

Groton Daily Independent

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“Gratitude opens the door to the power, the wisdom, the creativity of the universe. You open the door through gratitude.”

—Deepak Chopra



9:30 a.m.: Aberdeen Roncalli Marching Festival
Groton CM&A: Kids’ Club and Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm
UMC: Community Coffee Hour at 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation Snack at 3:30 p.m. with confirmation at 4 p.m.
Emmanuel: 6 p.m.: 7th and 8th grade confirmation; League at 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Sept. 29

School Breakfast: Muffins.
School Lunch: Chicken sandwich, sweet potato puffs.
Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato with sour cream, creamed peas, fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.
Junior Fall Planning Day and Career Expo at NSU
1:30 p.m.: Parent/Teacher Conferences - School dismisses at 1:15 p.m.
4 p.m.: Cross Country at Sisseton Golf Course
UMC: Bible Study with Ashley, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 27

School Breakfast: French toast.
School Lunch: Lasagna hot dish, corn.
Senior Menu: Hot turkey combos, mashed potatoes with gravy, 7 layer salad, fruit.
6 p.m.: Youth Football at Redfield
Volleyball hosts Florence/Henry: C and 7th grade at 5 p.m., JV and 8th grade at 6 p.m. with varsity to follow. JH matches in GHS Gym.
Pantry at Community Center open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store Open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at 209 N Main.
UMC: Bible Study at 10 a.m.; The Walk Bible Study by Pastor Brandon in Conde, 7 p.m.

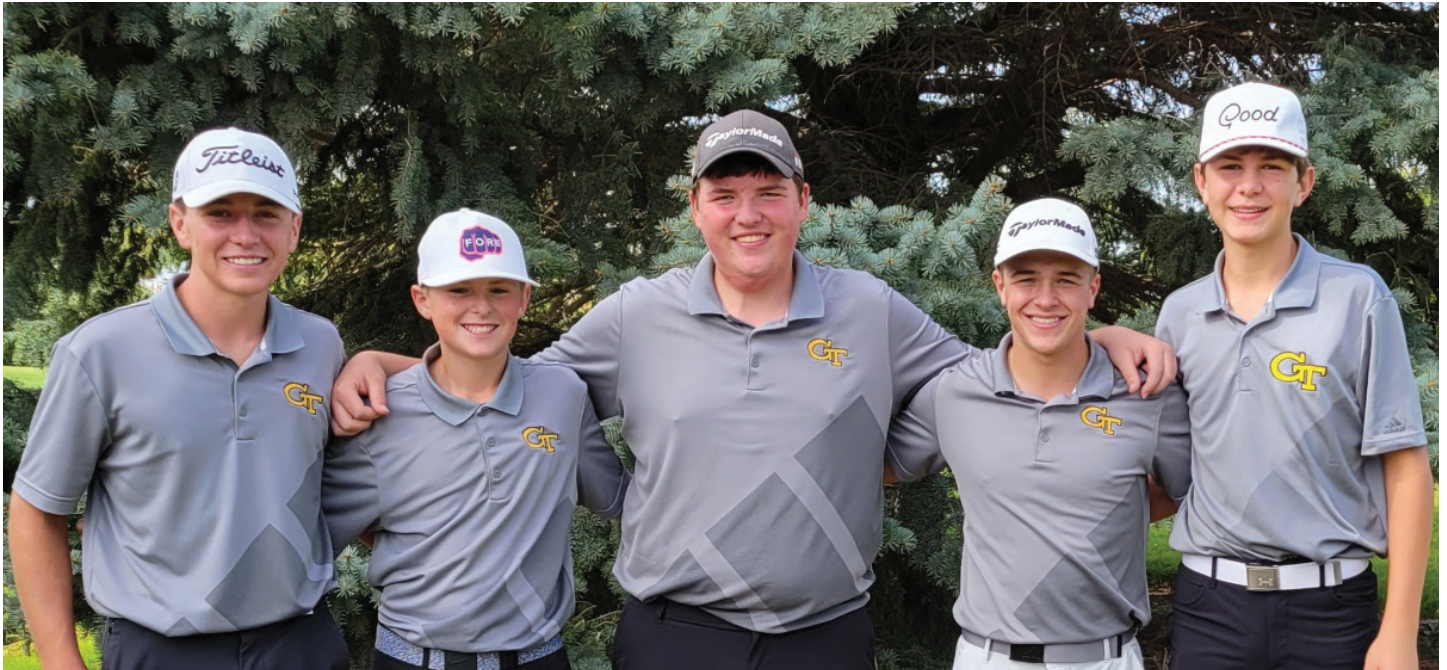
Wednesday, Sept. 28

NATIONAL GOOD NEIGHBOR DAY!
School Breakfast: Egg omelets.
School Lunch: Super nachos.
Senior Menu: Swedish meatballs, mashed potatoes, peas and carrots, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

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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Groton Boys Golf Team qualifies for state

Groton boys golf placed third and made it to state next week October 3rd and 4th at Moccasin Creek. Pictured left to right are Cole Simon who placed 19th, Jace Johnson placed 29th, Logan Pearson placed 24th, Brevin Flihs placed fourth and Carter Simon placed 11th.

(Courtesy Photo)

Groton Cross Country Results

Groton Area hosted a cross country meet Monday at the Olive Grove Golf Course. In the boys varsity race, Jacob Lewandowski placed 21st with a time of 20:56.13; Tristin McGannon placed 27th with a time of 22:09.04; Jayden Schwan was 32nd with a time of 24:11.22; Gavin Kroll was 40th with a time of 25:35.58; Nathan Unzen was 46th with a time of 29:33.34 and Kayson Oswald was 47th with a time of 31:43.17.

Logan Clocksene placed 24th in the boys junior varsity race with a time of 19:39.39. Two girls ran in the junior varsity division with Ryelle Gilbert placing third with a time of 13:45.11 and Rylie Rose placing seventh with a time of 15:04.77.

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ANOTHER JARK/WORLIE AUCTION



RETIREMENT CEMENT TOOLS & EQUIPMENT AUCTION

Saturday, Oct. 1, 2022
Sale Time: 10:00 AM

507 E. RR Ave, Groton, SD



SKID STEER – WHEEL LOADER

• Mustang 2056 Turbo w/2 speed Cab, AC/Heat, Hydr. Tach, 6' Bucket, 2302 hours, ('10) • 5' Mustang Skid Steer Bucket (cement) • Kobelco LK300A Wheel Loader w/Bucket, Forks, 16.9-24 Tires, Eng. Overhauled 4084 hrs ago (\$23,000)– Runs/Works.

GUN SAFE - TOOLS – EQUIP – TANKS

- Safari 24 Gun Safe (NIB)
- Husqvarna FS309 Cement Saw -Nice
- Subaru Robin Ex17 Cement Saw
- DP-75ASB Diesel Generator (New)
- Wen 5500 Generator (New)!
- Screeds w/Honda & B&S Motors
- BNT-40 14.4v Lithium Rebar Cutter
- Honda Drive Motor w/Vibrating Cable & Water Pump
- Impala 30 ton Hydr. Press
- Mikasa MVC-88GH Packer (Honda)
- Wacker VPA1750 Packer (Honda)
- Wacker Power Float (Honda)
- DeWalt & Jet Table Saws
- Insulated Concrete Blankets
- 8 Sets of Scaffolding
- Bosch Elec. Jack Hammer
- Stihl TS 400 & TS 500 Cement Saws
- Weldmark 135+ Welder
- DP Air Compressor
- Older Floats, Packers & Screeds
- Hammer Drills
- Hand Tools, Trowels, Air Hose Reel
- 5/8" Rod (4', 8', 20')
- 4) 6"x6"x15' St. Tubes (1/4")
- 90) 4x8 Wall Forms
- 4' & 8' Corner Forms
- Newer 2' Forms
- Stakes & Wire Ties
- 2x4's, 2x6's, 2x10's,
- Several 2x12's (15' & 20')
- 500 gal. Propane Tank (needs valve)
- 500 gal. Diesel Tank (1/2 full)
- Lots of Hand Tools

TRACTOR – LOADER – SNOWMOBILE

Case IH 50 CVT FWA Tractor w/L350 Loader, Bucket, Forks, 3 pt, PTO, 2 Hydr, 575 hours! • Case IH BS172H 6' Snow Blower (Nice) • Case IH TLX180H 80" 3 pt. Tiller • Farm King 847 7' Leveler • Fimco 3 pt. Sprayer w/ 50 gal. Tank, Folding Booms • King Kutter 3 pt. 6' Disk • Field Svc Tank • '08 Polaris RMK 700 Snowmobile w/155" Track/ 2 1/4" Lugs (all consigned)



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Netters lose to Faulkton in four sets

Groton Areas volleyball team overcame a tough first set to play very competitively with Faulkton. The home team of a Faulkton won the match, 3-1.

In the first set, Faulkton rolled out 12 straight points to take a 12-1 lead and would go on for a 25-12 win.

The second set was tied eight times and there were three lead changes. Groton Area had the upper hand for the middle part of the set before Faulkton took the lead, 16-15. The Tigers closed to within one at the end, 24-23, but the Trojans would win, 25-23,

The third set was tied seven times and there were four lead changes in a set that was very high intense. The Tigers had an 11-9 lead, but Faulkton would score five straight points to take a 14-11 lead. The Tigers would come back to tie the set at 14, but the Trojans kept the upper hand. Faulkton was setting at set point at 24-20, but the Tigers rattled off the last six points to win the third set in extra points, 26-24.

The fourth set was tied 14 times with five lead changes. Groton had a three-point lead, 21-18, but the Trojans would score four straight points to take the lead, 22-21. Groton Area tied the set at 22 before Faulkton would finish with the final three points to win, 25-22.

Aspen Johnson led the Tigers with eight kills and four blocks. Anna Fjeldheim had eight kills and one block. Sydney Leight had seven kills. Emma Kutter had four kills and two blocks. Elizabeth Fliehs had four kills and one block. Lydia Meier had two kills. Carly Guthmiller had two ace serves. Laila Roberts had one kill and one ace serve. Holly Frost had a block, Jerica Locke had an ace serve and Jaedyn Penning had a kill.

Addison Melius led Faulkton with 20 kills. Kelli Stoecker had 10 kills, two blocks and an ace serve. Carley Cotton had seven kills and two ace serves. Aedyn Raethz had four kills and an ace serve. Gabby Kast had three kills and an ace serve. Ashly Senn had three kills. Jaymi Senn had two kills and a block. Hannah Cunningham had one ace serve.

The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Bahr Spray Foam, John Sieh Agency, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, I Locke Electric, Dacotah Bank, SD Army National Guard with Brent Wienk, Milbrandt Enterprises Inc and Groton Area Chamber of Commerce. Justin Hanson was the guest commentator.

Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 25-21 and 25-16. That match was also broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM sponsored by Rutgeqqr605.com. Justin Hanson also did the play by play calling.

Tali Wright had five kills and a block. Faith Traphagen had two kills. Chesney Weber had six ace serves and three kills. Jerica Locke had four ace serves and a kill. Rylee Dunker had two kills and a block. Jaedyn Penning and Emma Kutter each had five kills.

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.

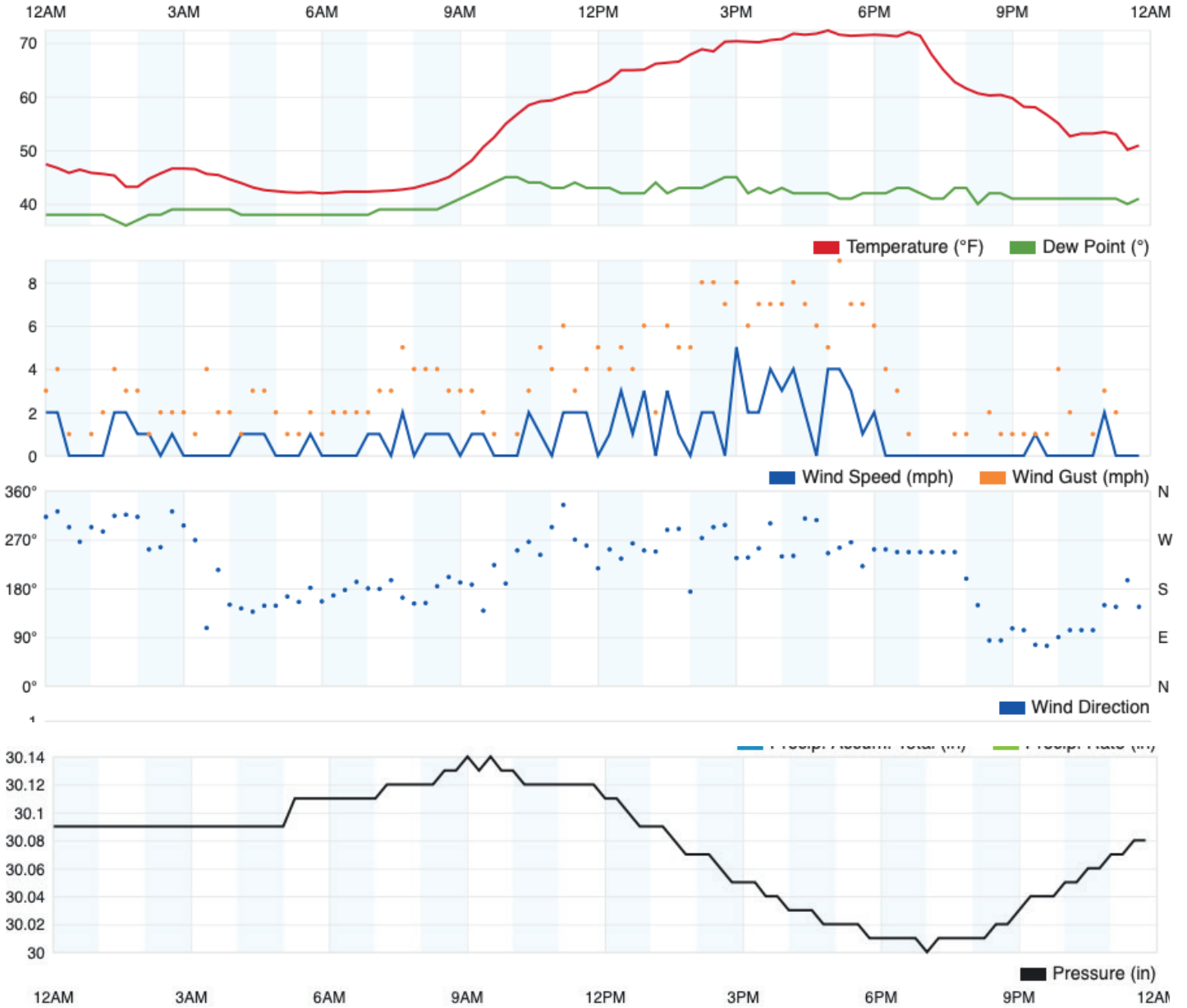
If your child is already receiving services or enrolled at Groton Elementary School they will not need to be screened. If your child has already been screened but you have concerns please contact the elementary school. If you are new to the district and have a child under the age of 5, we also ask you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



Mostly Sunny

High: 66 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 35 °F

Wednesday



Areas Frost
then Mostly
Sunny and
Breezy

High: 70 °F

Wednesday
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 51 °F

Thursday



Mostly Sunny
and Breezy

High: 75 °F

Dry & Warm West, Mild East

September 27, 2022
2:35 AM

Today

Mostly Sunny, Highs 60-76°

Wednesday

Mostly Sunny, Highs 65-84°

Thursday

Partly Cloudy, Highs 68-90°

Friday

Increasing Clouds, Highs 71-85°



Weather-Ready Nation
WFO Aberdeen SD

The rest of the work week will remain dry. The warmest temperatures will occur over central South Dakota, while the east remains cooler. #sdwx #mnwx

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 73 °F at 6:53 PM

Low Temp: 42 °F at 5:55 AM

Wind: 11 mph at 2:48 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 11 hours, 57 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 95 in 1952

Record Low: 22 in 1900

Average High: 70°F

Average Low: 42°F

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.79

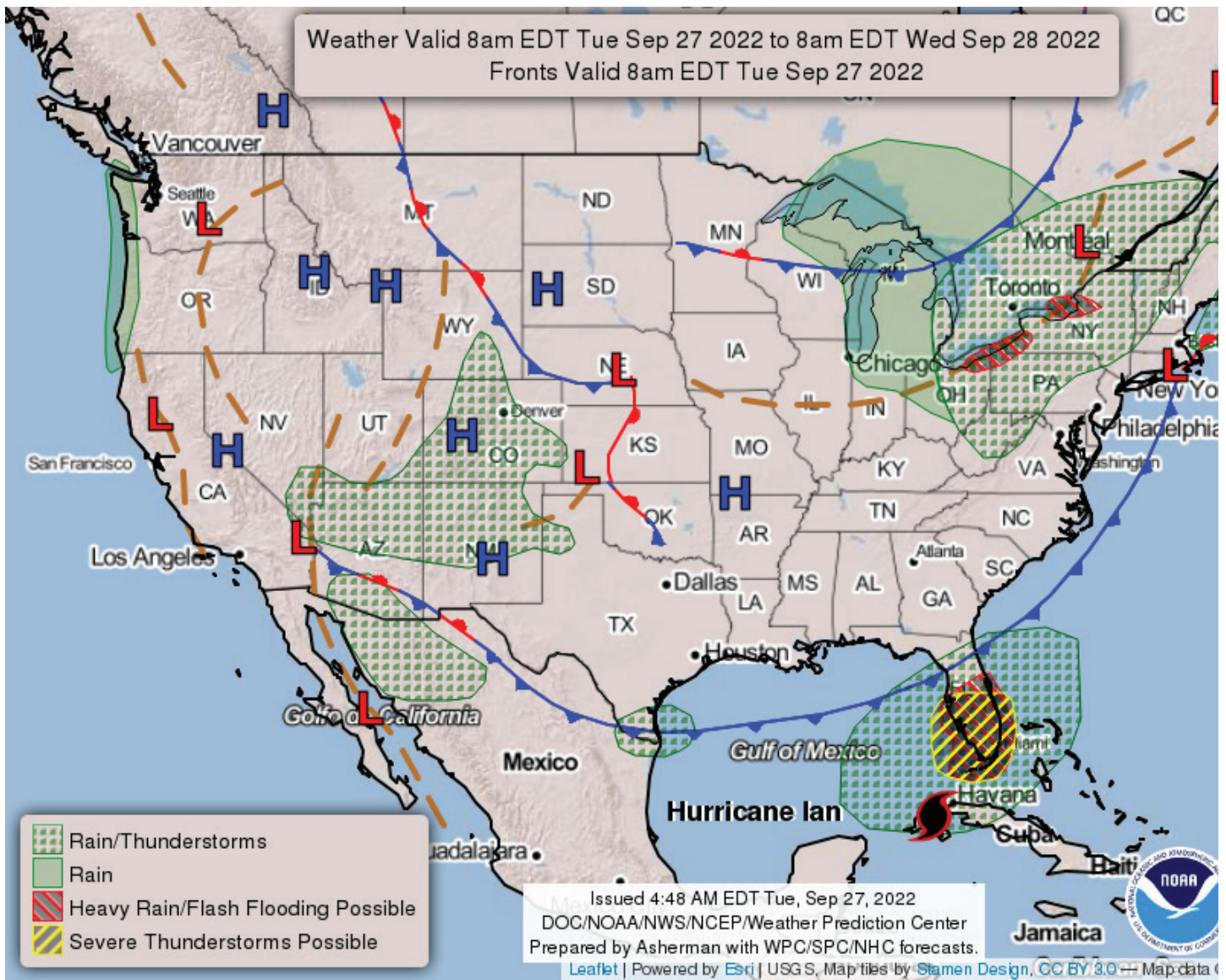
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.07

Average Precip to date: 18.13

Precip Year to Date: 16.05

Sunset Tonight: 7:22:03 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:25:45 AM



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Today in Weather History

September 27, 1983: Lightning caused a grass fire which burned 25,000 acres northwest of Reliance during the evening hours. At its peak, the fire was four miles wide by ten miles long.

September 27, 1985: Snow fell across south-central South Dakota from the evening of the 27th until the early afternoon of the 28th. Three to five inches of snow occurred with up to 18 inches reported around Winner. Eight to 12 inches fell around Gregory and Burke.

1816 - A black frost over most of New England kills unripened corn in the north resulting in a year of famine. (David Ludlum)

1822: Using various documents and meteorological observations determined a hurricane moved ashore on this day in South Carolina. One account from Bull Island, South Carolina records the eye passing directly over that location.

1906: The second September storm of 1906 was one of great violence. On the 27th the hurricane reached the central Gulf Coast with destructive winds and unprecedented tides. At Pensacola, FL, the tide was 10 feet above normal. At Mobile, AL property damage was severe. An estimated 134 lives were lost from Pensacola, FL to Mississippi from this storm.

1911: The earliest photograph of a tornado in Australia occurred on this day. The estimated F3 tornado tore through Marong, Victoria, or about 150 km from Melbourne.

1959 - A tornado 440 yards in width traveled twenty miles from near Hollow, OK, to western Cherokee County KS. Although a strong tornado, it was very slow moving, and gave a tremendous warning roar, and as a result no one was killed. (The Weather Channel)

1959: Typhoon Vera was the strongest and deadliest typhoon on record to make landfall on the islands of Japan. Damage totals from this typhoon are estimated at \$4.85 billion (USD 2015). An estimated 4,000 deaths occurred from Typhoon Vera. This Category 5 Typhoon first made landfall on September 26 near Shionomisaki on Honshu. Vera transitioned to an extratropical cyclone on September 27, which continued to affect the island for an additional two days.

1970 - Afternoon highs of 103 degrees at Long Beach, CA, and 105 degrees at the Los Angeles Civic Center were the hottest since September records were established in 1963. Fierce Santa Ana winds accompanying the extreme heat resulted in destructive fires. (The Weather Channel)

1985: Hurricane Gloria swept over the Outer Banks then rushed across Long Island, New England, and Canada. It was the first significant hurricane to hit New England in twenty-five years and brought heavy rains and high winds to the Mid-Atlantic states as well.

1985 - A record early season snowstorm struck the Central High Plains Region. The storm left up to nineteen inches of snow along the Colorado Front Range, and as much as a foot of snow in the High Plains Region. (Storm Data)

1987 - While those at the base of Mount Washington, NH, enjoyed sunny skies and temperatures in the 70s, the top of the mountain was blanketed with 4.7 inches of snow, along with wind gusts to 99 mph, and a temperature of 13 degrees. Severe thunderstorms developed along a cold front in the south central U.S. A thunderstorm west of Noodle TX produced golf ball size hail and wind gusts to 70 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced large hail in southeastern Wyoming during the afternoon, with tennis ball size hail reported at Cheyenne. Strong winds ushering the cold air into the north central U.S. gusted to 59 mph at Lander WY. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Freezing temperatures were reported in the Great Lakes Region and the Ohio Valley. Houghton Lake MI reported a record low of 21 degrees. Thunderstorms in the western U.S. produced wind gusts to 50 mph at Salt Lake City UT, and gusts to 58 mph at Cody WY. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2014: A squall line impacted central Arizona, including the Phoenix Metro area

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

WISE WORDS PREVENT PROBLEMS

"Loose Lips Sink Ships" was a widely quoted slogan during World War II. It was part of the US Office of Information's attempt to limit the possibility of people inadvertently giving useful information to enemy spies. It was one of the several slogans that came under the campaign's basic message "Careless Talk Costs Lives." While our talk may not "cost lives" careless words are costly, often harmful, and can cause serious problems.

Years ago, Solomon realized this and said, "Those who guard their lips guard their lives." It is like placing a boundary around what we want people to know or think about us. Being careful is wise because we will not have to try to explain what we mean if we express an unclear thought or idea. We will not have to apologize or make amends or be fearful for things we might have said that could stain someone's reputation if we speak unkindly. In fact, later in Proverbs, Solomon said that our "tongues have the power of life and death."

There is also the person who "speaks rashly." This person speaks without taking time to think or makes statements that are untrue, intending to hurt, harm, destroy, or take advantage of others. Many of us have endured - even struggled to survive - false stories or outright lies about us as others intended to damage or destroy us. We have been left fearful and unable to trust others because of their unfair words.

But we are to take heart. Our God is a fair and just God and He will, in His own time, make all things right. Those who "speak rashly will come to ruin."

Prayer: Father, we are grateful that You love us, understand us, and know "who we are." May we never harm others. May we bring them Your healing and hope, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Those who control their tongue will have a long life; opening your mouth can ruin everything. Proverbs 13:3



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

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2022-23 Community Events

- 07/21/2022: Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/22/2022: Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
07/24/2022: Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20
07/27/2022: Golf Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course 11a-1pm
08/05/2022: Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
08/12/2022: GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
No Date Set: Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day 4-5pm GHS Parking Lot
09/10/2022: Lions Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
09/11/2022: 6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm
09/11/2022: Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10 a.m.
09/02-04: Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/01/2022: Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/07/2022: Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/31/2022: Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2022: United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/12/2022: Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
11/24/2022 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
12/03/2022 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party at Olive Grove Golf Course
12/10/2022: Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm
01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
07/04/2023 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start (4th of July)
07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Lotto America

21-22-24-46-51, Star Ball: 6, ASB: 2

(twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-four, forty-six, fifty-one; Star Ball: six; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$24,110,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 325,000,000

Powerball

13-20-31-33-59, Powerball: 20, Power Play: 3

(thirteen, twenty, thirty-one, thirty-three, fifty-nine; Powerball: twenty; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$300,000,000

Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Avon def. Freeman Academy/Marion, 25-11, 25-21, 25-21

Britton-Hecla def. Wilmot, 25-19, 23-25, 25-22, 15-25, 15-7

Burke def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-14, 25-9, 25-12

Canton def. Freeman, 24-26, 25-19, 25-15, 25-21

Clark/Willow Lake def. Great Plains Lutheran, 25-20, 25-21, 25-19

Dell Rapids St. Mary def. Hills-Beaver Creek, Minn., 25-6, 25-15, 25-13

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Flandreau Indian, 25-6, 25-7, 25-7

Faulkton def. Groton Area, 25-12, 25-23, 24-26, 25-22

Flandreau def. Deuel, 25-19, 25-9, 25-17

Ipswich def. North Central Co-Op, 25-16, 25-15, 25-19

Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Scotland, 25-19, 25-16, 18-25, 25-18

Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Aberdeen Central, 25-11, 25-12, 25-19

Stanley County def. Crow Creek, 25-12, 25-13, 25-6

Viborg-Hurley def. Howard, 28-30, 25-22, 25-20, 21-25, 16-14

Winner def. White River, 25-22, 25-17, 25-14

Wolsey-Wessington def. Iroquois/ Lake Preston Co-op, 25-11, 13-25, 25-22, 25-10

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

Russia to medevac wounded in school shooting to Moscow

MOSCOW (AP) — More than a dozen people wounded in a school shooting in central Russia will be medevaced to Moscow for further treatment, authorities said Tuesday, a day after a gunman killed 17 people and wounded 24 others.

Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said that a medical evacuation is planned for 15 of the injured, including 13 children and two adults. He said three of them are in critical condition.

The shooting in Monday took place in School No. 88 in Izhevsk, a city 960 kilometers (600 miles) east of Moscow in the Udmurtia region, and was one of the deadliest school shootings in Russia. The gunman, a 34-year-old graduate of the school, killed himself after the shooting.

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School shootings aren't common in Russia, but have become more frequent in recent years.

A shooter killed six people in a university in Perm a year ago. Just months before that, a gunman opened fire at a school in the city of Kazan, killing seven students and two teachers with a registered weapon. A student at a college in the Russia-annexed Crimean Peninsula killed 20 students and himself in 2018.

Russian authorities last year sought to tighten gun regulations in the wake of the shootings.

Russia's Investigative Committee identified the gunman in Izhevsk as Artyom Kazantsev and said he was wearing a black T-shirt bearing "Nazi symbols." No details about his motives have been released, and an investigation is underway. But local officials said he was registered as a patient at a psychiatric facility.

The government of Udmurtia said 17 people, including 11 children, were killed in the shooting. According to Russia's Investigative Committee, 24 other people, including 22 children, were wounded in the attack.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov described the shooting as "a terrorist act" and said President Vladimir Putin has given all the necessary orders to the relevant authorities.

The school educates children between the first and 11th grades.

Russia's National Guard said Kazantsev used two nonlethal handguns adapted to fire real bullets. The guns weren't registered with the authorities.

Izhevsk, a city of 640,000, is located west of the Ural mountains in central Russia.

He's back: Italy's Berlusconi wins Senate seat after tax ban

By GIADA ZAMPANO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Just in time to celebrate his 86th birthday, former Italian premier Silvio Berlusconi is making his return to Italy's parliament, winning a seat in the Senate nearly a decade after being banned from holding public office over a tax fraud conviction.

Berlusconi, who has made personal comebacks a hallmark of Italian politics for three decades, was re-elected to Italy's upper house with more than 50% of the votes Sunday in the northern city of Monza, where he also owns a soccer team that was recently promoted to Italy's top division.

While overall his party lost ground compared with the 2018 general elections, it fared better than expected and Berlusconi's victory was particularly heartfelt.

"Regaining a seat in the Senate was a sort of personal revenge for Berlusconi, after all the judicial problems he went through," said Massimiliano Panarari, political analyst at Rome's Mercatorum University.

In 2013, the Senate expelled Berlusconi because of a tax fraud conviction stemming from his media business, and he was banned from holding public office for six years. After he served a sentence of community service, a court ruled he could once again hold public office and he won a seat in the European Parliament in 2019.

His third and last premiership had ended abruptly in 2011, when financial markets lost confidence that the billionaire media magnate could manage Italy's finances during Europe's sovereign debt crisis.

Berlusconi's Forza Italia center-right party — which pioneered populist politics in Italy in the 1990s — gained just over 8% in Sunday's vote, which dominated by his ally Giorgia Meloni. She is now poised to lead the country's first far-right government since World War II.

It was a better-than-expected result for Forza Italia, even though it still amounted to a significant loss of support compared with the 14% of the votes it nailed in 2018 elections. The party has grown weaker in recent years, hit by Berlusconi's judicial woes and his recurring health problems, but it has remained relevant enough.

Beating expectations, Forza Italia finished right behind its other ally, the anti-immigrant League of Matteo Salvini, which won only about 9% of the vote, down from 17% in 2018.

Berlusconi has pledged to exercise a moderating influence over the other two more radical parties in the center-right coalition.

"In the competition with the League, Forza Italia did pretty well and, thanks to this, Berlusconi will be pivotal again in the new governing coalition. He can say he's a winner in these elections," Panarari said.

The media mogul, whose birthday is Thursday, did just that after the votes came in.

"Forza Italia proved decisive for the success of the center-right and the formation of the next government," Berlusconi enthused in a tweet. "Once again I put myself at the service of Italy, of the country I love."

Analysts noted that, despite some "grotesque" performances on TikTok, which Berlusconi used in the electoral campaign to reach young voters with anecdotes and jokes, the three-term premier succeeded in gaining a new space on Italy's political stage.

His TikTok videos, where he often dressed in classic suits and ties, seemed to clash with the language and style of the teen audience, but often went viral.

"I've still got it," he said in one viral video clip, after he successfully nailed a fly that had landed on his forehead during a television interview.

He raised eyebrows late in the campaign when he seemed to justify Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, saying he was forced into it by pro-Moscow separatists in Donbas.

"The troops were supposed to enter, reach Kyiv within a week, replace Zelensky's government with decent people and then leave," Berlusconi told his favorite late-night talk show host. Later he backtracked, saying his words had been "oversimplified."

But Berlusconi has a long, friendly history with Putin: He has entertained the Russian leader at his Sardinian villa and even visited Crimea with Putin in 2014 after the Russian leader annexed the peninsula from Ukraine.

While Berlusconi has secured another political life for himself, the survival of his party long-term remains uncertain given it seems indissolubly linked to Berlusconi's active presence on the scene.

"As long as Silvio Berlusconi lives, Forza Italia lives. But the party never had its autonomy," said Sofia Ventura, a political science professor at the University of Bologna.

And yet Berlusconi wasn't the only winner in the household.

His 32-year-old girlfriend, Marta Fascina, also took a seat in the lower house of parliament, after winning the vote in the Sicilian constituency of Marsala, despite never showing up in the southern island during the campaign.

In an interview with an Italian newspaper, Fascina said she used to go to Sicily with her father on vacation when she was a child.

Vote in Ukraine's Russia-held areas stokes tension with West

By ADAM SCHRECK and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The final day of voting was taking place in Russian-held regions of Ukraine on Tuesday in preordained referendums that are expected to serve as a pretext for their annexation by Moscow.

The ballots are heightening tension between the Kremlin and the West, with Russia warning it could resort to nuclear weapons to defend its own territory.

Formal annexation of captured chunks of eastern Ukraine, possibly as soon as Friday, sets the stage for a dangerous new phase in the seven-month war.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday that after the ballots "the situation will radically change from the legal viewpoint, from the point of view of international law, with all the corresponding consequences for protection of those areas and ensuring their security."

Faced with recent humiliating battlefield setbacks for the Kremlin's forces in Ukraine, and increasingly cornered by Kyiv's counteroffensive, Russian President Vladimir Putin has since last week tried to raise the stakes by talking up Moscow's nuclear option. The regional ballots and a call-up of Russian military reservists are other strategies aimed at buttressing Moscow's exposed position.

Western allies are standing firm with Ukraine. French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna on Tuesday was the latest high-ranking foreign official to visit Kyiv, saying Paris is determined "to support Ukraine and its sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of Russia's Security Council chaired by Putin, spelled out the threat in the bluntest terms yet Tuesday.

"Let's imagine that Russia is forced to use the most powerful weapon against the Ukrainian regime that

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has committed a large-scale act of aggression, which is dangerous for the very existence of our state," Medvedev wrote on his messaging app channel. "I believe that NATO will steer clear from direct meddling in the conflict in that case."

The United States has dismissed the Kremlin's nuclear talk as scare tactics.

Jake Sullivan, the U.S. national security adviser, responded to Putin's nuclear threats from last week. Sullivan told NBC on Sunday that Russia would pay a high, if unspecified, price if Moscow made good on threats to use nuclear weapons in the war in Ukraine.

The Ukraine war is still gripping world attention, as it causes widespread shortages and rising prices not only for food but for energy, inflation hitting the cost of living everywhere, and growing global inequality. The talk of nuclear war has only deepened the concern.

Misery and hardship are often the legacy of Russia's occupation of Ukrainian areas now recaptured by Kyiv's forces. Some people have had no gas, electricity, running water or internet since March.

The war has brought an energy crunch for much of Western Europe, with German officials seeing the disruption of Russian supplies as a power play by the Kremlin to pressure Europe over its support for Ukraine.

The German economy ministry said Tuesday that the Nord Stream 1 pipeline leading from Russia to Europe has reported a drop in pressure, only hours after a leak was reported in the Nord Stream 2 pipeline in the Baltic Sea off Denmark. Both pipelines were built to carry natural gas from Russia to Europe.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the problems were "very alarming" and would be investigated.

The referendum in Russian-held areas of Ukraine, whose outcome is expected to be a predetermined victory for Moscow, is rejected as a sham by Ukraine and many other countries.

The five-day voting, in which residents are asked whether they want their regions to become part of Russia, has been anything but free or fair. Tens of thousands of residents had already fled the regions amid the war, and images shared by those who remained showed armed Russian troops going door-to-door to pressure Ukrainians into voting.

The balloting on Tuesday was held at polling stations.

With his back against the wall amid Ukraine's battlefield successes, Russian media are speculating that Putin may follow up on last week's order of partial mobilization by declaring martial law and shutting the nation's borders for all men of fighting age.

The call-up has in some ways backfired on Putin. It has triggered a massive exodus of men from the country, fueled protests in many regions across Russia and sparked occasional acts of violence. On Monday, a gunman opened fire in an enlistment office in a Siberian city and gravely wounded the local chief military recruitment officer. The shooting came after scattered arson attacks on enlistment offices.

In the latest move to stem the tide of men fleeing Russia to avoid mobilization, Russian officials declared plans to set up a military recruitment office right on the border with Georgia, one of the main routes of the exodus.

And trying to assuage public outrage, numerous Russian officials and lawmakers have acknowledged that mistakes were made during the mobilization — when military conscription offices were rounding up random people without military experience who weren't supposed to be called up — and promised to quickly correct them.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday once again decried the Russian mobilization as nothing more than "an attempt to provide commanders on the ground with a constant stream of cannon fodder."

Zelenskyy vowed that the Ukrainian military will push efforts to take back "the entire territory of Ukraine," and has drawn up plans to counter "new types of weapons" used by Russia.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Monday that Putin had told Turkey's president last week that Moscow was ready to resume negotiations with Ukraine but had "new conditions" for a cease-fire.

Even as the voting has continued in Russia-held areas, Russian forces have kept up their strikes across Ukraine. Overnight, Russian missile attacks targeted the southern areas of Zaporizhzhia and Mykolaiv, damaging residential buildings and other sites, officials said.

Abe's militaristic funeral captures Japan's tense mood

By FOSTER KLUG Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The leadup to former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's controversial state funeral could seem like a never-ending exchange of heated words — both for and against. But it was the images of Tuesday's ceremony that most clearly told the story of a nation still deeply divided over the legacy of perhaps the most polarizing leader in its modern history.

Sections of Tokyo, still on edge after Abe's assassination in July, looked more like a police state than the capital of one of the most stable nations in the world. Twenty thousand police officers and more than 1,000 soldiers crammed the neighborhoods around the massive funeral hall, as thousands of protesters took to the streets.

If Japan is sometimes seen from abroad as a monolith of sorts, a largely uniform middleclass haven of social harmony, Abe's funeral laid bare some of the messy reality of a divided nation. It's a place where the shadow of World War II — a subject Abe spent much of his career addressing — can still loom as large as the economic and security worries that drive modern elections.

For many of the thousands of public mourners who stood in long lines to take turns bowing and laying small bouquets of flowers beneath photos of Abe in a park near the official ceremonies, the former leader spearheaded a heroic, still unfinished quest to make Japan a "normal country." He encouraged a sense of national pride in Japan's enormous international contributions instead of focusing on a lingering shame over war-era brutality.

"Former Prime Minister Abe was such a great prominent figure. He brought Japan back to international importance after World War II," said one of the mourners, Masae Kurokawa, 64.

As he left an offering of flowers, Masayuki Aoki, 70, simply said, "I'm emotionally attached to him."

But Abe, in life and in death, generated as much anger as admiration.

Large groups of protesters marched through Tokyo, banging drums, shouting and holding signs that urged the funeral be scrapped. Similar anti-Abe rallies happened across the country, a reflection of a deep resentment about honoring a man who critics say repeatedly tried to whitewash Japan's wartime atrocities, stir nationalist sentiment and engage in high-handed leadership.

"Shinzo Abe has not done a single thing for regular people," said Kaoru Mano, a Tokyo housewife who was at one protest.

The militaristic tones of the funeral were especially striking in a nation that has operated under a pacifist constitution since 1947 — a constitution Abe wanted to revise to expand the military.

A military band played a funeral dirge and a 19-gun volley was fired as his widow brought Abe's ashes into the funeral hall. Dozens of soldiers in crisp, white dress uniforms carried rifles with bayonets as they stood at attention in front of a huge rampart of tens of thousands of white and yellow chrysanthemums that led up to a large photograph of Abe, draped in black ribbon.

Outside the funeral hall, hundreds of police stood outside office buildings, schools and train stations. The extreme security was linked in part to the continuing shock over Abe's assassination, in which a suspect reportedly angry about the former leader's links to a conservative South Korean religious group, the Unification Church, allegedly shot him with a homemade gun while he was giving a campaign speech in western Japan.

In some ways, the split public reactions to the state funeral, which has links to prewar imperial ceremonies that celebrated nationalism, reflect Abe's career-long push to change the way his nation operates on the world stage.

Adored by many in Washington for his staunch military and diplomatic support, he was loathed by liberals at home and by the Koreans and China for his support of conservative revisionist efforts and his push to end apologies over the war.

Abe saw the country's constitution, which was written largely by occupying Americans, as the product of "victor's justice" by the West over Japan. That constitution renounces the use of force in international

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conflicts and limits Japan's military to self defense, although the country has an advanced modern army, navy and air force.

Abe's legacy is likely to last in the political party he spent years championing. For all the protesters in the streets Tuesday, the Liberal Democratic Party has ruled almost without interruption since the war's end; Abe won six national elections during his long years in power.

His LDP acolytes are legion, most prominently the current leader, Fumio Kishida, who has vowed to bolster Japan's military capabilities and carry on many of Abe's policies.

"I hereby announce my pledge to create a Japan, a region and a world that are sustainable, inclusive and where everyone shines on top of the foundation that you built," Kishida said, addressing Abe in his funeral speech.

Suit: Care home resident died with paper jammed in windpipe

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM Associated Press

Cheryl Yewdall spent most of her life at a Philadelphia care home for people with developmental disabilities. It was there, on Jan. 26, that the 50-year-old was found face down on the floor, in a pool of urine, suffocating on a large wad of paper that had been stuffed down her throat.

She died five days later.

No one in authority has said how a 6- or 7-inch paper towel or disinfecting wipe wound up in the trachea of a woman with cerebral palsy and profound intellectual disabilities. The medical examiner's office said it could not determine the manner of Yewdall's death, and a police investigation has yielded no arrests.

But an attorney for Yewdall's mother, in a new wrongful death lawsuit, casts suspicion on an unidentified staff member at Merakey Woodhaven — and suggests that Yewdall herself left a disturbing clue about what how she was treated at the place she called home for four decades.

"She was just so sweet and innocent and helpless, and she depended on them to care for her and love her and be safe," Yewdall's mother, Christine Civatte, said in a phone interview. "I just thought they would protect her."

In a written statement to The Associated Press, Merakey said it "denies any responsibility" for Yewdall's death, which it called "a serious and tragic incident." The organization said it has cooperated with state and local investigations.

"She was a valued member of the Merakey community, and we were honored to have had her in our care for more than 40 years," said Merakey, a provider of developmental, behavioral health and education services with nearly 700 locations nationwide.

Born three months premature, Cheryl Yewdall went to live at Woodhaven as a child. She loved nursery rhymes, doo-wop music and especially Buddy Holly's "Peggy Sue" — whenever her mother put it on, Yewdall would smile, clap her hands and rock back and forth in her wheelchair.

Christine Civatte said she thought everything was fine.

But in January 2021, a year before her death, Cheryl suffered a broken leg that went undiagnosed, the lawsuit said. Then, after an X-ray confirmed the fracture, staff failed to place an immobilizer on her leg as required, telling a visiting physician weeks later they didn't know how, the lawsuit said.

And in a separate incident, from September 2021, Yewdall was reported to have a black eye and swollen cheek, which Woodhaven attributed to a fall, the lawsuit said.

Yewdall, who had limited verbal skills, often repeated words and phrases she heard other people say, a condition called echolalia. One day, her sister asked her to say, "Hi Daddy."

Yewdall's response, recorded by her sister on an iPhone, was chilling.

"Listen to me, a——. Settle down baby. I'm going to kill you if you don't settle down," said Yewdall. "I'm going to kill you, a——."

The clear implication, according to James Pepper, the lawyer for Yewdall's mother, was that she was merely repeating what she'd heard at Woodhaven.

"Cheryl's recounting of what she heard previously, and the undisputed facts of what occurred to her dur-

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ing that yearlong period (before her death), match up," said Pepper, who included a transcript of Yewdall's statements to her sister in the lawsuit.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health threatened to terminate Woodhaven's license after Yewdall's death. In their review, regulators also found the care home denied prompt emergency treatment to another resident who fractured his hip, and failed to safeguard two residents with pica, an eating disorder in which someone consumes things that are not food, according to a state report.

The report showed that "Merakey had no effective policies in place to prevent its residents from engaging in pica behavior," Civatte's lawsuit said.

Though other Woodhaven residents struggled with pica, Pepper said, he doesn't believe Yewdall inserted a large disinfectant wipe in her own windpipe. She had a normal gag reflex and no history of pica, according to Woodhaven records reviewed by the Health Department.

"No one with a gag reflex within normal limits could have put a cleaning wipe ... into their trachea," Pepper said.

The lawsuit, instead, pins blame on someone at Woodhaven.

"Cheryl Yewdall's lack of any history of engaging in pica behavior indicates that a staff member at Merakey Woodhaven placed the cleaning wipe in Cheryl Yewdall's trachea," the lawsuit said.

Philadelphia police did not respond to multiple requests for comment. The state attorney general's office, which has jurisdiction on criminal neglect at nursing homes, declined comment.

The state Health Department returned to Woodhaven on Sept. 6 and lifted the care home's termination notice, concluding it had made "significant progress" in correcting problems.

Woodhaven sent condolences to Civatte after her daughter's death, but offered no information about how and why it happened, Civatte said. Staff invited her to pick up Cheryl's belongings: six tubs of clothes, toys, dolls.

Civatte said she's still looking for answers.

"I need to know everything that happened. Every single moment," Civatte said. "I need to find out who found her. I need to know who did this."

Rules sought for 'gooning,' taking troubled kids to care

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Within what's known as the secure transport industry, it's called "gooning." Brawny men show up under the cover of darkness and force a teenager into a vehicle, taking them against their will to a boarding school, foster home or treatment center.

The process is typically initiated by parents at wit's end over what to do with a child they perceive as troubled. For the kids, it's the traumatic first leg of a journey to an unheard-of place, perhaps hundreds of miles away from home.

Teens who resist are often told, "We can do this the easy way or the hard way." They might be restrained with handcuffs or zip ties. They could be blindfolded or hooded. Though a secure transport company operator was indicted last month, criminal charges are rare because the little-known industry is virtually unregulated. In fact, the indictment was for violating a restraining order, not for the transport itself.

"Some of these stories are almost out of a Charles Dickens novel," said Rep. Ro Khanna, a California Democrat who is pushing for federal regulation of the secure transport industry.

Thousands of American teenagers end up annually in some form of congregate care facility or program aimed at dealing with issues ranging from behavioral problems to drug or alcohol abuse and crime.

In Missouri alone, more than 100 Christian boarding schools promise hope for wayward teens. In Utah, wilderness programs use a back-to-nature approach to try and help young people turn around their lives. Other kids end up in foster homes or treatment centers.

In many cases, the children don't want to leave home and won't go along with their parents. That's where secure transport companies come in.

At a cost often reaching thousands of dollars, parents hire one of the many companies specializing in

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transporting children to congregate care. Many have websites touting their approaches.

"My goal to your child is to start this transition with 100% honesty and integrity," Julio Sandoval of Safe, Sound, Secure Youth Ministries in Missouri posts on his site. "I am not of the ideology of necessarily making your child happy. Happiness will eventually arise when he finds himself growing as a young man and not a threat to himself and society."

Sandoval, 41, and the mother of a California teenager were indicted by a federal grand jury in August. The indictment said workers for Sandoval's company handcuffed the teenager at a store in Fresno, California, and drove him to the Agape Boarding School in Stockton, Missouri. The boy allegedly remained restrained for the entire 27-hour ride. Sandoval and the mother are accused of violating the boy's restraining order against her.

Sandoval was formerly a dean at Agape and now works at another Christian boarding school in Missouri, in addition to operating the transport company. Phone and email messages left with his company and Sandoval's lawyer weren't returned.

The secure transport industry is regulated in just one state — Oregon. That law, implemented in 2021, prohibits the use of hoods, blindfolds and handcuffs, among other things.

Other states may follow suit. Utah state Sen. Mike McKell, a Republican, and Missouri state Rep. Keri Ingle, a Democrat, plan to introduce legislation next session regulating the secure transport industry their states. But advocates say that because so many children are picked up in one state and taken to another, federal legislation is vital.

Currently, there are no federal laws regulating the transportation companies.

"You have a host of jurisdictional issues," McKell said. "You pick up a kid in California and he ends up in Missouri. If there is a problem or abuse, where does jurisdiction lie? This is an issue that squarely deals with interstate commerce. I do think we need a federal solution."

Khanna is formulating the "Accountability for Congregate Care Act," which would provide protections at youth facilities such as prohibiting solitary confinement and the use of chemical or physical restraints. His proposal also would provide for regulation of transport companies.

"I think people didn't realize the kind of trauma and abuse that was going on," Khanna said. "There was a sense they're going to be sent to be reformed, they're going to get tough love."

"But they didn't realize there was actually emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse taking place and they didn't realize the trauma of kids being tricked to going there. What we end up doing is just creating more trauma for these kids."

David Patterson was one of those kids.

He was a high-achieving high school freshman — honor roll student, a pole vaulter on the track team. He said his parents became alarmed because he got drunk and smoked marijuana on Halloween, and because he told them he was gay.

On Father's Day 2002, two men showed up at the Pattersons' California home around 4 a.m. and roused him out of bed. They displayed the handcuffs they'd use if he didn't get into a taxi, which took the trio to the airport for the flight to Missouri. Within hours, Patterson was at Agape, where he spent about a year.

Patterson, now 35, said the trauma of being taken to the school stuck with him for a decade. "When I would see yellow cabs I would have panic attacks and episodes," he said.

The process is expensive. One company lists fees on its website showing that prices range up to \$2,895 plus airfare for two agents and the child; or \$300 to \$5,000 for kids who are driven to a facility, depending on the distance and other factors.

A data analysis earlier this year by American Public Media, The Salt Lake Tribune and KUER public radio in Salt Lake City found that Utah receives far more troubled teens than any other state. The analysis of the period from 2015 through 2020 showed about one-third of teens who crossed state lines for a youth treatment facility ended up in Utah. Virginia, Texas, Missouri and Iowa had the next-highest numbers.

Adding to concerns about the secure transport companies are accusations about some of the places the kids are taken.

At Agape, serving about 60 teenage boys, the school's former doctor was charged last year with multiple

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counts of sexual abuse of children, and five staff members are charged with abuse. The Missouri Attorney General's office asked a judge this month to shut down Agape, and Missouri Speaker of the House Rob Vescovo asked the U.S. Attorney in Kansas City to do the same. So far, the school remains open.

In nearby Humansville, Missouri, Circle of Hope, a Christian boarding school for girls, closed amid an investigation in 2020. The husband-and-wife co-founders were charged with 99 abuse counts last year, including sexual abuse.

The allegations of wrongdoing at Agape and Circle of Hope led Ingle to sponsor a measure signed into law last year that requires more rigorous oversight in Missouri.

Now, Ingle said she'll seek stricter regulations on companies transporting the kids against their will.

"It seems like something that's so dramatic — minors being taken in the middle of the night and whisked away to a facility. But this is something that has been happening in this state for decades now," Ingle said.

Hurricane Ian makes landfall in Cuba en route to Florida

By CRISTIANA MESQUITA and CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — A strengthening Hurricane Ian's rain and winds lashed Cuba's western tip, where authorities have evacuated 50,000 people, as it became a major Category 3 storm early Tuesday and roared on a path that could see it hit Florida's west coast as a Category 4 hurricane.

The storm made landfall early Tuesday in Cuba's Pinar del Rio province, where officials set up 55 shelters, rushed in emergency personnel and took steps to protect crops in Cuba's main tobacco-growing region. The U.S. National Hurricane Center said the island's west coast could see as much as 14 feet (4.3 meters) of storm surge.

"Cuba is expecting extreme hurricane-force winds, also life-threatening storm surge and heavy rainfall," hurricane center senior specialist Daniel Brown told The Associated Press.

After passing over Cuba, Ian was forecast to strengthen further over warm Gulf of Mexico waters before reaching Florida as early as Wednesday as a Category 4 storm with top winds of 140 mph (225 km/h).

As of early Tuesday, Tampa and St. Petersburg appeared to be the among the most likely targets for their first direct hit by a major hurricane since 1921.

"Please treat this storm seriously. It's the real deal. This is not a drill," Hillsborough County Emergency Management Director Timothy Dudley said Monday at a news conference on storm preparations in Tampa.

In Havana on Monday, fishermen were taking their boats out of the water along the famous Malecon seaside boulevard, and city workers were unclogging storm drains ahead of the expected rain.

Havana resident Adyz Ladron said the potential for rising water from the storm worries him.

"I am very scared because my house gets completely flooded, with water up to here," he said, pointing to his chest.

In Havana's El Fanguito, a poor neighborhood near the Almendares River, residents were packing up what they could to leave their homes.

"I hope we escape this one because it would be the end of us. We already have so little," health worker Abel Rodrigues said.

The Hurricane Center said in a 4:30 a.m. EDT (0830 GMT) update that Ian made landfall in Cuba as it continued to strengthen, with sustained winds of 125 mph (205 km/h). In an update about a half-hour later, the center said Ian was located about 5 miles (10 km) south of the city of Pinar del Rio, moving north at 12 mph (19 km/h).

The center defines a major hurricane as a Category 3 storm or higher, meaning maximum sustained winds of at least 111 mph (178 km/h), and Ian became a Category 3 hurricane earlier Tuesday.

The center said "significant wind and storm surge impacts" were occurring Tuesday morning in western Cuba.

Ian won't linger over Cuba but will slow down over the Gulf of Mexico, growing wider and stronger, "which will have the potential to produce significant wind and storm surge impacts along the west coast

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of Florida," the hurricane center said.

A surge of up to 10 feet (3 meters) of ocean water and 10 inches (25 centimeters) of rain was predicted across the Tampa Bay area, with as much as 15 inches (38 centimeters) inches in isolated areas. That's enough water to inundate coastal communities.

As many as 300,000 people may be evacuated from low-lying areas in Hillsborough County alone, county administrator Bonnie Wise said. Some of those evacuations were beginning Monday afternoon in the most vulnerable areas, with schools and other locations opening as shelters.

"We must do everything we can to protect our residents. Time is of the essence," Wise said.

Floridians lined up for hours in Tampa to collect bags of sand and cleared store shelves of bottled water. Gov. Ron DeSantis declared a statewide emergency and warned that Ian could lash large areas of the state, knocking out power and interrupting fuel supplies as it swirls northward off the state's Gulf Coast.

"You have a significant storm that may end up being a Category 4 hurricane," DeSantis said at a news conference. "That's going to cause a huge amount of storm surge. You're going to have flood events. You're going to have a lot of different impacts."

DeSantis said the state has suspended tolls around the Tampa Bay area and mobilized 5,000 Florida state national guard troops, with another 2,000 on standby in neighboring states.

President Joe Biden also declared an emergency, authorizing the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate disaster relief and provide assistance to protect lives and property. The president postponed a scheduled Tuesday trip to Florida because of the storm.

Playing it safe, NASA planned to slowly roll its moon rocket from the launch pad to its Kennedy Space Center hangar, adding weeks of delay to the test flight.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers announced Monday night that the football team was relocating football operations to the Miami area in preparation for next weekend's game against the Kansas City Chiefs. The Buccaneers said the team will leave Tampa on Tuesday.

Flash flooding was predicted for much of the Florida peninsula, and heavy rainfall was possible for the southeast United States later this week. With tropical storm force winds extending 115 miles (185 kilometers) from Ian's center, watches covered the Florida Keys to Lake Okeechobee.

Biden's strategy to end hunger in US includes more benefits

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration is laying out its plan to meet an ambitious goal of ending hunger in the U.S. by 2030, including expanding monthly benefits that help low-income Americans buy food.

The administration, in a plan released Tuesday, is also seeking to increase healthy eating and physical activity so that fewer people are afflicted with diabetes, obesity, hypertension and other diet-related diseases. It said it would work to expand Medicaid and Medicare access to obesity counseling and nutrition.

"The consequences of food insecurity and diet-related diseases are significant, far reaching, and disproportionately impact historically underserved communities," Biden wrote in a memo outlining the White House strategy. "Yet, food insecurity and diet-related diseases are largely preventable, if we prioritize the health of the nation."

Biden is hosting a conference this week on hunger, nutrition and health, the first by the White House since 1969. That conference, under President Richard Nixon, was a pivotal moment that influenced the U.S. food policy agenda for 50 years. It led to a greatly expanded food stamps program and gave rise to the Women, Infants and Children program, which serves half the babies born in the U.S. by providing women with parenting advice, breastfeeding support and food assistance.

Over the years, cuts to federal programs coupled with stigmas over welfare and big changes to how food and farming systems are run have prompted declines in access to food.

Biden, a Democrat, is hoping this week's conference is similarly transformative. But the goal of Nixon, a Republican, also was "to put an end to hunger in America for all time."

And yet 10% of U.S. households in 2021 suffered food insecurity, meaning they were uncertain they

could get enough food to feed themselves or their families because they lacked money or resources for food, according to the Food and Drug Administration.

To succeed, Biden needs buy-in from the private sector and an increasingly partisan Congress. Some of the goals sound reminiscent of former first lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move initiative to tackle childhood obesity and promote healthy eating. The conference also will highlight the need for access to better, healthier food and exercise.

Biden said in his memo that over the past 50 years, "we have learned so much more about nutrition and the role that healthy eating plays in how our kids perform in the classroom and about nutrition and its linkages to disease prevention."

Under to the White House plan, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program eligibility would be expanded, children would get better access to free meals, and summer benefits would be extended to more schoolkids. Such changes would require congressional approval.

The other tenets of the strategy include the development of new food packaging to truth-check the "healthy" claims for some products, expanding SNAP incentives to select fruits and vegetables, providing more programs to encourage people to get outside and move, and boosting funding for research.

Teen interest in long-lasting birth control soars after Roe

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and ARLEIGH RODGERS Associated Press

Sixteen-year-old Adismarys Abreu had been discussing a long-lasting birth control implant with her mother for about a year as a potential solution to increasing menstrual pain.

Then Roe v. Wade was overturned, and Abreu joined the throng of teens rushing to their doctors as states began to ban or severely limit abortion.

"I'm definitely not ready to be pregnant," said Abreu, who had Nexplanon — a reversible, matchstick-sized contraceptive — implanted in her arm in August. Her home state of Florida bans most abortions after 15 weeks, and not having that option is "such a scary thought," she said.

Experts say the U.S. Supreme Court's June ruling appears to be accelerating a trend of increased birth control use among teens, including long-acting reversible forms like intrauterine devices and implants. Appointments have surged and Planned Parenthood has been flooded with questions as doctors report demand even among teens who aren't sexually active.

Some patients are especially fearful because the new abortion laws in several states don't include exceptions for sexual assault.

"Please, I need some birth control in case I get raped," patients tell Dr. Judith Simms-Cendan, a pediatric-adolescent gynecologist in Miami, where state law does not provide exceptions for rape or incest after 15 weeks.

Simms-Cendan, the president-elect of the North American Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology, said parents who might have been hesitant in the past now want to discuss birth control.

"It's a sea change of, 'I don't have room to play. We have got to get my child on something,'" she said.

Teens already were shifting to more effective long-acting forms of birth control, which have similar or even lower failure rates than sterilization, said Laura Lindberg, a professor at Rutgers University's School of Public Health in New Jersey. Her research found the number of 15- to 19-year-olds using those methods rose to 15% during the period 2015 to 2019, up from 3% during the 2006 to 2010 period.

No national data is available for the months since Roe was overturned, said Lindberg, who previously worked for nearly two decades at the Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports abortion rights.

But she said "major ripple effects" have to be expected from the loss of abortion access and noted that it wouldn't be the first time politics have led to a shift in birth control usage.

In the weeks after former President Donald Trump's election, as women raised concerns online that the Affordable Care Act would be repealed, demand for long-acting birth control rose by nearly 22% across all age groups, according to a 2019 research letter published in JAMA Internal Medicine.

In Ohio, where a judge this month blocked a ban on virtually all abortions, patients — both male and

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female — now listen with rapt attention to the contraception talk that Dr. Peggy Stager has long made a part of routine appointments at her pediatric practice in Cleveland.

Stager said her practice's dedicated spots for insertion of the Nexplanon implant are consistently filled, and requests for contraceptive refills have increased 30% to 40% since Roe was overturned. Recently, she talked to a college-bound student who wasn't sexually active but decided to get an IUD anyway.

"She was real clear: 'I want to have a great four years without any worry,'" recalled Stager, who is the chair of the section on adolescent health at the American Academy of Pediatrics. "And that's a change."

In Missouri, among the first states in the country with a trigger law in effect to ban abortions at any point in pregnancy, Dr. David Eisenberg also has seen a similar sense of urgency from college-bound teens to choose the most effective option.

"Fear is an amazing motivator," said Eisenberg, an associate professor at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, who performs abortions in neighboring Illinois. "They understand the consequence of a contraceptive failure might mean they become a parent because they might not be able to access an abortion."

Interest is also high at the contraception clinic that Dr. Elise Berlan oversees in Columbus, Ohio. Before the Supreme Court's decision, the clinic booked appointments for new patients within a week or two.

Now, they are booking several months out for first appointments, said Berlan, an adolescent medicine specialist who sees mothers and daughters in tears in her exam room. She said the demand is so high they are adding a provider.

On the day the Supreme Court ruled against Roe, twice as many birth control questions as normal poured into Roo, Planned Parenthood's online chatbot aimed at teens.

Online birth control appointments also skyrocketed that day — up 150% from a typical day, with an even-larger 375% surge for IUD-seekers, said Julia Bennett, director of digital education and learning strategy for Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

By mid-July, several weeks after the ruling, birth control appointments remained up about 20%, although the data isn't broken down by age group.

The growing interest exists even in states like North Carolina, where abortion remains legal but the Legislature is conservative.

Dr. Kavita Arora, an obstetrician-gynecologist in Chapel Hill, said she saw maybe one teen a month before the ruling. Now, she said, she sees them at each clinic session.

"They're aware that this is an incredibly fluid situation, and what is allowed at one moment may not be allowed a week or a month later," said Arora, the chair of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' Committee on Ethics.

That uncertain future is part of what motivated Abreu, the Florida teen, whose implant will prevent pregnancy for up to five years.

"I don't know what's going to happen with the laws in that time period," said Abreu, who was using a short-acting form of birth control before switching. "Having this already in my arm, it makes me feel so much safer."

Her mother, Maribys Lorenzo, said in Spanish that she, too, is a little more at peace knowing her daughter cannot get pregnant and said she would recommend the implant because it does not require her daughter to remember to take a contraceptive pill.

She said she is not worried, any more or less, that her daughter will become sexually active because of the implant. But if it happens, she will be protected, Lorenzo said.

"I don't think that's fair to me or my family to not have abortion as an option," said her daughter, Abreu.

World shares mostly gain after Dow tumbles into bear market

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

World shares were mostly higher on Tuesday as buying kicked in after heavy selling on Wall Street put the Dow Jones Industrial Average into what's known as a bear market.

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U.S. futures and oil prices gained.

In early European trading, Germany's DAX climbed 0.7% to 12,315.01 while the CAC 40 in Paris rose 0.8% to 5,812.41. In London, the FTSE 100 edged 0.1% higher to 7,029.46.

The future for the S&P 500 jumped 1.3%, while the contract for the Dow industrials was 1% higher.

In Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index picked up 0.5% to 26,571.87 and the S&P/ASX 200 added 0.4% to 6,496.20. In Seoul, the Kospi rebounded from earlier losses, edging 0.1% higher to 2,223.86.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng added just 5 points, to 17,860.31. The Shanghai Composite index jumped 1.4% to 3,093.86 after China's central bank on Tuesday moved to maintain cash flow for banks by buying securities from commercial lenders, with an agreement to sell them back in the future.

The official Xinhua News Agency said the People's Bank of China carried out 175 billion yuan (about \$24.7 billion) in reverse repos "to maintain liquidity in the banking system."

Global stocks have been sagging under concerns over stubbornly hot inflation and the risk that central banks could trigger recessions as they try to cool high prices for everything from food to clothing.

Investors have been particularly focusing on the Federal Reserve and its aggressive interest rate hikes. But volatility in currency markets has further roiled markets.

The British pound dropped to an all-time low against the dollar on Monday and investors continued to dump British government bonds in displeasure over a sweeping tax cut plan announced in London last week. It had stabilized by early Tuesday.

The Japanese yen edged toward 145 to the dollar early Tuesday. Last week, the Bank of Japan intervened in the market as the yen slipped past 145, gaining a brief reprieve. But the dollar's surge against other currencies is putting pressure on the BOJ and other central banks, especially in developing economies facing growing costs for repaying foreign loans.

On Tuesday, the pound was at \$1.0809, up from \$1.0686 late Monday. The dollar bought 144.33 yen, down from 144.65 yen, and the euro rose to 96.36 cents from 96.10 cents.

Companies are nearing the close of the third quarter and with the next round of earnings reports investors will get a better sense of how companies are dealing with persistent inflation.

Several economic reports are on tap for this week that will give more details on consumer spending, the jobs market and the broader health of the U.S. economy.

The latest consumer confidence report, for September, from the business group The Conference Board will be released on Tuesday. The government will release its weekly report on unemployment benefits on Thursday, along with an updated report on second-quarter gross domestic product.

On Friday, the government will release another report on personal income and spending that will help provide more details on where and how inflation is hurting consumer spending.

Seeking to make borrowing more expensive and crimp spending, the Fed raised its benchmark rate, which affects many consumer and business loans, again last week. It now sits at a range of 3% to 3.25%. It was near zero at the start of the year. The Fed also released a forecast suggesting its benchmark rate could be 4.4% by the year's end, a full point higher than envisioned in June.

The U.S. economy is already slowing, raising worries that rate hikes might cause a recession. The Dow was the last of the major U.S. stock indexes to fall into what's known as a bear market on Monday, falling 1.1% to 29,260.81.

The Dow is now 20.5% below its all-time high set on Jan. 4. A drop of 20% or more from a recent peak is what Wall Street calls a bear market.

The S&P 500 fell 1% to 3,655.04. The Nasdaq dropped 0.6% to 10,802.92, while the Russell 2000 dropped 1.4% to close at 1,655.88.

In other trading on Tuesday, U.S. benchmark crude added \$1.26 to \$77.97 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It sank \$2.03 to \$76.71 on Monday.

Brent crude, used for pricing international oils, rose \$1.35 to \$84.21 per barrel.

Pound stabilizes but turmoil continues for UK economy

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LONDON (AP) — The British pound stabilized in Asian trading on Tuesday after plunging to a record low a day earlier, as the Bank of England and the British government tried to soothe markets nervous about a volatile U.K. economy.

The instability began to have real-world impacts, with several British mortgage lenders withdrawing deals amid concern that interest rates may soon rise sharply.

The pound was trading at around \$1.08 on Tuesday morning. On Monday it plunged to \$1.0373, the lowest since the decimalization of the currency in 1971, on concerns that tax cuts announced Friday by Treasury chief Kwasi Kwarteng would swell government debt and fuel further inflation.

Late Monday the central bank said it was “closely monitoring” the markets and would not hesitate to boost interest rates when it next meets in November to curb inflation that is running at 9.9%.

The U.K. Treasury also sought to reassure markets, saying it would set out a medium-term fiscal plan on Nov. 23, alongside an economic forecast by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility.

The statements did little to ease misgivings about the government’s economic policies, with the pound staying well below the \$1.12 level it held before Kwarteng’s announcement on Friday.

Some analysts warned that the statements from the bank and the Treasury were “too little, too late.”

“There is no rate increase today and speculators will enjoy the prospect of two months of Bank of England inactivity if the statement is taken at face value,” said Alastair George, chief investment strategist at Edison Group.

The government plans to cut 45 billion pounds (\$49 billion) in taxes at the same time as it spends more than 60 billion pounds to cap energy prices that are driving a cost-of-living crisis.

Kwarteng and Prime Minister Liz Truss, who replaced Boris Johnson as prime minister on Sept. 6, are betting that lower taxes and reduced bureaucracy eventually will generate enough additional tax revenue to cover government spending. But many economists say it is unlikely the gamble will pay off.

Torsten Bell, who heads the Resolution Foundation, an economic think-tank focused on inequality, said the markets were looking at British government plans “and saying that is not what serious policymaking looks like.”

“The world we are heading for is a bumpy few weeks,” he told Sky News. Kwarteng “is now going to have quite a tough time because he has now set out plans to balance the books in November. That is going to be very hard.”

Vietnam imposes curfew, evacuations ahead of Typhoon Noru

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Vietnam imposed a curfew and evacuated over 800,000 people as a powerful typhoon that had flooded villages and left at least eight dead in the Philippines aimed Tuesday for the country’s central region.

People living near the coast where Typhoon Noru was expected to slam early Wednesday had been ordered to take shelter, national television VTV said. Schools were closed and public events canceled.

In Da Nang and Quang Nam provinces, a curfew will be in effect starting Tuesday evening. It forbids people from venturing out except those on official duty, the TV said.

Flights at five regional airports were canceled and train service halted until the typhoon passes.

The weather agency said Noru was packing maximum sustained winds of 180 kilometers (111 miles) per hour.

The typhoon deaths in the northern Philippines on Sunday included five rescuers who drowned in San Miguel town in Bulacan province after their boat overturned when it was hit by a collapsed wall, tossing them into rampaging floodwaters, police said.

Nearly 80,000 people had been moved to emergency shelters, some forcibly, across the main Luzon island, where many villages were flooded.

Lamb’s 1-handed TD catch gives Dallas 23-16 win over Giants

By TOM CANAVAN AP Sports Writer

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EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — CeeDee Lamb was angry with himself in the second quarter after dropping a wide-open pass and costing the Dallas Cowboys a possible touchdown. It was just embarrassing.

The star receiver more than made up for it with the game on the line, making a one-handed TD catch with 8:30 to play to cap a go-ahead drive that gave the Cowboys a 23-16 win over the New York Giants on Monday night.

"He's CeeDee Lamb," Dallas quarterback Cooper Rush said after hitting Lamb four times on the 89-yard drive. "Guy's open a lot. Makes big-time catches. That fade catch was unbelievable. I'm sure he wants that other one back, but made tons of plays for us, like usual."

Ezekiel Elliott scored on a 1-yard run to ignite a comeback from a seven-point deficit and Brett Maher kicked three field goals as the Cowboys (2-1) beat the Giants (2-1) for the 10th time in 11 games and handed coach Brian Daboll his first loss.

"Didn't get it quite done tonight," Daboll said. "They made more plays than we did. Give them credit."

Rush threw for 210 yards, including the 1-yard touchdown to Lamb, in winning his second straight game filling in for injured Dak Prescott (thumb).

Lamb finished with eight catches for 87 yards, but also dropped a potential 52-yard TD pass. He paced the sideline after the play and teammates walked over to encourage him.

"It was situation I had to deal with on my own. Obviously I'm the one that dropped the ball for the guys," Lamb said. "So knowing that I had to make this up in the back end of the game, I just wanted to step up."

Lamb actually made three plays at the end of the drive. He caught a 4-yard pass on fourth-and-4 from the Giants 41 with 10:27 to go. He added a 26-yard grab to the 1 and followed that with his great catch on the fade pattern for a 20-13 lead.

Saquon Barkley scored on a weaving 36-yard touchdown run that gave the Giants a brief 13-6 lead. Graham Gano added three field goal, including a 51-yarder with 3:37 to play to make it a one-score game.

The Giants got the ball back with 1:45 left, but the series ended quickly with an interception by Trevon Diggs.

The Cowboys outgained the Giants 391-336 in an NFC East rivalry game that saw the teams rush for almost as much as they gained passing. Dallas ran for 176 yards — Tony Pollard had 105 — and the Cowboys threw for 215. The Giants gained 167 on the ground and 196 in the air.

Dallas came into the game having allowed only one touchdown in each of its first two games, and the trend continued Monday night. The defense hounded Daniel Jones, sacking him five times, with DeMarcus Lawrence tying his career high with three.

Jones finished 20 of 37 for 196 yards and ran nine times for 79 yards. Barkley finished with 81 yards on 14 carries.

Maher sandwiched field goals of 26 and 28 yards around a 42-yarder by Gano to give Dallas a 6-3 half-time lead.

The Cowboys also got a big play on special teams as defensive lineman Dorance Armstrong blocked a 47-yard field goal attempt by Gano on New York's opening possession.

INJURIES

Cowboys: Lawrence was injured early in the third quarter when he hurt a foot on a play that saw Jones get sacked by safety Donovan Wilson. ... Giants wide receiver Sterling Shepard appeared to hurt his leg on New York's final offensive play, and Daboll said after the game the initial report was not good.

UP NEXT

Cowboys: Return home to face the Washington Commanders on Sunday.

Giants: Complete a three-game homestand against the Chicago Bears on Sunday.

Giants take 2 body blows from Cowboys, a loss and injury

By TOM CANAVAN AP Sports Writer

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — The New York Giants took it on the chin against the Dallas Cowboys. Dropping a hard-fought 23-16 decision to the rival Cowboys on Monday night to lose for the first time

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under new coach Brian Daboll hurt. What was worse came at the end of the game.

Wide receiver Sterling Shepard, the Giants' longest-tenured player and one of the key leaders on a young team, sustained a leg injury on New York's final offensive play and it did not look good.

Shepard, who took a pay cut to come back this year, had to be carted off the field and Daboll said there's a possibility the injury is very serious.

Shepard made it back for the season opener and caught a touchdown pass after recovering from an Achilles tendon injury late last season.

"It was heartbreaking," offensive tackle Andrew Thomas said. "Shep worked really hard to get back and to see him go through something like that again, I feel for the guy. He loves the game, he works hard."

Daboll had no immediate information on the extent of the injury but he was clearly worried about the 29-year-old who led the Giants (2-1) with five catches for 49 yards.

New York quarterback Daniel Jones, who was sacked five times by the Cowboys and was on the run most of the game eluding pass rushers, said seeing Shepard go down on a play where they were seemingly no contact was rough.

"Real tough to see that, for sure," said Jones, who ran for 79 yards and threw for 196. "A guy who works so hard, he's battling back from an injury last year. I feel for him as a teammate, as a close friend and yeah, that's tough to see."

Shepard was not made available to reporters after the game.

Saquon Barkley, whose 36-yard touchdown run gave the Giants a 13-6 lead in the third quarter, said he will go home, say a prayer for Shepard and hope for the best.

"Just the type of guy Shep is, he is a character, especially the energy he brings to the team," Barkley said. "He's one of my best friends, if not my best friend. So to see him go down, you know, we all got his back."

Daboll called the injury a shame.

"Guys work their butts off to get back from injuries, and if this is something that he's out for the whole season – which we'll probably know tomorrow morning or maybe even tonight – you hurt for those guys because they put everything into it," he said.

As for the loss, Daboll said his approach will be the same. It's one game and the team needs to correct its mistakes and get ready to play the Bears on Sunday.

"You can't let these things linger just like you can't let a win linger," he said. "You have to move on and get ready on the next opponent. To ride the rollercoaster, there's going to be a lot of ups and downs throughout the league, throughout the year for any team."

Jury to be picked for Oath Keeper boss' Jan. 6 sedition case

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

Jury selection is expected to get underway Tuesday in the trial of the founder of the far-right Oath Keepers extremist group and four associates charged with seditious conspiracy, one of the most serious cases to emerge from the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Stewart Rhodes and the others are the first Jan. 6 defendants charged with the rare Civil War-era offense to stand trial for what authorities allege was a serious, weeklong plot to violently stop the transfer of presidential power from election-denier Donald Trump to Joe Biden.

The case against Rhodes and his Oath Keeper associates is the biggest test yet for the Justice Department in its massive Jan. 6 prosecution and is being heard in federal court in Washington. Seditious conspiracy can be difficult to prove and the last such guilty verdict was nearly 30 years ago.

Hundreds of people have already been convicted of joining the mob that overran police barriers, brutally beat officers and smashed windows, sending lawmakers fleeing and halting the certification of Biden's electoral victory.

But prosecutors in the case against the Oath Keepers will try to show that the Oath Keepers' plot to stop Biden from becoming president started before all the votes in the 2020 race had even been counted.

Authorities say Rhodes, a former U.S. Army paratrooper and a Yale Law School graduate, spent weeks

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mobilizing his followers to prepare to take up arms to defend Trump. The Oath Keepers repeatedly wrote in chats about the prospect of violence, stockpiled guns and put "quick reaction force" teams on standby outside Washington to get weapons into the city quickly if they were needed, authorities say.

The day before the riot, authorities say, Rhodes met with the leader of another far-right extremist group, then-Proud Boys Chairman Enrique Tarrío, in an underground parking garage in Washington, though little is known publicly about what they discussed. Tarrío is charged separately with seditious conspiracy alongside other Proud Boys and is scheduled to stand trial in December.

On Jan. 6, Oath Keepers wearing communication devices, helmets and other battle gear were captured on camera storming the Capitol in military-style "stack" formation. Rhodes isn't accused of going inside the Capitol, but phone records show he was communicating with Oath Keepers who did enter around the time of the riot and he was seen gathered with members outside afterward.

On trial with Rhodes, of Granbury Texas, are Thomas Caldwell, of Berryville, Virginia; Kenneth Harrelson, of Titusville, Florida; Jessica Watkins of Woodstock, Ohio; and Kelly Meggs of Dunnellon, Florida.

Attorneys for the Oath Keepers have pushed unsuccessfully to get the trial moved, arguing they can't possibly get a fair jury in Washington.

The court has already dismissed several potential jurors based on their answers to a questionnaire, which asked them about their feelings about Jan. 6 and other matters. Jurors already dismissed include a journalist who has covered the events of Jan. 6. and someone else who described that day "one of the single most treasonous acts in the history of this country."

Conviction for seditious conspiracy calls for up to 20 years behind bars. The last time prosecutors secured a seditious conspiracy at trial was in 1995 in the case against Islamic militants who plotted to bomb New York City landmarks.

Three of Rhodes' Oath Keepers followers have pleaded guilty to the charge and are likely to testify against him at trial. Rhodes' lawyers have claimed those Oath Keepers were pressured into pleading guilty and are lying to get a good deal from the government.

Rhodes' attorneys have suggested that his defense will focus on Rhodes' belief that Trump would invoke the Insurrection Act and call up a militia to support his bid to stay in power. Defense attorneys say Rhodes' actions in the weeks leading up to Jan. 6 were in preparation for what he believed would have been lawful orders from Trump under the Insurrection Act, but never came.

The defense has said that Oath Keepers were dressed in battle gear to protect themselves from possible attacks from left-wing antifa activists and that the "quick reaction force" outside Washington was meant for defensive purposes if Trump invoked the Insurrection Act.

Nearly 900 people have been charged so far in the Jan. 6 riot and more than 400 have pleaded guilty or been convicted at trial. Sentences for the rioters so far have ranged from probation for low-level misdemeanor offenses to 10 years in prison for a retired New York City police officer who used a metal flagpole to assault an officer at the Capitol.

UN meeting produces sense that a 'new epoch' is arriving

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The war in Ukraine and its global fallout transfixed the meeting of world leaders at the U.N. General Assembly this year. When it wasn't out front, it lurked in the background of virtually every speech.

There were near-unanimous calls for an end to the seven-month war, with rich and poor countries decrying the fallout from the conflict — widespread shortages and rising prices not only for food but for energy, inflation hitting the cost of living everywhere, and growing global inequality.

The speeches and side meetings produced no breakthroughs toward peace, but they did put the top diplomats from Russia and Ukraine in the same room for the first time in many months, however briefly. And U.N. food chief David Beasley sounded an alarm that the war, on top of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, has left 50 million people in 45 countries "knocking on famine's door." He warned of starvation,

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destabilization of nations, riots, and mass migration if help doesn't arrive quickly.

In his strongest, gloomiest speech since taking the helm of the United Nations in 2017, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres opened the six-day gathering telling leaders that the survival of humanity and the planet are at stake, and nations aren't tackling the challenges to reverse course. "We are gridlocked in colossal global dysfunction," he said. "Our world is in peril — and paralyzed."

General Assembly President Csaba Kőrösi said he heard, from leaders, a resounding message: that the war in Ukraine, whose effect is being felt around the world, must end. "Yet be it the largest and the most acute, the war in Ukraine is one of nearly 30 armed conflicts worldwide," Kőrösi said. "And none of them is improving."

The Hungarian diplomat cited other takeaways from the high-level meeting: Climate change is destroying us, human rights must be improved and the United Nations must be modernized — particularly its 15-member security council, which must, he said, reflect "the realities of this century."

The 77th General Assembly meeting returned to an in-person gathering for the first time in three years. It was entirely virtual in 2020 and hybrid in 2021. According to Kőrösi, 190 of the 193 U.N. member nations delivered addresses including 126 world leaders, a significant number but fewer than the nearly 150 on the last speakers list issued earlier this month.

The assembly made one exception to the in-person requirement. Over objections from Russia and a few allies, members voted overwhelmingly to allow Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to deliver a pre-recorded speech because of the "ongoing foreign invasion."

The six-day meeting was held under the shadow of Europe's first major war since World War II, which began with Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of its smaller neighbor. The conflict has unleashed a global food crisis and opened fissures among major powers in a way not seen since the Cold War.

In the midst of the speeches, the U.N. Security Council held an open meeting on Thursday called by France, the current council president, on ensuring accountability for Russian actions. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov left a lower-ranking official in Russia's seat, arriving just before his speaking slot and leaving immediately afterward -- much to the dismay of other ministers including Ukraine's, whose speeches Lavrov missed.

Lavrov repeated his country's claims that Kyiv has long oppressed Russian speakers in Ukraine's east — one of the explanations Moscow has offered for the invasion — and that Western support for Ukraine is a menace to Russia. He never mentioned President Vladimir Putin's new troop mobilization.

In his speech to the assembly on Saturday, Lavrov accused the West of aiming to "destroy and fracture Russia." And there were a lot of comments on the opposing side.

French President Emmanuel Macron accused countries remaining silent on the war of "serving the cause of a new imperialism, a contemporary cynicism that is destroying the world order," and said it was time for all countries to "act to force Russia to give up the choice of war so that it realizes the cost on itself and us and ends its aggression."

U.S. President Joe Biden called on democracies and autocracies alike to speak out against Russia's "brutal, needless war" and bolster's Ukraine effort to defend itself. "We will stand in solidarity against Russia's aggression, period," he said, accusing Russia of "shamelessly" violating the core tenets of the U.N. Charter.

Beyond Ukraine, other topics percolated — from climate change to inequity to security. Senegalese President Macky Sall, chairman of the 55-nation African Union, urged greater global and U.N. focus on terrorism, which "is not just an African matter."

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari warned of new kinds of war — "conflicts increasingly being driven by non-state actors, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, terrorism, violent extremism, malignant use of technology, climate change, irregular migration, and disparities in opportunities for improved standards of living."

An end to the Ukraine war appears distant, and the nation is keeping up the pressure at the U.N., calling for a Security Council meeting Tuesday on the referenda that Russia has called in a prelude to the likely annexation of more of its territory.

And so it continues after the General Assembly just as before, with the United Nations trying to help

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stop war but — particularly in the Security Council — having a limited kit of tools to do so. Still, there are ways forward that remain.

"Fairness and togetherness are needed to bring about peace, love and prosperity in this world," said Mia Mottley, prime minister of Barbados. "And this is not romanticism. These are hard realities that simply require decisions."

Kőrösi closed the annual global gathering Monday afternoon by saying he sensed, in leaders' speeches, a "growing awareness that humanity has entered a new era" of complex challenges, multilayered crises, and changing priorities. What's happening, he said, represents not "just modifications, but "significant transformations in the making."

There isn't a name yet "for the new epoch," Kőrösi said, "but we feel that it has arrived."

At UN, a fleeting opportunity to tell their nations' stories

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Pakistan's new prime minister stepped onto the U.N. podium and faced world leaders, ready to spin a tale of floods and climate change and more than 33 million people at risk. Shahbaz Sharif began: "As I stand here today to tell the story of my country ..."

At its core, that was what every world leader was here to do during the past week.

One after another, they took the stage — different leaders from different traditions that, under a single roof, reflected most of the world's history. All had a fleeting opportunity to craft a story about their nation and the world that would — they hoped — make others sit up and listen. Some did it better than others.

We are storytellers, we humans. And even in an era of globalized politics and instantaneous streaming simulcasts, the story — the way it's told, the details used, the voice and the cadence and the passion (or lack thereof) — can win the day.

Yet the dawn of storytelling at scale over the past two decades — regular people amplified globally right next to world leaders, and entire industries devoted to disseminating disinformation across continents — makes it harder for even the most powerful to get their messages noticed.

"In a public-discourse environment where people are just choosing to believe what they wish to believe, the challenge for a speaker at the U.N. is tremendous," said Evan Cornog, author of "The Power and the Story: How the Crafted Presidential Narrative Has Determined Political Success."

"It is so hard to break through," Cornog said. "And I think it's become much harder. In Dwight D. Eisenhower's age of politics, there was more of a predisposition to think, 'I should listen to this person.' Today the predisposition is, 'This is all propaganda, and I should pay no attention to this.'"

Nevertheless, to watch a week of what is effectively an open-mic night for the people who rule the world revealed that in the attention economy, particularly for nations that aren't in the spotlight at the moment, how you tell the story can make all the difference.

Urgency was a key theme. "Inflection point" came up a lot, as did "the moment to act." Said Bharat Raj Paudyal, Nepal's foreign secretary: "We are living indeed in a watershed moment."

Tandi Dorji, the foreign minister of Bhutan, read a letter from a child about climate change. "Help and save our tiny village from global warming," it said, and it was hard not to stop and notice.

Other speeches were more workaday. Some were simply bullet points about priorities. Some were adjective-rich screeds about old enmities. Some were, bluntly, quite wonky.

Yet some leaders (or their speechwriters) have honed storytelling to a persuasive art. Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy, for example, got a dispensation to be the only world leader allowed to speak on video this year thanks to his status as a wartime president. In doing so, he got handed some advantages:

He controlled the production values. If he made a mistake, he could rerecord. Most of all, he could take advantage of the storytelling optics that have served him so well since Russia invaded — his trademark olive T-shirt, his flag in the background, his ability to dominate his own environment rather than be framed in the same green marble as everyone else.

Then there is the case of Ralph Gonsalves, prime minister of the island nation of Saint Vincent and the

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Grenadines. His speech Saturday brimmed with metaphors and language that some might call epic and others grandiose — but were highly noticeable either way.

“I ask the relevant and haunting questions: What’s new? Which world? And who gives the orders? The future of humanity depends on satisfactory answers to these queries,” Gonsalves boomed.

Storytelling, of course, goes beyond oratory — even in the context of a speech. Some of the most memorable U.N. stories have been told by leaders who went past words.

Consider Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, whose fabled shoe-banging at the 1960 General Assembly was a defining moment of his public life — and he wasn’t even at the podium at the time. And Libya’s Moammar Gadhafi, who spent 1 hour and 36 minutes uncorking his anger at the United Nations before pulling out a copy of its charter and ripping it up.

Most speeches are not that lively and, in fact, would be boring to many people. That’s in part because the storytelling is often aimed at audiences different from a general international one.

Sometimes a story is intended for fellow assembled leaders, or for a specific leader (many U.N. General Assembly speeches have been delivered for an audience of one: the president of the United States). Sometimes it is intended for a financial institution, like the World Bank. Sometimes it is told for a domestic media audience, or for the people of a country next door.

“They’re still learning. Heads of state are learning how to tell stories, how to use this format to get their message out there,” said William Muck, head of the political science department at North Central College in Illinois.

“They’re not always great storytellers,” he said. “But we now have the means and the technology to share those stories. So somebody who’s adept at storytelling can really thrive in that space.”

One story that faded into the background some this year: that of COVID-19. The dominant narrative at both the all-virtual 2020 U.N. General Assembly and the hybrid 2021 edition, it receded to a B-story this time around as war, climate change and food insecurity elbowed to the front row. Beyond the global desire to move on, there seemed to be recognition that it was time for other stories.

Just outside the General Assembly Building this month, a mockup of an outdoor classroom with pupil desks and backpacks was set up for a summit on transforming education. Every day, delegates walked past and saw these words etched on the blackboard: “Only one in three 10-year-olds globally can read and understand a simple story.”

The message was clear. Telling stories, understanding them and casting both an appreciative and a critical eye on them sit at the heart of 21st-century literacy. It is a central part of being a citizen, a smart consumer — and a leader.

It is also, as some here say, a way station on the path toward what the United Nations covets most of all: peace.

Asian shares mixed after Dow falls into bear market

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

Stocks were mixed in Asia on Tuesday after closing broadly lower on Wall Street, where the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell into what’s known as a bear market.

Tokyo, Sydney and Shanghai advanced while Hong Kong and Seoul declined. U.S. futures rose and oil prices also were higher.

The week started out with a bout of selling amid an extended slump for many markets. The benchmark S&P 500 is down more than 7% in September.

Tokyo’s Nikkei 225 index picked up 0.8% to 26,651.60 and the S&P/ASX 200 added 0.3% to 3,051.25. The Shanghai Composite index was unchanged at 3,051.25, while Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index shed 1% to 17,674.94. In Seoul, the Kospi lost 0.4% to 2,212.57.

Stocks have been sagging under concerns over stubbornly hot inflation and the risk that central banks could trigger recessions as they try to cool high prices for everything from food to clothing.

Investors have been particularly focusing on the Federal Reserve and its aggressive interest rate hikes.

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But volatility in currency markets has further roiled markets in recent days.

The British pound dropped to an all-time low against the dollar on Monday and investors continued to dump British government bonds in displeasure over a sweeping tax cut plan announced in London last week.

The Japanese yen edged toward 145 to the dollar early Tuesday. Last week, the Bank of Japan intervened in the market as the yen slipped past 145, gaining a brief reprieve. But the dollar's surge against other currencies is putting pressure on the BOJ and other central banks, especially in developing economies facing growing costs for repaying foreign loans.

The pound was at \$1.0765, up from \$1.0686 late Monday. The dollar bought 144.49 yen, down from 144.65 yen, and the euro rose to 96.29 cents from 96.10 cents.

Companies are nearing the close of the third quarter and investors are awaiting the next round of earnings reports. That will give them a better sense of how companies are dealing with persistent inflation.

Several economic reports are on tap for this week that will give more details on consumer spending, the jobs market and the broader health of the U.S. economy.

The latest consumer confidence report, for September, from the business group The Conference Board will be released on Tuesday. The government will release its weekly report on unemployment benefits on Thursday, along with an updated report on second-quarter gross domestic product.

On Friday, the government will release another report on personal income and spending that will help provide more details on where and how inflation is hurting consumer spending.

Seeking to make borrowing more expensive and crimp spending, the Fed raised its benchmark rate, which affects many consumer and business loans, again last week. It now sits at a range of 3% to 3.25%. It was near zero at the start of the year. The Fed also released a forecast suggesting its benchmark rate could be 4.4% by the year's end, a full point higher than envisioned in June.

The U.S. economy is already slowing, raising worries that rate hikes might cause a recession. The Dow became the last of the major U.S. stock indexes to fall into what's known as a bear market Monday, falling 1.1% to 29,260.81.

The Dow is now 20.5% below its all-time high set on Jan. 4. A drop of 20% or more from a recent peak is what Wall Street calls a bear market.

The S&P 500 fell 1% to 3,655.04. The Nasdaq dropped 0.6% to 10,802.92.

Smaller company stocks fell more than the broader market. The Russell 2000 dropped 1.4% to close at 1,655.88.

In other trading on Tuesday, U.S. benchmark crude added 28 cents to \$76.99 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It sank \$2.03 to \$76.71 on Monday.

Brent crude, used for pricing international oils, rose 32 cents to \$83.18 per barrel.

Hurricane Ian nears Cuba on path to strike Florida as Cat 4

By CRISTIANA MESQUITA and CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Hurricane Ian was growing stronger as it barreled toward Cuba on a track to hit Florida's west coast as a major hurricane as early as Wednesday.

Ian was forecast to hit the western tip of Cuba as a major hurricane and then become an even stronger Category 4 with top winds of 140 mph (225 km/h) over warm Gulf of Mexico waters before striking Florida.

As of Monday, Tampa and St. Petersburg appeared to be among the most likely targets for their first direct hit by a major hurricane since 1921.

"Please treat this storm seriously. It's the real deal. This is not a drill," Hillsborough County Emergency Management Director Timothy Dudley said at a news conference on storm preparations in Tampa.

Authorities in Cuba were evacuating 50,000 people in Pinar del Rio province, sent in medical and emergency personnel, and took steps to protect food and other crops in warehouses, according to state media.

"Cuba is expecting extreme hurricane-force winds, also life-threatening storm surge and heavy rainfall," U.S. National Hurricane Center senior specialist Daniel Brown told The Associated Press.

The hurricane center predicted areas of Cuba's western coast could see as much as 14 feet (4.3 meters)

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of storm surge Monday night or early Tuesday.

In Havana, fishermen were taking their boats out of the water along the famous Malecon, the seaside boardwalk, and city workers were unclogging storm drains ahead of the expected rain.

Havana resident Adyz Ladron, 35, said the potential for rising water from the storm worries him.

"I am very scared because my house gets completely flooded, with water up to here," he said, pointing to his chest.

In Havana's El Fanguito, a poor neighborhood near the Almendares River, residents were packing up what they could to leave their homes, many of which show damage from previous storms.

"I hope we escape this one because it would be the end of us. We already have so little," health worker Abel Rodrigues, 54, said.

On Monday night, Ian was moving northwest at 13 mph (20 km/h), about 105 miles (169 kilometers) southeast of the western tip of Cuba, with top sustained winds increasing to 105 mph (169 km/h).

The center of the hurricane passed to the west of the Cayman Islands, but no major damage was reported there Monday, and residents were going back into the streets as the winds died down.

"We seem to have dodged the bullet" Grand Cayman resident Gary Hollins said. "I am a happy camper."

Ian won't linger over Cuba but will slow down over the Gulf of Mexico, growing wider and stronger, "which will have the potential to produce significant wind and storm surge impacts along the west coast of Florida," the hurricane center said.

A surge of up to 10 feet (3 meters) of ocean water and 10 inches (25 centimeters) of rain was predicted across the Tampa Bay area, with as much as 15 inches (38 centimeters) inches in isolated areas. That's enough water to inundate coastal communities.

As many as 300,000 people may be evacuated from low-lying areas in Hillsborough County alone, county administrator Bonnie Wise said. Some of those evacuations were beginning Monday afternoon in the most vulnerable areas, with schools and other locations opening as shelters.

"We must do everything we can to protect our residents. Time is of the essence," Wise said.

Floridians lined up for hours in Tampa to collect bags of sand and cleared store shelves of bottled water. Gov. Ron DeSantis declared a statewide emergency and warned that Ian could lash large areas of the state, knocking out power and interrupting fuel supplies as it swirls northward off the state's Gulf Coast.

"You have a significant storm that may end up being a Category 4 hurricane," DeSantis said at a news conference. "That's going to cause a huge amount of storm surge. You're going to have flood events. You're going to have a lot of different impacts."

DeSantis said the state has suspended tolls around the Tampa Bay area and mobilized 5,000 Florida state national guard troops, with another 2,000 on standby in neighboring states.

President Joe Biden also declared an emergency, authorizing the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate disaster relief and provide assistance to protect lives and property. The president postponed a scheduled Tuesday trip to Florida because of the storm.

Playing it safe, NASA planned to slowly roll its moon rocket from the launch pad to its Kennedy Space Center hangar, adding weeks of delay to the test flight.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers announced Monday night that the football team was relocating football operations to the Miami area in preparation for next weekend's game against the Kansas City Chiefs. The Buccaneers said the team will leave Tampa on Tuesday.

Flash flooding was predicted for much of the Florida peninsula, and heavy rainfall was possible for the southeast United States later this week. With tropical storm force winds extending 115 miles (185 kilometers) from Ian's center, watches covered the Florida Keys to Lake Okeechobee.

Bob Gualtieri, sheriff of Pinellas County, Florida, which includes St. Petersburg, said in a briefing that although no one will be forced to leave, mandatory evacuation orders are expected to begin Tuesday.

"What it means is, we're not going to come help you. If you don't do it, you're on your own," Gualtieri said.

Zones to be evacuated include all along Tampa Bay and the rivers that feed it. St. Petersburg Mayor Ken Welch urged residents not to ignore any evacuation orders.

"This is a very real threat that this storm poses to our community," Welch said.

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The hurricane center has advised Floridians to have survival plans in place and monitor updates of the storm's evolving path.

As Cantonese language wanes, efforts grow to preserve it

By TERRY TANG, HAVEN DALEY and SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Three decades ago, finding opportunities to learn Cantonese in San Francisco wasn't hard. But today in the city that's drawn Cantonese speakers from South China for over 150 years, there's fear that political and social upheaval are diminishing a language that is a cultural touchstone.

The Chinese government's push for wider use of Mandarin— already the national language, spoken by 1 billion people — along with the country's changing migration patterns have contributed to an undeniable shift away from Cantonese. It's a change that has reverberated from East to West.

From the United States to the United Kingdom and beyond, there's worry among native and second-generation Cantonese speakers about preserving the language, spoken by some 85 million people worldwide. They fear their children can't communicate with elderly relatives. Or worse, the Cantonese language and culture won't survive another generation.

Ceci Pang, a former kindergarten teacher, runs classes for children at Rainbow Seeds Cantonese school in London. Most of her students are from families with mixed heritage.

"Many (parents) want their kids to be able to communicate with their grandparents," she said. "It's just so hard here, there are so few learning resources and lots of parents get frustrated and give up. That's usually the point the parents come to me."

In the U.K., as in the U.S., most primary and secondary schools offering Chinese teach Mandarin. That's left many migrant families struggling to find ways to pass on their heritage.

Some turn to social media for advice and camaraderie — a Facebook group called "Cantonese Parents" has thousands of members sharing tips on everything from Cantonese books to YouTube videos. Some organize local Cantonese family meet-ups, while others seek out Cantonese tutors.

Pang said she hasn't noticed many explicit concerns about Cantonese dying as a language. But, she said, that may change as more Hong Kong migrants settle in the U.K. Britain opened its doors last year in response to China's crackdown on civil liberties in the city. Since then, thousands of Hong Kong families have fled to the U.K.

"I think in a few years, when more and more Hong Kong families settle here, there may be more parents worried about their children rejecting Cantonese altogether as they become so immersed in the English environment," she said.

In China, concerns have been voiced for years about a decline in Cantonese, spoken in southeastern China's Guangdong province and the cities of Hong Kong and Macao. Promoting Mandarin was written into China's constitution in 1982. A suggestion in 2010 to increase Mandarin programs on a Cantonese TV channel caused such a public backlash in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong, that the government was forced to give reassurance that Mandarin would not replace Cantonese.

Guangzhou, formerly known as Canton, is considered the birthplace of Cantonese. But today it is a hub of manufacturing and tech jobs attracting Mandarin speakers. Nowadays many young people can only understand Cantonese but don't speak the language.

While Cantonese is not dominant in people's lives as it used to be, it's too early to say the language is in crisis in Guangzhou. It's still spoken in homes and among friends, and there are Cantonese TV channels as well as Cantonese announcements on public transport.

In contrast, Cantonese has maintained its primacy in Hong Kong. It's the city's lingua franca, used by 90% of the population, said Lau Chaak-ming, assistant professor of linguistics at the Education University of Hong Kong.

"Everyone who comes to Hong Kong needs to learn some Cantonese. And in order to succeed in most of the careers in Hong Kong, you need to speak fluent Cantonese," said Lau, who started an online Cantonese dictionary in 2014 to help people better learn the language.

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While most classes in Hong Kong's schools are still taught in Cantonese, many have added Mandarin to their curriculum as Beijing tries to strengthen its grip over the semi-autonomous city. The arrival of mainland Chinese for work or education has also boosted Mandarin, and more Hong Kong residents have learned to speak Mandarin to do business with the mainland.

But such changes have not eroded Cantonese, Lau said. "Cantonese has never been stronger in Hong Kong," he said.

That's a far cry from the U.S., where even in San Francisco there are few opportunities to pursue Cantonese in high school and beyond. The San Francisco Unified School District has Cantonese and Mandarin immersion programs for preK-8th grades. But in high school, Mandarin is the only option for studying Chinese for foreign language credits.

In 1990, when Grace Yu was hired at City College of San Francisco, there were four Cantonese instructors and a dozen Cantonese classes offered each year. But for the past six years, Yu has been the lone Cantonese professor, teaching only three classes per year.

"Vacancies were not replaced with Cantonese instructors. Instead they hired Mandarin instructors," said Yu.

She described her situation as "kind of lonely."

Still, there is a glimmer of hope. One of City College's trustees — who grew up speaking Cantonese — proposed a resolution to preserve the Cantonese program with at least one instructor. The board approved it this spring.

"Cantonese classes will not be canceled if I retire," Yu said.

Like Yu, Sik Lee Dennig was the lone Cantonese lecturer at Stanford University until she retired last year. After more than 20 years, the school opted not to renew her contract, which effectively eliminated the Cantonese language program. A "save Cantonese" petition prompted an endowment. But the university would only restore half the classes.

That prompted Dennig to strike out on her own and start a nonprofit, the Cantonese Alliance, to help teachers and interested learners worldwide. The online resource includes podcasts, videos and handouts, as well as Cantonese pop music and comic books.

"Cantonese is not a dialect of Mandarin" as some people mistakenly think, Dennig said recently over a Cantonese dim sum meal of pork and shrimp dumplings.

Cantonese can be especially challenging to learn. In writing, Mandarin and Cantonese use the same Chinese characters. But spoken, the tonal languages — where even the subtlest word inflection can change the meaning — are not similar or interchangeable. Mandarin has four basic tones. Cantonese has nine, which can be difficult to differentiate.

Meanwhile, independent Chinese schools are helping fill the void as Cantonese-speaking communities grow — and not just in Chinatowns.

Aleyda Poe has been overseeing the Cantonese kindergarten at Merit Chinese School in Plano, Texas, for over a decade. Initially a parent who enrolled her two sons to pass along her cultural roots, she is now doing that for other families.

"I hope it's not a dying language," Poe said. "But you know, we'll do our part and see how long they'll take us."

Bam! NASA spacecraft crashes into asteroid in defense test

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A NASA spacecraft rammed an asteroid at blistering speed Monday in an unprecedented dress rehearsal for the day a killer rock menaces Earth.

The galactic slam occurred at a harmless asteroid 7 million miles (11.3 million kilometers) away, with the spacecraft named Dart plowing into the space rock at 14,000 mph (22,500 kph). Scientists expected the impact to carve out a crater, hurl streams of rocks and dirt into space and, most importantly, alter the asteroid's orbit.

"We have impact!" Mission Control's Elena Adams announced, jumping up and down and thrusting her

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arms skyward.

Telescopes around the world and in space aimed at the same point in the sky to capture the spectacle. Though the impact was immediately obvious — Dart's radio signal abruptly ceased — it will take as long as a couple of months to determine how much the asteroid's path was changed.

The \$325 million mission was the first attempt to shift the position of an asteroid or any other natural object in space.

"As far as we can tell, our first planetary defense test was a success," Adams later told a news conference, the room filling with applause. "I think Earthlings should sleep better. Definitely, I will."

NASA Administrator Bill Nelson reminded people earlier in the day via Twitter that, "No, this is not a movie plot." He added in a prerecorded video: "We've all seen it on movies like "Armageddon," but the real-life stakes are high."

Monday's target: a 525-foot (160-meter) asteroid named Dimorphos. It's a moonlet of Didymos, Greek for twin, a fast-spinning asteroid five times bigger that flung off the material that formed the junior partner.

The pair have been orbiting the sun for eons without threatening Earth, making them ideal save-the-world test candidates.

Launched last November, the vending machine-size Dart — short for Double Asteroid Redirection Test — navigated to its target using new technology developed by Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory, the spacecraft builder and mission manager.

Dart's on-board camera, a key part of this smart navigation system, caught sight of Dimorphos barely an hour before impact. "Woo hoo!" exclaimed Adams, a mission systems engineer at Johns Hopkins.

With an image beaming back to Earth every second, Adams and other ground controllers in Laurel, Maryland, watched with growing excitement as Dimorphos loomed larger and larger in the field of view alongside its bigger companion. Within minutes, Dimorphos was alone in the pictures; it looked like a giant gray lemon, but with boulders and rubble on the surface. The last image froze on the screen as the radio transmission ended.

Flight controllers cheered, hugged one another and exchanged high fives. Their mission complete, the Dart team went straight into celebration mode. There was little sorrow over the spacecraft's demise.

"Normally, losing signal from a spacecraft is a very bad thing. But in this case, it was the ideal outcome," said NASA program scientist Tom Statler.

Johns Hopkins scientist Carolyn Ernst said the spacecraft was definitely "kaput," with remnants possibly in the fresh crater or cascading into space with the asteroid's ejected material.

Scientists insisted Dart would not shatter Dimorphos. The spacecraft packed a scant 1,260 pounds (570 kilograms), compared with the asteroid's 11 billion pounds (5 billion kilograms). But that should be plenty to shrink its 11-hour, 55-minute orbit around Didymos.

The impact should pare 10 minutes off that. The anticipated orbital shift of 1% might not sound like much, scientists noted. But they stressed it would amount to a significant change over years.

"Now is when the science starts," said NASA's Lori Glaze, planetary science division director. "Now we're going to see for real how effective we were."

Planetary defense experts prefer nudging a threatening asteroid or comet out of the way, given enough lead time, rather than blowing it up and creating multiple pieces that could rain down on Earth. Multiple impactors might be needed for big space rocks or a combination of impactors and so-called gravity tractors, not-yet-invented devices that would use their own gravity to pull an asteroid into a safer orbit.

"The dinosaurs didn't have a space program to help them know what was coming, but we do," NASA's senior climate adviser Katherine Calvin said, referring to the mass extinction 66 million years ago believed to have been caused by a major asteroid impact, volcanic eruptions or both.

The non-profit B612 Foundation, dedicated to protecting Earth from asteroid strikes, has been pushing for impact tests like Dart since its founding by astronauts and physicists 20 years ago. Monday's feat aside, the world must do a better job of identifying the countless space rocks lurking out there, warned the foundation's executive director, Ed Lu, a former astronaut.

Significantly less than half of the estimated 25,000 near-Earth objects in the deadly 460-foot (140-meter)

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range have been discovered, according to NASA. And fewer than 1% of the millions of smaller asteroids, capable of widespread injuries, are known.

The Vera Rubin Observatory, nearing completion in Chile by the National Science Foundation and U.S. Energy Department, promises to revolutionize the field of asteroid discovery, Lu noted.

Finding and tracking asteroids, "That's still the name of the game here. That's the thing that has to happen in order to protect the Earth," he said.

Navy bribery fugitive 'Fat Leonard' seeks Venezuelan asylum

By JOSHUA GOODMAN and JULIE WATSON Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The fugitive defense contractor nicknamed "Fat Leonard" who orchestrated a huge bribery scheme involving dozens of U.S. Navy officials, has requested asylum in Venezuela, a law enforcement official said Monday, nearly a week after he was captured in the South American country.

Leonard Glenn Francis slipped away from house arrest in San Diego on Sept. 4, only weeks before he was to be sentenced. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not permitted to speak to the press about the closed proceedings, did not provide any additional details about the Malaysian businessman's moves. By law the Venezuelan government must consider the asylum request.

Francis owned Singapore-based Glenn Defense Marine Asia Ltd. or GDMA, that supplied food, water and fuel to vessels for decades. He has acknowledged overbilling the U.S. Navy by \$35 million with the help of dozens of U.S. naval officers whom he plied with prostitutes, Kobe beef, cigars and other bribes so they would direct their ships to ports Francis controlled in the Pacific in Southeast Asia.

Francis, known for his wide girth and big personality, pleaded guilty in 2015 and faced up to 25 years in prison. While awaiting sentencing, he was given home confinement in San Diego to receive medical care as he cooperated with the prosecution, which led to the convictions of 33 of 34 defendants.

U.S. and Venezuelan officials said that Francis cut off his ankle monitor, fled to Mexico and then made his way to Cuba before turning up in Venezuela. He was arrested there Tuesday before he boarded a flight at the Simon Bolivar International Airport outside Caracas. Venezuelan officials have said he intended to reach Russia.

Venezuela and the United States have an extradition agreement, though the Biden administration doesn't officially recognize President Nicolas Maduro's socialist government, has no embassy in Venezuela and has imposed crushing sanctions on the country that have further embittered relations.

U.S. authorities have 30 days to formally request his extradition. In an email, a Department of Justice spokesperson has said that the agency does not comment on extradition-related matters.

The U.S. attorney's office declined to comment when asked about Francis' request for asylum in Venezuela.

Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes' path: From Yale to jail

By JACQUES BILLEAUD and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Long before he assembled one of the largest far-right anti-government militia groups in U.S. history, before his Oath Keepers stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, Stewart Rhodes was a promising Yale Law School graduate.

He secured a clerkship on the Arizona Supreme Court, in part thanks to his unusual life story: a stint as an Army paratrooper cut short by a training accident, followed by marriage, college and an Ivy League law degree.

The clerkship was one more rung up from a hardscrabble beginning. But rather than fitting in, Rhodes came across as angry and aggrieved.

He railed to colleagues about how the Patriot Act, which gave the government greater surveillance powers after the Sept. 11 attacks, would erase civil liberties. He referred to Vice President Dick Cheney as a fascist for supporting the Bush administration's use of "enemy combatant" status to indefinitely detain prisoners.

"He saw this titanic struggle between people like him who wanted individual liberty and the government

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that would try to take away that liberty," said Matt Parry, who worked with Rhodes as a clerk for Arizona Supreme Court Justice Mike Ryan.

Rhodes alienated his moderate Republican boss and eventually left the steppingstone job. Since then he has ordered his life around a thirst for greatness and deep distrust of government.

He turned to forming a group rooted in anti-government sentiment, and his message resonated. He gained followers as he went down an increasingly extremist path that would lead to armed standoffs, including with federal authorities at Nevada's Bundy Ranch. It culminated last year, prosecutors say, with Rhodes engineering a plot to violently stop Democrat Joe Biden from becoming president.

Rhodes, 57, will be back in court Tuesday, but not as a lawyer. He and four others tied to the Oath Keepers are being tried on charges of seditious conspiracy, the most serious criminal allegation leveled by the Justice Department in its far-reaching prosecution of rioters who attacked the Capitol. The charge carries a potential sentence of up to 20 years in prison upon conviction.

Rhodes, Jessica Watkins, Thomas Caldwell, Kenneth Harrelson and Kelly Meggs are the first Jan. 6 defendants to stand trial under a rarely used, Civil War-era law against attempting to overthrow the government or, in this case, block the transfer of presidential power.

The trial will put a spotlight on the secretive group Rhodes founded in 2009 that has grown to include thousands of claimed members and loosely organized chapters across the country, according to Rachel Carroll Rivas, interim deputy director of research with the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project.

For Rhodes, it will be a position at odds with the role of greatness that he has long envisioned for himself, said his estranged wife, Tasha Adams.

"He was going to achieve something amazing," Adams said. "He didn't know what it was, but he was going to achieve something incredible and earth shattering."

Rhodes was born in Fresno, California. He shuttled between there and Nevada, sometimes living with his mother and other times with grandparents who were migrant farm workers, part of a multicultural extended family that included Mexican and Filipino relatives. His mother was a minister who had her own radio show in Las Vegas and went by the name Dusty Buckle, Adams said.

Rhodes joined the Army fresh out of high school and served nearly three years before he was honorably discharged in January 1986 after breaking his back in a parachuting accident.

He recovered and was working as a valet in Las Vegas when he met Adams in 1991. He was 25, she was 18.

He had a sense of adventure that was attractive to a young woman brought up in a middle-class, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints family. A few months after the couple started dating, Rhodes accidentally dropped a gun and shot out his eye. He now wears an eye patch.

Adams' family had set aside money for her to go to college, but after their wedding Rhodes decided he should be the first to attend school. He told her she would need to quit her job teaching ballroom and country dancing and instead support them both by working full time as a stripper so he could focus on doing an excellent job in school, according to Adams. They married, but she found stripping degrading and it clashed with her conservative Mormon upbringing, she said.

"Every night the drive was just so bad. I would just throw up every single night before I went in, it was just so awful," Adams said. Rhodes would pressure her to go further, increase her exposure or contact with men to make more money, she said. "It was never enough ... I felt like I had given up my soul."

She quit when she got pregnant with their first child, and the couple moved back in with her family. They worried about her but didn't want to push too far for fear of losing her altogether. By then, Rhodes was the center of her orbit.

Rhodes' lawyer declined to make him available for an interview and Rhodes declined to answer a list of questions sent by The Associated Press.

After finishing college at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Rhodes went to work in Washington as a staffer for Ron Paul, a libertarian-leaning Republican congressman, and later attended Yale, with stints in between as an artist and sculptor. Paul did not respond to a request for comment.

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Rhodes' college transcripts earned him entry to several top schools, Adams said. While at Yale, Adams took care of their growing family in a small apartment while he distinguished himself with an award for a paper arguing that the George W. Bush administration's use of enemy combatant status to hold people suspected of supporting terrorism indefinitely without charge was unconstitutional.

After the Arizona clerkship, the family bounced to Montana and back to Nevada, where he worked on Paul's presidential campaign in 2008. That's when Rhodes also began to formulate his idea of starting the Oath Keepers. He put a short video and blog post on Blogspot and "it went viral overnight," Adams said. Rhodes was interviewed by conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, but also more mainstream media figures such as Chris Matthews and Bill O'Reilly.

He formally launched the Oath Keepers in Lexington, Massachusetts, on April 19, 2009, where the first shot in the American Revolution was fired.

"We know that if a day should come in this country when a full-blown dictatorship would come or tyranny, from the left or from the right, we know that it can only happen if those men, our brothers in arms, go along and comply with unconstitutional, unlawful orders," Rhodes said in his Lexington speech, which didn't garner any news coverage.

The group's stated goal was to get past and present members of the military, first responders and police officers to honor the promise they made to defend the Constitution against enemies. The Oath Keepers issued a list of orders that its members wouldn't obey, such as disarming citizens, carrying out warrantless searches and detaining Americans as enemy combatants in violation of their right to jury trials.

Rhodes was a compelling speaker and especially in the early years framed the group as "just a pro-Constitution group made up of patriots," said Sam Jackson, author of the book "Oath Keepers" about the group.

With that benign-sounding framing and his political connections, Rhodes harnessed the growing power of social media to fuel the Oath Keepers' growth during the presidency of Barack Obama. Membership rolls leaked last year included some 38,000 names, though many people on the list have said they are no longer members or were never active participants. One expert last year estimated membership to be a few thousand.

The internal dialogue was much darker and more violent about what members perceived as imminent threats, especially to the Second Amendment, and the idea that members should be prepared to fight back and recruit their neighbors to fight back, too.

"Time and time again, Oath Keepers lays the groundwork for individuals to decide for themselves, violent or otherwise criminal activity is warranted," said Jackson, an assistant professor at the University at Albany.

A membership fee was a requirement to access the website, where people could join discussion forums, read Rhodes' writing and hear pitches to join militaristic trainings. Members willing to go armed to a stand-off numbered in the low dozens, though, said Jason Van Tatenhove, a former spokesman for the group.

Showdowns with the government began in 2011 in the small western Arizona desert town of Quartzsite, where local government was in turmoil as officials feuded among themselves, the police chief was accused of misconduct and several police employees had been suspended. A couple years later, Rhodes started calling on members to form "community preparedness teams," which included military-style training.

The Oath Keepers also showed up at a watershed event in anti-government circles: the standoff with federal agents at Nevada's Bundy Ranch in 2014. Later that year, members stationed themselves along rooftops in Ferguson, Missouri, armed with AR-15-style weapons, to protect businesses from rioting after a grand jury declined to charge a police officer in the fatal shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown.

The following year Oath Keepers guarded a southern Oregon gold mine whose mining claim owners were in a dispute with the government. Still, Rhodes was never arrested.

As the Oath Keepers escalated their public profile and confrontations with the government, Rhodes was leaving behind some of those he once championed. Jennifer Esposito hired him as her lawyer after the group's early outing in Quartzsite, but he missed a hearing in her case because he was at the Bundy Ranch standoff. A judge kicked Rhodes off the case, and no lawyer would represent her.

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She has no hard feelings, but Michael Roth, also represented by Rhodes in Quartzsite lawsuits, is less forgiving. He compared Rhodes's handling of his case to a doctor walking out of an operating room in the middle of surgery.

"He clearly just used us for publicity to gain membership in the Oath Keepers," Roth said.

The neglect culminated in a disbarment case eventually brought against Rhodes. He ignored the allegations, missed a hearing and wasn't even represented by a lawyer. The commission examining the case in 2015 found his conduct as an attorney wouldn't normally get someone disbarred, but his refusal to cooperate did.

Meanwhile, on the national stage, Donald Trump's political star was taking off. His grievances about things such as the "deep state" aligned with the Oath Keeper's anti-governmental stance. While Rhodes didn't agree with Trump on everything, the group's rhetoric began to shift.

"With the election of Trump, now the Oath Keepers have an ally in the White House," Jackson said.

For much of the the Oath Keepers' history, the federal government was the enemy, but gradually the enemy became left-leaning people in the United States and antifa, or anti-fascist groups, became the primary menace, he said.

Rhodes wanted Oath Keepers to go to Cleveland to provide security for Trump — then set to be the GOP presidential nominee — at the 2016 Republican National Convention, even though no one had asked the group for protection, said Richard Mack, a former Arizona sheriff who served on the Oath Keepers' board for about six years.

"I said, 'Why are we going — so we can say we protected Trump? We are not going to get anywhere near Trump,'" Mack said. "I said, 'This was crazy.' All the other board members voted with me, and Stewart was mad."

That was a breaking point last straw for Mack.

He wasn't the only board member to walk away as they saw the direction of the group close up, Van Tatenhove said.

"Once they saw where he was going, they were a lot less comfortable," he said. But Rhodes always managed to weather the disagreements and hold onto power. "He was always going to be the start and finish of the Oath Keepers."

A voracious reader and charismatic speaker, Rhodes drew people in and had a talent for molding his message to his audience and holding onto power. He warmed to the "alt-right" movement as its profile rose. Van Tatenhove knew he had to leave when in 2017 he overheard a group of Oath Keepers, in a discussion in a grocery store, denying that the Holocaust happened.

In 2018, Rhodes went too far for Jim Arroyo, a former Army Ranger who serves as president of an Oath Keepers chapter in Yavapai County, Arizona. He rejected a push to send group members to the U.S.-Mexico border for an armed operation to support the U.S. Border Patrol.

Arroyo said that hadn't been approved by any authority and argued that pointing a gun in the wrong direction along the border could stir an international problem. He refused to go.

"That's when he pretty much didn't want anything to do with us," said Arroyo, who eventually broke away from the national Oath Keepers and hasn't had contact with Rhodes in over four years.

When Biden won the 2020 election, prosecutors say, Rhodes started preparing for battle. Rhodes and the Oath Keepers spent weeks plotting to block the transfer of power, amassing weapons and setting up "quick reaction force" teams with weapons to be on standby outside the nation's capital, prosecutors say.

On Jan. 6, 2021, authorities say, two teams of Oath Keepers stormed the Capitol alongside hundreds of other angry Trump supporters.

Rhodes is not accused of going inside, but he was seen gathered outside the Capitol after the riot with several members who did, prosecutors have said.

Defense lawyers have accused prosecutors of twisting their clients' words. They have argued that the militia group went to Washington only to provide security at events before the riot for right-wing figures such as Trump confidant Roger Stone and that there was never a plan to attack the Capitol.

The case has dealt a major blow to the Oath Keepers, in part because many people associated with it want to be considered respectable in their communities, said Carroll Rivas of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Of the approximately 30 Capitol riot defendants affiliated with the Oath Keepers, nine have pleaded guilty to charges stemming from the attack, including three who have pleaded guilty to seditious conspiracy.

But that doesn't mean the ideas that Rhodes promoted have faded away.

"He came up with a blueprint that is going to be used in the future by people we don't even know about," Van Tatenhove said. "I think it's very important for us to pay attention."

Arizona abortion clinics send women to other states

By JONATHAN J. COOPER and TERRY TANG Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — When an Arizona judge ruled last week that prosecutors can resume enforcing a near-total ban on abortion that dates to the Civil War, it fell to the staff at Camelback Family Planning to break the news to the women scheduled for appointments in the coming weeks.

The staff faced "crying, a lot of very, very angry people, denial," nurse Ashleigh Feiring said Monday. One woman argued, "But I'm only five weeks (along)."

Women seeking abortions across Arizona were forced to find alternatives beyond the state's borders after the ruling, which clears the way for prosecutors to charge doctors and others who help a woman end a pregnancy unless her life is in danger. The state's major abortion providers immediately halted procedures and canceled appointments.

Providers in neighboring states, already seeing an increase in traffic from other conservative states that have banned abortion, were preparing to treat some of the 13,000 Arizona patients who get an abortion each year.

Planned Parenthood Arizona on Monday asked Pima County Superior Court Judge Kellie Johnson to put her ruling on hold pending an appeal, saying it created confusion about the status of the law in Arizona. Lawyers cited conflicts created by the abortion ban dating to 1864, a more recent law banning abortions after 15 weeks, and a variety of other laws regulating the processes and paperwork when terminating pregnancies.

Johnson's ruling lifted an injunction that was imposed after the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision guaranteed a right to abortion in 1973.

At the Camelback Family Planning clinic in central Phoenix, a young woman took off from work Monday afternoon for an appointment to get medicine to help with an abortion. The 20-year-old is afraid she is prone to miscarriage and already miscarried two years ago.

"I don't want to experience this. I don't have the time and energy to go through that again," said the woman, who declined to give her name.

But she never made it past the check-in window. Instead, she got a slip of paper with a website to order medicine by mail and left visibly upset.

She says she never got a call that the ruling by a Tucson judge last Friday effectively voided her ability to get an abortion in Arizona.

"I can guarantee I would not have wasted my time leaving work early and losing money to come here," the woman said. "I need to get it done — regardless if that's going to a different state or going across the border. It just sucks that this is the last resort for people."

The doctors and nurses at Camelback Family Planning had an inkling last week that a court decision on abortion could come down. But they thought it would be a ban on abortions after 15 weeks into pregnancy. So, several of the abortions performed last week were for patients over 20 weeks along.

"We cleared our schedule to do as many of those later-term ones," said Feiring, the nurse. So they postponed some patients less farther along until this week.

Feiring and other staff at the Phoenix clinic are letting patients know the clinic is still available to do follow-up abortion care. They refer them to websites and organizations that help with abortion access.

Planned Parenthood has patient navigators who work with women seeking abortions to find an affiliate

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in a state where abortion is legal, and to help with money and logistics, said Brittany Fonteno, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Arizona. Many Arizona patients are getting abortions in California, Nevada, New Mexico and Colorado.

"This is really a traumatic experience, to be told that one day a basic health care procedure is available to you and then out of the blue the next day it's been stripped away from you and has the potential to completely alter the course of your life," Fonteno said.

In California, the second-largest Planned Parenthood affiliate in the country says it is considering opening a new health center in part because of an expected increase in patients from Arizona and other states.

Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino counties operates nine health centers in Southern California that catered to 250,000 medical visits last year – largely for services other than abortion, like cancer screenings and birth control, according to Nichole Ramirez, the group's senior vice president for communications.

The group started preparing for an influx of patients from other states last year by hiring more providers, offering more abortion appointment slots and helping patients pay for things like gas, hotel rooms and plane tickets.

"We knew this was going to happen slowly, in a way, as state by state has been banning abortion," Ramirez said. "The number is going to continue to increase."

California is already seeing evidence of an increase in abortion patients coming from other states. Last week, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a new website – abortion.ca.gov – that promotes all of the state's abortion services, including a list of clinics and information about state laws.

On Monday, the Governor's Office said the website – while not tracking and storing people's personal information -- had seen an increase in out-of-state page views, with about 58% of traffic coming from people in other states. That increase comes after Newsom used some of his campaign money to pay for billboards in seven conservative states to promote the website.

Meanwhile, a California Access Reproductive Justice – a nonprofit that helps people pay for the logistics of getting an abortion – said 10 of the 63 people it helped in August were from Arizona.

Shannon Brewer, director of Las Cruces Women's Health Organization that operates an abortion clinic in southern New Mexico, says she anticipates a surge in inquiries about abortion services from residents of Arizona, a two-hour drive away at minimum. The clinic already received nearly a dozen queries Monday from people in Arizona.

Brewer previously operated the abortion clinic in Jackson, Mississippi, that was at the center of the *Dodds v Jackson Women's Health* decision that took away women's constitutional protection for access to abortions nationwide. The Mississippi clinic has closed, while the like-named clinic in New Mexico has treated about 100 abortion patients during its first six weeks in operation.

"The majority of our calls are from out-of-state, mostly Texas. The majority of our patients are from Texas," Brewer said Monday. "I expect the same thing" from Arizona.

Most abortion procedures remain legal in New Mexico, where state lawmakers in 2021 repealed a dormant 1969 statute that outlawed most abortion procedures as felonies to ensure access to abortion.

Vulnerable Tampa Bay braces for storm not seen in a century

By CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — It's been more than a century since a major storm like Hurricane Ian has struck the Tampa Bay area, which blossomed from a few hundred thousand people in 1921 to more than 3 million today.

Many of these people live in low-lying neighborhoods that are highly susceptible to storm surge and flooding they have rarely before experienced, which some experts say could be worsened by the effects of climate change.

The problem confronting the region is that storms approaching from the south, as Hurricane Ian is on track to do, bulldoze huge volumes of water up into shallow Tampa Bay and are likely to inundate homes

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and businesses. The adjacent Gulf of Mexico is also shallow.

"Strong persistent winds will push a lot of water into the bay and there's nowhere for it to go, so it just builds up," said Brian McNoldy, a senior research associate at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric and Earth Science. "Tampa Bay is very surge-prone because of its orientation."

The National Hurricane Center is predicting storm surge in Tampa Bay and surrounding waters of between 5 and 10 feet (1.5 and 3 meters) above normal tide conditions and rainfall of between 10 and 15 inches (12 and 25 centimeters) because of Hurricane Ian.

"That's a lot of rain. That's not going to drain out quickly," said Cathie Perkins, emergency management director in Pinellas County, where St. Petersburg and Clearwater are located. "This is no joke. This is life-threatening storm surge."

Officials in the area began issuing evacuation orders Monday for a wide swath of Tampa, with the St. Petersburg area soon to follow. The evacuations could affect 300,000 people or more in Hillsborough County alone.

Gov. Ron DeSantis took note of the region's vulnerability in a Monday afternoon news conference in Largo, Florida.

"Clearly, when you look at the Tampa Bay area, one of the reasons why we fear storms is because of the sensitivity of this area and the fragility of this area," DeSantis said.

The last time Tampa Bay was hit by a major storm was Oct. 25, 1921. The hurricane had no official name but is known locally as the Tarpon Springs storm, for the seaside town famed for its sponge-diving docks and Greek heritage where it came ashore.

The storm surge from that hurricane, estimated at Category 3 with winds of up to 129 mph (207 km/h) was pegged at 11 feet (3.3 meters). At least eight people died and damage was estimated at \$5 million at the time.

Now, the tourist-friendly region known for its sugar-sand beaches has grown by leaps and bounds, with homes and businesses along the water the ideal locations — most of the time. Hurricane Ian could threaten all of that development.

Just as an example, the city of Tampa had about 51,000 residents in 1920. Today, that number is almost 395,000. Many of the other cities in the region have experienced similar explosive growth.

A report from the Boston-based catastrophe modeling firm Karen Clark and Co. concluded in 2015 that Tampa Bay is the most vulnerable place in the U.S. to storm surge flooding from a hurricane and stands to lose \$175 billion in damage. A World Bank study a few years before that placed Tampa as the seventh-most vulnerable city to major storms on the entire globe.

Yet for years storms seemed to bypass the region somewhat inexplicably. Phil Klotzbach, research scientist in the Department of Atmospheric Science at Colorado State University, noted that only one of five hurricanes at Category 3 strength or higher has struck Tampa Bay since 1851.

"In general, cyclones moving over the Gulf of Mexico had a tendency of passing well north of Tampa," the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration said in report on the 1921 storm.

Also lurking in the waves and wind are the impacts of climate change and the higher sea levels scientists say it is causing.

"Due to global warming, global climate models predict hurricanes will likely cause more intense rainfall and have an increased coastal flood risk due to higher storm surge caused by rising seas," Angela Colbert, a scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, wrote in a June report.

McNoldy, the University of Miami researcher, noted that Hurricane Andrew's storm surge today would be 7 inches (17 centimeters) higher than it was when that storm pounded South Florida 30 years ago.

"As sea level rises, the same storm surge will be able to flood more areas because the baseline upon which it's happening is higher," McNoldy said.

Amid all the science, a local legend has it that blessings from Native Americans who once called the region home have largely protected it from major storms for centuries. Part of that legend is the many mounds built by the Tocobagan tribe in what is now Pinellas County that some believe are meant as guardians

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against invaders, including hurricanes.

Rui Farias, executive director of the St. Petersburg Museum of History, told the Tampa Bay Times after Hurricane Irma's near miss in 2017 that many people still believe it.

"It's almost like when a myth becomes history," Farias said. "As time goes on, it comes true."

It appears Hurricane Ian will give that legend a test in the coming days.

Russia gives citizenship to ex-NSA contractor Edward Snowden

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia on Monday granted citizenship to former American intelligence contractor Edward Snowden, who fled prosecution after he revealed highly classified U.S. surveillance programs to capture communications and data from around the world.

A decree signed Monday by Russian President Vladimir Putin listed Snowden as one of 75 foreign citizens listed as being granted Russian citizenship. After fleeing the U.S. in 2013, Snowden was granted permanent Russian residency in 2020 and said at the time that he planned to apply for Russian citizenship without renouncing his U.S. citizenship.

Ties between Washington and Moscow are already at their lowest point in decades following Putin's decision to launch what the Kremlin has dubbed a "special military operation" in Ukraine.

While Snowden, 39, is considered by supporters to be a righteous whistleblower who wanted to protect American civil liberties, U.S. intelligence officials have accused him of putting U.S. personnel at risk and damaging national security. He currently faces charges in the United States that could result in decades in prison.

"Our position has not changed," State Department spokesman Ned Price said Monday. "Mr. Snowden should return to the United States where he should face justice as any other American citizen would."

Snowden becomes a Russian citizen as Moscow is mobilizing reservists to go to Ukraine. In Russia, almost every man is considered a reservist until age 65, and officials on Monday stressed that men with dual citizenship are also eligible for the military call-up.

Snowden, however, has never served in the Russian armed forces, so he is not eligible to be mobilized, his lawyer Anatoly Kucherena told the Interfax news agency. Having previous combat or military service experience has been considered the main criterion in the call-up.

Kucherena told Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti that Snowden's wife, Lindsay Mills, an American who has been living with him in Russia, will also be applying for a Russian passport. The couple has two children.

"After two years of waiting and nearly ten years of exile, a little stability will make a difference for my family," Snowden tweeted Monday. "I pray for privacy for them — and for us all."

Andrei Soldatov, a Russian investigative journalist known for his exposés of Moscow security services, said that "strictly speaking, (Snowden) could be drafted, strictly in theory." But that would be bad PR for the Kremlin so it won't happen, said Soldatov, who is on Russia's wanted list for "spreading false information." Russian authorities have also frozen his bank accounts and he lives in exile.

Snowden, who has kept a low profile in Russia and occasionally criticized Russian government policies on social media, said in 2019 that he was willing to return to the U.S. if he's guaranteed a fair trial.

Snowden has become a well-known speaker on privacy and intelligence, appearing remotely at many events from Russia. But he has been sharply criticized by members of the intelligence community, and current and former officials from both U.S. political parties say he endangered global security by exposing important programs. A U.S. damage assessment of his disclosures is still classified.

James Clapper, who served as U.S. director of national intelligence at the time of the disclosures, said Snowden's grant of citizenship came with "rather curious timing."

"It raises the question — again — about just what he shared with the Russians," Clapper said in an email Monday.

Snowden has denied cooperating with Russian intelligence and was traveling through Moscow when the U.S. revoked his passport.

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Snowden leaked documents on the National Security Agency's collection of data passing through the infrastructure of U.S. phone and internet companies. He also released details about the classified U.S. intelligence budget and the extent of American surveillance on foreign officials, including the leaders of U.S.-allied countries.

Snowden says he made the disclosures because he believed the U.S. intelligence community had gone too far and wrongly infringed on civil liberties. He also has said he didn't believe the administration of former President Barack Obama, which was in office when Snowden leaked the records to journalists, would act had he made an internal whistleblower complaint instead.

His decision to turn against the NSA came when he used his programming skills to create a repository of classified in-house notes on the agency's global snooping and as he built a backup system for agency data, he wrote in his 2019 book "Permanent Record."

Reading through the repository, Snowden said he began to understand the extent of his government's stomping on civil liberties and became "cursed with the knowledge that all of us had been reduced to something like children, who'd been forced to live the rest of their lives under omniscient parental supervision."

Snowden was charged in 2013 with unauthorized disclosure of U.S. national security and intelligence information as well as theft of government property. The three charges each carry a maximum 10-year penalty.

The Justice Department also sued to stop Snowden from collecting profits on his memoir, saying he had violated his nondisclosure agreements with intelligence agencies.

The White House on Monday referred comment on Snowden's citizenship to the Justice Department, citing the pending criminal charges.

Chief: Man shot by Chicago police infiltrated SWAT training

By COREY WILLIAMS and DON BABWIN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A man climbed five stories of a fire escape to infiltrate a Chicago police facility Monday while officers were undergoing a SWAT training exercise and grabbed at least two guns before he was shot and wounded by police, the chief said.

Police Superintendent David Brown said the suspect was taken to the hospital with injuries not considered to be life-threatening. One officer was taken to the hospital with a sprained ankle.

Brown said the suspect was seen on video leaving the facility and then returning to infiltrate it. He asked where to go to retrieve personal property at the facility in Homan Square on Chicago's West Side. Then he came back to the building and climbed the fire escape to the fifth floor, where a door had been propped open for ventilation because there are no windows on that floor.

Brown said it has not been determined if the man went to the building to retrieve property, saying that the man had an extensive record. It wasn't immediately clear if property taken from the man was stored in the building.

He had no other information about the man, other than to say he was a resident of Waukegan, a suburb about 42 miles north of Chicago.

Police later said the man is 47.

Brown said investigators believe the man grabbed at least two guns that were on a table during the training exercise and pointed them at officers. He said the guns did not have live ammunition in them, adding that they were either empty or contained munitions, such as pellets that are used for training exercises, because they sting when they strike a person but do not cause serious injury or death. He said he did not know if the man attempted to shoot officers with the guns.

He said the investigation will reveal what officers in the room knew about the guns the suspect took.

Brown speculated on what officers in the training room saw as the man entered the room.

"These were guns that were being watched," he said. "Obviously, someone coming from a stairwell outside startled everyone. Who is this person? Is this person associated with the training? We do have live actors sometimes who come in plainclothes."

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He also said that it was likely the officers said something to the man when they spotted him, but that, "We just don't know what the offender said."

He said most of those taking part in the training were tactical officers assigned to specialized units but that a few of them were uniformed officers assigned to City Hall or to Mayor Lori Lightfoot's home.

The officer was taken to Mount Sinai Hospital and listed in good condition with the ankle injury. He was not shot, Brown said.

The suspect was initially described as being in critical condition with at least one gunshot wound. Later in the day, Brown said the man's injuries were not life-threatening. Department spokesman Tom Ahern said the man has been placed under arrest and is under police guard in the hospital because he is a suspect in the incident. He did not know what specific charges he might face.

The shooting is being investigated by the city's Civilian Office of Police Accountability. The officer or officers involved will be placed on routine administrative duties for 30 days, the police department said.

The police facility is in a large red brick building that houses evidence and recovered property on the first floor. Some of the police department's specialized units also work out of the building.

Early Monday afternoon, crime scene tape was stretched across South Homan Avenue a block south of the police station and across the same street just north of the building.

A nearby school was placed on lockdown.

New this week: 'Reasonable Doubt,' 'Blonde' and Björk

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's a collection curated by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists of what's arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

MOVIES

— Andrew Dominik's long-delayed, NC-17 rated epic about Norma Jean Baker, or Marilyn Monroe, is finally here. "Blonde," which will be available on Netflix on Wednesday, looks at the life and mythology of the Hollywood icon, played by Ana de Armas, through an experimental and fictionalized lens, with stunning recreations of classic film moments from "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" and "The Seven Year Itch," brought to life by Chayse Irvin's cinematography, Jennifer Johnson's costumes, and de Armas's committed performance. But this is no celebration of Hollywood's "Golden Age" or one of its brightest stars; it's an often brutal critique of that industry and the surrounding culture and how it failed her time and time again.

— For something infinitely lighter and seasonally appropriate, head over to Disney+ on Friday for "Hocus Pocus 2," which brings the witchy Sanderson Sisters (Bette Midler, Sarah Jessica Parker and Kathy Najimy) back to Salem. The first film, which was released in 1993, was neither a box office success nor a critical favorite by any stretch, but kept a hold on those who saw and loved it as children. And almost every years since, "Hocus Pocus" has had a spike in sales around Halloween time. This sequel adds some TV comedy favorites to the mix like "Veep's" Tony Hale and Sam Richardson and "Ted Lasso's" Hannah Waddingham.

— In a new documentary "Nothing Compares," Irish filmmaker Kathryn Ferguson looks at the life and career of Sinéad O'Connor, from her rise to her de facto exile from the pop establishment and beyond. The film, which begins streaming on demand for Showtime subscribers on Friday before premiering on air on the channel on Oct. 2, uses archival footage, some previously unseen, and a new interview with O'Connor to tell her story.

— AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr

MUSIC

— The first video from Björk's new album shows her in a psychedelic mushroom forest with a phalanx of bass clarinet players, which seems pretty on-brand. The Icelandic star releases "Fossora" on Friday and says the title is a word she made up — the feminine version of the Latin word for "digger." Björk has described the collection as a "mushroom album." Two of the album's tracks, "Sorrowful Soil" and "Ancestress," were inspired by the death of her mother. Her last album was "Utopia," which was light and airy. "This time around/the feeling was landing/on the earth and digging my feet into the ground," she wrote

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on social media.

— Rita Wilson is flexing her big-name connections with her new album, "Rita Wilson Now & Forever: Duets," out Tuesday. It sees Mrs. Tom Hanks collaborating with numerous artists, including Elvis Costello, Keith Urban, Willie Nelson, Smokey Robinson, Leslie Odom Jr., Josh Groban and Jackson Browne. Each tune explores songs from the '60s and '70s, from the Bee Gees' "Massachusetts" to Fleetwood Mac's "Songbird." She sings "Let It Be Me" with Browne, "Slip Slidin' Away" with Nelson and "Where Is The Love?" with Robinson.

— Can't make it to Broadway for one of the fall's loveliest shows? Then just stream the cast album of James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim's "Into the Woods," with an all-star cast including Sara Bareilles, Brian d'Arcy James, Patina Miller, Phillipa Soo, Gavin Creel and Joshua Henry. In the musical, several classic Grimm fairy tales are thrown into a blender and then emerge intertwined, unmoored and unfinished. Bareilles' version of "Moments in the Woods" is utterly sublime. The stream starts Friday.

— AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy

TELEVISION

— Kerry Washington ("Scandal") is behind the camera as an executive producer for Hulu's "Reasonable Doubt," debuting Tuesday. Emayatzy Corinealdi stars as a L.A. defense attorney who chooses results over protocol and has a complicated personal life. Jay-Z's debut album and discography are cited as inspiration for the show and episode titles, with hip-hop, R&B and neo-soul featured on the soundtrack. Michael Ealy and Sean Patrick Thomas co-star in the first scripted drama from Disney's Onyx Collective, which focuses on programming from creators of color and underrepresented voices.

— Marcia Gay Harden and Skylar Astin play a mother-son odd couple in CBS' new dramady "So Help Me Todd," debuting Thursday. The Oscar-winning Harden's attorney Margaret Wright is organized to a fault; Astin's Todd is the black sheep in a successful family, an effective private eye who lost his license because he balked at following the rules. She decides the best cure for her wayward but talented offspring is to put him to work for her law firm as in-house investigator, and he accepts. Humor, mysteries and family dysfunction are promised to ensue.

— "How I Got Here" combines a roots-discovery trip, family bonding and travelogue, which pretty much means something for everyone. In each episode, a parent returns to their native country — young adult child in tow — to explore the sacrifice and circumstances that led to their decision to seek a new home. Each 10-day trip allows time to sample the local food, scenery and cultural highlights in countries including Chile, Israel, Italy and Zambia. The BYUtv series debuts at 2:30 p.m. EDT Sunday followed that night by episode two in its regular 6 p.m. slot.

Russian military recruiter shot amid fear of Ukraine call-up

By ADAM SCHRECK and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A young man shot a Russian military officer at close range at an enlistment office Monday, an unusually bold attack reflecting resistance to Russian President Vladimir Putin's efforts to mobilize hundreds of thousands of more men to wage war on Ukraine.

The shooting comes after scattered arson attacks on enlistment offices and protests in Russian cities against the military call-up that have resulted in at least 2,000 arrests. Russia is seeking to bolster its military as its Ukraine offensive has bogged down.

In the attack in the Siberian city of Ust-Ilimsk, 25-year-old resident Ruslan Zinin walked into the enlistment office saying "no one will go to fight" and "we will all go home now," according to local media.

Zinin was arrested and officials vowed tough punishment. Authorities said the military commandant was in intensive care. A witness quoted by a local news site said Zinin was in a roomful of people called up to fight and troops from his region were heading to military bases on Tuesday.

Protests also flared up in Dagestan, one of Russia's poorer regions in the North Caucasus. Local media reported that "several hundred" demonstrators took to the streets Tuesday in its capital, Makhachkala. Videos circulated online showing dozens of protesters tussling with the police sent to disperse them.

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Demonstrations also continued in another of Russia's North Caucasus republics, Kabardino-Balkaria, where videos on social media showed a local official attempting to address a crowd of women.

Concerns are growing that Russia may seek to escalate the conflict — including potentially using nuclear weapons — once it completes what Ukraine and the West see as illegal referendums in occupied parts of Ukraine.

The voting, in which residents are asked whether they want their regions to become part of Russia, began last week and ends Tuesday, under conditions that are anything but free or fair. Tens of thousands of residents had already fled the regions amid months of fighting, and images shared by those who remained showed armed Russian troops going door-to-door to pressure Ukrainians into voting.

"Every night and day there is inevitable shelling in the Donbas, under the roar of which people are forced to vote for Russian 'peace,'" Donetsk regional governor Pavlo Kirilenko said Monday.

Russia is widely expected to declare the results in its favor, a step that could see Moscow annex the four regions and then defend them as its own territory.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday no date has been set for recognizing the regions as part of Russia but it could be just days away.

Jake Sullivan, the U.S. national security adviser, said Russia would pay a high, if unspecified, price if it made good on veiled threats to use nuclear weapons in the war in Ukraine.

"If Russia crosses this line, there will be catastrophic consequences for Russia. The United States will respond decisively," he told NBC.

Elsewhere, the British government on Monday slapped sanctions on 92 businesses and individuals it says are involved with organizing the referendums in occupied Ukraine. U.K. Foreign Secretary James Cleverly called the votes on joining Russia "sham referendums held at the barrel of a gun." He said they "follow a clear pattern of violence, intimidation, torture and forced deportations."

The White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre likewise said Monday the U.S. "will never recognize" the four regions as part of Russia, and threatened Moscow with "swift and severe" economic costs.

Putin and his Belarusian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko, meanwhile, held an unannounced meeting Monday in the southern Russian city of Sochi and claimed they were ready to cooperate with the West — "if they treat us with respect," Putin said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Monday that Putin had told Turkey's president last week that Moscow was ready to resume negotiations with Ukraine but had "new conditions" for a cease-fire.

The Kremlin last week announced a partial mobilization — its first since World War II — to add at least 300,000 troops to its forces in Ukraine. The move, a sharp shift from Putin's previous efforts to portray the war as a limited military operation, proved unpopular at home.

Thousands of Russian men of fighting age have flocked to airports and Russia's land border crossings to avoid being called up. Protests erupted across the country, and Russian media reported an increasing number of arson attacks on military enlistment offices.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday once again decried the Russian mobilization as nothing more than "an attempt to provide commanders on the ground with a constant stream of cannon fodder."

In his nightly televised address, Zelenskyy referenced ongoing Russian attempts to punch through Ukrainian defense lines in the eastern industrial heartland of Donbas, a key target of Moscow's military campaign.

"Despite the obvious senselessness of the war for Russia and the occupiers' loss of initiative, the Russian military command still drives (troops) to their deaths," Zelenskyy said in his nightly televised address.

The Ukrainian military on Monday said in its regular Facebook update that Moscow was focusing on "holding occupied territories and attempts to complete its occupation of the Donetsk region," one of two that make up the Donbas. It added that Ukrainian troops continued holding Russian troops at bay along the frontline there.

Meanwhile, the first batches of new Russian troops mobilized by Moscow have begun to arrive at military bases, the British Defense Ministry said Monday, adding that tens of thousands had been called up so far.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Monday on Facebook that the Ukrainian military is push-

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ing efforts to take back “the entire territory of Ukraine,” and has drawn up plans to counter “new types of weapons” used by Russia. He did not elaborate.

An overnight drone strike near the Ukrainian port of Odesa sparked a massive fire and explosion, the military said Monday. It was the latest drone attack on the key southern city in recent days, and hit a military installation, setting off ammunition. Firefighters struggled to contain the blaze.

New Russian shelling struck near the Zaporozhzhia nuclear power plant, according to Zelenskyy’s office. Cities near the plant were fired on nine times by rocket launchers and heavy artillery.

Local Ukrainian officials said Monday evening that the strikes had wounded three civilians in the town of Marhanets, across the Dnieper river from the plant.

Russia also kept pummeling Ukrainian-held territory in the country’s east, parts of which have seen ramped-up shelling and missile strikes since Ukraine’s ongoing counteroffensive made sweeping gains there this month. At least seven civilians, including a 15-year-old girl, were killed Monday in a rocket attack on the city of Pervomayskiy in the northeastern Kharkiv region, local officials reported.

Further south, Ukrainian officials reported that a Russian missile on Monday evening destroyed a civilian airport in the eastern city of Kryvyi Rih, President Zelenskyy’s birthplace. The regional governor, Valentyn Reznichenko said that while there had been no casualties, the airport had been knocked out of commission.

In Ukraine’s industrial heartland of Donbas, four civilians were wounded on Monday after a Russian strike slammed into apartment blocks in the city of Kramatorsk, its mayor said on social media.

Kramatorsk is one of two largest Ukrainian-held cities remaining in the Donbas, and home to the headquarters of Ukrainian troops there.

In the town of Iziium in eastern Ukraine, which Russian forces fled this month after a Ukrainian counter-offensive, Margaryta Tkachenko is still reeling from the battle that destroyed her home and left her family close to starvation with no gas, electricity, running water or internet.

“I can’t predict what will happen next. Winter is the most frightening. We have no wood. How will we heat?” she asked.

17 dead, 24 wounded in school shooting in Russia

MOSCOW (AP) — A gunman opened fire in a school in central Russia on Monday, killing 17 people and wounding 24 others before shooting himself dead, authorities said.

The shooting took place in School No. 88 in Izhevsk, a city 960 kilometers (600 miles) east of Moscow in the Udmurtia region.

Russia’s Investigative Committee identified the gunman as 34-year-old Artyom Kazantsev, a graduate of the same school, and said he was wearing a black t-shirt bearing “Nazi symbols.” No details about his motives have been released.

The government of Udmurtia said 17 people, including 11 children, were killed in the shooting. According to Russia’s Investigative Committee, 24 other people, including 22 children, were wounded in the attack.

The governor of Udmurtia, Alexander Brechalov, said the gunman, who he said was registered as a patient at a psychiatric facility, killed himself after the attack.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov described the shooting as “a terrorist act” and said Russian President Vladimir Putin has given all the necessary orders to the relevant authorities.

“President Putin deeply mourns deaths of people and children in the school, where a terrorist act took place,” Peskov told reporters Monday.

The school educates children between grades one and 11. It has been evacuated and the area around it has been cordoned off, the governor said.

Russia’s National Guard said Kazantsev used two non-lethal handguns adapted to fire real bullets. The guns were not registered with the authorities.

A criminal probe into the incident has been launched on charges of multiple murder and illegal possession of firearms.

Izhevsk, a city of 640,000, is located west of the Ural mountains in central Russia.

Putin's call-up fuels Russians' anger, protests and violence

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — Long lines of cars on roads snaking to Russia's border crossings with Georgia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, and similar queues at airports.

Angry demonstrations — not just in Moscow and St. Petersburg — but in the remote far north province of Yakutia and in the southern region of Dagestan, with women chasing a police officer and shouting, "No to war!"

A gunman who opened fire in an enlistment office in a Siberian city and gravely wounded the military commandant, saying, "We will all go home now."

Five days after President Vladimir Putin announced a partial mobilization to call up hundreds of thousands of reservists to fight in Ukraine, the move has triggered outraged protests, a fearful exodus and acts of violence across the vast country.

"Panic. All the people I know are in panic," said David, a Russian who gave only his first name out of fear of reprisals, in an interview with The Associated Press at a border crossing with Georgia. "We are running from the regime that kills people."

While the Kremlin had wanted to promote its orchestrated referendums in occupied parts of Ukraine as a joyful event, with those regions expected to join Russia in a move similar to the annexation of Crimea in 2014, it instead is dealing with instability and chaos at home.

State-run rallies were held in Moscow and other cities celebrating the referendums even before the conclusion of several days of balloting that has been denounced as pre-ordained, phony and illegitimate by Kyiv and the West.

In his address on Wednesday announcing the mobilization, Putin said the Kremlin would "support" the regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson in their push to be incorporated into Russia.

But the mood in Russia has been anything but festive.

Fears are running high that Moscow might close the borders to men of fighting age after the referendums in Ukraine end, prompting long lines of cars at Russia's frontiers. Telegram chats dedicated to some of these crossings swelled with thousands of new users.

The lines apparently persisted Monday. The online service Yandex Maps showed a 18-kilometer traffic jam on a road in Russia's region of North Ossetia that leads up to the border with Georgia, and the regional branch of the Federal Security Service, or FSB, deployed an armored vehicle to the crossing.

Officials told Russia's RBC news site that the action came "just in case the reservists want to break through the (border) checkpoint and leave the country without completing any border formalities," promising not to restrict any exits.

"Call-up notices are being served to everyone. Nobody knows who will receive one tomorrow and therefore we decided with friends for the time being to rest in a beautiful country," said Roman Isif, a Russian who crossed into Lars, Georgia, in an interview with AP.

Long queues and crowds were reported Sunday in at least two of four Moscow airports. Tickets to destinations still available to Russians after the European Union halted all direct flights — such as Turkey, Armenia, Serbia and Dubai — have been sold out for days, despite exorbitant prices.

Russian media — including state-run outlets — reported Monday that border guards have started turning men away at the border, citing mobilization law. It wasn't immediately clear how widespread the practice was.

Although state television painted a rosy picture of the mobilization drive, with Russia 1 TV on Sunday showing crowds of eager men lining up to enlist "in almost every region," the reality was different.

Enlistment offices and other administrative buildings have been set on fire since the start of the call-up. Although such incidents, usually involving Molotov cocktails, have been common during the 7-month-old invasion, they have grown in number and frequency after Putin's speech.

Russian independent news outlets counted at least 17 such incidents in recent days, on top of 37 before

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the mobilization was announced.

A man walked into the enlistment office in the Siberian city of Ust-Ilimsk and opened fire, shooting the military commandant at close range.

Russian media reported the man, identified as Ruslan Zinin, 25, was upset that his best friend who didn't have any combat experience was called up. Authorities have said such experience would be the main criteria for the mobilization.

Zinin, who was arrested, reportedly said, "No one will go fighting," and "We will all go home now." His victim was hospitalized in intensive care in an "extremely grave" condition, the reports said.

Also on Monday, a man at a bus station in Ryazan, a city about 200 kilometers southeast of Moscow, reportedly doused himself with a flammable liquid and set himself on fire, shouting he didn't want to take part in Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine. He reportedly sustained minor injuries and was detained by police.

As troubling as these incidents are, it is the spread of protests to far-flung strongholds of Putin's base of support that could be more concerning for the Kremlin, with women confronting authorities about "taking our sons." Although the mobilization was said to total about 300,000 men, some media reports claim the authorities plan to muster more than 1 million, which Moscow denied.

Even though initial demonstrations against the mobilization were brutally suppressed by police, with hundreds detained shortly after it was announced, more have broken out in various regions. Over the weekend, women rallied against the call-up in the remote province of Yakutia in Russia's far north.

In Mahachkala, the capital of the predominantly Muslim province of Dagestan, a crowd of women in headscarves gathered Sunday, chanting "No to war." Some of them chased a police officer away from the protest, while others stood in front of a police car, preventing it from moving and demanding the release of detained protesters inside.

Protests in Dagestan continued Monday, with demonstrators clashing with police. Outrage also spilled into the streets of another North Caucasus region, Kabardino-Balkaria. Video showed a crowd of women surrounding a man in a suit, identified by the media as a local official, with one screaming: "Do you know where you're sending him?" — an apparent reference to someone close to her being mobilized.

Dagestan, as well as the Siberian region of Buryatia, are among several regions where there are complaints that a disproportionate number of ethnic minorities have been deployed to fight and have died in Ukraine.

"For our state, we are not its citizens, but cannon fodder in this war. Just a resource," said Pavel, a 40-year-old resident of Buryatia who fled to Mongolia last week to avoid getting called up. He spoke to AP on condition that his last name not be used, fearing retribution.

"Siberia and the Far East are being actively sold — timber, minerals, land leased for 50 years. And it turns out that people living here are also processed as a resource," he added.

Putin is "risking a lot by announcing mobilization, he's losing support, he's creating a pre-revolutionary situation — protests, arson incidents at enlistment offices," political analyst Abbas Gallyamov told AP.

Given the atmosphere of instability and Russia's recent battlefield setbacks, the referendums in Ukraine are unlikely to have any influence on public opinion, he said.

"No one needs these referendums — not the Russian public, not even the patriots anymore," Gallyamov added.

Andrei Kolesnikov, senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, pointed out that polls indicate about half the Russian people unconditionally support the war, with about a third whose backing comes with caveats.

The latter constitutes "a reservoir of doubt and discontent," Kolesnikov told AP. "It is already clear that the mobilization is not partial, and if this becomes more and more obvious, then the mood may begin to change. Putin is taking a big risk."

Pfizer seeks to expand omicron booster to 5- to 11-year-olds

By The Associated Press

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Pfizer asked U.S. regulators Monday to expand use of its updated COVID-19 booster shot to children ages 5 to 11.

Elementary school-aged children already received kid-sized doses of Pfizer's original vaccine, a third of the dose given to everyone 12 and older -- two primary shots plus a booster.

If the Food and Drug Administration agrees, they would start getting a kid-sized dose of the new omicron-targeted formula when it is time for their booster.

FDA vaccine chief Dr. Peter Marks said last week he expected a decision on boosters for that age group soon.

Pfizer and its partner BioNTech also announced a new study of the omicron-focused booster in even younger children, those ages 6 months through 4 years, to test different doses.

Updated boosters made by both Pfizer and rival Moderna rolled out earlier this month for everyone 12 and older. They're a tweak to vaccines that already have saved millions of lives -- a combination or "bivalent" shot that contains half the original recipe and half protection against the BA.4 and BA.5 omicron relatives responsible for most of today's COVID-19 cases.

The hope is that the modified boosters will help tamp down continuing COVID-19 cases and blunt another winter surge. As of last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said 4.4 million Americans had gotten an updated booster so far.

AP Exclusive: Jimmie Johnson to retire from full-time racing

By JENNA FRYER AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson is retiring from full-time racing and will turn his focus toward spending time with family.

He figures his future schedule will include no more than 10 bucket-list events, but the 47-year-old had no idea Monday what that will look like in 2023.

Johnson told The Associated Press he was excited to announce "I've got a blank sheet of paper, and we can now see what opportunities exist and start making a calendar." Carvana has already told Johnson it will back whatever racing he pursues.

Johnson took two weeks from the IndyCar finale — with a weekend spent in England with Ganassi teammates Scott Dixon and Dario Franchitti at the Goodwood Revival — before finalizing his decision to scale back. He told the AP he didn't really need the time to ponder his future.

"It's been an interesting process to feel so fulfilled with the experience and then also try to make a decision," Johnson said. "In the big scheme of things, there is so much life-planning going on with the kids. We've always had an idea of trying to live abroad for a year or two. We love Colorado and want to spend more time there, and there's just so much swirling personally and professionally that I just wanted to take some time and make the decision not on the back of a positive or negative experience on the racetrack."

So what is Johnson, who retired from NASCAR in 2020, thinking?

LE MANS

The 24 Hours of Le Mans would be part of the NASCAR and Hendrick Motorsports special "Garage 56" entry. Johnson has said from the start he wants to be part of the three-driver Le Mans lineup, even though it's an exhibition for the Next Gen and the car will be alone in its class.

He'd been awaiting the 2023 IndyCar schedule to see if he'd even be available, but will ensure his schedule is clear should NASCAR want its future Hall of Famer to be part of the project.

INDYCAR

Johnson for sure won't return for a second full IndyCar season with Chip Ganassi Racing. He raced only the street and road courses in 2021, added the ovals to run the full 2022 season and now isn't even sure if he'll run IndyCar at all.

"We are fully supportive of Jimmie. He has been a valued member of our team and if we can find a way to continue working together, we would like to do so," said team owner Ganassi, who told AP he'd like to run four full-time cars. Now that Johnson has made up his mind not to drive a full season in the No. 48,

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Ganassi is figuring out how to keep that entry on track.

Johnson struggled on the street and road courses over two seasons, with his best performances on ovals — the discipline he dominated for nearly two decades in NASCAR. He finished an IndyCar-best fifth at Iowa, and although he ultimately crashed out of his Indianapolis 500 debut, Johnson turned laps at over 240 mph in a dazzling qualifying performance.

"I do have a desire to go back, it's just at this point, I know what's required to do a full schedule, and I don't have that in me," Johnson told AP. "I don't have that passion that I need for myself to commit myself to a full season."

BIG IDEA

Johnson has said since his 2020 NASCAR retirement that he'd race again in the series in the right opportunity, and is now entertaining the idea of doing "The Double" — the Indianapolis 500 and Coca-Cola 600 on the same day.

Kurt Busch was the last driver to attempt the 1,100-mile, two-state odyssey in 2014. Busch fell 200 miles shy of completing it when his engine failed in the NASCAR closer. Tony Stewart, who twice attempted both races, is the only driver to complete all 1,100 miles. John Andretti and Robby Gordon both made attempts before Busch.

Johnson would like to give it a try: He won the Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte Motor Speedway four times, including three consecutive victories from 2003-2005.

"You know me and endurance sports, and the double sounds awesome," Johnson told AP. "I've always had this respect for the guys who have done the double. I would say it is more of a respect thing than a bucket-list item, and I'd love to put some energy into that idea and see if I can pull it off."

The other NASCAR events that's have caught his attention? Next year's inaugural race through the downtown streets of Chicago and the All-Star race at North Wilkesboro. Johnson noted as a past winner, he's got an exemption into both the All-Star race and the exhibition season-opening Clash at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. However, the 2022 NASCAR rules state a driver must be competing full-time to race in the all-star race.

WHAT ELSE?

The future in sports car racing is an unknown for Johnson after this weekend's IMSA season-ending Petit Le Mans. He's spent the last two seasons running the endurance races in a joint entry with Hendrick and Action Express, but does not expect enough inventory next year when IMSA adopts new cars for Johnson's project to continue.

He told AP he would consider racing in a lower IMSA category, such as LMP2, and is even curious about the six-race World Endurance Championship. But the WEC Series intrigues him because of its exotic locales — Monza, Italy, Fuji Speedway in Japan, Bahrain — and the love of international travel he shares with his wife and two young daughters.

He and Chani Johnson have explored enrolling their girls in school in either England or France for a year for the experience, and as a hands-on father, Johnson takes an active role in shuttling his daughters to and from their full schedule of sports and activities. Chani Johnson is also a successful owner of an art gallery and is looking to expand her businesses.

"Chani has always supported me to the nth degree and also at the same time had her objectives, desires and pursued her pathway and her career. I think she's optimistically cautious I follow through with this plan," Johnson told AP. "But these decisions are based around family needs and demands, and I think it gets tricky and a bit more complicated on my schedule if we can get some traction on travel and living abroad.

"But those are decisions that will come about in the next few months. And so I go into this I would say with no regrets. I look back and definitely learned lessons from what's happened, good and bad. But I don't have any pit in my stomach of something left unfinished, or any regrets I might have." _____

More AP auto racing: <https://apnews.com/hub/auto-racing> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

The British pound has taken a tumble. What's the impact?

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By KELVIN CHAN Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The pound is taking a pounding.

The British currency has taken a plunge, sliding against the U.S. dollar to touch an all-time low. It's a sign of the alarm in financial markets over new Prime Minister Liz Truss' emergency budget measures unveiled last week aimed at jump-starting the ailing economy.

Investors are spooked by a sweeping package of tax cuts likely to cost tens of billions of pounds in extra government borrowing and amounts to a risky gamble to stave off a looming recession.

But that's not all. The currency chaos is playing out against the wider backdrop of the dollar's rally to a two-decade high.

Here's a look at what it all means:

EVERYDAY IMPACT

Many Britons are struggling amid soaring inflation driven by rising prices for food and energy, in a cost-of-living crisis that's been dubbed the worst in a generation.

The pound's slump threatens to make it even worse. One of the most visible ways is by feeding into the energy crisis because oil and natural gas is priced in dollars. The impact is being felt at the pump.

British drivers are paying 5 pounds (\$5.45) more on average to fill up their cars since the beginning of the year as the pound has fallen, according to an analysis by motoring association AA. U.K. gas prices would be at least 9 pence per liter cheaper if the pound was still at its mid-February level of \$1.35, compared with the now-outdated \$1.14 level that the group used last week for its calculation.

"There's every chance that a falling pound will make life more expensive," said Sarah Coles, senior personal finance analyst at financial services firm Hargreaves Lansdown. Anything bought from overseas — components, raw materials, supermarket staples and household basics — will be pricier.

"These rising costs will feed into higher prices, and push inflation even higher," Coles said. "For anyone whose budget was already stretched to breaking point, this will mean even more pain at the tills."

Finance minister Kwasi Kwarteng hopes that big tax cuts will spur economic growth and generate wealth, but the sliding pound raises the possibility that will be offset if the central bank steps in with bigger-than-expected interest rate increases.

Some analysts are speculating rates could rise as high as 6% by next spring, a sharp contrast to the near zero level they were at just a few years ago. Rising rates mean many homeowners face bigger monthly mortgage bills, leaving them less to spend on other goods and services.

HOW LOW CAN IT GO?

Fifteen years ago, 1 British pound was able to buy \$2. Now, the pound is getting closer to parity with the greenback, a once-unthinkable event and a psychologically important milestone. The pound has tumbled more than 5% since the government outlined its economic plans Friday, dropping as low as \$1.0373 early Monday, before bouncing back to above \$1.06.

The markets are raising the prospect that the two currencies might soon reach equal footing. A lot of the decline has been driven by the strength of the dollar, which has climbed against a wide range of other currencies as the U.S. Federal Reserve aggressively raises rates, drawing interest from investors fleeing riskier assets.

The euro, for example, has been on a similar trajectory to the pound, having fallen below parity with the dollar recently and then hitting a fresh 20-year low Monday.

The pound has dropped more than most, though, because of local factors. Investors are alarmed at Kwarteng's "lack of focus on fiscal prudence," which outweighs any optimism about his pro-growth, anti-red tape agenda, said Victoria Scholar, head of investment at interactive investor.

"On top of being bullish towards the dollar, the international investor community is now also very bearish towards the pound amid fears about the UK's economic outlook and investment case," Scholar said.

TUG OF WAR

The plummeting pound highlights what analysts are calling a "tug of war" between Britain's Treasury and the central bank, which has independence from the government to operate free of political influence.

The Truss government is gambling that slashing taxes and borrowing more to pay for it will kick-start

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economic growth as a recession looms.

That puts government officials at odds with the Bank of England, where policymakers are trying to rein in inflation that threatens financial stability by raising interest rates, with seven hikes so far this year and more in the pipeline.

The central bank said Monday that it wouldn't hesitate to raise interest rates by as much as needed at its next meeting in November, which did little to soothe markets. An interim meeting to decide on an emergency rate hike could be needed, "though that would risk escalating tensions with the new government," said Jeremy Lawson, chief economist at asset manager abrdn.

"There are no good options from here, just less bad ones, with the U.K.'s already struggling household and businesses left to pick up the pieces," Lawson said.

IS THERE ANY UPSIDE?

British exports will be cheaper for buyers paying in dollars. But the economic impact is likely to be limited, given that the United Kingdom runs a trade deficit with the rest of the world by importing more than it exports.

It'll be a lot cheaper for foreign visitors, especially Americans. Pub beers, theater tickets for shows in London's West End, and hotel bills will be more affordable for tourists.

And for investors and wealthy people, the slumping pound makes it cheaper to buy real estate in Britain, especially in exclusive London neighborhoods that have long been favored by the global superrich.

Harrowing film tells of Las Vegas shooting and its aftermath

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A pair of cowboy boots that Ashley Hoff never thought she would see again helped unlock a powerful story about the worst mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

The resulting film, "11 Minutes," is an inside account of the 2017 massacre at a country music festival in Las Vegas and, more importantly, about how it reverberated in the lives of those who were there. More than three hours long, the four-part documentary debuts Tuesday on the Paramount+ streaming service.

"I've never felt more useful or more like the universe put me exactly where I was supposed to be," said Hoff, an executive producer of "11 Minutes."

It seems like a strange sentiment given that Hoff was at the show on Oct. 1, 2017, four rows from the stage as Jason Aldean sang "Any Ol' Barstool." Hoff heard popping sounds that she and her husband, Shaun, first dismissed as fireworks — not the work of a gunman firing from a nearby hotel window.

She turned to look at her husband and saw someone just behind him struck in the face by a bullet. They alternated ducking to the ground for cover and running away, depending on when they could hear the gunshots.

At one point, she kicked off her cowboy boots because it was too slippery to run in them, eventually escaping the killing field where 58 people died that night, and two more later of their injuries. More than 850 people were hurt before the gunfire stopped.

Nine months later, an FBI agent was at Hoff's door with her boots — part of a little-known unit that returns property left behind by people caught in these incidents.

Hoff, already in the film business, thought that made an intriguing subject. She was encouraged to broaden her focus through her experience with fellow survivors and the involvement of director Jeff Zimbalist and veteran producers Susan Zirinsky and Terence Wrong.

Many survivors, like herself, were unhappy with media coverage of the massacre, believing there was too much focus on the gunman and that it was forgotten too soon.

"We all went back to our corners to suffer in silence," she said.

The film takes you vividly inside the event with cellphone and police body-cam footage. The cooperation of Las Vegas police was key, bringing footage like the race to hospitals with survivors and the moment when a tactical unit burst into the casino hotel room where the gunman had barricaded himself.

The experiences of people like Jonathan Smith, a Black concertgoer who had felt unwelcome because

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of a white man's remark wondering why he was there, and Natalie Grumet, who had just survived cancer, are weaved throughout the story. Both were seriously injured.

"Is it easy to watch? No, but it shouldn't be easy to watch," said SiriusXM host Storme Warren, who was onstage in Las Vegas that night. "I don't know why you would tell the story if it were easy to watch."

Warren at first hesitated when asked to participate in the film, dealing with his own PTSD and wary because of past media coverage. He and Aldean, who gave his first interview about Las Vegas to filmmakers, are important ties to the country community.

Hoff believes that her own experience that night, even though it is not included in the film, helped convince some of those involved to talk.

Searingly, the parents of Carrie Parsons, a young woman who didn't survive her wounds, discuss dealing with every parent's worst nightmare, and how their time to grieve with her body was cut short.

"They're going to cremate my daughter in 10 minutes," a tearful Ann-Marie Parsons recalled being told. "How do you deal with that?"

After the shooting stopped, police talked of hearing the rings of cellphones as they walked among bodies still on the concert grounds, knowing there were desperate callers on the other end wanting to know if their loved ones were safe.

Beyond the concertgoers, it's startling to see some of the first responders — often not the most emotive types — speak about how they've dealt with the emotional aftermath. "I was a very angry man. Very angry," said Brian Rogers, paramedic operations chief, in the film.

Part four of "11 Minutes," begins at dawn on Oct. 2, 2017, and focuses on some of the enduring bonds between survivors, and some of the rescuers.

It's Hoff's favorite part. "I do like to encourage people that there is goodness in the end, so hang in for that," she said.

"There are extraordinary acts of courage and human beings helping human beings," said Zirinsky, chief of the See It Now Studios production company. "They're just regular people. In the darkest hours, people found each other."

Zirinsky, the former CBS News president, produced "9/11," perhaps the most memorable doc made in the wake of that disaster, and considers "11 Minutes" the most powerful film she's worked on since.

While the film talks about the gunman, whose motive remains a mystery since he killed himself before police reached him, it pointedly does not mention his name. Almost militantly so: A series of audio news reports included are cut off just before the name is spoken.

It was found that the gunman had searched the internet for "how to be a social media star" in the days before the shooting. Even in death, Hoff doesn't want to give him that wish.

The film ends with a slow crawl showing the names of those killed five years ago in Las Vegas, as well as the victims of every mass shooting since that time in the U.S. where at least four people were killed.

"I don't call it a political statement," Zirinsky said. "I call it a statement of reality."

Both Hoff and her husband escaped the concert without any gunshot wounds, although Hoff broke her arm when she slipped and fell trying to run in her cowboy boots. She didn't notice her injury until they stopped running.

She's fine if people take the message from her film that enough's enough.

"We need to stop turning away, and we need to understand what going through this was like," she said. "It changes a person forever."

Civil rights law targets 'cancer alley' discrimination

By MICHAEL PHILLIS Associated Press

RESERVE, La. (AP) — Sprawling industrial complexes line the drive east along the Mississippi River to the majority-Black town of Reserve, Louisiana. In the last seven miles the road passes a massive, rust-colored aluminum-oxide refinery, then the Evonik chemical plant, then rows of white tanks at the Marathon oil refinery.

But it's the Denka chemical plant that is under scrutiny from federal officials. Less than a half mile from

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an elementary school in Reserve, it makes synthetic rubber, emitting chloroprene, listed as a carcinogen in California, and a likely one by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Angelo Bernard is a grandfather whose family has lived in Reserve for generations. His three grandkids used to attend the school, Fifth Ward Elementary. Hurricane Ida forced them to move.

"I'm glad they're away," said Bernard. "I feel for the kids that have to go to school that close to the plant."

The investigation is part of a push by the Biden administration to prioritize environmental enforcement in communities overburdened by pollution. On Saturday, that push ratcheted up a notch when EPA administrator Michael Regan announced the creation of a new office at EPA focused on environmental justice.

"We are embedding environmental justice and civil rights into the DNA of EPA," Regan said.

Regan visited Reserve last year and said "we will do better." Now the EPA is investigating whether Louisiana regulators are discriminating against Black residents by failing to control air pollution in parishes packed with refineries and petrochemical plants, a region some call "cancer alley."

To do it, they are using an old tool in a new way. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbids anyone who receives federal funds from discriminating based on race or national origin. It's been used in housing and transportation, but rarely on environmental matters.

The Biden administration said that must change.

The U.S. Department of Justice last fall opened its first-ever environmental Title VI investigation into state and local officials in Alabama over chronic wastewater problems in majority-Black Lowndes County. Another is looking into illegal dumping in Houston. The EPA initiated its own investigation into Colorado's air program, also a first. Activists are taking notice and filing more complaints. Experts say the EPA is addressing them more quickly than in the past.

Alexandra Dapolito Dunn, an environment attorney at the law firm Baker Botts, said the approach represents "a seismic shift."

The EPA accepted three complaints from activists to investigate Louisiana's regulation of air emissions. The agency could pull federal funds if they find a civil rights violation, but local governments more commonly agree to make changes.

Bernard said some nights he smells something like benzene when he steps out of his home in Reserve. He is skeptical that the Title VI complaint will force Denka to cut its emissions further – there's too much money at stake.

"If this was California, maybe they would shut it down. But this is Louisiana – no way," he said.

Agreements typically have not directly attacked discriminatory policies — they've focused on procedure. Activists hope that will change.

The Denka plant's emissions have gone down significantly in recent years, but EPA monitoring found chloroprene levels higher than what activists say is safe.

A Denka spokesperson said advocates were describing a crisis that "simply does not exist." The state said it has worked to help the company emit less, denying it was taking too long to do more.

And as the Biden administration takes credit for its environmental justice push, some say it's also working at cross purposes. The oil and gas industry that is concentrated in Louisiana received a boost with the Inflation Reduction Act signed into law this summer. It requires auctions of new offshore oil and gas leases.

On Saturday, Regan announced the creation of the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights in the same spot where the environmental justice movement started: Warren County, North Carolina, where hundreds were arrested in the early 1980s protesting plans to dump hazardous waste in the predominantly Black community.

"Creating the separate office is a very visible step that puts a spotlight on these issues and demonstrates how important they are to the administration," Dunn said.

About 30 miles upriver from Reserve is Welcome, a sparsely populated stretch of St. James Parish. It's an area of heavy industry and sugarcane fields. Many of its mostly Black residents have deep local roots and family nearby.

The other Louisiana community complaint accepted by the EPA concerns a local affiliate of Formosa Plastics called FG LA. It plans to build a \$9.4 billion petrochemical complex in the area. The complaint says

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the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is ignoring the threat that new industrial facilities like Formosa's pose to already polluted areas. It says too often residents, especially Black residents, are left out of the permitting process.

In a recent setback for Formosa's plans, a Louisiana judge threw out the 14 air permits the state issued for the complex, saying environmental justice issues were "at the very heart of this case."

Gloria Johnson is 61, has lived in the area her whole life and said there are many elderly and disabled residents who are vulnerable if a new industrial complex makes the air quality worse.

"It's too close to the neighborhood," she said, adding that she didn't know about Formosa's plans until it felt like a done deal.

The company said the complex would create 1,200 jobs, generate millions in taxes and fund improvements in the community. It emphasized that local parish officials voted to support the complex. Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards has said it would continue the "tremendous industrial growth" that's occurred along the Mississippi River.

Louisiana environmental regulators said they did not discriminate — companies want to locate in the region because key infrastructure already exists here. Air permitting decisions are based on well-established requirements and the public is informed when major projects are being considered, the state told the EPA in its response to the Formosa complaint.

Mary Hampton lives in Reserve. She grew up during segregation. Her father helped her obtain property so she could build and own her home. She didn't want a job cleaning kitchens or mopping floors.

"I wanted to get a job where I could make money," she said.

Eventually, she became one of the first Black women to work at a nearby chemical plant, walking in on her first day to a sea of white faces shocked by her presence.

But over time she has come to worry about what was coming out of the Denka plant.

"My main concern was that we had been smelling things for years and years and years and we never even knew what we were living next to," she said. Hampton is the president of Concerned Citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish, which raised civil rights concerns about the state's handling of Denka.

She worries about the health of her family and friends and is frustrated that the environmental consequences fall on this community.

"We want EPA to set rules," Hampton said. "And stick to it."

How a party of neo-fascist roots won big in Italy

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — The Brothers of Italy party, which won the most votes in Italy's national election, has its roots in the post-World War II neo-fascist Italian Social Movement.

Keeping the movement's most potent symbol, the tricolor flame, Giorgia Meloni has taken Brothers of Italy from a fringe far-right group to Italy's biggest party.

A century after Benito Mussolini's 1922 March on Rome, which brought the fascist dictator to power, Meloni is poised to lead Italy's first far-right-led government since World War II and Italy's first woman premier.

HOW DID POST-FASCISM BEGIN IN ITALY?

The Italian Social Movement, or MSI, was founded in 1946 by Giorgio Almirante, a chief of staff in Mussolini's last government. It drew fascist sympathizers and officials into its ranks following Italy's role in the war, when it was allied with the Nazis and then liberated by the Allies.

Throughout the 1950-1980s, the MSI remained a small right-wing party, polling in the single digits. But historian Paul Ginsborg has noted that its mere survival in the decades after the war "served as a constant reminder of the potent appeal that authoritarianism and nationalism could still exercise among the southern students, urban poor and lower middle classes."

The 1990s brought about a change under Gianfranco Fini, Almirante's protege who nevertheless projected a new moderate face of the Italian right. When Fini ran for Rome mayor in 1993, he won a surprising 46.9% of the vote — not enough to win but enough to establish him as a player. Within a year, Fini had renamed the MSI the National Alliance.

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It was in those years that a young Meloni, who was raised by a single mother in a Rome working-class neighborhood, first joined the MSI's youth branch and then went on to lead the youth branch of Fini's National Alliance.

DOES THAT MEAN MELONI IS NEO-FASCIST?

Fini was dogged by the movement's neo-fascist roots and his own assessment that Mussolini was the 20th century's "greatest statesman." He disavowed that statement, and in 2003 visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Israel. There, he described Italy's racial laws, which restricted Jews' rights, as part of the "absolute evil" of the war.

Meloni, too, had praised Mussolini in her youth but visited Yad Vashem in 2009 when she was a minister in Silvio Berlusconi's last government. Writing in her 2021 memoir "I Am Giorgia," she described the experience as evidence of how "a genocide happens step by step, a little at a time."

During the campaign, Meloni was forced to confront the issue head-on, after the Democrats warned that she represented a danger to democracy.

"The Italian right has handed fascism over to history for decades now, unambiguously condemning the suppression of democracy and the ignominious anti-Jewish laws," she said in a campaign video.

HOW DID BROTHERS OF ITALY EMERGE?

Meloni, who proudly touts her roots as an MSI militant, has said the first spark of creating Brothers of Italy came after Berlusconi resigned as premier in 2011, forced out by a financial crisis over Italy's soaring debt and his own legal problems.

Meloni refused to support Mario Monti, who was tapped by Italy's president to try to form a technocratic government to reassure international financial markets. Meloni couldn't stand what she believed was external pressure from European capitals to dictate internal Italian politics.

Meloni co-founded the party in 2012, naming it after the first words of the Italian national anthem. "A new party for an old tradition," Meloni wrote.

Brothers of Italy would only take in single-digit results in its first decade. The European Parliament election in 2019 brought Brothers of Italy 6.4% — a figure that Meloni says "changed everything."

As the leader of the only party in opposition during Mario Draghi's 2021-2022 national unity government, her popularity soared, with Sunday's election netting it 26%.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE PARTY'S LOGO?

The party has at the center of its logo the red, white and green flame of the original MSI that remained when the movement became the National Alliance. While less obvious than the bundle of sticks, or fasces, that was the prominent symbol of Mussolini's National Fascist Party, the tricolor flame is nevertheless a powerful image that ties the current party to its past.

"Political logos are a form of branding, no different than those aimed at consumers," said Rutgers University professor T. Corey Brennan, who recently wrote "Fasces: A History of Rome's Most Dangerous Political Symbol."

He recalled that when Almirante made his final MSI campaign pitch to voters in the 1948 election at Rome's Spanish Steps, he put the party's flame symbol on top of the obelisk and illuminated it with floodlights.

"You can make whatever you want out of a flame, but everybody understood that Almirante was making a deeply emotional appeal to keep the spirit of fascism alive," he said.

HOW DO ITALIANS FEEL ABOUT IT?

In general, the party's neo-fascist roots appear to be of more concern abroad than at home. Some historians explain that by noting a certain historical amnesia here and Italians' general comfort living with the relics of fascism as evidence that Italy never really repudiated the Fascist Party and Mussolini in the same way Germany repudiated National Socialism and Hitler.

While Germany went through a long and painful process reckoning with its past, Italians have in many ways simply turned a willful blindness to their own.

Historian David Kertzer of Brown University notes that there are 67 institutes for the study of the Resistance to Fascism in Italy, and virtually no center for the study of Italian Fascism.

In addition, Mussolini-era architecture and monuments are everywhere: from the EUR neighborhood in

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southern Rome to the Olympic training center on the Tiber River, with its obelisk still bearing Mussolini's name.

The Italian Constitution bars the reconstitution of the Fascist party, but far-right groups still display the fascist salute and there continues to be an acceptance of fascist symbols, said Brennan.

"You don't have to look very hard for signs," Brennan said in a phone interview. "Fully a quarter of all manhole covers in Rome still have the fasces on them."

DOES THAT MEAN ITALIANS SUPPORT FASCISM?

If history is any guide, one constant in recent political elections is that Italians vote for change, with a desire for something new seemingly overtaking traditional political ideology in big pendulum shifts, said Nathalie Tocci, director of the Rome-based Institute of International Affairs.

Tocci said the Brothers of Italy's popularity in 2022 was evidence of this "violent" swing that is more about Italian dissatisfaction than any surge in neo-fascist or far-right sentiment.

"I would say the main reason why a big chunk of that -- let's say 25-30% -- will vote for this party is simply because it's the new kid on the block," she said.

Meloni still speaks reverently about the MSI and Almirante, even if her rhetoric can change to suit her audience.

This summer, speaking in perfect Spanish, she thundered at a rally of Spain's hard-right Vox party: "Yes to the natural family. No to the LGBT lobby. Yes to sexual identity. No to gender ideology."

Back home on the campaign trail, she projected a much more moderate tone and appealed for unity in her victory speech Monday.

"Italy chose us," she said. "We will not betray it, as we never have."

For chewy Japanese noodles, borrow an Italian technique

By CHRISTOPHER KIMBALL Christopher Kimball's Milk Street

Japanese udon noodles are all about the chew, but it's hard to replicate the texture with what's available in American markets.

Fresh udon is hard to come by. So for this recipe from our book "Milk Street Tuesday Nights," which limits recipes to 45 minutes or less, we needed a solution for more widely available dry udon.

Enter the Italian technique of cooking the noodles only until al dente — still quite firm. To further firm up the texture, we chilled them by rinsing them with ice in the strainer under cold water. Even after reheating the noodles in the cooked sauce, they retained that pleasant toothsome quality that makes this vegetarian dish feel so hearty.

With the texture settled, we opted for an umami-rich sauce of soy sauce, dried shiitake mushrooms and the semisweet rice wine mirin, all balanced by a little sugar. Fresh shiitake and mild-tasting baby bok choy kept the stir-fry light.

To balance the savoriness, we turned to pickled ginger, which you can find jarred in the Asian foods section of grocery stores. For extra flavor, sprinkle on the Japanese spice blend shichimi togarashi at the table.

Be sure to start checking the udon for doneness well before the suggested cooking time. They will cook slightly more once they're added back to the sauce.

Yakiudon with Pickled Ginger

<https://www.177milkstreet.com/recipes/yakiudon-pickled-ginger>

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Servings: 4

12 ounces dried udon noodles

2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons grapeseed or other neutral oil, divided

¼ cup soy sauce

2 tablespoons mirin

1 teaspoon white sugar

3 small dried shiitake mushrooms, broken in half

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8 ounces fresh shiitake mushrooms, stemmed, halved if large, thinly sliced
1 small yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced
2 medium garlic cloves, minced
12 ounces baby bok choy, trimmed and sliced crosswise ½ inch thick
½ teaspoon ground white pepper
2 scallions, thinly sliced on a bias
1 tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted
Shichimi togarashi, to serve (optional)
Pickled ginger, to serve

In a large pot, bring 4 quarts of water to a boil. Add the udon, stir well and cook until al dente. Drain using a colander, then add 2 cups of ice to the noodles. Run under cool water, tossing, until they are chilled. Drain well, then transfer to a large bowl. Toss with 2 teaspoons of the oil, then set aside.

In a small saucepan over medium, combine the soy sauce, ¼ cup water, mirin and sugar. Bring to a simmer, stirring, then add the dried mushrooms, pushing them into the liquid. Remove from the heat, cover and set aside until the mushrooms have softened and cooled, 20 to 30 minutes.

Remove the mushrooms from the soy sauce mixture, squeezing them to allow any liquid to drip back into the pan. Remove and discard the stems, then finely chop. Transfer to a medium bowl and set aside.

In a large nonstick skillet over medium-high, heat 1 tablespoon of the remaining oil. Add the fresh mushrooms and cook, stirring, until lightly browned and slightly shrunken, about 3 minutes. Add the onion, drizzle with the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 3 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the bok choy and cook, stirring, until the leaves are wilted and the stem pieces are crisp-tender, about 2 minutes. Add to the chopped dried shiitakes.

Set the now-empty skillet over medium and add the udon, gently tossing with tongs. Add the vegetable mixture, gently toss a few times, then add the soy sauce mixture and white pepper. Cook, tossing constantly, until the noodles are heated and have absorbed most of the liquid, about 2 minutes. Transfer to serving bowls and sprinkle with scallions and sesame seeds. Serve with pickled ginger.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more recipes, go to Christopher Kimball's Milk Street at 177milkstreet.com/ap

Bills would curtail objections at future Jan. 6 vote counts

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Members of Congress have officially objected to the results in four of the last six presidential elections, a partisan practice that has been legal for over a century but became much more fraught after a violent mob of then-President Donald Trump's supporters attacked the U.S. Capitol last year.

In an effort to prevent another Jan. 6, 2021, bills moving through the House and the Senate would make it harder to lodge those objections when Congress counts the electoral votes in a joint session after every presidential election. The move to curtail the objections is part of a larger effort to overhaul the 1800s-era Electoral Count Act and safeguard the integrity of the vote after Trump tried to persuade his Republican allies in Congress to vote against Democrat Joe Biden's victory and overturn his 2020 defeat.

Under current law, only one member of the House and one member of the Senate has to challenge a state's results to trigger votes on that state's electors in each chamber. If a simple majority in each chamber votes to sustain the objection, that state's votes can be thrown out.

The House and Senate bills would each raise that threshold substantially, with the House bill requiring a third of each chamber to object and the Senate bill requiring a fifth of each chamber to object. The House legislation, passed last week, would also lay out new requirements for the grounds for an objection.

"It is just too easy to trigger an objection when it only requires one person in each chamber," says Maine Sen. Susan Collins, a Republican co-sponsor of the Senate version. Eleven GOP senators have signed on to the legislation, which is up for a vote in a Senate committee on Tuesday.

If the bills are consolidated into one measure that becomes law, it will do away with a tradition that has become increasingly popular as Congress has become more polarized.

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Democrats have objected the last three times that Republicans were elected — twice against George W. Bush and once against Trump — but in each of those cases the Democratic candidate had already conceded the election.

The stakes were raised considerably in 2021, when Trump and his allies were actively trying to thwart Biden's win, with a strategy to throw out Biden electors in Congress and the support of a violent mob that broke into the Capitol, interrupted the joint session and threatened the lives of lawmakers and Vice President Mike Pence.

House Administration Chairwoman Zoe Lofgren of California, the Democratic sponsor of the House bill with Republican Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, said the bill would protect the voters' will from "frivolous" objections and more sinister efforts.

"If you want to object to the vote, you better have your colleagues and the Constitution on your side," Lofgren said just before the bill passed. "Don't try to overturn our democracy."

At the 2021 joint session, two GOP senators — Ted Cruz of Texas and Josh Hawley of Missouri — joined a larger group of House Republicans in objecting to Biden's electoral votes in Arizona and Pennsylvania, two swing states that Trump had won in the 2016 election but lost in 2020. Both the House and the Senate voted to certify Biden's win in those states in the hours after the rioters had injured police officers, rampaged through the Capitol and sent lawmakers running for their lives. But eight senators and almost 140 members of the House voted to sustain the objections.

Congress had only held such votes twice since the enactment of the Electoral Count Act 135 years ago. In 1969, two Democratic senators joined a member of the House to object to the vote of one elector in North Carolina during the certification of Republican Richard Nixon's victory. In 2004, Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer of California and Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones, D-Ohio, objected to President George W. Bush's electors in Ohio over what they said were voting irregularities.

In both cases, the House and the Senate rejected the objections.

In several other instances, members of the House have lodged objections without the support of a senator. In 2000, several members of the Congressional Black Caucus objected to Bush's electors in Florida after the Supreme Court had forced a halt to vote-counting in that state and decided the election. Vice President Al Gore, whom Bush had defeated, gaveled the objections down as he presided over the session.

In 2016, several Democrats stood and objected to Trump's win over Democrat Hillary Clinton but no senator joined, and Vice President Joe Biden dismissed them. Like Gore, Clinton had already conceded defeat.

Members on both sides of the Capitol have been working on the revisions to the Electoral Count Act since the 2021 insurrection, saying the law's vague language was not robust enough protection against Trump's overt attempts to subvert the will of the people. The bills would also clarify that the vice president's role is solely ceremonial and try to prevent states from creating slates of illegitimate electors, as Trump's allies tried to do.

The House bill is more expansive than the Senate bill, and the two sides will eventually have to resolve their differences into a single measure. That includes the House language with new grounds for any objection, which would restrict the process even further.

Under the House legislation, no member could make an objection unless it fell under a strict set of parameters that relate to the Constitution — that the state is not validly a state, if the state submits too many electoral votes or if a candidate is not eligible, for example.

House Republicans argued against the legislation by saying it was a political attack on Trump, noting the frequent Democratic objections over the years. It only received nine Republican votes, all from members who are not returning to the House next year.

Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., responded that if lawmakers believed there had been too many objections in the past, "you should absolutely be supporting this legislation."

Hawley, who was photographed raising a fist to pro-Trump protesters outside the Capitol ahead of last year's joint session, said in an interview that he is "skeptical" of the effort to change a law that has been in place for so many years.

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"My concern is that it's going to look like to Republican voters that Democrats can object as much as often as they want," the Missouri Republican said, noting the objections in 2000, 2004 and 2016.

"As soon as Republicans do, they change the law," Hawley said. "I can promise you, that will be the perception."

Still, 11 Republican senators have signed on to the Senate bill, enough to break a filibuster and pass the bill in the 50-50 Senate.

Pennsylvania Sen. Pat Toomey, who is retiring, was the latest GOP senator to sign on to the legislation last week.

"The poor drafting of the 1887 Electoral Count Act endangered the transition of power from one Administration to the next," Toomey said when he announced his support.

"Unfortunately, in the over 100 intervening years, individual Democratic and Republican members of Congress have occasionally attempted to exploit the ambiguities in this law to cast doubt on the validity of our elections, culminating in the debacle of January 6, 2021," he said. "It is past time Congress act."

Ukrainians scared by Russia's preordained referendums

By YURAS KARMANAU and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — After seven months of war, many Ukrainians fear even more suffering and political repression as referendums orchestrated by the Kremlin portend Russia's imminent annexation of four occupied regions.

Many residents fled the regions before the so-called referendums got underway, scared about being forced to vote or potentially being conscripted into the Russian army. Others described hiding behind closed doors, hoping to avoid having to answer to armed soldiers going door-to-door to collect votes.

Petro Kobernik, who left the Russian-held southern city of Kherson just before the preordained voting began Friday, said the prospect of living under Russian law and the escalating war made him and others extremely jittery about the future.

"The situation is changing rapidly, and people fear that they will be hurt either by the Russian military, or Ukrainian guerrillas and the advancing Ukrainian troops," Kobernik, 31, said in a telephone interview.

As some Russian officials brought ballots to neighborhoods accompanied by armed police, Kobernik said his 70-year-old father shut the door of his private house in the village of Novotroitske — part of Kherson — and vowed not to let anyone in.

The referendums, denounced by Kyiv and its Western allies as rigged, are taking place in the Russian-controlled Luhansk and Kherson regions, and in occupied areas of the Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions. They are widely viewed as a pretext for annexation, and Russian authorities are expected to announce the regions as theirs once the vote ends Tuesday.

The Kremlin has used this tactic before. In 2014, it held a hastily called referendum in Ukraine's Crimea region to justify annexation of the Black Sea peninsula, a move that was denounced as illegitimate by most of the world.

Ukrainian authorities have told residents of the four Russian-occupied regions that they would face criminal punishment if they cast ballots and advised them to leave.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who began mobilizing more troops for the war last week, said he's ready to use nuclear weapons to protect territory in a clear threat to Ukraine to halt its attempts to reclaim the regions.

Putin's escalating rhetoric and politically risky decision to call up as many as 300,000 army reservists comes after Russians were hastily forced to retreat from large swaths of northeastern Ukraine earlier this month. A fierce Ukrainian counteroffensive continues in the country's east and south.

Moscow-appointed governor of the southern Kherson region, Vladimir Saldo, vowed that Ukrainian attempts to derail the referendum by shelling the city won't succeed.

"It's complicated because of security issues, but everything will be done to make the balloting safe for the voters and election officials," Saldo said in a video address. "People are waiting to join Russia and

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want it done as quickly as possible.”

Moscow-backed separatists in the eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions claim that most residents of these territories have dreamed about joining Russia ever since Russia’s annexation of Crimea.

But many residents there tell a different story.

“The streets are empty as people stay home,” Marina Irkho, a 38-year-old resident of the Sea of Azov port city of Berdyansk said by phone. “No one wants them to declare us part of Russia and start rounding up our men.”

She said that “those who actively stood for Ukraine have left or gone into hiding,” adding that many of the older people who supported Russia have stayed but feel scared.

Ukrainian guerrillas have continuously targeted Moscow-appointed officials in the occupied regions.

Just a week before the referendum, a deputy head of the Berdyansk city administration and his wife who headed the city election commission were killed in an attack.

Members of the Yellow Band guerrilla group named after Ukraine’s yellow-and-blue national flag have spread leaflets threatening those who cast ballots and urged residents to send photos and video of people who vote to track them down later.

The guerrillas also posted phone numbers of election commission chiefs in the Kherson region, calling on pro-Ukraine activists to “make their life unbearable.”

Ukrainian officials say signs of the referendums’ illegitimacy are all around.

“The Russians are seeing the citizens’ fear and reluctance to vote, so they are forced to take people in,” said Ivan Fedorov, the Ukrainian mayor of the Russia-held city of Melitopol, who was detained and held by the Russians before leaving the city.

“Groups of collaborators and Russians accompanied by armed troops go from one apartment to another, but few people open the doors,” Fedorov said. “The haste with which they organized that pseudo-referendum shows that they weren’t going to even count the ballots in earnest.”

Larysa Vinogradova, a resident of the port city of Mariupol who left the city after the Russian invasion, said that many of her friends stayed because they had to take care of elderly parents refusing to flee. “They don’t stand for Russia, they want Mariupol to be part of Ukraine, and they are waiting for it,” she said, bursting into tears.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai, who left the region after it was swept by the Russian forces, said that residents fear that the Russians will round up more men in the region for military service following Putin’s mobilization order.

“The Russians are using this pseudo-referendum as a pretext for armed people to visit apartments and search for any remaining men to mobilize them and also look for anything suspicious and pro-Ukrainian,” Haidai told The Associated Press.

“The swift Ukrainian counteroffensive has scared the Russians,” he added.

Analysts say Putin is hoping to use the threat of military escalation to force Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy into negotiating with the Kremlin.

“The haste with which the referendums were called shows the weakness of the Kremlin, not its strength,” said Volodymyr Fesenko, head of the Penta Center, an independent think tank based in Kyiv. “The Kremlin is struggling to find levers to influence the situation that has spun out of its control.”

Today in History: September 27, Taliban take power

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Sept. 27, the 270th day of 2022. There are 95 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On Sept. 27, 1996, in Afghanistan, the Taliban, a band of former seminary students, drove the government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani out of Kabul, captured the capital and executed former leader Najibullah.

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On this date:

In 1779, John Adams was named by Congress to negotiate the Revolutionary War's peace terms with Britain.

In 1825, the first locomotive to haul a passenger train was operated by George Stephenson in England.

In 1854, the first great disaster involving an Atlantic Ocean passenger vessel occurred when the steamship SS Arctic sank off Newfoundland; of the more than 400 people on board, only 86 survived.

In 1928, the United States said it was recognizing the Nationalist Chinese government.

In 1939, Warsaw, Poland, surrendered after weeks of resistance to invading forces from Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union during World War II.

In 1956, Olympic track and field gold medalist and Hall of Fame golfer Babe Didrikson Zaharias died in Galveston, Texas, at age 45.

In 1964, the government publicly released the report of the Warren Commission, which concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald had acted alone in assassinating President John F. Kennedy.

In 1979, Congress gave its final approval to forming the U.S. Department of Education.

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush announced in a nationally broadcast address that he was eliminating all U.S. battlefield nuclear weapons, and called on the Soviet Union to match the gesture. The Senate Judiciary Committee deadlocked, 7-7, on the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1994, more than 350 Republican congressional candidates gathered on the steps of the U.S. Capitol to sign the "Contract with America," a 10-point platform they pledged to enact if voters sent a GOP majority to the House.

In 1999, Sen. John McCain of Arizona officially opened his campaign for the 2000 Republican presidential nomination, the same day former Vice President Dan Quayle dropped his White House bid.

In 2018, during a day-long hearing by the Senate Judiciary Committee, Christine Blasey Ford said she was "100 percent" certain that she was sexually assaulted by Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh when they were teenagers, and Kavanaugh then told senators that he was "100 percent certain" he had done no such thing; Republicans quickly scheduled a recommendation vote for the following morning.

Ten years ago: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the U.N. General Assembly that the world had only a matter of months to stop Iran before it could build a nuclear bomb. NFL referees returned to the field after a tentative deal with the league ended a lockout; games had been marred by controversy, blown calls and confusion as substitute referees officiated during the first three weeks of the season.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump and congressional Republicans unveiled the first major revamp of the nation's tax code in a generation, a plan that included deep tax cuts for corporations, simplified tax brackets and a near-doubling of the standard deduction. Playboy founder Hugh Hefner died at the age of 91.

One year ago: A Texas judge found Infowars host and conspiracy theorist Alex Jones liable for damages in defamation lawsuits brought by the parents of two children killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre over his claims that the shooting was a hoax; the cases would head to trial for juries to determine the amount of damages Jones and the other defendants would have to pay the families. (In August 2022, a jury ordered Jones to pay more than \$49 million to the parents of one child who was killed.) R&B superstar R. Kelly was convicted in a sex trafficking trial in New York, after decades of avoiding criminal responsibility for numerous allegations of misconduct with young women and children. (Kelly was sentenced in June 2022 to 30 years in prison.) Ford and a partner company announced plans to build three major electric-vehicle battery factories and an auto assembly plant by 2025 in Kentucky and Tennessee.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Kathleen Nolan is 89. Actor Claude Jarman Jr. is 88. Author Barbara Howar is 88. World Golf Hall of Famer Kathy Whitworth is 83. Singer-musician Randy Bachman (Bachman-Turner Overdrive) is 79. Actor Liz Torres is 75. Actor A Martinez is 74. Baseball Hall of Famer Mike Schmidt is 73. Actor Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa is 72. Actor/opera singer Anthony Laciura is 71. Singer Shaun Cassidy is 64. Comedian Marc Maron is 59. Rock singer Stephan (STEE'-fan) Jenkins (Third Eye Blind) is 58. Former Democratic National Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz is 56. Actor Patrick Muldoon is 54. Singer Mark Calderon is 52. Actor Amanda Detmer is 51. Actor Gwyneth Paltrow is 50. Actor Indira Varma is 49. Rock

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singer Brad Arnold (3 Doors Down) is 44. Christian rock musician Grant Brandell (Underoath) is 41. Actor Anna Camp is 40. Rapper Lil' Wayne is 40. Singer Avril Lavigne (AV'-rihl la-VEEN') is 38. Bluegrass singer/musician Sierra Hull is 31. Actor Sam Lerner is 30. Actor Ames McNamara is 15.