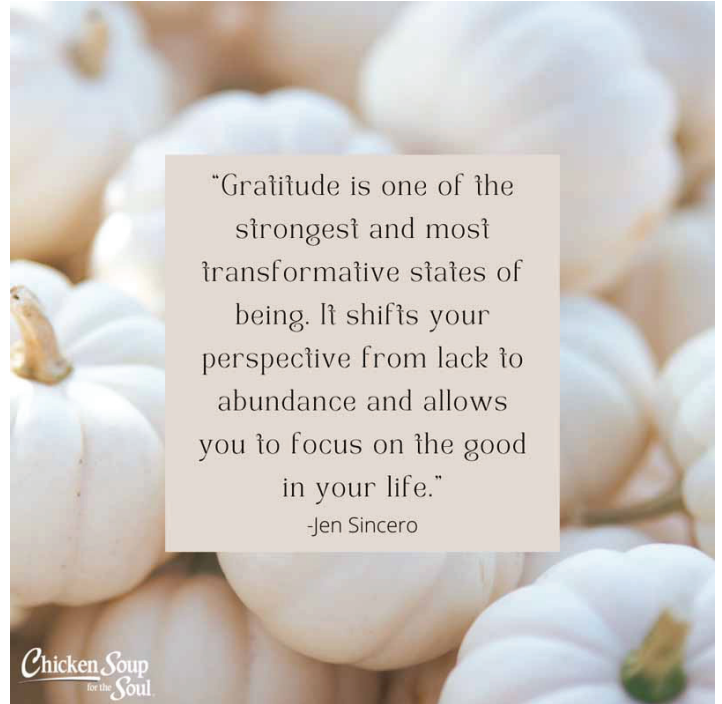


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- [3- Weather Pages](#)
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“Gratitude is one of the strongest and most transformative states of being. It shifts your perspective from lack to abundance and allows you to focus on the good in your life.”

-Jen Sincero

Chicken Soup  
for the Soul

## Groton Community Calendar

### Wednesday, Oct. 19

Senior Menu: Ranch chicken breast, boiled potatoes, squash, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg omelets.

School Lunch: Grilled cheese, glazed carrots.

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

Emmanuel Lutheran Confirmation, 6 p.m.

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

UMC: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.; YMYF Bible Study, 7 p.m.

### Thursday, Oct. 20

Senior Menu: Hamburger with bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, fruit, ice cream.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Goulash, corn.

Emmanuel Lutheran WELCA final day packing LWR projects, potluck

UMC: Newsletter items due; UMW Final meeting, 1:30 p.m.; Bible Study with Ashley, 6:30 p.m.

### Friday, Oct. 21

Senior Menu: Chicken rice casserole, green beans, spinach salad, chocolate pudding with bananas,

whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Eggs and sausage.

School Lunch: Fish nuggets, tiny whole potatoes.

Volleyball hosts Redfield. (8th grade match at 6 p.m. in gym, C match at 5 p.m. followed by JV and varsity. Wear NEON night.

### Saturday, Oct. 22

State Cross Country Meet in Huron

Emmanuel Lutheran WELCA fall retreat, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**HELP  
WANTED!**

**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.**

## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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

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## Haven leads Northwestern with 27 kills in win over Groton

Groton Area's volleyball team came up against stiff competition from Ella Haven and the Northwestern Area Wildcats. Northwestern won in three straight sets, 25-7, 25-12 and 25-16.

Haven led the Wildcats with 27 kills, two blocks and an ace serve. Her sister, Ashley Haven, added five kills and three ace serves. Brooklenn Halvorson had four ace serves and two kills while Payton Grandpree had four kills and a block and Ella Boekelheide and Adriana Ratigan each had a kill.

The Tigers were led by Anna Fjeldheim with three kills and two ace serves while Aspen Johnson had three kills and a block, Hollie Forst had three kills, Elizabeth Flihs had two kills and an ace serve, Sydney Leicht and Lydia Meier each had two kills, Jerica Locke had an ace serve and Jaedyn Penning had one kill.

The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Bahr Spray Foam, John Sieh Agency, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Locke Electric, Dacotah Bank, SD Army National Guard, Milbrandt Enterprises Inc, Groton Area Chamber of Commerce.

Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 25-14 and 25-18. In the first set, Groton Area had 14 ace serves.

For the match, Rylee Dunker had eight ace serves and four kills, Jaedyn Penning had six ace serves and three kills, Faith Traphagen had five kills, Chesney Weber had three ace serves, a kill and a block, Talli Wright had three kills, Carly Gilbert two ace serves, Jerica Locke a kill and an ace serve and Emma Kutter had two kills.

Taylor Vetter and Kyara Ratigan each had six kills for Northwestern while Nicolette Nickeson had three kills, Ella Boekelheide two kills, Tara Blachford two ace serves and Layla Ortmeier had an ace serve.

The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Gordon and Dorene Nelson.

Groton Area won the C match, 25-22 and 25-13.

Talli Wright had five kills and five ace serves, Chesney Weber had five kills and an ace serve, Kella Tracy had five kills, Cali Tollifson had three kills and two ace serves, Rylee Dunker three kills and four ace serves, Carly Gilbert had three ace serves and a kill, Emerlee Jones had two kills and Hannah Sandness had one kill.

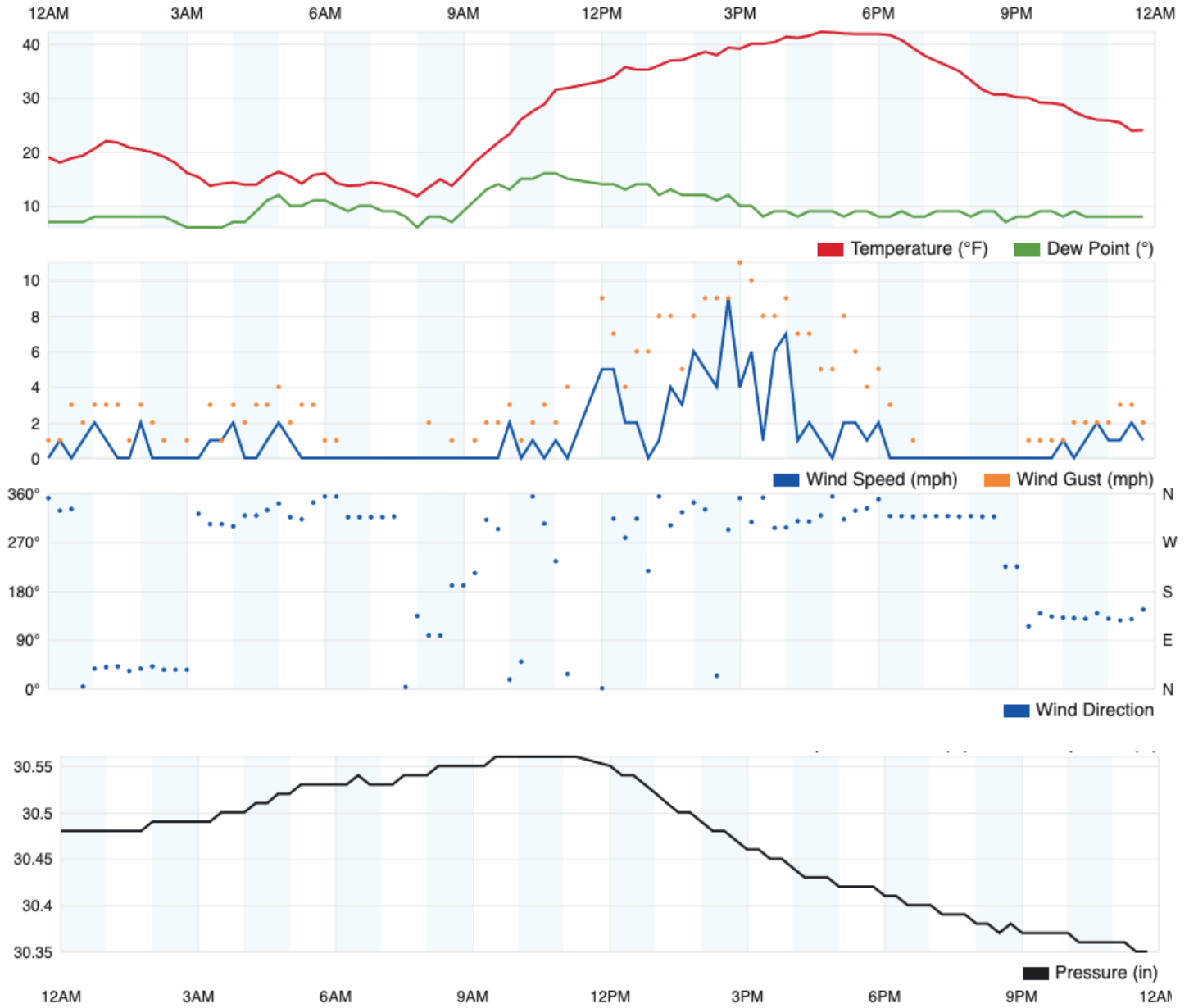
Jayden Mielke led the Wildcats with four kills and three ace serves, RikkaLyn Winman-Gisi had three kills and two ace serves, Tyanne Osterkamp had three ace serves, Courtney Decker had two kills, Natasha Kaderbek and Jensyn Siebrecht each had a kill and Shelbey Fortin had an ace serve.

The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Kent and Darcy Muller.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Broton Daily Independent

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Today



Becoming Sunny

High: 62 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 32 °F

Thursday



Mostly Sunny

High: 69 °F

Thursday Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 42 °F

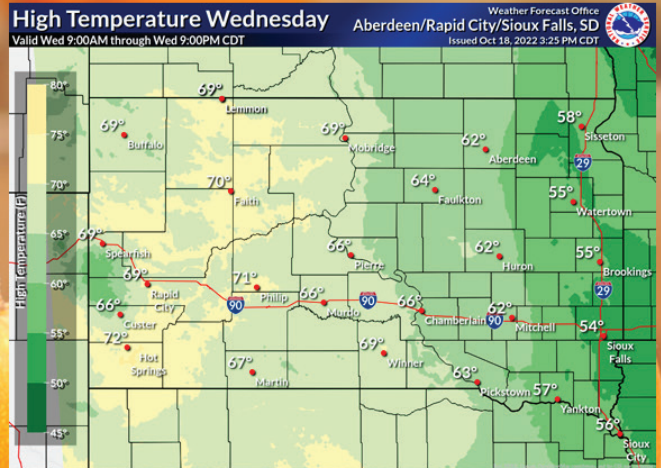
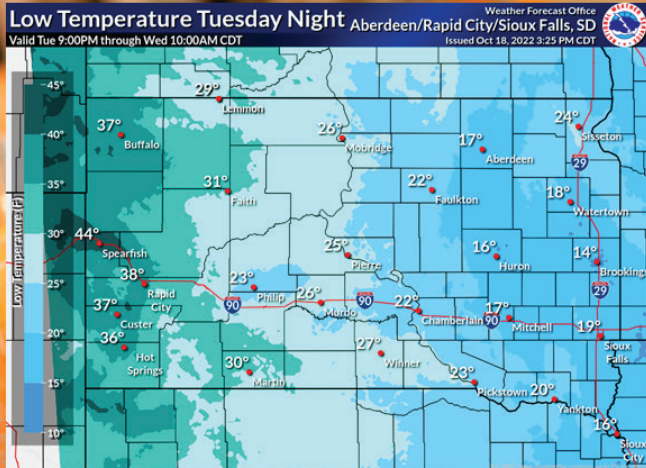
Friday



Sunny

High: 64 °F

## One More Cold Night, Then Warming Up for Wednesday



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

weather.gov/abr

Graphic Created  
10/18/2022 3:37 PM

A cold air mass is still in the region and it will bring one more night of cold temperatures as lows drop into the teens and 20s. Warmer air will begin spreading into the area on Wednesday as highs rebound into the 50s and 60s. Lower 70s are likely west of the Missouri River. Mild temperatures will then persist through the weekend, with highs in the 60s and 70s. Precipitation chances will enter the forecast Sunday into Sunday night with the approach of a low pressure system.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 42 °F at 4:45 PM**

**Low Temp: 12 °F at 7:58 AM**

**Wind: 11 mph at 1:05 PM**

**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 10 hours, 48 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 86 in 1958

Record Low: 10 in 1917

Average High: 58°F

Average Low: 32°F

Average Precip in Oct.: 1.44

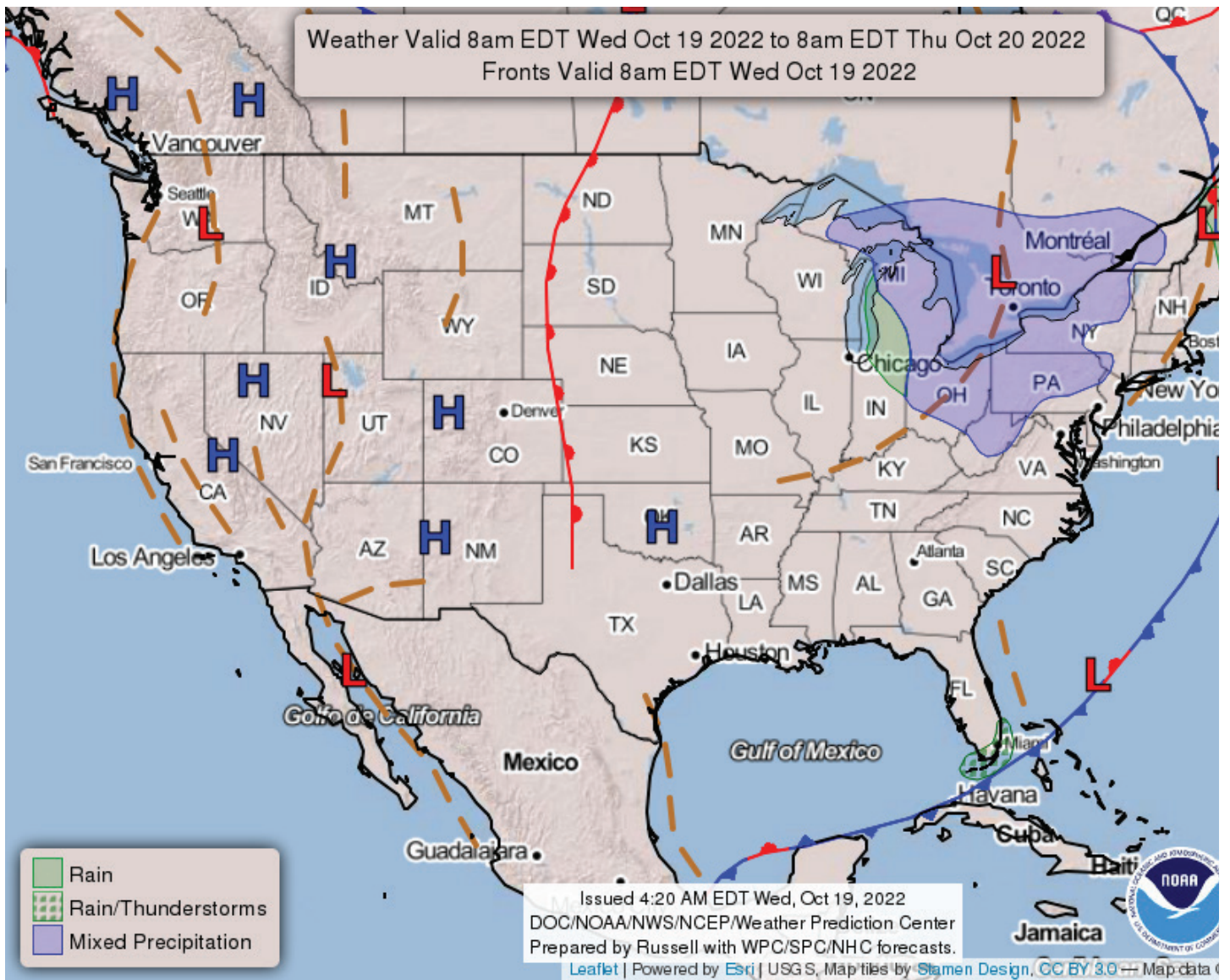
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.45

Average Precip to date: 19.77

Precip Year to Date: 16.50

Sunset Tonight: 6:41:46 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:54:11 AM



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## Today in Weather History

October 19, 1982: An early fall snowstorm dropped 3 to 12 inches of wet snow over the southeastern corner of South Dakota. The wet snow combined with the gusty winds of 20 to 40 mph dropped wind chills to around zero. Numerous trees snapped downing power lines. Power outages were extensive from Vermillion to Mitchell. Thunder rumbled, and lightning flashed amidst the height of the snowstorm. Almost a foot of snow fell in northern Union and southern Lincoln counties. High wind gusts knocked out television and radio transmitters in Sioux Falls. The weight of the snow collapsed a panel on the covered stadium at the University of South Dakota at Vermillion.

1844 - The famous "Lower Great Lakes Storm" occurred. Southwesterly winds were at hurricane force for five hours, driving lake waters into downtown Buffalo NY. The storm drowned 200 persons. (David Ludlum)

1961 - Rain changed to a record early season, heavy wet snow over the southern mountains of West Virginia. Leaves were still on trees, resulting in the worst forest disaster since the fires of 1952 and 1953. One to two feet of snow fell near Summersville and Richwood. (19th-20th) (The Weather Channel)

1984 - Thunderstorms deluged the town of Odem, TX (located 15 miles northwest of Corpus Christi) with 25 inches of rain in just three and a half hours. Most businesses in Odem were flooded, as were 1000 homes in nearby Sinton. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front brought rainshowers to parts of the central U.S., and ushered cool Canadian air into the Great Plains Region. Daytime highs were only in the 30s in North Dakota and eastern Montana. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced high winds in eastern Colorado, with gusts to 63 mph reported at La Junta. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Record breaking snows fell across northern and central Indiana. Totals ranged up to 10.5 inches at Kokomo, and 9.3 inches was reported at Indianapolis. The 8.8 inch total at South Bend was a record for the month as a whole. Up to seven inches of snow fell in extreme southern Lower Michigan, and up to six inches fell in southwestern Ohio. The heavy wet snow downed many trees and power lines. Half the city of Cincinnati OH was without electricity during the morning hours. Temperatures dipped below freezing across much of the Great Plains Region. Twenty cities, including fourteen in Texas, reported record low temperatures for the date. North Platte NE reported a record low of 11 degrees. In Florida, four cities reported record high temperatures for the date. The record high of 92 degrees at Miami also marked a record fourteen days of 90 degree weather in October.

1996: The opening game of World Series between the Braves and Yankees in New York was postponed by heavy rains and high wind from a major storm system affecting the East Coast, marking the third time in history that the World Series opener had been postponed. Overall, nine of the 22 games that have been canceled in Series history were scheduled in New York or Brooklyn.

2007: A total of 87 tornadoes were reported in the United States from Oct. 17-19, a new record outbreak for the month, according to NOAA's Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma. The outbreak also contributed to the monthly total of 105 tornado reports – the second highest for October, behind the 117 tornadoes in October 2001. Records date back to 1950.



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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### WHAT'S IN IT FOR GOD?

"Before you make a decision, make a plan or set a goal, ask these questions," said T.B. Matson, our ethics professor.

"Can I ask God to bless what I am about to do?"

"Is what I am planning to do going to honor God?"

"Would I feel comfortable to ask others to join me in prayer for what I am asking God to do for me?"

"Would others agree with me that what I am about to do will be God-honoring?"

We often act and react without pausing to pray about or even consider the consequences of our behavior. Sometimes when things seem to be getting out of control, we run to God and plead for Him to "correct this terrible mess I've created for Your name is at stake." Others may say, "Well, it looked good when I started but where is God now?"

Because of our sinful nature, we often act without seeking God's approval before setting out on a project. We think, plan, work and then wonder "what happened to my ideas?" when things go wrong. We forget the need to go to God first because of our desire to act independent and self-sufficient. If we look to and depend on God, we automatically admit we are insufficient on our own and need His help. And who wants to think they need help?

Wisely Solomon wrote, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed." The word used for "commit" literally means "roll over." So if in prayer, we "roll over" our plans to God for His blessing, protection, and guidance, we can expect them to succeed.

Prayer: Father, we pray that You will remove all pride from our hearts and help us realize our need for Your guidance. May we realize our need for You at all times. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed. Proverbs 16:3



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

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## 2022-23 Community Events

- 07/21/2022: Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course  
07/22/2022: Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start  
07/24/2022: Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20  
07/27/2022: Golf Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course 11a-1pm  
08/05/2022: Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm  
08/12/2022: GHS Basketball Golf Tournament  
No Date Set: Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day 4-5pm GHS Parking Lot  
09/10/2022: Lions Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)  
09/11/2022: 6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm  
09/11/2022: Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10 a.m.  
09/02-04: Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport  
10/01/2022: Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm  
10/07/2022: Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am  
10/31/2022: Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)  
10/31/2022: United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm  
11/13/2022: 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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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## News from the Associated Press

### Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL=

Little Wound 54, Pine Ridge 6

Todd County 52, St. Francis Indian 14

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Central def. Mitchell, 25-23, 25-15, 22-25, 25-14

Arlington def. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, 25-23, 23-25, 25-17, 25-18

Baltic def. Howard, 19-25, 25-21, 25-18, 25-17

Belle Fourche def. St. Thomas More, 25-15, 26-24, 25-19

Bon Homme def. Parkston, 10-25, 27-25, 26-24, 25-20

Bowman County, N.D. def. Lemmon, 25-23, 25-22, 25-22

Burke def. Gayville-Volin, 25-22, 25-17, 25-8

Castlewood def. DeSmet, 25-19, 25-18, 25-7

Chester def. Sioux Valley, 25-16, 21-25, 25-17, 25-21

Colman-Egan def. Deubrook, 25-13, 22-25, 25-17, 25-23

Corsica/Stickney def. Avon, 25-23, 17-25, 20-25, 25-20, 15-11

Dell Rapids def. Madison, 25-16, 14-25, 25-18, 25-22

Douglas def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-8, 25-13, 25-6

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 26-24, 25-19, 25-15

Estelline/Hendricks def. Iroquois/ Lake Preston Co-op, 25-11, 25-16, 25-11

Faith def. Timber Lake, 25-19, 23-25, 25-17, 25-23

Flandreau def. Parker, 25-8, 25-10, 25-21

Florence/Henry def. Deuel, 25-14, 25-14, 25-22

Freeman def. Hanson, 25-11, 25-22, 22-25, 23-25, 15-11

Garretson def. West Central, 18-25, 23-25, 25-12, 25-15, 15-2

Great Plains Lutheran def. Waubay/Summit, 25-23, 26-24, 11-3

Harrisburg def. Sioux Falls Christian, 15-25, 25-22, 19-25, 25-21, 15-12

Herreid/Selby Area def. Sully Buttes, 22-25, 25-13, 25-23, 25-23

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 25-17, 25-20, 22-25, 25-20

Jones County def. Colome, 25-17, 25-12, 25-21

Lakota Tech def. Edgemont, 12-25, 25-8, 17-25, 25-21, 15-7

Langford def. Britton-Hecla, 25-23, 25-21, 25-20

Linton/HMB, N.D. def. Mobridge-Pollock, 26-24, 25-14, 25-14

Lyman def. Highmore-Harrold, 17-25, 25-12, 25-21, 25-23

McCook Central/Montrose def. Tea Area, 15-25, 25-23, 25-20, 25-19

Milbank def. Aberdeen Roncalli, 14-25, 25-20, 25-18, 19-25, 15-10

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Gregory, 25-17, 21-25, 25-11, 22-25, 15-12

Northwestern def. Groton Area, 25-12, 25-7, 25-16

Omaha Nation, Neb. def. Marty Indian, 25-7, 25-10, 25-12

Philip def. Bennett County, 25-13, 25-8, 25-16

Pierre def. Huron, 25-14, 25-19, 25-19

Platte-Geddes def. Kimball/White Lake, 25-15, 25-23, 17-25, 18-25, 15-9

Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Watertown, 25-12, 22-25, 25-14, 25-13

Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 26-21, 25-14, 25-17

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Sioux Falls Washington def. Brandon Valley, 25-16, 25-13, 25-17  
Spearfish def. Hot Springs, 25-15, 25-20, 25-20  
Strasburg-Zeeland, N.D. def. Potter County, 25-19, 15-25, 25-19, 15-25, 16-14  
Tiospa Zina Tribal def. Clark/Willow Lake, 27-25, 25-15  
Tripp-Delmont/Armour def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-11, 25-17, 25-16  
Vermillion def. Beresford, 25-22, 22-25, 25-9, 25-23  
Wagner def. Winner, 25-13, 25-14, 25-15  
Wessington Springs def. James Valley Christian, 25-17, 26-24, 18-25, 25-15  
White River def. Lower Brule, 25-21, 25-20, 19-25, 25-14  
Wolsey-Wessington def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-13, 25-10, 25-12  
Kadoka Triangular=  
Kadoka Area def. New Underwood, 25-13, 27-25, 26-24  
Kadoka Area def. Stanley County, 25-14, 25-20, 25-9  
Stanley County def. New Underwood, 16-25, 25-21, 25-23, 22-25, 15-13  
McLaughlin Triangular=  
Chamberlain def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, CANCELLED  
McLaughlin def. Chamberlain, CANCELLED  
McLaughlin def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte CANCELLED

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

01-15-20-44-67, Mega Ball: 23, Megaplier: 3

(one, fifteen, twenty, forty-four, sixty-seven; Mega Ball: twenty-three; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$30,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 508,000,000

## Oklahoma governor sets March election for marijuana question

By SEAN MURPHY Associated Press Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt on Tuesday set a statewide election for March 7 for voters to decide whether to legalize the recreational use of marijuana, a question Democrats had hoped would be on the November ballot to help energize liberal voters.

Oklahomans for Sensible Marijuana Laws gathered enough signatures to qualify the question for a statewide vote and thought the proposal would be on the ballot in November. But because it took longer than usual to count the signatures and for courts to consider legal challenges, there wasn't enough time to print the ballots ahead of the November election.

If approved by voters, the question would legalize the use of marijuana for any adult over the age of 21. Marijuana sales would be subjected to a 15% excise tax on top of the standard sales tax, and the revenue it generates would be used to help fund local municipalities, the court system, public schools, substance abuse treatment and the state's general revenue fund.

The proposal also outlines a judicial process for people to seek expungement or dismissal of prior marijuana-related convictions.

Oklahoma already has one of the most robust medical marijuana programs in the country, with roughly 10% of the state's residents having state-issued medical cards that allow them to purchase, grow and consume marijuana.



Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt said that while he supports the federal legalization of marijuana, he opposes the state question, saying the country's patchwork of state laws on marijuana has become problematic.

It's likely that a marijuana question on the ballot in November would have increased voter turnout in Oklahoma. About 892,000 voters cast ballots on the medical marijuana question in the June 2018 midterm primary election. By comparison, only about 528,000 voters cast ballots in the governor's race in this year's midterm primary election.

President Joe Biden's recent announcement that he will pardon thousands of people for simple marijuana possession has shined a new spotlight on legalization efforts. This year, voters in Arkansas, Maryland, Missouri, North Dakota and South Dakota are considering measures on recreational marijuana.

## **MN regent criticized for asking if campus is 'too diverse'**

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The vice chairman of the University of Minnesota Board of Regents is publicly questioning whether enrollment declines at one campus are because it's "too diverse," a question that has drawn criticism and calls for his resignation.

At a public meeting of the board that oversees the university system last week, Vice Chairman Steve Sviggum, a former Minnesota House speaker, asked acting Morris Chancellor Janet Schrunk Ericksen whether it was "possible at all from a marketing standpoint" that the campus had become "too diverse."

"I've received a couple letters, two actually, from friends whose children are not going to go to Morris because it is too diverse," Sviggum said at the meeting. "They just didn't feel comfortable there."

According to KSTP-TV, which first reported the exchange, Schrunk Ericksen responded "on behalf of minority students," saying, "I think that they would be shocked that anyone would think our campus was too diverse. ... They certainly feel, at times, isolated where they are located. So, the answer is from that perspective, no."

Sviggum, 71, told the Star Tribune Monday that he was posing a question, not making a statement.

"As public policymakers, we have to question all of our programs to see if they're meeting the intended or unintended consequences," Sviggum said.

Sviggum said total enrollment at Morris had decreased by 40% as the enrollment of Black, Indigenous and people of color had increased to nearly 45%.

"It's fair to ask the question: Is there a relationship?" Sviggum said.

Asked what he thought the relationship might be, Sviggum said, "I don't know."

Currently, Morris has 1,068 students enrolled. Of those, 54% are white and 32% are Native American. Overall, 41% are Black, Indigenous and people of color.

Former Regent Michael Hsu said Sviggum should resign immediately.

"Sviggum's time is up," he said. "His comments and actions have been and are damaging to the university."

Also calling for his resignation was Teamsters Local 320, which represents 1,500 workers across five University of Minnesota campuses. The union called Sviggum's questions "racist and divisive."

Morris, a community of about 5,100, is located in west central Minnesota, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) southeast of the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

## **North fires more shells toward inter-Korean sea buffer zone**

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired about 100 more artillery shells toward the sea Wednesday in response to South Korean live-firing drills at border areas as the rivals accuse each other of dialing up tensions on the Korean Peninsula with weapons tests.

The drills conducted by both sides come amid heightened animosities over recent North Korean missile tests that it calls simulated nuclear attacks on South Korean and U.S. targets.

South Korea's military detected the artillery being fired from a western North Korean coastal town, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. On Tuesday night, North Korea fired about 100 shells off its west coast and 150 rounds off its east coast, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said earlier.

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Both days, the North Korean shells landed in the northern parts of the maritime buffer zones the two Koreas created off their eastern and western coasts as part of agreements they made in 2018 to reduce tensions, according to the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

North Korea also fired hundreds of shells at the buffer zones Friday in its most significant direct violation of the 2018 agreement.

North Korea's military said the launches were a warning against what it called provocative South Korean artillery firing drills along the border earlier this week.

"Our army strongly warns the enemy forces to immediately stop the highly irritating provocative act in the frontline areas," an unidentified spokesperson at the General Staff of the North's Korean People's Army said in a statement Wednesday.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said it conducted artillery drills at land border areas as part of its annual military exercises. But it said its drills didn't violate the 2018 accord because its shells didn't land in the buffer zones.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff warned North Korea to immediately stop provocations that threaten peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. It added that it is boosting its military readiness and, in coordination with the United States, is closely monitoring North Korea's moves.

There were no reports of violence between the two Koreas. But animosities could persist as North Korea will likely react to South Korea's ongoing annual "Hoguk" field exercises with its own weapons tests. South Korean officials said the "Hoguk" drills are aimed at improving a military readiness against North Korean nuclear and missile threats and involve an unspecified number of U.S. troops.

North Korea views regular South Korea-U.S. military training as an invasion rehearsal. It said its recent barrage of missile tests were meant to issue a warning to one of the allies' earlier exercises involving a U.S. aircraft carrier.

In parts of the "Hoguk" drills open to the media, South Korean and U.S. troops built floating bridges on a river southeast of Seoul to let tanks and other armored vehicles move over them. South Korea's army said Wednesday's training was meant to deal with a hypothetical enemy attack that would leave some of the bridges over the river destroyed.

"It's so far been extremely successful and demonstrated the strength of the ROK-U.S. alliance," said Capt. Sean Kasprisin, a company commander at the U.S. military, using the initials of South Korea's official name, the Republic of Korea. "We are definitely stronger together with the two nations."

From Oct. 31 to Nov. 4, South Korea and the United States will also hold combined air force drills involving some 240 warplanes, including F-35 fighters operated by both nations. The drills are designed to inspect the two countries' joint operation capabilities and improve combat readiness, the South Korean military said Tuesday.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Wang Wenbin, said at a briefing Wednesday that Beijing hopes all relevant countries would keep trying to look for a political settlement to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

North Korea has test-launched 15 missiles since it resumed testing activities Sept. 25. One of them was an intermediate-range ballistic missile that flew over Japan and demonstrated a range capable of reaching the Pacific U.S. territory of Guam and beyond.

Some foreign experts say North Korean leader Kim Jong Un would eventually aim to use his expanded weapons arsenal to pressure the United States and others to accept his country as a legitimate nuclear state and lift economic sanctions on the North.

The North's artillery tests draw less outside attention than its missile launches. But its forward-deployed long-range artillery guns pose a serious security threat to the capital, Seoul, about 40 to 50 kilometers (25 to 30 miles) from the border with North Korea.

## NYC opens emergency center for influx of bused migrants

By DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

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NEW YORK (AP) — A complex of giant tents built on an island is set to open Wednesday as New York City's latest temporary shelter for an influx of international migrants being bused into the city by southern border states.

The humanitarian relief center on Randall's Island is intended to be a temporary waystation for single, adult men — many from Venezuela — who have been arriving several times per week on buses chartered predominantly from Texas.

Spartan and utilitarian, the tents include cots for up to 500 people, laundry facilities, a dining hall and phones for residents to make international calls.

The city's plan is to bring single men to the facility once they arrive at the main Manhattan bus terminal and to house them there for a period of days while determining next steps, officials said. Families with children are being housed in a hotel.

"We needed a different type of operation that gave us the time and space to welcome people, provide them a warm meal shower, a place to sleep, to understand their medical needs, to really then work with them to figure out what their next step is going to be," said Emergency Management Commissioner Zach Iscol.

The white, plastic-walled tents also include a space where migrants can meet with case workers to determine their next steps, as well as a recreational room with televisions, video games and board games. In the sleeping area, row upon row of green cots stretch out, each one with a pillow, some sheets and a blanket, and some towels. The city said it will be able to double the sleeping capacity of the tents, if needed.

In recent months, New York City has seen an unexpected increase in migrants seeking asylum in the United States who have been sent to the city from other states including Texas and Arizona. The influx has put a strain on the city's shelter system, leading officials to look for other places to house people and proposing the temporary tent facilities.

New York City's homeless shelter system is now bursting with more than 63,300 residents. While there are fewer families in the shelters now than there were in the years before the pandemic, the number of single men has soared since the spring, largely because of the influx of migrants. There were more than 20,000 single adults in the shelter system Monday, up 23% from the nightly average in July.

Mayor Eric Adams declared a state of emergency earlier this month, calling the increased demand being put on the city "not sustainable."

The tents were initially planned for a far-off corner of the Bronx, but were moved after concerns about flooding and criticism from immigrant advocates over the remote location. Iscol said the Randall's Island location was safe from flooding.

Advocates remain concerned even with the new location, questioning what conditions migrants will be kept in, and whether the support they get will be adequate.

Randall's Island is located in the waters between the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens. Five bridges connect it to the three boroughs, and the city's subway system is a bus ride or walk away.

It's already put to a variety of uses — there are numerous athletic fields, as well as Icahn Stadium, a track and field facility. There's also a psychiatric hospital and a fire academy for the Fire Department of New York.

## **Biden to release 15M barrels from oil reserve, more possible**

By JOSH BOAK and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden will announce the release of 15 million barrels of oil from the U.S. strategic reserve Wednesday as part of a response to recent production cuts announced by OPEC+ nations, and he will say more oil sales are possible this winter, as his administration rushes to be seen as pulling out all the stops ahead of next month's midterm elections.

Biden will deliver remarks Wednesday to announce the drawdown from the strategic reserve, senior administration officials said Tuesday on the condition of anonymity to outline Biden's plans. It completes the release of 180 million barrels authorized by Biden in March that was initially supposed to occur over



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six months. That has sent the strategic reserve to its lowest level since 1984 in what the administration called a “bridge” until domestic production could be increased. The reserve now contains roughly 400 million barrels of oil.

Biden will also open the door to additional releases this winter in an effort to keep prices down. But administration officials would not detail how much the president would be willing to tap, nor how much they want domestic and production to increase by in order to end the drawdown.

Biden will also say that the U.S. government will restock the strategic reserve when oil prices are at or lower than \$67 to \$72 a barrel, an offer that administration officials argue will increase domestic production by guaranteeing a baseline level of demand. Yet the president is also expected to renew his criticism of the profits reaped by oil companies — repeating a bet made this summer that public condemnation would matter more to these companies than shareholders’ focus on returns.

It marks the continuation of an about-face by Biden, who has tried to move the U.S. past fossil fuels to identify additional sources of energy to satisfy U.S. and global supply as a result of disruptions from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and production cuts announced by the Saudi Arabia-led oil cartel.

The prospective loss of 2 million barrels a day — 2% of global supply — has had the White House saying Saudi Arabia sided with Russian President Vladimir Putin and pledging there will be consequences for supply cuts that could prop up energy prices. The 15 million-barrel release would not cover even one full day’s use of oil in the U.S., according to the Energy Information Administration.

The administration could make a decision on future releases a month from now, as it requires a month and a half for the government to notify would-be buyers.

Biden still faces political headwinds because of gas prices. AAA reports that gas is averaging \$3.87 a gallon. That’s down slightly over the past week, but it’s up from a month ago. The recent increase in prices stalled the momentum that the president and his fellow Democrats had been seeing in the polls ahead of the November elections.

An analysis Monday by ClearView Energy Partners, an independent energy research firm based in Washington, suggested that two states that could decide control of the evenly split Senate — Nevada and Pennsylvania — are sensitive to energy prices. The analysis noted that gas prices over the past month rose above the national average in 18 states, which are home to 29 potentially “at risk” House seats.

Even if voters want cheaper gasoline, expected gains in supply are not materializing because of a weaker global economy. The U.S. government last week revised downward its forecasts, saying that domestic firms would produce 270,000 fewer barrels a day in 2023 than was forecast in September. Global production would be 600,000 barrels a day lower than forecast in September.

The hard math for Biden is that oil production has yet to return to its pre-pandemic level of roughly 13 million barrels a day. It’s about a million barrels a day shy of that level. The oil industry would like the administration to open up more federal lands for drilling, approve pipeline construction and reverse its recent changes to raise corporate taxes. The administration counters that the oil industry is sitting on thousands of unused federal leases and says new permits would take years to produce oil with no impact on current gas prices. Environmental groups, meanwhile, have asked Biden to keep a campaign promise to block new drilling on federal lands.

Biden has resisted the policies favored by U.S. oil producers. Instead, he’s sought to reduce prices by releasing oil from the U.S. reserve, shaming oil companies for their profits and calling on greater production from countries in OPEC+ that have different geopolitical interests, said Frank Macchiarola, senior vice president of policy, economics and regulatory affairs at the American Petroleum Institute.

“If they continue to offer the same old so-called solutions, they’ll continue to get the same old results,” Macchiarola said.

Because fossil fuels lead to carbon emissions, Biden has sought to move away from them entirely with a commitment to zero emissions by 2050. When discussing that commitment nearly a year ago after the G-20 leading rich and developing nations met in Rome, the president said he still wanted to also lower gas prices because at “\$3.35 a gallon, it has profound impact on working-class families just to get back and forth to work.”

Since Biden spoke of the pain of gas at \$3.35 a gallon and his hopes to reduce costs, the price has on balance risen another 15.5%.

## UK inflation accelerates to 40-year high as food prices rise

By DANICA KIRKA and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British food prices rose at the fastest pace since 1980 last month, driving inflation back to a 40-year high and heaping pressure on the embattled government to balance the books without gutting help for the nation's poorest residents.

Food prices jumped 14.6% in the year through September, led by the soaring cost of staples such as meat, bread, milk and eggs, the Office for National Statistics said Wednesday. That pushed consumer price inflation back to 10.1%, the highest since early 1982 and equal to the level last reached in July.

The figures immediately fueled demands that the government do more to help families and retirees as it struggles to regain credibility after an ill-fated package of tax cuts roiled financial markets. Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt ditched the package after he took office last week, but he has warned that this will be a difficult winter and spending reductions also will be needed.

Glenn Sanderson, head teacher at St. Aidan's Catholic Academy in Sunderland, said schools across the country are finding it difficult to feed needy children, with many diverting money from textbooks and classroom teaching to subsidize meal programs. The suggestion of government budget cuts in this environment is "appalling," he said.

"Parents ... are having to make difficult decisions — do they pay the bus fare to send their child to education or do they use that money to feed their child," Sanderson told the BBC. "In today's society, I find that completely unacceptable."

Hunt this week told the House of Commons that the government would "prioritize help for the most vulnerable while delivering wider economic stability." But he also backed away from Prime Minister Liz Truss' previous commitment to increase pensions in line with inflation.

Downing Street spokesman Max Blain said "no decisions have been made" on pension guarantees.

"We are very aware of how many vulnerable pensioners there are," but the government is not making "any commitments on any particular policy areas at this point," he said.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has boosted food and energy prices around the world, with shipments of natural gas, grains and cooking oil disrupted. That added to price rises that began last year as the global economy started to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the jump in food costs took the biggest bite out of household budgets in Britain last month, prices are rising across the board. Transportation costs jumped 10.9%, furniture and household goods rose 10.8%, and clothing was up 8.4%. Housing costs rose 9.3%, driven by the rising price of energy.

The government has sought to shield consumers from the impact of rising energy prices by capping the cost of electricity and natural gas. But Hunt has now limited the price cap to six months, instead of the two years originally promised.

That means inflation is likely to stay higher for longer than previously forecast, said Jack Leslie, senior economist at the Resolution Foundation, a think tank that focuses on improving living standards for low- and middle-income people.

"This bleak outlook means that family incomes will continue to fall sharply again next year, especially as support with energy bills is withdrawn," Leslie said in a statement. "That is the context of debates within government about whether previous commitments to uprate benefits or pensions in line with prices should be the next U-turn to be announced."

Faster inflation also fuels expectations that the Bank of England will raise interest rates further and faster as it struggles to return inflation to its 2% target.

The central bank is trying to slow inflation without tipping Britain into recession. The British economy shrank an estimated 0.3% in August after growing just 0.1% in July, according to ONS figures.

"Today's hotter-than-anticipated inflation reading paves the way for another aggressive interest rate

increase from the Bank of England at its next meeting in early November," said Victoria Scholar, head of investment at Interactive Investor. "However, the central bank is between a rock and a hard place as it looks to curb price pressures without inadvertently adding to the risk of recession."

It's the same calculation going on in other countries, but the U.S. Federal Reserve has signaled it will continue its rapid rate hikes to combat inflation that is at a decades-high 8.3%.

The European Central Bank at its meeting next week is expected to make another big increase to curtail record inflation in the 19 countries that use the euro currency. The EU's statistics agency, Eurostat, on Wednesday adjusted eurozone inflation for September down slightly to 9.9%.

## Some risks too big: Insurers withdraw from fossil projects

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Insurance companies that have long said they'll cover anything, at the right price, are increasingly ruling out fossil fuel projects because of climate change — to cheers from environmental campaigners.

More than a dozen groups that track what policies insurers have on high-emissions activities say the industry is turning its back on oil, gas and coal.

The alliance, Insure Our Future, said Wednesday that 62% of reinsurance companies — which help other insurers spread their risks — have plans to stop covering coal projects, while 38% are now excluding some oil and natural gas projects.

In part, investors are demanding it. But insurers have also begun to make the link between fossil fuel infrastructure, such as mines and pipelines, and the impact that greenhouse gas emissions are having on other parts of their business.

"Like banks, insurers can leverage access to their services as an incentive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or exposure to the physical risks of climate change," said Jason Thistlethwaite, an expert on the economic impacts of extreme weather at the University of Waterloo, Canada.

"It's the same idea as an insurance company raising your property insurance rates because you engage in risky behavior, like drunk driving," he added. "But in this case, it's the fossil fuel sector that's engaging in risky behavior by contributing to climate change."

In some insurance markets, such as Florida, people are already struggling to get coverage for hurricanes and other disasters that are forecast to become more potent with global warming.

"If climate change continues at its current rate, markets where they can provide insurance at a rate people can afford will erode," said Thistlethwaite.

Earlier this month Munich Re, one of the world's biggest reinsurers, said it would stop backing new oil and gas fields beginning next April.

"Insurance is the Achilles heel of the fossil fuel industry and has the power to accelerate the transition to clean energy," said Peter Bosshard, the report's author.

That's because projects that require large amounts of capital are unlikely to attract investment if they can't get insurance to cover potentially costly mishaps.

"It's not ideal for a large scale fossil fuel project to lose a brand name insurer with a good reputation," said Thistlethwaite. "Smaller insurers are likely to fill the gap, but they could be more expensive."

Insure Our Future said its annual scorecard of 30 companies ranked Allianz, AXA and Axis Capital best for their coal exit policies, while Aviva, Hannover Re and Munich Re came out on top for oil and natural gas.

By contrast, some insurers such as Berkshire Hathaway, Starr and Everest Re have adopted few or no restrictions coal, oil or gas projects, it said. The alliance also criticized Lloyd's of London for announcing plans for ending coal coverage two years ago but then declaring it optional.

Many of the insurers reviewed introduced their restrictions in the last year, though the exact policies differ significantly, the report said.

Some countries have meanwhile proposed applying the idea of insurance to help nations facing massive costs due to climate change.



Germany, which chairs the Group of Seven leading economies, and the V20 alliance of vulnerable nations, chaired by Ghana, last week agreed to promote the idea of a "global shield" against climate risks.

The proposal, to be discussed at next month's United Nations climate summit in Egypt, partly addresses demands from poor countries for more financial help to cope with the loss and damage resulting from rising global temperatures.

Thistlethwaite said such schemes will require private sector involvement.

"Western governments are unwilling to shoulder the climate risk liability they are ultimately responsible for," he said.

## Russia tightens Ukraine energy squeeze; launches evacuation

By HANNA ARHIROVA and SABRA AYRES Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian missile strikes and shelling of energy utilities left more Ukrainian villages, towns and parts of two cities without power on Wednesday, authorities said, tightening an energy squeeze that threatens misery for millions in winter.

A nearly two-week barrage of Russian attacks with missiles, self-destructing explosive drones and other weaponry on Ukraine's critical infrastructure comes as Russian forces are being forced back on the ground.

In Kherson, among the first Ukrainian cities seized by Russian forces in the February invasion, Moscow-installed authorities are bracing for a Ukrainian assault to take it back, telling residents to expect shelling and to evacuate. Text messages Wednesday urged people to leave the southern city, Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti reported.

Moscow-backed authorities have said evacuations from occupied territories are voluntary. But in many cases, the only routes out for evacuees are to Russia.

In a rare acknowledgement of the pressure that Ukrainian troops are exerting on the ground, Russia's new invasion commander, Gen. Sergei Surovikin, on Tuesday described the situation for Russian forces in the Kherson region as "very difficult."

Kherson is one of four partly or fully-occupied regions that Russia illegally annexed last month, in an effort — widely condemned and rejected by Western nations — to cement its land-grabs.

Proving incapable of holding all the territory it seized and struggling with manpower and equipment losses, Russia has stepped up bombardments from the air.

The scorched-earth campaign targeting Ukrainian power plants and other key infrastructure contrasts with Kremlin tactics in the invasion's opening stage, when Russian commanders had seemingly sought to spare some utilities they perhaps thought they might later need, had they not been beaten back.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy tweeted Tuesday that nearly a third of Ukraine's power stations have been destroyed since Oct. 10, causing "massive blackouts" nationwide.

Later Tuesday, in his nightly video address, Zelenskyy urged Ukrainians to make "a very conscious" effort to save power, speaking before another night where substations and other infrastructure were pounded. Zelenskyy said switching off appliances and doing other things to save power during hours of peak consumption help "the entire country."

Shelling knocked out power and water in some parts of Enerhodar, Mayor Dmytro Orlov said. The southern city is next to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, which is one of the most worrisome flashpoints of the nearly eight-month invasion.

Missiles severely damaged an energy facility in the region of Kryvyi Rih, a city in south-central Ukraine, the regional governor reported. He said the strike cut power to villages, towns and to one city district.

Western nations have promised more air-defense systems to help Ukraine counter the aerial assault that is testing the resilience Ukrainians have shown since Moscow invaded.

A newly arrived German-supplied air defense system has been deployed and is performing well against the Russian strikes, Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address.

He thanked Ukrainian soldiers who shot down missiles and Iranian-made drones that were targeted at

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energy facilities.

Across Ukraine, Russian strikes killed at least six civilians and wounded 16 in the latest 24 hour-period, the president's office said Wednesday. It said Russian forces attacked nine southeastern regions of Ukraine using drones, rockets and heavy artillery, focusing on energy facilities.

Four cities were attacked around the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, the largest in Europe, with residential buildings damaged and, in Enerhodar, where plant workers live, electricity and water partially lost.

In the eastern Donetsk region, there was also continued fighting for the city of Bakhmut.

## Many remain critical of state of US democracy: AP-NORC poll

By GARY FIELDS and CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Many Americans remain pessimistic about the state of U.S. democracy and the way elected officials are chosen -- nearly two years after a divisive presidential election spurred false claims of widespread fraud and a violent attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Only about half of Americans have high confidence that votes in the upcoming midterm elections will be counted accurately, according to a new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, though that's an improvement from about 4 in 10 saying that just before the 2020 presidential election. Just 9% of U.S. adults think democracy is working "extremely" or "very well," while 52% say it's not working well.

In a reversal from two years ago, Republicans are now more likely than Democrats to say democracy is not working well. This year, 68% of Republicans feel this way compared with 32% two years ago. The share of Democrats with a sour outlook on how democracy is functioning in the U.S. dropped from 63% to 40%.

Ronald McGraw Sr., 67, of Indianapolis, is a retired construction worker who recently registered to vote and intends to cast a ballot for the first time this year.

"I thought I'd let everybody else put their vote in and just go with the flow, but this whole thing is at stake now," he said, referring to democracy, the economy, "everything, how the whole country runs."

McGraw, who is Black and considers himself a moderate, said a big concern is the political turmoil in the country and the fact that he sees too many self-serving politicians concerned with power, especially those who work against the interest of minorities. He said he registered as a Republican but did not give any thought to party platforms or stances at the time.

"I am paying attention now," he said.

After every presidential election, members of the losing candidate's party can experience a letdown. The fallout from the 2020 election has been deeper, fueled by the lies from former President Donald Trump and his allies that Democrats stole the election.

There is no evidence of widespread fraud or manipulation of voting machines. Exhaustive reviews in key states upheld Democrat Joe Biden's win, while judges — including some appointed by Trump — dismissed numerous lawsuits challenging the outcome. Trump's own attorney general, William Barr, called the claims bogus.

The general despair over democracy comes after decades of increasing polarization nationwide, from the presidential and congressional races down to local contests such as races for school boards.

Overall, just a quarter of U.S. adults — including similar percentages of Republicans and Democrats — say they are optimistic about the way leaders are chosen, while 43% say they are pessimistic. An additional 31% feel neither.

Adam Coykendall, a 31-year-old social studies teacher from Ashland, Wisconsin, said he sees party loyalties driving lawmakers more than the good of the country.

"I feel like everything is becoming a little more divisive, a little more polarized, more focused on party loyalty ... rather than working for your constituency, having things that work for people rather than working for the party," said Coykendall, who described himself as an independent who leans toward the Democratic Party.

The AP-NORC poll also found a large segment of Republicans, 58%, still believe Biden's election wasn't legitimate. That's down slightly from 66% in July 2021.

Gary Phelps, a 70-year-old retired truck driver in Clearwater, Minnesota, accepts Biden is president but doesn't think he was legitimately elected. Phelps said he was concerned about voter fraud, mail ballots being received and counted after Election Day, and irregularities with some voting machines, although he acknowledged it's based on his feeling rather than evidence.

Phelps remains concerned about the voting process and whether the tallies will be accurate. "I would hope so, but I don't think so," the Republican-leaning independent said.

The poll shows 47% of Americans say they have "a great deal" or "quite a bit" of confidence that the votes in the 2022 midterm elections will be counted accurately. Confidence is highest among Democrats, 74% of whom say they're highly confident. On the Republican side, confidence in elections is decidedly mixed: 25% have high confidence, 30% have moderate confidence and 45% have little to no confidence.

That erosion of trust comes after two years of Trump and his allies promoting lies about the 2020 presidential election and peddling conspiracy theories about voting machines.

Narratives about mailed ballots mysteriously changing vote totals have been one persistent source of misinformation. To be clear, results announced on election night are unofficial and often incomplete. It's normal for counting to continue several days after Election Day, as mailed ballots received by their deadline are processed and added to the tally.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a surge of mailed balloting as voters opted to avoid crowded polling stations. A large number of those ballots slowed down the results as local election offices worked through the steps to verify the ballots and ensure they matched registered voters.

Julie Duggan, a 31-year-old police officer from Chicago, is among the Republicans who does not believe Biden's win was legitimate. She said watching his gaffes and missteps, it was impossible to believe he garnered enough support to win.

She is concerned about the country's direction, citing inflation, illegal immigration, crime rates and a lack of respect for law enforcement.

"If we don't get the right people in, we will be at the point of no return," she said, adding she hopes elections will be run fairly but has her doubts. "My confidence has definitely been shaken."

## China party congress offers look at future leaders

BEIJING (AP) — While Xi Jinping is primed to receive a third term as head of China's ruling Communist Party on Sunday, it is unknown who will join him for the next five years on the party's leading bodies, the Central Committee and the Politburo.

Analysts will scrutinize who joins, and who leaves, for any clues about the future direction of policy as well as just how much power the 69-year-old Xi has been able to amass as one of China's most influential figures in the country's modern political history.

Most closely watched will be the Politburo Standing Committee, whose size fluctuates but has stood at seven members under Xi. Based on past practice, the new lineup will be revealed when the members walk out from behind a curtain Sunday, one day after the end of a weeklong party congress.

The positions they take on stage, to Xi's left and right, will indicate their rank within what is considered the inner circle of power. Leading contenders include both current members and newcomers:

### PREMIER LI KEQIANG

One major question is the future of the party's No. 2 official, Premier Li Keqiang, who has been on the Standing Committee since 2012 and is primarily responsible for heading the cabinet and managing the world's second-largest economy.

The 67-year-old Li is regarded as an advocate of market reforms and private enterprise, in contrast to Xi, who favors state-led development with an emphasis on technological self-reliance and reducing the large gap between rich and poor.



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Li has had little impact on policymaking since Xi sidelined him politically, but he has led efforts to promote consumption-led economic growth and reduce reliance on exports and investment, employing tactics that some other countries say violate China's free-trade commitments.

Though he has said he will step down as premier next year, he is still eligible to stay on the Standing Committee. If he remains, analysts say that might indicate that supporters of a more market-driven economy have tempered Xi's push for greater state control.

## ADVISORY BODY HEAD WANG YANG

Other possible holdovers include Wang Yang, who joined the Standing Committee in 2017 and is also regarded as a member of the wing that favors markets, private enterprise and economic experimentation.

Wang heads the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a party-controlled advisory body made up of representatives from various sectors such as religious groups, professional organizations and chambers of commerce.

He won plaudits in 2011 for defusing protests by residents of the fishing village of Wukan over land sales by local officials.

## POLITICAL THEORIST WANG HUNING

Longtime party political theorist Wang Huning is seen as likely to stay on the Standing Committee. He may move up to head of the National People's Congress, the largely ceremonial legislature, which would make him one of the top three party officials.

## VICE PREMIER HU CHUNHUA

Among possible newcomers, Vice Premier Hu Chunhua is considered one of those with the best chance. He was a top official in Guangdong province from 2012 to 2017, where he led a crackdown on "naked officials" who work in China but have sent their families to live abroad, considered an indication of corruption.

Hu rose through the party's Communist Youth League, which is seen as a separate faction from Xi's circle and politically close to Xi's predecessor, former party leader and President Hu Jintao.

Hu Chunhua is known as a boy wonder who ranked first in China's national university entrance examinations and became the youngest person to hold several official posts.

He spent the first two decades of his career in Tibet, where he promoted economic development and oversaw efforts to suppress pro-independence sentiment. He was thereafter appointed party secretary for the Inner Mongolia region.

## SHANGHAI CHIEF LI QIANG

Li Qiang has been party secretary of Shanghai, China's largest city and financial hub, since 2017. The post was previously held by Xi, former President Jiang Zemin and former Premier Zhu Rongji.

Li is regarded as being close to Xi after serving under him in the southeastern province of Zhejiang, a center for export-oriented manufacturing and private enterprise.

His reputation was dented by a lengthy lockdown of Shanghai earlier this year that confined 25 million people to their homes, disrupted the economy and prompted scattered public protests.

## CHONGQING LEADER CHEN MIN'ER

Chen Min'er, another Xi ally who worked under him in Zhejiang province, has served as party secretary of the vast southwestern city of Chongqing since 2017.

The 62-year-old Chen is regarded by analysts as a rising star whom Xi might want to promote in order to secure his legacy in the next generation.

Chen has never held a national-level position but is seen as a capable leader who made Chongqing's government more responsive and efficient after a turbulent period under the now-imprisoned Bo Xilai, who was a Xi rival.

He previously held the top post in Guizhou, a relatively poor southern province, from 2012 to 2017.

## Demings goes on attack against Rubio in Fla. Senate debate

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Democratic U.S. Rep. Val Demings of Florida went on the attack Tuesday in her first

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debate against Republican Sen. Marco Rubio, accusing him of being a serial liar, while Rubio criticized her for supporting President Joe Biden's economic agenda.

Rubio, a two-term senator, and Demings, a three-term congresswoman and former Orlando police chief, faced questions at the West Palm Beach debate on topics including inflation, abortion, voting rights, gun violence, immigration and foreign policy.

Florida has increasingly shifted rightward in recent election cycles, giving Rubio the advantage as Republicans now lead Democrats with voter registration in the state. But Demings clearly saw the debate as an opportunity to take Rubio on forcefully as she tries to become the state's first Black senator.

Rubio skirted a question on whether he would support a federal abortion ban with no exceptions and instead called Demings' position extreme because she would not say what limits on abortion she would support.

"Every bill I have ever sponsored on abortion and every bill I've ever voted for has exceptions," Rubio said.

"What we know is that the senator supports no exceptions," Demings responded. "He can make his mouth say anything today. He is good at that, by the way. What day is it and what is Marco Rubio saying?"

Following the Supreme Court's decision in June to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, Rubio has expressed his personal opposition to abortion in all cases while saying he'd back abortion-restricting statutes that include exceptions. Demings supports abortion access at least until fetal viability, saying the government should not be the one to determine that.

On gun control, Demings accused Rubio of not doing enough to change laws to prevent shootings, including mass killings at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando in 2016 and at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland in 2018.

"How long will you watch people being gunned down in first grade, fourth grade, high school, college, church, synagogue, grocery store, movie theater, a mall and a nightclub and do nothing?" Demings said.

But Rubio defended his opposition to gun restrictions, saying some proposals would not have stopped many of the mass shootings and Americans have a Second Amendment right to protect themselves.

"Everything she is for would have done nothing to stop any of those shootings," Rubio said. "Every one of these shooters would have passed the background check that she keeps insisting on. No one here is in favor of mass shootings and violence."

To address inflation, Rubio said the U.S. needs to stop spending so much money, citing some pandemic relief funds, and to boost domestic oil production. He chastised the Biden administration for its decision to release more oil from the U.S. strategic reserve to help bring down prices at the pump.

"Oil reserves do not exist to win midterms," Rubio said.

Demings said the pandemic relief money was necessary to help hurting families and businesses.

"Of course the senator who has never run anything at all but his mouth would know nothing about helping people and being there for people when they are in trouble," Demings said.

Rubio also attacked Demings for not passing legislation in Washington, saying all she had done was get post offices named after people. Demings angrily rejected his characterization, noting the buildings were named after police officers who died in the line of duty.

"It's embarrassing that you think that honoring a person who was a hero by naming a federal building after them is nothing," she said.

Demings repeatedly accused Rubio of distorting her record and positions on issues.

"I am really disappointed in you, Marco Rubio, because I think there was a time when you did not lie in order to win," she said.

Rubio maintained that Demings was simply there to support Biden's and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's agenda, while calling himself the most effective senator.

"In the two terms I've been there, no U.S. senator has gotten more done than I have," he said. "The only thing she does is vote 100% with Pelosi."

Asked whether he would accept the results of the 2022 election, Rubio said, "Sure, because I'm going to win."

Later, he clarified that “no matter what the outcome is, I’ll support it, because Florida has good laws. They’re not some crazy laws like they have in Pennsylvania and these other places.”

## Iran’s Elnaz Rekabi, who competed without hijab, in Tehran

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iranian competitive climber Elnaz Rekabi received a hero’s welcome on her return to Tehran early Wednesday, after competing in South Korea without wearing a mandatory headscarf required of female athletes from the Islamic Republic.

Rekabi’s decision not to wear the hijab while competing Sunday came as protests sparked by the Sept. 16 death in custody of a 22-year-old woman have entered a fifth week. Mahsa Amini was detained by the country’s morality police over her clothing — and her death has seen women removing their mandatory hijabs in public.

The demonstrations, drawing school-age children, oil workers and others to the street in over 100 cities, represent the most-serious challenge to Iran’s theocracy since the mass protests surrounding its disputed 2009 presidential election.

Supporters and Farsi-language media outside of Iran have worried about Rekabi’s safety after she choose to compete without the hijab.

Rekabi on Wednesday repeated an explanation posted earlier to an Instagram account in her name that described her not wearing a hijab as “unintentional.” The Iranian government routinely pressures activists at home and abroad, often airing what rights group describe as coerced confessions on state television — the same cameras she addressed on her arrival back home.

Video shared online showed large crowds gathered early Wednesday at Imam Khomeini International Airport outside of Tehran, the sanctioned nation’s main gateway out of the country. The videos, corresponding to known features of the airport, showed crowds chanting the 33-year-old Rekabi’s name and calling her a hero.

She walked into one of the airport’s terminals, filmed by state media and wearing a black baseball cap and a black hoodie covering her hair. She received flowers from an onlooker, and then repeated what had been posted on Instagram that not wearing the hijab was “unintentional” and her travel had been as previously planned.

Rekabi described being in a women’s only waiting area prior to her climb.

“Because I was busy putting on my shoes and my gear, it caused me to forget to put on my hijab and then I went to compete,” she said.

She added: “I came back to Iran with peace of mind although I had a lot of tension and stress. But so far, thank God, nothing has happened.”

Outside, she apparently entered a van and slowly was driven through the gathered crowd, who cheered her. It wasn’t clear where she went after that.

Rekabi left Seoul on a Tuesday morning flight. The BBC’s Persian service, which has extensive contacts within Iran despite being banned from operating there, quoted an unnamed “informed source” who described Iranian officials as seizing both Rekabi’s mobile phone and passport.

BBC Persian also said she initially had been scheduled to return on Wednesday, but her flight apparently had been moved up unexpectedly.

IranWire, another website focusing on the country founded by Iranian-Canadian journalist Maziar Bahari who once was detained by Iran, alleged that Rekabi would be immediately transferred to Tehran’s notorious Evin Prison after arriving in the country. Evin Prison was the site of a massive fire this past weekend that killed at least eight prisoners.

In a tweet, the Iranian Embassy in Seoul denied “all the fake, false news and disinformation” regarding Rekabi’s departure. But instead of posting a photo of her from the Seoul competition, it posted an image of her wearing a headscarf at a previous competition in Moscow, where she took a bronze medal.

Rekabi didn’t put on a hijab during Sunday’s final at the International Federation of Sport Climbing’s Asia

Championship.

Rekabi wore a hijab during her initial appearances at the one-week climbing event. She wore just a black headband when competing Sunday, her dark hair pulled back in a ponytail; she had a white jersey with Iran's flag as a logo on it.

Footage of the competition showed Rekabi relaxed as she approached the climbing and after she competed.

Iranian women competing abroad under the Iranian flag always wear the hijab.

"Our understanding is that she is returning to Iran, and we will continue to monitor the situation as it develops on her arrival," the International Federation of Sport Climbing, which oversaw the event, said in a statement. "It is important to stress that athletes' safety is paramount for us and we support any efforts to keep a valued member of our community safe in this situation."

The federation said it had been in touch with both Rekabi and Iranian officials, but declined to elaborate on the substance of those calls when reached by The Associated Press. The federation also declined to discuss the Instagram post attributed to Rekabi and the claims in it.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry acknowledged the departures of the Iranian athlete and her team from the country without elaborating. On Wednesday, a small group of protesters demonstrated in front of Iran's Embassy in Seoul, with some women cutting off locks of their hair like others have in demonstrations worldwide since Amini's death.

So far, human rights groups estimate that over 200 people have been killed in the protests and the violent security force crackdown that followed. Iran has not offered a death toll in weeks. Demonstrations have been seen in over 100 cities, according to the group Human Rights Activists in Iran. Thousands are believed to have been arrested.

Gathering information about the demonstrations remains difficult, however. Internet access has been disrupted for weeks by the Iranian government. Meanwhile, authorities have detained at least 40 journalists, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Iranian officials, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, have repeatedly alleged the country's foreign enemies are behind the ongoing demonstrations, rather than Iranians angered by Amini's death and the country's other woes.

Iranians have seen their life savings evaporate; the country's currency, the rial, plummeted and Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers has been reduced to tatters.

## Russia's Iranian drones complicate Israel's balancing act

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Iranian-made drones that Russia sent slamming into central Kyiv this week have complicated Israel's balancing act between Russia and the West.

Israel has stayed largely on the sidelines since Russia's invasion of Ukraine last February so as not to damage its strategic relationship with the Kremlin. Although Israel has sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine, it has refused Kyiv's frequent requests to send air defense systems and other military equipment and refrained from enforcing strict economic sanctions on Russia and the many Russian-Jewish oligarchs who have second homes in Israel.

But with news of Moscow's deepening ties with Tehran, Israel's sworn foe, pressure is growing on Israel to back Ukraine in the grinding war. Israel has long fought a shadowy war with Iran across the Middle East by land, sea and air.

Lt. Col. Richard Hecht, a military spokesman, said the suicide drone attack in Ukraine had raised new concerns in Israel.

"We're looking at it closely and thinking about how these can be used by the Iranians toward Israeli population centers," he said.

The debate burst into the open on Monday, as an Israeli Cabinet minister called on the government to take Ukraine's side. Iran and its proxies in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen have threatened Israel with



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the same delta-shaped, low-flying Shahed drones now exploding in Kyiv.

The Iranian government has denied providing Moscow with the drones, but American officials say it has been doing so since August.

"There is no longer any doubt where Israel should stand in this bloody conflict," Nachman Shai, Israel's minister of diaspora affairs, wrote on Twitter. "The time has come for Ukraine to receive military aid as well, just as the USA and NATO countries provide."

His comments set off a storm in Russia. Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said on Telegram that providing military aid to Ukraine would be "a very reckless move" by Israel.

"It will destroy all interstate relations between our countries," he wrote.

But Shai doubled down on Tuesday, while stressing his view did not reflect the government's official stance.

"We in Israel have a lot of experience in protecting our civilian population over 30 years. We've been attacked by missiles from Iraq and rockets from Lebanon and Gaza," Shai, a former military spokesman, told The Associated Press. "I'm speaking about defense equipment to protect Ukraine's civilian population."

The Israeli prime minister's office and Defense Ministry both declined to comment.

For years, Russia and Israel have enjoyed good working relations and closely coordinated to avoid run-ins in the skies over Syria, Israel's northeastern neighbor, where Russian air power has propped up embattled President Bashar Assad. Russia has let Israeli jets bomb Iran-linked targets said to be weapons caches destined for Israel's enemies.

Israel has also been keen to stay neutral in the war over concern for the safety of the large Jewish community in Russia. Israel frets about renewed antisemitic attacks in the country, with its long history of anti-Jewish pogroms under Russian czars and purges in the Soviet era. Over 1 million of Israel's 9.2 million citizens have roots in the former Soviet Union.

Israel's former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett maintained strict neutrality after the invasion, refraining from condemning Russia's actions and even trying to position himself as a mediator in the conflict. As the U.S. and European Union piled sanctions on Russia, Bennett became the only Western leader to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

But in recent months, Israel's cautious stance has grown more fraught.

Prime Minister Yair Lapid, who took over as caretaker leader over the summer, has been more vocal than his predecessor. As foreign minister, he described reports of atrocities in Bucha, Ukraine as possible war crimes. After Russia bombarded Kyiv last week, he "strongly" condemned the attacks and sent "heartfelt condolences to the victims' families and the Ukrainian people," sparking backlash from Moscow.

Tensions rose further when a Russian court in July ordered that the Jewish Agency, a major nonprofit that promotes Jewish immigration to Israel, close its offices in the country. Israel was rattled. A hearing to decide the future of the agency's operations in Russia is set for Wednesday. "Anything could happen," said Yigal Palmor, the agency's spokesman.

Now, Israeli alarm about the Iranian drones buzzing over Kyiv has heightened the debate.

"I think Israel can help even more," said Amos Yadlin, a former chief of Israeli military intelligence. He described Israel's "knowledge on how to handle aerial attacks," its "intelligence about Iranian weapons" and "ability to jam them" as potentially crucial to Ukraine.

Iran is battle testing weapons that could be used against Israel's northern and southern borders, argued Geoffrey Corn, an expert on the law of war at South Texas College of Law in Houston.

Iran backs Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group and Hamas in the Gaza Strip — both of which have fought lengthy wars against Israel.

If the drones prove effective in Ukraine, Iran will "double down on their development," Corn said. If they are shot down, Iran will have an "opportunity to figure out how to bypass those countermeasures."

Israel's air defense system, the Iron Dome, has boasted a 90% interception rate against incoming rocket fire from Gaza. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has hit out at Israel for not providing Kyiv with the anti-rocket system.

Former Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky, a onetime Soviet dissident, criticized his country's

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reluctance to help Ukraine in an interview with the Haaretz daily on Tuesday, deriding Israel as "the last country in the free world which is still afraid to irritate Putin."

Still, some insist that Israel must not enter the fray precisely because it differs from its Western allies. "We are not Germany or France," said Uzi Rubin, a former head of Israel's missile defense program. "We are a country at war."

## Ex-Pence aide shrugs off doubts in Indiana election post bid

By TOM DAVIES Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A former Mike Pence aide is sidestepping previous support for tighter voting restrictions and doubts about the 2020 presidential vote as he tries to avoid turbulence in his campaign for what would typically be a little-noticed election win by a Republican seeking Indiana's top elections office.

Since Diego Morales defeated Indiana's current secretary of state for the GOP nomination in June, he's given scant explanation for dropping his criticism of early and mail voting while Democrats criticize Morales as one of many Republican "election deniers" seeking to win state offices around the country.

Indiana Democrats, who last won a statewide race a decade ago, see a chance to defeat Morales in the Nov. 8 election. They are highlighting that he twice left low-level secretary of state office jobs after being written up for poor job performance and questions over whether he's overemphasized his military service.

Morales largely focuses his campaign on appearances at county Republican events and local festivals, brushing off criticism. He has not joined candidate forums with Democrat Destiny Wells and Libertarian Jeff Mauer and skipped a debate last week with them that was broadcast by public TV stations across Indiana.

Wells said Morales is "sowing seeds of fear and doubt" about elections and that the secretary of state should focus on improving Indiana's troubles with low voter turnout.

"I think Diego is being very dishonest in where the secretary of state needs to take Indiana in election reforms," Wells said. "We don't need to make voting harder to make it more secure and he only wants to make it harder by reducing opportunities to vote."

Ahead of Morales' June Republican convention victory over current Secretary of State Holli Sullivan, he wrote an online column in which he called the 2020 election a "scam" while pointing to unfounded claims former President Donald Trump and his allies have made about other states. He called for voter restrictions that included cutting Indiana's 28-day early voting period in half, eliminating several reasons why people can request mail-in ballots, requiring new voters to prove their U.S. citizenship when registering, and creating an "election task force" that would investigate "shenanigans."

His single-page campaign website has included no mention of such plans and they don't come up in his frequent social media posts of greeting voters.

When asked in an interview to explain his shifts, Morales didn't give a direct answer.

"When I crisscross the 92 counties, I've been listening to all Hoosiers, including county clerks, and I have meetings with them and I believe the early voting is working and it will continue to be the same," Morales told The Associated Press.

The Indiana secretary of state's office oversees statewide policies for elections, which are run by elected county officials under laws enacted by the Republican-dominated Legislature. Winning the GOP nomination for the office has been tantamount to election victory as Republicans have won by double-digit percentages in six of the past seven times its been on the ballot.

Morales, 43, leans heavily into his life story of immigrating from Guatemala with his parents and sisters, finishing high school in the southern Indiana town of Sellersburg, then going to college at Indiana University Southeast and enlisting in the military before becoming a U.S. citizen.

Morales briefly held secretary of state office jobs in 2009 and 2011 until getting poor performance write-ups that the AP first reported about during his unsuccessful 2018 bid for an Indiana congressional seat. He returned to state government as an aide on Pence's gubernatorial staff for four years until Pence left to become Trump's vice president in 2017. Other Pence staffers have defended his work and Pence spoke at a Morales campaign fundraiser last week.

His campaign's social media pages feature photos of Morales in a camouflage uniform and videos highlighting his service as an Army infantryman.

Military records released by the Morales campaign, however, show he underwent about 3-1/2 months of Army infantry training in 2007 and transferred to the Indiana National Guard. The records show Morales left the National Guard in 2013 without advancing beyond his initial rank of specialist or undergoing additional military education.

Morales said he was proud of his military service but declined to discuss it in any detail.

"My reasoning of joining is simply to give back," he said. "I believe I signed a blank check to be ready, if needed, for this great country."

Morales also declined to discuss why he never sought promotion or wasn't activated when his National Guard unit served a deployment to Iraq in 2008.

"Feel free to call the National Guard or the U.S. Army or the Department of Defense. I'm sure they would walk you through all of that," Morales said. "You can call them because they are the experts, they will tell you every single detail of this. So, the proof is there that I'm honorably discharged and I'm very proud of it."

An Indiana National Guard spokesman, however, responded that the only information allowed for release under military regulations are records regarding "duty status, the character of his discharge, his term of service, his awards, his education and his job specialty."

The Democratic candidate, Wells, a 38-year-old lawyer, released records of her Army service since 2004, including her promotion to her current Army Reserve rank of lieutenant colonel, time as an intelligence officer and active-duty deployment to Afghanistan in 2017.

Wells pivots discussion about military service back to what she calls an erosion of women's rights with the statewide abortion ban approved by the Republican-dominated Legislature. Wells said that action resulted from the total control Republicans now have over state government and that more two-party balance is needed.

"I went to the ends of the Earth to protect the notion of democracy abroad, to protect women abroad in third world countries so that they have rights like ours secured," Wells said. "But now I am at home and I am seeing my own rights taken away."

## Children starve as Yemen teeters on a return to fighting

By ANWAR SALEM and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

HAYS, Yemen (AP) — An emaciated little girl lies motionless on a hospital bed and struggles to breathe. Her body is covered with sores. She can barely open her eyes.

Hafsa Ahmed is about 2. About a dozen other children in the red-brick hospital in this southern Yemeni city are also dying of starvation.

Hunger has long threatened the lives of hundreds of thousands of Yemen's children. Now, the war between the country's Iran-backed Houthi rebels and a Saudi-led coalition is threatening to escalate after months of a tenuous truce. Yemenis, and international assistance groups, worry that the situation will get even worse.

In the city of Hodeida, with a population of roughly 3 million, al-Thawra Hospital receives 2,500 patients daily, including "super-malnourished" children, said Joyce Msuya, U.N. assistant secretary-general for humanitarian affairs. She visited the facility this month.

Around 2.2 million Yemeni children under the age of 5 are hungry. More than half a million are severely malnourished. Some 1.3 million pregnant or breastfeeding women had severe malnutrition this year, the United Nations says.

"This is one of the saddest visits I've ever done in my professional life," Msuya said in a video released by the U.N. "There are immense needs. Half of Yemeni hospitals are not functioning, or they are completely destroyed by the war. We need more support to save lives in Yemen, children, women and men."

The war in Ukraine is exacerbating the situation.

The Yemeni diet depends heavily on wheat. Ukraine supplied Yemen with 40% of its grain, until Russia's

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invasion cut the flow. In developed countries, people are working harder to pay higher bills. In Yemen, food is 60% more expensive than it was last year. And in poor countries, inflation can mean death.

"Yemen has been hit three times by the Russian invasion of Ukraine," said Peter Salisbury, a Yemen expert at the International Crisis Group. "First, by the loss of food supplies from Ukraine and higher prices on international markets. Then, by higher fuel prices. And third, by a shift in international focus."

War has raged for eight years in Yemen between Shiite Houthi rebels and pro-government forces backed by a coalition of Sunni Gulf Arab states. The Iran-backed Houthis swept down from the mountains in 2014, occupied northern Yemen and the country's capital, Sanaa, and forced the internationally recognized government to flee into exile to Saudi Arabia.

Since then, more than 150,000 people were killed by the violence and 3 million were displaced. Two-thirds of the population get food assistance.

There's a truce in place now despite the two sides' failure to renew it this month. Hafsa and more than half a million other Yemeni children are severely malnourished. Every 10 minutes, a child in Yemen dies from preventable illness, according to Save the Children.

Hafsa is the youngest of six. One died from malnutrition. Her father Ahmed, 47, works as a day laborer. Each day he can afford only some flour and cooking oil.

He and his family live in the district of Hays, about 120 kilometers (74 miles) south of the port city of Hodeida, which has seen some of the fiercest fighting in Yemen's conflict.

The children in Hays Hospital have swollen bellies and twig-like limbs. Eventually, prolonged malnutrition "causes their organs to stop functioning," Dr. Nabouta Hassan said.

Hassan, who oversees the hospital's malnutrition ward, said that every month it receives up to 30 children suffering from diseases related to acute malnutrition.

Hodeida, along with the northern province of Hajjah, includes the hardest-hit areas by extremely severe food insecurity and acute malnutrition, according to the U.N.

Mohammed Hussein, a 49-year-old father of five, lives in a camp for displaced people in the outskirts of the city of Abs in northern Hajjah province.

He said he has been displaced four times since the war began in 2014.

"I lost my home, farmland, everything," he said over the phone.

He lost a 9-month-old son three years ago. He has a 1-year-old and a 3-year-old who are starving.

Their main dish is bread mixed with water and salt. Some days, neighbors give his family meat, chicken or pasta. Hussein's too poor to take his kids to the hospital.

"There is no money, and I am jobless," he said. "They could die also from hunger."

The U.N. food agency has cut rations for millions of people due to critical funding gaps and soaring global food prices. The World Food Program has for months prioritized the most vulnerable 13.5 million Yemenis, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA.

The U.N. said that by the end of September, its humanitarian response plan for Yemen secured \$2 billion of the \$4.27 billion needed to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection services to 17.9 million people.

Abdulwasea Mohammed, advocacy, media and campaigns manager for Oxfam in Yemen, said his group needs more money, more consistent access to the most vulnerable, and a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

"The response is saving lives every day despite this," he said.

## Abortion access looms over medical residency applications

By JAMES POLLARD Associated Press/Report for America

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Students in obstetrics-gynecology and family medicine — two of the most popular medical residencies — face tough choices about where to advance their training in a landscape where legal access to abortion varies from state to state.

Abortions are typically performed by OB-GYNs or family doctors, and training generally involves observing and assisting in the procedure, often in outpatient clinics. Many doctors and students now worry about



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nonexistent or subpar training in states where clinics closed or abortion laws were otherwise tightened after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

In some cases, applicants who want to perform abortions as part of their career are pursuing residencies in states with more liberal reproductive laws and perhaps continuing their careers there, too — potentially setting up less permissive states for a shortage of OB-GYNs, observers said.

“To choose a state where I will be limited or I wouldn’t have full access is essentially shortchanging myself and my future patients on the quality of care that I can provide,” said Deborah Fadoju, a fourth-year Ohio State medical student who said she looked at programs along the East Coast, where many states have laws safeguarding abortion.

As an OB-GYN, Fadoju said, she should be able to “do the full breadth of work.”

On the other hand, students who oppose abortion may find more accommodation at residency programs in states that are largely outlawing the procedure.

Dr. Christina Francis, a board member and CEO-elect of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, said her organization has previously received requests from students seeking information on residencies in which they wouldn’t have to so much as make an abortion referral.

“Now we’re seeing residents and medical students who don’t want to participate in abortions saying, ‘We are going to seek out residency positions in places where abortion might be restricted’ because — theoretically and I think this will play out — there should be less pressure placed upon them.”

OB-GYN residency programs must provide training in abortions, according to the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, though residents with religious or moral objections may opt out. A Sept. 17 update said programs where abortions are illegal must provide that experience elsewhere. There are no similar requirements for family medicine programs.

Doctors need the “muscle memory” that only hands-on education can give, especially for abortions, said Pamela Merritt, the executive director of Medical Students for Choice, which promotes access to abortion education.

“How many surgical hours do you want a liver specialist to have before they try to do a biopsy?” Merritt said. “We would never be debating how to educate people without physical patient interaction on any other major health care issue.”

A research team led by Atlanta’s Emory University is surveying third- and fourth-year medical students throughout the country and across specialties about their residency application decisions after the ruling that overturned *Roe*.

The team is still analyzing data, but initial results show many applicants are grappling with where to pursue further training, according to Emory medical students Nell Mermin-Bunnell and Ariana Traub, who also co-founded an advocacy group that supports abortion rights.

“There’s a lot of unknowns, and it’s scary for people applying to residency,” Mermin-Bunnell said. “There’s really just a lot of question marks, and the way that health care is being practiced is changing rapidly.”

Over three-fourths of about 490 respondents said abortion access would likely or very likely influence decisions about their residency location, the researchers said. The survey did not ask respondents directly for their stance on abortion, to avoid introducing bias.

Connor McNamee, a third-year family medicine resident at the University of Toledo, began exploring abortion training outside Ohio last summer. A state law bans most abortions after cardiac activity is detected, but a judge has blocked it while a challenge proceeds.

McNamee is now looking at options in Virginia, where abortions are more widely accessible. He had been open to eventually returning to Ohio, but he now says abortion limits there are “the final nail in the coffin” for him.

“I can’t really be an abortion provider in Ohio, and that’s an important part of my career,” McNamee said.

The majority of medical residents end up practicing in the state where they completed their residencies, according to a 2021 report from the Association of American Medical Colleges — and some doctors fear fewer trainees will mean fewer OB-GYNs in states with tight restrictions on abortion.

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In South Carolina, students' fears about access to reproductive health education (for their career) and abortion services (for themselves) have hampered the recruitment of medical residents and fellows, said Dr. Elizabeth Mack, president of the South Carolina chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, who testified in August before lawmakers pursuing tighter abortion restrictions.

Francis, of the anti-abortion obstetricians group, said she hopes new restrictions might open the door for students otherwise interested in OB-GYN but opposed to abortion to enter the field.

Nearly 44% of 6,007 OB-GYN residents were located in a state deemed certain or likely to ban abortion if the Supreme Court overturned Roe, according to a paper published online in April by the journal *Obstetrics & Gynecology*.

President Joe Biden promised Tuesday to codify abortion rights if Democrats retain enough seats in Congress — but while such federal protections remain elusive, medical education leaders are brainstorming ways for residents in restrictive states to continue abortion training, including allowing travel to more permissive states.

Such "travel rotations" have been proposed by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, but the sheer volume of need makes it difficult to bridge the gap, according to the *Obstetrics & Gynecology* paper.

The Ryan Program, based at the University of California, San Francisco, piloted travel rotations for students to train outside of Texas last year, according to its director, Dr. Jody Steinauer.

Steinauer suggests that programs collaborate to help fund travel rotations and guide residents through the process of obtaining medical licensing in new states. She also suggests shoring up abortion simulation training to teach basic skills.

She fears legal changes will imperil trainings on emergency skills like safely emptying a uterus after a miscarriage or abortion.

The surgical procedures for miscarriage and abortion are the same — something Francis said should allow residents to be trained without participating in abortion.

Residents could still learn a lot from miscarriage care, Steinauer said, but routine abortion training correlates with greater preparedness in all early pregnancy loss management, including counseling and complications. And, she said, residents need to see enough patients to feel competent — something restrictions make difficult.

"Not having integrated, full abortion training leaves people often with deficits in their skills," Steinauer said. "Programs are really going to have to support their learners, who are able to, to travel to other states to get training."

## Harper, Schwarber HR as Wheeler, Phils top Pads to open NLCS

By BERNIE WILSON AP Sports Writer

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Bryce Harper hit another postseason home run — no surprise there — and then Kyle Schwarber topped him by launching a shot that amazed even his teammates.

Harper hit his fourth homer this postseason and Schwarber hit a jaw-dropping, 488-foot drive that carried the Philadelphia Phillies over the San Diego Padres 2-0 Tuesday night to open the all-wild card NL Championship Series.

Zack Wheeler was awesome, too, combining with two relievers on a one-hitter for Philadelphia. The Phillies managed just three hits off Yu Darvish and the San Diego bullpen — the combined four hits matched the fewest ever in a postseason game.

The Phillies will try to take a 2-0 lead when they send Aaron Nola to mound to oppose Blake Snell on Wednesday afternoon. Nola is set to pitch against his brother, Padres catcher Austin Nola.

"I thought Darvish was really good and we couldn't get much going, but Harper, three straight games with a home run, and Schwarber's game was just completely flush," Philadelphia manager Rob Thomson said. "I mean, with the great pitching we had tonight, that's all we needed."

Harper, trying to reach his first World Series, hit a high-arcing, opposite-field shot into the first row in left

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field with one out in the fourth. It was the fourth home run this postseason for Harper, who was playing in San Diego for the first time since his left thumb was broken when he was hit by a pitch by Blake Snell on June 25, sidelining him for two months.

Harper, the two-time NL MVP who won the award last year, has hit nine home runs in 26 career postseason games.

Schwarber's incredible shot on Darvish's first pitch of the sixth had an exit velocity of 119.7 mph — the hardest-hit ball in any postseason since Statcast began tracking in 2015 — and was the first to reach the right field upper deck at Petco Park, which opened in 2004. It was the farthest in his career and the farthest at Petco in the Statcast Era and gave the Phillies a 2-0 lead.

Schwarber, who led the NL with 46 home runs this season but was in a 1-for-20 postseason slump coming in, raised his right arm as he rounded first base and Harper stood in the dugout with his mouth agape in amazement.

"I thought it got pretty small pretty fast," said Harper, who's in his first NLCS. "I've never seen a ball go up in that section in Petco Park. Just very impressive."

And then some.

"A lot of people just looked at me weird," Schwarber said about the reaction he got in the dugout. "It was a cool moment, but I'm happy that we got the win overall."

Wheeler said he was in the tunnel just off the dugout, "but I heard everybody sort of take off, so I ran up the stairs and I saw it land, and that was pretty crazy," the pitcher said. "I've never even seen that done in batting practice or anything."

Austin Nola, the Padres' catcher, said "that ball was hit as far as I've ever seen. It was left over the middle — it was up in the zone. He put a good swing on it."

Darvish said it wasn't a mistake pitch to Harper, but added, "For Schwarber that is on me, that is my mistake. I knew he was waiting on something off-speed. The ball kind of went into the middle area and he got the most of it," he said through an interpreter.

The Padres, who eliminated the 111-win Los Angeles Dodgers in the NLDS, had only four baserunners, including a single by Wil Myers in the fifth. Still, they had a chance to win in the ninth against José Alvarado.

Jurickson Profar drew a one-out walk and Juan Soto reached when third baseman Alec Bohm made an errant throwing trying for a force. Manny Machado flied out and Alvarado struck out Josh Bell for the save, looking skyward and clapping after getting the final out.

The long balls by Harper and Schwarber were the latest impressive home runs for the Phillies, who are back in the playoffs for the first time since 2011. The last won the World Series in 2008. They've hit eight homers in seven games this postseason.

Harper joined Gary Matthews (1983) as the only players in franchise history to homer in three straight postseason games in the same year. Harper hit one homer in the wild-card series win at St. Louis and two in going 8 for 16 as the Phillies eliminated the defending World Series champion Atlanta Braves in the NLDS.

Rhys Hoskins had an epic bat spike on a monster homer against the Braves, and J.T. Realmuto became the first catcher in postseason history to hit an inside-the-park home run.

"I love this," Harper said. "Like I just really enjoy this situation. I really enjoy coming to ballparks that are hostile. I don't know, I just really enjoy it."

The Phillies at times stunned Petco Park, where a sellout crowd of 44,826 was amped up for the Padres' first NLCS appearance since 1998.

But Wheeler had the Padres totally off balance, allowing only a one-out walk to Juan Soto in the first and then retiring 12 straight batters until Myers singled with one out in the fifth. Wheeler then retired his final eight batters. He struck out eight and walked one on 83 pitches.

"That's probably as good a pitching performance we've seen all year, is my guess," Padres manager Bob Melvin said.

Seranthony Dominguez pitched a perfect eighth.

Darvish took the loss, allowing two runs and three hits in seven innings while striking out seven and walking one.

## STATS

The combined four hits matched the total for the Cardinals and Pirates in a 2013 NLDS matchup, and a game in the 2004 NLCS between the Cards and Astros. ... The Padres became the first team to pitch a one-hitter in one game and have a one-hitter thrown against them in another during the same postseason. Joe Musgrove and the San Diego bullpen allowed one hit against the Mets in the wild-card round clincher.

## UP NEXT

Phillies RHP Aaron Nola (11-13, 3.25 ERA regular season; 2-0, 0.00 postseason) and Padres LHP Blake Snell (8-10, 3.38 ERA regular season; 1-0, 3.12 postseason) are scheduled to start Game 2 Wednesday afternoon. Nola's brother Austin is the Padres' catcher. Austin Nola's RBI single off his younger brother carried the Padres to a 1-0 win against the Phillies at Petco Park on June 24.

## Rape allegations aired against '70s Show' actor Masterson

By BRIAN MELLEY and ANDREW DALTON Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A prosecutor on Tuesday described rape allegations by three women against "That '70s Show" actor Danny Masterson from two decades ago that contained some of the same disturbing elements.

Two women became woozy or passed out after a couple drinks and were tossed in his hot tub, Deputy District Attorney Reinhold Mueller said in his opening statement in Masterson's trial. One of them said he dragged her to his bed where she regained consciousness to find him having sex with her. A third woman, an ex-girlfriend, said she woke up to find him on top of her.

Masterson's lawyer said the reason the allegations had so much in common is that the alleged victims violated a detective's warning not to speak with each other and had "cross-pollinated" their accounts and undermined their credibility.

"If you speak to each other you will contaminate this case," they were told, defense attorney Phillip Cohen said in Los Angeles Superior Court. "Speaking to each other and other witnesses is fatal to a case."

Masterson, 46, has pleaded not guilty to three counts of forcible rape between 2001 and 2003 at his Hollywood home, which functioned as a social hub when he was at the height of his fame.

Cohen urged the jurors not to consider Masterson's affiliation with the Church of Scientology and its relationship to the case, while Mueller said that it helped explain why the women — all former members of the church — waited so long to report the incidents.

Two of the alleged victims first went to the church to report what happened to them and were told it wasn't rape and that reporting it to authorities or telling others about it would end with them being ostracized by their closest friends and even family members.

"You essentially become an enemy of the church," Mueller said. "You lose it all."

Cohen said the case had nothing to do with the religion and he repeatedly objected when it was brought up.

Superior Court Judge Charlene F. Olmedo sternly reminded the lawyers that Scientology would not dominate the trial.

The trial's witness list is full of members and former members of the church, which has a strong presence in Los Angeles and has counted many famous figures among its members. The list includes former member Lisa Marie Presley, the daughter of Elvis Presley and former wife of Michael Jackson, a friend of one of the alleged victims.

One of the women had been Masterson's longtime girlfriend. Another was best friends with his personal assistant, and the third, an actress, was a newer acquaintance.

The friend of his assistant filed a police report because she was unhappy with the way the Scientology ethics board handled her complaint. No charges were brought at the time.

In 2016, she connected and shared stories with the ex-girlfriend who is one of the accusers. Each filed a police report that year. Masterson's former girlfriend said she did so after telling her story to her husband,



who helped her understand she had been raped. The third woman went to police in 2017.

Cohen said the heart of the defense was a "sizzle reel of inconsistencies" between what the women initially said and how their accounts changed over time.

A woman who said she was raped after passing out from drinking some of a fruity red vodka drink Masterson gave her told police she had consensual sex with him several months earlier under similar circumstances. She now says that she didn't consent. Masterson doesn't face charges over those allegations.

Another alleged victim went to Masterson's house after he invited her over. She set ground rules that she wouldn't have sex with him and told him "no sex" multiple times as fooling around progressed, Mueller said. He described Masterson's alleged assault as being so forceful that the woman vomited in her mouth and was "limp like a rag doll."

But Cohen asserted the woman stayed in bed with Masterson for hours talking and listening to music and thought "we'll probably start dating" after she left. He said she was dismayed when Masterson didn't call or text her.

The former girlfriend said that after she broke up with Masterson she had consensual sex with him two other times.

If convicted, Masterson could face up to 45 years in prison.

The Associated Press does not typically name people who say they were victims of sexual abuse unless they come forward publicly.

Masterson was one of the first Hollywood figures to be charged in the #MeToo era. His is one of several high-profile sexual assault cases that have gone to trial around the fifth anniversary of the reporting of accusations against Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein, which transformed the #MeToo movement into an international reckoning.

Weinstein's second rape and sexual assault trial — he's already been convicted in New York — is happening simultaneously, just down the hall from Masterson's. In New York, civil trials have begun for actor Kevin Spacey and for screenwriter and director Paul Haggis, who are both being sued for sexual assault.

Haggis is himself a Scientology dissident, and the judge in that case is allowing him to argue that the church is behind the allegations against him.

From 1998 until 2006, Masterson starred as Steven Hyde on Fox's "That '70s Show," which made stars of Ashton Kutcher, Mila Kunis and Topher Grace and is getting an upcoming Netflix reboot with "That '90s Show."

Masterson had reunited with Kutcher on the Netflix comedy "The Ranch" but was written off the show when an LAPD investigation was revealed in December 2017.

## Race gap seen in US infant deaths after fertility treatment

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

Black-white disparities exist in fertility medicine, reflected in life-and-death outcomes for babies, according to a large study of U.S. births.

The study, published Wednesday in the journal *Pediatrics*, is the broadest look yet at racial gaps for women who use in vitro fertilization, fertility drugs or other fertility treatments. Researchers found higher death rates for infants born to Black women who used such treatments than white women who did the same — a gap that is much wider than in babies born without those treatments.

Infant deaths are rare in the U.S., and the reasons for poor outcomes are unclear. Researchers saw racial gaps even after adjusting for age, diabetes, obesity, smoking and other maternal risk factors.

The steep cost of IVF and the scarcity of insurance coverage means women getting fertility care are wealthier on average.

The findings suggest women seeking fertility treatment are not protected from racism despite their relative affluence, said Dr. Cynthia Gyamfi-Bannerman, head of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of California San Diego medical school.

"These women are still experiencing the same racism that might be causing poor outcomes in other pregnancies," said Gyamfi-Bannerman, who was not involved in the study. "We all need to pay more at-

tention and see how we can find a solution.”

Black women who use fertility treatments may not be getting the highest quality care during pregnancy and after childbirth, said Dr. Michael A. Thomas, who will become the first Black president of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine next week.

“The IVF patients, they work so hard to get there that they don’t allow anything to stand in the way of that baby getting a good outcome,” said Thomas, who was not involved in the study. “But is the Black patient getting that same high-level, priority, concierge treatment?”

The researchers thought women using fertility treatments might see less racial disparity in birth outcomes.

“We were a bit surprised that this disparity was actually larger than in the general population,” said Dr. Sarka Lisonkova of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, who led the research.

Her team analyzed data for more than 7 million U.S. births in 2016 and 2017, including more than 93,000 births resulting from fertility treatments.

They looked only at single births, which carry less risk than twin or other multiple births. Household income was not analyzed because it was not available in the data.

Deaths within four weeks after birth were four times higher in babies born to Black mothers who used IVF compared with white mothers who used IVF. Among babies born without fertility treatments, infant deaths were two times higher for Black moms compared with white moms.

Similar disparities existed for Hispanic and Asian mothers who had fertility treatments, but the gaps were less pronounced. There were too few American Indian and Alaska Native women using fertility treatments in the study to analyze their birth outcomes.

White women were much more likely than other groups to use fertility treatments. Of the 69,778 white mothers who used fertility treatments over the two years of the study, 227 infants died. Of the 4,669 Black mothers who used fertility treatments, 68 infants died.

The findings should not deter women from pursuing a family, Lisonkova said.

“There are countless women who have had fantastic pregnancies that started with medically assisted reproduction,” Lisonkova said. But because pregnancies to older women and those conceived with fertility treatment have worse outcomes than spontaneously conceived pregnancies, she encouraged women who want children to think about starting a family when they are “relatively young.”

“I know there are pressures to have your education, have your job and then have your family, but I think they’re both important,” she said. “And they can be combined in a way that women do not have to choose.”

## Minnesota gubernatorial candidates go on attack in debate

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Republican challenger Scott Jensen launched sharp attacks against Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz on Tuesday night over his handling of the violent unrest that followed the police killing of George Floyd, expressing incredulity when the Democratic incumbent said he was proud of how his administration responded.

The two gubernatorial candidates also clashed over abortion, violent crime and a scandal involving \$250 million stolen from a pandemic food-aid program. It was their only televised debate of the campaign. It was held at KTTC-TV in Rochester and also carried live by stations in Duluth, Fargo-Moorhead and Mankato, but it was available only by livestream in the Twin Cities. It was their first debate since FarmFest in southwestern Minnesota on Aug. 3. They’ll meet for their final scheduled debate Oct. 28 on Minnesota Public Radio.

Here are some key takeaways:

### GEORGE FLOYD MURDER

Both candidates were asked what they would have done differently to respond to the unrest that followed Floyd’s death in Minneapolis in 2020, which included looting across Minneapolis and St. Paul and the burning of a Minneapolis police station.

“Sitting on the sidelines and critiquing, that’s not what being governor is. It’s making the hard decisions at the time,” Walz said. He defended how local, state and federal authorities worked together, and said

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the lessons learned help prevent violence during former Officer Derek Chauvin's trial for killing Floyd.

"I'm proud of Minnesota's response; I'm proud of Minnesota's first-responders who were out there, from firefighters to police to the National Guard, to citizens that were out there," he said.

Jensen jumped on Walz for that.

"You heard it here. Gov. Walz just told you 'I am proud of Minnesota's response,' referring to the riots in May and June of 2020. Wow," he said, accusing the governor of failing to stand by the police and National Guard. "Burn that into your psyche, Minnesota."

## ABORTION

Walz said there's a "clear contrast" between them on abortion rights. He noted that Jensen said earlier in the campaign that he would support a ban on abortions, but softened that after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Roe v. Wade decision to include exceptions for rape, incest and to protect the health or life of the mother.

"In my entire career I've trusted women to make their health care decisions. I don't believe anybody who sits in this office should come between them," Walz said, suggesting that Jensen changes his positions as the winds blow.

Jensen tried to minimize the importance of issue, accusing Walz of "fear-mongering." He said the only way to undo the state's protections for abortion rights would be by putting a constitutional amendment on the ballot that voters would have to approve. He tried to pivot instead to inflation, crime and education.

## CRIME

Jensen said rising crime across Minnesota and at schools is "a product of the lawlessness that swept over our state," after Floyd's death, and he blamed Walz. "Arguably he is the godfather of the crime epidemic that has swept our country."

Walz countered that the Republican-controlled Senate in the Minnesota Legislature, where Jensen used to serve, blocked his efforts to increase funding for law enforcement and to fight gun violence.

"We have the opportunity to do smart things, whether it be background checks or making sure we have red flag laws. ... The easy access to firearms is one of the problems," Walz said.

## FEEDING OUR FUTURE

Jensen repeated claims made by Republican legislators on Monday that Walz could have stopped the Feeding our Future scandal before \$250 million in taxpayer money was stolen from a state-administered federal program to feed children during the pandemic when they were kept home from school.

Federal authorities have charged 49 people in the case, which centers on a nonprofit group called Feeding our Future, and have thanked the Walz administration for its cooperation with the investigation.

Jensen said the governor has been evasive about what he knew about the fraud, and when he knew it, and accused Walz of a cover-up. He rejected the administration's claims that its hands were tied by a judge's order and instructions from the FBI not to compromise the investigation.

"Gov. Walz and his team could have stopped this anywhere along the line," Jensen said.

Walz said everybody agrees that "fraud is unacceptable, whether it's in the public sector or the private sector." But he then turned the discussion to how his administration worked four years ago to fix a badly flawed — but not fraudulent — driver's licensing computer system. It wasn't clear how that was relevant.

The governor went on to say that the federal government relaxed its rules when it sent COVID-19 aid to the states — "as they should have" — and that his administration alerted the FBI when it discovered the fraud.

"Now it's an on ongoing investigation. I guess we'll get more clarity," Walz said.

"You just heard a smokescreen," Jensen retorted.

## North Korea fires artillery shells near border with S. Korea

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired artillery shells near its sea boundaries with South Korea late Tuesday, a day after the South began annual military drills to better deal with North Korean provocations.

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South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement early Wednesday that North Korea fired about 100 shells off its west coast and 150 rounds off its east coast. It said the South Korean military broadcast messages several times asking North Korea to stop the firing, but there were no reports of violence between the rivals.

South Korea's military said the shells didn't land in South Korean territorial waters but fell inside the northern part of the maritime buffer zones the two Koreas established under a 2018 inter-Korean agreement aimed at reducing front-line animosities.

It's the second time North Korea has fired shells into the buffer zones since last Friday, when it shot hundreds of shells there in its most significant direct violation of the 2018 agreement.

South Korea's military said North Korea must halt provocations that undermine peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. It added that it is boosting its military readiness and, in coordination with the United States, is closely monitoring North Korea's moves.

Hours later, an unidentified spokesperson for the North Korean People's Army's General Staff issued a statement describing the latest artillery firings as a response to the South Korean artillery training that it claimed took place earlier Tuesday at a border area. Seoul didn't immediately confirm it had conducted such artillery drills on Tuesday.

"The enemies should immediately stop the reckless and inciting provocations escalating the military tension in the forefront area," the North Korean military spokesperson said.

The North Korean spokesperson also lashed out at the South Korean military for kicking off an annual 12-day field exercise on Monday, calling it an invasion rehearsal. South Korea's Defense Ministry said the training is aimed at improving operational capabilities to counter various types of North Korean provocations and that an unspecified number of U.S. troops will take part in this year's drills.

The North's artillery tests draw less outside attention than its missile launches. But its forward-deployed long-range artillery guns pose a serious security threat to South Korea's populous metropolitan region, which is about 40 to 50 kilometers (25 to 30 miles) from the border with North Korea.

In recent weeks, North Korea has conducted a spate of weapons tests in what it calls simulations of nuclear strikes on South Korean and U.S. targets in response to their "dangerous military drills" involving a U.S. aircraft carrier. North Korea views regular military exercises between Washington and Seoul as an invasion rehearsal.

North Korea has test-launched 15 missiles since it resumed testing activities on Sept. 25. One of them was an intermediate-range ballistic missile that flew over Japan and demonstrated a range capable of reaching the Pacific U.S. territory of Guam and beyond.

Some foreign experts say North Korean leader Kim Jong Un would eventually aim to use his expanded weapons arsenal to pressure the United States and others to accept his country as a legitimate nuclear state and lift economic sanctions on the North.

## Parents of accused North Carolina shooter express sorrow

By JONATHAN DREW Associated Press

The parents of a 15-year-old boy accused of killing five people in a North Carolina shooting rampage released a statement Tuesday saying they are "overcome with grief" and saw no warning signs before the killings.

Alan and Elise Thompson issued the statement through a lawyer that acknowledges the pain caused by their son, Austin, and expresses grief for the five killed on Thursday, including their other teenage son, 16-year-old James. Witnesses described in 911 calls that the shooter opened fire with a shotgun in a neighborhood northeast of downtown Raleigh and along an adjacent walking trail.

"Our son Austin inflicted immeasurable pain on the Raleigh community, and we are overcome with grief for the innocent lives lost," the statement said.

The statement said they will fully cooperate with law enforcement to help investigators understand what happened, but they have questions themselves. Authorities have not discussed a motive for the shooting.



"There were never any indications or warning signs that Austin was capable of doing anything like this," the statement said.

Reached by phone Tuesday night, Elise Thompson declined to comment outside of the statement.

Austin Thompson remains hospitalized in critical condition following his arrest on Thursday night, hours after the shooting began.

The Wake County prosecutor has said she will pursue adult charges against the suspect. Authorities had previously identified the shooter as a 15-year-old boy but had not publicly released the name.

Callers who dialed 911 during the shooting rampage described encountering bodies on the streets or front yards of their neighborhood and along a trail popular with runners and bikers, according to recordings released by authorities. Witnesses said shooter was wearing camouflage and using a shotgun in the attacks that began shortly after 5 p.m.

The shooting drew officers from numerous agencies to the neighborhood as the suspect eluded capture for several hours. The victims, ranging in age from 16 to their late 50s and were felled going about their daily routines, police and loved ones said. Among those killed was an off-duty police officer. In addition to those killed, two others were wounded.

## Ukraine's power, water supplies under Russian attack again

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Airstrikes cut power and water supplies to hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians on Tuesday, part of what the country's president called an expanding Russian campaign to drive the nation into the cold and dark and make peace talks impossible.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said nearly one-third of Ukraine's power stations have been destroyed in the past week, "causing massive blackouts across the country."

"No space left for negotiations with Putin's regime," he tweeted.

Depriving people of water, electricity and heat as winter begins to bite, and the broadening use of so-called suicide drones that nosedive into targets have opened a new phase in Russian President Vladimir Putin's war. The bombardments appear aimed at wearing down the notable resilience Ukrainians have shown in the nearly eight months since Moscow invaded.

Meanwhile, along the front lines, things remained "very difficult" for Russian troops in the southern region and city of Kherson, according to Russia's new commander, Sergei Surovikin.

He told reporters in Moscow that the Russian military would help evacuate civilians ahead of an expected Ukrainian offensive.

Kherson is one of four regions illegally annexed by Russia last month. Regional head Vladimir Saldo said Tuesday that residents of Berislav, Belozersky, Snigiryovsky and Alexandrovsky were to be moved across the Dnieper River, away from Russian troops building "large-scale defensive fortifications."

Saldo urged residents to stay calm and said they would "remain under the reliable protection of the Russian army."

On Friday, too, Saldo had urged Kherson residents to evacuate. Russian authorities promise free travel and accommodations to those who leave for Russia, the only route out that they have offered.

Across Ukraine, even far from front lines, basic utilities are no longer certainties, with daily Russian strikes reaching far into the country and damaging key facilities.

The latest city shorn of power was Zhytomyr, home to military bases, industries and leafy boulevards, about 140 kilometers (85 miles) west of Kyiv. The mayor said the whole city of 250,000 lost power and also water initially. Repairs quickly reconnected some homes but 150,000 people were still without electricity hours after the morning strike, regional authorities said.

Pavlo Raboschuk, a 33-year-old computer repairman in Zhytomyr, said that only small shops that could get by without electricity were open on his route to work.

"Only swear words come to mind," he said. He's bracing "for a tough and dark winter," with dehydrated foods, warm clothes and batteries already stockpiled at home.

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City hospitals switched to backup power after the double missile strike Tuesday on an energy facility, said Mayor Serhiy Sukhomlyn.

In the capital, Kyiv, missile strikes damaged two power facilities and killed two people, city authorities said. The attack left 50,000 people without power for a few hours, the facilities' operator said.

Missiles also severely damaged an energy facility in the south-central city of Dnipro, and strikes hit the northeastern region of Sumy.

Russia is mixing up its modes of attack.

Suicide drones set ablaze an infrastructure facility in the partly Russian-occupied southern Zaporizhzhia region, the regional governor said.

Air-defense S-300 missiles, which Russia has been repurposing as ground-attack weapons as its stocks diminish, were used to strike the southern city of Mykolaiv. In the eastern city of Kharkiv, eight rockets fired from across the nearby border with Russia hit an industrial area, the regional governor said.

In Zhytomyr, school director Iryna Kolodzynska had students back at their desks within 30 minutes of the air raid all-clear. Without power for their computers, they used the class board to work on math equations.

"We must not break down," she said. "There are regions that suffered much more from the war than we did."

Waves of the explosives-laden suicide drones also struck Kyiv on Monday. One slammed into a residential building, killing four people.

The Iranian-made Shahed drones that hit Kyiv have also been widely used elsewhere in Ukraine in recent weeks. An Associated Press photographer caught one on camera Monday, its triangle-shaped wing and pointed warhead clearly visible, though the Kremlin refused to confirm their use.

The U.N. Security Council scheduled closed consultations Wednesday afternoon on the Iranian-made drones at the request of the United States, Britain and France. They contend that supplying them to Russia violates the 2015 U.N. Security Council resolution that endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and six countries.

A Western official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence, said Russia is pursuing a strategy of "attempting to destroy Ukraine's electricity network" with long-range strikes that are causing civilian casualties rather than degrading its military.

The official said the Iranian drones "are playing an increasingly significant role, although we can see that Ukraine is effectively neutralizing many of them before they hit their targets."

In a televised address on Monday night, Zelenskyy said Russia is using the drones because it is losing ground in the war.

"Russia doesn't have any chance on the battlefield, and it tries to compensate for its military defeats with terror," he said. "Why this terror? To put pressure on us, on Europe, on the entire world."

Zelenskyy's tweet ruling out talks with Putin wasn't the first time he's said that he won't negotiate with the Russian leader. Russia and Ukraine held several rounds of talks in the first month after Moscow's invasion but they fell apart. The Kremlin has said talks could only be possible if Ukraine meets Russian demands and accepts its land-grabs of Ukrainian territory. Ukraine has flatly ruled out talks on those terms.

In other developments:

— Ukraine's nuclear energy operator said Russian forces have detained two more senior employees at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. Energoatom said their whereabouts are unknown. Also unknown are the whereabouts of another executive who was detained earlier in October.

— In Russia, the death toll from Monday's crash of a Russian warplane into a residential area rose to 15. The Su-34 bomber came down in the port city of Yeysk after one of its engines caught fire during takeoff for a training mission, the Defense Ministry said. Both crew members bailed out safely, but the plane struck a neighborhood, causing a huge blaze, officials said.

## Stanton, Judge HR, Yankees beat Guards, into ALCS vs Astros

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

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NEW YORK (AP) — Gleyber Torres stepped on second base for the final out, swinging his arms back and forth, four times in all, while glaring at Josh Naylor and the Guardians dugout.

Giancarlo Stanton and Aaron Judge rocked Cleveland with early homers, and Nestor Cortes and the New York Yankees rolled into another AL Championship Series matchup with the Houston Astros.

"We got our revenge. We're happy to beat those guys. Now they can watch on TV the next series for us," Torres said after the Yankees beat the Guardians 5-1 in the decisive Game 5 of their AL Division Series on Tuesday night. "It's nothing personal. Just a little thing about revenge."

Yankees manager Aaron Boone won his gamble by starting Cortes on three days' rest over Jameson Taillon, making the late switch after Monday night's rain caused a postponement.

Cleveland manager Terry Francona stayed the course with Aaron Civale instead of switching to 2020 Cy Young Award winner Shane Bieber on short rest.

"I've never done it," Bieber said. "But could I have? Sure."

Civale had trouble throwing strikes, and the Guardians never recovered from Stanton's three-run homer just 21 pitches in.

Taillon will start Wednesday night at Houston, which goes with Justin Verlander. The AL matchup features the league's top two regular-season teams in the 106-win Astros and 99-win Yankees, a contrast to the NL championship between wild-card San Diego and Philadelphia.

"When they're all clicking they're great," Yankees ace Gerrit Cole said of the Astros, his former team. "When they're not all clicking, they're great."

Cole got two wins against Cleveland and carved the Guardians with just three words. Naylor made the rocking the baby motion repeatedly while rounding the bases after homering off Cole in Game 4.

Cole responded: "Whatever. It's cute."

"We feel like it is a little disrespectful, not just Cole but for the team," Torres said.

Yankees fans in the sellout crowd of 48,178 greeted Naylor with derisive chants of "Who's your daddy!" echoing their treatment of Boston pitcher Pedro Martinez two decades ago.

No offense, Naylor said.

"That was so sick," he said. "That was honestly like a dream come true as a kid. Playing in an environment like this, where they've got diehard fans. It's cool."

Now 27, Cortes he was traded by the Yankees to Seattle after the 2019 season, was dropped by the Mariners a year later and became an All-Star after resurfacing in the Bronx.

"Just the legend of Nestor," Boone said. "Honestly going in, I would have been really excited about 10 batters."

Cortes dominated with three-hit ball for five innings for the win, throwing 61 pitches.

"I've got nothing to lose. I've been in the gutter before. I've been down," Cortes said. "So for me, this is just a cherry on top,"

Jonathan Loáisiga, Clay Holmes and Wandy Peralta finished with five-hit scoreless relief. Peralta became the first Yankees pitcher to appear in all five games of a Division Series..

"Just getting the last out, it's hard to explain. It's such an exciting moment," Peralta said through a translator.

With two outs and two on, Myles Straw hit a grounder to shortstop Isiah Kiner-Falefa, who flipped to Torres to end it.

Anthony Rizzo had a fifth-inning RBI bloop single for AL East champion New York, which is seeking its 28th title and first since 2009,

AL Central champion Cleveland, the youngest team in the majors, remained without a championship since 1948. The Guardians whose \$68 million payroll is a fraction of the Yankees' \$274 million, led 2-1 in the best-of-five series.

"I know they are hurting right now," Francona said. "This needs to be a starting place for us. This can't just be a good story this year. We need to take this and go, because I think we have a chance to have something really special."

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José Ramírez's third-inning sacrifice fly drove in the only run for Cleveland, which has lost a big league record 11 straight postseason elimination games.

New York hit .182 but outhomered the Guardians 9-3 as Stanton and Judge each went deep twice. The Yankees scored 16 of their 20 runs on long balls.

"We definitely had to throw the first punch in a game like this," Stanton said.

Judge, who homered on an opposite-field drive to right against Sam Hentges, became the first player with four homers in winner-take-all postseason games. He tugged at and kissed the interlocking "NY" on his jersey after reaching the dugout.

"I've been watching a lot of Premier League soccer games. So I've seen those guys doing it," Judge said. "It was in the moment."

Civale threw just 12 of 26 pitches for strikes, getting only one swing and miss and just one out.

Torres walked on four pitches leading off, Judge struck out on a full-count curveball and Civale hit Rizzo on the left thigh with a pitch.

Stanton lined a cutter 379 feet into the short right-field porch, a drive that would be a home run in only three of the 30 major league ballparks.

Civale stared into his stall after the game, wearing a hooded sweatshirt, before showering and then answering questions.

"Just didn't have great command early on and didn't last very long," he said. "Left a pitch up, and one of the guys that gets paid to hit home runs hit a home run."

TOO LATE

Cleveland failed to ask for a video review in the fourth inning when Andrés Giménez clearly beat a diving Rizzo to the first-base bag. Francona said he ran out of time.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Yankees: LF Aaron Hicks hurt his left knee in a collision with SS Oswaldo Cabrera chasing a Steven Kwan's popup, which fell for a single. Hicks said his postseason is over after an MRI showed the knee requires a six-week recovery. ... RHPs Ron Marinaccio (right shin) and Frankie Montas (right shoulder) could be activated against Houston. ... OF Andrew Benintendi (right wrist) is unlikely.

UP NEXT

Guardians: Open the season at Seattle on March 30.

## Kevin Spacey finishes testimony at NY civil sex abuse trial

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Kevin Spacey remained composed Tuesday during cross examination at a civil trial, repeatedly rejecting suggestions that he wasn't telling the truth when he denied an actor's claims that he made a sexual advance on him when he was 14 in the 1980s.

His testimony for several hours on cross examination by a lawyer for actor Anthony Rapp, 50, went smoothly enough that Spacey's lawyer did not ask any questions after the examination was completed by early afternoon. Rapp testified earlier in the trial, now in its third week. He is seeking \$40 million in damages.

Addressing Rapp's lawyer as "sir," Spacey didn't seem rattled a day after he emotionally testified that he regretted following the advice of his handlers to be "friendly and cordial" in responding to Rapp's claims in 2017 that Spacey picked him up and briefly laid on top of him on a bed in his apartment in 1986 when Rapp was 14 and he was 26.

"In my heart, I did not believe this had happened," Spacey said of his reaction to the claims. He said he was "terrified" and went along with his handlers proposal of a public statement saying he didn't recall the encounter but if it happened, "I owe him the sincerest apology for what would have been deeply inappropriate drunken behavior."

"The whole thing was horrifying," Spacey said.

Rapp's claims, and those of others, abruptly interrupted what had been a high-flying career for the



two-time Academy Award winning actor, who lost his job on the Netflix series "House of Cards" and saw other opportunities dry up. Rapp is a regular on TV's "Star Trek: Discovery" and was part of the original Broadway cast of "Rent."

Spacey, 63, admitted entertaining Rapp and Rapp's friend, John Barrowman, one evening in 1986 after they saw Spacey perform in "Long Day's Journey into Night." But he said if he had a romantic interest, it was Barrowman, not Rapp, who was performing at the time in "Precious Sons" on Broadway.

Spacey recalled dancing with the then-19-year-old Barrowman at the Limelight dance club and said he invited Barrowman and Rapp to his apartment afterward to see his dog.

Once there, Barrowman and Spacey "playfully had a moment together" on his bed in a visit to the apartment that lasted about a half hour, the actor said. Barrowman testified in a deposition partially played in court Monday that Rapp was in the restroom when Barrowman and Spacey briefly flirted on the bed.

"It was a flirtatious and playful moment between two people who were attracted to each other," Spacey said. "I was captivated by John Barrowman."

On Monday, Spacey testified that he was sure he was never alone with Rapp, and that Rapp's claim that Spacey made a pass at him after a party at his apartment was not true.

"I knew I wouldn't have any sexual interest in Anthony Rapp or any child. That I knew," Spacey said.

## Missouri school to close after radioactive waste report

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

FLORISSANT, Mo. (AP) — A Missouri school board decided Tuesday to shut down a grade school that sits near a contaminated creek after a study funded by law firms involved in a class-action lawsuit found high levels of radioactive material inside the school.

Contamination was in classrooms, the playground and elsewhere at Jana Elementary School in Florissant, Missouri, according to a report last week by Boston Chemical Data Corp. It follows another study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, made public in the summer, that found contamination stemming from World War II-era nuclear weapons production in a wooded area near Coldwater Creek.

The Hazelwood Board of Education voted in closed session Tuesday to close the school until it can be cleaned up. Virtual learning will start Monday and is planned until the students can be moved to different schools, tentatively scheduled for Nov. 28. It's unclear when Jana Elementary would reopen.

The school board, in a statement after the closed meeting, said the remediation is necessary but acknowledged "this is causing a disruption to our students' education and school climate."

The decision came even as a Corps official raised questions about the Boston Chemical study. Phillip Moser, program manager of the Corps' Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program in St. Louis, said the agency's evaluations found no contamination between the wooded site and the school or its playground. He called the Boston Chemical report "incomplete and not consistent with the approved processes required to do an evaluation at one of our sites."

Still, several politicians urged immediate closure of the school.

The new report worried parents, especially since the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry stated in 2019 that people exposed to Coldwater Creek from the 1960s to the 1990s may have an increased risk of bone cancer, lung cancer and leukemia.

"I do not understand why it's not closed now," William Johnson, the father of a current student at the school and three others who went there, told the board.

It wasn't immediately clear if students will continue at the school through the rest of the week. District spokesperson Jordyn Elston said she didn't have information on the remainder of the week.

Many speakers at the meeting welcomed the shutdown of the school, but wondered why the school district didn't communicate about the problem. Some said they heard about it first on the news or on Facebook.

"I'm happy that you have a plan now," said Patrice Strickland, who has two children at the school. "I'm so happy you're considering our babies now. But just communicate with us."

Nuclear waste from World War II weapons production as part of the Manhattan Project contaminated

Coldwater Creek. Mallinckrodt Chemical Co. processed uranium ore in St. Louis from 1942 to 1957 and shipped waste to a site near Lambert Airport, where it made its way into the 19-mile-long waterway that flows into the Missouri River.

The Environmental Protection Agency designated the creek as a Superfund site in 1989. Remediation efforts — digging up contaminated dirt and taking it by covered rail car to a waste management facility in Idaho — aren't expected to be complete until 2038.

Dawn Chapman, co-founder of the environmental group Just Moms STL that has pushed for cleanup of Coldwater Creek, acknowledged the difficulty in connecting illnesses to contamination. But Chapman said the new report — funded by two law firms seeking compensation for illnesses and deaths allegedly caused by the creek contamination — has created worry for current and former parents, teachers and staff.

"Everybody's just terrified," Chapman said.

The Boston Chemical study cited levels of radioactive isotope lead-210 that were 22 times the expected level on the kindergarten playground. It also found high levels of polonium, radium and other material in various places throughout the school.

Mahadevappa Mahesh, chief physicist at the teaching hospital at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, called the data "bothersome," but said he needed more information to reach firm conclusions about the potential health effects.

"The psychological impact is greater than even the actual physical injury," said Mahesh, also a professor of radiology. "Now that the students and the parents know these things, that can have a lot more psychological impact — worrying about the radiation — more than actual radiation injuries."

The school — which sits in a subdivision surrounded by homes — opened in the 1970s and has educated thousands of children, said Christen Commuso of the Missouri Coalition for the Environment. While the area along Coldwater Creek is racially mixed, about 80% of Jana Elementary School's 400 students are Black.

"You're talking about kids throughout the decades who have been exposed to this," Commuso said.

Eventually, Ashley Bernaugh wants her son to be back at the school. Bernaugh is president of Jana Elementary School's parent-teacher association.

"We love Jana Elementary," Bernaugh said. "I'll go down fighting for it."

## Patagonia condor repopulation drive faces wind farm threat

By NATACHA PISARENKO and DANIEL POLITI Associated Press

SIERRA PAILEMAN, Argentina (AP) — It was a sunny morning when about 200 people trudged up a hill in Argentina's southern Patagonia region with a singular mission: free two Andean condors that had been born in captivity.

The emotion in the air was palpable as conservationists got ready for a moment that so many had been working toward for months. But the joyous moment was also bittersweet.

Preliminary plans for a massive wind farm that could be located in the Somuncura Plateau to feed a green hydrogen project is putting at risk a three-decade-long effort to repopulate Patagonia's Atlantic coast with a bird that is classified as vulnerable to extinction by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

While members of the Mapuche, the largest Indigenous group in the area, played traditional instruments, and children threw condor feathers into the air that symbolized their good wishes for the newly liberated birds, an eerie silence engulfed the mountain in Sierra Paileman in Rio Negro province as researchers opened the cages where the two specimens of the world's largest flying bird were kept.

Huasi (meaning home in Quechua) seemed born for this moment. As soon as the cage opened, he spread his wings and took off without a moment's hesitation. Yastay (meaning god that is protector of birds) appeared cautious, uncertain of the wide open Patagonia skies after spending his first two years in captivity, and it took him around an hour before taking off.

People hugged while researchers sprang into action and started tracking the birds. In the back of their minds were latent worries about what the potential for new wind farms in the area could mean for the lives of these newly released birds.

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Conservationists fear the birds inevitably would collide with the rotating blades of the turbines and be killed. In neighboring Chile, an environmental impact study for a planned wind farm with 65 windmills concluded that as many as four of the rare condors could collide with the massive structures yearly. Environmental authorities rejected the project last year.

"Why are we freeing two? We generally free more than two," Vanesa Astore, executive director of the Andean Condor Conservation Program, said. "We're at like a maintenance level now."

Researchers had to release Huasi and Yastay now or risk that they would have to remain in captivity for the rest of their lives, which can range from 70 to 80 years, Astore explained, noting condors can only adapt to the outside world if they are released before their third birthday.

The current uncertainty regarding the future of the wind farm that would be built by Australian firm Fortescue Future Industries has not only put conservationists on alert but has prompted them to slow the pace of reproduction and release of the Andean condors even as the company insists it has no plans to set up shop in the Somuncura Plateau.

Condors are notoriously slow breeders that only reach sexual maturity at 9 years old and have an offspring every three years, but researchers have found ways to speed that up by removing eggs from pairs in captivity to incubate artificially. When the egg is removed, the pair will then produce another egg within a month, which they will raise while the first one is raised by humans with the help of latex puppets meant to simulate their parents and help them recognize members of their own species.

That strategy allow researchers to "increase reproductive capacity by six times," said Luis Jacome, the head of the Andean Condor Conservation Program.

That effort is now on pause.

"We aren't maximizing because I don't know what's going to happen," Astore explained.

Since the conservation program started 30 years ago, 81 chicks have been born in captivity, 370 condors have been rehabilitated and 230 freed across South America, including Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile and Bolivia.

Sixty-six of those have been released along Patagonia's Atlantic coast, where the bird was nowhere to be seen at the turn of the century even though Charles Darwin had written in the early 1800s about the presence of the large birds in the region.

The Andean condor has now made a comeback, and for many locals that has a spiritual resonance.

"The condor flies very high, so our elders used to say that the condor could take a message to those who are no longer here," said Doris Canumil, 59, a Mapuche who took part in the ceremonies for the liberation of the condors.

While they celebrate the success of the program, conservationists worry it could all be erased.

"These birds that we've liberated, that once again joined the mountain range with the sea through their flight, that have matured and had their own offspring that live and fly here in this place, they will simply die in the blades of the windmills," Jacome said. "So the condor would once again become extinct in the Atlantic coast."

Conservationists found out about the proposed wind farm through the media and alarm bells immediately went off.

Last year, Fortescue unveiled a plan to invest \$8.4 billion over a decade in a project to produce green hydrogen for export in what the government touted as the largest international investment in Argentina over the past two decades. In order to qualify as green, the hydrogen must be produced using renewable power, and that is where the windmill farm would come in, taking advantage of the strong, reliable winds of Patagonia.

The government of President Alberto Fernández celebrated the project, saying it would create 15,000 direct jobs and somewhere between 40,000 and 50,000 indirect jobs.

Yet neither the company nor the provincial government of Rio Negro had carried out an environmental impact study before unveiling the project.

For now at least, Jacome said, the "only thing green are the dollars" attached to the project.

"We're putting the cart before the horse," Jacome said. "We need to have environmental impact studies

that demonstrate what is going to be done, how many windmills, where they will be placed.”

Fortescue agrees and says it “is committed to evaluating the social, environmental, engineering, and economic considerations before committing to the development” of any project.

The Australian firm said in a statement that any pre-development study will include consultations with local organizations to “guarantee the protection of the local species such as the Andean Condor.”

Following questions about the project, Fortescue has decided to not measure winds at the Somuncura Plateau until the province finishes its environmental plan and will instead explore “other areas of interest within lands near Sierra Grande and the Province of Chubut,” the company said.

On Oct. 11, the Rio Negro provincial government said Fortescue launched a 12-month effort to analyze the environmental and social impacts of the project.

Provincial officials see the number of jobs attached to the project as key.

“On the one hand, we have to preserve and take care of our fauna,” Daniel Sanguinetti, Rio Negro’s planning and sustainable development secretary, said. But the government also must “promote the development of the 750,000 Rio Negro citizens who currently live (here) and generate sources of production and genuine work for all of them.”

Sanguinetti added it was important “not to get carried away by different situations that supposedly would happen at some time in the future when all of this would have been implemented, when the reality is that the project is in its initial phases.”

For those who have made repopulating the Patagonia coast with the condor their life’s work, the discussions over the future of the project are deeply personal.

“We feel a little bit like parents,” said Catalina Rostagno, who moved to the base camp in Rio Negro two and a half months ago for the process of liberating Huasi and Yastay. “The condor is a reflection of me.”

## **USDA announces \$1 billion debt relief for 36,000 farmers**

By DAVID PITT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The federal government announced Tuesday a program that will provide \$1.3 billion in debt relief for about 36,000 farmers who have fallen behind on loan payments or face foreclosure.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the farm loan relief program funded from \$3.1 billion set aside in the Inflation Reduction Act allocated toward assisting distressed borrowers of direct or guaranteed loans administered by USDA. The law was passed by Congress and signed by President Joe Biden in August.

The USDA provides loans to about 115,000 farmers and livestock producers who cannot obtain commercial credit. Those who have missed payments, are in foreclosure or are heading toward default will get help from the USDA. Financial difficulties for farmers may be caused by a variety of issues including drought and transportation bottlenecks.

“Through no fault of their own, our nation’s farmers and ranchers have faced incredibly tough circumstances over the last few years,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “The funding included in today’s announcement helps keep our farmers farming and provides a fresh start for producers in challenging positions.”

About 11,000 farm borrowers delinquent on direct or guaranteed loan payments for 60 days or longer are receiving automatic electronic payments to get them current on their loans. Each farmer with a direct loan received about \$52,000 and those with guaranteed loans received about \$172,000. The total cost for this group is nearly \$600 million. Farmers who received this help will get a letter informing them that their payments have been made and they will remain current until their next annual payment is due in 2023, Vilsack said.

Another \$200 million has been used to immediately help 2,100 farm borrowers after their loans had been foreclosed but who still owed money and had their tax refunds and other resources taken by the U.S. Treasury. The money will be used to pay the money these farmers owe to give them a fresh start, Vilsack said. The USDA said farmers in this category received an average of \$101,000.

Another \$571 million will be used help several additional groups including:



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—7,000 farmers who during the COVID pandemic delayed loan payments to the end of their loans. This will cost \$66 million.

—1,600 farmers that face bankruptcy or foreclosure will get help on a case-by-case basis with individual meetings to assess their problem and find solutions at a cost of \$330 million.

—14,000 financially distressed farm borrowers facing cash flow problems who ask for help to avoid missing a loan payment will receive additional assistance. Vilsack said these issues could be brought on by drought or by low levels on the Mississippi River that is slowing barge traffic causing grain transportation issues. Up to \$175 million will be available for this program.

The money announced Tuesday is the first round of payments designed to help insure the farmers stay in business or re-enter farming.

The remainder of the \$3.1 billion will be used to help relax unnecessary loan restrictions and provide further assistance to be announced later, the USDA said.

Farmers assisted by the program have been found by the USDA to be distressed borrowers hard hit by pandemic-induced market disruptions exacerbated by more frequent, more intense, climate-driven natural disasters, the USDA said.

President Joe Biden and his administration continue to endure criticism for enacting a program to forgive some college loans but some of the Republican politicians who have criticized that program did not respond to questions about whether they support the farm loan help.

The USDA also provided \$31 billion to help nearly a million farmers offset lower sales, prices and other losses due to the coronavirus pandemic in 2021 and 2022, the U.S. Government Accountability Office has said.

## Review: 'Black Adam,' a superhero franchise born on a Rock

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

Not long into "Black Adam," a preteen boy looks up at the muscled hulk of Dwayne Johnson and begs for his help: "We could use a superhero right now." Speak for yourself, kid.

Do we need another superhero with another convoluted origin story that stretches back thousands of years and fulfills a whacko destiny? Do we really need another clutch of secondary level heroes to muddy focus? We're almost 40 deep into the Marvel Cinematic Universe and a dozen in the DC universe. You can almost smell the fumes now, can't you?

"Black Adam" isn't bad, it's just predictable and color-by-numbers, stealing from other films like an intellectual property super-villain. But Johnson is a natural in the title role, mixing might with humor and able to deliver those necessary wooden lines. Why he hasn't had a starring role in a DC or Marvel superhero flick until now is astonishing — c'mon, he's built himself into a freaking superhero in street clothes already.

Like Marvel's "Eternals," "Black Adam" gets out of the blocks very sluggishly with the tangled tale of our setting — Kahndaq, a fictional Middle Eastern kingdom in 2,600 B.C. that has wizards, a blood-thirsty king, a magical crown and Eternium, a rare metallic ore with energy-manipulating properties (Hello, Vibranium from "Black Panther").

Flash-forward to present day, where Kahndaq is under the cruel rule of the organized crime syndicate Intergang and its citizens are ripe to rebel. They think they may have a leader in Black Adam (here Teth Adam, when he is introduced), who is released from his 5,000-year-long tomb and is naturally cranky. Is he a force for good or bad? (Or for a new sub-franchise?) The answer is yes to all.

Yet the other superheroes in the DC pantheon aren't sure about the new guy and send what can only be described as the Plan B of muscle from leftover members of a knock-off organization called the Justice Society of America.

There's Doctor Fate (a dollar-store Doctor Strange played by Pierce Brosnan, who somehow keeps his dignity), Atom Smasher (Noah Centineo, nicely playing a dweeby and always hungry giant), Aldis Hodge as a one-note Hawkman and Quintessa Swindell as Cyclone, who can control — checks notes — the wind. They apparently left at home the superhero with the ability to open jars.

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Black Adam is more than a match for all of them combined. He can fly, move as fast as The Flash, catch rockets, deflect bullets and harness his own bluish electricity. Mostly he does this weirdly passive thing of just floating. "I kneel before no one" he intones, which might explain it.

Director Jaume Collet-Serra and the design team do a great job in every department but are let down by a derivative and baggy screenplay by Adam Sztykiel, Rory Haines and Sohrab Noshirvani that goes from one violent scene to another like a video game in order to paper over a plot both undercooked and overcooked. At one point, with the audience exhausted by all the carnage, they introduce skeletons who rise up as a legion from hell, just what we wanted.

They nicely include pockets of humor that DC has not always done well — a recurring bit with "Baby Come Back" and teaching Black Adam satire are fun; a Clint Eastwood gag fails — and there may have been three natural endings piling up before the final, manipulative one. ("This can only end one way," says the script. Don't believe it.)

Amidst the punching superheroes are two humans — a rebel leader and her skateboard-and-comics-loving pre-teen son, played superbly by Sarah Shahi and Bodhi Sabongui, respectively. Comedian Mohammed Amer is a much-needed bolt of bright humor.

Most intriguing — and the angle most fruitful to lean into — is the notion of hero itself. The Justice Society members are shocked to find that they aren't seen as heroic to the residents of Kahndaq, living 27 years under oppression. Black Adam has come to help, even if he's a little more violent. Residents wonder where were the guys with all the superpowers for almost three decades while they suffered — a nice dig at Western nations.

"There are only heroes and villains. Heroes don't kill people," a confused Hawkman states. Black Adam replies: "Well, I do." It is Shahiby's character who notes that it's easy to call someone a hero when you're the one drawing the line.

The number of — ahem — call-backs to other films is pretty sad — "Tomb Raider," "Back to the Future" and plenty of "Star Wars" (even, unforgivably, the line "You're our only hope".) It's a film that is sometimes self-aware, as when the kid urges Black Adam to come up with a catchphrase that will sell lunchboxes.

He does, but it makes little sense: "Tell them, 'The man in black sent you.'" Wait, he was sent by someone else? Do they mean Johnny Cash? Actually that may be a clue. What the filmmakers probably had in mind was cash — selling those lunchboxes.

"Black Adam," a Warner Bros. Pictures release that hits cinemas on Friday, is rated PG-13 for sequences of strong violence, intense action and some language. Running time: 124 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

## Netflix rebounds from recent subscriber losses with 3Q gain

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Netflix reversed its recent subscriber losses with a summertime gain that management is hoping to build upon with the upcoming launch of a cheaper version of the video streaming service that will include ads for the first time.

The Los Gatos, California, company disclosed Tuesday that it picked up 2.4 million subscribers during the July-September period, a comeback from a loss of 1.2 million customers during the first half of the year amid stiffer competition and soaring inflation that's squeezing household budgets.

Netflix now boasts 223 million subscribers, enabling the company to at least temporarily reclaim the mantle as the world's largest video streaming service. Walt Disney Co. eclipsed Netflix in August when it reported its service had 221 million subscribers, a number that will be updated Nov. 8 when Disney is scheduled to report its summertime results.

"Thank God, we are done with shrinking quarters," Netflix co-CEO Reed Hastings exclaimed in a video conference call Tuesday. "We are back to positivity."

The uptick in subscribers also helped Netflix earn \$1.4 billion, or \$3.10 per share, a 4% dip from the same time last year. Revenue climbed 6% from last year to \$7.93 billion. The subscriber gains, earnings per share and revenue all topped analyst projections compiled by FactSet.

Netflix's shares surged by about 14% after the latest numbers came out. Even so, the stock has still lost more than half its value so far this year, reflecting worries that Netflix's best days have passed.

Now that Netflix is growing again, it will be aiming to accelerate the momentum with its first ad-supported plan that debuts in the U.S. and 11 other markets in early November. The new option will cost \$7 per month in the U.S., less than half the price for Netflix's most popular \$15.50-per-month plan without commercial interruptions.

"Netflix still has a lot of room to grow and capture the share in a price-sensitive market," Investing.com analyst Haris Anwar said in a sign of renewed optimism about the company's prospects.

In a possible sign Netflix isn't expecting the ad-backed plan to be an immediate hit, management is forecasting it will add 4.5 million subscribers during the October-December period. Although that would be Netflix's biggest quarterly gain this year, it would still be down from the 8.3 million subscribers added during the same holiday-season period last year.

Netflix is apparently hoping to de-emphasize Wall Street's long-running focus on its subscriber growth by stopping to provide forecasts about how many customers it expects to add from one quarter to the next. Management disclosed Tuesday that its subscriber projection for the current quarter will be its last, but that it will continue to predict earnings and revenue in hopes investors will pay more attention to those figures.

Although investors have generally been enthusiastic about Netflix's expansion into the advertising market, one major concern is whether the additional revenue generated from selling commercials will be enough to offset the losses from current subscribers who switch to the cheaper option from higher prices they are currently paying.

Netflix is projecting revenue of nearly \$7.8 billion for the quarter covering the holiday season that traditionally spurs more advertisers, slightly below what analysts had been anticipating, according to FactSet. If Netflix delivers on its revenue forecast, it will translate into a 4% increase from the same time last year. By comparison, Netflix's posted a year-over-year revenue gain of 16% in its 2021 holiday-season quarter.

But an analysis by the research firm Insider Intelligence foresees advertising contributing a significant chunk of Netflix's revenue. Next year, Netflix should bring in more than \$830 million from advertisers in the U.S. alone, followed by more than \$1 billion in the U.S. in 2024, according to Insider Intelligence.

"The economics will be just fine," Greg Peters, Netflix's chief operating officer, said during Tuesday's conference call.

Netflix is expecting to bring in even more subscribers early next year when it begins to crack down on rampant password-sharing that has allowed millions of people watch its service for free. As a prelude to forcing a market segment that the company has labeled as "borrowers," Netflix on Monday unveiled a new feature called "Profile Transfer" that will allow viewers to export their customized recommendations and personal histories to a new account.

"All the stars are lining up for us," Hastings said Tuesday.

## **Analyst acquitted at trial over discredited Trump dossier**

By MATTHEW BARAKAT Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AP) — A jury on Tuesday acquitted a think tank analyst accused of lying to the FBI about his role in the creation of a discredited dossier about former President Donald Trump.

The case against Igor Danchenko was the third and possibly final case brought by Special Counsel John Durham as part of his probe into how the FBI conducted its own investigation into allegations of collusion between the 2016 Trump campaign and the Kremlin.

The first two cases ended in an acquittal and a guilty plea with a sentence of probation.

Danchenko betrayed no emotion as the verdict was read. His wife wiped away tears after the clerk read the final "not guilty" to the four counts he faced.

Danchenko didn't comment after the hearing, but his lawyer, Stuart Sears, spoke briefly to reporters, saying, "We've known all along that Mr. Danchenko is innocent. We're happy now that the American public knows that as well."

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The jury reached its verdict after roughly nine hours of deliberations over two days. One juror, Joel Greene of Vienna, Virginia, said there were no real disputes among the jury and that jurors just wanted to be thorough in reviewing the four counts.

The acquittal marked a significant setback for Durham. Despite hopes by Trump supporters that the prosecutor would uncover a sweeping conspiracy within the FBI and other agencies to derail his candidacy, the three-year investigation failed to produce evidence that met those expectations. The sole conviction — an FBI lawyer admitted altering an email related to the surveillance of a former Trump aide — was for conduct uncovered not by Durham but by the Justice Department's inspector general, and the two cases that Durham took to trials ended in full acquittals.

Durham declined comment after the hearing, but he said in a statement issued through the Justice Department: "While we are disappointed in the outcome, we respect the jury's decision and thank them for their service. I also want to recognize and thank the investigators and the prosecution team for their dedicated efforts in seeking truth and justice in this case."

He issued an identical statement after the first trial ended in acquittal.

The Danchenko case was the first of the three to delve deeply into the origins of the "Steele dossier," a compendium of allegations that Trump's 2016 presidential campaign was colluding with the Kremlin.

Most famously, it alleged that the Russians could have blackmail material on Trump for his supposed interactions with prostitutes in a Moscow hotel. Trump derided the dossier as fake news and a political witch hunt when it became public in 2017.

Danchenko, by his own admission, was responsible for 80% of the raw intelligence in the dossier and half of the accompanying analysis, though trial testimony indicated that Danchenko was shocked and dismayed about how Steele presented the material and portrayed it as factual when Danchenko considered it more to be rumor and speculation.

Prosecutors said that if Danchenko had been more honest about his sources, the FBI might not have treated the dossier so credulously. As it turned out, the FBI used material from the dossier to support applications for warrantless surveillance of a Trump campaign official, Carter Page, even though the FBI never was able to corroborate a single allegation in the dossier.

Prosecutors said Danchenko lied about the identity of his own sources for the material he gave to Steele. The specific charges against Danchenko allege that he essentially fabricated one of his sources when the FBI interviewed him to determine how he derived the material he provided for the dossier.

Danchenko told the FBI that some of the material came when he received an anonymous call from a man he believed to be Sergei Millian, a former president of the Russian-American Chamber of Commerce.

Prosecutors said Danchenko's story made no sense. They said that phone records show no evidence of a call, and that Danchenko had no reason to believe Millian, a Trump supporter he'd never met, was suddenly going to be willing to provide disparaging information about Trump to a stranger.

Danchenko's lawyers, as a starting point, maintain that Danchenko never said he talked with Millian. He only guessed that Millian might have been the caller when the FBI asked him to speculate. And they said he shouldn't be convicted of a crime for making a guess at the FBI's invitation.

That said, Danchenko's lawyers say, he had good reason to believe the caller may well have been Millian. The call came just a few days after Danchenko had reached out to Millian over email after a mutual acquaintance brokered a connection over email.

And Danchenko's lawyers say it's irrelevant that his phone records don't show a call because Danchenko told the FBI from the start that the call might have taken place over a secure mobile app for which he had no records.

The jury began deliberations Monday afternoon after hearing closing arguments on four counts. On Friday, U.S. District Judge Anthony Trenga threw out a fifth count, saying prosecutors had failed to prove it as a matter of law.

Trenga nearly threw out all of the charges before the trial began, citing the legal strength of Danchenko's defense, but allowed the case to proceed in what he described as "an extremely close call."



## Wisconsin Republican Michels walks back abortion pledge

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The Republican running for governor in Wisconsin suggested Tuesday that he did not support enforcing the swing state's near-total ban on abortions, saying "I will never arrest a doctor" before his campaign walked back his comment.

Tim Michels is locked in a tight race with Democratic Gov. Tony Evers and abortion has been a major issue. Michels, who is endorsed by former President Donald Trump, said in the Republican primary that he backed a state law dating to 1849 that makes it a felony for doctors to perform nearly all abortions.

But last month Michels had changed course and said he would sign a bill granting exceptions in cases of rape and incest. He repeated that position Tuesday during a Q&A at the Rotary Club of Milwaukee, but went a step further.

"I will never arrest a doctor, as they're saying," Michels said. "I'm a reasonable guy."

Under Wisconsin's abortion ban, doctors who perform abortions can be found guilty of a class H felony, punishable by up to six years in prison, a fine of up to \$10,000, or both. The governor is not responsible for enforcing the law, but Michels' comment suggested he did not support anyone arresting a doctor who would violate it.

Michels' spokesperson Anna Kelly attempted to clarify his comment, saying it was the district attorneys, not the governor, who enforce laws.

"He's not a DA or beat cop arresting anyone," she said.

Evers' campaign spokesman Sam Roecker accused Michels of trying to hide his true support for "locking up doctors who provide abortions," noting his longtime support for banning abortions.

"He's either lying to voters today, in a desperate attempt to hide his radical positions, or he was lying to them for the last six months," Roecker said.

Democratic district attorneys in the state's two largest counties where abortions had been performed before the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* have said they won't enforce the state's ban, which was enacted before women had the right to vote and before the Civil War.

Abortion has seeped into all of the top races in Wisconsin this election cycle.

Democratic Attorney General Josh Kaul filed a lawsuit, supported by Evers, seeking to overturn the state's ban. His Republican challenger, Fond du Lac District Attorney Eric Toney, has said he wants to allow district attorneys to cross county boundaries to enforce the ban.

That is not currently allowed under state law unless a district attorney asks for assistance. Kaul has said he would not enforce the abortion ban.

Evers and his allies have been spending tens of millions of dollars on television advertising to hammer Michels on his previous support for the 1849 law, which he called the "exact mirror" of his position. Evers is challenging the law in court and has twice called special sessions of the Legislature seeking to repeal the ban and create a way to put the question before voters. Republicans rejected both proposals.

Democrats are trying to make the governor's race a referendum on abortion, pointing to public polls that show broad bipartisan support for legal abortions and at the very least exceptions for rape and incest.

Michels said Tuesday that the attacks against him on abortion are "just not sticking."

Evers said he would not sign a bill granting abortion exceptions for rape and incest if it leaves the underlying abortion ban in place. Evers also said he would grant clemency to any doctor who is convicted under the law and sentenced to prison.

While Democrats have tried to make the race about abortion, Michels has focused on crime. He promised Tuesday to reduce crime statewide and in Milwaukee, promising "life will be better for everybody."

Michels also promised to have "massive" tax reform, including lowering the income tax to a nearly flat rate for all filers of around 5%.

Michels said after the event, in response to a question from a reporter, that he would "certainly" accept the results of the November election after previously not committing fully to that. He also promised to

sign a number of bills Evers vetoed that Republican supporters said were designed to make elections more secure. A number of the measures made it more difficult to vote absentee.

"No one two years from now, four years from now, six years from now, whatever, will ever have a question about election integrity here in Wisconsin," Michels promised.

Michels also suggested that he would be open to breaking up the state Department of Natural Resources into two agencies, one to deal with hunters and the other focused on business regulations.

## How Michael Flynn goes local to spread Christian nationalism

By MICHELLE R. SMITH Associated Press

VENICE, Fla. (AP) — It was less than three weeks before the Sarasota County, Florida, school board election when the former White House national security adviser weighed in on the local political race.

"These 'woke' members need to be defeated in detail this upcoming election," Michael Flynn posted on Telegram on Aug. 6. "Our children's lives and futures are at risk when our school boards here in Florida and around the nation shove (critical race theory) and transgender nonsense down their throats."

A few days later, the retired three-star Army general who spent decades enmeshed in international conflict weighed in again on the local election: "'WOKE' SOBs operating in many counties and on many school boards across the country" have to be voted out or censured "and some just need to be arrested."

Later that month, Flynn's chosen candidates — who were also backed by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis — defeated three school board candidates backed by Democrats.

Flynn, who just eight years ago under President Barack Obama led the U.S. military's intelligence agency, now is at the center of a far-right Christian nationalist movement that has a growing influence in the Republican Party. In speeches across the U.S., he urges his supporters to get involved in local politics as a way to change the country from the bottom up.

"Local action equals national impact," Flynn says at nearly every stop.

This story is part of an ongoing investigation from The Associated Press and the PBS series "Frontline" that includes the upcoming documentary "Michael Flynn's Holy War," premiering Tuesday on PBS and online.

In Sarasota County, Flynn and his allies have created a kind of laboratory for his approach, energizing local conservative activists through social media and public appearances, and gatherings at a venue called The Hollow that has become a meeting place for the far right. He questions American democratic institutions, repeats lies about the 2020 election, attacks the news media and embraces conspiracy theories about COVID-19. One of the groups he's welcomed into the fold is the violent extremist group the Proud Boys.

The political marriage between a man who once sat at the right hand of President Donald Trump and local extremists in Sarasota County starts in some ways on Jan. 6, 2021, and with their failed attempts to thwart the democratic process and keep Trump in power.

It was insurrection day and Flynn, American flag hat atop his head, sat in the VIP section of the rally as Trump urged his supporters to march on the U.S. Capitol and stop Congress from confirming that he had lost the election.

Less than 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) away, James Hoel, decked out in tactical gear, a walkie-talkie on his chest, advanced past the Capitol barricades with fellow members of the Proud Boys, at the vanguard of the deadly riot.

There's no evidence the two men knew each other on that day. But in the 21 months since Trump's fight to stay in office came to an end, their paths and interests have crossed again and again.

The Associated Press and the PBS series "Frontline" reported last month that Flynn's movement envisions Christianity as the basis of American life and institutions; where the right to bear arms is paramount; where abortion is illegal; where concepts such as systemic racism and gay or transgender rights have no place in the schools; and where people who disagree are called "Marxists," or perverts, and are excluded

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from American civic life.

Flynn has drawn together election deniers, mask and vaccine opponents, insurrectionists and leaders in state and local Republican parties who are continuing the attack on American democracy and institutions that came to a head on Jan. 6.

After the failed insurrection, Flynn moved to Sarasota County and set out to build a political community of like-minded people. He found an operating base of sorts at a place known as The Hollow in rural Venice. It's a 10-acre site that's at times a children's playland, wedding venue, organizing space and weapons training ground.

The Hollow's owner, Victor Mellor Sr., is a former Marine who posted on Facebook that he "Just knocked on front doors" of the Capitol on Jan. 6. Mellor told "Frontline" that he was proud he was there that day and once suggested on social media that he would have a "J6 reunion at the Hollow."

Flynn first visited the site in May 2021, and the next day, Mellor posted on Facebook that there was a "war going on" and pledged "all our resources to the Flynns in this battle." Since then the Hollow has turned into a center of activity for Sarasota County's far right.

Last fall, the Hollow drew thousands to events with Flynn in attendance where doctors distributed mask and vaccine waivers for school children. The site hosts political groups and candidates, offers free play-dates — with water slides, zip lines and a bouncy house — has advertised classes on "Biblical citizenship," food storage and wound and trauma care, and provides access to a neighboring, unpermitted gun range to ex-military and law enforcement. The gun range has hosted groups as large as 40 and has offered free shooting lessons to children as young as 6.

Visitors enter through a bunker-like windowless hallway, painted black and filled with quotes, many of which push the idea that violent revolution is part of the nation's history and possibly its future. "To disarm the people is the best and most effectual way to enslave them," reads one. A Thomas Jefferson line reads: "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants."

In a meeting space inside, a banner promises "any attempt of violence towards our children will be met with overwhelming deadly force." On another wall hangs a "soldier's prayer," signed by Flynn, that reads in part: "Let Your truth be my shield and buckler/Against the fiery darts — the lies — of the enemy."

The bunker then opens onto an expansive outdoor space decorated with American flags and bunting and landscaped with palm trees, pathways and pergolas. One winding path connects to an adjacent property that includes the gun range. Mellor said he added a 10-foot cross at Flynn's suggestion.

Reporters for AP and "Frontline" visited the outskirts of the Hollow in February. Later, Mellor invited a "Frontline" crew inside for a tightly controlled visit and sat down for an interview. Mellor said he was not a right-wing extremist and expressed concern the Hollow would be portrayed as "a militia camp." He added: "But it is absolutely the opposite spectrum of that."

Flynn has been visiting the Hollow regularly for over a year, and supporting it financially. After Hurricane Ian swamped the site with several feet of water, Flynn and Mellor visited it together by boat, Mellor told AP. He shared a photo of the two of them, surrounded by floodwaters, folding an American flag.

It was at The Hollow where Flynn was seen mixing with Proud Boys, including Hoel.

Photos and video posted on Facebook and a public Telegram chat show Flynn at The Hollow with men wearing the Proud Boys' signature yellow and black shirts or other gear with the group's logo. Sarasota lawyer Ron Filipkowski, who tracks far-right figures online, circulated a photo posted on Facebook in September 2021 that showed a man wearing a Proud Boys hat, yellow shirt and bandanna standing with Mellor and Flynn.

The Proud Boys played an important role in the insurrection. One of its members, Jeremy Bertino, pleaded guilty this month to seditious conspiracy for his role in the attack.

Samantha Kutner, an extremism researcher who is an expert on the Proud Boys and runs the consultancy Glitterpill LLC, said grievance is a driving factor in the group: they paint themselves as victims of a progressive society that wants to emasculate them.

Many Proud Boys attended the deadly "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017. They've been designated a terrorist organization by the governments of Canada and New Zealand and labeled a

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hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit legal advocacy group.

Hoel and other Sarasota Proud Boys have taken Flynn's presence and words as a rallying cry, echoing them in public Telegram chat groups they use to organize their political activities. They have often shared messages from Flynn as a way to encourage each other to get involved in local politics.

In October 2021, Flynn was the featured guest for a family event at the Hollow, "Halloween with General Flynn." Messages from a public chat on Telegram show Proud Boys and their wives organized to volunteer.

On Oct. 19, Proud Boy Nick Radovich suggested a person whose username is "MilkshakePB" could volunteer for the event. "I can try and take Halloween off to help. Is there a job list and time slot," MilkshakePB replied. A Proud Boy who goes by the nickname Milkshake has been charged and pleaded not guilty for his alleged actions on Jan. 6.

"Interested in seeing General Flynn and (state GOP Rep. Anthony) Sabatini at the Hollow at no cost? Can you help volunteer for 3 hours at the Halloween event?" Radovich's wife, Melissa, wrote Oct. 23, one of several posts she made about the event.

The event promised a "haunted hike" and trick-or-treating for kids, but it also included political speeches by a number of far-right activists, including Flynn and Kimberly Fletcher of Moms for America, one of the groups that organized the rallies in Washington on Jan. 5 and 6, 2021. Organizers said 1,000 people came. A video shows that during the event, Flynn got a standing ovation before telling the crowd that Republicans need to improve their election tactics.

"I can tell you exactly how the Democratic Party does precinct training and then who they put in charge," Flynn said. "They know exactly where to put people, where to put the thugs."

He suggested those in the audience should register to be precinct volunteers and poll watchers.

Later that night, Nick Radovich posted a video in a public Telegram chat saying he had met Flynn, and the general had congratulated him for being part of a group that protested outside the school board chair's house, calling for her to come outdoors for a "redress of grievances." Local media had reported on Proud Boys' involvement in the protest.

"He said good, keep it up," Radovich said in the video. "So, anybody seeing this should know that we have his approval."

Two weeks later, Hoel posted a photo he took with Flynn at the Hollow: Hoel wears a Proud Boys shirt, and next to him, Flynn holds up for the camera a Proud Boys emblem.

Mellor told "Frontline" that some Proud Boys had volunteered at the Hollow before he knew they were members of the extremist group.

"They're just dads and husbands and their kids come out here, OK? You know, they're part of the society," he said and added that the Proud Boys are "just another organization that just like any organization is welcomed here."

It is not clear whether Flynn has a formal relationship with the Hollow, and he and Mellor declined to answer questions on the subject.

Mellor said in a written statement that one of Flynn's nonprofits, America's Future Inc., had recently donated \$25,000 to purchase an observation dome for a 14.5-inch telescope for the Hollow's new science and nature program. Flynn has also been soliciting money for the Hollow through a crowdfunding campaign for The America Project, a group he started last year and that AP and "Frontline" previously reported has been spending millions on efforts to advance its agenda, including by undermining trust in elections.

Some Sarasota residents told AP and "Frontline" that Proud Boys have tried to intimidate people at school board meetings — labeling those who supported masks or sympathized with gay children as "perverts."

Angela Wynn said she was harassed by a group of Proud Boys when she attended a women's rights rally with her 10-year-old. She believes Flynn's outspoken presence in Sarasota has given members of the group confidence and validation.

"Maybe back in the day they would have tried to hide who they are," Wynn said. "But now they're just so emboldened and they have this sense of empowerment."

At one protest, children were photographed hoisting Proud Boys flags.

Carol Lerner, a public education activist and retiree in Sarasota County who is opposed to Flynn's politics,



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has visited The Hollow twice and tracked the Proud Boys activities in Sarasota and at The Hollow.

She says Flynn, with the help of Mellor and the Proud Boys, is building an infrastructure to further the attack on American democracy that came to a head on Jan. 6 and using The Hollow to build a community and teach children anti-democratic values.

"It's pretty. It's nice. It fills a need. Then you look at what their worldview is, what they're fighting for. It's scary. It's quite frightening," Lerner said. "It's kind of like a socialization of insurrection."

## THE CAMPAIGNS

Flynn has said in public speeches that he and his supporters have "flipped" 250 school boards across the country to people who agree with his views. He declined to provide a list of the communities he was referring to. But it's certain that he counts Sarasota County as one of his success stories.

Flynn, Mellor and the Proud Boys supported candidates in Sarasota that they believed would stand against mask and vaccine mandates, ban books they see as objectionable and stop any talk of sexual orientation.

Campaign finance records show that Mellor, his business and The Hollow together donated more than half the money raised by a political action committee that backed those candidates. The PAC paid for a mobile billboard calling one Jewish school board candidate a liar and "baby killer," drawing condemnation from people who noted the term's history as an antisemitic slur. Flynn's The America Project kicked in \$5,000 to the PAC in the days after the uproar.

As the school board campaign raged, Flynn and his supporters branched out beyond schools. "General Flynn is submitting his application to the Republican Executive committee on Monday," Nick Radovich wrote on Telegram July 9. "Patriots need to control the Republican party, my wife will bring you an application to join so we can take over the republican party and get rid of the RINOS. Send me date and time where she can meet you."

In the following weeks, dozens of people submitted paperwork to join the executive committee of the Sarasota County Republican Party, including Flynn, several Flynn family members, Hoel and his wife. The Herald-Tribune newspaper was first to report Flynn's application to the committee.

On Sept. 8, Hoel and Flynn were sworn in to the party's executive committee. Flynn signed up to be a poll watcher.

A Sarasota Republican Party spokesman, Rod Thomson, would not comment on whether the party endorses the views Flynn espouses. He said the party was just following its rules when it approved Flynn and Hoel to the 270-member executive committee.

Kutner and others who study extremism see a mutually beneficial relationship between Flynn and Proud Boys, likening it to when then-President Donald Trump called for the Proud Boys to "stand back and stand by" ahead of the 2020 election. Flynn is working to consolidate various factions within the GOP, while Proud Boys are trying to gain visibility and legitimacy while deflecting from their actions and involvement during Jan. 6, Kutner said.

"They are trying to engage in local politics," she said, "because that's where the fight is now."

## FLYNN RESPONDS

Mellor told AP in a written statement that he and Flynn are "experiencing and nurturing a true grassroots movement in its purest form."

"I assure you; this is only the beginning."

Flynn has not answered several questions sent to him since August, both before and after AP and "Frontline" published the article about his political movement on Sept. 7. But a few days after it ran, he held a 90-minute live-streamed response without providing any substantive rebuttal to the article's findings.

He did, however, reiterate his commitment to local action.

"We're on the battlefield that I believe is the most important battlefield, which is the local battlefield," he said. "The terrain that I have chosen to fight on is the local battlefield, the local terrain. And I think that that's the terrain that will win the day."

**Take note: Utah Jazz may have lost their hashtag to Apple**

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SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Take note: The Utah Jazz evidently need a new hashtag.

The team's long-used hashtag — #TakeNote — was used by Apple CEO Tim Cook in a tweet on Tuesday, accompanied by an Apple logo emoji. It raises questions about how the phrase will be used in the team's marketing plans going forward.

"That was weird. I saw that when you all did," Jazz owner Ryan Smith said Tuesday at a Salt Lake City news conference unrelated to hashtag matters. "Got to look into it."

Cook and Smith are friends; Cook has even sat courtside with Smith for at least one Jazz game.

Apple Inc. unveiled the latest innovations with its iPad and Apple TV products on Tuesday, and Cook's early morning tweet with the hashtag and a short video that also made use of the "Take Note" phrase was basically the kickoff to his company's announcements.

The Jazz have "#TakeNote" on multiple displays in their arena, plus they have used it on merchandise. The team started using the hashtag in 2016, got away from it briefly and began using it again in 2019.

And just last week, the Jazz announced a partnership with Utah-based company Chatbooks — including a promotion where Chatbooks would "display a collage of fans' social media photos" on the video boards hanging over center court.

The plan was to tell fans to post photos on social media with the #TakeNote hashtag to have them considered for those collages.

## Biden vows abortion legislation as top priority next year

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden promised Tuesday that the first bill he sends to Capitol Hill next year will be one that writes abortion protections into law — if Democrats control enough seats in Congress to pass it — as he sought to energize his party's voters just three weeks ahead of the November midterms.

Twice over, Biden urged people to remember how they felt in late June when the Supreme Court overturned the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling that legalized abortion, fresh evidence of White House efforts to ensure the issue stays front of mind for Democratic voters this year.

"I want to remind us all how we felt when 50 years of constitutional precedent was overturned," Biden said in remarks at the Howard Theatre, "the anger, the worry, the disbelief."

He repeatedly lambasted Republicans nationwide who have pushed for restrictions on the procedure, often without exceptions, and told Democrats in attendance that "if you care about the right to choose, then you gotta vote."

As he has done all year, Biden emphasized that only Congress can fully restore abortion access to what it was before the Supreme Court's decision in Dobbs v. Jackson, which overturned Roe. But he also acknowledged "we're short a handful of votes" now to reinstate abortion protections at the federal level, urging voters to send more Democrats to Congress.

"If we do that, here's the promise I make to you and the American people: The first bill that I will send to the Congress will be to codify Roe v. Wade," Biden said. "And when Congress passes it, I'll sign it in January, 50 years after Roe was first decided the law of the land."

That's a big if.

For Biden to follow through on his pledge, Democrats would have to retain control of the House and pick up seats in the Senate — an unlikely scenario considering current political dynamics. Abortion rights have been a key motivating factor for Democrats this year, although the economy and inflation still rank as chief concern for most voters.

Abolishing the filibuster — the legislative rule that requires 60 votes for most bills to advance in the Senate — amid opposition in their own ranks will also pose a significant challenge for Democrats.

Long resistant to any revisions to Senate institutional rules, Biden said in the days after the June decision to overrule Roe that he would support eliminating the supermajority threshold for abortion bills, just as he did on voting rights legislation.

But two moderate Democrats — Sens. Kyrsten Sinema, Ariz., and Joe Manchin, W.Va. — support keep-

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ing the filibuster. Sinema has said she wants to retain the filibuster precisely so any abortion restrictions backed by Republicans would face a much higher hurdle to pass in the Senate.

Democratic Senate candidates in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — the party's two best chances to flip seats currently held by Republicans — have both said they support eliminating the filibuster in order to pass abortion legislation. Pennsylvania Senate candidate John Fetterman has actively campaigned on being the 51st vote for priorities such as legalizing abortion, codifying same-sex marriage protections, and making it easier for workers to unionize — all measures that would otherwise be blocked by a filibuster in the Senate.

Abortion — and proposals from some Republicans to impose nationwide restrictions on the procedure — have been a regular fixture of Biden's political rhetoric this election cycle, as Democrats seek to energize voters in a difficult midterm season for the party in power in Washington.

In fundraisers and in political speeches, Biden has vowed to reject any abortion restrictions that may come to his desk in a GOP-controlled Congress. Like he did on Tuesday, Biden has also urged voters to boost the Democratic ranks in the Senate so enough senators would not only support reinstating abortion nationwide, but would change Senate rules to do it.

Opponents of abortion rights have also sought to capitalize on the issue, with Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, saying Tuesday that the stakes of next month's midterm elections "could not be higher."

"Doubling down on an extreme agenda of abortion on demand until birth won't stop Democrats from losing Congress, even with the abortion industry spending record sums to elect them," Dannenfelser said. "Biden's party is on the wrong side and stunningly out of touch."

On Tuesday, Biden made a pointed appeal to young voters, who traditionally participate in lower rates than other age demographics in midterm elections. Though his remarks were primarily focused on abortion, Biden also mentioned his decisions to forgive billions of dollars in student loan debt and to issue pardons for marijuana possession — moves popular with younger voters.

"What I am saying is, you represent the best of us. Your generation will not be ignored, will not be shunned and will not be silent," Biden said, adding: "In 2020, you voted to deliver the change you wanted to see in the world. In 2022, you need to exercise your power to vote again for the future of our nation and the future of your generation."

Court decisions and state legislation have shifted — and sometimes, re-shifted — the status of abortion laws across the country. Currently, bans are in place at all states of pregnancy in 12 states. In another, Wisconsin, clinics have stopped providing abortions though there's dispute over whether a ban is in effect. In Georgia, abortion is banned at the detection of cardiac activity -- generally around six weeks and before women often know they're pregnant.

Meanwhile, codifying Roe remains a broadly popular position. In a July AP-NORC poll, 60% of U.S. adults said they believe Congress should pass a law guaranteeing access to legal abortion nationwide.

Even with the economy dominating so much of the midterm discourse, abortion has been a touchstone in high-profile contests from Ohio to Arizona, especially as Democrats try to trap Republicans between their most ardent anti-abortion base voters who want absolute or near-total bans and a majority of U.S. adults that wants at least some legal access to elective abortions.

For instance, in Georgia, Republican Senate nominee Herschel Walker went so far in his only debate against Sen. Raphael Warnock, a Democrat, as to deny his previous support for a national abortion ban with no exceptions. Despite Walker's previous statements captured on video, he insisted Warnock misrepresented his position. Walker said in the debate that he backs a Georgia statute outlawing abortion after six weeks of pregnancy — an effective ban for some women because it's so early they don't yet know they're pregnant. The law includes exceptions for later abortions in cases of rape, incest and involving health risks to a woman.

Warnock, meanwhile, avoided direct questions about whether he'd support any abortion limits, instead turning the question to Walker's position.

## McDonagh, Farrell, Gleeson get 'Bruges' band back together

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — "Time be flyin'," it's said in Martin McDonagh's "The Banshees of Inisherin." It's a sentiment shared by McDonagh and his two stars, Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson, who have reteamed 14 years after McDonagh's pitch-black feature debut, "In Bruges."

"It feels like not two days of passing," McDonagh said, shaking his head, on a recent fall day in New York while Farrell and Gleeson, sitting beside him, eagerly agree.

"It feels like we just went back in the room and said, 'It's going to be a good one, isn't it?'" says Gleeson.

The 2008 "In Bruges," which began the celebrated British-Irish playwright's transition from stage to screen, was a memorable dark comedy of two hitmen holed up in the medieval Belgian city. For Farrell's character, who has just accidentally shot a boy on his first job, Bruges is a purgatory. "The Banshees of Inisherin" is likewise set in a specific locale: the Aran Islands off the west coast of Ireland. And a sense of existential doom is again palpable.

But the feud this time requires no guns and the rural 1920s backdrop is even more picturesque. After years of friendship and regular trips to the pub together, Colm Doherty (Gleeson) has decided that he just doesn't like Pádraic Súilleabháin (Farrell) anymore. This confounds Pádraic, who persistently tries to reingratiate himself to Colm. Eventually, Colm decides to make his demand for peace gruesomely clear.

"People go, 'You can't just make a film about a guy who doesn't want to be friends with another guy,'" says Farrell. "Well, that's how."

"The Banshees of Inisherin," which opens in select theaters Friday before expanding nationwide, is a story of friends falling out made by a trio with abiding affection for one another. McDonagh wrote it with Gleeson and Farrell in mind. He first sent the two actors a draft seven years ago. ("That was crap," says McDonagh. "I loved it," says Farrell.) He later returned to it, preserving only the first five pages and digging deeper into the pair's relationship.

McDonagh, Gleeson and Farrell's pleasure in each other's company was easy to see when they convened at a hotel on the Upper West Side shortly after Gleeson's skateboard-shredding "Saturday Night Live" hosting stint. The three had just stepped away from individual interviews over Zoom. "Together again!" they exclaimed.

"From the start, there was a deep sense of kinship and an understanding of each other," Farrell says. "In a strange way, I understand myself more through Martin and his mind and his heart and his work. And I understand myself more through my interactions with Brendan."

"I think we all, basically, are romantics," adds Gleeson. "We're not blind, either. We know the other side of the coin."

"In Bruges" was well-received at the time and launched McDonagh as a filmmaker. ( Roger Ebert wrote: "Every once in a while you find a film like this, that seems to happen as it goes along, driven by the peculiarities of the characters.") But it also has only grown in stature over the years, and it remains a touchstone for all three. Farrell, who was then adjusting to the onset of fame, credits the film with reorienting his career.

"It meant a lot to me. I had genuinely lost sight of the fun and exploration and the journey of discovery that what we do for a living can be and should be. I was just going through the motions. It was at a stage of my life where there was a lot of change personally, and as a result of that professionally," says Farrell. "The pilot light got ignited by 'In Bruges.'"

"Banshees" preserves some of the "Bruges" dynamic between Farrell and Gleeson. Gleeson again plays the more erudite of the two. Farrell is sweeter, less intelligent. There are other connections, too. It's a throwaway line but Farrell begs Gleeson to go down to the pub in "In Bruges." Gleeson's response: "No."

From the start, their banter together had a natural rhythm. "An instantaneous mainlining into headquarters," says Gleeson.

"I think part of it is – Martin has the line – that we're an odd-looking couple," adds Farrell. "What people see here are two people that look like they're very different, sound like they're very different and maybe even feel very different, and yet somehow that's never articulated, we find out that they're not so different, at all."



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In "Banshees," Colm's abrupt plea for solitude stems from his being tired of "aimless chatting." Feeling time slipping away, he wants to devote himself to writing music. (The song he's writing is titled "The Banshees of Inisherin.") Their discord has symbolism; the Irish Civil War is raging on the mainland. But it most reflects the struggle of an artist, perhaps a self-serious one, to balance work with the demands of social convention.

"Aimless chatting," of course, is no small part of movie promotion – especially for a critically acclaimed film like "The Banshees of Inisherin" forecast to play a major role through awards season. McDonagh's previous film, the Oscar-winning "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri," took that path, and, this time, Farrell's performance has already been especially singled out. The trio pledged that this chat, at least, wasn't aimless but, as Farrell said, "good, normal chatting."

Still, it's clear that the conflict in "Banshees" is one McDonagh feels, himself.

"Time slips away with irrelevant nonsense all the time," McDonagh says. "A long time ago I said: I have to write one thing a year. If it takes two weeks, the rest of the year is free for anything. But you have to stick to that."

Reading, he grants, has gotten harder to make time for because of the Internet and phones. "A curse!" chimes Farrell. But the pandemic and the yearslong process to bring his last play, "Hangmen," to Broadway, has led McDonagh to turn his focus entirely to films.

"That I can't show you how good we got 'Lieutenant of Inishmore' 20 years ago is unfair," he says. "It's a question I haven't come to a concrete conclusion about. But there's also a lack of democracy about theater. It's too expensive and not enough people can see it. Unless you live in New York or London, you probably won't see my stuff. Whereas a movie, not only is it going to last 20 years, 100 years if it's a good one, you can get it anywhere. You can get it in Kansas City. You can get it in Ulaanbaatar. That's democratic."

"Actually, I don't think we open in Kansas City," Farrell adds, grinning.

But the 52-year-old McDonagh, like Gleeson's Colm, is increasingly — "always, daily," he says — focused on what he's going to leave behind, what work of his might endure.

"If there's, like, 25, 30 years left of one's life, I think maybe 20 good films," McDonagh says hopefully. "I'm not swearing off plays. I'm pretty sure I will do at least one or two more. But I think in the next bunch of years it's going to be films. I think COVID has solidified that idea. I can go back and watch 'In Bruges' now and be overjoyed at what we captured. That's why I'm leaning toward movies."

With that kind of long-term plan, a trilogy for Farrell and Gleeson could be natural. Where next? Venice? Iceland?

"I've got no idea what it will be when we get together again. But I think you're right, that I'll find a place, I'll see the town and that will tell us the story," says McDonagh, musing on the geographical possibilities. "Maybe it's the American West."

"The Geezers of Reykjavik!" exclaims Farrell.

"I'm in. I'm in. I'm in," says Gleeson, cackling. "Which geezer do I play?"

## Nevada's 'Reid Machine' staring down tough test in midterms

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

Democrats in Nevada hold both U.S. Senate seats, the governor's mansion and three of its four U.S. House seats. The state hasn't backed a Republican presidential candidate since 2004.

But as this year's midterm elections approach, the party's grip on power is under threat. Catherine Cortez Masto is considered the most vulnerable Democrat in the Senate. Gov. Steve Sisolak is facing a spirited reelection challenge from Republican Joe Lombardo. And the GOP could pick up two House seats in Nevada, which would put the party well on its way to regaining the majority in Washington.

The dynamics pose a severe test for the sophisticated organization that the late Sen. Harry Reid spent years building to give Democrats an edge in the swing state.

The party is facing headwinds everywhere, dragged down by President Joe Biden's unpopularity and persistent inflation. And the challenges in Nevada are particularly notable because the election is the first

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since Reid died last year, raising questions about the durability of the so-called Reid Machine.

Some leading Democrats say the competitive environment is simply a reminder that Nevada is a genuine swing state that the national party can't take for granted.

"I think what we're seeing in Nevada is what we always see. We're a purple state," said the state's Democratic Attorney General Aaron Ford. "We have to work hard."

Reid, who was the Senate majority leader from 2007 to 2015, helped pool resources to maximize support for candidates up and down the ballot. His approach tapped into networks that extended well beyond the traditional party structure. He leaned especially on the heavily immigrant Culinary Union, which represents about 60,000 casino workers and leads efforts to register voters, make phone calls and knock on doors.

That's especially important in a state where shift work in the casinos, hotels and restaurants of Las Vegas and language barriers can make some voters harder to reach.

"It was everything. It was an investment in people and operatives and candidates to make sure that we were firing on all cylinders across the ballot," said Rebecca Lambe, a longtime Reid aide and Democratic strategist.

"Across the ballot" has been a key organizing principle.

"We had every organizer we could knocking for every Democrat," said Molly Forgey, a former Reid aide and state party staffer. Forgey is now a spokeswoman for Sisolak's campaign.

As Reid ceded the stage in 2016, his machine's organizing and voter turnout efforts still helped Cortez Masto become the nation's first Latina senator. Two years later, Nevada Democrats flipped the state's other Senate seat long held by Republicans, elected the first Democratic governor in two decades and expanded their majorities in the Legislature.

Reid also muscled Nevada's presidential caucuses to be among the earliest contests in the nation, sending White House hopefuls, political spending and attention to what had been an overlooked state -- which amplified the resources and network of experienced campaign workers that could help in other Nevada elections.

But this November, veterans of the Reid Machine admit they're facing a tough challenge.

"There's no question that every Democrat in Nevada misses Sen. Reid this year," Lambe said. But at the same time the political and organizing infrastructure that he supported and invested in "was always built to support Democrats in the long term," he said.

"It was never just about Sen. Reid and his campaign."

However, the coordinated operation began to fracture last year after progressives backed by Democratic Socialists of America took over the state party leadership. Top Democratic officials, including the moderates Cortez Masto and Sisolak, set up an alternative operation run through the county that includes Reno, though Nevada Democrats say the divide has not played a role in the tight races this year.

Democrats and their aligned groups working on the ground have long warned the state has the potential to swing to Republicans and at times have felt victims of their own success. In 2018 and 2020, they warned national Democrats and donors in the final weeks before the elections that they shouldn't take the state for granted.

"It's up in the air," Ted Pappageorge, head of the casino workers' Culinary Union, said of this year's election. "It's a complete tossup."

Cortez Masto's opponent is Republican Adam Laxalt, the state's former attorney general and the grandson of Paul Laxalt, the former longtime Nevada senator and close friend of President Ronald Reagan.

The Reid Machine's record has hardly been perfect. In some years, it has seen losses or has had to scrap out wins.

In 2014, as Reid focused on trying to win competitive Senate contests elsewhere and keep Democratic control in the Senate, efforts in his backyard dwindled. Republicans tapped into backlash against then-President Barack Obama, winning all the statewide races that year and a Las Vegas-area House seat in the heart of Democrat-friendly territory.

Reid himself faced a tight reelection battle in 2010 against Tea Party star but gaffe-prone candidate Sharron Angle. That contest, even more than this year's, came amid widespread economic concerns as

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Nevada bore the brunt of a recession, but Reid and his machine managed to win.

This year, national Democrats are well aware of the stakes, fretting that Nevada is their biggest risk of losing a key Senate race. The contest is one of the most expensive in the country, with candidates and outside groups having spent about \$100 million so far, despite the state's relatively small population of about 3 million people.

That population is heavily working class and transitory, making it a constant challenge to connect with people moving in, to register them to vote and to introduce them to candidates. Roughly a third of the electorate is not registered with any political party.

It can be especially difficult to get voters who may not have deep roots in the state to pay attention to midterm elections, said Susie Martinez, a state assemblywoman and the head of the Nevada AFL-CIO.

"This is not a presidential," she said. "People tend to be a little more lackadaisical about voting. It's not in their mind at present."

Pappageorge, who leads the Culinary Union as secretary-treasurer, said the union has 300 people and growing who are working full time to knock on doors — "workers talking to workers" on behalf of Cortez Masto, Sisolak and other Democratic candidates in English, Spanish and other languages.

"This is going to be a tough election, tougher than 2020, because it's a midterm. But we've got a plan to win," Pappageorge said, even with Reid gone. "We'll never be able to repay the senator for what he did for our state and for us that live here. But we've taken this fight."

## Everything to know to apply for student loan forgiveness

By CORA LEWIS and ADRIANA MORGA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Joe Biden's student loan forgiveness program, announced in August, will cancel up to \$20,000 in debt per borrower. The application process is now open, and the administration says the forms should take five minutes to complete.

Borrowers who apply before mid-November should see forgiveness before Jan. 1, when payments on loans are scheduled to restart after a pause during the pandemic. Some Republican-led states have filed lawsuits to try to stop the cancellation, but the Biden administration says they're confident the challenges won't succeed.

Here's how to apply, and everything else you need to know:

### WHO QUALIFIES FOR STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS?

You qualify to have up to \$10,000 forgiven if your loan is held by the Department of Education and you make less than \$125,000 individually or \$250,000 for a family. If you received Pell grants, which are reserved for undergraduates with the most significant financial need, you can have up to \$20,000 forgiven. If you are a current borrower and a dependent student, you will be eligible for relief based on your parents' income, rather than your own.

One major lingering question is what will happen to students with commercially held FFEL loans who didn't refinance before Sept. 29. At the moment those loans are not eligible (even though they were initially going to be eligible). The administration has said it's looking for "additional legally-available options to provide relief" to those borrowers, but nothing has been announced yet.

### HOW DO I APPLY FOR LOAN FORGIVENESS?

Go to [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) and in the section on student loan debt relief, click "Apply Now."

Be ready to type in some basic personal information. The form asks for: name, Social Security Number, date of birth, phone number and email address. It does not require documentation about your income or your student loans.

Next, review the eligibility rules and confirm that you're a match. For most people, that means attesting that they make less than \$125,000 a year or that their household makes less than \$250,000 a year. If you meet the eligibility rules, click the box confirming that everything you provided is true.

Click "Submit."

### HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO RECEIVE FORGIVENESS?

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After the form is submitted, the Biden administration says it should take four to six weeks to process. The Education Department will use its existing records to make sure your loans are eligible and to look for applicants who might exceed the income limits. Some will be asked to provide additional documentation to prove their incomes. The Education Department estimates that the verification application will take about half an hour, including time to review and upload tax documents.

Most borrowers who apply before mid-November should expect to get their debt canceled before Jan. 1, when payments on federal student loans are scheduled to restart after a pause during the pandemic.

## WILL STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS DEFINITELY HAPPEN?

Things could get more complicated, depending on the outcomes of several legal challenges. The Biden administration faces a growing number of lawsuits attempting to block the program, including one filed by six Republican-led states.

A federal judge in St. Louis is currently weighing the states' request for an injunction to halt the plan. Biden on Monday said he's confident that the suit will not upend the plan. "Our legal judgment is that it won't," he said, "but they're trying to stop it."

## HAS THE STUDENT LOAN PAYMENT FREEZE BEEN EXTENDED?

The payment freeze has been extended one last time, until Dec. 31. The freeze started in 2020 as a way to help people struggling financially during the COVID-19 pandemic and it's been extended several times since. It was set to expire Aug. 31.

Interest rates will remain at 0% until repayments start. Under an earlier extension announced in April, people who were behind on payments before the pandemic automatically will be put in good standing.

## DOES GRADUATE STUDENT DEBT QUALIFY?

Yes, federal student loans taken out to cover graduate degrees qualify for forgiveness.

## WHAT IF MY STUDENT LOAN BALANCE INCLUDES A LOT OF INTEREST?

The interest itself is considered part of the balance for purposes of this program. Forgiveness will remove \$10,000 from the total balance you owe.

## WILL I HAVE TO PAY TAXES ON THE AMOUNT I'M FORGIVEN?

At least a few states have said they plan to tax the forgiveness, including Indiana and Mississippi, and it's unclear whether some others will change their tax rules to exclude forgiven student debt. Previously, Congress eliminated taxes on loan forgiveness through 2025.

## DO PARENT PLUS LOANS QUALIFY?

Parent Plus loans are included in the forgiveness plan, subject to the same \$250,000 income cap for families that applies to the rest of cancellation.

Parent Plus loans differ from other federal education loans in that they can go towards covering expenses other than tuition, such as books, and room and board for college students. As of March 2022, parents of 3.6 million students owe more than \$107 billion in Parent Plus loans, according to the Department of Education. That represents about 6% of the total amount of federal student debt held by Americans.

If a parent received a Parent Plus loan on behalf of a student and the same student received a direct loan, both would receive relief, as the cancellation is on a per-borrower, not a per-student basis. That means that each person who has Education Department-held federal student loans and meets the income requirements qualifies for cancellation.

## WHAT'S A PELL GRANT AND HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE ONE?

Roughly 27 million borrowers who qualified for Pell grants will be eligible to receive up to \$20,000 in forgiveness under the Biden plan.

Pell grants are special government scholarships for lower-income Americans, who currently can receive up to \$6,895 annually for roughly six years.

Nearly every Pell Grant recipient came from a family that made less than \$60,000 a year, according to the Department of Education, which said Pell grant recipients typically experience more challenges repaying their debt than other borrowers.

Pell grants themselves don't generally have to be paid back, but recipients typically take out additional



student loans.

"This additional relief for Pell borrowers is also an important piece of racial equity in cancellation," said Kat Welbeck, Civil Rights Counsel for the Student Borrower Protection Center. "Because student debt exacerbates existing inequities, the racial wealth gap means that students of color, especially those that are Black and Latino, are more likely to come from low-wealth households, have student debt, and borrow in higher quantities."

To find out if you have a Pell grant, check any emails you've received that describe your FAFSA award.

**HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL THIS HELP?**

About 43 million Americans have federal student debt, with an average balance of \$37,667, according to federal data. A third of those owe less than \$10,000. Half owe less than \$20,000. The total amount of federal student debt is more than \$1.6 trillion.

**WHAT IF I'VE ALREADY PAID OFF MY STUDENT LOANS — WILL I SEE RELIEF?**

If you've voluntarily made payments since March 2020, when payments were paused, you can request a refund for those payments, according to the Federal Office of Student Aid. Contact your loan servicer to request a refund.

**WHAT REPAYMENT PLAN IS THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PROPOSING?**

The Department of Education has proposed a repayment plan that would cap monthly payments at no more than 5% of a borrower's discretionary income, down from 10% now. Borrowers will need to apply for the repayment plan if it's approved, which could take a year or more.

For example, under the proposal, a single borrower making \$38,000 a year would pay \$31 a month, according a government press release.

The amount considered non-discretionary income will also be increased, through the department has not said how much.

Discretionary income usually refers to what you have left after covering necessities like food and rent, but for student loan repayment purposes it's calculated using a formula that takes into account the difference between a borrower's annual income and the federal poverty line, along with family size and geographic location.

"What's tough about income-driven repayment is that it does not take into account your other liabilities, such as your rent payment," said Kristen Ahlenius, a financial counselor at Your Money Line, which provides financial literacy training. "If someone's living paycheck to paycheck and their rent is taking up half of their paycheck and then their car payment takes the other, they have to choose. Unfortunately, income-driven repayment doesn't take that into consideration, but it is an option."

Student Debt Relief offers a calculator to help determine your discretionary income.

**WHAT IF I CAN'T AFFORD TO PAY EVEN WITH LOAN FORGIVENESS?**

Once payments resume, borrowers who can't pay risk delinquency and eventually default. That can hurt your credit rating and mean you're not eligible for additional aid.

If you're struggling to pay, check if you qualify for an income-driven repayment plan. You can find out more here.

The Biden plan also includes a proposal that would allow people with undergraduate loans to cap repayment at 5% of their monthly income. Proposals like this one can take a year or more to be implemented, and it's not clear what the fine print will be.

If you have worked for a government agency or a non-profit organization, you could also be eligible for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which you can read more about here.

## **Review: A friendship ends in 'The Banshees of Inisherin'**

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

What if, one day, your best friend decided that they didn't want to be friends anymore? Not because of something that happened like a fight or some offense. You didn't say something stupid while drunk. It's not anything that can be apologized for or mended. It's much worse than that. It's just you.

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Ask anyone it's happened to: Short of the death of a loved one, there are few things as devastating. Not even the end of a romantic relationship can quite compare. Those, we mostly understand, can come and go. But a friend who doesn't want to be around you anymore? It may sound like playground troubles, but whether it happens when you're 8 or 80, that's a wound that never really heals.

Yet it's also not a topic that's been widely explored in great plays, films and literature. Maybe that's part of the reason it's such a blow when it actually happens: The art wasn't there to warn us.

And who better to stare into this uncomfortable well than the great playwright Martin McDonagh? In "The Banshees of Inisherin" he and a small group of wonderful actors have sculpted an aching reverie about friendship and fulfillment that is one of the very best films of the year.

It's 1923 on a small island off the west coast of Ireland when we meet Colin Farrell's Pádraic, a happy and kindhearted fellow who is content with his life there living with his sister, the bookish Siobhan (a brilliantly sharp Kerry Condon), tending to his favorite donkey, Jenny, and meeting his best friend Colm (a quiet, soulful Brendan Gleeson) at the pub every day at 2 p.m. But on this day Pádraic's routine is upended when he knocks at Colm's window to go get their daily pint and Colm ignores him. As Pádraic will come to find, Colm has decided he just doesn't like him anymore and would like to spend the rest of his days doing anything but talking to him. For Pádraic, this is just the start of an agonizing spiral of self-doubt that turns into a nightmare and leaves no one unchanged.

Colm's decision, everyone agrees, is mean. Really, really mean. It's something you just don't do to a person, especially someone like Pádraic who values niceness above all else. But Colm has and isn't budging.

People also seem to agree that Pádraic and Colm always made an odd pairing. Pádraic is affable and kind and maybe a little dull. Colm is a more tortured soul, a musician and artist and reader who feels his own enlightenment is being stifled by boring chats. Mean, but also true, at least to Colm who in millennial speak has chosen boundaries and self-care at the expense of another's feelings.

"The Banshees of Inisherin" presents an impossible conundrum and there's no solution that will make everyone (or anyone) happy. It is a McDonagh joint after all, and Carter Burwell's melancholy score and Ben Davis's haunting cinematography add to the spiritual solemnness.

Farrell is as heartbreaking as he's ever been as Pádraic, who we watch in horror as he slips into a crueler version of himself. A sweet and tragic local boy, Dominic (a perfect Barry Keoghan role), steps in and for a minute looks like a glimmer of hope for Pádraic. He's also possibly repeating the cycle of how Pádraic and Colm became friends in the first place — some combination of proximity and lack of options on a small island.

This is the nature of life on an insular island and it's a problem for more than Colm. It's starting to gnaw at Siobhan as well.

The film may leave you shattered, but it'll also have you laughing, quoting lines in a bad Irish accent and thinking about your own life and relationships. At the start, it seems clear that Colm is the unreasonable one, but as the story progresses, you begin to accept and maybe even admire his resolve. Somewhere along the way you may find yourself just praying for Pádraic to accept it too and let Colm live in quiet peace.

"The Banshees of Inisherin" is a rich, soulful journey, full of agony, dry Irish wit and big, haunting questions. If it's answers you're looking for, however, you're not going to find them on Inisherin.

"The Banshees of Inisherin," a Searchlight Pictures release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "language throughout, some violent content and brief graphic nudity." Running time: 109 minutes. Four stars out of four.

## 'Bad situation': Soaring US dollar spreads pain worldwide

By PAUL WISEMAN, KELVIN CHAN, SAMY MAGDY and AYSE WIETING Associated Press

The cost of living in Cairo has soared so much that security guard Mustafa Gamal had to send his wife and year-old daughter to live with his parents in a village 70 miles south of the Egyptian capital to save money.

Gamal, 28, stayed behind, working two jobs, sharing an apartment with other young people and eliminat-

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ing meat from his diet. "The prices of everything have been doubled," he said. "There was no alternative."

Around the world, people are sharing Gamal's pain and frustration. An auto parts dealer in Nairobi, a seller of baby clothes in Istanbul and a wine importer in Manchester, England, have the same complaint: A surging U.S. dollar makes their local currencies weaker, contributing to skyrocketing prices for everyday goods and services. This is compounding financial distress at a time when families are already facing food and energy crunches tied to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"A strong dollar makes a bad situation worse in the rest of the world," says Eswar Prasad, a professor of trade policy at Cornell University. Many economists worry that the sharp rise of the dollar is increasing the likelihood of a global recession sometime next year.

The dollar is up 18% this year and last month hit a 20-year high, according to the benchmark ICE U.S. Dollar Index, which measures the dollar against a basket of key currencies.

The reasons for the dollar's rise are no mystery. To combat soaring U.S. inflation, the Federal Reserve has raised its benchmark short-term interest rate five times this year and is signaling more hikes are likely. That has led to higher rates on a wide range of U.S. government and corporate bonds, luring investors and driving up the U.S. currency.

Most other currencies are much weaker by comparison, especially in poor countries. The Indian rupee has dropped nearly 10% this year against the dollar, the Egyptian pound 20%, the Turkish lira an astounding 28%.

Celal Kaleli, 60, sells infant clothing and diaper bags in Istanbul. Because he needs more lira to buy imported zippers and liners priced in dollars, he has to raise prices for the Turkish customers who struggle to pay him in the much-diminished local currency.

"We're waiting for the new year," he said. "We'll look into our finances, and we'll downsize accordingly. There's nothing else we can do."

Rich countries aren't immune. In Europe, which was already teetering toward recession amid soaring energy prices, one euro is worth less than a \$1 for the first time in 20 years, and the British pound has plunged 18% from a year ago. The pound recently flirted with dollar parity after Britain's new prime minister, Liz Truss, announced huge tax cuts that roiled financial markets and led to the ouster of her Treasury secretary.

Ordinarily, countries could get some benefit from falling currencies because it makes their products cheaper and more competitive overseas. But at the moment, any gain from higher exports is muted because economic growth is sputtering almost everywhere.

A rising dollar is causing pain overseas in a number of ways:

- It makes other countries' imports more expensive, adding to existing inflationary pressures.
- It squeezes companies, consumers and governments that borrowed in dollars. That's because more local currency is needed to convert into dollars when making loan payments.
- It forces central banks in other countries to raise interest rates to try and prop up their currencies and keep money from fleeing their borders. But those higher rates also weaken economic growth and drive up unemployment.

Put simply: "The dollar's appreciation is bad news for the global economy," says Capital Economics' Ariane Curtis. "It is another reason why we expect the global economy to fall into recession next year."

In a gritty neighborhood of Nairobi known for fixing cars and selling auto parts, businesses are struggling and customers unhappy. With the Kenyan shilling down 6% this year, the cost of fuel and imported spare parts is soaring so much that some people are choosing to ditch their cars and take public transportation.

"This has been the worst," said Michael Gachie, purchasing manager with Shamas Auto Parts. "Customers are complaining a lot."

Gyrating currencies have caused economic pain around the world many times before. During the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s, for instance, Indonesian companies borrowed heavily in dollars during boom times — then were wiped out when the Indonesian rupiah crashed against the dollar. A few years earlier, a plunging peso delivered similar pain to Mexican businesses and consumers.

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The soaring dollar in 2022 is uniquely painful, however. It is adding to global inflationary pressures at a time when prices were already soaring. Disruptions to energy and agriculture markets caused by the Ukraine war magnified supply constraints stemming from the COVID-19 recession and recovery.

In Manila, Raymond Manaog, 29, who drives the colorful Philippine mini-bus known as a jeepney, complains that inflation — and especially the rising price of diesel — is forcing him to work more to get by.

“What we have to do to earn enough for our daily expenses,” he said. “If before we traveled our routes five times, now we do it six times.”

In the Indian capital New Delhi, Ravindra Mehta has thrived for decades as a broker for American almond and pistachio exporters. But a record drop in the rupee — on top of higher raw material and shipping costs — has made the nuts much costlier for Indian consumers.

In August, India imported 400 containers of almonds, down from 1,250 containers a year earlier, Mehta said.

“If the consumer is not buying, it affects the entire supply chain, including people like me,” he said.

Kingsland Drinks, one of the United Kingdom’s biggest wine bottlers, was already getting squeezed by higher costs for shipping containers, bottles, caps and energy. Now, the rocketing dollar is driving up the price of the wine it buys from vineyards in the United States — and even from Chile and Argentina, which like many countries rely on the dollar for global trade.

Kingsland has offset some of its currency costs by taking out contracts to buy dollars at a fixed price. But at some point, “those hedges run out and you have to reflect the reality of a weaker sterling against the U.S. dollar,” said Ed Baker, the company’s managing director.

Translation: Soon customers will just have to pay more for their wine.

## Are you a mosquito magnet? It could be your smell

By MADDIE BURAKOFF AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A new study finds that some people really are “mosquito magnets” and it probably has to do with the way they smell.

The researchers found that people who are most attractive to mosquitoes produce a lot of certain chemicals on their skin that are tied to smell. And bad news for mosquito magnets: The bloodsuckers stay loyal to their favorites over time.

“If you have high levels of this stuff on your skin, you’re going to be the one at the picnic getting all the bites,” said study author Leslie Vosshall, a neurobiologist at Rockefeller University in New York.

There’s a lot of folklore about who gets bitten more but many claims aren’t backed up with strong evidence, said Vosshall.

To put mosquito magnetism to the test, the researchers designed an experiment pitting people’s scents against each other, explained study author Maria Elena De Obaldia. Their findings were published Tuesday in the journal *Cell*.

They asked 64 volunteers from the university and nearby to wear nylon stockings around their forearms to pick up their skin smells. The stockings were put in separate traps at the end of a long tube, then dozens of mosquitos were released.

“They would basically swarm to the most attractive subjects,” De Obaldia said. “It became very obvious right away.”

Scientists held a round-robin tournament and ended up with a striking gap: The biggest mosquito magnet was around 100 times more attractive to the mosquitoes than the last place finisher.

The experiment used the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that spreads diseases like yellow fever, Zika and dengue. Vosshall said she’d expect similar results from other kinds, but would need more research to confirm.

By testing the same people over multiple years, the study showed that these big differences stick around, said Matt DeGennaro, a neurogeneticist at Florida International University who was not involved with the research.

“Mosquito magnets seem to remain mosquito magnets,” DeGennaro said.



Out of the favorites, the researchers found a common factor: Mosquito magnets had high levels of certain acids on their skin. These “greasy molecules” are part of the skin’s natural moisturizing layer, and people produce them in different amounts, Vosshall said. The healthy bacteria that live on the skin eat up these acids and produce part of our skin’s odor profile, she said.

You can’t get rid of these acids without damaging your skin health too, said Vosshall, who is paid by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and serves as its chief scientific officer. The institute also supports The Associated Press’ Health and Science Department.

But the research could help find new methods to repel mosquitoes, said Jeff Riffell, a neurobiologist at the University of Washington who was not involved with the study. There may be ways to tinker with skin bacteria and change humans’ tantalizing smells, he said.

Still, figuring out ways to fight off mosquitoes isn’t easy, Riffell said, since the critters have evolved to be “lean, mean biting machines.”

The study proved this point: Researchers also did the experiment with mosquitoes whose genes were edited to damage their sense of smell. The bugs still flocked to the same mosquito magnets.

“Mosquitoes are resilient,” Vosshall said. “They have many backup plans to be able to find us and bite us.”

## Mike Lee tries to distance himself from Trump in Utah debate

By SAM METZ Associated Press

OREM, Utah (AP) — Fending off attacks from his independent challenger, U.S. Sen. Mike Lee of Utah worked to distinguish himself from former President Donald Trump in a contentious debate Monday evening.

“I stood against my party time and time again to oppose reckless spending. I will do it again and again and again. We need people who say no,” the second-term Republican said.

Lee repeatedly pointed to his voting record and twice told the audience at Utah Valley University that he voted less in line with Trump than all but two Republican senators — Rand Paul and Susan Collins.

“To suggest that I’m beholden to either party, that I’ve been a bootlicker for either party is folly. And it’s contradicted by the plain facts,” Lee said.

Lee faces a challenge from Evan McMullin, a former Republican known most for his long-shot bid for president six years ago, when as an independent he won 21.5% of voters in Utah, including Lee. McMullin has remained a pillar of the anti-Trump movement, attacking the former president as an authoritarian who poses a threat to democracy.

Lee’s attempts to draw a distinction with Trump reflect the peculiar dynamics emerging in Utah this election cycle. In the red state’s marquee race, one candidate is running as an independent and the other is attempting to emphasize his independent streak.

The race has taken shape as one of the nation’s many referendums on the direction Trump has taken the GOP. McMullin is attempting to harness anti-Trump sentiment that has distinguished Utah from other Republican strongholds. Lee’s last minute efforts to put space between his voting record and Trump’s stances depart from his past messaging as Election Day nears.

“I don’t think he’s trying to distance himself from Trump. What I think he’s trying to do is draw that contrast,” Utah Republican Party Chair Carson Jorgensen said.

“He’s stood up for what he believed every time, even when it came to Trump,” he added.

Utah is a reliably Republican state, however its religion-infused politics are idiosyncratic. The majority of residents belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which places a high value on manners and eschews alcohol, pornography and foul language. Members of the faith lean Republican, yet polling has shown Trump commands less robust support among them than other prominent GOP politicians.

Trump failed to win support from a majority of Utah voters in 2016 and Joe Biden lost but performed better with Utah voters in 2020 than any Democrat since 1964.

Lee’s emphasis on his willingness to stray from Trump comes as McMullin attempts to paint him as one of the former president’s most loyal disciples. McMullin recently released an attack ad based on Lee’s 2020 remarks comparing Trump to Captain Moroni, a scriptural hero in the Book of Mormon.

Monday's debate was McMullin's first chance to directly confront Lee about the text messages he sent to Trump Chief of Staff Mark Meadows in the lead-up to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, which he's made a centerpiece of his campaign.

The texts show Lee, who Trump has endorsed in the race underway, asking for advice on how to contribute to efforts to challenge the 2020 election results. Lee has defended his actions by saying he merely intended to look into the legal arguments and rumors about swing states putting forth slates of fake electors, noting that he ultimately voted to certify the results.

On Monday, Lee demanded an apology from McMullin and said his version of events exhibited a "cavalier, reckless disregard for the truth."

Though the messages suggest Lee researched the legality of alternate elector slates in the lead-up to Jan. 6, Lee said they showed no evidence that he would have supported such a scheme. He said he wouldn't have and noted that he voted to certify the election results.

A raucous crowd made up mostly of Lee supporters jeered and booed when McMullin called Lee's actions "a travesty."

"Senator Lee, that was the most egregious betrayal of our nation's Constitution in its history by a U.S. Senator. I believe it will be your legacy," McMullin said, wagging his finger at Lee.

## 1st lease sale to be held for offshore wind on West Coast

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — The Biden administration will hold the first-ever lease sale for offshore wind energy on the West Coast, officials said Tuesday.

The Dec. 6 sale will target areas in the Pacific Ocean off central and northern California—the first U.S. auction for commercial-scale floating offshore wind energy development. The administration hailed the upcoming sale at a conference for offshore wind developers and experts in Providence, Rhode Island.

"We're not just committed to the country's transition to a clean energy economy, one that combats climate change, creates good-paying jobs and ensures economic opportunities are accessible to all. We're actually taking action and driving results," Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Director Amanda Lefton told the group.

The final sale notice for the auction will outline the details and lease terms for five areas off California, enough for 4.5 gigawatts of offshore wind to power more than 1.5 million homes and create thousands of new jobs, she said. The notice will include lease stipulations to promote a domestic supply chain and create union jobs.

Hundreds of offshore wind developers and experts gathered in Rhode Island to talk about the future of clean energy— how to grow the offshore wind industry and address shared challenges. The nation's first offshore wind farm opened off the coast of Rhode Island in late 2016. But with five turbines, it's not commercial scale.

JC Sandberg, the American Clean Power Association's interim CEO, said Lefton's "historic announcement" marks a significant milestone for offshore wind in the United States and on the West Coast.

President Joe Biden set a goal of deploying 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030 using traditional technology that secures wind turbines to the ocean floor, enough to power 10 million homes. The administration announced plans last month to develop floating platforms in the deep ocean for wind towers that could vastly expand offshore wind in the United States.

Biden hopes to deploy up to 15 gigawatts of electricity through floating sites by 2035, enough to power 5 million homes. The plan targets sites in the Pacific Ocean off the California and Oregon coasts, as well as in the Atlantic in the Gulf of Maine.

More than half of the nation's offshore wind resources are in waters too deep for bottom-fixed turbines, Lefton said. To date, BOEM has held 10 competitive lease sales and two commercial wind farms have been approved in the Atlantic Ocean.

Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee told conference attendees that ramping up offshore wind is good for the

environment but also good for the economy and “we’re going to make the most of it here in Rhode Island.” With the offshore wind power Rhode Island plans to add to the grid, the state could meet over 70% of its estimated electricity demand in 2030 with carbon-free energy, McKee said.

Molly Morris, the incoming president of Equinor Wind US, said the industry is at a critical point and she hopes developers and regulators will come together at the conference to figure out how to make the permitting process faster and more transparent, build up the supply chain and bolster the grid.

Equinor, based in Norway, is one of the few developers worldwide with experience in floating offshore wind. Morris said she’s “extremely enthusiastic” about the administration’s support for floating offshore wind since 15 gigawatts by 2035 is “quite an aggressive number in a relatively short period of time.” She said she’ll be closely evaluating the California opportunities.

## India-led alliance bats for diverse solar energy market

By SIBI ARASU Associated Press

BENGALURU, India (AP) — For countries to transition away from fossil fuels and toward cleaner energies like solar power, supply chains for components need to be more geographically diverse, officials said during a conference on solar energy in New Delhi said on Tuesday.

Currently, 75% of components needed for solar power are manufactured in China, according to a recent report by the International Energy Agency. Representatives at the fifth assembly of the International Solar Alliance, made up of 110 member countries, want that to change.

“By 2030, we expect that solar will be the cheapest source of electricity in most geographies,” said Ajay Mathur, director general of the ISA.

Adding that freight prices have spiked, Mathur urged for “multiple regions from which solar photovoltaic products can go from the producer to the supplier” to ensure that more nations benefit from the cheap prices of solar energy.

Launched by India and France at the 2015 Paris climate conference, the ISA aims to promote the use of solar energy as countries look to reduce their fossil fuel use to curb global warming. And although China has invested over \$50 billion in new solar supply capacity – ten times more than Europe – and created more than 300,000 manufacturing jobs, it is not part of the alliance.

“China’s policies have contributed to a cost decline of more than 80%, helping solar photovoltaics become the most affordable electricity generation technology in many parts of the world,” said senior International Energy Agency analyst Heymi Bahar. “However, they have also led to supply-demand imbalances.”

Bahar added that the global market is almost entirely reliant on China for solar products, with 15% of global supply coming from one Chinese plant alone, leading to concerns that the world is too reliant on a few, concentrated supply chains.

“This concentration has already resulted in prices increasing during the Covid-19 pandemic and extreme weather events” in China when exports were disrupted, Bahar said. “Diversification will result in a more secure supply chain.”

Industry experts say that a diversified supply chain can also increase employment, grow economies, encourage innovations, provide energy security as well as help countries achieve their climate goals.

“Right now, the jobs that are being created in countries like India are largely in the construction and installation side of things and not on the manufacturing side,” said Ulka Kelkar, who directs India’s climate policy analysis for the World Resource Institute. “To really benefit from the full potential of the job creation possibilities of solar manufacturing, it is important to diversify.”

India’s federal minister for power, RK Singh, told the conference on Tuesday that countries have “the responsibility of enabling development in the parts of the world that lack access to energy and energy security.”

The Indian federal government recently approved funding to the tune of \$2.6 billion for a production-linked incentive scheme that would encourage domestic solar module manufacturing. The U.S.’s Inflation Reduction Act also encourages domestic manufacturing of solar power components.

The solar energy market needs to grow tenfold by the end of the decade if global climate goals are to be met, according to both the ISA and the International Energy Agency.

The ISA's assembly, which runs until Wednesday, also announced programs that will encourage investments in solar energy in Africa as well as help start-ups in the solar energy space.

## Runners worldwide finish slain Raleigh mother's last run

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press/Report for America

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Just over 5 miles into her Thursday evening run along the familiar Neuse River Greenway, Raleigh mother of three Susan Karnatz was fatally shot by a 15-year-old boy whose shooting rampage killed five people, wounded two and frightened hundreds more in surrounding neighborhoods.

Her husband, Tom Karnatz, said she died 1.9 miles short of her 7-mile goal for that day. Now, runners across the globe are finishing the final leg of the run Karnatz never got to complete.

Organizing under the hashtag #RunforSue, hundreds of runners are sharing photos of their routes — often 1.9 miles (3 kilometers) to complete her run, 5.1 miles (8.2 kilometers) to mark the distance she covered or 7 miles (11.2 kilometers) to match her goal — on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to show the Karnatz family how many she inspired. Runners as far as Panama, Australia and Ireland have already dedicated their daily runs to her.

The teen who killed Karnatz and four others was arrested hours after the shooting, police said. He was hospitalized after his arrest and remains in critical condition.

The victims, ranging in age from 16 to their late 50s, died while going about their everyday routines, friends and authorities have said. Karnatz, 49, had just left home for a run down one of her favorite paths, her husband said.

A four-time Boston Marathon finisher and beloved member of several local running groups, Karnatz is remembered by her friends and family as "a beacon of strength," the "rock of her family" and "a role model" for fellow moms. She worked as a school psychologist before pausing to homeschool her three sons, ages 14, 13 and 10. The boys often joined their parents on short runs, which their friends described as a family affair.

"She was a very loving wife and amazing mother to our three sons," her husband told The Associated Press through tears when he answered his door Friday morning. "We're absolutely heartbroken and miss her dearly."

Under a basketball hoop in the family's driveway, a silver minivan and a Toyota Camry display matching 26.2 stickers — signifying the mileage of a marathon. The minivan's license plate reads simply: "RUNNR."

"We had plans together for big adventures," Tom Karnatz wrote in a Facebook post. "And plans together for the mundane days in between. ... Now those plans are laid to waste."

The #RunforSue posts — some from friends and many more from complete strangers — have been a bright spot in an otherwise devastating week.

"I'm amazed at all the support," Tom Karnatz wrote Sunday on Facebook after running 1.9 miles with his sons, niece and brother.

The Karnatzes met in 2004 at a gathering of the North Carolina Roadrunners Club and stayed involved with the organization for almost 20 years, said Jack Threadgill, the club president.

Just before Threadgill pinned on his red and white bib for Sunday's Bull City Race Fest, a half marathon in nearby Durham, the Cary resident grabbed a black marker and inscribed his bib with "SBK" for Susan Butler Karnatz.

He spent the weekend recalling fond memories of Karnatz, like when they ran with her kids in the club's February social run from one Snoopy's Hot Dogs to another.

"It's a Raleigh institution," he quipped — a momentary break from his somber tone.

The club will gather for a pre-planned race at the end of October, where members will have the chance to write condolence cards and donate to the family's charities of choice — an animal rescue and a children's literacy project. An annual memorial run will likely be organized.



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Karissa McDonough had been close friends with Karnatz for about six years, and the two ran the Boston Marathon together in 2019. After the shooting, the mother from Waterbury Center, Vermont, carefully explained the tragedy to her 14-year-old daughter Eireann before asking if she wanted to come along on a run to honor her late friend.

"Her eyes lit up and she was like, 'It's meaningful to Mom, so yes, for sure I want to do it,'" McDonough said.

Blasting "the ultimate pump-up song" — Metallica's "Master of Puppets" — out the car windows, Eireann strapped on her rollerblades and a skull helmet as her mom drove them to the trailhead. They made their way up the mountain to a ski resort, passing horseback riders and fellow runners before stopping to reflect at a covered bridge.

As a fellow mother of three, McDonough, 47, said she always looked to Karnatz as a role model. Even when they were far apart, Karnatz filled her days with laughter and constant encouragement after McDonough's husband died of an illness in January. Now, McDonough said she is devastated that Tom Karnatz and his sons will have to experience a similar pain.

"When I met her, it was like meeting myself," she said of her friend. "We became so close because we were living the same lives, just, you know, a thousand miles away."

Other runners, like Tom Blennerhassett of Kildare, Ireland, had never met Karnatz but paid tribute from afar. After seeing a friend in North Carolina, post about the shootings on Instagram, Blennerhassett said he realized "it really struck a chord." His community, he said, is still recovering from the killing earlier this year of a 23-year-old female primary school teacher who was out running along a canal.

Blennerhassett, who has been training for the upcoming Dublin Marathon, ran a 5.1-mile loop Sunday in Karnatz's honor along some busy roads and through open plains while listening to his soft rock playlist — complete with U2, Tom Petty and Bruce Springsteen songs.

"Both a mental and physical recovery run of sorts," he said. "It was nice to reflect about somebody like that losing their life so senselessly while just out for a run, the things that we take for granted every day."

## EU faces battle to keep energy prices from tanking economy

By RAF CASERT and SAMUEL PETREQUIN Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Union leaders enter a crucial stretch this week to make sure runaway energy prices and short supplies don't further tank their struggling economies and foment unrest. At the same time, they need to keep all 27 members united in their opposition to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Leading up to Thursday's start of a key summit, the European Commission, the bloc's executive branch, proposed a blueprint on Tuesday that needs to reconcile the yawning gap between those who want to impose a common gas price cap to keep prices down and those who think it would primarily keep out supplies, further starving industries and businesses.

Then, going into the weekend, EU leaders will seek a compromise during two days of talks, however hard that may be. As a sweetener, the European Commission also proposes to retarget some 40 billion euros in budget aid towards those most affected by the crisis.

European Council president and summit host Charles Michel told the 27 leaders in his invitation letter that there were three lines of action: reducing demand, ensuring security of supply and containing prices.

"Europe is facing its week of truth," Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo said. "This week it is hit or miss."

It didn't take long for EU member countries to realize that the bloc's dependence on Russian energy was a huge political error after Putin invaded neighboring Ukraine on Feb. 24 and natural gas prices skyrocketed. Amid sanctions imposed on Russia's energy sector, the wealthy bloc of 450 million has since been struggling to find ways to keep freezing temperatures from entering the homes of the poorest and businesses from going down for lack of affordable energy.

With nationalists and right-wing populists complaining ever more about the EU's common approach, the ability to find a joint exit strategy from the crisis could have a direct impact on the bloc's future.

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"The coming winter could freeze and shatter European sentiment — the shared sense of belonging, mutual trust among European countries, and citizens' emotional attachment to the idea of Europe," said Pawel Zerka of the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Even De Croo, leader of one of the most EU-embracing nations, knows there is no more time to waffle. "The time for excuses has gone. If the EU still wants to be meaningful, contain energy prices and better protect families and businesses in this energy war, it finally has to deliver," he said.

De Croo has been pushing hard in recent weeks to cap the cost of all gas imports to the EU, with other countries like Poland and Greece also increasing the pressure on the European Commission.

The body tried to find a common ground between juggernaut Germany, which doesn't back a full gas price cap, and other countries which are convinced such a cap won't lead to a decline of offer on the market.

The European Commission proposed a compromise that would allow for a temporary correction mechanism to kick in in exceptional circumstances, and the creation of a new LNG gas index better reflecting the market following the drastic reduction of imports of pipeline gas from Russia.

If any prodding was needed, the International Energy Agency did it early this month by saying that "Europe's security of gas supply is facing unprecedented risk as Russia intensifies its use of natural gas supplies as a political weapon."

Even if hoarding of gas supplies has gone full thrust ahead and reliance on Russian provisions has dwindled to less than 10 percent, dangers still lurks.

"The possibility of a complete cut-off in Russian gas deliveries cannot be dismissed ahead of the 2022/23 heating season — when the European gas system is at its most vulnerable," the IEA said.

And the energy crisis is ripping deep into the fabric of European society. The ETUC European trade union group said that wages adjusted for inflation have fallen in every EU member state this year by as much as 9%. Meanwhile, corporate profits continued to rise, sometimes by as much as 6.5 percent in Romania, it said.

"People are missing meals, having to scrap the leisure activities. And families have to choose between filling up their cars or turning on the heating," said Manon Aubry, an EU lawmaker from the Left group.

Against such a background of potential social foment, the EU leaders are in line to agree on a system to pool buying of gas to make sure member states stop bidding against one another to boost reserves and push up energy prices overall. Under the commission's proposal, natural gas arriving through the entry points from Russia would be excluded from the plan.

To get ready for possible shortages in the winter, the EU has already agreed to cut gas consumption by 15%. The European Commission also suggested Tuesday to bolster EU solidarity rules to make sure members can receive gas from the others in case of an emergency in exchange of a compensation.

To counter the threat of business failures and industrial decline, EU nations have independently started subsidizing threatened sectors, at the risk of skewing the market. If a wealthy member state can throw billions of euros at an industry while a poorer one has to scrape by and look on jealously, the concept of the EU's common market is under threat.

This is why Germany's 200 billion-euro plan to subsidize its industry to get through the next two winters has come under criticism by many. But then again, keeping Germany's wheels of industry going, could also benefit all. "Usually what is good for Germany is good for us," De Croo said.

## Small town in southern Mexico hosts thousands of migrants

By MARIA VERZA Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — As migrants, especially Venezuelans, struggle to come to terms with a new U.S. policy discouraging border crossings, one small town in southern Mexico is unexpectedly playing host to thousands of migrants camped far from the U.S. border.

San Pedro Tapanatepec had 7,000 migrants, about 75% Venezuelans, when The Associated Press visited at the beginning of October. By Monday, Mayor Humberto Parrazales estimated the number had grown to 14,000. The AP could not independently verify that figure.

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While many Venezuelans had planned to make their way to the U.S. border, the new U.S. policy says only those applying online, and arriving by air, will be admitted. Border crossers will simply be expelled. That leaves many camped out in five large tent shelters wondering what they'll do next.

They while away the sweltering day with just a few electric fans to cut the heat.

San Pedro Tapanatepec is obviously not where they wanted to wind up. The heat-drenched town in Oaxaca state is only about 180 miles (300 kilometers) from the border with Guatemala. Many of the migrants had thought they left Guatemala behind forever on the long trek that took many of them from the Darien Gap in Panama, through Central America to Mexico.

Since August, the town has served as a way station where migrants would wait for a few days while Mexican immigration authorities issued them a sort of transit pass that gave them time to make it to the U.S. border.

But Parrazales said the flow of that paperwork has slowed down, leaving many more migrants waiting here in an impoverished town ill-equipped to play host to so many people.

"I don't understand anything," Venezuelan migrant Robinson Rodríguez said by phone from Tapanatepec. "If everything at the border is closed, then they shouldn't be handing out these (transit) passes. And if you ask (the authorities), they say they don't know, but they keep handing them out."

Time is not on the migrants' side. Rodríguez had actually received a seven-day transit document, which basically required him to leave Mexico within a week. But he had to spend time raising the money to pay for transport to the northern border, and by the time he got it, his pass had expired.

Confusion reigns. Nicaraguan migrant Luis Martinica showed a leaflet containing the web link for Venezuelans to apply, but it was confusing; if he, as a Nicaraguan, showed up at the U.S. border, would he too be expelled?

Mayor Parrazales has his own set of worries. The town's transformers can no longer handle the electricity needed for the camp, and there have been partial blackouts. Health care, sanitation and water are also problems.

Still, migrants have to pay for most things, and Parrazales acknowledges the town has seen about \$15 million in extra business selling migrants food, places to sleep, medicine, taxi and bus rides. "They have to pay to charge cell phones," he notes.

Mexico has issued about 77,000 transit passes to Venezuelans so far this year, most of them in the last three months. Like Nicaraguans and Cubans, Venezuelans are hard to deport, both for Mexico and the United States.

Mexico's National Immigration Institute did not respond to requests by the AP about how the camp will be managed after the new U.S. program. In the face of the lack of official information, rumors and tensions run high.

Martinica, the Nicaraguan immigrant, says officials stopped issuing passes for a while "after a dispute in which some Venezuelans offended a police officer."

"There is a big lack of information," Parrazales said. "This is a pressure cooker I'm trying to contain here."

## What goes around comes around: Roller skating's retro appeal

By TRACEE M. HERBAUGH undefined

At a nondescript, basketball court in Waltham, Massachusetts, the leaves take on an autumnal glow and the air is crisp. But there are no pickup basketball players. This is now a spot for people who roller skate.

"I had my eye on skates for a while — I saw they were making a comeback," said Tammy Donroe Inman, 48, of Waltham, Massachusetts, who recently bought a pair of sparkly Impalas. She comes here every few days, turns on music, and skates.

"As an older skater, I thought I was going to be self-conscious, but I'm not," she said, wearing a helmet and knee pads. "I fall all the time but it's pure joy."

With its retro flair, roller skating has been enjoying a 2020s revival and shows no signs of receding.

That may be partly due to the pandemic, which drew more people to an accessible, social and physical

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activity that can be done outdoors. It's also part of a larger fashion and music throwback to the disco era of the '70s and '80s, the last time roller skating was so hot. In the 1990s, inline skates, a kind of roller skate, were all the rage, but their buzz had gotten quieter.

Now, there are roller skating pop-up rinks in parks and on roadways, and lots and lots of skates on social media. Skate meet-ups in large cities are common — outside the Louvre Museum in Paris, for instance, or in Venice Beach, California, where skaters have congregated for decades.

New York City's Rockefeller Center hosted a roller rink this summer for the first time since 1940, advertising that it was "bringing the magic of the 1970s with it."

And then there are all the celebrities on skates.

Country star Tyler Hubbard does laps under a disco ball in a video to the new song "Baby Gets Her Lovin'". Madonna took a spin around a pop-up rink in New York's Central Park at a disco celebration this summer.

R&B singer Usher's smooth skating videos pull in the views on TikTok and YouTube, while Joanna Gaines wore skates on the summer edition of her Magnolia magazine. Actors Ryan Gosling and Margot Robbie cruise up and down Venice Beach in neon-yellow inline skates as Ken and Barbie in next summer's "Barbie" movie.

The filmmakers behind a 2019 HBO documentary, "United Skates," about roller skating as a vibrant Black subculture, told The Associated Press then that they expected to be chronicling the end of an era. But they found the opposite. As one young Black skater told them, "Skating's not dead. It just went underground."

At Harlick Skates, a San Carlos, California-based skate-boot company started in 1933, fourth-generation owner Jason Kuhn said roller skate sales started to take off again in 2020.

"I started seeing the orders roll in," he said archly.

While roller skates used to be only 20% of Harlick's business, they're now more popular than ice skates. "It was hard to find workers. Not everyone knows how to do this kind of work," he said.

Many adult roller skaters haven't skated since they were children. This has sparked a boom in online classes.

Nicole Fiore, 30, of Orange County, California, teaches skills and choreography classes online and on YouTube. Her parents worked as roller skating instructors, and she's a four-time roller skating World Champion. She often missed school growing up because she was at competitions.

"I've never seen people roller skating in grocery store parking lots before, and suddenly they're here," she said. "I've been waiting for this moment my entire life."

A day of skating can be a killer workout. There are varied forms of roller skating, including competitive, speed, dancing and roller derby, a contact sport played between two teams.

Yet you don't need to be in top shape to start roller skating.

Dana Johnson, whose roller derby name is Val Kyrie, started participating in a local league seven years ago after getting a divorce. She picked up roller derby after seeing a match, even though she didn't consider herself athletic.

Kyrie, 35, of Minneapolis, is an engineer who now does public relations on the side for the Minnesota Roller Derby.

"Those skates are a great equalizer," she said. "It's all about how you use your body on those skates."

There are, of course, roller-skating influencers. Across all social-media platforms, you can find people posting roller-skating videos, tutorials and pretty pictures of skates.

Thirty-one-year-old Ana Coto lives in Los Angeles and goes by the social media handle @anaocto, an homage to the eight wheels on a roller skate. A 2020 TikTok video of her skating effortlessly to the Jennifer Lopez hit "Jenny From the Block" garnered 2.5 million likes and millions of views.

"There was no intention — just to feel good and feel happy, not to find something to put on TikTok," she said. "I started posting a skate journal, really for myself."

Then Coto saw that people were interested in watching her skate. An actress, she was contacted for appearances in a movie and has since appeared in the Dua Lipa music video "Levitating."

"It is funny. Skating has given me this little foothold in the industry that I never had before," she said.



## Here's how you can apply for student loan forgiveness

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Monday officially kicked off the application process for his student debt cancellation program, opening the door for millions of Americans to apply for up to \$20,000 in forgiveness. The Biden administration touts it as a simple, straightforward application that should only take about five minutes. Here's how to apply.

Go to [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) and in the section on student loan debt relief, click "Apply Now."

Be ready to type in some basic personal information. The form asks for: name, Social Security Number, date of birth, phone number and email address. It does not require documentation about your income or your student loans.

Next, review the eligibility rules and confirm that you're a match. For most people, that means attesting that they make less than \$125,000 a year or that their household makes less than \$250,000 a year. If you meet the eligibility rules, click the box confirming that everything you provided is true.

Click "Submit."

After the form is submitted, the Biden administration says it should take four to six weeks to process. The Education Department will use its existing records to make sure your loans are eligible and to look for applicants who might exceed the income limits. Some will be asked to provide additional documentation to prove their incomes. The Education Department estimates that the verification application will take about half an hour, including time to review and upload tax documents.

Most borrowers who apply before mid-November should expect to get their debt canceled before Jan. 1, when payments on federal student loans are scheduled to restart after a pause during the pandemic.

Things could get more complicated, depending on the outcomes of several legal challenges. The Biden administration faces a growing number of lawsuits attempting to block the program, including one filed by six Republican-led states. A federal judge in St. Louis is currently weighing the states' request for an injunction to halt the plan. Biden on Monday said he's confident that the suit will not upend the plan. "Our legal judgment is that it won't," he said, "but they're trying to stop it."

## Millions of cookies: MacKenzie Scott gives Girl Scouts \$85M

By THALIA BEATY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Philanthropist MacKenzie Scott donated \$84.5 million to Girl Scouts of the USA and 29 of its local branches, the 110-year-old organization said Tuesday, calling it a vote of confidence.

"Her support of our organization means honestly just as much as the donation," Sofia Chang, CEO of GSUSA, said in an interview.

It's the largest donation the Girl Scouts have received from an individual since their founding in 1912, she said. The funds will help the organization recover from the impact of the pandemic, which drove down membership. The Girl Scouts plan to support volunteers and staff, make camp properties more resistant to the impacts of climate change, improve science and technology education for youth members and develop diversity and inclusion programming to make their troops more accessible.

The Girl Scout council in Southern Arizona decided to use the \$1.4 million it received from Scott to elevate the work they are already doing rather than to start a new program or initiative, said its CEO Kristen Garcia-Hernandez.

"We are a small council and we're certainly not in a major metropolitan hub. So for us, gifts of this magnitude don't come around very often," Garcia-Hernandez said.

The gift accelerates their plan to hire more staff to reach most places in the seven counties they serve in under an hour and provide programming year-round. The council will also outfit a van as a mobile science and technology classroom, a project they have tried to fund for a year and a half. Many local funders seem to think that the Girl Scout's cookie sales cover their expenses, she said.

"While the cookie program sustains us certainly and it's wonderful and the girls are part of that process, which makes it even more beautiful, we certainly need more from the community," Garcia-Hernandez said.

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Philanthropic giving to organizations that specifically serve women and girls represents less than 2% of all donations, according to a research project of the Women's Philanthropy Institute at Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. The institute found that proportion has not changed significantly between 2012 and 2019, the years the study has tracked.

Tessa Skidmore, research associate at the institute, said major gifts from women like philanthropists Melinda French Gates, Sheryl Sandberg and Scott could inspire other donors.

"Those are the types of things that have the potential to change that number," she said.

The institute partnered with Pivotal Ventures, the investment firm founded by French Gates, and others to promote giving to women and girls on the International Day of the Girl, marked on Oct. 11 each year. It also shares its giving data in the hopes that donors or researchers will use it as one way to evaluate gender equity in donations.

Scott communicates infrequently about her giving, which has totaled around \$12 billion since 2019. She has donated large, unrestricted grants to many different kinds of organizations, though her gifts have had a special focus on racial equity. Scott also made a blockbuster \$275 million gift to the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its affiliates this year.

In September, Scott filed for divorce from her second husband, Dan Jewett, whose profile was also removed from website of The Giving Pledge, a group that asks billionaires to give more than half their wealth away in their lifetimes. The former couple had jointly written on the site last year about their intention to give away Scott's fortune, which largely comes from her divorce from Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.

Youth membership of the Girl Scouts fell dramatically during the pandemic, dropping nearly 30% from about 1.4 million in 2019-2020 to just over 1 million in 2021-2022. Chang acknowledged the drop but made the case that the organization's programs consistently help girls build confidence and tackle problems in their community.

"Our traditional way of supporting girls was really upended during the pandemic as troops couldn't really meet in person," Chang said. "So to build back stronger than we ever had before, we're really listening to our Girl Scouts, listening to their families and to our volunteers to really ensure that what comes next for us is truly impactful in this moment."

## Liz Truss' waning power brings political plots, and jokes

By JILL LAWLESS and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Powerless, humiliated, labeled a "ghost" prime minister and compared unfavorably to a head of lettuce — this is not a good week for Liz Truss.

Britain's prime minister was scrambling to recover her grasp on power Tuesday after her economic plans were ripped up and repudiated by a Treasury chief whom she was forced to appoint to avoid meltdown on the financial markets.

Truss remains in office, for now, largely because her Conservative Party is divided over how to replace her.

In a bid at business as usual, Truss held a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, where, her spokesman said, there was an "in-depth discussion" of the new economic plan, and no one asked her to resign.

Truss also met lawmakers from rival Conservative factions, arguing that keeping her in post can provide stability, even though she has had to ditch almost the entire prospectus on which she was elected party leader just six weeks ago.

Chastened but defiant, Truss acknowledged Monday that "mistakes were made" — but insisted she would lead the Conservatives into the next national election.

Few believe that. Britain's lively, partisan press is unusually united in the opinion that Truss is doomed. The Conservative-backing tabloid The Sun called her "a ghost PM" and said "for the sake of the country, we cannot go on like this." The left-leaning Guardian compared the Conservatives to a mutinous ship's crew, saying "Truss has not left her party. But it appears to have left her."

After The Economist said Truss' time in control of the government — before the Sept. 23 "mini-budget" that set the markets aflame — was "roughly the shelf-life of a lettuce," the tabloid Daily Star set up a

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livestream featuring a photo of the prime minister beside a head of iceberg, adorned with a blond wig, eyes and a mouth. It asks "Can Liz Truss outlast this lettuce?" — which, five days in, is gradually turning brown.

Truss initially tried to stay the course after her government's package of 45 billion pounds (\$50 billion) in unfunded tax cuts spooked the markets, pushing up government borrowing costs, raising home mortgage costs and sending the pound plummeting to an all-time low against the dollar. The Bank of England was forced to intervene to protect pension funds, which were squeezed by volatility in the bond market.

Under intense political and economic pressure, Truss last week fired her ally Kwasi Kwarteng as Treasury chief, replacing him with the Cabinet veteran Jeremy Hunt, who had been sidelined since 2019.

On Monday Hunt scrapped almost all of Truss' tax cuts, along with her flagship energy policy and her promise that there will be no public spending cuts, saying there are "many difficult decisions" to be made before he issues a medium-term fiscal plan on Oct. 31.

The market for British government bonds and the pound weakened Tuesday as relief over the government's about-face was tempered by the recognition that the new policies are likely to mean slower economic growth.

The pound fell 0.75% against the U.S. dollar to \$1.1273 in late morning trading in London, after jumping as much as 1.2% on Monday. Yields on 10-year government bonds rose to 4.081% after dropping to 3.973% on Monday. Bond yields, which represent the return investors receive on their money, rise as a borrower's creditworthiness decreases and decline when it improves.

"While one could argue that yesterday's measures have stabilized the public finances in the short term and pulled the U.K. back into the pack as far as market perceptions of fiscal responsibility is concerned, one must question at what price to the economy next year," said Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets UK.

With opinion polls giving the opposition Labour Party a large and growing lead, many Conservatives now believe their only hope of avoiding electoral oblivion is to replace Truss.

Under Conservative Party rules, Truss is safe from a leadership challenge for a year, but those rules can be changed if enough lawmakers want it. Some Conservative legislators also believe Truss can be forced to resign if the party can agree on a successor. But the many divisions in the party — whose factions range from hard-right Brexiteers to centrist "One Nation" Conservatives — makes that a challenge.

Truss' defeated leadership rival Rishi Sunak, House of Commons leader Penny Mordaunt and popular Defense Secretary Ben Wallace all have supporters, as does Hunt, who many see as the de facto prime minister already. Some even want the return of Boris Johnson, who was ousted in the summer after becoming enmeshed in ethics scandals.

A national election does not have to be held until 2024, and a few Conservatives say Truss should be given a second chance. But lawmaker Charles Walker said that if Truss led the party into the next election, "I think we'll be out (of power) for 15 years."

The chaos is unprecedented even for a country that has experienced plenty of political turbulence. Since the shock 2016 referendum vote to leave the European Union, Britain has seen years of bitter wrangling with the EU, two general elections and three prime ministers.

"British politics and economics is convulsed from time to time, as many countries are," said Tony Travers, visiting professor in the Department of Government at the London School of Economics. "But the two coming together — where a political crisis effectively causes an economic one, which then the government has to try to bail itself out from — I think it's pretty well without parallel."

## Today in History: October 19, Lord Cornwallis surrenders

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 19, the 292nd day of 2022. There are 73 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 19, 2001, U.S. special forces began operations on the ground in Afghanistan, opening a signifi-

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cant new phase of the assault against the Taliban and al-Qaida.

On this date:

In 1781, British troops under Gen. Lord Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia, as the American Revolution neared its end.

In 1814, the first documented public performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner" took place at the Holiday Street Theater in Baltimore.

In 1944, the U.S. Navy began accepting Black women into WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service).

In 1950, during the Korean Conflict, United Nations forces entered the North Korean capital of Pyongyang.

In 1953, the Ray Bradbury novel "Fahrenheit 451," set in a dystopian future where books are banned and burned by the government, was first published by Ballantine Books.

In 1960, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was arrested during a sit-down protest at a lunch counter in Atlanta. (Sent to prison for a parole violation over a traffic offense, King was released after three days following an appeal by Robert F. Kennedy.)

In 1977, the supersonic Concorde made its first landing in New York City.

In 1987, the stock market crashed as the Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged 508 points, or 22.6 percent in value (its biggest daily percentage loss), to close at 1,738.74 in what came to be known as "Black Monday."

In 1990, Kevin Costner's Western epic "Dances with Wolves" had its world premiere in Washington, D.C.

In 2003, Pope John Paul II beatified Mother Teresa during a ceremony in St. Peter's Square.

In 2010, the Pentagon directed the military to accept openly gay recruits for the first time in the nation's history.

In 2016, in the third and final 2016 presidential debate, Republican Donald Trump stunned the forum in Las Vegas by refusing to say he would accept the results of the election if he were to lose; Democrat Hillary Clinton declared Trump's resistance "horrifying."

Ten years ago: The Dow Jones industrial average had its worst day in four months, sinking 205.43 points, or 1.5 percent, to close at 13,343.51.

Five years ago: Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello, meeting with President Donald Trump at the White House about a month after Hurricane Maria, described the situation in the island territory as "catastrophic"; Trump rated the White House response to the disaster as a "10." Counter-demonstrators greatly outnumbered supporters of white nationalist Richard Spencer, drowning him out as he spoke at the University of Florida. The Los Angeles Dodgers beat the Chicago Cubs 11-1 to reach the World Series for the first time in almost three decades.

One year ago: A House committee investigating the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection voted unanimously to hold former White House aide Steve Bannon in contempt of Congress after the longtime ally of former President Donald Trump defied a subpoena for documents and testimony. A federal grand jury indicted U.S. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry of Nebraska, accusing him of lying to the FBI and concealing information from federal agents who were investigating campaign contributions funneled to him from a Nigerian billionaire. (Fortenberry was convicted in March 2022; he resigned two days later.) The U.S. Supreme Court declined to block a vaccine requirement imposed on Maine health care workers, the latest defeat for opponents of vaccine mandates.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Tony Lo Bianco is 86. Artist Peter Max is 85. Author and critic Renata Adler is 85. Actor Michael Gambon is 82. Actor John Lithgow (LIHTH'-goh) is 77. Feminist activist Patricia Ireland is 77. Singer Jeannie C. Riley is 77. Rock singer-musician Patrick Simmons (The Doobie Brothers) is 74. Actor Annie Golden is 71. Talk show host Charlie Chase is 70. Rock singer-musician Karl Wallinger (World Party) is 65. Former Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele is 64. Singer Jennifer Holiday is 62. Retired boxer Evander Holyfield is 60. Host Ty Pennington (TV: "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition") is 58. Rock singer-musician Todd Park Mohr (Big Head Todd and the Monsters) is 57. Actor Jon Favreau is 56. Amy Carter is 55. "South Park" co-creator Trey Parker is 53. Comedian Chris Kattan is 52.



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Rock singer Pras Michel (The Fugees) is 50. Actor Omar Gooding is 46. Country singer Cyndi Thomson is 46. Writer-director Jason Reitman is 45. Actor Benjamin Salisbury is 42. Actor Gillian Jacobs is 40. Actor Rebecca Ferguson is 39. Rock singer Zac Barnett (American Authors) is 36. Singer-actor Ciara Renee (TV: "Legends of Tomorrow") is 32. Actor Hunter King is 29.