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Tuesday, Sept. 13

Senior Menu: Swiss steak with gravy, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, fruit, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Breakfast Sandwich
School Lunch: Corndogs, fries.
6 p.m.: 3/4 and 5/6 football at Warner
10 a.m.: Golf Meet at Redfield
6:30 p.m.: Senior Scholarship Info Night
The Pantry open at the Groton Community Center,
4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Emmanuel: 7 pm Church Council

Wednesday, Sept. 14

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, au grain potatoes, carrots, apple sauce, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Eggs and breakfast potatoes.
School Lunch: Grilled cheese sandwich, corn.
Emmanuel: 6 – 7:15 pm Confirmation with 7th & 8th graders & parents; 6:30 pm League

NO OUTDOOR WATERING!

Effective immediately, no outdoor watering is permitted in the City of Groton until further notice. (About 4-6 weeks)

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

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

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Superintendent's Report to the Groton Area School District 06-6 Board of Education

September 12, 2022

1968 Gym Boiler. Our 1968 Iron Fireman Boiler did not pass inspection and will not be licensed by the State for use during the 2022-23 school year. Allied Climate is working on a proposal to replace the boiler in a way that makes sense moving forward as we work to update the equipment in that section of the building.

Arena/Gymnasium HVAC. We've been working with Travis Sichmeller of Sichmeller Engineering on getting plans in place to address the air conditioning in the arena. I've asked him to include all portions of the building not currently being mechanically cooled (i.e. kitchen, weight room, wrestling room, old gym, arena commons, etc.). Travis was hoping that he'd have an engineering proposal to us with an estimated project price tag for our meeting today.

Open Enrollment for Alternative Instruction Students. At the beginning of the school year, a question was raised about the ability for alternative instruction students (i.e. homeschooled students) to home school and enroll in a district for the purpose of participating in extra curricular activities. The Council of School Attorneys (COSA), ASBSD, and SASD issued a joint opinion on the issue indicating that a student must enroll AND attend school under the statutory scheme regulating open enrollments in South Dakota.

On August 31, the South Dakota Department of Education's legal office issued a one page memo stating in part, "It is the South Dakota Department of Education's position that South Dakota's open enrollment statutes allow for alternative instruction students to open enroll into a nonresident district solely for participation in athletics, fine arts, or activities."

I think it is fair to expect additional legislation on the issue in the upcoming session to provide clarity.

Social Studies Standards Revision. The proposed social studies standards have been released and will be in a period of public review and comment. The first public hearing by the Board of Education Standards is scheduled for Monday, September 19 at 9:00 AM at Dakota Event Center in Aberdeen. The second is scheduled for November 21 in Sioux Falls.

Written public comment is also being reviewed and considered. The best way to provide written comment is to visit the social studies standards website [doe.sd.gov/ContentStandards/ss-review.aspx] and click the "Submit Public Comments" link on the bottom of the page. You can also view the standards from this page.

Fall Enrollment. The official fall enrollment is taken on the last Friday in September – Friday, September 30, 2022.

Groton Area School District 06-6

2022-2023 Fall Enrollment (Updated 9/12/22)

	JK	K	1	2	3	4	5	Elementary Total	6	7	8	MS Total	9	10	11	12	HS Total	District Total
Projected	15	43	44	36	49	48	44	279	41	51	39	131	46	49	41	42	178	588
Actual	21	38	44	43	47	53	39	285	43	47	37	127	46	48	42	39	175	587
Difference	6	-5	0	7	-2	5	-5	6	2	-4	-2	-4	0	-1	1	-3	-3	-1

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Principal's Report

MS/HS Building

Mrs. Sombke

September 12, 2022

1) Enrollment Update/Class Sizes 6-12

Grade 6	43
Grade 7	47
Grade 8	37
MS total=	127
Grade 9	46
Grade 10	48
Grade 11	42
Grade 12	39
HS Total=	175
MS+HS=	302

2) ASPEN Student Behavior Training: September 14th 11:30-3:30pm

Training session will include specific information in the following areas:

- Recognize and understand what causes aggressive student behavior.
- Replace outdated, inefficient practices and replace them with practices that work in numerous situations.
- Identify the ways MTSS is currently working and build upon it with Totem student behavior training.
- Use positive psychology methods and Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) principles to address aggressive student behavior.

3) NWEA MAPS Testing

- Grades 6-11 are completing the MAPS Assessment in English, Math, and Science
- Students will again test just before Christmas, and again in the spring to demonstrate individual, group, and grade level rate of academic growth in each content area
- Collecting information that identifies gaps in learning or a weakness in the current curriculum allows teachers to adjust their lesson plans or to use additional resources as needed to meet the identified academic need or gap in learning
- Teachers will continue to work collaboratively throughout the school year and during scheduled teacher in-services to create and adjust lesson plans, to include outside resources as needed, and to enhance teacher proficiency in interpreting MAPS Assessment Data to inform lesson planning

4) Teacher Effectiveness Process: Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching

- Group A Teachers- 15 teachers will complete the Formal Evaluation Process including the SLO process demonstrating professional practice in all four domains as seen below.
- Group B Teachers- 8 teachers will complete the informal process and will upload artifacts throughout the school year that demonstrate professional practices in all four domains

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including: Planning and Preparation, The Classroom Environment, Professional Responsibilities, and Instruction

Charlotte Danielson's FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING

<p>DOMAIN 1: Planning and Preparation</p> <p>1a. Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy * Content knowledge * Pedagogical relationships * Content pedagogy</p> <p>1b. Demonstrating Knowledge of Students * Child development * Learning process * Special needs * Student skills, knowledge, and proficiency * Trends and cultural heritage</p> <p>1c. Setting Instructional Outcomes * Valid, sequence, and alignment * Clarity * Balance * Feasibility * Instructional design</p> <p>1d. Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources * For classroom * To valid content knowledge * For students</p> <p>1e. Designing Cohesive Instruction * Learning activities * Instructional materials and resources * Instructional groups * Lesson and unit structure</p> <p>1f. Designing Student Assessments * Congruence with outcomes * Criteria and standards * Formative assessments * Use for planning</p>	<p>DOMAIN 2: The Classroom Environment</p> <p>2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport * Positive interaction with students * Student interactions with students</p> <p>2b. Establishing a Culture for Learning * Importance of content * Opportunities for learning and achievement * Student goals setting</p> <p>2c. Managing Classroom Procedures * Instructional groups * Routines * Materials and supplies * Non-instructional duties * Resources of students and pedagogues</p> <p>2d. Managing Student Behavior * Expectations * Identifying behavior * Response to misbehavior</p> <p>2e. Organizing Physical Space * Safety and accessibility * Arrangement of furniture and resources</p>
<p>DOMAIN 4: Professional Responsibilities</p> <p>4a. Reflecting on Teaching * Accuracy * Use of data in teaching</p> <p>4b. Maintaining Accurate Records * Student portfolio or assignments * Student progress in learning * Non-instructional records</p> <p>4c. Communicating with Families * About instructional program * About individual students * Engagement of families in instructional programs</p> <p>4d. Participating in a Professional Community * Responsiveness with colleagues * Participation in school projects * Involvement in culture of professional inquiry * Device to attract</p> <p>4e. Growing and Developing Professionally * Enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skill * Responsiveness to research from colleagues * Service to the profession</p> <p>4. Showing Professionalism * Integrity/ethical conduct * Service to students * Advocacy * Decision-making * Compliance with school/district regulations</p>	<p>DOMAIN 3: Instruction</p> <p>3a. Communicating with Students * Expectations for learning * Directives and procedures * Explanation of content * Use of oral and written language</p> <p>3b. Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques * Quality of questions * Discussion techniques * Student participation</p> <p>3c. Engaging Students in Learning * Activities and assignments * Student groups * Instructional materials and resources * Structures and pacing</p> <p>3d. Using Assessment in Instruction * Assessment criteria * Monitoring of student learning * Feedback to students * Student self-assessment and monitoring</p> <p>3e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness * Lesson adjustment * Response to students * Persistence</p>

www.danielsongroup.org

5) ICU has begun for the 2022-2023 School Year

- Students are contacted by their classroom teacher and made aware of missing coursework or a current failing grade; parent or guardian are contacted and informed of the ICU assignment
- The ICU program clarifies all students to increase their academic success by providing additional opportunities to master course material
- ICU Letter Included

6) Homecoming 2022

- Theme: "Movies"
- Parade Marshalls 2022: Merle and Janet Harder
- Dress Up Days: Monday September 19th- Country Club or Country
 Tuesday September 20th- First Letter of Your Name
 Wednesday September 21st- Dress like your parent
 Thursday September 22nd- Class color

Seniors: Black

Juniors: White

Sophomores: Grey

Freshmen: Gold

8th Grade: Purple

7th Grade: Blue

6th Grade: Red

Staff/Teachers: Pink

Friday September 23rd- Black and Gold

- Coronation of Homecoming King and Queen 2022 on Monday September 19th in the Old GHS Gym @ ~~7:00~~ 7:30 pm

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- “Jungle Days” on Thursday September 22nd from 1:30-3:30pm for grades 6-12: Classes will follow shortened bell schedule below

Bell Schedule for September 22nd

- **Warning Bell** 8:25
- **1st hour** 8:30-9:04
- **2nd hour** 9:08-9:42
- **3rd hour** 9:46-10:20
- **4th hour** 10:24-10:58
- **1st 5th hour** 10:58-11:23
- **1st Lunch** 10:58-11:23
- **2nd Lunch** 11:36-12:01
- **2nd 5th hour** 11:27-12:01
- **6th hour** 12:05-12:38
- **7th hour** 12:42-1:25
- Homecoming Parade at 1:00pm on Friday September 23rd
- FFA Serving Meal at Homecoming Football Game; meal will begin @ 5:30pm
- **Homecoming Football Game @ 7:00pm**
- Homecoming King and Queen announced at half-time of football game

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Brett Schwan

Elementary Principal

September 12, 2022

1. Enrollment

- a. JK-21
- b. KG-38
- c. 1st-44
- d. 2nd-43
- e. 3rd-47
- f. 4th-53
- g. 5th-39

2. Dakota Dreams Online Tutoring Program

(From Molly Weisgram, System Academic Program Manager, SD Board of Regents)

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in the early roll-out of the! We are thrilled to add the Groton schools and afterschool programs to our list of early users.

Shown below are the goals we hope to accomplish through the early roll-out.

Goal #1: Help us get kids registered!

- *Registration needs to be done by the parents! Parents will register online when they'll create a username/password for their student. ***Make sure they write down the username/password, so kids have it handy.*** The online registration site will be available starting Wednesday, September 14.*
- *Please let me know if parents are having problems getting access to an internet connection for registration. We are developing a paper consent form as an alternative to the online registration, but it will require a few additional steps, such as adding a local contact as a custodian of the account so they can help students establish usernames/passwords.*
- *A communication toolkit will be made available early next week so you can easily share information with parents. This will include social media graphics, a templated introduction email, and a one-pager that you can print (with QR code for the registration page).*

Goal #2: Help your students log into the program and request on-demand tutoring at least once!

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- Please help registered students log-in and access “on-demand” tutoring – even if just to say hello to the tutors!
- Your help getting students into the system for the first time will show students just how easy it is to use. We want them to feel comfortable accessing it afterschool or during the evenings/weekends.

Dakota Dreams Online Tutoring Program Hours:

- **Monday-Thursday:** 3:30-9:30 p.m. Central
- **Friday:** 3:30-6:30 p.m. Central
- **Saturday:** 1:30-6:30 p.m. Central
- **Sunday:** 11:30-9:30 p.m. Central

**Note, laptop and headphones (or a quiet place to visit with the tutor) will ensure the best experience.*

3. Homecoming Week (September 23)

- a. Homecoming sheets will be sent home this week. We ask that parents let us know if they plan to eat with their child (KG-5th) and what their after parade plan is.

KG and 1st – 11:00-11:30

2nd and 3rd – 11:30-12:00

4th and 5th – 12:00-12:30.

- b. Dress Up Dates for the Elementary

- i. Monday: Mix and Match/Mismatched Day

- ii. Tuesday: Beach Day

- iii. Dream Job Day (Dress like what you want to be when you get older!!!)

- iv. Thursday: Pajama Day

- v. Friday: Spirit Day

4. Developmental Screening will be on Friday, September 30th at the elementary. Information has been posted online. Letters will be sent home to families we currently have on our census. For families who are new to the district or who don't receive a letter by the end of the week please contact the elementary school.
5. SASD LEADERSHIP ACADEMY '23. I will be attending this training during the course of the 2022-2023 school year. This is the same training that Mr. Joe Schwan attended last year. Our first meeting is set for Thursday, September 29.
6. Fall Conferences will be held on September 29th from 1:30-8:00. Preference letters will be sent home this week. Elementary PAC will be serving dinner for our teachers during conferences.

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Business Manager's Report September 12, 2022

Time Management System - Today was the first day of transition from punch timecards to new online Time Management Software System. Currently, there are 39 auxiliary staff employees using the new software.

AFLAC Staff Visits - AFLAC representatives were in our buildings on September 6th and 7th to enroll staff in the cafeteria benefits program which allow employees to pre-tax out-of-pocket premiums paid on health, dental, vision and life insurance. AFLAC also manages tax-free Flex Spending Account setups for staff electing dependent and health care expenses not covered by our health plan and they sell their own line of cancer and medical insurance products. Setup for these products begin on October 1.

Grant Funding Requests – Funding requests have been submitted for ESSER II (\$101,970) and ESSER III Learning Loss (\$75,216) expenses from 2021-22. After collection, the balance of funds remaining is \$165,458 in ESSER II and \$501,775 in ESSER III and are available through September 30, 2023, and 2024 respectively.

New State Management Companies – ASBSD Protective Trust Health insurance has consigned P&A Group to manage all COBRA enrolled health and dental insurance members. This was previously handled directly by our insurance providers Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and Delta Dental of SD. Additionally, Sivic Solutions Group has been hired to manage Medicaid Random Moment Time Studies throughout the state. Our administrative and certified staff members who are involved with services to Medicaid eligible students are randomly selected to fill out a five-question survey through this state sponsored company. Participation in this process returns a federal special ed reimbursement of approximately \$10,000 annually.

Credit Card Fraud – We had a fraudulent charge to our Wells Fargo Credit Card in August shortly after school began. The account has been closed and a new card has been issued.

Dacotah Bank Meeting – I met last Thursday with Ryan Fjeldheim of Dacotah Bank to discuss the services charges on our District, Custodial and Coop checking accounts. He is recommending a conversion of all account to Gold Business Checking while adding Positive Pay and Online Deposit Services. These steps require maintaining a checking account balance of \$1,500,000 and moving those funds into a Money Market account with an interest rate of 0.20%. We also visited about a line of Dacotah Bank Business Credit Card. Since we do not receive monthly state aid funds and our tax dollar revenue does not arrive until November and May, it may be difficult to maintain a \$1,500,000 balance. I am also leery about adding more services. I will need to visit with Joe and Kristi before continuing discussions with Ryan.

Title IX - Sexual harassment complaint forms have been established for both Groton Area and Coop. As Title IX Coordinator I am the first contact for any potential complaints regarding this new federal policy.

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The new school year is just around the corner! In preparation for this new school year to start, it may be helpful to review the following information regarding the Groton Area 6-12 ICU Program.

We will continue to provide support and guidance for all students to work towards mastery of each subject area. This type of specific academic expectation fosters social support and produces students that can persevere, be resourceful, rise and overcome obstacles, and be successful learners. The Groton Area ICU Program is based on **The Power of ICU Formula** as shown below. **The Power of ICU Formula:**

Completion + Quality Assignments + Healthy Grading = Student Success

Completion= Every student completes every quality assignment

Quality Assignments= Assignments linked to academic standards

Healthy Grading= Grades reflect student mastery of concepts

The Groton Area 6-12 ICU program will empower teachers and facilitate building success for every student through a school-wide collaborative effort of reaching out to students, holding students accountable, and helping students reach their academic potential.

Students will be informed by their teacher when they are assigned ICU and will be required to make arrangements to attend ICU that day after school from 3:30-5:00pm, or to attend the next morning session from 7:15-8:00am. It is the student's responsibility to meet with the ICU Supervisor, communicate when they will be attending, and to attend and complete the missing work. Skipping an ICU session will result in detention.

In addition, I am including Goal #1 from our **School Improvement Plan**, which provides more information about the use of ICU.

MS/HS School Improvement Goals

Goal #1: During the 2019-2020 school year, we will reduce the number of students receiving failing grades.

Action Steps:

1. We will refine and implement our ICU program to quickly identify students who've fallen behind with turning homework in on time and immediately notify their parents.
2. Faculty will not issue "zero credit" grades for late homework.

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3. All students will complete all assignments through collaborative efforts of faculty, staff, students, and parents.

Evaluation Tools: Infinite Campus grading reports, Bi-weekly eligibility reports

Evaluation Statement: As students are identified as missing assignments, they will be required to participate in the ICU program. We expect to see our academic ineligibility list decrease in size and quarter/semester grades improve.

I look forward to visiting with and greeting all of you at the beginning of the school year, and as the year goes on. Please be sure to let me know if you have questions regarding ICU or your child's individual academic progress. Thank you for your time in reviewing this information, and I hope that you enjoy a restful last bit of summer vacation!

Respectfully,

Mrs. Sombke
Groton Area MS/HS Principal

Groton Area School District Mission Statement:

Each school will foster a school climate conducive to learning by encouraging good behavior and citizenship, good attendance, a thirst for knowledge, and high academic standards. Teachers will employ strategies and approaches to instruction to meet the needs of all children assigned to them. With proper motivation and instruction, all children can learn.

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Groton Area School District 06-6

Capital Outlay Projection - Facilities, Acquisitions, Construction

	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	Unassigned
Facilities, Acquisitions, Construction	\$313,750	\$341,000	\$305,000	\$320,000	\$304,500	
FISCAL YEAR TOTAL	\$313,750	\$341,000	\$305,000	\$320,000	\$304,500	\$679,500
Elementary Roofing Replacement (Sections C/Library) - Pd \$35,500 in FY	\$51,500					
Elementary Landscaping	\$15,000					
Security Camera Additions - South Exterior, WR Room, Storage	\$7,500					
HS - 1957 Hallway Lighting Upgrades	\$4,500					
Replace Goal Posts - FB Field	\$5,750					
Repair/Replace Interior Elementary Doors (Restrooms/Gym)	\$15,000					
Replace Interior HS Doors (HS Cafeteria/Girls Gym)	\$5,000					
Replace Doors @ Old Gym Entrance (Interior/Exterior)	\$52,000					
Crow's Nest Replacement	\$80,000					
Siding/Roofing Custodial Maintenance Garage	\$12,500					
Replace Fulton Boiler - 1969 HS Addition	\$65,000					
Elementary Roofing Replacement (Section A/Lower Pod)		\$125,000				
Replace AO Smith Boilers - 1969 HS Addition		\$75,000				
Stage Renovations (Curtains, Rigging, Acoustical)		\$27,500				
Replace Old Gym Air Handling Units		\$70,000				
1957 English Classroom Renovation		\$25,000				
Football Field Grading			\$65,000			
Elementary Roofing Replacement (Sections B/JK&D/Upper Pod)			\$225,000			
Sidewalk Repairs/Replacement			\$15,000			
Replace Elementary Gym Floor				\$75,000		
Roofing - HS Gym (Pending Roofing Inspection)				\$60,000		
Unit Vent Replacements (Arena Addition)				\$75,000		
Replace 1969 Gymnasium Bleachers				\$75,000		
1969 Gymnasium Public Restroom Renovations				\$35,000		
Replace 1969 Gymnasium Flooring					\$100,000	
2009 Addition Carpeting					\$29,500	
Heat Pump Replacements (Geothermal System)					\$150,000	
Playground Equipment Upgrades					\$25,000	
Replace Tile Flooring - MS Science Room						\$18,000

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Groton Area School District 06-6

Capital Outlay Projection - Facilities, Acquisitions, Construction

	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	Unassigned
Facilities, Acquisitions, Construction	\$313,750	\$341,000	\$305,000	\$320,000	\$304,500	
FISCAL YEAR TOTAL	\$313,750	\$322,500	\$305,000	\$320,000	\$304,500	\$679,500
Add Security Doors Between Old Gym/Classroom Areas						\$25,000
Band Room Ceiling/Lighting						\$26,000
Weight Room Equipment Upgrades						\$65,000
West Side HS Parking Lot Repairs						\$35,000
MS/HS IP Intercom						\$65,000
HS Locker Replacements (Science Hall)						\$35,000
Science Hall Suspended Ceiling Replacement						\$17,500
2004 Addition Lighting - 138 Fixtures						\$18,000
1934 Addition Restroom Renovations						\$50,000
1934 Classroom Renovations						\$17,500
1934 Addition Hallway Cielings/Lighting						\$25,000
1934 Addition Locker Replacements						\$20,000
Tech Office Modernization/Renovation						\$17,500
HS Band Room Renovation & Acoustical Treatment						\$22,500
Kitchen Renovation						\$22,500
Track Repairs, Re-Surface, Replace?						\$125,000
Middle School/Visitor Locker Room Renovations						\$75,000

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Junior golf tournament was held Monday at the Olive Grove Golf Course. Groton golfers from left to right. Shaydon Woods, Jace Johnson and Keegan Harry. Jace Johnson placed first with a 9 hole score of 40. (Courtesy Photo)

Zebra mussel discovered in South Rush Lake

Pierre, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has confirmed the presence of zebra mussels in South Rush Lake in Day County.

"Following confirmation of zebra mussels in Blue Dog Lake, GFP investigated neighboring waterbodies and found a single adult mussel near the boat ramp on South Rush Lake," said Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator, Tanner Davis. "GFP Fisheries staff continued investigation and found an additional mussel at a separate location on the lake."

"Due to the nature of water connectivity in northeast South Dakota, we will continue to monitor the situation and waterbodies within the region," said Davis. "South Rush Lake is now considered infested with zebra mussels."

GFP has significantly enhanced efforts to slow the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) in recent years, both educating anglers and boaters to clean, drain, dry every time they are on the water as well as physically inspecting boats prior to and/or after loading.

"Our message to 'clean, drain, dry' has been spread widely across the state," said GFP Communications Manager, Nick Harrington. "Whether it be in your email, on social media, at the gas pump, or at the boat ramps themselves if you enjoy the water in South Dakota we know you are receiving our messages."

To date in 2022, GFP has sent 1.8 million emails with AIS content, reached 341,000 individuals on social media, have reminders playing at 43 gas stations, and have placed signage at boat ramps across the state. These efforts have driven over 12,300 visitations to SDLeastWanted.sd.gov.

Watercraft inspection stations have taken place across the state, with over 16,300 watercraft inspected through August 2022. This is up from the previous high of 14,556 watercraft that were inspected across the state through August 2021.

Boat plug compliance at all locations across the state has been between 93-100%.

"When we see such high plug compliance rates we know our messages are working. As we continue to work to slow the spread, new infestations such as this need to serve as another reminder to boaters and anglers the importance of doing their part," concluded Harrington.

More information regarding AIS in South Dakota can be found at sdleastwanted.sd.gov.

Your chance to spotlight South Dakota's best

By Jim Speirs, Executive Director, Arts South Dakota

Every two years, Arts South Dakota and the state arts agency join together with the current South Dakota governor to honor our home state's outstanding contributors to the arts. The Governor's Award in the Arts is South Dakota's highest honor for individuals, businesses and organizations who have shaped our cultural climate throughout the decades. Nominations are now open for the 2023 Awards—and we want to hear from you!

The classifications for these lifetime achievement awards are:

Distinction in Creative Achievement, given to individual artists who have made significant contributions in any of the various arts disciplines.

Outstanding Service in Arts Education, for individuals who have made significant contributions to arts education as a teacher, mentor or catalyst.

Outstanding Support of the Arts by an Individual, presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions in supporting and encouraging the arts with their time, talent or funding.

Outstanding Support of the Arts by an Organization or Business, the award for an organization, business or corporation that has demonstrated leadership in supporting and encouraging the arts through time, talent and funding, or by funding and presenting projects by South Dakota artists for public education and enjoyment.

Outstanding Support of the Arts to Native Nations with Lands in South Dakota, given to an individual, organization or business from South Dakota that has made significant contributions through the arts to Native nations with lands in South Dakota. The recipient will have demonstrated strong arts traditions and revitalization in Native communities by promoting social justice and cultural understanding.

The 26th Biennial Governor's Awards in the Arts will be presented in Pierre February 15, 2023. Recipients must be present to accept the award. Nominations may be made by an organization, institution or individual and must be submitted no later than November 15, 2022.

The awards honor those who have made a huge impact in communities throughout South Dakota. Your voice is important in choosing the best of the state's artists and arts advocates! For complete nominating directions, deadline and forms, go to the Arts South Dakota website at ArtsSouthDakota.org.

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Groton American Legion Auxiliary

The Groton ALA Unit 39 held its monthly meeting in September with 11 senior and 2 junior members present. Our unit obligations were paid for 2023 and our new membership goal is 101. Please pay your membership dues of \$25 (senior) \$5.50 (junior) to Gertie Erickson by December 31st or you can pay them on-line at alaforveterans.org.

For the community service program, we are looking for workers for Pumpkin Fest which is Oct. 1. Please call or email Samantha Oswald ASAP if you can work a shift 10-12 or 12-3.

A party is being organized to honor our 40 plus year auxiliary members. The potluck is on Monday, November 7 at 6 at the Legion hall and all members are asked to bring a hot dish or salad for the party. Dessert will be provided. Please save the date and come and help celebrate these women.

For the Veterans Affairs and Rehab program, we are in the process of contacting Veterans to be honored at the Veterans Day Program at Groton Area High School on November 11. We plan to honor eight Veterans this year.

The annual turkey party will be in November as well so please be watching your email from President Samantha for signing up to work in kitchen, bingo, or cake walk. Remember to bake a cake bring that for the cake walk.

The District Four Fall meeting will be held at Warner on October 29 at 4. The Auxiliary will be meeting at the fellowship hall at St. John Lutheran Church in Warner.

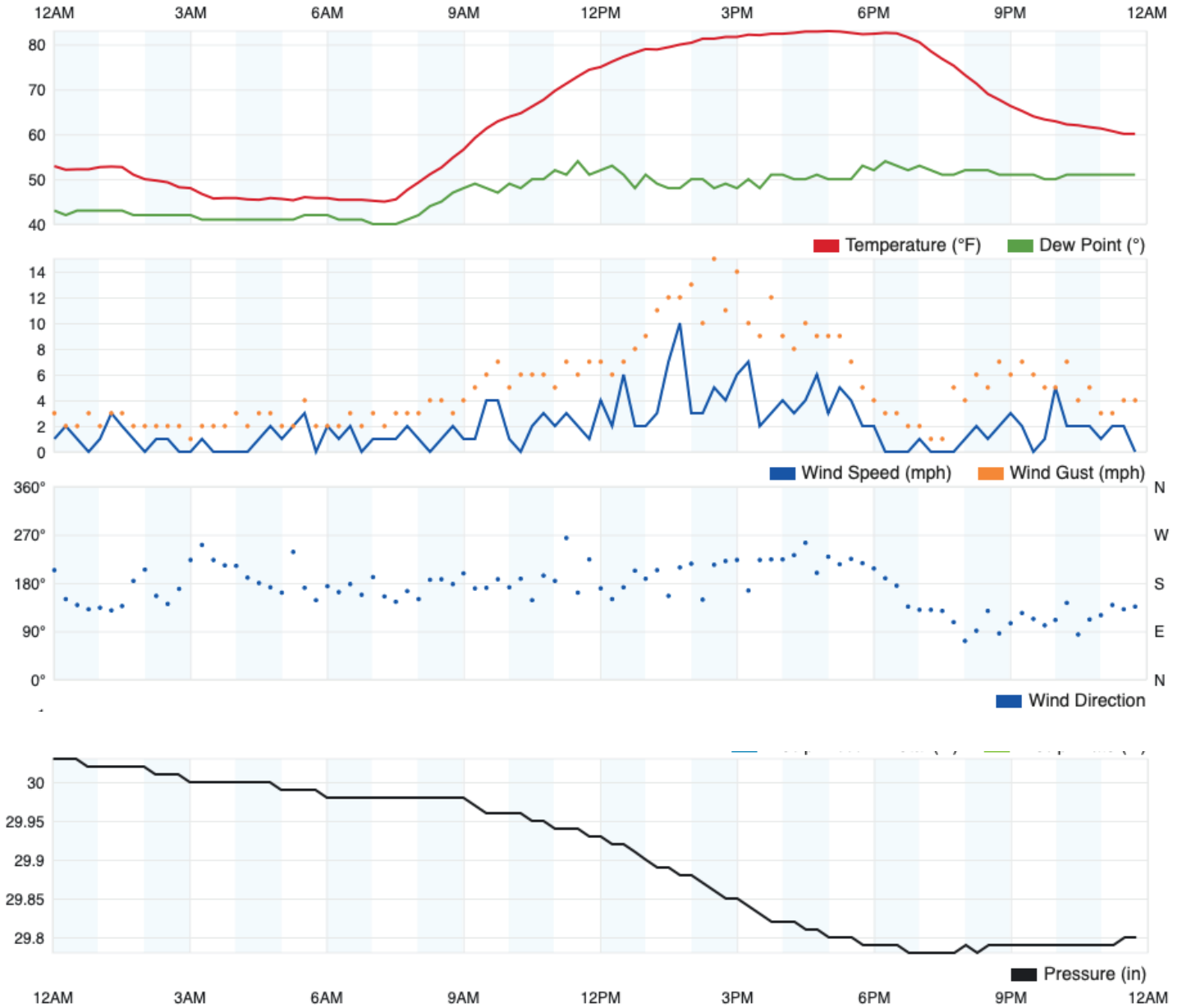
Our next auxiliary meeting will be Monday, October 3 with a meal at 6 and our meeting to follow at 6:30.

Jan Seibel

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Mostly Sunny

High: 79 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 54 °F

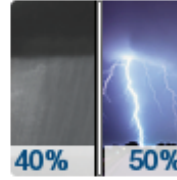
Wednesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 89 °F

Wednesday
Night



Chance
Showers then
Chance
T-storms

Low: 66 °F

Thursday



Chance
Showers

High: 83 °F

Today:

High Smoke - Warm & Dry
78 to 86°

Wednesday:

High Smoke - Hot, Dry & Breezy
Increased Fire Danger &
A chance for storms late...
85 to 92°

Thursday:

Breezy & Unsettled
78 to 85°



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

A little more seasonal today with high smoke from western wildfires today. Winds and temperatures increase for Wednesday heightening fire weather concerns. That's ahead of a system that will bring moisture to the region for the latter half of the work week and into the weekend.

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Today in Weather History

September 13, 1928: An estimated F4 tornado traveled across Yankton and Turner County. An entire farm was swept away just as the family was about to enter the storm cellar. A man and his daughter were killed. A woman was killed in the town of Davis, in Turner County. Nine homes were destroyed, 52 were damaged, and 13 people were injured in Davis.

1823: A strong category 1 or low category 2 hurricane struck near New Orleans, Louisiana and went toward Baton Rouge. Its strongest impacts occurred west of New Orleans.

1922 - The temperature at El Azizia in Libya soared to 136 degrees to establish a world record. To make matters worse, a severe ghibi (dust storm) was in progress. (The Weather Channel)

1928 - Hurricane San Felipe crossed Puerto Rico resulting in the highest winds, the heaviest rains, and the greatest destruction in years. The hurricane produced much damage in the Virgin Islands, and later hit the Bahamas and Florida. (David Ludlum)

1944: The destroyer USS Warrington was sunk by the Great Atlantic Hurricane 300 miles east of Cape Canaveral, Florida. 247 men were lost in the tragedy.

1978: Little Rock, Arkansas saw 8.10 inches of rain which caused major flash flooding. Ten people were killed.

1984 - Hurricane Diana, after making a complete loop off the Carolina coast, made landfall and moved across eastern North Carolina. Diana deluged Cape Fear with more than eighteen inches of rain, and caused 78 million dollars damage in North Carolina. (Storm Data)

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the northeastern U.S. Flooding was reported in Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Greenwood NY received 6.37 inches of rain. A dike along a creek at Prattsburg NY gave way and a two million dollar onion crop left on the ground to dry was washed away. The prolonged rains in the eastern U.S. finally came to an end late in the day as a cold front began to push the warm and humid airmass out to sea. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Hurricane Gilbert smashed into the Cayman Islands, and as it headed for the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico strengthened into a monster hurricane, packing winds of 175 mph. The barometric pressure at the center of Gilbert reached 26.13 inches (888 mb), an all-time record for any hurricane in the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, or the Atlantic Ocean. Gilbert covered much of the Gulf of Mexico, producing rain as far away as the Florida Keys. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Unseasonably cool weather prevailed over the Central Plains Region, with a record low of 29 degrees at North Platte NE. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across the Pacific Northwest, with a record high of 96 degrees at Eugene OR. Thunderstorms over south Texas produced wind gusts to 69 mph at Del Rio, and two inches of rain in two hours. (National Weather Summary)

2008: Hurricane Ike made landfall as a Category 2 storm near Galveston, Texas.

2017: The NWS Office in Reno, Nevada, issued their first tornado warning since July 21st, 2014.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

IF AND WHEN

The Bible was not written to teach psychology. But, the Bible is psychologically sound and correct. Consider Proverbs 12:25: "Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up." The writer does not profess to be a diagnostician, but he certainly is insightful.

Recently a study on "anxiety disorders" concluded that 40 million Americans, or 18.1% of our population, are plagued with fears that, from time to time, trouble them deeply. It is also a known fact that anxiety can lead to depression.

From wisdom that came from God, Solomon made the same "diagnosis." Notice that he said, "Anxiety weighs down the heart." The words "weigh down" imply a state of depression. Our author, with God's guidance and insight, described people whose anxiety is coupled with fear or worry – which as I mentioned earlier, can lead to depression.

All of us, at one time or another, have had those moments when we feared that something horrible was about to overtake or destroy us. When those feelings came to the "surface," it was natural to feel "weighted down," either "oppressed" or "depressed." And, when this happens, it is normal and natural to look for encouragement and support. How tragic if no one was there to help us or share a "kind word to cheer us up" and "lift the weight."

Notice, however, that Solomon was not talking to a behavioral health specialist. He was talking to people like us who have the ability to recognize the lonely, the sad, the worried, the anxious, and depressed.

Often people, also like us, only need a "word" of grace, comfort, encouragement or ... simply a smile, to bring them hope, health, and happiness.

Prayer: We thank You, Father, for giving us Your love to share with others. May we be alert to those around us who need Your love and kindness and offer them hope. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up. Proverbs 12:25



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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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)
09/11/2022: 6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm
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)
10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)

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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 Monday:

Lotto America

01-06-09-11-20, Star Ball: 2, ASB: 2

(one, six, nine, eleven, twenty; Star Ball: two; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$22,390,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 231,000,000

Powerball

06-14-16-34-66, Powerball: 25, Power Play: 3

(six, fourteen, sixteen, thirty-four, sixty-six; Powerball: twenty-five; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$206,000,000

Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Colome def. Marty Indian, 25-9, 25-10, 25-16

Howard def. James Valley Christian, 25-23, 25-23, 25-14

Parkston def. Tea Area, 18-25, 25-14, 25-18, 16-25, 15-12

Platte-Geddes def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-19, 25-16, 25-15

Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-16, 26-24, 19-25, 25-23

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Gov. Kristi Noem's activity to be limited after back surgery

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem disclosed Monday that she recently underwent back surgery to treat an injury impacting her spine and that her activity would be limited during several months of recovery.

The 50-year-old Republican governor said she traveled to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, for the surgery after receiving medical treatment for several weeks in South Dakota. She said in a video posted on Twitter that she injured her back about two months ago. She said she will be restricted in the amount of travel she can do and the time she can spend standing while she recovers.

Noem is in the midst of a reelection campaign and is also considered a potential 2024 White House contender.

"I won't be able to stand for more than 10, 15 minutes at a time, I won't be able to get out and about South Dakota like I love to do so much," the governor said in the video where she appeared slightly dispirited.

Dr. Mohamed Bydon said in a statement released by the governor's office that he treated her for an "acute condition impacting her lumbar spine."

He added that the surgery was successful and that the governor is in "excellent health."

The governor's office and her campaign spokesman did not immediately respond to a question on how she was injured.

Russia's war in Ukraine the backdrop to pope's Kazakh visit

By NICOLE WINFIELD and KOSTYA MANENKOV Associated Press

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NUR-SULTAN, Kazakhstan (AP) — Russia's war in Ukraine and the Holy See's strained relations with China are the backdrop to Pope Francis' visit this week to the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan, where he is ministering to a tiny Catholic community and participating in an interfaith conference aimed at promoting peace and dialogue.

Francis arrived Tuesday in the Kazakh capital of Nur-Sultan to meet with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev during the state visit portion of the three-day trip. On Wednesday and Thursday, he participates in an interfaith meeting with more than 100 delegations of Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Shinto and other faith groups from 50 countries.

The most noteworthy aspects of Francis' visit might be missed opportunities: Francis was supposed to have met with the head of the Russian Orthodox Church on the sidelines of the conference. But Patriarch Kirill, who has justified the war in Ukraine, cancelled his trip last month.

Francis is also going to be in the Kazakh capital at the same time as Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is making his first foreign visit since the coronavirus pandemic.

Xi is not attending the religious congress. On the pope's flight to Kazakhstan, Francis was asked about a possible meeting with Xi and replied: "I don't have any news about this. But I am always ready to go to China."

The Holy See and Beijing haven't had diplomatic relations for over a half-century, and the two sides are finalizing the renewal of a controversial deal over Catholic bishop nominations in China.

Both of which focuses attention on the interfaith conference, an important triennial event for Kazakhstan, a country that borders Russia to the north, China to the east and is home to some 130 ethnic groups. It's a showpiece of its foreign policy and a reflection of its own multicultural and multiethnic population that has long been touted as a crossroads between East and West.

Darhan Qydyrali, minister of information and social development, said the presence of world religious leaders in the country was fully in Kazakhstan's national interests. "We invited them and hoped that Patriarch Kirill will also participate," he told The Associated Press on the eve of the congress. "All in all, I think the congress will give an example that other issues can be also solved through the dialogue of religions."

When St. John Paul II visited in 2001, 10 years after independence, he highlighted Kazakhstan's diversity while recalling its dark past under Stalinist repression: Entire villages of ethnic Poles were deported en masse from western Ukraine to Kazakhstan beginning in 1936, and the Soviet government deported hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans, Chechens and other accused Nazi collaborators to Kazakhstan during World War II. Many of the deportees' descendants remained and some of them make up the country's Catholic community, which only numbers about 125,000 in a country of nearly 19 million people.

Sophia Gatovskaya, a parishioner at Our Lady Of Perpetual Help Cathedral in the capital, said she attended that first papal visit and that it has borne fruit to this day.

"It was actually amazing. And after this visit, we have peace and tolerance in our republic. We have a lot of nationalities in Kazakhstan, and we all live together. And we expect the same from this visit (of Pope Francis) that we will have peace in our republic. And we very much expect that the war in Ukraine will end."

Iconic French New Wave director Jean-Luc Godard dead at 91

By JAMEY KEATEN and THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — Jean-Luc Godard, the ingenious "enfant terrible" of the French New Wave who revolutionized popular cinema in 1960 with his first big endeavor, "Breathless," and stood for years as one of the world's most vital and provocative directors has died. He was 91.

Swiss news agency ATS quoted Godard's partner, Anne-Marie Mieville, and her producers as saying he died peacefully and surrounded by his loved ones at his home in the Swiss town of Rolle, on Lake Geneva, on Tuesday.

French President Emmanuel Macron paid tribute to Godard as "the most iconoclastic of the New Wave directors" who "invented a resolutely modern, intensely free art form."

He added: "We have lost a national treasure, the eye of a genius."

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Godard defied convention over a long career that began in the 1950s as a film critic. He rewrote rules for camera, sound and narrative.

He worked with some of the best-known names of French cinema like Brigitte Bardot and bad-boy Jean-Paul Belmondo, who was propelled to stardom through Godard films. He profiled the early Rolling Stones, gave a voice to Marxist, leftist and 1960s-era Black Power politics, and his controversial modern nativity play "Hail Mary" grabbed headlines when Pope John Paul II denounced it in 1985.

While many of his works were lauded, Godard also made a string of films that were politically charged and experimental, and pleased few outside a small circle of fans, while frustrating many critics who saw them as filled with overblown intellectualism.

Cannes Film Festival Director Thierry Fremaux told The Associated Press on Tuesday that he was "sad, sad. Immensely so" at the news of Godard's death.

Born into a wealthy French-Swiss family on Dec. 3, 1930 in Paris, Godard grew up in Nyon, Switzerland and studied ethnology at the Sorbonne in France's capital, where he was increasingly drawn to the cultural scene that flourished in the Latin Quarter "cine-club" after World War II.

He became friends with future big-name directors Francois Truffaut, Jacques Rivette and Eric Rohmer and in 1950 founded the shortlived Gazette du Cinema. By 1952 he had begun writing for the prestigious movie magazine Cahiers du Cinema.

After working on two films by Rivette and Rohmer in 1951, Godard tried to direct his first movie while traveling through North and South America with his father, but never finished it.

Back in Europe, he took a job in Switzerland as a construction worker on a dam project. He used the pay to finance his first complete film, the 1954 "Operation Concrete," a 20-minute documentary about the building of the dam.

Returning to Paris, Godard worked as spokesman for an artists' agency and made his first feature in 1957 — "All Boys Are Called Patrick," released in 1959 — and continued to hone his writing.

He also began work on "Breathless," based on a story by Truffaut. It was to be Godard's first big success when it was released in March 1960.

The movie stars Belmondo as a penniless young thief who models himself on Hollywood movie gangsters and who, after he shoots a police officer, goes on the run to Italy with his American girlfriend, played by Jean Seberg.

Along with Truffaut's "The 400 Blows," released in 1959, Godard's film set the new tone for French movie aesthetics. Godard rejected conventional narrative style and instead used frequent jump-cuts that mingled philosophical discussions with action scenes.

He spiced it all up with references to Hollywood gangster movies and nods to literature and visual art.

Godard also launched what was to be a career-long participation in collective film projects, contributing scenes to "The Seven Deadly Sins" along with directors such as Claude Chabrol and Roger Vadim. He also worked with Ugo Gregoretti, Pier Paolo Pasolini and Roberto Rossellini on the Italian movie "Let's Have a Brainwash," with Godard's scenes portraying a disturbing post-apocalypse world.

Godard, who was later to gain a reputation for his uncompromising left-wing political views, had a first brush with French authorities in 1960 when he made "The Little Soldier." The movie, filled with references to France's colonial war in Algeria, was not released until 1963, a year after the conflict ended.

His work turned more starkly political by the late 1960s. In "Weekend," his characters lampoon the hypocrisy of bourgeois society even as they demonstrate the comic futility of violent class war. It came out a year before popular anger at the establishment shook France, culminating in the iconic but short-lived student unrests of May 1968.

Godard harbored a life-long sympathy for various forms of socialism depicted in films from the early 1970s to the 1990s.

Some of the world cinema's greatest directors counted Godard's boundary-breaking work as an influence, including Quentin Tarantino, Bernardo Bertolucci, Brian De Palma and Jonathan Demme.

Godard took potshots at Hollywood over the years.

He remained home in Switzerland rather than travel to Hollywood to receive an honorary Oscar at a private ceremony in November 2010 alongside film historian and preservationist Kevin Brownlow, director-producer Francis Ford Coppola and actor Eli Wallach.

His lifelong advocacy of the Palestinian cause also brought him repeated accusations of antisemitism, despite his insistence that he sympathized with the Jewish people and their plight in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Though the academy received some complaints about Godard being selected to receive the award, academy President Tom Sherak said the director was recognized solely "for his contributions to film in the New Wave era."

Godard married Danish-born model and actress Anna Karina in 1961. She appeared in a string of movies he made during the remainder of the 1960s, all of them seen as New Wave landmarks. Notable among them were "My Life to Live," "Alphaville" and "Crazy Pete" — which also starred Belmondo and was rumored to have been shot without a script. Godard and Karina divorced in 1965.

Godard married his second wife, Anne Wiazemsky, in 1967. He later started a relationship with Swiss filmmaker Anne-Marie Miéville. Godard divorced Wiazemsky in 1979, after he had moved with Miéville to the Swiss municipality of Rolle, where he lived with her for the rest of his life.

Ukraine piles pressure on retreating Russian troops

By ELENA BECATOROS and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KHARKIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian troops piled pressure on retreating Russian forces on Tuesday, pressing a counteroffensive that has produced major gains and a stunning blow to Moscow's military prestige.

It was not yet clear if the Ukrainian blitz in the northeast after months of little discernible movement could signal a turning point in the nearly seven-month war. But the country's officials were buoyant, releasing footage showing their forces burning Russian flags and inspecting abandoned charred tanks. In one video, border guards tore down a poster that read, "We are one people with Russia."

Momentum has switched back and forth before, and Ukraine's American allies, for one, were careful not to declare a premature victory since Russian President Vladimir Putin still has troops and resources to tap.

Still, the Kremlin struggled to respond to the defeat, its largest since its forces abandoned a botched attempt to capture Kyiv early in the war.

Late Monday, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said his troops have retaken more than 6,000 square kilometers (2,300 square miles) — an area more than twice the size of Luxembourg — in a matter of weeks.

"The movement of our troops continues," he said.

In the latest claim, Ukraine's border guard services said the army took control of Vovchansk — a town just 3 kilometers (2 miles) from Russia seized on the first day of the war.

While every individual claim of military success could not be verified, Russia acknowledged that it has withdrawn troops from areas in the northeastern region of Kharkiv in recent days.

Reports of chaos abounded as Russian troops pulled out — as well as claims that they were surrendering en masse. Ukraine officials have said they have captured so many soldiers that they are struggling to house them. The claim could not be immediately verified.

Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Defense Hanna Maliar said Kyiv is trying to persuade even more Russian soldiers to give up, launching shells filled with flyers ahead of their advance.

"Russians use you as cannon fodder. Your life doesn't mean anything for them. You don't need this war. Surrender to Armed Forces of Ukraine," the flyers read.

In one indication of the blow sustained by Moscow, British intelligence said that one premier force, the 1st Guards Tank Army, had been "severely degraded" during the invasion and that "Russia's conventional force designed to counter NATO is severely weakened. It will likely take years for Russia to rebuild this capability."

The retreat didn't stop Russia from pounding Ukrainian positions, however. Early Tuesday, it shelled the city of Lozova in the Kharkiv region, killing three people and injuring nine, said regional governor Oleh Syniehubov.

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And Ukrainian officials said Russia kept up shelling around Europe's largest nuclear facility, where fighting has raised fears of a nuclear disaster. The Nikopol area, which is across the Dnieper River from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, was shelled six times during the night but no injuries were immediately reported, said regional governor Valentyn Reznichenko.

Strikes have also continued unabated on the city of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest and one that has been hammered by artillery for months.

Zelenskyy specifically criticized Russia for targeting energy infrastructure in its attacks over the past days. "Hundreds and thousands of Ukrainians found themselves in the dark — without electricity. Houses, hospitals, schools, communal infrastructure ... sites that have absolutely nothing to do with the infrastructure of the armed forces of our country."

He said it could only point to one thing. "This is a sign of the desperation of those who contrived this war. This is how they react to the defeat of Russian forces in the Kharkiv region. They can't do anything to our heroes on the battlefield."

The counteroffensive has provoked rare public criticism of Putin's war. Meanwhile, some of its defenders in Russia played down the idea that the success belonged to Ukraine, blaming instead Western weapons and fighters for the losses.

"It's not Ukraine that attacked Izium, but NATO," read a headline in the state-supported Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper, referring to one of the areas where Russia said it has withdrawn troops.

Elsewhere, residents of a Russian village just across the border from Ukraine were evacuated after shelling by Ukrainian troops killed one person, according to Russia's Tass news agency.

The report cited the head of the local administration in Logachevka, who said Ukrainian troops opened fire at a border checkpoint.

William Ruto sworn in as Kenya's president after close vote

By CARA ANNA and BRIAN INGANGA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — William Ruto was sworn in as Kenya's president on Tuesday after narrowly winning the Aug. 9 election in East Africa's most stable democracy, and quickly signaled that his leadership would be a strongly Christian one.

The Supreme Court last week rejected a challenge by losing candidate and longtime opposition figure Raila Odinga to the official results, completing a markedly peaceful election.

The 55-year-old Ruto had been the deputy to outgoing President Uhuru Kenyatta but had a bitter split with Kenyatta that left the two not speaking for months at a time. On Tuesday, the audience cheered as the two shook hands, and again as Kenyatta handed over the instruments of power.

Ruto, who had dropped to his knees in tears and prayer when the court upheld his win, knelt on the stage minutes after his swearing-in during an extended sermon. "A chicken seller to a president," intoned the pastor, highlighting Ruto's humble youth.

Ruto's first tweet quoted Psalms: "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

The event began with some chaos. Scores of people were crushed and injured as they forced their way into the packed stadium. A medic said a fence fell down after people pushed it and about 60 were injured, though the number may rise.

"We had to treat some with minor injuries. Most of them were rushed to the main hospital in Nairobi," Peter Muiruri said. There were no reports of deaths.

People tried to dodge baton-wielding security forces. Some failed. "I was beaten by the police after trying to get inside," said one witness, Benson Kimutai.

Ruto is taking power in a country heavily burdened by debt that will challenge his efforts to fulfill sweepingly made campaign promises to Kenya's poor.

With the transition, Kenya's presidency moves from one leader indicted by the International Criminal Court to another. Both Kenyatta and Ruto were indicted over their roles in deadly 2007 post-election violence, but the cases were later closed amid allegations of witness intimidation.

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The August election was calm in a country with a history of political violence. Chaos erupted only in the final minutes when the electoral commission publicly split and prominent Odinga supporters tried to physically stop the declaration of Ruto as the winner.

Ruto's campaign had portrayed him as a "hustler" with a humble background of going barefoot and selling chickens by the roadside, a counterpoint to the political dynasties represented by Kenyatta and Odinga. His presidential flag features a wheelbarrow, the symbol of his campaign.

But Ruto received powerful political mentoring as a young man from former President Daniel arap Moi, who oversaw a one-party state for years before Kenyans successfully pushed for multiparty elections.

Ruto now speaks of democracy and has vowed there will be no retaliation against dissenting voices.

The losing candidate, the 77-year-old Odinga, is setting himself up to be a prominent one. In a statement on Monday, he said he would skip the inauguration and later will "announce next steps as we seek to deepen and strengthen our democracy."

Though Odinga also asserted that "the outcome of the election remains indeterminate," a spokesman told The Associated Press it was "highly unlikely" he would seek to declare himself the "people's president" as he did after losing the 2017 election.

King Charles in Belfast, queen's coffin to return to London

By RENATA BRITO, JILL LAWLESS and MIKE CORDER Associated Press

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP) — King Charles III flew to Northern Ireland on Tuesday on the latest leg of his tour of the four parts of the United Kingdom, where crowds of well wishers gathered to greet him in a region with a contested British and Irish identity that is deeply divided over the British monarchy.

In the latest outpouring of affection since Queen Elizabeth II's death last Thursday, hundreds of people were lining the street leading to Hillsborough Castle, the royal family's official residence in Northern Ireland, just outside Belfast. The area in front of the gates to the castle was carpeted with hundreds of floral tributes.

On Monday night, Charles and his siblings, Anne, Andrew and Edward, their heads bowed, briefly stood vigil around their mother's flag-draped coffin in St. Giles' Cathedral as members of the public filed past.

Earlier, a man wearing a suit adorned with medals stood silently, bowed his head and moved on. A woman dabbed away tears with a handkerchief. Another woman with two young children in their school uniforms walked slowly past the coffin.

In the line of mourners outside St. Giles' Cathedral in the historic heart of Edinburgh, Sheila McLeay called the queen "a wonderful ambassador for our country."

"She was such an example for every single one of us. She was dignified. She was just, she was beautiful inside and out. And I have known her all of my life. And I miss her very much," she added.

Scotland, where the queen died Thursday at her beloved Balmoral estate in the Highlands after a 70-year reign, has been almost universal in its praise for the queen.

The British monarchy draws more mixed emotions in Northern Ireland, where there are two main communities: mostly Protestant unionists who consider themselves British and largely Roman Catholic nationalists who see themselves as Irish.

That split fueled three decades of violence known as "the Troubles" involving paramilitary groups on both sides and U.K. security forces, in which 3,600 people died. The royal family was touched personally by the violence: Lord Louis Mountbatten, a cousin of the queen and a much-loved mentor to Charles, was killed by an Irish Republican Army bomb in 1979.

A deep sectarian divide remains, a quarter century after Northern Ireland's 1998 peace agreement.

But in a sign of how far Northern Ireland has come on the road to peace, representatives of Sinn Fein — the main Irish nationalist party, linked during the Troubles to the IRA — are attending commemorative events for the queen and meeting the king on Tuesday.

Sinn Fein's president, Mary Lou McDonald, paid tribute to the 96-year-old monarch following her death last Thursday, calling her "a powerful advocate and ally of those who believe in peace and reconciliation."

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The president and prime minister of the neighboring Republic of Ireland are also due to attend the memorial service in Belfast, despite tense relations between Dublin and London over Brexit. Since Britain left the European Union in 2020, the U.K. and the EU have been wrangling over trade rules for Northern Ireland, the only part of the U.K. that shares a border with a member of the bloc.

After lying in the cathedral through most of Tuesday, the queen's coffin will be flown back to London and driven to her official London home, Buckingham Palace.

The Royal Air Force C-17 Globemaster plane that will carry the coffin has in the past been used to evacuate people from Afghanistan and to take humanitarian aid and weapons to Ukraine following Russia's invasion, U.K. Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston said.

In the early hours of Tuesday, scores of workers were seen cleaning litter and weeds from the road between the air force base where the plane carrying the queen's coffin will land and central London.

Armenia says 49 soldiers killed in attacks by Azerbaijan

By AVET DEMOURIAN Associated Press

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP) — Azerbaijani forces shelled Armenia's territory on Tuesday in a large-scale attack that killed at least 49 Armenian soldiers and fueled fears of even broader hostilities.

Azerbaijan and Armenia have been locked in a decades-old conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, which is part of Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a separatist war there ended in 1994. Azerbaijan reclaimed broad swaths of Nagorno-Karabakh in a six-week war in 2020 that killed more than 6,600 people and ended with a Russia-brokered peace deal.

Moscow, which deployed about 2,000 troops to the region to serve as peacekeepers under the deal, moved quickly to broker a cease-fire on Tuesday morning, but it wasn't immediately clear whether it was holding.

The hostilities erupted minutes after midnight, with Azerbaijani forces unleashing an artillery barrage and drone attacks in many sections of Armenian territory, according to the Armenian Defense Ministry.

Azerbaijan charged that its forces returned fire in response to "large-scale provocations" by the Armenian military, claiming that the Armenian troops planted mines and repeatedly fired on Azerbaijani military positions, resulting in unspecified casualties and damage to military infrastructure.

Azerbaijan's ally Turkey also placed the blame for the violence on Armenia. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu called for Yerevan to halt its "provocations" and Defense Minister Hulusi Akar condemned "Armenia's aggressive attitude and provocative actions" following talks with their counterparts in Baku.

Speaking in parliament early Tuesday, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said that Azerbaijani shelling has killed at least 49 Armenian soldiers.

He said the Azerbaijani action followed his recent European Union-brokered talks in Brussels with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev that revealed what he described as Azerbaijan's uncompromising stand.

Pashinyan called Russian President Vladimir Putin overnight and also had phone calls with French President Emmanuel Macron, European Council President Charles Michel, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken to discuss the hostilities.

The Armenian government said that the country will officially ask Russia for assistance under a friendship treaty between the countries and also appeal to the United Nations and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a Moscow-dominated security alliance of ex-Soviet nations that includes Armenia.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov refrained from comment on Yerevan's request, but added that Putin was "taking every effort to help de-escalate tensions."

Russia's Foreign Ministry urged both parties "to refrain from further escalation and show restraint" and voiced hope that a cease-fire brokered by Moscow this morning will hold.

US leaders avoid victory dance in Ukraine combat advances

By LOLITA BALDOR and ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. leaders from President Joe Biden on down are being careful not to declare

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a premature victory after a Ukrainian offensive forced Russian troops into a messy retreat in the north. Instead, military officials are looking toward the fights yet to come and laying out plans to provide Ukraine more weapons and expand training, while warily awaiting Russia's response to the sudden, stunning battlefield losses.

Although there was widespread celebration of Ukraine's gains over the weekend, U.S. officials know Russian President Vladimir Putin still has troops and resources to tap, and his forces still control large swaths of the east and south.

"I agree there should be no spiking of the ball because Russia still has cards it can play," said Philip Breedlove, a retired U.S. Air Force general who was NATO's top commander from 2013 to 2016. "Ukraine is now clearly making durable changes in its east and north and I believe that if the West properly equips Ukraine, they'll be able to hold on to their gains."

Lawmakers particularly pointed to the precision weapons and rocket systems that the U.S. and Western nations have provided to Ukraine as key to the dramatic shift in momentum, including the precision-guided High-Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, and the High-speed Anti-Radiation Missile, or HARM, which is designed to target and destroy radar-equipped air defense systems.

"They're there, they're in theater, and they're making the difference," Sen. Chris Coons, a Delaware Democrat and member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the hands of highly motivated Ukrainian fighters who are making the most of weapons ranging from off-the-shelf drones and abandoned Russian arms to advanced weapons from the West, the HIMARS are enabling Ukrainians "to turn the tide, dramatically," Coons said.

Meanwhile, a senior defense official said the U.S. is looking at future needs, including discussions about providing more intensive combat training for larger Ukraine units, a change from current training focused on smaller teams learning to handle specific weapons. It is also considering sending additional air defense systems, as well as lethal strike drones and more surveillance drones. The official was one of two who briefed reporters Monday on condition of anonymity to discuss planning details.

Ukraine's launch in recent days of a much-anticipated counteroffensive — in a different part of the country from where Russian troops occupying Ukraine had massed strength to meet it — has brought on the biggest territorial changes in months in the 200-day war, launched when Putin rolled Russian forces into the neighboring country, targeting its Western-oriented government.

The U.S. officials acknowledged that the U.S. provided information to help the Ukrainian counteroffensive, but declined to say how much or if Western officials helped strategize the idea to throw Russian forces off guard by calling attention to attack plans in the south, while actually plotting a more formidable campaign in the east.

The U.S. provided information "on conditions" in the country, said one of the officials, but "in the end, this was the Ukrainian choice. The Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian political leadership made the decisions on how to conduct this counteroffensive."

Ukrainian forces claimed Monday to have retaken a wide band of territory and more than 20 Ukrainian settlements from Russia, pushing all the way back to the two countries' northeastern border. Russian soldiers were surrendering in such numbers that Ukraine was having difficulty making room for them, Ukrainian military officials said.

Ukrainians have pounded 400 targets in all with the HIMARS since the U.S. began supplying them, using them "with devastating effect," Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters late last week as Ukraine's counteroffensive was getting underway.

The truck-mounted, GPS-guided systems fire faster, farther and more precisely than the Soviet-designed rocket launchers otherwise used by both Russia and Ukraine. They can hit targets up to 80 kilometers (50 miles) away. Ukrainian forces have used the 16 HIMARS and several similar systems to strike supply lines, ammunition depots and other key Russian targets.

The Ukrainians "believe that this has happened because of the new technology equipment and weapons that we've sent them. They ... said well, if you would have sent them six months ago," said Sen. Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat. "We didn't have them six months ago, but you know, we had to build the

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weaponry, and train their people on it, takes time.”

Still, Ukrainian leaders are still pressing for more — including fighter jets and the longer-range Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMS, a surface-to-surface missile that the U.S. has so far declined to send.

A key question going forward will be how much more Congress and the American public are willing to spend on the war in Ukraine, which the U.S. and the West say also represents a significant threat to Europe.

It’s unclear if, or how, Ukraine fighters’ successes in recent day will affect the ongoing debate. The White House has asked Congress to greenlight an additional \$11.7 billion in aid as part of an overall government funding measure that lawmakers must approve before the end of the month.

“I haven’t seen any lack of appetite so far” for continuing funding for Ukraine, said Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo. “I think to see the ability to take the help that they’ve been given and then be clearly successful in some of their efforts is an encouragement to want to do more of that.”

The U.S. — the lead contributor to Ukraine’s war effort among NATO members — has poured more than \$15 billion in weapons and other military support into Ukraine since January.

Biden acknowledged the battlefield gains for Ukraine over the weekend but refused to say more. “I’m not going to speak to that now because things are in process,” he told reporters.

Breedlove noted that despite the recent battle losses, Putin still has “a lot of tanks and a lot of trucks and a lot of people that he can still throw at this problem. They’re just not his best tanks, his best trucks or his best people.”

But he warned that winter may bring the most daunting challenge. Putin’s moves to shut down fuel supplies to Europe, which is expected to increase prices, are likely aimed at turning public opinion across the region.

“Even though Mr. Putin’s military has taken a beating on the military front, his big card, yet probably to play is how well does Europe hold together through a winter that Mr. Putin is going to make completely miserable for the European people,” Breedlove said. “I think Mr. Putin is desperately trying to hang on to winter because his big hope now is to separate the European people from their European political leadership.”

EXPLAINER: Why Twitter’s former security head is testifying

By The Associated Press undefined

Peiter Zatkó, the former Twitter security chief who’s accused the company of negligence with privacy and security in a whistleblower complaint, will testify before Congress on Tuesday.

Zatkó is well-respected in the cybersecurity space, which gives his complaints extra weight. But so far he has little documentary support for his claims — unlike the Facebook whistleblower, Frances Haugen, whose complaint last year included troves of internal documents from the company now called Meta.

Zatkó’s accusations are also playing into Tesla CEO Elon Musk’s battle with Twitter to get out of his \$44 billion bid to buy the company. The Delaware judge overseeing that case has ruled that Musk can include new evidence related to Zatkó’s allegations in the high-stakes trial set to start Oct. 17.

Twitter calls Zatkó’s description of events “a false narrative.”

WHO IS PEITER ZATKO?

Better known by his hacker handle “Mudge,” Zatkó is a highly respected cybersecurity expert who first gained prominence in the 1990s and later worked in senior positions at the Pentagon’s Defense Advanced Research Agency and Google.

He joined Twitter at the urging of then-CEO Jack Dorsey in late 2020, the same year the company suffered an embarrassing security breach in which hackers broke into the Twitter accounts of world leaders, celebrities and tech moguls — including Musk — in an attempt to scam their followers out of bitcoin. Zatkó served as Twitter’s security chief until he was fired early this year.

WHAT ARE HIS ACCUSATIONS AGAINST TWITTER?

Zatkó’s complaint alleges that the company misled regulators about its poor cybersecurity defenses and

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its negligence in attempting to root out fake accounts that spread disinformation, according to a whistleblower complaint filed with U.S. officials.

Among Zlatos's most serious accusations is that Twitter violated the terms of a 2011 FTC settlement by falsely claiming that it had put stronger measures in place to protect the security and privacy of its users. Zlatos also accuses the company of deceptions involving its handling of "spam" or fake accounts, an allegation that is at the core of Musk's attempt to back out of the Twitter takeover.

His 84-page complaint alleges that he found "extreme, egregious deficiencies" on the platform, including issues with "user privacy, digital and physical security, and platform integrity/content moderation."

WHY IS HE GOING BEFORE CONGRESS?

U.S. lawmakers are anxious to hear from Zlatos and his allegations that the influential social network misled regulators about its cyber defenses and efforts to control fake accounts. Tuesday's Senate Judiciary Committee hearing will be the first, but it might not be the last.

The Judiciary Committee's chairman, Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., and its senior Republican, Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, said in a joint statement last month that if Zlatos's claims are accurate, "they may show dangerous data-privacy and security risks for Twitter users around the world."

They said the panel "will investigate this issue further with a full committee hearing ... and take further steps as needed to get to the bottom of these alarming allegations."

WHAT'S EXPECTED FROM THE HEARING?

With the midterm elections looming in early November, many lawmakers may wish to appear before TV cameras expressing concern about online privacy, an issue that resonates with consumers. That means camera lights glaring and outrage thundering from elected representatives as a lone whistleblower stands and takes the oath behind a table ringed with photographers — a scene that would mirror former Facebook product manager Frances Haugen's testimony late last year.

What's less clear is whether Congress will take any concrete steps to address Zlatos's allegations. While lawmakers have held numerous hearings questioning Big Tech executives over privacy, security, competition and other matters, efforts to regulate the companies on a federal level have stalled.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Securities and Exchange Commission is also questioning Twitter about how it counts fake accounts on its platform. In June, the securities regulators asked the company about its methodology for calculating the number of false or spam accounts and "the underlying judgments and assumptions used by management." The numbers are key to Twitter's business because it uses metrics for real users to attract advertisers, whose payments make up a little more than 90% of its revenue.

Twitter, with an estimated 238 million daily active users, said last month that it removes 1 million spam accounts daily.

Senior members of the Senate Intelligence and Commerce committees, as well as the House Energy and Commerce panel, also have publicly signaled their engagement on the issue. The Senate Intelligence Committee is planning a meeting with Zlatos to discuss his allegations, a spokeswoman said, adding, "We take this matter seriously."

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a Connecticut Democrat, has called on the FTC to investigate.

Trump's PAC faces scrutiny amid intensifying legal probes

By JILL COLVIN, BRIAN SLODYSKO and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sitting on top of more than \$115 million across several political committees, Donald Trump has positioned himself as a uniquely indomitable force in the GOP who would almost certainly have the resources to swamp his rivals if he launched another presidential campaign.

But that massive pile of money is also emerging as a potential vulnerability. His chief fundraising vehicle, Save America PAC, is under new legal scrutiny after the Justice Department issued a round of grand jury subpoenas that sought information about the political action committee's fundraising practices.

The scope of the probe is unclear. Grand jury subpoenas and search warrants issued by the Justice

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Department in recent days were related to numerous topics, including Trump's PAC, according to people familiar with the matter who requested anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation. The subpoenas seek records as well as testimony and ask at least some of the recipients about their knowledge of efforts to engage in election fraud, according to one of the people.

The subpoenas also ask for records of communication with Trump-allied lawyers who supported efforts to overturn the 2020 election results and plotted to line up fake electors in battleground states. A particular area of focus appears to be on the "Save America Rally" that preceded the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, the person said.

The investigation is one of several criminal probes Trump currently faces, including scrutiny of how documents with classified markings wound up at the former president's Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida. Regardless of Save America's ultimate role in the investigations, the flurry of developments has drawn attention to the PAC's management, how it has raised money and where those funds have been directed.

Trump spokesman Taylor Budowich slammed the subpoenas, saying a "weaponized and politicized Justice Department" was "casting a blind net to intimidate and silence Republicans who are fighting for his America First agenda." Representatives for the Justice Department have declined to comment.

While Trump has more than \$115 million held across various committees, the vast majority of it is stored at Save America. The PAC ended July with more than \$99 million cash-on-hand, according to fundraising records — more than the Republican and Democratic national campaign committees combined.

Trump has continued to shovel up small-dollar donations in the months since, frustrating other Republicans who have been struggling to raise money ahead of the November midterm elections.

Save America is set up as a "leadership PAC" designed to allow political figures to fundraise for other campaigns. But the groups are often used by would-be candidates to fund political travel, polling and staff as they "test the waters" ahead of potential presidential runs. The accounts can also be used to contribute money to other candidates and party organizations, helping would-be candidates build political capital.

Much of the money Trump has amassed was raised in the days and weeks after the 2020 election, which he lost to Democrat Joe Biden. That's when Trump supporters were bombarded with a nonstop stream of emails and texts, many containing all-caps lettering and blatant lies about a stolen 2020 election, soliciting cash for an "election defense fund."

But no such fund ever existed. Instead, Trump has dedicated the money to other uses. He's financed dozens of rallies, paid staff and used the money to travel as he's teased an expected 2024 presidential run.

Other expenses have been more unusual. There was the \$1 million donated last year to the Conservative Partnership Institute, a nonprofit that employs Cleta Mitchell and former Trump chief of staff Mark Meadows, both of whom encouraged Trump's failed attempt to overturn the 2020 election.

There was the \$650,000 "charitable contribution" in July to the Smithsonian Institution to help fund portraits of Trump and the former first lady that will one day hang in the National Portrait Gallery, according to the Smithsonian spokesperson Linda St. Thomas.

Much of the money has also funded a different sort of defense fund — one that has paid the legal expenses of Trump confidants and aides who have been called to testify before the Jan. 6 committee.

Overall, Trump's sprawling political operation has spent at least \$8 million on "legal consulting" and "legal expenses" to at least 40 law firms since the insurrection, according to an analysis of campaign finance disclosures.

It's unclear how much of that money went to legal fees for staffers after a congressional committee started investigating the origins of the attack. But at least \$1.1 million has been paid to Elections LLC, a firm started by former Trump White House ethics lawyer Stefan Passantino, according to campaign finance and business records. An additional \$1 million was paid to a legal trust housed at the same address as Passantino's firm. Passantino did not respond to a request for comment Monday night. Payments have also been made to firms that specialize in environmental regulation and real estate matters.

As of July, only about \$750,000 had been doled out to candidates for Congress, with an additional \$150,000 given to candidates for state office, records show. Trump is expected to ramp up his political

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spending now that the general election season has entered full swing, though it remains unclear how much the notoriously thrifty former president will ultimately agree to spend.

Trump has long played coy about his 2024 plans, saying a formal announcement would trigger campaign finance rules that would, in part, force him to create a new campaign committee that would be bound by strict fundraising limits.

In the meantime, Trump aides have been discussing the prospect of creating a new super PAC or repurposing one that already exists as gets he closer to an expected announcement. While Trump could not use Save America to fund campaign activity after launching a run, aides have discussed the possibility of moving at least some of that money into a super PAC, according to people familiar with the talks.

Campaign finance experts are mixed on the legality of such a move. Some, like Richard Briffault, a professor at Columbia Law School and an expert in campaign finance, said he didn't see a problem.

"There may be some hoops he has to jump through," he said. But "I don't see a problem with it going from one PAC to another ... I don't see what would block it."

Others disagree.

"It is illegal for a candidate to transfer a significant amount of money from a leadership PAC to a super PAC. You certainly can't do \$100 million," said Adav Noti, a former Federal Election Commission attorney who now works for the Campaign Legal Center, a Washington-based good governance group focused on money and politics.

And whether or not Trump would face any consequences is a different matter.

For years, the FEC, which polices campaign finance laws, has been gridlocked. The commission is split evenly between Republicans and Democrats, and a majority vote is needed to take any enforcement action against a candidate.

Indeed, legal experts say Trump has repeatedly flouted campaign finance law since launching his 2016 White House run, with no consequence.

More than 50 separate complaints alleging Trump broke campaign finance laws have been filed against him since his 2016 campaign. In roughly half of those instances, FEC lawyers have concluded that there was reason to believe that he may have broken the law. But the commission, which now includes three Trump-appointed Republicans, has repeatedly deadlocked.

The list of dismissed complaints against Trump is extensive. In 2021, Republicans on the commission rejected the claim, supported by the FEC's staff attorneys, that a Trump orchestrated hush-money payment by his former lawyer to pornographic film star Stormy Daniels amounted to an unreported in-kind contribution. In May, the commission similarly deadlocked over whether his campaign broke the law by hiding how it was spending cash during the 2020 campaign.

And over the summer, the commission rejected complaints stemming from Trump's threat to withhold \$391 million in aid for the Ukraine unless the Ukrainian officials opened an investigation into the relationship President Joe Biden's son Hunter Biden had with a Ukrainian gas company called Burisma, which the FEC's attorney's determined was a potential violation of campaign finance law.

"There is no legal basis whatsoever for believing that Congress intended the FEC to police official acts of the government that may be intended to assist an officeholder's reelection," the commission's three Republicans said in a written statement late last month.

That means any enforcement action would likely have to come from the Justice Department.

"He has nothing to fear from the Federal Election Commission until either its structure is changed or there is turnover among the FEC Commissioners," said Brett G. Kappel, a longtime campaign finance attorney who works at the Washington-based firm Harmon Curran and has represented both Republicans and Democrats. "That doesn't mean he doesn't have anything to fear from the Justice Department, which is already apparently investigating Save America. From what I can see, there are multiple wire fraud allegations that could be the subject of a Justice Department investigation."

In the meantime, Trump and Save America continue to rake in contributions from grassroots supporters, blasting out fundraising solicitations with aggressive demands like "this needs to be taken care of NOW"

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and threatening donors that their "Voter Verification" canvass surveys are "OUT OF DATE," even as some of the Republican Senate contenders Trump endorsed and helped drag across the finish line in primaries are struggling to raise cash.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has urged those candidates to ask Trump for money, which the former president has so far proven reluctant to provide. That has left the candidates, some of whom presented themselves as McConnell antagonists during their primaries, to grovel to McConnell and the Senate Leadership Fund, the super PAC he controls and has \$100 million in reserve.

It also strengthens McConnell's hand in his long-simmering feud with Trump, who has urged GOP senators to oust the Kentucky Republican. Some close to Trump acknowledge the candidates could use the money, but said he doesn't see it as his responsibility to fill the void.

Emmy Moments: A winner's joy — in song — lifts Emmy night

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

As a kindergarten teacher on "Abbott Elementary," she can get an unruly class to sit up and listen. And that's exactly what Sheryl Lee Ralph did at the Emmys — capturing the attention of a packed theater and a global TV audience with a stirring acceptance speech for the ages.

It was the first Emmy (and nomination) for stage and screen veteran Ralph, at 66, and she made the most of it, delivering the ultimate feel-good moment of an Emmy show that sometimes felt flat or uneven, despite the well-known comic talents of host Kenan Thompson and the return of a pre-pandemic crowd.

It was a show that rewarded previous winners in several major categories. "Succession" and "Ted Lasso," the big winners in drama and comedy, were repeat winners, as were a number of actors.

Still, there were new and groundbreaking wins like that of actor Lee Jung-jae of "Squid Game," the first Asian to win the award and a major breakthrough for a foreign-language show along with Hwang Dong-hyuk's prize for directing. There was Ralph's acting prize and Quinta Brunson's writing award for "Abbott Elementary." And then there was winner Lizzo, crying as she reminded her audience of the urgency of young people being able to see people who look like them represented in media and culture.

A few notable moments of the night:

A TEACHER SCHOOLS HER AUDIENCE

Sheryl Lee Ralph had already broken into tears before the show, when she'd been handed a tablet on the carpet with a recorded message of support from a beloved aunt. She declared that no matter what happened inside, she'd already won. Luckily, Ralph had more winning to do. Declared the victor for supporting actress in a comedy, she ascended the stage and sang the powerful opening to "Endangered Species" by Dianne Reeves: "I am an endangered species but I sing no victim's song. I am a woman, I am an artist, and I know where my voice belongs." She then admonished anyone watching who'd ever had a dream, to not give up. "This is what believing looks like," she said. Sometimes it's not clear early on what the big moment of an awards night will be. On this Emmy night, it was clear.

NO 'CROWN,' BUT A SUCCESSION

Two actresses have already won Emmys for playing the late Queen Elizabeth II on the same show, "The Crown." Will there be a third, when Imelda Staunton takes over, after Claire Foy and Olivia Colman? In any case, "The Crown," last year's drama winner, was not in contention this year, and "Succession" was able to win its second prize, after winning in 2020. It was not the only repeat winner, by far. "Ted Lasso" repeated last year's win as best comedy, as did its star, Jason Sudeikis, and supporting actor Brett Goldstein. Other repeats: Zendaya of "Euphoria," repeating her prize from 2020, and Jean Smart, who won her second comedy actress award for "Hacks." There had been thoughts of an "Abbott Elementary" upset in the comedy category, but it was not to be.

LIZZO'S POIGNANT REMINDER

She was visibly blown away by Ralph's speech, but soon Lizzo was onstage for her own emotional win for her competition series, "Lizzo's Watch Out For The Big Grrrls," in which contestants vie to be her backup dancers, beating out frequent winner "Ru Paul's Drag Race." The singer gave a compelling lesson

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on how crucial representation is in our pop culture. "When I was a little girl, all I wanted to see was me in the media," she said. "Someone fat like me, Black like me, beautiful like me." She said she eventually did, but SHE had to be that person. Lizzo gave a shout-out to her dancers up in the balcony. "This is for the big girls!" she said.

MARTIN SHORT GETS IN A DIG

There wasn't a lot of politics mentioned in Monday night's show, but "Only Murders in the Building" star Martin Short managed to get in a dig at a favorite target on some awards nights, Donald Trump. "Really, what an audience you are," Short said. "I wish I could box you up and take you home, like classified White House documents." Co-star Steve Martin decided to get things back to the main reason for the evening. "Have you or someone you love ever considered a reverse mortgage?" he quipped.

HEADING HOME

When Jerrod Carmichael won best writing for a comedy special with his "Jerrod Carmichael: Rothaniel," he decided to end the evening then and there on a high note, saying he was going home. "I made something that was of great personal consequence to me and this definitely contributes to the meaning of it," he said of his very personal special. "I'm not like a sore winner, but I'm gonna go home because I can't top this right now."

ABOUT THOSE THANK-YOU CAPTIONS

It seemed like a good idea — leading up to the Emmys, nominees were told to send in written lists of people they'd like to thank, to be used in captioning, so their eventual speeches could be more creative, unencumbered by all those names. In reality, though, only some winners had the captioning, and even those who did proceeded to thank a long list of people anyway, making it all feel rather moot.

IF YOU'RE GONNA GET PLAYED OFF, DANCE!

Jennifer Coolidge was a sentimental favorite to win for "The White Lotus," and when she did, regaling the audience about a lavender bath she'd taken that day that had an unforeseen effect, she quickly ran out of time with more to say. When the music wouldn't stop despite her pleading "Wait, hold on!" she just decided to smile and boogey along with it. The crowd roared.

OR NOT:

Matthew Macfadyen of "Succession," winner for supporting actor in a drama, was also played off, but he didn't dance. No, this is Tom Wambsgans, so he's no doubt quietly humiliated and enraged and who knows what'll happen next season.

Rains, mudslides prompt Southern California evacuations

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Heavy rains Monday unleashed mudslides in a mountain area east of Los Angeles that burned two years ago, sending boulders and other debris across roads and prompting evacuation and shelter-in-place orders for thousands of residents.

Firefighters went street by street in the community of Forest Falls to make sure no residents were trapped. Eric Sherwin, spokesperson for the San Bernardino County Fire Department, said crews hadn't found anyone who needed to be rescued and no one was reported missing.

Many structures in the area had varying levels of damage, Sherwin said, including a commercial building where the mud was so high it collapsed the roof.

The rains were the remnants of a tropical storm that brought high winds and some badly needed rainfall to drought-stricken Southern California last week, helping firefighters largely corral a wildfire that had been burning out of control about 20 miles (32 kilometers) south of the mudslides.

The mud flows and flash flooding occurred in parts of the San Bernardino Mountains where there are burn scars — areas where there's little vegetation to hold the soil — from the 2020 wildfires.

"All of that dirt turns to mud and starts slipping down the mountain," Sherwin said.

One of the wildfires, the El Dorado Fire, was sparked by a smoke device used by a couple to reveal their baby's gender. A firefighter died and the couple was criminally charged in a pending case.

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Concerns about additional mud and debris flows Monday night prompted authorities to put 2,000 homes in the San Bernardino Mountain communities of Oak Glen and Forest Falls under evacuation orders after nearly 2 inches (5 centimeters) of rain fell on Yucaipa Ridge.

For some homes in Forest Falls it was too late to evacuate and residents were told to shelter in place through the night because it was safer than venturing out.

"The roads are compromised or they're covered in debris," Sherwin said, adding that crews planned to work all night using heavy equipment to clear routes.

The mudslides came after a week that saw California endure a record-long heatwave, where temperatures in many parts of the state rocket past 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius), and pushed the state's electrical grid to the breaking point as air conditioners sucked up power. The Fairview Fire and the Mosquito Fire burning east of Sacramento broke out and raged out of control.

The tropical storm aided crews battling the Fairview Fire about 75 miles (121 kilometers) southeast of Los Angeles. The 44-square-mile (114-square-kilometer) blaze was 56% contained by late Monday. Two people died fleeing the fire, which destroyed at least 30 homes and other structures in Riverside County.

The Mosquito Fire has grown to 76 square miles (197 square kilometers), with 16% containment, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. While crews were able to take advantage of cooler temperatures and higher humidity Monday to strengthen control lines, more than 5,800 structures in Placer and El Dorado counties remained under threat, and some 11,000 residents were under evacuation orders.

Smoky skies from wildfires in many areas of the West caused air quality to deteriorate Monday, with dangerous levels of particulate pollution detected by government and private monitors in portions of eastern Oregon and Washington, Northern California, central Idaho and western Montana. In some areas, people were told to avoid all outdoor activity until the pollution cleared.

In Washington, fire officials scrambled to secure resources for a blaze sparked Saturday in the remote Stevens Pass area that sent hikers fleeing and forced evacuations of mountain communities. As of Monday, the Bolt Creek Fire was 2% contained and had scorched nearly 12 square miles (31 square kilometers) of forestland about 65 miles (104 kilometers) northeast of Seattle. A larger incident management team and additional fire crews were slated to arrive Tuesday, officials said.

In Oregon, utility companies said Monday they restored power to tens of thousands of customers after shutting down service over the weekend to try to prevent wildfires during high winds, low humidity and hot temperatures.

Both Portland General Electric and Pacific Power enacted planned power shutoffs Friday as gusting winds and low humidity moved into Oregon, posing extreme fire danger. The utilities were concerned that the winds would cause power lines to break or sag, making sparks that could ignite tinder-dry vegetation.

South of Portland, evacuation levels were reduced near the 135-square-mile (349-square-kilometer) Cedar Creek Fire, which has burned for over a month across Lane and Deschutes counties. Firefighters were protecting remote homes in Oakridge, Westfir and surrounding mountain communities. Sheriff's officials warned that people should remain ready to leave at a moment's notice should conditions change.

Scientists say climate change has made the West warmer and drier over the last three decades and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive. In the last five years, California has experienced the largest and most destructive fires in its history.

Seoul says N. Korea will self-destruct if it uses nukes

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea on Tuesday warned North Korea that using its nuclear weapons would put it on a "path of self-destruction," in unusually harsh language that came days after North Korea legislated a new law that would allow it to use its nuclear weapons preemptively.

North Korea will likely be infuriated by the South Korean rhetoric as Seoul typically shuns such strong words to avoid raising tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

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Despite North Korea's increasingly aggressive nuclear doctrine, some experts say the country — outgunned by more superior U.S. and South Korean forces — will still unlikely use its nuclear weapons first.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said the legislation would only deepen North Korea's isolation and prompt Seoul and Washington to "further strengthen their deterrence and reaction capacities."

To deter North Korea from using its nuclear weapons, the ministry said South Korea will sharply boost its own preemptive attack plan, missile defense and massive retaliation capacities while seeking a greater U.S. security commitment to defend its ally with all available means, including nuclear one.

"We warn that the North Korean government would face the overwhelming response by the South Korea-U.S. military alliance and go on the path of self-destruction, if it attempts to use nuclear weapons," Moon Hong Sik, an acting ministry spokesperson, told reporters.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre earlier said the United States "remains fully committed to the defense of (South Korea), using the full range of defense capabilities." Jean-Pierre said the United States has no hostile intent toward North Korea and that it remains focused on pursuing close coordination with its allies to advance a shared objective of the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Last week, North Korea's rubber-stamp parliament adopted the legislation on the rules for the use of its nuclear arsenal. It would allow the use of nuclear weapons if its leadership faced an imminent attack or if it aims to prevent an unspecified "catastrophic crisis" to its people.

The loose wording raised concerns the rules are largely meant as a legal basis for a preemptive nuclear strike to intimidate rivals into making concessions amid long-stalled negotiations over its arsenal. Some experts say the North Korean move is also designed to strengthen the control of Kim Jong Un's leadership in the face of hardships caused by the pandemic and border closures.

During the parliament's meeting, Kim said in a speech that his country will never abandon its nuclear weapons to cope with U.S. threats. He accused the United States of pushing to weaken the North's defenses and eventually collapse his government.

Earlier this year, Kim said his nuclear weapons would never be confined to the sole mission of war deterrent and could be used preemptively if his country's national interests are threatened. North Korea later approved plans to assign new duties to front-line army units, sparking speculation it was a step toward deploying battlefield nuclear weapons along its border with South Korea.

This year, Kim has also dialed up weapons tests to a record pace by test-launching a slew of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles targeting both the U.S. mainland and South Korea. For months, U.S. and South Korean officials have said North Korea could carry out its first nuclear test in five years as well.

Since taking office in May, South Korea's new conservative government, led by President Yoon Suk Yeol, has said it would take a tougher stance on North Korean provocation but also offered massive support plans if the North denuclearizes. North Korea has bluntly rejected that aid-for-disarmament offer and unleashed crude insults on the Yoon government.

Seoul's use of words like "self-destruction" is unusual but it's not the first time. When South Korea was governed by another conservative leader, Park Geun-hye, from 2013-2017, her government also warned North Korea would evaporate from Earth or self-destruct with its provocations, as the North conducted a slew of missile and nuclear tests.

Liberal President Moon Jae-in, who served from 2017 until this year, championed greater reconciliation between the Koreas. He was credited for arranging now-stalled nuclear diplomacy between Pyongyang and Washington but also faced criticism that such a diplomacy only allowed Kim Jong Un to buy time to perfect weapons technology while enjoying an elevated standing on the world stage.

Mass firing at UAE newspaper raises question of censorship

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The story about high fuel prices was safe, editors agreed, even under the strict press laws of the United Arab Emirates.

Instead, it unleashed a firestorm at Al Roeya newspaper in Dubai. Within days, top editors were inter-

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rogated. Within weeks, dozens of employees were fired and the print paper declared dissolved.

The newspaper's publisher, Abu Dhabi-based International Media Investments, or IMI, said Al Roeya's closure stems only from its transformation into a new Arabic language business outlet with CNN. However, eight people with direct knowledge of the newspaper's mass firings told The Associated Press that the layoffs came in the immediate aftermath of the article on the UAE's gas prices.

Their accounts, given on condition anonymity for fear of reprisals, show the limits of speech in the autocratic nation that tightly controls its domestic media. Self-censorship is rife among journalists at local outlets expected to provide a stream of good news in the UAE, which advertises itself as a globalized destination attractive to tourists, investors and Western media companies.

"The UAE touts itself as liberal and open to business while continuing its repression," said Cathryn Grothe, a Middle East research analyst at the Washington-based group Freedom House. "Censorship is rampant, online and offline. ... It limits the work that journalists are able to do."

IMI declined to comment on the story published just weeks before Al Roeya's announced closure. The company stressed its plans to launch CNN Business Arabic capped monthslong negotiations.

Al Roeya, Arabic for "The Vision," was founded in 2012 and rebranded by IMI three years ago to provide local and global news to Arab youth.

IMI is owned by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the billionaire brother of the UAE's president who also owns British soccer club Manchester City. IMI's major outlets include The National, an English-language broadsheet newspaper, and Sky News Arabia.

While Al Roeya hewed to the UAE's official line, its pages provided in-depth business news.

The story that staffers say set off the crisis at the paper came together earlier this summer, when high prices were the talk of the town. Unlike its neighbors, the oil-producing UAE has phased out fuel subsidies. Citizens accustomed to cheap gasoline and cradle-to-grave welfare felt the sting after Russia's invasion of Ukraine pushed up oil prices.

Al Roeya interviewed Emiratis who had resorted to cost-saving measures. A few citizens living near the border with Oman, where drivers pay half as much for fuel as in the UAE due to government subsidies, told Al Roeya they crossed into the sultanate to fill up their cars. Some reportedly even got extra fuel tanks fitted on their vehicles.

The story spread like wildfire on social media on June 2 — especially the anecdote about cross-border fuel fill-ups. Within hours though, the article was deleted from the website and never made it to print.

Several employees involved with the article were summoned to the office days later. They were suspended from work and faced extensive questioning from IMI and Al Roeya representatives and a lawyer about every step and person involved in the story's creation, editing and publication, according to those familiar with the events.

A week later, the group was given a choice: resign with additional benefits or be terminated and face possible repercussions. Those who signed a resignation letter promised not to disclose anything about the reasons behind their dismissals or criticize the publication, according to a copy of one such letter obtained by the AP.

The eight compelled to resign included top editors. Morale plummeted.

Over a week later, IMI CEO Nart Bouran visited the newsroom for an all-hands meeting.

Going into the meeting, the remaining staffers had no reason to fear for their jobs, according to some with knowledge of the internal discussions at the newspaper. They said senior managers at IMI had assured staff over the past year that their jobs were safe as the paper's editorial focus shifted primarily to business coverage.

Instead, Bouran declared the dissolution of Al Roeya and the imminent launch of the Arabic-language business outlet with CNN. At least 35 employees lost their jobs in a single day, those with knowledge said. Others said dozens more on top of that were dismissed, with severance pay.

IMI did not respond to repeated questions about how many people it fired. Profiles on jobs website LinkedIn suggest some 90 people had been working at Al Roeya.

The paper has kept a skeleton staff to update its website until the launch of CNN Business Arabic, people

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with knowledge of the matter said.

"This case (of Al Roeya) sounds part and parcel of the general repressive environment," said Grothe from Freedom House. "It has a chilling effect."

While some foreign journalists have the security of returning home to countries that support press freedom, Arab journalists who form the backbone of the country's local media remain wary of jeopardizing their residency status, which is tied to their jobs.

Al Roeya printed its final issue on June 21 with the headline: "A new promise, A renewed era." CNN Business Arabic is set to launch by the year's end.

IMI described Al Roeya's transition to CNN Business Arabic as long-planned, saying that the shift "unfortunately necessitated some redundancies." It denied the paper's closure was "connected in any way with the editorial output of Al Roeya."

When asked about the firings, CNN spokesperson Dan Faulks referred the AP to IMI's statement, and did not elaborate.

Mohamed al-Hamadi, the head of the UAE's state-backed journalist association, said the group "provided the required support" to dismissed journalists and backed IMI's description of the firings.

The upheaval recalled other dramatic episodes that have rattled the UAE's local press in recent years. In 2017, the government temporarily banned Arabian Business magazine from publishing after it reported Dubai courts were liquidating dozens of failed real estate projects stemming from the 2009 global financial crisis.

The downturn, drawing a slew of negative headlines about Dubai's debt crisis, caused the UAE to tighten its media laws. The country's crackdown on online dissent then peaked in the wake of the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings, which were kindled by economic discontent.

Sailor killed at Pearl Harbor to be laid to rest, at last

By DON BABWIN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Herbert "Bert" Jacobson will be laid to rest on Tuesday, more than 80 years after he was killed in the attack that propelled the United States into World War II.

Members of Jacobson's family have waited all their lives to attend a memorial for the young man they knew about but never met. Jacobson was among the more than 400 sailors and Marines killed on the USS Oklahoma during the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The casket containing his remains will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

"This has kind of been an unsolved mystery and it gives us closure to finally know what happened to Bert, where he is and that he's being finally laid to rest after being listed as an unknown for so long," said Brad McDonald, a nephew.

The service at Arlington will be the latest chapter in the story of a 21-year-old man from the small northern Illinois town of Grayslake, for the family that never had a body to bury when he was killed and the scientific quest to put names to the remains of hundreds of personnel from the battleship who lay buried anonymously for decades in a dormant volcanic crater near Pearl Harbor.

It is a story of waiting.

The battleship remained submerged for two years before it was refloated and bodies were recovered. A few years later, the graves of men on the Oklahoma were reopened in the hopes that dental records might lead to their names. But 27 sets of remains were not identified and had to be reinterred at the crater, the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, commonly known as the Punchbowl.

Another effort to identify about 100 sets of remains came up empty in 2003.

In 2015, the Department of Defense announced plans to exhume the remains again.

"We now have the ability to forensically test these remains and produce the identifications," Debra Prince Zinni, a forensic anthropologist and laboratory manager at the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency in Hawaii, told The Associated Press at the time.

That gave new hope to Jacobson family members, who had been disappointed by each failed effort. They told the AP that Jacobson's mother cried every Dec. 7, at least in part because she never knew

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where he was.

"She always had the hope the phone would ring and it would be Bert," McDonald said.

The 2015 effort, Project Oklahoma, has led to the identification of 355 men — including Jacobson — who were killed when their ship was hit by at least nine torpedoes. That leaves 33 sets of remains still to be identified. To mark the 80th anniversary of the attack, those unidentified remains were reinterred, said Gene Hughes, a public affairs officer with Navy Personnel Command. He has worked with the families of those killed on the Oklahoma, including Jacobson's relatives.

For Jacobson's family, any hope they would know exactly what happened on Dec. 7, 1941, faded long ago. All they knew from talking to Jacobson's shipmates was that he had just come off duty after spending several hours ferrying men to shore.

McDonald said a good friend of his uncle's from the Navy said he was pretty sure Jacobson "was asleep in his bunk and died before he even knew a war was going on. But we don't really know."

That left one final question: What happened to Bert Jacobson's body?

The answer came in 2019, when McDonald said the family was notified that Jacobson's remains had been identified. Hoping the burial could take place the next year, they were forced to wait, in large part because the COVID-19 pandemic delayed most gatherings, funerals included.

Now, they are getting the closure that Jacobson's parents and other family members never had.

"I wish they could have seen this," McDonald said of his grandparents, parents and others.

For him, seeing the uncle he never met take his place at Arlington is especially significant.

"When Bert joined the Navy, he ran into a fella from South Dakota who was an orphan," McDonald said.

"When they got a weekend pass, Bert took him home and the orphan met his (Bert's) younger sister."

Orville McDonald and Norma Jacobson dated and later married, giving McDonald a favorite ending to that story.

"That orphan was my dad, and Bert's sister was my mom," he said. "So, I wouldn't be here without Bert."

Queen hailed in Scotland as a 'constant in all our lives'

By DAVID KEYTON, JILL LAWLESS and MIKE CORDER Associated Press

EDINBURGH, Scotland (AP) — As Queen Elizabeth II's four children walked silently behind, a hearse carried her flag-draped coffin Monday along a crowd-lined street in the Scottish capital to a cathedral, where a service of thanksgiving hailed the late monarch as a "constant in all of our lives for over 70 years."

Four days after the 96-year-old queen died at Balmoral Castle in the Scottish Highlands, a military bagpiper played as her oak coffin, draped in the red-and-yellow Royal Standard of Scotland, was borne from the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh in a solemn procession.

King Charles III, dressed in army uniform, and his siblings Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward walked behind as the hearse traveled to St. Giles' Cathedral, flanked by a bearer party of the Royal Regiment of Scotland and a detachment of the Royal Company of Archers, the king's ceremonial bodyguard in Scotland.

Inside the church, the coffin was placed on a wooden stand and topped with the golden Crown of Scotland, encrusted with 22 gems and 20 precious stones along with freshwater pearls from Scotland's rivers.

"And so we gather, to bid Scotland's farewell to our late monarch, whose life of service to the nation and the world we celebrate. And whose love for Scotland was legendary," said the Rev. Calum MacLeod.

Because the queen died at her summer home of Balmoral, Scotland has been the focus of the world's attention for the first part of Britain's 10 days of national mourning. Large crowds have lined the route as her coffin journeyed from the castle to Edinburgh, underscoring the deep bond between the queen and Scotland. That bond persisted even as relations soured between the Conservative U.K. government in London and the pro-independence Scottish administration in Edinburgh.

Church of Scotland Moderator Iain Greenshields said "most of us cannot recall a time when she was not our monarch."

"Committed to the role she assumed in 1952 upon the death of her beloved father, she has been a

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constant in all of our lives for over 70 years," he said. "She was determined to see her work as a form of service to others."

The coffin will remain at the cathedral until Tuesday so the public can pay their respects. Thousands of people lined the 0.7-mile (1 kilometer) route between palace and cathedral, some arriving hours early to catch a glimpse.

"I just wanted to be here, just to show ... last respects. I cannot believe she is dead," said Marilyn Mclear, a 70-year-old retired teacher. "I know she was 96, but I just cannot believe the queen's dead."

One man shouted at the passing hearse, while others called out: "God save the king!" But the procession was greeted mostly with a respectful silence under a blue sky flecked with clouds.

Charles and his siblings later stood in silent vigil at the church, lowering their heads as they stood at four sides of their mother's oak coffin alongside members of the Royal Company of Archers. As they performed the traditional vigil, members of the public filed past.

Charles, Anne and Edward all wore military uniforms, but Andrew did not. The Royal Navy veteran was stripped of his honorary military titles and was removed as a working royal over his friendship with the notorious U.S. sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Charles later donned a kilt as he visited the Scottish parliament, where he was greeted by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon.

"The queen, like so many generations of our family before her, found in the hills of this land and in the hearts of its people a haven and a home," Charles told Scottish lawmakers.

Earlier, the queen's grandson, Prince Harry, hailed her as a "guiding compass" and praised her "unwavering grace and dignity."

The government, meanwhile, announced the nation will observe a minute of silence on Sunday, the evening before the queen's funeral. The "moment of reflection" will take place at 8 p.m. (1900 GMT, 3 p.m. EDT).

Before flying to Scotland, Charles received condolences at Parliament on Monday and told lawmakers he would follow his late mother's example of "selfless duty."

Hundreds of lawmakers crowded into the 1,000-year-old Westminster Hall for the service, rich in pageantry, in which Parliament offered its condolences to the king. A trumpet fanfare greeted him and Camilla, the Queen Consort.

Charles told the House of Commons and the House of Lords that he would follow his late mother in upholding "the precious principles of constitutional governance" that underpin the U.K.'s political system.

"As I stand before you today, I cannot help but feel the weight of history, which surrounds us and which reminds us of the vital parliamentary traditions to which members of both Houses dedicate yourselves, with such personal commitment, for the betterment of us all," Charles said.

The ceremony was held in Westminster Hall because monarchs are not allowed inside the House of Commons since King Charles I tried to enter and arrest lawmakers. That confrontation led to a civil war which ended with the king being beheaded in 1649.

In a personal tribute to his grandmother, Prince Harry said he cherished their times together "from my earliest childhood memories with you, to meeting you for the first time as my Commander-in-Chief, to the first moment you met my darling wife and hugged your beloved great-grandchildren."

Amid acrimony in the House of Windsor, Harry quit as a senior royal and moved to the U.S. two years ago. On Saturday, there was a possible sign of a reconciliation as Harry and his wife Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, joined his brother Prince William and sister-in-law Catherine, the Princess of Wales, in meeting mourners outside Windsor Castle.

Harry's statement alluded to the death of his grandfather, Prince Philip, last year: "We too smile, knowing that you and grandpa are reunited now and both together in peace."

The queen's coffin will be flown Tuesday to London, where it will lie in state at the Houses of Parliament from Wednesday afternoon until the morning of her funeral on Sept. 19. U.S. President Joe Biden is among the world leaders and dignitaries planning to attend the service at Westminster Abbey.

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Authorities already have issued rules for people wanting to pay their respects in London.

Vanessa Nathakumaran showed up more than two days early to stake out a place. "I really, really want to be part of it," she said.

Judging by the size of the crowd in Edinburgh, the line behind Nathakumaran will be long.

Rosamund Allen, 67, came to Edinburgh from Rothbury in northern England to be part of history.

"It was very moving. It was very quiet," she said. "I felt very sorry for the family itself to be on show. They are very brave to do that. And I really hope and pray that they get something out of today and have a chance to mourn themselves.

"They were very kind to allow us to be part of their sadness."

Goddess gowns, Old Hollywood glam and pink rule Emmy carpet

By LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Hannah Waddingham wore Dolce & Gabbana with bedazzled high top sneakers on her feet Monday while Elle Fanning went Old Hollywood in a gown designed by Sharon Long of her show, "The Great," as glamour returned to the Emmys in sticky Los Angeles humidity.

Waddingham, from "Ted Lasso," showed off her comfy white shoes beneath her corseted strapless pink look. Fanning, her hair in a pinned-back bob, said she wanted to honor the creatives on her show that provided her with her first Emmy nod. Fanning's look was black and pink, embellished at the chest.

"I've always been inspired by the Old Hollywood glam of the '50s," Fanning said.

Sheryl Lee Ralph of "Abbott Elementary" had a fashion faux pas before arriving at the Emmys.

"A designer gave my co-star and me the same sketch for the same gown," she said, having discovered it on set when Lisa Ann Walter showed Ralph what she was wearing to the awards.

"Up until five days ago I had no gown so Brandon Blackwood stepped up. He was in Japan and started rendering the gown on his Pacific flight," Ralph said.

Ralph was resplendent in a black velvet strapless gown with an orange underside and a slit to her upper thigh. She carried a tiny orange purse.

The stars went all out.

Zendaya, working with her stylist Law Roach, was in a classic black strapless corset look with a full skirt and dainty bow at the waist. It was Valentino, and she was dripping in Bulgari jewels, including a fresh, young white diamond choker with a center, 4.45-carat stone at the center. She, too, had pockets.

Connie Britton was in a goddess gown by Monique Lhuillier in a soft pink, a cape like effect at the back. Britt Lower, from "Severance," donned a Venetian beaded gown in gold with matching elbow-length gloves. There were cut outs up top and thin embellished straps.

"It felt like I wanted to wear outer space. I have an appreciation for fabrics, my mom was a home economics teacher. I feel great in it," Lower told The Associated Press.

People's style and beauty director Andrea Lavinthal, said pink carried the night, though lots of other colors brightened up the carpet.

"Pink seems to be continuing its dominance as the red carpet color of choice. There's just a lot of stars who are gravitating towards different shades of pink," she said.

Not Rachel Brosnahan. She stood out in a plunging Pamela Roland column gown in beautiful violet. It was adorned with tulle and pearl floral bow appliques from the designer's fall 2022 collection.

Laverne Cox and Himesh Patel helped kick off the parade of fashion, she in a bold black armor-esque Jean Paul Gaultier Couture mini and he in a white print tuxedo jacket, eschewing the usual evening black. Royal blue on Sarah Thompson (a "Yellowjackets" writer), marigold yellow and more — color took the night.

"I'm quite warm, I'm in a three-piece suit. I love this suit, but I wasn't expecting the heat," Patel said.

Natasha Rothwell of "The White Lotus" chose red for a gown with balloon short sleeves and a hot commodity on fashion carpets — pockets! It was custom silk taffeta from Safiyaa. Megan Stalter also went for red in a sheer dress that celebrated her curves. Jen Tullock of "Severance" was in the red zone, a high slit and structured sleeve number by Thierry Mugler, worn with drop pearl earrings.

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"I'm such a fan of his line. It's elegant but still has a sense of humor," Tullock said.

Stalter, from "Hacks," was in burned out velvet by Norma Kamali. She had a faux red rose pinned between her breasts.

"It took my breath away and my words. It's kind of a sexy dress. It's wild like me," she said.

Jung Ho-yeon, the it girl and Louis Vuitton ambassador from "Squid Game," wore an all-around, multicolored figure-hugging look from the brand. It was custom in a tweed design with all-around sequins. Her jewels were Vuitton, too.

"I still can't believe it. It hasn't sunk in yet, but I'm just going to enjoy the day and cherish the moment," she said of her nomination.

Reese Witherspoon went for blue and sunglasses-worthy bling in blue sequins. Around her neck was a knockout aquamarine, blue zircon and diamond choker from Tiffany & Co. Amanda Seyfried wore a body hugger in pink from Armani Prive, paired with Cartier drop diamond earrings in platinum.

"I'm a mermaid tonight," Seyfried said.

Another refreshing surprise for Lavinthal? The men who dismissed black for all-white tuxedos, including Nicholas Braun from "Succession" in a double-breasted tux from Christian Dior. Andrew Garfield also went for white, along with Seth Rogan. Speaking of white, Jean Smart decided on it, too, with an elegant collar that fell off one shoulder. Ellie Saab designed Kerry Washington's short draped dress with a long overskirt and a riot of organza lilies on one shoulder.

Washington's black tights had some scratching their heads. So did Kaley Cuoco's high-low Dolce & Gabbana tutu style and Julia Garner's Gucci bellybutton cutout on her dark brown velvet look with silver crystals.

"I thought we'd seen every kind of cutout on the red carpet, but a bellybutton cutout was something new," Lavinthal said.

Among Lavinthal's highlights was Lily James in coppery Versace.

"It was very much 2022, but it could have come right off a '90s runway with the chainmail and the sculpted cups," she said.

Smart's gown was made by Christian Siriano, as was the white look of Laura Linney.

Robin Thede also wore Siriano (he landed eight gowns on the carpet) in stunning pastel blue, while Jerrod Carmichael went furry in a long, white fox fur coat. Carmichael laughed at the heat and humidity.

"This was Puff Daddy's coat. He wore it in a video," the comic said.

Carmichael was shirtless under the fur and wore a sunburst platinum necklace. His black satin pants were accented by the top of his white underwear peaking out. He was sockless in his black loafers.

Another Siriano fan? Melanie Lynskey from "Yellowjackets." Hers was a mint green with sheer overlay that made her feel "half princess and half bad (expletive)." Of the designer, she said: "He's the sweetest man alive and I adore him. I feel like he made something that was for me, for my body."

Rachel Tashjian, fashion news director for Harper's Bazaar, saw a different trend.

"The standout looks on this year's red carpet declared a turning point in celebrity style hinted at by the recent Venice Film Festival: The craziest and loudest outfit is no longer the best. Instead, stars are gravitating towards real elegance, even classicism," she said.

She pointed to Zendaya, who is often a risk taker.

"Here she was in a very traditional sweeping strapless Valentino gown and gorgeous late 1950s socialite coiffed hair," Tashjian said.

Similarly, Fanning was in a "very classic 1950s-ish couture dress with an old school coiffure," she said.

Another of her highlights was Issa Rae in a fitted, flattering Sergio Hudson look that was on his runway Sunday. But her absolute favorite was Lizzo in her "gorgeous red Giambattista Valli gown — a refined, glamorous statement that dazzles."

Among other standouts was Ariana DeBose in Atelier Prabal Gurung. It was a lilac silk chiffon hand-draped with a cape.

Jodi Kahn, vice president of luxury fashion for Neiman Marcus, said pink — in its many shades — is something her shoppers are also drawn to and can easily wear.

"Pink is a universally flattering color that women can feel very beautiful and confident and happy in. It's

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something we've noticed specifically with our clients," she said. "It's great for any skin color, any body type."

Metallics, too, like that of James and the russet custom Dolce & Gabbana worn by Quinta Brunson, is another draw for Kahn's customers.

"Specifically the textured metallics," she said. "They're something you can implement very easily from the red carpet into your every day life for occasion or evening dressing."

Colman Domingo of "Euphoria" was already a winner as he walked the carpet. He earned an Emmy for guest actor in a drama series at the earlier creative arts awards.

"I've been celebrating all week long to the point where I had to wake up and take a couple of ibuprofen," he said.

Domingo wore a gold brocade open jacket and matching pants.

"I want to feel like a king," he said.

Domingo carried a platinum-studded battery-operated fan in an attempt to ward off the oppressive humidity, unusual for Los Angeles.

Stylist Holly Katz, host of the Fashion Crimes podcast, named Washington — black stockings and all — her best dressed.

"She killed it," Katz said.

Katz called Waddingham's sneakers the "best-kept fashion secret of the night!"

Mark Indelicato was in the red club, sort of. Indelicato's hair was bright red and his black tux sported long split tails like a train. And more of the men? Phil Dunster of "Ted Lasso" went for burgundy tux with black lapels, though his Lasso co-star Brett Goldstein stayed with black.

Emily Heller, meanwhile, went in a different direction. She had a "Kick Me" sign on the back of her short floral dress, and a bit of toilet paper stuck to one shoe.

Anger over past, indifference meets queen's death in India

By KRUTIKA PATHI and BHUMIKA SARASWATI Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Just hours before news of Queen Elizabeth II's death spread, Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a fiery speech urging India to shed its colonial ties in a ceremony to rename a boulevard that once honored King George V.

Rajpath, formerly called Kingsway, was a "symbol of slavery" under the British Raj, he said. Instead, under the newly named Kartavya Path that leads to the iconic India Gate, "a new history has been created," Modi beamed.

His speech last Thursday was the latest in a concerted drive to purge India of its colonial relics. It was also a clear sign that the country, once the largest of Britain's colonies that endured two centuries of imperial rule, has moved on.

The renovated avenue now boasts a black granite statue of Indian freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose, in the place where a mold of King George V, Elizabeth's grandfather, once stood.

The queen's death provoked sympathies to a deeply respected figure from some while for a few others, it jogged memories of a bloody history under the British crown. But among most regular Indians, the news was met with an indifferent shrug.

The British monarchy "holds precisely zero relevance to Indians today — they are of no importance," said Kapil Komireddi, author of "Malevolent Republic: A Short History of the New India."

British rule shaped the country in significant ways, but India has since overtaken the British economy in size.

"The country has come into its own ... As a rising power, India can gain a lot from the U.K. but the U.K. can gain a whole lot more from India," Komireddi added.

On Thursday, Modi penned a heartfelt note, calling the queen "a stalwart of our times," while the government declared a day of mourning. But for most Indians born a generation after independence from the British in 1947, there is little attachment to the queen or the royal family.

Sankul Sonawane, 20, was at home when he heard the news, which had "no impact" on him. "We have

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no sense of emotional connection with the queen. She was a monarch and I don't believe in the idea of a monarchy."

Dhiren Singh, a 57-year-old entrepreneur in New Delhi, felt the same way. "I do not think we have any place for kings and queens in today's world, because we are the world's largest democratic country," he said.

Elizabeth visited India three times during her reign and was the first monarch to tour the newly freed country, cementing the start of fresh ties with Britain. After her coronation in 1953, she arrived in the capital New Delhi in 1961, where she addressed a massive crowd and nearly a million people lined up along streets to catch a glimpse of her and her husband, Prince Philip.

Darshan Paul was 10 or 11 years old when she stood along a road in New Delhi and waved an Indian flag at the queen. "I remember her gloved hand waving back at me and was so impressed," Paul, now 71, said.

There was abundant excitement and curiosity around her visit, Paul recalled, as she and her friends poured over newspaper photos of the queen and were dazzled by the gowns she wore.

But it was a different time then, Paul said, as she acknowledged that the traditional bond some Indians once held with the royal family has morphed dramatically since.

"To young Indians today, they seem like any other high-profile celebrity family - you might follow news of them because you want to know what is happening behind closed doors. But beyond the glamor and celebrity allure, they don't hold any significance any more."

If her son, who was formally proclaimed King Charles III over the weekend, were to make an official visit to India, "it will certainly not matter as much," Paul added.

The queen's last visit in 1997 was tinged with controversy when she traveled to a memorial dedicated to hundreds of unarmed Indians who were killed by British colonial forces in 1919, amid calls for an apology over the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

For many, the royal family remains a hallmark of a deeply painful history. Colonial rule is still remembered for the extraordinary violence and suffering it spawned, from numerous famines and economic exploitation to ultimately an unprecedented level of bloodshed in the partition of India and Pakistan.

Scrolling through social media after the news, 25-year-old Sumedha Chatterjee said the tweets in support of the queen felt almost like people had forgotten about all the "loot and plunder" the British monarchy oversaw. "They built their empire on the backs of the so-called third world," she added.

Just hours after her death, Indian social media lit up with renewed calls for the return of the famous Koh-i-Noor, the 106-carat discovered in India that is part of the British crown jewels.

"If the king is not going to wear (the) Koh-i-Noor, give it back," quipped one user.

Ever since gaining independence, India has moved to shed its colonial ties, including changing back the names of a clutch of cities that were renamed during British rule. In the 1960s, officials removed figures of British officials and royalty from public view — the statue of King George V, which stood tall under the canopy of India Gate, was moved to Coronation Park, a graveyard or final resting place for imperial symbols in the capital.

And under Modi, there has been renewed vigor to reclaim India's past, which has seen the government scrub away colonial-era street names, some laws and even flag symbols.

Such gestures "represent a new India" which has nothing to do with the monarchy, said Archana Ojha, a professor of history at Delhi University. She added, though, that the country's imperial history can't be hidden away.

"We may not need to cherish some of the legacies, but we need to preserve them to teach our future generations. We cannot just erase it completely," she said.

What's left as Jan. 6 panel sprints to year-end finish

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With only three months left in the year, the House Jan. 6 committee is eyeing a close to its work and a final report laying out its findings about the U.S. Capitol insurrection. But the investigation is not over.

The committee has already revealed much of its work at eight hearings over the summer, showing in

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detail how former President Donald Trump ignored many of his closest advisers and amplified his false claims of election fraud after he lost the 2020 election to Joe Biden. Witnesses interviewed by the panel — some of them Trump's closest allies — recounted in videotaped testimony how the former president declined to act when hundreds of his supporters violently attacked the Capitol as Congress certified Biden's victory on Jan. 6, 2021.

Lawmakers say there is more to come. The nine-member panel — seven Democrats and two Republicans — interviewed witnesses through all of August, and they are planning at least one hearing this month. Members are expected to meet and discuss some of their next steps on Tuesday.

Because the Jan. 6 panel is a temporary, or "select," committee, it expires at the end of the current Congress. If Republicans take the majority in November's elections, as they are favored to do, they are expected to dissolve the committee in January. So the panel is planning to issue a final report by the end of December.

What's left for the committee in 2022:

HEARINGS

The committee is expected to hold at least one hearing, maybe more, before the end of the month. Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney, the Republican vice chairwoman, said the committee "has far more evidence to share with the American people and more to gather."

"Doors have opened, new subpoenas have been issued and the dam has begun to break," Cheney said at a July 21 hearing that was held in prime time and watched by 17.7 million people. "We have considerably more to do."

It's unclear if the next hearings will provide a general overview of what the panel has learned or if they will be focused on new information and evidence. The committee conducted several interviews at the end of July and into August with Trump's Cabinet secretaries, some of whom had discussed invoking the constitutional process in the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office after the insurrection.

WITNESSES

The panel has already interviewed more than 1,000 people, but lawmakers and staff are still pursuing new threads. The committee just recently spoke to several of the Cabinet secretaries, including former Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in July and former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and former Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao in August.

The committee also wants to get to the bottom of missing Secret Service texts from Jan. 5-6, 2021, which could shed further light on Trump's actions during the insurrection, particularly after earlier testimony about his confrontation with security as he tried to join supporters at the Capitol.

"We anticipate talking to additional members of the president's Cabinet," Cheney said at the beginning of August. "We anticipate talking to additional members of his campaign. Certainly, we're very focused as well on the Secret Service."

The committee has also pursued an interview with conservative activist Virginia "Ginni" Thomas, who's married to Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. Lawmakers want to know more about her role in trying to help Trump overturn the election. She contacted lawmakers in Arizona and Wisconsin as part of that effort.

FINAL REPORT

The committee must shut down within a month after issuing a final report, per its rules. But lawmakers could issue some smaller reports before then, perhaps even before the November elections. Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., the panel's chairman, has said there may be an interim report in the fall.

The release of the final report will likely come close to the end of the year so the panel can maximize its time. While much of the findings will already be known, the report is expected to thread the story together in a definitive way that lays out the committee's conclusions for history.

TRUMP AND PENCE

Members of the committee are still debating how aggressively to pursue testimony from Trump and former Vice President Mike Pence.

Some have questioned whether calling Pence — he resisted Trump's pressure to try and block

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Biden's certification on Jan. 6 — is needed since many of his closest aides have already testified. His top lawyer at the White House, Greg Jacob, testified at one of the committee's hearings in June and characterized much of Pence's thought process during the time when Trump was pressuring him.

The panel has been in discussions with Pence's lawyers for months, without any discernible progress. Still, the committee could invite Pence for closed-door testimony or ask him to answer written questions.

The calculation is different for the former president. Members have debated whether they need to call Trump, who is the focus of their probe but also a witness who has railed against the investigation, denied much of the evidence and who has floated the idea of presidential pardons for Jan. 6 rioters. He is also facing scrutiny in several other investigations, including at the Justice Department and over the classified documents he took to his private club.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS

Another bit of unfinished business is the committee's subpoenas to five House Republicans, including Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy.

In May the panel subpoenaed McCarthy, R-Calif., and Reps. Jim Jordan of Ohio, Scott Perry of Pennsylvania, Andy Biggs of Arizona and Mo Brooks of Alabama. The panel has investigated McCarthy's conversations with Trump the day of the attack and meetings the four other lawmakers had with the White House beforehand as Trump and his aides worked to overturn his election defeat.

The five Republicans, all of whom have repeatedly downplayed the investigation's legitimacy, have simply ignored the request to testify. But the Jan. 6 committee seems unlikely to meet their defiance with contempt charges, as they have with other witnesses, in the weeks before the November elections. Not only would it be a politically risky move, but it is unclear what eventual recourse the panel would have against its own colleagues.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee is expected to weigh in on possible legislative changes to the Electoral Count Act, which governs how a presidential election is certified by Congress.

A bipartisan group of senators released proposed changes over the summer that would clarify the way states submit electors and the vice president tallies the votes. Trump and his allies tried to find loopholes in that law ahead of Jan. 6 as the former president worked to overturn his defeat to Biden and unsuccessfully pressured Pence to go along.

The Jan. 6 panel's final report is expected to include a larger swath of legislative recommendations.

Midterm primaries wrap up with fresh test of GOP's future

By WILL WEISSERT and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — A staunchly conservative retired Army general is vying for the chance to take on Democratic Sen. Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire in a contest many Republicans hoped would be among their best chances to flip a Senate seat this year.

But the prospect of Don Bolduc winning Tuesday's GOP Senate primary has dampened those ambitions. In a state that President Joe Biden carried by more than 7 percentage points, Bolduc has campaigned on a platform that includes lies that Donald Trump won the 2020 election and conspiracy theories about vaccines.

That underscores the sense of disappointment among some national Republicans that Gov. Chris Sununu, a relatively popular moderate who likely could have posed more of a threat to Hassan, chose instead to run for reelection. The GOP is grappling with the possibility of again nominating a candidate who is popular with the party's base but struggles to broaden support ahead of the November general election.

Republican primary voters have similarly chosen conservative candidates this year in moderate or Democratic-leaning states including Massachusetts and Maryland, potentially putting competitive races out of the party's reach.

Neil Levesque, director of the New Hampshire Institute of Politics, said Bolduc is a type of candidate who would have struggled to succeed in GOP politics before Trump's rise. He's never held elected office and

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had just \$75,000 in cash on hand last week. Still, Bolduc has been able to make inroads by positioning himself as an ally of Trump and his election falsehoods.

"That is because the theme of his campaign and messaging is very similar to former President Trump," Levesque said. "If it mirrors the former president, it's been effective."

Federal and state 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.

Known for kicking off the primary season during presidential campaigns, New Hampshire is instead marking the conclusion of the nominating process for this year's midterms. There are also contests on Tuesday in Delaware and Rhode Island.

But the U.S. Senate race in New Hampshire is perhaps most revealing about the direction of the GOP. Bolduc is competing in a crowded field that includes Chuck Morse, the more moderate president of the New Hampshire state Senate, who has been endorsed by Sununu. The governor called Morse "the candidate to beat Sen. Hassan this November and the candidate Sen. Hassan is most afraid to face."

Sununu feels differently about Bolduc, whom he's called a conspiracy theorist while warning that Bolduc could have a harder time winning the general election.

Bolduc doesn't seem bothered by Sununu's criticism. He's called the governor "a Chinese communist sympathizer." Bolduc hasn't been formally endorsed by Trump, who propelled many primary candidates to victory in key races throughout the summer. But the former president has called Bolduc a "strong guy."

The final primary contests are unfolding at a dramatic moment in the midterm campaign. Republicans have spent much of the year building their election-year message around Biden and his management of the economy, particularly soaring prices. But Democrats are now entering the final stretch with a sense of cautious optimism as approval of Biden steadies and inflation shows signs of easing.

The Supreme Court's decision overturning a woman's constitutional right to an abortion may provide Democrats with the energy they need to turn back the defeats that historically accompany a new president's first midterms.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell acknowledged the challenge last month, saying his party may be more likely to end Democrats' narrow control of the House than the Senate. He bemoaned "candidate quality" as a factor that could sway some outcomes in his chamber.

Some Democratic groups, meanwhile, have sponsored primary ads promoting Bolduc, predicting he'll make an easier November opponent for Hassan. That's consistent with Democratic-aligned organizations backing pro-Trump candidates in key races around the country — a strategy some have criticized, arguing that it could backfire if those candidates go on to win their general elections.

Republicans in New Hampshire and around the country scoff at the notion that being a Trump loyalist — or not — could be a deciding general election factor, noting that the still unpopular Biden will be a drag on his party regardless.

The New Hampshire Republican Party has tweeted that Hassan "votes with Joe Biden 96.4% of the time."

Many of the same dynamics swirling around the former president are at work in New Hampshire's 2nd Congressional District, where pro-Trump candidate Bob Burns is among several Republicans vying for the party's nomination to face five-term incumbent Democratic Rep. Annie Kuster.

In New Hampshire's other congressional district, which encompasses Manchester and the southeastern part of the state, several Republicans are vying to challenge Democratic Rep. Chris Pappas, who could also face a potentially close general election reelection contest — once he learns who his opponent will be.

The GOP field includes former TV broadcaster Gail Huff Brown, wife of Scott Brown, a former U.S. senator from Massachusetts and ambassador to New Zealand during the Trump administration. Also running is Matt Mowers, who won the district's congressional 2020 Republican nomination and was a Trump administration State Department adviser.

But the candidate closest to Trump may be Karoline Leavitt, who worked in his White House's press office and has also campaigned with Republican Texas Sen. Ted Cruz.

"Her compass always points to Trump," said Dante Scala, a University of New Hampshire political science professor. He added, in reference to the former president's "Make America Great Again" campaign slogan, "She, in a very kind of crisp, sharp, confident way, will say the most MAGA thing that can be said in any situation."

Bill Gates: Technological innovation would help solve hunger

By THALIA BEATY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Bill Gates says the global hunger crisis is so immense that food aid cannot fully address the problem. What's also needed, Gates argues, are the kinds of innovations in farming technology that he has long funded to try to reverse the crisis documented in a report released Tuesday by The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Gates points, in particular, to a breakthrough he calls "magic seeds," crops engineered to adapt to climate change and resist agricultural pests. The Gates Foundation on Tuesday also released a map that models how climate change will likely affect growing conditions for crops in various countries to highlight the urgent need for action.

In assigning technology a pre-eminent role in addressing the world's food crisis, Gates puts himself at odds with critics who say his ideas conflict with worldwide efforts to protect the environment. They note that such seeds generally need pesticides and fossil fuel-based fertilizers to grow.

Critics also contend that Gates' approach doesn't address the urgency of the crisis. Developing "magic seeds" takes years and won't immediately deliver relief to countries currently enduring widespread suffering because they rely on food imports or are experiencing historic droughts.

It's a debate that could intensify international pressure to meet the shared goals for global prosperity and peace, known as the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals, ahead of a 2030 deadline. The 17 goals include ending poverty and hunger, battling climate change, providing access to clean water, working toward gender equality and reducing economic inequality.

"It's pretty bleak relative to our hopes for 2030," Gates, 66, said in an interview with The Associated Press. He added, though, "I'm optimistic that we can get back on track."

Gates pointed to the war in Ukraine and the pandemic as the main causes for the worsening hunger crisis. But his message to other donors and world leaders convening for the U.N. General Assembly this September is that food aid won't be enough.

"It's good that people want to prevent their fellow human beings from starving when conflicts like Ukraine interrupt the food supply," Gates writes in the new report. But the real problem, he says, is that many food insecure countries don't produce enough of their own food — a problem sure to be exacerbated by the consequences of climate change.

"Temperature keeps going up," Gates said. "There is no way, without innovation, to come even close to feeding Africa. I mean, it just doesn't work."

As he has for more than 15 years, Gates called for investment in agricultural research, highlighting corn seeds that thrive at higher temperatures and in drier conditions than other varieties. Those seeds were developed under a program of the African Agricultural Technology Foundation to which the foundation has given \$131 million since 2008.

Since then, the Gates Foundation has spent \$1.5 billion on grants focused on agriculture in Africa, according to Candid, a nonprofit that researches philanthropic giving. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is by some measures the largest private foundation in the world and is best known for its work on global health, including vaccines. It began in its current form in 2000, after Gates left his CEO position at Microsoft, the tech giant he co-founded. Forbes estimates his net worth to be around \$129 billion.

The foundation's spending on agricultural development is why Gates' view on how countries should respond to food insecurity has taken on heightened importance in a year when a record 345 million people around the world are acutely hungry. The World Food Program said in July that tally represents an increase of 25% from before Russia invaded Ukraine in February and a 150% jump from before the

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pandemic struck in the spring of 2020.

In Ghana, field trials for four varieties of modified seeds began in 2013. But only this past summer has one been approved for commercialization, said Joeva Rock of the University of Cambridge. Activists there, she said, have asked whether those resources could have been better spent elsewhere.

"What would happen if those went into increasing funds to the national research centers in Ghana, to building roads, to building storage, to building silos or helping to build markets?" said Rock, who has written a book about food sovereignty in the country.

When asked, Gates acknowledged the importance of infrastructure like roads and other transportation systems.

"If you want your inputs like fertilizer to come in, if you want your output to go out, it's just too expensive in Africa without that infrastructure," he said, adding that building and maintaining roads is highly expensive.

Some researchers question the wisdom of pursuing the fundamental premise that Gates has embraced: Increasing agricultural production through the use of modified seeds along with fertilizers and pesticides. They point to the environmental footprint of industrial agriculture, including the use of fossil fuel-based fertilizers, the degradation of soil quality and the diminishing of biodiversity.

Alternatives could include agroecological interventions, like developing locally managed seed banks, composting systems to promote soil health and pesticide interventions that don't rely on chemicals, experts said. Over time, those approaches can reduce the need for food aid and build more resilient farming systems, according to Rachel Bezner Kerr, a professor of global development at Cornell University.

Kerr, a lead author of the food chapter of the latest report from the International Panel on Climate Change, said that while the panel doesn't make recommendations, "overall, the kind of focus on a few technologies and reliance on fossil fuel-based inputs isn't in line with ecosystem-based adaptation" or a biodiverse future.

Mark Suzman, CEO of the Gates Foundation, defends its approach warning that limiting access to fertilizers means farmers cannot increase their yields.

"Fertilizer is necessary. You simply cannot meet the overall productivity gains without it," Suzman said, speaking on a call with reporters.

In his interview with the AP, Gates himself dismissed criticisms of the foundation's emphasis on modified seeds.

"If there's some non-innovation solution, you know, like singing 'Kumbaya,' I'll put money behind it," Gates said. "But if you don't have those seeds, the numbers just don't work." He added, "If somebody says we're ignoring some solution, I don't think they're looking at what we're doing."

Another project the foundation has funded is the development of computer models that try to measure crop loss caused by disease or pests. The idea is to direct research and responses to where they are needed most.

"It's not just, how do we get through this crisis and get back to normal? It's, what does the future normal look like?" said Cambria Finegold, the director of digital development for CABI, an intergovernmental nonprofit that is developing the models.

Melinda French Gates, the other co-chair of the Gates Foundation, highlighted in a separate letter the halting progress toward gender equity worldwide. Since January, the foundation has expanded its board, adding six new members to help direct its work, a move that followed the announcement of the Gateses' divorce last summer.

French Gates has agreed to step down after two years if the two decided they could not continue to work together. French Gates, who also founded an investment organization called Pivotal Ventures, was not available for an interview.

Gates said he is lucky that his former wife has continued to put her time and energy into the foundation. In July, Gates said he would contribute \$20 billion to the foundation in response to the significant setbacks caused by the pandemic, raising its endowment to approximately \$70 billion.

Through his giving, investments and public speaking, Gates has held the spotlight in recent years, espe-

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cially on the topics of vaccines and climate change. But he has also been the subject of conspiracy theories that play off his role as a developer of new technologies and his place among the highest echelons of the wealthy and powerful.

Gates said he does not spend time thinking about conspiracies and that his foundation's work has nothing to do with his personal reputation.

"If you go into these countries, they've never heard of me or the foundation," Gates said. "Maybe in the rich world somebody is reading some internet thing, but the people we care about have never, will never, and it's not important that they ever know who I am."

Cheaper gas likely slowed high US inflation for a 2nd month

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A sign that the painful inflation of the past 18 months may be gradually easing could come Tuesday, when the government is expected to report that the acceleration in U.S. prices slowed in August compared with a year ago for a second straight month.

Economists have forecast that the report will show that prices jumped 8.1% from 12 months earlier, down from a four-decade high of 9.1% in June and 8.5% in July, according to data provider FactSet. Sharply lower gas prices are behind much of the decline, along with the costs of used cars, air fares and clothing.

On a monthly basis — the figures the Federal Reserve, the agency charged with fighting inflation, monitors most closely — consumer prices are predicted to have dropped 0.1% in August. It would be the first outright decline in month-over-month inflation since May 2020 and would follow a flat reading in July.

Inflation has escalated families' grocery bills, rents and utility costs, among many other expenses, inflicting hardships on households and deepening gloom about the economy despite strong job growth and historically low unemployment.

Yet the signs that inflation might have peaked could bolster Democrats' prospects in the midterm elections and may already have contributed to slightly higher public approval ratings for President Joe Biden. In his speeches, Biden has generally stopped referring to the impact of high prices on family budgets. He has instead highlighted his administration's recent legislative accomplishments, including a law enacted last month that's intended to reduce pharmaceutical prices and fight climate change.

Still, Republicans blame Biden's \$1.9 trillion financial rescue package, passed in March 2021, for contributing to higher prices. The legislation provided a third stimulus check and enhanced unemployment benefits, boosting consumers' ability to spend.

Many mainstream economists generally agree, though they also blame snarled supply chains, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and widespread shortages of items such as semiconductors for fueling inflation. In recent months, though, supply chain backups have eased considerably, and so have chip shortages. Oil prices have dropped to about \$88 a barrel, down from a peak of \$123 in March.

The average cost of a gallon of gas fell to \$3.72 nationwide on Monday, down from just above \$5 in mid-June. And many businesses are reporting signs that supply backlogs and inflation are beginning to fade.

Elaine Buckberg, chief economist at General Motors, said the pandemic disruptions to overseas production of semiconductors, which have reduced auto output, "have largely dissipated and we're in a much better position now." Supply chain disruptions overall, she said, have improved about 80% from the worst days of the pandemic.

Grocery prices have been a particular sore spot for many families. Over the past year, prices of meat, milk and fruits and vegetables have soared by double-digits. But executives at Kroger, the nation's largest grocery chain, said that falling prices for farm commodities like wheat and corn could slow cost increases for food this year.

"We would expect there to be some flattening out of inflation in the back half of the year," Gary Millerchip, Kroger's chief financial officer, told investors last week.

Still, despite signs that inflation is easing, the Fed is expected to impose another substantial increase in its benchmark short-term interest rate when it meets next week. Most analysts expect the policymakers

to announce a third straight three-quarter-point hike, to a range of 3% to 3.25%.

The Fed's rapid rate increases — the fastest since the early 1980s — typically lead to higher costs for mortgages, auto loans and business loans, with the goal of slowing growth and reducing inflation. The average 30-year mortgage rate jumped to nearly 5.9% last week, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac, the highest figure in nearly 14 years.

Chair Jerome Powell has said the Fed will need to see several months of low inflation readings that suggest price increases are falling back toward its 2% target before it might suspend its rate hikes.

The central bank also closely tracks prices that exclude the volatile food and energy categories. So-called "core" inflation has also fallen from its peak, though it is forecast to tick up to 6.1% in August compared with a year ago, from 5.9% in July. On a monthly basis, economists expect core prices rose 0.4% in August — double what the Fed would prefer — up from 0.3% in July.

Even if inflation has peaked, most economists don't expect it to fall back to the Fed's 2% target for at least two years, if not longer. Wages are still rising at a strong pace — before adjusting for inflation — which has elevated demand for apartments as more people move out on their own. A shortage of available houses has also forced more people to keep renting, thereby intensifying competition for apartments.

Rising rents and more expensive services, such as medical care, are also keeping inflation high.

Justice Dept. OK with 1 Trump pick for Mar-a-Lago arbiter

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department said Monday that it was willing to accept one of Donald Trump's picks for an independent arbiter to review documents seized during an FBI search of the former president's Florida home last month.

The accommodation could help accelerate the selection process and shorten any delays caused by the appointment of the so-called special master. The judge in the case, granting a request from the Trump team, said last week that she would appoint a neutral arbiter to go through the records and weed out any that may be covered by executive privilege or attorney-client privilege.

Department lawyers said in a filing Monday night that, in addition to the two retired judges whom they earlier recommended, they would also be satisfied with one of the Trump team selections — Raymond Dearie, the former chief judge of the federal court in the Eastern District of New York. He is currently on senior active status, and the department said he had indicated he was available and "could perform the work expeditiously" if appointed.

It was not immediately clear whether U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon would name Dearie or someone else. The Trump team said earlier Monday that it opposed both Justice Department selections.

The back-and-forth over the special master came as Trump's lawyers in a 21-page filing Monday dismissed the former president's retention of top-secret documents at Mar-a-Lago as a "storage dispute" and urged Cannon to keep in place a directive that temporarily halted key aspects of the Justice Department's criminal probe. The Trump team referred to the documents that were seized as "purported 'classified records,'" saying the Justice Department had not proven that the materials taken by the FBI during its Aug. 8 search were classified or remain so now.

The filing underscores the significant factual and legal disagreements between lawyers for Trump and the U.S. government as the Justice Department looks to move forward with its criminal investigation into the retention of national defense information at Mar-a-Lago. Department lawyers in their own filings have rejected the idea that the documents, many of them classified at the top-secret level, belonged to Trump or that Mar-a-Lago was a permissible place to store them.

"This investigation of the 45th President of the United States is both unprecedented and misguided," they wrote. "In what at its core is a document storage dispute that has spiraled out of control, the Government wrongfully seeks to criminalize the possession by the 45th President of his own Presidential and personal records."

The investigation hit a roadblock last week when Cannon granted the Trump team's request for a special

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master and prohibited the department, for now, from examining the documents for investigative purposes.

The Justice Department has asked the judge to lift that hold and said it would contest her ruling to a federal appeals court. The department said its investigation risked being harmed beyond repair if that order remained in place, noting that confusion about its scope had already led the intelligence community to pause a separate risk assessment.

But Trump's lawyers said in their own motion Monday that Cannon should not permit the FBI to resume its review of classified records. It said the government had unilaterally determined the records to be classified but had not yet proven that they remain so.

"In opposing any neutral review of the seized materials, the Government seeks to block a reasonable first step towards restoring order from chaos and increasing public confidence in the integrity of the process," the lawyers wrote.

Both sides on Friday night proposed different names of candidates who could serve as special master, though they disagreed on the scope of duties the person should have. Cannon has said the yet-to-be-named arbiter would be tasked with reviewing the documents and segregating out any that could be covered by claims of either executive privilege or attorney-client privilege.

The Justice Department recommended either Barbara Jones, a retired judge in Manhattan who has served as special master in prior high-profile investigations, or Thomas Griffith, a retired federal appeals court jurist in the District of Columbia who was appointed to the bench by former President George W. Bush. The department said in its proposal that the special master should not have access to classified documents, or be empowered to consider claims of executive privilege.

On Monday, the Trump team told the judge it was objecting to both those candidates but was not prepared to say why publicly at the moment.

Trump's lawyers proposed either Dearie, a senior judge on active status in the federal court in Brooklyn who also previously served on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, or Florida lawyer Paul Huck Jr. They have said the arbiter should have access to the entire tranche of documents and should be able to evaluate executive privilege claims.

The Justice Department said it was willing to support Dearie's selection but it opposed the selection of Huck because of what it said was a lack of relevant experience.

In its filing Monday, the Trump team again voiced a broad view of presidential power, asserting that a president has an "unfettered right of access" to his presidential records and absolute authority to declassify any information without the "approval of bureaucratic components of the executive branch" — though it did not say, as Trump has maintained, that he had actually declassified them.

The Justice Department has said Trump had no right to hold onto the presidential documents. And the criminal statutes the department has used as the basis of its investigation, including one criminalizing the willful retention of national defense information, do not require that the records be classified.

In any event, the Justice Department says more than 100 documents with classification markings were found in last month's search.

Trump, who often spends time at his various properties, was at his Virginia golf club Monday.

Prosecutor: R. Kelly 'degraded' girl for his 'sick pleasure'

By MICHAEL TARM AP Legal Affairs Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — R. Kelly parlayed his fame as an R&B superstar to sexually abuse minors and record that abuse on video, a prosecutor told jurors Monday at the singer's federal trial on charges of child pornography and of rigging his 2008 state child pornography trial.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth Pozolo several times raised her voice and singled out Kelly, describing him as a secret sexual predator in closing arguments in Kelly's hometown of Chicago, where he rose from poverty.

"Robert Kelly abused many girls over many years," she said, referring to the 55-year-old Grammy winner's full first name. "He committed horrible crimes against children. ... All these years later, the hidden

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side of Robert Kelly has come out.”

Jurors are expected to begin deliberating Tuesday after Kelly’s lead attorney, Jennifer Bonjean, makes her closing argument and prosecutors give a short rebuttal.

Bonjean twice called for a mistrial Monday, complaining that closing arguments by attorneys for Kelly co-defendants Derrell McDavid and Milton Brown were grounded in the presumption that “the world now knows Mr. Kelly is a sex predator.”

“The presumption of innocence has been abolished for him,” Bonjean said about Kelly, meaning he was unable to get a fair trial. Judge Harry Leinenweber denied the requests.

Known for his smash hit “I Believe I Can Fly” and for sex-infused songs such as “Bump n’ Grind,” Kelly sold millions of albums even after allegations of sexual misconduct began circulating in the 1990s and after his 2008 Illinois trial, at which he was acquitted. Widespread outrage emerged after the #MeToo reckoning and the 2019 docuseries “Surviving R. Kelly.”

Kelly and McDavid, Kelly’s former business manager, are charged with fixing the 2008 trial. Both face child pornography charges. Brown, a former Kelly associate, is accused of receiving child pornography.

Kelly already was sentenced to 30 years in prison after a separate federal trial in New York in June. Convictions on just a few of the 13 counts Kelly faces at his current trial could add years to that.

Pozolo, the prosecutor, focused much of her closing argument Monday on a Kelly accuser who went by “Jane” and who was considered the government’s star witness. She testified that Kelly sexually abused her hundreds of times starting when she was 14.

“He took advantage of Jane’s youth,” Pozolo said about Kelly. “He repeatedly abused her. He performed degrading acts upon her for his own sick pleasure.”

Pozolo reminded jurors of graphic video footage they watched earlier at the trial, recordings that Jane testified depicted Kelly, at around age 30, abusing her when she was 14. Among the videos jurors saw was one at the heart of Kelly’s 2008 trial. Jurors at that trial said later they had no choice but to acquit Kelly because Jane didn’t testify then.

“That abuse is forever memorialized,” Pozolo told jurors. “Who does that? Who uses a 14-year-old child to film a video like this? This man. Robert Kelly.”

Before Kelly’s 2008 trial, Pozolo said, Kelly and his associates scrambled to recover multiple sex videos that had gone missing from a collection he often carried around in a large gym bag.

By doing so, she said, Kelly associates sought “to cover up the fact that ... R. Kelly, the R&B superstar, is actually a sexual predator.”

Pozolo said the fact that Jane and three other Kelly accusers had so much to lose by testifying should give jurors confidence they told the truth on the stand.

“They opened up old wounds to tell you what happened to them and who did it to them,” she said.

In his closing, an attorney for McDavid said prosecutors had to show that his client actually knew about any abuse of Jane by Kelly in the 2000s — not just that it was likely he knew.

“Did they prove he knew ... behind a reasonable doubt?” Beau Brindley asked. “They did not.”

Earlier Monday, Pozolo balked at the idea that McDavid had no inkling in the 2000s that the abuse allegations might be credible after helping to recover missing recordings and handing bags of cash to people who returned videos McDavid knew could destroy Kelly.

“Really? Does that make any sense?” she said. “It doesn’t make sense.”

Also Monday, the judge replaced one juror with an alternate after the panelist reported having a panic attack while listening to closing arguments.

McDavid was the only defendant who testified during the trial that started Aug. 15. Combined, lawyers for the three co-defendants called several witnesses over four days, with McDavid on the stand for three. The witnesses mostly gave testimony favorable to all three defendants. But McDavid may have hurt Kelly’s defense by ultimately questioning Kelly’s believability, saying that listening to Kelly accusers testify at the current trial had altered his views of the singer.

Biden hopes ending cancer can be a 'national purpose' for US

By ZEKE MILLER and CARLA K. JOHNSON Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Monday urged Americans to come together for a new “national purpose” — his administration’s effort to end cancer “as we know it.”

At the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Biden channeled JFK’s famed moonshot speech 60 years ago, likening the space race to his own effort and hoping it, too, would galvanize Americans.

“He established a national purpose that could rally the American people and a common cause,” Biden said of Kennedy’s space effort, adding that “we can usher in the same unwillingness to postpone.”

Biden hopes to move the U.S. closer to the goal he set in February of cutting U.S. cancer fatalities by 50% over the next 25 years and dramatically improving the lives of caregivers and those suffering from cancer. Experts say the objective is attainable — with adequate investments.

The president called his goal of developing treatments and therapeutics for cancers “bold, ambitious, and I might add, completely doable.”

In his speech, Biden called on the private sector to make drugs more affordable, and data more regularly available. He ticked off medical advancements possible with focused research, funding and data.

And he spoke of a new federally backed study that seeks evidence for using blood tests to screen against multiple cancers — a potential game-changer in diagnostic testing to dramatically improve early detection of cancers.

Danielle Carnival, the White House coordinator for the effort, told The Associated Press that the administration sees huge potential in the commencement of the blood diagnostic study on identifying cancers.

“One of the most promising technologies has been the development of blood tests that offer the promise of detecting multiple cancers in a single blood test and really imagining the impact that could have on our ability to detect cancer early and in a more equitable way,” Carnival said. “We think the best way to get us to the place where those are realized is to really test out the technologies we have today and see what works and what really has an impact on extending lives.”

In 2022, the American Cancer Society estimates, 1.9 million new cancer cases will be diagnosed and 609,360 people will die of cancer diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention rank cancer as the second-highest killer of people in the U.S. after heart disease.

The issue is personal to Biden, who lost his adult son Beau in 2015 to brain cancer. After Beau’s death, Congress passed the 21st Century Cures Act, which dedicated \$1.8 billion over seven years for cancer research and was signed into law in 2016 by President Barack Obama.

Obama designated Biden, then vice president, to run “mission control” on directing the cancer funds as a recognition of Biden’s grief as a parent and desire to do something about it. Biden wrote in his memoir “Promise Me, Dad” that he chose not to run for president in 2016 primarily because of Beau’s death.

Despite Biden’s attempts to hark back to Kennedy and his space program, the current initiative lacks that same level of budgetary support. The Apollo program garnered massive public investment — more than \$20 billion, or more than \$220 billion in 2022 dollars adjusted for inflation. Biden’s effort is far more modest and reliant on private sector investment.

Still, he’s tried to maintain momentum for investments in public health research, including championing the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health, modeled after similar research and development initiatives benefiting the Pentagon and intelligence community.

On Monday, Biden announced Dr. Renee Wegrzyn as the inaugural director of ARPA-H, which has been given the task of studying treatments and potential cures for cancers, Alzheimer’s, diabetes and other diseases. He also announced a new National Cancer Institute scholars’ program to provide funding to early-career scientists studying treatments and cures for cancer, with a focus on underrepresented groups and those from diverse backgrounds.

The president was joined by Caroline Kennedy, the daughter of JFK who is now the U.S. ambassador to Australia. He reiterated his administration’s efforts later Monday at a fundraiser for the Democratic National Committee.

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Experts agree it's far too early to say whether these new blood tests for finding cancer in healthy people will have any effect on cancer deaths. There have been no studies to show they reduce the risk of dying from cancer. Still, they say setting an ambitious goal is important.

Carnival said the National Cancer Institute study was designed so that any promising diagnostic results could be swiftly put into widespread practice while the longer-term study — expected to last up to a decade — progresses. She said the goal was to move closer to a future where cancers could be detected through routine bloodwork, potentially reducing the need for more invasive and burdensome procedures like colonoscopies, and therefore saving lives.

Scientists now understand that cancer is not a single disease, but hundreds of diseases that respond differently to different treatments. Some cancers have biomarkers that can be targeted by existing drugs that will slow a tumor's growth. Many more targets await discovery.

"How do we learn what therapies are effective in which subtypes of disease? That to me is oceanic," said Donald A. Berry, a biostatistician at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. "The possibilities are enormous. The challenges are enormous."

Despite the challenges, he's optimistic about cutting the cancer death rate in half over the next 25 years.

"We can get to that 50% goal by slowing the disease sufficiently across the various cancers without curing anybody," Berry said. "If I were to bet on whether we will achieve this 50% reduction, I would bet yes."

Even without new breakthroughs, progress can be made by making care more equitable, said Dr. Crystal Denlinger, chief scientific officer for the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, a group of elite cancer centers.

And any effort to reduce the cancer death rate will need to focus on the biggest cancer killer, which is lung cancer. Mostly attributable to smoking, lung cancer now causes more cancer deaths than any other cancer. Of the 1,670 daily cancer deaths in the United States, more than 350 are from lung cancer.

Lung cancer screening is helping. The American Cancer Society says such screening helped drive down the cancer death rate 32% from its peak in 1991 to 2019, the most recent year for which numbers are available.

But only 5% of eligible patients are being screened for lung cancer.

In his speech, Biden highlighted provisions in the Democrats' healthcare and climate change bill that the administration believes will lower out-of-pocket drug prices for some widely used cancer treatments. And he celebrated new guarantees for veterans exposed to toxic burn pits, that cover their potential cancer diagnoses.

Dr. Michael Hassett of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, said Biden's goal to reduce cancer deaths could be met by following two parallel paths: one of discovery and the other making sure as many people as possible are reaping the advantages of existing therapies and preventive approaches.

"If we can address both aspects, both challenges, major advances are possible," Hassett said.

Carlos Alcaraz: 19, US Open champ, No. 1, unique

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Carlos Alcaraz got out of bed Monday as a U.S. Open champion, as the No. 1-ranked player in men's tennis at age 19 — and, truth be told, exhausted.

"I woke up dead," the Spaniard said through that already-familiar wide smile during an interview with The Associated Press that followed a Times Square photo shoot with his fingerprint-smudged first Grand Slam trophy.

"So many tough days in a row. High intensity. High level," said Alcaraz, the first man in 30 years to win five-setters in the fourth round, quarterfinals and semifinals and still come away with the title at Flushing Meadows. "I don't know how I played so many tough and long matches."

By the end of that run, which included saving a match point during his 5-hour, 15-minute quarterfinal victory over Jannik Sinner, then a 4-hour, 19-minute semifinal victory over Frances Tiafoe, before Sunday's 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (1), 6-3 victory over Casper Ruud, Alcaraz was spent.

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Not that he was about to let anyone know.

"You have to show the opponents you are good, you are fine. But you're dealing with problems all the time. You have to know that — and you have to overcome that. You have to be fine with that," Alcaraz said, sitting in a stuffed chair on the top floor of a Manhattan hotel, skyscrapers jutting beyond the windows. "After the quarterfinals against Jannik, I woke up the next day and I almost couldn't walk. But you have to give everything you have inside. All the hard work you put in every day is for that."

That hard work is what transformed a body his coach, 2003 French Open champion and U.S. Open finalist Juan Carlos Ferrero, likened to "spaghetti; very thin" when he teamed up with a 15-year-old Alcaraz.

"No muscles at all. Not in the back, not in the legs," Ferrero said. "But obviously we saw something very special."

So, too, does the rest of the world.

His youth certainly contributes to the fascination with Alcaraz as the sport looks for a fresh face after decades of dominance by Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer, who each has at least 20 Grand Slam titles.

Alcaraz is the first teenager to top the ATP rankings, the first teenager to win the U.S. Open since Pete Sampras in 1990, the first teenager to win any major tournament since Nadal in 2005.

Asked what he considers his best quality, Alcaraz paused to ponder, then chuckled sheepishly.

"I'm a dynamic player. I can do anything on court," he said. "The opponent can't read my shots. In some moments, I can try (unique) shots. I can do a lot of shots."

Like the behind-the-back one against Sinner, say. Or the sprinting-away-from-the-net, twisting flick of a forehand he pulled off more than once against Tiafoe. Or the landing-on-his-belly-on-the-run forehand that just barely missed against Ruud.

"I've always been like that. I never give up. I just believe I can win every point," Alcaraz said. "If the point seems lost, I still believe I have a chance to get the ball, to keep the point alive. So I run. And I consider myself fast."

Ruud considers Alcaraz a mixture of Nadal's speed and Djokovic's flexibility.

"It makes us other players feel like you need to paint the lines, sort of, to be able to hit a winner. Sometimes even that's not enough," said Ruud, a 23-year-old from Norway who is now ranked No. 2 after two runner-up finishes at the past three Slams.

"He's very fast. He's very quick. He's a great mover," Ruud said. "He can get to balls that we've probably never seen before."

Alcaraz grew up admiring Nadal, who's 36, and Federer, 41 — "but," he said Monday, "a little bit more Rafa, because he's Spanish."

There tends to be an obsession in all sports with finding a past athlete with whom to compare a budding star. So some will note that Alcaraz's attacking, all-court game is closer to Federer's than Nadal's.

But it's not time for comparisons. Not yet, anyway.

Carlos Alcaraz wants to be the best version of Carlos Alcaraz, not anyone else. And that makes perfect sense.

"Every player is different. Every player has their style. And some players will look like other players in the game. But I've never wanted to seem like another player, like Federer or Rafa or anyone," he said. "I'm just who I am. This is my game."

Ukraine reclaims more territory, reports capturing many POWs

By ELENA BECATOROS and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KHARKIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian troops expanded their territorial gains Monday, pushing all the way to the country's northeastern border in places, and claimed to have captured a record number of Russian soldiers as part of the lightning advance that forced Moscow to make a hasty retreat.

A spokesman for Ukrainian military intelligence said Russian troops were surrendering en masse as "they understand the hopelessness of their situation." A Ukrainian presidential adviser said there were so many

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POWs that the country was running out of space to accommodate them.

Blue-and-yellow Ukrainian flags fluttered over newly liberated towns across a wide swath of reclaimed land. The Ukrainian military said it had freed more than 20 settlements in 24 hours. In recent days, Kyiv's forces have captured territory at least twice the size of greater London, according to the British Defense Ministry.

After months of little discernible movement on the battlefield, the momentum has lifted Ukrainian morale and provoked rare public criticism of Russian President Vladimir Putin's war.

"In some areas of the front, our defenders reached the state border with the Russian Federation," said Oleh Syniehubov, governor of the northeastern Kharkiv region.

The counteroffensive left the Kremlin struggling for a response to its largest military defeat in Ukraine since Russian forces pulled back from areas near Kyiv after a botched attempt to capture the capital early in the invasion.

The Russian Defense Ministry acknowledged the setback in a map that showed its troops pressed back along a narrow patch of land on the border with Russia — a tacit admission of big Ukrainian gains.

Reports of chaos abounded as Russian troops pulled out.

"The Russians were here in the morning. Then at noon, they suddenly started shouting wildly and began to run away, charging off in tanks and armored vehicles," Dmytro Hrushchenko, a resident of recently liberated Zaliznychne, a small town near the eastern front line, told Sky News.

Video taken by the Ukrainian military showed soldiers raising the Ukrainian flag over battle-damaged buildings. In one scene, a fighter wiped his boots on a Russian flag on the ground. Other videos showed Ukrainians inspecting the wreckage of Russian military vehicles, including tanks.

In his evening address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said his forces have liberated more than 6,000 square kilometers (2,300 square miles) in the east and the south since the beginning of September.

Now Ukrainian teams are disarming land mines and other unexploded weapons in the recaptured areas and searching for any remaining Russian troops, officials said.

It was not yet clear if the Ukrainian blitz could signal a turning point in the war. Momentum has switched back and forth before, but rarely with such a big and sudden swing.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Oleksiy Arestovich did not specify the number of Russian prisoners but said the POWs would be exchanged for Ukrainian service members held by Moscow. Military intelligence spokesman Andrey Yusov said the captured troops included "significant" numbers of Russian officers.

Ukraine's deputy interior minister accused fleeing Russian forces of burning official documents and concealing bodies in an attempt to cover up rights violations in the areas they controlled until last week.

The mood was jubilant across the country.

In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city and the capital of the region where the gains have been made, authorities hailed that power and water had been restored to about 80% of the region's population following Russian attacks on infrastructure that knocked out electricity in many places across Ukraine.

"You are heroes!!!" Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov wrote on Telegram, referring to crews who restored utilities in Ukraine's second-biggest city. "Thanks to everyone who did everything possible on this most difficult night for Kharkiv to normalize the life of the city as soon as possible."

Meanwhile in Russia, signs of disarray emerged as Russian military bloggers and other commentators chastised the Kremlin for failing to mobilize more forces and take stronger action against Ukraine.

Russia has continuously stopped short of calling its invasion a war, instead describing it as a "special military operation" and relying on a limited contingent of volunteers instead of a mass mobilization that could spur civil discontent and protest.

Ramzan Kadyrov, the Moscow-backed leader of the Russian region of Chechnya, publicly criticized the Russian Defense Ministry for what he called "mistakes" that made the Ukrainian blitz possible.

Even more notable, such criticism seeped onto state-controlled Russian TV.

"People who convinced President Putin that the operation will be fast and effective ... these people really set up all of us," Boris Nadezhdin, a former parliament member, said on a talk show on NTV television. "We're now at the point where we have to understand that it's absolutely impossible to defeat Ukraine using these resources and colonial war methods."

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Some in Russia blamed Western weapons and fighters for the losses.

"It's not Ukraine that attacked Iziium, but NATO," read a headline in the state-supported Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper, referring to one of the areas where Russia said it has withdrawn troops.

Elsewhere, residents of a Russian village just across the border from Ukraine were evacuated after shelling by Ukrainian troops killed one person, according to Russia's Tass news agency.

The report cited the head of the local administration in Logachevka, who said Ukrainian troops opened fire at a border checkpoint.

Pro-Kremlin separatists reported that Ukrainian troops were approaching the town of Lyman, a rail hub captured by Russia in late May that offers access to bridges over the nearby Siverskyi Donets river.

Denis Pushilin, head of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, acknowledged that the situation was "difficult."

Even amid Ukraine's ebullience, the casualties kept mounting. Ukraine's presidential office said Monday that at least four civilians were killed and 11 others wounded in a series of Russian attacks in nine regions of the country. The U.N. Human Rights Office said last week that 5,767 civilians have been killed so far.

Among Monday's attacks were strikes on residential areas in Kharkiv that killed at least one civilian and set multiple fires, local officials said.

In a reminder of the war's toll, a council member in Iziium accused enemy forces of killing civilians and committing other atrocities. Maksym Strelnikov told reporters Monday in an online briefing that hundreds of people had died during the fighting and after Russia seized the town in March.

Many died from shelling and could not get a proper burial, he said. His claims could not be immediately verified, but similar scenes have played out in other places captured by Russian forces.

The Ukrainian military also claimed to have found more evidence of human rights violations by Russian occupiers. It did not elaborate.

Iziium was a major base for Russian forces in the Kharkiv region. The first Ukrainian flag was raised over the city on Saturday, according to Strelnikov. Residents, some wrapped in the country's flag, greeted Ukrainian forces and offered them food.

Ukraine said the Russians continued shelling Nikopol across the Dnieper River from the Zaporizhzhia power plant, damaging several buildings there and leaving Europe's largest nuclear facility in a precarious position. The last operational reactor in that plant has been shut down in a bid to prevent a radiation disaster as fighting raged nearby.

The Washington-based Institute for the Study of War said Monday that Kyiv "will likely increasingly dictate the location and nature of the major fighting."

The British Defense Ministry said the retreat would likely further deteriorate the trust Russian forces have in their commanders and put Moscow's troops on the back foot.

Psychologist: School shooter suffered fetal alcohol damage

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Attorneys for Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz began building their argument Monday that his birth mother's alcohol abuse left him with severe behavioral problems that eventually led to his 2018 murder of 17 people at Parkland's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

Paul Connor, a Seattle-area neuropsychologist, said medical records and testimony by prior witnesses show that Brenda Woodard drank and used cocaine throughout much of her pregnancy before Cruz's birth in 1998. Woodard, a Fort Lauderdale prostitute, gave up the baby immediately after to his adoptive parents, Lynda and Roger Cruz. Woodard died last year.

Connor, testifying by Zoom, told jurors that people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder show at a young age problems with motor skills, impulse control, socializing and paying attention — problems previous defense testimony showed Cruz had.

Cruz's preschool teachers testified he couldn't run without falling or use utensils. He was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder as a young child and teachers testified that he was extremely

anxious and had trouble making friends.

At 5, tests showed Cruz had impairments in 10 intellectual categories including memory, reasoning, language and impulsivity, Connor said. Court records and earlier testimony showed he would have frequent outbursts in class and at home. By middle school, he was making threats.

Connor said he measured Cruz's IQ at 83, which he said matches the slightly below average intelligence many people with fetal alcohol issues often score. He said IQ tests conducted throughout Cruz's life found similar results, including one done recently by a prosecution expert.

Under cross-examination by lead prosecutor Mike Satz, Connor conceded he is not board certified in his field but said such certification is voluntary and only a state license is required to practice. He also conceded that he almost always testifies on behalf of the defense in fetal alcohol cases, not prosecutors. He will continue testifying Tuesday.

Cruz, 23, pleaded guilty in October to murdering 14 students and three staff members and wounding 17 others as he stalked a three-story classroom building with an AR-15-style semiautomatic rifle on Valentine's Day 2018. His trial is only to decide whether the former Stoneman Douglas student is sentenced to death or life without parole. For the seven-man, five-woman jury to impose a death sentence, the vote must be unanimous.

Satz finished his primary case last month. He played security videos of the shooting and showed the rifle Cruz used. Teachers and students testified about watching others die. He showed graphic autopsy and crime scene photos and took jurors to the fenced-off building, which remains blood-stained and bullet-pocked. Parents and spouses gave tearful and angry statements about their loss.

In an attempt to counter that, assistant public defender Melisa McNeill and her team have made Cruz's history their case's centerpiece, hoping at least one juror will vote for life.

After the defense concludes its case in the coming weeks, the prosecution will present a rebuttal case before the jury's deliberations begin.

100 years after compact, Colorado River nearing crisis point

By CHRIS OUTCALT and BRITTANY PETERSON The Colorado Sun and The Associated Press
DENVER (AP) — The intensifying crisis facing the Colorado River amounts to what is fundamentally a math problem.

The 40 million people who depend on the river to fill up a glass of water at the dinner table or wash their clothes or grow food across millions of acres use significantly more each year than actually flows through the banks of the Colorado.

In fact, first sliced up 100 years ago in a document known as the Colorado River Compact, the calculation of who gets what amount of that water may never have been balanced.

"The framers of the compact — and water leaders since then — have always either known or had access to the information that the allocations they were making were more than what the river could supply," said Anne Castle, a senior fellow at the Getches-Wilkinson Center at the University of Colorado Law School.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of a collaborative series on the Colorado River as the 100th anniversary of the historic Colorado River Compact approaches. The Associated Press, The Colorado Sun, The Albuquerque Journal, The Salt Lake Tribune, The Arizona Daily Star and The Nevada Independent are working together to explore the pressures on the river in 2022.

During the past two decades, however, the situation on the Colorado River has become significantly more unbalanced, more dire.

A drought scientists now believe is the driest 22-year stretch in the past 1,200 years has gripped the southwestern U.S., zapping flows in the river. What's more, people continue to move to this part of the country. Arizona, Utah and Nevada all rank among the top 10 fastest growing states, according to U.S. Census data.

While Wyoming and New Mexico aren't growing as quickly, residents watch as two key reservoirs — popular recreation destinations — are drawn down to prop up Lake Powell. Meanwhile, southern Califor-

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nia's Imperial Irrigation District uses more water than Arizona and Nevada combined, but stresses their essential role providing cattle feed and winter produce to the nation.

Until recently, water managers and politicians whose constituents rely on the river have avoided the most difficult questions about how to rebalance a system in which demand far outpaces supply. Instead, water managers have drained the country's two largest reservoirs, Lake Mead and Lake Powell, faster than Mother Nature refills them.

In 2000, both reservoirs were about 95% full. Today, Mead and Powell are each about 27% full — once-healthy savings accounts now dangerously low.

The reservoirs are now so low that this summer Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton testified before the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee that between 2 million and 4 million acre-feet would need to be cut next year to prevent the system from reaching "critically low water levels," threatening reservoir infrastructure and hydropower production.

The commissioner set an August deadline for the basin states to come up with options for potential water cuts. The Upper Basin states — Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Wyoming — submitted a plan. The Lower Basin states — California, Arizona and Nevada — did not submit a combined plan.

The bureau threatened unilateral action in lieu of a basin-wide plan. When the 60-day deadline arrived, however, it did not announce any new water cuts. Instead, the bureau announced that predetermined water cuts for Arizona, Nevada and Mexico had kicked in and gave the states more time to come up with a basin-wide agreement.

STILL LEFT OUT

A week before Touton's deadline, the representatives of 14 Native American tribes with water rights on the river sent the Bureau of Reclamation a letter expressing concern about being left out of the negotiating process.

"What is being discussed behind closed doors among the United States and the Basin States will likely have a direct impact on Basin Tribes' water rights and other resources and we expect and demand that you protect our interests," tribal representatives wrote.

Being left out of Colorado River talks is not a new problem for the tribes in the Colorado River Basin.

The initial compact was negotiated and signed on Nov. 24, 1922, by seven land-owning white men, who brokered the deal to benefit people who looked like them, said Jennifer Pitt of the National Audubon Society, who is working to restore rivers throughout the basin.

"They divided the water among themselves and their constituents without recognizing water needs for Mexico, the water needs of Native American tribes who were living in their midst and without recognizing the needs of the environment," Pitt said.

Mexico, through which the tail of the Colorado meanders before trickling into the Pacific Ocean, secured its supply through a treaty in 1944. The treaty granted 1.5 million acre-feet on top of the original 15 million acre-feet that had already been divided, 7.5 million each for the Upper and Lower Basins.

Tribes, however, still don't have full access to the Colorado River. Although the compact briefly noted that tribal rights predate all others, it lacked specificity, forcing individual tribes to negotiate settlements or file lawsuits to quantify those rights, many of which are still unresolved. It's important to recognize the relationship between Native and non-Native people at that time, said Daryl Vigil, water administrator for the Jicarilla Apache Nation in New Mexico.

"In 1922, my tribe was subsistence living," Vigil said. "The only way we could survive was through government rations on a piece of land that wasn't our traditional homeland. That's where we were at when the foundational law of the river was created."

COMPETING INTERESTS

Agriculture uses the majority of the water on the river, around 70% or 80% depending on what organization is making the estimate. When it comes to the difficult question of how to reduce water use, farmers and ranchers are often looked to first.

Some pilot programs have focused on paying farmers to use less water, but unanswered questions remain about how to transfer the savings to Lake Powell for storage or how to create a program in a way

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that would not negatively impact a farmer's water rights.

Antiquated state laws mean the amount of water that a water right gives someone access to can be decreased if not fully used.

That's why the Camblin family ranch in Craig in northwest Colorado plans to flood irrigate once a decade, despite recently upgrading to an expensive, water-conserving pivot irrigation system. Nine years out of 10, they'll receive payment from a conservation group in exchange for leaving the surplus water in the river. But in Colorado, the state revokes water rights after 10 years if they aren't used.

Not only would losing that right mean they can't access a backup water supply should their pivot system fail, but their property's value would plummet, Mike Camblin explained. He runs a yearling cattle operation with his wife and daughter, and says an acre of land without water sells for \$1,000, about a fifth of what it would sell for with a water right attached.

There are other ways to improve efficiency, but money is still often a barrier.

Wastewater recycling is growing across the region, albeit slowly, as it requires massive infrastructure overhauls. San Diego built a robust desalination plant to turn seawater to drinking water, and yet some agricultural users are trying to get out of their contract since the water is so expensive. Some cities are integrating natural wastewater filtration into their landscaping before the water flows back to the river. It's all feasible, but is costly, and those costs often get passed directly to water users.

One of the biggest opportunities for water conservation is changing the way our landscapes look, said Lindsay Rogers, a water policy analyst at Western Resource Advocates, a nonprofit dedicated to protecting water and land in the West.

Converting a significant amount of outdoor landscaping to more drought-tolerant plants would require a combination of policies and incentives, Rogers explained. "Those are going to be really critical to closing our supply-demand gap."

After years of incentive programs for residents, Las Vegas recently outlawed all nonfunctional grass by 2026, setting a blueprint for other Western communities. For years, the city has also paid residents to rip out their lawns.

Several water agencies, including the one that serves Las Vegas, recently wrote to the Bureau of Reclamation committing to more water reuse and lawn replacement. Denver Water signed it, although it does not offer incentives for replacing residential lawns. Its neighbor, Aurora Water, has done so for 15 years and recently restricted non-functional grass in new housing.

This summer, in southern California, the Metropolitan Water District instituted an unprecedented one-day-a-week water restriction.

Still, regardless of the type of water use, more concessions must be made.

"The law of the river is not suited to what the river has become and what we see it increasingly becoming," Audubon's Pitt said. "It was built on the expectation of a larger water supply than we have."

Putin's Russia struggles for response to Ukrainian blitz

By The Associated Press undefined

As Russian troops were retreating in northeastern Ukraine amid a fierce counteroffensive by Kyiv, Muscovites were celebrating the 875th anniversary of the city's founding. Fireworks boomed and President Vladimir Putin inaugurated a huge Ferris wheel, a new transportation link and sports arena.

The Russian capital's festive holiday weekend stood in stark contrast to the military debacle unfolding in Ukraine that seemed to catch the Kremlin by surprise in the nearly 7-month-old war.

The rapid and reportedly chaotic troop withdrawal in the Kharkiv region, in which some weapons and ammunition were left behind, was a huge blow to Russian prestige. It was its largest military defeat in Ukraine since Moscow pulled back its forces from areas near Kyiv after a botched attempt to capture the capital early in the invasion.

As he attended the holiday celebrations that included the inauguration of the Ferris wheel — bigger than the iconic London Eye and now Europe's largest such amusement ride — Putin said nothing about the key

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moment in Ukraine.

Indeed, the Ukrainian counteroffensive appears to have left the Kremlin struggling for a response.

The Defense Ministry declared the troop pullback was intended to strengthen Russia's forces in the Donbas, a somewhat weak excuse, given that Russia-held areas in the Kharkiv region provided a key vantage point for Moscow's operations in the Donetsk region to the south.

The ministry hasn't offered any specifics about the pullback, but it released a map Sunday showing the Russian troops that were pressed back along a narrow patch of land on the border with Russia — a tacit admission of big Ukrainian gains.

Russian state television and other government-controlled media followed suit, avoiding a direct mention of the retreat while extolling the performance by Russian forces in individual combat episodes.

A Defense Ministry video showed a Russian helicopter gunship attacking Ukrainian troops trying to cross the Oskil River in a previously quiet part the Kharkiv region, an acknowledgement of the broad scale of the ongoing Ukrainian attack.

Many in Russia blamed Western weapons and fighters for the setbacks. "It's not Ukraine but all of NATO who is fighting us," wrote Alexander Kots, a war correspondent for the pro-Kremlin newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.

The new Ukrainian blitz, which has boosted the country's morale as the war passed 200 days on Sunday, could set the stage for further gains in the east and elsewhere.

But it also could potentially trigger an even more violent Moscow response, leading to a new and dangerous escalation of hostilities. On Sunday night, Russian missiles struck key Ukrainian infrastructure targets, knocking out power in several regions.

"The Kremlin seems stunned, and has not yet come up with a plan as to how to try and spin this, so to a large extent the media are ignoring the bad news until they get a directive," said Mark Galeotti, a professor at University College, London, who specializes in Russian security affairs.

He described the situation a "sign that the state's control over the narrative is cracking."

In a stark reflection of internal tensions provoked by Kyiv's successes, the Kremlin-backed regional leader of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, openly criticized the Russian Defense Ministry for "mistakes" that made Ukrainian gains possible.

The criticism from Kadyrov, who has sent Chechen units to fight in Ukraine and repeatedly pushed for tougher action in bellicose language, has revealed new rifts over the course of action in Ukraine.

On another flank, liberal politician Boris Nadezhdin warned on broadcaster NTV that Russia won't be able to defeat Ukraine, and he called for negotiations.

Nadezhdin's statement, made during a carefully orchestrated talk show, appeared to reflect widening doubts in some quarters of Russian officialdom about the future of the Ukraine operation and could be part of efforts to float possible policy shifts.

The Ukrainian blitz and the Kremlin's failure to mount a quick response has infuriated Russian nationalist commentators and military bloggers, who chastised Defense Ministry brass for failing to foresee and fend off the counteroffensive.

Igor Strelkov, a Russian officer who led Moscow-backed forces in the early months of the separatist conflict in eastern Ukraine after it erupted in 2014, denounced top Russian military officials as "morons" for underestimating Kyiv.

Strelkov pointed out that a sizable Russian force blunted Ukrainian attacks in late August and early September in the country's south. But he said the number of troops in the Kharkiv region was woefully insufficient to handle a counteroffensive.

"It turned out that the enemy is capable of simultaneously mounting large-scale offensives at several fronts, including the one where we only had a thin chain of outposts lined up in one echelon with even tactical reserves missing," Strelkov said.

He warned that Ukraine could launch a new offensive in the Donetsk region south to Mariupol. The city on the Sea of Azov fell in May after nearly three months of fierce battles, giving Russia a long-coveted land corridor from its border to the Crimea Peninsula that Moscow annexed in 2014.

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"Having the initiative, high combat spirits and powerful groups of strike forces, the enemy will be unlikely to give our troops time to regroup," Strelkov said, noting Ukraine will try to take advantage of the few remaining weeks of good weather before autumn rains make it harder to maneuver.

Many military bloggers criticized the Kremlin for failing to take stronger action and stubbornly trying to win what Moscow calls a "special military operation" with a limited force smaller than Ukraine's.

Ukraine has conducted a broad mobilization with a goal to reach an active military of 1 million fighters, but Russia has continued to rely on a limited contingent of volunteers, fearing that a mass mobilization could fuel broad discontent and cause political instability.

Russia has not said how many of its troops are involved in the war, but Western estimates at its start put the invading force at up to 200,000. Western observers said the recruitment of new volunteers and the use of private military contractors failed to compensate for the heavy losses.

While Moscow hasn't reported its own losses since March when it said that 1,351 soldiers had been killed in the war's first month, Western estimates put the toll as high as 25,000 dead, with the wounded, captured and deserters bringing overall Russian losses to more than 80,000.

Many pro-Moscow military bloggers also wondered why Russia has failed to destroy Ukrainian power plants, communications facilities and bridges on the Dnieper River that are a conduit for Western weapons, fuel and other supplies to the front line. They say Russian missile strikes on railway facilities and power plants have been sporadic and insufficient for inflicting lasting damage.

The Sunday night missile barrage on Ukrainian power plants seemed to respond to those questions in an apparent signal that Moscow could ramp up strikes on vital infrastructure. Ukrainian authorities said Monday that power was quickly restored to most areas.

Strelkov and other nationalist commentators are urging even stronger blows.

"It was necessary to strike Ukraine's critical infrastructure from Day One of the operation," Strelkov said on his messaging app channel. "Strikes on power plants will be quite useful for winning the war."

Loss of unifying queen could fray the bonds of fractious UK

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II has been likened to the invisible glue holding the United Kingdom together. Some think the reign of King Charles III will see those bonds come unstuck, giving new momentum to Scotland's push for independence.

But the fact the queen died last week at her beloved Highland retreat, Balmoral Castle, has made Scotland the focus of commemorations watched around the globe in the first days after her death. That has served as a reminder of the monarchy's deep ties to Scotland — and could provide a boost for the union.

Scottish historian Tom Devine said because by "extraordinary serendipity" the queen died in Scotland, "it was possible for the world to see the relationship between the queen and this country."

"It was a fitting end to a life of service and a life of concern for the four nations — not simply one nation — of the U.K.," he said.

In a touching display of respect, thousands of people on Sunday lined the 175-mile (280 kilometer) route from Balmoral to Edinburgh as the queen's coffin was driven in a slow procession to the Scottish capital. On Monday, the coffin was carried along Edinburgh's medieval Royal Mile to St. Giles' Cathedral, where thousands more are expected to pay their respects over the next day.

The queen had deep ties to Scotland. Besides spending her summer months at Balmoral, her mother, the late Queen Mother, was Scottish and as a child the queen grew up playing on her grandparents' estate of Glamis Castle in central Scotland.

So far there have been only tiny protests by anti-monarchist demonstrators. One woman was arrested in Edinburgh on Sunday for breaching the peace after brandishing a profane sign calling for the abolition of the monarchy.

King Charles III has moved quickly to stress that he will be a monarch for the whole of the U.K., undertaking a national tour during his first days on the throne. He was in Scotland on Monday accompanying

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his mother's coffin, and he plans to visit Northern Ireland and Wales later in the week, attending memorial services in Belfast and Cardiff.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are all part of the U.K. but have distinct histories — and complex ties with England, which dominates the U.K. in both population and politics.

Some Welsh nationalists have objected to Prince William being recently given the title of Prince of Wales — a title first given to the heir to the throne after the English conquest of Wales in the 14th century.

The status of the monarchy has always been fraught in Northern Ireland, where there are two main communities: unionists who consider themselves British and nationalists who see themselves as Irish. That split fueled decades of violence known as "The Troubles," and remains a deep divide. But in a sign of how far Northern Ireland has come on the road to peace, representatives of the Irish Republican Army-linked party Sinn Fein are attending commemorative events for the queen in Belfast.

Sinn Fein vice president Michelle O'Neill praised "the significant contribution Queen Elizabeth made to the advancement of peace and reconciliation between the different traditions on our island, and between Ireland and Britain during the years of the peace process."

Scotland and England have been governed under the same monarch since 1603, and formally unified in 1707. But Scotland has distinct educational and legal systems and, since 1999, its own parliament.

Relations now between the Conservative U.K. government in London and the pro-independence Scottish administration in Edinburgh are tense.

Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who left office last week, was unpopular in Scotland, where a majority opposed his pet project: Brexit. Johnson led the U.K. out of the European Union after a 2016 referendum in which the country as a whole backed leaving — but Scotland voted to stay in the bloc.

Devine said Johnson's government had displayed "a reduction in respect for Scotland as an historic nation."

"That attitude of disrespect considerably annoyed the Scottish electorate over the last few years," he said. "But there is still a very strong sense here that the monarchy — especially in the person of the queen — maintains that respect."

In 2014, Scotland held a referendum on whether to remain part of the U.K. Voters rejected independence by 55% to 45% in what was billed as a once-in-a-generation choice. But the Scottish National Party government in Edinburgh is pushing for a new independence referendum, arguing that Brexit has radically changed the political and economic landscape.

Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has pledged to hold such a vote in October 2023. But new Prime Minister Liz Truss, like Johnson, says her government will not agree, and without its approval a referendum would not be binding.

Amid the political deadlock, Sturgeon has appealed to the courts for the power to call a referendum on her own. The U.K. Supreme Court is to start hearing the case next month.

As monarch, Charles is required to remain politically neutral. His mother caused a stir in 2014 when she remarked that Scots should "think very carefully" before voting — a remark widely seen as opposing independence.

Even after that comment, the queen remained widely respected by people on both sides of Scotland's independence debate. Sturgeon, the pro-independence first minister, praised Elizabeth on Monday as "the Queen of Scots" and "the great constant -- the anchor of our nation."

Pauline Maclaran, an expert on royal culture at Royal Holloway University of London, said "it will remain to be seen if Charles can command the same loyalty" as his mother.

"There will be a honeymoon period for Charles, I think, where everybody — out of respect, but also their own feelings — will lay off the usual demands for independence," she said.

But Maclaran felt that period would not last.

"I think they (demands for Scottish independence) will come back. And I think the whole question will be how much can Charles build his bonds with them? What bonds does he have? That will then be one of his tests, that's for sure," she said.

Bezos rocket crashes after liftoff, only experiments aboard

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A rocket crashed back to Earth shortly after liftoff Monday in the first launch accident for Jeff Bezos' space travel company, but the capsule carrying experiments managed to parachute to safety.

No one was aboard the Blue Origin flight, which used the same kind of rocket as the one that sends paying customers to the edge of space. The rockets are now grounded pending the outcome of an investigation, the Federal Aviation Administration said.

The New Shepard rocket was barely a minute into its flight from West Texas when bright yellow flames shot out from around the single engine at the bottom. The capsule's emergency launch abort system immediately kicked in, lifting the craft off the top. Several minutes later, the capsule parachuted onto the remote desert floor.

The rocket came crashing down, with no injuries or damage reported, said the FAA, which is in charge of public safety during commercial space launches and landings.

Blue Origin's launch commentary went silent when the capsule catapulted off the rocket Monday morning, eventually announcing: "It appears we've experienced an anomaly with today's flight. This wasn't planned."

"Booster failure on today's uncrewed flight. Escape system performed as designed," the Kent, Washington-based company tweeted close to an hour later.

The company later said the rocket crashed.

The mishap occurred as the rocket was traveling nearly 700 mph (1,126 kph) at an altitude of about 28,000 feet (8,500 meters). There was no video shown of the rocket — only the capsule — after the failure. It happened around the point the rocket is under the maximum amount of pressure, called max-q.

The rocket usually lands upright on the desert floor and then is recycled for future flights.

The webcast showed the capsule reaching a maximum altitude of more than 37,000 feet (11,300 meters). Thirty-six experiments were on board to be exposed to a few minutes of weightlessness. Half were sponsored by NASA, mostly from students.

It was the 23rd flight for the New Shepard program, named after the first American in space, Mercury astronaut Alan Shepard. It was the ninth flight for this particular rocket-capsule pair, which was dedicated to flying experiments.

Blue Origin's most recent flight with paying customers was just last month; the ticket price hasn't been released. Bezos was on the first New Shepard crew last year. Altogether, Blue Origin has carried 31 people on 10-minute flights, including actor William Shatner.

The rocket should have launched nearly two weeks ago, but was grounded until Monday by bad weather.

Exxon Valdez Capt. Joseph Hazelwood dies at 75

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Joseph Hazelwood, the captain of the Exxon Valdez oil tanker that ran aground more than three decades ago in Alaska, causing one of the worst oil spills in U.S. history, has died, the New York Times reported. He was 75.

He died in July after struggling with COVID-19 and cancer, his nephew Sam Hazelwood told the newspaper for a story reported Friday. Hazelwood's family members and business associates did not respond to The Associated Press for comment.

The Exxon Valdez, a 987-foot (301-meter) tanker, grounded on Alaska's Bligh Reef at 12:04 a.m. on March 24, 1989, spewing nearly 11 million gallons (41 million liters) of oil into the rich fishing waters of Prince William Sound. Currents and storms carried the crude over 1,200 miles (1,931 kilometers) of Alaska coastline.

The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council estimates the spill killed a quarter million seabirds, 2,800 sea otters, 300 harbor seals, 250 bald eagles, up to 22 killer whales and billions of fish eggs. It took years for the fish numbers to rebound following the spill, and oil can still be found under the surface of some beaches in Prince William Sound.

The grounding, along with other oil spills in 1989 and 1990, prompted passage of the Oil Pollution Act

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of 1990, which strengthened how the U.S. government responds to oil spills. Exxon Valdez was surpassed as the nation's worst oil spill when Deepwater Horizon exploded in 2010, releasing 168 million gallons (635 million liters) of oil into the Gulf of Mexico.

An Anchorage jury awarded nearly 33,000 plaintiffs affected by the Alaska spill \$5 billion in punitive damages in 1994, but that amount was cut in half by other courts on appeals by Exxon. In 2008, the U.S. Supreme Court cut the punitive damages to \$507.5 million.

Hazelwood, whom prosecutors accused of being drunk when the tanker grounded, was the only crew member criminally charged after the spill. He had left a third mate in control of the ship while he went below to do paperwork. Hazelwood was accused of one felony, criminal mischief, and three misdemeanors — reckless endangerment, operating a vessel while intoxicated and negligent discharge of oil.

During his 1990 Anchorage trial, witnesses reported he drank vodka at a Valdez bar before the ship sailed, but how much he drank and at what hour were in dispute. No witnesses described Hazelwood as appearing drunk, staggering or slurring his words. Crew members called him cool, calm and in command before and after the grounding, according to Associated Press coverage of the trial.

His blood-alcohol reading was .061, but he wasn't tested until about 10½ hours after the tanker grounded. In most states, the legal limit is .08 percent.

The jury ultimately found Hazelwood guilty of negligent discharge of oil into state waters and acquitted him of the other charges. He was sentenced to spend 1,000 hours in community service and ordered to pay \$50,000 in restitution.

During his sentencing, then-Superior Court Judge Karl Johnstone said he was disappointed Hazelwood had not publicly apologized for his role in the disaster.

"I'm sure deep down, he is very shameful," Johnstone said.

In June 1999, Hazelwood, of Huntington, New York, spoke to the New York Times as he prepared to leave for Anchorage to complete his community service.

"As master of the vessel, I accept responsibility for the vessel and the actions of my subordinates," he told the newspaper. "I've never tried to avoid that. I'm not some remorseless oaf."

He then noted that he was convicted of a low-level misdemeanor. "There's no lower crime in the state of Alaska. The judge had to come up with a sentence. I can understand it. I don't have to agree with it," Hazelwood told the Times.

However, a decade later, he issued the apology that Judge Johnstone wanted to hear.

Hazelwood took responsibility in the book, "The Spill: Personal Stories from the Exxon Valdez Disaster," by Sharon Bushell and Stan Jones.

"Occasionally people have called me a scapegoat, but I've never felt comfortable with that term when applied to me in regard to the oil spill," he says. "I was captain of a ship that ran aground and caused a horrendous amount of damage. I've got to be responsible for that. There's no way around it."

Following the spill, he worked at a New York law firm as a paralegal and also was an instructor at a maritime college.

Hazelwood is survived by his wife, Suzanne; a daughter, Alison; two grandsons, and a brother, Joshua, the Times reported.

Teacher shortages are real, but not for the reason you heard

By SHARON LURYE and REBECCA GRIESBACH Associated Press and AL.com

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Everywhere, it seems, back-to-school has been shadowed by worries of a teacher shortage.

The U.S. education secretary has called for investment to keep teachers from quitting. A teachers union leader has described it as a five-alarm emergency. News coverage has warned of a crisis in teaching.

In reality, there is little evidence to suggest teacher turnover has increased nationwide or educators are leaving in droves.

Certainly, many schools have struggled to find enough educators. But the challenges are related more

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to hiring, especially for non-teaching staff positions. Schools flush with federal pandemic relief money are creating new positions and struggling to fill them at a time of low unemployment and stiff competition for workers of all kinds.

Since well before the COVID-19 pandemic, schools have had difficulty recruiting enough teachers in some regions, particularly in parts of the South. Fields like special education and bilingual education also have been critically short on teachers nationwide.

For some districts, shortages have meant children have fewer or less qualified instructors.

In rural Alabama's Black Belt, there were no certified math teachers last year in Bullock County's public middle school.

"It really impacts the children because they're not learning what they need to learn," said Christopher Blair, the county's former superintendent. "When you have these uncertified, emergency or inexperienced teachers, students are in classrooms where they're not going to get the level of rigor and classroom experiences."

While the nation lacks vacancy data in several states, national pain points are obvious.

For starters, the pandemic kicked off the largest drop in education employment ever. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of people employed in public schools dropped from almost 8.1 million in March 2020 to 7.3 million in May. Employment has grown back to 7.7 million since then, but that still leaves schools short around 360,000 positions.

"We're still trying to dig out of that hole," said Chad Aldeman, policy director at the Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University.

It's unknown how many of those positions lost were teaching jobs, or other staff members like bus drivers — support positions that schools are having an especially hard time filling. A RAND survey of school leaders this year found that around three-fourths of school leaders say they are trying to hire more substitutes, 58% are trying to hire more bus drivers and 43% are trying to hire more tutors.

Still, the problems are not as tied to teachers quitting as many have suggested.

Teacher surveys have indicated many considered leaving their jobs. They're under pressure to keep kids safe from guns, catch them up academically and deal with pandemic challenges with mental health and behavior.

National Education Association union leader Becky Pringle tweeted in April: "The educator shortage is a five-alarm crisis." But a Brown University study found turnover largely unchanged among states that had data.

Quit rates in education rose slightly this year, but that's true for the nation as a whole, and teachers remain far more likely to stay in their job than a typical worker.

Hiring has been so difficult largely because of an increase in the number of open positions. Many schools indicated plans to use federal relief money to create new jobs, in some cases looking to hire even more people than they had pre-pandemic. Some neighboring schools are competing for fewer applicants, as enrollment in teacher prep programs colleges has declined.

The Upper Darby School District in Pennsylvania has around 70 positions it is trying to fill, especially bus drivers, lunch aides and substitute teachers. But it cannot find enough applicants. The district has warned families it may have to cancel school or switch to remote learning on days when it lacks subs.

"It's become a financial competition from district to district to do that, and that's unfortunate for children in communities who deserve the same opportunities everywhere in the state," Superintendent Daniel McGarry said.

The number of unfilled vacancies has led some states and school systems to ease credential requirements, in order to expand the pool of applicants. U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona told reporters last week that creative approaches are needed to bring in more teachers, such as retired educators, but schools must not lower standards.

Schools in the South are more likely to struggle with teacher vacancies. A federal survey found an average of 3.4 teaching vacancies per school as of this summer; that number was lowest in the West, with 2.7 vacancies on average, and highest in the South, with 4.2 vacancies.

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In Birmingham, the school district is struggling to fill around 50 teaching spots, including 15 in special education, despite \$10,000 signing bonuses for special ed teachers. Jenikka Oglesby, a human resources officer for the district, says the problem owes in part to low salaries in the South that don't always offset a lower cost of living.

The school system in Moss Point, a small town near the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, has increased wages to entice more applicants. But other districts nearby have done the same. Some teachers realized they could make \$30,000 more by working 30 minutes away in Mobile, Alabama.

"I personally lost some really good teachers to Mobile County Schools," said Tenesha Batiste, human resources director for the Moss Point district. And she also lost some not-so-great teachers, she added — people who broke their contracts and quit three days before the school year started.

"It's the job that makes all others possible, yet they get paid once a month, and they can go to Chick-fil-A in some places and make more money," Batiste said.

A bright spot for Moss Point this year is four student teachers from the University of Southern Mississippi. They will spend the school year working with children as part of a residency program for aspiring educators. The state has invested almost \$10 million of federal relief money into residency programs, with the hope the residents will stay and become teachers in their assigned districts.

Michelle Dallas, a teacher resident in a Moss Point first-grade classroom, recently switched from a career in mental health and is confident she is meant to be a teacher.

"That's why I'm here," she said, "to fulfill my calling."

As Ukraine pursues counteroffensive, Russia strikes Kharkiv

By ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

KHARKIV, Ukraine (AP) — Among the boarded-up windows and blast-scarred buildings of Ukraine's second-largest city, where Russian missiles and rockets strike during the day and the night, fear forms the backdrop of life.

As Ukrainian forces advance in their counteroffensive in the Kharkiv region, pushing Russian forces out of territory they have held for months, strikes have continued unabated on the city, already hammered by artillery during months of war.

A missile strike on a power station Sunday night sparked a major fire and plunged Kharkiv into darkness for hours. In the blackness, another missile slammed into a residential building at around midnight, collapsing part of it and killing one person, local officials said.

"It's dangerous to live in Kharkiv, every day is dangerous. It's dangerous during the day and night," said Kateryna Protsenko, a 29-year-old veterinarian living across the street from the apartment building.

"The nights are sleepless, but anyway you continue to live because you have a family and you need to survive and work somehow," she said, visibly shaken at the sight of the building, a gaping hole where part of the third story used to be.

The building's facade had peeled off and piles of rubble lay strewn on the ground, mixed with the twisted metal shrapnel of the missile. On the building's second story, a closet stood suddenly exposed, a single coat hanger dangling precariously from its rail.

Protsenko said she couldn't leave Kharkiv — she needed to work, and there were still sick animals to treat. "So you live where you can live, and you understand that today you are alive but you can be gone in a minute," she said.

More explosions sounded out in the middle of the day Monday, with a police administrative building set on fire by a strike that killed one person in a neighboring building.

"Russia carried out a rocket attack against a peaceful city, where peaceful people live, just the same as the people living in the United States of America, or anywhere else in the world, who go to school, have their ordinary lives, raise their children," Kharkiv regional police chief Volodymyr Timoshko said.

Behind him, firefighting crews clambered up ladders with hoses, dousing the flames leaping out of the top story of the building as choking smoke billowed out over the city.

Timoshko said authorities believed the building was hit by a rocket from a Smerch multiple rocket launcher. "It's quite a powerful weapon which is used for mass destruction, I repeat, mass destruction of the population," he said. "They are using it during the daytime in the city center, the city which is living a normal life."

A big break comes with a big task: Playing Steven Spielberg

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

TORONTO (AP) — "Untitled Amblin Film," read Gabriel LaBelle's audition sheet. Director "TBD."

LaBelle, a 19-year-old actor from Vancouver with a handful of credits in TV and film, taped his audition and sent it off, not thinking too much about it. A couple days later, he began to hear whispers. That movie? It's a Steven Spielberg film. And the part? Playing Steven Spielberg.

LaBelle didn't get a call back until three months later — and even then he didn't really know what he was in for. It wasn't until LaBelle was cast and received the full script that it dawned on him. He was the lead of Spielberg's "The Fabelmans," playing a fictionalized younger version of the legendary director.

"When I was auditioning, the character's name was Teenage Sammy — I thought as opposed to Adult Sammy," LaBelle said in an interview the day after "The Fabelmans" premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival.

"I get the script and you're reading it for 30 pages and he's 6 and 8 years old. Page 35 or so Teenage Sammy comes along. OK, good! Now this is my part. It's going to be a three-act movie, it's going to be a 'Moonlight' or something. I kept waiting for my exit but it never came."

Instead, LaBelle makes a very big entrance in "The Fabelmans" playing the legendary American film director in his most autobiographical film. As Spielberg's fictionalized stand-in, Sammy Fabelman, he plays the 75-year-old filmmaker through some of his most formative teenage years as an aspiring filmmaker. Much of the film belongs to Michelle Williams and Paul Dano, who play Sammy's parents and turn in extraordinarily nuanced, performances. But LaBelle's Sammy is the through-line in "The Fabelmans," a deeply felt portrait of an American movie icon as a young man.

For a young, little-known actor just getting a role in a Spielberg film can launch a career. Christian Bale and Drew Barrymore are just a few of the actors who got their big break with the director. LaBelle's challenge, though, added the considerable wrinkle of also playing Spielberg, himself.

"After I got cast, it was really like: Did I just bite off more than I can chew?" said LaBelle, who goes by Gabe. "It was like the universe just dropped down. 'Ah, you want to be an actor, do you? You want to be in the movies?'"

Before "The Fabelmans," LaBelle's most notable credit was probably a small part in the 2018 reboot "The Predator." His father, Rob LaBelle, is a veteran actor with dozens of film and television credits. At the premiere, when the younger LaBelle saw "The Fabelmans" for the first time, he sat with his parents and brother, often clutching his mother's hand. On stage after the film, LaBelle described the odd feeling of being on a film set "surrounded by masters."

"Then there's me, that kid with the good audition."

But LaBelle quickly became part of the company, Spielberg said. In a talk with Cameron Bailey, TIFF director, at the festival, Spielberg said the role was especially difficult for him to cast.

"None of this is really easy because we don't often see ourselves the way our friends and our family sees us," Spielberg said. "As a kid growing up, I always had a lot of reasons why I was always in the corner, why I was always not the center of conversation."

"I needed someone who wasn't going to bring too much self-awareness to Sammy."

"The Fabelmans," which Universal Pictures will release Nov. 11, tracks Sammy through his first exposure to cinema as a child (Mateo Zoryna Francis-Deford plays him as a boy) through his high-school years. The film captures Spielberg's growing wonder with the possibilities — and manipulative power — of filmmaking during a time of increasing marital toil for his parents. That meant that LaBelle would be acting out some seminal moments in Spielberg's life: Making his first war movie; kissing his first girlfriend; stepping onto

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a studio lot for the first time.

LaBelle found Spielberg a ready resource but their talks didn't often stray outside of the work at hand. "Our main focus was the movie," said LaBelle. "Yes, I could talk to him and go off about his life but I could tell he wasn't going to unload it all to us. We had to ask. We had to go at it scene by scene. It was really just about what's the purpose of each moment. How did you feel? What do you want out of me? Sometimes he'd tell me and sometimes he wouldn't want me to know and he'd want me to just do what I thought Sammy should do."

Other times, Sammy's own anxiety mirrored LaBelle's exactly. One scene reenacts 15-year-old Spielberg's famous encounter with the director John Ford, who is played by David Lynch in the film. Lynch, LaBelle said, "scared the s--- out of me."

"I mean, he's a great guy. But leading up to it, Sammy's nervous, so I'm getting nervous," said LaBelle. "He walks into the room and Steven goes over. It's David Lynch and Steven Spielberg talking. My coverage wasn't going to be until later, so I'm waiting and waiting to do that scene. It really helped me get nervous to meet him."

LaBelle stars in the recently debuted Showtime series adaptation of the 1980 film "American Gigolo," playing the younger version of Jon Bernthal's lead character. He said that making "The Fabelmans" — along with some COVID studying (watching Masterclasses by Samuel L. Jackson and Natalie Portman, reading Michael Caine's biography) — has taught him how if he committed to working hard he has to be as an actor. Which isn't to say that leaping into "The Fabelmans" wasn't head-spinning.

"To think that it goes from an audience to this," LaBelle said, shaking his head in disbelief. "It's just absolutely wild."

The queen, as imagined —from punk rock to mystery novels

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

In the spring of 2012, portrait artist Ralph Heimans stood on the Cosmati pavement of Westminster Abbey and awaited the subject of his latest commission, Queen Elizabeth II. When she approached, he says, it was an extraordinary moment.

"She was wearing her Robe of State, with four footmen holding it, and as she came down the long corridor it was a very theatrical kind of entrance," Heimans said soon after he had learned that the queen had died Thursday at age 96.

After spending an hour the queen, "discussing niceties," he came away with "a sense of how thoughtful she was, almost a sense of shyness, an introspective quality." In his oil painting, which hangs in Westminster, he drew her as a solitary, even brooding figure, her eyes cast down, with the vastness of Westminster behind her like so much weight from the past — and present.

"I wanted to show her in this private moment, with a certain gravity about her," he says.

Over the past 70 years, authors, filmmakers, playwrights, songwriters and painters have responded to the queen as both symbol and human being, whether commenting on the heights of her position or attempting to tease out the inner life of a woman who spoke infrequently in public and avoided personal revelations. The dual qualities, majesty and mystery, found her imagined in settings ranging from the sobriety of royal art to the rage of punk music to the varied characterizations of film and television.

"I think because she was a constant presence who didn't say very much, it allowed people to project on her in different ways," says Elizabeth Holmes, whose "HRH: So Many Thoughts on Royal Style" was published in 2020. "Also, you can very easily make people look like the Queen. You can take that as a starting point and run."

On film, the queen has been fictionalized in everything from Helen Mirren's Oscar-winning portrayal in "The Queen" to the farcical "Naked Gun" movies and the grim "Spencer," with Kristen Stewart as Princess Diana and Stella Gonet as Elizabeth. But she has been dramatized most fully in the Emmy-winning Netflix series "The Crown," which follows her life from the beginning of her reign to recent times — and whose production was suspended Friday after her death.

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When played by Claire Foy as a young and glamorous monarch, she is seen as finding her way in her new life, trying to maintain a happy relationship with her husband, Prince Philip, while approaching her royal duties with the sobriety of someone years older. Olivia Colman takes over as Elizabeth as she becomes more mature and prickly, and flawed, failing initially to travel to the scene of a devastating mining tragedy in Wales and comfort the townspeople, and proving unsympathetic to Diana's troubles with her son Prince Charles.

"I emote. The queen is not meant to," Colman told *Vanity Fair* in 2018. "She's got to be a rock for everyone, and has been trained not to (emote)."

The queen herself didn't comment on works about her or always seem aware of cultural trends: Greeting Led Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy Page at a 2005 palace reception, she seemed unsure of who he was and what instrument he played. But she sensed her place in world and had enough savvy to appear with Daniel Craig, in character as James Bond, for a 2012 Olympics video, and enough good humor to allow herself to be pictured as parachuting from a helicopter with him (the former was really her, the latter a stunt double).

Fiction writers enjoyed setting the queen off on unusual adventures. In Emma Tennant's "The Autobiography of the Queen," the monarch flees to St. Lucia in the Caribbean. S.J. Bennett worked from the premise "What if the queen solved crimes?" in writing the mystery novels "The Windsor Knot" and "A Three Dog Problem."

"She had such a unique perspective on the world. She was always looking out when everyone else was looking at her, so she must see a lot of things the rest of us don't see," Bennett, the daughter of a military veteran who had met the Queen, told *The Associated Press*.

"It was her character that fascinated me, not her position as a symbol," she added. "She was intelligent, frequently underestimated because she wasn't traditionally educated, and endlessly curious about people. In the books I have her eagerly looking out of the windows of Buckingham Palace while being painted for a portrait, to see what was going on outside, because that's what she really did. She had a very wry sense of humor and a huge instinct for fun, but equally an almost supernatural instinct for diplomacy, and a world-class sense of duty."

Musicians have paid tribute, condemned her and invoked her name for a quick laugh.

For punk and New Wave artists, she was a monument to be torn down. The Smiths' "The Queen Is Dead" mocks the royal family and the succession to power: "I say, Charles, don't you ever crave/To appear on the front of the Daily Mail/Dressed in your Mother's bridal veil?" The Sex Pistols helped define the punk movement in 1976 with "God Save the Queen," in which Johnny Rotten (now Lydon) declares "No future" as he snarls out some of the most scathing, nihilistic lyrics ever to top the British charts:

God save the queen
The fascist regime
They made you a moron
A potential H bomb
God save the queen
She's not a human being ...

Songwriters otherwise responded with affection. Duke Ellington met her in the late 1950s and found her "so inspiring" he soon collaborated with Billy Strayhorn on the pensive "The Queen's Suite," for which he arranged a single gold pressing just for her. In the late 1960s, Paul McCartney dashed off the acoustic, 23-second "Her Majesty," with its cheeky refrain, "Her Majesty's a pretty nice girl/But she doesn't have a lot to say," and the Beatles tacked it onto the end of "Abbey Road."

As he explained in "Paul McCartney: The Lyrics," published in 2021, he wrote the song in part because the queen really didn't offer many public statements, beyond her annual Christmas address and the opening of Parliament. McCartney would meet the queen numerous times, as a Beatle and a solo performer, and even played the song for her. But, he reaffirmed in his book: "She didn't have a lot to say."

New this week: 'The Handmaid's Tale' and 'Goodnight Mommy'

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By The Associated Press undefined

Here's a collection curated by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists of what's arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

MOVIES

— Twin brothers go to their mother's house for a stay but find something is off about her in "Goodnight Mommy," an English language remake of a cult Austrian horror from 2014. Naomi Watts plays the mother, an actress whose face is wrapped in bandages — presumably recovering from plastic surgery. She's also quite on edge and suspiciously cruel and the boys, Elias (Cameron Crovetti) and Lucas (Nicholas Crovetti) start worrying that it is not, in fact, their mother, but an imposter. Directed by Matt Sobel, "Goodnight Mommy" arrives on Prime Video on Friday.

— A year after "Official Competition" premiered to raves at the 78th Venice Film Festival, it's finally coming to a streaming service, AMC+, on Friday. The sharp satire skewering the movie business (and the art world in general) stars Penélope Cruz and Antonio Banderas as two egomaniacs who a billionaire hires to make a film together. By all accounts the Spanish language film, directed by Mariano Cohn and Gaston Duprat, is deliriously fun and funny and a great showcase for its leads Cruz and Banderas.

— Over on Disney+, the original documentary "Mija" tells the story of Doris Muñoz and Jacks Haupt, the daughters of Mexican immigrants who are trying to make their way in the music business in the U.S. It's the directorial debut of Isabel Castro, also a Mexican American, and will be available to watch on Friday. In the Variety review out of the Sundance Film Festival, critic Lisa Kennedy wrote that, "Castro's debut feature deals with heartache and vulnerability but also shimmers with joy and genuine insight."

— AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr

MUSIC

— After night must come light, right? Little Big Town's album "Mr. Sun" drops Friday, the follow-up to the band's last offering, "Nightfall." Band member Karen Fairchild says: "Mr. Sun" is focused on better days ahead, the value of friendships and family; it touches on heartbreak and letting go, but it's full of sunshine and joy." The 16-song album — with a member of the band writing or co-writing 13 of them — includes "Rich Man," the hazy, addictive "All Summer" and "Hell Yeah."

— Singer-songwriter Michelle Branch will release her new album "The Trouble with Fever" despite facing her own personal troubles. The album, out Friday, was co-produced with her husband, Patrick Carney, drummer for The Black Keys. Branch was arrested last month for allegedly slapping Carney, but prosecutors decided not to press charges. The album's first single, "I'm A Man," is a bluesy protest song that tackles such topics as women's rights, toxic masculinity, reproductive rights and sexual harassment.

— Marcus Mumford releases his first solo album on Friday, but he's tapped plenty of friends for help: Brandi Carlile, Phoebe Bridgers, Clairo, Monica Martin and Julia Michaels. The album, "(self-titled)," has produced the quiet yet powerful "Cannibal" (with a Steven Spielberg-directed video) and the superb "Grace," a strummy cathartic tune with the lyrics: "I hear there's healing just around this corner." Blake Mills produced the album.

— Jessie Reyez had some bad luck when she released her debut album, "Before Love Came To Kill Us." It came out in late March 2020, along with the pandemic, which wiped out her buzz. This week, she's hoping for better luck with "YESSIE," led by the spiteful kiss-off single "Mutual Friend," with the line: "This heartbreak morphed into hate." The Colombian-Canadian artist has had an exciting year, touring with Billie Eilish and performing at the 2022 Coachella music festival.

— AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy

TELEVISION

— "The Handmaid's Tale" returns with high stakes for June (Elisabeth Moss) and the future of Gilead, the totalitarian society that she and others have risked their lives to fight. The Emmy-winning series, adapted from Margaret Atwood's novel of the same name, has become a touchstone for women's rights advocates. In the fifth season that begins Wednesday with two episodes, June is dealing with the consequences of a killing, while Serena (Yvonne Strahovski), the woman she widowed, seeks her own path to power. Hulu

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announced the drama will end with season six.

— “The U.S. and the Holocaust” examines Nazi Germany’s Jewish genocide in the context of American society and the nation’s response. The three-part documentary looks at the 20th-century rise of Adolph Hitler and the Nazi party amid racism and antisemitism elsewhere in the world, including in the United States. Directed and produced by Ken Burns, Lynn Novick and Sarah Botstein and written by Geoffrey Ward, the six-hour docuseries airs Sunday through Tuesday, on PBS and will be available on PBS.org. Peter Coyote narrates.

— Looking for a break in your day? “The Jennifer Hudson Show” and “Sherri,” with comedian-actor Sherri Shepherd, are here to oblige, with both shows debuting Monday. Actor-singer and “American Idol” alum Hudson will welcome first-week guests including Simon Cowell, Magic Johnson and Hannah Waddingham. Among Shepherd’s debut week guests: Ricki Lake, Robin Thicke and Derek Hough. The hosts are looking to fill the void left by Ellen DeGeneres’ and Wendy Williams’ now-ended shows, with Kelly Clarkson and Drew Barrymore among the returning competition.

In Mexico’s dry north, Colorado River adds to uncertainty

By SUMAN NAISHADHAM and GREGORY BULL Associated Press

MEXICALI (AP) — When Gilbert Quintana, a farmer in the Mexicali Valley, learned he would soon lose 15% of his water supply, he did what he’s done before in a pinch: buy water from other growers in northern Mexico.

But Quintana worries that such workarounds won’t always be possible. The water used to irrigate his 2,000 acres of (800 hectares) of Brussel sprouts, green onions, and lettuce comes from the over-tapped Colorado River, which a megadrought in the American West due in part to climate change is rapidly depleting.

Buying water from other farmers is often the only way to grow the same acreage anymore, Quintana said, “but it’s short term.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: This is part of a collaborative series on the Colorado River as the 100th anniversary of the historic Colorado River Compact approaches. The Associated Press, The Colorado Sun, The Albuquerque Journal, The Salt Lake Tribune, The Arizona Daily Star and The Nevada Independent are working together to explore the pressures on the river in 2022.

By the time the Colorado River reaches Mexico, just a fraction of its water is left for the fields of the Mexicali Valley and millions of people in northwestern desert cities. Now, that supply is more at risk than ever.

Water experts and scientists say Mexico, at the end of the river, will need to find other water for the two northwestern states that depend on it. They say the country will also have to use its supply more efficiently. But Mexico has been slow to act.

“This hit us so fast that it took us a while to understand that it’s not a drought, it’s a new era. It’s a new regime,” said Carlos de la Parra, an urban and environmental studies professor at El Colegio de la Frontera Norte in Tijuana.

The National Water Commission declared an emergency in four northern states in July. Roughly 65% of the country was facing drought. A swath stretching from Tijuana to Matamoros, more than 1,500 miles (2,414 kilometers), is still bone dry, with water shutoffs common in cities and towns and key reservoirs near all-time lows.

Tijuana, the sprawling border city of 2 million people, is especially dependent on the Colorado. About 90% of its water comes from the river. Parts of the city have baked this summer as taps ran dry — sometimes due to mismanagement — with local water authorities blaming it on the drought.

“It’s mismanagement linked with drought,” said Mario López Pérez, a consultant at the World Bank who previously worked for Mexico’s national water commission.

To fill the gap, the government has sent water tankers, a common sight in Mexican cities, to neighborhoods without running water. People have also bought water from private sellers.

PLANS FOR DESALINATION, WATER RECYCLING

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For more than a decade, officials in Baja California talked about building a large, desalination plant in a beach town near Tijuana. In 2016, state officials finalized a plan only to shelve it four years later, citing its high cost. The energy-intensive technology works by removing impurities from seawater. Mexico has other, small desalination plants elsewhere in the state and country.

Roberto Salmón helped oversee U.S.-Mexico treaties on borders and rivers as Mexico's representative to the International Boundary and Water Commission between 2009 and 2020. He said a desalination plant would help Tijuana considerably.

"But discussions had been going on ever since I came into the commission," Salmón said, "and there is no plant yet."

A single aqueduct that crosses the state, including a rugged 4,000 feet (1,219 meters) mountain pass, brings Colorado River water into Tijuana. "It's a one-source city," Salmón said.

Officials and companies have similarly talked about using treated recycled wastewater to boost the city's water supply for years, but the city has little to show for it.

UNCERTAINTY FOR FARMERS

Maria-Elena Giner, the U.S. representative to the IBWC, said the U.S. is looking at projects that could help Mexico conserve more Colorado River water with about \$32 million that became available in 2017. The money could go toward lining leaking canals, helping farmers switch to water-efficient drip irrigation, and paying others to leave fields unplanted, she said.

But getting Mexico to use significantly less water — and fast — will be hard.

"We did a lot of the low-hanging fruit," Giner said. "Our problem right now is how we do the more difficult projects in Mexico."

Mexican officials, meanwhile, say water conservation should be balanced with needs.

"We need to evaluate how we can contribute," said Francisco Bernal, who directs the National Water Commission in Baja California. "But we also have to see that there isn't a severe impact on our allocation."

Since 1944, Mexico has received slightly more than a third of what California can take each year from the Colorado River. Next year, it will lose 7% of that, or more than what the industrial border city of Mexicali — population 1 million — uses in a year, according to Alfonso Cortez-Lara, an environmental professor at El Colegio de la Frontera Norte in Mexicali who researches transboundary water issues.

Nicolás Rodríguez, the director of an irrigation district in the Mexicali Valley, said water shortages (this year, Mexico lost 5% of its overall supply from the river) are starting to cause friction between irrigation district managers and farmers.

Farmers in the Mexicali Valley produce an almost identical range of crops — most for U.S. export — as what's grown just north of the border in California's Imperial Valley. Leafy greens, broccoli, alfalfa, and wheat are common. The farms tend to be much smaller.

Rodríguez said he has encouraged farmers for years to grow more drought-resistant crops and plant tighter rows to use less water, which some farmers have taken up. Eventually, he thinks the government could restrict how much alfalfa and cotton Mexicali Valley farmers can grow.

According to a recent study, the state of Baja California could need nearly 30% more than it gets now from the Colorado River by 2030 to not be water stressed.

Cortez-Lara, the study's author, said that while cities should reduce their water use, coming up with that much water would involve significantly cutting how much alfalfa and cotton is grown in the Mexicali Valley. But doing so would come at an enormous cost, he said, adding that Mexico's federal government should play a role in funding and enforcing water efficiency.

Absent such action, water managers, experts and farmers like Quintana, who bought his way out of trouble this year, agree that shortages will only get worse.

"The less water there is," Quintana said, "the more farmers in the Mexicali Valley will have to fight."

Spain, France kick off anniversary celebration of Picasso

By CIARAN GILES Associated Press

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MADRID (AP) — Against the backdrop of Picasso's iconic anti-war painting, "Guernica," the culture ministers of France and Spain gathered Monday in Madrid's Reina Sofia Museum to kick off a year of commemorative acts to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the death of the Spanish artist who revolutionized the world of art.

In "Picasso Celebration," France and Spain will be organizing more than 40 exhibitions conferences and other events in museums in Madrid, Paris, Barcelona, Málaga and other cities in Europe and North America over the next 12 months.

Picasso was born October 25, 1881, in Málaga and died in Mougins, France, on April 8, 1973.

"Our aim is to revindicate the artistic legacy of Picasso and the relevance of his work," said Spanish Culture Minister Miquel Iceta.

"If there is one artist that defines the 20th century, who presents it in all its cruelty, violence, passion, excesses and contradictions, that artist is Pablo Picasso."

Although born in Spain. Picasso spent most of his adult life in France.

In a career spanning nearly eight decades. he is said to have created tens of thousands of paintings, drawings, sculptures and ceramics covering an incredible range of styles and movements that made him possibly the most influential and celebrated artist of the past 150 years.

Together with artist Georges Braque, he started the avant-garde Cubist movement that radically changed European painting and sculpture.

"The abundant, inventive and often radical work of Picasso continues to exert a genuine fascination throughout the world," said French Culture Minister Rima Abdul Malak.

Picasso's reputation for having mistreated many of the women in his life is not being ignored during the anniversary and will be the subject of more than one conference and exhibition during the year.

"We want to present Picasso as he was," said Iceta. "Celebrate his work of course but not hide some of the aspects of his life that seen from today might be controversial."

Abdul Malak said there was no denying there was a lot of debate about how Picasso should be perceived, particular in his relation with women and his sometimes violent nature but she said these topics needed to be debated, not covered up.

The anniversary was launched in front of "Guernica" — by far Picasso's most famous painting. It was commissioned by the Republican government of Spain to represent the country at a Universal Exposition in Paris in 1937 when Spain was in the throes of a bloody civil war started by future dictator Gen. Francisco Franco.

The black and white canvas comprises tormented and distorted figures — human and animal — and represents the horrors of mechanized war.

Americans give health care system failing mark: AP-NORC poll

By AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Emmanuel Obeng-Dankwa is worried about making rent on his New York City apartment, he sometimes holds off on filling his blood pressure medication.

"If there's no money, I prefer to skip the medication to being homeless," said Obeng-Dankwa, a 58-year-old security guard.

He is among a majority of adults in the U.S. who say that health care is not handled well in the country, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The poll reveals that public satisfaction with the U.S. health care system is remarkably low, with fewer than half of Americans saying it is generally handled well. Only 12% say it is handled extremely or very well. Americans have similar views about health care for older adults.

Overall, the public gives even lower marks for how prescription drug costs, the quality of care at nursing homes and mental health care are being handled, with just 6% or less saying those health services are done very well in the country.

"Navigating the American health care system is exceedingly frustrating," said A. Mark Fendrick, the di-

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rector of the University of Michigan Center for Value-Based Insurance Design. "The COVID pandemic has only made it worse."

More than two years after the pandemic's start, health care worker burnout and staffing shortages are plaguing hospitals around the country. And Americans are still having trouble getting in-person medical care after health centers introduced restrictions as COVID-19 killed and sickened millions of people around the country, Fendrick said.

In fact, the poll shows an overwhelming majority of Americans, nearly 8 in 10, say they are at least moderately concerned about getting access to quality health care when they need it.

Black and Hispanic adults in particular are resoundingly worried about health care access, with nearly 6 in 10 saying they are very or extremely concerned about getting good care. Fewer than half of white adults, 44%, expressed the same level of worry.

Racial disparities have long troubled America's health care system. They have been abundantly clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, with Black and Hispanic people dying disproportionately from the virus. Black and Hispanic men also make up a disproportionately high rate of recent monkeypox infections.

Fifty-three percent of women said they are extremely or very concerned about obtaining quality care, compared to 42% of men.

While Americans are united in their dissatisfaction with the health care system, that agreement dissolves when it comes to solutions to fix it.

About two-thirds of adults think it is the federal government's responsibility to make sure all Americans have health care coverage, with adults ages 18 to 49 more likely than those over 50 to hold that view. The percentage of people who believe health care coverage is a government responsibility has risen in recent years, ticking up from 57% in 2019 and 62% in 2017.

Still, there's not consensus on how that coverage might be delivered.

About 4 in 10 Americans say they support a single-payer health care system that would require Americans to get their health insurance from a government plan. More, 58%, say they favor a government health insurance plan that anyone can purchase.

There also is broad support for policies that would help Americans pay for the costs of long-term care, including a government-administered insurance plan similar to Medicare, the federal government's health insurance for people 65 or older.

Retired nurse Pennie Wright, of Camden, Tennessee, doesn't like the idea of a government-run health care system.

After switching to Medicare this year, she was surprised to walk out of her annual well-woman visit, once fully covered by her private insurance plan, with \$200 worth of charges for a mammogram and a pap smear.

She prefers the flexibility she had on her private insurance plan.

"I feel like we have the best health care system in the world, we have a choice of where we want to go," Wright said.

A majority of Americans, roughly two-thirds, were happy to see the government step in to provide free COVID-19 testing, vaccines and treatment. Roughly 2 in 10 were neutral about the government's response.

The government's funding for free COVID-19 tests dried up at the beginning of the month. And while the White House says the latest batch of recommended COVID-19 boosters will be free to anyone who wants one, it doesn't have money on hand to buy any future rounds of booster shots for every American.

Eighty percent say they support the federal government negotiating for lower drug prices. President Joe Biden this summer signed a landmark bill into law allowing Medicare to negotiate the price of prescription drugs. The move is expected to save taxpayers as much as \$100 billion over the next decade.

"Medication costs should be low, to the minimum so that everyone can afford it," said Obeng-Dankwa, the Bronx renter who has trouble paying for his medication. "Those who are poor should be able to get all the necessary health they need, in the same way someone who also has the money to pay for it."

Georgia's shifting politics force GOP to look beyond Atlanta

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By JEFF AMY Associated Press

TOCCOA, Ga. (AP) — When Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp made one of his first general election campaign swings in August, he went straight to the modern heartland of the state's Republican Party.

It wasn't Buckhead, the glitzy Atlanta neighborhood where Kemp lives in a governor's mansion dwarfed by other nearby estates. And it wasn't suburban Cobb County, once the bastion of Newt Gingrich.

Instead, Kemp kept going north, deep into the Georgia mountains that have become one of the most Republican areas in the country over the last three decades. He stopped at a gas station turned coffee shop in Toccoa to urge people to "turn out an even bigger vote here in this county and in northeast Georgia than we've ever seen before."

"Ask your kids, your grandkids, your friend's kid, are they registered to vote?" Kemp told attendees. "If they're eligible, and they're not, we got to get them registered, and we've got to go tell them to pull it for the home team."

The emphasis on this rural region represents a notable shift in the GOP's strategy in Georgia. The party grew into a powerhouse in Georgia once it began combining a strong performance in the Atlanta suburbs with growing dominance in rural areas. But that coalition has frayed in recent years as voters in the booming Atlanta region rejected the GOP under former President Donald Trump, turning this onetime Republican stronghold into the South's premier swing state.

A 41-county region, including some distant Atlanta suburbs encroaching into north Georgia, now has as many GOP voters as the core of metro Atlanta, according to an analysis by The Associated Press. Those changing dynamics have intensified pressure on Kemp to maintain — or strengthen — his support in rural mountainous communities like Toccoa to offset losses closer to the capital city.

"The party ... in terms of understanding where they're going to get votes, understands that now they need those votes in north Georgia to compensate for their losses in the suburbs," said Bernard Fraga, an Emory University political scientist.

Kemp won the governor's office in 2018 by defeating Democrat Stacey Abrams by just 1.4 percentage points. As the two wage a rematch for the post this year, early summer polling found a close race, with some suggesting Kemp has a narrow advantage.

But his reliance on voters like those in Toccoa is driving the party further to the right.

In a diversifying state, north Georgia is overwhelmingly white. While Democrats attack and Republicans fret over abortion restrictions in the suburbs, there's little public wavering in the mountains. Voters love guns so much that they cut out the middleman and chose gun dealer Andrew Clyde as one of north Georgia's two very Trumpy members of Congress. The other member? Marjorie Taylor Greene.

"It reflects a lot of the country right now, in the sense that it's very populist, very close to the vest, very isolated in the sense of distrust of government, very strong-willed, mountain Appalachian-type individuals that are very self sufficient," said former Rep. Doug Collins, the Republican who preceded Clyde in representing northeast Georgia's 9th Congressional District.

Kathy Petrella, a Clarksville retiree who was visiting the state Department of Driver Services in early September in Toccoa, said she's a "true blue conservative."

"It means I don't believe in the government telling me anything I have to do, except law and order," said Petrella, who cites her Christian faith as an important anchor of her political affiliation and fears a decline into "communism."

Lee MacAulay of the north Georgia town of Cleveland, also visiting Toccoa, said she believes Trump won the 2020 election and calls President Joe Biden "a ridiculous joke" and "an idiot."

"I was a Trumper," MacAulay said. "I am a Trumper."

She discounts the idea that lingering doubts about the 2020 election will suppress turnout as they appeared to do in the 2021 Senate runoff elections, when victories by Democrats Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff gave their party control of Congress. MacAulay said she believes many neighbors are eager to vote for Republicans this year, "but we need everybody."

Jay Doss, a Toccoa lawyer, said he feels "working-class people are benefited more by the conservative

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party" and that "I just feel that less government is better for everybody."

There was once another conservative tradition in north Georgia — in the Democratic Party. While there were always some Republicans, a legacy of white mountaineers who backed the Union over the Confederacy in the Civil War, they won few elections.

"It used to be slap Democrat. If you ran Republican, you could not get elected. Now, if you run Democrat, you ain't got a chance much of getting elected," said Stephens County Commissioner Dennis Bell, a Republican who owns Currahee Station, the coffee shop where Kemp campaigned in Toccoa.

That Democratic lineage, nourished by the 1930s-era New Deal, produced former Gov. Zell Miller, a proud son of the mountains and titan of Georgia Democratic politics a generation ago.

Miller rode high in the 1990s as a Democrat who combatted crime and overhauled welfare, while creating lottery-funded college scholarships. Miller even squeaked out a reelection victory in the 1994 "Republican Revolution" that vaulted Gingrich to U.S. House speaker.

That year, Miller actually lost his home region to Republican Guy Millner, a self-financed millionaire businessman. But Miller lost by fewer than 4,000 votes across north Georgia, and Millner's strength in suburban Atlanta wasn't enough, leaving the Republican 32,000 votes short statewide.

By 2004, as a U.S. senator, Miller was giving the keynote speech at the Republican National Convention that renominated George W. Bush. By then, Miller had written "A National Party No More," a book that blamed his own party for abandoning Southern conservative Democrats.

"Obviously, southerners believe the national Democratic Party does not share their values," Miller wrote in the 2003 book. "They do not trust the national party with their money or the security of the country."

North Georgia was 19% of Millner's vote in 1994. It was 26% of Kemp's vote in 2018. Some of that is due to population growth, but reflects a partisan shift to Republicans. Millner won less than 51% of the vote in the region. Kemp won almost 72%.

Democrats, enduring steep decline, grew demoralized. June Krise, who then chaired the Democratic Party in north Georgia's White County, remembers crying when the county probate judge, clerk of court and sheriff all switched to run as Republicans.

"If we don't switch, we will lose because the Republicans are going to run somebody against us," Krise remembers the men telling her. "And guess why they were going to lose. Barack Obama was the Democratic nominee for president."

Republicans say formerly Democratic voters gravitated to their party because of cultural issues, but those who study the electorate note white voters are much more likely to be Republican, and Appalachia made a hard turn against Obama, the nation's first Black president.

"The Republican Party has now started organizing itself, I think, to be more in line with the white people who are there — more rural, less urban-interested, even less suburban-interested, in terms of the state party," Fraga said. "And that's looks more like North Georgia in a lot of ways."

Fraga sees the split in the Georgia Republican Party over Trump's attempt to overturn Joe Biden's 2020 presidential victory in Georgia in part as a conflict between suburban and rural. Suburban-identified politicians including Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger were willing to oppose Trump, Fraga said, while Republicans representing more rural areas, such as Greene, were "on the Trump train."

Democrats have been trying to rebuild. Mike Maley, a Toccoa pediatrician who chairs the Stephens County Democratic Party, says just getting people on the ballot helps get the message out.

"I have hope for our community," Maley said. "I feel like we can make a difference and this is worth fighting for."

Democrats note that even if they're not going to win in places like Stephens County, where more than 80% of voters chose Kemp in 2018 and Trump in 2020, each additional vote counts in Georgia's ultra-close statewide elections. That's what brought Abrams to the mountain town of Clayton on July 28.

"Why would you go there?" Abrams told Rabun County Democrats she was asked about her trip. "Because counties don't vote, people do."

Abrams' strategy is simple. Get more Democrats to vote across the state, backed up by a campaign that sometimes seems focused more on rural areas than her home turf of Atlanta.

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"We've got to boost turnout dramatically across the board," Abrams said that day. "But we've already seen it's possible."

But many voters, like Bell, will be looking to Kemp and other Republicans. The Stephens County commissioner says Democrats are "going way too far to the left" and says debt, spending and restrictions on oil and gas drilling make a GOP vote in north Georgia "a no-brainer."

Pope heads to Kazakh interfaith congress, without patriarch

By NICOLE WINFIELD and KOSTYA MANENKOV Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis had hoped his trip to Kazakhstan this week would offer a chance to meet with the head of the Russian Orthodox Church — who has justified the war in Ukraine — and plead for peace. Patriarch Kirill bowed out a few weeks ago, but Francis is going ahead with the trip that is nevertheless being overshadowed by Russia's seven-month war.

Francis travels to the majority-Muslim former Soviet republic on Tuesday to minister to its tiny Catholic community and participate in a Kazakh-sponsored conference of world religious leaders. The conference had as its original goal to promote interfaith dialogue in the post-pandemic world, but Russia's invasion of Ukraine has given it a more immediate cause: for faith leaders from around the world to appeal for peace with a united voice.

"It will be an occasion to meet so many religious representatives and to dialogue as brothers, animated by the common desire for peace, the peace for which our world is thirsting," Francis told thousands of people in St. Peter's Square on Sunday.

In a way, Kirill's absence will make life easier for all involved: Kazakhstan won't have its showcase gathering of Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Shinto and Jewish leaders from 50 countries overshadowed by a headline-grabbing photo op between the pope and the patriarch. Francis won't have the diplomatic headache of having to explain to Ukraine why he met with an ideological supporter of Russia's war before Francis even visited Kyiv. And Kirill will avoid the embarrassment of being present when a global congress of imams, rabbis, ministers and a pope issues a final statement largely expected to denounce war.

But for Kazakhstan's Catholic leaders, Kirill's absence represents something of a lost opportunity.

"Personally I am pained," said Bishop Adelio Dell'Oro of the Kazakh diocese of Karaganda. "I think a meeting between them on the sidelines of the congress would have been a notable contribution, notable in this process of peace to clarify what religions can contribute to human coexistence in the world. So I am disappointed, but you have to accept it."

The interfaith congress is an important triennial event for Kazakhstan, a country that borders Russia to the north, China to the east and is home to some 130 ethnic groups: It's a showpiece of its foreign policy and a reflection of its own multicultural and multiethnic population that has long been touted as a crossroads between East and West.

"We can say that Kazakhstan is really a place where dialogue is not some formal slogan, but this is a Kazakh brand," said Monsignor Piotr Pytlowany, spokesman for the Kazakh bishops conference. "Kazakhstan wants to share dialogue not only during this congress but also after it, offering the dialogue as one of the possible ways to resolve the various difficulties that the world now faces."

When St. John Paul II visited in 2001, 10 years after independence, he highlighted Kazakhstan's diversity while recalling its dark past under Stalinist repression: Entire villages of ethnic Poles were deported en masse from western Ukraine to Kazakhstan beginning in 1936, and the Soviet government deported hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans, Chechens and other accused Nazi collaborators to Kazakhstan during World War II. Many of the deportees' descendants remained and some of them make up the country's Catholic community, which only numbers about 125,000 in a country of nearly 19 million.

Kazakh bishops had asked Francis to visit a former Soviet detention camp during his three-day visit, but the 85-year-old pope declined due to his strained knee ligaments, which have forced him to use a wheelchair and cane to get around.

His program has time for private meetings with religious leaders attending the congress. While the Vatican

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hasn't released a list, expected participants include Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, the grand imam of Al-Azhar, the seat of Sunni learning in Cairo.

One visitor not currently on his agenda: Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is expected in Kazakhstan on his first foreign trip since the coronavirus pandemic. Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said there were no current plans for any meeting and noted that Xi isn't attending the religious conference. China and the Holy See haven't had diplomatic relations for over a half-century.

Francis has repeatedly denounced Russia's war in Ukraine as an unjust "violent aggression," expressed solidarity with the "martyred" Ukrainian people and sent personal envoys to Ukraine to provide humanitarian and spiritual aid. At the same time, he has refrained from calling out Russia or President Vladimir Putin by name, trying to maintain a path of dialogue with Moscow in keeping with the Vatican's diplomatic tradition of not taking sides in a conflict.

Kirill has justified Russia's invasion of Ukraine on spiritual and ideological grounds, calling it a "metaphysical" battle with the West. He has blessed Russian soldiers going into battle and invoked the idea that Russians and Ukrainians are one people.

The Kazakh congress would have provided a neutral location and coincidental excuse for their second-ever meeting, and both Kirill and Francis had originally confirmed their presence. But Kirill pulled out last month. A former Vatican ambassador to Moscow has suggested that grumblings within the Russian Orthodox hierarchy might have factored into Kirill's decision.

Perhaps they saw the writing on the wall. Just last week, the general assembly of the World Council of Churches, a fellowship of more than 350 churches representing more than a half-billion Christians worldwide, denounced what it called an "illegal and unjustifiable" invasion and demanded the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine.

The Russian Orthodox Church, which is a member of the WCC, refused to vote for the "politicized" declaration and complained about what it called "unprecedented pressure" on members to condemn Moscow and the Russian church.

Kazakhstan, for its part, has had to walk a thin line with the war. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has vowed to respect Western sanctions against Russia while trying to maintain close ties with Moscow, an important economic partner and ally. At the same time Tokayev refused to recognize the Russia-backed separatist "people's republics" in Ukraine, which Moscow recognized days before invading Ukraine.

While Kazakhstan could have emerged as the mediator if Francis and Kirill had met, "maybe it's even better that this is not happening because Kazakhstan would have looked like as a country that is getting involved in the Ukraine crisis, and this is the last thing that Kazakhstan wants to do right now," said Temur Umarov, a Central Asia expert and fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Today in History: September 13, Mother Teresa's funeral

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Sept. 13, the 256th day of 2022. There are 109 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 13, 1788, the Congress of the Confederation authorized the first national election, and declared New York City the temporary national capital.

On this date:

In 1803, Commodore John Barry, considered by many the father of the American Navy, died in Philadelphia.

In 1814, during the War of 1812, British naval forces began bombarding Fort McHenry in Baltimore but were driven back by American defenders in a battle that lasted until the following morning.

In 1948, Republican Margaret Chase Smith of Maine was elected to the U.S. Senate; she became the first woman to serve in both houses of Congress.

In 1962, Mississippi Gov. Ross Barnett rejected the U.S. Supreme Court's order for the University of Mississippi to admit James Meredith, a Black student, declaring in a televised address, "We will not drink

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from the cup of genocide.”

In 1971, a four-day inmates’ rebellion at the Attica Correctional Facility in western New York ended as police and guards stormed the prison; the ordeal and final assault claimed the lives of 32 inmates and 11 hostages.

In 1993, at the White House, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat shook hands after signing an accord granting limited Palestinian autonomy.

In 1996, rapper Tupac Shakur died at a Las Vegas hospital six days after he was wounded in a drive-by shooting; he was 25.

In 1997, funeral services were held in Calcutta, India, for Nobel peace laureate Mother Teresa.

In 1998, former Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace died in Montgomery at age 79.

In 2001, two days after the 9/11 terror attacks, the first few jetliners returned to the nation’s skies, but several major airports remained closed and others opened only briefly. President George W. Bush visited injured Pentagon workers and said he would carry the nation’s prayers to New York.

In 2008, rescue crews ventured out to pluck people from their homes in an all-out search for thousands of Texans who had stubbornly stayed behind overnight to face Hurricane Ike.

In 2010, Rafael Nadal won his first U.S. Open title to complete a career Grand Slam, beating Novak Djokovic 6-4, 5-7, 6-4, 6-2.

Ten years ago: Chanting “death to America,” hundreds of protesters angered by an anti-Islam film stormed the U.S. Embassy compound in Yemen’s capital and burned the American flag. New York City’s Board of Health passed a ban on the sale of big sodas and other sugary drinks, limiting the size sold at restaurants, concession stands and other eateries to 16 ounces.

Five years ago: Firefighters who were called to a sweltering nursing home in Hollywood, Florida, where air conditioning had been knocked out by Hurricane Irma found three people dead and evacuated 145 others to hospitals; five others died later in the day. Former Republican Sen. Pete Domenici (doh-MEN’-ih-chee), New Mexico’s longest-serving senator, died in Albuquerque at the age of 85. The Cleveland Indians set an American League record with their 21st straight win, a 5-3 victory over the Detroit Tigers. (The streak would continue to 22 before the Indians were stopped.) The International Olympic Committee officially awarded the 2024 Summer Olympics to Paris and the 2028 games to Los Angeles.

One year ago: School began for about a million New York City public school students in the nation’s largest experiment of in-person learning during the coronavirus pandemic. Nearly all of New York City’s 300,000 employees were required to be back in their workplaces, in person, as the city ended remote work; most were required to be vaccinated or undergo weekly COVID-19 testing. President Joe Biden surveyed wildfire damage during visits to Idaho and California; Biden sought to make the case that extreme weather events around the country showed the need for his play to upgrade aging infrastructure.

Today’s Birthdays: Actor Barbara Bain is 91. Actor Eileen Fulton (TV: “As the World Turns”) is 89. Rock singer David Clayton-Thomas (Blood, Sweat & Tears) is 81. Actor Jacqueline Bisset is 78. Singer Peter Cetera is 78. Actor Christine Estabrook is 72. Actor Jean Smart is 71. Singer Randy Jones (The Village People) is 70. Record producer Don Was is 70. Actor Isiah Whitlock Jr. is 68. Actor-comedian Geri Jewell is 66. Country singer Bobbie Cryner is 61. Rock singer-musician Dave Mustaine (Megadeth) is 61. Radio-TV personality Tavis Smiley is 58. Rock musician Zak Starkey is 57. Actor/comedian Jeff Ross is 57. Actor Louis Mandylor is 56. Olympic gold medal runner Michael Johnson is 55. Rock musician Steve Perkins is 55. Actor Roger Howarth is 54. Actor Dominic Fumusa is 53. Actor Louise Lombard is 52. Former tennis player Goran Ivanisevic (ee-van-EE’-seh-vihch) is 51. Country singer Aaron Benward (Blue County) is 49. Country musician Joe Don Rooney (Rascal Flatts) is 47. Actor Scott Vickaryous is 47. Singer Fiona Apple is 45. Actor Ben Savage is 42. Rock singer Niall Horan (One Direction) is 29. Actor Mitch Holleman is 27. Actor Lili Reinhart (TV: “Riverdale”) is 26.