

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Community Calendar Monday, Nov. 14

Senior Menu: Honey glazed chicken breast, parsley buttered potatoes, beets, fruit, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Mini waffles.
School Lunch: Taco salads.
Veteran's Day Program, 2 p.m., GHS Arena
1 p.m.: Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Community Center.
Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 15

Senior Menu: Baked fish, au gratin potatoes, 3 bean salad, peach cobbler, cookie, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Breakfast sandwich
School Lunch: BBB Pulled Pork, nachos.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
UMC: Bible Study, 10 a.m.; Conde Ad Council

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

Picture re-take day, 7:50 a.m. to 9 a.m.
FCCLA Blood Drive, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m., GHS Arena Lobby.
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 16

Senior Menu: Ham loaf, sweet potatoes, peas, acini depepi fruit salad, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Eggs and breakfast potatoes.
School Lunch: Chicken strips, fries.
Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.
UMC: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.; UMYF/FCCLA Food Drive, 6 p.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 17

Senior Menu: Taco salad, Mexican rice, seasonal

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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Weekly Vikings Recap

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

For the first time since week 3, the Vikings kicked off to start the game. The decision to kick off to the Bills, who arguably have the most potent offense in the game, paid off as they went three-and-out on their opening drive. The Bills then had to punt to what truly might be the best offense in the NFL, the opening drive Vikings. In the Vikings' nine games this season, the offense has scored a touchdown on their opening drive in six of them, including every game since they returned from their bye week. Thanks to two huge plays by Justin Jefferson, one of which was a 46-yard catch on 3rd & 11, the Vikings' opening drive success continued as they took the lead 7-0 over the Bills.

However, that lead barely lasted as Bills' running back, Devin Singletary, punched in two goal line runs for touchdown to give the Bills a 14-7 lead. Coming into this game, the Vikings had yet to play a cold, outdoor game, and it showed. The 39-degree weather and light flurries seemed to soften up the Vikings' defense as they looked afraid to get physical with the Bills' offense. To make matters worse, the Vikings' defense seemed to be unprepared for the Bills' turf as players were running gingerly or just plain slipping on the field.

After a Kirk Cousins' interception on an overthrow to KJ Osborn, it appeared that the Bills were going to run away with this game. However, the Vikings' defense was able to hold the Bills to a field goal to keep the game within 10 points. After the Vikings' field goal cut the Bills' lead to 17-10, the Vikings got a stroke of luck on a Devin Singletary fumble that could have easily been called down by contact. Unfortunately, the Vikings' offense could not capitalize as they came up with no points and gave the Bills plenty of time to score before the first half ended. And that is exactly what the Bills did as they drove quickly down the field, scoring on a Gabe Davis touchdown catch to give themselves a 24-10 lead going into halftime.

It's a shame the Vikings' opening drive success does not carry over into opening second-half drive success because the Vikings would have loved to score a touchdown to start the second half. Instead, the Vikings killed a promising opening drive on an awful interception by Kirk Cousins directly to a Bills defender.

Not to be deterred though, this Vikings team is different than the past couple of seasons.

A defensive battle until late in the third quarter, the Bills took a 27-10 lead on a field goal. On the very next play, Dalvin Cook ran for 81-yards to cut the lead 27-17. All of a sudden there is new life in this purple team.

Moving to the fourth quarter, it was about as crazy as it could get. Looking to put the nail in the coffin, Josh Allen throws a pick in the endzone to Patrick Peterson, who then returns it to the 40-yard line. The Vikings drive it down and CJ Ham scores his first TD in 5 years to make it 27-24. After a defensive stand, Kirk Cousins drives the Vikings all the way down to the 1-yard line. On fourth down, Cousins tries to sneak it in only to come up just inches short. Looking like the game was over, Josh Allen proceeded to fumble the snap on the next play, and Eric Kendricks lands on the ball for a touchdown. This game was far from over as Allen led the Bills down close to kick a game-tying field. On to overtime.

In the overtime, the Vikings won the toss and put a nice drive together ending in a field goal. Vikings go up 33-30. Allen once again runs the Bills to within field goal range only to throw another interception to Peterson in the endzone. Game over and the Vikings are now 8-1.

Now the Vikings head home for a tough three game home stand and kick things off with the Cowboys next Sunday. SKOL!!!

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“Looking out for all of you”

Recently, while visiting from out of state, my father had a “health hiccup.” As we navigated getting this problem investigated and addressed, he was very concerned that we keep his primary care doctor informed. As my dad has said repeatedly, “I give him more grief than any of my other doctors, but I also listen to him more than any of my other doctors. He’s the only one looking out for all of me!”



Based on Science, Built on Trust



Debra Johnston, M.D.

Like many Americans, particularly older Americans, my dad has a whole host of specialists he sees on a regular basis. One of my friends recently teased, what do primary care providers do, anyway? It seems that there is a specialist for pretty much any problem you can imagine!

If I see a cardiologist, an electrophysiologist, a urologist, an endocrinologist, a gastroenterologist, a rheumatologist, a nephrologist and maybe even an oncologist, why do I need one more doctor, who doesn't seem to be handling anything?

Established readers of this column know that I, like Dr Holm before me, am a proponent of the annual wellness visit. It's a chance to step back and look at the big picture, to review screenings, immunizations, and health promotion recommendations. Many factors can influence these recommendations, beyond age and gender. Did you know that older men who have smoked should be screened for aortic aneurysms, and that diabetes in pregnancy increases diabetes risk going forward?

The origin of a symptom is not always straightforward. For example, abdominal pain can originate not just from the digestive system, but from many other systems, and from causes that might surprise you, such as blood or metabolic diseases and poisonings. Some people, women especially, get their gallbladders removed, only to discover that the problem was, in fact, their heart. A primary care doctor can help sort things out in a more efficient way.

A primary care doctor looks at the big picture, In fact, all of us answering questions tonight are primary care doctors. We commonly say we are specialties of breadth, not depth. My father says the specialist studies one 1000 page book on their topic, while the generalist studies the 10 page summary for 100 different topics. We may ask for assistance from our specialist colleagues for more unusual, treatment resistant, or advanced diseases, but every day we help patients manage their health problems. We coordinate care between specialists, and watch for signs that the treatment for one problem is worsening another. In fact, I would argue that the more specialists you have, the more important it becomes to have someone “looking out for all of you.

Everyone deserves a primary care provider!

Debra Johnson, 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.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust for 21 Seasons, streaming live on Facebook and SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



2023 Groton Snow Queens

On the left is Senior Snow Queen Shaylee Peterson with her parents, Kristi and Ben Peterson. On the right is Junior Snow Queen Talli Wright, with her parents Adam and Nikki Wright. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Snow Queen Contest

Pictured are Anna Bisbee, senior talent winner; Hollie Frost, Ava Kramer; Sierra Ehrsmann, first runner-up; Senior Snow Queen and Miss Congeniality Shaylee Peterson, Prince Liam Gibson, Princesses Ellie Lassel, Junior Snow Queen Talli Wright; Cambria Bonn, Natalia Warrington, and Junior talent winners Addison Hoeft and Libby Cole. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Democrats projected to retain U.S. Senate control after winning Nevada seat

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - NOVEMBER 13, 2022 9:50 AM

Democratic U.S. Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada will win reelection, according to Associated Press projections late Saturday, ensuring Democrats will remain in the majority next year no matter what happens in a runoff election in Georgia next month.

After days of vote counting, U.S. Sens. Mark Kelly of Arizona and Cortez Masto were both projected to win their races and return to Washington next year.

The Associated Press called the Arizona race late Friday and the Nevada race late Saturday after a tranche of ballots from Clark County, the state's most populous, were reported.

Kelly defeated political newcomer Blake Masters, a venture capitalist aligned with former President Donald Trump, by about 6 percentage points. The AP called that race Friday evening.

Cortez Masto won by a narrower margin, leading by about one-half a percentage point Saturday night, over former Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt. She ran up large margins in the state's urban center of Clark County, which was enough to offset Laxalt's strength in rural areas.

The victories will bring Democrats' total to at least 50 senators. With Vice President Kamala Harris' tie-breaking vote, that is enough to ensure the party will maintain control of the chamber.

Two other Senate races are still uncalled, but one, in Alaska, is between two Republicans.

The other, a runoff election in Georgia between Democratic U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock and Republican former football star Herschel Walker on Dec. 6, will now not decide control of the Senate, but whether Democrats will have a two-seat advantage or control an evenly divided chamber as they have for the last two years.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, who is likely to stay in that role for another two years after the results of this election, said in a Saturday evening appearance that three factors led to Democrats' wins.

The first was the party's candidates. The second was their "agenda and accomplishments."

The third, he said, was a rejection of Republican extremism, especially for GOP candidates closely tied to Trump and his lies about the 2020 election. "The American people rejected the anti-democratic extremist MAGA Republicans," he said.

"Voters across the country have delivered a resounding endorsement of Democrats' Senate majority," U.S. Sen. Gary Peters, a Michigan Democrat who leads the caucus' campaign arm, said in a Saturday statement.

Democratic control of the Senate means President Joe Biden should be able to easily confirm most nominees for judicial and administrative posts. The last time the Senate and the White House were held by different parties, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell blocked President Barack Obama's nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court, Merrick Garland — who is now the attorney general.

Biden, on an official trip to Southeast Asia, phoned Cortez Masto from Phnom Penh to congratulate her, according to a White House pool report.

"I feel good and I'm looking forward to the next couple years," he said, according to the pool report.

So far, every incumbent who ran has won reelection. Georgia's Warnock could continue that trend.

The only seat to change parties so far is in Pennsylvania, where Democratic Lieutenant Gov. John Fetterman defeated Dr. Mehmet Oz in a contest to succeed retiring Republican Pat Toomey.

In the days since Election Day, national Republicans have bickered over how much candidate quality cost them in an election cycle that otherwise may have favored them.

President Donald Trump favored bombastic candidates willing to endorse his false claims that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from him.

That resulted in untested candidates winning GOP Senate primaries in Arizona, Georgia, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and Ohio. Of that group, three lost outright and Georgia is still to be decided. Only J.D. Vance in Ohio won outright, in an open seat, though he far underperformed the Republican establishment-favored Gov. Mike DeWine.

Control of the U.S. House is still yet to be determined, though Republicans are still expected to gain a narrow majority in that chamber.

As of Saturday morning, Republicans were projected by The Associated Press to win 211 races, with Democrats safely ahead in 203. A party must win 218 seats for a majority in the House.



JACOB FISCHLER ✉️ 🐦

Jacob covers federal policy as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

South Dakota voters approved Medicaid expansion, but implementation may not be easy

BY: ARIELLE ZIONTS - NOVEMBER 14, 2022 4:30 AM

RAPID CITY, S.D. — South Dakotans voted last week to expand the state's Medicaid program to cover thousands of additional low-income residents, becoming the seventh state to approve expansion via the ballot box.

But as other conservative states have shown, voter approval doesn't always mean politicians and administrators will rush to implement the change.

In Missouri, for example, experts said subpar publicity efforts and an outdated application system led to a glacial pace of enrollment after voters there approved Medicaid expansion in 2020.

A similarly slow rollout could occur in South Dakota, said Tricia Brooks, a Georgetown University research professor who studies Medicaid.

South Dakota's Medicaid computer system "has a long way to evolve," Brooks said. "Unless they're going to really boost their eligibility [processing] capacity, then I think we're in for a rough or rocky start to expansion."

That could leave some South Dakotans temporarily uninsured even after they become eligible for Medicaid coverage.

Brooks said state administrators could face additional complications if the federal government ends the covid-19 public health emergency while South Dakota is enrolling newly eligible people into Medicaid. During the health emergency, states have been barred from dropping people who are no longer eligible for Medicaid, but they will resume doing so once the emergency ends.

Officials with the South Dakota Department of Social Services acknowledged Wednesday that they need to prepare. "We anticipate needing a significant number of additional staff and technology resources for implementation," Laurie Gill, the department secretary, said in a statement. She said the department created a leadership team to oversee necessary policy and system changes.

Missouri and most other states where voters approved Medicaid expansion faced politicians who tried to hamstring implementation.

But the pro-expansion group South Dakotans Decide Healthcare is confident that the change will be implemented as required by the constitutional amendment that voters approved Tuesday, campaign manager Zach Marcus said.

Marcus pointed to deadlines included in the amendment, and he noted that Gov. Kristi Noem — a Republican who opposed expansion — promised during a debate to implement the change if voters approved it.

South Dakota became the 39th state to approve Medicaid expansion, after 56% of voters supported the measure. The Department of Social Services expects about 52,000 newly eligible residents ages 18

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through 64 will enroll in Medicaid.

Medicaid is the nation's leading public health insurance program for people with disabilities and low incomes. It is funded and administered by the federal government and states.

The 2010 Affordable Care Act initially required states to expand their programs so more low-income adults could gain coverage, with the federal government paying 90% of the costs. But a U.S. Supreme Court ruling struck down that mandate.

Most states adopted Medicaid expansion through governors' orders or legislature-approved bills. But voters in Maine, Idaho, Nebraska, Utah, Missouri, Oklahoma, and South Dakota overrode resistance from lawmakers and governors by approving expansion through ballot measures. Every time Medicaid expansion has been on the ballot, it has passed.

Expansion proponents in South Dakota sought a constitutional amendment, which can't be easily repealed or revised. The amendment includes implementation deadlines and bars the state from creating extra rules, such as work requirements, for people who newly qualify for Medicaid.

In the past, South Dakota politicians have filed lawsuits that successfully argued that voter-approved measures violated the state constitution.

Last year, for example, Noem spearheaded a lawsuit that overturned a voter-approved amendment to legalize recreational marijuana. But she recently said the Medicaid expansion amendment "appears to be written constitutionally."

States can face hurdles in rolling out Medicaid expansion even after implementation begins. Education, enrollment, and processing policies play a role.

For example, in 2021, Missouri hit roadblocks when lawmakers refused to fund the program, and the state implemented the change only after a judge ordered the state to begin accepting applications. Experts said Missouri officials put little effort into outreach and required people to navigate a bureaucratic application process. Data shows the state also failed to process applications on time.

Oklahoma, where voters approved expansion the same year, had the opposite experience. Lawmakers there agreed to fund the program, and the state spread the word about expansion through social media campaigns, TV interviews, and outreach events. The state also evaluated whether people who had applied to other benefit programs might

GROTON'S EVENTS

Nov. 11-13 Front Porch
605 Christmas at the Barn
10am-5pm each day

Nov. 19 American
Legion Post #39 Turkey
Party 6:30pm

Nov. 24 Community
Thanksgiving at the
Community Center
11:30am-1pm

Dec. 3 Holiday Tour of
Homes & Silent Auction
at Olive Grove Golf
Course 4-7pm



Dec. 10 Santa Claus
Day at Professional
Management Services
9am-12pm



Jan. 29, 2023 Groton
Robotics Pancake Feed
at the Community
Center 10am-1pm



Jan. 29, 2023 85th Carnival of
Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm

GROTON
Chamber Of Commerce

120 N Main St., Groton, SD 57445

605-397-8422

GrotonChamber.com

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be newly eligible for Medicaid.

By December 2021, Oklahoma had enrolled more than 210,000 people through Medicaid expansion, while Missouri had enrolled fewer than 20,000.

Shelly Ten Napel, CEO of Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas, said officials can take steps to ensure a positive experience in South Dakota. Creating a "simple administrative process" means less work for applicants and state workers, said Ten Napel, who advocates for clinics that serve low-income and uninsured patients.

Brooks, the Georgetown expert on Medicaid administration, said South Dakota's Medicaid practices aren't as strong as other states'. "South Dakota is not advanced in their use of technology," Brooks said. "I worry if it's too manually driven that the state will be overwhelmed. And that will slow down the processing and you could potentially see what we've seen in Missouri."

Brooks' concerns are supported by studies and data.

South Dakota uses multiple applications and processing systems for Medicaid and other benefit programs when it could use just one, according to a March report by KFF and Georgetown's Center for Children and Families.

The report also says South Dakota is one of three states without an online account system. That means South Dakotans can't monitor their applications or upload documents to renew their coverage.

The Department of Social Services must submit its Medicaid expansion plan to the federal government by March 1 and begin providing benefits to newly eligible people by July 1.

Gill said the department is developing a system that is cell-phone friendly and will allow people to create online accounts.

But she said those changes won't be ready until fall 2023. That's months after the department is expected to see a flood of new, post-expansion applications.

ARIELLE ZIONTS

Arielle Zionts, Rural Health Care Correspondent for Kaiser Health News, is based in South Dakota. She primarily covers South Dakota and its neighboring states and tribal nations. Arielle previously worked at South Dakota Public Broadcasting, where she reported on business and economic development. Before that, she was the criminal justice reporter at the Rapid City Journal and a general assignment reporter at the Nogales International, on the border of Arizona and Mexico. She graduated from Pitzer College in Claremont, California. Arielle lives in Rapid City with her cat, Sully.

Congress heads back to D.C. for a hectic lame-duck session

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - NOVEMBER 14, 2022 4:30 AM

WASHINGTON — Congress returns to Capitol Hill and a lengthy to-do list this week, following a six-week midterm elections break that saw Democrats outperform expectations and Republicans barely inch toward the U.S. House majority.

On the agenda are same-sex marriage legislation, a huge defense bill, changes in how presidential electoral votes are counted and more.

The lame-duck session, a brief period between the election and the new Congress convening in January, is typically marked by lawmakers either doing the bare minimum, or pushing through dozens of bills in an attempt to finish work they've left until the end in hopes of securing party-line priorities during a hectic few weeks.

This year's lame duck is likely to be the latter. Democrats will be looking to wrap up numerous must-pass bills before heading home for the December holidays. And with control of both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate undecided as of Friday afternoon, the next few weeks could become a bit of a roller coaster.

Here are the five top things to tackle during the last few legislative weeks of the 117th Congress:

Paying the bills: Congress approved a short-term government funding bill in September, giving themselves through Dec. 16 to reach a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on spending totals for the fiscal year that began on Oct. 1 and to draft the dozen annual appropriations bills.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Thursday the Biden administration would like that package to include more funding to help communities recover from natural disasters, additional money to

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address COVID-19 and more aid to help Ukraine defend itself against Russia.

If Congress can't reach an agreement on the full-year spending bills, it can pass another short-term funding bill into next year.

Defense authorization: Lawmakers would like to pass the annual defense policy bill, known as the National Defense Authorization Act, during the lame-duck session.

While the legislation isn't essential for the Pentagon's funding (that's the defense appropriations bill in the item above), the NDAA sets sweeping policy for the U.S. Department of Defense. Congress has completed the measure for the last 61 years, a streak neither political party wants to break.

One possible snag will be behind-the-scenes discussions about whether to attach an energy permitting reform bill that West Virginia Democrat Sen. Joe Manchin III tried to get to President Joe Biden's desk in September.

Jean-Pierre said Thursday the White House believes that should move within the defense policy bill, though lawmakers have expressed some skepticism.

Iowa Republican Sen. Joni Ernst, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said in late September she doesn't want a permitting reform bill tacked onto the defense policy bill, saying the focus should remain on defense-related amendments.

"So to have one that's not germane be placed upon the NDAA would probably create some heartache," Ernst said.

Electoral count process: The U.S. House and a key U.S. Senate panel both gave their nod of approval to overhauling the Electoral Count Act in September, though the two chambers need to work out their differences before a bill can head to Biden's desk.

U.S. House lawmakers voted 229-203 to approve a bill that would raise the number of members needed to object to certifying a state's electoral votes for president and clarify the vice president's role in the process is purely ceremonial.

The Senate bill is somewhat similar, though it has broader bipartisan backing than the House version, which only garnered the support of nine Republicans.

The version approved by the U.S. Senate Rules and Administration Committee would also reinforce the vice president's role as ceremonial and increase the number of Congress members needed to object to a state's electoral college votes.

The current standard is one House member and one senator. The Senate bill would increase that to one-fifth of members from both chambers, while the House version proposes increasing it to at least one-third of both chambers.

Same-sex marriage bill: The U.S. House voted 267-157 in July to pass a bill that would ensure same-sex couples' marriages are recognized, if the U.S. Supreme Court were to overturn the 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges opinion that legalized same-sex marriages nationwide.

The bill has been stalled in the U.S. Senate ever since.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer was on track to bring it up before the midterm elections, but held off at the request of Sens. Tammy Baldwin, a Wisconsin Democrat; Susan Collins, a Maine Republican; Rob Portman, an Ohio Republican; Kyrsten Sinema, an Arizona Democrat; and Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican.

"We are confident that when our legislation comes to the Senate floor for a vote, we will have the bipartisan support to pass the bill," they wrote in a September letter explaining the delay.

The bill also protects interracial marriages in the event the U.S. Supreme Court were to overturn the 1967 Loving v. Virginia decision that voided state laws making it illegal for interracial couples to marry.

Leadership elections: A tried and true tradition of every lame-duck session is electing, or more often reelection of, leaders in the U.S. House and U.S. Senate.

The biggest question mark on Capitol Hill remains whether Speaker Nancy Pelosi will step aside from the role of top House Democrat, clearing the way for another lawmaker to take over that position.

Pelosi agreed during the last round of leadership elections that this would be her last term in that role,

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though an attack on her husband earlier this month inside their San Francisco home might have changed her calculations about her political future.

"I have to say my decision will be affected about what happened the last week or two," she said on CNN's "Anderson Cooper 360" this week when asked whether she had made a final decision about stepping aside or staying on.

House Republicans were on track to elect California Rep. Kevin McCarthy as their next speaker and Louisiana Rep. Steve Scalise as their leader next week, but it's unclear if that could change given the undecided nature of the midterm elections.

Indiana Rep. Jim Banks and Minnesota Rep. Tom Emmer are competing for the role of Republican whip — a job that could be especially demanding if the GOP continues on the path to an especially narrow majority. Whoever wins that title will be tasked with ensuring at least 218 members of the party stay in line on what will amount to hundreds of votes over two years, an unenviable task.

In the U.S. Senate, party leadership likely won't change.

New York Sen. Chuck Schumer is expected to continue on as Democratic leader with Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin as whip. Kentucky Sen. Mitch McConnell will likely stay on as Republican leader with South Dakota Sen. John Thune as whip.

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, however, called for a delay to his party's elections next week, tweeting Friday that, "First we need to make sure that those who want to lead us are genuinely committed to fighting for the priorities & values of the working Americans (of every background) who gave us big wins in states like #Florida.



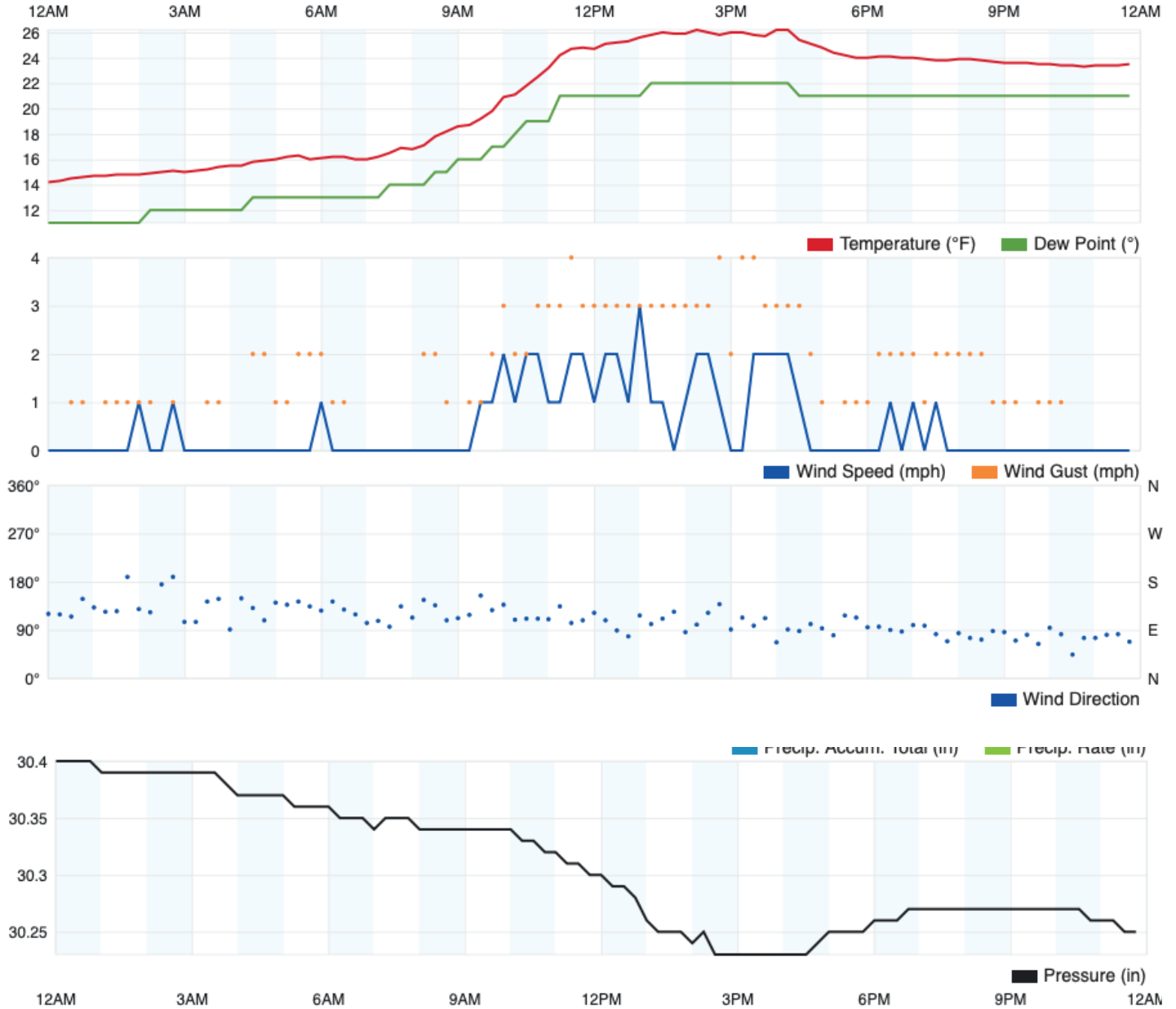
JENNIFER SHUTT  

Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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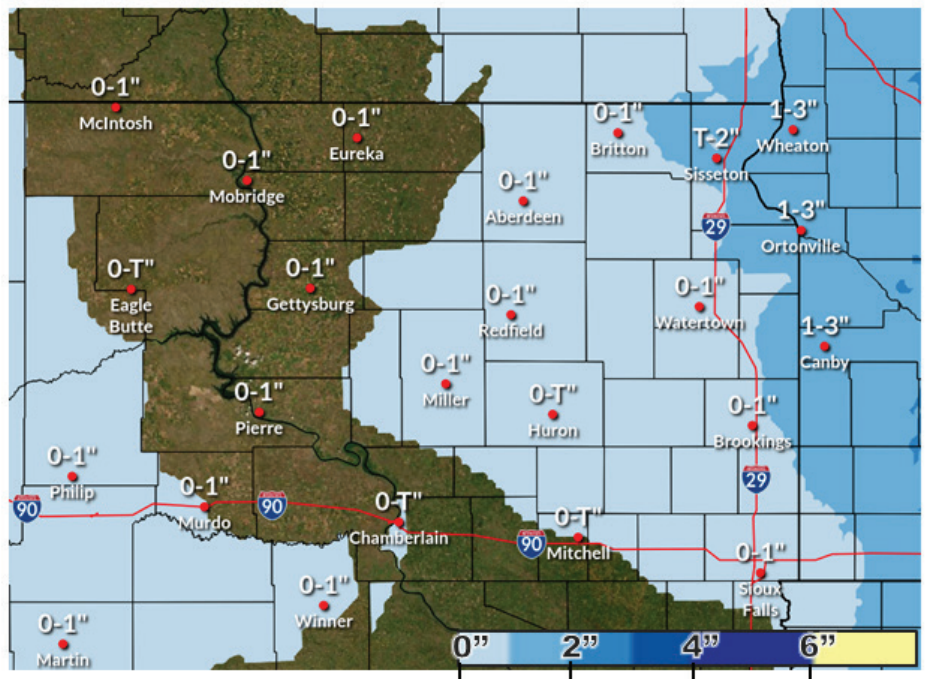
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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
 20%	 40%	 20%			 20%	
Slight Chance Snow then Mostly Cloudy	Cloudy then Chance Snow	Slight Chance Snow	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Snow	Mostly Cloudy and Blustery
High: 25 °F	Low: 14 °F	High: 24 °F	Low: 6 °F	High: 23 °F	Low: 9 °F	High: 16 °F

Extended Period of Snow

- First round of snow ending this morning
- A couple more rounds of snow expected mainly across northeastern SD and west central MN
 - Monday overnight into Tuesday afternoon
 - Wednesday overnight into Thursday evening
- Slick roads may result even in areas with very light accumulations due to cold roadways

Expected Snowfall From 6am Mon Through 6am Thu



Updated: 11/14/2022 5:41 AM Central

Periods of light snow through Thursday evening will affect mainly northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota. Be cautious if traveling as roadways may become slick. Meanwhile, the cold is expected to remain through the weekend.

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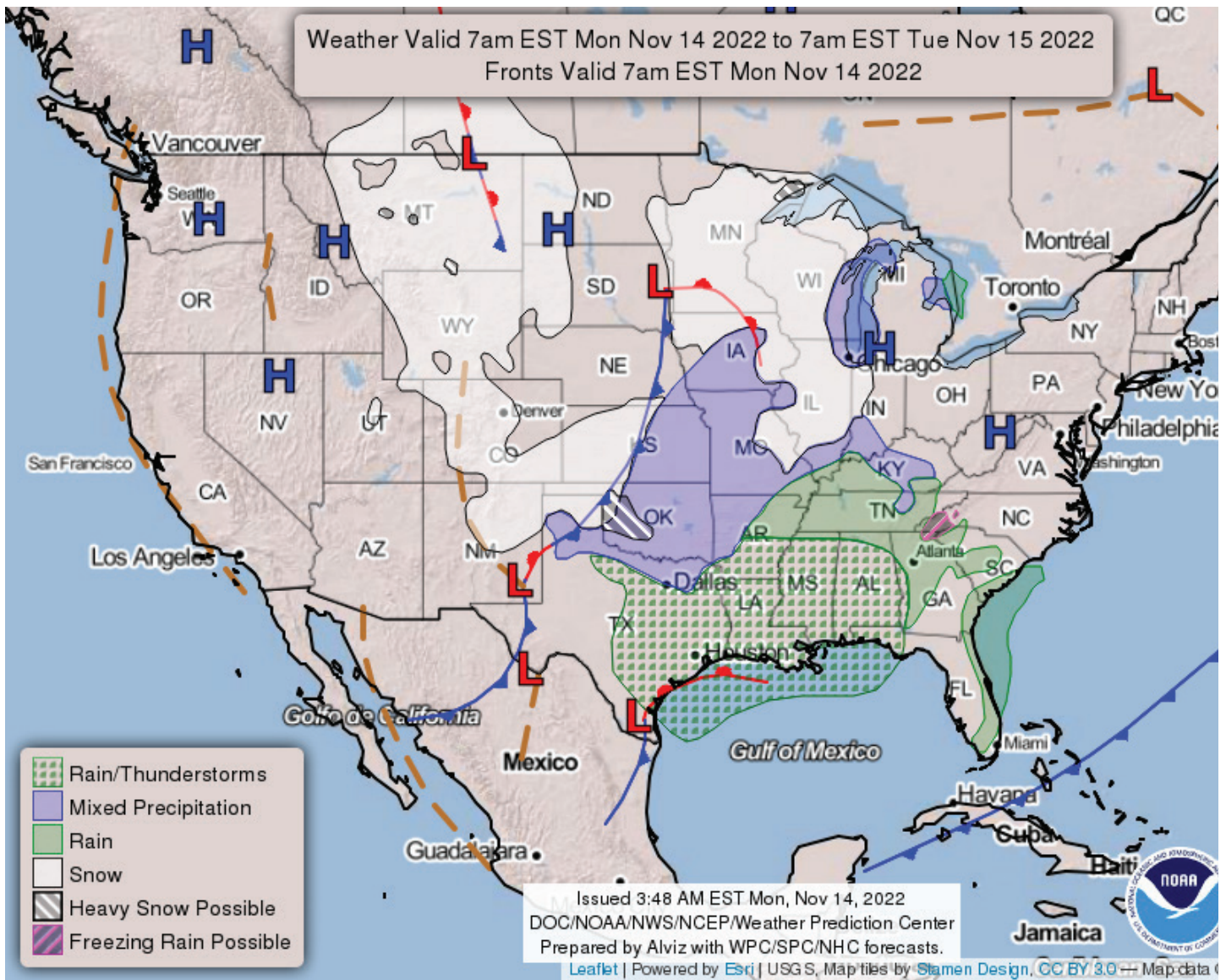
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 26 °F at 4:06 PM
Low Temp: 14 °F at 12:00 AM
Wind: 4 mph at 11:20 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 36 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 68 in 2015
Record Low: -17 in 2014
Average High: 43°F
Average Low: 20°F
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.40
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 20.87
Precip Year to Date: 16.50
Sunset Tonight: 5:05:03 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:30:02 AM



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Today in Weather History

November 14, 1997: A low-pressure system produced snow and blowing snow, creating near whiteout conditions at times. Six inches of snow fell in the Sisseton foothills by Friday evening in Roberts and eastern Marshall Counties. Strong north winds gusting to near 35 mph, combined with the snow, caused visibilities to fall below one-half mile at times over a large portion of northeast South Dakota during the evening of the 13th and through the 14th. Classes were canceled around Summit because of near-whiteout conditions, while classes were delayed for two hours in Britton. Interstate 29 was closed just north of the Grant County line for a time after a semi-trailer rolled. Some snowfall amounts include; 6.5 inches in Summit; 6.2 inches in Waubay; 6.0 inches in Roscoe; and 5.0 inches in Sisseton and Wilmot.

1921: During the afternoon hours, thunderstorms brought severe hail to portions of Alabama. The hailstones ranged from about the size of buckshot to as large as a baseball. The largest stoned weighed as much as a pound.

1964 - With the help of a fresh three inch cover of snow, the temperature at Ely, NV, dipped to 15 degrees below zero to establish an all-time record low for the month of November. That record of -15 degrees was later equalled on the 19th of November in 1985. (The Weather Channel)

1969: Apollo 12 was launched into a threatening gray sky with ominous cumulus clouds. Pete Conrad's words 43 seconds after liftoff, electrified everyone in the Control Center: "We had a whole bunch of buses drops out," followed by "Where are we going?" and "I just lost the platform." Lightning had stricken the spacecraft. Warning lights were illuminated, and the spacecraft guidance system lost its attitude reference.

1974 - A storm produced 15 inches of snow at the Buffalo, NY, airport, and 30 inches on the south shore of Lake Erie. (David Ludlum)

1986 - An early season cold wave set more than 200 records from the northwestern U.S. to the east coast over a seven day period. For some places it proved to be the coldest weather of the winter season. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987 - The first major snowstorm of the season hit the Southern and Central Rockies, producing 12 inches at the Brian Head ski resort in Utah overnight. Strong and gusty winds associated with the storm reached 52 mph at Ruidoso NM. In the eastern U.S., the temperature at Washington D.C. soared to 68 degrees, just three days after being buried under more than a foot of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A massive storm produced snow and gusty winds in the western U.S., with heavy snow in some of the higher elevations. Winds gusted to 66 mph at Show Low AZ, and Donner Summit, located in the Sierra Nevada Range of California, was buried under 23 inches of snow. Heavy rain soaked parts of California, with 3.19 inches reported at Blue Canyon. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed east of the Rockies. Temperatures reached 70 degrees as far north as New England, and readings in the 80s were reported across the southeast quarter of the nation. Nineteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date. For the second time in the month Dallas/Fort Worth TX equalled their record for November with an afternoon high of 89 degrees. The high of 91 degrees at Waco TX was their warmest of record for so late in the season. Heavy snow blanketed parts of Wyoming overnight, with a foot of snow reported at Cody, and ten inches at Yellowstone Park. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

GOD WORKS

"Do you know what U.N. stands for?" he asked.

"The United Nations," I replied quickly and confidently.

"Not at all," was his reply. "It stands for Unsettled Nations," he informed me.

Then he continued, "Does the Lord care about the condition of the nations of the world? And, if He does care, why doesn't He intervene and make things better?"

"Yes, He cares," I answered. "But we need to see how God has intervened in the past by studying His Word so we can understand what He is doing today."

One nation above all others seems to be the center of God's attention: Israel.

Psalm 105:24 describes what we might call an "explosion of people." "The Lord made His people very fruitful. He made them too numerous for their foes." We have often heard that there is "strength in numbers." Here we see this "in action." As the Israelites grew in numbers, they grew in strength, and they were able to overcome their adversaries.

This "strength in numbers" made the Exodus possible. The historian continues by revealing another fact to us: those "whose hearts He turned to hate His people, and to conspire against His servants," were led by Moses, His servant, and Aaron, His chosen one, to lead them into the land that God had prepared for them. Ultimately, it was the persecution that led them to the Promised Land.

Is God involved in the affairs of nations? Indeed, He is. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord!" We may not see it now, but we will see it when the time is right.

Prayer: May we look to You, Lord, as the only One who can save our nation. May our leaders seek Your guidance. Please help me look more faithfully to you for guidance. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: The Lord made His people very fruitful. He made them too numerous for their foes, whose hearts He turned to hate His people, and to conspire against His servants. Psalm 105:24-25



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

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2022-23 Community Events

- 07/21/2022: Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/22/2022: Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
07/24/2022: Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20
07/27/2022: Golf Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course 11a-1pm
08/05/2022: Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
08/12/2022: GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
No Date Set: Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day 4-5pm GHS Parking Lot
09/10/2022: Lions Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
09/11/2022: 6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm
09/11/2022: Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10 a.m.
09/02-04: Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/01/2022: Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/07/2022: Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/31/2022: Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2022: United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/13/2022: Snow Queen Contest
11/19/2022: Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
11/24/2022 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
12/03/2022 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party at Olive Grove Golf Course
12/10/2022: Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm
01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
07/04/2023 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start (4th of July)
07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)

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News from the Associated Press

Zelenskyy calls liberation of Kherson 'beginning of the end'

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

KHERSON, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed the Russian withdrawal from Kherson as the “beginning of the end of the war” on Monday, as he lauded soldiers and took selfies with them in the recently liberated southern city.

The retaking of Kherson after a grinding offensive that forced Russian to pull back its forces from the city was one of Ukraine’s biggest success so far of the nearly nine-month invasion and a stinging blow to the Kremlin.

Zelenskyy walked the streets of the city Monday, just hours after warning in his nightly video address of booby traps and mines left behind in the city by the Russians before their retreat.

Zelenskyy has previously appeared unexpectedly in other front-line zones at crucial junctures of the war, to support troops and congratulate them for battlefield exploits.

In Kherson, he distributed medals to soldiers Ukrainian troops in a central square and posed for selfies with them.

Video footage also showed him waving to residents who waved at him from an apartment window and yelled “Glory to Ukraine!” The reply “Glory to the heroes!” came back from Zelenskyy’s group, made up of soldiers and others.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Monday refused to comment on Zelenskyy’s visit to Kherson, saying only that “you know that it is the territory of the Russian Federation.”

The liberation of Kherson after a grinding offensive that forced Russian to withdraw its forces from the city was one of Ukraine’s biggest success so far of the nearly nine-month invasion and a stinging blow for the Kremlin.

After the Russian retreat, Ukrainian authorities say they are finding evidence of torture and other atrocities.

In his nightly video address on Sunday, Zelenskyy said without details that “investigators have already documented more than 400 Russian war crimes, and the bodies of both civilians and military personnel have been found.”

“In the Kherson region, the Russian army left behind the same atrocities as in other regions of our country,” he said. “We will find and bring to justice every murderer. Without a doubt.”

The end of Russia’s eight-month occupation of Kherson city has sparked days of celebration, but also exposed a humanitarian emergency, with residents living without power and water and short of food and medicines. Russia still controls about 70% of the wider Kherson region.

Zelenskyy said Russian soldiers who were left behind when their military commanders abandoned the city last week are being detained. He also spoke, again without details, of the “neutralization of saboteurs.”

Ukrainian police have called on residents to help identify people who collaborated with Russian forces.

Zelenskyy urged people in the liberated zone to also be alert for booby traps, saying: “Please, do not forget that the situation in the Kherson region is still very dangerous. First of all, there are mines. Unfortunately, one of our sappers was killed, and four others were injured while clearing mines.”

And he promised that essential services would be restored.

“We are doing everything to restore normal technical capabilities for electricity and water supply as soon as possible,” he said. “We will bring back transport and post. Let’s bring back an ambulance and normal medicine. Of course, the restoration of the work of authorities, the police, and some private companies are already beginning.”

Residents said departing Russian troops plundered the city, carting away loot as they withdrew last week. They also wrecked key infrastructure before retreating across the wide Dnieper River to its east bank.

One Ukrainian official described the situation in Kherson as “a humanitarian catastrophe.”

Reconnecting the electricity supply is the priority, with gas supplies already assured, Kherson regional

governor Yaroslav Yanushevych said.

The Russian pullout marked a triumphant milestone in Ukraine's pushback against Moscow's invasion almost nine months ago. In the past two months, Ukraine's military claimed to have retaken dozens of towns and villages north of the city of Kherson.

Ukraine's liberation of Kherson was the latest in a series of battlefield embarrassments for the Kremlin. It came some six weeks after Russian President Vladimir Putin annexed the Kherson region and three other provinces in southern and eastern Ukraine — in breach of international law — and declared them Russian territory.

Congress faces leaders in flux, big to-do list post-election

By LISA MASCARO and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress is returning to an extremely volatile post-election landscape, with control of the House still undecided, party leadership in flux and a potentially consequential lame-duck session with legislation on gay marriage, Ukraine and government funding.

Newly elected members of Congress arrived for Monday's orientation amid jarring disappointments for Republicans, setting up rocky internal party leadership elections for GOP leader Kevin McCarthy and Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell. Republicans suffered one of the most disappointing midterm outcomes in decades when a mighty red wave forecast for the House never hit.

Democrats performed better than expected, keeping narrow control of the Senate and pressing a long shot race for the House. But they, too, face leadership turmoil as Republicans pick up House seats toward majority control that would threaten Speaker Nancy Pelosi's gavel.

"There are all kinds of ways to exert influence," Pelosi said Sunday, deflecting questions about her future if Democrats lose control of the House. "Speaker has awesome power, but I will always have influence."

It's a changed place on Capitol Hill in the aftermath of the first election since the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection, with the Republican Party split over its ties to former President Donald Trump, Democrats eyeing generational leadership changes, and Biden with just weeks to accomplish goals with guaranteed Democratic control of Washington. Much of the action will be playing out behind closed doors in private caucus meetings.

Against this backdrop, McCarthy has tried to tamp down unrest as he asked his GOP colleagues for their support ahead of Tuesday's closed-door leadership elections, which would put him in line to take the House speaker's gavel from Pelosi, D-Calif., if Republicans flip majority control.

"I will be a listener every bit as much as a Speaker, striving to build consensus from the bottom-up rather than commanding the agenda from the top-down," McCarthy, R-Calif., wrote in a letter to his GOP colleagues.

But McCarthy enters the speaker's race a weakened leader, confronted by his party's losses and demands from his restive right-flank, led by the ultra-conservative House Freedom Caucus and its ties with Trump. The former president backs McCarthy for speaker, but Freedom Caucus lawmakers are calling for elections to be postponed.

"I certainly don't think we should have elections before we have everything counted and know what our numbers are," said Freedom Caucus member Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas.

Among the newly elected lawmakers, Republican Cory Mills, an Army combat veteran who won an open seat in Florida, said: "You've got actual races that haven't been called yet and you want to go out and have leadership votes?"

But Mike Lawler, who delivered a stunning defeat in New York to Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, the chair of the Democrats' campaign committee, said McCarthy has "my full support."

The tumult playing out on Capitol Hill comes as Trump is poised to announce his 2024 bid for the White House on Tuesday. The GOP is torn between those remaining loyal to the former president and those who blame him for the midterm losses and prefer to move on from his "Make America Great Again" brand. Some lawmakers begged off from joining Trump at his Mar-A-Lago club for the announcement because

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of their own work on Capitol Hill.

"The Republican Party has a choice," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Sunday. "I say to the Republican senators and to Leader McConnell, we are willing to work with you to get things done for the American people."

Funding to keep the government running past a Dec. 16 funding deadline, aid for Ukraine and bipartisan legislation that would safeguard same-sex marriages from potential Supreme Court challenges in states where they have been legal are all top priorities in the final weeks of the year.

But McConnell faces his own intraparty turmoil ahead of Wednesday's closed-door leadership race, which his right flank also wants postponed as they review what went wrong in the midterm elections in general and the Georgia race now heading toward a Dec. 6 runoff.

"We need to have serious discussions," said a draft letter led by Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., and signed by a handful of other GOP senators.

Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., put it more bluntly in a tweet: "The old party is dead. Time to bury it. Build something new."

Democrats have pushed their own internal elections off until after Thanksgiving, at which time Pelosi has said she will decide whether she would seek to stay on as party leader.

A younger generation of Democrats has been eager to take the reins in the House once Pelosi and top leaders Steny Hoyer of Maryland and Jim Clyburn of South Carolina decide if they will stay or go.

At the same time, lawmakers are buckling in for a final weekslong legislative sprint of this session — potentially the last chance Biden will have with Democratic control of Congress and monopoly party power in Washington.

On the agenda ahead are must-do bills — most prominently funding to keep the government running or risk a federal shutdown. Conservatives are eager to use the December funding deadline to begin to extract their policy priorities from McCarthy, particularly their promises to slash spending and refuse to raise the nation's debt limit.

The fiscal showdown, also expected to include a round of disaster funding for hurricane-hit Florida and other areas, could be a preview of the what's next in the new year.

The outgoing Congress is also working swiftly to ensure another round of funding for Ukraine to fight Russia, particularly after McCarthy signaled Republicans will refuse to provide a "blank check" for the overseas expenditure.

One top priority of Biden and his party is post-Jan. 6 legislation to modernize the Electoral Count Act, an update to the late 19th century law.

Also a landmark bill that would require recognition of same sex and interracial marriages in states where they are legal has gained support from both parties, amid concerns the Supreme Court could roll back marriage protections. It is promised for a Senate vote after already passing the House.

Legislation helping young immigrants known as Dreamers in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program remain in the U.S. also is under consideration.

Biden, Xi seek to 'manage our differences' in meeting

By SEUNG MIN KIM and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

NUSA DUA, Indonesia (AP) — President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping opened their first in-person meeting Monday since the U.S. president took office nearly two years ago, aiming to "manage" differences between the superpowers as they compete for global influence amid increasing economic and security tensions.

Xi and Biden greeted each other with a handshake at a luxury resort hotel in Indonesia, where they are attending the Group of 20 summit of large economies, before they sat down for what was expected to be a conversation lasting several hours.

"As the leaders of our two nations, we share responsibility, in my view, to show that China and the United States can manage our differences, prevent competition from becoming anything ever near conflict, and

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to find ways to work together on urgent global issues that require our mutual cooperation," Biden said to open the meeting.

Xi said he hoped they would "chart the right course for the China-US relationship" and that he was prepared for a "candid and in-depth exchange of views" with Biden.

Both men entered the highly anticipated meeting with bolstered political standing at home. Democrats triumphantly held onto control of the U.S. Senate, with a chance to boost their ranks by one in a runoff election in Georgia next month, while Xi was awarded a third five-year term in October by the Communist Party's national congress, a break with tradition.

"We have very little misunderstanding," Biden told reporters in Cambodia on Sunday, where he participated in a gathering of southeast Asian nations before leaving for Indonesia. "We just got to figure out where the red lines are and ... what are the most important things to each of us going into the next two years."

Biden added: "His circumstance has changed, to state the obvious, at home." The president said of his own situation: "I know I'm coming in stronger."

White House aides have repeatedly sought to play down any notion of conflict between the two nations and have emphasized that they believe the countries can work in tandem on shared challenges such as climate change and health security.

But relations have grown more strained under successive American administrations, as economic, trade, human rights and security differences have come to the fore.

As president, Biden has repeatedly taken China to task for human rights abuses against the Uyghur people and other ethnic minorities, 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. Chinese officials have largely refrained from public criticism of Russia's war, although Beijing has avoided direct support, such as supplying arms.

Taiwan has emerged as one of the most contentious issues between Washington and Beijing. Multiple times in his presidency, Biden has said the U.S. would defend the island — which China has eyed for eventual unification — in case of a Beijing-led invasion. But administration officials have stressed each time that the U.S.'s "One China" policy has not changed. That policy recognizes the government in Beijing while allowing for informal relations and defense ties with Taipei, and its posture of "strategic ambiguity" over whether it would respond militarily if the island were attacked.

Tensions flared even higher when House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., visited Taiwan in August, prompting China to retaliate with military drills and the firing of ballistic missiles into nearby waters.

The Biden administration also blocked exports of advanced computer chips to China last month — a national security move that bolsters U.S. competition against Beijing. Chinese officials quickly condemned the restrictions.

And though the two men have held five phone or video calls during Biden's presidency, White House officials say those encounters are no substitute for Biden being able to meet Xi in person. That task is all the more important after Xi strengthened his grip on power through the party congress, as lower-level Chinese officials have been unable or unwilling to speak for their leader.

Before the meeting, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning had said China was committed to peaceful coexistence but would firmly defend its sovereignty, security and development interests.

"It is important that the U.S. work together with China to properly manage differences, advance mutually beneficial cooperation, avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation, and bring China-U.S. relations back to the right track of sound and steady development," she said at a daily briefing in Beijing.

Xi has stayed close to home throughout the global COVID-19 pandemic, where he has enforced a "zero-COVID" policy with mass lockdowns that have roiled global supply chains.

He made his first trip outside China since start of the pandemic in September with a stop in Kazakhstan and then onto Uzbekistan to participate in the eight-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organization with Putin and other leaders of the Central Asian security group.

White House officials and their Chinese counterparts have spent weeks negotiating details of the meet-

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ing, which was held at Xi's hotel with translators providing simultaneous interpretation through headsets.

U.S. officials were eager to see how Xi approaches the Biden sit-down after consolidating his position as the unquestioned leader of the state, saying they would wait to assess whether that made him more or less likely to seek out areas of cooperation with the U.S.

Biden and Xi each brought small delegations into the discussion. U.S. officials expected Xi would bring newly elevated government officials and expressed hope that it could lead to more substantive engagements down the line.

Before meeting with Xi, Biden held talks with Indonesian President Joko Widodo, the G-20 host, to announce a range of new development initiatives for the archipelago nation, including investments in climate, security, and education.

Many of Biden's conversations and engagements during a three-country tour — which took him to Egypt and Cambodia before he landed on the island of Bali on Sunday — were, by design, preparing him to meet Xi.

The two men have a history that dates to their service as their country's vice president. The U.S. president has emphasized that he knows Xi well and wants to use the meeting to better understand where they stand.

Biden has tucked references to his conversations with Xi into his remarks as he traveled around the U.S. before the Nov. 8 elections, using the Chinese leader's preference for autocratic governance to make his own case to voters for why democracy should prevail.

The president's view was somewhat validated on the global stage, as White House aides said several world leaders approached Biden during his time in Cambodia — where he was meeting with Asian allies to reassure them of the U.S. commitment to the region in the face of China's assertive actions — to tell him they watched the outcome of the midterm elections closely and that the results were a triumph for democracy.

Indonesian officials: Russian FM Lavrov taken to hospital

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

NUSA DUA, Indonesia (AP) — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was taken to the hospital after suffering a health problem following his arrival for the Group of 20 summit in Bali, multiple Indonesian authorities said Monday.

Russia's top diplomat arrived on the resort island the previous evening ahead of the meeting, which begins Tuesday.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova later denied that Lavrov had been hospitalized but did not address whether he had received treatment.

She posted a video of Lavrov, looking healthy in a T-shirt and shorts, in which he was asked to comment on the report of his treatment.

"They've been writing about our president for 10 years that he's fallen ill. It's a game that is not new in politics," Lavrov says in the video.

Russia's state news agency Tass cited Lavrov as saying, "I'm in the hotel, reading materials for the summit tomorrow."

Lavrov is the highest-ranking Russian official at the gathering, which U.S. President Joe Biden, China's Xi Jinping and other leaders are attending.

Four Indonesian government and medical officials told The Associated Press that Lavrov was receiving treatment at the Sanglah Hospital in the provincial capital, Denpasar.

All of the officials declined to be identified as they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

The hospital did not immediately comment.

Two of the people said Lavrov had been treated for a heart condition.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's attendance at the G-20 had been uncertain until last week, when officials confirmed he would not come and that Russia would be represented by Lavrov instead.

Fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine is expected to be among the issues discussed at the two-day G-20 meeting, which brings together officials from countries representing more than 80% of the world's economic output.

Turkey detains Syrian suspect in bombing that killed 6

By MEHMET GUZEL and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkish police said Monday that they have detained a Syrian woman with suspected links to Kurdish militants and that she confessed to planting a bomb that exploded on a bustling pedestrian avenue in Istanbul, killing six people and wounding several dozen others.

Sunday's explosion occurred on Istiklal Avenue, a popular thoroughfare lined with shops and restaurants that leads to the iconic Taksim Square.

"A little while ago, the person who left the bomb was detained by our Istanbul Police Department teams," Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu announced early on Monday. Police later identified the suspect as Ahlam Albashir, a Syrian national.

At least 46 other people were also detained for questioning, the Istanbul Police Department said in a statement.

Sunday's explosion was a shocking reminder of the anxiety that stalked the Turkish population during years when such attacks were common. The country was hit by a string of deadly bombings between 2015 and 2017, some by the Islamic State group, others by Kurdish militants who seek increased autonomy or independence.

Police said the suspect told them during her interrogation that she had been trained as a "special intelligence officer" by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, as well as the Syrian Kurdish group the Democratic Union Party and its armed wing. She entered Turkey illegally through the Syrian border town of Afrin, according to the police statement.

The suspect would have fled to neighboring Greece if she had not been detained, the interior minister said.

Earlier, Soylu said security forces believe that instructions for the attack came from Kobani, the majority Kurdish city in northern Syria that borders Turkey. He said the attack would be avenged.

"We know what message those who carried out this action want to give us. We got this message," Soylu said. "Don't worry, we will pay them back heavily in return."

Soylu also blamed the United States, saying a condolence message from the White House was akin to "a killer being first to show up at a crime scene." Turkey has been infuriated by U.S. support for Syrian Kurdish groups.

In its condolence message, the White House said it strongly condemned the "act of violence" in Istanbul, adding: "We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our NATO ally (Turkey) in countering terrorism."

Turkish television broadcast footage purporting to show the main suspect being detained at a house where she was allegedly hiding. It said police searching the house also seized large amounts of cash, gold items and a gun.

Police later also released a photograph showing the woman standing between two Turkish flags, in handcuffs.

The minister told reporters that Kurdish militants had allegedly given orders for the main suspect to be killed to avoid evidence being traced back to them.

Soylu said of the 81 people who were hospitalized, 50 had now been discharged. Five of the wounded were in intensive care and two of them were in life-threatening condition, he said. The six who were killed in the blast were members of three families and included children aged 15 and 9.

Istiklal Avenue was reopened to pedestrian traffic at 6 a.m. on Monday after police concluded inspections at the scene. People began leaving carnations at the site of the blast.

Mecid Bal, a 63-year-old kiosk owner said his son was caught up in the blast and called him from the scene.

"Dad, there are dead and wounded lying on the ground. I was crushed when I stood up" to run, Bal

quoted him as saying.

Restaurant worker Emrah Aydinoglu said he was talking on the phone when he heard the explosion.

"I looked out of the window and saw people running," the 22-year-old said. "People were lying on the ground, already visible from the corner of the street (I was in). They were trying to call (for help), whether it was an ambulance or the police. All of them were shrieking and crying."

The PKK has fought an insurgency in Turkey since 1984. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people since then.

Ankara and Washington both consider the PKK a terrorist group but they diverge on the issue of the Syrian Kurdish groups, which have fought against the Islamic State group in Syria.

In recent years, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has led a broad crackdown on the militants as well as on Kurdish lawmakers and activists. Amid skyrocketing inflation and other economic troubles, Erdogan's anti-terrorism campaign is a key rallying point for him ahead of presidential and parliamentary elections next year.

Following the attacks between 2015 and 2017 that left more than 500 civilians and security personnel dead, Turkey launched cross-border military operations into Syria and northern Iraq against Kurdish militants, while also cracking down on Kurdish politicians, journalists and activists at home.

"In nearly six years, we have not experienced a serious terrorist incident like the one we experienced yesterday evening in Istanbul. We are ashamed in front of our nation in this regard," Soylu said.

Turkey's media watchdog imposed restrictions on reporting on Sunday's explosion — a move that bans the use of close-up videos and photos of the blast and its aftermath. The Supreme Council of Radio and Television has imposed similar bans in the past, following both attacks and accidents.

Access to Twitter and other social media sites was also restricted on Sunday.

3 killed, 2 wounded in shooting at University of Virginia

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP) — Three people have been killed and two others were wounded in a shooting late Sunday at the University of Virginia, according to the school's president. Police are searching for a suspect, who remains at large.

The shooting at around 10:30 p.m. Sunday "resulted in three fatalities; two additional victims were injured and are receiving medical care," President Jim Ryan said in a letter to the university community posted on social media.

The university's emergency management issued an alert on Monday night notifying the campus community of an "active attacker firearm." The message warned students to shelter in place following a report of shots fired on Culbreth Road on the campus.

The UVA Police Department posted a notice online saying multiple police agencies including the state police were searching for a suspect who was considered "armed and dangerous."

Ryan's letter confirmed the suspect was still at large.

"This is a message any leader hopes never to have to send, and I am devastated that this violence has visited the University of Virginia," Ryan wrote. "This is a traumatic incident for everyone in our community and we have cancelled classes for today (Monday, Nov. 14.)"

African nations demand more money for removing emissions

By WANJOHI KABUKURU Associated Press

SHARM EL-SHEIKH (AP) — African nations want to increase how much money they receive from schemes that offset greenhouse gas emissions and are looking for ways to address the issue at U.N. climate talks currently underway in Egypt.

Carbon offsets, where polluters can effectively cancel out their emissions by paying into initiatives such as tree-planting, are currently cheaper to purchase in Africa than in many other parts of the world where schemes are more strictly regulated. African nations are looking to the climate talks to get a better price on the 'carbon market' to help achieve their own emissions reductions targets and move toward clean

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energy. The schemes have come under scrutiny by environmental groups who are concerned they are a free pass to keep polluting.

"We should look at carbon trading as an income tool for our developmental agenda," Zambian environment minister Collins Nzovu told The Associated Press. "If we hurry into this market, we may lose our national heritage and give away at a low price that we will regret in future."

In carbon trading, one credit issued equals one ton of carbon dioxide or another greenhouse gas equivalent removed from the atmosphere. The voluntary carbon market, which remains dominant in Africa, has been plagued by integrity and transparency concerns. Africa's market currently sees the continent earning less than \$10 per ton of carbon. Other regions can secure over \$100 for the same amount in some instances.

Still, carbon credit schemes have recorded relative successes in Kenya, Tanzania and Congo.

The Ntakata Mountains Project in Tanzania, for example, has seen local communities now have more money to put in schools, community clinics and infrastructure. Similar success has been reported in Kenya's Mikoko Pamoja project, as well as others dotted around the continent.

But efforts remain to make the industry more regulated, particularly in Africa.

"High-integrity carbon registries, which sustain a supply of high-quality and trustworthy credits that are tradable in the global exchange markets, are critical and will allow African countries to succeed in those processes," said Antonio Pedro, the executive secretary of the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa.

Pedro added that significant support from developed countries, where the demand for such high-quality carbon credits will be required, is essential to regulating markets. But for the market to not push emissions up even further, there would need to be limitations on how companies can use carbon credits.

On Wednesday, U.S. climate envoy John Kerry announced a controversial plan to encourage big businesses to tap into carbon markets, sparking concerns from environmental groups that it would give companies a license to keep emitting at higher rates. Kerry insisted that the credits would be "highly regulated" and there were multiple "guardrails against abuse," including the types of firms able to buy them and how they can be used.

A study released at the U.N. summit on Saturday by the Africa Climate Policy Centre found that the continent stands a chance of limiting global warming to temperatures set in the Paris agreement if the price of a carbon credit is pegged at \$120 per ton of carbon. That would rake in about \$82 billion a year, the report found.

Experts say that for carbon markets to be effective at limiting warming, they have to have credibility.

"Carbon markets need to be cushioned in integrity as they bring benefits to both the investor and the communities. There have been bad experiences in the past. Integrity in carbon markets is key," Pedro said.

G-20 summit casts spotlight on Bali's tourism revival

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

NUSA DUA, Indonesia (AP) — Bali wants the world to know it's back.

Dozens of world leaders and other dignitaries are traveling to the Indonesian island for the G-20 summit, drawing a welcome spotlight on the revival of the tropical destination's vital tourism sector.

Tourism is the main source of income on this idyllic "island of the gods," which is renowned for its tropical beaches, terraced rice paddies, mystical temples and colorful spiritual offerings.

The pandemic hit Bali harder than most places in Indonesia.

Before the pandemic, 6.2 million foreigners arrived in Bali each year. Its lively tourism scene — fueled by hard-partying clubgoers, chilled surfers and spiritual bliss-seekers alike — faded after the first case of COVID-19 was found in Indonesia in March 2020. Restaurants and resorts shut and many workers returned to their villages to try to get by.

Foreign tourist arrivals dropped to only 1 million in 2020, mostly in the first few months of the year, and then to a few dozen in 2021, according to government data. More than 92,000 people employed in tourism lost their jobs and the average occupancy rate of Bali hotels fell below 20%.

The island's economy contracted 9.3% in 2020 from the year before and shrank further in 2021.

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"The coronavirus outbreak has hammered the local economy horribly," said Dewa Made Indra, regional secretary of Bali province. "Bali is the region with the most severe economic contraction."

The island is home to more than 4 million people, who are mainly Hindu in the mostly Muslim archipelago nation.

After closing to all visitors early in the pandemic, Bali reopened to Indonesians from other parts of the country in mid-2020. That helped, but then a surge of cases in July 2021 again emptied the island's normally bustling beaches and streets. Authorities restricted public activities, closed the airport and shuttered all shops, bars, sit-down restaurants, tourist attractions and many other places on the island.

Monkeys deprived of their preferred food source — bananas, peanuts and other goodies given to them by tourists — took to raiding villagers' homes in their search for something tasty.

The island reopened to domestic travelers a month later, in August, but in all of 2021 only 51 foreign tourists visited.

Things are looking much better now. Shops and restaurants in places like Nusa Dua, a resort area where the G-20 meeting is being held, and in other towns like Sanur and Kuta have reopened, though business is slow and many businesses and hotels are still closed or have scaled back operations.

The reopening of Bali's airport to international flights and now the thousands coming for the G-20 summit and other related events have raised hopes for a stronger turnaround, Dewa said.

More than 1.5 million foreign tourists and 3.1 million domestic travelers had visited Bali as of October this year.

Embracing a push toward more sustainable models of tourism, Bali has rolled out a digital nomad visa program, called the "second home visa" and due to take effect in December. It's also among 20 destinations Airbnb recently announced it was partnering with for remote work, also including places in the Caribbean and the Canary Islands.

The recovery will likely take time, even if COVID-19 is kept at bay.

Gede Wirata, who had to lay off most of the 4,000 people working in his hotels, restaurants, clubs and a cruise ship during the worst of the pandemic, found that when it came time to rehire them many had found jobs overseas or in other travel businesses.

The G-20 is a welcome boost. "This is an opportunity for us to rise again from the collapse," he said.

There's a way to go.

"The situation has not yet fully recovered, but whatever the case, life has to go on," said Wayan Willy, who runs a tourist agency in Bali with some friends. Before the pandemic, most of their clients were from overseas. Now it's mostly domestic tourists. But even those are few and far between.

Bali has suffered greatly in the past. At times, the island's majestic volcanos have rumbled to life, at times erupting or belching ash.

The dark cloud of the suicide bombings in Bali's beach town of Kuta that killed 202 mostly foreign tourists in 2002 lingered for years, devastating tourism on the island usually known for its peace and tranquility.

Recent torrential rains brought floods and landslides in some areas, adding to the burdens for communities working to rebuild their tourism businesses.

When the situation started to improve, Yuliani Djajanegara, who runs a business making traditional beauty items like massage oils, natural soaps and aromatherapy products under the brand name Bali Tangi, got back to work.

She had closed her factory in 2020 when orders from hotels, spas and salons in the U.S., Europe, Russia and the Maldives dried up, taking orders for her products from more than 1,000 kilograms (1 ton) to almost nothing.

So far, Djajanegara has rehired 15 of the 60 workers she had been obliged to lay off during the dark days of the pandemic.

She's hopeful, but cautious.

"Tourism in Bali is like a sand castle," Djajanegara said. "It is beautiful, but it can be washed away by the waves."

Israel rushes to protect marine life as Mediterranean warms

By ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

ROSH HANIKRA MARINE RESERVE, Israel (AP) — Between the cliffs and crags of Israel's submerged prehistoric coastline, a Mediterranean ecosystem is surging back to life.

Giant groupers flourish among the rocks, a psychedelic purple nudibranch sea slug clings to an outcrop, and a pair of rays skate along the undisturbed sandy bottom.

Israel is blazing forward with a plan to protect sections of its 118-mile coastline, a measure experts say is crucial to maintain biodiversity and shield ecosystems from humanity. Rosh Hanikra, just south of the Lebanese border, is the centerpiece of this effort, providing what scientists believe can be a blueprint for rescuing seas ravaged by pollution, overfishing and climate change.

Climate change, invasive species and explosive human activity are threatening what remains of the eastern Mediterranean's severely impacted ecosystems. Scientists warn that without protection, remaining marine ecosystems will be devastated.

But there is a glimmer of hope. In recent years Israel has taken steps to better protect critical habitats along its Mediterranean coast, like the Rosh Hanikra Marine Reserve, and researchers say key species have bounced back even after just a few years of protection.

"If we won't maintain the resilience and the functionality of the ocean, it will collapse," said Ruth Yahel, a marine ecologist at Israel's Nature and Parks Authority. Conservationists say the best way to do that is creating zones where human impact is reduced.

Last month, an Associated Press team joined park rangers diving beneath the waves off Rosh Hanikra, which Yahel calls "the jewel in the crown" of Israel's marine protected areas, where commercial fishing, drilling and sewage runoff are prohibited. An underwater canyon and sloping hills — vestiges of the Mediterranean coastline submerged by rising seas at the end of the last Ice Age — provide oases for underwater life to gain a foothold.

Since 2019, Israel has increased these protected areas from roughly 0.3% of its coastal waters to around 4%. Another roughly 4.5% are earmarked for protection.

While those measures fall short of the international target of 10% by 2020, and broader global efforts to protect sea-life have faltered, it shows Israel has started taking the issue more seriously.

Last year, Israel signed on to U.S. President Joe Biden's 30 by 30 initiative of "conserving 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030." Around 24% of Israel's land area is now designated as nature reserves, along with just over 2% of its total maritime territory, including its Exclusive Economic Zone stretching some 200 kilometers beyond its territorial waters. This summer the government declared a fishhook-shaped 175-square-mile (450-square-kilometer) protected area that's home to a deep-sea ecosystem several dozen miles off the coast of Tel Aviv outside its territorial waters.

These protected areas are not just lines on a map. Marine rangers patrol them along Israel's Mediterranean coastline and "protect an ecosystem that is supposed to be less disturbed by humanity," said Eyal Miller, one of the rangers.

But that ambitious target faces major obstacles due to Israel's fast-growing population, limited available land, offshore gas exploitation, commercial fishing and shipping, and military use.

Tamar Zandberg, the country's outgoing environmental protection minister, said a main challenge is Israel's lack of an overarching government strategy concerning the Mediterranean.

"This is a very sensitive ecosystem that can very easily change from a solution to a problem if we don't conserve it," she said, expressing worry that environmental issues have become politicized and that Israel's incoming government may abandon them.

The Israeli government has faced criticism for its climate inaction. Dov Khenin, head of the Israel Climate Forum, recently summed up a 2021 state watchdog report on Israel's climate policies as "setting low targets and not meeting them." Just 8.2% of Israel's energy was produced from renewable resources in 2021, with the bulk of production coming from newly exploited natural gas reserves off its Mediterranean

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coastline, the Electricity Authority said.

The Mideast as a whole is expected to be heavily affected as global temperatures rise, and the eastern Mediterranean is no exception. It is warming faster than most other bodies of water around the globe, putting its already heavily battered ecosystems at risk.

"We are like the canary in the coal mine for what might happen to the West and North as the climate keeps changing and water keeps warming," said Gil Rilov, marine biologist at Israel's Oceanographic and Limnological Research institute.

Israel's coastal waters are home to dozens of invasive species, from venomous lionfish and algae-marauding rabbitfish to enormous swarms of jellyfish, many of which originated in tropical waters and migrated to the Mediterranean through the Suez Canal.

"It's a complexity of conditions that the marine reserve mitigates by giving extra protection from human activity," said Yahel of the parks authority.

Yahel and her colleagues have conducted biomass surveys every other year since 2015 to gauge how effective the protected areas are. She says the zones have shown their effectiveness.

Algae, sponges and other invertebrates are all proliferating in the reserves, and commercial fish species like groupers have three times the biomass of those in unprotected waters. They're bigger, there are more of them, and as predators near the top of the food chain it's a sign of a healthy ecosystem, she said.

Not everyone is pleased by Israel's growing maritime protected areas, especially its dwindling number of commercial fishermen. Israel severely tightened regulations on its fishing industry in 2016, including a fishing ban during the spring spawning season and the use of bottom trawlers that destroy seafloor habitats.

Nir Froyman, head of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the Agriculture Ministry, said the measures were aimed at ensuring long-term sustainability.

But many fishermen see it as yet another step by the government to curtail their livelihood.

"It's forbidden to fish, but it's allowed to lay infrastructure for the gas rigs and for oil ships and polluters to enter the marine reserves," said Sami Ali, spokesman for the Israel Fisherman's Union. "There's an inherent contradiction here."

His organization represents Israel's 900 commercial fishermen, including those in the village of Jisr al-Zarka, 20 miles (33 kilometers) south of Haifa, where a dozen small boats bobbed offshore as a giant gas rig loomed.

Ali decried what he called hypocrisy, saying the environmental damage caused by fishermen is a drop in the ocean "compared to those polluting monstrosities," pointing at the gas platform.

"The truth is that we overfished our oceans," said Yahel, looking out over the waves in Rosh Hanikra. "If we won't allocate big chunks of area in order to protect it, we will lose the entire wonderful ecosystem of the sea."

McCaffrey's TD, stout D lead 49ers past Chargers 22-16

By JOSH DUBOW AP Pro Football Writer

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) — For all the talk of how dynamic San Francisco's offense could look with Christian McCaffrey and Deebo Samuel, it was the 49ers defense that once again led the way.

McCaffrey ran for the go-ahead touchdown with 7:54 to play, and the Niners pitched a second-half shutout to beat the Los Angeles Chargers 22-16 Sunday night in their first game back from a bye week.

"I was proud of our team today," coach Kyle Shanahan said. "I want to play better. I want to blow people out. I want to score every time we go. ... Those guys are tough to get in the end zone against and they did that to us today. But we still found a way to win."

The Niners (5-4) returned from the midseason break as healthy as they've been all season on offense and with hopes of making a second-half run. Their performance against the short-handed Chargers (5-4) was a slog at times but proved to be just enough to come out on top.

San Francisco fell behind by 10 points in the second quarter before rallying. Jimmy Garoppolo scored on a 1-yard sneak in the second quarter and then made the biggest play when he hit Brandon Aiyuk on

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a 24-yard pass on third-and-10 from the Chargers 26 midway through the fourth quarter.

McCaffrey ran it in on the next play and has now accounted for four touchdowns in three games since arriving from Carolina in a midseason trade.

Garoppolo went 19 for 28 for 240 yards while San Francisco relied heavily on the ground game, rushing 41 times for 157 yards, and defense.

"There's different ways to win this league," Garoppolo said. "We definitely made it hard on ourselves, that's for sure. But a lot of resilient guys, a lot of mature guys. ... It wasn't pretty early on and they were doing some things that gave us trouble, but we stuck with it."

Justin Herbert went 21 for 35 for 196 yards with a touchdown pass for the Chargers, who were playing without both starting tackles and receivers.

After scoring a touchdown on their opening possession, the Chargers managed just three field goals — two on drives that started in Niners territory — the rest of the way against a stout San Francisco defense.

"They did a good job against the run in the second half," coach Brandon Staley said. "We couldn't get anything going in the run game, and in the passing game it was tight. The rush was coming, and there wasn't a lot of air in the second and third level to take advantage of."

The Chargers failed on two late chances, They took over at their 1 with 2:03 to play but turned it over on downs when Herbert's pass on fourth-and-3 from his own 8 went off Joshua Palmer's hands for an incompletion.

After holding San Francisco to a field goal, Herbert got another chance with 53 seconds to go but was intercepted by Talanoa Hufanga on the first play to seal the game.

"It didn't go our way today," Herbert said. "Unfortunately we fell short."

San Francisco held the opposition scoreless in the second half for the second straight game after allowing 44 points to Kansas City in Week 8.

"We know that we're one of the best defenses in the league," linebacker Fred Warner said. "We've shown that throughout the season. One bad game doesn't define you."

FAST START

The Chargers flipped the script from their recent games, when they became the first team since 1988 to trail by at least 10 points following the first quarter in four straight outings. Herbert completed all four passes on the opening drive, capped by a 32-yard TD strike to DeAndre Carter.

Los Angeles then held the Niners to a field goal after a drive inside the 10 and led 7-3 after one.

EJECTED

Niners linebacker Dre Greenlaw was ejected late in the second quarter when he delivered a helmet-to-helmet hit on Herbert. Herbert was forced to leave the game to be checked for a concussion.

"It blew my mind," Shanahan said of the ejection.

Chase Daniel came in for the final three plays of the half. The Chargers' drive stalled and they settled for a field goal that made it 16-10. Herbert was cleared and returned at the start of the second half.

INJURIES

Chargers: DL Otito Ogbornia (knee) and TE Gerald Everett (groin) left in the first half and didn't return. ... DL Christian Covington (pectoral) left in the fourth quarter.

49ers: WR Danny Gray rolled his ankle in warmups and didn't play.

UP NEXT

Chargers: Host Kansas City next Sunday night.

49ers: Play Arizona in Mexico City on Monday, Nov. 21.

Musk touches on Twitter criticism, workload at G-20 forum

By ADAM SCHRECK Associated Press

NUSA DUA, Indonesia (AP) — It's not easy being Elon Musk.

That was the message the new Twitter owner and billionaire head of Tesla and SpaceX had for younger people who might seek to emulate his entrepreneurial success.

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"Be careful what you wish for," Musk told a business forum in Bali on Monday when asked what an up-and-coming "Elon Musk of the East" should focus on.

"I'm not sure how many people would actually like to be me. They would like to be what they imagine being me, which is not the same," he continued. "I mean, the amount that I torture myself, is the next level, frankly."

Musk was speaking at the B-20 business forum ahead of a summit of the Group of 20 leading economies taking place on the Indonesian resort island. He joined the conference by video link weeks after completing his heavily scrutinized takeover of Twitter.

He had been expected to attend the event in person, but Indonesian government minister Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, who's responsible for coordinating preparations for the summit, said Musk could not attend because he's preparing for a court case later in the week.

He's got plenty else to keep himself busy.

"My workload has recently increased quite a lot," he said with a chuckle in an apparent reference to the Twitter deal. "I mean, oh, man. I have too much work on my plate, that is for sure."

The businessman appeared in a darkened room, saying there had been a power cut just before he connected.

His face, projected on a large screen over the summit hall, appeared to glow red as it was reflected in what he said was candlelight – a visage he noted was "so bizarre."

While Musk was among the most anticipated speakers at the business forum, his remarks broke little new ground. Only the moderator was able to ask questions.

The Tesla chief executive said the electric carmaker would consider making a much cheaper model when asked about lower-cost options for developing countries like India and G-20 host Indonesia.

"We do think that making a much more affordable vehicle would make a lot of sense and we should do something," he said.

Musk also reiterated a desire to significantly boost the amount and length of Twitter's video offerings, and share revenue with people producing the content, though he didn't provide specifics.

He bought Twitter for \$44 billion last month and quickly dismissed the company's board of directors and top executives.

He laid off much of the rest of the company's full-time workforce by email on Nov. 4 and is now eliminating the jobs of outsourced contractors who are tasked with fighting misinformation and other harmful content.

Musk has vowed to ease restrictions on what users can say on the platform.

He's reaped a heap of complaints — much on Twitter itself — and has tried to reassure companies that advertise on the platform and others that it won't damage their brands by associating them with harmful content.

In his appearance Monday, Musk acknowledged the criticism.

"There's no way to make everyone happy, that's for sure," he said.

Across the US, a return to democratic order. Will it last?

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — There was no violence. Many candidates who denied the legitimacy of previous elections lost and quietly conceded. And few listened when former President Donald Trump tried to stoke baseless allegations of electoral fraud.

For a moment, at least, there's a sense of normalcy in the U.S. The extremism that has consumed political discourse for much of the last two years has been replaced by something resembling traditional democratic order.

The post-election narrative was instead focused on each party's electoral fate: Republicans were disappointed that sweeping victories didn't materialize, while relieved Democrats braced for the possibility of a slim House GOP majority. At least for now, the serious threats that loomed over democracy heading into Election Day — domestic extremist violence, voter intimidation and Republican refusal to respect election

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outcomes — did not materialize in any pervasive way.

"It was a good day, I think, for democracy," President Joe Biden said, even as he acknowledged his party might lose one chamber of Congress.

New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu, a Republican, said midterm voters were concerned about Biden's leadership but that they had a more urgent message: "Fix policy later, fix crazy now," he told CNN.

Yet the "crazy" that consumed Sununu's party this fall still looms.

Even as many GOP leaders blame Trump for elevating weak and extreme candidates who struggled, the former president sought to undermine the midterm results from his low-profile social media platform. Trump posted no fewer than 20 messages since Tuesday afternoon raising the false prospect of electoral fraud in the 2022 election, increasingly focusing on Nevada and Arizona as vote counting there continued into the weekend.

His expected announcement on Tuesday of a third presidential campaign could give Trump another high-profile platform to advance lies about the election.

Of the high-profile candidates on the 2022 ballot, only Arizona's Republican candidate for governor, Kari Lake, has been aggressive in promoting Trump's unfounded concerns about the extended vote-counting process, which is typical in some states. Lake is locked in a tight race against Democrat Katie Hobbs that hasn't been called.

In Pennsylvania, the Trump-backed candidate for governor, Doug Mastriano, was soundly defeated. Mastriano's senior legal adviser, Jenna Ellis, a former Trump aide, stated unequivocally there was no sign of serious voting irregularity.

"There isn't this kind of concern like we had in 2020," Ellis said on her podcast. "We can't just say, 'Oh, my gosh, everything was stolen.' I mean, that's ridiculous for this election."

And in Michigan, Trump-backed Republican Tudor Dixon, a leading 2020 election denier, quickly conceded to Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer after The Associated Press called the race.

A leading progressive, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who has raised concerns about far-right threats to democracy since before his own 2020 presidential bid, suggested that the GOP has begun to act more rationally.

"I think that a number of Republicans now understand that Trump's desire to undermine American democracy is not only wrong, but it is bad politics," Sanders told the AP. "For all of those people who want to maintain the lies that Trump actually won in 2020, Tuesday was a bad day for them and a good day for the rest of the American people."

Indeed, across the country, so-called election deniers lost some of the nation's most important races.

Just one of 14 self-described "America First" secretary of state candidates, Indiana's Diego Morales, won his race. The group of would-be chief election officials, which included candidates in swing states Arizona, Michigan and Nevada, was defined by Trump's baseless claims that the 2020 election was stolen. Candidates who embraced such beliefs also lost races for governor in the Midwestern battlegrounds of Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin and in the Northeastern battleground of Pennsylvania.

Republicans who denied the legitimacy of the last election did prevail in Senate contests in North Carolina and Ohio. In Georgia, Republican Brian Kemp won reelection outright after fighting Trump's conspiracy theories, but Senate candidate Herschel Walker, who has promoted lies about the last election, proceeded to a runoff election in December.

Before Election Day, NAACP President Derrick Johnson said he was "extremely concerned" that Black people would be disenfranchised by voter intimidation or other voter suppression tactics — especially as hundreds of pro-Trump activists signed up to serve as GOP election watchers across the country.

U.S. intelligence agencies issued a bulletin less than two weeks before the election warning of a heightened threat of domestic violent extremism that might target elected officials, election workers or voting places.

But days after polls closed, Johnson said the voting process largely went well. He noted, however, that it's impossible to know whether the threat of intimidation or violence may have had a "chilling effect" on voter participation.

"It was frustrating that we have to operate in our democracy from a fear posture," Johnson said. "We

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should be making it easier to vote.”

Meanwhile, world leaders noted the relatively smooth election in discussions with Biden during a weekend summit in southeast Asia. National security adviser Jake Sullivan said the outcome established “a strong position for him on the international stage.”

“I would say one theme that emerged over the course of the two days was the theme about the strength of American democracy and what this election said about American democracy,” Sullivan told reporters aboard Air Force One. “So, the president feels very good about — obviously, about the results.”

On Election Day, Trump tried and failed to sow disorder in multiple states — especially in regions with large minority populations.

Trump posted a message on social media Tuesday afternoon falsely claiming that voters were being refused the right to vote in Detroit. “Protest, Protest, Protest!” the former president wrote.

The message inspired no protests or even visible tension outside the Detroit convention center where votes were being counted. Four years earlier, scores of Trump supporters screamed and beat on the glass during the tabulation process.

At Milwaukee’s central count facility, several election observers heckled election commission members as roughly 250 workers tabulated the city’s absentee ballots Tuesday evening. Republican Commissioner Doug Haag, who stood witness as the flash drives with vote totals were sealed in envelopes, was among those who scolded the hecklers. They quieted down after receiving a final warning and were allowed to stay for the remainder of the process.

In Arizona’s pivotal Maricopa County, there were calls early on from far-right groups, including some known to attract Proud Boys, Oath Keepers and other extremists, for protests in front of the building where the ballots were being counted to demand a hand count of the vote. Police responded with a heavy presence on Election Day, bringing in mounted officers and helicopters. But not even a handful of protesters showed up. Four years earlier, a large group of armed protesters gathered outside the same tabulation center.

And in Nevada, local officials were prepared for disorder, but bad weather more than voter intimidation marked Election Day.

In populous Clark County, a Democratic stronghold, one man walked into a polling place and raised his voice at poll workers, saying the machines were rigged, according to the Clark County School District Police Department. Poll workers told him to quiet down before he walked outside, where he tried to pull down the “vote here” sign.

In the Reno, Nevada, area, where voters braved snow and ice on Election Day, Washoe County interim registrar Jamie Rodriguez said there was only one case of voter intimidation. Two men threatened poll workers and were “aggressive” toward voters, before a poll manager escorted them out. The Washoe County Sheriff’s Office said it was investigating.

“It was a lot of comments about them not being patriots, not doing the right thing,” Rodriguez said.

Flying home for the holidays will cost you more this year

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

People still looking to book trips home to visit family or take a vacation during the holidays need to act fast and prepare for sticker shock.

Airline executives say that based on bookings, they expect huge demand for flights over Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s. Travel experts say the best deals for airfares and hotels are already gone.

On social media, plenty of travelers think they are being gouged. It’s an understandable sentiment when government data shows that airfares in October were up 43% from a year earlier, and U.S. airlines reported a combined profit of more than \$2.4 billion in the third quarter.

Part of the reason for high fares is that airlines are still operating fewer flights than in 2019 even though passenger numbers are nearly back to pre-pandemic levels.

“Fewer flights and more people looking to head home or take vacation for the holidays means two things: Prices will be higher, and we will see flights sell out for both holidays,” says Holly Berg, chief economist

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for travel-data provider Hopper.

Yulia Parr knows exactly what Berg is talking about. The Annandale, Virginia, woman struggled to find a reasonably priced flight home for her young son, who is spending Thanksgiving with his grandmother in Texas while Parr visits her husband, who is on active military duty in California. She finally found a \$250 one-way ticket on Southwest, but it's not until the Tuesday after the holiday.

Parr figures she waited too long to book a flight.

"My husband's kids are flying home for Christmas," she said. "Those tickets were bought long ago, so they're not too bad."

Prices for air travel and lodging usually rise heading into the holidays, and it happened earlier this year. That is leading some travelers in Europe to book shorter trips, according to Axel Hefer, CEO of Germany-based hotel-search company Trivago.

"Hotel prices are up absolutely everywhere," he said. "If you have the same budget or even a lower budget through inflation, and you still want to travel, you just cut out a day."

Hotels are struggling with labor shortages, another cause of higher prices. Glenn Fogel, CEO of Booking Holdings, which owns travel-search sites including Priceline and Kayak, says one hotelier told him he can't fill all his rooms because he doesn't have enough staff.

Rates for car rentals aren't as crazy as they were during much of 2021, when some popular locations ran out of vehicles. Still, the availability of vehicles is tight because the cost of new cars has prevented rental companies from fully rebuilding fleets that they culled early in the pandemic.

U.S. consumers are facing the highest inflation in 40 years, and there is growing concern about a potential recession. That isn't showing up in travel numbers, however.

The number of travelers going through airport checkpoints has recovered to nearly 95% of 2019 traffic, according to Transportation Security Administration figures for October. Travel industry officials say holiday travel might top pre-pandemic levels.

Airlines haven't always done a good job handling the big crowds, even though they have been hiring workers to replace those who left after COVID-19 hit. The rates of canceled and delayed flights rose above pre-pandemic levels this summer, causing airlines to slow down plans to add more flights.

U.S. airlines operated only 84% as many U.S. flights as they did in October 2019, and plan about the same percentage in December, according to travel-data firm Cirium. On average, airlines are using bigger planes with more seats this year, which partly offsets the reduction in flights.

"We are definitely seeing a lot of strength for the holidays," Andrew Nocella, United Airlines' chief commercial officer, said on the company's earnings call in October. "We're approaching the Thanksgiving timeframe, and our bookings are incredibly strong."

Airline executives and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg blamed each other for widespread flight problems over the summer. Airline CEOs say that after hiring more pilots and other workers, they are prepared for the holiday mob.

Travel experts offer tips for saving money and avoiding getting stranded by a canceled flight, although the advice hasn't changed much from previous years.

Be flexible about dates and even destinations, although that's not possible when visiting grandma's house. In a recent search, the cheapest flights from Los Angeles to New York around Christmas were on Christmas Eve and returning New Year's Eve.

Look into discount airlines and alternate airports, but know that smaller airlines have fewer options for rebooking passengers after a flight is canceled.

Fly early in the day to lower your risk of a delay or cancellation. "If something goes wrong, it tends to progress throughout the day — it gets to be a domino effect," says Chuck Thackston, general manager of Airlines Reporting Corp., an intermediary between airlines and travel agents.

There are plenty of theories on the best day of the week to book travel. Thackston says it's Sunday because airlines know that's when many price-conscious consumers are shopping, and carriers tailor offerings for them.

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For the most part, airlines have dodged the accusations of price-gouging that have swirled around oil companies -- which drew another rebuke this week from President Joe Biden -- and other industries.

Accountable US, an advocacy group critical of corporations, linked airline delays and cancellations this summer to job cuts during the pandemic and poor treatment of workers. "But generally, we would say the airline industry is not currently at the same level as big food, oil or retail in terms of gross profiteering," says Jeremy Funk, a spokesman for the group.

Brett Snyder, who runs a travel agency and writes the "Cranky Flier" blog about air travel, says prices are high simply because flights are down from 2019 while demand is booming.

"How is it gouging?" Snyder asks. "They don't want to go (take off) with empty seats, but they also don't want to sell everything for a dollar. It's basic economics."

Travelers are sacrificing to hold down the cost of their trips.

Sheena Hale and her daughter, Krysta Pyle, woke up at 3 a.m. and left their northwestern Indiana home an hour later to make a 6:25 a.m. flight in Chicago last week.

"We are exhausted," Hale said after the plane landed in Dallas, where Krysta was taking part in a cheer competition. "We started early because the early flights were much cheaper. Flights are way too expensive."

They're not going anywhere for Christmas.

"We don't have to travel. We're staying home with family," Hale said.

New Zealand targets cow burps to help reduce global warming

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

PALMERSTON NORTH, New Zealand (AP) — How do you stop a cow from burping?

It might sound like the start of a humorous riddle, but it's the subject of a huge scientific inquiry in New Zealand. And the answer could have profound effects on the health of the planet.

More specifically, the question is how to stop cows, sheep and other farm animals from belching out so much methane, a gas which doesn't last as long as carbon dioxide in the atmosphere but is at least 25 times more potent when it comes to global warming.

Because cows can't readily digest the grass they eat, they ferment it first in multiple stomach compartments, or rumen, a process that releases huge amounts of gas. Every time somebody eats a beef burger or drinks a milkshake, it comes at an environmental cost.

New Zealand scientists are coming up with some surprising solutions that could put a big dent in those emissions. Among the more promising are selective breeding, genetically modified feed, methane inhibitors, and a potential game-changer — a vaccine.

Nothing is off the table, from feeding the animals more seaweed to giving them a kombucha-style probiotic called "Kowbucha." One British company has even developed a wearable harness for cows that oxidizes methane as it's burped out.

In New Zealand, the research has taken on a new urgency. Because farming is central to the economy, about half of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions come from farms, compared to less than 10% in the U.S. New Zealand's 5 million people are outnumbered by 26 million sheep and 10 million cattle.

As part of a push to become carbon neutral, New Zealand's government has promised to reduce methane emissions from farm animals by up to 47% by 2050.

Last month the government announced a plan to begin taxing farmers for animal burps, a world-first move that has angered many farmers. All sides are hoping they might catch a break from science.

Much of the research is taking place at a Palmerston North campus, which some have jokingly taken to calling Gumboot Valley, in a nod to Silicon Valley.

"I don't believe there's any other place that has the breadth of ambition that New Zealand has in terms of the range of technologies being investigated in any one place," said Peter Janssen, a principal scientist at AgResearch, a government-owned company that employs about 900 people.

Underpinning the research are studies indicating that reducing methane doesn't need to harm the animals or affect the quality of the milk or meat. Janssen said the microbes that live in the animals and produce

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methane seem to be opportunistic rather than integral to digestion.

He's been working on developing a vaccine for the past 15 years and has focused intensively on it for the past five years. He said it has the potential to reduce the amount of methane belched by cows by 30% or more.

"I certainly believe it's going to work, because that's the motivation for doing it," he said.

A vaccine would stimulate an animal's immune system to produce antibodies, which would then dampen the output of the methane-producing microbes. One big upside of a vaccine is that it would likely only need to be administered once a year, or even perhaps even once in an animal's lifetime.

Working in a similar way, inhibitors are compounds administered to the animals that directly dampen the methane microbes.

Inhibitors could also reduce methane by at least 30% and perhaps by up to 90%, according to Janssen. The challenge is that the compounds need to be safe for animal consumption and not pass through the meat or milk to humans. Inhibitors must also be regularly administered.

Both inhibitors and vaccines are some years away from being market ready, Janssen said.

But other technologies such as selective breeding, which could reduce methane output by 15%, will be rolled out onto sheep farms as early as next year, Janssen said. A similar program for cows may not be too far behind.

Scientists have for years been testing sheep in chambers to chart differences in how much methane they belch. The low-emitters have been bred and produced low-emitting offspring. Scientists have also been tracking genetic characteristics common to low-emitting animals that make them readily identifiable.

"I think one of the areas that New Zealand scientists, particularly, have made some great progress is in this whole area of animal breeding," said Sinead Leahy, the principal science advisor at the New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre. "And particularly, a lot of research has been done into breeding low emissions sheep."

Another target is the feed that animals eat, which scientists believe has the potential for reducing methane output by 20% to 30%.

At one greenhouse on the campus, scientists are developing genetically modified clover. Visitors must wear booties and medical scrubs and avoid putting down objects to prevent any cross-contamination.

The scientists explain that because New Zealand farm animals eat outside in fields most of the time rather than in barns, methane-reducing feed additives like Bovaer, developed by Dutch company DSM, aren't as useful.

Instead, they are looking to genetically modify the ryegrass and white clover that the New Zealand animals predominantly eat.

With the clover, scientists have found a way to increase tannins, which helps block methane production.

"What this team has done is they've actually identified, through their research, a master switch that switches on condensed tannins in the leaves," said Linda Johnson, a science group manager at AgResearch.

Laboratory analysis indicates the modified clover reduces methane production by 15% to 19%, Johnson said.

The clover program goes hand-in-hand with a ryegrass program.

Richard Scott, an AgResearch senior scientist, said they have been able to increase the oil levels in ryegrass leaves by about 2%, which studies indicate should translate to a 10% drop in methane emissions.

But like the inhibitors and vaccine, the feed program is still some years away from being farm ready. Scientists have completed controlled tests in the U.S. and are planning a bigger field trial in Australia.

However, New Zealand has strict rules that ban most genetically modified crops, a regulatory barrier that the scientists will need to overcome if they are to introduce the modified feed to the nation's farms.

In other research, dairy company Fonterra is trialing its probiotic Kowbucha concoction and British company Zelp is continuing to trial and refine its wearable harnesses. Other trials have indicated that a red seaweed called *Asparagopsis* reduces methane when eaten by cows.

But farmers aren't waiting around for all the research to come to fruition. On the Kaiwaiwai Dairies farm near the town of Featherston, farmer Aidan Bichan said they've been reducing their methane output by

getting more efficient.

He said that includes increasing the milk production from each cow, using less processed feed, and replacing milking cows less frequently.

"At a farm level, we've got to do our bit to help save the planet," Bichan said.

Ukraine war, tensions with China loom over big Bali summit

By ADAM SCHRECK and ELAINE KURTENBACH Associated Press

NUSA DUA, Indonesia (AP) — A showdown between Presidents Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin isn't happening, but fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and growing tensions between China and the West will be at the fore when leaders of the world's biggest economies gather in tropical Bali this week.

The Group of 20 members begin talks on the Indonesian resort island Tuesday under the hopeful theme of "recover together, recover stronger." While Putin is staying away, Biden will meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping and get to know new British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Italy's Giorgia Meloni.

The summit's official priorities of health, sustainable energy and digital transformation are likely to be overshadowed by fears of a sputtering global economy and geopolitical tensions centered on the war in Ukraine.

The nearly 9-month-old conflict has disrupted trade in oil, natural gas and grain, and shifted much of the summit's focus to food and energy security.

The U.S. and allies in Europe and Asia, meanwhile, increasingly are squaring off against a more assertive China, leaving emerging G-20 economies like India, Brazil and host Indonesia to walk a tightrope between bigger powers.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo has tried to bridge rifts within the G-20 over the war in Ukraine. Widodo, also known as Jokowi, became the first Asian leader since the invasion to visit both Russia and Ukraine in the summer.

He invited President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine, not a G-20 member, to join the summit. Zelenskyy is expected to participate online.

"One of the priorities for Jokowi is to ease the tension of war and geopolitical risk," said Bhima Yudhistira, director of the Center of Economic and Law Studies in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta.

Last year's G-20 summit in Rome was the first in-person gathering of members since the pandemic, though the leaders of Russia and China didn't attend.

This year's event is bracketed by the United Nations climate conference in Egypt and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Cambodia, which Biden and some other G-20 leaders are attending, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Thailand right afterward.

The American president vowed to work with Southeast Asian nations on Saturday, saying "we're going to build a better future that we all want to see" in a region where China is working to grow its influence. On Sunday, Biden huddled with the leaders of Japan and South Korea to discuss China and the threat from North Korea.

One question hanging over the Bali summit is whether Russia will agree to extend the U.N. Black Sea Grain Initiative, which is up for renewal Nov. 19.

The July deal allowed major global grain producer Ukraine to resume exports from ports that had been largely blocked for months because of the war. Russia briefly pulled out of the deal late last month only to rejoin it days later.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on Saturday called for more pressure on Russia to extend the deal, saying Moscow must "stop playing hunger games with the world."

As leaders contend with conflicts and geopolitical tensions, they face the risk that efforts to tame inflation will extinguish post-pandemic recoveries or cause debilitating financial crises.

The war's repercussions are being felt from the remotest villages of Asia and Africa to the most modern industries. It has amplified disruptions to energy supplies, shipping and food security, pushing prices sharply higher and complicating efforts to stabilize the world economy after the upheavals of the pandemic.

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United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is urging the G-20 to provide financial help for the developing world.

"My priority in Bali will be to speak up for countries in the Global South that have been battered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate emergency, and now face crises in food, energy and finance — exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and crushing debt," Guterres said.

The International Monetary Fund is forecasting 2.7% global growth in 2023, while private sector economists' estimates are as low as 1.5%, down from about 3% this year, the slowest growth since the oil crisis of the early 1980s.

China has remained somewhat insulated from soaring inflation, mainly because it is struggling to reverse an economic slump that is weighing on global growth.

The Chinese economy, the world's second largest, grew at a 3.9% pace in the latest quarter. But economists say activity is slowing under the pressure of pandemic controls, a crackdown on technology companies and a downturn in the real estate sector.

Forecasters have cut estimates of China's annual economic growth to as low as 3%. That would be less than half of last year's 8.1% and the second lowest in decades.

Chinese President Xi will be coming to the summit emboldened by his appointment to an unusual third term as party chairman, making him China's strongest leader in decades. It's only his second foreign trip since early 2020, following a visit to Central Asia where he met Putin in September.

Biden and Xi will hold their first in-person meeting since Biden became president in January 2021 on the event's sidelines Monday.

The U.S. is at odds with China over a host of issues, including human rights, technology and the future of the self-ruled island of Taiwan. The U.S. sees China as its biggest global competitor, and that rivalry is only likely to grow as Beijing seeks to expand its influence in the years to come.

The European Union is also reassessing its relationship with China as it seeks to reduce its trade dependency on the country.

Biden said he plans to talk with Xi about topics including Taiwan, trade policies and Beijing's relationship with Russia.

"What I want to do ... is lay out what each of our red lines are," Biden said last week.

Many developing economies are caught between fighting inflation and trying to nurse along recoveries from the pandemic. Host Indonesia's economy grew at a 5.7% pace in the last quarter, one of the fastest among G-20 nations.

But growth among resource exporters like Indonesia is forecast to cool as falling prices for oil, coal and other commodities end windfalls from the past year's price boom.

At a time when many countries are struggling to afford imports of oil, gas and food while also meeting debt repayments, pressure is building on those most vulnerable to climate change to double down on shifting to more sustainable energy supplies.

In Bali, the talks are also expected to focus on finding ways to hasten the transition away from coal and other fossil fuels.

The G-20 was founded in 1999 originally as a forum to address economic challenges. It includes Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union. Spain holds a permanent guest seat.

Some observers of the bloc, like Josh Lipsky, senior director of the Atlantic Council's GeoEconomics Center, question whether the G-20 can even function as geopolitical rifts grow.

"I'm skeptical that it can survive long-term in its current format," he said in a briefing last week.

That makes things especially tough on host Indonesia.

"This is not the G-20 they signed up for," Lipsky said. "The last thing they wanted was to be in the middle of this geopolitical fight, this war in Europe, and be the crossroads of it. But that's where they are."

Musk's latest Twitter cuts: Outsourced content moderators

By BARBARA ORTUTAY and MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writers

Twitter's new owner Elon Musk is further gutting the teams that battle misinformation on the social media platform as outsourced moderators learned over the weekend they were out of a job.

Twitter and other big social media firms have relied heavily on contractors to track hate and enforce rules against harmful content.

But many of those content watchdogs have now headed out the door, first when Twitter fired much of its full-time workforce by email on Nov. 4 and now as it moves to eliminate an untold number of contract jobs.

Melissa Ingle, who worked at Twitter as a contractor for more than a year, was one of a number of contractors who said they were terminated Saturday. She said she's concerned that there's going to be an increase in abuse on Twitter with the number of workers leaving.

"I love the platform and I really enjoyed working at the company and trying to make it better. And I'm just really fearful of what's going to slip through the cracks," she said Sunday.

Ingle, a data scientist, said she worked on the data and monitoring arm of Twitter's civic integrity team. Her job involved writing algorithms to find political misinformation on the platform in countries such as the U.S., Brazil, Japan, Argentina and elsewhere.

Ingle said she was "pretty sure I was done for" when she couldn't access her work email Saturday. The notification from the contracting company she'd been hired by came two hours later.

"I'll just be putting my resumes out there and talking to people," she said. "I have two children. And I'm worried about being able to give them a nice Christmas, you know, and just mundane things like that, that are important. I just think it's particularly heartless to do this at this time."

Content-moderation expert Sarah Roberts, an associate professor at the University of California, Los Angeles who worked as a staff researcher at Twitter earlier this year, said she believes at least 3,000 contract workers were fired Saturday night.

Twitter hasn't said how many contract workers it cut. The company hasn't responded to media requests for information since Musk took over.

At Twitter's San Francisco headquarters and other offices, contract workers wore green badges while full-time workers wore blue badges. Contractors did a number of jobs to help keep Twitter running, including engineering and marketing, Roberts said. But it was the huge force of contracted moderators that was "mission critical" to the platform, said Roberts.

Cutting them will have a "tangible impact on the experience of the platform," she said.

Musk promised to loosen speech restrictions when he took over Twitter. But in the early days after Musk bought Twitter for \$44 billion in late October and dismissed its board of directors and top executives, the billionaire Tesla CEO sought to assure civil rights groups and advertisers that the platform could continue tamping down hate and hate-fueled violence.

That message was reiterated by Twitter's then-head of content moderation, Yoel Roth, who tweeted that the Nov. 4 layoffs only affected "15% of our Trust & Safety organization (as opposed to approximately 50% cuts company-wide), with our front-line moderation staff experiencing the least impact."

Roth has since resigned from the company, joining an exodus of high-level leaders who were tasked with privacy protection, cybersecurity and complying with regulations.

Sam Bankman-Fried's downfall sends shockwaves through crypto

By KEN SWEET AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Sam Bankman-Fried received numerous plaudits as he rapidly achieved superstar status as the head of cryptocurrency exchange FTX: the savior of crypto, the newest force in Democratic politics and potentially the world's first trillionaire.

Now the comments about the 30-year-old Bankman-Fried aren't so kind after FTX filed for bankruptcy protection Friday, leaving his investors and customers feeling duped and many others in the crypto world fearing the repercussions. Bankman-Fried himself could face civil or criminal charges.

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"Sam what have you done?," tweeted Sean Ryan Evans, host of the cryptocurrency podcast Bankless, after the bankruptcy filing.

Under Bankman-Fried, FTX quickly grew to be the third-largest exchange by volume. The stunning collapse of this nascent empire has sent tsunami-like waves through the cryptocurrency industry, which has seen a fair share of volatility and turmoil this year, including a sharp decline in price for bitcoin and other digital assets. For some, the events are reminiscent of the domino-like failures of Wall Street firms during the 2008 financial crisis, particularly now that supposedly healthy firms like FTX are failing.

One venture capital fund wrote down investments in FTX worth over \$200 million. The cryptocurrency lender BlockFi paused client withdrawals Friday after FTX sought bankruptcy protection. The Singapore-based exchange Crypto.com saw withdrawals increase this weekend for internal reasons but some of the action could be attributed to raw nerves from FTX.

Bankman-Fried and his company are under investigation by the Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission. The investigations likely center on the possibility that the firm may have used customers' deposits to fund bets at Bankman-Fried's hedge fund, Alameda Research, a violation of U.S. securities law.

"This is the direct result of a rogue actor breaking every single basic rule of fiscal responsibility," said Patrick Hillman, chief strategy officer at Binance, FTX's biggest competitor. Early last week Binance appeared ready to step in to bail out FTX, but backed away after a review of FTX's books.

The ultimate impact of FTX's bankruptcy is uncertain, but its failure will likely result in the destruction of billions of dollars of wealth and even more skepticism for cryptocurrencies at a time when the industry could use a vote of confidence.

"I care because it's retail investors who suffer the most, and because too many people still wrongly associate bitcoin with the scammy 'crypto' space," said Cory Klippsten, CEO of Swan Bitcoin, who for months raised concerns about FTX's business model. Klippsten is publicly enthusiastic about bitcoin but has long had deep skepticism about other parts of the crypto universe.

Bankman-Fried founded FTX in 2019, and it grew rapidly — it was recently valued at \$32 billion. The son of Stanford University professors, who was known to play the video game "League of Legends" during meetings, Bankman-Fried attracted investments from the highest echelons of Silicon Valley.

Sequoia Capital, which invested in Apple, Cisco, Google, Airbnb and YouTube, described their meeting with Bankman-Fried as likely "talking to the world's first trillionaire." Several of Sequoia's partners became enthusiastic about Bankman-Fried following a Zoom meeting in 2021. After several more meetings, Sequoia decided to invest in the company.

"I don't know how I know, I just do. SBF is a winner," wrote Adam Fisher, a business journalist who wrote a profile of Bankman-Fried for the firm, referring to Bankman-Fried by his popular online moniker. The article, published in late September, was removed from Sequoia's website.

Sequoia has written down its \$213 million in investments to zero. A pension fund in Ontario, Canada wrote down its investment to zero as well.

In a terse statement, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Fund said, "Naturally, not all of the investments in this early-stage asset class perform to expectations."

But up until last week, Bankman-Fried was seen as a white knight for the industry. Whenever the crypto industry had one of its crises, Bankman-Fried was the person likely to fly in with a rescue plan. When online trading platform Robinhood was in financial straits earlier this year — collateral damage from the decline in stock and crypto prices — Bankman-Fried jumped in to buy a stake in the company as a sign of support.

When Bankman-Fried bought up the assets of bankrupt crypto firm Voyager Digital for \$1.4 billion this summer, it brought a sense of relief to Voyager account holders, whose assets has been frozen since its own failure. That rescue is now in question.

As king of crypto, his influence was starting to pour into political and popular culture. FTX bought prominent sports sponsorships with Formula Racing and bought the naming rights to an arena in Miami. He pledged to donate \$1 billion toward Democrats this election cycle — his actual donations were in the tens of millions — and prominent politicians like Bill Clinton were invited to speak at FTX conferences. Football

star Tom Brady invested in FTX.

Bankman-Fried had been the subject of some criticism before FTX collapsed. While he largely operated FTX out of U.S. jurisdiction from his headquarters in The Bahamas, Bankman-Fried was increasingly vocal about the need for more regulation of the cryptocurrency industry. Many supporters of crypto oppose government oversight. Now, FTX's collapse may have helped make the case for stricter regulation.

One of those critics was Binance founder and CEO Changpeng Zhao. The feud between the two billionaires spilled out onto Twitter, where Zhao and Bankman-Fried collectively commanded millions of followers. Zhao helped kickstart the withdrawals that doomed FTX when he said Binance would sell its holdings in FTX's crypto token FTT.

"What a s(asterisk)(asterisk)t show ... and it's going to be crypto's fault (instead of one guys's fault)," Zhao wrote on Twitter on Saturday.

Investigation underway over midair crash at Dallas air show

By JUAN A. LOZANO, JOSH FUNK and LM OTERO Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — A national transportation official probing the cause of a midair crash of two historic military planes during an air show that left six people dead said Sunday that one of the key questions for investigators is why the aircraft were seemingly sharing the same space just before impact.

A World War II-era bomber and a fighter plane collided and crashed to the ground in a ball of flames on Saturday, leaving crumpled wreckage in a grassy area inside the Dallas Executive Airport perimeter, about 10 miles (16 kilometers) from the city's downtown. Several videos posted on social media showed the fighter plane flying into the bomber.

"One of the things we would probably most likely be trying to determine is why those aircraft were co-altitude in the same air space at the same time," Michael Graham, a member of the National Transportation Safety Board, said at a news conference.

The crash came three years after the crash of a bomber in Connecticut that killed seven, and amid ongoing concern about the safety of air shows involving older warplanes. The company that owned the planes flying in the Wings Over Dallas show has had other crashes in its more than 60-year history.

The crash claimed six lives, Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins tweeted Sunday, citing the county medical examiner. Authorities are continuing work to identify the victims, he said. Dallas Fire-Rescue said there were no reports of injuries on the ground.

Armin Mizani, the mayor of Keller, Texas, said Terry Barker, a retired pilot who lived in Keller, was in the B-17 bomber that crashed. Mizani said he learned of Barker's death from his family.

Mizani said Barker's death has been difficult for his town of 50,000, where many of the residents know each other.

"It's definitely a big loss in our community," he said. "We're grieving."

Barker was an Army veteran who flew helicopters during his military service. He later worked for American Airlines for 36 years before retiring in 2020, Mizani said.

Maj. Curtis J. Rowe, a member of the Ohio Wing Civil Air Patrol, was a crew chief on the B-17, his brother-in-law Andy Keller told The Associated Press on Sunday. Rowe, of Hilliard, Ohio, did air shows several times a year because he fell in love with WWII aircraft, Keller said.

The Federal Aviation Administration also was going to investigate, officials said. The planes collided and crashed about 1:20 p.m., the FAA said.

Graham said five people were in the B-17 Flying Fortress bomber and a pilot was the only person in the P-63 Kingcobra fighter plane. The aircraft are owned by Commemorative Air Force, the company that put on the air show. The aircraft are flown by highly trained volunteers, often retired pilots, said Hank Coates, president of Commemorative Air Force.

John Cudahy is president of the International Council of Air Shows, a trade group that sets the standards air shows follow and oversees the training of pilots and "air bosses," who serve as the flight controller for

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an event. Cudahy said that typically at air shows there is a Friday rehearsal where the pilots fly through the entire show to practice, so the Saturday show is actually the second time the pilots have flown the show. There are also detailed briefings each day to go over the plan for the air show and cover exactly where each pilot will be and their roles in the show.

"It's still too early to figure out what happened yesterday. I've watched the tape several times and I can't figure it out and I've been doing this for 25 years," Cudahy said.

Investigators will examine the wreckage from both aircraft, conduct interviews of crews present at the air show and obtain pilot training and aircraft maintenance records.

"We'll look at everything that we can and we'll let the evidence basically lead us to the appropriate conclusions. At this point, we will not speculate" on the cause, Graham said.

A preliminary report from the NTSB is expected in four to six weeks, while a final report will take up to 18 months to complete.

Air shows must obtain special waivers from the FAA and all of the pilots have to demonstrate their skills in low flying and other maneuvers used in air shows, said John Cox, a former airline captain with more than 50 years' experience. Cox is also founder of Safety Operating Systems, a company that helps smaller airlines and corporate flight services from around the world with safety planning.

Each air show is overseen by an air boss, Cox said.

"If there's any adjustments that have to be made, it's the air boss that makes those calls and the pilots comply with that," he said. In addition, any pilot with a mechanical problem would announce it to the air boss, he said.

Air shows typically rely on extremely detailed plans, including contingencies for emergencies, Cox said. For example, any pilot who ran into trouble could break out of formation and go to a designated area free of other planes that is identified by a landmark of some kind.

The B-17, a cornerstone of U.S. air power during World War II, is an immense four-engine bomber used in daylight raids against Germany. The Kingcobra, a U.S. fighter plane, was used mostly by Soviet forces during the war. Most B-17s were scrapped at the end of World War II and only a handful remain today, largely featured at museums and air shows, according to Boeing.

The Commemorative Air Force has had previous crashes during its more than 60-year history, including a deadly 1995 crash near Odessa, Texas, involving a B-26 bomber that killed five crewmembers, according to an NTSB report. The plane crashed while practicing for an air show. The NTSB determined that the probable cause was the failure of the pilot to maintain minimum airspeed for flight.

In 2001, two separate West Texas crashes involving planes owned by the group — one in April and one in May — killed three people. In June 2005, two people were killed when a single-engine plane owned by the group crashed in Williamson, Georgia.

The Commemorative Air Force, previously called the Confederate Air Force until members changed its name in 2001 to avoid any association with the Civil War, had been headquartered in Midland, Texas, but relocated to Dallas in 2014.

Wings Over Dallas bills itself as "America's Premier World War II Airshow," according to a website advertising the event. The show was scheduled for Nov. 11-13, Veterans Day weekend, and guests were to see more than 40 World War II-era aircraft. Its Saturday afternoon schedule of flying demonstrations included the "bomber parade" and "fighter escorts" that featured the B-17 and P-63.

Vikings get critical Allen turnovers, stun Bills 33-30 in OT

By JOHN WAWROW AP Sports Writer

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. (AP) — Count out the Vikings all you want. Patrick Peterson, Justin Jefferson and company keep finding ways to rally for victories in the most remarkable and improbable of ways.

Sunday's 33-30 overtime win over the previously AFC-leading Buffalo Bills might have been the most stunning so far.

Peterson intercepted Josh Allen with 1:12 left in overtime to finally end a sloppy, yet thrilling back-and-forth game between two of the NFL's best teams, in which Minnesota rallied from a 17-point second-half deficit.

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"Look at us now. Look at us now. That's all I could say," Peterson said, referring to critics who pointed out the NFC North-leading Vikings' easy schedule.

"We're not trying to prove them wrong. We just want to continue to prove ourselves right each and every time we step on the field," added Peterson, who had two interceptions. "I believe the largest margin was 13, 14, 17? So if we're not a good football team, how could you come back from that deficit? Look at us now."

The Vikings took advantage of three turnovers by Allen in the fourth quarter and overtime, pulling ahead late in regulation when he mishandled a snap and fumbled in the end zone.

Greg Joseph put the Vikings ahead to stay by hitting a 33-yard field goal with 3:42 left in overtime. The game didn't end until Allen, facing second and 10 at Minnesota's 20, forced a pass over the middle intended for Gabe Davis, only to have Peterson intercept it a few yards into the end zone. Peterson ran out and slid to the turf.

The Vikings also got a heroic performance by Jefferson — who had 10 catches for 193 yards and an incredible, game-saving one-handed grab — and overcame an officiating gaffe.

NFL senior vice president of officiating Walt Anderson said the Bills' hurry-up offense gave replay officials no time to review Davis' 20-yard catch on Buffalo's final drive of regulation, which ended with Tyler Bass tying the game with a 29-yard field goal with 2 seconds left. Replays revealed Davis didn't maintain control and the ball touched the ground on the sideline on what was ruled a catch at the Vikings 40 with 17 seconds remaining, Anderson said.

With its only loss to the undefeated Philadelphia Eagles, Minnesota matched its best record through nine games since 2009 and extended its win streak to seven games — the Vikings' best since an eight-game run 2017.

Minnesota rallied to win when trailing with 2 1/2 minutes or less remaining in regulation for the fifth time this season.

The Bills (6-3) have lost two straight and no longer lead the conference, or even their division. They now trail Miami by a half-game in the AFC East.

And Allen's turnover problems are suddenly the biggest question surrounding the Bills' talented QB. He was questionable to play on Sunday because of an injured throwing elbow. Allen said the injury had nothing to do with the turnovers.

"Losing sucks. It sucks this way even more. Horrendous second half," Allen said. "It comes down to my shoulders and my shoulders only. Making the right decisions, making the right throws. This one's going to suck, watching it."

Allen's first interception on fourth-and-goal from Minnesota's 2 led directly to C.J. Ham scoring on a 3-yard run to cut Buffalo's lead to 27-23 with 4:34 remaining. Buffalo's defense then appeared to have the game won by stopping Vikings quarterback Kirk Cousins for no gain on fourth-and-goal from the half-yard line with 49 seconds remaining.

On the very next play, Allen muffed the snap from center Mitch Morse, and Minnesota linebacker Erik Hendricks dived into the end zone to recover it for a touchdown.

His third and final turnover came with Buffalo facing second-and-10 from Minnesota's 20 — in position for a tying field goal. Allen forced a pass over the middle intended for Davis.

"I'm going to remember this one forever," Vikings first-year coach Kevin O'Connell said. "We just had to continue to trade those blows, body blows, haymakers, and just try to be ready for the next snap, as long as they let us continue to play today."

Cousins threw for 357 yards, and Jefferson had a monster game.

He had a 22-yard touchdown catch on the Vikings' first possession. But the most amazing of his many highlights was a 32-yard grab on fourth-and-18 on Minnesota's final drive of regulation. Jefferson reached back to get one hand on the ball and rip it out of the grasp of Bills defender Cam Lewis.

"It felt like it was unreal. Like a movie," Jefferson said. "The big games, the big moments, when people are looking for you to make a play, that's what I like the most."

Selected with the 2020 first-round pick the Vikings acquired in a trade that sent receiver Stefon Diggs

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to the Bills, Jefferson became the NFL's first player to top 100 yards receiving 20 times in his first three seasons, breaking a tie with Odell Beckham Jr. and former Minnesota great Randy Moss.

Dalvin Cook sparked the Vikings' comeback by scoring on an 81-yard run to cut Buffalo's lead to 27-17 with 1:34 left in the third quarter. Cook finished with 119 yards rushing on 14 carries.

Devin Singletary rushed for two first-quarter TDs as the Bills appeared to take control by building a 24-10 halftime lead.

Failing to protect the ball has been a season-long issue for Allen. He has turnovers in eight of nine outings, with 10 interceptions — two more than he had all last season. He's also lost three fumbles, matching his total last year.

Allen finished 29 of 43 for 330 yards passing and an 11-yard touchdown pass to Davis.

INJURIES

Vikings: CB Akayleb Evans, starting in place of Cameron Dantzler, who was placed on injured reserve, did not return after sustaining a concussion in the first half. ... LT Christian Darrisaw was escorted up the tunnel to be evaluated for a concussion in the fourth quarter.

Bills: LB Tremaine Edmunds did not return after a groin injury in the first half. ... WR Jake Kumerow hurt an ankle, ending his day.

UP NEXT

Vikings: Host Dallas next Sunday.

Bills: Host Cleveland next Sunday.

EXPLAINER: What's happening at bankrupt crypto exchange FTX?

The imploding cryptocurrency trading firm FTX is now short billions of dollars after experiencing the crypto equivalent of a bank run.

The exchange, formerly one of the world's largest, sought bankruptcy protection last week, and its CEO and founder resigned. Hours later, the trading firm said there had been "unauthorized access" and that funds had disappeared. Analysts say hundreds of millions of dollars may have vanished.

The unraveling of the once-giant exchange is sending shockwaves through the industry. Here's a look at the company's collapse so far:

WHY DID FTX GO BANKRUPT?

Customers fled the exchange over fears about whether FTX had sufficient capital, and it agreed to sell itself to rival crypto exchange Binance. But the deal fell through while Binance's due diligence on FTX's balance sheet was still pending.

FTX had valued its assets between \$10 billion to \$50 billion, and listed more than 130 affiliated companies around the world, according to its bankruptcy filing.

FTX and dozens of affiliated companies — including founder Sam Bankman-Fried's hedge fund, Alameda Research — filed the bankruptcy petition in Delaware on Friday.

The week's developments marked a shocking turn of events for Bankman-Fried, who was hailed as somewhat of a savior earlier this year when he helped shore up a number of cryptocurrency companies that ran into financial trouble. He was recently estimated to be worth \$23 billion and has been a prominent political donor to Democrats.

WAS IT HACKED, TOO?

FTX confirmed Saturday there had been unauthorized access to its accounts, hours after the company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

A debate formed on social media about whether the exchange was hacked or a company insider had stolen funds — a possibility that cryptocurrency analysts couldn't rule out.

Exactly how much money is involved is unclear, but analytics firm Elliptic estimated Saturday that \$477 million was missing from the exchange. FTX's new CEO John Ray III said it was switching off the ability to trade or withdraw funds and taking steps to secure customers' assets.

IS MY BITCOIN SAFE?

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People who own bitcoin should be OK if they keep them off exchanges such as FTX that effectively work as a "crypto-casino gambling website," said Cory Klippsten, the CEO of financial services firm Swan Bitcoin.

"Any exchange is a security risk," said Klippsten. Some are more reputable than others, but he said a better option is to take control of your digital assets. "With bitcoin, you have the option to take self-custody and take your coins off the exchange," he said.

IS FTX UNDER INVESTIGATION?

The Royal Bahamas Police Force said Sunday it is investigating FTX, adding to the company's woes. The police force said in a statement Sunday it was working with Bahamas securities regulators to "investigate if any criminal misconduct occurred" involving the exchange, which had moved its headquarters to the Caribbean country last year.

IS ANYONE ELSE INVESTIGATING?

Even before the bankruptcy filing and missing funds, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission began examining FTX to determine whether any criminal activity or securities offenses were committed, according to a person familiar with matter who spoke to The Associated Press last week on condition of anonymity because they could not discuss details of the investigations publicly.

WHAT ARE THE REPERCUSSIONS?

Companies that backed FTX are writing down investments, and the prices of bitcoin and other digital currencies have fallen. Politicians and regulators are calling for stricter oversight of the unwieldy industry. FTX said Saturday that it was moving as many digital assets as can be identified to a new "cold wallet custodian," which is essentially a way of storing assets offline without allowing remote control.

FTX had entered into a number of sports-related deals, some of which are crumbling. The NBA's Miami Heat and Miami-Dade County decided Friday to terminate their relationship with FTX, and will rename the team's arena. Earlier Friday, Mercedes said it would immediately remove FTX logos from its Formula One cars.

Massive turnout in defense of Mexico's electoral authority

By FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Tens of thousands of people packed the Mexican capital's main boulevard Sunday to protest President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's proposal to overhaul the country's electoral authority in the largest demonstration against one of the president's efforts during his nearly four years in office.

The massive turnout was a strong rebuke of the president's assertion that criticism comes only from a relatively small, elite opposition.

Opposition parties and civil society organizations had called on Mexicans to demonstrate in the capital and other cities against proposed electoral reforms that would remake the National Electoral Institute, one of the country's most prized and trusted institutions.

López Obrador sees the institute as beholden to the elite, but critics say his reforms would threaten its independence and make it more political. The initiative includes eliminating state-level electoral offices, cutting public financing of political parties and allowing the public to elect members of the electoral authority rather than the lower chamber of Congress.

It would also reduce the number of legislators in the lower chamber of Congress from 500 to 300 and senators from 128 to 96 by eliminating at-large lawmakers. Those are not directly elected by voters, but appear on party lists and get seats based on their party's proportion of the vote.

The proposal is expected to be discussed in Mexico's Congress in coming weeks, where the president's Morena party and allies hold an advantage.

"I'm already fed up with Andrés Manuel, with so many lies, so much crime," said Alejandra Galán, a 45-year-old manager, as she raised a Mexican flag in the middle of the multitude. "He wants to take the (electoral institute) from us so that eventually it's like Venezuela, Cuba, but we're not going to let him."

Jorge González said such comparisons to authoritarian regimes may seem exaggerated at this point, but "I think it's only a step away. We have to have a clear separation of powers, independent institutions and

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especially the National Electoral Institute.”

The 49-year-old, who works in the finance sector, noted the seven decades of uninterrupted rule by the Institutional Revolutionary Party, which was finally ousted in 2000. “The fear is not having an independent civic institution, where we can really trust in the elections and (instead) going back to a way with an institute where it’s run by a single party.”

Fernando Belaunzarán, one of the promoters of the protest, said 200,000 people participated in the march. Authorities did not confirm this figure.

López Obrador has spent decades battling electoral authorities. He considers himself a victim of electoral fraud on multiple occasions, though it was the National Electoral Institute that confirmed his landslide presidential victory in 2018.

Organizers have said the march is not against López Obrador, but to draw attention to the proposal and to urge lawmakers to vote against it.

López Obrador’s party does not have enough votes to pass the constitutional reform without support from the opposition.

Last week, López Obrador dedicated a good part of his daily morning press conferences to dismissing the promoters of the demonstration, calling them “cretins” and “corrupt,” aiming to trick the people. He defended the proposal as seeking to reduce the electoral authority’s budget and avoiding “electoral fraud.”

While agreeing that some cost savings could be desirable, some analysts worry eliminating the state electoral offices would concentrate power too much at the federal level and sacrifice efficiency.

Selecting members of the Electoral Court and leadership of the institute by popular vote would give the parties more power to pick candidates. The proposal would also reduce members of the institute’s council from 11 to seven.

Patricio Morelos of Monterrey Technological University pointed out that with López Obrador enjoying high popularity and his party controlling the majority of Mexico’s 32 state governments, they would have an advantage if the electoral authority is remade and would likely exert control.

Protester Giovanni Rodrigo, a 44-year-old salaried worker, said López Obrador does not want to let go of power, if it’s not himself in the presidency, he wants to decide who.

“I believe without a doubt he is the best politician that exists today in modern history and that’s why he is the owner of a party” that controls the majority of Mexican states, he said. “It hasn’t been enough. He wants more and more.”

Pelosi holds open option of another term as House Dem leader

By HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With control of the House still hanging in the balance, Speaker Nancy Pelosi stayed mum Sunday on her future plans but said congressional colleagues are urging her to seek another term as Democratic leader following a strong showing in the midterm elections.

Appearing in Sunday news shows, Pelosi said Democrats are “still alive” in their fight to win the chamber and that she will make a decision on whether to run for House leadership in the next couple weeks.

“People are campaigning and that’s a beautiful thing. And I’m not asking anyone for anything,” she said, referring to House Democratic leadership elections set for Nov. 30. “My members are asking me to consider doing that. But, again, let’s just get through the (midterm) election.”

“A great deal is at stake, because we will be in a presidential election,” Pelosi said.

Over the weekend, Democrats clinched control of the Senate following Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto’s victory in Nevada. But in the House, a majority remains unsettled with neither party having yet reached the 218 seats needed to control the 435-member chamber. As of Sunday, Republicans had 212 seats compared to 204 for the Democrats, with 19 races still to be called by The Associated Press.

Some races can take days or even weeks to call.

Pelosi, D-Calif., declined to predict whether her party will retain control of the House, saying she was “disappointed” with four Democratic losses in New York, including by Congressional Campaign Chairman

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Sean Patrick Maloney, which ultimately could make the difference.

"Nonetheless, we still think we have a chance to win this," she said. "Nobody would have ever expected that we would be this close. Well, we expected it."

On the GOP side, House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy is seeking to become House speaker if his party prevails, but the disappointing showing in the midterms has created turmoil for leaders and calls for a new direction. Former President Donald Trump's effect on the 2022 races is also being hotly debated as he prepares to announce another run.

Pelosi on Sunday said she believed that President Joe Biden should run for a second term, citing his legislative accomplishments such as the bipartisan infrastructure law and the Inflation Reduction Act as well as the creation of millions of jobs under his watch.

"He has been a great president and he has a great record to run on," she said.

The 82-year-old Pelosi, who has led Democrats in the House since 2003 and is the first female speaker, had struck a deal with House members to serve for two more terms as leader — or four years — after Democrats won control of the chamber in 2018. But she hasn't announced her plans, nor have her top two deputies, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., and Whip Jim Clyburn, D-S.C. There has been some pressure from younger House members to pass the torch to new leaders.

Pelosi's decision also comes after her husband was attacked late last month in the couple's San Francisco home, suffering a skull fracture and other injuries. The intruder, 42-year-old David DePape, demanded "Where is Nancy?" before striking Paul Pelosi with a hammer. She was in Washington at the time.

Pelosi said Sunday that her husband's recovery will be a "long haul, but he's doing well," though the trauma of the attack was "intensified" by Republicans' "ridiculous, disrespectful attitude." Top Republicans, including Trump, had downplayed the attack and spread misinformation about it.

"It wasn't just the attack. It was the Republican reaction to it, which was disgraceful," she said.

Pelosi said her decision on whether to run again for House leadership will be "about family" but "also my colleagues," citing a need to move forward "in a very unified way" going into a new Congress and the 2024 campaign season. She stressed the opportunities for Democrats that lie ahead.

"Who would have thought two months ago that this red wave would turn into a little tiny trickle, if that at all?" she said. "But we never believed that. We believed."

"There are all kinds of ways to exert influence," Pelosi added. "Speaker has awesome power, but I will always have influence."

Pelosi spoke on CNN's "State of the Union" and ABC's "This Week."

Slovenia elects first woman president in a runoff vote

By DUSAN STOJANOVIC Associated Press

LJUBLJANA, Slovenia (AP) — Liberal rights advocate Natasa Pirc Musar won a runoff Sunday to become Slovenia's first female head of state, and said she will seek to bridge the deep left-right divide in the Alpine nation of 2 million.

With nearly all of the votes counted in the small European Union nation, Pirc Musar led Slovenia's conservative former Foreign Minister Anze Logar by 54% to 46%. Her victory boosts the country's liberal bloc following the center-left coalition victory in Slovenia's parliamentary election in April.

"My first task will be to open a dialogue among all Slovenians," she said as her election team celebrated. "In the democratic election, Slovenians have shown what kind of a country they want."

"All my life I've advocated the same values: democracy, human rights, tolerance. It's time to stop dealing with the past. Many things have to be done in the future," she declared.

Logar conceded defeat, saying he hopes Pirc Musar "will carry out all the promises" that she made during the campaign.

Pirc Musar, 54, will be the first woman to serve as president since Slovenia became independent amid the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991. A prominent lawyer, Pirc Musar had represented former U.S. first lady Melania Trump in copyright and other cases in her native Slovenia.

She trailed Logar in the first round of voting two weeks ago.

But since none of the seven contenders who competed in the first round managed to gather more than 50% support to claim outright victory, Logar and Pirc Musar went to a runoff. Analysts in Slovenia had predicted that centrist and liberal voters would rally behind Pirc Musar.

Pirc Musar will succeed President Borut Pahor, a centrist politician who had already served two terms.

While the presidency is largely ceremonial in Slovenia, the head of state still is seen as a person of authority. Presidents nominate prime ministers and members of the constitutional court, who are then elected in parliament, and appoints members of the anti-corruption commission.

Logar, 46, served under former populist Prime Minister Janez Jansa, who moved Slovenia to the right while in power and faced accusations of undemocratic and divisive policies. Jansa was ousted from power in the parliamentary election in April.

Bomb rocks avenue in heart of Istanbul; 6 dead, dozens hurt

By ZEYNEP BILGINSOY Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — A bomb rocked a bustling pedestrian avenue in the heart of Istanbul on Sunday, killing six people, wounding several dozen and leaving panicked people to flee the fiery blast or huddle in cafes and shops.

Emergency vehicles rushed to the scene on Istiklal Avenue, a popular thoroughfare lined with shops and restaurants that leads to the iconic Taksim Square. In one video posted online, a loud bang could be heard and a flash seen as pedestrians turned and ran away.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called the blast a “treacherous attack” and said its perpetrators would be punished. He did not say who was behind the attack but said it had the “smell of terror” without offering details and also adding that was not certain yet.

Sunday’s explosion was a shocking reminder of the anxiety and safety concerns that stalked the Turkish population during years when such attacks were common. The country was hit by a string of deadly bombings between 2015 and 2017, some by the Islamic State group, others by Kurdish militants who seek increased autonomy or independence.

In recent years, Erdogan has led a broad crackdown on the militants as well as on Kurdish lawmakers and activists. Amid skyrocketing inflation and other economic troubles, Erdogan’s anti-terrorism campaign is a key rallying point for him ahead of presidential and parliamentary elections next year.

Erdogan, who left Sunday for the Group of 20 summit in Indonesia, said six people were killed. Vice President Fuat Oktay put the wounded toll to 81, with two in serious condition, and also said it appeared to be a terrorist attack.

Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag told pro-government broadcaster A Haber that investigators were focusing on a woman who sat on a bench by the scene of the blast for about 40 minutes. The explosion took place just minutes after she left. He said her identity was not yet clear, nor was it clear what group might be behind the attack.

A manager of a restaurant near where the bomb went off said he heard the explosion and saw people running. The dozens of customers inside his restaurant, including women and children, panicked and screamed.

The manager, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the situation, said he closed his restaurant’s shutters, fearing there might be another explosion, and tried to calm the customers down. After about 15 to 25 minutes inside, he saw police on the avenue and organized the customers and his staff to leave in small groups.

Numerous foreign governments offered their condolences, including neighboring Greece with which relations are tense. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said he was “shocked and saddened by the news of the heinous attack.”

Following the attacks between 2015 and 2017 that left more than 500 civilians and security personnel dead, Turkey launched cross-border military operations into Syria and northern Iraq against Kurdish mili-

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tants, while also cracking down on Kurdish politicians, journalists and activists at home.

While the Kurdish militants, known as the PKK, are considered a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union, critics say Erdogan has also used broad terror laws to stifle free speech.

Most recently, Turkey enacted a controversial "disinformation law" that carries a prison sentence of up to three years for social media users who disseminate false information about domestic or international security, public order or health. Critics have said the wording of the article is so vague, it can be used to stamp out dissent.

Police on Sunday said they had identified 25 social media users who shared "provocative content" that could fall afoul of that law.

In another example of the country's restrictions on the press, Turkey's media watchdog also imposed temporary limits on reporting on Sunday's explosion — a move that bans the use of close-up videos and photos of the blast and its aftermath. The Supreme Council of Radio and Television has imposed similar bans in the past, following attacks and accidents.

Access to Twitter and other social media sites was also restricted.

French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday noted that the Istanbul attack came exactly seven years after Islamic State extremists killed 130 people at Paris cafes, the Bataclan theater and France's national stadium.

"On such a symbolic day for our nation, as we are thinking of the victims who fell Nov. 13, 2015, the Turkish people were hit by an attack on their heart, Istanbul," Macron said. "To the Turks: We share your pain. We stand at your side in the fight against terrorism."

Sandy Hook memorial opens nearly 10 years after 26 killed

By DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

NEWTOWN, Conn. (AP) — Bouquets of flowers floated counterclockwise in the waters of the circular memorial pool, passing the engraved names of the 20 first graders and six educators killed a short distance away at Sandy Hook Elementary School nearly 10 years ago.

The long-awaited memorial to the victims officially opened to the public on Sunday, drawing visitors steadily throughout the day. There was no ceremony, in keeping with Newtown's tradition of marking anniversaries and other remembrances of the shooting with quiet reflection.

"It just takes your breath away," said Nora Smith, a resident of nearby Monroe who visited the memorial with her husband, Kevin. "It's something that you hold close to your heart because you feel so bad for these families."

A path from the small parking lot leads down a hill to the focus of the memorial — a manmade water feature with a sycamore tree sprouting from an island in the middle. The 26 names are engraved in the top of a stone wall supporting the pool. A cobblestone walkway surrounds the feature, its outer ring lined with black-eyed Susan flowers. Other paths lead past a variety of plantings on the grounds.

With tree leaves having fallen, the new Sandy Hook School is now visible from the memorial. The new school was built on the same property, but not in the same footprint as the old one, which was torn down after the shooting on Dec. 14, 2012.

Relatives' victims were offered a private tour on Saturday. Others, including Jennifer Hubbard, visited earlier by private appointment. Her daughter, Catherine Violet Hubbard, 6, was one of the children who died in the shooting.

"It took my breath away in the sense that to see Catherine's name and to see what has been created in honor of those that lost ... the families, those that survived — they've lost their innocence," she said. "And the community. We all suffered because of Dec. 14.

"I think that the memorial is so perfectly appointed in honoring and providing a place of contemplation and reflection for a day that really changed the country," said Hubbard, who is now executive director of the Catherine Violet Hubbard Animal Sanctuary in Newtown.

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Nelba Marquez-Greene, whose 6-year-old daughter, Ana Grace Marquez-Greene, died in the shooting, took to Twitter on Saturday to thank those who worked on the memorial planning for years.

"Ten years. A lifetime and a blink," she wrote. "Ana Grace, we used to wait for you to come home. Now you wait for us. Hold on, little one. Hold on."

Several visitors declined to speak with the few reporters present Sunday. Others discussed their thoughts but did not want to give their full names, saying the day was about the victims. Many in Newtown are apprehensive about the rush of media that comes to town every anniversary of the shooting.

"It's a difficult day," said a woman, her eyes filled with tears as she returned to her vehicle after viewing the memorial.

Town police officers occasionally stopped by the site, which also has surveillance cameras.

Visitors get their first view of the memorial in the small parking lot, which overlooks the site. Near the beginning of a path that leads down the hill, a plaque welcomes visitors and includes a quote by former President Barack Obama from when he spoke at a vigil in Newtown two days after the shooting.

"Here in Newtown, I come to offer the love and prayers of a nation," the Obama quote reads. "I am very mindful that mere words cannot match the depths of your sorrow, nor can they heal your wounded hearts.

"I can only hope it helps for you to know that you're not alone in your grief; that our world, too, has been torn apart; that all across this land of ours, we have wept with you," the plaque reads.

Town voters approved \$3.7 million for the cost of the memorial last year. Much of the cost was offset when the State Bond Commission approved giving the town \$2.5 million for the project.

The project faced several challenges after the town created a special commission to oversee memorial planning in the fall of 2013. Some proposed sites were rejected, including one near a hunting club where gunshots could be heard, and officials cut the cost of the project down from \$10 million because of concerns voters would not approve it.

Town officials say the memorial will be open as long as weather permits this winter, and then reopen in the spring.

For Newtown First Selectman Dan Rosenthal, the town's top elected official, the memorial is both a quiet and intense tribute to those killed in the shooting.

"When you're down in the hollow, at the water's edge, it has a very peaceful serenity to it," he said. "You're standing at this water feature and the magnitude ... There's 26 capstones on the water's edge, It's pretty overwhelming."

Climate reshapes life for tenacious gannets on Quebec isle

By CALVIN WOODWARD, LYNN BERRY, CAROLYN KASTER and CHRISTINA LARSON Associated Press PERCE, Quebec (AP) — On Quebec's Bonaventure Island, the ghosts of human habitation from years past and the birds that breed there now in extraordinary numbers tell the same story: of lives lived hard in a place of fairy-tale beauty.

You see this from the tender ages on the family gravestones of islanders who scratched out a living from the late 1700s to when Bonaventure went entirely to the birds a half century ago.

You see it from the tenacious colony of 100,000-plus northern gannets as they plunge into the sea for prey, soar back to their nests and fight at the least provocation, sometimes to the death, for their territory on a plateau high above the waters or in crannies of the cliffs.

Nothing is easy for the gannets. Not in this age of warming seas, competition with trawlers for fish, pollution, supercharged storms and the onset of avian flu.

That's especially so when those perils are combined with their curious compulsion, shared by many seabirds, to return each spring to the exact spot they left the year before. For these spirited divas, the next nesting spot over just won't do.

Worldwide, it remains difficult or impossible to tie any one massive die-off of seabirds or breeding calamity solely to global warming, for nature has its own jarring rhythms of abundance and deprivation.

But the evidence writ large, over decades, is unassailable: Warming and rising seas and the erratic weather

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events fueled by a changing climate are taking a heavy toll on seabirds. University of British Columbia researchers say seabird populations have fallen 70% since the mid-20th century.

Climate-related losses have, for example, hit albatrosses in the central Pacific, common murrelets and Cassin's auklets along the U.S. West Coast, puffins off the Maine coast, penguins in South Africa, endangered roseate terns off New England, and brown pelicans on vanishing islands off southeastern Louisiana.

The struggles of many seabird species occur in marine wilderness far from humans. Those of the Bonaventure gannets, however, play out in plain sight, in a gift to scientists and the public, on the protected grounds of the Quebec government's Parc national de l'Île-Bonaventure-et-du-Rocher-Perce.

The Bonaventure gannets display a "clumsy and funny little side on land which has nothing to do with what it is when it is at sea," said David Pelletier, a leading Quebec researcher of the birds.

At sea the gannets are magnificent in their grace and power.

Using air currents off the water, they fly effortlessly high over the sea and dive nearly straight down in their hunt for fish, piercing the surface at 100 kilometers (60 miles) an hour like so many white missiles. Their black-tipped wings, which span 2 meters (6 feet), are tightly tucked behind them.

They dive in huge numbers near the island when mackerel — the prey that gives them the most energy — or herring or other smaller fish are abundant there.

It's a sight that amazes even the most seasoned scientists every time. "It's so wow," said Magella Guillemette, a pre-eminent gannet researcher at the University of Quebec in Rimouski, as he described watching the feeding frenzy from his small boat in the thick of it.

With the island less than 3 kilometers (under 2 miles) from the Perce harbor, these Bonaventure birds are remarkably accessible to biologists and visitors who hike on trails thick with wildflowers in summer to see the birds up close. The clamor of the birds greets the hikers even before the full colony comes into view.

The gannets, unlike many other seabirds, seem utterly indifferent to humans. They gaze right through you with their porcelain blue eyes.

"It's rare that we have the possibility to look at wild animals like this," said Marie-Dominique Nadeau-Girard, the park's services manager. "And they stay there, they don't look at you, they live their life, and you're just looking at them and learning."

Guillemette's student researchers are busy each summer studying the birds. Over the years, they have put leg bands and GPS systems on hundreds of them. What's striking about gannets is that the researchers can simply pick them up, without fear of disturbing their nests.

"You just catch that bird," Guillemette said. "You weigh them, you put some devices on them and then you put it back to the nest and it's just staying there."

THE ECO-SENTINELS

All of this makes the Bonaventure gannets ideal sentinels for the health of the marine ecosystem in the gulf and clattering storytellers to the planet. They form the world's second largest gannet colony and are easier to reach than the largest, on Scotland's remote Bass Island.

Quebec's on-the-ground experts on the colony, Canadian government biologists, and seabird scientists globally say there is little to no question that global warming is reshaping the lives of the northern gannets. Warmer sea temperatures drive their prey to cooler depths, distant waters or both.

But the full impact of climate change is not yet established and overfishing may be an even greater danger.

In tandem, the threats from fishing and warming are forcing the gannets to go farther from their Bonaventure nests in search of food for their island chicks and themselves. The distance the birds fly on a single fishing trip has more than doubled in recent years to an average of 500 kilometers (300 miles), leaving one mate and the chick waiting several days or longer to be fed by the hunter, Guillemette said.

If the mate on the nest gets too weak from hunger, it may fly off for food, too, leaving the young one to starve or to wander from the nest and risk being killed by an adult. Like many seabirds, adult gannets are highly territorial and may kill any intruders to their nesting areas; AP journalists witnessed two such deadly attacks on the young on a day shortly before the winter migration.

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Researchers have been able to draw a strong correlation between the supply of mackerel in the gulf and the number of chicks produced. In 2012, when there were almost no mackerel, only 4% of the nests produced a chick, Guillemette said, a record low attributed to unusually warm waters that year.

Since then, productivity has been highly variable year to year while remaining low on average, said sea-bird biologist Jean-François Rail of the Canadian Wildlife Service, an agency of Environment and Climate Change Canada.

"Everything points in the direction of reduced availability of mackerel and herring, which results in lower breeding success," he said.

What's clear is that birds now need to work harder to find food. Beginning in 2012, Guillemette's researchers began outfitting gannets with a GPS device, in little boxes taped above their tails, which lets them track how far they fly, how deep they dive, and how many times they dive each day.

In March, just as the spring fishing season was opening, Canada shut commercial fishing for Atlantic mackerel and spring herring in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, saying stocks had entered a "critical zone." Earlier efforts to restore stocks failed, in part because warmer waters had depleted the microscopic crustaceans that are the main food for the fish.

Mackerel is a star of the gulf ecosystem, not only for gannets. They're prized as a commercial species as well as bait for the lucrative lobster, crab and tuna fisheries. The gulf's abundant grey seals gobble as many as they can get. With all the competition for food, gannets have found ways to adapt, but at a cost.

This year, the Bonaventure colony also had to contend with the avian flu. The contamination rate was high in the spring, Guillemette said, but faded. Other colonies in Canada had it much worse.

COLONY LIFE

Over winter, northern gannets are solitary birds that live widely dispersed on the water — along the Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida, some even in the Gulf of Mexico. But mates reunite year after year on their breeding grounds, for 15 years or so, producing one chick each season.

They have a monogamous nature and an elaborate means of communicating mate to mate. In gannet-speak, a beak turned skyward signals it's time to go forage; mates clacking their bills together as if in a swordfight signal a welcome home after the hunt.

You might think they are lovebirds; alas, these sentinels are not sentimental.

"People are more romantic and think they are faithful to their partner, but it's not the case," Nadeau-Girard says with a laugh. "The gannet is faithful to his territory, his nest.

"And if the baby goes out of the nest, the parents won't recognize him because ... they recognize the nest, not the individual. Each time they see each other it's like they meet for the first time."

The nests are only 80 centimeters (30 inches) apart, center to center, and these are sizable birds. At certain vantage points, the colony appears as a carpet of white as far as the eye can see, dotted with the dark-feathered young ones, and all of it against the backdrop of sea and sky.

The birds arrive in April, lay their eggs in May and tend them until they hatch more than 40 days later. Then it's three months of raising the chicks. By the time of the southern migration in late September or early October, the young are plenty plump, weighing 1 kilogram (over 2 pounds) more than their parents. The extra fat will sustain them at sea as they learn to fly and dive for fish.

There are no training wheels for the portly juveniles. Instead, lots of practice beating their wings on the ground, followed by a departure from the cliffs that is part flight, part plop.

If they survive that, the journey south will teach them their grace and power on the wing and into the deep.

A MYSTICAL LANDSCAPE

From the town of Perce, the mainland cliffs with the red-roofed houses, the commanding Perce Rock and Bonaventure Island make for an iconic panorama, and a mystical one for the people of the Gaspé Peninsula and travelers from around the world.

When boats bring visitors to the island, park employees corral them to explain the trails and what they

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can and cannot do. Services are primarily in French. On a September day, the multilingual Rudiger Spraul pulled aside the English-speaking visitors to give them the drill.

He came from Germany, fell in love with the place and spent the summer and early fall working for the park until it closed last month after the gannets left for the winter. He looked out on the colony every day from a small food operation where visitors can picnic and hope they aren't leeward of the day's winds, for the colony can stink.

"It gave me so much peace that I decided I'm going to stay here," he said. "I'm actually an engineer. Now I'm selling sandwiches on this lonesome spot.

"The island is such a beautiful small little paradise. It's like time stands still there. You go there, you see that old houses, no people living for so many years, but still you can get the impression how it was there, how hard it was."

The island was settled in the late 18th century by cod fishermen, reaching its population peak of 172 in 1831. The last remaining families left in 1971 when it was taken over by the government to become part of the park.

Altogether, some 250,000 birds inhabit the teardrop-shaped island, about 3 kilometers (under 2 miles) at its longest. Seals frequent the rocks and shore and whales are a common sight. Foxes poke from island bushes and snag an occasional gannet on the colony's periphery.

They're all out making a living in a changing ecosystem that tests the ability of creatures great and small to adapt.

"The northern gannet is, for me, a resilient species, strong, capable of 'turning on a dime' ... as we say in Quebec, 'se tourner sur un 10 cents,'" said Pelletier, a teacher-researcher at Cegep de Rimouski, a public college.

How much and how fast must they pivot as their habitat and our planet continue to warm? What fish will be there for them in the spring, and how far and how deep will they be? Bonaventure's sentinels will be back next year to tell more of that tale.

AP Top 25: No. 1 UGA leads unchanged top 5; Ducks, UCLA slip

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

No. 1 Georgia led an unchanged top five in The Associated Press college football poll Sunday, while the rest of the Top 25 was shuffled after eight ranked teams lost — including two big upsets in the Pac-12.

For the second straight week, the Bulldogs received all but one of the 63 first-place votes in the AP Top 25 presented by Regions Bank. No. 2 Ohio State received the other first-place vote.

No. 3 Michigan, No. 4 TCU and No. 5 Tennessee held their spots after victories Saturday, with only the Horned Frogs facing a real challenge.

Georgia, Ohio State, Michigan and Tennessee won by a combined 203-60 against conference opponents.

Home losses by Oregon (to Washington) and UCLA (to Arizona) shook up the rest of the top 10. No. 6 LSU and No. 7 Southern California each moved up a spot.

The last time two top-10 Pac-12 teams lost at home during the same weekend was Oct. 2-4, 2014, when No. 2 Oregon fell 31-24 to Arizona 31-24 and No. 8 UCLA was defeated 30-28 by Utah.

Alabama jumped two spots to No. 8 after it fell to a season-low No. 10 last week. Clemson moved up four spots to re-enter the top-10 at No. 8 and Utah climbed to No. 10.

POLL POINTS

Georgia is closing in on a school record.

The Bulldogs are No. 1 for the ninth time this season, matching the total from last season, when they won the national title for the first time in 41 years.

Georgia has been at No. 1 a total of 33 times in school history, one behind Michigan for 12th most in the history of the AP poll.

The Bulldogs are at Kentucky next week and close the season against Georgia Tech. Barring a major upset, they'll go into the Southeastern Conference championship against LSU with 11 weeks as the coun-

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try's top-ranked team.

IN

Of the four teams that moved into the rankings this week, Coastal Carolina is the only one making its season debut. The 23rd-ranked Chanticleers have now reached the Top 25 in each of the last three seasons.

— No. 22 Cincinnati is back in. The Bearcats give the American Athletic Conference a season-high three ranked teams along with No. 17 Central Florida and No. 21 Tulane.

— No. 24 Oklahoma State returned after snapping a two-game losing streak by beating Iowa State.

— No. 25 Oregon State is also back. The Beavers broke a nine-year poll drought two weeks ago, immediately lost a close game at Washington and dropped out, and then moved back in Sunday after beating California.

OUT

Texas' season in the rankings: Unranked for the first two polls, moved in for two weeks in September, out for two weeks, in for two weeks, back for a week and now gone again.

— Illinois tumbled out after a second straight home loss.

— North Carolina State is unranked for the first time this season after the Wolfpack was upset at home by Boston College.

— Liberty's time in the Top 25 lasted a mere week. The Flames followed up a victory at Arkansas to move into the rankings by losing at UConn to fall out.

CONFERENCE CALL

The Ducks and Bruins getting toppled crushed the Pac-12's hopes of putting a team in the College Football Playoff. One consolation prize: The conference now has more ranked teams than it has since Sept. 15, 2019.

Pac-12 — 6 (Nos. 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 25).

SEC — 5 (Nos. 1, 5, 6, 8, 14).

ACC — 3 (Nos. 9, 13, 20).

American — 3 (Nos. 17, 21, 22).

Big Ten — 3 (Nos. 2, 3, 11).

Big 12 — 3 (Nos. 4, 19, 24).

Sun Belt — 1 (No. 23).

Independent — 1 (No. 18).

RANKED vs. RANKED

The Pac-12's big games lost some luster, but they're still at the top of the marquee.

No. 7 USC at No. 16 UCLA.

No. 10 Utah at No. 12 Oregon.

Abortion rights wins in Kentucky, elsewhere stoke supporters

By BRUCE SCHREINER and DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Lexie Overstreet logged plenty of miles on foot, knocking on doors to try to persuade Kentuckians not to take away one of the last legal paths to restoring abortion rights in the state.

Now she's hoping her side's win at the ballot box Tuesday will convince the state's highest court to throw out a sweeping abortion ban passed by the Republican-led legislature.

"It was great to wake up this morning and know that Kentuckians are on the same side as me," the 21-year-old University of Louisville student and volunteer said after the election. "And know that the thousands of doors that I knocked aren't going to be forgotten and that all those people I talked to, they cast their vote and their vote was heard."

Whether those voices will resonate with the Kentucky Supreme Court, which is set to hear arguments for and against the ban Tuesday, hinges on legal arguments about whether state constitutional protections extend to a right to an abortion. With a hearing set for Tuesday, the case looms as the first legal test for abortion rights after midterm elections in which voters across the country came down firmly on the side of keeping abortion legal. No timeline has been given for a ruling.

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In Kentucky, abortion rights supporters think the amendment's rejection should be a consideration as the justices hear the case.

"My hope is that the Supreme Court will listen to the will of the people and know that the people have rejected extremism and rule accordingly," Gov. Andy Beshear, a Democrat, said in the days leading up to the pivotal court hearing.

Beshear, who is running for reelection next year, can take comfort in knowing that his position on abortion rights puts him squarely on the side of a majority of Kentuckians. But one of the GOP candidates hoping to take his job next year said the vote shouldn't be a factor.

Republican Attorney General Daniel Cameron said the result, though disappointing, didn't change his belief that there is "no right to abortion hidden in the Kentucky Constitution." Abortion policy, Cameron said, "belongs to our elected representatives in the General Assembly" to decide.

Right now it belongs to the courts, with attention shifting to the courtroom at the Kentucky Capitol in Frankfort, where the Supreme Court justices will hear arguments in the case.

Those arguments will center on a Louisville judge's ruling from July, when he wrote that the state's new, post-Roe abortion bans likely violate "the rights to privacy and self-determination" protected by Kentucky's constitution. Judge Mitch Perry said it was not the court's role to determine whether the state constitution contains the right to abortion, but whether the state's restrictive laws violate freedoms guaranteed by its constitution.

It's unclear how much impact, if any, the anti-abortion measure's defeat will have on the court's views on the case.

"It may well differ from justice to justice," said University of Louisville law professor Samuel Marcossou. "Some of them may view the defeat of the initiative as a strong signal that Kentuckians believe there is and should be a right in the constitution, and this could empower those justices to rule that way. Others may say that it is at best an uncertain signal, and that it remains a task for them to determine the meaning of the constitution."

Abortion opponents had hoped to shut off such a path through the courts. The amendment would have added "clarity and an extra level of protection against judicial activism," said David Walls, executive director of The Family Foundation, a faith-based organization opposed to abortion.

Currently, abortions are mostly on hold in Kentucky, based on a trigger law at the center of the case before the state Supreme Court. Approved by lawmakers in 2019, the ban took effect after *Roe v. Wade* was overturned in June by the U.S. Supreme Court. That law ended all abortions with narrow exceptions to save a pregnant woman's life or to prevent disabling injury. There are no exceptions for rape or incest victims. The state's high court in August kept the ban in place while it reviews the case. A separate six-week ban that Kentucky lawmakers approved also is being challenged.

Now abortion rights supporters hope the amendment's defeat is a springboard to victory in court.

"It is an important step in continuing the legal fight for abortion access in this state," said Rachel Sweet of Protect Kentucky Access, an abortion-rights coalition. "Moreover, it is a repudiation of the extreme anti-choice agenda that is out of step with most voters' values and beliefs."

Attorneys for the two abortion clinics left in Kentucky — both of them in Louisville, the state's largest city — will ask the state's high court for an injunction to allow abortions to resume while the case is litigated.

Meanwhile, abortion rights supporters secured wins elsewhere across the country. Michigan, California and Vermont voted to enshrine abortion rights in their state constitutions. Voters in Montana rejected a ballot measure that would have forced medical workers to attempt lifesaving measures in the rare event of a baby born after an attempted abortion.

In Michigan, Democrats who took control of the Legislature for the first time in decades have signaled that affirming reproductive rights will be one of their top priorities in 2023.

Abortion rights supporters in Vermont are planning to ask the legislature to enact shield laws to protect Vermont providers that perform abortion services for out-of-state travelers.

In Kentucky, Cameron downplayed the anti-abortion amendment's defeat in a post-election filing with the Supreme Court, saying the outcome "has no bearing on whether the court should create a Kentucky *Roe v. Wade*."

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"In short, because Kentucky voters chose to leave their Constitution as is, the constitutional text that the court must interpret to resolve this appeal is the same today as it was before" the vote, the Republican attorney general wrote.

But Overstreet, the University of Louisville student and abortion rights volunteer, said the voters' rejection of the Kentucky amendment spoke volumes about where the people stand.

"I have family from Appalachia, and I grew up in the city," she said. "People really underestimate Kentucky. People think that Kentucky is regressive. They think that Kentuckians don't believe in one another. But that's just absolutely not true. Kentuckians want abortion access. And that's what this amendment has shown us."

'Black Panther' sequel scores 2nd biggest debut of 2022

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

The box office roared back to life with the long-awaited release of "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever."

The Marvel sequel earned \$180 million in ticket sales from more than 4,396 theaters in the U.S. and Canada, according to estimates from The Walt Disney Co. on Sunday, making it the second biggest opening of the year behind "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness." Overseas, it brought in an additional \$150 million from 50 territories, bringing its worldwide total to \$330 million.

"Wakanda Forever" was eagerly anticipated by both audiences and exhibitors, who have weathered a slow spell at the box office since the summer movie season ended and there were fewer bigger budget blockbusters in the pipeline. The film got off to a mighty start a bit stronger than even the first film with an \$84 million opening day, including \$28 million from Thursday previews.

"Some may have hoped for \$200 million like the first film, but this is solid," said Paul Dergarabedian, Comscore's senior media analyst. "This is the type of movie that theaters really need to drive audiences."

The first film opened to \$202 million in February 2018 and went on to gross over \$1.4 billion worldwide, making it one of the highest grossing films of all time and a cultural phenomenon. A sequel was inevitable, and development began soon after with director Ryan Coogler returning, but everything changed after Chadwick Boseman's unexpected death in August 2020. "Wakanda Forever" became, instead, about the death of Boseman's King T'Challa/Black Panther, and the grieving kingdom he left behind. Returning actors include Angela Bassett, Lupita Nyong'o, Letitia Wright, Winston Duke and Danai Gurira, who face off against a new foe in Tenoch Huerta's Namor. The film would face more complications too, including Wright getting injured and some COVID-19 related setbacks. All told, it cost a reported \$250 million to make, not accounting for marketing and promotion.

AP Film Writer Jake Coyle wrote in his review that, "'Wakanda Forever' is overlong, a little unwieldy and somewhat mystifyingly steers toward a climax on a barge in the middle of the Atlantic. But Coogler's fluid command of mixing intimacy with spectacle remains gripping."

It currently holds an 84% on Rotten Tomatoes and, as is often the case with comic book films, the audience scores are even higher.

Superhero films have fared well during the pandemic, but none yet have reached the heights of "Spider-Man: No Way Home," which opened to \$260.1 million in Dec. 2021. Other big launches include "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness" (\$187.4 million in May), "Thor: Love and Thunder" (\$144.2 million in July) and "The Batman" (\$134 million in March).

"Wakanda Forever" is first film to open over \$100 million since "Thor" in July, which has been difficult for exhibitors that are already dealing with a calendar that has about 30% fewer wide releases than in a normal year.

Holdovers populated the rest of the top five, as no film dared launch nationwide against a Marvel behemoth. Second place went to the DC superhero "Black Adam," with \$8.6 million, bringing its domestic total to \$151.1 million. "Ticket to Paradise" landed in third, in weekend four, with \$6.1 million. The Julia Roberts and George Clooney romantic comedy has made nearly \$150 million worldwide. "Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile" and "Smile" rounded out the top five with \$3.2 million and \$2.3 million, respectively.

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Some awards hopefuls have struggled in their expansions lately, but Searchlight Pictures' "The Banshees of Inisherin," with Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson, looks like an exception. The Martin McDonagh film expanded to 960 theaters in its fourth weekend and got seventh place on the charts with \$1.7 million, bringing its total to \$5.8 million.

"It's been a very interesting post-summer period for movie theaters, with some gems out there doing well like 'Ticket to Paradise' and 'Smile,'" Dergarabedian said. "But movie theaters can't survive on non-blockbuster style films. The industry needs more of these."

After "Black Panther," the next blockbuster on the schedule is "Avatar: The Way of Water," arriving Dec. 16. The weekend wasn't completely without any other high-profile releases. Steven Spielberg's autobiographical drama "The Fabelmans" opened in four theaters in New York and Los Angeles with \$160,000. Universal and Amblin will roll the film out to more theaters in the coming weeks to build excitement around the likely Oscar-contender. Michelle Williams and Paul Dano play parents to the Spielberg stand-in Sammy Fabelman, who is falling in love with movies and filmmaking as his parents' marriage crumbles.

"This will be an interesting holiday season," Dergarabedian said. "I think a lot of the dramas and independent films will have their time to shine over the next couple months."

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 Panther: Wakanda Forever," \$180 million.
2. "Black Adam," \$8.6 million.
3. "Ticket to Paradise," \$6.1 million.
4. "Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile," \$3.2 million.
5. "Smile," \$2.3 million.
6. "Prey for the Devil," \$2 million.
7. "The Banshees of Inisherin," \$1.7 million.
8. "One Piece Film Red," \$1.4 million.
9. "Till," \$618,000.
10. "Yashoda," \$380,000.

Election Day saw few major problems, despite new voting laws

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Heading into this year's midterms, voting rights groups were concerned that restrictions in Republican-leaning states triggered by false claims surrounding the 2020 election might jeopardize access to the ballot box for many voters.

Those worries did not appear to come true. There have been no widespread reports of voters being turned away at the polls, and turnout, while down from the last midterm cycle four years ago, appeared robust in Georgia, a state with hotly competitive contests for governor and U.S. Senate.

The lack of broad disenfranchisement isn't necessarily a sign that everyone who wanted to vote could; there's no good way to tell why certain voters didn't cast a ballot.

Voter advocacy groups promoted voter education campaigns and modified voting strategies as a way to reduce confusion and get as many voters to cast a ballot as possible.

"We in the voting rights community in Texas were fearing the worst," said Anthony Gutierrez, director of Common Cause Texas, on Wednesday. "For the most part, it didn't happen."

False claims that the 2020 election was stolen from former President Donald Trump undermined public confidence in elections and prompted Republican officials to pass new voting laws. The restrictions included tougher ID requirements for mail voting, shortening the period for applying for and returning a mailed ballot, and limiting early voting days and access to ballot drop boxes.

There is no evidence there was widespread fraud or other wrongdoing in the 2020 election.

An estimated 33 restrictive voting laws in 20 states were in effect for this year's midterms, according to the Brennan Center for Justice. The most high-profile and sweeping laws were passed in Georgia, Florida,

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Iowa and Texas. Arizona also passed new voting rules, but those were largely put on hold this year or will take effect later.

Of the four states with major voting law changes in effect, a preliminary analysis shows a decline in turnout among registered voters in Florida, Iowa and Texas, while Georgia turnout declined slightly. Several factors can affect turnout, including voter enthusiasm and bad weather.

In Texas, the bumbling rollout of new voting restrictions in the state's March primary resulted in officials throwing out nearly 23,000 mailed ballots as confused voters struggled to navigate new ID requirements.

But preliminary reports after Tuesday's election showed rejection rates reverting to closer to more normal levels, which election officials attributed to outreach and mail voters figuring out the new rules. In San Antonio, county officials put the preliminary rejection rate at less than 2% — a sharp reversal from the 23% of mailed ballots they threw out in March.

Groups such as the Texas Civil Rights Project, working through churches and other organizations, focused on ensuring voters knew how to properly complete their mail ballots under the law known as Senate Bill 1.

"As a Texas community we've worked very hard to prepare for SB1," said Emily Eby, the group's senior election protection attorney.

Florida last year added a host of new rules around mail and early voting. They included new ID requirements, changes to how many ballots a person can turn in on behalf of someone else and limiting after-hours access to drop boxes. This year, lawmakers created a controversial new office dedicated to investigating fraud and other election crimes.

Still, voting appeared to be relatively smooth this year, before and on Election Day. Election officials reported no major problems.

Mark Earley, president of the Florida Supervisors of Elections, said the new laws did not greatly affect voter turnout or access this year, but said the rules, taken together, posed a challenge.

"When you put all of these together — the cumulative effect — it becomes confusing, difficult to communicate and educate the public about, difficult for the public to understand," said Earley, who oversees elections in Tallahassee's Leon County. "It becomes a big logistical and educational burden, and more hurdles for people to be able to jump over before they can get their ballots together."

Iowa's new law shortened the period for voters to return their mailed ballots, reduced polling place hours and early voting days, and prohibited anyone but close relatives, a household member or caregiver from dropping off someone else's ballot.

More than 1.2 million voters cast ballots in the Nov. 8 election. State officials said it was the second highest in state history for a midterm, but voting groups expressed concern that Latino participation may have declined due to the changes.

"We historically have had a fair amount of Latino voters who did the absentee ballot, which allowed LULAC volunteers to pick up those early ballots and return them to the county election offices," said Joe Henry, a board member of the Iowa chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens.

In Georgia, more votes were cast in this general election than in any prior midterm election — although with more voters on the rolls than four years ago, the actual turnout rate was lower.

Gabriel Sterling, interim deputy secretary of state, noted that most of the changes in the election law, known as Senate Bill 202, affected pre-Election Day voting — "and they blew away every record in that."

He said more votes were cast early — both in person and by mail — than in any previous midterm election in the state. It was Election Day turnout that was lower than expected.

After Democrats won the 2020 presidential contest and two U.S. Senate runoff elections, the Republican-controlled Georgia Legislature passed a sweeping overhaul of the state's election laws in 2021.

The law shortened the time period to request an absentee ballot and required voters to sign absentee ballot applications by hand, meaning they needed access to a printer. It also reduced the number of ballot drop boxes in the state's most populous counties and limited the hours they were accessible.

Critics said the changes made it more difficult to cast mail ballots. Democrats urged people to vote early and in-person this year instead. Kendra Cotton, CEO of the New Georgia Project Action Fund, said she believes the election law did have a negative effect in a state where key races have been decided by

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narrow margins in recent elections.

"The narrative that's out there is that SB202 was trying to depress the vote writ large, and we submit that that was not, in fact, the case," she said. "It was trying to stop just enough people from voting that the electoral outcome here in Georgia would shift."

This year, Republicans swept the statewide constitutional offices, and a Dec. 6 runoff will be held to decide the winner in the U.S. Senate race.

While she acknowledged there weren't many problems on Election Day, Cotton said the law created a lot of "noise" that drained energy and resources from organizations such as hers.

"We're having to go out and help voters fight to remain on the rolls," Cotton said.

Voter advocacy groups already are mobilizing to support Georgia voters heading into the Dec. 6 Senate runoff. Previously, runoffs were held nine weeks after an election. The new law shortened that to just four weeks, a period that also leaves too little time for new voter registrations.

"These types of tactics aim to suppress votes," Andrea Hailey, CEO of Vote.org, said in a statement. "But Georgians have shown that they are ready and willing to navigate tough voting environments in order to make their voices heard."

Biden-Xi summit: What Biden wants, what Xi wants

By SEUNG MIN KIM and JOE MCDONALD Associated Press

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — There won't be concessions from the U.S. side. No real deliverables, which is government-speak for specific achievements. Don't expect a cheery joint statement, either.

During President Joe Biden's highly anticipated meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday, the leaders will be circling each other to game out how to manage a relationship that the U.S. has determined poses the biggest economic and military threat.

At the same time, U.S. officials have repeatedly stressed that they see the two countries' interactions as one of competition — and that they want to avoid conflict.

Here's a look at what each side is hoping to achieve out of the leaders' first in-person encounter as presidents, to be held on the island of Bali in Indonesia:

FOR THE UNITED STATES

Essentially, Biden and other U.S. officials are trying to understand where Xi really stands.

In a news conference shortly before leaving Washington, Biden said he wanted to "lay out ... what each of our red lines are, understand what he believes to be in the critical national interests of China, what I know to be the critical interests of the United States."

That mission has become all the more imperative since the conclusion of the Communist Party congress in Beijing, during which Xi secured a norm-breaking third term as leader, empowering him even further.

It's a goal that will be much more readily achieved in person, White House officials say, despite Biden and Xi's five video or phone calls during the U.S. president's term.

Biden told reporters on Sunday that he's "always had straightforward discussions" with Xi, and that has prevented either of them from "miscalculations" of their intentions.

"I know him well, he knows me," Biden said. "We've just got to figure out where the red lines are and what are the most important things to each of us, going into the next two years."

The U.S. president will want to send a message to Xi on White House concerns about China's economic practices. Taiwan is sure to come up, and Biden will want to emphasize to Xi that the U.S. will stand ready to defend the self-governing island should it come under attack by China. Biden also will seek to make clear his concerns about Beijing's human rights practices, as he has in their previous interactions.

Biden will also use the meeting to press for a more aggressive posture from Xi on Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The Chinese leader has largely refrained from public criticism of Vladimir Putin's actions while declining to actively aid Moscow by supplying arms.

"We believe that, of course, every country in the world should do more to prevail upon Russia, especially those who have relationships with Russia, to end this war and leave Ukraine," said U.S. national security

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adviser Jake Sullivan.

Finally, U.S. officials say they're eager to see where the two superpowers could actually collaborate. Though there are numerous areas in which Biden and Xi won't see eye to eye, the White House has listed several issues where they conceivably could, including health, counternarcotics and climate change.

FOR CHINA

Xi has yet to give a wish list for talks with Biden, but Beijing wants U.S. action on trade and Taiwan.

Perhaps most importantly, the Group of 20 gathering in Bali and the meeting with Biden give China's most powerful leader in decades a stage to promote his country's image as a global player and himself as a history-making figure who is restoring its rightful role as an economic and political force.

China pursues "increasingly assertive foreign and security policies aimed at changing the international status quo," Kevin Rudd, a former Australian prime minister who is president of the Asia Society, wrote in Foreign Affairs. That has strained relations with Washington, Europe and China's Asian neighbors, but Xi is unfazed and looks set to be more ambitious abroad.

The meeting is "an important event of China's head-of-state diplomacy toward the Asia Pacific," said a foreign ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian. He said Xi will "deliver an important speech" on economic growth.

Zhao called on the Biden administration to "stop politicizing" trade and embrace Beijing's claim to sovereignty over Taiwan, the self-ruled island democracy that split with the mainland in 1949 and never has been part of the People's Republic of China.

Beijing wants Washington to lift tariffs imposed by former President Donald Trump in 2019 and to pull back on increasing restrictions on Chinese access to processor chips and other U.S. technology. Biden has left most of those in place and added curbs on access to technology that American officials say can be used in weapons development.

"The United States needs to stop politicizing, weaponizing and ideologizing trade issues," Zhao said.

Xi's government has stepped up efforts to intimidate the elected government of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen by flying fighter planes near the island and firing missiles into the sea.

Beijing broke off talks with Washington on security, climate cooperation and other issues after U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in August in a show of support for its government.

"The United States needs to stop obscuring, hollowing out and distorting the 'one-China principle,'" said Zhao, referring to Beijing's stance that Taiwan is obligated to join the mainland under Communist Party leadership.

Another goal for Xi: Don't get COVID-19.

The G-20 will be only Xi's second foreign trip in 2 1/2 years while his government enforces a severe "Zero COVID" strategy that shut down cities and kept most visitors out of China.

Xi broke that moratorium by attending a September summit with Putin and Central Asian leaders. But he skipped a dinner and photo session where Putin and others wore no masks.

Shorter voting window could cut turnout in Georgia runoff

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia Democrat Raphael Warnock's first runoff in 2021 was a titanic nine-week clash to control the Senate that included three weeks of early in-person voting and lots of mail ballots.

Warnock's victory against Republican Sen. Kelly Loeffler - and Democrat Jon Ossoff's tilt against Republican David Perdue - ended in two Democratic victories that gave the party control of a 50-50 Senate, thanks to Vice President Kamala Harris' ability to break ties.

But the Dec. 6 runoff won't be for Senate control this time with Democrats retaining seats in Arizona and Nevada earlier this month. Successful reelection bids by Sens. Mark Kelly and Catherine Cortez Masto were what Democrats needed to keep the slimmest of margins in the chamber.

Georgia requires a runoff if a candidate doesn't win a majority in the party primary or in the general election. Neither Warnock nor Republican Herschel Walker got to 50%.

Under Georgia's 2021 election law, there will be only four weeks before the runoff — with Thanksgiving

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in the middle. Many Georgians will be offered only five weekdays of early in-person voting beginning Nov. 28. And June's primary runoffs showed time for mail ballots to be received and returned can be very tight.

Those changes could disadvantage Democrats, who tend to push early voting and vote-by-mail more than Republicans. Because the 2021 law makes it harder to apply for a mail ballot, Democrats urged supporters to vote early in person in October.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Hank Johnson said it will be challenging to reignite the kind of early voting enthusiasm that Democrats displayed ahead of the general election, when overall early voting set a new midterm record.

"We've from Thanksgiving weekend to Tuesday, Dec. 6, to get these votes out, and there will be a lot of hard work over the holiday and the runup to the holiday season to make sure we get this vote out," Johnson said. "I think voters are aware that our future is still in peril, and we can make a difference in Georgia for the sake of the nation. We've done it before, and we can do it again."

Stephen Lawson, who worked for Loeffler ahead of her 2021 defeat to Warnock, recalled that even with a two-month period between the 2020 general election and the second round "you had voters who weren't aware of the runoff date and had to be reminded that it wasn't over." Lawson now leads the 34N22 political action committee backing Walker.

The changes could produce lower turnout, and maybe a return to the old rules of Georgia runoffs before 2021, when Republicans had clear advantages.

"Republicans do better in getting their voters back out for a runoff election," said Eric Tanenblatt, a lobbyist who was chief of staff to Republican Gov. Sonny Perdue and later national finance co-chair for Republican Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential campaign.

No one who wasn't on the rolls before Nov. 8 can register to vote now. The last day to register was Nov. 7.

Georgia's 159 counties can open early voting sooner than Nov. 28 if they are able. But they can't begin until the state certifies the general election, currently targeted for Nov. 21, said Deputy Secretary of State Gabriel Sterling.

But only 10 counties offered more than the mandated five days during June primary runoffs, the first statewide elections held with the shortened runoff period. Moreover, state law bars early in-person voting on a state holiday or the Saturday after a state holiday. Because both Thanksgiving and the following Friday are state holidays, there will be no Saturday voting offered before the runoff.

Some urban counties are likely to offer early in-person voting on the Sunday after Thanksgiving, and the most ambitious counties might also offer voting on the Tuesday and Wednesday before Thanksgiving, if the race is certified Nov. 21.

Mail ballots can be requested now through Nov. 28. About 150,000 people who voted by mail in the November election will automatically be mailed a ballot for the runoff. But Associated Press reporting found some counties were slow to mail ballots before the primary runoff, raising questions about whether voters could receive and return them in time.

Republicans say the four-week runoff is workable, noting it was law in Georgia before 2013. A federal judge found then that military and overseas voters didn't have enough time to return mail ballots, ordering nine weeks instead. Lawmakers in 2021 solved that problem by adding ranked-choice ballots for overseas voters, letting them pick additional candidates in the event of a runoff.

"The counties are prepared already. They know we're going to have this period of time," Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger told reporters Wednesday.

Opponents of Georgia's voting law say changes to mail voting hurt voters, disputing Republican claims that high turnout proves the law didn't hurt anyone.

"We know that our community members did not have fair and equitable access to voting by mail," Aisha Mahmood, executive director of the Asian American Advocacy Fund said during an online news conference on Wednesday.

Liberal groups vow they won't be outworked. Most don't endorse candidates but push progressive policies broadly in line with Democrats, and are a key cog in the Democratic turnout machine.

"The way that we won in 2021, you're seeing it happen again right now," said Hillary Holley of Care in

Action, which advocates for domestic workers. "And so yes, is this runoff shorter? Absolutely. And do we need everyone to start making a plan to vote right now? Absolutely."

Kherson celebrates Russian exit yet faces huge rebuilding

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KHERSON, Ukraine (AP) — Residents of Kherson celebrated the end of Russia's eight-month occupation for the third straight day Sunday, even as they took stock of the extensive damage left behind in the southern Ukrainian city by the Kremlin's retreating forces.

A jubilant crowd gathered in Kherson's main square, despite the distant thumps of artillery fire that could be heard as Ukrainian forces pressed on with their effort to push out Moscow's invasion force.

"It's a new year for us now," said Karina Zaikina, 24, who wore on her coat a yellow-and-blue ribbon in Ukraine's national colors. "For the first time in many months, I wasn't scared to come into the city."

"Finally, freedom!" said 61-year-old resident Tetiana Hitina. "The city was dead."

But even as locals rejoiced, the evidence of Russia's ruthless occupation was all around, and Russian forces still control some 70% of the wider Kherson region.

With cellphone networks knocked out, Zaikina and others lined up to use a satellite phone connection set up for everyone's use in the square, enabling them to swap news with family and friends for the first time in weeks.

Downtown stores were shuttered. With many people having fled the city during the Russian occupation, the city streets were thinly populated. Many of the few people venturing out Sunday carried yellow and blue flags. On the square, people lined up to ask soldiers to autograph their flags and rewarded them with hugs. Some wept.

More bleakly, Kherson is also without electricity or running water, and food and medical supplies are short. Residents said Russian troops plundered the city, carting away loot as they withdrew last week. They also wrecked key public infrastructure before retreating across the wide Dnieper River to its east bank. One Ukrainian official described the situation in Kherson as "a humanitarian catastrophe."

"I don't understand what kind of people this is. I don't know why they did it," said resident Yevhen Teliezhenko, draped in a Ukrainian flag.

Still, he said, "it became easier to breathe" once the Russians had gone.

"There is no better holiday than what's happening now," he declared.

Ukrainian authorities said the demining of critical infrastructure is under way in the city. Reconnecting the electricity supply is the priority, with gas supplies already assured, Kherson regional governor Yaroslav Yanushevych said.

The Russian pullout marked a triumphant milestone in Ukraine's pushback against Moscow's invasion almost nine months ago. In the past two months, Ukraine's military claimed to have retaken dozens of towns and villages north of the city of Kherson.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowed to keep up the pressure on Russian forces, reassuring the people in Ukrainian cities and villages that are still under occupation.

"We don't forget anyone; we won't leave anyone," he said.

Ukraine's retaking of Kherson was a significant setback for the Kremlin and the latest in a series of battlefield embarrassments. It came some six weeks after Russian President Vladimir Putin annexed the Kherson region and three other provinces in southern and eastern Ukraine — in breach of international law — and declared them Russian territory.

The U.S. embassy in Kyiv tweeted comments Sunday by National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, who described the turnaround in Kherson as "an extraordinary victory" for Ukraine and "quite a remarkable thing."

The reversal came despite Putin's recent partial mobilization of reservists, raising troop numbers by some 300,000. That has been hard for the Russian military to digest.

"Russian military leadership is trying and largely failing to integrate combat forces drawn from many

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different organizations and of many different types and levels of skill and equipment into a more cohesive fighting force in Ukraine," commented the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War, a think tank that tracks the conflict

British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace said the Kremlin will be "worried" by the loss of Kherson but warned against underestimating Moscow. "If they need more cannon fodder, that is what they'll be doing," he said.

Ukrainian police called on residents to help identify collaborators with Russian forces. Ukrainian police officers returned to the city Saturday, along with public broadcasting services. The national police chief of Ukraine, Ihor Klymenko, said about 200 officers were at work in the city, setting up checkpoints and documenting evidence of possible war crimes.

In what could perhaps be the next district to fall in Ukraine's march on territory annexed by Moscow, the Russian-appointed administration of the Kakhovka district, east of the city of Kherson, announced Saturday it was evacuating its employees.

"Today, the administration is the No. 1 target for Ukrainian attacks," said the Moscow-installed leader of Kakhovka, Pavel Filipchuk. "We, as an authority, are moving to a safer territory, from where we will lead the district."

Kakhovka is located on the east bank of the Dnieper River, upstream of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station.

'Here comes the bride': White House to host its 19th wedding

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — "Here Comes the Bride" will be heard at the White House very soon. Again.

Naomi Biden, the granddaughter of President Joe Biden, and Peter Neal are getting married on the South Lawn on Saturday in what will be the 19th wedding in White House history.

It will be the first wedding with a president's granddaughter as the bride, and the first one in that location, according to the White House Historical Association.

A mutual friend set up Naomi Biden, 28, and Neal, 25, about four years ago in New York City and the White House said they have been together ever since. Naomi Biden is a lawyer; her father is Hunter Biden. Neal recently graduated from the University of Pennsylvania law school. The couple lives in Washington.

Nine of the 18 documented White House weddings were for a president's daughter — most recently Richard Nixon's daughter, Tricia, in 1971, and Lyndon B. Johnson's daughter, Lynda, in 1967.

But nieces, a grandniece, a son and first ladies' siblings have also gotten married there. One president, Grover Cleveland, tied the knot there, too, while in office.

First lady Jill Biden said she's excited to see her granddaughter "planning her wedding, making her choices, becoming, you know, just coming into her own, and she's just so beautiful."

"So I can't wait till all of you see her as a bride," the first lady said during a recent appearance on singer Kelly Clarkson's talk show.

Stewart McLaurin, president of the historical association, said special occasions at the White House aren't soon forgotten.

"If you were to have the privilege of celebrating a holiday there or a special occasion in your life, like a wedding, it is a very memorable occasion," he said.

Five weddings were held in the East Room, four took place in the Blue Room and two unfolded in the Rose Garden, steps away from the Oval Office.

In June 1971, some 400 guests watched as Nixon walked Tricia down the steps of the South Portico to a waiting Edward Cox, and the couple exchanged vows in a gazebo set up in the Rose Garden for the first wedding ceremony ever held there.

Her planner — a black, three-ring binder labeled "TRICIA'S WEDDING" and kept by the historical association — has tabbed sections for every aspect of her special day, including the attendants, social aides, gazebo, flowers, parking, seating, menu, champagne, the press and more.

Her wedding cake was a six-tiered, 350-pound (159 kilograms), 6-foot-tall (1.8 meters) lemon-flavored pound cake decorated with blown sugar love birds and the initials "PN" and "EC."

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The White House released the recipe, but home bakers and food critics said it produced a "soupy mess" and speculated that the White House had scrambled the number of egg whites versus whole eggs, according to White House History Quarterly magazine's weddings issue.

President Nixon sent a thank-you note to Rex Scouten, the White House chief usher, for his help coordinating physical arrangements for the wedding. The letter is in Tricia Nixon's planner.

"I want you to know how grateful all the Nixons are for your splendid contributions on this very special day," Nixon wrote.

In October 2013, Barack Obama's chief White House photographer, Pete Souza, and Patti Lease married in a private ceremony in the Rose Garden after 17 years of being a couple. Obama had gotten to know Lease because she attended some White House events.

"He kept pestering me about why we hadn't gotten married," Souza told The Associated Press. He said Obama made what he thought was an off-hand comment about having the wedding in the Rose Garden, but later "I found out that he was not joking."

He and Lease exchanged "I do's" in the presence of about 30 family members and friends. They felt overwhelmed by the venue, but were honored by the president's gesture, he said.

"It gives people a sense that I had a unique relationship with Barack Obama that he would insist I have the wedding at the White House," Souza said. "I'm so honored, as is my wife, to have my wedding ceremony at the White House. Not many people can say that."

The Rose Garden helped unite two Democratic political families when Anthony Rodham, a brother of then-first lady Hillary Clinton, and Nicole Boxer, a daughter of then-California Sen. Barbara Boxer, exchanged wedding vows in May 1994 during a private ceremony.

Hillary Clinton had first offered Camp David, the official presidential retreat in Maryland's Catoctin Mountains, for the wedding, but later on suggested the Rose Garden, Nicole Boxer said.

"I was like out of my mind excited with the possibility of it," Nicole Boxer recalled during a telephone interview from California. "Can you imagine a more perfect venue?"

Among the approximately 250 guests were President Biden and his wife, Jill. Biden and Barbara Boxer served in the Senate at the time.

The reception was held in the first lady's garden, followed by dinner in the State Dining Room and dancing in the East Room. President Bill Clinton played his saxophone; daughter Chelsea was a bridesmaid.

"You just think you're the luckiest person in the world and I think it's something you have to appreciate," Nicole Boxer said. "It's like being part of the American fabric."

A White House wedding is no guarantee of a lasting marriage. The couple divorced in 2001. Rodham died in 2019.

Lynda Johnson Robb said she never thought about a White House wedding, but circumstances practically dictated that she and Marine Capt. Charles Robb marry there in December 1967. The year before, her sister Luci had a Roman Catholic church wedding in Washington.

"We had to get married sooner than I would have liked because he was going to be going to Vietnam, and so we wanted to be married a little while and that was just three months before he left," Lynda Johnson Robb said on a White House Historical Association podcast in 2018.

The couple met because Robb was assigned to the the White House as a military social aide.

They wed in the East Room with White House bride Alice Roosevelt Longworth, who was married in the same room in 1906, among the approximately 500 guests. The couple walked under a saber arch created by Robb's fellow Marines as they left the room afterward.

Following tradition at military weddings, they used Robb's sword to make the first cut of their wedding cake — a 6-foot (1.8 meters)-tall, 250-pounds(113.4 kilogram) pound cake with raisins decorated with sugar scrolls, roses and love birds.

Lynda Johnson Robb said she was lucky. Red is her signature color and December nuptials meant the White House was already decorated for Christmas. Her mom, Lady Bird Johnson, was spared some stress.

"They could use the same decorations and that was great," she said. "My mother was always trying to find ways to save money."

Amid the war ruins in Ukraine, Banksy seeds art

BORODYANKA, Ukraine (AP) — Amid the ruins of war, the flowerings of art.

A delicate painting of a gymnast doing a handstand has popped up on the wall of a wrecked building outside of Kyiv and appears to be the work of the British graffiti artist known as Banksy.

Banksy posted photos on his Instagram page of the artwork in Borodyanka, northwest of Ukraine's capital.

The town was the target of shelling and fighting in the early stages of the Russian invasion, which turned apartment buildings into charred, bombed-out hulks.

The mural of the gymnast is in black and white and is painted so she looks like she is doing her handstand on the crumpled remains of concrete blocks that poke out of the blackened wall. Towering above her are the gutted, blown-apart innards of what were once apartments.

Another mural in the town — of a small boy doing a judo throw on a man — also looked like it might be Banksy's, although that wasn't posted on his Instagram page.

President Vladimir Putin of Russia is a judo practitioner.

A Banksy-like painting, also in black and white and again not confirmed as his by Banksy himself, also appeared on the wall of a war-damaged building in the town of Irpin, on Kyiv's northwestern outskirts.

It shows a rhythmic gymnast doing a pirouette with a ribbon, over a gaping hole in the wall.

Saudi Arabia has 'green vision' at COP27, critics unmoved

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — Hydrogen cars and vehicles that capture their tailpipe pollutants. Computer mice made from recycled ocean waste plastic. Hundreds of millions of trees planted in the desert. Saudi Arabia's vision of an environmentally friendly future is on display just a short drive from the venue of the U.N. climate summit being held in Egypt.

What's not highlighted in the glossy gallery are the earth-warming fossil fuels that the country continues to pump out of the ground for global export. Fossil fuel emissions are the reason why negotiators from nearly 200 countries have gathered at the annual two-week conference, haggling over how pollution can be cut and how fast to do it.

In and around the conference, Saudi Arabia is presenting itself as a leader in green energies and eco-friendly practices, with flashy pavilions, glossy presentations and optimistic assessments of technologies like carbon capture, which can remove carbon dioxide from the air but is costly and years away from being deployed at scale.

"We have hugely ambitious goals and targets," Saudi climate envoy Adel al-Jubeir said at the two-day Saudi Green Initiative Forum on COP27's sidelines. "We want to be an example to the world in terms of what can be done."

The effort is part of a large push by Saudi Arabia, which has some of the world's largest reserves of oil and is a leader of the OPEC oil cartel, to make the case that the nation should be part of the transition to renewable energies while holding on to its role as the top global crude oil exporter. That vision is sharply contested by climate scientists and environmental experts, who argue that Saudi Arabia and other countries with large reserves of oil simply want to distract the world to continue with business as usual.

The Saudi energy minister, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman al Saud, announced a raft of new green projects or updates to existing ones, from beefed up tree planting pledges to fresh solar energy projects in the pipeline.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman launched his Saudi Green Initiative ahead of last year's COP26 conference in Glasgow, Scotland, with a target for "net zero" greenhouse gas emissions by 2060.

Still, energy exports are the Saudi economy's mainstay, earning \$150 billion in annual revenue, despite efforts to diversify revenue as the global transition away from fossil fuel reliance accelerates.

At the Saudi forum, officials and invited guest speakers from renewable energy companies held forth on topics like clean hydrogen, greening the desert, and a futuristic desert city project called Neom.

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State-owned oil giant Saudi Aramco's CEO, Amin Nasser, said the world needs more investment in oil and gas, not less, a message at odds with the sentiment among many country delegations and climate experts and activists attending COP27.

"I'm concerned because of lack of investment in the oil and gas in particular," said Nasser, touching on a frequent theme. Saudi Arabia has resisted calls to urgently phase out fossil fuels, warning that a premature switch has led to price spikes and shortages.

"Yes, there is good investment happening in the alternatives," such as wind and solar power, he said, adding that the amount of money spent on oil production capacity has fallen to \$400 billion a year from \$700 billion in 2014.

"That is not enough to meet global demand in the mid to long term," he said.

An Aramco spokesman said Nasser wasn't available for an interview.

Among the Saudi announcements, there were plans to set up a regional center to "advance emissions reductions" and one to host a regional climate week ahead of next year's COP meeting.

Saudi Arabia is also set to build 13 renewable energy projects with a total generating capacity of 11.4 gigawatts, though experts said that's a step back from numbers announced in previous years.

Once they're up and running, the new energy projects will cut carbon dioxide emissions by about 20 million tons a year.

Saudi Aramco plans to build the world's biggest carbon capture and storage hub, which will store up to 9 million tons of carbon dioxide when its up and running in 2027.

It's all part of the kingdom's pledged to cut emissions by 278 million tons a year by 2030. That's still small compared to about 10 billion metric tons of carbon spewed globally into the air annually.

The kingdom also upgraded its tree planting goal to 600 million by 2030, including mangroves, up from its 450 million initial target.

Climate experts weren't convinced.

"Saudi Arabia would be better placed to focus on cutting emissions rather than relying on carbon capture and storage and questionable reductions from planting trees, the offsets of which would simply allow them to continue increasing emissions from burning fossil fuels," said Mia Moasio, an energy policy expert focusing on Middle East and North Africa at the New Climate Institute think tank.

"To keep emissions on a 1.5°C pathway, all governments must focus on cutting fossil fuel emissions, not offsetting them."

The Climate Action Tracker, operated by the institute and its partners, rates Saudi Arabia as "highly insufficient."

The tracker analyzes nations' climate targets and policies compared to the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement that spells out ideally limiting the Earth's temperature rise to 1.5 Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit).

Saudi authorities are promoting what they call a "circular carbon economy" to cut emissions from oil and gas operations, but the tracker says this it "only addresses a fraction of relevant emissions in Saudi Arabia and globally, as most emissions related to oil and gas come from fuel combustion rather than extraction and processing."

Saudi Arabia's oil and gas assets spew 900 million tons of emissions a year, according to an inventory of top known sources of greenhouse gas emitters compiled by the Climate TRACE coalition and launched at COP27.

There's also a plan for a greenhouse gas crediting and offsetting scheme next year, with few details. Carbon credits, which allow countries and companies to pay to reduce their carbon footprints, say by planting trees, have become increasingly controversial, with critics saying they're a license for polluting companies to keep polluting.

At least year's talks in Glasgow, Saudi Arabia faced accusations that its negotiators were working to block climate measures that would threaten demand for oil - a charge that the energy minister called a lie.

As negotiations on the final agreement head into their second and final week, watchdog groups warned about the influence of so-called petrostates and industry lobbyists. They counted 636 people linked to fossil fuel companies on the meeting's provisional list of participants, a quarter more than last year's tally.

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"The Saudis may well be coming to COP27 with a green hat on and extolling the virtues of planting trees, but this is a state that continues to profit wildly from the destructive practices causing the climate crisis," said Alice Harrison, a campaigner at Global Witness, one of the groups that did the count. "Any exhibitions, talks or shows to the contrary are pure greenwashing."

US, Japan, SKorea vow unified response to North Korea threat

By ZEKE MILLER and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — President Joe Biden and the leaders of Japan and South Korea on Sunday vowed a unified, coordinated response to North Korea's threatening nuclear and ballistic missile programs, with Biden declaring that the three-way partnership is "even more important than it's ever been" when North Korea is stepping up its provocations.

Biden met separately with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol before all three sat down together on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit in Cambodia.

The U.S. president began by offering condolences for a crowd surge during Halloween festivities in Seoul that killed more than 150 people, saying the U.S. had grieved with South Korea. The meeting was heavily focused on North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's recent escalations, although Biden said the three leaders would also discuss strengthening supply chains and preserving peace across the Taiwan strait, while building on the countries' support for Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression.

Biden had also planned to seek input from Kishida and Yoon on managing China's assertive posture in the Pacific region on the eve of his face-to-face with President Xi Jinping.

"We face real challenges, but our countries are more aligned than ever, more prepared to take on those challenges than ever," Biden said. "So I look forward to deepening the bonds of cooperation between our three countries."

Both Yoon and Kishida discussed the ongoing displays of aggression by North Korea, which has fired dozens of missiles in recent weeks. The launches include an intercontinental ballistic missile 10 days ago that triggered evacuation alerts in northern Japan, as the allies warn of a looming risk of the isolated country conducting its seventh nuclear test in the coming weeks.

Referring to the crowd surge that occurred in the Itaewon neighborhood in Seoul, Yoon said, through an interpreter: "At a time when South Koreans are grieving in deep sorrow, North Korea pushed ahead with such provocations which lays bare the Kim Jong Un regime's true inclinations."

U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters on Saturday that Biden would use the meetings to strengthen the three countries' joint response to the dangers posed by North Korea, officially known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"What we would really like to see is enhanced trilateral security cooperation where the three countries are all coming together," he said. "That's acutely true with respect to the DPRK because of the common threat and challenge we all face, but it's also true, more broadly, about our capacity to work together to enhance overall peace and stability in the region."

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have skyrocketed in recent months as the North continues its weapons demonstrations and the U.S. and South Korea held stepped-up joint defense exercises. Earlier this month, the South Korean military said two B-1B bombers trained with four U.S. F-16 fighter jets and four South Korean F-35 jets during the last day of "Vigilant Storm" joint air force drills. It was the first time since December 2017 that the bombers were deployed to the Korean Peninsula. The exercise involved a total of roughly 240 warplanes, including advanced F-35 fighter jets from both countries.

North Korea responded with its own display of force, flying large numbers of warplanes inside its territory.

The Biden administration has said it has sent repeated requests to negotiate with North Korea without preconditions on constraining its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, but that Kim Jong Un's government has not responded.

Biden has said he plans to press Xi to use China's sway over North Korea to curtail its aggressive behavior, as part of what is expected to be a wide-ranging meeting between the leaders on the margins of

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the Group of 20 gathering in Bali, Indonesia.

China "has an interest in playing a constructive role in restraining North Korea's worst tendencies," Sullivan said Saturday. "Whether they choose to do so or not is, of course, up to them."

Biden told reporters on Sunday that he's "always had straightforward discussions" with Xi, and that has prevented either of them from "miscalculations" of their intentions. Their meeting comes weeks after Xi cemented his grip on China's political system with the conclusion of the Community Party congress in Beijing that gave him a norm-breaking third term as leader.

"His circumstances changed, to state the obvious, at home," Biden said of Xi. Biden maintained that his own have as well, saying that after Democrats retained control of the Senate in the midterm elections, "I know I'm coming in stronger."

Underscoring that point, several heads of state approached Biden in Cambodia to tell him they had followed the U.S. midterm campaigns closely, telling the president that the results were a testament to the strength of American democracy, Sullivan told reporters traveling on Air Force One to Indonesia on Sunday evening.

Monday's meeting will be the first in-person sit-down between the leaders since Biden was elected. U.S. officials have expressed frustration that lower-level Chinese officials have proven unable or unwilling to speak for Xi, and are hoping the face-to-face summit will enable progress on areas of mutual concern — and, even more critically, a shared understanding of each others' limitations.

"I know him well, he knows me," Biden said. "We've just got to figure out where the red lines are and what are the most important things to each of us, going into the next two years."

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.

Biden also spoke briefly with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who has sought out his own meeting with Xi this week in an effort to ease Chinese sanctions against his country.

Southeast Asian leaders: region no proxy for any powers

By DAVID RISING and SOPHENG CHEANG Associated Press

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Indonesia's president vowed Sunday not to let Southeast Asia become the front lines of a new Cold War amid increasing tensions between the United States and China, saying as his country took over the chairmanship of the influential Association of Southeast Asian Nations that it would not become "a proxy to any powers."

Joko Widodo said the 10-nation bloc with a combined population of some 700 million people "must be a dignified region" and "uphold the values of humanity and democracy" — principles that have been challenged by last year's military takeover in Myanmar and concerns about human rights in Cambodia.

"ASEAN must become a peaceful region and anchor for global stability, consistently uphold international law and not be a proxy to any powers," he said. "ASEAN should not let the current geopolitical dynamic turn into a new Cold War in our region."

As China has grown more assertive in the Asia-Pacific and pressed its claim to the self-governing democracy of Taiwan, the U.S. has pushed back, leading to increasing tensions.

Even as the ASEAN leaders met over the weekend in Phnom Penh, U.S. naval exercises with its partners in the so-called "Quad" group of nations — Australia, India and Japan — were underway in the Philippine Sea, east of Taiwan.

And on Saturday, China's military flew 36 fighter jets and bombers near Taiwan, ten of which flew across

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the median line in the Taiwan Strait that separates the island from the mainland, according to Taiwanese officials.

The flights come as part of Chinese President Xi Jinping's stepped up efforts to intimidate Taiwan by regularly flying fighter planes and bombers near the island and firing missiles into the sea around it.

In Sunday's East Asia Summit, which ran concurrently with the ASEAN meeting and included both the U.S. and China, U.S. President Joe Biden underscored that freedom of navigation and overflight must be respected in the East China and South China seas and that all disputes must be resolved peacefully and according to international law, according to the White House.

Biden said the U.S. will compete vigorously with China while keeping lines of communication open and ensuring that competition does not veer into conflict, while reaffirming the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, the White House said.

The comments came just a day before a highly anticipated meeting between Biden and Xi at the Group of 20 summit in Bali.

In Japan's meetings with ASEAN leaders, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida also singled out China, expressing "serious concern over unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force in the East and South China seas as well as economic coercion," Japan's Foreign Ministry said.

"He also pointed out the importance of the peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and highly valued ASEAN's call for utmost restraint."

At the opening of the East Asia Summit, Cambodian leader Hun Sen called for unity, telling the gathering attended by Biden, Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that current global tensions have been taking a toll on everyone.

Without singling out any nation by name, Hun Sen said he hoped leaders would embrace a "spirit of togetherness in upholding open and inclusive multilateralism, pragmatism and mutual respect in addressing the existential and strategic challenges we all face."

"Many current challenges and tensions have been hindering our past hard-earned efforts to promote sustainable development and causing greater hardship to people's lives," he said.

Li Keqiang, meantime, told a meeting of ASEAN, China, Japan and South Korea that amid a "turbulent" global security situation, "unilateralism and protectionism are surging, economic and financial risks are rising, and global development is confronted with unprecedented challenges."

As major economies in East Asia, Li said the group needed to "stay committed to promoting peace, stability, development and prosperity in the region and beyond, and to improving the people's wellbeing."

The East Asia Summit also included the leaders of Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan and others.

Biden raised human rights concerns in Cambodia when he met with Hun Sen on Saturday. In a statement after the meeting, the White House said Biden urged the prime minister — an authoritarian ruler in a nominally democratic nation — to "reopen civic and political space" before its 2023 elections.

Biden, according to the White House, also pushed Hun Sen to release activists including Theary Seng, a Cambodian-American lawyer who was convicted of treason. Biden also raised concerns about activities at Ream Naval Base, whose expansion Cambodian officials have described as a collaborative effort between it and China.

Another topic Biden focused on was Myanmar, where the military overthrew the civilian government in February 2021 and arrested its democratically elected leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. As he met with Hun Sen, Biden stressed that the U.S. was committed to the return of democracy in Myanmar, which had steadily headed toward a democratic form of governance before the takeover.

ASEAN has been struggling to get Myanmar to implement its five-point peace plan. The group has already banned leaders of Myanmar, a member state, from participating in its top-level events, such as the Phnom Penh summit.

ASEAN's plan calls for the immediate cessation of violence, a dialogue among all parties, mediation by an ASEAN special envoy, provision of humanitarian aid and a visit to Myanmar by the special envoy to meet all sides. Myanmar's government initially agreed to the plan but has made little effort to implement it.

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ASEAN leaders agreed on a plan Friday that largely puts the onus on the upcoming Indonesian chairmanship of the group to develop measurable indicators and a timeline for Myanmar to implement the five-point consensus.

Today in History: November 14, crash kills Marshall team

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Nov. 14, the 318th day of 2022. There are 47 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 14, 1970, a chartered Southern Airways DC-9 crashed while trying to land in West Virginia, killing all 75 people on board, including the Marshall University football team and its coaching staff.

On this date:

In 1851, Herman Melville's novel "Moby-Dick; Or, The Whale" was published in the United States, almost a month after being released in Britain.

In 1910, Eugene B. Ely became the first aviator to take off from a ship as his Curtiss pusher rolled off a sloping platform on the deck of the scout cruiser USS Birmingham off Hampton Roads, Virginia.

In 1915, African-American educator Booker T. Washington, 59, died in Tuskegee, Alabama.

In 1940, during World War II, German planes destroyed most of the English town of Coventry.

In 1965, the U.S. Army's first major military operation of the Vietnam War began with the start of the five-day Battle of Ia Drang. (The fighting between American troops and North Vietnamese forces ended on Nov. 18 with both sides claiming victory.)

In 1969, Apollo 12 blasted off for the moon.

In 1972, the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed above the 1,000 level for the first time, ending the day at 1,003.16.

In 1973, Britain's Princess Anne married Captain Mark Phillips in Westminster Abbey. (They divorced in 1992, and Anne remarried.)

In 1996, singer Michael Jackson married his plastic surgeon's nurse, Debbie Rowe, in a ceremony in Sydney, Australia. (Rowe filed for divorce in 1999.)

In 1997, a jury in Fairfax, Virginia, decided that Pakistani national Aimal Khan Kasi (eye-MAHL' kahn KAH'-see) should get the death penalty for gunning down two CIA employees outside agency headquarters. (Five years later on this date, Aimal Khan Kasi was executed.)

In 2013, former Boston crime boss James "Whitey" Bulger was led off to prison to begin serving a life sentence at 84 for his murderous reign in the 1970s and '80s. (Bulger was killed Oct. 30, 2018, hours after arriving at a federal prison in West Virginia.)

In 2020, Donald Trump supporters unwilling to accept Democrat Joe Biden's election victory gathered in cities across the country including Washington, D.C., where thousands rallied; after night fell in the nation's capital, demonstrators favoring Trump clashed in the streets with counterprotesters, resulting in injuries to demonstrators and police officers and charges against nearly two dozen people.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama, in his first news conference since winning a second term, challenged congressional Republicans to let taxes rise on the wealthiest Americans, saying that would ease the threat of another recession as the nation faced a "fiscal cliff." Israel said it had killed the leader of Hamas' military wing in a wave of airstrikes launched in response to days of rocket fire out of Hamas-ruled Gaza. Baseball's Cy Young Awards went to Tampa Bay's David Price in the American League and R.A. Dickey of the New York Mets in the National League.

Five years ago: Three UCLA basketball players who'd been detained in China on suspicion of shoplifting returned home; they were then indefinitely suspended from the team. Papa John's Pizza apologized for comments made by CEO John Schnatter (SHNAH'-tur), who had blamed sluggish pizza sales on NFL players kneeling during the national anthem. House Speaker Paul Ryan said the House would require anti-harassment and anti-discrimination training for all members and their staffs; the announcement came

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hours after two female lawmakers spoke about sexual misconduct involving sitting members of Congress.

One year ago: A 9-year-old Dallas boy became the youngest person to die from injuries sustained during a crowd surge at the Astroworld music festival in Houston nine days earlier; a family attorney said Ezra Blount died at a Houston hospital, where he'd been placed in a medically induced coma after he suffered serious injuries in the crush of fans during a performance by rapper Travis Scott. (The crowd surge left 10 people dead.) Libya's election agency said Seif al-Islam, the son and one-time heir apparent of late Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi, had announced his candidacy for the country's December presidential election.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Kathleen Hughes is 94. Former NASA astronaut Fred Haise is 89. Composer Wendy Carlos is 83. Britain's King Charles III is 74. Rock singer-musician James Young (Styx) is 73. Singer Stephen Bishop is 71. Blues musician Anson Funderburgh is 68. Pianist Yanni is 68. Former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is 68. Former presidential adviser Valerie Jarrett is 66. Actor Laura San Giacomo (JEE'-ah-koh-moh) is 61. Actor D.B. Sweeney is 61. Rapper Reverend Run (Run-DMC) is 58. Actor Patrick Warburton is 58. Rock musician Nic Dalton is 58. Country singer Rockie Lynne is 58. Pop singer Jeanette Jurado (Expose) is 57. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher Curt Schilling is 56. Rock musician Brian Yale is 54. Rock singer Butch Walker is 53. Actor Josh Duhamel (du-MEHL') is 50. Rock musician Travis Barker is 47. Contemporary Christian musician Robby Shaffer is 47. Actor Brian Dietzen is 45. Rapper Shyheim is 45. Rock musician Tobin Esperance (Papa Roach) is 43. Actor Olga Kurylenko is 43. Actor-comedian Vanessa Bayer is 41. Actor Russell Tovey is 41. New York Mets shortstop Francisco Lindor is 29. Actor Cory Michael Smith is 36. Actor Graham Patrick Martin is 31. NHL forward Taylor Hall is 31.