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#### "THE HAPPIEST PEOPLE DON'T NECESSARILY HAVE THE BEST OF EVERYTHING. THEY JUST MAKE THE BEST OF EVERYTHING."



#### **Groton Community Calendar** Friday, Oct. 28

Senior Menu: Chicken alfredo, broccoli, spinach salad, mandarin oranges, whole wheat bread. School Breakfast: Biscuits and jelly. School Lunch: Cheese bread sticks with marinara.

#### Saturday, Oct. 29

UMC: Charge Conference in Groton, 6:30 p.m. Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

#### Sunday, Oct. 30

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:45 a.m.

St. John's worship, 9 a.m.; Zion Lutheran worship, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, Milestones for JK and K, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

UMC: Conde Worship, 8:30 a.m.; coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School after children's sermon during worship.

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

#### Monday, Oct. 31

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, corn, chocolate cake, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Chicken legs, mashed potatoes. Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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

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

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#### Tollifson interns at St. John's Pre-School



Marlee Tollifson, daughter of Deb and Travis Kurth and Matt and Lana Tollifson, is working as an intern at St. John's Pre-School in Groton. "I just love working here with these little kids!" Tollifson smiled.

"Being around these little enthusiastic children is worth it every day I'm here," she explained. "They make me smile and feel good just by being around them."

"Although working with pre-school children can be fun, it is also challenging," Tollifson admitted. "I've found the hardest things to do are teaching them how to do simple things, like holding a scissors to cut paper."

"Making connections with these little ones is the easiest part of this job," she stated. "They really love to listen to me read stories to them. They seem to like being around me as much I like being here."

"I am a member of the Groton High School dance team and enjoy performing at the games," Tollifson said. "I'm also a member of FCCLA."

"After I graduate from high school, I first plan to attend Lake Area Technical College in Watertown to become a cosmetologist," she explained. "After I've finished that, I next want to attend Stewart's in Sioux Falls to learn massage therapy too."

- Dorene Nelson

#### Garcia interns in 1st grade room



Nia Garcia, the daughter of Anthony and Melissa Garcia, is working as an intern in Mrs. Emily Eichler's 1st grade classroom. "The kids were all looking forward to today since they could wear their pajamas to school as part of dress-up days for homecoming," Garica smiled.

"As an intern, I help teach the 'number' of the day as well as helping individual students with their math papers and finishing their homework," she explained.

"The hardest part of this job is trying to be patient with the children, especially since the students could be on different levels," Garcia said. "It is so easy to assume that all children learn at the same pace and level!"

"The best part of being an intern in first grade is being around these little kids," she stated. "I love working with them and expect to have a lot of contact with children after I graduate from high school."

"I plan to become a pediatric doctor, majoring in human science and biology," Garcia listed. "My daily contact with these first graders will help me learn how to relate to the children under my care."

"To receive this kind of a degree, I'm planning to attend Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science in Rochester, MN," she explained.

"Here in Groton I am a cheerleader for football, and both boys and girls basketball," Garcia stated.

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The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column --"We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



### Presidents and Former Presidents are Subject to Subpoenas

The 1807 treason trial of Aaron Burr, lost in the mists of early American legal history, stirs, at most, only faint recollections among members of the Bar, let alone the general public. But Chief Justice John Marshall's landmark ruling that the president is required to obey subpoenas represents a principle that is fundamental to American Constitutionalism and the rule of law.

**By David Adler** 

Marshall's ruling is a grand reminder of the resonance--in the fanatical politics of our time--of the American ideal that all men are equal in the eyes of the law. The principle that the president is subject to the rule of law was succinctly stated by James Wilson, one of the heavyweights in the Constitutional Convention and a

Supreme Court Justice at the dawn of the republic: "Not a single privilege is annexed to his character; far from being above the laws, he is amenable to them in his private character as a citizen, and in his public character by impeachment." It hardly needs to be mentioned that the law applies equally to sitting and former presidents alike.

At the time of his trial, the disgraced former vice-president of the United States had few allies. He had been shunned by fellow Jeffersonian Republicans for opportunistically opposing the leader of their party, Thomas Jefferson, during the House of Representatives' presidential runoff in the 1800 presidential election. And he was exiled by Federalists for killing Alexander Hamilton in their famous duel in 1804.

A grand jury indicted Burr on the charge of treason for instigating war against Spain. The indictment against Burr focused on his activities at Blennerhasset's Island in the Ohio River on December 10, 1806.

Chief Justice Marshall presided at the trial since his duties as a Supreme Court Justice included assignment as a federal judge for the U.S. Circuit for Virginia. Marshall instructed the jury on the meaning of the Treason Clause—Article III, Section 3—of the Constitution, which provided, "Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort. No person shall be convicted of treason unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act, or on confession in open court."

The government's case against Burr was weak. The prosecution offered no evidence that Burr had instigated war against Spain, and it produced not a single witness, let alone two, to testify that Burr had engaged in an overt act of levying war against the United States. Burr was acquitted on all charges.

At trial, Burr's stellar defense team, which included Luther Martin and John Randolph, both delegates to the Constitutional Convention, asked Chief Justice Marshall to subpoen President Jefferson to testify and submit letters that it believed would exonerate Burr. Jefferson replied that personal attendance at

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a trial would interfere with his duties as president, particularly if he could be hauled to far-off St. Louis, to one court after another. But he offered to testify by deposition, if Burr should "suppose there are any facts within the knowledge of the heads of departments or of myself to give him the benefit of it."

Jefferson's plea rested on a serious administrative inconvenience, not a claim of immunity from judicial process. Indeed, Jefferson's attorney made no such claim. As Marshall stated, "the attorney for the United States avowed his opinion that a general subpoena might issue to the president."

Marshall left no doubts on this score. "In the provisions of the constitution, and of the statutes, which give the accused the right to compulsory process of the courts, there is no exception whatever." He rejected the practice in England of protecting the King from testimony on grounds that it was incompatible "with his dignity," because the "principle of the English constitution that the king can do no wrong" was inapplicable to our Constitution, under which, "the president may be impeached and removed from office." Marshall emphasized that "the president may be subpoenaed and examined as a witness, and required to produce any paper in his possession, is not controverted."

Marshall acknowledged that a president might have "sufficient motives for declining a particular paper," but the court would be the final authority on any presidential claim to withhold documents. In the end, the importance to the defense of the disclosure of a document would override presidential refusal to disclose.

Chief Justice Marshall was intent on placing beyond doubt that a subpoena could reach the president. His opinion reflected the conventional view of his time, and even Jeffersonian Republicans agreed. Jefferson, moreover, as an apostle of democracy, was not about to place the executive above the law.

To the end of his life, Marshall considered the Burr trial the most unpleasant experience in his 35 years on the bench. Like many, he was repulsed by Burr's cynicism and opportunism, particularly after the death of Hamilton, but he took pride in affirming the subordination of the president to the rule of law. The equivalent treatment before the law of presidents and ordinary citizens, he believed, breathed life into the text of the Constitution and the most deeply held principles and values of the republic that he fought to preserve.

David Adler is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality and civic education. This column is made possible with the support of the South Dakota Humanities Council, South Dakota Newspaper Association and this newspaper.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Saturday

Saturday Night

Sunday







Mostly Sunny

Mostly Cloudy



Sunny

then Sunny

Patchy Fog

Partly Cloudy

High: 64 °F

Low: 37 °F

High: 60 °F

Low: 34 °F

High: 62 °F



Southwesterly winds will keep temperatures 10-15 degrees above average today and some areas could see some slightly cooler temperatures Saturday as a weak trough passes over the region. The forecast for Halloween night looks very favorable with temperatures close to 50 during peak Trick-or-Treating time, with a little bit of a breeze.

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#### Yesterday's Groton Weather High Temp: 55 °F at 3:33 PM

Low Temp: 43 °F at 11:57 PM Wind: 29 mph at 12:38 PM Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 10 hours, 22 minutes

**Today's Info** Record High: 82 in 1937

Record High: 82 in 1937 Record Low: -6 in 1919 Average High: 52°F Average Low: 28°F Average Precip in Oct.: 1.99 Precip to date in Oct.: 0.45 Average Precip to date: 20.32 Precip Year to Date: 16.50 Sunset Tonight: 6:27:14 PM Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:06:28 AM



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#### **Today in Weather History**

October 28, 1989: The season's first snowfall brought much-needed moisture to the Black Hills and portions of western South Dakota as up to nearly a foot of snow fell in the higher elevations. The storms caused motorists some problems. A build-up of ice and slush in combination with blowing snow prompted the State Highway Patrol to close the portion of Interstate-90 from Rapid City to Wall. Numerous multiple vehicle accidents were reported.

October 28, 1993: Very strong northwest winds gusting to 50 to 60 mph raked South Dakota. A new home under construction southwest of DeSmet collapsed in the winds. Reported peak winds included 56 mph at Huron, 55 mph at Rapid City, and 52 mph at Sioux Falls.

1846: In the spring of 1846, a group of nearly 90 emigrants left Springfield, Illinois, and headed west to California. The Donner party arrived at the Great Salt Lake and still needed to cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains late in the season. On this day, a heavy snowfall blocked the pass, thus trapping the emigrants. Only 45 of the original 89 emigrants reached California the following year.

1936 - The temperature at Layton, NJ, dipped to 9 above zero to establish a state record for the month of October. (The Weather Channel)

1971 - A severe early season blizzard raged across the Plateau Region and Rocky Mountain Region. Heavy snow blocked railroads and interstate highways, and record cold accompanied the storm. Lander WY received 27 inches of snow, and the temperature at Big Piney WY plunged to 15 degrees below zero. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms over the San Joaquin Valley of California produced three-quarters of an inch of rain in thirty minutes at Placerville, and caused numerous power outages due to lightning. Rain began to diminish in the northeastern U.S., but some flooding continued in Vermont, eastern New York and northern New Jersey. One inch rains in Vermont clogged culverts and sewers with fallen leaves, resulting in erosion of dirt roads. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Arctic cold invaded the north central U.S. Valentine, NE, dipped to 8 degrees, and Cutbank, MT, reported a morning low of one degree above zero. The temperature at Estes Park CO dipped to 15 degrees, but then soared thirty degrees in less than thirty minutes. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - A storm crossing the western U.S. produced 10 to 20 inches of snow across northern and central Wyoming, with 22 inches reported at Burgess Junction. Seven cities in the Lower Ohio Valley and the Upper Great Lakes Region reported record high temperatures for the date as readings again warmed into the 70s. Alpena MI reported a record high of 75 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1999: A Super Typhoon, known as Cyclone 05B reached the equivalent of the Category 5 hurricane on this day. This storm is the strongest tropical cyclone ever record in the North Indian Ocean. Cyclone 05B hit the Indian State of Odisha near the city of Bhubaneswar on October 29. An estimated 10,000 individuals would die from this cyclone, and 1.67 million people were left homeless.



# Seeds of Hope

#### **PASS IT ON!**

It was just before noon when Joseph walked into my office. His clothes were dirty and wrinkled. He must have been cold from the driving rain and winter wind.

"I know I look nasty," he said. "I've been sleeping in a barn for the past three nights. There's no heat, and it's been hard to stay warm. Mind if I sit in your chair over in the corner? It really looks comfortable."

"This soft drink is all I've had for two days. I'm a diabetic and need to eat but I'm drinking this drink as slowly as I can until I find someone who can help me. I was thrown out of my home Christmas Day because I couldn't pay the rent. Do you have any money you can give me? I'll have some by Friday and can pay you back then."

Our offices are located on a state highway, and many folks like Joseph stop by daily. Cal stopped by Monday. His mother, along with his two-month-old daughter, was killed by a drunk driver the day before. He was on his way to Florida to make funeral arrangements before he deployed to Iraq with his Marine unit. He did not ask for anything except prayer. "I saw your Chapel," he said, "and I knew I could find someone here who could pray for me. That's really all I need."

It is difficult to remember a day when no one has stopped by for help. Their stories are compelling, often even heart-breaking. Occasionally they are untrue. In the end, however, they answer to God for what they do. "He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker."

Prayer: Help us, Father, to help those who are poor and in need. You've sent them our way for a reason. May we show Your love, mercy, and grace to those in need. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker. Proverbs 17:5a



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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Ope Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition         Subscription Form         All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax         Black & White         State         Colored         \$79.88/year         Colored         \$42.60/6 months         E-Weekly*         * The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.	Groton Daily Independent www.397news.com Subscription Form This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives. <ul> <li>1 Month</li></ul>
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### News from the Associated Press

### **Thursday's Scores**

The Associated Press PREP FOOTBALL= Class 11AAA= Quarterfinal= Harrisburg 42, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 12 Sioux Falls Jefferson 42, Sioux Falls Washington 7 Sioux Falls Lincoln 42, Brandon Valley 17 Sioux Falls O'Gorman 29, Rapid City Stevens 20 Class 11AA= Ouarterfinal= Aberdeen Central 34, Spearfish 7 Pierre 42, Sturgis Brown 14 Tea Area 41, Watertown 0 Yankton 49, Brookings 14 Class 11A= Quarterfinal= Beresford 24, Canton 8 Dell Rapids 41, Lennox 7 Sioux Falls Christian 41, Dakota Valley 14 West Central 35, Madison 6 Class 11B= Quarterfinal= Elk Point-Jefferson 42, Redfield 0 Hot Springs 28, Aberdeen Roncalli 0 McCook Central/Montrose 38, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 6 Winner 32, Deuel 8 Class 9AA= Ouarterfinal= Elkton-Lake Benton 52, Freeman/ Marion/ Freeman Academy Co-op 14 Hamlin 26, Hanson 20, OT Parkston 34, Howard 7 Wall 20, Bon Homme 12 Class 9A= Ouarterfinal= Gregory 34, Wolsey-Wessington 19 Harding County/Bison Co-op 20, Philip 15 Lyman 34, Castlewood 16 Warner 48, Canistota 31 Class 9B= Quarterfinal= DeSmet 20, Kadoka Area 8 Herreid/Selby Area 44, Avon 14 Hitchcock-Tulare 52, Dell Rapids St. Mary 0 Irene-Wakonda 36, Sully Buttes 30 Some high school football scores provided by Scorestream.com, https://scorestream.com/

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#### **Republican wave tested by competitive Senate race in Ohio** By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

GROVEPORT, Ohio (AP) — Ruth and Boyd Boone are longtime Ohio Republican voters, eager to reelect their GOP governor. But when it comes to the Senate, they're not so sure.

Both are skeptical of JD Vance, the venture capitalist and author-turned-first time candidate who won the Republican nomination with former President Donald Trump's backing.

"I don't like him at all," said Boyd, 80, who owns a farm outside of Ashville. "I don't think he gives a blank about Ohio. I think he just thinks he's going to be the senator."

Both he and Ruth, 77, also said they like what they hear from Democrat Tim Ryan, the 10-term congressman running against Vance as a moderate — though they also have their reservations, including about his support for abortion rights.

"It's going to be right down to the wire," said Ruth of her decision, even as she picked up a yard sign for another Republican, Secretary of State Frank LaRose, from canvassers in a Kroger parking lot.

That ambivalence underscores a surprising dynamic in Ohio, where Vance is hoping to ride to Washington on a wave of national discontent with Democrats. Less than two weeks before Election Day, the race is more competitive than initially expected. While Vance may still win in a state that Trump carried by 8 percentage points twice, most polls show Vance and Ryan roughly tied, even as incumbent Republican Gov. Mike DeWine leads his Democratic rival by double digits.

Campaigning recently in a red and white windbreaker and sneakers, Ryan stressed his working class roots and cast Vance as an outsider and "extremist" more interested in notching a title than serving Ohioans. But the Democrat's blue collar campaign sometimes sounds like a broadside against his own party.

"We have got to get this country back focused on the stress that working people are under every single day," he said at a union hall in Niles, where he grew up, peppering his speech with profanities. "I don't give a s—- who you voted for," he told the room of Democratic activists and union organizers.

Indeed, Ryan sometimes sounds less like a candidate for Senate than a doomsday prophet warning national Democrats that they are on the precipice of disaster if they abandon the working class voters who were once the heart of the party's base.

"We will not be a national party unless we have the working class back on our side and that's what this election is all about," Ryan said, his voice straining as he stood flanked by labor leaders at P.J. McIntyre's Irish pub in Cleveland later that afternoon.

It's a message that has resonated with voters like Christine Varwig, 54, a Toledo school board member who said that Ryan speaks her "language."

"He gets us," Varwig said at a backyard union gathering in Toledo, where Ryan, a former quarterback, tossed around a football, sipped beer and played tug-of war. (He lost but won a re-match.) "When he talks about his grandfather, it reminds me of my own grandparents, and so we can relate."

But across the state, it was clear what Ryan is up against. On a recent weekday morning at 9 a.m., the Thirsty Cowboy bar in Republican stronghold Medina was packed with several hundred Vance supporters, fired up and angry, with cups of Dunkin' Donuts coffee in hand.

"I think people are fed up," Vance said as he railed against high grocery bills, rising gas prices and a porous border and blamed the country's woes on failed leadership in Washington.

After sparking concern within the GOP for largely disappearing from the campaign trail over the summer, Vance has crossed the state with conservative firebrands including Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and Donald Trump. Jr. At events, he talks about being raised by his grandparents as his mother struggled with opioid addiction — a story he turned into the best-selling memoir-turned movie "Hillbilly Elegy." And he revs up his crowds by lacing into Ryan, painting the congressman as a "complete fraud" who has tried to sell himself as a moderate but votes with President Joe Biden — a theme Republicans have hit hard in ads.

"My message is pretty clear: Tim Ryan has been in office for 20 years, ladies and gentlemen, he's had his chance. Let's send him back to Youngstown and force him to get a real job," Vance said as he campaigned later that afternoon with Cruz outside the Spread Eagle Tavern in Hanoverton, where several hundred people had gathered on a crisp fall afternoon next to several hulking tractors.

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The crowd included Lettie Davis, 63, who works at a local car dealership, where a life-size cardboard cutout of Trump greets customers but where business has suffered from supply chain issues and soaring interest rates.

"We love him," she said of Vance. "He's down to earth, which I really like. And he has a lot to offer from his past, with his mom and all that. So he's like the rest of us."

"For a first-time candidate, he's doing well," said Steven Clifford, 68, a longtime Republican from Stark County.

Trump's decision to endorse Vance, despite years of Vance's criticism, helped the novice candidate seal the nomination in a competitive GOP primary. That turned him into one of Trump's earliest success stories, helping the defeated president cement his status as a GOP kingmaker. But it also sparked fierce local backlash from supporters of rival candidates, who urged Trump to reconsider.

East Palestine's Peggy Caratelli, 64, who initially backed Vance rival Josh Mandel, said it took her some time to come around to Trump's decision. But now she is fully onboard.

"So some of us were not very happy about (the endorsement.) But we figure Trump is smarter than we are. So there is a reason," she said. "You know, (Vance) was an anti-Trumper. But he was very quick to explain why he felt that way and why he changed his mind."

"I think he's seen the error of his ways. We forgive him," added Don Ridge, 65, from Winona, who said he sees similarities between Trump and Vance.

Ryan, in an interview after a long day of campaigning, said he was confident he would ultimately prevail, in part by winning over the kinds of Republicans and independents in the state who have long backed party moderates like DeWine and retiring Sen. Rob Portman but have soured on Trump's brand. He's hoping some DeWine voters will split their tickets and cast their ballots for him, too.

"They like the fact that I'm running as an independent-minded guy who's willing to take on his own party," he said of voters.

Vance is publicly dismissive of his opponent's chances.

"I think the media has constantly tried to tell a story that Tim Ryan is somehow keeping this race close. In reality, I think we're going to win and I think we're going to win pretty convincingly," he said in an interview.

Through it all, Ryan has been largely ignored by the national Democratic Party as groups focus on defending vulnerable incumbents and flipping other Republican-held seats, even as Republicans have been pouring money into Ohio for attack ads against Ryan. That includes \$28 million from the Mitch McConnellaffiliated Senate Leadership Fund from Labor Day through the election, and \$2.4 million from Trump's MAGA Inc. Super PAC, which is expected to continue spending in the state.

Ryan has his own robust fundraising operation and has actually outraised Vance. But the decision by the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee not to invest more in the race to date has left some Democrats fuming.

"If he ends up losing by a point or two, that's on them, 100%," said Chris Monaghan, 51, who works with sheet metal workers in Toledo.

"I personally think it's shameful. ... We are so close," said Varwig, the school board member who also works as an office manager at the Lucas County Democratic Party. She said that every day she meets Republicans who walk into the office and ask for Ryan signs.

"That says something," she said. "They are completely turned off by Vance, completely turned off. The Republicans that I've talked to, they are sick of the Trump-Vance messaging."

But nationally, both parties sense that the dynamics are trending in Republicans' favor. And the GOP is relying on voters like Kimberly Kell, 61, a software engineer from Groveport who was hoping to retire this year but has put off her plans because of her battered retirement savings.

Kell hasn't been following local politics or the Senate race, but plans to vote Republican because she's angry at Biden.

"The only thing I really follow is listening to the presidential stuff, which I could just choke on," she said. She plans to vote, "all Republican, down the board."

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#### Musk in control of Twitter but where will he go from here?

By BARBARA ORTUTAY, TOM KRISHER and MATT O'BRIEN AP Business Writers

Elon Musk has taken control of Twitter after a protracted legal battle and months of uncertainty. The question now is what the billionaire Tesla CEO will actually do with the social media platform.

Musk ousted three top Twitter executives on Thursday, according to two people familiar with the deal who said he was in charge. Such a shakeup was widely expected, but Musk has otherwise made contradictory statements about his vision for the company — and shared few concrete plans for how he will run it.

The people wouldn't say if all the paperwork for the deal, originally valued at \$44 billion, had been signed or if the deal had closed. A Delaware judge had ordered that the deal be finalized by Friday.

Late Thursday, Musk tweeted, "the bird has been freed," a reference to Twitter's logo.

Twitter's users, advertisers and employees are parsing Musk's every move in an effort to guess where he might take the company — but the mercurial tech executive has not made the job easy.

He has criticized Twitter's dependence on advertisers, but made a statement Thursday that seemed aimed at soothing their fears. He has complained about restrictions on speech on the platform — but then vowed he wouldn't let it become a "hellscape." And for months it wasn't even clear if he wanted to control the company at all.

After Musk signed a deal to acquire Twitter in April, he tried to back out of it, leading the company to sue him to force him to go through with the acquisition.

Friday's deadline to close the deal was ordered by the Delaware Chancery Court in early October. The New York Stock Exchange notified investors that it will suspend trading in shares of Twitter before the opening bell Friday in anticipation of the company going private under Musk.

Musk has been signaling more recently that the deal is going through. He strolled into the company's San Francisco headquarters Wednesday carrying a porcelain sink, changed his Twitter profile to "Chief Twit," and tweeted "Entering Twitter HQ — let that sink in!"

The people familiar with the deal said Musk has fired CEO Parag Agrawal, CFO Ned Segal and Chief Legal Counsel Vijaya Gadde. Both people insisted on anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the deal.

Musk privately clashed with Agrawal in April, immediately before deciding to make a bid for the company, according to text messages later revealed in court filings.

Around the same time, he publicly criticized Gadde, the company's top lawyer, in a series of tweets. A wave of harassment of Gadde from other Twitter accounts followed, including racist and misogynistic attacks, in addition to calls for Musk to get rid of her. After she was fired, the harassment on the platform began again.

In his first big move earlier on Thursday, Musk said that he is buying the platform to help humanity and doesn't want it to become a "free-for-all hellscape."

The message appeared to be aimed at addressing concerns among advertisers — Twitter's chief source of revenue — that Musk's plans to promote free speech by cutting back on moderating content will open the floodgates to more online toxicity and drive away users.

"The reason I acquired Twitter is because it is important to the future of civilization to have a common digital town square, where a wide range of beliefs can be debated in a healthy manner, without resorting to violence," Musk wrote in an uncharacteristically long message for the Tesla CEO, who typically projects his thoughts in one-line tweets.

He continued: "There is currently great danger that social media will splinter into far right wing and far left wing echo chambers that generate more hate and divide our society."

Musk has previously expressed distaste for advertising and Twitter's dependence on it, suggesting more emphasis on other business models such as paid subscriptions that won't allow big corporations to dictate policy on how social media operates. But on Thursday, he assured advertisers he wants Twitter to be "the most respected advertising platform in the world."

The note is a shift from Musk's position that Twitter is unfairly infringing on free speech rights by blocking misinformation or graphic content, said Pinar Yildirim, associate professor of marketing at the University

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of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

But it's also a realization that having no content moderation is bad for business, putting Twitter at risk of losing advertisers and subscribers, she said.

"You do not want a place where consumers just simply are bombarded with things they do not want to hear about, and the platform takes no responsibility," Yildirim said.

As concerns rise about the direction of Twitter's content moderation, European Union Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton tweeted to Musk on Friday that "In Europe, the bird will fly by our rules."

Breton and Musk met in May and appeared in a video together in which Musk said he agreed with the 27-nation bloc's strict new online regulations. Its Digital Services Act threatens big tech companies with billions in fines if they don't police their platforms more strictly for illegal or harmful content such as hate speech and disinformation.

Musk is expected to speak to Twitter employees directly Friday if the deal is finalized, according to an internal memo cited in several media outlets. There is internal confusion and low morale tied to fears of layoffs or a dismantling of the company's culture and operations.

The Washington Post reported last week that Musk told prospective investors that he plans to cut three quarters of Twitter's 7,500 workers when he becomes owner of the company. The newspaper cited documents and unnamed sources familiar with the deliberation.

Musk has spent months deriding Twitter's "spam bots" and making sometimes conflicting pronouncements about Twitter's problems and how to fix them.

Thursday's note to advertisers shows a newfound emphasis on advertising revenue, especially a need for Twitter to provide more "relevant ads" — which typically means targeted ads that rely on collecting and analyzing users' personal information.

Yildirim said that, unlike Facebook, Twitter has not been good at targeting advertising to what users want to see. Musk's message suggests he wants to fix that, she said.

### Japan Cabinet OKs \$200B spending plan to counter inflation

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's government approved Friday a hefty economic package that will include about 29 trillion yen (\$200 billion) in government spending to soften the burden of rising utility rates and food prices.

Globally surging prices and a weakening of the yen have amplified costs for imports, pushing inflation higher.

The stimulus package includes subsidies for households that are largely seen as an attempt by Kishida to lift his plunging popularity. His government has been rocked by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's close ties to the South Korean-based Unification church, which surfaced after the assassination of former leader Shinzo Abe in July.

"The economic measures are designed to overcome rising prices and to achieve an economic recovery," Kishida said in a news conference. "We will protect the people's lives, jobs and businesses, and strengthen the economy for the future."

Any market reaction to another flood of stimulus was likely already taken into account earlier in the week as share prices fell in Tokyo, with the benchmark Nikkei 225 losing 0.9% to 27,105.20.

Japan has stuck to using fiscal measures, or government spending, to counter current economic challenges. While central banks around the world are raising interest rates aggressively to try to tame decadeshigh inflation, Japan's inflation rate is a relatively moderate 3% and the greater fear is that the economy will stall, not overheat.

The Bank of Japan, which has kept its benchmark rate at minus 0.1% since 2016, kept its longstanding lax monetary policy at a policy making meeting that wrapped up on Friday.

In doing so, it runs the risk of seeing the yen weaken further since the Federal Reserve is still raising rates, which tends to push the dollar higher. That in turn will raise prices in Japan since it imports much

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of what it consumes.

Kishida said Friday that the government was vigilantly monitoring movements in exchange rates. Japan has spent tens of billions of dollars in market interventions to support the yen in recent weeks as the currency sank to a 32-year low against the dollar of more than 150 yen. On Friday, it was trading near 148 yen to the dollar. At the beginning of the year, it was at about 115 yen.

Kishida said the overall size of the stimulus package, including private-sector funding and fiscal measures, is expected to amount to 71.6 trillion yen (\$490 trillion).

The plan includes about 45,000 yen (\$300) subsidies for household electricity and gas bills and coupons worth 100,000 yen (\$680) for women who are pregnant or rearing babies.

"We will make sure to deliver the measures to everyone and do our utmost so that people can feel supported in their daily lives," Kishida said earlier Friday, after preliminary approval of the package earlier in the day.

The 29 trillion yen (\$200 billion) spending package will be part of a supplementary budget that still must be approved by the parliament.

Kishida vowed to compile and submit a budget plan and get it approved as soon as possible.

His support ratings have sunk since July amid public criticisms over his Liberal Democratic Party's longstanding cozy ties with the Unification Church, which is accused of brainwashing adherents into making huge donations, causing financial hardships and breaking up families.

An LDP internal survey showed about half of its 400 lawmakers were tied to the church, though not as followers. Kishida's economy minister, Daishiro Yamagiwa, was obliged to resign earlier this week because of his ties with the church and failure to explain them. He was replaced by former health minister Shigeyuki Goto.

The hefty spending package will require issuing of more government bonds, further straining Japan's worsening national debt that has piled up as the government spent heavily to counter the impact of the pandemic. Japan now has a long-term debt exceeding 1.2 quadrillion yen (\$8.2 trillion), or more than twice the size of its economy.

#### Democrats cautiously campaign on Jan. 6, democracy threats

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Speaking last year on the House floor, Democratic Rep. Tim Ryan angrily bemoaned the lack of bipartisanship after the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection and said Republican opposition to an investigative commission was a "slap in the face" to the law enforcement officers assaulted by then-President Donald Trump's supporters that day.

Ryan has trodden more carefully this year as he runs for the U.S. Senate in Ohio, a onetime battleground state that has trended rightward in the Trump era. At a recent debate, his Republican opponent, JD Vance, charged that Ryan has an "obsession" with the insurrection and called the Jan. 6 House committee's investigation a "political hit job" on Trump.

"I don't want to talk about this any more than anybody else," Ryan shot back. "I want to talk about jobs. I want to talk about wages. I want to talk about pensions ... but, my God, you've got to look into it."

Ryan's cautiousness is a reflection of the political divide that remains nearly two years after the violent Capitol insurrection spurred by Trump's lies of a stolen 2020 presidential election. Many Republicans still falsely believe the vote count was rigged against Trump, and GOP lawmakers have repeatedly downplayed the violent attack, which left at least five people dead, injured more than 100 police officers and sent lawmakers running for their lives.

But some Democrats' reluctance to talk about Jan. 6 on the campaign trail is an acknowledgement that voters are primarily focused on pocketbook issues, like gas prices and rising inflation, in a midterm year that is typically a referendum on the president in power. That dynamic has created a delicate balance for Democrats, especially those like Ryan who are running in more Republican-leaning areas or swing states.

"The public sees this as something in the past, whereas they are dealing with inflation right now," says

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GOP pollster Frank Luntz, who has conducted focus groups on the Jan. 6 attack. If you can't afford to feed your family or fill your tank with gas, Luntz says, "arguing something that happened two years ago isn't prone to be high on your list."

Still, some candidates are betting that voters will care.

Independent Evan McMullin, a former Republican running against Utah Sen. Mike Lee, has made the issue a central part of his campaign. In a debate this month, McMullin said Lee had committed a "betrayal of the American republic" after it was revealed that the GOP senator had texted with White House aides ahead of the insurrection about finding ways for Trump to overturn his defeat. Lee demanded an apology, which McMullin did not offer, and noted that he had voted with most senators to certify Democrat Joe Biden's victory.

McMullin also appeared with Illinois Rep. Adam Kinzinger, one of two Republicans on the Jan. 6 panel, at an event in Salt Lake City. Speaking to an audience that included supporters carrying signs that read "Country First," the two men framed the midterms as a fight for democracy.

"If you're Mike Lee, it's still acceptable to say that Donald Trump is the future of the party and the leader of the party," Kinzinger said.

In a debate earlier this month, Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., defended her work as a member of the House Jan. 6 panel by saying it is "the most important thing that I have done or ever will do" professionally, beyond her military service. Her campaign later ran an ad showing footage of her opponent, Republican Jen Kiggans, refusing to say whether Biden was fairly elected.

"I'm not your candidate if you stand with insurrectionists," Luria said at the debate. "I'm not your candidate if you'd rather have Donald J. Trump as president again."

In Wisconsin, Democrat Brad Pfaff is struggling against his opponent, Republican Derrick Van Orden, but is betting that more people will vote against Van Orden if they find out that he was among the Trump supporters outside the Capitol on Jan. 6. One Pfaff ad shows images of the violence and a veteran criticizing Van Orden.

Another ad in Wisconsin targets Republican Sen. Ron Johnson, who is running for reelection and has repeatedly downplayed the violence of the attack. "Ron Johnson is making excuses for rioters who tried to overthrow our government," a police officer says in the ad, paid for by Senate Majority PAC, which is associated with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Democratic pollster Celinda Lake says that the democracy issue has proven salient among Democratic voters, particularly among older and suburban women who have less favorable views of Trump. "They are talking about it as a get-out-the-vote issue," Lake said.

John Zogby, also a Democratic pollster, agrees that the threat to democracy is a top-tier issue for many Democrats. But he has seen less interest among the independent voters who could decide the most competitive elections.

"I don't know that it gains any new voters for Democrats," Zogby says.

Like Ryan, the chair of the House spending subcommittee that oversees the Capitol Police, some Democrats who have been outspoken about the insurrection while in Washington have been talking about it less on the campaign trail.

New Hampshire Rep. Annie Kuster and Michigan Rep. Dan Kildee have spoken about their post-traumatic stress from being trapped in the House gallery as rioters tried to beat down the doors on Jan. 6. Now in competitive reelection races, neither has focused much on the attack or threats to democracy — though both have occasionally mentioned it.

Kildee noted that police protected him that day in a debate against his opponent, Republican Paul Junge, as he spoke about his opposition to efforts to defund law enforcement. "People wearing uniforms saved my life on Jan. 6," Kildee said. "I know what the police can do."

Answering a question on support for Ukraine, Kuster said that she thinks the United States also needs to fight for democracy at home and that she is a "survivor, witness, victim of the insurrection on Jan. 6 in our Capitol."

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Vermont Rep. Peter Welch, who was trapped alongside Kuster and Kildee and others that day, has chosen a different strategy as he runs for Senate in his liberal-leaning state. He talks about his experience often. Asked about the committee's work in a recent debate, Welch told the audience that "I was there" and that it was a violent assault on the peaceful transfer of power.

"A big issue in this election is the American people coming together and fighting to preserve that democracy that has served us so well," Welch said.

His opponent, Republican Gerald Malloy, responded that criminals should be held to account but that Americans have a right to peacefully assemble.

"I am not calling this an insurrection," Malloy said.

#### Baker's storytelling a hit with Astros as Series begins

By KRISTIE RIEKEN AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Astros pitcher Lance McCullers Jr. was asked for a simple description of Houston manager Dusty Baker.

His answer?

"Story time."

Baker has spent a lifetime in baseball and loves to regale his team with tales of his experiences and exploits in the game. This week as the Astros prepared to meet the Philadelphia Phillies in the World Series beginning Friday night, his players shared some of their favorite stories.

Baker is famous for spinning yarns, and during his time with the Astros the 73-year-old skipper has mentioned everyone from John F. Kennedy Jr. to NBA great Bill Russell to reggae icon Bob Marley. But to his players, his best and most powerful stories are those about his interactions with many of the greatest players in major league history.

Houston catcher Martín Maldonado shared a story Baker told him about an interaction with former Cincinnati Reds star Pete Rose.

"Pete Rose asked him, 'What do you got today?' And he said, '2 for 4, I'm fine," Maldonado said. "And Pete Rose told him: 'So that means you're giving up two at-bats before you go to the plate?' That was really impressive to me."

Baker is making his third trip to the Series as a manager and hopes to win his first title. As a player, he went three times with the Los Angeles Dodgers, winning it all as a big-hitting left fielder in 1981.

He's played with and managed some of the top names in the game during more than 50 years in baseball and has a great story about almost anyone he's asked about. But perhaps the two players he loves talking about the most are Hank Aaron and Barry Bonds.

Baker was on deck and among the Braves congregated at the plate to celebrate with Aaron on April 8, 1974, when he hit his 715th home run to pass Babe Ruth for the career record since broken by Bonds.

Baker managed Bonds for 10 seasons with the San Francisco Giants, including in 2001 when he hit 73 homers to set the single-season mark.

"Those two are probably two of the best hitters of all-time," third baseman Alex Bregman said. "So, any time he talks to you about them talking about hitting — you listen."

Baker and Aaron forged a lifelong friendship during their time playing for the Braves. But sometimes Aaron, who was 34 when Baker made his MLB debut at 19 in 1968, would give his much younger teammate a bit of tough love.

"Hank Aaron was getting on Dusty about something, and Dusty kind of chirped back at him, as a young kid, like: 'Let me do what I want to do," Astros outfielder Jake Meyers said. "And Hank was like: 'No, no, no, no, no — you're going to do it this way.' And Dusty really respected that."

While most hitters on the team have gotten an earful about Bonds from Baker, no one hears more stories about the seven-time MVP than slugger Yordan Alvarez.

"He tells me stories almost every day," Alvarez said in Spanish through a translator. "Every time he talks to me or tells me a story, he usually talks about Barry Bonds or compares me with Barry Bonds. He'll

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always mention him."

For closer Ryan Pressly, it was impossible to pick just one story Baker has told him that stands out. And he knows there are plenty more tales he's yet to hear from his manager.

"He's got so many cool stories about guys he's played with," Pressly said. "It's really cool to know that he's been there, and he's seen all that stuff. Hopefully, one of these days, I can just sit down with him and have a beer and just talk baseball with him."

Yuli Gurriel has heard plenty of stories from Baker about other players since he took over the team in 2020. But the first baseman was most wowed by one that involved him.

"Dusty told me that he went to Cuba and saw me playing at a Latin American tournament years ago," Gurriel said in Spanish through a translator. "So, I was pretty excited about that."

Baker is known as the ultimate players' manager and takes a keen interest in everyone on his team. McCullers loves his stories but said the skipper probably wouldn't be too happy if he shared some of them publicly.

However, the right-hander was quick to recount an unusual gift Baker gave him. The Astros were in San Diego during the pandemic-shortened 2020 season when McCullers arrived at his locker in the visitors' clubhouse to find something on his chair wrapped in tin foil.

"I slowly open it and there's like this like big filet of salmon," McCullers said. "And I close it back up. And I'm just like, "Who the heck put this in my locker?"

He soon found out Baker had broken COVID-19 protocols to leave the hotel and pick up the salmon from his favorite fish market because he heard McCullers loved it.

"I was like, 'You left the hotel?" McCullers said. "He's like, 'You're not going to snitch on me, are you?' I was like, 'No, no, I'm not going to snitch on you Dusty."

McCullers cracked up as he recalled that story before getting serious about the man these Astros adore. "He's just always thinking of others," McCullers said. "And I think that goes along with the storytelling and the way that he just kind of controls that vibe, controls the room. He's a very thoughtful person."

Star second baseman Jose Altuve is one of many Astros who have said they'd like to win it all this year so Baker can finally add a World Series title as a manager to his already sparkling resume.

Altuve didn't have a favorite story from Baker but perfectly summed up how he and so many others across the game feel about the man.

"I like all of his stories and I like him as a manager," Altuve said. "Everything about him, I like it."

#### Russia's hope for Ukraine win revealed in battle for Bakhmut

By INNA VARENYTSIA and SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

BÁKHMUT, Ukraine (AP) — Russian soldiers pummeling a city in eastern Ukraine with artillery are slowly edging closer in their attempt to seize Bakhmut, which has remained in Ukrainian hands during the eightmonth war despite Moscow's goal of capturing the entire Donbas region bordering Russia.

While much of the fighting in the last month has unfolded in southern Ukraine's Kherson region, the battle heating up around Bakhmut demonstrates Russian President Vladimir Putin's desire for visible gains following weeks of clear setbacks in Ukraine.

Taking Bakhmut would rupture Ukraine's supply lines and open a route for Russian forces to press on toward Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, key Ukrainian strongholds in Donetsk province. Pro-Moscow separatists have controlled part of Donetsk and neighboring Luhansk province since 2014.

Before invading Ukraine, Putin recognized the independence of the Russian-backed separatists' selfproclaimed republics. Last month, he illegally annexed the Donetsk, Luhansk and two other provinces that Russian forces occupied or mostly occupied.

Russia has battered Bakhmut with rockets for more than five months. The ground assault accelerated after its troops forced the Ukrainians to withdraw from Luhansk in July. The line of contact is now on the city's outskirts. Mercenaries from the Wagner Group, a shadowy Russian military company, are reported

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to be leading the charge.

Russia's prolonged drive for Bakhmut exposes Moscow's "craziness," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a nightly address to the nation this week.

"Day after day, for months, they have been driving people there to their deaths, concentrating the maximum power of artillery strikes there," Zelenskyy said.

The shelling killed at least three people between Wednesday and Thursday, according to local authorities. Ukraine's military is firing mortars and heavy artillery to repel the Russian forces who were less than 5 kilometers (3 miles) away by early Thursday, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a think tank in Washington.

Russia needs a victory in Bakhmut given it is losing control over large swaths of the northeastern region of Kharkiv to a Ukrainian counteroffensive last month and its deteriorating position in Kherson. The areas were among the first the Russian military captured after the Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine.

"Russia's suffering defeats across the board. ... They need the optics of some kind of an offensive victory to assuage critics at home and to show the Russian public that this war is still going to plan," said Samuel Ramani, an associate fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, a defense and security think tank based in London.

The Wagner Group has played a prominent role in the war, and human rights organizations have accused its soldiers for hire of committing atrocities. Their deployment around Bakhmut reflects the city's strategic important to Moscow. However, it's unclear if the mercenaries have made many tangible gains, according to Ramani.

"We're seeing a situation where the Wagner Group is quite effective at creating terror amongst the local residents but much less effective at actually capturing and holding territory," he said. At the very best they're gaining 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) a week toward Bakhmut, he said.

While in the city this week, journalists from The Associated Press saw burned-out cars, destroyed buildings and people struggling to survive amid a cacophony of constant shelling. Bakhmut has been without electricity or water for a month, and residents worry about heating their homes as temperatures drop.

"We hoped that this (war) would end or that we would have conditions that allow us to live. But since last month, conditions have been terrible," resident Leonid Tarasov said.

Few shops are open. The AP saw people using firewood to cook on the streets and drawing water from wells.

Bakhmut had a population of about 73,000 people before the war, but approximately 90% have left the city, according to Pavlo Kyrylenko, the Ukrainian governor of the Donetsk region.

Some of those who remained asked in recent days to be evacuated from areas that are now too dangerous for volunteers or soldiers to get to because of the fighting, Roman Zhylenkov a volunteer with the local aid group Vostok-SOS, said.

Others feel trapped.

"People who left moved to stay with their children or brothers and sisters. They had places to go," Ilona Ierhilieieva said as she mixed soup on an open fire by the side of the road. "But as for us, we don't have a place to go. That's why we are here."

#### Iran's elite technical university emerges as hub of protests

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

The aging brick campus of the Sharif University of Technology, Iran's elite technical school, has long been a magnet for the nation's brightest minds, with a record of elevating its students to the highest reaches of society.

Thousands of Sharif University alumni power Iran's most sensitive industries, including nuclear energy and aerospace. One of supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's closest advisors has taught there for decades.

But as demonstrations erupt across Iran — first sparked by the death in September of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in the custody of the country's morality police — the scientific powerhouse known as "Iran's M.I.T."

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has emerged as an unexpected hub for protest, fueling Iran's biggest antigovernment movement in over a decade.

"We've become politically active because there is nothing to lose," said an electrical engineering major and activist in Sharif University's student association who spoke on condition of anonymity. Like others who insisted their identities be shielded, he feared of reprisals. "The way things are now in Iran, you have to emigrate and leave your family and friends or stay and fight for your rights."

Across the country and despite a violent crackdown, Iranians have taken to the streets, venting their outrage over social repression, economic despair and global isolation — crises that have clipped the ambitions of Iran's young and educated generation. Over the last few weeks, university campuses have become a hotbed of opposition after years of dormancy, as students take up the mantle of activism they haven't held in years.

"Students have come to the realization they will not achieve their rights in this framework," said Mohammad Ali Kadivar, an Iran scholar at Boston College. "They are demanding the end of the Islamic Republic."

Protests have flared nearly every day for the past month at Sharif University — and escalated after security forces cracked down violently on Oct. 2, resulting in an hourslong standoff between students and police that prompted an international outcry and shocked the country.

"Whether it's true or not, people have this feeling that it's safer to protest on campus," said Moeen, a Sharif University alum who has observed the protests and spoke on condition that only his first name be used. "It's easier than orchestrating something at a random square in Tehran. There are student syndicates. There's leadership."

University campuses have been pivotal to Iran's opposition movements before. After the U.S.-backed 1953 coup, University of Tehran students revolted over then-Vice President Richard Nixon's visit to the capital. The shah's security forces stormed the campus and shot three students dead.

Sharif University, among other campuses, was wracked by protests two decades later, when Marxist and Islamist student groups lit the fuse of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which ushered in the clerical establishment that still rules Iran.

Once in power, the young theocracy worked to ensure universities would no longer be breeding grounds for opposition: The clerics purged professors, arrested dissident students and set up their own powerful student associations.

Political issues occasionally galvanized students despite the risks. Pro-reformist students protested at the University of Tehran in 1999, prompting a fearsome raid by security forces who fatally shot a student and flung others out of windows.

But broadly over the decades, Tehran's campuses became subdued, students and experts said, particularly Sharif University — a competitive, high-tech hub considered less liberal and activist than others in the capital. Amid American sanctions and raging inflation, some students joked the university was essentially an airport, as the best and brightest students rushed to leave for Europe and the U.S. after graduation.

A turning point came in 2018, students said. Former President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of Tehran's landmark nuclear deal that year and reimposed harsh sanctions. Deepening global isolation and frustration over lagging political reforms convinced many students that nothing would come of engaging with the system.

A year later, in the fall of 2019, a fuel price hike set off the deadliest nationwide unrest since the Islamic Revolution. The Sharif Islamic Association, a misnomer for the students' largely secular representative body, jumped into action, organizing demonstrations on campus.

In 2020, the student group boycotted classes and held a protest vigil after the Iranian military's downing of a Ukrainian passenger plane killed 176 people, including over a dozen Sharif University graduates. Later that year, authorities arrested two top students on widely disputed security charges, stoking outrage.

"We have no industry, we are in a bad economic situation, the environment is ruined," said the student association activist, listing the reasons for protest. "But the biggest reason is freedom. We just want basic things that you have all over the world."

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When news spread of Amini's death after her arrest for allegedly violating Iran's strict rules on women's dress, students buzzed. Iran's government insists Amini was not mistreated in police custody, but her family says her body showed bruises and other signs of beating after she was detained.

"Even my conservative friends said, 'If we don't take to the streets now, we never will'," Moeen said.

Sharif University authorities denied the student association a protest permit, members said. Crowds demonstrated anyway, pumping their fists and chanting "Death to the dictator!" — a slogan that protesters have used around the country.

On Oct. 2, the protests devolved into violent mayhem, according to statements from the association.

As hundreds of students chanted against Khamenei, plainclothes security forces raided campus. Professors formed a human shield so students could flee. But security forces beat the professors, ripped through their interlocked hands and chased protesters into the parking garage.

They unleashed paintballs, tear gas and metal pellets on shrieking students. Several were wounded and some 40 were arrested, most of whom have now been released.

"It was brutal," said one professor who witnessed the events. "For the sake of its own future, the government should care about these students. They're the nerds. But it was clear it only cared about oppressing them."

Tensions were further inflamed when the minister for higher education, Mohammad Ali Zolfigol, visited the campus and, instead of reassuring students, accused them of "lawlessness" and warned they'd be held responsible, according to a computer engineering student who attended the meeting and videos posted online.

In an attempt to defuse the resentment, the university created a forum, billed as a safe space for students to voice their complaints. The university president, the U.S.-sanctioned Rasool Jalili, who served on Iran's Supreme Council of Cyberspace, presided over the program.

Women boldly took the stage without the mandatory hijab, according to videos shared by members of the association. Students lashed out at the university for its failure to protect them.

And there were consequences to speaking out. On Sunday, the university announced it would temporarily ban over two dozen students who contributed to the "unstable environment."

That prompted more demonstrations, as students raged against both university authorities and the ruling clerics. Most recently this week, female students streamed into the male-only section of the dining hall in protest over campus gender segregation as male students cheered them on. The university closed the cafeteria on Tuesday, hoping to end the demonstrations.

Instead, the students moved their lunch to the campus yard, videos showed. A professor joined in solidarity. Young women and men picnicked side by side on the pavement, chanting: "Woman! Life! Freedom!"

#### N Korea fires missiles toward sea as US warns over nukes

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG undefined

SÉOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles toward the sea on Friday in its first ballistic weapons launches in two weeks, as the U.S. military warned the North that the use of nuclear weapons "will result in the end of that regime."

South Korea's military detected the two launches from the North's eastern coastal Tongchon area around midday on Friday, Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. It said both missiles flew about 230 kilometers (140 miles) at a maximum altitude of 24 kilometers (15 miles).

The statement said South Korea strongly condemns the launches, calling them "a grave provocation" that undermines regional peace and violates U.N. Security Council resolutions banning any ballistic activities by North Korea.

The U.S. Indo Pacific Command said the launches highlighted the "destabilizing impact" of North Korea's illicit nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. The Japanese Defense Ministry said it also detected the launches and that the type of missiles used and their flight information were still being analyzed.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said its top nuclear envoy held separate phone talks with his U.S. and

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Japanese counterparts soon after the launches. It said the three agreed to strengthen trilateral coordination on North Korea while repeating their calls for the North to stop weapons tests and return to talks.

The back-to-back launches, the North's first ballistic missile tests since Oct. 14, came on the final day of South Korea's annual 12-day "Hoguk" field exercises, which also involved an unspecified number of U.S. troops this year. Next week, South Korean and U.S. air forces plan to conduct a large-scale training as well.

North Korea sees such regular drills by Seoul and Washington as practice for launching an attack on the North, though the allies say their exercises are defensive in nature.

Next week's "Vigilant Storm" aerial drills are to run from Monday to Friday and involve about 140 South Korean warplanes and about 100 U.S. aircraft. The planes include sophisticated fighter jets like F-35 from both nations, South Korea's Defense Ministry said in a statement earlier Friday.

Since late September, North Korea has launched a barrage of missiles toward the sea in what it called simulated tests of tactical nuclear weapons systems designed to attack South Korean and U.S. targets. North Korea says its testing activities were meant to issue a warning amid a series of South Korea-U.S. military drills. But some experts say Pyongyang has also used its rivals' drills as a chance to test new weapons systems, boost its nuclear capability and increase its leverage in future dealings with Washington and Seoul.

Tongchon, the launch site for the North's Friday launches, is about 60 kilometers (37 miles) away from the inter-Korean land border. The area was closer to South Korean territory than any other missile launch site North Korea has used so far this year, according to South Korea's Defense Ministry.

South Korea and the United States have strongly warned North Korea against using its nuclear weapons preemptively.

The Pentagon's National Defense Strategy report issued on Thursday stated that any nuclear attack by North Korea against the United States or its allies and partners "will result in the end of that regime."

"There is no scenario in which the Kim regime could employ nuclear weapons and survive," the report said. The Pentagon said it will continue to deter North Korean attacks through "forward posture," including nuclear deterrence, integrated air and missile defenses, and close coordination and interoperability with South Korea.

During a visit to Tokyo on Tuesday, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman reiterated that the United States would fully use its military capabilities, "including nuclear," to defend its allies South Korea and Japan.

Last month, South Korea's Defense Ministry warned North Korea that using its nuclear weapons would put it on a "path of self-destruction."

There are concerns that the North could up the ante in the coming weeks by conducting its first nuclear test since 2017.

Rafael Grossi, chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said Thursday that a new nuclear test explosion by North Korea "would be yet another confirmation of a program which is moving full steam ahead in a way that is incredibly concerning."

He said the U.N. agency has been observing preparations for a new test, which would be the North's seventh overall, but gave no indication of whether an atomic blast is imminent.

In recent days, North Korea has also fired hundreds of shells in inter-Korean maritime buffer zones that the two Koreas established in 2018 to reduce frontline military tensions. North Korea has said the artillery firings were in reaction to South Korean live-fire exercises at land border areas.

On Monday, the rival Koreas exchanged warning shots along their disputed western sea boundary, a scene of past bloodshed and naval battles, as they accused each other of violating the boundary.

#### Miami building evacuated near site of deadly condo collapse

MIAMI (AP) — Residents of a Miami Beach building on the same street where a condominium collapse killed nearly 100 people were forced to evacuate on Thursday evening after officials determined the structure was unsafe and gave orders to leave.

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Miami Beach spokesperson Melissa Berthier said around 4 p.m. Thursday that the city planned to post an unsafe structure notice and order residents of the 14-story Port Royale building to vacate immediately. Around 5 p.m., the condo board sent residents a mandatory notice to vacate by 7 p.m., the Miami Herald reported.

Residents of the Port Royale said city of Miami Beach officials informed them Wednesday that the building would need to be evacuated, but the notice to leave immediately was not delivered until Thursday, WPLG-TV reported.

A report from the building's structural engineer prompted the evacuation notice of the 164-unit structure at 6969 Collins Avenue, which is in the process of undergoing a 50-year recertification.

The site of the Champlain Towers South condo building in Surfside, Florida, that collapsed in June 2021 and killed 98 people is also on Collins Avenue, about 1.3 miles (2 kilometers) from the Port Royale.

The disaster at the 12-story oceanfront condo building in Surfside drew the largest non-hurricane emergency response in Florida history, including rescue crews from across the U.S. and as far away as Israel to help local teams search for victims.

Engineers have recommended additional "shoring" to reinforce areas needing repair be installed in the Port Royale's garage to support a damaged beam. Officials said they expected the reinforcement to be in place within 10 days, the Miami Herald reported.

#### Dig finds evidence of Revolutionary War prison camp location

By MARK SCOLFORO Associated Press

Researchers say they solved a decades-old riddle this week by finding remnants of the stockade and therefore the site of a prison camp in York, Pennsylvania, that housed British soldiers for nearly two years during the American Revolutionary War.

The location of Camp Security was thought to have been on land acquired by the local government nearly a decade ago. On Monday, an archaeological team working there located what they believe to be the prison camp's exterior security fence.

The camp housed more than 1,000 English, Scottish and Canadian privates and noncommissioned officers for 22 months during war, starting with a group of prisoners who arrived in 1781, four years after their surrender at Saratoga, New York. By the next year, there were some 1,200 men at the camp, along with hundreds of women and children.

Fieldwork at the site, which also includes the lower-security Camp Indulgence, has gone on for decades, but the exact spot of Camp Security — where prisoners from the 1781 Battle of Yorktown, Virginia, were kept — had been unknown until a telltale pattern of post holes in a foot-deep trench was uncovered.

"This has been a long project, and to finally see it come to fruition, or at least know you're not nuts, that's wonderful," said Carol Tanzola, who as president of Friends of Camp Security led fundraising for the project.

Lead archaeologist John Crawmer said the location site had been narrowed down after about 28 acres (11 hectares) were plowed for metal detection and surface collection of artifacts in 2020. That further reduced the search area to about 8 acres (3 hectares), where long exploratory trenches were dug last year.

Those trenches helped the team identify post holes that in turn led to the pattern of holes and a stockade trench that matched stockades at other 18th-century military sites, Crawmer said.

Next spring, Crawmer and other researchers hope to determine the full size of the stockade and perform a focused search for artifacts within and around it.

"Was it circular or square, what's inside, what's outside?" Crawmer said. "As we do that, we're going to start finding those 18th-century artifacts, the trash pits. We'll be able to start answering questions about where people were sleeping, where they were living, where they were throwing things away, where the privies are."

Crawmer said there is evidence the vertical posts that formed the security stockade were not in the ground for very long and that they may have been dug up and reused after the camp was closed in 1783.

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A contemporaneous account of camp life by a British surgeon's mate said there was a "camp fever" that might have killed some of the prisoners, and a list of Camp Security inmates was located in the British National Archives. No human remains have been found at the site.

Historians confirmed local lore about the general location of Camp Security and Camp Indulgence after a 1979 archaeological study of a small portion of the property produced buckles, buttons and other items associated with British soldiers of the period. That survey also found 20 coins and 605 straight pins that may have been used by prisoners to make lace.

#### Rare John Steinbeck column probes strength of US democracy

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NÉW YORK (AP) — Decades ago, as communists and suspected communists were being blacklisted and debates spread over the future of American democracy, John Steinbeck — a resident of Paris at the time — often found himself asked about the headlines from his native country.

The question he kept hearing: "What about McCarthyism?"

The future Nobel Laureate wrote that the practice embodied by U.S. Sen. Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin was "simply a new name for something that has existed from the moment when popular government emerged."

"It is the attempt to substitute government by men for government by law," Steinbeck continued in a 1954 column for Le Figaro that had rarely been seen until it was reprinted this week in the literary quarterly The Strand Magazine. "We have always had this latent thing. All democracies have it. It cannot be wiped out because, by destroying it, democracy would destroy itself."

Steinbeck was closely associated with his native California, the setting for all or most of "The Grapes of Wrath," "Of Mice and Men" and other fiction. But he lived briefly in Paris in the mid-1950s and wrote a series of short pieces for Le Figaro that were translated into French.

Most of his observations were humorous reflections on his adopted city, but at times he couldn't help commenting on larger matters.

"Anyone even remotely familiar with Steinbeck's works knows that he never shied away from taking on controversial topics," Andrew F. Gulli, managing editor of The Strand, writes in a brief introduction. The Strand has unearthed obscure works by Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald and many others. Gulli calls Steinbeck's column in the French publication a timely work for current concerns about democracy.

"The Grapes of Wrath" was a defining work of the Great Depression. Steinbeck held to an idealistic liberalism that was formed in part in the 1930s by Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal, deepened by the Allied victory over Nazi Germany in World War II and eventually tested by the Vietnam War. He despised both McCarthyism and communism, opposing what he called "any interference with the creative mind" — whether censorship in the U.S. or the persecution of writers in the Soviet Union.

"He stated in the 1960s that the role of an artist was to critique his country," says Susan Shillinglaw, who directs the Center for Steinbeck Studies at San Jose State University.

Steinbeck believed that the United States was a force for good and fortunate in its ability to correct itself. He advocated a version of tough love hard to defend now, likening democracy to a child who "must be hurt constantly" to endure and regarding McCarthyism as a passing threat that would strengthen the country in the long run.

"In resisting, we keep our democracy hard and tough and alive, its machinery intact. An organism untested soon goes flabby and weak," he wrote.

McCarthyism was peaking around the time of Steinbeck's column and McCarthy himself would be censured by his Senate peers within months and dead by 1957. Political historian Julian Zelizer says that Steinbeck was not alone in recognizing the dangers of anti-communist hysteria, while maintaining an "unyielding optimism" that "the constitutional separation of powers and pluralism would keep these forces on the margins."

Lucan Way, whose books include "Pluralism by Default: Weak Autocrats and the Rise of Competitive

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Politics," tells The Associated Press that "in principle the clear and unambiguous defeat of anti-democratic actors" such as McCarthy might have a positive effect.

But he does not think Steinbeck's column can be applied to contemporary politics.

"What is going on now is not an example of this phenomenon (the fall of McCarthyism)," Way says. "Trumpism has not been clearly defeated but has instead helped to normalize anti-democratic behavior that was previously considered out of bounds."

#### **Barack Obama gets a midterm do-over to help boost Democrats**

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Barack Obama is trying to do something he couldn't during two terms as president: help Democrats succeed in national midterm elections when they already hold the White House.

Of course, he's more popular than he was back then, and now it's President Joe Biden, Obama's former vice president, who faces the prospects of a November rebuke.

Obama begins a hopscotch across battleground states Friday in Georgia, and he will travel Saturday to Michigan and Wisconsin, followed by stops next week in Nevada and Pennsylvania.

The itinerary, which includes rallies with Democratic candidates for federal and state offices, comes as Biden and Democrats try to stave off a strong Republican push to upend Democrats' narrow majorities in the House and Senate and claim key governorships ahead of the 2024 presidential election.

With Biden's job approval ratings in the low 40s amid sustained inflation, he's an albatross for Democrats like Sens. Raphael Warnock of Georgia and Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada. But party strategists see Obama as having extensive reach even in a time of hyperpartisanship and economic uncertainty.

"Obama occupies a rare place in our politics today," said David Axelrod, who helped shape Obama's campaigns from his days in the Illinois state Senate through two presidential elections. "He obviously has great appeal to Democrats. But he's also well-liked by independent voters."

Neither Biden nor former President Donald Trump can claim that, Axelrod and others noted, even as both men also ratchet up their campaigning ahead of the Nov. 8 elections.

"Barack Obama is the best messenger we've got in our party, and he's the most popular political figure in the country in either party," said Bakari Sellers, a South Carolina Democrat and prominent political commentator.

Obama left office in January 2017 with a 59% approval rating, and Gallup measured his post-presidential approval at 63% the following year, the last time the organization surveyed former presidents. That's considerably higher than his ratings in 2010, when Democrats lost control of the House in a midterm election that Obama called a "shellacking." In his second midterm election four years later, the GOP regained control of the Senate.

Swimming against those historical tides, Biden traveled Thursday to Syracuse, New York, for a rare appearance in a competitive congressional district. After months of Republican attacks over inflation, he offered a closing economic argument buoyed somewhat by news of 2.6% GDP growth in the third quarter after two previous quarters of retraction.

"Democrats are building a better America for everyone with an economy ... where everyone does well," Biden said.

Yet Lis Smith, a Democratic strategist, said Obama is better positioned to take that same argument to Americans who haven't decided whom to vote for or whether to vote at all.

"If it's just a straight-up referendum on Democrats and the economy, then we're screwed," Smith said, acknowledging that no incumbent party wants to run amid sustained inflation. "But you have to make the election a choice between the two parties, crystallize the differences."

Obama, she said, did that in the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections "by winning over a lot of workingclass white voters and others we don't always think about as part of the 'Obama coalition."

He couldn't replicate it in midterms, but he's not the president this time. Smith and Axelrod said that means Obama can more deftly position himself above the fray to defend Democratic accomplishments,

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from the specifics of the Inflation Reduction Act to the COVID-19 pandemic relief package that many Democrats have avoided touting because Republicans blame it for inflation. Smith said Obama can remind voters of years of Republican attacks on his 2010 health care law that now seems to be a permanent and generally accepted part of the U.S. health insurance market.

Beyond those policy arguments, Sellers noted that Obama, as the first Black president, "connects especially with Black and brown voters," a bond reflected in the opening days of his itinerary.

In Atlanta, he'll be on stage with Warnock, the first Black U.S. senator in Georgia history, and Stacey Abrams, who's vying to become the first Black female governor in American history. Warnock faces a stiff challenge from Republican nominee Herschel Walker, who is also Black. Kemp is trying to unseat Republican Gov. Brian Kemp, who narrowly defeated her four years ago.

In Michigan, Obama will campaign in Detroit with Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, who is being challenged by Republican Tudor Dixon, and in Wisconsin he'll be in Milwaukee with Senate candidate Mandela Barnes, who is trying to oust Republican Sen. Ron Johnson. Each city is where the state's Black population is most concentrated. Obama's Pennsylvania swing will include Philadelphia, another city where Democrats must get a strong turnout from Black voters to win competitive races for Senate and governor.

With the Senate now split 50-50 between the two major parties and Vice President Kamala Harris giving Democrats the deciding vote, any Senate contest could end up deciding which party controls the chamber for the next two years. Among the tightest Senate battlegrounds, Georgia, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania are three where Black turnout could be most critical to Democratic fortunes.

Plans have been in the works for Obama and Biden to campaign together in Pennsylvania, though neither the White House nor Obama's office has confirmed details.

A wider embrace for Obama is a turnabout from his two midterm elections. But it's at least partly a rite of passage for former presidents. "Most of them — maybe not President Trump, but most of them — are viewed more favorably after they leave office," Axelrod said.

Notably, during Obama's presidency, former President Bill Clinton was the in-demand surrogate heavyweight, especially for moderates trying to survive Republican surges in 2010 and 2014. Clinton was a pivotal voice for Obama's reelection effort in 2012, with Obama dubbing him the "secretary of explaining stuff" after Clinton's sweeping endorsement address at the Democratic convention as Obama was locked in a tight contest with Republican Mitt Romney.

"Bill Clinton was the MVP for us in 2012," Axelrod said.

Now, Clinton is two decades removed from the White House, and the #MeToo movement has forced some people to reevaluate his history of sexual misconduct allegations.

"It's always been dicey to bring in national Democrats in a midterm, and it doesn't help when they bring a lot of baggage," Smith said of Clinton.

Axelrod was more circumspect, saying simply, "It's a different time."

But he said Obama and Clinton have a similar approach.

"What Clinton and Obama share is a kind of unique ability to colloquialize complicated political arguments of the time, just talk in common-sense terms," Axelrod said. "They're storytellers. I think you'll see that again when he's out there."

#### Hand vote count on hold after Nevada high court says illegal

By GABE STERN, KEN RITTER and SCOTT SONNER Associated Press

PÁHRUMP, Nev. (AP) — An unprecedented hand-count of mail-in ballots in a rural Nevada county is on hold and may not resume after the Nevada Supreme Court said in an after-hours ruling the current process is illegal and the Republican secretary of state directed the county clerk to "cease immediately."

Volunteers in rural Nye County had wrapped up a second day of hand-counting the ballots on Thursday by the time the Supreme Court issued a three-page opinion siding with objections raised by the American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada.

Secretary of State Barbara Cegavske, who is in charge of elections and has been been one of the GOP's

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most vocal critics of the sort of voter-fraud conspiracy theories that fueled the hand tallying of ballots, said the "hand-counting process must cease immediately."

She requested in a letter to Nye County Clerk Mark Kampf that he confirm to her office Thursday night that the hand count process "had been stopped."

Cegavske's office didn't immediately respond to requests from The Associated Press for an update. But the ACLU said in a statement that Nye County's attorneys had informed the organization's legal staff that "its hand-count process has been shut down."

"Today is a victory for all who believe in democracy," said Sadmira Ramic, ALCU of Nevada's voting rights attorney.

Nye County officials and their lawyers did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Cegavske, citing the court's latest ruling, said in the letter the current hand-count procedure was prohibited at least until after the close of polls on Nov. 8.

She said "no alternative hand-counting process may proceed" until she and the county can determine if there are any feasible alternatives that would comply with the Supreme Court order.

In its three-page ruling Thursday evening, the high court stopped short of ordering a halt to the recount. But the court sided with the arguments the ACLU made in an emergency motion filed earlier Thursday.

The ACLU accused Nye County officials of violating a Supreme Court order issued last week requiring the count to be conducted in a way that prevents public release of early results before polls close to inperson voting Nov. 8.

The ACLU argued that reading candidates' names aloud from ballots within hearing distance of public observers violates the court rule.

Attorneys for Nye County said in a court filing earlier Thursday that the ACLU was engaging in "political stunts and 'gotcha' games." It asked the court to distinguish between observers verbally describing the "vote count" and observers learning the "election results."

The high court said the "specifics" of the hand-count process and "observer positioning" in a way that comply with its earlier order was for Nye County and the secretary of state "to determine."

On the first day of counting Wednesday, The Associated Press and other observers, including some from the ACLU, watched as volunteers were sworn in and split into groups in six different rooms at a Nye County office building in Pahrump, 60 miles (96 kilometers) west of Las Vegas.

ACLU Nevada chief Athar Haseebullah described on Twitter what he saw as "a disaster of a process."

Haseebullah on Thursday provided additional detail about an apparently armed polling place volunteer who he said ushered an ACLU observer out of a counting room on Wednesday in a dispute about whether she was improperly tallying votes on a notepad.

"That volunteer never drew a firearm," Haseebullah said, describing what he said appeared to be a handgun handle visible in the woman's waistband. "We weren't removed from the counting site, but that volunteer did pull my team member out of the room where she was observing."

Kampf, in the county filing to the Supreme Court, alleged that the unnamed ACLU observer was taking notes in violation of the court order that said observers "will not prematurely release any information about the vote process."

Some teams the AP observed spent about three hours each counting 50 ballots. Mismatches, where all three talliers didn't have the same number of votes for a candidate, led to recounts and occasionally more recounts.

On Thursday, volunteers counted 25 ballots at a time instead of 50 — a decision Kampf made in response to the difficulty in counting 50 ballots at a time.

"The first day was a little rough as you could imagine, but today things are going very smooth, much fewer recounts," Kampf told KLAS-TV in Las Vegas. After counting 900 ballots Wednesday, Kampf said his goal was to count about 2,000 ballots per day.

While the county planned to count every vote by hand, it was still relying on Dominion voting machines as the primary vote tabulators for this election. Kampf has floated the idea of scrapping the machines in future elections.

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In a filing last week, the ACLU sought to block hand-counting before Election Day, saying it threatened to reveal election results before most voters could even weigh in. While the state Supreme Court allowed the count to go ahead, it blocked a plan to livestream the counting, ruling that video can only be released only after polls close Nov. 8.

Thursday's new opinion came in response to the ACLU's emergency request for a "clarification" of the earlier ruling.

Nevada has one of the most closely watched U.S. Senate races in the country, as well as high-stakes contests for governor and the office that oversees elections.

Ballots cast early, either in-person or by mail, are typically counted by machine on Election Day, with results released only after polls close. In most places, hand counts are used after an election on a limited basis to ensure machine tallies are accurate.

However, Nye County commissioners voted to hand-count all ballots after complaints by residents echoing nearly two years of conspiracy theories about voting machines and false claims that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from former President Donald Trump.

Trump won 69% of the vote in Nye County although President Joe Biden won Nevada by about 2.4%.

The Republican nominee for secretary of state, Jim Marchant, has repeated unsubstantiated election claims and said he wants to spread hand-counting to every Nevada county.

#### Massive learning setbacks show COVID's sweeping toll on kids

By BIANCA VÁZQUEZ TONESS and SHARON LURYE AP Education Writers

The COVID-19 pandemic devastated poor children's well-being, not just by closing their schools, but also by taking away their parents' jobs, sickening their families and teachers, and adding chaos and fear to their daily lives.

The scale of the disruption to American kids' education is evident in a district-by-district analysis of test scores shared exclusively with The Associated Press. The data provide the most comprehensive look yet at how much schoolchildren have fallen behind academically.

The analysis found the average student lost more than half a school year of learning in math and nearly a quarter of a school year in reading – with some district averages slipping by more than double those amounts, or worse.

Online learning played a major role, but students lost significant ground even where they returned quickly to schoolhouses, especially in math scores in low-income communities.

"When you have a massive crisis, the worst effects end up being felt by the people with the least resources," said Stanford education professor Sean Reardon, who compiled and analyzed the data along with Harvard economist Thomas Kane.

Some educators have objected to the very idea of measuring learning loss after a crisis that has killed more than 1 million Americans. Reading and math scores don't tell the entire story about what's happening with a child, but they're one of the only aspects of children's development reliably measured nationwide.

"Test scores aren't the only thing, or the most important thing," Reardon said. "But they serve as an indicator for how kids are doing."

And kids aren't doing well, especially those who were at highest risk before the pandemic. The data show many children need significant intervention, and advocates and researchers say the U.S. isn't doing enough.

Together, Reardon and Kane created a map showing how many years of learning the average student in each district has lost since 2019. Their project, the Education Recovery Scorecard, compared results from a test known as the "nation's report card" with local standardized test scores from 29 states and Washington, D.C.

In Memphis, Tennessee, where nearly 80% of students are poor, students lost the equivalent of 70% of a school year in reading and more than a year in math, according to the analysis. The district's Black students lost a year-and-one-third in math and two-thirds of a year in reading.

For church pastor Charles Lampkin, who is Black, it was the effects on his sons' reading that grabbed his

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attention. He was studying the Bible with them one night this fall when he noticed his sixth and seventh graders were struggling with their "junior" Bible editions written for a fifth grade reading level. "They couldn't get through it," Lampkin said.

Lampkin blames the year and a half his sons were away from school buildings from March 2020 until the fall of 2021.

"They weren't engaged at all. It was all tomfoolery," he said.

Officials with the local district, Shelby County Public Schools, did not respond to multiple phone calls and emails requesting comment. According to district presentations, Shelby County schools last year offered tutoring to the lowest-performing students. Most students who received tutoring focused on English language arts, but not math. Lampkin said his sons have not been offered the extra help.

The amount of learning that students lost – or gained, in rare cases – over the last three years varied widely. Poverty and time spent in remote learning affected learning loss, and learning losses were greater in districts that remained online longer, according to Kane and Reardon's analysis. But neither was a perfect predictor of declines in reading and math.

In some districts, students lost more than two years of math learning, according to the data. Hopewell, Virginia, a school system of 4,000 students who are mostly low-income and 60% Black, showed an average loss of 2.29 years of school.

"This is not anywhere near what we wanted to see," Deputy Superintendent Jay McClain said.

The district began offering in-person learning in March 2021, but three-quarters of students remained home. "There was so much fear of the effects of COVID," he said. "Families here were just hunkered down."

When schools resumed in the fall, the virus swept through Hopewell, and half of all students stayed home either sick or in quarantine, McClain said. A full 40% of students were chronically absent, meaning they missed 18 days or more.

The pandemic brought other challenges unrelated to remote learning.

In Rochester, New Hampshire, students lost nearly two years in reading even though schools offered in-person learning most of the 2020-2021 school year. It was the largest literacy decline among all the districts in the analysis.

The 4,000-student district, where most are white and nearly half live in poverty, had to close schools in November 2020 when too few teachers could report for work, Superintendent Kyle Repucci said. Students studied online until March 2021, and when schools reopened, many chose to stay with remote learning, Repucci said.

"Students here were exposed to things they should never have been exposed to until much later," Repucci said. "Death. Severe illness. Working to feed their families."

In Los Angeles, school leaders shuttered classrooms for the entire 2020-2021 academic year, yet students held their ground in reading.

It's hard to tell what explains the vastly different outcomes in some states. In California, where students on average stayed steady or only marginally declined, it could suggest that educators there were better at teaching over Zoom or the state made effective investments in technology, Reardon said.

But the differences could also be explained by what happened outside of school. "I think a lot more of the variation has to do with things that were outside of a school's control," Reardon said.

Now, the onus is on America's adults to work toward kids' recovery. For the federal government and individual states, advocates hope the recent releases of test data could inspire more urgency to direct funding to the students who suffered the largest setbacks, whether it's academic or other support.

School systems are still spending the nearly \$190 billion in federal relief money allocated for recovery, a sum experts have said fails to address the extent of learning loss in schools. Nearly 70% of students live in districts where federal relief money is likely inadequate to address the magnitude of their learning loss, according to Kane and Reardon's analysis.

The implications for kids' futures are alarming: Lower test scores are predictors of lower wages, plus higher rates of incarceration and teen pregnancy, Kane said.

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It doesn't take Harvard research to convince parents whose children are struggling to read or learn algebra that something needs to be done.

At his church in Memphis, Lampkin started his own tutoring program three nights a week. Adults from his congregation, some of them teachers, help around 50 students with their homework, reinforcing skills and teaching new ones.

"We shouldn't have had to do this," Lampkin said. "But sometimes you have to lead by example."

#### New Zealand leader Ardern makes rare trip to Antarctica

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern appeared awestruck Thursday to be standing in the Antarctic hut of explorer Ernest Shackleton.

"I think when you're a kid and you read stories about Shackleton, you'd never imagine you'd have the opportunity to come. So, I feel pretty lucky," she said from inside the hut that was built more than a century ago. "It's a cool place."

Ardern this week is making a rare visit by a world leader to Antarctica, to see firsthand the research taking place on global warming and to mark the 65th anniversary of New Zealand's Scott Base, which will be demolished in a few years to make way for a rebuild.

Ardern's visit comes as delegations from 26 nations and the European Union meet in Australia to decide the future of Antarctica's pristine waters.

Conservationists say new marine protected areas and rules to prevent overfishing in Antarctica are desperately needed, but that Russia could use its veto-like powers to once again block progress.

Russia last year rejected the toothfish catch limits proposed by the commission's scientists, and the U.S. says this year that Russia and China have been blocking progress on creating new marine protected areas, although the U.S. aims to work toward a resolution with China. The motivation for Russia, which did not respond to requests for comment this week, remains unclear.

Ardern's trip has highlighted some of the challenges of visiting the icy continent. Her first flight in a military cargo plane was turned around after about two hours on Tuesday due to strong winds and deteriorating weather, making her part of what's informally known as the "boomerang club."

She made it to Antarctica the next day, accompanied by a single pool journalist whose photos and videos can take many hours to transmit overnight due to the tenuous internet capacity. She is due to return home Saturday.

Ardern said the scientists and crew on Antarctica have noticed the effects of global warming over the past five years, including observing sea ice cracking and moving, and glaciers and icebergs changing.

She said it was important for New Zealand to maintain a leadership role on the continent.

"We're in a period where internationally you see that parts of the world are becoming increasingly contested, and Antarctica is part of that, too," Ardern said.

Standing in the hut, Ardern said that Irish-born Shackleton and his British expedition had tried to reach the South Pole, but that he was remembered more for his extraordinary leadership and saving the lives of his men. She said she didn't exactly draw parallels with her own leadership.

"I don't think I can quite compare government with the hardship and endurance of Antarctic exploration," she said, adding with a laugh: "But some days."

#### Will post-Sandy repairs be enough for the next big storm?

By WAYNE PARRY Associated Press

HOBOKEN, N.J. (AP) — After Superstorm Sandy struck the northeast U.S. in 2012, an unprecedented effort began to fortify the densely populated coastline against the next big storm.

Thousands of homes were raised on pilings. Concrete and steel walls meant to help hold back the sea were hidden beneath rebuilt dunes and beach boardwalks. Tunnels near New York's harbor were equipped with giant flood doors.

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Then, last year, the region learned that even all those precautions might not be enough in an age of more powerful storms.

Flash floods killed at least 58 people from Maryland to Connecticut when the remnants of Hurricane Ida blew into the northeast after first striking the Gulf Coast. In New York and New Jersey, people drowned in basement apartments far from any ocean or bay. In the suburbs, motorists were swept away trying to escape flooded inland roadways.

The two deadly storms, nearly a decade apart, left public officials and residents alike contemplating what more needs to be done. And today, 10 years after Sandy and with billions of dollars already spent, the most ambitious and comprehensive protections are years away from completion, with some still in early stages or even unfunded. Experts say Ida showed the area was not ready for another storm — and they worry about what will happen when the next one hits.

"We must be more prepared than we are now," said Shawn LaTourette, New Jersey's environmental protection commissioner. "We have done a lot of work since Sandy — developing the dune system, the buildings raised and the flood control infrastructure. We're still not ready."

Residents echo his concerns. "I will be forever nervous because of Sandy," said Liz Ndoye, whose Hoboken home flooded. "I will never feel safe. We can mitigate, but we will never stop the city from flooding. Every time it rains, I worry. We are in a climate crisis."

She watched Hurricane Ian devastate the Florida coast weeks ago. "This is coming for all of us," she said of future storm fears.

Experts nationwide say hurricanes like Ian set off a familiar cycle: Another round of evaluations follows each storm, adding to the list of needed work, from the overhaul of aging inland stormwater management systems to infrastructure projects to address climate change concerns.

"We have to think of more sustainable ways to live along the coast," said Greg Tolley, executive director of the Water School at Florida Gulf Coast University. "We have to do things differently. The so-called 100-year storms and the Category 4 and 5 hurricanes are happening more frequently."

When Sandy made landfall just north of Atlantic City on Oct. 29, 2012, it touched off a rethinking on not just rebuilding the region, but on the effect of a warming planet and rising seas for all plans.

In New York, work began last year on a \$1.5 billion effort to protect Manhattan's Lower East Side by raising the East River shoreline about 8 feet. The project involves bulldozing around 1,000 trees and a waterfront park, then rebuilding it and a 1.2-mile-long (1.9 kilometer) floodwall on top of tons of fill. It's one phase of a ring of planned flood barriers and levees dubbed "The Big U." Completion isn't expected for years.

The project proceeded despite criticism that it cut too many mature trees. It's a common concern among environmental advocates and other experts: Each project may offer a solution to a singular issue while creating new problems, especially where climate change is involved.

"Because the challenges we face are very widespread and can vary — they might deal with something like long-term sea level rise or being prepared for a big storm shock like Sandy — I think we're at real risk of it showing up in a slightly different way, and we won't have the defenses in place to handle that," said Andrew Salkin, who co-founded New York-based nonprofit Resilient Cities Catalyst.

"Solely relying on hard infrastructure and gray infrastructure, like concrete and steel, to erect things to keep out nature is challenging," he said. "Over time, nature tends to win."

Last month, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers unveiled a \$52 billion proposal to build tidal gates and storm surge barriers to protect parts of New York and northern New Jersey. Construction would start in 2030 at the earliest, with projected completion in 2044 if all is approved and funded.

The Army Corps has a separate \$16 billion plan to build gates that could stop storm tides from surging up inlets and bays behind the Jersey Shore. It would be one of the costliest flood-prevention projects any state has undertaken, and there's no guarantee Congress will pay for any of it.

Some projects launched after Sandy are complete. A 4-mile (6.4 kilometer) steel wall is buried under the sand of replenished beaches in Mantoloking and Brick at the Jersey Shore, where storm surge cut a coastal highway in half and swept dozens of homes into Barnegat Bay.

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The Jet Star roller coaster — whose collapse into the ocean at Seaside Heights, New Jersey, became an iconic Sandy image — has been replaced with a new ride, built on the beach instead of over water.

A New Jersey train station where floodwater gushed in through an elevator shaft has been rebuilt with aquarium glass and flood doors that can be slammed and locked in less than a minute.

And billions of dollars have been spent hardening power infrastructure, ringing water and sewage treatment plants with better storm barriers, and elevating home electrical, heating and cooling equipment.

Officials admit the scope of that work is vast but say it's a fraction of what remains.

"Are we better off than we were before Sandy? No question," said LaTourette, the New Jersey official. "But it's not enough."

Complicating the calculus of storm protection was Hurricane Ida — a "humongous wakeup call," said Amy Chester, managing director of Rebuild by Design, an organization that worked with federal officials to jump-start post-Sandy resiliency projects.

"It showed us that every single community can flood, not just those in flood plains," she said.

The group says urban areas need to be transformed from concrete jungles into sponges by creating "resiliency parks" designed to flood during storms. The parks capture water that would otherwise flow into streets and sewer systems.

The city of Hoboken built two such parks after Sandy, with three more to come. They can hold millions of gallons of stormwater, some via large underground cisterns, one of which is the size of a city block.

New York has begun some work to improve inland drainage, including spending \$2.5 billion to upgrade antiquated sewers, though many billions more in spending would be needed to make the system capable of handling storms like either Sandy or Ida.

In the Bronx, the city hopes to take a brook diverted into the city's sewer system a century ago and bring it back above ground. That might help avoid a repeat of issues during Ida: The brook, swollen beyond capacity of the sewer pipes, ran onto a major city expressway and submerged cars.

Other work that began after Sandy and continues today includes six projects sponsored by Rebuild by Design and funded in part by nearly \$1 billion in federal seed money given in 2014. "The Big U" is among them. So is a resilient energy generation project in the Bronx and a plan to lessen flooding in northern New Jersey's Meadowlands. Other projects are in Hoboken and Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Some aspects of the largest projects could be completed next year, while others will take years more to finish.

"Am I happy with the pace? No," Chester of Rebuild by Design said. "But it is reality that it's going to take time to get our cities prepared for future storms. One thing we quickly realized is just how complex these projects are."

At a groundbreaking Wednesday for one segment of "The Big U," New York Mayor Eric Adams asked the federal government for another \$8.5 billion for future storm-protection projects.

"Sandy wasn't just a storm; it was a warning," he said, echoing officials' comments over the past decade. "Another storm could hit our city at any time."

And each storm is likely to bring more plans and adaptations.

Florida has been forced repeatedly to rethink its resiliency goals, from stronger construction codes adopted after Hurricane Andrew in 1992 to a \$1 billion plan approved last year to help communities build barriers, elevate roads, improve drainage and protect wetlands.

Tolley, the Florida educator, said Ian proved the need for urgency in all states' plans: "We need to have that conversation now about what we have to do and what things should look like 20, 30, 40 years from now."

In New Jersey, LaTourette agrees.

"The Sandys and the Idas will keep coming and they'll keep getting worse," he said.

"We have to get better at doing what we always say we'll do: Look at things from the perspective of what we leave our kids. We decide whether the barrier islands are still there for them in their retirement," LaTourette said. "We're deciding that now."

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### **AP sources: Musk in control of Twitter, ousts top executives**

By BARBARA ORTUTAY, TOM KRISHER and MATT O'BRIEN AP Business Writers

Elon Musk has taken control of Twitter and ousted the CEO, chief financial officer and the company's top lawyer, two people familiar with the deal said Thursday night.

The people wouldn't say if all the paperwork for the deal, originally valued at \$44 billion, had been signed or if the deal has closed. But they said Musk is in charge of the social media platform and has fired CEO Parag Agrawal, CFO Ned Segal and Chief Legal Counsel Vijaya Gadde. Neither person wanted to be identified because of the sensitive nature of the deal.

A few hours later, Musk tweeted, "the bird has been freed," a reference to Twitter's logo.

The departures came just hours before a deadline set by a Delaware judge to finalize the deal on Friday. She threatened to schedule a trial if no agreement was reached.

Although they came quickly, the major personnel moves had been widely expected and almost certainly are the first of many major changes the mercurial Tesla CEO will make.

Musk privately clashed with Agrawal in April, immediately before deciding to make a bid for the company, according to text messages later revealed in court filings.

About the same time, he used Twitter to criticize Gadde, the company's top lawyer. His tweets were followed by a wave of harassment of Gadde from other Twitter accounts. For Gadde, an 11-year Twitter employee who also heads public policy and safety, the harassment included racist and misogynistic attacks, in addition to calls for Musk to fire her. On Thursday, after she was fired, the harassing tweets lit up once again.

Musk's changes will be aimed at increasing Twitter's subscriber base and revenue.

In his first big move earlier on Thursday, Musk tried to soothe leery Twitter advertisers saying that he is buying the platform to help humanity and doesn't want it to become a "free-for-all hellscape."

The message appeared to be aimed at addressing concerns among advertisers — Twitter's chief source of revenue — that Musk's plans to promote free speech by cutting back on moderating content will open the floodgates to more online toxicity and drive away users.

"The reason I acquired Twitter is because it is important to the future of civilization to have a common digital town square, where a wide range of beliefs can be debated in a healthy manner, without resorting to violence," Musk wrote in an uncharacteristically long message for the Tesla CEO, who typically projects his thoughts in one-line tweets.

He continued: "There is currently great danger that social media will splinter into far right wing and far left wing echo chambers that generate more hate and divide our society."

Musk has previously expressed distaste for advertising and Twitter's dependence on it, suggesting more emphasis on other business models such as paid subscriptions that won't allow big corporations to dictate policy on how social media operates. But on Thursday, he assured advertisers he wants Twitter to be "the most respected advertising platform in the world."

The note is a shift from Musk's position that Twitter is unfairly infringing on free speech rights by blocking misinformation or graphic content, said Pinar Yildirim, associate professor of marketing at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

But it's also a realization that having no content moderation is bad for business, putting Twitter at risk of losing advertisers and subscribers, she said.

"You do not want a place where consumers just simply are bombarded with things they do not want to hear about, and the platform takes no responsibility," Yildirim said.

Musk said Twitter should be "warm and welcoming to all" and enable users to choose the experience they want to have.

Friday's deadline to close the deal was ordered by the Delaware Chancery Court in early October. It is the latest step in a battle that began in April with Musk signing a deal to acquire Twitter, then tried to back out of it, leading Twitter to sue the Tesla CEO to force him to go through with the acquisition. If the two sides don't meet Friday's deadline, the next step could be a November trial that could lead to a judge forcing Musk to complete the deal.

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But Musk has been signaling that the deal is going through. He strolled into the company's San Francisco headquarters Wednesday carrying a porcelain sink, changed his Twitter profile to "Chief Twit," and tweeted "Entering Twitter HQ — let that sink in!"

And overnight the New York Stock Exchange notified investors that it will suspend trading in shares of Twitter before the opening bell Friday in anticipation of the company going private under Musk.

Musk is expected to speak to Twitter employees directly Friday if the deal is finalized, according to an internal memo cited in several media outlets. Despite internal confusion and low morale tied to fears of layoffs or a dismantling of the company's culture and operations, Twitter leaders this week have at least outwardly welcomed Musk's arrival and messaging.

Top sales executive Sarah Personette, the company's chief customer officer, said she had a "great discussion" with Musk on Wednesday and appeared to endorse his Thursday message to advertisers.

"Our continued commitment to brand safety for advertisers remains unchanged," Personette tweeted Thursday. "Looking forward to the future!"

Musk's apparent enthusiasm about visiting Twitter headquarters this week stood in sharp contrast to one of his earlier suggestions: The building should be turned into a homeless shelter because so few employees actually worked there.

The Washington Post reported last week that Musk told prospective investors that he plans to cut three quarters of Twitter's 7,500 workers when he becomes owner of the company. The newspaper cited documents and unnamed sources familiar with the deliberation.

Musk has spent months deriding Twitter's "spam bots" and making sometimes contradictory pronouncements about Twitter's problems and how to fix them. But he has shared few concrete details about his plans for the social media platform.

Thursday's note to advertisers shows a newfound emphasis on advertising revenue, especially a need for Twitter to provide more "relevant ads" — which typically means targeted ads that rely on collecting and analyzing users' personal information.

Yildirim said that, unlike Facebook, Twitter has not been good at targeting advertising to what users want to see. Musk's message suggests he wants to fix that, she said.

Insider Intelligence principal analyst Jasmine Enberg said Musk has good reason to avoid a massive shakeup of Twitter's ad business because Twitter's revenues have taken a beating from the weakening economy, months of uncertainty surrounding Musk's proposed takeover, changing consumer behaviors and the fact that "there's no other revenue source waiting in the wings."

"Even slightly loosening content moderation on the platform is sure to spook advertisers, many of whom already find Twitter's brand safety tools to be lacking compared with other social platforms," Enberg said.

#### Arizona agrees not to enforce total abortion ban until 2023

By BOB CHRISTIE Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Arizona's attorney general has agreed not to enforce a near total ban on abortions at least until next year, a move that Planned Parenthood Arizona credited Thursday with allowing the group to restart abortion care across the state.

The state's largest provider of abortions restarted services at only their Tucson clinics after an appeals court blocked enforcement of the old law on Oct. 7. A lower court had allowed enforcement of that law on Sept. 23, halting all abortions statewide.

On Thursday, Planned Parenthood said services would resume statewide, including at clinics in metro Phoenix and in Flagstaff.

"While we are celebrating today, we can't ignore that we are still on a long an uncertain path to restoring the fundamental right to abortion in Arizona, and making this essential healthcare truly accessible and equitable for all people," Brittany Fonteno, who heads Planned Parenthood Arizona, said at a news conference. "While abortion is currently legal in Arizona and we have resumed abortion care throughout the state, we know that this could very well be temporary."

The only exception to the law is if the mother's life is in jeopardy. The pre-statehood abortion ban law
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had been blocked since Roe was decided in 1973, but Republican Attorney General Mark Brnovich asked a court in Tucson to allow it to be enforced this summer. The law dating to 1864 carries a prison sentence of two to five years.

After the judge in Tucson agreed with Brnovich, the court of appeals temporarily overrode her and set a schedule for Planned Parenthood and the Arizona attorney general's office lawyers to file their legal briefs in the appeal. Those document are due by a Nov. 17 deadline.

Meanwhile, a Phoenix physician who runs a clinic that provides abortions and the Arizona Medical Association filed a separate lawsuit that sought to block the territorial-era law, arguing that laws enacted by the Legislature after 1973's Roe v. Wade decision should take precedence and abortions should be allowed until 15 weeks into a pregnancy.

The lawsuit filed by a Phoenix abortion doctor and the Arizona Medical Association repeated many of the arguments made by Planned Parenthood in their failed effort last month to persuade the Tucson judge to keep in place a 50-year-old injunction barring enforcement of the old law. The judge said it was not procedurally proper for her to try to reconcile 50 years of later law with the old law.

Brnovich sought to place that lawsuit on hold until the court of appeals rules on the Planned Parenthood case. In an agreement with the abortion rights groups, he agreed not to enforce the old law until at least 45 days after a final ruling in the original case.

Any decision by the court of appeals is certain to be appealed to the state Supreme Court, so any final decision could take well into 2023.

A law enacted by the Legislature this year limits abortions to 15 weeks into a pregnancy, well before the 24 weeks generally allowed under the Roe decision that was overruled by the U.S. Supreme Court in June.

Arizona women seeking abortions have been whipsawed by the state's competing laws since the high court's decision. Also in play is a "personhood" law that raised fears by providers that they could face charges under that law before a federal judge blocked it in July.

Abortion providers halted all care in the state after Roe was struck down, restarted in mid-July after the personhood law was blocked, and stopped them again when the Tucson judge allowed the 1864 law to be enforced.

#### Auto prices finally begin to creep down from inflated highs

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — All summer long, Aleen Hudson kept looking for a new minivan or SUV for her growing passenger shuttle service.

She had a good credit rating and enough cash for a down payment. Yet dealerships in the Detroit area didn't have any suitable vehicles. Or they'd demand she pay \$3,000 to \$6,000 above the sticker price. Months of frustration left her despondent.

"I was depressed," Hudson said. "I was angry, too."

A breakthrough arrived in late September, when a dealer called about a 2022 Chrysler Pacifica. At \$41,000, it was hardly a bargain. And it wasn't quite what Hudson wanted. Yet the dealer was asking only slightly above sticker price, and Hudson felt in no position to walk away. She's back in business with her own van.

It could have been worse. Hudson made her purchase just as the prices of both new and used vehicles have been inching down from their eye-watering record highs and more vehicles are gradually becoming available at dealerships. Hudson's van likely would have cost even more a few months ago.

Not that anyone should expect prices to fall anywhere near where they were before the pandemic recession struck in early 2020. The swift recovery from the recession left automakers short of parts and vehicles to meet demand. Price skyrocketed, and they've scarcely budged since.

Prices on new and used vehicles remain 30% to 50% above where they were when the pandemic erupted. The average used auto cost nearly \$31,000 last month. The average new? \$47,000. With higher prices and loan rates combining to push average monthly payments on a new vehicle above \$700, millions of buyers have been priced out of the new-vehicle market and are now confined to used vehicles.

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The high prices are yielding substantial profits for most automakers despite sluggish sales. On Tuesday, for example, General Motors reported that its third-quarter net profit jumped more than 36%, thanks in part to sales of pricey pickup trucks and large SUVs.

Still, as Hudson discovered, many vehicles are becoming slightly more affordable. Signs first emerged weeks ago in the 40-million-sales-a-year used market. As demand waned and inventories rose, prices eased from their springtime heights.

CarMax said it sold nearly 15,000 fewer vehicles last guarter than it had a year earlier. The CEO of the used-vehicle company, based in Richmond, Virginia, pointed to inflation, higher borrowing rates and diminished consumer confidence.

A "buyer's strike" is how Adam Jonas, an auto analyst at Morgan Stanley, characterized the sales drops a dynamic that typically foretells lower prices. And indeed, the average used vehicle price in September was down 1% from its May peak, according to Edmunds.com.

At AutoNation, the nation's largest dealership chain, sales of used vehicles and profit-per-vehicle both dropped last guarter. CEO Mike Manley noted that while the supply of vehicles remains low, used-auto prices are declining.

"Our analysis shows that we are coming off the high values that we saw before," Manley told analysts Thursday.

Ivan Drury, director of insights at Edmunds cautioned that it will take years for used prices to fall close to their pre-pandemic levels. Since 2020, automakers haven't been leasing as many cars, thereby choking off one key source of late-model used vehicles.

Similarly, rental companies haven't been able to buy many new vehicles. So eventually, they are selling fewer autos into the used market. That's crimped another source of vehicles. And because used cars aren't sitting long on dealer lots, demand remains strong enough to prop up prices.

When auto prices first soared two years ago, lower-income buyers were elbowed out of the new-vehicle market. Eventually, many of them couldn't afford even used autos. People with subprime credit scores (620 or below) bought only 5% of new vehicles last month, down from nearly 9% before the pandemic. That indicated that many lower-income households could no longer afford vehicles, said J.D. Power Vice President Tyson Jominy.

Higher borrowing rates have compounded the problem. In January 2020, shortly before the pandemic hit, used-vehicle buyers paid an average of 8.4% annual interest, according to Edmunds. Monthly payments averaged \$412. By last month, the average rate had reached 9.2%. And because prices had risen for over two years, the average payment had jumped to \$567.

The 1% average drop in used prices will help financially secure buyers with solid credit scores who can qualify for lower loan rates. But for those with poor credit and lower incomes, any price drop will be wiped out by higher borrowing costs.

The new-vehicle market, by contrast, has become an option mainly for affluent buyers. Automakers are increasingly deploying scarce computer chips to make costly, loaded-out versions of pickups, SUVs and other outsize vehicles, typically with relatively low gas mileage. Last month, the average price of a new vehicle was down slightly from August but remained more than \$11,000 above its level in January 2020.

Glenn Mears, who runs five dealerships south of Canton, Ohio, says the Federal Reserve's interest rate hikes, by contributing to pricier auto loans, are slowing his showroom traffic.

"We can feel some pullback," he said.

Analysts generally say that with shortages of computer chips and other parts still hobbling factories, new-vehicle prices won't likely fall substantially. But further modest price drops may be likely. The availability of vehicles on U.S. dealer lots improved to nearly 1.4 million vehicles last month, up from 1 million for most of the year, Cox Automotive reported.

Before the pandemic, normal supply was far higher — around 4 million. So historically speaking, inventory remains tight and demand still high. Like Hudson, many buyers are still stuck paying sticker price or above.

"It's extraordinarily expensive these days," said Jominy, who estimates that there are still 5 million U.S.

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customers waiting to buy new vehicles.

Despite recent stock market declines, many such buyers have built up wealth, especially in their homes, and are rewarding themselves with high-end autos. In the San Francisco Bay area, for example, notes Inder Dosanjh, who runs a 20-dealership group that includes General Motors, Ford, Acura, Volkswagen and Stellantis brands, many people have received substantial pay raises.

"There's just a lot of money out there," he said.

In its earnings report Tuesday, GM noted that its customer demand is holding up. Though GM and other automakers would like to produce more vehicles, at the moment they are benefiting from slower production, which typically means higher prices and profits.

John Lawler, Ford's chief financial officer, noted Wednesday that near-record new-vehicle prices were starting to decline. And consumer appetites are starting to change: Demand for midrange vehicles, he said, has begun to outpace more profitable autos loaded with options.

Next year could be a turning point, suggested Jeff Windau, an analyst at Edward Jones. With the economy likely to weaken and possibly enter a recession, prices could fall "as consumers become more focused on their financial situation and what they're willing to bite off from a payment perspective."

#### Prosecutors take charge of probe into Baldwin shooting

#### MORGAN LEE Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — A sheriff's department submitted on Thursday its investigative findings to prosecutors in the death of a cinematographer shot and killed by Alec Baldwin on a film set in New Mexico in October 2021.

Santa Fe Sheriff's Office spokesman Juan Ríos said that two binders of information were turned over to the Santa Fe-based district attorney's office, without setting forth any recommendations about possible criminal charges.

He said the case file outlines all the evidence collected, including investigative interviews and forensic analysis of physical evidence by the FBI. District Attorney Mary Carmack-Altwies said through a spokeswoman that investigators and prosecutors will now begin a thorough review to make a timely decision about whether to bring charges, without mention of specific deadlines.

Cinematographer Halyna Hutchins died shortly after being wounded by a gunshot during setup for a scene in the western movie "Rust" at a filmset ranch on the outskirts of Santa Fe on Oct. 21, 2021. Baldwin was pointing a pistol at Hutchins when the gun went off went off, killing her and wounding the director, Joel Souza.

The Santa Fe Sheriff's Office already has made public a vast trove of law enforcement files concerning the deadly shooting, including lapel camera video of the mortally wounded Hutchins, witness interrogations, email threads, text conversations, inventories of ammunition and hundreds of photographs.

Santa Fe County Sheriff Adan Mendoza has described "a degree of neglect" on the film set for "Rust" but is leaving decisions about potential criminal charges to prosecutors.

The family of Hutchins — widower Matthew Hutchins and 9-year-old son Andros — recently settled a lawsuit against producers of "Rust" under an agreement that aims to restart filming with Matthew's involvement as executive producer.

Baldwin has said the gun went off accidentally and that he did not pull the trigger. But a recent FBI forensic report found the weapon could not not have fired unless the trigger was pulled.

New Mexico's Office of the Medical Investigator determined the shooting was an accident following the completion of an autopsy and a review of law enforcement reports.

Rust Movie Productions continues to challenge the basis of a \$137,000 fine against the company by New Mexico occupational safety regulators who say production managers on the set failed to follow standard industry protocols for firearms safety. The state Occupational Health and Safety Review Commission has scheduled an eight-day hearing on the disputed sanctions in April 2023.

In April, New Mexico's Occupational Health and Safety Bureau imposed the maximum fine against Rust

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Movie Productions and distributed a scathing narrative of safety failures, including testimony that production managers took limited or no action to address two misfires of blank ammunition on set prior to the fatal shooting.

Rust Movie Productions told safety regulators that misfires prior to the fatal shooting of Hutchins did not violate safety protocols and that "appropriate corrective actions were taken," including briefings of cast and crew.

Other legal troubles persist in relation to the film and the deadly shooting.

#### **Baker laments lack of US-born Black players in World Series**

By KRISTIE RIEKEN AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Dusty Baker grew up watching Black stars shine in the World Series, paving his path to a life devoted to baseball.

When he leads the Houston Astros in Game 1 of the World Series against the Philadelphia Phillies on Friday night, the AL and NL champions are expected to play without any U.S.-born Black players for the first time since 1950, shortly after Jackie Robinson broke the Major League Baseball color barrier.

It's a fact that deeply disturbs the 73-year-old Baker, one of two Black MLB managers, who has spent his entire life either playing or coaching baseball.

"What hurts is that I don't know how much hope that it gives some of the young African-American kids," Baker told The Associated Press on Thursday. "Because when I was their age, I had a bunch of guys, (Willie) Mays, (Hank) Aaron, Frank Robinson, Tommy Davis — my hero — Maury Wills, all these guys. We need to do something before we lose them."

Jackie Robinson debuted in 1947 with the Brooklyn Dodgers and played in the World Series that year. Since then, the 1950 matchup between the New York Yankees and Phillies has been the only World Series without a U.S.-born Black player.

Houston and Philadelphia will announce their 26-man rosters several hours before Game 1 on Friday night at Minute Maid Park, and neither is expected to have a U.S.-born Black player. Michael Brantley, a Black outfielder for Houston, is out for the season because of a shoulder injury.

"I don't think that that's something that baseball should really be proud of," said Baker, who won a World Series as an outfielder with the Dodgers in 1981 and is seeking his first championship as a manager. "It looks bad. It lets people know that it didn't take a year or even a decade to get to this point."

Indeed, the dwindling number of Black MLB players has been an issue for years. Richard Lapchick, director of The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at Central Florida is the lead author for his group's annual reports on diversity hiring practices in sports. He said that Black players made up just 7.2% of opening day roster this year, the lowest percentage since study data was first collected in 1991, when 18% of MLB players were Black.

Starting in 1954, when Mays and the New York Giants played against Larry Doby and Cleveland, every single team to reach the World Series had at least one U.S.-born Black player until the 2005 Astros did not.

The Phillies had no Black players on their opening roster this year for the first time since 1959. Roman Quinn, a Black backup outfielder, played 23 games before being released.

Philadelphia power-hitting rookie Darick Hall made his debut in late June and played 41 games — his mother is white and his father is Black and white, and he identifies as multiracial. Hall wasn't on the Phillies' roster for any of the first three rounds this postseason and isn't expected to be on the World Series roster.

Last summer, for the first time in MLB draft history, four of the first five players selected were Black.

All four, along with more than 300 big leaguers including Atlanta's Michael Harris II, Cincinnati's Hunter Greene, Pittsburgh's Ke'Bryan Hayes and Milwaukee's Devin Williams, took part in MLB diversity-based initiatives such as the MLB Youth Academy, DREAM Series and the Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) program.

While "very disappointed and discouraged" with the situation this year, Baker hopes the makeup of the top of the most recent draft means this will be the last World Series where U.S.-born Black players aren't

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represented.

"There is help on the way," he said. "You can tell by the number of African-American number one draft choices. The academies are producing players. So hopefully in the near future we won't have to talk about this anymore or even be in this situation."

#### 'Burn boss' arrest inflames Western land use tensions

By ANDREW SELSKY Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — When U.S. Forest Service personnel carried out a planned burn in a national forest in Oregon on Oct. 13, it wound up burning fencing that a local family, the Hollidays, uses to corral cattle. The crew returned six days later to restart the burn, but the flames then spread onto the family's ranch and resulted in the arrest of "burn boss" Rick Snodgrass.

Repercussions of the singular incident in the remote corner of eastern Oregon have reached all the way to Washington, D.C., where Forest Service Chief Randy Moore denounced the arrest. But the ranching family is applauding Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley's actions.

"It was just negligence, starting a fire when it was so dry, right next to private property," said Sue Holliday, matriarch of the family.

The incident has once again exposed tensions over land management in the West, where the federal government owns nearly half of all the land.

In 2016, that tension resulted in the 41-day occupation by armed right-wing extremists of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in adjacent Harney County to protest the imprisonment of two ranchers, Dwight Hammond and his son Steven, who were convicted of arson for setting fires on federal land.

In a telephone interview, Tonna Holliday, Sue's daughter, said whoever was responsible for burning up to 40 acres (16 hectares) of their property should face justice.

"How can the Hammonds be held accountable but the United States Forest Service not be held accountable when it's the same thing?" Holliday said.

However, the Hammonds were convicted of felony arson for intentionally setting fires on federal land, including a fire set to allegedly cover up their slaughter of a herd of deer. Snodgrass is being investigated for alleged reckless burning, a misdemeanor.

The practice of mechanical thinning and planned fires in overgrown forests is credited with saving homes, for example during a 2017 wildfire near Sisters, Oregon. But some efforts have gone terribly awry, including causing the largest fire in New Mexico's history earlier this year. Several hundred homes were destroyed, livelihoods of the rural residents were lost and water supply systems were compromised.

The federal agency acknowledged in a review that it failed to consider the historic drought and unfavorable spring weather conditions as fire managers attempted to reduce flammable undergrowth in northern New Mexico.

Moore said following the review that the agency must account for its actions. This week he told Forest Service workers that he's got their backs.

"Prescribed fire is a critical tool for reducing wildfire risk, protecting communities, and improving the health and resiliency of the nation's forest and grasslands," Moore said on the Forest Service website. "I will aggressively engage to ensure our important work across the country is allowed to move forward unhampered as you carry out duties in your official capacity."

Forest Service spokesman Jon McMillan said the fencing that was burned on Oct. 13 has already been repaired.

"We regularly plan and conduct prescribed burns in areas with allotments fences and it's standard practice to fix any fence posts damaged by the burn," he said.

Over the past dozen years, prescribed fire has accounted for an average of 51% of the acreage of hazardous fuels reduction accomplished, or an average of 1.4 million acres per year, the Forest Service says.

Grant County covers 4,529 square miles (11,730 square kilometers) — four times the size of Rhode Island — and is studded with forests and mountains, blanketed by grasslands and high deserts. Only

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7,200 people reside there, many tracing their Oregon roots back to wagon train days. The Hollidays and other ranchers used to drive hundreds of cattle annually through the nearby town of John Day, in scenes reminiscent of the Old West.

The Holliday ranch covers more than 6,000 acres (2,400 hectares) and has about 1,000 head of cattle. This time of year, before the snow falls, the cattle are being driven from the family's grazing allotments in the Malheur National Forest onto a large pasture holding area, and then onto the ranch.

On Oct. 19, dark gray smoke from the prescribed fire loomed over some of the cattle as they grazed in the pasture. Soon enough, the fire jumped onto the Holliday's ranch. It burned large stands of ponderosa pines that Tonna Holliday's uncle, Darrell Holliday, said he helped plant two decades ago.

Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter on Tuesday defended the arrest of Snodgrass, who was handcuffed and taken to the county jail before being conditionally released. Carpenter said an investigation into the case could last for weeks or even months and that once it's completed, he'll decide whether to charge Snodgrass.

The Hollidays say they want justice done.

"We're just standing up for what we believe in, and this is our land," Tonna Holliday said. "And that's really what it comes down to."

She dissociated the family from extremists like Ammon Bundy, who led the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge takeover. The Bundy family has a history of opposition to the federal government. Bundy's father had refused to pay federal cattle grazing fees in Nevada, leading to an armed standoff there in 2014.

"The Bundys, they were extreme," Holliday said. "They didn't pay their grazing fees. We believe in paying off grazing fees, running our cows out there responsibly, working with our range management and doing it that way."

#### Hawaii's Big Island gets warning as huge volcano rumbles

By AUDREY MCAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Hawaii officials are warning residents of the Big Island that the world's largest active volcano, Mauna Loa, is sending signals that it may erupt.

Scientists say an eruption isn't imminent, but they are on alert because of a recent spike in earthquakes at the volcano's summit. Experts say it would take just a few hours for lava to reach homes closest to vents on the volcano, which last erupted in 1984.

Hawaii's civil defense agency is holding meetings across the island to educate residents about how to prepare for a possible emergency. They recommend having a "go" bag with food, identifying a place to stay once they leave home and making a plan for reuniting with family members.

"Not to panic everybody, but they have to be aware of that you live on the slopes of Mauna Loa. There's a potential for some kind of lava disaster," said Talmadge Magno, the administrator for Hawaii County Civil Defense.

The volcano makes up 51% of the Hawaii Island landmass, so a large portion of the island has the potential to be affected by an eruption, Magno said.

There's been a surge of development on the Big Island in recent decades — its population has more than doubled to 200,000 today from 92,000 in 1980 — and many newer residents weren't around when Mauna Loa last erupted 38 years ago. All the more reason why Magno said officials are spreading the word about the science of the volcano and urging people to be prepared.

Mauna Loa, rising 13,679 feet (4,169 meters) above sea level, is the much larger neighbor to Kilauea volcano, which erupted in a residential neighborhood and destroyed 700 homes in 2018. Some of its slopes are much steeper than Kilauea's so when it erupts, its lava can flow much faster.

During a 1950 eruption, the mountain's lava traveled 15 miles (24 kilometers) to the ocean in less than three hours.

The Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, which is part of the U.S. Geological Survey, said Mauna Loa has been in a state of "heightened unrest" since the middle of last month when the number of summit earthquakes

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jumped from 10 to 20 per day to 40 to 50 per day.

Scientists believe more earthquakes are occurring because more magma is flowing into Mauna Loa's summit reservoir system from the hot spot under the earth's surface that feeds molten rock to Hawaii's volcanoes.

The temblors have declined in frequency in recent days but could rise again.

More than 220 people attended a community meeting last weekend that county civil defense officials held in Ocean View, a neighborhood that lava could reach in hours if molten rock erupts through vents on Mauna Loa's southwest flank.

Bob Werner, an Ocean View resident who didn't attend the meeting, said it's wise to be aware of a possible eruption but not to fear it. He's not concerned that the neighborhood would be completely cut off, if lava flows across the only road connecting it to the bigger towns of Kailua-Kona and Hilo, where many people do their shopping.

The "greater concern is it will be extremely annoying to drive an extra hour or two hours to get the same stuff," he said.

Ryan Williams, the owner of the Margarita Village bar in Hilo, said the volcanic unrest wasn't worrying customers who are used to warnings.

There could still be a heightened sense of urgency since officials have been holding town hall meetings, urging people to prepare.

"But everything I've read or heard, they trying to kind of assure people that conditions have not changed," Williams said. "There's no imminent eruption, but just to be alert."

Magno said his agency is talking to residents now because communities closest to vents likely wouldn't have enough time to learn how to respond and prepare once the observatory raises its alert level to "watch," which means an eruption is imminent.

The current alert level is "advisory" meaning the volcano is showing signs of unrest yet there's no indication an eruption is likely or certain.

Residents in other parts of the island would have more time to react.

Lava from Mauna Loa's northeast flank could take days or weeks to reach residential communities. That's because the mountain's slopes on that side are relatively gentle and because towns are farther from volcanic vents.

Frank Trusdell, research geologist at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, said all of Mauna Loa's eruptions in recorded history have started in its summit crater. About half of them stayed there, while the other half later spewed lava from vents lower down the mountain.

Lava erupting from the summit generally doesn't travel far enough to reach residential areas.

Mauna Loa has erupted 33 times since 1843. It last erupted in 1984 when lava flowed down its eastern flank only to stop 4.5 miles (7.2 kilometers) short of Hilo, the Big Island's most populous town.

Mauna Loa also has a history of disgorging huge volumes of lava.

In the 1950 eruption, which lasted for 23 days, Mauna Loa released 1,000 cubic meters (1,307 cubic yards) of lava per second. In contrast, Kilauea released 300 cubic meters (392 cubic yards) per second in 2018.

The earthquakes could continue for a while before any eruption: increased seismic activity lasted for a year before a 1975 eruption and a year-and-a-half before the 1984 one. Alternatively, the temblors could subside and Mauna Loa may not erupt this time.

Trusdell said residents should look at his agency's maps and learn how quickly lava may show up in their neighborhood. He also urged people living in one of the short-notice areas to pay attention if the summit turns red.

"All you got to do is look up there and see the glow. You grab your stuff, throw it in the car and drive. Go!" he said.

They can always go home after if the lava ultimately doesn't flow into their neighborhood, he said.

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#### Ukraine attacks Russia's hold on southern city of Kherson

By ANDREW MELDRUM Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian forces attacked Russia's hold on the southern city of Kherson on Thursday while fighting intensified in the country's east. The battles came amid reports that Moscow-appointed authorities have abandoned the city, joining tens of thousands of residents who fled to other Russia-held areas.

Ukrainian forces were surrounding Kherson from the west and attacking Russia's foothold on the west bank of the Dnieper River, which divides the region and the country.

As the battles unfolded, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Moscow has no intention to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine, despite issuing repeated warnings in the past that he was prepared to use all available means to defend Russia, including its nuclear arsenal.

"We see no need for that," Putin said at a conference of international foreign policy experts outside Moscow. "There is no point in that, neither political nor military."

The Russian leader, who insisted for weeks before the invasion that he did not intend to attack Ukraine, also sought to cast the conflict as part of efforts by the West to secure global domination. He accused the U.S. and its allies of trying to dictate their terms to other nations in a "dangerous and bloody" domination game.

Putin, whose troops invaded on Feb. 24, has described Western support for Ukraine as part of broad efforts by Washington and its allies to enforce what they call a rules-based world order that only foments chaos.

Meanwhile, Russia warned that Moscow could target Western commercial satellites used for military purposes in support of Ukraine, and a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman accused the United States of pursuing "thoughtless and mad" escalation.

Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova argued that Washington should take an approach more like it did during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, when the Cold War superpowers stepped back from the brink of nuclear confrontation.

"The more the U.S. is drawn into supporting the Kyiv regime on the battlefield, the more they risk provoking a direct military confrontation between the biggest nuclear powers fraught with catastrophic consequences," Zakharova said.

Ukraine has pushed ahead with an offensive to reclaim the Kherson region and its capital of the same name, which Russian forces captured during the first days of a war now in its ninth month.

More than 70,000 residents from the Kherson city area have evacuated in recent days, the region's Kremlin-installed governor, Vladimir Saldo, said Thursday.

Members of the Russia-backed regional administration also fled, the deputy governor, Kirill Stremousov said. Monuments to Russian heroes were moved, along with the remains of Grigory Potemkin, the Russian general who founded Kherson in the 18th century. His remains were kept at the city's St. Catherine's Church.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described reports of Russian troops' possible withdrawal from the city as disinformation.

"I don't see them fleeing from Kherson," Zelenskyy said in an interview with Italy's Corriere della Sera newspaper. "This is an information attack, so that we go there, transfer troops from other dangerous directions there."

Zelenskyy also dismissed as "theater" recent attempts by local Kremlin-backed officials to persuade the city's civilian residents to relocate deeper into Russian-held territory ahead of the Ukrainian advance.

"Their most trained soldiers are in position. We see this and do not believe them," Zelenskyy said.

In eastern Ukraine, Russian forces continued to bombard the city of Bakhmut in the Donetsk region, making slow gains toward the center.

The deputy head of Russia's delegation at a U.N. arms control panel, Konstantin Vorontsov, described the use of U.S. and other Western commercial satellites for military purposes during the fighting as "extremely dangerous."

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"The quasi-civilian infrastructure could be a legitimate target for a retaliatory strike," Vorontsov warned. As they have all month, Russian forces carried out attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure that have caused increasing worry ahead of winter.

A Russian drone attack early Thursday hit an energy facility near the capital of Kyiv, causing a fire, said Kyiv regional Gov. Oleksiy Kuleba. He said the latest attacks inflicted "very serious damage."

Kuleba announced new rolling blackouts and urged consumers to save power. He said authorities were still pondering how to restore service.

Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of Ukraine's presidential office, said rolling blackouts would also be introduced in the neighboring Chernihiv, Cherkasy and Zhytomyr regions.

Zelenskyy has said that Russian attacks have already destroyed 30% of the country's energy infrastructure.

In a likely response to Russia's assaults on Ukrainian infrastructure, a drone attacked a power plant just outside Sevastopol, a port in the Russian-annexed region of Crimea. The plant sustained minor damage, according to city leader Mikhail Razvozhayev. He said electricity supplies were uninterrupted.

Crimea was annexed by Russia from Ukraine in 2014. It has faced drone attacks and explosions amid the fighting in Ukraine. In a major setback for the Kremlin, a powerful truck bomb blew up a section of a strategic bridge linking Crimea to Russia's mainland on Oct. 8.

A senior Ukrainian military officer accused Russia of planning to stage explosions at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant and blame them on Ukraine in a false-flag attack.

Gen. Oleksii Gromov, the chief of the main operational department of the Ukrainian military's general staff, pointed to Moscow's repeated unfounded allegations that Ukraine was plotting to detonate a radioactive dirty bomb as a possible signal that Moscow was planning explosions at the plant, Europe's largest nuclear power station.

Russia took control of the Zaporizhzhia plant in the opening days of the invasion. Russia and Ukraine have accused each other of attacking the plant, which had its reactors shut down following continuous shelling.

Elsewhere, Ukrainian authorities reported that another mass grave was discovered in territory recently reclaimed from Russia. It contained up to 17 bodies of soldiers and civilians.

The Ukrainian Interior Ministry said in a statement that police found the grave outside the city of Izium after being tipped off by local residents.

The statement cited locals as saying that Russian troops dumped bodies in a pit outside the nearby village of Kopanky in mid-April, then leveled the ground with tanks.

In other developments, Ukrainian authorities said they were launching a criminal case against Russia's children's rights commissioner, accusing her of enabling the abduction and forced adoption of thousands of vulnerable Ukrainian children.

Maria Lvova-Belova said this week that she herself has adopted a boy seized by the Russian army in the bombed-out city of Mariupol.

Last month, she was sanctioned by the U.S., U.K. and other Western nations over allegations that she masterminded the removal of over 2,000 vulnerable children from the embattled Donetsk and Luhansk region in Ukraine's east. According to Ukraine, she orchestrated a new policy to facilitate their forced placement with "foster families" in Russia.

Zelenskyy ended the day on an emotional note, pointing out in his nightly address to the nation that Ukraine on Friday marks the anniversary of its liberation from the Nazis in World War II. This year, he said, the holiday carries special significance.

"Evil always ends the same way. The occupier becomes a capitulator, the invader — a fugitive. War criminals become defendants. Aggression becomes a court verdict. Destruction turns into reparations. Enemy equipment becomes museum exhibits," Zelenskyy said.

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#### Divers find bone believed to be human at receding Lake Mead

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Divers have found more human remains at drought-stricken Lake Mead near Las Vegas, authorities said Thursday.

A National Park Service dive team confirmed Oct. 18 that a bone found a day earlier at Callville Bay was part of "human skeletal remains" on the Nevada side of the Colorado River reservoir behind Hoover Dam, according to a statement from the Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

"At this time, no foul play is suspected," the statement said, and the Clark County coroner's office in Las Vegas was working to confirm the identity of the dead person.

The discovery marked at least the sixth time since early May that remains identified as human have been discovered in shallow water or on the dramatically receding shore of the lake. The water level has dropped more than 180 feet (55 meters) since the lake was full in 1983, putting it at less than 27% full today.

A man's body found stuffed in a barrel near Hemenway Harbor on May 1 has not been identified, but Las Vegas police said he had been shot, probably between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s, and his death is being investigated as a homicide.

Remains found May 7 at Callville Bay were identified in August as Thomas Erndt, a 42-year-old Las Vegas man believed to have drowned during a family boat outing in 2002. Callville Bay is one of several lake marina and resort areas.

Several more sets of partial human skeletal remains have been found since then — including on July 25, Aug. 6 and Aug. 16 — generally near a swimming area at the lake. They were not in barrels.

Seven states in the U.S. West and Mexico draw water from the Colorado River. Scientists attribute the drop in lake water levels to a warmer and drier climate affected by atmospheric warming, mainly due to rising levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

#### Knife attack in Italy kills 1, wounds soccer player, others

MILAN (AP) — A man grabbed a knife from a supermarket shelf Thursday and stabbed five people, killing one and wounding four others, including Spanish soccer player Pablo Mari, Italian authorities said. Police arrested a 46-year-old Italian man suspected in the attack at a shopping center in Assago, a

suburb of Milan, carabinieri said.

A supermarket employee died en route to the hospital, according to the news agency ANSA, which said three other victims were in serious condition. Another person was treated for shock but not hospitalized, police said.

The motive for the attacks was unknown, but police said the man showed signs of being psychologically unstable. There were no elements to suggest terrorism.

Mari, who is on loan to the Serie A club Monza from Arsenal, was among the wounded. Arsenal said in a statement that Mari was at the hospital but was not seriously hurt.

Monza club CEO Adrian Galliano wished the soccer player a speedy recovery in a message posted on Twitter.

"Dear Pablo, we are all close to your and to your family, we love you, continue to fight as you know how, you are a warrior and will heal quickly," Galliano said.

Witnesses told ANSA they saw people fleeing the supermarket in shock, and as the gravity of the situation became clear, shop workers pulled down the store's shutters.

The Carrefour supermarket chain said that police and ambulance crews responded immediately to calls alerting them about the attack. The chain expressed its sympathies to employees and clients affected by the attack and said it was offering them psychological support.

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#### Russia's Putin says he won't use nuclear weapons in Ukraine

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday denied having any intentions of using nuclear weapons in Ukraine but described the conflict there as part of alleged efforts by the West to secure its global domination, which he insisted are doomed to fail.

Speaking at a conference of international foreign policy experts, Putin said it's pointless for Russia to strike Ukraine with nuclear weapons.

"We see no need for that," Putin said. "There is no point in that, neither political, nor military."

Putin said an earlier warning of his readiness to use "all means available to protect Russia" didn't amount to nuclear saber-rattling but was merely a response to Western statements about their possible use of nuclear weapons.

He particularly mentioned Liz Truss saying in August that she would be ready to use nuclear weapons if she became Britain's prime minister, a remark which he said worried the Kremlin.

"What were we supposed to think?" Putin said. "We saw that as a coordinated position, an attempt to blackmail us."

In a long speech full of diatribes against the United States and its allies, Putin accused them of trying to dictate their terms to other nations in a "dangerous, bloody and dirty" domination game.

Putin, who sent his troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, has cast Western support for Ukraine as part of broad efforts by Washington and its allies to enforce its will upon others through a rules-based world order. He argued that the world has reached a turning point, when "the West is no longer able to dictate its will to humankind but still tries to do it, and the majority of nations no longer want to tolerate it."

The Russian leader claimed that the Western policies will foment more chaos, adding that "he who sows the wind will reap the whirlwind."

Putin claimed that "humankind now faces a choice: accumulate a load of problems that will inevitably crush us all or try to find solutions that may not be ideal but could work and could make the world more stable and secure."

Without offering evidence, the Russian leader repeated Moscow's unproven allegation that Ukraine was plotting a false flag attack involving a radioactive dirty bomb it would try to pin on Russia.

Ukraine has strongly rejected the claim, and its Western allies have dismissed it as "transparently false." Ukraine argued Russia might be making the unfounded allegation to serve as a cover for its own possible plot to detonate a dirty bomb.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told reporters on Thursday that the U.S. has still not seen anything to indicate that Putin has decided to use a dirty bomb.

Putin said he personally ordered Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu to call his foreign counterparts to tell them about the purported plot. He maintained that Russia knows the Ukrainian facilities working on the project.

He mocked the allegations by Ukraine and the West that Russia was firing on the territory of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in southern Ukraine as "ravings." Russian troops have occupied the plant, Europe's largest, since the early days of the conflict.

Putin also expressed bewilderment about Washington's policy on China, noting that tensions sparked by a recent visit to Taiwan by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi come amid the U.S.-Russian showdown over Ukraine.

"Why spoil relations with China at the same time?" Putin said. "It seems to defy logic and common sense. It looks like ravings."

He hailed Russia's relations with China, but said he hadn't warned Chinese President Xi Jinping about his intention to send troops into Ukraine when he visited Beijing days before that to attend the 2022 Winter Olympics.

Ásked about Washinton's threat to re-evaluate its relationship with Saudi Arabia over the Riyadh-led OPEC+ alliance's move to cut oil production, Putin argued that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was acting in his nation's interests and the need to stabilize global energy markets.

"They need to respect the crown prince and Saudi Arabia, and they will respond in kind," Putin said.

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"And they will also respond in kind if they are spoken to in a boorish manner."

The Russian leader said Russia isn't the enemy of the West but will continue to oppose the purported diktat of Western neo-liberal elites, accusing them of trying to subdue Russia.

"Their goal is to make Russia more vulnerable and turn it into an instrument for fulfilling their geopolitical tasks, they have failed to achieve it and they will never succeed," Putin said.

Putin reaffirmed his long-held claim that Russians and Ukrainians are part of a single people and again denigrated Ukraine as an "artificial state" that received historic Russian lands from Communist rulers during the Soviet times.

In that context, he acknowledged that the fighting in Ukraine effectively amounts to a civil war, although the Kremlin calls its actions in Ukraine a "special military operation."

Putin said he thinks "all the time" about the casualties that Russia has suffered in Ukraine, but insisted that NATO's refusal to rule out Ukraine's prospective membership and Kyiv's refusal to adhere to a peace deal for its separatist conflict in the country's east has left Moscow no other choice.

He denied underestimating Ukraine's ability to fight back and insisted that his "special military operation" has proceeded as planned.

Putin also acknowledged the challenges posed by Western sanctions, but argued that Russia has proven resilient to foreign pressure and has become more united.

John Kirby, a U.S. National Security Council spokesman, responded to Putin's speech as it was underway. "We don't believe that Mr. Putin's strategic goals have changed here. He doesn't want Ukraine to exist as a sovereign, independent nation state," Kirby said.

#### At San Francisco restaurant, pups chow on filet mignon

By HAVEN DALEY Associated Press

SÁN FRANCISCO (AP) — San Francisco is a foodie heaven with plenty of Michelin-starred restaurants. And San Franciscans love dogs. So it might come as no surprise that an entrepreneur has decided to combine the two passions, creating what's believed to be the first restaurant exclusively for man's best friend. Dogue, which rhymes with vogue, opened last month in the city's trendy Mission District.

For \$75 dollars per pup, doggie diners get a multiple-course "bone appetite" meal featuring dishes like chicken skin waffles and filet mignon steak tartare with quail egg.

It also includes a mimosa and a baked treat for the pup's human.

Rahmi Massarweh, a dog owner and classically trained chef, decided to leave his stressful job running a fine dining restaurant to focus on his new canine cafe.

Some critics have expressed online outrage over the price point for the pampered pets, pointing out income inequality, gentrification and homelessness in the city. For the cost of the tasting menu, you could buy at least five big burritos at one of the many nearby taquerias in the Mission neighborhood.

But Massarweh says that since opening a month ago, he's received overwhelming support from his customers who appreciate having a place to pamper their pups.

On a recent Sunday, Dogue hosted three fur baby birthday parties simultaneously.

"I wanted to celebrate him. He is so special to me. He's my four-legged child and this is the perfect place to do a really nice celebration," Gledy Espinoza said, as her 11-year-old miniature dachshund Mason enjoyed a bowl of mushroom soup with slices of chicken breast. "We're foodies. I guess he is too, now."

Massarweh spends hours cooking and prepping for his service and says a similar menu for people could cost up to \$500 in the expensive city and the ingredients he uses are not cheap. Everything is human-grade, although if you took a bite, you'd probably find the doggie dishes to be a bit bland for the human palate.

"When we make our food, it is a process. It is very time-consuming. There is a lot of technique. There's a lot of method and detail to what we do," he said. "Our pastries, for example, take about two days on average to make. I know they're going to be eaten in two seconds."

Massarweh said the real goal of Dogue is to raise awareness about feeding your dog fresh, healthy, natural ingredients which some research shows can be easier on your pup's stomach than mass-produced dog food and make dog parents happy.

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"I've worked in restaurants for many years, and it's rare when as a chef, I walk into the dining room to touch tables and every single guest has a smile on their face," Massarweh said. "There's something very unique and satisfying about that."

#### Election Day is Nov. 8, but legal challenges already begin

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Election Day is 12 days away. But in courtrooms across the country, efforts to sow doubt over the outcome have already begun.

More than 100 lawsuits have been filed this year around the Nov. 8 elections. The legal challenges, largely by Republicans, target rules for mail-in voting, early voting, voter access, voting machines, voting registration, the counting of mismarked absentee ballots and access for partisan poll watchers.

The cases likely preview a potentially contentious post-election period and the strategy stems partly from the failure of Donald Trump and his allies to prevail in overturning the free and fair results of the 2020 presidential election that he lost to Joe Biden.

That was an ad hoc response fronted by a collection of increasingly ill-prepared lawyers that included Rudy Giuliani. The current effort, however, is more formalized, well-funded and well-organized and is run by the Republican National Committee and other legal allies with strong credentials. Party officials say they are preparing for recounts, contested elections and more litigation. Thousands of volunteers are ready to challenge ballots and search for evidence of malfeasance.

"We're now at the point where charges of fraud and suppression are baked into the turnout models for each party," said Benjamin Ginsberg, co-chair of the Election Official Legal Defense Network and former counsel to the George W. Bush campaign and other Republican candidates. "Republicans charge fraud. Democrats charge suppression. Each side amplifies its position with massive and costly amounts of litigation and messaging."

The RNC said it has a multimillion-dollar "election integrity" team. It has hired 37 lawyers in key states, held more than 5,000 training sessions to teach volunteers to look for voter fraud — which is rare and isolated — and filed 73 suits in 20 states. Other Trump-allied legal teams, including America First Legal, run by former Trump adviser Stephen Miller, are involved.

"We built an unprecedented election integrity ground game to ensure that November's midterm elections are free, fair and transparent," the RNC chairwoman, Ronna McDaniel, said last month.

The Democrats' legal effort focuses on making voting easier and helping those denied a chance to vote. A team led by lawyer Marc Elias and his firm is litigating roughly 40 cases in 19 states, though many are interventions in Republican-led suits.

Elias said he is bracing for a deluge of challenges to election results. Some Republican candidates have already said they will not accept a loss or have planted doubt on the election process despite no evidence of fraud.

"The problem with the Republican Party right now is that conceding you lost an election is the only thing that will hurt you," Elias said. "Contesting an election that is clearly lost is now where all the incentive structure is, and that is incredibly corrosive for democracy."

Almost every election begets legal challenges. But much of that generally comes after Election Day.

In 2020, pro-Trump lawyers filed roughly 60 suits and asked judges to set aside votes. Those suits were roundly rejected. Trump's own leadership found the election was fair, and state election officials saw no widespread evidence of fraud. Biden earned 306 electoral votes to Trump's 232, the same margin as Trump's victory over Hillary Clinton in 2016, when he called it a "landslide."

At that time, the Republican establishment had not adopted Trump's lies about the election. Since then, the falsehoods have taken root within the GOP.

Ginsberg said unsubstantiated charges that elections were fraudulent or rigged or unreliable have become the mantra for a Republican to win a contested 2022 primary in most states.

"That can only harm public faith in elections, something for which Republicans will eventually pay a

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price," he said.

For three decades, the RNC was under a consent decree that prohibited it from challenging voters' qualifications and targeting alleged fraud. That legal agreement, which ended in 2019, arose from a Democratic National Committee suit that argued Republicans sought to dissuade Black Americans from voting by posting armed, off-duty law enforcement officers at certain polling sites and sending targeted mailings warning about penalties for violating election laws.

In 2020, Republican poll watchers, who have no direct role in the elections and cannot interfere in the electoral process apart from watching and reporting issues, were the basis of many of the suits filed by Trump allies. But when pressed by judges for evidence backing partisan claims of suspicious behavior by election workers, the litigation faltered.

Election workers have increasingly been subjected to abuse and threats of violence. Voter intimidation cases are on the rise, and there is growing concern among election officials and law enforcement about overly aggressive poll watchers or people pretending to be poll watchers intimidating voters.

Last week the RNC won a legal challenge against Michigan's secretary of state, Democrat Jocelyn Benson, over rules about how poll challengers can operate.

"Jocelyn Benson not only disregarded Michigan election law in issuing this guidance, she also violated the rights of political parties and poll challengers to fully ensure transparency and promote confidence that Michigan elections are run fairly and lawfully," McDaniel said in a statement.

The RNC has won legal challenges in Nevada and Arizona over the appointment of poll workers and in Wisconsin on "ballot curing" — a process whereby voters can fix problems with their ballots so they can be counted — and drop boxes. Litigation in Pennsylvania involved absentee ballots dating and whether outside parties should be allowed to examine voting machines.

Democratic-led groups have initiated about 35 suits that focus largely on making voting easier. Just this week, litigation was filed on behalf of Voto Latino and the Arizona Alliance for Retired Americans to stop intimidation over using drop boxes in Arizona. The ACLU of Pennsylvania sent a letter to Allegheny County officials on mail-in ballot concerns.

Heading into 2020, the U.S. focused on the possibility of foreign threats, from Russia or possibly China, to the integrity of the election, such as by manipulating vote tabulations. Election officials and Trump's own agencies said it was the most secure election ever. It was Trump and his supporters who nurtured conspiracy theories about voter fraud.

U.S. officials are again sounding the alarm that Russia is working to amplify doubts over the integrity of the elections.

This week, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said, "No outside cyber activity has ever prevented a registered voter from casting a ballot; compromised the integrity of any ballot cast; or affected the accuracy of voter registration information."

She said the government would "monitor any threats to our elections if they arise and work as a cohesive, coherent interagency to get relevant information to the election officials and workers on the ground."

#### US economy returned to growth last quarter, expanding 2.6%

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy grew at a 2.6% annual rate from July through September, snapping two straight quarters of contraction and overcoming high inflation and interest rates just as voting begins in midterm elections in which the economy's health has emerged as a paramount issue.

Thursday's better-than-expected estimate from the Commerce Department showed that the nation's gross domestic product — the broadest gauge of economic output — grew in the third quarter after having shrunk in the first half of 2022. Stronger exports and consumer spending, backed by a healthy job market, helped restore growth to the world's biggest economy at a time when worries about a possible recession are rising.

Consumer spending, which accounts for about 70% of U.S. economic activity, expanded at a 1.4% annual

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pace in the July-September quarter, down from a 2% rate from April through June. Last quarter's growth got a major boost from exports, which shot up at an annual pace of 14.4%. Government spending also helped: It rose at a 2.4% annual pace, the first such increase since early last year, with sharply higher defense spending leading the way.

Housing investment, though, plunged at a 26% annual pace, hammered by surging mortgage rates as the Federal Reserve aggressively raises borrowing costs to combat chronic inflation. It was the sixth straight quarterly drop in residential investment.

Overall, the outlook for the overall economy has darkened. The Fed has raised interest rates five times this year and is set to do so again next week and in December. Chair Jerome Powell has warned that the Fed's hikes will bring "pain" in the form of higher unemployment and possibly a recession.

"Looking ahead, risks are to the downside, to consumption in particular, as households continue to face challenges from high prices and likely slower job growth going forward," Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics, wrote in a research note.

With inflation still near a 40-year high, steady price spikes have been pressuring households across the country. At the same time, rising loan rates have derailed the housing market and are likely to inflict broader damage over time. The outlook for the world economy, too, grows bleaker the longer that Russia's war against Ukraine drags on.

The latest GDP report comes as Americans, worried about inflation and the risk of a recession, have begun to vote in elections that will determine whether President Joe Biden's Democratic Party retains control of Congress. Inflation has become a signature issue for Republican attacks on the Democrats' stewardship of the economy.

Economists noted that the third-quarter gain in GDP can be traced entirely to the surge in exports, which added 2.7 percentage points to the economy's expansion. Export growth will be difficult to sustain as the global economy weakens and a strong U.S. dollar makes American products pricier in foreign markets.

Thursday's report offered some encouraging news on inflation. A price index in the GDP data rose at a 4.1% annual rate from July through September, down from 9% in the April-June period — less than economists had expected and the smallest increase since the final three months of 2020. That figure could raise hopes that the Fed might decide it can soon slow its rate hikes.

Last quarter's U.S. economic growth reversed annual declines of 1.6% from January through March and 0.6% from April through June. Consecutive quarters of declining economic output are one informal definition of a recession. But most economists have said they believe the economy skirted a recession, noting the still-resilient job market and steady spending by consumers. Most of them have expressed concern, though, that a recession is likely next year as the Fed steadily tightens credit.

Preston Caldwell, head of U.S. economics for the financial services firm Morningstar, noted that the economy's contraction in the first half of the year was caused largely by factors that don't reflect its underlying health and so "very likely did not constitute a genuine economic slowdown." He pointed, for example, to a drop in business inventories, a cyclical event that tends to reverse itself over time.

Higher borrowing costs have weakened the home market, in particular. The average rate on a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage, just 3.14% a year ago, topped 7% this week for the first time since 2002, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac reported Thursday. Sales of existing homes have fallen for eight straight months. Construction of new homes is down nearly 8% from a year ago.

Still, the economy retains pockets of strength. One is the vitally important job market. Employers have added an average of 420,000 jobs a month this year, putting 2022 on track to be the second-best year for job creation (behind 2021) in Labor Department records going back to 1940. The unemployment rate was 3.5% last month, matching a half-century low.

Hiring has been decelerating, though. In September, the economy added 263,000 jobs — solid but the lowest total since April 2021.

International events are causing further concerns. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has disrupted trade and raised prices of energy and food, creating a crisis for poor countries. The International Monetary Fund, citing the war, this month downgraded its outlook for the world economy in 2023.

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While the U.S. economy expanded, the European Central Bank predicted weakening growth in the 19 countries that use the euro currency the rest of this year and next, pointing to the uncertainty of Russia's war in Ukraine that could keep food and energy prices high. While ECB President Christine Lagarde said the likelihood of recession had increased, the central bank on Thursday still announced its second big interest rate hike in a row to target inflation running at 9.9%.

#### Two NASA spacecraft detect biggest meteor strikes at Mars

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Two NASA spacecraft at Mars — one on the surface and the other in orbit — have recorded the biggest meteor strikes and impact craters yet.

The high-speed barrages last year sent seismic waves rippling thousands of miles across Mars, the first ever detected near the surface of another planet, and carved out craters nearly 500 feet (150 meters) across, scientists reported Thursday in the journal Science.

The larger of the two strikes churned out boulder-size slabs of ice, which may help researchers look for ways future astronauts can tap into Mars' natural resources.

The Insight lander measured the seismic shocks, while the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter provided stunning pictures of the resulting craters.

Imaging the craters "would have been huge already," but matching it to the seismic ripples was a bonus, said co-author Liliya Posiolova of Malin Space Science Systems in San Diego. "We were so lucky."

Mars' atmosphere is thin unlike on Earth, where the thick atmosphere prevents most space rocks from reaching the ground, instead breaking and incinerating them.

A separate study last month linked a recent series of smaller Martian meteoroid impacts with smaller craters closer to InSight, using data from the same lander and orbiter.

The impact observations come as InSight nears the end of its mission because of dwindling power, its solar panels blanketed by dust storms. InSight landed on the equatorial plains of Mars in 2018 and has since recorded more than 1,300 marsquakes.

"It's going to be heartbreaking when we finally lose communication with InSight," said Bruce Banerdt of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the lander's chief scientist who took part in the studies. "But the data it has sent us will certainly keep us busy for years to come."

Banerdt estimated the lander had between four to eight more weeks before power runs out.

The incoming space rocks were between 16 feet and 40 feet (5 meters and 12 meters) in diameter, said Posiolova. The impacts registered about magnitude 4.

The larger of the two struck last December some 2,200 miles (3,500 kilometers) from InSight, creating a crater roughly 70 feet (21 meters) deep. The orbiter's cameras showed debris hurled up to 25 miles (40 kilometers) from the impact, as well as white patches of ice around the crater, the most frozen water observed at such low latitudes, Posiolova said.

Posiolova spotted the crater earlier this year after taking extra pictures of the region from orbit. The crater was missing from earlier photos, and after poring through the archives, she pinpointed the impact to late December. She remembered a large seismic event recorded by InSight around that time and with help from that team, matched the fresh hole to what was undoubtedly a meteoroid strike. The blast wave was clearly visible.

Scientists also learned the lander and orbiter teamed up for an earlier meteoroid strike, more than double the distance of the December one and slightly smaller.

"Everybody was just shocked and amazed. Another one? Yep," she recalled.

The seismic readings from the two impacts indicate a denser Martian crust beyond InSight's location.

"We still have a long way to go to understanding the interior structure and dynamics of Mars, which remain largely enigmatic," said Doyeon Kim of ETH Zurich's Institute of Geophysics in Switzerland, who was part of the research.

Outside scientists said future landers from Europe and China will carry even more advanced seismometers.

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Future missions will "paint a clearer picture" of how Mars evolved, Yingjie Yang and Xiaofei Chen from China's Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen wrote in an accompanying editorial.

#### Why election results may not be known right away

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

It's the night of the election. Polls have been closed for hours. Why don't Americans know the winners? In 2020, President Donald Trump proclaimed that the lack of final results on election night could be an indicator of something nefarious and used it to assert without evidence that the election was stolen: "We don't want them to find any more ballots at 4 o'clock in the morning and add them to the list," he said.

In reality, however, results released on election night are unofficial and always incomplete. They inevitably change as more ballots are counted.

Unlike in many countries, elections in the U.S. are highly decentralized, complex and feature long lists of races, from president and Congress all the way down to local measures and town council seats. Some states give local election offices several weeks before Election Day to process mailed ballots, including checking signatures and verifying ID information. In other states, that process can't start until Election Day or shortly before, meaning those ballots might not get counted until the next day or even later.

Here's why results are not always known the night of an election.

SHOULD WE KNOW THE WINNERS BEFORE GOING TO BED?

Republicans in particular have pointed to perceived delays in knowing results as a reason to be suspicious about the integrity of elections.

"We've got to get our elections reformed so that every Arizonan, whether they be Democrat, Independent, or Republican, when they go to bed on Election Night they know the winner and they're satisfied that it was a fair election. We don't have that right now," Kari Lake, the Trump-endorsed Republican candidate for governor in Arizona, said in August on Twitter.

Not knowing the winner on election night says nothing about the fairness of an election or the accuracy of results. Under Arizona law, all ballots including those that were mailed must be returned by 7 p.m. on Election Day, but officials have 20 days to finalize their counts.

In Nevada, counties have four days to count late-arriving mailed ballots and give voters two more days to fix mailed ballots that arrive in envelopes with errors or missing information. This week, the elections official in the county that includes Reno reminded voters of that extended timeline and said final, official results are unlikely until the actual canvass of the vote on Nov. 18.

"It will definitely be more than the day after the election for final results of the election," said Jamie Rodriguez, Washoe County's interim registrar of voters.

WHY CAN'T WE BE LIKE FRANCE?

A close Republican primary for U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania last May triggered comparisons to the French presidential election, which had been held a few weeks earlier.

Trump, in a social media post two days after the Pennsylvania primary, questioned why it was taking so long to find out the winner: "France, same day all paper, had VERIFIED numbers in evening," Trump wrote. "U.S. is a laughing stock on Elections."

But in France there was only one contest on the ballot. Presidential and parliamentary elections are held on separate dates. In Pennsylvania, the U.S. Senate GOP primary was just one of several contests being decided, including races for governor, attorney general, Congress and state legislature.

U.S. elections also are not nationalized, but rather overseen by states and run by local officials at the county or even township level. The U.S. has some 10,000 jurisdictions charged with overseeing the voting process.

For presidential elections in France, the Ministry of Interior distributes election-related materials, including ballots, while local officials coordinate staffing of polling places. France also has a Constitutional Council that decides election-related complaints and announces results.

Noah Praetz, the former elections clerk in Cook County, Illinois, said it's possible to have quick results,

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but the U.S. has "decided to make voting accessible to everybody and let us vote on everything." He noted that ballots in the U.S. typically include dozens of offices in contrast to some countries where voters might simply back a party whose leadership then fills many of those positions.

In France, voters choose from lists of local candidates usually associated with a party. The candidate list gaining the most support will receive the most seats in the city and regional councils.

"It's a fundamentally different view of democracy," Praetz said.

In addition, voters in France can vote by proxy — designating someone else to vote for them if they are unable to cast a ballot in person on Election Day, which is not allowed in the U.S.

DO MAIL BALLOTS AFFECT THE REPORTING OF RESULTS?

They can. Long before the COVID-19 pandemic, states were expanding the use of mail ballots and early in-person voting to reduce lines on Election Day and provide more flexibility to voters.

Mail ballots are subject to various security checks, varying by state. Some require voter signatures or ID information to match their registration files, while others require witnesses or notaries to affirm a voter's identity.

In most states, including Florida and Georgia, the process of validating mail ballots begins well ahead of Election Day -- providing a huge advantage in reporting results quickly. That's not the case in a few political battleground states. Pennsylvania and Wisconsin officials are not allowed to begin that work until Election Day, while Michigan officials can start just two days before. This means most results being reported from these states on election night will be from in-person voting on Election Day or during the early voting period.

"Counting votes and reporting the results take time," said Leigh Chapman, acting secretary of state in Pennsylvania. "Election officials are focused on accuracy over speed."

WHAT OTHER FACTORS CAN SLOW RESULTS?

While most states require mail ballots to be received on or before Election Day, 19 states provide a grace period as long as ballots were sent through the mail by Election Day. Such ballots in California can be received up to seven days later.

Voters may not know the outcome of a close race for several days if a significant number of those ballots arrive at local election offices after Election Day.

This also can change results over time. If Democratic voters dominate mail voting while Republican voters largely cast ballots in person, this can mean that early results heavily favor a Republican candidate who then sees that lead slip away as the late-arriving mail ballots are counted.

WOULD HAND COUNTING HELP SPEED UP THE PROCESS?

No. Hand counting of all ballots happens primarily in small towns in the Northeast. For places with a lot of ballots, experts consider it to be more time-consuming and susceptible to human error. Hand tallies are used in post-election reviews to ensure accuracy of tabulator machines, but that usually involves only a sample of ballots and is done without the time pressure of trying to report results quickly.

Republican activists and candidates have been pushing for hand counts, based largely on conspiracy theories that voting systems were manipulated to steal the 2020 election. There is no evidence of wide-spread fraud or tampering of machines.

Also, hand counts would by themselves prolong the reporting of results, perhaps by several days.

Cobb County, Georgia, performed a hand tally ordered by the state after the 2020 election. It took hundreds of people five days to count just the votes for president on roughly 397,000 ballots. A county election official estimated it would have taken 100 days to count every race on each ballot using the same procedures.

#### WHO: Tuberculosis cases rise for the first time in years

GENEVA (AP) — The number of people infected with tuberculosis, including the kind resistant to drugs, rose globally for the first time in years, according to a report Thursday by the World Health Organization. The U.N. health agency said more than 10 million people worldwide were sickened by tuberculosis in

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2021, a 4.5% rise from the year before. About 1.6 million people died, it said. WHO said about 450,000 cases involved people infected with drug-resistant TB, 3% more than in 2020.

Dr. Mel Spigelman, president of the non-profit TB Alliance, said more than a decade of progress was lost when COVID-19 emerged in 2020.

"Despite gains in areas like preventative therapy, we are still behind in just about every pledge and goal regarding TB," Spigelman said.

WHO also blamed COVID-19 for much of the rise in TB, saying the pandemic "continues to have a damaging impact on access to TB diagnosis and treatment." It said progress made before 2019 has since "slowed, stalled or reversed."

With fewer people being diagnosed with the highly infectious disease, more patients unknowingly spread tuberculosis to others in outbreaks that may not have been spotted in countries with weak health systems.

WHO reported that the number of people newly identified with TB fell from 7 million in 2019 to 5.8 million in 2020.

WHO also said COVID-19 restrictions, including lockdowns and physical distancing protocols, also hampered TB treatment services and may have prompted some people to skip going to health facilities for fear of catching coronavirus. Officials added that the downturn in the global economy was also a factor, saying that about half of all TB patients and their families face "catastrophic total costs" due to their treatment. WHO called for more countries to cover all TB diagnosis and treatment expenses.

After COVID-19, TB is the world's deadliest infectious disease. It is caused by bacteria that typically affects the lungs. The germs are mostly spread from person to person in the air, such as when an infected individual coughs or sneezes.

TB mostly affects adults, particularly those who are malnourished or have other conditions like HIV; more than 95% of cases are in developing countries.

According to the WHO report, only one in three people with drug-resistant TB are receiving treatment.

"Drug-resistant TB is curable, but alarmingly, cases are on the rise for the first time in years," said Dr. Hannah Spencer, who is with Doctors Without Borders in South Africa. "It's urgent that shorter, safer and more effective treatments are scaled up now."

Spencer called for lowering the prices of TB treatment so a complete treatment course costs no more than \$500.

WHO also said ongoing conflicts in eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East have worsened the options for patients seeking TB diagnosis and treatment.

Ukraine had one of the world's worst TB epidemics even before Russia invaded the country in February. Health experts fear the inability of patients to get treated could fuel the rise of more drug-resistant TB across the region.

While TB patients displaced by the war can seek care in Ukraine, the country has seen a shortage of key medicines and authorities face challenges in keeping track of patients.

#### UK says new PM Rishi Sunak won't go to UN climate conference

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak will not attend a major United Nations climate conference next month, the government said Thursday.

Sunak's office said the decision was made because of "pressing domestic commitments" including preparations for an emergency budget on Nov. 17 and does not reflect a downgrade in the Conservative government's commitment to combating climate change. Other senior U.K. government ministers are expected to attend.

Sunak took office on Tuesday, replacing Liz Truss, who stepped down after a seven-week term in which her tax-cutting plans sparked economic and political mayhem.

Officials from almost 200 countries are due to gather in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, starting Nov. 6 to discuss how to tackle global warming at the conference known as COP27. Britain hosted last year's COP26 conference in Glasgow, Scotland, which was attended by then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

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A Sunak spokeswoman said Britain remained committed to reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050, "and to leading international and domestic action to tackle climate change."

Opposition Labour Party spokesman Ed Miliband said Sunak had made "a terrible decision."

"These summits matter," he told the BBC. "They are forcing mechanisms for action on the biggest issue we face as a world."

#### China accused of using overseas bases to target dissidents

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — China has reportedly established dozens of "overseas police stations" in nations around the world that activists fear could be used to track and harass dissidents as part of Beijing's crackdown on corruption.

Information about the outposts underscored concerns about the ruling Chinese Communist Party's influence over its citizens abroad, sometimes in ways deemed illegal by other countries, as well as the undermining of democratic institutions and the the theft of economic and political secrets by bodies affiliated with the one-party state.

Spanish-based non-government group Safeguard Defenders published a report last month, called "110 Overseas. Chinese Transnational Policing Gone Wild," that focused on the foreign stations.

Laura Harth, a campaign director with the group, told The Associated Press that China has set up at least 54 overseas police service stations.

"One of the aims of these campaigns, obviously, as it is to crack down on dissent, is to silence people," Harth said. "So people are afraid. People that are being targeted, that have family members back in China, are afraid to speak out."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said Thursday that Beijing wasn't doing anything wrong. "Chinese public security authorities strictly observe the international law and fully respect the judicial sovereignty of other countries," Mao said.

Many of the facilities appeared to have links to the Fuzhou and Qingtian areas, where many overseas Chinese originate.

The Irish government said it told China to close a Fuzhou Police Overseas Service Station operating in Dublin. The Department of Foreign Affairs said Chinese authorities did not make an advance request to set up the office.

"Actions of all foreign states on Irish territory must be in compliance with international law and domestic law requirements," the Irish government said, noting why it had told the Chinese Embassy that the office "should close and cease operations."

"The Chinese Embassy has now stated that the activities of the office have ceased," it said.

The Dutch government said this week it was looking into whether two such police stations — one a virtual office in Amsterdam and the other at a physical address in Rotterdam — were established in the Netherlands.

"We are investigating the activities of these so-called police centers. Once there is more clarity on the matter, we will decide on appropriate action," the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement sent to the AP. "We have not been informed about these centers via diplomatic channels."

Another Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Wang Wenbin, described the foreign outposts identified by Safeguard Defenders as service stations for Chinese people who are abroad and in need of help with, for instance, renewing their driver's licenses.

Wang added that China also has cracked down on what he called transnational crimes but said the operation was conducted in line with international law.

In its report, Safeguard Defenders reproduced Chinese media accounts about people suspected of alleged crimes in China being interrogated by video link from some of the locations in other countries that Beijing allegedly did not declare to other governments.

In one instance, according to the group, a Chinese man accused of environmental crimes was persuaded in 2020 to return from Madrid to Qingtian, in Zhejiang province, where he turned himself in to authorities.

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Visits by The Associated Press to some of the locations identified by Safeguard Defenders in Rome, Madrid and Barcelona found, respectively, a massage parlor, the Spanish headquarters of an association of citizens from Qingtian and a firm providing legal translation services. There was no indication of police stations or other activity directly related to the Chinese government.

A worker at the Barcelona translation company confirmed to the AP that a Fuzhou Police Overseas Service Station operated on the premises for a few weeks this year in a test-drive capacity.

The employee, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to journalists, the press, said the police service center offered document renewal services to Fuzhou citizens living in the Barcelona region who could not return to China due to pandemic travel restrictions and the high cost of flights.

According to Safeguard Defenders, China claims 230,000 suspects of fraud were "persuaded to return" to China from April 2021 to July 2022.

"These operations eschew official bilateral police and judicial cooperation and violate the international rule of law, and may violate the territorial integrity of third countries involved in setting up a parallel policing mechanism using illegal methods," its report said.

The European Union's executive arm said Thursday it was up to member countries to investigate such allegations since it would be a matter of national sovereignty.

A Hungarian opposition lawmaker claimed this month to have discovered two sites in Budapest where Chinese overseas police stations operated without the knowledge of the country's Interior Ministry.

The lawmaker, Marton Tompos, said one of the two locations in Hungary's capital had a sign that said Qingtian Overseas Police Station. Tompos said he was unable to contact anyone affiliated with the sites and that when he visited again days later, the sign had been removed.

The Hungarian Interior Ministry did not immediately respond to AP questions on the matter.

Three informal Chinese police stations are operating in Portugal, Safeguard Defenders reported. Portuguese authorities did not immediately reply to AP questions about the claim.

A Portuguese TV report said one of the venues, located in an industrial complex in northern Portugal, appeared to be a car shop operated by a Chinese man. The man denied any connection with the Chinese government, though broadcaster S.I.C. Noticias showed him in a video promoting the Beijing Winter Olympics and said he heads a local association that helps Chinese immigrants.

In Tanzania, both police and the Chinese Embassy have denied the presence of a Chinese-run police station in the country's commercial hub and former capital, Dar es Salaam, after the BBC reported on it last week.

"You are fabricating stories," the embassy tweeted, calling the report an example of disinformation aimed at dividing China-Africa relations. A police spokesman sent the AP a copy of China's denial in response to questions Thursday.

In Lesotho, a kingdom in southern Africa, national police Senior Superintendent Mpiti Mopeli also denied the existence of any Chinese law enforcement activities. He said such operations would be illegal as any form of policing in Lesotho is conducted by local authorities.

Over his decade in power, Chinese President Xi Jinping has pushed a relentless anti-corruption drive that has seen tens of millions of Communist Party cadres investigated and expanded overseas via a pair of campaigns known as Sky Net and Fox Hunt. Both are tasked with locating allegedly corrupt officials who have fled abroad and convincing them to return to China with their stolen state assets.

Since China began opening up in the 1980s, corruption has been a major problem among those enjoying access to state funds and resources with few safeguards in place, and cash was often squirreled away abroad, particularly in the U.S. and other countries without extradition treaties with China.

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### **Battle of the Alps? Water woes loom amid climate change**

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

BRIG, Switzerland (AP) — A battle is brewing around Europe's rooftop over the planet's most precious resource.

The crystal-clear waters issuing from the Alps could become increasingly contested as the effects of climate change and glacier melt become more apparent. Italy wants them for crop irrigation in the spring and summer. Swiss authorities want to hold up flows to help hydroelectric plants rev up, when needed.

For the first time in four years, government envoys from eight Alpine countries — big, small and tiny — were meeting under a grouping known as the Alpine Convention, which was set up 30 years ago to help coordinate life, leisure and the limited resources from Europe's most celebrated peaks.

The envoys in Brig, Switzerland, representing pint-sized principality Monaco and small Slovenia as well as powerhouses like France, Germany and Italy, focused attention Thursday on what's known as the Simplon Alliance. Named after an Alpine pass between Italy and Switzerland, it aims to make transportation in the mountains more eco-friendly, such as by favoring rail over roads, electric vehicles and public transportation over private cars.

But with global warming causing a worrying shrinkage in Alpine glaciers this year, the issue of water frozen up in the mountains, or showered and snowed on them, is growing in importance. Environmental advocates say jockeying for water isn't being addressed with enough urgency; they want the Alpine countries to do more to secure the future of the resource that's been bountiful for centuries.

While many parts of the world have grappled with water woes, well-irrigated and relatively rich Europe has been largely spared so far. Droughts and wildfires raise seasonal worries, but there typically is enough water for agriculture, hydropower, ski resorts, and human consumption. Swiss children were once taught their country was home to the continent's "water tower," according to Maria Lezzi, head of Switzerland's territorial development office.

However, factors like global warming, the fallout from Russia's war in Ukraine on energy supplies and economic demands have made the issue more pressing.

Last month, Swiss authorities authorized a seven-month increase in the amount of water available for electricity generation from 45 of Switzerland's 1,500 hydraulic plants — hoping to churn out up to 150 gigawatts more power. Alluding to the possible knock-on effect, the Swiss said the move could temporarily affect fish migration, "which could make replenishing fish populations more difficult in 2023."

Meanwhile, sparse summer rainfall and a punishing heat wave in northern Italy — which melted snowfields and glaciers in the area — dried up the Po River, jeopardized drinking water and threatened irrigation in what's known as the Italian food valley.

The "9th report on the State of the Alps" — drafted by the Swiss hosts — notes that water supply is a "particularly pressing issue" because the Alps are a huge reservoir of water, which ultimately flows to the benefit of some 170 million people along some of Europe's most famous rivers, including the Danube, Po, Rhine and Rhone.

A draft of the report, obtained by The Associated Press, noted the need for "consistent availability of Alpine water" for industry, agriculture, hydropower and other uses, adding: " "Climate change puts these functions under pressure, as glaciers are receding and precipitation regimes are constantly changing."

"Reduced quantities of water and limited reliability of water supply will be a major issue in the coming decades," it added.

Kaspar Schuler, director of CIPRA International, a commission devoted to protecting the Alps based in tiny Liechtenstein, said governments have done well to put water on the agenda but stopped short of steps to tackle the issue — by setting up working groups, expanding research, or coming up with ways that water can be better shared in the future.

"The description of the difficulties is well done by the Swiss, but they have still no courage to really address the elephant in the room," said Schuler added.

While Alpine resorts and villages rely on water, the major upstream users are Switzerland's hydropower plants, which want to hold onto the water until it's most needed to power turbines that provide some

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60% of the country's electricity.

But the biggest consumers of the water are downstream — industrial areas like Grenoble and Annecy in France, Austria's capital Vienna, and areas around Bolzano in Italy's South Tyrol are likely to feel an impact.

The southern Alpine towns, especially in France and Italy with their drier climates, are more likely to undergo water shortages than the northern towns, the report said. "This is particularly true of inner-Alpine dry valleys such as the Aosta Valley in northwestern Italy, already affected by significant water stress."

CIPRA's Schuler suggested that many have become too complacent about the Alps' bountiful waters — and those days may be over soon.

"Until now, all the non-Alpine countries — the lowlands — were happy that the Alps have been providing so much: landscape for leisure and sports, ski resorts, and the water as much as everybody needs," he said. "So far, everybody was happy and the Alps delivered."

"In future it will be a battle ... about these resources because especially the lack of water can really harm a lot of people," he said.(backslash)

Environment Minister Uros Brezan of Slovenia, which is set to take over the Alpine Convention's presidency, said regional authorities were not taking the issue lightly.

"I think the member states of the European Union and also members of the Alpine Convention are well aware that water scarcity problem cannot be solved only within the national borders, but has to be addressed internationally," he said.

#### Fishermen face shutdowns as warming hurts species

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Fishing regulators and the seafood industry are grappling with the possibility that some once-profitable species that have declined with climate change might not come back.

Several marketable species harvested by U.S. fishermen are the subject of quota cuts, seasonal closures and other restrictions as populations have fallen and waters have warmed. In some instances, such as the groundfishing industry for species like flounder in the Northeast, the changing environment has made it harder for fish to recover from years of overfishing that already taxed the population.

Officials in Alaska have canceled the fall Bristol Bay red king crab harvest and winter snow crab harvest, dealing a blow to the Bering Sea crab industry that is sometimes worth more than \$200 million a year, as populations have declined in the face of warming waters. The Atlantic cod fishery, once the lifeblood industry of New England, is now essentially shuttered. But even with depleted populations imperiled by climate change, it's rare for regulators to completely shut down a fishery, as they're considering doing for New England shrimp.

The Northern shrimp, once a seafood delicacy, has been subject to a fishing moratorium since 2014. Scientists believe warming waters are wiping out their populations and they won't be coming back. So the regulatory Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is now considering making that moratorium permanent, essentially ending the centuries-old harvest of the shrimp.

It's a stark siren for several species caught by U.S. fishermen that regulators say are on the brink. Others include softshell clams, winter flounder, Alaskan snow crabs and Chinook salmon.

Exactly how many fisheries are threatened principally by warming waters is difficult to say, but additional cutbacks and closures are likely in the future as climate change intensifies, said Malin Pinsky, director of the graduate program in ecology and evolution at Rutgers University.

"This pattern of climate change and how it ripples throughout communities and coastal economies is something we need to get used to," Pinsky said. "Many years are pushing us outside of what we have experienced historically, and we are going to continue to observe these further novel conditions as years go by."

While it's unclear whether climate change has ever been the dominant factor in permanently shutting down a U.S. fishery, global warming is a key reason several once-robust fisheries are in increasingly poor shape and subject to more aggressive regulation in recent years. Warming temperatures introduce new

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predators, cause species to shift their center of population northward, or make it harder for them to grow to maturity, scientists said.

In the case of the Northern shrimp, scientists and regulators said at a meeting in August that the population has not rebounded after nearly a decade of no commercial fishing. Regulators will revisit the possibility of a permanent moratorium this winter, said Dustin Colson Leaning, a fishery management plan coordinator with the Atlantic States commission. Another approach could be for the commission to relinquish control of the fishery, he said.

The shrimp prefer cold temperatures, yet the Gulf of Maine is warming faster than most of the world's oceans. Scientists say warming waters have also moved new predators into the gulf.

But in Maine, where the cold-water shrimp fishery is based, fishermen have tried to make the case that abundance of the shrimp is cyclical and any move to shutter the fishery for good is premature.

"I want to look into the future of this. It's not unprecedented to have a loss of shrimp. We went through it in the '50s, we went through it in the '70s, we had a tough time in the '90s," said Vincent Balzano, a shrimp fisherman from Portland. "They came back."

Another jeopardized species is winter flounder, once highly sought by southern New England fishermen. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has described the fish as "significantly below target population levels" on Georges Bank, a key fishing ground. Scientists with University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management wrote that the fish have struggled to reach maturity "due to increased predation related to warming winters" in a report last year.

On the West Coast, Chinook salmon face an extinction risk due to climate change, NOAA has reported. Drought has worsened the fish's prospects in California, at the southern end of its range, scientists have said.

Fishermen on the East Coast, from Virginia to Maine, have dug softshell clams from tidal mud for centuries, and they're a staple of seafood restaurants. They're used for chowder and fried clam dishes and are sometimes called "steamers."

But the clam harvest fell from about 3.5 million pounds (1.6 million kilograms) in 2010 to 2.1 million pounds (950,000 kilograms) in 2020 as the industry has contended with an aging workforce and increasing competition from predators such as crabs and worms. Scientists have linked the growing predator threat to warming waters.

The 2020 haul in Maine, which harvests the most clams, was the smallest in more than 90 years. And the 2021 catch still lagged behind typical hauls from the 2000s, which were consistently close to 2 million pounds (907,000 kilograms) or more.

Predicting what the clam harvest will look like in 2022 is difficult, but the industry remains threatened by the growing presence of invasive green crabs, said Brian Beal a professor of marine ecology at the University of Maine at Machias. The crabs, which eat clams, are native to Europe and arrived in the U.S. about 200 years ago and have grown in population as waters have warmed.

"There seem to have been, relative to 2020, a ton more green crabs that settled," Beal said. "That's not a good omen."

One challenge of managing fisheries that are declining due to warming waters is that regulators rely on historical data to set quotas and other regulations, said Lisa Kerr, a senior research scientist with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute in Portland, Maine. Scientists and regulators are learning that some fish stocks just aren't capable of returning to the productivity level of 40 years ago, she said.

Back then, U.S. fishermen typically caught more than 100 million pounds (45.4 million kilograms) of Atlantic cod per year. Now, they usually catch less than 2 million pounds (907,000 kilograms), as overfishing and environmental changes have prevented the population from returning to historical levels.

The future of managing species that are in such bad shape might require accepting the possibility that fully rebuilding them is impossible, Kerr said.

"It's really a resetting of the expectations," she said. "We're starting to see targets that are more in line, but under a lower overall target."

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#### **In Pa. governor's race, faith surfaces in contrasting ways** By PETER SMITH Associated Press

CARMICHAELS, Pa. (AP) — In one of the most closely watched races in one of the most contested of battleground states, both gubernatorial candidates bring up religion. But in starkly different ways.

Republican Doug Mastriano's campaign has several hallmarks of Christian nationalism, which fuses Christian and political imagery, words and rituals and promotes a belief that America has been and should be a Christian nation.

Democrat Josh Shapiro, meanwhile, talks about his Jewish faith in speeches and ads, saying it inspires him toward public service while he seeks to build a classic Democratic coalition of Black clergy and other progressive religious groups, including Christians and Jews, and the non-religious.

"My faith grounds me and calls me to do public service. I don't use my faith to make policy decisions or to exclude others the way my opponent does," Shapiro, Pennsylvania's current attorney general, said in an interview.

Mastriano, a state senator, has rejected the "Christian nationalist" label, though his political events often carry the feel of a worship service. He was introduced at a church-hosted event near Pittsburgh by a pastor who mixed Christian and political imagery: "Get ready for a great 'blood of Jesus' red wave!"

At a campaign event in Pennsylvania's rural southwestern corner, Mastriano stood at the front of a church, to the backdrop of an oversized campaign sign and a towering cross.

A pastor laid hands on him in a common Pentecostal custom and asked God for protection.

"We pray that you give him this courage and strength for what he's about to face," the pastor said at the gathering at Crosspoint Assembly of God. "We pray against the darkness and the enemies that come against him in the spiritual realm."

Mastriano's campaign did not respond to emailed requests for an interview. He has consistently ignored requests for comment from The Associated Press and many other media outlets.

At the recent church event, a campaign staffer told a reporter Mastriano would not be taking questions. Mastriano contended that he "watched various media outlets mock our faith" in their coverage of his primary victory rally, which was infused with worship music and Bible quotes. "My campaign has no place for intolerance and bigotry," he said.

That's been challenged by Shapiro and others because Mastriano's campaign paid \$5,000 for what it described in a financial disclosure form as "consulting" services to Gab— a social media site popular with white supremacists and antisemites. It was on Gab, authorities say, that a suspect signaled his plans for the 2018 massacre of 11 worshippers at the Tree of Life synagogue building in Pittsburgh. It was the deadliest antisemitic attack in U.S. history.

Mastriano led efforts to overturn Pennsylvania's vote for Joe Biden in 2020. He chartered buses to bring Pennsylvanians to the outdoor rally preceding the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection. According to a Senate Judiciary Committee report, he passed through "breached barricades and police lines."

The two candidates are appealing to the contrasting religious and ethnic demographics that have supported each side in recent campaigns such as the 2020 presidential election, when a majority of white Catholics and a large majority of white evangelical Christians voted Republican while Democrats drew on strong support from Black Christians, Latino Catholics, Jews, Muslims and people of no religion.

Several recent polls have shown Shapiro with a lead over Mastriano.

A September survey by the Franklin & Marshall College suggests Shapiro and Mastriano are running about even among Protestants and Catholics overall, while Shapiro leads among followers of no religion. The poll shows Mastriano leading among self-identified born-again or evangelical Christians.

Mastriano has "made no effort to soften" his hardline stances to a general election electorate, said John Fea, a history professor at Messiah University in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, and author of "Believe Me: The Evangelical Road to Donald Trump."

Mastriano takes a "black-and-white, spiritual-warfare view of the world," Fea said. "Anyone who criticizes him is the devil. I'm not meaning this metaphorically. He really believes they are working for the cause of evil. ... That's what makes him so dangerous."

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Still, some evangelicals "may be disgusted by his (Mastriano's) Christian nationalism but cannot imagine themselves voting for a prochoice candidate like Shapiro," Fea said.

He said Shapiro appears to be contrasting his broader view of religious freedom in a diverse population with Mastriano's narrower one. Shapiro has criticized Mastriano's statement that "all religions are not equal."

A Pew Research Center report released Thursday said 45% of American adults surveyed, and 67% of those leaning Republican, believed the U.S. "should be a Christian nation," though fewer want the federal government to formally declare itself Christian.

Mastriano spends much of his stump speeches denouncing a rise in crime, the incumbent Democratic administration's COVID-19 restrictions and the participation of transgender athletes in girls' sports. He has called banning abortion without exception a top priority.

Shapiro has said "my office is dedicated to protecting legal access to abortion in our Commonwealth," where it is permitted through the 23rd week of pregnancy.

Each candidate draws supporters with a shared understanding of religion's role.

At the Carmichaels church, Mastriano addressed a small but enthusiastic crowd on a September morning. "I like the fact that he's emboldened to (express) our religious values and our freedoms in the Bill of Rights," said Steven Grugin of Dunkard Township. Speaking in a church "tells people that he's very much for freedom of speech, freedom of religion," he said.

The Rev. Marshall Mitchell, senior pastor of Salem Baptist Church of Abington, Pa., who has known Shapiro for years, said Shapiro "is as comfortable in a Black Baptist church as he is in a Conservative shul or a temple or a mosque," Mitchell said. "He sees the common humanity, which he believes originates in God."

### Musk doesn't seek a "free-for-all hellscape" for Twitter

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

Elon Musk is telling Twitter advertisers he is buying the platform to "help humanity" and doesn't want it to become a "free-for-all hellscape" where anything can be said with no consequences.

The message to advertisers posted Thursday on Twitter came a day before Musk's deadline for closing his \$44 billion deal to buy the social-media company and take it private.

"The reason I acquired Twitter is because it is important to the future of civilization to have a common digital town square, where a wide range of beliefs can be debated in a healthy manner, without resorting to violence," Musk wrote, in an unusually-long message for the billionaire Tesla CEO who typically projects his thoughts in one-line tweets.

He continued: "There is currently great danger that social media will splinter into far right wing and far left wing echo chambers that generate more hate and divide our society."

The message reflects concerns among advertisers -- Twitter's chief source of revenue -- that Musk's plans to promote free speech by cutting back on moderating content will open the floodgates to more online toxicity and drive away users.

Musk told advertisers Thursday he wants Twitter to be "the most respected advertising platform in the world." He said it should be "warm and welcoming to all" and enable users to choose the experience they want to have.

"I didn't do it to make money," he said of the pending acquisition. "I did it to try to help humanity, whom I love. And I do so with humility, recognizing that failure in pursuing this goal, despite our best efforts, is a very real possibility."

Friday's deadline to close the deal was ordered by the Delaware Chancery Court in early October. It is the latest step in an epic battle during which Musk signed an April deal to acquire Twitter, then tried to back out of it, leading Twitter to sue the Tesla CEO to force him to conclude the deal. If the two sides don't meet the Friday deadline, the next step could be a November trial that would likely lead to a judge forcing Musk to complete the deal.

But Musk has been signaling that the deal is going through by Friday, paying a visit to Twitter's San Francisco headquarters Wednesday and changing his Twitter profile to "Chief Twit."

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And overnight the New York Stock Exchange notified investors that it will suspend trading in shares of Twitter before the opening bell Friday in anticipation of the company going private under Musk.

### FBI probing ex-CIA officer's spying for World Cup host Qatar

By ALAN SUDERMAN Associated Press

A former CIA officer who spied on Qatar's rivals to help the tiny Arab country land this year's World Cup is now under FBI scrutiny and newly obtained documents show he offered clandestine services that went beyond soccer to try to influence U.S. policy, an Associated Press investigation found.

The monthslong FBI probe focuses on whether Kevin Chalker's work for Qatar broke laws related to foreign lobbying, surveillance and exporting sensitive technologies and tradecraft, said two people with knowledge of the investigation who requested anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss it.

Chalker's goal, AP found, was to burnish Qatar's image among American decision makers while undermining critics who have accused the Persian Gulf monarchy of financing terrorists and other wrongdoing. Federal investigators have focused increasing scrutiny in recent years on Qatar's influence efforts, including those alleged to involve former U.S. national security officials.

AP's reporting in the past year has detailed how Chalker and his company, Global Risk Advisors, sought to help Qatar host the 2022 World Cup by spying on soccer officials in rival countries. That included deploying a Facebook "honeypot" in which an attractive woman is used to lure a target, having someone pose as a photojournalist to keep tabs on one nation's bid and, after the decision was announced in 2010, waging a failed two-year campaign to get a top German soccer official to soften his criticism of Qatar.

New AP reporting based on internal Global Risk Advisors records and interviews with Chalker's associates shows much of his work in the years since has focused on seeking to strengthen Qatar's influence in the U.S. That included attempting to set up high-level meetings between Qatari officials and top CIA leaders and pitching a sprawling covert influence operation to damage the reputations of U.S. officials perceived as Qatar's enemies. The company even boasted in internal records of using spycraft to try and gather information on a congressman who sponsored legislation Qatar opposed.

Global Risk Advisors "has consistently protected Qatar by attacking the attackers," the company said in one internal document.

Chalker's lawyer, Kevin Carroll, said Global Risk Advisors had never engaged in any unlawful activity and was unaware of any federal investigation.

The FBI said it could neither confirm nor deny the existence of an investigation. Qatar did not respond to requests for comment.

Qatar, an energy-rich sheikdom that is home to a massive U.S. military base, has spent billions in recent years to successfully fend off attempts by its neighboring rivals – Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – to isolate the country and sour its relationship with the U.S.

Chalker began a long and lucrative relationship with Qatar after working as an undercover operations officer for the CIA in the 2000s. His work on the World Cup helped Qatar become Global Risk Advisors' main client, allowing it to open offices in New York, Washington, London and Doha.

"GRA is on the cusp of rapid expansion," said a 2014 memo to employees, adding that the company "has been pursuing a number of extraordinary projects."

The company's work included a covert information campaign against Qatar's rivals that involved helping make a 2018 film called "Enemies of Peace" that was highly critical of Saudi Arabia's crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, according to two former Chalker associates. The film's director told the AP he was unaware an advisor on the film was working for GRA.

Global Risk Advisors and its affiliates also provided military and intelligence training for several years to Qatari officials, including members of the royal family, interviews and records show. Courses ranged from hostage rescue to how to operate undercover.

"Essentially, he wants us to conduct mini-Farm courses both for ops and for tech ops," said an internal Global Risk Advisors' document describing a Qatari official's request for training. "The Farm" is the nick-

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name given to the CIA's covert training facility in Virginia.

One member of the Qatari royal family received a perfect score of 100 in a "technical surveillance countermeasures" course despite missing much of the instruction and not showing "a genuine desire to learn the material," according to a company document.

Federal law prohibits sharing certain tactics the U.S. government teaches its own soldiers and spies, and some former Chalker employees said they were concerned that some of the Qatari trainings crossed the line.

Chalker's attorney said Global Risk Advisors has received proper authorization from the U.S. government whenever its work has required it.

AP's reporting was based on hundreds of pages of documents provided by former Chalker associates who requested anonymity because they feared retaliation.

Several of those sources described Chalker as a chaotic and mercurial boss whose priorities constantly shifted, with many projects ultimately going nowhere. They said Chalker prized secrecy, regularly used codenames -- his own was "Hercules" -- and often kept employees in the dark about the work Global Risk Advisors did for Qatar or the research reports it produced.

"Nobody really knew who these were going to, why they were being produced, what the real driver was — other than they were what Kevin wants us to work on," said one former employee.

Company records and interviews show Chalker consulted with and received advice on some of his proposals from then-CIA employee Denis Mandich, who worked as an agency liaison to Silicon Valley. Those projects included a multibillion-dollar proposal in 2014 to have Global Risk Advisors invest in tech startups on Qatar's behalf, pitched as a way to block the sale of potentially sensitive technology to its Persian Gulf rivals.

It's unclear from company documents if that project moved forward and Mandich later left the agency and joined Global Risk Advisors to become one of Chalker's top lieutenants. Mandich's attorneys did not respond to questions about his work for GRA.

Global Risk Advisors also created a detailed security plan in 2014 to install a surveillance system in Qatar that could track mobile phones in the country "with extreme accuracy" and allow analysts to "isolate individual conversations and listen in real-time," according to internal company records that include a draft contract.

That plan, dubbed Project Berlin, also suggested creating a World Cup 2022 mobile phone app that could record users' location and movements. Chalker indicated in internal company documents that Qatar gave preliminary approval to Project Berlin but it's unknown whether it was ever implemented.

Chalker's efforts at boosting Qatar's ties with the U.S. included an effort to set up a face-to-face meeting between top officials at the CIA and Qatar's prime minister. One Qatari official told Chalker that such a meeting help would provide a "golden stamp of approval" for Chalker's various projects, company records show.

But those records show Chalker's initial efforts to broker such a meeting failed despite his boasting of having unparalleled access to the highest levels of the Qatari government.

The CIA declined to comment.

Other company records showed Global Risk Advisors pushed to have oversight and control of Qatar's U.S. lobbying efforts, saying it could manage those efforts more productively.

A March 2017 proposal called "Project ENDGAME" said Qatar's enemies were seeking to inject the country into proxy fights involving its "allies" such as the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist group backed by Qatar.

In response to that threat, the company boasted in internal records that it had "developed an approach to a close contact of the congressman" who sponsored legislation that year to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization. "Developed an approach" is intelligence jargon for seeking to recruit a potential asset.

That congressman, Florida Republican Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, said he was unaware of such efforts and that he's continued to sponsor similar legislation in the years since.

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"The allegations that a former CIA officer is actively trying to influence an important national security bill on behalf of a foreign country are deeply disturbing," Diaz-Balart told AP.

The "Project ENDGAME" proposal also warned that President Donald Trump was "unpredictable" and his inner circle was being co-opted by the UAE's well-connected ambassador in Washington, Yousef Al-Otaiba.

The proposal suggested Qatar obtain "total information awareness" into Otaiba and his U.S. allies and then spread damaging information through friendly media outlets.

"Now is the time to once again seize the initiative to dominate the information battlefield," the proposal said.

In April 2017, Chalker and a Qatari government official signed a letter of intent that said Global Risk Advisors would provide Qatar with "enhanced tracking and monitoring, intelligence collection, predictive intelligence, information operations" and other spy services for \$60 million over three years. Other records show a Gibraltar-based company owned by Chalker began receiving seven- and eight-figure payments from Qatar shortly afterward.

Anonymous hackers began leaking selectively curated copies of Otaiba's emails in June 2017. Those emails included potentially embarrassing messages showing Otaiba's close relationships with top U.S. of-ficials and significant influence at some think tanks.

There's no direct evidence linking Global Risk Advisors to the release of Otaiba's emails. Chalker has categorically denied playing any role in a hack-and-leak operation, and no former Chalker associates who spoke with the AP said they saw the company engage in such activities.

The hackers' targets in the Otaiba leaks included a former Defense secretary, former high-ranking diplomats and intelligence officials, and two think tanks that had been critical of Qatar and were specifically named in the "Project Endgame" pitch document.

After going dormant for several months, the hackers released a new round of Otaiba emails in 2018 focused on Tom Barrack, a close Trump adviser who is currently on trial for allegedly working illegally for the UAE and whose hacked-and-leaked emails form part of the Justice Department's case.

Former Trump fundraiser Elliott Broidy has accused Chalker and Global Risk Advisors in an ongoing lawsuit of overseeing the Otaiba hack and leak on Qatar's behalf as well as a similar operation targeting Broidy that began in early 2018. Chalker's lawyers have called the lawsuit "baseless."

Chalker associates say he has shifted his focus away from Global Risk Advisors in recent years to a quantum computing cybersecurity company he formed with Mandich called Qrpyt, which has signed a technology licensing agreement with the Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

#### Call of Duty's latest battle is between Microsoft and Sony

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

Hunting down your enemies on the bustling streets of Amsterdam, along the U.S.-Mexico border or in a Middle Eastern fishing village is just part of the intense action in the latest Call of Duty video game.

The Friday release of Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 continues a nearly two-decade run for Californiabased Activision Blizzard's wildly popular military shooting game franchise. New installments of the game can rival Hollywood's biggest blockbusters in how much they earn on their opening weekend.

But the battle this time is also happening off-screen. Call of Duty is at the center of a corporate tugof-war between Microsoft's Xbox and Sony's PlayStation over Microsoft's pending \$69 billion purchase of Activision Blizzard.

"Microsoft would have full ownership of one of the most valuable franchises in console gaming," said Joost van Dreunen, a lecturer on the business of games at New York University's Stern School of Business. "And naturally, Sony does not want that or like that because it will cost them business."

Microsoft has been working to get approval from antitrust regulators in the U.S., Europe and elsewhere to complete its January agreement to acquire the video game giant. But it's been trailed around the world by objections from Sony, which is afraid of losing access to what it describes as a "must-have" game title.

Among those listening to Sony's concerns are antitrust regulators in the United Kingdom who last month

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escalated their investigation into whether Microsoft could make Call of Duty and other titles exclusive to its Xbox platform or "otherwise degrade its rivals' access" by delaying releases or imposing licensing price increases.

"These titles require thousands of game developers and several years to complete, and there are very few other games of similar calibre or popularity," said a September report from the UK's Competition and Markets Authority.

At the Southern California studios of Infinity Ward, the division of Activision Blizzard responsible for creating the new game, the Microsoft-Sony fight has been secondary to game developers' more pressing worries about making sure their newest release satisfies legions of diehard fans.

"It's always tough when you have something this popular and everybody's got an opinion on what it should be, what it shouldn't be," said Jack O'Hara, the game's director.

Work on Modern Warfare 2 started before the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered Infinity Ward's headquarters outside of Los Angeles, forcing developers to be more creative in how they drew the game's characters, weaponry, motions and scenery and recorded its voices. It was the same studio that in 2003 launched the original Call of Duty, a first-person shooter set during World War II.

Mark Grigsby, the studio's animation director, first joined in 2005. He said he was feeling "a little bit of anxiety" ahead of Friday's release about how players would react to tweaks affecting the feel of the virtual weapons they're carrying, such as how they recoil after a shot is fired.

"Every iteration of the product, you're never able to get everything that you wanted to do done in that one edition. So you're always trying to up your game," Grigsby said. "It takes an army and a talented army."

The games have gradually grown more visually realistic, interactive and multiplayer in the past two decades. They've also become more contemporary, starting with 2007's Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare, which took the fighting to modern-day settings in the Middle East and Ukraine. Friday's release is a sequel to a popular 2019 game that was itself a refresh of that 2007 game of the same name.

Studio executives said they consulted advisers and experts before incorporating storylines and imagery from the politically-charged U.S.-Mexico border wall, as well as a collection of settings that are meant to evoke a Mexican town and a fictional Middle Eastern country. Ukraine, where the company has some employees affected by Russia's war, is notably absent.

"We want to have that realism and feel like it's a world that we know and it's not outside of the realm," O'Hara said. "However, obviously, we're all impacted by current affairs. And so we always want to stay away from something that just feels glib or just not right, essentially. The goal is not to profiteer off of anything."

Infinity Ward executives declined to talk about their pending takeover by Microsoft. But Microsoft is increasingly speaking out about what would be the largest-ever tech acquisition, trying to assure regulators that it will keep Call of Duty on the PlayStation "for at least several more years" beyond its current contract with Sony.

While Brazil and Saudi Arabia have already approved the deal, it still awaits important decisions from the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and authorities in the U.K. and the European Union. Microsoft told investors Tuesday that is still expects the deal to close by the first half of next year. But it's possible regulators could impose conditions that force Microsoft to keep access open to Call of Duty for a longer time and ensure that its rivals aren't getting a lesser version.

"Is it really that important for Sony on a financial basis? Probably not. But it's mostly the draw of having all these people come to their platform," van Dreunen said.

And while important to console-makers and the digital subscription services they are building, Call of Duty and its fanbase is just a portion of what Microsoft would get from taking over Activision Blizzard, which owns dozens of titles including popular mobile games like Candy Crush. Van Dreunen said while the attention is on the Call of Duty dispute, that mobile expansion might be the real "gravity point" for Microsoft's massive merger.

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## UN report: Climate pollution reductions 'highly inadequate'

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

The world, especially richer carbon polluting nations, remains "far behind" and is not doing nearly enough -- not even promising to do enough -- to reach any of the global goals limiting future warming, a United Nations report said.

That "highly inadequate" inaction means the window is closing, but not quite shut yet, on efforts to keep future warming to just a few more tenths of a degree from now, according to Thursday's Emissions Gap report from the United Nations Environment Programme.

"Global and national climate commitments are falling pitifully short," United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Thursday. "We are headed for a global catastrophe."

The world is weaning itself from fossil fuels too slowly, the report and experts said.

"The report confirms the utterly glacial pace of climate action, despite the looming precipice of climate tipping points we're approaching," said climate scientist Bill Hare, head of Climate Analytics that also examines what countries are promising and doing about carbon emissions in its own analysis.

Instead of limiting warming to 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees or 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels, the global goals set by 2015 Paris agreement, the way the world is acting now, warming will hit 2.8 degrees (5 degrees Fahrenheit) by the year 2100, the UN report said. Countries concrete pledges would bring that down to 2.6 degrees (4.7 degrees Fahrenheit). It's already warmed 1.1 degrees (2 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times.

"In all likelihood we will pass by 1.5," UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen told The Associated Press in an interview. "We can still do it, but that means 45% emissions reductions" by 2030.

World Meteorological Organization Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said the U.N. weather agency has calculated that there's a 50% chance that world will likely hit the 1.5 degree mark temporarily in the next five years and "in the next decade we'd be there on a more permanent basis."

"It's really about understanding that every little digit (tenth of a degree of warming) that we shave off is a lesser catastrophic outlook," Andersen said.

"We're sliding from climate crisis to climate disaster," Andersen said in a Thursday news conference.

The emissions gap is the difference between the amount of carbon pollution being spewed between now and 2030 and the lower levels needed to keep warming to 1.5 or 2 degrees.

Guterres said "the emissions gap is a by-product of a commitments gap. A promises gap. An action gap." Stanford University climate scientist Rob Jackson, who chairs the independent Global Carbon Project that tracks carbon dioxide emissions around the world but wasn't part of the UN report, said "another decade of fossil emissions at current rates and we'll zip past 1.5C.... The way things are going though we'll zip past 1.5C, past 2C and -- heaven help us -- even 2.5 or 3C."

"We're failing by winning too slowly," Jackson said in an email. "Renewables are booming and cheaper than ever. But COVID stimulus plans and the war in Ukraine have disrupted global energy markets and led some countries (to) revert to coal and other fuels. This can't continue in a safe climate."

In 10 days, yearly international climate negotiations will begin in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, and in the run up to the United Nations conference, several reports highlight different aspects of the world's battle to curb climate change. Wednesday, a different UN agency looked at countries' official emission reduction targets. Thursday's Emissions Gap report looks at what countries are actually doing as well as what they promise to do in the future in various pledges.

The G20 nations, the richest countries, are responsible for 75% of the heat-trapping pollution, Andersen said, adding "clearly the more those G20s lean in, the better we will be."

The report said "G20 members are far behind in delivering" on their promises to reduce emissions. Taking out the special cases of Turkey and Russia, current polices by G20 nations fall 2.6 billion metric tons a year short of the 2030 goal, the report said. Both Turkey and Russia's targets for 2030 have higher pollution levels than current policies project and using their projections would make the G20 emissions gap artificially low, the report said.

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"It's critical that China, as well as the U.S. and other G20 countries, actually lead," Andersen said. She hailed the newly passed \$375 billion American climate- and inflation-fighting law as an example of action instead of just promises.

The report said that by 2030 the U.S. law should prevent 1 billion metric tons of carbon emissions, which is much more than other nations efforts made this year.

"What we're calling for is an accelerated pace because there are good things happening out there in a number of countries, but it's just not fast enough and it's not consistent enough," Andersen said.

Overall to get to the emission cuts needed, the world needs to transform to a low-carbon economy, something that needs global investments of \$4 trillion to \$6 trillion a year, the report said.

### **Today in History: October 28, Mussolini takes power**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, Oct. 28, the 301st day of 2022. There are 64 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 28, 1922, fascism came to Italy as Benito Mussolini took control of the government. On this date:

In 1636, the General Court of Massachusetts passed a legislative act establishing Harvard College.

In 1726, the original edition of "Gulliver's Travels," a satirical novel by Jonathan Swift, was first published in London.

In 1858, Rowland Hussey Macy opened his first New York store at Sixth Avenue and 14th Street in Manhattan.

In 1886, the Statue of Liberty, a gift from the people of France, was dedicated in New York Harbor by President Grover Cleveland.

In 1914, medical researcher Jonas Salk, who developed the first successful polio vaccine, was born in New York.

In 1919, Congress enacted the Volstead Act, which provided for enforcement of Prohibition, over President Woodrow Wilson's veto.

In 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt rededicated the Statue of Liberty on its 50th anniversary.

In 1962, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev informed the United States that he had ordered the dismantling of missile bases in Cuba; in return, the U.S. secretly agreed to remove nuclear missiles from U.S. installations in Turkey.

In 1991, what became known as "The Perfect Storm" began forming hundreds of miles east of Nova Scotia; lost at sea during the storm were the six crew members of the Andrea Gail, a swordfishing boat from Gloucester, Massachusetts.

In 2001, the families of people killed in the September 11 terrorist attack gathered in New York for a memorial service filled with prayer and song.

In 2013, Penn State said it would pay \$59.7 million to 26 young men over claims of child sexual abuse at the hands of former assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky.

In 2016, the FBI dropped what amounted to a political bomb on the Clinton campaign when it announced it was investigating whether emails on a device belonging to disgraced ex-congressman Anthony Weiner, the estranged husband of one of Clinton's closest aides, Huma Abedin, might contain classified information.

Ten years ago: Airlines canceled more than 7,000 flights in advance of Hurricane Sandy, transit systems in New York, Philadelphia and Washington were shut down, and forecasters warned the New York area could see an 11-foot wall of water. President Barrack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney altered their campaign travel plans because of the approaching superstorm. The San Francisco Giants won their second World Series title in three years, beating the Detroit Tigers 4-3 in 10 innings to complete a four-game sweep.

Five years ago: During a visit to South Korea, U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis warned that the threat of nuclear missile attacks by North Korea was accelerating; he accused the North of illegal and unneces-

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sary missile and nuclear programs. Houston Astros first baseman Yuli Gurriel was suspended for the first five games of the 2018 season for making a racist gesture toward Dodgers pitcher Yu Darvish after hitting a home run in Game 3 of the World Series off of Darvish, who was born in Japan.

One year ago: Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said his company was rebranding itself as Meta, an effort to encompass its virtual-reality vision for the future. (The social network itself would still be called Facebook.) Rapper Fetty Wap was arrested at New York's Citi Field, where a hip-hop music festival was taking place; he would be charged with participating in a conspiracy to smuggle large amounts of cocaine and other drugs into the New York area. (The rapper pleaded guilty to a conspiracy drug charge that carried a mandatory five-year prison sentence.) Joel Quenneville resigned as coach of the Florida Panthers, two days after the second-winningest coach in NHL history was among those implicated for not swiftly responding to allegations by a Chicago Blackhawks player of being sexually assaulted by another coach during the 2010 Stanley Cup playoffs.

Today's Birthdays: Jazz singer Cleo Laine is 95. Actor Joan Plowright is 93. Actor Jane Alexander is 83. Actor Dennis Franz is 78. Actor Telma Hopkins is 74. Caitlyn Jenner is 73. Actor Annie Potts is 70. Song-writer/producer Desmond Child is 69. Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates is 67. The former president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (ah-muh-DEE'-neh-zhahd), is 66. Rock musician Stephen Morris (New Order) is 65. Rock singer-musician William Reid (The Jesus & Mary Chain) is 64. Actor Mark Derwin is 62. Actor Daphne Zuniga (ZOO'-nih-guh) is 60. Actor Lauren Holly is 59. Talk show host-comedian-actor Sheryl Underwood is 59. Actor Jami Gertz is 57. Actor Chris Bauer is 56. Actor Jeremy Davies is 53. Singer Ben Harper is 53. Country singer-musician Caitlin Cary is 54. Actor Jeremy Davies is 53. Singer Ben Harper is 53. Country singer Brad Paisley is 50. Actor Joaquin Phoenix is 48. Actor Gwendoline Christie is 44. Singer Justin Guarini (TV: "American Idol") is 44. Pop singer Brett Dennen is 43. Actor Charlie Semine is 42. Actor Matt Smith is 40. Actor Finn Wittrock is 38. Actor Troian Bellisario is 37. Singer/rapper Frank Ocean is 35. Actor Lexi Ainsworth (TV: "General Hospital") is 30. Actor Nolan Gould is 24.