

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 1 of 64

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Groton Robotic Team Competes in Box Elder, SD](#)
- [3- Priage Doc: "The vital role that women play in men's health"](#)
- [4- Weekly Vikings Recap](#)
- [5- Weather Pages](#)
- [9- Daily Devotional](#)
- [10- 2022 Community Events](#)
- [11- Subscription Form](#)
- [12- News from the Associated Press](#)

Groton Community Calendar

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.

Tuesday, Nov. 1

School Breakfast: Egg Omelets.

School Lunch: Lasagna hot dist, corn.

Senior Menu: BBQ beef sandwich, potato salad, carrots and peas, fresh fruit.

8:30 a.m.: NCRC Test for seniors

7:30 p.m.: Region 1A Volleyball at Roncalli: Groton Area vs. Webster Area

1 p.m.: St. John's Ladiws Aid LWML

10:00am Bible Study - Adam Hamilton Videos on UMC Split

3:00pm Common Cents Community Thrift Store Downtown

4:00pm The Pantry at Groton Community Center

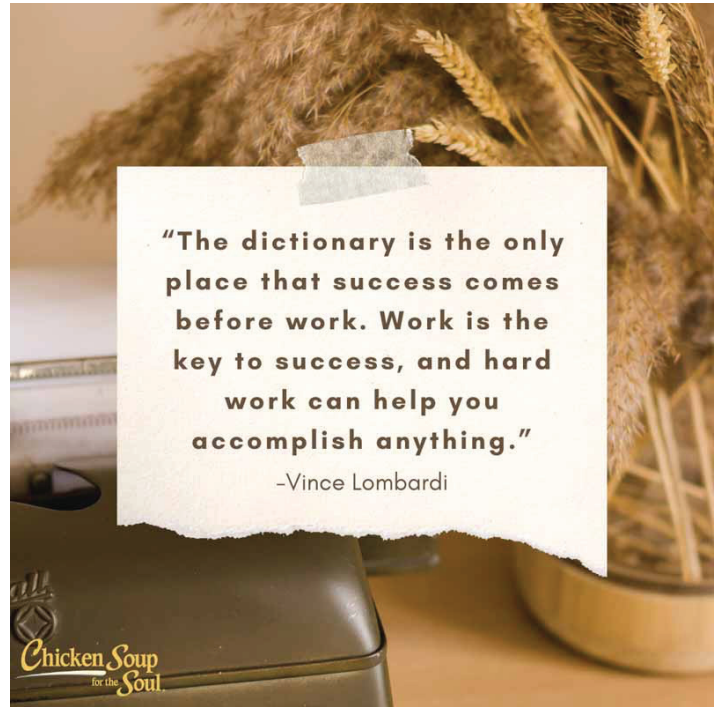
Wednesday, Nov. 2

School Breakfast: Hash brown pizza.

School Lunch: Nacho chips and cheese

Senior Menu: Turkey and dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, apple sauce, pumpkin bar with topping, whole wheat bread.

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



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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; Confirmation, 6 p.m.

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

9:30am UMC: Community Coffee Hour

4:00pm UMC: Confirmation

7:00pm UMYF Bible Study

Thursday, Nov. 3

Region 1A Volleyball

School Breakfast: Oatmeal.

School Lunch: Chicken sandwich, fries.

Senior Menu: Tuna noodle casserole, peas and carrots, swedish apple pie square, whole wheat bread.

2 p.m.: Emmanuel Lutheran Nigeria Circle

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

Friday, Nov. 4

School Breakfast: Cereal

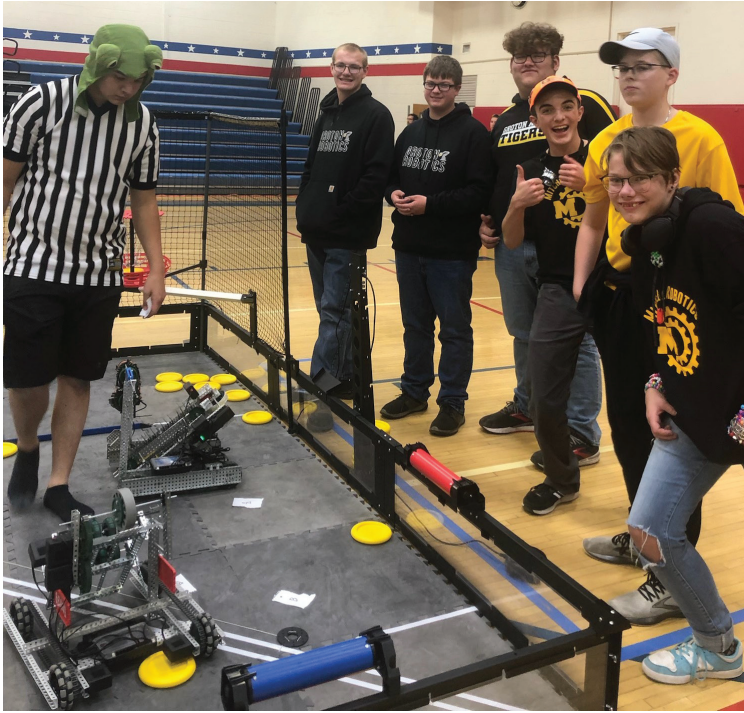
School Lunch: Pizza crunchers, green beans.

Senior Menu: Sloppy joe on wheat bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, fruit sauce.

OPEN! Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Gear Heads (L-R) Ethan Clark, Jack Dinger, Corbin Weismantel (fill-in assistant) (Courtesy Photo)

Groton Robotic Team Competes in Box Elder, SD

Gear Heads-Jack Dinger, Ethan Clark headed out to Rapid City for their first tournament of the season held at Douglas High School in Box Elder on Saturday, October 29th. This tournament was very small and only 4 schools participated including Groton, Box Elder, Mitchell, and Gillette, Wyoming for a total of 16 teams. Gear heads were 8th after the qualifying rounds. They ended the day by coming short one point in the quarter finals tournament. Mitchell took home the first place trophy for the day.

The team has been working on their robot since spring, but first tournaments always act as a learning curve. There are a few ways to score during this tournament and their original scoring plan of shooting disk into goals didn't go as efficiently as they had hope. Mid-point during the qualifying matches they decided to change their scoring strategy and tweak their robot accordingly. After this they were able to finally rack up some points at the end of each match. Each tournament acts as a learning curve and the robots are modified each time to become more efficient.

Thanks again to all who support Groton Robotics! All Groton Robotic teams will be traveling down to Mitchell next weekend on Saturday, November 5th. The 6th grade team will be competing for the first time. It's always fun to watch their enthusiasm and see what skills and knowledge they take home. The tournament starts at 10:30 and will be in the Norby Trade Center at Mitchell Technical Institute. A link to watch will be posted on the Groton Robotics Facebook page.

Submitted by: Groton Robotics

“The vital role that women play in men’s health”

A hug when I come home after a long day. A smile that melts my heart. A song and a dance that are spontaneous and carefree. Those are some of the blessings that come to mind when I think about my daughter.

Daughters can be a blessing in so many ways, as can sons of course. However, when it comes to taking care of families, women often play a vital role. Whether it is a young mom with her baby, a concerned wife encouraging her husband to go to the doctor, or a loving daughter preparing her elderly father another meal, women are important for men’s health.

Certainly, men are important for the health and well being of children, spouses, and parents as well. However, women naturally tend to be caregivers and stewards of a family’s health. Studies have shown that having a daughter increases their father’s life expectancy, while sons do not statistically contribute to paternal longevity. (Interestingly, having sons or daughters both decrease the life expectancy of their mothers, presumably due to the stress on the body.)

Thus, if one wants to promote men’s health and awareness, one must reach the women!

This November, you may see a few more mustaches than usual, for the annual “No-shave November” sometimes called “Movember” for the “M” from “mustache”, and intended to raise awareness of men’s health issues such as prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and suicide.

Oftentimes the key to detecting and treating cancer is to catch it early. A preventative physical exam with a primary care provider can allow time to identify a person’s health risk factors and decide on a strategy for screening and detecting disease. This wellness visit should also promote healthy efforts at diet and exercise that may prevent some diseases altogether.

And who is it that often encourages men to get their preventative physical and see the doctor? It’s the mothers, wives, and daughters!

For this “Movember,” I want to give a “thank you” to the women and anyone taking care of the men in their life. Thank you for encouraging them to get their health checked out and seeking help for mental illness. Thank you for being caregivers. Thank you for being a blessing and saving lives.

Andrew Ellsworth, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices family medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show based on science, built on trust for 21 seasons, broadcast on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



Based on Science, Built on Trust



Andrew Ellsworth, MD.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 4 of 64

Weekly Vikings Recap

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

After having the prior week off with a bye, the Vikings get right back in the win column with a 34-26 victory over the Arizona Cardinals. The Vikings now stand at 6-1 and hold the largest division lead of any of the current division leaders in the NFL. Despite owning the second-best record in the NFC, it still feels like the Vikings are flying a little under the radar from a national perspective. Perhaps that is just what this Vikings team wants.

The first half for the Vikings felt like a performance we would have seen from them last year. First, the run game was the main catalyst for the Vikings jumping out to an early lead on the Cardinals. Coming into the game, the Arizona Cardinals boasted the second-best run defense in the league. However, you would never have known that based on the way Dalvin Cook ran the ball today. Not only was Cook able to surpass 100 yards rushing for the first time this season, but he did it on only 20 carries. Cook's backup, Alexander Mattison, had a great day as well, picking up 40 yards and a touchdown on only five carries.

The best rushing highlight of the game surprisingly did not come from Cook or Mattison, however. It was from Kirk Cousins. On the Vikings' opening drive, the team found themselves in a 3rd and 4 from the Arizona 17-yard line. With the pocket collapsing, Cousins took off to his right, outran a diving tackle from a Cardinals defender, and sprinted down the sideline to dive in for a rushing touchdown. Who knows if will ever see such an athletic play from Cousins again in his career?

As the Vikings jumped out to a 14-3 lead, it felt like this might be the first game for the Vikings to blow out its opponent. However, the nightmares of last year's late first-half woes started to creep back in as the Vikings gave up a touchdown on a one-handed catch from superstar DeAndre Hopkins with 0:47 left in the first half.

The story of the second half had to be the Cardinals' turnovers. The first one came on a Harrison Smith interception of an underthrown pass by Kyler Murray midway through the third quarter. For the first time this season, the Vikings were able to turn a takeaway by the Vikings' defense into a touchdown by the Vikings' offense to go up 28-17.

After the Cardinals were able to cut the Vikings' lead to 28-26 and all momentum had shifted into the Cardinals' favor, the second Cardinals' turnover came on a muffed punt by Cardinals' punt returner, Greg Dortch. Initially, it looked like Dortch would recover his fumble, but the Vikings punt team did a nice job of hustling to the pile and crushing Dortch a couple of times while he was trying to grab the ball. For the second time in the game, the Vikings' offense turned a Cardinals' turnover into a Vikings' touchdown and extended their lead to 34-26.

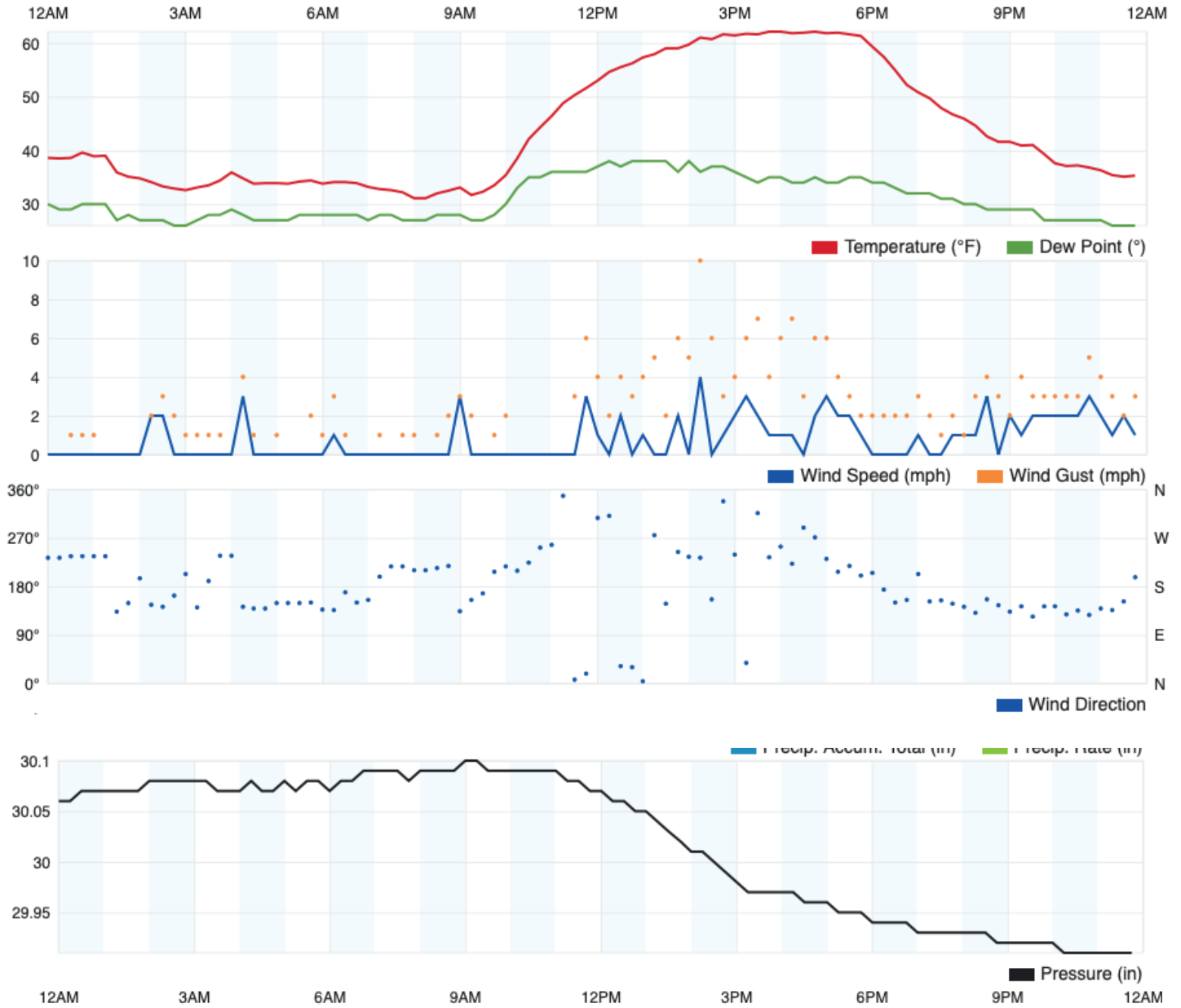
As the game started to wind down, the Vikings' defense made big play after big play to secure the Vikings' victory. Cam Bynum picked off a poorly thrown Kyler Murray in what would be the Vikings' third takeaway of the game. Later, former Cardinal Jordan Hicks made a huge tackle on a fourth-down play to ensure Cardinals' running back, Elo Benjamin, would be short of the first down marker. And lastly, on the final drive of the game, the Vikings' defensive line came up big with two back-to-back sacks on Kyler Murray as the time expired. If this keeps up, the story of the Vikings' season is going to be all about all the nerve-wracking wins they have gotten this year.

Next week, the Vikings head to Washington to face former Vikings' preseason superstar, Taylor Heinicke, and the 4-4 Washington Commanders. On paper, the Vikings should win easily. But, as we have seen all year, winning easily is not this team's style.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 5 of 64

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 6 of 64

Today



Patchy Fog
then Mostly
Sunny

High: 67 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 32 °F

Tuesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 70 °F

Tuesday
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 48 °F

Wednesday



Partly Sunny
then Mostly
Sunny and
Breezy

High: 73 °F

Warm & Dry Weather Continues

	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	Maximum
Aberdeen	60	63	66	68	66	63	59	53	50	68
Britton	60	63	65	66	64	61	57	51	48	66
Eagle Butte	62	64	65	66	65	63	59	53	51	66
Eureka	61	64	65	66	65	62	58	51	48	66
Gettysburg	61	63	64	66	64	62	57	51	48	66
Kennebec	65	68	68	70	68	66	62	54	51	70
McIntosh	60	63	64	65	64	62	58	52	50	65
Milbank	64	65	67	68	66	62	58	52	50	68
Miller	65	68	69	70	68	65	60	52	50	70
Mobridge	64	66	68	70	68	65	61	55	53	70
Murdo	64	66	67	69	67	65	60	53	51	69
Pierre	63	66	68	70	68	66	62	56	53	70
Redfield	61	65	68	69	68	65	60	53	50	69
Sisseton	65	67	68	67	66	62	57	54	53	68
Watertown	60	62	64	65	63	59	56	51	48	65
Webster	60	62	62	63	61	59	54	50	48	63
Wheaton	61	64	66	68	66	62	58	52	50	68



Aberdeen, SD

Hourly Temperatures Monday

Relatively mild temperatures are expected through the evening with light winds and clear skies.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 7 of 64

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 62 °F at 3:48 PM

Low Temp: 31 °F at 8:06 AM

Wind: 10 mph at 2:11 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 10 hours, 13 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 78 in 1933

Record Low: 8 in 2006

Average High: 51°F

Average Low: 26°F

Average Precip in Oct.: 2.14

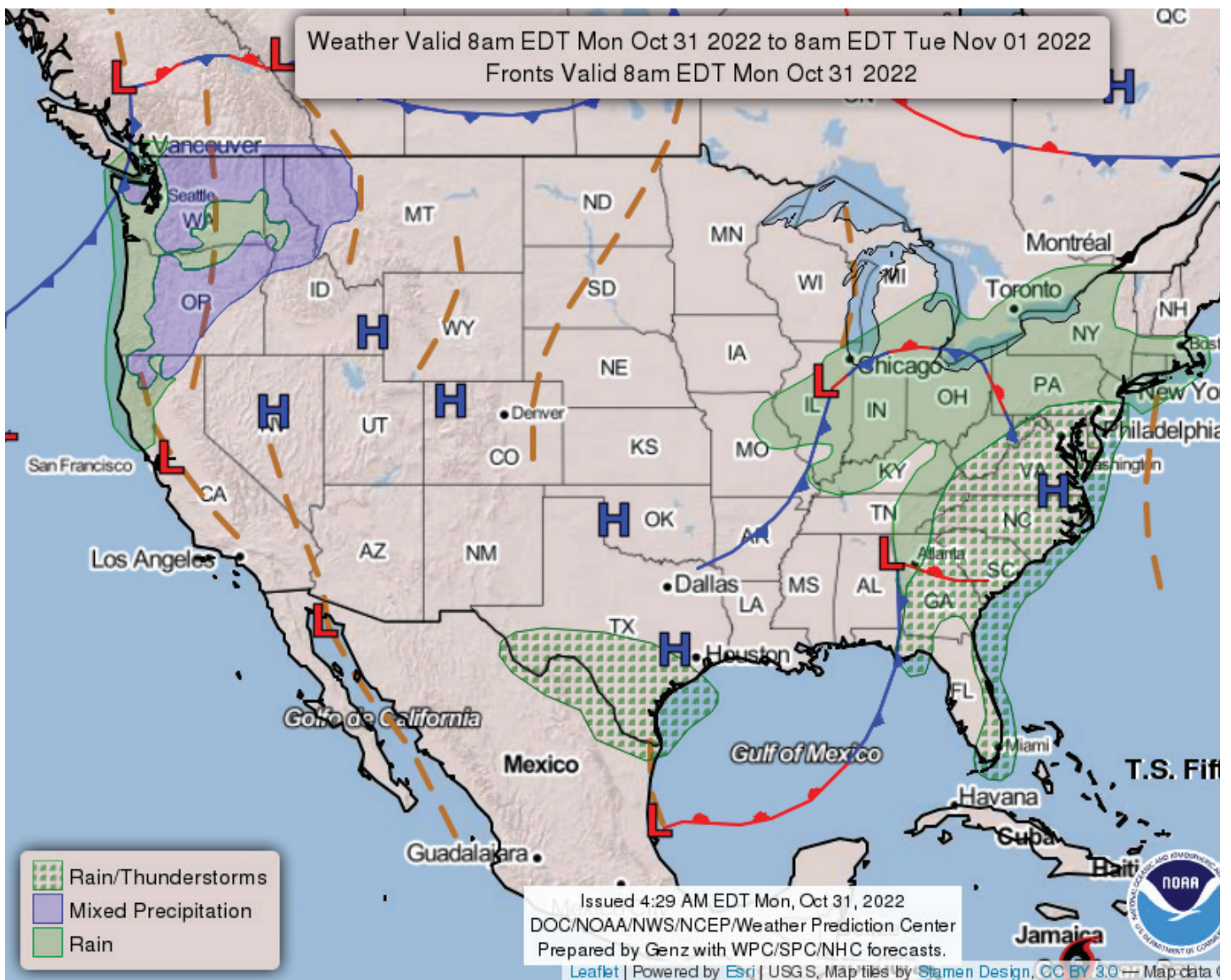
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.45

Average Precip to date: 20.47

Precip Year to Date: 16.50

Sunset Tonight: 6:22:45 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:10:37 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 8 of 64

Today in Weather History

October 31, 1979: A narrow band of heavy wet snow developed around midnight from Winner to Leola and produced from three to six inches of snow before ending in the afternoon of 31st. The wet snow stuck to power poles and combined with 30 to 50 mph winds broke up to 600 poles. Estimated damage was around \$400,000 dollars. The counties affected were Tripp, Lyman, Buffalo, Hyde, Hand, Faulk, and Edmunds Counties.

October 31, 1991: A blizzard swept through southeastern South Dakota, dropping over 16 inches of snow in places. The snow combined with winds gusting to 60 mph at times, thus producing blizzard conditions. Interstates 29 and 90, as well as most other roads east and south of Sioux Falls were closed due to blowing and drifting snow. There were hundreds of traffic accidents in the Sioux Falls area alone. The hospital emergency rooms were swamped with victims of automobile accidents and injuries sustained while shoveling heavy snow. Two men died from heart problems while shoveling the snow.

1846 - Eighty-seven pioneers were trapped by early snows in the Sierra Nevada Mountains that piled five feet deep, with 30 to 40 foot drifts. Just 47 persons survived the "Donner Pass Tragedy". (The Weather Channel)

1876: The Great Backerganj, also known as the Bengal cyclone of 1876 struck Bangladesh, then part of the province of Bengal in British India on this day. A maximum wind speed of 137 mph along with a storm surge of 10 to 45 feet inundated the coastal region. This storm likely caused 200,000 casualties along with displacing thousands of other individuals.

1950 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the central U.S. for Halloween. The temperature soared to 83 degrees at Minneapolis MN, their warmest reading of record for so late in the season. (The Weather Channel)

1965 - Fort Lauderdale, FL, was deluged with 13.81 inches of rain, which brought their rainfall total for the month of October to an all-time record of 42.43 inches. (30th-31st) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Halloween was a wet one in the southwestern U.S. Heavy rain in southern California resulted in numerous mudslides. Weather-related auto accidents resulted in three deaths and twenty-five injuries. Mount Wilson CA received 3.14 inches of rain in 24 hours. Yakima WA reported measurable rainfall for the first time since the 18th of July. The 103 day long dry spell was their longest of record. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Twenty-two cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 19 degrees at Cleveland OH was a record for October, and morning lows of 21 degrees at Allentown PA and Bridgeport CT tied October records. Nine cities in the southwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Phoenix AZ with a reading of 96 degrees. Showers made Halloween a soggy one in the southeastern U.S. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Halloween night was a soggy one in New England. Showers in the northeastern U.S. produced more than an inch and a half of rain in six hours at some locations. An invasion of cold arctic air brought an abrupt end to a week of "Indian Summer" type weather in the Great Lakes Region, and brought snow and subzero wind chill readings to the Northern Plains. In Colorado, Alamosa was the cold spot in the nation with a record low of two degrees above zero, and a Halloween night storm brought 3 to 6 inches of snow to the Front Range, and 5 to 10 inches to the nearby foothills. Icy streets around Denver the next morning made for a rather spooky commute. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1991: A severe winter storm, dubbed the Great Halloween Mega Storm, struck the upper Midwest. Minnesota bore the brunt of this storm. Blizzard conditions occurred with winds gusting frequently to 40 and 50 mph. By the time it was all over on November 2nd, Duluth recorded 37 inches, Minneapolis 28 inches, International Falls 18 inches and 11.2 inches in 24-hours at Sioux Falls, SD, their earliest heavy snowfall of 6 inches or more and snowiest October on record. For Duluth and Minneapolis, the snow amounts set new all-time records for the greatest amount of snow in a single storm. The storm gave these two cities nearly half of their average seasonal snowfall.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 9 of 64

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

EQUALITY FOR ALL

One of the great ongoing debates in our nation today concerns unequal justice. If the person who committed an offense is on my side politically or socially, for example, it is almost a foregone conclusion that "our side" wants "justice" for that one as they interpret the law. It seems as though most are more than willing to overlook justice for the "wrongdoer" if it will not cause "our side" to lose in the race for prominence, prestige, position or political favor.

How very wrong in the eyes of God! Justice, in God's eyes, is to be applied equally. He makes no apology or excuse for wrongdoing. One cannot read His Word without coming to the conclusion that "justice must prevail!" This concept is stressed in the Law and the Prophets and in other Old Testament writings. God will not bless or accept the behavior of those who attempt to justify the wrongdoing of anyone for any reason in any situation. In His Word and in His world, wrong is wrong and cannot be negotiated or resolved by getting the largest number of votes.

Injustice is always repulsive to God because it is a violation of His very nature and character. He is a just and holy God and to favor one side above another cannot exist in His creation, and should not exist within His Kingdom.

"Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent - the Lord detests them both." One thing to note about this verse is the fact that the words Solomon chose to describe "injustice" is a word that describes the most intense outrage possible to a Holy God. To Him, inequity is repulsive - even if it involves "the home team."

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to see right and wrong through Your eyes and in light of Your Word. May justice come to those wrongly condemned, and may justice prevail! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent - the Lord detests them both. Proverbs 17:15



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

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 10 of 64

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
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Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 11 of 64

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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News from the Associated Press

Poll workers train for conflict: 'A little nervous? I am.'

By CLAIRE SAVAGE and CARRIE ANTLFINGER Associated Press / Report for America

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Milwaukee's top election official surveyed about 20 poll workers gathered in a classroom in a city building stuffed with election supplies, then spoke frankly about the tense environment they may face next week when the city expects more people watching their work than ever before.

"So who is worried about observer disruptions?" Claire Woodall-Vogg, head of the Milwaukee Election Commission, asked the group. "Who has read things or heard things on the news, and you're a little nervous? I am. I'll raise my hand," she said, smiling.

A few of the workers raised their hands, too. They're not alone in their concern: Election officials across the country are bracing for confrontational poll watchers fueled by lies about the legitimacy of the 2020 election spread by former President Donald Trump and others, even after Trump's loss was upheld by repeated reviews, audits and recounts, and courts rejected legal challenges.

That tension is higher in the handful of battleground states like Wisconsin, where Trump and others were quick to cry fraud after late-arriving results from Democratic-dominated Milwaukee helped Joe Biden narrowly carry the state in 2020. Recounts demanded by Trump confirmed Biden's victory.

Woodall-Vogg has already felt the pressure. In an interview, she described being harassed and threatened after that election via email, phone calls and letters to her home — threats serious enough that she has an assigned FBI agent to forward them to.

Still, Woodall-Vogg said she'd rather she be a target than her workers — some of whom have stepped down from managerial roles because of the pressure.

"We're not paying them millions of bucks to endure that stress by any means," Woodall-Vogg said.

Election officials nationally are concerned about a flood of conspiracy theorists signing up to work as poll watchers, with some groups that have trafficked in lies about the 2020 election recruiting and training watchers, particularly in swing states like Wisconsin.

Wisconsin requires poll workers to be trained only every two years, but this year Milwaukee is offering much more frequent training than in elections past, including informational videos and one-hour sessions focused on specific topics, like voter registration. The content remains unchanged.

In the mid-October session observed by The Associated Press, Woodall-Vogg was presenting to an experienced group of poll managers — known as chief inspectors — who will be responsible for directing workers at individual polling places. The managers get a flat payment of \$325 for Election Day duties that begin before 7 a.m. and can stretch into the wee hours of the next morning. Non-managers get \$220.

When the training turned to how to handle potential problems, Woodall-Vogg was careful to note that observers play "a vital role in our democracy." But she also said she didn't want her workers to feel threatened by them.

She demonstrated how to tape off sections where observers can stand — between 3 and 8 feet from voter check-in and registration areas.

"Take your tape and make a line and say, 'This is the observer area,' or make a box and say, 'Please don't leave this area,'" she said.

Violators first get a warning; if they do it again, they're ordered to leave. If someone refuses, police are called.

Woodall-Vogg also walked the workers through how to handle challenges to voter eligibility based on a voter's race or the language they speak. Such challenges are unacceptable, Woodall-Vogg said, and should get a warning as frivolous. An observer who makes a second such challenge would be ordered to leave.

Some poll workers who spoke to AP said they expect to see conflict, but they're ready for it.

"I have a calling to serve," said 70-year-old Andrea Nembhard, who has worked elections for more than a decade. She added: "I'm not afraid."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 13 of 64

Melody Villanueva, 46, said the same.

"I'm a problem solver, so I will de-escalate if necessary, and I will have to call the proper authority if necessary," she said. "I am not one to fear much."

Some workers acknowledged their nerves.

Averil Fletcher recounted calling the police during the August primary when a voter — convinced he had been deliberately locked out of the polling place — threw chairs and threatened workers. She had to wait 35 minutes for officers who had been busy elsewhere handling a pair of shootings.

Woodall-Vogg assured the managers that Fletcher's experience "will never happen again."

"If there is an election disturbance, if someone's refusing to leave the polling place and you've issued them an order to leave, we have a direct line and there will be officers that will respond to support you," Woodall-Vogg told the chief inspectors.

Federal law enforcement will also be on standby. Four assistant U.S. attorneys are assigned to oversee Election Day in Wisconsin and deal with threats of violence to election staff and complaints of voting rights concerns, and the FBI has stationed agents throughout the country to address allegations of election fraud and other election abuses, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

Thanks to increased interest, the city hit full election staffing levels with two weeks to spare, which Woodall-Vogg said has never happened before.

"Usually it's more panicking, filling in gaps," Woodall-Vogg said.

That included five times as many partisan nominees to be election workers than in previous elections, but Woodall-Vogg said she's not worried about bad actors because the system is designed to prevent issues. Election inspectors always have multiple eyes over their shoulder as they work: a second inspector is required to sign off for each task, and chief inspectors are monitoring all workers.

"Anyone who might have bad intentions, we would immediately, I think, be able to identify," she said.

Suspension bridge collapse kills at least 133 in India

By AJIT SOLANKI, KRUTIKA PATHI and SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

MORBI, India (AP) — Military teams were searching Monday for people missing after a century-old cable suspension bridge collapsed into a river Sunday in the western Indian state of Gujarat, sending hundreds plunging into the water and killing at least 133 in one of the country's worst accidents in years.

As families mourned the dead, attention was turning to why the bridge, built by the British in the late 1800s and touted as an "engineering marvel," collapsed and who might be responsible.

The local government had awarded a 15-year contract to maintain and manage the bridge to a Morbi-based company, Ajanta Manufacturing Pvt. Ltd., mainly known for making clocks, mosquito racquets and electric bikes.

It reopened the bridge, which spans a wide section of the Machchu river, on Oct. 26. That's the first day of the Gujarati New Year, which coincides with the Hindu festival season, and the newly reopened attraction drew hundreds of sightseers.

Sandeepsinh Zala, a Morbi city official, told the Indian Express newspaper the company had reopened the bridge without first obtaining a "fitness certificate." That claim could not be independently verified, but the state government said it had formed a special team to investigate the disaster.

Authorities said the structure collapsed under the weight of hundreds of people. Security footage of the disaster showed bridge shaking violently and people trying to keep hold of its cables and green-colored metal fencing before the aluminum walkway gave way and crashed into the river.

Visuals from the disaster site showed the bridge split in the middle and the metal walkway hanging down, its cables snapped in places. At least 177 survivors were pulled from the river and teams from the army, navy and air force were looking for others still missing, said Jigar Khunt, an information department official in Gujarat.

State minister Harsh Sanghvi told reporters that 133 people were confirmed dead and many others were admitted to hospitals in critical condition. Emergency responders and rescuers worked overnight to search

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 14 of 64

for the survivors. Most of the victims were teens, women and older people, he said.

It was not immediately clear exactly how many people were on the bridge when it collapsed but survivors said it was so densely packed that the crowd was unable to quickly move to safety when its cable began to snap.

"There were just too many people on the bridge. We could barely move," Sidik Bai, 27, said while recovering from injuries in a hospital bed in Morbi.

Sidik said he jumped into the water when the bridge began to crack and saw his friend being crushed by its metal walkway. He survived by clinging to the bridge's cables, but his friend didn't make it.

"Everyone was crying for help, but one by one they all began disappearing in the water," Sidik said.

Local news channels ran pictures of the missing shared by concerned relatives and family members raced to overcrowded hospitals searching for their loved ones.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, visiting his home state of Gujarat, said he was "deeply saddened by the tragedy." His office announced compensation for families of the dead and called for speedy rescue efforts.

"Rarely in my life, would I have experienced such pain," Modi said during a public event in the state on Monday.

Modi was the top elected official of Gujarat for 12 years before becoming India's prime minister in 2014. A Gujarat state government election is expected in coming months and opposition parties have demanded an investigation into the collapse.

The bridge collapse is Asia's third major disaster involving large crowds in a month.

On Saturday, a Halloween crowd surge killed more than 150 mostly young people who attended festivities in Itaewon, a neighborhood in Seoul, South Korea. On Oct. 1, police in Indonesia fired tear gas at a soccer match, causing a crush that killed 132 people as spectators tried to flee.

India's infrastructure has long been marred by safety concerns, and Mordis has suffered other major disasters. In 1979, an upstream dam on the Machchu river burst, sending walls of water into the city and killing hundreds of people in one of India's biggest dam failures.

In 2001, thousands of people died in an earthquake in Gujarat. Morbi town, 85 miles (150 km) from the quake's epicenter in Bhuj, suffered widespread damage. According to a report in the Times of India newspaper, the bridge that collapsed Sunday also was severely damaged.

South Korea probes Halloween crowd surge as nation mourns

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean police are investigating what caused a crowd surge that killed more than 150 people including 26 foreigners during Halloween festivities in Seoul last weekend in the country's worst disaster in years, as President Yoon Suk Yeol and tens of thousands of others paid respects to the dead at special mourning sites.

Saturday's disaster was concentrated in a sloped, narrow alley in Seoul's Itaewon neighborhood, a popular nightlife district, with witnesses and survivors recalling a "hell-like" chaos with people falling on each other like dominoes. They said the entire Itaewon area was jammed with slow-moving vehicles and partygoers clad in Halloween costumes, making it impossible for rescuers and ambulances to reach the crammed alleys in time.

Police said they've launched a 475-member task force to investigate the crush.

Officers have obtained videos taken by about 50 security cameras in the area and are also analyzing video clips posted on social media. They have interviewed more than 40 witnesses and survivors so far, senior police officer Nam Gu-Jun told reporters Monday.

Other police officers said they are trying to find exactly when and where the crowd surge started and how it developed. They said a team of police officers and government forensic experts searched the Itaewon area on Monday.

"The government will thoroughly investigate the cause of the incident and do its best to make necessary improvements of systems to prevent a similar accident from recurring," Prime Minister Han Duck-soo said

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 15 of 64

at the start of a government meeting on the disaster.

The Itaewon area, famous for its cosmopolitan atmosphere, is the country's hottest spot for Halloween-themed events and parties, which have grown increasingly popular among young South Koreans in recent years. An estimated 100,000 people were gathered there in the country's largest Halloween celebration since the pandemic began.

The dead included about 26 foreign nationals.

One of the Americans killed was Anne Gieske, a University of Kentucky nursing student from northern Kentucky who was doing a study-abroad program in South Korea, the university said in a statement. The other was Steven Blesi, 20, his father, Steve Blesi, wrote on Twitter after earlier seeking information about his son.

Blesi appealed for information after not hearing from his son, asking, "If anyone has any news please share." After a flood of responses offering help and support, he tweeted, "We just got confirmation our son died," followed by "Thank you for the outpouring of love. We need time to grieve."

Australian victim Grace Rached, a Sydney film production assistant, was described by her family as "our life of the party." Her family said in a statement that "We are missing our gorgeous angel Grace, who lit up the room with her infectious smile."

The Japanese dead included Mei Tomikawa, who was studying Korean language in Seoul, according to Japanese media. Her father, Ayumu Tomikawa, told Japanese public broadcaster NHK that his daughter "really liked South Korea and was enjoying her life there."

Halloween festivities in Itaewon have no official organizers. South Korean police said Monday they don't have any specific procedures for handling incidents such as crowd surges during an event that has no organizers.

Police said they dispatched 137 officers to maintain order during Halloween festivities on Saturday, much more than the 34-90 officers mobilized in 2017, 2018 and 2019 before the pandemic.

Citing those figures, police dismissed as "different from the truth" speculation that a police station in the area was understaffed because it was providing extra security for Yoon, who earlier moved the presidential office to a site near Itaewon. They said police-provided security for presidents has long been handled by two special police units which have nothing to do with the Yongsan police station, whose jurisdiction includes Itaewon.

Nam, the police officer, said, the investigation would look into all possible causes of the crush.

As of Monday morning, the government said it has identified 153 of the 154 bodies and informed relatives of their identification. Nearly two-thirds of the dead — 98 — were women. It said 149 others remain injured. The death toll could rise further because officials said 33 of the injured were in serious condition.

More than 80% of the dead were in their 20s or 30s and 11 were teenagers, the Interior Ministry said.

Among foreign victims, five were from Iran, four from China, four from Russia, two from the United States, two from Japan, and one each from Australia, Norway, France, Austria, Vietnam, Thailand, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Sri Lanka, according to the ministry.

As the identifications of the dead neared completion, bereaved families were expected to begin funerals for their loved ones. Officials said the government will provide necessary support for funeral procedures.

President Yoon on Sunday declared a one-week national mourning period and ordered flags at government buildings and public offices to fly at half staff.

The government opened special memorial sites on Monday in Seoul and other major cities. Tens of thousands of people including Yoon and other top officials visited the sites, placed white flowers and bowed deeply. Many people also laid chrysanthemums, bottles of Korean "soju" liquor, candles and snacks near an Itaewon subway station and posted a host of condolence messages.

Following the disaster, many hotels, department stores, amusement parks and other businesses canceled Halloween-themed events.

The crowd surge was South Korea's deadliest disaster since 2014, when 304 people, mostly high school students, died in a ferry sinking.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 16 of 64

The sinking exposed lax safety rules and regulatory failures. It was partially blamed on excessive and poorly fastened cargo and a crew ill-trained for emergency situations. Saturday's deaths will likely draw public scrutiny of what government officials have done to improve public safety standards since the ferry disaster.

Barrage of Russian strikes hits key Ukrainian infrastructure

By ANDREW MELDRUM and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A massive barrage of Russian strikes on Monday morning hit critical infrastructure in Kyiv, Kharkiv and other cities in apparent retaliation for what Moscow alleged was a Ukrainian attack on its Black Sea Fleet over the weekend.

Loud explosions were heard across the Ukrainian capital in the early morning as residents prepared to go to work. Some of them received text messages from the emergency services about the threat of a missile attack, and air raid sirens wailed for three straight hours.

Large areas of the city were cut off from power and water supplies as a result, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said. Local authorities were working to restore a damaged energy facility that supplies power to 350,000 apartments in the capital, he said.

In the outlying region, authorities warned people to be prepared for a long power outage because of the emergency cuts. Kyiv region Gov. Oleksii Kuleba also said that one person was wounded and a number of houses were damaged as a result of this morning attack.

In Kharkiv, two strikes hit critical infrastructure facilities, according to the authorities, and the subway ceased operating. Officials also warned about possible power outages in the city of Zaporizhzhia resulting from the strikes there.

Critical infrastructure objects were also hit in the Cherkasy region southeast of Kyiv, and explosions were reported in other regions of Ukraine. In the Kirovohrad region of central Ukraine, the energy facility was hit, according to local authorities. In Vinnytsia, a missile that was shot down landed on civilian buildings, resulting in damage but no casualties, according to regional Gov. Serhii Borzov.

Some parts of Ukrainian railways were also cut off from power, the Ukrainian Railways reported.

The attack comes two days after Russia accused Ukraine of a drone attack against Russia's Black Sea Fleet off the coast of the annexed Crimean Peninsula. Ukraine has denied the attack, saying that Russia mishandled its own weapons, but Moscow still announced halting its participation in a U.N.-brokered deal to allow safe passage of ships carrying grain from Ukraine.

Commenting on Monday's attacks, the head of Ukraine's presidential office Andriy Yermak said that Russian forces "continue to fight with civilian facilities."

"We will persevere, and generations of Russians will pay a high price for their disgrace," Yermak said.

Deputy head of the presidential office Kyrylo Tymoshenko said urgent power shutdowns were being carried out after "Russian terrorists once again launched a massive strike on energy facilities in a number of Ukrainian regions."

It's the second time this month that Russia unleashed a massive barrage of strikes on Ukrainian infrastructure. On Oct. 10, a similar attack rocked the war-torn country following an explosion on the Kerch Bridge linking annexed Crimea to mainland Russia — an incident Moscow blamed on Kyiv.

This time, however, the Ukrainian forces say they were able to intercept most of the missiles launched by Russia.

Ukraine's air force said that more than 50 X-101/X-555 cruise missiles were launched from Tu-95/Tu-160 strategic aviation missile-carrying aircraft from the north of the Caspian Sea and from the area around the Russian city of Volgodonsk in the Rostov region. A total of 44 of them were shot down.

The Russian military haven't yet commented on the attack.

Suspension bridge collapse kills at least 132 in India

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 17 of 64

By AJIT SOLANKI, KRUTIKA PATHI and SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

MORBI, India (AP) — Military teams were searching Monday for people missing after a century-old cable suspension bridge collapsed into a river Sunday in the western Indian state of Gujarat, sending hundreds plunging into the water and killing at least 132 in one of the worst accidents in the country in the past decade.

At least 177 survivors were pulled from the river and teams from the army, navy and air force were looking for others still missing, said Jigar Khunt, an information department official in Gujarat said.

Live video reports showed hundreds of others desperately clinging to the broken structure and trying to make their way to safety, as crowds onshore shouted or swam to try to rescue who had fallen in.

Authorities said the 19th-century, colonial-era pedestrian bridge over the Machchu river in the state's Morbi district collapsed because it could not handle the weight of the large crowd, as the Hindu festival season drew hundreds of sightseers to the recently opened tourist attraction. Security footage of the disaster showed the suspension bridge shaking violently and people trying to hold on to its cables and green-colored metal netting before the walkway gave way and crashed into the river.

The 232-meter (761-foot)-long bridge had been closed for repairs for almost six months and had reopened just four days earlier for the Gujarati New Year.

Visuals from the disaster site showed the bridge split in the middle and the metal carriageway hanging down, its metal cables snapped in places.

State minister Harsh Sanghvi told reporters that 132 people were confirmed dead and many were admitted to hospitals in critical condition. Sanghvi said emergency responders and rescuers worked overnight to search for the survivors. Most of the victims were teens, women and older people, he said.

It was not immediately clear exactly how many people were on the bridge when it collapsed but survivors said it was so densely packed that the crowd was unable to move to safety when the cable strings began to snap.

"There were just too many people on the bridge. We could barely move," Sidik Bai, 27, said while recovering from injuries in a hospital bed in Morbi.

Sidik said he jumped into the water when the bridge began to crack and saw his friend being crushed by its metal carriageway. He survived the disaster by climbing on the bridge and holding onto its cables, but his friend couldn't make it.

"Everyone was crying for help, but one by one they all began disappearing in the water," Sidik said.

Local news channels ran pictures of the missing shared by concerned relatives searching for their loved ones. Many family members raced to overcrowded hospitals looking for their kin.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was in his home state of Gujarat on a three-day visit, said he was "deeply saddened by the tragedy." His office announced compensation to the families of the dead and urged for speedy rescue efforts.

"Rarely in my life, would I have experienced such pain," Modi said during a public event in the state on Monday.

Modi ruled Gujarat as its top elected official for 12 years before becoming India's prime minister in 2014.

A Gujarat's state government election is expected in the coming months and opposition parties have demanded an investigation into the collapse, saying that the bridge was reopened without having a safety clearance. The claim could not be independently verified, but the state government said it has formed a special team to investigate the disaster.

The state's civic body officials told local news media that the bridge — built by the British in late 1880 during the Victorian era and touted by the Gujarat government as an "engineering marvel" — might have been opened by the private company that runs it without a "fitness certificate."

India's infrastructure has long been marred by safety concerns, sometimes leading to major disasters on its highways and bridges.

The bridge collapse is Asia's third major disaster involving large crowds in a month.

On Saturday, a Halloween crowd surge killed more than 150 mostly young people who attended festivities in Itaewon, a neighborhood in Seoul, South Korea. On Oct. 1, police in Indonesia fired tear gas at a

soccer match, causing a crush that killed 132 people as spectators tried to flee.

In Israel, tiny swing could determine outcome of tight race

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli voters appear to be hopelessly deadlocked as the country heads to elections once again on Tuesday, with opinion polls saying the race is too close to forecast.

Former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who governed for 12 years before he was ousted last year, is asking voters to give him another chance, even as he stands trial on corruption charges. The current prime minister, Yair Lapid, has billed himself as a voice of decency and unity. He hopes his brief term as head of a caretaker government has shown voters that someone besides Netanyahu can lead the country.

In Israel's fragmented political system, neither Netanyahu's hard-line Likud party nor Lapid's centrist Yesh Atid is expected to capture enough seats in parliament to form a new government. Instead, each hopes to secure the required 61-seat majority in the Knesset, or parliament, with the support of smaller political allies. If neither succeeds, Israel could soon be facing another election, after already holding five votes in under four years.

Here is a look at the factors that could swing the outcome:

TURNOUT: Both Lapid and Netanyahu need strong turnout from their bases.

Netanyahu, who appeals to poorer, religious and small-town voters with hawkish views toward the Palestinians, has spent the summer touring Israel and delivering campaign speeches to adoring crowds in a small, bulletproof truck known as the "Bibi-bus." Lapid, popular with secular, urban voters, has built up a formidable army of volunteers and party activists across the country.

But the real key to the election could lie with Israel's Palestinian citizens, who make up about 20% of the population.

Arab voters, whose communities have long suffered from poverty, neglect and discrimination, have little enthusiasm for either candidate and turnout is expected to be low. But those who do vote tend to favor Lapid and his allies. If Arab voters turn out in modest numbers, that could give a lift to Lapid. But if they stay home, as opinion polls forecast, their absence could push Netanyahu to victory.

ON THE THRESHOLD: Any party that wins more than 3.25% of the vote makes it into parliament, with seats divided up by how many votes they capture. Over 10 parties could be elected.

Small parties that squeak past this threshold can find themselves in a powerful position to form the next coalition. For those who fall short, their votes are wasted.

Two venerable parties in the anti-Netanyahu bloc — Labor and Meretz — are hovering near the threshold in opinion polls. A failure by either of them to do so would be devastating for Lapid.

On the other side, "Jewish Home," a hard-line nationalist party loyal to Netanyahu, is also struggling. Polls indicate the party will not make it into parliament. But if it does, the Netanyahu bloc almost certainly will win.

POTENTIAL POWER BROKERS. The far right "Religious Zionism" party has been the story of this campaign. Led by openly anti-Arab and homophobic politicians, the party has burst out of the extremist fringes of Israeli politics and is poised to emerge as one of the largest factions in parliament. It is a strong ally of Netanyahu, and its leaders will expect a generous payout if they propel him to victory. In return, they have indicated they will try to erase the charges against him.

On the other side, Defense Minister Benny Gantz, who leads a small, center-right party, could be critical for a Lapid victory. If Gantz can siphon votes away from Netanyahu, he could prevent the former prime minister from his hoped-for majority. Gantz also has good relations with Netanyahu's religious allies and could potentially bring them over to Lapid's side. That could make him a powerful player in coalition negotiations — and even position him to be a future prime minister.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED. During Lapid's brief four-month term, Israel has fought a three-day battle against Gaza militants, stepped up arrest raids in the occupied West Bank and reached a diplomatic agreement with Lebanon over a maritime border between the enemy countries. An unexpected bout of violence

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 19 of 64

or surprising diplomatic breakthrough could all potentially sway voters at the last moment.

'Our phoenix': Lula's ups and downs in Brazil defy belief

By MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Four years ago, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's reputation and political future were in tatters. After an unlikely rise from poverty to union leader to Brazil's presidency, the man universally known as Lula had landed in prison.

On Sunday — in yet another twist — Brazilian voters chose him by the narrowest of margins to once again lead the world's fourth-largest democracy. He will also be putting his legacy on the line.

"They tried to bury me alive, and I am here," da Silva said in a speech Sunday night after results that confirmed his third presidential win. "I am here to govern in a very difficult situation. But I have faith in God that, with our people's help, we will find a way out for this country."

The life of da Silva has unfolded in such a unique, extraordinary way that it strains credulity.

His family moved from Brazil's poor northeast region to Sao Paulo state in pursuit of a better life, following his father who had traveled south years before. Upon arriving, however, they found he had settled down with another woman. Da Silva's mother was left alone to raise eight children, of whom little Lula was the youngest.

Pressed for money, he became a metalworker at age 14 in the metropolis' gritty outskirts. It was a physical job that famously cost him his left pinky finger. He became a union leader in an era when Brazil's manufacturing work force was still vast, and translated into political power. He made his first presidential run in 1989, which he lost — along with two subsequent races.

Finally, in 2002, he claimed victory and became the first worker to assume the nation's top job. And he was reelected four years later, defeating his rival Geraldo Alckmin who, this year, became his running mate.

Commodities exports to China were surging, filling government coffers, and a vast welfare program lifted tens of millions of Brazilians into the middle class. Da Silva left office with an approval rating above 80%, and then-U.S. President Barack Obama called him "the most popular politician on Earth." His hand-picked successor, Dilma Rousseff, was elected in 2014.

In Rousseff's second term, however, a sprawling corruption investigation ensnared top politicians and businessmen alike. It plunged her administration — along with da Silva and the rest of the Workers' Party he founded — into disgrace.

Revelations of systemic kickbacks in exchange for government contracts were followed by a deep, two-year recession that many blamed on Rousseff's economic policies, and which turbocharged resentment of the Workers' Party. She was impeached in 2016 for breaking fiscal responsibility laws regarding management of the federal budget.

Then the former president was sentenced for corruption and money laundering, and confined to a 160-square-foot room on the fourth floor of a Federal Police building in southern city Curitiba. That sidelined him from the 2018 presidential race, and cleared the way for Jair Bolsonaro, then a fringe lawmaker, to cruise to victory. Da Silva's political legacy was in tatters.

His personal life, too, was blown to pieces. His wife passed away, which at the time he blamed on the strain caused by the investigation.

Slowly, hope crept in. He started exchanging love letters with a woman named Rosângela da Silva, nicknamed Janja. Their relationship blossomed thanks to da Silva's then lawyer, Luis Carlos Rocha, who visited him every weekday.

Rocha acted as dutiful courier, hiding Janja's letters inside his jacket pocket where guards wouldn't check. He told The Associated Press he saw da Silva's face light up with each colorful envelope he delivered.

"God willing, one day we will publish (the letters)," da Silva said at a rally in September. "But only for people aged over 18."

The Supreme Court also started assessing the legality of his convictions, which it eventually annulled on the grounds that the presiding federal judge had been biased and colluded with prosecutors.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 20 of 64

After 580 days imprisonment, da Silva was a free man — free to marry his girlfriend, and free to run for the presidency. That didn't stop incumbent Bolsonaro, seeking a second term, from reminding voters of da Silva's convictions at every turn, warning that electing him would be like letting a thief return to the scene of the crime.

It revitalized semi-dormant sentiment against the Workers' Party, and the fact that much of Brazil still holds da Silva in disdain is a key reason this year's contest between the two political titans grew ever closer.

Ultimately, it came down to the wire: da Silva was elected, for the third time, with 50.9% of the vote. It was the tightest election since Brazil's return to democracy over three decades ago.

During his victory speech, Janja was by his side, as she was throughout his campaign. She shed tears, overwhelmed with emotion. And she wasn't alone.

"I cried when he was jailed. Now I cry because he will take Brazil back to normal. He can do it, he has the charisma to do it," said Claudia Marcos, a 56-year-old historian who joined thousands of others to celebrate the leftist's victory on Sao Paulo's main boulevard. "He is our phoenix. The most important president in Brazil's history."

At the Workers' Party's headquarters on Sunday, da Silva read out a long, carefully written speech promising to unite Brazil. He will take office on Jan. 1, and has said he won't seek reelection. That means this presidential term could be his final act.

"It is not the number of years that makes someone old. What makes you old is the lack of a cause," said da Silva, who turned 77 three days before the vote. "Brazil is my cause. The Brazilian people are my cause."

Brazil's Lula to reclaim presidency after beating Bolsonaro

By MAURICIO SAVERESE and DIANE JEANTET Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Brazilians delivered a very tight victory to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in a bitter presidential election, giving the leftist former president another shot at power in a rejection of incumbent Jair Bolsonaro's far-right politics.

Da Silva received 50.9% of the vote and Bolsonaro 49.1%, according to the country's election authority. Yet hours after the results were in -- and congratulations poured in from world leaders -- Bolsonaro had yet to publicly concede or react in any way.

Bolsonaro's campaign had made repeated — unproven — claims of possible electoral manipulation before the vote, raising fears that, if he lost, he would not accept defeat and try to challenge the results.

For da Silva, the high-stakes election was a stunning comeback. His imprisonment for corruption sidelined him from the 2018 election won by Bolsonaro, who has used the presidency to promote conservative social values while also delivering incendiary speeches and testing democratic institutions.

"Today the only winner is the Brazilian people," da Silva said in a speech Sunday evening at a hotel in downtown Sao Paulo. "It's the victory of a democratic movement that formed above political parties, personal interests and ideologies so that democracy came out victorious."

Da Silva is promising to govern beyond his party. He says he wants to bring in centrists and even some leaning to the right, and to restore the kind of prosperity the country enjoyed when he last served as president from 2003-2010. Yet he faces headwinds in a politically polarized society.

Bolsonaro's four years in office have been marked by proclaimed conservatism and defense of traditional Christian values. He claimed that his rival's return to power would usher in communism, legalized drugs, abortion and the persecution of churches - things that didn't happen during da Silva's earlier eight years in office.

This was the country's tightest election since its return to democracy in 1985, and the first time that a sitting president failed to win reelection. Just over 2 million votes separated the two candidates; the previous closest race, in 2014, was decided by a margin of roughly 3.5 million votes.

Da Silva's win extended a wave of recent leftist triumphs across the region, including Chile, Colombia and Argentina.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 21 of 64

The president-elect will inherit a nation straining against itself after he is inaugurated on Jan. 1, said Thomas Traumann, an independent political analyst who compared Sunday's results to Biden's 2020 victory.

"The huge challenge that Lula has will be to pacify the country," he said. "People are not only polarized on political matters, but also have different values, identity and opinions. What's more, they don't care what the other side's values, identities and opinions are."

Among world leaders offering congratulations on Sunday night was U.S. President Joe Biden, who in a statement highlighted the country's "free, fair, and credible elections." The European Union also commended the electoral authority for its effectiveness and transparency throughout the campaign.

Bolsonaro had been leading throughout the first half of the count and, as soon as da Silva overtook him, cars in the streets of downtown Sao Paulo began honking their horns. People in the streets of Rio de Janeiro's Ipanema neighborhood could be heard shouting, "It turned!"

Da Silva's headquarters in downtown Sao Paulo hotel only erupted once the final result was announced, underscoring the tension that was a hallmark of this race.

"Four years waiting for this," said Gabriela Souto, one of the few supporters allowed in due to heavy security.

Outside Bolsonaro's home in Rio, ground-zero for his support base, a woman atop a truck delivered a prayer over a speaker, then sang excitedly, trying to generate some energy as the tally grew for da Silva. But supporters decked out in the green and yellow of the flag barely responded. Many perked up when the national anthem played, singing along loudly with hands over their hearts.

For months, it appeared that da Silva was headed for easy victory as he kindled nostalgia for his presidency, when Brazil's economy was booming.

Bolsonaro's administration has been widely criticized for its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the worst deforestation in the Amazon rainforest in 15 years. But he has built a devoted base by presenting himself as protection from leftist policies that he says infringe on personal liberties while producing economic turmoil and moral rot. He sought to shore up support in an election year with vast government spending.

"We did not face an opponent, a candidate. We faced the machine of the Brazilian state put at his service so we could not win the election," da Silva told the crowd in Sao Paulo.

Da Silva built an extensive social welfare program during his tenure at president that helped lift tens of millions into the middle class. The man universally known as Lula left office with an approval rating above 80%, prompting then U.S. President Barack Obama to call him "the most popular politician on Earth."

But he is also remembered for his administration's involvement in vast corruption revealed by sprawling investigations.

Da Silva was jailed for 580 days for corruption and money laundering. His convictions were later annulled by Brazil's top court, which ruled the presiding judge had been biased and colluded with prosecutors. That enabled da Silva to run for president for the sixth time.

Da Silva has pledged to boost spending on the poor, reestablish relationships with foreign governments and take bold action to eliminate illegal clear-cutting in the Amazon rainforest.

"We will once again monitor and do surveillance in the Amazon. We will fight every illegal activity," da Silva said in his speech. "At the same time, we will promote sustainable development of communities in the Amazon."

The president-elect has pledged to install a ministry for Brazil's original peoples, which will be run by an Indigenous person.

But as da Silva tries to achieve these and other goals, he will be confronted by strong opposition from conservative lawmakers.

Unemployment this year has fallen to its lowest level since 2015 and, although overall inflation slowed during the campaign, food prices are increasing at a double-digit rate. Bolsonaro's welfare payments helped many Brazilians get by, but da Silva has been presenting himself as the candidate more willing to sustain aid going forward and raise the minimum wage.

In April, he tapped center-right Geraldo Alckmin, a former rival, to be his running mate. It was another key part of an effort to create a broad, pro-democracy front to not just unseat Bolsonaro, but to make it

easier to govern.

Building bridges among a diverse — and divided — country will be key to his success, said Carlos Melo, a political science professor at Insper University in Sao Paulo.

“If Lula manages to talk to voters who didn’t vote for him, which Bolsonaro never tried, and seeks negotiated solutions to the economic, social and political crisis we have,” Melo said, “then he could reconnect Brazil to a time in which people could disagree and still get some things done.”

Trump Organization faces criminal tax fraud trial over perks

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For years, as Donald Trump was soaring from reality TV star to the White House, his real estate empire was bankrolling big perks for some of his most trusted senior executives, including apartments and luxury cars.

Now Trump’s company, the Trump Organization, is on trial this week for criminal tax fraud — on the hook for what prosecutors say was a 15-year scheme by top officials to hide the plums and avoid paying taxes.

Opening statements and the first witnesses are expected Monday in New York. Last week, 12 jurors and six alternates were picked for the case, the only criminal trial to arise from the Manhattan district attorney’s three-year investigation of the former president.

Among the key prosecution witnesses: Trump’s longtime finance chief Allen Weisselberg, who pleaded guilty and has agreed to testify against the company in exchange for a five-month jail sentence.

If convicted, the Trump Organization could be fined more than \$1 million and could face difficulty in securing new loans and deals. Some partners and government entities could seek to cut ties with the company. It could also hamper its ability to do business with the U.S. Secret Service, which sometimes pays the company for lodging and services while protecting Trump as a former president.

Neither Trump nor any of his children who have worked as Trump Organization executives are charged or accused of wrongdoing. Trump is not expected to testify or even attend the trial.

Prosecutors have said they do not need to prove Trump knew about the scheme to get a conviction and that the case is “not about Donald Trump.” But a defense lawyer, William J. Brennan, said even if he’s not physically there, Trump is “ever present, like the mist in the room.”

That’s because Trump is synonymous with the Trump Organization, the entity through which he manages his many ventures, including his investments in golf courses, luxury towers and other real estate, his many marketing deals and his TV pursuits.

Trump signed some of the checks at the center of the case. His name is on memos and other company documents. Witnesses could testify about conversations they had with Trump. They are even expected to enter Trump’s personal general ledgers as evidence.

Prosecutors say The Trump Organization — through its subsidiaries Trump Corp. and Trump Payroll Corp. — is liable in part because former Weisselberg was a “high managerial agent” entrusted to act on behalf of the company and its various entities.

The Trump Organization has said it did nothing wrong. The company’s lawyers argue that Weisselberg and other executives acted on their own and that, if anything, their actions harmed the company financially.

Weisselberg, who has pleaded guilty to taking \$1.7 million in off-the-books compensation, pinned blame on himself and other top Trump Organization executives, including senior vice president and controller Jeffrey McConney.

But he disagreed with the notion that the company was harmed, saying the perks actually saved the company money because it avoided having to give raises.

Prosecutors have said they expect to call 15 witnesses, including Weisselberg and McConney, who was granted limited immunity to testify last year before a grand jury.

Judge Juan Manuel Merchan expects the trial to take at least four weeks, though a defense lawyer estimated last week that the prosecution case alone could go on for two months. Court will meet for a full day on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursday and for a half-day on Friday. The trial is off on Wednesday so

the judge can attend to other matters.

In Xi's China, even internal reports fall prey to censorship

By DAKE KANG Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — When the coronavirus was first detected in Wuhan in late 2019, reporter Liao Jun of China's official Xinhua News Agency told conflicting stories to two very different audiences.

Liao's news dispatches assured readers the disease didn't spread from person to person. But in a separate confidential report to senior officials, Liao struck a different tone, alerting Beijing that a mysterious, dangerous disease had surfaced.

Her reports to officials were part of a powerful internal reporting system long used by the ruling Communist Party to learn about issues considered too sensitive for the public to know. Chinese journalists and researchers file secret bulletins to top officials, ensuring they get the information needed to govern, even when it's censored.

But this internal system is struggling to give frank assessments as Chinese leader Xi Jinping consolidates his power, making it risky for anyone to question the party line even in confidential reports, a dozen Chinese academics, businesspeople and state journalists said in interviews with The Associated Press.

It's unclear what the impact has been, given the secretive nature of high-level Chinese politics. But the risk is ill-informed decision-making with less feedback from below, on everything from China's stance on Russia's invasion of Ukraine to its approach to the coronavirus.

"Powerful leaders become hostages," said Dali Yang, an expert on Chinese politics at the University of Chicago. "They actually are living in cocoons: protected, but also shielded from information that they should be open to."

The reports are classified as state secrets, giving them an air of mystery in China. They are called "neican," which is pronounced "NAY-tsahn" and means "internal reference."

They report on what would be considered staples of journalism in many other countries: corruption, strikes, public criticism, industrial accidents. In China, such matters can be too sensitive for public consumption, as they "could damage the Party's reputation," a 2020 Chinese academic paper says.

Newspapers, think tanks and universities across China each have their own classified reporting channel, sending intelligence up to local and provincial officials. They monitor air pollution in industrial Hebei province and guide the disposal of spoiled pickles in Hunan, a region famed for its cuisine.

But a few outlets, such as Xinhua and the state-controlled People's Daily, supply intelligence directly to China's rulers. Their confidential reports have toppled officials, changed policy, and launched government campaigns against poverty and waste.

The Communist Party calls internal reporting a secret weapon, acting as its "eyes and ears," while propaganda acts as its "throat and tongue."

Those who write internal reports are thoughtful, open-minded and often critical of the government, says Maria Repnikova, a Chinese media expert at Georgia State University.

They can face threats or intimidation, even when backed by the state, with officials taking extreme measures to block bad news from reaching their superiors.

"They are quite cautious about what goes in there, because they still have gatekeepers," Repnikova said.

Xi is intimately familiar with the power of this internal reporting system, said Alfred Wu, a former reporter who met Xi when he governed Fujian province. Xi cultivated ties with reporters from Xinhua and the People's Daily, the outlets with direct, confidential lines of communication to Beijing — and thus, the power to influence his career.

"He'd always mingle and socialize with journalists," Wu said. "Xi's street smarts helped him so much."

After coming to power in 2012, Xi stifled dissent and launched an anti-corruption campaign that jailed rivals. The crackdown has made reporters more cautious about what they write in internal memos.

Xi took control of Xinhua, which nominally reports to the No. 2 official, the premier. Under Xi, Xinhua at times began to ignore Premier Li Keqiang, whose frustrations boiled over in an internal meeting, said

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 24 of 64

Wu and a state media journalist with knowledge of the matter, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive subject.

A Xinhua journalist fumed for internal reports that helped take down a senior executive at a state company is now unable to publish, according to a close associate, because the risks are too big.

"Before, he could make these disclosures because Xinhua had the power to protect him," the associate said, declining to be named for fear of retribution. "Now, they say he can't report these things anymore."

The internal reports system was also vulnerable to corruption. Officials and businesspeople manipulated it to lobby for their interests. In one incident, Shanxi province officials gave cash and gold ingots to reporters to cover up a mine accident that killed 38 people.

Xi's crackdown has reined in corruption, but also sidelined many of Xi's competitors and paralyzed low-level officials, who are reluctant to act without clear permission from the top.

The government's tightening grip on the internet under Xi is also warping the internal reports.

Decades ago, there were few ways for officials to know what ordinary people thought, making the reports a valuable channel of insight. But the internet "handed everyone their own microphone," the People's Daily wrote, resulting in an explosion of information that internal reports struggled to analyze.

The internet also posed a threat: Critics bonded online, organizing to challenge the state.

Xi tackled both challenges. Under him, China beefed up big data analysis to harness the vast tide of information. Internal reports now cite the internet more and more, with some bulletins made up largely of social media posts.

Xi also launched a campaign against "online rumors" and put millions of censors to work. One of the first to be detained was an investigative journalist accusing an official of corruption.

So while internal reports now draw heavily on online information, the internet itself has become strictly censored, which can distort the message sent to the top.

Electronic surveillance has also become pervasive under Xi, making it tougher for sensitive information to be shared, one current and one former state media journalist said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to foreign media. Communications are heavily watched, keeping officials and experts, not just dissidents, under the gaze of the state.

As a result, people withhold critical information — sometimes, with catastrophic consequences.

In the early days of the virus outbreak in Wuhan, Xinhua's Liao reported the arrest of eight "rumormongers" for spreading "false information."

In fact, they were doctors warning each other about the emerging virus in online chats. Her story discouraged others from speaking up, leaving the central leadership blind to the virus' spread.

She also wrote an internal report alerting Beijing to notices from Wuhan health authorities leaked online. But instead of galvanizing swifter action, her reports lulled officials into thinking the outbreak was under control, according to Yang, the University of Chicago professor.

"It's a systemic issue," Yang said. "They operated in a system that choked off channels of information for good decision-making."

The information department of the State Council, China's Cabinet, declined to comment. Xinhua did not immediately respond to an AP request for comment.

The virus story illustrates a paradox of the internal reports: The tighter controls are, the more valuable the reports become. But tighter controls also make it harder to find reliable information.

Interviews with Chinese academics suggest when it comes to decisions made by the top, there's now little room for discussion or course correction.

Though China hasn't expressed direct support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Beijing's stance is clear: Under Xi's "no limits" partnership with Russia, officials voice sympathy with Moscow's grievances with the West, portraying the U.S. as a hypocritical bully and NATO as the aggressor.

But in private conversation, many Chinese foreign policy experts express views that diverge from the party line. That diversity of opinions, though, isn't being conveyed to China's leaders, some intellectuals fear.

"There's much more diversity of opinions than one would assume," said one academic, declining to be

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 25 of 64

named because they were not authorized to speak to the press.

At the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a book published in Russia wasn't allowed to be translated into Chinese because it had sections critical of Putin, according to an academic familiar with the academy's Russia experts.

One expert wrote an internal report suggesting China's foreign minister call his Ukrainian counterpart, the academic said. When the call took place about a week later, many academics congratulated the expert in a group chat.

Then, one of the academics said the expert should recommend Xi call Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. "If I do that, I won't be able to write another report again," the academic recounted the expert writing, speaking on condition of anonymity because of fear of retribution.

Xi hasn't spoken with Zelenskyy since the invasion began.

Many experts worry China has alienated Europe by favoring Russia. A landmark investment deal with the European Union looks all but dead, and Europe is increasingly aligning its China policy with the latter's biggest rival, the United States.

One scholar took a calculated risk to get his views heard. Government adviser Hu Wei published an online essay in March criticizing the war and arguing Beijing should side with Europe.

Hu wrote publicly because he worried his bosses wouldn't approve an internal report, according to Zhao Tong, a fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Even if the piece was censored, he reasoned, it might get the attention of senior officials.

"The information bubble is very serious," Zhao said. "I'm not sure even the authorities have a grasp of how popular a certain view really is."

More than 100,000 people viewed Hu's essay online. Within hours, it was blocked.

Lula defeats Bolsonaro to again become Brazil's president

By MAURICIO SAVERESE and DIANE JEANTET Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has done it again: Twenty years after first winning the Brazilian presidency, the leftist defeated incumbent Jair Bolsonaro Sunday in an extremely tight election that marks an about-face for the country after four years of far-right politics.

With 99.9% of the votes tallied in the runoff vote, da Silva had 50.9% and Bolsonaro 49.1%, and the election authority said da Silva's victory was a mathematical certainty. At about 10 p.m. local time, three hours after the results were in, the lights went out in the presidential palace and Bolsonaro had not conceded nor reacted in any way.

Before the vote, Bolsonaro's campaign had made repeated — unproven — claims of possible electoral manipulation, raising fears that he would not accept defeat and would challenge the results if he lost.

The high-stakes election was a stunning reversal for da Silva, 77, whose imprisonment for corruption sidelined him from the 2018 election that brought Bolsonaro, a defender of conservative social values, to power.

"Today the only winner is the Brazilian people," da Silva said in a speech at a hotel in downtown Sao Paulo. "This isn't a victory of mine or the Workers' Party, nor the parties that supported me in campaign. It's the victory of a democratic movement that formed above political parties, personal interests and ideologies so that democracy came out victorious."

Da Silva is promising to govern beyond his party. He wants to bring in centrists and even some leaning to the right who voted for him for the first time, and to restore the country's more prosperous past. Yet he faces headwinds in a politically polarized society where economic growth is forecast to slow and inflation remains high.

This was the country's tightest election since its return to democracy in 1985, and the first time that a sitting president failed to win reelection. Just over 2 million votes separated the two candidates; the previous closest race, in 2014, was decided by a margin of roughly 3.5 million votes.

The highly polarized election in Latin America's biggest economy extended a wave of recent leftist vic-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 26 of 64

tories in the region, including Chile, Colombia and Argentina.

Da Silva's inauguration is scheduled to take place on Jan. 1. He last served as president from 2003-2010.

Thomas Traumann, an independent political analyst, compared the results to Biden's 2020 victory, saying da Silva is inheriting an extremely divided nation.

"The huge challenge that Lula has will be to pacify the country," he said. "People are not only polarized on political matters, but also have different values, identity and opinions. What's more, they don't care what the other side's values, identities and opinions are."

Congratulations for da Silva — and Brazil — began to pour in from around Latin America and across the world Sunday evening, including from U.S. President Joe Biden, who highlighted the country's "free, fair, and credible elections." The European Union also congratulated da Silva in a statement, commending the electoral authority for its effectiveness and transparency throughout the campaign.

Bolsonaro had been leading throughout the first half of the count and, as soon as da Silva overtook him, cars in the streets of downtown Sao Paulo began honking their horns. People in the streets of Rio de Janeiro's Ipanema neighborhood could be heard shouting, "It turned!"

Da Silva's headquarters in downtown Sao Paulo hotel only erupted once the final result was announced, underscoring the tension that was a hallmark of this race.

"Four years waiting for this," said Gabriela Souto, one of the few supporters allowed in due to heavy security.

Outside Bolsonaro's home in Rio, ground-zero for his support base, a woman atop a truck delivered a prayer over a speaker, then sang excitedly, trying to generate some energy as the tally grew for da Silva. But supporters decked out in the green and yellow of the flag barely responded. Many perked up when the national anthem played, singing along loudly with hands over their hearts.

For months, it appeared that da Silva was headed for easy victory as he kindled nostalgia for his presidency, when Brazil's economy was booming and welfare helped tens of millions join the middle class.

But while da Silva topped the Oct. 2 first-round elections with 48% of the vote, Bolsonaro was a strong second at 43%, showing opinion polls significantly had underestimated his popularity.

Bolsonaro's administration has been marked by incendiary speech, his testing of democratic institutions, his widely criticized handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the worst deforestation in the Amazon rainforest in 15 years. But he has built a devoted base by defending conservative values and presenting himself as protection from leftist policies that he says infringe on personal liberties and produce economic turmoil. And he shored up support in an election year with vast government spending.

"We did not face an opponent, a candidate. We faced the machine of the Brazilian state put at his service so we could not win the election," da Silva told the crowd in Sao Paulo.

Da Silva built an extensive social welfare program during his tenure that helped lift tens of millions into the middle class. The man universally known as Lula also presided over an economic boom, leaving office with an approval rating above 80%, prompting then U.S. President Barack Obama to call him "the most popular politician on Earth."

But he is also remembered for his administration's involvement in vast corruption revealed by sprawling investigations. Da Silva's arrest in 2018 kept him out of that year's race against Bolsonaro, a fringe lawmaker at the time who was an outspoken fan of former U.S. President Donald Trump.

Da Silva was jailed for for 580 days for corruption and money laundering. His convictions were later annulled by Brazil's top court, which ruled the presiding judge had been biased and colluded with prosecutors. That enabled da Silva to run for the nation's highest office for the sixth time.

Da Silva has pledged to boost spending on the poor, reestablish relationships with foreign governments and take bold action to eliminate illegal clear-cutting in the Amazon rainforest.

"We will once again monitor and do surveillance in the Amazon. We will fight every illegal activity," da Silva said in his acceptance speech. "At the same time we will promote sustainable development of the communities of the Amazon."

The president-elect has pledged to install a ministry for Brazil's original peoples, which will be run by an

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 27 of 64

Indigenous person.

But as da Silva tries to achieve these and other goals, he will be confronted by strong opposition from conservative lawmakers likely to take their cues from Bolsonaro.

Carlos Melo, a political science professor at Insper University in Sao Paulo, compared the likely political climate to that experienced by former President Dilma Rousseff, da Silva's hand-picked successor after his second term.

"Lula's victory means Brazil is trying to overcome years of turbulence since the reelection of President Dilma Rousseff in 2014. That election never ended; the opposition asked for a recount, she governed under pressure and was impeached two years later," said Melo. "The divide became huge and then made Bolsonaro."

Unemployment this year has fallen to its lowest level since 2015 and, although overall inflation has slowed during the campaign, food prices are increasing at a double-digit rate. Bolsonaro's welfare payments helped many Brazilians get by, but da Silva has been presenting himself as the candidate more willing to sustain aid going forward and raise the minimum wage.

In April, he tapped center-right Geraldo Alckmin, a former rival, to be his running mate. It was another key part of an effort to create a broad, pro-democracy front to not just unseat Bolsonaro, but to make it easier to govern.

"If Lula manages to talk to voters who didn't vote for him, which Bolsonaro never tried, and seeks negotiated solutions to the economic, social and political crisis we have, and links with other nations that were lost, then he could reconnect Brazil to a time in which people could disagree and still get some things done," Melo said.

Witnesses describe 'a hell' inside South Korean crowd surge

By FOSTER KLUG and HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — In one moment, thousands of Halloween revelers crammed into the narrow, vibrant streets of Seoul's most cosmopolitan neighborhood, eager to show off their capes, wizard hats and bat wings.

In the next, a surge of panic spread as an unmanageable mass of people jammed into a narrow alley in Itaewon. Topped revelers were trapped for as long as 40 minutes, stacked on one another "like dominoes" in a chaotic crush so intense that clothes were ripped off.

A stunned Seoul was just beginning on Monday to put together the huge scope of the crowd surge on Saturday night that killed at least 154, mostly people in their 20s and 30s, including foreign nationals. Officials said they expected more deaths because there were nearly 150 others injured, 33 of them in serious conditions.

Witnesses described a nightmarish scene as people performed CPR on the dying and carried limp bodies to ambulances, while dance music pulsed from garish clubs lit in bright neon. Others tried desperately to pull out those trapped at the bottom of the crush of people, but often failed because there were too many of the fallen on top of them.

"We were just stuck together so tightly we couldn't even shift to call out and report the situation," said one survivor, surnamed Lee. "We were strangers, but we held each others' hands and repeatedly shouted out, 'Let's survive!'"

Kim Mi Sung, who works for a non-profit organization in Itaewon, told The Associated Press that nine out of the 10 people she gave CPR to eventually died. Many were bleeding from their noses and mouths. Most were women who dressed as witches or were in other Halloween costumes; two were foreigners.

"It was like a hell," Kim said. "I still can't believe what happened."

In this ultra-wired, high-tech country, anguish, terror and grief — as well as many of the details of what happened — are playing out most vividly on social media. Users posted messages desperately seeking friends and loved ones, as witnesses and survivors described what they went through.

"I thought I was dying," one woman said in posts on Twitter. "My entire body was stuck among everyone

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 28 of 64

else, while people laughed from a terrace and videotaped us. I thought I would really die if I cried out. I stretched my hands out to (others) who were above me and I managed to get out."

An unidentified woman in her 20s wept as she described the scene to the Yonhap news agency: "It looked like the graves of people piled upon one another. Some of them were slowly losing consciousness and others seemed to have already died."

A man, surnamed Kong, said he managed to escape to a nearby bar with his friends after the crush happened. He saw through the bar windows that people were falling on top of each other "like dominoes," Yonhap reported.

When a 27-year-old office worker who gave only his surname, Choi, left the bar he'd been in during the crush, he saw dozens of police and paramedics. "It kind of looked like a war zone," he said.

The bodies of 10 to 15 people were lined up in front of the King Kebab restaurant on the asphalt and were being covered up with blue tarps as he walked by.

"It looked like they were sleeping — eyes closed, mouth opened. They looked like mannequins," Choi said.

Friends and family members gathered at a local government office to try to find news about the missing.

One Twitter user posted a series of messages asking for information about a 17-year-old friend who had gone to Itaewon to celebrate wearing a hairband that looked like cat ears.

"I lost contact with her. She's been a friend of mine for 12 years, and we were like family. Please help me," the message said.

Even after the crush, witnesses said they saw some revelers not immediately making way for emergency vehicles, rescuers and police officers. One viral video clip on Twitter showing a crowd of young people dancing and singing near the carnage drew several insults from South Koreans.

Ken Fallas, a Costa Rican architect who has worked in Seoul for the past eight years, watched stunned as a dozen or more unconscious partygoers were carried out from a narrow backstreet packed with youngsters dressed like movie characters.

Fallas said police and emergency workers pleaded with people to step up if they knew how to give CPR because they were overwhelmed by the large number of injured.

"I saw a lot of (young) people laughing, but I don't think they were (really) laughing because, you know, what's funny?" Fallas said. "They were laughing because they were too scared. Because to be in front of a thing like that is not easy. Not everyone knows how to process that."

Confident GOP unifies behind candidates once seen as risky

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

ATKINSON, N.H. (AP) — New Hampshire's Republican governor described Don Bolduc as a "conspiracy theory extremist" just two months ago. But now, a week before Election Day, Gov. Chris Sununu is vowing to support him. And the leader of the GOP's campaign to retake the U.S. Senate stood at Bolduc's side over the weekend and called him "a true patriot."

"I'm here for one reason, and that's to make sure Don Bolduc is the next U.S. senator," Rick Scott, a Florida senator and chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, told dozens of voters on Sunday gathered inside an Atkinson, New Hampshire, community center.

"Here's a guy who's a true patriot," Scott said as he introduced Bolduc, a retired Army general. "He served his country. He believes. He cares."

The New Hampshire dynamic reflects the emboldened GOP's increasing confidence in candidates who party leaders believed were essentially unelectable — or at least seriously flawed — just weeks or months ago. But heading into the final full week of the 2022 midterms, Republican leaders are betting that anti-Democratic political headwinds will supersede what Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell himself called "candidate quality" issues in his own party.

Republican Senate contenders from Arizona to Georgia and North Carolina to New Hampshire are grappling with revelations about their personal lives, extreme positions and weak fundraising. Yet they may be in position to win on Nov. 8. Leaders in both parties believe Republicans are poised to take the House

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 29 of 64

majority, with control of the Senate in sight as well.

At the same time, Republicans are waging competitive battles for governorships in swing states like Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada and Wisconsin.

As Republican optimism grows, Democrats have been forced into a defensive position with voters looking to punish the party that controls Washington for surging inflation, crime concerns and general pessimism about the direction of the country. Saddled by weak approval ratings, the leader of the Democratic Party, President Joe Biden, has avoided many of the nation's most competitive battlegrounds for fear he would do his party more harm than good.

Biden is set to spend the night before Election Day at a rally in deep-blue Maryland. He'll travel this week to New Mexico and California, two Democratic strongholds where Republicans are threatening to make gains.

Former President Barack Obama rallied voters in Michigan and Wisconsin over the weekend.

"I understand why people are anxious," Obama said in Detroit. "Moping is not an option."

It was first lady Jill Biden, not her husband, who campaigned with New Hampshire Sen. Maggie Hassan on Saturday. The first lady called New Hampshire's Senate contest "an enormous race" and encouraged volunteers to "dig a little deeper" and "work a little harder" in the coming days.

In an interview moments before taking the stage with the first lady, Hassan refused to say whether she wanted Biden to run for a second term when asked.

"How about we just get through 2022?" Hassan said. "That's obviously his decision to make."

The GOP's embrace of risky Senate contenders has been playing out for months in states like Georgia, where \$60 million will have been spent on television advertising to benefit Republican Herschel Walker by Election Day. That backing comes even as Walker confronts reports of violence and mental health issues from his past and more recent allegations that he paid at least two women to have abortions. Walker has denied the abortion allegations.

The Republican Party is also rallying behind Arizona Senate contender Blake Masters, a so-called election denier viewed as deeply flawed by GOP leaders earlier in the year. Washington Republicans aggressively recruited outgoing Gov. Doug Ducey to run for the Senate, but Ducey declined.

Masters, a 36-year-old venture capitalist, is now the GOP's only hope to defeat incumbent Sen. Mark Kelly, a retired astronaut. Ignoring Masters' embrace of former President Donald Trump's lies about the 2020 election, former Vice President Mike Pence campaigned for the Arizona Republican recently and called him "one of the brightest stars in the Republican Party."

In North Carolina, local Republicans have raised concerns about the strength of Trump-backed Republican Senate candidate Ted Budd. The congressman who has struggled to energize Republican voters in his campaign against Democrat Cheri Beasley, a former chief justice on the state Supreme Court. Local GOP officials openly criticized Budd for skipping a recent debate against Beasley, although over the last week Sens. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, Tom Cotton of Arkansas and Ted Cruz of Texas campaigned with him.

It's been much the same in Ohio, where local officials have spoken out against Trump's preferred Senate candidate, J.D. Vance, a venture capitalist who has promoted the former president's election lies and underwhelmed as a fundraiser.

Steven Law, a chief McConnell ally who runs the McConnell-aligned super PAC known as the Senate Leadership Fund, says that apparent flaws in candidates — including those who have railed against McConnell himself — are far less important than the party's ultimate goal this fall: winning.

"At the end of the day, our focus is on winning the majority. And I feel like a lot of those concerns have faded into the background as we work toward that goal," Law said in an interview.

Still, the Senate Leadership Fund shifted roughly \$6 million it had planned to invest in the New Hampshire Senate race to Pennsylvania in recent days, suggesting it was essentially giving up on Bolduc. But just days later, the NRSC invested another \$1 million — and Scott, its chairman, campaigned with Bolduc, sending the unmistakable message that the GOP stands behind the controversial New Hampshire Republican.

Over the weekend, a conservative group aligned with the conservative Heritage Fund invested another \$1 million into Bolduc's candidacy.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 30 of 64

Meanwhile, Bolduc continues to rail against Washington leadership in both parties as he wages an aggressive retail campaign across New Hampshire. In a brief interview before a Windham town hall on Saturday, Bolduc said he would work to replace McConnell and other Republican leaders if elected.

"The leadership on both sides have drug us into the mess that we see ourselves in. I'm the only candidate that says that," Bolduc said. "It's a Republican problem. It's a Democrat problem."

Inside the town hall, one Bolduc supporter mistakenly believed that Bolduc backed abortion rights. She sought to clarify his position as he shook her hand before taking the stage.

"I have a question," said the voter, who declined to give her name. "Are you pro-choice?"

"I am pro-life," Bolduc responded.

He added that he would not support a federal ban on abortion and instead prefers to let the issue be decided at the state level. That's despite telling Republicans in Dover, New Hampshire, earlier in the year: "I'm not going to vote contrary to pro-life. I respect life from the beginning to the end."

Sununu, the New Hampshire governor who Washington Republicans tried and failed to recruit for the Senate contest, addressed his change of heart on Bolduc during a Sunday appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press." In August, Sununu had dismissed Bolduc as "not a serious candidate" and a "conspiracy theory extremist."

"Don and I didn't see eye to eye during the primary," Sununu said. "But again, I'm going to support the Republican ticket because the issues that folks are voting on are inflation, gas prices, heating oil, which is skyrocketing here in New Hampshire and causing a major concern."

Sununu was not asked about Bolduc's repeated allegations of voter fraud in New Hampshire.

Bolduc has softened his tone since winning the GOP primary, but during a debate last week, he falsely claimed voters had been bused into the state to vote illegally. And when asked about the integrity of the 2020 election at a town hall earlier in the month, he said, "I can't say whether it was stolen or not."

Meanwhile, Hassan, a former Democratic governor with a massive fundraising advantage, acknowledged that Bolduc is waging a competitive campaign.

"Don Bolduc has been working really hard to conceal his extremism from the people of New Hampshire," she said. "He is the most extreme U.S. Senate nominee we have seen in modern New Hampshire history."

Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, who leads the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, predicted Democrats would retain their narrow Senate majority because of the sharp contrast in the quality of candidates.

"The Republicans have put up a cast of characters who are extreme and not ready for — not just prime-time, but any time," Peters said. "There's not a red wave. And we will win. But these are going to be close races."

Supreme Court takes up race-conscious college admissions

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The future of affirmative action in higher education is on the table as the Supreme Court wades into the admissions programs at the nation's oldest public and private universities.

The justices are hearing arguments Monday in challenges to policies at the University of North Carolina and Harvard that consider race among many factors in evaluating applications for admission.

Following the overturning of the nearly 50-year precedent of *Roe v. Wade* in June, the cases offer another test of whether the court now dominated by conservatives will move the law to the right on another of the nation's most contentious cultural issues.

The Supreme Court has twice upheld race-conscious college admissions programs in the past 19 years, including just six years ago.

But that was before three appointees of President Donald Trump joined, as well as Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, the court's first Black woman.

Lower courts upheld the programs at both UNC and Harvard, rejecting claims that the schools discriminated against white and Asian-American applicants.

The cases are brought by conservative activist Edward Blum, who also was behind an earlier affirmative

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 31 of 64

action challenge against the University of Texas as well as the case that led the court in 2013 to end the use of a key provision of the landmark Voting Rights Act.

Blum formed Students for Fair Admissions, which filed the lawsuits against both schools in 2014.

The group argues that the Constitution forbids the use of race in college admissions and calls for overturning earlier Supreme Court decisions that said otherwise.

Colleges and universities can use other, race-neutral ways to assemble a diverse student body, including by focusing on socioeconomic status and eliminating the preference for children of alumni, Students for Fair Admissions argues.

The schools contend that they use race in a limited way, but that eliminating it as a factor altogether would make it much harder to achieve a student body that looks like America.

The Biden administration is urging the court to preserve race-conscious admissions. The Trump administration had taken the opposite position in earlier stages of the cases.

UNC says its freshman class is about 65% white, 22% Asian American, 10% Black and 10% Hispanic. The numbers add to more than 100% because some students report belonging to more than one category, a school spokesman said.

White students are just over 40% of Harvard's freshman class, the school said. The class also is just under 28% Asian American, 14% Black and 12% Latino.

Nine states already prohibit any consideration of race in admissions to public colleges and universities: Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Oklahoma and Washington.

In 2020, California voters easily rejected a ballot measure to bring back affirmative action.

Public opinion on the topic varies depending on how the question is asked. A Gallup Poll from 2021 found 62% of Americans in favor of affirmative action programs for racial minorities. But in a Pew Research Center survey in March, 74% of Americans, including majorities of Black and Latino respondents, said race and ethnicity should not factor into college admissions.

Jackson and Chief Justice John Roberts received their undergraduate and law degrees from Harvard. Two other justices went to law school there.

But Jackson is sitting out the Harvard case because she was until recently a member of an advisory governing board.

A decision in the affirmative action cases is not expected before late spring.

In southern France, drought, rising seas threaten traditions

By DANIEL COLE Associated Press

SAINTES-MARIE DE LA MER, France (AP) — In a makeshift arena in the French coastal village Aigues-Mortes, young men in dazzling collared shirts come face-to-face with a raging bull. Surrounded by the city's medieval walls, the men dodge and duck the animal's charges while spectators let out collective gasps. Part ritual and part spectacle, the tradition is deeply woven into the culture of the country's southern wetlands, known as the Camargue.

For centuries people from across the region have observed Camarguaise bull festivities in the Rhone delta, where the Rhone river and the Mediterranean Sea meet. But now the tradition is under threat by rising sea levels, heat waves and droughts which are making water sources salty and lands infertile. At the same time, there are efforts by authorities to preserve more land, leaving less for bulls to graze.

"Here in Camargue the bull is God, like a king," said Aigues-Mortes resident Jean-Pierre Grimaldi as he cheered on from the private arena stands, where he's watched competitions for decades. "We live to serve these animals ... some of the most brilliant bulls even have their own tombs built for them to be buried in."

Generations of "manadiers," or ranchers, like Frederic Raynaud, have dedicated their lives to raising the bulls that are indigenous to the region. Wilder bulls that can win prestigious fighting events are the most prized.

Raynaud, a fifth-generation manadier, has raised many such bulls on his "manade" — a term for ranches in the region — just east of Aigues-Mortes. His ranch currently looks after around 250 Camargue bulls

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 32 of 64

and 15 horses that graze in semi-wild pastures along the coast. He fears that soon his much-celebrated cattle will not have lands to feed on.

"The sea level rises on our coast and takes more and more of our land," Raynaud said.

A temporary dike constructed by local authorities to stop the growing sea has sunk in on itself, the water passing right through it and into the manade's pastures. The edge of the ranch is slipping into the sea. Land that hasn't been swallowed up is becoming unusable as encroaching waters make the wetlands more and more salty. Heat waves and drought, exacerbated by climate change, are also depriving the land of fresh water, allowing sea water to take over.

"We used to have the salt rising up on just on our land" nearer the coast, Raynaud said. "But now the salt rises up through the soil five or six kilometers (3 to 4 miles) beyond the shoreline where you can see salt encrusting over the vegetation."

The sea level around the town of Saintes-Marie de la Mer in Camargue has risen by a steady 3.7 millimeters (0.15 inches) per year from 2001 to 2019, almost twice the global average sea level rise measured throughout the 20th century, according to the local Tour du Valat research institute. Warming, expanding oceans and the melting of ice over land, both a result of climate change, are contributing to higher sea levels.

Researchers added that the advance of salt into the soil would leave the land barren and uninhabitable long before the sea engulfs it. Some affected pastures have already become bare with little vegetation and the abnormally high salt content poses health risks to organisms not able to tolerate it.

People have always been attracted to the Camargue because of the abundance of species and resources it contains despite the challenges of living between the ebb and flow of an ever-evolving delta. Its nutrient-rich wetlands contain an enormous amount of biodiversity, making it one of the most productive ecosystems in the world.

The Rhone river has long served as the Camargue's lifeline, bringing fresh water from the Alps and dampening salt levels in the Camargue. As rain and snowfall decrease, it's becoming a less reliable fresh water source, with researchers estimating the river's flow has reduced by 30% in the last 50 years and is expected to only worsen.

"Glaciers which are in the process of melting at an incredibly high rate have already passed the point of no return, so probably in the years to come, the 40% of river flow that arrives in Camarague will be reduced to a much smaller percentage," said Jean Jalbert of Tour du Valat.

During summers plagued by high temperatures and diminished rainfall, the sea water can reach up to 20 kilometers (12 miles) into the Rhone river. During a heat wave in August this year, the Raynaud family's water pump in the Petite Rhone, an offshoot of the main river, began pumping salt water. They were forced to move the pump farther up the river outside the perimeters of their own ranch to irrigate their land and feed their animals.

The Raynauds recently bought 10 hectares (24 acres) of land to the north of their property to allow their bulls to graze.

"It isn't that much for 250 bulls, but if one day there's a catastrophe, that will be a fall back if we ever are forced to start again somewhere new," Raynaud said.

Manadier Jean-Claude Groul already grazes his animals across separated pastures, taking advantage of the different conditions each offers for his cattle.

At the crack of dawn, he whistles as he walks through an open field until a group of cotton-white Camargue horses heed his call and emerge from the fog. Groul loads his horses onto a truck and drives from one of his pastures to another he owns farther down the road.

"One day if things get worse, we will have to find land further north" he said.

Less and less territory is being prioritized for the ranches as authorities work to acquire land destined for preservation. Christine Aillet, the mayor of Saintes-Maries de la Mer, has said statewide conservation efforts are putting nature over her townspeople.

"They tell you on TV that the Camargue needs to be returned to nature," said Aillet, who is skeptical of schemes aimed at saving the region by limiting global warming and reforesting the land.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 33 of 64

"The Camargue will be dry without fresh water" if such preservation plans are enacted, she added.

Aillet favors measures such as increasing the number of tidal barriers along the coastline, which she says will help residents, but researchers say these ideas are only a temporary fix and won't withstand the effects of coastal erosion and a fast-altering climate.

Scientists in the region say the Camargue risks losing both its economic and cultural worth as well as its natural beauty if interventions aren't taken to help curb climate change. Top climate experts around the world say sea levels will continue to rise and that drastic action is needed to stop making the problem worse.

"For the past five generations the Camarguaise lived with the belief that the balance of Camargue is and forever will be stable, but we are in a delta that is beginning to face climate change," Tour du Valat's Jalbert said. "This ecosystem, that we believed to be stable, is starting to show cracks."

For Frederic Raynaud, how big those cracks get will determine whether he'll be able to maintain a ranch that has been in his family for more than a century.

"I've always been here, grown up here, the animals have always been here," he said. "Leaving this place would be awful but if one day the sea arrives here, we will have to go."

Kemp, Abrams argue abortion, voting in Ga. governor debate

By JEFF AMY and BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia's Republican Gov. Brian Kemp and Democratic challenger Stacey Abrams traded harsh attacks on Georgia's elections during the pair's final debate Sunday before Georgia's Nov. 8 election, while elaborating on their positions on abortion and offering sharply differing visions for the state's economy.

Kemp avoided a categorical promise not to sign further abortion restrictions, saying "it's not my desire to go move the needle any further." But he acknowledged that more restrictions might be passed by a Republican legislature, saying that "we'll look at those when the time comes."

Abrams pointed out that equivocation, saying, "Let's be clear, he did not say he wouldn't."

Kemp criticized Abrams as inconsistent on what restrictions she would support. Abrams argued she had not changed her position and said she would support legal abortion until a fetus is viable outside the womb.

Kemp denied claims by Democrats that under Georgia's abortion restrictions, which restrict most abortions after cardiac activity can be detected in the womb, women could be prosecuted for abortions or investigated after miscarriages. The governor revealed that his wife had miscarried one of what had been twins, while the other survived to become his eldest daughter, calling it a "tragic, traumatic situation."

Abrams, though, said it was up to local law enforcement and district attorneys and that it wasn't clear local authorities won't attempt prosecutions. Abrams said women "should not be worried about the knock on the door is the sheriff coming to ask them if they have had an illegal abortion."

Though Kemp and Abrams disputed issues with specificity throughout the 60-minute debate, they reserved their most personal back-and-forth for a discussion of voting rights, exposing the origins of a rivalry that goes back to when Kemp was secretary of state and Abrams was a state House member, before each ran for governor in 2018.

Kemp's version is that he's made it "easy to vote and hard to cheat" in Georgia, while Abrams has spent "the last 10 years running around telling you that's not the case." He added the barb that she's "benefited personally from that running around," noting Abrams' personal financial success since her 2018 defeat.

Abrams answered that Kemp "has spent 16 years attacking the right to vote in Georgia," most recently with the 2021 elections law overhaul that, among its provisions, enacted new rules around voting by mail.

Kemp noted that early vote totals have already reached 1.6 million, far outpacing 2018, with early voting running through Friday. He also highlighted record primary turnout for both major parties earlier this year — points that Abrams said obscure other state actions that she said have made it harder for people to cast their ballots.

"The fact that people are voting is in spite of SB 202, not because of it," she said, referring to the GOP

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 34 of 64

election law. "It was never about making sure that we had fair elections in Georgia. It was about gaming the election for Brian Kemp so he could keep people out of the polling place."

Kemp took credit for wage growth and low unemployment while blaming sustained inflation on "disastrous" policies of Democrats in Washington, while Abrams sidestepped her party's role in the federal government and pointed the finger at Kemp.

"We have the lowest unemployment rate in the history of our state," he said. "We have the most people ever working in the history of our state. We're seeing economic opportunity in all parts of our state."

Kemp touted his use of state and federal funds to suspend gasoline taxes and issue income tax rebates, repeating his pledge to seek more income tax rebates plus property tax rebates in a second term.

Abrams argued that Kemp's economy hasn't boosted enough Georgians. She pointed to her proposals to spend the state surplus on raises for teachers and some law enforcement officers, expand Medicaid, boost child care programs for working parents, among other proposals.

"Right now people are feeling economic pain, and unfortunately under this governor, that pain is getting worse," Abrams said.

Kemp and Abrams drew sharp distinctions on crime, with the Republican governor attempting to cast Abrams as a supporter of the "defund the police" movement and touting his endorsements from dozens of sheriffs across the state.

"He is lying again. I've never said that I believe in defunding the police. I believe in public safety and accountability," Abrams shot back, highlighting her proposals for spending more on law enforcement with Kemp.

While Kemp highlighted his administration's push to curtail gang activity and violence in Georgia, Abrams criticized the administration for not thinking "holistically" about the root causes of crime, blaming Kemp's loosening of gun laws for a rise in violence.

"What is most concerning to me is that you are minimizing the death," Abrams said. "People are dying from gun violence in the state of Georgia; children are dying. It is the No. 1 killer of our children."

Kemp defended his policies, saying he had provided aid to state and local law enforcement, but that rising violence was ultimately not his fault.

"We are not the local police department. I'm not the mayor. I'm the governor," Kemp shot back, adding that local law enforcement agencies "know I will have their back."

Sunday's match was the third debate overall between the two rivals. They met only once in 2018, with Kemp, then secretary of state, skipping a second debate to attend a rally with then-President Donald Trump.

Kemp leads in most polls, but Abrams argues that her focus on getting out infrequent Democratic voters may be missed by surveys.

Unlike the first governor's debate on Oct. 17, Sunday night's event did not feature Libertarian Shane Hazel, the third candidate on the ballot. Hazel interrupted that debate several times trying to make his points because he wasn't asked as many questions. Hazel's presence on the ballot means it's possible that there will be a runoff on Dec. 6, because Georgia law requires candidates to win an absolute majority.

Bell wins, Chastain rides the wall to earn title race spots

By HANK KURZ Jr. AP Sports Writer

Ross Chastain's aggressive style hasn't made a lot of friends in NASCAR's top series. Now, he'll be contending for a championship because of that approach.

Chastain pinned his Chevrolet against the outside wall of the 0.526-mile Martinsville Speedway and was sailing at some 70 mph faster than the rest of the field, careening from 10th place to fifth on the final lap to give Trackhouse Racing its first championship appearance.

Christopher Bell won his way into NASCAR's championship race while Chastain used a move more suited for a video game to also advance in Sunday's thrilling regular-season finale.

Chastain credited his video game playing for the dramatic move on the final lap.

"Oh, played a lot of NASCAR 2005 on the GameCube with (younger brother) Chad growing up," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 35 of 64

"You can get away with it. I never knew if it would actually work.

"I mean, I did that when I was eight years old. I grabbed fifth gear, asked off of two on the last lap if we needed it, and we did. I couldn't tell who was leading. I made the choice, grabbed fifth gear down the back. Full committed. Basically let go of the wheel, hoping I didn't catch the turn four access gate or something crazy. But I was willing to do it."

Bell had to win to advance to the final four next week at Phoenix Raceway and he pulled it off to give Joe Gibbs Racing and Toyota one spot in the finale. Bell also won on the Charlotte Motor Speedway road course in the final race of the second round of the playoffs, so has now twice advanced with victories.

But this win was different.

"Man, I say it all the time, but the driver is just a small piece of the puzzle for these races," Bell said. "The reason why this car won today is because it was the best car on the racetrack. Adam Stevens, Tyler William, this entire 20 group, they just never give up. When our back is against the wall, looks like it's over, they show up and give me the fastest car out here.

"I don't know, man. Words can't describe this feeling."

The final four drivers in the Cup Series winner-take-all finale are Bell, Joey Logano, Chase Elliott and Chastain, who bumped foe Denny Hamlin from the championship with his spectacular last-lap scramble.

Hamlin, while disappointed, was impressed.

"Great move. Brilliant. Certainly a great move," he said of Chastain's tactic. "When you have no other choice, it certainly is easy to do that. But well executed," he said.

Bell passed Chase Briscoe, who also needed to win to advance to the championship, with five laps to go to earn the automatic berth into the championship race. It was Bell who was caught in Bubba Wallace's retaliation of Kyle Larson at Las Vegas and Bell being collected in that crash dropped him to last of the eight drivers.

He knew since then it would take a victory for Bell to race for his first Cup title, and he pulled it off on NASCAR's oldest track.

S. Korea in shock, grief as 153 die in Halloween crowd surge

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Koreans mourned and searched for relatives lost in the "hell-like" chaos that killed more than 150 people, mostly young adults, when a huge Halloween party crowd surged into a narrow alley in a nightlife district in Seoul.

It remained unclear what led the crowd to surge into the downhill alley in the Itaewon area on Saturday night, and authorities promised a thorough investigation. Witnesses said people fell on each other "like dominoes," and some victims were bleeding from their noses and mouths while being given CPR.

Kim Mi Sung, an official at a nonprofit organization that promotes tourism in Itaewon, said she performed CPR on 10 people who were unconscious, mostly women wearing witch outfits and other Halloween costumes. Nine of them were declared dead on the spot.

"I still can't believe what has happened. It was like a hell," Kim said.

As of Sunday evening, officials said 153 people were killed and 133 were injured. Nearly two-thirds of those killed — 97 — were women. More than 80% of the dead were in their 20s and 30s, and at least four were teenagers.

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety said the death count could further rise as 37 of the injured people were in serious condition.

Witnesses said many people appeared not to realize the disaster that was unfolding steps away from them. Some clad in Halloween costumes continued to sing and dance nearby as others lay lifeless on the ground.

Ken Fallas, a Costa Rican architect who went to Itaewon with expat friends, used his smartphone to film video showing unconscious people being carried out from the alley as others shouted for help. He said the loud music made things more chaotic.

"When we just started to move forward, there was no way to go back," Fallas said. "We didn't hear

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 36 of 64

anything because the music was really loud. Now, I think that was one of the main things that made this so complicated.”

At least 20 of the dead are foreigners from China, Russia, Iran and elsewhere. There is one American among the dead, the Interior Ministry said in a release.

Authorities said thousands of people have called or visited a nearby city office, reporting missing relatives and asking officials to confirm whether they were among those injured or dead after the crush.

The bodies of the dead were being kept at 42 hospitals in Seoul and nearby Gyeonggi province, according to Seoul City, which said it will instruct crematories to burn more bodies per day as part of plans to support funeral proceedings.

An estimated 100,000 people had gathered in Itaewon for the country’s biggest outdoor Halloween festivities since the pandemic began. The South Korean government had eased COVID-19 restrictions in recent months.

While Halloween isn’t a traditional holiday in South Korea — where children rarely go trick-or-treating — it’s still a major attraction for young adults, and costume parties at bars and clubs have become hugely popular in recent years.

Seoul’s marquee Halloween destination is Itaewon, near where the former headquarters of U.S. military forces in South Korea operated for decades before moving out of the capital in 2018. The expat-friendly district is known for its trendy bars, clubs and restaurants.

Witnesses said the streets were so densely clogged with people and slow-moving vehicles that it was practically impossible for emergency workers and ambulances to swiftly reach the alley near Hamilton Hotel, a major party spot in Seoul.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol declared a one-week national mourning period on Sunday and ordered flags at government buildings and public offices to fly at half-staff. Around 100 businesses in the Hamilton Hotel area have agreed to shut down their shops through Monday to reduce the number of partygoers who would come to the streets through Halloween day.

During a televised speech, Yoon said supporting the families of the victims, including their funeral preparations, and the treatment of the injured would be a top priority for his government. He also called for officials to thoroughly investigate the cause of the accident and review the safety of other large cultural and entertainment events.

“This is really devastating. The tragedy and disaster that need not have happened took place in the heart of Seoul amid Halloween (celebrations),” Yoon said during the speech. “I feel heavy hearted and cannot contain my sadness as a president responsible for the people’s lives and safety.”

After the speech, Yoon visited the alley where the disaster occurred. Local TV footage showed Yoon inspecting the trash-filled alley and being briefed by emergency officials.

World leaders offered condolences, including Pope Francis.

“We pray the Risen Lord also for those — especially young people — who died last night in Seoul, due to the tragic consequences of a sudden crush,” Francis said after his Sunday’s Angelus prayer in St. Peter’s Square, inviting the crowd to pray for the victims.

Among the 20 foreigners who died are four from China; three from Russia; two from Iran; and one each from Vietnam, Austria, Norway, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka and the United States, the Interior Ministry said. It added the nationalities of the four other foreigners have not been confirmed.

The University of Kentucky issued a statement saying the victims included one of its students who was studying in South Korea this semester with an education abroad program.

Some local media said the tally of foreign dead rose to 26. France and Thailand each said one and Japan said two of their nationals had also died during the Itaewon disaster, but the South Korean Interior Ministry couldn’t immediately confirm the reports.

The crowd surge was South Korea’s deadliest disaster since 2014, when 304 people, mostly high school students, died in a ferry sinking.

The sinking exposed lax safety rules and regulatory failures. It was partially blamed on excessive and poorly fastened cargo and a crew poorly trained for emergency situations. Saturday’s deaths will likely

draw public scrutiny of what government officials have done to improve public safety standards since the ferry disaster.

AP source: Pelosi attacker carried zip ties, in Jan. 6 echo

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The man accused of attacking House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband carried zip ties with him when he broke into the couple's San Francisco home, according to a person briefed on the investigation, in what is the latest parallel to the Capitol riot of Jan. 6, 2021.

The person was not authorized to publicly discuss the Pelosi case and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Sunday.

The attack on Democratic leader's 82-year-old husband, Paul Pelosi, less than two weeks before before the Nov. 8 election that will determine control of Congress as well as key statewide and local offices, was an unsettling reminder of the nation's toxic political climate. With threats to public officials at an all-time high, members of Congress were being urged to reach out for additional security resources, including increased police patrols of their neighborhoods.

U.S. Capitol Police Chief J. Thomas Manger said in a weekend memo to lawmakers that the attack "is a somber reminder of the threats elected officials and families face in 2022."

Police in San Francisco said the assault of Paul Pelosi was intentional. Authorities said the suspect, identified as David DePape, 42, confronted Paul Pelosi in the family's Pacific Heights home early Friday and, the AP has reported, demanded to know, "Where is Nancy?"

The two men struggled over a hammer before officers responding to a 911 call to the home saw DePape strike Paul Pelosi at least once, police said. DePape was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder, elder abuse and burglary. Prosecutors plan to announce the charges on Monday during a new conference and expect his arraignment on Tuesday.

Eerie echoes of the Jan. 6 riot were apparent in the incident at the Pelosi home.

Rioters who swarmed the Capitol trying to overturn Joe Biden's election victory over Donald Trump roamed the halls and shouted menacingly, demanding "Where's Nancy?" Some in the siege were seen inside the Capitol carrying zip ties. The presence of the zip ties on the suspect in Paul Pelosi's assault was first reported by CNN.

Nancy Pelosi was in Washington when her husband was attacked at home. She soon returned to San Francisco, where her husband was hospitalized. He had surgery for a skull fracture, and suffered other injuries to his arms and hands, her office said.

"Our children, our grandchildren and I are heartbroken and traumatized by the life-threatening attack on our Pop," she said in a letter late Saturday to colleagues. "We are grateful for the quick response of law enforcement and emergency services, and for the life-saving medical care he is receiving."

Paul Pelosi remains hospitalized and "continues to improve," she told colleagues.

With Election Day nearing and Trump relentlessly promoting claims he did not lose to Biden in 2020, federal agencies warned on Friday that domestic extremists fueled by election falsehoods "pose a heightened threat" to the midterms. The Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies said the greatest danger was "posed by lone offenders who leverage election-related issues to justify violence."

Biden and other officials, Democrats and Republicans, condemned the attack on Paul Pelosi and said violence has no home in American politics.

"Enough is enough is enough," Biden said while campaigning in Pennsylvania on Friday night.

Trump, in an interview taped Friday with Americano Media, a conservative Spanish-language network, called the attack on Paul Pelosi a "terrible thing," but the former president also tried to link it to crime in U.S. cities.

For years, Republicans have tried to make Pelosi a campaign boogeyman, using the 82-year-old's image as a recurring caricature in countless ads against Democrats, including many now airing in races nationwide during a hostile election season.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 38 of 64

The head of the Republican National Committee, Ronna McDaniel, said Sunday it was "unfair" to blame the GOP for creating a political climate that could have laid the ground for such an attack.

"You can't say people saying, 'Let's fire Pelosi' or 'Let's take back the House' is saying go do violence," she told "Fox News Sunday."

The House GOP's campaign chief, Minnesota Rep. Tom Emmer, was asked during a Sunday interview about a tweet promoting his own video, which shows him shooting a gun at an indoor target.

"Enjoyed exercising my Second Amendment rights," Emmer tweeted, mentioning he was with two House GOP candidates. The video includes the imagery and sounds of the rifle being fired. The tweet was posted Wednesday, before Paul Pelosi was assaulted, and said: "13 days to make history. Let's #FirePelosi."

Emmer said on CBS' "Face the Nation" that he was just "exercising our Second Amendment rights, having fun."

Both McDaniel and House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy of California said Paul Pelosi's assailant was "deranged."

McCarthy said on Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures" that violence or the threat of violence "has no place in our society."

Five years ago, a left-wing activist opened fire on Republicans as they practiced for an annual charity baseball game. Rep. Steve Scalise of Louisiana was critically wounded. In 2011, then-Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., was shot in the head at an event outside a Tucson grocery store.

Elon Musk jumped into the debate Sunday tweeting, then deleting, a link to a fringe website with an unfounded rumor about the attack on Speaker Pelosi's husband. Sent to his millions of followers, Musk's tweet came just days after his purchase of Twitter fueled concerns that the social media platform would no longer seek to limit misinformation and hate speech.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who leads the Senate committee overseeing security at the Capitol, said lawmakers are considering new measures, including taking their private information off the internet.

Klobuchar, D-Minn., noted, however that Nancy Pelosi "has been villainized for years and, big surprise, it's gone viral, and it went violent."

"I think it is really important that people realize that it is not just this moment of this horrific attack, but that we have seen violence perpetrated throughout our political system," Klobuchar told NBC's "Meet the Press."

Musk tweets link to an unfounded conspiracy theory

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Elon Musk on Sunday tweeted a link to an unfounded rumor about the attack on House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband, just days after Musk's purchase of Twitter fueled concerns that the social media platform would no longer seek to limit misinformation and hate speech.

Musk's tweet, which he later deleted, linked to an article by a fringe website, the Santa Monica Observer, an outlet that has previously asserted that Hillary Clinton died on Sept. 11 and was replaced with a body double.

In this case, the article recycled a baseless claim that the personal life of Paul Pelosi, the speaker's husband, somehow played a role in an intruder's attack last week in the couple's San Francisco home, even though there is no evidence to support that claim.

Musk did so in reply to a tweet by Hillary Clinton. Her tweet had criticized Republicans for generally spreading "hate and deranged conspiracy theories" and said, "It is shocking, but not surprising, that violence is the result."

In response to Clinton's tweet, Musk provided a link to the Santa Monica Observer article and added, "There is a tiny possibility there might be more to this story than meets the eye."

The Los Angeles Times, the dominant news organization in the Southern California area where the Observer is located, has said the Observer is "notorious for fake news."

Police in San Francisco have said the suspect in last week's attack, identified as David DePape, 42, broke

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 39 of 64

into the Pelosi family's Pacific Heights home early Friday and confronted Paul Pelosi, demanding to know, as the AP has reported, "Where is Nancy?"

The two men struggled over a hammer before officers responding to a 911 call to the home saw DePape strike Paul Pelosi at least once, police said. DePape was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder, elder abuse and burglary. Prosecutors plan to file charges on Monday and expect his arraignment on Tuesday.

Police say the attack was "intentional" and not random but have not stated publicly what they consider to be the motive.

The exchange between Musk and Clinton occurred a day after Yoel Roth, Twitter's head of safety and integrity, tweeted that the company's policies toward "slurs" and "hateful conduct" were still in place.

"Bottom line up front: Twitter's policies haven't changed. Hateful conduct has no place here," Roth wrote.

Shortly after Musk took control of Twitter, some accounts on the platform began tweeting messages ranging from racist slurs to political misinformation, such as "Trump won," to see what Twitter will now tolerate.

Musk himself said Friday that he would form a "content moderation council" for Twitter and promised advertisers that the website would not devolve into a "free for all hellscape." Musk has also described himself as a "free speech absolutist."

But at least one major advertiser, General Motors, has said it will suspend advertising on Twitter while it monitors the direction of the platform under Musk.

Also on Sunday, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, a Minnesota Democrat, said on NBC's "Meet the Press" that she didn't trust Musk to run Twitter.

Referring to antisemitic attacks and the QAnon conspiracy theory that were advanced online by DePape, the suspect in the attack, Klobuchar said, "I think you have to have some content moderation."

"If Elon Musk has said now that he's going to start a content moderation board," the senator said, "that was one good sign. But I continue to be concerned about that. I just don't think people should be making money off of passing on this stuff that's a bunch of lies."

Concerns rise as Russia resumes grain blockade of Ukraine

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia resumed its blockade of Ukrainian ports on Sunday, cutting off urgently needed grain exports to hungry parts of the world in what U.S. President Joe Biden called a "really outrageous" act.

Biden warned that global hunger could increase because of Russia's suspension of a U.N.-brokered deal to allow safe passage of ships carrying grain from Ukraine, one of the world's breadbaskets.

"It's really outrageous," Biden said Saturday in Wilmington, Delaware. "There's no merit to what they're doing. The U.N. negotiated that deal and that should be the end of it."

Biden spoke hours after Russia announced it would immediately halt participation in the grain deal, alleging that Ukraine staged a drone attack Saturday against Russia's Black Sea Fleet off the coast of occupied Crimea. Ukraine has denied the attack, saying that Russia mishandled its own weapons.

Ukraine's Infrastructure Ministry reported Sunday that 218 ships involved in grain exports have been blocked — 22 loaded and stuck at ports, 95 loaded and departed from ports, and 101 awaiting inspections.

One of the blocked ships, carrying 40,000 tons of wheat for Ethiopia under a U.N. aid program, could not leave Ukraine on Sunday as a result of Russia's "blockage of the grain corridor," Oleksandr Kubrakov, Ukraine's minister of infrastructure, said on Twitter. The ship, Ikaria Angel, was stuck in the Black Sea port of Chornomorsk.

The Istanbul-based UN center coordinating the ship passages later said the Ikaria Angel was among six vessels that began moving out but hadn't yet entered a humanitarian corridor. The center reported on plans to move and inspect other ships on Monday but it wasn't clear whether Russia would agree.

The grain initiative — an example of rare wartime cooperation between Ukraine and Russia — has allowed more than 9 million tons of grain in 397 ships to safely leave Ukrainian ports since it was signed

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 40 of 64

in July. U.N. chief António Guterres had urged Russia and Ukraine on Friday to renew the deal when it expires Nov. 19. The grain agreement has brought down global food prices about 15% from their peak in March, according to the U.N.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed outrage at Russia's decision. Referring to the *Ikaria Angel*, he said in his nightly video address Sunday, "This bulk ship with wheat for the U.N. food program and other vessels with agricultural products are forced to wait, because Russia is blackmailing the world with hunger."

Two initiatives to revive the grain deal were reported Sunday.

Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar was in talks with his counterparts to "solve the problem and to continue the grain initiative," his agency said, adding that no more grain ships would leave Ukraine but those already waiting near Istanbul would be inspected on Sunday or Monday.

At the United Nations in New York, Guterres delayed a trip by a day to engage in talks aimed at ending Russia's suspension of the grain export deal. Russia also requested a meeting Monday of the U.N. Security Council to discuss the topic.

Analysts say Russia's withdrawal shows that it sees the grain deal as another way to pressure Ukraine.

"By leaving the deal now and putting the blame on Ukraine, it aims to slow Ukrainian attacks around the Black Sea," said Mario Bikarski, a Economist Intelligence Unit analyst. Russia could be hoping that Ukraine's Western allies might ask it to focus its forces elsewhere to save the grain deal, he said.

More conflicting details emerged Sunday about the alleged attack on Russia's Black Sea Fleet.

The city council of Mariupol, a Ukrainian port now controlled by Russia, claimed on Telegram that Ukrainian special services had destroyed at least three Russian warships near the city of Sevastopol on the Russian-annexed Crimean Peninsula.

But an adviser to Ukraine's Interior Ministry claimed that the Russians' "careless handling of explosives" had caused blasts on four Russian warships. Anton Gerashchenko wrote on Telegram that the vessels included a frigate, a landing ship and a ship that carried cruise missiles.

Reports have surfaced for months of Ukrainian sabotage of Russian warplanes and ammunition depots on Crimea and Zelenskyy has vowed repeatedly to recapture the strategic Black Sea peninsula that Russia annexed in 2014.

Russia's Defense Ministry claimed Sunday that one Ukrainian drone that reportedly attacked Sevastopol appeared to emanate from a civilian ship carrying agricultural products from Ukraine. The ministry claimed an inspection of the wreckage showed the drones used Canadian-made navigation and their launch point was the Ukrainian coast near the port of Odesa.

Independent verification of each side's claims was not possible.

Ukraine appears to have targeted the Black Sea Fleet and other Russian military infrastructure on Crimea — far from the front lines but a critical launching pad for attacks against Ukraine — since the spring, although it often doesn't confirm its responsibility.

On the battlefield, Russian missile attacks kept pounding key front-line hot spots in Ukraine. The Russians shelled seven Ukrainian regions over the past 24 hours, killing at least five civilians and wounding nine more, Ukraine's presidential office said.

In the eastern Donetsk region, where the fighting is ongoing near the cities of Bakhmut and Avdiivka, eight cities and villages were shelled.

In areas that Ukraine has recaptured, residents are still recovering bodies of killed civilians, Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said.

"Over the past 24 hours alone, in three de-occupied towns and villages, we found abandoned bodies of Ukrainian civilians," Kyrylenko said.

Ukraine's Interior Minister Denys Monastyrskiy said Sunday that Russian forces were mining territories they leave behind twice as densely as during the first months of the war.

Power outages were reported Sunday in the occupied Ukrainian city of Enerhodar, home to the closed Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, Europe's largest. Ukrainian and Russian officials traded blame for the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 41 of 64

shelling that caused the blackout.

Men exonerated in Malcolm X killing to receive \$36 million

NEW YORK (AP) — The city of New York is settling lawsuits filed on behalf of two men who were exonerated last year for the 1965 assassination of Malcolm X, agreeing to pay \$26 million for the wrongful convictions which led to both men spending decades behind bars.

The state of New York will pay an additional \$10 million. David Shanies, an attorney representing the men, confirmed the settlements on Sunday.

"Muhammad Aziz, Khalil Islam, and their families suffered because of these unjust convictions for more than 50 years," said Shanies in an email. "The City recognized the grave injustices done here, and I commend the sincerity and speed with which the Comptroller's Office and the Corporation Counsel moved to resolve the lawsuits."

Shanies said the settlements send a message that "police and prosecutorial misconduct cause tremendous damage, and we must remain vigilant to identify and correct injustices."

Last year, a Manhattan judge dismissed the convictions of Aziz, now 84, and Islam, who died in 2009, after prosecutors said new evidence of witness intimidation and suppression of exculpatory evidence had undermined the case against the men. Then-District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. apologized for law enforcement's "serious, unacceptable violations of law and the public trust."

The New York City Law Department, through a spokesperson, said Sunday it "stands by" Vance's opinion that the men were wrongfully convicted and the financial agreement "brings some measure of justice to individuals who spent decades in prison and bore the stigma of being falsely accused of murdering an iconic figure."

Shanies said over the next few weeks the settlement documents will be signed and the New York court that handles probate matters will have to approve the settlement for Islam's estate. The total \$36 million will be divided equally between Aziz and the estate of Islam.

Aziz and Islam, who maintained their innocence from the start in the 1965 killing at Upper Manhattan's Audubon Ballroom, were paroled in the 1980s.

Malcolm X gained national prominence as the voice of the Nation of Islam, exhorting Black people to claim their civil rights "by any means necessary." His autobiography, written with Alex Haley, remains a classic work of modern American literature.

Near the end of Malcolm X's life, he split with the Black Muslim organization and, after a trip to Mecca, started speaking about the potential for racial unity. It earned him the ire of some in the Nation of Islam, who saw him as a traitor.

He was shot to death while beginning a speech Feb. 21, 1965. He was 39.

Aziz and Islam, then known as Norman 3X Butler and Thomas 15X Johnson, and a third man were convicted of murder in March 1966. They were sentenced to life in prison.

The third man, Mujahid Abdul Halim — also known as Talmadge Hayer and Thomas Hagan — admitted to shooting Malcolm X but said neither Aziz nor Islam was involved. The two offered alibis, and no physical evidence linked them to the crime. The case hinged on eyewitnesses, although there were inconsistencies in their testimony.

Attorneys for Aziz and Islam said in complaints that both Aziz and Islam were at their homes in the Bronx when Malcolm X was killed. They said Aziz spent 20 years in prison and more than 55 years living with the hardship and indignity attendant to being unjustly branded as a convicted murderer of one of the most important civil rights leaders in history.

Islam spent 22 years in prison and died still hoping to clear his name.

Bolsonaro seizes on Brazil's soccer glory during election

By MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Soon after casting his vote in Brazil's presidential election in Rio de Janeiro on Sun-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 42 of 64

day, incumbent Jair Bolsonaro was hoisting a silver trophy into the air alongside newly crowned soccer champions.

The far-right leader posed for cameras and snapped selfies with players from the local Flamengo team. On Saturday night, the team won the Copa Libertadores, South America's most prestigious club soccer tournament. Flamengo is Brazil's most popular club and won 1-0 against Athletico, of Parana state.

"Brazil champion! Brazil VICTORIOUS!" Fabio Wajngarten, one of the president's campaign coordinators, wrote on Twitter when sharing the video. "The Brazil of Pr. Jair Bolsonaro!"

Bolsonaro also had lunch with some of Flamengo's players, before returning to Brazil's capital to watch election results.

It was the latest display of Bolsonaro basking in soccer teams' reflected glory, and a highly visible election-day pit stop, amid an uphill battle against former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to secure a second term. Footballers' involvement in campaigns can divide fans, especially those who are discomfited by brazen political positioning.

Bolsonaro – who resided in Rio after growing up in Sao Paulo state – was known as a fan of Sao Paulo-based Palmeiras and Botafogo in Rio. That changed after his election in 2018.

The president attends matches regularly, as da Silva did during his days in office. In a nation where hardcore soccer fans would never dream of donning another team's jersey, Bolsonaro has shown no qualms about sporting dozens of different jerseys from top division teams. The only big exception is Sao Paulo FC, one of Palmeiras' main rivals. Da Silva, a Corinthians fan, makes a point of rarely wearing another team's jersey.

Bolsonaro has often shown favor for Flamengo, whose directors are outspoken boosters. Before his meeting on Sunday, several Flamengo players filmed themselves on their team bus expressing support for the incumbent by using their fingers to flash "22" – the number Brazilians must enter on electronic voting machines to cast their ballot for him.

Footballers in Brazil aren't typically outspoken on politics. Most who have taken a public stand support Bolsonaro.

That includes star striker Neymar and defender Thiago Silva, both of whom are expected to join the country's squad for the World Cup in Qatar. Former footballers Romário, Ronaldinho and Rivaldo, as well as former national squad coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, have also endorsed Bolsonaro.

Brazil coach Tite said in an interview with The Associated Press earlier this month that he will not travel to Brasilia to meet the president, regardless of the team's World Cup finish. Tite will leave the job after the tournament.

The canary yellow jersey of Brazil's national squad has been used as an anti-leftist symbol for nearly a decade; Bolsonaro and his supporters regularly wear them at rallies.

Neymar, an evangelical Christian who said he shares the president's conservative values, is easily Bolsonaro's most prominent supporter from Brazil's hallowed soccer universe. He has campaigned for the president on his wildly popular social media channels, and posted videos of himself dancing while flashing the "22."

Video of the Sunday meeting with Flamengo posted by the president's allies doesn't show the team's top players, including strikers Gabriel Barbosa and Pedro. Midfielder Everton Ribeiro, a contender for a spot on the World Cup squad, previously expressed opposition to Bolsonaro and his policies.

Flamengo delayed its celebratory parade due to the election, in light of a request from the nation's electoral authority.

Violent clashes grip Iran universities as protests persist

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iranian students clashed with security forces at universities across Iran on Sunday, Iranian media reported, as videos showed security forces firing tear gas and live ammunition at students.

Sunday's violence came as nationwide protests gripped the country despite threats from the country's

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 43 of 64

paramilitary Revolutionary Guard. The Guard's chief had warned young Iranians that Saturday would be the last day of the protests first sparked by the Sept. 16 death of Mahsa Amini in the custody of the country's morality police.

Clashes escalated at Azad University in Tehran, where Iran's semiofficial Tasnim news agency reported that some groups attacked a protest staged during a memorial ceremony for the victims of a deadly attack at a major Shiite holy site in southern Iran. Several students were injured in the clashes, Tasnim reported, without elaborating.

Videos on social media purportedly showed security forces firing tear gas at students shouting against Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. University campuses have emerged as central hotbeds of opposition, playing a central role in the protest movement.

A video posted by the Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights showed a member of the Basij, the Guard's force of paramilitary volunteers, firing a pistol at close range at students protesting.

The human rights group said it strongly condemned, "the encroachment of university campuses by armed plainclothes forces and violent crackdown on peaceful student protests."

Hardline, pro-government students in several universities across the country had gathered to commemorate a deadly Islamic State-claimed attack on a mosque in Shiraz that killed 13 people on Wednesday, including women and children. The ceremonies also drew masses of antigovernment protesters, including at Azad University.

"Freedom, freedom, freedom!" they chanted.

The Iranian government has repeatedly alleged that foreign powers have orchestrated the protests, without providing evidence. The protests have become one of the most serious threats to Iran's ruling clerics since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The protests first focused on the state-mandated hijab, or headscarf, for women but quickly grew into calls for the downfall of Iran's theocracy itself. At least 270 people have been killed and 14,000 have been arrested in the protests that have swept over 125 Iranian cities, according to the group Human Rights Activists in Iran.

Since October 24, the country's authorities started hearing the cases of at least 900 protesters charged with "corruption on earth" — a term often used to describe attempts to overthrow the Iranian government that carries the death penalty.

AP Top 25: Tennessee, Ohio St tied at 2, UGA next for Vols

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Tennessee moved into a tie with Ohio State for No. 2 in The Associated Press college football poll Sunday to set up a 1 vs. 2 matchup next week with top-ranked Georgia.

Georgia-Tennessee will be the 25th regular-season game matching the top two teams in the AP poll, and the third straight involving Southeastern Conference teams. Neither the Bulldogs nor the Volunteers have ever played in a 1-2 game in the regular season.

Georgia remained No. 1 for the fourth straight week, receiving 30 first-place votes and 1,528 points in the AP Top 25 presented by Regions Bank.

The Volunteers moved up a spot, receiving 18 first-place votes and 1,500 points to match Ohio State. The Buckeyes received 15 first-place votes. The last time there was a tie at No. 2 in the AP poll was Nov. 14, 2004, between Auburn and Oklahoma behind No. 1 Southern California.

On Saturday, Tennessee routed Kentucky 44-6 and Ohio State won 44-31 at Penn State.

Tennessee has not been ranked this high since it was No. 2 in 2001, a season the Vols finished fourth. No. 4 Michigan, No. 5 Clemson, No. 6 Alabama, No. 7 TCU and No. 8 Oregon held their spots in the rankings. USC moved up a spot to ninth and No. 10 UCLA gave the Pac-12 three teams in the top-10 for the first time since November 2016.

The last time both Los Angeles schools were in the top 10 was September 2015.

The first College Football Playoff rankings of the season will be released Tuesday night.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 44 of 64

POLL POINTS

The last two 1-2 regular-season games both involved Alabama and LSU.

The Tigers were No. 1 in 2019 when they beat the second-ranked Crimson Tide in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, on the way to an SEC and national championship.

In 2011, the top-ranked Tigers won at No. 2 Alabama in overtime and the two SEC West rivals played again in the BCS national championship game. The Tide won the rematch and finished No. 1.

Including postseason games, this will be the 53rd game matching AP's No. 1 and No. 2 since the poll began in 1936.

IN

Three teams are making their season debuts on the Top 25 this week.

— No. 23 Liberty is ranked for the first time since 2020, when the Flames were ranked for eight weeks and peaked at No. 17 in the final poll of the season.

— No. 24 Oregon State becomes the latest Power Five school to snap a long absence from the rankings. The Beavers had not been ranked since they were No. 25 in the 2013 preseason poll. They had not been ranked in the regular season since 2012 when they finished 20th.

Earlier this year Kansas broke a 13-year rankings drought, which had been the longest in Power Five. Then Illinois broke the next longest dry spell, moving into the rankings for the first time since 2011.

Rutgers currently holds the longest AP Top 25 drought among Power Five teams, dating back to 2012. Vanderbilt is next. The Commodores have not been ranked since the 2013 season.

— No. 25 UCF is ranked for the first time since Sept. 27, 2020.

OUT

SEC East rivals Kentucky and South Carolina both dropped out of the poll after absorbing their third losses of the season. The Gamecocks are out after just one week ranked. The Wildcats are unranked for the first time this season.

Cincinnati also dropped out of the rankings after losing to UCF.

CONFERENCE CALL

SEC — 5 (Nos. 1, 2, 6, 11, 15).

ACC — 5 (Nos. 5, 17, 20, 21, 22).

Pac-12 — 5 (Nos. 8, 9, 10, 12, 24).

Big Ten — 4 (Nos. 2, 4, 14, 16).

Big 12 — 3 (Nos. 7, 13, 18).

American — 2 (Nos. 19, 25).

Independent — 1 (No. 23).

RANKED vs. RANKED

Big weekend in the SEC as both division leads will be up for grabs.

No. 6 Alabama at No. 15 LSU. First ranked matchup for the Crimson Tide and Tigers since that 2019 1 vs. 2 game.

No. 20 Wake Forest at No. 21 North Carolina State. For the second straight year, the Demon Deacons and Wolfpack will meet as ranked opponents.

Thousands commemorate Italy's fascist dictator Mussolini

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

PREDAPPIO, Italy (AP) — Several thousand black-clad fascist sympathizers chanted and sang in praise of the late Italian dictator Benito Mussolini on Sunday as they marched to his crypt, 100 years after Mussolini entered Rome and completed a bloodless coup that gave rise to two decades of fascist rule.

The crowd of 2,000 to 4,000 marchers, many sporting fascist symbols and singing hymns from Italy's colonial era, was more numerous than in the recent past, as the fascist nostalgics celebrated the centenary of the March on Rome.

On Oct. 28, 1922, black-shirted fascists entered the Italian capital, launching a putsch that culminated

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 45 of 64

two days later when Italy's king handed Mussolini the mandate to start a new government.

The crowd in Predappio, Mussolini's birthplace and final resting place in the northern Emilia-Romagna region, also was apparently emboldened by the fact that a party with neo-fascist roots is heading an Italian government for the first time since World War II.

Organizers warned participants, who arrived from as far away as Rome, Belgium and the United States, not to flash the Roman salute used by the Fascists, or they would risk prosecution. Still, some couldn't resist as the crowd stopped outside the cemetery where Mussolini is laid to rest to listen to prayers and greetings from Mussolini's great-granddaughter, Orsola.

"After 100 years, we are still here to pay homage to the man this state wanted, and who we will never stop admiring," Orsola Mussolini said, to cheers.

She listed her great-grandfather's accomplishments, citing an infrastructure boom that built schools, hospitals and public buildings, reclaimed malaria-infested swamps for cities, and the extension of a pension system to non-government workers. She was joined by her sister Vittoria, who led the crowd in a prayer.

The crowd gave a final shout of "Duce, Duce, Duce!" Mussolini's honorific as Italy's dictator.

Anti-fascist campaigners held a march in Predappio on Friday, to mark the anniversary of the liberation of the town — and to prevent the fascists from marching on the exact anniversary of the March on Rome.

Inside the cemetery on Sunday, admirers lined up a handful at a time to enter his crypt, tucked away in a back corner. Each was given a memory card signed by his great-granddaughters with a photo of a smiling Mussolini holding his gloved hand high in a Roman salute. "History will prove me right," the card reads.

Italy's failure to fully come to terms with its fascist past has never been more stark than now, as Italy's new Premier Giorgia Meloni seeks to distance her far-right Brothers of Italy party from its neo-fascist roots.

This week, she decried fascism's anti-democratic nature and called its racial laws, which sent thousands of Italian Jews to Nazi death camps, "a low point." Historians would also add Mussolini's alliance with Nazi Germany and Japan in World War II and his disastrous colonial campaign in Africa to fascism's devastating legacies.

Now in power, Meloni is seeking a moderate course for a new center-right government that includes Matteo Salvini's League party and Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia. But her victory gives far-right activists a sense of vindication.

"I would have voted for Lucifer if he could beat the left," said organizer Mirko Santarelli, who heads the Ravenna chapter of the Arditi, an organization that began as a World War I veterans group and has evolved to include caretaking Mussolini's memory. "I am happy there is a Meloni government, because there is nothing worse than the Italian left. It is not the government that reflects my ideas, but it is better than nothing."

He said he would like to see the new Italian government do away with laws that prosecute incitement to hatred and violence motivated by race, ethnicity, religion and nationality. It includes use of emblems and symbols — many of which were present in Sunday's march.

Santarelli said the law punishes "the crime of opinion."

"It is used as castor oil by the left to make us keep quiet. When I am asked my opinion of Mussolini, and it is clear I speak well of him, I risk being denounced," Santarelli said.

Lawyer Francesco Minutillo, a far-right activist who represents the organizers, said Italy's high court established that manifestations are permissible as long as they are commemorative "and don't meet the criteria that risks the reconstitution of the fascist party."

Still, he said, magistrates in recent years have opened investigations into similar manifestations in Predappio and elsewhere to make sure they don't violate the law. One such case was closed without charges last week.

To avoid having their message misrepresented, Santarelli asked the rank and file present not to speak to journalists. Most complied.

A young American man wearing a T-shirt with a hand-drawn swastika inside a heart and the words "Brand New Dream," and a fascist fez said he had timed his European vacation to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the March on Rome so he could participate in the march in Predappio. He declined

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 46 of 64

to identify himself, other than to say he was from New Jersey, and lamented there was no fascist group back home to join.

Rachele Massimi traveled with a group four hours from Rome on Sunday to participate in the event, bringing her 3-year-old who watched from a stroller.

"It's historic," Massimi said. "It's a memory."

Patriots' Kraft, school statements denounce antisemitism

By DENNIS WASZAK Jr. AP Sports Writer

New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft and other members of the sports world are condemning recent incidents of hate speech toward Jewish people — not just the antisemitic comments by the music mogul formerly known as Kanye West, but also outside of a college football game in Florida on Saturday night.

A day after the NBA and Brooklyn Nets issued disapproving statements in response to Kyrie Irving's apparent support for an antisemitic film, other team executives and athletes are speaking out against hatred and intolerance, on and off the field.

At some point during the football game between Florida and Georgia on Saturday night, the phrase "Kanye is right about the jews" was projected on the outside of one of the end zones at the TIAA Bank Field stadium in Jacksonville, Florida. It was a reference to recent antisemitic comments that Ye has made on social media and in interviews — comments that have led to him losing partnerships with Adidas and several other companies.

The University of Florida and University of Georgia issued a joint statement Sunday morning condemning the hate speech on the stadium and "the other anti-Semitic messages that have appeared in Jacksonville." The schools also said they "together denounce these and all acts of anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred and intolerance. We are proud to be home to strong and thriving Jewish communities at UGA and UF, and we stand together against hate."

Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry said on social media his northeast Florida city is "made better because of its diversity. Those who spread messages of hate, racism and antisemitism will not be able to change the heart of this city or her people. I condemn these cowards and their cowardly messages."

And Shad Khan, the owner of the Jacksonville Jaguars, who play in the TIAA Bank Field stadium, said on social media that he was "personally dismayed" by the rhetoric, calling it, "hurtful and wrong."

"It has to stop. I'm asking everyone to make it their mission to end the ignorance and hate," Khan said. "Let's be better."

Last year, the Anti-Defamation League recorded 2,717 incidents of harassment, vandalism or violence targeting Jews — the highest annual total since it began tracking these incidents in 1979. The recent anti-semitic incidents come four years after the deadliest attack on American Jews, when 11 people were killed at a synagogue in Pittsburgh, and just days before the contentious midterm elections throughout the U.S.

A nonprofit founded by Kraft took the extra step of planning to air an ad during the Patriots-New York Jets game on Sunday that condemned anti-Jewish hate speech and encouraged people who are not Jewish to speak up against antisemitism.

"Recently many of you have spoken up," the 30-second ad from Kraft's Foundation to Combat Antisemitism said. "We hear you today. We must hear you tomorrow. There are less than 8 million Jewish people in this country. Fewer than are watching this ad. They need you to add your voice."

The ad, which was scheduled to air during the first quarter of the game, ends with the hashtag: #StandUptoJewishHate.

"I have committed tremendous resources toward this effort and am vowing to do more," Kraft said in a statement. "I encourage others to join in these efforts. My hope is this commercial will continue to enhance the national conversation about the need to speak out against hatred of all types, and particularly to stand up to Jewish hate."

Also this week, Nets owner Joe Tsai said he was disappointed by Irving, a seven-time All-Star who appeared to support a film Tsai said was "based on a book full of antisemitic disinformation" when he posted

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 47 of 64

a link for the film "Hebrews to Negroes: Wake Up Black America" on Twitter on Thursday.

Nets coach Steve Nash said the organization had "spoken to Kyrie about it" but didn't give specifics. The NBA also spoke up Saturday, saying that "hate speech of any kind is unacceptable."

"We believe we all have a role to play in ensuring such words or ideas, including antisemitic ones, are challenged and refuted and we will continue working with all members of the NBA community to ensure that everyone understands the impact of their words and actions," the league said.

Irving, however, responded in a postgame news conference Saturday, claiming to believe in all religions and saying he is "not a divisive person when it comes to religion." He added he wouldn't "stand down on anything I believe in."

"Did I do anything illegal? Did I hurt anybody?" Irving said. "Did I harm anybody? Am I going out and saying that I hate one specific group of people?"

Texas A&M's football team changed up how it entered the field Saturday night before its 31-28 loss to No. 15 Mississippi. After coming out to "Power" by Ye since 2012, the Aggies instead entered to an instrumental of "Bonfire" by Childish Gambino. Texas A&M athletic director Ross Bjork criticized West's comments earlier this week.

The fallout around Ye's comments also includes Donda Sports, a brand management agency he founded. Los Angeles Rams defensive tackle Aaron Donald and Boston Celtics swingman Jaylen Brown terminated their associations with the agency, with Donald and his wife, Erica, denouncing the "displays of hate and antisemitism" by Ye.

The high-profile basketball team at Ye's Donda Academy in California also has been affected, with the Los Angeles Times reporting Friday that it had confirmed four major tournaments had dropped the school.

Families get final say before Parkland shooter is sentenced

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz will be sentenced to life in prison this week — but not before the families of the 17 people he murdered get the chance to tell him what they think.

A two-day hearing is scheduled to begin Tuesday that will conclude with Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer formally sentencing Cruz for his Feb. 14, 2018, massacre at Parkland's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Because the jury at his penalty trial could not unanimously agree that the 24-year-old deserved a death sentence, Scherer can only sentence the former Stoneman Douglas student to life without parole — an outcome most of the families criticized.

Each family of the 14 students and three staff members Cruz murdered can speak, as can the 17 people he wounded during the seven-minute attack. The families gave highly emotional statements during the trial, but were restricted about what they could tell jurors: They could only describe their loved ones and the murders' toll on their lives. The wounded could only say what happened to them.

They were barred from addressing Cruz directly or saying anything about him — a violation would have risked a mistrial. And the jurors were told they couldn't consider the family statements as aggravating factors as they weighed whether Cruz should die.

Now, the grieving and the scarred can speak directly to Cruz, if they choose.

"We are looking forward to speaking without the guardrails that were imposed upon us," said Tony Montalto, whose 14-year-old daughter Gina was murdered.

Broward County Public Defender Gordon Weekes, whose lawyers represent Cruz, said he has no problem with the families expressing their anger directly to Cruz.

"Rightly so," Weekes said. The sentencing hearing "is not only an accountability process, but there are also some cathartic pieces that come from it."

"Hopefully, after expressing (their anger), not only will the community be able to hear the pain they are carrying, the court will be able to hear it and we will move forward."

Cruz is not expected to speak, Weekes said. He apologized in court last year after pleading guilty to the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 48 of 64

murders and attempted murders — but families told reporters they found the apology self-serving and aimed at garnering sympathy.

That plea set the stage for a three-month penalty trial that ended Oct. 13 with the jury voting 9-3 for a death sentence — jurors said those voting for life believed Cruz is mentally ill and should be spared. Under Florida law, a death sentence requires unanimity.

Prosecutors had argued that Cruz planned the shooting for seven months before he slipped into a three-story classroom building, firing 140 shots with an AR-15-style semi-automatic rifle down hallways and into classrooms. He fatally shot some wounded victims after they fell. Cruz said he chose Valentine's Day so it could never again be celebrated at Stoneman Douglas.

Cruz's attorneys never questioned the horror he inflicted, but focused on their belief that his birth mother's heavy drinking during pregnancy left him brain damaged and condemned him to a life of erratic and sometimes violent behavior that culminated in the massacre — the deadliest mass shooting to go to trial in U.S. history.

After Cruz is sentenced, he will be transferred from the Broward County jail to the state correctional system's processing center near Miami, then later to a maximum-security prison, his lawyers have said. The Florida Department of Corrections declined to comment.

Ron McAndrew, a former Florida prison warden, believes that because of Cruz's notoriety, officials at that prison will place him in "protective management," separated from other inmates, to keep him from being harmed.

Cruz's cell will be 9 feet by 12 feet (3 meters by 4 meters) with a bed, metal sink and metal toilet, McAndrew said. For one hour a day, he will be allowed alone into an outdoor cage that is usually 20 feet by 20 feet (6 meters by 6 meters) where he can exercise and bounce a basketball. Florida prisons do not have air conditioning. McAndrew noted that because Cruz has a life sentence, he will be last in line for education and rehabilitation programs.

Cruz will be kept in protective management until prison officials believe it is safe to place him into the general population, a process that could take years, McAndrew said. It is also possible that Florida could send Cruz to another state in exchange for one of its notorious prisoners, so both could have more anonymity, the former warden said.

But eventually, Cruz will be placed in the general population, McAndrew said. He will be required to bunk, work and mingle with other prisoners. At 5-foot-7 (1.4 meters) and 130 pounds (59 kilograms), Cruz could have difficulty defending himself — though he did attack and briefly pin a Broward jail guard. It is possible a more physically imposing prisoner could become his protector — "but that comes with a horrible price," McAndrew said.

Linda Beigel Schulman, whose son, teacher Scott Beigel, was murdered by Cruz, said she hopes Cruz "has the fear in him every second of his life just the way he gave that fear to every one of our loved ones whom he murdered, or the students and people that he harmed."

Craig Trocino, a University of Miami law professor, said one benefit of Cruz receiving a life sentence is that he will fade from public view; a death sentence would have brought a decade of appeals, with the possibility of a retrial, and eventually an execution. Each step would have been covered extensively.

"No one is going to hear about him anymore until he dies," Trocino said.

'Black Adam' takes top spot at box office again

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

"Black Adam," the Dwayne Johnson-fronted DC superhero film, kept its hold on the No. 1 spot at the North American box office in its second weekend in theaters. Down 59% from its launch, and facing little new competition, "Black Adam" added \$27.7 million in ticket sales, bringing its domestic total to \$111.1 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Johnson spent a decade trying to bring the character to the big screen and has visions for follow-ups involving Superman. But the future of "Black Adam" is not written quite yet, though it's earned \$250 million worldwide. The Warner Bros. film carried a hefty price tag of \$200 million, not including marketing

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 49 of 64

and promotion costs, and a sequel has not been officially greenlit.

But big changes are afoot at DC—the studio just announced a new leadership team of Peter Safran and James Gunn, whose love for propping up little-known comic book characters is well-documented. And on Sunday, Johnson posted a note to his 344 million Instagram followers about the end of the world press tour, thanking those who worked behind the scenes to launch “our NEW DC FRANCHISE known as BLACK ADAM.”

Bucking recent romantic comedy trends, moviegoers remained curious about “Ticket to Paradise,” Universal’s Julia Roberts and George Clooney destination romp, which fell only 37% in weekend two to claim second place. The genre has not been the most reliable bet at the box office lately, with films like “Bros” stumbling in theaters, but the star power of Roberts and Clooney is proving hard to resist. “Ticket to Paradise” added \$10 million from 3,692 North American theaters, bringing its domestic total to \$33.7 million. Globally, it’s grossed \$119.4 million to date.

Horror movies, meanwhile, claimed spots three through five on the weekend before Halloween on Monday. Lionsgate’s “Prey for the Devil” opened in third place with \$7 million from 2,980 theaters. Notably, it is the only of the three horror films that carried a PG-13 rating. The others were R-rated.

Paramount’s “Smile” took fourth place in its fifth weekend with another \$5.1 million, bringing its domestic total to \$92.4 million (on a \$17 million budget), while “Halloween Ends” landed in fifth place in its third weekend with \$3.8 million. “Ends,” which has grossed \$60.3 million in North America, was released simultaneously on NBC Universal’s streaming service Peacock.

“This is just another mandate in favor of horror,” said Paul Dergarabedian, Comscore’s senior media analyst. “It’s not just about being in October, horror movies have played well throughout the pandemic. It’s a genre that continues to kill it at the box office time and again.”

Chinonye Chukwu’s Mamie Till-Mobley film “Till” went wide this weekend, adding \$2.8 million from 2,058 locations to take seventh place. Boasting a 98% on Rotten Tomatoes, the United Artists Releasing film has gotten good word of mouth with much of it centered on Danielle Deadwyler’s performance.

This weekend also saw the expansion of several notable films, like Todd Field’s “Tár,” which expanded to 1,087 theaters nationwide where it grossed \$1 million and landed in 10th place. Cate Blanchett’s performance as a renowned composer and conductor won her a top acting prize from the Venice Film Festival last month.

Another Venice-winner, “The Banshees of Inisherin” widened to 58 theaters and 12 new markets over the weekend. The Martin McDonagh film starring Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson earned \$540,000. The Searchlight Pictures release will expand to around 800 locations next weekend.

Charlotte Wells’ “Aftersun” expanded to 17 locations where it earned \$75,242, bringing its cumulative grosses to \$166,030. The A24-released father-daughter film starring Paul Mescal and Frankie Corio will continue to expand throughout awards season.

James Gray’s “Armageddon Time” opened in six theaters in New York and Los Angeles, to \$72,000. Gray mined his own childhood to tell the story about an 11-year-old in Queens in the fall of 1980. The film, which premiered at Cannes earlier this year, stars Banks Repeta, Anne Hathaway, Jeremy Strong and Anthony Hopkins.

But as far as blockbusters are concerned, things will be somewhat slow-going until “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever” arrives on Nov. 11.

“That’ll get the box office going again in a way that feels more like summer,” Dergarabedian said.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. “Black Adam,” \$27.7 million.
2. “Ticket to Paradise,” \$10 million.
3. “Prey for the Devil,” \$7 million.
4. “Smile,” \$5.1 million.

5. "Halloween Ends," \$3.8 million.
6. "Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile," \$2.8 million.
7. "Till," \$2.8 million.
8. "Terrifier 2," \$1.8 million.
9. "The Woman King," \$1.1 million.
10. "Tár," \$1 million.

Workers leave iPhone factory in Zhengzhou amid COVID curbs

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Workers in a manufacturing facility in the central Chinese city of Zhengzhou appear to have left to avoid COVID-19 curbs, with many traveling on foot for days after an unknown number of employees were quarantined in the facility after a virus outbreak.

Videos circulating on Chinese social media platforms showed people who are allegedly Foxconn workers climbing over fences and carrying their belongings down the road.

The Foxconn plant in Zhengzhou, Henan province, is one of the largest factories in China that assembles products for Apple Inc., including its latest iPhone 14 devices.

Not all the videos that showed workers purportedly leaving the facility could be verified. It is unclear if the workers leaving the facility had escaped or if they were allowed to leave.

Foxconn did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Volunteers from nearby villages put out food and drinks for the Foxconn workers. One such volunteer, who asked to be identified only by his surname Zhang out of privacy concerns, was put in charge of distributing supplies that his village in Xingyang county had prepared. He said that the people shown in a video he uploaded to the short-video platform Douyin were Foxconn workers because they would have to take that road if they were leaving the facility.

The workers' exodus comes after reports that Foxconn had placed a number of workers under quarantine following a COVID-19 outbreak in the factory.

The Foxconn facility in Zhengzhou can accommodate up to 350,000 factory workers, but it is not clear how many are currently employed by the factory. It is also unclear how many of them have left, or how many were affected by COVID-19 curbs implemented in the factory prior to their departure.

Earlier this week, media reports said that a "closed-loop" system had been implemented in the factory that largely restricts workers to movements between their residence and the plant.

Local media reports said that Foxconn workers complained of poor food quality and a lack of medical care for those who tested positive amid growing concerns that the infection could be spreading. The company also denied rumors that 20,000 people in the plant had been infected with COVID-19.

Cities near Zhengzhou have since urged Foxconn workers to report to local authorities if they have plans to return to their hometowns so they can undergo appropriate isolation measures.

According to posts on the Zhengzhou government's public WeChat account, Foxconn issued notices Sunday to workers at its factory, pledging to ensure the safety, legitimate rights and income for those willing to stay.

A day after videos circulated of workers leaving the factory, Foxconn and several local governments have also arranged transportation for employees who choose to return home. It is not clear how much agency the workers had in deciding to leave the factory.

The departure of Foxconn workers from the Zhengzhou plant highlights the growing discontent in China's "zero-COVID" strategy, where governments attempt to stamp out outbreaks by implementing strict isolation and lockdown measures where infections are detected.

Witness recalls harrowing moment of Seoul crowd surge

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — As he watched a dozen or more unconscious partygoers carried out from

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 51 of 64

a narrow backstreet packed with youngsters dressed like movie characters, an overwhelmed Ken Fallas couldn't process what was happening.

Fallas, a Costa Rican architect who has worked in Seoul for the past eight years, said Saturday's Halloween festivities at the city's nightlife district of Itaewon were a long-awaited occasion to hang out with fellow expats following years of COVID-19 restrictions

Instead, the 32-year-old became a front-row witness to one of the most horrific disasters South Korea has seen.

The smartphone video Fallas took following the deadly crowd surge shows groups of Halloween revelers carrying out their unconscious peers, one after another, from an alley near Hamilton Hotel, passing by throngs of people dressed in capes and Miyazaki movie costumes. Some people are seen administering CPR to injured people on the pavement while others shout for help above blaring dance music.

Fallas said police and emergency workers were constantly pleading with people to step up if they knew how to give CPR because they were overwhelmed by the large number of the injured laid out on the street.

"I saw a lot of (young) people laughing, but I don't think they were (really) laughing because, you know, what's funny?" Fallas said. "They were laughing because they were too scared. Because to be in front of a thing like that is not easy. Not everyone knows how to process that."

Fallas said he and his friends were trapped among the huge throngs of people pushing toward the alley when police officers began breaking the lines from behind to approach the injured. He said people near his group didn't initially know what was happening.

"We were we were unable to move back. The music was loud. Nobody knew what was happening. People were still partying with the emergency happening in front of us," he said. "We were like, 'What's going on from here, where we can go?' There was no exit."

Lebanon president leaves with no replacement, crisis deepens

By BASSEM MROUE and ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — President Michel Aoun left Lebanon's presidential palace Sunday, marking the end of his six-year term without a replacement, leaving the small nation in a political vacuum that is likely to worsen its historic economic meltdown.

As Aoun's term ends, the country is being run by a caretaker government after Prime Minister-designate Najib Mikati failed to form a new Cabinet following May 15 parliamentary elections. Aoun and his supporters warn that such a government doesn't have full power to run the country, saying that weeks of "constitutional chaos" lay ahead.

In a speech outside the palace, Aoun told thousands of supporters that he has accepted the resignation of Mikati's government. The move is likely to further deprive the caretaker administration of legitimacy and worsen existing political tensions in the country.

Mikati responded shortly afterward with a statement from his office saying that his government will continue to perform its duties in accordance with the constitution.

Many fear that an extended power vacuum could further delay attempts to finalize a deal with the International Monetary Fund that would provide Lebanon with some \$3 billion in assistance, widely seen as a key step to help the country climb out of a three-year financial crisis that has left three quarters of the population in poverty.

While it's not the first time that Lebanon's parliament has failed to appoint a successor by the end of the president's term, this will be the first time that there will be both no president and a caretaker cabinet with limited powers.

Lebanon's constitution allows the cabinet in regular circumstances to run the government, but is unclear whether that applies to a caretaker government.

Wissam Lahham, a constitutional law professor at St. Joseph University in Beirut told The Associated Press that in his view, the governance issues the country will face are political rather than legal.

Although the constitution "doesn't say explicitly that the caretaker government can act if there is no

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 52 of 64

president, logically, constitutionally, one should accept that because... the state and institutions should continue to function according to the principle of the continuity of public services," he said.

Lebanese are deeply divided over Aoun, an 87-year-old Maronite Christian and former army commander, with some seeing him as a defender of the country's Christian community and a leading figure who tried to seriously fight corruption in Lebanon. His opponents criticize him for his role in the 1975-90 civil war and for his shifting alliances, especially with the Iran-backed Hezbollah, the country's most powerful military and political force. He has also come under fire for grooming his son-in-law to replace him, and many blame him for the economic crisis that is rooted in decades of corruption and mismanagement.

Aoun, Lebanon's 13th president since the country's independence from France in 1943, saw Beirut's historic relations with oil-rich gulf nations deteriorate because of Hezbollah's powers and one of the world's largest non-nuclear explosions at Beirut's port in August 2020 that killed more than 200.

Aoun blasted his political opponents and said that they prevented him from bringing to justice central bank governor Riad Salameh, who is being investigated in several European countries, including Switzerland, France, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein for alleged money laundering and embezzlement.

"I leave a country that is robbed," Aoun said, adding that all Lebanese were hurt by losing their life savings in local banks. He added that some politicians prevented the investigation into the port blast.

Aoun, who blamed his political rivals and others for the crisis except for members of his political party, later left the palace and headed to his residence in Beirut's northern suburb of Rabieh.

Aoun's biggest achievement came last week. He signed a U.S.-mediated maritime border agreement with Israel that Beirut hopes will lead to gas exploration in the Mediterranean. That will presumably help Lebanon come out of its economic crisis that has been described by the World Bank as one of the worst the world has witnessed since the 1850s.

Parliament has held four sessions since late September to elect a president but no candidate was able to get the two-thirds majority of the vote needed. As in previous votes, parliamentary blocs will have to agree on a consensus candidate for the country's top post as no alliance within the legislature controls majority seats.

Aoun himself was elected in 2016 after a more than two-year vacuum. Despite Hezbollah's support then, Aoun was only elected after he received the backing of the bloc of his main rivals of the Christian Lebanese Forces Party as well as the bloc of former Prime Minister Saad Hariri.

Under Lebanon's power-sharing agreement, the president has to be a Maronite Christian, the parliament speaker a Shiite and the prime minister a Sunni Muslim. Cabinet and government seats are equally divided between Muslims and Christians. Christians, Sunnis and Shiites each make about a third of Lebanon's 5 million people.

Since the economic meltdown began with nationwide protests in October 2019, Lebanon's political class — which has ruled since the end of the civil war — has resisted reforms demanded by the international community that could help secure billions of dollars in loans and investments.

Talks between Lebanon's government and the IMF that began in May 2020 and reached a staff-level agreement in April have made very little progress.

The Lebanese government has implemented few of the IMF's demands from the agreement, which are mandatory before finalizing a bailout program. Among them are restructuring Lebanon's ailing financial sector, implementing fiscal reforms, restructuring external public debt and putting in place strong anti-corruption and anti-money laundering measures.

"The prospects of an IMF deal were already dim before the upcoming power vacuum and departure of Aoun," said Nasser Saidi, an economist and former Minister of Economy. "There is no political will or appetite for undertaking reforms."

"Aoun's departure is simply another nail in the coffin," he said. "It does not change the fundamentals of a dysfunctional failed state and totally ineffective polity."

Powerball grand prize climbs to \$1B without a jackpot winner

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 53 of 64

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The Powerball jackpot keeps getting larger because players keep losing. It happened again Saturday night as no one matched all six numbers and won the estimated \$825 million grand prize. That means the next drawing Monday night will be for a massive \$1 billion, according to a statement by Powerball.

The winning numbers Saturday night were: white balls 19, 31, 40, 46, 57 and the red power ball 23. The increased jackpot will remain the fifth-largest in U.S. history behind another Powerball prize and three Mega Millions lottery game jackpots. The biggest prize was a \$1.586 billion Powerball jackpot won by three ticketholders in 2016.

Although the advertised top prize will be an estimated \$1 billion, that is for winners who receive their winnings through an annuity paid over 29 years. Winners almost always opt for cash, which for Monday's drawing will be an estimated \$497.3 million.

Players who missed out on the latest grand prize in the 30-year-old lottery shouldn't immediately toss away their receipts.

A Florida ticket holder matched all five white balls in Saturday's drawing and increased the prize to \$2 million by including the game's "Power Play" feature. Six tickets won a \$1 million prize by matching five white balls, including two in California, two in Michigan, one in Maryland and one in Texas.

Another 17 tickets won a \$150,000 prize while there were 80 winners of \$50,000 each. More than 3.8 million tickets won cash prizes totaling above \$38 million, Powerball said.

It has been nearly three months since anyone hit all six numbers and took the lottery's top prize, with a \$206.9 million jackpot win in Pennsylvania on Aug. 3. Thanks to Powerball's long odds of one in 292.2 million, there have now been 37 consecutive draws without a jackpot winner.

Powerball is played in 45 states, as well as Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Astros burst ahead, beat Phillies 5-2, tie World Series 1-1

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Framber Valdez swapped his glove and his spikes midgame. He repeatedly rubbed his hands.

By the time he strode off the mound to a standing ovation and handed the Houston Astros' bullpen a seventh-inning lead, it was clear he had thrown a curve at the Philadelphia Phillies.

"This was a really good game for the fans, a really good game for our team and also for me," he said through a translator after pitching the Astros over the Phillies 5-2 Saturday night to tie the World Series at one game apiece. "I've just been playing really inspired."

Valdez made a five-run lead stand up after Houston's lightning first-inning burst and Alex Bregman homered as the Astros rushed to a 5-0 lead for the second straight night. Unlike ace Justin Verlander in the opener, Valdez and Houston held on.

"His curveball was on tonight," Phillies star Bryce Harper said after going 0 for 4. "It was big, sharp."

Houston became the first team to open a Series game with three straight extra-base hits, and Valdez pitched shutout ball into the seventh, rebounding from a pair of poor outings against Atlanta last year that had left him with a 19.29 Series ERA.

He threw 42 curveballs among 104 pitches and got six of nine strikeouts with that pitch, three of them looking. He allowed four hits and one run in 6 2/3 innings, giving up a leadoff double in the seventh to Nick Castellanos, who scored on Jean Segura's sacrifice fly off Rafael Montero.

Valdez said his hand-rubbing was inconsequential.

"Nobody should think of it as anything like in the wrong way. I do it out in the open," he said. "It's all tendencies I do. I do it throughout the game, maybe distract the hitter a little bit from what I'm doing, like maybe look at me, rubbing different things, and nothing about the pitch that I'm going to throw. I've been doing it all season."

Valdez started the game with a tan glove and spikes with orange and yellow trim, then swapped ahead of the second inning for a dark glove and dark cleats with a white stripe.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 54 of 64

"Normally have different spikes when I warm up and the ones that I go into the game. Today I decided to start the game with the ones I warmed up in," he said. "I had a long inning there and I was like, You know what, I'm going to change everything. I'm going to change my glove, my belt, my cleats. And those are just things that us Dominicans do, just some tendencies here and there."

When the Phillies put two runners on for the only time against him in the sixth, Valdez struck out Game 1 star J.T. Realmuto with high heat, then got Harper to bounce a first-pitch sinker into an inning-ending double play.

Phillies manager Rob Thomson didn't take issue with Valdez rubbing his palm — social media was abuzz, wondering if there was some banned sticky substance.

"The umpires check these guys after almost every inning and if there's something going on MLB will take care of it," Thomson said. "We saw it the last time he started, too."

Jose Altuve, Jeremy Peña and Yordan Alvarez all doubled as Houston took a two-run lead four pitches in against Zack Wheeler. Shortstop Edmundo Sosa's throwing error allowed another run in the first.

Bregman added a two-run homer in the fifth when Wheeler left a slider over the middle of the plate, Bregman's sixth career Series homer.

A day after coming back for a 6-5 win in 10 innings, Philadelphia tried to rally in this one, too.

With the Phillies trailing by four runs, Kyle Schwarber hit a drive deep down the right-field line with a man on in the eighth against Montero that was originally ruled a two-run homer by right field line umpire James Hoye.

First base umpire Tripp Gibson signaled for umps to conference and the call was reversed on a crew chief review when it was determined the ball was just to the foul side of the pole.

Schwarber, who led the NL with 46 home runs this season and added three more in the playoffs, hit the next pitch 353 feet to right, where it was caught by Kyle Tucker just in front of the wall.

Ryan Pressly finished a six-hitter for a bullpen that lowered its postseason ERA to 0.89, giving up a run on when an first baseman Yuli Gurriel allowed Brandon Marsh's grounder to skip past him and down the right-field line for an error.

Following the split in Houston, the Series resumes Monday night when Citizens Bank Park hosts the Series for the first time since 2009.

Of 61 previous Series tied 1-1, the Game 2 winner went on to the title 31 times — but just four of the last 14.

"I just can't wait to get out on Monday and keep it rolling," Segura said.

Altuve, who broke out of a 4-for-37 postseason slump with three hits, lined a sinker into left on Wheeler's first pitch and Peña drove a curveball into the left-field corner on the second for a 1-0 lead. Alvarez fouled off a pitch and drove a slider high off the 19-foot wall in left.

Wheeler gave up five runs — four earned — six hits and three walks in five innings, a day after Aaron Nola struggled.

"I think everybody deserves a poor start every once in a while," Thomson said. "Those guys have been so good for us for so long, and I fully expect them to come back and be ready to go and pitch well for us."

BIG DIFFERENCE

Houston won 106 games during the season and Philadelphia 87, the second-highest win disparity in the Series behind the 93-win Chicago White Sox beat the 116-win Cubs in 1906.

UP NEXT

RHP Noah Syndergaard will start Game 3 for the Phillies and RHP Lance McCullers Jr. for the Astros. Phillies LHP Ranger Suárez will take the mound for Game 4, and likely LHP Cristian Javier for Houston.

In Mexico, Day of the Dead is actually a celebration of life

By MARÍA TERESA HERNÁNDEZ Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — During the Day of the Dead celebrations that take place in late October and early November in Mexico, the living remember and honor their dearly departed, but with celebration — not

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 55 of 64

sorrow.

Marigolds decorate the streets as music blares from speakers. Adults and children alike dress as skeletons and take photos, capturing the annual joy-filled festivities. It is believed that during the Day of the Dead — or Dia de Muertos — they are able to commune with their deceased loved ones.

No one knows when the first observance took place, but it is rooted in agriculture-related beliefs from Mexico's pre-Hispanic era, said Andrés Medina, a researcher at the Anthropological Research Institute of the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Catholic traditions were incorporated into the celebration after the Spanish conquest in 1521.

"In that mythology, the corn is buried when it's planted and leads an underground life for a period to later reappear as a plant," Medina said. The grain of corn is seen as a seed, comparable to a bone, which is seen as the origin of life.

Today, skeletons are central to Day of the Dead celebrations, symbolizing a return of the bones to the living world. Like seeds planted under soil, the dead disappear temporarily only to return each year like the annual harvest.

Altars are core to the observance as well. Families place photographs of their ancestors on their home altars, which include decorations cut out of paper and candles. They also are adorned with offerings of items once beloved by those now gone. It could include cigars, a bottle of mezcal or a plate of mole, tortillas and chocolates.

Traditional altars can be adorned in a pattern representative of a Mesoamerican view that the world had levels, Medina said. But not everyone follows — or knows — this method.

"To the extent that Indigenous languages have been lost, the meaning (of the altar) has been lost as well, so people do it intuitively," he said. "Where the Indigenous languages have been maintained, the tradition is still alive."

The way Mexicans celebrate the Day of the Dead continues to evolve.

Typically, it is an intimate family tradition observed with home altars and visits to local cemeteries to decorate graves with flowers and sugar skulls. They bring their deceased loved ones' favorite food and hire musicians to perform their favorite songs.

"Nowadays there's an influence of American Halloween in the celebration," Medina said. "These elements carry a new meaning in the context of the original meaning of the festival, which is to celebrate the dead. To celebrate life."

In 2016, the government started a popular annual parade in Mexico City that concludes in a main square featuring altars built by artisans from across the country. The roughly three-hour-long affair features one of the holiday's most iconic characters, Catrinas. The female skeleton is dressed in elegant clothes inspired by the engravings of José Guadalupe Posada, a Mexican artist who drew satirical cartoons at the beginning of the 20th century.

On Friday afternoon in the capital city, Paola Valencia, 30, walked through the main square looking at some of the altars and explained her appreciation for the holiday: "I love this tradition because it reminds me that they (the dead) are still among us."

Originally from the Mexican state of Oaxaca, she said the residents of her hometown, Santa Cruz Xoxocotlán, take a lot of time to build large altars each year. They are a source of pride for the whole community.

"Sometimes I feel like crying. Our altars show who we are. We are very traditional and we love to feel that they (the dead) will be with us at least once a year," she said.

Leavitt, 25, cites youth in bid to be youngest congresswoman

By KATHY McCORMACK Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — Karoline Leavitt recalls being in her New Hampshire college dining hall in 2018, filling out an application for a White House intern job while her friends were tailgating at a football game.

"I remember thinking, 'If I made this opportunity, it's worth missing any football game in the world,'" she told The Associated Press in an interview.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 56 of 64

She got the job. That eventually led to a position in President Donald Trump's White House press office, then another as communications director for Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y.

Inspired by Stefanik, the youngest woman elected to Congress when she won in 2014 at age 30, Leavitt is now running for a House seat of her own. At age 25, she could make history on Election Day, Nov. 8: Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., won at 29 in 2018.

Leavitt, an unabashed pro-Trump Republican, would also be the youngest person in the next session of Congress if she were to defeat two-term Democratic Rep. Chris Pappas in one of the most competitive races this year. Leavitt is seven months younger than fellow Gen Z candidate Maxwell Alejandro Frost, a Florida Democrat favored in his race.

The New Hampshire contest will test the appeal of a far-right candidate in a Democratic-leaning state in a midterm election that historically has served as a referendum on the current president.

The 1st Congressional District has a history of switching between parties. It flipped five times in seven elections before Pappas, now 42, won the open seat in 2018. The district includes Manchester, the state's most populous city, Portsmouth on the Seacoast and rural communities farther north.

Leavitt won her 10-way Republican primary in September in part by going to the right of the other candidates, including Matt Mowers, the party's 2020 nominee. Mowers also worked in the Trump administration and has said he believed there were voting irregularities in the 2020 presidential election won by Democrat Joe Biden.

"I consistently continue to be the only candidate in this race who says that I believe the 2020 election was undoubtedly stolen from President Trump," Leavitt said during a debate a week before the primary.

Numerous federal and local election officials of both parties, a long list of courts, top former campaign staffers and even Trump's own attorney general have said there is no evidence of that. Trump recently endorsed Leavitt, calling her "fantastic."

"Matt Mowers had solid Trump credentials," said Dante Scala, a University of New Hampshire professor of political science. "And yet she managed to out-Trump him ... and that meant also expressing a lie about a stolen election without reservation."

Pappas called Leavitt extreme and said her claims about the 2020 election "are not based in truth or reality" and are "dangerous." Leavitt contends that Pappas and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., "are the real extremists," citing their support for a federal elections bill named after the late Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., that would have created national automatic voter registration, allowed all voters to cast ballots by mail and weakened voter ID laws, among other things.

Leavitt has been campaigning for stronger parental rights in schools and increased domestic energy production. She has the endorsement of Republican Gov. Chris Sununu, a moderate who backed Trump's reelection bid.

"Washington is broken, and it won't get fixed if we keep sending the same people back there," said Sununu, who lives in the 1st District. "Karoline Leavitt is the new voice and principled vote New Hampshire needs in Congress."

Pappas and Leavitt have little in common beyond backgrounds in family small businesses — his at a restaurant known for its ice cream, hers working at an ice cream stand and at a used truck and car dealership.

The two have sparred over inflation, the future of Social Security and abortion.

Leavitt contends that the Inflation Reduction Act, which Pappas voted for, will actually increase inflation at a time when families are struggling.

Pappas notes that the new law has capped out-of-pocket costs for older adults on Medicare and provides energy rebates for businesses and families. He said it is fully paid for, will lower energy and health costs, and will reduce the deficit by \$1.9 trillion over 20 years.

On Social Security, Pappas has accused Leavitt of wanting to privatize it "and gamble it on the stock market." Leavitt said she would work to protect the benefits of anyone who has paid into the system and is open to "alternative solutions that will ensure a better future for your children and grandchildren." She said Pappas wants to raise taxes on high earners to continue supporting Social Security.

On abortion, Pappas said he would support the Women's Health Protection Act, which would protect the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 57 of 64

right to access abortion care nationwide after the overturning of Roe v. Wade.

Leavitt pledged on her campaign website to be a "fearless pro-life advocate" if elected to Congress. She said she supports having state legislatures make decisions on abortion regulations and would oppose a federal abortion ban.

As a contrast to Leavitt, who has never held elected office, Pappas notes his bipartisan record in Congress and his "People Over Party" coalition of supporters that include Republicans, former Republicans and independents.

"Her professional background is as Donald Trump's spin doctor in the White House," Pappas said. "She's never worked with Democrats on anything."

Kathleen Sullivan, former chair of the New Hampshire Democratic Party, wrote in a column in the New Hampshire Union Leader that "it is difficult to see Leavitt working with Democrats in the way that Pappas has worked with Republicans." She cited Leavitt's references to Democrats as "radical, power-hungry socialists" and previous comments that climate change is "a manufactured crisis" created by the Democrats.

Leavitt says her experience working in the White House prepared her well for Congress, with the West Wing "perhaps one of the most fast paced, high pressure work environments there is."

She says her youth would be an advantage in Congress.

"There's people on both sides of the aisle that have been down there literally twice as long as I have been alive," said Leavitt, who campaigned at college campuses, including her alma mater, Saint Anselm College in Manchester. "That's a problem for our republic. That's a problem for your young voters who really want a voice."

Stefanik, now the third-ranking Republican in the House, endorsed Leavitt early on, calling her a "rising star in the Republican Party who will carry the torch of conservative values for generations to come." Leavitt credits Stefanik with encouraging her to mount a campaign.

"Nobody told her she was going to win, but she believed in herself," Leavitt said. "That was very inspiring to me. And I thought, 'Why can't I do that from my own home district?'"

Itaewon: An inclusive, multicultural hub hit with tragedy

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and ADAM SCHRECK Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Itaewon, the neighborhood where at least 151 people were killed in a Halloween crowd surge, is Seoul's most cosmopolitan district, a place where kebab stands and BBQ joints are as big a draw as the pulsing night clubs and trendy bars.

Wedged between two of the city's biggest parks and the War Memorial of Korea museum, Itaewon has long been popular among foreign residents and tourists thanks in large part to a major U.S. military base that was once nearby. The area's nightlife is mostly centered on one main road.

In recent years, the days around Halloween have seen Itaewon's lively streets filled with partygoers — expat and Korean alike — dressed up in holiday costumes. Those festivities continued even during the pandemic, which temporarily dampened Itaewon's nightlife after several cases were traced to the area's nightclubs and other venues.

Officials believe that tens of thousands of revelers flocked to Itaewon on Saturday, in one of the biggest gatherings since the country removed most of its COVID-19 restrictions in recent months. Witnesses say the streets were so densely clogged with people and slow-moving vehicles that it was practically impossible for emergency workers and ambulances to arrive in time, leaving them helpless to prevent the situation from developing into the country's worst disaster in years.

On Saturday night, emergency workers were seen rushing to carry the injured and dead out in stretchers as ambulances lined up in the streets and a chaotic crowd fled the area. Paramedics and pedestrians frantically performed CPR on people in the streets near rows of lifeless bodies kept under blue blankets.

Park Ji-won, who runs a Middle Eastern restaurant across the street from Hamilton Hotel, said he saw emergency workers bring out people in stretchers among the huge throngs of crowds as he closed his restaurant around 11 p.m. He had no idea what just happened.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 58 of 64

"I just presumed a fight broke out — in my 10-plus years of doing business here, I only saw ambulances when people got assaulted or when there were fires," Park said.

He said he was "extremely shocked" when he got home and watched the news, which was when the death toll was at a dozen. "But then the death toll kept growing until it became 151," he said.

Park said Itaewon always had large Halloween crowds, even during raging COVID-19 infections last year. He said shop owners like him usually avoid the narrow alley beside Hamilton Hotel during holiday festivities, because "once you go there, you cannot move or get out."

For some people, it was the contrast between the normally lively, fun neighborhood and the mass death that was most striking.

"People were wearing Halloween costumes so the scene was so unrealistic," said an official at an Itaewon tourism organization who rushed to the scene to try to help. She requested anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the incident.

While there's not widespread Western-style trick-or-treat activities in South Korea, Halloween-themed parties and events have become increasingly popular among young South Koreans, and Itaewon is the country's hottest spot for such events, where bars, clubs and restaurants hold costume competitions.

Itaewon's international character was shaped by its proximity to a U.S. military garrison nearby. The area is still home to restaurants, bars and other businesses catering to the American community in Seoul.

The Yongsan Garrison, which served as the headquarters for the U.S. Forces Korea and the United Nations Command until 2017, is less than a mile away from Itaewon. The U.S. forces have since relocated their South Korean headquarters to Pyeongtaek, a city 70 kilometers (45 miles) south of Seoul, leaving only a small contingent in Yongsan while beginning to hand over the land to the South Korean government.

Even after losing most of its American military customers, Itaewon has remained a major attraction for both South Koreans and foreign visitors, who are drawn to the district's buzzing and boozy nightlife as well as its international flair. Restaurants serving American barbecue and Middle Eastern kebabs sit alongside Irish pubs and traditional Japanese-style bars.

"The Itaewon community has opened its arms to us for many years and is part of the reason our Alliance is so strong," U.S. Forces Korea, which commands the nearly 30,000 American military personnel in the country, said in an online statement, written in English and Korean. "During this time of grief, we will be there for you just as you have been there for us."

The epicenter of the disaster appeared to be on a cramped, sloping alley running along the western side of the Hamilton Hotel, where some witnesses say people fell and toppled over one another like "dominoes." The brick hotel and its adjacent shopping center are a well-known landmark in the area.

The lane would have left those seeking shelter with few options. One side is occupied by the mostly solid wall of the hotel. The other is lined with a handful of small storefronts, including bars, a small retail shop and a branch of the Emart24 convenience store chain.

The alley itself is on an incline that leads to one of the entrances to the busy Itaewon subway station, making it harder for revelers to maintain their footing as the crowd surged. The block-long alley links the main road with another narrow strip packed with bars and trendy restaurants.

One witness told local TV station YTN that he saw both foreigners and Koreans who'd been killed, and seemed amazed as the neighborhood filled with police vehicles and ambulances trying to help the injured and dying.

"It was like an abyss," the man, who gave his name as Hwang Min-hyuk, said.

Philippine storm victims feared tsunami, ran toward mudslide

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Victims of a huge mudslide set off by a storm in a coastal Philippine village that had once been devastated by a killer tsunami mistakenly thought a tidal wave was coming and ran to higher ground where they were buried alive by the boulder-laden deluge, an official said Sunday.

At least 20 bodies, including those of children, have been dug out by rescuers in the vast muddy mound that now covers much of Kusiong village in southern Maguindanao province, among the hardest-hit by

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 59 of 64

Tropical Storm Nalgae, which blew out of the northwestern Philippines early Sunday.

Officials fear 80 to 100 more people, including entire families, may have been buried by the deluge or washed away by flash floods in Kusiong between Thursday night and early Friday, according to Naguib Sinarimbo, the interior minister for a Muslim autonomous region run by former separatist guerrillas.

Nalgae, which had vast rain clouds, left at least 73 people dead in eight provinces and one city in the Philippine archipelago, including in Kusiong, and a trail of destruction and flooding in one of the world's most disaster-prone countries.

The catastrophe in Kusiong, populated mostly by the Teduray ethnic minority group, was particularly tragic because its more than 2,000 villagers have carried out disaster-preparedness drills every year for decades to brace for a tsunami because of a deadly history. But they were not as prepared for the dangers that could come from Mount Minandar, where their village lies at the foothills, Sinarimbo said.

"When the people heard the warning bells, they ran up and gathered in a church on a high ground," Sinarimbo told The Associated Press, citing accounts by Kusiong villagers.

"The problem was, it was not a tsunami that inundated them but a big volume of water and mud that came down from the mountain," he said.

In August 1976, an 8.1-magnitude earthquake and a tsunami in the Moro Gulf that struck around midnight left thousands of people dead and devastated coastal provinces in one of the deadliest natural disasters in Philippine history.

Lying between the Moro Gulf and 446-meter (1,464-foot) Mount Minandar, Kusiong was among the hardest hit by the 1976 catastrophe. The village never forgot the tragedy. Elderly villagers who survived the tsunami and powerful earthquake passed on the nightmarish story to their children, warning them to be prepared.

"Every year, they hold drills to brace for a tsunami. Somebody was assigned to bang the alarm bells and they designated high grounds where people should run to," Sinarimbo said. "Villagers were even taught the sound of an approaching big wave based on the recollection of the tsunami survivors."

"But there wasn't as much focus on the geo-hazards on the mountainside," he said.

Bulldozers, backhoes and payloaders were brought to Kusiong on Saturday with more than 100 rescuers from the army, police and volunteers from other provinces, but they were unable to dig at a spot where survivors said the church lay underneath because the muddy mound was still dangerously soft, officials said.

The national disaster-response agency reported 22 missing from the storm's onslaught in several provinces. Sinarimbo said many of the missing in Kusiong were not included in the government's official tally because entire families may have been buried and no member was left to provide names and details to authorities.

Army Lt. Col. Dennis Almorato, who went to the mudslide-hit community Saturday, said the muddy deluge buried about 60 rural houses in about 5 hectares (12 acres) of the community. He gave no estimate of how many villagers may have been buried but described the extent of the mudslide as "overwhelming" and said the nighttime disaster may have unfolded fast.

A regional army commander, Major Gen. Roy Galido, has been ordered to lead an emergency command center to head search and retrieval work in Kusiong, officials said.

The stormy weather in a large swath of the country prompted the coast guard to prohibit sea travel in dangerously rough seas as millions of Filipinos planned to travel over a long weekend for visits to relatives' tombs and for family reunions on All Saints' Day in the largely Roman Catholic nation.

More than 100 domestic and international flights were canceled, Manila's international airport was briefly closed amid stormy weather and sea voyages in storm-whipped seas were prohibited by the coast guard, stranding thousands of passengers.

Floodwaters swamped many provinces and cities, trapping some people on their roofs, and more than 700 houses were damaged. More than 168,000 people fled to evacuation camps. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. expressed disappointment over the high casualty toll in a televised meeting with disaster-mitigation officials Saturday.

"We should have done better," Marcos Jr. said. "We were not able to anticipate that the volume of water

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 60 of 64

will be that much so we were not able to warn the people and then to evacuate them out of the way of the incoming flash floods.”

About 20 typhoons and storms batter the Philippine archipelago each year. It is located on the Pacific “Ring of Fire,” a region along most of the Pacific Ocean rim where many volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur, making the nation one of the world’s most disaster-prone.

Biden faces ‘unpredictable’ era with China’s empowered Xi

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden’s administration is taking stock of a newly empowered Xi Jinping as the Chinese president begins a third, norm-breaking five-year term as Communist Party leader. With U.S.-Chinese relations already fraught, concerns are growing in Washington that more difficult days may be ahead.

Xi has amassed a measure of power over China’s ruling party unseen since Mao Zedong, the leader from 1949 until his death in 1976. Xi’s consolidation of power comes as the United States has updated its defense and national security strategies to reflect that China is now America’s most potent military and economic adversary.

Biden takes pride in having built rapport with Xi since first meeting him more than a decade ago, when they served as their countries’ vice presidents. But Biden now faces, in Xi, a counterpart buoyed by a greater measure of power and determined to cement China’s superpower status even while navigating strong economic and diplomatic headwinds.

“We’re not back in the Mao era. Xi Jinping is not Mao,” said Jude Blanchette, chair of China studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “But we are definitely in new territory and unpredictable territory in terms of the stability and predictability of China’s political system.”

Biden and Xi are expected to hold talks on the sidelines of next month’s Group of 20 summit in Indonesia, a long-anticipated meeting that would come after nearly two years of tense relations. The leaders are dug into winning the upper hand in a competition that both believe will determine which country is the leading global economic and political force driving the next century.

“There’s an awful lot of issues for us to talk to China about,” said National Security Council spokesman John Kirby. He added that U.S. and Chinese officials have been working to arrange a meeting of the leaders, though one has yet to be confirmed. “Some issues are fairly contentious and some should be collaborative,” Kirby said.

Biden and Xi traveled together in the U.S. and China in 2011 and 2012, and they have held five phone or video calls since Biden became president in January 2021. But the U.S.-China relationship has become far more complicated since those getting-to-know-you talks over meals in Washington and on the Tibetan plateau a decade ago.

As president, Biden has repeatedly taken China to task for human rights abuses against the Uyghur people and other ethnic minorities, Beijing’s crackdowns on democracy activists in Hong Kong, coercive trade practices, military provocations against self-ruled Taiwan and differences over Russia’s prosecution of its war against Ukraine.

Xi’s government has criticized the Biden administration’s posture toward Taiwan — which Beijing looks eventually to unify with the communist mainland — as undermining China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Chinese president also has suggested that Washington wants to stifle Beijing’s growing clout as it tries to overtake the U.S. as the world’s largest economy.

“External attempts to suppress and contain China may escalate at any time,” Xi warned in his address before the Communist Party congress. “We must therefore be more mindful of potential dangers, be prepared to deal with worst-case scenarios, and be ready to withstand high winds, choppy waters and even dangerous storms.”

Dali Yang, a political scientist at the University of Chicago who researches Chinese politics, said there are some potentially stabilizing developments emerging in the relationship after months of rancor.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 61 of 64

Two of China's best-known diplomats in Washington were elevated at the Communist Party meeting. Foreign Minister Wang Yi was selected for the Communist Party's Politburo, the policymaking body made up of the 24 most senior officials. China's ambassador to the U.S., Qin Gang, is joining its central committee. Their elevation should bring a measure of continuity to the U.S.-China relationship, Yang said.

Yang noted there has also been an effort on the part of the Communist Party leadership to "tone down its warm embrace of Russia." Last month, after meeting with Xi on the sidelines of a summit in Uzbekistan, Russian President Vladimir Putin acknowledged that Xi had expressed "concern and questions" about the war in Ukraine.

With his third term confirmed, "in some ways, Xi is now freer to act and less encumbered in terms of no longer having to always watch what his rivals are doing," Yang said. "I think that actually may affect his approach and may make him more comfortable in dealing with Biden."

White House officials have played down hopes that Xi's new five-year hold on the Communist Party could give him breathing room to more fully engage on matters where China has some overlapping interests with the U.S.

Biden, during a meeting with Defense Department officials on Wednesday, stressed that the U.S. was "not seeking conflict" with China. Hours later, Chinese state television reported Xi told members of the national committee on U.S.-China relations that Beijing should find ways to work with Washington on issues of mutual concern.

The conciliatory moment was short-lived.

The following day, U.S. and Chinese officials were trading rhetorical shots about the U.S. move earlier this month to expand export controls on the sale of advanced semiconductor chips to China.

"The U.S. has overstretched the national security concept and suppressed China's development, and normal business cooperation has been politicized and weaponized," Wang Hongxia, counselor at the Chinese Embassy in Washington, told reporters.

Her comments came not long after a top Commerce Department official, Undersecretary Alan Estevez, said at a Washington forum that "if I was a betting person, I would put down money" on the U.S. imposing additional export controls on China.

China's economy is slowing, with Beijing reporting this month that growth for the first nine months of the year was 3%, putting it on pace to fall well below its official full-year target of 5.5%. The country's economy is also dragging from strict "zero" COVID rules, and Beijing is confronting a deceleration in exports and home prices that fell to a seven-year low in September.

It also faces increased competition from a U.S. and European Union that are investing tens of billions of dollars to compete on semiconductors and other technologies. All of this points to the possibility that China might not eclipse U.S. gross domestic product by 2030 as many economists have forecast.

Ruchir Sharma, chairman of Rockefeller International, recently concluded that with its likely growth trajectory China would exceed the U.S. economy by 2060, if it manages to do so at all.

At the same time, Secretary of State Antony Blinken as well as the U.S. chief naval operations officer, Adm. Mike Gilday, have recently expressed concern that Beijing may try to step up its timeline to seize Taiwan. Blinken said China had made "a fundamental decision that the status quo was no longer acceptable."

China has largely refrained from criticizing Russia's war in Ukraine, but also has held off on supplying Moscow with arms. Still, the conflict has raised concerns in Taiwan that China — which has never controlled the island — might be further emboldened to move on its long-stated plan for unification.

U.S.-China tensions have been further enflamed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's August visit to Taiwan and Biden's remark in May that the U.S. military would defend Taiwan in case of an attack by China, comments the White House later played down.

"What's concerning now is that with Xi's unlimited power and ambition, he may use Taiwan to distract from his internal problems," said Keith Krach, a former undersecretary of state during the Trump administration. "I hope he's looked at the courage of the Ukrainians and reckoned that the people of Taiwan are just as courageous, perhaps even more so."

From Bakke to Fisher, evolution of affirmative action cases

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court will take up the issue of affirmative action again Monday — the second time in six years — but with the conservative majority now generally expected to end the use of race in higher education admissions.

That would be a major shift for the court, which first ruled in favor of affirmative action policies in admissions in 1978. The earlier cases on affirmation action are each known by a single name: Bakke, Grutter, Gratz and Fisher.

During arguments Monday in cases involving North Carolina and Harvard, those names may be used as shorthand for the cases they represent. But real people are behind them.

A look at what they have done since the Supreme Court made their names synonymous with the issue of race in higher education:

Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, 1978

Allan Bakke was in his 30s when he applied to the medical school at the University of California, Davis. Rejected twice, Bakke sued. He said the school's decision to set aside 16 seats for minority students in a class of 100 discriminated against him as a white man. The Supreme Court agreed and ordered him admitted. But the court allowed the use of race as a factor in admission if it was part of an overall evaluation of an applicant. Bakke graduated in 1982 and worked for years as an anesthesiologist in Minnesota. He has kept out of the spotlight since his case.

Grutter v. Bollinger, 2003

Barbara Grutter was Michigan resident who applied to the University of Michigan Law School in 1996. Grutter, who is white, had a 3.8 grade point average but was rejected. She sued for discrimination, claiming the school's policies gave certain minority students a significantly greater chance of admission. The Supreme Court said in a 5-4 decision that the law school's admissions policy, which considered race as one factor in admissions, was not illegal. The decision allowed the continued use of race in admissions.

The Bollinger in the case was Lee Bollinger, who was sued in his capacity as the university's then-president. Bollinger, now Columbia University's president, told reporters recently that he is "worried about the outcome" of the current cases.

Gratz v. Bollinger, 2003

The companion case to Grutter's involved Jennifer Gratz, a white woman denied undergraduate admission to Michigan. Unlike Grutter, Gratz won her case. The Supreme Court agreed that the school's undergraduate admissions system was flawed because it relied too heavily on race.

Frustrated that affirmative action survived anyway, Gratz was instrumental in Michigan's passage of Proposal 2, which ended race-based preferences in state university admissions. The ban survived its own trip to the Supreme Court. Gratz went on to open a microbrewery in Florida with her husband.

Fisher v. University of Texas, 2013 and 2016

Abigail Fisher is Supreme Court famous twice over. Fisher, who is white, sued after being rejected in 2008 from the University of Texas at Austin. A cello player who also participated in math competitions and did volunteer work, she graduated just shy of the top 10% of her class. She argued the university's policy discriminated against her because of race, in violation of the Constitution.

Her first Supreme Court case was inconclusive. Three years later, when her case returned to the court, the justices in a narrow ruling upheld the school's use of affirmative action. Only seven justices ruled in the case, however, because Justice Antonin Scalia had died and Justice Elena Kagan was recused.

Fisher, who has called herself an "introverted person," graduated from Louisiana State University in 2012 and worked in finance, but she hasn't given up on the affirmative action issue. Now in her 30s she's one of the leaders of Students for Fair Admissions, the group that brought the UNC and Harvard cases to the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 63 of 64

high court. The group's head is Edward Blum, a former stockbroker who also financially backed Fisher's original case and other race-based Supreme Court cases.

Today in History: October 31, Indira Gandhi assassinated

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Oct. 31, the 304th day of 2022. There are 61 days left in the year. This is Halloween.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 31, 1984, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two Sikh (sihk) security guards.

On this date:

In 1864, Nevada became the 36th state as President Abraham Lincoln signed a proclamation.

In 1941, work was completed on the Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota, begun in 1927.

In 1961, the body of Josef Stalin was removed from Lenin's Tomb as part of the Soviet Union's "de-Stalinization" drive.

In 1964, Theodore C. Freeman, 34, became the first member of NASA's astronaut corps to die when his T-38 jet crashed while approaching Ellington Air Force Base in Houston.

In 1967, Nguyen Van Thieu (nwen van too) took the oath of office as the first president of South Vietnam's second republic.

In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered a halt to all U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, saying he hoped for fruitful peace negotiations.

In 1992, Pope John Paul II formally proclaimed that the Roman Catholic Church had erred in condemning the astronomer Galileo for holding that the Earth was not the center of the universe.

In 1999, EgyptAir Flight 990, bound from New York to Cairo, crashed off the Massachusetts coast, killing all 217 people aboard.

In 2005, President George W. Bush nominated Judge Samuel Alito (ah-LEE'-toh) to the Supreme Court. Civil rights icon Rosa Parks was honored during a memorial service in Washington, D.C.

In 2015, a Russian passenger airliner crashed in a remote part of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula 23 minutes after taking off from a popular Red Sea resort, killing all 224 people on board.

In 2019, President Donald Trump announced that he would be making Palm Beach, Florida, his permanent residence after leaving the White House rather than returning to Trump Tower in New York.

In 2020, actor Sean Connery, who rose to international stardom as the suave secret agent James Bond and then carved out an Oscar-winning career in other rugged roles, died at his home in the Bahamas at the age of 90.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama joined New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie for a tour of damage along the Jersey coast from Superstorm Sandy; Wall Street was back in business after a two-day shutdown caused by the storm. (Stocks finished mixed).

Five years ago: Eight people were killed when a man drove a truck along a bike path in New York City in an attack that authorities immediately labeled terrorism; the driver, identified by authorities as Uzbek immigrant Sayfullo Saipov, was shot and wounded by police. Netflix said it was suspending production on "House of Cards" following sexual harassment allegations against its star, Kevin Spacey. (Spacey would later be fired from the show, and production resumed without him.)

One year ago: Southwest Airlines said it was investigating after a pilot greeted passengers over the plane's public address system using a phrase that had become a stand-in for insulting President Joe Biden. White House press secretary Jen Psaki said she had contracted COVID-19 and was experiencing mild symptoms. American Airlines canceled hundreds of flights for a third straight day as it struggled with staffing shortages.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Lee Grant is 97. Former CBS anchorman Dan Rather is 91. Folk singer Tom Paxton is 85. Actor Ron Rifkin is 84. Actor Sally Kirkland is 81. Actor Brian Doyle-Murray is 77. Actor Stephen Rea is 76. Olympic gold medal long-distance runner Frank Shorter is 75. Actor Deidre Hall is 75. TV show host Jane Pauley is 72. Actor Brian Stokes Mitchell is 65. Movie director Peter Jackson is 61. Rock musician Larry

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 116 ~ 64 of 64

Mullen is 61. Actor Dermot Mulroney is 59. Rock musician Mikkey Dee is 59. Rock singer-musician Johnny Marr is 59. Actor Rob Schneider is 59. Country singer Darryl Worley is 58. Actor-comedian Mike O'Malley is 57. Rap musician Adrock is 56. Rap performer Vanilla Ice (aka Rob Van Winkle) is 55. Rock musician Rogers Stevens (Blind Melon) is 53. Rock singer Linn Berggren (Ace of Base) is 52. Reality TV host Troy Hartman is 51. Gospel singer Smokie Norful is 49. Actor Piper Perabo (PEER'-uh-boh) is 46. Actor Brian Hallisay is 44. Actor Samaire (SAH'-mee-rah) Armstrong is 42. Actor Eddie Kaye Thomas is 42. Rock musician Frank Iero (My Chemical Romance) is 41. Actor Justin Chatwin is 40. Actor Scott Clifton is 38. Actor Vanessa Marano is 30. Actor Holly Taylor is 25. Actor Danielle Rose Russell is 23. Actor-singer Willow Smith is 22.