "These days, if I have to choose between building my tennis resume and building my family, I choose the latter."

She and her husband, Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian, have a daughter, Olympia, who turns 5 on Sept. 1.

"Believe me, I never wanted to have to choose between tennis and a family. I don't think it's fair," said Williams, who was pregnant when she won the 2017 Australian Open for her last Grand Slam trophy. "If I were a guy, I wouldn't be writing this because I'd be out there playing and winning while my wife was doing the physical labor of expanding our family."

Williams said she and Ohanian want to have a second baby, and wrote: "I definitely don't want to be pregnant again as an athlete. I need to be two feet into tennis or two feet out."

She was off the tour for about a year after getting injured during her first-round match at Wimbledon in 2021. She returned to singles competition at the All England Club this June and lost in the first round.

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"Unfortunately I wasn't ready to win Wimbledon this year. And I don't know if I will be ready to win New York," Williams wrote in her essay. "But I'm going to try."

Williams hinted in the Vogue essay that the U.S. Open would be her last tournament but did not say so explicitly.

"I'm not looking for some ceremonial, final on-court moment," Williams wrote. "I'm terrible at goodbyes, the world's worst."

Biden, Democrats bet on long-term goals for short-term boost

By SEUNG MIN KIM, JOSH BOAK and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's legislative victories have aimed to position the U.S. to "win the economic competition of the 21st century," but his investments to boost the nation's technology, infrastructure and climate resilience over the next decade are set against a 90-odd-day clock until the midterms.

From turbocharging the U.S. computer chip sector to shifting the nation to a greener economy, the achievements from Biden will take years to come to fruition -- reflecting the sheer scope of his ambitions that, taken together, put Biden among the most legislatively productive presidents in recent memory.

Yet Democrats are also gambling that the rapid clip of recent accomplishments will persuade an electorate that's downcast about the economy and the general direction of the country to vote nonetheless in their party's favor. Particularly critical, they say, is being able to illustrate to voters what Democrats can accomplish when they hold the levers of power in Washington, even if energy bills don't decline right away or a new bridge takes years to be completed.

"I do think this bill will have immediate political impact, but not because people will feel the effects in the next six weeks," Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, said of the big health care, climate and economic package making its way through Congress. "It's because they know we are lawmakers who weren't making very many laws over the last six months."

Schatz added, "It's a vibe, and the vibe is winning."

The White House views the legislative victories as interlocking pieces fulfilling the agenda Biden laid out when he ran for president in 2020 on the promise of helping the country out-compete a rising China. The policy proposals were focused on addressing generational threats and creating long-term opportunities — especially after what Biden viewed to be troubling setbacks during the Trump years.

A 50-year veteran of Washington and a former senator and vice president, Biden also aimed to avoid governing by executive order, a crutch of presidents for both parties when legislative dysfunction is high. Executive orders can be rewritten or overturned by a president's successors — and they're often constrained by how much they can do without Congress acting. Biden, White House aides said, aimed not just for altering the country's trajectory, but keeping it on that path, a move that required legislating, not emergency declarations.

On Tuesday, as he signed a \$280 billion bill bolstering U.S. competitiveness against China, Biden said he was enacting a once-in-a-generation investment whose impact will resonate for decades. The law sets aside \$52 billion to bolster the semiconductor industry, which manufactures the diminutive chips that power everything from smartphones to computers to automobiles.

"The CHIPS and Science Act is going to inspire a whole new generation of Americans to answer that question: What next?" Biden said. "That's why I'm confident that decades from now, people are going to look back at this week, with all we've passed and all we've moved on, that we met the moment at this inflection point in history."

Speaking with reporters Monday, Biden said the Democrats' massive climate and health care package — poised for final House passage Friday — would help his party ahead of the November midterms, pointing in particular to its drug pricing provisions.

"Now, some of it is not going to kick in for a little bit, but it's all good," Biden said in Dover, Delaware. "When you sit down at that kitchen table at the end of the month, you're going to be able to pay a whole hell of a lot more bills because you're paying less in medical bills."

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Biden likes to talk up the bill's provisions capping drug costs for seniors on Medicare at \$2,000 annually, although that won't occur until January 2024. White House officials are also touting an extension of subsidies that would help an estimated 13 million people purchase coverage under the Affordable Care Act, assistance that would have expired this year and subsequently spike out-of-pocket costs.

Other aspects of the climate and health care bill will take much longer to see. An analysis from the Rhodium Group, an independent research firm, said the measure could reduce consumer energy costs in the longer term, with households saving between \$730 to \$1,135 per year, but not until 2030. The Congressional Budget Office has also said the inflation-reducing aspects of the "Inflationary Reduction Act" will be negligible in the short term.

Chris Wilson, a Republican strategist, said the legislation won't help Democrats' chances when voters already disapprove of Biden's handling of the economy.

"Joe Biden and the Democrats are taking a big risk pushing out a major taxing and spending bill on the eve of an election," he said.

The administration has been sensitive to criticism that it will take years to fully realize its policies.

One senior administration official, insisting on anonymity to discuss private conversations, stressed that 18 months of talks and negotiations were required for the computer chip funding to pass. Because it could take a decade to build semiconductor plants and shift more advanced chip production to the U.S., the official said America would have been much further ahead in the process if Congress passed the measure earlier. The official said the administration was essentially moving as fast as it could given the speed of politics.

The chips bill was more than a year in the making, but finally cleared Congress late last month with significant bipartisan margins. The Senate passed it 64-33, with 17 GOP senators supporting it, while the House followed suit with a 243-187 vote that included 24 Republicans in favor, even though party leaders began urging their ranks to vote against it after Democrats advanced the separate bill focused on climate and health care.

The White House sought Tuesday to begin selling the immediate impacts of the semiconductor measure, noting that Micron, a leading U.S. chip manufacturer, will announce a \$40 billion plan to boost domestic production of memory chips, while Qualcomm and GlobalFoundries will unveil a \$4.2 billion expansion of an upstate New York chip plant.

"We are working hand-in-hand with private companies who are already announcing new investments here at home," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said. Asked when Americans will see new jobs or other impacts of the new competitiveness law, Jean-Pierre declined to say, noting the White House would have details "very soon."

But there is also a limit as to how fast the administration can pump money into the economy for technological breakthroughs and new infrastructure. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo has stressed that the goal is ensuring funding for broadband and economic development is properly spent, not just ushered out the door quickly. Her department will take the lead on implementing the chips law.

Mitch Landrieu, the former mayor of New Orleans who is coordinating the release of infrastructure money, has said the goal is not necessarily to achieve political gains in midterms but ensure that state and local governments get the money they urgently need.

"I didn't get hired to be a political prognosticator," Landrieu said in a May interview, noting that even Republicans who opposed the infrastructure spending are now touting its benefits and "that's OK with us because this was done for the American people."

Tuesday's sweltering South Lawn ceremony celebrating the competitiveness bill was the latest White House event running through a veritable checklist of recent accomplishments. Biden will host another Wednesday to sign legislation offering care for veterans suffering from exposure to toxic burn pits. The White House is also expected to hold an event after the climate and health care package clears the House.

"We know there are those who focus more on seeking power than securing the future," Biden said as he signed the chips measure. But he added that with the new law, "the future of the chip industry is going to be made in America."

US will stretch monkeypox vaccine supply with smaller doses

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. health officials on Tuesday authorized a plan to stretch the nation's limited supply of monkeypox vaccine by giving people just one-fifth the usual dose, citing research suggesting that the reduced amount is about as effective.

The so-called dose-sparing approach also calls for administering the Jynneos vaccine with an injection just under the skin rather than into deeper tissue — a practice that may rev up the immune system better. Recipients would still get two shots spaced four weeks apart.

The highly unusual step is a stark acknowledgment that the U.S. currently lacks the supplies needed to vaccinate everyone seeking protection from the rapidly spreading virus.

That includes 1.6 million to 1.7 million Americans considered by federal officials to be at highest risk from the disease, primarily men with HIV or men who have a higher risk of contracting it. Vaccinating that group would require more than 3.2 million shots.

White House officials said the new policy would immediately multiply the 440,000 currently available as full doses into more than 2 million smaller doses.

"It's safe, it's effective, and it will significantly scale the volume of vaccine doses available for communities across the country," Robert Fenton, the White House's monkeypox response coordinator, told reporters.

The Biden administration declared monkeypox a public health emergency last week in an effort to slow the outbreak that has infected more than 8,900 Americans. Officials announced a separate determination Tuesday that allows the Food and Drug Administration to expedite its review of medical products or new uses for them, such as the dose-sparing technique for Jynneos.

The FDA authorized the approach for adults 18 and older who are at high risk of monkeypox infection. Younger people can also get the vaccine if they are deemed high risk, though they should receive the traditional injection, the agency said.

FDA officials stressed that the second dose is critical to ensuring protection.

"We feel pretty strongly that the two doses are necessary because, in part, we don't have any evidence that three, six, eight months later people will be adequately protected by a single dose," said Dr. Peter Marks, the FDA's vaccine chief.

Regulators pointed to a 2015 study showing that inoculation with one-fifth of the traditional two-dose vaccine generated a robust immune-system response comparable to that of the full dose. About 94% of people receiving the smaller dose had adequate levels of virus-fighting antibodies, compared with 98% of those receiving the full dose, according to the study funded by the National Institutes of Health.

The NIH is planning an additional trial of the technique. And Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said her agency is already starting to track real-world vaccine effectiveness in U.S. communities, though initial estimates will take time to generate.

But some experts and advocates worried that with little data to support the policy, it could backfire if it reduces vaccine effectiveness.

"We have grave concerns about the limited amount of research that has been done on this dose and administration method, and we fear it will give people a false sense of confidence that they are protected," said David Harvey of the National Coalition of STD Directors, in a statement.

The smaller doses also require a different type of injection that penetrates only the top layer of skin, rather than the lower layer between the skin and muscle. That's a less common technique that may require extra training for some health practitioners. But infectious disease specialists said it shouldn't be a major obstacle.

"Intradermal administration is certainly something that has been used for other vaccines, including the smallpox vaccine, which was administered to hundreds of millions of people during the 20th century," said Anne Rimoin, director of UCLA's Center for Global and Immigrant Health.

The shallower injection is thought to help stimulate the immune system because the skin contains numerous immunity cells that target outside invaders.

The CDC said it will provide educational materials on the technique along with a broader awareness

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campaign for U.S. health departments.

Rationing vaccine doses is common in Africa and other parts of the world with limited health resources. In recent years the World Health Organization has endorsed the strategy to address outbreaks of yellow fever, polio and other diseases.

"This is not an uncommon situation" said Dr. William Moss of Johns Hopkins' Vaccine Access Center. "It comes down to the public health decision-making: In the midst of an outbreak where you have insufficient supply, do you make this tradeoff?"

Both the U.K. and Canada have adopted a single-dose vaccine strategy prioritizing people who face the highest risk from monkeypox. And health departments in several large U.S. cities adopted a similar strategy amid limited supplies, including New York, San Francisco and Washington.

Officials said Tuesday that anyone who previously received a full first dose can get the smaller amount for their second dose.

U.S. officials have shipped more than 625,000 full vaccine doses to state and local health departments. So far the shots have been recommended for people who have already been exposed to monkeypox or are likely to get it due to recent sexual contacts in areas where the virus is spreading.

The Biden administration has come under fire for not quickly marshaling millions more doses from the strategic national stockpile. Officials have ordered 5 million shots since July, but most aren't expected to be delivered until 2023. Under the new dosing strategy that would represent 25 million doses.

The U.S. owns bulk vaccine ingredients equivalent to 16.1 million doses under contracts with Danish manufacturer Bavarian Nordic. But the material needs to be sealed in vials, a process that's expected to take months.

The FDA approved the Jynneos vaccine in 2019 to prevent smallpox and monkeypox based, in part, on studies in monkeys. Animals that received the two-dose vaccination were more than twice as likely to survive than those who didn't after being infected with monkeypox, according to FDA labeling.

Additional human studies showed people who received Jynneos had an immune response similar to those who received an older smallpox vaccine. But Jynneos hasn't been tested in humans with either monkeypox or its relative smallpox, which was eradicated decades ago.

'El Jefe' the jaguar, famed in US, photographed in Mexico

By MARIA VERZA Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — They call him "El Jefe," he is at least 12 years old and his crossing of the heavily guarded U.S.-Mexico border has sparked celebrations on both sides.

"El Jefe" — or "The Boss" — is one of the oldest jaguars on record along the frontier, one of few known to have crossed a border partly lined by a wall and other infrastructure to stop drug traffickers and migrants, and the one believed to have traveled the farthest, say ecologists of the Borderlands Linkages Initiative, a binational collaboration of eight conservation groups.

That assessment is based on photographs taken over the years. Jaguars can be identified by their spots, which serve as a kind of unique fingerprint.

The rare northern jaguar's ability to cross the border suggests that despite increased impediments, there are still open corridors and if they are kept open "it is feasible (to conserve) the jaguar population in the long term," said Juan Carlos Bravo of the Wildlands Network, one of those groups in the initiative.

But some fear for the jaguars' future. Although it was the government of President Donald Trump that reinforced and expanded the border wall with Mexico, the Biden administration has announced plans for closing four gaps between the U.S. state of Arizona and the Mexican state of Sonora — the two states the jaguars traverse.

Conservationists do not know how many jaguars there are in the Sierra Madre Occidental, but of the 176 that have been identified over two decades by the Northern Jaguar Project — another group in the initiative — only two others besides "El Jefe" are known to have crossed the border, Bravo said. In one case, conservationists are not sure if the jaguar crossed the border alive or dead since only its skin was found.

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The first photograph of "El Jefe" was taken by a hunter southeast of Tucson, Arizona, in 2011, Bravo said. The jaguar became famous in Arizona and a local school named him "El Jefe." Motion sensor cameras installed in transit areas photographed the jaguar in Arizona again in 2012 and in 2015.

Conservationists were stunned when they confirmed that a photograph taken by another member of the coalition, Profauna, last November in the center of Sonora was "El Jefe." The discovery meant not only that jaguars could still cross the border but that other jaguars they had lost track of could also still be alive, the initiative said in a statement.

Hunted in the southwestern United States for rewards offered by the government to promote cattle ranching, they were thought to have disappeared from the U.S. by the end of the 20th century. Jaguar populations are currently concentrated on Mexico's Pacific coast, southeastern Mexico, Central America and central South America.

A sighting of jaguars in the United States in 1996 prompted studies that found a reproductive point in the center of Sonora.

The NGOs banded together to operate on both sides of the border to track the cats, create sanctuaries, understand where they moved and seek the support of landowners in the U.S. and Mexico to protect them, Bravo said.

Besides the difficulty of determining where to put cameras to record the animals and the subsequent analysis of the images, conservationists in Mexico face another problem: drug cartels.

"There is a presence of armed groups and drug traffickers" who pass through the same isolated areas as the jaguars, Bravo said by telephone from Sonora. "It is important to move carefully, work with the people in the communities that tell us where not to go. ... All of this is making it very, very complicated."

The border is the main challenge for hopes to repopulate the American Southwest with jaguars, with walls impeding movement by those animals as well as the American antelope, the black bear and the Mexican wolf, Bravo said. Light towers and the roads used by the Border Patrol also are a problem, he added.

Town honors Ahmaud Arbery day after end of hate crimes case

By RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

BRUNSWICK, Ga. (AP) — A crowd of dozens chanted on a sweltering street corner Tuesday as Ahmaud Arbery's hometown unveiled new street signs honoring the young Black man who was fatally shot after being chased by three white men in a nearby neighborhood — a crime local officials vowed to never forget.

Arbery's parents joined the celebration the day after the men responsible for their son's death received harsh prison sentences in U.S. District Court for committing federal hate crimes.

Officials in coastal Brunswick, where Arbery grew up, have ordered that intersections along all 2.7 miles (4.35 kilometers) of Albany Street that runs through the heart of the city's Black community will have additional signs designating it as Honorary Ahmaud Arbery Street.

The first two signs were unveiled Tuesday at an intersection near the Brunswick African-American Cultural Center, where one wall is adorned with a giant mural of Arbery's smiling face.

"That's an honor, is all I can say," said Brenda Davis, a dock worker at Brunswick's busy seaport who lives on Albany Street along a stretch of modest brick and cinder block homes. "He means something to everybody, though a lot of people didn't know him."

Arbery was killed Feb. 23, 2020, after he was spotted running in the Satilla Shores subdivision not far from his mother's house. A white father and son, Greg and Travis McMichael, grabbed guns and used a pickup truck to chase after Arbery, suspecting he was burglar. A neighbor, William "Roddie" Bryan, joined the pursuit in his own truck and recorded cellphone video of Travis McMichael shooting Arbery at close range with a shotgun.

No arrests were made for more than two months, until the graphic cellphone video leaked online and Georgia state investigators took over the case from local police. Arbery's death reverberated far beyond Brunswick as protests erupted across the U.S. over killings of unarmed Black people such as George Floyd in Minneapolis and Breonna Taylor in Kentucky.

More than two years of criminal proceedings against Arbery's killers concluded Monday as U.S. District

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Court Judge Lisa Godbey Wood sentenced the McMichaels to life and Bryan to 35 years in prison after their February convictions on federal hate crime charges. All three were already headed to state prison after being found guilty of Arbery's murder last November.

Brunswick weathered both criminal trials without violence as his family insisted any demands for justice be carried out peacefully.

City commissioners voted in December to place Arbery's name on a city street with a resolution proclaiming that he had become "a symbol of strength and unity within our community."

"We did this because we want to always remember what happened," Cornell Harvey, who served as Brunswick's mayor when the street designation was adopted, said Tuesday. "You say, 'Why would you want to remember such a tragedy?' Because sometimes it takes that to make a change. I am so sorry for the family ... but history has seized us."

The crowd chanted "Long live Ahmaud Arbery!" as his mother and father tugged on opposite ends of a blue covering to reveal the new street sign bearing their son's name underneath.

Wanda Cooper-Jones, Arbery's mother, said that although she still mourns his death, she also takes pride in what's been accomplished in its wake. Georgia adopted a hate crimes law imposing additional penalties for crimes motivated by a victim's race, religion, sexual orientation or other factors. And state lawmakers gutted an 1863 state law authorizing private citizens to make arrests, which Arbery's pursuers had sought to use to justify the deadly chase.

"I look at the change Ahmaud has brought since his passing," Cooper-Jones told the dozens gathered for the street dedication.

"My only prayer is you guys will not forget his name," she said, breaking down in tears. "Please promise me you guys will always say his name."

For Arbery's family, the court battles aren't over. The McMichaels and Bryan have appealed their murder convictions, and almost surely will appeal the hate crimes verdicts as well.

Meanwhile, Jackie Johnson, the local district attorney at the time of the killing, has been indicted on state misconduct charges alleging she used her position to protect the McMichaels. Greg McMichael was a retired investigator who worked in Johnson's office, and prosecutors say they exchanged several phone calls in the weeks after the shooting. Johnson was voted out of office in the fall of 2020. She has denied wrongdoing.

Still, some in Brunswick are hoping for a reprieve now that sentences have been imposed in both cases against Arbery's killers.

"There's a sigh of relief now that justice is served," said the Rev. Abra Lattany Reed, a Brunswick native and Methodist minister who attended the street sign dedication Tuesday.

She added: "It would be a fair assessment to say we're tired of the spotlight. This isn't the kind of spotlight you want on your community."

New York Film Festival sets lineup for 60th edition

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York Film Festival will celebrate its 60th anniversary with a robust 32-film main slate and a number of hometown tales, including James Gray's Queens coming-of-age drama "Armageddon Time" and Laura Poitras' documentary "All the Beauty and the Bloodshed," about artist Nan Goldin's battle against the Sackler family.

Film at Lincoln Center, which puts on the annual festival, announced this year's lineup Tuesday. The gala screenings are notably New York-centric, beginning with the previously announced opening night film, from longtime New Yorker and New York Film Festival regular Noah Baumbach. He'll debut his Don DeLillo adaption "White Noise" shortly after it also opens the Venice Film Festival.

The festival's centerpiece will be "All the Beauty and the Bloodshed," in which the "Citizenfour" filmmaker chronicles Goldin's fight to stem the opioid crisis and the pharmaceutical companies that benefitted from it.

Elegance Bratton, who drew from his own experiences in his documentary about homeless queer and

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transgender young people in New York in his documentary "Pier Kids," will close out the festival with his semi-autobiographical fiction film "The Inspection," starring Jeremy Pope as a gay man in Marine Corps basic training.

Gray's "Armageddon Time" will screen as part of the festival's 60th anniversary celebration. The film, which premiered in May at the Cannes Film Festival, draws from Gray's own childhood in 1980s Queens. It co-stars Anthony Hopkins, Jeremy Strong and Anne Hathaway.

Other entries include Todd Field's anticipated "TAR," starring Cate Blanchett as a world-renown composer; Paul Schrader's "Master Gardener," starring Joel Edgerton as a horticulturist; Joanna Hogg's "The Eternal Daughter," with Tilda Swinton; master documentarian Frederick Wiseman's "A Couple," a monologue drama based on the letters of Leo Tolstoy and wife Countess Sophia Behrs.

Several standouts from this year's Cannes will play at the festival including Charlotte Wells' feature debut "Aftersun"; Park Chan-wook's "Decision to Leave"; Mia Hansen-Løve's "One Fine Morning"; Kelly Reichardt's "Showing Up"; Cristian Mungiu's "R.M.N."; and Ruben Östlund's Palme d'Or-winner "Triangle of Sadness."

Also among New York's selections is the latest from Iranian director Jafar Panahi, "No Bears." In July, Panahi, one of Iran's leading filmmakers, was sent to prison for a six-year sentence related to a 2011 charge of producing antigovernment propaganda. His imprisonment has been widely decried internationally and in the film community.

The New York Film Festival runs Sept. 30-Oct. 16. Along with premieres at Lincoln Center, the festival will host screenings throughout New York's five boroughs, at Staten Island's Alamo Drafthouse Cinema; Brooklyn Academy of Music; the Bronx Museum of the Arts; the Museum of the Moving Image in Queens; and the Maysles Documentary Center in Harlem.

Motown songwriter-producer Lamont Dozier dead at 81

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Lamont Dozier, the middle name of the celebrated Holland-Dozier-Holland team that wrote and produced "You Can't Hurry Love," "Heat Wave" and dozens of other hits and helped make Motown an essential record company of the 1960s and beyond, has died at age 81.

Dozier died "peacefully" Monday at his home near Scottsdale, Arizona, according to a statement issued by his family. The cause of death was not immediately determined. Duke Fakir, a close friend and the last surviving member of the original Four Tops, called Dozier a "beautiful, talented guy" with an uncanny sense of what material worked best for a given group.

"I like to call Holland-Dozier-Holland 'tailors of music,'" he said Tuesday during a telephone interview. "They could take any artist, call them into their office, talk to them, listen to them and write them a top 10 song."

In Motown's historic, self-defined rise to the "Sound of Young America," Holland-Dozier-Holland stood out even compared to such gifted peers as Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder and Barrett Strong. Over a four-year period, 1963-67, Dozier and brothers Brian and Eddie Holland crafted more than 25 top 10 songs and mastered the blend of pop and rhythm and blues that allowed the Detroit label, and founder Berry Gordy, to defy boundaries between Black and white music and rival the Beatles on the airwaves.

For the Four Tops, they wrote "Baby I Need Your Loving" and "Reach Out (I'll Be There)," for Martha and the Vandellas they wrote "Heat Wave" and "Jimmy Mack," for Marvin Gaye "Baby Don't You Do It" and "How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved by You)." The music lived on through countless soundtracks, samplings and radio airings, in cover versions by the Rolling Stones, Linda Ronstadt, James Taylor and many others and in generations of songwriters and musicians influenced by the Motown sound.

"Their structures were simple and direct," Gerri Hirshey wrote in the Motown history "Nowhere to Run: The Story of Soul Music," published in 1984. "Sometimes a song barreled to number one on the sheer voice of repetitive hooks, like a fast-food jingle that lurks, subliminally, until it connects with real hunger."

Brian Wilson, Ronnie Wood and Mick Hucknall were among the many musicians offering tributes Tuesday. Carole King, who with then-husband Gerry Goffin was another leading hitmaker of the '60s, tweeted that "striving to keep up with them made us better songwriters."

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The polish of H-D-H was ideally suited for Motown's signature act, Diana Ross and the Supremes, for whom they wrote 10 No. 1 songs, among them "Where Did Our Love Go," "Stop! In the Name of Love" and "You Can't Hurry Love." Expectations were so high that when "Nothing But Heartaches" failed to make the top 10 in 1965, Gordy sent a company memo demanding that Motown only release chart toppers for the Supremes, an order H-D-H obeyed with "I Hear a Symphony" and several more records.

Holland-Dozier-Holland weren't above formulas or closely repeating a previous hit, but they worked in various moods and styles: the casual joy of "How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved by You)," the escalating desire of "Heat Wave," the urgency of "Reach Out (I'll Be There)." Dozier's focus was on melody and arrangements, whether the haunting echoes of the Vandellas' backing vocals on "Nowhere To Run," flashing lights of guitar that drive the Supremes' "You Keep Me Hanging On," or the hypnotic gospel piano on Gaye's "Can I Get a Witness."

"All the songs started out as slow ballads, but when we were in the studio we'd pick up the tempo," Dozier told the Guardian in 2001. "The songs had to be fast because they were for teenagers - otherwise it would have been more like something for your parents. The emotion was still there, it was just under cover of the optimism that you got from the up-tempo beat."

The prime of H-D-H, and of Motown, ended in 1968 amid questions and legal disputes over royalties and other issues. H-D-H left the label, and neither side would recover. The Four Tops and the Supremes were among the acts who suffered from no longer having their most dependable writers. Meanwhile, H-D-H's efforts to start their own business fell far short of Motown. The labels Invictus and Hot Wax both faded within a few years, and Dozier would recall with disbelief the Hollands' turning down such future superstars as Al Green and George Clinton. H-D-H did release several hits, including Freda Payne's "Band of Gold" and Honey Cone's "Want Ads."

Holland-Dozier-Holland were inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1988 and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame two years later. On his own, Dozier had a top 20 hit with "Trying to Hold on to My Woman," helped produce Aretha Franklin's "Sweet Passion" album and collaborated with Eric Clapton and Hucknall among others. His biggest success was co-writing Phil Collins' chart-topping "Two Hearts," from the 1988 movie "Buster," a mid-tempo, Motown-style ballad that won a Grammy and Golden Globe and received an Oscar nomination.

H-D-H reunited for a stage production of "The First Wives Club," which premiered in 2009, but their time back together was brief and unhappy. Dozier and the Hollands clashed often and Dozier dropped out before the show launched. "I can't see us ever working with Lamont again," Eddie Holland wrote in "Come and Get These Memories," a memoir by the Hollands that came out in 2019, the same year Dozier published the memoir "How Sweet It Is."

Dozier acknowledged that his early success conflicted with his family life, but he eventually settled down with Barbara Ullman, who died in 2021 after more than 40 years of marriage. His children included the songwriter-record producer Beau Dozier and composer Paris Ray Dozier.

Like so many Motown artists, Dozier was born in Detroit and raised in a family of singers and musicians. He sang in the choir of his Baptist church and his love for words was affirmed by a grade school teacher who, he recalled, liked one of his poems so much she kept it on the blackboard for a month. By the late 1950s, he was a professional singer and eventually signed with Motown, where he first worked with Brian Holland, and then Eddie Holland, who wrote most of the lyrics.

Some of Motown's biggest hits and catchiest phrases originated from Dozier's domestic life. He remembered his grandfather's addressing women as "Sugar pie, honey bunch," the opening words and ongoing refrain of the Four Tops' "I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)." The Four Tops hit "Bernadette" was inspired by all three songwriters having troubles with women named Bernadette, while an argument with another Dozier girlfriend helped inspire a Supremes favorite.

"She was pretty heated up because I was quite the ladies' man at that time and I'd been cheating on her," Dozier told the Guardian. "So she started telling me off and swinging at me until I said, 'Stop! In the name of love!' And as soon as I'd said it I heard a cash register in my head and laughed. My girlfriend didn't think it was very amusing: we broke up. The only ones who were happy about it were the Supremes."

Kenan Thompson of 'SNL' to host Sept. 12 Emmy Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Veteran "Saturday Night Live" cast member Kenan Thompson will host next month's Emmy Awards.

"Being a part of this incredible evening where we honor the best of the television community is ridiculously exciting, and to do it on NBC — my longtime network family — makes it even more special," Thompson said in a statement Tuesday.

Thompson has been with NBC's late-night sketch show since 2003 and returns for his 20th season this fall. His work on "SNL" has earned him a trio of Emmy supporting acting nominations, and he won a trophy in 2018 as lyrics co-writer of the song "Come Back, Barack," which was featured on the show.

He earned a lead acting nomination last year for his sitcom "Kenan," which NBC canceled in May after two seasons.

Thompson was an original cast member of Nickelodeon's children's sketch comedy series "All That" and starred with Kel Mitchell on the spinoff "Kenan and Kel." His film credits include "Clifford the Big Red Dog" and "Barbershop 2: Back in Business."

The Sept. 12 Emmy ceremony will air live on NBC and be carried on its streaming sibling Peacock. Top nominees include the dramas "Succession" and "Squid Game" and comedies "Ted Lasso," "Hacks" and "Only Murders in the Building."

'The Sacrifice Zone': Myanmar bears cost of green energy

By DAKE KANG, VICTORIA MILKO and LORI HINNANT Associated Press

The birds no longer sing, and the herbs no longer grow. The fish no longer swim in rivers that have turned a murky brown. The animals do not roam, and the cows are sometimes found dead.

The people in this northern Myanmar forest have lost a way of life that goes back generations. But if they complain, they, too, face the threat of death.

This forest is the source of several key metallic elements known as rare earths, often called the vitamins of the modern world. Rare earths now reach into the lives of almost everyone on the planet, turning up in everything from hard drives and cellphones to elevators and trains. They are especially vital to the fast-growing field of green energy, feeding wind turbines and electric car engines. And they end up in the supply chains of some of the most prominent companies in the world, including General Motors, Volkswagen, Mercedes, Tesla and Apple.

But an AP investigation has found that their universal use hides a dirty open secret in the industry: Their cost is environmental destruction, the theft of land from villagers and the funneling of money to brutal militias, including at least one linked to Myanmar's secretive military government. As demand soars for rare earths along with green energy, the abuses are likely to grow.

"This rapid push to build out mining capacity is being justified in the name of climate change," said Julie Michelle Klinger, author of the book "Rare Earths Frontiers," who is leading a federal project to trace illicit energy minerals. "There's still this push to find the right place to mine them, which is a place that is out of sight and out of mind."

The AP investigation drew on dozens of interviews, customs data, corporate records and Chinese academic papers, along with satellite imagery and geological analysis gathered by the environmental non-profit Global Witness, to tie rare earths from Myanmar to the supply chains of 78 companies.

About a third of the companies responded. Of those, about two-thirds didn't or wouldn't comment on their sourcing, including Volkswagen, which said it was conducting due diligence for rare earths. Nearly all said they took environmental protection and human rights seriously.

Some companies said they audited their rare earth supply chains; others didn't or required only supplier self-assessments. GM said it understood "the risks of heavy rare earths metals" and would source from an American supplier soon.

Tesla did not respond to repeated requests for comment, and Mercedes said they contacted suppliers

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to learn more in response to this story. Apple said "a majority" of their rare earths were recycled and they found "no evidence" of any from Myanmar, but experts say in general there is usually no way to make sure.

Just as dirty rare earths trickle down the supply chains of companies, they also slip through the cracks of regulation.

In 2010, in response to war in the Congo, Congress required companies to disclose the origin of so-called conflict minerals — tantalum, tin, gold and tungsten — and promise their sourcing does not benefit armed groups. But the law does not cover rare earths. Audits are left up to individual companies, and no single agency is held accountable.

The State Department, which leads work on securing the U.S. rare earths supply, did not respond to repeated requests for comment. But experts say the government weighs the regulation of rare earths against other green goals, such as the sales and use of electric vehicles. With ongoing negotiations in Congress, the issue has become increasingly touchy, they say.

Rare earths are also omitted from the European Union's 2021 regulation on conflict minerals. A European Commission statement noted gaps in oversight of the supply chain stretching to Europe, and said "it is yet unclear how" a Chinese push to regulate rare earths will work.

With no regulation or alternatives, companies have quietly continued shipping rare earths without environmental, social and governance audits, known as ESG.

"What would be the result if now the world would say, 'We want to do ESG audits on all rare earths production'?" said Thomas Kruegger, director of Ginger International Trade & Investment, which does mineral and metal supply chain management. "The result would be that 70% of production would need to be closed down."

The story of rare earths is one of a naked grab for resources while leaving the wreckage to other countries. Despite their name, these elements are relatively common in trace amounts on the earth's crust, and possess an extraordinary magnetic power critical to technology. However, extracting enough rare earths requires intense mining that can be environmentally destructive.

The United States offshored its rare earths mining to China in the 1980s because of environmental and cost issues. China's leader at the time, Deng Xiaoping, declared rare earths China's answer to "oil in the Middle East." Tens of thousands of Chinese in the countryside discovered that they could make more in a month of mining than years of farming.

For decades the industry prospered. China became the world's foremost miner of rare earths. A Beijing magazine called the profits "more addictive than drugs."

Then, stung by public criticism, officials in Beijing declared war on the country's dirty industries, including rare earths mining. At a 2012 press conference in Beijing, a top Chinese industry official brandished photos of the devastation — pockmarked land stripped bare of vegetation.

Caught in the crossfire were miners like Guo, who asked to be identified by his last name only.

For years, Guo, a former car repairman, earned a handsome living after joining the booming rare earths industry in his native Jiangxi province. Then Beijing began enforcing some of the world's strongest environmental laws, shutting down mom-and-pop operations like his. Chinese satellites now snap photos from space, hunting for hidden mines.

But even while the supply from China is now monitored, the global demand for rare earths is expected to explode by 300% to 700% by 2040, according to the International Energy Agency. The proposed Inflation Reduction Act in the U.S. would increase demand even more by subsidizing the sale of electric vehicles in one of the world's largest markets.

"The disturbing reality is that the cash that fuels these abuses ultimately comes from the world's fast-growing demand for these minerals, driven by the scaling up of green energy technologies," said Clare Hammond, a senior researcher at Global Witness, which also conducted field work in Myanmar.

China is also responding to competition from Europe and its greatest rival, the United States, which has called its dependence on rare earths from China a "national security risk." Concerned that its shrinking reserves could allow Western countries to break its stranglehold on the industry, China encouraged

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companies to look abroad.

"Environmental controls have become much stricter," said a government trade researcher, who declined to be named because he was not authorized to speak to the media. "That's why imports have increased. It's better to get rare earths from abroad."

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said it "didn't understand" the situation and referred a request for comment to other ministries. The industrial and environmental ministries and the Jiangxi regional government did not respond to requests for comment.

As mines in China shuttered, ore prices rose. In neighboring Myanmar, home to some of the world's richest deposits of what are known as heavy rare earths, opportunity beckoned. Thousands of Jiangxi miners streamed across the border.

"It reminds me of the European colonial attitudes towards Africa," said an industry analyst, speaking on condition of anonymity to avoid damaging ties with the Chinese government. "You just can't be relying on third-world-type mining practices in a dictatorship like Myanmar. It's not sustainable."

That does not bother Guo.

In 2019, he got a call. An old contact was opening up shop in Myanmar and needed a technician. Would he like to go?

Guo said yes, joining what he describes as a modern-day gold rush. He recounted primitive working conditions, including clouds of mosquitoes and nights spent burning logs in ramshackle cabins. The miners dug hundreds of feet deep with shovels and their bare, callused hands.

"I lived in a virgin forest, I lived like a savage," he said.

He and other Chinese workers in Myanmar described a web of small, unlicensed private mines that sell to China's big state-owned mining conglomerates — directly or through trade intermediaries. When cash changes hands, few questions are asked.

"I'm only responsible for digging the mountain up and selling it," Guo said. "The rest is none of my business."

Since 2015, imports from Myanmar have grown almost a hundredfold, according to UN trade data. Myanmar is now China's single largest source of heavy rare earths, making up nearly half of the supply, according to Chinese customs data and expert estimates.

A few years ago, there were just two or three mines in Myanmar, then dozens. Today there are hundreds, and Guo guesses there may soon be thousands. At this pace, he predicts, it won't be long before Myanmar's rare earths are all gone.

But Guo cares little about preservation or politics.

"They talk about future generations, I'm talking about survival today," he said. "We just see if we can make money. It's that simple."

There is a name for what Myanmar has become: A "sacrifice zone," or a place that destroys itself for the good of the world.

The sacrifice is visible from the air, in toxic turquoise pools that dot the landscape covered by mountain jungles just a few years ago. Since rare earth clays in Myanmar are soft and near the surface, they can easily be scooped into these pools of chemicals. Satellite imagery commissioned by Global Witness showed more than 2,700 of these pools at almost 300 separate locations.

The leaching agents have tainted tributaries of Myanmar's main river, prompted landslides and poisoned the earth, according to witnesses, miners and local activists. Water is no longer drinkable, and endangered species such as tigers, pangolins and red pandas have fled the area.

A villager who lives along a river some 15 miles from the center of the mining sites said his wife used to catch and sell fish. Now the few they can catch make them ill, so they must buy from elsewhere at higher prices instead. Every time he enters the water, his feet feel itchy.

"There are no fish along the creek, not even small fishes," said the villager, who asked to be anonymous for his safety. "Everything went extinct."

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Militias are rampant in these northern forest frontier areas, with at least one tied to the Border Guard Force backed by the Myanmar military, or Tatmadaw. Since seizing power last year, the Tatmadaw is under international sanctions for human rights abuses, which means the rare earths money it gets from the militia may be going into a violent crackdown against civilians.

With the armed militias in control, villagers have no recourse to defend their land.

When village leaders filed a complaint about the effects of rare earth mining and testing on land needed for black cardamom, walnuts and livestock, a high-ranking militia leader aligned with the Border Guard Force angrily summoned them. He said rare earth mining would proceed with or without their agreement.

"You, village leaders, should solve this issue," he yelled as he pointed to the leaders, according to a recording of the January meeting obtained by Global Witness, which was shared with and verified by the AP. "Otherwise, I'll have to start shooting and killing people. Do not underestimate me. I am not a child — this is not child's play."

The Myanmar military, militia-owned mining companies and militia leaders did not respond to requests for comment.

In the meantime, mining projects continue to get ever closer to the land villagers are trying to protect.

"We dare not complain," said a villager, who also asked to be anonymous for his safety. "If we say something ... they beat us. We don't want to be in prison."

The militias and warlords have turned Myanmar's frontier with China into a modern-day wild west, with each tiny fiefdom demanding a cut of the profits that flow through its land.

"(The money) has to be going to people that are not nice people," said an executive at a Chinese magnets maker, who declined to be named to speak on a sensitive topic. "There's no way out of it."

For Dong, a Chinese miner, the hundreds of dollars he hands to the armed men lining the roads in Myanmar are the price of doing business.

"To enter Myanmar, you pay," he said, declining to give his first name to speak on a sensitive topic. "It's all about the money."

Dong said police have told him that the rare earths he extracts can only be sold to China, not to the Americans or Japanese, because they are China's strategic resources. He is under no illusions about the damage from acids so strong that they corrode the shovels of his bulldozers and excavators — something he'd never seen before.

"This stuff is unbelievable," he said. "It's definitely polluting."

As rare earths from Myanmar travel around the world, they pass through many hands.

The most destructive mining is for heavy rare earths, which are critical to make powerful magnets heat-resistant. Ores are trucked across the border from illicit mines in Myanmar to southern China, where state-owned companies buy them up in sacks by the thousands. Among them: Minmetals, China Southern Rare Earth, and Rising Nonferrous Metals.

Some 70% of China Southern's rare earth ores came from Myanmar, with the rest from recycling, Jiangxi customs official Liu Jingjing wrote in a paper. China Southern, among the world's largest processors of heavy rare earths, has no active mining in China, according to Liu's paper. A company post highlighted how it is "seizing overseas rare earth resources" and "opening up" imports from Myanmar.

Minmetals, another major producer, warned shareholders in recent annual reports that it relied heavily on imports, as its one major mining project in China didn't produce enough. Rising Nonferrous, the third company, wrote on their website in 2020 that their trading subsidiary had won approval from Chinese customs to import Myanmar heavy rare earth ores.

All three companies did not respond to calls, emails and faxes requesting comment.

Those companies in turn supply three major magnet companies: Yantai Zhenghai Magnetic Material, JL MAG, and Zhong Ke San Huan, public agreements show. Rising Nonferrous also supplies Guangdong TDK, a joint venture with Tokyo-based TDK, one of the world's largest manufacturers of cell phone, laptop, and hard drive components and a supplier of Apple and Samsung. TDK and the magnet companies did not

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respond to requests for comment.

As the ore is transformed into magnets, it is separated, refined and melted, according to interviews with miners and magnet engineers. Along the way, materials from different sources often get mixed, making it difficult to track any particular shipment of rare earths from Myanmar to a specific batch of magnets.

Chinese magnet makers often don't know where their rare earths come from because many multinational companies don't ask, an engineer at one company noted.

"There's never been like, where do you get your rare earth?" said the engineer, declining to be named to speak candidly. "There should be concern, but there's no concern within the industry."

The magnet companies go on to supply intermediaries like components manufacturers and trading companies as well as big brands. The rare earths can pass through many more tiers of suppliers before reaching a consumer.

"The transparency in this industry is just so poor that the companies don't know," said Kristin Vekasi, a professor studying rare earth sourcing at the University of Maine.

Among global carmakers, GM, Volkswagen, and Mercedes said they expect suppliers to adhere to codes of conduct and due diligence, and Mercedes added that they were designing new motors to eliminate heavy rare earths. Ford said they conduct audits and request suppliers to identify sourcing.

Hyundai denied using rare earths from Myanmar, and Stellantis said that "to the best of Stellantis' knowledge," their rare earth supply chains only involve operations in China. Some auto parts makers, including Bosch, Brose and Nidec, also said they were assured by the magnet companies that their components were free of rare earths from Myanmar. Others, such as Continental AG and BorgWarner, said they expected suppliers to adhere to their codes of conduct.

However, only an order from the Chinese government could force companies to separate rare earths from Myanmar and China, according to Nabeel Mancheri, secretary general of the Rare Earth Industry Association. The group is trying to build a blockchain-based verification to link up international customers with the Chinese companies "upstream."

"Nothing exists on auditing the Chinese supply chain," he said. "Downstream players simply rely on whatever certificate they get from Chinese companies."

Among electronics giants, Samsung said they did not tolerate rights violations or environmental damage but did not answer other specific questions about their suppliers. Toshiba, Panasonic and Hitachi did not comment on suppliers but said they would suspend working with businesses violating human rights.

Thyssenkrupp said it had "initiated measures" to find out more about the origin of the minerals for its magnet supplier. Other machinery manufacturers like Mitsubishi did not respond.

Among wind turbine manufacturers, Siemens Gamesa, which has projects in the United States and Europe, said it audits immediate suppliers and is preparing to trace those further upstream. It said "supplier feedbacks" showed only rare earths from China. Other wind companies, like Xinjiang Goldwind, did not respond.

But Klinger, the expert on illicit minerals tracing, said the only way for a company to be certain to avoid rare earths from Myanmar is to have their supply chain "entirely outside of Myanmar, China and potentially outside Southeast Asia." She said there are cleaner ways to mine, but they cost more — a huge hurdle in the cutthroat world of commodities.

Mike Coffman, a former congressman who pushed for the original U.S. conflict minerals rules a decade ago, said he would like to see an expansion of the domestic supply of rare earths minerals, which is now before Congress. And U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, a Texas Republican, introduced a measure this year aimed at reducing U.S. reliance on China for rare earths and other critical minerals.

However, alternatives are still a long way in the future. In 2022, the U.S. and Australian governments both backed domestic rare earths projects with multimillion dollar financing, but facilities are years and tons of metals behind China's current capacity.

Other countries with rare earths deposits are reluctant to mine them. Greenland's parliament last year voted to halt a rare earth mining project, and efforts to develop a promising deposit in Sweden stalled

because of local objections.

In the meantime, villagers still protest in one area in northern Myanmar where the black cardamom and walnuts grow — for now. Standing in the green mountains under a tree, a villager made it clear why they continue to raise their voices even when there's been no recourse for others just a few mountains away.

"They are mining rare earth everywhere and we are no longer safe to drink water," she said. "There is nothing to support the children. Nothing to eat."

Israel-Gaza truce shines light on Palestinian hunger striker

By JELAL HASSAN and TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

IDNA, West Bank (AP) — A Palestinian hunger striker who his family says has refused food for the past 160 days and is wasting away in an Israeli jailhouse infirmary has suddenly been thrust into the center of efforts to firm up a Gaza cease-fire.

Khalil Awawdeh is in the spotlight because the Islamic Jihad group sought his release as part of Egyptian-brokered talks that ended three days of fighting between the Gaza-based militants and Israel over the weekend.

In an attempt to win the militants' agreement to halt their fire, Egypt had assured them it would also try to win the release of their West Bank leader and of Awawdeh.

The 40-year-old father of four girls, gaunt and weakened, is protesting his detention without charge or trial by Israel. He is one of dozens of prisoners who have staged hunger strikes in Israeli prisons.

Prospects for his release are uncertain. But his case highlights the plight of hundreds of Palestinians who are being held by Israel under a system that critics say denies them the right to due process.

Israel can hold so-called administrative detainees indefinitely, without showing them the alleged evidence against them or taking them to trial in military courts. Many turn to hunger strikes as a last recourse to bring attention to their situation.

Awawdeh's lawyer, Ahlam Haddad, said her client is "moving between life and death" and that it makes no sense to keep him in detention. "He looks like a pile of bones," she said. "How much of a threat can he be?"

His family says he not eaten for 160 days, and has only been drinking water, except for a 10-day period when he also received vitamin injections.

Israel is currently holding some 4,400 Palestinians, including militants who have carried out deadly attacks, as well as people arrested at protests or for throwing stones. Around 670 Palestinians are now being held in administrative detention, a number that jumped in March as Israel began near-nightly arrest raids in the West Bank following a spate of deadly attacks against Israelis.

Awawdeh hails from a small town in the southern West Bank and worked as a driver. In his current condition, he uses a wheelchair, and is showing memory loss and speech difficulties.

Haddad said he was arrested in December, accused by Israel of being a member of a militant group, a charge she said he denies.

Dawood Shihab, an Islamic Jihad official, said the group demanded his release as part of the truce talks because it supported his struggle for freedom, not because he is a member.

"This is a matter that continues to be a disgrace to all of humanity," he said, referring to the hunger strike and detention.

Haddad said she doesn't know why Islamic Jihad chose to include him in the cease-fire deal, along with a senior West Bank commander Israel arrested last week. She is currently appealing his detention in court.

The arrest of the commander had sparked the weekend fighting, with Israeli launching what it said were preemptive airstrikes at Gaza and Islamic Jihad firing hundreds of rockets at Israel. Dozens of Palestinians were killed during the fighting.

The Israeli Shin Bet security agency did not respond to a request for comment.

Israel says administrative detention is needed to prevent attacks or to keep dangerous suspects locked up without sharing evidence that could endanger valuable intelligence sources.

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Israel says it provides due process and largely imprisons those who threaten its security, though a small number are held for petty crimes.

Palestinians and human rights groups say the system is designed to quash opposition and maintain permanent control over millions of Palestinians while denying them basic rights.

Prisoners like Awawdeh have looked to hunger strikes as their only means to protest their detentions. Dozens of prisoners have staved off food for weeks to draw attention to their detention without trial or charges.

"The tools detainees have to challenge the unjustness of detention are very few. Hunger strikes are an exceptional measure, a tool for the weakest people who have no other way of advocating for themselves," said Jessica Montell, the director of Hamoked, an Israeli human rights group, who said Israel had turned its system of incarceration of Palestinians into an "assembly line."

Lengthy hunger strikes draw international attention and stoke protests in the occupied Palestinian territories, putting pressure on Israel to meet the prisoners' demands. Amid that pressure, Israel has at times acceded to hunger strikers' demands.

As hunger strikers' health deteriorates, they are transferred to Israeli hospitals under guard. They drink water, and medics encourage them to take vitamins, but many refuse.

Haddad said she is hoping to convince a judge that Awawdeh's condition is so life-threatening that he must be released. She said a prison doctor has so far disputed that diagnosis.

No Palestinian in Israeli detention has died as a result of hunger strikes, but doctors say prolonged vitamin deficiency can cause permanent brain damage.

In Awawdeh's home in the occupied West Bank town of Idna, his family was anxiously following the latest cease-fire developments, now that his fate was suddenly linked to international diplomacy.

Awawdeh's wife Dalal told The Associated Press that her husband's release as a result of such efforts would be "a victory for the entire Palestinian cause."

Vatican cardinal honors Jewish convert, tells his own story

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — A Vatican cardinal marked the 80th anniversary Tuesday of the gas chamber killing of the Jewish-born Catholic convert Edith Stein by celebrating a Mass near the former Auschwitz death camp and telling the story of his own family's Jewish origins and their fate under the Nazis.

Michael Czerny is one of cardinals most closely associated with Pope Francis' pontificate. A Jesuit who ministered in El Salvador, Czerny heads the Vatican office responsible for Francis' priority portfolios of migration, the environment, development and social justice. A Czech-born Canadian, Czerny recently joined Francis on his landmark visit to Canada to apologize to Indigenous peoples for the Catholic Church's role in running the country's notorious residential schools.

On Tuesday, Czerny commemorated the anniversary of the day Stein was killed in Auschwitz's gas chambers by celebrating Mass in a nearby Carmelite convent in Oswiecim, a Polish town under Nazi German occupation during the war. There, he delivered a homily that recounted Stein's story and how it intersected with his own and that of his relatives, who hailed from Brno, in the former Czechoslovakia.

Stein was a German Jew born in 1891 in Breslau, now the Polish city of Wroclaw, who converted to Catholicism in 1922 and became a nun. She joined the Carmelite order in Cologne, Germany, but was transferred to the Netherlands after the intensification of Nazi attacks in 1938. She was arrested in 1942 after Hitler ordered the arrest of Jewish converts and was sent to Auschwitz, where she was killed Aug. 9, 1942. St. John Paul II canonized Stein as a martyr in 1998 and made her a patron saint of Europe the following year.

Czerny, 76, noted that he and Stein shared their "Jewish origins, the Catholic faith, a vocation to religious life," as well as the fact that Stein and Czerny's maternal grandmother, Anna Hayek, were about the same age and "came to a similar end."

"My mother's family — both parents and two brothers — were also Catholic but shared the Jewish origins

that the enemy abhorred," Czerny recalled in the text of his homily, which his office provided. "My maternal grandmother Anna, my grandfather Hans and my uncles Georg and Carl Robert, were all interned in Terezín, where Hans died," Czerny said, referring to the Theresienstadt concentration camp in the former Czechoslovakia.

"My grandmother and uncles were transported to Auschwitz. From here my uncles were sent to labor camps and eventually murdered there," he said.

His grandmother died of typhus in 1945, but the family has no trace of where she was buried.

Czerny's mother, a baptized Catholic, was forced to work as a farm laborer during the war because of her Jewish ancestry and was jailed in Theresienstadt and Leipzig for 20 months; his father was forced to work as a farm laborer because he refused to divorce her. In 1948, they moved to Canada as refugees with young Michael, who was born in 1946, and his brother, the cardinal said.

Czerny, who has made humanitarian visits to minister to refugees fleeing Ukraine on behalf of Francis, said he was honored to celebrate Stein in the year of Russia's war that he said "urges us to remember."

"Remembering both Edith and Anna with the six million others, we mourn and repent, 'Lest we forget ...,'" he said. "Through their intercession, we pray for peace in Ukraine and throughout the world."

Most electric vehicles won't qualify for federal tax credit

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — A tax credit of up to \$7,500 could be used to defray the cost of an electric vehicle under the Inflation Reduction Act now moving toward final approval in Congress.

But the auto industry is warning that the vast majority of EV purchases won't qualify for a tax credit that large.

That's mainly because of the bill's requirement that, to qualify for the credit, an electric vehicle must contain a battery built in North America with minerals mined or recycled on the continent.

And those rules become more stringent over time — to the point where, in a few years, it's possible that no EVs would qualify for the tax credit, says John Bozzella, CEO of the Alliance of Automotive Innovation, a key industry trade group. As of now, the alliance estimates that about 50 of the 72 electric, hydrogen or plug-in hybrid models that are sold in the United States wouldn't meet the requirements.

"The \$7,500 credit might exist on paper," Bozzella said in a statement, "but no vehicles will qualify for this purchase over the next few years."

The idea behind the requirement is to incentivize domestic manufacturing and mining, build a robust battery supply chain in North America and lessen the industry's dependence on overseas supply chains that could be subject to disruptions.

Production of lithium and other minerals that are used to produce EV batteries is now dominated by China. And the world's leading producer of cobalt, another component of the EV batteries, is the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Though electric vehicles are part of a global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, they require metallic elements known as rare earths, found in places like Myanmar, where an Associated Press investigation has found that the push for green energy has led to environmental destruction.

Under the \$740 billion economic package, which passed the Senate over the weekend and is nearing approval in the House, the tax credits would take effect next year. For an EV buyer to qualify for the full credit, 40% of the metals used in a vehicle's battery must come from North America. By 2027, that required threshold would reach 80%.

If the metals requirement isn't met, the automaker and its buyers would be eligible for half the tax credit, \$3,750.

A separate rule would require that half the batteries' value must be manufactured or assembled in the North America. If not, the rest of the tax credit would be lost. Those requirements also grow stricter each year, eventually reaching 100% in 2029. Still another rule would require that the EV itself be manufactured in North America, thereby excluding from the tax credit any vehicles made overseas.

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Automakers generally don't release where their components come from or how much they cost. But it's likely that some versions of Tesla's Model Y SUV and Model 3 car, the Chevrolet Bolt car and SUV and the Ford Mustang Mach E would be eligible for at least part of the credit. All those vehicles are assembled in North America.

The tax credit would be available only to couples with incomes of \$300,000 or less or single people with income of \$150,000 or less. And any trucks or SUVs with sticker prices above \$80,000 or cars above \$55,000 wouldn't be eligible.

There's also a new \$4,000 credit for buyers of used EVs, a provision that could help modest-income households go electric.

The industry says the North American battery supply chain is too small right now to meet the battery component requirements. It has proposed that the measure expand the list of countries whose battery materials would be eligible for the tax credit to nations that maintain defense agreements with the United States, including NATO members.

One component of the bill would require that after 2024, no vehicle would be eligible for the tax credit if its battery components came from China. Most vehicles now have some parts sourced in China, the alliance said.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, a Michigan Democrat and a leading ally of Detroit automakers, complained that Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, a critical Democratic vote, had opposed any tax credits for EV purchases.

"I went round-and-round with Senator Manchin, who frankly didn't support any credit of any kind, so this is a compromise," Stabenow told reporters Monday. "We'll work through it and make this as good as we can for our automakers."

Manchin, long a holdout Democrat who negotiated terms of the deal with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, had blocked previous climate and social spending proposals.

Manchin's office declined to comment. He told reporters last week that he wants automakers to "get aggressive and make sure that we're extracting in North America, we're processing in North America and we put a line on China. I don't believe that we should be building a transportation mode on the backs of foreign supply chains. I'm not going to do it."

Stabenow asserted that the bill was written by people who don't understand that manufacturers can't simply flip a switch and create a North American supply chain, though they are working on it. Numerous automakers, including General Motors, Ford, Stellantis, Toyota and Hyundai-Kia, have announced plans to build EV battery plants in the United States.

Katie Sweeney, executive vice president of the National Mining Association, said that industry leaders "like the requirement that minerals for batteries be sourced close to home rather than from our geopolitical rivals."

"Doing that," she said, "directly supports high-paying jobs here in the United States ... secures our supply chain and really enhances our global competitiveness."

Stabenow said she remains hopeful that the Biden administration can offer the tax credits next year while it works on the detailed rules for the battery requirements.

"We will continue to work with the automakers and the administration on getting as much common sense into the regulations as possible," the senator said.

Messages were left Monday seeking comment from the White House and the Treasury Department, which would administer the credits.

Stabenow says she's pleased that the measure would restore tax credits for General Motors, Tesla and Toyota, all of which hit caps under a previous bill and can no longer offer them. Ford, too, she said, is closing in on an EV cap.

Taiwan warns China drills show ambitions beyond island

By JOHNSON LAI Associated Press

PINGTUNG, Taiwan (AP) — Taiwan warned Tuesday that Chinese military drills aren't just a rehearsal for

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an invasion of the self-governing island but also reflect ambitions to control large swaths of the western Pacific, as Taipei conducted its own exercises to underscore it's ready to defend itself.

Angered by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's recent visit to Taiwan, China has sent military ships and planes across the midline that separates the two sides in the Taiwan Strait and launched missiles into waters surrounding the island. The drills, which began Thursday, have disrupted flights and shipping in one of the busiest zones for global trade.

Ignoring calls to calm tensions, Beijing instead extended the exercises without announcing when they will end.

Taiwanese Foreign Minister Joseph Wu said that beyond aiming to annex the island democracy, which split with the mainland amid civil war in 1949, China wants to establish its dominance in the western Pacific. That would include controlling of the East and South China Seas via the Taiwan Strait and imposing a blockade to prevent the U.S. and its allies from aiding Taiwan in the event of an attack, he told a news conference in Taipei.

The exercises show China's "geostrategic ambition beyond Taiwan," which Beijing claims as its own territory, Wu said.

"China has no right to interfere in or alter" Taiwan's democracy or its interactions with other nations, he added.

Wu's assessment of China's maneuvers was grimmer than that of other observers but echoed widespread concerns that Beijing is seeking to expand its influence in the Pacific, where the U.S. has military bases and extensive treaty partnerships.

China has said its drills were prompted by Pelosi's visit, but Wu said Beijing was using her trip as a pretext for intimidating moves long in the works. China also banned some Taiwanese food imports after the visit and cut off dialogue with the U.S. on a range of issues from military contacts to combating transnational crime and climate change.

Pelosi also dismissed China's outrage as a public stunt, noting on NBC's "Today" show that "nobody said a word" about a Senate delegation a few visit months ago. Later on the MSNBC news network, she said Chinese President Xi Jinping was acting like a "scared bully."

"I don't think the president of China should control the schedules of members of Congress," she said.

Through its maneuvers, China has pushed closer to Taiwan's borders and may be seeking to establish a new normal in which it could eventually control access to the island's ports and airspace. But that would likely elicit a strong response from the military on the island, whose people strongly favor the status quo of de-facto independence.

The U.S., Taipei's main backer, has also shown itself to be willing to face down Beijing's threats. Washington has no formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan in deference to Beijing, but is legally bound to ensure the island can defend itself and to treat all threats against it as matters of grave concern.

That leaves open the question of whether Washington would dispatch forces if China attacked Taiwan. U.S. President Joe Biden has said repeatedly the U.S. is bound to do so — but staff members have quickly walked back those comments.

Beyond the geopolitical risks, an extended crisis in the Taiwan Strait, a significant thoroughfare for global trade, could have major implications for international supply chains at a time when the world is already facing disruptions and uncertainty in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine. In particular, Taiwan is a crucial provider of computer chips for the global economy, including China's high-tech sectors.

In response to the drills, Taiwan has put its forces on alert, but has so far refrained from taking active counter measures.

On Tuesday, its military held live-fire artillery drills in Pingtung County on its southeastern coast.

The army will continue to train and accumulate strength to deal with the threat from China, said Maj. Gen. Lou Woei-jye, spokesperson for Taiwan's 8th Army Command. "No matter what the situation is ... this is the best way to defend our country."

Taiwan, once a Japanese colony, had only loose connections to imperial China and then split with the mainland in 1949. Despite never having governed the island, China's ruling Communist Party regards it as

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its own territory and has sought to isolate it diplomatically and economically in addition to ratcheting up military threats.

Washington has insisted Pelosi's visit did not change its "one China policy," which holds that the United States has no position on the status of the two sides but wants their dispute settled peacefully.

Billions pour into bioplastics as markets begin ramping up

MARK GILLISPIE Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) — In a world increasingly troubled by the persistent harm that plastic — manufactured in petrochemical plants — has had on the environment, companies are investing billions of dollars to ramp up production of plastics made from natural, renewable materials that can be safely composted or can biodegrade under the right conditions.

Bioplastics have long been used in medical applications. The stitches you got after cutting your hand slicing onions were likely made of a bioplastic thread that harmlessly dissolved into your body.

But the nascent bioplastics industry envisions a far bigger role for materials made from corn, sugar, vegetable oils and other renewable materials in the hope of grabbing a larger share of a nearly \$600 billion global plastic market.

Since large-scale production began in the 1950s, fossil fuel plastics have made food safer to consume and vehicles safer to drive, for example. Yet plastics are seen as one of the world's leading environmental threats with its production responsible for emitting million tons of greenhouse gases each year.

Of the 9 billion tons of fossil fuel plastic produced since the 1950s, only 9% percent has been recycled, studies have shown. The rest has been buried in landfills, burned or has polluted land and waterways. The chemical structure of fossil fuel plastic means it can never fully disintegrate and instead breaks down into smaller and smaller particles.

For now, bioplastic represents just 1% of global plastic production. If plastic made with fossil fuels is the enormous Mall of America in Minnesota, bioplastics would be a 7-Eleven.

Companies and investors see opportunities. Data from i3 Connect show investment in bioplastic manufacturing reached \$500 million in the first three months of 2022, exceeding the previous high of \$350 million in the last quarter of 2021. The money is coming in from both corporations and venture capitalists.

Zion Market Research estimates the bioplastics market will surge from \$10.5 billion in 2021 to some \$29 billion in 2028.

Danimer Scientific is one company making a big bet on bioplastic with a recent expansion of its plant in Winchester, Kentucky. The Georgia-based firm makes a bioplastic called PHA using microorganisms that ferment with canola oil. The result is plastic pellets that manufacturers can use to mold products in the same way they use petrochemical plastic, Danimer CEO Stephen Croskrey said in an interview.

The expansion has made Danimer one of the largest PHA producers in the world.

Straws and plastic drink stirrers made from Danimer's PHA are being used in Starbucks and Dunkin' Donuts and large venues like Sofi Stadium in Inglewood, California, Croskrey said.

"We have active development projects for just about anything you can imagine," he said.

Testing has shown products made from Danimer's PHA can biodegrade in six months in marine environments and two years in soil, Croskrey said.

The other primary bioplastic sold today is PLA, polylactic acid, usually produced by fermenting sugar from corn and sugar cane. One producer is Minneapolis-based NatureWorks, a joint venture by Cargill, one of the world's largest privately-held corporations, and Thailand-based PTT Global Chemical. It is the largest PLA company in the world, capable of producing 150,000 metric tons of bioplastic pellets annually at a plant in Blair, Nebraska.

NatureWorks is building a \$600 million plant in Thailand that will increase its production capacity by 50%, said Leah Ford, the company's global marketing communications manager, in an interview.

The company's "biggest visibility market," Ford said, is compostable food service items such as plastic cutlery, clear cups, wrappers and containers that, along with restaurant food waste, can be converted

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into a dark organic material to enrich soil in gardens and on farms. That's important because food waste clogs recycling machinery and contaminates recyclable petroleum plastics.

Some Starbucks stores use disposable cups lined with NatureWorks' PLA, Ford said.

NatureWorks has become something of a game changer in the United Kingdom, where PG Tips, a big name in tea, has switched from polyester tea bags to bags made with cellulose and a thin layer of NatureWorks' PLA that are fully compostable, Ford said.

Researchers at McGill University in Montreal released a study in 2019 that said petroleum-based polyester tea bags leach billions of microplastic particles when steeped in hot water. Around 60 billion cups of tea are consumed annually in the UK.

One of the criticisms of bioplastic made with corn and sugar is that it uses arable land on a hungry planet. Ford called that concern unfounded. NatureWorks uses sugar extracted from corn while the rest of the kernels are used to produce sweeteners, ethanol, cooking oils and livestock feed.

PLA, unlike PHA, does not easily biodegrade in nature. It needs to be mixed with food waste in industrial composters to biodegrade. When buried in landfills, PLA will eventually disintegrate, but that would likely take decades.

NatureWorks has formed a partnership with PHA manufacturer CJ Bio to produce a bioplastic that can more easily biodegrade. The company, headquartered in South Korea, is expanding its plant in Indonesia and is planning to build a large plant in the Americas, said Raj Kirsch, vice president of research and development at CJ Bio.

Blending the two types of bioplastic "brings a lot of value propositions to the final end product," Kirsch said in an interview.

Ramani Narayan, a professor of chemical engineering at Michigan State University, has worked with Cargill in the past to help with PLA production.

Narayan said companies are using biodegradability claims to make their products more attractive to consumers. But the term is "misused, abused and overused because everything in the world is biodegradable given the right time and environment."

California, Narayan noted, has banned the use of the term "biodegradable" in marketing. The world needs to replace petroleum plastic with plastic materials that have been verified and certified as completely biodegradable, he said.

Narayan acknowledged that bioplastics are easier to biodegrade than petrochemical plastic which can take centuries to disintegrate, shedding worrisome microplastic along the way. Yet the fact that PHA takes longer to break down in cold oceans and lakes than in temperate climates shouldn't be sugarcoated.

"It will take time, and you need to say that," Narayan said.

Today in History: August 10, Ruth Bader Ginsburg sworn in

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Aug. 10, the 222nd day of 2022. There are 143 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 10, 1945, a day after the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Imperial Japan conveyed its willingness to surrender provided the status of Emperor Hirohito remained unchanged. (The Allies responded the next day, saying they would determine the Emperor's future status.)

On this date:

In 1792, during the French Revolution, mobs in Paris attacked the Tuileries (TWEE'-luh-reez) Palace, where King Louis XVI resided. (The king was later arrested, put on trial for treason, and executed.)

In 1821, Missouri became the 24th state.

In 1885, Leo Daft opened America's first commercially operated electric streetcar, in Baltimore.

In 1944, during World War II, American forces overcame remaining Japanese resistance on Guam.

In 1962, Marvel Comics superhero Spider-Man made his debut in issue 15 of "Amazing Fantasy" (cover

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price: 12 cents).

In 1969, Leno and Rosemary LaBianca were murdered in their Los Angeles home by members of Charles Manson's cult, one day after actor Sharon Tate and four other people were slain.

In 1977, postal employee David Berkowitz was arrested in Yonkers, New York, accused of being "Son of Sam," the gunman who killed six people and wounded seven others in the New York City area. (Berkowitz is serving six consecutive 25-years-to-life sentences.)

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed a measure providing \$20,000 payments to still-living Japanese-Americans who were interned by their government during World War II.

In 1993, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was sworn in as the second female justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1995, Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols were charged with 11 counts in the Oklahoma City bombing (McVeigh was convicted of murder and executed; Nichols was convicted of conspiracy and involuntary manslaughter and sentenced to life in prison).

In 2006, British authorities announced they had thwarted a terrorist plot to simultaneously blow up 10 aircraft heading to the U.S. using explosives smuggled in hand luggage.

In 2019, Jeffrey Epstein, accused of orchestrating a sex-trafficking ring and sexually abusing dozens of underage girls, was found unresponsive in his cell at a New York City jail; he was later pronounced dead at a hospital. (The city's medical examiner ruled the death a suicide by hanging.)

Ten years ago: A man in an Afghan army uniform shot and killed three American service members in southern Afghanistan; the Taliban claimed the shooter joined the insurgency after the attack. At the London Olympics, the United States won the women's 4x100-meter track relay in a world-record time of 40.82 seconds to give the Americans their first victory in the event since 1996.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump, continuing his criticism of Senate GOP leader Mitch McConnell following the failed effort to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, suggested that McConnell might have to rethink his future as majority leader unless he could deliver on Trump's legislative priorities on health care, taxes and infrastructure. North Korea's military described as a "load of nonsense" Trump's warning that the North would face "fire and fury" if it threatened the United States.

One year ago: New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced his resignation over a barrage of sexual harassment allegations; he denied intentionally mistreating women and said the push for his ouster was politically motivated. (Cuomo would be succeeded by Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul, who became the state's first female governor.) The Senate approved a \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure plan, as a rare coalition of Democrats and Republicans came together to overcome skeptics and deliver a cornerstone of President Joe Biden's agenda. Vote-counting machine maker Dominion Voting Systems filed defamation lawsuits against right-wing broadcasters and a prominent Donald Trump ally over their baseless claims that the 2020 election was marred by fraud. Soccer star Lionel Messi signed his eagerly anticipated Paris Saint-Germain contract to complete the move that confirmed the end of a career-long association with Barcelona.

Today's Birthdays: Actor James Reynolds is 76. Rock singer-musician Ian Anderson (Jethro Tull) is 75. Country musician Gene Johnson (Diamond Rio) is 73. Singer Patti Austin is 72. Actor Daniel Hugh Kelly is 70. Folk singer-songwriter Sam Baker is 68. Actor Rosanna Arquette is 63. Actor Antonio Banderas is 62. Rock musician Jon Farriss (INXS) is 61. Singer Julia Fordham is 60. Journalist-blogger Andrew Sullivan is 59. Actor Chris Caldovino is 59. Singer Neneh Cherry is 58. Singer Aaron Hall is 58. Former boxer Riddick Bowe is 55. Actor Sean Blakemore is 55. R&B singer Lorraine Pearson (Five Star) is 55. Singer-producer Michael Bivins is 54. Actor-writer Justin Theroux is 51. Actor Angie Harmon is 50. Country singer Jennifer Hanson is 49. Actor-turned-lawyer Craig Kirkwood is 48. Actor JoAnna Garcia Swisher is 43. Singer Cary Ann Hearst (Shovels & Rope) is 43. Actor Aaron Staton is 42. Actor Ryan Eggold is 38. Actor Charley Koontz is 35. Actor Lucas Till is 32. Reality TV star Kylie Jenner is 25. Actor Jeremy Maguire is 11.