

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Thursday, Sept. 15

Senior Menu: Breaded codfish, parsley buttered potatoes, seasoned cabbage, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Stromboli square, chips.

11 a.m.: Golf Meet at Dakota Magic Golf Course

4 p.m.: Cross Country at Lee Park, Aberdeen

Volleyball Hosts Clark/Willow Lake (8th grade at 6 p.m. followed by 7th grade in gym; Arena games have C match at 5 p.m. followed by JV and Varsity)

## Friday, Sept. 16

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, mixed vegetables, garlic toast, pears, sherbert.

School Breakfast: Biscuits and Jelly.

School Lunch: Fish nuggets, mashed potatoes.

7 p.m.: Football at Deuel (Clear Lake)

## Saturday, Sept. 17

SEAS Confession: 3:45-4:15 p.m., SEAS Mass: 4:30 p.m.

3/4 and 5/6 football jamboree in Groton

Volleyball Tourney at Hamlin

9 a.m.: JH Volleyball at Redfield

9 a.m.: Groton Youth FB Jamboree (3rd-4th, 5th-6th)

Emmanuel: 9am 2nd Confirmation retreat for 9th graders



# 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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FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN STUDENTS

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual **Tiger-Palooza**

**& Pep Rally!**  
Thursday, Sept. 22



### FUN games for ALL ages

- Basketball Sharp Shooter
- Golf Hot Shot
- Arm Wrestling
- Face Painting
- Photo Booth
- Toddler Area & MORE!

Tickets sold by glass doors/East entrance of Old Gym  
\$5 for 10 tickets



### Dunk Tank!

Don't miss your chance to DUNK one of these Groton School staff:

- Adam Franken
- Chelsea Hanson
- Kyle Gerlach
- Matt Locke
- Kris Kucker

### Grillin' Cheeses & Praisin' Jesus!

Offering a variety of FOOD options this year!

Pep Rally featuring  
*Northern State University*  
**DRUM LINE!**

### GHS FCS HOCO 2022

**WHEN:**

Friday Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>

2:30-4:15pm

Pep Rally

4:15-4:30

**WHERE:**

OLD GYM

Games, food & Pep Rally inside

Dunk tank in parking lot

**WHY:**

School SPIRIT!

And fundraiser for FCS Scholarship, activities, prizes, service projects, etc.





**The Groton Post Office is getting a new facelift as the siding started coming off on Wednesday.**

## **Preschool Developmental Screening**

### **Groton Area Schools #06-6**

Preschool Developmental Screening is for children ages 3-4 who reside in the Groton Area School District. The child needs to be 3 years of age before the screening date/day. This screening is not required to enter Kindergarten.

The screening consists of adaptive, personal/social, communicating/speaking, motor, and concepts skills. If you believe your child has difficulties in any of these areas please contact the school.

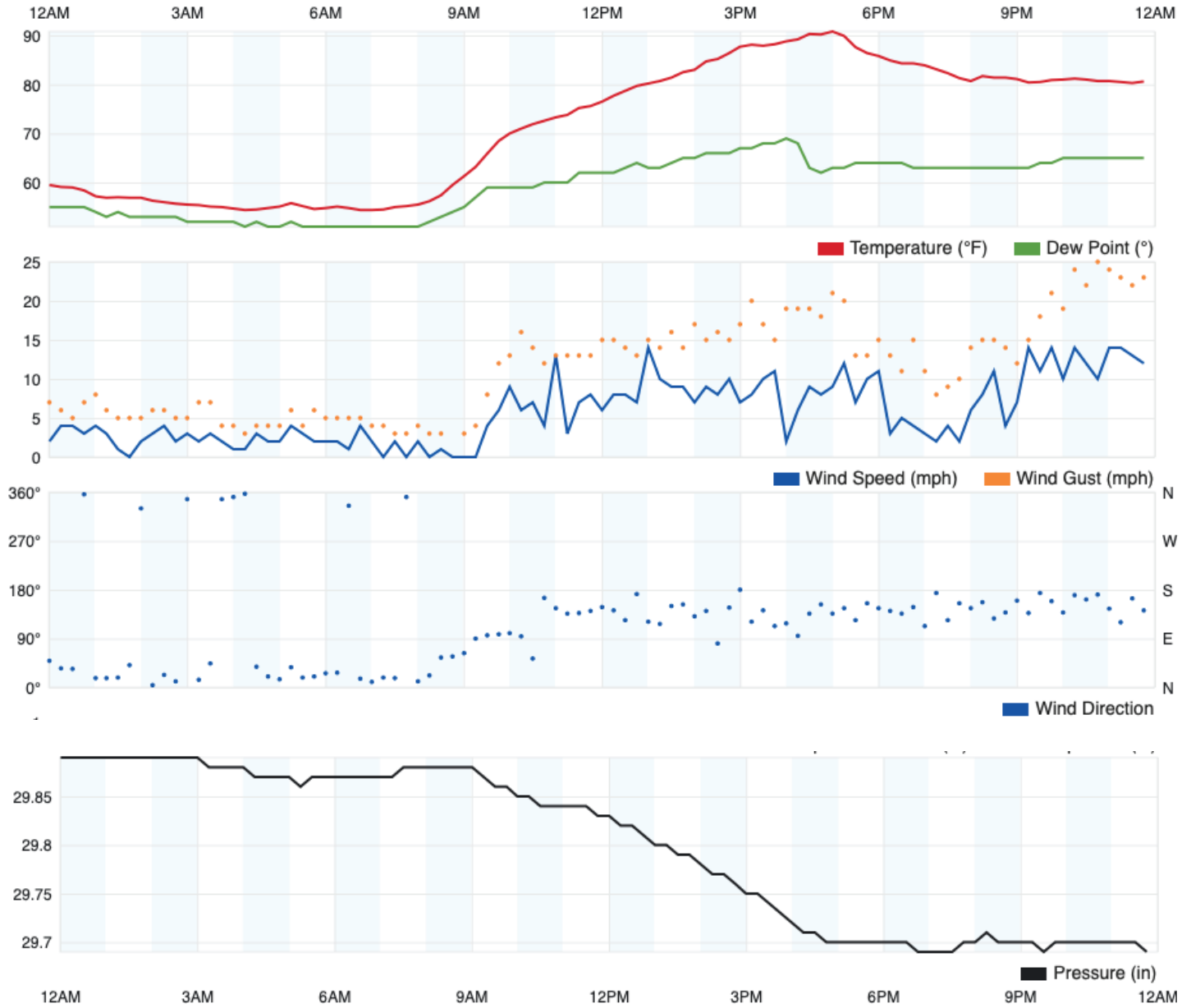
If your child is already receiving services or enrolled at Groton Elementary School they will not need to be screened. If your child has already been screened but you have concerns please contact the elementary school. If you are new to the district and have a child under the age of 5, we also ask you to contact the elementary school.

Screenings will be held on Friday, September 30 8:00-3:30. Information will be sent to families who have already been identified. Please contact Heidi Krueger at 605-397-2317 to schedule a screening time.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



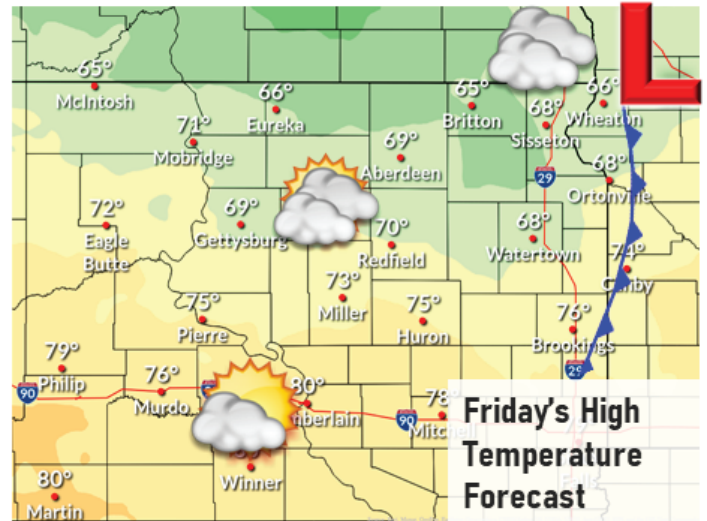
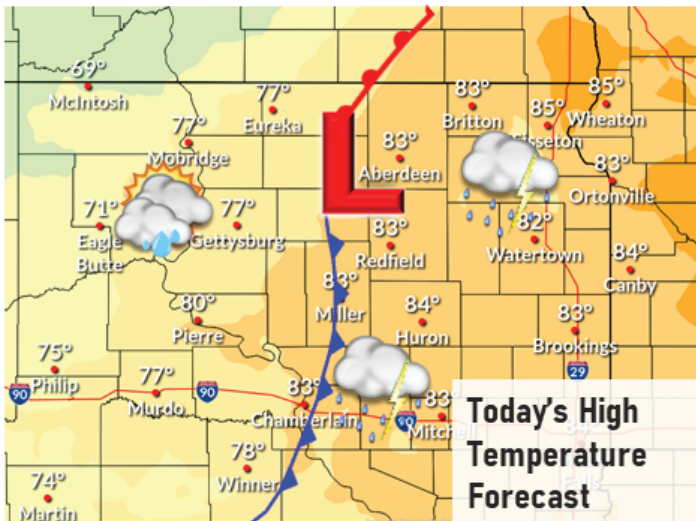
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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
Slight Chance Showers then Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy then Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms
High: 83 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 67 °F	Low: 52 °F	High: 73 °F

## Unsettled Pattern Continues

Showers and sub-severe thunderstorms will be associated with a slow-moving low pressure system through this evening, particularly across northeastern SD and west central MN (40-60% chance). It'll be cooler Friday, with highs near to slightly below normal for this time of year. Showers and storm chances return Friday evening through Saturday.





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## Today in Weather History

September 15, 1977: Sioux Falls residents received a rude awakening during the morning hours as thunderstorms rolled through the city. Over two and one-half inches of rain fell in the town in an hour and 15 minutes. A large amount of rain in a short period led to street flooding in some areas. Lightning strikes from the storms also started several small fires.

1747: Some historical accounts of a hurricane caused flooding on the Rappahannock River in Virginia. A slave ship was overturned, and several fatalities were reported.

1752 - A great hurricane produced a tide along the South Carolina coast which nearly inundated downtown Charleston. However, just before the tide reached the city, a shift in the wind caused the water level to drop five feet in ten minutes. (David Ludlum)

1910 - Rains of .27 inch on the 14th and .73 inch on the 15th were the earliest and heaviest of record for Fresno CA, which, along with much of California, experiences a ""rainy season"" in the winter. (The Weather Channel)

1939 - The temperature at Detroit MI soared to 100 degrees to establish a record for September. (The Weather Channel)

1945: A hurricane entered the south Florida coast at Homestead, curving northward right up through the center of Florida, remaining over land, and exited near Jacksonville Beach with winds gusting to 170 mph. The following is from the Homestead Air Reserve Base. "On Sept. 15, 1945, three years to the day after the founding of the Homestead Army Air Field, a massive hurricane roared ashore, sending winds of up to 145 miles per hour tearing through the Air Field's buildings. Enlisted housing facilities, the nurses' dormitory, and the Base Exchange were all destroyed. The roof was ripped from what would later become building 741, the Big Hangar. The base laundry and fire station were both declared total losses. The few remaining aircraft were tossed about like leaves." Click [HERE](#) for more information from Abandoned and Little-Known Airfields.

1982 - A snowstorm over Wyoming produced 16.9 inches at Lander to establish a 24 hour record for September for that location. (13th-15th) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - The first snow of the season was observed at the Winter Park ski resort in Colorado early in the day. Eight inches of snow was reported at the Summit of Mount Evans, along with wind gusts to 61 mph. Early morning thunderstorms in Texas produced up to six inches of rain in Real County. Two occupants of a car drowned, and the other six occupants were injured as it was swept into Camp Wood Creek, near the town of Leakey. Late afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in central and northeastern Oklahoma. Wind gusts to 70 mph and golf ball size hail were reported around Oklahoma City OK. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms brought much needed rains to parts of the central U.S. Rainfall totals of 2.87 inches at Sioux City IA and 4.59 inches at Kansas City MO were records for the date. Up to eight inches of rain deluged the Kansas City area, nearly as much rain as was received the previous eight months. Hurricane Gilbert, meanwhile, slowly churned toward the U.S./Mexican border. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms produced locally heavy rain in the Central Appalachians. Virgie VA received 2.60 inches of rain during the evening hours, and Bartlett TN was deluged with 2.75 inches in just ninety minutes. Heavy rain left five cars partially submerged in high water in a parking lot at Bulls Gap TN. Thunderstorms over central North Carolina drenched the Fayetteville area with four to eight inches of rain between 8 PM and midnight. Flash flooding, and a couple of dam breaks, claimed the lives of two persons, and caused ten million dollars damage. Hugo, churning over the waters of the Caribbean, strengthened to the category of a very dangerous hurricane, packing winds of 150 mph. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2010: The largest hailstone in Kansas was found in southwest Wichita. It measured 7.75 inches in diameter.

2011: An EF0 Waterspout moved ashore in Ocean City, Maryland.

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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### NOW OR LATER OR BOTH?

It's really rather obvious: the "righteous" will receive rewards while living. It's also obvious that the sinner and the wicked will receive "much more repayment" for their lifestyle.

While not stated quite so obviously, it is clear that someone will pass judgment on both, and both will be compensated for what they have done or not done, and how they have lived. And the "judge" will "compensate" both of them.

While in court recently, I was careful to watch the proceedings and the actions of the judge. To some, he said, "Your behavior has surprised me, and I'm going to reduce your sentence as a reward." To others, he said, "You have broken the law once again. Therefore, your parole is revoked, and you are going back to prison."

Judges have the power to sanction those who are under their control or jurisdiction. A sanction can be a reward for exceeding expectations or requirements. Or a sanction may be given as punishment for disobeying or breaking the law or regulations.

Some look at the Proverbs as being too simplistic or too good to be true. For example, "If the righteous receive their due on earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner."

Take note of "on earth." This is a bold statement that God is active - here and now - in rewarding or punishing - everyone - righteous or wicked. Also, these sanctions are both positive and negative. Finally, rewards from God will be handled judiciously - today and in the future!

Prayer: Father, help us to realize that You, our Judge, are watching us constantly, continuously, and carefully. Help us to live godly lives and please You Always! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: If the righteous receive their due on earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner. Proverbs 11:31



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)  
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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

### Subscription Form

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## Groton Daily Independent

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## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

20-22-26-29-30

(twenty, twenty-two, twenty-six, twenty-nine, thirty)

Estimated jackpot: \$59,000

Lotto America

09-13-15-29-32, Star Ball: 7, ASB: 3

(nine, thirteen, fifteen, twenty-nine, thirty-two; Star Ball: seven; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$22,610,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 256,000,000

Powerball

09-10-20-22-52, Powerball: 25, Power Play: 3

(nine, ten, twenty, twenty-two, fifty-two; Powerball: twenty-five; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$225,000,000

### Sioux Falls police: Man fatally shoots woman, shoots self

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A man fatally shot a woman inside an apartment building in Sioux Falls, before turning the gun on himself Wednesday morning, according to police.

Authorities were called at 7:30 a.m. to an apartment for a report of a family dispute.

Police spokesman Sam Clemens says when officers knocked on the door and entered the apartment they were met by gunfire. Clemens says a 5-year-old child who was in the entryway was grabbed by officers and was not hurt, the Argus Leader reported.

Later, the man inside the apartment had made a call to someone and told them he had shot a woman. That information was relayed to police, who heard another child in the background while negotiating with the man on the phone.

Clemens said shortly after that, police stormed the apartment building, and the man shot himself. No gunshots were fired by police

The children are safe. The man's condition was not immediately known. He was taken by ambulance to a nearby hospital.

### Crowds queue for queen's coffin as Charles spends quiet day

By JILL LAWLESS, MIKE CORDER and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Thousands of mourners lined up through the night to file past the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II in Parliament's Westminster Hall on Thursday, as King Charles III spent a day in private to reflect on his first week on the throne.

The queue to see the queen lying in state stretched for nearly four miles (around six kilometers) past Tower Bridge. The line snakes along the south bank of the River Thames and then over a bridge to Parliament. Thousands in the line didn't mind the hours of waiting.

"I'm glad there was a queue because that gave us time to see what was ahead of us, prepared us and absorbed the whole atmosphere," said health care professional Nimisha Maroo. "I wouldn't have liked it if I'd had to just rush through."

After a day of high ceremony and high emotion on Wednesday as the queen was borne in somber pro-

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cession from Buckingham Palace, the king was spending the day in "private reflection" at his Highgrove residence in western England. Charles has had calls with U.S. President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron and is speaking to a host of world leaders — many of whom will come to London on Monday for the queen's funeral.

Heir to the throne Prince William and his wife Catherine, Princess of Wales, will visit the royal family's Sandringham estate in eastern England to see some of the tributes left by well-wishers.

On Wednesday the queen left Buckingham Palace for the last time, borne on a horse-drawn carriage and saluted by cannons and the tolling of Big Ben, in a solemn procession through the flag-draped, crowd-lined streets of London to Westminster Hall.

Charles, his siblings and sons marched behind the coffin, which was topped by a wreath of white roses and her crown resting on a purple velvet pillow.

The military procession underscored Elizabeth's seven decades as head of state as the national mourning process shifted to the grand boulevards and historic landmarks of the U.K. capital.

The 900-year-old Westminster Hall is now the focus of events, as the queen lies in state until Monday.

The display of mass mourning is an enormous logistical operation, with a designated 10-mile (16 kilometer) route lined with first aid points and more than 500 portable toilets. There are 1,000 stewards and marshals working at any given time, and 30 religious leaders from a range of faiths to stop and talk to those in line.

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, the spiritual leader of the Church of England, wore a high-visibility vest emblazoned with the words "Faith Team" as he spoke to mourners.

Welby, who led a service for the royal family when Elizabeth's coffin reached Westminster Hall, paid tribute to the queen as "someone you could trust totally, completely and absolutely, whose wisdom was remarkable."

Thousands have already paid their respects, filing past the casket draped with the royal standard and topped with a diamond-encrusted crown.

People old and young, dressed in dark suits or jeans and sneakers, walked in a steady stream through the historic hall, where Guy Fawkes and Charles I were tried, where kings and queens hosted magnificent medieval banquets, and where previous monarchs have lain in state.

After passing the coffin, most mourners paused to look back before going out through the hall's great oak doors. Some wiped away tears; others bowed their heads or curtsied. One sank onto a knee and blew a farewell kiss.

Keith Smart, an engineer and British Army veteran, wiped away tears as he left the hall. He had waited more than 10 hours for the chance to say his goodbye.

"Everybody in the crowd was impeccably behaved. There was no malice, everybody was friends. It was fantastic," he said. "And then, to come into that room and see that, I just broke down inside. I didn't bow — I knelt to the floor, on my knees, bowed my head to the queen."

The late-night silence was broken when one of the guards standing vigil around the coffin collapsed and fell forward off a raised platform. The man, his chest adorned with medals, could be seen on livestreams of the queen's coffin lying in state swaying on his feet before pitching forward onto the floor. Two police officers rushed to his assistance.

Crowds have lined the route of the queen's coffin whenever it has been moved in its long journey from Scotland — where the monarch died Sept. 8, aged 96 — to London.

On Tuesday night, thousands braved a typical London drizzle as the hearse, with interior lights illuminating the casket, drove slowly from an air base to Buckingham Palace.

Earlier, in Edinburgh, about 33,000 people filed silently past her coffin in 24 hours at St. Giles' Cathedral.

Follow AP coverage of Queen at <https://apnews.com/hub/queen-elizabeth-ii>

## Putin, Zelenskyy court major allies as Ukraine makes gains

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

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KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy are each courting major allies on Thursday, seeking to prop up their efforts in a war whose fortunes have tilted toward Ukraine in recent days.

In Uzbekistan's ancient Samarkand, Putin was hoping to break through his international isolation and further cement his ties with Chinese President Xi Jinping in a geopolitical alliance increasingly seen as potent counterweight to the Western powers.

Putin and Xi were due to meet one-on-one and discuss Ukraine, according to the Russian president's foreign affairs adviser.

In Kyiv, Zelenskyy was shrugging off a traffic collision the previous night that left him with no major injuries, officials said. He met with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who once more showed full commitment to Ukraine's cause.

Von der Leyen said she would address "how to continue getting our economies and people closer while Ukraine progresses towards accession" to the European Union, which is likely still years away in even the best of circumstances.

In a sign of further EU commitment, the European Parliament completed the drawn-out political process of a 5 billion-euro preferential loan to Ukraine, the key part of a 9 billion-euro package of aid to offset the cost of war.

In Germany, the EU's economic powerhouse, the foreign minister was pressuring Chancellor Olaf Scholz to decide soon to supply Ukraine with versatile tanks while the war momentum was with Kyiv.

Germany has been hesitant on such moves for long, but Annalena Baerbock said that "in the decisive phase that Ukraine currently finds itself, I also don't believe that it's a decision which can be delayed for long."

While Russian forces in some areas are increasingly being pushed back toward the border, Russia is still striking from behind the front line. Ukrainian officials said Russian missiles kept hitting the dam of the reservoir close to Zelenskyy's birthplace, Kryvyi Rih, on Thursday. The damage flooded over 100 homes. Efforts were underway to contain more spillage and authorities urged citizens to take shelter as strikes continued.

The attack so close to his roots angered Zelenskyy, who said the strikes had no military value.

"In fact, hitting hundreds of thousands of ordinary civilians is another reason why Russia will lose," he said in his nightly address late Wednesday.

The presidential office said that Russian shelling of seven Ukrainian regions over the past 24 hours killed at least two civilians and wounded 14.

Zelenskyy himself remained in a buoyant mood, saying that almost 400 settlements had been retaken in less than a week of fighting.

"It was an unprecedented movement of our warriors — Ukrainians once again managed to do what many considered impossible," he said.

Zelenskyy is expected to ask for more Western military material, which has been essential in driving the counteroffensive, and request even harsher sanctions against Moscow as the war approaches the seven-month mark.

Despite the renewed Ukrainian vigor on the battlefield and the first rumblings of criticism at home, Putin is staying steadfast with his determination to fully subdue Ukraine, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said.

After a phone call with Putin earlier in the week, Scholz said that "unfortunately, I cannot tell you that the realization has grown over there by now that this was a mistake to start this war."

"There has been no indication that new attitudes are emerging there now," he added.

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Follow AP war coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

## With its queen gone, Britain ponders how to discuss death

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

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Where goes Queen Elizabeth II, there — inevitably — go each of us and all those we love.

Because she reigned and lived for so long, seemingly immutable and immortal, the death of the British monarch after 70 years on the throne and 96 years of extraordinary life was a reminder, in Britain and beyond, that mortality and the march of time are inexorable, waiting for neither man nor woman, even a royal.

That kernel of wisdom from Elizabeth's passing, the last of many she dispensed during her lifetime, is uncomfortable, even difficult, for the living. The reality of death — the queen's being, by extension, a glimpse at the eventuality of their own — is part of the reason why some Britons mourning the only monarch most have known are feeling a complex soup of emotions.

Some have called bereavement counselors for solace and said her departure has rekindled grief for others they loved and lost. And Britons acknowledge that they sometimes struggle with the emotions of loss. "We don't necessarily do grief and bereavement that well," says Lucy Selman, an associate professor of palliative and end-of-life care at the University of Bristol.

British bereavement experts are hoping, however, that the queen's death and its manner — at home, with family, in her beloved Balmoral Castle — might also spur a national conversation about the sometimes awkward relationship that Britons have with dying. In the process, the experts hope, it might prompt them to better prepare for the inevitable.

"If we are going to die in a way that we hope is peaceful, comfortable, and satisfying for us, we have got to do what the queen did: Recognize that it is going to happen at some point and put some plans in place for what we want and what we don't want to happen," says Kathryn Mannix, author of "With the End in Mind: How to Live and Die Well."

Mannix has witnessed thousands of deaths in her 30-year career as a palliative care physician. She says it became clear in the last two years of Elizabeth's life that she was dying. She recognized familiar patterns — in the slowdown of the habitually frenetic queen's schedule and the preparations she made.

In her final months, Elizabeth made it known that when now-King Charles III succeeded her, she wanted his wife, Camilla, to be known as "Queen Consort." And she lingered to see her grandson, Prince William, and his wife, Kate, relocate their family from central London to a royal cottage in Windsor.

One of her very last actions as queen was to ask Conservative Party leader Liz Truss to become her 15th and, as it turned out, last prime minister. That audience was last Tuesday, Sept. 6. It was the first time in Elizabeth's reign that she'd been away from her official London residence, Buckingham Palace, for a prime ministerial appointment. Instead, she stayed in Balmoral, her Scottish vacation home, and Truss traveled to her.

Duty done, the queen died two days later. Mannix was reminded of other deaths she encountered in her medical career, of people who clung to life "to hear the news that a baby has been born or an exam has been passed" and who then relaxed "very quickly into dying."

"There is nothing at all disrespectful about recognizing that even our monarchs are mortal and that what happens at the very ends of people's lives is a recognizable pattern," Mannix says. "We perhaps can use this as an occasion to start to think about knowing the pattern, being able to recognize the pattern, being able to talk to each other about the pattern — not being afraid of it."

Described by the government as "a period of time for reflection," the 10 days of national mourning decreed for Elizabeth's passing are also, unavoidably, giving dying, loss and bereavement starring roles in the wall-to-wall media coverage of the queen's life and times.

Bereavement experts say the rituals of communal grieving and the mourning period — practically an age in the swipe-and-tap era of short attention spans — are an exceptional and important opportunity for Britons to adjust to the loss of a queen and the gaining of a king, and to process the emotions and anxiety that enormous change sometimes brings.

For young people, "this might be first time that they learn about the finality of life and what that means," says psychologist Bianca Neumann, the head of bereavement at Sue Ryder, a British charity that offers support through terminal illness and loss.

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"We never really look at the end of life like that, unless we have to," she says. "It would be nice as a nation if those conversations could become more mainstream."

Psychotherapist Julia Samuel, who was a close friend of the late Princess Diana, is urging Britons to pause and digest their loss. Posting on Instagram, she said that "if we just keep going and doing what we normally do, our brain isn't given the information to let us know that something very big has happened."

"The task of mourning is to adjust to the reality of a death," she says. "To do that, we need to let our brain kind of slow down."

To be fair, British conversations about death and loss have taken place for centuries. In "Hamlet," Shakespeare had his prince muse famously about the human condition, clutching the skull of Yorick, a court jester.

"Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him," Hamlet mourns. "Where be your gibes now? Your gambols? Your songs?"

Britons also surprised themselves and the world, casting off their reputation as a nation of stiff upper lips, with a deluge of public tears over the death of Princess Diana in 1997.

"The pendulum went from the one side to the other," says Adrian Furnham, a London-based professor of organizational psychology at the Norwegian Business School and author of "Psychology 101: The 101 Ideas, Concepts and Theories that Have Shaped Our World."

"It's now much more acceptable, and indeed a lot more healthy, to 'let it out,'" he says. "That has changed in this country, because there was a time when that was distinctly a sign of weakness."

Still, Britons concede that they could do better in helping others and themselves through bereavement. Sue Ryder last year launched a "Grief Kind" campaign, to help people find words when those around them lose loved ones.

Selman is the founding director of the "Good Grief Festival," started during the COVID-19 pandemic to break taboos around dying. She hopes mourning for the queen will produce "a bit more awareness and an ongoing discussion about bereavement and loss and our social attitudes towards it."

"There's a conversation to be had about what a good death is," she says. "And what we can do to try and ensure that we have the death that we want."

Follow AP stories on the death of Queen Elizabeth II and Britain's royal family at <https://apnews.com/hub/queen-elizabeth-ii>

## Pope urged to avoid 'supermarket of religions' in Kazakhstan

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

NUR-SULTAN, Kazakhstan (AP) — Pope Francis reaffirmed the critical value Thursday of interfaith dialogue to contrast the "folly of war," even as one of his own bishops warned that Francis' participation in a big interfaith peace conference in Kazakhstan could imply papal endorsement of a "supermarket of religions."

Francis delivered the closing speech to the Kazakh government's triennial conference of traditional religions, which gathered some 80 Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and Taoist faith leaders who called for greater interfaith efforts to combat war, poverty, climate change and other ills facing the world.

Francis praised the summit and underlined its conclusion that religion can never be used to justify war -- a call that came against the backdrop of the Russian Orthodox Church's support of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. The final document says "extremism, radicalism, terrorism and all other forms of violence and wars, whatever their goals, have nothing to do with true religion and must be rejected in the strongest possible terms."

Without mentioning Russia or any other warring country by name, the final document calls on world leaders to "abandon all aggressive and destructive rhetoric which leads to destabilization of the world, and to cease from conflict and bloodshed in all corners of our world."

Francis told the gathering that interfaith encounters such as the Kazakh summit are "more valuable than ever in challenging times like our own, when the problems of the pandemic have been compounded by the utter folly of war."

With a delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church at the table, Francis said peace was "urgently needed."

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"We plead with you, in the name of God and for the good of humanity: Work for peace, not weapons! Only by serving the cause of peace, will you make a name for yourselves in the annals of history," he said.

A note of caution, however, came from Bishop Athenasius Schneider, the auxiliary bishop of Astana and one of Francis' most vocal critics. Schneider has joined other traditionalist and conservative cardinals and bishops in criticizing several of Francis' signature gestures and what they say are his doctrinal ambiguities on issues such as divorce and remarriage, homosexuality and interfaith outreach.

As an auxiliary bishop of Kazakhstan's capital, Schneider had to help play host to Francis during his three-day visit and had a prominent role in the pontiff's Thursday morning visit to the capital's cathedral. He accompanied Francis' wheelchair down the aisle at the start of the meeting and introduced a line of dignitaries who met the pontiff afterward, serving as translator.

But Schneider has also joined American Cardinal Raymond Burke in criticizing a landmark 2019 document Francis signed with the grand imam of al-Azhar university in Cairo which, among other things, said that all religions are "willed by God." Some Catholic critics have said the idea that God actively wanted a plurality of religions could lead to relativism that would accept that all religions are equally valid paths to God, when the Vatican holds that Catholicism provides the only true path to salvation.

The so-called "Human Fraternity" document was held up as an example of "great historical significance" by Kazakhstan's president at the start of the interfaith conference, and the final communique recognized its "importance and value" in calling for "peace, dialogue, mutual understanding and mutual respect among believers for the common good."

Speaking to reporters at the cathedral, Schneider defended his occasional criticism of the pontiff as respectful, "fraternal" advice to the pope, borne out of love and providing "true help for the church."

"This is normal because we (bishops) are not employees of the pope," he said. "We are brothers. We have to say with respect when we recognize something is a danger for the entire church. This is a help."

He welcomed the pope's visit to Kazakhstan, but he warned that Francis' participation in such a big international interreligious event could call into question what he said was the Catholic Church's unique role in providing the sole path to salvation.

"The congress as such has a good aim to promote mutual respect and understanding in the world today. But it has also a danger because it could give the impression of a 'supermarket of religions' and this is not correct because there is only one true religion, which is the Catholic Church, founded by God himself," Schneider said.

He urged the Vatican to reconsider participation in such international events in the future and instead focus on building relationships at a more local level.

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Associated Press religion coverage receives support through the AP's collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

## As 'buy now, pay later' plans grow, so do delinquencies

By KEN SWEET AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Americans have grown fond of "buy now, pay later" services, but the "pay later" part is becoming increasingly difficult for some borrowers.

Buy now, pay later loans allow users to pay for items such as new sneakers, electronics, or luxury goods in installments. Companies such as Affirm, Afterpay, Klarna and PayPal have built popular financial products around these short-term loans, particularly for younger borrowers, who are fearful of never-ending credit card debt.

Now, as the industry racks up customers, delinquencies are climbing. Inflation is squeezing consumers, making it tougher to pay off debts. Some borrowers don't budget properly, particularly if they are persuaded to take out multiple loans, while others may have been credit risks to begin with.

"You have an industry with a higher concentration of subprime borrowers in a market that hasn't been effectively tested through (this type of economy), and you have a kind of a toxic brew of concerns," said



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Michael Taiano, an analyst with Fitch Ratings, who co-wrote a report in July highlighting some of the concerns with the industry.

The most popular type of buy now, pay later loans allow for four payments over six weeks — one payment at the time of purchase and three others that borrowers often try to sync up with pay periods. Longer-term loans for bigger purchases are also available. Most of the short-term loans have no interest attached to them. Companies that do charge interest can clearly state upfront how much a borrower will pay in financial charges.

Given those features, consumer advocates and financial advisors initially had seen buy now, pay later plans as a potentially healthier form of consumer debt if used correctly. The biggest concern had been late fees, which could act as a hefty finance charge on a small purchase if a borrower is late on a payment. The fees can run as high as \$34, plus interest. But now as delinquencies are rising, and companies are being more aggressive in marketing their products, advocates see a need for additional regulation.

The industry is growing rapidly, according to a report released Thursday by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Americans took out roughly \$24.2 billion in loans on buy now, pay later programs in 2021, up from only \$2 billion in 2019. That industry-wide figure is only expected to jump even more. Klarna's customers bought \$41 billion worth of product on its service globally in the first six months of the year, up 21% from a year ago. At PayPal, revenue from its buy now, pay later services more than tripled in the second quarter to \$4.9 billion.

Jasmine Francis, 29, a technology analyst based in Charlotte, North Carolina, said she first used a buy now, pay later service in 2018 to buy clothes from fast-fashion brand Forever21.

"I remember I just had a cartful," she said. "At first, I thought, 'Something's gotta go back,' and then I saw Afterpay at checkout — you don't pay for it all right now, but you get it all right now. That was music to my ears."

How healthfully customers are using buy now, pay later loans is unclear. Fitch found that delinquencies on these services rose sharply in the 12 months ended March 31, while credit card delinquencies remained steady.

"This upward trend on delinquencies is continuing," said Rohit Chopra, director of the CFPB, in a call with reporters.

Credit reporting company TransUnion found that buy now, pay later borrowers are using the product just as much as credit cards, piling on debt on top of additional debt. A poll by Morning Consult released this week found 15% of buy now, pay later customers are using the service for routine purchases, such as groceries and gas, a type of behavior that sounds alarm bells among financial advisors. The CFPB report also found a small, but growing number of Americans using these products for routine purchases as well.

"If these buy now, pay later plans are not adequately budgeted for, they can have a cascading impact across a person's entire financial life," said Andre Jean-Pierre, a former Morgan Stanley wealth advisor who now runs his own financial planning firm focused on helping Black Americans adequately save and budget.

Another concern among advisers and consumer advocates, as well as Washington lawmakers and regulators, is the ease with which consumers can layer on these installment loans.

Speaking at a hearing of the Senate Banking Committee Tuesday about new financial products, Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, noted the benefits of plans that allow consumers to pay for things in installments. But he also criticized the way in which the industry promotes the plans.

"Ads encourage consumers to use these plans for multiple purchases, at multiple online stores — racking up debt they cannot afford to repay," Brown said.

The short-term loans are potentially problematic because they're not reported on a consumer's credit profile with Transunion and Experian. Further the buy now, pay later industry's customers skew young — meaning they have little credit history. Hypothetically a borrower could take out several short-term loans across multiple buy now, pay later companies — a practice known as "loan stacking" — and they would never appear on a credit report. If a person puts too many items on buy now, pay later plans, budgeting could be difficult.

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"It's a blind spot for the industry," Taiano of Fitch said.

In a statement, the buy now pay later industry trade group pushed back on the characterization that its products could saddle borrowers with too much debt.

"With zero to low-interest, flexible payment terms, and transparent terms and conditions, BNPL helps consumers manage their cash flow responsibly and live healthier financial lives," said Penny Lee, CEO of the Financial Technology Association.

Meanwhile providers of buy now, pay later services see rising delinquencies as a natural consequence of growth, but also an indication that inflation is hitting Americans most likely to use these services the hardest.

"We have seen some stress (among those with the lowest credit scores), and those are starting to have a hard time," said Max Levchin, founder and CEO of Affirm, one of the largest buy now, pay later companies.

"I would not call it a sort of preamble to a potential downturn, but it's not the same kind of a smooth sailing it's been," he said, adding that Affirm is taking a more conservative approach towards lending.

Buy now, pay later took off in the U.S. after the Great Recession. The product, analysts said, largely has not been tested through a great period of financial distress, unlike mortgages or credit cards or auto loans.

Despite these concerns, the consensus is buy now, pay later companies are here to stay. Affirm, Klarna, Afterpay, which is owned by Block Inc., as well as PayPal and others are now widely embedded in Internet commerce.

Further, the industry's growth is attracting more players. Technology titan Apple earlier this summer announced Apple Pay Later, where users can put purchases on a four-payment plan over six weeks.

"I generally plan purchases that I make using PayPal 'Pay in 4' so that my due dates for purchases land on my pay dates, as the due dates are every other week," said Desiree Moore, 35, from Georgia.

Moore said she tries to use buy now pay later plans to cover purchases not in her usual monthly budget, so not to take money away from the needs of her children. She has been increasingly using the plans with inflation making items more expensive and is so far able to keep up with the payments.

Francis, the technical analyst, said it's now common among her friends to pay for travel with the installment loans, to not completely drain their bank accounts in case of emergencies.

"If I come back home from vacation and have two flat tires, and I just spent all that money on plane tickets, that's \$400 you don't have at the moment," she said. "Most people don't have savings. They just have enough for those flat tires."

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AP Personal Finance Reporter Cora Lewis contributed to this report from New York.

## **Xi, Putin hold summit in Uzbekistan as Ukraine war dominates**

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russia's Vladimir Putin and leaders from India and Central Asia gathered Thursday in Uzbekistan for a summit of a security group formed by Beijing and Moscow as a counterweight to U.S. influence.

The meeting Friday of the eight-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organization is overshadowed by Putin's attack on Ukraine and strains in China's relations with Washington, Europe, Japan and India due to disputes over technology, security and territory.

The event in the ancient sultanate of Samarkand is part of Xi's first foreign trip since the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic 2 1/2 years ago, underscoring Beijing's desire to assert itself as a regional power.

Putin and Xi were due to meet one-on-one and discuss Ukraine, according to the Russian president's foreign affairs adviser, Yuri Ushakov.

Xi's government, which said it had a "no limits" friendship with Moscow before the invasion, has refused to criticize the attack. Beijing and India are buying more Russian oil and gas, which helps Moscow offset the impact of Western sanctions.

China "states explicitly that it understands the reasons that forced Russia to launch a special military operation," Ushakov said Thursday, according to the Russian news agency ITAR-Tass.

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Putin planned to meet Friday with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, ITAR-Tass said, citing Ushakov. There was no indication whether Modi might meet Xi. Chinese-Indian relations are strained due to clashes between soldiers from the two sides in a dispute over a border in a remote area of the Himalayas.

Other SCO governments include Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Tajikistan.

The meeting planned to consider an application by Iran, an observer of the group, to become a full member, according to ITAR-Tass.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, which has the status of "dialogue partner," was also in attendance.

Putin and Erdogan planned on Friday to "evaluate the effectiveness" of a deal under which wheat exports from Ukraine via the Black Sea resumed, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said, according to ITAR-Tass.

The Chinese leader is promoting a "Global Security Initiative" announced in April following the formation of the Quad by Washington, Japan, Australia and India in response to Beijing's more assertive foreign policy. Xi has given few details, but U.S. officials complain it echoes Russian arguments in support of Moscow's attack on Ukraine.

The region is part of China's multibillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative to expand trade by building ports, railways and other infrastructure across an arc of dozens of countries from the South Pacific through Asia to the Middle East, Europe and Africa.

On Thursday, Xi met with President Sadyr Zhaparov of Kyrgyzstan and said Beijing supports the "early operation" of a planned railway linking China, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the Chinese foreign ministry said.

China's economic inroads into Central Asia have fueled unease in Russia, which sees the region as its sphere of influence.

Xi made a one-day visit Wednesday to Kazakhstan en route to Uzbekistan. Pope Francis was in Kazakhstan, but they didn't meet.

## **Biden: Tentative railway labor deal reached, averting strike**

By JOSH BOAK and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Thursday that a tentative railway labor agreement has been reached, averting a strike that could have been devastating to the economy before the pivotal mid-term elections.

Railroads and union representatives had been in negotiations for 20 hours at the Labor Department on Wednesday to hammer out a deal, as there was a risk of a strike starting on Friday that could have shut down rail lines across the country.

Biden made a key phone call to Labor Secretary Marty Walsh at 9 p.m. as the talks were ongoing after Italian dinner had been brought in, according to a White House official insisting on anonymity. The president told the negotiators to consider the harm to families, farmers and businesses if a shutdown occurred.

What resulted from the back and forth was a tentative agreement that will go to union members for a vote after a post-ratification cooling off period of several weeks.

"These rail workers will get better pay, improved working conditions, and peace of mind around their health care costs: all hard-earned," Biden said. "The agreement is also a victory for railway companies who will be able to retain and recruit more workers for an industry that will continue to be part of the backbone of the American economy for decades to come."

The threat of a shutdown had put Biden in a delicate spot politically. The Democratic president believes unions built the middle class, but he also knew a rail worker strike could damage the economy ahead of the midterms, when majorities in both chambers of Congress, key governorships and scores of important state offices will be up for grabs.

That left him in the awkward position on Wednesday. He flew to Detroit, a stalwart of the labor movement, to espouse the virtues of unionization, while members of his administration went all-out to keep talks going in Washington between the railroads and unionized workers.

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As the administration was trying to forge peace, United Auto Workers Local 598 member Ryan Buchalski introduced Biden at the Detroit auto show on Wednesday as “the most union- and labor-friendly president in American history” and someone who was “kickin’ ass for the working class.” Buchalski harked back to the pivotal sitdown strikes by autoworkers in the 1930s.

In the speech that followed, Biden recognized that he wouldn’t be in the White House without the support of unions such as the UAW and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, saying autoworkers “brung me to the dance.”

But without a deal among the 12 unions in talks back in Washington, Biden also knew that a stoppage might have begun as early as Friday that could halt shipments of food and fuel at a cost of \$2 billion a day.

Far more was at stake than sick leave and salary bumps for 115,000 unionized railroad workers. The ramifications could have extended to control of Congress and to the shipping network that keeps factories rolling, stocks the shelves of stores and stitches the U.S. together as an economic power.

That’s why White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre, speaking aboard Air Force One as it jetted to Detroit on Wednesday, said a rail worker strike was “an unacceptable outcome for our economy and the American people.” The rail lines and their workers’ representatives “need to stay at the table, bargain in good faith to resolve outstanding issues, and come to an agreement,” she said.

Biden faced the same kind of predicament faced by Theodore Roosevelt in 1902 with coal and Harry Truman in 1952 with steel — how do you balance the needs of labor and business in doing what’s best for the nation? Railways were so important during World War I that Woodrow Wilson temporarily nationalized the industry to keep goods flowing and prevent strikes.

Inside the White House, aides don’t see a contradiction between Biden’s devotion to unions and his desire to avoid a strike. Union activism has surged under Biden, as seen in a 56% increase in petitions for union representation with the National Labor Relations Board so far this fiscal year.

One person familiar with the situation, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss White House deliberations on the matter, said Biden’s mindset in approaching the debate was that he’s the president of the entire country, not just for organized labor.

With the economy still recovering from the supply chain disruptions of the coronavirus pandemic, the president’s goal was to keep all parties so a deal could be reached. The person said the White House saw a commitment to keep negotiating in good faith as the best way to avoid a shutdown while exercising the principles of collective bargaining that Biden holds dear.

Biden also knew a stoppage could worsen the dynamics that have contributed to soaring inflation and created a political headache for the party in power.

Eddie Vale, a Democratic political consultant and former AFL-CIO communications aide, said the White House pursued the correct approach at a perilous moment.

“No one wants a railroad strike, not the companies, not the workers, not the White House,” he said. “No one wants it this close to the election.”

Vale added that the sticking point in the talks was about “respect basically — sick leave and bereavement leave,” issues Biden has supported in speeches and with his policy proposals.

Sensing political opportunity, Senate Republicans moved Wednesday to pass a law to impose contract terms on the unions and railroad companies to avoid a shutdown. Democrats, who control both chambers in Congress, blocked it.

“If a strike occurs and paralyzes food, fertilizer and energy shipments nationwide, it will be because Democrats blocked this bill,” said Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.

The economic impact of a potential strike was not lost on members of the Business Roundtable, a Washington-based group that represents CEOs. It issued its quarterly outlook for the economy Wednesday.

“We’ve been experiencing a lot of headwinds from supply chain problems since the pandemic started and those problems would be geometrically magnified,” Josh Bolten, the group’s CEO, told reporters. “There are manufacturing plants around the country that likely have to shut down. ... There are critical products to keep our water clean.”

The roundtable also had a meeting of its board of directors Wednesday. But Bolten said Lance Fritz,

chair of the board's international committee and the CEO of Union Pacific railroad, would miss it "because he's working hard trying to bring the strike to a resolution."

By 5:05 a.m. Thursday, it was clear that the hard work across the government, unions and railway companies had paid off as Biden announced the deal, calling it "an important win for our economy and the American people."

## **Berlin museum approaches ethnological collection in new ways**

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — A Berlin museum opens fully to the public this week with a very modern take on the display of cultural items from around the world and the debate over demands for some of them to be returned to their homelands.

The east wing of the Humboldt Forum contains items from the city's Ethnological Museum and the Museum for Asian Art. It will display some 20,000 objects, among them dozens of Benin Bronzes that were stolen in Africa during colonial times — as well as an exhibit explaining to visitors how most of them are soon to return to Nigeria.

The east wing opened Thursday with a preview for reporters and will be open to the public starting Saturday. The west wing of the museum — located in the heart of the German capital, next to the neoclassical Museum Island complex — opened in 2021. It also contains items from the two collections.

The objects on display offer a survey of the world's cultures and have been chosen to place a new emphasis on the importance of art from Africa, Oceania, Asia and the Americas.

During the development of the exhibition, German curators worked closely together with teams from countries and regions where many of the objects originated.

"It was important for us to develop the narratives of these objects in cooperation with colleagues from all over the world," said Hermann Parzinger, the president of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, an authority that oversees many of Berlin's museums including the Humboldt Forum.

"This house was created through dialogue and exchange," Parzinger added. "Our commitment to openness and transparency, the recognition of colonial injustice with resulting restitutions ... will continue to define our work in the future."

Earlier this year, Germany and Nigeria signed an agreement about the return of 514 objects from the famous Benin Bronzes collection that were looted from the royal palace of the Kingdom of Benin, in what is now southern Nigeria, by a British colonial expedition in 1897.

The artifacts ended up spread far and wide. Hundreds were sold to collections such as the Ethnological Museum in Berlin, which has one of the world's largest groups of historical objects from the Kingdom of Benin. Many of them date from the 16th to the 18th centuries.

While the first pieces will be returned to Nigeria later this year, about a third of the collection will remain on loan in Berlin for an initial period of 10 years.

In one of the galleries, 40 of the Benin Bronzes will be presented at the opening. They include iconic cast bronze memorial heads, carved ivory tusks and rectangular relief plaques.

A second gallery is dedicated to illustrating the restitution process. In video installations, German and Nigerian scholars, artists and representatives of museums and the royal family in Benin City explain from multiple perspectives the history and significance of the objects and give their view on the current restitution debate.

Other objects that will be on display include a sixth-century Buddhist cave temple from Kizil, located near Kucha on the Northern Silk Road in China, an exhibition of textiles and pottery from Central Asia, and traditional buildings and houses from different regions in Oceania such as a meeting house from Palau from 1907, as well as a replica of an Abelam cult house from Papua New Guinea.

Several galleries are dedicated to art from the Americas. Among the highlights are large stone reliefs from the Aztecs, and a 16-square-meter (172-square-foot) painted cloth with inscriptions by Mixtec, Nahuatl and Choco artists from what is now the Mexican state of Oaxaca, which records social events spanning a

period of more than 500 years.

In addition to the permanent exhibitions, there will be changing temporary exhibits.

Among those shown during the opening of the museum, is a collection of around 60 objects that was compiled by Francis La Flesche, a native American ethnologist who was born on the Omaha Reservation in the United States' Midwest in 1857. La Flesche collected the items, such as clothes, decoration and ornaments on behalf of the Ethnological Museum in the 19th century hoping to preserve parts of his culture this way.

All in all, the collections of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum for Asian Art comprise about 500,000 objects, which were previously shown in museums in the city's Dahlem district. Less than 3 percent will be on display in the Humboldt Forum.

Since the opening last year of the west wing of the Humboldt Forum — which is a partial replica of a Prussian palace that was demolished by East Germany's communist government after World War II — more than 1.5 million people have visited.

Entrance to the museum will be free at least until the end of this year.

## **New atlas of bird migration shows extraordinary journeys**

By CHRISTINA LARSON AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A bay-breasted warbler weighs about the same as four pennies, but twice a year makes an extraordinary journey. The tiny songbird flies nearly 4,000 miles (6,437 kilometers) between Canada's spruce forests and its wintering grounds in northern South America.

"Migratory birds are these little globetrotters," said Jill Deppe, the senior director of the migratory bird initiative at the National Audubon Society.

A new online atlas of bird migration, published on Thursday, draws from an unprecedented number of scientific and community data sources to illustrate the routes of about 450 bird species in the Americas, including the warblers.

The Bird Migration Explorer mapping tool, available free to the public, is an ongoing collaboration between 11 groups that collect and analyze data on bird movements, including the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, the U.S. Geological Survey, Georgetown University, Colorado State University, and the National Audubon Society.

For the first time, the site will bring together online data from hundreds of scientific studies that use GPS tags to track bird movements, as well as more than 100 years of bird-banding data collected by USGS, community science observations entered into Cornell's eBird platform, genomic analysis of feathers to pinpoint bird origins, and other data.

"The past twenty years have seen a true renaissance in different technologies to track bird migrations around the world at scales that haven't been possible before," said Peter Marra, a bird migration expert at Georgetown University who collaborated on the project.

The site allows a user to enter a species — for instance, osprey — and watch movements over the course of a year. For example, data from 378 tracked ospreys show up as yellow dots that move between coastal North America and South America as a calendar bar scrolls through the months of the year.

Or users can enter the city where they live and click elsewhere on the map for a partial list of birds that migrate between the two locations. For example, ospreys, bobolinks and at least 12 other species migrate between Washington, D.C. and Fonte Boa, Brazil.

As new tracking data becomes available, the site will continue to expand. Melanie Smith, program director for the site, said the next phase of expansion will add more data about seabirds.

Washington, D.C. resident Michael Herrera started birdwatching about four months ago and was quickly hooked. "It's almost like this hidden world that's right in front of your eyes," he said. "Once you start paying attention, all these details that were like background noise suddenly have meaning."

Herrera said he's eager to learn more about the migratory routes of waterbirds in the mid-Atlantic region, such as great blue herons and great egrets.

Georgetown's Marra hopes that engaging the public will help spotlight some of the conservation challenges facing birds, including loss of habitat and climate change.

In the past 50 years, the population of birds in the U.S. and Canada has dropped nearly 30%, with migratory species facing some of the steepest declines.

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Follow Christina Larson on Twitter at @larsonchristina.

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Associated Press climate and environmental coverage receives support from several private foundations. See more about AP's climate initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Woman arrested in S. Korea after bodies found in New Zealand

By NICK PERRY and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A woman was arrested in South Korea on Thursday on two murder charges from New Zealand, where the bodies of two long-dead children were found last month in abandoned suitcases, authorities said.

Authorities didn't immediately say if the 42-year-old suspect was the dead children's mother. New Zealand police had earlier told their South Korean counterparts that the mother might be living in South Korea.

South Korean police detained the woman in the southeastern port city of Ulsan, based on a South Korean court warrant issued after New Zealand requested her provisional arrest as part of an extradition process, according to South Korea's National Police Agency and Justice Ministry.

The unidentified woman covered her face with the hood of her coat as officers escorted her outside an Ulsan police station and put her in a car headed for the capital, Seoul, where she was expected to be questioned by prosecutors.

New Zealand authorities must submit the formal request for her extradition to the South Korean Justice Ministry within 45 days. The ministry will then decide whether to proceed with an extradition review at the Seoul High Court to rule whether she would be sent to New Zealand.

New Zealand police said the South Korean warrant was in connection with two charges of murder, and they have asked South Korean authorities to keep the woman in jail until she is extradited.

"To have someone in custody overseas within such a short period of time has all been down to the assistance of the Korean authorities and the coordination by our New Zealand Police Interpol staff," Detective Inspector Tofilau Fa'amanuia Vaaelua said in a statement.

He said the investigation had been "very challenging" and that inquiries were continuing both in New Zealand and abroad.

Vaaelua said police weren't going to comment further as the matter was now before the courts. Authorities in New Zealand typically don't comment on pending court cases in order to avoid the possibility of influencing the outcome.

The children's bodies were discovered last month after a New Zealand family bought abandoned goods, including two suitcases, from a storage unit in Auckland in an online auction. Police said the New Zealand family had nothing to do with the deaths.

The children were between 5 and 10 years old, had been dead for a number of years, and the suitcases had been in storage for at least three or four years, according to police.

South Korean police say the woman was born in South Korea and later moved to New Zealand, where she gained citizenship. She returned to South Korea in 2018, according to immigration records.

South Korean police say it was suspected she could be the mother of the two victims, as her past address in New Zealand was registered to the storage unit where the suitcases were kept for years.

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Perry reported from Wellington, New Zealand.

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## Biden approval rises sharply ahead of midterms: AP-NORC poll

By JOSH BOAK and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's popularity improved substantially from his lowest point this summer, but concerns about his handling of the economy persist, according to a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Support for Biden recovered from a low of 36% in July to 45%, driven in large part by a rebound in support from Democrats just two months before the November midterm elections. During a few bleak summer months when gasoline prices peaked and lawmakers appeared deadlocked, the Democrats faced the possibility of blowout losses against Republicans.

Their outlook appears better after notching a string of legislative successes that left more Americans ready to judge the Democratic president on his preferred terms: "Don't compare me to the Almighty. Compare me to the alternative."

The president's approval rating remains underwater, with 53% of U.S. adults disapproving of him, and the economy continues to be a weakness for Biden. Just 38% approve of his economic leadership as the country faces stubbornly high inflation and Republicans try to make household finances the axis of the upcoming vote.

Still, the poll suggests Biden and his fellow Democrats are gaining momentum right as generating voter enthusiasm and turnout takes precedence.

Average gas prices have tumbled 26% since June to \$3.71 a gallon, reducing the pressure somewhat on family budgets even if inflation remains high. Congress also passed a pair of landmark bills in the past month that could reshape the economy and reduce carbon emissions.

Republicans have also faced resistance since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* and its abortion protections. And Biden is openly casting former President Donald Trump as a fundamental threat to democracy, a charge that took on resonance after an FBI search of Trump's Florida home found classified documents that belong to the U.S. government.

This combination of factors has won Biden some plaudits among the Democratic faithful, even if Americans still feel lukewarm about his leadership.

"I'm not under any belief that he's the best person for the job — he's the best from the people we had to choose from," said Betty Bogacz, 74, a retiree from Portland, Oregon. "He represented stability, which I feel President Trump did not represent at all."

Biden's approval rating didn't exceed 40% in May, June or July as inflation surged in the aftermath of Russia invading Ukraine.

The president's rating now is similar to what it was throughout the first quarter of the year, but he continues to fall short of early highs. His average approval rating in AP-NORC polling through the first six months of his term was 60%.

Driving the recent increase in Biden's popularity is renewed support among Democrats, who had shown signs of dejection in the early summer. Now, 78% of Democrats approve of Biden's job performance, up from 65% in July. Sixty-six percent of Democrats approve of Biden on the economy, up from 54% in June.

Interviews suggest a big reason for Biden's rebound is the reemergence of Trump on the national stage, causing voters such as Stephen Jablonsky, who labeled Biden as "OK," to say voting Democratic is a must for the nation's survival.

"The country has a political virus by the name of Donald Trump," said Jablonsky, a retired music professor from Stamford, Connecticut. "We have a man who is psychotic and seems to have no concern for law and order and democracy. The Republican Party has gone to a place that is so unattractive and so dangerous, this coming election in November could be the last election we ever have."

Republicans feel just as negative about Biden as they did before. Only about 1 in 10 Republicans approve of the president overall or on the economy, similar to ratings earlier this summer.

Christine Yannuzzi, 50, doubts that 79-year-old Biden has the capacity to lead.

"I don't think he's mentally, completely aware of everything that's happening all the time," said Yannuzzi, who lives in Binghamton, New York. "The economy's doing super poorly and I have a hard time believing



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that the joblessness rate is as low as they say it is.”

“I think the middle class is being really phased out and families are working two and three jobs a person to make it,” the Republican added.

Twenty-nine percent of U.S. adults say the economy is in good shape, while 71% say it’s doing poorly. In June, 20% said conditions were good and 79% said they were bad.

Democrats are more positive now than they were in June, 46% vs. 31%. Republicans remain largely negative, with only 10% saying conditions are good and 90% saying they’re bad.

About a quarter of Americans now say things in the country are headed in the right direction, 27%, up from 17% in July. Seventy-two percent say things are going in the wrong direction.

Close to half of Democrats — 44% — have an optimistic outlook, up from 27% in July. Just 9% of Republicans are optimistic about the nation’s direction.

Akila Atkins, a 27-year-old stay-at-home mom of two, thinks Biden is “OK” and doesn’t have much confidence that his solutions will curb rising prices.

Atkins says it’s gotten a little harder in the last year to manage her family’s expenses, and she’s frustrated that she can no longer rely on the expanded child tax credit. The tax credit paid out monthly was part of Biden’s \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package and has since lapsed.

The Census Bureau reported Tuesday that the expanded tax credit nearly halved the child poverty rate last year to 5.2%. Atkins said it helped them “stay afloat with bills, the kids’ clothing, shoes, school supplies, everything.”

Whatever misgivings the Democrat in Grand Forks, North Dakota, has about Biden, she believes he is preferable to Trump.

“I always feel like he could be better, but then again, he’s better than our last president,” she said.

The poll of 1,054 adults was conducted Sep. 9-12 using a sample drawn from NORC’s probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3.9 percentage points.

Follow the AP’s coverage of President Joe Biden at <https://apnews.com/hub/joe-biden>.

## Israel’s Netanyahu campaigns aboard bulletproof ‘Bibibus’

By ILAN BEN ZION and SAM McNEIL Associated Press

BEERSHEBA, Israel (AP) — Props are a familiar part of Benjamin Netanyahu’s repertoire when delivering public speeches — from cartoon bombs at the United Nations to a wall of CDs and binders supposedly seized from Iran by Mossad agents.

Now, the former prime minister — famed for his flair for the dramatic — is hitting the campaign trail with a new shtick. Behold: the Bibibus.

The bizarre bulletproof vehicle is part popemobile, part movie set and 100% vintage Netanyahu. As Israel heads to the polls for the fifth time in under four years, the veteran politician is using the Bibibus to attract passionate crowds of supporters and once again make himself the focus of attention among a weary electorate.

At a rally in the southern city of Beersheba on Tuesday, Netanyahu addressed a crowd of around 200 people in a mall parking lot. Flanked by his former finance minister, he spoke at a podium from the back of the modified delivery truck. Its side wall had been replaced with bulletproof glass, and its air-conditioned interior was backlit with an enormous LED screen projecting the logo of his Likud party over a fluttering Israeli flag.

Netanyahu does not actually ride in the vehicle. Instead, it serves as a mobile stage that is moved from city to city to serve as the backdrop for his campaign appearances.

Commentators have variously dubbed it the “aquarium truck,” the “Bibimobile” and the “Bibibus” — riffing on Netanyahu’s nickname. The Likud promotes the mobile rallies as “Bibiba,” or “Bibi is coming,” and

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says the truck is a necessary security precaution.

"I have to stand here, unfortunately," he told the crowd, tapping his hand against the glass separating him from the throngs of cheering supporters before delivering pledges to combat rising costs of living and inflation.

The Likud says the vehicle and its bulletproof glass were adopted to comply with safety measures required by the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security agency.

But there may be more to the story. No other politicians have adopted similar protocols, and the bus is not entirely fortified. The bulletproof glass appears to cover only part of the vehicle, and when he spoke at the podium, a window was open and Netanyahu was exposed to the crowd. Netanyahu has also in the past repeatedly appeared at crowded markets and malls with no such protection. The agency did not respond to a request for comment.

Israel is holding parliamentary elections on Nov. 1, the fifth since the beginning of a protracted political crisis in early 2019. Like the other four, the upcoming vote will largely be a referendum on Netanyahu's fitness to rule, and he could once again fail to form a durable coalition even if his party gets the most votes.

Netanyahu, who led the country from 2009 until last year, has been charged with fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three different cases, and his high-profile trial has been dragging on for over two years. He has denied any wrongdoing and has lashed out against law enforcement and the courts, accusing them of conducting a politically motivated witch-hunt.

Netanyahu remains the country's most popular politician, and his supporters adore him with cult-like reverence. But the corruption allegations have deeply divided Israelis, and last year he was driven from office for the first time in 12 years by an unwieldy coalition united in large part by its opposition to his continued rule.

That coalition collapsed in June, triggering new elections and raising the possibility of Netanyahu's return to power after a year in the wilderness as opposition leader.

The former prime minister, who turns 73 next month, remains a tireless campaigner and has near-daily whistle stops, holding campaign rallies from the back of the Bibibus.

The bulletproof glass hasn't protected Netanyahu from critics, who regard the Bibibus as another symbol of his disconnection from ordinary Israelis. Israeli public broadcaster Kan reported that the truck rental for two months of campaigning cost the Likud party 700,000 shekels (\$200,000), a massive expense at a time when many are tightening their belts.

One of Likud's main rivals, the Machane Mamlachti party, released a video mocking Netanyahu, contrasting his appearance behind glass with a clip of its leader, Defense Minister Benny Gantz, surrounded by a crowd of supporters. Ben Caspit, an Israeli columnist and longtime Netanyahu critic, has called the Bibibus "grotesque" and "a strange mistake."

In the face of criticism, Netanyahu has doubled down and embraced the Bibibus. Likud released a campaign video with the former leader stepping dramatically out of the truck cab and wiping clean its enormous glass panes.

"No bulletproof glass will separate my heart from yours," the beaming former leader says.

## 'Abbott Elementary' creator visits Kimmel, collects apology

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Abbott Elementary" creator-star Quinta Brunson took revenge on Jimmy Kimmel's Emmy prank with one of her own, then collected an apology from the late-night host whose bit was criticized as rude and worse.

Kimmel, who had distracted attention from Brunson's Emmy acceptance speech by lying pretend-drunk on stage, was delivering his monologue Wednesday when a pretty-in-pink Brunson appeared, award in hand.

"I have a little favor to ask," she said. "So you know how when you win an Emmy you only have 45 seconds to do an acceptance speech, which is like not that much time. And then ... you get less time because someone does a dumb comedy bit that goes on a bit too long?"

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"I have heard of that happening in previous years," Kimmel replied.

"Well, I was wondering, or no, more demanding if I could I have a couple of extra minutes to thank, you know, a couple of extra people," Brunson said. Kimmel stepped back to cede the spotlight to his guest, and later in the show told Brunson he was sorry for what he'd done at the Emmys on Monday.

Brunson's and Kimmel's shows both air on ABC.

Brunson won the best comedy series writing award Emmy and found herself sharing the stage with Kimmel — who was flat on his back and dragged there by fellow presenter Will Arnett because Kimmel supposedly had too many "skinny margaritas." Kimmel gave Brunson a thumbs-up for her award but didn't budge, a decision that was blasted online as thoughtless by some and cited as an example of white-male arrogance by others.

"Abbott Elementary," a mockumentary set in an underfunded Philadelphia school, earned a total of three Emmy Awards for its freshman season, including one for co-star Sheryl Lee Ralph for best comedy supporting actress.

On Kimmel's show, Brunson received loud applause from the studio audience when she thanked "all of the fans of the show," then joined the host for a chat.

He started out with a one-liner — "Congratulations on your Emmy. I missed it, how did it go?" — then turned apologetic, beginning with an awkwardly qualified mea culpa.

"That was a dumb comedy bit that we thought it would be funny," he said. "Then people got upset, they said I stole your moment. And maybe I did. I'm very sorry if I did do that. I did do that, actually. ... The last thing I would ever want to do is upset you, because I think so much of you. I think you know that. I hope you know that."

"It's very kind of you to say that," Brunson replied, graciously, avoiding direct criticism of Kimmel. She said she was "wrapped up in the moment" after winning her first Emmy and with Arnett and Kimmel on stage with her.

"Honestly, I had a great night. It was a good night and a good time," she said.

Kimmel, who jokingly blamed Arnett for what happened, lauded Brunson's series and noted that he's never won an Emmy despite repeated trips to the awards.

"And I went one time and won," she said, delivering the dig with a smile.

Kimmel offered one last apology, adding, "I was dumb, and I've got news: It's gonna happen again."

Earlier Wednesday, Brunson and her cast mates fielded questions from TV critics during a virtual panel discussion, with Ralph expressing her displeasure with Kimmel's Emmy act. "I was like, 'Oh, the disrespect, Jimmy,'" Ralph recalled.

She sarcastically referred to it as "lovely that he was lying on the floor during her wonderful acceptance speech. "I told him too, to his face, and he understood," said Ralph.

When Brunson was asked what she expected during her appearance with Kimmel, she said she was "anticipating that we are going to have a good old-fashioned time" and that she was intent on highlighting the season-two return of "Abbott Elementary" on Sept. 21.

Brunson said that she and Kimmel had already spoken but didn't detail their private conversation. Backstage at the Emmys on Monday, Brunson said the bit didn't bother her "that much" and noted that Kimmel has been a booster of her and "Abbott Elementary." If she decides she's mad at him, a smiling Brunson added, she might "punch him in the face" during her appearance on his show.

## Queen's reign saw British leave Mideast with a mixed legacy

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The long reign of Queen Elizabeth II saw large swaths of the world cast off London's rule, but after her death a handful of British-installed monarchies still endure in the Middle East.

They have survived decades of war and turmoil and are now seen as bastions of a certain kind of authoritarian stability. When popular uprisings erupted across the region a decade ago in what was known as

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the Arab Spring, sweeping away regimes with anti-colonial roots, hereditary rulers were largely unscathed. The days of imperial pomp and gunships may be over, but the region's emotional and financial ties to England run deep. Emirs, sultans and kings attend the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. Gulf Arab sovereign wealth has helped reshaped London's skyline.

As the son of a British mother, Jordan's King Abdullah II also has familial and cultural ties to Britain.

Jordan's ruling Hashemites, who come from the Arabian Peninsula and claim descent from the Prophet Muhammad, launched the revolt against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. They had hoped their wartime alliance with Britain would help secure an independent Arab state across much of the Middle East.

It didn't work out that way.

Britain and France carved up the Ottoman Empire after the war, breaking promises and drawing often arbitrary borders that virtually guaranteed decades of conflict in Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, as well as Israel and the Palestinian territories.

"There is no question that the two royal families have enjoyed very strong relations," former Jordanian foreign minister Marwan Muasher said of the the British royals and the Hashemites. "But the relationship has been marred by major issues and turbulent times."

Abdullah I, the current king's great grandfather, was given Jordan, a swath of desert mainly populated by nomadic Bedouin.

His brother, Faisal, was placed on the throne of Iraq, another new country, assembled from three distinctive Ottoman provinces and loosely based on ancient Mesopotamia.

The British helped establish both kingdoms in an English mold. Jordan got a British-style bureaucracy. In Iraq, a band played "God save the King" at Faisal's coronation.

Both were buffeted by the wave of Arab nationalism that erupted after World War II. Abdullah was assassinated by a Palestinian nationalist in Jerusalem in 1951, and Iraq's King Faisal II was deposed and killed in a bloody 1958 coup.

Egyptian military officers deposed that country's British-backed monarchy in 1952, and hereditary rulers were later overthrown in Libya and Yemen. All were eventually replaced by homegrown autocrats — many aligned with the West.

But not Jordan.

King Abdullah II, a native English speaker who would fit in at a British army club, and his glamorous wife of Palestinian descent, Queen Rania, today rule an Arab country that has come to be seen as an island of stability in a volatile region.

His father, King Hussein, quashed internal threats and survived dozens of plots to kill and overthrow him. His image as a friendly, Western-style monarch in a restive region compelled foreign patrons — first Britain, then the United States — to bankroll the kingdom.

Its modern-day image of stability masks an economy dependent on foreign aid, a conservative culture and popular discontent that occasionally bubbles to the surface.

King Abdullah II often flies to London to "seek advice from the British on this or that issue," said Labib Kamhawi, a Jordanian political analyst. When the king's half-sister, Princess Haya, sought legal protection from her ex-husband, the ruler of Dubai, she looked no further than the British capital.

Jordan's royal court declared a week of mourning after Queen Elizabeth's death, hailing her as an "iconic leader" and a "beacon of wisdom."

The response from ordinary people in Jordan — and across the region — was more muted.

Many trace the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to Britain's 1917 Balfour declaration, in which it supported "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."

Daoud Kuttab, a prominent Palestinian journalist based in Jordan, said he would have expected Elizabeth's passing to create more debate among Jordanians. "But she became queen in 1952. It's hard to blame her for the Balfour declaration," he said.

Iraqis still bitterly recall the British invasion during World War II and many view the 1958 coup that deposed Faisal II with pride. But it ushered in decades of instability, culminating in Saddam Hussein's brutal rule and wars with his neighbors. The U.S.-led invasion in 2003, in which Britain was a key participant,

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removed Saddam but plunged Iraq into chaos from which it has yet to fully emerge.

"Installing a monarchy that wasn't very popular and that was overthrown in 1958 was the ignition for the many problems that the modern Iraqi state has faced," said Lahib Higel, senior Iraq analyst for the International Crisis Group.

Still, Iraqis of a certain age credit Britain with helping to establish education and health systems that were the envy of the region before Saddam's catastrophic rule. Some Egyptians also look back fondly on their monarchy, whose demise was followed by decades of authoritarian rule and stagnation.

"Especially older Egyptians have this residual admiration for British culture and institutions," said Egyptian writer Khaled Diab.

Further east, across the glittering cities of the Persian Gulf, British influence remains strong decades after independence. Starting in the 18th century, Gulf emirs came under the protection of the British Empire, which brokered truces between loosely organized tribes.

The discovery of vast oil riches ensured the survival of hereditary rule even after the British withdrew in 1971. Heirs to the tribal leaders today boast second homes in London's toniest districts and degrees from British universities.

Bahrain was convulsed by a 2011 revolt supported by its Shiite majority against its Sunni monarchy, but there was hardly any sign of unrest in any other Gulf country.

"These Arab monarchies are modern-era creations and they've had to create the monarchical myth in a relatively short space of time," said Christopher Davidson, a fellow at the European Center for International Affairs. "The British royal protocols continue to produce these states with a ready-made blueprint on how to behave and operate."

After Elizabeth's death, a video clip from 2015 went viral showing Ali Gomaa, the former grand mufti of Egypt, describing the British queen as a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad. Her blood line, he alleged, ran through medieval Muslim Spain.

The claim, which has been made by others but never proven, drew mockery on social media. But some welcomed it as proof of enduring ties.

"There's this desire to build bridges," said Diab, the Egyptian writer. "Britain has this residual pull on the Arab imagination."

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Associated Press writer Joseph Krauss in Ottawa, Ontario, contributed to this report.

## Queen Elizabeth II lies in state as throngs pay respects

By MIKE CORDER, JILL LAWLESS and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The coffin of Queen Elizabeth II left Buckingham Palace for the last time Wednesday, borne on a horse-drawn carriage and saluted by cannons and the tolling of Big Ben, in a solemn procession through the flag-draped, crowd-lined streets of London to Westminster Hall. There, a steady stream of mourners paid their respects to Britain's longest-reigning monarch.

As the cortege left the palace, her son, King Charles III, and his siblings and sons marched behind the coffin, which was topped by a wreath of white roses and her crown resting on a purple velvet pillow.

The military procession underscored Elizabeth's seven decades as head of state as the national mourning process shifted to the grand boulevards and historic landmarks of the U.K. capital.

At 900-year-old Westminster Hall, where the queen will lie in state until her funeral Monday, crowds shuffled past her coffin well into the night. They moved silently down the steps of the hall under a great stained glass window, then past the coffin that was covered with the Royal Standard and had been placed on a raised platform known as a catafalque by eight pallbearers.

There were couples and parents with children, veterans with medals clinking on navy blue blazers, lawmakers and members of the House of Lords. Some wore black or suits and ties, others jeans and sneakers, and all had waited hours to stand in front of the coffin for a few moments

Many bowed or curtsied and some were in tears.

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Thousands who had waited for the procession for hours along The Mall outside the palace and other locations along the route held up phones and cameras, and some wiped away tears, as the casket rolled by. Applause broke out as it passed through Horse Guards Parade. Thousands more in nearby Hyde Park watched on large screens.

The coffin was topped with the Imperial State Crown — encrusted with almost 3,000 diamonds — and a bouquet of flowers and plants, including pine from the Balmoral Estate, where Elizabeth died on Sept. 8 at the age of 96.

Two officers and 32 troops from the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards in red uniforms and bearskin hats walked on either side of the gun carriage. The 38-minute procession ended at Westminster Hall, where Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby led a service attended by Charles and other royals.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you," Welby read from the Book of John.

After a short service, the captain of The Queen's Company 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards, assisted by a senior sergeant, laid the royal standard of the regiment on the steps of the catafalque.

Four officers from the Household Cavalry — two from the Life Guards and two from the Blues Royals — began the vigil, taking their places at each corner and bowing their heads.

Thousands had queued up along the banks of the River Thames, waiting to enter the hall and pay their respects to the only monarch most Britons have ever known after her 70 years on the throne.

Esther Ravenor, a Kenyan who lives in the U.K. said she was humbled as she watched the procession.

"I love the queen, I love the royal family, and you know, I had to be here," she said. "She is a true role model. She loved us all, all of us. Especially someone like me, a migrant woman coming to the U.K. 30 years ago, I was allowed to be here and to be free and safe, so I really honor her. She was a big part of my life."

Maj. Gen. Christopher Ghika, of the Household division, who organized the ceremonial aspects of the queen's funeral, said it was "our last opportunity to do our duty for the queen, and it's our first opportunity to do it for the king, and that makes us all very proud."

Troops involved in the procession had been preparing since the queen died. So had the horses of the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery.

Sgt. Tom Jenks said the horses were specially trained, including how to handle weeping mourners, as well as flowers and flags being tossed in front of the procession.

Heathrow Airport temporarily halted flights, saying it would "ensure silence over central London as the ceremonial procession moves from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Hall."

President Joe Biden spoke Wednesday with Charles to offer his condolences, the White House said.

Biden recalled "the Queen's kindness and hospitality" she hosted them and the first lady at Windsor Castle in June, the statement said. "He also conveyed the great admiration of the American people for the Queen, whose dignity and constancy deepened the enduring friendship and special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom."

Crowds have lined the route of the queen's coffin whenever it has been moved in its long journey from Scotland to London.

On Tuesday night, thousands braved a typical London drizzle as the hearse, with interior lights illuminating the casket, drove slowly from an air base to Buckingham Palace.

Earlier, in Edinburgh, about 33,000 people filed silently past her coffin in 24 hours at St. Giles' Cathedral.

The line of people snaking along the banks of the River Thames to enter Westminster Hall, the oldest building in Parliament, was nearly 3 miles long in the afternoon, according to a government tracker.

The hall is where Guy Fawkes and Charles I were tried, where kings and queens hosted magnificent medieval banquets, and where ceremonial addresses were presented to Queen Elizabeth II during her silver, golden and diamond jubilees.

Chris Bond, from Truro in southwest England, was among those waiting to see the queen's coffin. He also attended the lying in state of the queen's mother in 2002.

"Obviously, it's quite difficult queuing all day long, but when you walk through those doors into Westminster Hall, that marvelous, historic building, there was a great sense of hush and one was told you take as much time as you like, and it's just amazing," he said.

"We know the queen was a good age and she served the country a long time, but we hoped this day would never come," he added.

Chris Imafidon, secured the sixth place in the queue.

"I have 1,001 emotions when I see her," he said. "I want to say, God, she was an angel, because she touched many good people and did so many good things."

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Associated Press writer Sylvia Hui contributed.

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## Alabama sidesteps compensation for survivor of '63 KKK blast

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Sarah Collins Rudolph lost an eye and still has pieces of glass inside her body from a Ku Klux Klan bombing that killed her sister and three other Black girls at an Alabama church 59 years ago, and she's still waiting on the state to compensate her for those injuries.

Gov. Kay Ivey sidestepped the question of financial compensation two years ago in apologizing to Rudolph for her "untold pain and suffering," saying legislative involvement was needed. But nothing has been done despite the efforts of attorneys representing Rudolph, leaving unresolved the question of payment even though victims of other attacks, including 9/11, were compensated.

Rudolph will meet with President Joe Biden at the White House for a summit about combatting hate-fueled violence on Thursday, the anniversary of the bombing.

Rudolph, known as the "Fifth Little Girl" for surviving the infamous attack, which was depicted in Spike Lee's 1997 documentary "4 Little Girls," has been rankled by the state's inaction.

Speaking in an interview with The Associated Press on Wednesday, Rudolph said then-Gov. George C. Wallace helped lay the groundwork for the Ku Klux Klan attack on 16th Street Baptist Church with his segregationist rhetoric, and the state bears some responsibility for the bombing, which wasn't prosecuted for years.

"If they hadn't stirred up all that racist hate that was going on at the time I don't believe that church would have been bombed," said Rudolph.

Rudolph said she still incurs medical expenses from the explosion, including a \$90 bill she gets every few months for work on the prosthetic she wears in place of the right eye that was destroyed by shrapnel on Sept. 15, 1963. Anything would help, but Rudolph believes she's due millions.

Ishan Bhabha, an attorney representing Rudolph, said the state's apology — made at Rudolph's request along with a plea for restitution — was only meant as a first step.

"She deserves justice in the form of compensation for the grievous injuries, and costs, she has had to bear for almost 60 years," he said. "We will continue to pursue any available avenues to get Sarah the assistance she needs and deserves."

Five girls were gathered in a downstairs bathroom at 16th Street Baptist Church when a bomb planted by KKK members went off outside, blowing a huge hole in the thick, brick wall. The blast killed Denise McNair, 11, and three 14-year-olds: Carole Robertson, Cynthia Morris, also referred to as Cynthia Wesley, and Addie Mae Collins, who was Rudolph's sister.

Three Klan members convicted of murder in the bombing years later died in prison, and a fourth suspect died without ever being charged. The bombing occurred eight months after Wallace proclaimed "segregation forever" in his inaugural speech and during the time when Birmingham schools were being racially integrated for the first time.

The church itself has gotten government money for renovations, as has the surrounding Birmingham

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Civil Rights National Monument, formed by President Barack Obama in 2017 in one of his last acts in office. "But not me," Rudolph said.

Ivey, at the time of the apology, said in a letter to Rudolph's lawyer that any possible compensation would require legislative approval, said press secretary Gina Maiola.

"Additionally, in attorney-to-attorney conversations that ensued soon after, that same point was reiterated," she said.

No bill has been introduced to compensate Rudolph, legislative records show, and it's unclear whether such legislation could win passage anyway since conservative Republicans hold an overwhelming majority and have made an issue of reeling in history lessons that could make white people feel bad about the past.

While the Alabama Crime Victims' Compensation Commission helps victims and families with expenses linked to a crime, state law doesn't allow it to address offenses that occurred before the agency was created in 1984.

Rudolph has spent a lifetime dealing with physical and mental pain from the bombing. Despite her injuries and lingering stress disorders, Rudolph provided testimony that helped lead to the convictions of the men accused of planting the bomb, and she's written a book about her life, titled "The 5th Little Girl."

Rudolph's husband, George Rudolph, said he's frustrated and mad over the way his wife has been treated. Victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks were compensated, he said, as were victims of the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013.

"Why can't they do something for Sarah?" he said.

Reeves is a member of AP's Race and Ethnicity Team.

## Unwed couples grew, US was more wired in COVID's 1st years

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

During the first two years of the pandemic, the number of people working from home in the United States tripled, home values grew and the percentage of people who spent more than a third of their income on rent went up, according to survey results released Thursday by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Providing the most detailed data to date on how life changed in the U.S. under COVID-19, the bureau's American Community Survey 1-year estimates for 2021 showed that the share of unmarried couples living together rose, Americans became more wired and the percentage of people who identify as multiracial grew significantly. And in changes that seemed to directly reflect how the pandemic upended people's choices, fewer people moved, preschool enrollment dropped and commuters using public transportation was cut in half.

The data release offers the first reliable glimpse of life in the U.S. during the COVID-19 era, as the 1-year estimates from the 2020 survey were deemed unusable because of problems getting people to answer during the early months of the pandemic. That left a one-year data gap during a time when the pandemic forced major changes in the way people live their lives.

The survey typically relies on responses from 3.5 million households to provide 11 billion estimates each year about commuting times, internet access, family life, income, education levels, disabilities, military service and employment. The estimates help inform how to distribute hundreds of billions of dollars in federal spending.

Response rates significantly improved from 2020 to 2021, "so we are confident about the data for this year," said Mark Asiala, the survey's chief of statistical design.

While the percentage of married-couple households stayed stable over the two years at around 47%, the percent of households with unwed couples cohabiting rose to 7.2% in 2021 from 6.6% in 2019. Contrary to pop culture images of multigenerational family members moving in together during the pandemic, the average household size actually contracted from 2.6 to 2.5 people.

People also stayed put. More than 87% of those surveyed were living in their same house a year ago in 2021, compared to 86% in 2019. America became more wired as people became more reliant on remote



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learning and working from home. Households with a computer rose, from 92.9% in 2019 to 95% in 2021, and internet subscription services grew from 86% to 90% of households.

The jump in people who identify as multiracial — from 3.4% in 2019 to 12.6% in 2021 — and a decline in people identifying as white alone — from 72% to 61.2% — coincided with Census Bureau changes in coding race and Hispanic origin responses. Those adjustments were intended to capture more detailed write-in answers from participants. The period between surveys also overlapped with social justice protests following the killing of George Floyd, who was Black, by a white Minneapolis police officer in 2020 as well as attacks against Asian Americans. Experts say this likely led some multiracial people who previously might have identified as a single race to instead embrace all of their background.

“The pattern is strong evidence of shifting self-identity. This is not new,” said Paul Ong, a professor emeritus of urban planning and Asian American Studies at UCLA. “Other research has shown that racial or ethnic identity can change even over a short time period. For many, it is contextual and situational. This is particularly true for individuals with multiracial background.”

The estimates show the pandemic-related impact of closed theaters, shuttered theme parks and restaurants with limited seating on workers in arts, entertainment and accommodation businesses. Their numbers declined from 9.7% to 8.2% of the workforce, while other industries stayed comparatively stable. Those who were self-employed inched up to 6.1% from 5.8%.

Housing demand grew over the two years, as the percent of vacant homes dropped from 12.1% to 10.3%. The median value of homes rose from \$240,500 to \$281,400. The percent of people whose gross rent exceeded more than 30% of their income went from 48.5% to 51%. Historically, renters are considered rent-burdened if they pay more than that.

“Lack of housing that folks can afford relative to the wages they are paid is a continually growing crisis,” said Allison Plyer, chief demographer at The Data Center in New Orleans.

Commutes to work dropped from 27.6 minutes to 25.6 minutes, as the percent of people working from home during a period of return-to-office starts and stops went from 5.7% in 2019 to almost 18% in 2021. Almost half of workers in the District of Columbia worked from home, the highest rate in the nation, while Mississippi had the lowest rate at 6.3%. Over the two years, the percent of workers nationwide using public transportation to get to work went from 5% to 2.5%, as fears rose of catching the virus on buses and subways.

“Work and commuting are central to American life, so the widespread adoption of working from home is a defining feature of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Michael Burrows, a Census Bureau statistician. “With the number of people who primarily work from home tripling over just a two-year period, the pandemic has very strongly impacted the commuting landscape in the United States.”

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Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

## Abortion ban legislation adds to political challenge for GOP

By STEVE PEOPLES and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Don Bolduc didn't have much time to celebrate winning the Republican nomination for Senate in New Hampshire on Wednesday before he and other swing-state GOP candidates were on the defensive.

A conservative retired Army brigadier general, Bolduc insisted during the Republican primary he would “always default for a system that protects lives from beginning to end.” But South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham's decision to introduce legislation this week that would create a national abortion ban created the prospect that a campaign talking point could become a reality.

With his attention now shifting to the November general election in a moderate state that President Joe Biden carried by more than 7 percentage points, Bolduc quickly distanced himself from Graham's measure.

“It doesn't make sense,” he told Fox News, adding that abortion laws are better left to each individual state. “Women on both sides of the issue will get a better voice at the state level.”

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With less than two months until the midterm elections, Bolduc's pivot is a sign of the challenge dividing Republicans in some of the most competitive states as they navigate abortion politics. The party was already facing a potential backlash from voters upset by the Supreme Court's June decision invalidating a woman's constitutional right to an abortion. But Graham's legislation risked adding to the headwinds, undermining the GOP's argument this summer that the future of abortion rights in the U.S. would be decided by individual states.

Graham's bill would ban abortions nationwide after 15 weeks of pregnancy, except in cases of rape, incest or risk to the physical health of the mother. Congressional Republicans have introduced similar legislation in the past and, like those efforts, this measure is unlikely to become law.

But Democrats were quick to point to the measure to warn that handing control of Congress to Republicans could lead to a broader erosion of rights.

"In the world's greatest democracy, Don Bolduc will make women second-class citizens," New Hampshire Sen. Maggie Hassan, one of the Senate's most vulnerable Democrats, said at a quickly arranged press conference Wednesday. "National Republicans, from Mike Pence to leaders in the Senate and House, have waited years for the chance to ban abortion nationwide. If Don Buldoc is in the Senate, they would have a reliable vote to do just that."

The legislation exposed deep frustration among Republican candidates and strategists who have found no answer on the politics of abortion since the Supreme Court's ruling. There was concern that the measure shifts attention away from Biden's vulnerabilities, including persistent inflation.

"It's probably the right bill at the wrong time," said veteran Republican strategist Chris Wilson.

Graham's plan, he said, "gives the Dems the chance to talk about abortion more. And right now Republicans are losing when talking about abortion."

Conservative commentator Charlie Kirk derided Graham's proposal as "election interference."

"I would love a total abortion ban — 15 weeks is not enough," Kirk said. "But I'm also not dumb; 25 days out from ballots going out the Democrats are applauding, thank you Lindsey Graham."

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, who is one seat away from majority control, notably declined to embrace Graham's legislation.

"I think every Republican senator running this year in these contested races has an answer as to how they feel about the issue," McConnell said Tuesday. He said most GOP senators prefer having the issue dealt with by the states, rather than at the federal level. "So I leave it up to our candidates who are quite capable of handling this issue to determine for them what their response is."

Abortion would have been a dominant issue this fall whether Graham released his national abortion ban or not. A majority of Americans say Congress should pass a law guaranteeing access to legal abortion nationwide, according to a July AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll that found over half said they felt at least somewhat "sad" or "angry" about the Supreme Court's decision.

Democrats have poured tens of millions of dollars into television advertising focused on abortion rights. Women have been registering to vote in greater numbers than men across the country. And several states that have not already banned abortion altogether are pushing forward with new restrictions.

The Supreme Court's Republican-appointed majority overturned Roe in late June, triggering abortion bans in at least 13 states, many of which don't provide exceptions for rape, incest and the health of the mother. In Indiana, a new Republican-backed abortion ban takes effect Thursday. West Virginia's legislature approved a sweeping abortion ban with few exceptions Tuesday.

Former Vice President Mike Pence, speaking Wednesday at Liberty University's Convocation, celebrated the developments.

"We have only come to the end of the beginning and the battle for life continues," said Pence, who is considering a 2024 presidential run. "We must not rest and we must not relent until we restore the sanctity of life to the center of American law in every state in the nation."

Meanwhile, swing-state Republican Senate candidates have offered inconsistent and conflicting messages.

In Arizona, Republican Senate candidate Blake Masters described abortion as "demonic" during his GOP primary, calling for a federal personhood law that would give fetuses the same rights people have after

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they're born. He has more recently toned down his rhetoric, focusing on restricting late-term abortions while allowing states to impose more stringent limits.

After winning the Republican nomination, Masters deleted references to his support for a personhood law from his campaign website and dropped language describing himself as "100% pro-life." He says he supports an Arizona law banning abortion after 15 weeks, which he called "a reasonable solution."

"Of course, I support Lindsey Graham's 15-week bill, and I hope it passes," Masters said this week. "If it doesn't, I suggest and will introduce a third-trimester standalone bill. Certainly we can all agree that in America, we shouldn't tolerate late-term abortion like China and North Korea do."

In another battleground state, Georgia's Republican Senate nominee Herschel Walker released a statement supporting Graham's proposal, having already declared during a GOP primary that he'd support abortion bans without any exceptions.

"I am a proud pro-life Christian, and I will always stand up for our unborn children," Walker said of Graham's proposal this week. "I believe the issue should be decided at the state level, but I WOULD support this policy."

It was just the opposite in Colorado, where Republican Senate nominee Joe O'Dea said "a Republican ban is as reckless and tone deaf as is Joe Biden and Chuck Schumer's hostility to considering any compromise on late-term abortion, parental notification, or conscience protections for religious hospitals.

O'Dea said Congress should pass a bill "protecting a woman's right to choose early in pregnancy" and "sensible limits on non-medically necessary late-term abortion."

In Nevada, Republican candidate Adam Laxalt has said he would oppose a nationwide ban, but his campaign declined to offer a specific position on Graham's proposal when asked. It was similar in Pennsylvania, where Republican Senate contender Mehmet Oz suggested he would oppose the federal ban but did not say so explicitly.

"As a senator, he'd want to make sure that the federal government is not involved in interfering with the state's decisions on the topic," Oz spokesperson Brittany Yanick said.

And in Wisconsin, Republican Sen. Ron Johnson, who faces a tough reelection bid, has previously co-sponsored six 20-week national abortion ban proposals. But after the Supreme Court overturned Roe, Johnson said he supported that ruling and leaving the decision about abortions to the states.

The Republican senator, typically a Graham ally, appeared to stick with that position Tuesday while not taking a firm position on Graham's bill. He told CNN that abortion should be decided by "we the people" in the 50 states.

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Peoples reported from New York. AP writers Meg Kinnard in Columbia, South Carolina; J.J. Cooper in Phoenix; Jill Colvin in New York; Bill Barrow in Atlanta; and Scott Bauer in Madison, Wisconsin, contributed to this report.

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This story has been corrected to show that many of the bans in at least 13 states don't provide exceptions for rape, incest and the health of the mother, not the life of the mother.

## **Texts: Mississippi ex-governor knew of Favre welfare money**

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Newly revealed text messages show how deeply a Mississippi governor was involved in the state paying more than \$1 million in welfare money to Brett Favre to help fund one of the retired NFL quarterback's pet projects.

Instead of the money going to help low-income families in one of the nation's poorest states, as intended, it was funneled through a nonprofit group and spent on a new \$5 million volleyball facility at a university that the football star and the governor both attended.

One of the texts from 2017 showed Republican Gov. Phil Bryant, who left office in 2020, was "on board" with the arrangement. The state is suing Favre and others, alleging they misspent millions of dollars in welfare money. The director of the nonprofit has pleaded guilty to criminal charges in Mississippi's largest

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public corruption case in decades.

The texts were in documents filed Monday in state court by an attorney for the nonprofit, known as the Mississippi Community Education Center. Messages between Favre and the center's executive director, Nancy New, included references to Bryant. The documents also included messages between Bryant and Favre and Bryant and New.

New pleaded guilty in April to charges of misspending welfare money, as did her son Zachary New, who helped run the nonprofit. They await sentencing and have agreed to testify against others. Favre has not been charged with any criminal wrongdoing.

"Just left Brett Farve," Bryant texted New on July 16, 2019, misspelling the athlete's last name. "Can we help him with his project. We should meet soon to see how I can make sure we keep your projects on course."

New responded: "I would appreciate having the opportunity to follow through with all the good things we are working on, especially projects like Brett's."

Later that day, New texted Favre to let him know she was meeting with the governor.

"I love John so much. And you too," Favre responded to New, referring to the Mississippi Department of Human Services director at the time, John Davis.

The texts also showed discussion between Favre and New about arranging payment from the Human Services Department through the nonprofit to Favre for speaking engagements, with Favre then saying he would direct the money to the volleyball facility at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Favre played football at the university, located in Hattiesburg, before going to the NFL in 1991. His daughter began playing on the school's volleyball team in 2017.

According to court documents, Favre texted New on Aug. 3, 2017: "If you were to pay me is there any way the media can find out where it came from and how much?"

New responded: "No, we never have had that information publicized. I understand you being uneasy about that though. Let's see what happens on Monday with the conversation with some of the folks at Southern. Maybe it will click with them. Hopefully."

Favre replied: "Ok thanks."

The next day, New texted Favre: "Wow, just got off the phone with Phil Bryant! He is on board with us! We will get this done!"

Favre responded: "Awesome I needed to hear that for sure."

According to a previous court filing, New's nonprofit made two payments of welfare money to Favre Enterprises, the athlete's business: \$500,000 in December 2017 and \$600,000 in June 2018.

On Dec. 27, 2017, Favre texted New: "Nancy Santa came today and dropped some money off (two smiling emojis) thank you my goodness thank you."

"Yes he did," New responded. "He felt you had been pretty good this year!"

Attorneys for Favre did not immediately respond to a phone message Wednesday from The Associated Press.

In a July 11 court filing, New's attorney wrote that Bryant directed her to pay \$1.1 million in welfare money to Favre through the education center for "speaking at events, keynote speaking, radio and promotional events, and business partner development."

In July, a Bryant spokesperson said allegations that the governor improperly spent the money are false and that Bryant had asked the state auditor to investigate possible welfare fraud.

Billy Quinn, an attorney representing Bryant, told the AP on Wednesday that Bryant did not direct New to make the \$1.1 million payment to Favre. Quinn said a careful examination of court records will show "there's no proof that occurred. And that's because it didn't."

Bryant served two terms as governor and could not run again in 2019 because of term limits. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Southern Mississippi.

In May, the Mississippi Department of Human Services filed a civil lawsuit against Favre, three former pro wrestlers and several other people and businesses to try to recover millions of misspent welfare dollars.

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The lawsuit said the defendants “squandered” more than \$20 million from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families anti-poverty program.

About 1,800 Mississippi households received payments from the program in 2021, according to the Department of Human Services. A family of three must have a monthly income below \$680 to qualify, and the current monthly benefit for that family is \$260. Payments are allowed for up to five years.

In pleading guilty, Nancy and Zachary New acknowledged taking part in spending \$4 million of welfare money for the volleyball facility.

The mother and son also acknowledged directing welfare money to Prevacus Inc., a Florida-based company that was trying to develop a concussion drug. Favre has said in interviews that he supported Prevacus.

Mississippi Auditor Shad White said Favre was paid for speeches but did not show up. Favre has repaid the money, but White said in October that he still owed \$228,000 in interest.

In a Facebook post when he repaid the first \$500,000, Favre said he didn’t know the money came from welfare funds. He also said his charity had provided millions of dollars to poor children in Mississippi and Wisconsin.

## Ukrainian flag raised in retaken city after Russian retreat

By ELENA BECATOROS and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

IZIUM, Ukraine (AP) — Hand on heart, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy watched his country’s flag rise Wednesday above the recaptured city of Iziium, making a rare foray outside the capital that highlights Moscow’s embarrassing retreat from a Ukrainian counteroffensive.

Russian forces left the war-scarred city last week as Kyiv’s soldiers pressed a stunning advance that has reclaimed large swaths of territory in Ukraine’s northeastern Kharkiv region.

As Zelenskyy looked on and sang the national anthem, the Ukrainian flag was raised in front of the burned-out city hall. After almost six months under Russian occupation, Iziium was left largely devastated, with apartment buildings blackened by fire and pockmarked by artillery strikes.

A gaping hole and piles of rubble stood where one building had collapsed.

“The view is very shocking, but it is not shocking for me,” Zelenskyy told journalists, “because we began to see the same pictures from Bucha, from the first de-occupied territories ... the same destroyed buildings, killed people.”

Bucha is a small city on Kyiv’s outskirts from which Russian troops withdrew in March. In the aftermath, Ukrainian authorities discovered the bodies of hundreds of civilians dumped in streets, yards and mass graves. Many bore signs of torture.

Prosecutors said they so far have found six bodies with traces of torture in recently retaken Kharkiv region villages. The head of the Kharkiv prosecutor’s office, Oleksandr Filchakov, said bodies were found in Hrakove and Zaliznyche, villages around 60 kilometers (35 miles) southeast of Kharkiv city.

“We have a terrible picture of what the occupiers did. ... Such cities as Balakliia, Iziium, are standing in the same row as Bucha, Borodyanka, Irpin,” said Ukrainian Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin, listing places where the Ukrainians have alleged Russian forces committed atrocities.

Local authorities have made similar claims in other areas Russia previously held, but it was not immediately possible to verify their information. They have not yet provided evidence of potential atrocities on the scale described in Bucha, where the number and conditions of civilian casualties prompted international demands to press war crimes charges against Russian officials.

As he was returning from the front early Thursday, a passenger car collided with Zelenskyy’s vehicle in a motorcade in Kyiv, but he wasn’t seriously hurt, his spokesman said on Facebook. Spokesman Sergii Niforov said the driver of the other vehicle received first aid from Zelenskyy’s medical team and was taken by ambulance. Medics examined the president, who suffered no serious injuries in the accident, Niforov wrote. He did not specify what injuries Zelenskyy, 44, might have suffered.

Moscow’s recent rout in northeastern Ukraine was its largest military defeat since Russian troops withdrew from the Kyiv area months ago. On the northern outskirts of Iziium, the remains of Russian tanks

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and vehicles lay shattered along a road.

As Zelenskyy visited, his forces pressed their counteroffensive, de-mined retaken ground and investigated possible war crimes. He said that "life comes back" as Ukrainian soldiers return to previously occupied villages.

The Ukrainian governor of the eastern Luhansk region, Serhiy Haidai, said Ukrainian soldiers were preparing to retake the area, which borders the Kharkiv region and has been mostly under Russian control since July. Intense shelling of Ukrainian forces continued, he said.

Haidai told The Associated Press that Ukrainian troops were flying Ukrainian flags in the cities of Svatove and Starobilsk.

But in Kreminna, another city where Ukrainians raised their flag, Russians returned Wednesday and "tore down the (Ukrainian) flags and are demonstrably showing that they're there," Haidai said.

A Russia-allied separatist military leader confirmed the Ukrainian advance on the Luhansk region. Andrei Marochko, a local militia officer, said on Russian TV that the situation was "really difficult."

"In some places, the contact line has come very close to the borders of the Luhansk People's Republic," Marochko said, referring to the independent state the separatists declared eight years ago.

The counteroffensive has left more weapons in Ukrainian hands.

Russian forces likely left behind dozens of tanks, armored personnel carriers and other heavy weaponry as they fled Ukraine's advance in the east, a Ukrainian think tank said Wednesday. The Center for Defense Strategies said one Russian unit fleeing the Iziurm area left behind more than three dozen T-80 tanks and about as many infantry fighting vehicles. Another unit left 47 tanks and 27 armored vehicles, it said.

The center said Russian forces tried to destroy some of the abandoned vehicles through artillery strikes as they fell back. Typically, armed forces ruin equipment left behind so their opponent can't use it. However, the chaos of the Russian withdrawal apparently forced them to abandon untouched ammunition and weapons.

With the recent Ukrainian gains, a new front line has emerged along the Oskil River, which largely traces the Kharkiv region's eastern edge, a Washington-based think tank, the Institute for the Study of War, said Wednesday.

"Russian troops are unlikely to be strong enough to prevent further Ukrainian advances along the entire Oskil River because they do not appear to be receiving reinforcements, and Ukrainian troops will likely be able to exploit this weakness to resume the counteroffensive across the Oskil if they choose," the institute said.

In other areas, Russia continued its attacks, causing more casualties in a war that has dragged on for nearly seven months.

Two people were killed and three wounded after Russia attacked Mykolaiv with S-300 missiles overnight, regional governor Vitaliy Kim said.

The Nikopol area, across a river from the shutdown Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, was shelled three times during the night, with no injuries immediately reported, regional governor Valentyn Reznichenko said.

Fighting also raged in the eastern Donetsk region, where shelling killed five civilians and wounded 16. Together, Luhansk and Donetsk make up the Donbas, an industrial area that Moscow set out to capture following an unsuccessful attempt to invade Kyiv.

Russian troops are targeting critical infrastructure. Eight cruise missiles aimed at water equipment hit Zelenskyy's hometown of Kryvyi Rih, a city on the Inhulets River 150 kms (93 miles) southwest of Dnipro, the deputy head of the president's office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, reported on his Telegram channel. Zelenskyy said the strikes appeared to be an attempt to flood the city and that a dam on a reservoir was hit. Video posted online showed elevated water levels on the Inhulets and flooded city streets, and evacuations of residents were suggested.

U.S. President Joe Biden observed Wednesday that Ukrainian forces have made "significant progress" in recent days but added, "I think it's going to be a long haul."

While criticism of the invasion seems to be increasing in Russia, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said after

a phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin, "Unfortunately, I cannot tell you that the realization has grown over there by now that this was a mistake to start this war."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Wednesday that he had spoken with Putin about exporting Russian fertilizer through Ukraine's Black Sea ports to address a famine threat. The U.N. chief said at a news conference in New York that high prices for fertilizer have reduced the planting of crops, making it critical to increase Russian exports of ammonia — a key fertilizer ingredient — by shipping it through Black Sea ports now used to transport grain from Ukraine.

Western military and economic support has allowed Ukraine to keep fighting since Russia invaded on Feb. 24, and the Ukrainian government received more assistance Wednesday.

An international group of creditors, including the U.S., finalized a deal to suspend Ukraine's debt service through the end of 2023, helping the country ease liquidity pressures and increase social, health and economic spending.

Arhirova reported from Kyiv. Associated Press journalist Jon Gambrell in Kyiv contributed.

Follow AP war coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

## Officials probing whether Northeastern explosion was staged

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Federal officials are examining whether the employee who reported an explosion at Northeastern University may have lied to investigators and staged the incident, law enforcement officials said Wednesday.

Investigators identified inconsistencies in the employee's statement and became skeptical because his injuries did not match wounds typically consistent with an explosion, said one official.

The officials could not discuss details of the investigation publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The Northeastern staff member said late Tuesday the hard plastic case exploded on the campus in Boston, causing minor injuries, according to authorities.

In an interview with The Boston Globe, the employee denied staging the explosion, calling the event "very traumatic."

"I did not stage this ... No way, shape or form ... they need to catch the guy that did this," he told the newspaper. He didn't immediately respond to an email Wednesday from The Associated Press.

The case contained a rambling note that railed against virtual reality and also referenced Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, a law enforcement official said. No explosive materials were found and they do not believe the package was sent through the U.S. Postal Service, the official said.

The official described the case as a "Pelican-style" case. Pelican is a company that makes hard cases designed to protect sensitive equipment.

A spokesperson for the FBI office in Boston declined to comment Wednesday, saying the investigation is "still very active and fluid."

Northeastern in a message posted on its website Wednesday said the campus is safe.

"Events such as the incident that took place on our Boston campus last night can create or heighten anxiety for many of us," said the post, credited to Provost David Madigan and Chancellor Kenneth Henderson. "We would like to underscore what was communicated to our community last night: Multiple law enforcement agencies have determined that the campus is safe and secure."

The campus opened normally for classes and other activities Wednesday. Counseling and other support services were made available for students, faculty and staff.

Despite reassurances from the school, many students remain concerned.

"Every time I go to a class or dining hall or anything in general, people are just talking about what's going on and what went on yesterday," student Lisbeth Martinez said Wednesday. "A lot of people are still

anxious and obviously scared of the situation.”

The package delivered to Holmes Hall detonated just after 7 p.m. Tuesday when a staff member opened it, the university had said in a statement. The staff member, a 45-year-old man, was taken to the hospital with minor injuries to his hand, police said. No name was made public.

Boston’s bomb squad neutralized a second package near the city’s Museum of Fine Arts, which is near Northeastern’s campus.

Holmes Hall is home to the university’s Immersive Media Labs, which according to its website includes technologies for design, development, and exploration of virtual worlds. It is also home to the creative writing program and the women’s, gender and sexuality studies program.

Northeastern is a private university in downtown Boston with about 16,000 undergraduate students.

The case marks one of the first big scares in Boston since 2013, when two bombs planted near the finish line of the Boston Marathon killed three spectators and wounded more than 260 others.

Associated Press journalists Mark Pratt and Rodrique Ngowi in Boston contributed to this report.

## ‘Car guy’ Biden touts electric vehicles at Detroit auto show

By COLLEEN LONG and TOM KRISHER Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — President Joe Biden, a “car guy” with his own vintage Corvette, showcased his administration’s efforts to promote electric vehicles during a visit Wednesday to the Detroit auto show.

Biden traveled to the massive North American International Auto Show to plug the huge new climate, tax and health care law that offers tax incentives for buying electric vehicles. He toured a mix of American-manufactured hybrid, electric and combustion vehicles from Chevrolet, General Motors, Ford and Stellantis on a closed-off convention center floor, and greeted union workers, CEOs and local leaders.

“You all know I’m a car guy,” Biden told a roaring crowd of autoworkers, adding that cars “just give me a sense of optimism — although I like the speed too.”

While Biden has been taking credit for the recent boom in electric vehicle battery and assembly plant announcements, most were in the works long before the Inflation Reduction Act was signed into law on Aug. 16. Biden’s 2021 infrastructure legislation could have something to do with it — it provides \$5 billion over five years to help states create a network of EV charging stations.

In Detroit, Biden announced approval of the first \$900 million in infrastructure money to build EV chargers across 53,000 miles of the national highway system in 34 states and Puerto Rico.

“The great American road trip is going to be fully electrified,” Biden said.

He also highlighted the law’s funding supporting infrastructure projects in Detroit and across Michigan.

“When you see these big projects in your home towns,” Biden said, “I want you to feel the way I feel: Pride. Pride in what we can do when we do it together.”

The president credited the United Auto Workers and other unions with supporting him in his 2020 bid for the White House. He highlighted how his administration has worked to promote union contracts for big projects, calling union workers the “most skilled” in the nation.

“The middle class built America, and unions built the middle class,” Biden said.

He made time for party politics, too. He praised Michigan Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, who is up for reelection in November, calling her “a great governor” who has utilized federal resources for her state to the fullest. Biden also participated in a Michigan Democratic Party fundraiser on behalf of her reelection campaign.

During a tour of the convention center floor, the Democratic president, who recently took a spin in his pine-green 1967 Stingray with Jay Leno for a segment on CNBC’s “Jay Leno’s Garage,” hopped into the driver seat of a bright orange Chevrolet Corvette Z06 — which starts at \$106,000 and is not an EV — and fired up its engine, alongside GM CEO Mary Barra.

“He says he’s driving home,” she joked.

Biden then toured the new electric Ford Mustang Mach-E, marveling with Ford executive chairman Bill



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Ford at the model's performance. "It's amazing the speed," Biden said, adding, "Does it have a launch button?" He also explored less-flashy vehicles, like Ford's all-electric E-Transit van and F-150 truck.

Biden finally got behind the wheel of a Cadillac Lyriq all electric SUV, which starts at \$63,000, briefly driving it down an aisle in the blue-carpeted hall. It marked a rare occasion to drive — albeit at little more than a walking pace — for the president, who typically is transported in armored U.S. Secret Service vehicles when out in public.

"Jump in, I'll give you a ride to Washington," he joked to reporters. "It's a beautiful car," he said, "but I love the Corvette."

Under the new law, electric vehicles must be built in North America to be eligible for a federal tax credit of up to \$7,500. Batteries for qualifying vehicles also must be made in North America, and there are requirements for battery minerals to be produced or recycled on the continent. The credits are aimed at creating a U.S. electric vehicle supply chain and ending dependence on other countries, mainly China.

Passage of the measure set off a scramble by automakers to speed up efforts to find North American-made batteries and battery minerals from the U.S., Canada or Mexico to make sure EVs are eligible for the credit.

In April, Ford started building electric pickup trucks at a new Michigan factory. General Motors has revamped an older factory in Detroit to make electric Hummers and pickups.

Long before legislators reached a compromise on the legislation, each company announced three EV battery factories, all joint ventures with battery makers. A GM battery plant in Warren, Ohio, has already started manufacturing. A government loan announced in July will help GM build its battery factories.

Ford said last September it would build the next generation of electric pickups at a plant in Tennessee, and GM has announced EV assembly plants in Lansing, Michigan; Spring Hill, Tennessee; and Orion Township, Michigan. In May, Stellantis, formerly Fiat Chrysler, said it would build another joint venture battery factory in Indiana, and it has announced a battery plant in Canada.

Hyundai announced battery and assembly plants in May to be built in Georgia, and Vietnamese automaker VinFast announced factories in North Carolina in July. Honda and Toyota both announced U.S. battery plants after the act was passed, but they had been planned for months.

Biden has been talking for a long time about the importance of building a domestic EV supply chain, and that may have prodded some of the companies to locate factories in the U.S. But it's also advantageous to build batteries near where EVs will be assembled because the batteries are heavy and costly to ship from overseas.

And auto companies are rolling out more affordable electric options despite battery costs. The latest came last week from General Motors, a Chevrolet Equinox small SUV. It has a starting price around \$30,000 and a range-per-charge of 250 miles, or 400 kilometers. Buyers can get a range of 300 miles, or 500 kilometers, if they pay more.

The Equinox checks the North American assembly box. It will be made in Mexico. The company won't say where the battery will be made but it is working on meeting the other criteria for getting the tax credit.

It will take more than government money to build enough charging stations to ease the public's anxiety over running out of juice with an electric vehicle, said Christian Meunier, CEO of Stellantis' Jeep brand. But the money Biden announced should bring more private investment, he said.

"There is momentum building. There will be a business case for private companies to invest more," Meunier said on the floor of the auto show. "It's going to exponentially grow."

Krisher reported from Detroit. AP writer Zeke Miller in Washington contributed.

## Q&A: Next steps for Iowa teen sentenced for killing rapist

By MARGERY A. BECK and DAVID PITT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Donations are pouring in to help a 17-year-old sex trafficking victim who was ordered by a court to pay \$150,000 to the family of a man she stabbed to death after he raped her.

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A GoFundMe campaign set up for Pieper Lewis has already raised more than \$200,000 just one day after the restitution order was handed down by an Iowa judge.

Lewis also received a deferred 20-year prison sentence on Tuesday that will be expunged if she successfully completes five years of closely supervised probation. Prosecutors described the sentence as merciful for a teen who had been horribly abused -- and the judge said the law compelled him to order the \$150,000 payment -- but it struck many observers as unnecessarily harsh.

Lewis pleaded guilty last year to involuntary manslaughter and willful injury in the June 2020 killing of 37-year-old Zachary Brooks, a married father of two. Lewis was 15 when she stabbed Brooks more than 30 times in a Des Moines apartment.

Lewis has maintained that she was trafficked against her will to Brooks for sex multiple times and stabbed him in a fit of rage. Police and prosecutors have not disputed that Lewis was sexually assaulted and trafficked.

The Associated Press does not typically name victims of sexual assault, but Lewis agreed to have her name used previously in stories about her case.

Here's a look at how Lewis ended up facing criminal charges in an Iowa court and what's next for her:  
WHAT'S THE BACKSTORY OF THE GOFUNDME CAMPAIGN FOR LEWIS?

The account was set up late last year for Lewis by one of her former high school teachers. Initially the goal was set at \$150,000 to cover the restitution payment. All additional money raised will help Lewis pay for college or start her own business, and help other young victims of sex crimes.

"Pieper has five years of probation ahead of her; five years that she will be required to be nearly perfect to avoid facing 20 years in prison," Leland Schipper, a math teacher at Des Moines Lincoln High School, said on the GoFundMe page. "Pieper's path to true freedom will not be easy, and she is still a teenager that has experienced a lot of trauma."

The vast majority of donations came in increments of less than \$50. Almost every donor offered words of encouragement or outrage over the teen's prosecution — and sometimes both.

"Pieper, from one survivor to another, life gets better," one \$20 donor wrote. "I am disgusted you spent a second in jail, but don't look back. Use whatever funds are left to move on and move up."

WHY WAS LEWIS ORDERED TO PAY \$150,000 TO THE ESTATE OF HER ATTACKER?

Iowa law mandates that anyone convicted of a felony that leads to the death of another person must pay "at least" this much to the victim's estate.

The payment cannot be discharged through bankruptcy, and it does not preclude a victim's family from suing for more damages. But there is nothing in the law that would appear to bar someone from using donations to pay the restitution, said Grant Gangestad, a criminal defense attorney who helps lead the Iowa Association for Justice, a trade group for trial lawyers.

Lewis' lawyers argued that as a victim of human trafficking and sexual abuse, she should be spared from making any payment at all. They argued that Brooks was partially responsible for what happened and that such restitution would be cruel and unusual under the circumstances.

The judge rejected those arguments at Tuesday's sentencing hearing, noting that the Iowa Supreme Court has upheld the state's restitution law even in the face of some of those same arguments.

It is not clear whether Lewis' lawyers will appeal; they said Wednesday they are still weighing their options.  
WHY DID PROSECUTORS CHARGE LEWIS FOR KILLING A MAN WHO RAPED HER?

Dozens of states have so-called safe harbor laws that give trafficking victims at least some level of criminal immunity. Iowa is not one of them.

Iowans can avoid being convicted of violent crimes, however, if they can prove that they faced "imminent" serious injury.

While nobody disputed that Lewis was sexually assaulted and trafficked, prosecutors successfully argued that Brooks was not an immediate danger to Lewis because he was asleep at the time he was stabbed.

Prosecutors said that their goal in seeking charges against Lewis was twofold: To ensure the protection of the public from someone capable of stabbing another person to death, and to ensure that Lewis receives

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the rehabilitative help she needs.

HAS THE MAN LEWIS ACCUSED OF TRAFFICKING HER BEEN CHARGED?

No. Lewis has said she lived with a man for more than two months in 2020 after she had run away from an abusive home. The then-28-year-old man told her she was his girlfriend, but told others she was his niece, Lewis said.

The man told her she couldn't live with him for free, she said, and created a dating profile for her on websites and arranged for her to have sex with other men for money, which occurred seven or eight times when she lived with him.

It was this man who took her to Brooks beginning in May 2020 to have sex, she said. When she resisted going back to Brooks' apartment another time, Lewis said the man held a knife to her neck and cut her with it.

Lewis names the man in court documents, but The Associated Press is not releasing his name because he has not been charged with a crime.

Polk County Attorney John Sarcone on Wednesday gave few details on why.

"No charges have been filed," Sarcone said. "The matter is under investigation, and our office will not comment further."

WHAT'S NEXT FOR LEWIS?

Lewis' five years of supervised probation will be spent at the state's Fresh Start Women's Center in Des Moines, a low-level prison facility that allows convicts some level of freedom to work and make some trips outside the facility. Lewis' whereabouts will be monitored through a GPS-enabled ankle bracelet.

She was also ordered to conduct 600 hours of community service, to be carried out by speaking to other young people about the dangers they face and the importance of making responsible choices.

"You have a story to tell," Polk County District judge David M. Porter said at her sentencing. "You should be willing to tell it to other young women."

Lewis, who earned her GED diploma while being held in juvenile detention, has said she would like to go to college and dreams of being a fashion designer.

At Tuesday's sentencing hearing, she expressed both hope and fear for her future.

"I know that I am being watched by a million eyes. The reality is, I will make mistakes, even with the court's pressure," she said, reading from a prepared statement.

"I refuse to fail," she said. "I refuse to let the system fail me."

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Beck reported from Omaha, Nebraska.

## From carmakers to refiners, industries brace for rail strike

By The Associated Press undefined

Car buyers might not get the vehicle they want on time, commuter rail lines could see service disrupted, and shipments from everything from oil to livestock feed could be snarled.

Those are just a few of the wide-ranging impacts a walkout by U.S. rail workers would have on the country's industries and economy. A strike could happen if the railroads and unions can't settle their differences before an early Friday walkout deadline.

Here's how some industries are gauging the potential impacts and getting ready for the possible work stoppage.

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### AUTO INDUSTRY

Nearly all new vehicles that travel more than a couple hundred miles from the factory to their destination are shipped by rail because it's more efficient, said Michael Robinet, an executive director for S&P Global Mobility. So it's almost a certainty that new vehicles coming to the U.S. from Mexico or other countries will be delayed, he said.

"It's not like there's extra truck capacity to take all the vehicles that the railroads can't carry," Robinet said.

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Automakers might be hampered in building vehicles, too, because some larger parts and raw materials are transported by rail. But Robinet said automakers will go to great lengths to get the parts to keep their factories running as much as possible.

Mike Austin, senior mobility analyst for Guidehouse Research, said the strike could make new vehicles even more scarce, driving prices up beyond current record levels. That could raise inflation "as other goods aren't moving through the rails."

Carlos Tavares, CEO of Stellantis, said Wednesday at the Detroit auto show that his company will wind up apologizing to customers because their orders may not arrive on time.

## COMMUTING

Metra commuter rail service, which operates in the Chicago area, said Wednesday that it would suspend operations on four of its 11 lines on Friday if a work stoppage occurs. Some disruption on those lines would begin after rush hour Thursday night. In Minnesota, the operators of a commuter rail line that carries workers along a densely populated corridor from Minneapolis to northwestern suburbs and towns warned that service could be suspended as early as Friday.

In the Puget Sound region of Washington state, any strike would cancel the rail service until employees return to work, said David Jackson, a spokesman for the regional transit agency Sound Transit. Some Caltrain riders in the San Francisco Bay Area could be impacted by a rail strike, officials said.

The Maryland Transit Administration warned this week that a strike would mean the immediate suspension of service on two of its three MARC commuter rail lines.

Amtrak, meanwhile, said that starting Thursday, all its long-distance trains are canceled to avoid possible passenger disruptions while en route.

## ENERGY

A strike could have a significant impact on the energy industry, and could hurt consumers who would likely end up paying more for gasoline, electricity and natural gas. Refineries might have to halt production if they can't get the deliveries they need, or if they don't have access to rail to ship gasoline.

No one wants to risk leaving flammable chemicals stranded on the railroad tracks if a strike occurs. That's why railroads began curtailing shipments of hazardous materials on Monday to protect that dangerous cargo.

Roughly 300,000 barrels of crude oil move by rail each day, which could supply about two mid-size refineries, according to AFPM. And about 5 million barrels of propane, representing a third of U.S. consumption, are moved by rail monthly, the group said.

Roughly 70% of ethanol produced in the U.S. is shipped by rail, and ethanol accounts for about a tenth of U.S. gasoline volume, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights. Nearly 75% of the coal moved to electric utilities in the first half of 2022 was moved by rail, the group said.

## AGRICULTURE

Livestock producers could see problems almost immediately if shipments of feed abruptly ended, according to the National Grain and Feed Association.

Meat and poultry groups noted the reliance on rail for shipments of feed and called for a quick resolution of the rail dispute. Every week, the nation's chicken industry receives about 27 million bushels of corn and 11 million bushels of soybean meal to feed chickens, said Tom Super, senior vice president of the National Chicken Council.

## RETAIL

Experts say retailers have been shipping goods earlier in the season in recent months as a way to protect themselves from potential disruptions. But this buffer will only slightly minimize the impact from a railroad strike, which is brewing during the critical holiday shipping season, said Jesse Dankert, vice president of supply chain at the Retail Industry Leaders Association, a retail trade group that counts more than 200 retailers like Best Buy as its members. She noted that retailers are already feeling the impact from the

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uncertainty as some freight carriers are limiting services.

Dankert noted that retailers, noticing a slowdown in shipments, are now making contingency plans like turning to trucks to pick up some of the slack and making plans to use some of the excess inventory that it has in its distribution centers.

But she noted that there are not enough trucks and drivers to meet their needs. That scarcity will only drive up costs and make inflation worse, she said.

"As we have seen in the past two and half years, if there is a breakdown anywhere along the supply chain, one link falters, you see that ripple effect pretty quickly and those effects just spread from there," Dankert said.

## Election denier Bolduc wins New Hampshire GOP Senate race

By WILL WEISSERT and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Retired Army Brig. Gen. Donald Bolduc won New Hampshire's Senate Republican primary on Wednesday and will face potentially vulnerable Democratic incumbent Maggie Hassan in November — setting up another test of whether a fierce conservative can appeal to more moderate general election voters.

Bolduc wasn't formally endorsed by former President Donald Trump but has said he believes Trump won the 2020 election and has espoused conspiracy theories about vaccines. The former president called him a "strong guy, tough guy."

Two other pro-Trump candidates won their U.S. House primaries in New Hampshire — Karoline Leavitt in the 1st Congressional District and Bob Burns in the 2nd Congressional District — leaving some in the party questioning whether they will be able to broaden their appeal beyond the GOP base in November.

"Nice! The "Trumpiest" people ALL won in New Hampshire last night. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!!!" Trump wrote on Truth Social on Wednesday.

Primaries in New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Delaware on Tuesday capped the nation's primary season just eight weeks before Election Day, when majorities in both chambers of Congress, key governorships and scores of important state offices will be up for grabs.

Dozens of candidates around the country who were openly championed by Trump — or at least hewed closely to his brand — helped extend his hold on the national GOP. They notched primary wins up and down the ballot from Maryland to Arizona, Florida to Michigan. Some defeated Republican incumbents who had been open Trump antagonists.

The former president and the larger movement of Trumpism, which President Joe Biden and other top Democrats have decried as presenting a major threat to American democracy, didn't win every major race of the primary cycle. But those candidates who used the former president's support to win GOP nominations now will likely have to prove they can appeal to a broader swath of the electorate in general elections, where larger numbers of voters tend to be more moderate than those who turn out for primaries.

The results of Tuesday's primaries mean the general election for Senate in New Hampshire should provide another such test. Biden carried the state by more than 7 percentage points. Republican primary voters also picked conservative candidates this year in moderate or Democratic-leaning states including Massachusetts, potentially putting competitive races out of the party's reach.

Bolduc's victory likely reignites disappointment among some in the national party that Republican Gov. Chris Sununu, a relatively popular moderate who might have posed more of a threat to Hassan, chose instead to run for reelection. In his primary, Bolduc defeated New Hampshire state Senate President Chuck Morse, a mainstream Republican endorsed by Sununu, who called Morse "the candidate to beat Sen. Hassan this November and the candidate Sen. Hassan is most afraid to face."

By contrast, Sununu called Bolduc a conspiracy theorist and suggested he would have a tougher time in the general election. Bolduc wasn't bothered by Sununu's criticism, calling the governor "a Chinese communist sympathizer."

Some Democratic groups, meanwhile, sponsored primary ads promoting Bolduc, predicting he'd make

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an easier 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.

"Our campaign overcame the odds and millions of dollars in spending from outside special interest groups because we built a true bottom-up grassroots campaign," Bolduc tweeted in the wee hours of Wednesday. "Throughout the primary, I have felt the concerns of the voters, and heard time and again we need to send an outsider to Washington."

New Hampshire, known for kicking off the primary season during presidential campaigns, instead concluded the nominating process for this year's midterms. The races were less high profile in Rhode Island and Delaware, where Biden traveled late Tuesday to cast his ballot.

The final primary contests unfolded 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 Biden's approval rating steadies and inflation has slowed for the second straight month, even as it remains high.

The Supreme Court's decision overturning a 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.

Many of the same dynamics swirling around the former president were also at work Tuesday in New Hampshire's 1st Congressional District, where Leavitt, who worked in the Trump White House's press office, topped some more experienced Republicans with ties to the former president. She'll square off against Democratic Rep. Chris Pappas in another November contest that could be close.

Leavitt, who just turned 25 and could be among the first members of Gen Z in Congress, said she was "sending a strong and clear message to the Washington, D.C., establishment, and our Democratic opponent that our votes cannot be bought, our conservative voices can not be silenced." She also laced into Pappas, saying he "has campaigned his entire political career as a moderate, bipartisan voice for our district. But he has voted as a far left socialist Democrat."

Pappas also wasted little time going on the offensive against Leavitt, saying, "I will fight with everything I've got to stop extreme politicians like Karoline from hijacking our democracy."

In New Hampshire's 2nd Congressional District, the pro-Trump Burns won the Republican nomination to face five-term incumbent Democratic Rep. Annie Kuster in a general election race the GOP sees as potentially very competitive.

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Weissert reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Kathy McCormack in Concord, N.H., contributed to this report.

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Follow the AP's coverage of the 2022 midterm elections at <https://apnews.com/hub/2022-midterm-elections>.

## Defense suddenly rests case in Florida school shooter trial

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Attorneys for Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz suddenly and surprisingly rested their case Wednesday after calling only a fraction of their expected witnesses, leading to a shouting match after the judge accused them of a lack of professionalism.

Cruz's attorneys had told the judge and prosecutors they would be calling 80 witnesses but rested at the beginning of Wednesday's court session after calling only about 25. There were 11 days of defense testi-

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mony overall, the last two spotlighting experts about how his birth mother's heavy use of alcohol during pregnancy might have affected his brain's development and led to his murder of 17 people at Parkland's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School four years ago.

The sudden announcement by lead attorney Melisa McNeill led to a heated exchange between her and Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer, who called the decision without warning to her or the prosecution "the most uncalled for, unprofessional way to try a case."

The 12-member jury and 10 alternates were not present but were lining up outside the courtroom to enter. The sudden announcement also meant prosecutors weren't ready to start their rebuttal case.

Lead prosecutor Mike Satz threw his hands up when Scherer asked if he could begin and, with a nervous laugh, said "no."

"We're waiting for 40 more (defense) witnesses," Satz said.

Scherer then accused Cruz's attorneys of being inconsiderate to all involved, but especially the jurors for wasting their trip to court.

"To have 22 people march into court and be waiting as if it is some kind of game. I have never experienced such a level of unprofessionalism in my career," Scherer said, raising her voice.

McNeill countered angrily, "You are insulting me on the record in front of my client," before Scherer told her to stop. Scherer then laid into McNeill, with whom she has had a testy relationship since pretrial hearings began more than three years ago.

"You've been insulting me the entire trial," Scherer barked at McNeill. "Arguing with me, storming out, coming late intentionally if you don't like my rulings. So, quite frankly, this has been long overdue. So please be seated."

Cruz, 23, pleaded guilty last October to murdering 14 Stoneman Douglas students and three staff members on Feb. 14, 2018. His trial, now ending its second month, is only to determine whether he is sentenced to death or life without parole. For a death sentence, the jury must be unanimous.

After his attorneys rested, Cruz told Scherer he agreed with the decision.

"I think we are good," he said.

When jurors were told of the decision, several stared at the defense table, appearing stunned.

Cruz's attorneys have tried to show how his late birth mother's alcohol abuse during pregnancy put Cruz onto a lifelong path of erratic, bizarre and often violent behavior that culminated in the shootings. They also tried to show that his adoptive mother, Lynda Cruz, became overwhelmed after her husband died when Cruz was 5.

They called witnesses who knew his birth mother, Brenda Woodard, a Fort Lauderdale prostitute. They testified she drank fortified wine and malt liquor and abused cocaine during her pregnancy.

They called Cruz's psychiatrists and psychologists and teachers from his preschool, elementary and middle school years — they all testified he was a slow developing child who hurt others, had frequent outbursts, made threats and had few friends.

The defense concluded their case by calling Dr. Kenneth Jones, one of the nation's leading fetal alcohol experts, who said in his five decades of research he had never seen a birth mother who had more documented drinking than Woodard. He believes Cruz's doctors didn't properly diagnose him with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, meaning he never got the right treatment.

But Cruz's attorneys had been expected to call his younger half-brother, Zachary, who was a central figure in their case with witnesses accusing him of bullying his smaller, weaker brother. They also presented no witnesses from the school for students with behavioral problems that Cruz attended and no witnesses to discuss his troubled days attending Stoneman Douglas, where he was frequently searched for weapons.

Two attorneys who have followed the trial are stunned by the defense's decision.

"Wow. That is a shocker," said David Weinstein, a Miami defense attorney and former prosecutor. He said perhaps the defense was worried the prosecution's cross-examination of their witnesses was hurting their case, but "I am surprised that there was no testimony about his high school years or more about" Cruz.

Robert Jarvis, a professor at Nova Southeastern University's law school near Fort Lauderdale, said the decision is hard to fathom.

"Perhaps the defense felt it had made its case. Perhaps the defense felt it was losing the jury and further

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witnesses would only alienate the jury. Perhaps the defense felt that the witnesses to be called would give the prosecution too much leeway to explore matters during cross-examination that the defense did not want explored," Jarvis said.

Still, he said Scherer's dressing down of McNeill was uncalled for. He has been an outspoken critic of Scherer's selection to oversee such a complicated case — she had never tried a first-degree murder trial before being assigned Cruz's.

"It was the defense's right to rest when it thought the right moment was reached. Indeed, I have never heard of a judge effectively demanding that a party call all its proposed witnesses," Jarvis said. "This is just another example of Judge Scherer not being the right judge."

The defense is trying to overcome the prosecution's case, which focused on Cruz's massacre as he stalked a three-story classroom building for seven minutes with an AR-15-style semiautomatic rifle. Satz played security videos of the shooting and showed the rifle Cruz used. Teachers and students testified about watching others die.

Satz 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.

Prosecutors said they will need more than a week to prepare their rebuttal case. The trial is now tentatively scheduled to resume Sept. 27 and conclude the week of Oct. 10.

AP writer Freida Frisaro in Miami contributed to this report.

## Ti West, Mia Goth dream up a technicolor horror in 'Pearl'

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

VENICE, Italy (AP) — Ti West had a wild idea.

It was year one of the pandemic and his 1970s-set slasher "X" was one of the few films allowed to go into production thanks to the low COVID-19 numbers in New Zealand. He'd been talking to his star Mia Goth — who in "X" plays dual roles of a young porn star, Maxine, and a murderous older woman, Pearl — and had a thought: What if they just made two movies while they were there?

The idea isn't an uncommon one for a major franchise based on known intellectual property, but for an independent horror that hadn't shot a single frame, it was bold, to say the least. It wouldn't be a sequel either, but a prequel about Pearl in her youth.

"I'm like, well, they're never going to go for THAT," West said last week at the Venice Film Festival. To his immense surprise, however, they did.

The result, "Pearl," which had its premiere in Venice and opens in theaters nationwide on Friday, drops in on its title character as a teen in 1918. She dreams of being in the movies but is tethered to her family's Texas farm, with her strict, German mother and ailing father, until she gets a morsel of hope in an upcoming audition for a dance company.

"I just had this interest in making, for lack of a better term, a children's movie that has a more demented adult story to it," West said, seated beside Goth in a cottage at the Albergo Quattro Fontane on the Lido.

Goth, in a stylish and severe black corset ensemble, looks worlds away from the wide-eyed farmgirl with a pitchfork and a dream she portrays in "Pearl."

The film is a candy-colored ode to technicolor classics of Hollywood's Golden Age, from "The Wizard of Oz" to "Singin' in the Rain" but with carnage and blood. Touchstones ranged from Disney cartoons to Max Ophuls.

There was a "cheaper" version that West was willing to make, which would have been shot in black and white, paying homage to the films of Ingmar Bergman, but A24 had just come off of "The Lighthouse" and there were a few other black and white projects floating around, and the studio encouraged the colorful version.

"There was an interesting movie there" he said. "Either way, it was going to be a rich cinematic pastiche.



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I said, 'I'm just offering a cheaper version.' And they were like, 'No, no, no. Make the better version.'"

Goth even got a co-credit as a screenwriter, which was a new experience for the "Suspiria" and "High Life" actor.

"I'd never really considered writing scripts of my own," Goth said. "I didn't know if I would be able to help or contribute in any meaningful, worthwhile way."

But she accepted the challenge. For her writing sessions, Goth would set a timer and jot things down in a stream of consciousness that she'd then send to West to format.

"To me, she was just someone who was very ambitious and was likely just at the wrong place in the wrong time," Goth said. "I think had she had better opportunities presented to her, life would have turned out very differently."

Working on the script ultimately helped her feel more connected to the words on the page, which came in handy for the big finale: An emotional seven-minute monologue from Pearl that West wanted to shoot in one take.

"That was our last day of shooting," Goth said. "It was a lot of pressure because I knew that Ti wanted to do it in that one take. I didn't want to mess up or to stumble over my lines. And I never went to drama school. It's like not studied. I didn't have like an approach to tackling something like that."

But she needn't have worried. They did it a few times and were finished before lunch, which is almost unheard of for 12 pages of script.

The films have even taken on a meta quality, allowing them to explore and comment on the way cinema affects people.

"There's the sort of ambition and the dreamlike quality of it and the wonder of it all. But what comes with that is also sometimes you're the person who doesn't get the part," West said. "When your life and dreams are attached to that, it's heavy, you know?"

The world of "X" and "Pearl" is expanding too. This week, A24 announced that there would be a third film, a finale, called "MaXXXine" set in 1985.

"We catch up with Maxine after 'X,'" West teased. "I have to be a little tight lipped after that."

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Follow AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/ld](https://www.twitter.com/ld)

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## Disabled voters win in Wisconsin; legal fights elsewhere

By HARM VENHUIZEN Associated Press/Report for America

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Trudy Le Beau has voted in every major election since she turned 18 — a half-century of civic participation that has gotten increasingly difficult as her multiple sclerosis progressed. Now, with no use of her arms or legs, the Wisconsin woman relies on her husband to help her fill out and return a ballot.

This year, it seemed for the first time that the 68-year-old would have to choose between her physical health and voting.

After the Wisconsin Supreme Court outlawed ballot drop boxes in July, the state's top election official cited a state law that said voters had to place their own absentee ballots in the mail or return them to clerks in person.

"I certainly don't want to send my husband to jail because he put my ballot in the mailbox," Le Beau said. "I would have to find some way of putting my ballot in my teeth and carrying it to the clerk's office."

Fortunately for Le Beau, she and other Wisconsin voters with disabilities can get the help they need to return their ballots this November after a federal judge last month ruled that the Voting Rights Act, which allows for voter assistance, trumps state law.

In other states, however, battles continue over ballot assistance and other voting laws that harm voters with disabilities. As voters push back, challenges have arisen in the past two years to laws and practices

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in at least eight states that make it difficult or impossible for people with certain disabilities to vote.

A federal judge in June struck down voter assistance restrictions in sweeping changes to election laws passed by Texas Republicans last year that in part limited the help that voters with disabilities or limited English proficiency could get. Under the law, a voter could only receive assistance reading or marking a ballot, not returning one.

In July in North Carolina, a federal judge blocked state laws that limited people with disabilities to receiving ballot assistance only from a close relative or legal guardian. Restrictions on ballot assistance still stand in several other states, including Kansas, Iowa, Kentucky and Missouri. In Missouri, an ongoing lawsuit challenges a 1977 state law that says no one can assist more than one voter per election.

A Kansas judge in April dismissed parts of a lawsuit challenging voter assistance restrictions, saying the state's interest in preventing voter fraud outweighed concerns about voters who may not get the assistance they need.

But such anti-fraud measures — a major push by Republicans since former President Donald Trump's false claims of a stolen election in 2020 — don't affect everyone equally.

"Voting restrictions aimed at the general public can have a disparate impact on people with disabilities," said Jess Davidson, communications director for the American Association of People with Disabilities.

Voters and state agencies in Alaska, New York and Alabama have also raised challenges to absentee voting programs that don't provide accessible ballots for people with visual impairments or disabilities that make it difficult to fill out a print ballot privately. Advocacy groups in New York reached a settlement in April that requires the state elections board to create a program for disabled voters to fill out and print accessible online ballots.

Wisconsin voters with disabilities expressed frustration at having to fight for equal voting rights when federal law already lays out specific provisions for accessibility.

"This whole issue was absolutely ridiculous to start out with. It shouldn't matter if you need assistance returning your ballot," said Stacy Ellingen.

Ellingen, 37, has athetoid spastic cerebral palsy because of complications at birth. She lives in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and with no accessible transportation options, absentee voting is the only way she can cast a ballot. She said if it weren't for the ruling handed down two weeks ago, she wouldn't have been able to vote this fall.

"I'm not going to risk having caregivers get in trouble for putting my ballot in the mailbox. Especially when we have such a caregiver shortage," she said.

Republican lawmakers have yet to offer any resistance to the Wisconsin ruling. But Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, a law firm that frequently litigates for conservative causes, raised concern that the ruling could perpetuate fraud. They unsuccessfully pressed the Wisconsin Elections Commission to require anyone returning a ballot on someone else's behalf to sign a statement saying the voter has a disability and requires assistance.

Davidson, of the American Association of People with Disabilities, called the argument that voter assistance will lead to fraud "simply inaccurate, and motivated by anti-democratic interests."

Martha Chambers was paralyzed in a horseback riding accident 27 years ago. She uses her mouth to hold pens, paintbrushes and mouth sticks, which allow her to use a computer. Chambers also relies on a power wheelchair to get around.

Because she can't use her arms, she's unable to return her own ballot to a mailbox or polling location. A caregiver returned her ballot in Wisconsin's August primary, and Chambers said she joined the lawsuit so it wouldn't be illegal in future elections for caregivers to give such help.

"Why did we even have to go through all of this to begin with? Our lives are difficult enough with the challenges that we have on a daily basis," she said.

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AP reporters Summer Ballentine in Jefferson City, Missouri, and Heather Hollingsworth, in Kansas City, Kansas contributed to this report.

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Harm Venhuizen is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues. Follow Venhuizen on Twitter.

## **WHO: COVID end 'in sight,' deaths at lowest since March 2020**

GENEVA (AP) — The head of the World Health Organization said Wednesday that the number of coronavirus deaths worldwide last week was the lowest reported in the pandemic since March 2020, marking what could be a turning point in the years-long global outbreak.

At a press briefing in Geneva, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the world has never been in a better position to stop COVID-19.

"We are not there yet, but the end is in sight," he said, comparing the effort to that made by a marathon runner nearing the finish line. "Now is the worst time to stop running," he said. "Now is the time to run harder and make sure we cross the line and reap all the rewards of our hard work."

In its weekly report on the pandemic, the U.N. health agency said deaths fell by 22% in the past week, at just over 11,000 reported worldwide. There were 3.1 million new cases, a drop of 28%, continuing a weeks-long decline in the disease in every part of the world.

Still, the WHO warned that relaxed COVID testing and surveillance in many countries means that many cases are going unnoticed. The agency issued a set of policy briefs for governments to strengthen their efforts against the coronavirus ahead of the expected winter surge of COVID-19, warning that new variants could yet undo the progress made to date.

"If we don't take this opportunity now, we run the risk of more variants, more deaths, more disruption, and more uncertainty," Tedros said.

The WHO reported that the omicron subvariant BA.5 continues to dominate globally and comprised nearly 90% of virus samples shared with the world's biggest public database. In recent weeks, regulatory authorities in Europe, the U.S. and elsewhere have cleared tweaked vaccines that target both the original coronavirus and later variants including BA.5.

Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO's technical lead on COVID-19, said the organization expected future waves of the disease, but was hopeful those would not cause many deaths.

Meanwhile in China, residents of a city in the country's far western Xinjiang region have said they are experiencing hunger, forced quarantines and dwindling supplies of medicine and daily necessities after more than 40 days in a lockdown prompted by COVID-19.

Hundreds of posts from Ghulja riveted users of Chinese social media last week, with residents sharing videos of empty refrigerators, feverish children and people shouting from their windows.

On Monday, local police announced the arrests of six people for "spreading rumors" about the lockdown, including posts about a dead child and an alleged suicide, which they said "incited opposition" and "disrupted social order."

Leaked directives from government offices show that workers are being ordered to avoid negative information and spread "positive energy" instead. One directed state media to film "smiling seniors" and "children having fun" in neighborhoods emerging from the lockdown.

The government has ordered mass testing and district lockdowns in cities across China in recent weeks, from Sanya on tropical Hainan island to southwest Chengdu, to the northern port city of Dalian.

Follow all AP stories on the pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

## **Leaky pen and staff job cuts: King Charles under scrutiny**

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Reports that up to 100 staff at King Charles III's former residence could lose their jobs have drawn criticism of the British monarchy, within days of his accession to the throne.

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The Guardian newspaper reported Tuesday that dozens of staff at Clarence House, Charles' former official residence, were given notice that their jobs were on the line. The report said the notices came in the midst of a busy period of transition as Charles and his wife Camilla, the queen consort, move to Buckingham Palace after Queen Elizabeth II's death on Thursday.

The Public and Commercial Services Union called the royals' decision to inform staff of job cuts during a period of mourning "nothing short of heartless."

"While some changes across the households were to be expected, as roles across the royal family change, the scale and speed at which this has been announced is callous in the extreme," the union's general secretary, Mark Serwotka, said

Britain is in a national period of mourning until Monday, when the queen's state funeral will be held.

In a statement, Clarence House said that following Charles' accession, operations of his and Camilla's household "have ceased" and "as required by law, a consultation process has begun."

"Our staff have given long and loyal service and, while some redundancies will be unavoidable, we are working urgently to identify alternative roles for the greatest possible number of staff," the statement added.

The Guardian said one unnamed member of Charles' staff told the newspaper that "everyone is absolutely livid ... people were visibly shaken by it."

The criticism added to negative press for the 73-year-old monarch after two videos showing him visibly irritated by a leaky pen and a pen holder went viral on social media in recent days.

In one video, Charles was seen losing his temper at a leaking pen while he was signing a visitors' book in front of cameras in Northern Ireland, where he was visiting Tuesday on the latest leg of his royal tour of the U.K.'s four nations.

Charles was heard exclaiming "Oh god I hate this!" and muttering "I can't bear this bloody thing ... every stinking time."

The video came after another pen-related incident on Saturday, when the new monarch was seen gesturing in irritation at his staff when a pen holder got in his way as he signed a document during his accession ceremony.

Charles has been under intense media scrutiny and had a grueling schedule since his mother's death in Scotland on Thursday. He and Camilla flew from Scotland to London for his accession ceremony and a visit to Parliament to address legislators, before flying back to Scotland where he walked behind the queen's coffin.

He then jetted to Northern Ireland on Tuesday and returned to London the same night, in time for the procession of the queen's coffin from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Hall on Wednesday.

Follow AP coverage of Queen Elizabeth II at <https://apnews.com/hub/queen-elizabeth-ii>

## Bingo, Lite-Brite, Nerf among Toy Hall of Fame finalists

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP) — Voting opened Wednesday on which toys should go into the National Toy Hall of Fame this year. The class of 2022 finalists are: bingo, Breyer Horses, Catan, Lite-Brite, Nerf Toys, Masters of the Universe, piñata, Phase 10, Pound Puppies, Rack-O, Spirograph, and the top.

"These 12 toys span the history of play. The top is as old as civilization itself and bingo has been played in some form for hundreds of years," said Christopher Bensch, vice president for collections at The Strong museum in Rochester, where the hall of fame is housed.

The public is invited to vote online through Sept. 21. The three toys that receive the most public votes will make up a single "Player's Choice" ballot. That ballot will be counted alongside those turned in by a national selection committee whose members include industry experts, academics and others.

The inductees will be announced Nov. 10.

"All 12 of these toys have what it takes to be contenders for the class of 2022," Bensch said.

Anyone can nominate a toy for the annual honor, but to be recognized by the hall of fame, toys have to have achieved icon status, longevity and foster learning or discovery. They also must have changed play

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or toy design.

The National Toy Hall of Fame opened at The Strong in 1998. So far, 77 toys have been inducted, from simple favorites like the paper airplane, bubbles and sidewalk chalk to the even more ubiquitous, including the stick and cardboard box.

Last year's honorees were American Girl Dolls, Risk, and sand.

## **Biden chooses veteran diplomat for new US envoy to Russia**

By MATTHEW LEE and ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration has picked a veteran foreign service officer with years of experience in Russian affairs as its nominee to be the next ambassador to Russia.

Administration officials familiar with the matter say the nomination of Lynne Tracy, the current U.S. ambassador to Armenia, will be submitted to the Senate as soon as the Russian government signs off on the choice. Ambassadorial nominations must be approved by the host government under the rules of diplomatic protocol.

Such approval is generally routine, but Russia's acceptance of President Joe Biden's pick for ambassador cannot be taken for granted at a time of particularly fraught U.S.-Russian relations over Ukraine, the detention of Americans in Russia, allegations of Russian meddling in U.S. and other elections, and an escalating spat over the staffing of embassies in Washington and Moscow.

The ambassador opening comes as many Russia experts in the United States who might have been candidates for the Moscow post have been banned from Russia. Russia was informed of the administration's decision to choose Tracy's several weeks ago but has not yet given its formal approval, known as "agrément" in diplomatic parlance, the officials said.

Tracy, who speaks Russian, previously served as a senior adviser for Russian affairs in the State Department's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, as the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. She also held several posts in Central and South Asia.

The previous U.S. ambassador to Moscow, John Sullivan, left earlier this month, in a departure that had been expected this fall but was accelerated by the failing health of his wife, who died a day after his return.

Tracy is well-regarded within diplomatic circles. She received a State Department heroism award from then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2009.

While leading the U.S. consulate in Peshawar in Pakistan's insurgency-ridden border regions, Tracy survived an attack on her by a gunman that left her vehicle riddled with bullets, but insisted on going to work that day and staying on post, even as security concerns compelled the consulate to trim its staff.

Tracy also received the State Department's distinguished honor award for her work as the embassy deputy in Moscow.

Sullivan ended his tenure as America's top diplomat in Moscow this month after nearly three years. He had been expected to leave this fall, but his departure was sped up due to his wife's deteriorating medical condition. His wife, lawyer Grace Rodriguez, had not accompanied him to Moscow.

While the position remains vacant, Elizabeth Rood, the deputy chief of mission to Russia, is serving as the top U.S. diplomat in Moscow.

The ambassador post became vacant at a time when the United States is leading a campaign by NATO member nations to arm and fund Ukraine as that country fights to expel a brutal Russian invasion. The Biden administration also is playing the lead role in rallying international sanctions aimed at crushing Russia's economy to force it to end the war.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who sees NATO expansion and other Western partnerships with former Soviet states as the U.S. encroaching on Russia's security, launched the invasion in February, targeting Ukraine's Western-oriented government.

The next U.S. ambassador to Moscow also is likely to play a central role in negotiations to bring home two Americans the U.S. says Russia is detaining unjustly, WNBA star Brittney Griner and civilian contractor Paul Whelan.

## Increasing pressures on Colorado River water in New Mexico

By THERESA DAVIS Albuquerque Journal

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Colorado River tributaries in New Mexico bring water to the alfalfa fields in the Four Corners and the forested hills of the Gila wilderness in the southwestern part of the state.

But Colorado River and reservoir management was designed during a much wetter period.

And now, water officials are grappling with how to make do with less.

State Engineer Mike Hamman, New Mexico's top water manager, said the state "really feels the shortages" because it doesn't have the big reservoirs of other states in the Colorado River Basin.

"That's the dilemma — looking at how we can reduce demand with as soft a blow as possible," Hamman said.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is part of a collaborative series on the Colorado River on the eve of the Colorado River Compact, signed nearly 100 years ago. The Colorado Sun, The Associated Press, 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.

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton this year tasked Colorado River states with creating an ambitious conservation plan.

Touton said the states need to conserve an additional 2 to 4 million acre-feet of water next year to protect levels at Lake Powell in Arizona and Utah and Lake Mead in Nevada and Arizona.

A basinwide conservation plan had not materialized by the mid-August deadline.

Nevada, Arizona and Mexico will all receive less water from the Colorado River next year because of rapidly-declining reservoirs, the Interior Department announced on Aug. 16.

Interior officials did not issue any mandatory water cuts for New Mexico.

But the state's existing water conservation programs could be under increased scrutiny.

The Upper Basin states of New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Wyoming did release a five-point plan this summer that points to the region's "limited" conservation options.

For two years, the states have released additional water from at least three reservoirs — including New Mexico's Navajo Reservoir — to prop up Lake Powell levels.

Those Upper Basin reservoir releases will likely continue next year, Interior officials said.

A more arid climate means all water users need to work harder to "live within our means," said Estevan López, New Mexico's representative on the Upper Colorado River Commission.

"It certainly seems that we have to reset our expectations for what we might be trying to get out of the river," said López, a former Reclamation commissioner.

In 2021, water managers considered releasing even more water from Navajo Reservoir to help water levels in downstream reservoirs.

But López said the additional release could have jeopardized regional water supplies.

"Ultimately, we argued against it," he said. "Reclamation would perhaps not have been able to fulfill its contractual obligations to folks like the Navajo Nation and Jicarilla Apache and others that depend on water out of Navajo."

The same issues could resurface next year if officials look to the New Mexico reservoir as an emergency supply for downstream users.

The Upper Basin plan hinges on existing conservation programs.

Strategies include fallowing fields and making irrigation more efficient.

But the entire region must work together, López said, to avoid more mandatory cuts.

"If we can get water users within places like the San Juan Basin to agree to shortage sharing agreements, then there's no need for strict priority administration," he said. "It's a more acceptable solution, generally."

Colorado River tributaries serve relatively small portions of northwest and southwest New Mexico.

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But the basin's water is essential for the state's largest city: Albuquerque.

Rio Grande flows in Albuquerque are closely tied to the Colorado via the San Juan-Chama Drinking Water Project.

The system of tunnels and dams at the New Mexico state line diverts water into the Rio Grande Basin. Albuquerque's municipal supply is entitled to as much as 15 billion gallons of San Juan-Chama water every year.

David Morris, the water utility spokesman for the city and county, said the Colorado River water has allowed the region to wean itself off of unsustainable groundwater pumping.

Since 2008, aquifer levels underneath the city have rebounded as much as 40 feet.

"That's exactly what we were hoping that our use of surface water would allow the aquifer to do," Morris said. "We're in a very fortunate situation here in Albuquerque to have two different and distinct sources of supply."

But less snowpack and spring runoff resulting from climate change have led to several consecutive years when the utility and other New Mexico entities have received far less water than expected from the inter-basin project.

"It's important for us to invest in things like outdoor water conservation and reuse," Morris said. "It's quite possible that there just won't be as much San Juan-Chama water available in the future because of drought and climate change."

The Colorado River Compact was signed in 1922 — just 10 years after New Mexico became a state.

New Mexico still uses only about half of its allotment under the compact each year.

That could change as more tribes reach water rights settlements and build out infrastructure to use those rights.

Agencies are making progress on large projects to deliver water to Navajo communities in western New Mexico.

A resilient future on the Colorado must have tribal sovereignty at the forefront, said Daryl Vigil, Jicarilla Apache Nation water administrator and a staunch advocate for tribal inclusion in water management issues.

"The term 'consultation' gets thrown around in the basin a whole lot," Vigil said. "But if you know one tribe, you only know one tribe. Having a seat at the table means working with every tribe to learn their specific water rights and needs."

The U.S. Interior Department has said it will engage with tribes in the basin as parties hammer out some management details of the compact that are set to expire after 2026.

A historic influx of funding for infrastructure and drought response could also help New Mexico and other basin states reduce water use and prepare for a drier future.

"I'm optimistic that we're going to sort through some of these more sticky problems with a good collaborative solution," Hamman said.

## TikTok search results riddled with misinformation: Report

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

TikTok may be the platform of choice for catchy videos, but anyone using it to learn about COVID-19, climate change or Russia's invasion of Ukraine is likely to encounter misleading information, according to a research report published Wednesday.

Researchers at NewsGuard searched for content about prominent news topics on TikTok and say they found that nearly 1 in 5 of the videos automatically suggested by the platform contained misinformation.

Searches for information about "mRNA vaccine," for instance, yielded five videos (out of the first 10) that contained misinformation, including baseless claims that the COVID-19 vaccine causes "permanent damage in children's critical organs."

Researchers looking for information about abortion, the 2020 election, the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, climate change or Russia's invasion of Ukraine on TikTok found similarly misleading videos scattered among more accurate clips.

The amount of misinformation — and the ease with which it can be found — is especially troubling

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given TikTok's popularity with young people, according to Steven Brill, founder of NewsGuard, a firm that monitors misinformation.

TikTok is the second most popular domain in the world, according to online performance and security company Cloudflare, exceeded only by Google.

Brill questioned whether ByteDance, the Chinese company that owns TikTok, is doing enough to stop misinformation or whether it deliberately allows misinformation to proliferate as a way to sow confusion in the U.S. and other Western democracies.

"It's either incompetence or it's something worse," Brill told The Associated Press.

TikTok released a statement in response to NewsGuard's report noting that its community guidelines prohibit harmful misinformation and that it works to promote authoritative content about important topics like COVID-19.

"We do not allow harmful misinformation, including medical misinformation, and we will remove it from the platform," the company said.

TikTok has taken other steps that it says are intended to direct users to trustworthy sources. This year, for example, the company created an election center to help U.S. voters find voting places or information about candidates.

The platform removed more than 102 million videos that violated its rules in the first quarter of 2022. Yet only a tiny percentage of those ran afoul of TikTok's rules against misinformation.

Researchers found that TikTok's own search tool seems designed to steer users to false claims in some cases. When researchers typed the words "COVID vaccine" into the search tool, for instance, the tool suggested searches on key words including "COVID vaccine exposed" and "COVID vaccine injury."

When the same search was run on Google, however, that search engine suggested searches relating to more accurate information about vaccine clinics, the different types of vaccines and booster shots.

TikTok's rise in popularity has caught the attention of state officials and federal lawmakers, some of whom have expressed concerns about its data privacy and security.

The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee will hold a hearing Wednesday on social media's impact on the nation's security. TikTok's chief operating officer, Vanessa Pappas, is set to testify alongside representatives from YouTube, Twitter and Meta, which owns Instagram and Facebook.

Follow the AP's coverage of misinformation at <https://apnews.com/hub/misinformation>.

## Farming, water and Wall Street on Colorado's Western Slope

By CHRIS OUTCALT The Colorado Sun

LOMA, Colo. (AP) — Under the blazing afternoon sun, Joe Bernal navigates a shiny-green John Deere tractor onto a dirt road a few miles north of downtown Fruita. Bernal is headed to cut hay in a field a few hundred feet down the road. On his way, he points out the land his family has acquired over the years. His grandparents had 150 acres over there. His parents bought this land here. His great grandparents, who showed up in 1925, lived in a house right there.

Surrounding Bernal's land are the vistas of the Grand Valley, a strip of high desert situated on Colorado's Western Slope marked by dusty mesas and cliffs and the winding, ever-present Colorado River, which plunges down from the mountains to the east. Grand Valley farmers and ranchers use the water to irrigate tens of thousands of acres, growing everything from peaches and corn to wheat and alfalfa.

But since 2000 flows on the river have declined 20% and water levels at Lake Powell and Lake Mead have dropped to less than 30% of their combined storage. With the river overtaxed, Grand Valley farmers now face some of the most urgent questions regarding the future of water in Colorado and the West. Questions about how agriculture, which accounts for about 70% of the state's Colorado River water use, can be more efficient, whether water can be conserved and banked in Lake Powell and what, if anything, to do about someone looking to make a buck on the state's most precious resource, so-called water speculators.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of a collaborative series on the Colorado River on the eve of the Colorado



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River Compact, signed nearly 100 years ago. The Colorado Sun, The Associated Press, 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.

In the Grand Valley, much of the concern around private, profit-driven investment in the river has focused on a New York investment firm called Water Asset Management, or WAM. Run by co-founder Disque Dean Jr., son of a New York real estate developer, WAM has spent millions buying farmland with valuable water rights in this part of Colorado. The company is the largest landowner in the influential Grand Valley Water Users Association, which operates the 55-mile Government Highline Canal. Western Slope farmers rely on the canal's senior water rights to irrigate about 24,000 acres of farmland.

When the New York Times declared in a January 2021 headline that "Wall Street eyes billions in the Colorado's water," Colorado water users voiced significant concern about the company's motives.

"The worry was that a New York hedge fund's outside investors would not have the same economic and sociological calculus in deciding to lease or sell their water as a longtime resident would," Anne Castle, a senior fellow at the Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy, and the Environment at the University of Colorado, said. "Generational farmers and ranchers are going to be thinking about the impact on their neighbors, the local communities and what their kids do if the water leaves the ranch."

State politicians looked at addressing private water speculation during the most recent legislative session. Colorado law already requires water be put to a "beneficial use," say, to irrigate a farm, supply taps in cities or be left in the river for environmental or recreational purposes. You can't just buy water rights and sit on them. A draft state bill, however, tried to examine whether it might be viable to curb the sale of water in Colorado purchased specifically to turn a profit later on. But telling people what they can and can't do with their private property rights is a tricky proposition. The bill did not make it beyond the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

Three years ago, Water Asset Management purchased a farm from a landowner who was leasing land to Bernal, who farms alfalfa, corn and other crops north of Fruita. A member of the water users association board, Bernal has since leased a few other WAM-owned fields. The way he puts it, he's neither WAM's advocate nor their adversary. "I keep saying, 'So far so good,'" Bernal said. "Am I glad they're here? Not really. Would I have invited them in? No. How are they now? They're as good as any landlord I've had."

## WATER SAVINGS PROGRAMS

A few years ago, through the Grand Valley Water Users, Bernal enrolled some land in a water conservation project known as the System Conservation Pilot Program, sometimes referred to as a "buy and dry" or lease-fallowing program. The project, which ran from 2015 to 2018, was designed partly as a test of how paying farmers to voluntarily and temporarily fallow land might actually look in practice.

Restarting the program was a key part of a plan the Upper Basin states of Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Wyoming released in June in response to Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton's call to cut between 2 million and 4 million acre-feet of Colorado River water use by next year. The original, four-year Upper Basin program, funded by major water utilities and money from the Walton Family Foundation, spent more than \$8 million and reduced consumptive use by roughly 50,000 acre-feet, according to reports compiled by the Upper Colorado River Commission.

Colorado's U.S. Sen. John Hickenlooper introduced legislation in late July that would effectively reauthorize the program. If the bill, which has yet to make it out of the Senate, eventually passes, there appears to be money on the other side in the form of the \$4 billion in drought funding included in the Inflation Reduction Act spearheaded in part by U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet. The federal money will be available through the Bureau of Reclamation for states and other public entities to pay water users to voluntarily reduce use.

When Bernal first heard about the pilot program concept, he thought it could open up some useful possibilities for him, a way to optimize his operation. Maybe he could get some guaranteed income. Or maybe this would give him a chance to do some land leveling on a field he wouldn't be able to do otherwise. Heck, maybe he could even just work a little less.

Grand Valley Water Users Association board member Troy Waters, a fifth-generation farmer north of Fruita, said he was at first resistant to this type of program, but did eventually participate in the initial pilot

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project and learned a lot by doing so.

"With all the issues that are going on on the Colorado River, I think programs like this might become a necessary evil," Waters said. "I think Colorado is going to have to do their part; even though I still feel this whole mess is the Lower Basin's fault — they created it. The Lower Basin states have just been willy-nilly drainin' them reservoirs."

Designed correctly, Bernal thinks some kind of water banking program could help ease the crisis. "I think a widely distributed water banking program can have a low impact on a community and I think it can still be beneficial to what we're doing."

But he also worries that efforts to curb water use could alter the character of the place he grew up, where the red rock plateau of the Colorado National Monument rises above the river. If too much land is fallowed, Bernal is concerned it could negatively impact the local co-op or the seed producer or the trucker who lives down the road or the part-time mechanic he employs or his son Bryan or nephew Mario Baleztena who do this work with him full time.

"Imagine if we didn't have this irrigation system," Bernal said. "There wouldn't be anything to look at but the Monument."

But it's a delicate balance, he said. For instance, he knows the land he leases from WAM could be enrolled in a restarted system conservation project, bringing new revenue for the owners. "WAM would sure like to see a program," he said.

"It could hurt the entire system if they try to put too much in," Waters said of WAM potentially enrolling land in any future water savings program. Waters said he would want a program that didn't allow any one individual to enroll too much land or for there to be too much ground fallowed in the valley as a whole.

"If you take out a quarter of the farm ground," Waters said, "if it ain't managed right, this whole valley will turn into a dust bowl."

## **Typhoon Muifa makes landfall in China, heads for Shanghai**

BEIJING (AP) — A strong typhoon made landfall on a group of Chinese islands on Wednesday as it headed toward the metropolis of Shanghai.

Typhoon Muifa hit the Zhoushan archipelago, near the port city of Ningbo on the country's east coast, at about 8:30 p.m., China's National Meteorological Center said.

It was forecast to weaken as it headed north across a bay but still be at typhoon strength when it reaches Shanghai later in the night.

Heavy rain was already falling in the city of more than 20 million people. The Hong Kong Observatory classified it as a severe typhoon with maximum sustained winds of 155 kilometers (96 miles) per hour.

All flights at Shanghai's two main airports were canceled and authorities were evacuating people from construction sites and other risky areas, according to Chinese media reports.

The typhoon had been expected to make landfall in the afternoon in Zhejiang province, but it shifted slightly eastward, keeping it at sea and putting it on track for a direct hit on Shanghai.

All flights were canceled at Ningbo airport in Zhejiang and more than 11,000 fishing boats returned to port in the province, Chinese media said.

The requirement of a negative coronavirus test within 72 hours to enter buildings and other public areas in much of China was suspended in Ningbo, except at airports, train stations and highway entrances.

The storm's latest track would take it through Jiangsu and Shandong provinces along China's northeast coast after hitting Shanghai.

## **Jim Beam outlines expansion to ramp up bourbon production**

By BRUCE SCHREINER Associated Press

Jim Beam plans to ramp up bourbon production at its largest Kentucky distillery to meet growing global demand in a more than \$400 million expansion to be powered by renewable energy.

The project will increase capacity by 50% at the Beam plant in Boston, Kentucky, while reducing green-

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house gas emissions by the same percentage, Beam Suntory said Wednesday.

The company behind the top-selling bourbon said it has reached production capacity at the Boston plant, about 36 miles (58 kilometers) south of Louisville, Kentucky. The expansion will be used to produce two mainstays — Jim Beam white and black label bourbons — and will mostly support expected sales growth overseas, especially in European and Asian markets, said Carlo Coppola, managing director of the Beam brands.

Jim Beam has registered mid-single-digit growth globally in the past two years, the company said.

Mixing renewable energy into crafting whiskey, Beam will use a process that produces renewable natural gas to power the plant, the company said.

Beam Suntory said it has entered into an agreement with 3 Rivers Energy Partners to build a facility across the street to convert waste from making bourbon into biogas, which will be treated to renewable natural gas standards and piped directly back to the distillery.

Once the project is completed, expected to be in 2024, the distillery will be 65% powered by renewable natural gas and 35% by fossil-based natural gas, the company said.

"This expansion will help ensure we meet future demand for our iconic bourbon in a sustainable way that supports the environment and the local community that has helped build and support Jim Beam," said Beam Suntory President and CEO Albert Baladi.

Beam Suntory, whose products include Kentucky-crafted Maker's Mark, said last year it wants to cut its companywide greenhouse gas emissions and water usage in half by 2030. The company's more ambitious goal is to remove more carbon than is emitted from its operations and among its supplier base by 2040. The spirits giant also is committed to planting 500,000 trees annually by 2030, with a goal of planting more trees than are used to make barrels to hold its aging whiskeys.

The new project will create 51 more jobs and includes additional storage warehouses. Bourbon ages in new, charred oak barrels, where it acquires its color and flavor, while stored in warehouses. Most bourbons typically age four to eight years before reaching consumers. Beam's continued growth "reflects the strength of our state's signature bourbon industry," Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said.

Beam also is "fully leveraging" its capacity at its distillery in Clermont, Kentucky, where it produces Jim Beam, Basil Hayden, Knob Creek and Legent brands. The two Beam distilleries are about 14 miles (22 kilometers) apart in central Kentucky. At another distillery that opened last year at Clermont, the company produces such small-batch brands as Booker's, Baker's and Little Book.

The company broadly outlined its Boston plant expansion earlier in the summer, but the announcement Wednesday provided details about production and the use of renewable energy.

Beam Suntory, a subsidiary of Suntory Holdings Limited of Japan, isn't the first maker of bourbon to go green. Last year, spirits giant Diageo opened a carbon-neutral distillery of Bulleit bourbon powered by renewable energy in Lebanon, Kentucky.

Beam's expansion at its Boston distillery comes amid continued rapid growth in the state's \$9 billion distilling industry. Kentucky distillers are in the midst of a more than \$5 billion capital investment campaign that includes expanding production facilities and warehousing to meet the global thirst for Kentucky bourbon, according to the Kentucky Distillers' Association. Kentucky is home to 95% of the world's bourbon production, the association said.

## Devastated Ukrainian village emerges from Russian occupation

By ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

HRAKOVE, Ukraine (AP) — There's not much left of Hrakove. Its houses and shops lie in ruins, its school is a bombed-out hull. The church is scarred by rockets and shells, but the golden dome above its blasted belfry still gleams in the fading autumn light.

Only about 30 people remain, living in basements and gutted buildings in this small village southeast of Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, according to resident Anatolii Klyzhen. About 1,000 lived here when Russian troops rolled over the border in February, occupying the village shortly after.

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Those forces abandoned Hrakove around Sept. 9 as Ukrainian soldiers advanced in a lightning counteroffensive. That blitz could be a turning point, setting the stage for further gains in the east and elsewhere — but it could also trigger a violent response from Moscow, leading to a new and dangerous escalation in the war.

There were no signs the Russian soldiers were about to leave. “Nobody knew anything. They left very quietly,” said Viacheslav Myronenko, 71, who has lived in the basement of his bombed-out apartment building with three neighbors for more than four months.

The detritus of a fleeing army still litters the village: packs of empty Russian army food rations, abandoned crates with instructions for using grenades, a gas mask dangling on a tree, an army jacket trampled into the mud. Just outside the village by the bus stop, a Russian tank lies rusting on a road pockmarked with craters from shells, its turret and cannon blown off its body.

Feral dogs roam the mud-rutted streets, and authorities warn of mines and booby-traps in the weeds. “Before, the village looked really beautiful,” said Klyzhen, who spent 45 days living in his building’s basement while Russian soldiers occupied his now-trashed apartment on the second floor. He eventually managed to flee, deciding to take his chances at checkpoints.

The Russian soldiers were both frightened and paranoid, he said, and would check residents’ mobile phones for anything anti-Russian or anything they thought might give away their positions. Some people were taken away, and he never saw them again.

“I figured I could die at home or die at the checkpoint,” the 45-year-old said Tuesday. But he made it through, and returned after Hrakove was retaken to see what remained of his home. He found the windows blasted out and Russian army food packets, clothes and boxes strewn around. In one room lay a pile of TVs that he thinks soldiers may have stolen.

After retaking the village, Ukrainian authorities removed abandoned Russian military vehicles, and exhumed the bodies of two men who had been buried by the side of a road after being shot in the head, Klyzhen said. He thinks they were Ukrainian soldiers, but he’s not sure.

“They were killing locals, shooting them,” he said. “There was nothing good in here.”

Serhii Lobodenko, head of the Chuhuiv district that includes Hrakove, said the area saw fierce battles during six months of occupation.

“There were a lot of destroyed roads, private houses, a lot of people dead and a lot of people missing, both military and civilians,” he said, as residents in nearby Chkalovske gathered to receive food and water. “Now we are trying to repair the infrastructure, the electricity and gas. The food is brought in because people did not have food.”

Images of devastation and stories of hardship are emerging from other places recaptured in the Ukrainian advance, including Iziium, a strategic city also recently retaken that President Volodymyr Zelenskyy visited Wednesday in a rare foray outside the capital.

A few weeks into Russian occupation in Hrakove, Myronenko and his neighbors banded together to clear junk out of the basement of their apartment building and turn it into a shelter. With their apartments destroyed, it remains their home.

They found a couple of metal pipes and wedged them between the floor and the ceiling, hoping that would keep it from caving in as the building shook from explosions, said one of the four, 70-year-old Oleh Lutsai. They ventured outside to plant potatoes despite the incessant shelling, knowing they needed food to survive.

“Of course it was scary, it is very scary for everyone, when everything is shaking in here,” said Lutsai. An oil lamp hung on the wall, casting a soft glow over the cramped room. A kettle whistled softly on a wood-burning stove that Lutsai and his neighbors built.

Leaving wasn’t an option for him. “I’m 70 years old, I was born here,” he said. “Even if I had to die here — but obviously I want to live — I just want to die in Ukrainian Ukraine, not (Russian President Vladimir) Putin’s one. ... So why should I run away from here?”

## Driven by consumers, US inflation grows more persistent

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. inflation is showing signs of entering a more stubborn phase that will likely require drastic action by the Federal Reserve, a shift that has panicked financial markets and heightens the risks of a recession.

Some of the longtime drivers of higher inflation — spiking gas prices, supply chain snarls, soaring used-car prices — are fading. Yet underlying measures of inflation are actually worsening.

The ongoing evolution of the forces behind an inflation rate that's near a four-decade high has made it harder for the Fed to wrestle it under control. Prices are no longer rising because a few categories have skyrocketed in cost. Instead, inflation has now spread more widely through the economy, fueled by a strong job market that is boosting paychecks, forcing companies to raise prices to cover higher labor costs and giving more consumers the wherewithal to spend.

On Tuesday, the government said inflation ticked up 0.1% from July to August and 8.3% from a year ago, which was down from June's four-decade high of 9.1%

But excluding the volatile categories of food and energy, so-called core prices jumped by an unexpectedly sharp 0.6% from July to August, after a milder 0.3% rise the previous month. The Fed monitors core prices closely, and the latest figures heightened fears of an even more aggressive Fed and sent stocks plunging, with the Dow Jones collapsing more than 1,200 points.

The core price figures solidified worries that inflation has now spread into all corners of the economy.

"One of the most remarkable things is how broad-based the price gains are," said Matthew Luzzetti, chief U.S. economist at Deutsche Bank. "The underlying trend in inflation certainly has not shown any progress toward moderating so far. And that should be a worry to the Fed because the price gains have become increasingly demand-driven, and therefore likely to be more persistent."

Demand-driven inflation is one way to say that consumers, who account for nearly 70% of economic growth, keep spending, even if they resent having to pay more. In part, that is because of widespread income gains and in part because many Americans still have more savings than they did before the pandemic, after having postponed spending on vacations, entertainment, and restaurants.

When inflation is driven mainly by demand, it can require more drastic action from the Fed than when it's driven mainly by supply shocks, such as an oil supply disruption, which can often resolve on their own.

Economists fear that the only way for the Fed to slow robust consumer demand is to raise interest rates so high as to sharply increase unemployment and potentially cause a recession. Typically, as fear of layoffs rises, not only do the jobless reduce spending. So, too, do the many people who fear losing their jobs.

Some economists now think the Fed will have to raise its benchmark short-term rate much higher, to 4.5% or above, by early next year, more than previous estimates of 4%. (The Fed's key rate is now in a range of 2.25% to 2.5%.) Higher rates from the Fed would, in turn, lead to higher costs for mortgages, auto loans and business loans.

The Fed is widely expected to raise its benchmark short-term rate by a substantial three-quarters of a point next week for a third consecutive time. Tuesday's inflation report even led some analysts to speculate that the central bank could announce a full percentage point hike. If it did, that would amount to the largest increase since the Fed began using short-term rates in the early 1990s to guide consumer and business borrowing.

Even though headline inflation barely rose last month, underlying inflation, which reflects broader economic trends, worsened. A measure that the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland uses to track median inflation, which essentially ignores categories with the biggest price swings, rose 0.7% in August. That was the biggest monthly increase since records began in 1983.

Higher prices have yet to cause much of what economists call "demand destruction" — a pullback in spending that could quell inflation. Though higher gas prices have caused Americans to drive less, there isn't much evidence of significant cutbacks elsewhere.

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Restaurant prices, for example, jumped 0.9% in August and have risen 8% in the past year. But that hasn't noticeably discouraged people from going out. Restaurant traffic has surpassed pre-pandemic levels on Open Table, an app that tracks reservations, and was still increasing into September.

Overall, consumers have largely kept up their spending, even with rampant inflation, though perhaps through gritted teeth. In July, spending rose 0.2% after adjusting for higher prices.

The spread of inflation into services, such as rental costs and health care, largely reflects the impact of higher wages. Hospitals and doctors' offices have to pay more for nurses and other staff. And as more Americans find jobs or get raises, they're able to move out from family homes or split from roommates. Rental costs have increased 6.7% in the past year, the most since 1986.

Wages and salaries jumped 6.7% in August from a year earlier, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's wage tracker, the biggest increase in nearly 40 years. And Luzzetti noted that the same data shows a record wage premium for people who switch jobs, compared with those who stay put. That means employers are still offering big raises to try to fill jobs.

Economists had hoped that rising services prices would be offset by falling costs for goods such as new and used cars, furniture, and clothing, after those items spiked in the pandemic. As supply chain backups improved, a better flow of such goods were expected to bring prices down.

Yet so far, that hasn't happened.

"We've seen shipping costs come down, we've seen supply chain congestion ease a little bit, production has improved and inventories have risen," said Laura Rosner-Warburton, senior economist at MacroPolicy Perspectives. "So all of that suggests some supply side improvement. And yet companies are still putting through large price increases for those goods, and that's problematic."

Such trends could renew the debate over how much corporations' ability to raise prices has been fueled by a lack of competition, a phenomenon referred to as "greedflation." But most economists attribute the ability of companies to still charge more to consumers' willingness to pay.

"It appears that retailers are now raising prices because they can, not because they have to. Consumer demand is still too strong," said Aneta Markowska, chief economist at Jefferies, an investment bank, in a research note.

## Kenya's new president promises ambitious climate plan

By WANJOHI KABUKURU Associated Press

MOMBASA, Kenya (AP) — Kenya's newly elected president William Ruto said that climate change will be key to the government's agenda and made an ambitious pledge to ramp up clean energy and phase out fossil fuels for electricity by 2030.

"In our country, women and men, young people, farmers, workers, and local communities suffer the consequences of climate emergency," said President Ruto at his inauguration speech on Tuesday at Nairobi's Moi International Sports Complex.

"We must act urgently to keep global heating levels below 1.5 Celsius, help those in need and end addiction to fossil fuels," he added, echoing calls by the United Nations Secretary-General to cut the world's reliance on coal, oil and gas.

Taking cues from the country's revised commitments on climate change submitted to the U.N., known as nationally determined contributions, President Ruto promised the country will have a full and just transition to electricity exclusively produced by solar, wind and geothermal energy by 2030 that will ensure all communities benefit from the move.

"Kenya is on a transition to clean energy that will support jobs, local economies, and the sustainable industrialization," Ruto said. "We call on all African states to join us in this journey. Africa can lead the world. We have immense potential for renewable energy. Reducing costs of renewal energy technologies make this the most viable energy source."

The move, although welcome, might have too tight of a deadline given that the current devastating drought in Africa severely undermines hydropower, according to Evans Mukolwe, Kenya's former Meteo-

rological Department head. He added that unless deliberate efforts are made to increase geothermal and solar power, the President's new goal may be difficult to achieve.

Ruto, who won the August presidential elections, was sworn in as Kenya's fifth President on Tuesday. He succeeds President Uhuru Kenyatta who stepped down after serving the constitutional two-term limit.

President Ruto will also take over Kenyatta's position as chair of the Committee of African Heads of State on Climate Change, which is the continent's highest decision-making body on climate issues.

During the forthcoming U.N. climate conference in Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt this November, Ruto said he will lead the continent in negotiating the delivery of finance and technology to the continent to support nations dealing with the effects of climate change.

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Associated Press climate and environmental coverage receives support from several private foundations. See more about AP's climate initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## South Korea fines Google, Meta over privacy violations

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea's privacy watchdog has fined Google and Meta a combined 100 billion won (\$72 million) for tracking consumers' online behavior without their consent and using their data for targeted advertisements.

South Korea's Personal Information and Protection Commission said it fined Google 69.2 billion won (\$50 million) and Meta 30.8 billion won (\$22 million) after a meeting where officials agreed that the companies' business practices might cause "serious" privacy infringements.

The fines were the biggest ever penalties imposed by South Korea for privacy law violations, the commission said in a press release.

Both companies refuted the commission's findings and Meta indicated it could challenge its fine in court. The fines can be appealed through administrative lawsuits, which must be filed within 90 days after the companies are formally notified of the commission's decision.

According to the commission, Google and Meta, which operates Facebook and Instagram, didn't clearly inform users or obtain their consent as they collected information about their online activities when they used other websites or services outside their own platforms. Such data was used to analyze their interests and create individually customized advertisements, the commission said.

The commission ordered the companies to provide an "easy and clear" process of consent giving people more control over whether to share information about what they do online.

"Google did not clearly inform consumers that it would collect and use their behavioral information about their use of other companies' (services) when they signed up," the commission said.

"Meta did not present the content of consent in way that could be easily seen by consumers when they signed up, and just included the content in their full data policy statement. It did not specifically inform consumers of the legally required notifications and did not obtain their consent."

The commission said the companies' practices seriously threatened privacy rights as more than 82% of South Koreans using Google and more than 98% using Meta have let the companies track their online activities.

Google, a search and email giant that also operates the YouTube video platform, disagreed with the commission's findings. It said in a statement that it has always demonstrated a commitment to "making ongoing updates that give users control and transparency." The company said it will review the commission's findings once it receives the fully written decision.

Meta said it will consider "all options," including seeking a court ruling.

"We are confident that we work with our clients in a legally compliant way that meets the processes required by local regulations," Meta said in an emailed statement.

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## Today in History: September 15, Birmingham church bombing

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Sept. 15, the 258th day of 2022. There are 107 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 15, 1963, four Black girls were killed when a bomb went off during Sunday services at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. (Three Ku Klux Klansmen were eventually convicted for their roles in the blast.)

On this date:

In 1776, British forces occupied New York City during the American Revolution.

In 1789, the U.S. Department of Foreign Affairs was renamed the Department of State.

In 1857, William Howard Taft — who served as President of the United States and as U.S. chief justice — was born in Cincinnati, Ohio.

In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws deprived German Jews of their citizenship.

In 1940, during the World War II Battle of Britain, the tide turned as the Royal Air Force inflicted heavy losses upon the Luftwaffe.

In 1955, the novel "Lolita," by Vladimir Nabokov, was first published in Paris.

In 1959, Nikita Khrushchev became the first Soviet head of state to visit the United States as he arrived at Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington.

In 1972, a federal grand jury in Washington indicted seven men in connection with the Watergate break-in.

In 1981, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted unanimously to approve the Supreme Court nomination of Sandra Day O'Connor.

In 1985, Nike began selling its "Air Jordan 1" sneaker.

In 2001, President George W. Bush ordered U.S. troops to get ready for war and braced Americans for a long, difficult assault against terrorists to avenge the Sept. 11 attack. Beleaguered Afghans streamed out of Kabul, fearing a U.S. military strike against Taliban rulers harboring Osama bin Laden.

In 2006, Ford Motor Co. took drastic steps to remold itself into a smaller, more competitive company, slashing thousands of jobs and shuttering two additional plants.

Ten years ago: Four days after the deadly attack on a U.S. diplomatic outpost in Benghazi, Libya, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula called for more attacks on U.S. embassies. The State Department ordered non-essential government personnel and family members to leave its embassies in Sudan and Tunisia and warned U.S. citizens against traveling to the two countries. The National Hockey League locked out its players at 11:59 p.m. EDT; it was the league's fourth shutdown in a decade and one that would cost the league nearly half its season.

Five years ago: North Korea fired an intermediate-range missile over Japan into the northern Pacific, its longest-ever such flight. A bomb partially detonated on a London subway car, injuring 51 people. (An 18-year-old Iraqi asylum-seeker was convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to a minimum of 34 years in prison.) Harvard University reversed its decision to name as a visiting fellow Chelsea Manning, the former soldier who'd been convicted of leaking classified information. The Cleveland Indians saw their winning streak end at 22, an American League record, as they lost 4-3 to the Kansas City Royals. NASA's Cassini spacecraft disintegrated in the skies above Saturn after a journey of 20 years; it was the only spacecraft ever to orbit Saturn and sent back images of the planet, its rings and its moons. Character actor Harry Dean Stanton died at the age of 91.

One year ago: California Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom emphatically defeated a recall aimed at kicking him out of office. SpaceX's first private flight streaked into orbit for a three-day trip carrying two contest winners, a health care worker and their rich sponsor. Olympic gold medalist Simone Biles told a Senate panel that the FBI and gymnastics officials turned a "blind eye" to USA Gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar's sexual abuse of her and hundreds of other women. President Joe Biden announced that the United States was forming a new Indo-Pacific security alliance with Britain and Australia.



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Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall of Famer Gaylord Perry is 84. Actor Carmen Maura is 77. Writer-director Ron Shelton is 77. Actor Tommy Lee Jones is 76. Movie director Oliver Stone is 76. Rock musician Kelly Keagy (KAY'-gee) (Night Ranger) is 70. Actor Barry Shabaka Henley is 68. Director Pawel Pawlikowski is 65. Rock musician Mitch Dorge (Crash Test Dummies) is 62. Football Hall of Famer Dan Marino is 61. Actor Danny Nucci is 54. Rap DJ KayGee is 53. Actor Josh Charles is 51. Actor Tom Hardy is 45. Actor Marisa Ramirez is 45. Pop-rock musician Zach Filkins (OneRepublic) is 44. Actor Dave Annable is 43. Actor Amy Davidson is 43. Britain's Prince Harry is 38. TV personality Heidi Montag is 36. Actor Kate Mansi is 35.