

# Groton Daily Independent

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**We will have more Veteran's Day Program photos in tomorrow's edition**

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## Groton Community Calendar

### 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

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,

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



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 fresh fruit, breadstick.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, chips.

Emmanuel Lutheran: WELCA "Praise & Thanksgiving" - Program: Sarah, Hostess: Nigeria.

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

State A Volleyball Tourney in Sioux Falls

**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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## Groton City Council Meeting Agenda November 15, 2022 – 7:00pm City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

- Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
- Carnival of Silver Skates Continued Discussion
  - Purchase Tarp for Pond
- Minutes
- Bills
- October Finance Report
- Change Order #1 – Dahme Construction
- Pay Request #1 – Maguire Iron
- Approval of Utility Easement for Airport
- Approval of Aid to Construction Contract for Airport with Northern Electric Cooperative, Inc.
- Park Bathroom Continued Discussion
- Second Reading of Ordinance #763 – 2023 Salary Ordinance
- Second Reading of Ordinance #764 – 2023 Appropriations
- Holiday Lighting Contest – December 10th - \$100, \$75, & \$50 utility bill credits to be given away
- Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
- Hire Skating Rink Employees
- Adjournment

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## American Legion Auxiliary news for Groton Unit 39

Three unit members, Wendy Cooper, Tami Zimney and Jan Seibel distributed toy soldiers and ALA coloring pages to trick or treaters during Groton's annual downtown event on October 31.

Unit 39 member and District Four president, Jan Seibel, hosted a continuous member pot-luck at the American Legion hall on November 7. Eight of the 15 honorees attended the event. The night began with a pot-luck meal and then everyone was served cake. Next, Seibel presented eight certificates of continuous membership, and several of those members spoke about their special memories while serving our state and local veterans while being a unit member of the American Legion Auxiliary. Camryn Kurtz sang our National Anthem and "God Bless the USA." Word bingo was played and seven prizes were won. In closing, each member was given a long stemmed rose from Unit 39 for Make a Difference Day.

Turkey party is on November 19. Kitchen opens at 5:30 and cake walk and BINGO start at 6:30. Members, please have a cake to the kitchen by 6.

Veterans Day is November 11 and unit 39 will be presenting five quilts of honor to Thomas Belden, Bob Voss, Stanley Monson, Edward Stauch, and Charles Robinson. Program starts at 2. Guest speaker will be Doc. T from DTOM Ranch.



### Auxiliary Members Recognized

Front Row, L to R: Patricia Larson 40 yrs, Carol Dohman 42 yrs., Gertrude Erickson 60 yrs., and Charlean Erickson 49 yrs.

Back row L to R: Lisa Pray 40 yrs, Tami Zimney 55 yrs., Michele Everson 45 yrs., and Dawn Monson 47 yrs.

Other members recognized but not present: LaVonne Helmer 67 yrs, Jean Walter 62 yrs, Debra McKiver 62 yrs, Tracey Anderson 54 yrs., Beverly McGannon 51 yrs, Ruby Luce 49 yrs, and Mary Flihs 45 yrs. (Courtesy Photo)



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**Below, everyone gathered together for a photo with the Auxiliary Members that were recognized.** (Courtesy Photos)

**Working at the Downtown Trick and Treat event were Wendy Cooper, Tami Zimney, and Jan Seibel.** (Courtesy Photo)





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

November 14, 2022

**High School 1968 Addition Boiler Replacement.** The boilers are in and installation is nearly complete. We are waiting for the arrival of parts required for exhaust.

**Fiber Replacement Project.** We are working with three vendors to solicit quotes for the replacement of internal fiber runs in each school building and the fiber line between the two facilities. This is part of our ESSER grant proposal. We anticipate being able to choose a vendor and proceed prior to Thanksgiving for the work to begin in the spring of 2022 and be completed prior to the start of school in August 2023.

**School Cancellation Communications [Handout].** Last week, there were problems with the communications sent out regarding school cancellation. Thursday morning was particularly problematic in sending out voice phone calls. The problem was identified and rectified by our vendor by mid-morning but too late to be helpful for that morning.

There are many ways to hear of school cancellations, some of which may be more dependable than voice phone calls. We would encourage folks to use multiple methods to get their information.

**Region V Superintendent Meeting – October 26.** On October 26, I attended the Region V Superintendent meeting in Roscoe, SD. Dr. Swartos from the SDHSAA was there to discuss issues related to high school activities. We talked about open enrollments for alternative instruction students and the differing legal positions that we were presented with last fall. Dr. Swartos also presented a proposal for a constitutional amendment addressing Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) for high school student-athletes.

## Bids to be let for MS/HS air conditioning

There was discussion on air conditioning for the Arena and other areas of the middle/high school building. The air handlers in the Arena will work for air conditioning; thus, saving a considerable amount of money from having a total replacement. Superintendent Joe Schwan said the estimate for the project is now about \$750,000 instead of \$1.2 million. Bids will be published and bid specs put together with an opening date December 8 at 2 p.m.

The roof analysis summary was presented. Priority A repairs for the MS/HS was \$19,139 which also includes \$90 for a small repair on the elementary building. Priority B repairs recommended for FY2022 was \$8,451. For FY2023, two sections of the elementary school re-roofing was \$177,100 each. The cost of the report was \$900. The project was deferred to the building and grounds committee for their recommendations.

Schwan reported about the issue with the phone calls not going out last Thursday for the school closing due to the weather. He reported to the board that this is the third vendor that the district has had since he has been here and there has been issues with all of the vendors. Schwan said the app is the most reliable. The information is also relayed to various media outlets.

The board accepted the resignation of Emily Eichler as first grade teacher at the end of this school year. She has been a teacher for 15 years in Groton. The job will be posted in January 2023.

The board hired Amanda Tarpein as food service staff for 3.5 hours per day at a rate of \$14 per hour. Both the high school and elementary food service inspection report was given and both were given a perfect score of 100.

The following were approved as volunteer assistant coaches: Wrestling were Troy Zoellner, Wyatt Locke, Jeremy Krueger and Chris Ehresmann; girls' basketball was Becky Hearnen and boys' basketball is Jesse Zak.

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## Principal's Report

### MS/HS Building

Mrs. Sombke

November 14, 2022

#### 1) Enrollment

##### 2022 November Enrollment

6 43

7 47

8 37

MS Total= 127

9 46

10 48

11 42

12 39

HS Total= 175

MS+HS=Total Enrollment

127+175=302 MS/HS Building

#### 2) Teacher Effectiveness MS/HS

a) Group A: 15 Certified Teachers: 7 Non-Continuing and 8 Continuing

b) Group B: 8 Certified Teacher

c) Both Group A and Group B Teachers have completed the Self-Assessment. Group A Teachers have completed SLO #1 and SLO #2 and have scheduled or completed their first formal evaluation. Non-continuing certified teachers will complete two formal classroom evaluations, and certified continuing certified teachers will complete one formal classroom evaluation.

d) Both Group A and Group B will have four informal classroom observations throughout the school year.

#### 3) Groton Area School District Mission Statement

a) MS/HS Staff have worked to include and refer to our Groton Area School Mission Statement while planning instruction, and to create a visual display of our Mission Statement for their classroom or area. Groton Area School Mission Statement:



“The Groton Area School will foster a climate conducive to learning by encouraging good behavior and citizenship, good attendance, a thirst for knowledge, and high academic standards. Teachers will employ strategies and approaches to instruction to meet the needs of all children assigned to them. With proper motivation and instruction, all children can learn.” (Groton Area School District, 2022).

b) Mrs. Tietz/Family and Consumer Instructor- added color and font changes to enhance individual words and phrases which helped to emphasize overall meaning of our Groton Area Mission Statement.

#### **4) Increase Positive Communication MS/HS Building**

a) MS/HS Staff have been working to look for and identify our students “being good”!

b) “Caught You Being Good” took on a new look at the beginning of the 22-23 school year as we are now using a post-card to recognize and honor our students good work and behavior.

c) Please join us in looking for “good work”, either from our student or staff, and simply complete and drop off in the school office and we’ll address and mail the notification for you!

d) Research supports and demonstrates that increasing the acknowledgement of positive behaviors helps to support a decrease in negative behaviors within a formal school setting (Health Education Journal, 2018).

#### **5) Dual Credit Registration**

a) Groton Area High School Requirements: Student must be a junior or senior, and GPA must be 3.0 or higher

b) SD Board of Regents Requirements: Juniors-ACT of 24 or rank in the upper one-third of graduating class and GPA of 3.5. Seniors- ACT of 21 or rank in upper one-third of graduating class and GPA of 3.25

c) Juniors may enroll in up to two Dual Credit Courses and Seniors may enroll in up to four Dual Credit Courses

d) Dual Credit Permissions Packet and Criteria: completed at the beginning of each semester

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*Groton Area School District Mission Statement:*

Each school will foster a **climate** conducive to *learning* by **encouraging** good behavior and citizenship, good attendance, a *thirst* for **knowledge**, and high academic standards. **Teachers** will employ *strategies* and **APPROACHES** to instruction to meet the *needs* of all **children** assigned to them. With proper motivation and *instruction*, all children can **learn**.



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Brett Schwan  
Elementary Principal  
Nov 14, 2022

## 1. Enrollment

- a. JK-21
- b. KG-39 (+1)
- c. 1st-44
- d. 2nd-43
- e. 3rd-47
- f. 4th-53
- g. 5th-39
- h. PS – 11

2. **SASD LEADERSHIP ACADEMY '23.** Our next meeting will be held in Pierre on November 30<sup>th</sup>. During this session we will be focusing on leading others and how our leadership style/personality impacts how we work with others. After having a better idea of what kind of leader I am, I'm looking forward to how I can apply this when working with staff, students, and families.
3. **MAP Growth Assessment:** Our middle of the year Growth Assessment will be open starting on November 21. Most teachers like to have this completed before we dismiss for break.
4. **OST Fundraiser:** We will still be accepting fundraiser packets for the next couple of days. We encourage students to sell as much coffee as possible!!!
5. **STEM Room:** As of last week our stem room is up and running. Some of the activities we have include osmos, robots, spheros, lego WeDo 2.0, circuit boards, craft/building, mouse coding, etc. Mrs. Lipp will be having the room open each morning for assigned classes. Occasionally, she will bring classes down during their keyboarding time. Teachers can also check out the room when it is available.
6. **Title IX Training:** This training will be offered by KSB Law. This training is a comprehensive, one day training which certifies attendees in ALL possible roles in the Title IX process: Title IX Coordinator, Investigator, Decision-Maker, Appellate Decision-Maker, and Informal Mediator.

## Business Manager's Report November 14, 2022

**Dollars and Sense Zoom Meeting with DOE** – I will be meeting with state-wide BMs and the SD DOE tomorrow morning. A couple of items to be covered include:

### I. School Finance & Annual Reporting

- ♣ FY2022 Statistical Digest Information - <https://doe.sd.gov/ofm/statdigest.aspx>
- ♣ FY2022 Annual Financial Report Data
- ♣ 2023 Legislation Website - <https://doe.sd.gov/legislature/>
- ♣ ESSA reporting – Technical assistance sessions

### II. State Aid

- ♣ State Aid Updates
  - General Aid – Fall 2022 SAFE and Preliminary Pay 2023 updates
  - Special Education Aid – Excess Fund Balances and Preliminary Pay 2023 updates
  - Sparsity Aid – will be posted after 2023 final levy information is received
- ♣ State Aid Accountabilities
  - School Finance Accountability Board Meeting – Nov 10th  
<https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=165>
  - Joint Committee on Appropriations Waiver Action
  - Teacher Compensation Accountability
  - Excess Monthly Cash Balance Accountability

**Election Workshop Training** – Likewise, here is the schedule for upcoming on-line election training: Dec 8th, Dec 15th, Mar 2nd, Mar 9th, Mar 16th, and Mar 23rd. Each session is 45-minutes in length with topics changing as we progress through the election calendar. If there is no school board election this year, the March sessions will not be needed.

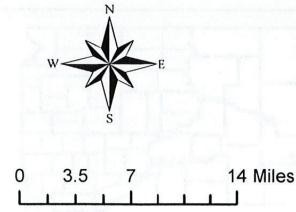
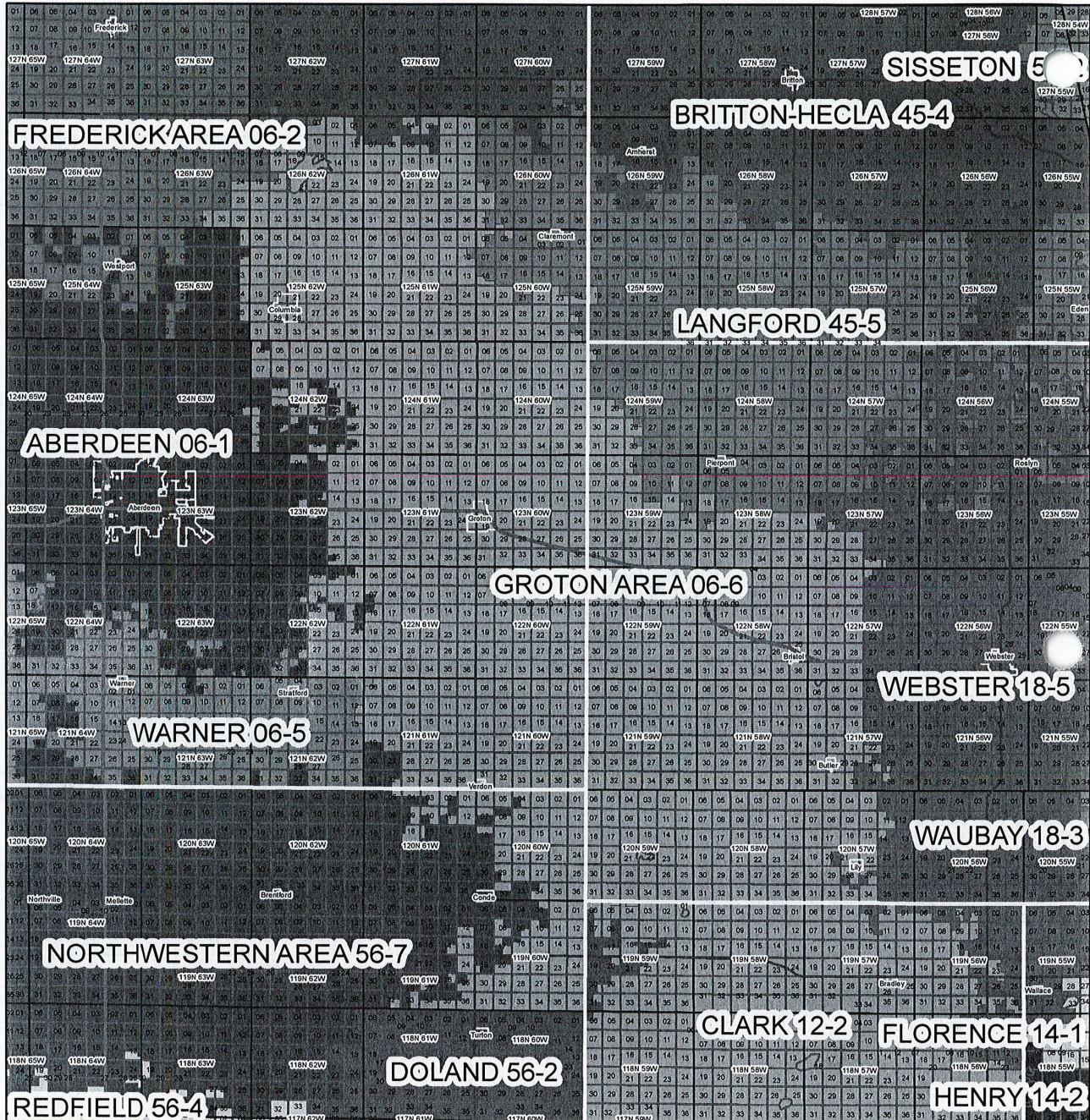


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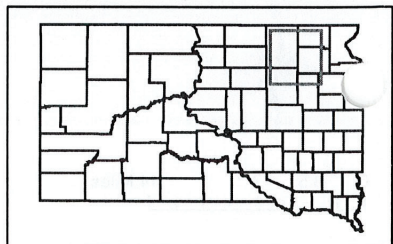
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## GROTON AREA 06-6



NOTE: THIS MAP IS FOR REFERENCE ONLY  
Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information, errors and conditions originating from the physical sources used to develop the database may be reflected in the data supplied. The end user must be aware of the data conditions and ultimately bear responsibility for the appropriate use of the information with respect to possible errors, original scale, collection methodology, currency of data, and other conditions specific to certain data





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## Veterans breakfast held Monday morning hosted by the Groton Area Elementary School.

(Courtesy Photos by Bruce Babcock)





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**Aaron Grant and Bruce Babcock posted the colors at the Veteran's Program held Monday.**

(Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)

**Many families attended the Groton Area Veterans Day program. Karyn and Bruce Babcock with grandchildren Rylan and Emery Blackwood.** (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Ethics panel moves to subpoena DCI records on Noem's state airplane use

**Complaint resulted in no criminal charges, remains open with Government Accountability Board**

**BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 14, 2022 4:01 PM**

A trio of retired judges voted on Monday to subpoena a Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) report on Gov. Kristi Noem's use of state aircraft.

The Government Accountability Board (GAB) voted 3-1 in favor of the subpoena after meeting in a closed executive session to discuss complaint 2021-04, the numerical tag attached to the complaint on state airplane use. The complaint, like all initial complaints to the GAB, is not a matter of public record.

The investigative record is necessary to determine if an ethical violation has taken place. If the board makes that determination, the governor would have an opportunity to respond during a contested case hearing.

Former Chief Justice of the South Dakota Supreme Court Justice David Gilbertson had recused himself from the complaint earlier this year, leaving retired Justice Lori Wilbur and retired circuit court judges David Gienapp and Gene Paul Kean to vote on the subpoena Monday.

The report exists because of a vote the board took in August, which forwarded the question of state airplane use to the DCI.

Attorney General Mark Vargo, appointed to the post by Gov. Noem after Jason Ravensborg's removal from office, recused himself from the case. That left any potential charging decisions in the hands of Hughes County State's Attorney Jessica LaMie.

LaMie and the DCI recently concluded that no criminal charges would flow from the accusation that Noem had used state aircraft for reasons aside from official state business. LaMie also concluded that a complaint on allegedly doctored flight logs was "frivolous."

The board has yet to determine if any non-criminal action is warranted. After the 15 minute closed-door hearing, Gienapp said that the board had "requested but not received" the report from LaMie and the DCI.

"In order to fulfill our obligations ... I would move we authorize a subpoena for the investigative report prepared by the DCI and state's attorney," Gienapp said.

Another complaint against Noem, focused on whether the governor abused her authority to help daughter Kassidy Peters obtain an appraiser's license, has been "partially dismissed and partially closed." That leaves open the possibility of a contested case hearing on that complaint.

Ian Fury, a spokesperson for Gov. Noem, did not immediately respond to a request for comment, nor did Vargo spokesperson Stewart Huntington.



**JOHN HULT**  

John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux falls Argus Leader.



## 'Workforce behind the workforce': Businesses, organizations tackle child care in new program

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - NOVEMBER 14, 2022 1:12 PM

The child care crisis is, above all else, a workforce crisis in South Dakota.

Gov. Kristi Noem addressed it as such on the campaign trail, and Sioux Falls Mayor Paul Tenhaken says it's one of the most common issues presented to him in recent years.

But it hasn't been treated as a "crisis" by businesses or state and local governments until recently, said Kayla Klein, executive director with Early Learner South Dakota.

Child care providers across the state have struggled for years to keep their rooms staffed, their doors open and their rates affordable.

The COVID pandemic brought the issue to a head when child care providers closed temporarily on and off during the pandemic. Businesses were left without workers as parents chose to stay home or forgo the workplace altogether because of rising child care costs.

The issue persists today.

"Child care is the workforce behind the workforce," Klein said.

It's impossible to have a strong workforce in South Dakota without supporting child care providers, Klein said, since more than 75% of children are in families with working parents. There are only enough licensed and registered child care providers in the state to satisfy 64% of the need.

### Collaborative aims for solutions

Businesses, local chambers of commerce and others are now part of the conversation.

South Dakota is one of nine states to take part in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and Bipartisan Policy Center's Early Childhood and Business Advisory Council. Each state brings together local chambers of commerce with key stakeholders, including state and local early childhood advocates, business owners and state administrators, to search for solutions in communities where barriers to child care exist.

South Dakota's Child Care Business Collaborative will launch its first meetings on Dec. 8 at Avera Health in Sioux Falls and Dec. 20 at Elevate Rapid City.

The meetings will focus on the child care landscape and child care's unprofitable business models. They'll also explore possible solutions and efforts already underway in urban areas like Rapid City and Sioux Falls and rural areas like the 300-person town of Bison.

Some examples include creating space for on-site daycare at business offices or businesses paying a portion of their employees' child care fees directly to the provider as a benefit.

"Businesses want to find solutions just as much, if not more, than the child care field," Klein said.

### Partners explore childcare benefits

Avera Health is one of South Dakota's largest employers. Lindsey Meyers, vice president of communications, said the organization is attending because "quality, consistent child care is important to many working parents who choose careers in healthcare." Over 80% of Avera employees are women, in a state that has the highest percentage of working mothers.

"We want to infuse conversations with the perspectives of our health care employees as hospitals and long-term care centers are open 24/7/365," Meyers said in an emailed statement. "Parents need the support of child care, so they can concentrate their attention on caring for our patients while they are at work, knowing their children are in good hands."

The healthcare system offers family benefits, paid time off packages and a minimum of \$17 an hour pay. Meyers hopes to share information with businesses and learn from others during the collaborative process.

At the state level, the Department of Social Services awarded \$32 million of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to over 600 child care providers in the state in early 2022, and the department is working on plans for another \$38 million allotted to the DSS during the last legislative session. Gov. Kristi Noem met with child care providers across the state this summer to discuss challenges they face and solutions the state government can bring to the table at the 2023 legislative session.

It's worth noting, Klein added, that there isn't a state department dedicated to early learning for children ages 0 to 5.

"DSS handles child care licensing and, to some degree, quality. The DOE handles birth to 3 years in special needs, but that's the only time they get involved before 5," Klein said. "There's no one in the government dedicated to looking out for all kids prenatal to age 5."

That's where businesses can step up, she said.



**MAKENZIE HUBER** ✉️ 🐦

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.

## 'Absolutely insane': Cascade County Election Official says cops called after skeptics escalate

**BY: NICOLE GIRTEN - NOVEMBER 14, 2022  
5:21 PM**

GREAT FALLS, MONTANA — Law enforcement was called Friday after a group of election integrity skeptics in Cascade County escalated tactics, circling the county office and waiting for election officials and staff to come outside, according to County Clerk and Recorder Rina Moore.

The last year already had been an "absolute nightmare" for her and her elections staff because the skeptics called for the hand counting of paper ballots, among other unrealistic demands, Moore said.

Moore said Friday, the group waited for Moore and her staff, along with election observers from both parties, in the parking lot after they had been working to prepare provisional ballots to be counted Monday along with military ballots and ballots that may need to have signature issues resolved if they don't match or a voter forgot to sign.

The doors were locked as it was a holiday, and Moore said they didn't want them unlocked with no one else in the building. But she said people called her staff and said they thought it was strange employees were in the office on Friday and "we just want to make sure you're not fixing this election for

## 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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Rina.”

Moore was up for re-election as Clerk and Recorder and is behind her opponent, Sandra Merchant, by 20 votes, according to the Secretary of State’s website.

Merchant did not respond to an interview request this week about her race. Saturday, she did not immediately respond to a voicemail or text message about whether she was aware of the group circling the building or had worked with any of them.

Moore said the group took videos and photos of staff along with their car license plate numbers and that the Cascade County Sheriff’s Office was called.

“They’re horrible people,” Moore said. “They circled our building. We just kept seeing a white car going up and down, you know, by the alley over and over again. There was a guy out there in camouflage.”

Since-debunked conspiracies around election integrity took off around the U.S. after former President Donald Trump denied election results in 2020.

In Montana, a work group made up of representatives from organizations and stakeholders across the state, including legislators from both parties, found Montana’s election system to be safe and secure. The group also created a website with the information from the FAQ at <https://votinginmontana.org/>.

Moore said the Sheriff’s Office told her and her staff to keep their heads down and not engage the group, and to call law enforcement immediately if they need help. Staff are afraid, she said, in some cases fearing the activity will escalate to physical violence.

Moore said after four complaints were made to the County Attorney’s Office regarding the election, the Sheriff’s Office was called on Wednesday to escort the van carrying ballots from the Exhibition Hall at Montana ExpoPark, where ballots were cast, across town to her office. She said it was a first for unopened ballots in the 16 years she’s been doing the job.

The Sheriff’s Office did not immediately respond for comment.

“They have no idea what the process is, they don’t want to ask, they just want to accuse,” Moore said. “These people are absolutely insane.”

Moore said when the last ballots are counted Monday, attorneys, all three county commissioners and at least two deputies from the Sheriff’s Office will be in attendance.



## NICOLE GIRTEN

Nicole Girten is a reporter for the Daily Montanan. She previously worked at the Great Falls Tribune as a government watchdog reporter. She holds a degree from Florida State University and a Master of Science from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

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## COMMENTARY

### **Social studies standards a new version of 'kill the Indian, save the man'**

**Patty Bordeaux Nelson**

What does it say when, during a time of deep and troubling news on the high number of deaths at the boarding schools used to assimilate D/N/Lakota children, that Gov. Kristi Noem would hire a Christian-school consultant to shape a working committee for new South Dakota social studies standards?

This reads as a violation of church and state, as well as a new brand of "kill the Indian, save the man," by the State of South Dakota. These new standards have removed many references about the Oceti Sakowin Oyate that former working groups had added. They also push a form of American exceptionalism and Western civilization that is a dog whistle for American white hegemony and supremacy.

Many of us question the SD Department of Education workgroup that made these changes. We must ask if the Oceti Sakowin Oyate was invited to the table to discuss. We must ask if the removal of Oceti Sakowin education was influenced by South Dakota Governor Noem's statement supporting "honest, patriotic, education that cultivates in our children a profound love for our country." Noem has also stated that "the state must do a better job educating teachers on civics, that the U.S. has failed to educate generations of children about what makes America unique, and that the left is indoctrinating students."

It is important that we as the Oceti Sakowin Oyate ask what the governor's words really mean. It appears that these words may be the influencing factor to the removal of the Oceti Sakowin from social studies curriculum.

In Noem's statement, "honest, patriotic, education that cultivates in our children a profound love for our country;" we must ask who are "our children"? If "our children" includes the Oceti Sakowin children, then it is of utmost importance to teach Oceti Sakowin curriculum. Furthermore, if one is to speak of "patriotism," be reminded that many Oceti Sakowin Oyate fought and died in all the wars that the United States entered in. In WWI, the Oceti Sakowin went to fight for the United States when citizenship, ironically, had not yet been granted. It would not be granted until 1924. These United States are our Indigenous homelands, and we have a profound love for I'na Maka (Mother Earth). We ask, has the social studies curriculum ever taught about our shared "honest, patriotic" love for "our" country? The words "our children" must include all children; therefore, including the history of all children.

If Noem is dedicated to doing a "better job educating teachers on civics, that the U.S. has failed to educate generations of children about what makes America unique," we ask "what about generations of Oceti Sakowin children?" For generations, social studies did not teach about Oceti Sakowin. Finally, after years of advocating, Oceti Sakowin curriculum was given to schools. It was not legislated for all schools to use, but it was progress in bridging the gap between Oceti Sakowin and white South Dakota. Now, with these statements by the governor and the actions taken by the social studies workgroup, there is a dark regression to a time of attempting to eradicate the Oceti Sakowin. We, Oceti Sakowin Oyate have survived horrific times; we are still here, and we will survive this, too.

We must ask why at this time is there this push to eliminate Oceti Sakowin education? The question that must be asked of those who support this: is it fear; and what is it that you fear? Secondly, is it shame? Is the truth of history too much shame to face?

We as Oceti Sakowin Oyate have carried the wounds of our historical trauma. Most recently, Oceti Sakowin youth and children were returned home to Rosebud, South Dakota, from the Carlise Boarding School, Pennsylvania, to be buried in the I'na Maka (Mother Earth) of their homelands. There are more Indigenous children yet to be returned home all across this nation. This bringing home of the Oceti Sakowin children is a step toward our healing.

History cannot be ignored. The attempt to eliminate Oceti Sakowin education from the social studies curriculum will not change or erase history. It is only by all being willing to face the true facts of history can all begin to heal.

In closing, we ask that the social studies workgroup reconsider the actions that have been taken. We also ask that Oceti Sakowin Oyate representative(s) be invited to the table for an open respectful honest dialogue.

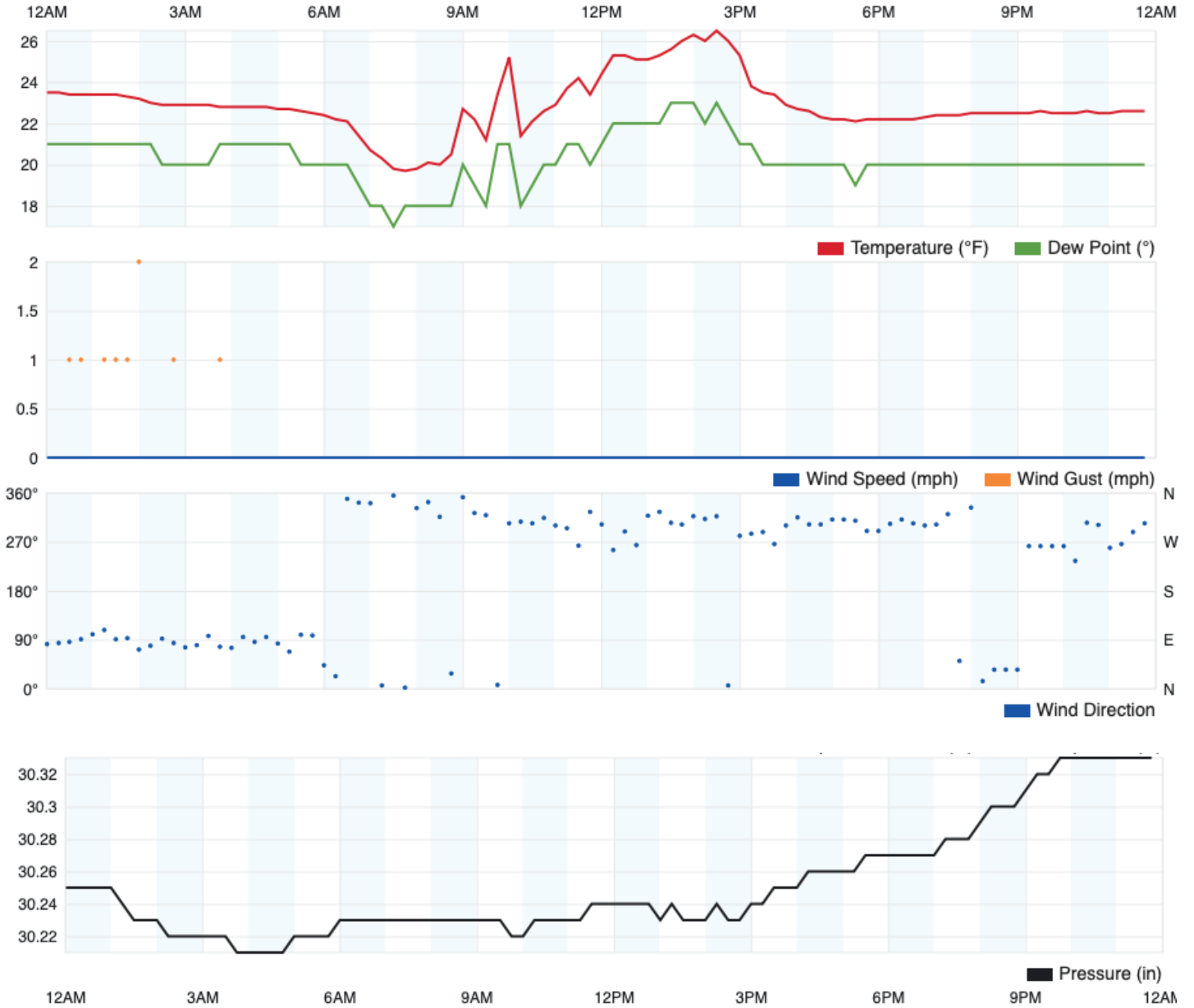
Pilamiyaye (Thank you).



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

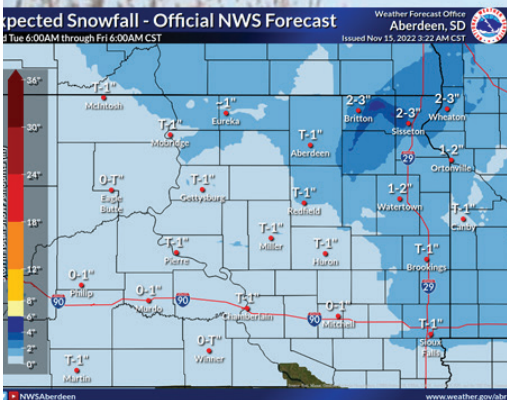


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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
 60%	 20%	 50%	 30%	 30%		
Snow Likely	Slight Chance Snow then Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny then Chance Snow	Chance Snow	Chance Snow and Patchy Blowing Snow	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 24 °F	Low: 4 °F	High: 23 °F	Low: 11 °F	High: 18 °F	Low: -1 °F	High: 15 °F

**Snow, Strong Winds And Cold Wind Chills**  
Between 6AM Tuesday and 6AM Friday, a couple more of rounds of light snow will be possible, with upwards of an inch of snow accumulation possible with each event.



These snowfall amounts represent a 3-day total forecast

Highest Potential For Blowing Snow/Power Interruptions

	11/16 Wed		11/17 Thu		11/18 Fri		11/19 Sat	
	6am	12pm	6am	12pm	6am	12pm	6pm	12am
Aberdeen	20	24	30	38	39	29	23	24
Britton	21	24	33	39	39	36	30	23
Eagle Butte	21	35	31	38	41	46	43	28
Eureka	18	28	38	40	43	38	29	23
Gettysburg	21	28	26	36	43	45	41	29
Kennebec	23	26	28	35	45	46	44	29
McIntosh	26	36	31	38	44	47	43	26
Milbank	26	21	20	29	35	35	36	33
Miller	23	24	23	31	43	43	39	26
Mobridge	17	28	28	36	39	43	40	23
Murdo	22	31	28	32	45	46	46	29
Pierre	16	25	24	30	39	41	41	25
Redfield	23	21	23	31	41	41	37	28
Sisseton	26	25	24	32	36	37	36	35
Watertown	26	23	22	31	37	38	37	33
Webster	26	28	25	36	41	44	40	36
Wheaton	24	18	17	28	31	31	32	28

Highest Potential For Bitterly Cold Wind Chill Values

	11/17 Thu		11/18 Fri		11/19 Sat		11/20 Sun	
	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm
Aberdeen	2	-2	-3	-10	-13	-4	-5	-6
Britton	0	-2	-4	-9	-14	-15	-8	-8
Eagle Butte	-6	-11	-12	-19	-20	-7	-7	-12
Eureka	-6	-8	-9	-15	-19	-10	-11	-14
Gettysburg	-5	-9	-10	-18	-20	-10	-10	-12
Kennebec	2	-4	-5	-14	-15	-14	-3	-5
McIntosh	-8	-13	-11	-20	-21	-11	-11	-14
Milbank	5	1	-2	-6	-10	-11	-6	-5
Miller	0	-3	-5	-13	-17	-4	-3	-11
Mobridge	1	-3	-4	-12	-13	-2	-3	-6
Murdo	0	-8	-8	-16	-17	-2	-6	-9
Pierre	4	-3	-3	-11	-12	-3	-2	-5
Redfield	1	-2	-2	-10	-15	-4	-5	-8
Sisseton	4	0	-2	-7	-12	-7	-5	-8
Watertown	2	-2	-5	-9	-14	-9	-8	-9
Webster	0	-4	-5	-10	-14	-10	-8	-10
Wheaton	2	0	-2	-6	-12	-8	-6	-8

Visit [www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr) for a detailed local forecast

Updated: 11/15/2022 5:08 AM CST

Additional rounds of light snowfall are expected this week. Between today and Friday morning, the grand total amount of snow accumulation from these minor snow events could tally 1 to 3 inches. Strong northwest winds heading into Thursday could create some areas of blowing snow. Areas that still have significant ice coating surfaces could see additional tree damage as a result, perhaps even some power interruptions. With the cold air being reinforced Thursday into Friday, some areas could see wind chill values dropping to 20 below zero or lower.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 27 °F at 2:34 PM

Low Temp: 20 °F at 7:37 AM

Wind: 2 mph at 1:55 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 33 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 72 in 1953

Record Low: -8 in 1900

Average High: 43°F

Average Low: 20°F

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.42

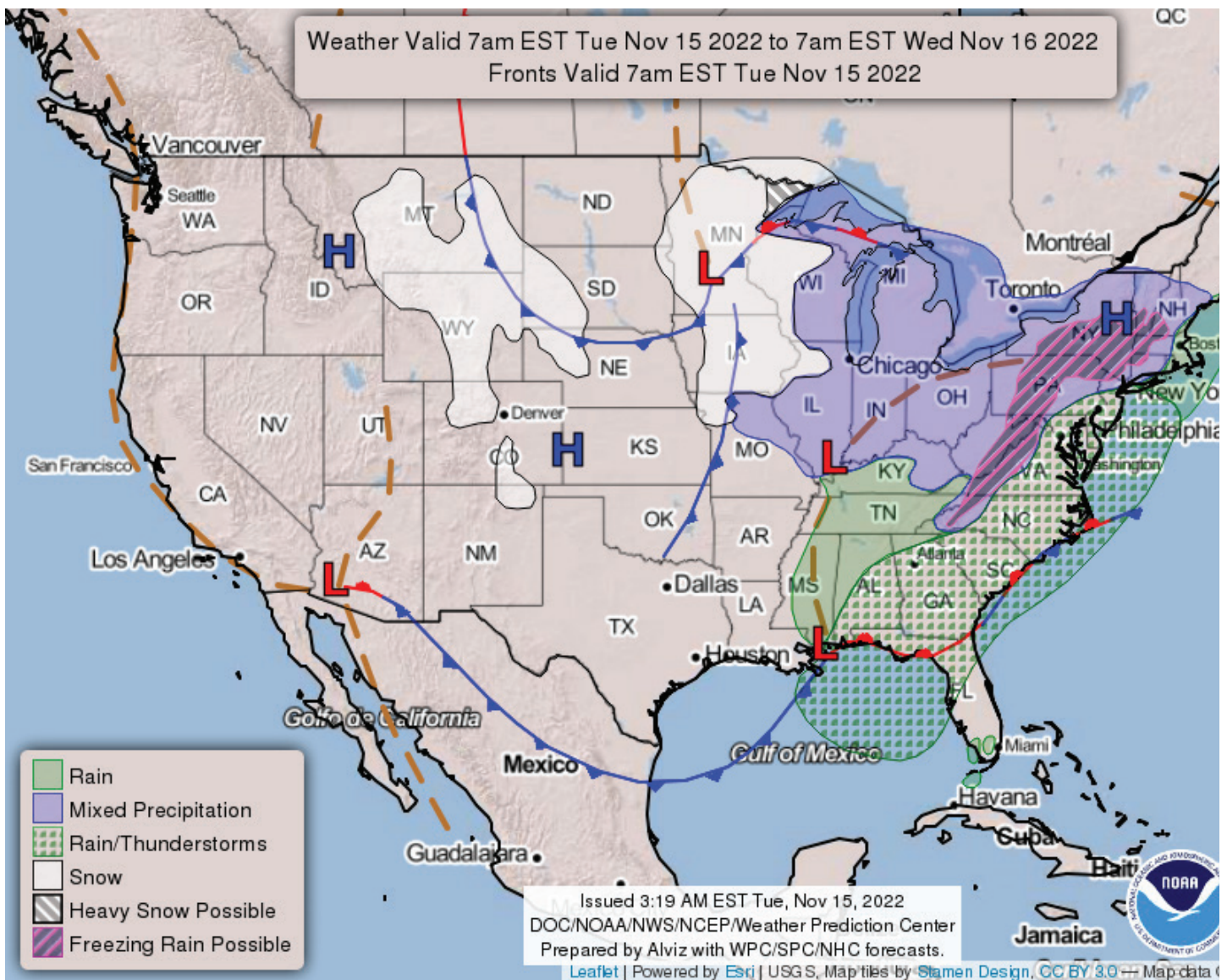
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 20.89

Precip Year to Date: 16.50

Sunset Tonight: 5:04:01 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:31:23 AM



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## Today in Weather History

November 15, 1988: A mixture of sleet, freezing rain and snow fell from north central South Dakota into west central Minnesota before changing over to all snow by the afternoon of the 15th. Snow continued across Minnesota during the morning hours on the 16th, along with increasing winds. The winds and falling snow created near zero visibility due to blowing snow in the northwest and west central Minnesota. A 60 mph wind gust was recorded in Morris, MN. Snow and blowing snow blocked roads, caused power outages and closed schools. Snow in many locations accumulated over a sheet of ice that coated roads from preceding rainfall.

1900 - A record lake-effect snowstorm at Watertown, NY, produced 45 inches in 24 hours. The storm total was 49 inches. (14th-15th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1967 - A surprise snow and ice coating paralyzed Boston during the evening rush hour. (David Ludlum)

1987: On November 15 and 16, intense thunderstorms rumbled through the South-Central US producing 49 tornadoes in Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi during a 34 hour period. Of the 49 tornadoes, four were F3, 12 were F2, 27 were F1, and 6 were F0. These severe storms caused 11 deaths and 303 injuries. This storm system also brought heavy rain to central Louisiana where five stations recorded over 10 inches in 24 hours. The highest amount was 14.22 inches at Olla on the 16.

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Oklahoma and northeastern Texas to northern Indiana and southern Wisconsin from mid morning through the pre-dawn hours of the following day. Thunderstorms spawned forty-four tornadoes, including thirteen in Missouri, and there were more than two hundred reports of large hail or damaging winds. A tornado in central Arkansas hit Scott and Lonoke killing five people, injuring sixty others, and causing fifteen million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along a powerful cold front began to produce severe weather in the Middle Mississippi Valley before sunrise, and by early the next morning thunderstorms had spawned seventeen tornadoes east of the Mississippi River, with a total of 350 reports of severe weather. There were one hundred reports of damaging winds in Georgia, and five tornadoes, and there were another four tornadoes in Alabama. Hardest hit was Huntsville AL where a violent tornado killed 21 persons, injured 463 others, and caused one hundred million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1996: An intense, lake effect snow event came to an end over western New York, northeastern Ohio, and northwest Pennsylvania. Chardon, Ohio was buried under 68.9 of snow over a six-day period. Edinboro, Pennsylvania checked in with 54.8 inches. 18.5 inches blanketed Cleveland, Ohio and 42 inches fell at Sherman, New York.

2005 - Severe thunderstorms produced over 30 tornadoes in 6 states, resulting in one fatality and at least 35 injuries (Associated Press). Some of the worst damage occurred in Henry county, Tennessee, where numerous homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed.

2006 - Strong winds cause severe damage at a skating rink in Montgomery, Alabama where more than 30 preschoolers were playing. Two children suffered injuries but there were no fatalities.

2007: Tropical Cyclone Sidr, a Category 4 storm on the Saffir-Simpson scale, brings torrential rain 150-mph winds and a four ft storm surge to the Bangladesh coast. At least 3200 people die, and millions are left homeless. Since records began in 1877, Sidr obtained the title of the second-strongest cyclone to make landfall in Bangladesh.



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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### OUR WONDER-WORKING GOD!

All of us know individuals whose lives have gone from pinnacles of prosperity to places of poverty. We know that temptations overtake some individuals, and they soon become enslaved and imprisoned by harmful habits. Once they were blest, but now they are in bondage. There seems to be a pattern of self-destruction that overcomes many who are not satisfied with the gifts of God. They apparently will not allow His grace and goodness to satisfy them. They always want "more!"

This is what happened to the people of Israel. It seems that the more God gave them, the less satisfied they were. Finally, their greed led them to slavery. But, thank God, their story does not end there. His love and mercy eventually brought redemption and restoration to them. When? When they repented and returned to the Covenant He made with them. God always keeps His Word.

Not only did He rescue them from their captors, but "they were laden with silver and gold." When we allow God to redeem us by His grace, His Word promises us that "It is He who will supply all of our needs from His riches in glory because of what Jesus Christ has done for us." God will honor His Word with us, as He did with Israel.

He also empowers those whom He redeems: "From among their tribes no one faltered." When God redeems us, we are called to serve Him faithfully. He has a plan for each of our lives, and that plan contains many opportunities for us to serve Him. And, for each of those opportunities He gives us, we know that He will empower us, and we will not falter or fail if we are faithful to Him.

Prayer: Father, if we have strayed from the plan You have for us, please forgive and restore us to the joy of serving You. There are no real riches but those found in You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold, and from among their tribes no one faltered. Psalm 105:37



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

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) \_ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Monday:

Lotto America

09-23-29-40-49, Star Ball: 10, ASB: 3

(nine, twenty-three, twenty-nine, forty, forty-nine; Star Ball: ten; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$30,340,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 207,000,000

Powerball

19-35-53-54-67, Powerball: 21, Power Play: 2

(nineteen, thirty-five, fifty-three, fifty-four, sixty-seven; Powerball: twenty-one; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$76,000,000

### SD Division of Criminal Investigation has a new leader

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Attorney General-Elect Marty Jackley on Monday named a former employee of the state's Division of Criminal Investigation as the agency's new leader.

Dan Saterlee previously served DCI as an administrative and a field operations assistant director. Saterlee is currently the coordinator for the South Dakota Fusion Center, an agency that compiles and analyzes criminal intelligence in support of terrorism prevention.

"Dan Saterlee's diverse experience in law enforcement, corrections, and the military has prepared him to lead the DCI as our new Director," Jackley said in making the announcement.

Saterlee will replace Chad Mosteller who served as interim director following the dismissal of DCI director David Natvig who served under Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg who was convicted on impeachment charges for his conduct following a 2020 fatal car crash.

Mosteller will return to his post as DCI's assistant director.

Gov. Kristi Noem appointed the lead prosecutor in Ravnsborg's Senate impeachment trial, Pennington County State's Attorney Mark Vargo, as interim attorney general. Vargo quickly dismissed Natvig and Ravnsborg's chief of staff, Tim Bormann, following his appointment.

Vargo will resume his duties as Pennington County State's Attorney when Jackley is sworn in on January 7, 2023.

### SD pork producers celebrate rejection of slaughterhouse ban

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Agriculture producers across South Dakota say the defeat of a proposed ban on new slaughterhouse plants in Sioux Falls is a big win for the industry and will create more options for local farmers to market their livestock.

The majority of voters in the state's largest city rejected the ban earlier this month. It allows Wholestone, a Nebraska-based pork producer, to continue with its plan to open a \$500 million plant in northeastern Sioux Falls.

"More competition is welcomed within the industry, no matter if it's on the growing end of the packer end, so we welcome the opportunity for many people," pork producer Adam Krause told KELO-TV.

The group Smart Growth Sioux Falls has been fighting Wholestone's plan since early this year, claiming that the plant would negatively affect the city's water and air quality and impact traffic and affordable housing.

Wholestone has countered those concerns by saying that the plant will be built with modern technology



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and is located in an industrial area.

The company said it would start with one shift of 1,000 employees when construction is finished in 2025 and add another shift of 1,000 to 1,200 employees later. Each shift would process about 3 million hogs per year.

"This was bigger than just pig farmers, this was bigger than agriculture as a whole. This set a very dangerous precedent for the city and surrounding cities of Sioux Falls just because if a local locker plant or small custom locker wanted to build in Sioux Falls, if this passed, they wouldn't be able to," said Krause.

Residents chose to keep growing the pork processing industry in Sioux Falls by voting 52% against the ban and 48% in favor of it.

## Walmart offers to pay \$3.1 billion to settle opioid lawsuits

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

Retail giant Walmart on Tuesday became the latest major player in the drug industry to announce a plan to settle lawsuits filed by state and local governments over the toll of powerful prescription opioids sold at its pharmacies with state and local governments across the U.S.

The \$3.1 billion proposal follows similar announcements Nov. 2 from the two largest U.S. pharmacy chains, CVS Health and Walgreen Co., which each said they would pay about \$5 billion.

Bentonville, Arkansas-based Walmart said in a statement that it "strongly disputes" allegations in lawsuits from state and local governments that its pharmacies improperly filled prescriptions for the powerful prescription painkillers. The company does not admit liability with the settlement plan.

New York Attorney General Letitia James said in a release that the company would have to comply with oversight measures, prevent fraudulent prescriptions and flag suspicious ones.

Lawyers representing local governments said the company would pay most of the settlement over the next year if it is finalized.

The deals are the product of negotiations with a group of state attorneys general, but they are not final. The CVS and Walgreens deals would have to be accepted first by a critical mass of state and local governments before they are completed. Walmart's plan would have to be approved by 43 states. The formal process has not yet begun.

The national pharmacies join some of the biggest drugmakers and drug distributors in settling complex lawsuits over their alleged roles in an opioid overdose epidemic that has been linked to more than 500,000 deaths in the U.S. over the past two decades.

The tally of proposed and finalized settlements in recent years is more than \$50 billion, with most of that to be used by governments to combat the crisis.

In the 2000s, most fatal opioid overdoses involved prescription drugs such as OxyContin and generic oxycodone. After governments, doctors and companies took steps to make them harder to obtain, people addicted to the drugs increasingly turned to heroin, which proved more deadly.

In recent years, opioid deaths have soared to record levels around 80,000 a year. Most of those deaths involve illicitly produced version of the powerful lab-made drug fentanyl, which is appearing throughout the U.S. supply of illegal drugs.

## Zelenskyy: Battle for Kherson was D-Day-like watershed

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday likened the recapture of the southern city of Kherson to the Allied landings in France on D-Day in World War II, saying both were watersheds on the road to eventual victory.

Ukrainian police, meanwhile, announced plans to investigate alleged Russian torture sites in now-retaken areas, and U.N. investigators said they'll look into enforced disappearances and detentions.

Speaking via video link to a Group of 20 summit in Indonesia, Zelenskyy said Kherson's liberation from eight months of Russian occupation was "reminiscent of many battles in the past, which became turning

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points in the wars.”

“It’s like, for example, D-Day — the landing of the Allies in Normandy. It was not yet a final point in the fight against evil, but it already determined the entire further course of events. This is exactly what we are feeling now,” he said.

The retaking of Kherson was one of Ukraine’s biggest successes in the nearly 9-month-old Russian invasion and dealt another stinging blow to the Kremlin. But large parts of eastern and southern Ukraine remain under Russian control and fighting continues. Ukrainian authorities on Tuesday reported another civilian death, from Russian shelling, in eastern Ukraine — adding to the invasion’s heavy toll of many tens of thousands killed and wounded.

The liberation of Kherson — the only provincial capital that Moscow had seized — has sparked days of celebration in Ukraine and allowed families to be reunited for the first time in months. But as winter approaches, the city’s remaining 80,000 residents are without heat, water or electricity, and short on food and medicine.

Still, U.S. President Joe Biden called it a “significant victory” for Ukraine. Speaking on the sidelines of the G-20 summit, Biden added: “We’re going to continue to provide the capability for the Ukrainian people to defend themselves.”

In his address to the G-20, Zelenskyy called for the creation of a special tribunal to try Russian military and political figures for the crime of aggression against Ukraine, and the creation of an international mechanism to compensate Kyiv for wartime deaths and destruction.

Zelenskyy referred to the G-20 meeting as “the G-19 summit,” adhering to Kyiv’s line that Russia should be excluded from the grouping.

“Everywhere, when we liberate our land, we see one thing — Russia leaves behind torture chambers and mass burials. ... How many mass graves are there in the territory that still remains under the control of Russia?” Zelenskyy pointedly asked.

Ukrainian authorities say they are finding indications of atrocities in Kherson, just as in other liberated areas. The head of the National Police of Ukraine, Igor Klymenko, said Tuesday that authorities are to start investigating reports from Kherson residents that Russian forces set up at least three alleged torture sites in now-liberated parts of the wider Kherson region and that “our people may have been detained and tortured there.”

“Mine clearance is currently underway. After that, I think, today, investigative actions will begin,” he said on Ukrainian TV.

U.N. investigators also want to travel to the city to verify allegations of nearly 80 cases of enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention and “understand whether the scale is in fact larger than what we have documented already,” said the head of the U.N. human rights office’s monitoring mission in Ukraine, Matilda Bogner.

She warned of a “dire humanitarian situation” in Kherson.

Speaking by video from Kyiv, Bogner also provided an update of her office’s work on the treatment of prisoners of war. Some former Ukrainian POWs recounted an array of physical abuse, “including being stabbed, shot with a stun gun, threatened with mock executions, being hung by the hands or legs, and burned with cigarettes,” she said. Some described electric shocks to their genitals, or being pulled by a rope around them, she added.

Zelenskyy made a triumphant surprise visit on Monday to Kherson. He hailed the Russian retreat from the southern city as the “beginning of the end of the war,” but also acknowledged the heavy price Ukrainian soldiers are paying in their grinding effort to push back Russia’s invasion forces.

## G-20 to hold tough on Russia, urge end to Ukraine war

By SEUNG MIN KIM, ZEKE MILLER and ELAINE KURTENBACH Associated Press

NUSA DUA, Indonesia (AP) — Leaders of the world’s largest economies appeared ready Tuesday to convey a strong message from most condemning Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, as President Joe Biden



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and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy pressed the group to maintain pressure on Moscow over its nine-month war that has devastated Ukraine and roiled the global economy.

A draft declaration by leaders of the Group of 20 major economies under discussion Tuesday echoes the condemnation of Russia's war on Ukraine by the United Nations, while acknowledging differing views among members. The careful wording of the statement reflects tensions prevailing at the gathering, which includes leaders from Russia and China, and the challenge facing the U.S. and its allies to isolate Russian President Vladimir Putin's government as some nations seek to avoid becoming entangled in antagonisms between the big powers.

The statement seen Tuesday by The Associated Press "deplores in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation" and "demands its complete and unconditional withdrawal from the territory of Ukraine." The G-20 draft statement also noted there were different views on the situation and sanctions against Russia, saying that the G-20 was not the forum for resolving security issues.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov denounced the U.S. lead effort to condemn Moscow.

"All problems are on the Ukrainian side that categorically refuses to hold any talks and comes up with conditions obviously unrealistic and inadequate to this situation," said Lavrov, who led the Russian delegation to the summit.

Biden skipped out on an evening gala for the leaders hosted by Indonesian President Joko Widodo, to attend to unspecified matters. Biden sent to his regrets to Widodo and said he would attend a planned tree plant with fellow G-20 leaders on Wednesday, according to a White House official. The official, who was not authorized to comment and spoke on the condition of anonymity, added that Biden's absence from the gathering was not related to COVID-19.

At the summit, Zelenskyy joined Biden in trying to persuade the G-20 to further isolate Russia diplomatically and economically, despite a souring global financial outlook that has tested many nations' resolve.

Inflation and slowing economies are weighing on countries that have imposed penalties on Russia for starting the war. Higher costs for energy and food have destabilized business activity around the world, as much of Europe prepares to brave the winter without imports of Russian natural gas.

In opening the summit, Widodo impressed on the gathering what's at stake. "If the war does not end, it will be difficult for the world to move forward," he said.

In a video address to the leaders from Kyiv, Zelenskyy reiterated 10 conditions for ending the conflict that began in February, among them a complete withdrawal of Russian troops and full restoration of Ukrainian control of its territory. He spoke days after Ukraine retook the strategic city of Kherson from Russian forces, in his country's latest step in a counteroffensive that has forced Moscow to withdraw its forces from previously-occupied areas.

"Ukraine should not be offered to conclude compromises with its conscience, sovereignty, territory and independence," he said. "Ukraine has always been a leader in peacekeeping efforts, and the world has witnessed it. And if Russia says that it supposedly wants to end this war, let it prove it with actions."

The European Council president, Charles Michel, also urged other global powers to intensify pressure on Russia. But it was unclear how many nations would embrace the relatively tough language in a final statement.

At the summit, Biden met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who played a pivotal role this summer in brokering a deal to open up Ukrainian grain exports to ease global food shortages. Biden also met briefly with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi whose cooperation is needed to secure a U.S.-sought price cap on Russian oil to limit the profits Moscow uses to invest in its defense base.

Separately, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres held a lengthy meeting Tuesday with Lavrov to discuss the Black Sea Grain Initiative, said UN Spokesperson Florencia Soto Niño. The deal, which allowed major grain exporter Ukraine to resume exports from ports that had been blocked due to the war, is up for renewal on Nov. 19.

The U.S. and its allies have responded to Russia's invasion of Ukraine with export controls and other sanctions, making it harder for Russia's military to access key technologies and resupply with drones,

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artillery and other weapons.

Chinese officials have largely refrained from public criticism of Russia's war, although Beijing has avoided direct support of the Russians, such as supplying arms. Biden said that during his meeting Monday with Chinese President Xi Jinping they discussed the war and "reaffirmed our shared belief" that the use or even the threat of nuclear weapons was "totally unacceptable" — a reference to Moscow's thinly veiled threats to use atomic weapons as its invasion of Ukraine has faltered.

Xi told G-20 leaders the global economy should not be weaponized.

"We must resolutely oppose the attempt to politicize food and energy issues or use them as tools and weapons," he said in translated remarks.

After meeting with Xi, French President Emmanuel Macron said they had called for "respect of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine."

In a tweet, Macron said France and China were determined to "put an end to the escalation of the war in Ukraine and deal with its consequences."

U.S. officials have said Biden's trip shows countries large and small are willing to condemn Russian aggression. Russian President Vladimir Putin stayed away, sending Lavrov as his representative.

The summit schedule does not include the customary "family photo" of leaders, avoiding a potentially awkward moment of interaction with Lavrov.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said no one in the U.S. delegation had plans to meet with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Biden accused Saudi Arabia of siding with Russia by leading the OPEC+ cartel to cut oil production last month in a bid to sustain the elevated energy prices that Russia uses to fund its war in Ukraine.

The summit is the first for two critical new partners in Biden's effort: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni.

Sunak, who took office last month after the disastrously short tenure of Liz Truss, has promised to continue his conservative predecessors' steadfast support for Ukraine. He and Biden were set to strategize during their Wednesday meeting on new ways to bolster Ukraine's defenses for the long haul.

Meloni has pledged to continue to provide arms and aid for Ukraine, but questions remain over her far-right coalition's commitment to stand up to Russia. She and Biden met on the sidelines of the summit on Tuesday and discussed China, the climate crisis, the impact of Russia's invasion on the global energy market, and their commitment to providing Ukraine support, according to a White House statement.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen tested positive for COVID-19 after his arrival in Bali and said he was returning home. So far, no other leaders are known to have tested positive, though many of those in Bali also attended meetings with Hun Sen just days ago during a summit of the Association of Southeast Asian nations.

At a side-event hosted by the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment — a Group of Seven-backed global development effort aimed at providing an alternative to China's "Belt and Road Initiative" — Biden, European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen and Widodo announced the commitment of \$20 billion to help Indonesia cut its reliance of fossil fuels and meet global emissions reductions commitments.

## Virginia students were prepared for shooting, not aftermath

BY SARAH RANKIN and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP) — Students huddled inside laboratory closets and darkened dorm rooms across the University of Virginia while others moved far away from library windows and barricaded the doors of its stately academic buildings after an ominous warning flashed on their screens: "RUN. HIDE. FIGHT."

Responding to the immediate threat of an on-campus shooting was a moment they had prepared for since their first years of elementary school. But dealing with the emotional trauma of an attack that killed three members of the school's football team late Sunday left students shaken and grasping to understand.

"This will probably affect our campus for a very, very long time," said Shannon Lake, a third-year student



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from Crozet, Virginia.

For 12 hours, she hid with friends and other students, much of that time in a storage closet, while authorities searched into Monday morning for the suspect before he was taken into custody.

When Lake and the others heard someone might be right outside the business school building, they all decided to go into the closet, turn off the lights and barricade the door.

"That was probably the most terrifying moment because it became more real to us, and reminded us of those practice school lockdowns as children. And it was just kind of a surreal moment where, you know, I don't think any of us were really processing what was going on," she said.

Police charged 22-year-old student Christopher Darnell Jones Jr. with three counts of second-degree murder, saying the three victims were killed just after 10:15 p.m. as a charter bus full of students returned from seeing a play in Washington. Two other students were wounded.

University President Jim Ryan said authorities did not have a "full understanding" of the motive or circumstances surrounding the shooting.

Police conducted a building-by-building search of the campus while students sheltered in place before the lockdown order was lifted late Monday morning.

Charlotte Goeb, a student who lives in an apartment about a half-mile (800 meters) away from where the shooting scene, immediately checked her doors and shut off the lights after getting an alert from the school.

"I'm having a hard time coming to terms that this was happening," she said. "Even though you spend all of your upbringing knowing this can happen."

Ellie Wilkie, a fourth-year student, was about to leave her room on the university's prestigious, historic Lawn at the center of campus when her group texts with friends began exploding with word of the shooting. But she didn't barricade herself in right away.

"I think our generation has been so habituated to these being drills and this being commonplace that I didn't even think it was all that serious until I got an email that said, 'Run. Hide. Fight,' all caps," she said.

Wilkie moved a large trunk she uses for storage in front of the door and put her mattress on top of that. She turned off the lights, unplugged anything that might make noise, put her phone on do-not-disturb mode, got under the covers of her top bunk and texted her mom, who called back, terrified.

She picked up but told her mom: "I have to get off the phone now. I can't be making noise in here."

University Police Chief Timothy Longo Sr. said the suspect had once been on the football team, but he had not been part of the team for at least a year. The UVA football website listed Jones as a team member during the 2018 season and said he did not play in any games.

It was not immediately clear whether Jones had an attorney or when he would make his first court appearance.

Hours after Jones was arrested, first-year head football coach Tony Elliott sat alone outside the athletic building used by the team, at times with his head in his hands. He said the victims "were all good kids."

Elizabeth Paul was working at a desktop computer in the Clemons library when she got a call from her mom about the shooting. She thought it was probably something minor until the computer she was using lit up with a warning about an active shooter.

She spent about 12 hours huddled with several others underneath windows in the library, hoping that if gunfire did erupt, they would be out of sight. She spent most of the night on the phone with her mom.

"Not even talking to her the whole time necessarily, but she wanted the line to be on so that if I needed something she was there," Paul said.

Em Gunter, a second-year anthropology student, heard three gunshots and then three more while she was studying genetics in her dorm room.

She told everyone on her floor to go in their rooms, shut their blinds and turn off the lights. Students know from active shooter drills how to respond, she said.

"But how do we deal with it afterwards?" she asked. "What's it going to be like in a week, in a month?"

## Climate activist blasts leaders holding onto fossil projects

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — Ugandan climate activist Vanessa Nakate slammed world leaders Tuesday who persist in backing new fossil fuel projects despite science warnings that this will push temperatures across the planet to dangerous highs.

Countries agreed in the 2015 Paris climate accord to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) by the end of the century if possible. But scientists say that with about 1.2 Celsius (21. Fahrenheit) of warming already reached, that target is likely to be missed.

"The focus for many leaders is about making deals for fossil fuel lobbyists, surviving the next election cycle and grabbing as much short-term profit as possible," Nakate said at an event on the sidelines of the U.N. climate talks in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

She warned that the annual meeting is being infiltrated by oil and gas representatives who are turning it into "a sales and marketing conference for more pollution and more destruction and more devastation."

Environmental groups have counted more than 600 delegates with links to the fossil fuel industry at the two-week meeting.

Nakate cited research from the International Energy Agency stating that there can be no new investment in coal, oil or gas if the world is to stay below 1.5 C.

This was being undermined by massive public spending on fossil fuel subsidies, partly as a result of the fallout from Russia's attack on Ukraine which has triggered a scramble for alternative sources of oil and gas.

"You are sowing the wind and frontline communities are reaping the whirlwind," she said. "You are sowing seeds of coal, oil and gas while frontline communities are reaping havoc, devastation and destruction."

Many developing nations are disproportionately impacted by climate change as they are less able to adapt to extreme weather exacerbated by global warming.

Nakate called out those countries that have issued new licenses for oil and gas exploitation in their territorial waters, or promised investments in new fossil fuel infrastructure in Africa.

Jochen Flasbarth, a long-time German climate negotiator, said Nakate was right to highlight the urgency of tackling climate change but questioned her criticism of politicians concerned about elections.

"You might be right that politicians sometimes have a short-term view, but (you should) still make the best out of these elections," he said, adding that "it is young people who increasingly did not go to elections over the last ten years" in many democratic nations.

Flasbarth told Nakate that young people "need to collaborate" with democratic processes to help "strengthen democracy around the world."

Nakate's speech comes as climate activists are protesting outside the conference venue.

Organized by the Fridays For Future Movement, the rally is taking place in the official designated protest area after organizers received the required permission from the Egyptian authorities. Organizers said they aim to showcase "restrictions on civil society and protest" at this year's conference.

Protests have so far been broadly limited to the 'Blue Zone,' which is considered a U.N. territory.

Rights and climate groups have in recent months complained about restrictions and costly accommodation that discouraged protests at this year's conference, in a stark contrast to previous years that featured large demonstrations.

There were also concerns that the Egyptian government could crack down despite promising to allow protests in a designated venue. Street protests are virtually banned in Egypt.

Meanwhile, negotiators at the conference haggle over numerous thorny issues including increasing efforts to cut greenhouse gases and providing more financial help to poor nations.

Ministers began arriving in Sharm el-Sheikh on Monday to provide a push for the meeting to clinch a substantial deal by its schedule close on Friday.

## US, China climate envoys to 'meet later' at UN summit

By FRANK JORDANS and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press



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SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — U.S. climate envoy John Kerry indicated on Tuesday he'll hold talks with his Chinese counterpart at annual United Nations climate talks underway in Egypt, in the latest sign of improving relations between the world's top two polluters after a meeting between their leaders Monday.

When asked if he would be meeting with China's top climate official Xie Zhenhua on Tuesday, Kerry told The Associated Press that "I will meet with him sometime later," without being more specific. "We're able to talk, we'll see what happens," he said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed a day earlier to resume climate change talks with the United States. Xi had put those contacts on hold three months earlier in retaliation for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan.

Government ministers, who've been arriving in Sharm el-Sheikh since Monday, delivered impassioned speeches to delegates as they push for the meeting to clinch a substantial deal by Friday.

The prime minister of Samoa appealed Tuesday to countries to respond as strongly to the threat of global warming as they did to the coronavirus pandemic.

Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa said her country and other Pacific states are "at the mercy of climate change and our survival hangs in the rush of the climate hourglass." She praised those major emitters who have made commitments to sharply cut their greenhouse gas emissions, but said those are still too few.

"Why is it not possible to apply the same level of urgency of action witnessed for the COVID-19 pandemic to the meeting of the 1.5 degree Celsius promise?," she asked.

She also called for more financial support to vulnerable countries, including the creation of a dedicated fund for "loss and damage" suffered as a result of climate change. She said failure to keep past funding promises had caused distrust.

"We cannot afford the further erosion of trust between the developed and developing countries," she said.

The European Union is raising its target for cutting greenhouse gas emissions, albeit slightly, the 27-nation bloc's top climate official told delegates.

Frans Timmermans said the EU will increase its target for reducing emissions by 2030 to 57%, from 55% previously, compared with 1990 levels. He said the increase showed the EU was not "backtracking" on its commitments because of the energy crisis sparked by Russia's war in Ukraine.

"Europe is staying the course," he said. "Actually, we're even accelerating."

Addressing poor nations who have called for more financial support to cope with global warming, Timmermans said the EU wants to work with multilateral banks "to get the shift of the trillions going."

The bloc was also willing to address demands for "loss and damage" money "including new funding arrangements," he said, but indicated that this would take time.

"We need to trust each other, launch a well-designed process so that we can end with the best possible result, with the highest benefits and the most value to those that need it most."

Environmental groups compared the EU's increased target to breadcrumbs, saying the bloc's fair share should be cuts of at least 65% by 2030.

"This small increase announced today at COP27 doesn't do justice to the calls from the most vulnerable countries at the frontlines. If the EU, with a heavy history of emitting greenhouse gases, doesn't lead on mitigating climate change, who will?" said Chiara Martinelli of Climate Action Network Europe.

Also Tuesday, Ugandan climate activist Vanessa Nakate slammed world leaders who persist in backing new fossil fuel projects despite science warnings that this will push temperatures across the planet to dangerous highs.

Nakate's comments came as negotiators at the conference haggle over numerous thorny issues including increasing efforts to cut greenhouse gases and providing more financial help to poor nations.

## World Population hits 8 billion, creating many challenges

By DAN IKPOYI and CHINEDU ASADU Associated Press

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — The world's population is projected to hit an estimated 8 billion people on Tuesday, according to a United Nations projection, with much of the growth coming from developing nations in Africa.

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Among them is Nigeria, where resources are already stretched to the limit. More than 15 million people in Lagos compete for everything from electricity to light their homes to spots on crowded buses, often for two-hour commutes each way in this sprawling megacity. Some Nigerian children set off for school as early as 5 a.m.

And over the next three decades, the West African nation's population is expected to soar even more: from 216 million this year to 375 million, the U.N. says. That will make Nigeria the fourth-most populous country in the world after India, China and the United States.

"We are already overstressing what we have — the housing, roads, the hospitals, schools. Everything is overstressed," said Gyang Dalyop, an urban planning and development consultant in Nigeria.

The U.N.'s Day of 8 Billion milestone Tuesday is more symbolic than precise, officials are careful to note in a wide-ranging report released over the summer that makes some staggering projections.

The upward trend threatens to leave even more people in developing countries further behind, as governments struggle to provide enough classrooms and jobs for a rapidly growing number of youth, and food insecurity becomes an even more urgent problem.

Nigeria is among eight countries the U.N. says will account for more than half the world's population growth between now and 2050 — along with fellow African nations Congo, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

"The population in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa is projected to double between 2022 and 2050, putting additional pressure on already strained resources and challenging policies aimed to reduce poverty and inequalities," the U.N. report said.

It projected the world's population will reach around 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050 and 10.4 billion in 2100.

Other countries rounding out the list with the fastest growing populations are Egypt, Pakistan, the Philippines and India, which is set to overtake China as the world's most populous nation next year.

In Congo's capital, Kinshasa, where more than 12 million people live, many families struggle to find affordable housing and pay school fees. While elementary pupils attend for free, older children's chances depend on their parents' incomes.

"My children took turns" going to school, said Luc Kyungu, a Kinshasa truck driver who has six children. "Two studied while others waited because of money. If I didn't have so many children, they would have finished their studies on time."

Rapid population growth also means more people vying for scarce water resources and leaves more families facing hunger as climate change increasingly impacts crop production in many parts of the world.

"There is also a greater pressure on the environment, increasing the challenges to food security that is also compounded by climate change," said Dr. Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India. "Reducing inequality while focusing on adapting and mitigating climate change should be where our policy makers' focus should be."

Still, experts say the bigger threat to the environment is consumption, which is highest in developed countries not undergoing big population increases.

"Global evidence shows that a small portion of the world's people use most of the Earth's resources and produce most of its greenhouse gas emissions," said Poonam Muttreja, executive director of the Population Foundation of India. "Over the past 25 years, the richest 10% of the global population has been responsible for more than half of all carbon emissions."

According to the U.N., the population in sub-Saharan Africa is growing at 2.5% per year — more than three times the global average. Some of that can be attributed to people living longer, but family size remains the driving factor. Women in sub-Saharan Africa on average have 4.6 births, twice the current global average of 2.3.

Families become larger when women start having children early, and 4 out of 10 girls in Africa marry before they turn 18, according to U.N. figures. The rate of teen pregnancy on the continent is the highest in the world — about half of the children born last year to mothers under 20 worldwide were in sub-Saharan Africa.



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Still, any effort to reduce family size now would come too late to significantly slow the 2050 growth projections, the U.N. said. About two-thirds of it “will be driven by the momentum of past growth.”

“Such growth would occur even if childbearing in today’s high-fertility countries were to fall immediately to around two births per woman,” the report found.

There are also important cultural reasons for large families. In sub-Saharan Africa, children are seen as a blessing and as a source of support for their elders — the more sons and daughters, the greater comfort in retirement.

Still, some large families “may not have what it takes to actually feed them,” says Eunice Azimi, an insurance broker in Lagos and mother of three.

“In Nigeria, we believe that it is God that gives children,” she said. “They see it as the more children you have, the more benefits. And you are actually overtaking your peers who cannot have as many children. It looks like a competition in villages.”

Politics also have played a role in Tanzania, where former President John Magufuli, who ruled the East African country from 2015 until his death in 2021, discouraged birth control, saying that a large population was good for the economy.

He opposed family planning programs promoted by outside groups, and in a 2019 speech urged women not to “block ovaries.” He even described users of contraceptives as “lazy” in a country he said was awash with cheap food. Under Magufuli, pregnant schoolgirls were even banned from returning to classrooms.

But his successor, Samia Suluhu Hassan, appeared to reverse government policy in comments last month when she said birth control was necessary in order not to overwhelm the country’s public infrastructure.

Even as populations soar in some countries, the U.N. says rates are expected to drop by 1% or more in 61 nations.

The U.S. population is now around 333 million, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. The population growth rate in 2021 was just 0.1%, the lowest since the country was founded.

“Going forward, we’re going to have slower growth — the question is, how slow?” said William Frey, a demographer at the Brookings Institution. “The real wild card for the U.S. and many other developed countries is immigration.”

Charles Kenny, a senior fellow at the Center for Global Development in Washington, says environmental concerns surrounding the 8 billion mark should focus on consumption, particularly in developed countries.

“Population is not the problem, the way we consume is the problem — let’s change our consumption patterns,” he said.

## **Qatar at World Cup pinnacle after years of Mideast turmoil**

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Hosting the World Cup marks a pinnacle in Qatar’s efforts to rise out of the shadow of its larger neighbors in the wider Middle East, where its politics and its upstart ambitions have brought both international attention and regional ire.

The road to the tournament — and Qatar’s increased prominence on the global stage — has been fueled by the country becoming one of the top exporters of natural gas. That newfound wealth built the stadiums that fans will fill for the tournament, created the Arab world’s most recognized news network, Al Jazeera, and enabled Doha’s diplomatic outreach to the wider world.

But that rise has not been without intrigue. A palace coup in 1995 installed a more assertive ruler in the country, who used Qatar’s wealth to back the Islamists who emerged stronger amid the 2011 Arab Spring protests — the same figures his fellow Gulf Arab leaders viewed as threats to their rule. A yearslong boycott of Qatar by four Arab nations that began in 2017 nearly sparked a war.

And while the overt tensions have eased in the region, Qatar likely hopes the World Cup will serve to boost its standing as it balances its relations abroad to hedge against any danger to the country in the future.

“They know there are these potential threats; they know they are very vulnerable,” said Gerd Nonneman, a professor of international relations and Gulf Arab studies at Georgetown University in Qatar. “Anything

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they can do to have an international network of if not allies, at least a sympathetic element, they will.”

Qatar, a little larger than Jamaica or just smaller than the U.S. state of Connecticut, is a peninsular nation that sticks out into the Persian Gulf like a thumb. It shares just a 60-kilometers (37-mile) border with Saudi Arabia, a nation 185 times larger, and sits just across the Gulf from Iran.

Through its sovereign wealth fund, Qatar owns London’s famed Harrods department store, Paris Saint-Germain soccer club and billions of dollars in real estate in New York City. That wealth comes from its sales of liquified natural gas through an offshore field it shares with Iran, most of it going to Asian nations such as China, India, Japan and South Korea.

That spigot of wealth began flowing in 1997, just after two major events that shook Qatar. The first, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the subsequent 1991 Gulf War, saw Doha and other Gulf Arab nations realize the need for long-term American military presence as a hedge, said Kristian Ulrichsen, a research fellow at Rice University’s Baker Institute.

Qatar built its massive Al-Udeid Air Base, which is home to some 8,000 American troops and the forward headquarters of the U.S. military’s Central Command today.

The second event that shook Qatar took place in 1995, when Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani seized power in a bloodless coup from his father who was in Switzerland. Sheikh Hamad later put down a 1996 coup attempt by his cousin.

Under Sheikh Hamad and flush with cash, Qatar created Al Jazeera, the satellite news channel that became known worldwide for airing statements from al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden. The U.S. railed against the channel after the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, though it provided the Arab world something beyond tepid state-controlled television for the first time.

In December 2010, Qatar won its bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Just two weeks later, a Tunisian fruit seller set himself on fire in protest and ultimately died of his burns — lighting the fuse for what became the 2011 Arab Spring.

For Qatar, it marked a crucial moment. The country double-downed on its support of Islamists across the region, including Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood who would be elected president in Egypt after the fall of the longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak. Doha poured money into Syrian groups opposing the rule of Bashar Assad — with some funding going to those that America later described as extremists, like the Islamic State group.

Qatar long has denied funding extremists, though it does maintain relations with the Palestinian militant group Hamas that rules the Gaza Strip, working as an interlocutor with Israel. But analysts say there was a recognition that things may have moved too fast.

“They realize they stuck out their necks too far too soon ... and they began to re-calibrate that,” Noneman said.

The Arab Spring soon chilled into a winter. A counterrevolution in Egypt supported by other Gulf Arab states saw the installation of military general turned President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in July 2013.

A little over a week earlier, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Sheikh Hamad’s son, took over as ruler in Qatar in the ruling family’s own acknowledgment that a generational change was needed.

Gulf Arab countries, however, remained angry. A 2014 dispute over Qatar’s support of Islamists saw Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates withdraw their ambassadors — only to bring them back eight months later.

But in 2017 after then-President Donald Trump’s visit to Saudi Arabia, those three nations and Egypt began a yearslong boycott of Qatar, closing off air traffic and severing economic ties even as construction on the stadiums continued.

Things grew so tense that Kuwait’s late ruler, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, who at the time mediated the dispute, suggested that “military action” at one point was a possibility, without elaborating.

The dispute ended as President Joe Biden stood poised to take office, though regional tensions remain. Still, Qatar has found itself hosting negotiations between American officials and the Taliban, as well as assisting the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Russia’s war on Ukraine has seen European leaders come



to Doha, hopeful for additional natural gas.

"They are at the center of attention again," Ulrichsen said. "It gives them a seat at the table when there's decisions being taken."

## Earth at 8 billion: Consumption not crowd is key to climate

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — The world is getting hotter and more crowded and the two issues are connected, but not quite as much as people might think, experts say.

On Tuesday somewhere a baby will be born that will be the globe's 8 billionth person, according to a projection by the United Nations and other experts. The Earth has warmed almost 0.9 degrees Celsius (1.6 degrees Fahrenheit) since the world hit the 4 billion mark in 1974.

Climate and population is a touchy subject for scientists and officials.

While more people consuming energy, mostly from the burning of fossil fuels, is warming the planet, the key issue isn't the number of people as much as how a small fraction of those people are causing way more than their share of carbon pollution, several climate and population experts told The Associated Press.

"We do have a population problem and we do have a population issue," said Vanessa Perez-Cicera, director of the Global Economics Center at the World Resources Institute. "But I think most importantly, we have an overconsumption issue."

And because of that the 8 billionth child born will "not have what we had ... because there's not enough resources," she said.

Kenya, which is suffering through a devastating drought, has 55 million people, about 95 times more than the population of Wyoming. But Wyoming emits 3.7 times the carbon dioxide as Kenya. Africa as whole has 16.7% of the world's population but historically emits only 3% of the global carbon pollution, while the United States has 4.5% of the planet's people but since 1959 has put out 21.5% of the heat-trapping carbon dioxide.

The average Canadian, Saudi and Australian put out more than 10 times the carbon dioxide into the air though their daily living than the average Pakistani, where one-third of the nation was flooded in a climate change worsened event. And in Qatar the per capita emissions is 20 times Pakistan's, according to the World Bank.

"The question is not about population but rather about consumption patterns," said climate scientist Bill Hare of Climate Analytics. "So it's best to look at the major northern emitters to begin with."

Climate Interactive, a group of scientists who run intricate computer simulations that can be tweaked to see what factors matter the most in fighting climate change, looked at the difference population makes. It found it made a small contribution compared to other factors, like economics.

Comparing two United Nations population projections scenarios of 8.8 billion people and 10.4 billion people, Climate Interactive's Drew Jones found only a 0.2 degrees Celsius (0.4 degrees Fahrenheit) difference. But the difference between no price or tax on carbon and \$100 a ton was 0.7 degrees Celsius (1.3 degrees Fahrenheit).

Hare said there is more than a tinge of racism in the myth that overpopulation is the major issue behind climate change.

"One of the biggest arguments that I hear almost exclusively from men in high-income countries is that, 'Oh, it's just a population problem,'" The Nature Conservancy Chief Scientist Katharine Hayhoe said. "Nothing could be further from the truth."

"The 50% poorest people in the world are historically responsible for 7% of heat trapping gas emissions," Hayhoe said. "Yet when you look at which countries are bearing the brunt of the impacts from climate change, countries like Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Afghanistan topped the list."

And even within countries, it's the wealthiest who cause more of the carbon pollution, Hare said. Overall, he said, "80% of the population, the global population, emits a small fraction of emissions."

The world's population is growing mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia "and they're contributing

the least to man-made climate change," said Colette Rose, project coordinator at the Berlin Institute for Population and Development.

Eight nations, five in Africa, three in Asia, are going to have at least half of the population growth between now and 2050, Rose said. They are Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, India and the Philippines.

Worldwide population growth has substantially slowed, will likely peak sometime this century, and is now down to growing less than 1% a year, Rose said. But carbon emissions are growing faster, at 1% more this year than 2021.

For environmental advocacy groups and officials the issue of population and climate has caused problems. "Population is an issue that no one has wanted to touch from the very beginning. Too politically sensitive," Joanna Depledge, a climate historian from the University of Cambridge in England, said in an email. "There are many dimensions, notably in relation to religion and accusations of racism — population growth is mostly concentrated in non-white populations, of course."

For a long time, the Sierra Club had promoted efforts to try to control the world population, until a couple decades ago, when the environmental group looked harder at the issue and broke down the numbers, said the group's president, Ramon Cruz. They found the problems were more overconsumption and fossil fuel use and those problems would be the same "at 6 billion, 7 billion or 8 billion" people, he said.

While most environmental groups try to avoid the issue, 11 years ago, when the world hit 7 billion people, the Center for Biological Diversity made special issue condoms with population and environmental messages such as "Wrap with care, save the polar bear."

## Britain's vulnerable await PM's spending plans with anxiety

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Thirugnanam Sureshan maneuvers his wheelchair into the tiny kitchen of his one-bedroom apartment, flips the switch on an electric kettle and brews a mug of instant coffee. It's his second hot drink of the day, and it will be his last.

The humble countertop kettle — ubiquitous in homes across Britain where a cup of tea is a symbol of welcome, comfort and a break from the demands of a busy day — has become a luxury for Sureshan and his wife, Sridevi, after their monthly electricity bill almost doubled over the past year.

Sureshan, a former airport security guard who is disabled by health problems including a rare foot condition, struggles to stay warm. He is cutting down wherever possible to ensure he can keep the heat on this winter amid soaring prices for electricity, food and gasoline.

"If I don't keep myself warm, I might lose my life," Sureshan, 50, said at his home in the town of Bexhill-on-Sea in southern England. "That's the situation."

Sureshan is among the millions hoping Prime Minister Rishi Sunak finds money to help them survive Britain's cost-of-living crisis when the government releases its spending plans Thursday.

The demands are many — ranging from pay increases for nurses and police officers to increased welfare benefits, higher pensions and more funding for free school meals — as 40-year-high inflation erodes families' buying power. And resources are limited, with Sunak facing a budget shortfall of up to 60 billion pounds (\$71 billion) that he says will require both tax increases and spending cuts to close.

It comes amid a grim backdrop of slowing economic growth, rising borrowing costs and the lingering effects of a tax-cutting plan by former Prime Minister Liz Truss, which torpedoed the government's reputation for financial discipline. When Sunak took office three weeks ago, he promised to restore that credibility, pledging the government would pay its bills and start reducing debts built up over the past 15 years.

But some economists caution against moving too fast when rising food, energy and housing costs are set to wipe out the savings of a fifth of British households.

Consumer price inflation accelerated to 10.1% in September, driven by a 96% spike in natural gas costs, a 54% increase in electricity and a 14.6% jump in food prices, a pattern seen as inflation has risen worldwide.

Britain's "government should increase borrowing to support the hardest-hit households, explain what it

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is doing, and put in place a plan for reducing public-sector debt at a point in the future once the shock has dissipated," the independent National Institute of Economic and Social Research said.

The financial challenges were magnified by Truss, who announced 105 billion pounds of tax cuts and spending increases without saying how she would pay for them. That raised fears of runaway public debt, sparking turmoil on financial markets, sinking the pound to a record low against the U.S. dollar and forcing Truss to resign after just six weeks in office.

But Britain's woes stretch back to the global financial crisis, a catastrophe from which it was just beginning to recover when COVID-19 and then Russia's war in Ukraine hit.

U.K. public debt ballooned to almost 83% of economic output in 2017 from less than 36% in 2007 as the government bailed out banks and struggled to bolster the economy. A decade of budget tightening had started to reduce the burden when the pandemic and war in Ukraine pushed debt to 98% of gross domestic product. That is the highest since 1963, when Britain was still recovering from World War II.

At the same time, austerity put increasing demands on a threadbare social safety net.

After a decade of wage increases that failed to keep pace with inflation, the cost-of-living crisis has forced some government employees to turn to food banks. Doctors, nurses, teachers, postal workers and railroad employees have either authorized or are considering strikes this winter.

And long waits for ambulances, cancer treatment and elective surgery are pressuring Sunak to prioritize the National Health Service over other programs.

Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt has refused to release details of the government's plans before his speech Thursday to Parliament. But he's promised to help those most in need.

"We will introduce a plan that will see us through the very choppy waters that we're in economically," Hunt told the BBC. "But we'll make sure that we protect the most vulnerable, and in particular deal with the single biggest worry for people on low incomes, which is the rising cost of their weekly shop and rising energy prices."

But people want certainty, and among those struggling are Sureshan. His family moved to Bexhill on Sea from London in 2006 to open a convenience store. But the business closed when Sureshan's health deteriorated and his wife stopped working to become his primary caregiver.

Disability benefits provide the bulk of their income, but that's being eaten up by the rising cost of living.

The cost of electricity alone — which Sureshan needs to charge his wheelchair, power the electric hoist that gets him in and out of bed, and run the machine that helps him breathe at night — has spiked to 189 pounds a month from 99 pounds.

The situation has become desperate for many, said Louise Rubin, policy director for Scope UK, which provides support and advice to people with disabilities. The charity used to offer tips on energy efficiency. Now, it is inundated with calls from those living on one meal a day in cold, dark houses. There's nothing left to cut back on.

"Life costs more if you're disabled," she said. "It costs up to 600 pounds more a month because of the extra equipment that people need to buy and power up. And the government must provide targeted support to those who need that extra support through no fault of their own."

The Sureshans say they're doing everything they can to cut costs.

They spend most of their time in the living room, where draft excluders seal in the warm air. They limit themselves to two, sometimes three, cups of tea a day, and use the oven sparingly, preparing big dishes that can be frozen for later use.

When grocery shopping, Sridevi goes store to store, comparing prices in hopes of saving a few pence.

Working outside the home is inconceivable, she says, because she would be too worried about her husband. Besides, they can't afford to pay someone to take her place.

"I don't want to lose him," she says desperately, clasping her hands together.

Their apartment contains hints of happier times: their 2000 wedding picture — Sridevi in a bright purple sari, the 6-foot-2 Thirugnanam towering behind her — a school drawing made by their son, photos of him in every room.

But they have few luxuries.



Christmas, a holiday the Hindu couple adopted from Britain, is the latest casualty. They can't afford to turn on the oven for hours to roast a turkey this year.

The Sureshans are convinced Sunak will help the most vulnerable. They are proud a Hindu, whose family worked hard to make their way in the U.K., is prime minister.

Despite their situation, Sridevi says she and her husband are lucky: They have each other and a son with a bright future studying biomedicine. He's offered to come home and help, but they say they refused because he's the future.

"At least he's got a wife and a child," Sridevi said of her husband. "I feel sad for those who have no one to look after them."

## Families reunited following Russian retreat in Ukraine

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

TSENTRALNE, Ukraine (AP) — Relatives embraced in the middle of the road. They squeezed hands and choked back tears. Others sobbed outside their homes. All had yearned for this same moment — to be reunited with their loved ones after Russian troops withdrew from their villages in southern Ukraine.

Families were torn apart when Russia invaded in February, as some fled and others hunkered down. Now many are seeing one another for the first time in months, after Moscow's latest retreat amid a Ukrainian counteroffensive that has retaken a pocket of territory wedged between the regional capitals of Kherson and Mykolaiv and the Black Sea.

The most significant withdrawal was from the city of Kherson itself, but troops also pulled back from nearby villages in recent days. The Associated Press visited four such villages this week and watched as people were reunited with relatives.

"This is just an explosion," said Andriy Mazuryk. The 53-year-old left his mother in her village of Tsen-tralne in April and fled some 30 kilometers (18 miles) away.

His mother didn't want to leave, but Mazuryk has a son in Ukraine's army and worried the Russians would kill him. Even though the occupying troops seized people's phones, Mazuryk managed to speak to his mother and other relatives almost daily because they made calls in secret, he said.

"Thank God, we were in touch every day ... relatives took risks," he said.

More than half a million people have fled the Mykolaiv and Kherson regions since February, according to local authorities, although exact numbers are hard to calculate. It's unclear how many have returned.

While some people, like Mazuryk, had only a short distance to cover to return home, others traveled from across the country when they learned the Russians had left. Igor, a soldier, was given time off from fighting in the hard-hit Donbas region so he could see his family.

Jumping out of a van in the village of Vavylove, Igor welled up as he hugged his mother, who was waiting for him in the middle of the road. "I knew that it would happen, that we will win and our whole land will be liberated," said Igor, who spoke on condition only his first name was used as is typical for Ukrainian soldiers because of security concerns.

Some villagers said they were surprised at how quickly the Russians left. After Russia announced a partial mobilization of some 300,000 reservists in September, locals said thousands more soldiers poured into the area and heavily mined it.

Several people said that in the weeks before the retreat, Russian soldiers stockpiled equipment and dug trenches, making it look like they were going to stay.

While most people said the Russians kept to themselves, living conditions under their occupation were wretched: Electricity, water and phone service were cut. Bridges were blown up, making it hard to move between villages to buy and sell food. And mines lurked everywhere.

The Russians are gone — but those problems remain.

There have been at least a dozen accidents involving mines in recent days, said Oleh Pylypenko, the head of the administration that covers the villages the AP visited.

Speaking to residents in each town on Sunday as local volunteers distributed food aid, Pylypenko warned

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people not to let their children play in abandoned trenches and promised that he'd restore power, water and communications as soon as possible.

With winter around the corner, aid groups warned that restarting such services quickly was critical. "We have to act fast to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe during the winter months," said Saviano Abreu, spokesman for the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Ukraine.

Still, most people in the villages said they weren't too worried about the future. They were just happy the Russians were gone.

"This is the first night I've been able to sleep," said Galina Voinova, a resident of the village of Znamianka. Since February, she's been falling asleep to the sound of shelling, she said.

But the agony of the occupation hasn't ended for everyone.

Tatiana Pukivska's husband was arrested by the Russians because they were told he was giving the Ukrainian army coordinates of their positions, she said. The 41-year-old resident of Tsentralne said she hasn't seen him since, as she wiped away tears from her cheeks.

Standing nearby, her mother-in-law dried her eyes.

"Oh my God it's horrible," Lesia Pukivska said holding a photo of her son's ID card. "I feel that he is alive and that he will return home. If only someone could help us, we are powerless."

## **EXPLAINER: Qatar's role in diplomacy ahead of 2022 World Cup**

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

For decades, Doha has flung open its doors to Taliban warlords, Islamist dissidents, African rebel commanders and exiles of every stripe.

Now, the tiny emirate is receiving extra scrutiny as it welcomes over a million soccer fans from around the world for the 2022 World Cup.

Qatar's quest for global influence ranges wide and runs deep. Flush with gas billions, the country has sought to mediate conflicts far afield but its brazen stances have also sparked diplomatic conflict back home. Three Gulf Arab neighbors, along with Egypt, severed ties with Doha in 2017, accusing it of financing terrorism and harboring fugitive dissidents.

Qatar denies the charges, but there's no doubt the emirate has pursued contrarian policies.

Here's a look at the country's outsized role in diplomacy around the world.

### **AFGHANISTAN**

The Taliban opened a political office in Doha in 2013, with Washington's consent. The insurgents made their home in the stylish capital. Qatar's Islamist leanings and close ties with the group ultimately proved vital as Doha played host to American diplomats and Taliban officials seeking to end America's longest war. Amid the United States' frantic airlift out of Kabul last year, Qatar stepped up again. It received nearly half of all Afghan and American evacuees — more than any other country, winning praise from President Joe Biden. Now, Qatar has a key role as interlocutor between Afghanistan's new rulers and the West.

### **REFUGE FOR ISLAMISTS**

Unlike its Gulf Arab neighbors, Qatar is sympathetic to political Islam. In the early days of the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings, it bet on Islamists across the region. In Egypt, Qatar and its Al Jazeera satellite news network backed the former democratically elected but divisive president who hailed from the Muslim Brotherhood. After the military-backed ouster of Mohamed Morsi, Qatar gave his supporters sanctuary. Qatar also backed powerful Islamist militias as wars erupted in Libya and Syria. That triggered accusations that Qatar was bankrolling terrorists. But Doha's ties with militant groups have sometimes proved important to the West, which has used them to negotiate hostage releases in countries like Syria. While Qatar enjoys a reputation as a safe haven for Islamic militants and other assorted strays, it has seen violence in the past. Former Chechen separatist leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, who was living in exile in Doha, was killed in a car-bombing in 2004.

### **ISRAEL & THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**

Qatar openly provides a base for leaders of Hamas, the Palestinian militant group that rules the Gaza

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Strip. After the 2007 split between feuding Palestinian factions Fatah and Hamas, Qatar sought to mediate an end to the — still ongoing — rivalry. Doha also has low-level ties with Israel, cooperating with the country to provide badly needed aid to impoverished, blockaded Gaza. The Qatari payments to Gaza have been used to buy fuel, pay civil servants' salaries and provide cash to needy families. Qatar has also been key to negotiating cease-fires between Israel and Hamas that have restored calm after four wars — the most recent in 2021 — as well as countless smaller skirmishes.

## CHAD

Qatar has served as a mediator between Chad's military government and rebels groups as the African nation struggles with the aftermath of the 2021 killing of its longtime President Idriss Deby Itno, who had ruled the country since 1990. Deby's 38-year-old son, Mahamat Idriss Deby, now leads the junta. In August, Chad signed a pledge in Qatar with over 40 rebel groups and opposition figures ahead of planned national reconciliation talks. However, the Front for Change and Concord in Chad, the main rebel group in the country blamed for killing Deby's father, did not sign the pledge. It remains unclear if the pledge will be enough to ensure the success of the talks as a planned 18-month transition from military rule to democracy winds down. Elsewhere in Africa, Qatar helped mediate an end to a diplomatic standoff last year between Kenya and Somalia, which were at odds over several issues, including oil-rich waters in the Indian Ocean.

## IRAN

Qatar sits just across the Persian Gulf from Iran and shares its massive offshore natural gas field with Tehran. That's required Doha to maintain good relations with the Islamic Republic. While Oman has long served as an intermediary between the U.S. and Iran, Qatar recently hosted indirect talks between Iran and America over Tehran's tattered nuclear deal. Its high-level ties also see top officials from both countries hold telephone conversations amid the nuclear negotiations. Al Jazeera covers Iran intensely and often sympathetically. Separately, Qatar has beefed up its own military and hosts the forward headquarters of the U.S. military's Central Command.

## Hopes and costs are high for UK's nuclear energy future

By DANA BELTAJI and MARY KATHERINE WILDEMAN Associated Press

BRIDGWATER, England (AP) — Wedged between the southwestern town of Bridgwater and the Severn estuary is a 430-acre site where some of the U.K.'s future electricity hopes are pinned.

Now reaching over 100 feet (32 meters) high, construction on the first of two nuclear reactors at the Hinkley Point C generating station is well underway, after years of planning.

Hinkley Point C is set to be one of the the biggest power stations in Britain and will generate 7% of the country's electricity. Around 8,000 workers, many of them currently living on-site, are shuttled between work and home at any hour of the day, seven days a week, on the site's bustling bus network.

"Here at Hinkley, everything's on a grand scale," said project delivery director Nigel Cann as he gestured toward the giant site. "We have the third biggest bus service in the world. We serve more eggs and sausages and bacon than anywhere else in the U.K., I imagine."

Sites like Hinkley have become integral to the U.K. government's "net zero" by 2050 strategy. Some experts say nuclear energy will be needed to help nations wean off fossil fuels, but there are concerns about the substantial cost and timescale of building large nuclear reactors as well as worries over safety and nuclear waste. Other clean energy, such as wind farms, can be built and come online much faster.

Whether Hinkley is a success, energy analysts say, could help determine whether more large nuclear reactors like it are built in Britain and other countries in future.

Nuclear power is generated through fission, the process of splitting uranium atoms. The energy released by fission turns water into steam to spin a turbine that generates electricity, a process which doesn't emit planet-warming gases into the atmosphere. Scientists say that for the world to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit), fossil fuel emissions need to be cut dramatically, with the remainder being canceled out.



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"Everyone wants nuclear," said Neil Hirst, a senior policy fellow for energy at Imperial College London. "They want it because nuclear provides security at a time when gas supplies are at risk. And also because a lot of countries have got a net zero by 2050 commitment, which may be quite difficult or even impossible to reach without substantial nuclear."

But not everyone wants the costs and time commitments that come with it.

The Hinkley Point C project is estimated to cost up to 26 billion pounds (\$30 billion) and is set to be completed in 2027. It's already around 7 billion pounds (\$8 billion) over budget and has suffered delays which owners EDF — the French state-owned energy company — say are largely down to the COVID-19 pandemic causing supply chain issues and labor shortages.

The United States, which still has the most capacity to generate nuclear power of any country, has seen just one new nuclear reactor connect to the grid since 2000 — a Tennessee-based project that took decades to complete. Meanwhile, plans for at least 21 new nuclear reactors have been cancelled since 2007, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency. One American project is under construction in Georgia, though the budget has more than doubled, per Associated Press calculations.

France's Flamanville 3, still under construction and the same type of reactor as Hinkley Point C, is several times over its original budget, now expected to cost 12.7 billion euros (dollars) and has experienced multiple setbacks. Olkiluoto-3 in Finland, which began generating electricity a decade behind schedule, saw its costs nearly quadruple to around \$11 billion.

These massive overruns have "certainly given people a cause to be hesitant," said Jennifer Gordon, director of the Nuclear Energy Policy Initiative at the Atlantic Council. "But that said, in the last year the geopolitical calculus has changed so dramatically" as climate and energy security concerns mount.

But Paul Dorfman, from Sussex University's Science Policy Research Unit, said that "nuclear would be far too late to help us with our energy dilemma and unfortunately, really far too late to help us with our climate dilemma." He added that the huge uptick in renewables shows they can meet growing electricity demands.

Nuclear projects need billions of dollars upfront before they start generating any electricity and also have the ongoing cost of buying fuel, something not true of wind or solar energy. They also don't see a return for several years, so they rely on government backing in most instances, and to that end, public support.

This is more feasible in Europe where governments are willing to dig into the public purse, Hirst said. In the U.S., it's more difficult to get these big costs approved, even with recent incentives for nuclear power, meaning the country is likely to skip ahead to a newer advanced technology, called small modular reactors, that have less daunting upfront costs and shorter construction timescales. This makes them an attractive prospect for many nations, Gordon said.

She added that large reactors could instead act "as a bridge to the next generation of nuclear and also as a bridge to renewables and breakthroughs in storage" technology.

Renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind or hydropower, doubled in capacity between 2000 and 2021 worldwide, according to an analysis of data from a global energy think tank. Nuclear power, meanwhile, grew by just 13% during that time, with more than half of that growth concentrated in China. Renewables are far cheaper per megawatt of electricity generated to build.

Their power is more variable but a lot of solar and wind farms now use batteries to get closer to a 24-hour supply of electricity. Some experts believe nuclear can provide back-up for other low-carbon energy sources in a future with no or very few fossil fuels, but there are concerns over whether it really has the modern flexibility needed to pair with sun and wind.

"It doesn't provide what's known as load flow to account for variability. It's much too inflexible to ramp up and down with the swings of demand," Dorfman said.

Concerns over safety and nuclear waste also persist as a result of high-profile disasters like Chernobyl and Fukushima.

"The public perspective regarding the nuclear energy industry is one of our main challenges," said nuclear risk analyst Jenifer Avellaneda. "We have had errors. But we do better and we must do better."

Avellaneda added that the industry's many regulatory bodies and strict procedures makes it a safer bet

than many other energy sources, especially high-polluting ones.

The share of nuclear energy for electricity generation worldwide has dropped to 9.8% — the first time it fell below 10%, the lowest value in four decades, and 40% below the peak in 1996, according to a recent report on the state of the industry.

Britain alone has decommissioned three nuclear sites in recent years when they came to the end of their lifespans.

Hirst believes the future of large nuclear reactors, particularly in Europe, will hinge in part on the success of Hinkley Point C.

"They've already had some cost overruns, but not on the scale of development," said Hirst, adding that if the site remains on its updated schedule and is "reasonably in touch with original costs, then I think we will see more orders."

The team in Bridgwater understand what's at stake.

"We understand our responsibility to get this plant generating as quickly as possible," said Cann. "We feel that pressure, we feel the responsibility, but we will never compromise safety or quality."

## **As climate warms, a China planner advocates "sponge cities"**

By EMILY WANG FUJIYAMA Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — To cushion the impact of extreme weather due to climate change, a Chinese landscape architect has been making the case for China and other countries to create so-called "sponge cities."

Yu Kongjian, who spoke to The Associated Press in Beijing, uses sweeping language to express his vision for cities that can withstand variable temperatures, drought and heavy rainfall. The challenges for implementing this vision at a time of ambitious economic development in China are multifold.

Yu criticizes much of Asia's modern infrastructure for being built on ideas imported from Europe, which he says are ill-fitted to the monsoon climate over much of the Asian continent. He points to recent floods that have wreaked havoc in many Asian cities, which he says are caused by this architectural mismatch.

"There's no resilience at all," Yu says of the concrete and steel infrastructure of major cities, and of using pipes and channels to funnel away water. "Those are useless, they will fail and continue to fail."

Instead, Yu proposes using natural resources, or "green infrastructure" to create water-resilient cities. It's part of a global shift among landscape design and civil engineering professionals toward working more in concert with the natural environment. By creating large spaces to hold water in city centers — such as parks and ponds — stormwater can be retained on site, helping prevent floods, he says. Sponge infrastructure also, in theory, offers ways for water to seep down and recharge groundwater for times of drought.

"The idea of a sponge city is to recover, give water more space," Yu said.

A turning point in China's awareness of climate change and urban adaptation came a decade ago, Yu said. A devastating flood hit the capital city of Beijing in July 2012.

Beijing's biggest downpour in 61 years overwhelmed drainage systems, swamped downtown underpasses and sent flash floods roiling through the city's outskirts. At least 77 people died.

Yu at the time sent a letter to Beijing's party secretary, Guo Jinlong, calling for a change in how the government approaches city infrastructure. He continued to send letters to high-ranking officials and top leadership, including China's leader Xi Jinping.

At a government working conference the next year, China incorporated the idea of sponge cities as a national strategy, "giving full play to the absorption, storage and slow release of rainwater by ecological systems."

In 2014, the central government issued a directive: Recycle 70% of rainwater runoff in 20% of urban areas by 2020, and in 80% of such areas by 2030.

The following year it launched 16 pilot sponge city projects, adding 14 more in 2016. Officials also said they would award 600 million yuan (83 million USD) each year for three years to municipal cities, 500 million to provincial capitals, and 400 million yuan to other cities.

The top-down mandate and subsidies spurred a boom in water-absorbing infrastructure, including in

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large cities including Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Cities around the world are similarly trying to integrate “bioswales” along the sides of roads, protect remaining marsh areas to absorb water, and increase the capture of roof rainwater.

## AN EXPERIMENT UNDERWAY

In China, one demonstration park is located in the northeast corner of the city of Nanchang, southern China. In mid October, engineers were putting finishing touches on a lush, picturesque 126-acre park designed to cushion the impact of both floods and droughts.

Formerly a coal ash dump site, the “Fish Tail” sponge park is built in a low-lying section of the city and intended to regulate water for surrounding neighborhoods and business districts. The fly ash, a byproduct of coal combustion, was mixed with soil to create mini-islands in the lake that allow water to permeate. Fang said the mixture, held in place by plant roots, prevents the ash from flowing into the water. Whether it prevents the release of toxic elements in the ash is an open question.

During dry periods, the water could be withdrawn, purified and used for plant irrigation.

Fang Yuan, an engineer at Yu’s design institute, Turenscape, said the park serves as “an ecological aquarium,” capable of retaining 1 million cubic meters of water during floods and means the water can be used, instead of just discharging it into the sewage system.

The park also serves as a habitat for plants and wildlife disrupted by extreme weather such as drought.

## AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

At times, the sponge city concept has been difficult to implement in China. Misallocation of funds, lack of expertise in sponge city planning, and other snags have doomed some projects.

In April, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development announced some cities had “insufficient awareness, inaccurate understanding, and unsystematic implementation of sponge city construction.”

The notice also warned against using funds earmarked for sponge city construction for other general infrastructure projects, such as buildings and roads.

Those guidelines were issued after massive rainfall and catastrophic floods in the city of Zhengzhou killed 398 people last summer. Floodwater inundated a section of the city’s subway, trapping hundreds of commuters. Rescuers flocked to the scene, but 14 people died in the subway disaster.

Notably, Zhengzhou was one of the pilot sponge cities, with a planned investment of 53.58 billion yuan (US \$7.4 billion). Some questioned whether sponge city projects work at all.

But an investigation by the State Council released in January, found that funds had been misspent. Only 32% of the 19.6 billion yuan that was invested went to what the government defined as sponge city concepts.

“Even at the critical moment when the whole country mobilized forces to support Zhengzhou’s rescue and disaster relief, they were still “building flower beds,” the State Council report said.

Yu acknowledges there is an oversight problem. “Many of the cities just use it as propaganda — just to get a lot of money from the central government,” but then invest the funds in other projects.

## POYANG LAKE

While problems implementing absorptive cities are worked out, China’s vulnerability to extreme weather is clear. A prolonged drought since July has dramatically shrunk China’s biggest freshwater lake, Poyang.

In the village of Tangtou, on the lake’s normally water-blessed northeast corner, residents scooped buckets of water from a village pond to tend their vegetables.

Since July, villagers say they’ve hardly seen any rainfall, let alone water in their corner of the lake.

“The whole lake was completely dry, and even the Yangtze River was dry,” said 73-year-old Duan Yunzhen, as he scattered pond water onto his crops.

“We planted rice, cotton, sesame, and sweet potato — they are all suffering from drought,” said 62-year-old Hong Zuhua.

## Israeli liberals fear new government will undo progress

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press



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JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's outgoing coalition has been the most diverse in the country's history, bringing a slew of progressive policies on the environment, LGBTQ issues and funding for the country's Arab minority.

But now, even before it takes office, Israel's expected new coalition government — overwhelmingly male, religious and right-wing — is promising to roll back many of the achievements of its predecessor, prompting concern from activists and liberals over where their country is headed.

If its promises materialize, a tax on environmentally destructive single-use plastics could be abolished. New protections for gay Israelis could be reversed, and generous budgets for the long underserved Arab sector could be slashed.

The outgoing coalition lasted for just over a year and collapsed over disagreements on the Palestinians — although on that subject, its policies were largely unchanged from previous, hard-line governments.

But after Benjamin Netanyahu's 12-year reign, activists say it brought a positive energy to the Knesset, or parliament, and pressed ahead on issues they say were largely ignored during his lengthy rule. Now, with Netanyahu set to take office again as head of what's expected to be the country's most right-wing government, fears are rising that all that will be undone.

"In the last government ... the public discourse was one of rights and equality and ending discrimination," said Hila Peer, chairwoman at Aguda — The Association for LGBTQ Equality in Israel.

What they are hearing now, Peer said, "is a discourse of fear."

Israel's Nov. 1 elections opened the way for Netanyahu's return, bolstered by a stable majority with ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox allies, among them extremist lawmaker Itamar Ben-Gvir. Netanyahu is expected to complete negotiations on forming a new coalition in the coming weeks.

To mollify his partners, Netanyahu is expected to accede to many of their priorities, vastly different from those advanced by the outgoing government. Liberals' fears are compounded by the coalition's intention to weaken the Supreme Court — often the last recourse for minority groups.

Netanyahu has batted away the fears, saying they arise whenever he is elected and are disproved quickly. His supporters claim the concerns are a result of a scare campaign by his opponents.

"We will not permit anyone to be harmed, not their fundamental rights or personal freedoms," Miki Zohar, a senior Likud lawmaker and Netanyahu confidante, told The Associated Press.

The coalition that ousted Netanyahu last year was made up of eight ideologically diverse parties, from dovish parties that support Palestinian statehood to nationalist ones that don't, as well as centrist factions and for the first time a small Arab Islamist party.

The coalition agreed to sidestep divisive topics such as Palestinian independence, focusing instead on social issues, including the environment and public transportation. Policies toward the Palestinians showed little change. The military carried out daily raids in the occupied West Bank and a brief operation against militants in the Gaza Strip. Settlement construction in the West Bank raced ahead.

While the outgoing coalition's razor-thin majority prevented major policy changes, activists say the government moved forward in small but meaningful ways.

On the environment, it imposed taxes on single-use plastics, and advanced a climate law. On LGBTQ rights, it rescinded a ban on blood donations by gay men, moved to streamline access to gender reassignment surgery and took a clear stand against "conversion therapy," the scientifically discredited practice of using therapy to "convert" LGBTQ people to heterosexuality or traditional gender expectations.

The government imposed a tax on sugary drinks and approved billions of dollars in funding to the country's Palestinian minority, promising more cash than a previous budget passed several years ago under Netanyahu. It took steps to encourage religious pluralism, passing a reform in the country's kosher certification process.

Beyond the inclusion of an Arab party, the coalition's Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz is openly gay and about half of the coalition's members and a third of ministers were women.

That image of inclusivity is about to change dramatically.

Only nine out of 64 members of Netanyahu's expected coalition are women. Ultra-Orthodox parties, which make up two out of the coalition's four parties, deny inclusion to women members entirely. The

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expected coalition includes no Arab members. It is set to have one openly gay member of parliament, but his record shows he doesn't focus on LGBTQ issues.

"Large parts of the nation will feel that they have no connection to or influence in the incoming government," said Assaf Shapira, of the Israel Democracy Institute think tank, noting that a lack of representation has a direct effect on the legislative agenda.

Incoming coalition members have already pinpointed policies they plan to undo.

Members of the far-right Religious Zionism party, some of whom are openly anti-LGBTQ, are expected to challenge certain rights. Incoming lawmaker Avi Maoz has said he wants the legality of Israel's raucous Pride parades to be "examined."

The threat — though the parades are likely to continue — has spooked many Israelis.

The ultra-Orthodox parties oppose the single-use plastic tax. They see it as targeting their constituents whose large families tend to use disposable plastic plates and cutlery to avoid washing large piles of dishes. A tax on sugary drinks is also on the chopping block, worrying doctors' associations that say the tax promotes public health.

Netanyahu, who is secular and hails from a socially liberal background, is likely to stand as a bulwark against some of the more extremist elements of his coalition, according to Shapira.

But he is still expected to give in on many of their demands in exchange for legal reforms that could permanently freeze his corruption trial or make it disappear altogether.

Critics warn the next government's policy priorities — coupled with the very real chance that the Supreme Court will no longer be a beacon for challenging discriminatory laws — is a ticking bomb for Israel's democracy.

"Endemic corruption, human rights violations, curbs on minority rights, erosion of the LGBTQ community's hard-won achievements and a takeover of the state coffers by the ultra-Orthodox minority are all tangible threats," wrote commentator Ben Caspit in Al-Monitor, a regional news site.

"They are no longer gloomy scenarios but projects in the making," he added.

## Commanders end sloppy Eagles' perfect season 32-21

By DAN GELSTON AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Brandon Graham took a knee at midfield as most of his Eagles teammates trudged off the field in stunned disbelief that their undefeated season had been wiped out.

An Eagles team that romped toward the first 8-0 start in franchise history played with uncharacteristic sloppiness, failed to hit on the game-breaking plays that had defined their season, and had every flaw exposed in quite an imperfect performance.

The Washington Commanders turned methodical drives into scores and took advantage of turnover-prone Philadelphia, stunning the Eagles 32-21 on Monday night and sending them to their first loss in nine games this season.

Behind Jalen Hurts, the Eagles were the last team in the NFL that could make a run at Miami's 17-0 mark in 1972 and the lone perfect season. The 2007 New England Patriots came close, going 18-0 before a Super Bowl loss.

"We started 8-0 together, we lost this game together, we're going to move on together," Eagles coach Nick Sirianni said.

The Eagles had their shot at perfection slip out of their hands.

Trailing at halftime for the first time this season, Hurts seemed to have one more big play left to pull out a victory. He connected on a deep ball to wide receiver Quez Watkins on a 51-yard reception late in the fourth quarter trailing 26-21. Watkins hit the ground, popped up and took off running, only to fumble the ball and give Washington possession.

"I was just trying to make a play. I know I didn't get touched and I knew I had left him behind, so I just wanted to get up and get some extra yards," Watkins said.

That was it for the Eagles and their four turnovers, a bloated number for a team that had only three in

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the first eight games.

"Flush it and move on," Graham said.

The defensive end was flagged for a late unnecessary roughness call on QB Taylor Heinicke that extended Washington's drive.

"I was just trying to touch him down, because it just looked like he was going to get up. You just never know. But that's on me. I own that one. That's on me," Graham said

NFL referee Alex Kemp told a pool reporter Graham was penalized because Heinicke "had clearly given himself up."

"Therefore, he is down and a defenseless player. The contact by Philadelphia No. 55 was not only late, but also to the head and neck area," Kemp said.

Graham wasn't alone in making miscues that cost the Birds.

A.J Brown had a catch knock off his hands and turn into an interception. And, Dallas Goedert fumbled in the fourth quarter when linebacker Jamin Davis grabbed the tight end by the facemask — but no penalty was called.

Kemp told a pool reporter, "We didn't see a face mask on the field."

Heinicke again started for injured QB Carson Wentz, the much-maligned former Eagles QB who did play a key role in helping them win a Super Bowl in the 2017 season. He wasn't flashy, but efficient, going 17 for 29 and throwing 211 yards. Terry McLaurin had 128 yards receiving -- including a 41-yard haul that led to a field goal. Joey Slye kicked four field goals.

The Commanders (5-5) also spoiled Pittsburgh's 11-0 start in 2020.

Hurts was 17 for 26 for just 175 yards.

"It's the same message that's always been delivered after our wins, same message delivered after our losses, we're controlling the things we can," Hurts said. "We came here today, we didn't do that. And today it got us. It's very important to control the things that you can. Controlling your ball security."

The Eagles were favored by 10 1/2 points, according to FanDuel Sportsbook, and the Commanders revelled in pulling off the upset.

"We had a marvelous time ruining everything," the Commanders tweeted.

The Eagles tried to make the Commanders seem like just another bump in their bid for perfection, with the kind of early good fortune that they have enjoyed this season.

Take, for example, a roughing-the-kicker penalty that gave Washington a first down, and new life, on the game's opening drive. Eagles defensive end Josh Sweat simply strip-sacked Heinicke on the next play and the Eagles recovered. Hurts rushed up the middle for a 1-yard TD and a 7-0 lead.

The Commanders then flashed their first clock-killing drive with a 16-play effort that chewed up more than seven minutes and ended with Antonio Gibson's 1-yard rushing TD.

Hurts hit the highlight-reel with an ode to former Florida star Tim Tebow with a jump pass to Goedert for a 6-yard score, and the QB struck the Heisman pose in celebration.

The points off takeaways and Hurts scoring with his arms and legs had been the key ingredients in the team's flawless start, and the Eagles certainly seemed poised to make it an easy night against a team they routed 24-8 in September.

The Commanders showed a rare offensive spark of late and, after scoring 17 points in each of their last two games, took a 20-14 lead into halftime. Slye kicked field goals of 44 and 58 yards and Brian Robinson added a 1-yard rushing score.

Washington converted 9 of 12 third downs in the half -- it entered 26th in the NFL in third-down efficiency -- and crushed the Eagles in time of possession 23:49 to 6:11 -- the 17:38 TOP disparity was their best in a first half in franchise history.

Slye kicked 32 and 55 yard field goals in the second half.

The Eagles trailed at halftime for the first time since last season's postseason loss at Tampa Bay, and Hurts could not rally them in their first true case of adversity.

Hurts, who didn't help his MVP bid, connected with wideout DeVonta Smith for an 11-yard score early



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in the fourth that pulled the Eagles within 23-21.

UP NEXT

Commanders play Sunday at Houston.

Eagles play Sunday at Indianapolis.

## Grammy nominations to be announced, with 5 new categories

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Recording Academy will announce nominees for the 65th Grammy Awards on Tuesday with some significant additions.

The academy earlier this year five new categories including songwriter of the year to honor music's best composer and a special song for social change award.

The non-classical songwriter category will recognize one individual who was the "most prolific" non-performing and non-producing songwriter for a body of new work. It will take a different approach than song of the year, which awards the songwriters who wrote the lyrics or melodies to one song.

This year's announcement will be made on a livestream beginning at noon Eastern, 9 a.m. Pacific at <https://live.grammy.com/>. Among those announcing the nominees this year will be Olivia Rodrigo, John Legend, Machine Gun Kelly and Smokey Robinson.

Possible nominees include Beyoncé, Kendrick Lamar, Harry Styles and Adele. Some other hopefuls include Lizzo and Steve Lacy, who both had two of the biggest songs this year.

The Grammy Awards will be handed out Feb. 5 in Los Angeles.

The new category for songwriters is a huge step forward. Last year, a rule update allowed that any songwriter, producer, engineer or featured artist on an album nominated for album of the year could ultimately earn a nomination.

The four other categories include best spoken word poetry album, alternative music performance, Americana music performance and score soundtrack for video games and other interactive media.

## Cambodian leader leaves G-20 early after COVID-19 diagnosis

By ADAM SCHRECK Associated Press

NUSA DUA, Indonesia (AP) — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said Tuesday he has COVID-19 and is leaving the Group of 20 meetings in Bali, just days after hosting President Joe Biden and other world leaders for a summit in his country's capital.

The diagnosis came as the heads of the G-20 leading economies and other nations began a two-day meeting on the Indonesian resort island.

In a posting on his Facebook page, the Cambodian leader said he tested positive for the coronavirus Monday night and an Indonesian physician confirmed the diagnosis on Tuesday morning. He canceled his meetings at the G-20 as well as the upcoming APEC economic forum in Bangkok to return home.

The White House said Biden tested negative Tuesday morning and is not considered a close contact as defined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The two leaders spent considerable time together Saturday, and were at a joint meeting but not seated together as recently as Sunday.

Hun Sen said it was fortunate that he arrived in Bali late Monday and was unable to join a dinner with French President Emmanuel Macron and other leaders.

The Cambodian capital Phnom Penh was the host of the Association of Southeast Asian Nation summit that ended on Sunday. Hun Sen met and shook hands with many leaders who attended one-on-one, some on multiple occasions.

In addition to Biden, guests included Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang and many others.

Cambodia last month lifted most of its COVID-19 restrictions on travelers, and world leaders arriving for the ASEAN summit were recommended to continue following health and safety protocols but were not

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required to do so.

During the summit, almost none of the leaders or other participants wore masks and all were seated close to one another, often for lengthy periods of time.

Biden sat next to Hun Sen during a lengthy gala dinner Saturday evening. They spent time close together earlier Saturday in bilateral discussions as well as talks during the wider ASEAN meeting. They were both participants in Sunday's parallel East Asia Summit as well.

As the leader of the host nation, Hun Sen had contact with almost all of the top-level participants.

On Sunday, Hun Sen met with New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and others at a separate meeting on the sidelines of the summit. A spokesperson said Ardern tested negative for the virus Tuesday.

Hun Sen also was in contact with G-20 host Joko Widodo, the Indonesian president. The two men shook hands Sunday as Hun Sen handed over the ASEAN gavel, turning over the rotating chairmanship to Indonesia for 2023.

In his Facebook post, Hun Sen said he had "no idea" when he might have become infected with COVID-19.

He said he feels normal and is continuing to carry out his duties as usual except for meeting with guests.

The G-20 summit's Indonesian organizers required delegates and journalists covering the event to provide proof of vaccination against COVID-19 and undergo temperature checks on arrival. Participants were also expected to take daily coronavirus tests, though it was unclear if this requirement extended to heads of government.

## Trump prepares to launch third campaign for the White House

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Former President Donald Trump is preparing to launch his third campaign for the White House on Tuesday, looking to move on from disappointing midterm defeats and defy history amid signs that his grip on the Republican Party is waning.

Trump had hoped to use the GOP's expected gains in last week's elections as a springboard to vault himself to his party's nomination by locking in early support to keep potential challengers at bay. Instead, he now finds himself being blamed for backing a series of losing candidates after disappointing results in which Democrats retained control of the Senate and House control remains too early to call.

"Hopefully, tomorrow will turn out to be one of the most important days in the history of our Country!" Trump wrote on his social media network on Monday. An announcement was expected at 9 p.m. EST Tuesday from his club in Palm Beach.

Another campaign is a remarkable turn for any former president, much less one who made history as the first to be impeached twice and whose term ended with his supporters violently storming the U.S. Capitol in a deadly bid to halt the peaceful transition of power on Jan. 6, 2021. Just one president in U.S. history has been elected to two nonconsecutive terms: Grover Cleveland in 1884 and 1892.

Trump is also facing a series of intensifying criminal investigations, including a Justice Department probe into the hundreds of documents with classified markings that were discovered in boxes and drawers at his Mar-a-Lago club.

Aides and allies had urged Trump to wait until after the midterms were over — and then until after a Dec. 6 Senate runoff election in Georgia — to announce his plans. But Trump, eager to return to the spotlight, is also hoping to stave off a long list of potential challengers, including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who cruised to reelection last week and is now being urged by many in his party to run for president a well.

Trump has tried to blame Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell for the GOP's performance — and McConnell allies have criticized Rick Scott, the Florida senator who heads the Senate Republicans' campaign committee.

However, Trump has received the brunt of criticism for elevating candidates in states like Pennsylvania and Arizona who were unappealing to general election voters because they embraced his lies about 2020 election or held hard-line views on issues like abortion that were out of step with the mainstream.

While Trump has the backing of the No. 3 House Republican, Rep. Elise Stefanik, others were already

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moving on.

Asked whether she would endorse Trump in 2024, Republican Sen. Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming told reporters Monday: "I don't think that's the right question. I think the question is, who is the current leader of the Republican Party?"

Asked who that was, she replied: "Ron DeSantis."

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, a longtime Trump critic, compared Trump to a pitcher who keeps losing after GOP disappointments in 2018, 2020 and now 2022.

"He's been on the mound and lost three straight games. If we want to start winning, we need someone else on the mound. And we've got a very strong bench that can come out," Romney said. "I know, there's some fans that love him. Just like, you know, an aging pitcher, they're always fans that want to keep them there forever. But if you keep losing games, try to put some new players on the field."

Others expressed concern that Trump's announcement would be a distraction from the Georgia race and urged potential candidates to focus there.

"What's really important for anybody who wants to be a 2024 candidate is to help us right now in 2020 to finish the cycle by winning the state of Georgia," said Sen. John Thune, R-S.D.

"We obviously had higher expectation in the Senate, which didn't pan out. I think there are a lot of different things that contribute to that," Thune added. "But I do think that, you know, folks who were unduly focused on the 2020 election, that's not a winning strategy with independent voices."

Even the former president's right-flank allies in the House Freedom Caucus kept their distance ahead of Trump's announcement.

"I am focused on what's happening here," said Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., the Freedom Caucus chairman, as lawmakers returned to Capitol Hill on Monday. "I'm just not paying attention to any of those things, so I don't want to comment on that."

Meanwhile, in Utah, 86 Republican lawmakers on Monday sent out a news release urging DeSantis to run, reflecting dissatisfaction with having Trump as their party's standard-bearer. The state's Mormon majority has long been skeptical of Trump's isolationism and foul language.

And in Michigan, Paul Cordes, chief of staff of the Michigan Republican Party, penned a four-page internal memo that criticized Trump-backed candidates for "statewide sweeps" that will give Democrats full control of the state's government for the first time in 40 years. That includes Tudor Dixon, who lost the governor's race to Democratic incumbent Gretchen Whitmer by double digits.

Trump, Cordes wrote, was "popular amongst our grassroots and a motivating factor for his supporters, but provided challenges on a statewide ballot, especially with independents and women in the midterm election."

## 'Vindication': Schumer lifts Democrats with majority stunner

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer was eating Peking duck at a Chinese restaurant with family and friends on Manhattan's West side Saturday evening when an aide called with urgent news: Democrats would win Nevada's Senate seat and keep their majority.

The restaurant erupted in cheers as the news flashed across a television screen, and a group celebrating a birthday sent him a slice of cake.

But Schumer didn't stay to celebrate. He was soon rushing back across town for an impromptu, late-night news conference in the lobby of a building near his office.

"I will once again be majority leader," he declared to the cameras, almost giddily.

The 2022 election was "a victory and a vindication for Democrats," he said.

It was vindication for the often-underestimated Schumer, in particular, who has racked up a series of unexpected legislative victories this year as he has navigated Democrats' slim 50-50 majority. But the midterm elections held the biggest surprise of all, with his party successfully defending seats despite historical trends and low approval ratings for President Joe Biden. The result: another two years of narrow



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Senate control.

Even a narrow majority has huge consequences for Biden and his party, as the Senate confirms executive branch nominees and judges, including for the Supreme Court if there are any vacancies in the next two years. Democrats will be able to decide what bills to put on the Senate floor as Republicans — who will possibly control the House — beat up on the president politically ahead of the 2024 election.

"Listen, I was on top of every one of these campaigns," Schumer said in an interview in his Capitol office on Monday, a fire roaring behind him and his elation still evident. He said he believes Democrats won because they had better candidates and because of their legislative achievements — allowing the government to negotiate some prescription drug costs, investments to fight climate change and a bipartisan effort to tighten who can own guns, among other measures that passed over the summer.

"This was always my plan," Schumer said. "Get things done, and focus on those things, and don't get diverted."

Lastly, he said, voters rejected anti-democratic efforts by Republicans who supported former President Donald Trump's efforts to overturn the last election.

"We were on the precipice of autocracy gnawing away at our democracy," said Schumer, who noted that the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection brought new attention to the attack over the summer, with multiple hearings and images of Trump's supporters beating up police getting heavy airtime. "American voters said, I don't like this. I'm going to reject it. And the American people saved us."

In his own election postmortem on Monday, Republican leader Mitch McConnell saw it differently, describing the Democrats' narrow win in the Senate and still-uncalled House control as confirmation of a "closely divided nation." Making the case directly to voters in Georgia, who will decide a December runoff between Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock and Republican candidate Herschel Walker, McConnell asserted that Democratic policy failures led to high inflation.

If Warnock wins, the Democrats will have a 51-49 majority. And Schumer will have protected every single one of his incumbents in the election — a stunning feat.

First elected to the House in 1980 and then the Senate in 1998, Schumer has long been known for his political acumen — he was in charge of Democrats' winning Senate efforts in 2006 and 2008 — and as a master communicator. But to his colleagues, the midterm election results are confirmation of his skills as a legislative leader as well. While he has been criticized by Republicans and some progressive groups for giving up some items on Democrats' wish list, the party had accomplishments to point to in the election, and lawmakers say that gave them new momentum over the summer.

"It's the year of Chuck Schumer," said Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., who spearheaded bipartisan negotiations on gun legislation. The election wins were "set up by a bunch of victories that ended up motivating both swing and base voters," Murphy said, particularly the sweeping health, climate and economic package that Democrats passed after Schumer negotiated one-on-one with moderate Democrat Joe Manchin of West Virginia, who had singlehandedly killed an earlier version of the legislation.

Murphy said Schumer's style is "totally unique, and it's very well suited to a 50-50 Senate," in that he knows when to micromanage and when to ease off. Murphy said he talked to Schumer several times a day while he was negotiating the gun bill, but he still let Murphy take the lead.

Schumer brags about his communication skills, noting he has every single Democratic senator on speed dial in his famous flip phone. And he knows many of their numbers by heart, he said.

"Every member calls me," he said. "They don't go through staff. They can talk to me directly, no email."

Brian Fallon, a former Schumer aide who is now the executive director of Demand Justice, a liberal advocacy group that supports expanding the court, said Schumer has "come into his own in the last two years" in terms of legislative maneuvering. At no moment was that more evident than this summer, Fallon said, when Schumer unexpectedly announced the deal with Manchin on the sweeping package of bills and took angry Republicans by surprise.

"He's had his own sort of Harry Reid moment the last several months," said Fallon, referring to the late Nevada senator and majority leader who was known as one of the Senate's toughest dealmakers before

passing the torch to Schumer. Reid died last year.

The next two years won't be easy, even if Warnock does win and give Democrats a crucial extra seat. Several Democratic incumbents are up for reelection in 2024, and Republicans still have a good chance of winning the House majority, making negotiations tougher for Schumer.

"So where do we go from here?" Schumer asked. The Democratic leader said he intends to sit down with McConnell and try to find places to agree, even though the two men have traditionally had a frosty relationship.

"I'm going to make a real effort to do as much as we can," Schumer said, echoing what he's said since he took the top job two years ago. "We've got to focus on getting things done. That means we're going to have to compromise."

## Siebel Newsom gives emotional testimony of Weinstein rape

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Jennifer Siebel Newsom, a documentary filmmaker and the wife of California Gov. Gavin Newsom, nearly screamed through tears from the witness stand Monday when she told the court Harvey Weinstein raped her in a hotel room and spoke of the devastating effect it had on her in the 17 years since.

"He knows this is not normal!" she shouted during the Los Angeles trial, recalling her thoughts amid the alleged 2005 rape. "He knows this is not consent!"

She then shouted "Oh God!" as if overcome by the memory, and gave in to the crying. Weinstein watched from the defense table.

Siebel Newsom said she found herself unexpectedly alone with Weinstein in a suite at the Peninsula Hotel in Beverly Hills, where she had agreed to join him for a meeting. She said she assumed others would be present and they would talk about her career.

When he emerged from the bathroom in a robe with nothing underneath and began groping her while he masturbated, she described her feelings.

"Horror! Horror!" she said. "I'm trembling. I'm like a rock, I'm frigid. This is my worst nightmare. I'm just this blow-up doll!"

She then gave a graphic description of a sexual assault and rape by Weinstein in the suite's bedroom.

Weinstein's lawyers, who only got to cross-examine her briefly and will continue on Tuesday, say the two had consensual sex and that she was seeking to use the powerful producer to advance her career.

Weinstein is already serving a 23-year sentence for a rape conviction in New York, and has pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of rape and sexual assault in California involving five women.

Siebel Newsom is the fourth woman Weinstein is accused of sexually assaulting who has taken the stand in Los Angeles. Her testimony was the most dramatic and emotional so far in the three-week trial. She cried throughout her 2 1/2 hours on the stand, beginning with when she was asked to identify the 70-year-old Weinstein for the record.

"He's wearing a suit, and a blue tie, and he's staring at me," she said as tears began to flow.

Now 48, Siebel Newsom described how Weinstein first approached her to introduce himself at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2005. At the time, she was a producer and actor with only a few small roles, and he was at the height of his Hollywood power.

"It felt like the Red Sea was parting," she said as she watched others in the room make way for him. "I don't know if it was deference or fear."

But she said when they had a drink later in the day he was "charming" and showed "a genuine interest in talking about my work."

He was in the Los Angeles area a few weeks later, stopping by her home during a small party to drop off a gift and inviting her to the hotel meeting.

She described how nervous she was after being directed to his hotel suite. Asked by Deputy District Attorney Marlene Martinez why she didn't walk away, she said: "Because you don't say no to Harvey

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Weinstein.”

“He could make or ruin your career,” she said.

Afterward, she said she felt “so much shame.”

“I was so violated and I don’t know how that happened,” she said, sobbing. “I didn’t see the clues and I didn’t know how to escape.”

Siebel Newsom is known as Jane Doe #4 at the trial, and like the others Weinstein is charged with raping or sexually assaulting, her name is not being spoken in court. But both the prosecution and the defense have identified her as the governor’s wife during the trial, and Siebel Newsom’s attorney confirmed to The Associated Press and other news outlets that she is Jane Doe #4.

The AP does not typically name people who say they have been sexually abused unless they have come forward publicly.

Weinstein has had many famous accusers, including A-list actors, since he became a magnet for the #MeToo movement in 2017. But none of the women telling their stories at the trial have had anywhere near the prominence of Siebel Newsom — spouse of the man who last week sailed to a second term as governor of the nation’s most populous state, and may make a run for the White House. The governor was not in the courtroom Monday.

During cross-examination, Weinstein attorney Mark Werksman pressed Siebel Newsom repeatedly about when she told her husband about the assault, pointing out in a transcript of a 2020 interview with prosecutors that she said Newsom was “maybe” the first person she told. The lawyer was the first to say the name “Gavin Newsom” during the testimony, and repeated it often.

She said she “dropped hints along the way” through the years after meeting him when he was San Francisco mayor. And he got the full account when women’s stories about Weinstein became widespread in 2017. He would return former political donations from Weinstein then.

Werksman suggested that the couple sought the donations from Weinstein at a time when Newsom must have known her story.

He took money “from somebody you hinted had done something despicable to you?” Werksman asked.

“It’s complex,” Siebel Newsom responded.

“Well is that just politics,” Werksman asked, “that you just take money from someone who has done something despicable to your wife unless everybody finds out about it?”

Siebel Newsom denied the suggestion from Werksman that new elements of the alleged assault that she had not described in interviews with prosecutors or grand jury testimony came up for the first time in her testimony Tuesday.

He said he wanted to know why her story changed.

“We all heard you being very emotional,” he said. “You’ve had a lot of time to think about it in the past 17 years.”

Siebel Newsom said she had spent much of that time trying not to think about it.

“It’s very traumatic, sir,” she said.

## Jay Leno suffers burns in gasoline fire, says he’s ‘OK’

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Jay Leno suffered “serious burns” but said Monday that he was doing OK, according to reports.

“I got some serious burns from a gasoline fire,” Leno said in a statement to The Associated Press. “I am ok. Just need a week or two to get back on my feet.”

The cause and time of the fire wasn’t immediately clear. The former “Tonight Show” host is known for his famed car collection, which is housed at a garage in Burbank, north of Los Angeles.

Leno, 72, had been set to appear at a financial conference in Las Vegas on Sunday but canceled because of a “serious medical emergency,” People magazine reported earlier Monday, citing an email sent to those attending the conference.

The comedian took over NBC’s “Tonight” when longtime host Johnny Carson retired in 1992. Leno was



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succeeded by Conan O'Brien in 2009, but NBC got cold feet when the show's ratings dropped and brought Leno back as host in 2010. He remained in the job until Jimmy Fallon took over in 2014.

Leno turned his love of cars into a CNBC series, "Jay Leno's Garage," and now hosts a revival of the game show "You Bet Your Life."

## **GOP on cusp of retaking House control with slim majority**

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans were on the cusp of retaking control of the House late Monday, just one victory shy of the 218 seats the party needs to secure a majority, narrowing the path for Democrats to keep the chamber and raising the prospect of a divided government in Washington.

Democrats have already won control of the Senate, securing 50 seats with a runoff in Georgia next month that could give President Joe Biden's party an additional seat. The GOP came into the election needing to gain a net of just five seats for House control.

Nearly a week after the midterm elections, Republicans were closing in on the majority, giving conservatives leverage to blunt Biden's agenda and spur a flurry of investigations. But a slim numerical advantage will pose immediate challenges for GOP leaders and complicate the party's ability to govern.

The full scope of the party's majority may not be clear for several more days — or weeks — as votes in competitive races are still being counted. Still, the party was on track to achieve 218 with seats in California and other states still too early to call.

Even barely achieving 218, though, means Republicans will likely have the narrowest majority of the 21st century. It could rival 2001, when Republicans had just a nine-seat majority, 221-212 with two independents. That's far short of the sweeping victory Republicans predicted going into this year's midterm elections, when the party hoped to reset the agenda on Capitol Hill by capitalizing on economic challenges and Biden's lagging popularity.

Instead, Democrats were able to largely blunt an expected big GOP election, holding on to moderate, suburban districts from Virginia to Minnesota and Kansas. The results could complicate House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy's plans to become speaker as some conservative members have questioned whether to back him or have imposed conditions for their support.

The narrow margins have upended Republican politics and prompted finger-pointing about what went wrong. Some in the GOP have blamed Donald Trump for the worse-than-expected outcome. The former president, who is expected to announce a third White House bid on Tuesday, lifted candidates during this year's primaries who struggled to win during the general election.

Despite its underwhelming showing, the GOP will still see its power in Washington grow. Republicans will take control of House committees, giving them the ability to shape legislation and launch probes of Biden, his family and his administration.

There's particular interest in investigating the overseas business dealings of the president's son Hunter Biden. Some of the most conservative lawmakers have raised the prospect of impeaching Biden, though that will be much harder for the party to accomplish with a tight majority.

Any legislation that emerges from the House could face steep odds in the Senate, where the narrow Democratic majority will often be enough to derail GOP-championed legislation.

With such a slim majority in the House, there's a potential for legislative chaos. The dynamic essentially gives an individual member enormous sway over shaping what happens in the chamber. That could lead to particularly tricky circumstances for GOP leaders as they try to win support for must-pass measures that keep the government funded or raise the debt ceiling.

The GOP's failure to notch more gains was especially surprising because the party went into the election benefiting from congressional maps that were redrawn by Republican legislatures. History was also on Republicans' side: The party that holds the White House had lost congressional seats during virtually every new president's first midterm of the modern era.

If elected to succeed House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in the top post, McCarthy would lead what will likely

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be a rowdy conference of House Republicans, most of whom are aligned with Trump's bare-knuckle brand of politics. Many Republicans in the incoming Congress rejected the results of the 2020 presidential election, even though claims of widespread fraud were refuted by courts, elections officials and Trump's own attorney general.

In the first national election since the Jan. 6 insurrection, one Republican who was outside the Capitol on the day of the mob attack, Derrick Van Orden, won a House seat. He won a seat long held by Democrats in Wisconsin.

Republican candidates pledged on the campaign trail to cut taxes and tighten border security. GOP lawmakers also could withhold aid to Ukraine as it fights a war with Russia or use the threat of defaulting on the nation's debt as leverage to extract cuts from social spending and entitlements — though all such pursuits will be tougher given how small the GOP majority may end up being.

As a senator and then vice president, Biden spent a career crafting legislative compromises with Republicans. But as president, he was clear about what he viewed as the threats posed by the current Republican Party.

Biden said the midterms show voters want Democrats and Republicans to find ways to cooperate and govern in a bipartisan manner, but also noted that Republicans didn't achieve the electoral surge they'd been betting on and vowed, "I'm not going to change anything in any fundamental way."

The president was also blunt in assessing his party's dwindling chances, saying Monday of the House, "I think it's going to be very close, but I don't think we're going to make it."

## Hobbs wins Arizona governor's race, flipping state for Dems

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Democrat Katie Hobbs was elected Arizona governor on Monday, defeating an ally of Donald Trump who falsely claimed the 2020 election was rigged and refused to say she would accept the results of her race this year.

Hobbs, who is Arizona's secretary of state, rose to prominence as a staunch defender of the legitimacy of the last election and warned that her Republican rival, former television news anchor Kari Lake, would be an agent of chaos. Hobbs' victory adds further evidence that Trump is weighing down his allies in a crucial battleground state as the former president gears up for an announcement of a 2024 presidential run.

She will succeed Republican Gov. Doug Ducey, who was prohibited by term limit laws from running again. She's the first Democrat to be elected governor in Arizona since Janet Napolitano in 2006.

"For the Arizonans who did not vote for me, I will work just as hard for you — because even in this moment of division, I believe there is so much more that connects us," Hobbs said in a statement declaring victory. "This was not just about an election — it was about moving this state forward and facing the challenges of our generation."

Lake tweeted after the call, "Arizonans know BS when they see it."

The Associated Press called the governor's race for Hobbs after the latest round of vote releases gave her a big enough lead that the AP determined she would not relinquish it. The AP concluded that, even though Lake had been posting increasingly larger margins in vote updates from Maricopa County, she was not gaining a big enough share to overtake Hobbs and was running out of remaining votes.

Vote counting had gone on for days since the Tuesday election, as officials continued to tally massive amounts of late-arriving ballots.

A onetime Republican stronghold where Democrats made gains during the Trump era, Arizona has been central to efforts by Trump and his allies to cast doubt on Joe Biden's 2020 presidential victory with false claims of fraud. This year, many Trump-endorsed candidates faltered in general elections in battleground states, though his pick in the Nevada governor's race, Republican Joe Lombardo, defeated an incumbent Democrat.

Before entering politics, Hobbs was a social worker who worked with homeless youth and an executive with a large domestic violence shelter in the Phoenix area. She was elected to the state Legislature in

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2010, serving one term in the House and three terms in the Senate, rising to minority leader.

Hobbs eked out a narrow win in 2018 as secretary of state and was thrust into the center of a political storm as Arizona became the centerpiece of the efforts by Trump and his allies to overturn the results of the 2020 election he lost. She appeared constantly on cable news defending the integrity of the vote count.

The attention allowed her to raise millions of dollars and raise her profile. When she announced her campaign for governor, other prominent Democrats declined to run and Hobbs comfortably won her primary.

She ran a cautious campaign, sticking largely to scripted and choreographed public appearances. She declined to participate in a debate with Lake, contending that Lake would turn it into a spectacle by spouting conspiracy theories and making false accusations.

She bet instead that voters would recoil against Lake, who picked verbal fights with journalists as cameras rolled and struck a combative tone toward Democrats and even the establishment Republicans who have long dominated state government.

Pre-election polls showed the race was tied, but Hobbs' victory was still a surprise to many Democrats who feared her timidity would turn off voters. She overcame expectations in Maricopa and Pima counties, the metro Phoenix and Tucson areas where the overwhelming majority of Arizona voters live. She also spent considerable time in rural areas, looking to minimize her losses in regions that traditionally support Republicans.

Lake is well known in much of the state after anchoring the evening news in Phoenix for more than two decades. She ran as a fierce critic of the mainstream media, which she said is unfair to Republicans. She earned Trump's admiration for her staunch commitment to questioning the results of the 2020 election, a stand she never wavered from even after winning the GOP primary.

She baselessly accused election officials of slow-rolling the vote count this year and prioritizing Democratic ballots as she narrowly trailed Hobbs for days following the election.

Lake has cited a problem with printers at about a third of Maricopa County vote centers that led on-site tabulators to reject some ballots. Election officials told voters to put ballots in a separate box to be counted later, but Republican leaders told their supporters to ignore that instruction and lines in some places backed up.

The problem affected about 7% of ballots cast in person on Election Day and about 1% of the total cast in the county.

Maricopa County Sheriff Paul Penzone said he increased security around the elections center Monday in anticipation that the race would be called and emotions could run hot, though he said there was no specific threat. Demonstrators have gathered outside the building for several days but have remained peaceful, he said.

"I think we're getting close to the end game so I want to be sure that we're prepared," Penzone told reporters in a news conference hours before the race call.

The sheriff's office was caught off guard two years ago when armed and angry protesters descended on the elections building in downtown Phoenix after Fox News and the AP called Arizona for Biden, marking the first time a Democrat won the state in more than two decades.

## Suspect caught in fatal shooting of 3 U.Va. football players

By SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP) — A University of Virginia student and former member of the school's football team fatally shot three current players as they returned from a field trip, authorities said, setting off panic and a 12-hour lockdown of the campus until the suspect was captured Monday.

Students who were told to shelter in place beginning late Sunday described terrifying hours in hiding. While police searched for the gunman through the night, students sought safety in closets, dorm rooms, libraries and apartments. They listened to police scanners and tried to remember everything they were taught as children during active-shooter drills.

"I think all of us were just really unsettled and trying to keep, you know, our cool and level heads during



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the situation," student Shannon Lake said.

Officials got word during a morning news briefing that the suspect, 22-year-old Christopher Darnell Jones Jr., had been arrested.

"Just give me a moment to thank God, breathe a sigh of relief," university Police Chief Timothy Longo Sr. said after learning Jones was in custody.

The violence erupted near a parking garage just after 10:15 p.m. Sunday as a charter bus full of students returned to Charlottesville from seeing a play in Washington.

University President Jim Ryan said authorities did not have a "full understanding" of the motive or circumstances of the shooting.

"The entire university community is grieving this morning," a visibly strained Ryan said.

The killings happened at a time when the nation is on edge from a string of mass shootings during the last six months, including an attack that killed 19 students and two teachers at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas; a shooting at a Fourth of July parade in a Chicago suburb that killed seven people and wounded more than 30; and a shooting at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York, that killed 10 people and wounded three.

Lake, a third-year student from Crozet, Virginia, ended up spending the night with friends in a lab room, much of the time in a storage closet.

Elizabeth Paul, a student from northern Virginia, was working at a computer in the library when she got a call from her mom, who had received word about the shooting.

Paul said she initially brushed off any concern, thinking it was probably something minor. She realized she needed to take it seriously when her computer lit up with a warning about an active shooter.

"I think it said, 'Run. Hide. Fight,'" she said.

Paul said she stayed huddled with several others in the library. She spent most of the night on the phone with her mom.

"Not even talking to her the whole time necessarily, but she wanted the line to be on so that if I needed something she was there," she said.

Ryan identified the three slain students as Devin Chandler, Lavel Davis Jr. and D'Sean Perry.

Two students were wounded and hospitalized, Ryan said.

Mike Hollins, a running back on the football team, was in stable condition Monday, his mother, Brenda Hollins, told The Associated Press.

"Mike is a fighter — and he's showing it," she said after flying to Virginia from Louisiana. "We have great doctors who have been working with him. And most importantly, we have God's grace and God's hands on him."

The shooting touched off an intense manhunt that included a building-by-building search of the campus. The lockdown order was lifted late Monday morning.

Jones was taken into custody without incident in suburban Richmond, police said.

The arrest warrants for Jones charged him with three counts of second-degree murder and three counts of using a handgun in the commission of a felony, Longo said.

It was not immediately clear whether Jones had an attorney or when he would make his first court appearance.

His father, Chris Jones Sr., told Richmond TV station WTVR he was in disbelief after getting a call from police on Monday.

"My heart goes out to their families. I don't know what to say, except I'm sorry, on his behalf, and I apologize," he said.

Jones had once been on the football team, but he had not been part of the team for at least a year, Longo said. The UVA football website listed him as a team member during the 2018 season and said he did not play in any games.

Hours after Jones was arrested, first-year head football coach Tony Elliott sat alone outside the athletic building used by the team, at times with his head in his hands. He said the victims "were all good kids."

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"These precious young men were called away too soon. We are all fortunate to have them be a part of our lives. They touched us, inspired us and worked incredibly hard as representatives of our program, university and community," he said in a statement.

Jones came to the attention of the university's threat-assessment team this fall after a person unaffiliated with the school reported a remark Jones apparently made about possessing a gun, Longo said.

No threat was reported in conjunction with the concern about the weapon, but officials looked into it, following up with Jones' roommate.

Longo also said Jones had been involved in a "hazing investigation of some sort." He said he did not have all the facts and circumstances of that case, though he said the probe was closed after witnesses failed to cooperate.

In addition, officials learned about a prior incident outside Charlottesville involving a weapons violation, Longo said. That incident was not reported to the university as it should have been, he said.

Em Gunter, a second-year anthropology student, heard three gunshots and then three more while she was studying genetics in her dorm room.

She knew right away there was an active shooter outside and told others to go in their rooms, shut their blinds and turn off the lights. For the next 12 hours, she stayed in her room with a friend, listening to a police scanner and messaging her family and friends who were stuck in other areas of the campus.

Students know from active shooter drills how to respond, she said.

"But how do we deal with it afterwards?" she asked. "What's it going to be like in a week, in a month?"

Eva Surovell, the editor in chief of the student newspaper, The Cavalier Daily, noted that her generation grew up with "generalized gun violence."

"But that doesn't make it any easier when it's your own community," she said.

Classes and other academic activities were canceled for Tuesday. An impromptu vigil drew a large crowd Monday night, and a university-wide vigil was being planned for a later date. Gov. Glenn Youngkin ordered flags lowered to half-staff on Tuesday in respect and memory of the victims, their families and the Charlottesville community.

Scores of worshippers gathered Monday evening on campus at St. Paul's Memorial Church for a prayer service.

"Have pity on us and all who mourn for Devin, Lavel and D'Sean, innocent people slaughtered by the violence of our fallen world," an officiant said in prayer.

Elsewhere, police in Moscow, Idaho, were investigating the deaths of four University of Idaho students found Sunday in a home near the campus. Authorities released few details, except to say that the deaths were labeled homicides.

## **Biden, Xi clash on Taiwan but aim to 'manage' differences**

By SEUNG MIN KIM and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

NUSA DUA, Indonesia (AP) — President Joe Biden objected directly to China's "coercive and increasingly aggressive actions" toward Taiwan during the first in-person meeting of his presidency with Xi Jinping, as the two superpower leaders aimed on Monday to "manage" their differences in the competition for global influence.

The nearly three-hour meeting was the highlight of Biden's weeklong, round-the-world trip to the Middle East and Asia, and came at a critical juncture for the two countries amid increasing economic and security tensions. Speaking at a news conference afterward, Biden said that when it comes to China, the U.S. would "compete vigorously, but I'm not looking for conflict."

He added: "I absolutely believe there need not be a new Cold War" between America and the rising Asian power.

Biden reiterated U.S. support for its longstanding "One China" policy, which recognizes the government in Beijing — while allowing for informal American relations and defense ties with Taipei, and "strategic ambiguity" over whether the U.S. would respond militarily if the island were attacked. He also said that

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despite China's recent saber rattling, he does not believe "there's any imminent attempt on the part of China to invade Taiwan."

Xi, according to the Chinese government's account of the meeting, "stressed that the Taiwan question is at the very core of China's core interests, the bedrock of the political foundation of China-U.S. relations, and the first red line that must not be crossed in China-U.S. relations."

Biden said he and Xi also discussed Russia's aggression against Ukraine and "reaffirmed our shared belief" that the use or even the threat of nuclear weapons is "totally unacceptable." That was a reference to Moscow's thinly veiled threats to use atomic weapons as its nearly nine-month invasion of Ukraine has faltered.

Chinese officials have largely refrained from public criticism of Russia's war, although Beijing has avoided direct support of the Russians, such as supplying arms.

While there were no watershed breakthroughs, the Biden-Xi meeting brought each side long-sought, if modest, gains. In addition to the shared condemnation of Russian nuclear threats, Biden appeared to secure from Xi the resumption of lower-level cooperation from China on a range of shared global challenges. Meanwhile, Xi, who has aimed to establish China as a geopolitical peer of the U.S., got symbolic home turf for the meeting as well as Biden's forceful One China policy commitment.

The White House said Biden and Xi agreed to "empower key senior officials" to work on areas of potential cooperation, including tackling climate change and maintaining global financial, health and food stability. Beijing had cut off such contacts with the U.S. in protest of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan in August.

China and the U.S. are the world's worst climate polluters, and their one-on-one climate contacts are seen as vital to staving off some of the most dire scenarios of climate change. Biden's first stop on his long overseas trip was in Egypt for a major climate conference.

The two leaders agreed to have U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken travel to Beijing to continue discussions.

Xi and Biden warmly 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.

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

Xi called on Biden to "chart the right course" and "elevate the relationship" between China and the U.S. He said he wanted a "candid and in-depth exchange of views."

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.

But relations between the two powers have grown more strained under successive American administrations, with economic, trade, human rights and security differences at 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 and Ukraine.

The White House said Biden specifically mentioned U.S. concerns about China's actions in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong, and the plight of Americans it considers "wrongfully detained" or subject to exit bans in China.

Taiwan has emerged as one of the most contentious issues. 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. China policy has not changed.



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Pelosi's trip prompted China, officially the People's Republic of China, to retaliate with military drills and the firing of ballistic missiles into nearby waters.

The White House said Biden "raised U.S. objections to the PRC's coercive and increasingly aggressive actions toward Taiwan, which undermine peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and in the broader region, and jeopardize global prosperity."

In the meeting, Biden said China's economic practices "harm American workers and families, and workers and families around the world," the White House said.

The meeting came just weeks after the Biden administration blocked exports of advanced computer chips to China — a national security move that bolsters U.S. competition against Beijing.

Xi's government said he condemned such moves, saying, "Starting a trade war or a technology war, building walls and barriers, and pushing for decoupling and severing supply chains run counter to the principles of market economy and undermine international trade rules."

Although the two men have held five phone or video calls during Biden's presidency, White House officials said those encounters were no substitute for an in-person meeting. They said sitting down with Xi was all the more important after the Chinese leader strengthened his grip on power with a third term and because lower-level Chinese officials have been unable or unwilling to speak for their leader.

White House officials and their Chinese counterparts spent weeks negotiating details of the meeting, which was held at Xi's hotel with translators providing simultaneous interpretation through headsets. Each leader was flanked by nine N-95 mask-wearing aides, and in the case of Xi, at least one official newly elevated in the recent Congress to its top leadership.

U.S. officials were eager to see how Xi approached the meeting after consolidating his position as the unquestioned leader of the state — whether that made him more or less likely to seek out areas of cooperation.

Biden said Xi was as he's always been.

"I didn't find him more confrontational or more conciliatory," Biden said. "I found him the way he's always been, direct and straightforward."

## Louisiana grand jury convenes in Black man's deadly arrest

By JIM MUSTIAN and SARA CLINE Associated Press

FARMERVILLE, La. (AP) — A Louisiana grand jury began hearing evidence Monday in the deadly 2019 arrest of Ronald Greene, long-awaited testimony that will determine whether state charges are brought against the white troopers seen on body-camera video stunning, striking and dragging the Black motorist by his ankle shackles following a high-speed chase.

Prosecutors planned to present a wide range of felony counts related to the troopers' use of force and their decision to leave the heavysset Greene handcuffed and prone for several minutes before rendering aid. The panel is expected to hear from several witnesses before deciding on indictments in the coming weeks.

"I want justice to be done," John Belton, the Union Parish district attorney, told The Associated Press. "I just feel like I need to do the right thing and present everything to the grand jury and have them determine which way this thing is going to go."

The proceedings come three and a half years after Greene died in Louisiana State Police custody on a rural roadside outside Monroe. The state case was held up for months by an ongoing FBI investigation that expanded to include allegations of an attempted cover-up. Federal prosecutors asked Belton to hold off pursuing state charges before reversing course last spring and handing over a voluminous case file.

"The goalposts moved," Belton said, adding he long expected the U.S. Justice Department to bring civil rights charges in the case. "I had to balance it because I promised the feds I wouldn't pursue any charges pending their investigation — but I promised the family I'd seek justice."

Long shrouded in secrecy, Greene's death exploded into public view last year after AP obtained and published graphic body-camera footage showing the 49-year-old pleading for mercy and wailing, "I'm your brother! I'm scared! I'm scared!"

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Authorities initially told Greene's family he died in a crash following a lengthy police pursuit — a narrative the family rejected and that was questioned even by an emergency room doctor after Greene's bruised and battered body arrived at the hospital. Still, a coroner's report listed the cause of death as motor vehicle accident, while a state police crash report omitted any mention of troopers even using force in Greene's arrest. And 462 days would pass before state police began an internal investigation into the troopers involved.

All the while, the body-camera footage remained so secret it was withheld from Greene's initial autopsy. Gov. John Bel Edwards declined repeated requests to release the videos, citing the ongoing investigations, before AP published them.

The Democratic governor has since described the troopers' treatment of Greene as both criminal and racist. Monday, Edwards attended a groundbreaking ceremony for an infrastructure project rather than appear in Baton Rouge before a bipartisan legislative committee investigating Greene's death.

The committee took a months-long hiatus in hearing testimony and waited until the day after last week's election to invite the governor. The panel formed in February after AP reported Edwards had been informed within hours that troopers arresting Greene engaged in a "violent, lengthy struggle," yet the governor stayed mostly silent on the case for two years, even as troopers continued to raise the car crash theory.

"I don't even understand how you can look your troopers in the face. They continue to have a badge, they continue to have a paycheck," Greene's mother, Mona Hardin, told lawmakers Monday. "What happened to Ronnie was murder."

The state and federal investigations have been complicated by the untimely death of Chris Hollingsworth, a state trooper who admitted bashing Greene's head with a flashlight and was recorded saying he "beat the ever-living f--- out of" Greene. Hollingsworth was widely seen as the most culpable of the half-dozen officers involved but he died in a high-speed, single-vehicle crash just six days after he was interrogated about the violence he used taking Greene into custody.

Hollingsworth's death was ruled accidental but prompted widespread speculation that the former state police driving instructor took his own life. His violent role in Greene's arrest prompted prosecutors to explore the possibility of charging him posthumously.

Among the witnesses testifying to the grand jury is Albert Paxton, the now-retired lead detective on the Greene case who has said supervisors pressured him not to bring state charges in the case.

Another is a forensic pathologist who, tasked by the FBI to re-examine Greene's autopsy, rejected the crash theory and attributed Greene's death to "physical struggle," troopers repeatedly stunning him, striking him in the head, restraining him at length and Greene's use of cocaine.

## Appeals court ruling keeps Biden student debt plan on hold

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — President Joe Biden's plan to forgive student loan debt for millions of borrowers was handed another legal loss Monday when a federal appeals court panel agreed to a preliminary injunction halting the program while an appeal plays out.

The ruling by the three-judge panel from the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis came days after a federal judge in Texas blocked the program, saying it usurped Congress' power to make laws. The Texas case was appealed and the administration is likely to appeal the 8th Circuit ruling as well.

The plan would cancel \$10,000 in student loan debt for those making less than \$125,000 or households with less than \$250,000 in income. Pell Grant recipients, who typically demonstrate more financial need, would get an additional \$10,000 in debt forgiven. The cancellation applies to federal student loans used to attend undergraduate and graduate school, along with Parent Plus loans.

The Congressional Budget Office has said the program will cost about \$400 billion over the next three decades.

A federal judge on Oct. 20 allowed the program to proceed, but the 8th Circuit the next day temporarily put it on hold while it considered an effort by the states of Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Arkansas and South Carolina to block the loan forgiveness plan.

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The new ruling from the panel made up of three Republican appointees — one was appointed by President George W. Bush and two by President Donald Trump — extends the hold until the issue is resolved in court.

Part of the states' argument centered around the financial harm the debt cancellation would cause the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority.

"This unanticipated financial downturn will prevent or delay Missouri from funding higher education at its public colleges and universities," the 8th Circuit ruling stated.

Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson, a Republican, said in a statement that the ruling "recognizes that this attempt to forgive over \$400 billion in student loans threatens serious harm to the economy that cannot be undone. It is important to stop the Biden administration from such unlawful abuse of power."

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement that the administration believes there is legal authority for the program and that "it is necessary to help borrowers most in need as they recover from the pandemic."

"The Administration will continue to fight these baseless lawsuits by Republican officials and special interests and will never stop fighting to support working and middle class Americans," the statement added.

Both federal cases centered around the Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003, commonly known as the HEROES Act. It was enacted after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, allowing the secretary of education to waive or modify terms of federal loans in times of war or national emergency.

Lawyers for the administration contend the COVID-19 pandemic created a national emergency and that student loan defaults have skyrocketed over the past 2 1/2 years.

But in the Texas ruling on Thursday, U.S. District Judge Mark Pittman — an appointee of Trump based in Fort Worth — said the HEROES ACT did not provide the authorization that the Biden administration claimed it did.

Karine Jean-Pierre has said that so far, 26 million people had applied for debt relief, and 16 million people had already had their relief approved. After the Texas ruling, the administration stopped accepting applications.

"Courts have issued orders blocking our student debt relief program," the Education Department said on its federal student aid website. "As a result, at this time, we are not accepting applications. We are seeking to overturn those orders."

The legal challenges have created confusion about whether borrowers who expected to have debt canceled will have to resume making payments come Jan. 1, when a pause prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic is set to expire.

Economists worry that many people have yet to rebound financially from the pandemic, saying that if borrowers who were expecting debt cancellation are asked to make payments instead, many could fall behind on the bills and default.

## High court rules against Arizona GOP leader in records fight

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court has cleared the way for the House committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol to get phone records belonging to the leader of the Arizona Republican Party.

The high court on Monday rejected GOP state chair Kelli Ward's request to halt the turnover of records while a lawsuit proceeds. The court lifted a temporary order that had been put in place by Justice Elena Kagan that had paused anything from happening while Ward's emergency request was at the Supreme Court.

Ward has said her First Amendment rights would be chilled if investigators were able to learn whom she spoke with while trying to challenge former President Donald Trump's 2020 election defeat.

As is common in situations involving emergency requests to the high court, the justices did not explain their reasoning in their three-sentence order. Justice Clarence Thomas and Justice Samuel Alito said they would have sided with Ward but also did not elaborate.



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Thomas' wife Virginia "Ginni" Thomas is one of the people who was interviewed by the Jan. 6 committee and has stood by the false claim that the 2020 election was fraudulent. She had urged Republican lawmakers in Arizona after the election to choose their own slate of electors.

"We're glad that two justices thought that the First Amendment associational interests implicated by the case were serious enough to warrant even the drastic step of a Supreme Court emergency stay," said Alexander Kolodin, Ward's attorney. "And we hope that lawmakers and officials that might think of targeting people for engaging in First Amendment protected political association will hear this as a warning shot and think twice before doing it."

A federal appeals court panel previously ruled 2-1 against Ward and said the committee should get records of calls she made and received from just before the November 2020 election to Jan. 31, 2021. That includes a period when Ward was pushing for Trump's election defeat to be overturned and Congress was set to certify the results in favor of Democrat Joe Biden.

Ruling against Ward at the appeals court level were judges appointed by presidents of different parties. Barry Silverman, an appointee of Democratic President Bill Clinton, and Eric Miller, a Trump appointee, both ruled against Ward. Judge Sandra Ikuta, an appointee of Republican President George W. Bush, dissented.

The appeals court ruling followed a September decision by a federal judge in Phoenix who also ruled against Ward.

Kelli Ward and her husband, Michael Ward, were presidential electors who would have voted for Trump in the Electoral College had he won Arizona. Both signed a document falsely claiming they were Arizona's true electors, despite Biden's victory in the state.

## **EXPLAINER: Where does student loan forgiveness stand?**

A federal appeals court in St. Louis has created another roadblock for President Joe Biden's plan to provide millions of borrowers with up to \$20,000 apiece in federal student-loan forgiveness.

The court on Monday agreed to a preliminary injunction halting the program in one of several cases challenging the debt relief plan.

With the forgiveness program on hold, millions of borrowers have begun to wonder if they'll get debt relief at all. The fate of the plan will likely eventually end up in the Supreme Court.

Here's where things stand:

### **HOW THE FORGIVENESS PLAN WORKS**

The debt forgiveness plan announced in August would cancel \$10,000 in student loan debt for those making less than \$125,000 or households with less than \$250,000 in income. Pell Grant recipients, who typically demonstrate more financial need, would get an additional \$10,000 in debt forgiven.

College students qualify if their loans were disbursed before July 1. The plan makes 43 million borrowers eligible for some debt forgiveness, with 20 million who could get their debt erased entirely, according to the administration.

The Congressional Budget Office has said the program will cost about \$400 billion over the next three decades.

The White House said 26 million people have applied for debt relief, and 16 million people had already had their relief approved.

### **A HOLD ON THE PLAN GETS EXTENDED**

The ruling Monday was made by a three-judge panel from the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis, which has been considering an effort by the Republican-led states of Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas and South Carolina to block the loan forgiveness program.

The ruling from the panel made up of three Republican appointees — one was appointed by President George W. Bush and two by President Donald Trump — extends a hold until the issue is resolved in court. Previously, the court had put it temporarily on hold.

Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson, a Republican, said in a statement that the ruling "recognizes that this attempt to forgive over \$400 billion in student loans threatens serious harm to the economy that

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cannot be undone.”

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said the administration is confident in its legal authority for the student debt relief plan.

“The Administration will continue to fight these baseless lawsuits by Republican officials and special interests and will never stop fighting to support working and middle class Americans,” Jean-Pierre said.

## A TEXAS JUDGE FOUND BIDEN OVERSTEPPED

On Thursday, U.S. District Judge Mark Pittman — an appointee of former President Donald Trump based in Fort Worth, Texas — ruled that the program usurped Congress’ power to make laws. The administration immediately filed a notice to appeal.

Pittman said the Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003, commonly known as the HEROES Act, did not provide the authorization for the loan forgiveness program.

The law allows the secretary of education to waive or modify terms of federal student loans in times of war or national emergency. The administration said the COVID-19 pandemic created a national emergency.

But Pittman said such a massive program required clear congressional authorization.

The plan has faced other legal challenges. In October, Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett rejected an appeal from a Wisconsin taxpayers group. A federal judge had earlier dismissed the group’s lawsuit, finding they didn’t have the legal right, or standing, to bring the case.

## THE TEXAS RULING WAS A BLOW TO THE PLAN

Pittman’s decision strikes down the underlying legal argument used to justify Biden’s plan. Previously, the White House has been able to dodge legal attacks made in lawsuits by tweaking details of the program.

One lawsuit argued that the automatic debt cancellation would leave borrowers paying heavier taxes in states that impose a tax on canceled debt. The administration responded by allowing borrowers to opt out. Another suit alleged that Biden’s plan would hurt financial institutions that earn revenue on certain kinds of federal student loans. The White House responded by carving those loans out of the plan.

The Texas ruling, however, argues that the HEROES Act does not grant authority for mass debt cancellation. The law grants the Education Department wide flexibility during national emergencies, but the judge ruled that it’s unclear whether debt cancellation was a necessary response to COVID-19, noting that Biden recently declared the pandemic over.

## IS THE CASE BOUND FOR THE SUPREME COURT?

The legal situation is complicated because of the numerous lawsuits. It’s likely that the Texas case and the lawsuit filed by the six states will be appealed to the Supreme Court. Before it reaches that level, the 5th and 8th Circuit appeals courts — both dominated by conservative judges — will rule separately in each case.

The case before the 8th Circuit could end up in the Supreme Court soon now that the panel has granted the injunction sought by the six GOP-led states.

Likewise, the administration has signaled it will appeal the Texas ruling. If the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals is asked to block Pittman’s ruling pending appeal, the losing side could then turn to the Supreme Court.

In either case, appellate courts would not issue a final ruling on the validity of the program, but on whether it can go forward while challenges proceed.

Meantime, the Biden administration is no longer accepting applications for student loan forgiveness.

## **Budweiser stalls to be less prominent at World Cup stadiums**

By GRAHAM DUNBAR AP Sports Writer

Budweiser beer stands at the eight World Cup stadiums are being moved aside to less prominent spots just days before the games start, Qatari organizers said on Monday.

It’s the latest late change in World Cup planning that started more than a decade ago in the majority-Muslim emirate where alcohol sales are strictly regulated.

Qatar consented when launching its historic hosting bid in 2009 to respect FIFA’s commercial partner-

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ships, including the long-established Budweiser deal that was renewed 11 years ago with brewer AB InBev through the 2022 tournament.

World Cup organizers finally confirmed a beer sales policy in September covering the stadiums and official FIFA-authorized fan sites.

On Saturday, just eight days before the first games, the agreement was tweaked to give Budweiser-branded sales tents less visibility for serving beer with alcohol within stadium perimeters.

"AB InBev was informed on November 12 and are working with FIFA to relocate the concession outlets to locations as directed," the Belgium-based company, which includes Anheuser-Busch, said on Monday in a statement. "We are working with FIFA to bring the best possible experience to the fans."

In Qatar, World Cup organizers said "operational plans are being finalized."

"These plans include venue management teams enhancing overlay requirements for all competition venues," the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy said, referring to adorning sports events with temporary branding and facilities for officials.

"This has a direct impact on the location of certain fan areas," said the organizers, who declined to address a question about who took the decision.

Four years ago in Russia, a Budweiser beer stand had one of the most prominent positions for sponsors outside Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow which hosted the opening game and the final.

Red tents for Budweiser and Coca-Cola — two of FIFA's longest-standing sponsors since the 1980s and 1970s, respectively — were placed next to the statue of Lenin that stood overlooking fans approaching the main stadium entrance.

FIFA does not publish the value of individual World Cup commercial deals but a second-tier sponsorship such as Budweiser is worth tens of millions of dollars.

The compromise on beer sales in Qatar was announced only in September and allowed for beer with alcohol to be served before and after games in the stadium perimeter. Only alcohol-free Bud Zero can be served during games and within the stadium bowl.

Champagne, wines and spirits as well as beer will be served at stadium restaurants and lounges for corporate hospitality clients. Fans staying in most high-end hotels and three cruise ships hired by organizers as floating hotels for the tournament can also buy a range of alcoholic drinks.

## Zelenskyy calls liberation of Kherson 'beginning of the end'

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

KHERSON, Ukraine (AP) — President Volodymyr Zelenskyy triumphantly walked the streets of the newly liberated city of Kherson on Monday, hailing Russia's withdrawal as the "beginning of the end of the war," but also acknowledging the heavy price Ukrainian troops are paying in their grinding effort to push back the invaders.

The retaking of Kherson was one of Ukraine's biggest successes in the nearly 9-month-old war, dealing another stinging blow to the Kremlin. It could serve as a springboard for more advances into occupied territory.

President Joe Biden called it a "significant victory" for Ukraine.

"I can do nothing but applaud the courage, determination and capacity of the Ukrainian people, the Ukrainian military," he said on the sidelines of a Group of 20 summit in Indonesia. "They've really been amazing. ... we're going to continue to provide the capability for the Ukrainian people to defend themselves."

Large parts of eastern and southern Ukraine are still under Russian control, and the city of Kherson itself remains within reach of Moscow's shells and missiles. Heavy fighting continued elsewhere in Ukraine. Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti reported the town of Oleshky, in Russian-held territory across the Dnieper River from Kherson, came under heavy artillery fire.

Zelenskyy awarded medals to soldiers in Kherson and posed with them for selfies while striking a defiant note.

"This is the beginning of the end of the war," he said. "We are step by step coming to all the temporarily



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occupied territories.”

But he also grimly noted the fighting “took the best heroes of our country.”

The end of Russia’s occupation of the city — the only provincial capital seized since the February invasion — has sparked days of celebration. But as winter approaches, its remaining 80,000 residents are without heat, water and electricity, and short on food and medicine. Zelenskyy says the city is laced with booby traps and mines. And Ukrainian authorities say there are signs of atrocities emerging, just as in other liberated areas.

Russian forces “destroyed everything in their path, wrecked the entire electricity network,” he said. Communications operators said cellphone service was being restored and the regional governor said a public wireless internet access point would begin working Tuesday.

The Institute for the Study of War said Ukraine has won “an important victory” in Kherson and other areas west of the Dnieper, but the Washington-based think tank noted that “it has by no means liberated the minimum territory essential to its future security and economic survival.”

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg warned that Moscow should not be underestimated.

“The Russian armed forces retain significant capability as well as a large number of troops, and Russia has demonstrated their willingness to bear significant losses,” he said in The Hague.

In Ankara, Turkey, CIA Director Bill Burns met with his Russian intelligence counterpart, Sergei Naryshkin, to underscore the consequences if Moscow were to deploy a nuclear weapon in Ukraine, according to a White House National Security Council official.

The official, who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity, said Burns and Naryshkin, the head of Russia’s SVR spy agency, did not discuss settlement of the war. Their meeting was the highest-ranking face-to-face engagement between U.S. and Russian officials since before the invasion.

While U.S. officials have warned for months of the prospect that Russia could use weapons of mass destruction in Ukraine amid battlefield setbacks, Biden administration officials have repeatedly said nothing has changed in U.S. intelligence assessments to suggest that Russian President Vladimir Putin has imminent plans to deploy nuclear weapons.

The U.N. General Assembly, meanwhile, passed a resolution calling for establishing a mechanism to assess Russian reparations for damages and injuries in Ukraine. The resolution is not binding and Russia’s ambassador said it had no legal validity.

Zelenskyy’s trip to Kherson was another in a series of unexpected visits to front-line areas at crucial moments of the war. It was laden with symbolism and the common touch — aimed at boosting the morale of soldiers and civilians alike.

In a video, a visibly moved Zelenskyy stood with his hand on his heart and sang the national anthem as troops saluted and stood at attention and a soldier raised the yellow-and-blue Ukrainian flag.

Residents draped with flags on their shoulders cheered, cried and shouted in gratitude as Zelenskyy walked by.

“It’s amazing. We’ve been waiting for him for nine months. Thank you,” said Danila Yuhrenko.

Serhii Yukhmchuk, 47, said he and his wife spent the occupation mostly at home to avoid any Russians and protested by refusing to use the ruble as currency.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov refused to comment on Zelenskyy’s visit, except to say: “You know that it is the territory of the Russian Federation.” Russia illegally annexed the Kherson region and three other Ukrainian provinces earlier this year, in addition to annexing the Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

In his Sunday night address, Zelenskyy said 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.”

Residents said Russian troops plundered the city and wrecked key infrastructure before retreating across the wide Dnieper River to its east bank last week.

Reconnecting the electricity supply is the priority, regional Gov. Yaroslav Yanushevych said.

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The arrival of winter is making the situation more difficult, with Stoltenberg saying that Putin is aiming “to leave Ukraine cold and dark this winter.”

Biden said he expected things to slow down somewhat militarily “because of the winter months and the inability to move as easily around.”

In the past two months, Ukraine’s military claimed to have retaken dozens of towns and villages north of the city of Kherson, a key gateway to Crimea to the south.

But the grinding war continued — with shelling, civilian casualties and each side reporting gains.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its forces had captured the village of Pavlivka in the eastern Donetsk region. Multiple Ukrainian officials have reported heavy battles there in recent weeks.

In Luhansk, another eastern region illegally annexed by Moscow, Kyiv’s forces have retaken 12 settlements, said regional Gov. Serhiy Haidai.

A senior U.S. military official said missile and drone strikes have slowed down a bit in Ukraine since the end of October. The U.S. doesn’t know the specific reason for the decline, the official said, but noted that Russia continues to see its weapons stockpiles decrease, particularly precision-guided munitions.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to provide the U.S. military assessment, said Russia continues to hit civilian infrastructure, including the electrical grid, and the U.S. has no reason to believe Moscow will let up on its attacks any time soon.

Asked if the U.S. will scale back its weapons contributions to Kyiv as winter takes hold, and fighting is likely to level off a bit, the official said Washington will continue to work with allies to ensure it has what it needs and that air defense systems will be an ongoing priority.

## **DEA’s most corrupt agent: Parties, sex amid ‘unwinnable war’**

By JIM MUSTIAN and JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — José Irizarry accepts that he’s known as the most corrupt agent in U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration history, admitting he “became another man” in conspiring with Colombian cartels to build a lavish lifestyle of expensive sports cars, Tiffany jewels and paramours around the world.

But as he used his final hours of freedom to tell his story to The Associated Press, Irizarry says he won’t go down for this alone, accusing some long-trusted DEA colleagues of joining him in skimming millions of dollars from drug money laundering stings to fund a decade’s worth of luxury overseas travel, fine dining, top seats at sporting events and frat house-style debauchery.

The way Irizarry tells it, dozens of other federal agents, prosecutors, informants and in some cases cartel smugglers themselves were all in on the three-continent joyride known as “Team America” that chose cities for money laundering pick-ups mostly for party purposes or to coincide with Real Madrid soccer or Rafael Nadal tennis matches. That included stops along the way in VIP rooms of Caribbean strip joints, Amsterdam’s red-light district and aboard a Colombian yacht that launched with plenty of booze and more than a dozen prostitutes.

“We had free access to do whatever we wanted,” the 48-year-old Irizarry told the AP in a series of interviews before beginning a 12-year federal prison sentence. “We would generate money pick-ups in places we wanted to go. And once we got there it was about drinking and girls.”

All this revelry was rooted, Irizarry said, in a crushing realization among DEA agents around the world that there’s nothing they can do to make a dent in the drug war anyway. Only nominal concern was given to actually building cases or stemming a record flow of illegal cocaine and opioids into the United States that has driven more than 100,000 drug overdose deaths a year.

“You can’t win an unwinnable war. DEA knows this and the agents know this,” Irizarry said. “There’s so much dope leaving Colombia. And there’s so much money. We know we’re not making a difference.”

“The drug war is a game. ... It was a very fun game that we were playing.”

Irizarry’s story, which some former colleagues have attacked as a fictionalized attempt to reduce his sentence, came in days of contrite, bitter, sometimes tearful interviews with the AP in the historic quarter of his native San Juan. It was much the same account he gave the FBI in lengthy debriefings and sealed

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court papers obtained by the AP after he pleaded guilty in 2020 to 19 corruption counts, including money laundering and bank fraud.

But after years of portraying Irizarry as a rogue agent who acted alone, U.S. Justice Department investigators have in recent months begun closely following his confessional roadmap, questioning as many as two-dozen current and former DEA agents and prosecutors accused by Irizarry of turning a blind eye to his flagrant abuses and sometimes joining in.

With little fanfare, the inquiry has focused on a jet-setting former partner of Irizarry and several other trusted DEA colleagues assigned to international money laundering. And at least three current and former federal prosecutors have faced questioning about Irizarry's raucous parties, including one still in a senior role in Miami, another who appeared on TV's "The Bachelorette" and a former Ohio prosecutor who was confirmed to serve as the U.S. attorney in Cleveland this year before abruptly backing out for unspecified family reasons.

The expanding investigation comes as the nation's premier narcotics law enforcement agency has been rattled by repeated misconduct scandals in its 4,600-agent ranks, from one who took bribes from traffickers to another accused of leaking confidential information to law enforcement targets. But by far the biggest black eye is Irizarry, whose wholesale betrayal of the badge is at the heart of an ongoing external review of the DEA's sprawling foreign operations in 69 countries.

The once-standout agent has accused some former colleagues in the DEA's Miami-based Group 4 of lining their pockets and falsifying records to replenish a slush fund used for foreign jaunts over the better part of a decade, until his resignation in 2018. He accused a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent of accepting a \$20,000 bribe. And recently, the FBI, Office of Inspector General and a federal prosecutor interviewed Irizarry in prison about other federal employees and allegations he raised about misconduct in maritime interdictions.

"It was too outlandish for them to believe this is actually happening," Irizarry said of investigators. "The indictment paints a picture of me, the corrupt agent that did this entire scheme. But it doesn't talk about the rest of DEA. I wasn't the mastermind."

The federal judge in Tampa who sentenced Irizarry last year seemed to agree, saying other agents corrupted by the "allure of easy money" need to be investigated. "This has to stop," Judge Charlene Honeywell told prosecutors, adding Irizarry was "the one who got caught but it is apparent to this court that there are others."

The Justice Department declined to comment. A DEA spokesperson said: "José Irizarry is a criminal who violated his oath as a federal law enforcement officer and violated the trust of the American people. Over the past 16 months, DEA has worked vigorously to further strengthen our discipline and hiring policies to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of our essential work."

AP was able to corroborate some, but not all, of Irizarry's accusations through thousands of confidential law enforcement records and dozens of interviews with those familiar with his claims and the ongoing investigation, including several who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss them.

The probe is focused in part on George Zoumberos, one of Irizarry's former partners who traveled overseas extensively for money laundering investigations. Irizarry told AP that Zoumberos enjoyed unfettered access to so-called commission funds and improperly tapped that money for personal purchases and unwarranted trips, using names of people that didn't exist in DEA reports justifying the excesses.

Zoumberos remained a DEA agent even after he was arrested and briefly detained on allegations of sexual assault during a trip to Madrid in 2018. He resigned only after being stripped of his gun, badge and security clearance for invoking his Fifth Amendment rights to stay silent in late 2019, when the same prosecutor who charged Irizarry summoned him to testify before a federal grand jury in Tampa.

Authorities are so focused on Zoumberos that they also subpoenaed his brother, a Florida wedding photographer who traveled and partied around the world with DEA agents, and even granted him immunity to induce his cooperation. But Michael Zoumberos also refused to testify and has been jailed outside Tampa since March for "civil contempt" — an exceedingly rare pressure tactic that underscores the rising



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temperature of the investigation.

"I didn't do anything wrong, but I'm not going to talk about my brother," Michael Zoumberos told AP in a jailhouse interview. "I'm basically being held as a political prisoner of the FBI. They want to coerce me into cooperating."

Some current and former DEA agents say Irizarry's claims are overblown or flat-out fabrications. The former ICE agent scoffed at Irizarry's accusation he took a \$20,000 bribe, saying he raised early red flags about Irizarry. And the lawyer for the Zoumberos brothers says prosecutors are on a "fishing expedition" to bring more indictments because of the embarrassment of the Irizarry scandal.

"Everybody they connect to José is extraneous to his thefts," said attorney Raymond Mansolillo. "They're looking to find a crime to fit this case as opposed to a crime that actually took place. But no matter what happens they're going to charge somebody with something because they don't want to come out of all of this after five years and have only charged José."

Making Irizarry's allegations more egregious is that they came on the heels of a 2015 Inspector General's report that slammed DEA agents for participating in "sex parties" with prostitutes hired by Colombian cartels. That prompted the suspension of several agents and the retirement of Michele Leonhart, the DEA's administrator at the time.

Central to the Irizarry investigation are overly cozy relationships developed between agents and informants — strictly forbidden under federal guidelines — and loose controls on the DEA's undercover drug money laundering operations that few Americans know exist.

Every year, the DEA launders tens of millions of dollars on behalf of the world's most-violent drug cartels through shell companies, a tactic touted in long-running overseas investigations such as Operation White Wash that resulted in more than 100 arrests and the seizure of more than \$100 million and a ton of cocaine.

But the DEA has also faced criticism for allowing huge amounts of money in the operations to go unseized, enabling cartels to continue plying their trade, and for failing to tightly monitor and track the stings, making it difficult to evaluate results.

A 2020 Justice Department Inspector General's report faulted the DEA for failing since at least 2006 to file annual reports to Congress about these stings, known as Attorney General Exempted Operations. That rebuke, coupled with the embarrassment brought on by Irizarry's confession, prompted DEA Administrator Anne Milgram to order an outside review of the agency's foreign operations, which is ongoing.

"In the vast majority of these operations, nobody is watching," said Bonnie Klapper, a former federal prosecutor in New York and outspoken critic of DEA money laundering. "In the Irizarry operation, nobody cared how much money they were laundering. Nobody cared that they weren't making any cases. Nobody was minding the house. There were no controls."

Rob Feitel, another former federal prosecutor, said the DEA's lax oversight made it easy to divert funds for all kinds of unapproved purposes. And as long as money seizures kept driving stats higher — a low bar given abundant supply — few questions were asked.

"The other agents aren't stupid. They knew there were no controls and a lot of them could have done what Irizarry did," said Feitel, who represents a former DEA agent under scrutiny in the inquiry. "The line that separates Irizarry from the others is he did it with both hands and he did it over and over and over. He didn't just test the waters, he took a full bath in it."

Irizarry, who speaks in a smooth patter that seamlessly switches between English and Spanish, was a federal air marshal and Border Patrol agent before joining the DEA in 2009. He said he learned the tricks of the trade as a DEA rookie from veteran cops who came up in New York City in the 1990s when cocaine flooded American streets.

But another key part of his education came from Diego Marín, a longtime U.S. informant known to investigators as Colombia's "Contraband King" for allegedly laundering dope money through imported appliances and other goods. Irizarry said Marín taught him better than any agent ever could the nuances of the black-market peso exchange used by narcotraffickers across the world.

Irizarry parlayed that knowledge into a life of luxury that prosecutors say was bankrolled by \$9 million he and his Colombian co-conspirators diverted from money laundering investigations.

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To further the scheme, Irizarry filed false reports and ordered DEA staff to wire money slated for undercover stings to international accounts he and associates controlled. Hardened informants who kept a hefty commission from every cash transfer sanctioned by the DEA also stepped in to fund some of the revelry in what amounted to illegal kickbacks.

Irizarry's spending habits quickly began to mimic the ostentatious tastes of the narcos he was tasked with targeting, with spoils including a \$30,000 Tiffany diamond ring for his wife, luxury sports cars and a \$767,000 home in the Colombian resort city of Cartagena. He'd travel first class to Europe with Louis Vuitton luggage and wearing a gold Hublot watch.

"I was very good at what I did but I became somebody I wasn't. ... I became a different man," Irizarry said. "I got caught up in the lifestyle. I got caught up with the informants and partying."

Irizarry contends as many as 90% of his group's work trips were "bogus," dictated by partying and sporting events, not real work. And he says the U.S. government money that helped pay for it was justified in reports as "case-related — but that's a very vague term."

Case in point: an August 2014 trip to Madrid for the Spanish Supercup soccer finals that was charged as an expense to Operation White Wash.

But Irizarry told investigators there was little actual work to be done other than courtesy calls to a few friendly Spanish cops. Instead, he said, agents spent their time dining at pricey restaurants — racking up a 1,000-euro bill at one — and enjoying field-side seats for the championship match between Real and Atletico Madrid.

Joining the posse of agents at the game was Michael J. Garofola, a then-Miami federal prosecutor and erstwhile contestant on "The Bachelorette" who posted a thumbs-up photo on Instagram standing next to Irizarry and another agent — all clad in white Real Madrid jerseys.

"Soaking up the last bit of Spanish culture before saying adios," he posted a few days later outside a pub.

Irizarry alleged that Garofola also joined agents, cartel informants and others in the Dominican capital of Santo Domingo in 2014 for a night at a strip club called Doll House. In a memo to the court seeking a reduction in his sentence, Irizarry recalled being in the VIP room with another agent and Garofola, racking up a \$2,300 bill paid for by a violent emissary of Marín with a menacing nickname to match: Iguana.

Garofola said the trips included official business and he was told everything was being paid for out of DEA funds.

"There were things about those trips that made me question why I was there," Garofola told AP. "But Irizarry totally used me to ratify this behavior. I was brand new and green and eager to work money laundering cases. He used me just by my being there."

When Irizarry was awarded with a transfer to Cartagena in 2015, the party followed. The agent's rooftop pool, with sweeping ocean views, became an obligatory stop for visiting agents and prosecutors from the U.S.

One that Irizarry recalls seeing there was Marisa Darden, a prosecutor from Cleveland who he says traveled to Colombia in September 2017 and was at a gathering where he witnessed two DEA agents taking ecstasy. Irizarry says he didn't see Darden taking drugs.

Federal authorities have taken a keen interest in that party, quizzing Irizarry about it as recently as this summer. At least one DEA agent who attended has been placed on administrative leave.

Darden went on to become a partner in a high-powered Cleveland law firm and last year was nominated by President Joe Biden to be the first Black woman U.S. attorney in northern Ohio. But soon after she was confirmed, Darden abruptly withdrew in May, citing only "the importance of prioritizing family."

Darden refused to answer questions from AP but her attorney said in a statement that she "cooperated fully" with the federal investigation into "alleged illegal activity by federal agents," an inquiry separate from the FBI background check she faced in the confirmation process.

"There is no evidence that she participated in any illegal activity," Darden's attorney, James Wooley, wrote in an email to AP.

A White House official said the allegations did not come up in the vetting process. And U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, an Ohio Democrat who put Darden's name up for the post, was also unaware of the allegations in

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the nomination process, his office said, and had he known "would have withdrawn his support."

Another federal prosecutor named by Irizarry and questioned by federal agents was Monique Botero, who was recently promoted to head the narcotics division at the U.S. attorney's office in Miami. Irizarry told investigators and the AP that Botero joined a group of agents, informants, Colombian police and prostitutes for a party on a luxury yacht.

Botero's lawyers acknowledge she was on the yacht in September 2015 for what she thought was a cruise organized by local police, but they say "categorically and unequivocally, Monique never saw or participated in anything illegal or unethical."

"Irizarry has admitted that he lied to everyone around him for various nefarious reasons. These lies about Monique are part of a similar pattern," said her attorney, Benjamin Greenberg. "It is appalling that Monique is being maligned and defamed by someone as disgraced as Irizarry."

Irizarry's downfall was as sudden as it was inevitable — the outgrowth of a lavish lifestyle that raised too many eyebrows, even among colleagues willing to bend the rules themselves. Eventually, he was betrayed by one of his closest confidants, a Venezuelan-American informant who confessed to diverting funds from the undercover stings.

"José's problem is that he took things to the point of stupidity and trashed the party for everyone else," said one defense attorney who traveled with Irizarry and other agents. "But there's no doubt he didn't act alone."

Since his arrest, Irizarry has written a self-published book titled "Getting Back on Track," part of his attempt to own up to his mistakes and pursue a simpler path after bringing so much shame upon himself and his family.

Recently, his Colombian-born wife — who was spared jail time on a money laundering charge in exchange for Irizarry's confession — told him she was seeking a divorce.

Adding to Irizarry's despair is that he is still the only one to pay such a heavy price for a pattern of misconduct that he says the DEA allowed to fester. To date, prosecutors have yet to charge any other agents, and several former colleagues have quietly retired rather than endure the disgrace of possibly being fired.

"I've told them everything I know," Irizarry said. "All they have to do is dig."

## **Roberta Flack has ALS, now 'impossible to sing,' rep says**

NEW YORK (AP) — A representative for Roberta Flack announced Monday that the Grammy-winning musician has ALS, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease, and can no longer sing.

The progressive disease "has made it impossible to sing and not easy to speak," Flack's manager Suzanne Koga said in a release. "But it will take a lot more than ALS to silence this icon."

The announcement of the amyotrophic lateral sclerosis diagnosis comes just ahead of the premiere of "Roberta," a feature-length documentary debuting Thursday at the DOCNYC film festival.

Flack is known for hits like "Killing Me Softly With His Song" and "The First Time I Ever Saw Your Face," the latter of which catapulted her into stardom after Clint Eastwood used it as the soundtrack for a love scene in his 1971 movie "Play Misty for Me."

The release says that the Grammy-winning singer and pianist, now 85, "plans to stay active in her musical and creative pursuits" through her eponymous foundation and other avenues.

The Antonino D'Ambrosio-directed documentary will be in competition at the festival and available via DOCNYC's website for a week after, before airing on television Jan. 24 as part of PBS' "American Masters" series.

Flack also plans to publish a children's book co-written with Tonya Bolden, "The Green Piano: How Little Me Found Music," that month. The North Carolina-born, Virginia-raised Flack is the daughter of pianists and classically trained herself — her talent won her a full ride to Howard University at just 15.

"I have long dreamed of telling my story to children about that first green piano that my father got for me from the junkyard in the hope that they would be inspired to reach for their dreams," Flack was quoted in the release. "I want them to know that dreams can come true with persistence, encouragement from family and friends, and most of all belief in yourself."



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The documentary's television debut and book's publication kick off 2023, which also will see the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of her fourth album, "Killing Me Softly," with a reissue. Her label for the first three decades of her career, Atlantic Records, is also celebrating its 75th anniversary.

Flack had a stroke in 2016 and spoke to The Associated Press a little over two years later about returning to performing. When asked if she'd sing one of her old hits at a then-upcoming event, she quickly retorted: "There's no such thing as an old hit," preferring the term "classic" instead.

"I could sing any number of songs that I've recorded through the years, easily, I could sing them, but I'm going to pick those songs that move me," Flack said. "Now that's hard to do. To be moved, to be moved constantly by your own songs."

## **Biden: Still not enough votes to codify abortion rights**

By SEUNG MIN KIM and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

NUSA DUA, Indonesia (AP) — President Joe Biden said Monday that Democrats still lack the power to codify abortion rights into law despite his party's stronger-than-expected performance in the midterm elections.

"I don't think there's enough votes," he said at a press conference during the Group of 20 summit in Indonesia.

Biden's blunt comments reflected how Democrats' euphoria over their strength in the midterms will soon collide with the likely reality of divided government in Washington.

During the campaign, Biden said that if Democrats picked up seats, the first piece of legislation that he would send to Congress would be to enact a nationwide right to abortion.

The right was previously guaranteed only by the U.S. Supreme Court in the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, and the court's conservative majority overturned that ruling earlier this year.

Although Democrats defied historical odds by avoiding a midterm wipeout, they did not gain enough ground to ensure abortion access nationwide.

Asked what voters might expect on the issue, Biden replied, "I don't think they can expect much of anything."

Although ballots are still being counted, Republicans are on track to take control of the House of Representatives by a narrow margin, putting them in position to block any abortion legislation.

"I think it's gonna be very close, but I don't think we're gonna make it," Biden said.

Democrats will maintain control of the Senate, and may even expand their majority after next month's runoff in Georgia. But some members of the party have been unwilling to sidestep filibuster rules to pass an abortion law.

Biden previously said "we need two more senators" to codify abortion rights, a reference to Sens. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona and Joe Manchin of West Virginia, who want to preserve the filibuster.

If Sen. Raphael Warnock of Georgia wins a second term next month, Democrats will have only gained one seat.

## **40 states settle Google location-tracking charges for \$392M**

By DAVE COLLINS and MARCY GORDON Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Search giant Google has agreed to a \$391.5 million settlement with 40 states to resolve an investigation into how the company tracked users' locations, state attorneys general announced Monday.

The states' investigation was sparked by a 2018 Associated Press story, which found that Google continued to track people's location data even after they opted out of such tracking by disabling a feature the company called "location history."

The attorneys general called the settlement a historic win for consumers, and the largest multistate settlement in U.S. history dealing with privacy.

It comes at a time of mounting unease over privacy and surveillance by tech companies that has drawn

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growing outrage from politicians and scrutiny from regulators. The Supreme Court's ruling in June ending the constitutional protections for abortion raised potential privacy concerns for women seeking the procedure or related information online.

"This \$391.5 million settlement is a historic win for consumers in an era of increasing reliance on technology," Connecticut Attorney General William Tong said in a statement. "Location data is among the most sensitive and valuable personal information Google collects, and there are so many reasons why a consumer may opt-out of tracking."

At a news conference, Tong urged consumers to "do a little personal inventory" of their online settings and turn them off if they don't want them.

"It is not an exaggeration to say that we live in a surveillance economy," he said. "Understand that you're being tracked every minute of every day where you are."

Google, based in Mountain View, California, said it fixed the problems several years ago.

"Consistent with improvements we've made in recent years, we have settled this investigation, which was based on outdated product policies that we changed years ago," company spokesperson Jose Castaneda said.

Location tracking can help tech companies sell digital ads to marketers looking to connect with consumers within their vicinity. It's another tool in a data-gathering toolkit that generates more than \$200 billion in annual ad revenue for Google, accounting for most of the profits pouring into the coffers of its corporate parent, Alphabet — which has a market value of \$1.2 trillion.

In its 2018 story, The AP reported that many Google services on Android devices and iPhones store users' location data even if they've used a privacy setting that says it will prevent Google from doing so. Computer-science researchers at Princeton confirmed these findings at the AP's request.

Storing such data carries privacy risks and has been used by police to determine the location of suspects.

The AP reported that the privacy issue with location tracking affected some 2 billion users of devices that run Google's Android operating software and hundreds of millions of worldwide iPhone users who rely on Google for maps or search.

The attorneys general who investigated Google said a key part of the company's digital advertising business is location data, which they called the most sensitive and valuable personal data the company collects. Even a small amount of location data can reveal a person's identity and routines, they said.

Google uses the location information to target consumers with ads by its customers, the state officials said.

The attorneys general said Google misled users about its location tracking practices since at least 2014, violating state consumer protection laws.

As part of the settlement, Google also agreed to make those practices more transparent to users. That includes showing them more information when they turn location account settings on and off and keeping a webpage that gives users information about the data Google collects.

The shadowy surveillance brought to light by The AP troubled even some Google engineers, who recognized the company might be confronting a huge legal headache after the story was published, according to internal documents that have subsequently surfaced in consumer-fraud lawsuits.

Tong, the Connecticut AG, thanked the AP for its story, which he said "set the table for the investigation by the states" and helped expose the tracking practices.

He said a new Connecticut consumer-privacy law set to take effect next year will require that people opt into any location tracking, and not have to turn it off.

Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich filed the first state action against Google in May 2020, alleging that the company had defrauded its users by misleading them into believing they could keep their whereabouts private by turning off location tracking in the settings of their software.

Arizona settled its case with Google for \$85 million last month, but by then attorneys general in several other states and the District of Columbia had also pounced on the company with their own lawsuits seeking to hold Google accountable for its alleged deception.

## Handshake sparks climate hope, but officials remain worried

By FRANK JORDANS, SETH BORENSTEIN and KELVIN CHAN Associated Press

SHARM EL-SHEIKH (AP) — A handshake in lush Bali is being felt at climate talks thousands of miles away in the Egyptian desert, where lack of progress had a top United Nations official worried.

After more than a week of so far fruitless climate talks, negotiators were grasping for something themselves: Hope. It came in the form of a cordial greeting between U.S. President Joe Biden and China's President Xi Jinping, who met on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Indonesia.

Tensions between the world's two biggest polluters — whose cooperation is essential for any climate deal to work — have cast a shadow over the annual U.N. climate gathering, known as COP27. The Biden-Xi meeting could unfreeze negotiations between the U.S. and China on climate, which Beijing paused in August to protest House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan.

At Monday's meeting, Biden and Xi agreed to "empower key senior officials" on areas of potential cooperation, including tackling climate change — though it was not immediately clear whether that meant formal talks would resume. The two nations' top climate envoys, John Kerry and Xie Zhenhua, have a long and friendly working relationship that was put on hold by the summer tensions.

Li Shuo, a China expert at Greenpeace, said the news from Bali showed Beijing and Washington had found an "offramp" to avoid geopolitics from polluting climate engagement. "This will help calm down tension at COP27," he said. "Both sides can talk to each other, now they also need to lead."

Despite the handshake, United Nations Environment Programme Director Inger Andersen used the word "worried" six times when talking about the state of climate talks in a half-hour interview with The Associated Press late Monday.

"We need to see much, much greater effort now," Andersen said. "So, yes, I'm worried, concerned, but also absolutely determined that we have to push to get there."

Sameh Shoukry, the Egyptian official chairing the talks, acknowledged that negotiators will need help from ministers now flying to Sharm el-Sheikh in order to get a deal over the line.

"There is still a lot of work ahead of us if we are to achieve meaningful and tangible outcomes of which we can be proud," said Shoukry, who is also Egypt's foreign minister. "We must now shift gears and complement the technical discussions with more political, high-level engagement."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, arriving in Bali, said, there was no way to address climate change "without the cooperation of all G-20 members and in particular without the cooperation of the two biggest economies, the United States and China."

But there was worry that fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the ensuing energy and food crises and global inflation, could see the G-20 backtrack on last year's commitment to addressing climate change, including upholding the 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) warming limit agreed seven years ago in Paris.

"It would clearly be a great disappointment to the majority of countries, the vast majority of countries, to the small island developing states" that insisted on putting the 1.5 goal in the 2015 Paris agreement, Andersen said. "We cannot undo Paris."

Deep divides remain at COP27, where tens of thousands of attendees from nearly 200 countries returned to the sprawling conference zone in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh after a one-day break.

Aside from haggling once again over the 1.5-degree target, delegates remained divided on calls for wealthy nations whose industrialization contributed most to global warming to provide more help for poor countries who've contributed little to global emissions.

This was reflected in the first draft of a crucial agreement released Monday on the issue of 'loss and damage.' Poor nations are seeking the creation of a new fund "no later" than November 2024 to provide further financial aid to countries hit by extreme weather, sea-level rise and other devastating effects of global warming. Rich nations including the United States have conceded that they need to provide more aid but made clear they don't want a new fund, instead citing an existing "mosaic of funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage."

UNEP head Andersen said the talks in Sharm el-Sheikh might clear the path for future pledges, but there still needed to be meaningful and clear progress on a pathway.



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Some delegates were already talking about the possibility of a walkout by developing nations unless demands for more aid to poor countries are met.

"Now rich countries need to play their part," said Rachel Cleetus, policy director and lead economist at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

"So this is going to be the litmus test of success at this COP, at COP27, that we get this loss and damage finance facility agreed here and that it's up and running in two years," Cleetus said at a press briefing.

Guterres, the U.N. chief, said he was encouraged by some countries' declarations that they would contribute funds, "but it's still early to know whether these (loss and damage) objectives will be - or not - reached."

The Group of Seven leading economies launched a new insurance system Monday to provide swift financial aid when nations are hit by devastating effects of climate change.

The so-called Global Shield is backed by the V20 group of 58 climate-vulnerable nations and will initially receive more than 200 million euros (dollars) in funding, mostly from Germany. Initial recipients include Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Fiji, Ghana, Pakistan, the Philippines and Senegal.

But civil society groups were skeptical, warning that the program should not be used as a way to distract from the much broader effort to get big polluters to pay for the loss and damage they've already caused with their greenhouse gases.

India made an unexpected proposal over the weekend for this year's climate talks to end with a call for a phase down of all fossil fuels.

The idea is likely to get strong pushback from oil and gas-exporting nations, including the United States, which promotes natural gas as a clean 'bridge fuel' to renewables.

India was blamed at last year's climate talks for resisting a call to "phase out" coal. Countries compromised by calling for a vaguer "phase down" instead, which was nevertheless seen as significant because it was the first time a fossil fuel industry was put on notice.

The talks are due to wrap up Friday but could extend into the weekend if negotiators need more time to reach an agreement.

The U.N.'s top climate official appealed for constructive diplomacy to match the high-flying rhetoric heard during the opening days of the talks.

"Let me remind negotiators that people and planet are relying on this process to deliver," U.N. Climate Secretary Simon Stiell said. "Let's use our remaining time in Egypt to build the bridges needed to make progress."

## Turkey detains Syrian suspect in deadly Istanbul bombing

By MEHMET GUZEL and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkish police said Monday 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. Kurdish militants strongly denied any links to the bombing.

Sunday's explosion hit Istiklal Avenue, a popular thoroughfare lined with shops and restaurants that leads to 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 Monday. Police later identified the suspect as Ahlam Albashir, a Syrian citizen.

The Istanbul Police Department said videos from around 1,200 security cameras were reviewed and raids were carried out at 21 locations. At least 46 other people were also detained for questioning.

The suspect allegedly departed the scene in a taxi after leaving TNT-type explosives on the crowded avenue, police said.

Sunday's explosion was a shocking reminder of the anxiety that gripped Turkey 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.

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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, police said.

The Kurdistan Workers Party denied involvement in a statement, saying it did not target civilians. In Syria, the main Kurdish militia group, People's Defense Units, denied any links to the suspect. The group maintained that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was trying to gather international support for his plans to launch a new incursion into northern Syria ahead of next year's elections.

Soylu said the suspect would have fled to neighboring Greece if she hadn't been detained.

Asked about Soylu's comments, Greek government spokesman Giannis Oikonomou reiterated Greece's condolences and stressed that the government "is steadily against any terrorist act. What happened in Istanbul is abhorrent and condemnable."

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."

Soylu also blamed the United States, claiming that 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 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 and a gun.

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.

Istanbul Gov. Ali Yerlikaya said of the 81 people hospitalized in the attack, 57 have been discharged. Six of the wounded were in intensive care and two of them were in life-threatening condition, he said. The six killed in the blast were members of three families and included children ages 9 and 15.

Funerals were held Monday for the six victims, including Adem Topkara and his wife, Elif Topkara, who had left their two young children with their aunt and were taking a stroll down Istiklal at the time of the blast.

Istiklal Avenue was reopened to pedestrian traffic at 6 a.m. Monday after police concluded inspections. People began leaving carnations at the site of the blast, while the street was decorated with hundreds of Turkish flags.

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 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 Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, has fought an armed 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 IS in Syria.

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 before Turkey's 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.

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

## 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 range from bemused to hostile 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.

"I've known him for a number of years and what just happened is just shocking," said Jeremy Allaire, the co-founder and CEO of cryptocurrency company Circle.

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.

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

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 over the decades 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



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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.

FTX's failure started after the cryptocurrency news outlet CoinDesk published a story, based on a leaked balance sheet from Alameda Research. The story found that the relationship between FTX and Alameda Research was deeper and more intertwined than previously known, including that FTX was lending high quantities of its own token FTT to Alameda to help build up cash. It sparked mass withdrawals from FTX, causing the crypto firm to experience a very old financial problem: a bank run.

"FTX created a worthless token out of thin air and used it to make its balance sheet appear more robust than it really was," Klippsten said.

As king of crypto, Bankman-Fried influence was starting to pour into political and popular culture. FTX bought prominent sports sponsorships with Formula One Racing and bought the naming rights to an arena in Miami, and ran Super Bowl ads featuring "Seinfeld" creator Larry David. 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, as did his supermodel soon-to-be-ex-wife Gisele Bündchen.

Bankman-Fried was also starting to throw his financial weight around in media as well. He was an initial investor in Semafor, the news startup run by BuzzFeed's former editor-in-chief and New York Times columnist Ben Smith. He also donated \$5 million to the investigative news outlet ProPublica.

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.

## AP Top 25: No. 1 South Carolina, No. 2 Stanford showdown set

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

South Carolina passed its first test of the season and now the top-ranked Gamecocks have a tougher challenge: a visit to No. 2 Stanford on Sunday.

South Carolina remained the unanimous choice as the top team in first regular-season Top 25 women's basketball poll from The Associated Press. Texas, Iowa and UConn round out the first five in the poll

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released Monday.

The Gamecocks (3-0) beat then-No. 17 Maryland 81-56 last week, setting up the showdown with Stanford. It will be the 63rd meeting between the top two teams in the women's AP Top 25 and the seventh time it has happened in November. The last 1-2 matchup was also South Carolina-Stanford with the Gamecocks beating the Cardinal by four points last Dec. 21, rallying from an 18-point deficit. The No. 1 team holds a 39-23 advantage in the meetings.

"I call it a win-win. Because no matter what happens in the game, you're gonna learn more about your team, people have to do the right thing," Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer said. "It's sort of like a tournament game, I mean, 1-2 matchup, it's awesome."

Before Sunday's game, Dawn Staley's squad will play at Clemson on Thursday. Stanford hosts Cal Poly on Wednesday night.

Ohio State made the biggest leap in the new poll, climbing six spots to No. 8 after upending then-No. 5 Tennessee in its season-opener last week. The Lady Vols fell to 11th.

Louisville and Iowa State were sixth and seventh while North Carolina State and Notre Dame round out the top 10.

Villanova entered the rankings for the first time since 2018 at No. 24 after knocking off then-No. 24 Princeton. The Tigers fell out of the poll. Utah came in at No. 25, replacing 23rd-ranked South Dakota State, which lost to Creighton.

## CROSSING THE CENTURY MARK

LSU has scored over 100 points in each of its first three games. The 343 points combined is the most in the first three games of a season by any team in the past 20 years.

"The non-conference schedule was done before we knew we had Angel Reese and all these transfers coming in here," LSU coach Kim Mulkey said. "The good thing about right now is we're building confidence. Making mistakes in a game that can be corrected when the SEC does come around."

It's the second time the school has had three straight 100-point games matching the mark set during the 1995-96 season. The Tigers have a chance to break that on Wednesday when they host Houston Christian in a matinee game.

## RARE LOSS

Tennessee's loss to Ohio State was the first time since 2008 that a top-five team was beaten in its first game by either an unranked team or a team outside the first five in the poll since No. 3 Maryland lost to unranked TCU, according to ESPN Stats & Information. The top five teams had gone 69-0 in those games until last week.

## John Aniston, star of 'Days of Our Lives,' dead at 89

NEW YORK (AP) — John Aniston, the Emmy-winning star of the daytime soap opera "Days of Our Lives" and father of Jennifer Aniston, has died at age 89.

The actor's daughter posted a tribute to him Monday morning on Instagram, announcing that he had died Friday, Veteran's Day. John Aniston served in the U.S. Navy.

"Sweet papa... John Anthony Aniston," Jennifer Aniston wrote. "You were one of the most beautiful humans I ever knew. I am so grateful that you went soaring into the heavens in peace — and without pain. And on 11/11 no less! You always had perfect timing. That number will forever hold an even greater meaning for me now."

John Aniston's acting credits included "Search for Tomorrow," "The West Wing" and "Gilmore Girls." But he was best-known for his long-running role on "Days of Our Lives" as family patriarch Victor Kiriakis, the former drug lord who goes on to found the powerful Titan Industries.

In 2017, his work on "Days of Our Lives" brought him an Emmy nomination for best supporting actor in a drama series. Earlier this year, he was presented a lifetime achievement Emmy, with Jennifer Aniston honoring him via video.

"It's an opportunity to not only pay tribute to a true icon in the daytime television world, but it's also a

chance to recognize the lifelong achievements of a great and well-respected actor, who also happens to be my dad," Jennifer Aniston said at the time. "John Aniston has been working in television consistently for over half a century."

John Aniston was born Yannis Anastassakis in Crete, Greece, and emigrated with his family to Pennsylvania when he was a child. A theater major at Pennsylvania State University, he began his professional acting career in the 1960s, with early roles in "Combat!", "I Spy" and "The Virginian."

Aniston was married twice, most recently to Sherry Rooney. He had two children, Jennifer and Alexander Aniston, and a stepson, John Melick.

## Insurance fund for climate impacts announced at UN talks

By WANJOHI KABUKURU Associated Press

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — The Group of Seven leading economies launched a new insurance system Monday to provide swift financial aid when nations are hit by devastating effects of climate change.

The so-called Global Shield is backed by the V20, an alliance of climate vulnerable nations chaired by Ghana, and the G-7 chaired by Germany. The scheme is designed to kick in with aid in the event of climate-related disasters in vulnerable nations. But critics argue it doesn't cover slower climate change effects, such as rising seas or the slow loss of arable land, nor does it account for historical harms.

Under the newly launched shield, countries will receive more than \$200 million dollars in funding, mostly from Germany. Initial recipients include Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Fiji, Ghana, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Senegal. In the last 20 years, nations in the V20 group are estimated to have lost \$525 billion to their GDP because of climate change-related events, according to a report released by the group.

Ghana's finance minister and V20 chair Ken Ofori-Atta called it "a path-breaking effort" that would help protect communities when lives and livelihoods are lost.

Civil society groups and aid agencies also warned the insurance scheme should not be used to distract from the much broader effort to get big polluters to pay for the loss and damage they've caused with their greenhouse gases. Vulnerable countries have long been calling for compensation for climate-related harms, with estimates of financial damage far exceeding the sums available in through the Global Shield.

"We need a solution at the scale of the losses, and that means going beyond subsidized insurance," said Rachel Simon of the environmental group Climate Action Network Europe.

She said new funds should also be created within the oversight of the U.N. climate talks, not on the sidelines, to ensure proper international supervision. Simon added that the loss and damage financing needs to be in the form of grants as opposed to debt which leads poor and developing nations to debt-distress.

Speaking for the G-7, Germany's development minister Svenja Schulze said the shield is not a ruse to avoid more comprehensive funding for vulnerable nations, which remains a key issue at the ongoing negotiations.

"Those most affected need action now," Schulze said. "It is not a kind of tactic to avoid a loss and damage financing facility at the negotiation."

Negotiators released the first draft of a crucial agreement on the issue of loss and damage on Monday.

The draft contained two options that reflect the divide between rich and poor nations. Vulnerable countries are proposing that such a fund should be "operationalized no later" than November 2024, whereas richer nations say funding should come from a wide range of initiatives.

## After election, marijuana advocates look to next states

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Law-abiding marijuana enthusiasts could find themselves in a bit of a predicament following voter approval of a recreational cannabis initiative in Missouri.

Though it soon will become legal for adults to possess and ingest cannabis, it could take a couple more months before they can legally buy it.

Maryland residents will have to wait even longer — until the middle of next year — before a recreational



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marijuana measure approved this past week can take effect.

With the addition of Maryland and Missouri, 21 states have legalized recreational marijuana for adults over the past decade — even though it remains illegal under federal law.

Marijuana advocates are pressing forward with similar efforts elsewhere, undeterred by defeats last week in Arkansas, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Efforts to legalize psychedelic drugs for personal use also appear likely to spread, after supporters poured millions of dollars into a Colorado measure that won approval.

Here's a look at what's next in the effort to reshape state drug laws.

## MISSOURI AND MARYLAND

Recreational marijuana for adults 21 and older will become legal in Missouri on Dec. 8. That's the same day the state's existing medical marijuana businesses can apply for licenses to grow, manufacture, transport and sell cannabis for recreational purposes.

But there won't be any immediate deals — at least not legally.

The newly approved constitutional amendment gives the state health department until Feb. 6 to consider applications. Though officials could act more quickly, the department doesn't expect to approve recreational cannabis licenses until February, said the department's communications director, Lisa Cox.

In the meantime, people potentially could get free marijuana from those with medical cards or turn to the black market.

"No one needs to say how or where they acquired their cannabis in order for it to be legal," said Dan Viets, Missouri coordinator for the drug policy group NORML.

Maryland's new constitutional amendment legalizes the possession and use of marijuana for adults 21 and older effective July 1, and directs the General Assembly to come up with laws regulating it.

In the meantime, a law set to be in place from Jan. 1 through June 30 makes the possession of a personal supply of marijuana — defined as up to 1.5 ounces — a civil offense with a fine of up to \$100.

Both states also have provisions to gradually expunge some past marijuana offenses for people.

## OKLAHOMA AND BEYOND

The next vote on legalizing recreational marijuana for adults will occur in Oklahoma. Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt set a March election after a delay in counting initiative signatures and legal challenges prevented the measure from appearing on the November ballot.

Oklahoma already has one of the nation's most robust medical marijuana programs, with about 2,500 licensed dispensaries. About 380,000 people, nearly 10% of all residents, have state-issued medical cards allowing them to buy, grow and consume marijuana.

After Oklahoma, Ohio could vote next on cannabis legalization. A group that originally sought to get a measure on the November ballot reached a legal settlement with legislative leaders that could allow supporters to submit petition signatures for a 2023 vote.

After Democratic victories in last week's legislative and gubernatorial elections, Minnesota could be poised to legalize recreational marijuana next year without needing to go to voters. Legislative approval of recreational marijuana also could be pursued next year in Democratic-led Hawaii, said Matthew Schweich, deputy director of the Marijuana Policy Project, a nonprofit advocacy group based in Washington, D.C.

New citizen-led ballot initiatives are possible in Florida, Idaho, Nebraska, Wyoming and the three states where ballot measures recently failed.

This year was "probably the worst election cycle for cannabis reform since the first ones passed in 2012, but there's still a belief that we can go win more states in 2024," said Schweich, who ran this year's campaign in South Dakota.

Marijuana legalization campaigns raised about \$24 million in the five states where they were on the ballot, according to pre-election finance reports. The vast majority of that was in Arkansas and Missouri, where more than 85% of contributions came from donors associated with medical marijuana licensees, according to an Associated Press analysis.

In Arkansas, some marijuana advocates opposed the initiative because it benefitted the existing industry

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while lacking provisions for people to grow their own cannabis and expunge past marijuana convictions. But advocates hope to return to voters in two years with a revised plan.

"I think the people still truly want to see this," said Eddie Armstrong, chairman of the group that campaigned for the Arkansas initiative.

## PSYCHEDELIC DRUGS

Voters in Colorado made it the second state, behind Oregon, to legalize psychedelic mushrooms for personal use by people 21 and older.

Though the hallucinogenic drug remains illegal under federal law and won't be sold in Colorado stores, it will be available for use under supervision at state-regulated "healing centers." Residents also will be able to grow psychedelic mushrooms at home and use them without civil or criminal penalties.

The initiative won't take effect until 2024. By then, similar legalization efforts already may have spread to other states.

The Colorado measure is "at the forefront of a new trend," said Mandy Zoch, who tracks ballot measures at the National Conference of State Legislatures. "I wouldn't be surprised if we saw more measures relating to things like psilocybin and other psychedelic drugs in the future."

Legislatures in several states, including California and New Jersey, are likely to consider psychedelic drug measures in 2023, said Graham Boyd, executive director of the drug policy group New Approach.

After spending more than \$4 million on the Colorado initiative, New Approach expects donors concerned about veterans and mental health issues to step forward with more money for future initiatives.

"I think that we are at the beginning of a very hopeful period of expanding options for dealing with mental health. That's what this is all about," Boyd said.

## Indonesia officials: Russia FM left hospital after 'checkup'

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

NUSA DUA, Indonesia (AP) — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visited and later left a Bali hospital ahead of the Group of 20 summit being held on the island, Indonesian authorities said Monday. Russia denied that he had been hospitalized.

Russia's top diplomat arrived on the resort island the previous evening to take part in the meeting of the world's leading economies, which begins Tuesday.

Bali Gov. I Wayan Koster said Lavrov, 72, was taken to Sanglah Hospital, the island's biggest, "for a health checkup."

"He left the hospital after a brief checkup and his health is in good condition," the governor said.

The director of health services governance at the Indonesian Health Ministry, Dr. Sunarto, who like many Indonesians uses only one name, also confirmed that Lavrov had visited the hospital to "get his health checked ... and thank God he is healthy."

Four Indonesian government and medical officials earlier told The Associated Press that Lavrov was treated at the hospital in the provincial capital, Denpasar.

Two of the people said Lavrov had sought treatment for a heart condition, with one later saying he'd returned to his hotel.

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

The hospital did not immediately comment.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova denied that Lavrov had been hospitalized, calling it "the highest level of fakes." She did not address whether he had received medical treatment, however.

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

"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 separately cited Lavrov as saying, "I'm in the hotel, reading materials for the summit tomorrow."

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Asked about Lavrov's situation, U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres said he "did not know about what happened to Minister Lavrov. I wish him the best possible recovery and hope that tomorrow it will be possible to meet."

Lavrov is the highest-ranking Russian official at the G-20 meeting, which U.S. President Joe Biden, China's Xi Jinping and other leaders are attending.

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.

Biden and Xi were meeting separately ahead of the summit in their first in-person talks since the U.S. president took office.

## 'Too hyperbolic'? School board parental rights push falters

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Conservative groups that sought to get hundreds of "parents' rights" activists elected to local school boards largely fell short in last week's midterm elections, notching notable wins in some Republican strongholds but failing to gain a groundswell of support among moderate voters.

Traditionally nonpartisan, local school boards have become fiercely political amid entrenched battles over the teaching of race, history and sexuality. Candidates opposing what they see as "woke" ideology in public schools have sought to gain control of school boards across the U.S. and overturn policies deemed too liberal.

The push has been boosted by Republican groups including the 1776 Project PAC, which steered millions of dollars into local school races this year amid predictions of a red wave. But on Tuesday, just a third of its roughly 50 candidates won.

Moms for Liberty, another conservative political group, endorsed more than 250 candidates, with about half winning so far. And despite resounding victories for Republicans including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, several gubernatorial candidates who leaned heavily on parents' rights fell short, including in Michigan, Wisconsin, Kansas and Maine.

The results raise doubts about the movement's widespread political strength and pose a potential obstacle for Republican lawmakers hoping to rally behind proposed legislation on the issue. With the GOP poised to take a narrow majority in the U.S. House, Leader Kevin McCarthy has already issued plans for a "Parents Bill of Rights," though its details are vague.

Teachers unions and liberal grassroots groups also have been pushing back with money and messaging of their own, casting conservative activists as fearmongers intent on turning parents against public schools.

The parents' rights movement demands transparency around teaching but also includes a wide range of cultural stances, calling for schools to remove certain books dealing with race or sexuality, for example, and an end to history lessons that aren't "patriotic."

In hindsight, activists this election should have had a stronger emphasis on academic issues, said Ryan Girdusky, founder of the 1776 Project PAC.

"The messaging needs to be more positive," he said. "Sometimes you lose moderate voters because you're too hyperbolic and you're not speaking truth to something very local to them."

The midterms marked a reversal from previous elections that saw parents' rights proponents land major victories. Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin, a Republican, hammered the importance of parents' rights in his successful campaign last year, winning crucial support from suburban voters — one year after the state voted for Democratic President Joe Biden.

Before Tuesday, the 1776 PAC had won roughly 75% of its races in the two previous years, putting dozens of school boards across the nation in control of conservative candidates.

Those victories have been attributed largely to parents' anger over schools' handling of the pandemic,



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including long closures and mask mandates. This year, the message pivoted to the cultural divides that have sparked battles around transgender rights, racism and sexuality.

In New Buffalo, Michigan, in the state's purple southwest corner, four candidates supported by the 1776 PAC took on four candidates favored by a teachers union. The conservatives took out full-page ads in two local newspapers accusing their opponents of supporting a school program that promotes critical race theory, sexually inappropriate material and "anti-parent content."

"NO Critical Race Theory," the ad read. "NO biological boys in girls sports."

Later, local residents began to raise worries about "furries" — a baseless myth spread by some conservatives alleging that students at some U.S. schools have been allowed to use litter boxes and given other special treatment if they identify as animals.

The level of misinformation was startling to Denise Churchill, one of the candidates endorsed by the teachers union. But on Tuesday, she and her three running mates won by wide margins, with the city also voting for Democrats at the state level.

"Truth prevails, and hate loses," said Churchill, who has two children in the district. She said the district has always invited parent involvement. "But parental rights does not mean that you get to cherry-pick what's taught in the schools."

The county that houses New Buffalo was a prized target for the 1776 group, having voted for Republican candidates for president and governor in recent elections. The group campaigned for 20 candidates across eight districts, but just four were elected. Many were defeated by union-backed candidates.

The group also fell short in its attempt to win majorities on boards in conservative Bentonville, Arkansas, and purple Round Rock, Texas. Its biggest victory was in right-leaning Carroll County, Maryland, where its candidates won three seats. All four of its candidates won in Florida, which has become a stronghold for the movement.

Despite the losses, some conservatives saw hopeful signs in DeSantis and Abbott's high-profile victories. And even picking up scattered school board seats across the country should be viewed as progress for a Republican Party that has long neglected education as a priority, said Rory Cooper, a GOP strategist and former congressional staffer.

"We're not seeing Democratic opponents go unopposed like they used to," he said. "I'm counting this year as a victory."

Democrats see the losses as proof that rhetoric around critical race theory and gender issues may play well in Republican primaries, but it has limited appeal for moderate Americans.

"In general elections, voters don't want to hear about it," said Stephanie Cutter, a Democratic strategist and former senior adviser to President Barack Obama. "The overwhelming majority of parents support their kids' teachers, believe in their public schools and want accurate history being taught in their classrooms."

As conservative groups increasingly inject themselves into local school board races, Democrats have responded in kind. State teachers unions have increased spending on their candidates, and grassroots groups including Red Wine and Blue have rallied liberal suburban parents.

But in many areas, school board members facing conservative challengers have aimed to distance themselves from any political affiliation.

In Coloma, Michigan, a town near New Buffalo, four incumbents opted not to accept outside money as they ran against three challengers supported by the 1776 PAC. All four incumbents won.

"We did not speak about them. We spoke about us," said Heidi Ishmael, president of the school board. "I am a firm believer the school board is nonpartisan. We are there to listen to and represent our entire community."

Democratic strategists have held up that approach — de-escalating the role of politics in education — as a winning tactic. Candidates who draw attention to any perceived bias run the risk of looking like they're the ones looking for political fights, said Guy Molyneux of Hart Research, a Democratic polling firm.

"I don't think people want either the left or the right to triumph here," Molyneux said. "They really want politics out of their schools."

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## 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 outcomes — did not materialize in any pervasive way.

"What we saw was the strength and resilience of American democracy," President Joe Biden said Monday at the Group of 20 summit in Indonesia, even as the White House acknowledges that Democrats 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.

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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 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. Two 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. Two 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.

## Paris 2024 Olympics, Paralympics mascot is a smiling hat

By MASHA MACPHERSON and THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The mascots for the 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympics have been revealed — a Phrygian cap.

The soft red cap, also known as a liberty cap, is an updated version of a conical hat worn in antiquity in places such as Persia, the Balkans, Thrace, Dacia and Phrygia, a place in modern day Turkey where the name originates. It later became a symbol of the pursuit of liberty in the French Revolution — and is still worn by the figure of Marianne, the national personification of France since that time.

The Olympic cap is triangular in shape, and comes complete with friendly smile, blue eyes, tricolor ribbon and big colored sneakers.

The Paralympic version features a prosthetic leg that goes to the knee — the first time such a mascot sports a visible disability, organizers said.

Michael Jeremiasz, gold medalist in wheelchair tennis at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, said the prosthesis sends an inclusive message to disabled people around the world.

"That's the key for us, because we suffer from being invisible in society," he said. "We have to use Paris 2024 as a powerful tool to change our rights."

Organizers said they didn't want to choose an animal or other creature, like mascots at previous Games, but instead wanted something that represented an "ideal." They said they chose the cap as an "allegory of freedom."

The choice to use the Phrygian cap for the Paris Games seems to draw out links between modern France and the ancient world.

"The Phrygian cap embodies the ability we all have together when we collectively decide to rise up to strive for better," Paris organizing committee brand director Julie Matikhine said.

The two mascots will be dubbed "Les Phryges," pronounced something like "freezh."

Jeremiasz, who is French, guessed that his English wife might mispronounce it, but added, "at the end of the day, it doesn't matter ... it will be sexy to have people from all over the world to try to pronounce it their own way."

Merchandise goes on sale starting Tuesday. They'll use fabric developed in the French region of Brittany, but the toys and other products will primarily be manufactured in China.

The Paris Olympics will be held from July 26-Aug. 11, 2024, and the Paralympics from Aug. 28-Sept. 8.

## Analysis: Ukrainian liberation a powerful dynamic in war

By TAMER FAKAHANY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Amid the death and destruction war leaves in its wake, there are powerful dynamics and narratives: domination, besieged populations, occupation and their counterparts, resistance, freedom and liberation.

Vast swaths of Western and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union knew this well at various points of the 20th century: Paris, Leningrad, Sarajevo. Iraq and Syria more recently in the 21st century.

In Russia's nearly nine-month war in Ukraine, the names of towns and cities like Mariupol, Bucha, Kharkiv and Kherson have been seared on the global consciousness as they witnessed the full spectrum of wartime horrors and more recently, jubilation.

Since Friday, striking scenes of unbridled joy and images from Kherson have shown troops being greeted as heroes as Ukrainian flags fly over liberated areas. As far as resounding inflection points in the war go, Russia's flight from the city of Kherson under prolonged Ukrainian assault is unmistakable.

Liberation and victory on the battlefield are also powerful incentives for allies like the United States, the European Union and the United Kingdom to keep a steady flow of military aid that directly helps Ukraine's

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advances.

"Momentum is an important factor in war. Ukraine has it now. Kyiv and its partners must make the most of it," the Institute for the Study of War said in an assessment.

Concerns about wavering support from Washington if the Democrats lost power on Capitol Hill to the Republicans seem unfounded now that U.S. President Joe Biden's party has maintained control of the Senate.

Chinese President Xi Jinping could also be less inclined to support Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin as major losses pile up. Ukraine was one of several key issues when Biden and Xi held an in-person summit in Asia on Monday. Putin won't attend the Group of 20 nations gathering in Bali, Indonesia, this week, his global isolation at its peak now during his more than 20 years in power.

From massacres of civilians to occupation ending in villages, towns and cities, the war grinds on. The question of what happened, what was mined and booby-trapped, the ongoing bombardment and punishing lack of water and electricity, rebuilding, the prosecution of potential war crimes and what comes next are at the fore.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Saturday that "we will see many more such greetings" of Ukrainian soldiers liberating Russian-held territory. Ukraine's retaking of the city of Kherson was a huge setback for the Kremlin and the latest in a series of battlefield humiliations. It was the only provincial capital that had been under Russian control since the early days of the invasion.

Late Sunday, Zelenskyy accused Russian forces of having committed "the same atrocities as in other regions of our country" before they were forced to pull out of Kherson and its environs. On Monday he visited the liberated city himself. He described the whirlwind events as "the beginning of the end of the war."

For Kyiv, and its allies, it's straightforward — a neighboring aggressor invaded, killed and destroyed, and is being driven from its territory even as it illegally annexed regions it loses control over day-by-day.

Moscow itself claimed that these eastern and southern areas were being "liberated" as part of Russia. That they were assimilating Russian-speaking Ukrainians in their embrace. But that's a similar argument to that which Nazi Germany used to march into Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland in 1938 and the Free City of Danzig, later Poland's Gdansk, in 1939.

In August 1944, France's wartime resistance leader Charles de Gaulle delivered these lines in the capital: "Paris outraged! Paris broken! Paris martyred! But Paris liberated!" It was a key inflection point as the Allies pushed on from the west and the Soviet Red Army from the eastern front to Berlin to extinguish the Third Reich within the year.

When Iraqi forces vanquished the barbaric Islamic State group in Mosul in July 2017, after the extremists had brutally held large parts of the nation, that also needed to be a bitter fight to the end that would shatter the aggressor, degrading them to a ramshackle force.

There are no such paths lying ahead in Russia's war in Ukraine. Russia may well be defeated on the battlefield, but it will remain a power to contend with one way or another. And the threat of the Kremlin's use of nuclear weapons hangs over the conflict, and the world.

The key question now is whether Ukraine can build on its Kherson city victory — a chunk of the region is still under Russian occupation — and expand its southern counteroffensive to other Russian-occupied areas, potentially including the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow seized in 2014.

The liberation of Crimea would be the greatest victory in the war for Ukraine, an unspeakable defeat for Russia, and even Putin's own hold on power could then hang in the balance.

## Short World Cup build-up poses challenges, tests coaches

By STEVE DOUGLAS AP Sports Writer

Soccer's top players have followed a well-trodden path in the lead-up to previous World Cup tournaments.

Finish your club season. Take a break with friends and family. Join up with your national team. Spend two or three weeks familiarizing yourself with teammates, working on practice drills and playing a few warmup games before the big kickoff.

Not this time.

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Adding to the novelty of this unique World Cup in Qatar — the first in the Middle East, the first to be played in the middle of the traditional European soccer season — is the unusually truncated build-up to the tournament.

One week.

For some players, even less than that.

"We fly to Qatar on the 15th, arrive on the 16th, then we have five days to prepare for the first game," said Tony Strudwick, head of performance for Wales' national team. "It's a challenge how we bring that all together."

Strudwick has the crucial job of getting Wales' players in prime shape — physically, but also mentally — for the nation's first World Cup game in 64 years, which will be against the United States on Nov. 21.

On one hand, he is excited about welcoming players who are in what he describes as a "good rhythm" midway through a season.

On the other, he and the rest of Wales' backroom staff have no control over what shape the squad will arrive for the tournament. Some players have been playing virtually three games a week for the past two months; others might have been struggling for game time at their clubs.

"We can't phone up the clubs and say, 'We need X, Y and Z players to be playing these minutes,'" Strudwick told The Associated Press. "We can't dictate that, so we have to be agile in our planning.

"It's going to come right down to the last league game before the World Cup and we'll need contingency plans."

World Cup-bound players had to be freed from club duties from Monday. The first game of the tournament is between host Qatar and Ecuador on Sunday.

How a team prepares during those few days before group play begins largely depends on when its first game takes place, with the first set of matches spread over five days.

The squads of Brazil and Serbia have the longest preparation time, for example, given the countries meet in the last of the four games on Nov. 24.

Lars Lagerback has coached at three World Cups for two nations — with his native Sweden in 2002 and 2006 and with Nigeria in 2010 — and said his priority would be "rehab" in the few days the squad is together before its opening game.

"You can't do much training," Lagerback told the AP in a telephone interview. "I think it's going to benefit the national teams with coaches who have organized the team for a long time and where everybody knows how to play.

"If you have been with a team for at least one or two years, they have an idea and a philosophy of how they want to play. I don't think having a friendly match or not is really important."

Some countries simply have no time for a friendly, with FIFA saying teams must arrive in the host country at least five days before their first game and cannot organize a warmup match in that time.

The countries starting later have a choice. While World Cup champion France has no friendly planned before its opener against Australia on Nov. 22, Argentina — also in group action that day — is scheduled to play the United Arab Emirates in a warmup match on Wednesday. Spain has a friendly arranged against Jordan on Thursday, when Portugal has one against Nigeria.

Wales is one of the teams who will not play a friendly and Strudwick doesn't see that as a disadvantage.

"We can build fitness and match rhythm and tempo in in-house games, where we can control what players do," he said. "You can't have that control in a friendly. And if we were to put a friendly game in there, while only having a week's preparation, it means you lose training days."

What's clear is that teams, whether they play a warmup or not, are unlikely to be up to full speed for their first games, given the shortened buildup compared to a typical June-July World Cup. That might play into the hands of the weaker nations, and perhaps lead to some shocks early in the tournament.

Soccer author Jonathan Wilson noted there were only nine goals in the first eight group games of the African Cup of Nations this year, after the majority of teams only met up a week before the tournament started.

"A lot of teams will go into their first game thinking, 'We're not really prepared, so let's play safety-first



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and keep it tight, not lose and be under pressure straightaway," said Wilson, who wrote "Inverting The Pyramid: The History of Football Tactics."

"Once teams have been together a bit longer, the attacking mechanisms begin to click to an extent — with the caveat that with international football, they are never as slick as they are at club level."

Before that, coaches simply have to cross their fingers and hope their players have come through their final club games before the World Cup unscathed.

They will be nervous times.

"You are hoping your stronger players, the ones you want available, are in that 'moment,' as Pep Guardiola says," Strudwick said. "And we can't manufacture that. We are heavily reliant on the clubs."

## Today in History: November 15, Sherman's "March to the Sea"

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 15, the 319th day of 2022. There are 46 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 15, 1864, during the Civil War, Union forces led by Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh (teh-KUM'-seh) Sherman began their "March to the Sea" from Atlanta; the campaign ended with the capture of Savannah on Dec. 21.

On this date:

In 1777, the Second Continental Congress approved the Articles of Confederation.

In 1806, explorer Zebulon Pike sighted the mountaintop now known as Pikes Peak in present-day Colorado.

In 1937, at the U.S. Capitol, members of the House and Senate met in air-conditioned chambers for the first time.

In 1942, the naval Battle of Guadalcanal ended during World War II with a decisive U.S. victory over Japanese forces.

In 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt laid the cornerstone of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C.

In 1959, four members of the Clutter family of Holcomb, Kansas, were found murdered in their home. (Ex-convicts Richard Hickock and Perry Smith were later convicted of the killings and hanged in a case made famous by the Truman Capote book "In Cold Blood.")

In 1961, former Argentine President Juan Peron, living in exile in Spain, married his third wife, Isabel.

In 1966, the flight of Gemini 12, the final mission of the Gemini program, ended successfully as astronauts James A. Lovell and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin Jr. splashed down safely in the Atlantic after spending four days in orbit.

In 1969, a quarter of a million protesters staged a peaceful demonstration in Washington against the Vietnam War.

In 1984, Stephanie Fae Beauclair, the infant publicly known as "Baby Fae" who had received a baboon's heart to replace her own congenitally deformed one, died at Loma Linda University Medical Center in California three weeks after the transplant.

In 2003, two Black Hawk helicopters collided and crashed in Iraq; 17 U.S. troops were killed.

In 2019, Roger Stone, a longtime friend and ally of President Donald Trump, was convicted of all seven counts in a federal indictment accusing him of lying to Congress, tampering with a witness and obstructing the House investigation of whether Trump coordinated with Russia during the 2016 campaign. (As Stone was about to begin serving a 40-month prison sentence, Trump commuted the sentence.)

Ten years ago: The Justice Department announced that BP had agreed to plead guilty to a raft of charges in the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill and pay a record \$4.5 billion, including nearly \$1.3 billion in criminal fines. Four veterans were killed and 13 people injured when a freight train slammed into a parade float carrying wounded warriors and their spouses at a rail crossing in Midland, Texas.

Five years ago: Zimbabwe's military was in control of the country's capital and the state broadcaster and held 93-year-old President Robert Mugabe and his wife under house arrest; the military emphasized

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that it had not staged a takeover but was instead starting a process to restore the country's democracy. (The military intervention, hugely popular in Zimbabwe, led to impeachment proceedings against Mugabe, who was replaced.) Eight members of a family who were among more than two dozen people killed in a shooting at a small Texas church were mourned at a funeral attended by 3,000 people.

One year ago: President Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping spoke for more than three hours by video amid mounting tensions in the U.S.-China relationship. Biden signed his hard-fought \$1 trillion infrastructure deal into law before a bipartisan, celebratory crowd on the White House lawn. A Connecticut judge found Infowars host and conspiracy theorist Alex Jones liable for damages in lawsuits brought by parents of children killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting; the parents sued Jones over his claims that the massacre was a hoax. Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont said he wouldn't seek reelection in 2022 to the seat he'd held since 1975.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Petula Clark is 90. Actor Sam Waterston is 82. Classical conductor Daniel Barenboim is 80. Pop singer Frida (ABBA) is 77. Actor Bob Gunton is 77. Former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson is 75. Actor Beverly D'Angelo is 71. Director-actor James Widdoes is 69. Rock singer-producer Mitch Easter is 68. News correspondent John Roberts is 66. Former "Tonight Show" bandleader Kevin Eubanks is 65. Comedian Judy Gold is 60. Actor Rachel True is 56. Rapper E-40 is 55. Country singer Jack Ingram is 52. Actor Jay Harrington is 51. Actor Jonny Lee Miller is 50. Actor Sydney Tamiia (tuh-MY'-yuh) Poitier-Heartsong is 49. Rock singer-musician Chad Kroeger is 48. Rock musician Jesse Sandoval is 48. Actor Virginie Ledoyen is 46. Actor Sean Murray is 45. Pop singer Ace Young (TV: "American Idol") is 42. Golfer Lorena Ochoa (loh-AY'-nah oh-CHOH'-uh) is 41. Hip-hop artist B.o.B is 34. Actor Shailene Woodley is 31. Actor-dancer Emma Dumont is 28.