

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Groton Community Calendar

### Wednesday, Oct. 12

8:30 a.m.: PSAT Grades 10 and 11 (Optional)

Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm

UMC: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran potluck, 6 p.m., followed by campfire worship, 7 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

UMC: Community coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; UMYF Hayride and Bonfire at Tietz's, 6:30 p.m.

### Thursday, Oct. 13

School Breakfast: Oatmeal.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, baked beans.

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, beets, peaches, dinner roll.

Region 1A Cross Country Meet at Webster, 3:30 p.m.

Volleyball at Deuel (7th and 8th at 4 p.m., C match at 5 p.m. followed by JV and Varsity)

5 p.m.: Combined 7th/8th FB at Webster

UMC: Bible Study with Ashley, 6:30 p.m.

### Friday, Oct. 14

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Mac and cheese, peas.

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, buttermilk biscuit, peas, mandarin oranges, cookie.

7 p.m.: Football at Mobridge

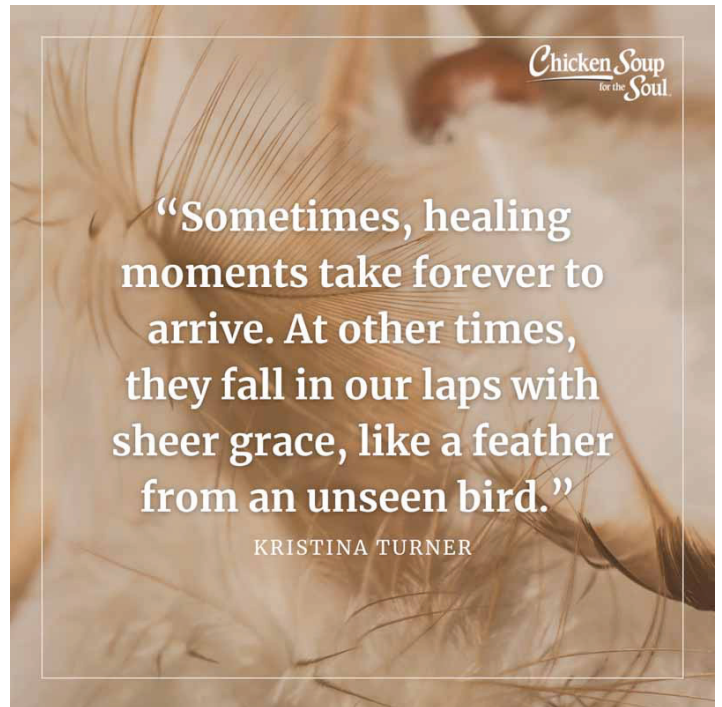
### Saturday, Oct. 15

Volleyball at Milbank Tournament. Groton games in the elementary gym. Groton plays Great Plains Lu-

**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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theran at 9 a.m.; Groton plays Sioux Valley at noon; Groton plays Hamlin at 1 p.m.; Finals start at 3 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran worship at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.

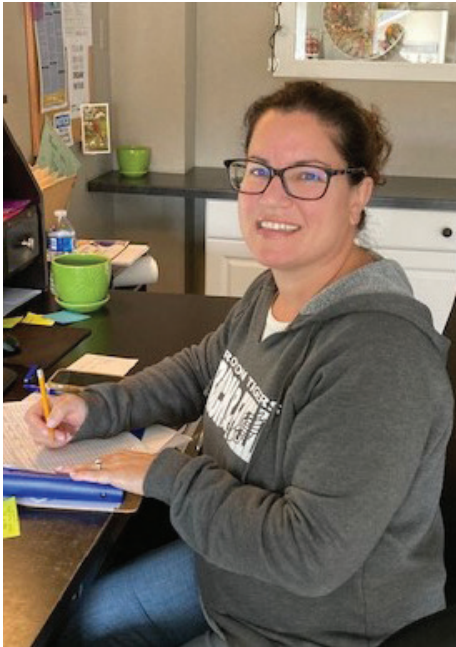
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.



**Part time cashier wanted at Ken's Food Fair of Groton. Must be available any hours including weekends. Stop at the store and see Lionel or Matt.**

## Strom joins Groton Community Transit

by Dorene Nelson



**Eugenia Strom**

Eugenia (pronounced "oh henya") Strom has recently joined the staff at Groton Community Transit. She will be dispatching and driving children around the city on Mondays and Wednesdays.

"I'm originally from Buenos Aires, Argentina," Strom smiled. "With a population of close to three million people, it's pretty much like any huge city in America."

"Forty-one years ago I moved to Texas where I met Jennifer Schelle," she explained. "Through her I consequently met Dwight Strom, and that explains why I now live here in Groton!"

"Dwight and I are the parents of four boys, with our youngest one, at 13, still living with us," Strom said. "Prior to working for the Transit, I was a travel agent and worked from home."

"I still work as a travel agent but have enough time to help out here too," she smiled. "As a matter of fact, Jennifer Schelle told me about this opening and encouraged me to apply. Since I have time and the available hours for working here fit perfectly with my travel agent job, I decided to apply."

"Monday, October 10, was my first day here on my own," Strom stated. "Before that Pam Hanson was busy training me for this job. I needed to know the route so that I wouldn't do any backtracking,

wasting time, and getting the kids to school late."

"I like to be organized so I made lists of who needed to be picked up, in what order, and at what location," she listed. "I know this is a small town, but I still needed to learn the details."

"I've lived in Groton for fifteen years but didn't know where everyone lived or how to get to that particular home," Strom admitted. "Getting that bus through icy, snow-covered streets will probably be the hardest part of this job!"

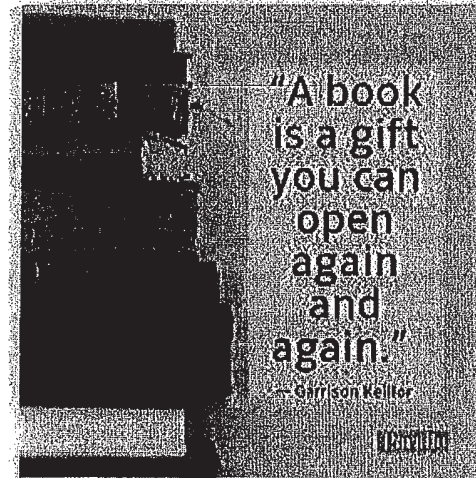
"The best part of this job is obviously picking up the little kids every day," she smiled. "They are always so happy to see me and excited to ride the bus every day to school. And just so the coffee guys don't get upset with me, I really do enjoy visiting with them every morning too!"

"Prior to being hired to help at the transit, I did some subbing at both the high school and the elementary school," Strom added. "My being bilingual helped with some students who struggle with handling both English and Spanish in the classroom."

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## Groton Area High School Library



### Basic Services:

- Book Check in/out
- Supervise Online Classes
- Select new Books
- Process New Books
- Record/Burn Programs to DVDs
- Create Projects from Digital Cameras
- Assist Students in finding books
- Maintaining Accelerated Reader Books
- Trouble shoot basic student computer issues

### Print collection:

6000 fiction Books

3000 Non-Fiction Books

15 Magazine Subscriptions

400 Videos

100 DVDs

### Media Collection:

Automated Card Catalog

DVD Burner

Digital Camera

Two Printers

Four In Focus Machines

Two Thermal Laminators

One Laminator

One Lap Top Computer

One desktop Computer

Two online newspapers

One Portable Scanner

One Stationary TV/VCR

## E learning Mentor Responsibilities

- Assist students to maneuver through their Desire 2 Learn account to locate classes , course work, tests ,quizzes, discussion posts and locating textbooks.
- Assist students to set up email accounts to specific college
- Liaison between the E-Learning school, high school, parents and students
- Continuous monitoring of grades and attendance of students

## Online Students

Spanish I - 21

Spanish II-12

Introduction to Law- 1

## Senior Class Advisor Responsibilities

- Homecoming- voting, decorating, supervising, and organizing royalty for parade and social appearances
- National Honor Society- meeting with students, processing student applications, calculating scores, supervising and directing the induction ceremony, planning reception for inductee's and families
- Graduation- ordering diplomas, caps, gowns and stolls. Determining honor students and walking order by GPA, and decorating the stage.

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Principal's Report

MS/HS Building

Mrs. Sombke

October 11, 2022

## 1) Fall Parent Teacher Conference Participation and Attendance

- Great turnout and participation during our Fall 2022 Parent Teacher Conference Day as demonstrated by an increase in overall parent and guardian attendance, please see below:

**Fall 2021** Attendance= 158 Conferences completed for grades 6-12

Grades 6-12 Enrollment= 321

Percent of Completed Conferences=  $158/321= 49\%$

**Fall 2022** Attendance= 184 Conferences completed for grades 6-12

Grades 6-12 Enrollment= 302

Percent of Completed Conferences=  $184/302= 60\%$

## 2) Dates to Know for Upcoming Registrations, Testing, or College and Career Opportunities:

10/11	School Board Meeting @ 7:00pm
10/12	PSAT Testing (sophomores and juniors)
10/21	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Ends (all grades 6-12)
10/25	ASVAB Testing (juniors)
11/1	NCRC Testing (seniors)
11/11	Veteran's Day/Veteran's Day Program (all grades 6-12)
11/14	School Board Meeting @ 7:00pm
11/18	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter Midterm (all grades 6-12)
11/23-25	Thanksgiving Break/NO SCHOOL
12/8	MS/HS Christmas Concert (grades 6-12)
12/12	School Board Meeting @ 7:00pm
12/22	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter Ends/1 <sup>st</sup> Semester Ends
12/23-1/3	Christmas Break/NO SCHOOL
1/4	School Resumes/2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester-3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter Begins

## 3) End of 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter

- First Quarter ends Wednesday October 26, 2022

## 4) 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Midterm

- Second Quarter Midterm is Friday November 18, 2022

## 5) Teacher Inservice Work Time/NWEA MAPS Data Work

- Each teacher and content area department spent time working individually and collaboratively to review the data from the Fall 2022 NWEA MAPS testing to

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determine identifiable gaps in learning or weaknesses in current curriculum and to begin to plan to inform and adjust weekly lesson plans.

**6) Mission Statement Work/Teacher Challenge**

- Teachers grades 6-12 began working to articulate and deepen the connection between our school mission statement, lesson planning, and instructional decisions.

**7) Challenge:**

Write out our school mission statement without looking or getting help from a friend or neighbor ☺ :

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- **Teachers are working to create visual examples of our school mission statement to post in classrooms and within our 6-12 building**
- **School Mission Statement can be found in our 6-12 Student Handbook, on our School Website, and displayed in our Grades 6-12 Classrooms; Go Tigers!**

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## Groton Area Elementary School Library

### Overview:

8:00-8:30 Morning Duties (Recess/Hallway)

8:30-9:00: Collect books from classrooms and check them in. Print reports and write overdue notes.

9:10-9:35 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Math Rti

9:35-10:05 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Reading Rti

10:05- 10:25 Recess Duty

10:30-11:00 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Reading Rti

11:45-12:45 Lunchroom Duty

12:45-2:00 Library Classes: Read aloud and teach library skills for 15 minutes and then help students check books out.

2:15-2:40 2nd Grade Math Rti

2:45-3:15 Library Class: Read aloud and teach library skills for 15 minutes and then help students check books out.

3:15-4:00 Put books back on shelves/library work

Duties: Book check in/out, organize computer check in/out, order new books, process new books, teach library skills, collect books from classrooms, put books back on the shelves in their proper places, organize/run book fair, help with RTI classes, lunchroom duties, recess duties, story time

### Book Fair Profit:

2022 Fall Book Fair: \$4,882.37

2022 Spring Book Fair: \$3,100.36

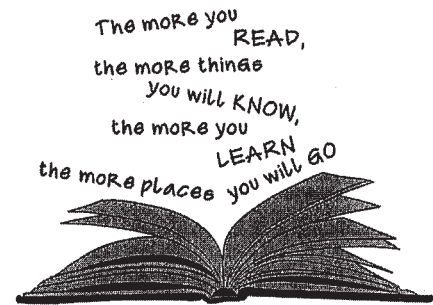
The library gets a percentage of the sales in scholastic dollars to buy new books and/or items for the library.

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## Number of Students and classes:

8 Preschool  
21 Jr. Kindergarten  
38 Kindergarten  
44 First Graders  
43 Second Graders  
48 Third Graders  
53 Fourth Graders  
40 Fifth Graders  
Total of 295 Students  
Total of 14 Library Classes



-Dr. Seuss

## Technology Integration:

### Media Collection

- 2 Computers for AR
- 1 Desktop Computer
- 1 HP Laser Jet Printer
- 1 Online Newspaper Subscription
- 1 Online Teacher Resource

### Print Collection

- 2,588 Fiction Books
- 3,598 Easy Read Books
- 4,121 Non-Fiction Books
- 10,663 Circulation to date



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

October 11, 2022

**High School 1968 Addition Boiler Replacement.** Allied Climate Pros and Schwan Welding began removing the old boiler from the 1968 boiler addition. Removal/demolition is expected to be complete late today/early tomorrow. The new boilers are here and ready for installation.

**Personnel Record Forms.** I completed and signed off on our annual personnel record forms (PRF) to the Department of Education on Friday, October 7. This annual data submission is required from all school districts where we report who is working for us (including both certified and non-certified staff) and in what capacity and serves multiple purposes for the state including the calculation of average teacher compensation. Our data shows total instructional staff FTE of 41.28 with an average instructional staff salary of \$52,768.

**Northeast Area Superintendent Meeting.** On Wednesday, October 5, I attended the NE Area Superintendent's meeting in Watertown. Secretary of Education, Tiffany Sanderson was the guest speaker. She spoke (mainly) about teacher compensation and a few statewide trends that are appearing in the data. A couple of high-level takeaways are that for FY2022, average statewide teacher salary was \$50,618 (\$1,982 below the target rate of \$52,600) yet statewide average teacher compensation was \$65,577 (\$280 above the target rate). Additionally, Secretary Sanderson made note that regionally our starting teacher salaries are competitive but the salaries of our mid-to-late career educators does not fare so well.

Brett Schwan

Elementary Principal

October 11, 2022

## 1. Enrollment

- a. JK-21
- b. KG-38
- c. 1st-45
- d. 2nd-43
- e. 3rd-48
- f. 4th-53
- g. 5th-39

## 2. Dakota Dreams Online Tutoring Program (Still encouraging families to register)

Program has now gone state wide. Mr. Joe Schwan sent out an all District email last week informing parents of this tutoring program. We encourage families to contact us if they have any questions or concerns. We would be more than willing to help.

## 3. Developmental Screening was on Friday, September 30<sup>th</sup> at the elementary. 15 families were invited and 11 students came. These 15 families are ones we know of in the District. Please contact the elementary if you were not invited or contacted.

## 4. SASD LEADERSHIP ACADEMY '23. At our first meeting we spent a good amount of time discussing the DiSC assessment. DiSC is an acronym that stands for the four main personality profiles described in the DiSC model: (D)ominance, (i)nfluence, (S)teadiness and (C)onscientiousness

- a. **People with D personalities** tend to be confident and place an emphasis on accomplishing bottom-line results.
- b. **People with i personalities** tend to be more open and place an emphasis on relationships and influencing or persuading others.
- c. **People with S personalities** tend to be dependable and place the emphasis on cooperation and sincerity.
- d. **People with C personalities** tend to place the emphasis on quality, accuracy, expertise, and competency.

## Business Manager's Report October 11, 2022

**Property Valuations** – Marshall County property values have finally been received. Actual values dropped \$16,199 from what was presented at the end of September. Most of the decrease was from commercial/other property. Overall, the adjustment is minimal, resulting in a decrease of \$45 in general fund local taxes.

**BAB Interest refund** – The final Build America Bond interest refund request was submitted today to the US Department of the Treasury. As a “shovel ready project” the Build America Bond program financed the 2009 Eastside Building Addition and included a provision to refund 35% of the interest assessed on the bonds sold to finance the project. Over the course of the program the district will receive \$181,675.25 in refunded interest, including the final request of \$1,103 which will be collected in December.

**Work Comp Self-Audit** – The 2021-22 Workmen's Comp Insurance self-audit is complete. Groton will be receiving a refund of \$2,097 on its 2021-22 premium of \$25,829. The amount of the Coop's refund will be \$92 on their premium of \$3,058.

**2021-22 Annual Report** – The state has approved annual report submissions for the District and Coop and Superintendent/Director and Business Manager have signed-off to verify the state's final data. This data will be audited by Eide Bailly, LLP later this year.

**AFLAC Payroll Deductions** – New Flex Spending Account allocations and Aflac product enrollments have been received and will be processed in October payroll. These products have an enrollment period of October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023.

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## 2020-21 Groton Technology Report

### 2022-23 Technology Report

#### March

- Ordered Computers for Teachers, Sophomores, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade early to ensure they came in with time to prepare them for the 22-23 school year.

#### June

- Requested Quotes, Placed Orders, & Sent P.O.'s for all other purchases.
- Finished checking in JH student computers.
- Repair computers or send them in for repairs if needed. (59 sent in for repair)
- Attended Virtual Training and 2 day in-person training at DSU provided by K12 Data Center
- Catalogued New Equipment as it arrived

#### July

- Upgraded Host servers to Windows Server 22, all others to Windows Server 19.
- Create Windows10 images for Students & Teachers
- Unpack, Catalogue, & Number/Label New Computers
- Unpack and label computer bags for Teachers, Sophomores, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Start imaging computers
- Image computers, image computers, image computers....

#### August

- Implemented **Splashtop Remote Support** application for assistance and troubleshooting while devices are away from the school. (More than 50% savings over previous brand.)
- Hand out New Teacher Computers & bags
- Handout Dual Credit student computers
- Have all the remaining computers ready to be put on desks for students to use for the first hour of the first day of school.
- Updated surveillance camera software
- Orientated 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders on use of their computers.

### Summer Tech By The Numbers

**450+** Computers Imaged with Windows 10 21H2

**200+** iPads Wiped, and refreshed with iOS 15.6.1

**180** New computers unpacked, catalogued, & imaged

**180** New Computers & Bags labeled and assigned to Teachers, 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 5<sup>th</sup> Graders.

**45** Computers & Bags relabeled and assigned to 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

**4** Carts assembled and prepared.

**1** device in the hands of every Groton Area student.

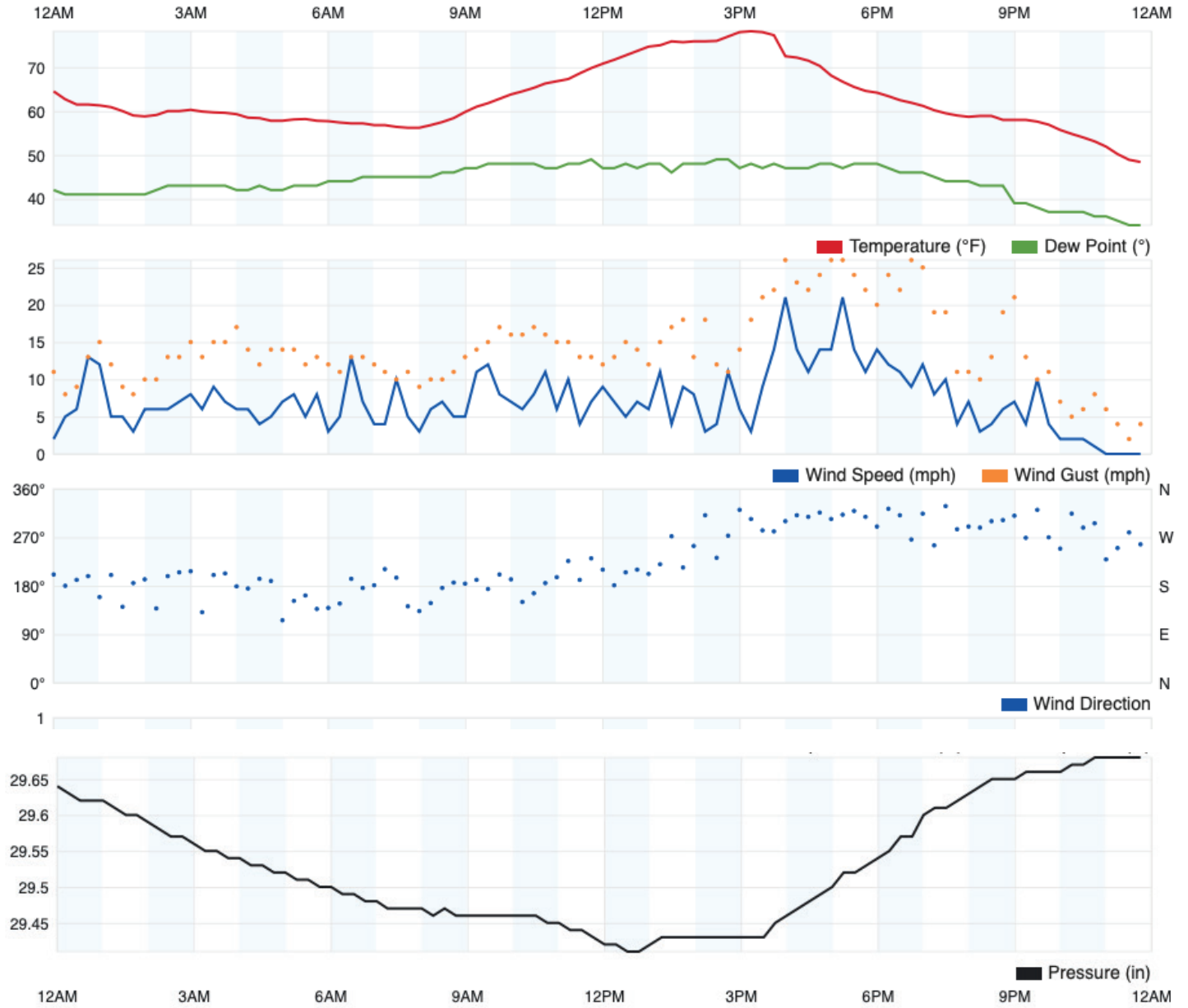
### Looking Ahead...

- **Upgrading Fiber** from 1 gig to 10 gig between HS and Elem. As well as between network closets. (Waiting for 2 additional quotes from vendors)
- **Upgrade Switches** on the network to accommodate 10 gig fiber connections. (Many were bought in 2012)
- **Computer related classes** – Since 2008, technology class offerings at the HS level have gone from a required class in 10<sup>th</sup> grade with other electives offered for Jr. and Sr. students, to none being offered at the HS level in the last number of years. Currently, the last computer class students get is for one quarter in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. To give students the basic knowledge of how to use MS Office as well as opportunities to learn how to code and create digital content, basic computer classes and Computer Science/STEM classes should be offered at the HS level. Computer Science is the fastest growing occupational field at around 16% annually! These offerings would give our students the ability to maximize the technology they have available to them and to prepare them for their future where technology will be part of their careers as well as their everyday lives.

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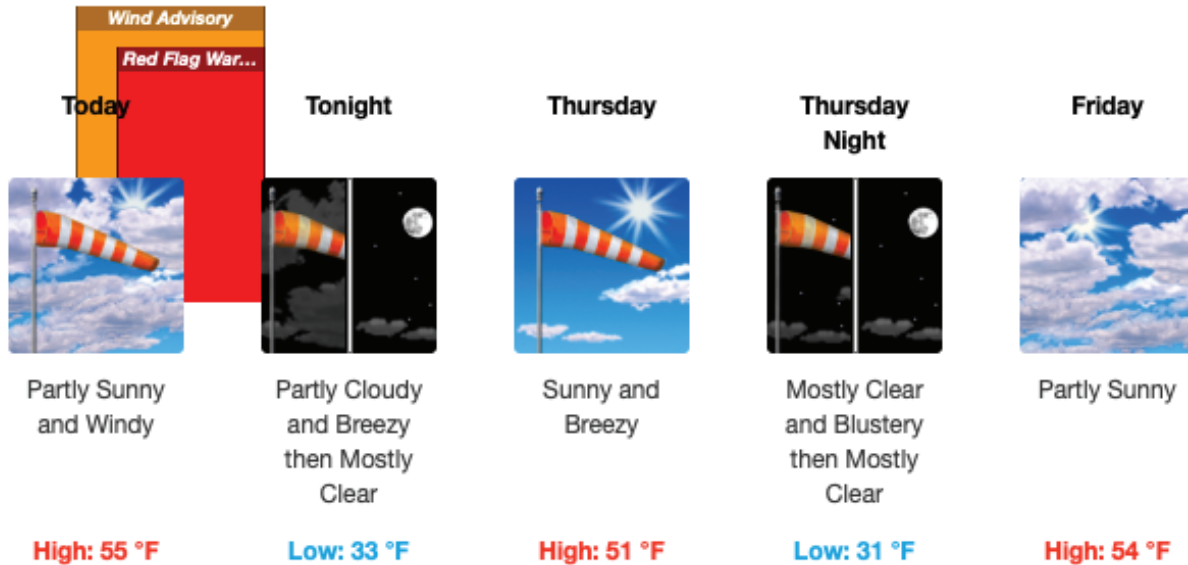
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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## RED FLAG WARNING

1 PM – 8 PM Today over central to northeastern SD

WIND GUSTS out of the

**Northwest**  
**45-55 MPH**

MIN. RELATIVE HUMIDITY

**20-30%**

Combination of strong winds and dry conditions can cause fires to rapidly grow!



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD



The combination of strong winds and dry conditions can cause fires to rapidly grow today. As a result, a Red Flag Warning is in effect for this afternoon. Expect winds out of the northwest gusting 45 to 55 mph. Each year, farm and construction machinery and equipment are the cause of numerous wildfires. With a little extra care, most of these fires are easily preventable. Wait until winds diminish. Remove accumulated grass and debris away from exhaust systems and bearings. Make sure all bearings are lubricated. Service all spark arresters. Keep a shovel, water and working fire extinguisher on the equipment. When excavating hard rocks with backhoes or excavators, make sure the bucket does not spark a fire when coming into contact with a rock or metal.

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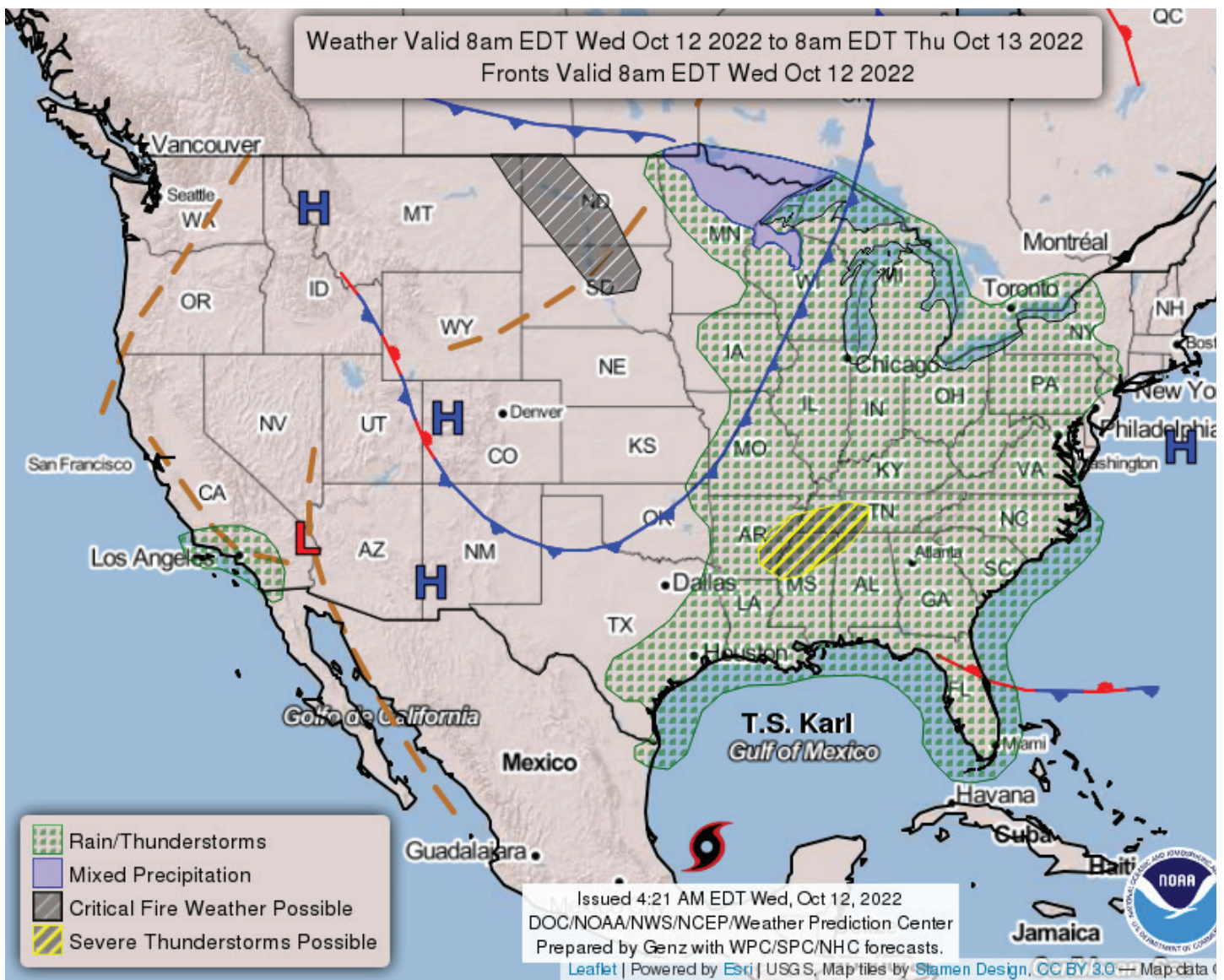
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 78.2 °F at 3:15 PM**  
**Low Temp: 48.4 °F at 11:45 PM**  
**Wind: 26 °F at 6:45 PM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 11 hours, 10 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 89 in 1910  
Record Low: 11 in 1917  
Average High: 62°F  
Average Low: 35°F  
Average Precip in Oct.: .90  
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.45  
Average Precip to date: 19.23  
Precip Year to Date: 16.50  
Sunset Tonight: 6:54:02 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:44:53 AM



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## Today in Weather History

October 12, 1997: High winds upward of 60 mph were recorded throughout western South Dakota.

1836 - A third early season storm produced heavy snow in the northeastern U.S. Bridgewater NY received 18 inches, a foot of snow fell at Madison NY, and for the third time all the mountains of the northeastern U.S. were whitened. (David Ludlum)

1918: On October 10, 1918, two men working near a railroad siding northwest of Cloquet, Minnesota, saw a passenger train pass by the siding, and soon after, that discovered a fire burning through grass and piles of wood. The fire could not be contained, and by October 12, fires had spread through northern Minnesota. At least 450 lives were lost, and 52,000 people were injured or displaced, 38 communities were destroyed, 250,000 acres were burned.

1918 - Forest fires ravaged parts of Minnesota from the Duluth area northeastward, claiming the lives of 600 persons. Smoke with a smell of burnt wood spread to Albany NY and Washington D.C. in 24 hours. Smoke was noted at Charleston SC on the 14th, and by the 15th was reported in northeastern Texas. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1962 - The "Columbus Day Big Blow" occurred in the Pacific Northwest. It was probably the most damaging windstorm of record west of the Cascade Mountains. Winds reached hurricane force, with gusts above 100 mph. More than 3.5 billion board feet of timber were blown down, and communications were severely disrupted due to downed power lines. The storm claimed 48 lives, and caused 210 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1979: The lowest barometric pressure ever recorded occurs in the center of Typhoon Tip on this day. A fly reconnaissance mission recorded the low pressure of 870 hPa or 25.69 inHg. Typhoon Tip was the most extensive tropical cyclone on record with a wind diameter of 1380 miles at its peak.

1987 - Floyd, the only hurricane to make landfall the entire season, moved across the Florida Keys. Floyd produced wind gusts to 59 mph at Duck Key, and up to nine inches of rain in southern Florida. Sixteen cities in the Ohio Valley and the Middle Mississippi Valley reported record low temperatures for the date. Record lows included 27 degrees at Paducah KY, and 24 degrees at Rockford IL and Springfield IL. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Twenty cities in the Upper Midwest reported record low temperatures for the date, including International Falls MN with a reading of 17 degrees. The town of Embarass MN reported a morning low of 8 degrees. Snow showers in the northeastern U.S. produced five inches at Corry PA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Temperatures again warmed into the 80s in the Central Plains Region and the Middle Mississippi Valley, with 90s in the south central U.S. Six cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Fort Smith AR with a reading of 92 degrees. Strong winds along a cold front crossing the Great Lakes Region and the Ohio Valley gusted to 61 mph at Johnstown PA. (The National Weather Summary)



Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### **HARD TO BELIEVE!**

My brother-in-law, Wayne, was a "people person." He enjoyed being with people and making them laugh. People also enjoyed being with him too, because he always brought smiles and encouragement wherever he went.

Wayne also had some unusual habits. One was brushing his tongue repeatedly. During a conversation he would often say, "Excuse me, please" and walk away. After a few moments he would return and begin the conversation precisely where it had ended. People were puzzled and did not feel comfortable asking where he went or what he did.

Finally, the suspense got the best of one of his friends and he asked, "Wayne, why do you walk off in the middle of a conversation? Where do you go and what do you do?"

"Oh," he replied with a smile. "I go to the bathroom and brush my tongue. The tongue, you know, has more germs than our teeth, and if not brushed carefully and repeatedly, can cause a stink." But, the story of the "tongue" does not end there.

"The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit," wrote Solomon. I am rather certain that each of us have experienced both parts of that verse. We all need words of encouragement and healing from hearts that are caring and kind. But, a deceitful tongue coupled with intent to harm others, does indeed "squeeze" the life from a person - often when a person's "spirit" is threatened. We need to be "healers," not harmers!

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to speak words of hope, help and healing from hearts that are clean, kind and caring. May we bless others with the words of Your hope. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit. Proverbs 15:4



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  
11/13/2022: Snow Queen Contest  
11/19/2022: Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)  
11/24/2022 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)  
12/03/2022 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party at Olive Grove Golf Course  
12/10/2022: Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm  
01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center  
01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)  
04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)  
04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)  
04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)  
05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)  
05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)  
07/04/2023 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start (4th of July)  
07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)  
09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)  
10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)  
10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm  
11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)

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News from the  Associated Press

## Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

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

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

03-07-11-13-38, Mega Ball: 1, Megaplier: 3

(three, seven, eleven, thirteen, thirty-eight; Mega Ball: one; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$494,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 421,000,000

## Utilities Commission says CO2 pipeline fee could be \$400,000

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's Public Utilities Commission on Tuesday authorized its staff to begin reviewing an application for a pipeline designed to transport carbon dioxide from ethanol refineries to an underground site in Illinois, assessing a filing fee of up to \$400,000.

The pipeline is the second proposed in the state. Both projects would pump carbon dioxide to sequestration sites where it would be buried thousands of feet underground. The one before the Public Utilities Commission — proposed by Navigator CO2 — would connect ethanol refineries across the Great Plains to a site in Illinois.

The commission's staff found that it could cost over \$270,000 to review Navigator CO2's application, which was submitted last month. Navigator CO2 agreed to covering a filing fee of up to \$400,000.

"It needs to be a quality evaluation and not have that cost fall back on the taxpayers," said Kristen Edwards, a staff attorney for the commission.

The pipeline projects, spurred by federal tax credits, promise to help in the fight against climate change by storing carbon dioxide rather than letting it be emitted into the atmosphere. But environmental activists have also pointed out the technology has struggled to get off the ground and allows emission-heavy industries to avoid taking drastic steps to cut greenhouse gases.

The other proposed pipeline, which would be operated by Summit Carbon Solutions, has faced opposition from landowners concerned about its safety. Recently, however, the company has indicated it still plans to complete construction by 2024.

## Observer: No matter who climbs Beijing's ranks, Xi rules

By DAKE KANG and TED SHAFFREY Associated Press

GREAT NECK, N.Y. (AP) — For decades, Ho Pin made accurate predictions about China's next leadership lineup — no small feat, given the black-box nature of Beijing politics.

But now, days before the opening on Sunday of China's most important political meeting in a decade,

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the New York-based journalist said there's little point, given the power amassed by leader Xi Jinping.

"It's not about who's going to be in the Standing Committee any longer," he said, referring to the handful of people who will be named to lead the ruling Communist Party for the next five years. "No matter who they are, they all have one thing in common: They all have to listen to Xi."

It's a sharp contrast from an earlier era, when jostling factions leaked salacious details to the foreign media, and a reflection of a consolidation of power that has swept away competitors and stifled internal dissent.

Ten years ago, scandal after scandal rocked Beijing's political establishment in the run-up to a Communist Party congress, the one that brought Xi to power.

Most damaging was the murder of a British businessman by the wife of Bo Xilai, a brash and rising political star. Bo was expelled from the party and sentenced to life in prison for bribery and corruption — eliminating a chief rival to Xi.

The run-up to this party congress, by comparison, is hushed. Gone, Ho said, are the factions, pluralism and open political differences that once existed within China's one-party system.

"Chinese politics is entering a completely new stage," he said.

Even in the days of Chairman Mao Zedong, who founded communist China in 1949, there were competing factions. Politicians were purged, then rehabilitated, then purged again, as Mao encouraged factional struggle to enhance his own power.

After Mao's death, leader Deng Xiaoping loosened controls dramatically, sparking an economic boom and some liberalization. He also instituted term and age limits for party leaders, meant to prevent the rise of another strongman like Mao.

But Xi has swept those rules aside. The party has loosened age restrictions, stopped naming obvious successors to the Standing Committee, and scrapped term limits for China's presidency — paving the way for Xi to retain power for a third five-year term, and possibly indefinitely.

That has made it more difficult to guess new appointments, Ho said. The previously formulaic rules of succession helped Ho forecast China's leadership lineup four times since 2002 by analyzing officials based on their age, education, work experience and relationship with other leaders.

Now, he said, China's new leaders are much more likely to be handpicked by Xi based on their competency and loyalty, unconstrained by past precedent and with little of the factional wheeling-and-dealing that used to take place.

But former Hong Kong journalist Willy Lam and other analysts such as Derek Scissors at the American Enterprise Institute say Xi could still be forced to compromise and keep or promote people with different views on China's governance.

Reliable information on who might be appointed has become extremely hard to come by under the state's tightening grip, said Alfred Wu, a Singapore-based professor who rubbed shoulders with China's leader decades ago as a journalist, when Xi was governor of Fujian province.

"It's very hard to have substantive conversations," he said of his former contacts. "They know it's not good to talk about politics."

Ho was born in China and got his start at a state-run broadcaster in the 1980s. When pro-democracy protests came to Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989, Ho was there, writing for a Hong Kong paper, with access to high level officials. He left days before soldiers opened fire on protesters, convinced that bloodshed was inevitable.

After slipping across the border to Macao, Ho moved to Canada, then the United States, settling in Great Neck, a suburb of New York with a sizeable Chinese population.

After a stint working for a Taiwanese paper, he started a Chinese-language media group, Mingjing — which means "The Mirror" — that now runs news websites, magazines and bookstores in Taiwan and the U.S.

He mingles with sources and emigres in Chinese restaurants and at his office in Great Neck, which has shelves stacked with books and a picture of him with Tibet's leader in exile, the Dalai Lama. At times, he offers scathing criticism of the Communist Party, and said he has no plans to go back.

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Despite that, Ho refers to China as his motherland, not America. His publications and YouTube channel are in Mandarin for a Chinese audience. In contrast to many dissident Chinese overseas, Ho often takes a dim view of American politics and blasts failures and flaws in the U.S. system just as he criticizes the Chinese government.

But the one thing Ho does appreciate about the U.S. is the freedom to speak openly. "There's no police knocking at your door here," he said.

Many of Ho's competitors in Chinese-language media overseas peddle conspiracy theories, driven by sheer opposition to Beijing. One, a journalist linked to the Falun Gong sect, spread rumors of a coup in China last month that turned out to be false.

Ho's media group, in contrast, is generally grounded in fact, though it is heavy on Chinese political gossip. He has made a prediction for who will make up China's next generation of leaders, but instead of making it public, he has set up a game that allows his audience to make predictions themselves — a way of keeping them engaged.

Ho is scathing about Xi's crackdown on press freedoms, and said that Beijing's stiff propaganda and assertive diplomacy have ruined China's global reputation.

But contrary to many Western observers, he suggested Xi still has a chance to be a great leader. If he plays his cards right, Ho said, Xi's iron rule could ultimately steer China away from collapse and avert the fate of the Soviet Union.

"It is very different from the China I imagined 30 years ago," he said, "but it isn't a simple reversion back to the Cultural Revolution, nor a move towards Western democracy."

Though some businesspeople and intellectuals dislike Xi, he still enjoys widespread support, Ho said. Many people have benefited from his programs to expand the social safety net, and agree with his nationalistic stance pitting China against the West.

Many Chinese have gone abroad, only to find that the West isn't all that great, he said. America's aging subways and struggling railways stand in stark contrast to China's gleaming new infrastructure. Chinese contrast the chaos of elections in the West, Ho said, with the stability under Xi's rule.

"The younger generation in China has a strong sense of national pride," he said. "That's a very strong foundation for Xi Jinping."

The biggest danger, Ho said, is that Xi rules for life, surrounded by "yes men." If the question of succession is not resolved, he said China could fall into chaos, as it did in the final years of Mao's rule. It's a question of how Xi's power is handed over, and who inherits it.

"If he becomes a lifelong dictator, it will be a disaster for the world, and a disaster for China," Ho said. \_\_\_\_ Kang reported from Beijing.

## Europe turns to Africa in bid to replace Russian natural gas

By KRISTA LARSON Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — A new liquefied natural gas project off Africa's western coast may only be 80% complete, but already the prospect of a new energy supplier has drawn visits from the leaders of Poland and Germany.

The initial field near Senegal and Mauritania's coastlines is expected to contain about 15 trillion cubic feet (425 billion cubic meters) of gas, five times more than what gas-dependent Germany used in all of 2019. But production isn't expected to start until the end of next year.

That won't help solve Europe's energy crisis triggered by Russia's war in Ukraine. Still, Gordon Birrell, an executive for project co-developer BP, says the development "could not be more timely" as Europe seeks to reduce its reliance on Russian natural gas to power factories, generate electricity and heat homes.

"Current world events are demonstrating the vital role that (liquid gas) can play in underpinning the energy security of nations and regions," he told an energy industry meeting in West Africa last month.

While Africa's natural gas reserves are vast and North African countries like Algeria have pipelines already linked to Europe, a lack of infrastructure and security challenges have long stymied producers in other

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parts of the continent from scaling up exports. Established African producers are cutting deals or reducing energy use so they have more to sell to boost their finances, but some leaders warn that hundreds of millions of Africans lack electricity and supplies are needed at home.

Nigeria has Africa's largest natural gas reserves, said Horatius Egua, a spokesman for the petroleum minister, though it accounts for only 14% of the European Union's imports of liquefied natural gas, or LNG, that comes by ship. Projects face the risk of energy thefts and high costs. Other promising countries like Mozambique have discovered large gas reserves only to see projects delayed by violence from Islamic militants.

Europe has been scrambling to secure alternative sources as Moscow has reduced natural gas flows to EU countries, triggering soaring energy prices and growing expectations of a recession. The 27-nation EU, whose energy ministers are meeting this week to discuss a gas price cap, is bracing for the possibility of a complete Russian cutoff but has still managed to fill gas reserves to 90%.

European leaders have flocked to countries like Norway, Qatar, Azerbaijan and especially those in North Africa, where Algeria has a pipeline running to Italy and another to Spain.

Italy signed a \$4 billion gas deal with Algeria in July, a month after Egypt reached an agreement with the European Union and Israel to boost sales of LNG. Angola also has signed a gas deal with Italy.

While an earlier agreement allowed Italy's biggest energy company to start production at two Algerian gas fields this week, it wasn't clear when flows would start from the July deal because it lacked specifics, analysts said.

African leaders like Senegalese President Macky Sall want their countries to cash in on these projects even as they're dissuaded from pursuing fossil fuels. They don't want to export it all either — an estimated 600 million Africans lack access to electricity.

"It is legitimate, fair and equitable that Africa, the continent that pollutes the least and lags furthest behind in the industrialization process should exploit its available resources to provide basic energy, improve the competitiveness of its economy and achieve universal access to electricity," Sall told the U.N. General Assembly last month.

Algeria is a major supplier — it and Egypt accounted for 60% of the natural gas production in Africa in 2020 — but it can't offset Russian gas to Europe at this stage, said Mahfoud Kaoubi, professor of economics and specialist in energy issues at the University of Algiers.

"Russia has an annual production of 270 billion cubic meters — it's huge," Kaoubi said. "Algeria is 120 billion cubic meters, of which 70.50% is intended for consumption on the internal market."

This year, Algeria is forecast to have piped exports of 31.8 billion cubic meters, according to Tom Purdie, a Europe, Middle East and Africa gas analyst with S&P Global Commodity Insights.

"The key concern here surrounds the level of production step-up that can be achieved, and the impact domestic demand could have" given how much gas Algeria uses at home, Purdie said.

Cash-strapped Egypt also is looking to export more natural gas to Europe, even regulating air conditioning in shopping malls and lights on streets to save energy and sell it instead.

Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly says Egypt hopes to bring in an additional \$450 million a month in foreign currency by rerouting 15% of its domestic gas usage for export, state media reported.

More than 60% of Egypt's natural gas consumption still is used by power stations to keep the country running. Most of its LNG goes to Asian markets.

A new, three-party deal will see Israel send more gas to Europe via Egypt, which has facilities to liquefy it for export by sea. The EU says it will help the two countries increase gas production and exploration.

In Nigeria, ambitious plans have yet to yield results despite years of planning. The country exported less than 1% of its vast natural gas reserves last year.

A proposed 4,400-kilometer-long (2,734-mile-long) pipeline that would take Nigerian gas to Algeria through Niger has been stalled since 2009, mainly because of its estimated cost of \$13 billion.

Many fear that even if completed, the Trans-Sahara Gas Pipeline would face security risks like Nigeria's oil pipelines, which have come under frequent attacks from militants and vandals.



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The same challenges would hinder increased gas exports to Europe, said Olufola Wusu, a Lagos-based oil and gas expert.

"If you look at the realities on ground — issues that have to do with crude oil theft — and others begin to question our ability to supply gas to Europe," he said.

Wusu urged pursuing LNG, calling it the "most profitable" gas strategy so far.

Even that isn't without issues: In July, the head of Nigeria LNG Limited, the country's largest natural gas firm, said its plant was producing at just 68% of capacity, mainly because its operations and earnings have been stifled by oil theft.

In the south, Mozambique is slated to become a major exporter of LNG after significant deposits were found along its Indian Ocean coast in 2010. France's TotalEnergies invested \$20 billion and started work to extract gas that would be liquefied in a plant it was building in Palma, in the northern Cabo Delgado province.

But Islamic extremist violence forced TotalEnergies to indefinitely scupper the project last year. Mozambican officials have pledged to secure the Palma area to allow work to resume.

Italian firm Eni, meanwhile, pressed ahead with plans to pump and liquefy some of its gas deposits discovered in Mozambique in 2011 and 2014. Eni established a platform in the Indian Ocean 50 miles (80 kilometers) offshore, away from the violence in Cabo Delgado.

It's the first floating LNG facility in the deep waters off Africa, Eni says, with gas liquefaction capacity of 3.4 million tons per year.

The platform liquefied its first gas on Oct. 2, according to Africa Energy, and the first shipment is expected to depart for Europe in mid-October.

## Biden goes West on 3-state tour as midterm elections near

By SEUNG MIN KIM and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden's three-state swing out West this week will capture, in a nutshell, the White House's midterm strategy for a president who remains broadly unpopular: promote his administration's accomplishments and appear where he can effectively rally the party faithful — all while continuing to rake in campaign cash.

Biden's first stop Wednesday is near Vail, Colorado, where he is to designate his administration's first national monument at the behest of Democratic Sen. Michael Bennet, the state's senior senator who finds himself in a competitive reelection bid. Then the president will head to California, where he will hold a pair of events promoting two of his most significant legislative achievements and headline a fundraiser for the House Democrats' campaign arm.

Finally, Biden will stop in Oregon, where Democrats' grip on the governor's mansion in Salem is being threatened by an unaffiliated candidate who has captured double-digit support in polling, giving an opening for a Republican to win the race outright in November.

"We've been very clear that the president is going to go out, the vice president is going to go out," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Tuesday. "They're going to talk about the successes that we have seen in this administration in the last 19 months."

It's all part of a campaign blueprint fine-tuned over the last several months for Biden, who has been eager to travel the country but is facing the traditional midterm headwinds against the political party in power, an unsettled economic outlook and presidential approval ratings that have remained stubbornly underwater.

To counter Republican criticisms over the economy and inflation, Democratic candidates have highlighted accomplishments such as bipartisan infrastructure, manufacturing laws, and a sweeping climate, tax and health care package. Those achievements also helped prompt a late-summer uptick in Biden's own job performance ratings earlier this year.

Democratic candidates have also been far more likely to appear with Biden if it's an official White House event underscoring their achievements, such as the groundbreaking for a computer chip facility in suburban Ohio that was aided tremendously by the law that bolsters domestic semiconductor production.

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That's the approach in Colorado, where the White House says Biden will speak about his administration's efforts to "protect, conserve, and restore some of America's most cherished lands and waters for the benefit of future generations."

Biden is to designate Camp Hale — an alpine training site where U.S. soldiers prepared for battles in the Italian Alps during World War II — as his administration's first national monument. Many troops who trained at Camp Hale returned to Colorado after the war and helped create the state's lucrative ski industry. While most national monuments protect extraordinary natural landscapes, there are at least 12 other military sites designated as national monuments by other presidents.

Bennet will stand alongside Biden at the announcement, which comes after years of advocacy from the senator and other Democrats in the state. Bennet, in office since 2009, is facing a challenge from GOP candidate Joe O'Dea, a businessman with a moderate profile who national Republicans believe is among the party's best recruits this cycle. O'Dea dismissed the trip as a stunt.

"It's not changing our economy. It's not changing the price of gas," O'Dea said of the Camp Hale designation in an interview. He added that while Camp Hale is "a special place," Biden's unilateral action was "an usurpation of power."

The political climate in Colorado prompted the Senate Leadership Fund, the primary super PAC dedicated to electing Republicans to the Senate, to make its first investment of the cycle in Colorado last week by sending \$1.25 million to O'Dea's super PAC.

"We've been monitoring Colorado and we like what we see there," Steven Law, the group's president, said,

Biden will return to his standard midterm pitch in California, where he plans to highlight the Democrats' climate and health care package that the party hopes is its political panacea for voters' inflation concerns, despite the law's indiscernible impact on prices in the short term.

Democrats also believe a ballot referendum that would enshrine access to abortion and contraceptives in the state constitution will keep the issue in the spotlight for their California candidates, even as the issue fades elsewhere. But rising gas prices — California has the highest in the nation at roughly \$6.20 a gallon — will be an unwelcome political backdrop for Biden.

Republicans think they can capitalize on gas prices, inflation and the economy as they look to defend and pick up five House seats across the state. Both parties are eyeing at least two offensive opportunities in the Orange County area, where Biden will speak Friday on lowering costs one day after the federal government releases its final inflation report before Election Day.

Biden will also talk up the bipartisan infrastructure law, signed last fall, at a separate speech in Los Angeles and hold his first fundraiser this cycle that directly benefits the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. The president headlined a dozen receptions this year for the Democratic National Committee that have brought in more than \$20 million.

It's in Oregon that Biden's political pull will be tested among Democratic voters.

The party is in danger of losing the governor's race in the traditionally blue state, as Betsy Johnson — a former Republican and Democrat who has since quit both parties — has mounted a well-financed bid against both Democratic nominee Tina Kotek and the GOP's pick, Christine Drazan. Democratic officials hope that while in Oregon, Biden can help consolidate the party's support behind Kotek.

"That is a huge factor in this race," David Turner, a spokesman for the Democratic Governor's Association, said of Johnson's candidacy. "I don't think we would be talking about this race if Betsy Johnson wasn't in it."

Republicans for months have sensed an opportunity in the Oregon race, not just from Johnson's bid but on a message of homelessness and crime that has been a top concern for the state's voters.

"Democrats are panicked their multi-decade grip on the governor's office is slipping away as Christine Drazan connects with a majority of Oregon voters who yearn for change," said Jesse Hunt, a spokesman for the Republican Governors Association. "The Democrat regime of Joe Biden, Kate Brown, Tina Kotek, and Betsy Johnson have done nothing to make Oregon safer or more prosperous."

**Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant loses external power**

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By ADAM SCHRECK and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's biggest nuclear plant, which is surrounded by Russian troops, has lost all external power needed for vital safety systems for the second time in five days, the head of the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog said Wednesday, calling it a "deeply worrying development."

The warning from International Atomic Energy Agency Director-General Rafael Grossi came amid a flurry of developments in Russia's war in Ukraine. Ukraine's military command said its forces recaptured five settlements in the southern Kherson region, and Russia's main domestic security agency said eight people had been arrested in connection with the weekend Crimea bridge blast.

Grossi, who met with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday, said IAEA monitors at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant — Europe's largest nuclear power facility — reported the interruption in external power, and said backup diesel generators were keeping nuclear safety and security equipment operational.

"This repeated loss of #ZNPP's off-site power is a deeply worrying development and it underlines the urgent need for a nuclear safety & security protection zone around the site," Grossi tweeted.

Ukraine's state nuclear operator Energoatom said on the Telegram social media platform that a Russian missile attack on the substation "Dniprovsk" in the neighboring Dnipropetrovsk region to the north was damaged, leading to the shutdown of a key communication line to the plant — prompting the diesel generators to turn on automatically.

Last month, Energoatom chief Petro Kotin told The Associated Press in an interview that in general, the Zaporizhzhia plant had enough fuel to run the diesel generators for just 10 days. He said those generators were "the station's last defense before a radiation accident."

The growing concerns about the nuclear plant come amid an upsurge in fighting in southern Ukraine and a barrage of Russian strikes across the country in recent days.

Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office, said Russian shelling had left at least 14 people dead in the Zaporizhzhia region and the Donetsk region to the east over the last day. At least 34 people were injured in five regions, he wrote on Telegram.

Earlier Wednesday, Ukraine's southern command said its forces recaptured five settlements in the southern Kherson region, on the western fringe of an arc of Russian control of territory in eastern and southern Ukraine.

The villages of Novovasylivka, Novohryhorivka, Nova Kamianka, Tryfonivka and Chervone in the Beryslav district were retaken as of Oct. 11, according to the speaker of the southern command Vladislav Nazarov.

The settlements are in one of the four regions recently annexed by Russia, a move condemned as illegal under international law by many countries and the U.N. secretary-general.

Also Wednesday, Russia's top domestic security agency — the main successor to the KGB — said it arrested eight people on charges of involvement in the bombing of the main bridge linking Russia to Crimea, while an official in the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia said Russian forces carried out more strikes there.

The Federal Security Service, known by the Russian acronym FSB, said it arrested five Russians and three citizens of Ukraine and Armenia over Saturday's attack that damaged the Kerch Bridge between Russia and the Crimean Peninsula — a crucial thoroughfare for supplies and travel whose much-ballyhooed construction after Russia's annexation of Crimea under Putin in 2014 cost billions.

A truck loaded with explosives blew up while driving across the bridge, killing four people and causing two sections of one of the two automobile links to collapse.

Ukrainian officials have lauded the explosion on the bridge, but stopped short of directly claiming responsibility for it.

The FSB alleged that the suspects were working on orders of Ukraine's military intelligence to secretly move the explosives into Russia and forge the accompanying documents.

It said the explosives were moved by sea from the Ukrainian port of Odesa to Bulgaria before being shipped to Georgia, driven to Armenia and then back to Georgia before being transported to Russia in a complex scheme to secretly deliver them to the target.

Putin alleged that Ukrainian special services masterminded the blast, calling it "an act of terrorism," and responded by ordering missile strikes across Ukraine.

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Russia's onslaught continued in the Zaporizhzhia region and eponymous city on Wednesday, shattering windows and blowing out doors in residential buildings, municipal council secretary Anatoliy Kurtev said. There were no immediate reports of casualties, though Kurtev warned locals of the possibility of a follow-up attack.

Zaporizhzhia, which sits fairly near the front line between Russian and Ukrainian forces, has been repeatedly struck with often deadly attacks in recent weeks. It is part of a larger region, including Europe's largest nuclear power plant now in Russian control, that Moscow has said it has annexed in violation of international law. The city itself remains in Ukrainian hands.

To the south, in a Russian-controlled area of the region, a powerful blast struck the city of Melitopol — sending a car flying into the air, mayor Ivan Fedorov said. There was no word on casualties.

The new clashes came two days after Russian forces began pummeling many parts of Ukraine with more missiles and munition-carrying drones, killing at least 19 people on Monday alone in an attack that the U.N. human rights office described as "particularly shocking" and amounting to potential war crimes.

Tuesday marked the second straight day when air raid sirens echoed throughout Ukraine, and officials advised residents to conserve energy and stock up on water. The strikes knocked out power across the country and pierced the relative calm that had returned to the capital, Kyiv, and many other cities far from the war's front lines.

"It brings anger, not fear," Kyiv resident Volodymyr Vasylenko, 67, said as crews worked to restore traffic lights and clear debris from the capital's streets. "We already got used to this. And we will keep fighting."

The leaders of the Group of Seven industrial powers condemned the bombardment and said they would "stand firmly with Ukraine for as long as it takes." Their pledge defied Russian warnings that Western assistance would prolong the war and the pain of Ukraine's people.

Zelenskyy told the G-7 leaders during a virtual meeting Russia fired more than 100 missiles and dozens of drones at Ukraine over two days. He appealed for "more modern and effective" air defense systems — even though he said Ukraine shot down many of the Russian projectiles.

The Pentagon on Tuesday announced plans to deliver the first two advanced NASAMs anti-aircraft systems to Ukraine in the coming weeks. The systems, which Kyiv has long wanted, will provide medium- to long-range defense against missile attacks.

In a phone call with Zelenskyy on Tuesday, President Joe Biden "pledged to continue providing Ukraine with the support needed to defend itself, including advanced air defense systems," the White House said.

Ukraine's defense minister tweeted that four German IRIS-T air defense systems had just arrived, saying a "new era" of air defense for Ukraine had begun.

## Belarus army would likely have little impact in Ukraine war

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — Statements made this week by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko have reignited fears that his army could join Russian forces in Moscow's war against Ukraine, but the authoritarian leader appears reluctant to lend his troops to the effort, despite perceived pressure from Moscow.

Russia has already used Belarus, its longtime and dependent ally, as a staging ground to send troops and missiles into Ukraine. Analysts say if Belarus' small and inexperienced military gets involved, the additional troops could help Moscow cut off some key transportation corridors, but likely wouldn't significantly boost Russian President Vladimir Putin's capabilities on the battlefield.

"The Belarusian army is weak and demotivated, and it is not willing to fight with Ukraine, which means that Lukashenko will try to give Putin anything but Belarusian soldiers," Ukrainian military analyst Oleh Zhdanov told The Associated Press on Tuesday. "Lukashenko is letting Putin know: 'I will help, but I won't fight.'"

Lukashenko announced Monday that he and Putin agreed to create a joint "regional grouping of troops" and that several thousand Russian soldiers will be stationed in Belarus. Lukashenko offered no details about

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where the troops will be deployed, and Russia's motives weren't immediately clear, though the remarks come as Moscow is struggling to replenish troops lost on the battlefield.

Lukashenko also said that Kyiv is plotting to attack Belarus — and he cautioned Ukraine against attacking “even one meter of our territory with their dirty hands.” His defense minister, Viktor Khrenin, also warned Ukraine not to provoke Belarus, saying, “We don't want to fight” and stressing a day later, however, that the joint force is for defense.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy assured leaders of the Group of Seven industrial powers on Tuesday that Kyiv isn't planning military actions against Belarus. He said Moscow “is trying to directly draw Belarus into this war.”

Oleksiy Danilov, head of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, told Ukrainian television Tuesday that Belarus is being “held hostage by Russia.”

Fears of Russian pressure on Belarus aren't unfounded. Lukashenko, an authoritarian leader, has ruled Belarus with an iron fist for 28 years while relying on Russia's political and economic support. Moscow has pumped billions of dollars into shoring up Lukashenko's Soviet-style, state-controlled economy with cheap energy and loans. And in 2020, the Kremlin helped Lukashenko survive the largest mass protests in the country's history, following a presidential election that the opposition and the West denounced as rigged.

Lukashenko has publicly supported Russia's attack on Ukraine, drawing international criticism and sanctions against Minsk. Still, Lukashenko has repeatedly rejected speculations that Belarus would send its own soldiers to fight alongside Russia.

“Neither the Belarusian elites, nor the population are ready to participate in this incomprehensible war,” Valery Karbalevich, an independent Belarusian analyst, told the AP. Karbalevich said Lukashenko is trying to bargain, offering to keep Russian nuclear weapons on its soil and create the joint force, while also hinting at the weakness of his own army.

Part of Belarus' 1,000-kilometer (621-mile) border with northwest Ukraine lies only about 90 kilometers (56 miles) north of Kyiv, Ukraine's capital. Troops coming from Belarus would likely move west and target cities of Lviv and Lutsk, key transportation hubs for Western military supplies, said Zhdanov, the Ukrainian military analyst.

“It is vital for Russia to cut off the transport corridor, because via Lviv, Western weapons reach the east and the south, where the Ukrainian army is conducting a successful counteroffensive, and this can only be done from Belarus,” Zhdanov said.

However, Lukashenko's army is relatively small — just 45,000 troops, including conscripts — and largely inexperienced. The Belarusian military holds regular drills, but hasn't taken part in combat since World War II.

At best, Minsk will be able to deploy 20,000 troops — professional contract soldiers, according to Zhdanov.

Belarusian military analyst Alexander Alesin said Lukashenko can avoid getting involved by saying that his limited troops are needed to defend Belarus' borders from its neighbors — NATO members Poland, Lithuania and Latvia.

Lukashenko said earlier this year that the Kremlin's campaign in Ukraine “has dragged on” and even suggested that he could mediate peace talks, insisting on the need to end the war as soon as possible. Karbalevich said Lukashenko understands that Russia is losing the war and he “is trying to crawl as far away from Russia as he can.”

Lukashenko is also facing public frustration at home, as Belarusians are feeling the effects of crippling Western sanctions and spiking inflation, which is already twice as high as last year.

“After mass protests of 2020, when hundreds of thousands of people demanded that Belarus' leader step down, Lukashenko is afraid of arming Belarusians. It can provoke another domestic explosion,” Karbalevich said.

And, Alesin said, Belarusians are not mentally prepared to fight Ukrainians.

“Unlike the Russians, Belarusians have absolutely no hostility towards the Ukrainians and don't understand the point of this special operation. This may lead to mass refusals to comply with orders to shoot Ukrainians,” he said.

## Protests galvanize Iranians abroad in hope, worry and unity

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — As anti-government protests roil cities and towns in Iran for a fourth week, tens of thousands of Iranians living abroad have marched on the streets of Europe, North America and beyond in support of what many believe to be a watershed moment for their home country.

From those who fled in the 1980s after Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution to a younger generation of Iranians born and raised in Western capitals, many in the diaspora community say they feel an unprecedented unity of purpose and affinity with the demonstrations at home sparked by the death of a 22-year-old woman detained by Iran's morality police.

"I see this as a turning point for Iran in many ways -- we've always had political fault lines that divided us, but this time it's people saying, 'I'm with women,'" said Tahirih Danesh, 52, a human rights researcher who lives and works in London. "It's phenomenal, it's happened at such speed, and this sense of camaraderie among Iranians has been amazing."

In the past month, large crowds of people of Iranian origin in dozens of cities from London to Paris to Toronto have turned out every weekend for rallies in solidarity with protests that erupted in Iran after Mahsa Amini died in custody after she was detained for allegedly violating strict Islamic dress codes for women.

Many say they have been kept awake at night by a mixture of hope, sadness and apprehension — hope that their country may be on the brink of change after decades of oppression, and fear that authorities will unleash more violence in an increasingly brutal crackdown that has seen dozens killed and hundreds arrested.

Some, like Danesh — whose family smuggled her and her siblings out of Iran in the 1980s to escape persecution — say the images of protesters being violently suppressed by authorities recall afresh the trauma of similar scenes around the time of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"I'm thousands of miles away, it's 40 years later but the images I see are bringing it all back, it's as if I'm reliving it again," Danesh said.

While Iran has seen waves of protest in recent years, many agree that this time the resistance feels broader in nature and in scope because it challenges the fundamentals of the Islamic Republic. Some say they have never seen the likes of global solidarity for Iran shown by politicians, intellectuals and celebrities, many of whom have cut off locks of their hair in a gesture of support of Iranian women.

"Before, many of us outside had a distanced view of what's happening inside, we couldn't find the same connection. But today Iranians inside are calling for fundamental change. They're saying 'retrieve my Iran,'" said Vali Mahlouji, 55, an art curator in London who left Iran in the 1980s. He said he is self-exiled because his work deals with censored artists and art history.

"This unites every Iranian I know, all the different generations of exiles," he added. "People who have been out of Iran most of their lives are feeling restless and sleepless. I don't know anyone who is not sympathetic, and of course, not worried."

The Iranian diaspora is large, including not just those who fled soon after the 1979 revolution, but also later waves leaving Iran because of continued repression or economic woes. More than half a million live in the U.S., and France, Sweden and Germany have communities in the hundreds of thousands, with major centers in Los Angeles, Washington, London, Paris and Stockholm.

In Paris, 28-year-old Romane Ranjbaran was among thousands last week who came out despite a heavy downpour and marched, sang and chanted "Khamenei get out" in Persian and French, referring to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Several women cut off locks of their hair and threw them in the air joyfully.

Ranjbaran, who grew up in France, said she felt "stricken" by what's happening in Iran.

"Iran is part and parcel of my history. My mom has known a free Iran when women were free," she said, as her mother and other family members stood by her side at the rally. "It's an international fight. If we want the situation in Iran to improve, we need international support."

The 1979 revolution ousted the U.S.-backed shah, the monarch whose rule was resolutely secular but was also brutally repressive and plagued with corruption. The revolution joined leftists and other political factions including Islamists, who after the shah's fall seized total power and created the Islamic Republic, ruled over by Shiite Muslim clerics.

Some expatriates have been wary of joining protests because they have family in Iran and regularly travel back and forth. Some raised concerns about the suspected presence of Iranian intelligence agents or extremist factions.

Others say they felt some unease about the protests' aims beyond the unifying cry of "Women, Life, Freedom" and the leaderless nature of the protests.

"I love my country, I want to show support, but every time I go I'm also confused because in every corner of the demonstrations there's a different chant," said Amanda Navaian, a luxury handbag designer in her early 40s who has attended all the recent weekend rallies in London.

Navaian said she wanted to attend protests "for as long as it takes," and has even made plans to potentially organize one herself. She wasn't sure demonstrations abroad will make a real difference, but she said it was crucial "to show we care."

At the very least, she knows she is doing something to dispel what she described as pervasive negative perceptions of Iran and Iranians.

"Islam was forced upon us, this extremism is not who we are. Our country has been hijacked — we were a country of music, dance and poetry," Navaian said.

"People were coming up to me in Trafalgar Square to ask, 'What are you doing?' and I explained why we were there," she added. "Through these demonstrations there's more awareness. Maybe now the international community should wake up to what's happening."

## 477 whales die in 'heartbreaking' New Zealand strandings

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — Some 477 pilot whales have died after stranding themselves on two remote New Zealand beaches over recent days, officials say.

None of the stranded whales could be refloated and all either died naturally or were euthanized in a "heartbreaking" loss, said Daren Grover, the general manager of Project Jonah, a nonprofit group which helps rescue whales.

The whales beached themselves on the Chatham Islands, which are home to about 600 people and located about 800 kilometers (500 miles) east of New Zealand's main islands.

The Department of Conservation said 232 whales stranded themselves Friday at Tupurangi Beach and another 245 at Waihere Bay on Monday.

The deaths come two weeks after about 200 pilot whales died in Australia after stranding themselves on a remote Tasmanian beach.

"These events are tough, challenging situations," the Department of Conservation wrote in a Facebook post. "Although they are natural occurrences, they are still sad and difficult for those helping."

Grover said the remote location and presence of sharks in the surrounding waters meant they couldn't mobilize volunteers to try to refloat the whales as they have in past stranding events.

"We do not actively refloat whales on the Chatham Islands due to the risk of shark attack to humans and the whales themselves, so euthanasia was the kindest option," said Dave Lundquist, a technical marine advisor for the conservation department.

Mass strandings of pilot whales are reasonably common in New Zealand, especially during the summer months. Scientists don't know exactly what causes the whales to strand, although it appears their location systems can get confused by gently sloping sandy beaches.

Grover said there is a lot of food for the whales around the Chatham Islands, and as they swim closer to land, they would quickly find themselves going from very deep to shallow water.

"They rely on their echolocation and yet it doesn't tell them that they are running out of water," Grover

said. "They come closer and closer to shore and become disoriented. The tide can then drop from below them and before they know it, they're stranded on the beach."

Because of the remote location of the beaches, the whale carcasses won't be buried or towed out to sea, as is often the case, but instead will be left to decompose, Grover said.

"Nature is a great recycler and all the energy stored within the bodies of all the whales will be returned to nature quite quickly," he said.

## LA Council faces uncertainty amid furor over racist remarks

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Where does the Los Angeles City Council go from here?

Three of its members — including the former Council president — are facing calls from President Joe Biden to resign after a recording surfaced of them participating in a closed-door meeting in which racist language was used to mock colleagues while they schemed to protect Latino political strength in Council districts.

Three current or former Council members have been indicted or pleaded guilty to corruption charges, and it's possible resignations in coming days could create new vacancies.

The current mayor, Democrat Eric Garcetti, was named last year to become U.S. ambassador to India but the nomination appears stalled in the Senate because of sexual harassment allegations against one of his former top aides. Elections next month will bring a new mayor and several Council members.

In the short term, it's a looming question if the Council can assemble the required 10 members — out of 15 total — to conduct business on Wednesday, when coincidentally Biden will be in town.

"I have never seen anything like this," said Raphael Sonenshein, executive director of the Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs at California State University, Los Angeles.

"That's the real challenge now, to kind of get to where they are going to conduct business on a regular basis," Sonenshein said. "This chaotic situation is going to be very visible ... both here and nationally."

The Council will attempt to reconvene Wednesday, possibly to censure the three members cited by Biden. A Tuesday meeting was nearly derailed when a raucous crowd of protesters packed the chamber, calling for the resignation of those involved in the meeting — former City Council President Nury Martinez, who is taking a leave of absence, and Councilmen Kevin de Leon and Gil Cedillo, all Democrats.

The Council cannot expel the members — it can only suspend a member when criminal charges are pending. A censure does not result in suspension or removal from office.

The uproar was triggered by a leaked recording of crude, racist comments from a nearly year-old meeting, which also provided an unvarnished look into City Hall's racial rivalries. Those involved in the meeting were all Latinos.

Martinez said in the recorded conversation that white Councilmember Mike Bonin handled his young Black son as if he were an "accessory" and said of his son "Parece changuito," or "he's like a monkey," the Los Angeles Times reported Sunday. She also referred to Bonin as a "little bitch."

At another point on the hourlong recording, Martinez, the first Latina appointed president of the City Council, called indigenous immigrants from the Mexican state of Oaxaca "tan feos," or "so ugly."

The discussion — which also included a powerful Latino labor leader, who has since resigned — centered on protecting Latino political power during the redrawing of council district boundaries, known as redistricting. The once-a-decade process can pit one group against another to gain political advantage in future elections.

At the ornate Council chamber, an overflow crowd of protesters delayed the start of Tuesday's meeting as they angrily shouted for de Leon and Cedillo to leave the room. Police officers scurried at the edge of the crowd.

De Leon sat impassively at his seat, his eyes cast downward, as protesters called on him by name to exit the chamber. Others on the 15-member Council urged the crowd to settle down and allow the meeting to begin.

Cedillo and de Leon left their seats early, leaving in doubt if they will appear Wednesday.



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Martinez stepped down from the leadership job and apologized Monday, saying she was ashamed of her racially offensive language in the year-old recording. However, she did not resign her council seat. She announced Tuesday that "I need to take a leave of absence and take some time to have an honest and heartfelt conversation with my family, my constituents, and community leaders."

She did not appear at the Tuesday meeting.

In emotional remarks at the meeting, Bonin said he was deeply wounded by the taped discussion. He lamented the harm to his young son and the fact that the city was in international headlines spotlighting the racist language. "I'm sickened by it," he said, calling again for his colleagues' resignations.

"Los Angeles is going to heal," he said at one point. "I want to lead with love."

Black and Latino constituents often build alliances in politics. But tensions and rivalries among groups separated by race, geography, partisanship or religion have a long history in Los Angeles and, indeed, the country. The friction can cross into housing, education and jobs — even prisons — as well as the spoils of political power.

The California Legislative Black Caucus said the recording "reveals an appalling effort to decentralize Black voices during the critical redistricting process."

In one of the most diverse cities in the nation, a long line of public speakers at the meeting said the disclosure of the secretly taped meeting brought with it echoes of the Jim Crow era, and was a stark example of "anti-Blackness."

There were calls for investigations, and reforming redistricting policy.

Many of the critics also were Latino, who spoke of being betrayed by their own leaders.

Candido Marez, 70, a retired business owner, said he wasn't surprised by Martinez's language, who is known for being blunt and outspoken.

"Her words blew up this city. It is disgraceful," he said. "She must resign."

The Los Angeles Times reported that the recording was posted on Reddit by a now-suspended user. It is unclear who recorded the audio, who uploaded it to Reddit and whether anyone else was present.

Biden press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Tuesday that the president wanted Martinez, de Leon and Cedillo to resign.

"The language that was used and tolerated during that conversation was unacceptable, and it was appalling. They should all step down," Jean-Pierre said.

Other calls for the councilmembers to resign have come from across the Democratic establishment, including from U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla, Garcetti, mayoral candidates Karen Bass and Rick Caruso and members of Council.

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has stopped short of doing so, denouncing the racist language and saying he was "encouraged that those involved have apologized and begun to take responsibility for their actions." Democratic state Sen. Steven Bradford, who represents parts of Los Angeles County, said Newsom should call for the resignation of the three councilmembers.

"Every ethnic caucus in the Legislature has called for the resignations, so I would hope that the governor would ... ask for the resignation as well," Bradford said.

Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, serving as acting president of the Council, said the city cannot heal if the three remain in office. He called it a "clear abuse of power" that was "profoundly unacceptable" of elected officials.

"Public opinion has rendered a verdict and the verdict is they all must resign," he said.

## Graft convictions extend Suu Kyi's prison term to 26 years

By GRANT PECK Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — A court in military-ruled Myanmar convicted the country's ousted leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, on two more corruption charges Wednesday, with two three-year sentences to be served concurrently, adding to previous convictions that now leave her with a 26-year total prison term, a legal official said.

Suu Kyi, 77, was detained on Feb. 1, 2021, when the military seized power from her elected government.

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She has denied the allegations against her in this case, in which she was accused of receiving \$550,000 as a bribe from Maung Weik, a tycoon convicted of drug trafficking.

Corruption cases comprise the biggest share of the many charges the military has brought against the 1991 Nobel Peace laureate. Suu Kyi has been charged with 12 counts in total under the Anti-Corruption Act, with each count punishable by up to 15 years in prison and a fine.

Suu Kyi had already been sentenced to 23 years' imprisonment after being convicted of illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies, violating coronavirus restrictions, breaching the country's official secrets act, sedition, election fraud and five corruption charges.

Her supporters and independent analysts say the charges are politically motivated and an attempt to discredit her and legitimize the military's seizure of power while keeping her from taking part in the next election, which the military has promised in 2023.

In recent months, her trials have been held in a purpose-built courtroom in the main prison on the outskirts of the capital, Naypyitaw. She has not been seen or allowed to speak in public since she was arrested and her lawyers, who had been a source of information on the proceedings, have not been allowed to speak publicly on her behalf or about her trial since a gag order was placed on them last year.

In the case decided Wednesday, Suu Kyi was accused of receiving a total of \$550,000 in 2019 and 2020 from Maung Weik, with separate payments being treated as two offenses.

Maung Weik, a construction magnate, had a close relationship with the army generals in power during a previous military-run government, and has headed two main companies during three decades in business: Maung Weik & Family Co. Ltd., specializing in the trading of metals and agricultural products, and Sae Paing Development Ltd., a real estate and construction company.

He was sentenced to 15 years in prison in 2008 for trafficking drugs but was released in 2014 under a semi-democratic transitional government led by former General Thein Sein.

After his release from prison, Maung Weik returned to doing business with former generals and according to a 2017 report in *The Irrawaddy*, an online news magazine, became chairman of Mandalay Business Capital City Development, which was involved in urban development work.

Under Suu Kyi's government, Maung Weik won a major development project that included the construction of houses, restaurants, hospitals, economic zones, a port and hotel zones in Myanmar's central Mandalay region.

He was reportedly interrogated by the army two weeks after its takeover last year, and shortly after that, in March 2021, military-controlled state television broadcast a video in which he claimed to have given cash payoffs to government ministers to help his businesses.

He said in his video that the money included \$100,000 provided to Suu Kyi in 2018 for a charitable foundation named after her mother, and another \$450,000 in payments in 2019 and 2020 for purposes he did not specify.

A state-controlled newspaper, the *Global New Light of Myanmar*, reported in February that Suu Kyi in her position as state counselor — the country's de facto chief executive — received \$550,000 in four installments in 2019-2020 "to facilitate the business activities of a private entrepreneur."

Suu Kyi's close colleague, Zaw Myint Maung, who served as a chief minister in the Mandalay region, was separately accused of receiving more than \$180,000 from Maung Weik and was convicted of corruption in June.

Wednesday's verdict sentencing Suu Kyi to two three-year sentences to be served concurrently was conveyed by a legal official who insisted on anonymity for fear of being punished by the authorities.

He added that her lawyers are expected to file an appeal in the coming days.

In separate proceedings, Suu Kyi is still being tried together with the country's former president, Win Myint, on another five corruption charges in connection with permits granted to a Cabinet minister for the rental and purchase of a helicopter.

Suu Kyi has been the face of the opposition to military rule in Myanmar for more than three decades. The previous military government put her under house arrest in 1989, which continued on-and-off for 15

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of the next 22 years.

Her National League for Democracy party initially came to power after winning the 2015 general election, ushering in a true civilian government for the first time since a 1962 military coup. However, democratic reforms were small and slow in coming, largely because the military retained substantial power and influence under the terms of a constitution it had enacted in 2008.

The National League for Democracy won a landslide victory again in the 2020 election, but its lawmakers were kept from taking their seats in Parliament by the army, which also arrested the party's top leaders.

The army said it acted because there had been massive voting fraud in the 2020 election, but independent election observers did not find any major irregularities.

The 2021 takeover was met by nationwide peaceful protests that security forces quashed with deadly force, triggering fierce armed resistance that some U.N. experts now characterize as civil war.

According to a detailed list compiled by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a watchdog group now based in Thailand, Myanmar security forces have killed at least 2,343 civilians and arrested 15,821.

## Cole cruises, Bader, Rizzo bash, Yanks beat Guardians 4-1

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Gerrit Cole dreamed of this moment growing up in California, winning a postseason game in pinstripes at Yankee Stadium.

Harrison Bader had a similar fantasy while sitting in the first base seats as a 15-year-old and watching New York's last championship team.

They combined to make each other's wishes come true.

Cole cruised for most of the night, Bader and Anthony Rizzo homered and the Yankees beat the Cleveland Guardians 4-1 on Tuesday in their AL Division Series opener.

Bader hit his first home run since the Yankees made the surprising deal to acquire him from St. Louis at the trade deadline, tying the score with a third-inning drive to left-center on a Cal Quantrill sinker after Steven Kwan had homered in the top half.

A graduate of Horace Mann School, 5 miles from Yankee Stadium, Bader was in a walking boot with a foot injury at the time of the trade and didn't make his Yankees debut until Sept. 20.

"I want to validate myself," Bader said. "I want to play hard and I want to show my teammates and I want to show — my parents are in the stands — I want to show them all why I earned that uniform."

Not even another Josh Donaldson baserunning blunder could slow the Yankees, who have won six straight postseason games against Cleveland dating to a comeback from a 2-0 deficit in the 2017 Division Series. The crowd of 47,807 roared from the first pitch.

"It was just a really awesome experience," Cole said. "Sometimes when you feel the crowd or the energy, it sometimes can become a little easier just to quiet things down because it's so loud. I don't know if that makes sense, but it does to me."

After Kwan's homer, Cole hit Amed Rosario with a pitch and José Ramírez lined a gapper to left-center. Bader, a Gold Glove center fielder, saved a run by cutting off the ball and holding the runners at second and third. Cole escaped a bases-loaded jam by striking out Andrés Giménez with his 60th pitch.

"That may be the at-bat of the game right there," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said.

Cole needed just eight pitches in the fourth and allowed just two more runners, on a single and his only walk. He left after giving up one run and four hits in 6 1/3 innings with eight strikeouts.

"We did a really good job early of driving his pitch count up," Cleveland manager Terry Francona said. "And then he had a real quick fourth inning, that kind of got him back into the game."

Jonathan Loáisiga, Wandy Peralta and Clay Holmes finished with two-hit relief to begin the best-of-five matchup. Holmes hit Owen Miller with a pitch before retiring the final two batters.

"Just had to check on my heart," quipped Yankees manager Aaron Boone, who got a pacemaker last year.

AL Central champion Cleveland, playing on the 74th anniversary of its last World Series title, struck out nine times against the AL East-winning Yankees, who returned from a five-day layoff. Guardians batters

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had the fewest strikeouts in the majors during the regular season.

Jose Trevino put New York ahead with a sacrifice fly in the fifth after Isiah Kiner-Falefa reached on a single into the right-field corner and Wild Card Series star Oscar Gonzalez allowed the ball to bounce through his legs for a two-base error.

"It took a little more spin than I was expecting, and it just went away," Gonzalez said through a translator.

Rizzo chased Quantrill with a drive into the right-field second desk in the sixth after Aaron Judge walked.

"The Guardians are a young team that has a lot of momentum and have been pitching really well and playing really well," Rizzo said. "That's a scary combination."

An inning earlier, Donaldson made another of the lack-of-hustle gaffes marking his first season in New York. With the score tied 1-1, the former AL MVP led off the fifth with a drive that hit the top of the 10-foot wall in right field, just in front of a fan's hands, and bounced back onto the field.

Donaldson went into a trot, thinking it was a home run, and even high-fived first base coach Travis Chapman. But Gonzalez grabbed the ball off the carom and threw to shortstop Amed Rosario, whose throw to first caught Donaldson trying to get back.

"We have to make sure we're getting where we need to get to," Boone said.

After the final out, that became a minor matter. Judge, who set an AL record with 62 homers, cited Bader for poor form.

"Judgey told me I ran a little too fast," Bader said. "As soon as he clips it, he knows he's got it. I haven't hit a home run in a long time, so I have to work back into it."

## WEB GEMS

Yankees rookie left fielder Oswaldo Cabrera made a leaping catch against the stands on Will Brennan leading off the fourth as his cap fell into the hands of a fan. Cabrera threw the ball back to the infield, took a step toward the wall as the fan tossed back his cap, then gave the spectator a high-five with his glove. Two pitches later, Donaldson snagged Austin Hedges' grounder as he slid into foul territory, then got up and made a strong throw to first to retire the slow-footed catcher.

## MOUND MATTERS

Quantrill lost for the first time since July 5 following 11 wins over 17 starts. He gave up four runs — three earned — four hits and three walks in five-plus innings.

## TRAINER'S ROOM

Guardians: RHP Nick Sandlin (strained shoulder) was dropped along with LHP Kirk McCarty, and RHPs Aaron Civale and Cody Morris were added.

Yankees: INF DJ LeMahieu was left off the roster and may have a broken bone under the second toe of his right foot. ... RHP Scott Effross needed Tommy John surgery.

## UP NEXT

After an unusual day off between Games 1 and 2, LHP Nestor Cortes (12-4) starts for the Yankees against RHP Shane Bieber (13-8) on Thursday. Rain is in the forecast.

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## 20 years after Bali bombings, 'the ache does not dim'

By EDNA TARIGAN and ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

DENPASAR, Indonesia (AP) — Hundreds gathered Wednesday on the Indonesian resort island of Bali to commemorate 20 years since a twin bombing killed 202 people, mostly foreign tourists, including 88 Australians and seven Americans.

Services were held simultaneously in several places in Australia and at Bali's Australian Consulate in the city of Denpasar, where Australian survivors of the 2002 terrorist attack and relatives of the deceased were among the 200 in attendance to pay tribute.

Survivors are still battling with their trauma from the Saturday night in October 2002, when a car bomb in Sari Club and a nearly simultaneous suicide bomb at nearby Paddy's Pub went off. That night remains seared into the national memories of Indonesians, Australians and many others.

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After the attack, the bustling tourist area was quiet for a time, but it has since returned to a state of busy weekends, packed traffic and tourists. What used to be Sari Club is now a vacant lot, while Paddy's Pub has resumed its operation 100 meters (300 feet) from its original location.

A monument stands less than 50 meters (yards) from the bombing sites with the names of the those who died inscribed on it. People regularly come to pray and place flowers, candles, or flags with photos of their loved ones.

A photo of two women tied with a bouquet of fresh chrysanthemums and roses sits next to a laminated paper that reads: "To our beautiful girls Renae & Simone. It is twenty years on and not a day has gone by without thinking of you both, and how we lost two treasures. Our hearts will cry for you forever. We love and miss you so very much. Your loving Dad and Brothers."

Twenty years later, the pain is still felt.

"We will always remember those 202 innocent people, most under the age of 40, the youngest just 13 years old. We stand with the survivors, relatives and families and support them at this time. And we remember the valor and the quiet courage of those who saw the worst of humanity and responded with the best," Australian Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs Tim Watts said at the memorial service in Denpasar.

Andrew Csabi, one of the survivors in attendance in Denpasar, said he is grateful to the first responders who issued first aid without self-preservation the night after the bombing, and to the government who medically evacuated them to Darwin, saving many lives.

"So I was granted a second chance at life and I make every minute count. I was often told that my life is bad for a reason. And how lucky I am. Yes, I am lucky I made it home and I will honor that privilege," Csabi said.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese attended a service in his hometown, Sydney, at the beachside suburb of Coogee. Six members of the Coogee Dolphins Rugby League Football Club died in the blasts.

Albanese paid tribute Wednesday to the strength and unity the Coogee community had shown since the tragedy.

"Twenty years ago, the shock waves from Bali reached our shores. Twenty years ago, an act of malice and calculated depravity robbed the world of 202 lives, including 88 Australians. Twenty years on, the ache does not dim," Albanese said.

At a ceremony at Australian Parliament House in the national capital Canberra, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong welcomed Indonesian Ambassador Siswo Pramono, who was among the dignitaries.

"Ambassador, on behalf of the Australian government, I warmly welcome you and acknowledge the strength, the courage and the cooperation of our two peoples," Wong said in Bahasa, the official language of Indonesia.

"Today, we remember what was taken. Today, we remember what was lost. And we wonder what might have been had they all come home," Wong added.

Pramono said the terrorist attack had created a "better and stronger bond" between Indonesia and Australia.

"Twenty years ago today, a hideous crime struck and it was one of the saddest days in Indonesian history," Pramono told the gathering.

"Family and friends were left with overwhelming grief and even though a lot of hearts were broken and our loved ones were taken from us, there are some things that a terrorist couldn't take: our love and compassion for others and the idea that people are equal in rights and freedoms," Pramono added.

The 2002 attack in Bali, carried out by suicide bombers from the al-Qaida-linked group Jemaah Islamiyah, started a wave of violence in the world's most populous Muslim nation. Three years later, another bomb attack the island and killed 20 people. Numerous attacks followed, hitting an embassy, hotels, restaurants, a coffee shop, churches, and even police headquarters across the archipelago nation.

Two decades after the Bali bombings, counterterrorism efforts in the world's most populous Muslim country remain highly active. Indonesia founded Densus 88, a national counterterrorism unit, in the wake of the attacks. More than 2,300 people have since been arrested on terrorism charges, according to data from the Center for Radicalism and Deradicalization Studies, a non-government Indonesian think tank.

In 2020, 228 people were arrested on terrorism charges. The number rose to 370 last year, underscoring authorities' commitment to pursue suspects even as the number of terrorist attacks in Indonesia has fallen.

The pursuit of suspects related to the Bali bombings has also continued, most recently resulting in the arrest of Aris Sumarsono, 58, whose real name is Arif Sunarso but is better known as Zulkarnaen, in December 2020. The court sentenced him to 15 years in prison for his role. Indonesian authorities also suspect him to be the mastermind of several other attacks in the country.

In August, Indonesia's government considered granting an early prison release to the bombmaker in the Bali attack, Hisyam bin Alizein, 55, better known by his alias, Umar Patek, who has also been identified as a leading member of Jemaah Islamiyah.

Indonesian authorities said Patek was an example of successful efforts to reform convicted terrorists and that they planned to use him to influence others not to commit terrorist acts. But the Australian government has expressed its strong opposition to his possible release.

## **EXPLAINER: What next in the Florida school shooter trial?**

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — The jurors who will decide whether Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz is sentenced to death or life without parole are expected to begin their deliberations Wednesday, concluding a three-month trial.

Cruz, 24, pleaded guilty last year to the murders of 14 students and three staff members at Parkland's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on Feb. 14, 2018. The trial has only been to determine his sentence.

Cruz's massacre is the deadliest mass shooting that has ever gone to trial in the U.S. Nine other people in the U.S. who fatally shot at least 17 people died during or immediately after their attacks by suicide or police gunfire. The suspect in the 2019 massacre of 23 at an El Paso, Texas, Walmart is awaiting trial.

The jurors will be sequestered during their deliberations, which could take hours or days — no one knows. They have been told to pack for at least two nights.

Here is a look at the case, how the seven-man, five-woman jury will come to their decision and what will happen after that.

### **WHAT DID CRUZ DO?**

Cruz, by his own admission, began thinking about committing a school shooting while in middle school, about five years before he carried it out. He purchased his AR-15-style semi-automatic rifle almost exactly a year before the shooting and his planning became serious about seven months in advance. He researched previous mass shooters, saying he tried to learn from their experience. He bought ammunition, a vest to carry it and a bag to hide it. He picked Valentine's Day to make sure it would never be celebrated at the school again.

He took an Uber to the school, arriving about 20 minutes before dismissal. He went inside a three-story classroom building, shooting down the halls and into classrooms for about seven minutes. He returned to some wounded to kill them with a second volley. He then tried to shoot at fleeing students from a third-floor window, but the thick hurricane glass thwarted him. He put down his gun and fled, but was captured about an hour later.

### **WHAT HAPPENED AT THE TRIAL?**

Lead prosecutor Mike Satz kept his case simple. He played security videos of the shooting and showed gruesome crime scene and autopsy photos. Teachers and students testified about watching others die. He took the jury to the fenced-off building, which remains blood-stained and bullet-pocked. Parents and spouses gave tearful and angry statements.

Cruz's lead attorney Melisa McNeill and her team never questioned the horror he inflicted, but focused on their belief that his birth mother's heavy drinking during pregnancy left him with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Their experts said his bizarre, troubling and sometimes violent behavior starting at age 2 was misdiagnosed as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, meaning he never got the proper treatment. That left his widowed adoptive mother overwhelmed, they said.

## WHAT'S REQUIRED FOR CRUZ TO GET A DEATH SENTENCE?

The jurors will be voting 17 times — once for each victim. For the jurors to recommend a death sentence for a specific victim, they first must unanimously agree that the prosecution proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the killing involved at least one aggravating circumstance as proscribed under Florida law.

This part should not be difficult — the listed aggravating circumstances include knowingly creating a great risk of death to numerous people, committing murders that were “especially heinous, atrocious, or cruel” or committed in a “cold, calculated, and premeditated manner.” They then must unanimously agree that the aggravating factors warrant consideration of the death penalty.

They then must determine whether the aggravating circumstances “outweigh” the mitigating factors that the defense argued such as his birth mother’s drinking, his adoptive mother’s alleged failure to get him proper psychiatric care and his admission of guilt.

If they do, the jurors can then recommend a death sentence — but that’s not required. A juror can ignore the weighing exercise and vote for life out of mercy for Cruz.

A death sentence recommendation requires a unanimous vote on at least one victim. If one or more jurors vote for life on all victims, that will be his sentence.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF THE JURY RECOMMENDS A DEATH SENTENCE?

Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer will schedule a sentencing hearing, likely months from now. Cruz’s attorneys will have an opportunity to persuade her to override the jury and impose a life sentence, but that rarely succeeds. If sentenced to death, he will be sent to Florida’s Death Row while his case goes through appeals. It will be years before he is executed, assuming the death sentence isn’t overturned and a retrial required.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF THE JURY IMPOSES A LIFE SENTENCE?

If the jury cannot unanimously agree that Cruz should be executed for at least one victim, he will be sentenced to life without parole — Scherer cannot overrule the jury. She could sentence him immediately or schedule a future hearing.

After he is sentenced, the Florida Department of Corrections would assign him to a maximum security prison where he would be part of the general population. McNeill, in her closing argument, alluded that could be an exceedingly dangerous place for someone like Cruz.

## To hold House, Democrats eye GOP-held districts won by Biden

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) — While preparing to march in a Saturday morning parade through this fast-growing city’s westside, Democratic congressional candidate Hillary Scholten warned her staff that the area was traditionally very conservative and they should brace for possible booing.

But the crowd lining Fulton Street to mark the region’s Polish pride was friendly. Only one man bellowed what sounded to the candidate like “Go to hell, Hillary!” as she passed. But he also grinned and flashed a thumbs-up later.

He’d actually cried, “Give `em hell, Hillary!”

It’s been 32 years since a Democrat won the House seat where Scholten is competing against Republican John Gibbs. But, its largest city, Grand Rapids, has turned steadily bluer lately, and redrawn congressional maps have converted it from a district that backed Donald Trump for president in 2020 to one that Joe Biden would have carried instead.

It’s one of 14 U.S. House seats nationwide that are held by Republicans but that Biden would have won under new maps.

As Democrats brace for midterm defeats that could erase their narrow, five-seat control of the House, a chance to limit the damage may lie in flipping Republican-held seats that voted for Biden to stanch the effect of losses elsewhere around the country.

Scholten, a former Justice Department attorney and Christian Reform Church deacon, lost the seat to Republican Rep. Peter Meijer in 2020. But Meijer was defeated in his Michigan GOP primary this year by

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Trump-backed challenger Gibbs, a former software engineer who falsely purports that the 2020 presidential election was stolen.

Scholten is trying to become the first Democratic woman elected to the House from western Michigan and isn't counting on more favorable boundaries to get her there, noting that it's "hard for people to believe in what they've never seen before, and we feel that every day."

But even Gibbs concedes the new maps have Democrats excited.

"In a year where they're expected to have a very difficult time in the midterms," he said, "for them, a pickup is something that they're salivating over."

The list of GOP-held Biden districts feature three Los Angeles-area seats and one in California's Central Valley. Others are the territories of Republican Reps. Don Bacon in Omaha, Nebraska, and Steve Chabot in Cincinnati. Pennsylvania Republican Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, who represents the moderate swing battleground of Bucks County, north of Philadelphia, faces a similar test. On the other side are a dozen districts that voted for Trump but are held by Democrats. Retirements and redistricting mean many no longer have incumbents running.

Still, Democrats see high stakes in their efforts to flip seats won by Biden. When House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer recently predicted that his party would hold the chamber, he mentioned such territory in California and Illinois, as well as Bacon's and Chabot's districts, and the Grand Rapids race.

Not every incumbent is sweating toss-up races. Chabot says that, during his 26 years running for reelection in southwestern Ohio, he's "had more challenging races, for sure, than anyone in the House." But, as he competes for potential crossover voters, Chabot is not emphasizing Trump.

"I agree with most of his policies, but I'm running on my own record," Chabot said. "People can make up their own minds."

Gibbs says that, despite Trump's endorsement, he's building appeal among independents and swing voters. He recalled one man approaching him in the lakefront city of Muskegon, northwest of Grand Rapids, and saying: "I voted for you. I'm a Democrat. Is that OK?"

"This race is not so much about Democrat vs. Republican. It's more crazy vs. normal," said Gibbs, pointing to high gas and food prices and "what they're trying to do to kids in school," with modern curriculums and inappropriate material in campus libraries being especially outlandish.

But, echoing Trump, Gibbs left open the possibility that he may object to the results of his own election next month.

"If it's fair and everything's on the up and up, I'll accept whatever the result is," he said. But asked if he could define fair, Gibbs replied, "Not at this point."

"We'll just have to kind of see how it goes," he said.

A Scholten win would cement this area's political transformation from red to blue. Booms in health, university and technology jobs are attracting scores of college-educated workers — with new residents often importing Democratic voting preferences. Grand Rapids and its suburbs have also turned more diverse, including notable increases in Hispanic voters.

Such a change was long unthinkable in the home city of Gerald Ford and former Trump administration Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, which once epitomized pro-business, country club conservatism.

"I love to play golf. We play at public courses," Scholten said, laughing. "I think that's a pretty good analogy, actually."

Despite Democrat-friendly lines, national Republicans see the district as a "checks and balances" area where voters might have shunned Trump but want to control Washington's spending and potential federal overreach.

Meijer was one of 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach Trump, prompting the former president to endorse Gibbs. The Democratic House campaign committee even financed a GOP primary ad proclaiming that Gibbs was "hand-picked by Trump to run for Congress," believing he'd be beatable in November.

Trump once nominated Gibbs to head the Office of Personnel Management, but he wasn't confirmed amid questions about past tweets, including one from 2016 in which Gibbs wrote, "Today's Dem party: Islam, gender-bending, anti-police, 'u racist!'"



Gibbs says Democrats have posted far more incendiary things. "I don't apologize. I never have and will not," he said.

Democrats hope that a question on Michigan's ballot asking voters to put the right to an abortion in the state constitution energizes their base.

"The issue of choice is front and center in a way that it wasn't before," Scholten said. "It's changed a lot of minds."

Gibbs counters that his steadfast opposition to abortion is a winner. He'd only allow exceptions if a pregnant woman's life is endangered. In instances of rape or incest, Gibbs said: "That baby, born in that case, is innocent. So I don't see why an innocent person should have to perish."

Raised in the Pentecostal church, Gibbs spent seven years as a missionary in Japan. But he converted to Catholicism in 2021 and now tries to go to Mass multiple times per week.

He has that in common with Biden, who is also a devout Catholic, though Gibbs isn't seeking bipartisan support there. He retorted of the president's frequent Mass attendance, "Yeah, I just wish he would accept the teachings."

"If I ever saw him at Mass, I'd have a nice, frank conversation," Gibbs said. "Give him a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: 'You oughta learn this.'"

## US mulls Ukrainian-type parole for Venezuelan migrants

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The Biden administration is developing plans for Venezuelans with financial sponsors to be granted parole to enter the United States, similar to how Ukrainians have been admitted after Russia's invasion, U.S. officials said Tuesday.

Four officials offered broad outlines of the plan to deal with a large increase in Venezuelans arriving at the U.S. border with Mexico. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

Venezuelans who cross the border illegally on land would be immediately returned to Mexico, two officials said. Currently, Mexico only accepts migrants expelled under Title 42 authority — a pandemic-era rule that denies migrants rights to seek asylum and is designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 — if they are from Guatemala, El Salvador or Honduras, in addition to Mexico.

Venezuelans who qualify for parole would enter the U.S. at airports, two officials said, mirroring a program introduced in April that allows Ukrainians with financial sponsors to stay for up to two years.

The officials strongly emphasized that discussions were fluid and plans could change. The plans were reported earlier Tuesday by CNN and The New York Times.

While major questions remain — such as how many would be eligible for parole and where Venezuelans would board planes — the discussions demonstrate concern about what has emerged as a major challenge to authorities in the U.S., Mexico and Central America and a test of a hemispheric agreement reached in June in Los Angeles for countries that host migrants to confront issues together.

The Homeland Security Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment late Tuesday. Mexico's Foreign Affairs Ministry said it would release details when talks are final.

"We are in discussions about a new approach that includes migration from Mexico and the northern Central American countries, as well as Haiti, Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua, in an orderly manner and with access to employment options," the ministry said in a statement.

Venezuelans recently surpassed Guatemalans and Hondurans to become the second-largest nationality stopped at the U.S. border after Mexicans. In August, Venezuelans were stopped 25,349 times, up 43% from 17,652 in July and four times the 6,301 encounters in August 2021, signaling a remarkably sudden demographic shift.

An estimated 6.8 million Venezuelans have fled their country since the economy tanked in 2014, mostly to Latin America and Caribbean countries. But the U.S. economy's relative strength since the COVID-19 pandemic has caused Venezuelan migrants to look north. Also, strained relations with the Venezuelan

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government make it extremely difficult to send them home under Title 42 authority, encouraging more to come.

Mexico, under pressure from the Biden administration, introduced restrictions on air travel to limit Venezuelan migration to the United States in January, but many then shifted to a dangerous land route that goes through Panama's notorious Darien Gap.

The plan being worked on would aim to discourage Venezuelans from the perilous journey by land and function like parole for Ukrainians. The administration has pledged to admit up to 100,000 people fleeing Russia's invasion and has already allowed tens of thousands, including nearly 17,000 in August.

"Uniting for Ukraine," as the parole program is called, effectively ended a short-lived practice of people flying to Mexico as tourists and showing up at U.S. border crossings.

## Alvarez hits 3-run HR vs Ray in 9th, Astros jolt M's in ALDS

By KRISTIE RIEKEN AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Yordan Alvarez wrecked all of Seattle's carefully crafted strategy with one colossal swing.

The Mariners came to the postseason with a plan. Down to their last out, the October-tested Houston Astros weren't so easily outmatched.

Alvarez smashed a game-ending, three-run homer with two outs in the ninth inning off Robbie Ray, foiling the Mariners' move to use a Cy Young Award winner in a rare relief role and vaulting the Astros to an 8-7 win Tuesday in their playoff opener.

"It was something going into the series where we were at, looking at our rotation, where we were going to head, and talking with Robbie about using him out of the bullpen as a bullet, so to speak, for that type of scenario," Mariners manager Scott Servais said. "You know, bringing in a lefty against Alvarez, although Alvarez is one of the better hitters in the league."

"But we talked about it coming into the series. We talked about it pregame today. I looked at it in the seventh inning and said, hey, this could happen. So that was the plan going in," he said.

Houston skipper Dusty Baker, who managed Servais while with the Giants, refused to second-guess his former player.

"If he gets him out, then it looks great ... next time Robbie Ray could win, but today we won," Baker said.

Trailing all game after a poor start by Justin Verlander, the AL West champion Astros overtook rookie star Julio Rodríguez and the wild-card Mariners at the end to begin their best-of-five Division Series.

The Astros had been 0-48 in their postseason history when trailing by more than a run after eight innings until Alvarez homered deep into the seats to overcome a 7-5 deficit.

With his Cuban parents in the stands, too.

"I think it's one of the most special moments that I've had in my career, having them there, and even for just the city of Houston," Alvarez said through a translator. "They know that we're a team that never gives up."

The no-doubt drive was the first walk-off homer in postseason history with a team trailing by multiple runs. And it was just the second walk-off homer with team down to its final out — the other was Kirk Gibson's startling shot that lifted the Dodgers over the A's in the 1988 World Series opener.

A stoic Ray said he was "just frustrated" after giving up the mammoth home run.

Houston rookie pinch-hitter David Hensley reached with one out in the ninth as Seattle closer Paul Sewald grazed his jersey with a pitch. Sewald struck out Jose Altuve before Jeremy Peña laced a single to center field to chase Sewald.

Servais then made the bold move to bring in Ray, who started Saturday at Toronto in the AL wild-card series, for a lefty vs. lefty matchup with Alvarez. Ray won the Cy Young last year with Toronto, had made only six relief appearances in his career and had never earned a pro save.

A percentage move — or was it?

Alvarez had a .998 OPS against left-handed pitchers this season, by far the highest among qualified left-

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handed hitters, and 10 home runs. And his batting average against lefties was .321, compared to .299 vs righties.

Alvarez, who hit 37 homers in the regular season, turned around Servais' move by launching Ray's second pitch into the seats in right field to set off a wild celebration with his mom and dad in the seats.

It was the first time they got to see him play in the postseason after arriving from the island in August to watch him play professionally for the first time.

The Mariners, back in the playoffs this year for the first time since 2001, were on the wrong end of a big comeback this time after rallying from a seven-run deficit in Game 2 to sweep their wild-card series with Toronto.

The Mariners jumped on Verlander for six runs in just four innings to build a 6-2 lead early. Yuli Gurriel hit a solo homer in the Houston fourth before Eugenio Suarez's solo shot in the seventh extended Seattle's lead to 7-3.

A two-run homer by Alex Bregman off Andrés Muñoz cut the lead to 7-5 in the eighth inning to set up the dramatic finish.

Alvarez had a two-run double in the third to get Houston's offense going a bit before it really took off in the final two innings.

The Astros, who are trying to reach the ALCS for a sixth straight season, led the AL with 106 wins but looked a bit out of sorts early after a six-day layoff since their last regular-season game.

"Those days off, I think hurt our whole team," Baker said. "You see, we didn't wake up until the fifth, sixth inning... you can practice all you want to. There's nothing, no substitute for game action. So that's not an excuse, but I can sort of feel it and see it."

They got going late to continue their dominance of the Mariners in Houston after going 30-7 against them in the regular season at Minute Maid Park since 2019.

Verlander followed up his remarkable comeback season after missing almost two full seasons after Tommy John surgery with a flop in the worst postseason performance of his storied career.

He led the majors with a 1.75 ERA and topped the AL with 18 wins this season. He dominated the Mariners in the regular season, going 5-1 with a 2.34 ERA in six starts.

Instead, the Mariners hit almost everything he threw in what was his 32nd playoff game. By the time he trudged off the mound mumbling something to himself after just four innings he'd given up a playoff career-high 10 hits with six earned runs, which tied his most in a postseason game.

"I have to do better next time out, but here we are with a Game 1 win and I couldn't be more happy," he said.

The last four batters Verlander faced hit, in order, a home run, triple, double and single.

Rodríguez tripled, doubled and scored three times and Ty France had three hits.

MATON OUT

Astros reliever Phil Maton revealed Tuesday that he broke his right pinkie when he punched a locker in frustration after Houston's regular-season finale and will miss the postseason.

Maton had surgery Monday to repair the fractured finger on his pitching hand.

The 29-year-old Maton gave up two hits, including a single to younger brother Nick Maton, and two runs while recording one out in the eighth inning of Houston's 3-2 win over Philadelphia last Wednesday.

UP NEXT

Seattle's deadline acquisition Luis Castillo, who got the win in the team's playoff opener at Toronto, opposes Framber Valdez in Game 2 Thursday in Houston.

## Ex-Texas cop charged for shooting teen eating hamburger

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A now-former San Antonio police officer was charged Tuesday with two counts of aggravated assault by a peace officer for shooting and gravely wounding a teen eating a hamburger in his car in a McDonald's parking lot. The teen had begun driving away when the officer opened fire.

James Brennand, 25, was charged in the Oct. 2 shooting of Erik Cantu, 17, according to a police statement. He turned himself in to police Tuesday night and remained in custody, said Police Chief William McManus.

Cantu is still unconscious and on life support, his family said Tuesday.

"There is no improvement in his condition," the family said in a statement delivered by their lawyer, Brian Powers. "The last two days have been difficult, and we expect more difficulty ahead, but we remain hopeful."

Brennand, a rookie officer, reported the vehicle Cantu was sitting in had evaded him the night before during an attempted traffic stop. Brennand said he suspected the vehicle was stolen.

In body camera footage released by police, Brennand opens the car door and tells Cantu to get out. The car drives backward with the door open, and the officer fires multiple times into the vehicle. He continues to shoot as the car drives away.

Investigators quickly determined that the use of deadly force was unwarranted, and Brennand was fired. Charges against Cantu of aggravated assault and evading arrest were dropped.

A police spokesperson did not immediately respond to an inquiry about whether the vehicle was actually stolen.

Brennand is charged with two counts of assault because there was a passenger in the car. The passenger was unharmed.

In a press conference Tuesday evening, the police chief defended the department's training and said the failures were those of the individual officer.

In an appearance on CNN earlier Tuesday, McManus said he expected aggravated assault charges would be filed, and murder charges in the event Cantu dies.

McManus said Brennand's body camera video was "horrific."

"There is no question in anybody's mind looking at that video that the shooting is not justified," McManus said.

Police officials and the Bexar County District Attorney's Office did not immediately return messages from The Associated Press. Brennand has no published telephone number and could not be reached for comment.

Cantu's condition, as related in his family's statement, is in stark contrast to what police officials said in the wake of the shooting: that Cantu was hospitalized in stable condition.

"We'd like to correct any misrepresentations that Erik is in 'stable condition' or he is 'going to be fine.' That is not true. Every breath is a struggle for Erik. We ask for everyone's continued prayers for our son," the family said.

## Castellanos' bat, glove help Phillies top Braves 7-6 in NLDS

By PAUL NEWBERRY AP Sports Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Nick Castellanos had already carried quite a load with his bat.

When the Philadelphia Phillies needed his glove in the ninth inning, he didn't let them down.

Castellanos drove in three runs and made a potentially game-saving catch, lifting the Philadelphia Phillies over the reigning World Series champion Atlanta Braves 7-6 in the opener of their NL Division Series on Tuesday.

The Phillies have won three straight games to begin these playoffs, hardly looking like a team making its first postseason appearance since 2011. They followed up their wild-card sweep of the St. Louis Cardinals with a victory over the team that finished 14 games ahead of them in the NL East.

It wasn't easy. Matt Olson hit a three-run homer in the ninth off Zach Eflin to bring the Braves within a run.

But Castellanos, capping off a brilliant all-around day, made a sliding catch in right field for the second out to help snuff out the comeback — a clutch play from a player frequently maligned for his defense.

"Do anything I could to not let it hit the ground," Castellanos said of his mindset.

He sprawled out on the grass — arms raised above his head, the ball securely in his glove — before rolling over and flipping it back to the infield.

Castellanos appears to be finding his groove after missing most of September with an oblique injury.

"I hope that's the start of something, because he's been out for a long time," manager Rob Thomson

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said. "Maybe he's really getting his timing back now."

Alec Bohm added two RBIs for the Phillies, who built a 7-1 lead by the top of the fifth and made it stand up against a Braves lineup that squandered numerous chances to get back in the game earlier.

Travis d'Arnaud homered and drove in the other three Atlanta runs, but the team that won 101 games during the regular season and edged the New York Mets in a thrilling NL East race suddenly finds itself in a best-of-five predicament.

Game 2 is Wednesday afternoon in Atlanta before the series shifts to Philly.

Castellanos had a run-scoring single in the first — the Phillies jumping ahead 2-0 before many fans had settled in their seats for the lunchtime start — and added a two-run single in the fourth.

Castellanos came in hitting .148 (4 for 27) in seven postseason games. He had nearly as many hits in this one, going 3 for 5.

And that catch on William Contreras' opposite-field liner truly made it a day to remember.

"Baseball is really, really fun right now," Castellanos said.

Max Fried, whose last postseason start was a World Series-clinching victory over the Astros, failed to get through the fourth against the Phillies.

The Braves ace was roughed up for eight hits and six runs — two of them unearned, but that was because of a throwing error by Fried.

The Phillies, on the other hand, have been playing like playoff-hardened veterans even though their 11-year postseason drought was the National League's longest.

They started the season dismally, which led to the firing of manager Joe Girardi in early June.

Thomson guided a remarkable turnaround as interim manager, the Phillies bouncing back to claim the NL's final wild card.

Thomson had the interim removed from his title on Monday, agreeing to a two-year deal to remain at the helm through 2024. The Phillies gave him quite a thank-you in his first game as plain ol' manager.

D'Arnaud led off the second with a homer deep into the left-field seats off Ranger Suárez to make it 2-1. But the 22-year-old left-hander was not flustered.

Suárez went just 3 1/3 innings but made a couple of big pitches to keep the Braves down.

After walking two to load the bases in the first, Suarez escaped on Contreras' inning-ending double play.

Atlanta loaded the bases again in the third, but d'Arnaud struck out on a high fastball out of the zone. Suárez pumped his fist emphatically on the way to the dugout.

"We had him on the ropes," Atlanta manager Brian Snitker said. "We just couldn't get a big hit."

The Braves put two more runners aboard in the fourth. This time, the threat ended with Dansby Swanson whiffing at a 3-2 pitch from Andrew Bellatti, who was credited with the win.

Swanson slammed his helmet to the dirt in frustration — which was pretty much indicative of how this day went for the defending champs.

The Phillies knocked out Fried in the fourth, the left-hander leaving with runners at second and third. Jesse Chavez had a chance to escape the jam after he struck out Realmuto, but Castellanos came through with a two-out single to left that made it 6-1.

## FRIED FLOPS

This was quite a postseason comedown for Fried.

In Game 6 of last year's World Series, he pitched six scoreless innings in a 7-0 victory that clinched Atlanta's first title in 26 years.

Fried was stricken with a stomach bug in the final week of the regular season but insisted he was fully recovered.

"I'm not going to make any excuses," he said. "I took the ball today and put us in a big hole right off the bat."

## ROSTER MOVES

Phillies reliever David Robertson was left off the NLDS roster after injuring his right calf jumping to celebrate Bryce Harper's home run in the clinching wild-card victory at St. Louis.

Spencer Strider, the Braves' hard-throwing rookie, made the roster after he was sidelined since Sept. 18 with a sore left oblique. He was not available for Game 1, but could pitch later in the series.

UP NEXT

RH Kyle Wright, who led the majors with 21 wins, faces a must-win situation when goes for the Braves in Game 2. He'll be opposed by Phillies RH Zack Wheeler (12-7, 2.87), who grew up in suburban Atlanta.

## **Biden vows 'consequences' for Saudis after OPEC+ cuts output**

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Tuesday there will be "consequences" for Saudi Arabia as the Riyadh-led OPEC+ alliance moves to cut oil production and Democratic lawmakers call for a freeze on cooperation with the Saudis.

Biden suggested he would soon take action, as aides announced that the administration is reevaluating its relationship with the kingdom in light of the oil production cut that White House officials say will help another OPEC+ member, Russia, pad its coffers as it continues its nearly eight-month war in Ukraine.

Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut and Rep. Ro Khanna of California introduced legislation that would immediately pause all U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia for one year. This pause would also halt sales of spare and repair parts, support services and logistical support.

But it remains to be seen how far Biden is willing to go in showing his displeasure with the Saudis, a vital but complicated ally in the Middle East. Biden came into office vowing to recalibrate the U.S. relationship because of Saudi Arabia's human rights record but then paid a visit to the kingdom earlier this year.

Biden said in a CNN interview he would look to consult with Congress on the way forward, but stopped short of endorsing the Democratic lawmakers' call to halt weapons sales.

"There's going to be some consequences for what they've done, with Russia," Biden said. "I'm not going to get into what I'd consider and what I have in mind. But there will be — there will be consequences."

John Kirby, a White House National Security Council spokesman, said Biden believes "it's time to take another look at this relationship and make sure that it's serving our national security interests."

Press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Tuesday the White House has no timeline for its review nor has the president appointed an adviser to serve as point person.

Meanwhile, officials underscore the central role that Saudi Arabia plays in addressing broader national security concerns in the Middle East.

Blumenthal and Khanna unveiled their legislation one day after Sen. Robert Menendez, a New Jersey Democrat, said it was unacceptable that OPEC+ had moved to cut oil production and effectively assist Moscow in its war on Ukraine. Menendez promised to use his position as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to block any future arms sales to the Saudis.

Menendez did not warn the White House before announcing his intention to block future Saudi arms sales, Kirby said.

OPEC+, which includes Russia as well as Saudi Arabia, announced last week it would cut production by 2 million barrels a day, which will help prop up oil prices that are allowing Russian President Vladimir Putin to keep paying for his eight-month invasion of Ukraine. The production cut also hurts U.S.-led efforts to make the war financially unsustainable for Russia, threatens a global economy already destabilized by the Ukraine conflict and risks saddling Biden and Democrats with newly rising gasoline prices just ahead of the U.S. midterm elections.

Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud told Saudi-owed Al Arabiya on Tuesday that his government's justification of the production cuts was "purely economic."

Biden and European leaders have urged more oil production to ease gasoline prices and punish Moscow for its aggression in Ukraine. Putin has been accused of using energy as a weapon against countries opposing Russia's invasion.

"They are certainly aligning themselves with Russia," Jean-Pierre said. "This is not a time to be aligning with Russia."

As for the Saudis, Sen. Blumenthal said, "We cannot continue selling highly sensitive arms technology to a nation aligned with an abhorrent terrorist adversary."

However, the White House takes note that its weapon sales to Riyadh serve, in part, as an important counterweight in the region to Iran, which is quickly moving toward becoming a nuclear power.

"There's 70,000 Americans living in Saudi Arabia right now, not to mention all the other troops we have throughout the region," Kirby said. "So, it's not only in our interest that missile defense in the region become more integrated and cooperative. It's in the interest of our allies and partners in that part of the world as well."

Still, the pressure is mounting for Biden. As a candidate for the White House, he vowed that Saudi rulers would "pay the price" under his watch for the 2018 killing of U.S.-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a critic of the kingdom's leadership. Biden said that he'd look to make the oil-rich country a "pariah."

But in July, amid rising prices at the pump around the globe, Biden decided to pay a visit to Saudi Arabia. During the visit, he met with the Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, who he once shunned as a killer for the death of Khashoggi. The U.S. intelligence community determined that the crown prince, often referred to by his initials MBS, likely approved the killing of Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. MBS denies he was involved.

The Saudis have also drawn international criticism for airstrikes killing civilians in the years-long war between the kingdom and Houthi rebels in Yemen — as well as for embargoes that exacerbated hunger and pushed Yemen to the brink of famine.

"Saudi Arabia's disastrous decision to slash oil production by two million barrels a day makes it clear that Riyadh is seeking to harm the U.S. and reaffirms the need to reassess the U.S.-Saudi relationship," Khanna said. "There is no reason for the U.S. to kowtow to a regime that has massacred countless civilians in Yemen, hacked to death a Washington-based journalist and is now extorting Americans at the pump."

## California expands largest US illegal pot eradication effort

By DON THOMPSON Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — With California's four-year-old legal marijuana market in disarray, the state's top prosecutor said Tuesday that he will try a new broader approach to disrupting illegal pot farms that undercut the legal economy and sow widespread environmental damage.

The state will expand its nearly four-decade multi-agency seasonal eradication program — the largest in the U.S. that this year scooped up nearly a million marijuana plants — into a year-round effort aimed at investigating who is behind the illegal grows. The new program will attempt to prosecute underlying labor crimes, environmental crimes and the underground economy centered around the illicit cultivations, said Attorney General Rob Bonta.

He called it "an important shift in mindset and in mission" aimed at also aiding California's faltering legal market by removing dangerous competition.

"The illicit marketplace outweighs the legal marketplace" Bonta said. "It's upside down and our goal is complete eradication of the illegal market."

In keeping with the new approach, the annual Campaign Against Marijuana Planting (CAMP) program started under Republican Gov. George Deukmejian in 1983 will become a permanent Eradication and Prevention of Illicit Cannabis (EPIC) task force, Bonta said.

CAMP began in "a very different time, a different era, a different moment during the failed war on drugs and (at) a time when cannabis was still entirely illegal," Bonta said.

The seasonal eradication program, which lasts about 90 days each summer, still will continue with the cooperation of other federal, state and local agencies. They include the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, National Park Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California State Parks and the California National Guard, some of which will also participate in the new task force, he said.

The task force will work with state Department of Justice prosecutors, the department's Cannabis Control

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Section and an existing Tax Recovery in the Underground Economy ( TRUE ) task force that was created by law in 2020, all with the goal of filing civil and criminal cases against those behind illegal grows.

Federal and state prosecutors in California have long tried, without much success, to target the organized crime cartels behind the hidden farms rather than the often itinerant laborers hired to tend and guard the often remote marijuana plots scattered across public and private land.

The laborers frequently live in crude camps with no running water or sewers and use caustic pesticides to kill animals that might otherwise eat the growing plants. But the pollution they leave behind has spread into downstream water supplies and the pesticides can spread up through the food chain.

The workers are victims of human trafficking, Bonta said, "living in squalid conditions alone for months on end and with no way out. These are not the people who are profiting from the illegal cannabis industry. They're being abused, they're the victims. They are cogs in a much bigger and more organized machine."

For example, about 80% of the 44 illegal grow sites found on and around Bureau of Land Management properties this year were connected to drug trafficking organizations, said Karen Mouritsen, the bureau's California state director.

"It's clear that there are big challenges with respect to organized crime," Bonta said. But he said he expects better results this time because the new year-round effort by multiple agencies "will make a big dent, a bit splash and lots of noise about our common priority to address the illicit marketplace, including at the highest levels."

Bonta is running to keep his job from Republican challenger and former federal prosecutor Nathan Hochman in next month's election. He is taking a familiar recent approach by Democrats nationwide in concentrating on dealers who provide illegal drugs rather than the users who support the underground economy. President Joe Biden last week said he is pardoning thousands of Americans convicted of "simple possession" of marijuana under federal law, while San Francisco officials announced a new effort to curb open drug dealing.

The year-round approach "is long since overdue," Hochman said. "Only by hitting illegal drug growers where it hurts, by seizing their plants and their proceeds, will California be able to help the legal cannabis industry survive and thrive."

For those trying to exist under the legal market approved by California voters in 2016, the problem has been falling pot prices, restricted sales, high taxes despite the recent repeal of the cannabis cultivation tax, and the fact that buyers can find better bargains in the booming underground marketplace.

Aside from the nearly 1 million plants that Bonta valued at about \$1 billion, this year's eradication program seized more than 100 tons of processed marijuana, 184 weapons and about 33 tons of materials used to cultivate the plants, including dams, water lines and containers of toxic chemicals including pesticides and fertilizers.

## Smashing success: NASA asteroid strike results in big nudge

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A spacecraft that plowed into a small, harmless asteroid millions of miles away succeeded in shifting its orbit, NASA said Tuesday in announcing the results of its save-the-world test.

The space agency attempted the test two weeks ago to see if in the future a killer rock could be nudged out of Earth's way.

"This mission shows that NASA is trying to be ready for whatever the universe throws at us," NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said during a briefing at the space agency's headquarters in Washington.

The Dart spacecraft carved a crater into the asteroid Dimorphos on Sept. 26, hurling debris out into space and creating a cometlike trail of dust and rubble stretching several thousand miles (kilometers). It took consecutive nights of telescope observations from Chile and South Africa to determine how much the impact altered the path of the 525-foot (160-meter) asteroid around its companion, a much bigger space rock.

Before the impact, the moonlet took 11 hours and 55 minutes to circle its parent asteroid. Scientists had



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anticipated shaving off 10 minutes, but Nelson said the impact shortened the asteroid's orbit by 32 minutes.

"Let's all just kind of take a moment to soak this in ... for the first time ever, humanity has changed the orbit" of a celestial body, noted Lori Glaze, NASA's director of planetary science.

Apollo astronaut Rusty Schweickart, a co-founder of the nonprofit B612 Foundation, dedicated to protecting Earth from asteroid strikes, said he's "clearly delighted, no question about that" by the results and the attention the mission has brought to asteroid deflection.

The team's scientists said the amount of debris apparently played a role in the outcome. The impact may also have left Dimorphos wobbling a bit, said NASA program scientist Tom Statler. That may affect the orbit, but it will never go back to its original location, he noted.

The two bodies originally were already less than a mile (1.2 kilometers) apart. Now they're tens of yards (meters) closer.

Neither asteroid posed a threat to Earth — and still don't as they continue their journey around the sun. That's why scientists picked the pair for this all-important dress rehearsal.

Planetary defense experts prefer nudging a threatening asteroid or comet out of the way, given years or even decades of lead time, rather than blowing it up and creating multiple pieces that could rain down on Earth.

"We really need to also have that warning time for a technique like this to be effective," said mission leader Nancy Chabot of Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory, which built the spacecraft and managed the \$325 million mission.

"You've got to know they're coming," added Glaze.

Launched last year, the vending machine-size Dart — short for Double Asteroid Redirection Test — was destroyed when it slammed into the asteroid 7 million miles (11 million kilometers) away at 14,000 mph (22,500 kph).

"This is huge feat, not only in achieving the first step in possibly being able to protect ourselves from future asteroid impacts," but also for the amount of images and data collected internationally, Daniel Brown, an astronomer at Nottingham Trent University in England, said via email.

Brown also said that it's "particularly exciting" that the debris tail can be seen by amateur skygazers with medium-size telescopes.

Team scientists cautioned more work is needed to not only identify more of the countless space rocks out there, but to ascertain their makeup — some are solid, while others are rubble piles. Scouting missions might be needed, for instance, before launching impactors to deflect the orbits.

"We should not be too eager to say one test on one asteroid tells us exactly how every other asteroid would behave in a similar situation," Statler said.

Nonetheless, he and others are rejoicing over this first effort.

"We've been imagining this for years and to have it finally be real is really quite a thrill," he said.

## Weinstein lawyer decries 'almost medieval' cell conditions

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Harvey Weinstein's attorney told the judge at his sexual assault trial Tuesday that conditions in the holding cell where he's being kept after court are "unhygienic" and "almost medieval."

Attorney Mark Werksman asked Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Lisa B. Lench for help with the issue at the beginning of the second day of jury selection in the former movie mogul's trial on 11 counts of rape and sexual assault.

He said Weinstein is being left alone in his wheelchair for three or four hours in an "unsanitary, fetid" holding cell at the courthouse before he is taken back to jail.

"It's almost medieval, the conditions," Werksman said. "He's 70 years old. I'm worried about him surviving this ordeal without a heart attack or stroke."

Weinstein, and the panel of 71 jurors who were brought in to fill out an initial questionnaire on Tuesday, were not yet present during Werksman's remarks.

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Lench replied that she would talk to deputies from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, which runs the jails and transports inmates to court, but that her power was limited over the matter.

"I'm not minimizing it, I'm just not sure there's a lot to be done," she said.

Weinstein, who is allowed to change into a suit from his jail attire for trial, was wheeled into the courtroom soon after, and slowly and carefully climbed into a seat at the defense table.

Werksman then raised the issue again, suggesting Weinstein didn't have a toilet to use in the cell.

Lench replied, "He's not deprived of a toilet, there is a toilet in the cell. I'm not going to let the record reflect that he's deprived of a toilet."

Werksman said he didn't mean to suggest there was no toilet at all, but said "It is unhygienic, it is virtually unusable, it is medieval."

An email seeking comment from the Sheriff's Department was not immediately returned.

Weinstein's attorneys have brought up his failing health repeatedly both during his New York trial, where he was sentenced to 23 years in prison for convictions of rape and sexual assault, and in his pre-trial hearings in Los Angeles.

He was hospitalized with chest pains and had a heart procedure immediately after he was found guilty in New York in February of 2020, and was diagnosed with COVID-19 in prison in the first weeks of the pandemic.

His lawyers have said he has diabetes and is "technically blind." They have asked the judge for permission to see an outside dentist because the one he sees in jail keeps pulling out his teeth.

In court, he appears pale and frail, looking nothing like the bearish man who once lorded over the Oscars every year.

Weinstein's trial, which comes five years after women's stories about him gave momentum to the #MeToo movement, is expected to last eight weeks. With the slow process of screening and selecting jurors from a pool of more than 200, opening statements aren't expected until Oct. 24.

## UN, G7 decry Russian attack on Ukraine as possible war crime

By ADAM SCHRECK Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces showered Ukraine with more missiles and munition-carrying drones Tuesday after widespread strikes killed at least 19 people in an attack the U.N. human rights office described as "particularly shocking" and amounting to potential war crimes.

Air raid warnings sounded throughout Ukraine for a second straight morning as officials advised residents to conserve energy and stock up on water. The strikes have knocked out power across the country and pierced the relative calm that had returned to Kyiv and many other cities far from the war's front lines.

"It brings anger, not fear," Kyiv resident Volodymyr Vasylenko, 67, said as crews worked to restore traffic lights and clear debris from the capital's streets. "We already got used to this. And we will keep fighting."

The leaders of the Group of Seven industrial powers condemned the bombardment and said they would "stand firmly with Ukraine for as long as it takes." Their pledge defied Russian warnings that Western assistance would prolong the war and the pain of Ukraine's people.

Russia launched the widespread attacks in retaliation for a weekend explosion that damaged the Kerch Bridge between Russia and the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow annexed in 2014. Russian President Vladimir Putin alleged that Ukrainian special services masterminded the blast. The Ukrainian government has applauded it but not claimed responsibility.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told the G-7 leaders during a virtual meeting that during the past two days Russia fired more than 100 missiles and dozens of drones at Ukraine, and that while Ukraine shot down many of them, it needs "more modern and effective" air defense systems.

The Pentagon earlier announced plans to deliver the first two advanced NASAMS anti-aircraft systems to Ukraine in the coming weeks. The systems, which Kyiv has long wanted, will provide medium- to long-range defense against missile attacks.

In a phone call with Zelenskyy on Tuesday, President Joe Biden "pledged to continue providing Ukraine

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with the support needed to defend itself, including advanced air defense systems," the White House said.

Zelenskyy thanked the U.S. and also Germany for speeding up the delivery of the first of four promised IRIS-T air defense systems. Ukraine's defense minister tweeted that the German system had just arrived, and that a "new era" of air defense for Ukraine had begun.

Zelenskyy also urged the G-7 leaders to respond "symmetrically" to the attacks on the Ukrainian energy sector by doing more to stop Russia from profiting off its exports of oil and gas.

"Such steps can bring peace closer," he said. "They will encourage the terrorist state to think about peace, about the unprofitability of war."

Ukrainian officials said the diffuse strikes on power plants and civilian areas made no "practical military sense." However, Putin's supporters had urged the Kremlin for weeks to take tougher action in Ukraine and criticized the Russian military for a series of embarrassing battlefield setbacks.

Pro-Kremlin pundits lauded the attacks as an appropriate response to Kyiv's successful counteroffensives. Many of them argued that Moscow should keep up the intensity to win a war now in its eighth month.

The head of Britain's cyber-intelligence agency, Jeremy Fleming, said Tuesday in a rare public speech that Russia is running out of military supplies and struggling to fill its ranks.

"Russia's forces are exhausted," Fleming said. "The use of prisoners as reinforcements, and now the mobilization of tens of thousands of inexperienced conscripts, speaks of a desperate situation."

Like Monday's strikes, the bombardment Tuesday struck both energy infrastructure and civilian areas. One person was killed when 12 missiles slammed into the southern city of Zaporizhzhia, setting off a large fire, the State Emergency Service said. A local official said the missiles hit a school, residential buildings and medical facilities.

Energy facilities in the western Lviv and Vinnytsia regions also took hits. Officials said Ukrainian forces shot down an inbound Russian missile before it reached Kyiv, but the capital region experienced rolling power outages as a result of the previous day's strikes.

The State Emergency Service said 19 people died and 105 people were wounded in Monday's strikes. At least five of the victims were in Kyiv, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said. More than 300 cities and towns lost power.

A spokesperson for the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights said Tuesday that strikes on "civilian objects," including infrastructure such as power plants, could qualify as a war crime.

"Damage to key power stations and lines ahead of the upcoming winter raises further concerns for the protection of civilians and in particular the impact on vulnerable populations," Ravina Shamdasani told reporters in Geneva. "Attacks targeting civilians and objects indispensable to the survival of civilians are prohibited under international humanitarian law."

War crimes investigations have long been underway in towns where mass graves were found, along with other evidence of atrocities, after they were liberated from Russian occupation. In Lyman, a city in the eastern Donetsk region, forensic workers pulled several bodies from a mass grave Tuesday, part of an arduous effort to piece together evidence of what happened under more than four months of Russian occupation. Regional Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said the bodies of 32 Ukrainian soldiers have been exhumed so far from one mass grave.

The tempo of the war in the last month fanned concerns that Moscow might broaden the battlefield and resort to using nuclear weapons in Ukraine. As Ukraine's counteroffensives in the east and south forced Russia's troops to retreat from some areas, a cornered Kremlin ratcheted up Cold War-era rhetoric.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Tuesday that Moscow would only employ nuclear weapons if the Russian state faced imminent destruction. Speaking on state TV, he accused the West of encouraging false speculation about the Kremlin's intentions.

Russia's nuclear doctrine envisions "exclusively retaliatory measures intended to prevent the destruction of the Russian Federation as a result of direct nuclear strikes or the use of other weapons that raise the threat for the very existence of the Russian state," Lavrov said.

In Brussels, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the alliance would hold annual war exercises testing the state of readiness of its nuclear capabilities next week as scheduled.

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Asked whether it was the wrong time for them, Stoltenberg replied: "It would send a very wrong signal now if we suddenly cancelled a routine, longtime-planned exercise because of the war in Ukraine."

Stoltenberg called Putin's rhetoric "irresponsible" but said he believes "Russia knows that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought."

NATO as an organization does not possess nuclear weapons. They remain under the control of three member countries — the United States, the U.K. and France.

The G-7, leaders who held the emergency meeting in response to Monday's attack, said the "indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilian populations constitute a war crime" and reaffirmed their "commitment to providing the support Ukraine needs to uphold its sovereignty and territorial integrity."

The pledge appeared to come in response to Kremlin warnings that Western military assistance, including training Ukrainian soldiers in NATO countries and feeding real-time satellite data to target Russian forces, increasingly made Ukraine's allies parties to the conflict.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said continued U.S. weapons deliveries to Ukraine would prolong the fighting and inflict more damage on the country without changing Russia's objectives.

As Russian forces pounded three districts around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant overnight, Ukraine's state nuclear operator said Russian forces kidnapped the plant's deputy human resources director.

Russians previously detained the facility's general director and released him following pressure from International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi.

Grossi met with Putin on Tuesday in St. Petersburg and urged him to agree to a "safety and security protection zone" around the occupied plant to prevent a radiation disaster.

## Angela Lansbury, 'Murder She Wrote' star, dies at 96

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Angela Lansbury, the scene-stealing British actor who kicked up her heels in the Broadway musicals "Mame" and "Gypsy" and solved endless murders as crime novelist Jessica Fletcher in the long-running TV series "Murder, She Wrote," has died. She was 96.

Lansbury died Tuesday at her home in Los Angeles, according to a statement from her three children. She died five days shy of her 97th birthday.

Hers was a 75-year career that included beloved musicals on stage, iron-fisted matriarchs on film, singing the theme song for the animated movie "Beauty and the Beast," being made a Dame by Queen Elizabeth II and the creation of one of television's best loved characters.

Lansbury won five Tony Awards for her Broadway performances and a lifetime achievement award. She earned Academy Award nominations as supporting actress for two of her first three films, "Gaslight" (1945) and "The Picture of Dorian Gray" (1946), and was nominated again in 1962 for "The Manchurian Candidate" and her deadly portrayal of a Communist agent and the title character's mother.

Her mature demeanor prompted producers to cast her much older than her actual age. In 1948, when she was 23, her hair was streaked with gray so she could play a fortyish newspaper publisher with a yen for Spencer Tracy in "State of the Union."

Her stardom came in middle age when she became the hit of the New York theater, winning Tony Awards for "Mame" (1966), "Dear World" (1969), "Gypsy" (1975) and "Sweeney Todd" (1979).

She was back on Broadway and got another Tony nomination in 2007 in Terrence McNally's "Deuce," playing a scrappy, brash former tennis star, reflecting with another ex-star as she watches a modern-day match from the stands. In 2009 she collected her fifth Tony, for best featured actress in a revival of Noel Coward's "Blithe Spirit" and in 2015 won an Olivier Award in the role.

Broadway royalty paid their respects. Audra McDonald tweeted: "She was an icon, a legend, a gem, and about the nicest lady you'd ever want to meet." Leslie Uggams on Twitter wrote: "Dame Angela was so sweet to me when I made my Broadway debut. She was a key person in welcoming me to the community. She truly lived, lived, lived!"

Playwright Paul Rudnick added: "she provided the most fabulous, irreplaceable joy. She was beloved

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as a person and an actress, and managed to be approachable, glamorous and heartbreaking. She'll be missed, celebrated and adored."

But Lansbury's widest fame began in 1984 when she launched "Murder, She Wrote" on CBS. Based loosely on Agatha Christie's Miss Marple stories, the series centered on Jessica Fletcher, a middle-aged widow and former substitute school teacher living in the seaside village of Cabot Cove, Maine. She had achieved notice as a mystery novelist and amateur sleuth.

The actor found the first series season exhausting.

"I was shocked when I learned that I had to work 12-15 hours a day, relentlessly, day in, day out," she recalled. "I had to lay down the law at one point and say 'Look, I can't do these shows in seven days; it will have to be eight days.'"

CBS and the production company, Universal Studio, agreed, especially since "Murder, She Wrote" had become a Sunday night hit. Despite the long days — she left her home at Brentwood in West Los Angeles at 6 a.m. and returned after dark — and reams of dialogue to memorize, Lansbury maintained a steady pace. She was pleased that Jessica Fletcher served as an inspiration for older women.

"Women in motion pictures have always had a difficult time being role models for other women," she observed. "They've always been considered glamorous in their jobs."

In the series' first season, Jessica wore clothes that were almost frumpy. Then she acquired smartness, Lansbury reasoning that, as a successful woman, Jessica should dress the part.

"Murder, She Wrote" stayed high in the ratings through its 11th year. Then CBS, seeking a younger audience for Sunday night, shifted the series to a less favorable midweek slot. Lansbury protested vigorously to no avail. As expected, the ratings plummeted and the show was canceled. For consolation, CBS contracted for two-hour movies of "Murder, She Wrote" and other specials starring Lansbury.

"Murder, She Wrote" and other television work brought her 18 Emmy nominations but she never won one. She holds the record for the most Golden Globe nominations and wins for best actress in a television drama series and the most Emmy nominations for lead actress in a drama series.

In a 2008 Associated Press interview, Lansbury said she still welcomed the right script but did not want to play "old, decrepit women," she said. "I want women my age to be represented the way they are, which is vital, productive members of society."

"I'm astonished at the amount of stuff I managed to pack into the years that I have been in the business. And I'm still here!"

She was given the name Angela Brigid Lansbury when she was born in London on Oct. 16, 1925. Her family was distinguished: a grandfather was the fiery head of the Labour Party; her father the owner of a veneer factory; her mother a successful actor, Moyna MacGill.

"I was terribly shy, absolutely incapable of coming out of my shell," Lansbury remembered of her youth. "It took me years to get over that."

The Depression forced her father's factory into bankruptcy, and for a few years the family lived on money her mother had saved from her theater career. Angela suffered a shattering blow when her beloved father died in 1935. The tragedy forced her to become self-reliant — "almost a surrogate husband to my mother."

When England was threatened with German bombings in 1940, Moyna Lansbury struggled through red tape and won passage to America for her family. With the help of two sponsoring families, they settled in New York and lived on \$150 a month. To add to their income, Angela at 16 landed a nightclub job in Montreal doing impersonations and songs.

"The only thing I ever had confidence in is my ability to perform," she said. "That has been the grace note in my sonata of life, the thing that has absolutely seen me through thick and thin."

Moyna moved the family to Hollywood, hoping to find acting work. Failing that, she and Angela wrapped packages and sold clothing at a department store. An actor friend suggested Angela would be ideal for the role of Sybil Vane in "The Picture of Dorian Gray," which was being prepared at MGM. She tested, and studio boss Louis B. Mayer ordered: "Sign that girl!"

She was just 19 when her first film, "Gaslight," earned her an Oscar nomination, but MGM didn't know what to do with the new contract player. She appeared as Elizabeth Taylor's older sister in "National Vel-

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vet," Judy Garland's nemesis in "The Harvey Girls," Walter Pidgeon's spiteful wife in "If Winter Comes" and Queen Anne in "The Three Musketeers."

Tired of playing roles twice her own age, she left MGM to freelance but the results were much the same: the mother of Warren Beatty in "All Fall Down," of Elvis Presley in "Blue Hawaii," of Carroll Baker in "Harlow," and of Laurence Harvey in "The Manchurian Candidate," in which she unforgettably manipulates her son and helps set off a killing spree.

In the mid-1940s, Lansbury had a disastrous nine-month marriage to Richard Cromwell, a soulful young star of the 1930s. In 1949, she married Peter Shaw, a Briton who had been under an acting contract to MGM, then became a studio executive and agent. He assumed the role of Lansbury's manager. They had two children; he had a son by a previous marriage.

The 1950s were a troubled time for the Shaws. Angela's career slowed down; her mother died after a battle with cancer; Peter underwent a hip operation; the children were on drugs; the family house in Malibu burned to the ground.

Lansbury later said of the fire: "It's like cutting off a branch, a big, luscious branch of your life and sealing it off with a sealer so it doesn't bleed, That's what you do. That's how the human mind deals with those things. You have to pick up the pieces and go on."

Weary of 20 years of typecasting, Lansbury tried her luck on Broadway. Her first two shows — "Anyone Can Whistle" and "Hotel Paradiso" (with Bert Lahr) — flopped.

Then came "Mame." Rosalind Russell declined to repeat her classic role as Patrick Dennis's dizzy aunt in a musical version. So did Mary Martin and Ethel Merman. Others considered: Bette Davis, Lauren Bacall, Judy Garland, Beatrice Lillie, Judy Garland. Composer Jerry Herman chose Lansbury.

The opening on May 24, 1966, was a sensation. One critic wondered that "the movies' worn, plump old harridan with a snakepit for a mouth" could turn out to be "the liveliest dame to kick up her heels since Carol Channing in 'Hello, Dolly.'"

After her "Sweeney Todd" triumph, Lansbury returned to Hollywood to try television. She was offered a sitcom with Charles Durning or "Murder, She Wrote." The producers had wanted Jean Stapleton, who declined. Lansbury accepted.

During the series' long run, she managed to star in TV movies, to be host of Emmy and Tony shows and even to provide the voice for a Disney animated feature. She played Mrs. Potts in "Beauty and the Beast" and sang the title song. "This was really a breakthrough for me," she said of her young following. "It acquainted me with a generation that I possibly couldn't have contacted."

In 2000, Lansbury withdrew from a planned Broadway musical, "The Visit," because she needed to help her husband recover from heart surgery. "The kind of commitment required of an artist carrying a multimillion-dollar production has to be 100%," she said in a letter to the producers.

Her husband died in 2003.

She was back on Broadway in 2012 in a revival of "The Best Man," sharing a stage with James Earl Jones, John Larroquette, Candice Bergen, Eric McCormack, Michael McKean and Kerry Butler. She also recently co-starred in Emma Thompson's "Nanny McPhee" and with Jim Carrey in "Mr. Popper's Penguins."

At the 2022 Tony Awards, Len Cariou — her "Sweeney Todd" co-star — accepted the lifetime Tony given to Lansbury. "There is no one with whom I'd rather run a cutthroat business with," Cariou said.

In 1990, Lansbury philosophized: "I have sometimes drawn back from my career. To what? Home. Home is the counterweight to the work."

In addition to her three children, Anthony, Deirdre and David, she is survived by three grandchildren, Peter, Katherine and Ian, plus five great grandchildren and her brother, producer Edgar Lansbury.

## Attorneys argue over school shooter's fate: death or prison

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — The prosecutor and defense attorney for Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz agreed Tuesday that his 2018 attack that killed 17 people was horrible, but disagreed in their closing

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arguments on whether it was an act of evil worthy of execution or one of a broken person who should be imprisoned for life.

Lead prosecutor Mike Satz and his defense counterpart, Melisa McNeill, painted for the 12 jurors competing pictures of what drove Cruz's attack at Parkland's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on Valentine's Day.

For Satz, Cruz was driven by antisocial personality disorder — in lay terms, he's a sociopath. He deserves a death sentence because he "was hunting his victims" as he stalked a three-story classroom building for seven minutes. He fired his AR-15-style semiautomatic rifle into some victims at close range and returned to wounded victims as they lay helpless "to finish them off."

Satz pointed to Cruz's internet writings and videos, where he talked about his murderous desires such as when he wrote, "No mercy, no questions, double tap. I am going to kill a ... ton of people and children."

"It is said that what one writes and says is a window into their soul," Satz said as the three-month trial neared its conclusion. The killings, he said, "were unrelentlessly heinous, atrocious and cruel."

McNeill said neither Cruz nor herself has ever denied what he did and that "he knew right from wrong and he chose wrong." But she said the former Stoneman Douglas student is "a broken, brain-damaged, mentally ill young man," doomed from conception by the heavy drinking and drug use of his birth mother during pregnancy. She argued for a sentence of life without parole, assuring them he will never walk free again.

"It's the right thing to do. Mercy is what makes us civilized. Giving mercy to Nikolas will say more about who you are than it will ever say about him," McNeill told the jury.

Cruz, 24, pleaded guilty a year ago to murdering 14 students and three staff members and wounding 17 others.

The jury will only decide his sentence, and a unanimous vote is required for death. Jurors can vote for death if they believe the prosecution's aggravating factors such as the multiple deaths and the planning outweigh the defense's mitigating circumstances such as his birth mother's drinking. They can also vote for life out of mercy for Cruz. Deliberations are expected to begin Wednesday.

Cruz, dressed in an off-white sweater, sat impassively during the presentations, occasionally exchanging notes with his attorneys. A large number of the victims' parents, wives and family members packed their section of the courtroom, many of them weeping during Satz's presentation. The mother of a murdered 14-year-old girl fled the courtroom before bursting into loud sobs in the hallway. Just minutes earlier, the families had greeted each other with smiles, handshakes and hugs.

Satz meticulously went through the murders, reminding the jurors how each victim died and how Cruz looked some in the eye before he shot them multiple times.

"They all knew what was going on, what was going to happen," Satz said.

As he had during the trial, Satz played security videos of the shooting and showed photos. He talked about the death of one 14-year-old girl. Cruz shot her and then went back to shoot her again, putting his gun against her chest.

"Right on her skin. She was shot four times and she died," Satz said. He then noted a YouTube comment, which jurors saw during the trial, in which Cruz said: "I don't mind shooting a girl in the chest."

"That's exactly what he did," Satz said.

His voice breaking, Satz concluded his two-hour presentation by reciting the victims' names, then saying that for their murders "the appropriate sentence for Nikolas Cruz is the death penalty."

McNeill during her presentation acknowledged the horror Cruz inflicted and said jurors have every right to be angry, "but how many times have we made decisions based solely on anger and regretted it?"

She focused on her belief that heavy drinking by his birth mother, Brenda Woodard, during pregnancy left him with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. She said that accounts for his bizarre, troubling and sometimes violent behavior starting at age 2.

"There is no time in our lives when we are more vulnerable to the will and the whims of another human being than when we are growing and developing in the wombs of our mothers," McNeill said. Woodard "poisoned him in the womb. He was doomed in the womb."

She said Cruz's increasingly erratic personality left his widowed adoptive mother, Lynda Cruz, over-

whelmed. He punched holes in walls when he lost video games, destroyed furniture and killed animals. Visitors described the home as "a war zone," McNeill said.

She pleaded with the jurors to give Cruz a life sentence, telling them that even if they are the only hold-out they shouldn't fear what the reaction will be from the families or the community.

Gesturing toward the victims' families, she said, "There is no punishment you could ever give Nikolas Cruz that would ever make him suffer as much as those people have and as much as they will continue to suffer every single day."

"Sentencing Nikolas to death will not change that. It will not bring back those 17 dead people. Sentencing Nikolas to death will literally serve no purpose other than vengeance," she said. Instead, she said, "Look into your heart. Look into your soul. The right thing here, not the popular thing, is a life sentence."

Cruz's massacre is the deadliest mass shooting that has ever gone to trial in the U.S. Nine other people in the U.S. who fatally shot at least 17 people died during or immediately after their attacks by suicide or police gunfire. The suspect in the 2019 massacre of 23 at an El Paso, Texas, Walmart is awaiting trial.

## Fetterman, Oz vie for Black voters in close Pa. Senate race

By MIKE CATALINI and MARC LEVY Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — As Sheila Armstrong grew emotional in recounting how her brother and nephew were killed in Philadelphia, Dr. Mehmet Oz — sitting next to her inside a Black church, their chairs arranged a bit like his former daytime TV show set — placed a comforting hand on her shoulder.

Later, he gave a hug to Armstrong, who has been an employee of Oz's campaign for Pennsylvania's U.S. Senate seat, and said, "How do you cope?"

Two days later, on a stage 4 miles away, Oz's Democratic rival, John Fetterman, stood with Lee and Dennis Horton and spoke of his efforts as lieutenant governor to free the two Black men from life sentences.

"Almost 30 years in prison, condemned to die in prison as innocent men, and I fought to make sure they come out to their families," Fetterman told the crowd.

Black voters are at the center of an increasingly competitive battle in a race that could tilt control of the Senate, as Democrats try to harness outrage over the Supreme Court's abortion decision and Republicans tap the national playbook to focus on crime in cities.

They are perhaps the Democratic Party's most loyal supporters. About 9 in 10 Black voters nationally went for Joe Biden in 2020, according to AP VoteCast, an expansive survey of more than 110,000 voters nationwide. In Pennsylvania, the support was similar, at 94%.

There's no evidence of a looming mass defection to Republicans like Oz. But if he can peel off even a small share — or a critical mass of Black voters choose not to vote — it might prove consequential in a race that polls show as close.

In Philadelphia, where Black voters are the largest bloc in the swing state's biggest Democratic bastion, some activists question Democrats' outreach and fret about turnout.

Charles Ellison, the executive producer and host of Reality Check, a daily public affairs program on Philadelphia's prominent Black-themed WURD radio, said Democrats lack a unified message tailored for the Black community and didn't undertake a long-term investment in Black voter outreach.

"There's just not this realization that's occurring that Pennsylvania is a national battleground and Philadelphia is the cornerstone in that," Ellison said. "And the only way you're going to get Philadelphia and the only way you're going to get Pennsylvania is through maximum Black voter turnout."

Fetterman may benefit from this year's governor's race.

In it, Democrat Josh Shapiro's campaign said it is investing \$3 million in Black voter outreach while his opponent, Republican Doug Mastriano, has drawn criticism from members of his own party for focusing almost exclusively on his right-wing base.

Shapiro is also making regular visits to Black churches and businesses, has rolled out a platform to expand pathways to jobs and create wealth in Black communities, and endorsed a Black man, Austin Davis, for lieutenant governor.

In the Senate race, millions of dollars in Republican attack ads aired on TV in Philadelphia before Fet-



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terman — who spent much of the summer off the campaign trail recovering from a stroke — held his first public political event there in late September.

For Oz, crime is a primary thrust. He has held two public safety-themed town halls in Black communities, suggesting that Democrats have failed to protect them from violence and drugs.

Republicans frequently point to gun violence in Philadelphia and have sought to undercut one of Fetterman's avenues of appeal to Black voters: his efforts as lieutenant governor to free the over-incarcerated, rehabilitated or innocent. Republicans cast it as freeing dangerous criminals to roam the streets.

Fetterman and Democrats call that a lie and fearmongering that underestimates support among Black voters for giving second chances. And they say Black voters know they can trust Fetterman to support the things they care about, like voting rights legislation in Congress.

Plus, Oz is former President Donald Trump's endorsed candidate.

"I think most Black people would say he was one of the worst presidents for Black people in our lifetime," said Sharif Street, the state Democratic Party chair and the first Black person to hold the position. "I don't think a TV commercial can override what people know to already be true."

At Fetterman's rally at a recreation center in northeast Philadelphia, at least a half-dozen Black supporters introduced Fetterman.

One of the speakers, the Rev. Mark Tyler, said Fetterman supports things that Black voters care about, such as bringing jobs to "America's poorest big city," ending environmental racism and supporting stronger funding for city schools. Fetterman also supports criminal justice reform and ending gun violence, Tyler said.

"He did it as a mayor in Braddock and understands what it is to have to sit and stand with grieving Black families after such a tragic incident," Tyler said.

As Fetterman stood onstage with the Hortons — brothers who had their life sentences commuted after nearly 30 years in prison, and now work for Fetterman's campaign — he took aim at Oz's attacks for his work to free the men. Oz's campaign has called the Hortons "convicted murderers" and Fetterman "the most pro-murderer candidate for the Senate in the entire country."

The Hortons were convicted of second-degree murder in a fatal shooting during a robbery in a Philadelphia bar — crimes they maintained they didn't commit. Despite opposition from the victim's brother, Gov. Tom Wolf freed the men in late 2020, noting they had served 27 years after turning down plea deals for 5 to 10 years.

"What does it say about a person's character if they will fight to make sure innocent men will die in prison versus a man that will fight to make sure that they're able to get back with their families?" Fetterman asked the crowd. "That's the choice."

Oz-allied groups have also aired TV ads reviving a 2013 incident in which Fetterman — as Braddock's mayor — grabbed his shotgun and pursued a jogging Black man whom he suspected had been involved in gunfire nearby. No one was charged in the incident and Fetterman has said he didn't know the man's race before he confronted him.

"He didn't even apologize and now he wants our vote?" says a Black woman speaking on camera in an ad by the Republican Jewish Coalition. "Not a chance."

Oz's town halls take a softer tone, where the heart surgeon-turned-TV talk show host says he is there to listen and find solutions to problems that Democrats have let fester.

"The best thing a doctor does is listen. You can't fix a problem you don't hear. So I've spent a career heeding that and trying to understand what people are trying to say because then you can really get to the answers," Oz said. He's also touted his work to raise money for scholarships for Black medical students.

Love Williams, a 25-year-old registered Democrat who came to Oz's event at the invitation of a friend, said he wasn't sure he'll vote this fall after feeling like Biden has underdelivered for Black people.

Asked by Williams what he'd do to help his community, Oz said he'd push for more tax dollars for private schools and to open liquefied natural gas export stations in the city to bring wealth into the community.

Williams said afterward that he wasn't sold on Oz — or Oz's ideas, either.

The event, he said, came off as "just a political stop for one politician."

## Prosecutors drop charges against Adnan Syed in 'Serial' case

By BRIAN WITTE Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — Prosecutors dropped charges against Adnan Syed on Tuesday in the 1999 killing of Hae Min Lee after additional DNA testing excluded him as a suspect in a case chronicled by the hit podcast "Serial."

Marilyn Mosby, the state's attorney for the city of Baltimore, said her office would continue to pursue justice for Lee but that it had closed its case against Syed, who spent 23 years in prison for the killing. She said the decision was made after additional DNA testing excluded Syed as a suspect in the strangulation of Lee, whom Syed had dated.

"This case is over. There are no more appeals necessary," Mosby said during a news conference.

She said her office decided to drop the charges after receiving the results on Friday of DNA testing on Lee's skirt, pantyhose, jacket and shoes that was conducted using a more modern technique than when evidence in the case was first tested. Although no DNA was recovered from the skirt, pantyhose or jacket, some was recovered from Lee's shoes, "and most compellingly, Adnan Syed, his DNA was excluded," she said.

Mosby said that even though her administration wasn't responsible for the pain inflicted on Hae Min Lee's family or the wrongful conviction of Syed, "as a representative of the institution, it is my responsibility to acknowledge and to apologize to the family of Hae Min Lee and Adnan Syed."

She also said her office "will continue to utilize every available resource to prosecute whoever is responsible for the death of Hae Min Lee."

Syed's attorney Erica Suter celebrated the news, noting that Syed wasn't ready yet to speak about it publicly.

"Today's the day that Adnan Syed and his loved ones have been waiting for 23 long years," Suter said during a Zoom call with reporters. "The results of the DNA testing excluded Adnan and confirm what Adnan and his supporters have always known: that Adnan Syed is innocent. The state of Maryland has dropped the charges. Adnan Syed is free."

Suter, an assistant public defender and the director of the University of Baltimore Law School's Innocence Project Clinic, said Syed's legal team would begin working with the state's attorney's office as soon as possible to formally certify his innocence. She said it was premature to say whether they would seek compensation for wrongful conviction.

"Today we are just elated that Adnan is free," Suter said, noting that Syed plans to spend time with his loved ones. "I think he's just really elated to be able to have the small quiet everyday joys of freedom that many of us take for granted."

A Baltimore judge last month overturned Syed's murder conviction and ordered him released from prison, where the 41-year-old had spent more than two decades. Circuit Judge Melissa Phinn also gave prosecutors 30 days in which to decide whether to retry Syed or drop the charges.

Phinn ruled that the state had violated its legal obligation to share evidence that could have bolstered Syed's defense. Syed was placed on home detention with GPS location monitoring after he got out of prison, but those restrictions were lifted on Tuesday.

Lee's family last month asked the Court of Special Appeals, which is Maryland's intermediate appellate court, to halt the case. Attorney Steve Kelly said Lee's family was not challenging Syed's release, but instead wanted the judge to hold another hearing that the family can attend in-person and address the court — Lee's brother Young Lee appeared via videoconference on short notice during the previous hearing.

In a statement Tuesday, Kelly said the Lee family learned about prosecutors' decision to drop the charges through news accounts.

"The family received no notice and their attorney was offered no opportunity to be present at the proceeding," Kelly said. "By rushing to dismiss the criminal charges, the State's Attorney's Office sought to silence Hae Min Lee's family and to prevent the family and the public from understanding why the State

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so abruptly changed its position of more than 20 years. All this family ever wanted was answers and a voice. Today's actions robbed them of both."

Mosby said Tuesday that the family's appeal would have no effect on her office's decision to drop the charges against Syed.

Asked about the status of the Lee family's appeal, Suter noted that the appeals court hadn't dismissed it and that Syed's legal team was awaiting that court's next action.

Syed has maintained his innocence for decades and captured the attention of millions in 2014 when the debut season of "Serial" focused on the case and raised doubts about some of the evidence, including cellphone tower data.

The state's attorney's office has said that a reinvestigation of the case revealed evidence regarding the possible involvement of two alternate suspects. It said the two might have been involved individually or together, but it didn't disclose their names.

One of the suspects had threatened Lee, saying "he would make her (Ms. Lee) disappear. He would kill her," according to a court filing.

The suspects were known persons at the time of the original investigation and were not properly ruled out nor disclosed to the defense, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors also said new information revealed that one of the suspects was convicted of attacking a woman in her vehicle, and that one of the suspects was convicted of engaging in serial rape and sexual assault.

Prosecutors also acknowledged that unreliable cellphone data had been used to convict Syed.

Syed served more than 20 years in prison for the strangling of Lee, who was 18 at the time. Her body was found weeks later buried in a Baltimore park.

More than a decade later, the popular "Serial" podcast revealed little-known evidence and attracted millions of listeners, shattering podcast-streaming and downloading records.

## Conservative PACs inject millions into local school races

By COLLIN BINKLEY and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

As Republicans and Democrats fight for control of Congress this fall, a growing number of conservative political action groups are targeting their efforts closer to home: at local school boards.

Their aim is to gain control of more school systems and push back against what they see as a liberal tide in public education classrooms, libraries, sports fields, even building plans.

Once seen as sleepy affairs with little interest outside their communities, school board elections started to heat up last year as parents aired frustrations with pandemic policies. As those issues fade, right-leaning groups are spending millions on candidates who promise to scale back teachings on race and sexuality, remove offending books from libraries and nix plans for gender-neutral bathrooms or transgender-inclusive sports teams.

Democrats have countered with their own campaigns portraying Republicans as extremists who want to ban books and rewrite history.

At the center of the conservative effort is the 1776 Project PAC, which formed last year to push back against the New York Times' 1619 Project, which provides free lesson plans that center U.S. history around slavery and its lasting impacts. Last fall and this spring, the 1776 group succeeded in elevating conservative majorities to office in dozens of school districts across the U.S., propelling candidates who have gone on to fire superintendents and enact sweeping "bills of rights" for parents.

In the wake of recent victories in Texas and Pennsylvania — and having spent \$2 million between April 2021 and this August, according to campaign finance filings — the group is campaigning for dozens of candidates this fall. It's supporting candidates in Maryland's Frederick and Carroll counties, in Bentonville, Arkansas, and 20 candidates across southern Michigan.

Its candidates have won not only in deeply red locales but also in districts near liberal strongholds, including Philadelphia and Minneapolis. And after this November, the group hopes to expand further.

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"Places we're not supposed to typically win, we've won in," said Ryan Girdusky, founder of the group. "I think we can do it again."

In Florida, recent school board races saw an influx of attention — and money — from conservative groups, including some that had never gotten involved in school races.

The American Principles Project, a Washington think tank, put a combined \$25,000 behind four candidates for the Polk County board. The group made its first foray into school boards at the behest of local activists, its leader said, and it's weighing whether to continue elsewhere. The group's fundraising average surged from under \$50,000 the year before the pandemic to about \$2 million now.

"We lean heavily into retaking federal power," said Terry Schilling, the think tank's president. "But if you don't also take over the local school boards, you're not going to have local allies there to actually reverse the policies that these guys have been implementing."

In a move never before seen in the state, Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis endorsed a slate of school board candidates, putting his weight behind conservatives who share his opposition to lessons on sexuality and what he deems critical race theory. Most of the DeSantis-backed candidates won in their August races, in some cases replacing conservative members who had more moderate views than the firebrand governor.

The movement claims to be an opposing force to left-leaning teachers unions. They see the unions as a well-funded enemy that promotes radical classroom lessons on race and sexuality — a favorite smear is to call the unions "groomers." The unions, which also support candidates, have called it a fiction meant to stoke distrust in public schools.

In Maryland's Frederick County, the 1776 group is backing three school board candidates against four endorsed by education unions. The conservatives are running as the "Education Not Indoctrination" slate, with a digital ad saying children are being "held captive" by schools. The ad shows a picture of stacked books bearing the words "equity," "grooming," "indoctrination" and "critical race theory."

Karen Yoho, a board member running for re-election, said outside figures have stoked fears about critical race theory and other lessons that aren't taught in Frederick County.

The discourse has mostly stayed civil in her area, but Yoho takes exception to the accusation that teachers are "grooming" children.

"I find it disgusting," said Yoho, a retired teacher whose children went through the district. "It makes my heart hurt. And then I kind of get mad and I get defensive."

In Texas, Patriot Mobile — a wireless company that promotes conservative causes — has emerged as a political force in school board races. Earlier this year, its political arm spent more than \$400,000 out of \$800,000 raised to boost candidates in a handful of races in the northern Texas county where the company is based. All of its favored candidates won, putting conservatives in control of four districts.

The group did not respond to requests for comment, but a statement released after the spring victories said Texas was "just the beginning."

Some GOP strategists have cautioned against the focus on education, saying it could backfire with more moderate voters. Results so far have been mixed — the 1776 Project claims a 70% win rate, but conservative candidates in some areas have fallen flat in recent elections.

Still, the number of groups that have banded together under the umbrella of parental rights seems only to be growing. It includes national organizations such as Moms for Liberty, along with smaller grassroots groups.

"There is a very stiff resistance to the concerted and intentional effort to make radical ideas about race and gender part of the school day. Parents don't like it," said Jonathan Butcher, an education fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation.

The foundation and its political wing have been hosting training sessions encouraging parents to run for school boards, teaching them the basics about budgeting but also about the perceived dangers of what the group deems critical race theory.

For decades, education was seen as its "own little game" that was buffered from national politics, said Jeffrey Henig, a political science and education professor at Columbia University's Teachers College who

has written about outside funding in school board elections. Now, he said, local races are becoming battlegrounds for broader debates.

He said education is unlikely to be a decisive issue in the November election — it's overshadowed by abortion and the economy — but it can still be wielded to "amplify local discontent" and push more voters to the polls.

Republicans are using the tactic this fall as they look to unseat Democrats at all levels of government.

In Michigan, the American Principles Project is paying for TV ads against the Democratic governor where a narrator reads sexually explicit passages from the graphic novel "Gender Queer." It claims that "this is the kind of literature that Gretchen Whitmer wants your kids exposed to," while giant red letters appear saying "stop grooming our kids."

Similar TV ads are being aired in Arizona to attack Sen. Mark Kelly, and in Maine against Gov. Janet Mills, both Democrats.

## **Bodies exhumed from mass grave in Ukraine's liberated Lyman**

By JUSTIN SPIKE Associated Press

LYMAN, Ukraine (AP) — Covered head-to-toe in protective suits, forensic workers pulled several bodies wrapped in black plastic from a mass grave Tuesday in Ukraine's devastated city of Lyman, part of an arduous effort to piece together evidence of what happened under more than four months of Russian occupation.

Ten body bags lay beside a roughly 100-foot (30-meter) trench from which authorities said 32 bodies have been exhumed so far in the city in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region.

The bodies were Ukrainian soldiers who had been buried together in a mass grave, the head of the Donetsk region's military administration, Pavlo Kyrylenko, said in Lyman on Tuesday.

Another 22 civilians have been exhumed from individual graves at the burial site, located on the edge of a cemetery in a forested area on the outskirts of Lyman. Further exhumations are planned.

The burial site was the second found in Lyman so far, Kyrylenko said, adding that initial investigations suggested the bodies had been buried by local residents and not by Russians.

"We have already found more than 50 bodies of soldiers and civilians," he said. "We have one long trench or mass grave ... We are finding bodies and parts of bodies here."

Lyman was liberated by Ukrainian forces at the end of September as part of a rapid Ukrainian counteroffensive which recaptured swaths of the Donetsk, Kharkiv and Kherson regions from Russian control.

As Ukrainian authorities entered the city, they found that many civilian residents had been killed by shelling. Others, mostly older people, had died during the Russian occupation because of a lack of food and medicine, Mark Tkachenko, communications inspector for the Kramatorsk district police of the Donetsk region, told The Associated Press last week.

The destruction in Lyman, a key rail and transit hub, is so widespread that large portions of the city have been completely destroyed. Ukrainian authorities are now working to restore basic infrastructure and investigate how civilians lived and died during the Russian occupation.

Forensic investigators on Tuesday lifted a black plastic bag from the trench and unzipped it to reveal a decomposed body in a bloody uniform of the Ukrainian armed forces. The remains were briefly inspected by investigators, then placed in another body bag and set among several others beside the trench.

Authorities said children have been found among the dead, and that most victims appeared to have died as the result of the heavy shelling that besieged the city for months.

They were cautious in describing whether any of the bodies exhumed Tuesday showed signs of having been executed or subjected to torture, emphasizing that the investigation was still in its early stages.

Other towns in Ukraine liberated from Russian occupation — such as Bucha, northwest of the capital of Kyiv, and Iziom in the Kharkiv region — are now the sites of war crimes investigations.

## **Iran's crackdown on protests intensifies in Kurdish region**

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

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DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran intensified its crackdown Tuesday on Kurdish areas in the country's west amid protests sparked by the death of a 22-year-old woman detained by the morality police as oil workers demonstrated at a key refinery, activists said.

Riot police fired into residential neighborhoods in Sanandaj, the capital of Iran's Kurdistan province, as Amnesty International and the White House's national security adviser criticized the violence targeting demonstrators angered by the death of Mahsa Amini.

Meanwhile, some oil workers Monday joined the protests at two key refinery complexes, for the first time linking an industry key to Iran's theocracy to the unrest. Workers claimed another protest Tuesday in the crucial oil city of Abadan, with others calling for protests on Wednesday as well.

Iran's government insists Amini was not mistreated, but her family says her body showed bruises and other signs of beating after she was detained for violating the Islamic Republic's strict dress code. Subsequent videos have shown security forces beating and shoving female protesters, including women who have torn off their mandatory headscarf, or hijab.

From the capital, Tehran, videos emerged showing students at two universities demonstrating and chanting. Some women and girls have marched through the streets without headscarves as the protests continue into a fourth week. The demonstrations represent one of the biggest challenges to Iran's theocracy since the 2009 Green Movement protests.

"There is just so much anger and frustration in the country that it's hard to imagine that the current generation of protesters in Iran would be cowed just by the system resorting to its traditional iron fist and trying to put down protests," said Ali Vaez, an analyst who covers Iran for the International Crisis Group.

Videos posted online by a Kurdish group called the Hengaw Organization for Human Rights showed darkened streets with apparent gunfire going off and a bonfire burning in Sanandaj, some 400 kilometers (250 miles) west of Tehran.

Another showed riot police carrying shotguns moving in formation with a vehicle, apparently firing at homes.

A video posted later Tuesday purportedly showed a massive bullet hole inside the home of one Sanandaj resident, a hole that Hengaw alleged came from a heavy .50-caliber machine gun — the type often mounted on armored vehicles. Another video purportedly showed security forces randomly firing in the air while arresting someone there on Monday.

Videos later Tuesday showed protesters throwing stones and wielding clubs in the city as they confronted security forces, who fired tear gas into the crowd. Hengaw reported a "fierce conflict" there Tuesday night, as well as in the nearby cities of Baneh and Saqqez, Amini's hometown.

The New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran posted another video showing what it described as a phalanx of motorcycle-riding security forces moving through Sanandaj.

"They reportedly broke the windows of hundreds of cars in the Baharan neighborhood," the center said.

Amini was Kurdish and her death has been felt particularly in Iran's Kurdish region, where demonstrations began Sept. 17 at her funeral there after her death the day before.

Amnesty International criticized Iranian security forces for "using firearms and firing tear gas indiscriminately, including into people's homes." It urged the world to pressure Iran to end the crackdown as Tehran continues to disrupt internet and mobile phone networks "to hide their crimes."

Iran did not immediately acknowledge the renewed crackdown in Sanandaj. However, Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned the British ambassador over the United Kingdom sanctioning members of the country's morality police and security officials due to the crackdown.

Iran's Foreign Ministry called the sanctions "arbitrary and baseless," even while threatening to potentially take countermeasures against London.

Jake Sullivan, U.S. President Joe Biden's national security adviser, similarly noted that "the world is watching what is happening in Iran."

"These protestors are Iranian citizens, led by women and girls, demanding dignity and basic rights," Sullivan wrote on Twitter. "We stand with them, and we will hold responsible those using violence in a vain effort to silence their voices."

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On Monday, workers held demonstrations in Abadan and Asaluyeh, a key point for Iran's massive offshore natural gas field in the Persian Gulf it shares with Qatar.

Iran's state-run IRNA news agency on Tuesday claimed the Asaluyeh demonstration was a strike over wages. Videos of the protests included workers chanting: "This is the bloody year Seyyed Ali will be overthrown," referring to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei without his Shiite religious title of ayatollah. Workers also said several of their colleagues had been detained by authorities after their protests Tuesday.

On Tuesday, the Contractual Oil Workers Protest Organizing Council claimed another strike at Abadan, posting videos outside of the massive refinery complex in the city near the Iraqi border. The details in the videos correspond with each and to known features of the facility compared against satellite photos taken in recent months.

The council later called on other oil workers to join them in solidarity — potentially raising the stakes further. The council's contractors typically build oil facilities, so their demonstrations haven't affected Iran's oil and gas production. Drawing in other workers potentially could change that.

It remains unclear how many people have been killed or arrested so far in the protests.

An Oslo-based group, Iran Human Rights, estimates at least 185 people have been killed. This includes an estimated 90 people killed by security forces in the eastern Iranian city of Zahedan amid demonstrations against a police officer accused of rape in a separate case. Iranian authorities have described the Zahedan violence as involving unnamed separatists, without providing details or evidence.

Iran's judiciary spokesman Masoud Setayeshi reportedly said Tuesday that Iran has released some 1,700 people arrested in the recent demonstrations, without offering a total figure for those detained so far.

Meanwhile on Tuesday, Iranian government spokesman Ali Bahadori Jahromi alleged without providing evidence that U.S. sanctions affected Amini's ability to get medicine for the chronic illnesses she faced. However, an Iranian government report Friday said that she was taking hydrocortisone and levothyroxine — two medicines made in Iran available in pharmacies in the country.

## Florida shrimpers race to get battered fleet back to sea

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

FORT MYERS BEACH, Fla. (AP) — The seafood industry in southwest Florida is racing against time and the elements to save what's left of a major shrimping fleet — and a lifestyle — that was battered by Hurricane Ian.

The storm's ferocious wind and powerful surge hurled a couple dozen shrimp boats atop wharves and homes along the harbor on Estero Island. Jesse Clapham, who oversees a dozen trawlers for a large seafood company at Fort Myers Beach, is trying to get boats back to sea as quickly as possible — before their engines, winches and pulleys seize up from being out of the water.

One of two shrimpers that didn't sink or get tossed onto land went out Sunday, but the victory was small compared with the task ahead.

"There's 300 people who work for us and all of them are out of a job right now. I'm sure they'd rather just mow all this stuff down and build a giant condo here, but we're not going to give up," said Clapham, who manages the fishing fleet at Erickson and Jensen Seafood, which he said handles \$10 million in shrimp annually.

The company's fractured wharves, flooded office and processing house are located on Main Street beside another large seafood company, Trico Shrimp Co. There, a crane lifted the outrigger of grounded shrimper Aces & Eights — the first step toward getting it back in the water. Across the yard, the massive Kayden Nicole and Renee Lynn sat side-by-side in the parking lot, stern to bow.

Shrimping is the largest piece of Florida's seafood industry, with a value of almost \$52 million in 2016, state statistics show. Gulf of Mexico shrimp from Fort Myers has been shipped all over the United States for generations.

Now, it's a matter of when the fishing can resume and whether there will still be experienced crews to operate the boats when that happens.

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Deckhand Michele Bryant didn't just lose a job when the boat where she works was grounded, she lost her home. Shrimping crews are at sea for as long as two months at a time, she said, so members often don't have homes on land.

"I've got nowhere to stay," she said. "I'm living in a tent."

Richard Brown's situation is just as precarious. A citizen of Guyana who was working on a boat out of Miami when Ian hit southwest Florida, Brown rode out the storm on one of four boats that were lashed together along a harbor seawall.

"We tried to fight the storm. The lines were bursting. We kept replacing them but when the wind turned everybody was on land," he said.

There's no way to catch shrimp on a boat surrounded by dirt, so Brown is staying busy scraping barnacles off the hull of the Gulf Star. "It's like it's on dry dock," he said — but he's no more sure what to do now than at the height of the storm.

"It was terrifying – the worst experience," said Brown, who is more than 2,160 miles (3,480 kilometers) from his home in South America. "I was just thinking, 'You could abandon the ship.' But where are you going?"

Seafood fleets along the Gulf Coast are used to getting wiped out by hurricanes. Katrina pummeled the industry from Louisiana to Alabama in 2005, and the seafood business in southern Louisiana is still recovering from Hurricane Ida's punch last year. But this part of Florida hasn't seen a storm like Ian in a century, leaving people to wonder what happens next.

Dale Kalliainen and his brother followed their father into the shrimping business and owns the trawler Night Wind, which landed amid a mobile home park near a bridge. He said high fuel prices and low-cost imported seafood took a bite out of the industry long before Ian did its worst.

"There used to be 300 boats in this harbor and now there's maybe 50," he said. "It's going to be probably years before this business is even close to being back to what it was."

Clapham, the 47-year-old fleet manager, has spent his entire life on shrimp boats. The industry already operates on a thin margin and needs help recovering from Ian, he said.

"These boats go out and catch \$60,000, \$70,000 worth of shrimp a month, but it costs \$30,000 to \$50,000 to put fuel on them and groceries and supplies, and then you've got to pay the crew. And sometimes these boats' (catches) don't even pay for everything," he said. "We take money from one boat and get another boat going and send 'em back fishing just to keep going."

## 6 tips you can use to help improve your credit score

By ADRIANA MORGA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Credit scores are complicated and because rating agencies consider many factors, the process of improving them can look different for everyone.

When Willard Carpenter, 68, wanted a loan to open a new business, he realized that his credit score was not high enough to get approved. After checking his credit history, he found several issues he needed to solve.

Carpenter's credit was heavily affected by credit card debt that his father left on their joint account after his death over a year and a half ago. He's also had no credit cards for at least 10 years — he stopped using them after he declared bankruptcy due to credit card debt.

Now, he is working with a financial advisor to erase his father's debt from his history and start building up his credit in a safe way.

Here are some tips for how you can do the same:

### KNOW YOUR STARTING POINT

The first step towards increasing your credit score is knowing your current score and what is showing in your credit report, said Kristin Myers, editor in chief of The Balance, a personal finance website.

"You can't fix what you don't know," she said. "See if there are any errors or if you've previously made a dispute and it keeps showing up."

Once you see what is in your report, you can start identifying where you might have weaknesses. For



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example, if you have a large amount of debt on one of your credit cards, start paying off that debt to reduce the credit utilization that is affecting your credit score.

## TACKLE YOUR DEBT, AS MUCH AS YOU CAN

Ideally, you pay off your credit card every month. But, if that is not possible for you, making small payments can help you maintain or increase your credit score.

If you can, pay just a bit more over the minimum monthly payment so you pay less interest over time.

A well-known payment method is the "debt snowball" where you pay down your debts from smallest to largest, to build momentum and good habits. Once the smaller debts are paid off and you have built a habit of paying off debt, the money you were used to putting aside every month can then go toward larger debts. NerdWallet offers a calculator to use this method.

Another small way to tackle debt is the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's recommendation to "use cash when it's under \$20" to avoid overspending on your credit card.

## AVOID MORE DEBT, IF YOU CAN

Not acquiring new debt is another way to increase your credit score, Myers said. If you have not paid off the debt that you currently have, it's best to not open more lines of credit. If you are in a position where you rely on credit due to economic circumstances, try to avoid unnecessary purchases that could significantly increase your debt.

## USE CREDIT CARDS, BUT IN MODERATION

Many people's first instinct is to not use any credit cards to avoid getting into debt. However, this is not a good tactic if you want to have a good credit score. It's best to have at least one credit card but the key is to use it moderately, said Colleen McCreary, consumer financial advocate at Credit Karma.

"You don't want to use more than 30% of the credit that's available to you, but you want to be using those cards even just a little bit to prove that you can be trusted," she said.

When using your credit card, make sure to pay on time each month and try to use it only for purchases that you were already planning to make, and can afford.

## DO NOT CLOSE YOUR OLD ACCOUNTS

After you have paid off your credit card, you might think it's best to close the account to avoid using it again.

This actually hurts your credit score. Since one of the factors in your credit score is the length of your credit history, if you close your oldest credit card account, you are also erasing this from your credit history.

"Keeping the length of that credit history open is incredibly important because the length of time you've had a loan or line of credit is going to boost your credit score," Myers said.

## IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY CREDIT HISTORY, START SAFE

If you are starting and want to build your credit, there are several ways to make this process safe for you to not get into debt. One of the most recommended ways is to open a "secured card," which are credit cards that require a deposit that usually amounts to the amount of credit that you are given.

The deposit is there in case you can't pay back the credit but it is given back to you after you upgrade to an "unsecured" card. Secured cards are reported to the credit bureaus, which means this line of credit shows in your credit report and it can help build or fix your credit score.

That's how Carpenter is planning to build up his credit score.

"This will allow me to start with a low limit and pay it off every month and then I can ask for a higher limit," said Carpenter, who lives in Bismark, Arkansas. Carpenter plans to open three credit cards and utilize a maximum of 25% of the allowed credit, he said.

## Trump lawyer who vouched for documents meets with FBI

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A lawyer for former president Donald Trump who signed a letter stating that a "diligent search" for classified records had been conducted and that all such documents had been given back to the government has spoken with the FBI, according to a person familiar with the matter.

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Christina Bobb told federal investigators during Friday's interview that she had not drafted the letter but that another Trump lawyer who she said actually prepared it had asked her to sign it in her role as a designated custodian of Trump's records, said the person, who insisted on anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation.

The process is of interest to investigators because the Justice Department says the letter was untrue in asserting that all classified records sought by the government had been located and returned. Though the letter, and 38 documents bearing classification markings, were presented to FBI and Justice Department officials during a June 3 visit to Mar-a-Lago, agents returned to the Florida estate with a search warrant on Aug. 8 and seized about 100 additional classified records.

According to an August court filing, the signed certification letter was presented to investigators who visited Mar-a-Lago on June 3 to collect additional classified material from the home. The Justice Department had weeks earlier issued a subpoena for the records after it says it developed evidence that more classified documents remained at the estate beyond those contained in 15 boxes recovered in January by the National Archives and Records Administration.

The letter produced for investigators asserted that, in response to the subpoena, "a diligent search was conducted of the boxes that were moved from the White House to Florida" and that "any and all responsive documents accompany this certification." The letter also included the caveat that the statements in it were true "based upon the information that has been provided to me."

At the time, the FBI was presented with an envelope containing 38 documents with classification markings, including at the top-secret level. But agents began to suspect that they had not received the entire stash of records, and returned two months later with a warrant.

Bobb told the FBI that the letter was actually drafted and prepared by another of Trump's lawyers, M. Evan Corcoran, and that he had asked her to sign it in her capacity as custodian of the records, according to the person.

Corcoran did not immediately return an email and phone message on Tuesday. Spokespeople for the FBI and Justice Department declined to comment, and Bobb did not immediately return a phone message seeking comment.

The interview was first reported by NBC News. The person familiar with it said it was a voluntary discussion with investigators and did not take place before a grand jury, and that she is not regarded as a target of the investigation.

The Justice Department has said that, beyond investigating possible crimes in the retention of the documents themselves, it is also investigating whether anyone sought to obstruct its probe. It is not clear if anyone will be charged.

## **AP source: NFL to discuss roughing calls, no change imminent**

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

The NFL did not give officials a directive to emphasize roughing-the-passer penalties following Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa's concussion, but the topic will be discussed next week when NFL owners meet in New York, a person with direct knowledge of the matter told The Associated Press.

The person, speaking on condition of anonymity because the conversations are internal, said the league isn't planning to make any rule changes amid outrage over two disputed calls in Week 5. Roughing-the-passer penalties are down 45% from this point last year. Through Week 5 in 2021, 51 were called. Only 28 have been called this season, according to league stats.

The league's Competition Committee — comprised of six team owners/executives and four head coaches — makes most of the recommendations for rule changes. Teams can also propose rule changes to be voted on by owners, which require 24 votes to pass.

One idea, suggested by Chiefs defensive tackle Chris Jones on Monday night after he was flagged, might be to allow video review of roughing calls.

That is unlikely, according to a person with knowledge of the situation.

The league already went down that road, making pass interference reviewable for one season after an

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egregious missed foul late in the fourth quarter in the NFC championship in January 2019 cost the New Orleans Saints a trip to the Super Bowl.

The experiment failed miserably and the rule wasn't considered the next year.

Protecting quarterbacks is a priority for owners, who pay big bucks for the faces of their franchises. Twenty-five QBs are making at least \$25 million this season.

The questionable call against Jones — the second in two days — nearly cost Kansas City in its 30-29 comeback victory over the Las Vegas Raiders.

The Chiefs had just scored to trim their deficit to 17-7 when Jones stripped Raiders quarterback Derek Carr from behind just before halftime. The Pro Bowl defensive tackle landed on Carr while also coming up with the ball — replays showed it was clearly loose and that Jones cleanly recovered — but referee Carl Cheffers threw a flag for roughing the passer.

"The quarterback is in the pocket and he's in a passing posture. He gets full protection of all the aspects of what we give the quarterback in a passing posture," Cheffers told a pool reporter after the game. "My ruling was the defender landed on him with full body weight. The quarterback is protected from being tackled with full body weight."

On Sunday, Falcons defensive tackle Grady Jarrett was flagged by referee Jerome Boger for a seemingly harmless sack on Tom Brady. The penalty gave the Buccaneers a first down and allowed them to run out the clock on a 21-15 victory.

Boger made a similar critical call late in the fourth quarter of the Ravens-Bills game a week earlier on a play that many also thought didn't warrant a flag.

Boger called another borderline roughing penalty in the Falcons-Buccaneers game when Vita Veo was pushed into Atlanta quarterback Marcus Mariota.

Roughing the passer is the only rule where referees are instructed to err on the side of caution.

The NFL rulebook notes: "When in doubt about a roughness call or potentially dangerous tactic against the quarterback, the referee should always call roughing the passer."

Jones, who has been flagged for roughing the passer nine times in his career, has a solution.

"We've got to be able to review it in the booth, you know what I mean?" Jones said. "I think that's the next step for the NFL as a whole. If we're going to call it a penalty at that high (of rate), then we've got to be able to review it and make sure, because sometimes looks can be deceiving."

## Supreme Court rejects appeal from Dylann Roof, who killed 9

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court has rejected an appeal from Dylann Roof, who challenged his death sentence and conviction in the 2015 racist slayings of nine members of a Black South Carolina congregation.

Roof had asked the court to decide how to handle disputes over mental illness-related evidence between capital defendants and their attorneys. The justices did not comment Tuesday in turning away the appeal.

Roof fired his attorneys and represented himself during the sentencing phase of his capital trial, part of his effort to block evidence potentially portraying him as mentally ill.

Roof shot participants at a Bible study session at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

A panel of appellate judges had previously upheld his conviction and death sentence.

Roof, 28, is on federal death row at a maximum-security prison in Terre Haute, Indiana. He can still pursue other appeals.

## Give him a hand: Biden ditching lectern for handheld mics

By ZEKE MILLER and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Whenever the president travels, a special bullet-resistant lectern called the "blue goose," or its smaller cousin "the falcon," is in tow. Lately, President Joe Biden is rendering them all but obsolete as he increasingly reaches for a hand-held microphone instead.

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From casual fundraisers to more formal remarks on disaster response or inflation or the like, Biden has opted for a hand-gripped mic more than a dozen times in recent months — even when he's standing in front of the fixed double microphones on a presidential-seal-adorned lectern.

Those who know him best say the mic swap makes Biden a much more natural speaker, and he knows it. There's an obvious change when he makes the switch. His shoulders relax. A smile spreads across his face. He walks the room, making eye contact.

"There are two tricks to public speaking, and neither is really rocket science, said Mo Elleithee, a former Democratic consultant who's now executive director of Georgetown University's Institute of Politics and Public Service. "First, you want to be as comfortable as possible. Second, you want to be authentic. And the two go hand in hand."

Elleithee said one of Biden's strengths is his authenticity — "love or hate his politics, he's a real guy who comes across as one. That's because he's most comfortable when he's talking with people, as opposed to talking at them. Standing at a podium is stiff. It's formal."

The president, who has acknowledged his difficulties as a public speaker and struggles to overcome a persistent stutter, is often stiff when reading prepared remarks. As a candidate and now as president, he has eschewed the traditional glass-paned teleprompters normally placed just off the corners of the lectern, instead preferring larger teleprompters on television screens.

His public style is meant to be everyman, down-to-earth — even folksy — as he works to connect with audiences. He tells dad (or grandpa?) jokes, talks about his parents, his wife, his children, his many years of government experience. But that sense of empathy and connection that he's able to cultivate in person often doesn't come through in some of his larger events, nor through the livestream.

The mic, in some ways, is as an attempt to bridge that divide.

Last week, as the president surveyed the hurricane damage in Florida, he spoke at first into the fixed microphones, gripping the sides of the lectern. But midway through his speech he called an audible.

"Let's see if this thing works, is this one working?" Biden asked as he grabbed on to the hand-held mic. The president then stuck a hand in his pocket and turned toward the crowd as he continued talking about the administration's disaster response.

Aware of the power of stagecraft, Biden isn't eschewing the iconic presidential lecterns entirely: They still hold paper copies of his remarks (in case the teleprompters have an error) and often a glass of water. But the built-in microphones are increasingly turned off.

The boxy dark blue and dark paneled lecterns — there are many — are a symbol of the modern presidency.

It's from behind them that President Bill Clinton said "I did not have sexual relations with that woman," President Barack Obama declared that Osama bin Laden had been killed, and Queen Elizabeth II was rendered nearly invisible except for her hat when she was welcomed on the South Lawn by President George H.W. Bush.

Now, when Biden staffers place the leather-bound folder with his written remarks on the lectern, they're also tucking in the handheld mic.

During his South Lawn celebration for the Inflation Reduction Act, Biden donned his aviators and pulled out the mic on a warm, sunny day.

"With your permission, I'm going to take my coat off," he told the crowd as he relaxed into the moment. "That doesn't mean I'm going to speak any longer." Then he said: "Folks, welcome to the White House, everybody."

Inevitably, there are times when technology fails him. During a Democratic fundraiser for Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, the mic feed kept going in and out, making it nearly impossible to hear Biden. But Biden is not deterred.

Delivering remarks recently at the headquarters for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Biden spotted the handheld microphone.

"I'm going to use this" he declared.

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## Today in History: October 12, China arrests "Gang of Four"

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 12, the 285th day of 2022. There are 80 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 12, 1976, it was announced in China that Hua Guofeng had been named to succeed the late Mao Zedong as chairman of the Communist Party; it was also announced that Mao's widow and three others, known as the "Gang of Four," had been arrested.

On this date:

In 1492 (according to the Old Style calendar), Christopher Columbus' expedition arrived in the present-day Bahamas.

In 1792, the first recorded U.S. celebration of Columbus Day was held to mark the tricentennial of Christopher Columbus' landing.

In 1870, General Robert E. Lee died in Lexington, Virginia, at age 63.

In 1933, bank robber John Dillinger escaped from a jail in Allen County, Ohio, with the help of his gang, who killed the sheriff, Jess Sarber.

In 1971, the rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar" opened at the Mark Hellinger Theatre on Broadway.

In 1973, President Richard Nixon nominated House minority leader Gerald R. Ford of Michigan to succeed Spiro T. Agnew as vice president.

In 1984, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher escaped an attempt on her life when an Irish Republican Army bomb exploded at a hotel in Brighton, England, killing five people.

In 1986, the superpower meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, ended in stalemate, with President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev unable to agree on arms control or a date for a full-fledged summit in the United States.

In 2000, 17 sailors were killed in a suicide bomb attack on the destroyer USS Cole in Yemen.

In 2002, bombs blamed on al-Qaida-linked militants destroyed a nightclub on the Indonesian island of Bali, killing 202 people, including 88 Australians and seven Americans.

In 2007, former Vice President Al Gore and the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change won the Nobel Peace Prize for sounding the alarm over global warming.

In 2011, a Nigerian al-Qaida operative pleaded guilty to trying to bring down a jetliner with a bomb in his underwear; Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab (OO'-mahr fah-ROOK' ahb-DOOL'-moo-TAH'-lahb) defiantly told a federal judge in Detroit that he had acted in retaliation for the killing of Muslims worldwide.

Ten years ago: Thousands of supporters and opponents of Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi clashed in Cairo's Tahrir Square in the first such violence since Morsi took office more than three months earlier. The European Union won the Nobel Peace Prize for fostering peace on a continent long ravaged by war.

Five years ago: The Trump administration said it would "immediately" halt payments to insurers under the Obama-era health care law. President Donald Trump lashed out at hurricane-devastated Puerto Rico, saying the federal government can't keep sending help "forever" and suggesting that the U.S. territory was to blame for its financial struggles.

One year ago: The New Jersey Nets said Kyrie Irving could not play or practice with them until he could be a full participant; New York City required professional athletes to be vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to play or practice in public venues. (Irving would be allowed to rejoin the team for out-of-town games in January 2022, and for home games two months later.) The head of the Chicago police officers union called on its members to defy the city's requirement to report their COVID-19 vaccination status or be placed on unpaid leave. The Boeing Co. told employees they must be vaccinated against COVID-19 or possibly be fired. Florida issued its first fine to a county that it said had violated a new state law banning coronavirus vaccine mandates; Leon County was fined \$3.5 million.

Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. Jake Garn, R-Utah, is 90. Singer Sam Moore (formerly of Sam and Dave) is 87. Broadcast journalist Chris Wallace is 75. Actor-singer Susan Anton is 72. Pop/rock singer/songwriter Jane Siberry is 67. Actor Hiroyuki Sanada is 62. Actor Carlos Bernard is 60. Jazz musician Chris Botti (BOH'-

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tee) is 60. R&B singer Claude McKnight (Take 6) is 60. Rock singer Bob Schneider is 57. Actor Hugh Jackman is 54. Actor Adam Rich is 54. R&B singer Garfield Bright (Shai) is 53. Country musician Martie Maguire (Courtyard Hounds, The Chicks) is 53. Actor Kirk Cameron is 52. Olympic gold medal skier Bode Miller is 45. Rock singer Jordan Pundik (New Found Glory) is 43. Actor Brian J. Smith is 41. Actor Tyler Blackburn is 36. Actor Marcus T. Paulk is 36. Actor Ito Aghayere is 35. Actor Josh Hutcherson is 30.