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Groton Community Calendar

Tuesday, Jan. 10

Senior Menu: Lemmon baked fish, au gratin potatoes, California blend vegetables, honey fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Sausage, egg and cheese wraps.

School Lunch: Old school BBQ sandwiches, tri taters.

Girls Basketball vs. Aberdeen Christian at the Aberdeen Civic Center, JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Church Council, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 11

Senior Menu: Spaghetti, mixed vegetables, garlic toast, fruit.

School Breakfast: Hashbrown pizza.

School Lunch: Chicken alfredo, cooked broccoli.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.

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

Thursday, Jan. 12

Senior Menu: Roast pork, mashed potatoes with gravy, Cauliflower and broccoli, apple sauce, whole

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

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



wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal with toppings.

School Lunch: Hamburgers, fries.

Basketball Double Header at Tiospa Zina: Girls JV at 5 p.m. followed by Boys JV, Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity.

Friday, Jan. 13

Senior Menu: Chili, corn bread, coleslaw, pears.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Pizza, cooked carrots.

Elementary Christmas Concert, 2:30 p.m. (re-scheduled from Dec. 22)

Saturday, Jan. 14

Wrestling at Potter County Tournament, 10 a.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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Groton Area boys beat Sisseton

Groton Area defeated Sisseton in boys basketball action played Monday in Groton, 73-20. The Tigers led at the quarters tops at 16-4, 44-8 and 63-11.

Lane Tietz led the Tigers with 22 points, three rebounds, three assists and seven steals. Jacob Zak had 18 points, six rebounds, four assists, three steals and one block. Tate Larson had nine points, six rebounds, one assist and one steal. Ryder Johnson had nine points, two rebounds, two assists and three steals. Cole Simon had six points, three rebounds, five assists and two steals. Keegan Tracy had six points and two rebounds. Logan Ringgenberg had two points, three rebounds and one steal. Cade Larson had two rebounds, one assist, two steals and one block. Taylor Diegel had one rebound, one assist, two steals and one block. Colby Dunker had one point, one rebound and one assist. Gage Sippel had five rebounds. Holden Sippel had one rebound.

Groton Area made 28 of 47 two-pointers for 60 percent, two of 13 three-pointers for 15 percent, 11 of 18 free throws for 61 percent, had 35 rebounds, 12 turnovers, 18 assists, 21 steals, 11 team fouls and three blocks.

Mason Herzon led the Redmen with seven points followed by Christian Shepherd with five, Ethan De-Spiegler had four, Dana BraveBull two and Nate Tchida and Carter Stickland each had one. The Redmen made six of 24 field goals for 25 percent, seven of 11 free throws for 64 percent, had 12 team fouls and 30 turnovers.

Groton Area's junior varsity team led at the quarter stops at 19-0, 39-0 and 50-5 en route to a 55-5 win. Ryder Johnson and Keegan Tracy each had nine points, Gage Sippel had seven points, Logan Ringgenberg and Taylor Diegel each had six, Braxton Imrie had five, Holden Sippel and Colby Dunker each had four, Caden McInerney and Logan Pearson each had two and Carter Simon added a free throw. Dana BraveBull made the five points for Sisseton.

Both games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM. The varsity game was sponsored by Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Bierman Farm Service, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Groton Chamber of Commerce, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Locke Electric, Spanier Harvesting & Trucking, Bahr Spray Foam, Thunder Seed with John Wheeting. The junior varsity game was sponsored by Mike and Dawn Imrie.

- Paul Kosel

GDILIVE.COM



Girls Basketball
Tuesday, Jan. 10
Groton vs. Aberdeen Christian
at the Aberdeen Civic Center



Livestreaming
Girls JV Game at 6 p.m.
Sponsored by Larry & Val Flihs

followed by Varsity Game
Sponsored by
Bary Keith at Harr Motors
Bierman Farm Service
Blocker Construction
Dacotah Bank
Groton Chamber of Commerce
Groton Ford
John Sieh Agency
Locke Electric
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking
Bahr Spray Foam
Thunder Seed with John Wheeting

GDILIVE.COM

Basketball Double Header

Thursday, Jan. 12

Groton at Tiospa Zina



**Livestreaming
Girls JV Game at 5 p.m.**

Sponsored by Larry & Val Flihs

Followed by Boys JV Game

Sponsored by Mike & Dawn Imrie

followed by Girls then Boys Varsity Games

Sponsored by

Bary Keith at Harr Motors

Bierman Farm Service

Blocker Construction

Dacotah Bank

Groton Chamber of Commerce

Groton Ford

John Sieh Agency

Locke Electric

Spanier Harvesting & Trucking

Bahr Spray Foam

Thunder Seed with John Wheeting

GDILIVE.COM

Friday, Jan. 13, 2:30 p.m.
Groton Area Elementary

Christmas Program



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Lawmakers want to ditch criminal justice cost estimates

Report cites data limitations not present in other states

BY: JOHN HULT - JANUARY 9, 2023 5:49 PM

For nearly a decade, the state's Legislative Research Council (LRC) has produced prison-jail cost estimates for bills that would impact the inmate population.

This session, lawmakers will be asked to repeal the law that requires them.

At least one of the law's initial backers says that's a bad idea for taxpayers.

House Bill 1003, the third bill on the House of Representatives docket for the 2023 session, was filed on behalf of the Legislature's Executive Board. The bill includes an emergency clause, which means it would take effect immediately, rather than on the typical post-session enactment date of July 1.

The bill comes on the heels of a report by the LRC that says it lacks the data sources and time it needs to produce reliable cost estimates, and that some of its previous estimates have proven wildly inaccurate.

"You never get any good information out of them. If you're not getting anything out of them and it's taking staff time, it just slows up the work," said House Speaker Hugh Bartels, R-Watertown, the prime sponsor of House Bill 1003. "And it creates a ton of work for the LRC."

The report says the South Dakota framework for producing the estimates makes it difficult to produce them, but it does not conclude that repeal is the answer.

The state could take cues from the 19 other states that require cost estimates to improve the numbers, according to Jim Seward of the Council on Criminal Justice, who was an adviser to former Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

"It doesn't seem wise to me, and it doesn't seem evidence-based or data-driven to say 'this is too hard, let's get rid of it,'" Seward said. "Many other states seem to be doing it, and according to the LRC, they might have a better process."

Cost calculation part of reform package

The cost estimate mandate was part of 2013's Senate Bill 70, a massive criminal justice reform package meant to reduce or adjust penalties for nonviolent crimes and refocus the system on rehabilitation and community supervision. Daugaard signed the bill that year; the first of the 251 estimates produced since then appeared the following year.

The requirement has been adjusted since then. Among other tweaks, lawmakers voted to forgo cost estimates in misdemeanor cases.

The LRC's October report on the estimates includes a rundown of how many had been produced each year and survey results from lawmakers on how the estimates impacted their decision-making. Most lawmakers reported reading the cost estimates and taking them into consideration, but relatively few reported casting a vote for or against a bill based on them.

Some lawmakers apparently bristle at the idea of considering prison and jail costs without some kind of certainty about the numbers.

"The accuracy of these estimates is very difficult to achieve," one unnamed lawmaker told the LRC. "There are just way too many variables. It's easy to dismiss new proposed punishments when we always are concerned about putting a price on it."

The report also includes a summary of the LRC's available data sources, its time constraints during session and an explanation of the differences between South Dakota's protocols and those used in the 19 other states that require cost estimates for criminal justice proposals.

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In some states, for example, the department of corrections is responsible for tallying possible costs. In South Dakota, the job falls on the shoulders of the LRC, an agency whose analysts help lawmakers craft bills and answer research questions throughout the session and the year.

Data limitations exist in South Dakota

The LRC faces significant hurdles in producing cost estimates. South Dakota has no centralized database of criminal cases, convictions, jail sentences or prison sentences. That means the LRC's "rapid response team" is forced to reach out to multiple agencies for data on existing charges before it can extrapolate possible costs of new penalties for existing crimes.

For new crimes, there's even less data to work with. One bill noted in the report would have enhanced penalties for drug dealers based on convictions in other states.

"While there had been almost 1,000 convictions under the relevant statute ... no database of information on their criminal backgrounds, including out-of-state convictions, was available in South Dakota," the report says.

Of the 251 cost estimates that have been prepared since 2014, just 71 suggested that a bill would have a budgetary impact on prisons and jails. The report includes case studies on five that were ultimately passed and signed into law. Three found an impact, but none materialized after the laws took effect. The remaining two over- and underestimated the cost of the new laws to which they were attached.

The findings might lead lawmakers to conclude that the estimates were inadequate, LRC author Joey Knofczynski wrote.

"The varying results seen can just as simply be attributed to the difficulty of accurately predicting human behavior, particularly criminal behavior, using limited data," the report says.

Daugaard adviser: Pausing to consider costs worthwhile

Seward was among those who helped craft the 2013 bill that placed the cost estimates on the books. Also on the team were Dusty Johnson, now a U.S. representative, who was chief of staff to Daugaard at the time; and Tony Venhuizen, a newly elected state representative from Sioux Falls who recently stepped down from the Board of Regents.

The group built SB 70 based on a series of intensive work group sessions with members of all three branches of state government, who dove into the state's criminal justice data with the help of the Pew Charitable Trusts. Pew's analysis of evidence-based practices fed into a lengthy report on the potential budgetary and public safety consequences if South Dakota continued to incarcerate nonviolent offenders at higher levels than surrounding states.

Corrections costs had ballooned to \$100 million by 2011, up from \$26 million in 1991. Yet South Dakota's crime rates weren't much better than states that spent less.

"South Dakota wasn't more safe than North Dakota, even though we had more people in prison," Seward said.

The cost estimate provision was just one piece of the bill, which had the backing of every branch of government and marked one of Daugaard's most significant legislative victories.

The overarching goal of the bill was to tamp down costs while preserving public safety. But while drug crimes and some other crimes have dropped in recent years, corrections costs have continued to grow.

Gov. Kristi Noem's proposed corrections budget for fiscal year 2024, not accounting for proposals to build a new women's prison and budgeting for a new state penitentiary, stands at \$125 million – \$10 million higher than the previous year.

Seward sees cost estimates as an important part of the legislative process. A study group of public safety stakeholders could use the LRC report as the basis for improving the estimates and bringing the protocols for producing them closer to those used in other states, Seward suggested.

Given that lawmakers have already altered the cost estimate law more than once and that lawmakers themselves reported reading and considering the numbers, Seward sees a fix as more useful than a "knee-jerk" repeal.

"If conservatives don't want to think about cost, we probably need to have a more foundational discus-

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sion," Seward said. "I think all legislators owe it to their constituents and to the state to take a careful look at corrections costs. They're a huge part of the state budget."

Lawmakers: estimates slow legislative process

Sen. Lee Schoenbeck, R-Watertown, who serves as Senate president pro tempore and chairs the Executive Board, is the prime sponsor of HB 1003 in that chamber.

Revising the cost estimate requirement or shifting responsibility to another agency wouldn't make the estimates worthwhile, Schoenbeck argued, because lawmakers need answers more quickly than any research agency can produce defensible numbers.

It takes several days to produce the estimates for bills or amendments, and all bills need their cost estimates by "crossover day" on Feb. 22, the last day for legislation to pass its house of origin.

Those time constraints limit the value of a prison-jail impact statement, Schoenbeck said.

"We can tell that there is no way during a 36 or 37 day legislative session, where you need the answer in 48 hours, that you can accurately predict how many people might be incarcerated," Schoenbeck said. "It's not physically possible during the session to do that."

The emergency clause on the bill means that if passed, lawmakers will be able to move through the session without pausing to consider the potential cost of crime-related proposals. That could be meaningful for incoming Sen. Brent Hoffman, R-Sioux Falls, who plans to submit a "truth in sentencing" bill – which Schoenbeck said he supports – that would require inmates to serve 85% of their sentences for violent crimes and 100% of their sentences for murder or manslaughter. Currently, most inmates are parole eligible after serving around a third of their sentences but can be forced to serve longer terms before a chance at parole if they commit violent crimes or have significant criminal histories.

Hoffman's bill would only apply to newly sentenced defendants. Schoenbeck and Hoffman both acknowledged that judges are likely to adjust their initial sentences downward in light of the new scheme if the bill passes, but there could still be an impact on prison costs.

But both lawmakers said a cost estimate would be more distracting than instructive for bills like Hoffman's. The proposal is in draft form, but "it's written to address the greatest concerns of law enforcement and our citizens," Hoffman said.

"Citizens simply don't want violent offenders released early only to commit additional violent crimes, as we've too often seen in the media," he said. "There must be serious consequences for serious crimes, and we're working on it."

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.

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COMMENTARY

Political squabbling stalls vital housing investments

BRAD JOHNSON - JANUARY 8, 2023 5:00 AM

The Federal Reserve's interest rate hikes and inaction by our state's political leaders have had a dramatic negative effect on South Dakota's real estate market.

A series of interest rate hikes has caused residential sales to decline while the price per single family home is up. Additionally, the inventory of houses available for sale is near historic lows thanks to a slow-down in building.

These statistics make it all the more important for the South Dakota Legislature to act quickly on releasing nearly \$200 million in stalled housing infrastructure money.

The federal and state money is intended to help communities expand infrastructure to make new development more affordable. Developers now must bear much of the cost, which ultimately is passed on to homebuyers.

The Legislature authorized spending the money last year but bickering between Gov. Kristi Noem and the Legislature derailed it, causing a construction season to be missed.

Noem originally wanted her Governor's Office of Economic Development to review applications and make funding awards, but legislators have little faith in the leadership of that office. They feared it would become a Noem slush fund.

So, they shifted the money to the independent South Dakota Housing Authority, but the authority felt the legislative language was unclear and declined to move forward.

A 2023 consensus bill, reportedly agreed to among legislative leaders and Noem, is expected to be a top priority when the legislative session begins Tuesday. The money is expected again to be funneled through the South Dakota Housing Authority.

We would be one year closer to solving our housing problems if government officials had done their jobs right last year.

The Senate is expected to pass it by Jan. 13 and the House will pass it by Jan. 20, according to leaders in both bodies. The governor is expected to quickly sign the emergency legislation, allowing it to take effect immediately.

About half of the money will be in a revolving loan fund and the lion's share will be earmarked to communities with less than 50,000 people.

Getting immediate help to the housing industry is critical. A shortage of affordable workforce housing is a near universal problem in South Dakota.

Higher interest rates combined with a lack of homes for sale caused mortgage applications to drop to their lowest rate in 27 years in December, according to a Jan. 4 report on Realtor.com.

The price increases being witnessed across South Dakota are startling:

In Sioux Falls, year-over-year prices ending in November 2022 jumped 22.7 percent with a median list price of \$176 per square foot. The average home there is listed at nearly \$325,000.

In Rapid City, prices climbed 17.6% in one year with an average listing price of about \$360,000, or \$194 per square foot.

Aberdeen's prices climbed 17.4 percent but with only 22 homes on the market in the city limits in January, it lacked housing in all price ranges.

Brookings had the least inflation with only a 6.4 percent increase while Watertown had the greatest inflationary list price increase of 25 percent.

Mitchell's climbed 10.6 percent.

What is dramatic about the market is the decline in the number of sales, especially in the Aberdeen, Brookings and Watertown markets, according to the Multiple Listing Service.

Sales activity in the Aberdeen market dropped 15 percent from 635 sales in 2021 to 540 in 2022.

Activity in Brookings declined nearly 20 percent from 588 transactions in 2021 to 466 in 2022, and in Watertown it also dropped about 20 percent from 412 to 328.

The infusion of state infrastructure money won't solve the problem, but it will spur development as developers and home builders can focus their resources on construction. It's a case of better late than never.

It's also a testament to the fact that government squabbling and inaction can have real, harmful consequences on people. We would be one year closer to solving our housing problems if government officials had done their jobs right last year.

Brad Johnson is a Watertown real estate appraiser and journalist whose previous career was as a Colorado newspaper reporter and editor. He has been writing regularly appearing opinion columns for at least 20 years.

Justice coalition aims to force change after death of Native American mother

Rapid City based group meeting weekly to push protocol changes

BY: JOHN HULT - JANUARY 9, 2023 5:48 PM

A group of Native American activists and their supporters have refined their demands for Pennington County officials following the death of a young woman who'd been arrested in Rapid City, and they plan to meet weekly all winter long to push for their demands to be met.

Tuesday will mark four weeks of group meetings, and its leaders say the energy has held.

"We're continuing to rack up the time, and we're getting a lot of committed organizers who keep showing up," said Natalie Stites Means, who helped found the group.

The group wants to see the dismissal of all nonviolent warrants, new protocols for the handling of medically vulnerable inmates and for notifying family members of hospital transfers, as well as implicit bias training for all law enforcement and correctional officers.

All officers trained at the Law Enforcement Academy in Pierre, the state's only training facility for incoming and certified officers, complete a required course on fair and impartial policing. Correctional officers are not required to attend the academy, however.

The Rapid City group, dubbed the Wotakuye Justice Coalition, first met in mid-December. More than two dozen attended the first meeting either virtually or in-person.

Attendees included representatives and leaders from the NDN Collective and Generations Indigenous Ways, as well as two Columbia University researchers and a handful of women who offered stories of their own relatives' experiences with the Pennington County Jail and Rapid City Police Department.

Organizers told their visitors on the night of the first meeting that they hadn't expected such a turnout on a night where temperatures hovered near zero degrees Fahrenheit.

"We're so happy to see so many of you," said Golnesa AsheghAli, the owner of Racing Magpie in Rapid City. "We thought it might be just us."

Recent death sparks concern

The group's work was motivated by the death of Abbey Lynn Steele. The 20-year-old mother of two was arrested on warrants Nov. 16, just five days after she'd undergone an emergency cesarean section.

Her heart stopped at the Pennington County Jail within hours of her arrest, but she was resuscitated and then transported to Monument Health in Rapid City without her family's knowledge. The family removed her from life support on Dec. 2.

Steele was arrested at least four times for missed court appearances and violations of a pre-trial sobriety program in the year and a half leading up to her death. She was facing a felony charge for drug ingestion – a charge unique to South Dakota – based on a drug test that occurred at the hospital where she'd given birth to her firstborn.

Her family said the initial test was taken without her consent. Before the felony charge that followed the test, her criminal history consisted of one traffic violation.

The South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) is investigating the circumstances surrounding Steele's death. Steele's family said they met with DCI representatives before Christmas.

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The death certificate for Steele, released in mid-December, says she died from pneumonia and methamphetamine toxicity. The narrative portion of the publicly accessible version of the certificate does not include a complete narrative of the circumstances surrounding her death.

DCI spokesman Tony Mangan said this week that the investigation is ongoing.

The organizers of the Tuesday meetings were among the first to reach out to Steele's family after her death. The Wotakuye Justice Coalition is an outgrowth of a Lakota women's group called Wotakuye Mutual Aid, or Meals for Relatives, whose members delivered meals, clothes, masks and medical supplies to vulnerable people during the COVID-19 pandemic and has since responded to other community concerns or calls for help from families in Rapid City.

"We're just women responding to people who need help," said Stites Means.

When word broke of Steele's death, Stites Means said, the women in the group saw their own friends and relatives reflected in her circumstances.

"Abbey Lynn being so young, we could all identify her as someone who's struggling and needs help," Stites Means said.

Community concerns presented

The introductions and ensuing discussion points addressed in the coalition's first meeting sometimes included personal stories from attendees about their own or their family members' experiences with law enforcement. Others offered blessings and statements of support on behalf of themselves or their organizations.

"(Abbey's) voice isn't being heard. So now, we're her voice," said Cheryl Angel. "Her heart stopped beating, but our hearts didn't stop."

Several people said their decision to come was fueled by outrage.

"I'm holding a lot of grief and holding my heart with everyone, especially the family," said Heather Wood of Rapid City. "And I'm angry, ready to move on making things better."

Steele's family has said that they were not informed of her transfer from the Pennington County Jail, instead learning that she was on life support hours later by contacting Monument Health. Some meeting attendees spoke of similar transfers or alleged failures in communication and other substandard health care behind bars.

One woman from Sturgis spoke of her son losing a toe to frostbite after a stay at the jail and a transfer to another facility. She told the group that her son might be willing to take his story public if it helps to change correctional protocols.

Others talked about being children of the foster care system, about sons and daughters who spent time in juvenile correctional facilities.

Susie Red Feather, an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, attended over Zoom. She read a statement on behalf of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women USA. When a woman is "stolen," the statement read, "there's a hole left in a community that she once filled with love."

"We demand answers. We demand justice, while acknowledging that justice will not heal the pain," Red Feather said. "This should not happen to another precious Lakota person, man or woman or Two Spirit individual ... I pray this young woman's death is not in vain, but hopefully, hopefully serves as a much needed eye opener."

Warrant issue stands out

The demand for the dismissal of nonviolent warrants is the most important for the Native community and public safety, Stites Means said. With well over 5,000 active warrants on file with the Pennington County Sheriff's Office, she said, there are more than 5,000 people in Rapid City who may hesitate to call or cooperate with law enforcement when they or their family members are in trouble, for fear of arrest.

Steele and some of her family members have been victims of domestic violence, Stites Means said. Like many women, she said, they've avoided reporting attacks to avoid potential trips to jail.

"I know a number of women who have been victimized, who have been raped or assaulted, or trafficked, and they do not and cannot go to law enforcement for protection, because they have a warrant

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that is making them fearful," Stites Means said.

The warrant issue is one that's garnered a lot of attention as the group meetings have continued, Stites Means said. Several coalition members are also interested in producing a "know your rights" training for community members that could be presented around the area, she said, and committees have been formed to tackle various aspects of the group's goals.

Most of the 36 people who attended that first meeting have continued to show up to each of the Tuesday night events, she said.

Warrants could be sticking point

Wholesale warrant dismissal might be a hard sell for law enforcement. Rapid City Mayor Steve Allender, a former RCPD police chief, said he understands concerns about fear of arrest, but doesn't see wholesale dismissal of nonviolent warrants as wise, or fair to those who've paid their fines.

"I get the consideration, but on the other hand, stay out of the system in the first place," Allender said. "If you get a warrant, be an adult and go take care of it."

Warrants have been a concern for years for Mark Vargo, who returned to his position as Pennington County State's Attorney this week after a six-month stint as interim attorney general. Vargo pointed to the county's warrant resolution program as an example of how to balance accountability with concerns about perceived retribution after reporting crimes.

"We are almost always capable, particularly on nonviolent – even nonviolent felonies – of getting the warrants set aside and setting up a promise to appear so that the case is then in motion, and can be dealt with appropriately," Vargo said.

The county also has a self turn-in program. Warrants that don't require a jail stay or court appearance can be resolved by paying \$25 per warrant. In 2021, 656 people cleared 885 warrants in Pennington County.

One issue with warrant dismissal, Vargo said, would be what to do with the underlying case. If the case isn't dismissed, he said, a warrant dismissal doesn't actually resolve the problem.

Even so, Vargo and Allender both said there ought to be a forum for discussions on systemic issues and community concerns. Vargo said that one option would be to bring those discussions to the just-created Jurisdictional Cooperation Commission, meant to bring together state and tribal leaders to discuss public safety issues that cross tribal boundaries.

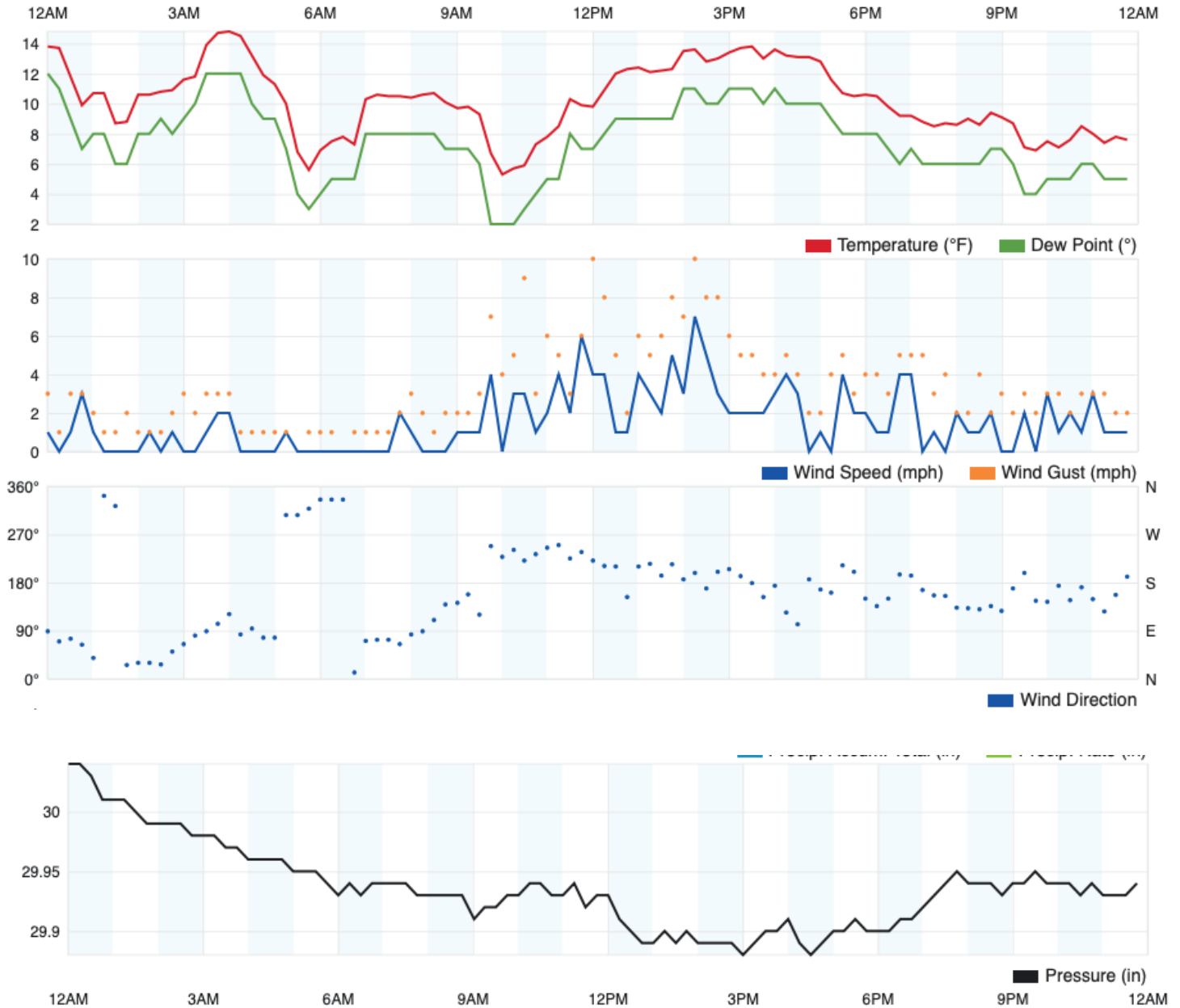
"I think that when people say they have a demand, what they're saying is, 'I have an idea and I haven't been heard,'" Vargo said. "I think we can convince people that they're actually being heard."

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.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						
Slight Chance Snow and Areas Dense Freezing Fog	Chance Snow and Areas Freezing Fog	Patchy Fog then Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 25 °F	Low: 18 °F	High: 25 °F	Low: 11 °F	High: 17 °F	Low: 2 °F	High: 18 °F

Chance of Snow Late Today, Dry Midweek



Today

Fog early. Cloudy with a chance of snow (15-20%) starting late this afternoon -mainly across northern/northeastern/eastern SD/western MN

Highs: 23 to 38°

Tonight

Cloudy. Chance of snow continuing for same areas (20-50%)

~tapering off west to east through the overnight

Lows: 13 to 22°

Wednesday

Partly Sunny to Mostly Cloudy

Highs: 23 to 31°

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
Aberdeen, SD

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Expect lingering fog over far eastern SD and west central MN today, otherwise a cloudy day is expected. A disturbance moving through the region continues to bring the possibility of light snow, but confidence remains low on the location and amounts. A cold front will move through the region late tonight and bring gusty northwest winds on Wednesday.

Snowfall Forecast Remains Uncertain For this Evening

DETAILS

A quick moving system is still possible this evening, but models remain uncertain

Trends have been to the southeast

UNCERTAINTY

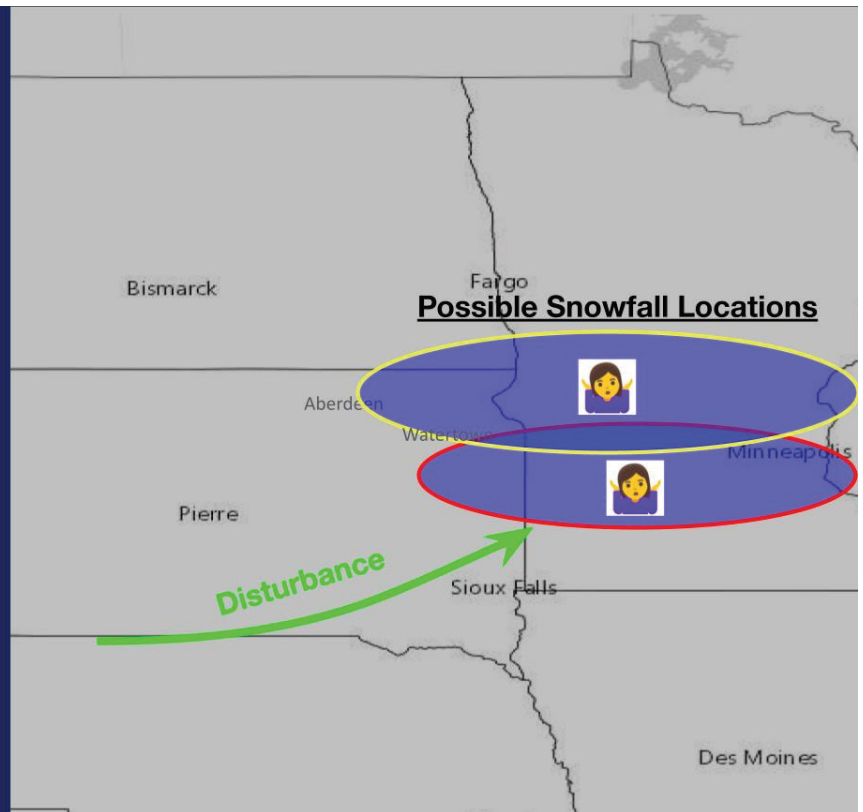
Location of the snow and amounts

POSSIBLE IMPACTS

Localized couple inches of snowfall

Localized travel issues due to limited visibility and slick roads

January 10, 2023 4:16 AM



Here's an update to yesterday's forecast on the potential snowfall. While the trends have been to the southeast and a little weaker with the system, there remains the possibility that a localized couple of inches of snow falls between northeast South Dakota and into central Minnesota. If you have travel plans in eastern SD and into MN tonight, continue to monitor the forecast today.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 14.8 °F at 4:00 AM

Low Temp: 5.3 °F at 10:00 AM

Wind: 10 mph at 2:15 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 01 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 56 in 2012

Record Low: -30 in 1978

Average High: 23°F

Average Low: 2°F

Average Precip in Jan.: 0.21

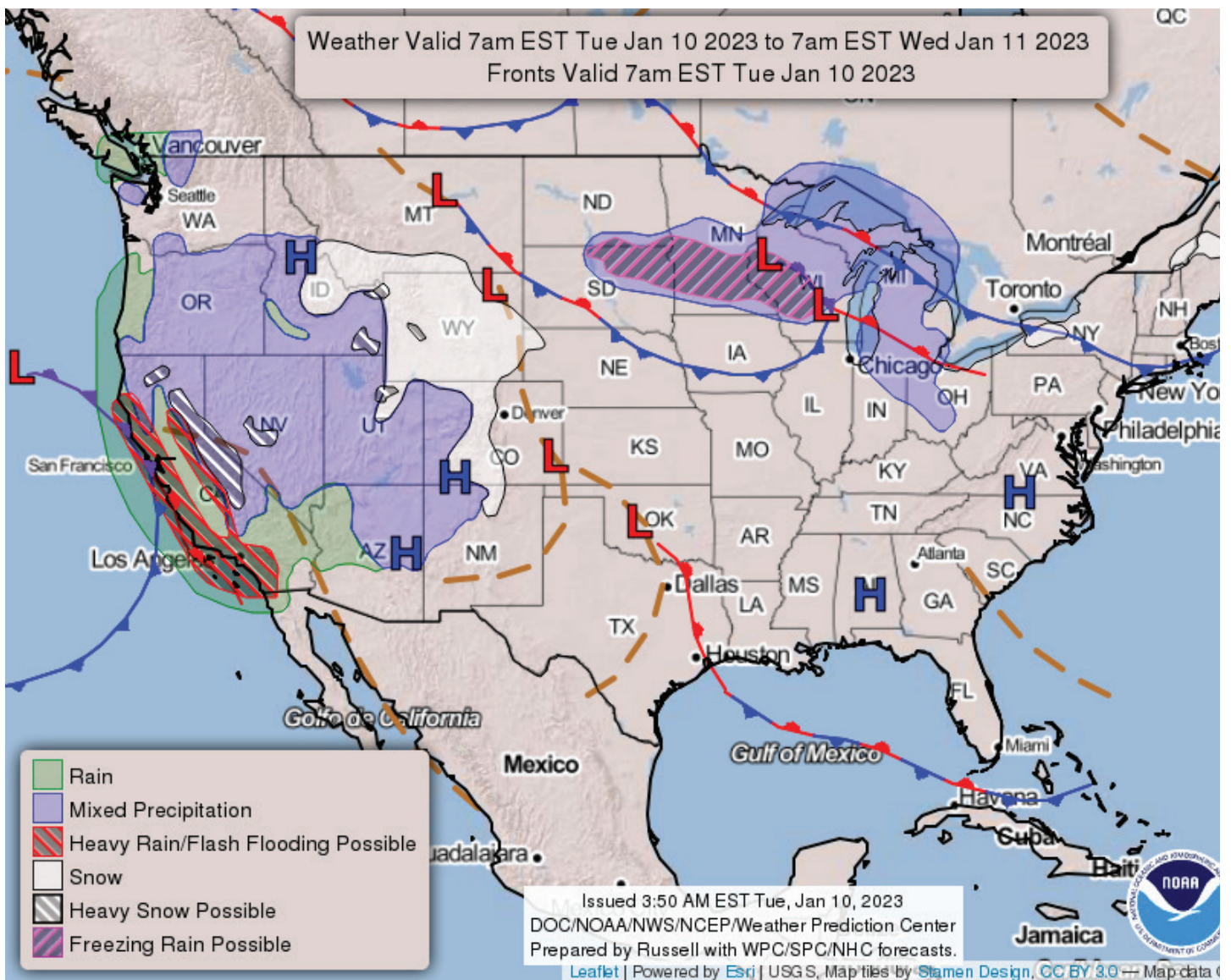
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.21

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:10:51 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:08:36 AM



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Today in Weather History

January 10, 1911: The temperature at Rapid City, South Dakota, plunged 47 degrees in just fifteen minutes. At 7 AM, the temperature was 55 degrees. Fifteen minutes later, it was 4 degrees below zero.

January 10, 1975: An intense area of low pressure moved from eastern Iowa through eastern Minnesota. The storm center set many low-pressure records as it moved across eastern Minnesota. New snow of 3 to 6 inches across much of Minnesota began to blow and drift on the morning of the 10th and then developed into a full-blown blizzard with heavy snowfall developing. The blizzard continued through the 11th with winds of 30 to 50 mph with gusts of 60 to 80 mph. Drifts up to 20 feet high in west-central Minnesota paralyzed the area. Snowfall amounts from 1 to 2 feet occurred. Numerous roads were closed due to drifting and low visibility. Numerous sustained power outages occurred, particularly in rural sections. Thousands of people were stranded, with 168 people trapped in a train in Willmar. Wind chills ranged from 50 below to 80 below the storm. Extensive losses to life and property occurred. There were 35 deaths during the storm and many injuries. Tens of thousands of livestock and poultry losses also occurred, with 140 farm buildings damaged or destroyed. Losses to livestock and property were over 20 million. It took 11 days to clear some areas.

In South Dakota, snow began to fall on the 10th in the afternoon, and then the winds increased and reached blizzard conditions by evening. These severe blizzard conditions continued through the 11th and the morning of the 12th. Wind chills fell to 50 below to 70 below zero. Many cars stalled on roads due to poor visibility, icy roads, and blowing and drifting snow. Eight people lost their lives. Thousands of livestock and poultry were lost. During the blizzard, a 2000 foot radio and TV antenna just east of Sioux Falls collapsed.

January 10, 2000: High winds gusting to over 60 mph caused some spotty damage across central and north-central South Dakota. Near Mobridge, the high winds blew a semi-tractor-trailer off the road and tipped it over while heading westbound on Highway 12. The semi-tractor-trailer sustained quite a bit of damage as a result. The high winds also damaged the windmill at the museum in Mobridge, breaking off the tail and bending several blades. Some high wind reports include; 56 mph at McLaughlin, 58 mph at Onida and Mobridge, and 63 mph at Pierre.

1800: According to David Ludlum, Savannah, Georgia, received a foot and a half of snow and ten inches blanketed Charleston, SC. It was the heaviest snowfall of record for the immediate Coastal Plain of the southeastern U.S.

1949: Snow was reported in San Diego, California, for the first time since 1882. The snow was noted on some of the beaches in parts of the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

1973: A powerful F5 tornado struck San Justo, a town in the province of Santa Fe, Argentina, on January 10, 1973. At least 63 people were reported dead, and 350 were reported injured as it cut a 300-yard wide swath through the town.

1982: Bitterly cold weather was found across Illinois. Of the 109 weather reporting stations in the state, 48 of those reported lows of 20 degrees below zero or colder. Some of the most frigid temperatures included 27 below zero at Rockford, 26 below zero at Chicago, and 25 below zero at Kankakee and Peoria. The Freezer Bowl was played between the Cincinnati Bengals and the San Deigo Chargers in bitterly cold wind chills. The air temperature was -9°F , but the wind chill, factoring in a sustained wind of 27 mph, was -37°F .

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

VICTORY IS THE LORD'S

Our individual and national security has become a very significant topic of discussion in recent years. When we look beyond our own borders, we are reminded of the reality of instant upheaval through acts of terror that bring destruction without warning. We wonder where the next attack will be and who will be responsible. Will it ever end?

On one occasion David wrote, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God." And a little later on he wrote, "A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all of its great strength it cannot save." No doubt his son Solomon had listened to his father as he discussed his thoughts on war and battle strategies, winning and losing or victory and defeat. Out of those conversations, Solomon formed his own ideas of war among and between nations. "The horse is made ready for the day of battle," he said, "but victory rests with the Lord!"

When David and Solomon penned these observations, the horse was the greatest weapon in the military arsenal. When coupled to a chariot, it added an even more lethal dimension. It brought speed to the battlefield that warriors could not overcome with its ability to "hit and run." Foot soldiers did not have the capability to defeat an army that used horses in combat.

David and Solomon, however, remind us today about what makes the difference in combat: Victory belongs to the Lord. Nations may develop strategies, prepare and equip warriors, have superior weaponry and technology, and plans without flaws (in their minds) but it makes little difference. God determines the victor.

Throughout Scripture God reminds us that "it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's." Whose side are you on?

Prayer: Thank you, Father, for the promises in Your Word that assure us of Your strength and sovereignty and our safety. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all of its great strength it cannot save. Proverbs 21:31



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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2023 Community Events

- 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)
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 07/04/2023 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start (4th of July)
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.06.23

3 20 46 59 63 13

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$1,100,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 8 Mins 58 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.09.23

27 32 34 39 43 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$34,070,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 8 Mins 57 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.09.23

3 5 24 26 31 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 38 Mins 57 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.07.23

2 23 24 28 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 8 Mins 57 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.09.23

19 41 47 53 54 25

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 7 Mins 57 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.09.23

18 43 48 60 69 14

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$360,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 7 Mins 58 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Roncalli 62, Sully Buttes 59
Bridgewater-Emery 72, Colman-Egan 53
DeSmet 59, Clark/Willow Lake 40
Dell Rapids St. Mary 60, Elkton-Lake Benton 38
Gregory 55, Chamberlain 44
Groton Area 73, Sisseton 20
Iroquois/ Lake Preston Co-op 67, Arlington 50
Lakota Tech 65, Red Cloud 64
Milbank 67, Britton-Hecla 33
Philip 87, Stanley County 37
Platte-Geddes 46, Corsica/Stickney 39
Sioux Falls Washington 49, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 41
South Border, N.D. 71, Herreid/Selby Area 66
Tea Area 75, Canton 45
Timber Lake 67, McIntosh 23
Waubay/Summit 74, Webster 41
Winner 75, Bon Homme 26

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Arlington/Lake Preston 70, Iroquois/ Lake Preston Co-op 56
Belle Fourche 68, Sundance, Wyo. 21
Canton 62, Tea Area 46
Corsica/Stickney 44, Platte-Geddes 30
DeSmet 45, Willow Lake 28
Ethan 61, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 54
Florence/Henry 71, Waubay/Summit 24
James Valley Christian 41, Highmore-Harrold 33
Lennox 47, Dell Rapids 38
Northwestern 50, Britton-Hecla 29
Parkston 38, Hanson 34
Red Cloud 63, Lakota Tech 49
Sioux Falls Washington 42, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 33
Stanley County 33, Philip 31, OT
Sully Buttes 49, Aberdeen Roncalli 41
Todd County 51, Douglas 33
Tri-Valley 56, Baltic 34
Winner 46, Bon Homme 34

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

EPA, pipeline operator reach deal to clean up Kansas spill

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

MISSION, Kan. (AP) — The Environmental Protection Agency announced Monday that it has reached

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an agreement with a pipeline operator to clean up a spill that dumped 14,000 bathtubs' worth of crude oil into a rural Kansas creek.

The agency said in a news release that the Dec. 7 rupture of the Keystone pipeline affected 3 1/2 miles of the creek as it flows through rural pastureland in Washington County, about 150 miles (240 kilometers) northwest of Kansas City.

The order requires TC Oil Pipeline Operations Inc., whose parent company is Canadian-based TC Energy, to recover oil and oil-contaminated soil and vegetation and contain the further spread of oil in the creek.

Meg McCollister, an EPA regional administrator, said in a statement that the federal government and the state are "committed to a thorough cleanup and restoration."

The 2,700-mile (4,345-kilometer) Keystone system carries heavy crude oil extracted from tar sands in western Canada to the Gulf Coast and to central Illinois.

The cause of the 14,000-barrel spill hasn't yet been announced. Each barrel is 42 gallons, the size of a household bathtub.

But U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell, a Washington Democrat who chairs the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, raised concerns in a letter Monday about the decision to grant TC Energy a permit that allowed the pressure inside parts of the Keystone system — including the stretch through Kansas — to exceed the typical maximum permitted levels.

"This latest spill is no surprise," Cantwell told the deputy administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration in demanding a review of the permit.

The spill was the largest onshore in nine years and larger than 22 previous spills on the Keystone system combined, according to U.S. Department of Transportation data.

The company and government officials have said drinking water supplies were not affected. No one was evacuated, and most of the Keystone system was back in operation in eight days.

Concerns that spills could pollute waterways spurred opposition to plans by TC Energy to build another crude oil pipeline in the same system, the 1,200-mile (1,900-kilometer) Keystone XL, across Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska. President Joe Biden's cancellation of a permit for the project led the company to pull the plug on the project last year.

ND considers legal sports betting outside of tribal casinos

By TRISHA AHMED Associated Press/Report for America

Amid ongoing efforts to legalize sports betting in North Dakota — and expand it beyond the tribal casinos, where it's already allowed — a House panel heard arguments Monday over a measure to let voters decide the issue next year.

"Passage of this resolution does not legalize sports betting," Republican Rep. Greg Stemen, of Fargo, told the Judiciary Committee. "It simply allows the voters of North Dakota to determine whether they want to legalize sports betting when they vote in the November 2024 general election."

A change to the state constitution is required to legalize sports betting. If passed, voters would decide whether to authorize that change. Then, in 2025, lawmakers could decide how exactly to authorize, license and regulate sports betting in North Dakota.

The committee recommended against passage, but the resolution will get a floor vote later anyway.

Stemen said thousands of people in the state already participate in illegal sports betting — and the state could generate millions of dollars in tax revenue if it legalizes and regulates the industry.

Jacob Thomsen, a policy analyst with North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action, testified against the resolution. He said the legalization of sports betting would worsen gambling problems and addictions among North Dakotans in exchange for a relatively small increase in state revenue.

It's not "morally justifiable to earn a fraction of additional annual state budget revenue off of those with gambling problems," Thomsen said.

Mark Hagerott, chancellor of the North Dakota University System, also testified against the resolution, saying it doesn't specify whether people will be able to place bets on college sports.

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"Sports betting potentially undermines the integrity of the game and renders unpaid athletes vulnerable to money flowing through their respective games and contingent on their performance," he said.

These concerns would be ironed out later by future lawmakers, said Pat Gibbs, national public policy counsel for the Sports Betting Alliance.

The resolution "simply starts the conversation" by asking the people of North Dakota if the state should legalize sports betting, Gibbs said.

"To maximize state revenue, enhance user convenience, and best attack illegal offshore sports betting websites that currently operate in North Dakota, the legislature should authorize and regulate competitive statewide mobile sports betting," Gibbs added.

Republican Rep. Lawrence Klemin, of Bismarck, chairman of the committee, said lawmakers will amend the resolution so it only allows betting on professional sports. He said that would "take care of the concern" about student athletes, since they are not professionals.

Republican Gov. Doug Burgum signed agreements last year with North Dakota's American Indian tribes that lower the legal gambling age from 21 to 19 at tribal-owned casinos, among other measures. The tribal-state agreements also allow online sports betting on mobile devices within reservation boundaries, but not outside of them.

The state's five tribes had asked for exclusive rights to host internet gambling and sports betting outside the reservations, but Burgum did not agree because sports betting isn't legal statewide.

Across the country, people have bet more than \$125 billion on sports via legal gambling outlets since a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2018 cleared the way for all 50 states to offer it. More than 30 states have legalized it so far.

South Dakota \$423M surplus will be top issue at Legislature

By The Associated Press undefined

The South Dakota Legislature's nine-week session is slated to begin Tuesday with all eyes on what lawmakers might do with the state's \$423 million surplus.

Gov. Kristi Noem wants to use the money to cover repealing the state sales tax on groceries, a plan some of the state's staunchest Republicans oppose. Lawmakers also could revive a \$200 million plan to cover utility infrastructure for new housing developments.

Debate over tax cuts and prison spending are also likely to occupy lawmakers' attention. Here's a look at some of the biggest questions the Republican-controlled Legislature will have to grapple with over the next nine weeks:

—Tax cuts. Noem's executive budget calls for repealing the state's 4.5% sales tax on groceries, a move that would save taxpayers \$100 million. Noem has argued that the state's surplus would cover the revenue loss. She has called repealing the tax her top priority for 2023. Minority Democrats support the idea but a number of staunch Republicans oppose it, questioning whether the state can absorb the lost revenue. Democratic Sen. Reynold Nesiba of Sioux Falls plans to introduce two back-up plans. One calls for reducing the sales tax on groceries by a cent, the other by 2 cents.

A property tax cut also could be in the mix. Sen. Jack Kolbeck, a Sioux Falls Republican, told the Argus-Leader newspaper that a proposal to drop home assessment values by \$100,000, allowing the owner to pay lower taxes, is in the works.

—Workforce housing. Lawmakers are looking to alleviate the state's worker shortage. They're considering resurrecting a \$200 million plan to cover utility infrastructure costs for new housing developments, in turn supporting more affordable housing for workers.

The plan stalled last year and its prospects look uncertain this time around after Republicans voiced concerns that the state could open itself up to lawsuits if the funds are misappropriated.

—Licensing. Legislators are looking to update licensing requirements for professional jobs and creating scholarships for students planning to become mental health professionals.

—Prisons. Noem wants to use \$86 million in the state's Incarceration Construction Fund to build a new

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300-bed, \$60 million women's prison in Rapid City. She also wants to spend \$52 million on a new men's prison in Sioux Falls to replace the South Dakota State Penitentiary, which has been operating since 1881. She wants to use \$27 million from the incarceration fund and \$25 million from state general funds to cover the project.

—Public employee raises. Noem's budget calls for giving public workers, teachers and health care providers a 5% raise. Nesiba wants to bump that to 8%.

—Juvenile justice. Lawmakers are considering bills that would revise when a juvenile offender can be committed to the state corrections system and when a school is notified about a student suspected of drug or alcohol violations.

China suspends visas for South Koreans in virus retaliation

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — The Chinese government suspended issuing tourist and business visas Tuesday for South Koreans — and reportedly for Japanese too — in apparent retaliation for COVID-19 testing requirements imposed by those countries on travelers from China.

The Chinese Embassy in Seoul, in a brief notice on its WeChat social media account, said the ban would continue until South Korea lifts its "discriminatory entry measures" against China.

Japan's Kyodo News service said the ban would also affect Japanese travelers, though there was no similar announcement from China. A Japanese Foreign Ministry official said the government was aware of the report and was holding unofficial discussions with Chinese authorities about measures being considered by Beijing.

It would be "regrettable" if restrictions are imposed, the official said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity.

China's Foreign Ministry threatened countermeasures last week against countries that had announced new virus testing requirements for travelers from China. At least 10 in Europe, North American and Asia have done so recently, with officials expressing concern about a lack of information about rapidly spreading virus outbreaks in China.

The Chinese announcement in South Korea appeared to apply only to new applicants, and said nothing about South Koreans currently holding visas.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that "our government's step to strengthen anti-virus measures on passengers arriving from China is based on scientific and objective evidence. We have provided information to the international community in a transparent manner and we have communicated with the Chinese side in advance."

A withholding of visas from South Korean or Japanese businesspeople could delay a hoped-for revival of commercial activity and potential new investment following China's abrupt lifting of anti-virus controls last month.

Business groups had warned earlier that global companies were shifting investment plans away from China because it was too hard for foreign executives to visit under the pandemic controls. A handful of foreign auto and other executives have visited China over the past three years, but many companies have relied on Chinese employees or managers already in the country to run their operations.

A South Korean restaurant owner in Beijing said the announcement forced friends to postpone plans to visit China. He spoke on condition of anonymity out of concern his business might be affected. He added that he is preparing to renew his Chinese work visa and doesn't know whether that will be affected.

In a phone call on Monday before the visa suspension was announced, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang "expressed concern" about the measures taken by South Korea to his counterpart, Foreign Minister Park Jin. Qin said he "hopes that the South Korean side will uphold an objective and scientific attitude."

China's move appeared to be grounded in its demands that its citizens be treated the same as those of other countries. About a dozen countries have followed the U.S. in requiring either a negative test before departing China, a virus test on arrival at the airport, or both.

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"Regrettably, a handful of countries, in disregard of science and facts and the reality at home, have insisted on taking discriminatory entry restriction measures targeting China," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Tuesday. "China firmly rejected this and took reciprocal measures."

He did not respond directly when asked if new visas had been suspended for South Koreans and Japanese, saying only that he had "made it very clear."

The World Health Organization and several nations have accused China of withholding data on its outbreak. A WHO official said Tuesday that the agency sees no immediate threat for the European region from China's outbreak, but that more information is needed.

China's ambassador to Australia said the response of those nations to China's COVID-19 outbreak hadn't been proportionate or constructive.

Xiao Qian told reporters in Canberra that China had shifted its strategy late last year from preventing infections to preventing severe cases. He said countries should use a science-based response.

"Entry restrictions, if they're targeted at China, they're unnecessary," the ambassador told reporters.

The online notice from the Embassy in Seoul did not say why China had apparently singled out South Korea for retaliation, although President Xi Jinping's government has long resented Seoul's alliance with the U.S.

Once-cordial ties between South Korea and its biggest trading partner soured after China targeted businesses, sports teams and even K-pop groups to protest deployment of an advanced U.S. anti-missile system in South Korea.

China fought on the side of North Korea in the 1950-1953 war and has remained a supporter of the North despite its missile launches and nuclear tests, and has opposed further sanctions against Kim Jong Un's government.

China abruptly reversed its strict pandemic containment requirements last month in response to what it says was the changing nature of the outbreak. That came after three years of lockdowns, quarantines and mass testing that prompted rare politically tinged protests in the streets in Beijing and other major cities.

The most optimistic forecasts say China's business and consumer activity might revive as early as the first quarter of this year. But before that happens, entrepreneurs and families face a painful squeeze from a surge in virus cases that has left employers without enough healthy workers and kept wary customers away from shopping malls, restaurants, hair salons and gyms.

The decision by Xi's government to end controls that shut down factories and kept millions of people at home will move up the timeline for economic recovery but might disrupt activity this year as businesses scramble to adapt, forecasters say.

China is now facing a surge in cases and hospitalizations in major cities and is bracing for a further spread into less developed areas with the start of the Lunar New Year travel rush, set to accelerate in the coming days. While international flights are still reduced, authorities say they expect domestic rail and air journeys will double over the same period last year.

'What madness looks like': Russia intensifies Bakhmut attack

By ANDREW MELDRUM Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces are escalating their onslaught against Ukrainian positions around the wrecked city of Bakhmut, Ukrainian officials said, bringing new levels of death and devastation in the grinding, monthslong battle for control of eastern Ukraine that is part of Moscow's wider war.

"Everything is completely destroyed. There is almost no life left," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said late Monday of the scene around Bakhmut and the nearby Donetsk province city of Soledar.

"The whole land near Soledar is covered with the corpses of the occupiers and scars from the strikes," Zelenskyy said. "This is what madness looks like."

The Kremlin, whose invasion of its neighbor 10 1/2 months ago has suffered numerous reversals, is hungry for any victories. Russia illegally annexed Donetsk and three other Ukrainian provinces in September, but its troops have struggled to advance.

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After Ukrainian forces recaptured the southern city of Kherson in November, the battle heated up around Bakhmut.

Ukraine's deputy defense minister, Hanna Malyar, said Russia has thrown "a large number of storm groups" into the fight for the city. "The enemy is advancing literally on the bodies of their own soldiers and is massively using artillery, rocket launchers and mortars, hitting their own troops," she said.

Pavlo Kyrylenko, the Donetsk region's Kyiv-appointed governor, on Tuesday described the Russian attacks on Soledar and Bakhmut as relentless.

"The Russian army is reducing Ukrainian cities to rubble using all kinds of weapons in their scorched-earth tactics," Kyrylenko said in televised remarks. "Russia is waging a war without rules, resulting in civilian deaths and suffering."

Wounded soldiers arrive around the clock for emergency treatment at a Ukrainian medical stabilization center located near the front line around Bakhmut. Medics at the center for combat casualties fought for 30 minutes Monday to save a soldier, but his injuries were too severe.

Another soldier had a head injury after a fragment pierced his helmet. Medics quickly got his condition stable enough to transfer him to a military hospital for further treatment.

"We fight to the end to save a life," Kostnyantyn Vasylykevich, a surgeon and the center's coordinator, told The Associated Press. "Of course, it hurts when it is not possible to save them."

The Moscow-backed leader of the occupied areas of Donetsk said Tuesday that Russia's forces were "very close" to taking over Soledar. But the gains were coming "at a very high price," Denis Pushilin told Russian state TV.

Control over the city would create "good prospects" for taking over Bakhmut, Pushilin said, as well as for a further assault on Siversk, a town further north where Ukrainian fortifications "are also quite serious."

The U.K. Defense Ministry concurred with that appraisal of the battle developments. Russian troops alongside soldiers from the Wagner Group, a Russian private military contractor, have advanced in recent days in Soledar and "are likely in control of most of the settlement," the ministry tweeted Tuesday.

It said that taking Soledar, which is located 10 kilometers (6 miles) north of Bakhmut, was likely Moscow's immediate military objective and part of a strategy to encircle Bakhmut.

But it added that "Ukrainian forces maintain stable defensive lines in depth and control over supply routes" in the area.

An exceptional feature of the fighting near Bakhmut is that some of it has taken place around entrances to disused salt mine tunnels which run for some 200 kilometers (120 miles) underneath the area, the British intelligence report noted.

"Both sides are likely concerned that (the tunnels) could be used for infiltration behind their lines," it said.

Russian Defense Minister Shoigu, whose performance has been fiercely criticized in some Russian circles but who has retained Russian President Vladimir Putin's confidence, said Tuesday that his country's military would use its experience in Ukraine to improve combat training.

Military communications and control systems will be improved using artificial intelligence, Shoigu said, and troops will be given better tactical gear and equipment.

The Kremlin argues that it is not just fighting Ukraine but also its NATO allies. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday that NATO's members "have become a party to the conflict, pumping weapons, technology and intelligence data into Ukraine."

Several front-line cities in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk provinces have witnessed intense fighting in recent months.

Together, the provinces make up the Donbas, a broad industrial region bordering Russia that Russian President Vladimir Putin identified as a focus from the war's outset and where Moscow-backed separatists have fought since 2014.

Russia's grinding eastern offensive captured almost all of Luhansk during the summer. Donetsk escaped the same fate, and the Russian military subsequently poured manpower and resources around Bakhmut.

Taking Bakhmut would disrupt Ukraine's supply lines and open a route for Russian forces to press on toward Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, key Ukrainian strongholds in Donetsk.

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Like Mariupol and other contested cities, Bakhmut has endured a long siege, spending weeks without water and power even before Moscow launched massive strikes to take out public utilities across Ukraine.

Kyrylenko, the Donetsk region's governor, estimated more than two months ago that 90% of Bakhmut's prewar population of over 70,000 had fled since Moscow focused on seizing the entire Donbas.

Ukraine's presidential office said at least four civilians were killed and another 30 wounded in Russian shelling between Monday and Tuesday.

Vitaliy Kim, the governor of the southern Mykolaiv region, said Russian forces shelled the port of Ochakiv and the area around it late Monday and then again early Tuesday. He said 15 people, including a 2-year-old child, were wounded in Monday's shelling.

Biden, López Obrador, Trudeau meet in Mexico City for summit

By COLLEEN LONG and CHRIS SHERMAN Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — President Joe Biden, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau are meeting for a series of talks on migration, trade and climate change on Tuesday as the three leaders try to mend tensions that have divided the continent.

The three-way gathering is held most years, although there was a hiatus while Donald Trump was U.S. president. It's often called the "three amigos summit," a reference to the deep diplomatic and economic ties between the countries.

However, the leaders still found themselves at odds, especially as they struggle to handle an influx of migrants and to crack down on smugglers who profit from persuading people to make the dangerous trip to the United States.

In addition, Canada and the U.S. accuse López Obrador of violating a free trade pact by favoring Mexico's state-owned utility over power plants built by foreign and private investors. Meanwhile, Trudeau and López Obrador are concerned about Biden's efforts to boost domestic manufacturing, creating concerns that U.S. neighbors could be left behind.

The key takeaways from the summit revolve around better connections among the three nations and a shared goal of a stronger North America on energy and in particular semiconductors, climate and a pledge to cut methane emissions, an agreement to manage large waves of migrants coming to the region and a more cohesive regional strategy on dealing with future pandemic-related health threats.

The centerpiece of the summit will be hours of talks with all three leaders, but Biden will start Tuesday with a meeting with Trudeau. It's unlikely to be as contentious as his sit-down with López Obrador on Monday.

During that meeting, the Mexican leader challenged Biden to improve life across the region, telling him that "you hold the key in your hand."

"This is the moment for us to determine to do away with this abandonment, this disdain, and this forgetfulness for Latin America and the Caribbean," Lopez Obrador said.

Biden responded by pointing to the billions of dollars that the United States spends in foreign aid around the world, saying that "unfortunately our responsibility just doesn't end in the Western Hemisphere."

It was a noticeably sharp exchange after the two leaders had smiled and embraced and shaken hands for the cameras.

Biden and López Obrador haven't been on particularly good terms for the past two years. The Mexican leader made no secret of his admiration for Trump, and last year he skipped a Los Angeles summit of the Americas because Biden didn't invite the authoritarian regimes of Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua.

However, there have been attempts to thaw the relationship. Biden made a point of flying into the new Felipe Angeles International Airport, a prized project of the Mexican president even though it's been a source of controversy.

The airport, which is expected to cost \$4.1 billion when finished, is more than an hour's drive north of the city center, has few flights and until recently lacked consistent drinking water. However, it's one of the keystone projects that López Obrador is racing to finish before his term ends next year.

The U.S. and Mexico have also reached an agreement on a major shift in migration policy, which Biden

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announced last week.

Under the plan, the U.S. will send 30,000 migrants per month from Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti and Venezuela back across the border from among those who entered the U.S. illegally. Migrants who arrive from those four countries are not easily returned to their home countries for a variety of reasons.

In addition, 30,000 people per month from those four nations who get sponsors, background checks and an airline flight to the U.S. will get the ability to work legally in the country for two years.

On Monday, before the summit began, López Obrador said he would consider accepting more migrants than previously announced.

"We don't want to anticipate things, but this is part of what we are going to talk about at the summit," López Obrador said. "We support this type of measures, to give people options, alternatives," he said, adding that "the numbers may be increased."

Mexico would likely require an increase in those receiving work authorization in the U.S. in order to receive more migrants who are being expelled.

Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, cautioned that nothing was decided yet.

"What we need is to see how the program announced last week works in practice, what if any adjustments need to be made to that program and then we can talk about taking the next steps," he said.

The number of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border has risen dramatically during Biden's first two years in office. There were more than 2.38 million stops during the year that ended Sept. 30, the first time the number topped 2 million.

Biden is expected to follow up his first trip to Mexico as president with another to Canada, although it has not yet been scheduled.

A senior Canadian official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly, said Canada is working with Americans on a visit in the near future.

Divisive influencer Tate appeals detention in Romanian court

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — The divisive social media personality Andrew Tate arrived at a court in Romania in handcuffs on Tuesday morning to appeal a judge's earlier decision to extend his arrest period from 24 hours to 30 days on charges of being part of an organized crime group, human trafficking and rape.

Tate, a 36-year-old British-U.S. citizen who has amassed 4.4 million followers on Twitter, was initially detained on Dec. 29 in an area of north of the capital Bucharest along with his brother Tristan, who is charged in the same case. Two Romanian women are also in custody.

All four of them immediately challenged the arrest extension that was granted to prosecutors on Dec. 30. A document explaining the judge's motivation for the extension says "the possibility of them evading investigations cannot be ignored," and that they could "leave Romania and settle in countries that do not allow extradition."

A verdict from Bucharest's Court of Appeal is expected to come later Tuesday, Eugen Vidineac, the Romanian lawyer representing Tate, told The Associated Press.

Romania's anti-organized crime agency DIICOT said after the late December raids that it had identified six victims in the case who were subjected by the group to "acts of physical violence and mental coercion" and were sexually exploited by group members.

The agency said victims were lured by pretenses of love, and later intimidated, surveilled, and subjected to other control tactics into performing pornographic acts intended to reap substantial financial gains.

Prosecutors investigating the case have so far seized a total of 15 luxury cars — at least seven of which are owned by the Tate brothers — and more than 10 properties or land owned by companies registered to them, said Ramona Bolla, a spokesperson for DIICOT.

Bolla said that if prosecutors can prove they gained money through human trafficking, the property "will be taken by the state and (will) cover the expenses of the investigation and damages to the victims."

If the court rules to uphold the arrest warrant extension on Tuesday prosecutors could request detention for a maximum of 180 days. If the court overturns the extension, the defendants could be put under

house arrest or similar conditions such as being banned from leaving Romania.

Since Tate's arrest, a series of ambiguous posts have appeared on his Twitter account, each of which garners widespread media attention.

One, posted on Sunday and accompanied by a local report suggesting he or his brother have required medical care since their detention, reads: "The Matrix has attacked me. But they misunderstand, you cannot kill an idea. Hard to Kill."

Another post, that appeared Saturday, reads: "Going to jail when guilty of a crime is the life story of a criminal ... going to jail when completely innocent is the story of a hero."

Tate, who is reported to have lived in Romania since 2017, has previously been banned from various prominent social media platforms for expressing misogynistic views and hate speech.

Trump's longtime CFO faces sentencing for tax fraud scheme

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Allen Weisselberg, a longtime executive for Donald Trump's real estate empire whose testimony helped convict the former president's company of tax fraud, is set to be sentenced Tuesday for dodging taxes on \$1.7 million in job perks.

New York Judge Juan Manuel Merchan is expected to sentence Weisselberg, a senior Trump Organization adviser and former chief financial officer, to five months in jail, in keeping with a plea agreement reached in August.

Weisselberg, 75, was promised that sentence when he agreed to plead guilty to 15 tax crimes and testify against the company, where he's worked since the mid-1980s.

When he begins serving his sentence, Weisselberg is expected to be locked up at New York City's notorious Rikers Island jail complex. He will be eligible for release after little more than three months if he behaves behind bars.

As part of his plea agreement, Weisselberg must also pay nearly \$2 million in taxes, penalties and interest, which he said he has made significant progress paying. He must also complete five years of probation.

Weisselberg faced the prospect of up to 15 years in prison — the maximum punishment for the top grand larceny charge — if he were to have reneged on the deal or if he didn't testify truthfully at the Trump Organization's trial. He is the only person charged in the Manhattan district attorney's three-year investigation of Trump and his business practices.

Weisselberg testified for three days, offering a glimpse into the inner workings of Trump's real estate empire. Weisselberg has worked for Trump's family for nearly 50 years, starting as an accountant for his developer father, Fred Trump, in 1973 before joining Donald Trump in 1986 and helping expand the family company's focus beyond New York City into a global golf and hotel brand.

Weisselberg told jurors he betrayed the Trump family's trust by conspiring with a subordinate to hide more than a decade's worth of extras from his income, including a free Manhattan apartment, luxury cars and his grandchildren's private school tuition. He said they fudged payroll records and issued falsified W-2 forms.

A Manhattan jury convicted the Trump Organization in December, finding that Weisselberg had been a "high managerial" agent entrusted to act on behalf of the company and its various entities. Weisselberg's arrangement reduced his own personal income taxes but also saved the company money because it didn't have to pay him more to cover the cost of the perks.

Prosecutors said other Trump Organization executives also accepted off-the-books compensation. Weisselberg alone was accused of defrauding the federal government, state and city out of more than \$900,000 in unpaid taxes and undeserved tax refunds.

The Trump Organization is scheduled to be sentenced on Friday and faces a fine of up to \$1.6 million.

Weisselberg testified that neither Trump nor his family knew about the scheme as it was happening, choking up as he told jurors: "It was my own personal greed that led to this." But prosecutors, in their

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closing argument, said Trump "knew exactly what was going on" and that evidence, such as a lease he signed for Weisselberg's apartment, made clear "Mr. Trump is explicitly sanctioning tax fraud."

A Trump Organization lawyer, Michael van der Veen, has said Weisselberg concocted the scheme without Trump or the Trump family's knowledge.

Weisselberg said the Trumps remained loyal to him even as the company scrambled to end some of its dubious pay practices following Trump's 2016 election. He said Trump's eldest sons, entrusted to run the company while Trump was president, gave him a \$200,000 raise after an internal audit found he had been reducing his salary and bonuses by the cost of the perks.

Though he is now on a leave of absence, the company continues to pay Weisselberg \$640,000 in salary and \$500,000 in holiday bonuses. It punished him only nominally after his arrest in July 2021, reassigning him to senior adviser and moving his office.

He even celebrated his 75th birthday at Trump Tower with cake and colleagues in August, just hours after finalizing the plea agreement that ushered his transformation from loyal executive to prosecution witness.

Rikers Island, a compound of 10 jails on a spit of land in the East River, just off the main runway at LaGuardia Airport in Queens, has been plagued in recent years by violence, inmate deaths and staggering staffing shortages.

Though just 5 miles (8 kilometers) from Trump Tower, it's a veritable world away from the life of luxury Weisselberg schemed to build — a far cry from the gilded Fifth Avenue offices where he hatched his plot and the Hudson River-view apartment he reaped as a reward.

UK space industry mulls setback after satellite launch fails

LONDON (AP) — British officials and space scientists said Tuesday they were disappointed but not deterred after the first attempt to launch satellites into orbit from the U.K. ended in failure.

U.S.-based Virgin Orbit attempted its first international launch late Monday, using a modified jumbo jet to carry one of its rockets from Cornwall in southwestern England over the Atlantic Ocean.

The plane released the rocket, carrying nine small satellites for a mix of civilian and domestic uses. But about two hours after the plane took off, the company reported "an anomaly that has prevented us from reaching orbit."

The plane, piloted by a Royal Air Force pilot, returned to Cornwall. The rocket and satellites were destroyed. "We're feeling awful, to be honest — I'm not going to lie," Melissa Thorpe, head of Spaceport Cornwall, said.

"This isn't the first time we've been knocked, this is the biggest definitely, but I feel OK and we'll get up and we'll go again," she said.

Virgin Orbit, which was founded by British transport and telecommunications tycoon Richard Branson, previously completed four similar launches from California.

Hundreds of people gathered for the Cornwall launch had cheered when a repurposed Virgin Atlantic Boeing 747 aircraft, named Cosmic Girl, took off late Monday. Around an hour into the flight, the plane released the rocket at around 35,000 feet (around 10,000 meters) over the Atlantic Ocean to the south of Ireland.

Virgin Orbit chief executive Dan Hart said "a technical failure appears to have prevented us from delivering the final orbit."

"While we are very proud of the many things that we have successfully achieved as part of this mission, we are mindful that we failed to provide our customers with the launch service they deserve," he said.

The mission was a collaboration between the U.K. Space Agency, the Royal Air Force, Virgin Orbit and Cornwall Council.

Britain hopes to become a major player in making and launching satellites, and is building a spaceport in the Shetland Islands north of Scotland as well as the one in Cornwall.

U.K. Business Secretary Grant Shapps said Monday's launch was "a big moment" despite its failure.

"Space is difficult," Shapps told Sky News.

"It didn't work. I've no doubt that they'll pick themselves up, dust themselves off and they'll go again once they find out what exactly went wrong with it," he said.

Newly restored house in Pompeii offers glimpse of elite life

By FRANCESCO SPORTELLI Associated Press

POMPEII, Italy (AP) — The newly restored remains of an opulent house in Pompeii that likely belonged to two former slaves who became rich through the wine trade offer visitors an exceptional peek at details of domestic life in the doomed Roman city.

On Tuesday, the House of Vettii, Domus Vettiorum in Latin, was being formally unveiled after 20 years of restoration. Given fresh life were frescoes from the latest fashion in Pompeii wall decoration before the flourishing city was buried under the volcanic ash furiously spewing from Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD.

The unveiling of the restored home is yet another sign of the rebirth of Pompeii, which followed decades of modern bureaucratic neglect, flooding and pillaging by thieves in search of artifacts to sell.

That is delighting tourists and rewarding experts with tantalizing fresh insights into the everyday life of what is one of the most celebrated remnants of the ancient world.

"The House of the Vetti is like the history of Pompeii and actually of Roman society within one house," Pompeii's director, Gabriel Zuchtriegel, gushed as he showed off an area of the domus known as the Cupid Rooms last month.

"We're seeing here the last phase of the Pompeian wall painting with incredible details, so you can stand before these images for hours and still discover new details," the archaeological park's energetic director told The Associated Press ahead of the public inauguration.

"So, you have this mixture: nature, architecture, art. But it is also a story about the social life of the Pompeian society and actually the Roman world in this phase of history," Zuchtriegel added.

Previous restoration work, which involved repeated application of paraffin over the frescoed walls in hopes of preserving them, "resulted in them becoming very blurred over time, because very thick and opaque layers formed, making it difficult to 'read' the fresco," said Stefania Giudice, director of fresco restoration.

But the wax did serve to preserve them remarkably.

Zuchtriegel ventured that the fresh "readings" of the revived fresco painting "reflect the dreams and imagination and anxieties of the owners because they lived between these images," which include Greek mythological figures.

And who were these owners? The Vettis were two men — Aulus Vettius Conviva and Aulus Vettius Restitutus. In addition to having part of their names in common, they shared a common past — not as descendants of noble Roman families accustomed to opulence, but rather, Pompeii experts say, almost certainly, as once enslaved men who were later freed.

It is believed that they became wealthy through the wine trade. While some have hypothesized the two were brothers, there is no certainty about that.

In the living room, known as the Hall of Pentheus, a fresco depicts Hercules as a child, crushing two snakes, in an illustration of an episode from the Greek hero's life. According to mythology, Hera, the goddess wife of Zeus, sent snakes to kill Hercules because she was furious that he was born from the union of Zeus with a mortal woman, Alcmena.

Might Aulus Vettius Conviva and Aulus Vettius Restitutus have recognized their own life story in some way in the figure of Hercules who overcame challenge after challenge in his life?

That's a question that intrigues Zuchtriegel.

After years in slavery, the men "then had an incredible career after that and reached the highest ranks of local society, at least economically," judging by their upscale domus and garden, Zuchtriegel said. "They evidently tried to show their new status also through culture and through Greek mythological paintings, and it's all about saying, 'We've made it and so we are part of this elite'" of the Roman world.

Pompeii's architect director of restoration work, Arianna Spinosa, called the restored home "one of the iconic houses of Pompeii. The residence "represents the Pompeian domus par excellence, not only because

of the frescoes of exceptional importance, but also because of its layout and architecture.”

Ornamental marble baths and tables surround the garden.

First unearthed during archaeological excavations in the late 19th century, the domus was closed in 2002 for urgent restoration work, including shoring up roofing. After a partial reopening in 2016, it was closed again in 2020 for the final phase of the work, which included restoration of the frescoes and of the floor and colonnades.

Feds propose 'student loan safety net' alongside forgiveness

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House is moving forward with a proposal that would lower student debt payments for millions of Americans now and in the future, offering a new route to repay federal loans under far more generous terms.

President Joe Biden announced the repayment plan in August, but it was overshadowed by his sweeping plan to slash or eliminate student debt for 40 million Americans. Despite the low profile of the payment plan, however, some education experts see it as a more powerful tool to make college affordable, especially for those with lower incomes.

Education Department officials on Tuesday called the new plan a “student loan safety net” that will prevent borrowers from getting overloaded with debt.

“Student debt has become a dream killer,” Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said. “This is a promise to the American people that, at long last, we will fix a broken system and make student loans affordable.”

Biden, a Democrat, is moving forward with the repayment plan even as his one-time debt cancellation faces an uncertain fate before the Supreme Court. The White House has asked the court to uphold the plan and reject two legal challenges from conservative opponents. The Biden administration submitted its brief last week, with oral arguments slated for Feb. 28.

The Education Department formally proposed the new repayment plan on Tuesday by publishing it in the Federal Register, starting a public comment period that often takes months to navigate.

If it’s finalized, the proposal would give a major overhaul to income-driven repayment plans — one of several payment options offered by the federal government. The resulting plan would have lower monthly payments, an easier path to forgiveness and a promise that unpaid interest will not be added to a borrower’s loan balance.

The federal government now offers four types of income-driven plans, but the proposal would mostly phase out three of them while focusing on one simplified option, scaling back the confusing array of options borrowers now face.

Under existing plans, monthly payments are capped at 10% of a borrower’s discretionary income, and those earning less than \$20,400 a year aren’t required to make payments. The new proposal would cap payments for undergraduate loans at 5% of borrowers’ pay, cutting their bills in half, and require payments only for those who earn more than about \$30,000 a year.

As long as borrowers make their monthly payments, any unpaid interest would not be charged. The change is meant to prevent borrowers from having unpaid interest added to their loan balance, a practice that can cause debt to snowball even as borrowers make payments.

Significantly, the proposal would also make it easier to get debt erased after making several years of payments. Existing plans promise to cancel any remaining debt after 20 or 25 years of payments. The new plan would erase all remaining debt after 10 years for those who took out \$12,000 or less in loans. For every \$1,000 borrowed beyond that, a year would be added.

Typical graduates of a four-year university would save about \$2,000 a year compared with today’s plans, the Biden administration says, while 85% of community college borrowers would be debt-free within 10 years.

Supporters see the proposal as a significant stride toward college affordability. Some say it’s so generous that it approaches free community college — a campaign promise that Biden has pushed but failed

to deliver.

Opponents on the right blast the revamped plan as an unfair handout with a steep price tag. The Biden administration estimates the repayment plan would cost nearly \$138 billion over the decade, and some critics have put it closer to \$200 billion.

Even some on the left have questioned the prudence of the idea, saying it's so generous that it effectively turns student loans into grants that don't need to be repaid. That could lead more students to borrow, they warn, and it could spur colleges to raise tuition prices if they know students won't be on the hook.

Still others have urged the administration to abandon income-driven payment plans entirely, calling them a failed policy. Critics cite a federal report from last year finding that sloppy oversight of the program left thousands of borrowers stuck with debt that should have been forgiven.

Cardona said his agency is working on other proposals that would hold colleges accountable if their students get overburdened with debt. One idea promoted by Biden is to warn the public about programs that leave graduates saddled with debt.

The Education Department on Tuesday began the process to deliver that goal, asking the public about the best way to identify "low-value" programs.

Rain to persist as storm weary Californians face evacuations

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The latest in a relentless string of storms slammed California on Monday, swamping roads, battering coastlines with high surf, turning rivers into gushing flood zones and forcing the evacuation of thousands in towns with histories of deadly mudslides.

The National Weather Service said rain was expected to continue through Tuesday after dumping up to 14 inches (35.5 centimeters) at higher elevations in central and Southern California. After a brief respite, another storm was expected to barrel into the state in a few days, adding to the misery and further saturating areas already at threat of flooding and debris flows.

The storms left a legacy of chaotic roads, threatened coastal and riverside towns and left tens of thousands without power. The weather service issued a flood watch through Tuesday for the entire San Francisco Bay Area, along with Sacramento Valley and Monterey Bay. Areas hit by wildfires in recent years faced the possibility of mud and debris slewing off denuded hillsides that have yet to fully recover their protective layer of vegetation.

"Additional heavy rains on Tuesday will exacerbate ongoing flooding and continue the risk of flash flooding and mudslides, especially across recent burn scar regions," the weather service said.

Forecasters also warned southwestern California could see 60-mph (97-kph) wind gusts at the peak of the storm, while some areas could receive rainfall of a half-inch (12.7 millimeters) per hour.

The death toll from the relentless string of storms that began last week climbed from 12 to 14 on Monday, after two people including a homeless person were killed by falling trees, state officials said.

California state highway authorities said late Monday night that parts of U.S. and state highways were closed because of flooding, mud or rockslides, heavy snow or car spinouts and truck crashes. The closures included northbound lanes of U.S. 101, a key coastal route, and sections of U.S. 6 and State Route 168.

Evacuation orders were issued in Santa Cruz County for about 32,000 residents living near rain-swollen rivers and creeks. The San Lorenzo River was declared at flood stage and drone footage showed numerous homes sitting in muddy brown water, the top halves of autos peeking out.

A 5-year-old boy vanished in floodwaters Monday on the central coast. The boy's mother was driving a truck when it became stranded in floodwaters near Paso Robles. Bystanders managed to pull her free but the boy was swept out of the truck and carried away, probably into a river, said Tom Swanson, assistant chief of the Cal Fire/San Luis Obispo County Fire Department.

A roughly seven-hour search for the missing boy turned up only his shoe before officials called it off as water levels were too dangerous for divers, officials said. The boy had not been declared dead, said spokesperson Tony Cipolla of the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office.

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About 130 miles (209 kilometers) to the south, about 10,000 people were ordered to evacuate in Santa Barbara County.

The entire seaside community of Montecito — home to Prince Harry, Oprah Winfrey and other celebrities — was ordered to flee on the fifth anniversary of a mudslide that killed 23 people and destroyed more than 100 homes in the coastal enclave.

County officials ordered 20 homes evacuated in the area of Orcutt after flooding and a sinkhole damaged up to 15 homes.

Jamie McLeod's property was under the Montecito evacuation order, but she said there was no way for her to "get off the mountain" with a rushing creek on one side and a mudslide on the other. The 60-year-old owner of the Santa Barbara Bird Sanctuary said one of her employees came to make a weekly food delivery and also became stuck.

McLeod said she feels fortunate because her home sits on high ground and the power is still on. But she tires of the frequent evacuation orders since the massive wildfire followed by the deadly landslide five years ago.

"It is not easy to relocate," McLeod said. "I totally love it, except in catastrophe."

Ellen DeGeneres shared an Instagram video of herself standing in front of a raging creek near the Montecito home where she lives with her wife, actor Portia de Rossi. She said in the post that they were told to shelter in place because they are on high ground.

"This is crazy," the talk show host, wearing a hoodie and raincoat, says in the video.

Some miles down the coast another town, La Conchita in Ventura County, was ordered evacuated. A mudslide killed 10 people there in 2005.

In Ventura County, the Ventura River reached its highest level on record at more than 25 feet (7.6 meters). Firefighters using helicopters rescued more than a dozen people trapped on an island in the surging waters.

The storm also washed 3 feet (1 meter) of mud and rock onto State Highway 126, stranding a long line cars and big-rig trucks. Crews worked into the night to pull them free.

In Los Angeles, a sinkhole swallowed two cars in the Chatsworth area on Monday night. Two people escaped by themselves and firefighters rescued two others who had minor injuries, authorities said.

Tens of thousands of people were without power, including some 17,000 late Monday night in the Sacramento area. The number of customers without service was down from more than 350,000 a day earlier after 60-mph gusts knocked majestic trees into power lines, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District said.

The National Weather Service warned of a "relentless parade of atmospheric rivers" — long plumes of moisture stretching out into the Pacific that can drop staggering amounts of rain and snow. The precipitation expected over the next couple of days comes after storms last week knocked out power, flooded streets, and battered the coastline.

President Joe Biden issued an emergency declaration Monday to support storm response and relief efforts in more than a dozen counties.

Much of California remains in severe to extreme drought, though the storms have helped fill depleted reservoirs.

'No amnesty!': Brazilian protests demand jail for rioters

By DAVID BILLER and FELIPE MELLO Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — "No amnesty! No amnesty! No amnesty!"

The chant reverberated off the walls of the jam-packed hall at the University of Sao Paulo's law college on Monday afternoon. Hours later, it was the rallying cry for thousands of Brazilians who streamed into the streets of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, penned on protest posters and banners.

The words are a demand for retribution against supporters of former President Jair Bolsonaro who stormed Brazil's capital Sunday, and those who enabled the rampage.

"These people need to be punished, the people who ordered it need to be punished, those who gave money for it need to be punished," Bety Amin, a 61-year-old therapist, said on Sao Paulo's main boulevards.

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vard. The word "DEMOCRACY" stretched across the back of her shirt. "They don't represent Brazil. We represent Brazil."

Protesters' push for accountability evokes memories of an amnesty law that for decades has protected military members accused of abuse and murder during the country's 1964-85 dictatorship. A 2014 truth commission report sparked debate over how Brazil has grappled with the regime's legacy.

Declining to mete out punishment "can avoid tensions at the moment, but perpetuates instability," Luis Felipe Miguel, a professor of political science at the University of Brasilia, wrote in a column entitled "No Amnesty" published Monday evening. "That is the lesson we should have learned from the end of the military dictatorship, when Brazil opted not to punish the regime's killers and torturers."

Brazilian police on Monday had already rounded up roughly 1,500 rioters, with some caught in the act of trashing Brazil's Congress, the Supreme Court and the presidential palace, while the majority were detained the following morning at an encampment in Brasilia. Many were held in a gymnasium throughout the day, and video shared on pro-Bolsonaro social media channels showed some complaining about poor treatment in the crowded space.

The Federal Police's press office told The Associated Press the force plans to indict at least 1,000 people, and has begun transferring them to the nearby Papuda prison.

The administration of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva says that is only the start.

Justice minister Flávio Dino vowed to prosecute those who acted behind the scenes to summon supporters on social media and finance their transport for crimes including organized crime, staging a coup, and violent abolition of the democratic rule of law. He also said authorities would investigate allegations that local security personnel allowed the destruction to proceed unabated.

"We cannot and will not compromise in fulfilling our legal duties," Dino said. "This fulfillment is essential so such events do not repeat themselves."

Lula signed a decree ordering the federal government to assume control of security in the capital Sunday. It was approved by Congress' Lower House on Monday night, and now proceeds to the Senate.

The riot in Brasilia was a reminder of the threat to democracy posed by far-right elements that refuse to accept Bolsonaro's electoral defeat. Since his Oct. 30 loss, they have camped outside military barracks, pleading for intervention to allow Bolsonaro to remain in power and oust Lula. When no coup materialized, they rose up themselves.

Decked out in the green and yellow of the national flag, they broke windows, toppled furniture and hurled computers and printers to the ground. They punched holes in a massive Emiliano Di Cavalcanti painting at the presidential palace and destroyed other works of art. They overturned the U-shaped table where Supreme Court justices convene, ripped a door off one justice's office and vandalized a statue outside the court. Hours passed before police expelled the mob.

"It's unacceptable what happened yesterday. It's terrorism," Marcelo Menezes, a 59-year-old police officer from northeastern Pernambuco state, said at a protest in Sao Paulo. "I'm here in defense of democracy, I'm here in defense of the people."

Cries of "No amnesty!" were also heard during Lula's Jan. 1 inaugural address, in response to the president detailing the neglect of the outgoing Bolsonaro administration.

Bolsonaro, a former army captain, has waxed nostalgic for the dictatorship era, praised a notorious torturer as a hero and said the regime should have gone further in executing communists. His government also commemorated the anniversary of Brazil's 1964 coup.

Political analysts had repeatedly warned that Bolsonaro was laying the groundwork for an insurrection in the mold of that which unfolded in the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. For months, he stoked belief among hardcore supporters that the nation's electronic voting system was prone to fraud — though he never presented any evidence and independent experts disagreed.

Results from the election, the closest since Brazil's return to democracy, were quickly recognized by politicians across the spectrum, including some Bolsonaro allies, as well as dozens of other governments. The outgoing president surprised nearly everyone by promptly fading from view, neither conceding defeat

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nor emphatically crying fraud. He and his party submitted a request to nullify millions of votes, which was swiftly dismissed by the electoral authority.

None of that dissuaded his die-hard backers from their conviction that Bolsonaro belonged in power.

In the immediate aftermath of the riot, Lula said that the so-called "fascist fanatics" and their financial backers must be held responsible. He also accused Bolsonaro of encouraging the uprising.

Bolsonaro denied the president's accusation Sunday. Writing on Twitter, he said peaceful protest is part of democracy, but vandalism and invasion of public buildings cross the line.

Authorities are also investigating the role of the federal district's police in either failing to halt protesters' advance or standing aside to let them run amok. Prosecutors in the capital said local security forces were negligent at the very least. A supreme court justice temporarily suspended the regional governor, who oversees the force, for what he termed "willful omission". Another justice blamed authorities across Brazil for not swiftly cracking down on "homegrown neofascism."

The upheaval finally prompted municipal and state governments to disperse pro-Bolsonaro encampments outside military barracks that have lasted since the election. Their tents and tarps were taken down, and residents were sent packing.

But pro-democracy protesters on Monday sought to ensure that their message — "No amnesty!" — was heard by the authorities responsible for investigating and prosecuting, as well as far-right elements who might dare defy democracy again.

"After what happened yesterday, we need to go to the street," said Marcos Gama, a retiree who protested Monday night in Sao Paulo. "We need to react."

China economy recovering but hampered by virus outbreaks

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Wang Jian is anxious to get back to work teaching basketball to children now that China has lifted anti-COVID-19 restrictions. But his gym in the eastern city of Shenyang has been closed for a month because all its coaches are infected.

The most optimistic forecasts say China's business and consumer activity might revive as early as the first quarter of this year. But before that happens, entrepreneurs and families face a painful squeeze from a surge in virus cases that has left employers without enough healthy workers and kept wary customers away from shopping malls, restaurants, hair salons and gyms.

"I hope the situation will turn around in March or April with no more COVID shocks," said Wang, 33, who went without a paycheck for four months when the gym closed during virus outbreaks. "If parents worry about possible reinfection, they simply won't send their children for training."

The abrupt decision by President Xi Jinping's government to end controls that shut down factories and kept millions of people at home will move up the timeline for economic recovery, but might disrupt activity this year as businesses scramble to adapt, forecasters say.

"This will be a bumpy process," said Dong Chen, chief Asia economist for Pictet Wealth Management.

"People still are struggling with infections, but we think this could be temporary," Chen said. "Broadly, we think this is a positive surprise."

The decision to accelerate China's reopening is a boost for the global economy at a time when activity in the United States and Europe is weakening after repeated interest rate hikes by central banks to cool surging inflation.

It is likely to help revive auto sales and propel demand for imported consumer goods, oil and food in China, one of the biggest global markets. Countries including Thailand with big tourism industries look forward to an influx of Chinese travelers.

The World Bank and private sector forecasters have cut estimates of China's economic growth last year to as low as 2.2% due to the infection spike that started in early October and challenged Beijing's "zero-COVID" goal of isolating every case. The International Monetary Fund expects a recovery to 4.4% this year, but that still would be among the lowest levels of the past three decades.

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"Zero-COVID" kept China's infection numbers low but shut down Shanghai and other industrial cities last year for two months, disrupting manufacturing and shipping. Business groups said global companies were shifting investment plans away from China because rules that required visitors from abroad to quarantine for a week kept executives from visiting.

The ruling party promised Nov. 11 to reduce the cost and disruption. A series of surprise announcements rolled back travel and other restrictions that health experts and economists had expected to persist through mid-2023.

On Sunday, Beijing began allowing travelers to enter China without quarantines. The government has yet to say when China will resume issuing tourist visas.

"The sudden, chaotic way in which pandemic policies have been changed means that growth will be hampered in new ways," Daniel H. Rosen, Charlie Vest and Rogan Quinn of Rhodium Group said in a report. High numbers of infections make it "realistic to expect production to be hampered for a substantial part of 2023."

Forecasters say the economy probably contracted in the final quarter of 2022 as virus case numbers rose and retail spending and trade fell.

Exports shrank after American and European consumer demand was depressed by interest rate hikes. That forces Chinese planners to make up for lost foreign sales by trying to boost consumer demand.

"The key to rapid economic recovery" is to "convert income into consumption and investment as much as possible," one of the country's most prominent financial figures, Guo Shuqing, the ruling party secretary for the central bank, told the official Xinhua News Agency.

Informal measures show public and business activity improving but weak.

This month's subway passenger numbers in 10 large cities recovered to 55-60% of the level a year ago, up from 30-35% last month, according to Macquarie Group. Roads are growing more congested.

Foreign companies that see China as a critical market welcome the change but are struggling, said Eric Zheng, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai.

"Companies were not prepared for this abrupt change," said Zheng, whose group has about 1,000 member companies. "It is hard to manage a workforce when a lot of people are getting sick."

Still, "things are almost going back to normal," Zheng said. "Once life goes back to normal and consumers are out shopping, things will definitely improve."

Another business group, the American Chamber of Commerce in China, said more than 70% of companies that responded to a poll last month expressed confidence the infection wave would last no more than three months and end early this year.

The ruling party is trying to nudge up growth by easing restrictions on financing for real estate and winding down anti-monopoly and data security crackdowns on tech companies that caused their stock market values to plunge.

In December, regulators announced Ant Group, an online financial company that was forced to call off a planned multibillion-dollar public stock offering in 2020, would be allowed to raise 10.5 billion yuan (\$1.6 billion) for its consumer unit, more than doubling its capital.

"These measures are helpful, but far from enough to move the needle," Larry Hu and Yuxiao Zhang of Macquarie said in a report.

Hotels, restaurants and other businesses hoping for a boost from this month's Lunar New Year holiday, the busiest tourism season, suffered a blow when some local authorities appealed to migrant workers to skip traditional visits to their hometowns that might spread infections.

The operator of the 12-room Oriental Hotel in the eastern city of Hefei, who would give only his family name, Huang, said he is losing 4,000 yuan (\$550) a month. His occupancy rate is 20%, well below the 50% needed to break even.

"People stay home and maybe they worry about possible reinfection," Huang said. "If it stays the same for another year, I will give up running the hotel."

The National Health Commission stopped announcing case numbers last month, but reports by city and county governments suggest hundreds of millions of people might have been infected.

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The Zhengtai Restaurant in the northwestern city of Jinzhong closed for two weeks because almost all its 57 employees were infected, according to the manager, Chang Zhigang. Chang said the business has lost about 2 million yuan (\$300,000) per year since the start of the pandemic.

"We don't expect the situation to turn around within a short time, given there are very few people on the street," Chang said.

Saudi Arabia: Hajj pilgrimage returning to pre-COVID levels

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Islam's annual hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia will return to pre-pandemic levels this year after restrictions saw the annual religious commemoration curtailed over concerns about the coronavirus, authorities say.

The hajj, required of all able-bodied Muslims once in their life, represents one of the world's largest gatherings of people. Before the pandemic, the pilgrimage drew millions each year to Islam's holy city of Mecca, home to the cube-shaped Kaaba that observant Muslims pray toward five times a day.

In 2019, over 2.4 million people took part in the pilgrimage. But in 2020, amid the lockdowns sparked by the pandemic, Saudi Arabia drastically curtailed the hajj with as few as 1,000 residents of Saudi Arabia permitted to take part. It was an unprecedented move unseen even during the 1918 flu epidemic that killed tens of millions worldwide.

In 2021, some 60,000 residents of Saudi Arabia attended. Last year saw 1 million faithful perform the pilgrimage.

Speaking on Monday night at a conference about the hajj in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah, Saudi Hajj and Umrah Minister Tawfiq bin Fawzan al-Rabiah announced the lifting of the restrictions.

"I bring you two bits of good news in this meeting. The first: The return of the numbers of pilgrims to what they were before the pandemic without any age restrictions," al-Rabiah said, according to the state-run Saudi Press Agency.

"And the second: Allowing any hajj mission from around the world to deal with any licensed company that meets the requirements of the pilgrims of those countries," he added.

Only those between the ages of 18 to 65 could attend the hajj in recent years. Saudi Arabia also had limited which private companies could conduct travel arrangements for the hajj.

The coronavirus isn't the first public health disaster to strike the hajj. The kingdom's Al Saud ruling family stakes its legitimacy in this oil-rich nation on overseeing and protecting the hajj sites. Ensuring the hajj happens has been a priority for them — and also a main economic driver bringing billions of dollars of non-oil revenue to Saudi Arabia.

Disease outbreaks have always been a concern surrounding the hajj. Pilgrims fought off a malaria outbreak in 632, cholera in 1821 killed an estimated 20,000, and another cholera outbreak in 1865 killed 15,000 before spreading worldwide.

More recently, Saudi Arabia faced danger from a different coronavirus, one that causes the Middle East respiratory syndrome, or MERS. The kingdom increased its public health measures during the hajj in 2012 and 2013, urging the sick and the elderly not to take part.

In recent years, Saudi officials also instituted bans on pilgrims coming from countries affected by the Ebola virus.

It wasn't immediately clear what health precautions would be taken for the hajj, which falls according to the lunar-based Islamic calendar this year at the end of June. While Saudi Arabia has no requirement for coronavirus vaccines or testing, it does require pilgrims to be vaccinated for other maladies.

Muslims have been prohibited from kissing or touching the cube-shaped Kaaba, the metaphorical house of God at the center of Mecca that pilgrims circle as they complete the hajj.

The hajj also involves close contact in large crowds, which in 2015 saw over 2,400 people killed in a crush and stampede.

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No. 1 Georgia bullies TCU 65-7 to win 2nd consecutive title

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP) — Stetson Bennett flashed a wry grin as he walked off the field, stopping to hug coach Kirby Smart as the crowd roared.

It was all standing ovations and sideline snacks in the fourth quarter of college football's most lopsided title game.

In emphatic and overwhelming fashion, Georgia became the first team to repeat as College Football Playoff national champions and left no doubt the 'Dawgs are the new bullies on the block.

Bennett threw two touchdown passes and ran for two scores — in the first half — as No. 1 Georgia demolished No. 3 TCU 65-7 on Monday night.

The Bulldogs (15-0) are the first repeat champs in major college football since Alabama went back-to-back a decade ago. There appears to be a new dynasty emerging from the Southeastern Conference.

"We wanted our kids to play without fear," Smart said. "All year I told them, I said, 'We ain't getting hunted guys, we're doing the hunting, and hunting season's almost over. We've only got one more chance to hunt,' and we hunted tonight."

TCU (13-2), the first Cinderella team of the playoff era, never had a chance against the Georgia juggernaut. Unlike Michigan in the Fiesta Bowl semifinal, the Bulldogs would not succumb to the Hypnotoads' spell.

Georgia turned in one of the all-time beatdowns in a big game, reminiscent of Nebraska running over Florida by 38 in the 1996 Fiesta Bowl, USC's 36-point rout of Oklahoma in the 2005 Orange Bowl and Alabama's 28-point BCS blowout over Notre Dame in 2013.

But this was worse.

Too much talent. Too well-coached. Two straight titles for the 'Dawgs.

No team has ever scored more points in a national championship game, dating to the beginning of the BCS in 1998.

With 13:25 left in the fourth quarter, Smart called timeout in the middle of an offensive drive so Bennett could exit to hero's ovation in the final game of his circuitous college career.

"That was special," said Bennett, who finished 18 for 25 for 304 yards and four touchdown passes. "I'll remember that for the rest of my life."

Georgia offensive linemen were munching on chicken wings on the sideline as the game wound down. Then, for the second straight year, the Bulldogs were showered by confetti and presented a championship trophy.

"I love this team, I love those fans, I love our band. I love everybody," Bennett said during the presentation ceremony. "Back-to-back, baby. Back-to-back."

Smart is now 81-15 in his first seven seasons at Georgia with two national titles. His mentor, Alabama coach Nick Saban, was 79-15 with three titles in his first seven seasons with the Tide.

The Bulldogs were a different kind of dominant this season after losing 15 NFL draft picks from the 2021 team: not quite as stingy on defense, but more explosive on offense.

"Last year's team probably had more talent on it," Smart said. "But this year's team was different, like they had this eye of the tiger. They weren't going to lose."

Earlier in Smart's tenure at his alma mater, Georgia fans worried about whether the former defensive coordinator for Saban would be able to build an offense to match this high-scoring era of college football.

Under third-year coordinator Todd Monken, the Bulldogs have become prolific, creative and diverse offensively. They picked apart TCU's 3-3-5 defense from all angles.

Versatile tight end Brock Bowers had seven catches for 152 yards. Receiver Ladd McConkey caught two TDs. Georgia ran for 254 yards with seven players gaining at least 10.

The Bulldogs scored all six times they touched the ball in the first half. Twice Bennett ran it in himself; the former walk-on turned two-time national champion was barely touched on the two quarterback keepers.

He hit a wide-open McConkey for a 34-yard score in the first quarter, a perfectly executed play out of a bunched formation that had TCU's defensive backs in disarray. Bennett's 22-yard score to Adonai Mitchell

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was a higher degree of difficulty, dropped in over a defender who had tight coverage.

It looked a lot like the Bennett-to-Mitchell touchdown that gave Georgia a fourth-quarter lead it would not relinquish against Alabama in last year's CFP title game.

Georgia vanquished the Tide to break a 41-year national title drought last season, avenging its only regular-season loss in the process.

There was no such drama against the upstart Horned Frogs.

"The journey was great. It's something I'll never forget," TCU running back Emari Demercado said. "Obviously, didn't end how we wanted it, but at the end of the day this journey was something great."

These Bulldogs never had to worry about Alabama. They rolled through the SEC, survived Ohio State in a classic CFP semifinal and then completed a perfect season with an historic blowout.

"Do you have to take a loss to learn?" Smart said. "I mean, why?"

Bennett hit Bowers for a 22-yard score with 10:52 left in the third quarter to make it 45-7. The sophomore from Northern California signaled touchdown while lying on the turf at Sofi Stadium. Bennett smiled as he tapped helmets with one of his linemen.

"He's got GOAT status and in Athens, Georgia forever," Smart said.

Georgia's famous bulldog mascot UGA could not make cross-country trip to root on his team, but it still felt a little like Sanford Stadium in SoCal.

Many of the TCU fans cleared out with more than half the fourth quarter left, choosing to venture out into a rainy and chilly night rather than watch any more of the massive mismatch.

"I'm disappointed we didn't make a better show tonight because that's not indicative of who we are. But we'll look back — it's going to take some time for the sting to go away, I assure you — but we'll look back on the season and build on it from here," first-year coach Sonny Dykes said.

Heisman Trophy runner-up Max Duggan threw two first-half interceptions in the final game of his roller-coaster TCU career. A four-year starter who never played in a bowl before this season, Duggan led TCU on one of the most improbable runs in college football history.

Unranked after a losing 2021 season and picked seventh in the Big 12, the Frogs won nine games by 10 or fewer points. They were within a victory of the program's first national title since 1938.

But they ran into a monster.

"As long as you don't have entitlement in your program, you've got a shot," Smart said. "And right now we don't have that."

The Golden Globes return Tuesday in a 1-year audition

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

After going dark for a year, the Golden Globes return to the air Tuesday on a one-year audition to try to win back their awards-season perch and relevancy to a Hollywood that shunned the awards after an ethics and diversity scandal.

Stars and studios boycotted last year's ceremony, which NBC opted not to televise, saying the Hollywood Foreign Press Association needed time to make "meaningful reform." A year later, much — though not all — of Hollywood appears ready to party, again.

Following red carpet coverage (E! will air it live beginning at 6 p.m. EDT), the broadcast from the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, Calif., starts at 8 p.m. on NBC. For the first time, the show will also be live-streamed, on NBCUniversal's Peacock. When the Globes were on the brink, NBC reworked its deal with the HFPA, putting the awards on a one-year contract and moving the show to Tuesday from its regular Sunday night spot.

Hosting is comedian Jerrod Carmichael, who won an Emmy last year for his HBO special "Rothaniel." Eddie Murphy and Ryan Murphy are set to receive tributes. Presenters include Ana de Armas (a nominee for "Blonde"), Jenna Ortega (nominated for "Wednesday"), Billy Porter, Tracy Morgan, Jennifer Coolidge (nominated for "White Lotus") and Quentin Tarantino. Sean Penn will also introduce a message from Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

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UNTANGLING THE GLOBES' MESS

The Globes were plunged into chaos shortly before a largely remote pandemic 2021 awards show when a Los Angeles Times report revealed that the HFPA, then numbering 87 members, had no Black members. A separate New York Times report showed that the group — an often ridiculed collection of little-known foreign journalists based in Los Angeles — paid its members some \$3 million in annual salaries, and detailed a litany of ethical lapses in how the organization regularly interacted with potential nominees.

Under mounting pressure, the HFPA pledged to reform, diversified its membership and changed some of the ways it operates. It now has 96 members, including six Black members, along with 103 nonmember voters. Billionaire Todd Boehly purchased the Globes through his Eldridge Industries, and has begun turning the nonprofit group into a for-profit company.

IS ANYONE STILL BOYCOTTING?

Reaction to the Globe nominations last month was muted, with few stars publicly celebrating. But only one nominee has stated emphatically that he will not attend: Brendan Fraser. Though nominated for best actor for his performance in "The Whale," Fraser said he would not participate in the Globes. In 2018, Fraser said he was groped in 2003 by longtime Hollywood Foreign Press Association member Philip Berk. Berk, who is no longer an HFPA member, denied it.

Eyes will be especially trained Tuesday on Tom Cruise, whose "Top Gun: Maverick" is nominated for best picture, drama. Cruise responded more forcefully to the HFPA revelations than almost anyone in the industry, returning his three Golden Globe awards.

But all studios are again participating in the Globes. As it has for most award shows, viewership to the Globes telecast has cratered. After the 2020 awards were watched by 18.4 million, the 2021 edition managed just 6.9 million, according to Nielsen. Still, the Globes remain a valuable marketing tool for awards contenders, propping up ads for films in the long stretch between the holidays and the Oscars, which air arch 12. Some of this season's top contenders, including Steven Spielberg's "The Fabelmans" and Todd Fields' "Tár," have struggled attract large audiences.

THE NOMINEES

Martin McDonagh's feuding friends tale "The Banshees of Inisherin" comes in with a leading eight nominations, including nods for actors Colin Farrell, Brendan Gleeson, Kerry Condon and Barry Keoghan. Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert's existential action comedy "Everything Everywhere all at Once" is up for six awards, including nods for Michelle Yeoh, Ke Huy Quan and Jamie Lee Curtis.

Several of the past year's biggest box-office hits are also in the mix. Along with "Top Gun: Maverick," "Tár" and "The Fabelmans," the nominees for best picture, drama include James Cameron "Avatar: The Way of Water" and Baz Luhrmann's "Elvis."

On the TV side, the public school sitcom "Abbott Elementary" leads with five nominations, including a nod for Quinta Brunson's lead performance. "The White Lotus," "Dahmer," "The Crown," "Pam & Tommy" and "Only Murders in the Building" all scored four nominations each.

Nominees include: Brad Pitt ("Babylon"), Viola Davis ("The Woman King"), Daniel Craig ("Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery"), Angela Bassett ("Black Panther: Wakanda Forever"), Julia Roberts ("Gaslit"), Donald Glover ("Atlanta"), Bill Hader ("Barry"), Selena Gomez ("Only Murders in the Building"), Kevin Costner ("Yellowstone"), Diego Luna ("Andor") and Bob Odenkirk ("Better Call Saul").

Virgin Orbit reports 'anomaly' in satellite launch from UK

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A mission to launch the first satellites into orbit from Western Europe suffered an "anomaly" Tuesday, Virgin Orbit said.

The U.S.-based company attempted its first international launch on Monday, using a modified jumbo jet to carry one of its rockets from Cornwall in southwestern England to the Atlantic Ocean where the rocket was released. The rocket was supposed to take nine small satellites for mixed civil and defense use into orbit.

But about two hours after the plane took off, the company reported that the mission encountered a

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problem.

"We appear to have an anomaly that has prevented us from reaching orbit. We are evaluating the information," Virgin Orbit said on Twitter.

Virgin Orbit, which is listed on the NASDAQ stock exchange, was founded by British billionaire Richard Branson. It has previously completed four similar launches from California.

Hundreds gathered for the launch cheered earlier as a repurposed Virgin Atlantic Boeing 747 aircraft, named "Cosmic Girl," took off from Cornwall late Monday. Around an hour into the flight, the plane released the rocket at around 35,000 feet (around 10,000 meters) over the Atlantic Ocean to the south of Ireland.

The plane, piloted by a Royal Air Force pilot, returned to Cornwall after releasing the rocket.

Some of the satellites are meant for U.K. defense monitoring, while others are for businesses such as those working in navigational technology. One Welsh company is looking to manufacture materials such as electronic components in space.

U.K. officials had high hopes for the mission. Ian Annett, deputy chief executive at the U.K. Space Agency, said Monday it marked a "new era" for his country's space industry. There was strong market demand for small satellite launches, Annett said, and the U.K. has ambitions to be "the hub of European launches."

In the past, satellites produced in the U.K. had to be sent to spaceports in other countries to make their journey into space.

The mission was a collaboration between the U.K. Space Agency, the Royal Air Force, Virgin Orbit and Cornwall Council.

The launch was originally planned for late last year, but it was postponed because of technical and regulatory issues.

California deluge forces mass evacuations, boy swept away

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — As another powerful storm walloped California, a 5-year-old boy was swept away by floodwaters Monday on the state's central coast and an entire seaside community that is home to Prince Harry, Oprah Winfrey and other celebrities was ordered to evacuate on the fifth anniversary of deadly mudslides there.

Tens of thousands of people remained without power, and some schools closed for the day. Streets and highways transformed into gushing rivers, trees toppled, mud slid and motorists growled as they hit roadblocks caused by fallen debris. The death toll from the relentless string of storms climbed from 12 to 14 on Monday, after two people were killed by falling trees, state officials said.

A roughly seven-hour search for the missing boy turned up only his shoe before officials called it off as water levels were too dangerous for divers, officials said. The boy has not been declared dead, said spokesperson Tony Cipolla of the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office.

The boy's mother was driving a truck when it became stranded in floodwaters just before 8 a.m. near Paso Robles, a small city inland from California's central coast, according to Tom Swanson, assistant chief of the Cal Fire/San Luis Obispo County Fire Department.

Bystanders were able to pull the mother out of the truck, but the boy was swept out of the vehicle and downstream, likely into a river, Swanson said. There was no evacuation order in the area at the time.

About 130 miles (209 kilometers) to the south, the entire community of Montecito and surrounding canyons scarred by recent wildfires were under an evacuation order that came on the fifth anniversary of a mudslide that killed 23 people and destroyed more than 100 homes in the coastal enclave.

In Los Angeles, a sinkhole swallowed two cars in the Chatsworth area on Monday night. Two people escaped by themselves and firefighters using ropes and an aerial ladder rescued two others who had minor injuries, authorities said.

The National Weather Service reported rainfall rates of one inch (2.5 centimeters) per hour, with heavy downpours expected throughout the night in the upscale area where roads wind along wooded hillsides studded with large houses. Montecito is squeezed between mountains and the Pacific and is home to

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celebrities including Rob Lowe and Harry and Meghan, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

Ellen DeGeneres shared an Instagram video of herself standing in front of a raging creek near the Montecito home where she lives with her wife, actor Portia de Rossi. She said in the post that they were told to shelter in place because they are on high ground.

"This is crazy!" the talk show host, wearing a hoodie and raincoat, says in the video. "This creek next to our house never flows, ever. It's probably about nine feet up and is going to go another two feet up."

Jamie McLeod's property was under the Montecito evacuation order, but she said there is no way for her to "get off the mountain" with a rushing creek on one side and a mudslide on the other. The 60-year-old owner of the Santa Barbara Bird Sanctuary said one of her employees came to make a weekly food delivery and is stuck, too.

McLeod said she feels fortunate because her home sits on high ground and the power is still on. But she said she tires of the frequent evacuation orders since the massive wildfire followed by the deadly landslide five years ago.

"It is not easy to relocate," said McLeod. "I totally love it — except in catastrophe."

Santa Barbara County Sheriff Bill Brown said the decision to evacuate nearly 10,000 people was "based on the continuing high rate of rainfall with no indication that that is going to change before nightfall." Creeks were overflowing, and many roads were flooded.

Northbound lanes of U.S. 101, a key coastal route, were expected to be shut until Tuesday. Many other highways and local roads were closed because of rockslides and flooding.

Up the coast, evacuation orders were issued in Santa Cruz County for about 32,000 residents living near rain-swollen rivers and creeks. The San Lorenzo River was declared at flood stage, and drone footage showed numerous homes sitting in muddy brown water, the top halves of autos peeking out.

Maria Cucchiara, who lives in tiny, flooded Felton, went for a walk to count her blessings after "a huge branch harpooned" the roof of her small studio, she said.

"I have two kitties, and we could've been killed. It was over a ton," she said. "So needless to say, it was very disturbing."

Nicole Martin, owner of the Fern River Resort in Felton, described a more laid-back scene Monday. Her clients sipped coffee amid towering redwood trees and were "enjoying the show," she said, as picnic tables and other debris floated down the swollen San Lorenzo.

The river is usually about 60 feet (18 meters) below the cabins, Martin said, but it crept up to 12 feet (4 meters) from the cabins.

In Northern California, several districts closed schools and more than 35,000 customers remained without power in Sacramento — down from more than 350,000 a day earlier after gusts of 60 mph (97 kph) knocked majestic trees into power lines, according to the Sacramento Municipal Utility District. A homeless person killed by a falling tree in the region was among the new deaths announced Monday.

The National Weather Service warned of a "relentless parade of atmospheric rivers" — long plumes of moisture stretching out into the Pacific that can drop staggering amounts of rain and snow. The precipitation expected over the next couple of days comes after storms last week knocked out power, flooded streets, and battered the coastline.

President Joe Biden issued an emergency declaration Monday to support storm response and relief efforts in more than a dozen counties.

The weather service issued a flood watch for a large portion of Northern and Central California, with 6 to 12 inches (15 to 30 centimeters) of rain expected through Wednesday in the already saturated Sacramento-area foothills.

In the Los Angeles area, there was potential for as much as 8 inches (20 centimeters) of rain in foothill areas late Monday and Tuesday. High surf was also expected.

Much of California remains in severe to extreme drought, though the storms have helped fill depleted reservoirs.

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Asian stock markets mixed ahead of US inflation update

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Stock markets were mixed Tuesday ahead of a U.S. inflation update that traders hope will encourage the Federal Reserve to ease off plans for more interest rate hikes.

Shanghai and Tokyo rose. Hong Kong and Sydney retreated. Oil prices declined.

Traders worry repeated rate hikes by the Fed and other central banks to cool inflation that is at multi-decade highs might tip the world into recession. They hope Thursday's report on U.S. consumer prices will show inflation moderating, reducing the need to slow economic activity further.

"Traders are bringing back talk of a 'soft landing,' which could support risk equities," said Anderson Alves of ActivTrades in a report. If the data show lower U.S. inflation, "another dovish wave may hit markets," helped by "easing recession fears."

The Shanghai Composite Index rose 0.3% to 3,167.06 while the Hang Seng in Hong Kong shed 0.6% to 21,260.84. The Nikkei 225 in Tokyo gained 0.9% to 26,212.28.

The Kospi in Seoul edged up less than 0.1% to 2,350.81 while Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 lost 0.2% to 7,135.30. New Zealand and Bangkok gained while Singapore and Jakarta retreated.

On Wall Street, the benchmark S&P 500 dipped 0.1% to 3,982.09. The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 0.3% to 33,517.65 while the Nasdaq composite gained 0.6% to 10,635.65.

Despite trader optimism, Fed officials say rates will have to stay elevated for an extended period of time to end upward pressure on prices. The Fed's benchmark lending rate stands at a range of 4.25% to 4.50%, up from close to zero a year ago.

On Monday, a members of the Fed's policymaking board, Mary Daly and Rafael Bostic, dampened hopes for a rate cut this year. Daly said she expects the benchmark to be raised to over 5%. Bostic said it will be kept there "for a long time."

Forecasters expect Thursday's report to show inflation slowed to 6.5% in December from November's 7.1%. That is down from June's 9.1% peak but well above the Fed's 2% target.

Warnings are also coming for what look to be lackluster corporate profits when reporting season begins Friday as companies contend with higher labor and other costs.

In energy markets, benchmark U.S. crude lost 37 cents to \$74.26 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract rose 86 cents to \$74.63 on Monday. Brent crude, the price basis for international oil trading, shed 45 cents to \$79.20 per barrel in London. It gained \$1.08 the previous session to \$79.65.

The dollar gained to 131.84 yen from Monday's 131.56 yen. The euro declined to \$1.0728 from \$1.0750.

Brazil and Jan. 6 in US: Parallel attacks, but not identical

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

Enraged protesters broke into government buildings that are the very symbol of their country's democracy. Driven by conspiracy theories about their candidate's loss in the last election, they smashed windows, sifted through the desks of lawmakers and trashed the highest offices in the land in a rampage that lasted hours before order could be restored.

Sunday's attack by supporters of former President Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil's capital drew immediate parallels with the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by former President Donald Trump's backers two years and two days earlier.

The two populist former presidents shared a close political alliance with an overlapping cast of supporters — some of whom helped spread Trump's lies about losing his re-election due to voter fraud and later parroted Bolsonaro's similar claims after his own re-election loss last fall. Bolsonaro was among the last world leaders to recognize Joe Biden's victory in 2020.

"The U.S. example of election denying and creating alternative facts, and radicalizing law enforcement, and of openly disparaging democratic institutions was a template that I don't think Bolsonaro et al would have come up with on their own," said Scott Hamilton, a former U.S. diplomat in Brazil.

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Still, experts warn against conflating the two attacks.

There were “undeniable similarities” to Jan. 6, said Graham Brookie, senior director of the Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensics Research Lab, which tracks disinformation around the globe.

“The imagery. A lot of the calls for action on social media are very, very similar,” he said. “But there’s a huge caveat. Democracy in Brazil is a lot different than democracy here in the United States. The culture, the context, even the institutions are really different, and that really matters.”

Many of the connections are out in the open. Bolsonaro’s lawmaker son, Eduardo, in 2019 signed on to work with Trump adviser Steve Bannon’s international populist movement. Bannon became one of the loudest proponents of Trump’s election lies in 2020 and has amplified Bolsonaro’s claims about rigged voting machines.

Trump was one of Bolsonaro’s few foreign allies, and Bolsonaro often exalted his American counterpart’s leadership, even posting photos of himself watching Trump’s addresses. He and his son visited Trump at Mar-a-Lago, and both attended dinners at Bannon’s house.

After Sunday’s rioting in Brasilia, Bannon called the protesters “Brazilian freedom fighters” in a video on social media.

The Conservative Political Action Conference, a key gathering of right-wing activists that has been a hotbed of pro-Trump enthusiasm, met in Sao Paulo in September. One of the attendees, former Trump spokesman Jason Miller, was later detained by Brazilian authorities before leaving the country.

“We do not advocate violence but believe peaceful protests are proper and that the situation in Brazil should be fully investigated,” Matt Schlapp, CPAC’s lead organizer, said in a statement to The Associated Press in reaction to the weekend rioting.

Protesters stormed Brazil’s Congress, Supreme Court and presidential palace, with some calling for the military to oust President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Others waved banners suggesting they believed claims that voting machines were programmed to steal the election from Bolsonaro, reminiscent of signs brandished on Jan. 6 promoting similar conspiracy theories in the U.S.

The images of Brazilian protesters fighting with police guarding the complex, breaking into government offices and searching the desks of opposition lawmakers added to the flashbacks about the attack on the U.S. Capitol.

The attacks followed months of Bolsonaro exploiting fears about election integrity without offering evidence, similar to Trump in 2020.

In November, Bolsonaro blamed his loss on a software bug and called for most electronic votes to be annulled. Independent experts rejected his claim, and Bolsonaro’s bid to annul the votes failed.

Social media still throbbed with misinformation about the election after it ended, and posts urging Brazilians to converge on their capital city on Sunday to challenge the election results went viral on TikTok, Facebook, Telegram and other platforms. One post racked up more than 800,000 views just since Friday, according to an analysis by Aos Fatos, a Brazilian fact-checking organization.

Wendy Via, president of the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, said Sunday’s riots are yet another example of how online misinformation and rhetoric can spur violence if they’re deployed by a leader with a large enough audience.

“We did see this coming,” Via said. “This doesn’t just happen in Brazil, or the United States. This is a global problem. Should we compare what happened in Brazil to Jan. 6? I say 100%, because it’s the same playbook.”

But there are important differences between the two attacks and the forces in the two countries that propelled them.

“This was not part of an orchestrated movement to overturn the election results,” said Christopher Gorman, managing director of the Americas for the Eurasia Group, a political risk consulting group. “It’s a little bit of a different animal” than Jan. 6, he said.

On Jan. 6, 2021, Trump was still president, and he urged his supporters at his rally on the ellipse to march to the Capitol and stop Congress’ ratification of Joe Biden’s victory. In Brasilia, the protest occurred on a Sunday, when few were in government offices and Bolsonaro had already relinquished power.

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Bolsonaro had even left the country — to Trump's adopted home state of Florida, where he appears to have been staying in the Orlando area. On Monday, he checked into a hospital there, complaining of abdominal pains.

Garman said Bolsonaro's hand may have been checked by Brazil's supreme court, which has been aggressively penalizing misinformation about the election to the point of censoring social media accounts and news reports that it found misleading. Bolsonaro knew that if he pushed too hard, the court could rule he could not run for public office again.

"If he had followed the Trump path, his political rights would have already been suspended," Garman said.

The situation in Brazil is also more fraught than in the U.S. Systemic corruption is a greater concern in that country, as is the stability of what is still a fairly young democracy after decades of authoritarian rule that lasted through the 1980s. The man who beat Bolsonaro, Lula, is a former president who was imprisoned on corruption charges during Bolsonaro's initial 2018 election, only to have his conviction annulled by Brazil's supreme court.

The anti-establishment anger may sound familiar to those who follow U.S. politics — a hyper-polarized political environment and a weakened center, along with mounting distrust in both institutions and those on the other side.

"It's not healthy for any democracy to have these levels of distrust," Garman said.

Prince Harry accuses Camilla of 'dangerous' leaks to media

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prince Harry has accused his stepmother, Camilla, the queen consort, of leaking private conversations to the media to burnish her own reputation as he promotes a new book that lays bare his story of his life behind palace walls.

In interviews broadcast Sunday and Monday, Harry accused members of the royal family of getting "into bed with the devil" to gain favorable tabloid coverage, singling out Camilla's efforts to rehabilitate her image with the British people after her longtime affair with his father, now King Charles III.

"That made her dangerous because of the connections that she was forging within the British press," he told CBS. "There was open willingness on both sides to trade information. And with a family built on hierarchy, and with her on the way to being queen consort, there was gonna be people or bodies left in the street."

Harry spoke to Britain's ITV, CBS's "60 Minutes" and "Good Morning America" to promote his book "Spare," which is to be widely released Tuesday. Some U.K. bookshops opened at midnight to meet demand for the highly anticipated memoir, which has generated incendiary headlines with reports that it includes details of bitter family resentments, as well as Harry and his wife Meghan's decision to give up their royal roles and move to California.

"I want to be able to paint the picture myself, see it for myself, and then be able to say, okay, yes, maybe things have changed or maybe the person has matured," said Chris Imfidon, chair of the charity Excellence in Education. He traveled from Essex to London to buy three copies of "Spare," wanting to compare the media picture of Harry to what's in the book. "If I just read in the newspaper, I don't think I'll be satisfied just hearing because each newspaper gives it totally different picture of the duke, he said.

In the interviews, Harry repeatedly blamed the media for the troubles that afflicted the couple, also known as the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, saying the coverage contributed to the rift with his brother, Prince William, and his wife, Kate.

"They always pitched us against each other," he told Good Morning America. "They pitch Kate and Meghan against each other."

Harry was also unapologetic about launching legal battles against some parts of the British media. While he said his father believes it is "probably a suicide mission" to take on the press, Harry described changing the media landscape in the UK as being "my life's work."

But Harry also continued to criticize the royal family itself.

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He repeated his claim that there was "concern" in the royal family about his unborn child's skin color after he married biracial American actress Meghan Markle. Harry and Meghan first mentioned the incident during an interview with Oprah Winfrey in 2021, but they haven't identified the family member who expressed concern.

Harry insisted his family wasn't racist, but said the episode was an example of unconscious bias. The prince told CBS that he was "probably bigoted" before he met Meghan, and said that the royal family, which is held to a higher moral standard, needed to "learn and grow" in order to be "part of the solution rather than part of the problem."

"Otherwise unconscious bias then moves into the category of racism," Harry told ITV.

"Spare" explores Harry's grief over the death of his mother in 1997, and his long-simmering resentment at his role as the royal "spare," overshadowed by the "heir" — older brother William. He recounts arguments and a physical altercation with William, reveals how he lost his virginity and describes using cocaine and cannabis.

He also says he killed 25 Taliban fighters while serving as an Apache helicopter pilot in Afghanistan — drawing criticism from both the Taliban and British military veterans.

The allegations about Camilla are particularly sensitive because of her role in the acrimonious breakdown of Charles' marriage to the late Princess Diana, William and Harry's mother.

Diana once described Camilla, who carried out a long-term affair with Charles, as the third person in their marriage. While many members of the public initially shunned Camilla, she has won fans by taking on a wide range of charitable activities and has been credited with helping Charles appear less stuffy and more in tune with modern Britain.

Writing about his father's 2005 wedding to Camilla, Harry says: "I had complex feelings about gaining a stepparent who, I believed, had recently sacrificed me on her personal PR altar." Still, he says he wanted his father to be happy. "In a funny way I even wanted Camilla to be happy. Maybe she'd be less dangerous if she was happy?"

"Spare" is the latest in a string of public pronouncements by Harry and Meghan since they quit royal life and moved to California in 2020, citing what they saw as the media's racist treatment of Meghan and a lack of support from the palace. It follows the interview with Winfrey and a six-part Netflix series released last month.

In the ghostwritten memoir, Harry, 38, describes the couple's acrimonious split from the royal family after their request for a part-time royal role was rejected.

The television interviews are certain to pile more pressure on the royal family. Harry is also appearing on "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert."

Royal officials haven't commented on any of the allegations, though allies have pushed back on the claims, largely anonymously.

Harry has defended the memoir describing it as his effort to "own my story" after years of "spin and distortion" by others. In the "60 Minutes" interview, Harry denied his book was intended to hurt his family.

Omid Scobie, co-author of "Finding Freedom," a book on the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, said Harry is offering the look behind the palace walls that the public has always wanted.

"Of course, that does come with some downsides for those who have been part of his journey," Scobie told the BBC. "We heard some sort of really startling confessions and stories about members of the royal family, particularly when it comes to Camilla and her relationship with the press."

While Harry said he hadn't spoken with his father or brother in a while, he hopes to find peace with them. But he told ITV that the "the ball is in their court."

"They've shown absolutely no willingness to reconcile," he said.

While the saga is damaging to the royal family, it may not be as harmful as people might think and will give the global audience a forum to discuss difficult issues like misogyny and racism, said Boston University professor Arianne Chernock, an expert in modern British history.

But she was cautious about doomsayers suggesting the monarchy itself was in trouble. The institution

has endured more than 1,000 years after all.

"This is a central component of the history of the royal family," she said. "Scandal is the norm not the exception."

EXPLAINER: Roots of the Brazilian capital's chaotic uprising

By CARLA BRIDI Associated Press

SALVADOR, Brazil (AP) — Thousands of Brazilians who support former president Jair Bolsonaro invaded the Supreme Court, presidential palace and Congress on Jan. 8 in an episode that closely resembled the U.S. Capitol insurrection in 2021. The groups were able to break through police barricades along the capital Brasilia's main boulevard and storm the buildings, damage furniture, smash windows and destroy artworks. As they unleashed chaos in the capital, Bolsonaro was holed up in Florida, home to his ally, former U.S. President Donald Trump. The incident sparked accusations that Bolsonaro's actions stoked the flames of dissent and ultimately produced the uprising.

WHO ARE THESE PROTESTERS, AND WHAT DO THEY WANT?

The protesters are hardcore Bolsonaro supporters, some of whom have been camped outside a military headquarters in Brasilia since Bolsonaro lost the Oct. 30 presidential election and reject the race's results. Others traveled to Brasilia for the weekend on buses. They have been demanding military intervention to oust newly inaugurated President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, alleging he is a thief who will lead the country into communism, and restore Bolsonaro to power.

HOW DID BRAZIL GET TO THIS POINT?

Throughout his administration, Bolsonaro trained fire at Supreme Court justices for opening investigations targeting him and his allies. He repeatedly singled out Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who presided over the electoral authority during the election, and at one point pushed Brazil to the brink of an institutional crisis by threatening to disobey any of de Moraes' future rulings.

Bolsonaro also sowed doubt about the reliability of Brazil's electronic voting machines, then declined to concede defeat. After his loss, he largely vanished from view, though he addressed his supporters once to tell them they had the power in their hands and that he controls the armed forces. His supporters maintained hope Bolsonaro or the armed forces would lead an intervention to overturn the results.

WHAT HAS BOLSONARO CLAIMED ABOUT THE VOTING SYSTEM AND ELECTIONS?

Bolsonaro insisted the electronic voting system should feature a printed receipt in order to enable audits, but Congress' Lower House in 2021 voted down his proposal for that change and electoral authorities say the results can already be verified. Security experts consider electronic voting less secure than hand-marked paper ballots because they leave no auditable paper trail. Brazil's system is, however, closely scrutinized and domestic authorities and international observers have never found evidence of it being exploited to commit fraud since its adoption in 1996.

After the 2022 elections, Bolsonaro and his party petitioned the electoral authority to nullify millions of votes cast on the majority of voting machines that featured a software bug — the machines lacked individual identification numbers in their internal logs. The request didn't say how the bug might affect results, and independent experts said that it would not undermine reliability in any way. The electoral authority's president swiftly dismissed the request and imposed a multi-million dollar fine on the party for what he called a bad-faith effort.

WHAT ARE BOLSONARO'S TIES TO TRUMP AND HIS ALLIES?

Former U.S. President Donald Trump was one of Bolsonaro's few foreign allies and Bolsonaro often exalted his American counterpart's leadership, even posting photos of himself watching Trump's addresses.

Bolsonaro and his lawmaker son Eduardo visited Trump at Mar-a-Lago, and both attended dinners at the house of Steve Bannon. The longtime Trump ally amplified Bolsonaro's claims about the electronic voting system before the October vote and, after the Jan. 8 uprising in Brasilia, called the protesters "Brazilian freedom fighters" in a video on social media.

Eduardo Bolsonaro has repeatedly attended the Conservative Political Action Conference in the U.S.,

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positioning himself as the international face of the right-wing movement led by his father and making inroads with his American counterparts. Jason Miller, the former Trump campaign strategist, also met with Eduardo in Brazil. On the eve of the Jan. 6 insurrection in the U.S. Capitol, Eduardo was in Washington, and met with Ivanka Trump and My Pillow chief executive Mike Lindell.

After Trump lost his reelection bid, then-President Bolsonaro waited five weeks before recognizing Joe Biden's victory and was one of the final world leaders to do so.

WHY IS BOLSONARO IN THE U.S.?

Bolsonaro flew to Florida two days before Lula's Jan. 1 inauguration, when the outgoing president traditionally bestows the presidential sash to his successor. Instead, Bolsonaro took up temporary residence in the home of a Brazilian former mixed martial arts fighter outside Orlando. He hasn't specified the reasons for his departure, and analysts have speculated it marks an attempt to avoid potential prosecution in connection with several ongoing investigations targeting him, blame from backers for not mobilizing the armed forces or responsibility for his supporters' actions.

Having elected House speaker, Republicans try governing

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Electing the House speaker may have been the easy part. Now House Republicans will try to govern.

Speaker Kevin McCarthy passed his first tests late Monday as the Republicans approved their rules package for governing House operations, typically a routine step on Day One that stretched into the second week of the new majority. It was approved 220-213, a party-line vote with one Republican opposed.

Next, the House Republicans easily passed their first bill — legislation to cut funding that is supposed to bolster the Internal Revenue Service. The Republicans' IRS bill ran into a snag ahead of votes because the budget office announced that rather than save money, it would add \$114 billion to the federal deficit. The measure flew through on another party-line vote, 218-210, though it has almost no chance of passage in the Democratic-controlled Senate.

It was an effective start to what could otherwise be a new era of potentially crisis governing. House Republicans are expected to be lurching from one standoff to the next after last week's raucous speaker's race that showcased the challenges ahead as McCarthy confronts a rebellious majority as well as the limits of President Joe Biden's remaining agenda on Capitol Hill.

With sky-high ambitions for a hard-right conservative agenda but only a narrow hold on the majority, which enables just a few holdouts to halt proceedings, the Republicans are rushing headlong into an uncertain, volatile start of the new session. They want to investigate Biden, slash federal spending and beef up competition with China.

But first McCarthy, backed by former President Donald Trump, needs to show the Republican majority can keep up with basics of governing.

"You know, it's a little more difficult when you go into a majority and maybe the margins aren't high," McCarthy acknowledged after winning the speaker's vote. "Having the disruption now really built the trust with one another and learned how to work together."

But McCarthy himself announced Monday evening's final vote tally on the IRS bill to applause from his side of the aisle. "Promises made. Promises kept," he said in a statement.

As McCarthy gavelled open the House on Monday as the new speaker, the Republicans launched debate on the Rules package, a hard-fought 55-page document that McCarthy negotiated with conservative holdouts to win over their votes to make him House speaker.

Central to the package is the provision the conservative Freedom Caucus wanted that reinstates a longstanding rule that allows any one lawmaker make a motion to "vacate the chair" — a vote to oust the speaker. Former Speaker Nancy Pelosi had done away with the rule when Democrats took charge in 2019 because conservatives had held it over past Republican speakers as a threat.

Rep. Morgan Griffith, R-Va., said the rules are about "getting back to the basics."

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But that's not the only change. There are other provisions the conservatives extracted from McCarthy that weaken the power of the speaker's office and turn over more control of the legislative business to rank-and-file lawmakers, particularly those far-right lawmakers who won concessions.

The Republicans are allowing more Freedom Caucus lawmakers on the Rules committee that shapes legislative debates. Those members promise more open and free-flowing debates and are insisting on 72 hours to read legislation ahead of votes.

But it's an open question whether the changes being approved will make the House more transparent in its operations or grind it to a halt, as happened last week when McCarthy battled through four days and 14 failed ballots before finally winning the speaker's gavel.

Many Republicans defended the standoff over the speaker's gavel, which was finally resolved in the post-midnight hours of Saturday morning on the narrowest of votes — one of the longest speaker's race showdowns in U.S. history.

"A little temporary conflict is necessary in this town in order to stop this town from rolling over the American people," Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas, said over the weekend on CNN.

On Monday, Roy praised the new rules he helped craft, saying he could file a motion "right now" to demand a vote on the speaker — as it has been through much of House history.

But heading into Monday evening's voting on the rules package, at least two other Republicans raised objections about the backroom deals McCarthy had cut, leaving it unclear if there would be enough GOP support for passage. In the end, only Republican Rep. Tony Gonzales of Texas voted against.

Democrats decried the new rules as caving to the demands of the far-right aligned with Trump's Make American Great Again agenda.

"These rules are not a serious attempt at governing," said Rep. Jim McGovern of Massachusetts, the top Democrat on the Rules Committee. Rather, he said, it's a "ransom note from far right."

Rep. Ritchie Torres, D-N.Y., focused his criticism on the GOP's so-called Holman Rule, which would allow Congress to rescind the pay of individual federal employees: "This is no way to govern."

McCarthy commands a slim 222-seat Republican majority, which means on any given vote he can only lose four GOP detractors or the legislation will fail, if all Democrats are opposed.

The new rules are making McCarthy's job even tougher. For example, Republicans are doing away with the proxy voting that Democrats under former Speaker Nancy Pelosi put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. That means McCarthy must demand greater attendance and participation on every vote with almost no absences allowed for family emergencies or other circumstances.

"Members of Congress have to show up and work again," said Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La.

With the Senate still narrowly held by Democrats, the divided Congress could still be a time of bipartisan deal-making. Monday saw a group of Republican and Democratic senators head to the southern U.S. border with Mexico as they try to develop an immigration overhaul to curb the flow of migrants.

But more often a split Congress produces gridlock.

The Republicans have been here before, just over a decade ago, when the tea party class swept to the majority in 2011, booting Pelosi from the speaker's office and rushing into an era of hardball politics that shut down the government and threatened a federal debt default.

McCarthy was a key player in those battles, having recruited the tea party class when he was the House GOP's campaign chairman. He tried and failed to take over for Republican John Boehner in 2015 when the beleaguered House speaker abruptly retired rather than face a potential vote by conservatives on his ouster.

House GOP kicks off majority with vote to slash IRS funding

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans began their tenure in the majority Monday by passing a bill that would rescind nearly \$71 billion that Congress had provided the IRS, fulfilling a campaign promise even though the legislation is unlikely to advance further.

Democrats had beefed up the IRS over the next decade to help offset the cost of top health and envi-

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ronmental priorities they passed last year and to replenish an agency struggling to provide basic services to taxpayers and ensure fairness in tax compliance.

The money is on top of what Congress provides the IRS annually through the appropriations process and immediately became a magnet for GOP campaign ads in the fall claiming that the boost would lead to an army of IRS agents harassing hard-working Americans.

The bill to rescind the money passed the House on a party-line vote of 221-210. The Democratic-controlled Senate has vowed to ignore it.

Shortly before the vote, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office projected that rescinding the extra IRS funding would increase deficits over the coming decade by more than \$114 billion. That created an awkward moment for Republicans, who have been saying that addressing deficits would be one of their top concerns in the majority. It offered an early example of how the GOP's bold promises on the campaign trail could get tangled in the messy reality of governing.

Still, the CBO's projection didn't appear to dampen Republican support. Rep. Jeff Duncan, R-S.C., said the extra IRS funding Democrats provided last year was for one purpose.

"To go after small businesses, hard-working Americans to try to raise money for reckless spending, reckless spending that has caused \$31 trillion in debt in this nation," Duncan said.

Duncan and other GOP lawmakers routinely say the extra funding will be used to hire 87,000 new agents to target Americans, but that's misleading. The number is based on a Treasury Department plan saying that many IRS employees would be hired over the next decade if it got the money. But those employees will not all be hired at the same time, they will not all be auditors and many will be replacing some 50,000 employees who are expected to quit or retire in coming years.

"This debate about IRS lends itself to be the most dishonest, demagogic rhetoric that I have seen in the Congress at any point in time," said Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md.

Charles Rettig, the former commissioner of the IRS, said in a final message to the agency in November that the additional money would help in many areas, not just beefing up tax enforcement. He said the investments would make it "even less likely for honest taxpayers to hear from the IRS or receive an audit letter."

Additional funding for the agency has been politically controversial since 2013, when the IRS under the Obama administration was found to have used inappropriate criteria to review tea party groups and other organizations applying for tax-exempt status.

In the ensuing years, the IRS was mostly on the losing end of congressional funding fights, even as a subsequent 2017 report found that both conservative and liberal groups were chosen for scrutiny.

In April, Rettig told lawmakers the agency's budget has decreased by more than 15% over the past decade when accounting for inflation and said the number of full-time employees — 79,000 in the last fiscal year — was close to 1974 levels.

But Rep. Nicole Malliotakis, R-N.Y., and other Republicans weren't buying the argument that the funding would be focused on auditing the wealthy.

"This is meant to nickel-and-dime, audit and harass America's small businesses and families, who they know cannot afford the legal fees to fight this army," Malliotakis said.

Sen. Ron Wyden, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, said a decade of Republican-led budget cuts gutted the IRS.

"The only way that House Republicans could make it any more obvious that they're doing a favor for wealthy tax cheats is by coming out and saying it in exactly those words," Wyden said. "This bill is going nowhere in the Senate."

And the White House said President Joe Biden would veto the bill if it gets to his desk, saying that the wealthiest 1% of Americans hide about 20% of their income so they don't have to pay taxes on it, shifting more of the tax burden to the middle class.

"With their first economic legislation of the new Congress, House Republicans are making clear that their top economic priority is to allow the rich and multibillion-dollar corporations to skip out on their taxes, while

making life harder for ordinary, middle-class families that pay the taxes they owe," the White House said.

DOJ reviewing potentially classified docs at Biden center

By ZEKE MILLER AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department is reviewing a batch of potentially classified documents found in the Washington office space of President Joe Biden's former institute, the White House said Monday.

Special counsel to the president Richard Sauber said "a small number of documents with classified markings" were discovered as Biden's personal attorneys were clearing out the offices of the Penn Biden Center, where the president kept an office after he left the vice presidency in 2017 until shortly before he launched his 2020 presidential campaign in 2019. The documents were found on Nov. 2, 2022, in a "locked closet" in the office, Sauber said.

Sauber said the attorneys immediately alerted the White House Counsel's office, who notified the National Archives and Records Administration — which took custody of the documents the next day.

"Since that discovery, the President's personal attorneys have cooperated with the Archives and the Department of Justice in a process to ensure that any Obama-Biden Administration records are appropriately in the possession of the Archives," Sauber said.

A person who is familiar with the matter but not authorized to discuss it publicly said Attorney General Merrick Garland asked U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois John Lausch to review the matter after the Archives referred the issue to the department. Lausch is one of the few U.S. attorneys to be held over from former President Donald Trump's administration.

Irrespective of the Justice Department review, the revelation that Biden potentially mishandled classified or presidential records could prove to be a political headache for the president, who called Trump's decision to keep hundreds of such records at his private club in Florida "irresponsible."

Trump weighed in Monday on his social media site, asking, "When is the FBI going to raid the many homes of Joe Biden, perhaps even the White House?"

The revelation comes as Republicans have taken control of the House of Representatives and are promising to launch widespread investigations of Biden's administration.

It also may complicate the Justice Department's consideration on whether to bring charges against Trump, who has launched a repeat bid for the White House in 2024 and has repeatedly claimed that the department's inquiry of his own conduct amounted to "corruption."

The National Archives did not immediately respond to a request for comment Monday. Spokespeople for Garland and Lausch declined to comment.

Rep. James Comer, the new GOP chairman of the House Oversight Committee, said Monday that the revelation raised questions about the Justice Department's handling of the Trump probe.

"Is the White House going to be raided tonight? Are they going to raid the Bidens?" he asked reporters. "This is further concern that there's a two-tier justice system within the DOJ with how they treat Republicans versus Democrats, certainly how they treat the former president versus the current president."

His Democratic counterpart, Rep. Jamie Raskin, said Biden's attorneys "appear to have taken immediate and proper action."

"I have confidence that the Attorney General took the appropriate steps to ensure the careful review of the circumstances surrounding the possession and discovery of these documents and make an impartial decision about any further action that may be needed," he added.

Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, chair of the powerful House Judiciary Committee, said Monday that the American public deserved to know earlier about the revelation of classified documents.

"They knew about this a week before the election, maybe the American people should have known that," Jordan told reporters. "They certainly knew about the the raid on Mar-a-Lago 91 days before this election, but nice if on November 2, the country would have known that there were classified documents at the Biden Center."

Jordan is among House Republicans pushing for the creation of a "select subcommittee on the Weap-

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onization of the Federal government" within the Judiciary Committee.

Votes on creating that committee are expected as soon as this week, setting up a showdown between Republicans and the prosecutors leading various federal investigations, including the ones into Trump.

It wasn't immediately clear why the White House didn't disclose the discovery of the documents or the DOJ review sooner. CBS was first to report Monday on the discovery of the potentially classified documents.

The Justice Department for months has been investigating the retention of roughly 300 documents that were marked as classified and were recovered from the Trump's Florida estate. In that instance, prosecutors say, representatives of Trump resisted requests to give back the full stash of classified documents and failed to fully comply with a subpoena that sought their return.

FBI agents in August served a search warrant at the Mar-a-Lago property, removing 15 boxes of records.

That investigation is being led by special counsel Jack Smith. Prosecutors have interviewed an array of Trump associates and have been using a grand jury to hear evidence.

It is not clear when a decision will be made on whether Trump, or anyone else, should be charged.

The think tank, formally known as the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement, is affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania and continues to operate independently of the Biden administration.

Georgia grand jury ends probe of Trump, 2020 election

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The special grand jury in Atlanta that has been investigating whether then-President Donald Trump and his allies committed any crimes while trying to overturn his 2020 election loss in Georgia has finished its work, bringing the case closer to possible criminal charges against Trump and others.

Fulton County Superior Court Judge Robert McBurney, who was overseeing the panel, issued a two-page order Monday dissolving the special grand jury, saying it had completed its work and submitted a final report. The lengthy investigation has been one of several around the country that threaten legal peril for Trump as he mounts a third bid for the White House.

The decision whether to seek an indictment from a regular grand jury will be up to Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis. Willis spokesperson Jeff DiSantis said the office had no comment on the completion of the panel's work.

McBurney wrote in his order that the special grand jury recommended that its report be made public. He scheduled a hearing for Jan. 24 to determine whether all or part of the report should be released and said the district attorney's office and news outlets would be given an opportunity to make arguments at that hearing.

Since June, the special grand jury has heard testimony from dozens of witnesses, including numerous close Trump associates such as the former New York mayor and Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani and Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina. Assorted high-ranking Georgia officials have also testified, among them Gov. Brian Kemp and Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger.

Last month, the House committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection asserted in its final report that Trump criminally engaged in a "multi-part conspiracy" to overturn the lawful results of the 2020 presidential election and failed to act to stop his supporters from attacking the Capitol. The report concluded an extraordinary 18-month investigation into the former president and the violent attack.

Special grand juries in Georgia cannot issue indictments but instead can issue a final report recommending actions to be taken.

Willis opened the investigation in early 2021, shortly after a recording surfaced of a Jan. 2, 2021, phone call between Trump and Raffensperger. During that call, the president suggested the state's top elections official could "find" the votes needed to overturn his loss in the state.

"I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have," Trump had said. "Because we won the state."

Since then it has become clear that Willis has been focusing on several different areas: phone calls made to Georgia officials by Trump and his allies; false statements made by Trump associates before Georgia

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legislative committees; a panel of 16 Republicans who signed a certificate falsely stating that Trump had won the state and that they were the state's "duly elected and qualified" electors; the abrupt resignation of the U.S. attorney in Atlanta in January 2021; alleged attempts to pressure a Fulton County election worker; and a breach of election equipment in a rural south Georgia county.

Lawyers for Giuliani confirmed in August that prosecutors told them he could possibly face criminal charges in the case. The 16 Republican fake electors have also been told they are targets of the investigation, according to public court filings. It is possible that others have also been notified they are targets of the investigation.

Trump and his allies have consistently denied any wrongdoing, with the former president repeatedly describing his call with Raffensperger as "perfect" and dismissing Willis' investigation as a "strictly political Witch Hunt!"

Willis took the unusual step in January 2022 of requesting that a special grand jury be seated to aid the investigation. She noted that a special grand jury would have subpoena power which would help compel testimony from witnesses who were otherwise unwilling to participate in the investigation.

In a letter asking the court to impanel the special grand jury, Willis wrote that her office had received information indicating a "reasonable probability" that Georgia's 2020 election, including the presidential race, "was subject to possible criminal disruptions." Her request was granted and the special grand jury was seated in May.

The Justice Department has also been conducting a wide-ranging investigation into efforts to undo the results of the 2020 election, as well as into the fundraising practices of Trump's political action committee.

On Monday, a person familiar with the matter who insisted on anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation, said Giuliani had received a subpoena weeks ago that sought, among other things, information about possible retainer agreements with Trump and sources of money he had received. As a lawyer for Trump, Giuliani was involved in post-election efforts to challenge the results of the presidential contest.

CNN earlier reported the subpoena.

'Spare' but not stingy: takeaways from Prince Harry's memoir

By HILLEL ITALIE and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

From the book's opening citation of William Faulkner, to Prince Harry's passionate bond with his wife Meghan, you could almost call the Duke of Sussex's memoir "The Americanization of Prince Harry."

Bereaved boy, troubled teen, wartime soldier, unhappy royal — many facets of Prince Harry are revealed in his explosive memoir, often in eyebrow-raising detail. Running throughout is Harry's desire to be a different kind of prince — the kind who talks about his feelings, eats fast food and otherwise doesn't hide beyond a prim facade.

Like an American.

From accounts of cocaine use and losing his virginity to raw family rifts, "Spare" exposes deeply personal details about Harry and the wider royal family. Even Americans may flinch when he confides that a trip to the North Pole left him with frostbitten genitals that proved most irritating during his brother's wedding to Kate.

BROTHERHOOD

The book opens with a famous quote from Faulkner, bard of the American South: "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

Harry's story is dominated by his rivalry with elder brother Prince William and the death of the boys' mother, Princess Diana, in 1997. Harry, who was 12 at the time, has never forgiven the media for Diana's death in a car crash while being pursued by photographers.

The loss of his mother haunts the book, which Harry dedicates to Meghan, children Archie and Lili "and, of course, my mother."

The opening chapter recounts how his father Prince Charles — now King Charles III — broke the news of his mother's accident, but didn't give his son a hug.

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Harry reveals that years later he asked his driver to take him through the Pont de l'Alma tunnel in Paris, site of the fatal crash, hoping in vain that it would help end a "decade of unrelenting pain. He also says he once consulted a woman who claimed to have "powers" and to be able to pass on messages from Diana.

Harry adds that he and William both "pleaded" with their father not to marry his long-term paramour Camilla Parker-Bowles, worried she would become a "wicked stepmother."

Harry also is tormented by his status as royal "spare" behind William, who is heir to the British throne. Harry recounts a longstanding sibling rivalry that worsened after Harry began a relationship with Meghan, the American actor whom he married in 2018.

He says that during an argument in 2019, William called Meghan "difficult" and "rude" (the kind of insults an upper class Englishman might reserve for Americans), then grabbed him by the collar and knocked him down. Harry suffered cuts and bruises from landing on a dog bowl.

Harry says Charles implored the brothers to make up, saying after the funeral of Prince Philip in 2021: "Please, boys — don't make my final years a misery.

Neither Buckingham Palace, which represents King Charles III, nor William's Kensington Palace office has commented on any of the allegations.

ADMIRATION FOR GRANDPARENTS

Harry writes with admiration and some affection about Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip. He remembers Phillip's "many passions — carriage driving, barbecuing, shooting, food beer," and above all how he "embraced life," as did his mother. "Maybe that was why he'd been such a fan" of Princess Diana, Harry recalls.

Meanwhile, he acknowledges being intimidated at times by his grandmother, if only because she was the Queen. She is no more helpful than anyone else in containing the media leaks, but she is often seen as sympathetic to his wishes, never more so than when she approved of his marriage of Meghan.

Harry also sees her as an engaging, even humorous person beyond her otherwise proper bearing. Reflecting on her death last year he remembers whispering jokes into her ear or convincing her to participate in a widely seen promotional video of the Invictus Games, in which she one-ups the Obamas in a sparring contest.

"She was a natural comedienne," he writes, calling her "wicked sense of humor" a prized confidence between the two. "In every photo of us, whenever we're exchanging a glance, making solid eye contact, it's clear. We had secrets."

WILD TEENAGE YEARS

The memoir suggests the media's party-boy image of Harry during his teen and young adult years was well-deserved.

Harry describes how he lost his virginity at 17 — in a field behind a pub to an older woman who loved horses and treated the teenage prince like a "young stallion." It was, he says, an "inglorious episode."

He also says he took cocaine several times starting at the same age, in order to "feel different." He also acknowledges using cannabis and magic mushrooms — which made him hallucinate that a toilet was talking to him.

ARMY REVELATIONS

Harry offers extensive memories of his decade in the British Army, serving twice in Afghanistan. He says that on his second tour, as an Apache helicopter co-pilot and gunner in 2012-2013, he killed 25 Taliban militants. Harry says he felt neither satisfaction nor shame about his actions, and in the heat of battle regarded enemy combatants as pieces being removed from a chessboard, "Bads taken away before they could kill Goods."

Veterans criticized the comments and said they could increase the security risk for Harry. Retired Col. Richard Kemp said it was "an error of judgment," and regarding enemy fighters as chess pieces is "not the way the British Army trains people."

"I think that sort of comment that doesn't reflect reality is misleading and potentially valuable to those people who wish the British forces and British government harm," he told the BBC.

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The Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021, and Harry's words have drawn protests in the country. Afghan Foreign Ministry spokesman Abdul Qahar Balkhi called the Western invasion of Afghanistan "odious" and said Harry's comments "are a microcosm of the trauma experienced by Afghans at the hands of occupation forces who murdered innocents without any accountability."

A REGULAR GUY

Yes, he's a Prince, but he isn't above stopping by for burgers and fries at an In-N-Out, or getting clothes from a chain outlet. He's also a compulsive watcher of "Friends" and relates most to the wisecracking Chandler Bing, played by Matthew Perry. And because he's a prince, he got to meet another "Friends" star, Courteney Cox, and indulge in chocolate psychedelic mushrooms at her Los Angeles home.

THE REAL VILLAIN

Harry shares painful words about his father and brother, but his real anger is directed at the British media, and at those within the royal circle who cooperated and otherwise stood aside. While Charles remains apparently indifferent to the press, the rest of the family is obsessed with media coverage, Harry writes, himself as much as any of them. He expresses despair over what he calls endlessly false stories about him, the racist caricatures of his wife and of the press' unnerving knowledge of his whereabouts and private correspondence. "One has to have a relationship with the press," he is told by the royal staff.

PERSONAL JOURNEY

Harry credits Meghan with changing the way he sees the world and himself. He says he was "awash in isolation and privilege" and had no understanding of unconscious bias before he met her.

The young prince notoriously wore a Nazi uniform to a costume party in 2005, and claims in the book that William and his now-wife Kate encouraged the choice of outfit and "howled" with laughter when they saw it. He was recorded using a racist term about a fellow soldier of Pakistani descent in 2006, but says he did not know the word was a slur and that the soldier was not offended.

Meghan and Harry cited the U.K. media's treatment of the biracial American actor as one of the main reasons for their decision to quit royal duties and move to the U.S. in 2020.

The book gives no sign that royal family relations will be repaired soon. Harry told ITV in an interview to promote the book that he wants reconciliation, but that there must be "accountability" first.

In the final pages, Harry describes how he and William walked side by side during the funeral procession of Queen Elizabeth II in September, but spoke barely a word to one another.

"The following afternoon, Meg and I left for America," he says.

Charles Simic, acclaimed poet adept at wordplay, dies at 84

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Charles Simic, the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet who awed critics and readers with his singular art of lyricism and economy, tragic insight and disruptive humor, has died at age 84.

The death of Simic, the country's poet laureate from 2007-2008, was confirmed Monday by executive editor Dan Halpern at Alfred A. Knopf. He did not immediately provide additional details.

Author of dozens of books, Simic was ranked by many as among the greatest and most original poets of his time, one who didn't write in English until well into his 20s. His bleak, but comic perspective was shaped in part by his years growing up in wartime Yugoslavia, leading him to observe that "The world is old, it was always old." His poems were usually short and pointed, with surprising and sometimes jarring shifts in mood and imagery, as if to mirror the cruelty and randomness he had learned early on.

In "Two Dogs," Simic writes of how one dog in "some Southern town" and another in the New Hampshire woods reminded him of a "little white dog" who became "entangled" in the feet of marching German soldiers. "Reading History" is a sketch of the "vast, dark and impenetrable" skies for those "led to their death." In "Help Wanted," life is a cosmic joke, and the narrator a willing dupe:

They asked for a knife
I come running
They need a lamb

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I introduce myself as the lamb

But Simic also loved wordplay ("The insomniac's brain is a choo-choo train"), catcalls ("America, I shouted at the radio/Even at 2 a.m. you are a loony bin!") and the interplay of great thoughts and everyday follies: "What was that fragment of Heraclitus/You were trying to remember/As you stepped on the butcher's cat?" he wrote in "The Friends of Heraclitus." In "Transport," sex becomes a near-literal feast of the senses:

In the frying pan
On the stove
I found my love
And me naked
Chopped onions
Fell on our heads
And made us cry
It's like a parade,
I told her, confetti
When some guy
Reaches the moon

His notable books included "The World Doesn't End," winner of the Pulitzer in 1990; "Walking the Black Cat," a National Book Award finalist in 1996; "Unending Blues" and such recent collections as "The Lunatic" and "Scribbled in the Dark." In 2005, he received the Griffin Poetry Prize and was praised by judges as "a magician, a conjuror," master of "a disarming, deadpan precision, which should never be mistaken for simplicity." He was fluent in several languages and translated the works of other poets from French, Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian, and Slovenian.

His 2022 collection "No Land in Sight" presented a dark vision of contemporary life, such as the poem "Come Spring" and its warning: "Don't let that birdie in the tree/Fool you with its pretty song/The wicked are back from hell."

In 1964, Simic married fashion designer Helene Dubin, with whom he had two children. He became an American citizen in 1971 and two years later joined the faculty of the University of New Hampshire, where he remained for decades.

Born Dusan Simic in Belgrade in 1938, the year before World War II began, he would describe his youth as "a small, nonspeaking part/In a bloody epic." His father fled to Italy in 1942 and was apart from the family for years. Home was so oppressive that Simic came to see the war as a needed escape.

"The war ended the day before May 9, 1945, which happened to be my birthday," he told the Paris Review in 2005. "I was playing in the street. I went up to the apartment to get a drink of water where my mother and our neighbors were listening to the radio. They said, 'War is over,' and apparently I looked at them puzzled and said, 'Now there won't be any more fun!' In wartime, there's no parental supervision; the grown-ups are so busy with their lives, the kids can run free."

Simic would refer to Hitler and Stalin as his "travel agents." Nazi rule gave way to Soviet-backed oppression and Simic emigrated to France with his mother and brother in the mid-1950s, then soon to the U.S. His family settled in Chicago, where his high school was once attended by Ernest Hemingway, and he became interested in poetry — for the art and for the girls. His parents unable to pay for college, he spent a decade working at jobs ranging from a payroll clerk to house painter while taking night classes at the University of Chicago and eventually New York University, from which he graduated in 1966 with a degree in Russian studies.

His first book, "What the Grass Says," came out in 1967. He followed with "Somewhere Among Us a Stone is Taking Notes" and "Dismantling the Silence," and was soon averaging a book a year. A New York Times review from 1978 would note his gift for conveying "a complex of perceptions and feelings" in just a few lines.

"Of all the things ever said about poetry, the axiom that less is more has made the biggest and the most lasting impression on me," Simic told Granta in 2013. "I have written many short poems in my life, except 'written' is not the right word to describe how they came into existence. Since it's not possible to sit down and write an eight-line poem that'll be vast for its size, these poems are assembled over a long

period of time from words and images floating in my head.”

Bills safety Hamlin back in Buffalo to continue recovery

By JOHN WAWROW and CAROLYN THOMPSON Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. (AP) — Bills safety Damar Hamlin said he returned to Buffalo on Monday “with a lot of love on my heart” to continue his recovery in a hospital there, a week after going into cardiac arrest and having to be resuscitated on the field during a game in Cincinnati.

Hamlin was discharged from the University of Cincinnati Medical Center in the morning and flown to western New York. He was listed in stable condition at Buffalo General Medical Center/Gates Vascular Institute.

“I can confirm that he is doing well. And this is the beginning of the next stage of his recovery,” said Dr. William Knight, one of his doctors in Cincinnati.

Doctors said Hamlin has been walking since having a breathing tube removed on Friday, eating regular food and undergoing therapy. They said he was on a normal or even accelerated trajectory in his recovery from cardiac arrest, which is considered a life-threatening event, and that normal recovery can be measured from weeks to months.

“We continue to be ecstatic about his recovery,” Dr. Timothy Pritts said.

Hamlin’s return comes a day after he cheered on the Bills from his hospital bed during their regular season-ending 35-23 win over the New England Patriots. The game proved to be a cathartic outpouring of support for the Bills and Hamlin.

“Headed home to Buffalo today with a lot of love on my heart,” Hamlin said in a tweet. “Watching the world come together around me on Sunday was truly an amazing feeling.”

Hamlin was so excited watching teammate Nyheim Hines return the opening kickoff 96 yards for a touchdown that “he jumped up and down, got out of his chair, set every alarm off in the ICU in the process,” Pritts said with a laugh. “But he was fine. It was just appropriate reaction to very exciting play.”

Pritts said it was still premature to comment on the potential cause of Hamlin’s cardiac arrest and that more testing would be done.

“The goal of the transfer ... is to get him closer to home for further evaluation, recovery and eventually discharge and rehabilitation,” Buffalo General Medical Center/Gates Vascular Institute said in a news release.

The Bills wore No. 3 Hamlin patches on their jerseys Sunday and honored their teammate by raising three fingers in the closing minutes, while tight end Dawson Knox celebrated his touchdown by forming his hands into the shape of a heart. Fans joined in, with many holding up red heart and No. 3 signs.

“The same love you all have shown me is the same love that I plan to put back into the world n more,” Hamlin tweeted Monday.

Bills coach Sean McDermott and general manager Brandon Beane briefly saw Hamlin after he landed in Buffalo.

“We’re happy to have him back.” McDermott told reporters on a conference call. “He’s a little bit tired, but it was good to get to see him in person for the first time in a while.”

The 24-year-old from the Pittsburgh area has made significant progress in his recovery since spending his first two days at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center under sedation and breathing through a ventilator.

He was awakened on Wednesday night and was eventually able to grip people’s hands. By Friday, Hamlin was able to breathe on his own and even addressed the team by videoconference, telling the Bills, “Love you boys.”

The last update from doctors came on Saturday, when they described Hamlin’s neurological function as “excellent,” though he remained listed in critical condition.

Pritts said doctors were able to upgrade his condition from critical on Monday, clearing the way for the flight home.

“We want to ensure that each organ system is stable to improving and that he needs a minimal amount of assistance such that he does not need intensive nursing,” Pritts said. “We have some awesome rock

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star nurses who've been with him from the beginning, but he no longer needs that level of nursing care and no longer needs intensive respiratory therapy from our respiratory care practitioners and is able to then move to a setting where he would have less intensive care."

A doctor accompanied Hamlin to the airport.

Doctors declined to speculate about whether Hamlin would be able to attend a game in person. By beating New England, the Bills (13-3) clinched home-field advantage through the first two rounds of the playoffs. Buffalo is preparing to host division rival Miami in a wild-card playoff matchup on Sunday.

"Right now it's just a young man recovering from a very serious illness, and we think that he will recover well from this," Pritts said. "He has a great positive attitude."

Hamlin's heart stopped on Monday night after making what appeared to be a routine tackle in the first quarter against the Bengals. The game was initially suspended before officially being canceled later in the week.

News of Hamlin's discharge from the hospital in Cincinnati was greeted with enthusiasm.

"That's unbelievable," Bengals coach Zac Taylor said.

"I mean, just think about it — that was one week, not even a week ago. There's no one in this room that would have expected he'd be in Buffalo," he added. "God is great. He works miracles. This is certainly a miracle, there's no question. ... And just an amazing moment for Damar."

As Brazil reels from riots, Bolsonaro finds home in Florida

By MIKE SCHNEIDER and MATT SEDENSKY Associated Press

KISSIMMEE, Fla. (AP) — As Brazil reels from mobs of rioters swarming its seats of power, its former leader has decamped to a Florida resort, where droves of supporters flocked to cheer on their ousted president.

Devotees have traveled in recent days to the temporary home of Jair Bolsonaro, a gated community with towering waterslides, for a chance to see him. He signed autographs, hugged children and took selfies with adoring masses, some sporting "Make Brazil Great Again" shirts.

"I will always support him," said 31-year-old Rafael Silva, who left Brazil eight years ago and now installs flooring in central Florida, where he stood outside Bolsonaro's rental home Monday. "He was the best for the country."

By early afternoon, the handful of supporters in yellow jerseys dissipated as word spread that the divisive, hard-right leader was hospitalized with abdominal pain. His wife, Michelle, said on social media that he had been hospitalized for observation due to abdominal discomfort related to a 2018 stabbing that has led to multiple hospitalizations in the past. A photo published by Brazilian newspaper O Globo showed him smiling from his hospital bed. A hospital spokesperson didn't immediately respond to a phone call and text message.

Prior to Sunday's angry storming of Brazil's Congress, Supreme Court and presidential palace, Bolsonaro had been seen repeatedly in this central Florida community, wandering a Publix supermarket's aisles, dining alone at a local KFC and, most of all, surrounded by clusters of adoring fans.

Though the Osceola County Sheriff's Office said it received a request from the Secret Service to provide a police escort for Bolsonaro when he arrived and he was still a sitting president, he has not been surrounded by a noticeable phalanx of security.

"He will make himself right at home in Florida's right-wing ecosystem of grifting and podcasting, finding allies with whomever thinks they can use him to advance their far-right agenda," said Andy Reiter, a professor of politics and international relations at Mount Holyoke College who has researched foreign strongmen.

His new home, Encore Resort at Reunion in the suburbs of Orlando, is made up of furnished rental homes with foosball tables, screening rooms, Disney decor on the walls and Mickey Mouse stuffed animals on beds.

If it all seems too odd, the sight of the former leader of one of the world's biggest countries wandering a gated community a stone's throw from Walt Disney World in shorts, consider the history.

A stream of regional leaders have called the state home, at least for a time, over the past half century, from Haiti's Prosper Avril to Nicaragua's Anastasio Somoza to Panama's Manuel Noriega. Alongside a list of

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other Latin American notables, they've camped out in both modest homes and elaborate mansions and, in the case of Noriega, a Miami prison cell, where he served 17 years on drug charges.

When asked by reporters Monday if the U.S. would send Bolsonaro back to Brazil, national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the Biden administration hadn't received any requests from Brazil related to the former president.

Brazilian Justice Minister Flavio Dino told reporters that, as of now, Brazil had no plans to ask the U.S. for Bolsonaro to be extradited.

A bevy of Brazilians have been lured to central Florida in the past two decades and have in turn transformed the region with scores of Brazilian shops and restaurants.

Florida has the largest population of residents who were born in Brazil – nearly 130,000 people -- of any U.S. state, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Many more come as visitors, with 830,000 Brazilians traveling to central Florida in 2019, the third largest international market for the area.

Though Lula da Silva won Brazil's election by more than 2 million votes, Brazilian voters living in Florida appear to have heavily favored Bolsonaro. Election data for Brazilians living abroad shows 56 polling locations listed under Miami, the only Florida city under which data is compiled.

In each of the 56 areas, Bolsonaro prevailed, some by margins of 6-to-1. All told, more than 16,000 votes were counted among Brazilians under the Miami umbrella, with 81% favoring Bolsonaro.

"He is very popular with the Brazilian emigres in central Florida," said Joel Stewart, former honorary consul for Brazil in Orlando. Brazil opened a consular office in Orlando last year.

Bolsonaro has long been called the "Trump of the tropics," so it may come as no surprise that he wound up just a few hours' drive away from the former American president's Palm Beach compound. Both rode to power fueled by right-wing, anti-establishment anger, pursued nationalist platforms while in office, then spread lies about voter fraud in their own defeats. Followers of both men attacked the seats of government in anger after their preferred candidate lost.

Rodrigo Constantino, a right-wing Brazilian commentator who lives in Florida, says he sees parallels between Bolsonaro's support in the state and the reelection triumph of Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis. Both, he said, amounted to rejections of "the totalitarian, woke, economic egalitarianism and sensational demagoguery of the radical left."

Whatever anger might exist against Bolsonaro in Brazil, Constantino says Brazilians living in Florida will understand and accept him.

"If he wants to come to my house and eat barbecue and chat about soccer or talk bad about communism, he will be very well received," Constantino said.

\$1.1B Mega Millions prize also can be winner for retailers

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — An estimated \$1.1 billion Mega Millions jackpot drawing Tuesday night has people lined up at convenience stores nationwide to buy tickets in longshot hopes of winning a massive prize, but shop and gas station owners selling the tickets also have a chance at a big-figure bonus.

State lotteries usually reward the owners of business that sell winning jackpot tickets thousands of dollars or even up to \$1 million, even before those giant prizes are claimed.

FIRST THINGS FIRST, WHAT'S THE LATEST ON THE JACKPOT?

It seems no one can win the Mega Millions jackpot, so it keeps getting larger. The last time someone overcame the odds of 1 in 302.6 million and won the top prize was on Oct. 14. Since then there have been 24 straight drawings without anyone snagging the jackpot. The prize now ranks as the fifth-largest, though it's still only about half the size of a record \$2.04 billion Powerball jackpot, won only a couple months ago by someone in California.

While it seems like forever since someone won, it's quite a ways from the record of 41 straight drawings that has occurred a couple of times, most recently leading up to that \$2.04 billion California prize.

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AND WHO IS THE LUCKY CALIFORNIAN?

That remains a mystery. The California Lottery hasn't announced a winner and says its policy is to not acknowledge whether anyone has claimed a prize until a supposedly winning ticket is vetted. All that's clear is that a ticket matching all six numbers drawn Nov. 9 was sold at Joe's Service Center in Altadena, an unincorporated community northeast of Los Angeles.

ONE WINNER IN ALTADENA IS CLEAR.

Even if we don't know anything about the Powerball winner, we know the service center owner, Joe Chahayed, was paid his \$1 million bonus by lottery officials. Standing under a sign hoisted by the lottery that read, *Billionaire Made Here*, and surrounded by dozens of media representatives and well-wishers, Chahayed said he planned to spend the money on his five children and would donate some of it to help his community. He didn't have a clue who had purchased the winning ticket.

"I wish I knew the person but most people who buy tickets from me are from the neighborhood. I hope one of them will be the winner," he said.

HOW DOES THE RETAILER BONUS SYSTEM WORK?

The rules vary from state to state. Ohio, for example, pays up to \$100,000 to retailers who sell jackpot-winning tickets. In Illinois, retailers can get up to a \$500,000 bonus and in California, that benefit tops out at \$1 million. The state lotteries say it's part of their efforts to encourage retailers to promote ticket sales. Some business owners say they also often see at least a temporary surge in business, as superstitious players stop off to buy their tickets at a spot where someone hit it big.

POWERBALL GETTING LARGER, TOO

Even as the Mega Millions jackpot grows ever larger, the top prize for the Powerball game is also nearing massive status. Ahead of a drawing Monday night, that prize stands at \$340 million for players who opt to be paid through an annuity, doled out over 29 years.

IF YOU BUY A TICKET, DON'T FORGET ...

Whether you spend \$2 or \$200 on Mega Millions or Powerball tickets, your chance of winning are incredibly small. Powerball's odds of 1 in 292.2 million are a little better than those offered by Mega Millions, but they're still miserable. Can't get your mind around that? Andrew Swift, a mathematics professor at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, described it another way, noting the odds of winning for a person who buys a single ticket in either game are a little worse than flipping a coin and getting heads 28 straight times.

AND DON'T FORGET THIS, EITHER

Although the publicized annuity prize of \$1.1 billion for winning Mega Millions or \$340 million for Powerball jackpot get all the attention, winners rarely choose such a long-term payment option. They want their money right now. The cash payout is much smaller, at \$568.7 million for Mega Millions and \$178.2 million for Powerball.

So as you dream of buying a yacht, maybe for settle for just one rather than two.

Mega Millions is played in 45 states as well as Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Ukraine school rejects Russian claim of troops killed there

By VASILISA STEPANENKO Associated Press

KRAMATORSK, Ukraine (AP) — Officials at a vocational school in an eastern Ukraine city dismissed claims by Russia that hundreds of Ukrainian troops were killed in a missile strike there, saying Monday that a rocket merely blew out windows and damaged classrooms.

Russia specifically named the vocational school in Kramatorsk as the target of an attack in the almost 11-month war. The Russian Defense Ministry said its missiles hit two temporary bases housing 1,300 Ukrainian troops in the city, killing 600 of them, late Saturday.

Associated Press reporters visiting the scene in sunny weather Monday saw a four-story concrete building with most of its windows blown out. Inside, locals were cleaning up debris, sweeping up broken glass and hurling broken furniture out into a missile crater below.

A separate, six-story school building was largely undamaged. There were neither signs of a Ukrainian

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military presence nor any casualties.

Yana Pristupa, the school's deputy director, scoffed at Moscow's claims of hitting a troop concentration. "Nobody saw a single spot of blood anywhere," she told the AP. "Everyone saw yesterday that no one carried out any bodies. It's just people cleaning up."

She said that before the war began last February the school had more than 300 students, most of them studying mechanical engineering, with most lessons moving online when Russia invaded.

The students "are now in shock," she said, adding, "What a great facility it was."

Ukrainian officials on Sunday quickly denied the Russian claims it had lost a large number of soldiers in the attack.

Despite the absence of any evidence, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said reports from the scene didn't shake senior officials' faith in defense authorities.

"The Defense Ministry is the main, legitimate and comprehensive source of information about the course of the special military operation," Peskov said Monday in a conference call with reporters, using the Kremlin's term for the war.

Both sides have regularly claimed killing hundreds of each other's soldiers in attacks. The claims can seldom be independently verified because of the fighting.

Moscow's allegations may have backfired domestically, however, as some Russian military bloggers criticized them.

The Institute for the Study of War think tank said the bloggers "responded negatively to the Russian (Ministry of Defense's) claim, pointing out that the Russian MoD frequently presents fraudulent claims and criticizing Russian military leadership for fabricating a story ... instead of holding Russian leadership responsible for the losses accountable."

A Russian Defense Ministry spokesman said the strikes on Kramatorsk were in retaliation for Ukraine's attack in Makiivka on New Year's Eve, in which at least 89 Russian soldiers gathered at a temporary barracks died, according to Moscow. Ukrainian authorities said hundreds were killed.

It was one of the deadliest attacks on the Kremlin's forces since the war began more than 10 months ago and an embarrassing loss.

Such revenge strikes have occurred before. When Ukraine in early October struck a bridge linking the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula with Russia, damaging an important supply artery for the Kremlin's faltering war effort in southern Ukraine and hitting a key symbol of Russian power in the region, the Kremlin sent a first massive barrage against Ukraine's energy facilities. It was billed as retaliation for the bridge attack and heralded a period of relentless bombardments against Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

Ukraine's deputy defense minister said Monday that Russian forces have launched a fresh assault on the town of Soledar in the eastern Donetsk region. Taking Soledar would allow Russia to intensify its attacks on the strategically key city of Bakhmut, where intense fighting has destroyed an estimated 60% of buildings.

In the Luhansk region, most of which is under Russian control, two residents of the village of Nevske were killed in Russian shelling on Monday, Luhansk governor Serhii Haidai said.

Ukraine's presidential office reported Monday that at least three civilians were killed and 12 others wounded over the previous 24 hours as nine Ukrainian regions in the southeast of the country were shelled.

In one attack on Monday, two people were killed and five others, including a 13-year-old girl, were wounded by a Russian rocket strike that hit a village market in the northeastern Kharkiv region, Ukrainian officials said.

Kharkiv regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said the strike hit Shevchenkove village. Photos on his Telegram channel showed ruined pavilions, some of them still on fire, and rubble all around them.

According to Ukrainian officials, more people could be trapped under the rubble. A rescue operation to find them was underway.

Russia maintains it is fighting against the might of NATO, not just the Ukrainians.

Nikolai Patrushev, the secretary of Russia's Security Council, repeated that argument in an interview published Monday, saying that "the events in Ukraine aren't a clash between Moscow and Kyiv, it's a military confrontation between NATO, and particularly the U.S. and Britain, with Russia."

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"The sooner the citizens of Ukraine realize that the West is fighting Russia with their hands, the more lives will be saved," Patrushev said in an interview with Argumenty i Fakty.

Meanwhile, two U.K. citizens working as volunteers in eastern Ukraine have disappeared, the Ukrainian national police said Monday.

Andrew Bagshaw and Christopher Perry left Kramatorsk on Friday bound for Soledar, where heavy fighting is reported, and contact with them was lost, police said.

Bagshaw, a resident of New Zealand, was in Ukraine to assist in delivering humanitarian aid, according to New Zealand media reports.

Analysis: Teammates gave Damar Hamlin the ultimate tribute

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

An emotional week for the NFL filled with fear, tears, prayer and uncertainty ended with exciting games, dramatic finishes and a celebration for Damar Hamlin.

When Hamlin left the stadium in Cincinnati in an ambulance Monday night fighting for his life, football didn't matter. A pivotal game between the Bills and Bengals suddenly was irrelevant.

The primary concern for players, coaches, the league and fans around the world became Hamlin's health. The 24-year-old Bills safety collapsed and went into cardiac arrest after making a tackle and needed to be resuscitated on the field in a scary scene witnessed by millions watching "Monday Night Football."

For a couple of days, it was unknown when the NFL would resume playing. The league announced Wednesday that Week 18 was still on schedule, and Hamlin made remarkable progress in his recovery by Thursday. He spoke to teammates for the first time Friday, telling them: "Love you boys."

Inspired by his motivational words, the NFL community returned to work filled with hope instead of heavy hearts.

The league honored Hamlin in various ways this weekend, dedicating all the games to him and recognizing the first responders and doctors who saved his life.

Then, players gave Hamlin the ultimate tribute with their performance.

Nyheim Hines returned the game's opening kickoff 96 yards for a touchdown in front of a charged-up crowd at Buffalo's Highmark Stadium on Sunday.

"We've had so many prayers and so much support and to be able to start the game like that, it was amazing," Hines said. "All that was for him. I felt like he was out there with us. This is bigger than me. It's bigger than the 10 guys blocking for me."

Hines did it again in the third quarter, taking a kickoff 101 yards for a go-ahead score in a 35-23 win over the New England Patriots that locked up the AFC's No. 2 seed for the Bills (13-3).

The Bills hadn't returned a kickoff for a TD since Oct. 20, 2019, a span of nearly three years and three months. No. 3 just happens to be Hamlin's number and it was on display everywhere from Buffalo to Green Bay on outlines on the 30-yard line to T-shirts, sweatshirts and jackets worn by players and coaches across the league.

Josh Allen choked up talking about it.

"It was just spiritual," Allen said. "I was going around to my teammates saying, 'God's real.' You can't draw that one up or write that one up any better. ... Pretty cool."

Another Josh Allen made the defensive play of the season for Jacksonville on Saturday night, returning a fumble 37 yards for a TD with 2:51 remaining to help the Jaguars beat Tennessee 20-16 and secure their first AFC South championship since 2017.

The Jaguars (9-8) completed a worst-to-first turnaround and became the third team in NFL history to reach the playoffs after starting the season 4-8 or worse.

On Sunday night, the Green Bay Packers (8-9) had a chance to become the fourth team to do it. But Aaron Rodgers threw an interception late in the fourth quarter and the Detroit Lions beat the Packers 20-16 to give the Seattle Seahawks (9-8) the NFC's final wild-card spot.

Rodgers soaked in the atmosphere and slowly walked off Lambeau Field perhaps for the last time in his

career with his arm around his buddy, wide receiver Randall Cobb.

Though he has two years remaining on a \$150 million, three-year contract, there's a possibility the 39-year-old Rodgers may retire or ask for a trade.

The offseason is the time to appreciate Rodgers' career. This weekend was all about Hamlin.

Famed Danish restaurant Noma to start new 'flavor search'

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — The famed Danish restaurant Noma which has claimed the title of world's top restaurant several times said Monday it will shut down to transform itself into "a pioneering test kitchen" dedicated to "food innovation and the development of new flavors."

Chef Rene Redzepi's house of Nordic gastronomy will close by the winter 2024 and re-emerge as Noma 3.0, the Copenhagen eatery said on its webpage.

"In 2025, our restaurant is transforming into a giant lab - a pioneering test kitchen dedicated to the work of food innovation and the development of new flavors, one that will share the fruits of our efforts more widely than ever before," it said.

Redzepi, who is Noma's chef and co-owner, said they will travel to "search for new ways to share our work" and said there could be "a Noma pop-up" but didn't specify where. After the sojourn, "we will do a season in Copenhagen."

"But I don't want to commit to anything now," Redzepi told Berlingske, one of Denmark's largest daily newspapers.

Another major publication, Politiken said the eatery's facility in Copenhagen will be transformed to develop products to the Noma Projects line - fermented sauces, cooking classes and an online platform.

"Serving guests will still be a part of who we are but being a restaurant will no longer define us. Instead, much of our time will be spent on exploring new projects and developing many more ideas and products."

Noma has gone through an earlier transformation. In 2015, the restaurant announced it was closing at the end of 2016 and reopened near its waterfront premises with its own vegetable farm in the vicinity of the hippie enclave of Christiania in Copenhagen.

Noma — a contraction of the Danish words for Nordisk and Mad, meaning Nordic and food, opened in 2003. The restaurant grabbed two Michelin stars and was three times voted the world's number one restaurant by Britain's Restaurant Magazine in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

UN says ozone layer slowly healing, hole to mend by 2066

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

DENVER (AP) — Earth's protective ozone layer is slowly but noticeably healing at a pace that would fully mend the hole over Antarctica in about 43 years, a new United Nations report says.

A once-every-four-years scientific assessment found recovery in progress, more than 35 years after every nation in the world agreed to stop producing chemicals that chomp on the layer of ozone in Earth's atmosphere that shields the planet from harmful radiation linked to skin cancer, cataracts and crop damage.

"In the upper stratosphere and in the ozone hole we see things getting better," said Paul Newman, co-chair of the scientific assessment.

The progress is slow, according to the report presented Monday at the American Meteorological Society convention in Denver. The global average amount of ozone 18 miles (30 kilometers) high in the atmosphere won't be back to 1980 pre-thinning levels until about 2040, the report said. And it won't be back to normal in the Arctic until 2045.

Antarctica, where it's so thin there's an annual giant gaping hole in the layer, won't be fully fixed until 2066, the report said.

Scientists and environmental advocates across the world have long hailed the efforts to heal the ozone hole — springing out of a 1987 agreement called the Montreal Protocol that banned a class of chemicals often used in refrigerants and aerosols — as one of the biggest ecological victories for humanity.

"Ozone action sets a precedent for climate action. Our success in phasing out ozone-eating chemicals

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shows us what can and must be done – as a matter of urgency — to transition away from fossil fuels, reduce greenhouse gases and so limit temperature increase,” World Meteorological Organization Secretary-General Prof. Petteri Taalas said in a statement.

Signs of healing were reported four years ago but were slight and more preliminary. “Those numbers of recovery have solidified a lot,” Newman said.

The two chief chemicals that munch away at ozone are in lower levels in the atmosphere, said Newman, chief Earth scientist at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center. Chlorine levels are down 11.5% since they peaked in 1993 and bromine, which is more efficient at eating ozone but is at lower levels in the air, dropped 14.5% since its 1999 peak, the report said.

That bromine and chlorine levels “stopped growing and is coming down is a real testament to the effectiveness of the Montreal Protocol,” Newman said.

“There has been a sea change in the way our society deals with ozone depleting substances,” said scientific panel co-chair David W. Fahey, director of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s chemical sciences lab.

Decades ago, people could go into a store and buy a can of refrigerants that eat away at the ozone, punch a hole in it and pollute the atmosphere, Fahey said. Now, not only are the substances banned but they are no longer much in people’s homes or cars, replaced by cleaner chemicals.

Natural weather patterns in the Antarctic also affect ozone hole levels, which peak in the fall. And the past couple years, the holes have been a bit bigger because of that but the overall trend is one of healing, Newman said.

This is “saving 2 million people every year from skin cancer,” United Nations Environment Programme Director Inger Andersen told The Associated Press earlier this year in an email.

A few years ago emissions of one of the banned chemicals, chlorofluorocarbon-11 (CFC-11), stopped shrinking and was rising. Rogue emissions were spotted in part of China but now have gone back down to where they are expected, Newman said.

A third generation of those chemicals, called HFC, was banned a few years ago not because it would eat at the ozone layer but because it is a heat-trapping greenhouse gas. The new report says that the ban would avoid 0.5 to 0.9 degrees (0.3 to 0.5 degrees Celsius) of additional warming.

The report also warned that efforts to artificially cool the planet by putting aerosols into the atmosphere to reflect the sunlight would thin the ozone layer by as much as 20% in Antarctica.

Border pressures migrate north as Venezuelans head to Denver

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Javier Guillen just wanted to get to the United States as he endured a three-month trek from Venezuela, hiking through Central American jungles and spending four days clinging to the roof of a Mexican train known as “the beast” to avoid police and kidnappers.

But when he finally arrived in El Paso, Texas, last week, the 32-year-old settled on a new destination, only one relatively cheap bus ride away — Denver, an additional 680 miles (1,094 kilometers) north from the border.

“It’s the easiest place, closest to Texas, and there are people who’ll help immigrants here,” Guillen said before making his way to one of a network of shelters the city has scrambled to set up.

Over the past month, nearly 4,000 immigrants, almost all Venezuelans, have arrived unannounced in icy Denver, with nowhere to stay and sometimes dressed in nothing more than T-shirts and flip-flops. The influx took city officials by surprise as they grappled with a spate of winter storms that plunged temperatures to record lows and disrupted transit out of the area.

When they appealed to the state to open new shelters, Gov. Jared Polis, a Democrat who had allocated \$4 million to help care for the migrants, arranged for those who wanted to travel onward to go by bus to Chicago and New York. That led New York Mayor Eric Adams, also a Democrat, who had already warned his city was being overwhelmed by new migrants, to complain about the transfers from Denver.

The situation illustrates how record numbers crossing the southern border are reverberating northward

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to cities like Denver, New York and Washington that have long been destinations for immigrants — but not busloads of them showing up all at once, straight from the border and with no resources.

“They are getting a taste of what border cities have been facing,” said Julia Gelatt, a senior policy analyst at the Migration Policy Institute in Washington. “The fact that people are showing up in groups with a need for basic services really is new for northern cities.”

In some instances, Republican governors — primarily Texas Gov. Greg Abbott — have tried to drive home that message by transporting immigrants straight from the border to New York or near Vice President Kamala Harris’ Washington residence in the nation’s capital. Last year Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis also sent some to the resort island of Martha’s Vineyard.

It’s not clear precisely how Denver became a new destination for Venezuelans fleeing their country’s economic and political chaos. Advocates had detected small numbers arriving from the border earlier in 2022 and warned the route was becoming increasingly popular.

Then, last fall, many traveled to the U.S.-Mexico border in hopes the Biden administration would end a pandemic regulation that lets the country automatically return asylum seekers to Mexico. Instead, President Joe Biden added Venezuelans to the nationalities covered by the rule in October. Venezuelan crossings dropped at the border, but then something changed in Denver.

Whatever the trigger, the number of migrants arriving in the city spiked dramatically in December to sometimes 200 a day, just as a bitter winter freeze and record low temperatures swept through. The storms snarled roads out of the city and canceled several scheduled bus trips to points east, stranding many in a city already struggling to shelter its homeless population.

In response, Denver converted three recreation centers into emergency shelters for migrants and paid for families with children to stay at hotels, allocating \$3 million to deal with the influx. It reassigned workers to process the new arrivals, assign them to shelters and help them get on buses. Residents donated piles of winter clothing.

“Cities and states are ill-equipped to deal with this,” Mayor Michael Hancock said in an interview. “Whether you’re on the border or in Denver, Colorado, cities are not set up for this.”

Amelia Iraheta, a city public health employee reassigned to work with the migrants, said one man reported walking from the border and arrived with a broken foot. One woman, who reached Denver barefoot, still had her feet covered with cactus spines after walking through the borderland desert. Most wore just the clothes on their back — woefully insufficient for the subzero temperatures.

“Coming into Denver in the peak of winter, conditions were not exactly what I think they had been expecting,” Iraheta said.

Most weren’t intending to stay long. The city and state say about 70% of the more than 3,800 migrants who’ve come to Denver since they began tracking on Dec. 9 planned to go elsewhere ultimately. More than 1,600, the city says, have already left town on their own accord.

Polis’ office said he was not available for an interview. “The state’s priority is ensuring people are receiving the resources they need and can reach their desired final destination, which is the opposite of actions other states have taken to send people to places they likely had no intention of going to,” spokesman Conor Cahill said in a statement.

Jennifer Piper of the American Friends Service Committee, which has worked with the city and several nonprofits to help the migrants, inspected one of the buses before it left Denver. She said all passengers agreed they were on it voluntarily and that almost all had friends or family in New York or Chicago to stay with.

“These are grown-ups in control of their own destiny,” Piper said. “The reality is they were going to be on Greyhound buses eventually.”

The city has set a 14-day limit on stays in the emergency shelters and is talking to other agencies and nonprofits about opening longer-term facilities. It’s unclear how Biden’s new immigration policy, which opens an additional 30,000 monthly slots for asylum applicants from Venezuela and three other Latin American nations, will affect the flow into Denver.

“I really think this is not a flash in the pan,” Piper said. “Denver is now on that route, and I don’t think

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that will shift for at least the next 5-6 months.”

It may last longer. Alexander Perez, 23, took the same daunting, monthslong overland journey through Colombia, Central America and Mexico as many other Venezuelans. It includes a particularly brutal stretch of jungle isthmus into Panama known as the Darien Gap, devoid of any roads and plagued by armed marauders and deadly natural perils.

Along the way he kept thinking about joining a cousin in New York. Following a week in El Paso, he hopped a bus to Denver with the intent of continuing northeast. But after finding a warm welcome and, eventually, a hotel room, he began to reconsider his itinerary. He needed to make some money before heading on.

“Sometimes God leads you places,” Perez said, standing outside a supermarket, eyeing mounds of dirty snow.

Maybe, Perez mused, he could stay and earn some money shoveling.

New this week: Margo Price and ‘Gold, Lies & Videotape’

By The Associated Press undefined

Here’s a collection curated by The Associated Press’ entertainment journalists of what’s arriving on TV, streaming services and music and video game platforms this week.

MOVIES

— In “I Didn’t See You There,” filmmaker Reid Davenport captures his perspective navigating the world in a wheelchair as a disabled man with cerebral palsy. The film, which premieres Monday as part of PBS’s “POV,” is a portrait of the challenges many with disabilities face and their often invisible struggle. (In one scene, Davenport is stuck on an airplane after landing.) But it’s also the work of a keenly observant filmmaker, with an eye for beauty and a uniquely poetic point of view. Davenport shot this autobiographical film largely with a handheld camera and, sometimes, with one affixed to his wheelchair. Last year, the film won him the documentary directing prize at the Sundance Film Festival.

— The title of Sierra Pettengill’s “Riotville, USA” refers to a fake town the U.S. military created in the 1960s to hold exercises mimicking police and military response to rioting. The drills, staged in front of cardboard storefronts, helped make a violent playbook for controlling the era’s social unrest. “A door swung open in the late ‘60s,” reads Charlene Modeste in narration penned by essayist Tobi Haslett. “And someone, something, sprang up and slammed it shut.” Using archival footage from those exercises, “Riotville, U.S.A.,” which debuts Thursday on Hulu, wearily surveys the militarization of the police force.

— Martin Scorsese’s monthly series of free virtual screenings of restored classics continues Monday, with George Stevens’ sweeping Texas epic “Giant” (1956), with Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson and James Dean. A live screening, with commentary, will begin at 7 p.m. EDT.

— AP Film Writer Jake Coyle

MUSIC

— Alt-country singer-songwriter Margo Price’s fourth studio full-length album, “Strays,” includes the super kiss-off single “Change of Heart,” with the lyrics, “If you break both your legs/Don’t come running to me.” The album features contributions from Sharon Van Etten, Lucius and Mike Campbell, plus the previously released track “Been to the Mountain.” On “Lydia,” Price illustrates the internal strife and self-doubt of a struggling woman who finds herself pregnant and unable to raise a child. The album is released Friday. Want more Price? Check out her new memoir, “Maybe We’ll Make It,” which tracks her early years as an artist in Nashville.

— “I got gothic babe tendencies/I always choose the dark,” sings up-and-coming singer-songwriter Julia Wolf. Her debut full-length “Good Thing We Stayed” is set to drop on Friday and a highlight is the moody, lovely “Gothic Babe Tendencies” featuring blackbear. The Long Island-raised Wolf also leans into her dark side with the smooth and clever single “Dracula” and the lyrics, “I call you Dracula/Cause most of you people just can’t even look in the mirror.” But she can also be cheeky, as with her sunny anthem “Get Off My.”

— Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy

TELEVISION

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— The team behind the Emmy-nominated HBO docuseries “McMillions” are out with a new investigative series called “Gold, Lies & Videotape.” It’s about a family who claims their ancestors discovered a fortune in gold bars, jewels and coins hidden in a New Mexico cave, now worth billions. Before they could remove it, an accident barricaded the entrance. The land was then blocked off by the government for military use. One man has been pushing for decades to obtain what he believes belongs to his family, because finders keepers, while others wonder if the treasure trove is just a myth. “Gold, Lies & Videotape” delves into this story in six-parts debuting Friday on Discovery Channel and discovery+. The series features images of the treasure plus archival footage and present-day interviews.

— Andie MacDowell and Chyler Leigh (formerly of “Grey’s Anatomy,”) co-star in a new drama called “The Way Home.” The pair play an estranged mother and daughter who haven’t spoken in decades until Leigh’s character’s teen daughter, played by Sadie Laflamme-Snow, brings them together for the first time in 20 years to hopefully repair what’s broken. The 10-episode series debuts Sunday on Hallmark Channel.

— Alicia Rancilio

VIDEO GAMES

— The manga/anime series “One Piece” has spun off dozens of games over the last 25 years, though it hasn’t become quite as popular in America as “Dragon Ball Z” or “Yu-Gi-Oh.” Still, Bandai Namco is hoping to attract franchise fans, as well as aficionados of Japanese role-playing games, with One Piece Odyssey. Monkey D. Luffy, the wannabe King of the Pirates, and his Straw Hat Crew are marooned on a mysterious island and have to figure out how to make their ship, the Thousand Sunny, seaworthy again. The publisher says “One Piece” mastermind Eiichiro Oda contributed the plot, new characters and new monsters to this adventure, and you can climb aboard Friday on the PlayStation 5 and 4, Xbox X/S or PC.

— Lou Kesten

Shiffrin can break Vonn’s record -- if she can stay awake

By ANDREW DAMPF AP Sports Writer

KRANJSKA GORA, Slovenia (AP) — Staying awake might be Mikaela Shiffrin’s biggest challenge as she prepares to try to set a record for women’s World Cup skiing victories.

Having poured out her emotions after matching Lindsey Vonn with career win No. 82 in an early morning giant slalom in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, on Sunday, Shiffrin now needs to refocus, regain her energy and shift her sleeping patterns in time for a slalom to be held under the lights in Flachau, Austria, on Tuesday.

“It’s tough,” she said. “If I have a good first run then I don’t start until 9:45 (p.m.) in the second run and normally I’m well asleep by then. So we have to change the whole rhythm again.”

It’s the opposite of how Shiffrin went from an evening race in Zagreb, Croatia, last week to the earlier starting times in Slovenia.

But Shiffrin has learned throughout her extraordinary career how to deal with just these types of challenges, as displayed when she recently won five consecutive races across three different disciplines — super-G, giant slalom and slalom — at three different resorts.

Also, slalom is Shiffrin’s best event, the discipline that has accounted for 51 of her 82 wins — four of which came in Flachau.

Shiffrin has already won four of the six slaloms this season, including the last two.

No wonder she feels confident about setting the record in the hometown of Hermann Maier, another one of the most successful racers in the sport.

“If I ski my best slalom, I have a really good chance to take the victory,” Shiffrin said. “But there’s a lot of other athletes who are sick of that. So we’ll see what happens.”

While not quite as rowdy as the nearby men’s night slalom in Schladming, the Flachau race usually attracts a decent crowd of about 15,000 spectators.

Breaking the record in Austria, a country where ski racing is the top sport, would be memorable.

“It’s pretty impressive that the top two female skiers of all time are Americans in a sport historically dominated by Europeans,” Vonn wrote in a guest column for The Associated Press. “We’re 20 wins ahead

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of the next woman (Annemarie Moser-Pröll of Austria with 62 wins), which is a substantial margin. So it's not even really close. It just speaks for our country as a whole and what we're capable of doing."

Shiffrin said the recent rise of teammates Paula Moltzan and Nina O'Brien made her realize how much effort it takes to get to the top for other Americans.

"It's so hard to focus the right resources in such a big country," Shiffrin said. "It makes the future even more exciting than anything our team has accomplished in the past."

What Shiffrin herself is accomplishing, though, is unlike anything any other skier has done.

Her 82 wins have come in 233 races for a 35% win rate. In other words, Shiffrin wins one of about every three races she enters. And she has finished on the podium in more than half of her races, 129 out of 233, or 55%.

What's more is that Shiffrin is only 27, while Vonn was 33 when she got to 82. Shiffrin could compete for many more years and win many more races, perhaps even set the new standard above 100 wins.

"It's mindboggling, really, when you think about the number of years she's had this level of performance and at an early age," said U.S. ski team women's head coach Paul Kristofic, who also coached Vonn at the end of her career. "She's a remarkable person and a remarkable athlete. Maybe once in a lifetime you see somebody like this."

It seems like a foregone conclusion that Shiffrin will also soon break Ingemar Stenmark's overall record — between men and women — of 86 wins.

So then the question is will Shiffrin be considered the greatest skier ever?

Shiffrin and Vonn both won four overall World Cup titles — which is considered the greatest prize in the ski racing community — and Shiffrin is on track for a fifth title this season.

Marcel Hirscher holds the record with eight overall titles and Moser-Pröll has the women's mark with six.

"I think everything is based on statistics and records," said Mike Day, the head coach of Shiffrin's personal team. "At the moment, she's clearly one of the best ever. But I think you have to look at Stenmark and Vonn and Hirscher and have massive respect for what people have done prior to her."

Piero Gros, the 1976 Olympic slalom champion from Italy who raced against Stenmark, said there's no point in comparing racers from different eras.

"Shiffrin is up there in paradise. What more can an athlete do? She's extraordinary. And I'm sure she's still struggling inside after the loss of her father," Gros said, referring to when Shiffrin's father, Jeff, died three years ago. "We know how much talent she has but she clearly also has a lot of inner strength."

"The Americans always seem to produce these champions," Gros added, "which is incredible in this European world of skiing."

CES 2023: Companies tout environmental tech innovations

By BRITTANY PETERSON Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The mottled bright green leaves of a pothos plant stood out against the flashy expanse of electric vehicles and smart products at the CES tech show in Las Vegas this year. This particular version of the familiar houseplant was bioengineered to remove 30 times the amount of indoor air pollutants of a typical house plant, according to Neoplants, the Paris-based company that created it.

Customers are already joining a waitlist for seedlings still in the nursery.

Neoplants founder and CEO Lionel Mora is a passionate former Google employee who sings a bit of a different tune than other founders at the electronics convention, with its technology-can-solve-anything vibe. He says before people turn to engineering solutions, they need to address consumption. But, "when it comes to innovation, we believe that biology is the way to go because it's sustainable by design," he said.

As countries grapple with how to limit global warming and protect natural resources and biodiversity, more companies are growing their own commitments to building sustainable supply chains and slowing emissions. For others, like Neoplants, addressing environmental issues is their whole reason for being.

Companies and start-ups at CES touched on a broad range of those efforts. Austin-based Pivet showcased biodegradable phone cases. Electric watercraft company Candela unveiled a 28-foot electric speedboat.

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Ukrainian start-up Melt Water Club presented its water purification method that uses freezing.

The Department of Energy even had a booth — a first, said Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, who spoke with The Associated Press ahead of her keynote on Friday.

Granholm said she is excited about a range of technologies at CES and beyond, from John Deere's newest electronic farm equipment, to battery storage using alternative materials such as sodium salt, both of which she said the Department of Energy has helped fund.

Granholm also spoke about expanding the use of clean energy, including some forms of hydrogen, fusion and geothermal energy, highlighting the latter as an opportunity for the oil and gas industry.

"If they've used fracking to be able to get to oil and gas, they could be using that same technology to be able to extract the heat beneath our feet," she said.

It could be a while before the oil and gas industry walks away from extracting fossil fuels. In the meantime, more companies are taking emissions reductions seriously. And the first step to reducing emissions is having a full understanding of them, said GreenSwapp founder Ajay Varadharajan. The Dutch company intends to help online grocers and food delivery services understand their carbon footprint, including those in their supply chain or "Scope 3" — often the toughest to track.

Varadharajan wrote an algorithm that pulls information about various edible products from published research papers, which allows him to assign a carbon footprint to every food's barcode. The algorithm then fine tunes that number with information about a product's farming techniques and packaging.

Using GreenSwapp's app, CES attendees could scan the barcode of various milk containers on display to instantly compare their carbon footprint. The company claims this works on any food item with a barcode.

The information is helpful for conscious consumers, but Varadharajan says the real impact happens when food companies use it to track their emissions.

Some companies may want to share the information with customers. But he expects many to use it internally, preparing for possible regulations, he explained. The Securities and Exchange Commission is expected to soon require publicly traded U.S. companies to disclose their greenhouse gas emissions. The largest ones may need to disclose Scope 3 emissions related to their supply chain. Once finalized, the U.S. would join a growing number of countries including the U.K. and Japan that require large companies to disclose this information. The European Union is finalizing reporting standards.

Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company didn't have a booth this year, but it did demo new tires on vehicles plastered in blue and yellow that rolled around Las Vegas.

The company currently has the largest market share for replacement consumer tires in the U.S. It says its new demo tire contains 90% sustainable materials, and has improved rolling efficiency, which helps people save energy, even when the tires are on electric vehicles.

Goodyear didn't specify how much carbon is reduced in the new tire manufacturing process, or how much energy is saved through rolling efficiency.

"It's very dependent on the type of vehicle and the type of tire being used," said CEO Rich Kramer.

But the company's line of ingredients appear to move in the right direction. Tires use many materials and this new one transitions away from petroleum products to surplus soybean oil to maintain pliability. It uses silica from rice husk waste residue for grip and fuel efficiency. The list goes on, and Kramer says the tire is an important step toward the company goal of reaching zero emissions by 2050.

But sourcing these materials in large quantities is an issue, he said.

"Can you get them at scale to be able to increase production? And then how do you change the manufacturing process for that? That's a challenge, but a challenge we welcome," he said.

There's still some room for improvement in the sourcing of Goodyear's rubber, said Sean Nyquist of Forest Stewardship Council, which works to certify sustainable rubber.

"In the last 20 years, there's been significant deforestation as a result of natural rubber," he said, as demand grew for rubber from trees instead of synthetic versions made in a lab.

Goodyear's rubber sourcing follows the guidelines of the Global Platform for Sustainable Natural Rubber. Nyquist says this is an important step, but third-party certification would add even more validity to sustainability claims.

Several tire companies are on a similar path, he said. The tires Pirelli makes for the plug-in version of the BMW X5 have obtained FSC certification, which guarantees rubber was sourced ethically, including forest management and labor practices.

There may not be a simple path to reducing emissions and building sustainable supply chains. But one place U.S. companies may now get more help is the record federal funding available to decarbonize buildings and transportation through the Inflation Reduction Act. Granholm says she believes the incentives to reduce energy use and scale clean technology are powerful.

"There's policy innovation and there's technology innovation, she said. "We're all scanning to see what has the best impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and getting to our ultimate goal of saving the planet."

Biden inspects US-Mexico border in face of GOP criticism

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — President Joe Biden walked a muddy stretch of the U.S.-Mexico border and inspected a busy port of entry Sunday on his first trip to the region after two years in office, a visit shadowed by the fraught politics of immigration as Republicans blame him for record numbers of migrants crossing into the country.

At his first stop, the president observed as border officers in El Paso demonstrated how they search vehicles for drugs, money and other contraband. Next, he traveled to a dusty street with abandoned buildings and walked along a metal border fence that separated the U.S. city from Ciudad Juarez.

His last stop was the El Paso County Migrant Services Center — but there were no migrants in sight. As he learned about the services offered there, he asked an aid worker, "If I could wave the wand, what should I do?" The answer was not audible.

Biden's nearly four-hour visit to El Paso was highly controlled. He encountered no migrants except when his motorcade drove alongside the border and about a dozen were visible on the Ciudad Juárez side. His visit did not include time at a Border Patrol station, where migrants who cross illegally are arrested and held before their release. He delivered no public remarks.

The visit seemed designed to showcase a smooth operation to process legal migrants, weed out smuggled contraband and humanely treat those who have entered illegally, creating a counter-narrative to Republicans' claims of a crisis situation equivalent to an open border.

But his visit was likely do little to quell critics from both sides, including immigrant advocates who accuse him of establishing cruel policies not unlike those of his hard-line predecessor, Donald Trump.

In a sign of the deep tensions over immigration, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, handed Biden a letter as soon as he touched down in the state that said the "chaos" at the border was a "direct result" of the president's failure to enforce federal laws. Biden later took the letter out of his jacket pocket during his tour, telling reporters, "I haven't read it yet."

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy dismissed Biden's visit as a "photo op," saying on Twitter that the Republican majority would hold the administration "accountable for creating the most dangerous border crisis in American history."

El Paso County Judge Ricardo Samaniego welcomed Biden's visit, but said a current lull in arrivals prevented the president from seeing how large the group of newcomers has been.

"He didn't get to see the real difficulties," said Samaniego, who was in the local delegation that greeted Biden. "It was good that he was here. It's a first step. But we still need to do more and have more time with him."

Elsewhere in El Paso where Biden did not visit, hundreds of migrants were gathered Sunday outside the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, where they have been sleeping outdoors and receiving three meals a day from faith groups and other humanitarian organizations.

The migrants included several pregnant women, including Karla Sainz, 26, eight months along. She was traveling in a small group that included her 2-year-old son, Joshua. Sainz left her three other children back

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home in Venezuela with her mother.

"I would ask President Biden to help me with a permission or something so we can work and continue," she said.

Juan Tovar, 32, one of several people in her group, suggested he also had political reasons for leaving his home country.

"Socialism is the worst," he said. "In Venezuela, they kill us, they torture us, we can't talk bad about the government. We are worse off than in Cuba."

Noengris Garcia, also eight months pregnant, was traveling with her husband, teen son and the small family dog from the tiny state of Portuguesa, Venezuela, where she operated a food stall.

"We don't want to be given money or a house," said Garcia, 39. "We just want to work."

Asked what he's learned by seeing the border firsthand and speaking with the officers who work along it, Biden said: "They need a lot of resources. We're going to get it for them."

El Paso is currently the biggest corridor for illegal crossings, in large part due to Nicaraguans fleeing repression, crime and poverty in their country. They are among migrants from four countries who are now subject to quick expulsion under new rules enacted by the Biden administration in the past week that drew strong criticism from immigration advocates.

Biden's recent policy announcements on border security and his visit to the border were aimed in part at blunting the impact of upcoming investigations into immigration promised by House Republicans. But any enduring solution will require action by the sharply divided Congress, where multiple efforts to enact sweeping changes have failed in recent years.

From Texas, Biden traveled south to Mexico City, where he and the leaders of Mexico and Canada will gather on Monday and Tuesday for a North American leaders summit. Immigration is among the items on the agenda. Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador met Biden at the airport Sunday night and joined him in the presidential limousine for the ride to Biden's hotel.

The numbers of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border has risen dramatically during Biden's first two years in office. There were more than 2.38 million stops during the year that ended Sept. 30, the first time the number topped 2 million. The administration has struggled to clamp down on crossings, reluctant to take measures that would resemble those of Trump's administration.

The policy changes announced this past week are Biden's biggest move yet to contain illegal border crossings and will turn away tens of thousands of migrants arriving at the border. At the same time, 30,000 migrants per month from Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti and Venezuela will get the chance to come to the U.S. legally as long as they travel by plane, get a sponsor and pass background checks.

The U.S. will also turn away migrants who do not seek asylum first in a country they traveled through en route to the U.S. Migrants are being asked to complete a form on a phone app so that they they can go to a port of entry at a pre-scheduled date and time.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told reporters aboard Air Force One that the administration is trying to "incentivize a safe and orderly way and cut out the smuggling organizations," saying the policies are "not a ban at all" but an attempt to protect migrants from the trauma that smuggling can create.

The changes were welcomed by some, particularly leaders in cities where migrants have been massing. But Biden was excoriated by immigrant advocate groups, which accused him of taking measures modeled after those of the former president. Administration officials disputed that characterization.

For all of his international travel over his 50 years in public service, Biden has not spent much time at the U.S.-Mexico border.

The only visit that the White House could point to was Biden's drive by the border while he was campaigning for president in 2008. He sent Vice President Kamala Harris to El Paso in 2021, but she was criticized for largely bypassing the action, because El Paso wasn't the center of crossings that it is now.

Trump, who made hardening immigration a signature issue, traveled to the border several times.

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Today in History: JAN 10, Florida secedes from the Union

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Jan. 10, the 10th day of 2023. There are 355 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 10, 1776, Thomas Paine anonymously published his influential pamphlet, "Common Sense," which argued for American independence from British rule.

On this date:

In 1860, the Pemberton Mill in Lawrence, Massachusetts, collapsed and caught fire, killing up to 145 people, mostly female workers from Scotland and Ireland.

In 1861, Florida became the third state to secede from the Union.

In 1863, the London Underground had its beginnings as the Metropolitan, the world's first underground passenger railway, opened to the public with service between Paddington and Farringdon Street.

In 1870, John D. Rockefeller incorporated Standard Oil.

In 1920, the League of Nations was established as the Treaty of Versailles (vehr-SY') went into effect.

In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson, in his State of the Union address, asked Congress to impose a surcharge on both corporate and individual income taxes to help pay for his "Great Society" programs as well as the war in Vietnam. Massachusetts Republican Edward W. Brooke, the first Black person elected to the U.S. Senate by popular vote, took his seat.

In 1971, French fashion designer Coco Chanel died in Paris at age 87.

In 1984, the United States and the Vatican established full diplomatic relations for the first time in more than a century.

In 2002, Marines began flying hundreds of al-Qaida prisoners in Afghanistan to a U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In 2003, North Korea withdrew from a global treaty barring it from making nuclear weapons.

In 2007, President George W. Bush said he took responsibility for any mistakes in Iraq and announced an increase in U.S. troops there to quell violence. The Democratic-controlled House voted 315-116 to increase the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour.

In 2011, a judge in Austin, Texas, ordered former U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay to serve three years in prison for his money laundering conviction. (DeLay's conviction was ultimately overturned.) No. 1 Auburn beat No. 2 Oregon 22-19 on a last-second field goal to win the BCS national title.

Ten years ago: Vice President Joe Biden met with representatives from the National Rifle Association and other pro-gun groups as he worked on recommendations to curb gun violence. A series of bombings in different parts of Pakistan killed nearly 200 people. Three Kurdish women, including a founder of a militant separatist group battling Turkish troops, were found shot to death in Paris. Major League Baseball announced it would test for human growth hormone throughout the regular season and increase efforts to detect abnormal levels of testosterone.

Five years ago: The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra said Charles Dutoit had stepped down as artistic director and principal conductor after multiple allegations of sexual assault. After nine terms in the House, California Republican Rep. Darrell Issa announced that he would not seek re-election.

One year ago: Robert Durst, the New York real estate heir who was sentenced to life in prison for killing his best friend, died at a hospital outside the California prison where he'd been serving the sentence; he was 78. Novak Djokovic returned to the tennis court for training after winning a round in the legal battle to stay in Australia and compete in the Australian Open; a judge reinstated his visa, which had been pulled after officials said he didn't qualify for an exemption to a rule requiring all non-citizens to be vaccinated against COVID-19. (Djokovic would eventually be deported for almost a year before returning for the Australian Open in 2023.) Stetson Bennett threw two touchdown passes to lead Georgia to a 33-18 win over Alabama for its first national championship in 41 years.

Today's birthdays: Jan. 10: Opera singer Sherrill Milnes is 88. Movie director Walter Hill is 83. Actor Wil-

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liam Sanderson is 79. Singer Rod Stewart is 78. Rock singer-musician Donald Fagen (Steely Dan) is 75. Boxing Hall of Famer and entrepreneur George Foreman is 74. Roots rock singer Alejandro Escovedo is 72. Rock musician Scott Thurston (Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers) is 71. Singer Pat Benatar is 70. Hall of Fame race car driver and team owner Bobby Rahal is 69. Rock musician Michael Schenker (UFO) is 68. Singer Shawn Colvin is 67. Rock singer-musician Curt Kirkwood (Meat Puppets) is 64. Actor Evan Handler is 62. Rock singer Brad Roberts (Crash Test Dummies) is 59. Actor Trini Alvarado is 56. Rock singer Brent Smith (Shinedown) is 45. Rapper Chris Smith (Kris Kross) is 44. Actor Sarah Shahi is 43. American roots singer Valerie June is 41.